

Most Luxurious Spas In The U.S. 2006

Sophia Banay, 07.20.06, 11:00 AM ET

Like a satisfied client after a six-hand massage, the spa industry in the United States radiates good health.

Americans make 136 million spa visits per year, and between 1994 and 2004, the number of American spas quadrupled to over 12,000, according to Spa Finder, a New York City-based spa marketing and media company. Spa treatments are now available on airplanes, aboard cruise ships and in hotel rooms. Hospitals have added spa wings and dentists are opening dental spas. And, finally, spa lovers are being granted their ultimate wish: to live at the spa.

As the spa market has become more saturated, existing spas have sought to differentiate themselves from their competitors, expand their brands and secure repeat clientele--hence, the introduction of the residential spa community.

"It's a lifestyle product that people have been asking for for a long time," says **John Vanderslice**, chief executive officer of **Miraval, Life in Balance**, a Catalina, Ariz.-based destination spa and part of **Revolution**, **Steve Case's** private holding company.

Vanderslice plans to address that demand, opening ten to 15 Miraval communities over the next few years in major U.S. cities, including New York and Seattle.

Vanderslice isn't exactly rising above the competition; he's merely joining a very sophisticated fray. Premier destination spa brands including **Canyon Ranch** and **Golden Door**, both of which made our list this year of the country's most luxurious spas, as well as **Red Mountain** and **Greenbrier** are all expanding into residential real estate, through full-time residences, condominium hotels, fractional ownership options or destination clubs, according to the Lexington, Ky.-based **International SPA Association**.

You can sleep 50 yards from your facial, while owning the bed, the stunning views, the right to extras like concierge service and all the fitness classes your heart desires--though not, sadly, unlimited massages.

Vanderslice estimates that a two-bedroom condominium in a Miraval community in Seattle could cost approximately \$500,000. Access to the private spa and unlimited fitness and wellness classes are covered in the condo's common charges. One-on-one consultations and treatments are extra.

Canyon Ranch, the renowned Tucson-based destination resort spa, is planning to open Canyon Ranch Living sites in Miami, Chicago and Bethesda as soon as next spring. The resort is already in the process of selling 20 Arizona properties associated with the Tucson spa, which range in cost from \$1.3 million to \$2.1 million. Each residence will pay an \$815 monthly fee that covers access to the spa and use of all facilities, classes, weight rooms and lectures. Meals, personal services and spa treatments are available on a pay-per-item basis.

For a dedicated spa-goer and healthy-living enthusiast, the absence of unlimited facials and manicures might be eclipsed by the convenience of living at the spa. "It's just a one-stop shop," says **Lynne Walker McNeese**, ISPA president. "It drives you back to taking time for yourself and the more accessible it is, the more you're going to do it. People are not just spa-ing on vacation,

but on a regular ongoing basis and as a way to take care of themselves and say 'I'm important.' That's what the residential spa movement is. It's the wave of the future."

For now, we have determined ten of the most luxurious spas across the United States. We looked at the best day, destination and hotel spas across the country, places that offer unique treatments and the highest-quality service--like **Cornelia Day Resort** in Manhattan, where you can float in the Northeast's only indoor Watsu pool, or **Enessa Wellness Spa** in Los Angeles, where you can get the same therapeutic collagen eye kit as **Reese Witherspoon**. At these spas, you can get beach-side massages, micro-dermabrasion facials, and lavender skin-buffing treatments. You just can't move in...yet



Golden Door Escondido, Calif.

Golden Door sets the standard for destination spas, with a four-to-one staff-to-guest ratio, a 40-guest weekly limit, and serene rooms with private patios. Each guest gets a personal dietician, fitness guide and esthetician, and receives six in-room massages, five skin-care treatments and two herbal wraps, plus a manicure/pedicure and make-up lesson. Weekly stays start at \$7,500 and include a tailored fitness program and personal treatment plan, all meals, accommodations and a take-home program.

For more information, visit www.goldendoor.com.