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*Self-assessment tests carried out on 41 volunteers, after four treatments during one month.

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Widening our remit

As our industry becomes ever more global, thanks to the influence of Global Wellness Day and the Global Wellness Summit, we find ourselves positioned to be able to contribute to the wider agenda of wellbeing around the world. This work has never been more important

Our industry is unique in its focus on the positive. There are no others which put wellbeing, peace, prevention and personal responsibility at their heart.

This means we're in a position to be a force for good in the world at a time when there are some very dark things happening which need to be countered.

Some say spa and wellbeing and a focus on health are a self-indulgent distraction and that at times of division and political and social unrest, there are more important things to be focusing on. But I don't believe this is the case, or that these things are disconnected.

Wellbeing is scalable, it starts with the individual, extends to the family, the community, the nation and then to the wider world. For each part of humanity to be well in the widest and truest sense, we must be at peace, feel energised in our own skin and have clarity of purpose. We also need to have good intentions to take the world forward in a positive direction based on understanding and compassion, rather than selfishness.

There is much we can do as an industry to shore up positivity and help people to not only deal with the darkness, but also to begin to turn the tide of it.

We can fight for what we believe is important, work to bring communities together and extend our reach to ensure that knowledge about healthy living and wellbeing is shared where it's most needed.

Much of what is going adrift in the world at present is as a result of lack of education, lack of opportunity and lack of love and it is well within our remit as an industry to make our contribution to addressing these issues.



Working for 'social good' means thinking about how you can reach out to help others, using your knowledge and resources

All require us to commit to self-care in body and mind and for those in a position to create life-changing chances for other people to do so at every opportunity.

The ultimate goal being a world which is able to keep refocusing on the things which matter – tolerance, collaboration, mutual support, fairness, compassion, peace, love and a commitment to making each day better than the last for everyone on the planet.

This industry is represented by outward looking, well travelled and right-thinking people who form a powerful global network. We are a community and we have many opportunities for collaboration and to exert a wide range of influences for good around the world.

What can be done? Education and community outreach sit at the heart of this and in our annual Spa Foresight™ report on page 50 we highlight 'social good' as a key trend which we think the industry can embrace going forward, to open up opportunities for others.

I urge you to look to your own business and to think about how you can reach out and share the philosophy and knowledge that underpins the work of wellbeing.

Liz Terry, editorial director @elizterry

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CLARINS

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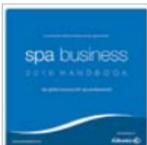
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The Spa Business website features daily news and jobs in the global spa and wellness industry. It also provides access to digital editions of Spa Business and links to other Leisure Media magazines and websites.

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Hugh Jackman, a lover and investor of Gwinganna Lifestyle Retreat (p60)

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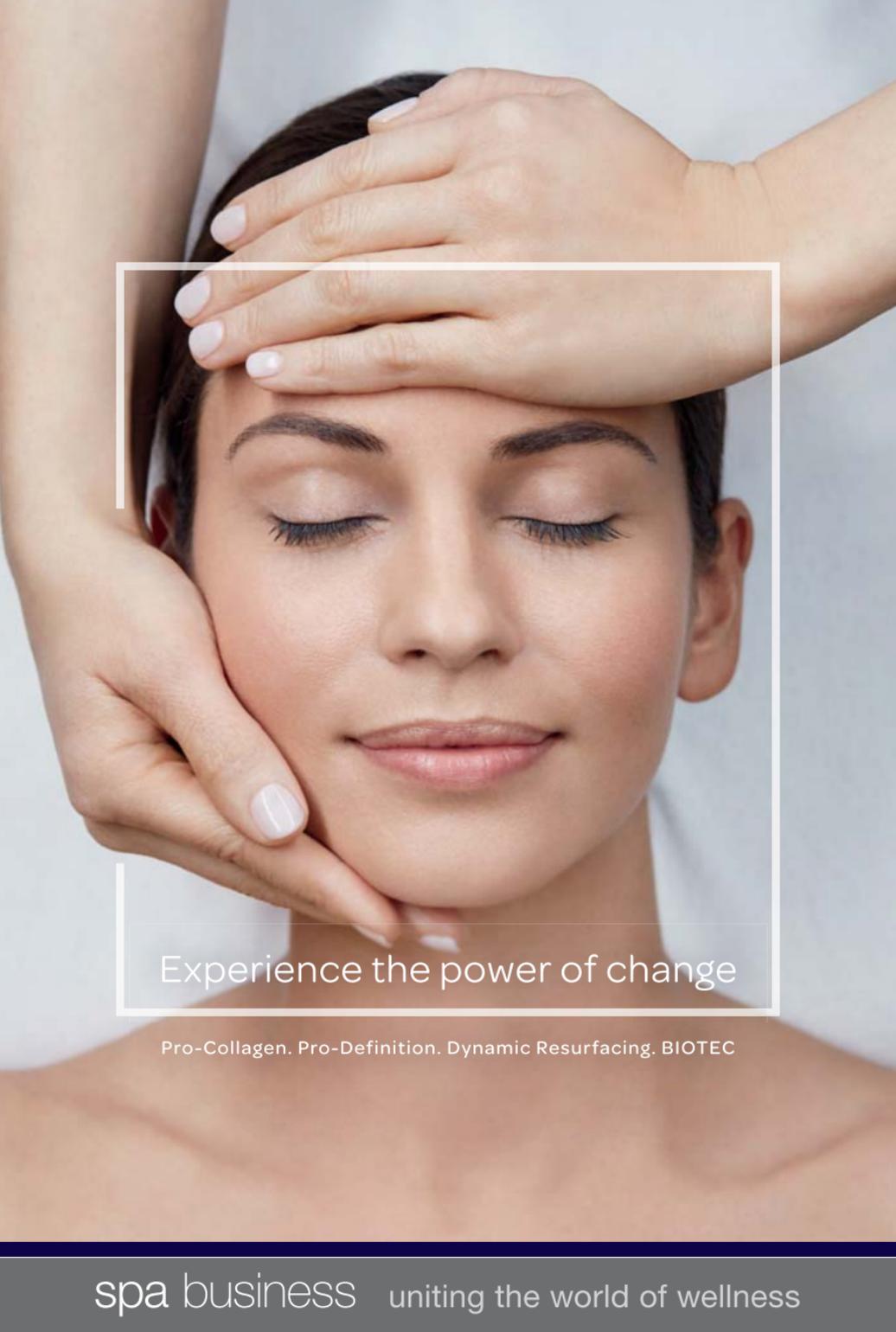
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Letters

KATIE BARNES, EDITOR, SPA BUSINESS

Do you have a strong opinion, or disagree with somebody else's point of view on topics related to the spa industry? If so, *Spa Business* would love to hear from you. Email your letters, thoughts and suggestions to theteam@spabusiness.com

WHY NOBODY KNOWS ANYTHING ABOUT AFRICAN MASSAGE... AND WHY THEY SHOULD

Julie Lombe, founder, panafricanbeauty.com

Africa has so much more to offer spa culture than just hammams, including ancient massage techniques based on native healing philosophies, shamanism, original accessories, natural products and music.

Such techniques are being brought alive by modern practitioners. Wellness coach Amy Beke has developed the Digiui from the north-west. Historically, this massage is given by a mother to a child after birth to relieve muscle pain and nervous tension. Beke's interpretation includes swathing the body in African shea butter and performing

As local practitioners travel globally, they're slowly spreading the word... African massage is a trend to catch



ANDREY JOPOV/SHUTTERSTOCK

long stretching and enveloping movements, vibrations and deep pressure massage in an invigorating rhythm with a backdrop of traditional music and rooibos tea to finish.

Since 1998 Carol Mathebula has been teaching the Vunkuwa healing massage from central Africa. Inspired by her grandmother and shaman rituals, it combines vigorous rocking from head to foot, fast and intense rubbing, stretching and kneading of the legs and back to recirculate energy and unlock areas of imbalance and tension. Massage oils sourced from native medicinal plants – such as immune-boosting lemon bush and stimulating green wood – are also used.

● Massage techniques can be based on natural products, music and native healing philosophies

I am both Belgian (working as a trainer for Sothys) and Congolese and my own Congo Massage® is a holistic treatment to relax, detoxify and energise. It starts with a long reflexology session using baobab oil and follows with a whole body massage first by hand and then with accessories to loosen the muscles more deeply and help with drainage. Accessories include wooden rungu sticks, traditionally used by Maasai warriors, and manefaing handles, like a poultice made of sacred red earth, used by Cameroon healers. The

treatment tempo varies from frenetic to calm according to the beat of the djembe drum.

Due to the lack of massage schools, scientific validation of treatments and the continent's negative image, African massage has struggled to expand internationally. Yet tourism development has spurred some countries such as South Africa and Namibia to offer traditional therapies. And as local practitioners such as Beke and Mathebula travel globally with their own creations, they're slowly spreading the word... African massage is a trend to catch. Contact Julie Lombe
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PHOTOGRAPHED/SHUTTERSTOCK



● Reflexology is often a glorified foot massage says Bramham

ARE SPA AUDITS MISSING THE POINT?

Anne Bramham, founder, Advanced Spa Therapy & Education Certification Council

While our industry is busy rebranding itself from spa to wellness, there's still little evidence of a shift in focus. Therapeutic intent remains largely ignored and many traditional disciplines are frequently tailored to maximise retail sales or to compensate for a lack of training.

Aromatherapy, for example, is widely practiced as a pleasant massage with an essential oil but barely resembles the alchemic, highly personalised experience of the original method. Reflexology is

often a glorified foot massage with a few pressure points thrown in for good measure. Hot and cold water circuits are commonly misused with little or no awareness of therapeutic application while contraindications and other disciplines are equally compromised.

Forbes and other accrediting/auditing agencies focus on everything from cleanliness to handling of guests, but none of them question whether a modality meets specific standards or

competency. No one asks whether hot and cold facilities follow a therapeutic regimen, or if it's safe to drink alcohol

“I often wonder about the qualifications of those who are judging... Do they really understand therapies?”

in thermal experiences. I often wonder about the qualifications of those who are judging. What's their background? Do they really understand therapies? If the

global spa industry hopes to realise its wellness potential, the guidance of experts is critically important.

Treatments generate up to 70 per cent of all spa revenue and the quality and integrity of those services are the single most important component of successful spa operations. It's this discerning value that will build and retain a loyal clientele and serious minded practitioners.
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NUTRITION, LIFESTYLE AND EMOTIONS AFFECT SKIN TOO

Dr Howard Murad, founder, Murad; and board certified dermatologist

I absolutely agree with the article in *Spa Business* (see SB16/2 p54) which suggests that skincare should be more than just about products. We've been taking this approach for the last 10 years.

You need to look beyond the surface of the skin and remember that it's connected

“You need to look beyond the surface of the skin and remember that it's connected to the rest of the body.”

to the rest of the body. When you have sunburn, for example, it can be accompanied by a headache and nausea, indicating that the body, as well as the skin, needs rest. I earned the title of 'father of internal skincare' many years ago by reducing sun damage and improving acne and wrinkles with supplements alone, demonstrating the importance of nutrition.

I've spent years studying how the lack of water in our cells affects the ageing process as a result of environmental, food and stress factors. More



● A new Murad facial combines nutrition and emotional self-care tips

recently, I've researched how cultural stress affects the body emotionally as well as visibly with signs of fine lines and wrinkles.

All of this is taken into account in my Inclusive Health Philosophy and new Murad Method Facial which takes a

holistic approach to wellness and looks at the importance of diet and nutrition alongside emotional self-care and topical skincare, in helping people look, live and feel younger. ●

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spa people

“Everybody’s been looking east and west for concepts and philosophies, and we finally looked south – there’s so much to pull from” Garcia-Tunon

Vivianne Garcia-Tunon, spa and wellness director &
Inge Theron, consultant, Tierra Santa Healing House



“It’s one of the most exciting hotel spas in the world and certainly one of the best projects to be involved with” THERON

Theron worked on the initial concept

Spa and wellness director Vivianne Garcia-Tunon and consultant Inge Theron have collaborated with Oscar-winning designer Catherine Martin on the newly-opened South American-themed spa at Faena Hotel in Miami Beach.

“Aesthetically, it’s one of the most spectacular places I’ve seen – and I’ve seen a lot,” says Theron, who helped shape the initial concept of the 13-treatment room Tierra Santa Healing House spa. “It’s so chic, so cool, but so different. Think *Great Gatsby* meets Buenos Aires.”

Martin, who worked on the interiors of Tierra Santa as well as the hotel, has won four Oscars for production and costume design on *Moulin Rouge* and *The Great Gatsby*. Both films were directed by her husband, Baz Luhrmann, who’s also been involved with design in other parts of Faena Hotel.

“Art permeates everything,” says Theron, who describes the vibe of the spa as authentic, but playful with murals and wallpaper adding a splash of colour.

Garcia-Tunon says guests “absolutely love the spa’s design”.

The spa and wellness director, who left a senior regional vice president role at ESPA to join Tierra Santa, created the 22,000sq ft (2,044sq m) spa’s treatments, which take their inspiration from places like Mexico



Garcia-Tunon created all treatments and hired and trained staff

and the Amazon. “Everybody’s been looking east and west for concepts and philosophies, and we finally looked south – there’s so much to pull from,” she says.

Among the unique therapies are sessions by Mexican shaman Carlos Gomez, who’s on-site once a quarter for one-on-one healing rituals – costing US\$400 (€359, £298) for two hours – designed to reenergise the body, evoke spirits and energy, or repair trauma from childhood.

Other treatments incorporate lapis lazuli from Chile to release tension, sound therapy with bowls from Eastern Vibration and a light massage using palo santo wood



The design is described as ‘*Great Gatsby* meets Buenos Aires’



Film director Baz Luhrmann and wife Catherine Martin (below) worked on the design of the spa (above) and hotel



DEBBY WONG/SHUTTERSTOCK

that's traditionally used in South American purification ceremonies.

"Guests have been very fascinated by the shaman and the treatments we've put together," says Garcia-Tunon, adding that the spa has been "extremely busy" since opening.

Preventative wellness and medical care is also offered at the spa by practitioners such as gut health expert Dr Matthew Cooper - aka Dr Enzyme - and cardiovascular specialist Dr Juan Rivera. Meanwhile, advanced beauty treatments are offered by Biologique Recherche and Georgia Louise.



Other industry companies and suppliers involved include Design for Leisure, which worked on the extensive and sophisticated hydrothermal area, Gharieni, Living Earth Crafts, SpaEquip and T-Y Linens.

Theron, who runs her own spa consultancy, Itanda, says Tierra Santa is "very unique... a sublime combination of ancient healing practice, art-inspired interiors and state-of-the-art technology,

which makes it one of the most exciting hotel spas in the world and certainly one of the best projects to be involved with."

Hammam treatments are offered alongside shaman-inspired rituals to reenergise

which makes it one of the most exciting hotel spas in the world and certainly one of the best projects to be involved with."

Hotelier Alan Faena and American/Russian investor Len Blavatnik opened the 182-bed Faena Hotel in November 2015. It's the first phase of openings in the larger Faena District Miami Beach, which is designed as an entire new neighbourhood with art and culture at its core. ●

“I’m very into healthy food and wellness and I think that this [organic skincare] is an extension of trying to eat well – and I’m really proud of it

Gwyneth Paltrow,
founder, Goop



Actress Gwyneth Paltrow’s lifestyle brand Goop has branched out into skincare – Goop by Juice Beauty – with a range that capitalises on the Goop philosophy of ‘fresh-faced, natural beauty’.

Paltrow worked with California-based Juice Beauty to create the collection, which is made with plant-based juices and organic ingredients – including food-grade organic preservatives.

Appearing on the *Tonight Show* Starring Jimmy Kimmel, Paltrow illustrated this point by actually eating one of the products – dipping a french fry into the cream.

“I couldn’t find products that were luxurious and really effective and work with wrinkles and all that, that were organic,” Paltrow explained to TV host Kimmel. “I’m very into healthy food and wellness and I think that this is an extension of trying to eat well – and I’m really proud of it.”

The line features six products, including an Enriching Face Oil, Exfoliating Instant Facial, Luminous Melting Cleanser, Revitalizing Day Moisturizer, Replenishing Night Cream and Perfecting Eye Cream.

The formulas are made with meristem plant cells, which are sourced from poet’s daffodil and



Paltrow ate one of the products on TV to show how organic the range is

west iris, then blended with an antioxidant juice complex designed to brighten skin tone and target fine lines and wrinkles. The line also includes aloe, apple, lemon and grape juices; peptides; linseed extract; hyaluronic acid and vitamin C.

Paltrow told Kimmel she worked for 13 months “nonstop, back-and-forth with the chemists, until we got them feeling really beautiful.”

She added: “We’ve created luxurious, clean, organic formulas that are proven effective. We hope they change the way women think about skincare.”

The line is available through Paltrow’s Goop website, as well as at select retailers. ●



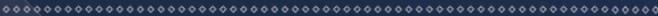
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6 The new locations are the first in a 100-unit, 15-year deal between Massage Envy and Australia-based Collective Wellness Group

Lee Knowlton, senior vice president of global sales and international, Massage Envy

One of the biggest US spa franchisors, Massage Envy, has expanded internationally with the opening of two sites in Sydney, Australia.

The new locations are the first in a 100-unit, 15-year deal between Massage Envy and Australia-based Collective Wellness Group, which will manage Massage Envy's operations in the country. The group also oversees Australia's 450 Anytime Fitness clubs.

Lee Knowlton, senior vice president of global sales and international at Massage Envy, says he hopes to have 40-50 stores open in Australia in the next three years, with Sydney and Melbourne as the firm's primary focus.

"I think we'll see our growth in Australia accelerate over the next few years," says Knowlton. "They



Sydney and Melbourne are a key focus for Massage Envy in its rollout across Australia

[Collective Wellness] already have the infrastructure and the real estate, and they're really strong players in the market."

Knowlton says he looks at things like population, income, GDP, taxes, the economy and awareness of the product when he's considering international locations, but that finding the right master-franchise partner is also important – and was key in selecting Australia as the inaugural country for international expansion. "We're looking to find a partner to help us develop in the whole country," he explains.

The first Sydney location is 2,100sq ft (195sq m) with 10 treatment rooms – a slight dip in Massage Envy's US model, which is typically closer to 3,400sq ft (316sq m) – and Knowlton says the firm will likely stick to the smaller model for international sites, where real estate tends to be pricier than in the US market.

The business model, branding and design of the spas will be

similar to in the US, with offerings of 1-, 1.5- and 2-hour massages and facials, with membership pricing at AU\$69 (US\$52, €45, £36) for a 1-hour treatment.

The first Massage Envy in Sydney is also located several doors down from an Anytime Fitness location, and while Knowlton says future locations won't necessarily be co-located, there is certainly the potential to do so – and possible synergy between the brands.

"They're similar brand experiences," he says. "In theory, you could go work out and then go get a massage, so I think we'll probably have quite a few of those down the line."

Knowlton hopes to have another international location signed by the end of this year – with Canada, Mexico, the UAE, the UK and South Korea top of the list – and up to three countries per year from then on.

Massage Envy currently has more than 1,100 franchise locations in 49 US states. ●

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spa business uniting the world of wellness

“We’re trying to get as close as possible to decarbonising the factory

Daide Bolatti, chair, Comfort Zone

Next year, skincare brand Comfort Zone will open its new €25m (US\$28.1m, £19.5m) headquarters in Parma, Italy, creating what chair Davide Bolatti calls a “house for sustainable beauty”.

Bolatti is passionate about the ways in which beauty, innovation and architecture intersect – and about creating sustainability in each of those areas.

The Matteo Thun-designed über-green headquarters will cover 11,000sq m (118,400sq ft) and is dubbed Davines Village after Comfort Zone’s parent company. When completed towards the end of 2017, Davines Village will feature a skin bar where visitors can try Comfort

Zone’s products, education zones and the company’s development laboratories – all set around a greenhouse and organic gardens, which will provide food for a central organic restaurant, as well as plants for the skincare products.

Traditionally, Parma is an agricultural region and Bolatti says he wanted the architecture to reflect that. But he also wanted to create an even more environmentally-friendly building and to foster quality of life for his employees. “We have a humanistic approach,” he explains. “It’s an approach that puts people at the centre.”

He chose Thun to design Davines Village because of his record of creating buildings with low carbon emissions



We have a humanistic approach. It puts people at the centre

and integrating buildings into the landscape.

“I learned the hard way that you don’t change a lot when it comes to architects – especially when they’re ‘archi-stars,” says Bolatti. “It’s better to choose the one that already has your sensibilities and that’s what we did with Matteo.”

The headquarters will house one of the biggest geothermal systems in Italy, says Bolatti, and will also make use of solar energy.

“We’re trying to get as close as possible to decarbonising the factory,” Bolatti explains.

He worked with a sustainability engineer to conduct a thorough review, and while it’s difficult to decarbonise a factory completely, Bolatti says: “We’re getting close.”

But Bolatti’s quest for sustainable beauty does not stop there. He’s also created the iSustainBeauty campaign, which is now in its second year and set to double in size. With a simple goal of making the world a more beautiful place, the movement focuses on small social, environmental and artistic ventures that do just that.

“This goes beyond corporate social responsibility; it goes to the core of sustainability,” he says.

This year, Bolatti expects the programme to fund about 100 projects globally, from reworking an abandoned village garden to opening a beauty school in an underprivileged neighbourhood to restoring a heritage church.

“The idea is to make the world a more beautiful place through local projects,” says Bolatti. “Because beauty can make all the difference.” ●

Comfort Zone will open its €25m HQ in late 2017. It’s been created by Italian eco-designer Matteo Thun





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spa business uniting the world of wellness

Miraval to open first destination spa resort outside of Tucson



“It’s got a great history and great architecture. This will be our New England anchor.”
Chevis Hosea

US spa operator Miraval is set to buy the historic Cranwell Spa and Golf Resort in Lenox, Massachusetts, marking its first East Coast location and the first Miraval destination spa resort outside of Tucson. It plans to open the resort in 2017.

“Cranwell is a great fit for us – it’s a large property where we can create the Miraval experiences,” says Chevis Hosea, the group’s vice president of development. “This will be our New England anchor.”



A new 35-room spa will be added



The location is just a few miles away from Canyon Ranch

The location is just a few miles from fellow Arizona-based destination spa Canyon Ranch, which operates a 100,000sq ft (9,290sq m) spa complex and resort in the Lenox area as well.

“If you’re going into New England with a wellness resort, obviously Lenox is a well-known destination already,” says Hosea. “We just want to add to that experience. It [Lenox] could be a real wellness destination.”

