

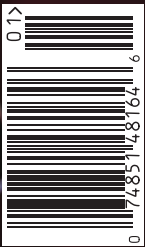
SANDIEGO[®]

MAGAZINE



The Wellness Issue

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DEATH IN THE
BIKE LANE

OUR ANNUAL
SPA GUIDE

GUADALAJARA'S
BIRRIA TRAIL

FEATURE

THE SPA GUIDE

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SHOLOM BER SOLOMON PHOTOS BY STACY KECK

This is your cue...

to unwind,
relax...

and
focus on you.





The right touch at the right time can turn around even the worst of days. A good spa treatment can go beyond self care, into the realm of self preservation. But not all spas are created equal, so we've put together this go-to guide for San Diego. All of these oases offer skin- and soul-treating treatments, though some go further into the realm of hot tubs, saunas, and pool access. When you call, be sure to ask what extras they offer. You deserve it, however big you decide to go. So get ready to slather yourself in seaweed and have every pore on your face squeezed. It's pampering time.

FAIRMONT SPA & WELLNESS AT FAIRMONT GRAND DEL MAR

Carmel Valley
GrandDelMar.com
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THE VIBE: A profoundly peaceful, secluded Mediterranean property.

They put the grand in grandeur. There's a three-Michelin star restaurant on the property, and the spa is its wellness equivalent. For an entirely new face, try the Grand Cru. Created by Dr. Burgener Switzerland (famed family-owned wellness center run by skin PhDs). The facial uses a gold complex that's a blend of chardonnay, pinot meunier, and pinot noir (grapes firm skin, gold reduces inflammation and redness). Then, green caviar (a longevity algae used for centuries in Japan) is combined with FicuVita stem cells, peptides, and hyaluronic acid (spurs collagen, reduces DNA damage, combats wrinkles). Finally, the specialist gently lawn-mows your face with lasers (microdermabrasion and VitaSkin ultrasound infusion).

THE SPA AT HARRAH'S, HARRAH'S RESORT SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Valley Center
HarrahsSoCal.com
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THE VIBE: A rare oasis in an otherwise smoke-tinged casino playground.

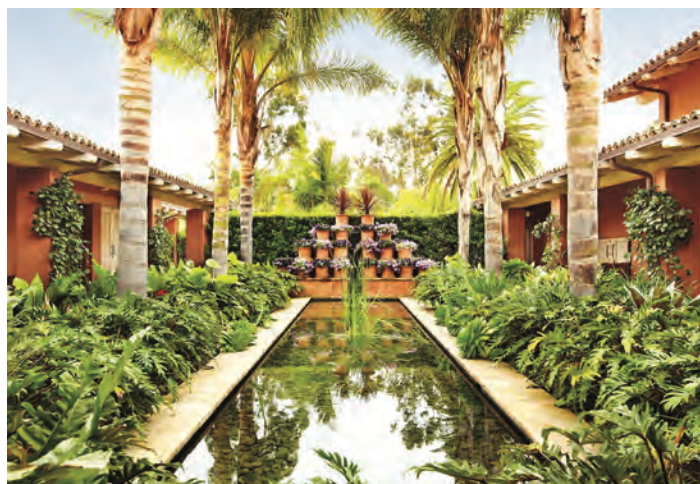
Besides the treatments, which are high-quality, especially considering the relatively low price compared with similar therapies at other area spas, the staff at The Spa at Harrah's is truly second-to-none. Experienced (many with 10+ years under their belts), and more than happy to give personalized modifications and recommendations, it's easily one of the friendliest spa experiences in town. Of special note is The Baby Bump massage, which may not be the first option that comes to mind at a casino spa, but it's a relaxing, pregnancy-enhancing rub-down; and also the facials, which use organic and highly sought after Eminence products. After being treated, relax in the not-too-hot 100-degree salt pool.

RANCHO VALENCIA SPA, RANCHO VALENCIA RESORT & SPA

Rancho Santa Fe
RanchoValencia.com
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THE VIBE: Widely considered one of the top resort properties in the country, this is indulgent luxury, hacienda style.

