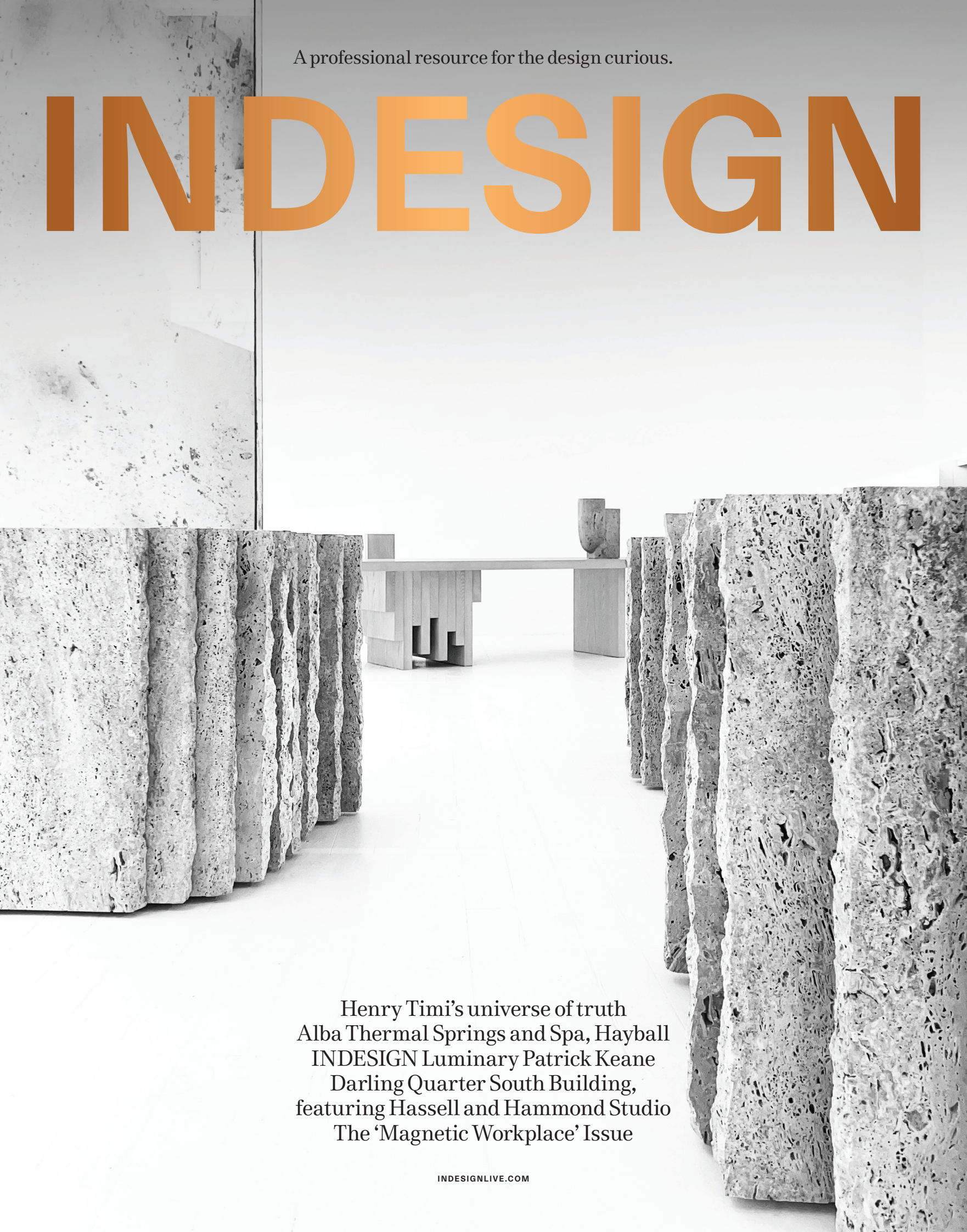


A professional resource for the design curious.

# INDESIGN



Henry Timi's universe of truth  
Alba Thermal Springs and Spa, Hayball  
INDESIGN Luminary Patrick Keane  
Darling Quarter South Building,  
featuring Hassell and Hammond Studio  
The 'Magnetic Workplace' Issue



Alba Thermal Springs and Spa is all fire and ice:  
essential yet monumental, discreet yet indulgent. The  
wellness journey is yours for the taking.

# Deep Restoration

Alba Thermal Springs and Spa by Hayball  
Location *Mornington Peninsula, Victoria* Traditional Custodians *Boon Wurrung/Bunurong People*  
Words *Jan Henderson* Photography *Chris McConville*

Opposite and pages 126-127: Set amongst 50,000 native plants that have been added to the landscape, the 31 pools each offer a unique experience. Page 120-121: Separating the public and private realms of the spa, an infinity edged pool is darkly reflective and calm. Page 122: The circular motif used throughout is explored as large sculptural seating booths in the spa waiting lounge. Page 123: In Thyme, the spa's restaurant, the pairing of caramel leather and timber is complemented by the stone bar. Page 124: A concise palette of greys and charcoals is met with a robust natural materiality.