Set on 380 acres (154 hectares), Cranwell features several cottages, including a historic hilltop Tudor-style mansion and

a home once lived in by abolitionist and author Harriet Beecher Stowe – famous for her anti-slavery novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.

Miraval plans to renovate every building on the property and “bring them up to Miraval standards,” says Hosea.

Four new buildings are also planned, including a 18,327sq ft (1,703sq m) spa with 35 treatment rooms. The existing Cranwell spa will be converted into a fitness facility. There are also plans for a new-build 12,003sq ft (1,115sq m) mindfulness and wellbeing building.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=W2F4T_B

Major renovation for Lanserhof Lans

Lanserhof Lans, the world-famous Austrian destination spa, is undergoing a major renovation until December 2016.

The existing facility will be extended and a new building by German architect Christoph Ingenhoven will be added. Ingenhoven is one of many regular guests to the detox retreat based in Tyrol, an Alpine province.

The new structure – an oval building with a wooden façade and a grassy roof – will have 16 rooms with mountain views.



“The new bathhouse is a sensation, with its heated saltwater pool and sauna complex.”
Christoph Ingenhoven

A sauna complex and indoor-outdoor seawater pool will be located on the ground floor.

“Guests can expect to find a completely refreshed Lanserhof,” Ingenhoven tells *Spa Business*. He adds that the architecture, as with existing facilities, will place an emphasis



Designer Ingenhoven is a regular at the detox retreat

on transparency, harmonious forms and natural materials “to open up heart and soul”.

During reconstruction the Lanserhof will be relocated at

the Schwarzer Adler hotel in nearby Kitzbühel, whose spa will offer Lanserhof’s signature LANS Med Concept.

More: http://lei.sr?a=j7Y2g_B

Mandarin Oriental launches Digital Detox Initiative

Luxury hotel brand Mandarin Oriental has launched a programme designed to help guests find new ways to manage their relationships with technology. The Digital Detox Initiative will debut in September in its 30-plus spas around the world.

The initiative encourages guests to surrender their phones when they arrive at the spa and also provides a range of more mindful activities in relaxation



“The expectations for instant communication can have a negative impact on our wellbeing”
Jeremy McCarthy



Guests surrender devices and benefit from a 'grounding' experience

rooms, including journaling, notecard writing, colouring and meditation.

A Digital Detox Retreat – which lasts for one hour and 20 minutes – focuses on grounding the body and mind through the power of human touch and includes an aromatic bath plus massage.

Mandarin worked with US-based nonprofit Mayo Clinic to create a range of tips and guidelines to help establish

personal boundaries on technology.

“The spa is one of the few places left in modern society where it's acceptable and even encouraged to disconnect from technology,” says group spa director McCarthy, adding that even a brief break can help people rest their minds.

Devices are returned – newly cleaned and repackaged – upon leaving the spa. **Read more:** http://lei.sr?a=T5V4H_B



The historic hotel features a wellness centre spread over four floors

Toskanaworld takes on fifth German spa hotel

Toskanaworld Group, which runs four spas and hotels across Germany, has been brought on board to manage the 207-bed five-star Elbresidenz hotel and 2,100sq m (22,604sq ft) wellness area in Bad Schandau.

The historic hotel has undergone a transformation after the Elbe River flooded in 2013. The wellness area at the property is spread over four floors and there are plans for special areas for meditation and yoga as well as ayurvedic and medical treatments.

Toskanaworld also operates the neighbouring 1,830sq m (19,698sq ft)



“The combination of activities in nature and spa treatments will be one of our unique selling propositions”
Marion Schneider

Toskana Therme which is home to the unique Liquid Sound spa experience which combines sound, water and light.

“As the Therme is only three minutes' walk apart by foot, the advantage is obvious,” says Marion Schneider, CEO and co-owner of Toskanaworld and Elbresidenz.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=B6W5E_B



Harrington (centre) is based in the US

House of Elemis Miami set for October opening

British-based skincare brand Elemis is to debut its second House of Elemis this October in a 9,000sq ft (836sq m), six-treatment-room location in Miami.

“Miami is not only a leading US city location, but also where Steiner [Elemis' owning company] and our cruise ship business is so strong, so it's a natural home for the launch,” says Elemis co-founder and president Sean Harrington.

“We are hugely focused on our US business, and in light of the recent Brexit of EU, this cements an even more important time for us to continue focusing our investment in the US to strengthen the brand.”

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=J7T5W_B

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Coco Chanel used to live at Ritz Paris

First Chanel-branded spa debuts at Ritz Paris

The first-ever Chanel-branded spa has opened at the Ritz Paris, along with the newly renovated 17,000sq ft (1,579sq m) Ritz Club Paris – two floors dedicated to beauty and wellness.

The Ritz Paris, which originally opened in 1898, closed its doors in 2012 for extensive renovations headed up by architect and designer Thierry W Despont.

The Ritz Club Paris wellness space has been entirely rethought and redesigned. The area includes a heated indoor swimming pool, hammam, sauna, experience shower, fitness room, manicure and pedicure stations and hair salon.

Chanel au Ritz Paris is described as a “unique and customised sensory experience,” and is a new concept dedicated to Chanel’s skincare.

Read more: http://lei.sr7a=a8N9x_B



The Terma Linca Resort and Spa will be rebranded as the GOCO Retreat Thimphu

GOCO to develop circuit of five wellness resorts across Bhutan

Through a partnership with Bhutan’s Queen Mother, GOCO Hospitality is developing projects in Bhutan’s top five tourist destinations.

GOCO founder and CEO Ingo Schweder says the firm has taken over the management of Terma Linca Resort and Spa, which is the first and flagship development of the partnership and the largest of the five resorts. Located just outside Bhutan’s capital of Thimphu, the Terma Linca resort has 30 rooms and a full-service spa with five treatment rooms.

Terma Linca will undergo a soft renovation this year, followed by more development in 2017 that will include



CEO Ingo Schweder

an extended spa and fitness facility with an indoor vitality pool, as well as an expansion of its on-site organic gardens.

The second phase of development will rebrand and rename the resort as the GOCO Retreat Thimphu.

The second Bhutanese resort will be a site in Punakha, which will have the most substantial wellness programming components, followed by sites in Paro, Gangtey and Jakar.

The proposed circuit is envisioned to offer an eco-conscious, cultural experience that merges Bhutan’s ancient healing and spiritual traditions with diverse natural settings.

Read more: http://lei.sr7a=G2h2f_B



The first Sentierre will be built in the Mojave Desert, Utah

Sepielli creating spa concept for new US wellness hotel brand

Sentierre, a new US-based hotel brand with a focus on wellbeing, will include a full-service spa created by Sylvia Sepielli in its first resort, Sentierre Padre Canyon in Utah.

The resort will be built on 43 acres (17 hectares) in the Mojave Desert. The Padre Canyon Sanctuary will encompass more than 14,000sq ft (1,300sq m), including six treatment rooms.



“It’s not a theme or concept – it’s who they are”
Sylvia Sepielli

“It’s exciting to be part of the evolution of this new hotel brand, particularly because wellness and wellbeing is part of its DNA,” says Sepielli, who’s known for her spa designs around the world.

More: http://lei.sr7a=A9B7H_B



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Vallati has worked on the treatments

ESPA ventures into mindfulness and sleep therapies

Spa supplier and operator ESPA has launched a series of mindfulness and sleep therapies at its flagship spa, ESPA Life at Corinthia London, with the intention of rolling some of the treatments out across its global portfolio at a later date.

The six therapies are based on yoga breathing and visualisation techniques and include a massage and facial.

ESPA founder Sue Harmsworth says: "One of the reasons we've introduced these treatments is because we see people coming into our city spa who are so stressed and their body is holding so much tension that they're not getting the benefits they should from their treatment."

Mindful Sleep, Mindful Breathing and Meditation, and Mindful Fitness sessions are on offer too. Harmsworth and Laura Vallati, the spa director at ESPA Life at Corinthia, have been working on the treatments for the past six months.

Vallati says: "There's now so much scientific research coming to light which shows how simple, slow breathing has a powerful effect on the central nervous system and a very soothing, calming effect."

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=3n8f6_B



It's taken four decades for Chenot to open a second destination spa

Second Chenot destination spa to open in Azerbaijan

Health and wellness specialist Henri Chenot is opening his second destination spa at a five-star retreat in Azerbaijan in November.

Based on the holistic detox and revitalisation Chenot methods, the Chenot Palace Health Wellness Hotel Gabala will be both a medical spa and a medical clinic dedicated to improving the health, wellbeing and natural appearance of guests.

The first Espace Henri Chenot opened in 1974 at the Cannes Polyclinic. In the early 1980s, it moved to south Tyrol and became the Espace Henri Chenot in Merano.

Guests at the new Chenot Palace in Gabala will undergo the Chenot method, which includes a combination of health check-ups and a detoxifying diet, along with spa treatments. The 6,000sq m (64,583sq ft) medical spa

“The nature, pure air and tranquility made Gabala the perfect retreat for our detox and revitalisation programmes”

Lorenzo Amaglio, general manager

facility is dedicated to medical check-ups and state-of-the-art diagnostics that enable the medical team to assess the wellness status of the guests.

A new Human Performance Department will feature a metabolic laboratory, a -110°C (-166°F) cryo chamber for whole-body cryotherapy, and a sports lab for fitness screening, antiviral technologies and hypoxic training for physical wellness.

Set on a 26-hectare (64-acre) park and surrounded by forests, lakes and mountains, the retreat's location is ideal for outdoor exercise.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=F3T4B_B



Sokolova working on Latvian wellness centre transformation

Latvian wellness consultancy Inbalans Group is working together with Moscow-based international development company Griffin Partners and Jurmala City Council to develop a substantial wellness community in Latvia's Kemer National Park.

The wellness community, located just west of the capital of Riga, will include a five-star hotel with a 1,500sq m (16,146sq ft) spa, due to open in 2018. Inbalans founder, Alla Sokolova, says there will also be a wellness clinic with a focus on balneotherapy treatments, which is due to open in 2022. In addition, fertility, sleep and performance programmes will be available and the hotel will feature a 12-treatment-room spa.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=K558Z_B

“This will be a different kind of luxury experience, based on local heritage and using healing sources, but also in a very private setting”

Alla Sokolova

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www.worldspawellbeing.com

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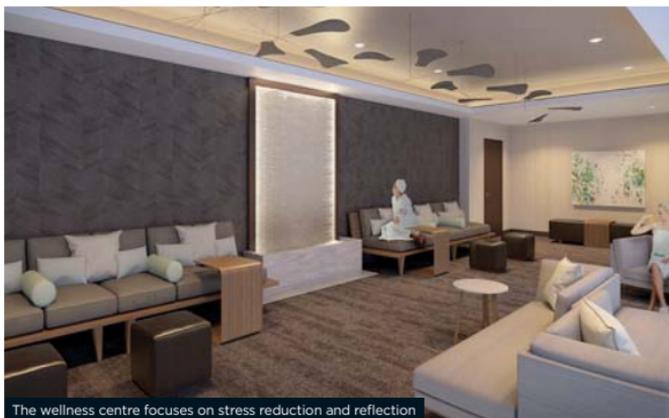
17-19 October 2016

Global Wellness Summit

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www.globalwellnesssummit.com



The wellness centre focuses on stress reduction and reflection

Marriott debuts 'art of living well' spa

Marriott has opened a new 5,500sq ft (511sq m) Spa and Wellness Center at its Coronado Island Resort & Spa in San Diego, California. The resort is focusing on the 'art of living well' through a refreshed focus on nutrition, exercise, movement, stress reduction and reflection, and also features a new two-storey 6,000sq ft (557sq m) fitness centre.

The 10-treatment-room spa has a holistic approach to wellness, focusing just as much on healing therapies as on indulgent services. It includes a spa garden and 2,000sq ft (186sq m) of outdoor space.

Treatments will use Elemis skincare, and spa rituals include Asian healing therapies for multi-services experiences.

“The Spa at Coronado Island emphasises the healing benefits of the sea and provides a true sense of relaxed luxury”

Veljko Savic, spa director

In other news, Marriott has introduced Stay Well hotel rooms to some of its US properties. The rooms, by wellness real estate firm Delos (see SBI4/1 p28), include light-focused features such as circadian lighting, vitamin C-infused showers and air purification. The concept, which launched in 2014, allows hotels to charge a 30 per cent premium on rack rates.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=7Y4n3_B

Global Wellness Day hopes for UN recognition in 2017



Belgin Aksoy, founder of GWD

Global Wellness Day (GWD) was celebrated around the world on 11 June, with people from 100 countries participating in the not-for-profit event through activities including yoga, pilates, dance, happiness workshops, nutrition lectures and children's activities.

But Belgin Aksoy, founder of the event, says she hopes next year that it will have a bigger reach, and has set a goal of the United Nations observing the event as an international day of wellness.

“It should be recognised as a day to create awareness and motivation to ensure that people make positive changes in their lives that will impact their wellbeing on the other 364 days of the year,” says Aksoy.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=v9C2D_B



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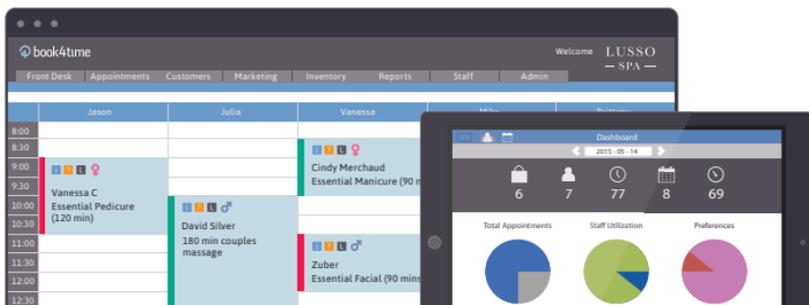
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spa business uniting the world of wellness

Vladislav Doronin

The owner of boutique hotel brand Aman tells Katie Barnes why wellness is so important to him - and to the future of the company

When Vladislav Doronin talks wellness, it's clear he's not just paying lip service to what's become one of the most overused words on the international spa scene. "Wellness is not only related to the physical, but also to the strength of the connection between the body and mind," he says. "This is of the utmost importance to me.

"I meditate regularly and I work with a qi gong specialist who helps me focus on aspects of wellbeing that are easy to neglect, such as posture, breathing and movement. I recently had an amazing experience at Amanjiwo in Java where I was able to practice qi gong in Borobudur, a ninth century Buddhist temple and UNESCO World Heritage site."

Originally from Russia, Doronin is super-fit and in his Moscow home - a spaceship-like creation by the late Dame Zaha Hadid - he has a gym and a thermal suite comprising both a traditional banya and a hammam with hot and cold plunge pools. He takes rest seriously too and recommends watsu "to anyone looking for deep relaxation and total release".

He feels wellness "enables you to be more productive elsewhere in your life" and is prioritising it at Aman by investing up to US\$30m (€26m, £21m) in spa development.

Self-confessed Amanjunker

Originating in Phuket, Thailand in 1988, Aman is known for sites that have a sense of space, exquisite design and uncompromising service and locations - think Moroccan deserts, Balinese jungles and Indian tented

camp. Privacy is key, and this is something many stars appreciate, including George Clooney who got married at the Aman Canal Venice and David Beckham, who hosted his 40th at Amanjena in Marrakech. In fact, the 30 properties (see p41) have somewhat of a celebrity status themselves and have their very own cult-like followers known as 'Amanjunkies' - of which Doronin is one.

He says: "Every time I stepped through the doors of an Aman, I felt as though I was returning to a home of a friend... The destinations quickly became somewhere I would visit to restore my energy and focus on wellbeing. I started to plan my travels around them, meticulously ticking off each resort and hotel in the 20 countries around the world."

So when Indian real estate firm DFL put out the feelers to sell the brand in 2013, he was first in line. Doronin, 53, is estimated to be worth US\$1bn and made his fortune first in commodity trading and later in real estate with his Russian-based firm Capital Group. He teamed up with a consortium of investors to buy Aman for US\$358m (€315.9m, £245.4m).

While there's been a very public legal battle over Aman's ownership among the original investors since the initial deal, disputes seem to have now been settled. Last August, Doronin became chair of the board following a corporate restructure.

His goal now is to "continue to set the benchmark with our bespoke approach to hospitality and rigorous attention to detail which is applied to every aspect of the guest experience." And spa is a key focus.

Aman Wellness

As destinations that aspire to offer 'transformative experiences', it's fair to say that Aman properties have always had a strong focus on spa (see SB10/2 p24). All sites, regardless of their size, feature spa facilities and services, including highly localised treatments - from those incorporating fresh medicinal herbs in Montenegro to hot spring bathing in Japan.

The destinations quickly became somewhere I would visit to restore my energy and focus on wellbeing



Doronin is investing
up to US\$30m in new
spa developments
and refurbis at Aman

spa business uniting the world of wellness



Awareness and spiritual awakening programmes are key to Aman's new wellness concept

“If we can make our guests feel renewed, refreshed, healthier and happier, then we've achieved what we set out to do”

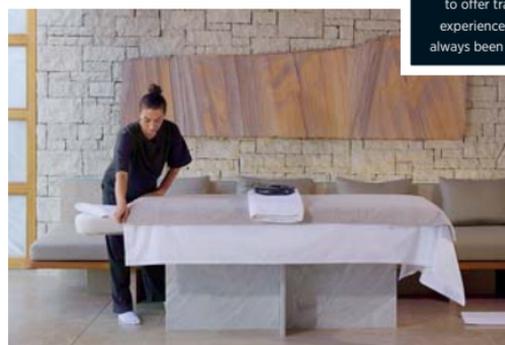
▶ “Aman means ‘peace,’” says Doronin. “People come to Aman to relax, enjoy, experience great food and to feel peace. The spa is a big part of this. They're so much more important to us than being just another revenue stream.” He adds that guests are the backbone of the Aman business and that “if we can make our guests feel renewed, refreshed, healthier and happier, then we've achieved what we set out to do. Many other hotels and resorts are losing the human touch, which in turn means many guests lose their connection and loyalty.”

Over the last three years, he's been working closely with Greg Payne, Aman's group director of spa who's been in the industry for 18 years, to bring its spas to the next level. Part of this includes the US\$30m investment in new spa developments and refurbishes (see p44). Another essential element is the Aman Wellness concept, which launched in June. The concept comprises a series of Individual Wellness Immersions run in parallel with Group Retreat Experiences across the Aman portfolio in 2016. They focus on four new approaches for the company: cleanse and detox, awareness and spiritual awakening, weight management and fitness. Of the latter, Doronin comments: ▶





Set in stunning locations, Aman destinations aspire to offer transformative experiences and spa has always been a core element



AMAN PORTFOLIO

Launched in Phuket, Thailand in 1988, Aman has grown steadily over the past 18 years and now includes 30 properties in 20 countries. The majority are in Asia, located in Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, India, Japan, Laos, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. But it has a growing presence in other international regions, with properties in the Dominican Republic, Turks & Caicos and the US, and also in France, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Morocco and Turkey.

spabusiness.com issue 3 2016 41



Opposites attract: outdoor adventure and spa tranquility at Amangiri, US

Each focus area is designed to remove barriers guests face with high-stress lifestyles and to help them achieve.

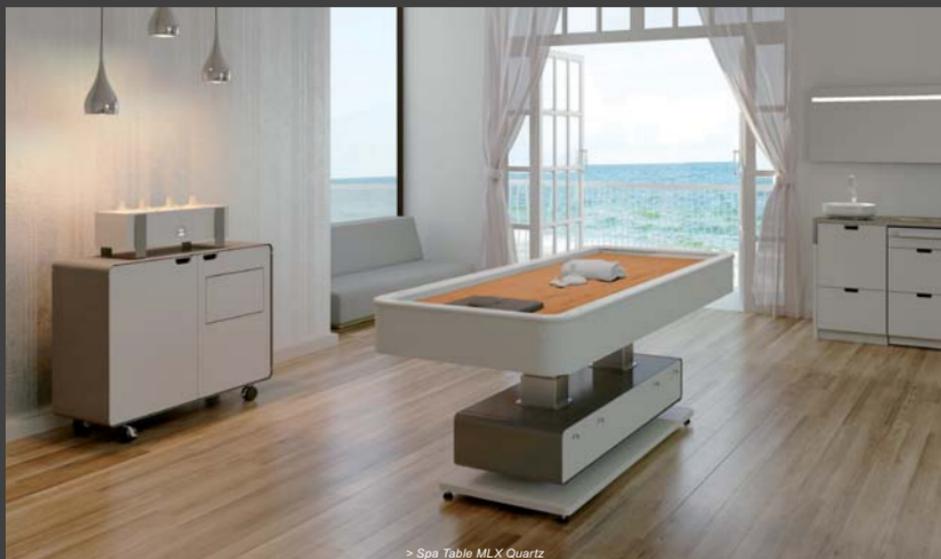
► “We’ve noticed guests of all ages are consistently looking for healthy alternatives and ways to keep active while on holiday.” At Amankora in Bhutan, for example, there’s hiking through the kingdom and therapies based on Tibetan medical treatments and Bhutanese ingredients. Meanwhile in Amangiri in the US, adrenalin-fuelled adventure is offered alongside its peaceful 25,000sq ft (2,323sq m) spa – “a combination that’s hard to find”.

Doronin says Payne and his team “have been instrumental in introducing the more holistic concept”. He adds: “Each focus area is designed to remove barriers guests face with high-stress lifestyles and to help them achieve: whether a physical objective or a more spiritual and internal focus... It’s an experience which opens up the soul to infinite possibility. Far beyond the massage bed, we deliver a feel-alive result which ensures guests return home feeling strong of spirit and with renewed intentions.”

New ventures

Critics of Doronin fear that being a commercially-minded real estate mogul, he may have a focus on just turning the investment around quickly. But he argues differently: “I’ve ►





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spa business uniting the world of wellness



Spa diversity: Amanemu opened in March and draws on Japan's hot spring bathing traditions

► been a long-standing admirer of the brand and I want to ensure that we remain true to all of the characteristics that Aman is known for," he says.

That said, he does – of course – intend to address performance and he has a new finance director and marketing and PR team in place to help. One step is to increase occupancy and it's also been reported that there are plans to raise room rates, which currently start at over US\$1,000 a night.

Venturing into urban locations and the highly lucrative realm of branded residential units are on the cards too.

Doronin says: "In December 2014 we launched Aman Tokyo, our first vertical Aman, which was a milestone for the brand [see SB15/2 p52]... Its success has encouraged us to venture further into developing more urban retreats and I feel it's a natural progression for us to have a presence in the international hubs of the world. This is perhaps also a reflection of what the next generation of our clients are looking for."

When it comes to the potential of Aman residences he says: "we've found that many of our guests want to make long-term investments in the Aman lifestyle."

