





The reception desk at Sāva Spa is made of dark wood and frosted glass. Fresh flowers are used as decorative accents throughout the spa. Retail displays are situated near the entrance.

SĀVA SPA

Loyal devotees of esthetician Joanna Czech prove they're willing to go the distance to frequent her uptown Manhattan retreat.

**WRITTEN BY
HEATHER MIKESELL**



"Czech was undeterred by what some might consider an undesirable location."

In the intimate space, a client enjoys a pedicure.

WHEN JOANNA CZECH FIRST MOVED TO THIS country 15 years ago, she settled in Washington Heights, a bedroom community of Manhattan. Even then, she could envision opening a spa in the building across the street from her apartment. Czech owned a salon in Poland, her native country, for four years before coming to the United States. Once here, she began building a reputation as a top esthetician in New York City. She built a loyal following that included a who's who list of celebrities as a sought-after esthetician at the Paul Lebreque Salon & Spa in Manhattan. It was that faithful following that helped her and her husband, Arthur Czech, launch Sāva Spa, which gets its name from a Polish legend of a young woman who was transformed into a mermaid.

Attached to the neighborhood and thinking it needed the type of spa she envisioned, Czech was undeterred by what some might consider an

inconvenient location for many Manhattanites. Instead, she focused on infusing the space with a personalized touch. "I wanted to treat clients the way I think is right," says Czech. And that includes small personal touches like serving cappuccino and providing comfortable Rani Arabelle cashmere blankets—things she wouldn't necessarily be able to do in a larger spa. "I don't like big spas," she says. "We can't handle more than seven clients at the same time, and that's the maximum." Sāva's intimate size also means that most of its clients know one another.

Although the location's distance may seem a bit daunting for some, it hasn't hampered business. In the beginning, Czech received much support from former clients traveling from the Upper West Side. She had approximately 120 regulars from Manhattan. Soon after launching Sāva, Czech decided to open on Sundays to

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**MOST
PROFITABLE
SERVICE:
Waxing**



One of Sāva's four treatment rooms.

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accommodate those having to travel up from the city. "People don't know what to do with themselves on Sunday," she says. In the year since it opened, neighborhood locals have warmed up to the spa. Responding to a number of Broadway performers who live in the area, Czech began opening the spa on Mondays as well to accommodate their performance schedule. Sāva is now open seven days a week.

Always thinking of herself as an esthetician first, Czech took great care in choosing the spa's many product lines. Sāva is the only U.S. spa to offer facial and body treatments from Nuxe, a French aromatherapy skincare line. It is

also one of the few spas to offer treatments using Protective Nourishment, an all-natural line of products with no artificial preservatives.

Although retail is an important element at most spas, Czech isn't interested in pushing products. She prefers to let the products speak for themselves. "We don't mention [products] unless the person starts asking questions," says Czech. The spa also retails other luxurious goods, such as the Place des Lices bath-and-body line and Geodesis candles and room fragrances. As for the future, Czech would like to eventually expand Sāva's retail area to make room for fashion accessories, such as headbands and handbags, created by some of her talented clients. ■

SĀVA SPA

(New York City)

Owner: Joanna and Arthur Czech

Opened: November 2003

• **CLIENT BASE**

90% female

10% male

ages 13 to 96

• **SPACE**

1,200 square feet;
4 treatment rooms

• **COST OF SPA**

\$600,000

• **SERVICES**

-body treatments

-facials

-makeup

-manicures and pedicures

-massage

-waxing

• **MOST POPULAR**

**Protective Nourishment
Facial (\$150, 60 minutes)**

• **PRICE RANGE**

\$10 for lip wax to **\$200** for
the Sāva Ultimate Facial

• **PRODUCT LINES**

-Babor

-Biodroga

-Biologique Recherche

-ê Shave

-Geodesis

-Jurlique

-MD Skincare

-Molton Brown

-Nuxe

-Place des Lices

-Protective Nourishment

-Satiness

-The Balm

• **EQUIPMENT**

-Bio-Mac

-Equipro

-Oakworks

-Repêchage (facial chairs
and technician stools)

-SpaElegance.com

• **ARCHITECT**

Peter Topor (New York City)

• **INTERIOR DESIGNER**

Cherry Zucker, Pear Designs
(New York City)