

GLV

THE GOOD LIFE IN VANCOUVER

May 2003

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Spas



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from the

PUBLISHER

It's been a lot of fun putting this first issue together. The core group of people, making the magazine happen, has been working together for a few years now. However, we have been producing personal finance magazines. One of them, Mutual Fund Review, has become the best read personal finance magazine in the country. Not bad, eh!

Unfortunately, over the last couple of years the mutual fund industry has been in the tank. Not surprisingly, when you can't brag about positive results, it's unlikely you would want to advertise those negative returns. A magazine lives or dies on its advertising revenue. Necessarily our group has had to be extremely creative to maintain the financial magazines, so producing GLV has been a real treat. We've found great advertisers who actually want to promote themselves and support our efforts. It's been a breath of fresh air! Plus, the content is definitely a lot more fun to put together. Doing this magazine has also brought some refreshing new people into our fold. You'll get to read their efforts, and hopefully experience the same enjoyment that we did.

One face missing from our group of smiling contributors is that of Connie Ekelund, President of Synergy CMC. Connie has lent her considerable talents in helping us position GLV for the Vancouver marketplace. In my not-so-humble opinion, Vancouver is simply the finest city in the world in which to live. It's comprised of a remarkable mosaic of different people. We want GLV to reflect the joy we all get from being lucky enough to find ourselves here.

GLV will appear every couple of months. Next issue's cover story will focus on the growth in the condo community. Vancouver is likely unique in that a city its size has no expressways. Further, the downtown area has a very large group of condo residences. This adds a vibrancy of which few large cities can boast, and lends a community flavor to the whole of the Greater Vancouver area.

I really like living in Vancouver. The people who put this magazine together really like living in Vancouver. With any luck our efforts will reflect this. Naturally if you have any comments or suggestions we would be more than happy to receive them. However, if any of these comments in any way suggest that Vancouver isn't the greatest, it's likely we'll have a hard time accepting your opinion. But you're welcome to voice it any way.

Hope to find your eyes here again in a couple of months!



Terry Tremaine
Publisher

We welcome letters from readers at: info@hqinvestment.com

CONTRIBUTORS



Brian Kendall has explored the booming Canadian golf scene from coast-to-coast. The author of six books, Kendall's latest is *Northern Links: Canada From Tee to Tee*, published this month by Anchor Canada. An excerpt, beginning on page 34, charts the rise to national prominence of Greywolf Golf Course's unforgettable sixth hole.

James West spends way too much on fine dining, theatre, dancing, ecstasy, and live music. He writes for this magazine cause he owes us money.



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Peter Beck is a well-known financial expert who founded Swift Trade Securities, Canada's first day trading firm, in 1998. It is now the country's leader in direct-access trading. Beck has also co-authored a book on Hedge Funds, due out this spring, and frequently appears on television to offer commentary on the performance of the Canadian markets.



Virginia Leeming The spa feature in our first edition of GVL is also contributing writer Virginia Leemings first free lance piece since her retirement after 20 years with the Vancouver Sun. Virginia is a self admitted spa junkie and has dipped her toes in spa waters frequently for research. She is an avid fan of food, wine, travel and a good book.



RESTORATION AND REJUVENATION

– *Today's Incredible Spas*

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BY VIRGINIA LEEMING



The spa experience is a delightful blend of outrageous pampering tinged with the sense you are doing something very good for your body as well as for your peace of mind. Throw in a little relaxation and a dab of rejuvenation and voila, a new lease on life. Allow your mind to soar into space while your worries melt away, at least for the time being. Welcome to today's spas.

In this era of technology our days are filled with modern communication tools and technical machines that speed up our lives. Cell phones, faxes, e-mail, and computers simply mean that we live faster and more intensely than our forefathers. How many times have you heard someone say "I can't imagine how I managed without my cell phone." Even e-mail can be a beast, a veritable burden crying out to be read, answered, or discarded. A business blessing? Most decidedly, but another connection to our speeded up world. So when it is time to unwind, put down our daily worries and recharge our emotional and physical engines, the cognoscenti head for the spa.

All the photos on these two pages courtesy of VidaWellness Spas.

A few years ago in North America, a spa was a retreat for the wealthy, requiring a trip to a resort for a week of being pampered with mud baths, massage, exercise, and at some establishments, a special low-calorie diet. Today, spas are proliferating in cities and towns, where clients can pop in for a personalized treatment or spend a luxurious day enjoying multiple sybaritic services. They are meeting places to join friends, havens from a busy world, places for wellness and well-being. The only difficulty encountered by those in the Lower Mainland who would seek an environment in which to nurture and heal, is to make a choice between the increasing numbers of day spas that have sprung up to serve this market.

