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SIMPLE PLEASURES

THE SPA OF COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG (VA)



features

143 **In Focus**

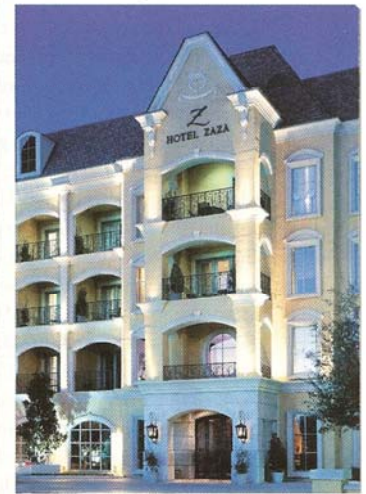
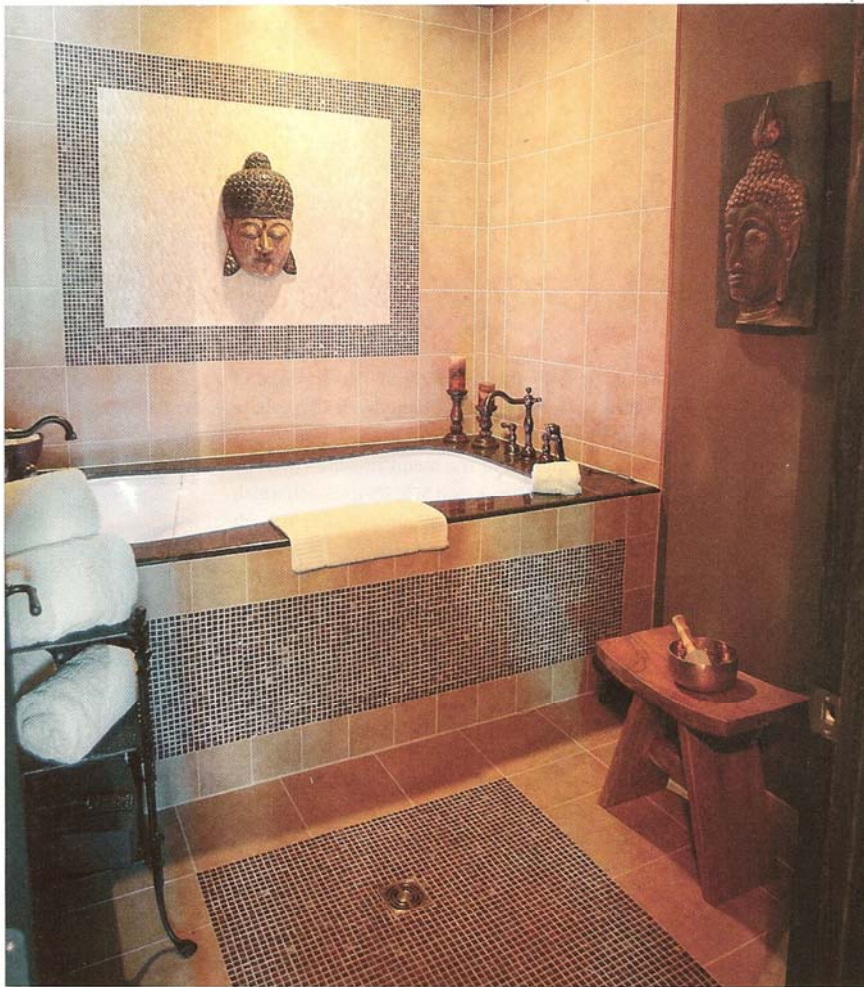
144 **A REVOLUTIONARY IDEA**
A new Virginia spa celebrates healing practices through the ages.

152 **WHIMSICAL WONDERLAND**

A fantasy-filled Dallas hotel inspires an equally enticing relaxation retreat.

*Whimsical
Wonderland*

Inspired by the eccentric nature of Hotel ZaZa, ZaSpa provides guests with a memorable and satisfying spa experience. BY NICOLE PALMIERI



ZaSpa (left) provides an urban oasis within the fun and funky Hotel ZaZa (above), located in uptown Dallas.

KNOWN AS ONE OF DALLAS'S HIPPEST HOTELS, HOTEL ZAZA

is an urban lifestyle retreat with a mission to exceed every guest's expectations. Featuring a contemporary decor with Asian and Moroccan influences, the top-rated restaurant Dragonfly, and concept suites with playful names, such as "Out of Africa," "Shag-a-Delic," and "Zen," the luxury boutique hotel served as the inspiration for the hotel's **ZaSpa**, which opened in December 2002. "The vibe of the hotel is fun, so the spa had to have a little flair to it," says spa director Virginia Burel. From the personal touches to each spa treatment to the warm and inviting atmosphere, clients easily become immersed in the entire spa experience. "The clients feel at home here at ZaSpa," says Burel. "We make it personal for each guest from the moment they book the appointment to the moment they check out."

