

Spa spy Slavic to the rhythm

EDITED BY
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They call it the “naked massage” but don’t panic – if it was good enough for Genghis Khan...

THE TREATMENT

In the days of Genghis Khan, ancient nomadic tribes developed a form of massage for their horses and soldiers, to prepare their bodies for going into battle. The long, sweeping techniques – said to send a person into an almost hypnotic state – have since spread to the West, via central Asia and eastern Europe, and these days Slavic massage, for all its noble heritage, is known as the “naked massage”. Cue nervous coughing. But it’s OK, Bill Foreman, the only Slavic massage trainer in Scotland (Knot Stressed, 10a Blenheim Place, Edinburgh, 07717 783230, www.knotstressed.com) assures me. I will be the naked one (albeit draped in a sheet); he will remain fully clothed at all times. Phew! But pants – paper or otherwise – will not be worn as the movements at times stretch from the tips of the toes right up to the top of the head, all in one seamless sweep.

WHY GO?

You’re stressed? Can’t sleep? Need a little me-time? At two hours’ long (£75), Slavic massage delivers – this treatment is all about relaxation and indulgence. Don’t plan a busy day afterwards.



PHOTOGRAPH: THINKSTOCK

OUR SPY SAYS

The room is heated, the bed is heated, the oil (rose water and jasmine) is heated – it’s so toasty you could easily slip into a cosy reverie as Foreman works first from shoulders to hips, then on to the legs, using a combination of feather-light, then firmer techniques. Turn over and he works on the backs of the legs – he says this is a full body massage in the truest sense of the word, and he’s right: there are few spots that don’t get his attention. A sheet (that’s heated too, by the way) covers my modesty at all times and I never feel too naked ... until we get to the top half. He has warned me in advance and made it clear if I would rather

not have my abdomen massaged, I can opt out of that element. I don’t have a problem with being exposed from shoulders to pubic bone, but some clients might prefer to remain covered. My shoulders get some more attention, along with my belly, and, all covered up again, we finish with a relaxing facial massage.

THE RESULTS

If the aim of this treatment is to deliver complete and utter relaxation, it does that in spades. I’m good for nothing for the rest of the day. Ready for battle? More like ready for bed.

RUTH WALKER

16/20

WHAT’S NEW?

CREAM OF THE CROP

Upgrade your mitt lotion with the help of Crabtree & Evelyn’s Hand Cream Amnesty. Before 12 March, take any brand of hand cream, new or used, to your nearest store and you can swap it for a 25g tube of their award-winning Hand Therapy Cream, worth £5, with shea butter-rich versions including the zesty Tarocco Orange, Eucalyptus and Sage. Available while stocks last, one per customer. www.crabtree-evelyn.co.uk

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START A NEW CYCLE

Pollution, cold winds and rain. It’s fair to say that a cyclist’s face gets battered by the elements. With this in mind, Brodie Skin Care has launched its Recovery Phase Cycle Cream. It’s an ultra moisturising mixture of shea butter, rosehip and avocado, as well as aloe vera and cucumber extracts to protect against irritation and redness. Out 28 February, £17.95. www.brodieskincare.co.uk

TIME FOR TEA

Created by the head herbalist at Neal’s Yard Remedies, this natural brand’s new Organic Herbal Tea Bags feature eight varieties including an Inner Strength version, which contains a fortifying mixture of echinacea, elderberry, astragalus, acerola, elderflower and ginger, while the rather sippable Calming tea features a soporific blend of lemon balm, lime flower, passion flower, skullcap and pink rose petals. £2.99 for 18 sachets, www.nealsyardremedies.com

WE DO THE MATHS 3 PRODUCTS TRIED AND TESTED

1+

QUICK AND EASY

This body scrub contains glycolic acid, a chemical exfoliant that helps to loosen dead skin cells. The particles are noticeably smaller than regular scrubs and skin felt instantly softer and smoother after use. It is also less messy than many scrubs, applying quickly and easily, giving a nice even result.

Glycolic Acid Body Scrub, £19.19, Bravura (www.bravuralondon.com)



2+

ON A ROLL

Thermal Spa Water is the headline ingredient here, from the hot springs of Vichy, France, and the only water source used in the eponymous company’s formulations. The roll-on feels cool against hot, tired eyes and puffiness was reduced.

Aqualia Thermal Eye Roll-On, £14.25, Vichy (www.vichy.co.uk)



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SQUEAKY CLEAN

This alternative to a pricey Clarisonic doesn’t feature sonic waves, but a soft revolving brush. My skin felt squeaky clean after use, though I’m not sure if it’s much more efficient than a good rub down with a flannel.

Skinvigorate Skin Cleansing Brush, £35, (inc spare cleansing head and batteries) Mary Kay (www.marykay.co.uk)

