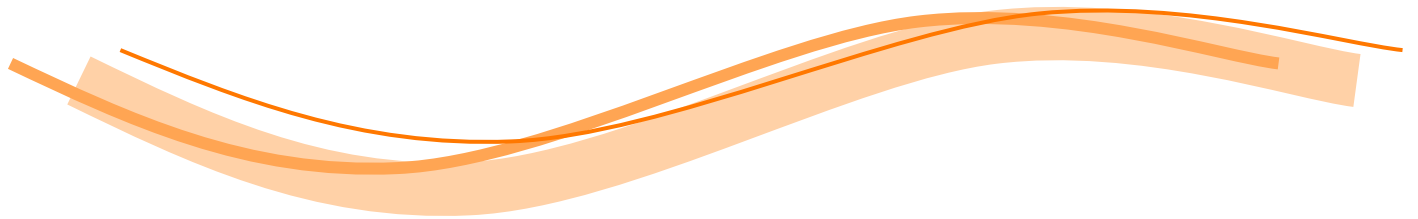




# Chris' Travel Notes: SPA VACATIONS





<p><b>SPA VACATIONS</b></p>	<p>For some people a visit to the spa is a treat that they give themselves maybe once during a vacation. Others plan their whole vacation around a spa and wellness theme. And yet others are still too scared to venture into that inner sanctum with its own language and etiquette. In this frenetic world of ours, we all need a little “me time”, a little pampering and a way to de-stress. Now there is a resource to help you navigate the world of spas and wellness and find exactly the right products and services for you.</p> <p>Founded more than 25 years ago, Spafinder Wellness 365 is dedicated to providing the information, experiences and inspiration to help people find – and share – their path to wellness. Spafinder.ca has 2,000 participating spa and wellness partners in Canada and 20,000 globally - plus a powerful search facility to help you find the right match for you. And there are nearly 500 spa vacations featured on the site.</p> <p>Spafinder.ca also has a wealth of articles and information – there is a Wellness Blog plus Top 10 lists, Readers Choice Awards, reports on Top Spa Trends, Top Spa Brands and more! Plus there are great special offers for everything from local spa treatments to vacation getaways. If you are planning a romantic weekend for two, a girl’s getaway or a much needed week of relaxation – check out <a href="http://www.Spafinder.ca">www.Spafinder.ca</a> and see how you can bring some extra pampering and a focus on wellness into the experience</p>
<p><b>Spafinder</b></p>	<p>Founded more than 25 years ago, Spafinder Wellness, Inc. is the world’s largest media, marketing and gifting company for the wellness industry. With a finger on the pulse of what’s time-trending and what’s time-tested, the company guides the industry, partners, consumers and employers with the most comprehensive resource for wellness-related products, services and insight. Millions of people find inspiration to keep well every day via the Spafinder Wellness 365 brand, also known for its widely-distributed gift cards available at 70,000-plus retailers worldwide and a global network of 20,000-plus spas, salons, fitness, yoga and Pilates studios and travel destinations.</p> <p>They know good health requires a holistic approach—from how you move to how you fuel, from the mental to the physical, from the inside out—it’s a 365-day affair.</p>
<p><b>Know Before You Go</b></p>	<p>Here are three tips from Spafinder...</p> <p>1. If you are going to unwind, or just to work out the kinks, make sure you find the right massage to meet your specific needs. These days, customer is king (and queen!) and often treatments can be customized to address any concerns. Just ask!</p>

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	<p>2. Wear what feels comfortable to get the most out of your experience.</p> <p>3. Be sure to speak up about what feels good and what doesn't - this is all about you!</p>
<p><b>Spafinder Spa Trends</b></p>	<p><b>Your Mind Is What Matters</b>  Weaving its way through every trend in 2014 is the simple, but compelling, act of mindful living: The idea that every action taken should be done with intention—and, in so doing so, clear the clutter in your mind caused by the over-stimulation of today's supercharged world. This is the biggest movement the wellness industry has ever seen, and people from all walks of life are waking up to the fact that mindful living breeds a healthy mind.</p> <p><b>Healthy Hotels 2.0</b>  In 2013, we explored how, after a century of experiences synonymous with unhealthy excess, more hotels were on a new health kick and branding and re-branding around wellness. But the most powerful trends like "Healthy Hotels" are more than passing news and have become megatrends that fulfill profound human needs. In 2014, look for hotels to move from healthy as a marketing differentiator to deeper, more multi-faceted programming that stretches well beyond the "free stretch band." The healthy hotel will ultimately become more inspired and comprehensive, moving from virtuous exception to part of the hospitality vernacular.</p> <p><b>Wired Wellness</b>  For some, even connecting the words "wired and wellness" is counterintuitive, especially as we are tethered to cell phones, computers and tablets every waking minute. This phenomenon has created a backlash of its own. But we are a society that is immensely connected and has become data crazed. Wired Wellness in all its iterations - from the ubiquitous fitness trackers to online booking and online classes to monumental leaps in mobile health - has a very significant role to play in keeping us healthy and even in lowering the spiraling costs of healthcare. 2014 marks a significant step ahead.</p> <p><b>Hot Springs Heating Up</b>  Bathing in hot springs may be the oldest "spa" experience in the world - dating further back than Roman times - but it is also incredibly on trend in 2014. There's never been a hotter moment for thermal springs, with more and more people seeking out this affordable, social, beneficial and natural therapeutic spa experience. And, with hot springs existing in</p>

