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The impact of AI

Message robots driven by artificial intelligence are coming to market, while chatbots are becoming ever more powerful. AI could transform our industry if we learn to embrace innovation

You're lying on a massage table but there isn't a therapist in the room. Instead, you're scanned by a machine that detects muscle and joint issues and uses energy field imaging to locate 'blockages'. Then

an AI massage robot (that you can interact with in real-time) gets to work, taking these parameters into account.

This may sound like sci-fi, but companies such as Massage Robotics, Aescape and Capsix Robotics are engaged in bringing such products to market.

These early AI massage robots can adjust pressure and technique, but are not yet a match for a skilled therapist, however, by their very nature AI devices have the capacity to learn rapidly and our reporters who've tried them say sessions are surprisingly pleasant.

The industry has struggled for years with staff shortages and hasn't done enough to invest in employee salaries, training or development, so we expect some operators to welcome AI robots that can deliver services reliably and be classed as a capital asset rather than a cost centre.

The risk for the sector, however, is that their arrival will negatively alter consumers' views of the services we offer, meaning AI robots will need to be deployed with care.

They could prevent staff burnout if used by therapists to assist with treatments and we foresee a time when robots and humans work side by side.

But if we don't integrate them carefully they could cause harm, so a tactical, industry-wide approach, backed up by effective training governed by leading industry bodies is needed.

Also coming down the AI track are new, highly sophisticated chatbots by Google, Microsoft and OpenAI which act as hyper-personalised internet assistants, guiding purchasing decisions.



Spa Business contributing editor, Jeremy McCarthy, says AI chatbots will change the world

In his debut as *Spa Business'* contributing editor on page 18, Jeremy McCarthy focuses on chatbots, predicting the tech behind them will change the world on a scale akin to the internet.

People who work in spas are typically focused on hands-on healing, shying away from tech, however, we have a real opportunity to become a leading sector in the use of AI if we tackle it fearlessly and ensure our teams are trained in its use.

Although AI in its many guises still feels a way off, now is the time to prepare to embrace innovation. ●

Katie Barnes, editor, Spa Business

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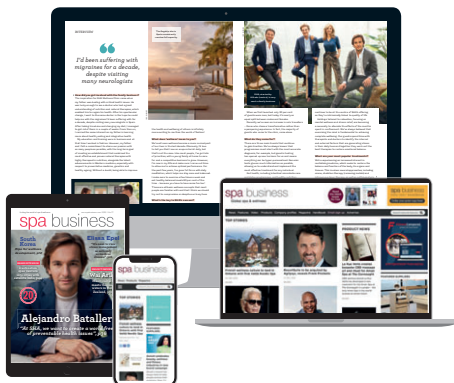
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Medical wellness is coming into its own and it's exciting

Sandie Johannessen, director of health & wellness, Zula Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som

The past few years have taught us that health is a valuable commodity we can't take for granted. Medical wellness is key to this and it's coming into its own now more than ever.

Instead of being passive recipients of care from a medical professional, more people are taking steps to avert issues before they happen.

This is befitting of the 'medical/integrative wellness guest' model, which usually encompasses a whole-person

approach that involves a team of professionals working collaboratively to ensure the best health outcomes for the individual on a physical, emotional and spiritual level.

Exercise, nutrition, relaxation and massage come into play and luxury hotels are also increasingly investing in high-grade medical equipment and diagnostics, as well as holistic healthcare professionals, to add scientific credibility to their wellbeing offerings.



Sandie Johannessen



With researchers, scientists, medics and therapists working together towards longer and healthier lives for all, the future truly does look bright



And with blood work being the new 'passport to wellbeing', guests can gain insights into everything from micro-nutrient deficiencies to management – or even diagnosis – of conditions from high blood pressure to diabetes.

On the other side of the coin in the Middle East, where I'm based, new hospitals are replicating the five-star hotel experience for patients, recruiting hoteliers and therapists for their skills.

So the question is are these two models really so separate? Or do they each, in fact, stimulate growth, learning and development in the other?

With researchers, scientists, medics and therapists working together towards longer and healthier lives for all, the future truly does look bright – from hospitality at a cellular level to hospitals that encompass a holistic approach to healing.

This is why the integrative wellness world excites me and why I'm looking forward to seeing just how much the lines between patient and guest can and will blur in the future. What fascinates you about the integrative/medical wellness world?

Working on the neck
is one way to impact
the vagus nerve



It all starts with the vagus nerve

Julie Cichocki, wellness solutions provider, Kloodos

When developing and writing advanced wellness protocols I always start at the very beginning – the vagus nerve.

This is the longest nerve in the parasympathetic system and touches all major organs, carrying signals to the brain and vice versa.

A good technician can strengthen and tone the vagus nerve through on/off, firm/light touches of the neck (taking clients to the edge before relaxing) and focus on breathwork, as well as incorporate work on the eyes (they have direct access to the brain) and tongue.

This initial approach will help to balance the whole body before you then work on lymph (waste) drainage because without these starting points you'll get nowhere, but they're so often overlooked.

With the arrival of high-tech in spas – from cryotherapy and hyperbaric chambers to IV drips – we're in danger of neglecting touch. That said, hands-on alone cannot hope to replicate the

deep cellular regeneration we can deliver with the right technology.

For the ultimate explosive results, the potent force of tech and touch cannot be beaten. It's so logical, it's powerful. But it's grossly neglected.

I've spent four decades developing treatment protocols for leading names such as Mandarin Oriental and ESPA and in the last decade I've also been supplying best-in-class technologies. It's unusual for distributors to have



Julie Cichocki

such a passion for anatomy and physiology, but being able to offer solutions to spas which integrate technologies and incorporate hands-on approaches enables them to have the best impact on health and wellness. ●



Without working on the vagus nerve followed by lymph drainage you'll get nowhere – yet it's so often overlooked

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spa people

The wellness consultant
was born and raised in
South Korea



PHOTO: JEN POWERS

The culture of public bathing
runs deep in South Korea's DNA

Leekyung Han

founder and managing director, Polaris Advisor

Newer 'jjimjilbang' facilities include heat experiences, sleeping areas and F&B outlets alongside thermal bathing



Although K-Pop and K-Beauty have hit the mainstream, much of Korean culture is still under-represented, including Korean wellness, says native Leekyung Han who specialises in hospitality real estate and development projects.

As founder and managing director of Seoul-based Polaris Advisor, she's worked across the globe and was instrumental in realising China's iconic wellness community Sangha by Octave Living. Han also has a bachelor's and two master's degrees in architecture and real estate development from the US.

Having been born and raised in South Korea, she passionately believes the peninsula is the next up-and-coming destination for wellness investors and operators.

She spoke with *Spa Business* to shed light on the market and why her home country has so much potential to take off as an exciting new destination for spas.

Untapped potential

"Wellness has existed in Korea for more than 5,000 years," Han explains. "With a strong influence from shamanism, it's

South Korea has many beautiful myths... which lay an excellent foundation for brand storytelling



The country is known for its strong presence of good chi energy

typically known as traditional Korean medicine (TKM) and is similar to traditional Chinese medicine."

She believes South Korea is ready for wellness development and investment because of its distinctive natural attributes and traditions that lend themselves to the creation of innovative wellness customer journeys.

In addition to TKM, significant draws include an abundance of natural hot springs, salt farms, a history of healthy cuisine and a high concentration of sacred sites claimed to possess natural healing powers and a strong presence of chi energy.

"South Korea has many beautiful myths associated with the landscape and is known as a country with great chi. This lays an excellent foundation for brand storytelling which can be translated into every detail of a retreat.

"Creating a sense of place can lead to a much more impactful experience because it's clear guests are being immersed in a healing landscape as soon as they arrive," she says.

Social soaking

The country's culture of public bathing already runs deep in its DNA.



Tea ceremonies would be a great addition to programming



- In the mid-20th century, bathhouses were extremely popular and could be found in most neighbourhoods, used as a social space for people to relax together.

"In the early 90s, this public bath concept was transformed into a new form called *jjimjilbang*," says Han. "This introduced a range of saunas with varying temperatures, as well as sleeping areas and F&B outlets. Part of the facilities also became segregated by sex."

A well-known modern-day example is Spa Land Centum City in Busan located in a department store. Here, guests have access to an impressive 18 thermal and wet experiences including hot springs, saunas, an outdoor foot spa, a host of relaxation rooms, food outlets and more. Each of Spa Land's pools is fed by two hot springs found 100m underground.

On that note, Han labels hot springs centres as another major wellness activity loved by South Koreans. These

facilities typically also offer spacious communal areas for people to sleep and rest on a heated floor after bathing.

Who and what?

In terms of demographics, there's a healthy spread of interest in wellness across South Korean age groups, she explains. When *jjimjilbangs* first launched, seniors formed the majority of the customer base but young people are now flocking to facilities and are

Getting a massage in a good spa requires booking at least two weeks in advance as demand is so high

“

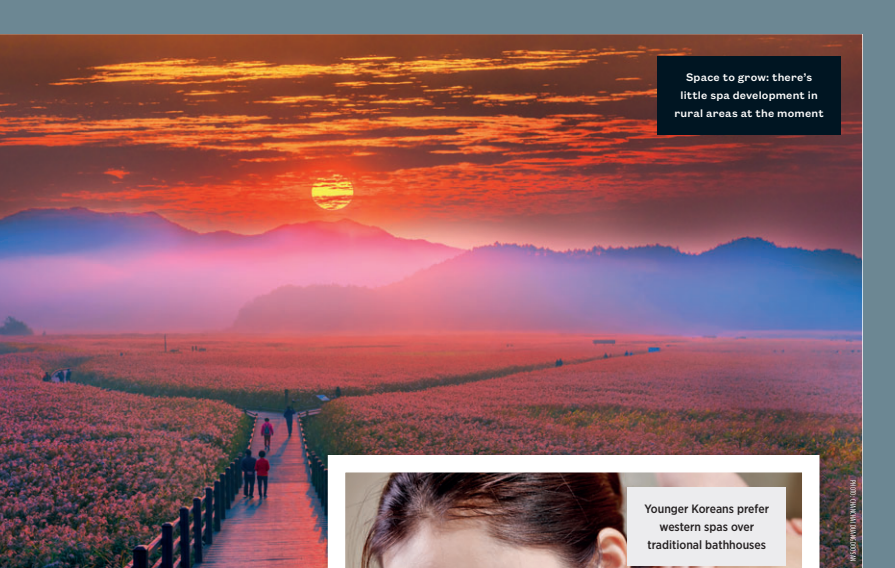
particularly fond of the western spa model which mainly offers massages. Han says that in Seoul, getting a massage in a good spa requires booking at least a couple of weeks in advance as demand is so high.

Han adds that on top of this "South Koreans tend to gravitate towards wellness offerings backed by medicine, whether this is TCM or western medicine. However, acupuncture, cupping and boyak (a customised herb



New spas could tap into Korea's unique Buddhist food traditions

Space to grow: there's little spa development in rural areas at the moment



medicine to balance energy) are also very popular activities.” Clinics providing these services are easily found in urban areas so workers can get treatments during work breaks.

Sound healing, yoga, IV therapy, ayurveda and immunity-focused experiences, in particular involving crystals, are also favourites.

Investor interest

Most wellness investment is funded by domestic companies to create more *jjimjilbangs* and hotel spas in urban areas, but Han feels there's a growing demand for rural retreats as people look to de-stress further afield from their busy daily lives.

“If investors branch into more rural areas, the development costs will be lower in comparison to city space and ROI could be just as good.

“The most important thing for the South Korean wellness market to take off is a change in mindset,” she says. “Developers need to break away from their

comfort zone and look at the country's natural assets to harness its full potential as a wellness destination.

“Furthermore, if the country can blend its beautiful traditional healing rituals with its natural healing assets, it will attract both domestic and international tourists by offering distinctively Korean wellness experiences that can only be felt authentically in the country.”

South Korea's international tourist base is mainly made up of visitors from China, followed by Japan and the USA, she says.

“Investors should focus on creating a destination

Investors should focus on creating a destination wellness offering that can only be found here

“

wellness offering which offers the usual aspects of wellness programming but also provides something that can only be found or experienced in South Korea. For example, a full-moon meditation and halotherapy ritual on a salt farm, body scrub rituals at *jjimjilbangs*, a customised TKM tea ceremony or a culinary experience of Korean Buddhist food.

“These unique offerings will attract adventurous travellers who are curious about Korean wellness. If there's a buzz from domestic consumers, this will then catch the attention of the international market too.” ●



Younger Koreans prefer western spas over traditional bathhouses

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ARTISTBYNINA

“We need to view stress management as seriously as we do medical disease

Elissa Epel

professor of psychiatry and behavioural science; author, *Stress Prescription*



Epel is known for her research which links stress to cellular ageing

“I’m a firm believer in retreats and spas but without the skills to help people deeply relax, they’re of limited value,” says Elissa Epel, professor in psychiatry and behavioural medicine at the University of California, San Francisco. “Despite being physically in paradise while visiting a spa, our mind can still be working overtime panicking about the past, the future and stress we hold in our bodies – even unconsciously.”

Best known in the industry for her pioneering research linking stress to the shortening of telomeres and immune cell ageing, Epel has just written a book – *The Stress Prescription* – to help people to take control of their stress in just seven days.

“I use the word prescription because we need to view stress management as seriously as we do medical disease,” Epel tells *Spa Business*. “The vast majority of us are living with too much daily stress and it’s ruining our life.

“We’re living in tough times and need more robust tools and stress management practices

for daily life. Stress can feel like a filter that masks the beauty in front of us. But we don’t have to live that way.”

After decades of studying the subject, Epel felt compelled to share her insights on how to reshape our relationship with stress into one that’s healthy and humorous. She’s broken them down into seven steps – “potent easy strategies proven to be effective” – that each requires just a few minutes a day:

- Embrace uncertainty
- Put down the weight of what we can’t control
- Use our stress response to help overcome challenges
- Train our cells to “metabolise stress” better
- Immerse ourselves in nature to recalibrate our nervous system
- Practice deep restoration
- Intersperse our busy schedules with moments of joy

“With some relatively simple new habits, we can train the mind and body to experience the inevitable stresses of life in a positive way that’s actually healthy for the body,” she says.

Epel sees the book being particularly useful to wellness

I’m a firm believer in spas, but without the skills to help people deeply relax, they’re of limited value

lovers and operators. “Using these techniques, people are better equipped to reap the positive effects of time at spas and benefit from the experience for longer, meaning they may return sooner,” she concludes.

“In fact, studies have shown that people who are more experienced in meditation show more immediate physiological benefits from a retreat.” ●



Epel’s new book is a guide to handling stress

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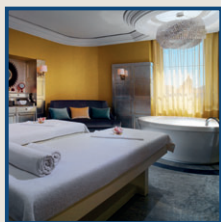
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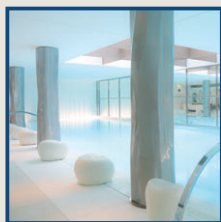
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SHAPING *the future*

Jeremy McCarthy makes his debut as a *Spa Business* contributing editor, asking if spas are ready for AI which – with the emergence of ChatGPT – is literally on our doorstep

OpenAI launched its new artificial intelligence chatbot, ChatGPT, in November, skyrocketing its valuation to US\$29bn in the first few months. Although ChatGPT is still a fledgling system, the AI technology behind it is likely to change the world on a scale akin to the advent of the printing press or the internet. And given AI's ability to use its own superhuman intelligence to learn and evolve, we can expect the changes to come more rapidly than anything we've ever seen.

So what does this mean for spas, and how can we prepare? The best way to think about AI is to imagine that every person in the future will have a hyper-intelligent personal assistant who reads almost the entire internet every day to stay up-to-date on what's going on. These assistants will help people personally and professionally, by gathering relevant information for them, teaching them what they'd like to learn, making personalised recommendations and guiding purchasing decisions, and generally helping them live more efficiently.

These AI 'assistants' have the potential to become an intermediary between brands and consumers. Business leaders must think not only about how they build consumer awareness of their brand but, potentially more importantly, how they ensure that the AI will learn about and advocate for them. Here are a few things I think spas need to take note of:

1 Having a digital presence is more important than ever

It sounds basic, but if you don't have your spa menu, hours of operation, address and core philosophy on your website, you don't exist in the age of AI. When you write website copy, you're not only providing consumers with basic information about your services, but you're also literally teaching future AI chatbots what you want them to know about your spa.

2 The return of FAQs

The internet has a love-hate relationship with 'frequently asked questions', but in the age of AI, you want to make sure your content helps train the AI how to answer queries about your offerings. If someone asks their AI assistant "what should I get my wife for Valentine's day?" or "which spa in town has the best therapists?" would it have information about your spa to share?

3 Customer reviews are king

We've already seen how online reviews reflect purchasing decisions. But we also know how time-consuming it can be to scour the internet trying to get a clear picture of consumer feedback on your upcoming Phuket resort or your planned underwater camera purchase. The AI assistants will streamline this process and take customer reviews into account when making their recommendations. The quality and quantity of reviews about your spa are crucial.

Would AI assistants
pick up on your spa's
Valentine's packages?



ChatGPT is likely to change the world on a scale akin to the advent of the internet

4 Think holistically about your digital footprint

As important as it is to build your own digital knowledge database about your spa, you have to remember that these AI assistants are no dummies and are likely to view your own marketing materials with a bit of scepticism. They will want to see the information about your spa validated by third parties such as online reviews, discussion forums and journalists. It's more important than ever to make sure your spa is being written about (positively) by other people on the internet.

5 Digitise your operation

Operators can use AI personal assistants, as well as consumers. And if you've done a good job of digitising your spa, your AI assistant can help you run your business too. Do you have an intranet for employees

with training manuals, SOPs and treatment protocols in a digital database? Do you have all your financial statistics and KPIs neatly organised electronically? Having more and better organised digital information about your business will allow your future AI assistant to help you run your business efficiently.

We've been hearing for some time about how AI will shape the future in some fantastic (and sometimes frightening ways). The emergence of ChatGPT shows us that the future is now, and AI is literally on our doorstep. Are you ready? ●

Jeremy McCarthy has worked in the spa industry for 34 years. As group director of spa and wellness for Mandarin Oriental, he oversees spa, wellness and leisure operations at 35 luxury hotels globally. Contact him with your views on Twitter @jeremymcc

Fresh wellness stats on Indonesia and US revealed

The Global Wellness Institute (GWI) has penned a new report about the US wellness economy after partnering with the National Academy of Sports Medicine.

Valued at more than US\$1.2trn (£994.3bn, €1.1trn), the US has been named the top wellness economy in the world by the paper. It boasts the largest markets in nine out of 11 of the wellness subsectors assessed by the GWI.

According to the new report, the US wellness economy contracted from US\$1.4trn (£1.2trn, €1.3trn) in 2019 to US\$1.2trn (£994.3bn, €1.1trn) in 2020 – a number that is expected to continue its upward trajectory.

The US data comes swiftly after GWI's deep dive into stats about Indonesia thanks to a collaboration

with the country's Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy.

That report values Indonesia's wellness economy at of US\$36.4bn (£30.2bn, €34bn) in 2020, ranking it 19th out of the 218 measured worldwide by GWI and seventh out of 46 in the Asia-Pacific region.

It goes on to say that the market is in a strong position for continued growth post-pandemic.

