



## THE BIG CHILL

Amid all the demands in the days before your wedding, the best bachelorette party may be one with an emphasis on relaxation. Ask your friends to host yours at one of these pampering spas. *By Bekah Wright*

### **fuel up for pleasure**

Get a healthy bite to eat with your gal pals at Voda Café before the group pampering begins.



**W**eddings are surrounded by a whirl of functions and events. So when it comes to celebrating upcoming nuptials with the girls, sometimes the best bachelorette party is about catching up, partaking in full-scale pampering, and taking time to simply chill. These spas have all the elements for just such a perfect get-together.

### CHILLING IN TOWN

#### **VODA SPA**

West Hollywood's coed Voda Spa welcomes brides and their friends for bachelorette festivities with Russian-style old-world charm complemented by sleek, contemporary décor and modern-day spa treatments. As if recognizing a girl's every need, Voda Café is in the entrance foyer, offering a healthy pre-treatment bite to eat. Have your pampering party in Voda's private VIP room, which requires a special code for entry. There, your senses will come to attention right away as your feet get a massage from the stone-inlaid floor. A skylight illuminates a lounging area featuring a cushioned banquette that fronts a Jacuzzi. A dry sauna and a massage room are nearby.

If you opt not to use the VIP area, adjourn upstairs to the women's locker room, heralded by its groovy orange glass lockers. The all-white rooftop deck, set off by planters of green bamboo, is ideal for sunning. Nearby, treatment rooms instill a sense of calm as candles flicker from nooks in the wall and elements from nature serve as works of art. Pure luxury comes in the form of treatments such as a "Caviar Wrap" using caviar extracts

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**bask in the afterglow** Following your luxurious treatments, settle into plush chaise lounges poolside to sip Voda Spa smoothies.

and serum to firm and nourish the skin.

The best place to sip post-treatment smoothies with your best girlfriends is around the swimming pool with its plush chaise lounges, skylights, and arched wooden rafters. Smoothies aren't the only things to sample here; a Korean scrub area, power showers, hydrotherapy rooms, and four specialty saunas reflecting spa philosophies from around the globe are also on tap. A must: partaking in the ancient practice of *platza*, during which a platza master uses a bundle of *venik* (Russian oak leaves) soaked in warm water to rhythmically tap and massage the skin, stimulating circulation and drawing out impurities. Afterward, a dip in the cold plunge pool brings on an adrenaline rush.

Compare experiences with the girls by the two-sided fireplace in an intimate seating area adjacent to the pool. Then head to the stylish V Room for a dinner of California cuisine. Adel

Chagar in hand, toast the bride with best wishes for a future filled with many bliss-filled days.

Voda Spa, 7700 Santa Monica Boulevard, West Hollywood, (323) 654-4411, [www.vodaspa.com](http://www.vodaspa.com).

## LE PETITE RETREAT

Set in a charming Spanish bungalow-style house built in 1924 and tucked away in sunny Larchmont Village, Le Petite Retreat Day Spa is a private hideaway just right for bachelorette parties. Best of all, the entire spa can be rented out for your special group.

Shrug off day-to-day chaos in lieu of fluffy robes. Round up everyone in the "living room" to catch up over cups of tea while seated in extra tall seagrass couches that promote a feeling of intimacy. Feel the effects of feng shui as the warmth from the fireplace soothes and the sound of the fountain calms. A day of getting spoiled has begun.

Out on a wooden deck, two green-and-white-striped bungalows allow for four concurrent spa treatments. Indoors, nine additional treatment rooms are available for use, as is a room set aside for soaking in an ergonomic copper tub. Take advantage of your bride status and head for some Cleopatra-style attention with a glass of champagne and a bath of milk, honey, and essential oils.

Sublime pairings of holistic spa treatments can be prearranged for your party by the spa concierge. Start with some time in the cedar sauna, followed by the Ionic Detoxifying Footbath. Next, get skin glowing with the Salt Glow & Herb Garden Wrapsody full-body scrub. Break for lunch (for larger parties only) brought in from one of numerous nearby restaurants such as the House of Chan Dara.

More pampering follows with a Jade Stone Massage using hot and cold stones. To add extra flutter for your big day, indulge in eyelash extensions. Bridesmaids can get into the act as well with lash curling and mascara coating. Something not to bat an eye over: planning return visits just because.