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virtually every corner of the world, governments and developers alike have taken notice and are funding hundreds of new, exciting projects around the globe.

### **Suspending Gravity**

The desire to disconnect from the "weight" of the world and float beyond earth's stress seems intuitive in our hyper-connected, burned-out lives. People have a deepening psychological and physical desire to escape from gravity's relentless pull, and a distinct "suspending gravity" or "floating" trend is rising. We're seeing more weightless stress - and mind-melting flotation tanks, chambers and pools at spas, and on the fitness front, a global craze for aerial and anti-gravity classes and yoga, along with new equipment like anti-gravity treadmills.

### **Ferocious Fitness**

Fitness, like fashion, is an ever-changing font of what's in and what's out. In 2013, we looked at the exploding "label-conscious fitness" culture, and while name-brand fitness shows no sign of stopping, a new trend is on the rise, led by people who want real and sometimes quick results, as well as those who seriously train for competitions or want to establish their own personal best. For others, fitness has become a major ingredient in their social life. A key factor in this new "Ferocious Fitness" trend is FUN.

### **"Natural" Beauty Meets Social Media**

With the growing popularity of social media and "selfies", where people are expected to look their best 24/7 - often without the benefit of makeup and blowouts - we may finally be leaving the era of faux beauty. This new era focuses on the nude, the natural and a high-tech, low-risk beauty, where organic products, science and technology intersect to deliver minimal downtime results that are seemingly produced by nature. Beauty seekers are clearly finding ways to mend from too many chemical products.

### **Aromatherapy: Scent With Intent**

The spa industry latched onto scent early on as an essential component of wellness and helped launch aromatherapy into the mainstream. But as aromatherapy plays a greater role in the treatment of pain, depression, insomnia and other physical and mental issues, spas have become motivated to reimagine their aromatherapy approach from the generically pleasant to the personalized and transformative. In 2014, there will be a growing effort to craft an aromatherapy of intention.

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	<p><b>Wellness Retreats Rise... &amp; Urbanize</b>          After years of recession-stalled stasis, look for exciting movement on the destination spa front, where personalized, immersive wellness programming is the DNA, and life transformations are the goal. Look for all-new brands like the spectacular, just-opened VANA in India's Himalayan foothills and further expansion from revered destination spa brands like Miraval (U.S.) and Lanserhof (Austria). A distinct sub-trend is also emerging: the urban-close wellness retreat.</p> <p><b>Death &amp; Spas: Thriving During Life's Transitions</b>          When we think of spas, three things usually come to mind: getting healthier, being pampered and looking our best. But as baby boomers - the group that has been the largest spa-going demographic for decades - start thinking seriously about aging and death, we're seeing spas of all kinds help clients tackle life's biggest transition. At the same time, spa offerings and influences are moving into hospitals and assisted living facilities and showing up in home designs that allow an aging population to live in a non-institutional setting.</p> <p><b>Top 10 Surprising Spa &amp; Wellness Destinations</b>          When one thinks spa or wellness vacation, a few select destinations immediately come to mind: Italy, Thailand, Turks and Caicos... sound familiar? But savvy spa-goers and wellness seekers are pushing back against the "been there, done that" travel mentality, searching for more exotic destinations and indigenous experiences to stamp on their spa passports. In fact, they are spawning significant demand for new spa settings to explore that extend beyond the normal hotspots.</p>
<p><b>Spafinder Wellness 365 Gift Cards</b></p>	<p>Give the gift of massage, facials, yoga, &amp; more that can be used at 2,000 locations in Canada and over 20,000 locations worldwide. Your friend or loved one gets to pick their perfect wellness experience. There are options from \$25 to \$1,000 and cards never expire. Go to <a href="http://www.spafinder.ca/Catalog/spagiftcertificates.jsp">http://www.spafinder.ca/Catalog/spagiftcertificates.jsp</a></p>
<p><b>Spafinder by the Numbers</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The number of years Spafinder has been in business: Spafinder was founded more than 25 years ago</li> <li>- The number of spas in Canada to choose from: There are 2,000 participating partners in Canada</li> <li>- The number of spas Worldwide to choose from: There are 20,000 globally</li> <li>- The number of spa vacations on the website: A total of 489</li> </ul>
<p><b>Spafinder's Top Ten Luxury Spas</b></p>	<p><b>Acqualina Resort &amp; Spa on the Beach – Miami Beach, FL</b></p> <p>Set on the water in Sunny Isles, Acqualina has long heated up the luxury hotel spa scene, and we can see why it sizzles: not only is there a branch of acclaimed NYC restaurant, Il Mulino, but there's the two-story, Forbes</p>