Renovated in 2021, the updated spa now boasts a full-service salon (highly recommended), as well as a new fitness center in addition to its spruced up relaxation areas and spa pool. Try the Marine Mineral Wrap, which sources high-quality seaweeds from Europe and requires dry brushing the body in preparation for a warm application of treats from the watery deep combined with Laminaria to make your skin tingle and shine. In tandem, enjoy an outdoor bath and shower, an indulgent treat that can be enjoyed year-round.





ESTANCIA LA JOLLA & HOTEL

La Jolla
EstanciaLaJolla.com
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THE VIBE: A tropical escape without the airfare.

The 7,000-square-foot spa sits amongst 10 acres of foliage and gardens near Torrey Pines—almost making you forget you're in San Diego. The spa offers the full wellness experience with couples' treatment rooms, eucalyptus steam rooms, a heated saltwater pool, and some of the softest and coziest robes you'll find in the city. Book the Estancia Glow Signature Facial which utilizes micro-current technology, LED light, and transdermal infusion to lift, firm, and add a youthfulness to your skin. The 100-minute therapy also features a diamond radiance collagen mask which leaves your skin glowing long after you leave.

SPA ALILA, ALILA MAREA BEACH RESORT

Encinitas
AlilaHotels.com
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THE VIBE: Eco-conscious luxury.

The service you'll get at Spa Alila is top-notch, from the chair-side tea service beforehand to the Chandon Champagne after, this is a spa worth spending on. Come for the Enrapture Body Renewal Ritual, where an aromatic salt or sugar scrub is made tableside and applied with a life-resetting touch. After a quick shower (no soap, the oil is too good), with fresh linens on the bed, a body butter massage moisturizes and soothes. What a gift.

THE SPA AT L'AUBERGE

Del Mar
LaubergeDelMar.com
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THE VIBE: A coastal-chic oceanfront escape.

Cruise through the idyllic Del Mar Village to find L'Auberge Del Mar. This tucked-away resort was designed to emulate a private oceanfront estate. Spa L'Auberge is housed in a detached bungalow with a California modern feel and thoughtful amenities. (Arrive early to don your cloudlike robe and sip a pineapple mimosa in the open-air lounge). The spa menu pulls both inspiration and ingredients from the Pacific, like marine salt crystals and red algae. Don't miss the Soulful Salt Stone massage, an 80-minute indulgence featuring warm Himalayan salt stones. This Swedish-style massage is a full-body experience: feet and hands receive just as much care as the back and neck. Book your treatment a few hours before sunset to enjoy the unbeatable ocean views.

THE CATAMARAN SPA, CATAMARAN RESORT

Pacific Beach
CatamaranResort.com
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THE VIBE: Tiki, but make it spa.

The Catamaran is a San Diego classic. Step outside the resort one way and you can see the surf. Step out the other side (the main attraction), and it's grass and the still water of the bay with boats and paddle boarders and multitudes out on their scenic strolls. After a treatment (they do full body massage, stone therapy, aromatherapy), dip into the modest hot tub and stare at the boardwalk life.

SPA PENDRY

Gaslamp Quarter
Pendry.com
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THE VIBE: Downtown loft oozing tranquility.

Tucked away in the Pendry Hotel, the indoor/outdoor spa combines industrial design with lush foliage for a serene retreat in the middle of Gaslamp. Arrive early to sip on Paru tea while the sun streams into the outdoor relaxation area or head to the eucalyptus steam room to clear congestion and unwind. For a results-focused facial, the 90-minute HydraFacial includes lymphatic draining, exfoliation, and light therapy, along with a neck and shoulder massage. This facial is ideal before special events as the results take effect immediately without any irritation, while leaving you relaxed and pampered.

SPA & SALON AT THE DEL, HOTEL DEL CORONADO

Coronado Island
HotelDel.com
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THE VIBE: Luxury beach retreat for vacationers and staycationers.

