

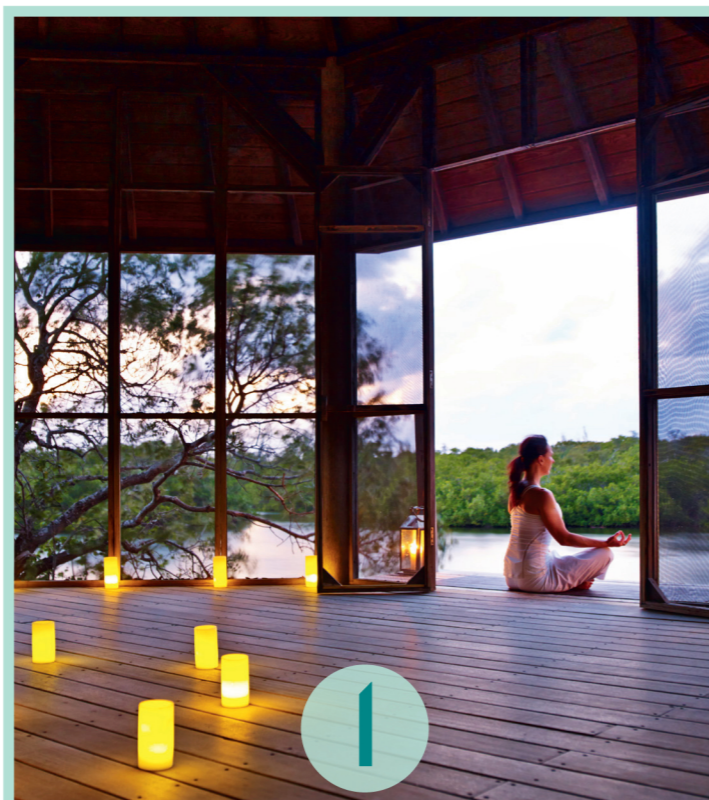
# of the BEST

## WELLNESS HOLIDAYS

Pamper your clients with **Laura French's** guide to the Caribbean's premier feelgood properties

**W**ellness tourism is booming – the sector will be worth \$919 billion by 2022, according to the Global Wellness Institute – and the Caribbean hasn't escaped the trend.

Quite the opposite. It's home to some of the world's foremost wellness properties, and that's little surprise. Cerulean seas, sugar-white sands and exotic rainforests make for ideal territory when it comes to boosting the endorphins and rejuvenating the cells – and from rustic eco-lodges buried in the rainforest to all-out wellness weeks that go beyond skin-deep, there are plenty of options. Here are some of our favourites.



1

### COMO PARROT CAY, TURKS & CAICOS

If the blue seas and caster-sugar sands of private island resort Como Parrot Cay aren't enough to lull clients into a hypnotic daze, its Shambhala spa should be. Holistic therapies are the order of the day here, with Ayurvedic massages, aromatherapy treatments, Pilates classes and more on offer, alongside yoga retreats for the dedicated and an organic menu for those wanting to take it up another level. "Guests learn yoga and meditation techniques that they can continue in the long term," says Jenny Basham, Caribbean product manager for Carrier.

**Book it:** Carrier offers seven nights' full-board from £6,625 based on two sharing, including a six-night yoga retreat plus flights on May 3. [carrier.co.uk](http://carrier.co.uk)



2

### ZOETRY AGUA PUNTA CANA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Horse riding, dance lessons, aqua spinning, culinary classes and meditation are all on the agenda at Zoetry's Punta Cana outpost, putting the emphasis on all-round wellness that goes beyond the spa. Not that the spa is to be outshone – saunas, 'bubble beds', sensation showers and a big indoor pool are among its offerings. "It's the finishing touches that stand out here," says Funway Holidays product destination manager Malcolm Davies. They include free daily massages, complimentary horse rides and personalised treatments.