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Five-Star ESPA at Acqualina, the U.S. flagship of the British-based spa company. Extravagance reigns here, thanks to luxuries like an expertly trained staff, organic spa cuisine, and relaxation room facing the spa pool and ocean.

### **Canyon Ranch Hotel & Spa in Miami Beach – Miami Beach, FL**

Revered as the first hotel in the renowned Canyon Ranch family, this Miami Beach boutique property—set in the historical Carillon Hotel, along 750 feet of white-sand beach—is committed to the distinguished brand’s healthy living principles, while making its own mark as one of the largest spa and wellness complexes (70,000 square feet!) in south Florida.

### **Château Hôtel de la Messardière – Saint Tropez, France**

Overlooking the gulf of Saint Tropez and the seven beaches of Pampelonne, Chateau Hotel de la Messardiere is said to resemble a castle on a hill, and its fairytale ambience invites you to live happily ever after at the majestic Chateau Spa, adorned with carved stone vaults, stained-glass windows, and wrought-iron railings. Before treatments (which use La Prairie and Cinq Mondes products), step out onto the spa terrace, which opens to a lovely Italian-inspired garden.

### **Fonteverde Tuscan Resort & Spa – Siena, Italy**

Against a Tuscan countryside backdrop, Fonteverde is a place of renewal thanks to Ferdinando I dei Medici, a natural hot spring named in honor of the founder of the first spa on the site Fonteverde now occupies. Today, its spa is all-encompassing, with 100-plus treatments that vary from Mediterranean-inspired and Ayurvedic to anti-aging and esthetic.

### **Hôtel de Charme Les Airelles – Courchevel, France**

Surrounded by soaring pine trees, bordering the Trois Vallees ski slopes in the Jardin Alpin, Hotel De Charme Les Airelles and its magical setting is like a storybook unfolding, complete with interiors evocative of Austro-Hungarian allure (think wooden balconies, charming window nooks, and a fireplace in the lobby). The luxury ski-in/ski-out alpine resort is also a winter enthusiast’s paradise, with a ski valet, ski technician, and private ice rink—even its Cellcosmet Spa for Les Airelles comes complete with a purifying snow cave, perfect following a day schussing the slopes.

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### **Hotel Fouquet's Barriere – Paris, France**

Ooh la la! Hotel Fouquet Barriere's location at the corner of the Champs-Élysée and George V avenues keeps you within a short stroll of famed landmarks, including the Arc de Triomphe, Eiffel Tower, River Seine, and Louvre—granted, if you can pull yourself away from U Spa, where blissful, relaxing treatments like the Parisian Massage make the bustling city seem miles away (on the dining front, the celeb-fave Fouquet's brasserie is also worth a visit!).

### **Masseria San Domenico Spa-Thalasso & Golf Resort – Brindisi, Italy**

The Leading Spas of the World website describes Masseria as being “full of hidden wonders,” and we wholeheartedly agree. Among the secret treasures? Caves below the property formerly housed Apulian monks fleeing Moorish attackers during the Middle Ages. One thing that's not a secret? The tranquility of Masseria's thalassotherapy spa, which sources mineral-rich water from a natural hot spring underneath Masseria—and showcases treatments using organic olive oil crafted from the resort's olive groves.

