

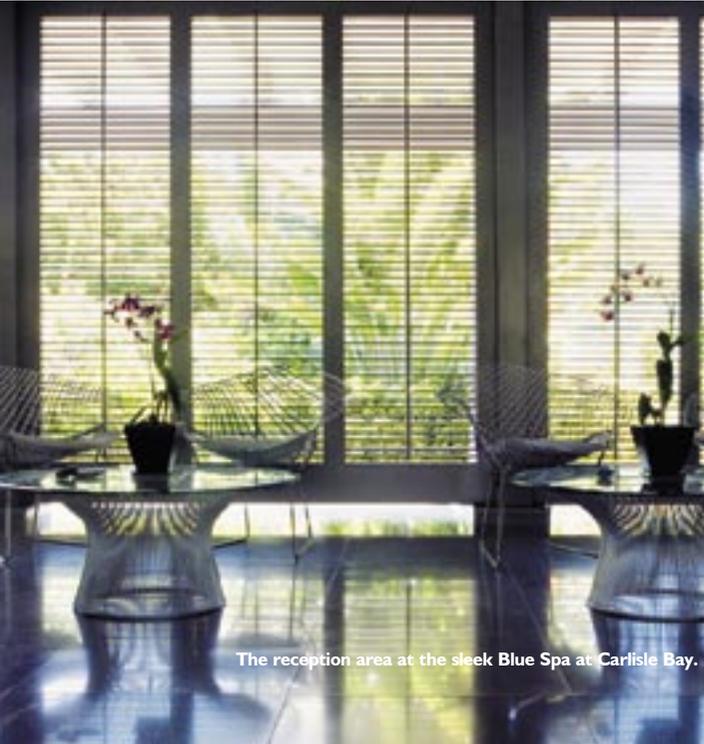
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A view from Silver Rain, Cayman Islands.



Kamalame Cay's Balinese style overwater spa, Bahamas.



The reception area at the sleek Blue Spa at Carlisle Bay.

There's nothing but pleasure on offer in this gorgeous paradise of balmy breezes and immaculate beaches. Six hot new spas are now setting the pace in the idyllic island surroundings. From past life regression in Anguilla, to starlit spa sessions in the British Virgin Islands, Caribbean resorts are going all out in their new generation spas: exotic flavours, bio-products, fantastic views and, of course, the legendary mellow Caribbean atmosphere to relax in. Far from the detox camps, this is the ultimate place for indulgence.

KAMALAME CAY, BAHAMAS

The Spa: Cool and relaxed – The first over-water spa in the Bahamas recently opened at Kamalame Cay – a tiny 19-room private island hide-away just off Andros Island. Charming pastel-coloured cottages hide in the lush palms and luxury prevails with stone features, striking wooden furniture and huge baths. The views through the muslin-draped French doors are entirely exotic, stretching as far as the barrier reef.

The 2 000-square-foot spa is simply amazing. Sitting over the turquoise waters, the two-story wooden construction is reminiscent of Bali's finest. A pier leads to five treatment rooms where grand floor-to-ceiling windows open up onto the sea. The real meaning behind "bay windows"! The mix of textures is ideal: thick luxurious cottons, wood and mother of pearl-encrusted mirrors. You can forget about having a tape of sea-sounds running in the background – you can actually hear the soothing rush of the ocean through the floorboards and all around. The spa is all about indulgence. You can arrange for champagne lunches on the veranda, or simply go for an alfresco yoga session.

The local products are all natural scrubs and oils made by Biotropica, for an authentic island experience. Try the one-hour Bahamian Boreh – a twist on the traditional Balinese treatment – the massage increases circulation and soothes muscles, as well as exfoliating skin. For a little fruit, pick the Kamalame Coconut Body Glow for sensitive skin, which uses freshly shredded young coconut in a gentle body scrub.

Fishing fans aren't forgotten either: the Fisherman's Friend massage

Blissed-out

A spa getaway in the sun-kissed Caribbean is a far-flung fantasy for most, but Rowena Carr-Allinson brings it closer to home by checking out its top six decadent pamper spots.

Massages on the beach at Cap Juluca.

