

The Good Life

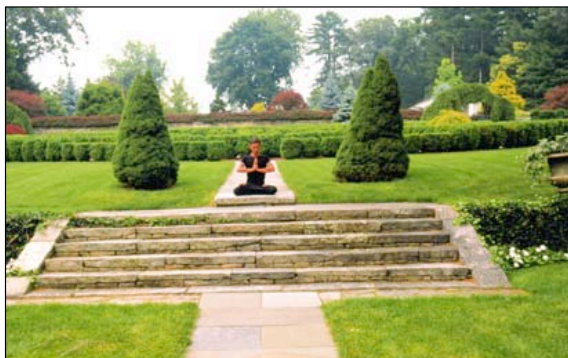
Seduced by a Spa

By Elzy Kolb
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Although the Mayflower Spa is a new kid on the luxury spa block, it is already making quite a name for itself.

A scant six weeks after its June 2006 opening, the Washington, Conn., facility was anointed No. 1 on a list of top destination spas compiled by *Travel + Leisure* magazine and "Good Morning America."

And *Luxury SpaFinder* magazine



recently dubbed it the country's "most luxurious and most exclusive" spa.

It's no surprise that the upstart edged out the veterans when you consider the achievements of the Mayflower Inn and Spa's power trio: owners Robert and Adriana Mnuchin and their daughter, Lisa Hedley.

A Natural Progression

Robert Mnuchin's more than 30-year tenure at Goldman Sachs included a stint as senior director.

Adriana Mnuchin has demonstrated

her entrepreneurial and creative flair as founder of enterprises: Cashmere-Cashmere, Tennis Lady retail chains, and the Shakespeare Society in New York.

Lisa Hedley, 44, Spa Creative Director is an attorney and an Emmy-nominated documentary filmmaker.

All three worked closely with the architect, and interior designer on every phase of the project to create a strikingly serene and luxurious environment for spa guests.

The family first became involved with the property, which is located less than two hours from New York City, after Robert Mnuchin left Goldman Sachs in the early 1990s.

Stairway to Heaven

Decorated with antiques and 18th and 19th century art, the revamped inn has the ambience of a traditional New England country house -- albeit one with flat-screen TVs, voice-mail and Wi-Fi access. The 30 rooms and suites feature fireplaces, steam showers, soaking tubs, custom-blended bath products and ultra-high-thread-count Frette linens.

The new ethereal Spa House, which shares the 58-acre property with the inn, offers treatments, classes and seminars to

soothe, strengthen and stimulate.

But the pampering begins even before arrival: The reservation process includes a consultation with a spa adviser, consisting of a discussion about the guest's goals and intentions for the stay, and a scheduling of activities to fulfill them.

Guests can pack lightly, as warm-ups, robes, slippers and outdoor gear such as rain jackets and boots are provided -- as are heart-rate monitors, pedometers and MP3 players with personalized music selections, based on information

gleaned from the consultation.

Body, Mind and Spirit

The spa offers a variety of wraps, scrubs, massages and focused treatments such as facials for hands, feet or scalp, or intensive eye or lip treatments.

The eight treatment rooms -- including one for couples -- are equipped with heated massage tables, and have been soundproofed to ensure that no disturbances from the outside world intrude on the serenity.

An array of fitness choices are offered in four exercise studios, including one-on-one yoga consultations, cardio classes combining Latin, hip-hop and belly-dancing techniques, and "Pumped-up Playground," based on jumping rope, hula-hooping and other skills originally learned at recess. Pilates and yoga are taught both on land and in the pool, which is also the site for a swim-stroke clinic and kayak-rolling tutorials.

Guests encounter a putting green and a maze garden on the short walk between the inn and the spa.

There are other gardens for yoga and meditation, and a labyrinth for blending movement and meditation, which is also the goal of a guided afternoon "saunter" around the grounds.

Hiking, biking, kayaking, fly-fishing, tennis, rappelling, archery and a variety of nature walks are also available, as are seasonal activities such as cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

As a complement to all these treatments and activities, the inn and spa's dining rooms specialize in naturally raised meat and poultry, natural grains and local, organic products.

The spa, which accommodates an exclusive 28 guests, offers a variety of special programs: weeks exclusively for men, couples, mothers and daughters, or fathers and sons.