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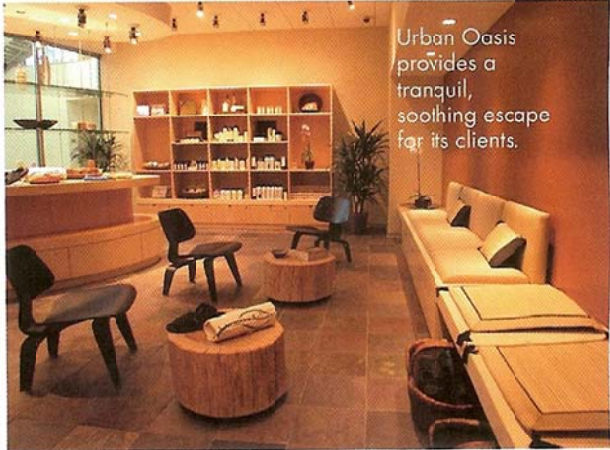
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Much of Urban Oasis' identity revolves around its most unique feature—private locker/shower rooms.



Urban Oasis

Chicago-based Urban Oasis has been offering soothing, relaxing massage treatments to its clients for 13 years.

Although, in the past, attempts have been made to venture into day spa territory, owner Peter Rubnitz has learned the beauty of being comfortable in a massage-focused niche. "We did facials at one time, but the whole pace of the place picked up and it became much more frenetic. We lost our focus and our identity, so we pared down the offerings and returned to our core business," he explains. "We were designed with massage and relaxation in mind—that is part of our attraction and our competitive edge. However, it's a double-edged sword because we have all our eggs in this one basket."

Much of Urban Oasis' identity revolves around its most unique feature—private locker/shower rooms. These enable clients to come down from the massage state in their own time without having to be thrust back into a social situation, which can be the case when returning to a traditional public locker room. Because of this addition, however,

punctuality is key. When the spa began providing facials and other services, along with massage, clients started booking more than one treatment. Inevitably, they began leaving later than they had anticipated, due to the number of people using the private locker/shower rooms. This caused a dilemma for the facility and led to its return to a massage-only focus.

Rubnitz has decided to expand into other high-touch services that are beneficial to his clientele and that match the spa's needs. The Maple Street location began providing chiropractic services five months ago, while the North Avenue spa started offering acupuncture three months ago. According to Rubnitz, "Both are wonderful complements to massage, and I think they are going to do nicely—probably acupuncture more than chiropractic." The spa has several massage therapists on its team who have been practicing acupuncture individually for more than 10 years.

"Whether they are even conscious of it or not, people are so bombarded every day by how technological and fast-paced everything has become. It's really nice just to get away," says Rubnitz. "Here, the phone isn't going to ring, and you can put everything aside for an hour or so. You need that—otherwise, you're on overdrive all day. It's important to step back, clear your mind and recharge."

PHOTO CREDITS

Photos courtesy of Urban Oasis, Chicago.

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www.urbanoasis.biz

Established: The Maple Street location was established in 1992, and the North Avenue facility opened in 2003.

Owner: Peter Rubnitz

Staff: 65 massage therapists

Hours: Monday, noon–8 PM; Tuesday–Thursday, 10 AM–8 PM; Friday, 9 AM–7 PM; Saturday, 9 AM–5 PM; and Sunday, 11 AM–5 PM

Product lines: Archipelago Botanicals and Biotone

Spa philosophy/mission: Urban Oasis is a massage spa that focuses on a high-touch, back-to-basics soothing and relaxing experience for its clients.

Newest treatments: Ashiatsu Oriental Bar massage, chiropractic services and acupuncture services

Most popular treatment: Prenatal massage

Most unique spa feature: Private locker/shower rooms

Business collaborations: The spa has a massage room inside the Crunch gym that is co-located with its North Avenue location.

Inspirations: Carapan Urban Spa and Shop in New York. "When you walked in, it was like you had left the city and were in Santa Fe with the smells, colors and concepts. That's what we tried to do on Maple Street with an Eastern appeal. We wanted it to be a place where people check their lives at the door," says Rubnitz.

Future plans: Massage enhancements, including antioxidant, herbal and anti-aging massage creams



One of the spa's newest offerings is Ashiatsu Oriental Bar massage.