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Clockwise from above: the spa at Les Fermes de Marie; Gazelli's Triple Youth range; Pure Altitude treatments harness the magic of the mountains; the calm surrounds of the Omorovicza spa in Budapest

THE BEAUTY OF TRAVEL

Behind some of today's most unique and pioneering spas are passionate and formidable families, says *Gabriella Le Breton*



Omorovicza, Budapest, Hungary

It's impossible to ignore a love story, particularly if it's as romantic as the one behind Hungarian skincare brand Omorovicza. Stephen, a descendent of the long-established Omorovicza family – who built the breathtaking Racz spa on the site of a medieval healing spring in Budapest – met the stylish US diplomat Margaret while she was working in the Hungarian capital. During their courtship, he took her to some of the city's grand old spas and, as love blossomed, so too did their idea for a new spa and skincare range that harnessed the benefits of the mineral-rich thermal waters of Budapest's baths. They worked with a Nobel prize-winning laboratory to create their popular and effective anti-ageing skincare and at the flagship spa on the prestigious Andrassy út, you'll be looked after by expertly trained therapists. Whether you go for a cellulite-busting Dimple Dissolve treatment or a more indulgent Illuminating Facial with a copper peel and traditional Hungarian massage, you'll enjoy instant benefits. www.omorovicza.co.uk

The Spa at Les Fermes de Marie, Megève, France

When Jocelyne Sibuet opened her first spa, La Ferme de Beauté, in the elegant resort of Megève 24 years ago, little did she know that she was starting a family spa dynasty. France's first mountain spa, La Ferme took its name from the ancient Alpine shepherds' huts and stables that Jocelyne and her husband, Jean-Louis, painstakingly dismantled and

rebuilt into a hotel. Now called Pure Altitude, Jocelyne's first spa has become the flagship in a portfolio of boutique hotels and spas dotted across France. Having pioneered the "cowshed chic" vibe, she also spearheaded the use of Alpine flowers, minerals, herbs and glacial water in her coveted range of Pure Altitude beauty products. For the past decade, Jocelyne's daughter, Marie, has worked alongside her in the development of the Pure Altitude brand, creating a signature line rich in edelweiss and extracts of 50 other Alpine plants. Ensnconed in treatment rooms clad with silver birch trees and sheepskins, lose yourself to skin-softening scrubs with malachite and rhodochrosite "snow crystals" or mineral-infused "velvet snow" body wraps. The candle ritual sees a coconut butter candle, fragranced with the Pure Altitude signature scent, melted to give a deeply nourishing body massage. www.pure-altitude.com

Gazelli House, London, England

All spa eyes are on London this spring, as South Kensington welcomes Europe's very first Gazelli House. One of Azerbaijan's finest exports, Gazelli is a range of skincare products created by Dr Zarifa Hamzayeva, a leader in the field of genetics and preventative medicine, based around her breakthrough ingredient, Gazelli White Oil. Working closely with her daughter, Jamila Askarova, Dr Hamzayeva has developed a select number of treatments that have, until now, only been available at Harrods and Josh Wood at the Lansdowne. Drawing inspiration from the elegant Gazelli House she launched in her hometown of Baku in the 1990s, Dr Hamzayeva is set to take London by storm with the new Gazelli House on Walton Street. Plump for a nurturing White Oil ritual and you'll never look back: after first immersing your body in volcanic mud, you'll be swathed in a silk wrap and massaged before enjoying a rejuvenating Gazelli White Oil facial. www.gazelliskincare.com

