MAY 2006

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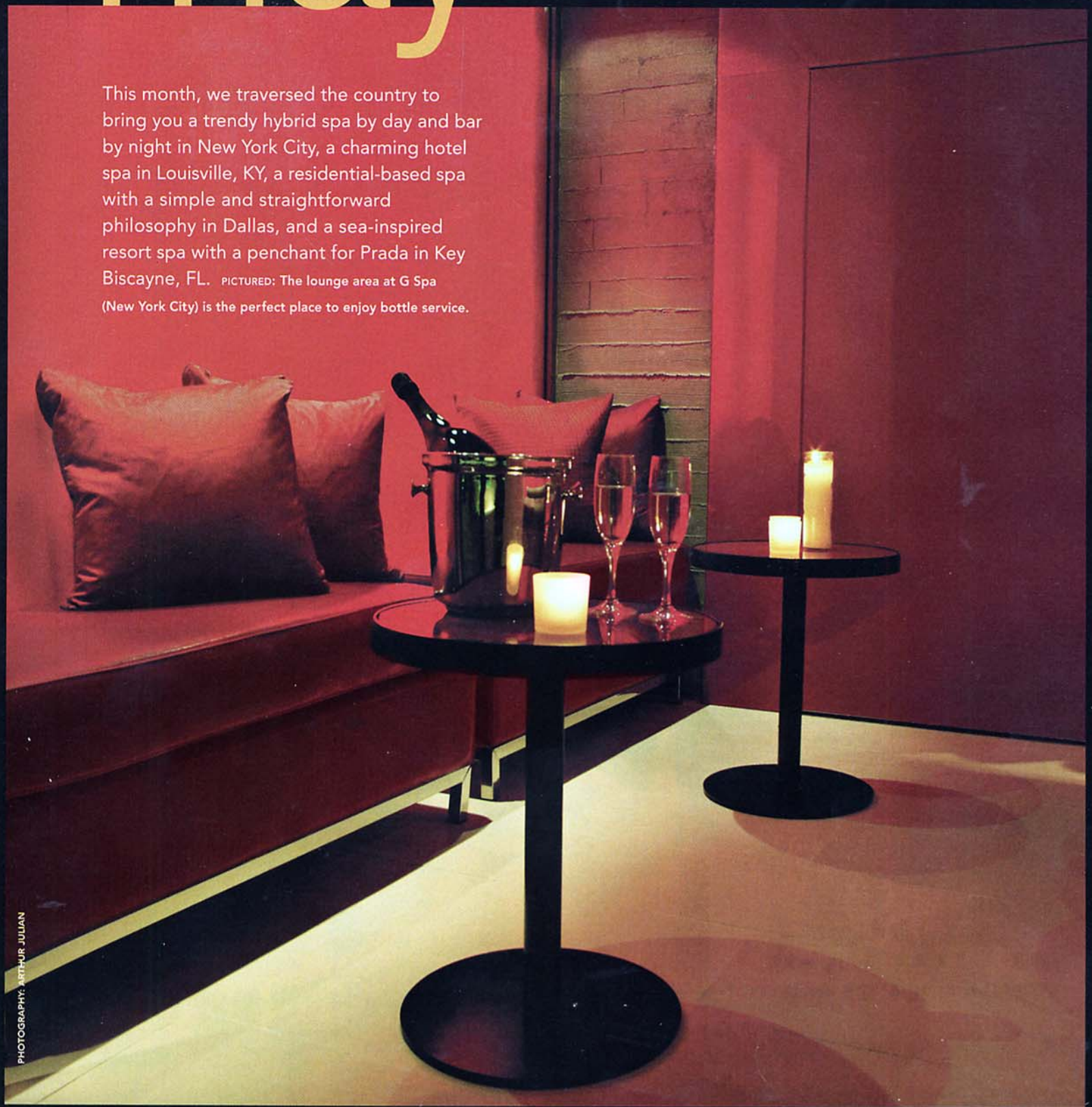
THE ANNUAL SKINCARE ISSUE

A QUESTEX PUBLICATION

may

This month, we traversed the country to bring you a trendy hybrid spa by day and bar by night in New York City, a charming hotel spa in Louisville, KY, a residential-based spa with a simple and straightforward philosophy in Dallas, and a sea-inspired resort spa with a penchant for Prada in Key Biscayne, FL. PICTURED: **The lounge area at G Spa (New York City) is the perfect place to enjoy bottle service.**



PHOTOGRAPHY: ARTHUR JULIAN

Body, Mind And Spirits

The opening of a spa by day and bar by night in the trendy Hotel Gansevoort in New York City's Meatpacking District gives new meaning to the idea of happy hour.

