

THE SPA & WELLNESS AUTHORITY

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LIFE

SHOU SUGI BAN HOUSE
(WATER MILL, NY)

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FEATURES

a closer look at some of the spas that are making news in the industry both here and abroad

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(Water Mill, NY)

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(Emigrant, MT)



Guests at Shou Sugi Ban House are immersed in a minimalist yet cozy setting, which is inspired by Japanese-design elements.



HAMPTONS' Healing

The scene-worthy South Fork welcomes a new Japanese-inspired spa that gives spa enthusiasts the comprehensive wellness experience they've been craving.

BY HEATHER MIKESELL

DESPITE THE APPEAL OF ESCAPING TO THE HAMPTONS in the summer months, wellness options have generally been limited to popular workout sessions from Barry's Bootcamp, Exhale, SoulCycle, and Tracy Anderson, where visitors can break a sweat before hitting the beach or pool. Unfortunately, sipping a glass of rosé poolside doesn't count (even if it is profoundly relaxing). Thanks to the recent debut of Shou Sugi Ban House (Water Mill, NY), those flocking to the Hamptons this season can embrace an all-encompassing wellness experience that encourages reconnection and transformation. Founded by Amy Cherry-Abitbol and Kathleen Kapnick, two friends who met in school and shared a vision of creating a wellness sanctuary. The retreat, with 13 guest rooms, is inspired by the principles of *wabi-sabi*, a Japanese aesthetic that embraces the beauty of imperfection. Cherry-Abitbol, the creative force behind Shou Sugi Ban House,

spent years living in Japan and is responsible for the Japanese influence found throughout the property. Embracing an integrative wellness program featuring holistic living, nutrition, education, fitness, meditation, skincare, bodywork, massage, hydrotherapy, and more, Shou Sugi Ban House serves as the Hamptons' first comprehensive wellness destination. Located on three acres next to the Parrish Art Museum, the retreat is also home to **The Spa at Shou Sugi Ban House**, which is guided by the belief that every individual travels his or her own path to wellness.

With five treatment areas; indoor and outdoor relaxation lounges; a thermal suite with an infrared sauna, a dry sauna, and a steam room; an experience shower with chromotherapy; hydrotherapy plunge pools and a watsu pool; an après ice fountain; and a roof deck for relaxation, the spa is the perfect place to unwind.

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Inviting treatment rooms and a host of bathing options, such as the float tub, make the spa the ultimate retreat.

OWNERS

Amy Cherry-Abitbol and
Kathleen Kapnick

SPA DIRECTOR

Debra Townes

OPENED

May 2019

SPACE

2,650 square feet;
five treatment rooms

PRODUCTS & EQUIPMENT

Biologique Recherche,

Bradford Wellness & Spa,
Coyuchi Robes, Faith
Cosmetics, Gharieni, In Fiore,
Maestro, Manduka, Rogue, The
Wellness Enterprise, Toto, TRX

ARCHITECT

Debbie S. Kropf, DSK Architect
(Water Mill, NY)

INTERIOR DIRECTOR

DSK Architect

SPA CONSULTANT

China Paradelo, Uppercase
Hospitality (New York City)



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Guests can enjoy a soak in the Hinoki wood tub, enjoy a class in the yoga room, or take a dip in the plunge pool.

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“Every detail has been considered at Shou Sugi Ban House—from the architecture and the flow of the space to the amenities and our staff uniforms,” says spa director Debra Townes. “They have all been thoughtfully designed for how they complement each other and the overall guest experience. Our services connect with the culinary philosophy, which connects with the plants, which connect with the vibrational healing arts services, which connect with the healing properties of water.”

According to Townes, the spa’s serene location in the picturesque Hamptons inspires the spa’s healing elements just as the surrounding flora influenced the ingredients. For example, the spa partnered with In Fiore products, because they rely on certified organic or wildcrafted essential oils, herbs, and floral waters from producers around the world and incorporate ancient medicinal knowledge and aromatherapeutic benefits. The spa also partnered with Biologique Recherche for its clinical approach to skincare

using pure, concentrated, and raw ingredients, and Faith Cosmetics, a Japanese skincare line featuring a patented nanocapsule delivery system of high potency collagen. The amenity line, Kotoshina, an organic skincare brand, also hails from Japan and is available exclusively in the U.S. at Shou Sugi Ban House.