### **Terme di Saturnia Spa & Golf Resort – Grosseto, Italy**

The Terme di Saturnia destination spa, tucked away within the rolling hills of Tuscany's Maremma region, sits at the base of the village of Saturnia, famed for its thermal spring that predates the Etruscan era and remains at a constant temperature of 98.6° F (37° C). Carve out time to “take the waters” in one of the resort's four pools, visit the medical spa, or try one of the spa's many beauty treatments, including the ultrasonic Keralytic facial.

### **Terre Blanche Hotel Spa Golf Resort – Puget, France**

Picture this: a quaint Provencal village-esque setting within the lush hills of Provence, encased by medieval villages, valleys, and mountains—the five-star Terre Blanche Hotel Spa Golf Resort on the French Riviera simply calls that reality. Not only does this all-suite-and-villa resort host two par-72 championship golf courses with views of the southern Alps, but it has a stunning spa, surrounded by cypress trees, that features Provence-inspired treatments, among its other luxe amenities.

### **The Setai, South Beach – Miami Beach, FL**

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	<p>The cosmopolitan Setai sets the tone for high style in the heart of South Beach's oceanfront district. Originally the site of the Dempsey Vanderbilt Hotel, established in the 1930s, the beachfront Miami Art Deco property is currently located adjacent to the hotel's impressive 40-story glass tower. On-site highlights include a recording studio, three restaurants, and the Spa at The Setai, which excels in Pacific Rim-inspired treatments like the Setai Jade Massage.</p>
<p><b>Spafinder's Top Ten Ontario Spas</b></p>	<p><b>Grail Springs Wellness Retreat &amp; Spa</b></p> <p>Led by its founder Madeleine Marentatte, Grail Springs Wellness Retreat &amp; Spa offers guests a holistic retreat experience where they will focus on detoxification, life-transformation, and weight-loss. The wellness retreat is set on 100 wooded acres in the heart of the Canadian Shield making it the perfect destination for trail lovers! When guests aren't enjoying trails for hiking and horseback riding they will most certainly be enjoying the 6,000-square-foot spa. The spa features medieval- and Gothic-style architecture throughout its 10 treatment rooms, spa boutique, and separate men's and women's locker rooms. Spa-goers can alternate between the indoor and outdoor amenities of infrared and Finnish saunas, a hot mineral saltwater tub, a Japanese saltwater cold plunge, a steam room, and a Vichy shower.</p> <p><b>Old Mill Toronto</b></p> <p>The Old Mill Toronto has a cherished motto, Vallis Humbria Angliae Pars Anglisa Procul which means, "In the valley of the Humber, a bit of England far from England." Blending Old World English charm with warm hospitality, Old Mill Toronto comes complete with stone walls, flagstone floors, beamed ceilings, and wood-burning fireplaces. The 3,500-square-foot spa has 11 treatment rooms, two infrared saunas, and separate men's and women's locker rooms. Spa guests will also find customized facials, massage services, body treatments, waxing, and makeup applications on the menu. Alternative therapies include reflexology, aromatherapy, and reiki.</p> <p><b>Shizen Spa at Cosmopolitan Hotel Toronto</b></p> <p>Near the bustling financial district, the Shizen Spa at the Cosmopolitan Hotel offers a respite from the hectic atmosphere of downtown Toronto. The 25-story sanctuary features an East-meets-West aesthetic with a holistic menu of treatments. Spa guests can chill out in the glass-enclosed solarium pre and post treatments, take a peek at the busy streets below through the floor-to-ceiling Japanese Shoji windows, or relax in the 12-person whirlpool. Treatments, utilizing Comfort Zone,</p>

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Guinot, Intraceuticals and OPI product lines, promote a distinctive fusion of Eastern and Western healing philosophies and are performed in five private spa suites.

### **Shizen Spa at Pantages Hotel Toronto Centre**

The all-suite Pantages Hotel Toronto Centre blends modern architecture with urban, Zen-like appeal into an urban oasis close to Toronto's arts, entertainment, shopping, and financial scenes. Chic interiors include apartment-style accommodations, a trendy martini bar, and the 3,000-square-foot, 10-treatment-room, Shizen Spa, which offers a full menu of indulgent treatments and packages. Spa guests will be led to the "White Room" relaxation lounge to unwind before treatments, or they can enjoy the infrared sauna, eucalyptus steam room, or Jacuzzi.

