

An All-Day ESCAPE for Vacationers and Locals Alike

By Dave Holton

Life is full of decisions. Decisions at work. Decisions at home. One after another after another. It's no wonder we sometimes feel exhausted and run down. And often, when we finally get to that vacation week or even just that day off, we find our supposed-to-be-free-time filled with more decisions and stress. Have you ever had the experience of declaring, upon your return to your daily life, that you need a vacation after your vacation? Well . . .

No. No more. It's time to end the cycle. It's time to start making decisions that lead to less stress, not more, such as green tea and red wine. Sunrises and sunsets. Yoga, massages and facials.



SANDERLING

Duck, North Carolina



"Making these decisions can feel like a luxury," says Paul Cavazos, spa director at the Sanderling Resort, "but we think the spa can and should be a regular part of people's well-being. These days everyone has a lot of stress in their lives, and a lot of times there's just no way to get it out. Until you come here, of course."

At the Spa at Sanderling located at Sanderling Resort, you can have a day that starts early and ends late and takes all that stress away. This is the vacation within the vacation. Or, if you happen to be local to the Outer Banks, this can be your treat to yourself, your own little staycation.

"We invite all to come," says Ashley Vaught, current director of rooms and former spa director, a 13-year employee of Sanderling Resort who believes that Sanderling is as much a place for locals as it is for visitors. "You don't have to be a guest. All services are open to the public. This is a place for you. We celebrate our locals and offer a 20 percent locals discount year round that extends to the spa and restaurant. If it weren't for the locals, we wouldn't be successful. We appreciate our partnerships with them."

"We are in the service industry too," says Paul, "and we get what many of the locals go through every year taking care of the visitors to the Outer Banks. We all have to take care of ourselves too."

The Spa at Sanderling does more than just offer discounts to give back to the locals. In October of this year, in a tradition that has been ongoing for 10 years now, the Spa at Sanderling will show their Passion for Pink. In partnership with the Outer Banks Hospital's new Cancer Resource Center, the spa will

offer complimentary treatments and services to cancer victims, survivors and caretakers. Says Paul, "The treatments will be specialized for the individuals." Those who come will be treated to one-on-one experiences intended to help the suffering feel relieved and the worn-down feel rejuvenated.

Paul and Ashley both take great pride in the relationships they form with spa and resort guests. They make sure that everyone who visits has an individual experience, one designed to respond directly to all the various stresses and strains that each guest faces in their own day-to-day. "Our services are personalized," says Paul, "to connect and create a memorable experience. We get to know our guests, because many return year after year to celebrate a birthday or anni-

versary or a holiday such as Thanksgiving or Christmas, and it becomes a tradition to visit the spa."

There are many options available for the visitors to the spa, from the indoor pool to the deep tissue massages to the steam rooms, and many guests spend the whole day enjoying their experience. There is a full-service salon, 10 treatment rooms – four of which offer couples treatments – and there is, of course, plenty of great food and beverages available at the Solarium or one of the other restaurants on the property.

When asked about their favorite spa options, Ashley and Paul both respond with the excitement of people who truly love the product they provide. "We have Thai yoga that runs year round and sunrise yoga from Memorial Day to Labor Day," says Ashley. "Thai yoga offers a different yoga experience, one that is all about balance and the well-being of the individual, one that people can take home with them and continue to practice. And, of course, practicing yoga outside as the sun rises is an amazing experience."

"The benefits of the spa experience," says Paul, "extend beyond the spa itself. We focus on educating our guests." In addition to the yoga practices, guests leave with a better understanding of skin maintenance and protection and, for the older guests, treatment of skin problems and sun damage.

Paul has a long background as a massage therapist and esthetician, a fancy word for skin care specialists, so he's well-versed in and a big proponent of

the spa's massage and facial offerings. He raves about the Serenity Ritual, in which two massage therapists deliver, in tandem, a hydro tub massage, a facial massage, a mask and a scalp treatment, a sea salt glow, a sea mud wrap, a Scotch hose massage and a Vichy rain shower. "It's like an intricate dance," he says.

"As an esthetician, of course, I'm partial to the facials," he says. "We have a new facial, the Sea Creations facial, that is 110 minutes long and uses ingredients harvested from the depths of the ocean as well as two different stones to do the massage. When it comes to luxury facials, there is no better."

There are plenty of options for two-person combinations as well, whether they be familial, friendly or romantic couplings. "We cater to a lot of couples, but we aren't limited to romantic dates," says Ashley. "We have plenty of mother-daughter combos who come in and enjoy the backdrop of

the Currituck Sound as they get massages."

The Sanderling Resort occupies a stretch of land that is only 300 yards wide from sound to sea, so you really can enjoy the spa from sunrise to sunset and see them both. Though there are days during the summer season when the spa can see as many as 100 people, both Ashley and Paul want to make sure that people know they are still able to offer the same experiences on busy days during the summer as they do in the middle of winter and vice versa. "Even on busy days," says Ashley, "you can come early and have a lounge to yourself, and the spa is laid out so that everyone feels like they have a private getaway." Another tip from Paul: If you stay through the day or arrive later, ask for one of the spa rooms with a view of the Currituck Sound.

Then kick back with a beverage of your choice and enjoy a sunset unlike any you've seen before. And in addition to the relaxation that the Spa at Sanderling menu will have surely provided, you can feel a little extra bit of satisfaction in the knowledge that you finally solved the age-old conundrum of how to truly escape from the stresses of life.

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