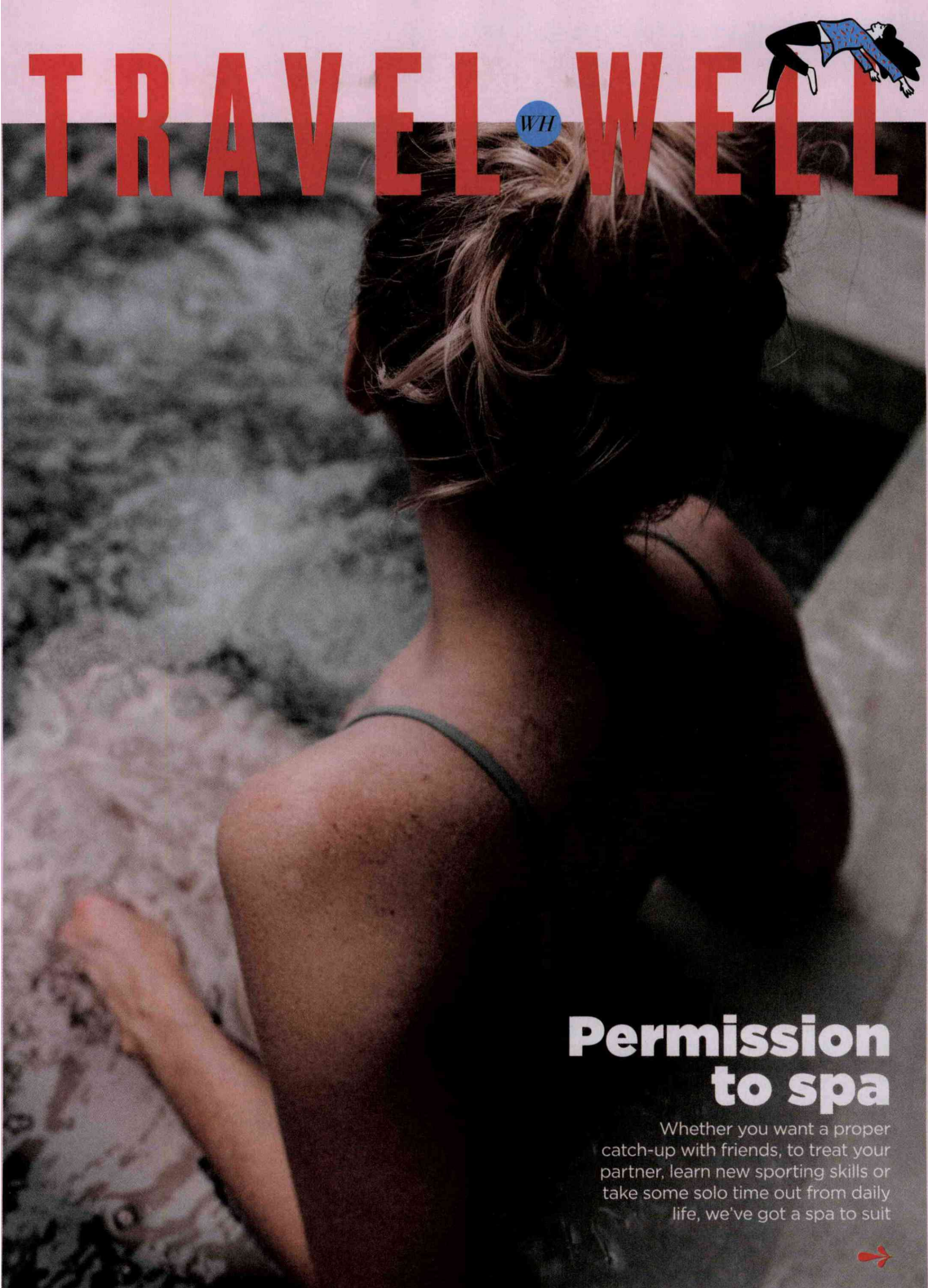


Source: Women's Health {Main}  
Edition:  
Country: UK  
Date: Tuesday 1, March 2022  
Page: 119,120,12  
Area: 3569 sq. cm  
Circulation: 128239 Monthly  
Ad data: page rate £0.00, scc rate £0.00  
Phone: 020 7339 4400  
Keyword: Jersey




