

SPA SPECTACULAR

By Jasmine Moir

No longer just pleasant perks or enjoyable extras, spas are increasingly taking center stage in today's meeting plans. As hotels and resorts scramble for a slice of an industry worth \$11.2 billion annually in the United States alone, the past five years have seen a slew of spectacular new spas and multimillion-dollar renovations in the Pacific Northwest.

And with these ever-more luxurious destinations, it's no wonder that relaxing massages and exotic skin treatments are 2006's hottest ingredients for upscale corporate retreats.

"We're finding that more and more businesses are looking to give their executive team or their managers a special experience on top of just going away to a lovely place for a meeting," says Conny Nordin, owner of Vancouver, British Columbia's Galiano Oceanfront Inn & Spa.

Like Nordin, most area spa owners and directors say they'll do whatever it takes — whether it's designing custom treatments or hosting in-spa meetings — to make sure a group's visit runs smoothly.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Galiano Oceanfront Inn & Spa

Tucked away on a remote island near Vancouver, this boutique Mediterranean-style resort provides something new even for spa connoisseurs. Here, the stress of the workday melts away with unique services, such as the Sea Mineral Flotation Bath (a more luxurious version of an isolation tank; \$60/hr.) or the Cedar Enzyme Bath (a toxin-reducing soak in 650 plant enzymes; call for prices). And for those still somewhat spa-shy, massages are also available in any one of the inn's 10 oceanfront guest rooms.

Galiano Island / 877.530.3939 / www.galianoinn.com

Grotto Spa at Tigh-Na-Mara Resort

At a whopping 20,000 square feet, the Grotto Spa at this 22-acre resort and conference center is the largest spa in British Columbia (and the second largest in Western Canada). Small groups will find more than enough space in its 16 regular treatment rooms and huge mineral soaking pool. Larger gatherings (up to 40) have the option of reserving the spa's entire third floor — where they'll be treated to a wine-tasting reception, exclusive use of the Treetop Tapas restaurant, the services of a spa concierge and three VIP treatment suites. Signature treatments range from \$90 – \$175.

Parksville / 250.248.1838 / 800.663.7373 / www.tigh-na-mara.com

Sooke Harbour House

There's no need to go to the spa at this contemplative beachfront inn. Instead, the spa comes to you. Practitioners deliver a menu of 26 different treatments in the privacy of guests' individual rooms, the majority of which come equipped with fireplaces, steam rooms and tubs big enough for two. For large groups, the hotel's 5,000-square-foot Potlach Room (a Native American-themed meeting space) can also be converted into a massage facility (complete with individual tents), accommodating up to 10 guests simultaneously (treatments \$80 – \$185).

Sooke / 250.642.3421 / www.sookeharbourhouse.com

Delta Victoria Ocean Pointe Resort & Spa

This casually elegant resort wins accolades both globally (making an appearance on Condé Nast's 2006 Traveler's Gold List of "The World's Best Places to Stay") and locally (named "best place to spend a day in the spa" by readers of a Victoria newspaper for 12 straight years). Spa manager Dana Sheers attributes the Zen-like 3,200-square-foot spa's popularity to her unpretentious staff, but we're guessing the facility's decadent ocean-themed treatment packages (\$160 – \$325) have something to do with it, too.

Victoria / 250.360.2999 / www.thespaatdeltavictoria.com

Willow Stream Spa at the Fairmont Empress

Not surprisingly, guests at Victoria's magnificent historic hotel get the royal treatment when they visit the \$6 million, 8,000-square-foot Willow Stream Spa. Visitors begin each service with a session in the steam room, Finnish sauna and Hungarian mineral bath before retreating to one of the 11 luxuriously appointed treatment rooms (services range from \$49 – \$349). Flexible when it comes to groups, the spa has been known to create services to match a theme, provide chair massages in meeting rooms and hold exclusive yoga classes.

