

The Good Life
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Austin Style

“Couples Pampering: Plan On It But Don’t Expect Miracles”

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urbanderthal n.1. urban Neanderthal. 2. Slang. The opposite of metrosexual (a heterosexual who spends a great deal of time and money on his appearance). 3. An urban male who thinks pampering is a hot shower and scrubbing with deodorant soap.

My intentions were good when I planned an intimate couples spa retreat at **The Crossings** (512.298.7243), a many-faceted and magical wellness center, spa and learning facility nestled in the Hill Country. The Crossings’ internationally known spa offers a wide range of unique and exotic pampering treatments that I was certain my husband would enjoy.

Everything at The Crossings is designed to promote serenity, healing and insight, from the gorgeous waterfall pool overlooking the splendor of Lake Travis to the Tex-Zen architecture, landscaping and interior design.

My mistake was in planning our overnight spa retreat as a surprise. See, my sweetie—while he wears expensive designer clothes, collects and appreciates fine art and loves good wine—is no metrosexual, reluctant or otherwise. My husband’s idea of pampering is watching a game on TV while *I’m* out getting a facial. If he can eat pizza and drink beer without me fussing, he’s happy. Ladies, *I know* you know what I’m talking about!

After we arrived and admired the magnificent view from our room’s balcony, I explained the pampering that lay ahead. He looked annoyed (there was no TV in the room and it was the first night of the World Series), worried (someone he didn’t know was going to be rubbing strange concoctions on his body) and, thankfully, just a bit interested.

“The Batu Jamu hot-and-cold stone massage along with the coconut lemongrass scrub is designed to deeply relax you as well as exfoliate and hydrate your skin, “ said Amika Burdick, my massage therapist for the exotic treatment. I had to smile as my honey—with a *this-is-too-froufrou-for-a-manly-man-such-as myself* scowl on his face—stepped into a nearby room for his treatment. While my experience was sheer bliss, I wondered aloud how his went. “I think he enjoyed it,” said Katie Kreiger, after she had finished working on him.

“He fell asleep at one point and when he left to shower, he was smiling.”

“I hope they have meat,” he said as we dressed for dinner. “If all they have is tofu and sprouts, I’m going back into town for a steak.” I wanted to punch him and only refrained because the whole point was romantic relaxation.

He needn't have worried. The Crossings' healthy fusion cuisine always features fish, chicken and vegetarian entrees, as well as a variety of freshly prepared, rich desserts. He even went back for seconds.

After dinner, we shared a glass of champagne on the balcony of our room. The city lights seemed far away in the dark, quiet starlight.

The next morning, having learned my lesson about surprising this man, I explained that Watsu, the most unusual of the treatments I'd arranged, is a water treatment that combines elements of yoga, dance, massage, and meditation. Our therapists—Judy Kegg, who reminds me of a playful dolphin, and Lucy Egg, a silver-haired sweetie with a gamine grin—explained more about the technique once we reached the secluded Watsu pool.

Imagine the exquisite tranquility of being cradled and gently supported as you float and flow in warm water surrounded by trees, fresh air and the amplified awareness of your own heartbeat. I was amazing!

“That *was* kinda cool,, he said. “At first, it was hard to relax but once I did, it was like,” he fell silent for a moment, “being in the womb. Peaceful.”

After our Swedish massage and a hearty lunch, we headed home. The love of my life shared his thoughts on the pampering experience.

“It was okay once I got over strangers rubbing stuff on me. I guess the bottom line is, I keep my car cleaned, get regular oil changes and tune-ups. It makes sense to do the same kinds of things for my body.” Trust an urbanderthal to come up with a car metaphor.

“Is it possible that you're becoming a metrosexual, honey?” I asked.

“Not hardly,” he said, scratching his armpit. The conversation was over. His attention had wandered to something mindless on TV.