

What's Taking Off in the World of Beauty

launchpad

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America's Top 20 Salons and Spas

In Sync

Synergistic shampoos and conditioners

Super Naturals

The truth about natural and organic ingredients



America's Top 20

It was a tough job narrowing down the competition, but the salons and spas on the following pages made the grade this year. May we present our third annual Top 20 Salons & Spas for 2006.





This and facing page:
William Caligari
designed the Aqua
Lounge at Canyon Ranch
in the Berkshires.

Award-winning architect and designer William Caligari of William Caligari Interiors Architecture in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, specializes in spa and salon design—some of his projects have included the Aqua Lounge at Canyon Ranch in the Berkshires and Canyon Ranch in Tucson. Since two of the salons he designed were included in our annual Top 20 Salons and Spas issue last year, we thought he might be able to offer a few words of advice to salon or spa owners about to make the leap into new construction or those contemplating a remodel.

“Do your homework,” says Caligari. “Coming to the table prepared not only increases the likelihood you’ll be happier with the finished project, but also makes the process itself less stressful and more fulfilling.” He also suggests that owners visit several properties on their own to take photos and notes of the things they like and the things they don’t.

Caligari takes his own advice in this regard. “You name it, I’ve had it,” he says, referring to the fact that before he’ll design a space for a new treatment, he makes sure to have the treatment himself, sometimes more than once. This enables him not only to experience things from the vantage point of the customer (what’s comfortable/satisfying vs. what’s not) but also to observe the therapist in action and scope out any ergonomic challenges that may be addressed by his design.

“Have a strong opinion of what you want your business to be about,” advises Caligari, who says that working with creative people makes his job easier—he describes the difficult client as one who “has difficulty engaging in his own aesthetic sense.”

Deciding on your list of treatments early in the process, a strategy that Caligari strongly recommends, is another way of being prepared.

Owners may be resistant, fearing it will limit their spa’s capabilities to expand, but Caligari says a good architect will always design for contingencies, creating spaces that serve present needs while allowing room for growth.

Another piece of helpful advice is to involve your employees in the process. Caligari acknowledges that this can be tough for some salon and spa owners. Still, involving therapists, technicians and stylists early in the process can not only result in a more efficient and comfortable work environment but also have the potential to substantially lower operating costs.

“In one skin care department, employees were filing a lot of Workers’ Comp claims for repetitive motion injuries,” says Caligari, who polled the estheticians and watched them work. What he discovered was that the injuries were caused by “things like lifting the paraffin tub 17 times a day or spinning around 180 degrees to use the sink.”

Caligari reconfigured the room, removing the back bar and repositioning the estheticians against the back wall. All supplies were placed in front, within reach, as was the client table. No spinning, and no reaching-while-lifting, equaled fewer injuries.

Resisting the impulse to be too trendy is probably a good idea. “It’s the most common mistake I see,” he says. “Generally speaking, the more trendy a service is, the more expensive it is to provide. Then it becomes obsolete.” One example he cites from the recent past: thalassotherapy. “The core salon and spa treatments—massage, skin care, haircuts and color will never change. Make sure you have adequate space for those treatments first, then worry about the specialty treatments.”

In the long run, he adds, the reputation you build will rely more on the quality of service you provide—the client’s comfort, satisfaction and fulfillment with the total experience—than on whether or not you offer the latest, hippest (and soon-to-be-forgotten) treatment. —Karen K. Ford



CHARLESTON, SC

The Spa at Wentworth Mansion

843.724.6555

WHY IT MADE THE LIST

The Spa opened in October, 2004 as the result of a partnership between the popular Charleston day spa Urban Nirvana and the historic Wentworth Mansion hotel. The spa itself is located in the former stables of the 100-year-old mansion, so when architect Joe Schmidt of Evans and Schmidt Architects was asked to draw up plans, he aimed to combine the old with the new. "Architectural artifacts were incorporated into the design in order to preserve them and to stimulate conversation and interest in this one-of-a-kind spa," says Schmidt.

The décor incorporates many of the stable's original features and elements evocative of Charleston style. For example, clients approach the spa through a long foyer made of the stable's original brick walls and enter through an old Charleston-style iron gate. Inside, the spa features the original 14-foot-high vaulted ceilings and exposed beams, floors, glass brick and bead board woodwork.

