

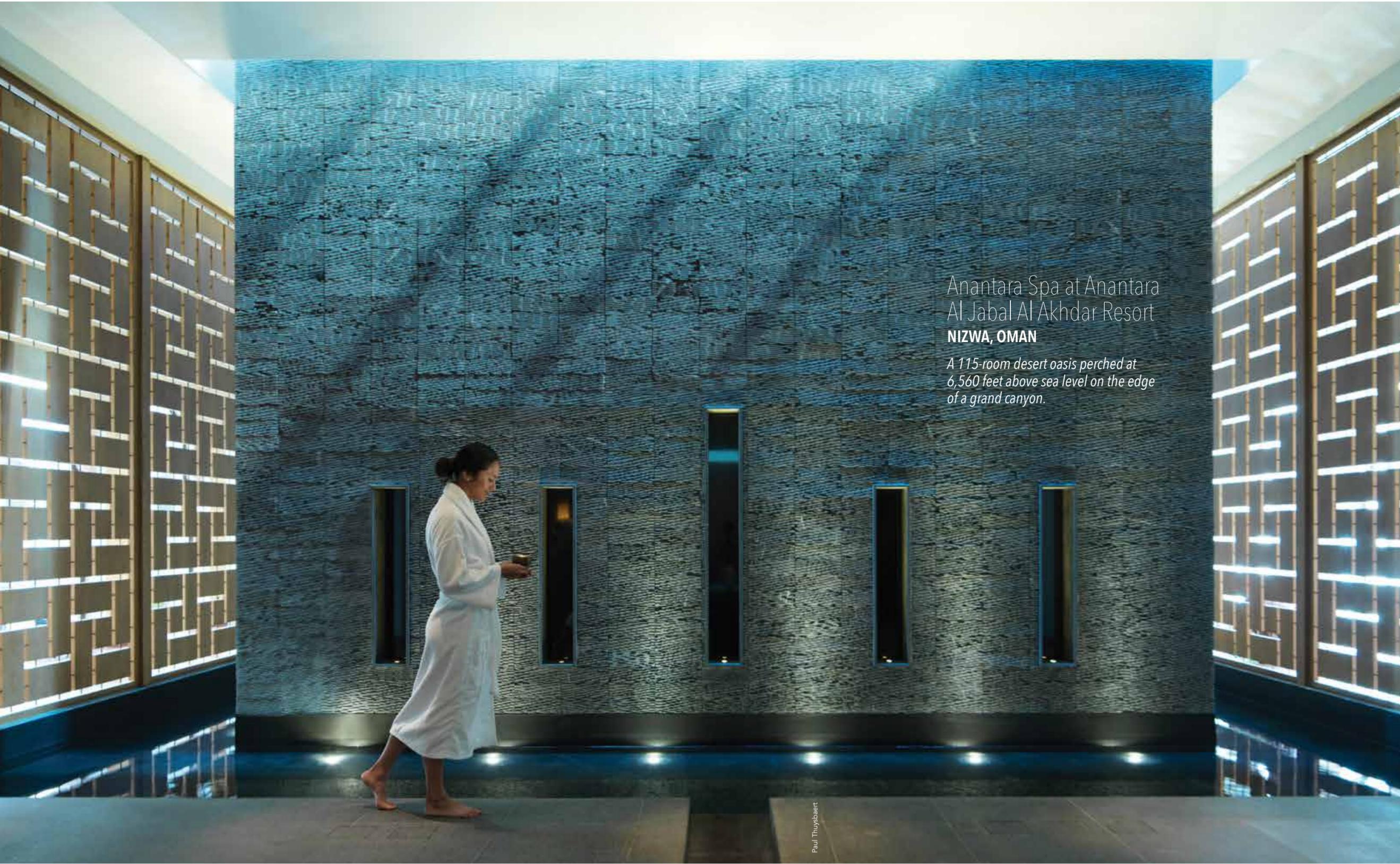
ROCK STARS

Six design-forward spas, fittingly hewn into the most extraordinary landscapes, offer more than rehab and recovery.