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looks after your neck, shoulders and arms, while the Fishing Widow's Revenge is a full day five-treatment package, with lunch included, to keep you out of trouble while he goes bone-fishing.

Room rates, excluding taxes and airport transfers, range from R3 442. Rates include all food, house wines and spirits, use of snorkelling equipment, sea kayaks, access to tennis facilities and an oceanfront freshwater swimming pool. The full day Fishing Widow's Revenge spa package starts from R3 528. For more details visit www.kamalame.com, call (242) 368 6281 or e-mail info@kamalame.com.

PETER ISLAND, BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

The Spa at Peter Island: Sea and Self – Peter Island is a private resort set in the unspoilt paradise of the British Virgin Islands. The rough coastline, dotted with pristine white palm-fringed sandy beaches, has the genuine barefoot-luxury feel with sea, sun, sand and solitude.

It's definitely worth a visit for the spa and snorkelling alone. The area is dotted with protected dive sites and is recognised as one of the world's best. Even the island's very own Deadman's Beach is teaming with colourful marine life.

The 10 000-square-foot spa at Peter Island is set over five acres with 10 indoor-treatment rooms, two outdoor-thatched bohios, private steam rooms, a salon, a spa café, a large pool, paradise-like landscaped gardens, a kilometer-long beach and the most spectacular views along Big Reef Bay. Everywhere you turn fresh exotic blooms remind you of your Caribbean surroundings.

Pick a West Indian Honey & Sesame Seed Glow to exfoliate and moisturise; a Tropical Lime & Ginger Buff with local island salt and lemongrass; or a deliciously fragrant Caribbean Coffee Polish, mixing finely ground Caribbean coffee, vanilla and spice oil. If you prefer a spot of DIY, try the Thalasso Mud Bowls Alfresco, where you become the therapist. Take the mineral-rich Thalasso Mud down to the beach and have your own private mud scrub.

The Spa Sea and Self Package, from R22 446 for two, includes five nights in an ocean-view room, 75-minute Signature Series massage, one 50-minute Signature Series Body Scrub, one 80-minute Signature Series Wrap/Scrub, one Thalasso Mud Bowl, and the standard package amenities, such as round trip transfer.

CARLISLE BAY, ANTIGUA

The Blue Spa: Smooth and Sexy – Carlisle Bay is the leader in a

new breed of Caribbean hideaways. With an ultra-modern designer setting, as opposed to the traditional Caribbean style, it brings a hint of London to the beach. Suave and sophisticated, Carlisle Bay juggles local influences with Asian and European. The food is extraordinary and the service pristine. Huge bedrooms with sea views come with double bathtubs and extravagantly colourful outdoor daybeds, with billowing curtains on the balcony for privacy.

The 17 000-square-foot Blue Spa is in keeping with the resort's sleek style. There's a contemporary James Bond feel to the two-storey pavilion, designed by guru Mary Fox Linton in shades of grey. It's no surprise all treatments include a "for your eyes only" energising treatment. Aromatherapy Associates Products used here are 100 percent pure, and the natural plant oils don't contain any mineral oils, genetically modified (GM) products or animal ingredients, save for beeswax. Try the Tropical Fruit Scrub, which uses fresh Antiguan-grown pineapples, mangoes and papayas, or take a yoga class in the open-air pavilion.

The spa package, from R30 610 for an ocean or beach suite, includes seven nights for two, four treatments (per suite per week), full breakfast daily, afternoon tea daily, a three-course dinner and coffee daily, with a full choice from the à la carte menus at Indigo on the Beach or East restaurants. Leisure activities include two films each evening in the hotel's screening room, watersports, tennis, use of the gym and beginners yoga or Pilates classes. For more information log onto www.carlisle-bay.com or call +1 (268) 484 0000. You can also contact The Blue Spa on +1 (268) 484 0025, or fax: +1 (268) 484 0001.

CAP JULUCA, ANGUILLA

Spa and Wellness service: Chakra and Shiatsu – This Moorish-style resort, separated from the outside world, is a sparkling white and azure sanctuary set on a beach that stretches into the horizon. Rooms are set back from the 2.4km beach with private terraces, huge beds and gigantic bath tubs. Golf carts whizz around the manicured grounds and even bring spa services to your door – no wonder this is a celebrity hideout.