The 2,000-square-foot spa has seven treatment rooms and features a Moroccan and Asian theme with deep green, red, and burgundy colors and jeweled chandeliers throughout. Instead of traditional spa CDs that play soothing instruments or nature sounds, some of the artists that can be heard both in the waiting area and the treatment rooms include John Mayer and Sarah McLachlan. "People enjoy the atmosphere and the music here because they feel comfortable while getting their massages," says Burel. Another unique aspect of the spa is that, in addition to hot tea, water, and fruit, clients are offered shots of X-Rated Vodka, a French vodka that features a hot pink tint and tastes like a mix of mango, blood orange, and passion fruit.

Upon arrival at the spa, male clients are led to the Gods locker room, while females are led to the Goddesses locker room. All clients can relax before and after treatments in the spa's relaxation room dubbed "The Big Chill," where they can get henna tattoos or play with Rubik's Cubes and Zen cards.

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"We make the spa experience a special time for every guest."

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While the spa's clientele ranges from Dallas locals to high-profile celebrities, the 20 full-time and 10 part-time employees are told never to take any guest for granted, according to Burel. "We make the spa experience a special time for every guest," she says. "We pay close attention to our guests' personal needs and what they like and dislike." Whether it is locals who need a quick getaway or hotel guests looking to enhance their stay, all clients expect excellent service, an exciting atmosphere, experienced therapists, and topnotch treatments. "Our clients expect a lot from us, and we always try to exceed these expectations by going above and beyond to make each service unique and personal to the individual," says Burel.

One way the spa makes each client's experience personal is by inquiring about the reason for the visit. "We try to get a little information out of the clients when they call to schedule an appointment," says Burel. "We ask if it is a special occasion or a getaway, for instance. We try to be like a concierge service for guests and give them many options because we've found that as long as they have options, they are satisfied."

The menu alone attracts many clients to ZaSpa. With services named "The Quickie" massage (\$55, 25 minutes), "Have No Mercy" deep-tissue massage (\$100, 50 minutes; \$139, 80 minutes), and "On the Rocks" pedicure (\$50, 50 minutes), for example, it's no wonder that many of the services are so popular. "The menu has a twist to it," says Burel. "The names of services are not only funny but are also conversation starters. Some clients try services just because the name sounds interesting."

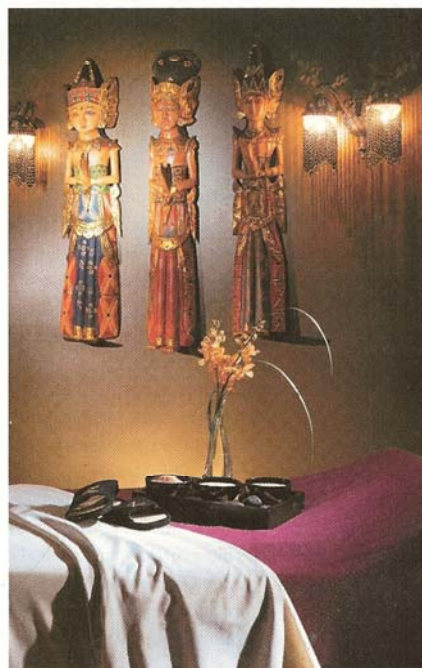
To make clients aware of the different services, staff members wear shirts featuring the names of the treatments. The shirts are also available for guests to purchase, along with hats and thongs with the treatment names on them, and other retail items from Aromatherapy Associates, Billy Jealousy, Ling Skincare, Niven Morgan, SkinCeuticals, and TRUE. "We created all the services on the menu ourselves," says Burel, noting that the staff experimented with different scents and developed various beauty

rituals. "It's important that the staff is involved in creating the menu because I want them all to believe in it and have fun."

New additions to the menu include For Your Legs Only (\$95, 50 minutes; \$55, 25 minutes), which is an invigorating leg and foot massage using smooth gliding strokes to loosen tense muscles and improve circulation; Thai Gold Therapy (\$140, 50 minutes), which helps protect, stimulate, and enrich the skin while preventing signs of aging; and Pearl Therapy (\$140, 50 minutes), which uses pearl powder to hydrate, smooth, and cover the skin, leaving it with a pearly glow. Both the Thai Gold Therapy and the Pearl Therapy treatments use Pindas of Energy volcano stones, which heat up and relax the body.

While the new services are expected to be a hit among clients, the most popular services to date are the Golden Dragon (\$180, 80 minutes) and

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LEFT: The spa's treatment rooms feature a mix of Moroccan and Asian decor. ABOVE: Hotel ZaZa offers almost two dozen concept suites, including (from top to bottom) "Art," "Texas," and "Shag-a-Delic."

"Hotel ZaZa has a mystique behind it."

