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Images are courtesy of The Farm, one of the few truly medical and wellness resorts in the world. Located in the Philippines. [www.thefarm.com.ph](http://www.thefarm.com.ph)

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT - THE FARM: Medical Facilities, Master Villa accommodation, Sulu accommodation. The yoga pavillion is the perfect place to strike a pose

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# the urban spa

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IMAGES COURTESY OF THE FARM [WWW.THEFARM.COM.PH](http://WWW.THEFARM.COM.PH)

As more and more people experience the wonderful benefits of spending time at Destination Spas or health retreats, there has been a growing demand for Urban Spas or Medical Spas that offer similar services as a 'top-up' so you can continue on your path of rejuvenation once your visit is over and you return home.

Anyone who has been to a Destination Spa or health retreat knows the incredible sensation of vitality and rejuvenation you feel when you leave. You want to cling on to that feeling of wellness for as long as you possibly can. However, once you're back in the real world, life has a tendency of getting in the way. You don't have a master chef serving you delicious, healthy meals three times a day, or a naturopath checking your mineral deficiencies, or a massage therapist easing the stress from your body. Instead, you have to juggle work and school pick-ups, meet deadlines, rely on your own culinary skills, and make time for you, over and above all your other commitments. This reality slowly eats away at the exuberant enthusiasm you had when you left your retreat, vowing to maintain a healthier life now that you've had a gentle push in the right direction (or in some cases, a major kick up the backside). It can eat away so much that, before you know it, you're back to being caught on the treadmill, wandering aimlessly among the myriad of health choices, while your feeling of relaxation and rejuvenation is long gone.

This has paved the way for the rise of Urban Spas or Medical Spas (Medi Spas), a hybrid between a medical clinic and a Day Spa that operates under the supervision of a medical doctor. Medi Spas provide comprehensive medical and wellness care in an environment that integrates Spa services with conventional and complementary therapies and treatments. Until now, Western medicine has failed to recognise the healing benefits of the Spa industry, but with the arrival of the Medi Spa, the two fields have converged and caused a veritable explosion, making this new trend the way of the future.

Dermatologists, plastic surgeons and dentists are jumping on the bandwagon, joining Day Spas or even expanding their own practices to offer higher level Spa services and care. Like a Day Spa, Medi Spas provide a relaxing atmosphere, complete with candles and burning oils, so even if you're having teeth pulled, the ambiance is still definitely Zen! However, a Medi Spa differs from a Day Spa in the following two ways. Since a Medi Spa houses both a medical, complementary health and >

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aesthetic staff under one roof, medical, complementary health and cosmetic treatments are offered catering for health, wellness and beauty needs. For instance, at Alkaline Spa in Sydney's Potts Point, you can have a colonic irrigation followed by a rejuvenating facial.

Depending on the available doctors, these services range anywhere from dermal filler injections to more invasive procedures such as liposuction. Although the main focus of the Medi Spa is to help you regain balance in all aspects of your health utilising Eastern philosophies, they also incorporate Western science to enhance your outcome. A Medi Spa is the perfect balance of traditional, clinical and luxury, offering anything from minor cosmetic and dental procedures to naturopathic and nutrition consultation. And of course a delicious selection of all your favourite Spa treatments too. So now you have no excuse for not continuing on your guided path to good health and wellness, as no doubt there is a Medi Spa near you that is available for a lunch-time booking!

#### PARIS MEDISPA (BEAUTY SPA CLUB INTERNATIONAL)

143-145 Sussex Street, Sydney  
[www.beautyspaclubint.com](http://www.beautyspaclubint.com)

Paris Medispa was created by husband-and-wife team Anita and Dean Morton. Anita comes from a health and beauty background, while Dean's experience lies in finance. Together they wanted to create a destination where people could come to be pampered, but also get great results and more bang for their buck. To fully benefit from her expertise in skin analysis, Anita finds her clients need to look at what they were put in their body, not just on it. To help her clients do this, Anita added naturopathic consults to her Spa offering. From hydrotherapy and energy healing to colour consults and nutrition advice, the Paris Medispa menu offers a comprehensive range of treatments, with an anti-ageing bent. Their expertise lies in skin care and body treatments, but a special mention must go to their extremely results-driven facial. 'Performance pampering' - I love it!

**Cost from \$140**  
**Time 80 minutes**

#### ENDOTA

Shop 7, Mezzanine Level, 1 Martin Place, Sydney-  
[www.endota.com.au](http://www.endota.com.au)

The first Endota Spa was opened by friends Belinda Fraser and Melanie Gleeson in 2000. These two young businesswomen decided to spread their business wings and now there are Endota Spas peppered throughout Australia. They offer a multitude of facials and skin treatments, such as microdermabrasion, photo-rejuvenation and IPL for hair removal, plus an array of body treatments for all sorts of ailments. They base their philosophy on natural health and nutrition, while

attaining emotional resilience. Check out their manifesto on their website (Endota Story, then 'In-Spa-Ration') to get a good taste of what Endota Spas are all about.

On a day when I was feeling particularly stressed, I ventured to Endota tied in a ball of knots and walked out floating on clouds! To help you switch off from the outside world and prepare yourself mentally for the treatment you are about to receive, the therapist gives you a soothing foot bath and scrub. You slowly let those racing thoughts leave your mind and replace them with... nothing! A little bit of reflexology certainly helps with this mammoth task. A 60-minute shiatsu massage takes me to another place. I'm not sure where, nor do I question the masterful ability of my therapist to hit just the right spots... I'm happy to just let go. The session finishes with the most amazing scalp massage, and my stress is replaced with clarity. This is the best medicine for anyone suffering from mental overload, culminating in stress. Take time out relieve the tension and be more productive for it.

**Cost from \$125**  
**Time 90 minutes**

#### ALKALINE

Shop 7, 91 Macleay Street, Potts Point, Sydney  
[www.alkaline.com.au](http://www.alkaline.com.au)

After spending time abroad, Monique Bolland returned to Australia wanting to change her habits and maximise her health and wellness, but she hit a stumbling block when she could only find places that offered one or two of her preferred treatments. And when she did find a place, it was either too clinical, or too alternative, or not professional enough. "I'm a real Spa junkie," admits Bolland. "I wanted there to be a place where you could get all these great things done for your health. It was as much about the experience and the aesthetics of the place as the treatments themselves." Bolland set about creating her own 'total health destination'. And so Alkaline was born. The treatments offered are all based on creating a more alkaline environment within your body. A growing weight of scientific evidence shows that ageing is brought on by a build-up of toxins in our bodies, which increases the acid levels in our systems. For optimum health, our bodies need to maintain a slightly alkaline state. Common signs of acidity are weight-gain, fatigue and ageing skin.

Truly a credit to her belief and passion, Alkaline is definitely first-class in professionalism, services and results. My visit started with a 30-minute naturopathic consult, followed by their signature AAA Facial. This is a natural, non-invasive, anti-ageing facial using Priori CoffeeBerry products, plus 20 minutes of Omnilux Revive LED light therapy and (the best bit!) a lymphatic drainage massage. I felt inspired with my new understanding of how to maintain a balanced pH, rejuvenated after my facial and totally relaxed by my massage.

**Cost \$240**  
**Time 90 minutes \***

FROM TOP: Cleansing foot bath at Endota. A sample of the nutritious raw food at The Farm. Quiet time is essential for good health, and plenty of meditation spots at The Farm.