

# Unwrap a year-end memory with a new spa package experience

There's a game I like to play with friends and family called "remember when." Remember when we went snorkeling and ended up swimming with the sharks? Remember when we ordered oysters on the half shell and I swallowed a pearl? (Yes, this really did happen.) The memories of shared experiences pile up in the recesses of our minds while each new memory shapes and adds value to our relationships. When something jogs the mind, memories suddenly appear for reexamination. We take the memory, toss it between us like a ball, and with each toss we conjure a detail that evokes a palpable remembrance. There's always plenty of laughter when we play this game.

Sometimes, you can set the pieces in place to make the experience happen. That's exactly what I intended when I planned a spa package experience for my husband and me. I was looking to create a "remember when" experience.

We started the day with a Hill Country ride on our motorcycle. After lunch at Maudie's Milagro we crossed to the other side of Capital of Texas Highway to **The Woodhouse Day Spa** (512-306-1100) where owner **Kim Stevens** greeted us for our Two's Company spa package.

A sense of tranquility imbues the spa from the gleam of granite counters in the dressing room to the aroma of lavender and cloves wafting through

sleek hallways. The dressing room, an inviting candlelit retreat enhanced by the glow of hardwood floors and mahogany lockers, tempts you to linger in the intoxicating scent of sandalwood.

I rejoined my husband in the sitting room, a retreat unto itself with windows that draw the Hill Country and sky to your feet. We reclined in our white robes and massage sandals, sipped on mimosas (what naughty, guilty pleasure in the middle of the work week) and contemplated the auspicious start to our spa stay. Massage therapists **Lori Weaver** and **Marilyn Mendez** soon led us away. Weaver treats her work seriously

and her Swedish massage was exceptional. She employed a technique faintly reminiscent of the rolling and tumbling of the ocean. We spoke little. She concentrated on her work as I drifted in and out of consciousness in keeping with the ebb and flow of her undulating movement. Playing off the background music, she varied the rhythm and tempo. Weaver has been massaging for six years and to me it felt as though she is a born natural.

Our facials followed. Estheticians **Beverly Blake-Kirchem** and **Jamie Hutchings** guided us through Essential Cleansing Facials. When asked about how often to get facials, Blake-Kirchem said, "To maintain healthy skin, and if you're not having any problems with breakouts or any major issues, then every few months." She also recom-

mended the spa's silk scrub, which is its best-selling skincare product for regular home use.

My husband finished with his facial first (ladies, this should come as no surprise). I found him in the sitting room, rubbing his chin and gazing at the Hill Country view. He smiled and said, "Well, that was fun." A man of few words, he summed it up nicely.

We basked in our Foam Sea Soak Pedicures as late afternoon rays spilled through a sheer wall of windows. Ensnared in ivory leather thrones, we engaged in casual banter with pedicurists **Tammy Ramsey** and **Patty DeGroot**. Body hair, Mexican food, motorcycles, we touched on all topics.

DeGroot tackled my husband's feet with an emery board for several long moments. She said, "Yours are the nicest feet I've had all day."

"Rough day, huh?" he said.

Owner Stevens, at the conclusion of our pampering, asked if my husband enjoyed his experience. "I think I have him hooked," I said.

My hunch proved true when several days later he returned from a long day of work and said, "I could get a pedicure every week."

You can also visit **Halina's European Day Spa at Steiner Ranch** (512-266-9060), the third and newest day spa opened by owner **Natalya Grigoreva**. **Michelle Nail** of the spa recommends her favorite, the Royal Full Day of Beauty, which provides seven hours of relaxation. She says, "We have customers come in together as

friends or for anniversaries or as bridal parties." Clients also enjoy complimentary use of the spa's amenities such as the sauna, steam room and cold plunge.

**Vickmay** (who goes by only her first name), owner of **Vickmay Skin & Body Med Spa** (512-478-1915), recommends the Couples Sweetheart Package, which is enjoyed in a private suite decorated with fragrant flowers and includes mini-facials, paraffin treatments and either the inch-loss body wrap or massage. The spa also offers the Mother and Daughter Rendezvous Package, which includes French signature facials, lavender herbal body wraps, scalp massages and paraffin hand treatments.

"We are a medical-based spa set in a very relaxing, welcoming atmosphere," said Vickmay. She described her spa as a quiet haven that is results-oriented. Vickmay's excellence in skincare shows in client loyalty. "We have people who move away and fly back in to see us (from Dallas, Nashville, New York City)."

I hope someday when we're indulging in our "remember when" game I'll ask my husband, "Remember when we went to the spa for massages, facials and pedicures," and he'll say, "Which one?" **g**

*There's still time before the year is up to treat you and a loved one to a spa package that creates a "remember when" experience. You may reach Joanne at [jliu@goodlifemag.com](mailto:jliu@goodlifemag.com).*

