



The Best Spas

Relaxation is imminent: Pamper yourself with these services for your whole body—and every mood. Plus, find out how *Man on a Ledge* star Elizabeth Banks likes to bliss out. Edited by **Sarah Bruning** Photographs by **Dale May**

Treatments by body part

Face



Wink Eco Beauty Bar: Green Glama Facial TONY DEAL

602 Vanderbilt Ave at St. Marks Ave, Prospect Heights, Brooklyn (718-230-3443, winkbeautybar.com). 60-minute facial regularly \$80. Mention TONY when booking for 15 percent off any 60-minute facial or 20 percent off any facial-and-body-treatment combination through Mar 31.

For one serene hour, skin care specialist Marlene Melendez worked on restoring my winter-ravaged face with a lavender-infused moisturizer and all-natural products, including a rosewater tonic. After exfoliating my face and neck with a mixture of dry milk and cornmeal, Melendez removed the mixture with a warm towel and painlessly extracted the blackheads. **Best part:** Melendez massaged my scalp and kneaded my shoulders, while a customized mask of white clay and honey purified my face. **Why it's worth it:** My skin felt velvety well beyond the 24-hour mark. —Molly Gallagher

The Blind Barber: Men's shave

339 E 10th St between Aves A and B (212-228-2123, blindbarber.com). \$30.

Since this Tompkins Square Park storefront doubles as a popular nightspot for bewhiskered (possibly intoxicated) hipsters, I was wary of stopping by in the evening and booked a Saturday-afternoon appointment instead. After

prepping my face with hot and cold towels, Nick, a barber with a decade of experience, applied soothing preshave oil, then confidently scraped my face clean with a straight razor, finishing with a proprietary aftershave smoother.

Best part: The price includes a free signature cocktail or well drink, and quaffing a bourbon before or after adds an air of manliness to the whole thing.

Why it's worth it: It's hard to say what I enjoyed more: the slanting light coming in off the southern exposure or the turntable skipping at the end of side one of *Born in the U.S.A.* —Joshua Rothkopf

Back



Greenhouse Holistic Spa: Hot-stone massage TONY DEAL

88 Roebling St at North 7th St, Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-599-3113, greenhouseholistic.com). 60-minute massage regularly \$80. Mention TONY when booking for 10 percent off a 60- or 90-minute hot-stone massage through Feb 15.

After discussing my various aches, lead massage therapist and founder David Greenhouse rubbed me down from head to toe, using heated massage stones to relax my muscles. Though his firm kneading caused me to grit my teeth at times, I could feel the deep-seated knots in my shoulders and upper back giving way.

Best part: My keyboard-based day job leads to pent-up stress in my shoulders, while my

waitressing gig causes tightness in my legs. Greenhouse eased the stiffness in my upper body and still had time to soothe my sore calves.

Why it's worth it: The therapists do their best to help you decompress even after you leave: Greenhouse showed me stretches I could do at home to relieve my tension. —Marley Lynch

Face to Face: Back or chest treatment TONY DEAL

20 W 20th St between Fifth and Sixth Aves, suite 603 (212-633-0404, facetofacenyc.com). 60-minute massage regularly \$140. Mention TONY when booking for 20 percent off through Mar 31.

I knew I was in for a high-end pampering session as soon as I walked into the spa and was offered a glass of wine. Once I decided which body part to focus on—my back, in this case—owner Enrique Ramirez examined my neglected dorsal pores, and set about remedying them. Using soothing strokes, he applied a Decl r cleanser and exfoliator, followed by an Aura Research hydrogen-peroxide mask (meant to disinfect and open pores), before performing thorough extractions. While the mask was working, he expertly massaged my feet, lower legs and grape-addled head.

Best part: The final step of the treatment is dictated by what your skin needs most—it might be a moisturizing paraffin mask to combat winter dryness or a fruit-acid peel to treat breakouts.