Victoria / 250.384.8111 / www.fairmont.com/empress

Santé Spa & Westin Bear Mountain Victoria Golf Resort

When is a spa more than just a spa? When it's a "full-service medical lifestyle spa concept" staffed by registered nurses and physicians, of course. Opened

in May, the 13,000-square-foot Santé Spa takes a traditional spa menu one step further by offering Botox injections, chemical peels and medical microderm-abrasion, as well as physicals, dietary consultations and personal training (\$100 – \$1,000). Those more interested in stress-reduction than self-improvement will also appreciate meditative touches, such as an outdoor labyrinth and whirlpool.

Victoria / 250.391.3772 / www.bearmountain.ca

Brentwood Bay Lodge & Spa

The pleasure is in the details at this three-year-old contemporary cedar-and-glass oceanfront resort, where touches such as heated slate bathroom floors and French press coffeemakers define its 33 guest suites. The same goes for the resort's eight-room Spa Essence of Life, which lets clean lines and minimalist décor set the stage for surprising, yet luxurious, treatments, such as the Vino Therapy pedicure (think "I Love Lucy"-style grape stomping, while sipping a glass of locally produced wine; \$85/75 min.).

Victoria / 250.544.5111 / www.brentwoodbaylodge.com

Spa Utopia and Salon at the Pan Pacific Vancouver

When this five-diamond hotel unveiled its new Spa Utopia last year, it took the meeting-slash-spa visit trend to new heights: The Old World Roman-style facility's 12,000 square feet actually include an in-spa boardroom. Whether sporting business suits or plush spa robes, up to 19 guests can fit comfortably around the earth-toned room's glass conference table, which is often stocked with light lunches and drinks. With enough advance warning, the state-of-the-art spa can also accommodate larger groups — up to 450 — for services using natural products such as hemp oils and local seaweed (\$55 – \$335).

Vancouver / 866.700.9008 / www.vancouver.panpacific.com

Absolute Spa at the Hotel Vancouver

It's a measure of just how far the spa industry has evolved that this much-lauded spa caters specifically to men. Ladies are welcome too, but the black leather chairs, sleek gray walls and liberal use of flat-screen TVs create Canada's first decidedly masculine spa atmosphere. It's a hit with stag parties, business groups and the British Columbia Lions, who flock to the 4,000-square-foot facility for straight-edge shaves (which include a massage and facial mask; \$55) and the Gentleman's Facial (\$125/75 min.).

Vancouver / 604.648.2909 / www.fairmont.com/hotelvancouver

Vida Wellness Spa at the Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre Hotel

Located in one of Vancouver's largest conference hotels, the Vida Wellness Spa regularly treats up to 100 guests per day to traditional massages, facials and wraps as well as holistic Ayurvedic therapies (\$130 – \$280). Incorporating sustainable materials into its design, the spacious West Coast-style facility boasts the largest relaxation lounge in Vancouver (comfortably seating up to 30). With so many guests, regional director Allison Hegedus says the spa

maintains a stringent staff-training program — ensuring each treatment is as spectacular as the last.

Vancouver / 604.682.8410 / www.vidawellness.com

Wickaninnish Inn & Ancient Cedars Spa

Voted the top resort spa in Canada by Condé Nast Traveler in 2005, this Aveda Destination Spa is nestled against a rugged old-growth rainforest with spectacular views of Vancouver Island's craggy western coastline. Guests at the cozy 75-room resort often indulge in spa treatments such as the Lomi Lomi massage (\$175/90 min.) or Salt Glow (\$100), which can take place in three different locales: individual indoor treatment rooms, a couples-friendly rustic outdoor Cedar Sanctuary or the Rainforest Haven, often used for bridal parties and small groups.

Tofino / 250.725.3100 / www.wickinn.com

Wedgewood Hotel & Spa

If the event calls for a sense of exclusivity, then this urban spa — rated the #1 hotel in Vancouver by Travel + Leisure magazine — is your place. Specializing in small groups and executive retreats, the deep red and sandstone-adorned facility uses hard-to-find Epicuren products in decadent treatments such as the Ultimate Cinnamon Enzyme Facial (\$140/60 min.) and the Chai Soy Anti-Stress Back Treatment (\$40/75 min.). Lucky guests can experience treatments in their rooms or take advantage of the spa and its Roman marble eucalyptus steam room.

