

# Healing Waters

Water Spas and Hydrotherapy  
By Todd Holmes  
Backyards and Billiards

*“You cannot give from an empty vessel; to give to others, you must first fill yourself.”*

*-- Chinese Proverb*

Thousands of years ago, ancient civilizations used spas for their healing properties, spiritual health and social gatherings. Steaming pools from ancient geysers are found worldwide. In fact, the oldest known spa still in existence is found in Merano, Italy, dating back to 3,000 B.C. Balneotherapy, the use of mineral water for the prevention and cure of disease, has been used throughout the ages by many cultures. Rediscover the ancient ritual of a healing bath as modern science substantiates its medicinal and therapeutic values of reducing stress, relieving pain and strengthening the immune system.

There are over 80 essential nutrients and minerals in mineral water, and it is believed that over 7,000 enzymatic processes are involved in the human body's metabolism requiring both minerals and trace elements.

Common elements found in these curative waters are said to have therapeutic properties:

## Curative Mineral Element

Sodium Bicarbonate

Sodium Chloride (salt)  
Calcium and Sulfate

Calcium and Magnesium  
Sodium, Potassium  
and Chlorine

## Therapeutic Properties

Mild antiseptic for the treatment of skin ailments: eczema, dermatitis and psoriasis.

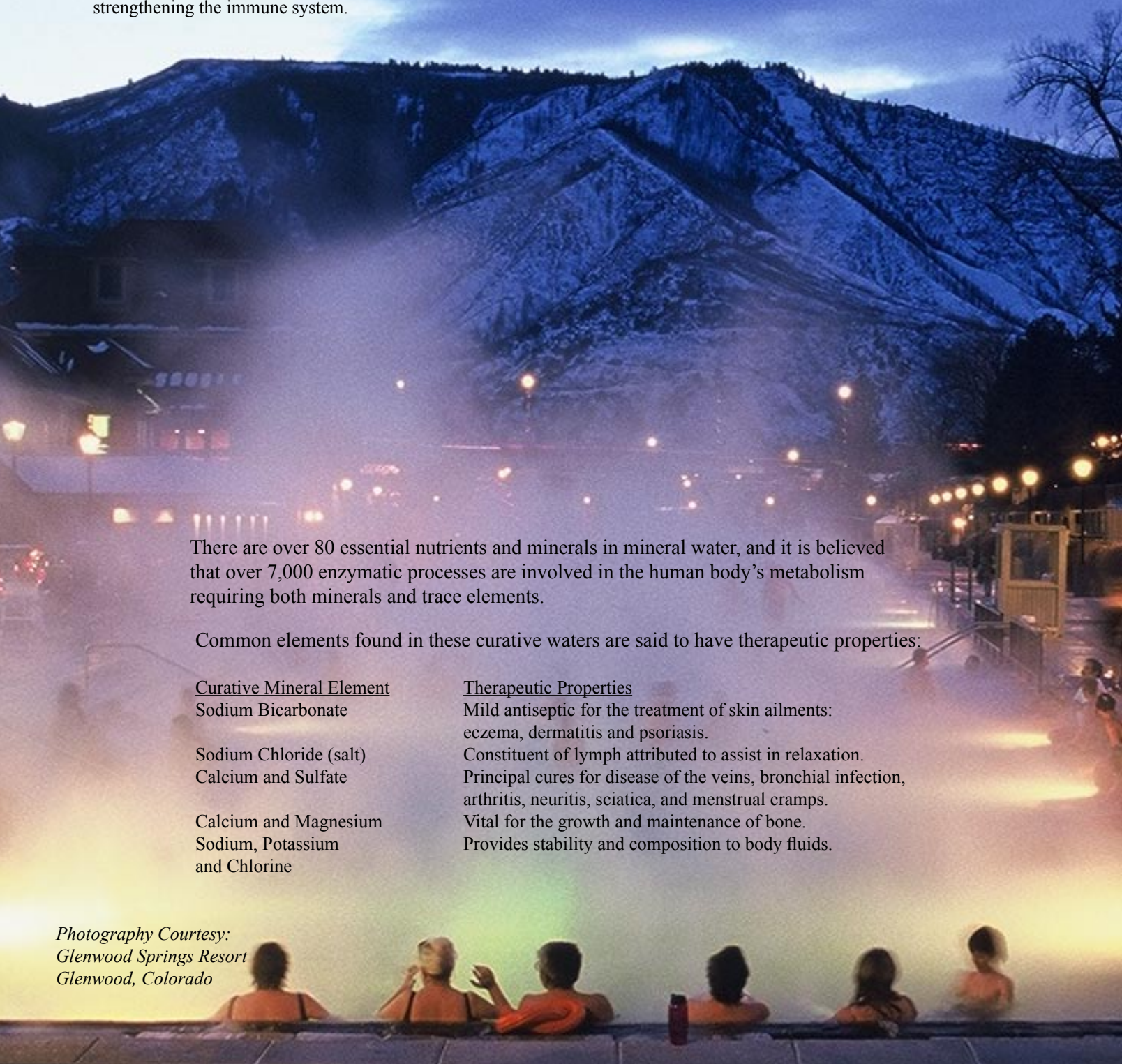
Constituent of lymph attributed to assist in relaxation.

