



**SWEET REPRIEVE** An hour of silence at \$30 a pop

## Mindfulness En Masse

A meditation chain for the on-the-go urban dweller? Fancy that!

BY HENRY GIARDINA  
PHOTOGRAPH BY FREDERICK CHARLES

**A**sking the busy modern urbanite in search of a spiritual spree to carve time out for meditation—or even a one-day schlep to Spa Castle—is sort of pointless. It's a bit like asking: How about some stress with your meditation?

Luckily, Khajak Keledjian has found a perfect solution. Teaming up with his architect friend Winka Dubbleddam, Keledjian—the CEO of the fashion company Intermix—has just opened Inscape, meditation center located smack in the middle of Manhattan. There, for the price of a crosstown cab ride, nervous New Yorkers can gain access to a totally silent, stylish zen retreat that offers classes, relaxation and even a gift shop.

What it doesn't offer is any teachers. "What we provide is a very calm voice on a sound system that gives you instructions at the beginning," explains Dubbleddam, who developed the space in just a year. "After that all you'll hear is baths of perfect sound that sort of wash over you. No talking!"

Keledjian was first introduced to meditation after he attended a two-week silent retreat a few years ago. When he resolved to open his own meditation palace last year, the entrepreneur started thinking about ways he could make the experience more ac-

cessible and less exotic for newcomers. He believes meditation shouldn't be about listening to a teacher. It should be about you. And about some really cool architecture. Which is where Dubbleddam came in.

The architect decked out the space in salmon-tinted furnishings made out of shiny renewables. To help their ADD-addled patrons sit still, she turned to spiraling systems of light that mimic the horizon, and a seating-optional approach to the space.

The partners also took pains to make sure the actual meditation room was sheltered from prying eyes. Their retail-facing Chelsea flagship provides a clever disguise. "When you walk in," says Dubbleddam, "you feel like you're entering another world. People just walk in and gasp."

If all goes to plan, Inscape's New York flagship will be the first outpost of a national chain that will do for meditation what the Gap did for white pocket T-shirts.

Until that happens, the club's members can take their spiritual experience on the road. An annual Inscape membership comes with a private app that members can use to meditate off-premises.

It may seem odd to ante up a membership fee for the privilege of sitting in silence. But at a moment when the nation seems gripped by anxiety about the future, it's probably helpful to have a place that compels you to live in the moment. ■