



Relaxation on the rocks

This much I know is true: A relationship on the rocks is a very good thing when the other half involved is a massage therapist whose intoxicants include smooth, hot stones and aromatherapy oils.

I learned this valuable lesson at Azul Medical Spa, where Keli Ackroyd, LMT, so handily administered a divine treatment dubbed "Rain Drops and Hot Rocks."

As I stretched out on the massage bed toward the end of a busy Friday, I really had something else on the rocks in mind. But then Keli quietly went to work, and my idea of happy hour evolved into something of an entirely different spirit.

After dotting my tired back and tense shoulders with droplets of 10 essential oils (basil, birch, marjoram and peppermint among them) chosen for their healing and detoxifying properties and smoothing them on my skin, Keli reached into

something that resembled a big electric roaster. She pulled out a hefty, fist-sized, natural Hawaiian basalt rock that had been heated to a much-more-than-mild 120 degrees and positioned it strategically at the top of my spine. Several more rocks followed in a toasty line all down my back; smaller stones rested between my shoulder blades and on my neck, all radiating a deep heat that snuffed out any remnant of respect I had for that microwaveable beanbag thingy my sister-in-law sent a couple of Christmases ago.

While the tension melted away, Keli worked more oil into my legs and put more hot rocks in all the right places, adding a bit of reflexology for good measure. ("You should drink more water," she gently advised.)

As the rocks cooled, she lifted them off and put a couple of fresh hot ones in her hands for a few minutes of Swedish massage, made simply sensa-

tional by the warm, weighty rocks.

On the flip side, my upper chest and shoulder, abdomen, arms and hands got the same attention before Keli slipped from the room. I'm snoring off for a few glorious minutes, but ultimately I pulled myself together and managed to emerge just as Keli was getting ready to tap on the door and check on me.

Halfway home I called my husband. Meeting somewhere for happy hour? he asked.

With not an iota of stress or guilt, I had to start without him.

— CINDY PIERCE

— Azul Medical Spa is connected with the offices of Patrick Flaherty at 12600 Creekside Lane in Fort Myers, 415-7576; AzulBeauty.com.

As described here, the 90-minute "Rain Drops and Hot Rocks" treatment is \$115.