

The Best Gay-Owned Spas in the U.S.

With the phenomenal growth in spas, how can a traveler tell the true-blue homosexual establishments from the merely metrosexual ones? Our top picks:

By Adam H. Graham, Matthew Link, Benjamin Ryan

1. INDIGO ECO SPA

Mendocino, Calif.

(800-421-2810)

Acquired by gay couple Seth Kelman and Michael Webster in 2004, Stevenswood Resort was transformed from a rustic lodge to a world-class resort complete with 10 luxury suites (with wood-burning fireplaces) and a restaurant that consistently ranks among *Zagat's* top 40 California eateries. Surrounded on three sides by the redwood groves of the 2,400-acre Van Damme State Park and close to the ocean, the resort also harbors the five-star Indigo Eco Spa, which uses organic, local, and natural botanicals-based treatments. The Pacific Detox utilizing Redwood and eucalyptus extracts and ocean lipids, the Gentleman's Choice Facial, and the Complete Body Chemical Analysis have earned the facility Top Ten World Spa status by Spa Tracker.

2. EAST CANYON HOTEL AND SPA, Palm Springs, Calif.

(760-320-1928)

Enjoying the fruits of a recent expensive renovation, this upscale gem of a retreat distinguishes itself from other Palm Springs gay resorts with its no-nudity policy and a highly experienced staff of professionally trained massage therapists working a full-service spa on the premises (making it one of only a handful of gay spa resorts in the world). Fifteen tasteful rooms and suites (with Italian Frette linens, Gilchrist & Soames bath amenities, large LCD flat-panel TVs, his-and-his vanities, and oversize showers) enclose a quiet swimming pool and whirlpool, with the San Jacinto Mountains looming beyond. Treatments range from

heated stone massages to reiki to two masseurs working on you at once!

4. THE GENDARMERIE

West Hollywood

(310-858-9009)

Just off West Hollywood's main gay drag of Santa Monica Boulevard, this cozy, social spa feels more like a friend's house; it's hidden away in a quaint 1928 stucco cottage. A rear courtyard invites guests to lounge about drinking martinis infused with fruit from the spa's own lemon tree. The spa offers an ionized water treatment process—a mineral footbath that detoxes the Botox and any other SoCal chemicals you

may ingest during your stay in La-La Land—or go for the whole shebang with a haircut, manicure, facial, pedicure, and chiropractic massage. Don't miss the full steam shower after a deep tissue massage—close to heaven.

5. FACE TO FACE

New York City

(212-633-0404)

Hidden on the sixth floor of a nondescript office building in Chelsea is this über-private modern spa founded by Mexican-born gay skin care guru Enrique Ramirez, who personally works on clients and tailors his approach to the needs of male skin. Their body wax, an Australian import, is

3. SENSPA

San Francisco

(415-441-1777)

San Francisco's largest day spa is not only partly gay-owned and gay-managed, it's set in a renovated 13,000-square-foot World War I Army barracks in the city's woodsy Presidio. A \$4.8 million makeover transformed its interior into a lush Zen-like world with 14 treatment rooms (including two VIP rooms), an education center, an indoor garden meditation sanctuary, and a cozy soundproof lounge with a floor-to-ceiling cylinder fireplace. Spa treatments come with a free assessment by a wellness coach, and a master healer can treat you to ancient Chinese practices like Tui Na, cupping, and acupuncture. Other, less traditional treatments include a workout recovery massage for gym rats, and a Fanny Facial that cleanses the skin of the back and buttocks!

