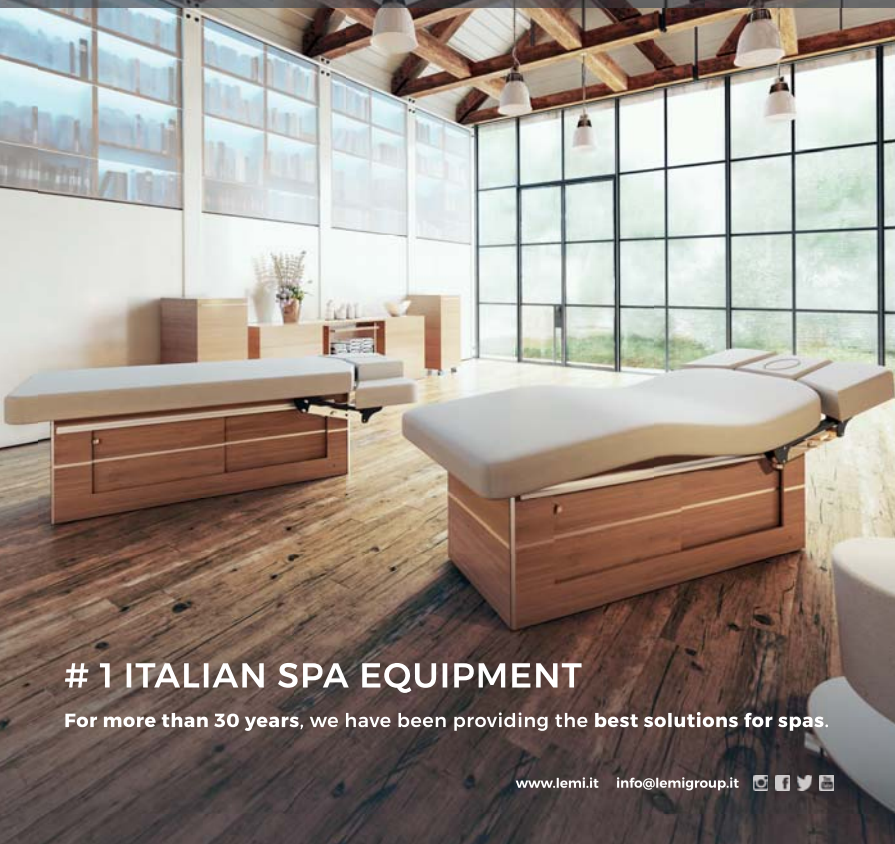


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Palazzo Fiuggi, Italy

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Adrian Zecha

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Where are the numbers?

Research just out gives some indication of COVID-19's impact on the spa industry in the US. But there's a lack of data to show what's happening within our sector globally

The International Spa Association recently released a sneak peek of its 'Big Five' statistics ahead of the publication of its full 2021 *US Spa Industry Study* findings next month (see p38).

Conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), the preliminary findings give the clearest picture yet of how COVID-19 has affected businesses in the US spa sector.

Some of the statistics confirm what many expected. There was a 36.4 per cent decrease in overall spa revenues, from US\$19.1bn at the end of 2019 to US\$12.1bn at the end of 2020. At the same time, the number of spa visits dropped by 35.1 per cent from 192 million in 2019 to 124 million at the end of last year.

There were some surprises too. The number of spa locations only fell by 3.9 per cent, meaning by the end of 2020, there were still 21,560 spas in the US, including those temporarily closed due to the pandemic. "Many people thought these numbers would fall off the cliff," says PwC's global research lead, Colin McIlheney, adding that it's "very encouraging" to see that so many businesses are still out there.

Another key finding was the marked difference between types of facilities, with day spas weathering the storm far better than resort and hotel spas. Average revenue fell by 46 per cent for resort/hotel spas compared to only 31 per cent for day spas. One in two resort/hotel spas reported a greater than 25 per cent decrease in staff, compared to one in five day spas.

These figures are valuable as they give operators a chance to take stock of how they measure up and an idea of how to adapt their businesses in the future.

However, the publication of the report highlights the lack of available industry numbers on a global scale. How



ISPA's 2021 study looks at spa revenue, visits, workforce and locations

“We want industry bodies worldwide to step up and gather and publish their numbers”

do these figures compare in terms of the impact COVID-19 has had on spa businesses in Asia, for example, where anecdotal evidence suggests businesses are bouncing back quicker than in other world regions? Where's the spa benchmarking data from industry associations and organisations in other international markets?

We want industry bodies worldwide to step up and gather and publish their numbers, so decision-makers can fully understand the impact of the pandemic on the global sector and plot successful ways forward. ●

Katie Barnes, editor @SpaBusinessKB

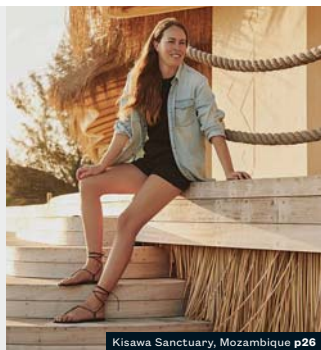
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spabusiness.com

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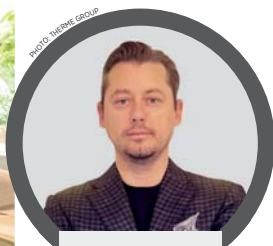


PHOTO: THERME GROUP

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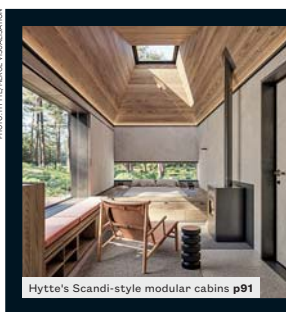
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spa people

6

If you love what you do, there's no need for retirement

Adrian Zecha
global hotelier

There's perhaps no one who's influenced the hospitality market in Asia as much as Adrian

Zecha. The Indonesian-born businessman has developed more than 100 luxury hotels around the world. He's been a key figure for brands such as Regent, one of the first high-end chains in Asia which was sold to Four Seasons and is now owned by IHG; and Rafael, which was acquired by Mandarin Oriental.

He's possibly most well known in the wellness arena as the founder of Aman resorts, the boutique resort chain which has always placed an emphasis on location and spa despite having smaller properties.

Zecha launched the iconic brand in Phuket in December 1987 and by the time he left the company in 2014, it had properties in 22 countries. "Amanpuri [the first property in Phuket] is 33 years old now," he says. "It's still relevant today and its success has been amazing."

Things went quiet for Zecha after Aman. He took a couple of years to take stock and think about his next move. Now 88



Zecha, now 88, has developed more than 100 luxury hotels around the world



The Yubune bathhouse is open to the public as well as Azumi guests

PHOTO: KAZUMI ITOHAKI © TONCHIRO SAKASHITA

years old, he'd be forgiven for not wanting to start anything new. But in a recent interview with the renowned hospitality management university Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne (see p14) he revealed that's certainly not the case, before sharing details about new projects and the secret to his success.

"I've never thought of retirement," he told interviewer Joshua Gan, EHL's regional director in the Asia Pacific. "If you're bored or unhappy, that's another matter. But if you're happy doing what you're doing, then there's no retirement."

Modern ryokan

Such is Zecha's reputation, that when he puts his name to something new it garners much interest. His latest brand, Azumi, was unveiled in March and has been created as a modern take on traditional Japanese ryokans - inns with hot springs.

"It's a long love story," Zecha tells EHL, detailing how he started out as a journalist before becoming a hotelier. "My first introduction to Japan came in 1956. I was sent by *Time Out* magazine to work in Tokyo... and I fell in love with the ryokan."

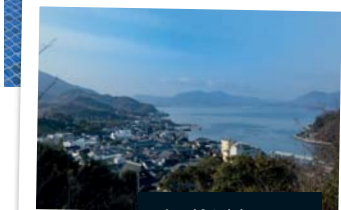
"A ryokan never has more than 20-30 rooms and it's always family

run. When things get too much, [the Japanese] go and spend a weekend in their favourite ryokan. It's for you to get away from everything else and you take many baths because of the hot springs."

Sixty years after his first visit he says there are still 500-600 ryokans across the country, but they're having a hard time "because the younger generations in Japan don't have the same lifestyle... but it's a fantastic experience and I want to preserve it."

Azumi is situated in Setoda, a fishing village on the small island of Ikuchijima, and has been co-founded with Japanese hospitality group Naru Developments. It's taken three years to sensitively restore the 140-year-old residential compound it's based in and across the road is the Yubune bathhouse which Naru has also transformed.

The main building offers a mix of contemporary architecture by Kyoto-based Shiro Miura, service, food, wellness and cultural programming to appeal to today's travellers. There are 18 suites and four duplexes but, unlike traditional inns where guests usually stay in their own rooms, it also features open and secluded public spaces for guests to relax in and enjoy.



Azumi Setoda has a more contemporary feel to appeal to younger travellers

PHOTO: KAZUMI ITOHAKI © TONCHIRO SAKASHITA



PHOTO: KAZUMI ITOHAKI © TONCHIRO SAKASHITA

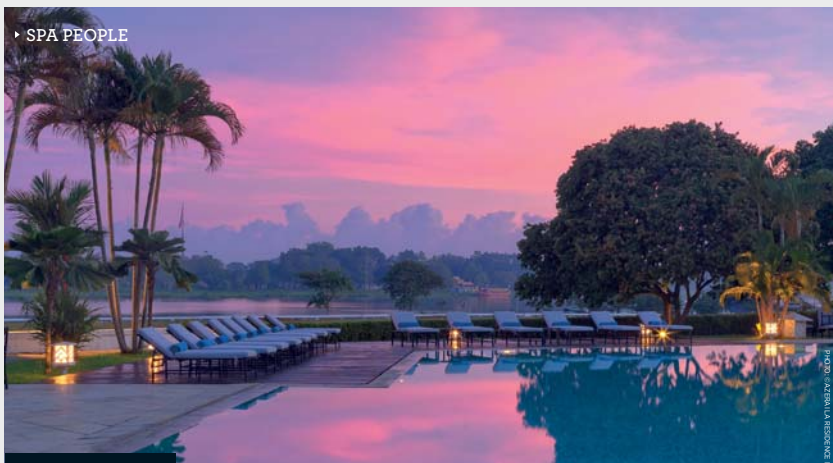
The ryokan is a fantastic experience and I want to preserve it



Yubune has 14 bathing rooms and in a gesture to the wider community of Setoda, the hot springs will serve as a public bathhouse. Guests will be invited to learn about and experience Japanese bathing culture, lemon and salt bathing and saunas.

Zecha says: "We're using the Azumi brand for this first one





Azerai's room rates start at around US\$200 a night

and hopefully, as with before, it will be the first of many."

Affordable luxury

Azumi Setoda launched at the same time as Zecha's third Azerai property, Azerai Ke Ga Bay in Vietnam. He first revealed the Azerai concept in 2017, three years after leaving Aman. "I didn't want to do something too quickly after Aman," he says. "I could have just continued something like it but with a different brand, but I didn't want people to compare... So I thought 'OK, let's do an affordable Aman'. I thought it would be interesting because it's a larger market."

The seeds were first sown six years earlier, he tells EHL, when a similar offering was trialled by GHM. "That was the Chedi in Bali," he says. "It turned out to be a fantastic success and then became an Alila, which was subsequently bought by Hyatt."

All Azerais are located in Vietnam so far, although there was also one in Laos which was taken over by Minor.

Azerai Can Tho debuted in southern Vietnam in early 2018, La Residence Hue in central Vietnam

I thought 'let's do an affordable Aman' and target a larger market



in 2019 and most recently, Azerai Ke Ga Bay in the east in March.

They range from 46-122 bedrooms/suites and all have sizeable spas with six to 10 treatment rooms on top of additional wellness facilities and locally inspired therapies.

The idea is to offer guests "simple elegance, refined design and discreet attentive service in places of unique beauty and cultural interest".

Rates start at around US\$220 (£179, £155) a night compared to US\$900 (£736, £637) at Aman's Vietnamese property Amanoi.

"Each of them is different because they relate to the local culture," Zecha says. "And also because all of them, except the first one, are based on existing buildings." To speed up the rollout Zecha says the future focus will be on refurbishments rather than building something from scratch. ►

About Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne

Founded in 1893, Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL) has more than 25,000 alumni worldwide and over 120 nationalities among its students. It was one of the world's first hospitality management schools, providing undergraduate and graduate programmes – including a Spa Management Major – at its campuses in Lausanne and Chur-Passugg, Switzerland, and in Singapore.

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Each Azerai picks up on the local culture to create a point of differentiation



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PHOTO: AZERBAIJA CANALING @AZERBAI



PHOTO: AZERBAIJA & SOURCE: THE SPA ZERBA

Up to 95 per cent of Azerai staff are sourced from the local population

"I don't have time to build brand new ones because I haven't got another 30 years in the business!"

Secrets to success?

For Zecha, there are several elements to consider for a successful hotel. "You have to be relevant to where it [the hotel] is," he explains. "You can do something totally different outside of the culture of the place, but I thought that would be wrong to do. Because I think people who come to stay want to experience the place and the culture that's there."

This is an ethos he's held since his journalism days. First starting out at New York-based *Time Out* magazine before launching his own title, *Asia Magazine*, to reintroduce the Asian culture to a new generation of Asians who'd studied at western universities. "Take a country like Thailand, which was never colonised," he explains. "If you were to say Beethoven or Shakespeare at the time, people would know who they were. But they didn't know anything about the music or literature of neighbouring countries like Burma."

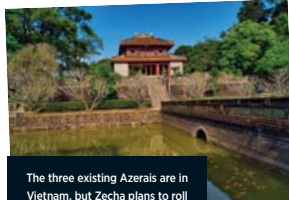
Asia Magazine ran for 39 years and was one of Rupert Murdoch's first Asian investments.

