

PARADISE, Home and Away

Take a journey—if not in body, then in mind—to unique spas both here and abroad

Article by Margaret Swaine



A heated saltwater infinity pool at Chuan Spa.

AWAY

Chuan Spa at The Langham Hotel Auckland, New Zealand

This spa builds on oriental traditions that seek spiritual and physical harmony. Treatments are personalized, based on the principles of yin and yang and the five essential elements (metal, wood, fire, earth and water), to relax and realign the body, mind and spirit. You can take traditional Chinese medicine treatments such as cupping and acupuncture facials, but I went for the 90-minute body and face Aotearoa Aura using locally made products.

First, my therapist sat down with me in their spa tea room, poured me my choice of herbal tea and inquired about my mood and goals for my spa experience that day. Then I was invited to use the treatment facilities: herbal steam room, sauna, snail-shaped shower (long, curling entrance) and “ice experience” (crushed ice to rub on the body to cool it down after the sauna or steam

room). Visitors who are not staying at The Langham Hotel also have access to spa treatments and facilities.

After 20 minutes, I was beckoned into a treatment room. My experience started with a scrub using natural extracts of passiflower kernels and heated river stones to polish the body.

Then my therapist applied a “Pohutakawa” body mask comprised of vitamin E, manuka honey and kaolin clay. My face was treated to a mask of pure manuka honey, one of New Zealand’s greatest →

BRING HOME
THE SPA Indulge
in a meadowy floral
body cream.
(Wonderfleur by
Mark, \$14, 200 mL)

For
where to
buy, see
page 116.



LOOK GREAT

natural healers; the therapist rubbed it in using warm greenstone, or “pounamu.” This natural mineral that is found in New Zealand purportedly purifies and softens the skin. She finished by applying a floral-scented body moisturizer containing shea butter, using therapeutic sweeping strokes.

A little footnote: The Langham Hotel exudes a timeless elegance and is not far from Auckland’s downtown area. It is particularly famous for its Tiffin Afternoon Tea, served twice daily in the luxurious surroundings of Palm Court. I was there for Mother’s Day, and it seemed like all of Auckland showed up for the tea ritual. langhamhotels.co.nz



Palm Court at The Langham Hotel in New Zealand.

TRAVEL PLANS

• **AUCKLAND** Air New Zealand (airnewzealand.co) flies non-stop from Vancouver to Auckland, and offers connecting flights from various other Canadian cities through its Star Alliance partner Air Canada. The spa is about 20 kilometres from the airport. The official website for New Zealand (newzealand.com) is a one-stop shop for activities, accommodation, itinerary planning and event information; the site also has a Travel Planner function. In New Zealand, anything travel-related that displays a Qualmark symbol (qualmark.co.nz) has been independently assessed as professional and trustworthy.

• **MONO** Hockley Valley Resort is about a 90-minute drive from downtown Toronto. The resort is open year-round and offers various accommodation and activity packages such as “girlfriend getaways,” depending upon the season. (hockley.com/stay/accommodation-packages)

Descriptions of treatments and accommodations in this article are the author’s observations. Services and conditions (and flight information) may change.



The gracious entrance to Hockley Valley Resort.

HOME

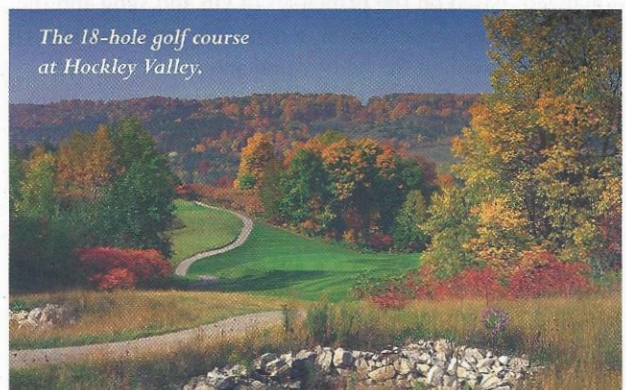
The Spa at Hockley Valley Resort, Ontario

The Hills of Headwaters is a very pretty area. The highest elevation in southern Ontario, it is the birthplace of four major river systems—the Nottawasaga, Credit, Humber and Grand—and makes for a breathtaking drive in autumn. The resort is in Mono, a 90-minute drive northwest of Toronto. In the warmer months, it makes the most of its gorgeous locale with a challenging championship 18-hole golf course designed by Thomas McBroom. In winter, skiers flock here for the 15 short but scenic downhill runs.

Several years ago, this family-owned resort added sophistication and sizzle to its offerings. John Paul Adamo, son of founders Nancy and Mario Adamo, led a \$5 million-plus renovation that included three new restaurants, an expanded spa, on-site culinary garden and thousands of grape vines (to make their sparkling wine).

The 8,000-square-foot spa is a pampering place, with spaces including a spacious ladies’ lounge, lunches at Oasis Café, a terrace with views of the hills, and many treatment rooms. Spa guests can access the indoor and outdoor saltwater pools, dry sauna and fitness room:

I enjoyed a 75-minute organic “Face and Body Ritual.” It started with a full-body scrub with coarse salt. (The spa now uses a sugar scrub.) The therapist used hot towels to remove the salt. She then applied detoxifying buriti oil derived from a Brazilian palm tree known as “the tree of life.” My facial consisted of organic products from the eco-certified Sacred Nature line from Italy, and included a foot scrub and massage. I plan to try this after a day on the ski slopes here. hockley.com ❄️



The 18-hole golf course at Hockley Valley.