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Luxury Living in Tampa Bay

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Spa-radise in Tampa Bay

By Susan B. Barnes

When the hectic pace catches up with us, the stress is a bit too much and we're harried beyond belief, we're fortunate to have a number of spas to turn to in the Tampa Bay area to melt our cares away.

For the past several years, the trend amongst spas throughout the U.S. has to go more organic, with an increased use

of natural products. The same rings true of spas in our area. The 'green' movement is more than the products, but includes the building and fixtures themselves.

From Sand and Sea

Sandava Spa, atop the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Clearwater Beach, is one such spa—the floors and cabinets throughout the spa are

made of bamboo, a sustainable resource.

"Finding what's unique about themselves" helps spas find a sense of self, said Beverly Fox-Crismond, spa director at Sandava Spa. She notes that massage is always the most popular treatment at pretty much any spa, but it's how spas make the treatments "their own" that set them apart.

A visit to Sandava Spa is a complete sensory experience. The relaxation room, with near-floor to ceiling windows overlooking the Intercoastal, features a waterfall wall that is soothing and "super-inviting," according to Beverly. Complimentary spa bites are offered with all services; morning spreads are breakfast fare, including mini-muffins, mini-parfaits, coffee and herbal teas, and afternoons bring hors d'oeuvres and wine.

Led from the relaxation room, each treatment room is a suite—no need to go from one room to the next if multiple treatments are scheduled.

"More likely than not, guests will have the same therapist for all services," said Beverly. This "keeps you connected with what you're there to do—relax."

Prior to each treatment, therapists offer guests a sand ritual: using sand from the beach right outside, guests choose an intention card and place card in the sand. The card is returned to the guests when it's time to go, bringing them back to the time and place where they were most relaxed.

On a recent visit to Sandava Spa, I opted for the Endless Wave massage—organic oils suspended in pure sea algae

were slowly dropped along my spine, with the intent on calming and centering me.

"Most people are out within five minutes," Beverly warned, and right she was. I was instantly quieted, my whirling mind turned off and tuned in. Cassie, the masseuse, did an incredible job easing away the knots and crunches that had taken over my back and neck.

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Glow—From the Inside Out

As a model, Wesley Winer, owner of Glow—A Couture Day Spa in South Tampa, had been in and out of different types of spas—those that were more medical and sterile, and those that were full of fluff and without substance. When she opened Glow seven years ago, she knew just what she wanted.

Wesley opened Glow with the mindset that only the best treatments would be offered, using the finest natural and organic products in a relaxed, sumptuous atmosphere. She first began offering facials, and, as she found her 'dream team,' added massage therapy and nail services to the menu.

"In addition to our strong belief of providing our clients with natural, chemical-free, organic products and treatments,

we also believe each person that steps through our doors has their own unique and individual needs," said Wesley. "That is why every treatment we offer is customized for each client."

She went on to explain that if, for example, a client is a runner, a pedicure bath would most likely be prepared using fresh fruits, tea tree and sea salt to help ease the feet. Or, for a pregnant guest, peppermint and hot stones may be used in a pedicure bath to relieve edema.

"This philosophy rings true across the board with our services," said Wesley, "and I believe this personal touch is something that makes us stand out."

Tucked into a bungalow in South Tampa, that personal touch is evident as soon as you walk through the door at Glow. On a recent visit, I found a boutique filled with fun items to browse through as

I made my way into a cozy relaxation lounge, complete with tempting treats and ambrosia water to satiate my appetite.

Because each appointment is made just for each person, I glimpsed only one other lucky guest as I made my way back to the treatment room for my facial. At the start of the treatment, Wesley gave me the choice of several different aromatherapies; I chose the one that would bring inspiration. After all, who couldn't be inspired?

Over the next hour, Wesley cleansed, buffed, polished and massaged my face using a French technique called effleurage, something like "taking your face out for a jog." I felt slightly guilty that my face was jogging while my body was melting into the table. I've had facials before, but this one was exquisite. Not to mention the soothing yet invigorating neck and shoulder massage, and arm and hand exfoliation.

When your body's had enough of the grind of the everyday, take some time for yourself. Make an appointment and reconnect—body, mind and spirit. In the Tampa Bay area, we have some amazing spas that will help you do just that. DR

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Photo courtesy of Sandava Spa



Photo courtesy of Glow—A Couture Day Spa



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