People won't just forget what made them happy in their leisure time

“

The regional knowledge and network Zecha accumulated, then led Marriott to headhunt him to grow its Regent brand internationally. This marked his foray into the hospitality arena. He became a land broker for the group and truly learned the ropes of the hotel business.

PHOTO: AZERBAIJA RESIDENCE HUE @AZERBAI



The three existing Azerais are in Vietnam, but Zecha plans to roll out the concept further afield

PHOTO: AZERBAIJA RESIDENCE HUE @AZERBAI



Zecha also clarifies that part of being relevant to where the hotel is located is hiring people from the local region. "We try to always have 90 to 95 per cent of the people who make it happen from the place. You have to have international hoteliers as well, of course, people who've been trained properly. But otherwise, we seldom go beyond the local population."

And it's the service element, he says, which gives a hotel its special touch. "It's not just about doing it correctly, it's about that unspoken word and the way in which it's done," he adds.

It will come back

When asked about the future of global hospitality, given the pandemic, Zecha is confident that there will be a rebound eventually.

"I hear too often the question, 'how do you cope with the new normal' and I'm always amused by that," he concludes. "Obviously, we can't do what we've been used to doing right now. But I don't believe we'll forget what made us happy in our leisure and travel time."

"It [business] will come back. People won't forget what they were doing only last year. They'll go back to what they were doing. I don't think it will change." ●



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In 2021 alone, 60 per cent of guests have already incorporated wellness treatments into their stays

Michala Chatel managing partner, Ultima Collection

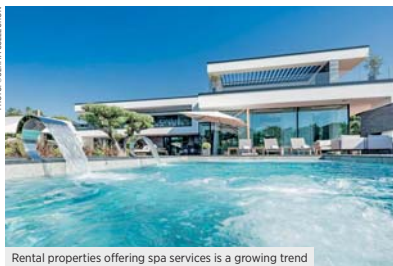
As the world steers itself through a COVID-19 landscape, people are placing a much higher value on guaranteed social distance, safety and minimised risk of infection during their hospitality and wellness experiences. As a result, private wellness offerings have become increasingly popular, particularly with ultra-high-net-worth individuals (UHNWI).

Ultima Collection's portfolio of European residences, chalets, villas and a hotel means it's well

placed to answer this demand, according to managing partner Michala Chatel. Each destination offers five-star amenities and service, including a spa, in the intimacy of a private residence and have recently added on-demand wellness experiences.

"Our approach to wellness and wellbeing is completely tailored to each guest and every Ultima spa is powered by a concierge team including on-call clinicians, aestheticians and therapists who create unique

PHOTO: ULTIMA COLLECTION



Rental properties offering spa services is a growing trend

Each spa is powered by a concierge team and on-call therapists



and bespoke treatments," explains Chatel, "no request is too big or small for them."

Spa Business spoke to Chatel to understand the logistics of offering wellness on-demand in this way.

What wellness services is Ultima providing?

Every Ultima spa offers a range of treatments and services, from cellular hydration and lifting treatments to aromatherapy massages and body wraps, all provided by Swiss Perfection.

We've also partnered with Switzerland-based Aesthetics Clinics to empower guests to identify their strengths and weaknesses through its DNA testing services. This helps us plan a roadmap of individually tailored treatments and services for optimal wellbeing.

What epitomises Ultima's wellness offering?

We know 80 per cent of UHNWIs are dedicating more of their time and money to wellbeing, so we recently created a holistic



PHOTO: ULTIMA COLLECTION

Chatel says Ultima has recently added on-demand wellness as well as a month-long package



The average length of stay at an Ultima property is 33 days

wellness retreat to cater to this demand: the Ultima Escape.

Available at all our properties, this self-care trip focuses on immunity, lifestyle and the environment and future healing and is designed to leave guests feeling rejuvenated over the course of a full month.

Guests can tend to their mind, gut and soul for a detoxifying stay, starting with a health check-up with a nutritionist and assessments with a personal trainer and masseuse.

Then, treatment plans are curated following Aesthetic Clinics' DNA analysis to help make positive, long-term changes and mitigate the risks of developing illnesses in the future.

Guests receive tailor-made immunity booster supplements informed by hair analysis, health check-ups by a licensed physician and four massages a week. They're also provided with butler service five-days-a-week, three personal training sessions a week, full access to on-site spa facilities and daily healthy breakfasts.

How much does it cost?

The Ultima Escape begins from CHF263,000 (US\$291,558, €239,715, £206,381) for one month for up to 10 people, including accommodation and a chef.

Additional services available on request include service staff for lunch and dinner, private driver

and car, extra facility sanitisation and private helicopter/jet flights, as well as yacht charters.

What inspired you to launch the Ultima Escape?

We knew we had to create something that answered the call of all those who are looking to maximise their exposure to wellbeing treatments and therapies.

The average length of stay at our properties is 33 days and we're continuing to witness a steep increase in the number of our long-stay guests.

With these factors in mind, we wanted to create a well-rounded experience that perfectly caters to these demands. Thus, the Ultima Escape was born to offer a combination of revitalisation and rejuvenation for guests who like to prioritise their health and wellness.

Can guests add more wellness treatments to the package?

Yes, they can personalise the package however they like. Massage treatments start at CHF197 (US\$221, €180, £156) for 50 minutes and Swiss Perfection's range of cellular facials are priced from CHF296 (US\$331, €270, £234) for 60 minutes.

How popular has wellness been with Ultima's guests following the pandemic?

In 2021 alone, we've already had over 60 per cent of guests



The main market is ultra high-net-worth individuals

Every Ultima Spa is a sanctuary for guests to retreat to in privacy

incorporate wellness treatments into their stays. DNA analysis in particular has been one of the most popular treatments as it can help inform every detail of their experience – even down to personalised menus.

In light of this uptake, we'll continue to focus on wellness as we expand. Our new destination in Courchevel, France will feature two world-class spas and wellness amenities. ●



Our planet needs a beauty brand that fundamentally changes how we consume

Stephanie Stahl CEO and co-founder, Ace of Air

Today's consumers have high expectations for brands to tackle sustainability head-on.

In early 2021, a new US beauty and wellness brand named Ace of Air raised the bar for the industry by launching with a fully circular shared packaging model which operates with a Buy the Product and Borrow the Packaging scheme.

Ace of Air is co-founded by former Revlon CMO, Stephanie Stahl; supermodel, Petra Nemcova; and founder of merchant banking firm, Three Ocean Partners, David Knowlton.

It launched with eight vegan and cruelty-free skincare and supplement products, priced between US\$35-US\$85 (£29-£71, £25-£61), in packaging capable of at least 100 uses made from steel, ceramic and Fairtrade rubber.

When purchasing, consumers pay a non-refundable US\$2 (£2, £1) fee to rent packaging on top of the products. They must then return their empty containers no later than six months after their order, so Ace of Air can clean, re-fill and

Consumers pay to rent packaging on top of the products they buy



re-use them for future orders, or incur a fee of US\$25 (£21, £18).

Products are also shipped in a reusable Boomerang Box – which adds a further US\$3 (£2, £2) to the bill – which must be returned in 30 days or they're charged US\$20 (£17, £14).

Ultimately, the company is on a mission to transform the beauty industry's response to the accelerating environmental crisis and encourage consumers to take responsibility for the full life of packaging.

"In 2017, we began creating an uplifting, inclusive brand designed to have a positive impact on people and our planet," comments Stahl, Ace of Air CEO and co-founder. "We did this because our planet needs a beauty and wellness brand that fundamentally changes what and how we consume."

The renting model provides potential inspiration for professional beauty and skincare

brands wishing to seriously integrate sustainability. And with major brands such as ESPA recently getting on board with product return and recycle schemes, it seems only a matter of time until these models become standard practice.

Such models allow brands not only to help consumers build awareness of responsible consumption but also helps to distinguish themselves in a saturated market where green-washing is rife.

In future, spa operators could also run similar product return and recycle schemes through their retail boutiques.

Ace of Air's model shares similarities with The Body Shop's original pioneering approach to sustainable beauty. Launched in 1976 by Dame Anita Roddick, the brand introduced one-off refillable sustainable packaging and ethically sourced ingredients. ●



Former Revlon CEO, Stephanie Stahl (left) and model Petra Nemcova (right)



PHOTOS: ACE OF AIR



The packaging is capable of at least 100 uses

PHOTO: ACE OF AIR

SPA TECHNOLOGY FOR THE NEW DECADE

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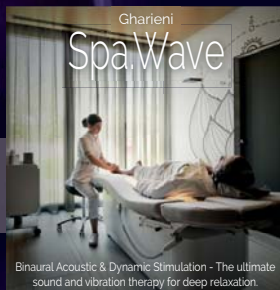
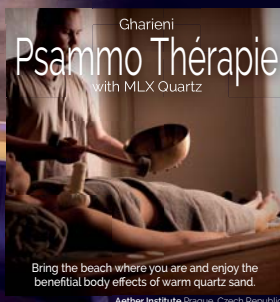
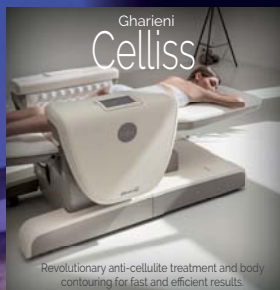
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Forte Village CEO backs new medi-wellness retreat



Those behind the new mineral medical spa include Lorenzo Giannuzzi (top); Thorsten Lipfert (middle); and David Della Morte Canosci (bottom)

Lorenzo Giannuzzi, CEO of Sardinia's lauded destination spa, Forte Village, has launched a medical wellness retreat in Fiumigi, Italy.

Set in an 8-hectare park which is renowned for its healing mineral waters, Palazzo Fiumigi Wellness Medical Retreat fuses holistic traditions, western medicine and nutrition.

Five personalised programmes are offered – Complete Life Rewind, Optimal Weight, Mindful Movement, Deep Detox and Immuno Boost – all of which incorporate Fiumigi's mineral water and a variety of spa treatments ranging from ayurveda to high-tech touchless therapies.

After a sensitive restoration, the existing 102-room hotel has reopened with a 6,000sq m wellness centre created by architects Mario Dal Molin and Claudia Manunta and equipped by the Gharleni Group.

Guests can access a wellness and spa area, medical spa and beauty clinic, offering 21 multi-functional treatment rooms, eight beauty cabins, one private spa suite and six medical rooms.

Industry figure Thorsten Lipfert is leading the facility during pre-opening, having worked alongside GOCO Hospitality in the early consultation stages.

Professor David Della Morte Canosci, Palazzo Fiumigi's medical and scientific director, says the resort "sets a new standard internationally for medical wellness retreats," adding that there are an array of medical wellness and fitness diagnostics and experiences.

In a nod to traditional Roman bathing, the spa is anchored by a 700sq m Roman bathing area alongside two hammams, a sauna, steamroom and an experience shower by Stenali.

Guests can also visit two thalasso pools – supplied by Unbescheiden – incorporating Fiumigi mineral water, a plunge pool and a host of fitness facilities.

Palazzo Fiumigi's concept is rounded out by a strong focus on nutrition underpinned by a specialist menu using nutrients to activate cellular pathways linked with anti-ageing, anti-inflammation and antioxidant processes.



ALL PHOTOS: TOSUN SAĞAL



The medical wellness resort is set in an 8-hectare park which is known for its healing mineral waters



NEW OPENING

Set back in a cliff,
the hotel faces out
over the iconic lake

PHOTO: PHOTOGRAPHIC ANGELI

Lake Garda spa hotel inspired by nature, Celtic mythology and minimalism

A five-star hotel and spa has opened in the Italian town of Limone sul Garda. Set back into a cliff face, the new destination gazes out across the iconic Lake Garda.

Opened in May, Eala is owned by the local Risatti family who've run accommodation around the lake for three generations. Its namesake and philosophy are inspired by Eala, a swan from Celtic mythology that interprets dreams. The aim is to transport guests to the retreat of their dreams.

The location was realised by architecture firm Studio Gesia and influenced by the surrounding landscape which is known for abundant lemon groves and stunning panoramas.

The studio has characterised the 67-room hotel and two-floor 1,500sq m spa with a palette of neutral tones and curved and enveloping lines, recalling the shapes of the lake, sun and moon.

Spa guests can explore a menu of cellular treatments by Team Dr Joseph alongside facials, scrubs, wraps and massages on Lemi beds, plus services for hair, nails and make-up.

Its core offering consists of eight rituals inspired by different Lake Garda towns, each harnessing fragrant natural ingredients, including bitter orange, lemon, mint leaves and lavender flowers.

Italian wellness consultancy and supplier Starpool helped animate the spa journey with a steam bath, ice fountain, experience showers, heated loungers, Kneipp pathways and two eye-catching saunas.

The first Finnish sauna offers views of the lake and is completed with deep dark wood reminiscent of local Alpine trees. Meanwhile, the second option is a Mediterranean sauna – offering a less intense thermal experience – which incorporates a refreshing citrus scent powered by local lemons.

In addition, guests can access a hydriopool, relaxation nest, Technogym workout space plus two indoor pools and an outdoor infinity pool.

The hotel also includes five spa suites equipped by Starpool, with open-plan bathrooms, steam baths and outdoor saunas.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF FALA

Eye-catching saunas have been supplied by Starpool

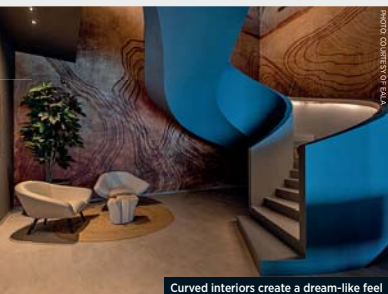


PHOTO: COURTESY OF FALA

Curved interiors create a dream-like feel



PHOTO: CESAR HERRERA, COURTESY OF STARPOOL

The 67-room hotel has a two-floor, 1,500sq m spa

Eco-resort and TCM spa realised by 3D-printing opens in Mozambique



Entrepreneur Nina Flohr is the driving force behind Kisawa

ALL PHOTOS: ISA YONG

Eco-wellness resort Kisawa Sanctuary is in its soft opening phase on Mozambique's subtropical island of Bengueria, complete with a Natural Wellness Centre inspired by Mozambican dwellings.