WRITTEN BY HEATHER MIKESELL PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL GRIMM AND ARTHUR JULIAN

TO CALL THE MEATPACKING DISTRICT IN NEW YORK CITY A SCENE IS SOMEWHAT OF AN UNDERSTATEMENT. ADDING TO THE AREA'S well-deserved reputation is the recent unveiling of **G Spa & Lounge** at the popular Hotel Gansevoort, already a major draw for trend-setters with its happening rooftop lounge. Unlike conventional spas, G Spa caters to this hip, demanding crowd with a new concept that combines the pampering and wellness-oriented aspects of a spa with the more social and imbibing aspects of a bar. Essentially, it's a spa by day and a bar by night. The idea may have some spa purists up in arms, but it's a concept well suited to its particular locale in the heart of New York's hottest 'hood.

Although the concept of serving alcohol is hardly revolutionary—many spas offer martinis and manicures—few, if any, offer a full-service bar. The spa even has its own signature cocktail, Grape Expectations, which is a blend of white grape juice and champagne. "It's our take on the Bellini," says spa director Christine Salata.

Making the most of the space, the 4,300-square-foot spa was designed by architect Robert D. Henry, who made it possible to transform the treatment rooms into VIP lounges at night. Cozy benches in the rooms serve double-duty as storage units, and teak cabinets keep spa equipment and products out of sight. The spa also has three infinity-edge soaking pools that guests can

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enjoy either pre- or post-treatment. Above each pool is a retractable projection screen, which can be used for movie screenings, presentations, and parties. It makes the space ideal for events. In the evenings, glass coverings are placed over the pools to aid in the spa's day-to-night transformation.

Although the spa has only three treatment rooms, Salata considers the Gansevoort's 187 guest rooms an extension of the spa. In-room treatments make up 30 percent of the spa's services. In the warmer summer months, manicures and pedicures are offered by the pool, which is located on the roof. Treatments are also available in a rooftop cabana.

With 22 employees, G Spa is well-equipped to handle the three treatment rooms and

"Many of the massage therapists are multi-talented in that they can also mix a mean drink."

additional treatment areas. According to Salata, finding the right people who are comfortable with the unconventional environment was one of her biggest challenges. "I interviewed a lot of great people who just wouldn't fit in here," says Salata. "I found people with great experience that I knew wouldn't be able to get their heads around the whole concept." The unconventional hiring process—interviews and practicals took place in the owner's apartment—helped to weed out those not cut out to work in such an environment. Many of the massage therapists are multi-talented in that they can also mix a mean drink.

In selecting products for the spa, Salata adopted a pick-and-choose philosophy. Instead of carrying entire lines, she chose only those products that impressed her with their efficacy. According to her, spas lose credibility by carrying every product of a line because no line can be everything to everyone. As a result, Salata chose products from Anakiri Bioenergetic Skin Care, Epicuren, MD Skincare, Sonya Dakar, Trilogy, and more. For makeup, she chose Hourglass Cosmetics.

Despite advising her staff members to listen and take notes when trainers come in to teach treatment protocols, Salata also encourages them to think outside the box and experiment

