

REFINERY 29
2/10/17

<http://www.refinery29.com/2017/02/140020/cliche-romantic-getaway-couples-valentines-day>



REFINERY29

My Partner & I Tried Every Clichéd "Romantic" Thing — & Here's What We Thought

REBECCA ADAMS
FEBRUARY 10, 2017, 1:30 PM



I like to think of myself as low maintenance when it comes to romantic gestures. (That's not to be confused with being "chill" or "cool" about relationships — I'm so far from those things, it's not even funny. I'm just saying I don't need to be surrounded by roses and candles to feel appreciated.) Thankfully, this works for me and my partner, Michael. We've been together for two years, and we've developed a great system for showing how much we love and appreciate each other through daily thoughtful acts and the occasional pre-planned special activity.

So when we were presented with the opportunity to spend three days of saccharine-level romance and couple-oriented luxury at the [âme Spa & Wellness Collective](#) at [Turnberry Isle Miami](#), we thought it seemed like a fun, if not a little awkward, change. Yes, we spend plenty of time together, and we take trips here and there, but spa and resort situations are not our usual thing: When we're not camping or attending a friend's out-of-town wedding (seriously, can people *stop* doing that?), our "couple's" trips have mainly consisted of visiting our families who live out of state.

Cut to us rolling up to Turnberry Isle and entering a stereotypical let's-remember-why-we-love-each-other haven. On our itinerary: couple's massages, romantic sunsets, exercise regimens with the likes of [Magen Banwart](#), breakfast in bed, state-of-the-art spa treatments, and drawn-out meals in which we'd presumably gaze lovingly into one another's eyes. The pressure was on.

So, for the sake of, um, *journalism*, Michael and I did it all — and shared our independent thoughts about whether or not over-the-top romance is all it's cracked up to be.

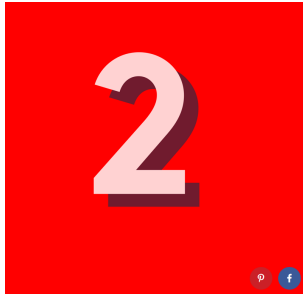


Luxurious room

Rebecca: We already spend a lot of time together, so having a room to ourselves wasn't a major treat. That said, when we travel, we tend to stay in AirBnbs if we're not camping, so the big white bed and beautiful view of the [golf course](#) definitely felt special. (For context: Our big "treat" this year was buying [a couple's sleeping pad](#) so that our sleeping bags wouldn't drift apart when we're trying to cuddle in our tent.) The moment we changed into the white plush robes in the suite, it definitely felt like we were playing the part of people having a romantic weekend together — but, like, in the best way.

Michael: I really like my queen bed at home, but there is something nice about slipping

into a freshly laundered sea of fluffy white sheets in a king-size bed. Rebecca likes to maintain at least one point of contact with me while sleeping, so having some extra space to maneuver keeps our nocturnal game of cat and mouse interesting. I also can't complain about ordering room service and eating breakfast in bed with the sweet sound of golf balls sailing home as the only background noise.



Therapeutic bath together

Rebecca: I love baths. Like, more than the average grown ass woman. But I wasn't really jazzed about taking a Fijian milk soak bath *with* my partner — it seemed kind of awkward and super cheesy. And when we got to the bath tub, there was a bucket of champagne and a bunch of rose petals. We got in and did the obligatory cheers, but we basically joked around the whole time and threw rose petals at each other. We definitely could've taken it more seriously, but then we probably wouldn't have coined the term [#rosebae](#), so I'm fine with that. Bonus: My skin felt really nice after soaking in the milk bath.

Michael: I don't really need to be told to get in a bathtub with Rebecca, but it's nice to be told. After our massage therapists left the room, we had 20 minutes to melt into the tub. It was a little early to be drinking champagne at that point (it was 11 a.m.), but being surrounded by roses and soaking in a hot bubbly bathtub with nice-smelling oils kinda puts you in the mood to have a glass.

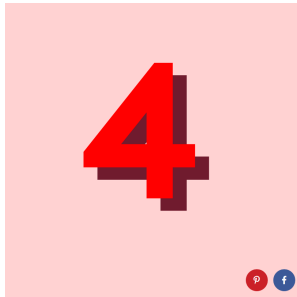


Couple's massage

Rebecca: I didn't really need much convincing for this one, but I was definitely pleasantly surprised at how much better it was to get a massage with my partner next to me. We both got a body scrub followed by a body butter massage, and I can honestly say it was the best massage I've ever gotten (and it made me oddly happy to

know that Michael was right there and equally as relaxed). After we did this, I basically spent the rest of the weekend telling Michael that we should learn how to massage each other — think about the money we'd save! — but he was having none of it. Unfortunately, aside from the DIY route, I don't think we could ever make a habit out of this, since 90-minute couple's massages are crazy expensive.

Michael: I've only received a handful of massages that weren't of the half-assed variety that occur in high school, but I can confidently say that this was by far the best one. Rebecca and I smelled like coconuts and mangos, respectively — what could be better? I know: getting to debrief one another about how it was strangely fun having someone elbow our butts right next to each other for 90 minutes.



