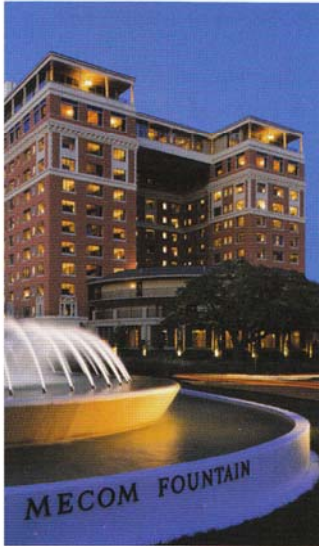


3 Unique Spa Experiences
to Refresh and Revitalize

Day at the Spa by CHAU NGUYEN

I like to relax. In my work hard play hard lifestyle, I try my best to include time for a little pampering. So when Yellow Magazine asked me to check out some of Houston's top hotel spas, I jumped at the chance. Show me a massage table and I'm getting on it faster than you can say "face down".



Hotel Zaza (zaspahouston.com)

Hotel Zaza embodies all that is cool. Right now, this is Houston's "it" hotel. Everything about the hotel is swank – the décor, the lounge music that plays throughout, and the guests who have passed through its doors (including Beyonce, Jennifer Lopez and hubby Marc Anthony). And, as I found out, the spa is swank, as well.

Nowhere else will you find massage treatments with names like The Big Chill or Who's Your Daddy (prenatal massage). I indulged myself with the Thai-Gold Therapy (50 minutes for \$130). While its name may sound less edgy than the others, it was a wild and relaxing blend of sponge bath, body wrap and massage.

I was smothered in an algae sea wrap followed by a warm sponge bath in which my therapist trickled warm water onto my skin. Finally, warm volcanic rocks were gently placed onto my back followed by a relaxing massage.

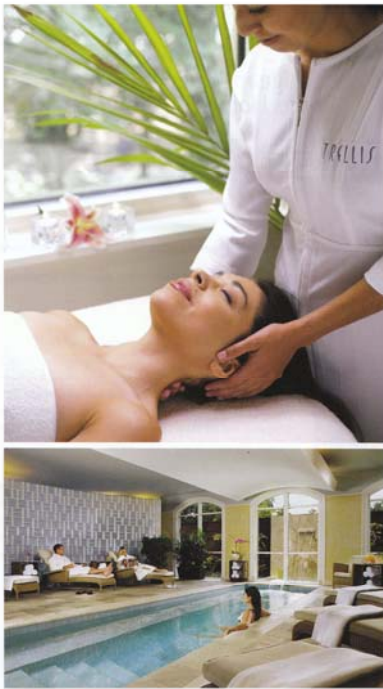
It was the most unique massage I've ever had, and I don't think I've ever been treated to a personal sponging. If you're not comfortable in just towels and your birthday suit, you'll want to try another treatment. A rinse is just not the same in your skivvies.

I thought my ZaSpa experience was over until I entered the Sanctuary room. It's really an oxygen bar, only there are four twin size beds laced in cushy white linens arranged like hospital beds. Did I feel more revitalized as I was laying there inhaling peppermint flavored air? I am not sure, but it sure seemed like the right thing to do to top off a great treatment.

ZaSpa, you're more than a Spa. You're relaxation with an edge.

Chau Nguyen is a former reporter and anchor for KHOU TV. An avid triathlete and traveler, you can also read about her adventures at pinkgurugal.com





Trellis, The Spa at The Houstonian (trellisspa.com)

If you want to experience a true “home away from home”, Trellis Spa is the place. The spa is nestled inside the wooded complex of the Houstonian Hotel, Club & Spa, near Loop 610 and Memorial Drive, which promotes a sanctuary feel. With 19 treatment rooms in a space that occupies 17,000 square feet, Trellis Spa is one of Houston’s largest.

My day at Trellis Spa began with a divine aromatherapy massage (\$120) that was fifty minutes in duration. It was a Swedish massage combined with aromatherapy oils and I chose the detox blends, which is one of an assortment of blends from which you may choose.

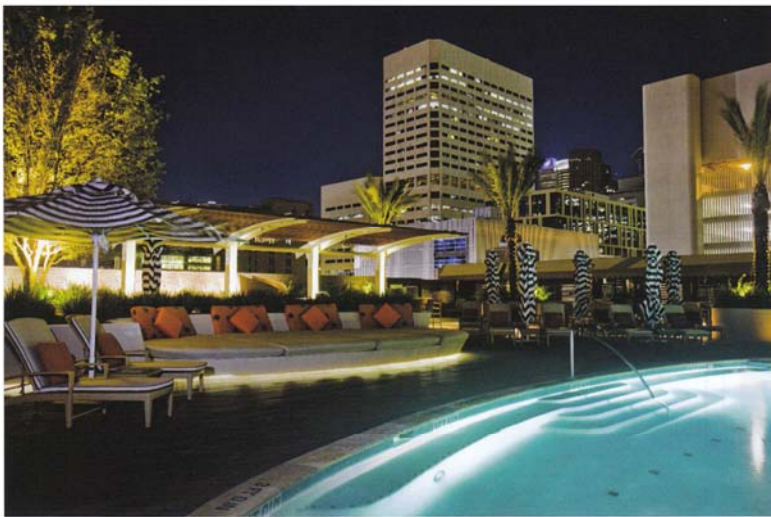
I followed my massage with a light lunch on the patio. I had the seared chicken breast with pasta salad and appreciated that the menu provided a calorie count for us weight watchers. Lunches are approximately \$20, or may be included in a spa package deal.

Then it was on to Trellis’ Signature Renovateur facial (\$160). Believe it or not, the facial includes a spread of roasted sunflower seeds and oils massaged onto your face. I must admit, it tasted good enough to eat. The facial is finished with a relaxing shoulder and neck massage. Ahhhh....

Finally, I was whisked to the spa’s hand and foot area where only natural products are utilized for manicures and pedicures. This fact was punctuated by my manicurist, who was five months pregnant. Manicures are \$50.

All told, this was a half day experience. But if you have a whole day, take advantage of it. Trellis Spa boasts an indoor float pool, men’s and ladies’ steamrooms and Jacuzzis, and two rooms for couples with showers and tubs.

Trellis Spa, you had me at welcome.



The Spa at Four Seasons Hotel Houston (fourseasons.com/houston/spa)

If you are living or working in downtown, The Spa at Four Seasons Hotel might just be the antidote to your stress. Albeit smaller than Trellis Spa, it definitely lives up to the Four Seasons reputation, offering a high-end facility and superior service.

I checked out the Relaxing Ritual Spa package (\$250), which combines a one hour aromatherapy massage, a one hour facial customized to suit the needs of your skin, and a poolside lunch. Inside the quiet and dimly lit treatment room, it’s easy to forget that you are inside a high-rise hotel in the middle of downtown Houston.

My only regret was that I didn’t bring a bathing suit to sunbathe at the pool, which was recently renovated. (Rumor has it that the spa will be renovated next).

