

LUXURY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

Robb Report



21+ AMAZING EXPERIENCES
AROUND THE GLOBE

THE TRAVEL ISSUE

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Inner peace amplified

There is no such thing as a spa too far. Meet the resorts finding new ways to make us relax

by Ute Junker



Underwater spas. Cold chambers cooled to 110 degrees below freezing. Cranio-sacral therapy, candlelit couples massages, *hammams* and rose-scented steam rooms. If your idea of a luxury spa doesn't extend much beyond a deep-cleansing facial, you have some catching up to do.

The world's best hotels and resorts are undergoing a spa boom. As time-poor travellers demand relaxation, fast, an indulgent spa has become as essential an

offering as king-size beds, a signature bar area and rooms with a view.

Each property offers its own take on the spa experience. Some leave it to the experts, partnering with industry leaders to deliver a comprehensive range of treatments. Others focus on reflecting a sense of place, drawing on local ingredients to deliver that one-of-a-kind experience.

And then there are the destination spas, properties where it is all about wellness.

From tropical Thailand to the European alps and the Australian bush, these retreats offer therapies for both the body and the mind.

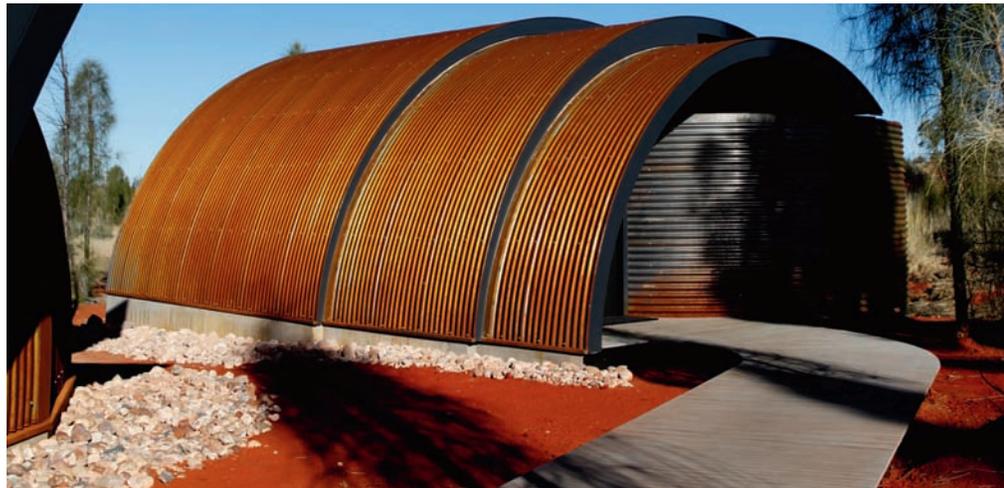
Roaming right around the globe, we have selected the properties that are winning the spa wars. With unforgettable locations, practised therapists and treatments that really deliver results, these retreats offer the ultimate in relaxation.

Spa Kinara, Longitude 131°
Uluru, Australia

The phrases 'rusty shack' and 'luxury spa' don't usually go together; but then again at Longitude 131°, the tented camp overlooking Uluru, they are known for doing things differently. The newly launched Spa Kinara draws inspiration from the Australian Outback both in terms of its design – inspired by the classic corrugated-iron bush shack – and its treatments. Massages feature a soothing balm made with *irmangka-irmangka*, or the leaves of the scented emu bush, which is known for its anti-inflammatory properties; the leaves are gathered by women from the nearby Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara lands.

The Mukulya facial harnesses the healing power of native sandalwood and macadamia nut, and includes a hair mask using native quandong. Complete the experience by rinsing off in the outdoor shower overlooking the vast desert plains.

