

NUMBER 1 \$8.00  
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NEW YORK AT ITS BEST

# Absolute



Post-Nups | The Havana Brown | Amanda Peet | Spring Fashion | Ferrari | Sentosa Island | Santiago Calatrava | Lanvin Pearls  
Tom Lee & Ann Tenenbaum | Macau | The Cloud Club | Mary Heilmann | The Stoned Cow Massage | Thakoon | Diet Coke Breakfast  
Balenciaga Sandal | Japanese Curling | Claude Troisgros | Krug Champagne | Richard Meier | Neue by Night | Liev Schreiber

massages are given on a table with a removable center, so that a mesh inset cradles the client's belly.

**THE VIBE** A candlelit and cedar-lined reception area, Native American flute music, Navajo blankets in the waiting room, and Southwestern furniture throughout give this Flatiron spa a charmingly out-there Santa Fe appeal. The spiced apple cider is on the house. *5 West 16th St.; 212-633-6220. \$100 for 60 to 70 min.*

## Spring Wellness

*"It's one of those group massage places down in the basement—it's not private, but it's totally silent. A lot of my friends go there. The massage is called qi gong—it's not so different from Swedish. They use their thumbs more and focus on pressure points. I wouldn't do it if I didn't find them much better than other places. You do 10, you get one free.*

—AMANDA CUTTER BROOKS, CREATIVE DIRECTOR, TULEH

**THE RUB** A centuries-old Chinese healing art, *qi gong* uses massage, meditation, and tai chi-like exercises to release trapped energy. Unlike the Swedish Institute-trained therapists at most New York spas, most of the masseuses here have studied classical

techniques in Shanghai and Beijing and use their fingers, fists, and an occasional elbow to banish tension from fully clothed clients.

**THE VIBE** If you're looking for a solitary, blissfully transporting kind of experience, go somewhere else. But if you can ignore the dowdy pink paint and the chintzy lace curtains, and are up for sharing a single dimly lit room with whoever else happens to have walked in, then you're in for one of the most thorough (not to mention cheapest) massages around.

*215 Mulberry St., near Spring St.; 212-219-2189. \$42 for 60 min.*

## Great Jones Spa

*"It's a very cool, only in New York experience: you walk into a former tenement and there are waterfalls. It's transporting. There's an interesting crowd there because it's downtown, but the facility is brand new and really nice. They do a great deep-tissue massage."*

—ERIC VILLENY, FURNITURE DESIGNER

**THE RUB** The woody Arnica oil that penetrates muscles and joints during the deep-tissue massage relieves chronic pain, reduces swelling, and just makes you feel good. Warm towels draped over the body then drive home the homeopathic healing.

**THE VIBE** Frank Lloyd Wright goes feng shui in this 15,000-square-foot spa with a three-story indoor waterfall, a river-rock sauna, hot tubs, and plunge pools, all open to anyone who books a treatment. The inspiration is Eastern, from the treatment-room decor to the fiber-optic display in the steam room that aims to balance your chakras. But the raw-foods café run by Pure Food and Wine remind you that you're definitely in NoHo.

*29 Great Jones St.; 212-505-3185. \$130 for 60 min.*

## Eastside Massage Therapy

*"It's not a fancy spa—it's plainer than Jane—but I love it because there's no fluff. You just go in, and you get the best massage ever. The price is right—and they take insurance."*

—LIZ COHEN, PUBLICIST

**THE RUB** The therapeutic deep-tissue massage here may seem almost medical in its strength and specificity, and it's meant to. In fact, sports doctors often prescribe a course as a rehabilitative treatment. Achy walkers are welcome.

**THE VIBE** Don't expect a Zen palace—the decor is more clinical than cushy. The experience here is all about the massage. The bright, functional waiting room is simply where it starts. *351 E. 78th St.; 212-249-2927. \$75 for 60 min.*

## Frédéric Fekkai

*"Frédéric Fekkai is my treat. The massage is strong, almost chiropractic, and the environment is very private. I don't like to go into a basement. Here you're in this nice, beautiful room, not a solitary cell."*

—VANESSA VON BISMARCK, PUBLICIST

**THE RUB** The Beauté de Provence massage mixes shiatsu and Swedish techniques with essential oils redolent of the south of France. To prepare you for your session, a therapist places a lavender-scented pillow over your eyes, hot towels on your feet, and a heated roll on your neck.

**THE VIBE** The spa may be part of Fekkai's bustling salon, but the hushed atmosphere up on the top floor makes you feel as if you're as far away as Provence. Case in point: there's no locker room; you get to shower and change in an enormous private bathroom stocked with Frette towels and robes and, of course, Fekkai's shea-butter beauty products. You can order a post-trub lunch from the Payard-catered menu.

*15 E. 57th St., 5th floor; 212-753-9500. \$110 for 50 min.*

## Tiffany Nails at Madison

*"Tiffany is fantastic for a 'Hey, can I come over now?' kind of thing. They give amazing massages. It's not the whole deal, but if you want last-minute, you aren't bargaining for that anyway."*

—SAMANTHA BOARDMAN, PSYCHIATRIST

Swedish massage at the Peninsula Spa

