



PURE BLISS

ENJOY THE SPA EXPERIENCE AT THE NEWLY REVAMPED HUSTYNS NEAR WADEBRIDGE

Words by **Hayley Lawrence**, photographs courtesy of **Club La Costa**

With my wedding fast approaching and a pile of deadlines eating away at my sanity, it was the perfect time to leave the chaos behind and slink off to a luxury spa retreat.

And so it was that I found myself – with my stressed out fiancé in tow – heading for the sanctuary of Hustyns, where the newly revamped spa facilities promised to help us re-find some inner Zen. We'd booked in for a full 24 hours to make the most of the experience with an overnight stay in plush surroundings, but whether you've got a couple of hours, a day, or a weekend to spare, this is a place that promises to soothe, relax and rejuvenate.

The Camel Estuary winked behind us as we wound along narrow lanes, and our pressure gauges were already falling by the time we reached our destination. Squirreled away in a densely wooded valley, Hustyns is surrounded by lush

countryside that stretches towards the rolling vistas of Bodmin Moor.

And when we were greeted by an exotic indoor waterfall, a roaring fire and a glass of champagne, it was like finding a paradise far, far removed from our everyday rollercoaster. Dumping our bags in our very stylish room, it was tempting to flop onto the massive bed and just catch up on sleep, but instead we found ourselves in the hotel lounge where we sunk into sumptuous leather couches with bubbles in hand.

Standing on a 90-acre estate of Cornish woodland and gardens, the spa is part of a hotel and woodland lodges (available on a time-share basis only). Decked out in the style of a country manor house, the interior boasts a traditional opulence fused with contemporary flair.

Extensive facilities include a brasserie, a jazz restaurant, two bars, a fitness suite and running track, an indoor pool →



We led our relaxed selves into the open air of the immaculate gardens

and, of course, the Elemis spa. Having been taken over by Club La Costa last summer, the re-vamped spa is just one of the initiatives set to welcome local guests alongside visitors from further afield. And there's certainly enough space to invite a more than the number of heads than the quota of rooms of allows. In fact, out of 120-odd guests checked in, I encountered barely a soul outside of the dining areas.

Having arrived on a Friday night, the jazz band and pianist were in full swing in the fine-dining restaurant, where a two-tier semi-circle of dining tables looked in towards the musical extravaganza on stage, and out towards the moon-lit countryside. Having donned our glad-rags we were transported into the decadent atmosphere of the 1920s, supping cocktails amidst the rich red velour, marble pillars and dark wood panelling of the jazz bar, before being seated to the backdrop of the music for a fine dining experience.

Our bellies filled with fresh venison, local scallops and Bailey's cheesecake, we watched the stars from our private balcony and fell into bed completely content. And when the birdsong eventually broke my deep, deep sleep, my only gripe about waking up was having to get out of such a

comfy bed for breakfast – even when breakfast turned out to be fresh poached eggs and Fowey smoked salmon that proved to be well worth getting up for.

For those of you that don't book in for the overnight stay, the experience starts here. Choose a half- or full-day spa treatment package and the hotel's facilities are all yours to make the most of. A dip in the balmy waters of the indoor pool is a good way to begin your rejuvenation programme.

A few laps, a sauna, spa bath and power-shower later, I padded out to meet Julia, a brave masseuse who undertook the challenge of pummelling away the rest of my stress with a deep-tissue massage. Following a maze of passageways, the zesty aroma of oils and lotions grew more and more potent as we reached an even more tranquil corner of the resort that houses the spa.

Whilst I reclined in the contemporary chill-out lounge, bedecked with loungers, waffle towels and fresh flowers, Julia spent some time finding out what sort of treatments I wanted and how I wanted to feel after the experience. "Relaxed and invigorated," I requested, as my body and mind were lulled into serenity by the soft dolphin music.

