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Healing One Soul at a Time

BY LINDSEY GETZ | PHOTOGRAPHY BY NINA LEA PHOTOGRAPHY

The principals of 1859 Wellness Spa & Salon have created a tranquil and elegant space where clients can enjoy a restorative experience in mind, body, and spirit.

When you step into the tranquil atmosphere of 1859 Wellness Spa & Salon, the “hustle and bustle” of Manayunk’s busy streetscape seems to melt away. One thing becomes abundantly clear: Although the surroundings may be somewhat familiar, this place is unlike any other. It has been built for the sole purpose of helping world-weary individuals unwind, recharge, and regain their balance.

Clients appreciate the “1859 experience,” as it has become known, for its ability to offer a sense of ultimate relaxation. The concept for this full-service salon and spa began with Beverly Weaver, a longtime massage therapist and licensed cosmetologist. She always dreamed of owning a spa where clients would be able to truly heal. That dream would begin to take shape when the “universe stepped in,” she says. A lost job turned into an opportunity for reinvention.

“The place where I had been working closed,” Weaver recalls. “In the interim of looking for something new, my client-turned-best-friend called me and said she didn’t want to lose me as her massage therapist.”

That best friend, Beth Ann White, just so happened to be an expert in business. “Together,” Weaver says, “we are yin and yang.”

White, a graduate of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, had enjoyed a successful career in banking. She suggested to Weaver that the two of them should become business partners and bring Weaver’s dream to life. With White’s business acumen, as well as an eye for design, and Weaver’s years of experience in the spa industry, they set out to create something truly unique.



Beverly Weaver (left) and Beth Ann White, partners in 1859 Wellness Spa & Salon

And so, the journey toward bringing a spa to life began. A thorough search of available sites yielded a location in Manayunk that had boundless potential. Despite some correctable aesthetic issues, the site had an abundance of natural light, which helped the women envision the possibilities.

“The building itself was alive and had this positive and amazing energy,” Weaver says. “We fell in love with it the first time we stepped in despite the fact that it was gaudy and ugly.”

The partners quite literally had to build the spa and salon from scratch, as well as



forge an identity that would communicate the spa's uniqueness to prospective clients. At the time, Weaver happened to be researching the area's rich history. She discovered that 1859 had been the Manayunk Canal's most active and profitable year.

"I decided that was the year we wanted to replicate," she says.

Thus, 1859 Wellness Spa & Salon was born. With the building underway and its identity taking shape, the partners set out to create a client experience that would be unlike any other. Weaver's background gave firsthand knowledge of what was lacking in the spa industry and sought to fill the void.

"My ultimate goal was to have a spa in the Philadelphia area where you feel as though you completely step out of the city and can totally unplug," Weaver describes. "You feel entirely transported somewhere else—away from the stresses of everyday life. It becomes a place where you can recharge, rebalance, and experience healing in mind, body, and spirit."

For that reason, a space that would become known as the "relaxation room" was an absolute must-have.

"So often, you go to spas where they have a tiny sitting area but nowhere that you can truly just relax before or after services," Weaver says. "Here, we don't want clients to feel rushed in any way."

The owners also sought other ways to help 1859 Wellness Spa & Salon stand apart from the crowd. For example, the spa offers an array of massage packages, each one targeted toward a specific aspect of a client's wellness—from stress relief to circulation to brain and gut health. While some clients come just for massage services, 1859 is truly a full-service spa and salon.

"We decided to add on hair services, which a lot of spas don't, so our clients don't have to go to multiple locations for all of their different services," Weaver says. "While clients are here, in the same building, why not allow them to get the multiple services that they might want or need?"

Such offerings have made 1859 particularly appealing for bridal parties. In a single location, clients can book a massage, facial, lash extensions, nails, hair, waxing, and makeup, all in an environment of elegance, warmth, and tranquility.

"We are also adding some medical spa offerings," says White. "These include microneedling, chemical peels, laser hair removal, and fibroblast plasma therapy. We already offer HydraFacials. As we add these services, we want our clients to know that they are carefully handpicked and being added because we already have a professional on our team who is trained to perform them. Everything that we do is in the best interest of our clients."

The spa has since begun offering memberships, as well as discounts on series of services so clients can save money when purchasing multiple services. Although White describes 1859's pricing as "extraordinarily fair," she says repeat clients should be able to "save some money by buying service groupings or memberships in advance."

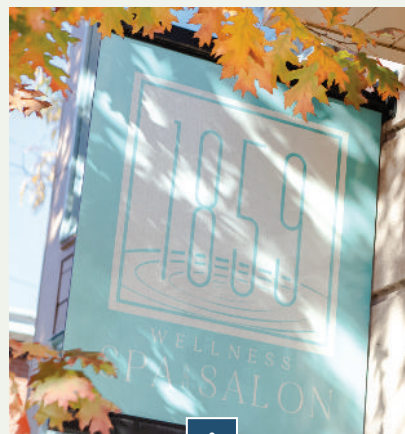
In addition, 1859 offers generous discounts to first responders including firefighters, police officers, and medical personnel. Given the challenges wrought by the pandemic, Weaver says these hardworking community members deserve a restful and relaxing experience more than anyone.

She speaks from experience, as 1859



has had to weather the same storm. The spa opened its doors only months before the federal government ordered a mandatory shutdown of nonessential businesses. The principals used that time to enhance their efforts in regard to cleaning and sanitization, which they say have always been a priority. For example, they brought in hospital-grade sanitizers and sanitization technology so guests can fully relax with the confidence that the spa and salon are as safe and sanitized as possible.

These efforts further 1859's primary mission of helping clients heal "one soul at a time." That becomes especially important in times of significant stress. In other words, 1859 Wellness Spa & Salon provides clients with a soothing path to self-care so they can look and feel their best, no matter what's happening in the world around them. ■



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