

Writing Sample:

Virtuoso Travel & Life, 3,800-word guide format



Soothing Spas that Stop the Clock

Where to explore the upside of downtime: amid veritable shrines to serenity, languor, centering, and reenergizing.

Paradise Island, Bahamas
Ocean Club

When the Ocean Club Spa by Mandara opens this winter, it will add the crowning touch to Ocean Club's recent \$100-million restoration and expansion. Under management by Bali-born, Hawaii-based Mandara Spa, the 5,000-square-foot facility will feature an expansive salon, massage and other body treatments, facials, aromatherapy, and Mandara and Decleor products. Guests of all 108 existing rooms, suites, and villas can drop by for some serious pampering. But for the ultimate Bahamas spa experience, book one of the eight new spa suites complete with walled garden, Jacuzzi, and outdoor waterfall shower.

Jimbaran, Bali, Indonesia

Four Seasons Resort Bali at Jimbaran Bay
The salt air of the beach joins the scents of frangipani and ginger, the sounds of bamboo wind chimes and gently splashing fountains at the Spa at Four Seasons Resort Bali at Jimbaran Bay. The 10,000-square-foot spa serves the body beautification needs of guests like Whitney Houston, Sylvester Stallone, and other privacy seekers, who hide

away in 147 villas equipped with plunge pools and outdoor showers. Spa treatments concentrate on potions and lotions indigenous to the island. Don't miss the signature Lurlur Jimbaran, a Balinese massage, scrub, and soak infused with spices, herbs, and flower petals from the spa's own garden.

Sayan Ubud, Bali, Indonesia

Four Seasons Resort Bali at Sayan

Four Seasons Resort Bali at Sayan overlooks the sacred Ayung River from the lip of the river's rice field-terraced gorge. The view alone guarantees a Bali high. But spirits soar even further when you factor in just 18 beautifully appointed suites and 36 secluded villas (each with private plunge pool) and the ministrations of the resort's health club and spa, whose rejuvenating secrets draw on the healing power of the central highlands—a combination of mountain botanicals, natural clays, warming spices, and ancient ayurvedic methods. Your choices in the pursuit of earthly and spiritual perfection range from top-flight fitness equipment to spa cuisine and staff-led meditation and yoga.

Somerset, Bermuda

Cambridge Beaches

Set on a peninsula at Bermuda's sunset tip, the Aquarian Baths at Cambridge Beaches takes center stage at the island's original cottage colony. Save time for the fitness center, Swimex lap pool, whirlpool, café, and gift shop as you divide your day between the Ocean Spa—which occupies the lower level with seven massage and treatment rooms, sauna, steam baths, and salon—and the upper level, which suggests the Roman baths of old with its spectacular pool, stately columns, and retractable sunroof. Guests live in 81 rooms and suites set in lovingly restored cottages, many dating back 200 years.

Polls, Cyprus

Anassa

The view across one of Cyprus's finest beaches to the famous Baths of Aphrodite inspired Anassa, a modern masterpiece of marble and five-star luxury. Guests of the 183 ocean-view rooms look to the Thalassa Spa for pampering, beautifying, and rejuvenation. The facilities include a hair and nail salon, treatment rooms, baths, showers, sauna, fitness room, and indoor pools. The Greek

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goddess of love and beauty herself would no doubt approve of the three- to seven-day Shine and Glow, Revitalizing, and Thalassotherapy programs—not to mention the menu of à la carte treatments derived from the sea.

Tying, England

Champneys Health Resort

The country house informality at Champneys Health Resort suits its setting to a tee. Surrounded by 170 acres of parkland at the edge of the Chiltern Hills in Hertfordshire, just 45 minutes from Heathrow, is the estate's centerpiece, a magnificent manor house once owned by the Rothschilds. Eighty guest quarters, 44 treatment rooms, a vast selection of spa therapies, a gleaming fitness center, more than 20 complimentary activities a day, medical services, and sumptuous low-calorie meals add up to a holistic approach to health and beauty. Special treats include the floatation experience in organic mud, aromatherapy cream, paraffin, or primrose oil.



