

**PAMPERING** FORGET DULL MASSAGES AND FACIALS, VICKI-MARIE COSSAR FINDS THE MADDEST, BADDEST SPA TREATMENTS AROUND

# In search of the spa fantastic

It's pampering time, girls and boys. Following the US's example, Britain acquired its own National Spa Week (now in its second year) which begins today and runs until Sunday.

According to Suki Kalirai, chairman of the Spa Business Association, the industry now has an annual turnover of £1.5 billion a year and some 35 per cent of the adult population has had a treatment in the past 12 months.

But one of the things we've noticed is how treatments seem to increasingly mirror each other and one massage fades into the next facial. Which is why we set out to find the maddest spa treatments on the travel agenda.

## Merano thermal baths

Guests can soak up views of the Dolomites in the Italian province of South Tyrol while indulging themselves in treatments such as the Sheep-Wool Pack (where you are wrapped in a 4m cloth made of wool that has been washed only once and contains natural lanolin for the skin), apple, grape and whey treatments, including peels, baths (pictured above), packs and massages. Or there is the Mountain Hay Bath (where you are wrapped in a fleece and humid hay and laid in the bath – there is no water).

Merano Thermal Baths, South Tyrol, from £17  
Tel: 0039 0473 252 000,  
www.termemerano.com

## Vinotherapy treatments

Discover treatments such as the Red Vine Bath (a hydro-massage, enriched with red vine extracts and organic essential oils), Wine Barrel Bath (bubbling water, plus fresh, finely crushed grape extracts from seed, skin, stalk

and pulp plus organic essential oils) and Sauvignon Massage (using grapeseed oil from Sauvignon grapes and organic essential oils).

Caudalie Vinotherapie Spa, Les Sources de Caudalie, France, bath £34/massage £57.  
Tel: 0033 557 83 83 83,  
www.sources-caudalie.com

## Mud body wrap in the heart of a volcano

Inside an extinct volcano, guests can swim in the natural sulphur springs and let their bodies soak up the minerals and salt. After the swim, they are exfoliated with volcanic sand before jet black volcanic mud is applied all over the body so the nutrients can hydrate, revitalise and nourish.

Ladera Resort, St Lucia, £44. For more information call Azure Luxury Hotel Collection on 01244 322 770, or visit www.ladera.com

## Zither bed treatment

Constructed like a wooden bench, the bed is strung like a musical instrument so a practitioner can 'play' the strings, creating both an earthy, natural sound as well as sending vibrations through the body of the person lying on the bed. The treatment (pictured left) can be offered to couples so they can send 'zithers' through their partner's body for total relaxation and sensory pleasure.

Hotel Wiesenhof, Tirol, £24.  
www.wiesenhof.at/en/wiesenhof

## 100 pillows massage

Perfect for both prenatal, menopausal and menstruating females. Lying in the foetal



Bottoms up: Soak up crushed grape extracts and essential oils in a wine barrel at Caudalie Vinotherapie Spa

position on top of 100 de luxe cotton pillows, guests are treated to a comforting 'effleurage' fingertip massage which works on the hips, abdomen, ankles, face and lower back. This is a soothing, rather than energising, technique to gently ease water retention and reduce lower back pain.

Waterfall Spa, Leeds, £90.  
Tel: 0800 731 1995,  
www.waterfallspa.co.uk



## Cryotherapy

Spend three minutes in the Cryochamber (pictured above), where liquid nitrogen is used to cool the body's external temperature, making the blood circulating within the only source of heat. The stimulation of sensory receptors with extreme temperatures has been proven to help patients stop feeling pain, no matter where it's located. Recently opened, it's recommended for rheumatoid joint inflammation, joint degeneration, inflammation, back pain, fibrositis, myalgia, sclerosis, osteoporosis, cellulite and depression.

AquaCity Resort, Slovakia, £15 p/session. For more information call Czech Travel on 01733 327 766, or visit www.aquacityresort.com



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