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# Stones IN THE SPA

by **Carrie Borzillo**

**A**s a way to connect clients to the Earth, spas are coming up with some inventive natural elements to integrate into their services. While the smooth, oval basalt stone is still most commonly used in hot stone massages, many spas are casting those stones aside in lieu of crystals, gem stones, jewels and more obscure rocks and stones. These are being used not only in massage services, but facial treatments as well.

Some say that the increased interest in crystals, in particular, could be tied to today's high-tech lifestyle. "While we are enjoying the benefits of technological advancements, there may be a part of us that craves a connection with natural elements. It could be the grounding properties and natural balance to counter where the technology may be pulling us," explains Maritsa Victorian, spa director at the Four Seasons Hotel Silicon Valley in East Palo Alto, Calif., which has had success with their Quartz Crystal Body Ritual (60 minutes, \$190).

Here are five treatments using various stones that go far beyond the typical hot stone massage...





## Quartz Crystal

Quartz crystal is a natural conduit that has the ability to transport energy and amplify healing, which is why it's being more widely used in body treatments and energy work at spas around the world today.

"While experts believe that there is more to be discovered to better connect all the dots between quartz crystals and healing, it is becoming widely accepted that vibrational energy can impact your physical body as well as your mental and spiritual health," says Victorian.

Victorian points to the wise words of Albert Einstein for further explanation: "Everything is energy and that's all there is to it. Match the frequency of the reality you want and you cannot help but get that reality. It can be no

other way. This is not philosophy. This is physics."

The Four Seasons Hotel Silicon Valley's Quartz Crystal Body Ritual, which uses both clear quartz crystal and rainbow fiolet crystal, uses the electromagnetic energy of plant, flower and herb essences from the client's recommended energy bouquet, which is created with the therapist to help the client with various energy needs, such as adventure, balance, confidence, focus, grounding or imagination.

The treatment features an all-natural exfoliating body scrub with organic chia seed, jojoba and brown sugar that is infused with rainbow fluorite crystals for an added healing experience.

"A quantum body oil infused with quartz crystal is then massaged into the client's focus areas to enhance, cleanse, and balance the energy body, helping to illuminate your inner light. The service concludes with an organic wellness tea containing gem and flower elixirs, in your recommended energy bouquet to further extend the energy balancing experience," explains Victorian.



## Rose Quartz

Rose quartz (a pinkish stone) is known as the stone of love, peace and harmony, and is one of the most popular crystals used in spa treatments today.

The Rose Quartz Facial (45 minutes, \$155) at Allegria Spa at Park Hyatt Beaver Creek in Avon, Colo., helps to restore the skin, stimulate circulation and promote cell renewal. The rose moisture formulas are crafted with rose extracts and rosehip oil, providing balance and hydration to the skin while calming the senses.

"Rose quartz is said to purify and open the heart at all levels to promote love, self-love, friendship, deep inner healing and feelings of peace. It is said to act as a strong magnifier of the heart. Crystal healing is a pseudo-



scientific alternative medicine technique; however, it's believed that rose quartz can strengthen a weak heart and is said to help to improve circulation. Emotionally, quartz stones are said to transform heavy, sorrowful energies into lighter energy," says spa director Gaye Steinke.

The Rose Quartz Facial begins by warming the rose quartz stones. The client takes a few deep breaths of rose essential oil, which is followed by a rose balancing mist. The face, neck and décolleté are cleaned with a rose cleanser. After the application of a rose cream mask and skin balancing oil mix is applied to the skin, the esthetician performs a facial massage using the warmed rose quartz stones.

"The stones we use to massage are smooth, oval shaped. The energy in the stone not only benefits the guest receiving the treatment, but also the esthetician receives the energy from the gemstone while in contact with it. A moisture replenishing mask is then applied to the skin and a smooth heart-shaped rose quartz stone is placed directly over the heart chakra for the duration of the facial," says Steinke.

## Chumpi

Chumpi stones are white volcanic stones that have been carved by shamans in the Andes Mountains in South America. They're used in spa treatments to balance energy and enhance physical vitality and mental clarity.