Global growth

Another priority for Doronin in the future is to strengthen Aman's global footprint to keep pace with other hospitality groups. The company's operational headquarters have moved to London from Singapore because of the city's international reach. And in terms of new developments, there are a possible 10 properties

It's a natural progression for us to have a presence in the international hubs of the world

in the pipeline over the next five years. Gabon and Mozambique have been brought up in the media as potential locations, as have Argentina, Brazil, Peru and even the Galapagos Islands. Meanwhile, with Aman's interest in urban expansion, New York, London and Hong Kong are all maybes.

However, with more than 50 projects under review at any one time, this could easily change. Doronin says: "I'm unable to divulge too many details at the moment, but what I am excited by is the diversity of wellness experiences we'll be able to offer."

He refers to Amanemu, the company's second property in Japan, which opened in March. "It's a hot spring sanctuary overlooking the nearby Ago Bay. The spa embraces the theme of water and offers

many water treatments, including watsu therapy." He also hints at more diversity for guests in upcoming projects. "There are plans to open our fourth hotel in China and further properties in Japan, so watch this space," he says.

In conclusion, Doronin adds that the team have: "ensured that Aman's spa and wellness offerings are no longer simply seen as an amenity, but are one of the most important factors in defining the positioning of our resorts. Together, we want to take our spa offering to a higher level, making it an even more special experience." ●



Katie Barnes is the editor of *Spa Business* magazine
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Spa Foresight™ is published annually in the *Spa Business Handbook*

What's going to have the biggest impact on spas in the future? *Spa Business* outlines the trends, technologies and strategies that are coming down the track

Top 20 predictions for 2016

- 1 Scaleable wellness
- 2 Iceland
- 3 Breathing
- 4 Spa planes
- 5 Social good
- 6 The virome
- 7 Clean eating
- 8 Dementia-friendly design
- 9 Meditation spaces
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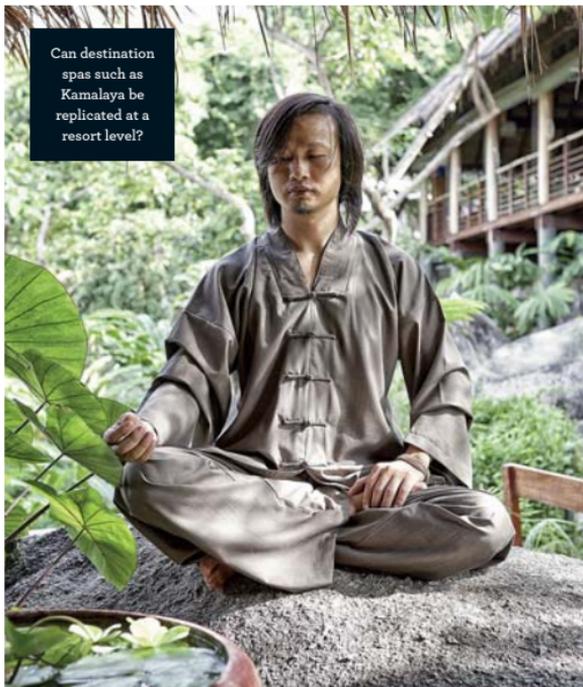


PHOTO: KAMALAYA WELLNESS SANCTUARY, THAILAND

RIPE FOR INVESTMENT

1. SCALEABLE WELLNESS

With an increasing movement towards all things wellness, more equity firms are scoping out potential projects in the wellbeing and spa sector.

According to Omer Isvan, owner of international investment company Servotel, scalable wellness is where

investors are heading. There's something magical about destination spas which offer truly authentic, transformational experiences that keep guests coming back year after year, says Isvan, claiming investors are keeping a close eye on such concepts that could potentially be

replicated in a credible way in a resort setting.

He also sees an opportunity for third-party wellness operators who can run specialist facilities for hotels and resorts in much the same way as they do spas.

■ Read more in *Spa Business* issue 2 2016: <http://lei.sr?a=8T4O8>



A €40m expansion is underway at the famous Blue Lagoon hot springs

HOT PROSPECT

2. ICELAND

Tourism is heating up on the volcanic island of Iceland having grown by 100 per cent since 2006 and set to reach the 3 million mark by 2020 – not bad for a country with a population of only 320,000. This will pave the way for upcoming hotel and spa businesses.

Iceland's airlines have been key to this boom, offering an increasing number of direct and stopover flights between North America and Europe.

Capital controls in place since the 2008 economic crash have also seen the country's pension funds – worth around ISK1,2tn (US\$9.6bn, €8.6bn, £6.6bn) – restricted to domestic investments. Tourism projects, including the new US\$2.5m Ice Cave were welcome recipients.

Trendy cafes and boutique shops are making an appearance. As are cool design-led hotels such as Marriott's

Edition which will open next to Reykjavik's iconic Harpa Concert Hall by 2019, with Bill Gates one of the reported investors.

The famous Blue Lagoon thermal spa is also undergoing a major expansion, while the country's alluring lunar-like landscape dotted with natural hot springs are a big hit with wellness lovers.

Given this potent mix, we feel Iceland will prove to be a recipe for success for spa operators of the future.

ELIMINATION

3. BREATHING

We expect the health benefits of healthy breathing to become increasingly well recognised and for operators to offer interventions such as a breathing workshops and coaching sessions to help guests improve this important eliminatory function.

Breathing well is a skill and many people struggle to

do it well, however, it can be improved with practice.

Breathing controls brainwaves and the stress response and can also trigger sleep, so improving breathing patterns can bring immediate and profound health benefits. Modalities such as yoga, which focus on the breath, will be part of this trend.

THE PAMPERED JOURNEY

4. SPA PLANES

Finding time for self-care can be challenging for those living a fast urban lifestyle.

We expect operators to widen their search for these time windows to the transport industry, with planes an obvious starting point.

Air travel is uncomfortable and for

those who can afford it, the chance to travel on a plane which has been fully fitted out as a spa, with treatments, healthy food and relaxation to while away the journey would be appealing.

This thinking can be extended to other modes of transport such as buses and trains.



Peninsula Hot Springs has links with a regional arthritis organisation

OUTREACH PROGRAMMES

5. SOCIAL GOOD

With consumers increasingly drawn to companies with a social conscience, we foresee a time when spas will work more actively with the less fortunate. They'll follow the lead of health clubs which

have had great success with outreach programmes – teaching fitness to older adults, the obese or those suffering from a range of illnesses. Spas have a wealth of knowledge and services focused on preventative health and wellbeing and could easily follow suit.

Operators could devise specialised programmes and take them out into

the community, host sessions on-site during off-peak hours or collaborate with local or national associations.

Australia's Peninsula Hot Springs is one of the first off the mark in positioning itself as hub for social good (and wellness). It already has links with Mental Health Australia and a regional arthritis and osteoporosis organisation.

DEEPER INTO THE BIOME

6. THE VIROME

We're becoming familiar with the biome – the billions of bacteria and viruses which live synergistically inside our bodies, controlling all sorts of functions. Biome-boosting treatments, diets and other interventions increasingly feature on spa menus the world over.

New science is emerging which is enabling us to better understand the impact viruses can have on our health. Scientists are calling this the virome.

We've grown used to viewing viruses as simply a source of disease, but researchers are exploring hidden parts of the biome and discovering that we may be able to use viruses to keep healthy.

It's thought that – just as there are 'good' and



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ALAZIO

The study of viruses will open up new treatments which use beneficial viruses to improve wellbeing

'bad' bacteria – so we will find there are 'good' and 'bad' viruses.

Vincent Racaniello, who studies viruses at Columbia University in the USA, says: "If we can make a connection between beneficial viruses and good health, the next step will be to try to manipulate them to improve our health and wellbeing."

A deeper understanding of viruses – which carry one-fiftieth as much genetic information as bacteria – is becoming possible as a result of new probes, which researchers are using to map the virome.

Spa and wellness operators will eventually be able to add virome-boosting treatments and protocols to their menus.



Spas will pick 'real', wholesome food

FOOD AS MEDICINE

7. CLEAN EATING

Far from being a diet limited to certain food groups or calorie counting, 'clean eating' is a simple concept – avoid processed foods and opt for 'real', wholesome ingredients instead.

We predict more spas will adopt this approach in their cuisine and also expect them to refine and expand the definition of superfoods as they realise that a wide range of foods have nutritional benefits.

Spas which roast, bake and fry with hot fat, creating acrylamide – which the World Health Organization has warned is carcinogenic – will change this practice as a more holistic approach to food is adopted.

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PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/CSKAY BENICE



Dementia levels are on the rise

COMPASSIONATE ACCESS

8. DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY DESIGN

As the population ages and the number of people living with dementia increases, we expect to see a rapid increase in awareness of the importance of dementia-friendly design.

The customer journey can be made far more enjoyable and straightforward if a building is skillfully designed to accommodate their needs. Things like signposting, effective colour selections for light and contrast can all help dementia-sufferers navigate with less stress and distress.

Increasing awareness of the power of peace will mean more meditation spaces

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/LUNA VANDORNE



THE POWER OF PEACE

9. MEDITATION SPACES

We're spotting a trend for the creation of meditation spaces in residential developments and expect this to filter across to the spa and wellness market.

Increasing interest in meditation and awareness of the importance of making time for contemplation and renewal is driving this need to find sanctuary.

Meditation spaces can be indoors, outdoors, or a mix of both and can be created in urban settings – with

the use of air filters and white noise machines – and in natural locations. Designing one with a beautiful view can add to the power of the experience.

Destination spas such as Rancho la Puerta, which has a stunning meditation room with mountain views, have led the way. We expect mainstream spas to follow, as this trend grows.

These spaces are increasingly likely to be designed by specialist architects.

SPA FOR YOUR GENES

10. EPIGENETICS

Scientists are increasingly convinced that the majority of disease – potentially up to 95 per cent – is preventable through making healthy lifestyle choices. This field of science is known as epigenetics.

It was previously thought that genes were fixed for life. However, sequencing of the human genome has taught us that many genes change in response to how we care for ourselves – from how we exercise and sleep, the pollution we're exposed to, our stress levels and state of mind, to what we eat and drink.

With prevention tipped to become a massive industry in years to come, this is a huge game changer for sectors related to self-care – including spa.

A spa for your genes will offer tests which reveal how a range of modalities, from meditation to massage, can impact our DNA – whether directly or indirectly

PHOTO: @JACQUELINEAN DESIGN



Chopra will have a centre focusing on epigenetics in Leonardo DiCaprio's new resort

through helping us to reduce stress or sleep better etc. And personalised programmes will be prescribed based on that data.

Deepak Chopra is already working on an anti-ageing and prevention centre which embraces epigenetics. It's due to open on

Blackadore Caye, a Belize island owned by Leonardo DiCaprio, in 2018 (see SB15/4 p36).

There's no reason why other spas can't follow suit by designing 'test and prescribe' modalities to ensure they're at the heart of the drive for prevention.

NEW DISCOVERIES

11. SKIN SCIENCE

Modern science is redefining the way we think about skin, and this will have a huge impact on the spa experience. New research (see SB16/2 p58) shows skin has both hearing and seeing sensors, suggesting there's a synergy between lighting and music and the effects of bodywork.

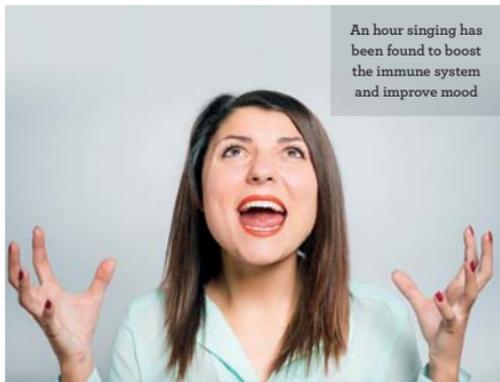
Discoveries show we're wired for 'social touch' and that we react to the speed or pressure of touch. Clients massaged gently are likely to tip more, for example, and feel longer-lasting benefits. As such, it's likely spa will have more impact on society's wellbeing than we can imagine.

TRIBAL GATHERING

12. SPECIALISATION

Specialisation is booming in the fitness industry as boutique facilities home in on specific types of exercise from yoga and group cycling to bootcamps. They're in accessible, city-centre locations with expert staff and tribal-like followers who buy into the brands in a big way, while still also going to their regular gym.

In the future, we see spa entrepreneurs siphoning off individual modalities – from reiki and reflexology to meditation – and creating their own highly specialised, standalone businesses with their own loyal tribes.



An hour singing has been found to boost the immune system and improve mood

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ELINDA

NOTEWORTHY BENEFITS

13. SINGING

For the past six years, scientists at the UK's Royal College of Music have been building a body of evidence to show that singing in a choir can have a range of social, emotional and psychological benefits. It was found to be particularly effective in those with the lowest levels of mental wellbeing. Most recently, it's been revealed that there are even biological advantages – one hour of choral singing boosts levels

of immune proteins in people affected by cancer.

Group singing sessions are a harmonious fit for spas which are getting more inventive with their menus. The activity, already popularised by TV series and films such as *Glee* and *Pitch Perfect*, could be offered to locals on a regular basis or as a one-off for guests to help improve mood, reduce stress and have a positive impact on their overall health in a fun and dynamic way.

FLOATING IDEA

14. SUSPENSION MASSAGE

"When you're hanging upside down, it takes away all the stress that's been pushing on the discs of your spine," says Christopher Harrison, the founder of AntiGravity® Aerial Yoga. "You're creating space, which allows the discs to hydrate and very often helps to relieve back pain."

Harrison's form of yoga uses a silk hammock to support and balance moves – such as the zero-compression inversion – which traditionally wouldn't be possible. He's now taking that idea and applying it to massage to develop an innovative treatment for spas.

He describes AntiGravity Floating Massage as something which will allow

a licenced therapist to manipulate the client into a weightless state in combination with massage therapy.

"Once suspended in mid-air, the body reacts very differently to manipulation," he says. "The therapist has the leverage that he/she would not be able to attain if the body was lying on a hard surface."

Expect to see this new technique rolling out in spas by the end of the year with Four Seasons already signed up.

We also feel there's room in the market for more innovation when it comes to massage, including the growth of turning and swinging beds such as Clap Tzu's WaveMotion table.



AntiGravity® Aerial Yoga founder Christopher Harrison is adapting his techniques for massage therapists



Haiti tourist numbers grew by 10.9 per cent last year

► CATCH OF THE CARIBBEAN

15. HAITI

Hailed as the last undeveloped island in the Caribbean, and the 'edgy new Cuba', Haiti is capturing the attention of real estate developers, hoteliers, spa operators and tourists.

Things are far from perfect following the devastating 2010 earthquake and years of political troubles. Yet the US considers it safe and last year Haiti had the fourth biggest increase of

tourists (up 10.9 per cent to 515,800 visitors) of any Caribbean destination.

Both Marriott and Best Western have hotels in the capital Port au Prince and Royal Caribbean has a cruise ship port in the north.

FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING

16. WALK-IN SPAS

The typical spa business model is therapist + client + treatment room = booking. This model is hugely inefficient, leading to a very high level of turnaways in most types of spas.

We expect new models to bypass these constraints by offering experiences which are more flexible in terms of the timed allocation of resources and what's on offer.

Imagine taking a ticket for a massage when you arrive and then spending time bathing in hot pools or chilling out in a relaxation space while you wait your turn.

HARNESSING NATURE

17. IMMUNE CHALLENGE PROGRAMMES

Medical research is increasingly focusing on harnessing the power of the immune system to both prevent and cure disease.

Researchers are now indicating that living in over-clean, sterile environments removes so many challenges to the immune system that it can leave people weakened and open to a range of diseases from cancer to auto immune disorders.

Just as immunisation programmes are used by doctors, so we expect spas to begin to offer immune system transformation retreats. These will include immune system challenges and treatments to enable the body to build more powerful responses to threats, deterioration and disease.

The treatments will amplify the body's own ability to fight disease using natural, rather than pharmaceutical interventions. ►



Can we be too clean?
Immune challenges
can build resistance to
infection and disease

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REST GETS TECHNICAL

18. RECOVERY

Modern life means many people are 'always on' and while wide acknowledgment of the importance of relaxation is one of the drivers of growth in the spa industry, many people are not skilled at building rest into their lives in a way which is technically optimised.

Olympic athletes know their rest and recovery schedules are as important in determining performance as their training, because once it's stressed through any kind of activity, the body needs time to respond and recuperate.

Exercise causes 'damage' which needs to be repaired and this requires the body



Rest time which is technically optimised enables the body to regenerate more powerfully

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/GIORGIO ROSSI

to expend a considerable amount of energy to heal. It's also the time when the training response takes effect and physical capacity is increased to enable a higher level of performance and function.

Spa and wellness businesses can raise their level of expertise in terms of the body's response to rest by using existing resources and expertise to

educate guests in the benefits, as well as programming technical rest with the correct nutritional, physical and physiological and psychological support.

Rest is also important for convalescence and healing from trauma or injury.

While athletes and coaches know the importance of the right kind of rest, this expertise is rarely available in spas.



PHOTO: FLOAT CLINIC AND RESEARCH CENTER/LIBR

The US is home to one of the first floatation research labs

SHORTCUT TO MEDITATION

19. FLOATATION THERAPY

It's time for spas to stop overlooking floatation pools, thinking of them as an expensive extra just for relaxation and to start incorporating them into wellness programmes or using them as a standalone treatment for serious ailments.

As research labs begin to document the therapeutic benefits of floatation, especially studying the way it can be used as a shortcut to meditation, we predict a

resurgence of the therapy in spas globally.

Neuropsychologist Justin Feinstein has set up one of the first float clinics at the Laureate Institute for Brain Research, US, and believes floatation can help people who find it difficult to meditate to switch off mental chatter. He's also found it could be used to treat conditions like PTSD, chronic pain and anorexia. ■ Read more in issue 2 2016: <http://lei.sr?a=C0e6u>



Keeping up with trends: virtual fitness

RAPID INNOVATION

20. MODULAR FITNESS PODS

The health and fitness industry is embracing a modular pod format which we expect to be taken up by operators in the spa and wellness market.

Driven by the fast pace of change in fitness and fitness tech, operators are designing flexible pod spaces with demountable walls which can be easily refitted for a variety of different offers throughout the day and which can be changed as soon as a new trend is identified.

Working a little like a food court, modular fitness pod facilities might have a series of pods for things like small group personal training, virtual workouts, meditation, yoga, TRX, heart rate training - whatever the membership demands.

As soon as a new trend emerges, a pod can be repurposed to deliver that activity, keeping the business in tune with demand. ●

SPA FORESIGHT™ Archive



2015

- Invisibles
- Faecal transplants
- Panama
- Massage-on-demand
- ASEAN market
- Attractions & spa
- Cuba
- Tiered offering
- Tribal investments
- Sport & spa
- Next gen skincare
- Haemoglobin levels
- Sexual wellness
- Biomimicry
- Bintan
- Halal tourism
- Animal movement
- Age-friendly design
- Face massage
- Spa and wellness real estate

2014

- Loneliness
- Oil, gas and solar
- Edible environments
- Playing with food
- Neuroplasticity
- Cellular health
- Robot therapists
- War zones
- Fats & carbs
- 3D printing
- Predicting purchasing
- No front desk
- Spa boom in Japan
- Virtual trainer
- Bad products
- Over nourishment
- Circadian aware
- Microgyms
- Gut health

- Clean air & water
- Facial recognition
- Wellness cities

2013

- Fresh food deliveries
- Online reviews
- Wearable tech
- Death
- Emotion
- Skills register
- Glute massage
- More with less
- Delicious extras
- Pop-up spas
- New allies
- Cellulite
- Home spa
- Childhood obesity
- Mobile biometrics
- Sex in spas
- Spa brands
- Hand & arm massage
- Repeat business
- Africa
- Variable pricing
- Last impressions
- Exercise
- Hospital spas
- 2012
- Budget spas
- Corporate wellness
- Education overhaul
- Deal sites
- Beauty brand power

2011

- Express treatments
- Spas seduced by beauty
- Tracking & analysing spa data
- Location-based marketing
- More serious skincare

- Discounting for volume deals
- Treatment room size
- The rise of part time staff
- International marketing partnerships

2010

- Spa art
- Four star spas
- Menu engineering
- Spa memberships
- Social spa-ing
- Spa niching
- No appointment needed
- Online learning
- A call for scientific proof
- Wellness tourism
- Retail brands turn pro
- Eco-packaging
- Social networking

2009

- Spa benchmarking
- Consumer beauty goes pro
- Spa brand diversification
- Yield management
- Travel spas
- Hair spa services
- Online booking, gifting & marketing
- Diagnostic spas
- Organic skincare certification
- Radio frequency identification systems
- Ethical products & operations
- Olfactory marketing
- Real estate
- Medical tourism
- Sustainability
- Spas for men
- Sleep health
- Spa bedrooms

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Email: katiebarnes@spabusiness.com
Twitter: @SpaBusinessKB

desert source

The new Hammamii luxury spa range from branding specialist Shawna Morneau of Neaumorinc is designed to help global spas deliver a modern, yet deeply authentic hammam experience using ingredients indigenous to North Africa and the UAE

Shawna Morneau first fell in love with the hammam in her early 20s living in Vancouver, when she experienced the ritual at a facility run by a Moroccan family.

She says: "It was a beautiful ritual, right down to the sweet mint tea they served me at the end. I have this enduring memory of feeling deeply cleansed and purified. There's also something so comforting about the hammam that takes you back to childhood and being bathed and nurtured by your mother."

Fast forward more than a decade and Morneau, whose consultancy is based in Dubai, has just launched her own range of hammam products for use in spa and wellness facilities worldwide.

It's also the first luxury spa range to offer some products that are made exclusively in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) using only UAE ingredients.



Shawna Morneau has designed eight signature Hammamii treatments

Morneau's range uses ingredients that are grown and harvested from its Moroccan laboratory's on-site farm. They represent the rich landscape of the Ourika Valley with its many indigenous desert plants and herbs such as prickly pear, bergamot, mint, eucalyptus and argan oil.

A nearby women's co-operative makes the reusable fabric bags for the products, as Morneau wanted to avoid wasteful, unnecessary packaging as much as possible. An all-natural linen hammam mitt is also part of the range.

The range is rooted in tradition, yet has a modern twist. Mirage is a milky cleanser with bergamot - "just one sweep and all your make up is off", says Morneau, who started her career as a top facial and body therapist at Four Seasons.

Khòl is a charcoal cleansing balm and Atay is a Moroccan mint tea body wash containing five different types of mint.

