



TRAVEL

Everyone Deserves a "3-Day Spa Get-a-Way"



By Richard Levy

Need a break? Consider taking a Spa Get-A-Way – just three magical days of pampering with extravagant exfoliating

treatments, deep massages, saunas, thermal-whirlpool tubs, cascading heated waterfalls, mountain hikes, organic farm-to-table spa cuisine every day will rejuvenate your spirit!

A three-day getaway is easier to fit into a busy schedule and the results will

tide you through to your next vacation. This is also a wonderful couples escape. I've been to a few luxury spas in my travels, but my favorite has to be "The Lodge at Woodloch," located on 150 private acres of picturesque, rolling woodlands in Northeast Pennsylvania.



But don't take my word for it, this was voted "One of the Best Spas in the World" by Travel & Leisure Magazine, "One of the 10 Best Destination Spas" by Trip Advisor and "10 Most Luxurious Spas in the US" – Forbes Magazine and "AAA Four Diamond Award". (Not too shabby.) Woodloch's philosophy is to provide you with a "personal awakening of mind, body and spirit."

Only 2 1/2 hours away by car, you could easily be there in time for dinner after work. As you wander through the rustic trails surrounded by idyllic woodlands, wetlands, gardens and lake you will see a variety of birds and flowers. On one evening walk I was lucky enough to catch a hummingbird hovering as it was feasting on a Morning Glory and glimpsed a doe and her little ones peering through the trees. Later I watched as a Bald Eagle soared across the lake searching for its dinner. You can go kayaking day or night on the beautiful crystal clear lake or try your hand at fishing for some Bass or Pike. The lake is well stocked, so you *can't* miss. There are plenty of fishing rods, great bikes and endless trails to explore.

You're sure to love the thermal-whirlpool tub on the sundeck with a glass-enclosed pool area surrounded by woods. Ladies, if your husband's not sure he "wants to go to a Spa" and he's an avid golfer, The Country Club at Woodloch Springs is just across the road from the Lodge. Golf Digest Magazine called this magnificent 18-hole 72-par championship golf course "One of the Best Places to Play" and gave it 4 1/2 Stars. Fern-carpeted forest, lush wetlands and broad meadows surround the course, that also has a driving range

and Golf Pros available for instruction. (Call to reserve tee times before you go.) Woodloch Springs Country Club also has tennis courts so bring your racquets if you play.

One of the things I loved the most was the majestic 8- high "Water-Wall" in the Aqua Garden's floor-to-ceiling glass enclosed pool area surrounded by woods. A warm wall of water cascades over you, offering the most invigorating, non-stop incredible massage you've ever experienced. It loosens up every muscle in your body, gets your blood flowing and clears out your head. Trust me, you won't want to leave – I kept coming back. There's also a smaller, more-gentle Water-Wall.

A dedicated "Spa Concierge" will expertly advise you as to which of the many facial, body treatments and massages might be best for you. My favorite massage was the "Deep Forest Ritual" which begins with a very stimulating exfoliation with specially prepared black mud made from coffee and dandelions to cleanse, soften and polish the skin, leaving you tingling all over. While still covered with exfoliates, you are wrapped in a Mylar blanket to "bake" for a while, followed by a therapeutic hot bath filled with white pine, balsam fir and juniper. An amazing massage and a rich body cream to hydrate your skin follow the bath. By now you'll be in an idyllic stupor, half awake, half asleep in a state of total euphoria. (75 minutes. \$195)

My girlfriend absolutely loved the "Rosemary Awakening," their signature treatment inspired by the healing properties of locally grown organic

Continued on page 10

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Continued from page 9

Rosemary. It begins with a stimulating “body polish” of Rosemary and citrus to cleanse and detoxify. Next there’s a full body massage, as you’ve probably never experienced one before, enhanced by fresh Rosemary infused oils and herbal heat packs to help relax and restore tired muscles. This is followed by a warm seaweed wrap, steeped in extracts of Icelandic moss and angelica, to nourish your dry skin, then an invigorating scalp massage. (100 minutes. \$250) These are two incredible treatments you absolutely must take. Also consider the “Reflexology” massage -- wonderful for sore, tired feet. There’s even an intoxicating “Beer Massage.” “The Lodge Massage” and “Lodge Facial” are invigorating and only \$125 each.

(Detoxification helps purge toxins and excess fluids from your body, to eliminate bloating and water retention. Spa treatments such as hydrotherapy, massages, heat therapy and other body treatments will help improve blood circulation and improve your mental health.

In the beautiful TREE Restaurant dining room you’ll get three farm-to-table delicious organic meals each day, all worthy of a three-star restaurant. There are so many enticing choices it will be difficult deciding what to order. (Not a problem, the waiters are very attentive and will bring you your two first choices, then let you decide.) My breakfast favorites included: Gluten-free Zucchini & Carrot French Toast with Marcona almonds, Heirloom Sweet Potato Medley & Kale Hash with a sunny-side farm egg on top and toasted Bagel & Lox with melt-in-your-mouth smoked salmon, dill cream cheese and capers.

Lunches are equally delectable and my favorites were: Grilled Southwest Shrimp, Freekeh (grain) and corn and black bean salad; and their juicy 5 Oz. Organic Bison Burger smothered in sautéed wild mushrooms on a Ciabatta roll with steamed Edamame.

