



Borgata



Sky Top Spa



Inhalation Lounge, 3000 B.C. Spa



Swi Kta, 3000 B.C. Spa

Spa Getaways

By Rhonda Cohen

You can do it!

SPA GETAWAYS. THE NAME ALONE CONJURES RELAXING IMAGES OF MESSAGES, FACIALS, BODY TREATMENTS, HIKES AND TASTY CUISINE. WHO COULDN'T USE A RELAXING GETAWAY - EITHER ALONE OR WITH YOUR SPOUSE, PARTNER OR FRIENDS? A PLACE WHERE YOU ARE PAMPERED AND RENEWED AS THE CALM PERSON YOU ONCE WERE IN A WORLD OF STRESS, FAMILY OBLIGATIONS, CARPOOLING AND MORTGAGES.

Wake up from your daydream! Open your eyes and adjust to reality and the world around you: the early morning alarm clock, packing lunch for the kids, feeding the pets and trying to fit in that work-out at the gym. In this harsh glare of reality you may think that the amount of preparation to achieve your fantasy is so daunting that it may keep you from following through.

I am here to tell you a spa getaway can be accomplished. As a career professional, a wife, mom, writer and triathlete, I undertook a mission to see how to do it. Those who are unencumbered or who have family or friends who will take care of your pets, kids and other obligations, will have an easier time getting away to relax. For the rest of us, we have to pre-arrange carpools, finesse our work schedule and, as one woman said, "Make sure your husband doesn't send your child to school in pajamas." But here are some ways to get away.

THE TAG TEAM SPA GETAWAY

Hershey Hotel, Hershey, Pennsylvania

The Spa at the Hershey Hotel is truly a sweet spot, with its famed chocolate massage, whipped cocoa bath and chocolate fondue wrap. The very thought of covering yourself with chocolate is quite an allure. For those who

are not chocoholics, there are plenty of other options for exotic wraps. Milton Hershey, the founder of the chocolate company, became enamored with Cuba and purchased sugar plantations and mills there so he could refine his own sugar. The spa menu salutes his passion with Cuban-themed treatments like the Mojito Sugar Scrub or Noche Azul Soak. You do not need to be a guest of the hotel to use the spa services, and you are able to use the health club facilities and the pool even if you are a day guest only.

We tag-teamed our day and night at this spa and hotel. It worked beautifully. My family and I followed the advice of Megan Adair, the public relations coordinator for Hershey Entertainment & Resorts: "Hershey is a great spa getaway with or without children. If it's just a couple, you can get a couples massage and relax at the spa, follow this with a romantic dinner at The Hotel's Circular Dining Room, and it's the perfect weekend. If you have kids with you, one parent can spend time with them at Hershey's Chocolate World or Hershey Park while the other is relaxing at The Spa, then you can switch places. Hershey has plenty of options for couples and families."

The Spa is spacious and gorgeous. There is an Inhalation Room plus a Quiet Room and a Silent Room where you can relax before and after your treatment.

Lovely muffins, fruits, coffee, tea, and, of course, Hershey's hot chocolate, are served. Having a specified time all to yourself while you know the family is happy and entertained makes the spa experience that much sweeter. Sitting around in a snugly comfortable robe and slippers enhances the relaxation. Each of you gets his or her turn, and each person relishes some private time.

THE FAMILY GETAWAY

In an era where formality is considered passé, a small number of historic resorts remain as bastions of traditions that harken to a bygone era. One

such icon is Skytop. Located on 5,500 acres of pristine land amidst the Pocono Mountains, it's the perfect place to share a heritage with generations, or slip away all by yourself to relax, says Jennifer Breslow Mansfield, public relations consultant to Skytop Lodge.

At Skytop, families relax at a full breakfast and plan their day. Daily activity sheets inform you what families can do together or as individuals. Plenty of activities for kids and teens are arranged just for them. There is even miniature golf in the main lodge and an old-fashioned ice cream parlor. An indoor pool and health club are also on the premises. But what really sets Skytop apart is the breadth of its outdoor activities.

The Lodge prides itself on having a plethora of seasonal activities, including its own ski area, toboggan run and skating rink in the winter, and golf, tennis and swimming in the summer. This all-inclusive getaway boasts plenty of food choices for picky kids, and if you choose to dine alone for a change, inquire to see if a children's-only supervised dinner including fun and activities is available. Babysitting can be arranged at the front desk. There are plenty of these weekends as well. Skytop Lodge is a reasonable drive -- less than two hours -- from anywhere in the Delaware Valley, and we arrived just about the time we heard the infamous, "Are we there yet?" from the back seat.

DOWN THE SHORE GETAWAY

In the opposite direction, Atlantic City hotels and resorts beckon. A day or an overnight at the shore shouldn't require too much pre-planning, and it's close enough to rush back if necessary. You even can go just for the day. I went for an overnight and included two destinations, The Borgata and Bally's.

