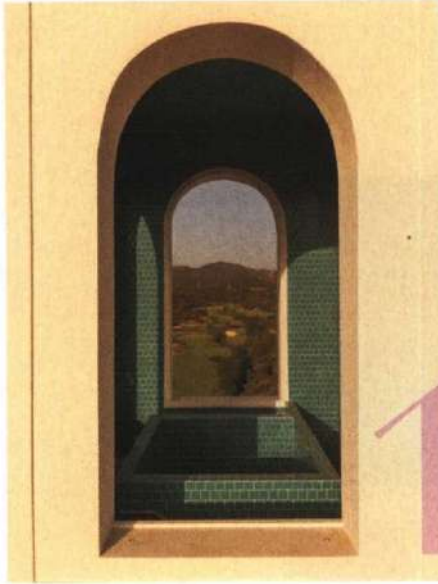




A TIME TO SPA

FROM DEEP HEALING IN VIETNAM TO A VERY
GOOD PEDICURE IN SUSSEX, TAKE WHAT YOU
NEED FROM RED'S EDIT OF THE BEST SPA
LOCATIONS AND WELLNESS BREAKS FOR 2026



TIME AND SPACE IN EASTERN ALGARVE THE SPA AT VICEROY AT OMBRIA ALGARVE, PORTUGAL

That a cavernous three-floor spa can remain almost concealed from view says many things about Ombria Algarve. The space, for a start: 370 acres of sunbaked hillside sprawling out under a huge, blue sky – there's plenty to play with. The unshowy vibe; there's another thing. Intended to celebrate the quieter interior of the Algarve, Ombria has the sleepy feel of a whitewashed village, yet is full of chic treats and hidden secrets, from a plaza cafe piled high with pastel de natas to pottery workshops. As for that spa, those three floors are so cunningly dropped into the hillside, I wander past more than once without realising it was there. I should have known it would be a marvel; wellness expert Greg Payne was the consultant on this project, and with two of the UK's most glorious spas under his belt (Beaverbrook in Surrey and Eynsham Baths at Estelle Manor), he knows how to make the simplest space feel like an oasis of healing. I drop off the map here for hours and could stay longer; each treatment room has its own outdoor terrace (when my therapist invites me to take my time after a full-body exfoliation, she means it), while a watery circuit of indoor and outdoor pool, sauna and steam room plus sensory and bucket showers mean I can wallow with intent. Portugal is a long way to come for a good spa, but for a showstopping one it's worth it.

Alexandra Friend

Rooms from around £450 a night; Holistic Massage from around £120 for 60 minutes



THERMAL HEALING IN THE SWISS MOUNTAINS TAMINA HEALTH AT GRAND RESORT BAD RAGAZ, SWITZERLAND

The new longevity centre, at one of Switzerland's most iconic health spas, takes its name from the nearby Tamina Gorge for good reason: 36.5°C thermal waters from the Tamina Spring fill both the pools of Bad Ragaz and my cup. Used here since the 13th century, its famous healing benefits felt particularly welcome after a hectic month. Tamina is positioned as a medical centre rather than a traditional spa, but the approach feels more considered than prescriptive. My three-day Recharge Programme moves between bodywork treatments and quieter windows of unstructured time, allowing for an escape from the stress back at home without feeling over-programmed. A chakra-balancing massage – a transformative hour of gentle pressure from skilled hands – is a highlight, while Tibetan sound baths add to the sense of being cocooned rather than corrected. Accommodation in the adjoining hotel leans into 'tradition meets timeless luxury', and a deeply restful night's sleep feels like part of the plan. I spend spare moments slipping away to the historic Helena bath, built in the 19th century and defined by cobalt tiles, marble pillars and a meditative stillness. Evenings bring rich, rustic Swiss cuisine (creamy cheeses and roasted veal) that locals grow up on. I leave after a cycle of sleep, relax, repeat, feeling calmer, more energised and – after a 60-minute purifying facial – visibly restored.

Urmi Pandit

Rooms from £388 a night; Inner Balance Chakra Treatment £180 for 50 minutes; Recharge Programme from around £1,165 for three days



