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DECEMBER 2015

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Slumber at the Spa

If you've ever rolled off the massage table and wished you could roll right into bed, this new offering might be for you. Launched late last summer, Big Cedar Lodge's Spa Cottage is a comfy guest suite complete with king bed, wood-burning fireplace, vaulted beamed ceilings, heated floors, luxe spa bathroom and balcony overlooking a meandering stream. It's also got a private bridge leading straight to the 18,000-square-foot Cedar Creek Spa—which means you can be the first one there in the morning, or enjoy the last appointment at night.

The Spa itself, opened in 2014, is inspired by the resort's Ozark Mountain setting, and features 11 fireplace-equipped treatment rooms and a candlelit grotto pool with underwater massage jets. Signature services include the Ozarks Rain Experience, in which you'll be exfoliated with a seasonal scrub, cleansed and massaged by eight shower heads, and hydrated with a body cream—and then, if you're lucky, roll straight back to your Spa Cottage. *bigcedar.com —Sandra Ramani*

Spa Artisans: Suds Up

Aurora Spa at Las Alcobas Mexico City

Mexico's rich beauty culture dates back to the Mayans. And Aurora Spa at Las Alcobas Mexico City embraces it with a menu that incorporates local customs, including their Heal treatments. "We use an age-old traditional Mexico wrap, Tepezchouite, a crushed and blended bark of a tree, which cures burns and quickly and deeply repairs the skin and boosts collagen levels," says Spa Curator Marjorie Charlton.

The spa's Nourish treatments highlight the avocado. The local dietary staple does wonders for the skin, repairing it and neutralizing free radicals. The treatment includes an almond and walnut scrub; avocado, honey and lavender wrap; an avocado cream soufflé application; and a 30-minute massage with lavender and almond oil. "I use one avocado every week on my face and hair," she says. "I mash it up and apply to my face and neck. I also use local honey three times a week on my face by applying it and leaving on for about 10 minutes. Then, I place my fingers on my face and pull up, and the stickiness acts as an exfoliant."

The spa's proudest embrace of local culture is its partnership with the handmade soap brand Manos Que Curan, crafted by a group of female healers from the Iztacihuatl and Popocatepetl volcano area. Their purpose is to share their knowledge of herbs, flowers and plants, which has been passed down from mother to child for generations.



"The benefits of using natural ingredients are important for beauty, but so much more important for skin health, and beneficial to the earth because they are environmentally friendly," says Charlton. "We like to use ingredients like amaranth and nopal (cactus) that are characteristic of Mexico."

Their suppliers are small local farmers, with whom they practice Fair-Trade principles. Each soap variety offers different skin health perks—coffee gently exfoliates, spearmint is invigorating, and rose petals are moisturizing. Charlton says, "The women of Manos que Curan pay tribute to their people by using the plants, flowers, herbs and seeds to formulate their handmade products and make them accessible to everyone." *lasalcobas.com/spa —Celia Shatzman*