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By Stacy Shoemaker Rauert
Photography by Dan Bibb and Arthur Julian



double duty

Spa by day, lounge by night?

A first-of-its-kind concept hits Manhattan



Below: The reception desk at G Spa and Lounge. *This photo:* Dot lights glow through the stainless steel bar at night. *Opening page:* During the day, the bar becomes a juice/manicure bar.

When a deal with an outside spa tenant fell through, Michael Achenbaum, co-owner of the Hotel Gansevoort in New York City, was left in a jam. He still wanted to open a spa, but was worried he wouldn't make money without bringing in an outside operator. But a brainstorming session with restaurateur Jeffrey Chodorow (who wanted to partner on the spa) and local designer Robert Henry resulted in something even better: an industry first. "We said, 'Let's use the space 24 hours a day and transform it,'" says Achenbaum of G Spa, a full-service spa by day and a bar/lounge at night. "It's not done so much to make a master profit—obviously I would like to—but instead it serves my guests really well and it's a more private atmosphere for our celebrity and high-end clientele than the rooftop bar."



Design-wise, Henry had to come up with a look that captures both the relaxed nature of a spa and the energy of a lounge. Since the spa/lounge is located in the hotel's basement (which Henry says was a space that "was never meant to be utilized") he decided to create a sexy grotto where furnishings play double duty and a mixture of "rough and smooth" materials reflect the space's dual purpose (as well as have some synergy with textures used

in the hotel's restaurant ONO). And even though he says he is over the Asian-inspired spa interior—"If I see another teak stained wall and hear Enya playing I am going to die," he says—as a veteran in the spa industry, Henry admits that at first he was bit nervous about G Spa's modern design. "Then I was, like, lighten up," he says of the unconventional palette of crimson red, dark silver-gray, and white. "This is unique and hip for the



Right: A scarlet glass-encased treatment room. *Below:* The lounge at night, with its red leather seating and glowing zero-edge tubs.



Meatpacking and we find it to be energizing and uplifting. It's more dramatic and responsive to the youth and energy of the area."

In the lounge area, a stainless steel bar doubles as a juice/manicure bar during the day and a cocktail bar at night, while gray ultrasuede lounge seating is also a pedicure station; at night, the large circular ceiling lights are turned off and dot lights on the steel bar face (drilled every six inches) are turned on. "It creates a cool constellated pattern that illuminates the room," Henry says. (Also, spa products lining the bar are replaced with alcohol.)

Three scarlet glass-encased massage rooms in the treatment area (complete with a flatscreen TV and bench seating) become VIP rooms for lounge guests with help from sexier lighting, the removal of the massage table, and spa equipment being hid in teak cabinetry. "Furniture is removed twice a day but it's not that complicated—we aren't moving as much equipment as you think," says Scott Sartiano, a co-owner of the lounge as well as Manhattan hotspot Butter. Loungers can also enjoy movies on large projection screens that rise up in front of the zero-edge tubs used for hydrotherapy treatments during the day; but they can't use all three of the lit tubs afterhours—two of them are covered with Plexiglas. "The water still spills out for an ambient vibe," Henry adds. Daytime relaxation chaises set on the white crystal bianco porcelain floors are replaced by red leather seating, while teak banquettes lining the uplit concrete wall become lounge seating thanks to the addition of red ottomans and teak tables lit by candles. "[The space] is so different at night than during the day that it's hard to explain," Achenbaum says. "It really is a fun, unique concept." **hd**

G Spa & Lounge at the Hotel Gansevoort

New York City

Owner Michael Achenbaum (spa and lounge); Jeffrey Chodorow, Richie Akiva, and Scott Sartiano (lounge)

Architecture/Interior Design Firm Robert D. Henry Architects, New York City

Architecture/Interior Design Project Team Robert Henry, principal; Nicole Migeon, principal and project manager; and Harris Levy, Gary Yen, and Rebecca Wu, design team

Contractor K&K Construction, Inc.

Lighting GL Lites On

MEP Engineer Jashar Engineering P.C.

Spa Pool Engineers DRMP, Inc.

Millwork KSD, Inc.

Glass Wall Panels Carvart Glass

Banquettes American Silk Mills

Banquette Upholstery Sensuede

Drapery Fabric Carnegie

**Marble Columns/Counters/Showers/
Floors** Stone Source

Carpet Karastan

Bar Custom designed by Robert D. Henry Architects

Chaise Lounge Chairs Cassina USA and Alias USA

Barstools Knoll, Inc.

Makeup Chairs Cassina USA

Etremis Bench Poliform USA