Evian les Bains, France

Royal Parc Evian

Increased vitality lies at the heart of the Better Living Institute's approach to well-being. Housed in the Domaine du Royal Club Evian's Hotel Royal, a 154-room palace designed for King Edward IV on the shores of Lake Geneva, the spa delivers just what it says: better living. First,

a resident physician helps pinpoint the most appropriate course of action. Your program may call on the expertise of a dietician, balneotherapist, physiotherapist, beauty technician, masseur, relaxation specialist, or gym instructor. Even if you need the whole team when you arrive, you're guaranteed to leave in top form.

Baden-Baden, Germany

Brenner's Park Hotel & Spa

Brenner's Park Hotel & Spa unites the grand hotel experience with the latest word in health and beauty techniques. Built in 1872, the 100-room hotel presides over 15 acres of Black Forest parkland, a ten-minute stroll from Baden-Baden's legendary casino, theater, and spa quarter. Sports and fitness facilities, two medical clinics, and the new Brenner's Spa attend to every whim or need. For the ultimate indulgence, invite three friends to join you in the Spa Suite, a private spa within a spa complete with photos by Karl Lagerfeld, marble tub and vitalizing shower, Japanese garden, steam bath, and dedicated spa butler. Suffering from jet lag? Try the rejuvenating seaweed treatment.

Jaipur, India

Rajvilas

The wings of a 1727 Rajasthani mansion enfold the Spa at Rajvilas, a sanctuary for mind, body, and soul in the Pink City of Jaipur. You stroll past a 240-year-old Hindu temple, lotus pond, herb gardens, and lap pool to enter the inner sanctum of ayurvedic and Western holistic traditions. Modern therapy and steam rooms, hot and cold plunge pools, Cybex and Life Fitness equipment, Indian essential oils, Aveda, Herblane, and Dead Sea products create a fusion of East and West. Rajvilas welcomes travelers with 54 rooms, three villas with private swimming pools, and 14 out-of-this-world tents.

Anacapri, Italy

Capri Palace Hotel & Spa

When celebrities like Harrison Ford, Saudi royalty, and the king and queen of Sweden retreat to Capri, they stay at the Capri Palace Hotel & Spa, a worthy destination of its own. But guests of the 30 rooms (four with private gardens and pools) can also benefit from the Capri Beauty Farm, where professional trainers, therapists, and physicians practice what can only be called the science of aesthetics. A lofty view of the Bay of Naples mirrors

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the accent on marine-based therapies, beginning with a saltwater Kneipp circuit, seawater pool, and micronized seaweed and algae baths.

Grosseto, Italy

Terme di Saturnia Resort & Spa

The ancient Romans attributed the birth of the healing hot springs at Terme di Saturnia to a lightning bolt hurled by Saturn. Much has changed over the millennia—including the addition of a 90-room luxury resort and Institute of Thermal Medicine and Scientific Cosmetology. But the mineral-rich springs bubble on, rising from the earth at a constant 98.6 degrees to fill a new lake-size swimming pool (with hot and cold water areas that stimulate circulation) and stone-walled baths and pools. More than 65 therapies range from watsu sessions to the Thermalion Capsule, a rousing combination of heat and steam.



Cernobbio, Italy

Villa d'Este

You can relax if you fretted over the addition of a modern spa to Lake Como's Villa d'Este, a 162-room, sixteenth-century paragon of the art of living well. The spa opened with an exquisite decor of slate gray and celadon, cut glass and candlelight, even Frette linens on the massage beds. Its multilingual therapists combine the latest methods in rejuvenation with grand hotel service. The scent of essen-

tial oils in the hydrotherapy tubs blends perfectly with the spa's own line of skin-care products. And you reach the Sports Club's sauna, pool, and gym tastefully, by underground passage.