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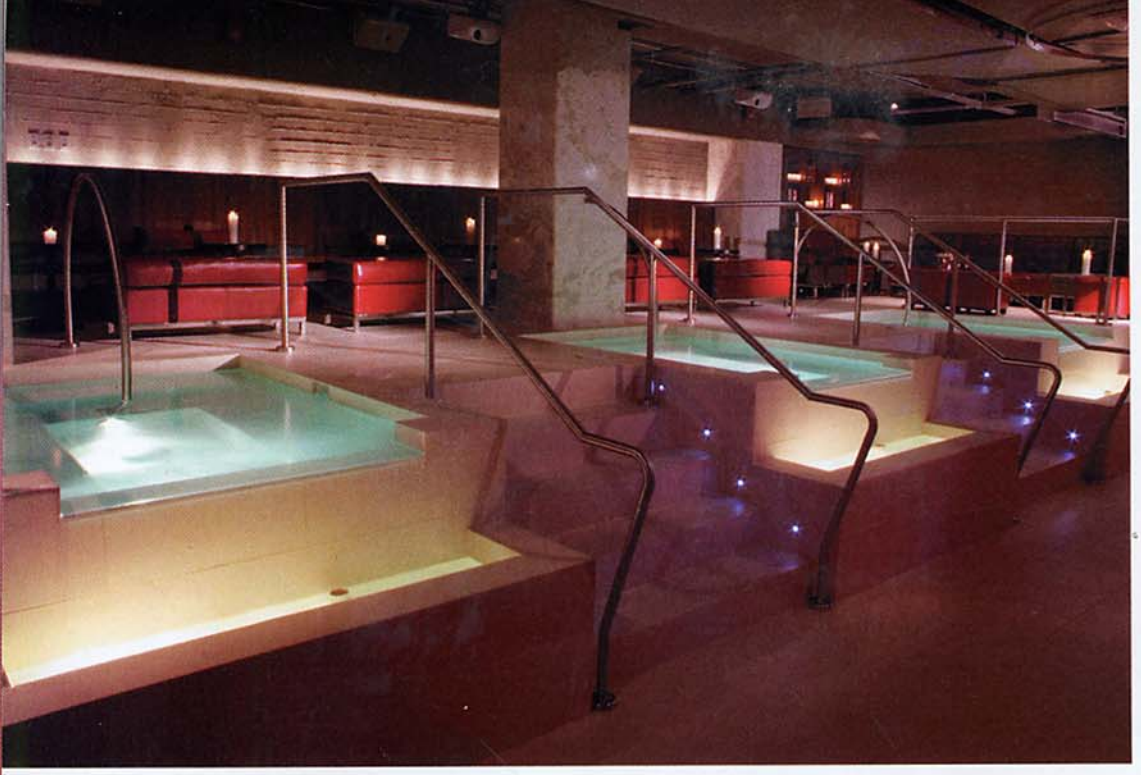
TOP: G Spa features a fully stocked bar. PICTURED: The spa's treatment rooms are transformed into VIP lounges at night.



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with the products. She refers to her estheticians as artists and scientists. Not wanting to be limited by manufacturer-prescribed therapies, Salata focused on creating customizable treatments. She also worked closely with the staff in creating unique protocols that are exclusive to the spa. "We have a lot of freedom to play around," says Salata.

The menu offers a range of treatments designed to appeal to the most discriminating spa-goer, from customized facials using a medley of product lines to manicures and pedicures using Fiji bottled water. G Spa also offers Yamuna Body Rolling, a mind/body workout that uses six- to 10-inch balls to work specific muscles and increase range of motion.

In keeping with the spa's hip appeal, guests don black spa robes from Telegraph Hill. Female spa-goers, many of whom belong to the fashion-forward stiletto set, sport sandals with a kitten heel. According to Salata, another big challenge was working with the sensuality of the place. Although it was important to her that G Spa be seen as offering a serious spa experience, she also wanted to make it social where both men and women feel comfortable kicking back. Believing the spa ripe for potential romance, Salata has already witnessed one promising exchange. She's hoping guests will find the spa a relaxing place to mix and mingle. Says Salata, "The goal is for women to get their drinks paid for as well as their pedicures." ■

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: **Guests can sample the spa's hot, cold, and freshwater pools; each has a retractable projection screen overhead; lounge chairs are available for guests to relax on while indulging in a pedicure; retail items are displayed behind the reception desk.**

G SPA & LOUNGE
(New York City)
OWNERS: Michael Achenbaum and Jeffrey Chodorow
SPA DIRECTOR: Christine Salata
OPENED: March 2006

• CLIENT BASE
50% female
50% male
ages 20 to 60

• SPACE
4,300 square feet;
3 treatment rooms

• SERVICES
-body treatments
-facials
-fitness
-full-service salon
-hydrotherapy
-makeup
-manicures and pedicures
-massage
-reflexology
-waxing
-Yamuna body rolling

• MOST POPULAR
Reveal Yourself facial ($250, 80 minutes)

• PRICE RANGE
$23 for a lip wax to **$665** for the six-hour G Spa Get Away, which includes a facial, body brushing, manicure and pedicure, makeup application, blowout, and cocktail

• PRODUCT LINES
-Anakiri Bioenergetic Skin Care
-Archipelago Botanicals
-Astara
-Cirepil Wax
-Diamancel
-Diana B
-Epicuren
-Fiji Bottled Water
-Hourglass Cosmetics
-MD Skincare
-Millbon
-Olan Labs
-Ren Skincare
-Rubis
-Sonya Dakar
-Telegraph Hill
-Trilogy

• EQUIPMENT
-Amber Spa
-Amerec
-Collins
-Living Earth Crafts
-Oakworks
-Paragon
-Silhouet-Tone
-Sterilux
-Takara Belmont
-Touch America

• ARCHITECT & INTERIOR DESIGNER
Robert D. Henry Architects
(New York City)