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EVERY QUEST HAS A BEGINNING.



Spa Scenes
From left: The Thermal Sanctuary at the Mayflower; the entrance to the spa at the Boulders Resort, near Scottsdale; a couples treatment room in a spa villa at L.A.'s InterContinental hotel.

NEW YORK CITY Cornelia Day Resort This 22,000-square-foot self-proclaimed “day resort” on Manhattan’s Fifth Avenue is stocked with decadent touches, like cashmere throws and butlers serving champagne in the relaxation room; a mini-boutique displays designer bags and accessories alongside skin-care products. But it’s the Signature Facial that is truly deluxe. Instead of one aesthetician, clients get two—the first tends to your face, while the second gives you a massage. *663 Fifth Ave.; 212/871-3050; cornelia.com; \$195.*

SUNNY ISLES, FLORIDA Espa at Acqualina Overlooking the ocean, this is the United States’ first stand-alone outpost from Espa. Look for an authentic experience in a resolutely modern environment. Services like the Vata Comforter—a scrub, massage, and wrap using muds, oils, and spices—draw on a range of Asian traditions (ayurveda, in this case). *17875 Collins Ave.; 305/918-6844; acqualina.com; \$295.*

NEW ORLEANS Belladonna Day Spa When it reopened directly following Katrina, Belladonna served as a community gathering place. It’s still a welcoming haunt, thanks to its worldly boutique and indulgent treatments such as the Thai Foot Ritual, an upgraded pedicure that includes traditional Thai stretches. *2900 Magazine St.; 504/891-4393; belladonnadayspa.com; \$95.*

AUSTIN Lake Austin Spa Resort It is Texas-chic at Austin’s top spa: mismatched wing chairs in the lounge; massage tables covered with gingham throws. To feel especially pampered, book the Texas Starry Night, done after dark in one of the outdoor treatment areas. The combined effect of the lavender-oil massage, twinkling stars, and air tinged with the scent of Texas wildflowers will lull any insomniac to sleep. *1705 S. Quinlan Rd.; 512/372-7300; lakeaustin.com; \$140.*

CAREFREE, ARIZONA Boulders Resort & Golden Door A compound of adobe buildings that seems to spring from the desert landscape, the Golden Door goes out of its way to put guests at ease. Case in point: Needle & the Stone, a blend of acupuncture and hot-stone massage, conducted by a therapist certified in both arts. *34631 N. Tom Darlington Dr.; 480/488-9009; goldendoorspas.com; \$200.*

LAS VEGAS Qua Baths & Spa One of the latest spas to open in Sin City, this water-themed spot differs from its other Strip counterparts through unusual offerings like Sleep Health; the massage followed by a hypnotherapy session is a welcome relief in a city known for encouraging late nights. *Caesar’s Palace, 3570 Las Vegas Blvd. S.; 866/782-0655; quabathsandspa.com; \$280.*

LOS ANGELES InterContinental Century City Forget standard treatment rooms. Services at Los Angeles’s InterContinental are performed in private villas with flat-screen TV’s and meditation gardens. During the Mediterranean Olive Scrub Massage—an exfoliation with crushed olive seeds and an olive-oil massage—guests are given time in the room’s infinity-edge Kohler tub, making it easy to soak it all in. *2151 Ave. of the Stars; 310/552-0425; intercontinentallosangeles.com; \$190.*

SEATTLE Ummelina International Day Spa Most treatments at downtown’s Ummelina begin with a foot soak and tea ceremony. Seaweed Pedicures are performed in private rooms where you are literally tucked into a plush heated bed. You’ll doze off while your toes are filed, buffed, and polished. *1525 Fourth Ave.; 206/624-1370; ummelina.com; \$80. +*

REPORTED BY *Christine Ajudua, Alice Gordon, Stirling Kelso, Clark Mitchell, John Newton, Nina Willdorf, and Elizabeth Woodson.*

TOP, FROM LEFT: WHITNEY LAWSON; COURTESY OF THE BOULDERS RESORT AND GOLDEN DOOR SPA; COURTESY OF THE INTERCONTINENTAL LOS ANGELES CENTURY CITY