Le Petit Retreat Day Spa, 331 N. Larchmont Boulevard, Los Angeles, (323) 466-1028, [www.lprdayspa.com](http://www.lprdayspa.com).

## THE SPA AT THE BEVERLY WILSHIRE

The Beverly Wilshire is often host to many star-studded affairs, making its spa the preeminent place for the bride and her entourage to chill. Get into the spirit of things by donning sunglasses, lowering the convertible top, and heading down

Rodeo Drive to this Beverly Hills institution.

Ladies who lunch know the first stop after checking in at the spa is a cabana by the swimming pool. Of course, this isn't merely for sangria and lunch; poolside spa treatments like foot massages are also in store.

Leave the sunshine behind and head inside the spa for more in-depth treatments. The changing area's cobalt blue glass sinks, tuffet stools, and oval mirrors haloed by light are fitting for "A-listers" like you. Achieve a new level of coolness by visiting the Aromatherapy Crystal Steam Room, where light therapy is delivered via ceiling fiber optics, and a white quartz crystal proffers healing benefits of balance, inner harmony, and energy. Self-applied crushed ice from an ice fountain sends shivers up spines. Next up, the Experience Shower offers healthy doses of light, sound, and water therapy.

Keep whispered conversations rolling from the comfort of cushy chaises in the Tranquility Lounge. Sheer curtains provide privacy for those ducking the glitterati. Escorts soon arrive to lead members of your posse past a water wall that towers above an amethyst geode to respective treatment rooms. A spa menu choice to savor: the Kate Somerville Signature Facial, which is popular with celebs like Kate Walsh



## enlightened steam

Experience light therapy via ceiling fiber optics and a white quartz crystal in the Aromatherapy Crystal Steam Room at the Spa at the Beverly Wilshire.



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and Sandra Oh. Another fave is Personalized Time, customized treatments in specific time increments that are matched to spa-goers' personalities and preferences.

Pummeled and pampered to perfection, it's time for more revelry. Slip into outfits for the evening, then have hair and makeup touchups done at Lea Journo Salon. Glitz in place, make your 90210 debuts over dinner at Wolfgang Puck's CUT. After all, your BFFs (best friends forever) are a cut above the rest.

The Spa at the Beverly Wilshire, 9500 Wilshire Boulevard, Beverly Hills, (310) 385-7023, [www.fourseasons.com/beverlywilshire](http://www.fourseasons.com/beverlywilshire).



**Mexican merriment** Comprising more than 12 oceanfront acres in San Jose del Cabo, Mexico, the newly opened Cabo Azul Resort and Spa stands ready to treat you and your best girlfriends to an indulgent getaway.

## OUT-OF-TOWN CHILLING

### PAZ BODY & MIND SPA AT CABO AZUL RESORT & SPA

The perfect coupling of spa and party time with gal pals can be found a mere 2½-hour flight away at Cabo Azul Resort & Spa in San Jose del Cabo, Mexico. The newly opened oceanfront resort is pure hip. Its centerpiece tri-level infinity swimming pool boasts double beds set in the water, wicker cocoons for lounging, hammocks for lazing, and permanent thatched umbrellas on the beach under which you can toast the all-girl reunion that lies ahead. A romantic reminder of the reason for celebrating—the five-story open-air chapel that overlooks guests from the heart of the resort.

Check your group into the opulent three-bedroom Presidential Penthouse Suite. Designed by Dodd Mitchell, the chic décor reflects Mexico's sensuality with natural elements like the stone-polished floor combined with contemporary furniture and fabrics artfully swooped from the ceiling. A gourmet kitchen and adjoining dining area allow for keeping the weekend intimate, as does the living area with a flat-screen television for giggling over favorite movies. In the master bedroom, a sunken Jacuzzi lures for a pre-dinner soak.

Gather the ladies on the penthouse balcony to watch the resort glow as special urns and tiki torches are lit throughout the property. Head down to Flor de Noche for dinner, where inside the open-air *palapa*, thick ropes dangle from the ceiling, creating the sensation that you're dining beneath a giant jellyfish. Later, catch a taxi into town for dancing until dawn at Passion at Nikki Beach.