PREVIOUS PAGES: HUSTYNS' INDOOR POOL; INDOOR AND OUTDOOR VIEWS AT HUSTYNS **ABOVE:** AN EXOTIC WATER FEATURE IN THE GARDEN **OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE:** THE JAZZ BAR; A GARDEN VIEW

You can choose from a whole menu of Elemis spa treatments including body wraps, facials and massages, from which I picked the Detox & Unwind half-day package – a deep tissue massage and an advanced facial. "We tailor every massage according to the client", Julia assured me, "and with a unique range of luxury spa treatments, we are striving to create a personal spa experience with a difference". By the time I was directed into one of the treatment rooms and laid out on the massage table, I was utterly relaxed, and confident that Julia was in possession of the magic wand my limbs and cluttered mind were crying out for.

Admittedly I'm a bit of spa junkie (when time and money allow) so I can tell a good massage from an oily rub down, and what I experienced under the hands of Julia was unquestionably in the former category. Warm flannels cleansed my feet, a scrubbing brush exfoliated any dead cells from my limbs and Julia's expert fingers, knuckles and elbows weeded the tension from every nook and cranny.

I'm not the sort to have a facial, but with a dry and grey complexion that needed sprucing up before I walk the aisle, I thought if anything could make me glow it would be the Elemis expertise. Sure enough, the advanced facial left my skin zingy, fresh and soft as a baby's bottom – if a little pink from the boosted blood flow.

What with spas no longer being exclusive female territory, my fiancé wasn't shy to sample a massage (his bravery fell



short of a facial), and after a deep tissue pummelling he came away a converted spa addict. A perfect result, because I can safely book us into a spa retreat on the honeymoon, as payback for all the boyish outdoors activity he'll no doubt have lined up!

The sunshine beaming like my new complexion, we led our relaxed selves into the open air of the immaculate gardens, where an army of gardeners keep a bedazzling array of hardy exotics, native shrubs and fruit orchards.

Here you can identify most of the vegetables found on the dinner table, and come summer the fruit cages showcase the likes of strawberries, raspberries, loganberries and rhubarb. Salad is plucked fresh from the herb and flower garden, where you will also find edible flowers and a cornucopia of fragrances used in cooking.

From the koi carp pool and the duck pond, to the deer park, the wonders of the gardens are remote and romantic, and if you want to do something more energetic, there are tennis courts, horses, a croquet lawn and a running track.


With the afternoon wandering away a beat faster than our sedated personal metronomes and our experience coming to a close, we certainly didn't want to turn our hands to anything more active than a final feast of the good food and wine served in the brasserie. Even if you're just here for a few hours, take the time to stop for a bite to eat, in order to sample the cuisine and savour the surroundings.

The inability to choose from the mouth-watering →



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selection of dishes led us to the Cornish Tapas platter, and we found ourselves tucking into a generous portion of duck, brie, smoked trout, pate and ham. The St Ives crab cakes with mango chutney were also too tempting to overlook, so we shared a plâté and toasted our slightly rounder, calmer selves over a glass of bubbly.

In less than 24 hours we had reverted back to the more familiar, rosy, chilled-out couple that bore no resemblance to the frazzled duo that had arrived weighed down by the baggage of a busy life. Reluctant to leave our haven too soon, we packed up and spent the last of the lazy afternoon exploring the string of golden bays and dramatic, wave-lashed cliffs that awaited just a short drive away. Where surfers ride the Atlantic rollers, golfers take in coastal views from world-class courses and visitors browse the chic boutiques of Padstow, we wandered, hand-in-hand, along the beautiful coastline. So close to home, yet so far away from the hustle and bustle of our current lives. And thanks to the mind and body cleansing spa experience, it was pure bliss. 



MORE INFORMATION

- ▶ Hustyns Luxury Country Hotel & Spa, St Breock Downs, Wadebridge, Cornwall, PL27 7LG
Tel. 01208 893700 www.hustyns.com
- ▶ Spa treatments:
Day packages from £170 / Half days from £55
A range of massages and treatments from £15
- ▶ Overnight stays:
Double rooms from £180 per night (B&B)

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: HUSTYNS IS A STONE'S THROW AWAY FROM THE DRAMATIC COASTLINE OF NORTH CORNWALL, AND THE FOODIE HAVEN OF PADSTOW; AN AERIAL VIEW OF THE HUSTYNS COMPLEX