

SPAS

for \$50 (or less)

No need to break the bank for a little relaxation. Try some of these luxurious low-cost treatments, whether you're into massages, facials—or beatings with oak leaves. Photographs by **Sara Forrest**

Massages

Asia Tui Na Wholeness: Tui na massage 37 E 28th St between Madison and Park Aves, suite 800 (212-686-8082, asiatuinawholeness.com). 45mins, \$45. This may be my new favorite cheap massage. The space is quiet and clean, and you're asked to fill out a form with your personal health history before anyone touches you. The proof, though, is on the table. My therapist in *tui na* (literally "push pull"), who seemed absolutely determined to release my tension, dug, pressed and slid her well-oiled hands, forearms and elbows over my crunching, snapping muscles, at one point straddling me for better leverage. **Best part:** "Hot Chinese medicine!" she declared as she placed a soothing, warm sack between my shoulder blades, to loosen the area while she worked on my legs.—*Daniel Gritzer*

TONY DEAL **The Aveda Institute: Elemental Nature Facial for Self Renewal** 233 Spring St between Sixth Ave and Varick St (212-807-1492, avedainstituteny.com). 90mins, \$50. Five readers can get a free Self Renewal treatment at the Aveda Institute; e-mail spas@timeoutny.com. Except for a prescrubbing inspection by the instructor, this beauty-school experience was identical to the double-the-price professional version. After a free cup of Aveda's Comforting Tea, I was treated to a foot soak, a "sensory journey" aromatherapeutic facial, and a head, hand and foot massage. I emerged from the session radiant. **Best part:** My facialist cleansed my skin with the same signature licorice-peppermint tea that I was served in the lobby. It feels much better than it tastes.—*Alyssa Pinsker*

Body Central: NECK-onomic Recovery 39 W 14th St between Fifth and Sixth Aves, suite 505 (212-677-5633, bodycentralnyc.com). 30mins, \$40. For this

neck-and-shoulder massage, chiropractor (and Body Central director) Jo Ann Weinrib rubbed me down with a homeopathic ointment made from plants and minerals, to soothe away muscle pain, and worked her fingers along my spine to loosen my muscles before focusing on each shoulder and upper arm. Then I flipped over, and as she held my head in her hands, she gently pressed away the tension I'd been carrying in my neck and scalp. **Take note:** The artwork here was all made by Dr. Weinrib's husband, David Weinrib, the curator at Pratt Institute's Sculpture Park.—*Dorkys Ramos*

Broome Sky Health Center: Acupressure massage 120 Elizabeth St between Broome and Grand Sts (212-226-6898). 60mins, \$42. There are only two small things that differentiate this hushed spot from its tonier uptown competitors: cramped quarters (easily forgotten once you're facedown on a bed with powerful fingers, palms and elbows prodding you into relaxed rapture) and a slightly uncomfortable headrest (BYO padding—a small towel should do the trick). Okay, three: An hour of expert kneading doesn't come this cheap north of Houston Street. **Best part:** The tasteful decor and warm lighting here defy the stereotype of churn-'em-out Chinatown joints.—*Kate Lowenstein*

TONY DEAL **Caudalie Vinotherapie Spa: Cranial massage** 1 W 58th St at Fifth Ave (212-265-3182, caudalie-usa.com). 20mins, \$50 (through Mar 31; normally \$55). I don't really believe in the benefits of wine unless you're drinking it, so I was glad to find that the Plaza's "Vinotherapie" spa offers some entirely grape-free treatments, like this peppermint-oil-spiked session. My scalp, neck and face got their due attention, but I spent the whole time feeling miffed that an unavoidable delay in my arrival resulted in

only half the allotted 20 minutes ("I have to end on time," the therapist shrugged, without offering to reschedule or otherwise accommodate me). **Best part:** Despite the brevity of the treatment, I was given a robe and invited to linger (for free) in the armchair-filled wine lounge, to sample some real vinotherapy in the form of the day's reds and whites.—*KL*

C'Spa: 30-minute reflexology foot massage 79-45 Metropolitan Ave between 79th Pl and 80th St, Middle Village, Queens (718-894-4500, cpsa-nyc.com). 30mins, \$45. I lay on a plush table, sighing under therapist Agnes's capable hands as she slathered Biotone cream on the pressure points of my feet. Traditional reflexology can be really rough, but this one wasn't: Agnes used light, reassuring strokes, rubbing the sides of my big toes (which purportedly "correspond to the thyroid"), heels ("intestines") and all the rest of my toes ("the nervous system"). **Best part:** Agnes made circles with each of my toes in a careful, rhythmic motion, for a gentle stretch.—*Ava Chin*

Element Natural Healing Arts: 30-minute massage 518 Henry St at Union St, Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn (718-855-4850, elementhealing.com). 30mins, \$50. After discussing my (lack of) back problems with the therapist (the type of massage depends on your needs), I sunk onto a heated bed for the basic Swedish. She kneaded my oiled back with constant pressure, silently working each quadrant, then moved on to a brief foot, neck and head rub. **Best part:** Though I'd carried groceries for only three blocks the day before, she could tell my neck was sore—and she worked it till it was in better shape.—*Rebecca Dalzell*



Mention TONY when booking these treatments and relax for less.

