



# Spa visit leads to epiphany in **Westport**

By WILLIAM ALLEN

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I NEVER saw myself as the type of person who would get much out of a visit to a spa, but that's all changed.

They say that **Spa Sula** in **Westport** - Limavady's beautiful twin town in Co Mayo - is the envy of many other hotels across Ireland, and I can tell you why. It's a fantastic experience - and one that I will travel back to **Westport** just to repeat.

There are many other reasons to travel to there, of course. It's got some of the most breathtaking scenery anywhere in Ireland, and its streets are packed with lovely bars and cafes, and a plethora of locally owned and fascinating little speciality shops with their multi-coloured fronts that you could spend days wandering in and out of.

And is there any town anywhere in Ireland which can offer such a scenic backdrop as **Westport**, with Croke Patrick towering majestically over it?

For the sports-minded golf and fishing are big attractions but if, like me, you just want to while away the time relaxing somewhere with fantastic views, then **Westport** offers that as well - in abundance. That's how I get rid of the stresses of work and all those other little problems life sometimes bombards you with - go somewhere nice, do as little as possible and just enjoy the scenery.

At least that was my modus operandi until I last visited **Westport** for two nights: things changed when I stayed at the **Castlecourt Hotel** and had the chance to try a massage at **Spa Sula**. First, anyone getting one of the many treatments on offer gets to relax in the thermal suite - and I defy anyone to enter that suite and to emerge anything less than totally relaxed. It was an eye-opener for me and now I find myself wondering why I never tried anything like that before.

I could probably come up with a few excuses, but all of them would be nonsense. I suppose I have to admit that I simply wasn't broadminded enough to think that a break that included a spa treatment would suit me. How foolish I feel now.

The hotel says that the thermal suite is a spacious, tranquil sanctuary designed for guests to relax and luxuriate in. It urges visitors to "enjoy the detoxifying, soothing warmth of the specialised dry and wet heat cabins as you voyage between the rock sauna, steam room and aroma grotto before refreshing under the tropical rain showers or cool yourself with the ice fountain". There is also a salt grotto and foot spas, Lifestyle Showers, Outdoor Rock Pool, and Garden Conservatory.

The brochure says the Garden Conservatory is "tailored for your utmost comfort, this room will take you into a world of ultimate relaxation". And it's not an idle boast, I honestly have never been as relaxed after a short

break.

The whole experience made me think again about the sort of short break holiday I'll take in future, and a massage, carried out so well and in such a friendly way by a Polish man called Marcin, was the icing on the cake. Even then, the treatment wasn't over. It really only ends when you want it to, after you are taken into a room where you have a private little sanctuary, to doze or read until you want to get back to the real world.

Only a dinner date with my wife - who herself was enjoying exploring the many nooks and crannies of the hotel itself - prevented me staying until they turned the lights out.

There are many treatments available for both men and women, including special treatments for couples, and details of these can be found on the hotel's website [www.castlecourthotel.ie](http://www.castlecourthotel.ie)

**Westport** itself is becoming a very popular destination for folk of all ages and more and more Northern Irish voices can be heard there. It's got close links to the North West and to Limavady in particular, with which it is twinned. Few towns in Ireland can match **Westport's** charisma, with its attractive selection of pubs, shops, cafes and restaurants. Little wonder it has become one of Ireland's most popular and cosmopolitan holiday destinations.

Good quality golf courses are plentiful in Co Mayo, and **Westport** is also well known for sea-angling and freshwater fishing is popular on nearby Loughs Mask and Carra and on the Erriff river.

All ages enjoy a stay in **Westport** - for instance it is exceptionally popular with elderly visitors, on **Golden Years** trips.

Due to phenomenal popular demand and after the first festival sold out, the **Westport Plaza** and **Castlecourt Hotel** has decided to host a second **Golden Years** Festival this year, which will run from Sunday 25th - Friday 30th April. The final festival of the year will run on Sunday 26th September - Friday 1st October.

Guests can enjoy Introduction Classes to Painting, Indoor Bowls and Bridge as well as Bad Bob's Cookery Demonstrations, Table Quizzes, Aqua Aerobics, Bingo, Nutritional Talks, Guided Tours of **Westport**, Day Trips, A Fun Talent Show - "The Gold-Factor", Historical Talks, Ballroom Dancing Classes, Live Entertainment and Dinner on four nights. A very special Gala Dinner will be held on the final evening with the announcement of the winner of the 'Gold Factor'.

Also, the **Westport Plaza** and **Castlecourt Hotel** Resort has also pulled a rabbit out of the hat for stressed parents this Easter by creating a Mid-Term 'All in Family Package'. Two adults and two children (under 12 years) can enjoy 3 nights Bed & Breakfast with 2 evening meals in the **Castlecourt Hotel** from as little as 539

euro in total - and with their hugely popular, fully supervised Kids Camp running from 29th March - 9th April (excl. 2nd & 3rd April).

**Westport** town is a haven for families and there is an abundance to keep children well and truly entertained. Parents are also spoiled for choice in the **Castlecourt Hotel**, as they are invited to relax in the Jacuzzi, Sauna or Steam room in the C Club Leisure Centre, visit the Hairdressing Salon and Beautician all located within the hotel, or indulge in some luxurious pampering in **Spa Sula**, of the adjoining sister hotel, the **Westport Plaza**.

As someone who enjoyed the hospitality of **Westport** and the **Castlecourt hotel** - especially that treat at **Spa Sula** - I can only conclude with that worn-out but apt phrase coined by Arnold Schwarzenegger - I'll be back.



The **Castlecourt Hotel**, **Westport**