

Our sleuth investigates the curative claims of wellbeing retreats worldwide

SPA SPY, THE VARSITY, CAMBRIDGE

The spa Situated beside the stylish boutique hotel, this calm candle-lit space is the perfect complement to a break in Cambridge. With its own sauna and steam room, it's an ideal refuge from the hustle and bustle. An undoubted highlight is the Jacuzzi, with its extraordinarily pretty view over the River Cam. While soaking in the bubbles, you can watch the serene sight of people punting on the water. Add the beautiful Aveda products, and Spy was in heaven.

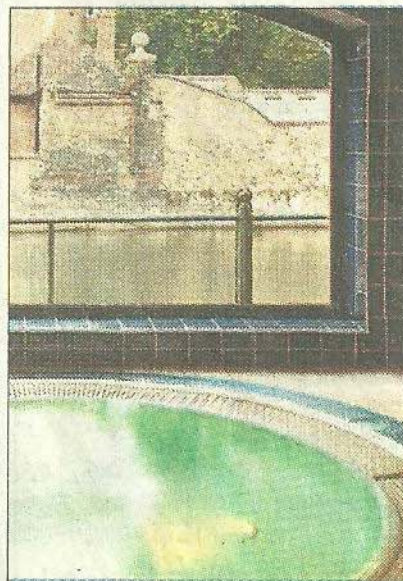
The symptoms Knotted, aching shoulders and a sharp pain in the back, thanks to hours on the computer and a long-held whiplash condition, and a dull complexion in need of some TLC.

The prescription Aveda Elemental Nature Facial (£50), with a back, neck, scalp and shoulder massage.

The procedure The lovely therapist began with a wonderful foot and leg massage before moving Spy on to the massage table, where she spent an hour concentrating on the back, shoulders and arms. As Spy's muscles were so knotted, she found the process quite painful at times. She began and finished the treatment by warming Spy's muscles with a hot towel - heaven! The facial was perfect for Spy's sensitive skin - and has had amazing results.

The verdict Knots loosened, aches attended to and in a deep state of calm, Spy was serene. She relaxed in the Jacuzzi for what felt like eons and then was ready to face the world again - or at least retreat to her beautiful hotel room, with stunning, free-standing bath.

The medical opinion: "Whiplash describes a number of soft tissue injuries to the neck caused by the



Jacuzzi with a view of the Cam

body being thrown in a sudden, forceful manner, resulting in the head being thrown beyond the neck's normal range of movement," says Dr Max Pemberton. "It is usually treated with a range of anti-inflammatory drugs, painkillers and physical therapy. There is no evidence that massage is of help directly, although relaxation techniques have been shown to be of benefit in the long term."

The feelgood factor Small but perfectly formed, the Varsity Spa is perfect for those on a city break, and in need of a quick fix of pampering. A meal in the hotel's chic restaurant continues the theme of indulgence - and after a good feed, Spy was ready for bed - super king-size, of course.

Details Double rooms at the Varsity Hotel (Thompson's Lane, Cambridge, CB5 8AQ, 01223 30 60 30, thevarsityhotel.co.uk) from £155. To contact the spa directly, call 01223 30 50 60, theglassworksgym.co.uk

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