

## ROSIE GREEN SPA STRUCK



### Hot-foot it to the pedi king for the £140 makeover

**E**veryone knows a Renault Twingo is in a different class to an Aston Martin. Ditto cava and champagne. Or one of the Kardashians and Amal Clooney.

The same goes for pedicures. Not all are created equal. But

pedicures are my favourite beauty treatment. Full stop. No argument. The results are immediate and satisfying. Arrive with gnarly peds and leave an hour later with super-soft, rejuvenated feet that in no way resemble a hobbit's. Price isn't necessarily an indicator of how good it'll be, either. I've had some of my best for \$25 (about £20) at suspicious-looking salons in New York, and some of my worst in fancy five-star hotels (where a therapist might do only one pedicure a week). In a nail salon, by comparison, practice makes perfect and practitioners are as deft with a paintbrush as a Japanese miniaturist.

You might think a pedicure is just a form of grooming – all show and no self-care. But the good ones on offer include a circulation-boosting, cortisol-lowering massage plus removal of any dead skin. When it

comes to luxury pedicures, Bastien Gonzalez is king. The French chiropodist has the tanned, suave appearance of an international jet-setter and traverses the globe to keep the feet of the have-yachts looking sublime. He has kept his treatments exclusive to the swishest of hotels, limiting them to one per city (except in Dubai, where there are three, the lure of the dirham clearly being too much).

In London, Gonzalez has set up his Pedi: Mani: Cure Studio in the newly refurbished **Mandarin Oriental** Hyde Park, London, which reopened in December after a fire. The spa is in the basement. It is large, with 13 treatment rooms, a swimming pool, a vitality pool plus steam and sauna rooms – yet it still manages to feel intimate. It has recruited superstar facialist Linda Meredith and Pilates

guru Hollie Grant, too. And in keeping with the wellness trend, you can book traditional Asanté Chinese medicine consultations.

Gonzalez has a pedi studio. It's nice enough, hardly standout, but it's what happens there that counts.

His pedicures cost £140 (yes, you read that correctly). So what do you get for the price? A therapist trained



above and beyond, for one thing. I was assigned Pierre De La Villehervé, a pedicure *podologue* (the French for “foot doctor”) who is dedicated to healthy feet and marvels at the beauty of them. Even mine.

This is quite extraordinary, as I am sporting two-month-old varnish and heels that resemble a parmesan crust. I also have a toenail Missing in Action (long story), so all in all not a pretty sight.

Pierre set about them with gusto. He removed lots of dead skin, in the process getting rid of a painful toenail issue. He also gave me a massage, which felt as restorative as a 60-minute hot-stone treatment, and set about trying to bring my toenails back to life.

As he worked, he told me that the filing done in some salons just makes more trouble later, and that wearing polish for more than three days causes staining of the nails. “You should take it off like you take off

your make-up,” he said. Then he buffed the nails with a chamois leather tool, and somehow made them look as shiny and unblemished as those of a child. He promised me that this effect would last for a whole month.

Afterwards my feet looked as if they belonged to Gwyneth Paltrow – natural, healthy and well groomed – channelling that understated, stealth beauty vibe. You know, the person with glowing skin that requires no make-up and a honed yoga body that requires no Spanx. Now all I need is the yacht and some sunshine...

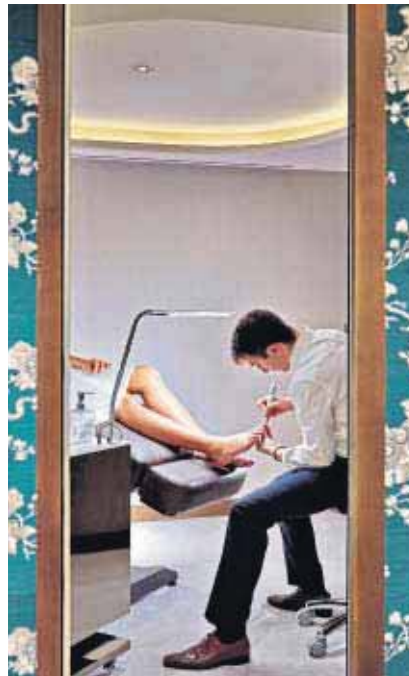
□ A Bastien Gonzalez pedicure lasts 60 minutes, costs £140 and is available at The Spa at the **Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park, London** (020 7838 9888; [mandarinoriental.com](http://mandarinoriental.com)).

#### FIND OF THE WEEK

Gift your guy some Italian grooming. Super-chic Acqua di Parma has opened its first Barbiere at London's Selfridges. With walnut-clad walls and flashes of the brand's signature Parma yellow, the stylish grooming space offers Italian shaves, haircuts,

beard trims and facials to the city's slickest gents. Express Shave £30; Prestige Shave £59 (020 7318 3595).

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Heel boy: Gonzalez at **Mandarin Oriental**