Cap Juluca has a different approach to their spa. The first obvious difference is that treatments take place in your room – following many indigenous cultures' belief that the heart of healing begins at home. The Mind, Body and Spirit programme, its most daring venture, includes shamanic work, psychospiritual work, yoga, intuitive healing, energetics and spiritual astrology. It's all about detoxifying your body, mind and soul.

To delve deep, try Coming Home with transpersonal therapist Diana Bourel. The sessions use storytelling, channelling, re-birthing and bioenergetics, as well as past-life material to get to your inner spiritual core and find out more about yourself. The idea is to lay to rest the issues that have been troubling you, whether

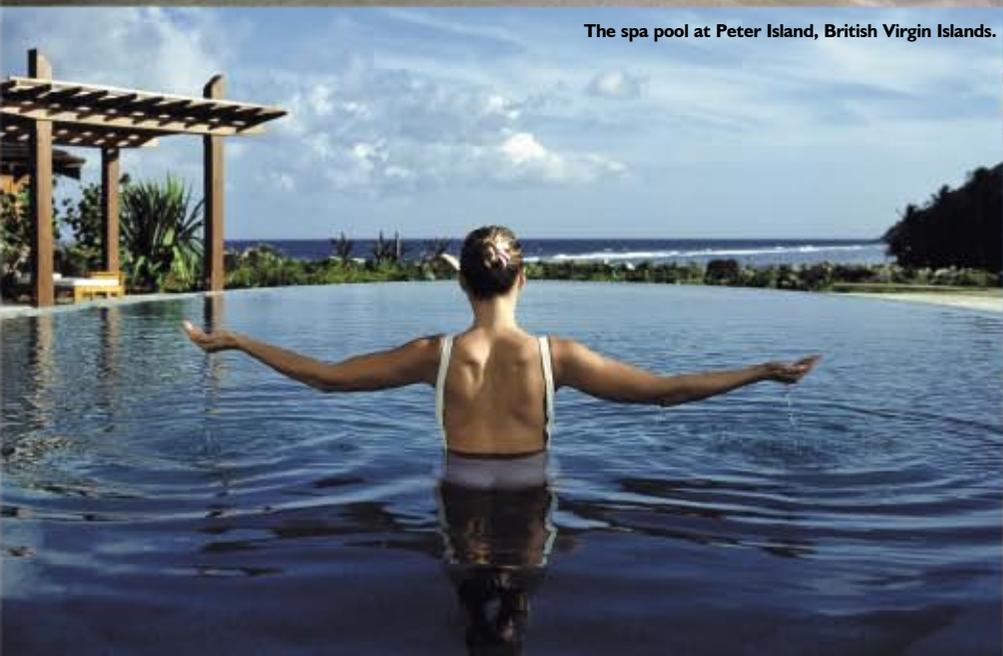




Spa treatment room with a view at Carlisle Bay.



A treatment room at Silver Rain, Cayman Islands.



The spa pool at Peter Island, British Virgin Islands.



A picture perfect beach at Calisle Bay, Antigua.

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from this life or one gone by. Other treatments in the programme include the Tree of Life massage; the “Soul Awakening”, evolved from Absuchanka, a mystical healing art using crystals and gemstones, and astrology readings with the extraordinarily-whiskered Hubert Delamotte.

For the more conservative, there’s an extensive massage menu using all sorts of goodies, from island fruit, spices, jasmine and frangipani oils, aromatherapy and shiatsu to Tai chi, pre-natal massages, reiki and tailor-made fitness programmes, including cardio-workouts on the beach with a former professional cricketer.

In the Mind, Body and Spirit Programme, treatments are offered à la carte, with rates ranging from R184 to R1 165 per person. The programme is also offered as a complete treatment plan, starting at R16 964 per person including individual treatments with Bourel, Delamotte and Liot, an aromatherapy massage, and four group classes, either yoga or Life in Movement Energetics. The full package, including five nights accommodation, half board and treatments starts from R35 600. Find out more at www.capjuluca.com/mindbodyandspirit.asp.

For more information, check Leading Hotels of the World at <http://www.lhw.com> or contact Cap Juluca on +1 (264) 497 6779 or visit their site www.capjuluca.com.