“ The range is rooted in tradition, yet has a modern twist ”

The range was first conceived in 2010 when Morneau was working for Richard Branson's Kasbah Tamadot in Morocco. "Two Berber sisters worked in the spa's hammam and they took great pride in their work. They taught me traditional techniques," says Morneau.

This September, Morneau's new Hammamii range will launch with

29 all-natural, chemical-free, Halal-certified products for face, hair and body, which are used to make up Hammamii's eight branded signature hammam rituals for use in spas.

"Traditional hammams don't tend to treat the hair or face, but we added hair and face products to ensure these important areas were not overlooked," she says.

Beyond Morocco, the range is also like a journey across the Middle East, using camel's milk produced in the Dubai desert (offering a high mineral content and anti-inflammatory properties), solar salt drawn from the sea using solar panels in Abu Dhabi and sand from the Sahara Desert.

Much of the range sounds good enough to eat, with the use of spices such as za'atar, sumac and turmeric, cloves and cardamom, as well as Arabica coffee and preserved lemons. Morneau adds: "They've also been developed for hot, humid climates, so when the body lotion is applied after a treatment, it's immediately absorbed into the skin." ●



The Hammamii range uses ingredients such as spices, preserved lemons and coffee

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TOP TEAM

Gwinganna Lifestyle Retreat

As Australian destination spa Gwinganna celebrates its 10th anniversary, members of its core team tell Julie Cramer about the work that's gone into making it a global success

When Australian entrepreneur Tony de Leede opened the doors to his new retreat in the Gold Coast's hinterland in 2006 (see SBo7/3 p76), it was with the aim of establishing a style of wellness destination the sector had never before experienced. A decade on, the 500-acre (200-hectare) Gwinganna Lifestyle Retreat in Queensland has grown into one of the world's most renowned sites for 'serious wellness' and education.

As de Leede says: "I believe we have one of the most unique offerings. It's truly my pride and joy and where I intend to spend a lot more time when I slow down."

Yet unlike the serial entrepreneur's other business interests - he owns a gym chain and other ventures (see p66)

“ Hugh Jackman fell in love with the place when he visited in the early days and has a part stake in the business ”

- which are all about expansion, de Leede and his wellness director, Sharon Kolkka, have resisted over-developing Gwinganna and have kept it small and intimate.

Australian actor Hugh Jackman fell in love with the place when he visited in the early days, and has had a part stake in the business ever since (see p64).

Connections with a homegrown, global film star aside, the quality, depth, innovation and reputation of the health programmes at Gwinganna have been the main catalysts for growth and success over the years. Another reason is no doubt the dedication and skills of a very loyal band of staff, with many of them having worked there since the beginning.

As Gwinganna celebrates its 10th anniversary year, De Leede, Kolkka and on-site organic gardener Shelley Pryor give their perspective on the winning formula of the business.



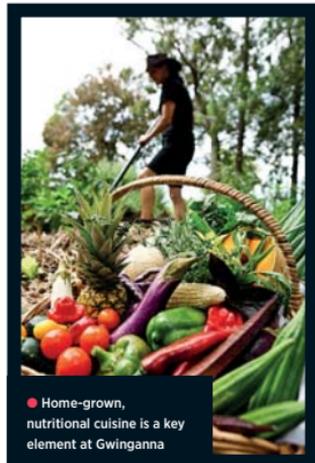
Julie Cramer is a health, hospitality and travel journalist and a former BBC news online editor
Email: juliecramer@me.com



● The 500-acre lifestyle retreat is known internationally for 'serious wellness'



● Accommodation is purposefully limited to help create a special, intimate atmosphere



● Home-grown, nutritional cuisine is a key element at Gwinganna

Tony de Leede CEO



When I first acquired the Gwinganna site, I didn't really know where the journey would take us, but I knew I wanted to create something that would help people enjoy a long and healthy life.

My mother, Yvonne Marie, was my inspiration. My father died aged 49 of heart disease, when I was just 16. Both my parents drank, smoked, ate rich foods and did not really exercise.

But after the death of my father, my mother changed her lifestyle. She gave up smoking, curbed her drinking and started swimming year-round in the ocean, meditating and doing tai chi. She even started visiting what I believe was Australia's first health retreat – then known as a fat farm – several times a year.

I knew that to remain healthy, I should live like my mother, but I didn't have her discipline. So I decided the best chance for me was to develop my own health retreat and spend a lot of time there.

Many of my associates in the fitness industry thought I was crazy when I spent close

If you want your staff to act like owners and treat the business with as much care, you have to give them a piece of the action

to AUS\$30m (US\$22.5m, €20m, £15.3m) buying and developing the site over three years. There were times in those first few years when I thought I was crazy too! But after opening in 2006, we broke even in year three and we've been surging forward ever since.

Sharon [Kolkka] and I were clear from the start that we wanted to limit the number of visitors at any one time to 64 people. It's served to preserve the integrity of the retreat and its special atmosphere. We only offer communal dining, as well as a carefully designed nutritional regime with no gluten or dairy – so people really see results.

I remain very involved with management, but I don't micro-manage. We have a very talented team led by



Sharon. My wife and I visit often and while I'm there I'll hold business meetings with the team, discuss strategy, pricing, future profit centres, programming and staff training, etc.

Our team have been integral to the success of Gwinganna. If you want your staff to act like owners and treat the business

● De Leede, a serial entrepreneur, plans to spend a lot more time at Gwinganna when he retires

with as much care, you have to give them a piece of the action. In the early days we gave core staff shares in Gwinganna's operating company, so they're now able to benefit from the success of the business. ▶



Sharon Kolkka wellness director and GM

Playing a part in developing Gwinganna from the ground up has been very exciting and allowed me to incorporate key elements that I felt were important for such a retreat.

As GM, I'm responsible for day-to-day operations and financial outcomes. My role also includes being the wellness director, which centres on the vision and implementation of our programmes. I develop the concepts (we have over 15 programmes) and liaise with guest speakers so that content and formats are relevant.

Due to my background in the fitness industry, personal training and instructor education, I'm very hands-on with the guest experience, which I love. This includes the arrival presentation, delivering seminars each week, along with activities such as qi gong.

I've secured a management team with a broad base of skills and a strong understanding or experience of hospitality. We've brought together an extraordinary group of qualified individuals

According to feedback, we've empowered guests to make changes that have improved their health over the years



● New meditation suites have been fully-booked since January

– 145 staff members in total – who love the challenge of creating something unique and delivering our guest experience each week.

I'm so proud of my team and what they bring to our business. Sixteen employees have been here since the first year of operations,

which is a wonderful confirmation of their commitment to what we do.

We now have so many return guests. In the past 18 months, it's not been uncommon for us to see up to a 50 per cent return of guests on any programme. We've also won many national and international awards (eight awards in 2015 alone).

It's rewarding for us to be leading the way with our educational wellness seminars, sharing evidence-based research (see p64). When we began 10 years ago, very few of our guests had heard of epigenetics (see p52) or the advances in neuroscience in relation to managing stress. According to their feedback, we've empowered them to make changes that have improved their health over the years. Guests often tell us they heard it first at Gwinganna.



● Kolkka has been at Gwinganna since day one, playing a key part in its development

We've seen a surge in demand for our emotional wellbeing therapies, such as psychotherapy and equine therapies. As a result, we've built a new facility with five counselling rooms, plus an additional yard for the horses. We see this as a growing trend and estimate around 30 per cent of our guests currently request this type of service.

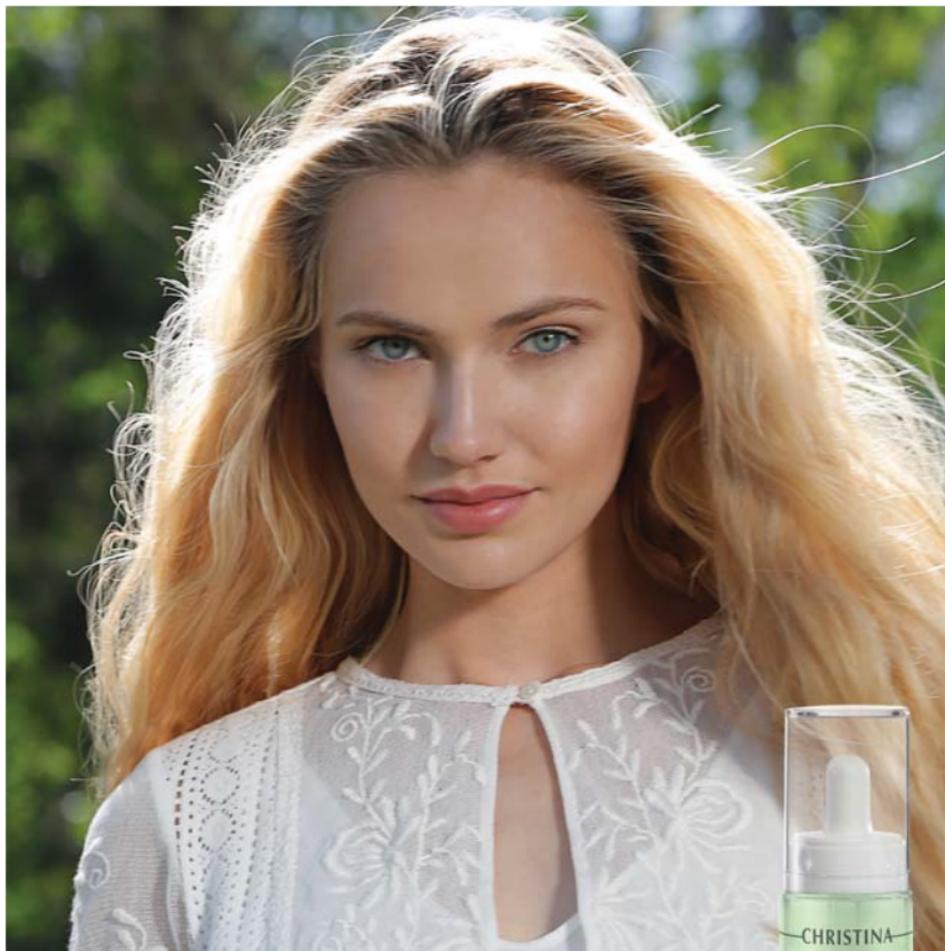
We've also created three new Meditation Suites. The suites are set apart from the main buildings and are designed to provide a place of tranquility, with high-end comforts, including a private deck with day bed, deep bath, king-sized bed, yoga mat, meditation cushion and meditation sessions on an iPod. They're incredibly popular and since their release in January, have all been booked out.

We always follow the health issues affecting our guests and look for programmes to help address these. Our very popular Triple S programme is an ideal example – developed to address the three troublesome areas of stress, sugar and sleep.

I find it really exciting that more research is identifying how so many modalities and lifestyle practices can be of significant benefit in a long term health plan. ▶



● Kolkka loves guest interaction and regularly delivers seminars



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One of the star ingredients we grow is aloe vera, which is wonderful for gut health



Shelley Pryor organic gardener



I was fortunate to come on board, initially as a trained chef, just prior to Gwinganna's opening. I grew up in a regional area where my parents grew and farmed everything we needed, so throughout my life, gardening and food were a passion. While working here as a chef, I started taking guests through the gardens at the end of the cooking demos and sharing tips with them. When the gardener left, it was an easy switch for me.

We have four areas of gardens, plus an orchard. All are managed organically without use of pesticides or herbicides.

One of the star ingredients we grow is aloe vera, which is wonderful for gut health, and we show guests how to make the juice. Other ingredients with incredible benefits are turmeric, ginger and garlic, which are always in use here. A very popular dish is our Salad of

Abundance – a collection of the best seasonal produce in the gardens on any day. It can include greens, micro greens, herbs, flowers and vegetables or fruits, such as eggplant or sweet lime. Then the chef designs a dressing to complement the flavours and guests love it!

Having been a chef in the same kitchen helps me understand their requirements and design the garden plan to provide what they need most.

My day also includes keeping our six active beehives, which produce all the honey for the kitchen. I may teach a gardening class or tend to the orchard.

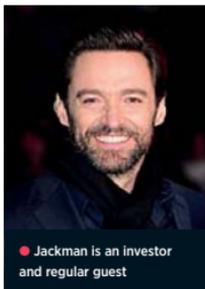
Our gardens are an integral part of our guests' stay and often they don't expect to be learning about gardening

● As well as tending to the gardens, Pryor teaches health food seminars

during a health holiday. We have steadily increased the number of presentations I do so that even more guests can learn about protecting the environment, understand more about natural solutions for ailments and the importance of organic processes without harmful chemicals or fertilisers. ▶

The Hugh Jackman connection

The link between Tony de Leede and Hugh Jackman goes back 20 years, at which time the popular *Wolverine* star was working on reception at a gym in Sydney – which became a Fitness First Australia facility. The pair met a few years after de Leede started running the business, via a mutual business partner.



● Jackman is an investor and regular guest

By the time de Leede opened Gwinganna, Jackman was a successful actor, headlining in the musical *Boy from Oz*. While rehearsing for this role, he visited Gwinganna and was so impressed that he wanted to invest. Today, de Leede retains an 80 per cent stake in the property assets of Gwinganna, with Jackman and three other investors making up the remaining 20 per cent.

Jackman told *Spa Business*: "I believe in the service Gwinganna is offering and the incredible team – which incidentally hasn't changed since the beginning.

"Honestly, I woke up the fourth morning of my first stay feeling better than I had in 20 years."

Jackman and his wife are said to have experienced Gwinganna's 'life changing' Tribal

Dreaming treatment – a two-and-a-half hour journey combining massage, dance and a forest initiation with didgeridoo healing and ochre clay dot body painting.

Jackman is also a significant partner in de Leede's Fit n Fast gym business and was a partner in Boxmaster, which the entrepreneur sold three years ago.

Capturing health data

Gwinganna is in the process of gathering data from its programmes, after being approached by Professor Marc Cohen and a team from Melbourne's RMIT University to participate in a formal, independent study around health outcomes for guests following seven nights in a wellness destination.

It's one of the first pieces of research to report on a wide range of specific wellness measures such as anthropometrics, depression, anxiety, stress, mood, sleep quality, health symptoms, cognitive function and urinary pesticide metabolites in health retreat participants. Initial results are said to be "very positive" and will be released soon.

Cohen is working on spa research at Gwinganna





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De Leede has launched Komune, a popular surfing/wellness resort concept, in Australia and Bali



“We’ve also just completed our new Health Hub, which offers dedicated areas for cross training, and a huge yoga shala”

De Leede’s new ventures

Tony de Leede is widely known as the man who launched Fitness First Australia. Since selling the business in 2008, he’s become increasingly involved with the wellness sector.

In 2009, he launched the first Fit n Fast budget club, which he grew to a chain of 18 clubs over three years. After being

inspired by a visit to Pure Yoga in Hong Kong, de Leede is now in the process of rebranding Fit n Fast into a boutique fitness village concept known as YogaBar, where people can experience disciplines such as yoga, meditation and barre under one roof, eat in a wholefoods café and buy branded exercise apparel. All the current Fit n

Fast clubs will be converted, and there will also be new acquisitions, says de Leede.

The entrepreneur also developed Komune, a surfing/wellness resort concept with extensive fitness facilities. There’s one location on the Gold Coast (opened 2009) and one in Bali (opened 2012), with the main focus on the expansion and evolution of the Indonesian site. It currently has 66 rooms, with 38 due in phase two, and operates at 92 per cent occupancy in high season, and 72 per cent in low season. De Leede says he’s been surprised by the mix of customers Komune has attracted since opening – with a fairly even split between families, couple and singles.

“My wife’s parents are in their late 60s and absolutely love it there. They’ve been there four times,” says de Leede.

“We’ve also just completed our new Health Hub, which offers dedicated areas for cross training, and a huge yoga shala, which can host stays for yoga teachers with their trainees.”

After experiencing the meditation pod Somadome in 2015 (see SB16/1 p113), De Leede soon acquired a significant share in the company and will play a key part in its expansion and the transferral of manufacturing from the US to China.

“I realised that this meditation pod – or what I call ‘easy meditation’ for the 95 per cent of people like me who can’t meditate in the traditional way – was going to be very relevant as we move forward,” says de Leede. The pod, already in US spas, will make its Australian debut in Gwinganna in the coming months. ●

“I realised that this meditation pod was going to be very relevant as we move forward”



Virgin’s Richard Branson is a fan of the Somadome meditation pod

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Ask an expert

Visiting Practitioners

Visiting practitioner programmes can boost a spa's profits by up to 40 per cent, but how easy are they to implement and manage? Kate Parker investigates

As a growing number of spas realise the importance of differentiating themselves and standing out from the crowd to attract the new wave of discerning, wellness-seeking customers, the demand for rare and specialist therapies has never been more valued. It's no longer enough to simply offer the standard range of treatments from in-house menus.

Enter, the visiting practitioner (VP). From tailored treatments provided by global practitioners, top yoga teachers and Roling experts, to muay thai champions, spiritual shamans with a celebrity following and rare Tibetan therapists, these specialists are increasingly playing an integral role as some of the leading spas in the industry. Many operators are going as far as introducing a year-round calendar with sophisticated programme schedules and up to 100 active

practitioners on the books. They can be hosted by individual properties like Kamalaya Koh Samui, or by international spa chains like Six Senses and Aman is one of the latest high-end names to make the jump (see p38).

However, it's not just how these experts enhance a spa's core offering that's interesting – there's a whole host of business advantages and benefits. VPs enable spas to construct a strong PR and marketing campaign, attract new guests to a brand in search of a unique experience, boost low-season occupancy and tap into the existing loyal followers, or 'tribes', of said experts.

So, if spas are thinking of introducing a VP programme of their own, what do they need to consider? How many specialists is a good number? How can operators manage and coordinate their programme? How do they split the costs and revenues? We ask the experts...

Spas can boost low-season occupancy and tap into the existing loyal followers, or 'tribes', of said experts

Freelance journalist
Kate Parker is a regular
contributor to Leisure
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Monica Barter group operations director, Como Shambhala

Our visiting practitioner programme began in 2000 at our Parrot Cay island resort [in the Turks & Caicos], with Dr Alla Svirinskaya, a fifth-generation Russian energy healer. We wanted to introduce a new approach focusing on the 'soul' aspect of healing.

Currently we have around eight active practitioners on the programme, with some on a global rotation and others exclusive to certain regions. Energy workers seem particularly popular among our guests, together with those offering Rolwing, a deep tissue manipulation treatment.

Many of our visiting experts have their own loyal followers or 'tribes' who seek them out and then book stays at our wellness retreats, resorts and hotels. This is a win-win



situation for us as it raises the profile of our practitioner programme while introducing new guests. It allows people to discover a new Como location while they look forward to having amazing treatments with their practitioner of choice.

We charge between US\$200-300 (£178-266, £141-212) per 60-minute for a VP session and the division of costs and revenues can vary depending on the location. Overall, the

The programme is worth 25 per cent to 30 per cent of our annual revenue

programme is worth 25 per cent to 30 per cent of our annual revenue and, in some months, can provide a 30 per cent to 40 per cent boost to profits.

City locations work differently [to resorts that tend to be seasonal] as once our practitioners have built a strong following, then any time of the year works well and, typically, they're fully booked way in advance. The awareness we generate at city locations has driven bookings to our flagship wellness destination in Bali.

Other location-specific points of difference to look out for are work permits which can be expensive and need to be factored into

overall costs. Mapping out the duration of a programme is important, therefore, in order to generate a profit.

Our VP programme enhances Como's holistic health offering. Its success is down to mindful scheduling and having a full understanding of our customer profiles. It also generates positive marketing opportunities, increasing brand awareness and introducing us to new audiences.

■ *Como Shambhala develops and manages urban and resort properties and has a flagship wellness destination in Ubud, Bali. Barter has been with the company since 1989. Details: www.comoshambhala.com*

Carina Lipold wellness project director, Six Senses

Six Senses has been offering a visiting practitioner programme since its inception in 1995, creating unique experiences delivered by experts with a wide range of backgrounds.

As the programme has grown, so has the data and admin around it. In 2013 we built a visiting practitioner platform - an internal-only interactive system where each VP has a profile containing their menu, references, documents and reviews. Separately, we also have a consumer-facing website with a listing of experts and our VP calendar.

The centralised, internal platform is great for VPs and spa managers alike. Everyone across the company has access to information about each expert, saving a lot of time and effort in organisation,



enabling them to plan experts up to a year ahead.

From a business perspective, it helps us maintain standards as it contains feedback processes for spa managers, staff teams, guests and experts. You can see at a glance the status and rating of each VP and it helps us to make sure that we have the right VP at the right time for every spa.

We have around 100 active experts in our database and

Price points are typically US\$150-250 per hour. We split the revenue 50/50

when scheduling, we look at time of year, target market, occupancy and special events. Some guests fly in specially to see a VP and we try to keep experts more or less to the same annual time slots to create a following, but mostly, the guests are already in-house.

Price points depend on location, but typically it's between US\$150 (£133, £106) and US\$250 (£222, £176) per one-hour session. We split the revenue 50/50. They pay their own flight and we provide accommodation and full board. At the beginning of each visit we discuss a budget with our experts that fulfils both sides' financial

expectations, making sure that we're covering our costs plus creating profit. Additionally, we allocate centralised costs for the VP platform and salaries.

The programme is an additional revenue and we can see an increase in profits, room nights and food and beverage during the months we host a popular VP, but when it comes to one of our core values of 'pioneering wellness', the added value that VPs offer is the real return.

■ *Six Senses manages eight resorts and 27 spas globally. Lipold, a health and wellness specialist, has been leading its VP programme since 2013. Details: www.sixsenses.com*

Karina Stewart co-founder and brand director, Kamalaya Koh Samui

The visiting practitioner programme has been part of Kamalaya's concept since the resort first opened over 10 years ago.

Kamalaya specialises in individual wellness programmes and retreats, delivered by our in-house staff team. Visiting practitioners enhance this core offering, adding different approaches and therapies that wouldn't otherwise be available at the resort. Treatments provided by VPs can range from anything from energy healing to astrological readings.

We have a regular network of over 30 visiting practitioners, many of whom we've worked with for several years and who visit two or three times each year. The duration of their stay varies, but typically lasts from 10 to 14 days at a time. Prices



vary between practitioners and what treatment they are offering, but tend to be priced at around US\$150-200 (£133-178, £106-141) per session. Revenues are split between the VP and Kamalaya according to each person's individual commercial arrangement.

We're careful in our selection process to ensure that the VPs offer added value, above and besides our core treatment list, ensuring that their treatments

We carefully select VPs who offer added value beyond our core treatments

complement our wellness menu and offer unique guest experiences. Many VPs already have their own established followers, which isn't of significant importance to us as the programme is about enhancing the experience for our own in-house guests.

