

Home > Lifestyle > Wellbeing > Spa spy

Spa Spy: The Varsity, Cambridge



0 Comments



The Varsity's spa features riverside views. Credit: Paul Winch-Furness



Malta: stunning cliffs with a rich historical legacy

Malta caters for all tastes, from its world-class dining to Unesco World Heritage sites. [Read more](#)

Sponsored

By [Spa Spy](#)

7 APRIL 2017 • 12:19PM

Our sleuth investigates the curative claims of wellbeing retreats worldwide. This week the boutique delights of The Varsity, Cambridge.

The Spa

Located in the heart of Cambridge, overlooking the river Cam and just yards from St. John's College, The Varsity Hotel's spa underwent a major renovation last year.

Housed in a beautiful Eighteenth Century glass warehouse, with high timber trussed ceilings and original brickwork, guests can choose a range of different Elemis treatments, including body massages, manicures, pedicures and a number of facials.

The Symptoms

Tired of London and fearing this must mean she is therefore, tired of life, Spy hopes a restful weekend in a more sleepy city may rejuvenated her enthusiasm for the hustle and bustle. It is hoped the gentle environs of Cambridge with a plethora of spring walks against medieval vistas, will soothe her well worn nerves.

While not keen to languish long in the Spa the whole time, Spy hopes that the nicely proximate Glassworks Health Works and Elemis Spa (literally next door) will successfully set her up with a starter for 10. In dire need of attention are her neck, back and shoulders which currently seem to be so frozen they twist from the waist only. A brisk massage should ensure maximum enjoyment of Spy's gentle Cambridge strolls.



One of The Varsity's double bedrooms

The Procedure

Having arrived at the Varsity in the afternoon, Spy wastes no time in checking into the Spa. The dark walls of the brick building are charmingly lined with rowing memorabilia and photographs, which give the atmosphere an appropriately sporting feel - but in a way that communicates that it is perfectly fine to simply sit back and spectate, Pimms in hand.

ADVERTISING



Afforded free run of the sauna, steam room and Jacuzzi prior to her treatment, Spy quickly plumps for a prime spot in the hot tub just feet from the Cam. As pedestrians wander past Spy's modesty is preserved thanks to a one way window. Cue some wicked watching of more energetic tourists as they punt by.

Whisked up for her half hour massage, Spy finds it hits the spot, or indeed multiple spots in her back and shoulders, perfectly. While there are no hidden surprises, it is the kind of proficient pummeling Spy had been in hope of and she leaves invigorated. Neck, shoulder and back are happily liberated from their sheath and ready to explore the medieval streets and college chapel spires.

Later, finding herself still energised enough to bound up the six floors of stairs, rather than take the hotel lift, to the Six Panoramic Bar and Restaurant, Spy sees in the Cambridge sunset, aperitif in hand. A heart gladdening meal - starter of beetroot, goats cheese and hazelnuts, followed by a thickly beautiful tuna steak and a cracking creme brulee - enjoyed with a night city skyline, remind her the attractions of metropolitan dining are not restricted purely to the capital.



The view from the Six Panoramic bar

The Verdict

If this is city life then Spy is moving in. Having resisted the night charms of the buzzing Quayside area in favour of an early night, Spy is considering signing up for an MA, or perhaps a PhD. But then comforts herself that Cambridge is less than an hour away from London by train.

Although she slept in, Spy was impressed by the newly refurbished gym and the offer of Sunday morning yoga. However, on this occasion was more enthusiastic about her breakfast of sourdough, mashed avocado and poached eggs.

Spy is most taken by The Varsity's sense of place and history all delivered with impeccable charm and a modern boutique sensibility; think Colefax and Fowler and Farrow and Ball. Special mention must be made for the attentive waiting staff over dinner who allowed Spy to dither happily over the menu for an unusual amount of time, and were consummately charming.

The Varsity's Spa while small, is perfectly formed and more than adequately answered Spy's need for some city break relaxation.

The Details

Prices at The Varsity start at £155 and prices of spa treatments start from £35.

www.thevarsityhotel.co.uk