SUN-SOAKED IN THE BALEARICS
GRAND HOTEL SON NET, MALLORCA

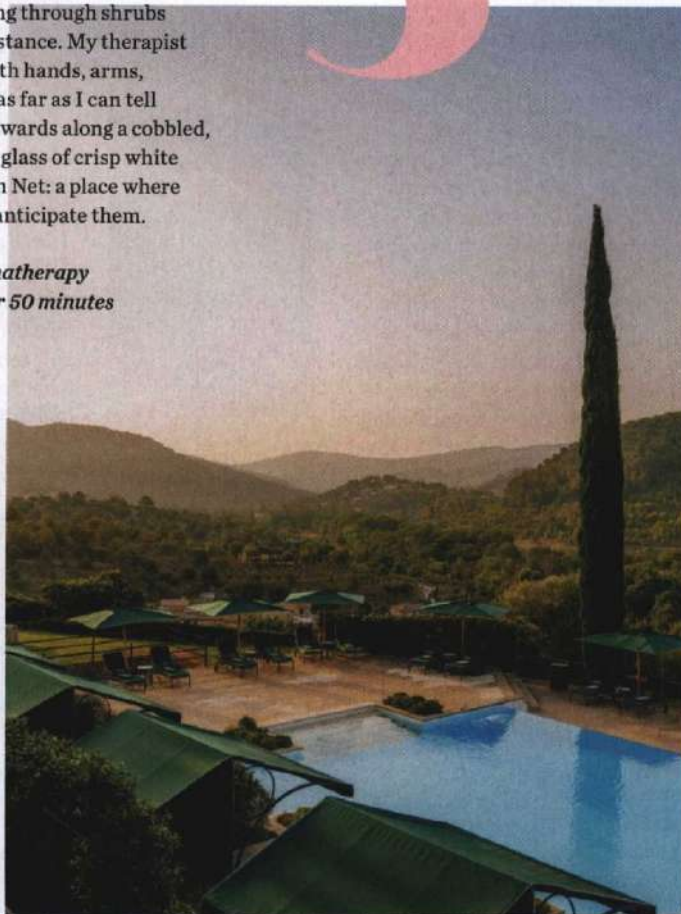
Things at Grand Hotel Son Net happen as if by magic. One moment I'm lounging poolside, the next an Institut Esthederm sunscreen appears in my hand just as my shoulders begin to turn pink. It isn't sorcery, of course – just antennae tuned uncannily to my needs from the moment I arrived. You'll feel just as held by the place itself: this palatial farmhouse is cradled by the Tramuntana mountains, wrapped in a hush that feels centuries deep. Inside, furnishings look richly sun-soaked even in the shade, and you could disappear into the patterned wallpaper if you stared long enough. Outside, the scene widens beyond a 31-metre pool (so turquoise it practically glows) to the sleepy village of Puigpunyent. Unusually for a Mallorcan property, Son Net stays open year-round, so its honey-stoned spa is made for hunkering down in less clement conditions, too. Another pool (bijou and subterranean) is framed by terracotta arches punctuated with emerald chaises and lit entirely by candlelight; it's a space that would persuade even the most tightly wound guest to surrender. Upstairs, massages take place in rooms with sweeping countryside views. Ask your therapist to open the windows; you'll hear breezes brushing through shrubs and an occasional goat bleating in the distance. My therapist pummels the swim out of my muscles with hands, arms, elbows and may well have used her legs, as far as I can tell through my blissful haze. I saunter afterwards along a cobbled, winding path and into a cabana, where a glass of crisp white wine appears in my hand. And that is Son Net: a place where your needs are met before you can even anticipate them.

Phoebe Lee

Rooms from around £480 a night; Aromatherapy Relaxing Massage from around £170 for 50 minutes



3





AYURVEDA IN BAVARIA
HUBERTUS MOUNTAIN REFUGIO
ALLGÄU, GERMANY

Arriving at Hubertus feels more like stepping into a scene from *The Sound Of Music* than checking into a wellness hotel. Acid-green hills rolling out beneath blue skies, cowbells chiming in the crisp air... unless a festive Hallmark film is more your vibe, in which case, find wooden chairs draped in furry throws, while guests gather around fires sipping hot chocolate. Hubertus is family-run, and if you listen carefully, you'll hear the owner, Marc Traubel, pressing tea and cake on someone nearby. Unless, of course, he's leading a three-hour sunrise hike; greeted by this blurry-eyed Londoner with little enthusiasm at 6am. But as the sun appears through candyfloss clouds, this silent, grounding start to the day sets the tone for everything that follows. The spa here is rooted in Ayurvedic healing, with treatments such as Marma point massage and Shirodhara oil pouring bringing Asian traditions into an Alpine setting. As someone who can be easily bored, I am caught off-guard by a sound bath; falling asleep in minutes and waking from what felt like the best nap of my life. In the name of easing anxiety by decongesting connective tissue and stimulating lymphatic flow, I have my legs massaged for a glorious 50 minutes. Afterwards, I shut my laptop for a full 24 hours and sleep again. That I did, is testament to the power of a place that makes rest feel both possible and permissible.

Humeara Mohamed

Rooms from £209 a night on a full-board basis. Stays of two nights or more include one spa treatment per guest; Ayurveda Starter massage from £105 for 50 minutes

HOLISTIC SPA MEDICINE IN HAMPSHIRE

THE BOTHY BY WILDSMITH AT HECKFIELD PLACE

I'm so aware of the hype around Heckfield Place that I arrive at the Hampshire manor house with a mix of scepticism and awe. Can it possibly be as good as everyone says? Well, the answer is yes. The three-year-old Bothy Spa by Wildsmith calls itself 'resolutely natural', which includes harvesting rainwater in a borehole and burning wood pellets for sustainable heating, but also using the principles of circadian rhythm to nurture and ground guests. Phones are locked away when you enter and limited spa sessions means the space is soothingly empty. During a massage I am contorted into the most obscure poses, only to discover my therapist trained in osteopathy, which explains how she accesses the most hard to reach muscles. But it's the 90-minute Spa Medicine that is the most holistic experience. We start in the steam room with a herb-infused salt scrub to rub over our bodies, then emerge to shower off, before heading into the sauna. Here, huge ice balls, rich with essential oils of coriander, fennel and mint are placed on the hot coals, each melting to scent the hot air, which our therapist wafts serenely around, intensifying the heat. In between each session we cool down in the outdoor hot tub and sip lightly salted citrus water to replenish our electrolytes. The final round includes 'leaf whisking' – tapping and brushing with a bunch of birch leaves to stimulate circulation and release their natural oils. Beforehand, I think I might dissolve into giggles at this bit, but on the contrary, I am all in. And I'd go back in a heartbeat. I expected my body to feel better, but had no idea how restored my soul would feel, too.

