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FIRST MIND/BODY

by Elise Maclay

FROM BOOT CAMP TO NIRVANA

Hurray for you! You've hit the StairMaster, lifted weights, counted calories, abstained and refrained. How come you don't feel as buff as you look? Could be you've let the *inner* you go to pot. If so, you're a candidate for the latest thing in health and fitness.

Make that wellness and pleasure. Those are the buzzwords at The Spa at Norwich Inn, where the goal is total renewal, the m.o. the ultimate feel-good experience.

I know because I'm just back from the spa's brand-new Healthy Pleasures program. My outer self has been soaked in Dead Sea mineral salts and patchouli, massaged with lavender oil and moisturized with mango soufflé. My inner self has been instructed and inspired to change my lifestyle from crazy-making to self-nurturing.

Healthy Pleasures is a total-immersion program quite unlike other spa packages, which deliver a quick beauty fix or a few days of R&R. More like tennis camp, Healthy Pleasures proffers group classes and individual instruction in total wellness and teaches you how to integrate what you've learned into your everyday life. Classes are small and you can come with your own group. (When we were there, a group of preteens were flitting about looking like giggling angels in white terycloth.) Private counseling tailors the fitness component to individual needs—training for a marathon, working around a bum knee.

Each day begins with an outdoor walk, followed by breakfast and classes in cardio-sculpt (a combination of traditional choreography and joint-sparing fat-burning exercise) and Mindful Movement



(a pastiche of Pilates, yoga, zen and dance). In the afternoon, there's Progressive Relaxation.

Then there's Mindful Eating. Forget diet, deprivation and denial. The spa demonstrates the pleasure principle at every meal. In addition, participants list their food preferences—lobster, fresh peaches, gelato—so chef Daniel Chong-Jimenez can design individual food plans to take home. Gustatory highlights include afternoon tea, a wine tasting, and a totally silent dinner with a guided meditation comparing sensory experiences ranging from a single raisin to sinfully rich molten chocolate cake.

We left reluctantly. None of that getting-out-of-boot-camp feeling. We weren't famished. Our muscles didn't hurt. But we did feel relaxed and confident. We could do it—keep fit, eat right, take on the world. And because two beauty treatments a day are included in the program, our fingers and toes twinkled with passion-pink polish. Go for the burn? How yesterday! *For information, call 800/ASK4SPA.*