It also highlights that Indonesia's top three wellness subsectors in 2020 were Healthy Eating, Nutrition and Weight Loss (US\$13.9bn, €11.6bn, €13.1bn), Personal Care and Beauty

(US\$7.6bn, £6.3bn, €7.2bn) and Traditional and Complementary Medicine (US\$5bn, £4.2bn, €4.7bn).

These two reports are the latest featured on the GWI's Geography of Wellness microsite. The platform, which launched last year, provides an in-depth look at the wellness economy and its various subsectors of countries which pay a US\$20,000 sponsorship fee.

Other countries with detailed wellness economy data available so far include Brazil, Singapore, Thailand and the UK.

More: http://lei.sr/d4t6q_B



In 2020, Indonesia's wellness economy was valued at US\$36.4bn

British scheme launches to encourage new industry talent

The British Beauty Council has introduced the Future Talent Programme, a career development programme set to nurture a steady pipeline of talent to the country's beauty industry and all of its sectors.

Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills are vital to beauty. Whether it's product formulation, packaging innovation, website design, supply chain efficiency or the various careers



The British Beauty Council is behind the programme

in-between, personal care couldn't exist without STEM specialists. However, the value and awareness of these careers have been poorly publicised, making it difficult for young people to pursue these roles.

In response to this, the British Beauty

Council is highlighting career pathways to people aged 11-18, via The Careers Hub Network, in schools across England to inspire and teach young people in the most formative years of their education about these exciting opportunities.

More: http://lei.sr/q6F6w_B



Patrizia Bortolin

Bortolin consults on UAE club concept

UAE wellness brand Kintsugi has appointed consultancy Glowing Flow Wellness Specialists – founded by Patrizia Bortolin and Stefano Battaglia – to assist with its development.

Unveiled in 2022, Kintsugi is a women-only members club concept created to empower a community of women across the globe. The brand's flagship retreat will open in Abu Dhabi later this year, joining its lifestyle collection and education series.

More: http://lei.sr/q8j5y_B



Spa at Séc-he is built in a museum dedicated to Agua Caliente Indians

Upcoming Palm Springs spa to flow with waters of 12,000-year-old sacred hot spring

A large new hot springs and spa destination is coming to downtown Palm Springs, California, this April.

Located on 5.8 acres of sacred land owned by the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, The Spa at Séc-he is named after the area's sacred Agua Caliente Hot Mineral Spring claimed to be 12,000 years old and used as a healing resource for thousands of years by the tribe.

Operated by Agua Caliente Casinos, the spa is built within the Agua Caliente Cultural Plaza – a museum dedicated to celebrating the tribe's history and culture. Part of a long-term plan, the tribe first broke ground on the project in 2018 after demolishing a 1960s spa hotel to make way for the development.



Reid D Milanovich

Visitors will have access to 22 mineral baths and 15 treatment rooms alongside a comprehensive set of wellness facilities.

Lynn Curry of Curry Spa Consulting was involved in the early stages of feasibility through concept and design development with JCY Architecture.

"This opening is a defining moment for the tribe," says tribal chair Reid D. Milanovich.

More: http://lei.sr/w7k3u_B



Founders Julie Rice (left) and Elizabeth Cutler

SoulCycle founders launch social wellness club

Elizabeth Cutler and Julie Rice, founders of the cult fitness and lifestyle brand SoulCycle, have unveiled their latest venture, Peoplehood.

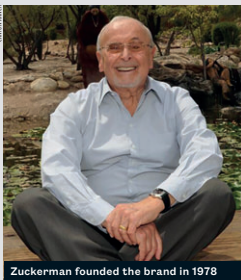
Focused on community and connection, the basis of Peoplehood is 60-minute guided group conversations – called Gatherings – between members where they practise active listening. Each session is led by a Peoplehood-approved Guide and includes setting an intention, thought-provoking prompts, destressing breathwork and feel-good music to spark self-awareness, change perspectives and lead to inspiring moments.

These are hosted either virtually or in person at the Peoplehood flagship in New York City.

The concept has been conceived to create a trusted and safe environment for its members to share freely and listen deeply to others.

"Coming out of the global pandemic, people feel lonelier and more isolated than ever," says Rice. "With Peoplehood, we hope relationships become prioritised just as much as daily fitness."

More: http://lei.sr/N4e7r_B



Zuckerman founded the brand in 1978

Industry tributes pour in as Canyon Ranch founder, Mel Zuckerman, dies

Global spa figures have been paying their respects to Melvin "Mel" Zuckerman, the founder of iconic US wellness brand Canyon Ranch, who has died at the age of 94.

"You left the world more enlightened and better for your work in wellness," said Lake Nona's Gloria Caulfield.

Wellness specialist and industry veteran Kevin Kelly called him "the father of wellness... an irreplaceable figure."

"He changed the lives of so many, including mine," said leading consultant Mia Kyrillos.

Revered as one of the early pioneers of wellness, Zuckerman opened the flagship Canyon Ranch property in Tucson, Arizona in 1978.

His holistic and integrative health philosophy emphasises the importance of exercise, a nutritious diet and mental wellbeing.

More: <http://lei.sr/d6N9J>

DIARY DATES

3-6 April 2023

Spatec North America

La Cantera Resort & Spa, Texas, USA

US operators of hotel, resort, destination, athletic and medical day spas meet with domestic and international suppliers for a series of personal meetings.

www.spatecna.com

24-25 April 2023

Medical Wellness Congress

St Martins Spa & Lodge, Frauenkirchen, Austria

Figures from the medical and wellness spheres gather for a conference, networking, workshops and a gala dinner.

www.mwcongress.com

9-11 May 2023

ISPA Conference 2023

Mandalay Bay, Las Vegas, USA

This key industry gathering organised by the International Spa Association includes an expo and speaker schedule covering topics such as business strategy and management.

www.attendispa.com

1 June 2023

Forum Hotel & Spa

Four Seasons Hotel

George V, Paris, France

This event is a meeting point for figures of the spa, hospitality and wellbeing industries. The focus this year will be looking at the future and how it's 'time to change'.

www.forumhotspa.com

11-14 June 2023

W3Spa EMEA

Le Méridien Lav, Split, Croatia

A meetings-based event for spa stakeholders located in Europe, the Middle East and Africa

www.weworkwellevents.com



The site is the former flagship of the Chenot Group

Palace Merano refreshes Revital Spa

Five-star hotel and wellness facility, Palace Merano, has re-opened its doors after totally renovating its spa.

The refreshed 1,200sq m space, named Revital Spa, is just one facet of the hotel's 6,000sq m health and wellness centre. Split into seven departments, the facility provides medi-wellness and preventative health treatments conducted by medical specialists.

The spa is located in the celebrated Italian spa town of Merano that's home to a host of public bathing facilities powered by its famous healing mineral water.

It previously served as the flagship site for the late industry legend Henri Chenot and his company The Chenot Group from 1980-2020.

The redesign of Revital Spa was carried out by interior designer, Michel Jouannet. The refurb includes a total refresh of its treatment rooms, common areas, hairdressing salon and boutique – which now stocks the Revital by Piroche Cosmétiques line.

The new-look facility is also home to a new 160sq m fitness room equipped by Technogym.

More: http://lei.sr/3X3D8_B



The Clinique La Prairie resort will feature 13 villas plus 52 rooms and suites

Clinique La Prairie to launch at Amaala

Red Sea Global (RSG), the developer behind the ambitious Amaala and The Red Sea regenerative tourism destinations in Saudi Arabia, has partnered with Swiss destination spa Clinique La Prairie (CLP).

The collaboration involves the development of a 50-room Clinique La Prairie Health Resort featuring four distinctive areas corresponding to its brand pillars – medical care, nutrition, movement and wellbeing.

The resort will open as part of Amaala which has been billed

as the first global integrated family wellness destination.

It is also part of a brand rollout for CLP which is looking to create up to 10 more Health Resorts globally, as well as 40 smaller Longevity Hubs.

CEO Simone Gibertoni reveals more about the group's expansion plans in our Ask an Expert feature on page 45.

Meanwhile, further details about Amaala can be found in the last issue of *Spa Business* magazine (www.spabusiness.com/Amaala).

More: http://lei.sr/z4R2K_B

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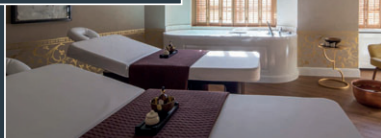
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Legendary Mii amo spa resort relaunches after two years

US destination spa Mii amo in Sedona, Arizona, has reopened after an extensive US\$40m (€38.9m, £34.1m) renovation and expansion project.

Nestled at the base of Boynton Canyon among its striking natural landscape and towering red rocks, the 22-year-old resort closed for two years so its footprint could be increased by more than 40 per cent (to approximately 42,000sq ft).

The update, overseen by Mii amo's original architect Gluckman Tang, has refreshed existing facilities and added a consultation wing, extra treatment rooms, a brand new movement and fitness area, a private suite of spaces for guests on its 'Journey' packages, new accommodations and a signature restaurant.

"It's been an honour and delight welcoming back our devoted past guests. They've been extremely eager to see and experience the property's refreshed and enhanced spaces and offerings," Mii amo managing director Stan Kantowski, tells *Spa Business*.

Mii amo is owned and managed by the Enchantment Group which includes three other properties in its portfolio. There's the

Enchantment Resort and Seven Canyons Golf Club in Sedona (opposite Mii amo and also overseen by Kantowski); the Tides Inn in Irvington, Virginia; and The Cove, Eleuthera in the Bahamas.

Tracy Tang, chair of the board of directors at Enchantment Group adds: "We decided to invest in a major renovation and expansion because we're committed to Mii amo and its continued standing as a trailblazer in the world of luxury wellbeing."

TAKING IT SLOW

A five-treatment-room consultation wing with a dedicated relaxation space is a particular new highlight of the refreshed spa. It's been added to provide a private setting for sessions with Mii amo's mindfulness team and therapists.

In total there are now 26 treatment rooms, including a sound lounge, as well as new steamrooms and saunas.

In a nod to slow wellbeing, Mii amo has extended all treatment durations. Formerly offered in 60- or 90-minute sessions, the new standard is 75-, 100- or 125-minute sessions.

According to Kantowski: "Slow wellbeing is about having the time and space to reflect, reconnect, restore and re-engage with the facets in our lives that most serve and fulfil us.

At Mii amo, we want to lean into supporting this intention with each of our guests."

SOCIAL SPACES

As part of the overhaul, Mii amo's Crystal Grotto for meditation and reflection has been renovated. The circular space, with its earthen floor and domed ceiling, centres around a pedestal of petrified wood featuring a fountain and an illuminated quartz crystal. Lit by an aperture overhead, it's designed so that once a year - on the summer solstice - a beam of sunlight strikes the crystal, connecting earth and sky.

In the Living Room, a fresh sunken seating lounge allows guests to relax and connect to the earth, while private niches line the perimeter of the room and offer a connection to the sky and sun.



US\$40m has been spent on the major overhaul



The destination spa has increased in size by more than 40 per cent



Enchantment Group executives (left) with regular Journey guest Debe Hauschild and resort MD Stan Kantowski

Slow wellbeing is about having the time and space to reflect, reconnect, restore and re-engage



Some areas are exclusive to guests on overnight Journey packages

NEW OPENING

A sunken seating area has been added to the refreshed Living Room

*Our approach is not prescriptive.
We work side-by-side with guests as
they uncover their way, not 'the' way*

► All new spaces from the Relaxation Lounge and Garden to the Sensory Garden with its reflexology path and expanded outdoor lounge, connect guests to the destination spa's natural outdoor surroundings.

Other landscape features include a labyrinth, a hammock grove and a yoga lawn, all with views of the surrounding red rock walls.

MINDFUL MOVEMENT

New fitness and movement studios with expanded programmes will give Mii amo guests a fresh focus on physical fitness.

Looking out onto the Sensory Garden, the 3,300sq ft studios will provide space for personal and group instruction. Newly-hired fitness leaders will guide guests through a series of classes and programmes, serving as liaisons to the Trail House at the adjacent Enchantment Resort.

Trail House offers hike-in/hike-out, bike-in/bike-out guided experiences, providing an opportunity for guests to create deeper connections to the Canyon and its surroundings, through a 400-mile trail network.

THE MII AMO JOURNEY

"Since opening in 2001, Mii amo has used the term Journey in reference to packages which include a three-, four-, seven- and now 10-night guest experience," says Kantowski. "We intend to serve as co-creators of each guest's Journey. The process is never prescriptive, we utilise our expertise to craft a Journey that will help them to uncover their way, not 'the' way.



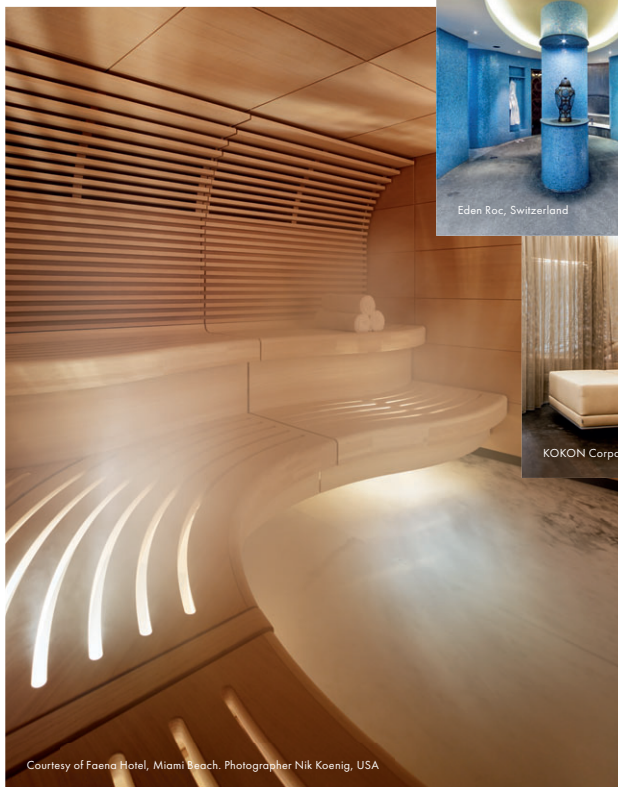
An illuminated quartz on a petrified wood pedestal sits in the centre of the renovated Crystal Grotto

As part of the renovation, three Casita guestrooms have been added to the existing 16 and 3,700sq ft of space has been dedicated exclusively to Journey guests to elevate their privacy yet also build connections. The Journey Lounge, with views of the iconic Kachina Woman rock formation, for example, serves as a place to unwind, study and listen (there's a library and space for lectures/presentations).

Journey guests can embark on three-, four-, seven- or 10-night all-inclusive packages to immerse themselves in the destination's expanded facilities and programming.

"It's this commitment to offering personalised support for all individuals that cultivates trusting, lasting relationships," concludes Kantowski. ●

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Immersive sound spa opens at tropical Vietnamese nature retreat



Anna-Cari Gund

A spa concept inspired by music and vibrational therapy has been revealed at the InterContinental Danang Sun Peninsula Resort in Vietnam.

The approach has been created by global wellness consultancy Raison d'Etre with a view to helping guests quite literally tune into their bodies to achieve physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing.

Good vibrations

Mi Sol Spa is named after the tones in the musical scale – do, re, mi, fa, sol, la and ti – each of which has a specific vibration frequency and is claimed to enhance the flow of natural energy around the body. For example, mi – 528 hertz – is said to stimulate love and restore equilibrium, while it's believed that sol – 741 hertz – helps to detoxify the body.

All treatments and rituals at the Mi Sol Spa are inspired by these tones and incorporate tuning forks to harness their frequencies.

These are then blended with ancient wellness healing techniques and modern science to create a multisensory treatment experience.

"Sound is incredible, as vibrations affect all things and have untold powers, using these as tools can help reset, relax and rejuvenate your life," says spa director Sri Ambarwati.

The goal is to help every spa client achieve complete relaxation and rejuvenation through the power of sound.

Anna-Cari Gund, managing director of Raison d'Etre says: "This has been a wonderful concept to work on and our team was truly inspired by the hotel's original design and natural location.

"It's something new and exciting which is guaranteed to surpass guests' expectations and help them achieve a greater level of holistic fulfilment."

Bill Bensley designed the spa and Raison d'Etre were the consultants



Tuning forks are
set to specific
frequencies



PHOTO: MI SOL SPA

Design by Bill Bensley

Surrounded by lush vegetation, the 39-hectare sanctuary is designed to feel separated from the outside world.

Visionary architect Bill Bensley is behind the building of the spa. He chose to create eight treatment villas that are based on the tube shape of local Quonset huts. Each is complemented with saunas and steamrooms, hammam beds, spa pools and marble bathtubs.

Guests can opt for Signature Mi Sol Spa experiences, bodywork treatments, scrubs, massages or facials, as well as frequent yoga sessions and sleep support therapies. The Re-Start Ritual, designed to cleanse and heal, is a particular highlight, along with Empower Me, to help people visualise their dreams, and Connecting Us, a treatment for couples or families seeking precious time together.

In addition to the sound therapy spa, InterContinental Danang is also home to a Bastien Gonzalez nail studio. ●



Vibrations affect all things and have untold powers which can help reset, relax and rejuvenate your life



Treatment villas
were inspired by
local Quonset huts

PHOTO: ICD

SACRED SPACE

Maori culture inspires upcoming New Zealand hot springs destination and spa

After five years of planning, geotechnical preparation, COVID challenges and construction, Wai Ariki Hot Springs and Spa in Rotorua – the New Zealand city famous for its geothermal activity – is edging closer to completion.

Set to open in mid-2023, the 4,453sq m spa and wellness centre is grounded in *te ao Maori* (the Maori worldview). It will be infused with native culture throughout, including the physical design of the building, the wellness experiences and authentic *manaakitanga* (the concept of care and hospitality).

Wai Ariki means 'chiefly waters', and is a reminder of the origin of Rotorua's thermal waters. The site is located on the shores of Rotorua's lakefront and is being delivered by Pukeroa Oruawhata Group (POG), the development arm of the local *hapū* (tribe) Ngāti Whakaue.

The facility will form just one element of the wider health and wellness vision for the group's



Karen Golden

11-hectare site and be managed by Australian-based contract management firm Belgravia Leisure.

"Wai Ariki's unique features combine with therapeutic mineral waters to deliver a world-class sanctuary that provides a place to relax, sustain and heal," says Karen Golden, Belgravia's general manager of destination, wellness and spa.

"The way local culture has been incorporated throughout the concept, design and product offering, combined with its location and people, provides a level of authenticity which we believe makes it unlike anything else in the world."

POG deputy chair David Tapsell says Ngāti Whakaue and Maori culture will sit at the heart of the property, with the 650-year history of the tribe and Rotorua's spa heritage forming an intrinsic part of the development.

"Wai Ariki is set to firmly position Rotorua in the global wellness and spa market," Tapsell says.

Wai Ariki has been created by the development arm of the local Maori tribe



“The way local culture has been incorporated throughout makes it unlike anything else in the world

Rotorua is known for its hot springs, geysers and bubbling mud pools

SPA FACILITIES

The site will have two main spa areas: Te Puna Kaukau Koruhuhū and Te Ahuru Mōwai I The Sanctuary – a space for bathing and spa treatments. There's also a café and gift shop.

