

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



The Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge is at the edge of Lac Beauvert.

HOME

The Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge Reflections Spa, Alberta

Situated in Alberta's magnificent Jasper National Park (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) and surrounded by snow-capped peaks, The Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge gives visitors a great Canadian lodge experience. Charming cabins exude rustic elegance, and the entrance to the Reflections Spa is designed with water features that flow over tiers of natural rock. A lounge, accented by pine and stone, provides a restful place to relax by a fire.

With the lodge's beautiful mountain vistas, sparkling lakes and an abundance of wildlife, it's not surprising that this is often named Canada's number one golf resort. The lodge was first constructed by the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway and opened in 1922, and the golf course is the design of the famous golf architect Stanley Thompson. After a day on the links, I took a relaxing swim in the heated outdoor pool (other options were to use →

TRAVEL PLANS

- **JASPER** From Edmonton or Calgary international airports it is a four- or five-hour drive respectively to The Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge. Flights to either city from major cities in Canada are frequent on Air Canada (aircanada.com) and WestJet (westjet.com). Brewster Travel Canada (brewster.ca) offers daily bus transportation between Calgary, Banff, Lake Louise and Jasper. Via Rail (viarail.ca) and Rocky Mountaineer (rockymountaineer.com) are rail alternatives.
- **SAN JUAN** Non-stop flights on WestJet go weekly from Toronto and Calgary into San Juan's Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport; Air Canada also has non-stop flights.

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

the sauna or steam room to heat up and help relax my muscles). Then, I was off to the spa.

I went for a 30-minute body scrub followed by a 60-minute “golf performance” massage. For the scrub, my therapist used an exfoliating product from Ener-G, a line of luxury, plant-based body products created exclusively for Fairmont spas by Kerstin Florian International. After the scrub, she applied a much-needed hydrating body lotion from Ener-G. The massage included stretching and acupressure to release the tension in my muscles after more than four hours of golf. My therapist also laid lavender-infused hot towels on my back, and put alpine balm on my feet and neck to relieve the soreness.

Non-golfers will find many other activities at the resort such as hiking, swimming in the pool, using the fitness centre and more. In winter there’s skiing, and in October there is a special “Dark Sky Festival package,” an event that celebrates Jasper as a great place for stargazing.

Foodies will appreciate that Cavell’s restaurant at the lodge sources its food locally: Spring Creek Premium beef from Vegreville, Fort Macleod’s Fairwinds Farm goat cheese, and Twin Meadows organics such as lettuce greens and other vegetables from McBride by the Fraser River. Cuisine choices include dishes to serve all types of ailments and requests such as sugar-free, gluten-free and low-fat.

Our group loved the relaxed atmosphere at Moose’s Nook after our golf game and spa treatments. The restaurant served top-notch AAA Alberta beef and homegrown micro-greens, and honey from the resort’s own beehives. Golf, spa and delicious food—my kind of day! fairmont.com/jasper

The boathouse on the shores of Lac Beauvert.



Remède Spa’s relaxation area at The St. Regis Bahia Beach Resort.



AWAY

The St. Regis Bahia Beach Resort, Remède Spa, Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico is often overlooked by Canadians, but this Caribbean island is a great destination. Fast facts: It is an unincorporated territory of the United States; the U.S. dollar is the official currency; and many people speak both English and Spanish. I was surprised to learn that it’s a huge culinary centre; it’s home to talented chefs and offers local coffee, cacao and rum that go into lip-smacking recipes and awesome drinks.

San Juan, Puerto Rico’s capital city, has Spanish colonial-style buildings, the most historic of which are found in Old San Juan with its cobblestone streets lined with shops, galleries and restaurants. The 195-hectare St. Regis Bahia Beach Resort, one of the top luxury hotels in Puerto Rico, is about 35 minutes by car from San Juan, on a former coconut plantation in a secluded area surrounded by the ocean, rivers and El Yunque National Forest. Guests can tee off at the challenging golf course designed by Robert Trent Jones, Jr., enjoy spa pampering, savour the cuisine of famous international chef Jean-Georges at Fern restaurant, lounge at the pool esplanade or bask on the pristine, sandy beach.

A floating pathway delivers guests to the secluded massage villas of the Remède Spa. (You can go to the spa as a day guest.) After a great 60-minute massage that included a head massage with light oil, and the use of hot stones and hot towels to relax and open the muscles on tight spots in my body, I had access to the women’s-only garden (there is a separate one for men). It houses a steam room, sauna, hot and cold plunge pools, and open-air showers. To cap my day off in style, I dined at Fern on shrimp salad with champagne vinaigrette and grilled octopus with hot black-pepper sauce. Sitting at my table, I gazed upon the ocean as the sun set in glorious pink and orange hues, and felt very fortunate indeed. stregisbahiaibeach.com ❁

For where to buy, see page 116.



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