Paul Thuybaert

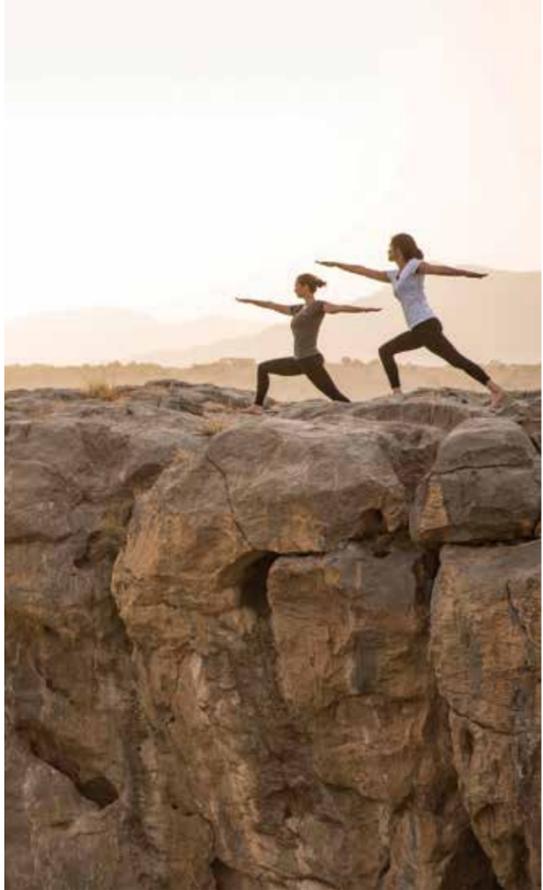
Anantara Spa at Anantara
Al Jabal Al Akhdar Resort
in Nizwa, Oman



Anantara Spa at Anantara
Al Jabal Al Akhdar Resort
NIZWA, OMAN

*A 115-room desert oasis perched at
6,560 feet above sea level on the edge
of a grand canyon.*

Paul Thuybaert



The craggy cliffs and shrub-speckled terrain of Oman's Al Hajar Mountains served as both muses and foundations for principal Lotfi Sidirahal and his French-based firm Atelier Pod when designing this exotic escape. Within the spa, transitional indoor-outdoor spaces, walls meticulously bejeweled in the very limestone rock from which the resort was constructed, and artistic stone arrangements connect visitors to their natural surroundings. To add elements of contrast and modernism, Nihaki stone from Morocco was imported for the hammam and dark granite stone for the spa floors. The most spectacular element is arguably the yoga pavilion—a polished, flat surface straddling a stunning precipice.

TREATMENT TO TRY During pomegranate harvest in September and October, opt for the 90-minute Revitalizing Pomegranate Journey: a fresh pomegranate and salt body scrub followed by a traditional Arabian massage focusing on pressure points. During February and March, try the 90-minute Rose Rescue Ritual: first a foot massage using locally grown Damask Roses and milk, then a hydration facial using rose-scented products, and finally a massage with perfumed rose oil. jabal-akhdar.anantara.com
—Paul Rubio >



Left: Celine Chhuon Photography



Six Senses Spa Zil Pasyon FÉLICITÉ ISLAND, SEYCHELLES

New private island retreat with 30 sprawling villas.

The geography of the Seychelles' inner islands reflects the last remaining landscapes of 75-million-year-old supercontinent Gondwana. Otherworldly granite boulders and multi-hued stone slabs are strewn across the archipelago blanketed in white sands, verdant jungles, and Popsicle-blue waters. In creating the spa for the Six Senses, the sole development on Félicité Island, the brand's architecture and design team alongside Richard Hywel Evans of London-based Studio RHE honored the dramatic surrounds. Among 19,000 square feet of brown, pink, and black granite boulders, five treatment suites, a reception area, a yoga pavilion, and a wet area are etched into and on top of the rocks. To reach the Ocean Villa treatment suite, first cross a hanging bridge sandwiched between towering boulders and then navigate a natural cave. The understated amalgam of glass and wood looks out to 180-degree views of the Indian Ocean. Alternatively, the Floating Villa treatment suite is cast atop a large rock and cantilevered over the ocean, and the all-glass Rock Villa boasts an all-stone outdoor shower on the edge of a cliff.

TREATMENT TO TRY Organic skincare brand Terres d'Afrique created five journeys for the spa, each exclusive to the corresponding spa villa. The Ocean Journey at the Ocean Villa combines acupressure, reflexology, aromatherapy, and muscle penetration using crystal balls and traditional handwork. sixsenses.com —P.R. >



Chablé Spa YUCATÁN, MEXICO

A 40-room retreat on 750 acres in the middle of a Mayan forest.