Vancouver / 604.608.5340 / www.wedgewoodhotel.com

Fairmont Chateau Whistler

Double your spa options at this renowned ski resort, where guests have a choice of attending the on-site Vida Wellness Spa (see Vida Wellness Spa, Sheraton Vancouver Wall Center, page 33) or heading across the road to the Nibbana Healing Spa. The former is a classically decorated, upscale, 17-treatment-room spa that's often booked solid with meeting and bridal groups — the latter a funkier spot that offers everything from Thai and shiatsu massages to private Pilates sessions and Tarot card readings (\$50–\$225).

Whistler / 604.938.8000 / www.vidawellness.com / www.nibbanaspa.com

Harrison Hot Springs Resort & Spa

Located in a quiet lakeside village surrounded by snowcapped mountains, this 334-room retreat specializes in team-building programs for corporate groups. Astutely, it has also built in plenty of opportunities for post-meeting relaxation — from soaking in one of the resort's five natural hot springs pools to visiting its nine-treatment-room spa. Signature services include couples massages in the private hot spring-equipped Rejuvenation Room (\$370/2 hrs.) and facials using Phytomer marine-based products (\$90–\$175).

Harrison Hot Springs / 604.796.2244 / 800.663.2266 / www.harrisonresort.com

Tauca Lea Resort & Spa

Known for its exceptionally large guest suites (featuring full kitchens, living rooms and private decks with hot tubs), this rustic West Coast-style resort tends to attract executive groups. The upscale two-year-old spa is one of the property's major draws, says general manager Volker Grady, who notices that when planners send guests to one of the facility's seven treatment rooms for services such as the Tranquility Facial (\$120/90 min.) or European Rose Mud Wrap (\$105/75 min.) before meetings begin, they emerge more relaxed and focused for the duration of the event.

Ucluelet / 250.726.4612 / 800.979.9303 / www.taucalearesort.com

Kingfisher Oceanside Resort & Spa

In keeping with its "sea and sand" theme, the 13,000-square-foot spa at this eco-friendly beachfront resort uses natural driftwood in its décor and marine-based products in its facials, massages and wraps. Guests at the 64-room hotel can slip into one of the spa's 22 understated treatment rooms for packages such as the Pacific Mermaid thalasso-therapy wrap/facial (\$150/90 min.) or try the one-of-a-kind Pacific Mist Hydropath (a guided tour of eight hydrotherapy stations including a eucalyptus steam cave, waterfall massage and sea mineral soak; \$45/60 min.).

Comox Valley / 250.338.1323 / www.kingfisherspa.com

Poets Cove Resort & Susurrus Spa

Approach this Gulf Island luxury resort by float plane, and the first thing you'll see is its Susurrus Spa — complete with a sandstone eucalyptus steam cave and oceanfront Jacuzzi nestled at the base of a waterfall. The tranquil 22-room retreat (plus cottages and villas) is a popular wedding and celebration spot, says spa director Rachel Browne, so its 3,500-square-foot spa regularly accommodates small to mid-size groups. Special touches include Westcoast synergy massage (\$230/60 min.) and steam cave, plus body treatments using locally made aromatherapy oils (\$60–\$130).

Pender Island / 866.604.5561 / www.poetscove.com

Sonora Resort and Wellness Centre

Corporate guests leave work far behind at this idyllic five-star resort, only accessible by boat, sea-plane or helicopter. Nestled within the breathtaking British Columbia wilderness, the resort's two-year-old free-standing spa houses five treatment rooms plus a state-of-the-art hydrotherapy tub. And if stress-busting treatments like the Phytomer body wrap (\$165) and detoxifying massage (\$175/75 min.) don't do the trick, the rustically elegant property's eight different lodge accommodations are also peppered with hot tubs and three outdoor mineral pools.

