



Reviewed: Dr Barbara Sturm at the Castle Spa at Dromoland

The Castle Spa has had a facelift, and the treatments are next-level, too

Introducing a fresh aspect to a 16th century castle requires restraint. At Dromoland Castle, the county Clare property synonymous with historic charm, a multi-million euro investment has resulted in a new spa offering that succeeds in marrying modern luxury with old world decadence. The Castle Spa at Dromoland was first unveiled in June of this year, and is quickly making its mark as something entirely unique - and some really quite special - in the Irish spa landscape.

At the Castle Spa every detail has been considered, from the rose-tinted walls that sit beside exposed brick, the roses in reception that recall the 'Lady Ethel' roses found in Dromoland's walled garden, and the Deborah Veale-designed spa robes that are festooned with monochrome blooms. There are small, thoughtful touches everywhere: in the Whisper Room (what a clever name), relaxation is accompanied by zingy sorbets, mindful colouring books and an audio meditation inspired once again by Lady Ethel Inchiquin, whose largesse once saved the castle from potential ruin. There are phone charging stations, delicious minty drinks on tap and a choice of which music style you'd prefer to enjoy during your treatment. It all feels like being looked after by an extremely generous and stylish heiress aunt, and who wouldn't appreciate that?

The Castle Spa at Dromoland has made a statement where spa brands are concerned. It is Ireland's only spa to offer treatments by Seabody, the highly efficacious marine-based skincare line created by Irish biochemists and nutritionists. It is the only Irish spa to offer OSKIA, a cult UK skincare brand that relies on wonder ingredient MSM, an organic sulphur that boosts

collagen and circulation while reducing inflammation. And it is the only spa in Ireland and the UK that offers treatments by the internationally renowned Dr Barbara Sturm.

Securing the Dr Barbara Sturm brand represents a coup for the Castle Spa. Beloved of celebrities like Kate Moss and Victoria Beckham, Sturm is the German scientist who has become a celebrity in her own right, not least as the author of Hollywood's famous 'Vampire Facial'. From an early career in orthopaedics, Sturm has spent more than two decades making simple yet scientifically supercharged products. "My philosophy is that every skincare routine should combat inflammation, deeply hydrate, nourish, and heal the skin and be packed with the highest optimal doses of active compounds and void of aggressive ingredients," Dr Sturm says. "It is important to heal rather than attack your skin. If you protect your skin, it will protect you back."

At the Castle Spa, choose from four signature Dr Barbara Sturm facial therapies: Sturmglow (60 minutes), Super Anti-Aging (75 minutes); Clarifying (60 minutes) or Anti-Pigmentation. *Irish Tatler* plumped for the Sturmglow (€250), the facial that promises to leave the complexion "radiant, refreshed and with the sought-after signature #Sturmglow."

Pre-treatment, a warm welcome is followed by consultation form-filling in a dedicated, beautifully decorated room. Next, you'll be ushered to one of six treatment rooms, one a twin, another featuring an amber & quartz crystal bed, and each blissfully tranquil in look and tone. The Sturmglow treatment begins with a swaddling of cosy blankets followed by a thorough facial cleansing (using either Dr Barbara Sturm Cleanser or Enzyme Cleanser). Next, an application of Hyaluronic Ampoules, and then the power move: Dr Barbara Sturm's iconic Face Mask. Hydrating, soothing, and deeply moisturising, the Face Mask includes aloe vera, chamomile, china clay and purslane, the anti-aging superhero. A steam machine accompanied the mask,

encouraging molecular penetration of the ingredients. After this came an application of Hyaluronic Serum, a depuffing with Dr Barbara's Eye Cream, and a lymphatic drainage facial massage using Dr Barbara Sturm's Face Cream in one of three depth levels, client-dependent. Finally, skin was treated to Glow Drops, the best-selling formula that optimises skin tone while adding a youthful, radiant sheen.

The *Irish Tatler* verdict? A Dr Barbara Sturm facial therapy is designed for pragmatic people who want results every time. Our tester recorded a marked improvement in skin texture, even-ness and overall tone, with that mythic glow staying put seven days later. This is the ideal facial for those with an important event on the near-horizon, and there is nowhere better to experience the luxury of a Dr Barbara Sturm facial than at the Castle Spa at Dromoland. Before you leave, pick up a product or two from the Dr Barbara Sturm range; we highly recommend her silky Lip Balm, while a pot of her Face Cream is a great place to start a new skincare obsession. And when you leave, start thinking about when you'll come back. ●

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