

Spa Ja

Julie Register visited this day spa in New York City in December, 2006



*I had the pleasure of visiting Spa Ja on an unseasonably warm (70°F) December day. I was tagging along with my husband on one of his business trips. I needed to occupy my day while Jeff was in meetings and, of course, I intended to occupy it in a spa. As I scanned through the multitude of spas in New York City looking for just the right one to go to, I was drawn to Spa Ja. The funky red and black design on the building facade appealed to me, and I found the spa menu interesting. I later learned that spa exterior was inspired by decorative work done in the favelas of Brazil where they use scraps of wood to beautify their shanties. The name, Spa Ja, means Spa "Now" in Portuguese, the language spoken in Brazil. I also learned that the spa is owned by James Coleman and Giovanna Kupfer. Giovanna is responsible for Spa Ja's Brazillian influence having lived and worked there for many years. You may remember her from her line of darling children's clothes and toys, *Giovanna Baby*, that was carried in Neiman Marcus and Bergdorf Goodman. Life took some strange twists and turns for Giovanna, but I believe she landed in the right place. Her attention to detail and high level of customer service is perfect for the spa business and is seen through all aspects of Sp Ja.



[Spa Ja Reception Desk](#)



[Spa Ja Reception Desk](#)

The black and red color theme of Spa Ja's exterior continues up the stairs and into the spa's first floor reception area, retail boutique (which is well stocked with a large selection of organic spa products) and tanning rooms (the tanning beds are even red!).



[Spa Ja Retail Boutique](#)



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[Spa Ja Retail Boutique](#)

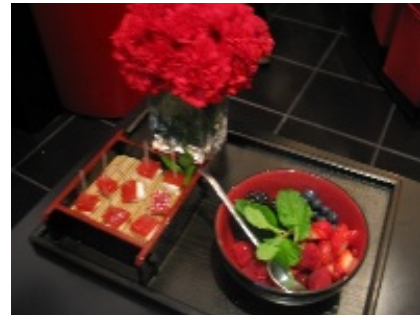


[Spa Ja Retail Boutique](#)

Upon entering the spa and checking in at the reception desk, I was asked to complete a form telling a bit about myself, my skin care routine and health history. While I was completing the form, James prepared a delicious cup of tea with a tea that is custom blended at Spa Ja. A garnish of berries made it as much a snack as a beverage.



[Spa Ja Refreshments](#)



[Snacks at Spa Ja include berries and "Romeo & Juliet" - low fat farmers cheese and quava - Delicious!](#)

When it was time for my first appointment, I was escorted up a white, black and red stairway and past a white, black and red manicure/pedicure room to a facial room, one of seven treatment rooms at Spa Ja.



[Spa Ja Stairway](#)



[Spa Ja Manicure/Pedicure Room](#)

The decor of this room and the other treatment rooms departed from the black and red theme of the rest of the spa. A bright pink comforter and towels and color therapy lights were used in the facial treatment room.



[Spa Ja Facial Treatment Room](#)



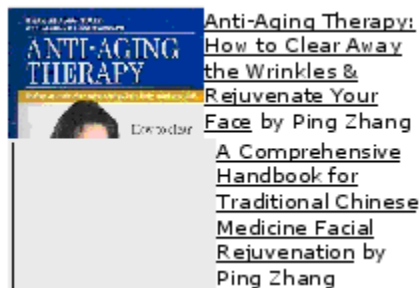
[Spa Ja Facial Treatment Room](#)

Iza, who is also from Brazil, instructed me to put on a pair of paper panties and a terry wrap and climb on the treatment table while she left the room to give me privacy. When she returned, she cleansed my face and examined my skin to determine the best course of treatment. What followed was probably the best and most efficacious facial I've ever had. I wouldn't be surprised if Iza didn't use a little of every technique she knew, and each step was a delightful surprise. During the deep pore cleansing (i.e. extractions) under steam, Juvy, a massage therapist, joined us in the treatment room to give my feet a reflexology treatment and my hands a massage. That certainly took my mind off the extractions! While I don't remember all of the steps to the facial, I do recall...

- an exfoliation with crushed pearls
- lots of facial massage to stimulate circulation
- a Severt collagen ampoule treatment applied with microsonophoresis (microcurrent) to help push the collagen deeper into my skin
- a vitamin mask and an oxygen mask to close my pores, tighten my skin, draw out toxins, and nourish my skin to leave it looking fresh and feeling vibrant
- head massages
- eye creams
- a manual face lift using two fan-shaped tools called gueshe that lifted the skin and muscles to reduce the appearance of wrinkles, provide pressure on key areas (like acupuncture) and improve circulation
- a jade stick massage with a cool jade roller smoothing and soothing the skin

My face felt fabulous after this facial. My skin was moist and smooth, and the puffy circles under my eyes were gone for days afterwards. I also think the manual lift really worked. If I could do it regularly, I believe it would make a real difference in fighting sagging and wrinkles.

According to Iza, all of the therapists and estheticians at Spa Ja are always actively learning about new treatments to bring the best to their clients. In Iza's case, even though she has been an esthetician for many years, she has been recently studying and taking training from Ping Zhang on traditional Chinese facials. While Iza has learned many techniques, it has also been stressed that in order to have healthy skin, you must be healthy from the inside out by eating healthy, getting enough sleep, and drinking plenty of water.



[Gueshe and Jade Roller used in the Manual Face Lift at Spa Ja](#)

After the facial, I was escorted across the hallway to a room that contained a pod-like machine that could have come straight from a science fiction movie. This Dermalife Spa Oceana capsule was to be my "home" for the next treatment. While this computer controlled hydrotherapy capsule would deliver light therapy, steam, infrared heat, aromatherapy and a Vichy shower, the human touch was not missing in this treatment. My therapist, Alexandra, applied a freshly mixed exfoliating salt scrub and detoxifying mud to my body before closing the lid. She made a custom blend of anti-oxidants - fresh herbs (witchhazel, lavender and peppermint) and vitamins (A, C, E) with jojoba oil. My head was completely outside of the capsule, so while my body enjoyed the hot steam and infrared light (which releases uric acid from muscles), my face and scalp was lightly massaged by another therapist, Mabelle, who specializes in lymphatic drainage massage. This facial lymphatic drainage also helps reduce puffiness around the eyes and face as well as improve the immune system. When the capsule finished its final Vichy shower spray, Alexandra opened it and helped me out. I headed to the shower to rinse off the last bits of mud. My skin was incredibly smooth (in fact, my husband commented on it later that night!).



[Dermalife Spa Oceana with Light Therapy at Spa Ja](#)



[Dermalife Spa Oceana with Light Therapy at Spa Ja](#)

My last treatment was a deep massage by Juvy. I had been seriously working out for about three weeks and really needed a good massage. Based on my other treatments, I expected an excellent massage. I was not disappointed. Juvy used Essence of Bali Balance massage oil and a combination of aromatherapy, deep tissue and hot stone massage to attack my deep muscle tension and stiffness leave me feeling great.



[Massage Treatment Room at Spa Ja](#)



[Massage Treatment Room at Spa Ja](#)