

The big ease-me

As three new mega havens make clear, size *does* matter By **Jennifer Romolini**

New Yorkers rarely get to spread out. We're housed in tight studios, work in cramped cubicles and commute in pickle-jar packed subway cars. In recent years, even our pampering has become close-quartered, as a wave of boutique spas shrank the wellness experience by offering speedy rejuvenation in miniature locales (think of Trish McEvoy's one-chair facial station in Henri Bendel, or Ellen Lange's Up Close Express booth in Macy's Herald Square). But the tiny trend is, thankfully, about to change.

A trio of new mega spas—each one sprawling over more than 15,000 square feet—is putting the *day* back in day spa, creating havens where clients can not only indulge in an array of revitalizing treatments, but kick back and stay a while in state-of-the-art lounging facilities.

GREAT JONES SPA

Anyone who'd make an argument against excess needs to pay a visit to this three-and-a-half-story detox emporium. The sleek Noho sanctuary, which opens in late September, has two thermal hot tubs, a cold plunge pool, a 70-foot waterfall, an aromatherapeutic glass-and-tile steam room with chakra-balancing color therapy, two lie-down vichy shower booths, a dome-ceilinged river-rock sauna, and a raw-food café and juice bar. Owner Donna Creagh, daunted by the overcrowding and unwelcoming "walk on eggshells" vibe of many Manhattan spa hot spots, designed the center as a spacious one-stop health shop that would be accessible and comfortable to all. To that end, the former physical trainer made the space wheelchair-accessible, placed extra-wide tables in the 20 treatment rooms to accommodate fuller guests, and added a private entrance and locker room for visiting celebs requiring respite from the masses.

Keeping with the holistic-health theme, the spa will employ two naturopathic doctors, who'll offer personalized detox programs to treat everything from weight loss to liver maladies. Great Jones's hands-on therapies include a full menu of facials, massages and body wraps, along with unconventional treatments like colonics. What's more, clients won't feel the assembly-line time crunch at this watery oasis—appointment holders are invited to wander the facility for up to two hours prior to treatments. "This is not an in-and-out experience," says Creagh, who also plans to schedule health-related lectures in the space. "I see it as a community resource where people can come, ask questions, get answers and improve their overall well-being."

29 Great Jones St at Lafayette St (212-505-3185)

CORNELIA

Though it was only last year that renowned aesthetician Cornelia Zicu launched her namesake minispa in the Helmsley Hotel, the Romanian-born skin healer quickly began itching for expansion. "We just didn't have the space to do what I wanted, what I dreamed of," she says. Apparently, Zicu's dreams are no small affair. Her planned luxury spa, which opens in November on Fifth Avenue above swish retailer Salvatore Ferragamo, will feature 20,000 square feet of visage- and body-doting space, including a renovated rooftop that sports a garden and sundeck, an open-air massage area and an outdoor café. Indoors, the luxe pamper palace offers a full hair salon, a men's barbershop, European soaking baths, 14 body-treatment rooms, a facial suite, a 600-square-foot retail store and a "relaxation library," which is adorned with chaise lounges and cashmere throws and serves complimentary tea and champagne. As if these amenities weren't enough to lure Zicu's sure-to-be-well-heeled clients, she also offers exclusive treatments such as underwater Watsu massage therapy, micro-ablation facials and Romanian mud baths.

663 Fifth Ave between 52nd and 53rd Sts (212-759-9375)

BLISS49

In January, when Manhattan spa darling Bliss teamed with the wildly successful W Hotels empire, the duo quickly began a process of "blissintegration"—flooding guest rooms with Bliss's signature blue-and-white toiletries and landing the swank blackhead-buster's facilities in the hospitality chain's sleekest properties. Bliss49, which opens November 1 in the W New York, is the flagship of this master plan and is Bliss's largest endeavor to date—a 23,000-square-foot full-service retreat on the hotel's fourth floor. The mod venue will feature the downtown spa's trademark oxygen facials and preciously named rubdowns (such as the "rubber neck" and the "super blissage"), along with wet body treatments, waxing and couples' massages. Special to the W New York location will be locker rooms equipped with traditional Turkish baths and an aromatherapy steam room (ladies), or pimped out with complimentary beer and Xbox stations (dudes).

