

Colorado Mountain Spas

This feature appeared in the *Denver Post* in Denver 1994 or January 1995. The specifics are out of date, but spa principles remain true.

Take Your New Year's Resolution to a Mountain Spa

Copyright © Claire Walter 1994.

By Claire Walter

The New Year's Resolutions are made. The diet starts today. So does the exercise program. And while we're at it, let's plan on being pampered. A massage. A facial. An herbal body wrap. A pedicure. Or all of the above.

Thanks to its popularity as a ski-vacation destination, Colorado's high country is blessed with sensational spas and fitness clubs, and many of them offer one-day programs to rejuvenate and refresh, or simply to jump-start the new routine for the new year. Reservations (and often appointments for specific treatments) are generally mandatory, and tipping about 15 percent of the charges is expected.

Colorado's most spectacular spa is at the Peaks at Telluride (1-800-789-2220). Its 42,000 square feet on three levels boast state-of-the-art fitness and beauty facilities, inherited from its original incarnation as the Doral Telluride Resort & Spa. The Alpine Indulgence (\$172) makes the most of the available options. It features unlimited one-day use of exercise equipment and fitness classes, a facial, a massage (a choice of wildflower aromatherapy, deep forest exfoliation, or alpine strawberry rejuvenation), and lastly an herbal wrap.

The Gentleman's Special (\$172) consists of a men's facial or head, scalp, neck, and shoulders treatment called *shirodhara*, a massage of choice, a "tribathlon" (steam room, sauna, and Roman bath), and an herbal wrap. The Spa Sampler (\$95), suitable for men and women, is a good choice for the couple of who wants to share the spa experience. It includes unlimited use of equipment and classes, an herbal wrap, and a massage or facial of choice plus the Peaks Purification Ritual. This may sound like a bizarre treatment from the film, "The Road to Wellville," but it is actually a lovely treatment based on native American practices. An herbal pack is put on your back and you sweat it in the spa's unique Kiva Room, a relaxing and rejuvenating experience.

The Peaks offers primer called "How to Spa Like a Pro" for those uninitiated in the spa ritual. It includes a glossary of spa terms, tells you how to match your needs and wants with specific spa offerings, and generally demystifies the experience, no matter which spa program you attend. You can get it free by calling the hotel's toll-free number.

Closer to home, the Lodge at Breckenridge (1-303-453-4274) has an intensively relaxing program starting with a light breakfast and ending five hours later with lunch. In between, there's a choice of physical activities (aerobics, work with a personal trainer, an energetic hike, or a snowshoe walk), followed by a body treatment (citrus salt glow, body scrub, clay treatment, or mud treatment), an herbal body wrap, a full massage, and finally a full facial. The \$220 cost includes use of the swimming pool, hot tub, sauna, or steam room.

Vail's Cascade Club (1-303-476-7400) offers a menu of one-day spa services. The Stress Buster (\$277) is the top-of-the-line program that includes a personalized facial, a Swedish massage, a pedicure, a manicure, and an aroma body mask, which feels as delicious as it sounds. The Afternoon Escape (\$136) is similar, but offers a choice of either the facial or the massage and does not include the body mask. The Custom Package (\$153) is a choice of any two treatments. For Men Only (\$230) is a guy version of a spa program, featuring Swedish massage, personalized skin care treatment, and a personalized weight training session. You can use the Cascade Club's extensive workout equipment, pool, sauna, and hot tub and take classes on any of the this package. A sprightly cafe serves spa cuisine for those who want to make a long day of it.

The nearby Vail Athletic Club (1-303-476-7960) offers a day of fitness and beauty (\$135, including lunch). The program begins with a morning aerobics class, or perhaps Pilates or yoga as an option. This is followed by a half-hour of relaxing in the steam room, sauna, or hot tub and a one-hour body treatment (salt glow, mineral-rich mud treatment, scalp massage, or foot reflexology). Finally, there's an essential oil sports massage and a facial before lunch at the Terra Bistro. You can also use the club's climbing wall or work with a personal fitness instructor (extra charge).

The Lodge at Cordillera (1-800-87-RELAX, 1-303-926-2200) on a hilltop above Edwards boasts a wonderful spa in a grandiose setting. A Day in Paradise (\$225) includes a selection of fitness classes (aerobics, step, slide, power tone, "aquathenics," and strength training), an aromatherapy massage, a hydrotherapy treatment, a half-hour sensory facial, and a light two-course lunch at the lodge's acclaimed Restaurant Picasso. An Afternoon Escape (\$125) starts with lunch and includes a full-body massage and a hydrotherapy treatment or a facial.

In the manner of an airline frequent flyer program, the lodge encourages you to become a spa habitué by providing a complimentary dinner for two at the Restaurant Picasso after four Days in Paradise or brunch following four Afternoon Escapes.

If the holidays have made too large a dent in your budget for a three-figure spa day, the best bargain in the state might be a visit to the newly renovated health club at Glenwood Springs' Hot Springs Lodge & Pool (1-800-537-SWIM, 1-303-945-6571). There's nothing in the way of indulgences like massages and facials, but you have access to the fitness club (Nautilus, free weights, racquetball, and aerobic equipment such as exercise bikes, treadmills, and stair-steppers) and classes (aerobics, ski conditioning, yoga, aquatone, and powertone). You can intersperse the exercise with unlimited use of hot tubs, saunas, steam rooms, and the mammoth Hot Springs Pool. The club opens at 6:45 a.m. on weekdays and 8:45 a.m. on weekends and closes daily at 10:00 p.m. The one-day admission is just \$11.50, which makes it an unbeatable bargain for getting into shape.

-end