

Canadian Gems
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As you might already know, British Columbia embodies exquisite extremes of urban beauty and wilderness paradise. Along with Vancouver's urban delights and wonderful waterfront, there are Whistler's old-growth forests, super-long ski seasons and radiantly lovely summers. No wonder the region attracts legions of spa-goers, mountain bikers, skiers, snowboarders, yogis and foodies.

Vancouver and Whistler are changing at warp speed. As the site of the 2010 Winter Olympics, this formerly low-key resort village is morphing into a more upscale scene. There are several new hotels in town, including Adara, a groovy boutique ski lodge. Numerous high-end stores are moving in as well. As the gateway city to the 2010 Olympics, Vancouver is also experiencing a mini building boom.

In a city filled with sailors, skiers and mountain bikers, it's hardly surprising that Vancouver is also a yogi's paradise. They have to unwind somehow from all those outdoor sports, and Studio 55 is the place they go. Professionals, mothers, overweight corporate types and hipsters whom this writer affectionately terms 'nose ring people' all practice yoga here in a room abloom with dozens of green plants.

Like the yoga scene, Vancouver's spa culture is highly diverse. For superb facials, massages and other treatments, head to Skoah. What the word means, I have no idea, but the Facialicious facial treatment feels like a purifying miracle for the face, shoulders and neck. For a classic steam bath where you can cleanse and relax as women have been doing in *hammams* for centuries, glide over to Miraj Hammam,. Try the Hammam Gomage body scrub and wash after a long day of walking. It's also ideal for jet lag recovery.