

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

The ultimate quick pick-me-up

By Linda Clarke
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Whether it's business or pleasure travel, more often than not you arrive at your hotel tired and grungy, shoulders stiff and neck aching, and your skin dehydrated from the dermal insult that is flying. But you've got a meeting to get to, or you're itching to soak in your surroundings and the last thing you want is to spend an hour-plus in a spa. That's why Maryse Vernillet, the spa director at the Langham Boston, added three Express Treatments to the hotel's Chuan Body + Soul spa menu this past summer: "Our spa treatments are well designed to address various needs," Vernillet says, "but I saw there wasn't the right treatment for someone who has less time to spend."

At 45 minutes each, these massage and facial treatments trim the fat, but don't cut down on

benefit. "They are only 45 minutes, but it's 45 minutes in a busy day where the client is the focus," says Maryse Vernillet. "They own the 45-minutes." That can be a big health boost in relaxation and reinvigorating self-energy. "With the massage, whatever they want to focus on, I do. You can't focus on the whole body in that time, but the really tense areas get the work."

Vernillet says that business travelers and Financial District workers jumped on the streamlined facial: "The facial is an instant booster for a tired appearance," she says. "I selected it because you walk out and you look good, ready for your meeting."

So far, the Langham, Boston is the only Langham hotel offering the shorter treatments: "If they work for our guests, who knows, our other hotels might add them, too."

Already, plenty of hotels see the need for mini treatments: the Boston Harbor Hotel's Head in

the Clouds Massage is 25 minutes of localized deep tissue work focused on the neck, back, and shoulders; Florida's new luxury Naples Grande Beach Resort's spa has the intense 25-minute Micro Current Express Facial to get guests glamorous and ready to go; and The Spa at Omni Mount Washington Resort in New Hampshire has a 25-minute scalp and face massage, and a 25 minute localized body massage (you choose the area). "The express treatments are a great alternative for guests who are busy with the resort's other activities, such as golf and skiing, as well as for conference guests who may not have a lot of available leisure time, but want to have a few moments of relaxation with us," says Jesse Tyler, Omni Mount Washington Resort's spa director.

This past summer, Hilton's eforea spas added three 30-minute mini treatments in all 20 locations. "It's a very different approach to tradition-

al spa treatments," says Miriam Liberman, the eforea spa director at Hilton Short Hills, in New Jersey. "These might be shorter in duration, but they are concentrated. The usual 60- or 90-minute massage covers the entire body, but the 30-minute is extremely targeted. Take the head and face treatment, which works great for people who get stress headaches, if this were part of a normal full treatment, the area would be worked on for five to eight minutes. In 30 minutes, we can give the full benefits of our Chinese medicine philosophy, and create a truly relaxing experience with meaningful health benefits."

Does this mean the three-hour spa bash is a thing of the past? "It isn't a thing of the past by any means," says Liberman. "But people are seeing the health value in having shorter spa treatments, but more frequently."

Linda Clarke can be reached at soundz@me.com.



HERE

SKI WITH A WORLD CHAMP
Head to Waterville Valley Resort Dec. 27 and 28 to meet and ski with Olympic gold medalist Hannah Kearney. The world champion freestyle skier won Olympic medals in 2010 and 2014, and has competed in 10 World Cup Championships, taking away six moguls titles and four overall titles. She plans to ski with guests at Waterville Valley Resort in the morning, and then stick around until 1 p.m. for photos and autographs in either the courtyard or on the second floor of the base lodge, depending on the weather. The ticket office opens at 7 a.m. and lifts start running at 8 a.m. Columbia Sportswear will also raffle off winter gear. Lift tickets: \$57-\$77, or save up to 55 percent by booking in advance online. 800-468-2553, waterville.com.



Olympic gold medalist Hannah Kearney.

