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TAKE FIVE SPAS

Whether it's for pampering or a spiritual pick-me-up, there's a perfect retreat to melt life's stresses away *BY SUZANNE DUCKETT*



BEST FOR SPIRITUALITY *Fusion Maia Resort, Da Nang, Vietnam*

Many spiritual journeys start with a physical one, and along the winding roads to Fusion Maia on Vietnam's east coast you'll have plenty of time to contemplate life among green-carpeted mountains, bamboo fields and powdery white-sand beaches. Your first "too good to be true" moment comes when you're granted unlimited access to more than 50 wellness specialists. Even by luxury resort standards, the inclusive policy on body wraps, massages and facials plus yoga, t'ai chi and meditation classes means the only pressure you'll feel is how to fit all the treatments into your schedule.

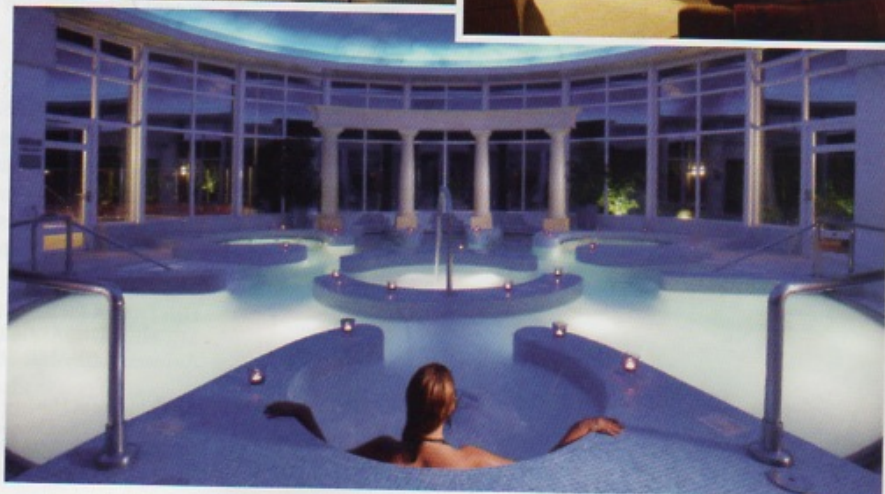
For a 360-degree mind/body/spirit experience, the seven-day Natural Living Program is ideal. Having availed yourself of a personalised nutrition regime, physical activity and aromatherapy to aid your mental, emotional and physical detox, along with workshops in massage, yoga, meditation and t'ai chi, you'll leave feeling cleansed and relaxed beyond your wildest dreams.

Each villa has a plunge pool, and the spa houses steam rooms, a sauna, a large pool and a waterfall. But do brave the nearby Ba Na mountain cable car ride. At 1,500 metres high, it's another journey to put your life, not just the coastline, into perspective.

BEST FOR EMOTIONS *Chewton Glen, Hampshire, England*

Until a few years ago, this quintessentially English country house hotel was more renowned for cream teas and croquet on the lawn. But in 2013, its comprehensive spa is a winner, not just with guests, but with industry experts too, having swiped a host of awards. While accolades for its five-star facilities – huge ozone pool, labyrinth of saunas, steam rooms, hydrotherapy pools and excellent treatments – are graciously received, the alternative treatments are also attracting spa seekers who want a more cerebral type of therapy.

The 1- or 4-Day Emotional Detox Retreats devised and hosted by organic spa entrepreneur Denise Leicester were introduced last year, and will feature on the spa menu again (10th–13th March is the next one). Aimed at addressing emotional tension, the workshops focus on undoing internal issues such as jealousy and negativity. This is achieved with a blend of physical and mental exercises including Nordic walking, yoga, meditation and Emotional Freedom Technique. Add to this a stay in a Treehouse Suite with the surround-sound of rustling leaves and birdsong, and your wellbeing will literally be taken to new heights.



BEST FOR PAMPERING

La Mamounia Spa, Marrakech, Morocco

Like a grand palace in *Arabian Nights*, this beautiful spa spans 2,500 square metres. There are myriad indoor and outdoor pools, candlelit chambers, peaceful inner courtyards, giant mosaic Jacuzzis, marble fountains and velvet banquettes to drape yourself over.

For professional help transforming dry, dull-looking skin into something fresher, The Royal Hammam treatment alone is worth the trip. This Moroccan version of a Turkish bath will buff you to within an inch of your life with its two hours of steam cleaning and preening. After a visit to the sauna to open your pores and relax your muscles, you are showered, then given a serious top-to-toe soaping and an intense body scrub. A nourishing mud body mask and soothing massage complete this positively purifying treatment, which gives skin and spirit a new lease of life.

If you're hitting the souks for some retail therapy, do so before your spa time; the excitement of their somewhat frenzied milieu may undo your precious relaxation. Another must-have is a La Mamounia candle that smells of delicate cedar wood, so you can fire up some of the spa's legendary atmosphere at home.



BEST FOR ANTI-AGEING

Longevity Wellness Resort, Algarve, Portugal

The commitment to eternal youth at the Longevity Wellness Resort ranges from glow-inducing Elemis facials to re-aligning osteopathy, and blood drawn at dawn then sent to a lab in Lisbon for evaluation. Add to this the partnership with La Clinique de Paris (founded 30 years ago by renowned age-management specialist Dr Claude Chauchard) and a medical wing operated by Chauchard's doctors, and you can rest assured that Longevity takes anti-ageing seriously.

The range of diagnostic treatments is worth taking full advantage of, especially the Preventive Medicine Consultation that uses both hi-tech and traditional medical detective work to measure body fat, muscle, body mass index, basal metabolic rate and fat distribution in the body. This, they claim, will eke out the imbalances and risk factors that lead to accelerated ageing.

The resort feels more like a chic hotel than a sober health clinic. The cuisine consists of five nutritious meals a day, though it would be rude not to forfeit one healthy meal for some of the local piri-piri chicken. In fact, getting out and about is positively encouraged, as the surrounding hills are a botanical garden rich with cork and pine trees and the famously super-clean air. ■

Suzanne Duckett is Associate Spa Editor of Tatler's Spa Guide

BEST FOR YOGA

Trasierra, Seville, Spain

The beauty of this peaceful family-run estate nestled in an unspoilt corner of Andalusia is more about what it *doesn't* have than what it does. No fitness classes, no overwhelming spa to busy yourself in, no pushy concierge convincing you to dine at umpteen restaurants, and no turn-down service. The simple yet profound offerings make it feel more like an old friend's house where you can pitch up and relax. *The Independent* summed it up perfectly as "the hotel for people who don't like hotels" Which is why the addition of excellent yoga and healing workshops makes it an ideal rustic break for beginner and veteran yogis alike. Resident yoga guru Amber Scott and London-based healer Georgia Coleridge are a dynamic duo whose workshops are designed to reboot your energy levels and stretch your mind as well as your body (the next one is 16th–20th May).

Hours of the best yoga money can buy help release tension and blockages in the body, while Coleridge teaches practical techniques to help handle life's daily stresses. Another thing they don't have at Trasierra is a calorie-counted menu that looks better on paper than on the plate. Instead there's delicious, home-cooked seasonal food to power you through your sun salutations and the many beautiful walks in the surrounding hills.

