

By TAMMIE TOLER

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PIPESTEM — Anna and Anthony Ferraraccio knew two years ago that they were destined to open a healing spa in southern West Virginia. In May, they realized that dream and opened Pipestem Bath, Spa, Massage and Healing Center.

Situated just across the street from Pipestem State Park and adjacent to the Nostalgia Inn, the spa offers a variety of special treatments, including: massage, facials, electrical acupuncture, wraps, therapeutic bath, energy healing and more. Both Ferraraccios are licensed massage therapists. Anna also specializes in medical aromatherapy, facial procedures and energy healing, while Anthony has extensive training in electrical acupuncture, which is a form of the Chinese healing art that doesn't use needles. In "another life," Anna said she was a teacher and a psychologist, and Anthony still works some in construction, but they both said their real calling in life was to help people heal by using their special talents and educations.

The couple met in Florida, where Anna's family had lived before her parents returned to southern West Virginia to open The Nostalgia Inn. Before long, Jim and Ellie White lured their son, Brandon, from the beaches of Florida to open his own restaurant beside the special bed and breakfast. Brandon's BBQ & Grill became a huge local success, and Anna and Anthony followed the same path when they noticed nearby property was available. "When we found this property for sale about two years ago, we knew this was our destiny," she said. They bought the house along West Virginia Route 20 and enough property to build the spa, complete with a lobby/welcome center and special rooms for massages, facials, wraps, relaxing baths and acupuncture. With Anthony overseeing the construction, the project moved quickly, and the spa opened for business in May.

The couples massage quickly became the Ferraraccios' most popular service, and Anna said they realized the need to expand. They added another room with enough space for two comfortable massage tables, clients, therapists, a sound system that provides relaxing music or simple sounds of nature and all sorts of aromatherapy essential oils.

"People are very romantic around here," Anna said. When Pipestem Bath, Spa, Massage and Healing Center opened, Anna expected many of the clients to come from the nearby Pipestem Resort, but she estimated 90 percent of the spa's business actually comes from Princeton, Bluefield, Hinton, Beckley, Lewisburg and even Charleston.

While spa treatments have long been known for their relaxation and pampering qualities, the Ferraraccios explained their therapies are very useful in treating chronic pain, injuries, emotional challenges and even neurological disorders. The medical massage treatments are particularly helpful in combating back pain, hip pain, sciatica, numbness, tingling and other muscle issues, while Anthony's electrical acupuncture therapy often targets rotator cuff injuries, carpal tunnel syndrome and much more. As far as massage goes, Anna considers her specialties to be treating TMJ and migraines, while Anthony pays particular attention to lower back problems and sports injuries.

Massages are always popular, but Anna explained that body wraps often eliminate toxins from the body. "They are beneficial for clients with chronic pain and swelling, and they're excellent for people undergoing chemotherapy," she said. In addition, wraps also help tighten and condition skin, particularly for people undergoing weight loss. Anna said removing the toxins from the body reduces swelling and the feeling of excess skin many people feel as they lose weight. In fact, she recommended a detoxifying wrap after every five pounds lost to keep skin in prime condition.

For the wraps, the spa is equipped with a special vichy bath, a long massage table that features eight shower heads positioned above the client to rinse the wrap away. One of Anna's passions, and the treatment for which she's trained the longest, is energy healing. At its most basic, energy healing describes the transfer of energy from one person to another. Anna begins each energy therapy regimen with an aura analysis and maps a course of action based on the issues the client wishes to address. Anna particularly enjoys working with children with neurological problems, especially autism. "That's just pure joy. There's no down side to helping someone feel better," she said.

For more information, a full lineup of services and detailed explanations of the therapy,

Visit www.pipestemspa.com

To talk with Anna or Anthony Ferraraccio or schedule an appointment, call (304) 466-1767.

Pipestem Bath, Spa, Massage and Healing Center is open seven days a week, by appointment. Contact Tammie Toler at ttoler@ptonline.net.