Within Te Puna Kaukau Koruhuhū, *manuhiri* (guests) will experience Haumanu Haerenga, a restorative journey made up of a series of hot and cold experiences designed to maximise therapeutic benefit.

The journey includes a herb pool – which combines mineral water with the aromatherapy properties of native plants to support calmness and relaxation; a mud experience; and a cool frigidarium.

The Wai Ariki brand speaks to the cultural narrative of Ngātoroirangi – a great *ariki* (chief) and *tohunga* (priest).

Caught in a blizzard climbing Mount Tongariro, Ngātoroirangi called for help from his sisters,

Te Pupu and Te Hoata, to bring precious *ahi* (fire). It's said the places the subterranean goddesses of fire dropped embers are where the region's hot pools and other volcanic and geothermal phenomena can be seen today.

A POWERFUL CONNECTION

“Every part of this spa provides a connection to the Ngāti Whakaue people and places that have come to define us through time,” says Tapsell. “In particular, the hot and cold experiences – while delivering proven therapeutic benefits – draw on the story of our ancestor, Ngātoroirangi.”

He concludes: “This is a defining history for Ngāti Whakaue and this legacy is present throughout Wai Ariki and its wellness experiences. This is part of what makes it truly unique – not just in New Zealand, but in the world.” ●

More: www.wai-ariki.co.nz

At your service

We reveal some of the latest, most thought-provoking spa and wellness treatments, programmes and experiences from around the world

📍 QC Termemilano,
Milan, Italy

💰 Day passes start
at €62 (US\$67, £54)



Guests are fully
immersed in the
eye of a storm

Storm spa – love it or hate it

Thunder, rain and lightning – strangely comforting or anxiety-inducing? An immersive storm spa room in Italy is dividing opinions and has gone viral on TikTok.

Guests begin the experience at QC Termemilano by stepping into a pool where a gentle rain shower trickles from the ceiling. Eventually, this progresses into a full-on downpour, as if the heavens have opened from up above.

While guests listen to rainfall hitting the pool's surface, the sounds of rumbling thunder and cracks of lightning boom out. At the same time, footage of dark storm clouds rolling across majestic landscapes is projected onto floor-to-ceiling screens to truly make guests feel like they're in the eye of the storm.

Calming kids' treatment in Thailand

Meliá Chiang Mai has extended its Yhi Spa repertoire to include children by offering a ritual to prevent hyperactivity. The 45- or 60-minute Kids Therapy treatment has been created with six- to 12-year-olds in mind. It starts off with guided stretching and animal-inspired yoga poses before a gentle massage with HARNN coconut oils.

Menu highlights for older guests, meanwhile, include a 90-minute signature treatment (THB 2,000, US\$61, €56, £50) which starts with tok sen, an ancient northern Thai massage that relaxes the muscles with the rhythmic tapping motion of a wooden hammer and stick made from a tamarind tree. It then transitions to a Spanish massage, in homage to the brand's roots, that strives to reduce cellulite and relieve fatigue, tension and muscle spasms.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ANDRZEJ



The ritual has been
designed to prevent
hyperactivity

📍 Meliá Chiang Mai, Thailand

🕒 45 or 60 minutes

💰 THB800 (US\$24, €22, £20)
or THB1,000 (US\$30, €28, £25)



Dr Greg Shiu

Chiva-Som taps into kinesiology

Chiva-Som has turned to visiting kinesiology practitioner Dr Greg Shiu to help address issues such as joint pain, digestive ailments, stress, hormone imbalances and sleep health.

Dr Shiu tests muscle and acupressure points (without needles) to determine where imbalances in the energetic system are. A number of vibrational medicine-based techniques, including holding acupoints and using flower essences or sound tools, are applied to correct the imbalance.

Dr Shiu combines this with joint manipulation, myofascial therapies, cranial techniques, meridian therapy and clinical nutritional and dietary management.

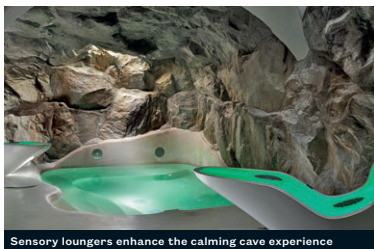
The session finishes with an overview of what was achieved and a take-home plan.

Sound tools are used to correct any imbalances

📍 Chiva-Som, Hua Hin, Thailand

🕒 80-minute treatment and consultation, plus 50-minute follow-up session

💰 THB18,000 (US\$547, €501, £444)



Sensory loungers enhance the calming cave experience

Mykonos gets a sensory seaside cave

A hidden treasure awaits discovery at Kensho Oronos, a boutique hotel on the Greek Island of Mykonos. This April, it will reveal a spa which has been designed to mirror the calming interior of a secluded seaside cave.

A 60-minute Cave Experience includes a 20-minute hammam session and dip in the pool before trying out sensory loungers which provide a gentle heat,

envelop users in colour and include sound therapy.

Treatments by Codage are offered in one of two treatment rooms. There's also a hydropool, tropical rain beds and a gym.

📍 Kensho Oronos, Mykonos, Greece

🕒 60 minutes

💰 €60 (US\$64, £53)

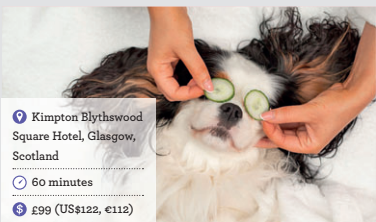
Pooch pampering in Scotland

Dogs and their human companions were recently able to enjoy a spa day together at Kimpton Blythwood Square after the five-star urban hotel launched its Ultimutt Treat.

The unconventional experience began with either a 30-minute express facial or massage for owners – using Ishga's

seaweed-centric spa products. Meanwhile, their four-legged friends rested in a spacious cosy dog bed.

Once the pet parent was fully relaxed, the pups were then pampered as their owners were taught by spa therapists how to give the perfect doggy massage using Edinburgh-based Bark and Hare's doggy paw balm.



📍 Kimpton Blythwood Square Hotel, Glasgow, Scotland

🕒 60 minutes

💰 £99 (US\$122, €112)

Spa therapists taught owners how to massage their dogs

📍 Montage Laguna Beach, California, US

🕒 150 minutes

💰 US\$2,000 (€1,848, £1,619)

The ritual will be a first for the luxury resort

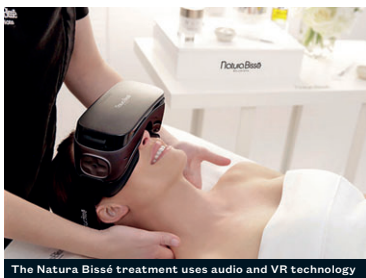
US\$2,000 futuristic facial in California

California's Spa Montage is taking holistic healing to the next level with its Five Senses Treatment using all-new VR+ technology from Natura Bissé.

The journey begins with the sounds of a singing bowl, a taste of honey and a foot bath while guests are immersed in a VR sight and sound experience. Through audio and immersive visual elements, the VR technology helps

clients focus on breathing, mindfulness and the other senses being stimulated throughout the ritual.

To complement, the treatment also includes a foot cleanse, a detox mask for hands and feet, a customised full-body massage and an anti-ageing facial. To finish, the sounds of a singing bowl and handcrafted dark chocolate gently bring guests back to the real world.



The Natura Bissé treatment uses audio and VR technology

📍 Nicaragua (various venues)

🕒 One week

💰 US\$2,300 (€2,126, £1,862)

Yoga retreat funds education for vulnerable young women

Part of the proceeds of Souljourn Yoga's workshops go towards giving girls access to education – which more than 130 million young women around the world are denied.

The next retreat for the non-profit foundation will take place across Nicaragua and include a week of yoga, movement and meditation, exploring a local coffee plantation, a tortilla-making lesson and hiking in breathtaking settings.

Participants will also spend time at a nearby girl's home which will receive a US\$375 tax-deductible donation from each person as part of the experience. ●

Souljourn's next retreat is in Nicaragua



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Bataller meditates daily to help him stay 'sane and balanced'



Alejandro Bataller

SHA Wellness Clinic is poised to take its cutting-edge brand into two new world regions, while further expansion into residential real estate and hospitality is on the cards. Katie Barnes talks to the group's vice president

It's been 15 years since the Bataller family opened SHA Wellness Clinic in the picturesque mountains near Alicante, Spain. The flagship site, with 6,000sq m of spa and wellness facilities, is known for the SHA Method, a holistic approach that blends cutting-edge preventive, genetic and anti-ageing medicine with natural therapies and macrobiotics. Innovative offerings, from telomere testing and programmes by NASA and Harvard to male hormone therapy, entice up to 6,000 guests a year to stay in one of its 93 suites or 11 private residences, putting it at full capacity.

"We feel we've reached our maximum potential at SHA Spain, so we're making our offer more accessible to a global market," says SHA Wellness



SHA Mexico is opening later this year and the building replicates a DNA strand

Being able to improve the health and wellbeing of others is infinitely more exciting to me than the world of fashion

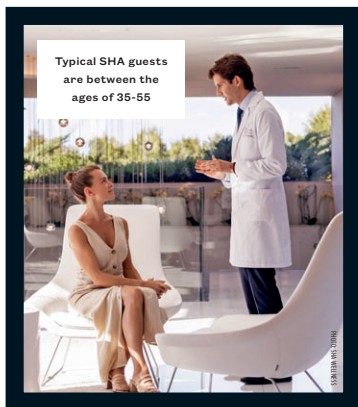
Clinic vice president Alejandro Bataller whose father, Alfredo Bataller Parietti, founded the business.

"We've always dreamed of expanding this valuable concept internationally, to transform more lives around the world. It isn't easy to replicate, but we believe we've now found the locations and talent to allow us to do this."

This November, a second site, SHA Mexico, will launch in Costa Mujeres, a secluded beach destination just north of Cancun. This will be followed by SHA Emirates, a forest resort in the middle of the UAE in 2025.

The properties are part of AB Wellness, one of three divisions which fall under the newly launched holding group AB Living – a global development firm founded by Alfredo in November. The two other divisions are AB Properties, focused on residential real estate and AB Hospitality, which aims to develop hotel projects with leading global brands.

Alejandro, who's also the vice president of AB Living, tells *Spa Business* why he ditched a career in fashion to fully embrace his family's passion for wellness and reveals more about SHA's exciting plans on the horizon. ►



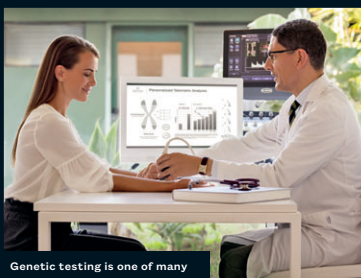


I'd been suffering with migraines for a decade, despite visiting many neurologists

► **How did you get involved with the family business?**

The inspiration for SHA Wellness Clinic came when my father was dealing with critical health issues. He was lucky enough to see a doctor who had a great understanding of nutrition and natural therapies, which enabled him to regain his health. After his spectacular change, I went to the same doctor in the hope he could help me with the migraines I'd been suffering with for a decade, despite visiting many neurologists in Spain. After taking his advice and changing my diet, I managed to get rid of them in a couple of weeks. From then on, I carried the same interest as my father in learning more about healthy eating and integrative health.

My education and training were in business and at that time I worked in fashion. However, my father and I felt a commitment to share our passion with as many people as possible, with the long-term goal of creating an establishment that combined the most effective and proven natural therapies with highly therapeutic nutrition, alongside the latest advancements in Western medicine, especially with respect to preventative medicine, genetics and healthy ageing. Without a doubt, being able to improve



Genetic testing is one of many cutting edge approaches at SHA

SHAWELLNESS

The flagship site in Spain consistently reaches full capacity



SHAWELLNESS

the health and wellbeing of others is infinitely more exciting to me than the world of fashion!

What does 'wellness' mean to you?

We've all seen wellness become a more normal part of our lives in the last decade. Obviously, I'd love to tell you that I see an acupuncturist daily, but that's not the case. Like most people, I've got lots of priorities, with a young family at home to care for and a competitive business to grow. However, I'm now in my 40s and make sure I carve out time to allow me to achieve optimal performance. For the past few years, I've gone full force with daily meditation, which helps me stay sane and balanced. I make sure to exercise a few times a week and eat healthy balanced meals 80 per cent of the time - because you have to have some fun too! These are all basic wellness concepts that most people are familiar with and that I think we should try not to compromise on despite our busy lives.

What's the key to SHA's success?

The integrative and results-oriented SHA Method is definitely a determinant factor, as is our spirit of constant evolution and genuine care that all of our talented team have instilled within them.

Who are your guests?

Typical SHA guests are men and women between the ages of 35-55 who seek to spend their free time evolving, learning about themselves and constantly striving to improve their health.



SHA, started by Alfredo (centre), is very much a family business

When we first launched only 30 per cent of guests were men, but today it's nearly an equal split between males and females.

Recently we've seen an increase in solo travellers – those who chase a transformative rather than a pampering experience. In fact, the majority of guests who come to the clinic, come alone.

What do they come for?

There are three main trends that continue to gain traction. We've always known that programmes must start with the most accurate diagnosis, for example, but genetic testing has opened up new horizons for us and means everything can be hyper-personalised. Genomic tests give as much information as possible, allowing us to understand and implement the most effective treatment for any individual.

Gut health, including intestinal microbiota care and detox programmes, and healthy nutrition

continue to be at the centre of SHA's offering as they're intrinsically linked to quality of life.

Holidays tailored to relaxation, focusing on mental wellness and stress relief, are becoming a necessity to alleviate the effects of the months spent in confinement. We've always believed that exercising the mind is fundamental to achieving complete wellbeing. Our guests spend time with therapists and doctors to identify the internal and external factors that are generating stress in their daily lives and together they work out the best therapies to restore emotional balance.

What are your most popular treatments?

We're experiencing an increased interest in revitalising medicine, which seeks to restore the balance and function of the body, its organs and tissues. This involves several approaches, including ozone, chelation therapy (removing metals) and intravenous laser therapy, as well as cell bioanalysis. ▶



The 31 wellness residences in Mexico were snapped up a year in advance



► We're also seeing an increased interest in our neurocognitive medicine unit, which offers treatments such as transcranial electrical stimulation.

Non-invasive dermo aesthetic treatments, treating issues such as pigmentation, lack of luminosity, wrinkles or loose skin, are popular among our highest-spending guests.

Our guests also love to add a la carte high-tech treatments such as Icoone, Vela Shape or Indiba.

Why is now the right time to go global?

Over the years we've received countless proposals to open in different countries and have always been very cautious in that we'll only expand when we consider we can maintain the concept and standards of excellence that characterise us. We feel this moment has arrived.

Why Mexico and Abu Dhabi specifically?

We've explored multiple potential international locations, assessing climate, environment and access to clinical resources. An in-depth analysis showed Mexico and the UAE were best suited to the needs of the business. Demand for our services in these regions is also strong.

Will you change the offering according to location?

Both will offer the traditional SHA Method and health programmes, but we do anticipate that each site will attract guests with specific needs.

We think guests staying in Mexico will seek a retreat-focused approach, with anti-stress or holistic therapies, for example, and that SHA Emirates guests are likely to focus on revitalising medical treatments, such as ozone therapy, and also non-invasive aesthetic medical treatments.

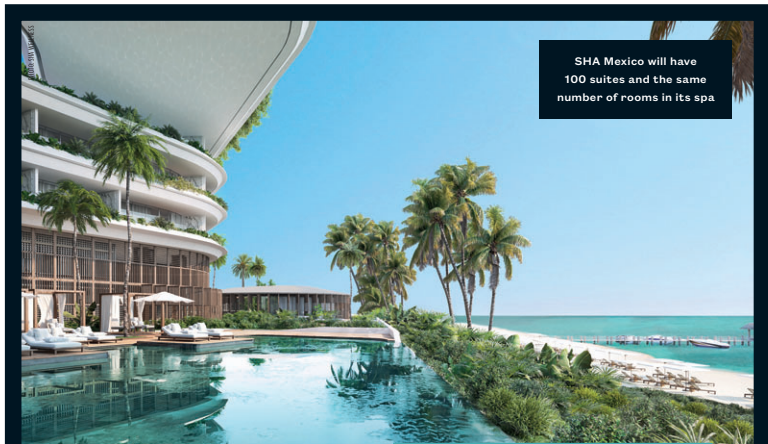
Increasing numbers of guests come for stress relief, mental wellness and relaxation



Our dream is to create the world's sixth Blue Zone



Interest in neurocognitive medicine is growing



SHA Mexico will have 100 suites and the same number of rooms in its spa

What will make SHA Mexico so special?

It's in the perfect spot in the north of Riviera Maya, just 30 minutes from Cancun's international airport, and it's going to be unprecedented for several reasons. With seven hectares of native nature and 500m of white sandy beach, it will be a paradisiacal location for guests to achieve their health goals.

Its architecture, which replicates the structure of a DNA strand, is being led by Mexican studio Sordo Madaleno with an organic and contemporary design ethos that will use renewable and locally-sourced materials.

Opening this November, there'll be 100 treatment rooms, 100 suites and 31 wellness residences which, I'm thrilled to say, we've encountered a high demand for – all were sold very quickly to a number of different international buyers.

Tell us more about the residences

They'll be some of the healthiest in the world and are a game-changing move that will ensure SHA Mexico is the destination of choice for consumers pursuing wellness.

Every detail has been designed with wellbeing in mind – from the location, architecture and the design of the buildings to the choice of natural and sustainable materials, air and water purification systems and home automation based on circadian rhythm. All with the most renowned medical experts at guests' disposal.

How will SHA Emirates stand out?

Due to open in 2025, SHA Emirates is located in the new AlJurf coastal development halfway between Abu Dhabi and Dubai (just over 30 minutes from each city). The 12.5-hectare site will be set amidst hundreds of thousands of planted

FAVOURITES

Treatment: Watsu

Spa: Four Seasons Park Lane in London

Film: *The Pursuit of Happyness*

Book: *Atomic Habits*, by James Clear

Place: Italy, especially the Amalfi Coast

Season: Summer

Best advice: My

grandfather reminded me from a very young age "A man reaps what he sows"

Who do you admire?

My parents. They're a constant example of teamwork, effort and courage

trees that form a verdant forest in the middle of the desert, so guests will be immersed in a natural world like no other. It's not what many would think of when they consider a wellness clinic in the Emirates, but that's exactly what we wanted to achieve.

It's being created by local developer IMKAN, with an investment of AED600m (US\$163.4m, €146.8m, £124.5m), and will include 110 treatment rooms, 120 suites and a large real estate component with 150 residences.

Our dream is to create the world's sixth Blue Zone – places which are recognised as having the highest concentration of centenarians. We envisage a tranquil wellness island, surrounded by nature, that will be an escape from busy city life. It will be a real first for the region and attract travellers from around the world.

What's the rationale for launching AB Living Group, your new global development firm?

AB Living is an overarching company that pulls together our wellbeing [AB Wellness], real estate [AB Properties] and hotel [AB Hospitality] divisions which collectively account for more than 30 years of experience in



SHA Emirates will be a forest resort in the UAE

► creating unique leisure projects. We'll specialise in delivering luxury properties around the world.

AB Hospitality has just partnered with Marriott in Mexico, hasn't it?

