

SWISS BLISS

writer **Michael Nassar**

If discretion is the better part of valour, surely the Swiss deserve a medal. Not for nothing do all those secret bank accounts remain so hush-hush – well, mostly: the Swiss have not only perfected the art of keeping secrets, they've elevated it to an art form.

With the exception of a few undisclosed vaults in Zurich, nowhere is such a distant delicacy practised with greater fervour than along the shores of Lake Geneva. A hit list of bold-faced names that have sought sanctuary here confirms its reputation as a hideaway in plain sight: Byron, Shelley, Chaplin, Nabokov, Wagner, Hemingway, and Freddie Mercury, whose life-size statue adorns the Montreux waterfront. This is the Swiss Riviera after all.

It's only natural that you'd find a selection of sublime spas and wellness clinics blending seamlessly into the Alpine landscape here – if you know where to look. Between Lausanne and Montreaux, no fancy signs point the way. Bells and whistles are nowhere to be seen and the international clientele that comes in search of rejuvenation would like to keep it that way – and remain nameless, thank you very much. However, once inside these retreats you'll find the peace of mind that comes from cutting edge therapies and a promise that everything will run as reliably as the trains and as smoothly as the chocolate.

THE MATTERHORN, ZERMATT, SWISS ALPS © IMAGINE.COM

CINQ MONDES, BEAU-RIVAGE PALACE, LAUSANNE

The 15,000 square foot Cinq Mondes is the first of its kind in Switzerland, created around a philosophy which incorporates ancient health and beauty rituals – *Rituels de Beauté du Monde* – as well as aesthetic elements from Japan, India, North Africa, China and Bali to awaken the five senses. Gentle fragrance, savoury tea, relaxing music and the tactile experience of walking through a tropical rain promenade are just the beginning. Designed to be functionally spare, the vast treatment rooms are pure in line and space, highlighted by natural materials that complement the Zen-like atmosphere and assortment of tempting treatments: Ayurvedic massage, Balinese massage, Taoist facial massage, and red cedar baths inspired by Japanese ofuro. Of particular note is the glass mosaic hammam. Equipped with a chromotherapy system, it combines an extremely relaxing heat treatment with the benefits of personalised aromatherapy and a custom coloured bath.

www.brp.ch

WILLOW STREAM SPA, FAIRMONT LE MONTREUX PALACE, MONTREUX

Finding your energy can be the difference between living and living well, which is why energy renewal is more than just a concept at Willow Stream Spa at Fairmont Le Montreux. It's a mission. The 1906 jewel box of Belle Epoque architecture is dedicated to creating energising spa experiences with a top-of-the-line complex offering an approach to mind and body wellbeing inspired by the elements. The spa practically hums with the revitalising elements of nature colliding. Bringing the unique healing powers of the alpine air, the sacred waters, and drawing energy from the mountains to reawaken your senses, treatments are designed to capture the authenticity of the destination. The Edelweiss Escape incorporates the healing ingredients of the delicate mountain flowers to rejuvenate the

body's energy; Mountain Magic and Après Ski blend regional ingredients to deliver soothing yet energising treatments with a touch of decadence; and the Willow Stream Elements Kur mixes all four elements in a centuries-old traditional spa experience that combines Moor mud wrap, therapeutic bath and massage to stimulate and rejuvenate dry or maturing skin. Constructed entirely of glass, the south façade opens onto the lake, the Palace gardens and the outdoor pool. This is nature at peak performance.

www.fairmont.com/montreux

GIVENCHY SPA AT LE MIRADOR KEMPINSKI, MONT-PELERIN

800 metres above Lake Geneva, Le Mirador Kempinski boasts spectacular panoramic views across the entire Swiss Riviera. Reminiscent of an elegant country manor with luxurious furnishings and fine paintings throughout, the hotel recently finished a ten-month renovation that saw the creation of 65 suites nestled in the Alps with private balconies to capitalise on the views. While many other properties in the region have taken an Asian approach to their spas, Givenchy – Le Mirador remains steadfastly European, with signature treatments such as Le Soin Noir Complete Beauty Renewal Skincare, which incorporates the patented anti-ageing cream and specific massage to give the skin a plumper appearance, and Hydra Sparkling Facial, which features Luminescence, the new sparkling water based radiance-enhancing line of moisturisers that received its worldwide launch at Le Mirador. www.mirador.ch



THIS PAGE: Clinique La Prairie indoor pool; having a massage at Givenchy Spa at Le Mirador Kempinski; and relaxing pool view at Fairmont Le Montreux Palace. OPPOSITE PAGE: Willow Stream Spa treatment at Fairmont Le Montreux Palace; and Japanese bath for two at Cinq Mondes, Beau Rivage Palace.

HOTEL VILLA VERMONT, LEYSIN

Villa Vermont welcomes its guests to a haven of peace located between the lake and the mountains. The brand new two-star establishment serves natural cuisine based on Hippocrates' advice: "Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food." At the Vitamin Bar, healthy drinks are made with seasonal fruits and vegetables, and soups such as carrot, ginger, or green vegetable come served hot or cold. (Don't hesitate to consult the in-room menu, either) The wellness centre, which is accessible to non-residents only under certain circumstances, offers a large range of services. Ayurvedic massage and yoga, sandalwood paste and rosewater baths, and plantar reflexology are just a few examples of the range on offer. Heedful of body and mind equilibrium, it also offers an attractive programme of workshops, activities, and conferences. www.villavermont.com

CLINIQUE LA PRAIRIE, CLARENS

For more than three quarters of a century, Clinique La Prairie has been a pioneer in age prevention, introducing the ovine cellular treatments known as Revitalisation Therapy while creating a Cellular Skin Treatment System that revolutionised the science of skin care. The centre brings together some 60 consultants, representing almost every medical specialisation. A multi-disciplinary team ensures a precise diagnosis to meet the specific needs of the individual in the areas of health, beauty and well being – the three stepping stones to a happy and fulfilling life. A stay at the Clinique can be considerably more than just a brief interlude of healthy living. It's an opportunity to take stock of life on a personal, physical and psychological level; to undergo an in-depth analysis of health and to increase self-awareness to the point where adopting a healthier, more balanced lifestyle seems as natural as the Alps. www.laprairie.ch

CENTRE MEDICAL MIRADOR, MONT-PELERIN

Down the hall from Kempinski's Givenchy Spa, you'll find some serious medicine going on inside Centre Medical Mirador, one of the original – and still the most famous – Swiss health spas. The Centre's Biomolecular Vitalisation Cure is not based on an all-purpose miracle cream but uses several specific medical tools coordinated into a week-long treatment: detoxification with energised water, stabilisation of the major functions and activation of the metabolism through supplementation and bio photons, and regular injections of cellular extracts to promote bio-energetic regeneration. Designed to maximise quality of life and longevity – the scientific community believes the human body is designed to reach the age of 120 – it also boosts-up abnormally low energy levels through monitored physical training and specific spa treatments. Additionally, the site of Mont-Pelerin is no accident either, despite its natural beauty: the area is a place of power well known for its cosmo-telluric (or radio-vitality) energies. www.centre-medical-mirador.ch