



A Retreat for the Body, Mind & Spirit

WRITTEN BY CHARITY DOYL

solstice spa

As the frenzied, celebration-filled month of December approaches, I always find myself craving a little breathing space to refill my energy reservoir and prepare for the season of giving (and doing!) that lies ahead. Accompanied by friends Rachel Asuncion & Christine Ramos, we headed for one of Pacific Northwest residents' favorite Christmas destinations – Leavenworth, Washington. We had one mission in mind for this Girlfriend Getaway...to slow down and enjoy each other's company in a place that offered some much needed spa time. Solstice Spa and Suites, Leavenworth's premier destination for spa and luxury accommodations, was just the place. Owners Tandra Zimmerman and Julie Hamstreet have created an oasis of serenity in an environment inspired by the natural beauty and rejuvenating properties of the surrounding alpine wilderness. Reclaimed birch branches and local stone greet and ground guests upon their arrival but botanical essences and the lure of steaming foot soaks draws them onto the spa path. There will be time for exploring the spa boutique, filled with one-of-a-kind items from around the world plus an ample selection of holistic skin care products designed to pamper you, your children and your furry pets later.

Our tranquil journey began as we checked into our Annapurna Suite, a spacious haven on the spa's top floor. One of three outdoor-inspired suites designed for guests to experience a night of perfect slumber, our retreat featured a silk duvet encased in luxury bedding, hydrotherapy tub, slate-tiled gas fireplace,

handcrafted iron furnishings, private balcony, sports equipment locker, outdoor rock soaking pool and spa breakfast. Not wanting to waste a moment, we slipped into our plush spa robes and reflexology sandals and were whisked from our suite to enjoy the current Solstice Seasonal Foot Treatment (The Mojito Foot Cocktail!) where our soles were soaked in a warm aromatic herbal cocktail of jelly-like crystals, sugar-scrubbed, wrapped, massaged and infused with a custom blended lime-lemon moisturizer as we sipped on raspberry green tea extract...sigh!

With our feet now ready some serious trekking, the rest of our afternoon was spent visiting various shops and sampling our way through local wines, cheeses, and chocolates. For dinner, we checked out South on Front Street; hailed as a favorite amongst locals for their authentic flare, fresh ingredients, and reasonable prices. This warm and family friendly restaurant specializes in authentic Mexican cuisine from the Oaxacan region. We loved every bite of our meals, from the lip smacking chicken mole and delightful seafood enchiladas to the complimentary salsa bar, stocked with a selection of freshly made sauces in the right fire and spice to satisfy every palate.

Returning to the warmth and calm of our suite, we opened one of our newly discovered wines and spent the evening by the fire relishing each other's company and laughing. After our night of perfect slumber, we awoke to the clear crisp mountain air that Leavenworth Oc-

toberns are so famous for. Our spa day started with time together in the steam room. Both refreshing and soothing, the billowing vapors of eucalyptus infused steam cleared both our heads and our minds. Excellent for relaxation, increasing circulation, and flushing out toxins, the steam invigorates our largest organ, the skin.

Our spa voyage continued as each of us was escorted to the comforting glow of a private treatment room. Rachel chose the Glacial Pacific Body Treatment, featuring colloidal glacial clay and Pacific organic kelp products from Ancient Secrets. The 90-minute treatment, a total wellness approach to anti-aging body care combines a Green Tea & Seaweed Salt Glow and Glacial Clay & Seaweed Mask and amazing blend of essential oils for inner balance, deep relaxation, and skin firming results...a divine body treatment. Christine selected the 90-minute Solstice Sunrise Signature Facial, which focuses on preventing premature aging and providing a radiant, healthy looking glow while providing overall relaxation. The treatment, featuring Dr. Spiller skin care products, includes cleansing, exfoliation, steam, natural mask, paraffin hand & foot treatments, and European massage of the face, neck, décolleté, hands and feet; leaving her glowing and relaxed from head to toe. A fan of Traditional Chinese Medicine, I opted for the Women's Balance Treatment with Marion Lodato, the spa's acupuncturist. Beneficial for emotional upset, skin blemishing, sleep disturbance or any hormone imbalance symptoms, this treatment combines hot rock acupressure, acupuncture, and aromatherapy, leaving you elevated and strengthened; a deeply harmonizing experiencing!

As our individual spa journeys came to a close and we floated back to our room in our scented bodies and robes. This was why we had come – to find this space, to put back some of what our busy daily lives had taken out, and to re connect with each other and ourselves. It was a peaceful trip home as we savored our newly achieved state of bliss, but we agreed we would continue to draw strength

and energy from our Solstice getaway long past the busy season and would definitely look forward to returning again.

Solstice Spa offers Ayurvedic, Traditional and Signature treatments utilizing a combination of European, Eastern & Western techniques with the finest skin care products and equipment available. Licensed therapists offer Relaxation, Treatment, Therapeutic, Deep Tissue, Hot Rock, Pregnancy, Oncology and Couple's Massage; Synergie Microdermabrasion, LED and Cellulite Solution Treatments; Skin & Body Care; Foot Therapies; Acupuncture; Spa Packages and BareEscentuals Cosmetics.

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Tandra Zimmerman and Julie Hamstreet