Yes. We're developing four all-inclusive properties in and around Costa Mujeres, where SHA Mexico is being built, that Marriott will manage.

The first project we announced was a St Regis which will be next door to the SHA Wellness Clinic. The 162-room resort will have its own high-end spa as well as a real estate component and owners of these residences will have access to SHA Mexico's facilities and team of experts.



Our motivation is to play a part in creating a world free of preventable health issues

The other properties we'll be working on as part of the collaboration are Almare Luxury Collection on Isla Mujeres, opening in 2024; JW Marriott Costa Mujeres, opening in 2026; and W Hotel Costa Mujeres, opening in 2026.

Will you look to expand elsewhere with similar deals?

We hope so! If someone had told us 20 years ago that we were going to do all this, we probably wouldn't have believed it, so yes!

What are your long-term goals?

We're always on the lookout for new opportunities and our overall aim is to have a SHA on every continent in the next 10 years. With our flagship site in Europe and now those planned in the Americas and the Middle East, we're almost halfway there.

Ultimately, our motivation is to play a part in creating a world free of preventable health issues. Having a SHA Wellness Clinic on all continents is part of that. But we also have many other initiatives we're working on that will enable us to bring this valuable concept of life to anyone who wants it – even if they don't have the opportunity to visit SHA. ●

PHOTO: SHA WELLNESS



Macrobiotics and gut health are a key focus at SHA

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Satellite sites are great feeders to the main property and vice versa. Around 10 to 20 per cent of clientele use both and this figure will grow as locations increase

Fivelements is still exploring its Habitat club-style membership-based concept

Ask an expert...

SATELLITE SITES

What could be better for the spa user than an annual week-long retreat topped up with regular visits to a local day spa to keep health goals on track? A burgeoning trend suggests this option is coming down the tracks. Kath Hudson reports

Destination spas are fantastic for a 360 overhaul, but the majority of guests visit once a year, which will never have as much impact on people's health as year-round support.

In response, a growing number of operators are kickstarting rollout plans for satellite centres, usually in urban locations where they can connect with their clients all year round. An extension of the brand, these more accessible sites have pared down offerings of the flagships, but with the same ethos, level of service and access to expertise.

Operators who've already launched satellite sites say they're great as feeders for the

main property and vice versa. Around 10 to 20 per cent of clients use both and this figure will likely grow as locations increase.

It sounds an attractive proposition for operators to go down this road, but it's not without challenges as it involves heavy investment and locations are sought with exacting criteria meaning they're not easy to find.

If this becomes a widespread trend, it could mean the democratisation of spas, with more people who can't travel to the main locations being able to access expertise, treatments and health technologies in their cities. Will we see more operators following this course of action? We ask the experts...

Simone Gibertoni CEO, Clinique La Prairie

Creating smaller sites around the world is absolutely part of our strategy and we have two concepts we're rolling out.

Longevity Hubs have been designed to offer a first access to our approach in city locations, so clients can regularly engage with experts to build healthy routines. The offer is focused on longevity, wellbeing and aesthetics, and services include health assessments, cryotherapy, far-infrared light, nutraceuticals, IV drips and brain stimulation.

We now have Longevity Hubs open in Madrid, Bangkok and Doha and the long-term goal is to reach about 40 in major cities worldwide.



Health Resorts will bridge the gap between Longevity Hubs and our flagship site in Switzerland. Set in stunning locations, they will offer week-long bespoke longevity and detox programmes combining preventative medicine and genetics/epigenetics, with wellbeing, lifestyle and nutrition plans.

Our first resort opens in Anji, China, in 2024



Clinique La Prairie's flagship spa is in Switzerland

The long-term objective is to reach about 40 Longevity Hubs in major cities around the world

and two more will follow in the Middle East and the USA by 2028. There will be no more than 10 of these with a maximum of 50 rooms each – which is a big challenge considering the investment required. But we can't replicate our ultra-personalised Swiss service if we go any larger.

The difficulty with expansion is retaining the

highest degree of exclusivity and premium service as we grow. It's an ambitious, but essential, balance.

All our projects will also contribute to what is at the heart of our company vision – to be at the forefront of innovation, with a commitment to source and develop the best technologies in the field of longevity.

John T G Nielsen general manager, Fivelements Retreat

If we can locate a good business partner and the numbers stack up, then satellite sites are a great way of growing the Fivelements footprint. Since being acquired by Evolution Wellness, Asia's largest fitness network, we can tap into its knowledge and experience so the brand extension is less of a risk for the operator, developers and investors. On the downside, any stand-alone venue requires a large upfront sum and regular ongoing expenses, which impacts ROI.

We tried this with the Fivelements Habitat in Hong Kong, where we created a club-style membership environment based on our flagship destination in Bali.



Although it was showing many positive signs, the Hong Kong unrest, riots and COVID-19, meant the club never had the chance to reach its potential.

While we're still exploring various models where the Habitat concept can be incorporated into projects, we're also looking to form other partnerships. In April, for example, we'll be

Satellite sites are a great way of growing the Fivelements footprint if the numbers stack up

launching and managing a branded wellness centre at the five-star Marianna Resort in Lake Toba, Indonesia. We're open to having an equity stake in assets like this in the future, but these agreements tend to be slightly more challenging to complete. Lease options are also an opportunity, but again the landlord must be seen as a good partner to ensure future financial success.

Our flagship retreat has a unique location on the sacred Ayung River, which offers a complete

immersion in nature and a permaculture garden where we harvest raw materials for our treatments. Fivelements Wellness Lake Toba will offer a similarly spectacular location, on the shores of the world's largest volcanic lake. The land is rich, producing Sumatra coffee, kaffir lime, garlic and other wonderful produce which we can incorporate into the treatments.

Another big appeal of this partnership is the exposure and future opportunities that come with being part of a new five-star hotel.

Nils Behrens chief marketing officer, Lanserhof

To get the full Lanserhof experience you need to stay for 10 days, this gives the gut a break and the mental system can also rest. You can do this at our destination retreats – two in Germany and one in Austria. As most of our guests come just once a year, however, we wanted to create an outpatient experience, where people could come for the day, get some of the benefits and keep themselves on track. We see smaller sites as a companion for the whole journey, allowing us to remain in constant contact with clients.

We chose Hamburg for our first site because it's where



many of our clients live. London at the Arts Club in Mayfair was our second site because the second highest number of our clients come from the UK and most of them are from London.

Smaller sites will be part of our ongoing business strategy and we're constantly evaluating locations. It's

It's difficult to find the right site as we need to have a city of a minimum size with suitable infrastructure

difficult to find the right site as we need to have a city of a minimum size and suitable infrastructure. Also, it's more complicated to develop medical centres than a regular wellness and hospitality offering, since regulations and health services vary between countries. As a result, we can't just create the perfect blueprint to roll out.

Smaller urban sites are much quicker to develop than a retreat, but we're still learning what the

ideal offering is. Hamburg started out as a preventative model and is moving towards a more acute one. London started out as acute and is moving more towards preventative, performance and longevity.

Fifteen per cent of our retreat clients use our urban sites and the two concepts complement each other, creating markets for the other. Most of our clients in London became members first, then visited the retreat afterwards.



Lanserhof's two concepts create markets for each other



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OPINION

Six Senses Place, a new club model, will build on the already successful brand

While a week-long retreat is great for a recalibration, often the real work is done when people leave the spa

Anna Bjurstam wellness pioneer, Six Senses

We all need to bring more balance into our lives. We're busier and lonelier than ever. Although we can work from anywhere, we can't seem to focus. While we're trying to be proactive about our health, we're overwhelmed by the choices.

Technology gives us the means to be more efficient, but less human connection and interaction can often make us inefficient. We're lacking connection to other humans and community, physical and mental space and lacking opportunities to get away from it all in the middle of it all.

Our latest concept, Six Senses Place, aims to fill this gap, allowing people to join a local community which can keep them on track.



While a week-long retreat is great for a recalibration, often the real work is done when people leave the spa. Behavioural science has shown small incremental changes are longer lasting than boot camp for a week.

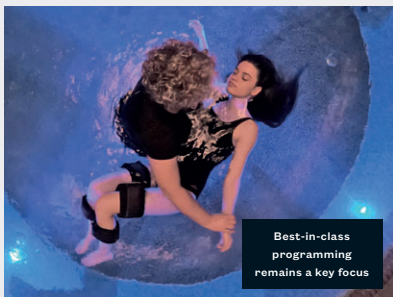
Reflecting the values we're known for, this private members club will have a community-feel and our aim is to address wellbeing on a number of different planes.

We want to support our members to live their life

to the fullest: balancing work, family, friends, social causes and wellbeing. These all-in-one venues will help members thrive, offering wellness guidance and practices which cut through the noise, as well as best-in-class programming, facilities and experiences, emotional and personalised

service and outstanding food and beverage under one sustainable roof.

The concept will provide us with the opportunity to build on our brand. We're opening our first Six Senses Place in London at the end of 2023, while six more will follow in Bangkok, Shanghai, Lisbon, Dubai and the US. ●



Best-in-class programming remains a key focus

swiss line

BY DERMALAB

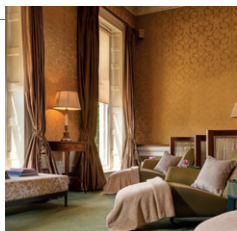


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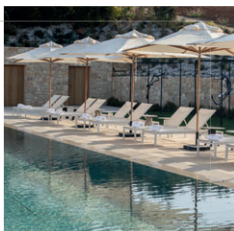
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WORKING WELL

Spa operators and corporate offices can now offer a comprehensive, six-part wellness journey designed by Art of Cryo to elevate health

Art of Cryo's latest innovation, the Tec-Spa Module (TSM), is a biohacking solution that combines three Art of Cryo appliances and three health-tracking devices to create a complete journey.

The six-part experience starts with Art of Cryo's electric Vaultz cryo chambers where guests enjoy programmes tailored to their needs. Next comes a cocktail of light therapy, ionised oxygen therapy,

aromatherapy and long-wave heat therapy in the award-winning Multi Cryo-Hacking System (MCS). The third and final pillar involves intermittent vacuum therapy in the Art of Cryo Flow System to stimulate the lymphatic system.

In order to measure guests' physiological changes and progress, they undergo pre- and post-treatment 3D body scans, have a breath analysis and get feedback from wearing a smart ring called the MCRC Vital X.

According to Art of Cryo, the most attractive benefits are the high-quality treatments, visible results, short treatment times and the non-invasive, holistic approach – all characteristics that make the device a perfect solution for workplace wellbeing.

Flexible treatment options

Completing the entire TSM process takes around 45 minutes, however, to optimise time, the therapies can be micro-dosed at



PHOTO: ART OF CRYO

The TSM can elevate employee wellbeing and as a consequence, concentration and productivity

Rainer Bolsinger



different times throughout the day or a working week, providing an invigorating break for employees, which can increase productivity.

With only an 18sq m space needed for the devices, the TSM can be easily set up by Art of Cryo engineers. All that's required is to connect it to power, the internet and in some hot parts of the world, connection to a cool-water line.

All elements of the TSM are easy to use, fully programmable and operate with a user-friendly

interface. The equipment also only requires minimal staffing.

"The TSM can elevate employee wellbeing and as a consequence, concentration and productivity," says Rainer Bolsinger, chief sales and marketing officer.

"Giving employees access to this technology is another way for companies to reward their staff and the therapies help employees relax, feel good, refresh their mind, re-energise them and improve their mood."

City spaces

Bolsinger believes micro-dosing therapies is not only suitable for people who work in offices, but also for those in urban environments.

"Offering high-performance therapies using time-saving equipment is now highly popular," he says. "In cities, people live a fast-paced life but still want to stay healthy and take care of their wellbeing."

"This is the exact feeling the TSM gives. Express treatments offer city dwellers the opportunity to restart and balance their body and mind."

Art of Cryo has designed the TSM to help all humans operate at the next level, by improving sleep, nutrition and activity, resulting in better overall health, increased energy, less stress and a better chance of living a long life. ●

More: www.artofcryo.com

WHAT consumers WANT

Euphoria Retreat in
Greece makes the
most of outdoor space



A general, overall reboot is the main motivation for wellness travel and nature/outdoor activities are the top must-have, according to the Wellness Tourism Association's latest consumer survey, as Anne Dimon reports

With a view to helping spa, hotel and tour operators understand wellness-minded travellers, the Wellness Tourism Association (WTA) has just revealed the results of its annual consumer survey. The WTA represents operators and professionals in the sector and the fourth edition of its *Wellness Travel Consumer Survey* is based on insights from close to 1,500 respondents (see p56). It underscores what we've all come to acknowledge: wellness

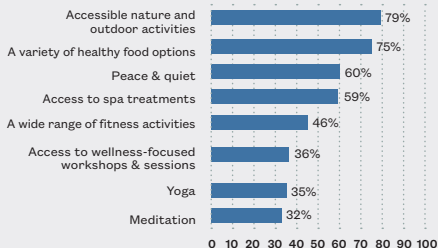
travel, which enables people to support their healthy lifestyle and sense of wellbeing, is clearly in demand as people take to the road once again.

"Of the 100,000 trip pages created through our platform in 2022, 35 per cent of those were wellness-focused," says Shayna Zand, head of partnerships at online booking platform WeTravel, which sponsored this year's survey. "That's a significant 25 per cent year-over-year increase in overall bookings plus wellness."

This corresponds with WTA's survey results. Close to 90 per cent of the respondents reported they now



Graph 1: What do you feel are the 'must haves' for your personal wellness vacation?*



*Source: Wellness Travel Consumer Survey 2022



**90 per cent of
respondents incorporate
wellness activities
when they travel**

incorporate wellness activities when they travel. This is up slightly from the 2021 survey. More people accept the fact that they're responsible for their own self-care and that becoming healthy and staying healthy is about being proactive.

But what are the wants, needs and demands of those planning wellness holidays? The WTA's five key findings are detailed below.

1. Length of stay and price point

For those looking to book in the future, three to five nights is the preferred length of stay for most consumers (54 per cent), followed by seven nights (29 per cent). Shorter stays dwindle dramatically in popularity, with only 9 per cent of people considering a two-day, three-night package.

These same people have a clear idea of how much they're willing to spend – only three per cent are prepared to pay more than US\$5,000 for their wellness holiday. An overwhelming majority are looking to spend either US\$2,500 or less (53 per cent) or between a US\$2,500 and US\$5,000 price point (44 per cent).

2. Nature rules (once again)

Since the WTA introduced consumer surveys back in 2018, the desire to be in nature continues to dominate. In the 2022 survey, 79 per cent of respondents rated "Accessible nature and outdoor activities" as a must-have (see Graph 1). Euphoria in Greece and the Garden of the Gods resort in the US are great examples of operators who are taking sessions outdoors.

Those looking to attract the growing number of wellness-minded travellers but not fortunate enough to have forest trails, thermal springs or mountain vistas in their backyard, however, need to accept the growing importance of nature and consider developing a quiet garden space and making it available to clients and guests as part of a wellness package.

3. Where spas fit

Number four on the list of must-haves – behind "Accessible nature and outdoor activities", "A variety of healthy food options" and "Peace and quiet" – was "Access to spa treatments". Consumers are beginning to realise that they can plan their wellness travels and holidays without including a spa experience. Now for ▶

RESEARCH

► those of you reading this who are spa operators, do not be discouraged. Treatments and the entire spa experience remain important aspects of the growing wellness tourism sector. While they're not mandatory for wellness travel itself, they can certainly be built into wellness programmes and multi-day retreats.

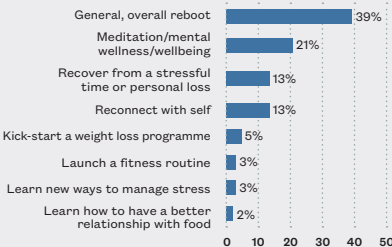
At Alba Wellness Valley by Fusion in Vietnam, for instance, a free 50-minute massage per person is included in every resort booking. "We've taken the spa experience to another level," says GM Hylton Lipkin, pointing out that this approach is a unique selling point for the resort which has "definitely been a contributing factor to the growth in occupancy".

4. Self-guided programmes

When asked about their preference for a bespoke programme versus a structured one for a wellness holiday, the vast majority (just under 80 per cent) of survey respondents selected the "self-guided programme with an opportunity to pick and choose from a menu of options."

WTA members are responding to this preference with packages that can be personalised according to specific goals and interests. Kimberly Rossi, director of Wellness at Art of Living Retreat Center in North Carolina, USA says, "Back in 2019 we began noticing that guests wanted more flexible retreats instead of structured signature programmes, so we created Rest and Relaxation, a self-guided offering and it's quickly become one of our most sought-after retreats." ►

Graph 2: If you're planning to take a wellness vacation in 2022 or 2023 what would be the one main goal?*



*Source: Wellness Travel Consumer Survey 2022



**A wellness vacation is
planned with a specific
intention in mind**

Consumers
want self-guided
programmes

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Spa is not mandatory for wellness travel, it needs to be added to programme and retreat packages

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The 2022 *Wellness Travel Consumer Survey* collected responses from nearly 1,500 consumers across 49 countries and territories.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

- ◆ 68% of consumers were from the USA
- ◆ 89% of respondents were female
- ◆ 85% were either gen X or baby boomers
- ◆ 44% were married
- ◆ 37% preferred to travel solo

Conducted online over a period of three months (March to May 2022), the survey was administered by the WTA in collaboration with its research associate Danny Kessler, assistant professor and director of the Workplace Wellness Research Lab at Dongseo University, International College in South Korea. Results were revealed in December.

Alba Wellness Valley in Vietnam offers free spa treatments as a USP

5. Top goals

The survey presented a list of eight popular wellness holiday goals to participants and posed the question: "If you're planning to take a wellness vacation in 2022 or 2023 what would be the one main goal?"

"General, overall reboot" topped the list (see Graph 2), followed by "Meditation/mental wellness/wellbeing" and, not surprisingly considering the pandemic, "Recover from a stressful time or personal loss". We're reminded here that by its very definition – a wellness vacation is planned with a specific intention in mind.

At the WTA's 2022 International Wellness Tourism Conference in December, speaker Molly Anderson, vice president of sales and programming at Canyon Ranch, pointed out to attendees the need for a post-COVID shift toward more purposeful programming. She says: "intention-based guests are seeking guidance and many of our programmes are purpose-driven in response to specific goals."

Flexibility is key

The overall conclusion here is that personal wellness is top-of-mind as travel resumes and consumers are much more demanding. Spa operators, retreat programmers, tour leaders and others in the wellness space need to accept that having some flexibility with offerings is key. Wellness travellers come from various demographics and with varying demands so one size, definitely, does not fit all. ●



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POWER SESSION KEYNOTE LINEUP:

DAY 1



Neil Pasricha

DAY 2



Erica Dhawan

DAY 3



Ben Nemtin

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VITAMIN BOOST

French beauty house Laboratoires Multaler has launched two new serums that deliver outstanding results for all skin types

Pioneer in aromatherapy, Laboratoires Multaler is the company behind Yon-Ka Paris, the phyto-aromatic skincare line that harnesses the forces of nature to deliver visible, proven results.

The laboratories have poured their expertise into creating two new products – a professional facial product – Serum C25 – and a retail product called Serum C20.

