

Island Retreats

You know you need to carve out some quality me-time. After running yourself ragged seeing all of the sights, perhaps an indulgent visit to a top salon or spa is in order?

BY TRISHA S. MCMAHON

Traveling to exciting destinations is terrific. Well, the arrival part is, but the trip itself can be bumpy. Even before leaving home, you probably had a last minute “to do” list of chores as expansive as the Brooklyn Bridge: Arrange for a dog walker, pick up the dry cleaning, change the answering machine’s message, stop the home delivery of the newspaper and so forth. The moment of truth hits when you arrive at the hotel and stare squarely into the bathroom mirror in your room and acknowledge that you have some excess baggage. No, it’s not the Louis Vuitton Pullman you were carting around, but the “personal effects” one acquires, thanks to the rigors of travel itself. The kinked neck, under-eye circles, lower back pain, swollen ankles, unmanageable hair, complexion breakouts and scores of other teensy complaints, which crop up like hot chestnut stands on most every Manhattan block during the winter months. Couple these little mementos of your journey with the fact that you had hardly a nanosecond to really think about yourself prior to departure. So, it’s understandable you may have also skimmed on taking care of a few personal details to save precious time.

Uh-oh, that boxed hair color you tried last week has turned to an unflattering shade of brass. Those sweet open-toed Shoe Parlor heels would be great to wear tonight, but not with that old pedicure. Is it the hotel’s bathroom lighting or is your smile looking a little peaked? Not to worry. You are, after all, in New York City, which specializes in the art of primping and pampering from head to toe. In this bustling metropolis sore muscles, tired complexions, lackluster locks and dingy smiles don’t stand a chance against the legions of skilled aestheticians, massage therapists, stylists and practitioners you’ll find around every corner—and spotlighted here. But before you venture out on your beauty-and-wellness campaign, take note of these tips from the leaders in their field.

Hair health begins at the scalp. Tonics, scrubs and massage are the stimulating tools used at **Sassoon Salon**, clearing the path for a new crop of hair to grow unencumbered.

Once reserved for “women only,” facials for men are now found on many menus, such as **Deva Spa’s** “Sir Face” treatment.

Eliminating under-eye fine lines, puffiness and dark circles is the goal of the Hydradermie Eye-Treatment at **Destiny Beauty & Wellness Day Spa**.

There is nothing more telling about a person’s age than discolored teeth. After a quick and comfy PearlinBrite® session with **Dr. Linhart**, a full-service cosmetic and restorative dental practitioner, smiles return to a more youthful appearance.

Often overlooked, the back, which needs daily exfoliation, thanks to a multitude of oil-producing sebaceous glands, can fall prey to adult acne. Using tea tree and Aztec clay, **Townhouse Spa’s** Beautiful Back treatment removes impurities and calms the area for glowing results.

Drinking lots of water on a daily basis is a life essential. But use caution when indulging in a muscle-soothing steam room or hot tub, since improper use can actually cause more harm than good.

Newcomers to body therapy shouldn't be very adventurous and should stick with a basic Swedish massage, which offers relaxing and restorative results. "If you've never had a massage, don't try anything too intense, like Shiatsu or deep tissue, since the therapist really works the muscles to the point where you might be uncomfortable," says Grace Macnow, owner of three Manhattan retreats, **Graceful Services**, **Graceful Spa** and **Graceful Spa 56**, which recently introduced a four-handed massage. "Communication is really the key to having a good treatment," remarks Linda Orhun, owner of **Destiny Beauty & Wellness Day**



Eyebrow shaping and eyelash extensions are making headlines. In Midtown, **Sania's Brow Bar** exclusively focuses on grooming those face framers. While Uptown's **Gita Gabriel Salon and Spa** offers Xtreme Eyelash Extensions, which are applied individually to your existing lashes. Sea salt is a wonderful exfoliant for the skin and featured in the Shimmer Salt Glo body treatment in the Flatiron District's **Rehoboth Spa Lounge**. Prior to any body treatment, immerse yourself in pure nirvana by having a Hot Stone Massage, found on most spa menus. At the Garment District's **Aura Wellness Spa**, the therapist uses several lava stones for maximum relief of tired muscles.

Spa, where "energy work" is also part of the spa's extensive massage, body wrap and facial menu. Speak frankly with the therapist or stylist, tell them where it hurts and relate any health issues or have dietary restrictions you may have. Be truthful about what type of and how many liquids you drink on a daily basis. The more details you can provide, the better the outcome. "You should also share what type of medication you're taking, as it could make a difference in how well the hair-color processes," says Olga Plitt, east coast regional manager of **Sassoon Salon**, famed for its futuristic approach to haircare. While drinking plenty of H₂O is a natural elixir for the body, including scalp, hair and complexion, water in the form of muscle-soothing steam and hot tubs can negatively impact skin and overall well being. "If you have an issue with sensitive skin, like rosacea (aka adult acne) or high blood pressure—it's best not to take advantage of that particular spa amenity," says Jolanta Smusz, aesthetician at **Deva Spa**, a luxe, full-service spa and hair salon staple for locals and out-of-towners, where tipping is never allowed.

Unlike the majority of city day spas, where a Zen atmosphere is the norm and the use of mobile phones, PDAs and other electronic devices is frowned upon, sa-

lons—for the most part—encourage their use. "No worries, we have wireless service in the salons, as most clients like to keep occupied while their hair treatment processes," says Nicola Goldberg, international artistic director, **Le Salon East**, where Japanese Thermal Straightening and Hair Extensions are the two hottest services on the menu at this Lenox Hill oasis. And speaking of time spent at a salon, according to Alonso Salguero, president of **Salon Ziba**, a Midtown West that offers facials, mani-pedis and massage, as well as traditional and airbrush makeup services, "If you have a big affair to attend, try not to have a facial that day. Have it a few days ahead, so your complexion has time to calm down a bit." Ditto for having a pro do your makeup. Try a "dry run" before the big night—a beauty dress rehearsal—to ensure that you're pleased with the makeup colors and application techniques.

So, what are you waiting for? New York City offers an unparalleled mix of beauty, grooming and wellness spas and salons. Why not sample a service or treatment from a variety of places? You've nothing to lose but your aches, pains and, perhaps, that dreaded hat hair.

For locations and contact information for each establishment mentioned, see "Shops & Services, Beauty & Personal Care" (p. 46).

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