Kisawa has been brought to life using 3D sand-printing technology and is the brainchild of entrepreneur Nina Flohr – the daughter of Thomas Flohr, Swiss billionaire and founder of private aviation company VistaJet. The method was used wherever possible to replace less sustainable construction practices, including during the inception of the Natural Wellness Centre.

Located amongst dunes, the wellness centre will open next month and offer rituals rooted in the five natural elements, traditional Chinese medicine and ayurveda. Guests will be offered individual treatments or personalised wellbeing programmes, in collaboration with their private chef and the broader Kisawa team.

Rituals including massage, reiki, meditation, a selection of yoga disciplines, breathwork, cleanses and energetic healing to help guests rebalance.

Additional facilities will include a Japanese lyashi Dome sauna and a modern gym.

Kisawa offers a combination of 12 one, two and three-bed bungalow residences, positioned within a 300 hectare stretch of forest, beach and sand dunes. In her role as creative director, Flohr focused on authentic storytelling.

"My mission for Kisawa is to create a level of hospitality and design that, to my knowledge, does not exist today, a place that inspires feelings of freedom and luxury born from nature, space and true privacy," she comments.

3D sand-printing technology has been used where possible to replace less sustainable construction practices



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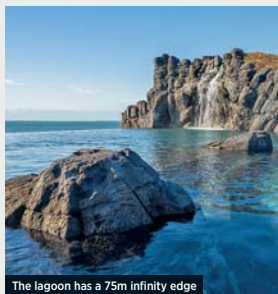
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NEW OPENING



PHOTO: PURSUIT

The new retreat is a competitor to the world-famous Blue Lagoon



The lagoon has a 75m infinity edge

PHOTO: PURSUIT



PHOTO: PURSUIT

Iceland's Sky Lagoon inspired by native bathing culture

Attractions and hospitality brand Pursuit has launched Sky Lagoon, a relaxing and restorative geothermal retreat just outside of Reykjavik, situated against the striking backdrop of the North Atlantic Ocean.

The new retreat is a competitor to the world-famous Blue Lagoon, which is located a 10-minute drive away.

Features of the geothermal Sky Lagoon include an ocean-side 75m infinity edge showcasing expansive sea and sky views and a sauna boasting Iceland's largest window. The destination's overall design draws inspiration from the breathtaking and



David Barry,
president of Pursuit

cinematic landscapes of Iceland with layers of grey-blues, deep greens and whites.

Textures like precious metals and wood create an infusion of warmth.

Sky Lagoon offers guests a deeply relaxing and restorative seven-step experience, The Ritual, developed from Icelandic traditions of combining warm and cold waters, warm steam, dry heat and fresh air.

"The need to re-energise, relax and restore is integral to both our physical and mental wellbeing and we're thrilled to introduce guests to the Sky Lagoon experience," says David Barry, president of Pursuit.

PHOTO: PURSUIT

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One&Only debuts in Europe with Chenot Espace

One&Only has unveiled its first European resort in Montenegro, nestled among a mountain landscape with panoramic ocean views.

One&Only Portonovi is the brand's first location offering a Chenot Espace facility, following an exclusive global partnership with the leading wellness brand.

Spread across 4,000sq m with 28 treatment rooms, the facility is geared to offer a transformative journey of resetting the body based on the renowned Chenot Method which focuses on Chinese healing (energy flow), detoxing and nutrition.

The Chenot Method was developed more than 50 years ago by wellness icon Henri Chenot who sadly passed away in December.

Guests are offered tailored programmes to positively improve performance at cellular and emotional levels, through tailored nutritional menus, fitness schedules, spa treatments and stress-relieving activities.

Diagnostics and treatments fall under six departments; Medical, Human Performance, Medical



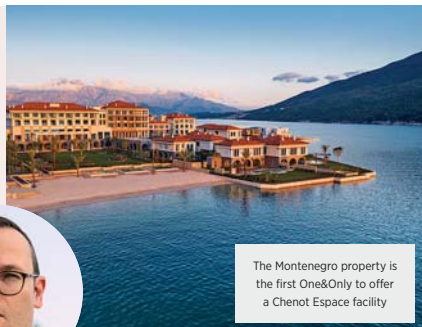
Philippe Zuber

Aesthetic, Aesthetics, Hydro-therapy and Sport & Fitness. And the spa offers an array of approaches, ranging from tailored menus, fitness schedules and colonic irrigation to acupuncture, ozone therapy and IV nutrition.

"We pride ourselves in delivering extraordinary guest experiences and now our guests have access to an exclusive, immersive and distinct experience that will nurture optimum personal results and extend far beyond the spa," says Philippe Zuber, CEO of Kerzner International, the parent company of One&Only.

Turkey-based international spa design and build company Promet was selected as spa and pool contractor by One&Only and has helped bring the destination to life.

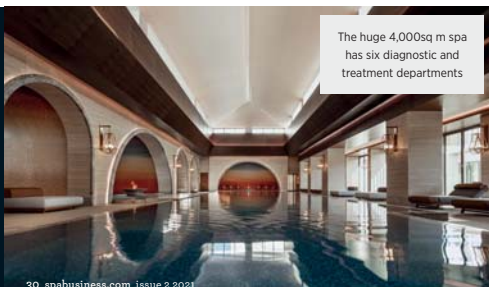
Thermal facilities include an oriental hammam, hydrotherapy and cryotherapy facilities, a sauna, steamroom and an indoor pool, alongside relaxation areas.



The Montenegro property is the first One&Only to offer a Chenot Espace facility



Cryotherapy is one of the many modalities



The huge 4,000sq m spa has six diagnostic and treatment departments



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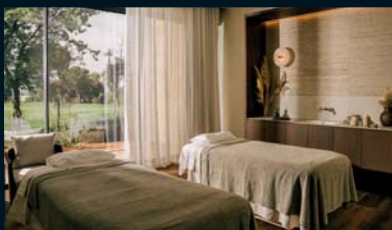
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NEW OPENING



Spa therapies are offered alongside movement and recovery facilities



PGA Catalunya's €5m wellness centre treats guests as elite athletes



Project consultant Greg Payne

A new Wellness Centre at the PGA Catalunya golf resort in Girona, Spain, has opened its doors following a €5m (US\$5.9m, £4.3m) investment.

Set in 540 hectares of Mediterranean forest, the destination offers a holistic retreat integrating physical and mental health into a space that nurtures fulfilment through golf, leisure and low-density living.

Industry figure Greg Payne has been instrumental in supporting the project's inception and has overseen the concept-planning, financial, design and pre-opening phases of the 1,000sq m facility. He says it "showcases a new integrated approach to spas for the hospitality industry."

Payne says the vision is to develop an offering that moves beyond spa and treats guests as elite athletes using the

latest technology and integrating therapies with nutrition, movement and recovery facilities. At the same time, the idea is to fuse this with spas' traditional high service and not switch off leisure guests looking for a relaxing treatment.

Located at the heart of the resort, the Wellness Centre was crafted by Lagula Arquitectes and provides traditional spa therapies alongside medi-wellness services such as Mecotec cryotherapy chambers, photobiomodulation, hyperbaric oxygen chambers and IV infusions.

Nutritional programmes are also offered as well as detox, immunity and anti-ageing programmes.

The centre features eight treatment rooms and suppliers include Oakworks, Aromatherapy Associates and Biologique Recherche.

PHOTO: PGA CATALUNYA RESORT

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Amazon launches first salon with augmented reality technology

Tech giant Amazon has expanded its presence in the world of beauty and opened its first bricks and mortar hairdressers – named Amazon Salon – in London's lively Spitalfields Market.

Spread across two floors, the 1,500sq m location offers hairdressing services provided by Elena Lavagni, owner of independent London salon Neville Hair & Beauty, and a team of stylists.

The new destination is also fitted out with exciting augmented reality technology that enables clients to experiment and see what they'd look like with new colours before treatments.

In addition, guests can experience point-and-learn technology in the retail area and explore Amazon's professional haircare products.

This system involves customers pointing at the product they're



Amazon has no plans to expand the concept yet

interested in on a display shelf and then having all the relevant information, brand videos and educational content pulled up automatically on a digital display screen in front of them.

If guests subsequently decide to buy the product, they can scan its QR code with their phone and immediately be taken to its individual Amazon web page and order directly online.

"We've designed this salon for customers to come and experience

"We want customers to experience some of the best technology and haircare products in the industry" some of the best technology, haircare products and stylists in the industry," commented John Boumphrey, Amazon's UK country manager.

"We want this unique venue to bring us one step closer to customers and it'll be a place where we can collaborate with the industry and test new technologies."

More: <http://lei.sr/G6X5m>

Biophilic forest bathing suite encourages calm

Glasgow's iconic Kimpton Blythswood Square has created a multi-sensory hotel suite combining biophilia with CBD rituals, meditation and sound therapy.

To realise concept, the hotel partnered with Scottish CBD skincare brand La Rue Verte, horticulturalists Benholm and DJ Brian D'Souza.

The La Chambre Verte suite is designed for the growing audience of wellness tourists seeking proximity to nature and alternative therapies on their travels to enhance wellbeing.

Within the room, guests are welcomed to a retreat



Biophilic design offers physical and mental health benefits

curated by La Rue Verte, including a host of its 100 per cent pure hemp products such as a hemp yoga mat, CBD-infused cocktails and CBD bathing amenities.

Benholm has brought the room alive with a variety of lush plants, including cascading trailing ivies, deep green cheese plant leaves and dense palm fronds.

In addition, guests can enhance their experience with a bespoke nature-based immersive soundscape within the room created by Open Ear Music.

Tracks combine field recordings of birdsong with sound therapy techniques and a selection of D'Souza's relaxing musical compositions.

More: <http://lei.sr/M6U9q>

Celebrity Cruises partners with Gwyneth Paltrow for exclusive Goop wellness concept

Gwyneth Paltrow, actress, entrepreneur and founder of lifestyle brand Goop, has been appointed wellbeing advisor for cruise operator Celebrity Cruises.



Gwyneth Paltrow

In her new role, Paltrow has designed a wellness event concept named Goop at Sea for the company's new luxury liner *Celebrity Beyond*, complete with a spa designed by well known British designer Kelly Hoppen.

The event will feature a live Q+A with Paltrow and Goop's chief content officer Elise Loeppen, mental health workshops, group workouts and spirituality sessions.

Once *Celebrity Apex* debuts in April 2022, guests can also expect added Goop-themed extras and amenities to complement their cruise along the way.

More: <http://lei.sr/5b5r8>



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/WASSFOOD

Metung Hot Springs will be built in a phased approach

Peninsula Hot Springs to open a second geothermal bathing oasis in southern Australia

Australian hot springs operator Peninsula Hot Springs (PHS) has announced plans to open a new destination in the lakeside town of Metung, in southern Australia.

PHS' founder and creative director Charles Davidson has partnered with local tourism operators Adrian and Rachel Bromage to realise Metung Hot Springs.

Metung used to be a major hot springs attraction famed for its mineral-rich geothermal water, but closed to the public in 1992.

The new multifaceted facility will feature a glamping village, thermal pools, sauna, plunge pools, dome day lounges and walking trails. There will also be a hot springs bathing facility, day spa, thermal bathing facilities and relaxation areas added to the existing King Cove Golf Club, creating Australia's first hot springs golf course.

In addition, Metung Hot Springs will include a bathing valley, hotel, wellness centre and marina with pools and saunas with direct views over Lake King.

More: <http://lei.sr/v0U4R>



Charles Davidson

PHOTO: PENINSULA HOT SPRINGS



PHOTO: VES SODOL

The ocean-fronted retreat is famed for its spa

Cecilia Hercik named Sea Island's new spa and wellness director

The Spa at Sea Island in Georgia, US, is under new leadership, with Cecilia Hercik who has been appointed as the new spa and wellness director.

Hercik explained that her new position involves bringing the most innovative spa and wellness treatments to the 65,000sq ft spa and fitness facility, while incorporating the unique aspects of the host culture and island community in an authentic and respectful manner.

"The energy of this magical place makes Sea Island an ideal place for living in the moment and reconnecting with nature," she said.

"I'm privileged to join a masterful spa team that has

an incredible reputation and impressive achievements."

Hercik's career in the spa industry has spanned 25 years and included corporate spa roles at Miraval, Ritz-Carlton, Four Seasons, Aveda-Neill and WTS International.

In 2013, Hercik drew on her breadth of international and national experience and launched her own spa and wellness consultancy called C Spa Consulting.

More: <http://lei.sr/G6g4Q>



Cecilia Hercik

Sha debuts new programme to support Long-COVID recovery

PHOTO: SHA WELLNESS CLINIC



The package starts at €2,600 for seven days

Sha Wellness Clinic's latest programme targets those suffering with long-term symptoms of COVID-19 – a syndrome clinically referred to as Long-COVID.

The retreat at Sha's flagship site in Spain is designed to treat persistent symptoms and help guests return to full health.

As the virus affects everyone differently, the package takes an integrated approach and is coordinated by multiple specialists.

Participants pay a baseline fee of €2,600 (US\$3,141, £2,257) for seven days, which includes an initial health assessment by an internal medicine specialist and diagnostic testing to determine biological damage caused by COVID-19.

Guests also receive nutritional profiling and support, free access to Sha's activity schedule and a moxibustion session or Chinese medicine consultation and acupuncture.

Following the initial assessment, the medical team prescribes guests with a tailored treatment package – for an additional fee – which best addresses their individual long-term effects.

These include: thrombosis, urological issues, cognitive impairment, heart disorders, long-term psychological effects, immune deficiencies, respiratory problems and musculoskeletal issues.

