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Is there a science to indulging? A methodical way to pamper? The Ancient Hindus, Persians and Egyptians thought so. If there is, Kelly Towry and her team of therapists at The Body Sanctuary in Westlake Village have certainly perfected their knowledge of this ancient modality.

# A Hidden Oasis of Wellness

# THE BODY SANCTUARY

BY SHANNON ANDERSON

Spa treatments such as massage and acupuncture have been an integral part of medicine and human wellness for thousands of years. They are some of the earliest remedial practices, and involve the most natural and effective ways to provide lasting rejuvenation and rehabilitation. Many people feel that treating themselves to a spa trip is a luxury, something that only happens for special occasions like holidays and vacations. But the truth is, wellness treatments like those offered at this hidden retreat, are no more a luxury than sleeping, eating or breathing. It is an essential that, if maintained regularly, will increase health, wellness and even lifespan.

The Body Sanctuary serves as a respite from the overwhelming and often hectic pace that accompanies modern-day living. From the moment you enter this perfect mini-retreat, you find yourself immersed in a tranquil atmosphere. Live trees and the sound of outdoor waterfalls greet customers when they step through the doors of The Body Sanctuary. Slip onto a massage bed in one of their specially designed relaxation rooms and experience the magic that only comes from a good massage, facial or acupuncture treatment. As a matter of fact, once you close your eyes, you may think you're in heaven. You're not.

Instead, this oasis of calm exists amid the turbulence of daily traffic, work and the stress of commuting. It is located straight off the 101 Freeway on Hampshire Road, where therapists help frazzled customers escape their woes with everything from facials to acupuncture. Trained practitioners will massage aching muscles and relieve the stresses of the day by providing treatments designed to nourish, tone and address the wellness of the whole body. And when it comes to The Body Sanctuary, smaller is definitely better.

Instead of bustling through passages of worn out, overworked therapists, opt for an intimate refuge with a specialized, unique menu of treatments like this one. If you feel the same way I do, you might be right at home at The Body Sanctuary. This spa, which is hidden among other shops, restaurants and offices at The Water Court, is one of the quaintest, most revitalizing little luxuries we've seen in a while.

The lobby, where guests can relax before their appointments, has a proverbial quality, with a wall of windows that are draped artfully with cream-colored hangings. The windows overlook the cascading waterfalls and serene pools within the plaza, creating a restful, mesmerizing scene.

I was thrilled to discover in the first moments of my visit that there is not a hint of stress or pressure here. Most of us have enough of both those things in our lives, and we don't need them at a spa. For those who are working mothers and fathers, juggling a job and parenting simultaneously can be totaled up in just about three words. To. Do. List. So when you can manage a bit of time for yourself, it's essential to get in some serious relaxation.

As for the flavor of The Body Sanctuary, it is neither Asian nor Ayurvedic nor anything but absolutely peaceful. Kelly referred more than once to the link between physical wellness and spirituality, and reveals that belief in her design of the spa's interior. Towry has meticulously and sensitively composed a blend of luxury and spirituality in her spa, giving each separate relaxation room a different feel and theme. Customers can receive an acupuncture treatment or a Ginseng Pearl Lifting Facial in the Asian room, or experience an English Rose Garden Foot Treatment in the European Escape room.

Left to right: Kelly Towry, Melanie Burns, and Bernadette Cairns

I was also pleased to find The Body Sanctuary offers treatments specializing in weight loss, allergy elimination, fibromyalgia, candida and PMS/hormone balance right alongside the more conventional spa treatments like facials and massage. They also offer a full range of med spa treatments including IPL photo facials, Rosacea treatments, age spot and vein treatments, permanent hair removal and Botox, making a trip to the spa that much more convenient.

One example of spa's delightful treatments is the Extreme Foot Massage, which features a hot peppermint soak, a desert sand essential oil scrub, and a delicious foot massage, using a combination of Swedish and reflexology techniques. Or, if you are looking for more of a full body indulgence, splurge on an aromatherapy massage and melt your stress away with your choice of scrumptious, custom-blended whipped body butter. And with the holidays coming, there is no better time to pamper a loved one with a spa treatment or gift certificate.

Whether or not you know exactly what your needs are, The Body Sanctuary is happy to help you get back on an even keel and feel your best. So the next time you want to escape from cell phones, traffic and the hustle and bustle of a busy day, remember that sometimes there is no better way to restore you mind and body than to simply lapse into luxury.

*The Body Sanctuary is located at 850 Hampshire Road, Suite P in Westlake Village, CA. Call 805-230-0010 to make an appointment, or visit www.body-sanctuary.com* yhc