

## High Luxe

Bari for the best shopping and Lecce for Baroque history.

*Masseria Torre Coccaro* (+39 080 482 9310; [www.masseriatorrecoccaro.com](http://www.masseriatorrecoccaro.com)), from €242 a double a night B&B. Seven nights B&B costs from £595 a person, excluding flights, with *Cognoscenti* (0871 750 0070; [www.c-italy.com](http://www.c-italy.com)). *Ryanair* (0906 270 5656; [www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com)) flies from London Stansted to Bari, from £4.99 one way.

### BEAU-RIVAGE PALACE LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND

Jean-Louis Poiroux, the creator of the Cinq Mondes spa concept, has spent 10 years travelling the world to discover some of the very best massages and spa treatments. The first Cinq Mondes spa, which opened in Paris in 2001, won the European Spa Award for best concept, and is now the most popular day spa in the city. The Cinq Mondes philosophy incorporates ancient health and beauty treatments in surroundings decorated with design elements from Japan, India, North Africa, China and Bali. Beau-Rivage Palace has invested more than £5 million to bring the Cinq Mondes spa to Lausanne, and it promises to be the most beautiful in Switzerland.

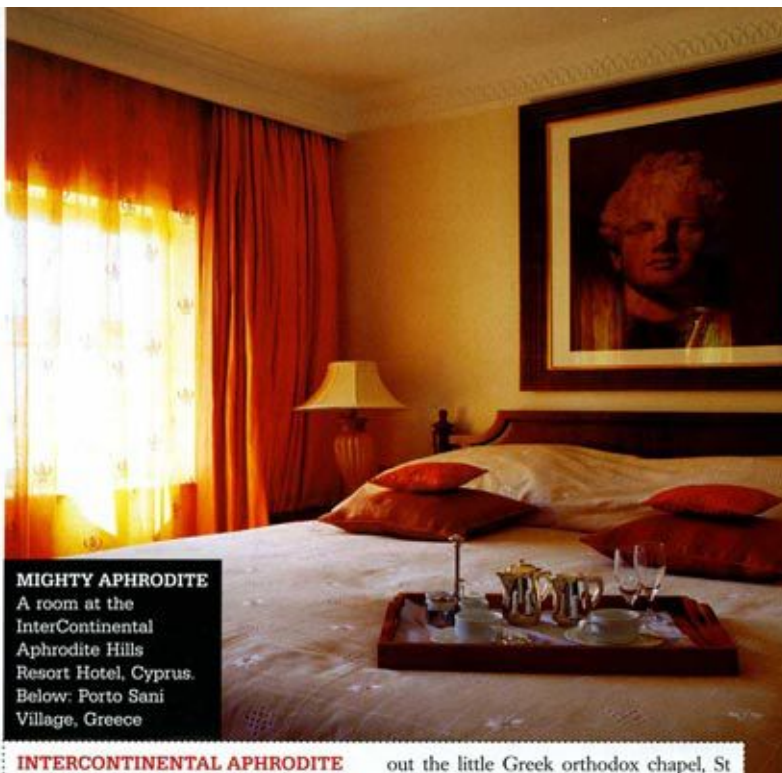
**Highlights** The sensory pleasures of walking through the Tropical Rain Promenade, or letting your mind drift as you languish in a Japanese bath sprinkled with flowers.

**Lowlights** There is only one spa suite for couples at present.

**Insights** The hotel is perfumed with gentle fragrances throughout, and the beautifully sleek and restful decor creates a calming atmosphere. The spa is a great escape from the daily pressures of city life, and the treatments, such as the Balinese massages and the Taoist facials, use time-honoured techniques. *Beau-Rivage Palace* (+41 21 613 3333; [www.brp.ch](http://www.brp.ch)), from €260 a double a night. *British Airways* (0870 850 9850; [www.ba.com](http://www.ba.com)) flies from London to Geneva, from £90 return.