More: <http://lei.sr/20D5r>

DIARY DATES

21-23 June 2021

World Spa and Wellness Asia Online
Online

Virtual exhibition and conference for Asia's hotel and spa community
The theme is Time to Rebuild.
<https://worldspaanline>

22 June 2021

World Bathing Day
Worldwide

International celebration of thermal bathing which encourages hot springs owners to educate the public about the benefits and traditions of thermal bathing.
www.worldbathingday.org

1-4 July 2021

Rimini Wellness

Expo Centre & Riviera di Rimini, Italy
Wellness event devoted to fitness, wellbeing, business, sport, physical culture and healthy eating.
www.riminiwellness.com

25-26 July 2021

Les Nouvelles Esthetiques Spa Conference 2021

The Houghton Hotel, Johannesburg, South Africa
A conference for spa managers, owners and wellness professionals in South Africa which focuses on building capacity, raising benchmarks and adding value to the spa industry.
www.lesnouvelles.co.za

2-3 August 2021

Spa Life International (UK)

The Woodlands Conference Centre, Wyboston, UK
An in-person spa event offering networking opportunities, dedicated meetings, product innovations and management education over the two days.
www.spa-life.co.uk

9-13 September 2021

Cosmoprof Worldwide Bologna Fair District, Bologna, Italy
Organisers of one of the world's biggest beauty trade fairs, with 10,000+ exhibitors, are aiming for an in-person event in September.
www.cosmoprof.com



A 3,000sq m spa will be the centrepiece

E77 to deliver €40m thermal wellbeing oasis nestled in Lithuanian forest

Spa, hotel and wellness consultancy The E77 Company is realising a thermal spa resort and hotel among a historic pine forest in Lithuania's coastal region of Klaipėda, scheduled to open between 2023-4.

The centrepiece of the 168-room resort in Giruliai will be a 3,000sq m spa complete with 25-30 treatment rooms and 1,700sq m of indoor and outdoor thermal pools.

The pools will be filled with local geothermal mineral water extracted from 1km underground.

After a €40m (US\$48.7m, £34.4m) investment, the resort is set to become an oasis of natural wellbeing which immerses

guests in lush green forest and invigorating sea air, offering a retreat from busy life.

"The opportunity to enjoy exceptional service, local history, nature and a distinctive thermal wellbeing offering will create a unique spa and wellbeing experience," explained Egle Rukšėnaitė, E77 owner and founder.

E77 is working alongside project owner and developer Releven to create the destination, as well as Lithuanian architecture studio Arches and professor of architecture Dr Edgaras Neniskis to sensitively integrate the resort within the forest habitat.

More: <http://lei.sr/lbw9D>



Egle Rukšėnaitė

The 61-key resort will be located in Ajman, UAE



Premedion to open integrative health and wellbeing retreat in Middle Eastern wildlife oasis

In August 2021, an authentic Middle Eastern retreat named Zoya Wellbeing & Health Resort Zoya at Al Zorah will open in Ajman, UAE, developed and operated by Premedion; an international spa consultancy and management company.

The vast 61-key destination will be dedicated to intensive wellbeing retreats and packages and be nestled in a naturally protected zone surrounded by wildlife, beaches and lush mangrove forests.

Zoya will harness medicine and holistic wellness to create customised wellbeing journeys with a specific focus on detoxing, therapeutic fasting,

“Zoya will invigorate the mind, body and soul”

Dr Yasser Moshref

prevention, aesthetics and anti-ageing and physical rehabilitation.

Packages will all include a minimum five-night stay and blend wellness treatments, physiotherapy, aesthetic medicine, diagnostic testing and exercise.

"Zoya Wellbeing is being designed to create a unique destination that protects, nourishes and invigorates the mind, body and soul," explained Dr Yasser Moshref, Premedion CEO.

More: <http://lei.sr/P6p0U>





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Total revenue dropped by US\$7bn, but revenue per visit only decreased by 2 per cent

Industry indicator

ISPA's 2021 study gives the clearest picture yet of how COVID-19 has affected the US spa sector

Spas in the US experienced a US\$7bn drop in total revenue in 2020, decreasing by 34 per cent from US\$19.1bn at the end of 2019 to US\$12.1bn.

This was one of the 'Big Five' stats revealed as a sneak preview to *ISPA's 2021 US Spa Industry Study* at its Stronger Together Summit in May.

Conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), the report outlines overall revenue, number of spa visits, number of spas, revenue per visit and total employees for the US spa industry in 2020.

"These statistics provide the clearest picture yet of the pandemic's impact in the spa sector," says Lynne McNees, ISPA president. "We trust these figures, along with the full report coming later this year, will provide the industry at large with meaningful insights they can use to aid their recovery."

Day spas fared better

The Big Five results (see table on p39) indicate that resort and hotel spas have been harder hit than days spas with average revenue falling 46 per cent and 31 per cent respectively.

Spa visits dropped from 192 million in 2019 to 124 million in 2020, while average revenue per visit shifted slightly from US\$99.5 to US\$97.5.

In addition, as of December 2020, 21,560 spa businesses were recorded, compared to 22,430 in December 2019. But these figures still include temporary closures due to lockdown.

PwC found that, as of January 2021, roughly 305,000 spa employees had returned to US spas, compared to the previous 384,000 in January 2020. Overall that's a drop of 20.6 per cent of the workforce but contractors were the hardest hit with 45.3 per cent of them still not back at work.



Findings were presented by PwC's McIlheney (above) and Donaldson (below)



2021 ISPA US Spa Industry Study Big Five Statistics

	2019 (Year End)	2020 (Year End)	% Change
REVENUE	\$19.1 billion	\$12.1 billion	-36.4%
SPA VISITS	192 million	124 million	-35.1%
LOCATIONS	22,430	21,560*	-3.9%
REVENUE PER VISIT	\$99.5	\$97.5	-2.0%
	2020 (Jan)	2021 (Jan)	
TOTAL EMPLOYEES	383,700	304,800	-20.6%
FULL-TIME	177,100	140,600	-20.6%
PART-TIME	178,800	149,000	-16.7%
CONTRACT	27,800	15,200	-45.3%

*Count of spas includes spas that were temporarily closed at the end of the calendar year 2020

PHOTO: NIKOLAI GAVRILOV/SHUTTERSTOCK



Demand will be driven by a new, even more diverse base of guests

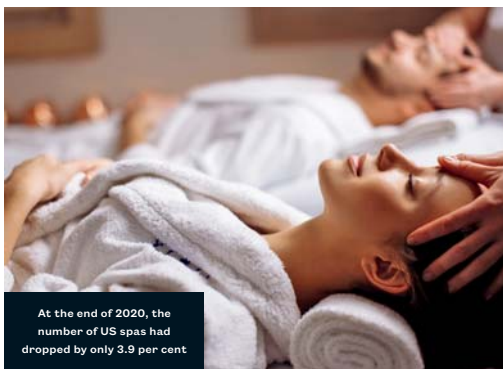


PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/OLIVIERO TOSCANI

Again, data showed that day spas fared better in these workforce metrics by a fairly sizeable margin. One in two resort/hotel spas (51 per cent) reported a greater than 25 per cent decrease in staff, compared to one in five day spas (23 per cent).

McNeese remarks: "The time line for a full recovery is uncertain, but we're confident that there's considerable demand for spa experiences and that as pandemic-related restrictions continue to lift, spas will make strong gains."

Grounds for optimism

Russel Donaldson, manager at PwC Research, presented the Big Five stats at the summit alongside his colleague Colin McIlheney, PwC global research leader.

The duo report that although numbers reflect the impact of the pandemic, things look hopeful for the industry. McIlheney says: "It's clear there's pent-up demand to get out to spas. There are definitely grounds for optimism for the later quarters of this year and particularly for 2022."

He adds that it's important that spas widen their customer database for a quicker recovery. "Personally, I could see demand rolling on, not just driven by old existing customers but being driven by a new even more diverse base of guests."

Standout figures

For Donaldson, the most intriguing finding is "the fragmentation between different parts of the

industry and the outcomes for day spas versus resorts/hotel spas".

McIlheney feels the location metrics were the most remarkable. "With regards to locations, there were many people who thought numbers would fall off a cliff," he says, "but the fact that there are still so many spas – over 20,000 – to choose from is very encouraging."

"In contrast, the drops in revenue and visits were expected and I anticipated they'd be in and around the mark they were."

The *US Spa Industry Study* has been published by ISPA since 1999 and in the latest edition it surveyed over 2,050 day, destination and medical spas.

The association is set to release its full findings in July. ●

At your service

We uncover the latest spa and wellness treatments, therapies, retreats and concepts from around the world

Art and sauna bathing collide at mesmerising Tokyo art exhibition

Global art collective teamLab has combined art and sauna to offer an immersive exhibition called teamLab & TikTok, teamLab Reconnect: Art with Rinkan Sauna Roppongi.

The dynamic and interactive sensory exhibition in Tokyo invites guests to view mesmerising artworks while in a meditative state called a 'sauna trance', brought on by contrasting bathing cycles.

According to Yasutaka Kato, professor of Keio University School of Medicine and representative director of the Japan Association of Sauna, sauna trance is a unique neurological state caused by the transition of dominance from the sympathetic nervous

📍 Roppongi, Tokyo, Japan

🕒 100 minutes

💰 Tickets start at JPY4,800 (US\$44, £37, £32)

system (SNS) to the parasympathetic nervous system. This change results in an invigorating trance state where people feel the effects of adrenaline, noradrenaline and endorphins released in the bloodstream, as well as increases in oxytocin and serotonin.

The collective wants visitors to give in to this state and let themselves relax and expand their sensory awareness to experience artwork in a deeply immersive way. Sauna trance "sharpens the senses, clears the mind

The mesmerising artworks are enhanced by a meditative state called a 'sauna trance' which is brought on by contrasting hot and cold bathing experiences

PHOTO: TEAM LAB RECONNECT: ROPPONGI, TOKYO © TEAM LAB



PHOTO: TEAM LAB RECONNECT: ROPPONGI, TOKYO © TEAM LAB

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and allows the beauty of the surrounding world to come into focus," says teamLab.

The exhibition is a continuous flowing experience composed of a sauna area, cold bathing area and an art submersion area, where visitors can rest and view interactive art installations.

Exhibition guests are required to wear a bathing suit and begin the experience by spending five to 10 minutes in one of seven unique saunas supplied by Metos, each with varying levels of heat and humidity, scent, light, sound and music.

Next, visitors travel to the cold shower area, complete with two different art installations, to awaken and invigorate the senses.

Guests then dry off, rehydrate and are invited to rest in one of three art submersion areas with works based on teamLab's new Supernature Phenomena project that focuses on occurrences that transcend the laws of nature.

Highlights include an installation named *Levitation - Flattening Red and Blue & Blurred Violet*, consisting of a large glowing sphere levitating between the floor and ceiling. Once touched, the sphere falls to

PHOTO: TEAM LAB LEVITATION - FLATTENING RED AND BLUE & BLURRED VIOLET // TEAM LAB



the ground and rolls away, but if there's no external interference, it will slowly rise into the air again, as though restoring itself to its original state. Visitors are advised to repeat this cycle a maximum of three times.

"By taking alternating hot and cold baths, visitors open their minds, experience an ever-expanding physical sensation and become one with the art," explains teamLab. ▶

Some art installations are used to awaken and invigorate the senses while others, such as *Levitation* (above), focus on occurrences which transcend the laws of nature

MENU ENGINEERING

📍 Multiple Banyan Tree properties

🕒 Two day minimum

💰 US\$500 (€414, £360) a night

Banyan Tree rolls out Wellbeing Sanctuary globally

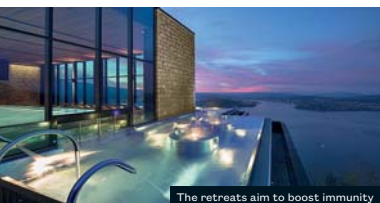
Banyan Tree is growing its flexible and customisable wellness concept – Banyan Tree Wellbeing Sanctuaries

The package involves guests staying in a Wellbeing Sanctuary villa with a set rate allowing them access to 50 different types of wellness activities weekly, plus a daily massage.

The villas first launched at Banyan Tree Phuket in May 2018 and are now being rolled out across China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Thailand and Vietnam.

A Wellbeing Sanctuary stay includes accommodation, in-room amenities such as singing bowls for private practice, pre-sleep bath and body rituals, healthy meals, bodywork and spa therapy experience and a personalised, take-home wellbeing guide.

Guests in a Wellbeing Sanctuary can access 50 wellness activities for free



The retreats aim to boost immunity

Bürgenstock introduces COVID Bounce Back retreat

Bürgenstock Resort's new package helps guests sustain health through supporting immunity and lowering risk of viral infections.

The retreat begins with examinations to assess current health, including ultrasound, blood analysis, lung function tests, biometric scans, an electrocardiogram and skin analysis. Results inform the creation of tailored nutritional profiles.

In addition, IV infusions, pulmonary physiotherapy, functional movement screening and PT sessions feature to help strengthen guests' bodies.

📍 Bürgenstock Resort, Lake Lucerne, Switzerland

🕒 Seven days

💰 CHF8,000 (US\$8,610, €7,250, £6,220)

The package is rounded off by four massages and a 90-minute healthy cooking class.

To finish, staff conduct a final consultation to assess progress and recommend how guests can integrate new healthy lifestyle habits at home.

PHOTO: BÜRGENSTOCK HOTEL & RESORT



Crkonova's approach is to help the healers

Training focuses on therapist self-care

Martina Crkonova has tapped her 20 years' global experience as a therapist, spa manager and consultant to create an in-person training course to equip spa therapists with tools to physically, mentally and emotionally support and sustain themselves.

"In my opinion, there isn't adequate support for therapists even though self-care is as important to the success of a spa as the clients and business skills are," she says.