Sarah Tomczak

**Rooms from £650 a night; Sauna
 Medicine from £150 for 90 minutes**

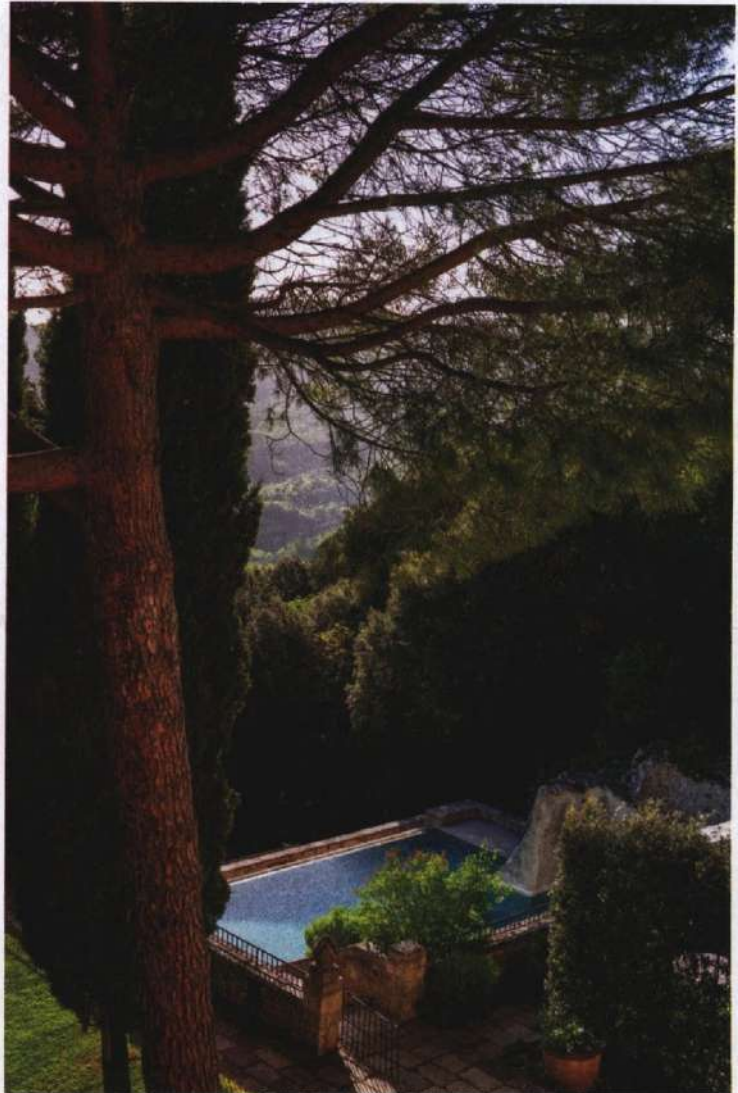
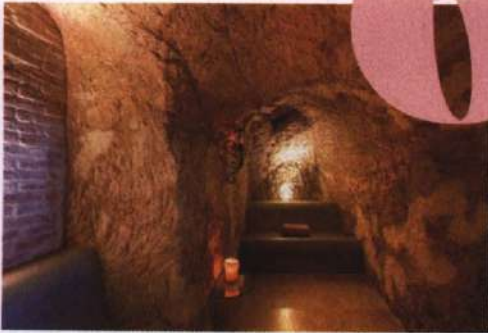


