

WELLNESS: BEST SPA PRODUCTS AT INTERNATIONAL HOTELS

For more than 20 years, a special part of my job has been to discover new beauty and skincare lines at unique resorts and spas around the world. Here are a few of my personal favorite products, and the places I think you would most enjoy experiencing them.
By Mary Bemis

ILA

STANDOUT PRODUCT

Face Mask for Revitalising Skin is a green clay-based mask that's beneficial for lackluster or dehydrated skin (think long flights). Ingredients include Himalayan rocks salt, argan oil and one of ila's star ingredients—cold-pressed rosehip seed oil, harvested from a sustainable farming project in the southern Andes.

Of special note: The convenient Travel Essentials Collection, made up of shampoo, conditioner, relaxing bath soak, body wash and body lotion.

PHILOSOPHY/STAR INGREDIENT

Translating to “earth” in Sanskrit, this luxury organic line, known for pioneering natural ingredients, is quickly becoming a cult favorite among jet-setting spa-goers. The line hails from the UK and was created by Denise Leicester, an aromatherapist and a former nurse who developed the line after a stint caring for a former ruler of Dubai. The brand's philosophy is “beyond organic,” and its vocation is “to bring purity, energy and balance into everyday life through the creation of luxury organic products ...”

WHERE TO EXPERIENCE

Four Seasons Resort Langkawi, Malaysia, is home to The Geo Spa, aptly because of its proximity to Langkawi's UNESCO Geopark. It's an eco paradise that offers a true holistic experience. The spa treatments (all bespoke natural treatments by ila) are based on four pillars: nourishment, water, light and air. Try the Feminine Spirit & Radiance ritual, inspired by ancient Malaysian traditions.



BIOLOGIQUE RECHERCHE

STANDOUT PRODUCT

Without a doubt, the star product is the *Lotion P50*, a unique exfoliator that is the basis of all of the line's skincare treatments. All treatments, including your at-home regimen, begin with this product that ultimately helps maintain the skin's acid pH. (Men love it because it does a great job of keeping in-grown hairs at bay.)

PHILOSOPHY/STAR INGREDIENT

Nearly forty years ago, Yvan (a biologist) and Josette (a physiotherapist) Allouche created this line and its methodology that is beloved by many a high-powered beauty editor. The results-driven line contains active ingredients and a high concentration of botanicals, marine and biological extracts.

Facials are highly customized, and products are used in combination with the company's original high-tech Remodeling Face Machine for pretty dramatic results. Every facial is designed around the “Skin Instant,” in other words, the current condition of your skin—and spa therapists undergo extensive training in technique in order to deliver a topnotch facial. There's a reason why Biologique Recherche has such a loyal clientele.

WHERE TO EXPERIENCE

Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong, where spa director Shoshana Weinberg was wowed by the line after receiving a “magical facial” from the founders' son, Dr. Philippe Allouche, a clinical doctor. The facial, along with the Biologique Recherche products, are bestsellers at this sophisticated city spa.

Photos courtesy of Four Seasons Resort Langkawi | Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong

ALPIENNE

STANDOUT PRODUCT

Arnika Lotion is light in texture—a refreshing lotion doesn't leave a greasy residue behind. Simple packaging and pure ingredients, like arnica and rosemary, make this a winner.

PHILOSOPHY/STAR INGREDIENT

This delightful line from Austria takes its inspiration from alpine traditional medicine focused on the healing power of plants, and it prides itself on only using natural ingredients from the Alps. Arnica, St. John's Wort, chamomile and honey are just some of those healing ingredients that are meant to moisturize and soothe.

WHERE TO EXPERIENCE

The beautiful resort hotel **The Chedi Andermatt** in Andermatt, Switzerland has a sumptuous and spectacular new spa that uses Alpienne in many of its treatments. And why not? The line reflects the spa's surroundings and highlights the indigenous herbs of the region. Try the Alpienne Mountain Ritual, a five-treatment experience made up of Aromatherapy Foot Polish, Mountain Massage, Mountain Herbs Body Polish, Classic Mountain Herbs Facial and a choice of Alpine Botanicals Whirl or Steam Bath.



