

He plays golf...



Courtesy of Turnberry Resort

...she gets pampered

BY WESLEY C. DAVIDSON

So you thought Turnberry was just a place to play golf?

So did I, until I found out about the spa.

I HATE GOLF: golf cocktail napkins, Christmas cards with Santa Claus putting, cocktail banter over who sunk the fifty foot putt for a "birdie." I know it's the fastest growing sport in America, but I'll take tennis any day. But when my husband, who wanted to play Turnberry's Ailsa course, home to the British Open three times, told me there was a spa at this 5-star resort, I was suddenly interested in being near the links!

On April 31st, we arrived at Glasgow in the wee morning hours. Westin's Turnberry Resort, 53 miles from the Glasgow airport, had sent a driver named Douglas whose Scottish burr was a bit hard to decipher. Douglas drove us past open fields punctuated by broken stone walls and farmhouses nestled by an occasional river or "firth." On the sunny western coast of Scotland, Turnberry, in Ayrshire County, overlooks Ailsa Craig and the Isle of Arran, with the mountains of Northern Ireland in the distance. Its proximity to the Gulf was responsible for the 70-degree weather during our stay.

Turnberry, "The World's first Hotel-Golf Complex" & Former Railroad Stop Forty-five minutes later, we drove up to an enormous Edwardian 1906 country house. This Westin resort prominently sits atop a hill overlooking 800 acres, three golf courses, Ailsa, redesigned Kintyre and Arran, a 9-hole course used by the world's first *Colin Montgomerie Links Golf Academy*, and the Irish Sea.

Attached to this grand hotel is a 50,000+ square foot spa with twelve treatment rooms, Jacuzzi, sixty-five foot pool enclosed in a glass pavilion, two squash courts, a gym and saunas. Opened in 1991, the Spa has Mediterranean casual restaurant "The Bay" that features low-cal, low-fat delicious food that doesn't spell d-e-p-r-i-v-a-t-i-o-n!

A River Runs Through It

At 11am, you can't expect your room to be ready. So we arranged to fish near the River Girvan, east of Turnberry, about 30 minutes away. The hotel provided us with a ghillie (guide) who drove us to a fishing club site. (Turnberry has an Activity Centre for on-site trout fishing and shooting as well.)

Fly-fishing for salmon is not "A River Runs Through It." After being outfitted, I looked quite the pro until my line ended up catching reeds, rocks, and resembled a yo-yo come unbound. We did have a good laugh at my expense.

Mario Buatta-like and Winner of Conde Nast Traveler Top 10 European Resorts 2002

When we returned to the hotel, our gargantuan room was ready. Turnberry has over 221 bedrooms, with 89 new rooms offered in 9 cottages and 12 lodges. The four-poster bed was draped in heavy satin. The ceiling was high and the furniture large and comfy, as you would expect in the British Isles. Our room overlooked a bed of pansies; I thought it was odd to see such an American staple on Scottish soil. Feeling rather tired from the flight, I was glad to steep in the deep bathtub in the huge marble bathroom and remained warm afterwards thanks to a heated towel rack.

Le Pheasant

Dinner in the main dining room is somewhat formal and predominantly French cuisine. Local specialities such as pheasant are served. According to Chef Stewart Cameron, pheasant must be "hung" at least three weeks to be served in this 5-star dining room. The waiters were attentive, but not hovering like hummingbirds.

We rotated among the Brasserie restaurant on the Spa's terrace, the Bay restaurant, and the main dining room. Every evening, bagpipers in full regalia "beating the retreat" serenaded us outside the lounge at cocktail hour.



Courtesy of Turnberry Resort

This is not Canyon Ranch

Turnberry has a wealthy, conservative clientele. A few enter and exit by helicopter that lands on the front lawn. There are conference rooms and business suites that can accommodate meetings for as many as 500 people. You don't wear sweatpants in this hotel!

My, we did enjoy the Spa, didn't we?

The next day, while the boys teed off (Turnberry guarantees a tee time for every hotel guest), I exercised my spa options. Although Turnberry boasts one of the first Hydrotherapy suites in the United

Kingdom, my idea of hydrotherapy was to swim in the 20-meter pool with a sidestroke while I looked at the granite-domed island Ailsa Craig through the glass-enclosed pavilion. Occasionally, I surface-dived to hear the piped-in music underwater. Awesome!

What I was interested in were beauty treatments with massage. The spa's mission, like most resort spas, is "to pamper and rejuvenate, to harmonize mind and body by reducing stress." This is not a yoga-type place nor does it emphasize weight reduction.

