

# Your Spa Awaits ...

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PHOTOGRAPH BY JULIA C.M. VANDERPOOL

Marilyn Roe and Christina Robertson are pictured with their signature green chair outside of Sweet 185 on King Street.

## The Sweetness is In the Name

Ever wonder what it would be like if you concocted your own spa experience? Ever wanted to tell the massage therapist not to spend so much time on your lower back, but to instead wander closer to your shoulders? Ever wonder why your skin breaks out after a facial?

It is because of these reasons and many others that trepidations occur regarding various treatments on the folding table. But, now, after years of desires to tweak that Swedish massage and run-of-the-mill facial, a solution has cropped up right in Charleston's busiest area.

Drowning out the honking of horns or the constant construction that accompanies maintaining the historic buildings dotting King Street, Sweet 185 has blended the classic spa experience with the novelty of holistic and natural therapies, bringing together the best of both worlds, completely tailored to the client.

Explains owner, Christina Robertson, "The point is to treat yourself from the inside out and the outside in." Thus, since starting in 2007, Christina and her business partner Marilyn Roe have designed a spa experience to rival all others.

Upon entering, clients are given forms to fill out regarding medical history, personal needs, skin type, etc. It may sound tedious, but in the long run, it is the form that sets you free in an entirely enlightening world of modern-day treatments. Once the therapist reviews the questionnaire, the client is brought into the treatment room. Of course, when biding time for his or her name to be called, the oxygen bar is at anyone's while disposal in the waiting room. Lounging in the leather recliners being cleansed by the oxygen coursing through you breeds an unparalleled feeling of serenity and wellness — despite the clinical nature it denotes. However, continuing on the client's journey to a completely customized service, the therapist then evaluates, based on his or her expertise reviewing the forms, what the client requires.

Combining the clients desires with their needs, the therapists set to work blending a soothing treatment with the comforts of holistic massage and spa therapy. They then spend time with their client to develop a long term skin care plan so that the effects of the spa experience can linger with the visitor long after their treatment has concluded. As Christina explains, "I may spend two hours with your skin, but you spend everyday with it. We want to make sure you care for it well."

Wanting to be all natural is a strong desire of the women, and as Marilyn explains, "not all products (they use or sell) have to be 100 percent organic, but they do have to be 100 percent natural." Which is how they found their way to sugaring.

Christina was trained using traditional waxing methods before she found out how to perform sugaring, an all-natural alternative to waxing. Being an esthetician for 14 years, she knew the chemicals that were going onto her clients' skin. When she learned that sugaring was lemon juice and sugar, she understood how gentle it would be on the skin. It is much harder to perform, but it is more effective on removing the hair follicle, competitively priced and most importantly, better for your skin. The entire process is a specialty of Sweet 185. They are one of the only sugaring studios in the state, and they pride themselves on offering such a unique treatment to the men and women they serve.

Naturally, their motto is *be kind to your body*. Investing in the experience is crucial to them, as they wholeheartedly endeavor into their projects. They desire to be kind to others, and give back to our community, too. Currently, they sell reusable glass water bottles that are elegant and completely eco-friendly. This is one way, in addition to sponsoring several Charleston charities in hands-on ways, like doing yoga in Marion Square with Louie's Kids, that they seek to give back to benefit us all.

Of course, their studio goes beyond the basic elements of treatment. It isn't the relaxation method that they operate under to rope in their clientele. They want to invest in their patrons, giving them something that they can leave with, not necessarily a product but a lifestyle change to be better to their bodies, skin and environment. Entering into Sweet 185 is an investment, one that we should all make in an effort to *be kind* from the inside out.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY BLAIR HALFORD

One all natural facial with a world-class esthetician? Yes, please!