Both are powerful new vitamin C oleo-serums.

The products are genderless and vegan, making them suitable for all – in spa and at home.

Made in France and formulated with 99.9 per cent natural ingredients, the new-generation serums quickly and visibly correct lack of radiance, wrinkles and dark spots to create younger and more luminous skin.

FOR IN-SPA AND HOME USE

At the intersection of medicine and spa treatments, the new Yon-Ka Vitamin C²⁵ facial combines a peel containing 30 per cent glycolic acid with Serum C25 which contains 25 per cent stable vitamin C.

The 10-step facial takes 60 minutes and has a suggested retail price of between €130 and €185

Following the first facial, wrinkles are less visible, the skin is more elastic and dermatologists measured that radiance has increased by 33 per cent. In the clinical trial, 100 per cent of respondents also said

*We have succeeded
in bringing together
all the advantages of
vitamin C, but without
its disadvantages*

Karen Andrieux,
marketing director, Yon-Ka



The C20 retail serum comes packaged in recyclable glass and FSC cardboard

they wanted to repeat the facial frequently and would recommend its effectiveness to others.

Retail product, Serum C20, which contains 20 per cent stable vitamin C, is used at home between facials to deliver improvements to the skin. The product has proven its effectiveness in as little as five days on the complexion radiance and evenness of the skin.

After 14 days, the anti-aging effect is visible, and increases after each day of use. The effectiveness on dark spots has also been proven. Details of the test can be seen at www.yonka.com.

A NEW APPROACH TO VITAMIN C

Unlike standard vitamin C which comes in the form of ascorbic acid, which can irritate the skin, the vitamin C used by Yon-Ka is fat-soluble for improved bio-assimilation and stabilised so it can be used at high concentrations while being completely safe.

"We've succeeded in bringing together all the advantages of vitamin C, but without its disadvantages," says Yon-Ka's marketing director, Karen Andrieux. "Our formulas have been tested under dermatological control on all skin types – even sensitive – with perfect tolerance."



PHOTO: LABORA TOIRES MULTIMEDIA

Yon-Ka has developed a one hour facial using the professional C25 serum

The products were formulated using isopalmitic acid and a sustainable, environmentally-friendly active ingredient called ascorbyl tetraisopalmitate – a 100 per cent naturally derived form of vitamin C.

Both these substances have biotech origins, in which non-GMO corn sugars undergo fermentation. Creating ingredients by this process makes them easily absorbable by the skin, giving an antioxidant action and allowing the stable vitamin C to increase collagen synthesis.

The formulae have been boosted with the addition of native turmeric and pomegranate plant cells to help regulate melanogenesis, as well as organic apricot oil, orange essential oil and Yon-Ka Quintessence, an exclusive complex of five essential oils – lavender, geranium, rosemary, cypress, thyme – that increases the power of the new formulae.

Laboratoires Multaler called on bio-fermentation and cellular cultivation to create the new

products which have been formulated without water, preservatives, acids or alcohol.

A SAFE AND NATURAL PRODUCT

Both C20 and C25 serums have a thin, lightweight, non-greasy texture and penetrate quickly to deliver a cocooned feeling of comfort to the most sensitive skin. They're non-comedogenic and provide a silky finish.

Yon-Ka believes that beauty reveals physical and psychological harmony, so each of its products and treatments is designed to deliver a multi-sensory, deeply personal experience.

As a French family brand, Yon-Ka is proud of its policy of designing and creating its products sustainably and responsibly in France, with the utmost respect for nature and the people who produce, grow and harvest the precious botanical active ingredients. ●

More: www.yonka.com

PHOTO: PHOTOFEST/ISTOCK/ALAMY

MYSTERY SHOPPER *by Cassandra Cavanah, founder, Cavanah Communications*

The setting gives
Cavanah high hopes for
her lomi lomi massage

Spa Montage

Kapalua Bay, Hawaii



PHOTO: CASSANDRA CAVANAH

Holidaying in paradise raises the wellness expectation bar... so how does Spa Montage in Hawaii measure up? Cassandra Cavanah goes undercover to find out

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Cavanah found noises from outside the treatment room a little intrusive

Spending time on the beautiful and picturesque Hawaiian island of Maui is a wellness experience in itself. The beaches, the waters, the warm breezes. It's easy to spend the whole day simply chilling out after, say, a morning yoga or stand-up paddle board session or a hike along the shores taking in the mesmerising views.

Pulling yourself away from these simple joys to head to a spa requires some sacrifice (she says with a heavy dose of irony). But, truly, when access to wellness and relaxation is pretty much all around you, you can have high hopes when it comes to a spa treatment that costs US\$305 (€281, £248) plus tax and the mandatory 20 per cent service charge, aka 'tip'.

So, while I was very much looking forward to my 90-minute lomi lomi massage at the Spa Montage Kapalua Bay, the experience had to be stellar or it was sure to fall short of expectations.

BOOKING

My experience, which took place just after the Thanksgiving holiday in the US, started with a booking in mid-October but I was surprised (and disappointed) to see only six treatments listed online and none of them was the island-specific, outdoor lomi lomi, 90-minute massage I wanted.

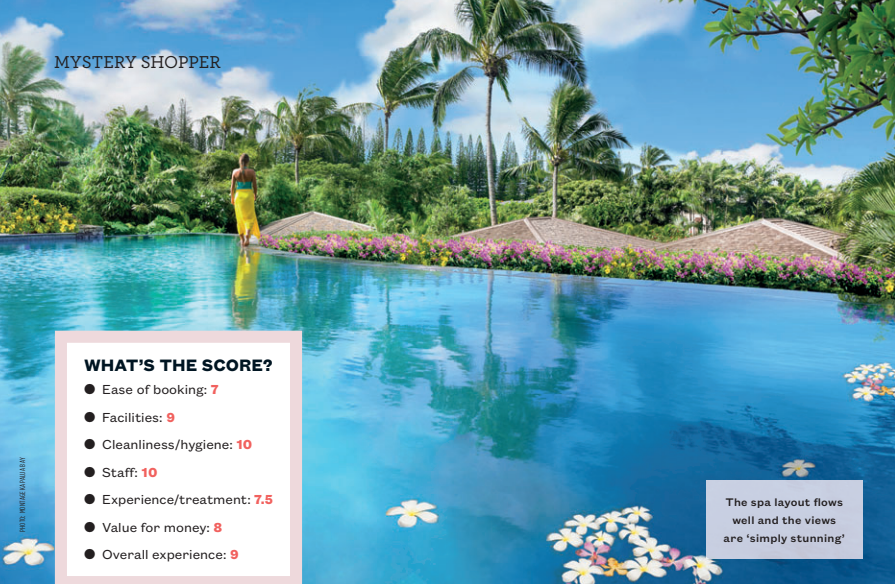
Given I'm in California, a call to Hawaii was no problem (not sure international customers would feel the same) and it was a much more personalised

“

I was hoping for a bit more of a full island sensory experience from the products

and informative experience detailing my access to all spa amenities and the availability of a US\$150 (€138, £122) day pass if someone wanted to join me. I was assured they were wide open for the day I was looking to book which was over a month in advance. My guess is most guests book on arrival in Hawaii or, specifically, arrival at the Montage, so the booking software is probably not an issue.

The day before my treatment, I received an extremely detailed (live, not recorded) voicemail from the spa team at the Montage that once again welcomed me, outlined my spa access and details of my treatment and reminded me of the six-hour cancellation policy, giving me plenty of time to opt out with no penalty if I wanted to (a very nice touch).



WHAT'S THE SCORE?

- Ease of booking: **7**
- Facilities: **9**
- Cleanliness/hygiene: **10**
- Staff: **10**
- Experience/treatment: **7.5**
- Value for money: **8**
- Overall experience: **9**

The spa layout flows well and the views are 'simply stunning'

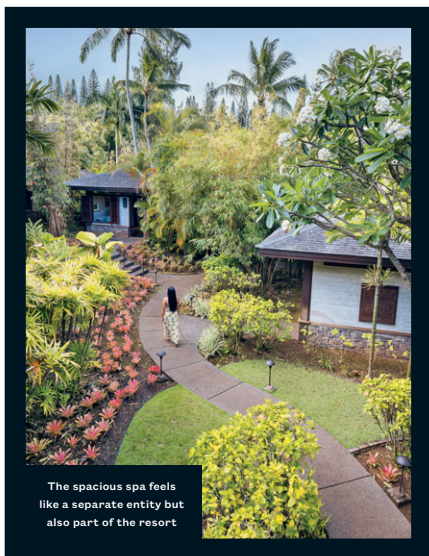
► DESIGN: MOSTLY ISLAND CHIC

This is a spacious spa situated on a hill overlooking lush tropical greenery and the ocean. Its location and position are absolutely lovely within the property as a whole – feeling like a separate entity but also part of the resort.

I'm greeted by an attendant who takes care of me throughout my visit (another nice touch). Though you walk downstairs, this is not a basement spa. A large ladies' changing area (with plenty of showers featuring delicious-smelling and feeling Kerstin Florian products) leads right outside to the ladies-only hydrotherapy area with a spa pool, humid and aromatic steamroom and sauna with a beautiful picture window (not so great for privacy but lovely from within).

This flows into a co-ed area with yet another spa pool and infinity pool where the views come into full effect (what a sunset!).

A couple of sub-par features were a cold rain shower which either pummelled down from a few outlets or dribbled from others and an indoor relaxation area with very stuffy formal 'drawing room' chairs which I had no desire to stay in. But I imagine folks never make it there – plenty of singles and couples were lounging around the pool and there's no fear the spa's suffering from any post-COVID downturn (a fact later confirmed by my therapist, who said, "We've really never been busier").



The spacious spa feels like a separate entity but also part of the resort



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RIGHT OF REPLY

Jessica Candy, director spa & retail, Montage Kapalua Bay

We welcome guests with gracious Hawaiian hospitality and offer an array of authentic and effective treatments featuring island ingredients and honouring local wellness traditions.

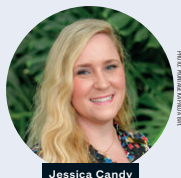
Our new booking platform launched in early October with a limited menu, but since this review, we've added more services to it and repaired our bamboo rain showers which refresh guests and stimulate their circulatory system.

Our beloved outdoor haies create a tropical oasis with natural sounds

**We've added more services
for online booking and
repaired our bamboo showers**

and, occasionally, sounds from our neighbours. Due to this and outdoor temperatures out of our control, we also accommodate our guests in indoor plantation-style spa suites inspired by Kapalua's pineapple farming history.

Our caring associates always intend to exceed guests' expectations in providing a tranquil authentic Hawaiian spa experience. We value this feedback so we can constantly improve our offerings.



Jessica Candy

PHOTO: MONTAGE KAPALUA BAY

► THE EXPERIENCE

My massage took place in a simply stunning outdoor 'hale' (or room). Large shutters are closed for undressing and then re-opened during the treatment, so you get beautiful views and breezes.

I'm told 'lomi' means 'to rub' in Hawaiian "so every massage is basically lomi lomi". But the magic occurs when the hands and arms move to mimic the ebb and flow of the ocean's water.

At the start, my therapist made sure I was comfortable and took note of a fusion in my lower back which is always a slight issue. Her communication before, during and after the massage made me feel comfortable and in full control. At one point, I asked for more pressure and got it.

I was slightly disappointed that there was no discussion about the brand being used and I wasn't asked to smell or choose my massage oil. I was hoping for a bit more of a full island sensory experience from the products.

Also, as my hale backed onto a path I could hear a motorised vehicle (golf cart maybe?) and people walking by speaking loudly. It didn't happen often but was distracting when it did.

My absolute favourite part of the treatment was when I turned over to lie on my back and the hydraulic Living Earth Crafts massage table seemed to magically reconfigure to a position that took any lingering niggles out of my lower back. My therapist made great use of this table throughout the treatment, adjusting the height as needed.

When the massage was over and I opened my eyes, the room's shutters were wide open and I was facing a picture-perfect view of palm trees.

My conclusion? The massage itself was good if not exceptional. But it's the majestic beauty of the place and the people (all staff were absolutely lovely and catered to my every need) that remain with me as I sit here writing in my LA office a week later. ●

“It's the majestic beauty of the place and the people that remain with me



Guests are welcomed with gracious Hawaiian hospitality

PHOTO: MONTAGE KAPALUA BAY



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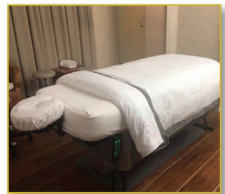
Low Height Masters' and Signature Collection



The Performalift creates unparalleled guest experiences at the Beverly Hills Hotel.



The low height ProLuxe tables combine the best features of a spa and treatment table at the Hlatus Spa.



The Talisse is feature rich with storage and warming drawer options. Shown here at Laguna Cliffs Marriott.

Jessica Wadley | studio.spatable.com | WhatsApp: +1 717.659.7403



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CHILL FACTOR

KĒPOS by Goco in Crete has been offering cryotherapy by MECOTEC to the satisfaction of guests

Much is expected of spa equipment. Each piece must be safe to use, effective in delivering outcomes and reliable. It must also blend seamlessly into a luxurious design concept. The cryo:one series from MECOTEC checks all these boxes, according to spa owners.

"MECOTEC's whole-body cryo chambers offer visitors a special experience", says Dr Sultan Masoud Fawzi, a consultant doctor responsible for specialised treatments at KĒPOS by Goco Daikos Cove. Since spring 2022, the cryo:one plus has been an integral part of this pioneering hub of wellbeing in Crete.

"We've received very positive feedback from our clients; who've been pleased with the results," Fawzi said. "Many have reported feeling refreshed, renewed and uplifted after a cryotherapy session."



*MECOTEC's whole body
cryo chambers offer visitors
a special experience*

Dr Fawzi, KĒPOS by Goco



The cryo:one plus has become a daily cornerstone of therapeutic care in the facility because of its convenient, user-friendly features. It automatically dries itself before shutting down for the night, meaning it's ready for use the next morning within 45 minutes. With a larger-than-average interior, the cryo:one plus also offers freedom of movement during treatments.

Fawzi applauds the many benefits of the equipment: "Cryotherapy can help with muscle pain, joint pain, arthritis, weight loss, anxiety, depression and migraines," he said. "Following a fitness session in the BXR Gym, many clients like to do a post-workout cryotherapy treatment to support recovery and decrease muscle pain."

At Daikos Cove, the cryo:one plus was installed in a small room inside the wellness centre and the device's recoler equipment was placed about 20 metres away outside the facility. With this design, much of the technology lies hidden from visitors.

Yves Meilich, sales director of MECOTEC, lists many other advantages for customers and operators in addition to installation freedom: "The cryo:one plus is extremely compact, can be set up within a few hours, is ready for use in a short

The luxurious KÉPOS by Goco offers guests a full cryotherapy experience



With the cryo:one plus, owners and operators can expand their offerings

Yves Meilich, MECOTEC

time and is very quiet," he explains. "In addition, two customers can enjoy the treatment at the same time.

"With the cryo:one plus, owners and operators of spas and wellness and fitness centres can expand their offerings. It can become a new service that existing members will love and it will also appeal to new customer groups." ●

More: www.mecotec.net





The massage was 'dreamy' said Marcellin's daughter

“Children live in such a busy world, they also need ‘me time’

the summer. Like many parents, we teach our children about the importance of nutrition and exercise. The spa factor and its benefits are more complicated to demonstrate, however, because spas don't usually welcome babies and young children and heat experiences/spa pools are off-limits.

Yet Sabrina Mallaun, owner and manager of Das SeeMount (see p72), designed her new hotel with family spa time as part of the criteria. The fourth floor is an adult-only spa area and includes a steamroom, Finnish sauna and infrared sauna and has a strict spa etiquette of no bathing suits. The family-friendly fifth floor, however, is more relaxed. Guests can turn up in any kind of swimwear or casual clothing, and all facilities, including the vitality pool, hot tub and bio sauna, are open to everyone.

"Children have such a busy world, they also need me time," Mallaun told me during our stay. "To relax deeply, I think they need that. If the children are happy, the parents are relaxed and happy."

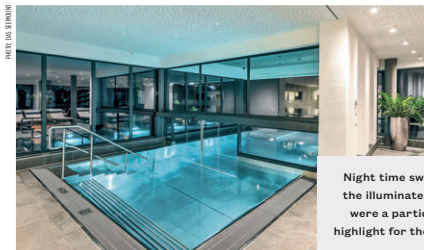
Of course, for parents, the reality is that spa time without kids is always going to be the optimal restorative option. However, Mallaun's vision bridges the gap for families who value wellness practices and wish to share them with their children. It not only introduces a future generation to this form of self-care but also allows them to discover the joy of rejuvenation that spa services deliver so uniquely.

GENUINE BONDING TIME

The indoor/outdoor design vitality pool has been designed with families in mind, whatever the weather. "It's possible for a family to be in the water together, even with a baby and even when it's cold outside." By the time my toddler had tentatively made his way down ▶



Rafting is one of many outdoor adventure activities



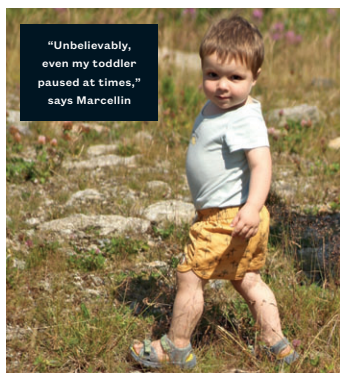
Night time swims in the illuminated pool were a particular highlight for the family



► the steps, the three bigger kids had whipped through the flap to the outdoor infinity space and were already basking in sunshine and experiencing bubble beds for the first time. Our pool sessions are habitually filled with swimming, diving and underwater gymnastics, but I witnessed moments where they actually paused, lay amidst the bubbles and then swam to the edge taking in the pure air and breathtaking Alpine mountainscape.

As the family area was open until 10pm, we indulged in after-dinner swims on several occasions. The illuminated infinity pool with its panoramas under the night sky was an unforgettable experience, for us and the children. When we weren't here, we'd spend an hour or so in the playroom, where the kids could play games and enjoy the mini climbing wall.

Outside, the pool connects to exterior terraces and a hot tub which all six of us could fit in comfortably. "This is amazing!" the girls squealed. They alternated between quiet moments, closing their eyes to feel the sun's rays as the water bubbled,



"Unbelievably, even my toddler paused at times," says Marcellin

WITTEDENK / ALAN HART / GETTY IMAGES

“This is amazing!”
the girls squealed

chatting animatedly and feeling for the water jets. It truly was genuine bonding family time and, unbelievably, the toddler even paused at times too.

The following day each of the children had 20-minute back and leg massages, using essential oils mixed with a little lemon. It was the first massage they'd ever experienced. "It made me feel like I was flying, I felt so dreamy," said my seven-year-old daughter. My nine-year-old son said he felt relaxed afterwards and that his post-hike legs were less achy.

My husband and I found our full-body massages as equally soothing and the unexpected hot stones were particularly beneficial for muscle tension.

BASE FOR WELLNESS

Das SeeMount is an excellent base to stay for family wellbeing. See's sports park and swimming lake is a five minute walk away. Twenty minutes by car in Ischgl, there's an open pool with a waterslide, as well as mountain-top adventure park Vida Truja for boating, rafting and trampolining – there's even a music-theme hiking trail. All mountain parks in the area are free, fun and designed to attract families.

