

examiner.com

Fit for the Dali Lama, new spa opens at mountain retreat near Manhattan



Bernard Burt
DC Spa Guide Examiner

December 11, 2013

Nestled in a vast mountain preserve north of New York City, the Menla Mountain Retreat has a new healing spa inspired by Buddhist traditions and funded by the father of actress Uma Thurman.

Designed by New York-based Clodagh, the new Mahasukha Spa is a mind-body experience. Irish-born Clodagh uses only her first name, has made a name for herself by masterminding interiors that emanate an earthy, spiritual calm. And she has long been a proponent of the view that good design can (and should) enhance wellbeing.

The impetus for Mahasukha spa was none other than the Dalai Lama, who stayed at Menla and confided in owner Robert Thurman (also Professor of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Studies at Columbia University and father to actress Uma Thurman) that his dream for Tibet, at one time known as the "Land of Medicine" by its neighbors, is to forge an economy based on healing, similar to the way in which Switzerland is associated with health spas.

Spurred by this, Thurman and his wife Nena von Schlebrügge sought someone who would understand—and translate visually—their vision for Menla. Enter Clodagh, who jumped on board by donating her skills pro bono, calling on vendor friends such as Kohler and Ann Sacks to gift materials and product to the project.

The result is one of understated tranquility: a mix of handcrafted silk tapestries, Eastern antiques, oversized lanterns and solid-wood furnishings that functions in perfect harmony with its purpose. Not to mention the altruism behind the project is surely the best kind of karma.

Menla is located about 4 hours north from NYC and it is nestled in lush greenery with total serenity and peace. Menla is operated on a non-profit basis by Tibet House US. Accommodations range from cottages to shared room for 4. They also have a separate yoga studio.

Go on hikes with new friends; the view is well worth it. But make sure you are cardiovascular fit or it will feel like torture.

Amenities include:

- sauna
- swimming pool
- outdoor tennis courts (2)
- bookstore and cafe
- fitness center
- nature trails

Menla Mountain Retreat Center for Health and Happiness
Pantherkill Road
Phoenicia, NY 12464
(845) 688-6897
www.Menla.org