



PEAK
CONDITION
*Villa Stéphanie
sits in the foothills
of the Black Forest*



The spa's plunge pool

ON THE MENU

Lomi Lomi Hawaiian
massage, £234 for 80 mins

Sisleÿa Global anti-ageing
facial, £251 for 80 mins

Aqua Organic detoxifying
treatment, £180 for 90 mins



*Natalie gets cosy with
Kléopatre, Brenners Park's
resident Burmese cat*

Black Forest break

**At Villa Stéphanie in
Baden-Baden, author
Natalie Livingstone finds
herself in detox heaven**

VILLA STÉPHANIE IS THE most glamorous *grande dame* of spas, set on the edge of the Black Forest in Baden-Baden, Queen Victoria's beloved Bavarian holiday spot. The spa sits within the opulent society hotel Brenners Park, which through the centuries has welcomed a series of high-profile guests, including Fyodor Dostoevsky and Barack Obama.

Like them, from the moment I arrived, I was enveloped in the retreat's warm, heavenly scented embrace – albeit, in my case, a lean, gluten- and lactose-free embrace. Villa Stéphanie is a high-tech medispas with 15 digital-detox

suites, providing every service exacting guests could ask for.

In the connecting mansion, Haus Julius, there's an array of medical treatments on offer, from traditional Chinese medicine to ultra-modern dental surgery. (I just about resisted the urge to come home with a set of gleaming veneers, which would have been ready for me by the time I checked out of the spa.)

Instead, I got with the health programme: there are myriad to choose between, from immunity-boosting regimes to weight-loss regimens. What's more, the food is delicious, dare I say decadent: lobster one evening in the serene, tasteful salon, and miraculously, the Michelin-starred kitchen even manages to make cabbage soup seem appealing. Alcohol is off limits, but coffee is available on demand, so there's no fear of

getting the caffeine-withdrawal headaches I've come to associate with health retreats.

This is the perfect place for those who wish to unwind without the deprivation *de rigueur* in many modish medispas. Villa Stéphanie covers 5,000 square metres and is equipped with a pool, gym and hammam. During my massage, healing hands doused me in warm vanilla oil that smelled good enough to drink. Book in advance with legendary therapist Othman Challouf, whose signature treatment – a fusion of deep-tissue, shiatsu and Thai massage – is life-changing. I'm already dreaming of another pilgrimage to this wellness wonder.

Healing Holidays can arrange a seven-night Detox programme, from £4,119pp, including full-board accommodation, flights and transfers; healingholidays.com

Vanity case



1 Apple Watch Hermès with Stainless-Steel Case, £1,299, by **APPLE**. 2 Triple S Trainers, £650, by **BALENCIAGA**. 3 Self-Tanning Drops, £35, by **DR SEBAGH**. 4 Coco Mademoiselle L'Eau Privée 100ml, £95, by **CHANEL**. 5 Acetate sunglasses, £280, by **GUCCI**. 6 Mon Tresor bucket bag, £1,450, by **FENDI**. 7 Capture Totale Firming and Wrinkle-Correcting Cream, £79, by **DIOR**