Environmental Commitment

Nusta Spa is the country's first LEED-certified day spa with a Gold certification for commercial interiors. Providing luxurious spa services for men and women, Nusta has been a pioneer in green building since its inception in 2004.

LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a rating system created by the U.S. Green Building Council to define and measure the standard for green building of commercial interiors. From the start, Nusta's vision has been to marry a sophisticated design concept with the highest standards of sustainability. With our eco-friendly interiors, organic product lines and other planet-friendly initiatives, an all-encompassing approach to healthy living is a top priority at Nusta Spa.

nusta spa

green plan
environmental efforts

location, location, location
Arrive at Nusta Spa via one of three nearby Metro stations: Dupont Circle, Farragut West, or Farragut North or via dedicated bike lanes on L and M streets. Save time and stress while reducing the air and water pollutants of vehicle exhaust.

clean air
During construction, we employed a sophisticated air filtration system to prevent exposure to harmful air-born particulates caused by the renovation. Before opening, we replaced the premium filters and adopted a plan for superior air change effectiveness. As an additional measure, we have carbon dioxide sensors to continuously monitor air quality and increase fresh-air intake based on occupancy levels.

comfort
A thermally comfortable environment supports the well-being of the spa staff and clients. We designed and installed an energy efficient heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system with controls for individual adjustment throughout the space. Specific controls in each treatment room accommodate personal preferences for temperature and airflow.

paints and adhesives
Most paints and adhesives contain Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)—carbon compounds that become a gas at room temperature. This off-gassing is potentially irritating and harmful to the installers and occupants of a space. We went to great lengths to research, find, and utilize eco-friendly paints, adhesives, and sealants that have limited or no VOCs, thus reducing the quantity of these harmful contaminants.

efficient lighting
The use of fluorescent bulbs, in lieu of the more typical incandescent bulbs, is an immense energy saver. Compact fluorescent lamps use 75% less energy and last 10 times as long as their incandescent counterparts. Also, incandescent bulbs emit heat, adding to cooling loads. Just think, an Easy-Bake® Oven cooks with just one 100W incandescent bulb!

appliances
The appliances (refrigerator, dishwasher, etc.) installed in the spa are Energy Star® compliant. Energy Star® is a government-backed program that helps businesses and individuals protect the environment through superior energy efficiency. In fact, with the use of compliant appliances, Americans have realized estimated savings of more than $239 billion on utility bills over the past two decades.

low mercury lamps
Mercury is an essential component of fluorescent lamps, however, it is a hazardous material. The lamps used in Nusta Spa have the lowest amounts of mercury on the market.

wood base
Instead of using virgin solid wood for the base, we used a wood-like base that is composed of wheat straw fiber, which renews annually.

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linoleum and rubber
The back-of-house support areas typically are finished with vinyl tile and vinyl base, which is known to release dangerous toxins. As an alternative, we specified linoleum flooring and rubber base, each made using natural raw materials.

salvaged ceiling
The tile ceiling in this area was salvaged during the demolition of another renovation project. Reduce, RE-USE, and recycle.

daylighting/sensors
The use of daylighting improves the indoor environment by exposing guests and staff to mood-enhancing natural light. Natural light also reduces the need for artificial lighting; modern buildings designed for daylighting typically use far less electricity for lighting needs than do conventional buildings. To further increase lighting efficiency, we have incorporated occupancy sensors to control the lamps.

recyclables
This area is dedicated to the collection, separation, and storage of materials for recycling, including paper, corrugated cardboard, glass, plastics, and metal. Creating convenient space to recycle is the most effective method for promoting this activity. Recycling one ton of paper prevents the processing of 17 trees.

bamboo
This use of bamboo throughout the spa helped us achieve both our aesthetic and environmental goals. Bamboo is a sustainable material due to its short harvest cycle. By requiring less land and time for harvest, rapidly renewable materials like bamboo reduce the depletion of finite resources.

carpet
The carpet used throughout the spa was designed specifically to raise the bar for "green" carpet. This carpet is composed of 100% recycled fibers and meets the Carpet and Rug Institute's Green Label Plus standards.