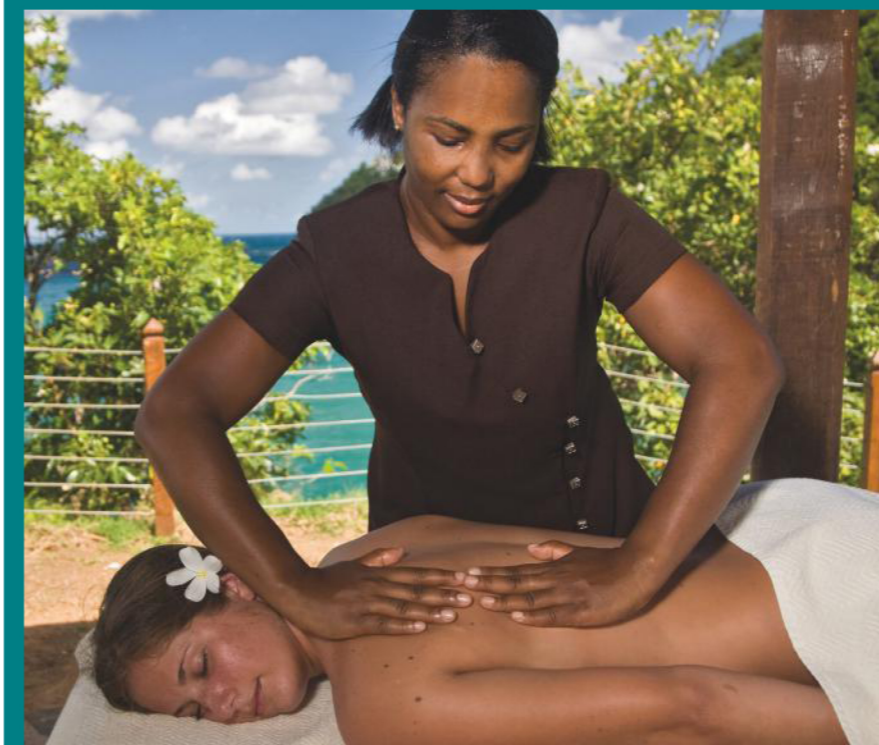
**Book it:** Funway Holidays offers seven nights' all-inclusive from £2,095, including flights from Heathrow and based on two sharing, departing July 10. [funway4agents.co.uk](http://funway4agents.co.uk)

3

### CAP MAISON, SAINT LUCIA

Clients suffering from insomnia? Direct them to Saint Lucia's Cap Maison, where they'll find a dedicated sleep retreat offering sessions with a sleep expert, alongside breathing workshops, meditation, personalised food menus and relaxation treatments, from aromatherapy massages to Japanese-inspired reiki healing. Outdoor activities, such as hiking the Pitons, jogging along the coast and visiting the Botanical Gardens, are also included, while comfy beds with sleep-inducing pillow scents seal the deal. Beyond the retreat there's plenty more to lure guests, including a secluded sandy beach, top-class spa treatments and a championship golf course right around the corner.

**Book it:** Elegant Resorts offers a week in a Garden View Room from £3,330, including flights, transfers and the sleep retreat package, departing June 10. [elegantresorts.co.uk](http://elegantresorts.co.uk)



4

### HERMITAGE BAY, ANTIGUA

A wellness break doesn't have to mean an intense retreat week, and for those looking to unwind in peaceful, natural surroundings without a schedule, suggest Antigua's hidden-away Hermitage Bay. There are plenty of wellness options for those who want them – including healing rituals in the frangipani-fringed Garden Spa, as well as complimentary meditation and Pilates classes on the spa deck – but it's just as acceptable to while away the hours staring out over the cerulean sea, surrounded by acres of calming tropical greenery.

**Book it:** Kuoni offers seven nights' all-inclusive from £4,199, based on two sharing a Sea View Garden Suite, with flights from Gatwick and transfers in May. [kuoni.co.uk](http://kuoni.co.uk)



ASK THE  
expert

“When it comes to selling a wellness holiday in the Caribbean, agents need to understand what their clients are looking for and ensure the right journey is explained to them. There are many types of wellness holidays and it’s important that the journey they present to their client reflects those goals. We have seen the industry grow and evolve over the past 30 years. In the beginning there was a strong focus on fitness and exercise. However, over the years, as the industry has developed, we’ve seen much more of a focus on overall wellbeing, and there’s no one target age – our clients range from 20 to 85. The concept of wellness is now widely known and because of this, living your best life is a concept for both young and old.”