Modern touches to the space include calming fountains and contemporary lighting and furniture.

The spa features three treatment rooms, including one with a dual-head shower designed for couples. Clients can choose from a variety of massages, wraps, scrubs, skin care treatments and waxing services. The spa even offers its guests who are staying at the mansion in-room spa treatments, complete with a gourmet lunch.

Signature services include the Rosehips Vitamin C Facial, which restores a healthier, more youthful appearance with the potent antioxidant, collagen-building vitamin C. Men can enjoy the Gentleman's Facial, a one-hour treatment designed exclusively for them. In the Raindrop Therapy Massage, the therapist layers nine powerful grade-A essential oils along the spine to induce relaxation and relieve muscle tension. The spa also offers exotic body treatments like the Lavender Lemongrass Salt Soufflé, the Peach Mango Salt Glow and the Espresso Salt Scrub.

PRODUCT LINES CARRIED

Phytomer, Eminence, Innovative Body Science, Get Fresh



Brentwood, CA

Juan Juan Salon

310.278.5826

WHY IT MADE THE LIST

Juan Juan Salon's Brentwood site joins the original salon located in Beverly Hills. The salon is co-owned by celebrity hair colorist Jennifer Jahanbigloo (or Jennifer J), who trained with Louis Licari and has worked with Julia Roberts, Cate Blanchett and Al Pacino; husband and celebrity stylist Sean Jahanbigloo, who trained with Vidal Sassoon; and Elie Jahanbigloo, a colorist who trained under José Eber for eight years before partnering with brother Sean.

The 4000-square-foot salon houses 28 chairs as well as color and treatment mixing areas. The shampoo area features music, dimmed lighting and a plasma screen television for customers to watch while getting shampooed. The color processing area includes an oversized dining room table complete with Internet air ports. The facial room is soundproof to help customers completely relax.

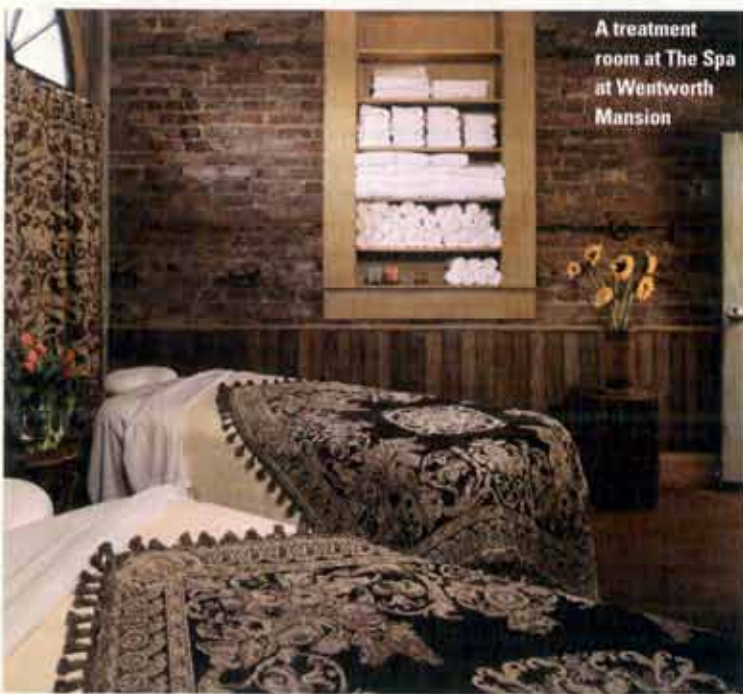
Architect David Keilen, who designed the Beverly Hills location 20 years ago,

also drew up the plans for the Brentwood location. "We wanted the salon to have a chic, modern, New York City feel with a laid-back L.A. vibe," says Sean Jahanbigloo. Highlights of the salon's modern décor include styling stations of dark wood and frosted glass as well as ebony wood flooring, which evokes a modern Italian feel. Square cutouts in the walls provide a sense of privacy but also keep the salon feeling open. A plasma screen television is prominently featured in the reception area. The retail area at the front of the salon offers a variety of professional products, including L'Oréal Professionnel's Serie Expert and Wella System Professional.