Why it's worth it: Unless you're as bendy as Mrs. Incredible, chances are your oft-neglected reverse could use the hour of close attention that this clarifying experience provides. —Sarah Theebom

PHOTOGRAPH: DALE MAY; STYLIST: JOSE CAMILO; MAKEUP: GEORGIE EISELL; ILLUSTRATIONS: BRYAN MAYES

Whole body



Bellissimo Hair Spa: Full-body Swedish massage

29-07 39th Ave at 29th St, Astoria, Queens (718-937-7773, bellissimohairspa.com). \$70. The soft-spoken technician at this pretense-free spot was skilled, focused and thorough, applying the perfect amount of pressure and variation on my limbs, back, fingers and toes. As the owner, Raul Mesias, explained afterward, traditional Swedish massage has a top-to-tail focus, so the session included both foot reflexology and a cranial rub. **Best part:** I didn't think I needed a facial massage, but the technician was able to untangle two previously unrecognized knots of stress above my cheekbones. **Why it's worth it:** Similar one-hour treatments can cost quite a bit more in Manhattan, making this no-frills joint worth the trip.—*Michael Martin*

Cynergy Spa: Seaweed-Mud Body Treatment

87 Fort Greene Pl between DeKalb Ave and Fulton St, Fort Greene, Brooklyn (718-403-9242, cynergyspa.com). \$150. Mention TONY for 20 percent off any single treatment through Feb 29. After giving me a cup of cinnamon tea and a hot washcloth in the waiting area to cleanse my hands, Cynergy's owner, Marsha-Ann Boyea, scrubbed my skin down with a dry, coarse brush, covered me in a detoxifying combination of organic seaweed and mud, and wrapped me in a thermal blanket for about 20 minutes. Afterward, I received a refreshing massage using grape seed and rose oil. **Best part:** Boyea's sweet disposition and delicate-yet-firm touch totally unclenched my muscles, weary from clinging to subway poles. **Why it's worth it:** Once I got over a bout of modesty, a deep calm washed over me and lasted well beyond the allotted hour.—*Rachel Brodsky*

Hands and feet



Relax Foot Spa: Foot reflexology

202 Hester St at Baxter St (212-226-8288) • 193 Center St at Hester St, second floor (212-226-5635) • relax-footspa.com. \$30. A mere 30 bucks buys you an hour-long reflexology session at this minisp. My masseuse, Xiao, began working on my head, neck and back, while my feet soaked in a warm herbal tonic. After 10 to 15 minutes, I eased into a recliner, and he got to work on my feet. **Best part:** Having your feet and calves rubbed with moisturizer after the massage remedies any throbbing from the preceding compressions. **Why it's worth it:** Xiao's commitment to getting

the job done (versus chatting) means you can bask in some much-needed quiet time.—*Sophie Harris*

Jin Soon Natural Hand and Foot Spa: Magic Clay Slipper for Hands

421 E 73rd St between First and York Aves (212-249-9144, jinsoon.com). Regularly \$32. The first 50 readers to mention TONY when booking receive a free CND Scentsations lotion (8.3-ounce bottle, normally \$12). Once inside this antiques-shop-turned-salon, I was offered tea and ushered to a small table. One of the friendly technicians whipped my nails into shape and scrubbed my arms from fingers to elbows before slathering them in an almond illuminating mask. A final shaping and paint job—you can select from myriad Chanel, CND and Zoya shades, among others—made my digits photoworthy. **Best part:** The mask has a fresh, understated scent and gives your skin a pearly glow. **Why it's worth it:** When I visited my newborn nephew a few days later, my once winter-chapped skin was still as soft as his... well, you know.—*Karen Snyder Duke*

Hair



Chris Chase Salon: Shu Uemura ume conditioning treatment

182 Ninth Ave between 21st and 22nd Sts (212-206-7991, chrischasesalon.com). \$50. Many hip NYC ladies rave about pricey but effective Keratin treatments, but this salon also offers a series of conditioning services created by Japanese wonder brand Shu Uemura that offer shorter-term smoothing results for a fraction of the cost. My upbeat stylist, Jenna Montefusco, offered me a glass of wine, before helping me select the best conditioner for my hair type (moisturizing and volume-enhancing are among the options). She washed my strands with Shu Uemura's cleansing oil shampoo, then painted the conditioner onto my hair in small sections.

