

Complé Nast Traveler

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Healing Holidays

THE SPA GUIDE 2020

THE BEST HOLISTIC HIDEOUTS, MEDI CLINICS, YOGA RETREATS AND DETOXES FROM ICELAND TO INDIA



NEW

ROYAL CHAMPAGNE HOTEL

CHAMPILLON, FRANCE

ELEGANT COUNTRY ADDRESS FOR A GROWN-UP RECHARGE

A wellness weekend in the world's most famous wine region sounds unlikely and yet there's sense as well as sophistication behind the offering at this standout hotel. Here we are, midway between Reims and Epernay, the capital of bubbles, so there's no point in imposing too much restraint. Rather than detox or denial, a three- to five-day retreat is more about employing some of that legendary French discipline. It's an exercise in moderation. The refurbished coaching inn is a tactile, low-slung lair of cream concrete, blond wood and glass, and the spa itself is huge, with a yoga room, Pilates studio and beauty space, plus gorgeous treatment rooms and an indoor swimming pool with views across the patchwork of vineyards. A partnership with cult skincare brand Biologique Recherche draws in locals and guests, and the spa director, fresh from the Mandarin Oriental in Paris, has brought with her some of that city slickness, as well as a kind of urban high expectation. Dip into the wellness zone as much or as little as you like. The retreats, limited to just six people, guarantee a level of personalisation far beyond the

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norm. Don't expect a packed agenda; the emphasis is on de-stressing and re-energising, with about three hours of treatments and activities each day. Depending on fitness levels, groups walk, jog or cycle along the paths that crisscross the UNESCO World Heritage hillsides. Trainers respond to weather conditions and whims, adapting the itinerary – they might stop for yoga in one of the parks that overlook the vineyards of Moët & Chandon and Taittinger, and if anyone's tired they can hitch a ride on a river barge. In the afternoons there are Champagne tastings, although for wellbeing reasons wines are organic and/or biodynamic. References to grapes are incorporated in the interior design, too, with delicate illustrations on walls and carpets, while the spa feels almost like stepping inside a glass of Champagne. Honey-toned walls are studded with burnished baubles, there are bubble-shaped blown-glass lampshades, golden tiles and fabrics as light and lovely as the first sip of Veuve Clicquot. The outdoor pool overlooks the villages of Champillon and Hautvillers (where Dom Pérignon is buried), as well as poplar and chestnut stands and the distinctive vines. Those excellent facials don't rely on scents or gimmicks, just the therapist's skilled fingers performing lymphatic-drainage movements for long-lasting results. Dining is also engineered to subtly support good intentions while celebrating local ingredients – chef Jean-Denis Rieubland previously held two Michelin stars at Hotel Le Negresco in Nice and already has one star here. The retreat is not overly prescriptive – instead there is advice about balanced dishes. This is all about the good life. A stay here probably won't result in much weight loss but will certainly restore a bit of oomph.

INSIDER TIP Going all out at the chef's table in Le Royal is well worth it, but plan ahead – it's usually booked up three months in advance.

BOOK IT Doubles from about £325 (royalchampagne.com).

PHOTOGRAPH: JENNIFER DELORD