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A guide to finer living in  
Connecticut & abroad.

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*Complimentary*

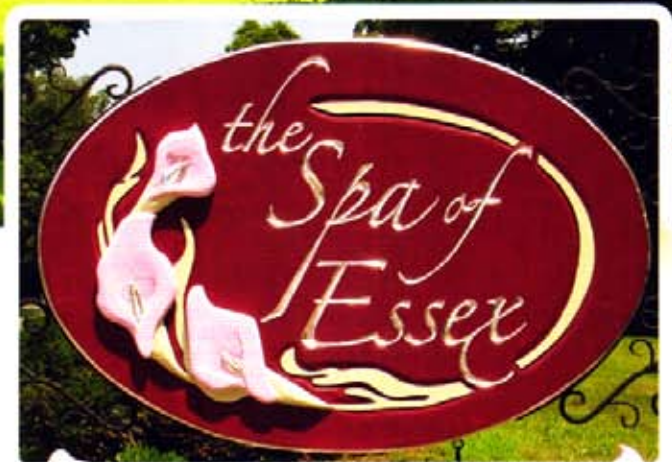


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## *Dreams* really can come true.

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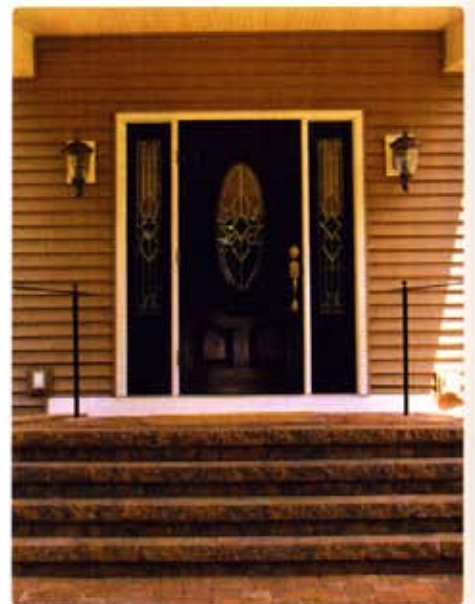


They've been part of our global culture for centuries. Historians write that dating back to 500 BC, the Greeks and Romans were great believers in the powers of the "baths," long considered the precursors to the spa, as centers for healing, relaxation and social gatherings. In fact, during the great Roman Empire they evolved into extravagant entertainment complexes where citizens flocked to enjoy a wide range of baths, restaurants and sporting events.

Throughout the rise and fall of many empires and as the ends of the earth were conquered and settled, people continued to believe in the healing power of water. Often located near hot or mineral springs, the ritual of the baths evolved within the unique culture of each civilization into bathhouses or spas. Here the sick and the stressed found nour-

ishment for their minds, bodies and souls. Saunas, steam baths, skin scrubs, herbal and holistic treatments soon joined the therapies and treatments offered by these centers for healing. But with the advent of medical science in the early 20th century, spas were largely replaced by scientific clinics and hospitals.

Spas took to reinventing themselves as luxurious and exclusive clinics catering to the very rich. But over the years they expanded their services and have become increasingly accessible to the mainstream population worldwide. In the United States, the spa has evolved into a center for spiritual healing, nourishment and renewal as well as pampering. Many Americans now





*Tranquil waiting area*



*Make Up Application Room*

include this new paradigm for wellness in their arsenal for achieving and maintaining good health along with their traditional doctors and state-of-the-art hospitals.

In Essex, CT, once named the "Best Small Town in America" by author Norman Crampton in his book - *The 100 Best Small Towns in America* - there are many wonderful reasons to head out and enjoy its quintessential New England charm. Lovely shops, several quaint country inns and restaurants and many beautifully maintained historic homes with white picket fences and colorful flower gardens line the village streets. In addition, there are accessible town docks, friendly marinas and immaculate sidewalks, making this a favorite destination for boaters and day-trippers alike. But now, just a short walk from the village center, quietly sits *The Spa of Essex*; the newest reason to visit the best small town in America. Nestled in a lovingly renovated building and discreetly set back on three secluded acres from South Main Street, *The Spa of Essex* offers a haven for those in search of that sweet spot in life - the spot where peace of mind, tranquility, serenity, beauty and renewal merge into a single glorious feeling of "ah."

A dream come true for owner Joyce Cosenza-Drew, *The Spa of Essex* was 10 years in the making. Inspired by a newspaper article she read many years ago and drawing upon her own enjoyment of spa treatments and pampering while growing up, Joyce believed that the family-owned nursing home would be the perfect location for a spa when that business eventually closed and a

perfect addition to the village of Essex. To that end and believing in her dream, Joyce spent untold hours researching spas and spa trends, testing products and services and educating herself about the business of running a spa, all the while working at her job as an administrator for a Durham nursing home and her other full time job as mom to two young daughters. "This is something I really wanted to do and still do," exclaimed Joyce. "I believed that it was a perfect fit for Essex and for this place. And I just never gave up!"

