

# Scent-sational

*Infuse aromatherapy into all of your salon services, and leave a lasting scent-sory impression on clients.*

By Andrea Sercu

In the royal palaces of ancient Java, young Indonesian brides-to-be participated in the Lulur ritual. Attendants massaged coconut oil and tropical flowers into the young women's skin; exfoliated it with rice, turmeric, sandalwood and jasmine; and then covered the women's bodies with yogurt before settling them in a bath scented with petals of jasmine and rose frangipani.

For those visiting the Florida Keys today, this aromatherapeutic experience is as close as a ferry ride away. At Spa Terre at Little Palm Island Resort and Spa in Little Palm Island, Florida—a remote island accessible only by boat—weary landlubbers lose their daily stresses in the exotic flower essences of the Javanese Lulur Royal Treatment, which adheres closely to the original tradition, right down to a scented soak in the spa's Javanese wooden tub. At this exclusive resort, clients can also treat their toes to a Margarita Key Lime Pedicure, featuring fresh key limes, citrus oils and real key lime essential oils in the water and exfoliating scrub.

Even salons without access to exotic floral essences or a Javanese wooden tub can incorporate the powerful effects of aromatherapy into their services and take clients on a plant-essence journey within the confines of their nail salons.





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## Heat things up



Heat can be added to a variety of nail services to ensure that the message of

aromatherapy will penetrate loud and clear. Channings offers an Aromatherapy Hot Glove Manicure, in which the tech applies jojoba, lavender and chamomile oils to nail beds and massages them into the hands and forearms before placing the hands in heated gloves.

Salon J clients also reap the benefits of heat therapy with an In-Spa Manicure, in which techs dip clients' hands in scented paraffin and massage them with aromatic essential oils.

And at The Villa Inn, Restaurant and Spa in Indianapolis, heated aromatherapy mitts allow vitamin-enriched moisturizing products to penetrate clients' skin. During this waterless manicure treatment, in which essential oils are blended into either a sugar- or salt-based exfoliant, clients profit from a Vitamin Blend Manicure with vitamin C, lemon and grapefruit, says owner Jeneane Life. Pedicure clients can choose a Mint Pedicure, featuring green tea, invigorating peppermint and antibacterial rosemary, or a Sugar and Spice Pedicure with stimulating cinnamon and moisturizing shea butter. "Everything's integrated," says Life. "What we use in our facials, we can also use in our hand and foot massages, and clients can upgrade their manicures to incorporate those ingredients."

To transport your guests on their own aromatherapeutic journeys, try these eight "scent-sational" tips:

### Upgrade nail services



Here's an easy way to take your nail services to the next level: Instead of using water to soak

nails, use hydrosols, the essence-infused water that remains as a by-product of the plant distillation process. Hydrosols can be used as mists for feet and hands, and a citrus hydrosol can help relieve swollen feet.

In addition, just about any essential oil exfoliant used in body treatments can be applied during manicures and pedicures. Glen Ivy Brea in Brea, California, uses its orange peel natural exfoliator during the massage portion of nail services, and Teddie Kossof Salon Spa Wellness Center in Northfield, Illinois, sloughs off dead skin on hands and feet with a citrus, mint, lavender and hibiscus salt glow.

Salon J Nails in Nashville, Tennessee, gets sweet on feet with its Aromatherapy Spa Pedicure, featuring a sugar scrub and massage with essential oils of rose, lavender or peppermint. Likewise, Channings Day Spa in

Chicago offers a Foot Facial with an essential oil and sugar scrub, a reflexology treatment and a cooling ginseng mask application.

Mary DiZazzo, a third-generation cosmetologist and owner of Mary for Nails in Andover, Massachusetts, prefers to use aromatherapy scents rather than oils. Some of her favorites include strawberry and water lily, and fun scents like chocolate truffles for the chocolate-themed pedicures she offered last Christmas. "Anything that has to do with chocolate is quite therapeutic!" she says.

Another way to add value to nail treatments: Infuse your service towels with peppermint or other essential oils. Channings, for instance, uses stimulating aromatherapy oils to scent the hot towels that she uses during her pedicures. The extra effort makes a lasting impression on clients.

One of the easiest ways to incorporate aromatherapy into almost any treatment is with the use of a steam canopy that diffuses essential oils into the air. Or you can spray the essential oils directly onto your linens, as is done at the Mezzanine Spa, a medical spa in New York, where clients can choose from a relaxing lavender and cedarwood blend or an uplifting spruce needles and bergamot blend.

The Paint Shop offers a six-week Holistic Nail Rehabilitation program using aromatherapy tailored to the individual needs of each client.

Rehabilitate damaged nails



At the Paint Shop in Beverly Hills, California, owner Julie Serquinia employs essential oils to help clients rehabilitate

damaged nails and cuticles. Serquinia's salon offers a six-week Holistic Nail Rehabilitation program using aromatherapy tailored to the individual needs of each client. "I started running into people who needed serious help with their nails," says Serquinia. "So I combined some of the techniques used in the shop with aromatherapy to nourish the nails back to health."

Serquinia favors tea tree oil for its antimicrobial properties. "When cuticles are dry and damaged, they're open to infection, so this combats that problem," she says. A touch of tangerine is also regularly used to increase circulation. "Not only do the essential oils perform a function, but they also smell good," she notes.

Serquinia often adds tea tree and lavender oils directly to the nail soak, so clients enjoy the scent as well as the therapeutic treatment. Then she incorporates green tea and more tea tree oil into a mask for the hands before finishing the natural-nail manicure.

