



# hela spa: URBAN HIDEAWAY

BY ASHLEY DRYSDALE AND KAITLYNN HENDRICKS

**EVERY DAY, SAVVY URBANITES ESCAPE THE BUSTLING** intersection at M Street and Wisconsin Avenue as they enter Hela Spa in Georgetown, a historic commercial, entertainment and residential district located in the northwest region of Washington, DC. Like all spa-goers, guests at Hela Spa are seeking solace. They find this here, where the delightful scents of wonderful aromas permeate the atmosphere.

A typical treatment at any given spa goes something like this: As the guest enjoys their massage, their mind wanders and they have an epiphany, feeling a renewed confidence to conquer life's challenges with poise. An hour later, the service has concluded, the bill is paid and the guest leaves the calm surroundings and returns to a world of fray. They then wonder what they really got out of the service that they couldn't have found somewhere else for a much lower price. With the onslaught of products and services available at drug stores, franchise laser houses and membership based massage parlors, it's only logical to wonder if a high-end spa offers anything more than ambiance and a skinny wallet!

As industry professionals, we of course know the answer is a resounding "YES!" But it is up to us in the spa industry to prove this to a clientele that is bombarded by a cacophony of ads promising "buy one, get-one-free" fountains of youth,

portable hair-removing gadgets or anonymous, un-vetted services at the click of a button.

The good news is that people are ad-weary. This gives spas an opportunity to come to their rescue. A consistent, trustworthy haven that offers more than a skin care line and marketing shenanigans can make clients into long-term understudies of skin and overall health from credentialed professionals instead of uneducated consumers. In the best case scenario, we become wellness champions in our clients' fight against stress, troubled skin and nagging aches and pains.

## Hela Spa clients: Washingtonians

In life and in business, we become those whom we serve in many ways. At Hela Spa, we serve Washingtonians.

A little something about Washingtonians—they get paid to be smart, skeptical and thorough. And they come by this naturally. They are hyper-educated, multi-talented and time-strapped. These qualities make it a challenge for them to pencil in appointments, especially for pampering. Like any of us, they feel a twinge of guilt at indulgence juxtaposed to their endless to-do list or wavering bank accounts. Many of them are pulled in so many directions with countless obligations; they are pieces of an intricate puzzle solving global conun-

drums. So it is no wonder they are probably in denial about what they know they should focus on more: self-improvement.

The desire to improve is there, but the bar is set so high. This is true both for them to stop procrastinating, and for us to come to their aid.

Meanwhile, the accumulated effects of UV rays, toxins and stress age them, altering and degenerating their youthful vigor. This damage does not stop if they don't make the time to take care of themselves due to their busy schedules. But here's the catch—their jam-packed, legitimately important careers (not to mention personal lives) benefit from any attention they heed to their overall health.

In Washington, appearance has value that goes beyond skin deep. It provides a political correspondent with professional clout; it gives the pageant contestant that added sparkle and the CEO his edge. It provides reprieve for the overworked, invisible Capitol Hill staffer or graduate student with great aspirations. Their faces are their résumés. They need us to help them master it.

*"I have had acne for my entire life, but it wasn't until my senior year of college that I really knew how bad it could be. I [developed] cystic acne, which turned into intense hyperpigmentation ... my face was covered in scars. Now, I was faced with scarred skin and acne on top of those scars; I was not a happy girl." – Miss DC, Allyn Rose*

At Hela Spa, we are the backstage and sidewing to our clients' front stage, on-task lives. We are their neighborhood hideaway. And all that we do must be done to accommodate their high-achieving social schedules while allowing them the space to completely forget about that reality. Whew!

## How we fix it

Our overworked cosmopolitan clients do not need more options and advertised shortcuts to complete beauty. They need exactly what they expect from themselves—expertise. A captain to take the helm, so to speak, so they can check this off their list of burdens and engage in the experience of becoming the most resplendent individuals they can be with the help of all the science that the latest cosmetic innovations have to offer.

That means we need the credentials and tenacity to choose aptly from among the myriad of options in anti-aging products, laser technologies, neuromodulators and injectables. We also need to be willing, when appropriate, to make a sacrifice to the bottom line in order to do what's best for the client.

