

No time to travel? DISCOVER LOCAL HOT spots

When crazy schedules and major commitments relegate exotic travel to your “maybe one day” wish list, it’s time you discovered your city’s top hot spots.

Written by Kara Kuryllowicz
Photography by Nathalie Ann & Brandon Barre

The Lounge at Miraj Hammam Spa



The women's changing room features a central jacuzzi for ultimate private relaxation

ELMWOOD

Stroking *silently* through salt water...
watching *clouds drift gently* across the sun...

Desperately craving the Pacific, Caribbean or Atlantic—because any combination of sea and sky will do—but you simply can’t make the time? Elmwood Spa, Canada’s favourite urban oasis in the very heart of downtown Toronto, offers the ultimate quiet-the-mind experience when you need to slide into the right-here, right-now.

A retreat and an escape from your reality, whatever that might be, the LI’TYA Dreaming Whole Body Ritual rebalances, rejuvenates and reenergizes every part of you with the help of traditional Australian Aboriginal healing techniques that

harness the power of native essential oils, desert salts, and herbs. Yet somehow, settling into stillness may be infinitely more challenging than you ever imagined. How often do you slow (let alone stop) your mind?

Sometimes. Rarely. Never. We’re always thinking, brains multitasking, endlessly seeking ideas, solutions, challenges.

It’s what smart, successful, driven people do—it’s who we are, who we need to be—whether we live in the world of business, art, or entertainment. So before you give yourself over to the LI’TYA experience, make a point of embracing the Water



Take your *time with the waters* before pulling on a pristine white robe and wandering up to the treatment room.

The swimming pool at Elmwood Spa is the perfect place to unwind before or after your treatment
Photo by Nathalie Ann



The couples treatment room is both spacious and intimate
Photo by Nathalie Ann

Therapies to prepare you for your ultimate surrender. Find a spot where sunlight streams through massive windows, water laps against tiled shores, bubbles and rumbles in hot tubs and whispers in lightly scented steam. Immerse your body and let your mind float free, riding ripples and wafting alongside sun shadows.

Take your time with the waters before pulling on a pristine white robe and wandering up to the treatment room. Savor the heat of the fireplace. Lift your head to steal a glance at the flames as they flicker and dance by your shoulder, then close your eyes as the sweet, acrid scent of smoldering o’yarrange, a lichen from the lychee family and lemon myrtle, an herb, tell you it’s time to succumb.

When asked to close your eyes and select the salt and oil over which your therapist will layer the rich, ochre-tinted mud, don’t think, don’t ponder—listen to your nose—it will tell you whether you need to detoxify, reharmonize or rejuvenate.

Once your choice has been made, strip down and slip between the sheets.

Know that there will be movement as limbs are laid bare, lifted and draped again, only to repeat the process countless times.

There will be sensation upon sensation. Oil, salt and mud layered onto naked skin, seeping into every pore as you try to drag your mind back from a deadline, a playdate or a new romance so you don’t waste even a second of the time you’re ensconced with your senses.

You’re struggling to shut down your uncooperative mind, until you’re reminded that the more you fight it and the greater the judgment you heap on yourself, the more insurmountable the brain battle will become.

Shift to focus on every breath, every patch of exposed skin and revel in the way you will come back to your body.

Be astonished at the play of touch at an ankle, a hip, a tender spot behind an ear. Track a dozen figure eights traced horizontally from the nape of your neck to the very base of your spine and the way in which the loops meet to change direction along your vertebrae.



Coolmam smudge with herbs used in the LI’TYA treatment - Photo by LI’TYA



The 3 Muds used in the LI’TYA treatment - Photo by LI’TYA

Absorb the heat from the fire, the oil, the two sets of hands and the mud while marveling at their textures on yours.

Slow to the rhythm of those smooth, measured strokes. Idly try to decipher the finger-tip calligraphy on a shoulder blade, across a rib cage.

Ponder the menu as you marvel at the fact that finally, your brain let you live more fully in your body and that time positively flew while you managed simply to be.

Savor every bit—from the bite of the horseradish to the rich decadence of the many chocolates.

Close your eyes and select the salt and oil over which your therapist will layer the rich, ochre-tinted mud

Feel your shoulders lift, your belly drop, and your legs rise as the bed eases the transition from prone to sitting before standing.

Where did the time go?? Peel yourself from the bed, rinse off and no, you don’t get a repeat just now.

Pour yourself back into your robe and meander up to the Terrace restaurant, making sure you appreciate the myriad of original artworks perfectly positioned along the way.

Settle into a booth and bask in the sunshine like the contented creature you’ve become as you anticipate further sensations, still sensual, but this time of a culinary nature.

Quietly revel in the fact that right now at Elmwood Spa, it is still all about you and how you feel—not what you think or even who you are!

Be grateful that as challenging, fabulous, stimulating, and overwhelming as your real world can be, for now you’re still cocooned at Elmwood where you’ll be welcomed back from your reality whenever you need to rebalance, rejuvenate, and reenergize or simply require respite in a momentary haven.

