



## Spa review: Kurhotel Skodsborg, Copenhagen

Healthista Expert  
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If you're looking for for a spa break with the option of being pushed outside your comfort zone, then the recently relaunched [Kurhotel Skodsborg](http://skodsborg.dk/en/) (<http://skodsborg.dk/en/>) is **The One**, says Emma Whitehair

Brace yourself for a dip in the Baltic, or you can simply relax in the brand new architectural spa that even a seasoned spa habitué will find exceptional – welcome to the newly relaunched Kurhotel Skodsborg, Copenhagen, Denmark.

History

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A 20 minute drive from central Copenhagen, Kurhotel Skodsborg is situated between a nature reserve and the ocean, both of which are utilised as a big part of the wellbeing programmes here. The deco-esque clinical exterior architecture of the building nods to its previous incarnation as a sanatorium, founded in 1898 by Dr. Carl Ottosen. One of the pioneers of light therapy and protegee of Dr Kellogg (of Cornflake fame), Ottosen was acclaimed for his expertise on physiotherapy and for preventive approaches to health. And his philosophies of light, air, water, nutrition, exercise and rest for health are still as evident at the hotel today.



The architecture of the building nods to its previous incarnation as a sanatorium.

The heritage of Kurhotel Skodsborg does not stop here though. The estate was previously acquired by the King of Denmark in the 1800s and The King's Hall has been restored according to original drawings. Now known as Villa Rex, the kitchen was the setting for my group's Hell's Kitchen style cooking school with (my new fitspo) Thomas Rode.

### The functional lifestyle mentor

Former Michelin-starred chef, now all round 'functional lifestyle mentor' Thomas Rode has written a book and appeared on TV as an authority on Paleo. If you're comfortable around a chef's temperament – then book in for a group hands on cooking session where you can chop cook and chat – preparing a gourmet paleo lunch, while picking Thomas' brains about all things health and fitness.

My group learnt that it's the spa's mission to prioritise keeping the staff healthy. And Thomas is a hellbent on ensuring the staff are the "The Nordics fittest hotel team", leading the programme with punishing Water CrossFit sessions and the like.

### Fitness and water Crossfit

This is not your usual relaxing spa retreat, as in true Nordic style – fitness is top of the agenda. With over 130 exercise classes a week, including 37 yoga/meditation classes. Kurhotel Skodsborg is an officially accredited CrossFit Center and so when in Rome...one must try the Water CrossFit. After a little wrestling I got into the provided wetsuit to meet our trainer Thomas down by the jetty. Best suited to confident swimmers and those with a good level of fitness, we were taken through a series of press ups, squats, sit ups and laps in the rough Baltic Sea, waves crashing over our heads.

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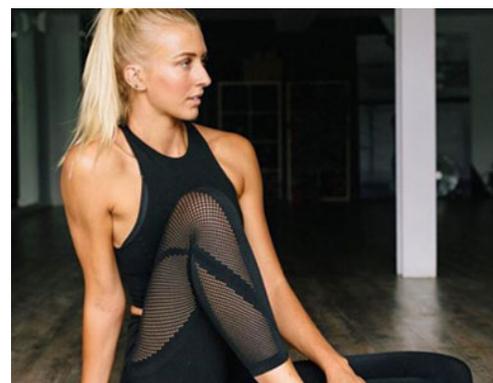
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Water CrossFit is a must, if you can handle it, when visiting the Kurhotel Skodsborg.

For those wanting a more gentle taste of the great outdoors, you can rent the hotel's bicycles for a pleasant ride to the local castle through the Dyrehaven UNESCO heritage site.

## The spa, saunas & baltic bathing

With 16 different cooling and warming experiences, including a 100 m2 hydrosapa with grottos and massage showers, outdoor jacuzzi, infrared sauna, salt cave, Rasul and a 21 m swimming pool – I wasn't surprised to learn that the spa has 1,800 local members who regularly take advantage of the facilities.

