



SPA EXOTIC

Next time you self-indulge, bypass the basic massage and opt for a Harmonizing Gemstone Treatment or one of these extraordinary services. BY KARA WILLIAMS



*Next to diamonds,
spas are a girl's best friend! →*

AFTER A DAY OF AIR TRAVEL OR a long stint in the car, a trusty deep-tissue massage is just the ticket for relieving sore muscles or working out tight knots. Lately, however, I've been trying to expand my horizons a bit when I travel—especially since resort spas are an ideal place to try new treatments. After all, what better place to pamper yourself than on vacation, with a treatment you just can't find at home? Following are some spa services to consider on your next trip. Some of them are trendy (will we still see diamond facials on the menu in five years?) and others are timeless (ancient Thai techniques have been practiced for centuries). But all are worth experiencing.

The Diamond Standard

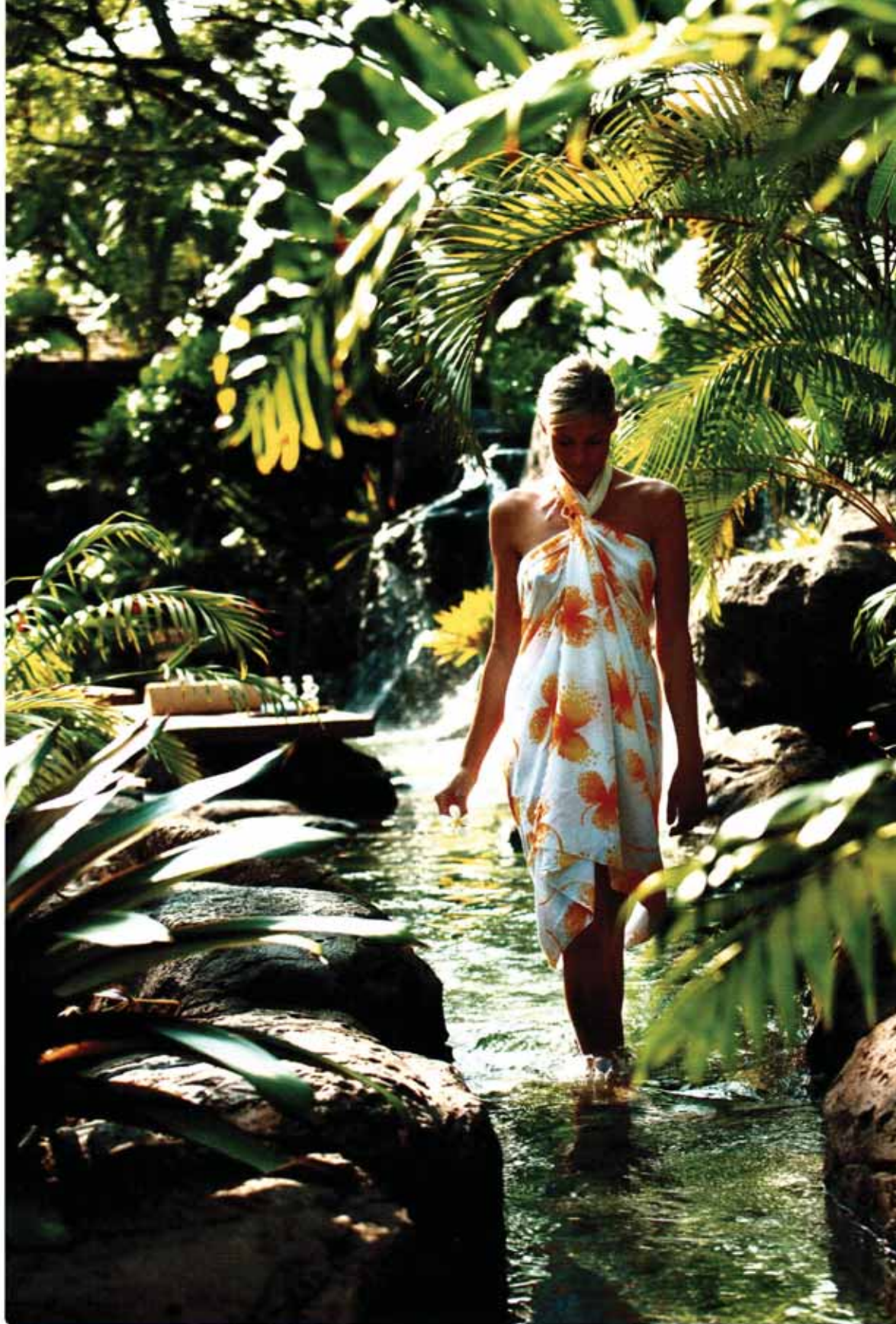
Do minute amounts of diamonds, gems and crystals in lotions and oils truly help purify, brighten and polish your skin? Personally, I think the jury's still out on that one...but if you have a free hour on vacation, plus a couple hundred dollars to spare, a diamond facial or gemstone massage may leave you with baby-smooth skin for the rest of your trip.

