



SWISS SOJOURN

A member of the Leading Spas of the World, the Bad Ragaz spa in Switzerland is the epitome of luxury and lavishness

Writer | **Aruna Rathod**

If St. Moritz is uplifting for the soul, Bad Ragaz is all about grandeur and indulgence. The red carpet is laid out for the guests at the railway station itself, where the suited driver turns up in a Mercedes E350 for the pick-up. Check in to the spa suite of Grand Resort Bad Ragaz, soak in the tranquility and sheer opulence of Europe's finest spa resort and gear up for the pampering that follows. The

entire resort is built around a natural hot water spring that comes from a gorge 4km uphill. Over a million litres of water gushes out every single day, at a consistent temperature of 36.5 degrees and apparently has been flowing for 800 years. It's remarkable how a multi-million dollar enterprise has been built around a natural resource, attracting the rich and the famous from across the world (including our very own Kokilaben Ambani) to come here

for rest and relaxation.

THERMAL THERAPY

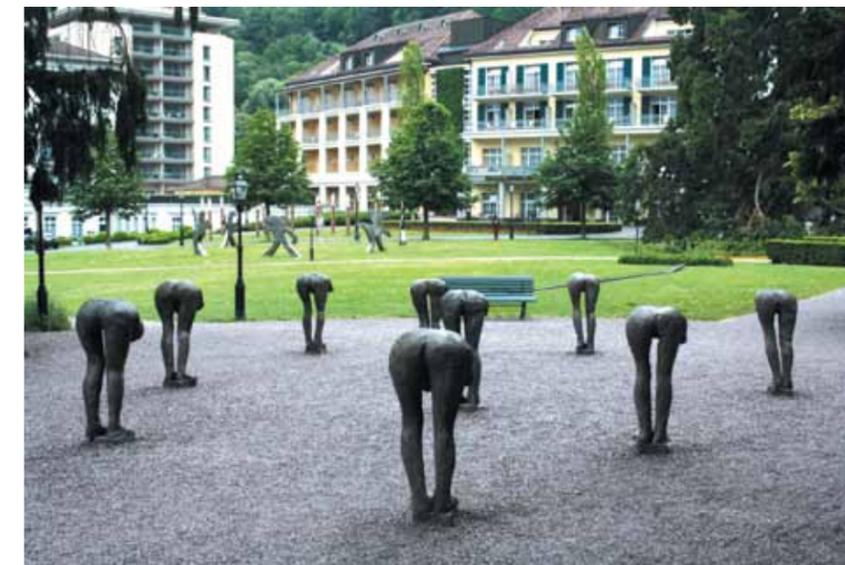
One great place to start is the Tamina Therme, the public area of the spa, with half a dozen pools with different temperatures of water – ranging from 17 degrees to 36.5 degrees. Just go with the flow, literally, lazing around in the Jacuzzis of these pools, letting all the stress melt away.

The Tamina spring has lent its name to the thermal spa and supplies its water to Bad Ragaz. Europe's fastest-flowing thermal spring rises in the Tamina Gorge near Bad Ragaz and was discovered in the early Middle Ages. Among those to praise the healing benefits of the water, classified as an acratotherm on account of its low mineral content and temperature of 36.5 °C, was the physician and alchemist Paracelsus. After the spring had been connected to Bad Ragaz through the construction of a four-kilometre long pipe in 1840, the Tamina Therme came into being in 1872 as the first thermal water indoor pool in Europe. This proved to be the foundation stone on which the worldwide reputation of the commune as a spa and health resort grew, attracting famous guests from across Europe.

In April 2008, the Grand Dame of European thermal spas underwent an extensive – and expensive – refurbishment, enabling it to reappear with a stylish new design after the rebuilding. Futuristic columns and high ceilings are the hallmark of the architectural concept, realised entirely in white painted spruce. Visitors to the Tamina Therme's 7,300 square metres will discover various indoor pools and one outdoor pool, numerous whirlpool recliners, whirlpools, a counter-current channel and a sauna world with its own outdoor area. Rounding off the thermal spa program is an extensive selection of massage, beauty and wellbeing treatments.

INNER HEALING

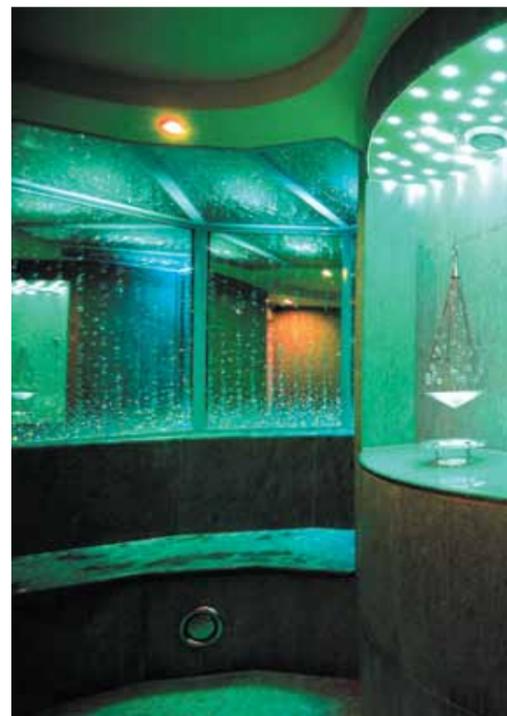
After all the wading in the waters in the public area of the spa, you can retreat to the private area for rounds of sauna and steam. The in-house and the indoor spa in the Grand Resort Bad Ragaz offers so much to choose from in its 5,500 square metres that spa fans have a tough time making up their minds. The accent is very much on wellness. In the stylishly opulent Helenabad pool, one can swim



