

Expansion Persists for 'Soothe' Mobile Massage-On-Demand

By Merilee Kern

We've all had them. Those days that start off perfectly fine and then take a hard left turn onto the stress superhighway. On these rough days in particular, there's nothing like a relaxing massage to calm your nerves and alleviate anxiety. But, all too often we don't know in advance we're going to have a "bad day" and, thus, didn't have the foresight to make a therapeutic massage appointment at the spa, which is surely booked solid weeks in advance. Indeed, unless you'd thought to book an appointment well ahead of time, that post-workday or workout massage is going to have to wait until the spa has an opening. Happily, one company has set out to change all of that: Soothe. This emerging mobile massage-on-demand service allows consumers to quickly and easily book a professional spa-quality massage at their home, hotel or other location of choice via a smartphone APP or online with as little as 60 minutes advance notice.

Soothe is the brainchild of tech entrepreneur, Merlin Kauffman, who founded and now operates the endeavor. The idea came to Kauffman when, after a long stressful day of traveling, he wanted a massage but was frustrated by the fact that he couldn't book an appointment on such short notice. And so lit the spark now known as Soothe, which first opened in Los Angeles and is reportedly now the largest massage provider in that region. The company subsequently expanded into additional service areas, including Orange County, Phoenix, Scottsdale, Austin, Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, Palm Beach and now San Diego.

Later this year Soothe has its sights set on launching in Washington D.C., Chicago, San Francisco and New York to offer its brand of mobile massage therapy throughout these major metros. From there, Soothe plans to continue rolling out services in every major U.S. city within the next 24 months and will notify

those who register online or through the APP via email as soon as services become available.

"Soothe's uniqueness lies in its ability to connect the client to an available therapist who can quickly come to the client's location and deliver five-star service at an affordable price," Kauffman explains. Soothe has created a hassle-free experience for the customer with no guesswork, even including taxes and gratuity for the therapist in the service price when scheduling the appointment. And, the convenience of a well-trained massage therapist coming to your home, hotel or other suitable location sure beats fighting traffic to get to and from a spa location after a long, hard day.

So how does it work? Just install the Soothe APP on your smartphone or visit the www.Soothe.com Web site on a computer, tablet or other Internet-enabled device. After signing up or logging in, simply choose the desired appointment date and time, the type of massage you want (Swedish, deep tissue, sports or couples using any of these styles), the length and cost of the session (60 minutes for \$99, 90 minutes for \$139 or 120 minutes for \$169) and the desired gender of the massage therapist. You can also input comments, if any, such as a special request for a specific therapist. You then enter the location address and any parking information necessary. Once you enter your payment detail, either using a credit card or a gift certificate, the appointment is booked and a confirmation email is sent. Appointments are available seven days a week from 10am to 10pm and, in some locations, from 9am to midnight.

One of the reasons Soothe's

services are so affordable, even with gratuity bundled in, is because the spa operator is taken out of the equation. After speaking with a number of therapists, Kauffman learned that out of a \$120-plus session, spas were only paying therapists about \$35. With Soothe, therapists reportedly make about twice the industry standard and are empowered to make a better life for themselves. It's a win-win for the business, the therapists and Soothe clientele.

In addition to individual or couples massages, services are also available for corporate and special events. A team of therapists can be booked for chair massage services for a specific number of hours. This is ideal for offices or other corporate locations. For personal massages in a private home or hotel room, Soothe does also keep safety top of mind. The company employs a network of 650 licensed and insured massage therapists who have all undergone thorough vetting, including passing background checks conducted by state investigators. And, the skills of the Soothe workforce are sure to be top-notch as the company interviews all therapists in person and hires only highly trained and qualified personnel who have a track record of excellent customer satisfaction.

As a self-professed massage connoisseur with years of "research" under my proverbial belt, I can attest not only to the ease and expedience of Soothe's booking engine, but also the proficiency and aptitude of its therapists. In my own deep tissue massage session, it was apparent that the technician was highly experienced and knowledgeable as she adeptly located and resolved various myofascial trigger points (i.e., painful muscle knots in key areas of the anatomy) that had been causing me chronic discomfort and stiffness.

With its simple booking system that offers same-day appointments amid extended operating hours and a team of well-trained massage therapists at-the-ready, it's no wonder Soothe customers post rave reviews and stellar ratings. This is mobile massage-on-demand made easy and affordable as compared to the typical spa price for the same exact treatment that's far less convenient. All things considered, Soothe just rubs the right way.





The beach at One Ocean Resort

RIGHT
The docents of One Ocean Resort

BELOW-RIGHT
The Spa at One Ocean Resort



T rue confession: A few times a year, I drive 20 minutes from my home and spend a few nights at a luxury boutique hotel. It may sound crazy to some, but I get to wake up at the most beautiful beach in all of Florida.

But there's another reason I indulge myself with this excursion. Quite simply, it's to be pampered. I'm a big fan of *Downton Abbey* and I often joke that I need a lady's maid, my own personal attendant. Breakfast in bed doesn't happen often in my house (okay, it's never happened) but at my favorite resort in Atlantic Beach, I have my own personal concierge who will greet me at my door each morning with hot coffee and my favorite newspaper.

One Ocean Resort & Spa, located on Atlantic Beach in North Florida, prides itself on "intuitive service" by providing guests their own private concierges, or, as they call them, docents. Just as a docent in a museum is required to have broad knowledge of art to meet visitors' interests, docents at One Ocean Resort get to know each guest's individual tastes in order to provide world-class, personalized service.

Another true confession: I can call my docent (from the beach) and have him or her draw a relaxing candlelit bath for me with a glass of my favorite wine waiting tub-side. Recently

