

*T*ranquility, peacefulness, and harmony with nature come to mind when thinking about a day at the spa. Spas and resorts come in all shapes, sizes and luxuries, but green spas are in, making a difference in the environment through education and conservation efforts. From sustainable business practices to chemical-free beauty treatments, holistic health options abound for eco-minded spa-goers. For destination spas, take the experience up a notch by deepening the connection of mind, body and spirit over the course of a few days through spa treatments, holistic consultations, healthy eating, and fitness workouts.



Be Kind to yourself, Be kind to the environment

BY BARBI WALKER

Mii amo Spa Enchantment Resort | Sedona

This enchanting spa sits within a sacred box canyon in beautiful Sedona, Arizona. Cradled among the red rock canyon slopes, Mii amo treats guests to spectacular and peaceful views of Boynton Canyon. The name, Mii amo, is a Yuman word that means "to continue one's path or journey," and the welcoming spirit of the resort provides the perfect setting for anyone beginning or continuing on their personal restorative, reflective journey.

Mii amo is a boutique hotel that also offers nutritional counseling, lymphatic massage, herbal detox wraps, yoga, hiking, health and wellness seminars, and much more.

Journey packages, as they are called at Mii amo, range from three to seven days and include organic spa treatments, health and wellness consultations, and award-winning cuisine. From the seasonally inspired menus to all-inclusive individualized packages, guests can connect body to spirit, and spirit to earth.

For the eco-foodie, Mii amo is a culinary delight with its "Green Cuisine" and award-winning menu. Chef Corey Shoemaker uses the highest-quality ingredients available, including organic fruits and vegetables for his simple yet creative menu—far from typical spa cuisine.

Mii amo has a commitment to the surrounding area and its environment, and honors the natural beauty of the land and canyon to preserve its Native American heritage, says Julia Thorn, spa spokesperson.

"While we do this in many ways, there are two major components of that commitment," Thorn adds. "One is our greening program, the other is our partnership with the National Forest Service," Thorn continues.

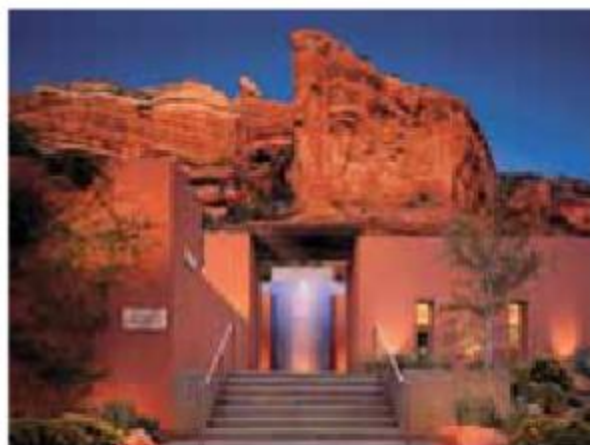
From composting food waste and buying environmentally friendly products, to watering landscaping with its own reclaimed water, Mii amo is not only an eco-friendly resort, it is an award-winning one as well. It was the highest-ranking Arizona hotel on the Condé Nast Traveler's 2012 Gold List.

The Golden Door Spa The Boulders | Scottsdale

Emanating from its roots, this spa continues its harmonious connection to the environment in the Arizona desert. The original Golden Door in Escondido, California is the oldest operating destination spa in America, and with experience comes wisdom. From water conservation efforts to eco-conscious spa treatments to the use of local and organic foods, the Golden Door is perfect for the 'green' spa-goer. The spa prides itself on the multiple organic and sustainable elements in place at the resort. Here, guests can feel good about supporting the local economy because the resort uses local organic farmers, organic biodynamic wines, and fills the room's mini-bars with local and organic items such as Arizona organic water, chocolate, and chips and salsa. The retail store sells handbags and clothing made from recycled juice bottles, rice bags, and other recycled materials.

A 5,600-square-foot organic garden serves as the local harvest for the restaurant, as a meditation garden, and for outdoor organic cooking demonstrations, says Debora Bridges, spokesperson for the spa.

Spa treatments include organic facials, mud body wraps, a lavender body wrap, and gentleman facials. Guests can continue the luxurious feeling at home with custom-made Boulders soap. Bridges says the soap, made in the shape of a boulder, was made exclusively for the resort to resemble the ancient boulders



This page: (left) Mii amo commits to protecting the natural beauty and native heritage of the surrounding landscape. *Photography courtesy of Middleton & Gendron, Inc.* (middle and right) Sanctuary Spa promotes a healthy and balanced lifestyle in its tranquil atmosphere. Opposite page: The Golden Door Spa prides itself on buying locally and using organic products for spa treatments. *Photography courtesy of Bridges Media Group*



surrounding the property, and its ingredients – the natural fragrance was inspired by the resort's organic garden. Sweet acacia honey, citrus blossoms, and desert herbs make up the three distinct bars.

Sanctuary Spa

Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain | Scottsdale

This legendary, world-class resort is known for being environmentally conscious and community-minded. Here, guests can reconnect and enjoy the resort's tranquil atmosphere that embraces and promotes a healthy and balanced lifestyle, says Katherine Van Ness, public relations representative for the resort.

Red Flower organic skin care and aromatherapy is the organic line used in spa treatments and in all guest rooms. One particular spa treatment on the menu for summer is the Asian energizing body ritual, which uses Red Flower products. Part Shiatsu and botanical body buffing, this treatment is perfect for relaxing and reviving Arizona dried skin. The spa offers a series of Satori retreats which are customized for guests looking to enlighten their lives. From pampering to wellness to adventure, and even treatments that address issues specific to the business person, guests are sure to find a package that suits. There's even a couple's romance retreat for those wishing to reconnect with their significant other.

Aqua Spa

Floating Stone Inn | Tubac

For something completely different and green, try the floating oasis in the Tubac, Arizona, desert. Here is where water therapies are part of the spa package and guests can truly relax, knowing all the water is chemical- and chlorine-free.

Spa owner Linda Ellinor decided to change gears after a long career in the corporate world. She wanted to create a place where

others, herself included, could slow down and relax in a healthy, chemical-free environment. The spa's adobe building was built in 1853 by Charles Poston, known as the "Father of Arizona," for his political involvement in the creation of a separate Arizona territory. Now this historic property is a retreat center and spa that focuses on wellness and sustainability, and Ellinor has worked to keep the building and everything inside eco-friendly.

The spa boasts five pools, including one hydro-therapy pool kept at 104 degrees, a Watsu or aqua massage, a water exercise and activity pool, a Japanese lap pool and a cold dip pool. Ellinor believes in the importance of a chemical-free water spa experience and installed a water filtration process that ionizes the water and removes chlorine. Solar panels heat the pools, and rainwater is collected and used in conjunction with the facility's grey water for irrigation. This "water wellness center" even offers alkaline and ionized water for drinking and cooking.

Spa-goers will find the usual menu of treatments and therapies – deep tissue, heated stone therapies, lymphatic massage, and couples massages – but it's well worth trying one of the spa's unique aqua therapies that blend water and massage. The watsu water massage combines two relaxing spa elements – a full-body massage while floating in perfect 98-degree water. And the aquatic massage, which blends western massage techniques, using the water's resistance to access deep muscle tension.

Whatever you desire in a spa experience, be it relaxation, revitalization of the soul and spirit, or a deeper connection with the world around you, there is a green spa designed to fit you. Now when you give yourself a much-needed break, you can give the planet one too. ■

Barbi Walker is a freelance writer and an award-winning journalist. Barbi lives in Phoenix with her husband and young son.

SOURCES
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