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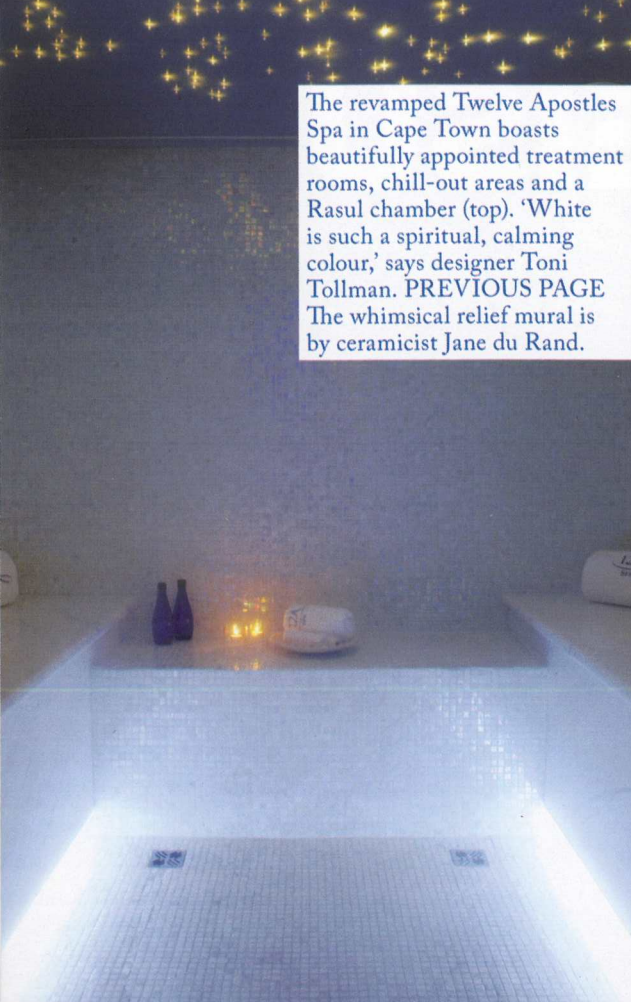
LEISURE

in your element

The spa at Cape Town's Twelve Apostles Hotel has evolved from moody grotto to bright, white delight

Text **Leigh Robertson** Styling **Jeanne Botes** Photographs **Greg Cox**

The revamped Twelve Apostles Spa in Cape Town boasts beautifully appointed treatment rooms, chill-out areas and a Rasul chamber (top). 'White is such a spiritual, calming colour,' says designer Toni Tollman. PREVIOUS PAGE The whimsical relief mural is by ceramicist Jane du Rand.



When Cape Town's Twelve Apostles Hotel opened its dramatic grotto-esque spa several years ago, it was considered a feat of engineering, the space having literally been carved out of the mountain. Perfectly in sync with the hotel's unique location on the pristine Bakoven coastline, set between the towering Twelve Apostles mountain range and the ocean, the spa offered the sort of introverted nurturing experience that comes with wallowing in pools of warm bubbling water in a soothing cave-like environment. Its essence was earthy, primal – in striking contrast to its new, dazzling white incarnation that looks to light and air as its elemental references.

Part of The Red Carnation Hotel Collection, founded and owned by Bea Tollman, The Twelve Apostles was next in line to be reinvented, design-savvy daughter Toni having launched the award-winning spa at Durban's Oyster Box Hotel and, more recently, extensively upgrading the spa at Bushmans Kloof Wilderness Reserve and Wellness Retreat in the Cederberg. Working with her sister Victoria in the conceptualisation of the spas, and in conjunction with Cape Town firm M2K Architecture, Toni says it was a matter of evolution. She wanted to reconnect with The Twelve Apostles' closeness to nature, with the spa fully embracing 'the energy of the sea and the mountain'. And so the space has been lightened and brightened to offer an altogether more uplifting ambience.

'We took away rather than added to it,' explains Toni. 'Rock was removed and normal ceilings installed, adding more height and making it feel less oppressive.' Mindful of the value of resourcefulness, she painted 'what I could' white (though there are occasional flashes of petrol blue), from the walls to antique Chinese screens that were part of the original interior. Exquisite details abound, such as a series of relief murals by renowned ceramicist Jane du Rand.

Great aesthetics aside, it's the quality of the treatments on offer that makes a spa shine. Part of the revamp has included a new spa menu, intensive training and a specially developed, all-indigenous product range, B|Africa. Whether you experience it in the white chambers of the new-look spa or in a gazebo amid mountain fynbos, frankly, you won't want to leave. □

The Twelve Apostles Hotel and Spa, 021-437-9000, 12apostleshotel.com

LEISURE HOT SPOT

Built into the mountain, the once cave-like space has been transformed into what Toni calls 'a perfect white crystal grotto'. 'People look to this spa as a sanctuary, a place to restore harmony,' she says.