Stepping into the coastal spa can feel like the ghost of Marilyn Monroe has inhabited your demeanor, making you feel like you deserve the beauty regimen that made her “hot” when she stayed at The Del. For example, you’re greeted with complimentary Champagne that flows all day. The newly launched Oxygenating S’mores Facial doesn’t make you want to eat your own face, thank goodness. Instead, the ingredients contain anti-inflammatory properties and stimulate cell turnover for boosted collagen production. Step outside to the spa pool with ocean views.



THE SPA AT RANCHO BERNARDO INN, RANCHO BERNARDO INN

Rancho Bernardo
RanchoBernardoInn.com
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THE VIBE: Unpretentious luxury in a secret garden setting.

Escaping the outside world is easier when you’re surrounded by 265 acres of rolling green hills. Rancho Bernardo Inn has an elevated country club feel: winding paths through flowers and fountains, patio dining next to putting greens, and Mediterranean-inspired architecture. The spa creates an indoor-outdoor vibe with open-air walkways, warm wood tones, and ample natural light. Book a custom facial to experience the spa’s clean beauty ethos in action. Your technician will pull from an apothecary of Eminence Organic skincare products to address your skin concerns. Shop their picks in the spa reception casita, then unwind in the saline pool shaded by cypress trees. This secluded space with golf course views is open only to spa guests.

Creature Comforts

“I have to go to a spa for work,” I told my fiancée one evening in the kitchen. “But good news, guess who else gets to come, too?”

She smiled big. I looked into her limpid eyes, like two geodes softly glimmering on a massage room altar, excited to tell her the good news.

Then I bent down, cradling the dog’s head in my hands. “Heidi,” I said. Our desert mutt we’d picked up in Mexico and one of the great loves of my life.

To her credit my fiancée did not hit me. However, this magazine’s style guide does not permit the language she used.

Suffice to say she was not as thrilled as I was that Heidi would be getting a Pawroma Therapy Massage at Spa Terre in the Kona Kai Resort. A long way from being malnourished and plagued by worms and ear mites like she was when we found her, Heidi was now the kind of dog who got a spa treatment. Say what you will about luxury pet experiences. Luckily for Heidi this was comped.

With lavender oil in the air, she laid down in a dog bed on the sand in a cabana on the private beach at the Kona Kai. She was then skillfully rubbed and tapped to loosen up her tight muscles. She thought it was play time, but eventually, she relaxed. On the way home, a smile on her face. She loved it. I couldn’t wait to tell my fiancée more good news.

—Mateo Hoke



SPA TERRE, KONA KAI RESORT

Shelter Island
ResortKonaKai.com
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THE VIBE: Pet friendly, lowkey everyday spa.

The Kona Kai is a fun yet quiet resort, with modern, approachable aesthetics. At Spa Terre, guests can choose from body indulgences with names like Healing Cocoon and Kona Breeze, as well as a broad range of facials and massages. Once robed, guests await service in the Zen Den, where soft Enya-esque music plays from above. Help yourself to tea and relax while perusing the stack of decorative Nicholas Sparks paperbacks. Then go for a personalized Noble Massage with aromatherapy, a staff favorite. Afterward, enjoy the steam room, hot tubs (plural), and adults-only pool with cocktails from the Tiki bar. For extra fun, bring your dog for a Pawroma Therapy Massage. Therapists train for months to learn pup-appropriate techniques, and they’ll even teach you some. Everyone wins.



SUNNY'S SPA AND BEAUTY LOUNGE, THE SEABIRD RESORT

Oceanside
TheSeabirdResort.com
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THE VIBE: Beachy and fun.

This newish oceanfront spa has become all the rage for the bachelorette circuit and girlfriend getaways. The 105-minute Soul Ritual treatment includes an exfoliating body scrub, a healing wrap, and a full body massage with aromatherapy and a sound bath, plus breathwork and extra love for the scalp, hands, and feet. Other treatments worth noting include the Duo in the Suites, curated experiences for couples, mothers and daughters, or close buds. The Family to Be package pairs prenatal massage with an oceanfront photo session. Their spare Mediterranean grotto, The Cove, invites guests to curate individual add-ons like foot soaks, collagen masks, or eye treatments.