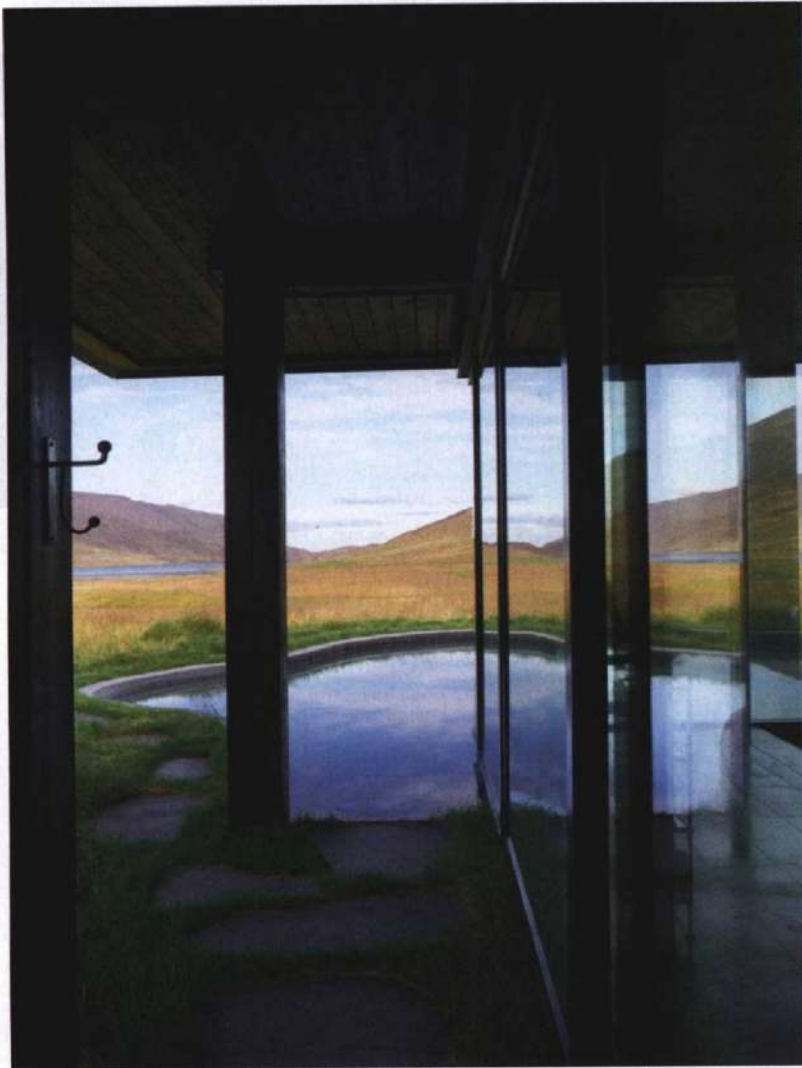
LUXURY ECO IN ITALY
BORGIO PIGNANO, TUSCANY

There's a particular quality to the landscape at Borgo Pignano. The undulating hills, the mellow lavender light, the herb-laced air that seems designed to down-regulate your nervous system; it's less hotel, more a retreat that gently coaxes you back to yourself. One of the first things you'll notice is the silence. There's no music at Borgo Pignano; a conscious decision made by owner Michael Moritz, who believes a holiday should encourage peace and contemplation. It's a clever move and surprisingly effective – without a soundtrack affecting your emotions, your senses recalibrate. It's probably the reason I don't barrel into my first treatment with my shoulders already up around my ears; by the time I arrive at the restored medieval well house spa, I'm already softened at the edges (the large glass of chilled rosé I had at lunch may also have something to do with that). As a complete wuss when it comes to anything too intense, I usually shy away from deep tissue massage, but in this candle-lit treatment room, my therapist's hands move with such fluid precision I can barely tell they are there at all. Combined with the scent of the oils, herbs, honey and botanicals grown on the organically farmed estate, I am carried into that magical place between sleep and consciousness. Muscles like butter, I linger in the cave-like treatment room sipping a tisane before admiring the beautifully packaged beauty products, made by the resident herbalist, that line the shelves of the spa. Three purchases later, I realise this treatment needs a disclaimer: may impair spending judgement.

Oonagh Brennan

*Rooms from around £305 a night based on double occupancy bed and breakfast;
Massage from around £140 for 60 minutes*





VIKING ADVENTURES IN THE TROLL PENINSULA ELEVEN DEPLAR FARM, ICELAND

It's during my full-body massage at Deplar Farm that I discover I've been missing out; I've had many lovely massages, but none like this. No mindless strokes or classic spa sounds here: knots are kneaded away with intention, to a soundtrack of ritualistic chanting, shamanic drums and Viking horns (apt for the remote fjord setting). If there's one thing they do incredibly well here, it's spa and sauna, peppered with cold water immersion in a fresh-water plunge pit a mere shiver away

from the outdoor geothermal pool and (incredibly chic) swim-up bar. Downstairs, a flotation tank promises more relaxation; with 500kg of salt to mimic the buoyancy of the Dead Sea, it's like drifting in silk. As for the rest of Deplar, the vibe is best described as Hamptons-meets-Nordics, set against a rugged landscape. Hospitality is hyper-personal: we're greeted by name on arrival, my partner's favourite niche band plays on our in-room sound system, and for every guest there's a cluster of three or four staff. All 13 bedrooms brim with thoughtful, functional touches, including Aesop toiletries, home-made snacks and a white noise machine at turndown. Beyond this cocoon of nothing-spared luxury, a cornucopia of adventures awaits: heli-skiing, horse riding, whale-watching and, of course, the Northern Lights. So, the crowd? We're joined by music producers from LA, and our trip is bookended by a UK politician arriving with their family, and Justin Bieber with his posse. The enchantment of rural Iceland: who knew?