# TRAVEL WELL

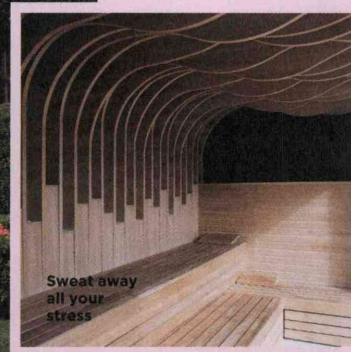
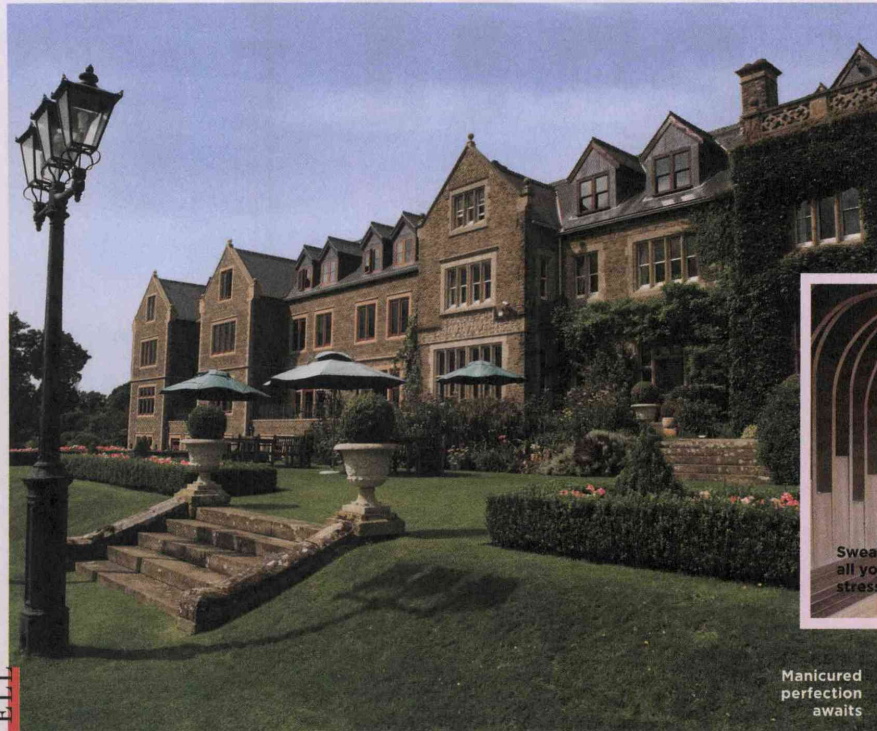
WH

## Permission to spa

Whether you want a proper catch-up with friends, to treat your partner, learn new sporting skills or take some solo time out from daily life, we've got a spa to suit







Sweat away  
all your  
stress

Manicured  
perfection  
awaits

TRAVEL WELL

## 01 The Spa at South Lodge, West Sussex

**Maddy Alford,**  
WH shopping editor

**The vibe** A quietly luxurious wellness centre, nestled in the green hills of the South Downs. It's a spacious (but plenty cosy) countryside retreat, offering welcome rejuvenation for weary city professionals, couples and families. The spa's oak-clad building, complete with a meadow roof, has a modern yet organic feel to it, thanks to the terraced layout. Inside, you'll find salt steam rooms, spin classes, osteopathy tables and not one but three pools. Plus the most posh and pristine changing rooms I have ever seen (think big-screen TVs, Dyson hairdryers and plush couches). I happily spent a slow afternoon going round in circuits from the

natural outdoor plunge pool, to the heated bubbling hydrotherapy jets, to the bucket shower, to the jasmine-infused steam room and the sauna, and then back again. Top it off with a grounding plant-based meal at Botanica (or indulge in some steak and wine, like I did), and you'll sleep like a log.

**USP** The utterly peaceful setting and million-pound scenery is the big draw. Soak away the tension in an open-air heated hydrotherapy pool, while looking out over the endless rolling fields; the indoor heated pool has also capitalised on its setting, separated from the outdoors only by near-invisible floor-to-ceiling glass. Ergonomic wicker loungers with lovely plump cushions are scattered everywhere, so you can slow down, unplug and enjoy the picturesque surroundings – a crisp glass of rosé on Botanica's outdoor terrace doesn't go amiss come sunset, either.