Best part: The replenishing tonic tamed my frizzy tresses into smooth waves, and the extended scalp massage that set the conditioner in my hair was killer. **Why it's worth it:** The treatment eliminated the buildup caused by my usual products, and I opted to add a blowout, which yielded several compliments while I was out on the town that evening.—*Sharon Steel*

Oasis Day Spa: Dry-scalp treatment

1 Park Ave between 32nd and 33rd Sts (212-545-5254, oasisdayspanyc.com). 40-minute treatment regularly \$50. Mention TONY when booking for 15 percent off this service Mon–Thu through Feb 29 (excluding Feb 14). Manager Carmine Fischetti vigorously massaged drops of Moroccan oil's original formula into my head, explaining that this treatment is especially popular during the colder months (heaters can dry out your scalp) and with clients who color their hair regularly (ditto for the chemicals in many dyes). I relaxed and sipped tea for ten minutes, then hopped over to a washing station for a shampoo, light dry and conditioning. **Best part:** As a scalp-treatment newbie, I appreciated how the affable Fischetti explained each step of the process. **Why it's worth it:** Walking up Park Avenue afterward, I caught a glimpse of my silky-smooth hair's sheen in a cab's window.—*Tim Lowery*



Treatments by purpose



Energizing

The Green Spa & Wellness Center: Organic Revital Eyes

8804 Third Ave between 88th and 89th Sts, Bay Ridge, Brooklyn (718-921-6100, greenspany.com). Regularly \$38. Mention TONY at booking for 15 percent off this treatment or any treatment that day. I'll take any opportunity to rejuvenate my dark-circled, puffy eyes. The all-natural Eminence products used at Green Spa exfoliated and soothed my fatigued skin, while a raspberry eye mask, green-tea-soaked cotton and a neck massage helped me forget why I was so tired in the first place. (The complimentary champagne and fluffy robe didn't hurt either.) **Best part:** After the initial fingertip massage, my aesthetician worked cool stones into the treatment, tracing the contours of my eyes and smoothing out any worry lines. **Why it's worth it:** From the wrought-iron door to the multiple floors of dimly lit earth-toned rooms and soothing rain-forest sounds, Green Spa is anything but clinical.—*Christen Brandt*

Stress-busting

Season Spa: Aromatherapy massage

165 Hester St between Elizabeth and Mott Sts (212-966-7416, seasonspa-nyc.com). Regularly \$68. Mention TONY when booking to get this treatment for \$55 through Feb 29. Before the treatment, massage therapist and spa manager Jennifer Wong offered a selection of four rotating aromatic oils (which are imported from Shanghai and Guangzhou in China) and explained the benefits of each scent. I opted for

jasmine for relaxation and was quickly transported from wintertime Manhattan to a balmy South Pacific garden. **Best part:** The hour-long treatment incorporates elements of Swedish, deep-tissue and *tui na* techniques, based on what each area of the body needs. In my case, it meant both targeted kneading of knots behind my shoulder blades and heavy, sustained pressure for my hamstrings and calves—achieved when Wong climbed up on the table and channeled her body weight through her knees. **Why it's worth it:** At the end of the session, my muscles felt not only soothed but therapeutically tuned up, and a tension-melting head massage during the last ten minutes left this overcaffeinated insomniac snoring.—*Carolyn Stanley*



Relax on Cloud 9: Mineral bath

694 Clove Rd at Martling Ave, Staten Island (718-448-3412, relaxoncloud9.com). \$50. This half-hour treatment is just long enough to help you unwind. After entering the

charming cottage that houses this retreat, I was led into a tiled room with a large Jacuzzi tub. My therapist, Steve Gargiulo, added mineral powder and lavender-scented essential oils to the bath, and I rested in the warm water while pan-flute music drifted into the room. Afterward, I refreshed myself with a quick spray of complimentary shea butter lotion. **Best part:** If you're lucky, you'll meet spa owner Doreen Zayer and her gorgeous dog, an adopted labrador, on your way out. **Why it's worth it:** This relaxing treatment is an excellent add-on to a massage, but if you're taking it on its own, request a complimentary five-minute shoulder and hand massage along with your bath.—*Annemarie Dooling*

