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Relax Mom!

By Caren Elizabeth Austen

MOTHER'S DAY IS UPON US once again and many of us are faced with the dilemma of what kind of gift will best honor the women who have affected our lives so profoundly. This year, instead of the traditional roses or chocolates, consider pampering her with a gift certificate for a spa treatment that can leave her feeling both relaxed and rejuvenated.

Frisco boasts a number of spas, one of which is sure to offer a service she'd love at a price in your range. In order to provide our readers with an accurate overview of what's available, I visited the spas, interviewed the owners or managers and sampled the services offered.

The spas are divided into two categories: Spas and Medical Spas (or "med spas"). They are not listed in order of preference, but in alphabetical order

under each of those categories.

THE COOPER SPA AT CRAIG RANCH

The Cooper Spa at Craig Ranch is part of the new Cooper Aerobics Center, an expansion of the original Preston Road campus. The Spa is one of a few services for which membership is not required.

When scheduling a spa service, be sure to allow enough time to arrive early and take advantage of the relaxation room with its waterfall wall and sound therapy chairs. This will begin the relaxation process before your treatment even begins.

Because the spa was not yet open when I visited, I was unable to sample the services offered. However, I found the environment to be soothing and the staff helpful and professional. I was pleased to see that spa clients do not have to go through the main aerobics facility entrance, but have a private entrance.

The spa and equipment used are state-of-the-art, as would be expected of a facility associated with Dr. Kenneth Cooper.

Childcare services set the Cooper Spa apart from many others. Childcare is free for all spa clients, including a high level of security and has a low child-to-caregiver ratio. Even the childcare facilities encourage healthy activities and high-level, but fun, exercise for older kids.

THE FACE & BODY DAY SPA

The Face & Body Day Spa Frisco is located in one of Frisco's newest hot spots at the intersection of Legacy and S.H.121. The atmosphere is warm and inviting, with helpful staff members that led me to a changing room to slip into a comfy robe and slippers before taking me to the relaxation room where they offered hot tea, coffee, water and cookies to enjoy while I waited for my service to begin.

The spa offers an impressive array of

services. I took advantage of one of their customized services, the "Red Flower Ritual." Teresa Buhler, Licensed Massage Therapist, first heated a private steam room for me. The heat and steam allowed my muscles to begin to relax and the pores to open in preparation for the rest of the treatment. After I toweled off, I relaxed on the massage table and experienced a stimulating scrub. Next, I showered to rinse off the exfoliating scrub and toweled off to prepare for an hour-long massage. As if this weren't pampering enough, it continued with a reflexology treatment on my feet. I guarantee any woman would love this service.

MASSAGE ENVY

If the lady in your life would love to be pampered on a regular basis, but you think it's just not in your budget, check out Massage Envy. This is a no frills spa, where massage is the only service on

the menu. For a \$49 monthly fee, which includes a \$10 membership charge and a single massage, members can come as often as they wish and pay only \$39 for an hour-long massage. They offer a number of different massage types, including Swedish, deep tissue, myofascial, sports, trigger-point and others. With 5,000 appointments available each month, it's likely you can get in whenever you want, even if it's at the last moment. According to franchise owner, Brendan McBratney, Massage Envy seeks to, "bring massage therapy out of the elite and expensive circle and make it available to everyone." Having provided more than 1,250 massages to clients in March alone, it would seem they've succeeded.

NICOLE DAY SPA

Nicole Day Spa may be one of Frisco's best-kept secrets. It is located in the up and coming Frisco Square, soon to be one

of Frisco's hottest locations. When co-owner Taylor Nguyen set out to design his second location (the first is in South Lake), he visited the ritziest spas around, even traveling to Las Vegas to check out their designs. Finally, he worked with his architect to create an upscale, but comfortable, full-service spa. When asked what sets Nicole Day Spa apart from others, Nguyen answered, "Good prices and ambience."

This spa has addressed the recent concerns over the safety of pedicures by designing a unique, anti-bacterial pedicure bowl. The water in these bowls does not re-circulate eliminating an environment where bacteria can grow. Fresh water flows in for each client and an underwater fan creates circulation. When each client is finished the water simply drains out with no nooks or crannies where bacteria might colonize. While Kristina did my pedicure at Nicole Day Spa, I reclined in



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an oh-so-comfortable massage chair from Sharper Image and thoroughly enjoyed my pedicure experience.

SOLARÉ SPA AND CAFE

Rosanne Best and her brother Vince Manguray, founded Solaré Spa and Cafe to fill a niche market. She says, "I wanted to provide a place where people could come to relax and be pampered and then stay for lunch or a snack to continue their down time before returning to their hectic pace." Out of that grew Solaré Spa and Cafe. She also wanted to disprove the myth that spas are only for affluent women. "We've tried to make our services affordable and to create a man-friendly environment."

One of their most popular services is their couples package, which includes massages done on side-by-side tables, followed by a private bath for two, accompanied by a fruit plate and sparkling



Pedicure at Nicole Day Spa

photo by Chris Johnson



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beverages. Many couples have raved that it was like a mini-vacation that they plan to repeat on a regular basis.