St. James, Jamaica

Half Moon Golf, Tennis and Beach Club

Four hundred acres of lawns, flowers, and 261 colonial-style rooms, suites, and villas back the crescent bay that gave this Caribbean legend its name. After nearly half a century, Half Moon recently added a spa to its constellation of golf, tennis, and water sports. You'll find a new Aerobic Dance Studio and Cardio Theatre as well as men's and women's saunas, steam rooms, Vichy and Swiss showers, Jacuzzi, and hydrotherapy tubs. Jamaican herbs lend extra magic to several of the beauty and therapeutic rituals—a signature of the light menu at the Seagrape Terrace as well.

Kunfunadhoo, North Baa Atoll, Maldives

Soneva Fushi Resort and Spa

How to improve on paradise in the Republic of Maldives, where the crystal-clear sea and equatorial climate create an ideal spa environment? Nestled on the private island of Kunfunadhoo, Soneva Fushi answers the question with its Six Senses Spa—part of the promise of pure pampered luxury in a 62-room Robinson Crusoe-style setting complete with air-conditioned gym. The spa employs experts from Sweden, Thailand, and Japan for its Swedish, Thai, and shiatsu bodywork. Talk about sublime. Picture yourself in a bath of fresh-picked rose petals, milk and honey, peppermint, champagne, or chocolate...or in your beachside villa gazing over a turquoise lagoon....

Los Cabos, Mexico

Las Ventanas al Paraiso

More than 140 treatments from every corner of the globe open the windows to paradise at the Spa at Las Ventanas al Paraiso. The 61-suite resort invites you to bliss out with headphones in eight treatment rooms, let the sound of the waves lull you in a screened pavilion on the sand, or enjoy sessions in a private Spa Suite with up to three bedrooms, Jacuzzi, pool, and open-air treatment area. A heavenly hot-stone massage may well bond you to the Baja Peninsula forever. Or try the detoxifying effects of the nopals cactus, the healing qualities of the *tepezcohuite* flower,

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or the purifying power of volcanic clay.

Banderas Bay, Mexico

Four Seasons Resort Punta Mita

Just 25 miles north of the airport in Puerto Vallarta, the Apuane Spa at the Four Seasons Resort Punta Mita sets you afloat on a private isthmus edged in miles of pristine sand and sea. A number of signature therapies round out the vast choice of treatments. The Punta Mita Massage, for instance, uses sage oil and tequila; a favorite among men and women alike, it's a perfect excuse to try a dreamy spa experience for two in the Deluxe Couples Room. Active pleasures include the 140-room resort's Jack Nicklaus golf course and high-tech gym, along with nearby surfing and deep-sea fishing.

Monte Carlo, Monaco

Les Thermes Marins de Monte Carlo

Marble-walled tunnels lead directly to Les Thermes Marins de Monte Carlo from Monaco's legendary 250-room Hotel de Paris and 229-room Hôtel Hermitage. Founded in 1995 by Prince Rainier's Société des Bains de Mer, the four-story, 21,000-square-foot spa contains the largest indoor seawater pool on the Riviera—shaped like a shell and flanked by soaring views of the sea and sky. It also offers regal French spa cuisine at L'Hirondelle, an aqua gym, extensive fitness equipment, and 42 treatment rooms designed for everything from wraps to body polishes. Au courant hair, facial, and nail salons send you out the door with your best foot forward.

Fajardo, Puerto Rico

Wyndham El Conquistador Resort & Country Club

Las Casitas Village, an exclusive 90-casita enclave at Puerto Rico's Wyndham El Conquistador, harbors the Golden Door, sister spa to the original Golden Door in California. You arrive on the Welcome Level, where the staff helps plan your visit. One floor up, the Vitality Level offers fitness appraisals, exercise classes, and high-tech workouts. The Tranquility Level caps things off with the Golden Door Ritual, involving a soothing shower followed by a trip to the *o-furo*, a Japanese bath with falling water,

and a body treatment—a Puerto Rican Pineapple Polish, perhaps—in one of 25 private rooms.

