

EXPERIENCE...

Whether you're in sunny Cape Town or wintry London, take time to recharge and unwind.

Should the Mrs. mention a spa retreat pour deux, be the first to suggest the spa at Babylonstoren, in the Drakenstein valley. It's not the usual steam-and-cream experience but rather an escape to an idyll where understated luxury meets country calm. And then there's the wine. A working wine estate, Babylonstoren is producing vintages worthy of a place in any true oenophile's cellar. We recommend the 2014 Mourvedre Rosé; on the palate, there's a combination of red berries and petal flavours in this salmon pink nectar. Once your vino is secured, rev up your romance with a couples treatment in the traditional Hammam, best described, as, er...stimulating. Expect his and hers cleansing (a scrub, soap wash and massage), all part of this ancient Turkish purification ritual. After some good (clean) fun, zone out together in the shady garden, fresh juice within reach.

Travel writer Sharon Feinstein took a brief respite from 'stressful London' to visit Chewton Glen's luxury country house and spa in Hampshire. Located at the edge of the New Forest National Park, within walking distance from the sea, this Relais & Châteaux member property was voted one of the World's Best Hotels by Condé Nast Traveller readers in 2014. 'Whatever your aches and pains, the Roman-themed hydrotherapy pool is bound to give relief with six different water jets of varying pressure and positioning. There's even an open-air whirlpool which we braved in freezing temperatures,' she says. 'My larch and beech anti-ageing facial, and full body massage with mud wrap and salt scrub, were utterly relaxing and made my skin glow like a burnished lamp.'

babylonstoren.com; chewtonglen



GET YOUR SKATES ON

The best thing to do at Christmas in London is ice skating at Somerset House or Hampton Court Palace, writes Sharon Feinstein. Après-skate, Sharon suggests a cocktail, Welsh Rarebit or hot chocolate at Fortnum's Lodge or the Skate Lounge.... If it's spectacle you're after, a walk down Oxford Street is a must. This year's Christmas lights will see 1 778 snowball-like decorations (and their 750 000 LED lightbulbs) lit up once again for what is the fifty-sixth year the road has been decorated for the festive period.