Bella Evennett-Watts

Rooms from around £2,958 a night based on full-board double occupancy, including adventure itineraries and equipment, minibar and house beverages, and airport transfers; Full Body Massage from £283 for 60 minutes



CITY HEALING IN THE DREAMING SPIRES THE STORE, OXFORD

The Store and I are a marriage of convenience. An hour's fast train from London, this boutique hotel is the escape I need from the daily grind, with the kind of bustling lobby that means a solo traveller can slip in and out unnoticed. I'm quite taken with the hotel's former identity as Boswells department store (the oldest in Britain after Fortnum & Mason). Shuttered for good during the pandemic, it's since been transformed with exposed brick, fluted glass screens and Crittall windows. The bar is in the former jewellery department, the restaurant in the pharmacy, and a rooftop terrace gives 360-degree views of Oxford's spires. But it's in the compact, but elegant, basement spa that I find my happiest place. It's so dark in here – walnut wood panels clad the walls and there is a backlit thermal suite comprising a sauna, steam room, experience shower and four loungers – I wonder if I'll stay awake. I'm two-thirds through the most relaxing of Oskia facials when I don't, and my therapist, Eleasha – somewhere between lymphatic drainage and a wonderfully indulgent head massage – subtly repositions me. The next morning, I return for a full-body massage using products by another British brand, Verden (I choose the D'Orangerie scent – a blend of orange blossom, lemon and jojoba). Eleasha has already picked up on my troublesome shoulders and finds new ways to get into the knots and tightness. I'm a physically and emotionally tired soul, and she has the care and patience of a saint. Convenient? This is an absolute pleasure. I could come back.

Megan Conner

Rooms from £285 a night including breakfast; Oskia Indulgent Escape Facial, £115 for 60 minutes; Verden Release Deep Tissue Massage, £145 for 60 minutes



VINOTHERAPY ON THE SOUTH DOWNS THE SPA AT SOUTH LODGE, WEST SUSSEX

As spa trends go, 'adjoining vineyard' is quite niche, but with the UK's wine business flourishing as fast as its home-grown wellness, South Lodge has done a very clever thing in combining both. On the wellness front, South Lodge already has a place in this beauty director's heart: with around 26 therapists (plus specialists in osteopathy and hormone management), a thriving restaurant that could make other spas weep, and a bucolic outdoor deck lined with pristine loungers and wicker relaxation pods – the huge, grass-roofed spa is a stand-alone destination rather than a hotel add-on. It also, which for me, seals the deal, sits in masses of sensitively manicured green space, featuring a reed-fringed natural swimming pond with water that feels deliciously fresh, a wild swimming lake (ditto), eight hidden-away lakeside lodges with outdoor copper baths, and 19,000 vines on a sunny slope just beyond the spa. And here comes the wine bit: while South Lodge is developing its own sparkling single estate with Ridgeview wines, it has called in British skincare company Pelegrims to magic discarded leaf cuttings and antioxidant-rich vine sap into unguents used in face and body treatments. It's this kind of upcycling that helps South Lodge retain its hard-won B-Corp certification and could lead to 'vinotherapy' becoming as recognised here as it is in

France and California. None of this would matter if the treatments weren't gorgeous. Happily, they really are, with warmed herbal poultices and oils applied with care by kind and experienced therapists and pedicures souped up with LED hand masks and a delicious glass of Ridgeway.

Alexandra Friend

Rooms from £308 and lodges from £1,000 a night, including spa access; Vine Leaf & Herbal Infusion Poultice Massage, £155 for 60 minutes; Margaret Dabbs London Ultimate Pedicure, £110



FLY DIRECT TO ZÜRICH OR GENEVA VIA SWISS (SWISS INTERNATIONAL AIR LINES) FROM LONDON; HEATHROW, LONDON CITY, MANCHESTER, BIRMINGHAM AND EDINBURGH, FROM £54 (SWISS.COM). SWISS PUBLIC TRANSPORT TICKETS FROM £40. SWISS TRAVEL PASSES FROM £29 FOR THREE DAYS (SWISSTRAVELPASS.COM).



10

ART NOUVEAU IN THE ALPS GRAND HOTEL BELVEDERE, SWITZERLAND

You don't just stumble across the Grand Hotel Belvedere; those in the know take a flight, three trains and (because the Swiss chocolate-box-pretty town of Wengen is car-free) an electric taxi to get here. It's all worth it, though, for a Wes Anderson-style renovation, a chic clientele and a front row seat to the snow-capped Alps. While some guests spend the day skiing, I take the snowy Royal Walk to the summit of the Männlichen mountain, as recommended by the front desk. The silence, the humbling views of the Jungfrau and the bracing air make for a heady combination, and I return ready for some R&R – plus a third 'R' for raclette. Though it's cold

outside, the Grand Hotel Belvedere couldn't be warmer in spirit or temperature. My sore muscles thank me as I take to the mineral-rich waters of the heated outdoor pool followed by a session in the sauna and a (quick) cold plunge in the minimalist, Japanese onsen-inspired spa. Yoga in a cosy yurt is stretchy and cathartic (it's the first time I've arrived at a class in Moon Boots) and a full-body massage slowly brings this weary explorer back to life, using enveloping movements and skin-nourishing Susanne Kaufmann oils with macerated alpine herbs. Even if you do nothing but admire the view from your chalet-style room, you can't help but internalise the calming magic of this unstuffy retreat, where tuning into nature is the greatest wellness hack of all.

