

News, Apps, Deals, and Gear from New England and Beyond

HERE



SWIM FOR LIFE IN P-TOWN

Celebrating its 25th year, the Provincetown Harbor Swim for Life and Paddler Flotilla takes to the water on Sept. 8. Sign up to swim or kayak the 1.4 miles from Long Point Light to the beach, or gather on the deck at the Boatslip Resort to cheer on participants. Either way, you'll contribute to the spirit of this creative community, and to an organization that has raised awareness and \$2.5 million for HIV/AIDS, and women's and community health. Other events include a Celebration of Life concert at the UU Meeting House, Mermaid Brunch, and public reading of messages on prayer ribbons. Events are free. Swim and kayak pledge: \$100 minimum. swim4life.org

FOOD AND WINE AT NEWPORT, R.I., MANSIONS

The Newport Mansions Wine & Food Festival inaugurates its seventh season with three days of seminars, Sept. 21-23, featuring wines from around the world, and celebrity chefs including Emeril Lagasse and father-daughter duo Jacques and Claudine Pépin. The festival takes place in three historic mansions: The Elms, Rosecliff, and Marble House. Attend the opening night gala, the two-day Grand Tasting with over 100 participating wineries, informative seminars, live and silent auctions, and a Collectible Wine Dinner. Tickets are available for individual events, as are all-inclusive weekend packages, \$40-\$265. 401-847-1000, www.newportmansions.org/events/wine-and-food-festival



THERE

MILITARY GOLF DISCOUNTS AT MARRIOTT

"Fairways-Fore-FREEdom" provides active, reserve, and retired military personnel with discount golf at 20 Marriott courses in the United States. Through Nov. 12 (Veterans Day), anyone with a valid military ID can take advantage of discounted "twilight" green fees-carts, ranging from \$29-\$69, while receiving a free replay certificate valid until Dec. 31. The program is available after 3 p.m. any day of the week at participating courses, and tee times can be made up to three days in advance. 888-236-2427, www.marriott.com/explore-and-plan/kids-golf.mi

TAKE TO THE SKY IN NEVADA

Play fighter pilot for a day at Sky Pilot Ace, in Henderson, Nev. No previous flight experience? No worries. Under the supervision of a combat fighter pilot, you'll learn the basic maneuvers needed to execute air-to-air combat tactics, including a 40-minute one-on-one aerial dogfight with another aircraft. Bring a friend or fly against another instructor in a 330-horsepower Extra 330LC. Other flight packages include The Adrenaline Rush, The Afterburner, and Top Gun Experience. If you don't enjoy speed, take a leisurely tour of the Hoover Dam or Las Vegas area in a YMF-5C Classic open cockpit bi-plane. Packages include complimentary hotel transfer. A DVD of the flight experience is available for purchase. From \$399. 888-494-5850, www.skycombatace.com



TRAIN OUTDOORS AT WESTIN

Tired of the same old workout in the hotel gym? Westin Hotels & Resorts has partnered with ElliptiGO, creator of the world's first outdoor elliptical cycle, to offer an innovative way to stay fit away from home. Combining the best of running, cycling, and an elliptical trainer, the ElliptiGO delivers a low-impact, high-performance workout you can use while taking in the local sights. Available at participating US hotels, including The Westin Hilton Head Island Resort and Spa, and The Westin Georgetown, Washington, D.C. Average rental fee: \$10. 800-937-8461, www.westin.co

EVERYWHERE



'CLIP' FOR BETTER PRICING

Clipix allows budget-savvy travelers to keep track of targeted hotels' rates without revisiting the same websites in search of better pricing. First you "clip" a travel-related link — to a specific hotel, airfare, or activity — to your personal clipboard, then set the rate you want to pay. Clipix automatically recognizes when you clip an item with a price on it. Once the targeted price is reached, the Price Drop Alert feature notifies you by e-mail and on the platform itself. Sharing clipboards with multiple users by means of syncboards makes it easy to coordinate travel plans all on one platform. Also available on iOS and Android devices. www.clipix.com

BOTTLE REFILLS GET EASIER

Frequent fliers who hate to check their bags must limit their carry-on shampoos, conditioners, lotions, and sprays to TSA-approved bottles of 3 ounces or less. Trying to refill small containers can be a messy task, but now Brincatti refillable travel bottles' extra wide opening allows travelers an easy alternative. Save money by purchasing your favorite products in bulk and refilling these leak-free containers without need for a pump or funnel. A four-bottle travel kit with bag: \$9.99. www.brincatti.com/travel