My dinner favorites were: Panko & Grain Mustard Crusted Rack of Lamb with roasted fingerling potatoes and Provençal vegetables; Stuffed New Jersey Flounder with North Atlantic chunks of crab meat, sautéed zucchini ribbons, shaved fresh corn and Tasso Beurre-Blanc; and their Grilled Wagyu

Sirloin Steak Frites with grilled asparagus, fingerling frites, pickled shallots and green peppercorn sauce.

The restaurant has an outstanding wine list with a large selection of superior wines by the glass. One thing you’ll absolutely love about the Lodge is that you can “go to breakfast and lunch wearing your plush Spa robe” (Massage-to-table, as they say). Or if you are too relaxed from the treatments and massages to make it to the dining room, room-service will bring meals to your room, during mealtimes, only.

Since this an escape, guests are only allowed to talk on their cell phones inside their rooms, while in the Lodge. (Don’t worry --you’ll get over the separation anxiety very quickly.) The 57 well appointed guestrooms are all luxurious, with marble baths, walk-in showers and a private veranda with views of the woodlands and lake.

The serene and relaxing “Whisper Lounge” right outside the treatment rooms is a quiet co-ed lounge with a fireplace and outdoor woodland porch with rocking chairs and gliders: a great place to crash after a massage or treatment. For those who miss the gym, the 3,500 square foot Cardio Weight Studio offers state-of-the-art resistance weights, free-weights, treadmills, elliptical machines, bikes, arc trainers and a spinning room staffed by expert trainers.

There are a huge number of innovative classes to choose from every day, including: “Las Blast”-- a dance fitness program designed by “Dancing with the Stars” fitness expert Louis Amstel. “BodyPump” is the original Les Mills weight bar class, that will sculpt, tone and strengthen your entire body with fast high-rep, dynamic weight work. “Chakra Guided Meditation” offers a 30 minute guided meditation of deep relaxation to awaken internal energy, creativity, love, and strength. The energy of the Chakras will allow us to decode out inner wellbeing and infinite healing. “Raising the Barre”, is a low-impact class that’s a unique fusion of Pilates, yoga, and ballet inspired moves to develop beautiful sculpted muscles using the ballet-barre and your body weight to challenge your stability and balance. “Rock Bottom” firms up your “assets” (Tush) by training the glutes, thighs, calves and lower body. “Tuscan Mountain Hike” is a challenging 3-mile hike on uphill terrain



around abandoned bluestone quarries and rocky outcroppings, leading to a stunning vista of the Upper Delaware River.

Now for some “Spa history”: Before there were spas, bathing played a major part in ancient cultures. The Greeks began bathing regimens that formed the foundation for modern spas, believing that certain natural springs or tidal pools were blessed by the gods to cure disease and so, established bathing facilities around these sacred pools. Those who desired healing left offerings to the gods at these sites and bathed themselves in hopes of a cure. The Spartans even developed a primitive vapor bath.

The Romans emulated many of the Greeks bathing practices, surpassing the Greeks in the size of their baths. As in Greece, the Roman bath became a focal center for social and recreational activity. Romans used the hot thermal waters to relieve their suffering from rheumatism, arthritis, and overindulgence in food and drink. The Roman

Senate would even hold meetings in these baths. Thus, the Romans elevated bathing to a fine art form that evolved into the world’s luxury spas.

So if you’ve considered going to a spa resort, but never actually escaped for a “Spa Get-A-Way”, pull out your calendar to see where you can pencil in three days of rest and total relaxation. After some serious pampering, I suspect you will be more tolerant with your family, more productive at work and oblivious to life’s little annoyances, such as traffic jams. You will also, I suspect, look so good and so relaxed that your friends might even think you “had some work done.” The staff at Lodge at Woodloch is very welcoming and attentive, eager to make guests feel truly at home. To find out more about the spa, rates special treatments, Mid-Week Packages and availability, visit the website at: <http://www.thelodgeatwoodloch.com/spa-hawley-packages/> or call 1.800.Woodloch.

Directions: By car from Westchester takes about 2 ½ hours. Take Tappan Zee Bridge to the Garden State Parkway N.

to exit 145 (West Orange/Newark). Merge onto I-280W (12 miles) to I-80W to New Jersey (30 miles) to Rt. 15N (Exit 34B, Sparta, NJ) Take Rt. 15 N 18 miles) to Rt.206N 16 miles).Cross Delaware River Bridge at Milford. Bear right onto Rt. 209N. Continue on to Rt. 6W. Follow Rt. 6W for 26 miles to Rt. 590E (which comes at the end of Main Street in Hawley) Bingham Park will be on your right, The Settler’s Inn on your left. At this light, make right to continue on Rt. 590E. Follow Rt. 590E for 6.5 miles where you will find The Lodge at Woodloch on your left hand side directly across from entrance to Woodloch Springs.

Alternatively, leave your car at home, take Metro North into Grand Central. Shuttle over or take a cab to The Port Authority where the Short Line Bus will get you there in under 3 hours. The bus takes you to Hawley, PA and the Lodge van will transport you The Lodge at Woodloch, only 15 minutes away.