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APRIL 2006

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For that youthful glow...try holistic skin therapy

by Lisa Sollicito

Looking great comes from the inside out. That's why Intelligent Skin Spa (ISS) is dedicated to improving clients' appearances through good beauty regimens and good health. Through one-on-one service and individualized programs, ISS customers maintain their youthful glows with non-invasive holistic skin therapy.

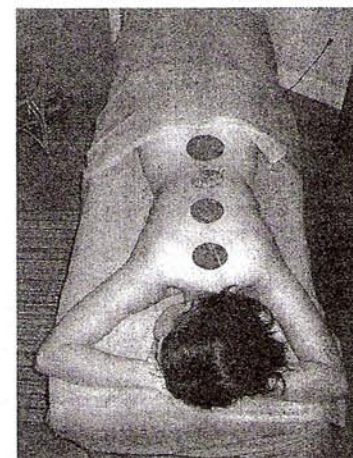
From the first contact, the ISS experience was friendly and comfortable, and owner Marlene Katz's passion for the business spoke for itself. Her vision for ISS was a small, cozy place where she had time to sit with people and could offer personalized programs and affordable pricing.

Treatments start as low as \$30 for a moisturizing therapy with an ampoule of warm paraffin, or an O2 blast that hydrates and rejuvenates your face.

With little previous spa experience, I walked into ISS a little nervous about what the treatments would be like. With options to choose from for every kind of skin type — or comfort level — Marlene suggested the soothing aromatic facial, 20-minute foot reflexology and the O2 blast. My nerves were eased when Marlene asked the therapist to explain the processes to me, as I was new to the experience.

I relaxed the minute I lay down on the heated bed. The low lighting and soft music in the background soothed the day's stress, and as the therapist began, she explained the process for the facial. She personalized my treatment by using an anti-bacterial high-frequency treatment to heal trouble spots. The combination of a massage, steam treatment and aromatherapy mask made my tired skin look soft and healthy, an effect which lasted for days.

The 20-minute foot reflexology, intended to soothe aches and tension, relaxed my whole body. While one foot is massaged, the other is covered with a warm towel and then an herbal slipper.



Owner Marlene Katz, Intelligent Skin Spa.

The O2 blast offers the intense moisturizing that every skin type needs. The mist felt cool and refreshing like air, but it went a long way: imperfections are less noticeable afterward, and the skin is left glowing.

I left in a completely different state of mind. To top it off, instead of a caffeine rush to jumpstart the day's next endeavor, Marlene suggested trying the oxygen bar. For ten minutes, I wore what look like

headphones that blow out oxygen in a gentle aromatherapy, and it actually woke me up better than my usual Diet Pepsi. It was relaxing and refreshing at the same time, and it worked: I skipped the Diet Pepsi on the drive home.

Marlene's insight draws from 25 years of experience as an aesthetician. Her first spa opened in New York City in 1982, where she offered treatments from head to feet, and attracted a celebrity clientele. She sold the business in the mid-90s to pursue a job behind scenes doing product development. For seven years she worked to create products, including those for her own line. While she enjoyed working with products, she said she missed customer service. When she opened ISS in November 2005, she now had both.

Marlene's average customer is a 40-to 50-year-old woman. "Women want to look as young as they can as long as they can without cosmetic surgery," she said. She advises waiting as long as possible, because cosmetic procedures don't last forever. What you want to do, she said, is slow down the aging process.

"We offer education so everyone knows there are things you can do without surgery. Or if you've had surgery, we teach clients how to keep things lifted," she said.

Marlene trains her staff personally, so that no matter what experience they have had before, all follow the same protocol, she said. And aside from meeting personally with clients, she educates them through the Avenues of Awareness program, which brings a guest speaker to the spa once a month to talk about wellness issues. Geared toward better care for the body, mind and spirit, these events have featured topics like meditation and nutrition, and emergent thinking: changing the negative thought process.

"I love every part of it," Marlene said, when asked what she enjoys most about her job. "I love coming to work, I enjoy the people who work here, and helping people, seeing clients happy ... I'm a people person."

One of the most popular treatments at ISS is the lymphatic face/body toning. By reducing fluid retention and waste, skin is more evenly toned and radiant with just

one treatment. The treatment is done one side first to show customers the difference, so they can actually see it working, Marlene said.

The electronic face fitness is a non-invasive procedure using an electric device that feels good on the skin and works on muscle tone. It stimulates muscles, much the same way as when it's used in physical therapy.

What was a novelty in the 80s at Marlene's New York spa, the herbal body wrap is still a popular choice for spa-goers. It's a wellness treatment, which is good for everyone, Marlene said. The bed is heated and there is a warm/cool sensation. Sounds like one to try.

Having been most impressed by the professionalism, knowledge and personal attention I got at ISS, I actually made my next appointment before I left the first one, and I'm bringing a family member along.

For a list of other services ISS offers, visit www.isintelligentskin.com. For more information or to make an appointment, 203-341-9779.