longitude131.com.au/spa



KurSpa, Sparkling Hill Resort
British Columbia, Canada

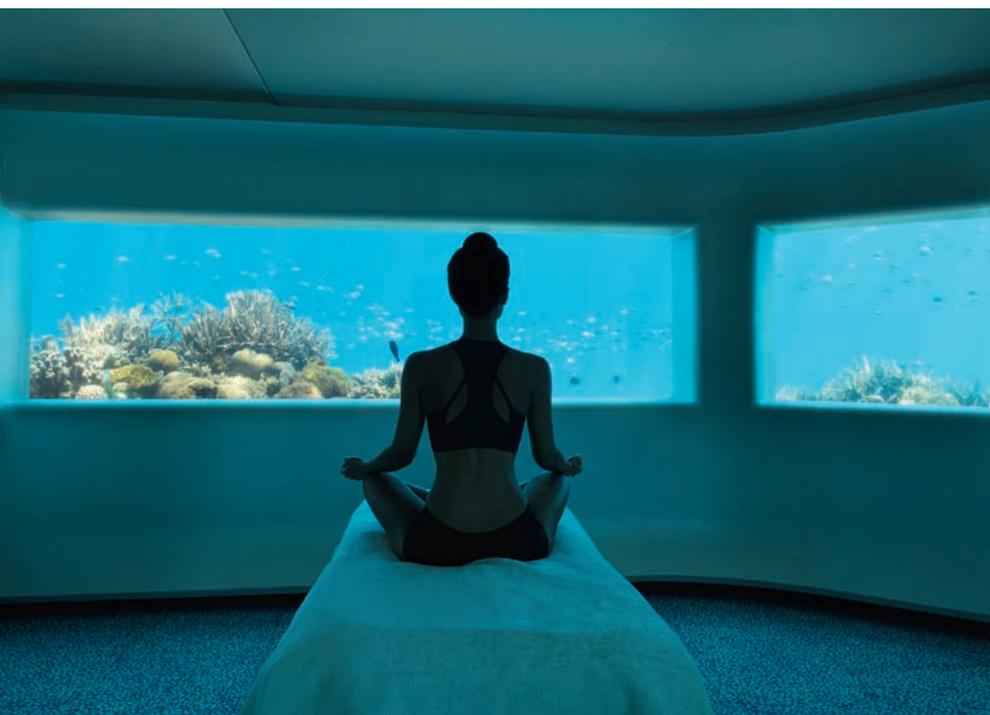
Is it getting cold in here? If so, you'll know you are standing in KurSpa's Cold Chamber, the only place in North America offering three-chamber cryotherapy. This unusual technique subjects the body to three-minute bursts of extreme cold – think 110 degrees below zero. Yes, Celsius. The results are claimed to be particularly useful for people suffering from arthritis, migraines, depression and stress. If you prefer a less chilly spa experience, there are plenty of other options available in the 4000-square-metre KurSpa, located in the Sparkling Hills Resort. Heat up in one of the seven steam and sauna areas, which include a crystal cave and a rose-scented steam room, then try the Honey Detox Treatment, in which honey is worked into the body to detoxify and stimulate the immune system. sparklinghill.com/kurspa



SPAS AROUND THE WORLD

Schloss Elmau Krün, Germany

The spectacular location amid Alpine peaks is just the start of Schloss Elmau's offerings, which include no fewer than six spas – some adults-only, others catering for the whole family. Guests can relax in the largest *hammam* west of Istanbul, pick a treatment from the 20-strong massage menu, or sign up for some sessions with a traditional Chinese medicine specialist. More active types will want to try hiking in summer, skiing in winter, or participate in one of the yoga retreats held throughout the year. Schloss Elmau looks after the mind as well as the body: the property also runs a superb cultural program. Several performances are held each week, including everything from classical music concerts to literary events.
schloss-elmau.de/en



Huvafen Fushi The Maldives

You had us at 'underwater spa'. The Maldives' many resorts compete with one another to offer the most sumptuous spas, but Huvafen Fushi trumps them all with its treatment rooms beneath the waves, which offer up-close views of colourful corals and tropical fish. The treatment to try is the Underwater Dream Spa. This unusual massage, carried out on a waterbed massage table, is designed to release tension and give you a better night's sleep, restoring your body's balance and leaving you feeling refreshed and positive. Also recommended is the Divehi Maalis, which takes place on the beach. As waves wash gently on the shore, you will enjoy a sand and herb exfoliation, followed by a sea bath and a traditional Maldivian massage. huvafenfushi.com

Spa qualia, qualia
Hamilton Island, Australia

The Whitsundays' most exclusive retreat, qualia, is all about indulgence, so of course the resort's Asian-style spa includes some seriously hedonistic treatments. Take the three-hour Wine Lovers Indulgence package, designed for couples. Enjoy a huge menu of body and face treatments, all using Vinotherapie products, before sinking into a bath together to enjoy a bottle of champagne or pinot noir. There is also a chocolate version for those with a sweet tooth. It's not all about sybaritic experiences, however; if you want to give your body a serious boost, Spa qualia also offers wellness services such as naturopathy and iridology. qualia.com.au/spa-qualia



SPAS AROUND THE WORLD

Gaia Retreat and Spa

Byron Bay Hinterland, Australia

You have been warned. Check into one of the elegant Komala Villas at Gaia Retreat & Spa – the celebrated wellness haven in the hinterland of Byron Bay – and you never need to set foot outside the villa. With a plunge pool, a day bed and even a dedicated treatment area, everything you need, from massages to meals, can be delivered to your door. The downside is that, if you don't step outside, you may miss some of the best things about this wonderfully restorative retreat, from the beautiful bush-fringed grounds to the social mealtimes in the Samoan-style longhouse. In addition to the usual range of spa treatments, Gaia offers its guests less mainstream experiences, including chakra balancing, sound meditation, art therapy, or even a tarot reading.

