



The view from Grand Resort Bad Ragaz; healing waters of a nearby gorge

SPA SPECIAL

RESTORE, REVIVE, REPAIR

From the physical aches and pains to the emotional ones, there is a place that can make you whole again



The spa is the height of modern luxe

offering everything from pedicures to injectables, as well as a private suite, where my wife and I enjoy an outstanding aromatherapy massage. And as relaxation in all its forms (as well as medical attention) is the order of the day at Ragaz, we're treated to a tour of the local vineyard (complete with tasting, of course). By the time I visit the medical centre on day two, I'm feeling totally serene. Senior consultant Dr Sieber examines my knee and reveals what nobody in the UK has previously put their finger on – that the cause of my knee pain is probably a compromised calf

muscle. He recommends an MRI scan once back home, and I'm immediately referred to the on-site physio who shows me some exercises to do in the meantime, as

well as how to support my calf with stretchy Kinesiology tape when the issue flares up. These revelations alone made the weekend worth the trip. All without a grain of sand in sight. *MERRICK CASSANOVA*

Home remedies

Your senses always tell you what you need. If you can, choose between aromatherapy bath and body oils by smelling them blind



Rooms come with state-of-the-art beds and a private sauna, below

experienced. Bad Ragaz has enjoyed a reputation as a destination for revitalisation since warm, healing waters were discovered in a nearby gorge. This water now runs through the resort itself – if you hear the hotel staff proudly referring to their "blue gold", this is what they mean.

My pristine white, mountain-view room is the epitome of modern luxury. Everything is controlled by the push of a button, including a whirlpool bath with mood lighting and a state-of-the-art mattress that can be inflated to suit my exact needs. It also benefits from its own private sauna, just big enough for two (I now need one of these permanently in my life). There's also a huge spa,

propping up a beach bar. So Grand Resort Bad Ragaz, one of Europe's leading wellbeing and medical health centres, could be the place for me.

My train journey to the foot of the Alps reveals mirror-clear lakes, azure skies and the faintest hint of winter snow in the distance. Cowbells tinkle on the wind and the air is the cleanest my lungs have ever

Grand Resort Bad Ragaz, SWITZERLAND

BEST FOR PHYSICAL PAIN AND INJURIES



"WE'RE SENDING YOU TO SWITZERLAND." I'll

be honest, it wasn't what I had in mind when Red's beauty director had offered to book me in for a long weekend of R&R. Given the choice, I'd be soaking up the rays on a beach somewhere, book in one hand, something ice cold in the other. That said, I do have a long-standing knee complaint that's not going to be solved by

What to pack

Rituals Winter Protection Face & Lips SPF 30, £12.50



Pyjamas, £385, Morpho + Luna

Bikini top and bottoms, £17 each, COS



MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: JUAN WELTERS/TRUNK ARCHIVE

The Bridge, FRANCE

BEST FOR EMOTIONAL RESCUE



ARRIVING AT A CONVERTED BARN DEEP IN THE FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE, I'm greeted by

a perfect rainbow.

Wood burner, cosy chairs and woollen blankets, too – could there be a better setting for any retreat? I'm here with nine others to make some serious changes. Juggling marital life, three young sons and work had left me feeling overwhelmed. Counselling and self-help literature had already taught me I set the bar too high for myself and my family, and that I am controlling, anxious and lacking in confidence – but it hadn't helped me to change anything. At The Bridge, I'll learn to love my true self – or so say the founders of this retreat, Donna Lancaster and Gabi Krueger, who are two of the wisest, most empathetic women I've ever met.

For the next five days, we are guided – as a group – through music and dance rituals, written work, ceremonies and meditation. Reading materials are confiscated on arrival so nothing will distract us from our emotions, and we're discouraged from vigorous exercise for the same reason. Sharing intimate details with people I've just met is easier than I thought, as our stories are so heartfelt. In fact, it's incredibly powerful to witness such raw emotion, and I realise being heard without judgement is the deepest level



Communal areas are cosy and inviting

TRIP NOTES

From £2,150 for a five-day retreat, including full board, all tuition and pre- and post-retreat support: Thebridge.events. British Airways flies from London Gatwick to Bordeaux, from £39 each way

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Healing Holidays offers a four-night stay from £2,099 per person sharing, including flights, transfers, accommodation, daily breakfast and three-day Therapeutic Relaxation programme (bespoke programmes can also be arranged); Healingholidays.co.uk

Kelly, left, was guided through music and dance rituals at converted barn retreat, The Bridge

of empathy we can give and receive. I also learn how healing music and movement can be. Shaking and stomping brings suppressed emotions to the surface – something I'll use at home with the boys.

Home remedies

Help blocked feelings flow by shutting the curtains, cranking up your music and dancing with your whole being

The work around loss is the hardest bit. My dad took his own life 13 years ago, and although I thought I'd grieved, I realise I've denied any feelings of anger, so haven't fully let go. We also talk

about unmet needs from childhood, and I discover much of what I expect from my husband are things I could give to myself. By the end of the week I can feel resentments slipping away, and I leave The Bridge ready to embrace being perfectly imperfect. In the real world, this is harder than I'd like, but as Donna and Gabi said, self-development is a lifetime's work as well as a daily practice. I now have the courage

to ask for help and receive it, along with a desire to love with my whole heart. I know this will positively impact all my relationships, and for that I'm truly grateful. *KELLY COWIN* »

What to pack

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Journ £20 Kikki

Neom Organics

Nourish, Breathe & Sle Hand Balm, £

Eye mask, £6: Olivia Von Hal

To read more on Kelly's experience at The Bridge, visit REDONLINE.CO.UK

BEAU