LA SAMANNA, ST MARTIN

The Elysée Spa: Chic and sleek – La Samanna is a glamorous resort overlooking the Baie Longue on the French half of St Martin. If you enjoy good food and pristine surroundings in privacy, this is the place for you. Its spa, named *Elysée* after the “abode for the blessed” in Greek mythology, has eight soothing massage rooms, two hydrotherapy rooms and a separate beauty salon. With rich redwoods and hand-hewn Italian travertine stone floors, the spa blends in with the resort’s cool whitewashed look, dotted with colourful Caribbean touches.

The choice is extensive, with everything from shiatsu to reflexology, Thai massages and hot stone therapy, as well as Pilates and yoga, and there’s even a personal trainer on hand for one-on-one training.

Since you’re in the French West Indies, try the French body polish that leaves the skin smooth and silky; or if you’ve over indulged, opt for the sunburn rescue treatment, an ultra soothing aloe-based pack in a thermal wrap. For an alfresco session, book into a private treatment room with an outdoor shower and shaded pergola.

For something different, try the Thalatherm

dome. Get smothered in soothing gel and seaweed before the dome is lowered over your body and heated, releasing minerals from the seaweed into the skin.

The spa package includes a six-day Energy Programme from R8 273 and includes one body scrub, two hot detoxifying seaweed wraps, two hot restorative seaweed wraps, four Balneotherapy sessions, four 55-minute massages and two facials, including extra care for eyes and neck area. The three-night Ultimate Spa Adventure includes accommodation in a deluxe ocean-view room, round trip transfers, nutritionist consultations, plus a spa package for two people (with anti-stress, revitalising, slimming and beauty treatments), Pilates session for two, training session for two, 3 buffet meals daily from the special healthy spa menus and a one-day Mercedes car rental to explore the island.

RITZ CARLTON, GRAND CAYMAN

Silver Rain Spa: Shiny and slippery – The brand new Ritz Carlton resort in Grand Cayman spans 144 acres from Seven Mile Beach to the North Sound. With 365 guestrooms, five restaurants, a tennis centre, a golf course and a shopping centre, it naturally had to come with an amazing 20 000 square-foot spa.

Designed by New York-based D’Aquino Monaco and the legendary Swiss skincare company, La Prairie, the spa’s theme is water, and indeed it runs throughout. The reception area is an ode to running water, from the walls of faceted glass and quartzite, to the river gushing beneath the floor of carved translucent glass – raindrops, rivers and rivulets create a surreal sparkle. It has a co-ed lounge, 17 treatment rooms and three hydrotherapy rooms designed by La Prairie. Whether you choose a massage in softly falling rain, an aromatic bath with Cayman orchids or a crushed coriander exfoliation, you’ll be submerged into another world.

The Silver Rain Package includes a Silver Rain facial, manicure and pedicure and the signature treatment, Into the Silver Rain. Accommodation, airport transportation, full breakfast overlooking the sea, a spa lunch and a Ritz Carlton bathrobe are all included – starting from R6 913 per night. Minimum stay is three nights. For more information, visit www.ritzcarlton.com.

GETTING THERE:

You can fly to the Bahamas and Grand Cayman from Jo’burg via London on British Airways. Fly to the British Virgin Islands also via London on Virgin Atlantic and catch a transfer on Caribbean Star Airlines. Virgin will fly to Antigua via London. Both Virgin Atlantic and British Airways will get you to Anguilla via London, with a stopover at the Solomon Islands using West Indies Airways and a transfer with Caribbean Star. Air France will fly you to St Martin via Paris. Also ask about ferry transfers between islands. ●



‘Whether you choose a massage in softly falling rain, an aromatic bath with Cayman orchids or a crushed coriander exfoliation, you’ll be submerged into another world’



An al fresco massage at Cap Juluca.



A pastel pink Caribbean home, Antigua.



Silver Rain, Cayman Islands.



The Spa at Peter Island, British Virgin Islands.



Gorgeous views of Jost Van Dyke, British Virgin Islands.



Hell's Gate, a fantastic diving spot where the Atlantic meets the Caribbean, Antigua.

A fisherman at sunset, Antigua.