For those with more ambitious fitness goals, there are challenging hikes, a glacier safari and some top-notch bouldering parks.

Coming up to her second summer season, Mallaun is looking to expand children's treatment options and, in keeping with the unique wellness region, is creating a signature massage that guests won't find anywhere else.



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Sabrina Mallaun

Hotel owner and manager, Das SeeMount

What's the hotel's backstory?

In 1994 my parents opened a small three-star hotel in See with about 20 rooms. Business grew and grew and we eventually replaced it in 2021 with a €14m new build. Running a spa hotel like this was my dream.

Why did you decide to create a family spa area?

Children are our guests of tomorrow and they should have fun too. It really is necessary for them to relax.

What massages do you offer children?

One focuses on the legs and feet, the other on the back and shoulders. They can be booked for 15 minutes for €16 (US\$16, £14) or 25 minutes for €24 (US\$24, £21). We do about five of these a month and we're now planning to add more massages, treatments and peels for younger guests, as well as build another sauna.

What are your most popular spa treatments overall?

The combi massage is the most in demand. This is a customisable 50-minute treatment where clients can decide which body parts should be massaged. Our antistress and sports massages are popular too.

During the pandemic, our therapist studied how to deliver lomi lomi, a Hawaiian massage, and that has become popular. The hot stone massage is also a favourite.

What about the spa facilities?

The pool is the most used facility – the view is stunning – and the outside terraces are always full. I didn't expect this. Even when it's not that warm, guests sit out in their coats, or put a blanket over them and lie outside.

Tell me more about the hotel's biophilic design.

All the wood here is oak, I wanted to have all-natural materials, including the textiles. The work has been done by people from the region – all the beds, cupboards, and so on, that was really important to us. The natural stone floor is from Italy, just across the border.

Mallaun is creating more treatments for younger guests



Children are our guests of tomorrow. They should have some fun too

So almost everything has been locally and sustainably sourced?

Yes, we tend to work only with small independent companies. Our restaurant relies on local suppliers for cheese and milk. Eggs come from a village farmer but what he produces per week is what I need daily so we need to supplement them. We even serve a local vegan and gluten-free coke called Tirola Kola but haven't found a substitute for Coke Zero yet.

What spa brands do you work with?

I don't work with big brands. Our natural oils come from Tyrol. The biggest company we work with is Ada International as I didn't want to supply soap and conditioner in small plastic bottles and this was the only firm I could find that would make refillable branded bottles for me at the time.

I like to work with small businesses. Our bags for in-room spa towels, for example, were made by a mother of two at home during the pandemic. She bought the sheep's wool and made 250 bags over six months. It feels as though we help people this way – in return, we get nice quality products that are unique to us. ●

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Our mission is to create products designed not only with aesthetics and brand consistency in mind but also with a strong focus on their specific function and use



Cinzia Imberti Beltrami, CEO, Beltrami Linen

PERSONAL TOUCH

Beltrami has over 50 years experience in creating bespoke textile products for spas around the world

Beltrami Linen's approach to the spa world places a strong emphasis on bespoke design, where its close collaboration with customers and their designers is of the utmost importance.

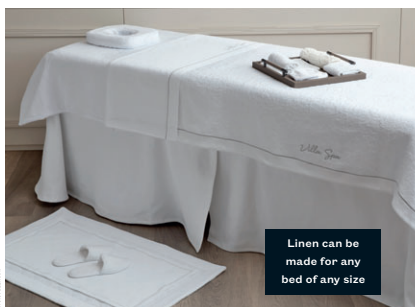
The Italian family-owned business has been manufacturing textiles for over 50 years and it supplies spas all around the world directly from its facilities in northern Italy or via selected local partners.

It provides all the textile products spas need, from tailor-made linen for treatment beds of any shape and size to a varied selection of towels, bathrobes and relaxation blankets.

"Our mission is to create products designed not only with aesthetics and brand consistency in mind but also with a strong focus on their specific function and use," explains company CEO Cinzia Imberti Beltrami.

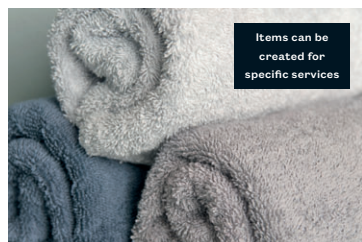
"Our projects are tailored to our customer's individual needs and often include items designed for specific services and treatments provided at each spa – such as special massage and manicure cushions, body wraps, oshibori and paraffin gloves."

Most recently, the company has revealed a spa and wellness garment collection – including



Linen can be made for any bed of any size

PIRELLA GÖTTSCHE LOWE



Items can be created for specific services

PIRELLA GÖTTSCHE LOWE

treatment wear, bathrobes and gowns – that combines elegance and comfort.

"All our products are customisable in different fabrics and tested for specific use and heavy laundering," says Beltrami, adding that its signature Autentica Fibra di Legno Beltrami is one of the most innovative yarns available.

She says the wood pulp for the fibre is sustainably sourced from birch trees located in certified forests in northern Europe. The fabric made from it stands out because of its thermoregulation, meaning it feels pleasant on the skin in every season, and its breathability which allows it to absorb moisture.

"We manage the complete production process of all our textiles, from the early stages of design through to weaving and customer service, which gives the highest quality standards," Beltrami concludes. "Our flexible service and specialised assistance start from the very first steps of the project, putting our know-how and expertise to our customers' complete disposal." ●

More: www.beltrami.it/en/contacts

IT'S GETTING HOT OUT HERE

Around the world, hot springs are having something of a moment, with renewed interest and investment ushering in a new era of social bathing. In the first of a two-part series, Jane Kitchen takes a closer look at the myriad of new developments in Australia and New Zealand

AUS\$100m has been spent on the new Alba Thermal Springs



The mineral-rich waters of natural hot springs are heated from deep within the earth's core and have been used for medicinal purposes and socialising for centuries in almost every culture. Over recent years, consumers are showing a renewed interest in the benefits of thermal bathing and this is breathing new life into long-forgotten facilities.

This wave of investment has been driving renovations, new builds and expansions across several countries. Many hot springs locations have extended their offerings to include saunas, cold plunge pools, reflexology walks, clay and mud baths, salt pools, cave pools and hammams – all of which have helped turn hot springs into wellness destinations.



At the same time, there's a movement to include broader wellness activities, so that consumers can now take part in a wide range of activities from the comfort of a hot springs pool, including listening to concerts, watching films, taking yoga classes, or experiencing singing bowl meditation. All while bringing people together to connect socially.

Both of these movements (Water + Wellness and Wellness + Gathering) have been tipped as two of the biggest trends in this year's Global Wellness Summit report.

Another factor in the increasing popularity of hot springs is that they can cater to a large market that can include everyone from children to grandparents, providing a fun, social space at a relatively low cost. "Hot springs are rapidly emerging to be a driving

Hot springs investment in
Australia and New Zealand
in recent years totals
AU\$550m. Numerous new
facilities have opened or
expanded and a multitude of
projects are in the pipeline

THERMAL SPA

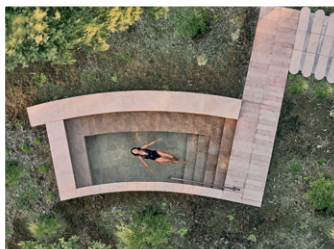


Metung Hot Springs
is a new 25-acre
wellness destination

► force for wellness practices which are accessible to the masses,” says Charles Davidson, chair and founder of Peninsula Hot Springs in Victoria, Australia. “One of the advantages is that they allow a wellness experience with a large footfall, making them more accessible to a broader range of guests. If the experience includes self-guided activities then overheads can be kept down, which can reduce the price point, further widening the accessibility.”

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

In this two-part series, we'll take a look at some of the most exciting new and upcoming hot springs developments around the world, starting with Australia and New Zealand, where numerous new facilities have opened or expanded in recent years and a multitude of projects are in development.



Unveiled in late 2022, Alba has 30 thermal pools

Hot springs are
rapidly emerging
as a driving force
for wellness practices which
are accessible to the masses



PHOTO: PENINSULA HOT SPRINGS

Charles Davidson, chair and founder, Peninsula Hot Springs

In fact, investment in the area totals more than AU\$550m (US\$380m, €354.1m, £314.3m).

“Australia – and Melbourne in particular – has been a perfect testing ground for the development of a globally inspired thermal bathing wellness centre,” says Davidson.

New arrivals in the country include the **Alba Thermal Springs** in Victoria, an AU\$100m (US\$69m, €64.4m, £57.1m) development that opened in late 2022 with more than 30 thermal pools; **Deep Blue Hotel and Hot Springs** in Warrnambool, Victoria, which revealed an AU\$3.5m (US\$2.4m, €2.3m, £2.2m) cave-based hot springs bathing park in the grounds of its oceanside hotel in 2020; and in outback Queensland **Talaroo Hot Springs**, a million-year-old mound spring, debuted in 2021 and is operated by the Ewamian people.

Peninsula Hot Springs is adding overnight accommodations, new thermal bathing facilities, and a function centre in 2025 at a cost of more



Deep Blue Hotel has
created a cave-based
hot springs bathing park

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THERMAL SPA

AU\$25m is being spent on bringing the historic Tawarrri Hot Springs back to life

THE CITY OF PERTH

THERMAL SPA

AU\$25m is being spent on bringing the historic Tawarrri Hot Springs back to life

THE CITY OF TOWNSHIRE



Australia's Federal Government is funding the development of Cunnamulla Hot Springs

"Indigenous culture, nature, the stars at night, opal mines, bird watching, natural mud baths, the great outdoors and the down-to-earth people are the draw cards, plus of course the new hot springs that will help this town become an outback wellness destination," says Davidson.

decommissioning in 1957. It will include a bathing and

Peninsula also operates the newly launched **Metung Hot Springs**, a 25-acre wellness destination that overlooks the Gippsland Lakes. First opened in the 1960s but closed in the 90s, an initial AU\$6m (US\$4.1m, €3.9m, £3.4m) investment brought the springs back to life in November 2022 with geothermal bathing pools, saunas, barrel pools and a glamping village, but a further AU\$2m (US\$1.4m, €1.3m, £1.2m) expansion will add a floating sauna, mud steam cave, five thermal pools, two grass music amphitheatre spaces and walking trails. Peninsula will also operate the upcoming **Phillip Island Hot Springs**, an AU\$46m (US\$31.7m, €29.6m, £26.3m) development slated to open in late 2023 with views over the Bass Strait Ocean at Cape Woolamai.

And **Cunnamulla Hot Springs**, an AU\$10m (US\$6.9m, €6.4m, £5.7m) project funded by the Australian Federal Government, will come to



Phillip Island Hot Springs is due to open later this year

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THERMAL SPA



New Zealand's Maruia Hot Springs is having an AU\$3m upgrade

PHOTO: GUY LAWRENCE/GETTY IMAGES



PHOTO: GUY LAWRENCE/GETTY IMAGES

The exciting new Wai Ariki Hot Springs draws on Maori culture

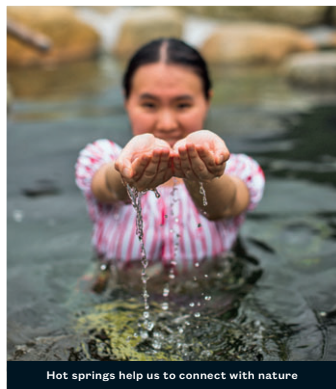
► wellness complex that will offer more than 20 different thermal bathing experiences as well as saunas, hammams, a Vichy shower and cold plunge pools.

Plans have also been announced for an AU\$200m (US\$138.1m, €128.8m, £114.2m) hot springs at the **12 Apostles**, along the scenic Great Ocean Road in Victoria, to include public baths, a wellness resort, amphitheatre and 150 eco-accommodation pods.

In New Zealand, **Maruia Hot Springs** will spend AU\$3m (US\$2m, €1.9m, £1.7m) on upgrades and the much-anticipated **Wai Ariki Hot Springs** is set to open in mid-2023, drawing on the 650-year legacy of the local Māori tribe, Ngāti Whakaue and Rotorua's famed spa heritage (see more on page 30).

"Hot springs provide a means of connecting with nature," says Davidson, in explaining their popularity. "No matter what the temperature is outside, provided you choose the right temperature pool, they help you feel relaxed and in harmony with yourself and your surroundings. It is the simplicity of bathing that brings us back to our pure nature, to a state of homeostasis where we find balance." ●

It is the simplicity of
bathing that brings us
back to our pure nature,
to a state of homeostasis
where we find balance



Hot springs help us to connect with nature

PHOTO: MARUA HOT SPRINGS

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Thinking THERMAL

Jane Kitchen joined hot spring leaders from around the world at The Global Thermal Think Tank in Israel

The Dead Sea is in trouble, its waters are shrinking by almost 4 feet every year and dangerous sinkholes are forming on its shores, explained local geologist Eli Raz during the recently-held Global Thermal Think Tank (G3T) in Israel.

The warning was a wake-up call for G3T attendees, a group of 24 international hot springs professionals and enthusiasts who took part in the three-day tour of thermal waters and historic sights in the country.

"It reminds us how important it is to be aware of environmental impacts on our source waters," says participant Vicky Nash, executive director of the US-based Hot Springs Association. "The implementation of preservation and conservation plans is critical to protecting these natural resources."

The annual G3T is an invitation-only event which precedes the Global Wellness Summit (GWS) and

dives into the culture and practices of hot springs near where it's held – with the latest event taking place in Tel Aviv. It got its start in 2016 in Bad Orb, Germany, in advance of the GWS in Kitzbühel, Austria.

This time, attendees visited the Ein Gedi oasis, had outdoor massages with views of the Dead Sea at Synergy Spa, floated and painted each other with mud at the Dead Sea, visited historical hot springs sites in Tiberias, soaked in the waters at Hamat Gader hot springs near the border of Syria and Jordan and swam in the Sea of Galilee.

Along the way, we stayed at a Bedouin tent camp, rode camels in the desert and hiked to the ancient fortress at Masada at sunrise, taking in the Roman bathhouse there.

Throughout the trip, we explored the way music and hot springs naturally go together – first with an incredible fireside performance from local musicians and later with serenades from Marty Williams the arts, culture and entertainment director at Peninsula Hot Springs in Australia.

Overall, G3T provided the opportunity for hot springs professionals from around the world to meet and discuss how they can collectively evolve and grow as a wellness sector.

The Dead Sea is one of the world's most famous mineral sources



Taking in the health benefits of local mud

PHOTO: JANE KITCHEN



Attendees included Marc Cohen from Australia and Alla Sokolova from Europe



Hot spring leaders from around the world came together to learn from each other



Conservation plans are critical to protecting these natural resources

"The goal is to find ways to learn from each other to develop international understanding and create hot springs-centred wellness communities," says Charles Davidson, chair and founder of Peninsula Hot Springs, who organises the event each year.

Attendee Mark Hennebry, chair of Europe-based Ensana Health Spas concludes: "Once again, the G3T programme brought together key industry leaders. The combination of informal conversations, education on mineral springs in Israel and music around campfires in the desert delivered deep and meaningful connections that resonate long after the event." ●

Doctor's ORDERS

Can a partnership with an internationally recognised hospital elevate a wellness retreat? Neena Dhillon travels to Bangkok's RAKxa to see how science is revolutionising the experience there



As self-indulgent as it sounds, nine days travelling around Asia to review hotel openings – my first trip since the lifting of pandemic restrictions in the region – has left me weary and irritable. On top of this, I've been dodging a super typhoon so a trip to Thailand's leading wellness centre is just what the doctor ordered.

STARTING WITH INTENTION

A smooth transfer along Bangkok's busy roads ends with a surprise. I've read that RAKxa is located in the city's 'green lung' but I'm still pleasantly taken aback when the hustle and bustle suddenly fade as we enter a green-carpeted island on the lesser-known banks of the Chao Phraya River. The welcome I'm given immediately sets the tone for the stay as I'm invited to engage in a singing bowl ceremony, which is very simple, but atmospheric when combined with views of the river and the sounds of insects chirping as the sun goes down. I feel I can set an intention at least to start releasing some of the tension of the past few days. I'm squeezing a four-day entry-level programme called the Sense of RAKxa into a flying two-night visit.

Partnering with the city's Bumrungrad Hospital through its anti-ageing arm, VitalLife, RAKxa

promises to elevate the wellness experience through its mix of clinical science, technology and ancient-healing wisdom. It's a bold claim. A quick stop at my spacious garden villa – one of 62 units managed by Minor – includes a tour from one of the 200 caring staff. I'm shown how to adjust the Saijo Denki environment system, which monitors air quality, and introduced to the green juices that will start cleaning up my digestive system. Then it's straight to a health and wellness consultation with my personal advisor, Sarita Yurai (Khun Fon), who impresses me with her empathetic professionalism when I explain how my work routines leave me too sedentary and stressed. The consultation is comprehensive but not tiresome and, rather than overwhelming me, Khun Fon suggests two breathwork and pilates approaches that she'd like me to explore when I return home.

There are a generous number of inclusions in the programme so my first treatment is quickly administered. It's the signature RAKxa Relaxing Massage with a scalp massage tagged on. ▶

“ *This would be a good place to recover from a long-term illness* ”



Chaotic city sounds fade as you approach the green-carpeted island

RAKxa's 62 villas are managed by Minor



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Rest and Reset packages are most popular with international guests



The carefully-balanced, anti-inflammatory organic meals are a highlight

► My back is so full of knots that my therapist has to apply firm pressure. This causes tenderness and while her English is limited, she instinctively knows that I can handle the discomfort needed to bring relief. It's an effective treatment. First thing next morning, as typically happens when a massage has been effective, my digestive system starts to detox.

Meals are included and the food is a highlight because rather than being deprived, I feel more than satisfied by the two- or three-course carefully balanced, anti-inflammatory meals. Only white meat is served and all fresh produce is organic but some of the techniques used are reminiscent of fine dining. Teas are a delight; the mix of barley rice and butterfly pea in one blend proves both delicate and relaxing. After dinner on the first night, there's evidence of the interconnected holistic approach taken here; Khun Fon has quietly spoken to the restaurant team and asked them to provide me with a bundle of dried turmeric and ginger to be taken in hot water in the comfort of my villa before I fall asleep. ►



"Teas are a delight," says Dhillion; and green juices help to cleanse the digestive system



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Visitors come not only for preventative healthcare and longevity offerings, but also to recover after surgery

► EXPERT APPROACH

With the dawn of a new day, I hop on one of the bikes provided and explore the spacious site full of verdant foliage and tranquil spots for reflection. While it's fairly quiet during my stay, I spot mothers and daughters, a small group of friends and couples. .

Today, I have a functional fitness assessment with the excellent physiotherapists at Gaya gym where I'm put through gentle paces on diagnostic machines – including Keiser, Technogym, Woodway and Huber. I'm given a score after working through six stations testing my balance, cardio, rotation, muscle power, flexibility and core stability. Results are accompanied by some suggestions on exercises that can be done against a wall to improve my shoulder stability and I'm told how I'm using certain muscles to overcompensate for the lack of strength in others. It's sobering stuff but I feel I have options to explore at home when I return.

