

JULY | AUGUST 2019

DEPARTURES

The
Hotels
Issue





From left: Susanne Kaufmann in front of the Hotel Post Bezau; a new wing houses a skincare lab.



Pure and Simple Beauty guru Susanne Kaufmann has transformed her family's traditional Austrian hotel into a modern-day wellness destination. *by Gisela Williams*

SUSANNE KAUFMANN'S cult-favorite skincare line can be found around the globe, the minimalist products lining the shelves at eco-beauty boutiques like Credo and spas at the Surf Club in Miami and Bürgenstock Resort in Switzerland. But what most of her fans don't realize is that the line was born at the Hotel Post Bezau, in the Austrian mountain village of Bezau, a traditional Alpine property that has been in her family for five generations.

After more than 20 years of quietly transforming the 58-room retreat, she relaunched it as Hotel Post Bezau by

Susanne Kaufmann in June, marking its culmination as a destination as sustainable as her organic products.

Kaufmann launched her namesake line after having experimented with the ingredients in her youth, when she was growing up in the verdant Bregenz Forest, a place where knowledge of natural remedies is passed down from generation to generation. She foraged ingredients like chamomile, St. John's wort, and horse chestnut to create serums and oils, and collaborated with Ingo Metzler, a local dairy farmer, to turn excess whey into lotions and soaps (he now produces all the Susanne Kaufmann

products in a state-of-the-art lab on his property nearby). Meanwhile, she collaborated with her brother, architect Oskar Leo Kaufmann, to expand the family lodge, adding a sleek wing of glass and wood for additional rooms and a cube-shaped, three-floor spa that contains an indoor pool and saunas.

To the relief of many of the hotel's loyal guests, who go for traditional Chinese medicine or to do Pilates, the changes are subtle. Kaufmann focused on restoring the space with natural materials and making behind-the-scenes practices far more environmentally conscious. "We have



The pool deck at Hotel Post Bezau by Susanne Kaufmann.

invested a lot of energy and resources into these changes, but many of them will be invisible to the guests," she said. She replaced flower arrangements with

potted plants, bottled the resort's spring water in reusable glass vessels, and is working on a line of organic cleaning materials. She's also hired two local farmers to create extensive vegetable gardens behind the hotel that will supply the restaurant.

With regard to extending her philosophy beyond her products: "There's a saying in German that translates as

'Are you comfortable in your own skin?'" says Kaufmann. "For me, that's the point." *Rooms from \$450, three-night minimum; hotelpostbezau.com.*



Bliss in a Bottle

New spa products worth toting home.

SYDNEY-BASED Subtle Energies, a holistic Ayurvedic skincare brand, makes its North American debut at the **Peninsula Hotels'** spas in New York City, Chicago, and Beverly Hills (peninsula.com). Heeding requests from guests to translate its wellness offerings into take-home products, **Aman** (aman.com) has debuted a 30-product line of serums, creams, oils, and balms. **Dorado Beach, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve** in Puerto Rico (ritzcarlton.com) reopened last fall with its own line of plant-based spa products.

Mind and Body Beautiful

Three spa debuts that take a holistic approach to wellness.



SHOU SUGI BAN HOUSE, THE HAMPTONS

What do you get when you mix the rustic charm of cottage living with the *wabi-sabi* of a *ryokan*? The Hamptons' newest wellness retreat is the area's most full-service destination yet, with 13 rooms (low beds, Japanese soaking tubs), traditional gardens, and treatments like Watsu water massages and Reiki. *From \$4,650 for three nights; shousugibanhouse.com.*



BLACKBERRY MOUNTAIN, TENNESSEE

The iconic foodie getaway Blackberry Farm makes a foray into wellness with a second property: 28 cabins and cottages set on 5,200 acres in the Great Smoky Mountains. Along with a spa and activities from aerial yoga to forest bathing, there are two restaurants, Three Sisters and Firetower, that continue the resort's pioneering culinary tradition. *Rooms from \$995; blackberrymountain.com.*



MIRAVAL AUSTIN, TEXAS

The popular resort that began in the Arizona desert has opened its second outpost. On 200 acres in the Hill Country, the 117-room retreat mixes adventure with mindfulness: There's equine therapy, archery, kayaking, and wall climbing, plus a 30-room spa with treatments that range from wellness counseling to craniosacral therapy. *Rooms from \$529; miravalaustin.com.*