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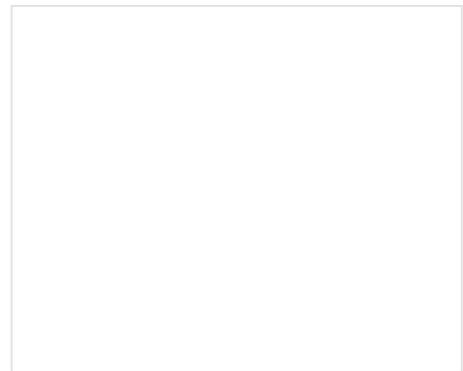
October 30, 2008

The Spa at The Bellagio, Las Vegas

It's the jaw-dropping backdrop to Ocean's 11 but you'd need to have stolen a fortune to be able to afford the spa

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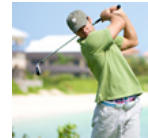
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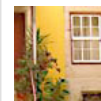
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USP One of the posher hotels on the Las Vegas Strip should be visited for its conservatory alone – and the spa’s signature hot and cold stone facial.

AMBIENCE The Bellagio is the hotel where George Clooney, Brad Pitt and Matt Damon swindled a \$150 million from under Andy Garcia’s nose in Ocean’s 11 while it’s dancing fountains did their Moulin Rouge routine outside.

The fountains are an amazing sight, but don’t quite top the hotel’s conservatory – a botanical garden straight out of Alice in Wonderland with smiling faced trees, butterflies the size of eagles perching on huge poppies.

In contrast to the hotel’s lobby the 65,000 sq ft spa opts for a subtle décor of granite, onyx and walnut. There are small pools, lit waterfalls behind aqua-coloured glass and hand-blown glass all incorporated into the décor. The effect is becalming because guests seemed comfortable enough to take a nude dip in the whirlpool. The spa’s four couples’ rooms are popular with honeymooners.

Like everything in Las Vegas the Bellagio spa is big and there are 56 treatment rooms. It’s also a popular spa with men. On Superbowl weekends there can be a 40 per cent ratio of men at the spa.

EXPERIENCE A variation of exotic teas and plenty of fruit welcomed me in the relaxation area, as well as a large TV (quite common in Vegas) making it a little difficult to relax.

On average Vegas has a relative humidity of 10 per cent which explained why my hair had stayed straight as a bone since I’d arrived. Because the weather can be very drying my therapist Julia told me a “polishing, smoothing and hydrating” facial would be extremely beneficial, so I chose the Bellagio Signature Stone Facial. Julia – 37 and wrinkle-free – used it herself and called it a “miracle treatment”.

Firstly she covered my face with a cleansing gel, then an exfoliating citrus cream that felt a little like sand while I was being “microdermabraded”. Then my face was steamed with ozone to open up my pores. She applied a combination of serums and then gently rubbed the stones over my face. This acts as a form of light lymphatic drainage. It felt slightly odd but not unpleasant. Finally more creams to puff out the skin before a pink seaweed mask was put over my face to help my skin absorb them all.

The therapists don’t stick rigidly to a set spa menu as the spa’s director lets them choose their favourite treatments and Julia, a wealth of information about the products she applied and why she preferred them, had been working at the Bellagio for ten years. A company called Vie, who have been in the seaweed business since 1971, well before companies like La Mer tapped into its healing properties, made all the products that she used.

FOOD There isn’t a restaurant dedicated solely to the spa, but the Bellagio has a pool café serving “light American fare” for breakfast and lunch, as well as a number of juice bars.

IN-CROWD Brides, bridegrooms and bridesmaids. You are not likely to see so many brides in one day unless you’re a vicar. At one point there were five congregating in the conservatory all trying to make their one special day exclusive.

WALLET WATCH Bellagio Signature Stone Facial – 50 minute session \$250 (£185), just one of 17 facials on the Bellagio’s spa menu. A Refresher Mini-Facial and an “aggressive” Exfoliating Mini-Peel Treatment using hibiscus flower, both 25-minutes, cost \$85 each.

Depending on the season, five nights at the 5-star Bellagio from £1,279, on a room-only basis. Price is per person based on two adults travelling and sharing a standard room with return economy flights from Gatwick direct to Las Vegas, price includes all applicable taxes and fuel surcharges which are subject to change. To book: www.virginholidays.com or call 0844 5573 860.

NEED TO KNOW The Spa at the Bellagio, 3600 Las Vegas Blvd South, Las Vegas, NV 89109 (Tel: 888.987.6667; www.bellagio.com)



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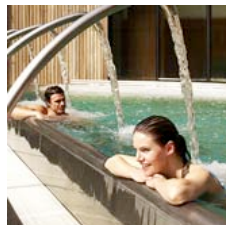
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Claire McDonald

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