Whether intimate and cozy or large and expansive, a spa is foremost a place where you will have a relaxing time, enjoying the finest treatments in the hands of knowledgeable experts. Choose from a myriad of packages that include body scrubs that exfoliate, water therapy to relax and calm, wraps to soften and detoxify the skin, and massage in its many forms - Swedish, sports, Thai, Shiatsu, lava rock, deep tissue – the options are seemingly endless. A friend of mine, who recently retired from a twenty-year career in caregiving, was presented with a gift certificate by her co-workers to a Yaletown spa. “I always wondered why people would spend good money to go to such a place”, she commented, but after her visit she says she can’t wait to go back.

Like my friend, more and more Canadians are discovering the pleasures and the benefits of day spas. According to Spas Canada, spas are the fastest-growing business in the nation. There are 500 to 600 spas in the country and the market sees no ceiling. It is estimated that they earn between \$345 and \$500 million a year. Recognizing the opportunity to serve this market is The Absolute Spa Group, a Vancouver business presided over by Wendy Lisogar-Cocchia, which now boasts Absolute Spa at the Century Plaza Hotel and Absolute Spa at the Fairmont Vancouver Airport Hotel, as well as two Absolute Spas in the airport’s domestic and international departure lounges. Have a soothing neck or back massage or get a manicure while waiting for your flight. In case you can’t make it to one of the locations, the company offers a mobile spa unit, favoured by celebrities to come to their homes or to a movie set. It is also available for corporate bookings, and it operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Speaking of celebrities, the Absolute Spa Group’s mantra is a litany of the famous who have received treatment at the hands of their specialists. Sharon Stone, Gwyneth Paltrow, Gillian Anderson, Uma Thurman, Tea Leoni, and Ethan Hawke are among the celebrities who have turned to the spa for fine tuning. In addition to its 12,000 square feet of treatment rooms, including a room for couples complete with a fireplace and a spa butler, the spa at The Century Plaza offers an ozonated pool for swimming, a eucalyptus steam room, and a lounge to relax in and enjoy the delicious menu the spa offers.

Also expanding rapidly to meet the demand for high quality spa services is EvelineCharles Salons and Spas which opened its first BC spa here last November, a 6,000 square foot space at 11th

WHEN YOU GO –

- A day spa should offer water treatments, such as a Vichy shower, baths with water jets, and steam rooms, as well as other services including massage, body wraps, and scrubs.
- Changing rooms, showers and lockers are a must.
- There should be plenty of clean towels, robes and spa sandals or slippers provided to wear.
- It goes without saying that the premises must be surgically clean and well kept.
- Attendants should be low key, polite and not pressure guests to purchase additional products.
- If you request a therapist of the same gender as yourself, it may be possible, but not always guaranteed, as previous bookings may preclude your choice.
- In all cases, proper respect should be paid by the therapists to your dignity and your privacy.
- If you plan to have any water treatments, you might want to bring a swimsuit, but in most situations treatments are best taken wearing no garments. Towels are used to cover your body during the session.
- Bring a change of fresh underwear and hosiery to wear after your services.
- Leave your valuables such as jewellery at home, and turn off your cell phone during your appointment.
- Do expect to give a tip. And remember, if you are using a gift certificate, it does not include the tip.
- One last piece of advice, don’t be late or you will cut into the time of your treatment.



Photos courtesy of EvelineCharles Salons • Spas

and Granville. The decor at EvelineCharles takes its cue from South Asia, with bamboo flooring, brushed aluminum and glass and big bamboo poles arranged to add a lush tropical touch. Owner Eveline Charles is Edmonton based and now operates four eponymous spas in Alberta. Her vision doesn't stop with the five spas she now oversees. Her goal is to open smaller spas of about 1,000 square feet located in shopping malls throughout Canada.

In addition to scrupulous attention to service (employees are given performance evaluations every three months), Charles believes that guests at her spas will be demanding more information and service about cosmetic surgery and cosmetic enhancement. "Medi spas are the next big thing" says Charles, who 29 years ago started her business with a one-chair hair salon. Currently the most popular treatments are the pedicures, facials and water treatments such as the Vichy shower, she reports. "Years ago the manicure was a luxury treatment for a wealthy woman, now it is maintenance." As for men, she says that men are a little

on the macho side, but after they try a facial they appreciate the pampering. "Once they break the barrier, they love it. They want to be well groomed. They want nicely shaped nails and the calluses off their feet. They are taking better care of themselves."