Once the nursing home closed, it sat empty for some time while Joyce continued to pursue her dream of owning a spa. In August 2000, she applied to the zoning board of Essex for a use variance because the property was zoned residential. In October 2000, it was granted and according to Joyce, "That was the easy part." From that day forward and for the next several years, she wrote and rewrote her 500 page business plan. Every detail of her dream, from architectural plans and contractor bids to marketing plans and proformas, had to be clearly articulated, revised and revised again before it was ready to submit to the banks. Over such a long span of time builders came and went, but Joyce's perseverance and hard work paid off. She happily closed on a construction loan in April, 2005.

The construction process began immediately and consumed every waking moment in addition to her other responsibilities. Joyce subcontracted all the work herself and jokingly says, "Had I known then what I know now, I might not have done this. Ignorance really is bliss!" But in spite of the day-to-day challenges of building and launching a business and the unforeseen delays and problems that invariably arise, *The Spa of Essex* welcomed its first guest on May 1, 2006.





Upon entering the spa, you are cheerfully greeted by a receptionist who sits at a beautiful mahogany reception desk. The walls are done in a rich shade of eggplant and the floors are covered in simple, earth-toned tiles. Callalilies fill a large vase in the mirrored niche behind the desk adding that perfect touch to the subtle elegance of the space. Next to the reception area are several rooms, including a lovely room housing a boutique, where products used by the spa can be purchased, a bright and airy make-up room perfect for achieving the look you're seeking for that special event and a pleasant sitting room furnished with

comfortable library chairs to relax in while waiting to be escorted to the treatment rooms.

Wide corridors leading to eight treatment rooms are thickly carpeted and softly lit by elegant sconces. Depending on the treatment, the spa's pristine rooms are tastefully equipped with state-of-the-art equipment including Vichy showers, massage tables, manicure and pedicure stations. Guests can enjoy an extensive menu of nearly one hundred services, including manicures, pedicures, exfoliating body treatments, facials, waxing, massage therapy and everything in between. Not readily available in many spas, permanent make-up and eyelash extensions are offered as well.



*Debra J. Hester*

Located at the end of the corridor is an intimate terra cotta dining room furnished with espresso stained wood tables and chairs where spa guests can enjoy a light repast ordered upon their arrival and provided by The Griswold Inn. And tucked in the center of this quiet wing is the relaxation room, furnished with comfortable easy chairs and tables where guests can relax between treatments or linger for as long as needed before braving the outside world once again.

Joyce is always working on perfecting the art of spa services. To that end, her employees are not only selected for their skills and experience but for their willingness to embrace "The Employee Promise" that is at the center of the spa's core philosophy. "The Employee Promise" includes a credo, a motto, 3 steps of service and 20 basic tenets which were thoroughly researched and



Pedicure Station



Manicure Station

thoughtfully developed by Joyce as she articulated her business plan. According to Joyce, *The Spa of Essex* is about providing a positive experience that exceeds all expectations, whether a guest is having a manicure or a full day of treatments."

And she continues to dream. Plans for Phase Two at *The Spa of Essex* include the installation of saunas, steam rooms, Jacuzzi rooms and couples rooms. Couples rooms, where a Jacuzzi and a massage can be a shared experience is an emerging trend in the world of spas. Hopefully, Joyce will take the time to try all the new treatments she will be offering in Phase Two at *The Spa of Essex* as she did for Phase One. But this time she won't have to do so alone. One of the original builders who bid on her project, lost the bid, but won her heart. Two years ago they were married and soon after, created their own little addition. Now they're a very busy family of five.

And so it would seem, with a lot of hard work and a little bit of luck, dreams really do come true...even the ones you weren't planning on.



Here are just a few services that Essex Spa has to offer:

#### Skin Treatments:

Warm Stone Facial  
Age Defying Facial  
Sinus Relief Facial  
Hydrating Facial  
Gentlemen's Facial  
Teen Facial  
Avance' Signature Facial



#### Wet Room Body Treatments:

Sea Polish  
Marine Pumice  
Sea Salt Glow  
Exfoliating Body Treatment  
Sunless Tanning Mist Treatment  
Enzymatic Peel



#### Massage:

Warm Stone Massage  
Four Handed Massage  
Deep Tissue Massage  
Prenatal Massage  
Reflexology  
Upper Body Massage  
Sports Rehabilitation  
Swedish Massage



#### Therapeutic Treatments:

Reiki  
Seaweed Body Wrap  
Cellulite Body Treatment  
Anti-Stress Back Pack  
Back Facial  
Termal Fat Burner  
Root Cause Analysis For Body



#### Make-up:

Bridal Make Up  
Make up Application  
Make up Lesson - 1 hour session  
Teen Make Up Application  
Teen Make Up Lesson  
Permanent Make-Up



#### Extreme Lash Extensions:

Natural, full look eyelash application  
Lash Lovers Club



#### Feet & Hands:

Classic Manicure & Pedicure  
Sea Spa Manicure & Remineralizing  
Sea Spa Pedicure  
Rejuvenating Spa Manicure &  
Tired Leg Spa Pedicure  
Anti-Aging Spa Manicure & Pedicure  
Muscular Ease Spa Manicure &  
Detoxifying Spa Pedicure  
Warm Stone Manicure  
Paraffin Dip