Jodie Dunworth

Rooms from around £309 a night; Signature Susanne Kaufmann Massage from around £177 for 60 minutes





OFF-GRID BY GONDOLA ERIRO ALPINE HIDE, AUSTRIA

'What have you noticed... is anything missing?' asks our host for the weekend, Hannes Neurmayer. Nothing is missing. Slipper-like wool socks to replace the hiking boots we left at the door: check. A perfect edit of jazz records for our in-room record player: present and correct. Chef with a mullet that looks fresh from a Berlin nightclub, who has us screeching with laughter as we tour his ferment-stocked pantry: very much covered. But Hannes looks expectant, so we scrabble until he takes pity. 'I have not given you a wi-fi password!' he triumphantly supplies, and no, we hadn't noticed. We ask for it eventually (emails are emailing), but we appreciate the concept. Reached by cable car, Eriro is an invitation to go off grid, filling the vacuum usually stolen by scrolling with foraging, whittling in an attic art studio or just playing dominoes. Eriro is not really a hotel or even a retreat, continues Hannes. 'We call it "the house", or "a chalet with nine rooms"; he tells us, and it does feel like somewhere you can make your own. But we are here for the spa, so there we pad and there we stay. (When we joke about spending the night here, Hannes offers to have one of the huge day beds made up.) For the most part, we are alone, sleeping in womb-like hammocks, reading by floor-to-ceiling alpine views or moving between two saunas and a series of shallow heated pools. In a hay-lined room, I have deep thoughts while listening to meditative sounds on an infrared chair. A kinesiology and breathwork treatment begins with an unhurried foot bath and ends wrapped in a blanket while ruing a life in London that's more about doing than being. Eriro excels at the latter and writing this a year later I would give anything to be there now.

Alexandra Friend

Rooms from £1,315 a night, including all food and drinks (excluding some spirits), spa access, guided activities, creative experiences and use of hiking equipment; treatments from around £135 for 60 minutes



12 PEDICURES IN EUROPE'S DIAMOND CAPITAL BOTANIC SANCTUARY, ANTWERP

Step inside the ancient-walled surrounds of this former 13th-century monastery and enter a calm oasis in the heart of Antwerp. Housed in five recently restored buildings neighbouring the Botanical gardens, each of the 108 rooms and suites (some with private garden courtyards) have been designed to consider their monastic heritage: expect centuries-old wooden beams and original brickwork, curated antiques, natural textures and local artwork. Guests, smart locals and the international art set flock to the library bar and five restaurants (three with Michelin stars;



this is the diamond capital of Europe, after all), though the state-of-the-art spa and on-site apothecary is where *Red* heads. Also recently renovated and set over three floors, there's a sparkling 18-metre pool set under a glass conservatory roof, and a sauna complex featuring a panoramic Finnish sauna with herbal infusions, infrared sauna, circulation-revving hot

and cold footbaths and an ice fountain. The wellness philosophy here merges the high tech (blood analysis, body scans and an IV lounge) with traditional, holistic treatments such as acupuncture, osteopathy and yoga. But most pleasing of all is a collaboration with international 'king of pedicures', the iconic Bastien Gonzalez, whose team of personally trained podiatrists carry out his signature foot treatments otherwise enjoyed by celebrities, royals and athletes. Bastien's philosophy is to respect and protect the feet, so don't expect a coat of polish. Instead, feet are vigorously exfoliated and nails lovingly buffed with chamois leather while a toe-to-knee massage relieves any tension built up in the spa's excellent gym.

Fiona Andrews

Rooms from around £390 a night; Bastien Gonzalez Signature Pedicure from around £130 for 60 minutes



13 FASCIA HEALING AT HYDE PARK CORNER SPA AND WELLNESS CENTRE AT THE PENINSULA HOTEL, LONDON

There will be a moment when, floating in The Peninsula's 25-metre pool, you will gaze up at the mahogany-framed windows above and wonder how the sun has filtered all the way down to the lower level of the subterranean spa. In fact, what you're looking at is a glowing simulation of natural daylight, though if you were here all day you'd see the light gradually darken into an echo of the evening outside, minus the chaos of Hyde Park Corner nearby. And that's what's so extraordinary about The Pen: with its hushed panelled spaces and acres of shining marble, you really could be anywhere but central London. Spa treatments are also

unlike any other in the capital. At a time when everyone in health and wellness is talking about the fascia (the network of tissue that holds our internal structure together), the spa has scored a partnership with Ricari Studios, an LA-based longevity brand with a unique massage method that focuses on lymphatic drainage and fascia rejuvenation, using manual massage and mechanical compression. It's also a celebrity-favoured way to depuff after a long flight, though the benefits for me are the loose-limbed feeling I leave the room with and my knock-out sleep that night. Also worth noting are treatments by Australian aromatherapy brand Subtle Energies, incorporating Ayurvedic massage techniques and guided meditation with powerful oils. I could be anywhere but London, but with this within easy reach of the Piccadilly Line, why would I want to be? Alexandra Friend

Ricari Signature Face & Body Treatment, £500 for 90 minutes (includes access to full spa facilities)





