

Spas by Lorraine Cademartori

## Hot Spots

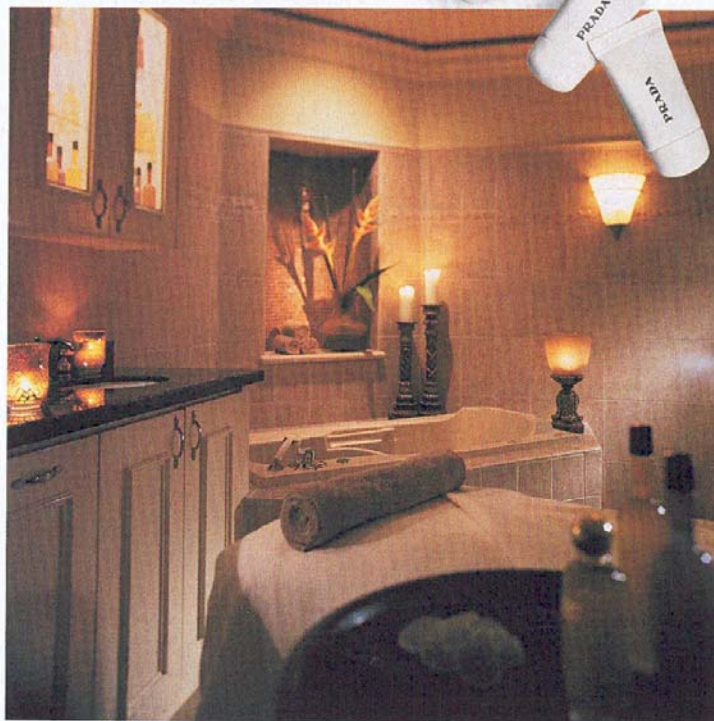
No longer an add-on afterthought, hotel spas are becoming innovators in the field.

It's pretty much conceded by industry professionals that the spa market is nearly mature. There aren't too many more consumers out there to convert, unless you count the men who will likely never be any more than occasional dabblers. But at the same time, more hotels are fine-tuning their spa services in response to increasing guest demand. At least in the U.S., it seems, if you don't have a spa, you're not really a full-service hotel. Necessity being the mother of invention, the following concepts may have a ripple effect on hotel spas in the coming years.

### HIGH-PROFILE SKIN CARE

Taking advantage of abundant square footage, soaring ceilings and an air of tradition that's elegant and not stuffy, Ritz-Carlton set the standard for domestic hotel spas. But even a champ has to develop a few new tricks to stay at the top of the game. This February the company launched a joint venture with Prada Beauty for a select number of its spas to distribute the latter's products. At first glance it seems like a mismatch: Spas have long used professional products that clients could mainly buy only through the spa or direct from small manufacturers, yet Prada Beauty products are available at department-store outlets like Neiman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue. But this is skin care superior to more ho-hum private-label ventures that fashion houses sometimes offer, and a name with a far higher brand recognition than any traditional spa line. In return, Ritz-Carlton gets to burnish its grande dame image with the more trendy and youthful Prada.

At Ritz-Carlton, Prada Beauty is used mainly in facial



Prada Beauty is a new addition to the spa at the Ritz-Carlton, Key Biscayne.



treatments—either “Exfoliant,” “Radiance” or “Reviving.” (Prices range from \$275 to \$375 per 90-minute service.) A facial begins with breathing, stretching and massage, followed by the prescribed protocol, which includes a delightfully coma-induc-

This is not a large space, but it is an innovative one: The hotel is marketing it as a first-of-its-kind “hybrid spa-lounge.” Past the reception area is a bar, which opens after the spa closes (around 10 p.m.). Through a nearby door and to the right is

encouraged my esthetician to keep applying it, and must confess to a bit of a burn, baby, burn philosophy when it comes to my own skin care—but I wasn’t counting on the week of peeling that followed. (On second thought, probably not a good idea to count solely on a client’s willingness to determine the intensity of the peel.) The upside: I hung out for a while and had a martini to ease the pain.

### THE MOUNTAIN COMES TO MOHAMMAD

In-room massage services are yesterday’s news—and they still haven’t drawn men in great numbers to experience other spa services. But some spas won’t take men’s disinterest for an answer, even if it means invading sacred ground: the golf course. CordeValle, a Rosewood Resort in San Martin, California, offers a “Pre-Shot



G Spa at the Hotel Gansevoort

ing fingertip shiatsu massage. During a recent visit to the Ritz-Carlton Key Biscayne, which is home to an especially luxe 20,000-square-foot spa, the Prada Replenishing Body Facial was the real standout—the requisite exfoliation, wrap and massage finished with Prada’s signature fragrance. Each Prada facial client walks away with an eight-day home treatment and a prescription card listing the products used so they can reorder through Ritz-Carlton. The staff is well-trained and detail-oriented, and while there were still some logistical bugs to work out (soap in a breakable dish should never be handed to a showering client, for instance), I felt that I was in the care of real pros.

### THE MULTIPURPOSE SPA

Before you can detox, you have to tox—or in some cases, retox. New York’s Hotel Gansevoort opened in 2004, and while occupancy in the trendy Meatpacking District lodge has been high, its nightlife-addicted guests have also clamored for spa amenities. Lacking the land to expand, the hotel made use of what could be considered the basement area—its new G Spa is actually one floor down from the lobby.

a “wet area”—hot and cold infinity pools accented by candles and flanked by leather banquettes. Spa clients hang out there during the day; hotel guests can lurk after closing. A marble walkway separates the wet area from the three treatment rooms constructed of distinctly unsoothing crimson-tinted glass (facials and massage are the specialties of the house). After hours, all the equipment fits into the skillfully designed cabinets so that the rooms become canoodling palaces. It might not be everyone’s idea of a relaxing spa experience, but it’s certainly a creative use of square footage.

G Spa is unusual in another way: Its management cherry-picks products from a variety of lines, including high-end spa standbys Sonya Dakar, Phytomer, MD Skincare, Anakiri, Epicuren and REN. It’s not unusual to carry so many lines for retail purposes, but it *is* unusual to mix and match them within a service (at least openly), simply because it’s hard to know how they’ll interact with one another. My own facial—a mix of Sonya Dakar’s enzyme peel and an intensive glycolic one from MD Skincare—felt great, if a little hot, while it was happening. I

Routine” massage that can be done anywhere from the driving range to the 18th hole of its Robert Trent Jones, Jr.-designed course. Therapist and chair will show up regardless of where a player is on the course—the idea being that once bitten, golfers will flock to spa central for such treatments as “Nearest Point of Relief,” to alleviate tension and tight muscles, or a pregame upper-body treatment called “Starting Time.” Now, if only someone could find a way to transport flat-screen TVs and salty snacks out to the course as well, men would never have to return to the hotel. •

### Blissed Out

Prada Beauty is available at Ritz-Carlton Hotels in Key Biscayne, South Beach, Naples, Orlando and Sarasota, Florida, and in Lake Las Vegas, Nevada, and starting in May in Half Moon Bay, Huntington and Laguna Niguel, California. [www.ritzcarlton.com](http://www.ritzcarlton.com). G Spa at the Hotel Gansevoort, New York. [www.hotelgansevoort.com](http://www.hotelgansevoort.com). Cordevalle, San Martin, California. [www.cordevalle.com](http://www.cordevalle.com).