

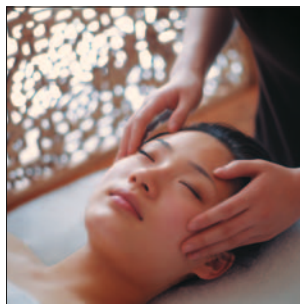
Relaxation goes beyond the treatment
rooms at Willow Stream Spa

PHOTO BY KK LAW



SPA DAYS

Three luxurious local spots offer the max in
relax BY SHERI RADFORD + JILL VON SPRECKEN



A soothing facial (above) and the relaxation lounge (L) at Chi, The Spa. Gommage (below) and the welcoming entrance (below L) at Miraj Hammam Spa



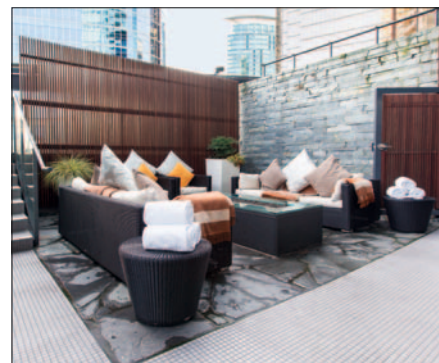
CHI, THE SPA

British Columbia is known for its gorgeous scenery, mild climate, eco-minded residents—and great seaweed. Chi, The Spa (page 22) uses protein-rich local seaweed to help detoxify and rejuvenate the skin in several of its massages, wraps and facials, including the Sea Therapy Facial—complete with hot- and cool-stone therapy and a neck, hand and foot massage, which is every bit as wonderful as it sounds—and the West Coast Wrap, which firms and tones while improving skin texture. Spa-goers seeking more of an East-meets-West vibe opt instead for treatments inspired by wushu martial arts. Wushu Toxin Release involves a wushu stretching session using bamboo, then warm bamboo rolling followed by a firm massage, while in the Wushu Stress Relief treatment, wushu stretching and guided deep breathing are followed by a tai chi massage. Other pampering options abound at the spa, from manicures, pedicures and skin polishes to mud wraps, aromatic baths and acupressure, all with the intention of encouraging the chi to flow freely within the

body. And with a fireplace, bath, shower, relaxation lounge and changing area contained within each suite, the spa ensures complete and utter relaxation for all. Who could ask for anything more from a spa day?—SR

MIRAJ HAMMAM SPA

Leave your troubles behind as you enter sweet-smelling Miraj Hammam Spa (page 22), which feels like travelling to another country, possibly another century. Also leave behind any traces of Western self-consciousness, because this East-meets-West destination is not for the shy. First step is the hammam, which involves relaxing naked in a steam-filled room. For 15 minutes, all you have to do is sip cool water and let your mind wander—while you sweat profusely. You can almost feel the toxins exiting your body at the same time as your mind's worries slip away. Next is the gommage: an aesthetician uses black Moroccan soap to scrub your body from head to toe, front and back, while you lie naked on Jerusalem gold marble, wondering if this is what ancient roy-



PHOTOS BY KK LAW



A cozy fireplace (above L), secluded seating area (L) and one of two jacuzzis with views (above) on Willow Stream Spa's expansive outdoor terrace

alty experienced every day. The vigorous exfoliation stimulates the senses and leaves skin feeling soft and supple. After all this cleansing and relaxing, it's the perfect time for an Orientale massage or aromatherapy facial, which can be added on (and are definitely recommended). Finally, don a robe and enter the Sultana Lounge, with its luxurious velvet beds covered in silk cushions. There you can relax some more while sipping traditional Middle Eastern tea and nibbling sweet cake. After being pampered so thoroughly, you might never want to leave Miraj and step back into the world outside.—SR

WILLOW STREAM SPA

Serenity can be found at Willow Stream Spa's (page 22) lofty locale, five floors above the hustle and bustle of the city's downtown core. Decked out in plenty of marble and warm wood—a nod to the coastal rainforest setting—this spa offers a dose of Zen with postcard-worthy water views. The airy and bright space offers three lounges (men, women and couples) for sipping pineapple-infused water, snacking on

fruit and nuts, and relaxing fireside in fluffy robes before, between or after treatments. Choosing from the array of massages, facials, body scrubs and wraps is simplified through treatment categories: relieve, restore or results. Simply select the type based on the desired result. A signature “restorative” pick, the Energy Deep Cleanse facial combines K-Lift light therapy technology with the know-how of the therapist to combat aging and to plump up skin. Sightseers with tired gams opt for the Van Active Feet, which targets lower legs and feet with a soak, warm exfoliation and cooling massage. Ingredients such as maple butter and Bio-Maple compound give treatments such as the Coastal Mountain Body Wrap and Pacific Rim Body Buffer a Canadian twist. Afterwards, bask in the post-treatment glow on the terrace, where jacuzzis, an infrared sauna and meditation pods complete the experience. Back inside the change room, don't pass up the luxurious Hydrotherapy Experience Shower and its 20 showerheads. Trust us: the real world is still out there. But there's no better way to ignore it for awhile.—JVS 