A ROOFTOP NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATION
Sip champagne and enjoy front-row seats to Boston's fireworks show at The Envoy Hotel's rooftop bar this New Year's. The hotel, a new boutique property in Boston's Seaport neighborhood, offers a special three-course chef's tasting menu at its Outlook Kitchen and Bar, Dec. 31, featuring butter-poached lobster with caviar, a Pineland Farms filet, and peppermint patty gateau with chocolate cake. Then head to the Lookout Rooftop Bar on the sixth floor for a champagne toast and clear views of the city's fireworks show. Cost: \$75 per person plus tax and gratuity for the dinner and rooftop toast. Or choose the complete New Year's Eve package at \$629 based on double occupancy, which includes accommodations, the chef's tasting menu, the fireworks viewing, brunch, and a New Year's toast for two, a complimentary bottle of champagne, overnight valet parking, and late checkout at 2 p.m. 617-530-1559, theenvoyhotel.com.

THERE
WILD ADVENTURES ON IRELAND'S WEST COAST
Hop in a custom-designed Land Rover with up to 12 other passengers and tour Ireland on an adventure geared to families. Vagabond Adventure Tours of Ireland offers an eight-day Wild Irish Rover trip that explores the southwest coast up to Connemara, and includes hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding on a sandy beach, and a night's stay in a castle (\$1,600 per person, based on double occupan-



The Vancouver Dine Out Festival runs for 17 days.

cy). Also visit the remote Skellig Islands, a UNESCO World Heritage Site where scenes from the new "Star Wars" movie was shot. The 6-day Tour to the Edge of the World explores the counties of Kerry and Cork, and includes surfing, sea kayaking, and a chance to learn about shepherding from a local farmer (\$1,308 per person, double occupancy). Both trips include accommodations in Irish guesthouses, meals at local restaurants, and nights of traditional Irish music. Save 10 percent off March and April trips. 870-619-4059, vagabondtoursof ireland.com.

NOT YOUR ORDINARY FOOD FEST
The lineup for the 17-day Dine Out Vancouver Festival in British Columbia's seaside city offers plenty of surprises: a chance to enjoy a beer-inspired breakfast buffet (think: beer kielbasa and hopped hollandaise paired with a local craft brew), learn how to make fancy cocktails from a legendary bartender, and enjoy dinners that are paired (and screened) with food-focused movies. Or enjoy a four-course meal while watching reef

sharks, sea turtles, and other tropical critters at the Vancouver Aquarium (followed by a behind-the-scenes adventure). The event, held from January 15 to 31, offers more than 100 culinary-themed experiences. Tickets: free to \$143 plus tax. Many downtown hotels offer special rates from \$58 to \$102 per night; more than 240 restaurants offer prix fixe menus from \$14.50 to \$29, and Air Canada offers 15 percent off flights for those traveling to Vancouver for the festival. 604-684-2787, www.dineoutvancouver.com.

EVERYWHERE
A GADGET THAT CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE
Be prepared for the next big storm, natural disaster, or travel glitch with Midland's new E+Ready Emergency Crank Radio. The ER310 has an easy-to-use crank and a solar panel for charging the device's lithium-ion battery, which lasts up to 32 hours (you can also use six disposable AA batteries). It has a 130-lumen LED flashlight with an SOS

beacon, an ultrasonic dog whistle to help rescue teams find you, a USB charger for refueling your cellphone and other portable devices, an AM/FM radio, and weather alert capabilities from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Keep one in your vacation home, car, backpack, and more. \$69.99. Midland's new line also includes a weather radio, and two-way radios, both of which have more basic features. midlandusa.com.

CAMERA KEEPS YOU CONNECTED TO HOME
Logitech's new portable camera lets you keep an eye on your home, connect with family, check on pets, and keep a log of each day's events while you travel. The Logi Circle Portable Home Connection Camera sets up quickly and easily via Bluetooth to your mobile device. Download the Logi Circle app, available to Android and Apple users, to connect to the device and adjust its settings. The Live HD View feature means you can have a two-way conversation in real-time that are also encrypted for security. The clever Scene Intuition technology filters out unimportant triggers, like light changes or a meandering pet, so you don't get false notifications. The best part: Day Briefs pare down the day's activity to a 30-second clip, so you can stay connected to home without having to relive each full day. It comes with a charging stand. Currently \$169.99 at Amazon.com. 510-795-8500, logitech.com. KARI BODNARCHUK

