

Windows Get Spa Treatment for a Change

By STAFF AT THE ALTERNATIVE PRESS

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On entering the Spa at Little River, the first thing one notices is the beautiful space lit by oversized windows lining every wall. But owner Lorelei Germain knew that the windows, dating back to the 1840s, were not in perfect shape. Rather than replacing the windows with new imitations, Germain decided to treat her heritage windows to some TLC. Just as she is working wonders for her spa guests, she is turning to Open Window Restoration to give the spa treatment to her windows.

Marybeth Robb of Open Window Restoration says she is thrilled to work with an owner who recognizes the value of heritage wood windows. “So many owners don’t realize that original wood windows, paired with a good storm window, are just as energy efficient as replacements, and restoration is almost always less expensive,” Robb noted. “And with proper care, these wood windows will last centuries because the old-growth timber used to make them is naturally strong and rot-resistant. Newer windows just don’t stand up by comparison. “

Open Window was founded by Robb and fellow Summit resident Karen Kaplan, who joined forces with contractor Bob VanBenschoten of Cranford. They met Germain and The Spa at Little River through Ken Roginski, better known as The Old House Guy. “These windows were built during the ‘federalist’ period in the early days of our nation, and they are typical of the period. The mullions separating each pane of glass are very thin and delicate. This look would be impossible to duplicate with a replacement window,” says Roginski. He is consulting with Germain on a phased approach to restoring the 190-year-old structure.

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Germain, a successful business woman and owner of Lorelei Staffing Solutions, had owned the building for several years. When the previous tenant left, she saw an opportunity to create a destination spa in the wonderful brick building. “I want to provide people from all walks of life an opportunity to leave their cares, even if for only a few hours or a day, and then return to their responsibilities refreshed and relaxed. Many people find it difficult to take the time for a vacation, but a few hours for a massage or facial can be deeply renewing.”

Renewing wood windows requires a different “spa treatment,” of course: removing the sashes, chipping away old paint and glazing putting, repainting, glazing, and replacing broken panes, and rehangng the windows with new rope. “When we re-rope the sashes, Lorelei will be able to open the windows and enjoy spring breezes anytime she and her guests like,” says Robb. “And restoring the windows is also the greenest approach because we’re keeping these beautiful antiques out of a landfill.”

All of this is good news for the guests and the windows of the Spa at Little River. Both are getting an unforgettable spa treatment.

The Spa at Little River is open seven days a week, Monday through Friday, 9 am- 9 pm; Saturday, 9 am- 5 pm; and Sunday 10 am – 5 pm, for massage therapy, facials and skin care, waxing and body treatments. 330 Old Bridge Turnpike, South River, NJ 08882 **Phone:** 732-257-1600

The Old House Guy, Ken Roginski, provides thoughtful and practicable advice on maintaining your old home. See his website for inspiring photos and informative explanations: www.oldhouseguy.com

Open Window Restoration aims to help homeowners retain their original wood windows and believes that preserving original wood windows is the frugal, green and gorgeous