NECEE REGIS

Hot tub, hike, swim, yoga, winery — pick your spa

► SPAS

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losophy is simple. "If you eat real food — whole grains, fruit, and vegetables — and you move your body, you'll feel good," says founder Jimmy LeSage, who opened this "hiking spa" 35 years ago. The spa is open from mid-May through September, the best time to take advantage of Mother Nature's gym, the Green Mountains. Rooms at the Inn of Six Mountains, the spa's home, aren't fancy, but they're clean and comfortable — not that you'll spend much time in your room.

A typical day begins with stretching and breakfast, then a three-hour guided hike. Hikes range from an easygoing walk in the woods to a thigh-burner at a brisk pace with some elevation gain (you choose the level of difficulty). Both the Appalachian Trail and the Long Trail are accessible from the lodge, so there is plenty of hiking to choose from. You can try 21 hikes if you stay for a week. After a healthy lunch, guests can join a fitness class, do yoga or meditate, swim in one of the pools, or go the indulgence route with a massage or facial. A jaunt to nearby Woodstock is another option. After dinner, there might be a cooking demonstration (say, how to make smoothies), a lecture, or someone playing the mandolin.

The location is gorgeous, the hiking is great (and you had better love to hike, because you'll do it in the rain), and the price is right: The rate for a two-to-four-night "mini-break" starts at \$229 per night double occupancy, which includes meals, guided hikes, exercise classes, and one massage or facial per three-night stay. www.newlifehikingspa.com

GIRLFRIENDS' GETAWAY: THE OAKS AT OJAI, Ojai, Calif.

It looks like a cute, rustic inn on Ojai's main drag, but when you step inside, you hear the pounding of feet and the thumping beat of Latin music. It's a Zumba class at The Oaks at Ojai spa, a high-energy zone amid Ojai's tony strip of shops and galleries. If you stick around, you'll meet the force of nature behind the spa, founder Sheila Cluff, "the godmother of Aerobics." Now 76, and still teaching classes and making YouTube exercise videos, Cluff founded The Oaks in 1977, before Jane Fonda put on her first pair of leg warmers. This former professional figure skater — still a dynamo on ice skates — is her own best testimonial: She's got arms like Michelle Obama's and energy to burn. Guests love the vibe at this famously low-priced spa.



DIANE BAIR FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

The BotaBota Spa Sur L'eau, docked at Montreal's Old Port on the St. Lawrence River, is a converted ferry boat with a gangplank entrance.

"It feels like a sorority house," says guest Stephanie Woodlee of Modesto, Calif., who visited with her mom, Janice. "You really bond with the other guests and the staff, so it feels perfectly normal to walk around in your pajamas and eat popcorn at 8 p.m." But don't be fooled: They're serious about fitness and committed to healthy living. Guests choose from among 15 fitness classes, along with the opportunity to hike and bike the hilly countryside surrounding the Ojai Valley (83 miles northwest of Los Angeles). There's even rock climbing. The Oaks also offers spa treatments, including a new pomegranate sugar scrub and the popular vitamin C anti-aging facial. At night, guest lecturers discuss topics such as nutrition, body image, and why laughter is good for the soul.

Rates start at \$209 per night on weekends (there's a two-night minimum) per person, double occupancy, which includes fitness classes, all meals, and use of all facilities. And there are deals, like the Mother-Daughter (or son) weekends in September, January, and May, when rates are discounted 40 percent. www.oaksspa.com

COUPLES: MIRBEAU INN & SPA Skaneateles, N.Y.

You'll feel like you've stepped into

an Impressionist painting at Mirbeau, given the lush, Monet-inspired gardens and buildings that look like they were plucked from a French country estate. Featured in the book "1,000 Places to See Before you Die," this ultra-romantic inn is set amid the rolling farmlands of New York's Finger Lakes region, about five hours from Boston by car. Local wineries — more than 100 — are the main attraction here. Most are open all winter.

You can get a wine-infused potion slathered on your face or body if you opt for one of the "vinotherapy" treatments at Mirbeau's 14,000-square-foot spa. And you can drink wine in the Aqua Terrace, Mirbeau's hot tub zone, where there's a waterfall, a fireplace, a Jacuzzi big enough for 15 people, and a bar. "It's really nice not to share a hot tub with the pre-teen set," says guest Paul Kelley of Beverly. Other amenities include exercise classes, yoga sessions, saunas and steam rooms, and beauty treatments galore.