**Top treatment**  
The Bespoke Facial, because you can't beat a classic. It's a heavenly hour spent in a dark, nature-themed treatment room while

birdsong plays quietly in the background and you lie on a deliciously heated

ergonomic bed. The therapist will deep cleanse, mask, tone and moisturise with precise hand movements, all helping to encourage lymphatic drainage and de-puff the skin. While your mask gets to work, enjoy an expert hand, scalp and foot massage – I was on the brink of nodding off. Can't resist picking up the calming botanical-scented products to bring your spa experience home with you? No, me neither.

**Insider tip** Take a good book and a mug of tea out to the rope swing egg chair. It hangs from a giant tree on the grounds and you'll feel both a sense of childlike smallness and 'own world' privacy as you sit in it.

**Go there** Spa breaks start from £669, (based on two guests sharing), which includes dinner, bed and breakfast at Botanica, one 60-minute treatment each and spa access (exclusive.co.uk/the-spa-at-south-lodge).





02

## Wave Garden Spa, Wales

Florence Ogram, WH designer

**The vibe** Outdoor thrill, indoor chill. You can't help but lose track of time at this glorious getaway with mountainous views of the Conwy Valley in North Wales. It's the perfect spot to enjoy outdoor activities, such as water sports and local trail walks, and then reap the rewards afterwards in the spa with its luxury ritual treatments and wonderful thermal experiences. At the end of the day, having built up an appetite, you can expect a delicious meal in the hotel restaurant, as you enjoy home-comfort cooking with a gourmet touch. The bedrooms have a contemporary, luxurious feel to them, but if you want to be even more at one with nature, you

can choose to stay in the wooden camping pods in the grounds.

**USP** The surfing lagoon right on your doorstep. With man-made inland waves, it's the only guaranteed surf spot in the UK. If, like me, you're new to surfing, this is the perfect way to learn and build your confidence. By the end of it, I was standing up: a proud moment. If surfing isn't your thing, opt for paddleboarding – you'll still get a decent workout for your core.

**Top treatment** Looking for a way to decompress after an intense surf session, I chose the Hot Wave massage. The spa's exclusive treatment transports you into much calmer waters with the sound of waves playing. Hot ceramic pots are used to release tension from your muscles. I can only liken the sensation to how I imagine it would feel to have large, warm marbles rolled around your body: dreamy. Lymphatic drainage, alongside sweet orange and fennel oil, are used to create an intense yet soothing massage.

On returning to the spa, it's recommended that you take yourself straight into the Himalayan salt sauna to soak up all that oil. Oh, if you insist.

**Insider tip** Although on a cold and rainy day the outside spa area may not seem so appealing, it's definitely worth braving. Plunge into the warm infinity pool and take in the backdrop of hazy clouds and forest-covered mountains. It might have been my lack of a summer holiday, or the effects of massage fumes, but it felt almost tropical. Climb out of the pool and run to the outdoor barrel sauna to warm up again.

**Go there** The Spa Stay Experience (Sunday to Thursday) includes one night at the Hilton Garden Inn Snowdonia, breakfast, unlimited spa access, a 55-minute treatment and a stand-up paddleboard lesson, from £215pp (wavegardenspa.com).



TRAVEL WELL





All the charm of the countryside

## 03 Hoar Cross Hall, Staffordshire

**Amanda Statham,**  
*WH contributing travel editor*

**The vibe** Bridgerton with bathrobes. You know you're in for a treat when you sweep up the long drive, deep in the Staffordshire countryside, and an impressive red-brick mansion appears. I was handed a glass of prosecco at check-in, then headed to my room, an incredible suite called Countess Crystal (which I now want to be known as), with a pink bathtub and a king-size bed overlooking the gorgeous grounds. Getting to the spa is a hike via long corridors, but once there I was stunned – it's huge. Like, probably the biggest spa I've ever been to, complete with a large circular reception area, a shiny new shop that looks like an airport duty free, salt and hydrotherapy pools, endless treatment rooms, a hairdresser, gym and a large cafe. Hoar Cross recently had a £14 million refurb and it shows. The spa is spotless and everything has a fresh feel – no grey towels or cracked tiles here. It's an entire spa world, and I was ready to become a citizen.