**Hard/Soft  
Surfaces**

Reverse Spanish brick provides a textural shift from the smooth lines of the stair and adjacent raked wall.





As a destination to feed the soul and renew the spirit, there is none better than Alba Thermal Springs and Spa. This beautifully crafted health and wellness retreat nestled into the landscape of Fingal on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, is not just a place of respite, but a monumental design achievement that is both sensitive to landscape and more than requisite to facility.

Constructed throughout the pandemic, the project was completed in October 2022. Designed by Hayball, with project lead Robert Mosca and his team, Alba is a faultless celebration of style that exceeds both the brief and client expectations. Collaborating with Hayball, Campbell Morris (managing director of Mala Landscape Architecture and Urban Design) brought a vision for the surrounding landscape that has helped transform this project from spectacular to extraordinary.

Alba is situated on 15-hectares of undulating landscape that envelopes the building and showcases its monumental scale and, on arrival, the structure's majestic, clean concrete lines dominate. Signage is discreet, sitting aside a glazed sliding doorway into an enormous reception hall. Here guests can choose either the public or private journey for their wellness experience.

For the public, entry is through a full-height pivot door, past a circular installation with overhead round skylight that serves as a reflection and transition space. Further along are change rooms that feature centrally-placed circular gardens under skylights and hundreds of light-timber clad lockers line the walls.

Throughout, the circular motif has been employed and extrapolated with curved walls, rounded windows, and a spectacular spiral stair rises from an indoor pool with waterfall edges that demark the public and private spaces. The surrounding pool wall is clad in handmade Spanish reverse brick tiles with the water reflecting the light and changing shadows.

For private clients there are over 35 bookable spa wellness and bathing treatments and the experience begins through a discreet opening, just off the reception, and up the circular stair to the next level where Thyme restaurant and the treatment rooms are located.

Open to all guests, Thyme comprises an intimate dining area and an expansive casual space with floor-to-ceiling windows and views to the surrounding landscape. Within are timber tables, tan leather chairs and a wall-hugging leather banquette to complement the stone bar with dark timber shelving.

Beside Thyme is the private treatment area. A concealed timber pivot door opens to a waiting area with lounges and banquette seating in circular booths with overhead suspended pods surrounded by round concrete forms. Behind this space is the manicure and pedicure room with sumptuous soft blue leather chairs and timber tables.

Another pivot door leads to the treatment rooms that are accessed from dark, winding, corridors and the atmosphere is seductive. Designed for singles and couples, the rooms are equally as dramatic, yet restful, with curved ceilings, transparent curtaining and recessed lighting.



At the rear of the building are the pools and springs – all 31 of them – that include geothermal and herbal-infused botanical pools. Set amongst the abundant vegetation, the various-sized pools are accessed by winding pathways. The Rapids, a curving water feature, traverses the landscape from top to bottom. It is calm in parts and fast in others and includes a section of man-made rapids induced by handmade bluestone tiles laid to introduce ‘bumps’ to the flowing water.

Morris elaborates, “One of our key driving aspirations right from the start was to regenerate, so there are 50,000 plants on this site all from local seed. We haven’t tried to rewild the site, the gardens are very much curated, using endemic plants.”

While pools are designed for a group or individuals, there is something for everyone, including a rainwater pool surrounded by a wall of cascading water. Speciality treatment/plunge pools are to the right along with the steam and sauna rooms and there is even an outside cold plunge pool for the total fire and ice experience.

On the roof of the building are three thermal and three salt bath rooms with oculus and private shower areas. It is at this place on the site that the scope of Alba can be fully appreciated, as the building rises and disappears into the terrain and, incredibly, there is ground access to and from every level of the building.

