

The Well of Energy

The Well in Clerkenwell is the latest addition to London's spa scene. Giselle Whiteaker checks out this new urban healing hotspot.





Walk along Farringdon Lane in Clerkenwell and, through a window in Wells Court, you can catch a glimpse of the Clerks' Well. In the Middle Ages, the London Parish clerks performed annual mystery plays here, based on biblical themes. Now though, a new well has come to Clerkenwell. The Well, inside concept store Clerkenwell London, is set to be a wellbeing hub for the area, fast gaining popularity since opening a few short weeks ago.

Early for my pedicure appointment, I find myself browsing through the eclectic mix of design, fashion and furniture in Clerkenwell London created by niche and established designers, creatives and artisans. It's a fascinating warren of design-led conceptual spaces, each room curated within a theme, showcasing ceramics, textiles, stationery, hand-crafted jewellery and an in-house perfumery, amongst other things. It's easy to while away time here, just admiring the collection.

The Well is tucked downstairs in a quiet corner, opposite the moodily lit piano lounge. The sage-green walls are immediately soothing and my therapist, Emily, guides me to a deep, cushy seat, upholstered with a bespoke "Clerkenwell" fabric print, part of a collaboration with textile designer Charlotte Frances London. I sink into the chair and immediately feel like I'm at home.

Moments later, Emily returns with a copper basin to soak my feet in warm

water, made opaque by the addition of Bamford's Epsom salts, the subtle blended scent of lavender and geranium rising through the air. Home-grown British brand Bamford is well-known by skincare connoisseurs for their delicious products made from pure botanical ingredients, and The Well's massages use both the products and the Bamford techniques. I make a note to book in for the Bamford Full Body Exfoliation on my next visit.

Bamford is not the only high-performance brand in evidence at The Well.

cosy, and that friend just happens to be trained in aesthetics and happy to scrub my feet, trim and treat my toenails, massage my legs, and paint my nails a beautiful dusky grape colour called "Chloe".

It feels like I've stepped out of the bustle of ordinary life into a space that's relaxing and welcoming, without labouring the point. The Well is not one of those spas where people speak in whispers and tranquil music is piped in. It's more of a friendly haven; a place to pop in, perhaps with a friend, as a little indulgence to

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Circ-Cell Skincare products are used for the range of facials on offer and the superb CosMedix range is used for peels. Even the nail polishes by Kure Bazaar are 85% natural. This all ties in neatly with the natural elements in The Well's décor: rattan, pebbles and birch wood.

With my feet immersed, Emily hands me samples of Kure Bazaar's polish colours so I can make a selection and slips away to arrange my coffee order, a steaming, strong latte delivered within minutes from 155 Bar and Kitchen upstairs. I feel like I'm lounging in a friend's apartment, comfortable and

get you through the week. I'm enjoying this far too much to leave, so I book an impromptu 20-minute LED light therapy session to rejuvenate my skin while my nails dry.

LED light therapy is based on research by NASA that shows that certain frequencies of light trigger the body to convert light energy into cell energy, increasing new tissue growth, stimulating collagen production and reducing fine lines and wrinkles. It also increases vitamin D and serotonin production, and has healing and anti-inflammatory properties. It's basically doing

the sun's job, but without the harmful UV rays and potential skin damage.

Lying on the treatment bed, a bolster propped under my knees, Emily rolls the LED light stand into position over my face and shoulders. The bright lights are dazzling, even with my eyes closed, and they gently warm my face as I dream of lying on a soft, sandy beach, waves lapping my toes, bathed in sunshine. When the light fades at the end of the allocated time, I'm almost disappointed, but opening my eyes, everything looks that little bit sharper. I can sense a vibrancy in the air, or perhaps

it's within me, and looking in the mirror, my skin is radiant. The effect is immediate, although Emily assures me I'll see more results over the next 24 to 48 hours.

Walking down the street, there's a joyful bounce in my step and I vow to find the time to make this part of my monthly routine. Time at The Well is time well-spent.

For more information about The Well and Clerkenwell London, see clerkenwell-london.com.