Several team members are involved part-time in vetting and selecting new practitioners and in managing and scheduling individual visits. We're careful not to have too many in-house at any one time, although we may increase the number when the resort is at full occupancy. We're also careful to ensure that all VPs in-house at any one

time complement each other, so timing and scheduling is very important and has to be carefully planned and managed.

Visiting practitioners offer added variety to our core offering, and overall the programme provides a positive contribution not only for guests, but for networking purposes and relationships within the wellness industry. ■ *Kamalaya Koh Samui is a wellness sanctuary and holistic spa in Koh Samui, Thailand. Stewart, who's qualified in acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine, opened the property with her husband John in November 2005. Details: www.kamalaya.com*

Vanessa Stoessel director of wellness & spa projects, MSpa International

We launched our Masters of Wellness visiting practitioner programme in 2014. It offers guests greater understanding about their health and provides treatments as well as recommendations for improving lifestyle.

By collaborating with specialists, we can introduce guests to numerous wellness experiences all year round. A practitioner's length of stay is flexible and generally hosted in-house between 10 days to a month

We have up to 20 practitioners who we constantly evaluate. For us it's not about the number, but the quality of treatments and their suitability for guests. Popularity is gauged by the number of treatments they deliver and their prior experience of working in luxury



resorts as well as their ability to work effectively with our hotel teams, integrating well with the programme concept.

We keep our offering fresh by regularly assessing and interviewing potential practitioners. Some already have their own established followers and this can certainly be of added benefit, especially if they're seen as celebrities in their field of expertise. However, it's more significant

Scheduling practitioners at the right times of the year is the key to success

for us in terms of marketing rather than revenue.

The business challenge comes in balancing the overall cost of the programme with its return. On average, for a 60-minute treatment, prices start from US\$150 (£133, £106), with a 50 per cent revenue share between spa and practitioner before service charge and tax, which goes to the spa. We cover all the marketing collateral, accommodation, meals, airport transfers, together with partial to full coverage of flights.

Scheduling practitioners at the right times of the year is the key to success. Whenever a practitioner is in-house,

the offering should match current guests' preferences, which we assess through forecasting, historic booking patterns and sales strategies.

Overall, the programme makes up a small part of our main spa business, but provides a distinct advantage nonetheless. Its value is in enhancing the overall health-savvy guest experience, adding variety to our services. Finally, it allows us to remain innovative and competitive and go beyond 'simply spa'. ● ■ *MSpa, the spa management arm for Minor Hotels, runs over 60 facilities. Stoessel joined in 2013. Details: www.mspa-international.com*



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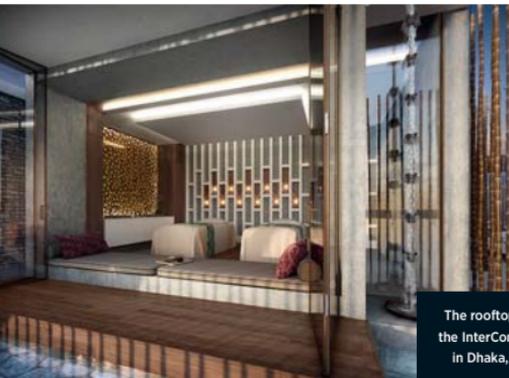


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The rooftop oasis spa at the InterContinental Hotel in Dhaka, Bangladesh

creating a splash

The MD of esadore International, Theodora Kioussis, explains how the company's creative, manufacturing and operational skill sets can bring an international spa project to life in a short space of time

How would you describe your company?

We're a creative consultancy providing integrated single point solutions in hospitality, spa and wellness project development. We're committed to creating world-class projects delivering extraordinary experiences through visual, functional and service-orientated journeys.

What are the key services you offer?

We provide a very wide range of services through our core divisions: Wellness, Creative, WET and Life. Every division caters to the different levels of the project requirement from concept to design, realisation to training and operation.

Key services are spa consulting, interior design, thermal area manufacturing, and construction and training. Our team has diverse experience and can cater to all our clients' needs at different stages of the life cycle of a spa, gym or wellness centre.

What's your unique selling point?

Our main team is based in the UAE and so our regional knowledge and experience is unmatched. We're known for being trendsetters thanks to our novel and bespoke approach to each and every project we undertake.



Theodora Kioussis, managing director of UAE-based esadore International

We're known for being trendsetters thanks to our novel and bespoke approach to each and every project we undertake

Esadore WET, a division of esadore International, is the only company based in UAE that manufactures thermal specialty areas within the UAE. We also recently opened a 4,000 sq ft factory in Al Quoz, where skilled workers and professional designers collaborate, conceptualise and create. It means we can go from design to completion in just three weeks.

What key elements are needed for a perfect wellness experience?

We believe in a holistic approach to wellness. This can be achieved by creating the right environment, with design that's stylish yet thoughtful for operators and end users. There should be a unique concept with an interesting story, practitioners who are passionate and professionally trained, and treatments and services which address our clients' needs and are results-driven.

What do you offer within your spa consulting (Wellness) division?

We offer customised solutions, including consulting in the design phase of the project; spa concept consulting and development, set up and operations assistance, staff training; product procurement negotiations; menu design and development, to name a few.



Above and left: esadore International's project at the Fairmont Ajman in the UAE, which included the opening of its own dedicated spa and wellness brand, the NINE Degrees Spa



Four pillars esadore International can provide complete wellness solutions, from design and planning through to creation and operation

What's the approach of your design (Creative) division?

We develop a story for a spa that can be translated with the help of our wellness team into a beautiful design and overall spa experience. This story is told through the concept, menu and overall service.

Our aim is to make each spa and wellness space aesthetically pleasing but functional to ensure that operation is seamless and revenue-making a priority.

Esadore Creative has been fortunate to have worked on some very interesting projects, from our own brand NINE Degrees spa in Fairmont Hotel in Ajman to the Hilton Salwa Resort & Spa in Qatar, and the rooftop oasis spa at the InterContinental Hotel in Dhaka.

Can you tell us more about your WET division?

Esadore WET provides two distinct services, manufacturing and installation of thermal facilities such as hammams, steamrooms, saunas, vitality pools, plunge pools, experience showers, thermal pathways and ice chutes, as well as turnkey development of spa and wellness facilities. Thanks to our local factory we are able to provide international quality products, quicker and at a lower price.

Tell us about NINE Degrees Spa

Our new concept is a unique proposition, and includes the use of indigenous ingredients to create and develop spa treatments and signature experiences.

The brand remains committed to keeping Middle Eastern traditions alive, whilst increasing public knowledge and understanding of the value and vital importance of health and relaxation within daily living and leisure time. We conceptualised this spa with the world's most discerning travellers in mind - those who seek exceptionally high standards of personalised service.

What are the key trends you see emerging in wellness?

Spafinder Wellness has noted the resurgence of the Mexican temazcal (house of steam) dating back to the Mayan and Aztec times, as one of the new spa trends that cleanses the body, mind and spirit.

We have a similar tradition or hammam culture in this region and at NINE Degrees Spa, Fairmont Ajman we have a unique hammam which boasts a fantastic view of the Arabian Gulf. Our aim is to provide a bespoke experience that not only cleanses the body, but with specific breathing and stretches also calms the mind and spirit.

Corporate wellness is also an emerging trend. Fast-paced, high-stress jobs and competitive work environments have led to a marked increase in burnout amongst staff, higher medical costs and low productivity. Larger companies have recognised this need and are taking action to address the physical and mental wellbeing of their employees.

Another area of focus is men's grooming and we're tackling this with the launch of our barber shop concept, MENS - the first of which opened at the NINE Degrees spa at the Fairmont Ajman in July - combining the grooming services of a barber with spa treatments in a relaxed environment.

What excites you about wellness?

When we launched esadore International in 2008, the wellness market in the UAE was in a nascent stage so the marked growth we have seen in recent years is very encouraging. It's exciting for us to ride this wave, share our experience and expertise to assist in putting the UAE's spa and wellness industry on the world map. ●

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Industry Predictions

International spa and wellness professionals, working in various spa sectors, give their views on the industry and what to expect in the year ahead

KATIE BARNES, EDITOR, SPA BUSINESS MAGAZINE



“ Guest service, care and experiences will be taken to a different level and will continue long after the guest has left the spa ”

Verena Lasvigne-Fox

Senior spa director

Four Seasons Seychelles

In my role in the Seychelles, as well as overseeing seven other spas in the Middle East and Africa, I'm expecting continued growth in personalised treatment and service experiences as guests expect us to become more like lifestyle coaches.

Consumers are no longer just treatment orientated. They're very educated, asking more questions than ever and looking

at ways to extend the experience well beyond the treatment itself. They want follow-up and customised programmes so they can incorporate what they've learned into their daily routines.

Spas may have to look at opportunities to stay connected with guests throughout the year to support them in their quest for an optimum lifestyle. Guest service, care and experiences will be taken to a different level and will continue long after the guest has left the spa. This also creates a chance for retail as guests actively look for products that can assist with their journey after they depart, so it's crucial we're prepared to deliver what they're looking for and to capitalise on this trend.

AFRICA &
MIDDLE EAST

Spas may need to think of ways to connect with guests after their visit as customers expect ongoing lifestyle advice

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Hot spring bathers report improved sleep, as well as less anxiety and depression says Davidson



AUSTRALASIA

“Operators of hot springs in the region have been collaborating to evolve an industry that provides more than just a relaxing and recreational experience”

Charles Davidson

CEO, founder & director

Peninsula Hot Springs

In Australasia, hot springs are increasingly becoming a driving force for wellness, community engagement and cultural evolution and we expect this to gain momentum in the next 12 months and beyond for a number of reasons.

Operators of hot springs in the region have been collaborating to evolve an industry that provides more than just a relaxing and recreational experience. They're recognising that —thermal waters have a broader role to play in building healthy communities. The physical,

mental and cultural benefits of thermal mineral springs are being woven into the offering. In addition, consumers are increasingly recognising hot springs for their therapeutic benefits. Recently, RMIT University surveyed nearly 4,000 visitors at Peninsula Hot Springs and “significant relief” was reported by 38 per cent of those who said they had depression and by 48 per cent of those with stress or anxiety.

More than 80 per cent of all visitors said they had better sleep after bathing in the thermal waters. Hot spring design that integrates nature and encourages movement contribute to these outcomes.

From a cultural perspective, a diversity of thermal bathing experiences such as hammams from Turkey, Yemen and Morocco; saunas from Scandinavia; and coloured mineral clays from across Australia, provide a cultural connection. ▶



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Lindsay Madden Nadeau

Director of spa integrations & operations

FRHI

Collier International's new Dubai spa benchmark report, gives an indication of the general trends, challenges and opportunities in the Middle East. The most interesting benchmarks – the ones which everyone's talking about – are spa capture rates, retail as a percentage of revenue and treatment room utilisation. And while the results are far from positive, and somewhat unexpected, they will help spas to evaluate performance and influence how they develop.

The report compares hotel spas in urban and resort locations with an average of 7.9 and 13.6 treatment rooms. When it comes spa capture rates, there's been a slight increase in resort (0.7 per cent) and decline in urban (-0.2 per cent) properties. Guests are being ever more conscientious of how they spend their money and spas no longer have the luxury of just waiting



Spa-goers in Dubai are increasingly price conscious and operators need to actively get out and bring the business in



“The benchmarks everyone's talking about are spa capture rates, retail as a percentage of revenue and treatment room utilisation”

for their guests to arrive. Spas need to actively get out and bring the business in.

While spa retail sales in Dubai are consistent, according to the report, buying habits in the region are changing. Chinese clients are switching from high-end to more mid-range brands, while Russian guests are spending less due to the decreasing strength of the Euro. If spas focus on strong consultations and guestcare as a means to retail, they should see an increase in product purchases.

Treatment room utilisation continues to be low in this region, the report shows an average of 15-20 per cent which means spa rooms are empty more than three-quarters of the time. This is reflective of over demand and competition combined with large spas with many treatment rooms that, frankly, just can't be filled. In the future, we predict that owners will build smaller spas with fewer treatment rooms to support the [lesser] demand of hotel and local guests. Expectations will then be aligned as people can strategically run their business.

There's a rise in integrated and functional medicine clinics across Asia, such as the Holistic Medical Clinic in Bangkok



ASIA

Joy Menzies

Managing director

DSM Wellness Management

“With large-scale developments typical to the region, we’ll see more activity in the wellness community field, particularly in China, in the coming year”

The Asian destination spa market is buoyant and we’ll see new sites by one or two major brands appearing this year.

There are also two exciting emerging fields for spas in the region. The first is wellness communities, driven by property developers responding to rising consumer demand for wellbeing. These large-scale projects combine residential homes with wellness-orientated infrastructure to create total lifestyle solutions.

The model offers excellent collaboration potential for all types of wellness business – from spas, medi-spas and holistic health facilities to wellness hotels/resorts, fitness and healthy food and lifestyle outlets. The challenge is to present clearly defined brands and innovative concepts that attract the interest of home owners while being viable for developers.



Wellness communities offer excellent opportunities for spas says Menzies

Wellness community projects we’ve worked on include Avira Living in Wellness, a development by the Eastern & Oriental hotel group which will have 3,000 homes, as well as Qi’n Wellness which opens with a destination spa in Hainan, China in 2017. This trend isn’t confined to Asia, but with the large-scale developments typical to the region, we’ll see more activity, particularly in China, in the coming year.

The second emerging field is integrated and functional medicine clinics such as the Holistic Medical Clinic, Bangkok and Life Clinic in Hong Kong. Such facilities offer results-based, anti-ageing medical treatments to boost internal health. At the same time, there’s still a demand for anti-ageing aesthetic treatments, suggesting an appetite for both internal and external healthy ageing services.

Nicolas Ronco

Founder & CEO

YeloSpa



Sleep health has been huge for Ronco and he only sees its popularity growing

“Clients respond well to things like simplified menus, unique membership options with no fine print and price per minute to fit schedules and wallets”

Days spas make up over three quarters of the industry in the US and amazingly have not really evolved since the 80s. There's a need for innovation and we feel a new way of doing business in the day spa segment is to observe customers and anticipate their needs.

Clients in high-end urban areas are extremely well-educated and informed. They have active, successful careers and no time to waste. They respond well to things like simplified menus, unique membership options with no commitments or fine print, price per minute to better fit with their schedules and wallet and streamlining at check in so that 95 per cent of their time is spent in a treatment. Expect to see much more of this in the year ahead. Extreme customisation

of the client experience is also big – starting with an individual consultation to ask them to choose the sound/music, aromatherapy and chromotherapy.

What I'm really excited about is the fact that urbanites have become health and wellness freaks. They really pay attention to what they ingest, how they exercise and approach life. This kind of thinking is no longer reserved to the top 1 per cent or the LA crowd. In this respect, sleep therapy, hygiene and napping has been huge for us and with the public starting to understand it has proper health benefits – from heart health and weight loss to fighting depression, anti-ageing and enhancing performance – this will only continue.

If day spas understand how to catch this new wave by addressing what clients really crave, they'll be successful.

NORTH
AMERICA



Anticipate guest needs and make sure check-in is streamlined so more time can be spent in treatments, says Ronco



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spa business uniting the world of wellness

“The new way of doing spa business in Africa will be to kick clichés by creating customised destinations and experiences which discerning guests simply cannot live without”



Mandy Trollip

Managing director

Amani Spas

We operate 16 spas across a wide

range of properties in South Africa, from those in blue chip city and country hotels to safari lodges, but despite the different locations what

we're noticing in all customers is the cult of the self: where the need to look and feel good is more valued and valuable than ever before.

With this in mind, creating a spa experience which is truly personalised to encompass the individual's needs and demands is an absolute must in our part of the world.

All too often spa-goers are enticed into the ocean of sameness - indulgence, pampering, beauty, tranquility. We think the new way of doing spa business in Africa will be to kick these clichés by creating customised destinations and



experiences which discerning guests simply cannot live without, the kind which ensure genuine integration of spa and lifestyle to keep them coming back for more.

Elsewhere, there's a growing demand to achieve more with less time, so express

treatments are essential. Meanwhile, the strongest emerging market is men. Men's health, wellbeing and grooming is growing more rapidly than women's in this region, especially in five-star city hotel spas. The urban gentleman is on the rise and they're on the look out for edgy, results-driven experiences. It's time for spa destinations to be open and engaging for both male and female guests.

The men's health, wellbeing and grooming market is growing more rapidly than the female spa market in Africa, says Trollip

AFRICA

Frank Van de Bruele

CEO

Zuiver

Improved economic conditions has led to a growth in spa-goers across the Netherlands. Our own spa sport hotel, with a spacious 13,000sq m (139,931sq ft) spa, on the outskirts of Amsterdam, usually carries out more than 31,000 treatments annually and we had 15 per cent more guests at the start of 2016 compared to 2015.

Across the country, we've noticed an increase in the demand for wellness days,



inclusive of a treatment and lunch or dinner, over one-off services and we see spas offering more packages because of that.

Frequent spa guests are aged 35-60, but millennials [the older of

which are aged 18-35 in 2016] are a new target market and operators are focusing on online and social media marketing and communications to catch their attention.

“Adapting to millennials, spas are introducing things like evening entrances, combined with meals, so these young executives can relax after a busy day”

EUROPE

Adapting to their wishes, they're also introducing things like evening entrances, combined with meals, so these young executives can relax at spas after a busy day at work.

Attracting more international guests is another target, but the big challenge with this is that almost all spas in The Netherlands are co-ed and nude. Most facilities have a swim wear day once a week and we expect these to become even more frequent to attract international customers in line with global spa etiquette. ●



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spa business uniting the world of wellness

BALTIC BATHING

Sauna rituals are a big part of many cultures, but in Latvia, the pirts takes on special significance. Jane Kitchen discovers the painful pleasure of the Baltic bathing ritual



Kitchen (left) prepares for the pirts with her cousin

I'm lying naked, in a sauna by a tranquil lake in the Latvian countryside, head-to-head with my cousin, El, while a man wearing only a pointy green hat and a clinging skirt shakes water from birch branches over us. If there's ever a moment when you realise just how much of this industry is based on blind trust in total strangers, this is it.

"This isn't what I had in mind when you said we'd be visiting a spa," says El. By the end of the three-hour session, she changes

her tune – even claiming it's awakened a new spiritual sense in her. But for now, we're sweating away in a 65°C pirts – the Latvian word for sauna – and Aigars, our sauna master, is whisking the wet leaves over my body, first tapping, then whipping the branches against my skin.

"Some people like you to hit them hard," explains Aigars, "but I like to use steam and massage techniques to get the effect." It's much more pleasant than it sounds, all this hitting business – it's gentle enough that it can be done over

sensitive areas – although it's still not exactly nice in the moment.

The pirts is so hot it's hard to breathe, and the air feels like it might contain actual flames. The hats we wear have a hole in the top and are made to protect the head from the intense heat. The only relief is from the dripping branches, or when Aigars lets in a blast of crisp air – which he does in response to my skin turning too pink. He's trained to read the body, he says, to know how people are feeling.

I'm feeling unbearably hot as I rest on a pile of damp birch branches, and then whoosh – Aigars dumps ice-cold water over both me and El. I shriek, but after the initial shock, it's actually blissful relief. For a few moments, that is, before Aigars gets back to whipping the branches through the air, making it even hotter than before. "Had enough?" he asks after some time. "Yes," we both agree. We sit up slowly to avoid dizziness, don comfy robes and head outside for some fresh Baltic air.

Welcome break

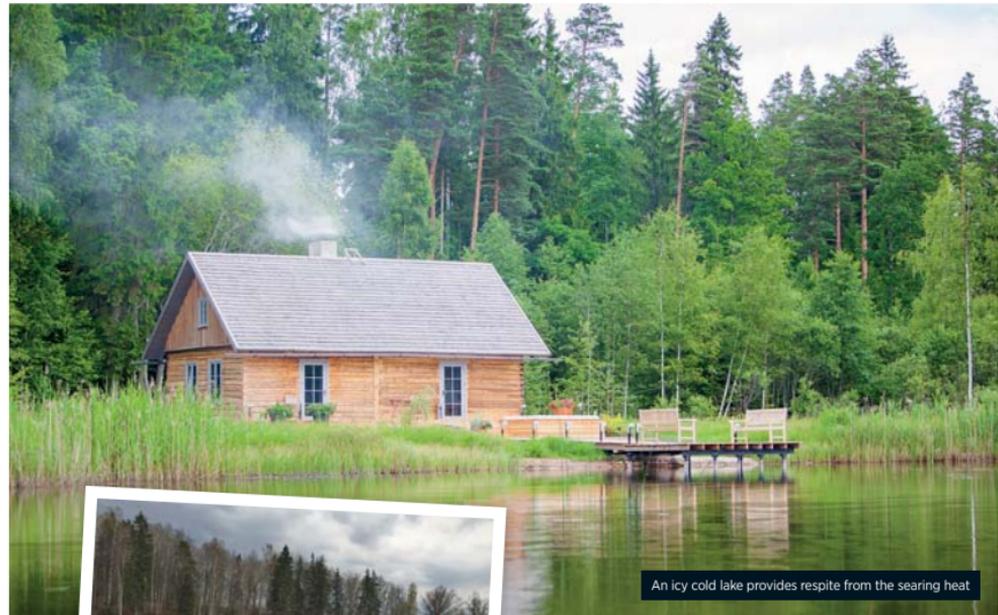
It's incredibly peaceful outside and my ears buzz – from the quiet or the heat, I'm not sure which. A deck looks out over a still lake flanked by trees and the only sound is of an occasional goose passing overhead.

We're about an hour outside Latvia's capital city, Riga, deep in the grounds of Rumene Manor, a lovingly restored, 10-bedroom neo-Gothic hotel. The pirts is in a traditional, lakeside pine cabin, first built in 1935 and reconstructed in 2014.

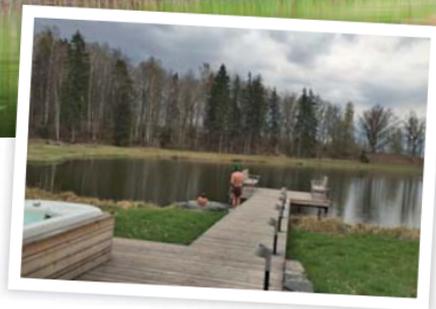
We rest, slowly cooling on chairs until Aigars calls us back into the cabin's lounge



Aigars, the sauna master (left), uses birch branches (above) to massage and stimulate the skin as well as to circulate the hot air around the cabin



An icy cold lake provides respite from the searing heat



with a blazing fire. He's made us yarrow and cowslip tea, served in traditional thick, black earthy mugs crafted locally.

