

# Healing

## *lifestyles & spas*

magazine

Featuring: Ste. Anne's Country Inn & Spa

## *Coast to Coast Wellness*

### *Memoir of a Spa Trip across Canada* By Bess Hochstein

Among the lessons learned with every spa visit is the joy of slowing down. Most of us are trapped on a treadmill of stress; just stepping out of our busy days and into the sanctuary of a spa reminds us to breathe deeply and enjoy the moment—to be taken care of, instead of being the caretaker.

IN MANY WAYS, SLOWING ONE'S LIFE DOWN IS SIMILAR TO TRAIN TRAVEL. IT MAY BE FASTER TO FLY, BUT IT'S ALWAYS A HECTIC TRIP, MORE FOCUSED ON THE DESTINATION THAN THE JOURNEY. And while car trips also bring the landscape back to human scale, only the passengers can truly appreciate it; the driver must remain focused on the driving. Train travel, by contrast, is all about the journey; all parties on the voyage can fully share the experience, relaxing and taking in the peacefully passing scenery, together.

Combining the pleasures of train travel with stops at exceptional spas along the way was the idea behind my recent cross-Canada trek by train. My husband Kipp and I began our rail journey on VIA Rail Canada in the transitional season of spring. We set out from the west coast in the damp chill of early spring, still shaking off the effects of a long New England winter. Nearly three weeks later we had passed through six provinces, visited eight spas, and covered thousands of miles of landscape—ending our train trek re-energized and glowing in the sunshine of a summery day.

During the ride to Ontario, prairies gave way to terrain typical of the Canadian Shield—a rolling rocky landscape punctuated with rivers, lakes and pine forests. We enjoyed our triple bedroom, but still spent most of the trip in the Park car, taking in the ever-changing view.

Upon arrival the next evening at *The Canadian's* terminus, we were whisked off to The Old Mill Inn on the Humber River, one of Toronto's most popular gathering spots for nearly a century and an outpost of English elegance. As couples danced to live music, we enjoyed a spectacular gourmet vegan meal, then retired to our spacious suite. Too tired to bathe in the invitingly large jetted tub, we fell into a deep sleep in the embrace of our king-sized bed with its impossibly soft, fresh-smelling sheets. Apparently our good night's sleep was not unique; the hotel's bedding is so popular with guests that everything from the sheets to the mattresses is for sale. The next day we enjoyed the hotel's courtyard gar-

dens, taking in the elegant Tudor architecture, before I headed to the spa for a hydrating Old Mill Soufflé Body Wrap featuring locally produced Ssense Presents' Milk and Honey potions. All too soon we had to rush back to the station to head to Cobourg aboard a strikingly modern train, a sharp contrast to the retro cars of *The Canadian*.

Set on 570 acres in the rolling Haldimand Hills, **Ste. Anne's Country Inn & Spa** is a bucolic retreat, with fairy-tale stone buildings and genteel, inviting décor featuring floral fabrics and welcoming, overstuffed furniture. Our gracious suite in the Main Inn featured a French balcony with a gorgeous view, several sitting areas—including one near a gas fireplace—and a large bathroom with double whirlpool tub. The suite was so inviting that we could have spent all our time there, but the glorious landscape, the outdoor whirlpool, cold plunge, and lap pool, and, of course, the Aveda spa beckoned.

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