



SPA LUXE

Are you in need of some real pampering? We know just the places. Here are six of our favourite luxury spas in the UK...

Gracious living

WHERE Four Seasons Hotel, Hampshire.
THE BLING The approach to the Four Seasons is along a single-track winding road through the historic Dogmersfield Park. Turn the final corner and the Grade-I heritage-listed Georgian manor house is revealed in all its glory. The interior is every bit as sumptuous, a fusion of marble and mahogany.

The Four Seasons is known for its exemplary service and our experience didn't disappoint. On arrival in our suite, we found Rice Krispies cakes for our daughter with her name spelled out in chocolate. Yes that's right, they even welcome children. The rooms – 22 of which are suites – are traditionally furnished with marble bathrooms and a signature deep-soaking bath.

The spa is situated in the 18th-century stable block, and is vast. As well as 15 treatment rooms, there's a conservatory-style indoor swimming pool, which connects to a heated outdoor vitality pool, a gym, a studio, which hosts fitness classes, plus an aromatic rainfall shower, sauna and sleep room. The spa uses

ESPA products and offers a wide range of treatments, including lots of new and unusual ones for spa regulars.

While you relax, your children will be entertained in a complimentary club for those aged three to 14. If you have any energy left, there are plenty of activities on site to enjoy, including cycling, fishing, jogging on mapped trails and riding at the Four Seasons' own equestrian centre. There are two restaurants in the hotel, Café Santé



in the spa serves light choices including salads and sushi, while the main restaurant, Seasons, is for formal French dining. Don't miss the beef and lamb, both of which are reared on the estate.

BEST KEPT SECRET If your budget isn't up to the full Four Seasons experience, you could book into the day spa. For just £139 you will get a day pass to all the facilities, four treatments and lunch.

SIGNATURE TREATMENT Using herbs picked daily from the spa's own herb garden, the Soothing Chamomile and Sage Massage, £85 for 55 mins, uses aromatherapy and flowing massage movements to help release tension.

THE DETAILS Standard room rates start at £280 B&B. For more information, call 01252 853000 or visit www.fourseasons.com/hampshire.

READER OFFER When you book either of the Day Spa packages, and quote "Zest Offer" at time of booking, you will receive an additional complimentary 45-minute manicure. Valid 31 July to 31 August 2008.*

Sanctuary by the sea

WHERE The St Moritz Hotel, Cornwall.
THE BLING A bright and breezy, art deco-inspired collection of apartments, rooms and villas dotted around a central reception, the St Moritz is one of Cornwall's freshest and friendliest hotels, with a vibe that manages to be luxuriously attentive and airy and informal all at the same time. The only complaint? There's way too much to do in a single weekend.

The nearest beach (so quiet it's as good as private) is a ten-minute walk down a sloping path, so even going for a paddle requires a bit of puff. If your workout needs a kick-start, the hotel's personal trainers (from £20 an hour) are inspiring and full of user-friendly tips – I picked up a brand-new, at-home routine and was taught how to stretch out a persistently-cricked neck. And when I let slip a secret desire to learn to surf, they called up a surf school (the beginner-friendly Animal Surf Academy at Wavehunters UK, a 15-minute walk away on Polzeath beach) who squeezed me in for a lesson at the last minute (from £25 for 2½ hours, including equipment; www.wavehunters.co.uk). After two hours of goading, coaxing and teasing, getting just about upright up on the board was the highlight of the trip. The

in-house restaurant specialises in local produce, so alongside Cornish crab (served with a hearty slice of granary toast), you'll also find battered pollock (a sustainable alternative to cod), creamy Cornish blue cheese, and scallops served with samphire – a spindly and delicious cliff-grown green also known as sea asparagus. Breakfasts range from a help-yourself vat of fresh fruit salad with healthy, seedy cereals to bucks fizz-fuelled Sunday brunches.

BEST KEPT SECRET The wonderful beds! The Hypnos mattress was seriously the softest, squashiest and most dreamily comfortable I've ever slept on.

SIGNATURE TREATMENT The Sun & Sea Treatment, £95, in one of the candle-lit, wood-paneled rooms of the Cowshed Spa, comprises two hours of body exfoliation, massage and a detoxifying wrap.

THE DETAILS Standard room rates in September start at £155. For more information, call 01208 862242 or visit www.stmoritzhotel.co.uk.

READER OFFER Get two nights for the price of one at the St Moritz (based on hotel retail rates) plus one complimentary bottle of Champagne at the bar. The offer is based on two people sharing and runs until the end of September 2008.*



travel



Relaxing refuge

WHERE Cowley Manor, Gloucestershire.
THE BLING As you pull up in front of the Grade-II listed house, you'd be forgiven for expecting a similarly formal interior, but you won't find any pomp or tweed here, it has a modern and relaxed feel.

Rooms vary in size from comfortable doubles to luxury suites with sumptuous four-poster beds and balconies. But the pièce de résistance has to be the fantastic bathrooms; ours had blue glass walls, a stand-alone bath, massive shower and views across the lake (even from the loo!).

In a bid not to clash with the traditional outdoor architecture, the amazing C-Side spa with its indoor and outdoor heated pools, gym, sauna, steam room and therapy rooms, is nestled down in the garden, almost like a luxury bunker.

At Cowley, the emphasis really is on rest and relaxation but, once you've spent an afternoon pampering, there are plenty of opportunities to work up a sweat in the gym or the 55 acres of surrounding countryside (so don't forget your trainers).

The hotel restaurant, set in the candle-lit oak dining room, feels relaxed and serves plenty of fresh fish and locally sourced meat and organic produce.

BEST KEPT SECRET Guests planning a party or celebration can hire the whole place for 60 people.

SIGNATURE TREATMENT Cloud 9, £107, is a 90-minute rebalancing all-over body massage, combining reflexology, aromatherapy, acupressure and chi-balancing to leave you feeling relaxed and revitalised from head to toe.

THE DETAILS Standard room rates start at £245 B&B per night. For more information, call 01242 870900 or visit www.cowleymanor.com.

READER OFFER The special Stay & Spa package includes a one-night mid-week stay for two, one treatment each (one free) plus a two-course lunch for £395 per room per night. Valid until 23 December 2008 (excl public and school holidays)*. -4

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HOTEL
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ST MORITZ