Fancy dinner

Rebecca: On our first night, we got dinner at one of the resort's restaurants, [Bourbon Steak](#). And instead of ordering off the menu, the waiter offered to send us a selection of his favorite dishes, so we gladly obliged. We ended up sitting in our booth for over three hours, eating small plate after small plate and talking. It was so nice to opt for a tasting menu-style meal, so all we had to think about was connecting with each other. When you spend most of the week with someone, it's easy for meals together to become routine, so there's something really fun about trying new foods together and talking about sensory experiences (rather than the errands we have to run or social group gossip). The one downside? We were so full after that that we basically crashed as soon as we got back to the room.

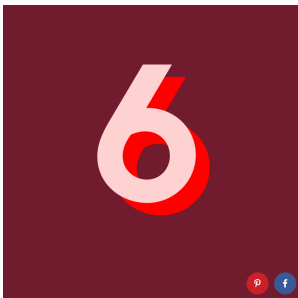
Michael: Coming from New York, we're probably a little spoiled food-wise (we already take the time to go to some of the best and most diverse restaurants in the country), but the service at the hotel puts most of our neighborhood spots to shame. It was nice to let our waiter "take care of us" and give us the "greatest hits" of the menu. And since the nice dinner was our only planned activity that night, it was easy to just get lost in our conversation.



Sweating together

Rebecca: We got to do a barre class with [Magen Banwart](#) and a private pilates class (with an instructor named Becky who seriously whipped my ass into shape) during our trip. I hadn't done either of these types of classes in a long time, so I wasn't at peak fitness goddess state (Michael and I rock climb together a couple times a week, but he's definitely in much better shape than I am). It was definitely fun to do these classes together, even if I was awkwardly flailing around most of the time, while Michael managed to nail both activities, as per usual. Thankfully, Michael doesn't pressure me or make me feel bad about my limits, so exercising together is a great reminder of why we're a great team. (I know it's super cheesy that we work out together, but hey, it works for us.)

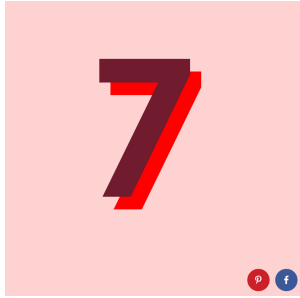
Michael: Barre and pilates are definitely not part of my normal routine, but it was entertaining to try out those classes with Rebecca (and laugh about what I thought was a gratuitous amount of pelvic thrusting). One of the trip highlights for me was the Yin Yoga class, led by Magen Banwart, that was further enhanced by being out in the middle of the resort's golf course. It's hard to beat sunset, birds, and finally getting plow pose. It convinced us that doing more weekend yoga (to supplement our climbing) would be a great activity to carry through from our trip.



Romantic sunset

Rebecca: We got to see the most beautiful sunset while doing yoga on the golf course. Sunsets are romantic clichés for a reason — I definitely felt very warm and fuzzy after a day and a half of spending quality time with Michael. And making sure to catch the sunset in such a beautiful environment made for a cute couple's photo.

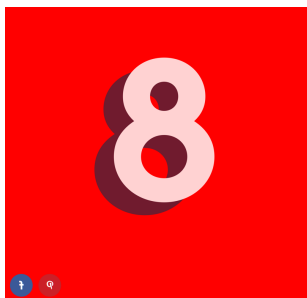
Michael: Nature is great, especially with bae.



Pampering alone time in the spa

Rebecca: We built in some alone time to enjoy the resort's spa so that we could give each other a chance to explore something that the other person wasn't super interested in (and maybe even miss each other). I relaxed in the lavender steam room and salt room in the spa before getting [the citrus drench Libra treatment](#). It was seriously the most intense spa thing I'd ever done: There was this [high-tech table](#) with five or six shower heads that pulsed water therapeutically as someone gave me a body scrub and a body wrap using crystallized honey, shea butter, ascorbic acid, and orange juice (the shower heads even turned into steam dispensers). The whole thing involved a lot of not-so-glamorous tossing and turning, so I was happy to do this one alone. I left with soft skin and an awesome story to tell Michael, since it felt like some sort of spa treatment from *The Jetsons*.

Michael: At first, I thought it was a little strange that we'd be splitting up, but building in some time to explore our own interests was actually a really good way to keep us energized. Getting a massage on the [Gharieni MLX Quartz Spa table](#), which is essentially a warmed sandbox, was like being massaged at the beach (it's hard to explain, but it's great). The solo massage treatment was a nice way to just let my mind float away for a moment.



Overall, what did we think?

Rebecca: It's hard to complain about such a luxurious, pampering weekend with my favorite person. Not so surprisingly, cheesy romantic stuff works! We'll probably stick to more adventurous trips for the most part, but this weekend has definitely got me thinking about building in some self-care time for us as a couple. Carving out the long weekend and committing to relaxing and just focusing on each other is something that's hard to do when there are a million things on our to-do lists, but it's definitely a

worthwhile investment (if you can swing it financially, at least — we'll likely continue to travel quite a bit more frugally than this). If you can afford a spa visit as a couple — even if it's just a day pass to enjoy a co-ed sauna, steam room, and/or pool — I highly recommend it.

Michael: I really enjoyed getting to experience all the amenities and services of a resort like Turnberry with Rebecca — it doesn't leave much to be desired, and it really simplified our weekend, compared to our usual jam-packed trips. It feels like a more civilized way to travel, which might be a good thing to intersperse between camping trips and whirlwind tours through foreign cities. Seeing as I probably wouldn't stay for more than a few days, this seems like the perfect way to decompress if you and your partner are both having a tough month or just want to take a breather. I'd definitely do it again.