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Environmental Ecstasy

10 Green Spas That Pamper the Planet—and You!

By Judy Colbert

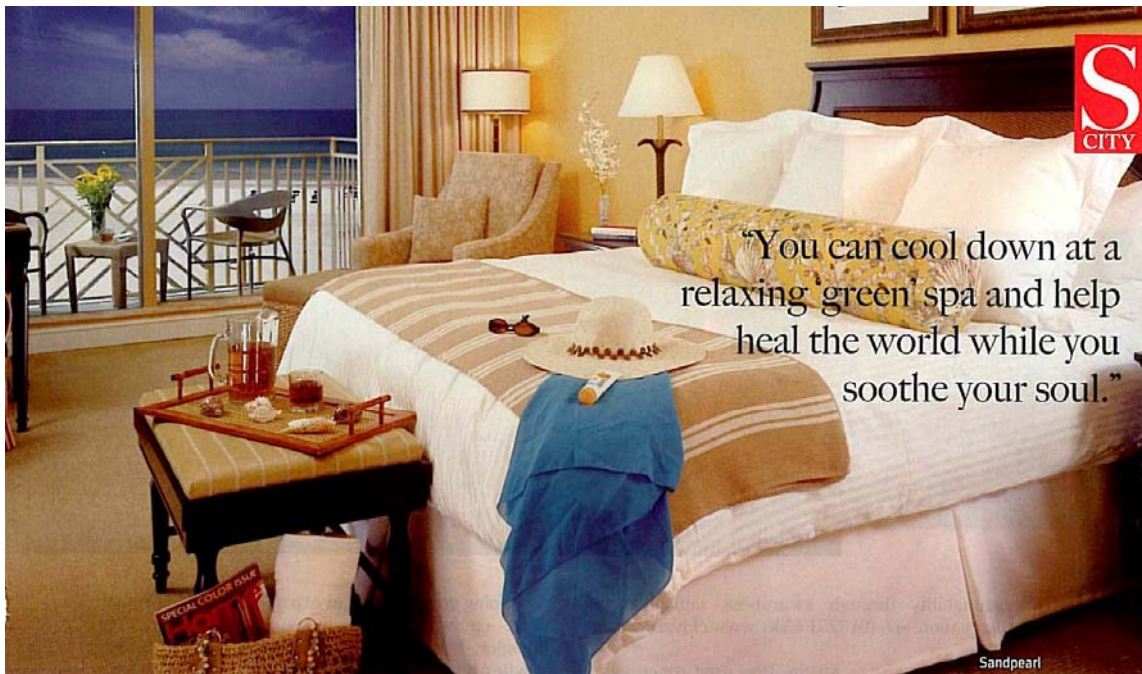
SPA TRIPPIN' with Judy Colbert

In these days of heated debate over global warming, one thing is certain: If you get hot under the collar from stories about melting icecaps, shrinking oceans and rising temperatures, you can cool down at a relaxing "green" spa and help heal the world while you soothe your soul. Many spas are now incorporating green consciousness into their buildings, operations, and treatments. Here are ten great spas that have found interesting and groundbreaking ways to alleviate their footprints on the earth and promote environmental sustainability.

The new 38,000-square-foot **Spa Desert Springs** at the Desert Springs JW Marriot in Palm Desert, Calif., has installed water-flow restriction devices, collects and uses rainwater for landscaping, and placed recycling bins on guest floors. Locally harvested citrus and dates from the Sonoran Desert are used in their body scrubs. The desert antioxidant facial uses nutrient-rich local flowers for exfoliation and firming, and the desert stone facial utilizes mineral-rich spring water. The Spa Bistro features a menu filled with strictly certified organic foods and free-range meats and poultry. 760/341-2211 or 888/538-9459. www.marriott.com.

The Oaks at Ojai, Ojai, Calif., has always employed some form of recycling, from donating egg yolks to the local humane society to mix with dog food ("We only use whites—and a lot of them—for our recipes," says Cathy S. Cluff, managing director) to giving lost and found items to local charities and eyeglasses to the Lions Club. Used office equipment is donated to local schools and all paper is cut into scratch paper. Towels are reused in guest rooms and in the aerobics studio (each guest has a peg to hang a towel on each day). New construction requires energy efficient lighting, flash heaters, low-flow toilets, energy efficient air conditioning systems, and dual paned windows. 800/753-OAKS. www.oaksspa.com





The spa at the **Sandpearl Resort** in Clearwater Beach, Fla., opened in August with a clear eco-friendly approach. Continuing its commitment to developing environmentally sound neighborhoods, the JMC Communities expects the resort to be one of the country's first LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified resorts. Within the spa, uniforms by Fianna are made with hemp—nature's most environmentally positive crop—and can reduce ultraviolet rays by 99.9%. Spa sandals are made of Microplast so they are antimicrobial, and the nail products are produced with naturally colored vegan ingredients from around the world that are grown without synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. 727/441-2425 or 877/726-3111. www.sandpearl.com

Uhma Spa & Lifestyle Annex, South Miami Beach, Fla., which opened in July, makes everyday Earth Day. Pronounced ooh-mah, and meaning "one" in Portuguese, the spa combines wellness for the body and the environment. Brazilian-born Debora Leia, the spa's creator, has been eco-conscious for more than two decades. The décor utilizes a biophilic design, where elements from nature are taken indoors. Walls and cabinetry, for example, are made from hand-carved American walnut, which is a sustainable wood, while bamboo is used for flooring. Manicures and pedicures are performed with a waterless conditioner for getting rid of those unwanted cuticles. Parking is available, but you can also bike or take the South Beach Local bus (.25) to Uhma. 305/695-0996. www.uhmanagri.com.