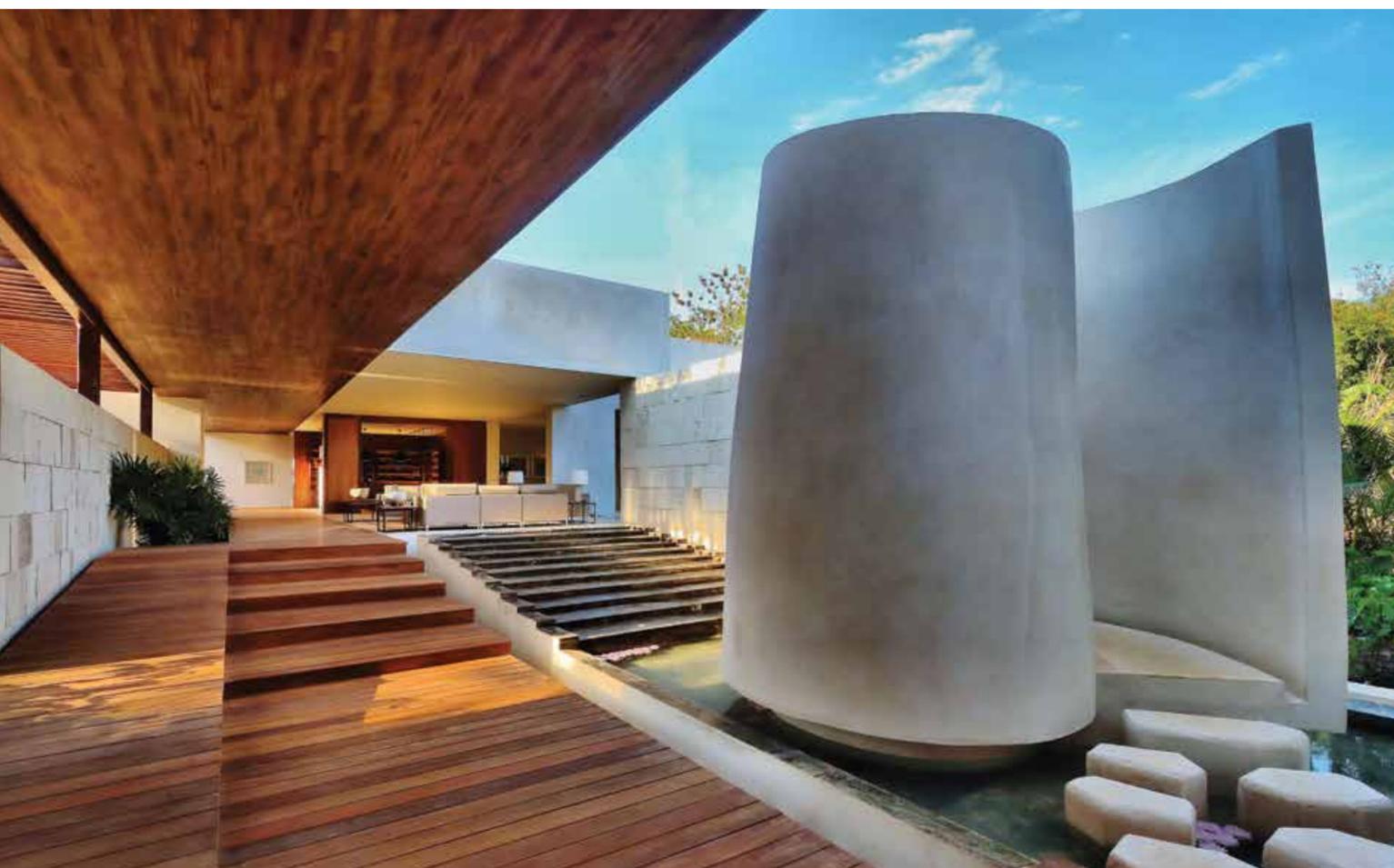


The spa here was designed around—of all things—a sinkhole. Murky and green, the spot, according to architect Jorge Borja, is the heart of the property. The collapsed cenote, one of thousands on the Yucatán Peninsula, is considered a sacred site and source of restoration for the body and soul. Mayans believed cenotes to be portals to the subconscious and afterlife, and a way to communicate with their gods. At Chablé, most of the 15 minimalist, standalone treatment rooms look out over the sacred place. “The intention of the treatment rooms was to feel like they existed before as part of the trees, or tree houses, all without tearing down a single tree,” explains Borja.

The 32,000-square-foot facility, complete with a state-of-the-art gym and hydrotherapy circuit (vapor steam room, dry sauna, salt room, Jacuzzi, and cool plunge pool), makes the most of the temperate climate, with many outdoor seating areas, secluded nooks for meditation, and a large, cement shell where guests consult the spa’s shaman.

TREATMENT TO TRY Following a consultation, spa-goers are directed to a three-hour Spa Journey to address their individual needs. The Fountain of Youth Journey begins at the water’s edge of the restorative cenote and continues in a Flotarium tank. Then a salt scrub is followed with a lymphatic drainage massage and aromatherapy ritual. Body, beauty, and ceremonial rituals can also be booked à la carte. chablesort.com —Rima Suqi