AROMATHERAPY IN CRETE JW MARRIOTT CRETE RESORT AND SPA

My wellness nirvana would involve climbing down rocks to bask in the warm salty waters around a Greek island. So far, so perfect, when it comes to the newly opened JW Marriott Crete Resort and Spa. A 15-minute drive from Chania, this grown-up and serene hotel feels a far cry from the usual tourist trail. Boxy architecture, sweeping ocean views and a handful of daybeds perch on those rocks, but it's the Anoseas Spa that is the standout here. Designed in sympathy with the surroundings, with pale Cretan stone, pools of soft light and cool curved spaces, its underground location makes a welcoming contrast to the scorching sun above. While facials are a serious business – the spa uses Swissline Cosmetics for its science-backed treatments that hydrate and increase oxygen flow to the skin – bodywork is more holistic. For a signature massage, I'm presented with Aromatherapy Associates blended oils to relax, destress or energise, and choose rosemary, ginger and sweet orange for invigoration. It's applied with deep, penetrative sweeps (I ask for firm pressure to combat a creek hike the day before) by my petite but masterful therapist, who uses her elbows to root out knots in my shoulders, thighs and calves and pulls my arms and legs to release tension. When I return to the sea later, I feel infinitely lighter.

Sarah Tomczak

Rooms from around £390 a night; Signature Massage from around £150 for 60 minutes

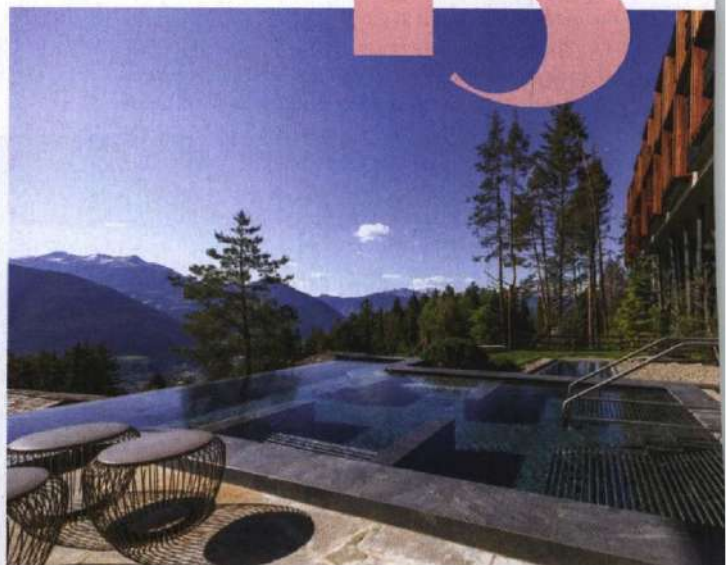


CONTRAST THERAPY IN SOUTH TYROL MY ARBOR, ITALY

Every spa worth its salt scrub has a hot-cold offering these days, but few are so committed – or kitted out – as My Arbor. With an indoor-outdoor pool, four saunas, a Turkish steam room, walk-in cold plunge and an outdoor Jacuzzi with dreamy infinity views of the mountains beyond, the two-level spa hovers up 27,000 square feet of floor space and it needs to, because from 3.30 every afternoon and into the fairy-lit evening, this is the place to be. I should say that the hotel itself is quietly lively at any given time, but once on the basement floor, you won't recognise another guest because you will all be naked, in the most northern-European and body-positive way. Towels are allowed but swimsuits are not, and no one else will use their towel for anything but sitting on, which feels marginally less awkward after a couple of rounds of sauna. After a couple of days, you just live like this, and that's the magic of Aufguss. It's a communal but freeing way to spa, this South Tyrolean ritual: freshly scrubbed sauna goers take their places on the wood benches as skilled sauna masters smash essential oil-spiked globes of ice on to the hot coals and circulate hot steam through the air with sharply snapping towels. Twelve minutes later (or after three tracks of anything from opera to Taylor Swift), everyone mills outside to bring their body temperatures down again: cold plunges for the bold; fruit skewers for everyone else. Around 45 minutes later you do it all over again – even though the final 'fire and ice' session reaches 95°C – and you feel majestic. Again, again!