My personal highlight is the signature SaunaGus treatment – the ultimate baptism of fire into the Nordic wellbeing culture. Conducted in small groups in a sauna and led by a 'Mist Master' – ours a stunning Dane named Tina. Pure aromatherapy oils infuse the air and before steam is swung around in the sauna in the form of a searing heat from a goosewing like flap of a towel. The almost unbearable heat only manageable due to our Mistress' calming coach like encouragement. Using mindfulness and breathing techniques and telling us 'only one more minute' (when it was actually three), Tina pushed our physical and mental limits to keep us calmly seated in the sauna for 20 mins (a personal record). We were then led to the picturesque private jetty for a dip in the Baltic – and whoa, there's definitely something in this cold water immersion malarky. Once I got out, heart racing from the extremes in temperature, I felt high as a kite. Invigorated, and so alive. Wrapped in our fluffy white robes we were then happily to be led back to the hot sauna, this time distracted with music and menthol crystals so we managed another 25 mins. And the final step – a dunk in a cold plunge pool, left me with tingles and a rosy glow that lasted for a few days.

## Dining

Most of the produce at Kurhotel Skodsborg is locally sourced and with three restaurants – there's plenty to choose from.

**The Lobby** – serves light dishes such as the palæo "smørrebrød" using delicious rich nutty seeded bread to create open sandwiches topped with the likes of avocado and crisp and flavoursome chicken skin. The de-age, de-stress and de-tox health juices here are also a highlight. **The Brasserie** is the best option for informal dining, and breakfast is also served here, which is mostly uber healthy including delicious pots of 'Krudtugle' porridge, with spelt, rosehip and nuttle and beetroot juice with a kick of chilli and ginger. While The Restaurant by Kroun is for those who enjoy the lengthy



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multiple-course gourmet dinner experience. Only recently opened, **The Restaurant by Kroun** it's already considered one of Denmark's Top restaurants and has been nominated for a Danish food guide award.



The Lobby serves palæo "smørrebrød", open sandwiches of seeded bread topped with avocado and crispy chicken skin.

**Note for those (like me), choosing not to drink** – if you too feel a lack of attention when you don't wish to sink a glass of carefully matched vino for each course. Slowly watching your fellow diners get more sozzled as the hours pass, then **The Restaurant by Kroun** may be the one to restore your interest in sober dining. This is the first time I have experienced such consideration given to the non-alcoholic offering, yet it does not seem to be promoted here. So do ask when you book. With a completely different drink matched to each course, and not just sugary mocktails, it's a wonderful complement to each dish. For example scallops were paired with a dill and lemon sour, made with egg whites. The turbot with mushroom tea. And duck with a marvellously rich beetroot, cherry and almond oil juice, with star anise, that knocked the socks off most red wines for flavour. And I don't want to spoil the surprise of how delightfully presented the tea served at the end of meal is, but it's definitely worth waiting for.

## Star rating and the clinic

I'm baffled as to why Kurhotel Skodsborg is a four star hotel. The attention to detail alone seems easily worthy of 5. Just a couple of little unexpected discoveries including rubber totes in the rooms for taking your bits to the spa, and big Karmameju product dispensers, rather than those wasteful miniatures. See, they're thoughtful here.

The ideal destination to bring out your inner viking and provide a health-giving boost, or a tag on trip to a city break in Copenhagen. Also worth bearing in mind is that there's a separate wing of the building which is a medical centre. With everything from a hair loss to dental clinic, offering all kinds of medical and cosmetic procedures – including plastic surgery. Allowing patients to use the spa for further convalescence, physio etc. before returning home. Looking, errr...especially rejuvenated.

A double room at [Kurhotel Skodsborg](http://skodsborg.dk/en/) (<http://skodsborg.dk/en/>), costs from £167 per night (based on two sharing, including breakfast and full access to the spa).

A reboot spa retreat (3 days/2 nights) start from £660 per person (excl flights). There is a de-age, de-stress or de-tox package available and as an example, de-tox includes:

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For more information call +4545585800 or email [info@skodsborg.dk](mailto:info@skodsborg.dk)

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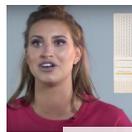
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