The Back Room Hand & Foot Spa Treat yourself to an indulgent mani-pedi for just \$25 (normally \$42–\$48) at this retreat tucked inside the Carol's Daughter flagship store. TONY readers get complimentary champagne and strawberries during service. Valid through Wed 3.

24 W 125th St between Fifth Ave and Malcolm X Blvd (Lenox Ave) (212-828-6717, thebackroom@carolsdaughter.com)



Ipanema Day Spa Defuzz with a Brazilian bikini wax and an eyebrow wax (normally \$75) or, for those not willing to bare

the full monty, a lower-leg wax and less-invasive bikini *carioca* (regularly \$80), each shaved down to \$50. Ipanema is also offering its facial and 45-minute deep-tissue body massage, each valued at \$75, for \$50 apiece through Wed 3. 1005 Second Ave between 53rd and 54th Sts, second floor (866-695-1378, ipanemadayspa.com)



Body by Brooklyn
platza treatment

TONY DEAL **Ettia Holistic Day Spa: Ettia Signature Dual Decadence massage** 239 W 72nd St between Broadway and West End Ave (800-795-7109, ettia.com). 30mins, \$50 (through Mar 15; normally \$65). My first impression of Ettia was its size: tiny. But my second impression is the one that stuck: I got personal attention and a darn good rubdown. Since we had only a half hour, the massage therapist asked what body part I wanted her to work on. I chose my back, since I sit at a desk for 12 hours a day. Once the massage started—a combo of Swedish and shiatsu—she kept checking to make sure the pressure was okay and if I was comfortable. I was. **Best part:** Thankfully, the masseuse didn't chitchat, allowing me to get lost in the treatment.—*Lucy Quintanilla*

TONY DEAL **Face to Face NYC: 30-minute targeted Swedish massage** 20 W 20th St between Fifth and Sixth Aves, suite 603 (212-633-0404, facetofacenyc.com). 30mins, \$32 (through Mar 31; normally \$65). The free glass of wine that precedes this treatment provided relaxation for what turned out to be a high-

intensity experience. The therapist called my middle back's propensity for pain "New York City-itis." Catchy. He was obviously skilled, hitting the right pressure points with oiled-up hands, but his handiwork left some slight bruising. **Take note:** This massage is not for the squeamish. My butt got kneaded for a solid ten minutes.—*Nina Topiel*

Faina European Day Spa: Foot reflexology 315 W 57th St between Eighth and Ninth Aves, suite 402 (212-245-6557, fainaeuropeanspa.com). 15mins, \$35. When your tiniest toes are getting a rub, reflexology almost feels like a prone pedicure. But that changes as the therapist starts targeting specific spots on your feet that correspond to parts of your body. This practitioner was responsive to every twitch and murmur, constantly adjusting and avoiding that ticklish spot below the balls of my feet. **Best part:** Faina has a generous understanding of "15 minutes"; sessions (seven under \$50) tend to bleed over the time limits, and feel twice as long.—*Allison Williams*

TONY DEAL **FineLiving New York Ayurveda: Lower-leg and foot massage** 154 W 14th St between Sixth and Seventh Aves, fourth floor (212-616-4127, newyorkayurveda.com). 30mins, \$50 (through Mar 31; normally \$60). Back and head, face and neck massages also 30mins, \$50 (through Mar 31). After determining my dosha (the ayurvedic classification of body and mind), a therapist smoothed my skin with almond and sesame oil, grinding her knuckles into the knot-ridged arches of my feet and using her fingertips to loosen my calves. I emerged softer of skin and muscle than I've been all winter. **Best part:** No product contains preservatives or chemicals. You could eat everything they put on you (but we wouldn't recommend it).—*KL*

Fashion Herb Center: Acupressure massage 107 Mott St between Canal and Hester Sts (212-966-8771, fashionherbcenter.com). 60mins, \$41. Clients are treated to a private room (with a door!) and a rubdown from an experienced acupressurist. Mine attacked tender trigger points from head to toe; by hour's end, each of my tense muscles had raised a white flag. "Is

Shibumi Spa at Eastern Athletic Club Get the movie-star treatment with either of Shibumi's two 30-minute Sundance services (normally \$70 each), which originated at the film festival and incorporate massage and reflexology; they're being offered for \$50 each and include a free guest pass (valued at \$25) to use the gym and sauna for the

day. TONY readers also get 10 percent off the Breast Health Wellness Program (a day of yoga, dance and motivational workshops that includes a 30-minute organic spa service) taking place Feb 6 and 7. Spa offers valid through Wed 3. 80 Leonard St between Broadway and



Church St (212-343-8788, shibumispa.com)

The New York Palace Spa & Fitness Center Make like your favorite pampered *Gossip Girl* character and hit the Palace hotel's spa for a 25-minute restorative massage and a 15-minute manicure or scalp

treatment for \$50 (valued at \$135). Valid weekdays through Feb 5. 455 Madison Ave between 50th and 51st Sts, eighth floor (212-303-7777, sfitness@nypalace.com)

Spa Hydra The Aromatic Anti-Stress Exfoliation, which uses a loofah to smooth skin and boost circulation, is