Before enjoying my next massage – this one to stimulate the energy points – at the 3,636sq m RAKxa Jai holistic wellness centre, I bump into ayurvedic



Fitness tests cover cardio, muscle power, balance and rotation

specialist and treatment manager Dr Dinesh Singh. He explains more about the partnership with Bumrungrad Hospital and specifically how visitors come not only for preventative healthcare and longevity offerings but also to recover after surgery or procedures. In terms of wellness, people are seeking everything from weight management to advanced aesthetics and assistance with personal trauma. Whether locals are visiting for the day or an international guest is staying for a month, Dr Singh explains how all team members stay in close touch with each other to discuss clients and adjust treatments accordingly.

The traditional healing treatments I experience over the course of the day are delivered by expert therapists who clearly know their specialisms. The Zenna Tai abdominal and craniosacral body treatment is a particular highlight, with my therapist using both hands-on and hands-off healing to unblock energies and soothe the body. I'm told about tightness in the left side of my abdomen near my pancreas but I'm not too sure what to do with this information. It's likely the language difference is a barrier to more in-depth conversations.

At the moment, the average length of stay for international guests is five nights, with the most popular programme for this demographic Rest and Reset starting at THB188,000 (US\$5,726, €5,757, ►



In-depth consultations prove to be interesting and informative



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An abdominal massage was a highlight of Dhillon's stay

► £4,655), while it's two nights for domestic visitors, many of whom opt for the Deep Sleep Sensation from THB37,500 (US\$1,142, €1,052, £928) to help with chronic tension and a lack of focus. Sense of RAKxa starts at THB116,000 (US\$3,533, €3,253, £2,872).

LONGER STAYS, MORE BENEFITS

In the afternoon, I have my third consultation, this time in the impressive VitalLife Scientific Wellness Centre, which features the latest high-tech equipment, including a hyperbaric oxygen therapy chamber, infrared sauna, whole-body light therapy, colon hydrotherapy, cryotherapy and an area for advanced infusions.

Meeting with the very jovial Dr Walun Vilaihong is a delight. He talks me through my medical history and lifestyle indicators, also taking my blood pressure and vitals. He's very knowledgeable about hormonal and GI health as well as the role that toxic heavy metals in the body can play in increasing inflammation.

He recommends I have a set of tests when I return home to test some inflammatory and hormonal indicators. If I was staying longer, the doctors would be able to run diagnostics, including genetic sequencing to predict future disease risks and hormone, metal and micronutrient checks, as well as prescribing customised supplements and infusions. They could even monitor my sleeping patterns.

Even as part of my shorter programme, there's a range of medical treatments included so I hop into the oxygen chamber for 20 minutes before a 20-minute photobiomodulation session. If I hadn't been getting on a plane the next day, I would have been prescribed a colonic. I imagine that



The scientific centre features the latest high-tech equipment

having this followed by personalised infusions and supplements would have given my immune system a much-needed boost. There's even blood-ozone therapy on offer. I'm beginning to think this would be a good place to recover from a long-term illness.

While a one-day trial is available to locals interested in becoming members, starting at THB250,000 (US\$7,614, €7,011, £6,190) for six months, I'm left feeling it's impossible to properly get your head around RAKxa, or absorb maximum benefits, in anything less than three nights. Still, for many people, longer stays are a tall ask because prices are clearly targeted at high-net-worth individuals and affluent travellers. For those who are able to make the investment, though, RAKxa's scientific, joined-up approach is likely to pay dividends. ●



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JUSTIN MUSGROVE

Core Life, billed as the world's most exclusive lifestyle company, has ambitions to expand to affluent cities around the globe. Its CEO speaks to Kate Cracknell

Customers won't tolerate crowds, so memberships are capped



We're focused on moving Core Life into the most affluent cities globally: London, Paris, New York, Los Angeles, Dubai, Singapore and Tokyo

Having amassed 45 years in the leisure industry – including four years overseeing spas for leading brands such as Center Parcs and Bannatyne – there isn't much Justin Musgrove hasn't experienced when it comes to wellness. Yet relocating from the UK to Saudi Arabia in 2019

has "been a great learning curve" he says.

Musgrove made the move after being headhunted by Leejam Sports, the largest health club operator in the Middle East with 140-plus locations, to lead its Fitness Time portfolio. Two years on and he's now the CEO of Core Life, an exclusive lifestyle brand founded in 2020, which is on a mission to improve quality of life for high achievers and high net-worth individuals.

Tell us about Core

Core Investment is owned by Kun Investment Holding. Its consumer-facing brand – which I head up – is Core Life and it spans a number of verticals.

There are four Core Social Wellness Clubs: two in Saudi and two in Egypt. We also have two Encore

restaurants, while our third vertical – operating under the Core Residences pillar – is hotels and retreats which has two projects in the pipeline.

The fourth vertical is Core Adventure and Excursions and we're also looking at piloting a medical pillar focusing on things such as gene testing and drawing heavily on the latest science.

And more about Core Social Wellness Clubs

International visitors who are members of the top clubs in their countries tell us they've never seen anything like Core. It's a very special product that's been beautifully designed and executed.

There are still no official mixed wellness clubs in Saudi Arabia, but at Core, we've been allowed to create the country's first mixed communities: one in Riyadh's diplomatic quarter – a secure and highly international zone within the city – and one in a highly affluent area of Jeddah. Our customer base is a fairly equal balance of men and women.

In terms of the facilities themselves, let's take Riyadh as the latest evolution, having opened in December 2021. The social wellness club covers

Many of our clients have their own trainers and gym at home and their own chefs. So they come to Core for the exceptional talent we employ

► 13,500sq m. It's a huge, opulent space with luxurious fixtures and fittings, as well as stunning art.

A beautifully designed spa offers 4,500sq m of luxury with a mix of holistic and tech-based treatments. This includes a number of Oriental therapies, for example, and also cryotherapy chambers, oxygen treatments and a Lympa Press (pneumatic compression pumps and garments), as well as hydrotherapy and contrast therapies. There's also an exquisite tea lounge, a kids club, a Eurasian restaurant, two boardrooms, a cigar lounge and also 10 luxury villas within the parameters.

In the gym, we've hand-picked what we believe to be best-in-class products – Woodway treadmills, Watson benches and dumbbells and anti-gravity treadmills from Life Fitness, for example. The focus

is on delivering one-to-one, in-person contact rather than connecting with apps and technology. I still believe this to be key in our sector, with people and programming supported by, not replacing, technology.

We also have two private gyms for members who require privacy and exclusivity.

How do you approach wellness at Core?

We have three grounding pillars – mind, body and soul – which I know everyone says. The difference at Core is not only that each element of the offering is world-class, but also that they're all connected. It's about the whole experience.

'Mind' centres on our world-class spas, where we use techniques such as biohacking to enhance recovery and complement the fitness journey.

Moving onto 'Body', it's about fitness, which is the backbone of our business. But the way we do it is important because many of our clients already have their own trainers at home, their own home gyms and their own chefs. So they come to Core for the exceptional talent we employ: the world-class trainers, the experts in biomechanics and the specialists in rehabilitation and recovery. We set the bar very high when it comes to recruitment and pay for the best.

'Soul' focuses on healthy, enjoyable cuisine. It isn't about dieting, but about doing things that subtly improve your habits.

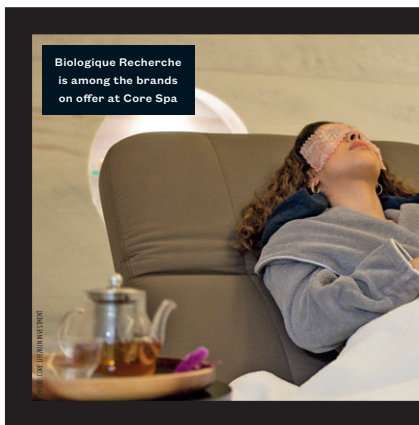
Our Core Connect programme integrates these three pillars to improve quality of life. I went through it myself recently and was amazed by the results.

Tell us about membership fees

Our access-only Silver tier starts at SAR30,000 (US\$8,000 £7,539, £6,611) a year, while Platinum, the highest level, costs SAR115,000 (US\$30,667, €28,898, £25,346) and in Jeddah, 40 per cent of



Core has some of the only mixed-gender clubs in Saudi Arabia



Biologique Recherche is among the brands on offer at Core Spa



Luxury designer finishes have been used in all areas of the club

members are on this tier. This gives them unlimited personal training, a couple of spa treatments a week, a couple of barber/hair appointments a month and VIP privileges. They're also allowed to bring their partner to share these benefits.

Importantly, though, ours is an exclusive community. We limit numbers and have a selection committee that approves applications to join our clubs. It isn't necessarily about your wealth but about being the right fit: we want our members to have a positive influence on the community at large.

What are your growth plans for Core?

In spite of the huge investment, after just one year of operation, the concept is being proven and we're close to breaking even in Riyadh. Once we also have our standard operating procedures fine-tuned, we'll move ahead with our growth plans.

We're primarily focused on moving Core into the most affluent cities globally: London, Paris, New York, Los Angeles, Dubai, Singapore and Tokyo. Each city will have just one Core Social Wellness Club, with a total of around 10 globally and most within the next five years.

For readers interested in health and fitness, what's the market like in Saudi Arabia?

The health club market has changed massively just in the few years I've been here. The planned transformation programme for the Kingdom, called *Vision 2030*,

Core Spa offers lifestyle interventions and relaxation facilities

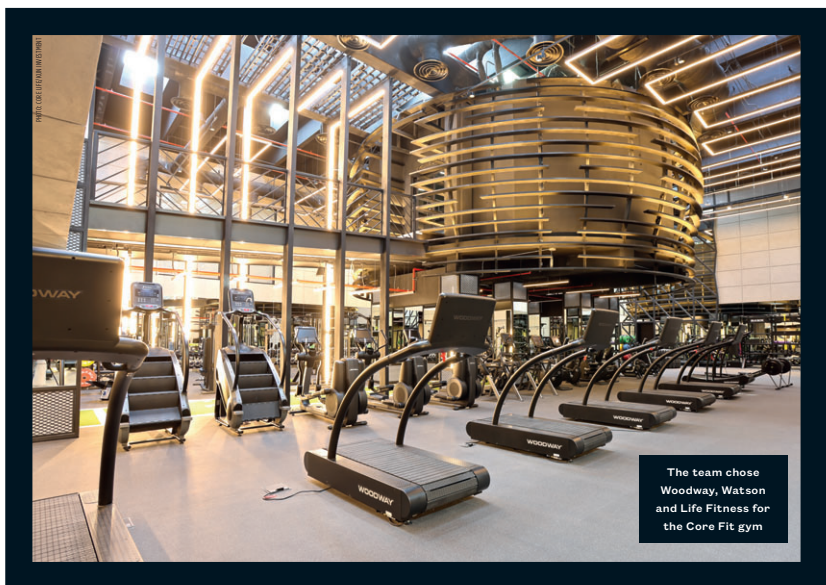




Most people work out with PTs, while private gyms are also available



New clubs will open in major cities around the world



The team chose Woodway, Watson and Life Fitness for the Core Fit gym



The Encore Restaurant and Tea Lounge deliver the F&B offering

► has seen a colossal amount of investment and development going on across six giga projects (see www.spabusiness.com/vision2030). Seeing them come to fruition is like something out of science fiction and one of the main strategies relates to getting the nation fit, healthy and productive, as Saudi has one of the worst diabetes and obesity records in the world.

In 2019 there were fewer than 500 chain gyms, but in the next two to three years, I expect the number of clubs to quadruple, with membership getting up to 10 per cent of the population – around 2.5 to 3 million – by the end of 2030.

Big box gyms such as Fitness Time and Bodymasters dominated the market. However, now there are boutiques such as 1Rebel and Orangetheory Fitness and a number of high-value-low-price (HVLPP) brands such as Pure Gym, Gym Nation, Activ and B-IT – the sister brand of Core.

What's shaping this sector in Saudi?

There are a few important factors, the first being that around 60 per cent of the population is under 34 years of age and nearly 80 per cent is under 44. Even at our exclusive clubs, members are in their 30s and 40s, which makes having a family offering very important.

The second is the relative importance of location over factors such as price. Price points remain inflated compared to other markets – monthly fees in the High Value, Low Price gym sector sit at around SAR180-250 (US\$48-67, €46-63, £40-55) – but what people are really looking for is a gym at the end of their road.

The third difference is really interesting and something I haven't seen anywhere else, even in the UAE. Saudis like space, so you have to look carefully at club density. In the UK, a low-cost gym measuring 1,500sq m might cater for 4,000–6,000 members. In Saudi, hit 2,500 members in that space and you'll be getting complaints.

Core Life's members are high achievers who want to perfect all aspects of their lives. We're here to support that

What are your plans personally?

I ultimately see myself returning to the UK, although there's no particular timeframe at the moment. At that point, I'd like to give something back in the shape of non-exec work.

We still have a lot of work to do as a sector to persuade governments and world organisations of the role our industry can play in the future of every country. It's why I've been an active member of the Global Health and Fitness Alliance – a group of industry leaders who've been working tirelessly since the pandemic to highlight the value of our sector, including producing a report in collaboration with Deloitte China, called *Economic Health and Societal Wellbeing: Quantifying the Impact of the Global Health and Fitness Sector*.

We've already made huge strides in reducing the cost of access to fitness: US\$10 a month at Planet Fitness in the US, for example, and £5 a month at Everlast in the UK... it's now so accessible. I know Saudi is still pricey, but even here prices will come down as access rises.

And that's why we're worthy of a seat at the table. Because we're givers. We contribute to society. But in return, we need government incentives and preferential terms. We need support. ●

Customers can use Zenoti's app to buy a spa's products

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ANNA MELLADO BERTZ



WHAT'S 'APP'ENING?

An increasing number of spas use apps to connect with customers, employees and run their businesses. How are software companies helping with this?

Amy Douglas

SALES MANAGER, ZENOTI UK/EUROPE

Zenoti offers both an employee and consumer mobile app for spas and salons. They're designed to be modern, user-friendly and synchronise with software in real-time.

The employee app supports an efficient, personalised service, giving quick access to guest information and the ability to view and update schedules, for example. Additionally, providers can add products and treatments to invoices – and even collect payment in the treatment room via smartphones. Therapists can also

view pay, commissions and tips and access digital courses on Zenoti University.

Our consumer-facing app is customised to match a spa's brand. Guests can book appointments, update profiles, view history, manage memberships, refer friends and track loyalty points. Some of the more unique features include viewing promotions and announcements, browsing retail products, seeing the availability of nearby sister properties if one is fully booked and receiving loyalty points for certain actions – like writing a review.



PHOTO: ZENOTI

Amy Douglas

Providers can add product and service invoices to the app and even collect payment in the treatment room

Ilana Alberico

FOUNDER & PRESIDENT, SPASPACE

Studies have shown that many hospitality workers laid off during the pandemic aren't willing to return to their original job. One of the biggest reasons for not coming back is an overly long onboarding process.

The SpaSpace app is both team member- and guest-facing and one

key element from a business perspective is how it speeds up the recruitment journey. It automatically checks a service professional's background and verifies their license so we can normally get employees approved in less than a week - which is five times faster than normal.

The app also includes automatic payroll services. This means

spas don't have to submit payroll each month and professionals receive their pay in hours/days rather than weeks/months.

From a customer point of view, SpaSpace is looking to launch a new Wellness Directory. This will allow guests to search for solutions for their needs via our app. It also includes AI recommendations for services, products and facilities.



PHOTO: SPA SPACE

Ilana Alberico

The app checks a service professional's background and verifies their license

Charity Hudnall

VP OF MARKETING, VAGARO

One particular USP of Vagaro's branded app is that it fully integrates with our software. Whenever a spa updates its business information, services, photos, packages etc on Vagaro, the app updates to reflect that change immediately. So busy owners don't need to take extra steps to push updates through app stores.

Features of a spa's app reflect what they're using in Vagaro Pro. For example, if they've enabled an online shopping cart or accept payments online, these capabilities will be live in their app. Likewise, appointment reminders will be sent through app push notifications if the business has them enabled.

Making appointments via the app has taken off and many of our spa facilities report it's their second-highest method of booking after websites.



PHOTO: VAGARO

Charity Hudnall

The app automatically reflects any updates a spa makes on our software

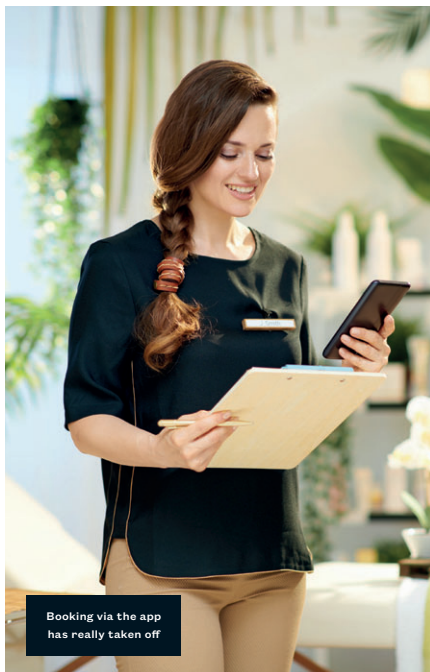


PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ALAINA11 IMAGES

Booking via the app has really taken off

Open API means many functions can slot straight into a spa's app



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ANDREW TILLY

Ricky Daniels

CO-FOUNDER, TRYBE

We offer a range of functions for spas that can slot straight into a property's app via our open-API. These include features such as scheduling, payments, digital intake forms, staff rota management, inventory management, retail, reporting and more.

Trybe's membership functionality is particularly popular. Members are able to log in through the branded app and see their personal information, manage their membership, see what credits they have to spend for the month and book classes.

We've also just launched our mobile membership cards which spas can brand up and customers

can download to their digital wallet to check in.

Our most sought-after feature – used by all of our spas – is our booking engine. Operators love using this as a mobile app and customers can browse all spa and leisure offerings, pulling straight from the property's live availability, with the final step of booking and pre-payment available too.



Ricky Daniels

We've just launched mobile membership cards



Sherry Cuti

We'll be launching a guest-facing point-of-sale function later this year

Sherry Cuti

REGIONAL ACCOUNT MANAGER, SPRINGER-MILLER

SpaSoft's Online Booking Engine can embed into a spa's mobile app, opening to a booking window and automatically filling appointment books within SpaSoft.

Due to the infrastructure of our Online Booking Application, each spa has the flexibility to customise its booking platform to meet brand and

operational needs or to even design a completely new guest experience.

