

Ski first, spa later

Taking note of the Swiss experience, Victorian ski fields offer soothing retreats for shocked muscles, writes **Rachael Oakes-Ash**

RECREATIONAL skiers use more than 16 core muscles from the hamstrings to the glutes when burning down the piste.

You'll know the others when you wake the next day after your first day of the snow season.

Massage helps keep the muscles limber, which means less chance of injury and more chance of you actually enjoying your seven days on the snow each year.

There's nothing like sore muscles to keep you under the duvet while your mates are making hay on the powder.

The Swiss know about the soothing power of alpine spas. The Victorian ski fields have taken note with Australia's first alpine ski-in, ski-out spa retreats.

The Endota Day Spa at Falls Creek is part of the glamorous Aspen-styled HUSKI complex of boutique apartments. Opening its doors for the first time this season, Endota is a true ski-in spa destination.

Think native Australian aromatherapy and treatments designed not just for females.

"Bloke massage" is tailored specifically for the male physique using "made for man" herbs. The Billabong Footbath of lemon myrtle and native mint foot soak and massage is the perfect antidote for feet bound up tight in ski boots.

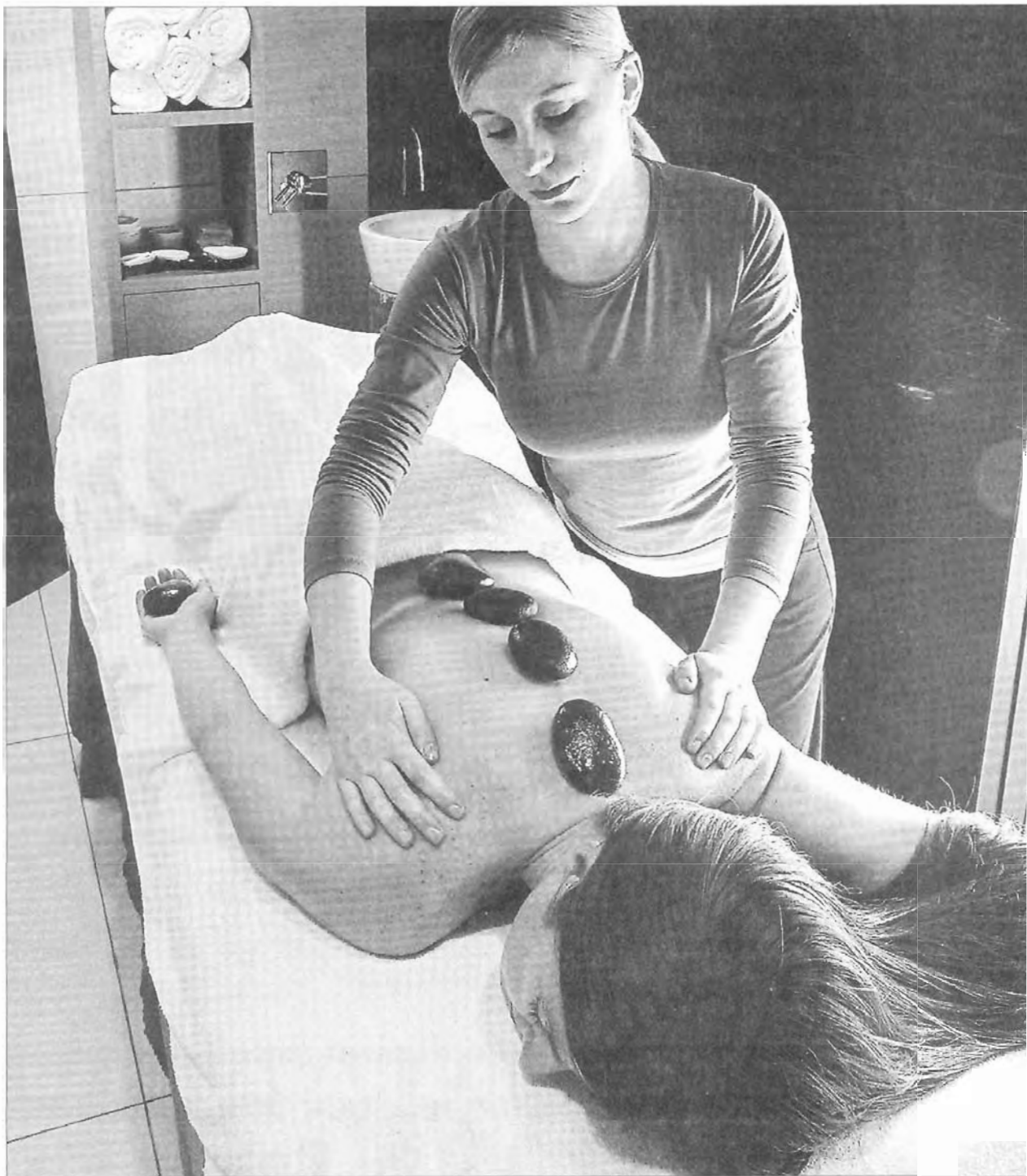
For pure blizzard-bliss the Never Never Land Treatment is 3½ hours of massage, exfoliation and Australian clay cocooning. Or choose the Witchetty Scrub to slough away dead cells.

