

MEET THE MAKER: *Peigin Crowley*

We all know the importance of self-care, but how many of us actually practice it? Dream Escape meets the founder of GROUND Wellbeing – the sustainable wellness brand empowering more of us to take better care of ourselves, in spas and at home

Words | Amy Bonifas



With issues like stress, anxiety and burnout on the rise, it's never been more important to take time out and tune into what's going on in your mind and body. Someone who understands that all too well is Peigin Cowley.

The award-winning spa consultant and aromatherapist is based in Cork, Ireland and has spent the last 30 years creating holistic wellness products and treatments that work to calm the nervous system and leave you feeling transformed.

GROUND Wellbeing experiences are now available in 5-star luxury

hotels across the globe – to include Dream Escape preferred partner hotels, Four Seasons, Waldorf Astoria, The Lanesborough, The Shelbourne, Lime Wood, The K Club, and Sheen Falls Lodge.

It was in 2020 when Peigin's attention shifted to at-home rituals that bring a little more focus and positivity to your day.

Peigin's own experience of burnout marked a significant turning point in her life. "It's different for everyone but after feeling fatigued and low on motivation myself, I tried to isolate what the triggers were.

"I found that it's usually when we're giving too much of ourselves,"



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she explains. “In this fast-paced world, we burn ourselves out trying to be everything to everyone. Slowing down is so important – if lockdown taught us anything, it’s that we need to do far less than we think.”

This realisation inspired her to craft treatments to help other people going through similar experiences. “Our passion at GROUND is to deliver carefully developed massage rituals to bring a little relief from things like insomnia, anxiety, menopausal and pregnancy symptoms and digestive issues,” she says.

Rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, each of their spa treatments is skillfully created to support the body’s functions naturally. “Our mission is to train therapists in advanced massage so that they have the right support, knowledge and expertise. They’re empowered to meet each client where they’re at on their wellbeing journey.” It’s what Peigin calls a ‘thinking’ therapist – developing the ability to listen to the body and identify what’s needed using a toolkit of solutions.

“With all GROUND treatments, it’s not just about locally tending to aches and pains in the muscles – though they will also do that – but rather the focus is on soothing the nervous system and the body as a whole to provide a

longer-term and positive impact on mind and body.”

More recently, Peigin is turning her focus to women – especially their experience with menopause. “My motivation is selfish, as I was inspired by my own menopausal journey. I realised that my education around it was so poor.

“Through my learning, it became apparent to me that women could and should celebrate their midlife. Equipping myself with the knowledge to move with the change and make friends with it rather than struggling privately is hugely empowering.”

Everything from aromatherapy sleep rituals to grounding gift sets make up the special Menopause Collection. Powered by natural and vegan oils and designed to help women prioritise joyful moments and reconnect with themselves, it’s a unique offering that you don’t see often.

"If lockdown taught us anything, it's that we need to do far less than we think."



Lime Wood, Hampshire

Peigin and her team also developed a family of products for people experiencing cancer and cancer treatment. The Barróg Collection (which means 'the hug' in Irish) aims to bring comfort and specific relief to compromised skin – think calming scalp relief oils for those who have lost their hair and nourishing body oils to encourage skin recovery.

“Our journey began with Christine Clinton, founder and CEO of Christine Clinton Cancer Care. Her education company specialises in teaching therapists how to safely and effectively work with clients living with cancer.

“As a therapist-led brand, we’d seen first-hand the number of people going through cancer or post-treatment, being refused hands-on massage therapy in spas. For a long time, misinformation and fear prevented a lot of therapists from working with these clients.

“And yet in recent years, more research and education from industry leaders has shown that massage is hugely beneficial for people’s emotional and mental wellbeing when they’re going through cancer.”

Another of Peigin’s passions is sustainability. As a self-care brand devoted to sustaining people, it makes sense that the brand practices what it preaches and is as kind as possible to the planet, too. “We’ve reduced plastic to an absolute minimum,” says Peigin. “We avoid all harmful chemicals and toxins in the products and use only 100% natural plant-based ingredients.

GROUND also supports local businesses like Little Kneaders in County Wexford – Peigin partnered with the sensory play brand to develop a range of calming therapy play doughs for children.

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It’s clear that her work is helping people through the toughest of times. But, her approach has also enabled her to realise the importance of finding better ways to take care of herself. Her favourite product from the GROUND range is the Deep Sleep Body Balm. “I put it on my feet with a pair of socks, on my chest, hands and wrists before I go to bed. It’s just so comforting and sedative. When you move in the middle of the night, the scent releases even more and lulls you back to sleep.”

She also has a couple of rituals that help her switch off and recharge. “I like to take about two baths a week – one always on a Sunday as a ritual. I take an hour to myself and I lock the door.”

Breathwork is also central to her routine. This is the term for specific breathing practices that help to calm and settle your body and mind. “It’s how I wake up every morning and how I go to sleep at night. I’ve had to train myself to breathe into the day with gratitude and breathe out of the day setting intentions to sleep deeply and restore my body.”

So, with such a strong ethos rooted in empathy, sustainability and compassion, what’s next for GROUND Wellbeing? “We’re growing worldwide,” says Peigin. “We’ve moved into the US and Canadian market, Europe is starting to grow as well and we’ll be moving into the Middle East and South East Asia over the next year.

“The brand was built during lockdown to help me provide for my family, so it’s crazy to think it’s become something cult that therapists and clients are loving. We’re really at the cutting edge of hands-on therapy and we’re so looking forward to taking it to the next level.”

Peigin's Picks...

PEIGIN'S 3 MUST-VISIT PLACES IN CORK

BLACK PIG, KINSALE

This wine bar and café is a local gem championing organic, seasonal food – from fresh oysters to foraged mushrooms – and artisan wines.

CASK, CORK CITY

Set in a stunning old building in the Victorian Quarter, Cask

is well-known for its unique and innovative cocktails, spiked with botanicals.

HAYFIELD MANOR, CORK CITY

The hotel’s spa is GROUND’s flagship and offers a warm and comforting sanctuary away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.



DREAM ESCAPE

In need of a spa break?

RELAX, REJUVENATE, AND RECHARGE, BODY AND MIND

If you are in need of some rest and relaxation, perhaps you should indulge in one of our Dream Escape spa-themed breaks. We will arrange an itinerary to include a pampering facial and soak in the hydrotherapy pool at Brown's Hotel in the heart of Mayfair, or a dip in the vitality pool, with an unmissable signature Sleep Ritual Massage at the Corinthia London. Perhaps you might like to extend your stay to The Dorchester, and Dream Escape will arrange for you to visit the spa for their signature Carol Joy London facial treatment. As featured in this article, Waldorf Astoria, The Lanesborough, The Shelbourne, Lime Wood, The K Club, and Sheen Falls Lodge are all other beautiful hotel choices with unique spa offerings. Let us recommend you hotels with treatments, pools, saunas, and relaxation areas to help you unwind and recharge as part of your next Dream Escape. enquiries@dreamescape.co.uk



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