



Primland

the spa at primland *virginia*

"From the moment you enter through the [Primland] gates, you feel at peace," my facialist, Brenda, told me. I reflected on my entrance the day prior. As we drove through the north gates and followed Primland's serene, winding roads, relaxation started to set in as I observed the lush greenery and the scent of a storm lingering in the fresh mountain air. Primland encourages you to reconnect with nature and pay attention to the rapidly shifting moments—blink an eye, and you might miss the flash of a deer's tail, a tortoise camouflaged on the roadside, or a shooting star.

Primland is a vast property roughly the size of Bermuda boasting 12,000 acres of pristine natural beauty nestled in southern Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains, nearly 3,000 feet above sea level. The late Billionaire Didier Primat had a vision for the land, which included a world-class golf course and luxury lodge. Last summer, his family completed the 26-room Lodge, which combines a sophisticated European aesthetic with sustainable design and includes a two-story wine bar and private observatory.

In July 2010, the Primat family opened Primland's Spa. Garance Primat, one of the Primat family owners, and longtime family friend Sylvie Keo, who trained the staff and is one of France's top consultants, spearheaded the project. The Spa combines Native American holistic remedies with European spa therapies, which is reflected in both the treatments and aesthetic. I learned that the medicine wheel, which hangs prominently on the wall leading to the treatment rooms, is made of turquoise and crystals from France and was constructed by a local Native American. She explained that Indians believe the turquoise stone is a piece of

sky that has fallen to the earth, connecting spiritual and earth energy. "We use turquoise in our treatments because Indians believe the stone harmonizes the body, skin, and spirit," Garance said.

Primland's Spa is 8,134 square feet and houses four treatment rooms named for the

elements; a couple's room with Jacuzzi and chromotherapy; a yoga and Pilates studio; a relaxation room with amazing views that transport you outside; a manicure/pedicure/hair salon; men's and women's locker rooms, each with separate Hamams (Turkish baths); and Spa Horizon, the latest addition to the Clair Azur mosaic spas, tiled with turquoise Emaux de Briare mosaics. There is also a stunning chlorine-free indoor swimming pool carved from local Virginia granite and a fully equipped Technogym fitness room.

Garance collaborated with the Native Americans on the Spa's treatments, decoration, and design. She consulted native descendants and local historians, gathering information to make the most authentic environment possible in order to pay homage to the land that was once home to the Cherokee and seven other tribes, land from which the Indians drew their ability to heal and nurture. "They will not tell you what to do," Garance said. "They will guide you, but you have to discover it for yourself."

I was lucky to discover one of the Spa's signature treatments, the "Shenandoah, Daughter of the Stars" facial, inspired by the American Indian legend of Shenandoah, a river and valley so beautiful that the stars in the heavens chose to place their brightest jewels there. My facialist, Brenda, separated my toes with smooth warm river rocks and placed larger stones on the chakra meridians; she balanced my "Native American birthstone," amethyst, on my navel, a point which represents life and birth. Using Naturopathica products, she cleansed and polished my face, then used a refining pear-fig enzyme peel, followed by a facial massage with turquoise stones. Each facial is highly individualized, and caters to what the therapist senses each person needs. "A facial is touch, environment, and products," Brenda explained. "The rest is a dance between you and me." primland.com/spa-well-being/

—Kristin Vuković