WILLOWS HOTEL AND SPA AT VIEJAS CASINO RESORT

Alpine
Viejas.com
\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

THE VIBE: Calm by the casino.

Before spending the day relaxing at the spa pool or trying your luck at the Viejas casino, treat yourself to a Fire & Ice Signature Body Wrap at Willows Spa. A light scrub sets the stage for a cooling masque made from the succulent stonecrop followed by a warm thermal wrap and hot towels. While experiencing the contrasts, an acupuncture massage is applied to feet and head before the treatment is concluded with a replenishing moisturizer. Seven treatment rooms offer massages and facials while hair and nail stations focus on beauty before a big night gaming.

SPA RITUAL, SYCUAN CASINO RESORT

El Cajon
Sycuan.com
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THE VIBE: An oasis of calm awash in marble.

In the subterranean trenches of a casino resort, the sleek Spa Ritual offers a jetted hot tub in gendered changing rooms, plus a steam room and sauna, while the co-ed outdoor pool and lazy river bring the fun on warm summer days. Splurge on the "Spoil Me" package, an 80-minute Royal Milk & Honey Wrap with a 75 minute Oxygen facial. The wrap is the spa's hidden gem. Guests are painted with coconut milk and honey sugar, coated with warm coconut oil, then cocooned in warm blankets while receiving a scalp massage. The Oxygen facial plumps the skin while guests receive hand and neck massages. Tack on the Reduce hot stone massage for a masters degree in decadence.

SPA BREZZA, SAN DIEGO MISSION BAY RESORT

Mission Bay
MissionBayResort.com
\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

THE VIBE: Tasteful luxury that's fit for a solo spa day.

The spa at San Diego Mission Bay Resort is the only in California to house a heated Himalayan salt block table that helps align your chakras and produces negative ions to balance the toxic positive ions emitted from electronic devices like phones and computers. A one-of-a-kind treatment, the Himalayan Salt Rejuvenating Scrub starts off at said table, where you'll meditate (or nap) for a bit after getting a scalp and foot massage. Once that's done, you'll relocate to another room to relax your body and mind with a full body scrub and 50-minute massage. Silky, hydrated and smooth skin guaranteed.

OMNI LA COSTA RESORT & SPA

Carlsbad
OmniHotels.com
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THE VIBE: The ultimate girlfriend's spa getaway.

The chic, white, 43,000-square-foot spa has 42 treatment rooms, a health-focused café, and a large pool—it feels like a resort on its own. The men's- and women's-only designated areas feature lockers, a clothing-optional hot tub, steam room, sauna, and showers with full-sized amenities. Try the Detox Herbal Massage, which assists with microcirculation, fights free-radicals, and relieves swelling in the body through lymphatic drainage. Using light pressure and rhythmic movements, the massage combines a full body scrub via a hand-crafted poultice made with exotic spices and flowers.

RANCHO LA PUERTA

Tecate (Mexico)
RanchoLaPuerta.com
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THE VIBE: Charming wellness hacienda in nature.

Splendor fills the air at Rancho La Puerta, a 4,000-acre escape overflowing with gardens, pristine pools, scenic hiking trails, almost a dozen gyms, and other stunning features set below Mt. Kuchumaa in Tecate, Mexico. The 1940's hacienda is only about an hour away from downtown San Diego. Using natural and ancient Mexican rituals, the estancia's three spa centers provide holistic therapies and body treatments to release tension from the outside world. Try the Mountain Sage Hot Stone Massage, where warm, smooth river stones provide a nurturing and healing touch to alleviate tense muscles and stress, easing the mind and body.

GLEN IVY HOT SPRINGS

Corona
GlenIvy.com
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THE VIBE: Outdoor aquatic oasis.