gaiaretreat.com.au

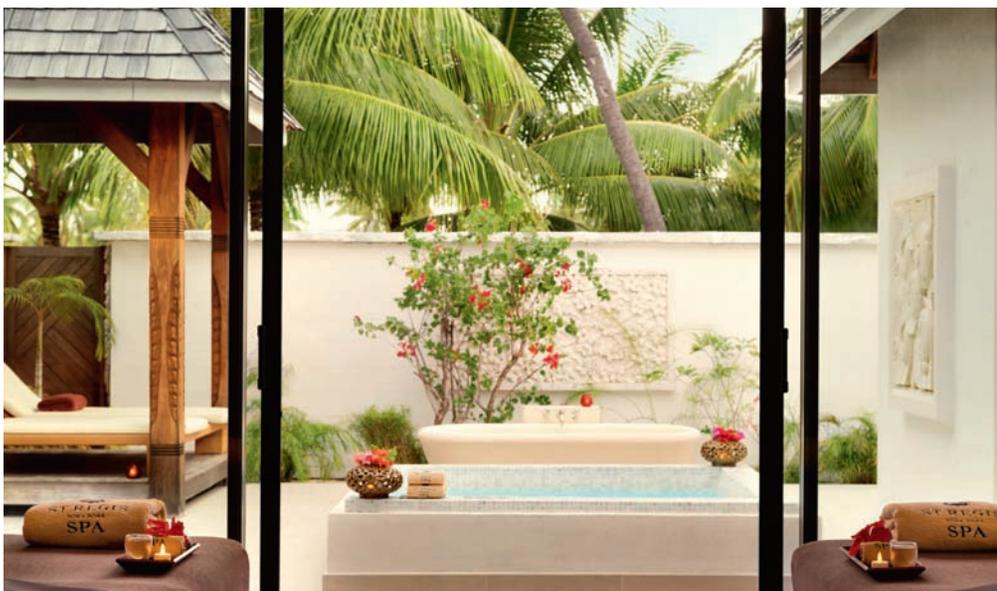


Miri Miri Spa by Clarins, St Regis
Bora Bora, French Polynesia

This one really ticks all the boxes. Start with one of the world's most

Instagrammable locations, the picturesque Bora Bora lagoon. Add an indulgent luxury resort, top it off with a world-class spa located on its own tiny islet, and you have a memorable retreat. The Miri Miri experience is all about slowing down and surrendering to pure pleasure. Guests are encouraged to make a day of their spa visit. Come early to enjoy a sauna or steam before your treatment; afterward, relax on the spa's private beach. The encyclopaedic spa menu offers plenty of choices but, given Clarins' reputation in skincare, one of the Pro-Aromatic Facials is recommended.

If romance is in the air, sign up for the Outdoor Candlelight Couple's Massage, set up after sunset on the spa's private beach. stregisborabora.com/miri-miri-spa-by-clarins



One & Only Palmilla
Los Cabos, Mexico

The manicure is the grease-and-oil change of the spa world: the treatment that is more about maintenance than pampering. Unless, that is, we are talking about the Bastien Duo mani-pedi, as offered by the spa at One & Only Palmilla in Baja California. As relaxing as a massage, its results as remarkable as a good facial, the Bastien Duo involves two therapists working simultaneously on you while you relax in a recliner, only to drift out later with smooth skin, relaxed muscles, and perfectly groomed hands and feet. To make the most of this incredible spa – which sprawls over an astonishing 2000 square metres – it is a wise idea to sign up for some back-to-back treatments. That gives you the opportunity to enjoy the magnificent treatment *casitas*, which come complete with plunge pools and day beds. oneandonlyresorts.com/one-and-only-palmilla-los-cabos





Kamalaya
Koh Samui, Thailand

Why does the award-winning Kamalaya regularly get ranked as one of the world's best spas? It is hard to know where to begin (see also our feature on page 134). There is the lush jungle setting on the quiet southern tip of Koh Samui. There is the calm, nurturing atmosphere that spreads right across the property. There is the fantastic food. Most of all, however, there is the spa itself and its outstanding range of mind and body treatments. You can try an Ayurvedic treatment such as the Marma Point Massage, which works 107 energy points throughout your body, or a counselling session with a Buddhist monk. Not your thing? Perhaps you would rather have a Chi Nei Tsang abdominal massage, or sign up for a Thai boxing lesson. Round it out with some complimentary yoga and meditation sessions, drop in on one of the fascinating lectures from guest speakers, or just lie by the pool, munching on frozen grapes.

kamalaya.com



**Southern Spa,
Southern Ocean Lodge**
Kangaroo Island, Australia

It is easy to miss the spa at Southern Ocean Lodge, so discreetly does the low-slung building nestle into the surrounding coastal heath. Which is fitting, since this spa is all about using the healing powers of the island's natural bounty: everything from wild-harvested eucalyptus and lavender, to mineral salt drawn from coastal lagoons around the Bay of Shoals. Fans of facials should try the Southern Karma treatment, which uses aromatic indigenous ingredients such as wattle, lilly pilly and lemon myrtle. One of the spa's signature body treatments is the Ligurian Honey and Almond Wrap, which cleanses and nourishes the skin using honey made by the island's bees, the only pure strain of Ligurian bees left on the planet. southernoceanlodge.com.au

