Stillwater Day Spa — Business Plan

Day spa in Asheville, NC · Startup plan

Executive summary

Stillwater Day Spa is a new day spa in Asheville, NC offering swedish, deep-tissue and prenatal massage; facials, peels and skincare treatments; body scrubs, wraps and waxing; and spa packages, couples treatments and gift cards. The model is a few calm rooms kept booked by licensed therapists, memberships that bring clients back monthly, and gift cards that carry the quiet months.

Startup budget: $165,400 across 12 items, funded from savings. Target: $22,000 in monthly sales.

Twelve months from now, success looks like this: Three treatment rooms booked 70% of open hours, a hundred members on a monthly massage or facial plan, and gift-card sales carrying December

Products and services

Stillwater Day Spa's core treatment is swedish, deep-tissue and prenatal massage. The menu is short and priced clearly, rooms turn in ten minutes with fresh linens and a warm table, and every client leaves with the next appointment booked and a product they can take home.

- Swedish, deep-tissue and prenatal massage
- Facials, peels and skincare treatments
- Body scrubs, wraps and waxing
- Spa packages, couples treatments and gift cards

Market analysis

The customers are locals who treat a monthly massage or facial as maintenance, couples and bridal parties booking a package, visitors looking for a spa near their hotel, and gift-card buyers at every holiday.

- Locals who book a monthly massage or facial as maintenance, not a treat
- Couples, bridal parties and friends booking a package for a birthday or a wedding weekend
- Visitors and hotel guests looking for a spa near where they're staying
- Gift-card buyers at the holidays, Mother's Day and Valentine's Day

Marketing strategy

Most clients will find Stillwater Day Spa on Google and through word of mouth — searching for a spa or a massage near them, then following the friend who came back glowing. Reviews on the Google Business Profile, the space on Instagram and a website with the treatment menu, online booking and gift cards turn that into a booked room.

- Google Business Profile and Google Maps — “spa near me”, “massage near me” and “facial” plus your city
- Word of mouth — a client who leaves relaxed tells the friend who needs it most
- Instagram for the space, the treatments and seasonal packages
- Hotels, wedding planners and nearby salons and gyms that refer their guests and members
- A website with your treatment menu, prices, online booking, gift cards and reviews

Operations plan

The owner works a room in year one, runs online booking with deposits, keeps every license and inspection current, sells memberships and gift cards all year, and adds therapists only as room-hours fill and the pricing covers their share.

- Online booking with a deposit or a card on file so a no-show doesn't empty a room for an hour
- Every therapist and esthetician licensed by the state, with licenses displayed as the board requires
- Treatment rooms turned in ten minutes: fresh linens, a warm table, the next client's intake already read
- Memberships that bank a treatment a month, and gift cards sold all year and pushed hard from November
- Backbar and retail from one or two professional skincare lines, with therapists retailing what they used

Startup costs

What it will take to open the doors, funded from savings.

Startup costs

ITEM	AMOUNT
Build-out: treatment rooms, plumbing, soundproofing, lighting, relaxation area	$85,500
Lease deposit and first months' rent	$12,500
Equipment: massage tables, facial beds, steamers, towel cabinets, wax warmers	$15,000
Opening backbar and retail order from one or two professional skincare lines	$6,500
Linens, robes, towels, slippers and a commercial washer and dryer	$4,000
Signage, branding and interior styling	$3,750
General liability and professional liability insurance (first year)	$2,000
State establishment license, massage and esthetics licenses, and inspections	$850
Business registration, LLC and local business license	$300
Booking, gift-card and membership software (first year)	$0
Website with online booking and Google Business Profile	$0
Working capital (first three months)	$35,000
Total	**$165,400**

Typical range to start a day spa in the US: $42,800–$291,200. Your list is what you decided to spend — replace estimates with real quotes as you get them. Booking, gift-card and membership software (first year): Your Zarla plan includes online booking, gift cards, invoicing and a client contact list with the website — you may still want a point-of-sale system at the front desk. Website with online booking and Google Business Profile: Your Zarla plan includes the website with online booking and gift cards and walks you through your Google Business Profile.

Financial plan

The numbers below come from your own startup list and typical monthly costs for a day spa in the US. The build-out and the lease are the fixed bet; room-hours booked and the therapists' share decide whether the reserve lasts until the spa is busy.

Typical monthly operating costs for a day spa: $3,600–$27,830 a month, before the owner's own pay.