18 Elm Street
Toronto, ON
416 977-6751

Scan with PressFront App to Book the Spa

MIRAJ HAMMAM

Rush into the massive almost starkly modern lobby that anchors the *elegant Shangri-La Hotel* in downtown Toronto and you immediately know just how much you truly matter here.

SPA BY CAUDALIE PARIS

Upon entering the beautiful lobby, even the most sophisticated time-strapped design aficionado has to stop and really look for just a second, and immediately an elegantly attired gentleman asks if he can help. With a warm smile, he welcomes you, and walks you to the elevators that will carry you to the Miraj Hammam Spa by Caudalie Paris.

Because the Miraj Hamman Spa by Caudalie Paris was inspired by the traditional Middle Eastern hammam as well as Paris, Marrakech and Istanbul, it feels slightly exotic, as if set in a different time and place to speak directly to you of a quiet ease and serene sensuality.

Once inside, you're coddled and cosseted due as much to the staff's fierce commitment to detail as the treatments themselves.

You always know exactly where you're going, when you need to be there and how soon you'll need to move forward because one of several attendants will always be on hand to lead and guide you through the soundless halls - past the extraordinary sculptures you'll be sure are nature-wrought wood, but are in fact vines crafted by the earth and the sun over the fields of France.

The entire hammam is yours, all yours, as you settle into your light as air sarong and the eucalyptus-infused steam creates a great fog that cradles and caresses, as you lounge on Jerusalem gold marble with a silver cup filled to the brim with refreshing, ice-cold water. Precisely heated to 115°F at high intensity and 95°F at low intensity, there is

Miraj Hamman Spa by Caudalie Paris was *inspired* by the traditional Middle Eastern hammam as well as Paris, Marrakech and Istanbul

a deep rumble as clouds of steam tumble around you and you're sure you feel the drops as the thunderstorm rolls in on waves of blessed humidity.

Your attendant will fetch you in precisely 15 minutes and whether you know it in that moment or not, you are grateful otherwise you'd surely melt forever into that blessed heat.





The Miraj Hammam Spa is located in the Shangri-La Toronto

The full body gommage (exfoliation) with black Moroccan soap, essentially eucalyptus-infused olive oil, is sure to bring you back to a different reality as every inch is scrubbed to uncover baby soft flesh trapped beneath the parched peau that's endured a long hard Canadian winter.

Shower and switch out of the sarong to the light waffled robe to amble back to the change room for the warmer robe, before you continue along the spa path to your facial and a bed whose entire surface is heated top to toe.

The Caudalie Grand Facial, like all of the Miraj Hammam Spa by Caudalie Paris facials, features unguents and lotions by Caudalie Paris, but goes beyond the standard deep cleanse and moisturizing. Together, you and your skincare technician customize the treatment based on what your skin needs most: nourishment, firming and lifting, cellular renewal, textural enhancement.

Caudalie Paris was created by Mathilde Thomas and her husband at the family vineyards of Château Smith Haut Lafitte in Bordeaux, France after Professor Joseph Vercauteren told the couple that they were "throwing away treasures" during the 1993 grape harvest. Apparently every time they disposed of the grape waste they were also sacrificing polyphenols whose anti-oxidant powers protect the skin against free radicals. The couple subsequently founded Caudalie Paris in 1995 and patented those grape polyphenols.

As extraordinary as the magic potions feel when applied by expert hands that stroke and smooth away stresses, the facial wraps up all too soon and you are returned, yet again, to the relaxation room.

Lounge amidst plush cushions and cozy throws under soft light in quiet music. Savor crisply crunchy banana chips and barely tart cranberries as well as perfectly plump grapes and decadent baklava

oozing fragrant honey on elaborate bronze plates. Select cool water or indulge in sweetened Moroccan chai mint tea infused with freshly ground peppermint leaves and unrefined cane sugar.

The relaxation room is lush, luxurious and fabulously flawless as staff discreetly refold throws, replump pillows, restack magazines and refresh trays and teas because everyone at the Miraj Hammam Spa by Caudalie Paris is attentive, attuned and fully committed to letting you know that you truly matter in a Miraj that's anything but a mirage in this wonderfully wide world.

188 University Avenue
Toronto, ON
647 253-5770



Scan with PressFront App to Book the Spa

Escape to cloud nine

Surrender to warmth, relaxation and bliss at the Spa at Four Seasons Hotel Toronto

Book any treatment and enjoy access to our relaxation lounges, steam room and indoor heated pool.

Explore our spa services at fourseasons.com/toronto/spa or call **416-963-6006** for details.

[f/FourSeasonsHotelToronto](https://www.facebook.com/FourSeasonsHotelToronto) [t @FSToronto](https://twitter.com/FSToronto) [i @FSToronto](https://www.instagram.com/FSToronto)



FOUR SEASONS HOTEL
Toronto