Begin the following day with a yoga class in the state-of-the-art gym. Your reward: together time in the Paz Body & Mind Spa. As ultra-

cool as the resort is, the spa feels like an über-luxe destination unto itself. The ceiling in the central corridor of the women's lounge looks as though it's made of undulating fish scales, and the pebbled floors and water features bring

nature indoors. Towel up for time in the steam room and sauna. From there, head to the all-white relaxation lounge. Much like a Mexican igloo, it offers modern, concrete loungers and banquettes for hanging out with the girls, as well as hot and cold plunge pools.

Keep group cohesiveness intact with treatments on the Crystal Terrace. A spiral staircase leads to this hidden rooftop oasis, where you'll find a Jacuzzi, shower, massage beds, and multiple areas for kicking back under an arbor laden with bougainvillea. Treat yourselves to the Paz Signature Massage, in which Swedish, Thai, and reflexology techniques combine with aromatherapy oils to work on sore muscles. Have lunch brought up to enjoy while indulging in the Azul Deluxe Manicure and Pedicure, which combines a hand and foot massage, lavender salt scrub, leg mask, and hot stones placed between the toes.

Thoroughly relaxed, take a sunset swim in the pool and enjoy cocktails at Flor de Noche's swim-up bar. As stars replace the sun, dine at Javier's Cantina & Grill. Long wooden tables there call for communing, while hurricane lanterns and the booming of the surf just steps away provide ambience. Close out the weekend by circling around Javier's firepit with nightcaps to plan a follow-up, post-wedding girls' getaway.

Paz Body & Mind Spa, Cabo Azul Resort & Spa, San Jose del Cabo, Mexico, (877) 216-CABO, [www.caboazulresort.com](http://www.caboazulresort.com).

### QUA BATHS & SPA AT CAESARS PALACE LAS VEGAS

With headliners like Bette Midler and Cher at its Colosseum theatre, Caesars Palace knows about catering to the fabulous. So pack your inner divas and head to Vegas for red-carpet treatment via the Qua Baths & Spa at Caesars Palace.

Set up stakes in the hotel's Augustus Towers. Suites decked out in aqua and brown set the mood for relaxation, as does the bathroom's deep-soaking marble tub with its own flat-screen television. Get the weekend started at the Forum Shops by stopping into Tiffany & Co. or Cartier to find accessories for the bridesmaids' dresses. Show off newly purchased bling during dinner at Bradley Ogden.

Keep the excitement over the impending wedding brimming by catching a performance of *The Beatles LOVE* by Cirque Soleil at The Mirage. Afterward, celebrate into the wee hours with VIP treatment in PURE Nightclub's

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**a savory dip** Dine under the huge poolside *palapa* or swim up to the bar for food service and drinks at Cabo Azul.

vibrant Red Room. While you're there, learn some new dance moves during a performance by the Pussycat Dolls.

Devote the ensuing day to supreme bliss. Head the girls into the Roman baths of Qua Baths & Spa for a healthy dose of social spa endeavors, including sampling the different temperatures of the various pools and the rainfall shower. A robe sauna keeps things warm between spa stops. Add to the rotation an additional soaking pool that's conveniently close to the Cedar Wood Sauna and Herbal Steam Room and the coed Laconium Room with built-in ergonomic banquettes. Chill out in the cool blue Arctic Ice Room, where it "snows" periodically and optic lights hang from the ceiling like icicles.

No two divas are alike, so the Qua offers the Signature Hourglass Treatment. Luxuriate in the 120-minute version of this custom-designed treatment in which you can combine a massage, facial, wrap...hey, this is Vegas—the sky's the limit. Reconvene in the Tea Lounge for more personalized service via the extensive tea menu from which brews are mixed by a tea sommelier. Exchange champagne toasts in the Crystal Room while having Swarovski crystal body art applied in preparation for a night on the town.

Just beyond Qua is Color, A Salon by Michael Boychuck. Inside, as a DJ spins tunes, you and your entourage will be escorted past glittery chandeliers and the crocodile Fendi reception desk for haircuts, color, manis, and pedis. Glammed and ready to take on Vegas, head to the Colosseum to sing along at the top of your lungs to a performance by Bette Midler or Cher with your own sisterhood of divas.

Qua Baths & Spa, Caesars Palace Las Vegas, Nevada, (866) 782-0655, [www.harrahs.com/qua](http://www.harrahs.com/qua). ❏