Winter remedies

Mario Badescu Skin Care Salon: European Facial with Vitamin C add-on

320 E 52nd St between First and Second Aves (212-758-1065, mariobadescu.com). Facial \$65, add-on \$35. Mention TONY when booking to receive a free manicure with your facial (available Mon–Thu 10am–4pm) through Feb 13. To begin the spa's signature treatment, my specialist, Angie J., directed a steam machine at my face to soften my skin and detoxify my pores. While I slackened under the warm air, Angie administered a thorough face cleansing with Mario Badescu's Enzyme Cleansing Gel and a circulation-amping neck, chest and shoulder massage. Then came a swift, take-no-prisoners series of extractions by hand, followed by a soothing mask to comfort my skin. After the mask dried, she gently cleaned my face and applied the Vitamin C add-on, an ultrahydrating, collagen-stimulating treatment to relieve my cold-weather-ravaged face. As a result, my skin was the cleanest, smoothest and most moisturized it has been in months. **Best part:** The spa offers a free posttreatment consultation, which any client can take advantage of. **Why it's worth it:** This methodically attentive procedure is one of the best facials for its moderate price.—*Anne Bauso*

Quickie/mini

Benefit Boutique Soho: Eyebrow Waxing and Tinting

454 West Broadway between W Houston and Prince Sts (212-769-1111, benefitcosmetics.com). Wax \$23, tint \$20. As a naturally bushy-faced gal, I've tried my fair share of waxes. This modern and feminine take on the old-school barbershop was a refreshing change. Instead of being sequestered in a side room to bear the treatment in private, I was seated at the communal Brow Bar. The vanities—along with bright lights, glam-girl decor and upbeat music—created a clubby vibe, while the ultrasensitive wax meant no wincing or tears. For the tinting, my aesthetician, Nicky Cayot, mixed a custom color that perfectly highlighted and glossed my dark hair. **Best part:** It took only seven minutes for my Sasquatch-like brows to be waxed, shaped and tweezed, and I was in and out of the boutique in well under half an hour. **Why it's worth it:** Every eyebrow treatment ends with a makeup application that incorporates Benefit's popular face and lip tint. I didn't have to hide any postwaxing puffiness, and my entire face looked twice as good as when I'd arrived.—*Meg Rushton*

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The Peninsula Spa

Spas to...

Bond with a bro

John Allan's: Signature Full Service

TONY DEAL

Locations throughout the city; visit [johnallans.com](#) for details. Regularly \$68. Mention TONY when booking to receive this treatment for \$38. Think of this bundle as a tune-up for your entire head: It comprises a scalp-massaging shampoo, conditioning treatment, hot towel, haircut, manicure and shoe shine. While I sipped a brewed iced tea (other offerings range from espresso to beer), I was escorted from station to station within the midtown outpost. The whole shebang took only 45 minutes, but I never felt rushed: I had the option to hang out all day at the bar and play a few games of pool in the lounge. Instead, I treated myself to an intense deep-tissue massage (60mins, \$105). **Best part:** If you're in a rush to go somewhere, you can multitask by getting the haircut and manicure at the same time. **Why it's worth it:** A single visit isn't much costlier than a salon appointment, but each club also offers an annual membership (one location \$750, all four locations \$850), so you can go as often as you choose. —Adam Fulrath

Bliss out with a gal pal

Haven Spa: Haven Hand Renaissance manicure and Haven Foot Renaissance pedicure

TONY DEAL

150 Mercer St between W Houston and Prince Sts (212-343-3515, [havensoho.com](#)). Hands \$35, feet \$70. Mention TONY when booking this pair of treatments with a friend to receive two gift cards for a classic European manicure (\$19 value per person) through Feb 21. Each Renaissance treatment takes about an hour, and Haven will give you and up to three mates access to the intimate lounge, where you can sip booze (there's a BYOB policy) while picking out your polish colors. At the pedicure station, chill out with Wi-Fi-enabled iPads loaded with tons of

games—one device is provided at each chair—then settle into the comfy manicure bench (a great spot for gabbing). **Best part:** My technician, Mariana Mejia, described the treatments as a “facial for your hands and feet,” and she meant it. Wearing the heated mitts and booties for 15 minutes sent waves of comfort through my body, and I could feel my skin soaking up the moisture. **Why it's worth it:** My nails stayed flawless for a week, and the extra hydrating massage repaired the chapped skin on my hands. —Jayme Klock