Another Serquinia favorite: lavender. This essential oil calms and centers clients. Plus, lavender is ideal for nail-biters: Apply and retail lavender oil, which calms the nerves and reminds the client to think twice before biting. "It's kind of like a nicotine patch," says Serquinia. "The lavender is a great nail-biter's deterrent. If the client starts to



lift her hands to her face, the aroma serves as a warning."

Be scent-sitive to your location



Many nail salons find their aromatherapy niche by focusing on the environment and traditions of their own communities.

Guests of the ShaNah Spa & Wellness Center, which sits nestled within Santa Fe, New Mexico's Sangre de Cristo Mountains, need not go on nature walks to acquaint themselves with the natural environs. This Native American-inspired retreat, located within the Bishop's Lodge Resort and Spa, offers its guests an aromatherapy experience featuring a variety of native oils. Like Little Palm Island's Spa Terre, the ShaNah Spa draws inspiration from its native surroundings to formulate signature aromatherapy blends. Here, wild sage, juniper and evergreen oils infuse all aspects of a client's experience, from the spa's signature bodycare line to the guest rooms and treatments. And on rainy Santa Fe days, spa manager Antonieta Matter often uses an uplifting bergamot blend at the front entrance to chase away the blues.

Diffuse essential oils

in your reception area to create an unforgettable introduction.

Aromatherapy is also a great way to communicate your salon's theme. DiZazzo uses aromatherapy every day in her salon and features a different scent every week. She sometimes infuses a lamp ring with vanilla or honeydew, not only to mask salon odors, but also to promote pleasant memories and emotions. "When you walk into the salon, you don't smell acetone and nail glue," she says. "People may come in stressed or upset over a problem but, by the time they leave, they're relaxed and in a good mood."

Blend in at the bar



Custom services and retail blends have gained popularity, and aromatherapy

is an essential part of personalizing the salon experience. Guests visiting the Bishop's Lodge are greeted by

an aromatherapy blending bar, where staff customize tubes of essential oils according to clients' ayurvedic *doshas*. These tailor-made blends can be used in any service, including manicures and pedicures.

The blending bar at Beauty Kliniek Aromatherapy Day Spa & Wellness Center has also become a favorite feature at the La Jolla, California-based salon and spa, where clients can have essential oil blends customized to help combat specific problems, such as insomnia, cellulite or hormonal imbalance. The spa, which is owned by licensed clinical aromatherapist Linda-Anne Kahn, will also blend personalized foot sprays, shower gels, lotions and creams with the client's preferred aroma.

"Oils are fat-soluble and penetrate the skin as well as the limbic system of the brain," says Jennifer Petersen, massage department head at Beauty Kliniek. "We use aromatherapy in almost every aspect of our treatments: inhalation, hydrotherapy, ayurvedic treatments and product blending. In fact, we can integrate aromatherapy into any service."



#### Sell the smell

If aromatherapy is a central part of your services, clients will want to relive the salon experience by bringing those familiar scents home. Glen Ivy Brea places its aromatherapy scrubs in open bowls with wooden spatulas, allowing clients the opportunity to smell and touch the different blends. "Believe me, they all want to take that smell home with them," says Glen Ivy Brea spa director Jen Breakey.

Serquinia likes to add grapefruit, lime or lemon to the foot bowl for her With a Twist pedicure. "It's like a cocktail in the pedicure bath," she says. The fresh fruits contain citric acid, which helps to break down dry skin, thus performing an exfoliating function. Plus, the fresh fruits make the salon smell great, she says. In addition,

Serquinia often burns incense in common areas and places a lamp ring in the bathroom.

A range of aromatherapy retail options exists for nail salons, from eye and neck compresses filled with flower essences to unscented hand lotions that can be custom-blended with the client's favorite essential oils.

By listing your salon's aromatherapy options on your service menu, you're likely to see an increase in upgraded bookings. At The Spa at Norwich Inn in Norwich, Connecticut, clients can select from Relaxation (ylang-ylang, lavender and tangerine); Energy (peppermint and rosemary); Respiration (eucalyptus, fir and pine); Meditation (sandalwood, fir and cedarwood); and Muscle Relief (birch, thyme and juniper) services. The spa has also taken the hot stone massage one step further by adding the essential oils of rose and frankincense to the experience.



#### Clear the air

First impressions are certainly the most memorable.

Diffusing essential oils in the reception area will create an unforgettable introduction that clients will want to experience again during their nail services and at home as well. At the Mezzanine Spa, the scent of an aromatherapy candle burning downstairs at the dermatologist's front desk serves as a great subliminal referral for the spa upstairs. The spa further reinforces the "message" with essential oils burning at its own entrance and within the locker rooms. You should change your oils often to give clients a variety of aromatherapy experiences when they enter and leave your salon.



#### Work it into waxing

Waxing is a highly desired treatment for many clients. You can temper treatments for sensitive areas by incor-

Offset any discomfort a client might feel during waxing with a few drops of a calming essential oil.

porating calming azulene from the blue chamomile plant into the service. To further offset the discomfort of waxing, place a few drops of a calming essential oil, such as lavender, bergamot, sage, jasmine or myrrh, on a cotton ball for clients to inhale while you wax.

At Relax.Now day spa in San Francisco, therapists prep clients' skin with lavender and the hydrating antioxidant grape seed extract, and use a wax that's premixed with anti-septic lavender, lending an aromatic element to the services.

From unleashing the potent diffusion of essential oils at the front desk to positioning them in starring roles during manicures and pedicures, aromatherapy is the most direct means of affecting your clients' moods, enhancing your spa's ambience and leaving a lingering impression well after the treatment is over. Don't miss the opportunity to create such a powerful effect on your clients' mental, emotional and physical well-being. ↓

*Andrea Sercu is a Los Angeles-based freelance writer.*