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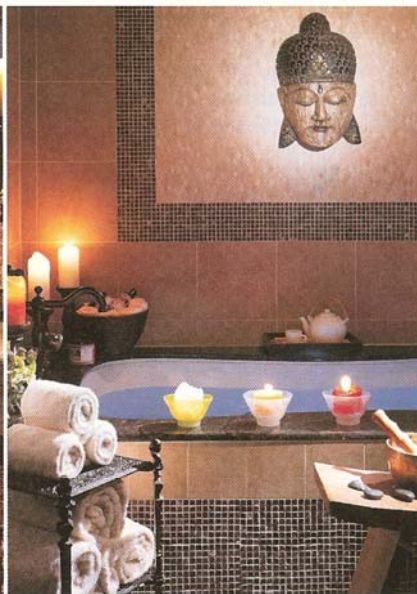
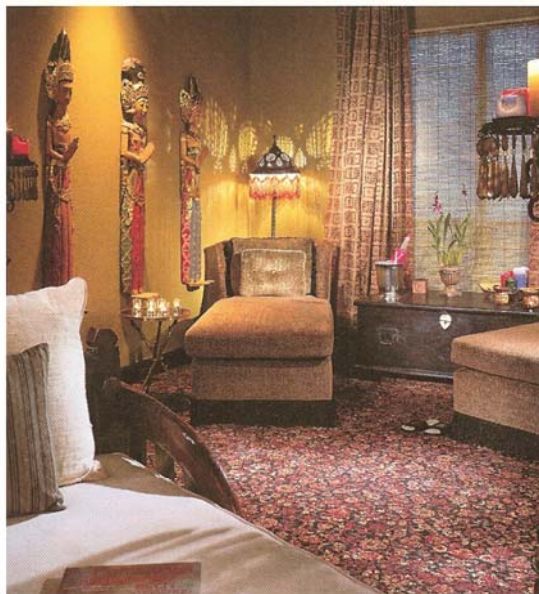
Dangerous Beauty (\$180, 80 minutes) body treatments. The Golden Dragon begins with a cleansing exfoliation using the spa's signature blend of raw cane sugar, ginger, lime, vanilla, and coconut milk to freshen and nourish the skin, followed by a warm botanical honey mask and a light massage. The Dangerous Beauty is a deep cleansing and refreshing full-body treatment that begins with an exfoliation using the spa's rice, coconut, and green tea scrub, followed by a yogurt mask and a massage using lemon verbena body butter, which leaves skin feeling fresh, hydrated, and moisturized.

According to Burel, both the traditional and the more obscure treatments are embraced at the spa because the spa's clients like variety. However, one new service that was recently added that Burel claims might be harder to sell is Reiki. She attributes that to the fact that many people don't know much about it. "There are so many benefits to Reiki—we just need to educate our clients to get them to try it," says

Burel. "It might be exactly what they need to relax and reduce stress."

Although opening the spa to locals has its benefits, it has also presented a challenge in that it is more difficult to let people know that the spa exists when they are not staying at the hotel. "Hotel ZaZa has a mystique behind it that it's a place for celebrities and high-profile people," says Burel. "We want everyone to enjoy the spa here. When clients change into a robe, we don't care about their status. Everyone is equal at that point."

Aside from the new treatments added to the menu, Burel hopes to keep growing the spa and attracting more hotel guests in the future to necessitate expansion. With a second Hotel ZaZa and ZaSpa already in Houston, she also hopes to be involved in the opening of new ZaSpas nationwide. "A gift and spa shop will be opening at the end of the year, so retail will hopefully become a bigger part of the spa," she says. "As for the spa itself, we receive great reviews from locals and hotel guests, so our mission is to keep them coming back for more." ■



ABOVE LEFT: Guests can relax before or after treatments in the lounge called The Big Chill. ABOVE RIGHT: The spa offers a number of specialty baths, including the ZaSpa Bathing Ritual (\$100, 50 minutes).

ZASPA

(Dallas)

OWNER: Charlie Givens and Jeff Records

SPA DIRECTOR: Virginia Burel

OPENED: December 2002

CLIENT BASE

60% female

40% male

ages 25 and up

SPACE

2,000 square feet;
7 treatment rooms

OFFERINGS

- body treatments
- couples' treatments
- facials
- lash tinting
- makeup application
- massage
- nailcare
- prenatal services
- reflexology
- sunless tanning
- waxing

MOST POPULAR

Golden Dragon (\$180, 80 minutes)

PRICE RANGE

\$10 for a French manicure or pedicure upgrade to \$352 for the Za Java package, which includes a choice of three treatments

PRODUCT LINES

- Aromatherapy Associates
- Billy Jealousy
- Ling Skincare
- Niven Morgan
- OPI
- SkinCeuticals
- TRUE

EQUIPMENT

- Life Fitness
- Monarch Robes
- Oakworks
- Satellite 8
- SpaSoft

INTERIOR DESIGNER

Duncan & Miller (Dallas)

SPA CONSULTANT

Laura Latronico (Dallas)