He's also laid out delightful bits of food: local cheeses, truffled salamis, fresh figs, raspberries, pine nuts, dried tomatoes. Suddenly I'm famished. "It's important to eat while you do the pirts," he says. "You should feel energetic when you're done and you need to keep your nutrition levels up."

Aigars warns us not to spend too much time out of the sauna – just a break to let the surface of the skin cool and allow the heat to travel further into the body.

Grounding experience

The next two sessions, also split by a short break, are similar to the first but progress in intensity. At one point, my head cocooned under a pile of cool, wet birch leaves, I have an amazing sense of my body as a separate entity as Aigars presses hot leaves into the small of my back. The sound of my breath against the leaves and the sizzling water on the sauna rocks lulls me into a heightened sense of relaxation.

The pirts at Rumene Manor is in a traditional lakeside pine cabin (above); snacks are needed in the three-hour session to keep up energy (right)



At the end, Aigars wraps me in a linen towel, walks me to the lake and instructs me to wade into the water. Mud oozes between my toes and the icy water pricks my skin. I hesitate. "Ätråk! ätråk!" he says, urgently. "Faster! faster!" and I obey. "Now under the water!" he says, and I duck below the surface before I can think. When I resurface, gasping with shock, Aigars guides me to a whirlpool on the deck.

The water in the tub is cold, but feels balmy after the icy lake. "Now I hold you on your back and you relax," Aigars commands. Water rushes into my ears and as I float, I can hear my blood pulse. My breath begins to slow and I feel like I'm spinning.

At the end of the experience, I open my eyes to grey clouds above and focus on the silhouette of a pine tree to ground myself. I'm not spinning, it turns out. The world is there, and quiet. The only sound is of my own breath and the cool water lapping gently at my skin. I'm invigorated – buzzing with a new energy – and fully present in the moment. ●



Jane Kitchen is the news editor of *Spa Business and Spa Opportunities*.
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Sitting comfortably

Spa designer and VP of Living Earth Crafts and Earthlite, Brian Paris, unveils some of the company's latest equipment models designed to give the delivery of spa treatments that extra edge

Tell us about the new recliner chair you've just launched

It's called the ZG (zero gravity) Lounger and Express Treatment Chair and we've developed it in response to the needs of today's diverse spa service offerings.

Our spas were looking to offer a better relaxation environment, and needed a chair that could create a bridge between all the services. The ZG is more versatile in where it can be used, as well as being less expensive than a conventional treatment couch.

A high-end chair typically costs between US\$5,000-6,000 (€4,550-5,460, £3,820-4,580), whereas the ZG is priced between US\$3,000-4,000 (€2,730-3,640, £2,290-3,050). It was designed in collaboration with Kenneth Ryan and John Hopp at Marriott International to become a brand standard for all Ritz Carlton properties.

Can you explain zero gravity as it applies to delivering treatments?

It's a concept called body neutral positioning, which is actually quite an old modality that I learned 20 years ago at massage school.

If you put a client in a seated position and gently tip them backwards while keeping the knees and calves raised, this creates a floating feeling. It provides less stress on the body by disengaging the muscles in their legs, hips and back muscles. This position tilts the pelvis, decompressing the vertebrae of the spine and distributing that weight across the larger muscles of the back. It's an extremely comfortable position - much more so than lying with your legs straight out. It also allows you to perform a supine massage using the pressure of their body weight, while in a completely natural and relaxed position.

It provides less stress on the body by disengaging the muscles in their legs, hips and back muscles

In addition to massage, the chair was designed to provide express treatments, such as facials, hand and foot treatments, as well as being an unbelievably comfortable relaxation lounger.

It's easy to overcomplicate spa furniture, and we're seeing trendy and sometimes impractical concepts dropped into some spa furniture offerings. Body neutral positioning has been around for decades... it's nothing new. We've just created an ideal couch to support this true wellness massage modality.

What are some of the ZG's core features?

It's built to our usual very high standards, using sustainable wood, water-based lacquers and our trademarked recyclable PU vinyl called Natursoft. The design features an adjustable headrest, an independent articulating footrest and electronic pivoting for the smoothest zero gravity adjustments. Upgraded features include a Relaxor® heat and massage option and Ultraleather® fabric.

It has a smaller footprint, so it's also suited to more compact areas. Express pods and micro treatments are part of a new spa and wellness lifestyle, but it shouldn't take a monstrosity of a treatment room to serve our clients.



The ZG Lounger and Express Treatment Chair has a modern design



Paris says the company operates in 148 countries



Living Earth Crafts has created new design options for its best-selling pedicure chairs to suit different environments



What else is new at Living Earth Crafts?

Well, we've created three new designs for our best-selling pedicure chairs and also remodelled our hot towel cabinets so they're even more efficient.

With the pedicure chairs, we felt we'd really perfected all the features that technicians and clients desire. What was needed now were more design options to suit different environments.

So this September at ISPA in Las Vegas we're launching a Victorian-style design, a modern lounge-style chair and a smooth soft-contour version.

The units are completely electronic - armrests, footrests and drains. We've also added an additional safety feature, which means that if a therapist walks away with the water running, the equipment will automatically maintain the water at the correct level without flooding.

This new line is ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant, so people with limited mobility can readily access the chair without having to climb up or around the unit.

And what's changed with your hot towel cabinets?

In 2015 we successfully launched the first high-end, embedded warming



Living Earth Crafts and sister company EarthLite are one of the world's largest spa furniture manufacturers, operating in 148 countries worldwide, selling more than 45,000 massage tables a year.

Living Earth Crafts is the company's brand for the high-end resorts, hotels, casinos and retreats, while EarthLite is the biggest brand in the mid spa market and also supplies the training schools and independent therapists.

drawer. It was a hit with designers and therapists. We saw the potential in all aspects of the market.

More recently, we've turned our attention towards improving some of the basics of spa equipment. I've been designing and selling equipment for 20 years and heated towel cabinets have traditionally been the piece of spa equipment that hasn't performed very well as they don't retain a consistent heat level.

So we've been back to the drawing board and fitted a commercial grade heating element that maintains at 5°C more and holds that heat better. Not only

is it a better towel warmer, we've also introduced cost efficiencies that make the equipment 15-20 per cent less expensive.

What's next for Living Earth Crafts?

In the last few financial years we've experienced very strong growth in Europe of almost 30 percent each year. Our partnerships with the elite brands has helped bring our brand to more spa professionals. We've been the world's leading spa furniture company for many years, but it's been wonderful to see new growth in the European market.

This year we'll continue to focus strongly on expansion with the help of our amazing distributors - Ellisons, Spa Vision and Beauty Express - who've been integral to our success.

All three have developed extremely sophisticated systems to ensure that the in-country support that we're able to offer our customers is unrivalled. ●



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BONNIE BAKER

Mexico-based spa consultant Bonnie Baker tells Katie Barnes how the country's lesser-known hot springs could become a hub for wellness tourism

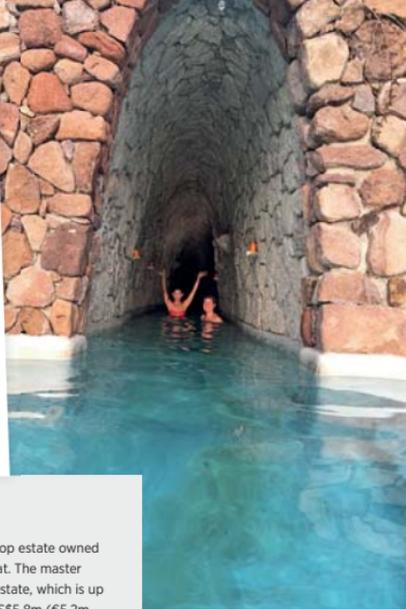
Think of the Mexico spa scene and you're likely to imagine luxury hotel spas in the coastal resorts of Riviera Maya or Cabo San Lucas. Travel further inland, however, and you'll find a corridor of hot springs fed by extinct, underground volcanoes. Around three hours north of the capital of Mexico City, the picturesque, colonial-era city of San Miguel de Allende lies at the heart of that corridor. Already popular with both domestic and international tourists (there's a big US ex-pat community there), the city, lined with cobbled streets and traditional buildings, has huge potential to become a wellness hub for the region. Bonnie Baker, who lives in San Miguel and runs independent spa consultancy Satteva, explains how a newly-formed, local Wellness Tourism Council is working with the state government to make it happen.

Tell us about your spa career to date

My background is in anthropology and in 2000, while working on a community development in Costa Rica, I began working with botanical and traditional therapies, which lead me to my first opportunity to manage a spa at the [well-known] Tabacón Grand Spa Thermal Resort. I went on to manage facilities for Mandarin Oriental and Four Seasons before moving to Mexico in 2008 and

Baker is part of a new Wellness Tourism Council working with the local government





MAYAN BATHS

Representing high-end hot spring bathing in San Miguel, the Mayan Baths comprise a network of subterranean tunnels and caves with multiple thermal pools and cascading waterfalls. The 18,686sq ft (1,736sq m) baths pay tribute to Mayan culture with a communal pyramid room and

a passageway aligned with the winter solstice - when the sun's at its lowest it shines down the tunnel, reflecting off the quartz and crystal rock walls. It's accessed by appointment only and is popular with both corporate and leisure groups.

The baths form part of the 19-hectare (47-acre) Hacienda

Arcángel hilltop estate owned by a US ex-pat. The master plan for the estate, which is up for sale for US\$5.8m (€5.2m, £4m), includes an extension to the underground baths, a standalone 26,500sq ft (2,462sq m) spa, up to 20 spa suites and a private residence. [● themayanbaths.com/en](http://themayanbaths.com/en)

The Mayan Baths is one of the top hot spring facilities in San Miguel

working independently on a number of projects in the Americas. I created my consultancy, Satteva, over three years ago.

Why is San Miguel popular with tourists?

There's a rich history here. It sits on the original Spanish Royal Path silver mine and trading route, has [beautiful] traditional buildings and some family legacies here even date back to colonial times. On a more modern scale, it's a mecca for international travellers and ex-pats who bring a range of art and other cultural experiences. There's also a rich tapestry of natural landscapes - hidden gems like botanical gardens, canyons and naturalist programmes.

Rosewood is the only international hotel chain in the city at the moment, but there's interest from others. There are independent boutique hotels, such as Hotel Matilda and thanks to Airbnb, locals are also opening up their houses for bed and breakfast too.

San Miguel survives on tourism. Last year it had 1,078,701 visitors amounting to 1.8 million bed nights

How important is tourism to the economy?

San Miguel survives on tourism. Last year it had 1,078,701 visitors amounting to 1.8 million bed nights. International tourists account for under 10 per cent of business, with most coming from the US, followed by Europe and a growing number from Asia, especially China.

A lot of tourism is related to weddings as well as festivals - there's a new festival nearly every month in San Miguel, whether it's for writers, film buffs or those interested in ecology. There's also quite a big emphasis on wine, vineyards and organic / biodynamic farming.

How would wellness tourism benefit the region?

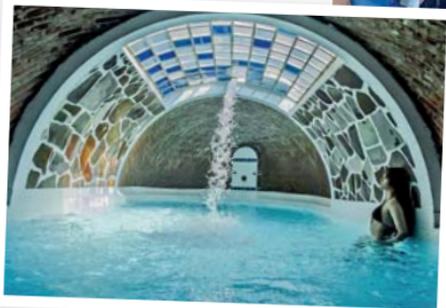
A lot of San Miguel's tourism is orientated towards the weekend, so the local state government of Guanajuato has embraced wellness tourism as a way to encourage visitors to stay longer, to come during the week and fill extra room nights - either by taking in the thermal waters, or hiking, or exploring nature.

It could also provide an antidote to the social crisis we're seeing in Mexico in terms of the drug wars, poverty and other imbalances. Volun-tourism, an aspect of wellness tourism concerned with community work, would be a great for the region as well.

What makes San Miguel suitable for wellness tourism?

It has many factors coming together - the culture, history, arts and natural environment - with the richness of the mineral hot springs and thermal waters. Combined with traditional, indigenous

Global spa professionals on a regional geothermal tour last November (right)



ESCONDIDO PLACE

Escondido Place, Atotonilco, offers a range of thermal baths set within a park/woodland setting with man-made lakes. The public baths are owned by a local family and are very popular in the surrounding

community. The family is currently developing a boutique hotel with five bedrooms, a restaurant and spa separate to the baths to help attract more international tourists. escondidoplace.com

▶ medicines and healing practices, such as temazcal sweat lodges (see p91), there's just a wealth of wellness.

What can you tell us about the hot springs?

There's a corridor of hot springs in the area between San Miguel and Dolores Hidalgo fed by extinct volcanoes deep underground. It's believed that the rocks and stones are full of crystals, which filter and cleanse the water. The local perception is that the crystals give the water and San Miguel itself a 'good vibe/energy'.

We know the water isn't sulphurous, but its mineral content isn't officially recorded and this is something a local university is addressing as a project this year. It definitely addresses skin conditions, works on a muscular level and aids detoxification (although ingestion is not recommended).

How many hot spring facilities are there and how popular are they?

In and around San Miguel there are 10 open to the public. Some of the standout facilities include those at Escondido Place (above) the Mayan Baths (p87), Los Senderos and Hotel Atotonilco (both p90).

Most of the hot springs have been on family plots for many years and there's a local tradition of soaking in the waters, which is slowly becoming more known in

There needs to be an evolution where spa directors and developers look at what the foundation for true wellbeing is

Mexico and with international tourists. If I had to gauge their popularity on a scale of one to 10, I'd say a nine.

How much scope is there for hot springs development?

They're facing rapid growth, especially as local families see the economic potential and interest from international tourists. But we don't want lots of quick-build water parks. So we're trying to address those issues by working with associations like the Global Wellness Institute and Termatalia, an international thermal water association, to create guidelines that take agriculture, water, hygiene and solar resources into account.

Who's the target market?

I think San Miguel is still very much a draw for international tourists, but there's much to be done to ensure the hot springs

here meet international facility, hygiene and quality-control standards.

Attracting international tourists will benefit the local economy, however, I do think it will create some limitations for locals in terms of pricing. So there's an opportunity for certain areas, maybe on the outskirts of San Miguel, to cater more for that [local] market.

Where do spas fit in all of this?

They're the second priority in wellness tourism for us after hot springs and there's an opportunity to focus on the therapeutic aspect. But I do think there needs to be an evolution where spa directors and developers look at the foundation for true wellbeing - thinking about things like prevention and the natural local environment, plants and therapies rather than superficial aspects. I think that's the future of spas in Mexico, if not the US and Europe as well.

What can you tell us about San Miguel's Wellness Tourism Council?

It's a branch of the local tourism board and is in the process of just starting up. There's a core group of eight to 10

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For once, the new state government is open to wellness tourism

► 'crusaders' including local business owners, spa operators and other people like myself and Dr Robert Maxwell. Dr Maxwell is cardiologist and although he's been brought up in the allopathic medical world, he's now a wellness convert.

Policy makers in Mexico are in power for three years and usually look at what's going to make money quickly. But for once, we feel the new state government in Guanajuato is open to hearing about the long-term benefits offered by wellness and sustainable tourism.

What is the council currently working on?

We're focused on creating awareness of the [hot spring and wellness] offering here and are looking to align ourselves with certain governing bodies that already



A thermal spa and pool complex is key to the 300-acre development

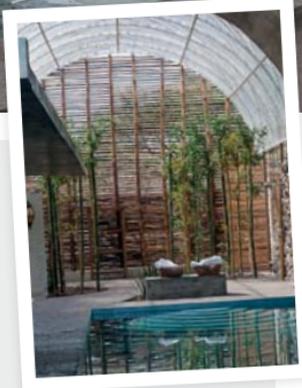


PHOTO BY MICHAELMARCIC.COM

LOS SENDEROS

Los Senderos is a 300-acre (121-hectare) sustainable residential/lifestyle community that's being developed on the outskirts of San Miguel. Owner Francesca Fisher is a former film and video producer and her vision is to create a development that's anchored by wellness with amenities to "help our guests push the 'reset' button and get back to a healthier way of living".

A key feature at Los Senderos is the Manaia luxury thermal spa, which will include an indoor thermal pool with private lounge areas, a natural thermal swimming lagoon, treatment tents, yoga and meditation decks, a Japanese tea house, and steamrooms/

hammams and a traditional temazcal within landscaped grounds.

There's already a farm-to-table restaurant, vineyard, equestrian centre and a wedding venue on-site. The spa will open by 2017. Residential units, condos, a boutique hotel and luxury tented camp are also in the planning.

● los-senderos.mx

HOTEL ATONILCO

An old hotel in the UNESCO World Heritage site of Atonilco, about 15 minutes from San Miguel, is undergoing renovations to become a boutique 30-bed property with a European-style therapeutic centre. Atonilco means 'taking the waters' in an Aztec dialect and the town is traditionally known for its healing hot springs. Local waters and hydrotherapy programmes will be a key feature of the wellness centre once it's developed.

● atotonilcoelviejo.com

have established guidelines and standards that we can follow as we develop and unite tourism with community development.

This September, Termatalia will have its annual thermal spa expo in Mexico and we recently hosted representatives from it on a two-day wellness programme in San Miguel. We did the same thing after the Global Wellness Summit last November, introducing 23 spa delegates from around the world to the local hot springs scene. So we're already creating our own network that can help us as the sector matures.

Next on our agenda is to work with the tourism board in Mexico City and select spas located there to highlight the wellness tourism potential in San Miguel.

When will San Miguel realise its potential as a wellness hub?

We've got three years with the current state administration, which wants wellness tourism to be its success story, so I don't think it's very far down the line. I'm confident that we're making enough noise around San Miguel and if we get the right model here, I think we can create a wellness tourism prototype for country-wide implementation.



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FIRST-PERSON EXPERIENCE: **Katie Barnes**

Temazcal at El Charco del Ingenio botanical gardens

San Miguel de Allende, Mexico

I sit hugging my knees in darkness, half on/half off a thin rattan mat on the earth with a handful of delegates from the Global

Wellness Summit who are on a geothermal mineral water tour in Mexico. I'm sweating within minutes as I try to calm my breathing in the oppressively hot, smoky air. The thought of enduring this for 20 minutes to an hour – the duration never was made clear – is not alluring.

Welcome to the temazcal: a traditional sweat lodge in Central and South America which has been used by natives since

ancient Mesoamerica times (and is still used regularly to this day) for curative and spiritual healing.

Before crawling into the small, stone-built dome our ceremony master – a young, softly spoken man dressed in bright patterned shorts and bandana – explains that the temazcal is a place of healing energy where people let go of negative feelings to be reborn. During a pre-ceremony cleansing, in which we acknowledge the gods, he asks us to make a wish or intent for our experience.

It's this – the health of myself and loved ones – that I try hard to concentrate on to get through



Barnes with the temazcal ceremony master after the memorable experience



The temazcal is said to be a place of curative and spiritual healing



Just when it seems to get too much, herb bundles are used to flick fragrant water on us and the embers to provide some respite

the time in the dome. A fire pit in the middle with smouldering embers belts out distractingly high heat but thankfully the ceremony master introduces elements along the way to help keep us centred. We carry out deep breathing exercises to expel bad energy, gently move our body to encourage awareness and hold hands while rhythmically chanting to remind ourselves of how blessed we are. Just when it seems to get too much, herb bundles are used to flick fragrant water on us and the embers to provide some respite.

Overall, the feeling was slightly uncomfortable both from a physical and mental perspective. There was nothing to support the body and, not used to sitting cross-legged for so long, pins and needles we never far away. At times I also found myself welling up with emotion and quickly internalised the feeling – although that probably wasn't the right thing to do.

The experience was over quicker than I thought and I was crawling back out in less than 30 minutes. I felt shaky and light headed at first, but having tepid water tipped over my head helped to bring me round, as did a cool light breeze sweeping through the chillout area. A feeling of tranquility and elation washed over me and my skin felt amazingly soft too. Despite an emotionally draining experience, I felt awake, alive and happy. ●

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Appealing to the senses

RKF Luxury Linen's chairman and CEO, Riadh Bouaziz, explains how the French brand's new marketing campaign signals a new direction for the company

Tell us about your video and how it fits in with your communications strategy

We launched the short black and white video in late June, starring a very talented up-and-coming French musician and actress called Aelle.

Our aim was to take the themes of haute couture and a 'honeymoon in Paris' – and use them to highlight how strongly the RKF brand is focused on creating high fashion luxury products with a very sensual and personal feel.

We filmed it at the famous French Palace, the Hôtel Fouquet's Barrière Paris in the heart of the Champs-Élysées, featuring iconic imagery such as the Eiffel Tower, as well as Aelle's music for the soundtrack.

Aelle is playing a character with a high flying career, who has just one night to enjoy a sensual night of passion on honeymoon with her husband, before leaving to catch a plane. She's a powerful woman. So it's not the cliché of the business person. It's more contemporary.



STUDIO HARCOURT PARIS

In the film, she's seen wearing a haute couture bathrobe with handcrafted embroidery and precious stones, and at the end departs in a spectacular cape, all designed and made by RKF. Because our fabrics are high quality, we were able to create a dress in a fabric which is normally used for table linen. This is couture.

We think the video represents the lives of many affluent clients who visit five-star hotels and spas. They lead an extremely busy life, and so when they take a few days' break it has to be a perfect, luxurious and unforgettable experience. As perfect as a honeymoon every time!

We've kept the RKF branding very subtle in the video, as it's all about communicating how amazing it feels to wear our fabrics and designs, and to lie on our bed linens. The aim is to introduce RKF as an innovative lifestyle brand. It's all about storytelling.

Has the video been well received?

As we set the story in Paris, we felt we were able to really push the boundaries of sensuality in the video, so I'd say it's

It's all about communicating how amazing it feels to wear our fabrics and designs

VANESSA MOSELLE

The video features French singer-actress Aelle as the main character in RKF's vignette



STUDIO HARCOURT PARIS



CHRISTOPHE DJOUX FOR RKF

Left: Timeless is a super-absorbent, budget fabric.
Right: Aelle in a couture robe



VANESSA MOSELLE

quite a daring piece of marketing material. When we take our theme to London to film next year, I expect we won't be able to be so risqué! But for this theme about Paris, we really had to show romanticism and passion. The idea is to express our custom-made know-how. We are able to create textile articles for any customer, in any country, according to its philosophy, its needs, its dreams, its interior decoration.

The video has been extremely well received, attracting 60,000 views in its first 10 days online. We also screened it at the Eurockéennes music festival, where around 120,000 festival-goers saw it within 3 days.

It represents a new direction for the RKF Luxury Linen brand over the next few years. RKF's existing customers, which include many hotel and spa brands around the world, already know how amazing our products are. However, we realised we had to do a much better job in communicating how innovative, luxurious and individual our products are - and of course how amazing they feel - to a much wider audience. You can see the video on our Facebook with other exclusive content.

