

## Foot Delight - Reflexology in Orinda

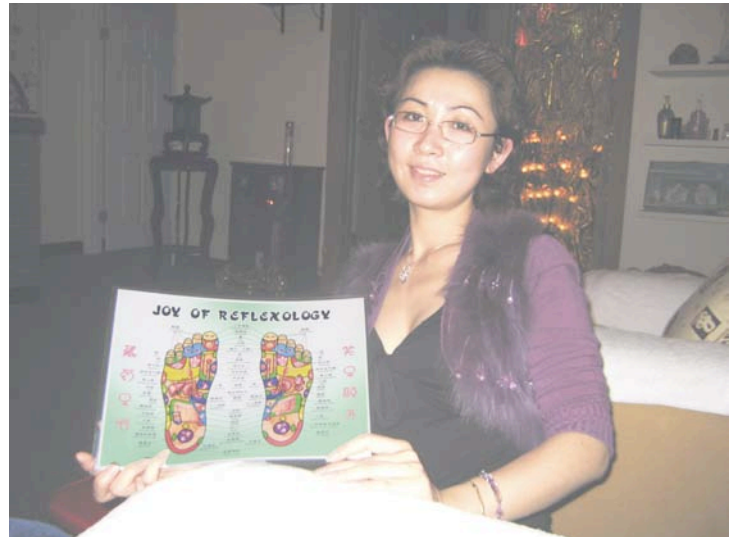
By Sophie Braccini

“Wonderful Spa Center” opened a few days ago in Orinda. Located at 23 Orinda Way, Suite N, the Center offers full body massages and foot reflexology, a technique that claims to promote better health and increase longevity. I made an appointment with a friend to experience the benefits of reflexology.

As we entered, it was clear this was not your average spa. The first thing I noticed was the sweet fragrance that filled the air. Also making the place different was a large TV playing karaoke CDs in front of the massage chairs. We were told it could be turned off. However, the first mixed feeling quickly receded as the real efficiency of reflexology started operating. My friend and I became totally oblivious of Sharon Stone’s exhibition on the screen as we drifted into deeper relaxation.

Reflexology is a technique that has been used in the ancient Chinese, Japanese, Indian, and Egyptian cultures. They all treat the feet as a means of promoting good health and preventing disease. The Orinda spa follows the ancient tradition. The session started with the immersion of the feet in a bucket of hot water. As the extremities were soaking, General, the masseuse who took care of me, energetically massaged my scalp, neck, shoulders and face before moving to my well-soaked feet. Totally peaceful in a deep reclining chair, kept warm under a blanket, my friend and I were offered tea, nuts and fruits as part of the treatment.

General arrived in America from Beijing five years ago and his English is still a bit limited. He had been training in reflexology in China for two and a half years and completed his education in Los Angeles. The first spa was opened with his sister in San Rafael two years ago, the second one in Orinda in mid-January. Michelle, the charming young person who answers the phone, masters conversational English better and tells more about the story of the technique and its effect. “You can feel which part of your body is not healthy when you apply gentle pressure,” she explains, “if the surface is smooth, it’s good, if you can feel little bumps, there is a blockage and by massaging the area you release the obstruction.” Since reflexology treats the whole person, not the symptoms of disease, most people benefit from the treatment. It is also a preventative therapy that helps to maintain good health as well as being a pleasurable experience. The therapy claims to bring relief to a wide range of acute and chronic conditions including: stress, back,



Michelle, from Wonderful Spa Center, explains how each part of the body can be affected by massaging a specific spot of the foot Photo Sophie Braccini

neck and shoulder pain, migraines, hay fever, arthritis, anxiety, depression, poor circulation, thyroid conditions, emotional disharmony, menopausal symptoms and insomnia. “A simple way to relax for people who have trouble falling asleep,” explains Michelle, “is to soak the feet in a bucket of hot water for 30 minutes. You can apply pressure yourself to the right zones, too.” She showed me the foot reflexology map; quite complex indeed!

We left the Center relaxed and in a great light mood. Something definitely happened there. Why reflexology works is still a mystery. Many explanations have been offered: The Nerve Impulse Theory, The Placebo Effect, Impeded and Unimpeded Energy Flow Theory, Subtle Energy/Zone/Meridian Theories, The Holographic Principle and many others. The important point is that regardless of how and why it works, Reflexology brings benefits to thousands of people. If you want to give it a try, it will cost you \$60 for an hour of treatment or \$35 for a half hour; 925-258-1888.