in Ragaz thermal spa water whose healing properties were confirmed already by Paracelsus. A sports pool and the garden pool, open from May to September complete the water world. The spacious sauna landscape contains a Finnish sauna, steam bath and sanarium as well as an ice grotto, sensory area and winter-garden lounge. The highlight here is the herbal steam bath, embellished with Swarovski crystals, the first of its kind in the world.

The world's first Swarovski-encrusted steam room has glittering gems adorning every surface. It's not called grand for nothing. Other details include mineral water on tap, open fires in the suites and mood lighting. There is also a huge circular private spa featuring a hi-tech cinema, 'cuddle lounge' and private dining area. Plus spa butlers are on hand to attend to your every whim.

From the 45-degree sauna where you sweat it out to the crystal embellished steam where you feel the pores open



up, a session at the spa is all it takes to unwind. At the end of the stay, to use a cliché, one emerges totally refreshed and rejuvenated.

ULTIMATE TREATMENTS

As part of the extensive upgrading and expansion programme, the spa has gained five balancing and harmonising suites in an Asian-Hawaiian style. Here and in the other luxury massage rooms, guests can choose from a wealth of

treatments for which the resort has enjoyed an outstanding reputation over many decades. And unique to the spa is the exclusive Sequoia massage. It begins with a meditative breathing exercise and continues with a Kneipp alternating foot bath and a foot reflex zone massage, culminating in a whole body herbal compress ball massage in combination with warm oil. The giant American trees, which gave their name to the massage, grow just outside the

door in the Resort Ragaz park. The thermo-stone experience with hot lava stones whose warmth opens the energy centres also promises deep relaxation. Another of the specialities is the choco therapy during which

valuable ingredients such as cacao and cinnamon, cloves and black cayenne pepper unfold their anti-ageing properties.

Lovers of extravagance and seclusion can enjoy the luxury of privacy in the Andeer Private Spa that includes a whirlpool, sauna with champagne cooler and steam bath, a relaxation lounge and an integral treatment and dining area with garden terrace.

A member of the 'Leading Spas of the World', the Grand Resort Bad Ragaz is situated in the Heidiland holiday region of eastern Switzerland, just an hour's drive by car from Zurich. Regarded as the leading wellbeing and medical health resort in Europe, the resort consists of two five-star establishments, the Grand Hotel Quellenhof & Spa Suites and the Grand Hotel Hof Ragaz, eight restaurants, six bars, the spa, two golf courses, the business and event center Kursaal and an in-house casino. Complementing the wellbeing and recreational facilities is the internationally renowned medical health center, as well as the Swiss Olympic Medical Center to which famous sportsmen and women come for treatment.

GO FOR GOLD

Glacier water and sea salt? Or perhaps caviar and high-tech? The specialists at the beauty salon in the Grand Resort Bad Ragaz offer the perfect treatments to pamper the skin. Time for yourself – that's the motto of the beauty specialists in the Swiss five-star Grand Resort Bad Ragaz. They have tailored their treatments to both female and male guests, on account of the fact that men today are paying more and more attention to their skin and grooming. Swiss glacier water gives men's skin a helping hand as it is the principal component of the 'Niance Men Switzerland' brand used in the salon, besides other quality spa products from La Prairie, Kanebo, Sisley, Carita, Bulgari and Ericson. While the caviar firming treatment from La Prairie is regarded as a classic, the stress relief facial treatment from Kanebo is another favourite. Both supply the skin with valuable active agents that lend it healthy radiance and restore the natural balance. For a penetrating action and long-lasting effect, Carita products are used with an electrophysical pro-lifting device.

With the addition of Dr. Claudia Steiner to strengthen the team of medical experts, Europe's leading

wellbeing und medical health resort is expanding its already extensive health offering. The spectrum in the dermatology department extends from the diagnosis and treatment of skin diseases and improvement of skin appearance through the removal of age spots and pigmentation marks up to laser therapies and anti-aging fruit acid peelings.

The 'Beauty Days', personally tailored for each guest, are comparable to a rejuvenation treatment. The programme features treatments for the face, neck and décolleté as well as whole body peelings and care packs, sea salt baths, make-up and pedicure depending on skin condition and individual wishes. However, the beauty treatments in the Grand Resort Bad Ragaz are just one aspect of wellbeing. Guests here can look forward to a holistic experience. But the height of luxury is the glittering 'Gold Temptation' treatment. It begins with a gold bath consisting of 23-carat gold leaf, valuable grapeseed oil, sesame oil, wheat germ oil, olive oil and argan oil. This is followed by a gold massage, during which wafer-thin 24-carat gold leaf is gently massaged into the skin of the back, stomach and legs. This splendid treatment is rounded off in perfect style with a chocolate cake embellished with gold.

