

## Golden Age Glamour

An elegant new spa debuts at an historic Manhattan hotel.

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By: [Julie Keller](#)

American Spa



A stairway highlighted by shimmering mosaic tiles leads guests to the treatment rooms

In New York City, the Carlyle has been synonymous with glitz and glamour from the time it opened its doors in 1930. Since then, it has become home base for the city's artistic, business, social, and political glitterati. It was known as the New York White House during President John F. Kennedy's administration—he kept an apartment there, and Marilyn Monroe is said to have snuck into a side entrance after her famous "Happy Birthday, Mr. President" performance on May 19, 1962. The hotel's Café Carlyle has also been the site of countless performances from musical icons such as Bobby Shore and Eartha Kitt. And in the book, *The Carlyle* (Assouline, November 2007), a photographic account of the hotel's storied history, author Nick Foulkes says, "If New York Society has a beacon, it's the golden tower of The Carlyle."

Today, it has another reason to shine, courtesy of an elegant new spa. **Sense, A Rosewood Spa at The**

**Carlyle, A Rosewood Hotel**, is a sophisticated extension of the iconic hotel that was designed to reflect its glamorous past. "The designer, Mark Zeff, was inspired by 1940s Hollywood and The Carlyle's famed Art Deco roots," says spa director Donna M. Creagh. "He utilized a dramatic black and grey color scheme highlighted with luminous lacquered wall panels, deep charcoal faux leather floors, and English chandeliers. With a spectacular barrel-vaulted stairwell finished in platinum mosaic tiles, every element of the design exudes sophistication and luxury." Other design elements include selections from photographer Kenro Izu's "Still Life" series featuring platinum palladium prints of botanicals and the human form. In the women's locker room and in the Yves Durif Salon, the dark wood of the treatment rooms and reception area is contrasted with an all-white design. Custom furniture from Zeff Design, including an antiqued mirror reception desk and velvet sofas and ottomans, further add to the spa's timeless appeal.



The Carlyle is an iconic part of the Upper East Side skyline



True to its elite ancestry, the five-treatment-room spa boasts a number of high-end amenities and offerings that are exclusive to the location. Most of the treatments are performed using Sisley products, and the company worked with Creagh to create several signature services. "Sisley and Sense is the perfect marriage of two strong, established luxury brands," says Creagh. "We are the only spa in North America to offer specific Sisley spa treatments developed especially for the spa. The company's integrity and attention to detail offer the finest in skincare, and the service mentality mirrors the Rosewood philosophy of quality first." The spa also has an exclusive agreement with Hommage, a luxury skincare and shave line for men, and is the only spa in the world to offer the Gentlemen's Black Diamond Facial (\$225, 60 minutes; \$300, 90 minutes), a deeply cleansing skincare service for men. Additionally, Treatment Room No. 2 boasts a custom Carrara marble-encased Kohler DTV shower that combines music with a multiple-head shower featuring nine body sprays, aromatherapy, and steam for what Creagh calls "a total multi-sensory experience." Sense is also home to the salon of celebrity stylist Yves Durif, who relocated from his longtime 65th Street salon, bringing with him a clientele that includes society mavens, celebrities, artists, and more.

According to Creagh, the most popular services are the five massages. "Between Blackberries, cell phones, the internet, longer work hours, and now economic distress, people desire the personal touch that comes with great therapists who have a real intent to heal," she says. Still, she and her team try to encourage guests to branch out. "As they explore our menu, they realize our rituals are not only the best value but also include almost every aspect to treating the entire body and face as well as their souls," she says. Among the healing rituals are Le Soin Sislea Anti-Age (\$400, 2 hours), a decadent multiple-step facial and signature hand-and-foot treatment; Flowers Hold Life (\$375, 3 hours), which includes an organic sea salt exfoliation, a steam in the Kohler shower, a massage, a facial, and a hand-and-foot treatment; and the Sense Spa Journey (\$375, 3 hours), which includes a sea algae wash and ginger grass scrub, a Shiatsu-inspired massage, a facial, and a hand-and-foot mineral bath. "The two-and three-hour rituals can be a harder sell due to the initial price points, but when clients break it down, they come to realize it works out to approximately \$125 per hour," says Creagh. "We promote these treatments by educating people about the added elements of these longer treatments rather than a basic massage or facial. Education and information are always powerful tools."



The women's locker room serves as a contrast from the rest of the spa with white Carrara marble and rich lacquered wood paneling and moldings.

Marketing is also a powerful tool in garnering clients. Hotel guests receive spa menus in their rooms, and Sisley samples are given as gifts during turndown. Also, a 25-percent discount is offered to first-time spa-goers to encourage them to try out the Sisley and Hommage treatments. "There are always challenges in opening any new business, of course, now more than ever," says Creagh. "But we have the luxury of being at The

Carlyle and in New York City, and we have already earned the trust and respect of many loyal customers."

To maintain this high standard of excellence, Creagh relies on nine full-time and 10 part-time staff members, each of whom have a minimum of six years of experience from various luxury hotels or have worked for her previously—she was formerly the spa director at **Great Jones Spa** in New York City. "We pride ourselves on offering not only qualified therapists but also therapists who are givers," she says.

At maximum capacity, the spa can facilitate approximately 45 people per day, while the salon can accommodate 50. Moving forward, Creagh hopes to perpetually hit those daily maximums, even in the midst of a recession, by maintaining the spa's core philosophy of meeting and exceeding expectations of guests with unparalleled personal service, adding that "great therapists, a warm and friendly staff, and reasonable prices will continue to make Sense, A Rosewood Spa a haven from economic worries."

#### SENSE, A ROSEWOOD SPA AT THE CARLYLE, A ROSEWOOD HOTEL

(New York City)

OWNER: Rosewood Hotels and Resorts

SPA DIRECTOR: Donna M. Creagh

OPENED: October 2008

#### CLIENT BASE

60% female, 40% male

#### SPACE

4,000 square feet; 5 treatment rooms

#### COST OF SPA

\$6 million

#### OFFERINGS

Acupuncture, aromatherapy, body treatments, chromatherapy, couples' treatments, energy work, eyelash extensions, facials, fitness, hair and scalp treatments, hammam, hand and foot treatments, hydrotherapy, makeup application, massage, nailcare, prenatal services, reflexology, salon services, waxing

#### SIGNATURE SPA SERVICE

Le Soin Sisleya Anti-Age (\$400, 2 hours)

#### MOST EXPENSIVE OFFERING

Le Soin Hydration Eclat (\$475, 3 hours), which includes an aromatherapy body scrub, a sculpting body massage, and a Phyto-Aromatique Radiance facial

#### PRODUCT LINES

Epicuren, Hommage, Red Flower, Sisley

EQUIPMENT

Cirrus, Frette, Olymp, Technogym, Touch America, Yves Delorme

ARCHITECT AND INTERIOR DESIGNER

Zeff Design (New York City)

SPA CONSULTANT

Creagh Spa Consulting (New York City)