After exploring Glen Ivy's 19 mineral pools and therapeutic baths set within gardens of tropical foliage, immerse yourself in a unique California red clay pool at 'Club Mud.' First, coat yourself with the warm, silky mud, then let it sink into your skin within their Wafa cave, a type of sauna that helps the mud draw impurities from your skin. Pro tip: Wear an old or dark colored bathing suit so that you can get dirty without worrying about stains. To make your day even more relaxing, add on a Quartz Massage, which requires you to lay on a specially designed bed of Gharieni quartz that ergonomically cradles you and balances your chakra while warm quartz sand eases away muscle tension.

CAL-A-VIE

Vista
Cal-A-Vie.com
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THE VIBE: French countryside chateau.

Cal-a-Vie doesn't offer day passes. If you want to experience the idyllic health spa, you'll need to book a three, four, or seven night stay. Their most popular option is the week-long European Package, which includes a sampling of their best massages, body wraps, and facials along with unlimited classes. The wellness retreat is expansive, with just 32 suites and villas on more than 500 acres filled with vineyards, hiking trails, and historic French-ish buildings that have been reassembled brick-by-brick. While the atmosphere is unmistakably Provençal, the holistic offerings are more expansive: from traditions like sound baths and acupuncture to technology like the Bod Pod.

PARK HYATT AVIARA

Carlsbad
ParkHyattAviara.com
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THE VIBE: Renovated and refreshed.

Park Hyatt Aviara will be debuting a fully redesigned spa early this year. The Miraval Life in Balance Spa at Park Hyatt Aviara is part of the final phase of its resort-wide renovation, updating the 15,000-square-foot spa including its 20 indoor and outdoor treatment rooms with specialized areas for holistic modalities such as hanging yoga silks for Naga Thai, a Thai-style massage. The new Miraval Life in Balance Spa will also offer exercise and meditation classes, traditional spa treatments, and spaces for reflection including crystals to cleanse energy and create mindfulness.

GOLDEN DOOR

San Marcos
GoldenDoor.com
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THE VIBE: Ultra-luxe.

Stepping beyond the literal "Golden Doors" takes guests to a peaceful hidden world that would be otherwise unexpected in the San Marcos hills. A Japanese Zen garden with ancient stone lanterns and distinctive historic architecture recalls temple sites in Kyoto. The sprawling resort includes pools, hiking trails, a biointensive farm with its own citrus trees, and chickens that lay fresh eggs for the refreshing spa meals. A typical day includes burning 5,000 calories with individualized fitness regimens, in-room massages, and bespoke body treatments. Relax in the renovated guest rooms and luxuriate in the sparkling new bathhouse.



For Moms and Moms-to-Be

EQUILIBRIO MASSAGE THERAPY

Hillcrest
EquilibrioMassage.com
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THE VIBE: Mama must-have.

Nearing (or after) your due date, if a mom-to-be is experiencing physical discomfort or anxiety, they might wonder if it's too late to book a massage. Happily, at Equilibrio Massage Therapy, they have a 'Birth' Day Massage designed for this time of transition. Equilibrio specializes in prenatal massage based in science, helping with common pregnancy issues like round ligament pain and sciatica while making mamas feel at peace and connected with their bodies and their babies. The spa's therapists are pillow ninjas, helping get you comfortable, while their therapeutic touch benefits pregnancy, labor, and birth.

THERAPIE DAY SPA

Ocean Beach
TherapieDaySpa.com
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THE VIBE: Lunch break meets spa break.

While many spas offer prenatal massage, a true expertise in pregnancy bodywork is harder to come by. Thérapie Day Spa has one of San Diego's top maternity massage specialists, Korrin Hamilton, who understands the stress that the changes of pregnancy put on the body and designs techniques to alleviate discomfort. Launching soon is a postpartum massage option, developed specifically for post-natal and addressing the strains of birth and motherhood. Thérapie has a monthly membership package to make it more affordable to get regular massages, along with rotating complimentary upgrades for members, like a rosemary foot scrub or aromatherapy.

BRIO SKIN STUDIO

Oceanside
Brio-Skin-Studio.square.site
\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

THE VIBE: Cozy, glamorous, lowkey spa suite.

