

Inside Information

Healing Waters Run Deep

While some Americans may still doubt the efficacy of natural remedies, Europeans have long turned to spas to alleviate a variety of ailments. On your next trip overseas, discover what it's like to immerse yourself in the healthful treatments offered at these European watering holes:

Austria A two-hour drive from Vienna, the ultra-modern Rogner-Bad Blumau spa makes the most of its thermal waters. A large swimming pool features man-made waves and whirlpools. Finnish and Swedish saunas, Turkish steam baths, and an aromatherapy grotto and beauty treatment tower also relax visitors.

Iceland In a shallow natural lava basin, the warm, milky, mineral-rich waters of the Blue Lagoon spa outside Reykjavik leech stress and ease skin ailments.

Ireland The Lodge and Spa at Inchydoney Island in West Cork features a thalassotherapy center where heated sea water is used in several treatments. Arthritis sufferers and others maintain that health and vitality improve from a visit.

Switzerland In the Rhine Valley town of Bad Ragaz, containing Europe's largest Akrato (odorless) hot springs, bathers can soak in indoor and outdoor pools filled with the healing waters of Tamina Thermal Springs. Just south in the Tamina Gorge is Switzerland's oldest baroque spa, the Old Bad Pfäfers.

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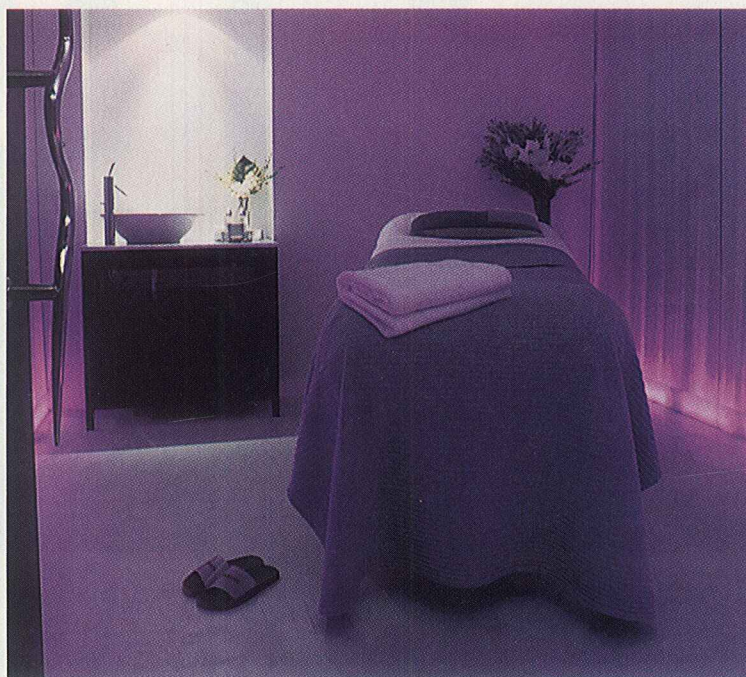
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you're building one; if you do have one, you're expanding it." Architectural designs are also undergoing stylish transformations. New World Design Builders has reimagined the widely touted **Maximus Soho** spa in Manhattan's Tribeca. A two-story wall of falling water greets patrons at the spa's entrance and a mood-enhancing lighting system in which rooms change from tranquil to invigorating hues every few seconds prep clients for some of the best massages in Gotham.

Spas have also become an integral part of the design of new hotels, and many venerable institutions have been adding spa facilities. **The Ritz-Carlton** has been a leader in advancing the concept of in-hotel spas. Currently, it has thirteen spas in locales stretching from New Orleans and The Cayman Islands to Qatar on the Arabian Gulf. Within the next year nine more will open, and another dozen are currently under development.



courtesy of Maximus Soho

MOOD INDIGO

Kudos continue to pour in for Maximus Soho's "water journey" treatment that scrubs, steams, and moisturizes.

The new spas are being modeled after the chain's flagship spa at The Ritz-Carlton, Naples, on Florida's southwest coast. Opened in April 2000, the 51,000-square-foot salon is set in a Mediterranean-style mansion with a stunning view of the Gulf of Mexico. Daily yoga and Pilates classes are so popular that guests must make advance reservations. *Sanitas per aqua* ("health through water") facilities, from mineral baths to jacuzzis, are featured in all Ritz-Carlton spas.

Just outside Atlanta, treatments at the new The Ritz-Carlton Lodge, Reynolds Plantation are based on the Muskogee Creek Indians' reverence for the seasons, the elements, and all of the herbs, fruits, and flowers they yield. John Winterhawk, a spiritual leader of the Muskogee Creek tribe, participated in the development of authentic Indian treatments and products that are used exclusively at the resort. The spa's "wellness center" offers Bio-Terrain Analysis, a preventive-medicine assessment that measures various toxicity levels in the body.

The Waldorf-Astoria in midtown Manhattan will gladly line up pampering treatments either in the privacy of one's own room or at nearby