

WELLNESS

When a vacation massage is no longer enough

By Bee Shapiro
 The New York Times

Apparently it's no longer enough to simply book a spa massage when you're on vacation. For a new wave of wellness-seekers, only the latest, and often personalized, forms of treatments will do.

"Fifteen years ago, we used to do sugar scrubs and chocolate facials — it was only about indulgence," said Kristi Dickinson, the director of spa and fitness at Rancho Valencia in Rancho Santa Fe, California. "Today, people are looking to the spa as a lifestyle resource."

That means that, along with a massage, a guest may sign up for the hotel's "neuroplasty program," which creates a specialized regimen (often a combination of meditation, exercise and yoga) to boost brain function.

The arts of healing

A slick new hotel seems to sprout in Miami Beach every season, but the Faena Hotel aims to stand out.

Its spa, exotically named the Tierra Santa Healing House, isn't content with meditation gurus. The wellness director, Vivianne Garcia-Tunon, enlisted a well-known Mexican shaman, Carlos Gomez, to headline its Shaman Purification Ritual.

Gomez has trained the Tierra Santa staff on the art of copaleada, which is about cleansing and purifying the body before healing.

"We use copal, which is a resin and is simi-

lar to an incense," Garcia-Tunon said,

"and the shaman salutes the earth, the heavens, the sun, north, south, east and west. And as the client journeys through this, the shaman is invoking all these different spirits from the heaven."

The ritual can be paired with a "unique healing arts" treatment, like the spa's sound bowl therapy, which is said to heal through vibrations. Be prepared to spend about two hours and \$400.

— *Faena Hotel Miami Beach, 3201 Collins Ave., Miami Beach, Florida, 305-534-8800; faena.com.*

Body type treatments

Besides neuroplasty, Dickinson is incorporating a somatotype program into the Rancho Valencia spa menu. Clients will be categorized as one of three body types (ecto, endo or meso), according to rules laid down by the somatotype founder, William H. Sheldon (who died in 1977).

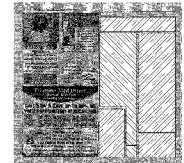
"The idea is to replenish the nutrients and minerals you need specifically for your body type," Dickinson explained. That means treatments like the Vitality Ritual (90 minutes, \$275), which begins with dry-skin brushing and is followed by a body cleanse, mineral-heavy body wrap, head massage and breathing meditation.

— *Rancho Valencia, 5921 Valencia Circle, Rancho Santa Fe, California, 858-759-6490; ranchovalencia.com.*

A soothing rush

Coca leaves, the raw material from which cocaine comes, is the star ingredient in the signature Inkaterra Therapy treatment (three hours, \$190) at the Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo hotel's Unu spa.

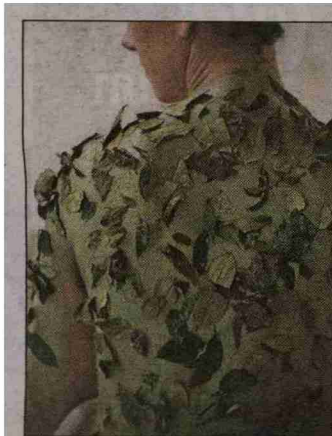
Along with a detox session in an Andean sauna, the service features a lymphatic drainage massage with coca oil followed by a body mask of coca leaf. Sandra Masias,



the product and service manager of **Inkaterra** Hotels, says that coca leaf contains “alkaloids that activate skin cells, circulation and, in turn, the lymphatic system, helping the body eliminate waste.”

Your limbs will be slathered with coca cream before you exit the treatment room.

— *Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel, Aguas Calientes, Peru, 51-1-610-0400; inkaterra.com.*



Coca leaf spa treatment at Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo. Hotel spas are offering more exotic and New Age-oriented services.

INKATERRA MACHU PICCHU
PUEBLO HOTEL