



Midwest Traveler

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A New You for the **New Year**

Pamper Yourself
at Missouri's Spas

Feed the Soul
in Sedona

Inspiring Sites
in Alaska

Four Missouri spa resorts can set guests on the path toward mindful lifestyles and provide a restorative getaway.

BY LISA WATERMAN GRAY

New Year, New You

Small heated Himalayan salt rocks warm my palms as the massage therapist firmly glides more warm rocks across my lightly oiled back. The penetrating heat relaxes tight muscles. Low lights reflect in a mirrored wall as soft music fills the small room. With multiple warm stones placed along my backbone, the therapist manipulates my arms and legs. She also frequently asks whether the massage pressure and heat from the stones felt OK.

Later on, a hydrating facial began with marine gel, which tingled slightly from blueberry in the masque preparation. A hot towel gently wrapped across my face added soothing warmth. The technician also massaged my head, neck, and shoulders, resulting in a light neck pop.

This is Spa Shiki where technicians tailor treatments to the needs of each client. For travelers seeking a restorative spa getaway not too far from home, it is one of four suggested Missouri getaways to explore at the start of a new year, when we often think about remaking ourselves.

Spa Shiki has operated for 15 years inside a 15,000-square-foot building at The Lodge of the Four Seasons in Lake Ozark, Mo. Nationally recognized by NBC's *Today Show*, *SELF* magazine, and *Spa Finder*, the facility transformed a previous bowling alley into a relaxing retreat.

From polished wood stairs leading to lower level treatment rooms, to dark, rich earth tones in locker rooms, and a low-lit lounge area where an illuminated wall displays leaf veins in repeating photographic panels, Spa Shiki combines Asian aesthetics with natural elements. Mirrored walls in each small treatment room create a feeling of spaciousness.

Spa services include massages, body treatments, facials, and salon treatments, as well as steam showers and saunas in each locker room, and a small saltwater hot tub. Guests can eat



Above and right: The two-story Spa Chateau in Branson features 10 treatment rooms, an indoor infinity tub, an outdoor Roman-style bath, and more. Spa Chateau

Left: The Grotto at the Spa at the Elms near Kansas City is a restful area that includes a hot tub, dry sauna, and steam sauna. The Elms Hotel and Spa

lunch in the compact dining room, while relaxing in cozy robes. A full salon is also on site.

CHATEAU ON THE LAKE

Located near Branson's outskirts, Chateau on the Lake Resort Spa & Convention Center (AAA Four Diamonds) is known for its 14,000-square-foot Spa Chateau. It features two levels with a spectacular two-story glass chandelier. There are 10 treatment rooms, male and female locker rooms, an indoor infinity tub, and an outdoor Roman-style bath in addition to a small retail area selling body care and bath products.

Guests will find soothing earth tones in carpet and furnishings, natural wood cabinets, wicker chairs and couches, and stucco-covered walls in the lounge where they can sip fresh cucumber water or hot tea while settling into terry-lined robes. Plastic slippers continuously massage feet with acupressure beads.

The 80-minute Lakeside Sampler treatment begins with a warm massage bed, low lights, and a large, warm eye pillow. Dark walls, a pillar candle, natural wood shutters, and soft sheets create a cocoon-like sensation. Deep foot reflexology treatment precedes a full-body, essential oil-fueled massage, as well as face and scalp massag-

es. The treatment ends with hot stones rubbed across your back.

Spa Chateau also offers Swedish and several other forms of massage, mother-to-be treatments, seaweed body wraps, and body exfoliation, as well as facials, and anti-aging treatment for face and hands. The Barber Shop & Image Center provides haircuts, coloring or highlights, and scalp massage, in addition to manicures, pedicures, and other services. A door from an indoor two-story pool area leads to the patio where a rushing waterfall, beautiful rock walls, and potted flowers complement the outdoor pool.

Guests can unwind in the eucalyptus steam room or a small dry sauna. There's even a Couples Candle Light Tub Soak, during which couples can soak in side-by-side tubs. For the ultimate treat, indulge in a light spa meal, such as blueberry balsamic salad, a hand-carved turkey sandwich, or fish tacos. Fresh fruit smoothies are also on the menu.

SPA AT THE ELMS

The Elms Hotel & Spa (AAA Three Diamonds) has a long healing tradition stemming from natural mineral springs that first drew enthusiasts to Excelsior Springs near Kansas City in the late 1800s. Today, Spa at the Elms is a relaxing haven that can accommodate





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tle water constantly spray across each client, accompanied by very warm water from a handheld hose. An invigorating bamboo scrub, sea algae wash, and foot massage are also part of this multi-faceted treatment. It's easy to virtually melt into the water-saturated towels.

The Turkish delight ritual incorporates cleansing with Moroccan mint tea salt, an olive stone scrub, a clay polish, and tangerine fig butter crème.

In addition to traditional massages, ara offers hot rock or aroma-infused massage treatments. All massages may be upgraded with smoothing paraffin treatments for hands and/or feet, or an exfoliating hand and foot scrub. A wide range of manicures, pedicures, and skin care treatments complete the spa menu.

Inside treatment rooms, lotions and massage oils incorporate natural ingredients such as plum blossom, red flower from Japan, and lime. In fact, the spa features its own line of body care items, including lotion made with green tea and lemongrass.

The calming spa environment features



Spa Shiki's Movement Room offers great views of the Lake of the Ozarks. Spa Shiki at The Lodge of Four Seasons Resort

neutral and pastel-tone tiles, rounded walls, a spacious steam shower, and a whirlpool tub. Floor-to-ceiling curtains, cozy chairs, and soothing neutral colors characterize ara's two waiting areas. The spa also offers a dining menu, with choices such as a fresh seasonal fruit plate, salads, and more.

Whether you schedule spa services at a hotel steeped in a century of healing tradition, a modern casino hotel, or a calming lake resort, Missouri spas offer relaxation and rejuvenation for every taste. ●

Lisa Waterman Gray is a contributor from Overland Park, Kan.

BEFORE YOU GO

To visit these Missouri spa destinations, first stop by your nearest AAA service office for maps, reservations, TripTiks® and TourBook® guides. A list of offices to serve you is on page 6 in this issue or visit AAA.com.

For more information, contact:

- Spa Shiki, (573) 365-8108, www.spashiki.com
- Spa Chateau, (417) 243-1700, www.spachateau.com
- The Elms Hotel & Spa, (816) 630-5500, www.elmshotelandspa.com
- ara - Ameristar St. Charles, (636) 949-7777, www.ameristar.com/st-charles

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