

Hot tubs in cold climes

Rachael Oakes-Ash looks at where winter adventurers can go to recover after a big day on the slopes.

THE winter mountain life can take a toll on your body and skin. Sore muscles and cracked lips are a given, while many find it difficult to sleep at altitude. Australian and New Zealand ski fields have their own unique solutions for skiers and boarders – from uber-cool day spas to hot tubs and oxygen therapy.

White Spa

Mount Hotham

Tucked away in the basement of Hotham Central sits White Spa, designed by Italian Giovanni Amborossie. The reception area mesmerises first-timers with its floor-to-ceiling glass overlooking Mount Hotham's snow-covered hills. Four treatment rooms, including a narcissistic mirrored room, are where body brushing, salt exfoliation, hot-stone massage and oxygenating facials are undertaken. The spa's Total TLC on the Run treatment takes a mere 30 minutes but we think that's just a tease. Take the spa's Unwind option – 120 minutes of foot soaking and scrub, exfoliation, hydrating body wrap and scalp massage, for \$240, then take yourself to bed. whitespahoam.com.au.

Onsen Retreat and Spa, Dinner Plain

Mount Hotham

It's all kimonos and konichiwa here. Inspired by Japanese bathing rituals, the Onsen at Dinner Plain is a shrine to clean, streamlined design. Put time aside, for once you enter these hallowed halls it will be hard to scrape your melted self off the floor. Yes, there's an onsen-esque communal bathing area. Yes, there's a private sauna in the change rooms. Yes, there are lounges for reclining on. However, there's also the four-hour Recovery Ritual, with Moor-style mud wrap, massage, foot treatment and spa cuisine. Or the Detox Ritual of seaweed body wrap, massage, aromatherapy facial and spa cuisine. No time? Less money? Soak your money worries away in the outdoor onsen. onsen.com.au.

Endota, Huski Apartments

Falls Creek

The indigenous-inspired Endota Spa opened in 2005 in the award-winning Huski apartment lodge with its snowflake architecture design. There are four treatment rooms and one double room (bring your favourite snow partner), a steam room and the endota signature treatments, including rapt, wicketty scrub and drenched. There's a hot tub on the balcony, too. endota.com.au.

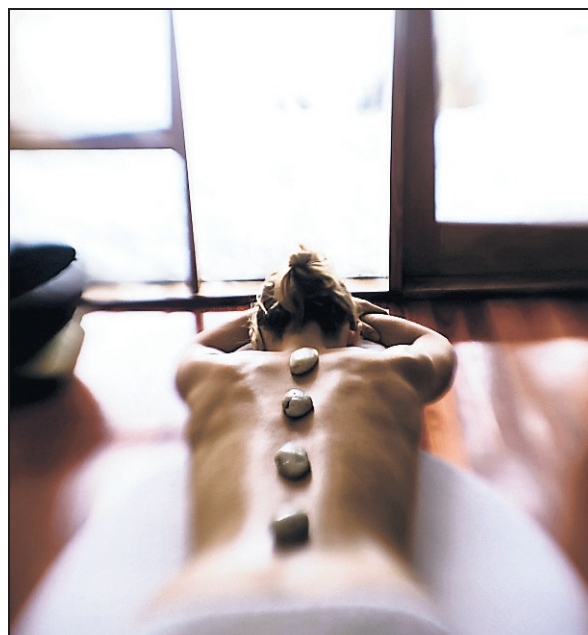
Onsen Hot Pools

Queenstown

These purpose-built, onsen-style hot pools are perched on a cliff overlooking Queenstown's Shotover River canyon. Each pool is housed in a private, cedar-lined bathing room built with a retractable picture window, so you can bathe outside if you wish. Up to four adults at a time can soak in the tub. The temperature is adjustable for those who can't stand the heat. The water may not be volcanic or thermal but it is a mix of



Cool solutions ... (clockwise from above) Onsen Hot Pools, Queenstown; Endota Spa, Falls Creek; hot stone therapy, Onsen Spa Retreat, Dinner Plain.



mountain spring water, rain water and lake water and is cleaned and energised with pure oxygen. Water is replaced throughout the day to ensure premium hygiene. A soak in one of these tubs improves circulation, helps with sleep, clears lactic acid and leads to relaxation and is priced from \$NZ46 each for the first hour. Choose the candlelight option under a night sky for an extra \$20, or the pamper pack for \$18 - it includes soft cotton towels for two. onsen.co.nz.

Mii Spa, Quay West Resort and Spa

Falls Creek

This spa sits at the base of Falls Creek's main chairlift, so you can ski in and spa out. With a sauna, steam room, indoor plunge pool and outdoor spa, Mii Spa has alpine treatments from Japan, Turkey and the Nordic regions covered. The Rubber Leg Rescue is designed for

mountain muscle meltdown and is 50 minutes of serious leg rubbing, for \$145. The Mii Mountain Revival is almost two hours of body brushing, body and scalp massage, foot wraps and spa cuisine, for \$255. A 25-minute deep tissue massage is \$90. mirvachotels.com/quay-west-resort-spa-falls-creek/mii-spa.

Breathtaker on High, Alpine Spa Retreat

Mount Buller

Enter and witness the "water experience", a communal reception-cum-atrium complete with spa, lap and bathing pools. Guests are encouraged to arrive early to make the most of a bathing ritual but bring your swimmers as the tubs are "mixed". Six treatment rooms are dedicated to LITYA Spa Care, an Australian product that utilises earth and sea minerals, indigenous medicine and massage technique. A 45-minute facial is priced from \$100;

a 90-minute sapphire sea wrap is \$200. The spa and water area are "adults only". breathtaker.com.au.

The Denman

Thredbo

Good things come in small packages, which is just as well as the Denman Hotel's Day Spa is intimate, with a mere two treatment rooms tucked away in a quiet nook. The style befits a boutique establishment known for personal service and a cosy apres bar. The spa uses Thalgo marine therapy products from France, with algae body wraps, hydrotherapy spa treatments and an underwater massage. Spa packages of two- to four hours are on the menu, though men may want to try the Snowman treatment, a 90-minute therapy that cleanses the pores then hydrates before a full body massage gets a chap ready for another day on the slopes. thedenman.com.au.

Millbrook Spa

Queenstown

Golf widows unite at this spa, built on the edge of Millbrook golf course. The owners have spent \$500,000 establishing a world-class spa in an amphitheatre-shaped valley, surrounded by the Southern Alps. One treatment room features a mangrove leaf-shaped bed, carved from a single piece of Australian arcadia cedar. Spa guests recline on the wood for a 12-shower-head water treatment; others take in the impressive mountain views from floor-to-ceiling glass windows in the manicure and pedicure room. Foot soaks, body rubs, foot mask and wrap, facial cleanse and scalp rituals are all on the menu, so give yourself at least two hours here. millbrook.co.nz.

Le Spa, Sofitel Hotel

Queenstown

The Sofitel launched the \$1 million Le Spa several years ago. The interior design is influenced by the landscape – exposed rock, engineered stone, flowing water. Expect warm, muted tones to soothe the mind and six streamlined spa suites, of which two are dedicated to couples treatments. Add a purpose-built hammam for complimentary use by all spa guests, a manicure and pedicure room and relaxation lounge and you may not want to leave. Treatments range from French to Maori-style, including the 90-minute Ataahua Beautiful Body treatment of exfoliation, body wrap (honey and geo-thermal mud), steam shower and massage, from \$NZ205. The Gentleman's Escape includes a 30-minute hammam treatment, 30-minute massage and 60-minute facial. lespaqueenstown.com.