**USP** The facilities. From detoxing in the Nordic Heat and Ice Suite to massaging your wobbly bits and feet, Kneipp style, in the Aqua Massage area, you won't be short of things to try. I loved floating in the salt pool, then swimming into a cave dotted with tiny star-like

lights. It was very busy and would definitely be a fun place to stay with a group of friends, although I also saw a few couples and some solos. The Ballroom restaurant serves delicious nosh such as seared king scallops on butternut purée, which I ate beneath the shining chandeliers.

**Top treatment** An Elemis Superfood Pro-Radiance Facial. Before the treatment, I chatted to my therapist about my concerns – oily T-zone, dry cheeks – and she showed me the products that she'd use to tackle them. An hour later, some kind of witchcraft had occurred because my skin was now glowing and had a notable reduction in fine lines. Impressed, I snapped up some Elemis Superfood Facial Oil from the spa shop.

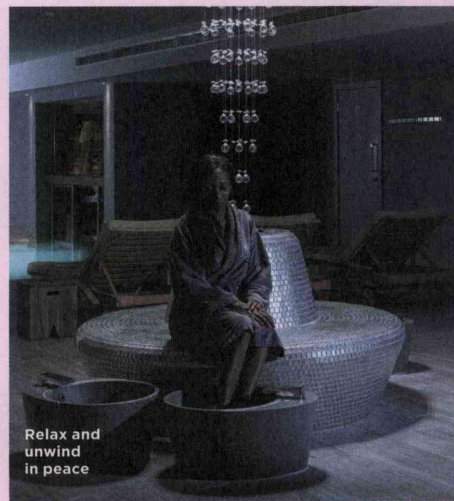
**Insider tip** Having trouble sleeping? Hunt out the cocoon-like snooze room, where you can lie on a heated water bed in the semi-dark and will be catching zzzs in no time. Also, don't miss all the free classes (I went to a lovely yoga class) – they fill up quickly, so check the schedule when you arrive and book pronto.

**Go there** Simply Spa Escape, including spa access, three meals, overnight accommodation, slippers and robe, from £145pp (baronseden.com).

## 04 Spa at Ye Olde Bell, Nottinghamshire

**Jessica Webb,** *WH art editor*

**The vibe** An Alpine escape in a Midlands setting. Small, luxurious and offering total escapism from everyday life, each thermal experience has a view of the outside chalets and fire pits, so I really did feel like I had been transported to the Alps. The spa circuit kicks off with a herbal laconium, the mildest heated room, where you're instantly hit by lovely smells of warm pine, then it's a stroll into the Stonebath room, where a bucket of mineral coals are released into water every few minutes to create short bursts of steam. You then cool down and walk through a snowstorm shower, where actual snow falls from the ceiling. Other spa delights include a salt inhalation room, steam room, shower walk-through experience, sauna and an incredible heated inside/outside vitality pool with lots of water massage jets to help you relax. And when you're done with the thermal experiences, it's time to unwind and have a drink from the extensive bar menu, on big comfy beds, sun loungers, or the hot stone beds outside (my personal fave). I also loved



Relax and unwind in peace



wrapping up in a blanket and sitting by the fire in one of the Alpine chalets with a hot chocolate.

**USP** The food is so good. From ham hock terrines with a date purée to seared cod with saag aloo gratin, it was all delicious and unexpectedly indulgent for a spa (limp salad leaves not welcome).

**Top treatment** As someone with eczema, I can recommend the facial using Germaine de Capuccini products. The ingredients were kind to my overly sensitive skin and left it glowing for days.

**Insider tip** If you're tired of dark days and a lack of vitamin D, then the Sabbia Med room is for you. In just 30 minutes you'll experience the sun rising and setting over the South of France in a specially purposed relaxation space, which comes complete with the sounds of the sea, warm sand and a lamp that simulates natural sunlight.

**Go there** A full spa day, including a two-course lunch and 60-minute treatment of your choice, with an overnight stay from £300pp (yeoldebell-hotel.co.uk).