At $22,000 in monthly sales, Stillwater Day Spa would clear up to $18,400 a month before owner pay and tax if costs stay near the low end of the typical range, and recover the $165,400 startup budget in

roughly 9 months. At the high end of typical costs ($27,830) that target doesn't cover them — so the cost list, not the sales target, is the number to pin down first.

Typical monthly operating costs

COST	TYPICAL RANGE
Rent and utilities	$2,500–$8,000
Labor (once you hire therapists, estheticians and front desk)	$0–$15,000
Backbar product, oils, wax, linens and laundry	$400–$1,500
Insurance	$100–$300
Booking, gift-card and membership software (included with Zarla)	$0–$330
Marketing, seasonal packages and social content	$300–$1,500
Card processing on treatments and gift cards	$200–$800
Music licensing, tea, water, candles and room amenities	$100–$400

US ranges for a small operation; replace with your own figures as you learn them. Lines marked (included with Zarla) are what those tools cost separately — with Zarla they are part of one monthly plan.

Risks and honest downsides

Every day spa plan should say out loud what can go wrong. For Stillwater Day Spa, the real risks are:

- Therapists are the product — they leave, take clients with them, and licensed ones are hard to hire everywhere
- A no-show empties a room for an hour you can't resell; deposits and a card on file are the only defense
- Rent runs every day while rooms sit empty on a Tuesday afternoon
- Gift cards are cash now and a liability later — sell them without planning for the redemptions and spring gets tight
- Discount sites train customers to wait for a deal; a spa that lives on them never builds full-price regulars

Licenses, permits and insurance

What Stillwater Day Spa needs before it can legally trade in the US. Rules vary by state and city — confirm each item with your local licensing office and an accountant.

- State massage therapy license — Most US states license massage therapists — 500 hours in Texas, 1,000 hours in New York, a voluntary 500-hour state certificate in California where cities keep their own permit power — and ABMP lists four states with no state license at all (Kansas, Minnesota, Vermont, Wyoming). Every therapist on your table must hold the license your state requires.
- State esthetician license — The states we read license estheticians through their cosmetology boards for facials, peels and waxing — 750 hours in Texas, 600 hours in California, 220 hours to register as a facial specialist in Florida — and draw the line at medicine: no lasers, no injections, no medium or deep peels.
- Establishment license — Texas, Florida and California license the spa itself as a salon or spa establishment, and separately as a massage establishment where massage is offered, with an inspection; Florida's massage establishment needs a designated manager who practices there. Some California cities add a police-department massage permit — check yours before signing a lease.
- Local business license and certificate of occupancy — From your city or county in most of the US; the build-out's plumbing, ventilation and sanitation get inspected before you open.
- Gift-card rules — In the US federal law bars an expiry earlier than five years after issue or the last load and bars dormancy fees, and some states go further — California allows no expiry at all. Write your gift-card terms to your state's rules.
- Insurance and music licensing — General liability plus professional liability for every therapist and esthetician, workers' compensation once you have employees (from one employee in California, four in Florida), and performance licenses for the music playing in your rooms.

Milestones: the next 30 days

The first month's to-do list for Stillwater Day Spa, in order:

- Confirm your own massage or esthetician license and find out what the establishment license and inspection require
- Walk former spa, salon and massage spaces before committing to a fresh build-out
- Register the business, get an EIN and open a business bank account
- Get general and professional liability quotes and check your state's gift-card rules
- Choose one or two professional skincare lines and price the opening backbar and retail order
- Set up a free Google Business Profile and put your website with online booking and gift cards live
- Pre-sell founding memberships to your first 30 clients before opening day
- Ask every client for a Google review while they're still relaxed at the front desk

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Appendix: what a lender will ask for

This plan tells the story and shows the numbers. If you take it to a bank, expect to be asked for these documents as well:

- Two years of personal tax returns and a personal financial statement
- A month-by-month 12-month cash-flow projection built on room-hours booked and the therapists' share, not a full book from day one
- The lease or letter of intent, and quotes for the build-out and equipment
- Your massage or esthetics license and any history of a full book at a previous spa
- Founding-membership pre-sales and any hotel or wedding-planner referral agreements
- Your credit report and the equipment as collateral

Sample plan for a fictional business, written by Zarla's free business plan generator. Every figure is a typical US range or calculated from the sample's own numbers — nothing is a market projection. Make it yours in five questions: zarla.com/business-plan-generator?industry=spa

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