📍 Massage or Knot Wellness Clinic, Newquay, UK

🕒 Two days

💰 £190 (US\$264, €220)

The course will include vibrant discussions and activities focused on:

- Body mechanics and awareness
- Therapist injury prevention
- Avoiding burnout
- How to properly take care of hands, wrists and forearms
- Steps to integrate body, mind and spirit

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ALAN GENTILE



Strata launches medical wellness memberships

Strata Integrated Wellness Spa in Colorado has devised five scientifically-driven Wellness Concierge Medical Memberships to support guests' specific healthcare needs and accomplish personal health and wellness goals.

Created by Strata's team of over 30 board-certified doctors, nurses, therapists and wellness clinicians, memberships are founded upon patient-centric and proactive healthcare, each including integrative, immersive and innovative services and treatments.

Five targeted options are offered – Immunity, Cardiology, Lifestyle, Health or Premium VIP.

Throughout all programmes, members will be assigned to a lead Strata Med clinician.

The new memberships were recently recognised in ISPA's Innovation Awards. ▶

Strata Integrated Wellness Spa is located at the Garden of the God's Resort in Colorado

Targeted medical memberships include Immunity, Cardiology, Lifestyle, Health and Premium VIP



📍 Garden of the Gods Resort and Club, Colorado, USA

💰 Membership starts at US\$3,000 (€2,498, £2,166)



The team is made up of over 30 doctors, nurses and therapists

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Fermentation masterclasses in a country retreat

England's Summer Lodge Country House Hotel has launched a masterclass to inspire guests about fermentation and its health benefits.

Fermentation describes the transformative action of microorganisms on other molecules, a process humans have harnessed for 10,000 years to create and preserve food, such as kombucha and miso. Fermented foods are increasing in popularity as

📍 Summer Lodge Country House Hotel, Dorset, UK

🕒 60 minutes

💰 £50 (US\$69, €58)

growing evidence indicates they offer a host of nutritional and health benefits.

During the session, guests forage for seasonal produce in Summer Lodge's gardens and then use their pickings to make fermented cocktails while learning about the history of fermentation and its role in wellness.



Guests forage for ingredients in the gardens and then make fermented cocktails



The Farm has launched a pain management programme as well as a mental health retreat

📍 The Farm at San Benito, Batangas, Philippines

🕒 One, two or three nights

💰 PHP26,025 (US\$538, €447, £387) a night

Mental health retreat at The Farm

Filipino spa destination The Farm at San Benito has partnered with integrative medicine provider Living Life Well to launch a mental health retreat.

Mental Health Management identifies immediate health problems before offering psychotherapy sessions and water wellness treatments.

There's also a Pain Management programme which includes acupuncture, physiotherapy and myotherapy.

Both experiences include accommodation, fitness and nutritional assessments and daily meals.

The Well partners with Mayflower Inn

Modern wellness brand The Well is known for its flagship New York location offering integrated holistic health solutions and access to doctors and wellness practitioners.

And now it's taken the concept to Auberge's famous Mayflower Inn in Connecticut to offer an array of retreats and treatments – ranging from acupuncture and craniosacral therapy to energy healing, plus bespoke treatments from its SkinHealth programme in partnership with Biologique Recherche.

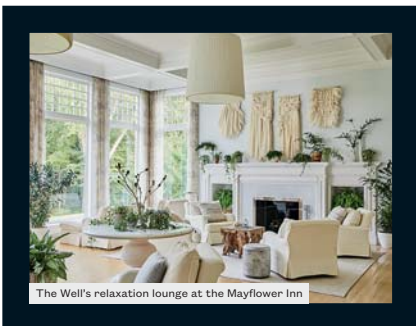
📍 Mayflower Inn & Spa, Connecticut, USA

🕒 One to 15 nights

💰 US\$105 (£87, €75)
– US\$1,000 (£825, €717)

Every guest is offered a Wellness Download from The Well's digital platform, to build customised treatment plans based on unique concerns and goals.

This means support extends beyond one's stay, allowing guests to continue programmes and classes and schedule visits with practitioners on-demand. ●



The Well's relaxation lounge at the Mayflower Inn

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Top Team **Capella**

Capella Hotel Group is forging ahead with development and also launching a new lifestyle brand and associated spa concept. Perfect timing, then, for the group's owning company and senior executives to speak with Neena Dhillon

For a modestly sized hotel collection, Capella has been packing a punch despite the challenges of a global pandemic. The group has pressed ahead with openings in Bangkok and Hanoi, bringing its portfolio to seven hotels. With two new destinations set to open in Sydney and the Maldives by 2023, the pipeline was further bolstered by signings in Kyoto, Osaka, Macau and Chiang Mai.

Capella caters to the luxury end of the leisure market. Storytelling is embedded into each hotel through top-flight design, unique sites chosen for heritage or nature, cultural immersion initiatives and wellness prioritised through Auriga Spa and resort programmes. Room inventory is limited in number but big on size (Shanghai's smallest is 111sq m).

These USPs are likely to stand it in good stead as affluent travellers are expected to be the first out of the gate as international restrictions lift.

With the group also launching an upscale lifestyle brand called Patina, *Spa Business* sits down with the top development and wellness team to find out more.

Nicholas Clayton

CEO, Capella Hotel Group

A luxury hospitality veteran whose personal investment in health ranges from daily yoga to dedicated wellness travel, Nicholas Clayton has no doubt about the value of a well-executed strategy in this arena. "Between 20-30 per cent of our bookings for Capella are driven by guests who travel to pursue wellness from spa therapies to fitness, meditation to breathwork or nutrition to beauty," he tells *Spa Business*. "They're interested in making optimal lifestyle choices beyond one-off treatments."

Originally developed by Sylvia Sepielli and Raison d'Etre, Auriga remains Capella's spa concept, rooted in the science of waxing and waning moon cycles with aligned treatment protocols of renewal and restoration. "We've been working diligently to evolve the concept in recognition that wellness extends beyond the physical being into spiritual and mental health," Clayton observes.

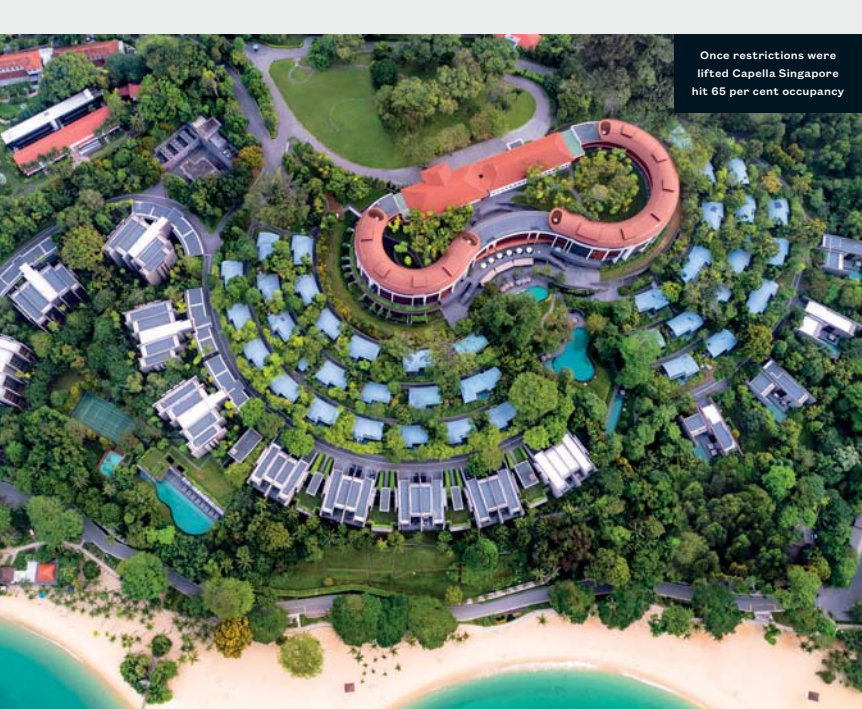
With signature moon rituals just one of the foundations, Auriga Spas are free to incorporate local treatments into each destination's menu, mixing western and eastern philosophies. Wellness is consciously weaved into resort programmes with daily activities such as meditation, yoga and sound healing, while transformative experiences include, at Capella Ubud for instance, chakra balancing with a traditional healer.

New bathing rituals, tea- and water-purification ceremonies are on the way while plans are afoot for resident astrologers to be installed at each destination.



PHOTO: CAPELLA HOTEL GROUP

Clayton recognises the value of wellness both personally and in business



Once restrictions were lifted Capella Singapore hit 65 per cent occupancy

PHOTO: CAPELLA HOTEL GROUP

For Clayton, there's complete sense in wellness resort programming – much of which is included in room rates – and traditional spa activities to be led by one person. "Wellness is so influential in terms of decision-making among our target clients that our investment in these activities is beneficial for overall business," he notes. "Look at our top-three performing spas in Sanya, Singapore and Shanghai last year; they actually achieved revenue increases of 30-40 per cent on similar periods in 2019 despite the pandemic."

The group's 2020 story is reflective of domestic market strength versus international travel. Capella's two Chinese resorts outperformed expectations, registering an average RevPAR increase of 25 per cent over 2019 while Capella Singapore hit occupancy of 65 per cent once the COVID circuit breaker was lifted in July. Bali's dependency on international business, in contrast, resulted in a RevPAR decrease of 60 per cent.

Travel turmoil withstanding, the group launched Bangkok and Hanoi, with owners Country Group Development and Sun Group respectively, with the aim of establishing the hotels' reputations domestically.

With exciting projects already under construction in the Maldives and central Sydney plus new Chinese

signings in the pipeline, Clayton explains that expansion in the Americas is now a greater priority: "Destinations such as Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Cabo San Lucas and the Caribbean are our initial focus."

In the meantime, all hands are on deck for the introduction of Patina Hotels & Resorts. Conceived as an ultra luxury lifestyle brand, Patina is a thoughtful sister to Capella, with the potential for both to be operated in close proximity.

Patina's wellness concept, Flow, "has a curious and adventurous character represented by the phrase 'state of mind, body and play'," says Clayton. "Health and lifestyle experts, known as 'resident hackers', programme wellness journeys. This could include treatments that improve cellular health, such as lymphatic drainage, or sessions incorporating

technologies like hyperbaric chambers, sound and light rooms. Fitness will have a playful element and there's a plant-based restaurant concept, named Roots."

Inaugural property Patina Maldives, Fari Islands is designed by Brazilian architect Marcio Kogan to play on ideas of duality, human connection and holistic health. Following the Maldives debut this month, Patina will open next in Bali, Japan and China over the next five to 10 years.

Between 20-30% of our bookings for Capella are driven by guests who travel to pursue wellness

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We've established Capella in Southeast Asia but are now setting our sights on other continents

Evan Kwee

Vice-chair, Capella Hotel Group

I believe in being in the thick of things," says Evan Kwee, the third generation of a Singaporean family known for prudent, long-term, real-estate development. Serving on Capella's board while holding the role of senior vice president of hotels at Pontiac Land Group – Capella's parent company – Kwee has had a hand in development, design and operations since guiding Capella Singapore came into existence shortly after his graduation. For more than a decade, he's overseen expansion of the brand in Asia: "We've established Capella in Southeast Asia but are now setting our sights on other continents."

Singapore's four Kwee brothers, whose net worth puts them into Forbes' top-50 wealthiest Asian families, control SG\$12bn (US\$9bn, €7.5bn, £6.5bn) worth of real estate. Back in 2006, the developer entered into a joint venture with Capella's founder Horst Schulze before fully acquiring the brand in 2017. As the son of Pontiac Land's chair Kwee Liong Tek, Evan Kwee is entrusted with making strategic equity investments.

To support the launch of Patina, Pontiac Land has committed to the development of a three-island complex in the Maldives, which welcomes both Patina and Ritz-Carlton

Evan Kwee's family owns Capella and is one of the wealthiest families in Asia

resorts this summer followed by Capella in 2023. As is the case with Capella Singapore and the forthcoming Sydney hotel, ownership positions are taken on occasions and a more traditional operator model on others. "The pride and effort we place into the opening and running of every property is equal, whether owned or managed," notes Kwee.

Under his leadership, Capella has become known for collaborating with star architects and designers including Bill Bensley, Norman Foster, André Fu, Jean-Michel Gathy and Kengo Kuma. He adds: "I collaborate with architects, engineers and clients to improve profitability through design excellence."

Kwee has overseen the expansion of the brand in Asia for over a decade





PROPERTY PORTFOLIO

CAPELLA

EXISTING HOTELS

- Bangkok, Thailand
(opened 2020)
- Düsseldorf, Germany
- Hanoi, Vietnam
(opened 2021)
- Sanya, China
- Shanghai, China
- Singapore
- Ubud, Bali

PIPELINE

- Kyoto, Japan
(next five-10 years)
- Macau, China
(next five-10 years)
- Maldives
(expected 2023)
- Osaka, Japan
(next five-10 years)
- Sydney, Australia
(expected 2022)

PATINA

PIPELINE

- Maldives
(expected June 2021)
- Bali, Indonesia
(next five-10 years)
- Osaka, Japan
(next five-10 years)
- Sanya, China
(next five-10 years)

Cassandra Forrest

Director of spa and wellness, Capella Singapore

From its Sentosa Island location, the flagship 1,114sq m Auriga Spa experienced an unexpected boom as soon as it was able to open last July after the national circuit breaker. "In the weeks before [re]opening, we were overwhelmed with enquiries," says Cassandra Forrest, who joined Capella in 2019 with close to 15 years' industry experience.

"The rainforest setting of Capella Singapore lends itself to staycations and our reputation for high standards and cleanliness attracted domestic guests from the city who were stressed, working long hours and wanting to prioritise wellbeing." This has translated into a spa capture rate of 10 per cent, up from 7 per cent pre-pandemic. Auriga also saw a 30 per cent increase in revenue for July-December 2020 versus the 2019 period.

Forrest believes that both the spa's reputation and compelling resort programme has attracted Singaporeans who remain at the resort longer because of thoughtful wellness and cultural activities.

"Whether candle-making, meditation or the art of yoga, you elevate the guest experience, promote longer stays and pique more interest in spa treatments," she says. "Last year, we added a self-care massage and DIY body scrub session so we could educate guests on how to maintain their wellbeing at home."

