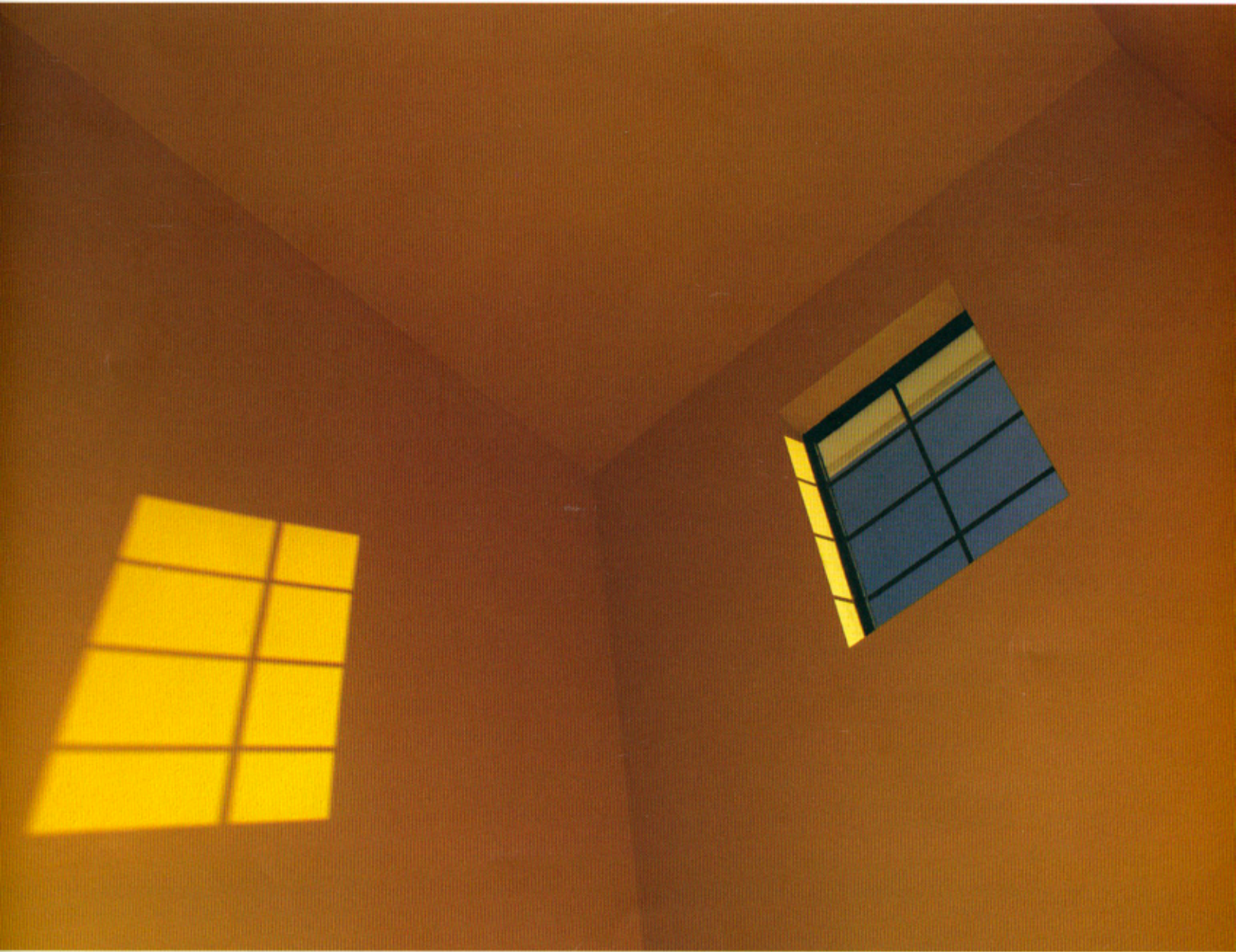


NEW AT HOME

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Kitchens: Today's Gathering Places
Warm Your Home with Color
Win a FREE Leather Chair



New Mexico spa gazing

by Judy Post



Photo by Deborah Fieg, courtesy of Ten Thousand Waves



Photo courtesy of Betty's Bath and Day Spa



Photo courtesy of ShahNah Spa and Wellness Center

You've unpacked, the dishes are put away in those brand new cabinets, your furniture is arranged beautifully and the pictures are hung in just the right places. Well, maybe there are a few cardboard boxes left in the corner of the garage, but that can wait. Your new home looks great and you are pleased with your efforts. Most of your expectations have been realized. Yet the stress from the move and some buyer's remorse lingers. How can you shed those uncomfortable feelings? You might try getting away from the house for a little while to enjoy a visit to one of New Mexico's impressive spas.

Soft flute music plays in the background on a surround sound system. In contrast to the bright sunny sky outside, dimmed indirect lighting wraps around you. At the side of a large room with a concrete floor, a puffy white sofa beckons . . . sit down, sink in and relax. A young woman whose gentle smile welcomes you is ready to help and guide. Once the door closes behind you, your stress disappears. Nestled in a quiet North Valley neighborhood, you have entered Betty's Bath and Day Spa (505-341-3456), one of 13 day-spas in Albuquerque. If you live in Albuquerque, Betty's is practically in your backyard.

Today's spas offer more than just pampering and indulgence. Overall wellness, body-mind connections and healing as well as health issues are incorporated into their respective philosophies and missions for their clients. Spas are no longer havens reserved for the wealthy and famous. Nationwide, the spa industry recognizes the enormous public interest. According to the International Spa Association, there are an estimated 12,000 spas throughout the U.S. and the spa industry generated \$11.2 billion in revenue in 2003. New Mexico is part of the big spa picture. To illustrate, here are a few spas in the Land of Enchantment:

For a Zen-like experience, try Ten Thousand Waves (505-982-9304), which you'll find on the way to the Santa Fe ski basin, tucked away from Hyde Park Road on piñon-covered hills. Iron lanterns at ground level escort you to the front door of this Japanese health spa. And except for birdsong and the tinkling of a wind chime, it is extremely quiet here. Ten Thousand Waves has been in business since 1981, long before the explosion of the spa industry. Outdoor private and communal hot tubs are available, with nearby cold plunges or showers. There is one private indoor pool. Schedule your visit to coincide with a full moon. Spa services include therapeutic and specialized massages, wraps, body glows and, last but not least, facials. Geishas love the nightingale facial, which uses nightingale droppings for cleansing and exfoliation.