

# Florida *Delivers* GREEN SPAS

By Susan B. Barnes

Once, the idea of a visit to a spa conjured up thoughts and images of deep relaxation, exquisite pampering and serene surroundings. Though those ideas and visions still hold true, today's spa goers are looking for green spas, and Florida delivers in spades.

"The spa industry has been on a green kick for a long time," says Linda Dennis, spa director, Sandpearl Spa. "It's just now that the rest of the world is catching on."

Here we take a look at four spas throughout the state of Florida who are green not only in treatments, but in practices as well.

Our tour begins at **Verde Spa** in the Bellasera Hotel in Naples.

The cozy spa has three well-appointed treatment rooms, all of which are warm and inviting—and green. Verde Spa offers solely vegan nail polish for manicures and pedicures; soy wax is used in place of paraffin; body treatments feature fruit- and vegetable-based scrubs; and the towels, linens, robes, and even cotton balls are all made of organic cotton. To reaffirm its commitment to the environment, Verde Spa donates a percentage of all services to the Conservancy Center of Southwest Florida.

"People are more mindful of what they're putting on their skin and into their bodies," says Lynn Domenici, spa director, Verde Spa. "We teach clients about green practices that they can take home with them to use in their everyday lives."

Verde Spa's signature treatment is the Mojito Massage; Mojito facials and manicures and pedicures are also on the menu. These signature treatments all feature a combination of organic cucumber, mint, and sugar blended together to



Photo courtesy of Verde Spa

Verde Spa in the Bellasera Hotel in Naples

invigorate the skin—and the sense of smell. The massage also includes a mask of locally grown citrus fruit and extra virgin coconut oil—both organic—and hot and cold stones.

Another unique offering at Verde Spa is Bamboosage, during which a massage therapist uses a combination of heated bamboo and rattan with traditional Swedish or deep tissue techniques for absolute relaxation.

The Bellasera Hotel is part of the Florida Green Lodging Program, an initiative of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, showing the property's overall dedication to being green.

Next stop—the **Sandpearl Spa** at the Sandpearl Resort on Clearwater Beach.

The Sandpearl Spa prides itself on being a health and wellness spa, not just someplace to get a massage, though they offer more than a hand-

ful of different—and not often heard of—varieties.

Since the spa opened in October 2007, Spa Director Linda Dennis says she has found that a number of guests are looking for hotels, resorts, and spas that are green-friendly, and notes that a number of the spa's guests visit because it is green.

The spa and resort, recently awarded the AAA Four-Diamond Award for 2009 and also part of the Florida Green Lodging Program, are adamant about taking care of the environment, both locally and on a broader scope. Everything used within the spa and resort is recycled.



The Signature Body Iridescence is one of Sandpearl Spa's signature treatments. The therapist begins with dry skin brushing to move lymph around the body and stimulate circulation; applies a paste made of several elements, including crushed pearl; and finishes with a massage using a warm silica balm—the ultimate in relaxation.

Another unique treatment at Sandpearl Spa is Lymphatic Therapy using touch rather than a machine, which is more common. The touch during Lymphatic Therapy is extremely gentle and in circular motions, encouraging cellular cleansing.

In an effort to bring the body, mind, and soul into balance, Sandpearl Spa offers life enriching programs to its guests, including yoga, meditation, artistic courses, cooking lessons, and more.

"As a spa, we continue to redefine ourselves to fine tune, get better, and listen to what our guests want," explains Dennis.

#### Sandpearl Spa at the SandPearl Resort on Clearwater Beach

### Next stop, the **Little Green Spa** in Orlando.

Owner Lisa Behrens recently moved her spa from a 500-square-foot location in Orlando's Thornton Park just down the road into a larger space in Winter Park. The spa incorporates green practices throughout, and is decorated with recycled and restored furniture and tiles for an eclectic, cozy feel. Though the space may be small, there's nothing slight about the treatments!

"I opened Little Green Spa as an all-organic spa, and we gradually evolved into an all-green spa," said Behrens. "Through the spa, we are raising awareness for our guests of the organic and green options that are out there and putting our green stamp on it."

Behrens and her staff take a holistic approach to each of the treatments offered, and ask guests what they would like to get out of the treatments.

Little Green Spa offers a set menu of



Photo courtesy of Little Green Spa

#### Little Green Spa in Orlando

treatments, including massage, facials, manicures, pedicures, and even ear candling, as well as seasonal specials, like the sugar and spice facial, all using Eminence products. The unique aspect about the sugar and spice facial is the use of paprika. The tingly sensation brought on by the spice brings the blood to the surface, resulting in a detoxification of the skin. It's quite invigorating.

Our final stop of this green tour of Florida is **Uhma Spa** in South Beach.

"We weren't looking to open a spa," said Debora Almeida, co-owner of Uhma Spa with her husband, Marco. "We were looking for space to open a store, and it was through a chain of events that it happens we opened a spa."

The Almeidas were looking to open a store to sell their organic skincare line, Uhma Nagri, when they realized a need for a green and eco-friendly spa ▶▶▶



Photo courtesy of Sandpearl Spa



Photo courtesy of Uhma Spa

Uhma Spa in South Beach

in the South Beach area. Over the course of a year and a half, the spa's redesign incorporated sustainable building materials and the Biophilic principles of design—bringing elements from nature indoors—were incorporated. The result? A sleek, natural spa that welcomes guests into relaxing, non-toxic, and environmentally friendly surroundings as soon as they walk through the door.


“Once we decided to open Uhma Spa, developing a green spa was a given,” says Almeida. “We’ve been green from the beginning (of our product line).”

Uhma Spa features body scrubs to go with the seasons, such as the Invigorating Caipirinha peppermint body polish with sugar crystals and organic lemon peel infused with peppermint and lime for the summer. Refreshing!

One of the most unique treatments

offered at Uhma is the Sabai Herbal Ball Massage. Throughout the course of the 90-minute treatment, the therapist incorporates Swedish and deep tissue massage with a lemongrass and sweet basil oil, followed by Thai stretches to further loosen and relax the body. Finally, the warm Sabai herbal balls are applied to pressure points, much like acupuncture, but without the needles. The aromatic herbs used in the balls are derived from a traditional Thai recipe, creating a unique aromatherapy experience.

Going green is not anything new to the spa industry, as you can see by the spas highlighted here. As Dennis noted, “It’s part of the (Sandpearl) spa’s culture to educate our guests, and it’s part of our culture to be green.”

It looks like the rest of the world is finally catching on! 

## Little Green Spa

2301 Lee Road, Winter Park (Orlando)  
407.254.0010  
[www.littlegreenspa.com](http://www.littlegreenspa.com)



Photo courtesy of Little Green Spa

## Sandpearl Spa

500 Mandalay Avenue, Clearwater Beach  
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Photo courtesy of Sandpearl Spa

## Uhma Spa

726 6th Street, South Beach  
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Photo courtesy of Uhma Spa

## Verde Spa

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Photo courtesy of Verde Spa