

## WINNING WAYS

By Robyn Emde

# Setting New Standards

An award-winning skin therapy center lifts the face of the esthetics industry in Virginia.

PATIENTS AT IN YOUR OWN SKIN (iyos.com) in Virginia Beach, Virginia, enter the skin therapy center through a hallway drenched in muted browns, greens and gold, accented by antique wooden beams and a fresh variety of exotic orchids. Once settled in the tranquil waiting area, they soak their feet in a rose petal-infused bath before being escorted to their treatment rooms.

This unique and unforgettable experience is just one of the reasons the skin therapy center was awarded the Crystal Award at the 9th annual International Repêchage Spa de Beauté Congress. Held in August at the Lydia Saifati Post-Graduate Academy in Secaucus, New Jersey, co-founders Kim Thumel and L. Saphonia Gee graciously accepted the award during a special ceremony honoring the spa for its notable achievements, state lobbying efforts and community outreach. Thumel spoke with DAYSPA about what makes IYOS a winner.

**DS: What extraordinary characteristics make IYOS worthy of this award?**

**KT:** Saphonia and I believe that we've taken skincare to a new level. Aside from providing the highest quality skin therapy from master estheticians, we've recently taken an active role in raising esthetics-industry standards by crafting and lobbying a state bill. House Bill 2510 put a two-tiered licensing requirement in place for estheticians in the state of Virginia. We felt that the advanced technology of equipment in the industry demanded a highly monitored level of education and knowledge.

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Kim Thumel and L. Saphonia Gee

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impact on not just our patients, but on the entire industry.

We're also involved in our community through participation with not-for-profits, such as Susan G. Komen for the Cure, St. Jude's Hospital Telethon and St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children.

**DS: How has winning this award affected the center?**

**KT:** We've only been open since November 2005, so it's been encouraging for us to receive the Spa de Beauté award. So much planning, time, finance and emotion go into opening a new business, so it's awesome to be recognized for our success. Our vision goes far beyond what we've already done. This award gives us determination and renews our excitement for setting the standards in our industry.

**DS: Tell us more about In Your Own Skin.**

**KT:** We approach each patient's skin holistically, taking lifestyle, health, nutrition, exercise and family history into consideration. Each treatment is tailored for the patients' specific needs, and we give them a plan for taking care of their skin for the rest of their lives.

For our outpatient recovery center, we've partnered with physicians in the community that embody the same holistic philosophy we follow. The facility utilizes state-of-the-art technology, including a hyperbaric chamber. Our estheticians work closely with patients and physicians for the best possible recovery results—everything from cosmetic surgery to c-sections to burn traumas. •

Are you practicing Winning Ways at your spa—with the results to prove it? We want to hear about it! Contact us with your story at [remde@creativeage.com](mailto:remde@creativeage.com).