



ENJOY THE VIEW OF MOUNT ORFORD AND THE POND FROM YOUR ROOM AT SPA EASTMAN. INSERT: AERIAL VIEW OF THE VILLAS AND OUTDOOR POOL AT RED MOUNTAIN RESORT.



TRAVELLING TOWARD WELLNESS

Canadians are finally discovering the benefits of good-for-you spa getaways. Here are a couple of affordable options to consider. | *by* MARGARET SWAINE

FOR CENTURIES, EUROPEANS HAVE BELIEVED THAT a visit to a spa is important for maintaining health rather than just beauty. In Germany, for example, up until 1995, all adults were entitled to a kur (cure) vacation every two years. Their economy hasn't kept pace with the cost of this kind of program, and now subsidized spa holidays have been reduced to every four years and only with a doctor's referral.

However, the traditional bads (spa towns) are still thriving, with most guests paying their own way. Ger-

many has more than 350 certified bads that, by official decree, must offer a healthy lifestyle to their visitors beyond thermal pools and saunas – that means classical concerts to soothe the soul, extensive parklands and gardens to encourage walking, and cultural events to expand the mind. Imagine that in North America!

We are just catching on to the idea of travelling to wellness here. Two spas that offer health-focused programs at a good value are Red Mountain Resort in Utah and Spa Eastman in Quebec.

TOP: MARIL LEVAC; INSERT: COURTESY OF RED MOUNTAIN RESORT

TOP: GUESTS PARTAKE IN RED MOUNTAIN RESORT'S "TAI CHI ON THE ROCKS" CLASS IN SNOW CANYON. BOTTOM: A PEACEFUL STREAM FLOWS THROUGH THE CENTER OF THE RED MOUNTAIN RESORT PROPERTY.

OUTSIDE CANADA

Red Mountain Resort, nestled in southwestern Utah's red-rock bluffs, has a breathtaking natural setting as its backdrop and offers a comprehensive selection of fitness classes, hiking and other outdoor adventures, along with nutritious cuisine (with calorie counts for each dish) and personal discovery seminars.

In 2013, the resort made a contractual agreement with the nearby Intermountain LiVe Well Center in St. George to offer a special 3½-hour health assessment to their guests. Participants fill out a health questionnaire and track their food and beverage intake for three days prior to their appointment and a baseline profile is created.

During the assessment, they meet with a doctor, a dietitian, an exercise physiologist and a health coach who analyze their blood, measure their body composition in the Bod Pod (an \$85,000 machine that gives fat and muscle percentages), assess their fitness levels, test their metabolic rate and examine their diet. At the end, a game plan is drawn up for each individual that outlines specific steps to improve their health and well-being.

I spent a few days at Red Mountain Resort to get a better handle on this new wellness trend. While there, I signed up for the metabolic rate test and the cardiovascular metabolic assessment. I was surprised to learn that I needed 1,420 calories a day just to maintain vital functions (this is normal, but, like many, I thought 1,200 was the average). To lose weight, I was advised to avoid going below this and to increase my exercise levels.

This was reinforced by my cardio fitness, which turned out to be poor. Several years ago, it was measured as excellent, but after a sporting accident in which I broke my wrist, I traded impact sports for Pilates and weights. Clearly, I need to do more exercise, and I was given a 12-week cardio program to get me back on track.

The resort has a large exercise room, so I started right away on my program. For the rest of the time, I kept busy with fitness classes like Pilates, stretching and full-body MELT (great for range of motion and pain relief), as well as spiritual and meditation seminars and spa treatments. The activity schedule started every day with a guided hike at 7:20 a.m. and continued all day long with a variety of activities (often several to choose from on any given hour) until 8:45 p.m.

At the resort's Sagestone Spa & Salon, I booked the Rejuvenating Detoxification Package, which consists of two dry-brush treatments, followed by a warm seaweed and clay wrap (washed off in a Vichy shower), two massages and a facial spaced out over the course of my stay.

For my spiritual health, I went to Barbara Harrison for a numerology, tea leaf reading and rune casting session. While I can't say she read my future, there was a lot of good energy in the room and a few specific acronyms (JLR?) that will likely have meaning for me this year.



LEFT: ENJOY A DAY IN ONE OF THE NORDIC BATHS AT SPA EASTMAN. RIGHT: TONIC CUISINE IS COLOURFUL, TASTY AND ENERGIZING AT SPA EASTMAN



if you go

RED MOUNTAIN RESORT

The simplest way to get to Red Mountain Resort is to fly to Las Vegas McCarran International Airport and enjoy a scenic two-hour drive. Air Canada offers regular non-stop flights to Las Vegas from Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal. WestJet offers non-stop flights from Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and other cities, depending on the day and time of year.

Shuttle-van service to and from the Las Vegas airport to the resort is available through Aztec Shuttle at 435-656-9040. aztecshuttle.com

A five-day, four-night Rejuvenate & Live Well package starts at \$1,725 US. The four-day, three-night Weekend Warrior Retreat package starts at \$885 US. redmountainresort.com

SPA EASTMAN

Spa Eastman is a 90-minute drive south of Montreal's main airport. Air Canada, Porter Airlines and WestJet offer regular flights to Montreal from a number of Canadian cities. Via Rail from Toronto, Ottawa or Quebec City is another option to get to Montreal. Either rent a car or book a shuttle directly with the hotel from the Montreal airport. The Health Immersion Package (available in five, seven and 14-night packages) starts at \$1,582. spa-eastman.com

IN CANADA

Spa Eastman is surrounded by 326 acres of picturesque wooded lands and rolling hills in Quebec's Eastern Townships. Founded in 1977, it's a veritable health village and Canada's first destination health spa. Since the beginning, Spa Eastman's restaurant has been offering a cuisine that focuses on healthy nutrition, serving up foods with little to no processing, organic first cold-pressed oils and natural sugars. Spa Eastman was awarded "best spa in Canada" by Spafinder's 2015 Wellness Travel Awards.

The Health Immersion Package (available for five, seven or 14 nights) is the resort's most complete program. Upon arrival, you meet with a health coach, who helps determine which aspects of your life need improvement, whether it's weight, sleep or stress.

A naturopath and a kinesiologist create a program to accomplish these health goals. As with Red Mountain Resort, guests can have private consultations and/or join in on the many wellness seminars, such as healthy cooking, stress management and meditation. They also have access to a daily program of physical activity, such as fitness walks, yoga, cardio-boxing, stretching and muscle toning. The focus is on helping you find the keys to the

art of living healthy and fit.

Spa Eastman also invites its clientele to take the waters in the European way and learn about the benefits of contrasting hot and cold water on their overall health based on the Kneipp approach (made famous in the German spa town of Bad Wörishofen, where Father Sebastian Kneipp, the "water doctor," first cured illnesses in 1855).

The Eastman-les-Bains thermotherapy zone includes a hammam (eucalyptus steam bath), a Finnish sauna (dry sauna), an infrared sauna (dry sauna), outdoor hot tubs, a polar bath and a Kneipp circuit for the arms and legs, an igloo shower with peppermint essential oil mists, indoor and outdoor pools, and an ecological pond for swimming (which is open year-round).

The resort's Pursuit of Health option provides a follow-up by their professionals after the guest leaves and involves staying in touch to answer any questions and give encouragement throughout the follow-up process (available for three months to one year).

Both places can help set a person on the path to better health. And when the resolve falters, there's always the opportunity – and perhaps the necessity – for a return visit. *W*