What's your newest product?

After two years in R&D, we announced our new Timeless fabric in January 2016 with patent pending. Timeless further improves on the unique properties of our successful DreamSoft® product, which is used in our luxury collections of robes and towels, etc.

While DreamSoft offers double the absorption of a comparable towelling product and produces a 50 per cent saving on laundry cycles, we can guarantee that Timeless delivers a minimum of 17 times the lifecycle of regular towelling, five times the absorption and can also cut operators' laundry bills by 75-80 per cent.



RKF's backstage pop-up spa cabin at the Eurockéennes music festival

CHRISTOPHE DJOUX FOR RKF

Tell us about your recent achievements

We recently received two worldwide awards for innovation. Our trench coat robe design in our Timeless fabric won the Golden A' Design Award in Milan in the textile category, beating 1,600 entries from 85 countries. We also won the European Spa Association's Innovative Spa Concept award, which was announced in May.

Also, this summer we created our first pop-up spa - for the musicians at the Eurockéennes festival in eastern France. In partnership with Sothys we created a mobile spa cabin and outdoor relaxation area behind the main stage.

What else is RKF concentrating on?

We're highly focused on creating bespoke products and designs. For example, we were able to recreate the famous Bulgari grey in DreamSoft for the Bulgari Spa in London. We have the ability to customise colours and designs, and also to protect those creations for our clients worldwide.

We've just added two new designers to our team directed by Christophe Djour, our creative director. They're working on some high fashion creations that will be 'firsts' for the luxury hotel and spa markets. I can't reveal details yet, but there will be an exciting launch at the end of the year. ●

Timeless can cut operators' laundry bills by 75-80%

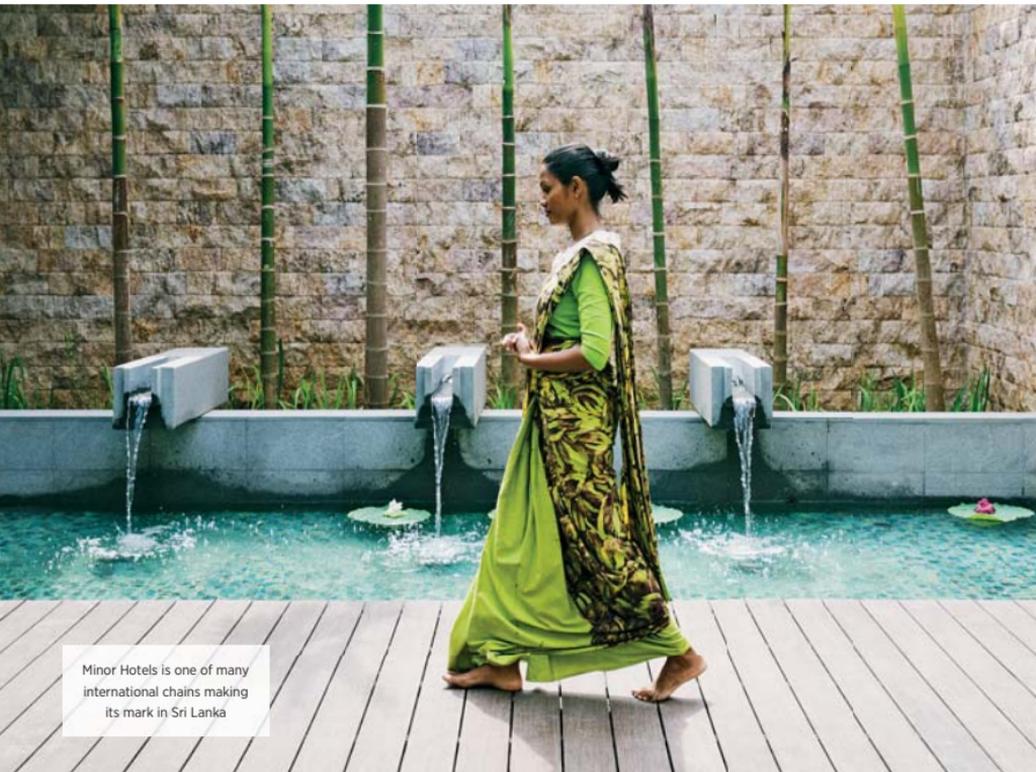
The fabric is eco-friendly, light and silky to the touch. It doesn't replace our premium DreamSoft product, but instead offers the choice of a budget option with an extremely quick return on investment.

Our first Timeless products went to the Jumeirah Hotels Group, and now other companies such as the Marriott Group are putting in orders. We have several projects in the Middle East thanks to our regional director, Mohamed Belkhdja, and are focusing on expansion in that region.

Our values are proximity, reactivity and flexibility. We never lower our standards but we're able to meet the demand of any customer thanks to our wide offer of fabrics and especially DreamSoft, Timeless and our microfibre textiles.



Contact RKF T: +33 3 84 90 08 56
E: rkf@rkf.fr www.rkf.fr



Minor Hotels is one of many international chains making its mark in Sri Lanka

A LAND OF WELLBEING?

Can hotels which have a strong wellness focus play a role in Sri Lanka's reinvigorated tourism story? Neena Dhillon visits the Pearl of the Indian Ocean to find out

At the first tourism and hotel investment conference hosted recently by hospitality consultants HVS in Sri Lanka, the government revealed a strategy that seeks to position the country as one of Asia's most sought-after destinations. It aims to double the expected tourist arrivals of 2.2 million this year by 2020, turning the sector into the largest contributor to its Foreign Exchange Earnings.

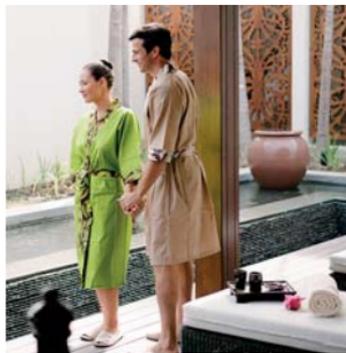
The potential is undeniable: the teardrop-shaped island not only benefits from a concentration of UNESCO-listed World Heritage sites, it also offers stunning beaches, national parks teeming with wildlife, cultural treasures and hospitable people, making this a round-trip location with an average length of stay of 9.9 nights.

Although the tropical isle has much to achieve to shrug off the legacy of its brutal civil war – which came to an end in 2009 after 26

wearying years, but effectively stunted the development of tourism – it's capturing the attention of many leading international hotel chains.

Minor Hotels opened its third Sri Lankan property at the end of 2015 (see p95), while Shangri-La has just revealed a 145-acre (59-hectare) resort in Hambantota boasting a signature Chi, The Spa. Other global operators are looking to make their mark this year too. Onyx is introducing its Amari brand in Galle, with the 172-room resort featuring a branded Breeze Spa; Riu Hotels is unveiling a 500-room property featuring a Renova Spa in Ahungalla, through a joint venture with Aitken Spence; and Sheraton is arriving with two properties (both incorporating spas) in Colombo and Kosgoda.

So, as Sri Lanka reclaims its place on the map, we ask fledgling and established hoteliers about the country's potential as an emerging restorative destination and where spas fit in.



Minor Hotels CEO, Dillip Rajakarier (above), was born in Sri Lanka and is bullish about its prospects

“The government has a clear focus on stimulating tourism”

Anantara

Having entered Sri Lanka back in 2011/12 with two Avani branded properties, Minor Hotels marked the end of 2015 with the opening of Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort on its southernmost coast.

Realised through a joint venture with Sri Lankan conglomerate Hemas, Minor Hotels has invested US\$200m (€180m, £146m) to introduce the Anantara experience. This figure divided between Tangalle and a sister property launching soon in Kalutara.

Sri Lankan-born Dillip Rajakarier, Minor Hotel's CEO, is bullish about the country's prospects, saying: "I'm confident we will launch more hotels because the island offers a responsive business climate, actively promotes foreign investment, and the government has a clear focus on stimulating tourism."

The Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort provides one of the country's biggest spas, at 4,887sq ft (454sq m), and GM Tamir Kobrin has a keen understanding of the issues operators face in setting up such facilities. "Some challenges are the limited awareness of wellness beyond traditional ayurvedic healing therapies, lack of formal training among therapists, language barriers and few chances for supplementary local training," he says. "In terms of recruitment, there's a lack of understanding among community and families about the professionalism and safety offered by a career in the five-star spa sector."

But he does see potential to position "Sri Lanka as a restorative destination". ▶



Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle opened in late 2015 and a sister property in Kalutara will make its debut imminently





Nawagamuwage (left) worked for Deloitte in the US before returning home to make his mark in tourism. The offering (below) has a unique edge over the typical sun, sea and sand packages of the 1970s/80s



“I started using wellness services and practising yoga over five years ago to avoid burnout.”

► Santani

When first-time hotelier Vickram Nawagamuwage opens Santani this August, he'll reveal “the first purpose-built wellness resort in Sri Lanka”.

The new resort will draw on the country's Buddhist heritage of mindfulness, its ayurvedic traditions and a forest setting on the edge of the Knuckles Mountain range. It will also place an emphasis on customised experiences, aiming to create balance through clean air, space to detoxify the mind, global spa therapies, outdoor activities and healthy cuisine with a fine-dining twist.

It's a concept close to his heart. “People don't have balance in their stressed-out lives, with little chance to escape emotionally from the working day because of technology,” he points out. “I started using wellness services and practising yoga five years ago to avoid burnout.”

Born in Sri Lanka, the entrepreneur moved to the US when he was 30 to study for an MBA, quickly being snapped up by



Santani, set on the edge of a forest, will draw on Sri Lanka's Buddhist heritage of mindfulness

Deloitte for a global consultancy career. As soon as the civil war was over, he engineered a return, advising Malaysian and Singaporean investors on tourism, all with the view to establishing his own project. “I turned down a partnership because I believe that one of Sri Lanka's strongest global assets is tourism. But our industry seems to be lacking in direction beyond the sun, sea and sand concept associated with the 1970s/80s.”

After identifying a pristine 48-acre (19-hectare) location in central Sri Lanka, Nawagamuwage has worked with

architect Thisara Thanapathy to create a 20-room sustainably-built resort, free of air-conditioning thanks to the comfortable temperatures of its elevation 850m above sea level. “One of the central tenets of ayurvedic healing is panchakarma detoxification including the nose cleanse,” says Nawagamuwage. “In this rainforest environment, the respiratory system starts to cleanse naturally.”

Of its minimalist design, he says: “Our four spa treatment rooms for bodywork are uncluttered and cut out artificial stimuli, allowing the mind to relax.”

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SRI LANKA

▶ While short stays are available, Santani is geared towards all-inclusive packages of three to seven nights, each including a consultation with a wellness concierge to determine background and goals. This is followed by a full assessment with an ayurvedic physician and the head of wellness – Narayana Prasad, formerly of Four Seasons Maldives and Song Saa Private Island.

Depending on the package focus – which could be healthy lifestyle, detox, stress, yoga or ayurveda – the experience could include a customised food plan, movement classes, lifestyle coaching, personal training, massages, mild cleansing treatments, energy balancing and meditation.

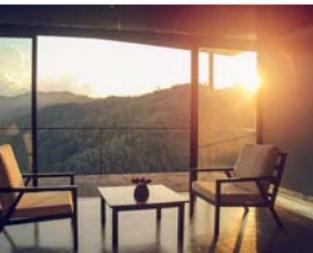
“We’re not about shocking the body,” Nawagamuwage points out. “We’ll introduce dietary changes slowly, giving guests a taste of juicing or explaining how bitter gourd can work to reduce sugar levels and where to find a similar acting vegetable at home.

“Similarly, if guests are exhausted, we’ll encourage them to recuperate by relaxing in our thermal salt-water bath – the first in Sri Lanka – or trying a water release treatment in the hydrotherapy area.”

Through its website and apps, Santani’s multinational spa team of eight will provide guests with practical follow-up advice to take home.

“We’re setting our package rates at US\$600-700 [€539-269, £408-476] per room, per night, making Santani a better value proposition for two people than regional competitors such as Chiva-Som,” adds Nawagamuwage.

Santani has just 20 rooms and rates start at US\$600 a night



Drummond, from the UK, runs Tri with his wife Lara who heads up its many yoga sessions

Tri

Having moved to Sri Lanka in 2001, British-born Rob Drummond serendipitously stumbled upon a 6-acre (2.4-hectare) plot of beautiful land flanking Koggala Lake in Galle District two years later and eventually opened Tri – an intimate hotel – in late 2015.

“I became a hotelier in a roundabout way,” he says. “Most of my Sri Lankan friends are in hospitality and I was aware there was a lack of good-quality rooms, for which there would be a demand. Still, I didn’t start out with a business plan – rather Tri is a creation of love.”

Working with Raefter Wallis, co-founder of AOO Architecture and a leader in sustainable design, Drummond explains that they “approached Tri as a landscaping project, choosing optimum spots for the placement of buildings and taking cues from the views presented in between particular trees, including an ancient banyan.” From here, a spiral-shaped whorl emerged following the folds and compression of the land, neatly mirroring nature’s Golden Ratio. Of the geometric

“I didn’t start out with a business plan – rather Tri is a creation of love”

construction, Drummond observes: “Really the architecture serves as a platform for the land’s natural beauty, which is so peaceful and relaxing that it lends itself to a feeling of wellness.”

One of the first facilities to be positioned was the elevated yoga shala, partially open to the elements to form a serene space in which to practise. Drummond’s wife Lara Baumann, originator of the Quantum Yoga method that taps into ayurvedic principles, leads a timetable of classes with four free sessions offered weekly and guests able to book one-on-one tuition. Drawing on her personal network, Baumann also organises a visiting practitioners’ programme through which specialist yoga teachers and spa therapists are invited for a month-long residency. Visiting ▶

[comfort zone]

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spa business uniting the world of wellness

SRI LANKA

Tri's wellness offering will evolve in response to market demand

practitioners are typically paid on a 50/50 split basis with the hotel, in addition to accommodation and food being covered. Since the 11 rooms, suites and villas at Tri (catering for up to 30 guests) do not always create enough demand, they seek yoga teachers who are also trained in a therapy to keep them fully occupied and make residencies worthwhile. The local community is another source market.

"With limited rooms, and since it's difficult to source female Sinhalese bodywork therapists [cultural norms limit physical interaction between the sexes], making the sums work for visiting practitioners can be tricky and we're not quite there yet," explains Drummond.

"We would consider adding more hotel rooms in future but in the meantime we're generating a lot of latent interest in retreats." With this in mind, Tri is on course to introduce yoga weekend workshops and longer high-end retreats offering a mixture of yoga sessions with a focus on pranayama, asanas and inversions, physical activities such as biking or kayaking, along with nutritious meals and juicing.

Drummond is keen to underline that Tri's wellness offering will evolve in response to market demand, with all



activities optional to guests. Still, in just over six months of operations, at least one person from every room has participated in a yoga session with the spa's capture rate per room standing at 70 per cent. Drummond and Baumann both hope to have a Sri Lankan head of spa in situ soon to guide the direction of the small

Tri is built on an island (below) and has been constructed according to geometric and Golden Ratio principles. The yoga shala (top) is a key facility

facility consisting of two treatment rooms and steamroom, although therapists also use the yoga shala for massages. "The most likely expansion would be the addition of a small ayurvedic spa," adds Drummond. "We've already had a practitioner giving ayurvedic bodywork but it would be interesting to beef up the ayurveda element, linking into the yoga and holistic approach here."

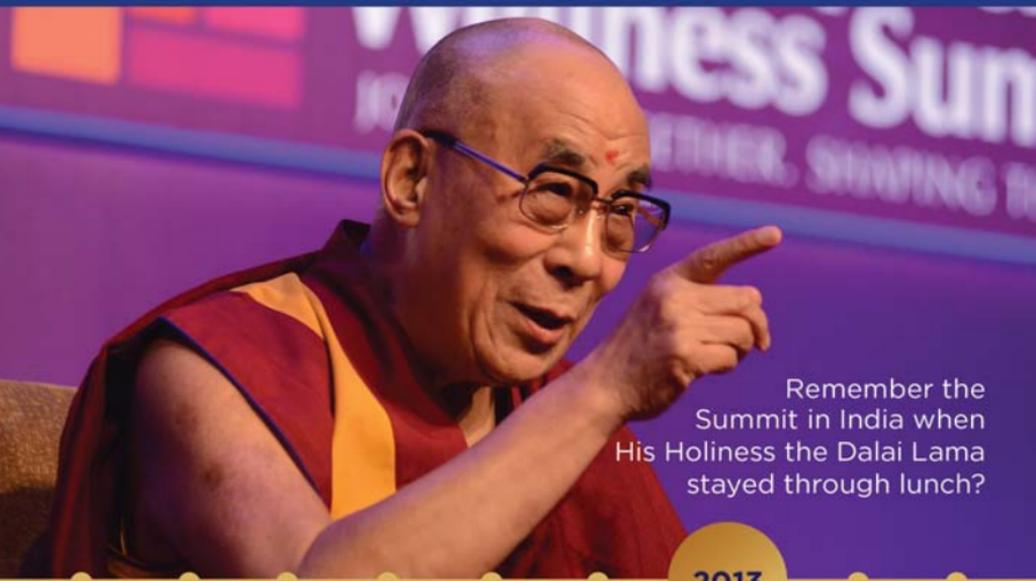
His story, along with the experiences of those involved in the Anantara and Santani projects, provides food for thought for spa brands hoping to share in Sri Lanka's renewed tourism landscape. ●



Neena Dhillon is a spa, hotel and travel journalist
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Firms are launching mobile solutions for both consumers and operators

TECH TALK III

What's happening in the world of spa software? We hear all the latest news, advances and forecasts from some of the best-known spa tech companies in the business

Kate Parker, writer, kateparker@spabusiness.com



For more information, or to contact any of these companies, visit spa-kit.net and type in the keyword

Rick Stollmeyer co-founder and CEO **Mindbody**



What are you doing that other spa software companies aren't?

Mindbody is busy building a global consumer network via a new app as a way of bringing more customers to clients. This includes our spa-goers, people who are engaged in various wellness activities that form natural complements to the kinds of services provided by spa businesses. The Mindbody network is designed to help people pursue and maintain a more holistic view of personal wellness, combining fitness with mental and spiritual wellness.

What are the trends in spa software?

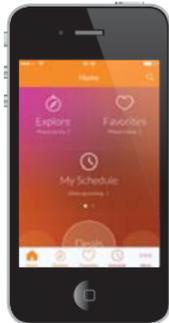
Everything is going to the cloud and spa services are also becoming more mobile with business owners taking treatments to consumers; they're visiting homes and even workplaces.

What's been your biggest news story recently? The Mindbody app launched in December, helping spas to attract

The new Mindbody app, helps people find, book, review and pay for services in their local areas

new customers by connecting them with people nearby who are actively searching for their services. Named by Apple as one of the Best New Apps of 2016, it helps people find, book, review and pay for services in their local areas and while travelling, immediately connecting consumers to the wellness practitioners in our network. More recently it won the 2016 Webby and People's Voice Awards for innovation in mobile design.

In other news, wellness expert Dr Deepak Chopra, is a



● Apple named the app one of the best new arrivals in 2016

keynote speaker at Mindbody's annual user conference this October, alongside celebrity fitness professional Jillian Michaels. Chopra will be sharing his thoughts on the future of wellness and the transformational impact healthier lifestyle choices can have on the human body.

Spa-kit.net keyword: **Mindbody** ▶



Prashant Nandha senior director **Paradigm Shift**



● Paradigm is implementing its system across Japan's Phoenix Seagaia Resort, which has multiple hotels and spas

What's your newest piece of spa software? E-Rewards is a web-based loyalty management system with real-time information on point balances and redemption. Calculating points based on multiple scenarios and tracking expiration, it empowers customers to access the website and redeem points at their own convenience.

What projects are you working on? We're currently implementing our spa and membership management systems at the Phoenix Seagaia Resort, a large island resort in Japan. It has hotels with spas by Banyan Tree and Sheraton and traditional onsens.

Interestingly, one of the key software requirements of this resort - the ability to see vast numbers of transactions in different areas of operation

Paradigm Shift customers had always wanted a single solution that could track guests' time in facilities across the whole resort



- is the need around which our software was originally designed.

Our customers wanted a solution that could track guests' time across a whole resort.

The implementation has had an immediate and positive effect on service, making it easier to manage members and guests in a more personalised manner.

The impact of accurate statistics and forecasting can't be overemphasised. Our software consolidates everything

into one solution, helping with statistical analysis and forecasting, as well as combining and managing the operational needs of the various facilities.

What are the trends in spa software? We're very excited about our new hybrid solution where a system keeps running in remote sites where there's an unreliable internet connection.

Spa-kit.net keywords: **Paradigm Shift**

Jen Robson co-founder and director **SpaOne Software**

What's new for you? We're finalising the launch of a SpaOne app which allows spa guests to book treatments, purchase online and keep up to date with all the latest news and promotions. The app interfaces seamlessly with other SpaOne software so operators have live data, sales and bookings updated immediately as the client books-in anywhere, anytime.

What's the current spa market climate like for you? Based in Australia, Asia is always a strong growth region for us. Supporting this location is easy for SpaOne, especially for the helpdesk time zones, so our focus and development of support facilities is strongly focused in this region. We have exciting new groups starting to grow around Vietnam, China and the Pacific and we'll be working with them to form a virtual network of software so they can operate their entire group from anywhere in the world as they continue to expand.

What's interesting about this region? The Asia-Pacific spa region has some unique requirements when it comes to technology - namely extreme weather and isolated locations. Maintaining power or an internet connection can be a challenge,

SpaOne has exciting new groups starting to grow around Vietnam, China and the Pacific

but as spa-goers choose to go further afield, and new resorts are being built in ever more remote locations, it's what SpaOne needs to address.

What are the trends in spa software? With the prevalence of mobile devices, traditional spa check-in and sales areas are now open to interpretation as to how you can do business that is better for you and your spa space. From a design point of view this is extremely exciting and one in which we're anticipating big changes.