Miraval Resort & Spa in Tucson, Ariz., uses these stones in their Pachamama Medicine treatment (80 minutes, \$280; 100 minutes, \$320), which is performed by a shaman and inspired by Incan shamanic traditions. The word "pachamama" comes from the Quechua language and means "Mother Earth."

"The shaman harnesses Pachamama's bountiful energy through the chumpi stones to strengthen the mind-heart-body connection. During the treatment, the shaman burns bunches of sage and sweet grass, which she

finds around the resort. The sage repels bad energy and the sweet grass retains good energy," explains spa director Simon Marxer.

## Black Obsidian

Black obsidian stone is known for its ability to eliminate negativity, boost self control and confidence, help to eliminate selfish thoughts and intentions and have a grounding effect on one's body and spirit.

"This stone awakens the inner courage that is buried deep inside us and helps us to enter our subconscious mind and rediscover our hidden abilities. The energy of the black obsidian stone draws in negative energy thus protects the client and shields against negativity," explains Elizabeth Adam, a Doctor of Naprapathy and owner of Elizabeth Adam Salon and Day Spa in Chicago, Ill., which offers the Obsidian Stone Massage (90 minutes, \$175).

The treatment begins with a foot soak in a rose petal footbath with natural minerals, including magnesium sul-



fate, to relax tired muscles. The massage therapist, who is trained by a Reiki master, places the obsidian stone on the naval area in order to help ground the spiritual energies within the body while the client lays in a supine position on a heated massage table receiving a relaxing scalp massage.

A massage of the face, neck, décolleté, back and shoulders follows, using both hot and chilled obsidian stones, as well as an application of obsidian stone on the third eye "that helps break through mental barriers, helps focus the emotionally scattered energies and bring emotional release," says Adam.

The treatment concludes with a foot massage with foot reflexology to reflex points that correspond to related parts of the body.





## Amethyst, Sapphire, & Aquamarine

The Amethyst Spa at the Restoration Hotel in Charleston, S.C., uses a combination of amethyst, sapphire and aquamarine stones in their Signature Meridian Massage (50 minutes, \$155/80 minutes, \$205).

"This massage takes a Eastern balancing approach to massage using the amethyst stones applied to meridian points throughout the body for energy flow, clearing, balance and deep relaxation. It also uses the amethyst wands to perform reflexology on the hands and feet, hitting on different chakra points finished with a facial massage focusing on lymphs, and third and mental health line," says spa director Denialle LePiors.

The massage also uses warm amethyst crystals with an anti-aging concentrate that is charged with sapphires and aquamarines, combined with a programmed amethyst elixir. "The guest experiences the physical matter of the stone combining the frequency or energy of the amethyst through the elixir for healing and balancing," adds LePiors.

## Sabai

MG's Grand Day Spa in Greer, S.C., uses the sabai stone in their MG's Sabai Stone Massage (60 minutes, \$130/90 minutes, \$190) for its shape, versatility and meaning (Sabai in Thai means longevity and well-being).

"This is more than just a stone massage. It's an advanced tri-phrase stone therapy that uses a synchronized therapeutic treatment with micronized minerals, malachite and zincite. It de-stresses your entire being — mind, body and spirit, explains co-owner Manisay Gabbard."

The workmanship of these stones is unique in that they are designed to fit comfortably in the palm of the hand, which minimizes fatigue for our therapists. "And, because they are carved from black granite, they are very hard and therefore can be easily disinfected between uses to prevent any buildup of germs or bacteria," says Gabbard.

Another interesting property is granite's thermal properties. "They can be heated (or cooled) faster and they retain their temperature for longer periods of time. Long enough to last throughout a 90-minute treatment," she adds. ■



**Carrie Borzillo** is an award-winning lifestyle and entertainment journalist covering spas, health and wellness, sex and relationships. Her work has appeared in magazines such as Men's Health, SELF, People, Entertainment Weekly and more. She is the author of three pop culture books. Borzillo can be reached at [carrie.borzillo@gmail.com](mailto:carrie.borzillo@gmail.com).

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