I chose to enjoy their hot stone massage and facial. The way the stones were used to relax and massage was the ultimate in soothing tense muscles.

HANNA ISUL MED SPA

Hanna Isul offers an exclusive, luxurious spa experience. The atmosphere is quiet and calm. All treatments, including pedicures and manicures, are done in private rooms where clients can recline comfortably. Instead of soaking clients' feet in pedicure bowls, hot towels are used to soften the skin. All services use Hanna Isul's private line of products developed by the founder, Myong Chong.

I enjoyed the Signature Facial, which left my skin feeling like a newborn's. It began with cleansing, continued with ultrasonic microdermabrasion to slough off dead cells and a lifting laser treatment that improves oxygenation and the production of collagen. It included other procedures that make this a viable and non-invasive alternative to facelift surgery. I left looking and feeling fresh and rejuvenated.

TIMELESS BEAUTY BY RENEE

Located inside the Hanna Isul Med Spa, though a separate business, is Timeless Beauty by Renee. Owned and operated by Renee Cao, Timeless Beauty specializes in permanent makeup. Renowned throughout the United States and Canada for her work, Cao applies permanent eyeliner and eyebrows, and can even correct or enhance the shape of lips. She is often called on to correct the work of other, less-skilled artists.

Cao says, "I am a watercolorist. I love to paint and I think that my work is an extension of that artistry. My artist's eye allows me to enhance a woman's natural beauty with a natural look."



Microdermabrasion at Le Beau Visage Medical Spa

photo by Chris Johnson

KOKOPELLI'S WELLNESS SPA & YOGA CENTER

Kokopelli's emphasis on wellness makes it, in many aspects, a one-stop shopping center for spa and wellness treatments. According to owner, Christine Douglas, the goal is to provide life-changing opportunities to improve one's health and wellness. The Spa offers classes and treatments that not only make you feel good for the moment, but create wellness from the inside out. An on-site chiropractor and a muscle pain specialist offer clients a chance to determine the underlying cause of ongoing aches and

pains and a treatment plan to work through them. Another important treatment offered is bio-identical hormone therapy.

Bio-identical hormone therapy is designed primarily for peri-menopausal women. This treatment identifies the individual's natural hormonal make-up, allowing specialists to prescribe specific dosages of the various hormones for her particular needs.

The spa treatment I experienced there was the aromatherapy massage, a wonderful treat for the senses. First, Lori Bittenbender, Registered Massage Therapist, RMT, brushed my skin to exfoliate and to stimulate circulation—an unusual, but delightful sensation. Next, she used aromatherapy oils, which she massaged into my skin. A hot towel wrap that felt like a comforting cocoon and caused the oils to soak into my skin followed this. During that time, Lori massaged my scalp, adding to the total relaxation experience.

LE BEAU VISAGE MEDICAL SPA

Le Beau Visage offers the feel and comfort of a spa for what is truly a medical clinic for non-surgical aesthetic treatments. When I arrived for my treatment, I relaxed in the

soothing atmosphere of the waiting room before going back for evaluation by owner, Jason M. Riehs, M.D. He first took three digital pictures. One of my profile in each direction and the other facing straight at the camera. He then used a black light, as at Hanna Isul, to highlight the areas of sun damage on my face. As one who has never been a sun worshiper, I was shocked to see the amount of damage to my face. Next, he took me to a treatment room where Jennifer performed microdermabrasion on my face using a state-of-the-art, diamond-tipped laser. As this was my first experience with regular

microdermabrasion, I was relieved that there was no discomfort. It just felt like a tiny vacuum was being moved around my face.

Jennifer pointed out the advantages of the diamond-tipped laser over the traditional laser that expels tiny bits of crystal. "With the traditional laser, you don't get quite as aggressive a treatment as you do with the laser tip. Plus you have to cover the eyes, preventing effective treatment of the eye area. The other disadvantage is that it's annoying to have to clean the crystals out of your ears, nose and mouth."

Dr. Rihs says, "At La Beau Visage, we incorporate innovative technologies and skin care products to enhance results with minimal side effects. Each client receives personalized information regarding daily skin care that will meet his or her unique needs."

SPA O₂ AND MEDICAL AESTHETICS

Spa O₂ offers all the services of a spa, plus the medical treatments of a med spa. Their services range from the Classic European Facial to metabolic typing.

When I arrived, I was given a plush robe to change into and was escorted into a massage therapy room to receive a massage by Cheryl McLaughlin, RMT. This soothing and calming experience prepared me for the Classic European Facial, administered by Ashanta Morris, Medical Aesthetician. The facial was a treat for the senses as Ashanta used a cleanser with grapefruit extract to begin, and then followed up with a rosemary-basil moisturizer that she massaged into my skin.

Manager Rachel Weber pointed out that though they have many clients who come in just for their spa services, they also have a large percentage that come for some of their longer-term treatments, such as laser hair removal and mesotherapy (treatments that break down cellulite).

Armed with this information, planning for Mother's Day should be a breeze. Frisco offers a spa sure to please mom, is conveniently located, and fits your budget. This year, offer her a day of pampering that will make her feel as special and beautiful as she really is.

Caren Elizabeth Austen is a freelance writer living in Plano.



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