In addition to the expected facials, body treatments, hydrotherapy services, and massage and bodywork, the spa also offers a host of healing arts offerings, such as Crystal Healing (\$225, 60 minutes; \$325, 90 minutes), Quantum Biofeedback (\$250, 60 minutes; \$350, 90 minutes), Sacred Sound Journey (\$225, 60 minutes; \$325, 90 minutes), Vibroacoustic Therapy (\$225, 60 minutes; \$325, 90 minutes), and Shinrin-Yoku (\$325, 90 minutes), also known as forest bathing. “When I first reviewed our spa service menu in one of its earlier drafts, I realized that we were writing a wellness story, as though told through the inner and outer aspects of the human body,” says Townes. “Every sense

PHOTOGRAPHY: FREDRIKA STJÄRNE



Spa-goers can take advantage of the Watsu pool and enjoy the spa's wabi-sabi aesthetic.

and sensibility was respected and considered to create a series of ideal experiences for the body and soul.”

The spa’s Day Rituals, which are half- or full-day programs designed with intention, offer combinations of skincare treatments, bodywork, healing arts, hydrotherapy, yoga, meditation, and a signature tea ceremony. Townes expects the spa’s Radiating in Stillness (\$325, 3 hours 30 minutes) half-day ritual to become the spa’s most popular treatment. It involves a functional bodywork massage followed by a hydrotherapy steam and sauna, a soothing tonic pairing, and a signature tea tasting. “As for my favorite elements of the spa, we have worked very hard to create individualized experiences that integrate the physical, mental, and spiritual nature of our guests, and I think these experiential therapies set us apart,” says Townes. “Our comprehensive offering

of bespoke treatments incorporates ancient healing practices with state-of-the-art technologies. Guests can choose from plant-based botanical treatments; skin and body care; massage; and multiple healing modalities using sound and energy, Reiki, and aromatherapy to customize each experience.” According to Townes, her and her team’s greatest challenge is finding new ways to make guests’ experiences even more personalized. “Many of our guests are avid spa-goers and quite diligent in their quest to maintain balance in their lives,” says Townes. “Our goal is to provide the services and facilities that support their wellness goals in ways that transcend even their own imaginations. Our sincere dedication to creating a special experience that captures the essence of ancient healing modalities in a modern world is what keeps everything fresh and inspiring for them and for us.” ●

SPA TALK *with* Debra Townes



Meet spa director Debra Townes, who once owned and operated a day spa in Brooklyn.

How many years have you been involved in the spa and hospitality industry? My journey into the industry began back in 1997 when I decided to do two life-changing things: get a little Jack Russell terrier puppy for my son and open

a holistic day spa in Cobble Hill (Brooklyn, NY).

What was the path that led you into the spa industry? At the time, there were very few actual day spas. Most spas were “away” spas and seemed exotic or out of reach. I found myself at the beginning of a booming business that seems to be growing even more as wellness becomes a point of focus in people’s lives.

What are the most challenging and rewarding parts of working in the spa industry? The most challenging and rewarding parts are the people.

What has surprised you most about the spa industry? The rapid and continued growth of the spa and wellness industry has happily surprised me. I believe that it will actually continue to grow as more awareness around how stress, toxins, environmental concerns, electromagnetic radiation, and, of course, our food create the need for establishing and maintaining balance in our lives.

What is the strangest client request you’ve fielded? A little girl came into my spa once asking for a massage for her teddy bear who had been

recently mauled by the family dog but somehow survived. The therapist performed Shiatsu, so as not to get any oil on the bear’s fur.

What new spa treatment would you like to try? Vibroacoustic therapy, which we offer.

How would you sum up your personal philosophy? Life is a spiritual practice.

What’s the best advice you’ve received? When everybody zigs, zag.

For our full interview, visit www.americanspa.com.