Sonora Island / 604.233.0460 / 888.576.6672 / www.sonoraresort.com

OREGON

Sage Springs Club & Spa at Sunriver Resort

Whether it's pampering 130 Toyota employees in three days or creating customized services for management meetings, the 35,000-square-foot Sage Springs Club & Spa has done it all, says club and spa director Lynne Hite. Opened in 2002, the inviting Northwest lodge-style building houses a comprehensive fitness center, three indoor tennis courts, lap pool and the nine-room spa, which treats guests to exclusive signature treatments such as the Hazelnut Scrub (an invigorating exfoliation using pulverized hazelnuts; \$99/45 min.).

Sunriver / 541.593.7890 / www.sunriver-resort.com

Avalon Hotel & Spa

With 99 stylish guest rooms, panoramic views of the Willamette River and a luxurious 12,000-square-foot spa and fitness club, this sophisticated hotel can legitimately call itself a destination resort. Not surprisingly, the 11-treatment-room spa does a brisk business in corporate groups ("It's almost taking the place of the golf course," says spa director Laurie Smith) and typically streamlines the planning process by creating customized, abbreviated versions of its extensive service menu (\$46 – \$168).

Portland / 503.802.5900 / www.avalonhotelandspa.com

Breitenbush Hot Springs Retreat and Conference Center

Don't expect cucumber-infused water or plush spa robes at this rustic eco-village located on 154 acres of wildlife sanctuary in the Willamette National Forest. "Our groups tend to be a little bit out of the mainstream," says Tom Robinson, director of marketing and events, who warns that the facility's all-organic vegetarian food, clothing optional bathing areas and lack of cell phone coverage aren't for everybody. Non-traditional groups, however, love the facility, its hot springs and its extensive massage menu (\$80/90 min.). The Oregon Massage Therapist Association returns every year for its conference.

Detroit / 503.854.3320 / www.breitenbush.com

Kah-Nee-Ta Resort & Casino

Ranked one of the top five spas in the nation by Shape magazine in 2000, the Native American resort village's spacious Spa Wanapine is two hours from Portland. Weathered wood, rock-pattern murals and slate-tiled floors create a rustic ambience in the facility's nine treatment rooms, where guests escape from the hot desert air with skin soothing services such as the Yon-Ka Paris Hydralessence Facial (\$75) or Sun Recovery moisturizing treatment (\$25), some of which incorporate mineral water from the tribal land's natural springs.

Warm Springs / 800.554.4786 / www.kah-nee-taresort.com

Salishan Spa & Golf Resort

This multimillion-dollar, 8,000-square-foot facility raised the bar for Oregon Coast destination spas in 2005. Just ask nearby Nike execs, who can often be found relaxing post-massage in the stunning glass-walled observation room or

infinity pool — both of which afford regular glimpses of blue herons, snowy egrets and bald eagles in Siletz Bay's Audubon Sanctuary. Treatments, fittingly, tend to incorporate the natural environment by soothing weary souls with ingredients such as chamomile, eucalyptus oil and lavender (most fall in the \$100–\$200 price range).

Gleneden Beach / 541.764.4300 / www.salishanspa.com

IDAHO

Coeur d'Alene Resort & Spa

"To stay competitive with the conventions, you have to have a world-class spa," says Coeur d'Alene Resort spa director Berni Campbell. This line of reasoning is responsible for the deluxe cedar, spruce and stone spa's recent expansion, helmed by leading national spa architect Tag Galyean. The new-and-improved 30,000-square-foot facility offers nature-inspired massages, facials and body scrubs, plus unique hydrotherapy add-ons, such as pre-massage soaks in a flow-through tub or relaxing sessions underneath 19 showerheads of the Pure Essence Shower designed by Galyean Tag (\$25 each).

