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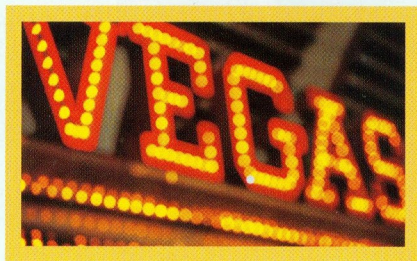
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8 DELICIOUSLY
DECADENT
(AND LEGAL)
THINGS TO DO
IN VEGAS

BY SHARI MYCEK



Vegas Spas



Las Vegas, with its flashing red-blue-pink neon lights, leggy show girls and round-the-clock casinos, has never been a predictable city. From its founding as a dusty railroad town to its Bugsy Siegel/Howard Hughes heyday of excess, illicit desire and refuge from the law, this desert city has constantly reinvented itself. Just when its allure seems on the verge of fading, the old implodes and a second act arises—be it a new star chef, 4,000-room hotel or mini Eiffel Tower.

Sin City's latest incarnation comes in the form of tranquility. Along the 12-or-so-mile Strip, tucked behind dancing fountains and erupting volcanoes, sophisticated and tastefully appointed spas are taking hold—offering a welcome haven from the manmade madness, and an exciting tapestry of global spa rituals.

Every spa offers the basics: massage, facial wraps, special treatments for mind and body. But each spa also has something special, whether it's a technique or a treatment derived from the ancients or developed in the age of technology. Here are some of most intriguing, sensual, self-indulgent (yet still legal) things you can get into on The Strip.

Wynn Spa Las Vegas

THE TREATMENT: RED FLOWER JAPAN BODY RITUAL

Why We Love It: The spa at Steve Wynn's \$2.7 billion hotel-casino extravaganza, which opened in April 2005, is the only one in Las Vegas (and one of only three in the U.S.) to offer Red Flower Japan, a luxurious five-step ritual inspired by Japan's ancient bathing culture. Red Flower creator Yael Alkalay, former creative director for Shiseido, spent five years in Tokyo where "every Sunday without fail" she visited an onsen (hot spring) and became intrigued with the different steps taken in the weekly bathing ritual (washing, scrubbing and scenting of the body) and the sensually fragrant ingredients used (cherry blossoms and wild plums).

At Wynn Spa, the immersion into the Japanese culture begins immediately when you exit the elevator and follow the long bamboo-lined hallway to the spa. Once washed in yuzu fruit and mimosa flowers, you're scrubbed with bamboo and gingergrass, drizzled with warm cherry blossoms and rice bran, misted with cool plum, and then massaged with a combination of Japanese

shiatsu and kenbiki (horizontal rocking). Alkalay's newest ritual, Red Flower Hammam, honoring Turkey's ancient steam-bath culture, debuts at Wynn Spa this summer. Open to hotel guests only.

Spa Bellagio

THE TREATMENT: TROPICAL ENZYME ESCAPE

Why We Love It: Only in Vegas will you find this sumptuous mango, pineapple and papaya face and body treatment by Pevonia. Sylvie Hennessy, founder of the botanical skincare line, created the treatment exclusively for Spa Bellagio, spending two full years perfecting the formula (which includes fruit enzymes, Vitamin E and pure marine collagen), and several months onsite training staff.

While the entire treatment team at this redesigned and ultra-Zen spa is superb, book your session with lead aesthetician Julia Shintaku, who spent time in Saint-Malo, France, studying the effects of seaweed (and sea water) on the skin. After a body exfoliation with rice powder, Shintaku applies the secret mango-pineapple-papaya concoction to your entire body, wraps you up tightly in a foil-like sheet (to enhance absorption) and then goes to work on your face. Her magic includes adding a 100 percent pure-marine, freeze-dried collagen masque to the usual cleanse-steam-extraction drill. Open to hotel guests only.

Bathhouse Spa, The Hotel at Mandalay Bay

THE TREATMENT: WATER CIRCUIT

Why We Love It: Spas are both sybaritic and contemplative, and this sleek, glass-stone-and-water décor works for both purposes. Modeled after the ancient Roman ideal of caring for the body and the mind in the same time and place, the Bathhouse "reveals itself in small moments," says Clarissa Richardson, one of the lead designers of the spa.

While the treatment menu is top-notch (we love the customized "Scents of You" massage), we love even more the spa's evocative water chamber (men's and women's areas are separate). Pass through a suede-lined hallway into a lobby of white-onyx and slate, and then into your own water fantasia—hidden hot-and-cold plunge pools, high-design steam rooms and saunas, and narrow

rooms with private, 8-foot tubs laced with lemon and rosewood oils. Perfect before spa treatments or as its own stand-alone experience. Open to the public.