Alexandra Friend

**Rooms from around £220pp
a night on a half-board basis**



16

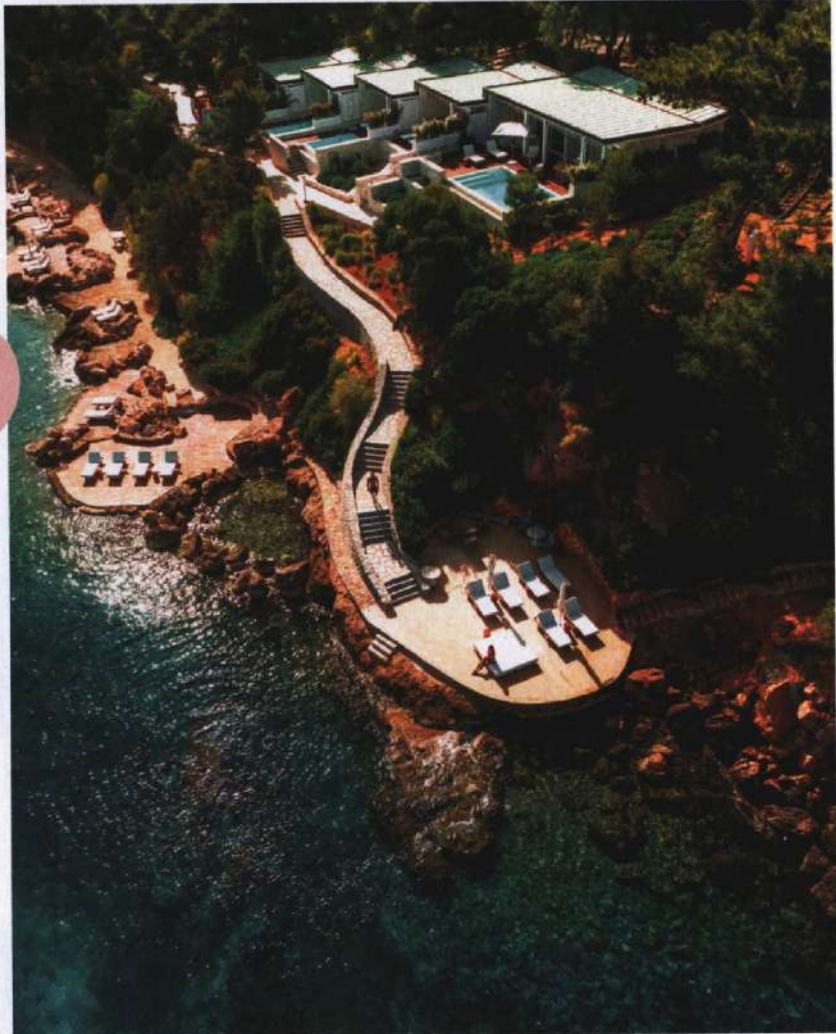
SEA VIEWS IN
ATHENS RIVIERA
FOUR SEASONS
ATHENS

It's Christmas when I visit the Four Seasons, but it's not just the profusion of fairy lights and plethora of fir trees that bring the magic at this five-star hotel on the Athens Riviera. The spa, which is housed in the lower levels of Arion (the smaller of two residences) would have an air of grandeur even without the baubles. My treatment is at dusk, but I can still make out the glittering of sailboats on the ocean through the floor-to-ceiling window. My therapist tells me that in the midday sun, it can feel pretty intense in this room (half of the treatment rooms have sea views), but at this time of night, I can't think of anything more calming. I explain that most of my tension is in my shoulders and back, so my treatment starts with a eucalyptus and arnica balm, which is slathered over my upper back and covered with a hot towel. I can feel my seized muscles slowly loosen while my therapist sets to work on my legs. Fifteen minutes later, when she turns her attention to my back, she's able to work much deeper into my knots. It seems like such a simple step, but it's game-changing – my massage is significantly more effective than any I've had before and it's a technique I plan to gift my shoulders at home to myself, after a week of hunching over a desk and commuting.

Sarah Tomczak

Rooms from around £608 a night; Entasi

Signature Massage from £225 for 50 minutes





BIOHACKING IN VIETNAM SIX SENSES CON DAO

It rains a lot in Vietnam. In fact, almost without pause during my brief stay at Six Senses Con Dao, but rather than dampen the experience, the constant drumming of water on wood provides a therapeutic soundtrack. A 45-minute flight from Ho Chi Minh City, the resort sits alone on a stretch of vast white sand, with rainforest behind and the ocean beyond. Don't let the design, inspired by a Vietnamese fishing village, fool you – Six Senses Spa Con Dao is as state-of-the-art as they come. My treatment is personalised and starts with a wellness screening that analyses key biomarkers from fat percentage vs muscle mass and metabolism to insulin resistance and monitoring the physiological stress indicators. I also wear a sleep tracker for the duration of my stay, to measure the quality of my rest and recovery potential and have a skin analysis, focusing on pigmentation, elasticity and hydration. My results reveal some gut inflammation, but generally are a positive story – I sleep well and process stress efficiently, too. The tailored treatments include a facial to rehydrate my dry skin, cupping to relieve the tight muscles in my upper back and compression therapy – where limbs are placed into pulsating tubes to improve lymphatic drainage – to counteract the long-haul flight. Yet, it's the oldest remedy that proves the most effective. Sandeep, who trained in the Himalayas, guides us through slow, meaningful poses under the wooden pagoda, while the rain clatters above. Not quite so high tech, but no less effective for body and soul.

Sarah Tomczak

**Rooms from around £513 a night;
treatments from around £145 for 60 minutes**



PHOTOGRAPHY: WILL PRYCE, ANGELA WARD BROWN, BASIL CHILDERS, BENNO PRENNI, CHRISTOS DRAZOS, SALVA LOPEZ, HUGO THOMASSEN PHOTOGRAPHY, MARK BOLTON PHOTOGRAPHY, STEFANO SCAIA, BENOIT LINERO, ALEX MOLING