

New Spa

New: Yuan Spa in Bellevue

Eastern philosophy and ancient, traditional healing practices inform the Eastside's new wellness and relaxation center.

Posted by: Laura Cassidy on Feb 16, 2012 at 08:50AM [0 Comments](#)



The cure for winter blues and busy lives: the hydrotherapy room at Yuan Spa. Not pictured: the sauna and steam rooms, which complete the ritual circuit aimed at stimulation and relaxation.

I'm no scientist but I do know that **our bodies are comprised mostly of water**, and I know that our **skin makes up the largest organ** in the bodily system. So as I considered the offerings at the new **Yuan Spa in Bellevue**, the **Chinese Body Ritual**, which includes an **all-expenses paid trip** through the in-spa **hydrotherapy pools**, was a natural choice.

And it did feel like a vacation. The **two-pool, sauna, and steam room set-up** of Yuan's **newly unveiled** gorgeous hydro area (**think Banya 5** with an Eastern bent) is lit to evoke some otherworldly twilight, and the clock's only there to ensure that you luxuriate for long enough to stimulate and sooth your muscles, to boost your circulation, and soften your skin.

You'll definitely want that vast and important organ to be plenty supple when the aesthetician comes to get you and lead you into the tiled-covered room where she'll scrub off your winter layer and get you moisturized, pliant, and brand new for the coming season.

(Actually, Li, the woman who so graciously liberated me from a few layers of stress and less-than-radiant skin, mentioned that in her native China they get scrubs once a month, and/or whenever they're feeling a little sluggish or under the weather.)

Sure, Yuan offers **treatments focused on relaxation**, and **pampering**, but there's something about being scrubbed clean and rinsed warm that is totally **edifying and calming**. As you lay on a warm, waterproof massage table, buckets of water swish over you at regular intervals like bathtub waves. I was reminded of childhood baths—in the best way. Practitioners of this therapy say it's **nourishing and detoxifying**, but It's also sort of the **ultimate luxury**; someone else is in charge of your hygiene for a good 80 minutes, and the scrub mitts and sweet soaps become almost as tranquilizing as hot stones.

Of course, the **scalp massage** that follows a rigorous hair washing and conditioning and punctuates the service is **pure indulgence**.

Anyone who's ever paid for a high-end spa service knows that **it's silly** (I'm being polite—it's actually idiotic) **to rush** when you've booked a treatment that's meant to restore and renew. Have you noticed that a packed schedule and busy day are almost like status symbols these days? Leave all that behind when you call Yuan. Tell yourself you've got the entire day, even if you're just booking a **manicure**. (But don't *just* book a manicure; the hydro room comes with some services, and is available for an add-on fee with others.) Leave plenty of time around your **facial** and consider adding a tradition-informed **Eastern-medicine treatment** to something that is perhaps more strictly **aesthetic**. If you have time for hair removal, surely you've got time to **gently jump start your Qi**.

Seasoned spa owner Zee Zhang spent the last two years creating this sanctuary of satisfaction and it shows. The large two-story facility with it's modern/ancient decor and flow is both clinical and catering, and it's a really, *really* good opportunity to press pause, clean up—systemically, holistically, and beautifully—and **get back inside your body for a while**.