Feel romantic

Townhouse Spa: Couples Combination Massage

TONY DEAL

39 W 56th St between Fifth and Sixth Aves (212-245-8006, [townhousespa.com](#)). Regularly \$270. Mention TONY when booking for 20 percent off the Duo Package through Feb 29. In a lavender-oil-infused couples room, massage therapist Giselda Anyz expertly combined two of the spa's signature massage styles—the customized pressure of the Townhouse Relaxation with the stretch-and-pull method of the Eastern Meridian, which also incorporates pressure points—to leave me feeling as limber as a jellyfish. Another technician, Carol Park, zeroed in on my fiancé's stiff right shoulder, determined to rid him of a particularly stubborn knot by using her elbows and Juara candlenut cream. **Best part:** Even though the massage lasted a full hour, Anyz encouraged me to prolong my mini getaway by enjoying the steam room and luxurious showers in the women's dressing area. **Why it's worth it:** The dimly lit room set a serene tone for our side-by-side rubdowns; we departed refreshed and reconnected after a grueling day. —Mona Lisa Macalino

Totally splurge

The Peninsula Spa: Deep Tissue Experience

700 Fifth Ave at 55th St (212-956-2888, [peninsula.com](#)). \$550. Massage therapist Carly Clark began my 120-minute reprieve from chaos with a ginger-and-

sea-salt foot buff, followed by a quick sensory test (comparing various scents on cotton pads and my own skin) to determine which aromatic lotions and oils would suit my needs. From there, she transitioned seamlessly through four treatments: a circulation-stimulating dry brush that used cactus bristles to slough off dead skin; an exfoliating body polish, which refined my epidermis with apricot kernels, aloe vera and spearmint; a balancing facial cleanse and red-clay scalp mask; and a tension-obliterating full-body massage combining body joint-mobilization techniques with the deep-tissue modality. **Best part:** Booking a treatment that lasted for at least two hours granted me access to the rooftop pool and fitness center, which encompasses a full weight room, machines and a group-class studio. (The locker rooms are even stocked with tees, shorts and socks to borrow, in addition to plush robes and slippers.) **Why it's worth it:** Everything at this serene retreat—from the eucalyptus-infused steam in the thermal suite to the plush, adjustable relaxation-room beds—invites you to shut off your brain and luxuriate. —Sarah Bruning

Spend a day

Body by Brooklyn

TONY DEAL

275 Park Ave between Washington and Waverly Aves, Clinton Hill, Brooklyn (718-923-9400, [bodybybrooklyn.com](#)). Mon, Wed, Thu, Sun 10am–8pm; Fri, Sat 10am–9pm. All-day admission Mon–Fri \$45; Sat, Sun \$45, with brunch \$55. Mention TONY on arrival for 10 percent off admission and treatments through Feb 29. Of the many splendid things about this spot—besides its inviting hot tubs and refreshing cold baths—is that for all its luxurious touches, it's affordable and pretension free. As I walked into the dry lounge, a group of chatty girls ordered drinks at the bar, while a couple of hungover-looking dudes read magazines by the fireplace. The wet lounge has pools galore, a Swedish dry sauna and a Turkish steam room, and you're encouraged to sip a freshly squeezed juice (with a nip in it, if you're feeling saucy) as you soak. The spa also offers massages, body treatments and facials. I opted for a tailor-made shiatsu massage (60mins \$120, 90mins \$170) from a considerate practitioner named Karen Garzon, while my friend had a facial that left her skin glowing. **Best part:** Drink options here are separated into four sections: Hangover Relief, Energize, Weight Loss/Detox, Relaxation. With your beverage (and thus category) choice, you'll get a wet-lounge guide that recommends the order you should visit each area within the facility. **Why it's worth it:** Spending a day here is like taking a mini vacation, and you'll emerge feeling appropriately de-stressed. —SH

MORE ONLINE!

