

A close-up, low-angle shot of a woman lying down with her eyes closed. Her face is the central focus, with her lips slightly parted and a serene expression. She has dark, curly hair. Her face is adorned with several flowers, including bright pink and white roses. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blur of more flowers in shades of red, pink, and yellow. The overall mood is peaceful and indulgent.

THE PAMPER PRESCRIPTION

If a gruelling grooming routine has left you with beauty burnout, it's time to slow down and recharge with new soul-soothing rituals, says *OLIVIA FALCON*

It's time to put the 'treat'
back into treatments



PAMPER PEOPLE

PUT YOURSELF IN THEIR HEALING HANDS



Steve Karle

South Kensington Club, Bathhouse spa, London

If you're feeling frazzled, Steve is the king of calm and offers a totally immersive experience in the plush Bathhouse spa, which ships across seawater from Sicily. He gently guides you through a series of gravity free movements called Watsu, stretching and star-fishing you around the pool. It's a blissful floating sensation in a state of free flow that lengthens the spine, reprogrammes muscle memory to ease up aches and niggles, improves posture and calms the mind. A total tonic for helping with insomnia, expect the best night's sleep. You do have to be a member (from £365pcm) or a friend of one though. 020 3006 6868; southkensingtonclub.com

It was a slap in the face, followed by vigorous knuckling and flicking to firm up my jawline at the new FaceGym Studio (a brilliant but fairly brutal emporium, where therapists manipulate facial muscles with a nimble fingered face workout), that woke me up to the fact that my current beauty routine; a mélange of quick fixes – a stab of Botox here, a beauty flash mask there – has become far more functional than fun. In our world of busy, busy, busy, a recent poll found the average working woman spends a mere 17 minutes a day on all-important 'me time'. We want products that make us look younger, brighter and thinner, and we want them NOW. Time-poor people are, however, paying a price to look good as we rarely indulge in the feel-good factor, which experts believe is hugely important not only for our psyche but for our overall wellbeing, with a jangled central nervous system, adrenal problems and a level of deep exhaustion that depletes the immune system being the most commonly reported side effects.

But it's not all doom and gloom; in much the same way as the cooking community had the slow food movement, the beauty world is waking up to the benefits of putting the 'treat' back into treatments with a new wave of more mindful spaces to breath, cocoon, pamper and wind down. Here's where to find them.



Hilary Barnfield,

Reflexologist, Gloucestershire

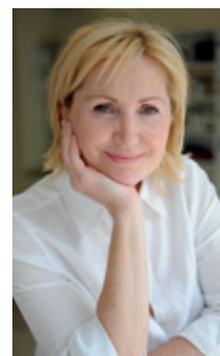
Based in the Cotswolds, Hilary's healing hands draw people from all over the country who feel overwhelmed by the stress of daily living. Hormonal issues such as adrenal fatigue is a particularly strong suit. She works not only on a physical level with deeply soothing, Ila aromatherapy oils to unblock the body's chakras/energy points through the feet but also taps into emotional and spiritual pathways (sometimes using reiki) to make you feel more connected and clear headed. *Treatments from £53. 07946 401829; hilarysreflexology.com*



Rose Santos

Soothe, London

This on-demand service delivers five-star massages in as little as one hour across London. Ask for Rose, a deeply intuitive therapist who can turn her hand from a deep tissue muscle detangler to a light nurturing touch. She's also a whizz at reflexology, which makes you feel lighter both physically and emotionally. The best bit? She will roll you off her couch, right into your own bed and let herself out. *From £65. soothe.com*



Beata Aleksandrowicz

Pure Massage, London

Moving beyond the mechanical, Beata's massage not only fixes you in the physical sense but improves mood too. Pulling together 20 years of experience (most notably her time studying the power of touch with the Kalahari bushmen in Africa), Beata and her team observe a client's breath and posture before working the connective tissue (the muscly 'wet suit' of the body that holds everything in) with flowing rhythmic strokes taken from both eastern and western cultures. The upshot? Muscles (and weirdly even internal organs) seem to relax, you breathe deeper, the lymph system revs up to detox the body and boost the immune system. Many people are so grateful there's often tears when time's up. *From £45 for 30 minutes. 020 7381 8100. puremassage.com*