### **Shizen Spa at Horseshoe Resort**

Just one hour north of the greater Toronto area, Horseshoe Resort allows guests to immerse themselves in both the beauty of southern Ontario's natural surroundings and the relaxation that comes from a luxury resort. A golf destination by summer and ski mecca come winter, Horseshoe entertains with ample outdoor excursions balanced by tranquil indoor spaces. Located on the second floor of the resort, the 400-square-foot Shizen Spa offers a secluded and intimate space of serenity with two treatment rooms.

### **Shizen Spa at Deerhurst Resort**

Sprawled over 760 acres, the lakefront Deerhurst Resort in eastern Canada's Muskoka region, two-and-a-half hours from Toronto. The 2,500-square-foot Shizen Spa offers a blend of global and local rituals in a lovely, earthy setting created with wood and stone elements, and the resort's abundance of outdoor activities showcases the area's ever-changing seasons. To heighten guests' relaxation, all Shizen Spa treatments begin with a SCENTSory Journey, inspired by nature and made from pure Muskoka ingredients. The 400-room resort has two championship golf courses, and an ample number of restaurants provide guests a taste of the local seasonal flavors.

### **White Oaks Resort & Spa**

Set in the heart of Ontario's wine country in Niagara on the Lake, the CAA/AAA Four-Diamond White Oaks Resort & Spa offers guests a 13-acre resort setting, award-winner dining options, and a private

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115,000-square-foot fitness club. At the resort's core is the modern 15,000-square-foot Spa at White Oaks, with 17 treatment rooms, as well as whirlpools, steam rooms, saunas and cold plunge pools. There are also two relaxation lounges and a dual suite, where romantics can become closer with tandem treatments.

### **Eganridge Inn Spa & Country Club**

In the picturesque village of Fenelon Falls, shaded by majestic, soaring pines, and surrounded by the Sturgeon Lake, is the 105-acre heritage estate, Eganridge Inn Spa & Country Club. This Canadian retreat is highlighted by a 10-boat marina, the nine-hole Eganridge golf course, and the stately Dunsford House. The nature-inspired six-room spa features hydrotherapy baths, Swiss showers, massage and skin care services against the backdrop of the lake.

### **The Spa at the Windsor Arms**

The neo-gothic-style Windsor Arms Hotel & Spa opened in 1927 and has since grown to meld Old World decadence with modern opulence in the center of Toronto's busy entertainment district. The landmark building features private butler service, exceptional dining options, and luxurious suite accommodations. The 500-square-foot spa is set on the fourth and fifth floors of the hotel. The first level houses a saltwater pool and the second has seven treatment rooms, one reserved for couples. The spa is highlighted by an oversized terrace.

### **The Briars Resort & Spa**

Along the shores of peaceful Lake Simcoe, an hour from Toronto, in Jackson's Point, Ontario, The Briars Resort & Spa is a 200-acre estate surrounded by soaring pines, verdant lawns, and blossoming gardens. The family-owned property, which originated in 1880 as a working farm, infuses a welcoming charm with an abundance of activities, including a championship Scottish woodlands golf course, tennis courts, and indoor and outdoor swimming pools. Guests can follow up a round of golf with a relaxing treatment at Briars Spa. The spa has seven treatment rooms and features a menu, made up of à la carte treatments and day or overnight packages, personally designed by the spa's staff. Spa services incorporate a variety of product lines, including Phytomer, Clayton Shagal, Kneipp, and Eminence. To begin or continue the spa experience, spa-goers are invited to unwind in the sauna.

### **Spafinder Contacts**

Website: [www.spafinder.ca](http://www.spafinder.ca)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SpaFinder>

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	Twitter: <a href="https://twitter.com/SpaFinder">https://twitter.com/SpaFinder</a>
<b>All-Inclusive Spa Treatments</b>	<p>In Vietnam, Fusion Maia is an all-inclusive spa resort – but with a big difference. No it's not the food and drinks that are all-inclusive as you will find in Mexico and the Caribbean – it's the spa treatments! Fusion Maia claims to be the only all-inclusive spa resort in Asia</p> <p>The hotel is located in Da Nang in the central seacoast region. This area is opening up rapidly due to the new international airport that opened two years ago.</p> <p>The boutique style resort has eighty luxurious pool villas, each with private outdoor plunge pool and indoor Jacuzzi. There are also four spa villas and three beach villas. Each villa has its own private compound.</p> <p>Fusion Maia has a number of special packages available and on their website currently display rates from US \$429 per room per night which includes villa accommodation, unlimited spa treatments and full hot breakfast, transfers to picturesque Hoi An and use of resort facilities and activities. For more information visit <a href="http://www.fusionmaia.com">www.fusionmaia.com</a>.</p>

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