Alfredo Azar

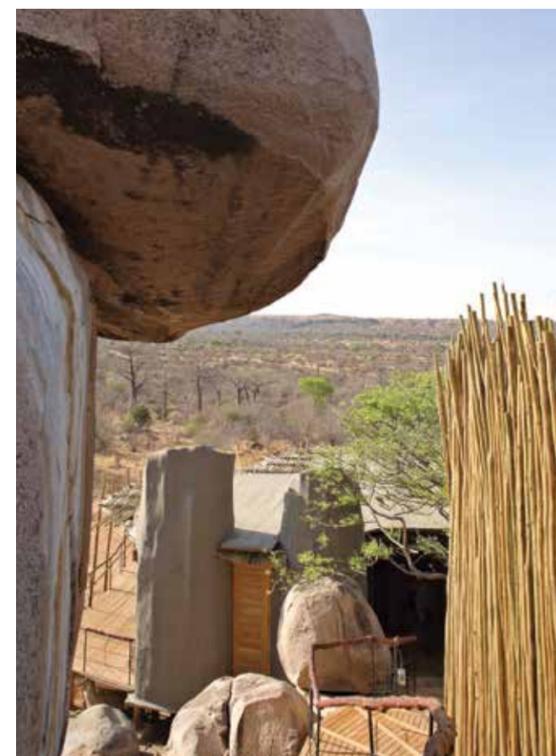


Asilia Spa at Jabali Ridge RUAHA NATIONAL PARK, TANZANIA

New safari camp hidden among gigantic boulders and elephant and lion haunts.

Tanzania’s largest national park—roughly the size of New Jersey—is the country’s least-known protected area. The park lacked a solid safari lodge to lure high-end travelers until the eight-suite Asilia Jabali Ridge opened in September 2017. Among Ruaha’s prolific wildlife and boulder-and-baobab-dotted landscapes, a striking spa is cast across the apex of a rocky outcrop and sheltered by granite boulders. Open-air treatment areas situate spa-goers among the songs of African nature as dexterous therapists lure them to a sleepy state of relaxation. A word to the wise: Sleep with one eye open—Ruaha houses one-tenth of the world’s lion population and visiting prides in excess of 20 are nothing out of the ordinary.

TREATMENT TO TRY Work out kinks from bumpy, exhilarating game drives with a 90-minute African Wood Massage. The deep-tissue treatment incorporates heated wood instruments and nourishing shea butter. asiliaafrica.com —P.R. >





The Spa at Four Seasons Resort Seychelles

MAHÉ, SEYCHELLES

Sixty-seven tree house villas, each with a pool and generous indoor/outdoor living spaces.

Built into the tiered, high-rising hillside encircling Petite Anse Bay, the layout of the Four Seasons is like a U-shaped amphitheater. Featuring the bay as the stage, tree house villas fill in the main seating area with the spa as the box seats. The spa's five glass-and-wood pavilions enjoy a prime bird's-eye view from a granite outcrop overlooking lush jungle and brilliant blue waters. In several treatment rooms, exposed granite composes the interior and exterior walls, framing the rooms themselves plus the outdoor tubs and rain showers. Interior designers from Singapore-based Hirsch Bedner Associates elevated the rock theme further by furnishing the space with pebble-clad relaxation chairs and low-lying stone tables. The extreme popularity of the spa and the greater resort has prompted the Four Seasons brand to deliver an encore: On March 1, Four Seasons Resort Seychelles at Desroches Island debuted, delivering an equally exciting paradise within the coralline beauty of the Outer Islands.

TREATMENT TO TRY The primordial coco de mer (or “coconut of the sea”) palm is endemic to two high-rising, mid-oceanic granite islands in the Seychelles, bearing fruit weighing more than 50 pounds and harboring erotic-shaped seeds recorded as the largest in the plant kingdom. Experience the legends of this plant’s healing and aphrodisiac powers through the 150-minute Coco de Mer treatment, which includes a coco de mer body scrub, body mask, and massage (with coco de mer body butter, of course). fourseasons.com —P.R. >

Ken Seet

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Eden Rock Spa
by Ligne St Barth
SAINT JEAN BAY, SAINT BARTHÉLEMY

Posh, red-roofed stronghold since the 1950s, surrounding an idyllic white-sand beach.

In the wake of Hurricane Irma in September 2017, Eden Rock will unveil its refreshed and renewed (yet familiar) self in late 2018. In early 2017 the famed resort moved beyond en suite spa treatments and debuted two proper spa suites with prime views of Saint Jean Bay. These spacious treatment areas were, in fact, transformations of ocean-view guest rooms molded into the base of the hyaloclastite volcanic rock from which Eden Rock garners its name. According to current reconstruction plans, the resort (inclusive of its spa suites) will retain its signature haute beehive aesthetic, with guest rooms and amenities etched into the grooves and crowning the outer layers of the iconic quartzite bluff. The spa will keep its exclusive partnership with prestigious local beauty brand Ligne St Barth.

TREATMENT TO TRY Escape from the island scene with the 60-minute St Barth Eden Flower therapy, a relaxation-focused massage designed exclusively for the hotel by Ligne (read: specialized massage techniques and strokes), using gardenia-infused and -scented products. oetkercollection.com—P.R. ♦



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