

TRAVEL

ADRIAN CAFFERY escapes from the daily grind – at a countryside wellness spa in Shropshire

I WAS promised the “ultimate all over body experience” that would leave me “walking on cloud nine”. And it would last a mind-blowing 90 minutes.

What man the wrong side of 40 could say no to that?

My “Top To Toe Ocean Radiance” treatment took place in the wellbeing spa at the Macdonald Hill Valley Hotel, on the edge of Whitchurch in Shropshire. It was three treatments in one.

A deep tissue back massage to help relieve tension, stress and aching muscles was followed by a “Power Booster Anti-Ageing Facial” and a “Sole Delight” treatment to nourish and condition my feet.

So often with massages, just as you start to relax and get over the awkwardness of being semi-naked with a stranger, it’s time to get your dressing gown back on. Not so with the Top To Toe.

With a full 90 minutes, I was able to sink into a deep sense of tranquility, the treatment mentally taking me back to that Maldives beach on my honeymoon some 12 years earlier – before the kids arrived!

With the soft music and the gentle fragrance of essential oils, I even stopped worrying about the fate of my football team, despite the fact they were losing 1-0 when the treatment began.

Beforehand, I was dubious of the claimed benefits of the massage but have to admit I really did feel rejuvenated as I walked back to my hotel room.

And, believe it or not, my daughter – without any prompting, so I’m told – said I looked younger!

The hotel’s Vital Health & Wellbeing Club also has a thermal suite, a Tranquility Area, a Mud Rasul Therapy Room and a 20m pool with parkland views from the loungers.

Its spa is a great place to unwind after a round of golf and the hotel has two well-regarded courses, both designed in 1975 by TV golfing stars Peter Alliss and Dave Thomas.

The 18-hole Emerald and Sapphire



■ Macdonald Hill Valley Hotel, Golf and Spa

■ View of the golf course from Adrian’s hotel room

■ Relaxation area in the hotel’s spa

Enjoy relaxation from top to toe...

NEED TO KNOW

■ **ADRIAN CAFFERY** and family were guests of Macdonald Hill Valley Hotel, Golf and Spa.
■ A one-night play and stay break including dinner, bed and breakfast and two rounds of golf costs from £79 per person.
■ A Rejuvenate Spa Break including dinner, bed and breakfast and 30-minute treatment

costs from £99 per person.
■ A Top To Toe Ocean Radiance treatment costs £75, Monday to Thursday, and £80, Friday to Sunday.
■ A full range of other treatments such as manicures, pedicures and tans is also available.
■ To book call 0344 879 9049 or visit www.macdonaldhotels.co.uk

courses make Macdonald Hill Valley Hotel, Golf & Spa one of the top 10 golf venues in the UK.

The Emerald championship course is a par 73 which sweeps around undulating fairways, through natural

water hazards and strategically placed bunkers, presenting a real challenge to experienced and mid-level players.

The par 66 Sapphire course aims to hone the skills of less experienced and veteran golfers in the finer points of the short game.

The first tee was just below the Juliet balcony of our second floor room and we could follow the golf balls down the stunning fairway, with the Welsh hills in the distance.

Our spacious, four-star room was bright and modern with comfortable beds, separate bathtub and shower, free wi-fi, a desk, laptop safe, and tea and coffee tray.

Dinner and breakfast were served at the relaxed Borders Restaurant

and on both occasions we managed to grab the best seats in the adjoining conservatory with views to water features. The dishes earned top marks.

After breakfast, it was my wife’s turn for 90 minutes of pampering and she was equally impressed by the Top To Toe experience, although it didn’t knock quite so many years off her as it did me (don’t tell her I said that)!

Our overnight stay was not without its hiccups.

My vegetarian daughter was served a carbonara dish instead of the macaroni cheese we ordered, while the bin in our room had not been emptied on arrival, and you really don’t want to know what was in it!

But overall, the hotel makes for a great weekend break, whether your idea of chilling is a pool and a pamper or a round with Aliss (or at least a course designed by the broadcasting legend).



■ The hot stones treatment in the spa

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