



This posh urban medspa is making over its clients – inside and out.

BY ANUPA MISTRY

Iyashi Bedrock Spa

Even though lying on stones might seem like roughing it, it's the basis of a treatment that has gripped the Land of the Rising Sun. Aiming to be more relaxing than rustic, Ganbanyoku – which means “bedrock bathing” in Japanese – is now available on this side of the world at Toronto’s Iyashi Bedrock Spa. There are no facials or massages at Iyashi, located just up the street from bustling Yonge and Eglinton, but the spa could be the cure-all to a cornucopia of woes.

“Ganbanyoku is about natural beauty and health coming together,” says Ryusuke Juge, Iyashi’s vice-president and co-founder, who discovered the treatment two-and-a-half years ago on a trip to Japan. Iyashi’s take consists of donning a custom-made robe and capri pants and lying on flat granite-inlaid black silica stones – imported from Hokkaido in northern Japan – in a humidity-saturated room heated between 44C to 46C. “Saunas heat the body from the outside,” he explains, “but the black silica experience penetrates to the bones and organs, helping to better circulation, metabolism and reset the immune system.”

Black silica’s natural properties emit infrared rays and anti-oxidizing negative ions that help dilate blood vessels and break down toxins in the blood stream. “All pressure points are also stimulated through the rock,” adds Juge, “meaning it can alleviate joint, muscle and nerve pain, migraines and menstrual camps.” Reclining on the stones allows heat to penetrate the body and exiting and re-entering the heated room at 10 to 15 minute intervals flexes the pores, allows for marathon sweating and results in dewy, smooth skin.

And detox is the biggest – or, at least, the most obvious –

benefit of Ganbanyoku. “As your metabolism rises you sweat from the sebaceous glands which produce oil to protect the skin,” explains Juge, who lost 19 pounds within the first three weeks of the spa opening. “So, one of the added benefits of this treatment is that the infrared rays and negative ions latch onto harmful metals that have created non-burnable fat and pull them away, allowing fat to burn and the metals to be detoxified through your pores.” He adds that the metabolic effect can be preserved post-sweat by keeping warm.

Iyashi itself is made up of two separate rooms, a 17-bed suite for women and four-bed suite for both sexes. Since its September 2008 opening the spa has seen a mix of men and women of all ages. Norma Percy, Iyashi’s media representative, says that the midtown location attracts a diverse clientele. “We’re seeing a lot of older people who have bone issues and are living with pain. It helps relax their bodies and minds, and even eases pain caused by stress,” she explains. “And there are also young, health-conscious professionals and athletes coming in to ease muscular aches.”

All of that good-for-you stuff aside: what if you’re just looking for a place that’s zen, or to zone-out with your girlfriends? Glass tables and cozy wicker chairs dot the suites, which are flooded with natural light, making it a great place to chat and sip green tea before heading into the heat. “It’s a great way to detox and socialize before or after a long event,” says Percy. “The heat leaves you incredibly relaxed and glowing.” **E**

Iyashi Bedrock Spa, 416-488-ROCK (7625)
iyashibedrockspa.com

JEFF JACKSON