



BOUNDLESS BREAKS

SAVE ON A SPA BREAK AT WEST CLIFF HOTEL & SPA

Spa Energising Escape
From £160 pp*
2 nights including
dinner and breakfast,
plus two treatments.

Simply Spa Break
From £79 pp*
1 night including
dinner and breakfast,
plus a treatment.

Blissful Spa Break
From £146 pp*
2 nights including
dinner, breakfast, and
afternoon tea, plus
two treatments.

Relaxing Spa Break
From £73 pp*
1 night including
breakfast and
afternoon tea,
plus a treatment.

*Prices reflect the 20% member discount that applies to all stays. Members also enjoy free spa access, free parking, late checkout, and 10% off additional treatments. boundless.co.uk/boundlessbreaks

*All prices based on two people sharing.



“As the rising sun streams through the roof, it’s easy to imagine that I’m in warmer climes”

Warm water swirls around me and I’m surrounded by Grecian-style pillars. Time feels suspended, with the incessant ping of emails and notifications banished. But this isn’t the Med. It’s Bournemouth in midwinter.

The seaside town may be celebrated for its summertime charm, but I’ve been embracing these darkest months – a time for rest and recovery, which is perfectly aligned with Bournemouth’s roots.

Founded in 1810 by Lewis Tregonwell, Bournemouth blossomed into a fashionable spa resort where the rich flocked to be revitalised by the sea breeze and pine-scented air. Its motto, *Pulchritudo et Salubritas* (‘beauty and health’), speaks to this – a pledge my partner and I are putting to the test with a spa break at the Boundless-owned West Cliff Hotel.

The underground spa is a sanctuary from winter’s bite, the noise of daily life dissolving into the gentle whirring of water and soft, ambient soundscapes. We’re drawn to the cobalt-blue pool, which glows with an otherworldly light, before pattering over to

the steam room to inhale lungfuls of hot vapour, then into the sauna for a blast of dry heat.

Next door, a low-lit lounge invites us to simply be – one guest appears to have succumbed to deep sleep. Our favourite, though, is the aromatherapy cave. Lemongrass perfumes the air as we settle onto warm tiles and gaze up to a light-studded ceiling, ready to drift off. I could have spent hours just doing the spa circuit, but I’d booked a head massage. Lights dimmed, my therapist Anna works her magic on my knotty neck and shoulders, before turning to my scalp. It’s the mental decluttering I didn’t know I needed.

REJUVENATING TREATS

This much pampering stirs up an appetite and, after freshening up in our rainfall shower, we head to the sleek, sapphire-hued restaurant. The menu offers both healthy and heartier fare; we’re particularly impressed by the vegetarian choices. I pick crispy vegetable tempura, a fragrant Thai red curry, and zingy lemon berry cheesecake, accompanied by a velvety merlot, as recommended by our attentive waiter, Alex. Later, we drift into the lounge and sip on G&Ts featuring locally distilled Conker gin. It’s delicious – perhaps next time we’ll book the distillery tour package...

A solid eight hours’ sleep later, we pull back the curtains in our room, a fusion of modern and classic. I stare out over the tropical-themed garden, which

beams back with misplaced optimism (Alex had likened it to Ibiza in summer). But summer can wait.

Determined to balance indulgence with more energising means of rejuvenation, I take a dip in a second pool, housed in a light-flooded conservatory, while my partner hits the gym. The water is balmy and, with the rising sun streaming through the roof, it’s easy to imagine I’m in warmer climes.

Invigorated, we refuel with pastries and fruit then amble up to Westbourne for a nosy around the independent boutiques. Next, it’s a leisurely stroll through Bournemouth’s gardens, which cut a slender, surprisingly secluded path through the urban sprawl, their towering pines a legacy of the thousands once planted for their therapeutic properties. We pause to warm up at a cosy little café, Fika, embracing its namesake Swedish ritual of taking a moment to slow down and enjoy a hot drink and snack (a London Fog and cinnamon roll for me). After the 15-minute walk back to the hotel, we flop onto our super-king-size bed before surrendering to another round of spa indulgences.

WINTER WONDERLAND

We can’t resist sampling the afternoon tea, so, bundled up in our cotton robes, we settle into the airy,

The treats keep coming at the West Cliff Hotel – from gentle paddling in restful waters to tasty teatime temptations, there’s so much to try that will boost your winter wellness

coastal-themed lounge and nibble on finger sandwiches, scones and mini desserts, while jazz plays softly. Then it’s back to the spa again, where we lose track of time until our stomachs begin to rumble.

Our tired legs are grateful we’re spoilt for choice on West Cliff’s doorstep. We end up at Da Mario (damariopizza.co.uk), a buzzy family-run pizzeria firing up pizzas delicious enough to rival those on Italian soil. Tiramisu follows – two-for-one with our free tastecard, as Boundless members – before supping a pint at the micropub next door.

The next day is our last – but we have time for one more dip in the pool. A dose of sea air seems the perfect finale (it’s what drew people here in the first place, after all), so we hop the 15 minutes down to the beach. The summer crowds have long melted away, and while it’s certainly blustery it feels all the more invigorating for it.

A seaside spa retreat might just be my new favourite winter wellness ritual – and it should be yours, too. ■

Your expert



KELLY RAY

After spending endless hours staring at her screen, staff writer Kelly jumped at the chance for an escape. This midweek dose of coastal calm and serious pampering was the perfect remedy.

