

hospitality design

superior interiors
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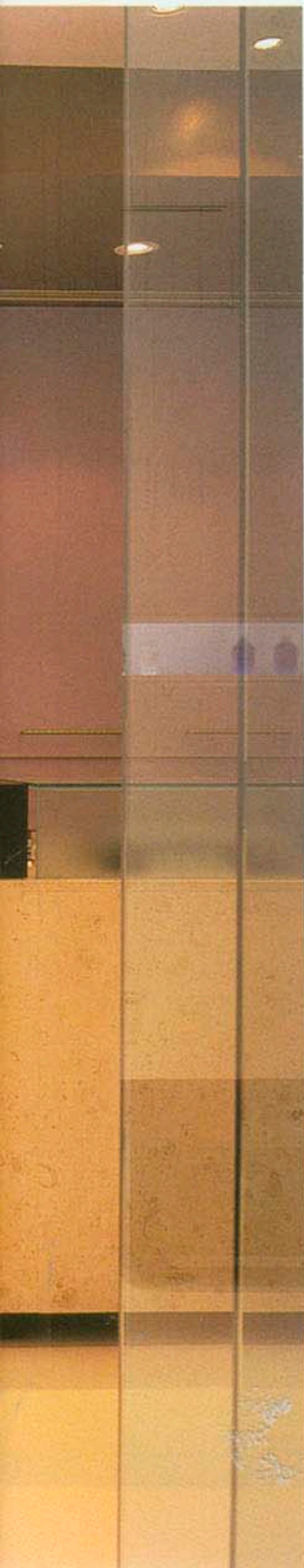
By Kelly Beamon
Photography by Dan Bibb

skinklinic

2002 gold key finalist spas & resorts



Opening page: Skinklinic was designed to be a "fast space" for its time-starved patrons. *Bottom:* In the lounges, a Tibetan lamb ottoman and faux ponyskin daybed contrast glowing limestone floors and glass walls and doors.



The hectic pace and urgent consumerism of city dwellers inspired designers of Skinklinic, New York-based UT, to make the spa a "fast space." Hardly bound by the typical luxury that's a selling point for traditional spas, UT founding principals Clarissa Richardson and Heidar Sadeki decided that, in a Manhattan medi-spa such as this one, "the notion of immediate results and salvation not unlike a car wash" should drive the solution. "The post-modern woman has 45 minutes, not three hours to spend in a dayspa," Sadeki announces. For that reason among others, the notion of fast space seemed appropriate, he says.

At the heart of this approach applied to a spa (traditionally a slow, relaxed experience) is circulation: Patrons move through clean and clear spaces in logical sequence and in turn feel clean and clear sooner because of the psychic reinforcement. "Translating the spa's business direction into design required a process of abstraction," Sadeki explains. So, building materials wink at the cleanliness and efficiency of Skinklinic's treatments. And just as diners feast first with their eyes, patrons here sample the results of treatment in their surroundings: sight lines (clean and unobstructed), surfaces (transparent and shimmering), and accents (spare and light) all help compress the time in which the time-starved feel comforted. "The time it takes to get information is shorter now than it was 15 years ago," asserts Sadeki. "You can fight that or celebrate it."

Skinklinic gives in to speed. Its 8,000-square-foot program ushers visitors through four stages: first, the entry, in a limestone façade accessed over a pool in a courtyard surrounded by walls of polished, black slate; second, reception; third, lounge spaces where sparse furnishings inject the lab-clean environment with rich texture (Tibetan lamb ottomans and a faux ponyskin daybed contrast glowing limestone floors and glass walls and doors); and fourth, several subterranean treatment rooms where floors give a quarter-inch underfoot. "Flooring gets progressively softer until it's like you're wearing sneakers," Richardson says.

Despite the Princeton University-trained pair's affinity for the modern, minimalist tack (Sadeki, specifically, is influenced by the visually spare imagery in movies by French filmmaker Robert Bresson), they'd also love to tackle a project with, as he puts it, "so much luxury you can hardly breathe." **hd**



Skinklinic

New York City

Owner Kathy Dwyer

Interior Design UT, a Richardson Sadeki Design Group Company, New York City

Contractor Cayley Barrett

Mechanical Engineering Cosentini & Associates

Structural Engineering Robert Silman Engineers

Reception/Lounge Furniture
Custom by UT

Leather Edelman

Flooring Hoffman Flooring

Lounge Fabric Benchmark Furniture Manufacturing

Lounge Ultrasuede Toray Ultrasuede

Glass Door Dorma Glass

Millwork J-Con