



LET YOURSELF LIGHTUP ON THE MASSAGE TABLE, THEN FINISH YOUR SPA RETREAT WITH SOME REAL WATER ACTION—AS IN THE MINERAL-SALT-BOOSTED FLOTATION TANK AT GALIANO OCEANFRONT INN & SPA.

SPA'D ROTTEN

THREE SOAKER SPOTS TO MELT AWAY YOUR WOES BY SARAH ROWLAND

Flying somewhere exotic for a few days of pampering is great. But if you're not into starting your rejuvenation experience with jet lag (we all know cabin air is murder on the complexion), there are plenty of places close to home. Here are three destination spas worth checking out—only hours away from the hustle and bustle of your Vancouver life.



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GALIANO OCEANFRONT INN & SPA

If you want a quintessentially B.C. experience, book a Hemp-Glacial Clay Wrap (\$155, 75 minutes) at this spa. My care "provider" was Kerli. The woman is a pressure-point genius. Before she painted my body with the spa's signature detoxifying mix of organic hemp powder and glacial clay, she pressed down on my feet in a way that made my body tuck to jelly. I instantly lost all my motor skills—it was heaven.

Then it was time for my 90-minute Decadent & Deluxe Pedicure and Foot-Facial (\$100). Thanks to my pedicurist, Pam, not only do I have shiny happy feet, I also know the complete history of Galiano Island. (Hint: don't get onto the subject of logging.) I ended my spa experience by soaking in the Mediterranean-style Madrona Rotation Bath (\$60 per hour), which is chock full of stress-reducing mineral salts.

Now, it should be noted that a day at the spa is way more taxing on the body than one might think. I know, tell it to a Ukrainian coal miner. But it is—sweating out toxins builds a hunger like nothing else. Thankfully, this modest resort by the sea has one kick-ass kitchen. And if you're thirsty afterward, head to Grand Central Emporium (2740 Sturdies Bay Road) for a pint. This family-run pub/restaurant seems to have an endless supply of hot young surfer boys ready to serve you. And they say Hornby is the jewel of the Gulf Islands. Ha! For more info, visit www.galianoinn.com.

HARRISON HOT SPRINGS RESORT & SPA

They call it the stone massage. I call it the PMS buster. These heated rocks can go places hot-water bottles can only dream of. Every cramp (and I had many that day) was gently rubbed out of my aching body. During my 75-minute treatment (\$155), massage therapist extraordinaire Yolanda went places no woman—or man, for that

matter—has ever gone before and I didn't care one bit.

All I know is those greased-up, black volcanic stones have therapeutic properties that science has yet to measure. Which could explain all the octogenarians roaming the healing grounds. Note: If you want a rockin' getaway, Harrison Hot Springs Resort & Spa is not for you. But if you want a relaxing experience set amid the scenery of beautiful B.C., this is your place. And don't forget to soak in the soothing, all-you-can-swim mineral pools while you're there. When in Rome, after all. For more info, visit www.harrisonresort.com.

FOUR SEASONS RESORT WHISTLER

And God created Jackie. This woman is truly gifted. But first, I must comment on the mind-blowing facility—no wonder it's considered one of the best spas in the world. You need a compass just to navigate your way through the five-star changing rooms. And don't even get me started on the food at Fifty Two 80 Bistro—it was the best meal I've had since...well, ever.

Admittedly, I was a little intimidated when I entered the spa compound. For starters, an unreasonably beautiful Aussie named Jon greeted me. And there was something very futuristic about that lobby, like it was the year 2020 and all the ugly people had been weeded out. But once Jackie had me in her clutches, my unease turned to bliss. I only came to once or twice—and that was only because I was dangerously close to drooling. She started my 90-minute See-to-sky massage (\$225) by exploding my back with a seaweed concoction. Then she went to work. Going way beyond duty, she ended my rubdown by showing me exercises I could do to mitigate the muscle damage caused by sitting in front of a computer all week. The massage may have lasted only 90 minutes, but the effects will stay with me a lifetime. For more info, visit www.fourseasons.com/whistler. ♦