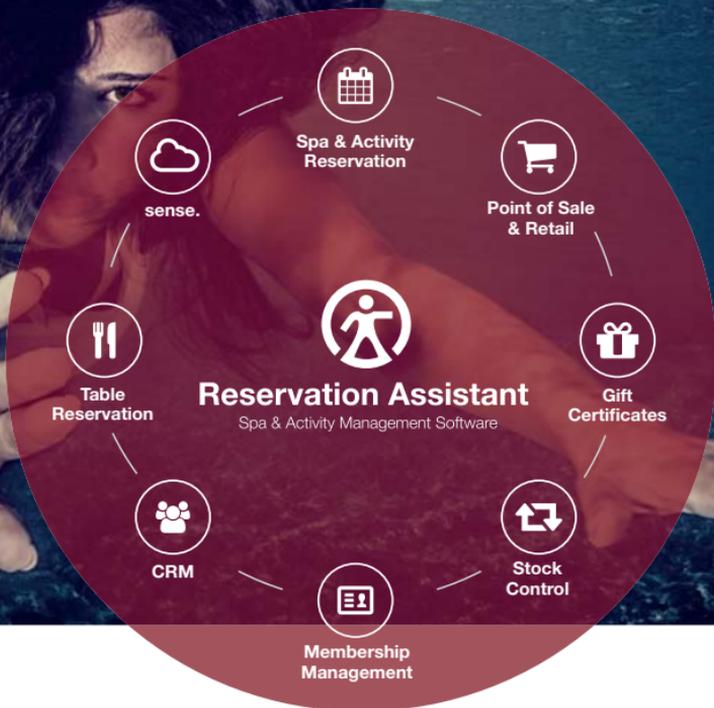
Spa-kit.net keyword: **SpaOne** ►



● SpaOne is finalising a real-time customer booking and purchasing app which spas can also use to track live data



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spa business uniting the world of wellness



Damien Tamiser CEO **Dimmbizz & xPlanOnline.com**

What's your newest piece of spa software? We have a new online booking engine which offers greater functionality. Besides booking treatments, packages and hotel stays,

users can also buy gift cards, review membership details and book lessons.

We've also developed an interface with the Technogym MyWellness Cloud, allowing the automatic addition of new members to the system, giving spa fitness trainers all the information they need to personalise the visit - a great tool to increase retention.

What are you doing that's different? We have a focus group set up with our xPlan users which reviews the market, trends and challenges. Together we discuss how these aspects can be met by developing new software features.

What spa software trends are you noticing? We try to anticipate potential trends, but it's also very important to

Dimmbizz has a focus group set up with our xPlan users which reviews the market, trends and challenges

be pragmatic and make sure a trend isn't just a hype. Our cloud solution is used effectively by many of our customers, but its success relies on an excellent internet connection. For customers with less reliable connections, who might have thousands of visitors a day, even a short interruption to the service means a potential loss of turnover. It pays to be aware of the risks and adapt in response.

What interesting projects are you working on? We have a project in Belgium that's interesting due to its

size and the combination of services it comprises, including spa, fitness, skate-park, restaurants and classes.

We'll also be releasing automatic duplication software in due course which will eliminate duplicate copies of repeat customer data, helping to ensure that clients maintain a clean CRM database. This sort of software is essential for marketing purposes as some of our spas have millions of addresses.

Spa-kit.net keyword: **Dimmbizz**



SOFTWARE NEWS

Paperless check-in with Book4Time

Guest Intake, a brand new platform from Book4Time, helps spas to digitise the intake process and become more efficient.

The online intake form does away with the need for processing paper forms at check-in.

Instead, clients fill in an online form on any platform

or screen - mobile, tablet, or computer. They can save time by filling out the intake form prior to their appointment or at check-in.

Once completed, the form is stored in the cloud and integrated with existing spa management software so spas can sync and streamline intake form responses immediately.



The Guest Intake platform has built-in encryption for all data transfer, backups and security.

Spa-kit.net keyword: **Book4Time**

The new platform will digitise spa intake, making the process much more efficient

ResortSuite partners with Shift4 for credit card encryption



ARIBOK SHIBUO/SHUTTERSTOCK

● Credit card info will be more secure thanks to the collaboration

Software firm ResortSuite has partnered with Shift4 Corporation, provider of the Dollars On The Net payment gateway.

The companies have integrated their solutions to the point where credit card data is encrypted at source - whether it's swiped, keyed, chip-read or entered online. Unencrypted card data never enters the system. When credit card information must be keyed in, it's first sent to Shift4's data centre, where it's tokenised for security.

"In a time when information can so easily fall into the wrong hands, we believe we can utilise strong technology to help, instead of harm," says Frank Pitsikalis, the CEO of ResortSuite which works with many spas.

"This integration will help the hospitality industry to deliver a personalised guest experience, with the confidence of securing guest information at every touch point." ●

Spa-kit.net keyword: **ResortSuite**



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Product innovation



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for the latest product and supplier news

Industry suppliers tell *Spa Business* about their latest spa design, product, treatment and equipment launches

Kate Corney, product editor & Jane Kitchen, news editor

Toni Egger and Felix Tarantik transform ski gondolas into saunas

German designers Toni Egger and Felix Tarantik are offering spas mobile saunas made from the aluminium shells of Swiss ski-lift gondolas.

The four- to eight-person Saunagondel can withstand extreme weather conditions and are small and lightweight.

"We both use saunas regularly," says Egger. "It's a cultural thing [in Germany] and it's very healthy as it increases your core temperature so your body fights off germs and viruses. But the current style of saunas is very traditional. They have never been designed in a modern, simplistic, high-quality way and are all lacking the sense of beauty we were looking for."

Tarantik adds: "We were looking for a frame that could withstand extreme temperature changes. Ski gondolas are built for that: they're indestructible."

The sauna is fitted with custom-made silver fir wood interiors and a 4.5 kW or 6kW electric heater that can reach temperatures of 100°C (212°F).

With one installation planned at a Swiss wellness spa near the mountains of Graubünden, and private users even adding the innovative cabin to roof terraces and gardens, the applications for Saunagondels are wide and varied.

Spa-kit keyword: Saunagondel ▶



■ Traditional saunas are lacking a sense of modern design and beauty say Egger and Tarantik

Chad Turner of Yoga Design Lab reveals clever, colourful mat designs



■ The mats make a bright alternative and provide extra grip

Yoga Design Lab's latest collection of yoga mats boasts designs to help users position their bodies correctly for poses. Created in Bali by Canadian surfer/yogi Chad Turner, the mats make a visually stunning alternative to traditional products.

Turner says: "I was seated in the back of a packed yoga class while on vacation in Ubud, Bali. Looking around, all I saw was a sea of unoriginal, mass-produced, solid coloured mats. My thinking was, there must be a way of creating a highly functional product that was also aesthetically beautiful. "So the journey began. Long story short, I sold my



stuff, packed up a couple bags and moved to Bali with the goal of creating a stunning line of products that inspire more people to get excited about yoga.

Each print is systematically aligned to assist yoga lovers to easily track their alignment and positioning during all poses."

He adds that the mats are designed for practicality as well as aesthetics. They're eco-friendly because they're made from biodegradable tree rubber. The rubber is bonded to a microfibre top



■ Turner was inspired to bring colour to yoga while holidaying in Ubud, Bali

layer designed to provide extra grip with sweat, ideal for bikram yoga. Eco-friendly water-based inks are also used for the designs.

Spa-kit keywords:
Yoga Design

Noel Asmar unveils elegant fashion line for retail



■ Asmar will debut the line at the ISPA expo in September

Canada-based fashion design group Noel Asmar will be previewing its hotly anticipated spring/summer 2017 fashion collection at the ISPA expo in September. The group has branched out to develop the new line, which will be available for spas to retail as well as high-end fashion boutiques.

CEO and founder Noel Asmar says: "The SS17 collection reflects the dichotomy of the Noel Asmar label and has an elegant resort feel. Ultra feminine designs in a soft palette are manufactured with premium lightweight linens, modals and silks.

Described as "fresh and whimsical", the designs reflect a sense of calmness and tranquility. Noel adds: "Soft colours and earth tones are brushed over cleverly constructed separates made of silk, linen, modal and cotton.

"The collection is a medley of timeless essentials and layering pieces that can be styled with ease while channelling sophistication.



"Clever details and luxurious fabrics make up minimal lines and sophisticated silhouettes for a polished and elegant look. The collection is made up of statement pieces that are versatile enough to be re-invented to evolve with your style."

Noel's fall/winter 2016 collection for spas also launches this August and is supported by a new hospitality line that includes men and women's shirting, vests, skirts and suiting coordinates.

Spa-kit keywords: Noel Asmar ▶

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Mathilde Gedouin-Lagarde introduces Phytomer's anti-pollution treatment

Phytomer has debuted the Citylife skincare line, which sweeps away toxic microparticles and repairs skin damage caused by pollution. Citylife has a sorbet-like texture and a formula comprising a trio of anti-pollution biotech marine sugars and oligomer - Phytomer's concentrate of partially desalinated seawater, which provides mineral replenishment to the skin.

This anti fatigue action is also reinforced by the draining and decongesting

effect of red algae and a blue microalgae which is believed to have exceptional antioxidant properties.

Also suitable for the eye contour, Citylife has been created to re-oxygenate tired eyes while diffusing mineral water into dehydrated skin.

"Citylife helps the skin to catch its breath with an overall treatment against the damages of pollution," says Mathilde Gedouin-Lagarde, marketing and communication director for Phytomer. "Being experts



■ Marine sugars, algae and desalinated seawater are all key ingredients

in skin-depolluting for 20 years, we are the only ones who have simultaneously tackled dehydration, dark spots and signs of fatigue, by using a trio of biotech marine sugars. As for its super-fresh sorbet texture, designed for both the face and eye contour area - it's to die for!"

Spa-kit.net keyword:
Phytomer



■ It's for both the face and eyes, says Gedouin-Lagarde

Valérie Corcias reveals Mycoocoon's colour therapy app



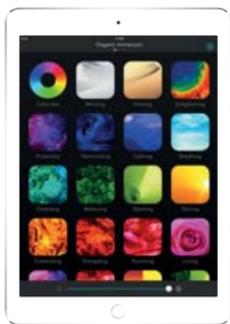
■ Valérie Corcias and Dominique Kelly have a range of colour energy products

Mycoocoon, the company behind the colour immersion relaxation pod, has launched the Color-Institute App that features a simple test to determine a user's personal colour profile, which will then help them select a light immersion session to balance their energy needs. Purple, for example, calms the mind and offers a sense of spirituality, while yellow activates memory and increases communication.

The app can be used as a standalone application for colour therapy combined with music, or as a remote control for the relaxation pod or Mycoocoon's colour walls.

"Based on chromotherapy, the Mycoocoon Color-Institute combines the ancestral beliefs about colour with the aid of technology," explains company founder Valérie Corcias.

Mycoocoon's product line includes the pods, which give clients a 'light bath' under biocompatible lamps. The lamps immerse the whole body in key colours, along with sounds to enhance the experience and can be used for meditation sessions.



■ The app can be used as a therapy in itself or combined with a relaxation pod

The company also supplies Colour Immersion Walls, which can be implemented in various room configurations and used with yoga, reflexology, or treatments for jet-lag, or can be installed in a relaxation room.

Mycoocoon recently launched its products in Asia in partnership with VDL Cosmetics so consumers can select their makeup based on their colour moods after taking the Mycoocoon test and immerse themselves in the colour pods.

Spa-kit.net keyword: Mycoocoon





■ Minimalistic contemporary design meets product expertise to create the ultimate in stylish, bespoke spa furniture



PROMOTION

Fabio Alemanno on the company's luxurious, hand-crafted, therapeutic spa furniture



■ The ergonomic form and infrared warmth offer a higher level of wellbeing and relaxation while stimulating the body's own healing processes and the regeneration of cells



Fabio Alemanno Design produces stylish, heated, multi-functional marble loungers with proven therapeutic effects, for the ultimate in bespoke spa furniture and design.

Cut from a single block of stone and hand-crafted into a unique, ergonomic form, the loungers can be customised for any spa, with a broad range of design options that make it easy to create a piece that's as beautiful as it is functional.

In creating a lounger to match their spa's design aesthetic, spa owners have the choice of many different marble colours, as well as unique design accents such as fine leather, exclusive fabrics and a variety of high-quality wood choices.

"With its contemporary design and unlimited options for customisation, each one of our heated loungers is a unique work of art with a flawless ergonomic form which will enhance any setting," says Fabio Alemanno, the company's CEO.

The loungers combine the healing properties of natural stone with the therapeutic effects of long-wave infrared heat.

An integrated, controllable electrical system warms the lounger from beneath, radiating heat throughout the stone, which provides health benefits such as

stress reduction, detoxification and the treatment of muscular and osteopathic injuries.

The loungers use a variable-tilt technology, which creates the perfect inclination and delivers an almost zero-gravity effect – all with the body fully supported.

A flexible, responsive three-zone heating system ensures optimal temperature regulation and the loungers can be easily moved thanks to integrated castors. With an easy-to-clean surface, they can be used for a wide range of wet treatments in a spa environment.

The company's newly launched Square Hammam Table pushes the boundaries between design and functionality. It features a dramatic inlay of semi-precious tiger's eye stones combined with a rich black-and-gold marble and an elegant, curved silhouette. It can be used in a variety of treatments, including those that combine the warmth of the infrared technology with the energy of the semi-precious gemstones.

Fabio Alemanno Design offers prospective clients flexible and sensible financing along with sales support and comprehensive partnership opportunities.

Spa-kit.net keywords:
Fabio Alemanno Design

Helen Coulon on the SoulBoks modular spa concept

Soulhouse consultants Helen Coulon and Daniella Russell have introduced a modular unit based on reusing 40ft (12m) shipping containers to create modern spa (SoulBoks) or thermal (HotBoks) facilities.

The customisable containers can be installed as a turnkey project for

hotels without a spa or as standalone boutiques. All owners need to provide is the space, water, drainage and power services and, as Coulon says, "The boks are then delivered to site ready to operate with no building disruption."

SoulBoks has four stations for beauty or spa

treatments with 30-minute back pain, insomnia and alignment protocols by Kore Therapies available (but not obligatory). Or they can also be turned into a fitness/wellness studio for meditation, yoga, pilates and barre work.

The HotBoks have space for up to two experiences including a sauna/steamroom, spa pool, plunge pool or floatation tank.

Coulon says: "We believe SoulBoks and HotBoks will go off with a bang in the industry as the spa scene is generally looking for new, 'out of the boks' ideas to move along with consumer demands of today."

Soulhouse has already established strategic



■ Helen Coulon (above) heads up Soulhouse with Daniella Russell

partnerships with investors from Dubai, London and Argentina to set up facilities in the next year.

Spa-kit keyword: Soulhouse



■ The customisable units are made from shipping containers

Sammy Gharieni says new HydroSpa bed gives spas an 'edge'

"The Libra Edge K is the result of the latest developments in our HydroSpa collection," says Sammy Gharieni, CEO and founder of spa equipment firm Gharieni. "With its state-of-the-art functionality and modern design it's a great opportunity to create an amazing USP for your spa."

The base has been created with specially formed edges to control waterflow and prevent flooding and is made from corian – a material with no joins which makes surfaces easier to clean. Fully adjustable in height and with a zero-gravity position, the Libra Edge K has a heated water mattress for the comfort of the spa client.

An adjustable Kohler shower arm offers a variety of pre-programmed water settings controlled through an intuitive touch screen interface. A 'cocoon' can also be set up around the bed for relaxing steam treatments to target cellulite, increase metabolism and support detox and weight loss.



In addition, a soap foam generator produces foam for massages.

The mattress and shower feature LED illumination for chromotherapy and a built-in Bluetooth music system.

Spa-kit keyword: Gharieni

■ A cocoon can be set up around the bed for relaxing steam treatments



■ Gharieni has teamed up with Kohler for his latest spa innovation



PROMOTION

Marc Massing explains Laboratoires Camille's revolutionary new fragrance diffuser



■ The Bysoo diffuser is silent and features an understated design

French spa supplier Laboratoires Camille – known for its innovative scents for saunas, steamrooms, experience showers and hammams – is debuting a revolutionary new line of fragrances and diffusers for the spa treatment room.

The new Perles de Parfum line will allow spas to create an 'olfactory identity' for their treatment room, with soothing or uplifting scents that can be used for different moods or types of treatments. It features concentrated fragrance beads that emit 100 per cent natural perfumes, and nothing else; there are no harsh chemicals, artificial fragrances, or other harmful emissions.

Laboratoires Camille can also custom-blend scents for product houses in order for the room fragrance to match a skincare line's scent.

The Bysoo diffuser is silent and features a deliberately understated design in order to blend in with any room setting. The diffuser uses a new dry diffusion process, which also ensures that no additional moisture is emitted in the treatment rooms.

Unlike traditional essential oil diffusers that need to be replenished every few hours, the concentrated fragrance beads will release their scent slowly and steadily over a period of between six to eight weeks, with no maintenance or additional essential oil top-up required – simply plug the diffuser in and turn it on.



"Customers asked us to create something for the treatment rooms," explains Laboratoires Camille CEO Marc Massing. "People have been waiting for this kind of concept – this has been missing in the spa arena."

Laboratoires Camille is debuting the Bysoo with 20 fragrances, including a wide range of essential oils as well as a few blends and natural perfumes. Scents include eucalyptus, orange blossom, pine, lavender, rosemary, mint and lemon, as well as Asian, Polynesian, Mediterranean and Oriental blends.

The diffuser is small and discreet, and can be used in everything



■ Laboratoires Camille
CEO Marc Massing

from small treatment rooms to larger relaxation lounges, up to 25sq m (269sq ft). There are three levels of fragrance release, so the amount can be adjusted based on the size of the room or a therapist's personal preference. Priced at €30 (US\$33, £25), the Bysoo diffuser is very economical.

Founded in 1976, Laboratoires Camille also produces a wide range of oils that can be used in massage treatments in addition to its line of scents for spa wet areas.

Spa-kit.net keywords:
Laboratoires Camille



■ The Perles de Parfum line includes concentrated fragrance beads that emit 100% natural scents and last between six to eight weeks

Elemis' new Superfood Facial Oil is like a 'personal trainer for the skin' says Noella Gabriel

Elemis has launched a new face oil that includes concentrated superfoods like broccoli, daikon radish and rice bran.

The Superfood Facial Oil has been formulated to be delicately silky in texture, rich in antioxidants and minerals and fatty acids, to both hydrate and soften the skin.

"This oil acts like a personal trainer for the skin and benefits directly from the powerful nutritional elements," says Noella Gabriel, co-founder of Elemis.

Oils from broccoli, poppy and cucumber seeds, macadamia nuts, rice bran, daikon radishes, rose hips, flaxseed and meadowfoam seed are all combined to create "skin health in a bottle" she adds.



■ Gabriel says the oil provides powerful nutritional elements

Broccoli seed oil is said to lead the mineral charge in addressing hydration and softening the skin; flaxseed oil with soaring levels of omega-3 has been added to soothe and seal moisture in; and daikon radish is said to help everything absorb for increased levels of nourishment.

"With the pace of life today, we know we should be eating better to ensure the skin is functioning at an optimal level, but this is not always possible," says Gabriel. "Superfood Facial Oil delivers an easily-absorbed booster of vitamins, omegas and antioxidants directly to the skin, for natural radiance and luminosity."

Spa-kit.net
keyword: Elemis



■ Oils from broccoli seeds, rice bran and flaxseed are all included

Noella Gabriel is a co-founder of Elemis



Margaret Dabbs launches healthy, scented nail polish line

Hand and footcare specialist Margaret Dabbs London has unveiled its first nail polish range, themed after English flowers and available in 72 shades.

Company creator Margaret Dabbs got her start as a podiatrist in 2004 and quickly expanded beyond medical footcare when she identified a gap in the market for hand and foot treatments that combined clinical and aesthetic needs.

Today, Dabbs has five standalone clinics with another two in the works and the company is expanding in a big way into spas, salons and retail outlets. The brand also recently launched in the US.

The nail polishes were created personally by Dabbs to promote



■ The varnishes include a rose extract to leave a lasting scent

nail health and vitality and include vitamin E to strengthen and protect the nails and wild rose botanical to revitalise and prevent infection. The wild rose extract also has the added bonus of leaving a lasting scent of the flower on the nails

"Everything we do is about health and wellbeing," says Dabbs. "This introduction means we enter the colour sector for the first time... It's an area we hope to expand on in the near future."

Spa-kit.net keywords:
Margaret Dabbs ●



■ Dabbs' first colour range features 72 shades

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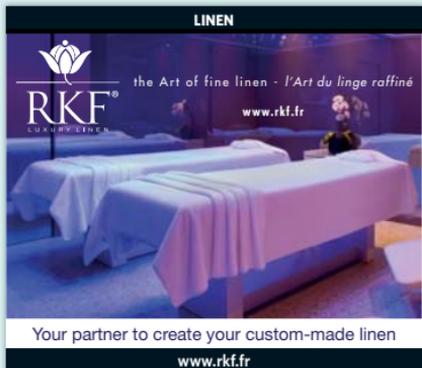
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TOUCHY SUBJECT

Scientists believe the illusion of soft skin could be key to why humans are motivated to build bonds through touch. Jane Kitchen reports

Some of us know about the power of touch and its mental and physical benefits from first-hand experience. Scientific studies have backed up these beliefs as well. Yet until recently, most research has focused on the benefits for the person receiving touch. But now a study* by University College London, UK, has highlighted the effect on the person actively touching others with some interesting findings.

The scientists found that participants consistently rated the skin of another person softer than their own, whether or not it really was. They suggest that this phenomenon may exist to ensure that humans are motivated to build social bonds through touch. "What's intriguing about the illusion is its specificity," says Antje Gentsch of UCL. "We found the illusion to be strongest when the stroking was applied intentionally and according to the optimal properties of the specialised system in the skin for receiving affective touch."

This system typically responds to slow, gentle stroking found in intimate



GORGAN ROBERTSON/SHUTTERSTOCK



Most research has focused on the benefits for the person receiving touch. But now a study has highlighted the effect on the person actively touching others



relationships and encodes the pleasure of touch, Gentsch explains.

"The illusion reveals a largely automatic and unconscious mechanism by which 'giving pleasure is receiving pleasure' in the touch domain," says lead researcher Aikaterini Fotopoulou.

Earlier studies show that softness and smoothness stimulate parts of the brain associated with emotion and reward. Therefore, the 'illusion' that other people are softer ensures that reaching out and touching another person comes as its own reward. The UCL team believe this rewarding illusion acts as a kind of social glue, bonding people to each other.

In the last issue of *Spa Business* (see SB16/2 p58), neuroscientist Dr Claudia

■ Skin feels softer when touch is delivered intentionally the study found

Aguirre also describes how gentle pressure – the kind we feel during a light massage – activates a different part of the brain to touch that is harder and quicker. This softer kind of touch reaches the brain at a much slower rate via slow-conducting fibres known c-tactile or CT fibres.

■ Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=k3w2e> ●



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*Source: Fotopoulou, A et al. Active Interpersonal Touch Gives Rise to the Social Softness Illusion. *Current Biology*, September 2015



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