



## **An oasis in an overworked world**

**Retreat Self-Care gives patrons peace in a hectic world, 20 minutes at a time.**

By Fred Ortega

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Calming New Age music fills your head. Botanical essences fill the air. A relaxing underwater seascape floats by, as your body is lightly massaged from head to toe.

This isn't a luxury day spa on a glass-bottomed yacht anchored off Maui. It is Retreat Self-Care, a new membership-based rest and relaxation center aimed at today's on-the-go white-collar worker and urbanite, based right here on Brand Boulevard in Glendale.

Retreat Self-Care features luxury massage chairs that provide back- and calf-massages customizable to each individual; zero-gravity reclining lounge chairs inspired by NASA for reading and relaxing; power-napping pods for a quick mid-day pick-me-up; and a full-body dry hydro massage capsule.

The center, at 330 N. Brand Blvd., Suite 220, is the brainchild of Kathy Geathers, a finance director at a Los Angeles-area hospital she declined to identify, who first noticed the need for rest and relaxation in today's busy world by watching her employees struggle to stay awake during corporate meetings.

"So she came up with the idea of a place where people could recharge, relax, and make their days more productive," said Geathers' daughter, Renee Geathers, who along with sister Michelle Geathers manages the day-to-day operations of the center, which had its grand opening Wednesday.

Retreat Self-Care overlooks the courtyard of one of downtown Glendale's high rises.

The view from the center's second-floor windows works well with Retreat Self-Care's unique concept, Michelle Geathers said.

"It helps promote the serene environment," she said. "We chose this site because of the windows and the view. It is really nice, during the day the waterfall in the courtyard trickles down and adds to the ambience."

For \$20 per 30-minute session, customers can use any of the center's state-of-the-art equipment. They are provided with Bose noise-canceling headphones connected to iPod shuffle players loaded with serene music.

"We tested a lot of products around the country before deciding on the equipment we chose, and not all of them made it," Kathy Geathers said.

"Our appointment periods are 20 minutes, plus a 10-minute adjustment period, because most people, after enjoying these machines, can't just get up and leave."

Each machine is sanitized between use, and a wide-variety of reading material is also provided, as well as primping mirrors and a selection of organic face and body products available for purchase before one heads back to the grind.

The machines are amazingly comfortable. Both the napping pods and zero-gravity loungers adjust to each person's preferred reclining position, and are designed to distribute weight so evenly that one actually feels like one is floating at times while sitting in them.

The napping pods gently wake their users with a slight vibration after each 20-minute period, though they can be set for shorter or longer durations.

"We set our machines at 20 minutes because that is the ideal duration to take a nap during the day," Renee Geathers said. "Any more than 20 minutes and you are likely to go into deep sleep, and wake up drowsy."

Studies show that getting away from the work environment for a few minutes each day greatly reduces stress, Kathy Geathers said.

"And stress contributes to a wide range of physical and emotional problems, from heart disease and insomnia to depression," she said.

Memberships for Retreat Self-Care range from \$90 a month for eight sessions to \$160 per month for 20 sessions with the Executive Package. Members also have access to the center's online reservation system, so they never have to wait for a machine.

Retreat Self-Care is open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information call (818) 552-2440 or visit [www.retreatselfcare.com](http://www.retreatselfcare.com).

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