

**Client:** Piaf Salon & Day Spa  
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Just the exquisite thought of spending a few relaxing hours in a luxurious day spa seems terribly indulgent in our busy lives. But ironically, it's our hectic modern lifestyle, that makes the day spa experience essential if we're serious about improving our quality of life.

For thousands of years and across almost every culture, meditation, massage and visualisation have been vital elements to a healthy, balanced life and the pursuit of overall happiness and wellbeing. It's only natural then, that these ingredients are as necessary today as they were in ancient times.

In fact, many of the 'luxuries' you find in modern day spas are just part of a complete and holistic approach to life – feeling better, living healthier and taking some time out to relax.

It is this holistic way of life that inspired Amanda Markin to create Piaf Salon & Day Spa within the stunning surroundings of the Yarra Valley.

After a comfortable hour or so drive from Melbourne and the airport, just arriving amid the towering gums and ancient tree ferns is enough to start easing the senses, as the clean fresh air and sounds of nature prepare you for a few magnificent hours of rejuvenation and serenity.

Amanda and her team of specialists have made it their mission to help people discover an alternative to living on the stress threshold.

Within this tranquil sanctuary, your mind and body are treated to a sumptuous array of therapies depending on your needs, your time and your budget. All the treatments are designed to help unclutter your mind and let you enter a deep and natural state of relaxation. But then in such surroundings, it's almost impossible not to.

"It's not just about a lovely massage," explained Amanda. "We create a total experience in relaxation, where the mind is calm, the body has let go of its stress and the senses are attuned to the sounds and moods of nature."

A dedication to the holistic approach calls for engaging each of the senses. The lush green of the rainforest setting is enough to appease the eyes, which can then remain blissfully closed to the world as your mind wanders far from the annoyances of life.

The powerful sense of smell is then invoked through the subtle use of pure essential oils, specially chosen to relax, uplift, transport or revitalise, depending on your mood and desire.

Within the first magical moments in the hands of the therapists, tension and stress fall away as you succumb to the sublime pleasure of a full body massage. The use of warm bamboo sticks and heated aromatic stones will delight even the most seasoned of spa connoisseurs. You'd be forgiven for never wanting to move again.

In a blend of Western and Oriental wisdom, Piaf have recently introduced Chinese chime balls into some of their facial massage treatments, adding an exotic aural component to the experience. The aim, according to Amanda's research, is to connect you to the present while still letting the mind drift into a deeper meditative state – a kind of cross-consciousness which lets you enjoy the benefits of your immediate surroundings as well as those of your imagination, almost as if time becomes irrelevant, allowing the soul to take over.

The fundamental elements of nature are of course important in such therapies and Piaf Salon and Day Spa uses natural ingredients in its therapies, from the oils in the pampering massages and manicures to the soaps and minerals in their body wraps.

Eventually you have to leave Piaf, but at least in doing so, you'll be revived, relaxed and most importantly, more essentially human. So when Amanda suggests that the day spa experience should be regarded as a frequent necessity not a rare indulgence, it's hard to disagree, but then, you'd probably be too relaxed to argue anyway.

Piaf Salon & Day Spa is open 6 days and can be found nestled in the forest of the Yarra Valley off the Maroondah Highway at 711 Don Road, Healesville, about an hour's drive from Melbourne and the airport. Treatments range from 30 minutes to six hours and start at \$55.00

Telephone (03) 5962 2797 or visit [www.piafsalon.com.au](http://www.piafsalon.com.au) for full information on special packages and bookings.