

Cold feet

Denmark | In Copenhagen, Lucy Kellaway enjoys the refreshingly no-nonsense Nordic approach to spas – culminating with a 95C sauna and a swim in the freezing Baltic



over Copenhagen – just as viewers of *Priggen* and *The Bridge* expect it to be. In the mess of midday the streets Denmark to Sweden are visible; all I could see a few yards of the Baltic. How cold is it in the driver. Around two three, he said. It wasn't as the following day a dip in it, after having in a sauna first.

trip partly because I amping into cold water. The English Channel on which was bone-chillingly balmy 12C. To get to know a country the happiest place on the best chair designers, there is the unpronounceable seems to boil down to and burning a lot of candles in such a climate.

has been decreed by my Britlé as the world's city, and after about 20 place I found myself the right size. It was in the war. Its old buildings – but so are its new that laps the city everywhere as drinking water. Once it has guards in bear-are are no tourists gap-purse being royal is no big in's main furniture store in Shop look both snobbish while in its poshest jewelry Jensen, I watched a take ages with a woman Mrs Tiggy-Winkle and a simple bracelet. In egalitarian feel to the staying. Kurhotel



obscurely let down when three hours later they stopped coming and instead we were brought herb tea that consisted of a bunch of leaves sticking out of a glass teapot that yielded a delicate pink drink once boiling water was added.

Clockwise from above: Lucy Kellaway at the Kurhotel in Skodsborg; in the hotel's sauna with other guests; coming out of the sea

mouth, she ordered. I was just about getting used to it when there was a crack like a whip and then a scorching wave of droplets fell on my skin. I disobeyed orders and opened my eyes. The woman was cracking a towel at each of us in turn, scalding us one after another.

After a brief break for a sleep in a comfortable modern bedroom, we were back at the trough for a candlelit breakfast, after which I cancelled my date with the nutritionist and went off instead for a brisk walk in the 1,000

While she did so she kept up a babble about "toxins", but then said something more to my liking: "Think of all the bloody great things you've done." I would have loved to do this, only the fear of the next crack of the whip kept interfering. Worse, I was fretting about how much longer I could stay in this inferno before my blood started to boil in my veins.



The next thing on the menu was lunch, which was good as I was ravenously hungry. What was less good was that we had to make it ourselves under the eye of Thomas Rode Andersen, a Michelin-starred chef and devotee of the caveman diet. He is Denmark's answer to Jamie Oliver, only while the former runs to fat, Rode Andersen is a hench hunk who when he isn't teaching Danish execs to make quenelles of roe and chive, is marching them around the forest getting them to do press-ups on logs. Still high, and not sure if I was hot or cold, I was put to work cutting up cos lettuce leaves into the shape of pine trees and shredding cauliflower florets.

minutes' drive from the is a large white lump of part-old summer haunt of VII, and part modern Henning Larsen Architecture stolidly, separated it of hygge – all candles, smørrebrød and some the piano.



I lowered myself into the sea, yelling as the cold gripped like an iron clamp around my body, swam six strokes around to the steps at the other side and heaved myself out. My heart was hammering and I was shouting in both agony and joy. Never had I experienced pleasure and pain that had been so tightly joined together. As I stood there on the jetty all I could think was: I want more. So I got back in, and counted to five, trying to pay attention to what was happening. My heart hammered. More crushing pain. More wild exhilaration.

The dish was beautifully pretty and nice enough to eat – although wasn't what I really wanted after a trip to the extremes of what my body could stand. I would have given much for a toasted cheese sandwich.

is sufficiently painful to judge in the fantasy that it some good. But what was d was what happened was made to lie on a recliner under a brown t and given a ginger shot

acres of the king's hunting forest to try to let the contents of my stomach settle before being roasted in the sauna.

This, according to the muscular woman who was in charge of our session, was something to take very seriously indeed. It was 95C inside the wood-lined cabin and hotter still on the higher benches. Everything would be OK, she assured us, so long as we didn't panic but allowed our hearts to race in response to the heat and closed our eyes and breathed.

This time when I got out I was incoherent with cold. My jaws were slamming together. I looked at my skin, which had taken on a sinister piebald look of rhubarb and custard. Never have I felt more alive. Never have I looked more as if we're about die.

On the way to the airport the clouds lifted and the sun came out. Danes were cycling home from work although it was only 4pm, the women's hair streaming out from under woolly hats. No one wears helmets as they assume they are not going to die.

the post-massage chaise heated in the name of the table at which we ate

The latter was easier said than done. Every time I inhaled, the air scorched the inside of my nose. Breathe with your

This can't be good for us, I said to a young woman as we got dressed. She concurred: the last time she'd felt anything like it was after having taken a large amount of MDMA.

I didn't die either on my brief visit to Denmark. I didn't feel more healthy as a result of the spa, but I did feel happier. Hygge is pleasure in small things; I'd had that and much more. Pleasure in thrill, in beauty, in democracy and the miracle wrought by a candle or two in a place where darkness is visible.

permission for a new heliport, to be used by smaller AgustaWestland AW139 15-seater helicopters. Robert Dorrén-Smith, who owns the island of Tresco, is leading a group of investors who will bankroll a new service, flying to the islands of St Mary's and Tresco. The council said it had received 2,600 messages of support for the heliport, more than for any other planning application.

Stockholm The airline SAS has announced it is seeking to compete in the price-sensitive leisure market by setting up its first operating bases outside of Scandinavia. The airline will apply for a new air-operator certificate in Ireland, and use that to set up bases in London and Spain. Doing so will allow it to hire staff at lower wages than those dictated by existing agreements in Scandinavia. Flights from the new bases are due to begin by the end of this year; the planes' livery and onboard service will be the same as existing SAS services. Budget airline Norwegian has enjoyed rapid growth by setting up bases across Europe. flysas.com

Tom Robbins



An AW139 like those that will link Penzance and the Scillies