



EXHALE SPA COMING TO ATLANTA

One of the country's hottest health spas is coming to 12th & Midtown

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By Lisa Schoolcraft

One of the country's hottest health spas is coming to Atlanta. Exhale will open in July at the new 12th & Midtown development. Its current spas include locations off Central Park and in the Hamptons in New York; Palm Beach, Fla.; Venice and Santa Monica, Calif.; Miami; Boston; Dallas and Chicago's "Gold Coast."

Known for its group fitness classes that include its proprietary Core Fusion, Core Fusion Sport and Core Fusion Yoga classes, exhale's entrance in Atlanta marks years of work, said exhale founder and CEO Annbeth Eschbach.

"We're not a gym," she said. "We're not a spa. We integrate multiple healing, spa, well-being and fitness disciplines so people can be exposed to all different things."

"All of our locations are premium. I was looking for the same in Atlanta. I spent a lot of time looking for the spot-on location. I think 12th & Midtown is the perfect place for our concept. It's the right demographic for exhale."

The \$2 billion mixed-use project has already landed Crate & Barrel's CB2 concept and New York steakhouse STK.

Landing exhale was a stretch.

"This has been a journey to get them here," said Ray Uttenhove, executive vice president and managing principal of SRS Real Estate Partners-Southeast LLC in Atlanta, who represented exhale. "They are very selective. They have been looking at this market for over five years. They are pursued heavily and they only do a few spots."

There is a real cachet about exhale, Uttenhove said. "People who have experienced this tend to be very trend-conscious," she said. Exhale tends to go to "sophisticated, knowledgeable and fashion-forward markets."

The spa will be on the second level of retail space at 11th and Peachtree streets, between the Loews Atlanta Hotel and the 38-story 1075 Peachtree office tower. Exhale plans to take 22,000 square feet.



“They are the best spa in the country,” said Steve Selig, president of Atlanta-based Selig Enterprises Inc., which is developing 12th & Midtown along with Daniel Corp., MetLife and Canyon Johnson Urban Funds. “They have a cult-like following. Their customers are very loyal to them.”

Exhale’s entrance in Atlanta “says Atlanta has grown up,” said Cici Coffee, CEO and founder of Atlanta-based Natural Body Spa & Shoppe, which has 11 metro Atlanta locations and 11 outside Georgia. “It speaks to our growth, [that] exhale had us on their radar.

“I think it is great they are coming,” she said. “They are putting Atlanta on the map as a consumer of more health and wellness choices.”

Founded in 2003, New York-based exhale expects to have 21 locations this year, including a second location in South Florida.

Its Atlanta location will be the largest in the chain, Eschbach said.

The gym, at 7,000 square feet, will also be the largest in the chain. It will also have 15 to 20 therapy rooms for massage, detoxification programs and acupuncture. Other spa services include facials, manicures and skin care.

“It’s an amenity for the hotel and the office building, but we think it will also be a retail draw by itself,” said Shirley Gouffon, Selig Enterprises’ senior vice president of real estate.

And unlike a spa, where customers may only go once in a while, “people go three to four times a week” to the exercise classes, she said. “People get addicted. That’s why we went after exhale rather than any other spa in the country.”

Debbie Dermer, a founder and former co-owner of Crème de la Crème chain of pre-schools, just visited exhale in Santa Monica and recalls “There were mostly young, hip, business people,” she said.

Dermer said she overheard classmates talking about taking classes in New York and Los Angeles.

“It has a following,” she said of exhale. “They have a lot of classes and at a variety of times, which is great for travelers.”

Fitness has changed over the past 10 years, said Missi Wolf, co-owner of Blast900, a boutique fitness center with locations in Buckhead, Johns Creek and Dunwoody.



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“It’s all about how fast can I get in, how fast can I get out, and how cheaply can I do it,” said Wolf, who also expects to open a new location in Midtown.

“I do strictly fitness, and Atlanta is pretty much at capacity for fitness,” she said. “But [exhale] is a little different because it is lifestyle.”