

Luxurious, Affordable, Fun - Soak Nail Spa and Lounge has it All

WRITTEN BY SUSAN M. BOTICH



When Shannon Dunlap and her husband, Darin, decided to start up a new business, they knew exactly what kind of business would fit perfectly into the Reno lifestyle – an all-natural spa and lounge that offers nail and skin treatments.

“We’re both originally from Reno,” says Shannon. “My expertise comes from having had pedicures for years and years,” she laughs. “It’s something that I enjoyed. We both thought that this idea was a great concept.”

Shannon has a Nevada teaching credential and has many years of classroom experience under her belt, which adds up to a lot of spontaneous, creative ideas on how to make a place fun as well as functional.

“My husband and I have always been entrepreneurial,” Shannon says. The two work to combine classroom skills with creativity.

The Soak Lounge

“Reno offers the flexibility to couple a liquor license with the spa,” says Shannon. She says it was a long road, but she wanted to be able to offer clients the benefits of a full liquor license. “We don’t have a traditional bar. We offer wine and champagne, margaritas and our signature



has mangoes and passion fruit. My husband created it.” Soak also offers various specialty drinks that change to match the seasons.

She adds that during the holidays they’ll offer cranberry cosmopolitans, and that although the wine selection will regularly change, they’ll always offer a red and a white.

Throughout the day, music plays in the background to add to the overall atmosphere – mellow, relaxing music in the mornings and something a bit more fun in the evenings. “We keep it current and offer different types of music,” says Shannon. “We make sure the music is ambiance but will never blast you out of the place.”

Everyone’s Welcome

Shannon says Soak strives to be a haven for individual clients who just want relaxing manicures or pedicures amid their otherwise busy days and also an ideal party place for groups that want to try something new for a particular celebration.

“We have moms, retirees, nurses, lawyers, book clubs and bachelorette parties,” she says. “We have bridesmaids treating the bride to a pedicure or manicure before the wedding. We have moms with little girls. For young girls, we offer the Little Miss Pedicure. We serve sparkling cider in a fancy glass. It’s really fun.”

For moms who have young children, Soak also has a playroom available. Customers are just asked to call ahead to make arrangements for their children to stay there.



"I'm not aware of another spa like this in Reno," Shannon says. "You can drink tea and relax here. Our prices are closer to something you'd find in a mall or superstore — those quick in-and-out type of nail places. But our spa experience is closer to high-end. Our concept is to provide a classy, comfortable, fun, clean experience without the cost. It's the day spa without having to spend the day or the dollars."

Nothing Artificial

Soak doesn't do artificial nails, although they do offer gel pedicures per client request. "We like to listen to what people like and want," says Shannon. "But we don't want the smell of artificial nails. Everything we do here is natural."

One of Soak's nail technicians, Robin Grissin, has been a nail tech for 15 years. "I enjoy working at Soak because the atmosphere is unique, the cleanliness is of the highest standard, and we have a lot of parties that are a lot of fun," she says.

"We have chic Italian leather reclining lounge chairs with silk pillows," adds Shannon. "We do the manicures in those chairs. Our pedicures are done in the traditional bowl style with rocks, lemon or lime in the water for the soak, a sugar-lime scrub and lemon lotion massage with a hot towel bath. The pedicure comes with our Pink Drink, a margarita or a toe design [for those who don't want a drink]."

Clean and Relaxed

Soak client and Reno resident Marissa Francovich says her

[OPPOSITE] Shannon Dunlap, along with her husband Darin, are proud to offer Northern Nevadans day spa services at in-and-out nail places prices.

[LEFT] Soak offers traditional bowl-style pedicures. Photos by Ken McGrath.

"Anything that can't be sterilized, we wrap in a cute little bag and give to our clients to take home."

favorite treatment is the pedicure. "They do a great job," she says. "All their technicians are highly trained. But the most important thing to me is how clean they are. When you leave they give you the file and scrubber for your feet. Nothing is reused. It's so clean."

"We're very focused on sanitation and cleanliness," Shannon says. "All our utensils are bagged for each client. Anything that can't be sterilized, we wrap in a cute little bag and give to our clients to take home."

Gifts and Goodies Galore

Shannon's teaching experience along with Darin's business concepts have brought dimension to Soak that other spas don't have, according to Shannon. Plus, Soak sells several products in their retail section, including handbags from a Park City, Utah designer; locally made jewelry; flip-flops for freshly painted toes and other great gift items.

"When you visit Soak, you can also walk away with a nice gift for someone else — or yourself," says Shannon. "At Soak, we want to pamper you without making you poor." **R**

For more information, call 324-7399 or visit www.soak-lounge.com.

Susan M. Botich is currently working as a freelance writer for magazines and news publications throughout northwestern Nevada. She enjoys being natural and being pampered.