Having reached a therapist utilisation rate of 90 per cent, Forrest has hired nine new team members since last July. "Our number of guests reduced but as I was able to grow my team and arrange shifts to yield optimal booking times with staggered starts, we achieved more business than pre-COVID," she says. "We're setting up a call-centre to handle demand and streamline reservations while considering an online booking platform although this has to be balanced with our desire to build guest relationships by making personalised treatment recommendations."

Since the spa's reopening, there's been a growing demand for facials because of mask wearing-associated

There's been a growing demand for facials because of mask wearing-associated skin congestion

PHOTO: CAPELLA HOTEL GROUP



Forrest has achieved more business than pre-COVID due to yield management

skin congestion. Forrest has introduced Biologique Recherche facials, which augment existing Organic Pharmacy treatments, signature moon rituals (SG\$450, or US\$337, €281, £244, for 3 hours including body scrub, wrap, massage and facial) and locally inspired therapies. Two new immunity-boosting therapies tap into current health concerns

including the Organic Pharmacy Immune Recovery Antioxidant Facial with Himalayan salt inhalation (SG\$225, or US\$168, €141, £122, for 75 minutes).

Forrest also hopes to complete in-depth training this year for the introduction of chakra singing bowl therapy. "Once people feel fully safe and able to remove masks, I think they'll be longing even more intensely for the touch and contact provided by spa therapies," she notes. "If you're trusted as a spa, there's much to be optimistic about for the future as the pandemic has only served to highlight the importance of personal wellness."

► TOP TEAM



One of Capella's newest openings, the Bangkok site has a strong offering for the local market

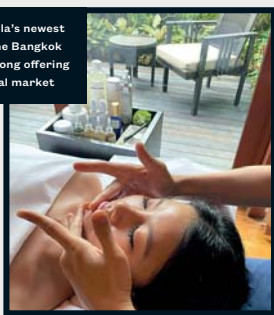


PHOTO: CAPELLA HOTEL GROUP



Our four-tier membership features inclusions such as generous spa credit, complimentary use of vitality pools and five hours of parking

Chinnapat Veerasomboonsin

Director of spa and wellness, Capella Bangkok

Opened towards the end of 2020, Auriga Wellness at Capella Bangkok has a strong offering for the domestic market. And this is the source of the majority of guests considering the strict quarantine rules for international tourists.

The 1,074sq m urban sanctuary boasts an open-air arrival courtyard with views to Chao Phraya River, wellness garden, thermal vitality area designed by GOCO Hospitality, movement studio and seven treatment rooms with interiors by Bangkok-based PIA.

"Our four-tier membership features inclusions such as generous spa credit, complimentary use of vitality pools and five hours of parking as we truly want to be open to the community," says newly appointed director Chinnapat Veerasomboonsin. "As we believe in an integrative wellness approach, activities such as guided meditation at a Buddhist temple can be arranged and we'll periodically be inviting visiting practitioners such as transformation coaches, naturopaths, energy healers and functional medicine specialists."

Since opening, 111SKIN's face therapies have been popular among both genders, with men favouring the 60-minute Cryotherapy Energy Signature Facial (which costs THB5,800, or US\$184, €153, £133). "Guests are drawn to the precision and medi-spa innovations of 111SKIN to protect against environmental damage and achieve efficient skin penetration," Veerasomboonsin reveals.

She's also hopeful that the THB15,000 (US\$477, €396, £345) meditative couples' retreat, which



Veerasomboonsin thinks authentic Thai therapies will appeal to global travellers when they return

encourages escape for three hours and disconnection from technology, will prove attractive – especially since it can be paired with a macrobiotic lunch.

Once global travellers return, the expectation is that authentic therapies such as tok sen, luk pra kob and nuad bo rarn will appeal to this profile because they're experiential and provide an insight into 2,500-year-old Thai healing arts. ●



Neena Dhillon is a spa, hotel and travel journalist
 ■ ndhillon@spabusiness.com

PHOTO: CAPELLA HOTEL GROUP



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Ensana has introduced
a Respiratory
Recovery Programme

PHOTO: © INMAN HEALTH SPA HOTELS & RESORTS

Ask an expert...

Treating Long COVID

Breathwork is growing in popularity in spas thanks to its mindfulness benefits. But could it have a role to play in treating Long COVID? Katie Barnes investigates

Since COVID-19 struck over a year ago, 175 million people globally have been infected with the coronavirus which attacks the respiratory system. At the start of the pandemic, it was believed that the majority of people who contracted the disease would experience only mild symptoms over a short period.

However, a preliminary study by Kings College in London*, estimates that up to one in 20 people are affected by Long COVID – meaning their symptoms aren't severe enough for them to be hospitalised but linger on for more than eight weeks. Meanwhile, one in 50 people experience the illness for longer than 12 weeks.

Long COVID is characterised by a range of symptoms, but broadly speaking the team at Kings College identified two main groups. The first group experienced problems across multiple parts of the body, including the brain, gut and heart. While the second group was dominated by respiratory issues such as shortness of breath, a cough, fatigue and headaches.

Spas are well placed to offer programmes for all Long COVID sufferers, but it's the people who have been affected by respiratory issues

that could potentially benefit the most given the industry's natural affiliation to breathwork.

As an extension of yoga and meditation, the practice of breathwork – focused on how we breathe and altering patterns of respiration – is something more spas are offering. It's seen as a great way to manage anxiety, reduce stress, promote clarity in our daily lives and strongly connects the body and mind.

But what if spas were to tap into this further to use breathwork to help treat Long COVID? What's the science behind it? What might work, or not? What else could it be combined with for effectiveness and is there any official training? We ask those in the know to shed some light.

**Source: Sudre, C et al. Attributes and predictors of Long-COVID: analysis of COVID cases and their symptoms collected by the COVID Symptoms Study App. MedRxiv. Oct 2020*



Katie Barnes is the editor of
Spa Business magazine
■ katiebarnes@leisuremedia.com

Patrick McKeown author, *Oxygen Advantage*; and *Breathing Cure*

Functional breathing is fundamental to health and wellness. Nose breathing affects the immune system through the uptake of nasal nitric oxide. Diaphragm breathing impacts stress management and disease via the autonomic nervous system. Light breathing normalises the body's chemistry by balancing carbon dioxide and oxygen and it improves sleep, making sure you get enough healing deep-stage rest.

If someone comes to a spa to feel better, and they're suffering the effects of Long COVID, it makes sense to offer breath coaching. As long as the methods and programmes are science-backed and taught by certified instructors, spas offer the perfect setting.



Low blood oxygen saturation is typical of COVID. This can be corrected using breathing exercises. And research shows it's common for people with Long COVID to lose their sense of identity. Breath awareness and conscious breathing provide a gentle but effective way to reconnect.

Certification [of providers] is crucial because there's so much

As long as methods are science-backed and taught by certified instructors, spas offer the perfect setting

that can be misunderstood or misapplied. Particularly in the case of Long COVID. But also for people with anxiety and panic disorder, incorrect teaching can do more harm than good.

The Oxygen Advantage® offers online and in-person instructor training courses. These cover the science and practice behind such breathing techniques.

Over the last 19 years, I've seen many people with asthma experience a 50 per cent reduction in symptoms within a fortnight

of attending my workshops. Restorative breathwork is progressive, but practitioners enjoy long-term benefits.

Breathing exercises are also incredibly portable. Once you've learned the techniques, you can practise anytime, anywhere – which is empowering for anyone who wants to take back control of their wellbeing.

■ Patrick McKeown is a world-renowned author and breathing practitioner and was clinically trained in the Buteyko Breathing Method in Russia. www.oxygenadvantage.com

Alex Tsuk founder, *Breathing Cold*

People go to spas because they want to be well and in the coming years we'll see them wanting to be educated about their health. They'll want to learn to breathe better and to understand how it can help all aspects of their life – from sleeping better and aiding digestion to releasing anxiety and stress and improving longevity and physical performance.

Breathwork, as it's usually offered, aims to help people access an altered state of consciousness to release and resolve trauma through open mouth, connected breathing. This is associated with upper chest, short and rapid breath.

But for people suffering from Long COVID, nose breathing, which focuses on deep, slow inhalations and exhalations through the nostrils and breath retention, is the key. Nose breathing, encourages



the release of nitric oxide (NO) to repair the nervous system. Oxygen with added NO is actually prescribed by doctors to treat COVID and its after effects. Humming is known to be particularly effective in increasing NO, it's a natural way to triple the production of it.

NO also dilates blood vessels, enabling more oxygen to be delivered throughout the body which ultimately improves lung capacity and boosts the immune system.

Humming naturally triples the production of nitric oxide which doctors add artificially to oxygen to treat COVID and Long COVID

Breathwork is fairly simple and you don't necessarily need a therapist or doctor to administer it. In my five-week online training course, practitioners cover all breathing techniques (not just my method) and potential risks so they can adjust their offering according to the needs of their clients.

The key to any successful programme is consistency and repetition and preferably clients take home the learnings and practise breathing every day.

Developing awareness of the breath is the most important part, along with mindset. My

method, for example, combines breathwork and ice-cold immersion. Cold exposure is an amazing tool as it activates the body's natural healing powers, but, most importantly it's not about embracing the cold, it's about embracing the discomfort and ultimately supporting your physiological and mental state of being. This enables people to focus on a positive attitude.

■ Alex Tsuk offers online breathing courses for practitioners and runs specialist workshops, including some for Marc Cohen's Extreme Wellness retreats. www.breathingcold.com

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Boris Bánovský medical director, Ensana

Long COVID includes a combination of different symptoms such as, but not limited to, fatigue, shortness of breath, brain fog, sleep disorders, intermittent fevers, gastrointestinal symptoms, anxiety and depression. The effects can persist for 12 weeks or more, so targeted and effective rehabilitation interventions for these patients are essential.

Ensana launched its Respiratory Recovery Programme in December for Long COVID sufferers. Its foundation is based on guest education and individual and group exercises aimed at practising proper breathing biomechanics – static and dynamic breathing gymnastics – with the ultimate goal of



increasing physical endurance, the mental condition and general wellness.

But it's not just breathwork alone, we have a holistic, multi-modality approach. The majority of our properties are based by, and use, natural healing resources such as thermal mineral water which has a positive effect on the musculoskeletal, respiratory, nervous, endocrine systems as well as immunity.

Our Respiratory Recovery Programme is now our second most popular package

Physical therapeutic methods are also key. Other treatments include inhalations, oxygen therapy, biolamp applications, hydrotherapy, classical massage, Kneipp walks, salt cave treatment and drinking cures.

An initial medical examination by a specialist in balneotherapy sets up the guest's individual therapeutic plan. All treatments are then delivered only by trained staff and exercises led by licensed physiotherapists.

The recommended minimum stay for the Respiratory Recover Programme is seven nights. This can be

either extended or repeated up to three times a year.

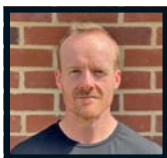
Since the pandemic, people are gradually becoming aware of the need to protect their own health and insurance companies are supporting this. We're certainly seeing increased interest in this programme – we've only been offering it for five months and it's already our second most popular package – and feedback from those who have completed it has been positive.

■ With 26 properties, Ensana is the largest health spa operator in Europe. www.ensanahotels.com

Aaron McCulloch managing director, Your Personal Training

This pandemic has damaged people's health. It's not simply a matter of reopening gyms and hoping people will come back. The same goes for spas and wellness facilities that offer fitness elements. Customers need to be eased back from COVID and a vast range of specific health issues, including fatigue, dizziness, cardiovascular and muscle deterioration, need to be addressed by experts with a bespoke approach – and breathing techniques are just one of the tools to help.

Your Personal Training is now upskilling personal trainers (PTs) to create Long COVID rehab hubs. At the Waterside Hotel and Leisure Club in north-west England, for example, we recently put 12 PTs through CAWS UK



training, which specialises in the rehabilitation of Long COVID. This includes cardio rehab, plotting and charting client's progress, as well as looking at the neurological and mental health impact.

One particular PT had success by using breathing methods, especially those linked with anxiety and relieving stress, on a client who still had respiratory issues five months after infection.

He used parasympathetic breathing, including

Customers need to be eased back from COVID and its vast range of specific health issues – and breathing techniques are just one of the tools to help

diaphragmatic breathing and controlled exhalation to help the acute onset symptoms of stress and anxiety. Secondly, he added pursed lip breathing, concentrating on deep inhalation, to expand his client's lung capacity and to increase oxygen proliferation through their alveoli, to help with chronic fatigue.

He also looked at the role of CO₂ through breath hold work and nasal breathing. This produces nitric oxide and slows the rate of breath during exercise, allowing the body to feed oxygen

more efficiently, which again decreases stress and fatigue.

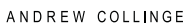
Using these methods, and other CAWS modalities, his client was able to work up to full one-to-one sessions again, allowing more rapid whole-body recovery.

Could spas offer similar areas of expertise? Absolutely, because it's part of a complete wellness programme. ●

■ Your Personal Training specialises in the provision and management of personal trainers. www.yourpersonaltraininguk.co.uk



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COOL NIGHT'S SLEEP

**High-performance cryo chamber specialist
Art of Cryo joins forces with leading bed manufacturer
Samina to launch cryo centres for sleep health**

Whole-body cryotherapy is on the rise in dedicated cryotherapy centres and beauty, fitness, health and wellness outlets. As the market matures,

customers are starting to realise the difference between showcased and real temperatures and are turning to high-performance solutions by Art of Cryo.

Samina, known for its outstanding orthopedic and bioenergetic-promoting beds made from natural materials, is one such customer and has recently collaborated with Art of Cryo to launch a specialist cryo centre for sleep called Samina Cool.

Eighty per cent of people have restless sleep and professor Gunther Amann-Jennson, a leading sleep psychologist, founded Samina 30 years ago to optimise people's sleep quality. He's now convinced that "whole-body cryotherapy is a megatrend that correlates strongly with better sleep" and has launched Samina Cool at the company's HQ in Vorarlberg, Austria.