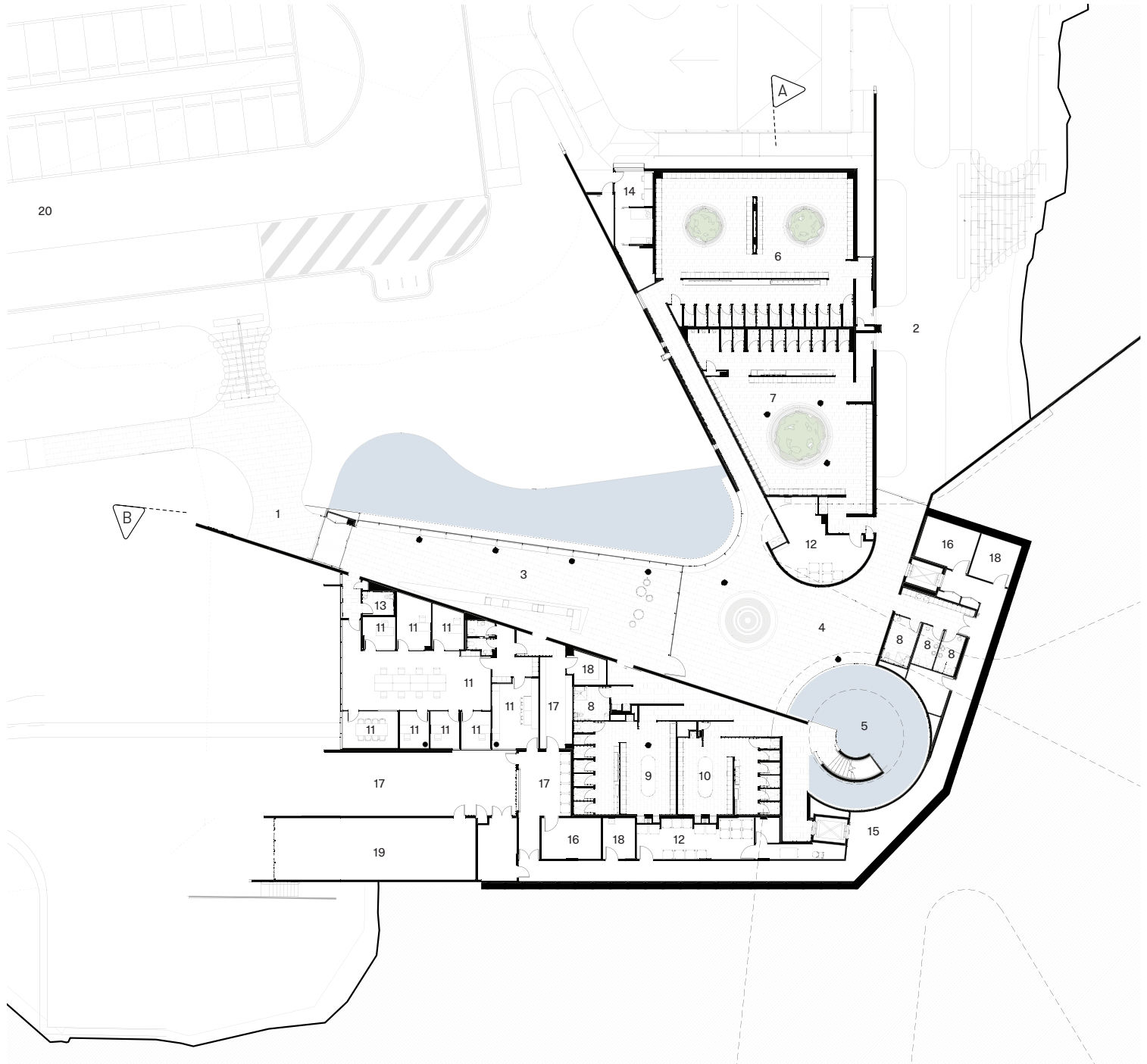
The colour palette of Alba is concise. Greys to charcoal, contrast with natural warm hues, however the organic materiality is a key connector between the interior and exterior. Handmade tiles, honey timber slim batons on ceilings, bluestone tiles underfoot, granite and timber decking pathways, and brass nickel fittings and fixtures outside and in. Lighting is understated, recessed under architraves, where floors meet walls and LED spotlights inset in ceilings shine down and, under water, radiate up. However, it is the use of natural lighting that is truly impressive. Windows provide full or diffused light and contain glimpses or expansive views, while skylights abound and cast light and shadow.

Mosca says, “This project is all about the experience. It’s about the user. It’s not about putting a big building on top of the hill, for us it was about putting it in the hill, making the landscape the hero and ensuring a memorable and restorative guest experience.”

The property can cater for some 400 guests and, while large, Hayball and Mala’s design, provides intimacy and privacy at every opportunity. Alba is a world-class luxury wellness destination that is already forging a place on the design, wellbeing and natural landscapes. Simply put, the experience of Alba is exceptional.

[hayball.com.au](http://hayball.com.au), [mala.net.au](http://mala.net.au)





- |                           |                                  |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 Public Entry            | 11 Office and Meeting Facilities |
| 2 Exit to Thermal Pools   | 12 Laundry                       |
| 3 Reception               | 13 Toilet Facilities             |
| 4 Reflection Zone         | 14 First Aid                     |
| 5 Reflection Pool         | 15 BOH                           |
| 6 Female Change Rooms     | 16 Waste                         |
| 7 Male Change Rooms       | 17 Loading                       |
| 8 Family Change Rooms     | 18 Store                         |
| 9 Treatment Female Change | 19 Plant                         |
| 10 Treatment Male Change  | 20 Visitor Parking               |



**At One  
With Nature**

The facilities include 31 pools and springs, including geothermal and herbal-infused botanical pools.