### PORTO SANI VILLAGE HALKIDIKI, GREECE

The Greek welcome at this hotel offers the warmest of embraces. The family-owned



**MIGHTY APHRODITE**  
A room at the InterContinental Aphrodite Hills Resort Hotel, Cyprus. Below: Porto Sani Village, Greece

### INTERCONTINENTAL APHRODITE HILLS RESORT HOTEL KOUKLIA, CYPRUS

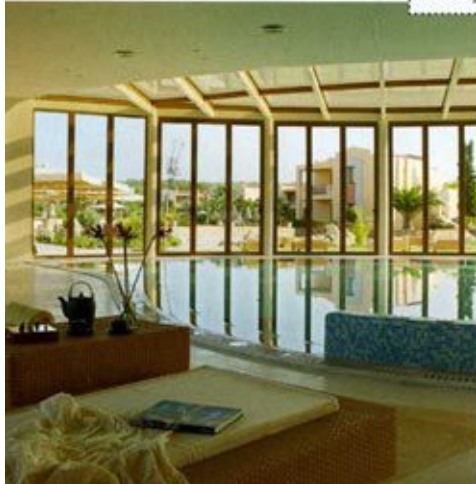
The Retreat Spa is situated in the hills 10 minutes from Paphos in the same spot where Aphrodite – the goddess of love and beauty – reputedly took her lovers. Designed in Graeco-Roman style, the spa has 18 treatment rooms as well as outdoor massage pavilions and a philosophy of luxury, serenity and vitality. New to the long list of treatments is the Caviar & Pearls Facial and the Green Coffee Wrap, which zaps cellulite. Ask therapist Kalli to include her speciality: a shiatsu head massage. Pevonia Botanica products feature, and the staff are very proud of their thermae facilities, which were inspired by the ancient Romans and are excellent for detoxing.

**Highlights** The beautiful sunsets – enjoy them from the terrace of your room or from the Sunset Bar, which overlooks the sea. If you are romantically inspired, check

out the little Greek orthodox chapel, St Catherine's, for an impromptu wedding.

**Lowlights** The hotel is popular with company away-days, but you will never be aware of them, as meeting rooms and conference areas are separate. The beach is a two-minute shuttle-ride away and pebbly.

**Insights** The hotel is perfect for golfers, with a 6,269-metre championship course designed by Cabell Robinson. Tennis players will love the courts; this is where the British Olympic team trained to become acclimatised for the 2004 games. There is also a very well-equipped gym with personal trainers. The children's swimming pool is covered by an awning for protection against the sun and there is a crèche supervised by a qualified nanny. *InterContinental Aphrodite Hills Resort Hotel* (+357 26 829000; [www.ichotelgroup.com](http://www.ichotelgroup.com)). Seven nights B&B costs from £625 a person, including BA flights and transfers, with *Carrier* (0161 491 7650; [www.carrier.co.uk](http://www.carrier.co.uk)).



Sani Resort, a private development within a 1,000-acre ecological reserve, encompasses a hotel and country club, the boutique rooms of the Sani Asterias Suites, the luxurious Porto Sani Village Spa Hotel, an outdoor cinema and a marina. The air is scented with pine and eucalyptus trees, and the landscape is rich with orange trees, olive groves, white sandy beaches, views of Mount Olympus and the sparkling Aegean Sea. The spa, which opened in June 2005, is suffused with Hellenic

serenity – so it makes sense that *sani* translates simply as 'health'.

**Highlights** The individually tailored treatments use natural Apivita and Anne Sémonin products. The Anne Sémonin Facial, with its marine gel mask, vitamin and mineral steam and lashings of cool, silky products, is a skin treat not to be missed.

**Lowlights** The close proximity of people at the other large, four-star resort on the same estate.

**Insights** There are 10 treatment rooms, a fitness studio, thermal suite with sauna, rasul, hammam and hydrotherapy baths. A sunny relaxation room is the perfect



**Highlights** The staff are effortlessly helpful and charming. The hotel may be large, but you can easily go from your room to the spa in your robe. The two restaurants are a bonus, serving nutritious, locally sourced food, and the views are simply breathtaking.

**Lowlights** Cardiff is not the most alluring city, but the hotel is close to the Millennium Stadium and Welsh National Opera.

**Insights** With a thalassotherapy package devised just for you, it's easy to hole up here and treat it like a super-luxe health spa rather than a city hotel with spa.

*The St David's Hotel & Spa (0870 460 6040; [www.stdavidshotel.com](http://www.stdavidshotel.com)), from £260 a night. Treatments, from £30; packages, from £239.*

### THE BALMORAL EDINBURGH

It is not easy to take a hotel that is already a local landmark and make it better, but that's exactly what has happened to the Balmoral. The result is the perfect big-city hotel, with friendly, immaculate service and luxurious rooms. In the cosy spa, the attentive therapists genuinely seem more interested in making you look and feel great than offloading a load of expensive products. Together with a pool and Michelin-starred restaurant, Number One, the Balmoral offers a perfect detox/retox weekend away.