FIND IT HERE At **Trump SoHo** in New York City, the *Harmonizing Gemstone Treatment* will feed your body with essential trace elements, while semi-precious stones are applied to each chakra to rebalance the body's energy. The *Five Diamond Gemstone Facial* at **ARIA** in Las Vegas features a special serum rich in micronized diamonds and extract of pure orchid to smooth fine lines.

Asian Influence

You don't need to travel halfway around the world to experience the soothing and spiritual influence of therapists well schooled in the art of Thai massage. East meets West in many resort spas, where traditional European-style facials are on the menu right alongside the ancient Chinese art of reflexology, Javanese Lulur ritual or Hindu Ayurvedic massage.

FIND IT HERE Interestingly, there is a vast array of Asian therapies in the Caribbean's **Six Senses Spa** in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. Herbal packs with turmeric and lemongrass are applied to the skin in the Thai Herbal Compress treatment (which is said to improve one's qi flow).



YOU'LL FIND SEAWEED CONCENTRATE AT OCEANFRONT RESORTS AND ESSENTIAL OILS INFUSED WITH ALPINE WILDFLOWERS AT MOUNTAIN SPAS.



Indigenous Ingredients

Using locally sourced products that feature extracts made from area plants, fruits and flowers has become the norm at spas worldwide. You'll find seaweed concentrate at oceanfront resorts and essential oils infused with alpine wildflowers at mountain spas. Same goes for clay, mud and salts used in body wraps and scrubs.

FIND IT HERE *The Transpiration treatment at Spa Montage in Deer Valley, Utah, ends with a rhythmic massage using nutritive aspen-bark extract. Spa services at Le Sereno on St. Barts use skin-care products by Ligne St. Barth, manufactured on the island.*

Whole-Body Wellness

Instead of offering isolated treatments that make a guest feel good, many resort spas offer wellness coaching, nutrition counseling and personal training that can help vacationers effect beneficial changes in their health long after they've returned home. While you might not be able to fit in a visit to the dietitian during a busy workweek, perhaps you can take some time out of a beach day to seek counsel on a long-lingering health concern with an expert practitioner.

FIND IT HERE *At Hualalai Resort on the Big Island's Kohala Coast, book a session with a chiropractor, acupuncturist, physical therapist or even a holistic sound/energy healer.*

Just for Men

More often than not, I'll walk into a resort spa's co-ed relaxation room to find robed men waiting for therapists to call their names. Indeed, spa services are hardly *just for the girls*; men find therapeutic massages hugely beneficial to sports performance and overall well-being. Gentlemen's facials cater to male skin with non-perfumed products, and special shaves hark back to the classic, old-fashioned barber shop.

FIND IT HERE *I love that the Esperanza Resort in Cabo San Lucas appeals to men's tastes with the Mexican Beer and Lime Facial, which features steaming hot towels to open pores and a massage that eases tension in the neck, shoulders and scalp. ☺*



INTERLUDE RELAXATION

A treatment can be 50m of an entire local ingredients, experiences and willingness to sit and submit to the actions of trained professionals. Step be the norm and into a new space.