

WHILE SOME VACATIONS may seem to cause more stress than they're worth (family reunion, anyone?), a healing trip to a waterfront spa remains a welcome escape. Breathing in the fresh ocean air as you gaze at an endless sea instills a natural serenity that intensifies when you factor in the pleasures of cocooning yourself in a plush robe and anticipating a decadent massage.

Check out one of these beach-based wonders to find your bliss.



CLICK HERE TO READ ABOUT PETER ISLAND

PETER ISLAND RESORT

PETER ISLAND, BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

Nothing says *escape* like a private island, and Peter Island Resort in the British Virgin Islands promises you that.

With just 52 guestrooms and three villas steps from the beach, you'll hear only the laughing gulls and the rustle of the palms overhead — no cars, no TVs, no intrusions. A private isle that can provide a no-fly zone to keep paparazzi helicopters at bay naturally attracts A-listers and VIPs, but because Peter Island "kisses and never tells" the celebs in your midst are merely guests on a rejuvenating getaway, just like you.

At the spa, two ayurvedic physicians provide iridology consultations (a holistic assessment of the body based on the iris of the eye) and offer take-home tips and follow-up



PETER ISLAND RESORT

PETER ISLAND, BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

consults. Relaxing, cleansing treatments include herbal wraps, thermal sand-bundle massage, and shirodhara, a therapeutic warm-oil treatment focused on the body's third eye. For a little action, try yoga classes, guided walks, snorkeling and sea kayaking — there won't be a Jet Ski (or tabloid!) in sight to mar the tranquility.

At the resort's Tradewinds Restaurant, executive chef Lisa Sellers embraces local sustainable ingredients in island-style dishes such as grouper ceviche or lemongrass-infused shrimp with green papaya and mango salad.

From \$590 per night, double occupancy; peterisland.com

— Leslie Gilbert Elman

CLICK HERE TO READ ABOUT FRÉGATE ISLAND



FRÉGATE ISLAND PRIVATE FRÉGATE ISLAND, SEYCHELLES

Surrounded by lush forests and hidden coves of dazzling white sand, Frégate Island Private is committed to protecting the island's fragile ecosystem. Guests can visit the Aldabra giant tortoise nursery, where the endangered species is reared before being released to the wild, or take a guided conservation hike to learn about the habitat.

The 16 3,000-square-foot villas, made of African teak, native mahogany and thatch, are perched on cliffs with commanding views of the Indian Ocean. Each has its own Jacuzzi and infinity-edge pool.

For more relaxing, head to the breathtaking Rock Spa for native-inspired treatments such as the Zoli Figir facial, which uses fresh fruits like papaya in lieu of brand-name

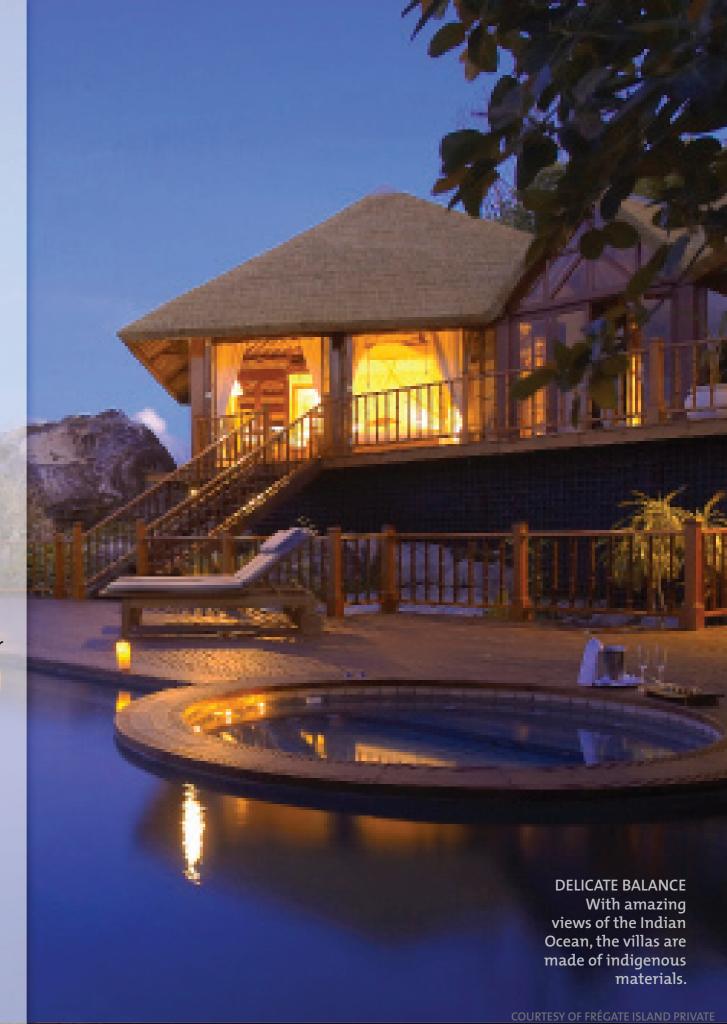


FRÉGATE ISLAND PRIVATE FRÉGATE ISLAND, SEYCHELLES

products. Hydroponic-gardening and drip-irrigation systems keep the island-grown produce so fresh that fruits and vegetables served are never more than four hours old and are pesticide-free.

