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Pampering Gains a Following in the Big Apple

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By Donna M. Airoidi

Spas have long been a component of incentive programs at resort destinations (see more on spas in the section beginning on page 42). Now, they're coming to the fore in the Big Apple, too, with new venues large enough to handle group business.

"Spas have become part of every group proposal, and the men are just as involved as the women," said Patrick Sullivan, president of PRA Destination Management in New York. He's sent numerous clients to the Cornelia Day Resort, which opened in February.

"Meeting at a spa is definitely the new way to do business," agreed Lisa Hagen, Cornelia's director of business development. "We've had all types of corporate clients. An incentive group from a big national food company is coming in for a private spa party, and a company from Arizona is hosting a big event this month."

Located in 22,000 square feet of space on the 8th and 9th floors of a Fifth Avenue building, Cornelia boasts 14 treatment rooms, signature products developed by its founder, Cornelia Zicu, and a roof garden for private events for up to 450 guests. F&B is provided by famed New York caterer Abigail Kirsch.

Karen Shackman, president of New York's Shackman Associates International, finds that the traditional spas, such as Elizabeth Arden and Georgette Klinger, can move more people through. But she also has sent incentive clients to Cornelia, to the new Great Jones Spa in Greenwich Village, and the two-year-old Exhale, with Midtown and Upper East Side locales.

The Spa at The Mandarin Oriental also is increasingly popular for incentive groups and meetings, noted Tiana Kartadinata, public relations manager for the hotel.


"It's a nice alternative to the usual wining-and-dining events," she said.

The spa sits 300 feet above street level, provides skyline views, and in October will launch its new two-hour, four-hand "Oriental Harmony" treatment, which incorporates simultaneous head and foot massages, for a truly relaxing — and motivating — reward.

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