



## This month's Spa of the Month: **Spa Radiance** Home to the First Lady of Facials

San Francisco, CA | By Sally Robb Haims

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – Just in time for the arrival of winter, a remodeled, sleeker Spa Radiance is set to officially reopen in November after an extensive facelift. It is renowned as one of the country's leading luxury day spas, offering the latest innovative, natural treatments that instantly deliver dazzling results. The first major renovation for the thriving Pacific Heights haven is headed up by the Jeffers Design Group. The firm took on the challenge to remake the charming 3,500 square-foot Victorian sanctuary into a more modern incarnation without losing its character. Three years in the making, the carefully planned décor is inspired by the spa's mission to offer remarkable results by marrying the best of both worlds: centuries' old traditional European healing therapies combined with the industry's latest technological advances. Clean colors in hushed hues of soft Mediterranean blue and crisp white create a blissfully comfortable atmosphere. This is perfect for overstimulated guests seeking to erase the signs and lines of stress that come with living in the heart of a bustling city. The newly expanded lobby's rustic hardwood floors, custom designed light fixtures and original artwork from Dolby Chadwick Gallery, a local favorite, draw upon the building's historic interiors while adding a twist that embraces clean, contemporary lines. Additionally, these themes are evident in the redesign of the 10 dreamy treatment

rooms featuring specially crafted, ergonomic, heated beds made in France.

There are 10 treatment rooms. The door to each room is inscribed with an inspiring quote from a famously fearless female, a subtle tip of the hat to four generations of women whose heartfelt passion and hard work helped build Spa Radiance into one of the country's leading destinations for results-oriented skin care.

"I'm excited to be designing Spa Radiance for the third time, having designed the first location 17 years ago," says Angelina Umansky, co-owner. "This new spa is just as chic—think of a Parisian apartment with soulful French oak flooring and a fresh coat of chalky, white paint." She explains that when she first designed the spa, she wanted her clients to feel comfortable, as if they were visiting her home. Architect Jay Jeffers explains how he adhered to this idea. "We've never wavered from that vision, just given it a fresh look," he says.

Umansky shares that her travels and experiences led her to this vision. "Every year, I travel to France to train with the best-in-class estheticians in these beautiful, distinctively classic Parisian buildings that have been quietly coaxed into the 21st century," she

says. "I loved that they maintained the original, intricate crown molding, but subtly painted over it, creating a seamless look. That's the kind of soothing space I wanted to replicate for my clients."

In addition to a state-of-the-art revamp focusing on the theme of California-clean-meets-Parisian chic, Spa Radiance also offers a new menu of treatments in keeping with these principles, featuring exclusive organic products.

Beloved by several generations of glowing San Franciscans, socialites and Hollywood celebrities alike, the Spa Radiance story spans four generations of women. Moscow was the place where founders Umansky and her mother Galina Rovner developed their unmatched, all natural skin care expertise under the watchful eyes of Rose, Rovner's mother and Umansky's grandmother. As a little girl, Umansky was intrigued by the way her mother healed people, using herbs from their garden and a nearby forest. She assisted her mother as she mixed botanicals such as chamomile, dill, aloe vera and parsley, and quickly learned to heal skin ailments holistically. "I just loved it," says Umansky.

In the early 1970s, Umansky and Rovner immigrated to this country without a dime, and helped launch what has now become a burgeoning \$14 billion spa industry in the United States. With their knowledge and background in Russian modalities, Umansky and Rovner soon became well respected in their community and among their peers.

Originally established in busy downtown San Francisco in 1976, Spa Radiance took a risk moving to the marina in 1997.

"It was scary because we had become such a skin care staple downtown, and the marina was still an up-and-coming neighborhood, but it's been great," says Umansky.

She explains that the keys to running a successful spa include not only staying a step ahead of the rest, but also sticking to the tried and true basics that she learned in Europe. The forward thinking facialist is now offering such technologically advanced treatments. "In the beginning of my career, for the first 20 years, all I cared about was what's next and what's new," Umansky says. "But all the gadgetry can only take my clients' skin so far. Now, I see the value of combining the latest technological breakthroughs with holistic therapies. It's true what they say. What's old is new again."

With 34 employees, 10 treatment rooms and a tranquil atmosphere, Spa Radiance stays very busy. Clients enjoy body treatments, massage, waxing, facials, lash extension services and airbrush tanning. Many Hollywood A-listers have passed through their doors. Sharon Stone, Ashley Judd and Mary J. Blige are all big fans.

In addition to the celebrity clientele, Spa Radiance is also known for the Caviar Dreams Facial, which Director Michelle Skundrich describes as the ultimate sensory experience. After relaxing in the spa's plush reception area, guests are quietly ushered into a treatment room to begin the indulgent three-hour facial. Following a deep pore cleansing and enzyme exfoliation, clear, odorless extracts of caviar are applied to the face. "The caviar is rich in healing minerals and vitamins A, D and B complex," says Skundrich. "So not only is the facial indulgent, but caviar is actually a very effective natural moisturizer." Additionally, the \$750 facial features diamond peel microdermabrasion, microcurrent desincrustation, steam with an Italian herb healing mask, warm enzyme exfoliating hand treatment, a caviar eye treatment with oxygenating mist spray, the spa's renowned Instant Lift Facial with imported French serums, a complete hand treatment with patented protein drops and LED light therapy to complete the glow.

The team at Spa Radiance has not deviated from their mission to deliver the very best to San Francisco. They cite this as one of the main reasons that they have been in business for 37 years. Now that they have passed along four generations of secret botanical formulas for beautiful skin, Umansky and Rovner oversee a highly trained team of esthetician experts who excel in the art of creating gorgeous complexions, combining traditional healing with the wonders of today's high technology tools.

Umansky reminisces on how she and Rovner came to America with help from concerned organizations who brought Russian Jews overseas. "I wouldn't be here if it weren't for someone else's charity," she says.

Umansky and Rovner believe in giving back to the community that has supported them for years, and are committed to making a difference in their own backyard. Over the years, Spa Radiance has supported hundreds of local non-profits, businesses and hospitals.

Over the years, Spa Radiance has supported the following charities (among others).

- UCSF
- Children of Shelters
- San Francisco Botanical Gardens
- Town School
- San Francisco Ballet
- Cystic Fibrosis Foundatio
- Cow Hollow Preschool
- San Francisco Opera
- Teddy Bear Rescue Fund
- Jewish Community Center
- Marin Academy
- Breast Cancer Fund

"Our business is about taking care of people," Umansky says. "We believe it is important to take care of the community we all live in and love." Umansky and Rovner recommend being generous with charitable organizations that touch your heart, not only during the holiday season but all year long. It is no wonder that they have charmed the San Francisco community, and are referred to as the "first ladies of facials." Now with a reeled facility and a dedicated and talented team, the future is looking bright for Spa Radiance!

Sally Robb Haims runs a San Francisco based public relations agency small enough to move quickly with the savvy that comes from a decade of resort and spa media relations experience. Her clients have been featured in The New York Times, Travel + Leisure, Condé Nast Traveler and Sunset. Haims can be reached at 415.254.5884 or [sally@sallypr.com](mailto:sally@sallypr.com).

