

De-stress at New England spas and retreats

By **Bill Burke** / The Travel Guy | Thursday, August 30, 2012 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | **Travel**

The Northeast is often seen as a place where people are constantly on-the-go: talking fast, working fast and burning out fast.

Turns out, it's also a great place to zone out.

There are spas, resorts and retreats throughout New England, giving residents and visitors a chance to spend plenty of time horizontal and relaxed.

Sitting atop a hill in the central Berkshires, the Cranwell Resort, Spa and Golf Club (55 Lee Road, Lenox) is a dramatic Tudor-style mansion. The lobby is welcoming, with comfortable furnishings, an oversized fireplace, dark woods and ornamental windows. Guests can choose one of several accommodations: the Founder's Cottage, Olmsted Manor, Beecher's Cottage and the Mansion.

A Resort King room — with a king-size bed, private bath and decorated in ornate Victorian style in Beecher's Cottage, Founder's Cottage or Olmsted Manor — starts at \$249 a night.

The resort's golf course is renowned for its beauty — 18 holes, with a cart, runs \$69-\$79 and overnight guests get 20 percent off greens fees. But we're not here for dawn-to-dusk activities. We're here for the steam, pampering and the fluffy towels.

The Spa at Cranwell offers more than 50 services, from massages and detox wraps to skin and body treatments, in its 16 treatment rooms. The massage options alone are wonderfully extensive: Swedish massage (\$115 for 50 minutes, \$165 for 80 minutes), Reflexology (\$115 for 50 minutes), Reiki energy balancing (\$115 for 50 minutes) and the new Head in the Clouds (\$60 for 22 minutes), a head, neck and shoulder massage, are just a few of the options. Body treatments range from a Carita soft satin skin buff (\$135 for 50 minutes) to new aromatherapy salt scrubs (\$115 for 50 minutes).

Good news for the relaxation crowd: The Cranwell is running a Spa Getaway package. Guests stay in a Resort King when taking advantage of the spa getaway. One night's accommodations, a \$125 spa credit, a 10 percent discount on spa treatments, \$25 dining credit at any Cranwell restaurant, unlimited fitness classes and full use of the Spa at Cranwell with steam rooms, whirlpools, saunas and a heated indoor pool costs \$245 per person, per night Sunday through Thursday, and \$322 per person, per night on Fridays, Saturdays or holidays.

An online-only special, Serenity Sundays, gives visitors 20 percent off spa treatments and full use of the spa facilities for \$129 per room. (To book, call 800-272-6935 or go to Cranwell.com.)

You can also find rejuvenation in the heart of area code 617. The new Exhale Mind Body Spa at the Fairmont Battery Wharf (2 Battery Wharf) occupies a spacious 13,000-square-foot space dedicated to relaxation and well-being.

Exhale offers a course of classes — Harborwalk Bootcamp, Core Fusion Barre, PranaVayu Yoga, Exhale Vinyasa Flow and assorted cardio and training among them. Spa therapies include acupuncture and healing eastern modalities (\$150 for 60 minutes), mani/pedis (\$30 and \$55), massage, facials, waxing and specialty therapies.

Among the more unique treatments is the Hammam Detox (\$110 for 30 minutes). Exhale also has a Back Bay facility, but the Hammam treatment is available at Battery Wharf only. The Hammam Detox puts guests in a coed hammam — a Middle Eastern steam bath where a warm water wash softens skin from head to toe. A relaxing exfoliation on the heated hammam stone is then followed by an organic aromatherapy scrub. All traces of the scrub are then rinsed away with cool water, followed by an aromatherapy mist that seals in these therapeutic treatments. Bathing suits are required.

The Fairmont is running a Couples Therapy Package, which includes an overnight stay and a therapeutic 60-minute couple's massage. The package starts at \$769 in a Fairmont Gold King room, and includes breakfast, hors d'oeuvres and dessert. At the high-end of the spectrum is the indulgent Presidential Suite King Panoramic Water View. The 1,500-square-foot suite includes a living room, dining room, wet bar and a terrace for taking advantage of the spectacular view after enjoying the couple's massage — all for \$2,380. (To book a treatment, call 617-603-3100 or go to Exhalespa.com.)

To track down your own spa by location, and to find a deal on a spa treatment nearby, go to spaweek.com and search by city. A quick search reveals that Corbu Spa and Salon (5 Bennett St., Cambridge) is offering a 60-minute Cafe Mocha Slimming Treatment crafted directly from chef Jody Adams' kitchen at Rialto for \$95 — a 14 percent savings. Adara Spa (115 Lewis Wharf) has a \$30 express facial; Kekei Salon and Beauty Lounge (54 Queensberry St.) offers 43 percent off semi-permanent eyelash extensions for \$99; and Essential Skin Electrology and Day Spa (271 Newbury St.) has a special 50-minute deep tissue or Swedish massage for \$50 — 38 percent off the normal rate.

Spiritual and meditative getaways are also available, but can present a different path to relaxation. Often, spiritual retreats are less about spas and manicures and more about inner peace and personal development.

For those seeking peace and quiet with their relaxation — emphasis on the quiet — there's the Quietude Personal Meditative Retreats at the Spirit Fire Meditative Retreat Center (407 W. Leyden Road, Leyden). Participants get a private bedroom and bathroom, and complete silence. Spirit Fire recommends these particular retreats — held several times throughout the year — for anyone needing to unplug, someone wrestling with an important decision, focusing on an upcoming birth or dealing with a recent death. Writers and students have also taken advantage of this unique getaway, which costs \$250 per person, meals included.

While there are several options for guests, the Practice Living Awareness Retreats at Spirit Fire are geared specifically for certain levels: entry, intermediate and generative. Entry-level retreats are four days long, providing an opportunity to take part in the site's meditation and mindfulness without creating a work/life scheduling problem. (To book a retreat, call 413-624-3955 or go to spiritfire.com.)

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