MGM Grand Spa

THE TREATMENT: THE DREAMING RITUAL

Why We Love It: The origins of this dreamy, two-hour ritual rest far from the glitz-and-glam of Vegas, deep in the Australian Outback. Aussie Gayle Heron, founder of the Li'Tya cosmetic line, was the first outsider to tap the knowledge of Aboriginal elders about their ancient massage techniques and use of medicinal plants like lilly pilly, munthari berry and wattleseed.

Today, Heron's Aboriginal-inspired spa products and treatment rituals (developed with the blessing of tribal elders) are available in only a few select spas worldwide. This interpretation—set to bush music—begins with a footbath in peppercorn and a traditional Aboriginal smoking ceremony “to ground the body and close out the rest of the world.” Pure Australian Mapi mud is applied to both body and scalp, then after rinsing is followed by an hour-long, deeply relaxing Kodo massage, a combination of smooth, circular motions with pressure-point therapy. Open to the public.

Canyon Ranch SpaClub, Venetian Resort-Hotel-Casino

THE TREATMENT: 18 CARATS

Why We Love It: As expected, all the Canyon Ranch neo-classics are here: the extensive spa services; massive fitness regimen (including a 40-foot climbing wall); yoga and pilates classes; nutritional and lifestyle consultations; free wellness lectures; and, of course, healthy cuisine.

But, since it's Las Vegas, there's a little added bling, too. “We brought the 18 Carat treatment to SpaClub because of the uniqueness, decadence and therapeutic benefit of gold,” says spa director Blake Feeney. “Gold is incredibly remineralizing, moisturizing and high in antioxidants.”

The bedazzling begins with a body scrub in pure-gold minerals (by Phytomer), followed by a soak in the spa's exclusive “King's Bath,” a handcrafted, bronze tub laced with rose petals and surrounded by burning candles. With skin softened and glowing, it's on to the massage table for an hour-long bliss-out with shimmering oil and light dusting of (you guessed it) gold powder.

Open to the public.

Four Seasons Spa

THE TREATMENT: JAMU

Why We Love It: Smaller and more intimate than its Strip spa companions (with just 16 treatment rooms), this soulful spa features ancient Balinese and Javanese rituals. The JAMU menu, created by American Kim Collier after living “eight glorious years

in Bali,” is one of the most extensive found outside Indonesia.

All of the traditional Javanese rituals, once exclusive to 17th-century Javanese royalty, are here: Lulur, a ritual that softens and sweetens skin, once used to prepare brides for their wedding day; and the Bali Boreh, a spicy body masque of cloves and ginger used by fishermen to relieve joint aches. The attention to detail at this spa is not to be missed. Kuan Yin, goddess of compassion, greets you upon arrival, while scattered rose petals guide you during your spa journey—from massage bed to bath. Open to hotel guests only.

Elemis Spa, Aladdin Resort and Casino

TREATMENT: EXOTIC SENSORY WRAP

Why We Love It: Although the Aladdin will soon transform from flying carpet to Planet Hollywood (the renovation is currently underway), this Moroccan-inspired spa will remain as is: sensual, exotic and mystical, indulging all the senses.

When Elemis opened this hotel-based day spa (its first in the U.S.), the goal was to create a Moroccan vibe—a sanctuary where spa treatments were celebrated as rituals; where cobalt blues and tangerine oranges blended into saffrons and cinnamons; and where mint tea was served while sitting on cushy pillows. The spa menu goes beyond Morocco, however, to include 24 rituals from 10 ancient African, Asian and Middle Eastern cultures.

While difficult to choose, we finally decided upon a favorite: the two-hour exotic sensory wrap, which begins with a coconut body scrub and drizzling of warm milk as you cocoon into a sensory-float bed (filled with even warmer water). While you'll toy with never surfacing, the spa's signature Wellbeing Massage that follows, combining exotic warm oils and 10 massage styles, is worth it. Open to the public.