Relying on nature's abundance is apparent at **Ginn Hammock Beach Resort**, Palm Coast, Fla., where the coquina shells you see on your beach walk are used in an exfoliating scrub, and seven varieties of North Atlantic seaweed are used in the Atlantic Seaweed Wrap.

Their newest organic treatment is a Florida poultice massage with a delicious blend of lavender, ginger, orange peel, and white cinnamon inside a malleable muslin fabric. These ingredients relax, cleanse, heal, refresh, moisturize, relieve aches and pains, and stimulate your circulation. Take the poultice home where it can be heated for two more uses or frozen for a cold compress. 866/Ginn-Club. www.ginnclubsandresorts.com.

The new \$3 million **Buttermilk Falls Inn & Spa** in Milton, N.Y., set on 70 historic acres overlooking the Hudson River, was constructed with a green operation in mind. They use geothermal technology, which incorporates the power of the earth and sun, to heat the sauna, steam room, and unique mineral saltwater pool used for Watsu and other treatments. In the winter, electricity from solar energy is used to extract heat from below the earth's surface to heat the building. In the summer, the heat is transferred from inside the building back into the ground and the cool air is cycled back into the building. 877/795-1310. www.buttermilkfallsinn.com

For a green Asian spa experience, **Chiva-Som International Health Resort**, Hua Hin, Thailand, is the place to go. The resort operates on a virtually waste-free continuum with used materials and products recycled. All wastewater is collected and purified onsite with carbon and sand filtration and ozonation, and then used for landscape irrigation and maintaining lake levels. Solar panels heat the fresh water used in the spa, laundry and kitchen areas. The spa's facial and product range is between 95 and 99.5% natural products; guests are even offered organic lemongrass-based insect repellent! Chiva-Som (Sanskrit for Haven of Life) and Preserve Hua Hin are dedicated to environmental



SPA TRIPPIN'



Buttermilk Falls Inn & Spa



Desert Springs JW Marriot

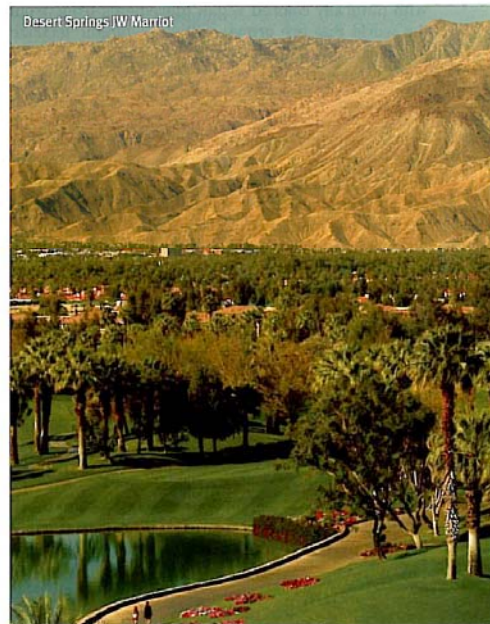
SPA TRIPPIN' with Judy Colbert

sustainability through awareness, education, and preservation. +66 (0) 3253-6536. www.chivasom.com

The Crossings, Austin, Tex., used concrete with fly ash (a byproduct of coal-burning that would have been disposed of in landfills), wood and plastic decking (using waste wood and grocery bags, etc.), non-toxic products (paints, rugs, and building materials), and recycled insulation (at least 30% post-consumer recycled content). Buildings were designed to be energy efficient, using natural ventilations, and low-flow plumbing fixtures. Their signature "Tex-Zen" design inspires innovative thinking and new ideas for group meetings and individuals. Organic and natural foods are served. Among the wellness classes are Qigong, Sadhana of Chenrezig Bodhisattva, water aerobics, yoga, Tai Chi, iridology, breath work, meditation, labyrinth walk, and the Nia technique. 877/944-3003. www.thecrossingsaustin.com.

Take your pick of the wonderful Willow Stream Spas at select Fairmont Hotels and Resorts for award-winning environmental activities where they use wind power, run-of-river electricity, and biomass for power. At Canada's Banff Springs, all swimming and treatment pools are maintained with salt instead of chlorine. The Fairmont Scottsdale Princess, in Arizona, collects rainwater from roof and exterior deck drains to use for landscaping. In California, the Fairmont Newport Beach's new \$32 million dollar Willow Stream Spa has created the Generosity Massage, where guests can contribute to a local charity. Ten percent of the profits from each treatment are donated to the local "Adopt-a-Beach" program that helps protect and restore the California coast. 800/257-7544. www.fairmont.com.

Going green can be an expense factor, but Dr. Amy Rein, co-owner of Solarice Wellness Spas in Whistler, British Columbia, thinks it's worth it. Soy candles have replaced paraffin, which she says have been linked to carcinogens, and their products are natural, without preservatives. The design incorporates feng shui and such natural elements as wood, stone, water and natural sunlight. Try the organic renewal package that includes a vanilla bean sugar scrub, aroma-steam, carrot vitamin wrap, massage, and an Eminence Organics facial. Rein's belief is that beauty starts from within and anything introduced to the absorbable skin layer should be chemical and preservative free. 604/935-1222 or 888/935-1222. www.solarice.com ■



Desert Springs JW Marriot