

PEOPLE OF THE YEAR: WHO MADE THE LIST

ASPEN

MIDWINTER 2005 \$4.95

magazine

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**The Best
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The Best New Pampering

The St. Regis Resort Aspen's Remède Spa takes indulgence to a new level in Aspen. **Janet O'Grady** discovers how.

I knew I needed something to revive my overworked, over-partied self right before the holidays, but what would it be? Plastic surgery? Too drastic. A weekend in St. Bart's? Not enough time. Turns out I found the best solution right in my own backyard at the new Remède Spa at Aspen's luxurious St. Regis Resort Aspen hotel.

I have always been surprised that despite our town's status as a health and fitness capital, we have never had a destination spa—until now. "Destination spa," in this case, means if you're staying at a resort's hotel, you never have to go out into the cold after spa-ing. All you need to do is slip back to your room in a fluffy terry-cloth robe and flop into bed. As for locals, now there is no need to fly off to Arizona or California for a little break from winter; just check into the

The Luxe Way: Remède's private treatment rooms spare no luxury; all are outfitted with high thread-count sheets and cashmere blankets.

No boot camp, Remède is a total pleasure zone for anyone who considers relaxing massages and body wraps, facials, manicures, and pedicures more important than wandering through a meditation maze or taking a nutrition class.

St. Regis for a quick escape. And if you are a celebrity, this private slope-side sanctuary is the perfect place to avoid the paparazzi or anyone else who might rub you the wrong way.

The 15,000-square-foot Remède Spa, with an adjacent 3,000-square-foot state-of-the-art fitness center, is the first in what will be an international line of luxury spas at select St. Regis hotels. (The next are scheduled for New York and San Francisco.) Designed by Barbara and Richard Mullen of the Aspen-based firm Poss Architecture and Planning, Remède offers a relaxed take on luxe. This is



not the kind of spa where you come to unblock your chi or chakras, or where, in the middle of a massage, you are reprimanded for all the Krug and foie gras that you enjoyed the night before. (Come to think of it, what better hangover helper could there be than an afternoon at a gloriously soothing spa like this?) No boot camp, Remède is a total pleasure zone for anyone who considers relaxing massages, body wraps, facials, manicures, and pedicures more important than wandering through a meditation maze or taking a nutrition class. The focus is on luxurious pampering by an impeccably trained staff of beauty experts and masseuses ready to rub, scrub, wax, primp, and otherwise spoil you into a state of bliss.



Above: The couple's massage room is equipped with side-by-side massage tables and a bathtub for two. Above, Left: Truffles, brownies, and sparkling Italian wine are complimentary in Remède's plush pretreatment waiting room.

Housed in the hotel's lower floor, Remède makes up for the lack of view and open-air massage rooms with a palette of earth tones and natural materials: wood, stone, granite, and fabrics in soothing shades of beige, brown, and a yellow as golden as the aspen leaves in autumn. The feel is warm but sophisticated; the decor suits our mountain setting. After you check in, an attendant ushers you into a restful waiting room where you can curl up on one of two chocolate-brown sofas with Marilyn Monroe curves. Call the surrounding art organic contemporary; a bold cantilevered stone sculpture, for instance, greets you outside the waiting area, and inside, rock crystals are showcased in wall niches.

Since I was not there to lose weight, I indulged in the complimentary rich

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homemade brownies; there are also truffles and glasses of chilled Italian sparkling wine that seem to materialize out of Aspen's thin air. You can hang out in an adjacent room with a gas fireplace and, as you rest on brown leather loungers, inhale hits of oxygen from tubes around the room. You'll find, of course, the usual spa amenities, such as steam baths and 15 cocoonlike treatment rooms. One of my favorite design elements is the inlay of black and white pebbles in the showers, which make for a sensual experience as the soles of your feet tread across the floor.

“Taking the waters,” a popular ritual in mountain towns of 19th-century Europe, is at the center of the spa experience here. Remède's stunning water room pays homage to one of the West's geologic wonders: hot springs.



Wave of Relaxation: Stacked stones form the spa's hot and cold plunge pools.



Breathing Easy: A visit to Remède's oxygen lounge may include unwinding on one of the soft brown leather chaise longues by the fireplace and enjoying a free session on an oxygen tank.

Is it possible that great massages have the same effect on the brain as chocolate?

You'll walk through an intimate rock passageway lined with candles to enter a grotto, an underworld of water and heat and subdued light. Flick a switch and as many as four small waterfalls begin cascading down the glistening rock walls into the pool. And if you insist on meditating or otherwise pursuing inner peace, tune your senses into the sounds of gurgling water and the play of indirect lighting—inspired by how light tiptoes down the cracks of the narrow slot canyons of the American West.

The Remède Spa has its own brand of products, which use the finest natural ingredients, and its treatments speak the international language of relaxation and beauty. Heated massage tables are lined with exquisite cotton sheets with high thread counts, and you are covered with cashmere blankets. I loved the spa's Complete Renewal Massage. What's not to love about it? A masseuse envelops your ski-boot-weary feet in

warm paraffin, then massages your scalp with warm oil and finishes with an intensely relaxing massage. The menu also focuses on treatments to help counter the effects of high altitude, such as a hydrating, body-refining wrap and a hot-stone massage using local basalt stones from the Roaring Fork Valley. Reflexology is offered, though I also wished Thai and Shiatsu massage were too, since these modalities are particularly effective for athletic bodies.

A couple of hours after checking into Remède Spa, I felt as if I'd been on an all-too-brief vacation. I craved more—is it possible that great massages have the same effect on the brain as chocolate? As I headed home, I dreamed of making Remède Spa a destination for a long weekend. Who needs St. Bart's anyway?

Janet O'Grady is editor in chief of Aspen magazine.