The centre comprises Art of Cryo's single Vault V1 lux chamber and members of the public can sign up for just a single session or a range



**Philipp Amann
(left) and
Gunther Amann-
Jennson (right)**

6 *Whole-body cryotherapy is a megatrend that correlates strongly with better sleep*

of packages. Along the way, they get access to Samina's in-store sleep health experts, a sleep-inducing drink and can relax on Samina beds afterwards.

"It's been a great success and Samina Cool is fully booked," says Philipp Amann, Gunther's son and the company CEO. He adds that the centre expects to fit in even more sessions as they get up to speed as Art of Cryo's high-performance chamber is designed to deliver 'cold medicine' in a very simple and time-saving manner.

The company is already looking to introduce the Samina Cool concept to its retail stores in Frankfurt and Berlin. If successful, a wider rollout might be on the cards – Samina owns 20 stores

globally and has 250 distribution partners.

"Our mission is to transform bad sleepers into good sleepers and good sleepers into super sleepers," says Philipp. "To sleep in a Samina bed after a whole-body Art of Cryo session makes absolute sense and improves the effects."

He also sees cold medicine spreading in the areas of wellness, integrative medicine, rehabilitation, pain management and psychotherapy.

The natural remedy has more than 50 areas of application. It can be used to treat anything from sleep disorders, rheumatism, arthritis, pain syndromes and inflammation to anxiety, depression, psychosomatic disorders and numerous chronic health disorders. ●



Stelian Iacob

A pioneer in contemporary thermal wellbeing resorts, Therme Group already attracts 3.4 million visitors a year to its sites in Germany and Romania. And now the COO reveals exciting global expansion plans to *Spa Business*

PHOTO: THERME GROUP

“We redefine the concept of wellbeing with activities for children, adults and seniors – offering them both fun leisure time and relaxation,” says Stelian Iacob, COO and senior vice-president of the Therme Group, adding that the company

is leading the charge in making the traditional thermal facility model more relevant to today's consumers.

“Wellbeing has become a luxury for the privileged few,” he says. “But looking back to Roman and Elizabethan times, thermal spas weren't just about relaxing and unwinding. They were for people of all backgrounds to meet, socialise and immerse themselves in culture in a way that benefitted all the dimensions of wellbeing: mental, physical, social and spiritual. And this is our goal.”

There are four operations for day guests run by Therme Group and Thermengruppe Josef Wund (see p59), three in Germany and one in Romania, which welcome 3.4 million visitors a year. Most recently, Therme Group secured planning permission for its biggest venue to date – a £250m (US\$353.3m, €290.4m) development in Manchester, UK. But

plans don't stop there. The group is also looking at three other sites in the UK, one in Scotland, Wales and another in England, near London.

On a world-scale it's working on further projects in mainland Europe – one has just been confirmed in Frankfurt – Asia Pacific and North America. Iacob insists none of these have been affected by COVID-19. If anything, they've been bolstered by it.

“The pandemic has shone a light on the global wellbeing crisis,” he says. “We're seeing a much greater focus, by countries, organisations and the population at large, on the need to integrate healthy living into daily life and reconnect with nature and each other.”

So just what is the Therme Group concept, how was it created and what else can Iacob reveal about the rollout?

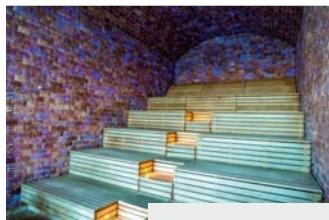
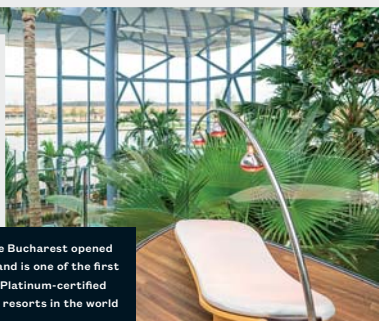
Technically speaking

Therme Group is headquartered in Vienna, Austria, but also has offices in North America, Europe and Asia. It's a part of A-Heat, a global firm specialising in heat exchange engineering.

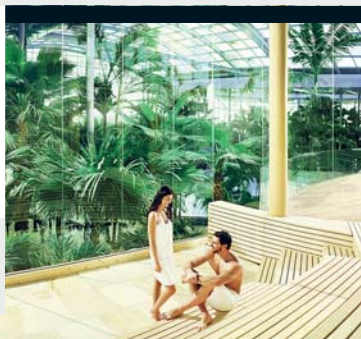
It's this background that led it to plan and develop large-scale thermal resorts. To give you an idea of size,



Therme Bucharest opened in 2016 and is one of the first LEED Platinum-certified thermal resorts in the world



Complexes are split into zones. Spa areas include 'exquisitely designed saunas' and infrared lounges



Therme Bucharest in Romania, opened in 2016, covers 30,000sq m and can fit in up to 4,000 guests at a time. Iacob describes it as "the world's first fully sustainable thermal resort with LEED Platinum certification".

He explains: "We use state-of-the-art sustainable systems based on natural processes to purify the environment, so guests are always breathing the freshest air and swimming in the cleanest water". Plant-based air filtration systems monitor and adapt levels of air flow, heat, humidity and light, for example. Meanwhile, he claims that water recirculation systems create, in a matter of hours, geological processes which would normally take hundreds of years to produce water as "clean at the purest spring water".

The water at all of Therme's resorts is heated in a sustainable manner, whether from a natural source, like the 3km deep geothermal well in Bucharest, or man made via processes like heat recovery, heat exchange, trigeneration and solar panels.

The first resort launched in Schwartzwald, Germany, in 2010 in collaboration with Wund Holding, a worldwide developer and operator of bathing and leisure facilities. Since then, the two companies

worked on projects in Sinsheim and Euskirchen in Germany, prior to the launch in Bucharest.

Just before the global pandemic hit, Therme and Wund announced a strategic partnership that sees them joining forces on an ambitious international expansion. The move includes the consolidation of their architectural and planning services to create a new division called Therme Arc. However, specific owner/management structures have not been disclosed and Iacob says these will "vary by global region, country and project".

Wellbeing for all

"We're returning to the essence of global bathing traditions, but have reimagined them for the modern, urbanised world, driven by our belief in 'wellbeing for all,'" says Iacob of Therme Group's concept. The facilities do this by offering a broad range of water-based and wellness activities all under one roof and in accessible locations at affordable prices.

The thermal complexes are split into distinct zones. In Bucharest, for example, these include Galaxy, with its 16 waterslides and wave pools and The Palm which ▶



We've reimagined global bathing traditions for the modern, urbanised world

► focuses on relaxation with a huge tropical lagoon, aromatherapy pools, outdoor pool and an external beach for summer use. Elysium, for people aged 16 and over, is the spa and wellness area which can host up to 800 people at a time. It features a panoramic pool enriched with zinc and selenium, six themed saunas, an infrared lounge area and three treatment cabins.

"The dedicated adult areas offer an essential opportunity to 'unplug' from the stresses and strains of daily life, including the always-on digital world," says Iacob. "They enable people to focus on personal wellbeing while socialising with others and are perfect for couples, singles, groups of friends and seniors."

He feels "guided multi-sensorial augguss journeys in exquisitely designed saunas" are a particular highlight, along with the nature-based surroundings – Bucharest has up to 800,000 plants, including 1,500 palm trees and countless species of orchids – which create areas for yoga, pilates and meditation.

Located 10 minutes outside of the capital, Terme Bucharest attracted 4 million people in its first four years and while locals are its biggest market, Iacob says it's becoming known as a worldwide wellbeing destination which draws visitors from the UK, Germany, Italy, Bulgaria, Israel and the US.

As with all Terme venues it's a day attraction but it partners with local hotels for overnight deals. And many spas could learn from its dynamic pricing. Guests buy a time slot – 3 hours, 4.5 hours or all day – per zone, but costs vary according to time of day, whether it's a weekday or weekend and age. Plus there are various family packages and concessions for people with disabilities.

In Elysium, the most expensive zone, prices start at RON79 (US\$20, €16, £14) in the week for a single adult for 3 hours, or RON88 (US\$22, €18, £15) at weekends, and go up to RON100 (US\$25, €20, £17) and RON109 (US\$27, €22, £19), respectively, for a whole day.

In Germany the model is slightly different. Costs change per time slot, day of the week and user, but also according to lounge location – you can view an entire plan of the complex online and see

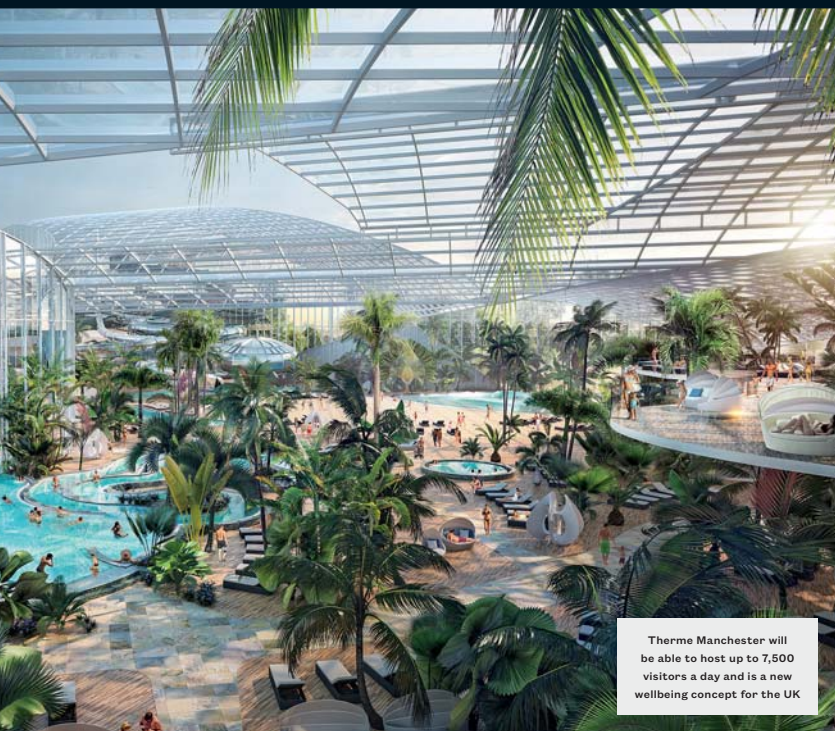


which ones are booked – and type, such as a luxury bed in a private room with food/drinks service.

A UK first

In early 2020, Terme Group revealed plans for its first site outside of mainland Europe in Manchester, north England. Located in Trafford City, a retail and leisure destination five miles to the west of the city centre, work is already underway on the development which covers 28 acres, the equivalent of 19 football pitches, and is still on track for completion in 2023.

"This is a major project for the leisure and wellbeing sector in the UK," says Iacob, hitting the nail on the head when he calls it "a completely new concept for the country". The building itself will take up 100,000sq m, making it three times the size of the facility in Bucharest, and will have the capacity for around 7,500 guests at a time.



Therme Manchester will be able to host up to 7,500 visitors a day and is a new wellbeing concept for the UK

PHOTO: THERME GROUP MANCHESTER

"The location has excellent public transport links, serving a regional population of over 6 million," he explains, "which will enable us to bring an everyday holiday to people throughout the north-west of England. Within the first few years of operation, we anticipate up to 2 million visitors annually, making it the most visited all-season water-based attraction in the world."

The Manchester complex will be based on the zoned approach of other Therme sites, offering hundreds of water-based activities for family fun. But in comparison, more space – at least half of the facility – will be dedicated to adults and focus on relaxation, spa and treatments. Features will include indoor and outdoor pools, swim-up bars, mineral baths of selenium, calcium, lithium and Dead Sea salt, vitamin-enriched pools, beautifully designed steamrooms as well as aufguss saunas.

The show-stopper looks set to be Genesis, a new zone which Iacob bills as a "completely new concept" ▶

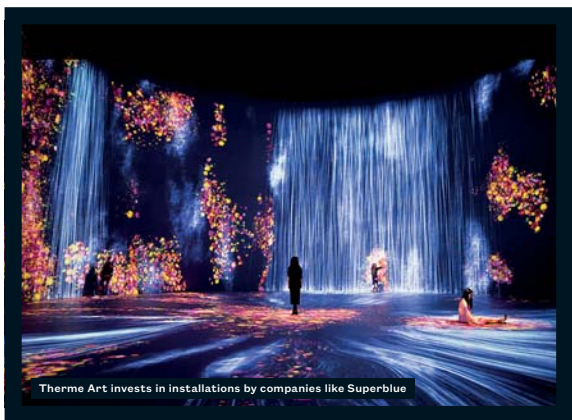


The 28-acre site is due for completion in 2023

PHOTO: THERME GROUP MANCHESTER



A Therme project is highly resilient with stable and strong returns



► in the world of wellbeing". While he's reluctant to give away precise details, he does reveal that "advanced body scanners and expert therapists will be used to personally design programmes for guests picked from authentic treatments from around the world".

With worldwide expansion on the cards, he also hints at further evolution focusing on areas such as nutrition and biomarker testing, live monitoring of physiological indicators, on-site urban farming, advanced wellness concepts and even brain-computer interface therapies.

Nature and art

Nature, art and culture is also key to Therme's approach to wellbeing. Green building is a priority for the group and, like Therme Bucharest, Therme Manchester will be built to LEED Platinum standards, Jacob says, explaining that Therme Arc has created its own BioTrue approach to development which is based on biomimicry and biophilic design principles.

A central focus of the Manchester project will be a 2-acre wellbeing garden in the shape of a rose, the national flower of England. "We've even developed technology delivering wellbeing for trees," says Jacob. "Our bespoke systems monitor thousands of trees to deliver the necessary water, cooled air and nutrients to optimise plant health."