Andrew Barnard, deputy managing director, BodyHoliday



6 AMANERA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

It’s all about natural healing methods at this tranquil Aman resort, with boat trips to bird sanctuaries, jungle hikes and mountain treks all on offer, alongside tennis, horse riding and kite surfing, plus golf at an adjoining 18-hole course. But the most unusual offering? Its range of medicinal herbal treatments, inspired by the shamanic traditions of the island’s indigenous Taino people, and the *palo santo* smudging ceremony, an ancient Hispanic ritual which uses the aromas of smoke from sacred wood, touted for its healing properties. The property is perched on a cliff, so if the rest isn’t enough to calm mind and body, the serene blues should be. **Book it:** Room-only rates start at £1,665, including all taxes, based on two guests sharing. [aman.com](http://aman.com)

5



KIMPTON SEAFIRE RESORT & SPA, GRAND CAYMAN

If ‘vino and vinyasa’ sounds like your clients’ ideal combination, look no further than Grand Cayman’s stylish Kimpton Seafire Resort & Spa, which offers yoga sessions followed by a daily wine hour in the library. Stand-up paddleboard yoga, beach fit, box fit and various other fitness sessions are also on tap (all included in the price), plus free bike hire, while at the spa you’ll find aromatherapy massages, reflexology treatments, a hammam and plenty more (look out for the quartz beds, complete with healing stones designed to enhance the treatments).

**Book it:** Rates start from £332 per night. [seafireresortandspa.com](http://seafireresortandspa.com)

7



CORAL REEF, BARBADOS

Bougainvillea-filled gardens, idyllic cottages, white-sand shores and an exceptional spa complete with private terraces in the treatment rooms – welcome to Coral Reef. It’s a wellbeing haven any time of year, with facials, foot rituals, massages and a ‘mojito magic body scrub’ all on the menu – but come for one of the ‘wellness weeks’ (March 7-14, August 8-15 and October 24-31 this year) and you’ll find even more, with activities spanning Zumba, sunset yoga, Pilates and tennis. For extra insight, guests can opt for a full-body composition assessment and get a personalised meal plan from a nutritionist.

**Book it:** Abercrombie & Kent offers seven nights in a Garden Room or Garden Cottage from £2,000, based on two sharing, including breakfast, transfers and flights. [abercrombiekent.co.uk](http://abercrombiekent.co.uk)

8

BODYHOLIDAY, SAINT LUCIA

No list would be complete without the renowned BodyHoliday, where a daily timetable of wellness-focused activities meets nutritious menus, complimentary daily spa treatments and a host of themed months, including yoga, fitness, dancing, sailing and more. Recent updates include the plant-based I-tal restaurant – where guests can pick their own produce before cooking it up into a wholesome dish – and a new partnership with the Wellness Music Festival, which will be bringing global artists together with spa treatments and health-focused events to nearby Pigeon Island from September 21-27.

**Book it:** A Festival Package including daily spa treatments, VIP festival entrance and access to the launch event costs from £2,350, based on two staying all-inclusive in a luxury room, with flights from Gatwick. [thebodyholiday.com/wmfstlucia](http://thebodyholiday.com/wmfstlucia)



PICTURES: Mikael Lamber, Tom Sawyer, Don Riddle, Andreas von Einsiedel, Steve Turvey

BEST OF THE REST

**Sandals Royal Barbados:** A 15,000sq ft spa boasting fitness classes, personal trainers, rooftop yoga and plenty of treatments puts this resort property high on the list for anyone looking to be properly pampered. There’s also a new plant-based menu for those embracing the vegan trend.

**Castara Retreats, Tobago:** For those wanting to embrace Tobago’s restorative powers, look to this family-run eco-resort, set on a leafy hillside with personalised massages and daily yoga sessions on hand, plus a string of dedicated retreat weeks.

**Mandarin Oriental Canouan, The Grenadines:** In true Mandarin Oriental style, this property boasts an impressive spa – with treatment rooms on a hillside overlooking the Atlantic Ocean – plus watersports, yoga retreats and more, all set on a secluded island ringed by the Caribbean’s largest living coral reef.