St. Andrews, Scotland

Old Course Hotel, Golf Resort & Spa

Scotland's King James II had to ban the game of golf in 1457. Born about 60 years earlier at the Old Course in St. Andrews, the sport mushroomed in popularity so fast, it threatened the practice of archery. Today, the home of golf's most serious rival to the game lies in the Old Course Hotel's spa, which offers the full gamut of health and beauty treatments, fitness equipment, steam, sauna, lap pool, and whirlpool. You'll find the resort strikes a perfect balance between history and modern luxury with its views over the Old Course to the sea, its Duke's Course, restaurants, and 146 rooms and suites.

Interlaken, Switzerland

Victoria Jungfrau Grand Hotel & Spa

A swimming pool with the splendor of ancient Rome highlights the spa at the Victoria Jungfrau, a 212-room superstar on the grand tour for 136 years. The spa's Aqua World accompanies the pool with whirlpools, brine baths, Turkish steam, Finnish sauna, and bio saunas for active-light therapy. The precision-minded staff and consultants specialize in medical checkups, prescriptive programs, and a vast number of exercise regimes, massage, and aesthetic treatments. Optional spa cuisine at La Terrasse caters to discerning palates. Trimmed and toned, you can hone your golf skills at the indoor facility, play tennis indoors or out, or go exploring in the heart of the majestic Swiss Alps.

Lausanne, Switzerland

Lausanne Palace & Spa

Established in 1915, the Lausanne Palace rivals the world's finest destination spas with its modern health and beauty facilities. Set at the heart of Lausanne's business and shopping district, the hotel's Centre de Bien Etre offers an indoor natatorium (swathed in frescoes), Jacuzzi, sauna, and Moroccan steam bath; Vichy and blitz showers; rooms for baths, wraps, dry treatments, and meditation; tatami room for shiatsu and ayurvedic work; and a complete fitness gym and studio with classes. You'll find spa cuisine just steps away at the Côté Jardin, and Belle Epoque decor and panoramas of the city, Alps, and Lake

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Geneva in all rooms and suites.

Chiang Mai, Thailand

The Regent Chiang Mai Resort & Spa

Utter bliss at the new Lanna Spa begins with its setting at the Regent Resort Chiang Mai—a 20-acre Garden of Eden laced with 77 suites, lakes, streams, waterfalls, and rice fields. Northern Thailand's ancient Lanna kingdom inspired the Regent's village layout and aesthetic, rendered on three levels at the spa. Inside lies a beauty salon, resting area, and seven self-contained treatment suites with features like steam rooms, soaking tubs, and rain-shower massage beds. Your choice among the three- to four-hour Spa Rituals may cover everything from herbal steam to aromatic massage, scrub, wrap, soak, and facial.

Phoenix, Arizona

Arizona Biltmore Resort & Spa

Known as the Jewel of the Desert for 72 years, Phoenix's Arizona Biltmore gained a new facet in 1998, in the form of a 22,000-square-foot spa. The sparkling facility flanks the 730-room property's Paradise Pool, where a water slide plunges 92 feet, indoor alcoves provide refreshing drinks, and 23 cabanas afford poolside massage and nail care. More than 80 treatments take place within the spa. Consider the Cactus Flower Wrap, a veritable body banquet of cactus-flower syrup, honey, citrus-infused oil, native grains, and yogurt. Or spring for a package: the Lady's or Gentleman's Decadence, perhaps, or the Belle of the Ball, Bride's, Groom's, Bridesmaid's, or Maternity.

