

Tea and Simplicity

Healthful brews and healing therapies help make this urban retreat a serene experience



By Tess Ghilaga

On Manhattan's bustling 14th Street, you'll find quite a few yoga studios, a Whole Foods store, and quite a number of holy sanctuaries. New to this historic block is the White Tea Spa, a haven that some are calling a religious experience.

"Everything we do is about being effective and less about Enya," says Sandra Mendez, the co-owner and sought-after massage therapist.

Touted as a potent antioxidant, white tea and its healing properties are central to the spa's message and services. Naturally, a selection of pure white teas and other seasonal blends and healthful brews are offered at the inviting tea bar.

Devoid of any new-age accouterments, the White Tea Spa grasps the psyche of the city's fast-paced dwellers. From the décor to the drolly worded spa menu, the ambiance and attitude is unmistakably

downtown New York. The eclectic space, bathed in warm earthy tones and jazzy hints of bronze and copper, is serenely stylish. Art Deco light fixtures, an antique tea cart and brilliant paintings from Pablo Carreño create a sophisticated ambiance that never goes unnoticed by Mendez's urbane clientele.

Dazzling décor aside, word of mouth has spread fast, and many are now clamoring for White Tea's gratifying treatments. The Yerba Mate Compression body wrap promises a slimmer silhouette, owing to its caffeine-like substance, called mateine. Surface fluid retention gets reduced, while the addition of rosemary and peppermint aids in blood circulation for optimal detoxification.

Another tea-based beauty fix is the VisabiliTEA eye treatment. Mendez won't reveal the secret ingredients; suffice it to say, it works wonders on puffy eyes and dark circles. For those who seek the sun-kissed glow, the SafeTea bronzing treatment is a safe, natural alternative to harsh chemical spray tans. Facials run the gamut from white, green, and red tea leaves to the natural Biologique line addressing all complexions.

Aging skin and unsightly cellulite are also given careful attention here; all natural micro-dermabrasion and their own FDA-approved endermologie treatments improve the appearance and tone problem zones. Lasting anywhere from 30-45 days, eyelash extensions are a big draw for the glamour-hungry and time-crunched woman.

As one of the resident massage therapists at White Tea, Mendez notably pinpoints the areas of tension in the body—and won't let up until she eradicates them. With 11 years of experience in body work, the results-oriented 33-year old understands the need for pampering in a city that never sleeps. To that end, don't leave the spa before spending some quiet time in the peaceful meditation room.

Mendez's objective is to inspire her clientele towards a transformative new lifestyle. "I love affecting people in positive way," Mendez says.

White Tea Spa - 104 West 14th Street, 212-647-8919