If you're looking for more of a surface primping than a full-body chill, an adjacent grooming studio provides men with hot shaves and women with blowouts and makeovers. Or head to the space-age nail lounge, where clients receive headphones and zone out in front of personal flat-screen TVs, while a conveyor belt delivers sanitized tools and nail paints to mani and pedi technicians.

541 Lexington Ave between 49th and 50th Sts (212-755-1200)

HIGHLIGHTS

Yoga for Peace: A Life Celebration

On September 18, to mark the anniversary of the September 11 attacks and in response to the Bush administration's war in Iraq, 2,000 yogis are expected to gather in Battery Park to participate in a three-hour yoga *mala*—a practice of 108 consecutive sun salutations, accompanied by devotional chanting—a ritual meant to acknowledge transition and celebrate change. Upon completion of the mala, participants will rest in *svasana*, a reclining meditation, to form a human mandala, or peace wheel. Top NYC yoga instructors and gurus will lead the final *kirtan* chanting session,

to close the ceremony. Students should dress comfortably and bring water and mats. Preregistration is required. For more info, go to www.yoga-for-peace.org.

Ayurvedic Yoga Massage at Longevity Health ▶

This restorative, traditional Indian bodywork is slated to become the hottest treatment since New Yorkers first embraced Thai massage. An amalgam of shiatsu technique and yoga posing, the deep-tissue therapy kneads knots with Ayurvedic oils and assisted stretching to stimulate circulation and flush out the body's



HYDROTHERAPY
A 70-foot waterfall
soothes clients in Great
Jones Spa's wet lounge.



toxins. The massage, which originated in Pune, India, makes its way to the States this month, where it debuts at the Flatiron spot Longevity Health. 166 Fifth Ave between 21st and 22nd Sts (212-675-9355).

Bikram Yoga Lower East Side

The sweaty-yoga style comes downtown with a new studio located above landmark LES bookstore Bluestockings. The airy space hosts Bikram's trademark series of 26 asanas in a room heated to 100 degrees. The studio offers more than 20 classes, seven days a week. Students should bring yoga togs and a lock;

towels are provided. 172 Allen St between Rivington and Stanton Sts (212-353-8859).

Chelsea Piers Kids' Exercise Studio

Chelsea Piers will open its doors to a whole new crowd this fall, when the West Side behemoth debuts the city's first full-service exercise studio catering exclusively to kids. The two-level space is broken into three kid-friendly parts: the Fit 4 Tots Gym and Toddler Adventure Center (ages infant to 4 years) and the CP Kids Fitness Center (ages 5-12). The gym will feature yoga, music and gymnastics classes; the fitness center has a two-story climbing station, an eight-by-eight-foot

ball pit, side-by-side slides and a suspension bridge. *The Field House at Chelsea Piers, 23rd St at Twelfth Ave (212-336-6500).*

David Barton Gym: The Y

In September, David Barton extends his all-things-fitness empire to the site of the former McBurney YMCA. Facilities will be ultraposh, including state-of-the-art equipment; separate yoga, spin and Krav Maga studios; coed Russian baths; and a juicing station and raw bar café catered by the folks at Pure Food and Wine. 215 W 23rd St between Seventh and Eighth Aves (212-414-2022).

Time Out

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New

preview

Fall

Gael
García
Bernal

plays a vengeful
drag queen and a
revolutionary hero
in two of autumn's
top films

A SEASON TO REMEMBER!

Almodóvar's
campy noir

Che Guevara's
comeback

MoMA's new home

Hip-hop's next wave

NYC's small-screen
close-up

Elizabeth Marvel's
Hedda Gabler

Helmet's return

Kiki & Herb's
farewell

Dig!'s warring
rockers

JFK's chichi
new shop

Ted Leo's Rx
for success

Susanna Clarke's
magical debut novel

Chef Gray Kunz's
big gamble

Carolines' New York
Comedy Festival

PLUS

George Lucas
on *THX 1138*

Anna Deavere Smith
on topical theater

Dennis Farina on
Law & Order

AND

64 new restaurants
for you to sample!