Besides cut and color services, the salon offers color correction, weaving and extensions. Clients can indulge in L'Oréal Professionnel's Serie Expert Powerdoses, which are designed for keeping hair in optimum condition. The Anastasia Beverly Hills Brow Studio—estheticians are trained by brow guru Anastasia herself—has its own space in the salon where a variety of services are provided.

PRODUCT LINES CARRIED

L'Oréal Professionnel, Wella





The manicure area has a breathtaking view.



The sun sets over Mepal Manor.



The Moroccan-themed pedicure area is adjacent to the styling area.

New Marlborough, MA Mepal Manor and Spa at Gedney Farm

413.229.3498

WHY IT MADE THE LIST

One look at the pastoral Mepal Manor and bucolic surroundings of Gedney Farm is enough to convince anyone to book an appointment. The 6,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art spa features four cozy, but spacious treatment rooms; ample, quiet lounging space; a large outdoor hot tub; a yoga and movement studio; and fully equipped locker rooms for men and women, with a steam room, showers, robes, slippers and towels. Clients who want to continue their spa experience at home can visit the spa's retail gallery. The salon and spa offer Comfort Zone products from Parma, Italy, which are specifically formulated to effectively treat all skin types.

The salon's Moroccan-inspired, retro design complements the look of the spa. Salon services include color treatments, cuts, wash and blow-dry, and a variety of special services for weddings or graduations. Clients can enjoy drinking tea, champagne or other refreshments while waiting for their appointments.

PRODUCT LINES CARRIED

Comfort Zone

San Diego, CA Collections Salon & Day Spa 877.212.8700

WHY IT MADE THE LIST

Richard Ouellette, president of HAI and Angles Beauty Care Group, wanted to fill a niche in the industry by helping the average consumer achieve a complete look at an affordable price. His goal from the beginning was to offer high-quality services while incorporating a modern retail center within each salon. To that end, he and his wife Connie opened Collections Salon and Day Spa. Today, there are three locations in Southern California.

The salon offers cuts and color, permanent waves, makeup applications and trichology. The Custom Blend Therapy Treatment, for example, is a unique, in-salon service—a special blend of nutrients protects the scalp, while repairing the hair from the inside out. Spa services include manicures and pedicures, the Aqua Salt Scrub and the Stress Relieving Back Treatment.

The corporate mission of the company is to make an impact in the beauty industry through leadership, creative marketing strategies, unique merchandising and distinct brand recognition. Connie has been a driving force in the company, automating and computerizing both the salons and the corporate office. The company also provides user support and training through continued education programs for staff members in order to keep them current with the latest fashion trends, styles, techniques, products and communication skills. Connie believes that in order for salon and spa professionals to keep up with the latest advancements in the industry, they must also attend conferences both domestically and internationally.

PRODUCT LINES CARRIED

Aveda, Bumble & bumble, HAlelite, Epicuren, Dermalogica, Goldwell

Ventura, CA Yamaguchi Salon and Coastal Day Spa 805.658.7909

WHY IT MADE THE LIST

Yamaguchi Salon and Coastal Day Spa has received worldwide attention. When owners Billy and Melissa Yamaguchi opened the spa in 1992, they were the first to adapt feng shui principles to services, products and the design of the spa. In fact, Billy wrote a book on the subject called *Feng Shui Beauty: Bringing the Ancient Principles of Balance and Harmony to Your Hair, Makeup and Personal Style*.

Melissa spearheaded the development of the Yamaguchi Spa Therapy line, which includes



The pedicure area

15 luxurious products made with essential oils and botanical ingredients. In 2001, Yamaguchi launched Chopsticks, a cherry-scented line of baby products.

A special spa service is the Yamaguchi Tea Spa Facial, which incorporates the antioxidant properties of green teas. Tea Ginger Massage oils and Moisture Mist are massaged onto shoulders, décolleté, hands, arms and feet, and a soothing cup of Yamaguchi tea is waiting at the end of this relaxing service.

The Yamaguchis are members of Intercoiffure, while Melissa is president of the Professional Beauty Association.

PRODUCT LINES CARRIED

Yamaguchi Hair Therapy, Feng Shui Spa, Chopsticks, Green Tea, Goldwell



The styling area is light and airy.



Front desk incorporates disparate elements like glass and stainless steel.