THEMAE

STAND-OUT PRODUCT

Baume Delicieux The en Orient is a lovely body massage balm that nourishes and rejuvenates dry skin. It features the brand's

proprietary Four Teas Elixir, has an intriguing subtle scent and is wonderful to use whether your skin is dry or not.

themaefr.com

PHILOSOPHY/STAR INGREDIENT

Originating in Paris, the line draws its name from the traditional Japanese tea preparation ceremony and pays homage to the art of tea as it is used and cherished by different cultures around the world. Long before its launch, the founders traveled extensively, researching the types and treatments of tea. Today, one may experience a number of

Themaef spa treatments that are a blend of different cultures and traditions. Tea—specifically a beautifying combination of white tea (regenerating), red tea (soothing), green tea (chockfull of antioxidants) and black tea (stimulating)—is at the heart of this luxury line, and the belief behind it is that antioxidant-rich tea, so naturally high in polyphenols, can help slow the skin's aging by neutralizing free radicals.

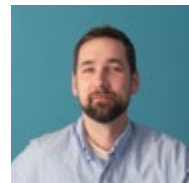
WHERE TO EXPERIENCE

Domaine de la Bretesche, Missillac, France. This stately Relais & Châteaux property is actually an elegant renovated 15th-century castle situated in a picture-perfect pastoral landscape. The luxury hotel is home to the La Cour Carrée Spa where one may book a variety of Themaef treatments, including the “De La Tête aux Pieds,” the head-to-toe ritual, which may just be the ultimate in relaxation.

bretesche.com

Mary Bemis is a leading spa and wellness expert. She is the founder of InsidersGuidetoSpas.com and believes in the benefits of seasonal facials and a serious at-home spa ritual.

Photos courtesy of The Chedi Andermatt | Themaef



TECHNOLOGY: WELL-CONNECTED

LIAM MCCABE RECOMMENDS THE ULTIMATE SMARTPHONE FOR SERIOUS TRAVELERS. BY LIAM MCCABE

For the discerning international voyager, one luxury smartphone stands head and shoulders above the pack. The Vertu Signature Touch (starting at \$10,300) is a high-powered handset, bolstered by the classic dependability of a 24-hour concierge service, plus insider access to clubs and events around the world.



Crafted around a titanium frame, the Signature Touch has a confident heft that's missing from today's typical aluminum and plastic phones. Its 4.7-inch, 1080p, sapphire crystal display is scratchproof. Bang & Olufsen-certified speakers have punch and clarity, while the Hasselblad-approved camera takes crisp, vibrant photos. The leather wrap is soft to the touch and is available in about a half-dozen finishes, including a new Bentley edition. Voice and text encryption are standard, and it will work on any GSM networks worldwide, with up to 4G speeds.

Vertu's trademark feature is a concierge service. With direct access from the phone, a concierge can assist customers in organizing travel details, arranging reservations and gaining access to high-profile sports and cultural events, entry to members-only clubs and more.

One year of service is included with the Signature Touch and costs up to \$3,000 per year thereafter.

Most services and privileges are centered in metropolitan cities, though Vertu tells us that their “concierge and events are on a global level,” and that they “have an intricate network of contacts that stretch well beyond the city limits.”

While the Signature Touch is considered to be one of the top handsets available right now and is probably an upgrade from your current handset, it's still built around many of the same components used in \$700 mobile phones. It's also an Android phone, so switching over from an iPhone won't be frictionless.

That said, the Signature Touch packs in great specs and no-stress services around the world—there's no other package quite like it.

Liam McCabe is a technology journalist living in Boston. His stories about cameras, gadgets and the future of your home have appeared in USA Today, Reviewed.com and more. He's an avid traveler and aspiring outdoorsman.