One of Oceanside's beauty secrets lies at Brio Skin Studio, a lowkey yet glamorous suite with two cozy rooms. The studio's standout service, the Geneo Facial, calls for a three-step regimen with exfoliation, oxygenation and nourishment that leaves your skin oxygenated and rejuvenized. Jamie DeNault—the studio's founder—says the treatment uses the "Bohr effect" to drive results. She sums up the science behind it as "creating oxygenation in the skin from the inside out," killing bacteria, and plumping and reviving the skin. Pick from a list of ingredients including charcoal and blue spirulina to bring your skin back to life.

INN AT MOONLIGHT BEACH

Encinitas
InnAtMoonlightBeach.com
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THE VIBE: Intimate and welcoming.

A five-suite sanctuary—and the first in the world to be WELL certified by the International Well Building Institute for having outstanding measures of air, water, lighting, nutrition, fitness, comfort, and mind—offers a list of wellness experiences perfect for a couple's retreat. The Well Loved Us package is among the most popular on site including two 60-minute massages, a bottle of bubbles and strawberries, a charcuterie board (vegan options available), a meditation kit with an abalone shell, palo santo and a selenite stick, plus a flower or medicinal herbal tea bath and other delicious wellness add-ons. Happy staycation-ing!

ANGELICA B BEAUTY

South Park
AngelicaBBeauty.com
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THE VIBE: Boho clean beauty in an urban spa that once was the Burlingame Garage.

Your face will feel like baby skin after trying the holistic massage facial with organic Laurel cosmetic products. Expect eye bags to disappear—seriously! There are three add-on options to the facial that are worth trying: lymphatic drainage, gua sha (gentle combing with a rose quartz stone to rid unhealthy cells), and Buccal massage (Pilates for the face to increase collagen production). There are also services for lashes, brow lamination, make-up, sugaring, and waxing. The front-of-the-house boutique offers lovely products for cosmetics, lash care, natural skin care, and sexual wellness.





SAFFRON & SAGE

Mission Hills
SaffronSageLiving.com
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THE VIBE: Iconic California “holistic health club.”

The queen bee of San Diego’s wellness scene, Saffron and Sage’s white walls are punctuated with black tourmaline to detract negative energy. Breathwork and movement studios are added perks. The collaboration between holistic medicine, ancient healing practices and body work are best taken advantage of by booking combination treatments. Devotees recommend starting with Breathwork (for alignment and emotional shedding), followed by Acupuncture and Fire Cupping. Need more decadence? Add sound therapy, guided meditations, hypnotherapy, a Thai massage, or a lymphatic drainage facial.

YU SPA

Convoy District
YuSpaSD.com
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THE VIBE: Ultimate Korean spa experience with body scrubs, saunas, and vaginal steams.

Nothing is quite like a Korean body scrub to take off every shred of dead skin. You get a revitalizing experience while laying on a table and getting intensively exfoliated with hand mitts. Guests can opt for a wet massage in the body scrub room or a dry massage in a private treatment room. Try the yoni, or vaginal steam, which helps the reproductive system. The day spa option is popular where you spend hours in the super hygienic dry and steam saunas, jacuzzi, cold plunge, and three Korean sauna rooms: the ice room, Himalayan salt sauna, and medicinal red clay room.

GIRL ON THE GO WELLNESS SPA

Golden Hill
GirlOnTheGo.net
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THE VIBE: Efficient, spare and cozy.

Girl on the Go brings some Anthropologie aesthetic to Golden Hill. The small shop hawks skincare products like Epicurean, Ilike, and Yonka, all popular with young professionals with cash to burn. Now that they’ve taken massages off the menu, Girl on the Go is zeroing in on what they do best—skin rejuvenation. They offer a vast array of facials, antioxidant wraps (like a pomegranate and goji berry skin treatment sure to melt excess tension), and even LED light therapy for pain management and wrinkles. Don’t miss the ancient Gua Sha treatment, a traditional Chinese medicine technique of scraping the skin to promote lymphatic drainage. Gua Sha can be added to any traditional facial. According to some aestheticians, this style of lymphatic drainage is almost as good as Botox.

