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A Treat For Skin, Senses at ISS

BY FRANCES MOORE

fmoore@bcnnew.com

"You're never going to make it if you don't do Botox in a town like Westport."

Those are the words that Intelligent Skin Spa owner Marlene Katz has been hearing since she opened her Westport spa eight months ago. But, Katz doesn't buy that.

"We're challenging that ... I feel that there are more people than not that really wish that there was something else they could do," she said.

What Katz offers her clients is a holistic approach to skin treatment. Instead of surgery and injections, she offers non-invasive anti-aging treatments, aromatherapy, microdermabrasion and other treatments that are intended to be natural ways of treating the skin.

"I have really believed in the fact that beauty comes from the inside out. I look at the whole beauty industry as just another method of wellness — of making you feel good about yourself," Katz said. "But that's not always the reason people come to see us. Sometimes they come simply for external reasons ... Little by little I start educating them that this is how you feel from the inside out. And it does come across."

She should know — she's had more experience in the business than most spa owners. In 1983, Katz opened a spa in New

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Contributed photo

Hot stone therapy is just one of the many holistic skincare treatments available at Intelligent Skin Spa in Westport.



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York City across the street from The Dakota. Her clientele included Raquel Welch and Carly Simon, among many others. Before she knew it, Katz had a \$1 million business on her hands. But by 1992, she wanted to have a "well-rounded life," which for her



MARLENE KATZ

included children and marriage. "It was just the right time for me to move on," she said.

Noticing that she had left the spa, a renowned laboratory, maker of high-end skincare lines, approached her about working for them in the product development division. In her spa, Katz had spent a great deal of time creating and concocting homemade herbal treatments in the spa's kitchen, so she was familiar with various ingredients and methods of creating skincare products. She agreed to head up the spa division, which meant relocating to Texas.

"I learned a tremendous amount being behind the scenes ... this took me to the next level," she said. "This knowledge to this day is just invaluable to me."

When the laboratory was sold to a larger company, Katz decided it was time to come back north. She initially settled in Westport, though she now lives in

Weston. Shortly after, she got married and had children.

But she found that she couldn't stay out of the spa business altogether. She began to create her own line of products, selling them to area spas. Called Intelligent Skin Sense, her products were extended to include a full skincare line. Katz also did some consulting on the side, but found that her Eastern philosophies didn't really gel with the philosophies of area spas — she found that many of the places in the area focused on injections, surgeries and chemical treatments. But for those who, like her, were not interested in plastic surgery or injections, options were limited.

"I'm not interested in Botox. If someone wants to go that route, I think that's great, but I think there are more people like me out there that are looking for other anti-aging modalities, rather than having to go that route," she said.

So eight months ago she opened

her small spa, located at 37 Saugatuck Ave, Westport. With just four treatment rooms, Katz has limited her services to skincare only, which includes aromatherapy, hot stones, face and body treatments, "O₂ Blasts" to the skin (along with an oxygen bar in the waiting room, instead of serving coffee or tea) and microdermabrasion, among many other treatments.

ISS also sells Katz's full line of products, including mineral make-up that Katz said can even be worn to bed. Her products also include skin treatments for men.

"With men, they really do have to worry about the eye area. A lot of men play sports and are outside and they don't really protect their skin, so I try to at least talk them into using an eye cream," Katz said.

Included in Katz's commitment

to overall wellness, she offers monthly "Avenues of Awareness" — small gatherings featuring guest speakers who will speak on the inner self. The next Avenues of Awareness gathering will be Monday, Sept. 25, and will feature author Joy Weston.

Katz hopes that her skincare line will be available at Wild Oats in the near future, as the organization has expressed interest in carrying her holistic products.

Treatments at ISS range from \$50 to about \$100, though Katz suggests that some of the treatments be done in a package to get the full benefit. She offers discount packages and gift certificates as well.

For more information, visit www.isintelligentskin.com, or call 341-9779.