

# Spa expert: winter-sun pampering

Miranda Allard

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## Miranda Allard advises Michael Attenborough on where to find luxury treatments without a long-haul

I am seeking the perfect combination for my annual spa indulgence where my family can satisfy their sporting needs. Most of my time will be relaxing in the spa so therapists must be both comfortable with my psoriasis and offer a wide variety of quality treatments. **Michael Attenborough, London**

**Times Online spa expert, Miranda Allard responds:** It is not easy to find the perfect combination of usual holiday fun for the family while being sure the spa is seriously good rather than the typical five-star resort with “a spa”. I suggested to Michael, who is director of the Almeida Theatre in London, that he visit **the Six Senses Spa at Porto Elounda, in Crete**. Here is some of his feedback from the trip:

“I have visited spas across the world but The Six Senses Spa at Porto Elounda is quite simply the finest. It is beautifully designed - gentle, natural tones and surfaces, all in harmony with the landscape - spacious and comfortable. It commands spectacular views from high above the sea and is handsomely equipped but, above all, it is impeccably run.

Contact with the customer is unfailingly human and personal. Treatments are generously and expertly carried out. I am a devotee of deep-tissue massage and received the finest I've ever had from a Siberian woman named Sonia who managed to combine strength and gentleness simultaneously in a most uncanny way.

You only have to commit to one treatment and the spa is yours for the whole day. This restriction inevitably guarantees a much more peaceful environment than would otherwise be possible and also almost total privacy in the beautiful outdoor infinity seawater pool.

During our ten days we found our rooms to be extremely comfortable and beautifully appointed with views over the bay. There was a small seawater pool on our patio which afforded us a luxurious privacy if we wanted to cool off without going down to the beach.

The beach itself is lovely and never felt crowded even though the hotel was full. There is a large freshwater swimming pool and an excellent water sports centre where the staff were charming and looked after everyone from adults on water skis or wind surfing boards, to children on banana boats or pedaloes, with equal care and attention. The hotel also offers tennis courts on site and a nine-hole golf course.”

Porto Elounda Deluxe Resort and Six Senses Spa is open year round and the bright design of the spa gives it a conservatory feel in winter months. It's surprisingly affordable with spa packages starting at about £500 for two nights, full board including 70 minutes of treatments. When direct flights to Heraklion cease at the end of the autumn season good connections can be found via Athens – well worth the stop over. For more details go to [www.portoelounda.com](http://www.portoelounda.com).

**Miranda Allard runs [SpaContacts.com](http://SpaContacts.com) which features a limited selection of spas invited by her to join**

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Read about David Aaronovitch's conversion to spa living in Greece

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