Principal cures for disease of the veins, bronchial infection, arthritis, neuritis, sciatica, and menstrual cramps.

Vital for the growth and maintenance of bone.

Provides stability and composition to body fluids.

*Photography Courtesy:  
Glenwood Springs Resort  
Glenwood, Colorado*



The Roman Empire's village of Spa is from where the word "spa" is derived and is rooted in the Latin language meaning "salus per aquam," or "health from water". It is believed that Roman soldiers would recuperate in stone tubs, steamy caldrons and public baths from which elaborate aqueduct systems supplied the water. The Diocletian was the largest of Roman bath and is said that this 130,000 square yard basin existed in 305 A.D. that was used by hundreds of citizens for recreation.

Evidence of the first hot tub exists from Phraortes, Egyptian King of Media, in 600 B.C. in which incandescent stones were used to heat the water. The Japanese custom "ofuro" to bath in freestanding wooden tubs filled with hot water inspired Californians to use oak barrels, discarded from vineyards, as prototypes for today's acrylic spas. The first air pump to attach to a hot tub was patented in 1954 by Joseph Jacuzzi to assist a relative with rheumatoid arthritis, and the jacuzzi was born!

European settlers arrived in the New World only to find Native Americans utilizing natural springs for ceremonial and spiritual gatherings, as well as for hygienic purposes. These sacred spas were where tribes could meet peacefully. According to the Geo Heat Center, Colorado has 167 thermal wells and springs, mostly situated west of the Front Range within the Rocky Mountains. Among 15 spa communities throughout Colorado including the development of Mad Cow Spa in Steamboat Springs, Indian Springs Resort which has unique hot springs in caves, and Mount Princeton offers clothing optional pools after dark. Colorado boasts the world's largest natural mineral pool at Glenwood Springs Resort, and The Springs Resort in Pagosa Springs has the world's largest and deepest hot mineral spring!