Tucson, Arizona

Miraval, Life in Balance

Miraval's commitment to life in balance begins with its no-tipping, all-inclusive policy. This covers everything from morning tai chi and yoga to high-tech workouts, a daily spa treatment (select from 80), and room service. You're free to dictate your own program—but encouraged to try something new. Take a horse-grooming, journal-writing, or sand-painting workshop. Drum. Scale the climbing wall. Jump off a 25-foot pole (harnessed to ropes, of course). The 135-acre Tucson retreat sets the stage for

its watchword "mindfulness" with three grotto pools, 106 casita-style rooms, Zen garden, desert botanical garden, and gourmet spa cuisine.

Beverly Hills, California

The Regent Beverly Wilshire

At the head of Rodeo Drive since 1929—and the center of Beverly Hills society—the 395-room Regent Beverly Wilshire now welcomes the world's elite with a new fitness center, spa, and renovated Riviera-style pool. The workout studio employs the latest in audio and TV components, and the spa entertains in the most comprehensive facility of its kind in any Beverly Hills hotel. Guests indulge in steam rooms, saunas, hot tubs, and salons for hair care, makeup, manicures, pedicures, facials, body treatments, massage, and aromatherapy. Top off your spa experience with a night in the Presidential Suite, where Julia Roberts bathed with Richard Gere in *Pretty Woman*.

Sonoma, California

Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa

Generations of visitors know the benefits of soaking in the mineral-rich hot springs that rise from 1,100 feet beneath the Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa. But returning guests find something new: a 40,000-square-foot facility combining the elixir's healthful properties with ancient European design—plus fitness analysis and activities, lifestyle classes, and more than 50 therapies performed in 40 specialty rooms and pools. Body treatments using grape seed, lavender, and olive oil honor local wine-country traditions. The 228 accommodations include 60 suites with fireplaces and whirlpool tubs—ideal for romantic spa retreats *a deux*.

Edwards, Colorado

The Lodge & Spa at Cordillera

Wrapped in views of a 6,500-acre Vail Valley wilderness and beyond, the Spa at Cordillera has a lot to live up to in terms of inspiration—which it does admirably. The 12,000-square-foot facility rewards workouts with more than 35 pampering treatments, everything from aromatherapy and hydrotherapy massage to moor-mud wraps. Spend your free time in the indoor and outdoor hot tubs or swimming pools. Play golf or tennis, ski, fly-fish, raft, hike, mountain bike, horseback ride, or hot-air balloon over the pines and aspen glens. Then relax with the

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lodge's choice of four restaurants and 56 suites, most with fireplaces and scenic decks.

Telluride, Colorado

Wyndham Peaks Resort & Golden Door Spa

This Golden Door clings to the side of a mountain 9,500 feet above Telluride. Colorado's version of the California classic has it all, and then some: fitness programs, children's programs, racquet courts, climbing wall, oxygen bar, kivas, 44 treatment rooms, sauna, steam, Jacuzzi, and a water slide that plunges from an indoor lap pool into an indoor-outdoor swimming pool. Most spa goers retire to the 174-room Wyndham Peaks hotel (it has ski-in, ski-out access). But for total spa immersion, opt for the Next Level program. You'll stay in one of 13 guest rooms, enjoying the one-on-one attention of a spa concierge and 24-hour spa access.

Boca Raton, Florida

Boca Raton Resort & Club

The late Addison Mizner would love the new spa set to open this winter at his 75-year-old Boca Raton Resort. The owner-architect—known for strolling the grounds in silk pajamas with two chow dogs, a macaw, and three monkeys—spawned today's fashion for the over-the-top fantasy-luxury seen at top resorts around the world. The spa's splendor reflects its location at the original Cloister hotel. Nearly 40 private suites, all with indoor and outdoor treatment areas and multiple therapeutic pools, add to a dazzling array of choices, including three fitness centers, 12 bars and restaurants, 963 rooms, two golf courses, 30 tennis courts, and a 25-slip marina.