Coeur d'alene / 800.688.5253 / www.cdaresort.com

WASHINGTON

Woodmark Hotel

Because this lakeside property hosts so many weddings, the Woodmark's tasteful earth tone-decorated spa regularly accommodates groups of up to 20 for Aveda concept massages, facials, hydrotherapy treatments and body wraps in its nine treatment rooms. Whether the crowd is a gaggle of bridesmaids or honchos from neighboring Microsoft, spa manager Helen Storer says event planners often select individual packages of three or more services for each guest (\$115–\$255), followed by group pedicures and a catered spa lunch.

Kirkland / 425.822.3700/ www.thewoodmarkspa.com

Spa Essencia at the Inn at Langley

Tucked away on a quiet strip of beachfront property adjacent to this elegant but unpretentious inn, this boutique facility owned by local massage therapist Dana Consuelo emphasizes full-body treatments tailored to individual spa-goers (\$68–\$145). Large windows frame ocean views in each of the 800-square-foot facility's three treatment rooms, complementing the nature-inspired theme of the décor and Consuelo's handmade aromatherapy oils that (like all of the spa's products) use exclusively organic ingredients.

Langley / 360.221.3033 / www.innatlangley.com

Salish Lodge

Delicate handcrafted shoji doors mark the entryway to the 10 treatment rooms at this serene Asian-inspired facility designed by award-winning Seattle-based architecture firm Mithun. Large groups can unwind silently in the eucalyptus steam room or beneath a gentle waterfall in the therapeutic pool before undergoing botanical-based treatments such as Thai massages and mineral

mud wraps. And if talking business is in order, guests can settle in to one of the lodge's five conference rooms while receiving hand-softening paraffin wax treatments from spa practitioners (most treatments \$108/50 min.).

Snoqualmie / 425.888.2556 / www.salishlodge.com

Skamania Lodge

Currently a comfortable but unassuming spot, the sprawling lodge's Waterleaf Club & Spa is slated for a \$1.6 million renovation in 2007. The facelift will add two treatment rooms and luxe décor, says spa manager Karen Verax, without tinkering with the mid-size facility's highlights — such as separate men's and women's Jacuzzis overlooking the Columbia River and its intensive Body Rock Massage, a deeper treatment than typical hot stone massages (\$130/50 min.).

Stevenson / 509.427.2529 / www.skamania.com

Willows Lodge

Better known for its award-winning restaurants The Herbfarm and The Barking Frog, this rustic 86-room lodge and meeting facility also houses an intimate full-service spa ideal for small groups. The 1,000-square-foot facility's four treatment rooms and one pedicure station have warm wood accents and Northwest-style décor, creating a frou frou-free setting for signature treatments such as anti-aging facials using the Parisian Carita product line (\$150/90 min.) and soothing hot stone massages (\$125/80 min.).

Woodinville / 425.424.2900 / www.willowslodge.com

Chrysalis Inn & Spa

"We understand that going to a spa can be intimidating for people who have never done it," says spa director Susan Brendon, who eases first-time clients' jitters by assigning each guest a personal attendant upon entrance to this airy 10-room facility. Known for its friendly (not snooty) practitioners, the contemporary slate-tiled spa offers unique treatments, such as the Hawaiian Lomi Lomi massage (\$120/90 minutes), in a serene setting overlooking Bellingham Bay.

Bellingham / 360.392.5515 / www.thechrysalisinn.com

Avanti Spa at Courtyard by Marriott

The Disneyland of Puget Sound-area spas, this new facility has a little something for everyone. Designed to resemble a Tuscan village (complete with faux building facades), the 10,000-square-foot spa offers traditional massages (\$89 – \$105/50 min.) and decadent treatments such as the Signature Caviar Facial (\$145/90 min.), as well as medical spa treatments such as laser beam facials and Botox injections (prices vary). Even the manliest of men will feel right at home, thanks to a separate male sanctuary equipped with plush leather chairs and big screen TVs.