**Highlights** The Balmoral is, at most, a 15-minute walk to the city's main landmarks, galleries and museums, and Harvey Nichols is virtually across the road – and its total and tasteful refurbishment two years ago has injected some much-needed glamour.

**Lowlights** For many locals, this hotel is a much-loved and well-utilised institution, so expect weddings, birthdays or anniversary parties to be going on during your stay – ask when booking if you want to avoid them.

**Insights** The location, attention to detail and service make this the perfect base for a long weekend in Edinburgh.

*The Balmoral (0131 556 2414; [www.thebalmorahotel.com](http://www.thebalmorahotel.com)), from £240 a night, including use of all facilities. Treatments, from £30; packages, from £95.*

### HEALTH FARMS

#### CHAMPNEYS FOREST MERE HAMPSHIRE

Bright, buzzy and laid-back, Champneys Forest Mere is ideal for a healthy weekend or to kick-start a new regime. If Champneys Tring is the Harvey Nicks of health farms, then its sister resort at Forest Mere is more like M&S: accessible, affordable and with lots on offer to appeal to a wide variety of tastes. It is always popular with men, women and most *Hello!* cover stars, so it's best to book everything well in advance.

*Champneys Forest Mere (0870 330 0300; [www.champneys.com](http://www.champneys.com)); day packages, from £70; residential packages, from £180.*

#### CHAMPNEYS TRING HERTFORDSHIRE

After a £10 million refit, the new pool, new spa menu (including La Prairie), new gym and new bedrooms make Champneys Tring one of Britain's best spas. Ideal for some R&R in a traditional health-farm environment – part high-end fitness club, part convalescence home, part countryside hotel – its style is unique. Try the new programme of workshops with celebrity trainers and top-name fitness experts.

*Champneys Tring (0870 330 0300; [www.champneys.com](http://www.champneys.com)); day packages, from £90; one-night/two-day stay, including all meals and facilities, from £230.*

#### DE VERE CAMERON HOUSE LOCH LOMOND

Tucked away in 100 acres of magnificent wooded parkland with views across the shores of Loch Lomond, De Vere Cameron House has a true, grand country-house feel. After a day's clay-pigeon shooting, archery or falconry, you can gaze from the huge windows of the spa at the swans and ducks lazing on the lawn, and you won't believe that busy Glasgow is just a half-hour drive away.

**Highlights** The 21-metre lagoon-style swimming pool; and sublime Oshadi Envelopment

#### RAGDALE HALL LEICESTERSHIRE

As a health farm meets beauty spa, set in pretty grounds in rural Leicestershire, Ragdale Hall not only offers a vast selection of traditional, holistic and natural treatments in a genuinely relaxed environment, but has three swimming pools for its guests. However, the decor is slightly worn and many people wear their bathrobes to dinner, which may not be what you want. Perfect for a weekend break for mothers and daughters, groups of friends, or to start a new diet or fitness regime. Book ahead, since treatments are popular.

*Ragdale Hall (01664 434831; [www.ragdalehall.co.uk](http://www.ragdalehall.co.uk)); day spa packages, from £95; two-day residential packages, from £235 a person.*

#### STOBO CASTLE PEEBLES SHIRE

A stay at Stobo Castle is more of an indulgent holiday than a detox endurance test. Book into one of the Deluxe or Classic rooms for some serious luxury (expect five-star standard), although with the much-improved spa and the stunning countryside you won't spend much time in your room. The communal tables at mealtimes may not initially appeal but, unless you really want to be alone, it works well, as this has to be the friendliest spa around.

*Stobo Castle (01721 725300; [www.stobocastle.co.uk](http://www.stobocastle.co.uk)); day packages from £75; residential packages from £99 a person.*

Massages, which combine ayurvedic techniques with aromatherapy and masks made of healing plants and spices.

**Lowlights** The sauna is a little too compact.

**Insights** Perfect for families and couples. There are excellent amenities for children, including a crèche, playroom and programme of indoor and outdoor activities, so parents can relax. End the day at the Georgian Room restaurant for a romantic dinner.

*De Vere Cameron House (01389 755565; [www.cameronhouse.co.uk](http://www.cameronhouse.co.uk)), from £125 a night B&B. Treatments, from £30.* □

**LOCH STOCK**  
The extensive grounds of De Vere Cameron House