Michelle Roques O'Neil

Therapie Roques O'Neil, London

With hands that make shoulders drop, Michelle's Inner Flow Treatment is first aid for the soul. After an initial chat to uncover your fears and frustrations, she works to recalibrate you with deeply intuitive cradling holds on the scalp and light pressure massage up the spine. Using her own heavenly scented sprays and balms, Michelle balances emotions and gets one to breathe deep. A deeply rooting and relaxing experience that really focuses on calming the nervous system. *£140. 020 8969 1221. roquesoneil.com*

DEEP RETREATS

THE PLACES THAT WILL REALLY PLEASE



L'Occitane Garden Spa at the Bath Priory Hotel

Bath, Somerset

What could be more relaxing than lying on the lawns of an English country garden? Possibly, lying on a heated treatment couch looking at one. At this small gem of a spa you can do just that. The outdoors comes indoors with treatments that champion the power of healing herbs. There are indulgent shea butter body wraps, a spine tingling aromatic verbena massage and the West Country's most gorgeous nail lounge for sumptuous manis and pedis. You won't starve here either as, afterwards, most people head up to the hotel's pantry for an old-school cream tea. 01225 331922; thebathpriory.co.uk

Lanesborough Spa and Health Club

Belgravia, London

London's most sybaritic new spa ups the ante with spa butlers who polish your shoes and press your clothes while you disrobe. There are massages designed to uncurl people who spend hours in front of the computer and facials curated by skin guru Anastasia Achilleos, which feature craniosacral massage (a light touch therapy that strokes points around the scalp and shoulders to release pressure throughout the body), along with deeply relaxing facial massage that has even the most stressed souls levitating off the mattress. For those who want to blow the budget, book the La Prairie Swiss Bliss Dream £300, three-hour facial and massage medley. 020 7259 5599; lanesborough.com



Fletcher's Cottage Spa

Archerfield House, North Berwick

You can knock back belly-warming glasses of sherry on arrival at this cosy cabin-style spa that's set on Scotland's scenic east coast. Pampering treatments abound, from Head and Heaven massages (a scalp, neck and shoulder soother), set in a magnificent rose coloured Himalayan salt brick room which cleanses the lungs, to seaweed baths in front of a log fire in bath huts. Even the wonderfully welcoming relaxation areas have king-sized beds and duvets that make proper deep sleep an option. 01620 897050; archerfieldhouse.com



Christophe Robin Salon

2nd Arr, Paris

The antithesis of a frenetic, conveyor belt style, wash and go, people get on the Eurostar for this salon. Since it opened last summer, Le Beau Monde has been clamouring to rest their heads in Robin's fabulous Venus de Milo-style, clamshell backwash and gaze at the hand-painted sky murals on the ceiling. Although the cuts and colours are spot on (Robin is responsible for Catherine Deneuve's blonde mane), it's the spine-tingling head massages and super chic tea lounge that makes you want to linger all day long. christophe-robin.com



HOME COMFORTS

THE PRODUCTS

THAT REALLY WORK



ROMILLY WILDE SERUM CLEANSER

A hydrating face wash that contains Manuka honey and saffron to repair complexions prone to redness. £54. romillywilde.com



MAKE HAND, FACE AND FEET GIFT SET

Using ingredients from her Somerset farm, Alice Temperley's sister, Mary, hand blends small batches of lotions to make the perfect treat. £17.50. makeskincare.co.uk



BULY LE VIRGINAL MIEL D'ECOSSE

Exquisite, non-sticky body lotion that contains Scottish honey. The whole Buly range lands in Selfridges this autumn. £34. buly1803.com

ROQUES O'NEIL CRYSTAL CLEAR

Put these luscious salts by your desk to absorb negative energy from electronic devices. £32. roquesoneil.com



UMA PURE BLISS WELLNESS OIL

Rub a few drops of this rose and sandalwood oil between your toes before a yoga class for maximum bliss-out effects. £60. cultbeauty.co.uk