Tacoma / 253.682.2005 / www.avantispas.com

Semiahmoo Resort

Claiming to offer the Northwest's most extensive array of anti-aging treatments, the ocean-view spa at this popular four-diamond golf resort melts away busy executives' stress with everything from basic sports and Swedish massages (\$100 – \$125/60 min.) to "Botox alternative" facials using LED light therapy (\$150/60 min.). The understated facility is rarely faced with a group it can't accommodate and has been known to spoil up to 80 guests per day in its 10 recently renovated treatment rooms and convertible ballroom.

Blaine / 360.318.2006 / www.semiahmoo.com

Campbell's River Room Spa

Located in a resort complex on Lake Chelan, this casual, comfortable facility has evolved from a simple massage space to a full-service day spa in the past four years. Used to serving crowds composed of local spa-goers and hotel guests, the nine-treatment-room spa will extend its hours when necessary to accommodate meetings at the lakeside resort. Signature treatments include the River Room Pedicure, with an extended massage using Phytomer products (\$65).

Lake Chelan / 509.682.2561 / www.campbellsresort.com

Bonneville Hot Springs Resort & Spa

Cap off a day of team-building events at this secluded 78-room resort with a visit to its velvet-and-tapestry-adorned day spa, where separate men's and women's bathhouses host private claw-foot tubs filled with hot springs mineral water (\$15/25 min.). The 12,000-square-foot facility uses the healing waters in all of its treatments — from the Rock 'N Rain Massage (using hot stones and warm essential oils; \$145/80 min.) to the Aloe Skin Soother (\$30/25 min.) — and tries to create a personalized experience by booking only one corporate group at a time.

Columbia Gorge / 509.427.7767 / www.bonnevilleresort.com

Spa Paradiso at The Davenport Hotel

In the four years since Spa Paradiso moved from its downtown Spokane location into the historic Davenport Hotel, the full-service day spa's staff has grown from nine to 40. The Old World Italian-style facility has six massage rooms, four facial rooms and two wet rooms, but still fills up fast, says spa owner Jan Schoonover. Savvy planners often pre-arrange packages for each guest, adds Schoonover, with a combination of services, such as the signature Paradiso pedicure, manicure, facial and massage (\$215).

Spokane / 509.747.3529 / www.thedavenporthotel.com

Quinault Beach Resort & Casino

For the true ocean lover, the Quinault Beach Resort Spa sources its products from right outside its front doors: Masseurs gather their own stones for hot stone massages, clay for facials and seaweed for wraps. Natural salts are used for exfoliation treatments (prices range from \$40 – \$100, no nail treatments). Because the six-year-old resort has a large wedding and

corporate clientele, the small spa has its routine down pat for large groups — pampering as many as 38 people on a typical Saturday in its four treatment rooms.

Ocean Shores / 888.461.2214 / www.quinaultbeachresort.com

Suquamish Clearwater Hotel & Angeline Spa

The din of slot machines won't intrude upon your spa experience at the new Clearwater Hotel & Casino, where the brand-new Angeline Spa occupies a freestanding beach house overlooking Agate Passage. A September grand opening added a pool and Jacuzzi to the completed seven-room facility, which offers a full-service spa menu plus extras, such as a handmade teak Vichy shower (most services range from \$80 to \$135). Although it had yet to serve its first large group at press time, spa director Belinda Buttons says exclusive use of the spa will be an option for conference guests.

Suquamish / 360.598.1420 / www.clearwatercasino.com

Alderbrook Resort & Spa

Whether they're spending their time kayaking, golfing or strategizing with the management team, guests at this recently renovated 3,500-square-foot spa tend to be tuckered out, says spa director Christine Whitwell. Practitioners come to the rescue with treatments such as aromatherapy massages (\$95/60 min.) and the glow-inducing Anti-Aging Vitamin C Facial (\$140/90 min.), often followed by relaxing, catered spa lunches around the fireplace in the Northwest lodge-style relaxation room.

Hood Canal / 360.898.2200 / www.alderbrookresort.com