This is especially applicable to injectables. Injections can be overused and exploited for monetary gain. But this will not satisfy clients in the long term, and their friends will definitely notice the odd change in them and think twice about coming to a medical spa that appears to value money over quality.

At Hela Spa, our clients are virtually our only form of advertisement. We are successful when our clients look and feel

their best. To serve them well, we must be able to separate the wheat from the chaff among products, from the most conventional to the latest medical grade innovations. Go beyond advertising and trends. Be armed with the latest research to secure the results that can only be guaranteed through hands-on training and continued tutelage by pioneers and veterans in the field.

## Lasers, Botox and peels, oh my!

If the medical spa elements of Hela Spa sound too intense for new or younger clientele, we are also proud of our sleek, calm ambiance that boasts some of the best smelling, silky textured products around. We offer many non-medical services to heal and mitigate recurring ailments. These include massages, our signature pumpkin peel and even acupuncture. These are all gateway services for the young, conservative or risk-averse clients who may later want to take on more aggressive approaches, such as IPL for skin pigmentation problems or Botox to prevent wrinkles as they become more educated on the benefits of these services.

As a medical spa, Hela Spa has the added protection and advantage of being led by a medical doctor. We are privileged to be under the auspice of a Georgetown trained physician, a relational and highly skilled medical doctor with more than a decade of experience with injectables and lasers. A talented, diverse and favorably reviewed staff work alongside him. This team of top notch professionals includes nurses, seasoned estheticians and our latest addition, a highly skilled Chinese acupuncturist.



Guests find themselves in the hands of trained professionals offering the most cutting-edge medical spa and esthetic treatments with a catered approach to whole body wellness. Signature treatments include laser hair removal, photo-rejuvenation (IPL), digital skin analysis, chemical peels and a full range of medical grade facial treatments that leave the skin glowing and youthful.

Hela Spa clients always see familiar faces among the long-time staff, and can request their favorite esthetician or massage therapist for any visit. Keeping the staff happy encourages their loyalty to Hela and its clients. A commitment to long-term treatment and results is part of Hela's overreaching philosophy.

There is no blind protocol at Hela Spa. Each new appointment is initially a consultation. Clients share their skin and medical history, which enables us to determine the best plan for unleashing or maintaining their natural beauty.

Hela Spa is equipped with an arsenal of competent staff and the latest products and lasers to accomplish anything the client is looking for. Anti-aging regimens, scar removal,  
*continues*



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clearing up acne breakouts, kneading away sciatica or an extra buff from a professional exfoliating facial are all offerings at Hela Spa.

To that end, the addition of acupuncture this year has been a boon to the vision of Hela Spa as we work to become a one-stop shop in wholeness for the DC area. For 2013, we intend to add more whole health regimens that can bolster overall wellness in the ever changing world of medicine.

*"Hela Spa in Georgetown came to my rescue and with the incredibly generous staff at Hela, I was able to completely transform my skin. A combination of light surface peels, IPL laser treatments and my esthetician's tutelage, my skin is now more radiant than ever. I wake up feeling beautiful every day, and I owe that to Hela Spa."* – Miss DC, Allyn Rose

### Distinction

In Swedish, Hela means "to heal, to make whole." The meaning of our name recognizes that whole beauty is much more than just merchandising, upselling hit or miss product lines or over-promising on services. It is personal, results-driven and abiding.

As Washington's premier medical spa, we foster total health through science and good sense, because we are just as skeptical as our clients and their wallets. We know they are worth more than health in a box, here today, gone tomorrow bargain hops or the plethora of partially smudged, discounted creams that clutter too many medicine cabinets.

Our clients are worth the collaborative commitment of expert staff and cutting-edge technologies that lifelong health in the modern world requires. They are worth the discretion and patience it takes to unveil the best of who they are through artistry, one step at a time.

This is what sets Hela Spa apart from the commotion; it is what our clients pay for. And it yields invaluable dividends that continue to pay out in their personal, professional and relational vitality. Hela Spa is committed to keeping it that way. ■

**Kaitlynn Hendricks** is an economist, writer and the business developer for Hela Spa. She enjoys finding elegant solutions to complicated logistical problems, timeless and avant-garde fashion, reading things that are too complicated to understand, challenging the status quo and exploring Washington D.C. in her Vespa.

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