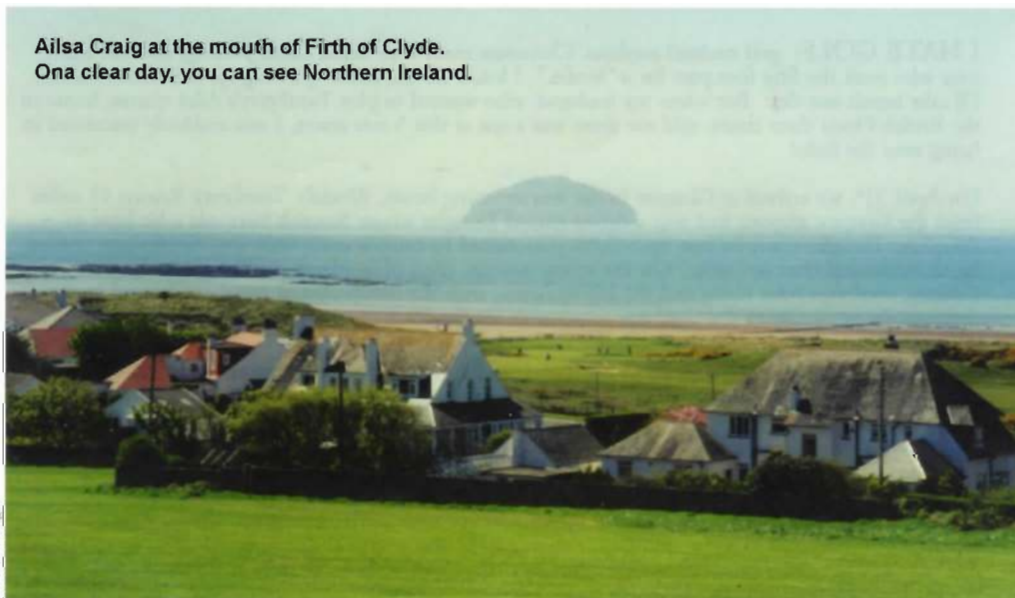
There are over 25 treatments for men and women. From November 1st to April 30th, there's a two-night package with dinner, breakfast, and spa services that include hydrotherapy bath, aromatherapy massage and reflexology. Non-hotel guests may use the spa as well and have a choice of three-day programs.

Rub-a-Dub, Dub, go for the Body Scrub

Of all the "treatments," I liked the full body scrub the best. Isabel Fleming, my esthetician, led me into a pleasant pink (Turnberry's favorite color) private room. After I took off Turnberry's thick, thirsty robe, I lay down on a heated table.

I was thankful Isabel spared me the New Age tinkly rainforest music. She began the body scrub by exfoliating my skin with a somewhat scratchy brush made

Ailsa Craig at the mouth of Firth of Clyde. On a clear day, you can see Northern Ireland.



Barbara Eager



Turnberry Hotel, Links Course

with cactus bristles and spearmint aloe. After a short time, the algae granules were washed off using their cleansing gel. Next warm algae was applied from my neck to my toe before I was wrapped like a mummy in what felt like Saran Wrap. A warm blanket was put over me while the infrared lights intensified the process. I was given a mini-facial and scalp massage simultaneously to rev my circulation. The body scrub both exfoliated and hydrated my skin. I felt as if my skin were plump and smooth simultaneously.

Ah, the Facial!

The facial consisted of massaging with Vitamin E oil. Isabel claimed that aromatherapy is self-regulating for all skin types. For "balance," she applied rosemary and lavender. To remove eye makeup, she used egg yolk, Vitamin E, jojoba and rose. To reduce puffiness around my eyes, she made a mask of cornflower and cucumber.

Next came the hydration of my skin using lavender, chamomile, nasturtium and mallow. Then I was sprayed with rosewater, always a rude awakening, but it does take away dead cells.

This was followed by a refining facial polish. Phytoplankton polished away superficial dead skin cells, then a moisturizer of wild chamomile, hops and sweet meadow helped firm my skin. It never felt so smooth or clean.

On my lips she put a nourishing aloe, buckthorn matricia, sunflower and shea cocoa butter blend. Not only, I was told, does it protect against dryness, but also chapping and ultraviolet rays.