Spa Toccare at The Borgata is simply beautiful. There is a wet area with whirlpools, steam and sauna, and the staff add a touch of cucumbers for the eyes and chilled scented towels for cooling. Booking a treatment allows you to also use the pool that has speakers that play music underwater. There are many amenities and the ambience is relaxing and elegant. A regular Swedish massage runs \$115 and on Saturdays is limited to registered hotel guests. A twenty percent tip is added to your treatment, but the front desk staff told me that the therapists themselves receive only a portion of that, so you may wish to leave the therapist an additional amount. A word of warning if you stay over at the Borgata! There is a sign in the bathroom next to the shampoos telling you that you, "Can't take it with you" and, if you do, the cost will be charged to your credit card. Two front desk staffers confirmed that you are not allowed to take any of these toiletries from the room.

The Spa at Bally's may lack a bit of the frou-frou of other spas, but has a lot going for it. Many staff members have been there for years, obviously love their jobs and make you feel comfortable as if you are part of their family. This spa has incorporated their location into the treatment theme. They

offer, for example, a Salt Water Taffy Scrub, a Boardwalk Macaroon Scrub and Ocean Sunset Scrub. The Bally's spa can be a real bargain. One of its packages includes an herbal wrap, a massage, and a scrub along with lunch and full use of the pools, both indoor and outdoor, the exercise room, the deck and the shower facilities. Then they feed you lunch, and the total cost is \$190.

Bally's also allows you to book as little as one treatment - perhaps a wrap at \$40 or a massage at \$85 - and you get full use of the facilities so you can have a relaxing wrap, go to the beach or the deck, work out, hop in one of their whirlpool tubs, shower and drive back home in a day. You can probably tag team this one too, and give your family some time at the beach.

THE ACROSS-THE-POND GETAWAY

Bovey Castle is located in Devon. Not the town on Philly's Main Line but the original Devon in Western England. The castle is in Dartmoor National Park, and became known to the world when it was pictured in the Sherlock Holmes film, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.

With many airlines offering weekend trips to London, this is an achievable destination. RailBritain provides a comfortable, two-hour train ride from London to Devon and a driver will pick you up and deliver you to the castle's front door. Bovey Castle is jaw-dropping, both in its physical beauty and the exquisite surroundings. What it offers is a

haven for families with a Bovey Rangers program that provides terrific and unique activities for kids, including collecting their own eggs for breakfast from the chicken coop.

Falconry, something that we see in Harry Potter movies, is demonstrated on the terrace and children also are instructed in activities like fly-fishing, archery, horseback riding and clay pigeon shooting. Bovey boasts a championship golf course, a beautiful spa and indoor pool. The ambience is quintessential British, including a very fancy high tea with scones and clotted cream. Yachtsman and environmentalist, Peter de Savary, is the owner of Bovey Castle. Married to an American, he understands both the British and the American lifestyles. Visiting Bovey Castle feels like you are in another world and you can leave all your stress behind.

THE I-CAN'T-GET-AWAY GETAWAY

Sometimes the amount of preparation you need to actually walk out the door causes more stress than if you never went away. So day spas are options where you don't leave home except for a few hours. 3000BC Spas are open seven days a week and accommodate everyone's schedules. There are two locations in the Delaware Valley where you can book spa treatments, have tea, a spa lunch and have the experience of a half-day spa getaway.

Their spas have tea lounges for guests receiving treatments to relax and enjoy a complimentary pot of organic, fair-trade tea before or after their treatments. Guests also are served a

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gourmet spa lunch in the tea lounge. The spas have a unique inhalation lounge with pure essential oils permeating the air, refreshing herbal tisanes to sip, and low-level lighting to help you drift back to reality. The spa also offers a steam sauna/shower to induce a deeper state of relaxation. Guests can conclude their day with a cleansing shower and a revitalizing pot of tea.

3000 BC Spas have a clean, crisp interior design, chic, modern, with gender-neutral finishes. Men feel very comfortable there with the special sandals and robes that are provided in a special men's lounge with men's magazines. Their locker room has men's body wash, men's shampoo and specialized men's grooming products.

THE BRING-YOUR-OFFICE-TO-A-RETREAT GETAWAY

If you can't beat em, bring the office to the getaway. RYAH Yoga and Health is a unique wellness center committed to creating health promotion for individuals and corporations. "RYAH programs, services and atmosphere are dedicated to combating stress, which is the number-one factor affecting employee performance and health," according to Phyllis Bookspan, President of RYAH Yoga and Health, Inc.

She says that promoting good health is promoting good business. Studies show that as much as twenty five percent of all outpatient and inpatient health plan claims can be



Locker Room, 3000 B.C. Spa

related to the risk factors that are addressed in a good health promotion program such as RYAH's.

Customized events can be tailored from taking a yoga class, learning stress reduction techniques that you can take back to work with you, a day with your team out on the river in a dragon boat with colleagues, or biking on the Conshohocken -Valley Forge Trail. Located in the corporate area of Conshohocken, RYAH offers a business retreat that includes yoga, massage, seminars conducted by a psychotherapist addressing how to deal with stress, and team building. One satisfied client, Sharon Booth from Conferences LexisNexis/Mealeys, says that her department's one-day retreat at RYAH, "Was both relaxing and uplifting. My team arrived feeling tired and stressed but left with new ideas for approaching stress management that they could start practicing immediately."

So you see, you can do this. It is possible and you deserve it. Now go, make your appointment.

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