Miami, Florida

Mandarin Oriental, Miami

Spa enthusiasts can now experience the Mandarin Oriental mystique in Miami. The new 15,000-square-foot, three-level spa at the 329-room Mandarin Oriental brings the best of Asian and European indulgence to Brickell Key, a 44-acre island in Biscayne Bay. Adjoining the health club and infinity pool, the spa offers 17 treatment rooms and six stunning spa suites on the top floor.

These Mandarin Suites include two with multijet tubs overlooking the bay, two designed for Thai massage and two for couples. All provide en-suite showers and baths. Be prepared for some dedicated lolling. A single treatment inevitably leads to a half- or all-day package.



Kohala Coast, Hawaii

The Mauna Lani Bay Hotel & Bungalows

Everything at the Mauna Lani Spa intensifies a sense of place on the Big Island. Seaside *lomi-lomi* massage bathes you in warm breezes and the sound of the surf. Hawaiian stone therapy suggests volcanic heat from the earth. Even the weightlessness of a session in the watsu pool captures the essence of life on the Kohala Coast. You can order treatments one by one or sample several favorites in the Mauna Lani Supreme—say a botanical polish followed by a hydrating wrap, facial, and foot therapy. The resort also pleases sybarites with its fitness center, fresh cuisine, and 350 rooms, suites, and bungalows.

New Orleans, Louisiana

The Ritz-Carlton, New Orleans

Pampering fit for French kings, queens, and courtesans feels right at home at The Spa at The Ritz-Carlton, New Orleans. Soft light from crystal chandeliers illuminates the 20,000-square-foot day spa, which rests on the first floor and mezzanine of the 452-room pleasure palace. Beauty secrets from the courts of Louis XIV and Napoleon III go into the Four Hand Royal Massage, Massage sous Cascade, Napoleon's Royal Massage, and Princess Eugenie's Marine Peel. Or take the Southern route with

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a Cool Mint Manicure or Essence of Magnolia Massage. The hotel complements such Big Easy indulgences with a fitness center, pool, sauna, whirlpool, and Spa Café.



Santa Fe, New Mexico

La Posada de Santa Fe Resort & Spa

Just two blocks off the Plaza, La Posada de Santa Fe offers a six-acre, 159-room retreat right in the city. Its spa, Avanyu, unites centuries-old regional traditions with modern techniques. The Corn Dance Purification, for instance, wraps you in cornmeal, oatmeal, and clay followed by anointment with lavender and sage oils. Plan to exercise your right to shop in the galleries and boutiques of Canyon Road. Then book a Spa Suite for immediate access to the five treatment rooms, two facial rooms, wet room, fitness room, beauty salon, locker rooms, steam showers, and adjoining pool and whirlpool.

New York, New York

The Peninsula New York

The express elevator at the 239-room Peninsula lifts you from Fifth Avenue through the grandeur of nineteenth-century Paris to the heights of twenty-first-century health and beauty. The three-story Peninsula Spa features grand views of the Manhattan skyline, a 42-foot swimming pool, whirlpool, rooftop sundecks, beauty and fitness facilities, steam, sauna, massage, and a dizzying array of treat-

ments and programs. Wellbridge management oversees more than 50 classes—everything from cardio boxing to yoga—as well as personal training and nutrition counseling. Wrap up a perfect day at the spa with cocktails at the adjoining Pen Top Bar & Terrace.

Snoqualmie, Washington

Salish Lodge & Spa

Look for the 91-room Salish Lodge & Spa at the crest of Snoqualmie Falls, just a half hour from Seattle. Everything celebrates the beauty of the Cascades setting, including the spa's design of native cedar, slate, and limpid soaking pools. Along with guided treks and state-of-the-art workouts, the Cascade Escape Package illustrates just a few of the rejuvenating options: the Heated Stone Massage, Salish Facial, Hand and Foot Revitalizer, Remineralizing Body Wrap, Reelasticizing Hair Pack, Aromatherapy Scalp Massage, and lunch at The Attic or Salish Dining Room. Accommodation on the Spa Level comes with the service of a spa concierge.