The next-door Produce Store is the perfect post-massage pit stop for a glass of local wine.

Where: Endota Day Spa, HUSKI, 3 Sitzmark St, Falls Creek

Cost: Treatments start at \$55 for a 30-minute massage.

Bookings: Visit www.endota.com.au
Tel: (02) 5758 3846;
www.huski.com.au



MT HOTHAM has gone the holistic route with the opening of the White Mountain Day Spa this season. At a cost of \$500,000 and designed by...

MT HOTHAM has gone the holistic route with the opening of the White Mountain Day Spa this season. At a cost of \$500,000, and designed by Italian architect Giovanni Amborossie, The White Mountain Spa Retreat features floor-to-ceiling glass for ethereal views of Swindlers Valley.

The complex is owned by two local Hotham skiers, Allison McEwan and Lisa Parkinson, who understand the specific needs of ski-weary bodies.

As a result the White Mountain Day Spa concentrates on alpine-focused products and treatments.

The Pevonnia Swiss-formulated facial products for intense hydration will keep ski widows happy for hours. East blends with west in the Reiki and Guasha treatments – Reiki for healing heat and Guasha-style massage to release heat toxins in the muscles.

Try the four hands treatment for pure decadence. Two therapists massage your muscles simultaneously. Bliss.

Where: White Mountain Spa Retreat, Hotham Central, Great Alpine Rd, Mt Hotham.

Cost: One-hour massages are \$99 for hot stone, aromatherapy and the like.

Bookings: Tel: (02) 5759 3360

The spa offers a Prestige Chalet Service. Massage therapists will come to you in your chalet: \$125 for 60 minutes.

MT BULLER'S Breathtaker All-Suite Hotel and Spa Retreat features the Breathtaker on High spa and is Australia's only alpine destination spa. The multimillion-dollar spa complex was opened in 2001 and has set the standard for alpine spa in Australia.

At Breathtaker on High it's all about the water. Geisha hot tubs, jacuzzis, water treatments and a window-edged lap pool are set in exposed stone surroundings.

The heat from water and air jets helps relax muscles before massage and assists aching ski joints to unwind.

The good news is it's strictly adults only so there are no screaming children to break the bliss. Couple treatments feature double geisha hot tub treatments and double massage rooms for time out together.

Stay at the Breathtaker All Suite hotel and you can be carried to your room post-treatment.



SOFT as snow . . . massage soothes away ski-weary aches; facials keep the ski widows happy; the Breathtaker on High spa sets the standard for alpine spa bliss in Australia.

Where: Breathtaker All-Suite Hotel and Spa Retreat, Breathtaker Rd, Mt Buller

Cost: A 30-minute back and neck massage costs \$55.

Bookings: www.breathtaker.com.au
Room rates at Breathtaker All-Suite Hotel start at \$445 per night for a one-bedroom deluxe apartment during peak season.

GETTING THERE

QantasLink operates direct flights to Mt Hotham from Sydney and Melbourne from \$199 ex-Sydney and \$119 ex-Melbourne one-way. www.rex.com.au

Falls Creek is a 4½-hour drive from Melbourne or 2½ hours from Albury. QantasLink operates daily flights to Albury from Brisbane and Sydney. www.qantas.com.au

Mt Buller is a 2½-hour drive from Melbourne. Virgin Blue operates daily flights from Brisbane to Melbourne from \$99 ex-Brisbane one-way and \$79 ex-Sydney one-way. www.virginblue.com.au

Europcars offer car rental from Melbourne to drive to Falls Creek and Mt Hotham with special weekend and mid-week packages on offer. www.europcars.com.au