From \$3,200 per night, all-inclusive, double occupancy;
fregate.com

— Suzanne Gerber



CLICK HERE TO READ ABOUT MANUEL ANTONIO

ARENAS DEL MAR

MANUEL ANTONIO, COSTA RICA

At the foot of a rutted jungle road skirted by amazing ocean vistas awaits the relaxed luxury of Arenas Del Mar. Exemplifying nature/nurture harmony, this boutique beach resort nestles on 11 acres of wildlife-rich rain forest just steps from a jeweled sea. Adjacent to famed Manuel Antonio National Park on Costa Rica's Pacific Coast, the ecoconscious hotel features 38 rooms with panoramic views, two pools, three restaurants and a spa. Built and operated in accordance with Costa Rica's Certificate for Sustainable Tourism, electric carts shuttle guests and solar panels heat balcony Jacuzzis.

Best bets at blissful Las Brisas Spa include the healing aloe wrap and 90-minute house massage with mini-



ARENAS DEL MAR

MANUEL ANTONIO, COSTA RICA

facial and foot scrub. The area's myriad other activities include a don't-miss park excursion, parasailing, kayaking, white-water rafting, sunset cruise, forest-canopy tour and horseback riding. Hanging with locals in neighboring Quepos will cap your holiday in Costa Rica's deservedly prime tourist destination.

The hotel's gourmet restaurants spotlight regional ingredients in its fresh seafood rolls and chilled mango/watermelon soup. For an off-site adventure, try Kapi Kapi restaurant, where you'll find Asian-inspired dishes enhanced by locally grown organic spices.

From \$250 per night, double occupancy;

arenasdelmar.com

— Suzan Crane

CLICK HERE TO READ ABOUT CABO SAN LUCAS



CAPELLA PEDREGAL

CABO SAN LUCAS, MEXICO

Like the growing handful of other Capella resorts now open, the luxe new Capella Pedregal is an intimate boutique collection of 66 capacious oceanfront guest rooms, replete with private plunge pools and expansive terraces. Accessible only via the sea and a private, chandelier-lit tunnel, the 24-acre resort ensures guests an extreme level of privacy despite its being only minutes away from downtown Cabo.

The Auriga Spa, designed by world-renowned spa developer Sylvia Sepielli, features 10 rounded treatment suites, each opening onto a private outdoor pool that meanders throughout the facility. For a truly unique experience, try the Art of Sound Therapy, which combines



CABO SAN LUCAS, MEXICO

CAPELLA PEDREGAL

acupressure with the soothing tinkling of pentatonic chimes. Activities include horseback riding, parasailing and scuba diving.

And don't miss al fresco dining at El Farallón restaurant: At dusk, lights begin to shimmer above the sea, revealing an intimate cliffside cove where guests imbibe sangria and dine on grilled seafood they can select from the day's catch.

From \$625 per night, double occupancy;

capellapedregal.com

— L. Brooks Baldwin

SUITE LIFE The Estrella Suite offers a private outdoor terrace with an infinity-edge plunge pool, fire pit and spectacular ocean views.

CLICK HERE TO READ ABOUT KONA

MAUNA LANI BAY HOTEL AND BUNGALOWS

KONA, HAWAII

Steeped in rich local culture and traditions, the Mauna Lani Bay Hotel and Bungalows embraces its guests in the magical spirituality of Hawaii, with impeccably tended historic fishponds and intriguing ancient petroglyphs on the property.

Try the beachside yoga or head to the Sylvia Sepiellidesigned Mauna Lani spa, which offers the popular Fire & Ice Pa'akai, a tingling full-body exfoliation incorporating cooling white Hawaiian sea salt and concluding with a relaxing heated body wrap. Get the most out of your appointment by taking advantage of the private lava saunas before your treatment, then rinse off in an outdoor shower surrounded by a garden of Hawaiian healing plants.



MAUNA LANI BAY HOTEL AND BUNGALOWS KONA, HAWAII

At the casual Bay Terrace cafe, customized omelets are offered on the menu every day, and insiders know that despite it not being on the menu, their request for Chef Arnold's special fried rice will always be granted with pleasure. For fresh, sophisticated oceanfront dining, visit The Canoehouse, which includes delicious local fish like moi and opakapaka on the menu.

From \$370 per night, double occupancy; maunalani.com

- L. Brooks Baldwin



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