This luxury comes at a price, alas, especially if you choose a package that includes a six-hour winery tour and a multicourse dinner at the inn's steakhouse (\$889.50 per night, weekends). Of course, you can always visit wineries on your own, grab dinner at a local hot spot, like Johnny Angel's Heavenly Burgers, and stay and spa at Mirbeau.

First, relax your calendars . . .

Even famous (and famously expensive) destination spas offer discounted rates now and then. Here are a couple of examples — great for spa-goers who can be flexible with dates:

CANYON RANCH in Lenox: We went from diet soda-swalling, M&M-popping wrecks to harmonious, healthy creatures after just three days at this Berkshires spa. Its anniversary special runs during fall foliage season; if you stay three or more nights between Sept. 3-30, you'll save 15 percent on your rate. Doing the math, rates for a three-night package with deluxe double accommodations start at \$2,711.50. And Canyon Ranch offers a special deal for solo travelers, "Celebrate You," from Dec. 1-23: Stay in single accommodations at the double occupancy rate, a savings of up to 20 percent. Rates for a three-night stay start at \$2,150. www.canyonranch.com

THE BODY/HOLIDAY at LeSport, St. Lucia: Our totally buff, impossibly well-groomed Swiss friends turned us on to this temple of health and fabulousness. The resort is home to Tao, one of the best restaurants anywhere, but you won't get fatter, thanks to the array of fitness classes and outdoor activities offered at this all-inclusive getaway in the West Indies. You can pay more than \$1,000 per person per night here, but if you go between now and Oct. 6 this year, \$450 a day gets you a room (single or double) and all meals, activities, and a spa treatment of your choice. The same rate and deal applies to a double occupancy room from Dec. 7-20 (a single is \$475 then). www.thebodyholiday.com

DIANE BAIR AND PAMELA WRIGHT

Booking a spa treatment gets you complimentary use of the wet areas and fitness classes. After Columbus Day, room rates dip as low as \$219 per night during midweek (based on availability) and around \$319 on weekends. www.mirbeau.com

REASONS TO GO SPA-ING IN MONTREAL: BotaBota Spa Sur L'eau and Scandinave Les Bains

Take an old ferry boat, spend \$12 million outfitting it with high-tech pools, Asian art, and glass tiles, and you've got BotaBota Spa Sur L'eau, a floating spa on the St. Lawrence River. Here, you'll feel like you're relaxing on a luxury yacht, even though you're not moving. A marvel of repurposing, the boat sits at a quay in Montreal's Vieux Port, minus its engines.

You walk a gangplank to enter, past a garden area set up with massage cabanas, and enter the four-level spa. Wearing your swimsuit, you'll do the Scandinavian-style pool hop — hot plunge, cold dip, relaxation — in a series of saunas, steam rooms, hot tubs, and cold baths. One of the cold pools is filled with filtered water from the river. Black beanbag chairs and lounges beckon guests to relax on terraces, in doors and out. "It's really magical to be out here in the hot tub in winter, when the snow is falling around you," says Marieve Lambert, customer service coordinator. It's definitely a kick to be lounging on an outdoor deck in your

spa robe, watching boats go by and taking in the busy streetscape of the Old Port area. There are even windows in the sauna, so you can sightsee as you sweat. There's a bistro and a bar, so you can make a day of it. Access to the "water circuit" is \$56 per day weekdays, \$66 weekends and holidays. Or stay up to three hours for \$46 or \$51, respectively. Get \$10 off when you pair it with a spa treatment — BotaBota offers facials, scrubs, nail treatments, and massages. www.botabota.ca

And in case you need more proof that Montrealers are just as stressed out as Bostonians, check out the Zero Stress room at Scandinave Les Bains, in Vieux Montreal. The barely-lighted, womblike space feels like the nap room at a day care center, with its cushy mats and soft music. Almost futuristic-looking, this day spa offers the option of baths only, \$55, as well as massage-and-bath packages. A 60-minute Swedish massage, with the bath experience, is \$132. On the Saturday when we visited, the clientele was a mix of men and women, including a couple who kissed passionately under the waterfall in the hot tub. www.scandinavemontreal.com

Both of these are day spas, but each offers lodging packages with local hotels and inns at a variety of price points.

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