Women's Health



Hot tub + fireplace = true joy

## 05 Calcot & Spa, Cotswolds

Victoria Rudland,  
 WH production editor

**The vibe** Entering this gorgeous manor house is like visiting your rich mate's country pile. It has a welcoming feel, a porch lined with wellies for muddy walks and a large living room with a crackling log fire, where guests read the papers or cosy up with a nightcap after dinner. You'll need a big appetite for lunch at the Gumstool Inn, a relaxed dining room serving hearty mains. Dinner is a fancier affair in the elegant Conservatory restaurant, where you'll also enjoy a light-drenched breakfast with views of the manicured grounds. Restorative relaxation is the name of the game at Calcot, and the small but perfectly formed spa delivers, with neutral interiors, natural wood and stone and a botanical theme adding to the zen. Sweat in the sauna and steam room, then chill in the relaxation area or wrap up in a blanket by the fire in the courtyard for ultimate hygge feels. The rooms blend luxe country chic with stylish modern accents. We stayed in 'Oxford', with its exposed beams, private terrace and huge bed with cloud-soft pillows. A claw-foot tub and the kind of bathroom lighting that makes your skin look lush completes the picture.

**USP** The extensive grounds offer plenty of outdoor activities. Go for a stomp around the 3km walking trail, or hop on a bike and explore the 200-plus acres of rolling countryside. There's a disc golf course, tennis courts and an outdoor pool area that could fool you into thinking you're in Tuscany. The pièce de résistance is a courtyard hot tub in front of a fireplace, surrounded by lavender, birch trees and climbing roses – the perfect Instagram-friendly spot for a glass of fizz before dinner.

**Top treatment** It's tricky to choose from the extensive menu of Elemis and Aromatherapy Associates treatments. The Elemis Pro-Collagen Age-Defy Facial offers the best of a facial *and* a massage, combining the Elemis Pro-Collagen range with lifting facial massage techniques. My therapist began with a double cleanse and exfoliation, soothed aches with a back, neck and shoulder massage while the face masks were at work, and finished by sealing in hydration with layers of serum, face oil and moisturiser. The glow could be seen from space.

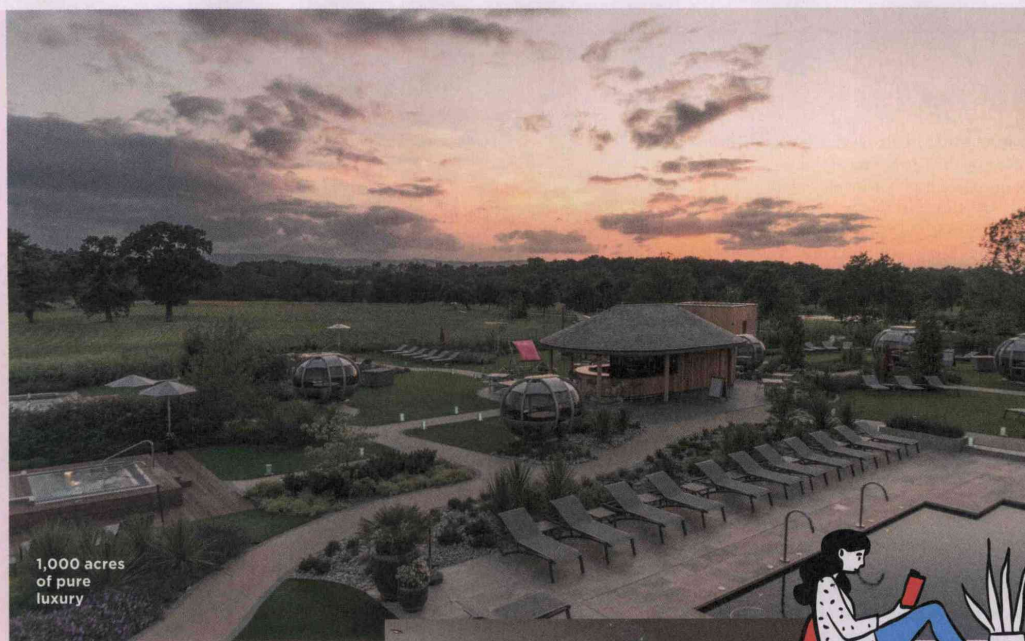
**Insider tip** The Westonbirt National Arboretum is a mere 10-minute drive away. Its 600 acres of woodland are home to more than 2,500 species of trees from across the globe.

**Go there** Rooms from £309 per night, including breakfast (calcot.co).

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## The Spa at Carden, Cheshire

Jessica Lockett, WH art editor

**The vibe** Romance and relaxation. As we ventured along a picturesque drive, the dramatic outline of the Carden Park hotel appeared through the trees. This 1,000-acre luxury resort offers everything you can think of, from the deep relaxation that comes from basking in a glorious natural setting while submerged in a vitality pool, to a knee-knocking, adrenaline-pumping aerial ropes course and zipline. I began my spa journey by slipping into a fluffy white robe and grabbing a spot of afternoon tea (with buttery melt-in-the-mouth scones) while overlooking the Spa Garden. Next, I made the most of the Bollinger garden bar with a glass of champers (or two) – it'd be rude to head to the hot tubs empty-handed, right? Out of the water, I headed to one of the thermal garden pods and cosied up with my other half.

