

hands-free aura-massage at Canyon Ranch aims to rebalance the body's energy field and alleviate anxiety, chronic fatigue and stress, the spa says.

Another big seller: Reiki, a Japanese treatment that has popped up at dozens of U.S. spas over the past several years. Frequent spa-goer Mary Vogen recently tried it as part of a \$720 weekend package at Westglow Spa in Blowing Rock, N.C., and swears the treatment—in which the hands of a trained "Reiki master" hover above the body, transferring healing energy to troubled spots—helped ward off her chronic sinus infections. "You can't prove it works," says the consultant in Mooresville, N.C. "The mood they evoke, that's what you're paying for."

Mystic Moods

In fact, with the recent interest in Eastern mysticism, spirituality has been a particularly big seller. At Pratima in New York, the new Rudraksha room has a cloth-covered massage table and ropes of faintly aromatic, dried fruits hanging from the ceiling. The treatment: Lie down for an hour. Frequent guest Lois Walden says it's more soothing than any massage, though the Milan, N.Y., drama teacher hasn't recommended the \$90 sessions to many others. "My friends make fun of me when I talk about the bead-room," she says. "I stopped bringing it up."

The next phase in hands-off therapy: letting customers do the work themselves. Tru, a spa slated to open in San Francisco on Feb. 14, plans to charge about \$100 for pots of mud that customers can apply to themselves and wash off 40 minutes later. Even the Four Seasons spa in Carlsbad, Calif., is considering letting guests administer mud concoctions in their rooms. "The point is to make it a little bit more affordable," says spokeswoman Shae Geary.

But even Ms. Vogen, the Reiki fan, draws a line at self-application. Home from a California spa vacation, she tried slathering herself with a pot of mud she'd picked up at the resort—but found it more perplexing than pampering. "It's very different when you're at the spa," she recalls thinking as she tossed the mud in the trash. "This is a mess."