

Gay travel destinations pay special attention to men travellers

Everything a guy wants in spa treatments

BY ROCHELLE LASH, SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE JANUARY 18, 2013

Nothing says “especially for men” like a gay destination.

The Grand Resort & Spa in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., has a wildly popular clothing-optional sundeck and a whirlpool large enough for 10 pals. Two blocks from the Atlantic Ocean, the Grand spreads out over one tree-shaded city block, with a meditative path winding through tropical gardens and gurgling fountains. It’s a ’50s-style estate with 33 rooms in four pavilions ranging from a basic courtyard view to full penthouse apartments with kitchens and ocean panoramas.

Out Magazine’s travel publication has ranked the Grand’s spa among the top gay centres in the U.S., prized for its excellent treatments, its spacious, heated swimming pool, a well-equipped gym and pleasant grounds. The Grand uses many products specifically for men such as American Crew and Jack Black (no relation to the movie star) that produce shaving creams and lotions for anti-aging, body, hair and sun care. For serious skin therapy, the Grand’s Age smart facial is an effective, intensive treatment against sun damage and wrinkles using refined Dermalogica products to smooth, hydrate and firm.

“We customize every treatment to the client’s needs — gay or straight, men or women,” says the Grand’s spa director, J.D. Greene. “If someone has been over- or under-exercising, our masseurs help with physical issues like range of motion, tendinitis or sciatica. Plus, we educate our clients, teach men how to shave and women how to remove their makeup and cleanse well.”

For city travellers, the hotel that names itself in capital letters — The Out NYC (no relation to Out Magazine) — is a new, happening hub of gay life in the Hell’s Kitchen area on Manhattan’s West Side. Calling itself a “straight-friendly urban resort,” The Out — there are those caps again — has fab food, hot entertainment, a spa with baths and The Out House, a private club. Ktchn Restaurant — which has dispensed with its vowels — serves contemporary cuisine in an airy industrial-chic glass and stone space with a popular communal table for making friends. The Out’s XL nightclub, cabaret and lounge will showcase dance-party DJs Tracy Young, Paolo — who goes by one name — and Tony Moran, and Hot Mess, an outrageous music and comedy drag show, takes to the stage on Friday nights.

The Out is different — and highly sociable — in many ways. The hotel’s 105 smart, black and white rooms are spread across a former three-storey motel, an anomaly in vertical New York. And although the accommodations are deluxe, guests also have a budget choice of attractive “sleep-share quads,” with four beds to a room, each protected by a privacy curtain. The Out’s hotel guests are 70 per cent gay and 30 per cent straight, both singles and couples, and the quad rooms are mixed, for both men

and women.

The spa at The Out NYC issues single-day wellness passes for access to the hot tubs, steam room, sauna and gym. The must-have treatments for men include the Performance Power Peel Facial and Sugaring Hair Removal — everything from bikini to back to chest so you can transition from bear to baby-Beiber smoothness. Other services are personal training, private yoga, manis and pedis and spray tanning.

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