Marcel Balcarek



*The Coliseum*  
Rome, Italy

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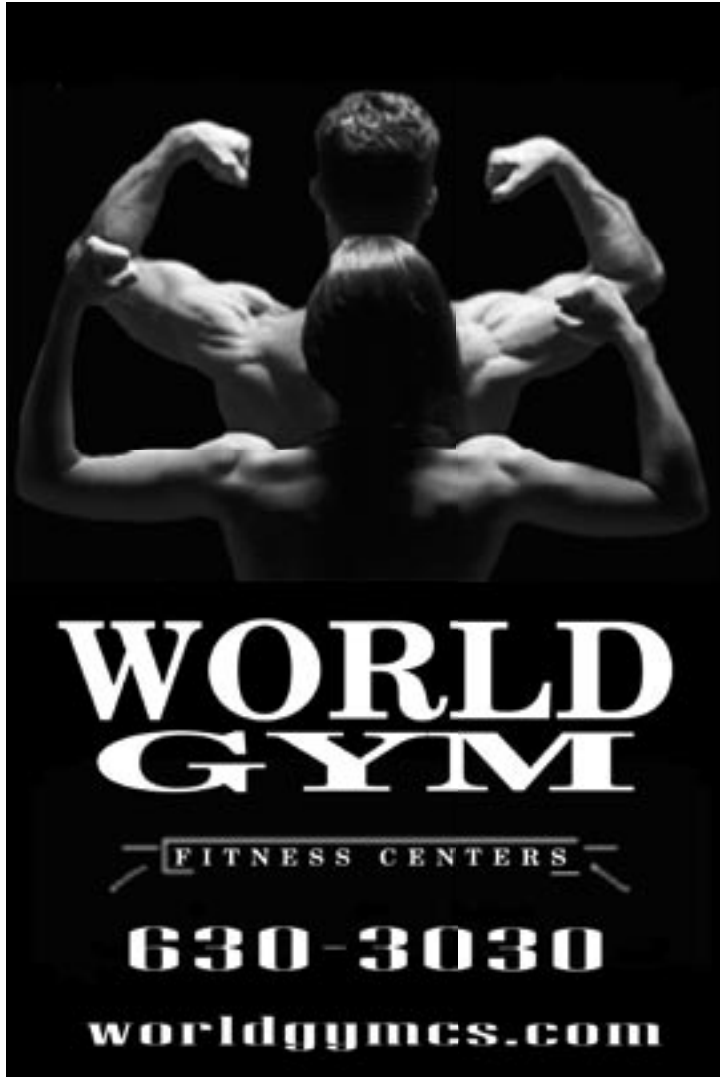
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The massaging action of water is perhaps the most unique characteristic of the spa. It is the combination of air and water through strategically positioned jets that produces energized streams of rhythmic pressure. When targeted at desired points of the body, jets can provide a thoroughly invigorating massage to relax tight muscles, soothe away soreness, and relieve aches. Hot tub soaking is utilized by many sports and physical therapists as part of a preventative regiment. Warm water also enhances blood flow, increasing delivery of oxygen and nourishments to cells, and thus accelerating the body's natural healing process.

According to the Arthritis Foundation. "A hot tub provides the warmth, massage and buoyancy needed to both relax and exercise joints and muscles in the convenience of your home." Water buoyancy greatly reduces the pull of gravity on the body, relieving joints and muscles of constant pressure. Soaking in a spa creates a comforting sensation of weightlessness. In fact, body weight is reduced dramatically by approximately 90% when suspended in water. Additionally, warm water increases circulation to muscles and joints, temporarily relieving them of stiffness and pain, and increasing flexibility. The Arthritis Foundation states Doctors often advise soaking in warm water before beginning your daily activities to help relieve the pain. You may find it just as beneficial to use spas at other times such as in the afternoon to help relax muscles and joints after a full day of activities, to loosen muscles before doing exercises, in the evening before bedtime to relax you for a restful sleep.

Hydrothermal therapy utilizes the body's response to the combination of heat, water, buoyancy, and massage, to treat conditions such as aches, tension, or stress. Immersion in tepid water raises body temperature, causing blood vessels to dilate and circulation to improve. Better circulation results in better release of toxins promoting a healthier immune system. Hydrotherapy also stimulates the release of endorphins, the body's natural pain blockers. Endorphins are polypeptides that boost the immune system, relieve pain, and reduce stress. Most of all, a soothing soak in a swirling pool of warm water is a great way to relax, rejuvenate and reconnect!



High-temperature water for therapeutic use is not recommended for those with high blood pressure, heart conditions or for children under age 10. Please consult your physician.

*Relax Rejuvenate Reconnect...*



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