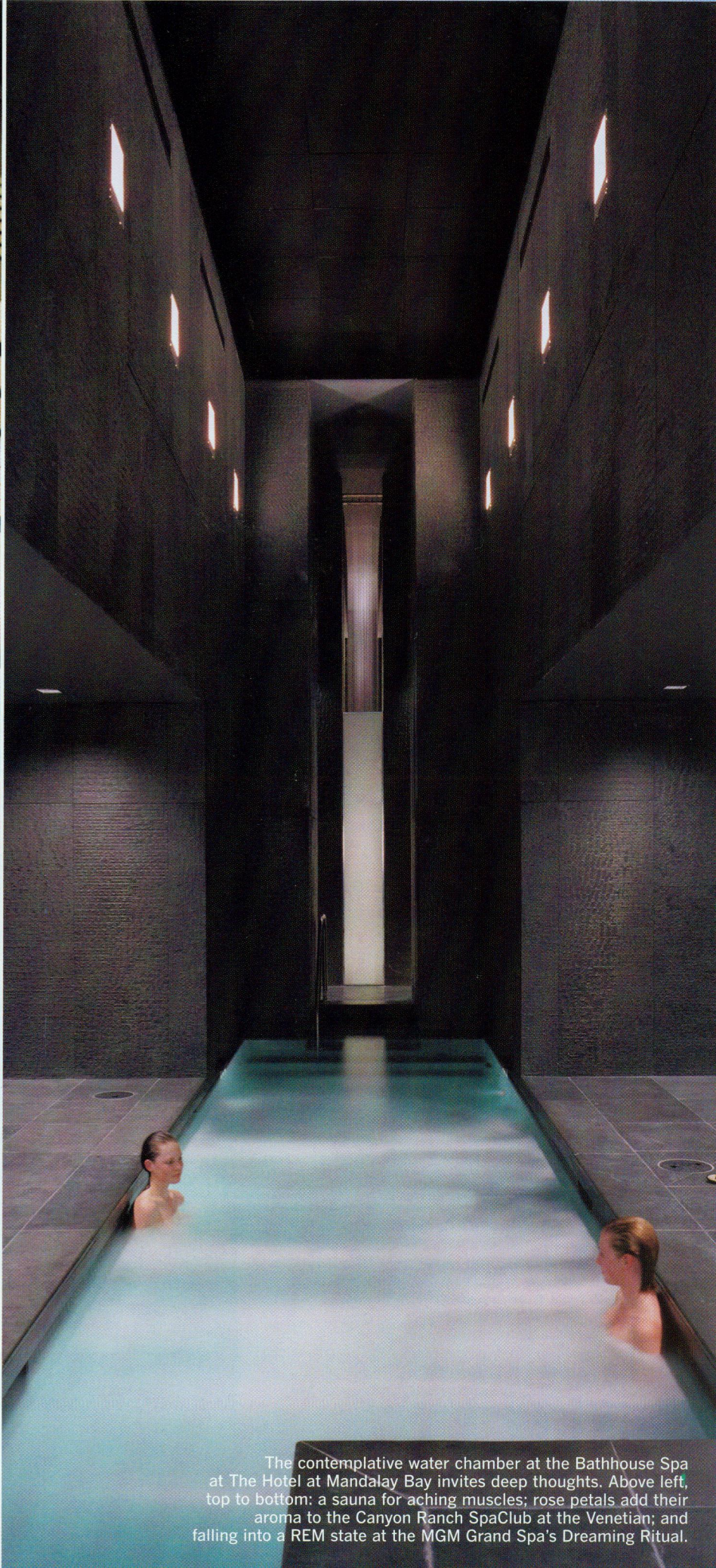
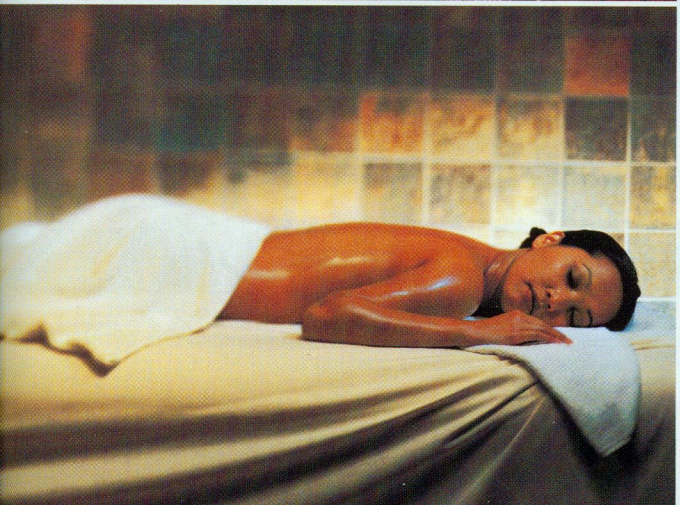
Ritz-Carlton, Lake Las Vegas Spa

THE TREATMENT: TRANQUILITY

Why We Love It: This Tuscan-villa-inspired spa isn't on the Strip. In fact, it's about 17 miles from downtown at Lake Las Vegas Resort. But after days of neon-flashing sensory overload, city spa-goers can find solace in this real desert oasis, fringed with green grass and palms.

While luxurious in every way, the focus here is on simplicity. “We work hard to remind guests of the simple things—like walking up a mountain and viewing the awesome sight of desert mountains as far as the eye can see, or watching a sunset that paints the sky in hues of red and purple, or looking through a telescope at the rings of Saturn,” says spa director Victoria Gulickson. “These are the things no amount of money or imagination can truly recreate.”

Spa ingredients and experiences are just as natural—massages can be done outdoors in a private garden by a waterfall, while treatment ingredients include powder from the desert mesquite tree and local red clay. Open to the public.



The contemplative water chamber at the Bathhouse Spa at The Hotel at Mandalay Bay invites deep thoughts. Above left, top to bottom: a sauna for aching muscles; rose petals add their aroma to the Canyon Ranch SpaClub at the Venetian; and falling into a REM state at the MGM Grand Spa's Dreaming Ritual.