**USP** Carden is way more romantic than I'd imagined. We strolled hand in hand through the estate's three-acre vineyard before trying a glass of their very own delicious sparkling wine, then dressed up to the nines for date night at The Vines – the hotel's gourmet restaurant. The locally sourced food is exquisite; start with pan-roasted west coast scallop in a mouth-watering lobster sauce and follow with Iberico pork rib for a hearty and rich main. And if you have room to squeeze in dessert (of course you have), the caramel apple tart is every bit as sharp as it is sweet.

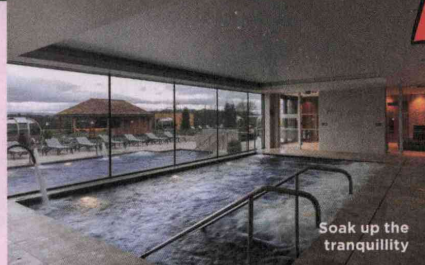
**Top treatment** The Botanical Massage ticks every box to restore you to a harmonious state of balance. My therapist tailored the experience to give me a bespoke treatment that focused on my

problem areas. It was so calming to lie beneath the twinkly ceiling and be massaged with soothing muscle balm infused with heavenly rosemary. The thermal experience rooms were great, too. I started in the Finnish sauna and

worked through the bio sauna, aroma steam room, experience showers and tepidarium. If you're feeling really brave, enhance the physical benefits of the thermal journey by applying ice directly to your skin from the ice fountain. This will stimulate circulation and leave you feeling rejuvenated.

**Insider tip** If you've used up your spa pass but aren't ready to leave the hot tub behind just yet, head over to the leisure centre, where you can enjoy all-day access to the pool, sauna, steam room and jacuzzi, all for free.

**Go there** Spa Garden Experience, from £155pp for a one-night Garden Escape, which also includes access to the Spa Garden and thermal experiences, accommodation and breakfast ([cardenpark.co.uk](http://cardenpark.co.uk)).





07

## The Club Hotel & Spa, Jersey

**Jodie McEwan,**  
WH picture editor

**The vibe** Tucked away on the nine-by-five-mile island of Jersey, The Club offers the perfect way to relax, unwind, then pig out, with a heated outdoor pool, boutique spa and Michelin-starred restaurant. On arrival, you'll feel your muscles loosening and your mind clearing as you take in the warm, woody tones of the decor. Although compact in size, the hotel has a luxurious feel, with impressive granite bathrooms and large comfy beds. Be sure to work up an appetite; I tried the seven-course tasting menu and it's an amazing experience, with tantalising dishes

such as seaweed butter with Guinness bread and roasted saddle and slow-cooked neck of lamb.

**USP** The Jersey setting. Take the opportunity to go sightseeing for a day and explore the island's idyllic beaches and lovely cliff walks. Outdoor activities, historic sites and charming markets make for tons of local experiences, right on your doorstep. From visiting the 800-year-old Mont Orgueil Castle on the east side of the island to taking a boat trip along the coast to visit the abandoned German bunkers, which have since been transformed into cute and trendy cafes, there's something for everyone – with the added bonus of being able to head back to The Club Hotel & Spa to dust off your sandy toes and unwind.

**Top treatment** In need of some self-care? The De-Stress Muscle Massage will hit the spot perfectly. With

gently soothing background music and aromatic oils, the 50-minute treatment was the perfect way to calm my mind and loosen all those pesky body aches.

**Insider tip** Make the most of being by the seaside and brace yourself for an early morning swim at the Havre des Pas beach, which sits a mere 600m from The Club Hotel & Spa. If that sounds altogether too adventurous, you can always take a dip in the tidal bathing pool instead, which has become one of the area's most iconic attractions since opening at the end of the 19th century.

**Go there** From £199 per night, including breakfast and overnight stay. Various spa packages are available at [theclubjersey.com](http://theclubjersey.com). Easyjet ([easyjet.com](http://easyjet.com)) flies to Jersey from £50pp. 



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