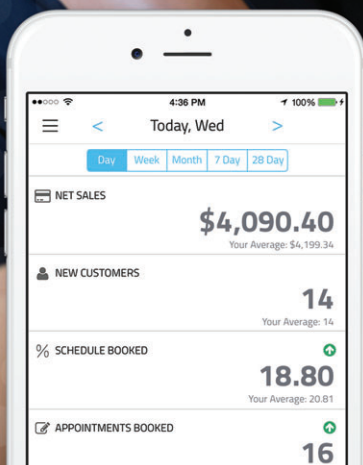
With the next generation of SpaSoft, we're excited about the flexibility and enhancements on the horizon for mobile applications. Expected later in the year, we're working on a guest-facing point-of-sale where guests can manage their payments from the palm of their hand. It will introduce a link to pay, the ability for guests to review their bill, apply gratuities, capture electronic signatures and more. ●



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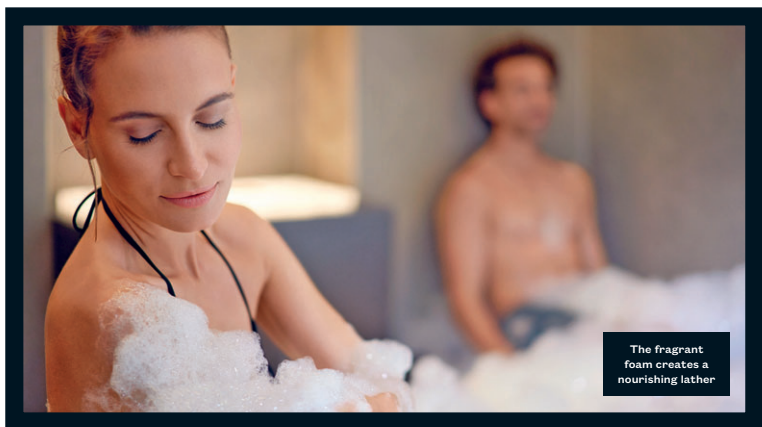
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Product innovation

Spa and wellness industry suppliers tell us about their latest product, treatment and equipment launches



The fragrant foam creates a nourishing lather

Foam steam bath creates a completely new bathing experience, says Phillip Rock

Klafts, the ever-innovative sauna, pool and spa manufacturer, has just brought the Espuro® foam steam bath to market.

"This is something out of the ordinary," says CEO Phillip Rock. "With Espuro, spas can create a very special experience that's never been seen before. It will give them a USP that guests, whether young or old, will remember with great enthusiasm."

Entering the cabin, guests are greeted with relaxing light and music before fragrant foam fills the room to waist height.

Bubbles glisten in the light and float in the air, creating childlike bathing fun, and the nourishing lather cleanses the body. Its patented formula has been developed for Klafts using natural ingredients.

During this time, the body is gently warmed by the steam and the experience culminates with a lukewarm drizzle from above which washes the body and dissolves the bubbles.

The foam is produced by an integrated unit, which can also be retrofitted into existing Klafts steamrooms.



Foam bubbles glisten in the light and float in the air

- Phillip Rock

sp-a-k-i-t.net keyword:
Klafts



PHOTO: NEUROSONIC

“The new model has stronger, more effective vibrations”
- Juha Suoniemi

Neurosonic's Juha Suoniemi on Gen2 vibration lounge debut

With the aim of less stress, faster recovery and better sleep, Finnish company Neurosonic has unveiled its Gen2 lounge.

The lounge uses low-frequency whole-body vibration to activate the parasympathetic nervous system to help lower the heart rate, blood pressure and stress levels.

The improved model has been designed with stronger, more effective vibrations to

aid sleep quality and body restoration. While greater muscle stimulation is said to alert nerve pathways to speed up the process.

A new activation programme has been added, complementing those focused on relaxation and recovery, as well as an updated app interface where users track their own data and view recommendations.

CEO Juha Suoniemi says: “We believe it has the potential

to make a real difference in people's lives by helping them relax, sleep better and cope with stress in a natural and healthy way.”

A Gen2 mobile mattress can also be used on its own/ overlaid on existing beds, while a Gen2 motorised reclining chair is also available.

spa-kit.net keyword:
Neurosonic



PHOTO: NEUROSONIC



PHOTO: NEUROSONIC

A Gen2 reclining chair is also available

Vinésime's Edouard Damidot reveals grape-scented fragrances

Vinésime has long been complimented on the “elegant yet delicate scents” of its skincare. So much so, the vinotherapy brand has now launched two unisex perfumes which capture the essence of the Burgundy wine region.

The fresh, light Chardonnay scent has notes of the grape mixed with mandarin, pink pepper and grapefruit. Meanwhile, the powerful Pinot Noir fragrance draws on the red grape, bergamot, violet leaf and blackcurrant.

“Our cosmetics products combine texture, look, smell and deliver skincare results,”



PHOTO: VINÉSIMÉ

“They can help spas tap into olfactory marketing”
- Edouard Damidot

says Vinésime founder Edouard Damidot. “Focusing on only one sense meant we had to be much more precise in delivering the essence of our territory.”



PHOTO: VINÉSIMÉ

The two new perfumes are Chardonnay and Pinot Noir

The timely additions could prove a hit with operators as more spas tap into olfactory marketing to create a lasting impression.

spa-kit.net keyword:
Vinésime

Lumini Kiosk V2 analyses skin using AI and smart mirror, says Joey Speers

Making its debut at the global IT exhibition CES, Lumini Kiosk V2 recommends cosmetic products to consumers using artificial intelligence (AI).

The Korean-made smart mirror (kiosk) scans the face using imaging technology and special light (said to be different from other diagnostic devices) and homes in on six problem areas – the pores, sebum, redness, wrinkles, pigment and any other troubles. The skin's condition is also physically checked by a therapist.

AI and big data technology are then used to determine the



PHOTO: MICHAEL ANDRIAN/REUTERS (1/11/2023)

It's like a personal skincare assistant that works in 15 seconds
– Joey Speers

age of the customer, identify which parts of the face need more care and suggest the most suitable products.

The kiosk can be aligned with specific skincare brands and also provides skin analysis reporting.

"It's like a personal skincare assistant which can boost the sales of any beauty business," says Joey Speers, founder of



The kiosk homes in on six specific problem areas

US distributor Health Fit Systems, adding that the kiosk can analyse the skin in just 15 seconds.

spa-kit.net keywords:
Health Fit Systems

Christian Mas on Sothys Organics new bodycare offering

Sothys has upgraded its organic collection with new bodycare products and treatment options.

The Sothys Organics body range features nine new eco-friendly packaged products, three of which are designed for retail. These include a body scrub, a multipurpose balm and an oil for the face, body and hair.

The brand has also created six professional products for spa treatments – a massage oil, a massage cream, a shea body butter, a massage balm, a scrub and a signature perfume concentrate scented with star anise.

The products are being used in Sothys' 100 per cent Customisable Massage which, it says, allows guests to tailor a whole treatment – from



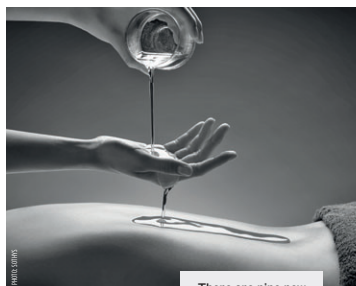
PHOTO: SOTHYS

The 100 per cent Customisable Massage allows guests to tailor a whole treatment
– Christian Mas

the fragrance used, texture of products and length of the session, to problem areas they want to focus on and whether they'd like a scrub, massage or wrap.

"This launch is key as it underlines our ongoing commitment towards sustainable development," says company president Christian Mas.

spa-kit.net keyword:
Sothys



There are nine new products in total



SOOTHYS

Nikki Miller unveils Kohler's Sprig shower aromatherapy infusion system

Normal showers can turn into sensory experiences using a plumbing system and collection of aroma pods just revealed by Kohler Co, the spa operator and bathroom fixtures company.

The pods slot into a patented device that can be attached to existing shower heads, or come ready installed in Kohler-branded equipment. They infuse the water stream with their different blend of aromatherapy oils – Breathe, Focus, Recharge, Shield, Relax and Sleep – and also feature skincare ingredients (such as hyaluronic acid).

The launch marks the arrival of Sprig, a new consumer-facing line from Kohler that's designed to elevate daily routines into self-care rituals and bring the spa experience into the home.

Nikki Miller, director of Kohler Waters Spas, says: "Sprig stimulates four out of the five senses – scent,



© KIMMY KUMBA

"The patented device can be attached to existing shower heads"

- Nikki Miller

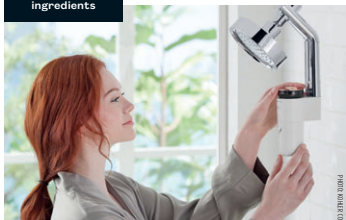
sight, sound and touch – while helping to create an immersive environment. It's perfect for both in-home and hospitality use, and we look forward to having our guests experience it in our hotels, boutique fitness businesses and spas."

The Sprig range also features bath bombs and body and linen mists.



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The oils also feature skincare ingredients



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 [spa-kit.net](https://www.spa-kit.net) keyword: Kohler

Nollapelli eye mask improves sleep and skin health, says Allison Howard

According to Nollapelli, its new Restorative Eye Masks not only encourage better sleep quality but also actively restore users' eye area.

"Nollapelli's two-in-one eye mask blocks light to promote healthier sleep and also uses an innovative textile to increase microcirculation around the eye area to mitigate puffiness, dark circles and fine lines," says Allison Howard, founder and CEO.

The eye mask has been created with a naturally occurring mineral embedded in a



PHOTO: NOLLAPELLI

"An innovative textile increases microcirculation around the eye area"

- Allison Howard

nylon fibre and it's claimed that this takes the heat emitted from the body and reflects it back into the top layers of your skin.

While imperceptible to the wearer, this gentle heat is said to help enhance oxygen flow and invigorate the skin. This effect

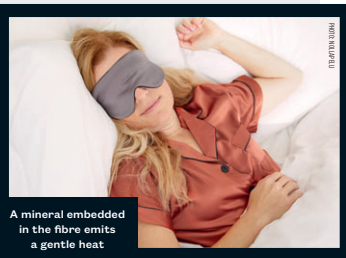


PHOTO: NOLLAPELLI

A mineral embedded in the fibre emits a gentle heat

around the delicate eye area – where stagnant circulation can lead to puffiness and dark circles – can help improve overall skin colour and tone.

 [spa-kit.net](https://www.spa-kit.net) keyword: Nollapelli



The patented membrane wraps around the body

PHOTO: STARPOOL

The new Zerobody Cryo will deliver comfortable cold therapy for spa, wellness and sports says Starpool CEO, Riccardo Turri

Tell us about Zerobody Cryo

It features unique technology that combines dry floatation with cold therapy to deliver the same benefits as cryotherapy, but in a less invasive way that's focused on the deep wellbeing of the individual.

Cold therapy enhances general wellbeing, as well as delivering benefits on both a physical and mental level. For these reasons, it's a treatment widely used in the spa and wellness, sports, beauty and medical sectors.

What's the history of this therapy?

It dates back to Roman times but was modernised in 1978 by Japanese doctor Toshima Yamaguchi who saw how cold treatments treated inflammation due to rheumatoid arthritis. Today it delivers a wide range of wellness outcomes.

What specific benefits does it offer?

Zerobody Cryo allows operators to deliver traditional cold therapy treatments, with significant benefits in terms of the reduction of muscle pain after exercise, reduction of

stress and anxiety, the stimulation of antioxidant action in the body and the production of sirtuins which support cell renewal and repair and boost longevity.

In spa, wellness and beauty worlds, Zerobody Cryo sessions can be combined with sauna, Starpool's Zerobody Dry Float, photobiomodulation and molecular hydrogen therapy, to deliver programmes for stress relief, sleep therapy, performance enhancement and longevity.

In a high-level sport world, cold therapy can be combined with infrared therapy, our Zerobody Dry Float or Finnish sauna to provide innovative solutions for effective recovery and top performances.

How is Zerobody Cryo different from other cold treatments?

Its innovation lies in the simplicity, safety and usability of the application, thanks to a patented membrane which is designed to wrap around the body in a uniform way.

This allows the effective transmission of cold at 4-6°C, so



PHOTO: STARPOOL

6 Making effective cold therapy available in this safe and comfortable way is a game changer
Riccardo Turri, Starpool CEO

users can enjoy cold therapy in a safe and non-invasive environment and with less contraindications.

Floating inside the Zerobody Cryo allows the body to benefit from intense cold in comfort and without the risks and disadvantages of some traditional cold therapies.

We hear of people who reject cryotherapy as too extreme and find diving into ice water physically difficult, as well as impractical.

Tell us about the equipment

Zerobody Cryo has an insulated metal tank which is available in various finishes and contains 500 litres of water. It's brought to an operating temperature of 4-6°C by a refrigerating device.

The system needs free space on the access side, while the chiller must be situated no more than 2m away. It's also necessary to provide ventilation in the room to avoid overheating the chiller.

Do staff need training to operate the Zerobody Cryo?

Operator training is simple and similar to that required for using our Zerobody Dry Float. Staff can be fully trained in a few hours.

Cold therapy is not a medical treatment and is not intended to cure any pathology or clinical condition. But it provides effective benefits and is widely used all over the world in sport, spa and beauty centres and even by people in their own homes.

More: www.starpool.com

🔗 spa-kit.net keyword: Starpool

Freddie Moross brings Myndstream's spa and wellness music service to market

Spas and independent therapists now have access to a wider range of wellness music, following the launch of Myndstream's subscription-based music service.

The web-based platform enables them access to music which has been intentionally created to improve wellbeing outcomes in a therapeutic environment.

It also provides a fully licensed proposition to business owners and accommodates additional logins. The service is available for US\$250 (€232, £205) annually, with an additional US\$150 (€139, £123) charge per extra location. Unlike other services, the spa is not charged by zone or user.



PHOTO: MYNDSTREAM

Spa owners and therapists can transform the audio experience during treatments

- Freddie Moross

Freddie Moross, CEO of Myndstream, says: "We've created a fantastic opportunity for spa owners and therapists to transform the audio experience

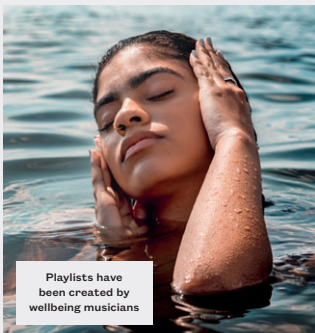


PHOTO: MYNDSTREAM

Playlists have been created by wellbeing musicians

during treatments. We'll continue to evolve the music proposition through a research programme with spas."

spa-kit.net keyword:
Myndstream

Patricia Fisas unveils latest additions to Natura Bissé's brightening Diamond Luminous line

Natura Bissé has added to its pro-ageing Diamond Luminous collection with a brand-new serum, face cream and mask.

Each features a formula blended with five dual-action ingredients - niacinamide, turmeric extract, prickly pear extract, carnosine and crystal illuminating peptide. Designed to minimise hyperpigmentation and offer an antioxidant, moisturising and firming effect, the combination is completed with aloe vera and hyaluronic acid of four different molecular weights.

"We want to offer our clients the dual benefit of rejuvenated and more evenly toned skin so they don't have to sacrifice one for the other," said Patricia Fisas, SVP of research and innovation.

"The results are visible from the first application thanks to the highly innovative formulas which combine active ingredients



PHOTO: NATURA BISSÉ

It offers both rejuvenated and evenly-toned skin

- Patricia Fisas

with maximum concentration to combat visible signs of ageing as well as dark spots."

To mark the launch, the products are incorporated into Natura Bissé's new professional Diamond Luminous facial. ●

spa-kit.net keywords:
Natura Bissé



PHOTO: NATURA BISSÉ

Additions include a serum, face cream and mask





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NEW AGE

Scientists from Harvard have made a breakthrough in learning about how cells age and how to reverse the process

A 13-year study by researchers at Harvard University has shown for the first time that the modification of gene expression can lead to cell ageing.

For years mainstream thinking in scientific circles has been that ageing is caused by mutations in genetic code which causes cells to malfunction and die, however, this new study, published in the journal *Cell*, suggests that it's the way DNA is governed that drives ageing.

In layman's terms, the researchers are suggesting that ageing doesn't mean cells are damaged and incapable of behaving like young cells, but rather that something has got lost in translation in their genetic make-up. So, in theory, if we use epigenetic interventions to get cells back on the right path, they can 'remember' how to be young and fully functioning again – effectively reversing the ageing process.

MAIN EXPERIMENT

In the main experiment, scientists at Harvard mimicked breaks in chromosomes that cells experience every day in response to things such as breathing, exposure to sunlight and contact with certain chemicals. They ensured these breaks did not occur in the

coding regions of the DNA so mutations were prevented from occurring over time.

The team noticed that the epigenome grew disorganised leading to more aged looks and behaviour. Next, they delivered gene therapy to reverse the changes and found the organs and tissues had resumed their youthful state.

"It's like rebooting a malfunctioning computer," says the paper's senior author David Sinclair, explaining that the therapy "led cells to restore the epigenetic information they had when they were young".

A DIFFERENT VIEW

Co-first author Jae-Hyun Yang adds: "We expect the findings will transform the way we view the process of ageing and the way we approach the treatment of diseases associated with ageing."

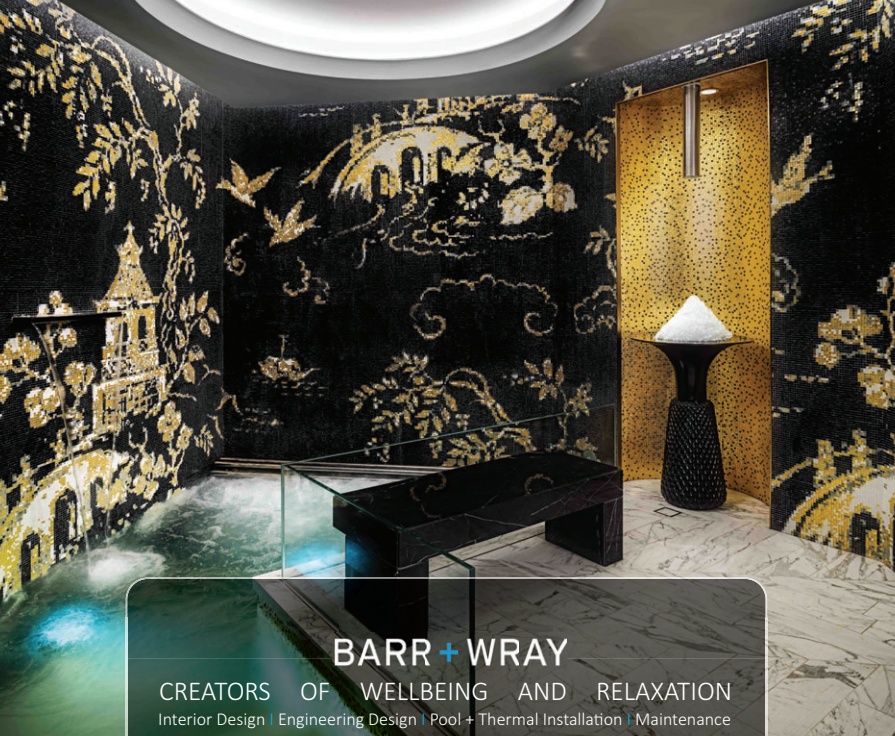
This is because it's easier to manipulate the molecules that control epigenetic processes rather than to reverse DNA mutations. Such interventions could include injecting stem cells to "help rewind mature cells", for example, or using drugs.

Sinclair hopes the work inspires other scientists to study how to control ageing to prevent and eliminate age-related conditions such as frailty, cardiovascular disease and Type 2 diabetes.

The ultimate goal, he concludes, would be to address the root causes of ageing to help people live healthier lives for longer. ●

Sinclair, D. et al. Loss of epigenetic information as a cause of mammalian aging. Cell, January 2023

The findings will transform the way we approach the treatment of diseases associated with ageing



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