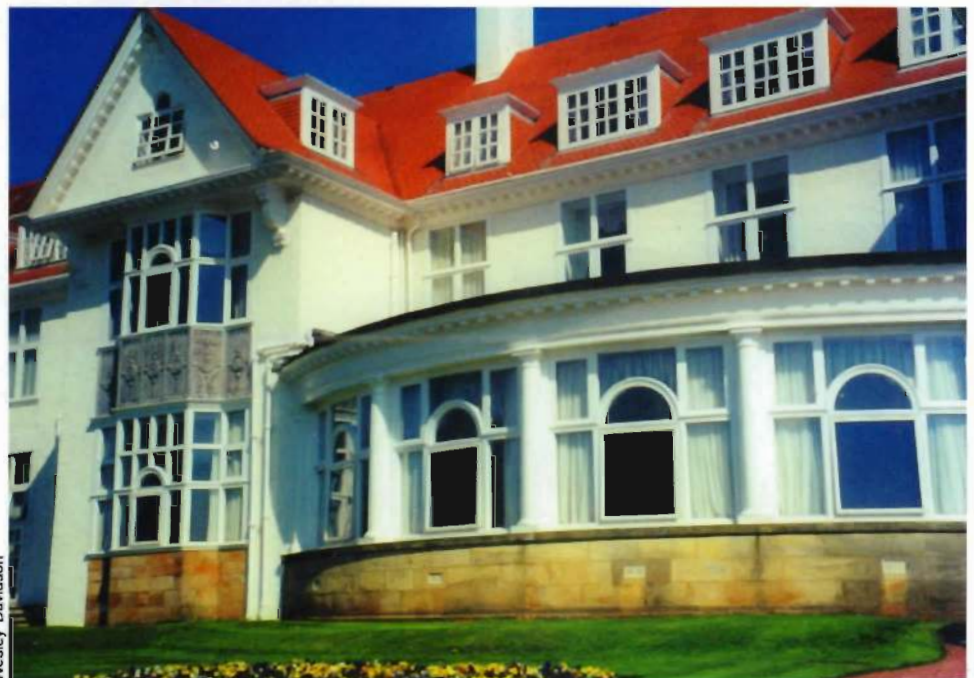
Turnberry products

Turnberry uses their own aromatherapy products sold under the E Spa label, available in most international spas. The spa line uses plants that are organically or wildy grown and are known for their purity, potency and therapeutic qualities. I bought the scalp treatment oil that Isabel used for massaging

my head. It contains essential oils of lavender, lemon and rosemary thought to improve circulation and energize the scalp yet soothe dry areas with nutrients from wheat germ, almond and jojoba oils.

My spa appetite was whetted for more the next two days. Andrea Malloy, a spa therapist since 1995, used vitamin E and calendula for a great massage. ("Golfer's Tonic," a 1 hr. 55-minute back massage that eases muscle tension after a golf game and includes a luxury foot and nail treatment with hot stone therapy is very popular here.)

She kneaded the knots out of my neck, a particularly vulnerable stress point for me, without hurting me. She applied a gentle coconut oil with firming chestnut oil. After I showered, a Ph-balanced body satin spray was



used that contained jojoba, ivy and mallow plants that are good for your nails. These oils give your body a nice glow, without being greasy.

What's Red and White and Makes You Feel Good All Over?

I've tried mud masks at home, but they didn't look or act like Turnberry's. Theirs wasn't hard nor did it feel tight. This was pink, made of red and white clay, castor oil and basil. Rose geranium, wild chamomile, and mallow help soothe, balance, and nourish my skin. It was also worked into my hair. It works wonders!

After the treatments, I was limp and retired to a teak deck chair in the waiting room and read a magazine while I sipped on lemon water provided in a pitcher.

Outside the Spa Cocoon

Not content to be supine *all* the time, I did muster the energy to walk the path to the lighthouse across the street along the ubiquitous gorse, a yellow brush, common to Scottish links. I walked along the links course that served as a military training strip for General Dwight D. Eisenhower during WWII. Ike's presence was also felt during an excursion to nearby Culzean Castle on a cliff above the Firth of Clyde, less than 4 miles away. In recognition of General Eisenhower's war efforts, he was awarded the use of the Castle by the Scottish government. The house, once owned by the Marquess of Ailsa, is considered one of Robert Adams' 18th Century masterpieces. Also nearby is Robert Burns' cottage in Alloway.

After Turnberry and a visit to Scotland's southwest coast, I will never again begrudge my husband time on a golf course. It was a vacation that pleased the golfer *and* the tennis player.

Who likes to be pampered.

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