Allison Hegadus, Regional Spa Director with Vida Wellness Spas operating at Chateau Whistler and The Wall Centre Hotel in Vancouver concurs that spa services go hand in glove with wellness. The public is more knowledgeable now, wants to learn about nutrition, yoga techniques, and proper diet, and wants products that are less toxic, Hegadus says. This holistic approach helps shape the treatments offered at Vida Wellness. One of the most interesting services offered here is based on a 5,000 year-old Indian tradition known as Ayurveda. Ayurveda treats the whole body and regards the dosha theory as the basis on which to tailor the herbs and oils used in the treatments. By answering a short questionnaire you can discover which of the three doshas – vata, pitta or kapha, you have. Most of us are a combination of the three, but with one more dominant than the other. When your doshas are in balance health and beauty are the result. At Vida Wellness Spa the Ayurvedic Swedana steam treatment promotes lymph circulation and helps detoxify your body. Following a massage with oil over the entire body including the scalp, the client lies in a hand-made cedar box infused with a custom-blended herbal mixture while steam envelopes the body. The massage therapist monitors the client, offers water, and places a cold compress on their forehead. Back in the massage room the final step completes the session. Using the Swedish dry skin brushing technique to stimulate the skin and exfoliate and rid the skin of toxins, the therapist sprinkles a flour made from natural sources, and brushes. Then after a shower the client is ready to meet the world again.

Visiting a spa can be a personal de-stressing and healing situation or it can be a wonderful opportunity for friends to share a

Photos courtesy of VidaWellness Spas.





Photos courtesy of Beverly's The Spa on Fourth.

memorable experience. Increasingly, couples, sisters, friends, bridal parties and corporations are booking spas. At Beverly's The Spa on Fourth, co-owner Anne Kerwin reports the popular Kitsilano spa is a destination. When a new Ikea store opened up here, the company booked the spa to reward its employees for hard work and long hours preceding the opening. Three sets of people came through for treatments. Employees of Ikea leaving the country came with their suitcases and left for the airport right from the spa, says Kerwin. But you don't have to be satisfied with bubbly water; arrangements can be made ahead of time for catering for your special spa experience. Kerwin and partner Paul Lauener chose a decor that echoes the sun-lit countryside of the south of France they so love. The mud and algae wraps they favour are known for their high mineral content and rejuvenating properties. Among the products the spa sells is a highly regarded skin care and makeup collection by Jane Iredale. The makeup contains no talc, dyes, or synthetic preservatives. Lipsticks are made from a base of macadamia nut oil and do not contain petroleum. A comforting thought.

Also nestled on Fourth Avenue is Spa Ethos, located in a former bank building. It is owned by orthodontist Dr. Peter Fransblow and his wife Ann. Lydia Masri, Director of Guest Care and Marketing, explains that the urban day spa is a sanctuary for their clients. Decor reflects natural earth elements, and the former bank vaults have been turned into wet rooms for water therapy. Because the spa is geared toward wellness there is a strong program for massage. The most popular service here is the spa pebble pedicure, which uses river stones on reflex points of the foot.

The most original theme spa in Canada is Miraj Hammam,

where the ancient techniques of steam and gommage are used to offer guests the ultimate experience. It was owner Surinder Bains Kassour's dream to recreate the atmosphere of the Middle Eastern hammams where patrons treat their bodies to cleansing and healing for both body and soul. The tradition of the hammam goes back to the Roman Empire, where bathing in a public area was established. In 600 AD the prophet Muhammad endorsed the idea of steaming to cleanse the body without bathing. Hammams were built in conjunction with the mosques so that worshippers could cleanse themselves first.

Step through the doors of her spa into a world that speaks in terms of wrought iron, vaulted ceilings, and Jerusalem marble. Voices are kept low and soft music sets the mood, as clients shed their clothes in exchange for a sarong and enter the hammam's steam room. After an intense steaming, guests lie on the marble slabs for the gommage, where they are scrubbed with black Moroccan soap and rubbed with a mitt, an experience that both invigorates and cleanses. To finish, clients receive a refreshing splash of water, then a deeply relaxing massage. Complete your visit to Miraj Hammam with Middle Eastern mint tea and a sweet cake in the Sultana Lounge while lying on a velvet bed piled with colourful silk cushions. Many first-time visitors to the spa come clutching a gift certificate that a thoughtful friend has purchased. Men and women are booked at separate times. Bains Kassour says business has become so brisk that she has had to extend the men's hours, currently Thursday afternoons and Sundays.

With the cornucopia of opulent choices, and the professional attention paid to the client's spiritual, health and beauty needs, the West Coast spa industry's future looks rosy indeed.