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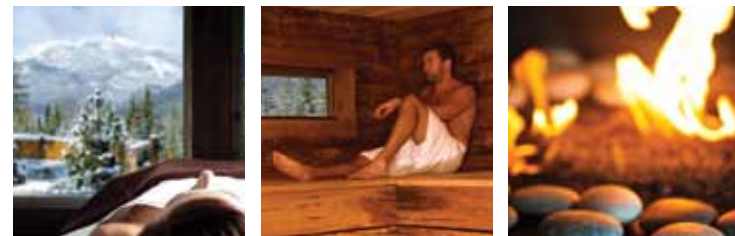
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Body & Soul

BY CINDY FILIPENKO

TAKE TIME from the ski hills and you'll discover another Whistler — one that's all about relaxation and rejuvenation.

Any body wrap will open your pores, but when you realize the sea salt and mud are locally sourced it becomes an authentic representation of place. Likewise, a good mani-pedi is easy to find, but it's a lot harder to find one that puts the environment front and centre in the choice of products and practices. And what could be more rejuvenating than visiting a bona fide Scandinavian day spa transplanted into a spectacular West Coast forest setting?

If you're not familiar with the spa experience, don't worry. Whistler spas are for everyone, not just size-six beauties with no-chip nails and perfectly straight teeth that have never seen orthodontia. For the record, I have a number of noticeable body flaws — including bad skin and icky toenails — and the last time I was anywhere near a size six, I was six! But I steeled myself and dove into my research. Guess what? I loved it and I wasn't self-conscious.

No matter how you feel about your body, you're going to love it a whole lot more after giving it a little therapeutic or aesthetic attention.

Whether you're looking for the ultimate après ski wind

down or some blustery day indulgence, here are three great choices to indulge your senses, spoil your body a little and renew your spirit.

Consistently in the Condé Nast's Top 10 Spas list, the Four Seasons Whistler delivers the level of service that reflects the venerable hotel brand. With 14 treatment rooms, numerous lounges, steam rooms, year-round heated pool and adjacent fitness facility, it's the type of place designed for guests to linger, relax and soak in the luxurious environment.

While the traditional aesthetics offerings such as waxing, tinting and shaping are on the menu, it's the signature treatments that really shine. For example, the après alpine treatment, featuring hot stone massage designed to drain away the strain your muscles took on the slopes, or a personal steam tent infusion inspired by the First Nations sweat lodge using essences of locally harvested lavender, rose and juniper.

But to experience all that our region has to offer, try the Sea to Sky Massage. From the salt and seaweed rub to the stone rub and aromatherapy, almost all products used in this experience are sourced within 100 miles of Whistler and showcase West Coast healing products. Sumptuous.

Reasonable prices meet Whistler cool at Eco Chic, the



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Village's greenest spa. (It's so green, the Suzuki Foundation purchased gift certificates for its staff Christmas gifts!) As well as having solid environmental credentials, Eco Chic also has Erin Hughes, a dynamic young businesswoman who's been making the women of Whistler even more beautiful since 1996. Since 2008, Erin's been the owner of Eco Chic, turning people on to the wonders of nail shellac and men's "foot treatments," a.k.a. pedicures, with consistent, quality service.

Along with the best mani-pedis in town — my feet can no longer be described as visually offensive — Eco Chic offers all the esthetic basics and a variety of body treatments including mud wraps and Vichy shower hydrotherapy.

Eco Chic's practice of using non-toxic products from companies with well-established track records of responsible business practices shows its commitment to community ideals of sustainability.

Scandinave, the Whistler arm of the renowned Canadian chain of Scandinavian baths, provides the most unique hydrotherapy experience most of us will ever encounter. The location, less than two kilometres from Whistler Village, is simply jaw dropping. Amidst a forest of cedars, pines and fir, mountains rise around the facility, giving it the feeling of perfect sanctuary in harmony with nature.

The cold plunge pools located in both the upper and lower levels of the spa may seem slightly daunting to the first time visitor. Be assured after emerging from either the Finnish steam sauna or the dry sauna, the 21 C / 74 F cooling pools are refreshing and invigorating. Guests are invited to go from hot to cool repeatedly exploring the pools, shower, sauna, relaxation lounges and seasonal outdoor amenities such as fire pits and hammocks.

With close to 60 therapists on board, the spa also offers a full range of massage experiences from 60-minute Swedish relaxation massages to 90-minute Thai yoga massage — a perfect way to start or end your day at Scandinave. Be forewarned, to preserve an environment of peaceful solitude you can't talk aloud at Scandinave, but chances are that after a few minutes you'll be too mellow to say much, anyway. 

Previous page:
A mani pedi at Eco Chic Spa.

Above: The hot stone treatment at the Spa at Four Seasons Resort.

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