

Soak away ski blues

Visitors gleefully schuss the Colorado slopes, writes **Rachael Oakes-Ash**

NO ONE mentions the dryness. They're happy to sing the praises of the majestic mountain vistas, the jaw-dropping bowls of snow, the alpine tree lines and the benefits of apres ski drinks each afternoon at four but the dryness they keep under their cowboy hat in Colorado.

Of course it's the dry snow that attracts visitors from around the globe who gleefully schuss the powder slopes. With no moisture there's little ice and the snow stays squeaky dry under the planks, providing the perfect velvet runs on air. But the dry air is a double edged sword, or a "minor inconvenience" in a town like Aspen where everything and everyone is catered for.

Hotels such as the St Regis on the Aspen slopes thoughtfully provide humidifiers to trick your body into believing it's in the tropics but hit those slopes and prepare to shed your

skin. Constant exposure to the dry air at oxygen deprived altitude means cracked skin that sucks up moisturiser by the bucketload.

Thank heavens for high-altitude spa treatments. Most day spas and retreats in the Colorado Rocky Mountains feature massage and facials designed specifically to relieve the symptoms of altitude on the body.

The Remede Spa at St Regis sits at 2400m at the base of Ajax Mountain. After five days of hiking back country at Aspen Highlands, skiing powder in Vail and riding the bumps at nearby Beaver Creek ski resort, my body is well prepared for some serious altitude spa action.

The serene setting of Remede Spa is welcome relief. Set in a basement, time is suspended by the comfort, lighting and lack of windows to tell the outside time. My headache instantly disappears and I head straight to the oxygen relaxation room to recline on a contemporary chaise lounge with



BREATH TAKING ... the snow is not the only Aspen attraction.

microfibre cashmere rug and hypnotic flamed fireplace for meditation.

Apparently my oxygen intake has depleted as even at this minor altitude I am breathing a mere 18 per cent of the life-giving gas. Twenty minutes on the pure oxygen treatment and I am ready to run a marathon, or at least walk the 5m to my treatment room.

My hour massage is designed to promote sleep with lavender essential

oils and a paraffin foot wax to soothe my ski weary tootsies. It works. An apres massage soak in the hydrotherapy tub and the attendants have to carry me to my room.

Muscles and lungs taken care of, I head for the Aspen Club and Spa the next day to deal with what is rapidly becoming "a skin condition".

The "Krauter Kur" high altitude skin treatment with Alpine Rejuven-

Getting there

United Airlines flies direct to Los Angeles and San Francisco daily with connecting flights to Denver, Aspen and Telluride.

www.unitedairlines.com.au

Further information:

Contact Colorado Ski Country
www.coloradoski.com

FACT FILE

Where to spa up in Colorado:

- Golden Door at the Peaks, Telluride
www.thepeaksresort.com
- Brown Palace Spa in Denver
www.brownpalace.com
- Remede Spa at the St Regis, Aspen
www.stregisaspen.com
- The Aspen Club & Spa
www.aspenclub.com

ator Body treatment are made for folks like me.

Exfoliating "kur" minerals rid the body of its scaly flesh and the steam towel instantly puts skin at rest. Organic pine oil is applied to one's epidermis which soaks it up with glee.

Now I have found the solution to my dry altitude problems I book in for an Alpine Strawberry Smoother fruit exfoliating body treatment at the Golden Door Spa in Telluride ski resort followed by a live oxygen facial to bring my skin back from the dead.

I complete my altitude spa round-up back in Denver but this time I have come prepared, visiting Brown Palace Spa for an eucalyptus steam to open my lungs for the flight home.

Rachael Oakes-Ash was a guest of Colorado Ski Country and United Airlines