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Modern Times

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“I never knew pondlife was so exciting”
Camilla Cavendish

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From The Sunday Times

March 30, 2008

Get yourself a uterus lift at Ushvani day spa in London

Helen Brown: Vanity case

Some so-called “spas” can be a serious disappointment. The term is overused and abused to such an extent that many salons with a mere couple of treatment rooms claim to have spa status. I often struggle to recommend a day spa to friends, simply because so few have the adequate wet facilities to keep you happily relaxed (rather than bored stiff) for several hours.

When you do find a spa that ticks all the boxes, its rarity makes it all the more rewarding. Then there is the odd one that offers something so unusual, you don't know whether to laugh or to be scared. I was halfway through my Balinese massage at Ushvani, the latest day spa to open its doors in London and a seriously high-end affair, when the therapist told me she was going to perform a “pelvic-floor lift”. I almost leapt off the bed, wondering if I had inadvertently signed up for some new type of cosmetic surgery. As it turned out, it is an authentic southeast Asian massage technique that simply involves brisk upward strokes on the lower abdomen. It is said to be performed once a day for 40 days after a woman has had a baby to help tighten the pelvic-floor muscles. Apparently, mine weren't too bad to start with (due to the fact that I hadn't just given birth, I suppose), but it's definitely preferable to routine squeezing exercises or a relentless Pilates schedule.

Plus, more than the aspirational address or the specially commissioned panelling carved with hibiscus flowers, it convinced me that this is a day spa to be reckoned with. True, the allure is partly down to the range of facilities – you can limber up under the vitality pool's water jets or sweat it out in the steam room – and the carefully thought-out touches, such as MP3 docks, so you can be spared the whale music. What really makes a great spa, however, are deft therapists who offer that little bit extra.

Ushvani, 1 Cadogan Gardens, SW3; 020 7730 2888

Lust of the week

Is it a lipstick? Is it a lip gloss? Actually, it's a bit of both. Lipstick Queen Oxymoron has the velvet consistency of a lipstick, but you can swirl your finger in the pot and smear it on your lips in the same haphazard way as you would when applying gloss. No mirror necessary.

Lipstick Queen Oxymoron matt gloss, £18; www.spacenk.co.uk

Try 3: blemish correctors

Unlike the skin-drying preparations of the past, today's spot treatments work gently to soothe irritation and blitz bacteria. Keep one of these at the ready.

Dr Sebagh Breakout Spot-On, £35, from Selfridges

A cream that soothes angry breakouts and contains zinc to keep bacteria at bay.

Korres Cinnamon & Thyme Gel, £7; 020 7581 6455

Its instant brightening effect makes affected areas appear clearer.

Neal's Yard Mahonia Clear Skin Gel, £12

This organic gel seems to seal spots to stop them getting worse.

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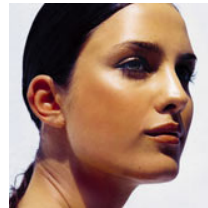
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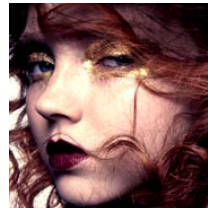
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VANITY CASE



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