LED lighting
The relaxation room and treatment rooms feature highly efficient LED (light emitting diode) colored lighting. Steadily gaining popularity and new applications, LEDs require only a fraction of the electricity used by other forms of lighting and do not require the use of mercury or other dangerous gasses.

tile
We chose the ceramic tile in the wet areas for both aesthetic and performance criteria. With over 50% recycled content, products like this not only reduce waste from their own facility, but also create a market for waste materials that would otherwise go to a landfill.

built-in casework
We have employed a number of environmental strategies in the production of the built-in casework throughout the spa. The substrate or "core panel" has a very high recycled content. The veneer or "facing" of the casework is wood procured from eco-friendly forests. All of the millwork has been produced locally to reduce the environmental impact of long distance transportation.

old wood, new wall
This feature wall highlights our strategy of reusing salvaged materials. In its former life, the rustic oak reclaimed for this wall came from the beams of an old barn. Using existing materials reduces the demand on our natural resources and limits the production of waste.

wood floor
Using wood certified by the Forest Stewardship Council ensures that the product comes from well-managed sources. The wood used in the spa was bought from timber providers who monitor the long-term health of forests, wildlife habitats and clean air and water supplies.

partitions
The partitions in the spa are finished with a painted drywall that has an interesting and sustainable composition. The panels are made from a sandwich of synthetic gypsum covered on each side with 100% post-consumer recycled paper. The synthetic gypsum is actually benign residue reclaimed from the interior of smokestacks!

stone floor ▪ stone wall
The stone floor and stone wall were quarried within 500 miles of our location. It is environmentally beneficial to use regional materials. The use of local materials supports the regional economy and reduces environmental damage resulting from long distance transportation.

furniture
In conjunction with aesthetics, function, and ergonomic requirements, our furniture selections considered the supplier's environmental commitment. We chose to furnish the spa with classic pieces from companies at the forefront of the sustainable movement. Supporting these companies provides incentives for ecological practices in manufacturing.

welcome mat
Our entry way system was specifically designed to catch and hold dirt, thus limiting the intrusion of pollutants, allergens, and organic matter typically brought in through visitors' shoes.

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Our Methodology

Sustainable Design Using the LEED Rating System

There are many degrees and definitions of what constitutes a "green" project. We adopted a revolutionary, comprehensive standard for designing and building a spa that is a high-performance, environmentally sustainable facility. Our rating system, The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System was developed by the U.S. Green Building Council in an effort to define and measure sustainable design. Nusta Spa is the first and only spa accepted into the LEED Pilot Program for Commercial Interiors. Our participation in this pilot influenced decision-making throughout the design process regarding issues of location, energy efficiency, materials, air quality, and innovative design. We are proud that our facility has served as a model to educate and influence other environmentally responsible projects.

Where to Start

Cleaning Up the Site

Selecting the location for a new project can have a large environmental impact. Nusta Spa is a quick walk from the Metro, encouraging the use of public transportation, and thereby helping reduce auto emissions. Our location in a high-density urban district helps preserve existing construction in an environmentally responsible way. It was our goal to salvage and recycle as much as possible from previous tenants. Office equipment and furniture were donated to local non-profit organizations such as DC Central Kitchen, Dinner Program for Homeless Women, Sarah's Kitchen, DC Preparatory Academy, Second Chance, and The Loading Dock. Although the demolition debris proved much more challenging, through diligent sorting and organizing we managed to divert and recycle half of the construction waste.

Energy

Reduce Demand and Increase Efficiency

The harmful environmental effects of energy production are well documented: global warming, smog, acid rain, water contamination, respiratory illnesses, etc. Nusta Spa lessens its negative environmental impact by employing state-of-the-art mechanical equipment designed for high performance and increased energy efficiency. As a further measure, we have entered into a contract to continuously and professionally monitor our equipment to ensure peak operation. We have also reduced our energy consumption through the use of natural day-lighting, fluorescent lamps, LED lighting, occupancy sensors, and Energy Star appliances. Our mechanical system is free of ozone-harming CFC refrigerant, which supports our goals of health and comfort by permitting individual area control and advanced air filtration of air-born pollutants.

Materials

Educated Choices

Activities to extract, create, and transport building materials pollute the air and water, thereby destroying natural resources. In selecting new materials for the spa, we selected products with a high percentage of recycled content. In order to decrease transportation efforts, we gave priority to products form local sources. Rapidly renewable resources and certified wood from well-managed forests were also solutions for minimizing the impact to our natural environment.

Your Health and Comfort

Breath Easy

Surprisingly, most of our daily exposure to air pollutants comes through the inhalation of indoor air! We are familiar with the expression "sick-building syndrome," which is why we have taken all necessary steps to provide clean, fresh air. Our sophisticated mechanical system offers exceptional air changes, filtration and ventilation. We have also eliminated many common building materials prone to releasing harmful contaminants.

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