

Destinations

A DAY OR A WEEK at a resort spa is good for the soul, but it will also spark design ideas and allow you to try **BEFORE YOU BUY.**

BY CAROLINE TIGER

Sundara Inn and Spa Wisconsin Dells

Silence is golden at Sundara, where spa-goers are greeted by signs posted at the entrance asking them to quiet their cell phones and pagers. Rather than laptops, visitors are encouraged to bring a journal or books and wear robes and slippers instead of street clothes. Spa spokeswoman Carla Minsky claims she can sense an instantaneous drop in blood pressure among guests who

are checking in. "They're so happy that someone's given them permission to disconnect."

AT HOME Establish a regular "no-tech time" and allow yourself to unplug. Pamper yourself with a plush robe and reflexology slippers.

Samas at the Park Eurasia Spa at Scottsdale Resort Scottsdale, Arizona

Each treatment at Eurasia Spa begins with sound therapy via the ringing of bronze wind bells,

made at a foundry in nearby Paradise Valley. Each has a unique, rich tone that's meant to help a person transition into a relaxed, spa-ready state.

AT HOME Hang wind chimes near a window in your bath and let them serenade you while you soak. In winter, use a small fountain to generate calming background noise.

Rancho Valencia San Diego, California

Many spas equate therapy with minimalism. That's not the case here, where the relaxation room and public areas are loaded with furnishings, including wicker armchairs with pillows covered in bold leafy prints, potted trees, terra-cotta pots, and walls inlaid with colorful Mexican tiles. The design communicates a sense of place and provides visuals that stimulate a spa-goer, but not so much that she's jarred from her spa-induced reverie.

AT HOME You'll feel more comfortable in an at-home spa bath that has a furnished feeling. Bring in artworks and collectibles that trigger happy memories.

Rancho La Puerta Tecate, Mexico

This spa is known for its gorgeous mountain-and-meadow setting on 3,000 acres at the foot of Mount Kuchumaa, called the "exalted high place" by the indigenous Kumeyaay tribespeople. The spa has cultivated an organic farm on-site to supply the kitchen. And staff plant biologist Enrique Ceballos supplements the area's natural bounty of wildflowers with calming gardens and outdoor pathways lined with fragrant sage and lavender.

AT HOME Devote some of your garden to aromatherapy plants such as chamomile, rosemary, and lemon verbena. Try growing English lavender in a pot placed by a sunny window.



Lake Austin Spa Resort Austin, Texas

In addition to its world-class spa facilities and lodge-like rooms filled with art and antiques, this resort is well known among foodies for its healthy and delicious cuisine. For one week every month, the kitchens open for Culinary Experience. Highlights of the program include guest chefs performing cooking demonstrations, classes on entertaining and how to revise recipes, a lakeshore cowboy breakfast, and a private tour of Whole Foods Market's flagship store.

AT HOME Create a steam room in a cup: Brew some peppermint tea, a natural perspiration stimulant. In summer, Lake Austin's director of flora and fauna, Trisha Shirey, likes to cold-brew mint tea and mix with apple juice for a refreshing cooler.

Lake Austin Spa Resort