



WELLNESS

getting oriented

A PARK CITY SPA OFFERS A BIT OF JAPAN | BY DAVID K. GIBSON

> THE MAIN DRAG OF PARK CITY, UTAH, LOOKS LIKE THE SET OF A John Ford western. Brothel abuts brothel, saloon salutes saloon, and the dry goods stores are stocked full for the strangers who pour into town. A gunslinging showdown would fit right in here some high noon, if the tourist traffic could be routed onto Deer Valley Drive.

In short, it's not a place you'd expect to find a peaceful zen oasis.

But that's exactly what lies on the garden level of Park City's The Sky Lodge. Amatsu* — Japanese for "from heaven" — is a westernized version of a traditional Japanese spa,

complete with wooden stools and long-handled brushes in the showers, tea service, and a zen garden. Though not a large place — particularly in comparison to the mega-spas that have become de rigueur in large resort hotels — its six treatment rooms assure an uncrowded feel. The décor is simple, but the experience is anything but austere.

In traditional style, guests are encouraged to soak in the wooden ofuro baths before or after their treatments, so that's where I go; the deep wooden boxes enable complete immersion and encourage a posture that helps stretch out the muscles of the back and shoulders. By the time I dry off for pre-treatment tea, relaxation is already sneaking up on me.

The Red Flower Hammam treatment — Amatsu's version of a traditional Moroccan ritual — gets an Asian twist here. Steaming towels prep me for a vigorous cleansing with mint tea and silt, followed by a scrubbing of lemon, coffee blossom, and olive stone. A languorous shower removes the mud, then I soak in the in-room ofuro tub, after which a therapeutic massage — swirling with bergamot, quince, and jasmine — lulls me into complete

calm. As a final touch, I am coated with a butter of tangerine and fig.

The next day, after hiking nearby Bald Mountain, I limp in for another treatment: a bamboo massage. Heated bamboo sticks are used much like rocks in a stone massage — at first. But soon, my therapist is using them like rolling pins over my back. Once I flip over, she pries the sticks between me and the table, using my body weight as pressure to work out difficult spots in my back and shoulders. With the exception of a working-over I once received at the hands of a 7-foot-tall former wrestler in Sedona, I've never felt so thoroughly massaged — every knot addressed, every muscle stretched.

Which is, I suppose, exactly what I'd expect from an attentive Japanese spa. I just didn't expect it in Park City. ●



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