For tons more spa treatments, plus a slide show of at-home pampering products and a guide to spa etiquette, visit [newyork.timeout.com/spas](#).



PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY PENINSULA SPA

PHOTOGRAPH: DALE MAY; STYLIST: JOSE CAMILO; HAIR: MATTHEW MONZON; MAKEUP: GEORGIE EISELL

MORE ONLINE!

For an expanded interview with Elizabeth Banks, visit [newyork.timeout.com/spas](#).



“I would fight extremely dirty, ’cause I’m a very small person!”

Anything else you're itching to try?

Yeah, I'm developing a live-action Tinker Bell project. That's my dream character. She's mischievous, fun, sassy and active. She's me!

The film adaptation of *The Hunger Games* comes out on March 23, and it's hotly anticipated by fans of the book trilogy. How did you prepare for your role as Effie, a handler from the dystopian Capitol?

A decent amount was the physical transformation. [In the film,] we live in an oppressed society. I'm one of the privileged citizens, so I wanted to be reminded constantly that I'm restricted in everything I do. All of my clothes were very tight and corseted.

With whom would you want to fall in love?

I have a serious crush on Michael Fassbender right now. He's just so manly, handsome and effortless.

I hear you did all your own stunts.

I'm a bit of a thrill-seeker in that regard. One of the reasons I liked the idea of the movie was the filmmakers' commitment to shooting [Sam Worthington and me up there] for real. It's an easy stunt to fake. We did have to do some things on the stage, but we wanted the audience to feel like they were up there with us and sense the stakes were legit

The film focuses on you, a police negotiator; a fugitive played by Sam Worthington; and a bevy of conspirators. Which cast member would be best at talking someone off a ledge?

I think it would depend on the person on the ledge. The main thing they tell you about negotiations is that you're trying to empathize with the other person. If it was a straight male, then the best person would be Genesis Rodriguez [who plays the fugitive's brother's girlfriend].

Is she really empathetic?

No, she's just completely gorgeous! [Laughs] If she said, “Hey, come with me,” any straight man would follow.

You've played the ditzy vixen in *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*, the funny girl in *Zack and Miri Make a Porno* and now the badass. What type of character would you like to embody next?

I enjoyed running around after bad guys with guns and doing stunts. It's great to be a woman in a man's world and not apologize for it. But I want to fall in love onscreen again [like in *Zack and Miri*].

Elizabeth Banks

The comedy and action star takes a breather to talk about her daredevil tendencies and her favorite NYC retreat. By Sarah Bruning

The Hunger Games are a fight to the death. If you had to do Effie's job and supervise a competitor, which costar—past or present—would you pick?

I think Mark Wahlberg would kick a lot of butt, but Josh Brolin would fight dirty, because he'd want to win. Mark would be super physical, but Josh would be very cunning.

What if you were the one battling 23 other people?

I would fight extremely dirty, 'cause I'm a very small person! I would do a lot of hiding, a lot of running away, with as little hand-to-hand combat and as little interaction as possible.

Do you think you'd win?

I think I could get pretty far! I would definitely be smart about it. I wouldn't make any alliances. I'd trust no one.

Since you're working a lot and you have your baby, Felix, at home, some TLC seems to be in order. Which spa in New York City is your go-to place?

I'm a fan of the Spa at the Mandarin Oriental ([mandarinoriental.com/newyork/spa](#)), where I normally get a deep-tissue massage. I don't go to be relaxed; I go to work out tension and knots. I like a nice, deep dig!

What type of spa treatments do you enjoy the most?

I recently had an amazing mud wrap [in Park City, Utah]. The aesthetician asked if I was claustrophobic, which made me wonder if I really knew what a wrap entailed. She said she was going to wrap me with foil and cover my eyes, which makes some people feel like they're in a coffin. [Laughs] I told her I thought I'd be okay, and I was.

What's the wackiest treatment you've tried?

The most ridiculous experience I've had was in Budapest. It's known for its bathhouses, and I'd never been to one of those. I had some giant Hungarian smack me with palm fronds. It was so painful [Laughs], but I was too embarrassed to say, “Please stop!”

Man on a Ledge opens Fri 27. The Hunger Games opens Mar 23.