Therme Group is also looking to align itself with WELL certification where buildings are designed according to their impact on people's health and wellbeing. On top of this, it's working on a five-year research fellowship with the University of Glasgow to research how architecture and the environment, including thermal baths, can foster a sense of wellness.

Therme Group is just as passionate about art and culture and under its dedicated Therme Art initiative is investing in companies like Superblue, which specialises in digital and experiential art installations and exhibitions. The idea is that such experiences will be made available in its resorts worldwide.

COVID-safe measures

Since coronavirus, Therme's resorts have been operating intermittently based on case numbers in Germany and Romania.

"It's only natural to expect guests to have a greater focus on hygiene and safety and the important takeaway is that our facilities provide the safest spaces against COVID-19 and virus transmission," Jacob says, adding that the group already uses HEPA (medical grade) air filtration and double UVC treatment on recovered air. Ozone is used in the water to neutralise 99.99 per cent of bacteria and viruses "three times faster than chlorine-based systems".

Most new safety measures have been digital – using the existing customer wristband system to ensure zones don't go over new capacity restrictions and introducing advanced online booking. Jacob says: "This has enabled us to deliver an exceptional experience – we've had our highest satisfaction levels ever in the past year – with a minimal drop in revenues by optimising venue usage."

He's also adamant that there's been no substantial impact on the time line of the Manchester development and remains confident about existing sites and the global rollout. "We take the long view in our approach to projects around the world," he explains. "As a business model, a Therme project is highly resilient with stable and strong returns and double-digit EBITDA margins in every location."

In fact, given the company's multi-faceted wellness proposition, Jacob expects it to do well as consumers begin to focus more on their health. "We have an extremely positive view of the future. Both for the industry and the advance of human and planetary wellbeing." ●



Katie Barnes is the editor of *Spa Business* magazine
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YASURAGI

While the majority of countries shut down non-essential services over the past year to curb the spread of coronavirus, the Swedish government took a different approach. They issued guidelines and restrictions but continued to keep schools and businesses, including spas and hotels, open to avoid lockdown.

Yasuragi, a Japanese inspired spa hotel on the outskirts of Stockholm, remained operational throughout the pandemic while adhering to regulations. All employees wear face masks, but guests don't have to, screens are placed at all service counters, sanitisers are everywhere

Spas in Sweden have been able to stay open during the pandemic. But do people still want to visit them? Andrew Gibson investigates at spa hotel Yasuragi



Andrew Gibson has consulted and worked on spas around the world

PHOTO: ANDREW GIBSON AT FOUR SEASONS LUNDA, SWEDEN

and numbers are restricted to enable social distancing. Swedes have always respected personal space so adherence to physical distance is easily complied with, but signage helps reassure and remind everyone to observe protocols.

And it appears that COVID-19 has not curbed the nation's appetite for wellness. Just like any ryokan, the bathing facilities are the primary attraction and on my mid-week stay the extensive hydrothermal facilities that are open to both hotel and day guests were busy. I counted at least 80 people in the baths (the capacity was 400 pre-COVID). Almost all were couples, with age groups ranging from people in their early 20s to seniors.

“

The Yasuragi concept is classically Japanese, but totally fitting for Sweden

EnviroProcess, a partner of
Klafts, worked on the renovation
of the 2,200sq m bathing area

The offer

Yasuragi was originally built as a conference centre for the Trade Union Confederation in the 1970s. The confederation commissioned Yoji Kasajima to design it after admiring his work at the Japanese embassy in Stockholm.

Perched on a majestic cliff top overlooking a sea channel and clad in dark timber, the building pays homage to Japanese style and is now a fitting home to a 191-room hotel and spa which falls under the Nordic Hotels & Resorts banner – a collection of 40 independent hotels and restaurants across Sweden, Norway, Denmark and



Additional activities like a tea ceremony cost US\$25

FIRST PERSON

- Finland. Other properties in the portfolio include the Ice Hotel and Farris Bad.

The prime attraction at Yasuragi is the bathing area which was renovated and extended in 2017 and covers around 2,200sq m. Architects DAP Stockholm AB spearheaded the overhaul with EnviroProcess, a partner of Klafs, installing multiple thermal rooms by Klafs and supporting and supplying the treatment system for a wide range of pools.

Located off the entrance to the baths is one floor for skincare treatments and another for body therapies.

There's a choice of four eateries, from a teppanyaki dining room to an informal snack bar by the baths. Perhaps restaurants have been the biggest victims of COVID restrictions as all were closed except one and Yasuragi has taken the opportunity to renovate the other two.

Packages and prices

There's a wide range of spa and accommodation options at Yasuragi with yield management strategies in place according to time of day, day of week, concessions for seniors and children and treatment and food add-ons. Loyalty cards are available too.

PHOTO: MARCUS SJUNSTEN/OSPA

Guestrooms have futon-style beds and simple furnishings. Some are pet friendly



There are many options for quiet relaxation and contemplation

PHOTO: MARCUS SJUNSTEN/OSPA

There are almost too many choices, making selection over the internet difficult, but it's nice to have options.

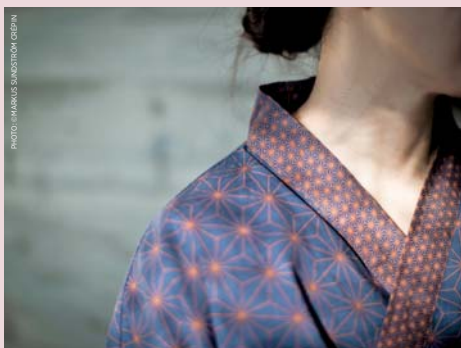
A day spa package starts at SEK990 (US\$120, €98, £84) and includes access to the baths, snacks, lunch or dinner and a choice of distinctively Japanese daily activities such as zen meditation, yoga and sound bowl sessions. The price goes up to SEK1,630 (US\$197, €161, £139) when a 20-minute treatment is bundled in.

An overnight stay with breakfast, including all of the above except for a treatment, starts at SEK1,750 (US\$211, €173, £149).

For those wanting just a treatment, a 50-minute classic massage is SEK1,275 (US\$154, €127, £100) or additional activities such as origami, calligraphy and tea ceremonies carry a fee of SEK210 (US\$25, €21, £20).

Upon arrival

So... the key question is, would you want to stay in a 20-year-old converted conference centre that has a Japanese theme set in the Swedish countryside? In



Enjoyable feature:
all guests are given
a stylish yukata
which they wear
during their stay –
even to dinner

my opinion, yes. It's a place to truly relax and to take a moment to reset your mind.

Perhaps your first thoughts are that a Japanese spa would be totally out of place in Sweden. But throughout my stay, I became aware of how many customs the countries share. Both have a deep respect for nature that extends from visual appreciation to full immersion. Both have a classic and strong design identity based on a minimalist feel, high quality finishes and natural materials... and both have a prominent culture of bathing (onsen and sauna).

As we stroll up a stone path lined with wooden pillars and cherry trees in full blossom the arrival is classically Japanese, but totally fitting for Sweden. Yasuragi exudes the lagom approach of Sweden where everything is just right, unassuming and certainly not extravagant and this provides the opportunity to slow down, appreciate your surroundings and have gratitude for the simple things in life.

My wife and I received a warm welcome and a quick, efficient check-in. Yasuragi

“COVID-19 has not curbed the nation's appetite for wellness

is a pet-friendly hotel so we took our dog and enjoyed many of the woodland trails.

Our standard guestroom (issued to people with pets) was typically Japanese with futon-style beds and simple furnishings, but at 20sq m felt a little small. I would recommend the ryokan (top suite) – complete with two bedrooms, extensive stone bathing area and enormous outdoor terrace with whirlpool – for the full experience.

Communication was one of the weakest parts of my stay. Although spa protocols and facilities were explained, there were no details of my treatment at arrival or in my room. Returning to reception, I was presented with a handwritten note simply saying '5pm' and the only confirmation I got was from speaking to a member of

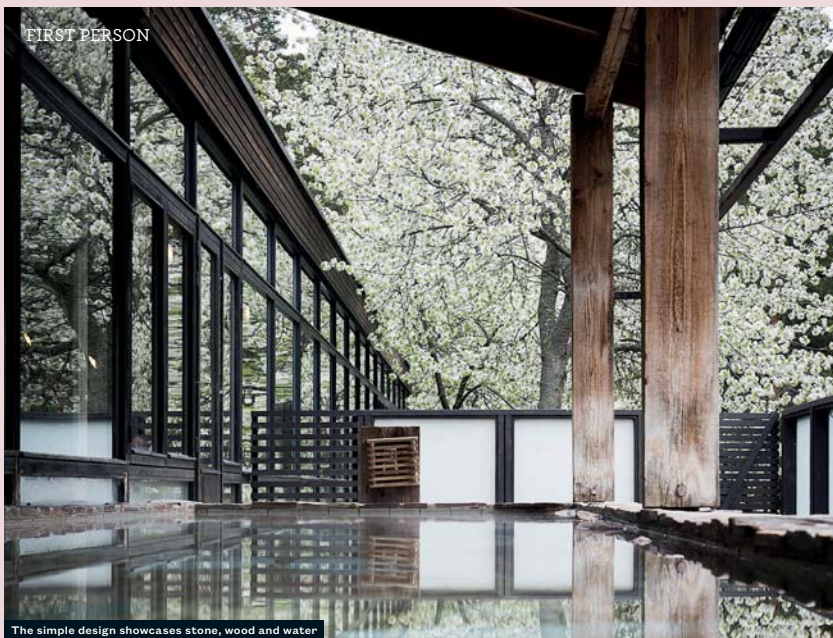
staff. Similarly spa activities were posted around the hotel, but not in the room.

The spa experience

One of the enjoyable features at Yasuragi is that guests are dressed in the same patterned yukata (Japanese robe) and slippers. You're given these well-designed, comfortable clothes and swimsuits to wear (the latter to keep) throughout your stay, even at dinner, and it's relaxing to know everyone is the same.

As a side note, the robes are also cleverly designed with a pocket inside the sleeve for key cards and numbered hangers help you to locate them when in the spa.

The baths can be reached via a glazed passage with views over a simple



The simple design showcases stone, wood and water

PHOTO: JAAKOB SANDSTROM/GETTY IMAGES

“If you’re in Stockholm, take time to add this to your itinerary

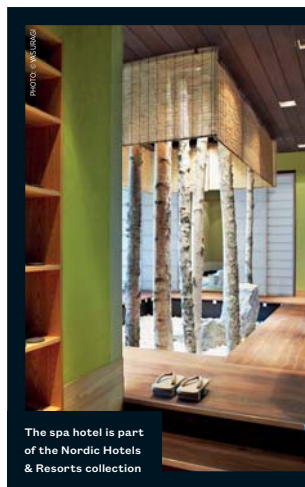
► Japanese rockery and you’re provided with a detailed written and verbal explanation of a naked cleansing ritual, as is the onsen tradition, which takes place in the changing rooms. The ritual takes place across 50 ablution areas that are cleverly designed around courtyards and terraces, to withstand the volume of business. During COVID spacing is controlled through signage and continual reminders of the maximum number of people permitted in any space.

After washing, the baths await. You enter a warm, high-ceiling courtyard dotted with small bathhouses that surround pools to give a village feel. Each bathhouse is different but the overall simple design showcases stone,

wood and water and accentuates the play on light and sound.

There are many options for quiet relaxation, from lounging on heated ganban yoku slabs to soaking in a tub on a moss-covered outdoor terrace with the undisturbed sounds of water, bird song and wind rustling through the pine and birch trees. Inside, the atmosphere could have been improved with more eastern style music rather than the generic, melancholy spa background tracks.

Similarly, some dining options are more reflective of Japan while others aren’t. The snack bar by the entrance to the baths serves only Japanese food, handmade for us (although service was slow) and we abandoned the classic



The spa hotel is part of the Nordic Hotels & Resorts collection



The experience starts with a naked bathing ritual in the changing rooms



Yasuragi overlooks a sea channel and is very accessible from the capital city



Swedish menu at dinner to sample a high-quality five-course Japanese meal including sake tasting. Yet a European continental buffet breakfast, with few Japanese dishes, was less authentic.

The daily activities seemed popular. They've been moved to large meetings rooms, which are plentiful at this former conference centre, and numbers are restricted to 20 guests. I counted nine people coming out of yoga and there were 18 of us taking the zen meditation class. The session was set at a basic level that felt right given the mix of guests ranging from curious to experienced.

Unfortunately, the treatment for my wife and myself was not a highlight. Both therapists were very good and

had excellent draping skills but lacked the subtle touch of hospitality found in a luxury spa. The classic massage was therapeutic with no frills. The haru was personalised but was also quite methodical. In summary, the experiences were detached from the subtle, refined Japanese feel in the rest of the hotel.

Lasting impression

Overall, the hotel shows some signs of ageing compared to the renovated baths. But don't let this spoil your visit because even though we all get a few wrinkles as we get older, we're still nice to be with.

If you're in Stockholm, take time to add this very accessible, value-for-money experience to your itinerary.

The attention to Japanese design and customs aids relaxation and charm as you escape into another world.

As we changed out of our yukatas and back into to our normal clothes in preparation for check out, and got ready to face the outside world once more, we realised that our 30 hours at Yasuragi had instilled a sense of happiness and calmness. My experience hit the perfect combination of the cherry blossom in full bloom, great weather and busy, but controlled, guest numbers. ●



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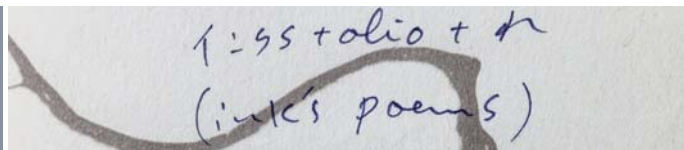
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Are customers really pursuing wellness like never before? Or wary of even stepping into a hotel (let alone a spa)? Lisa Starr asks Carillon's Tammy Pahel and shares her own first-hand experience

PHOTO: CARILLON MIAMI WELLNESS RESORT

Tammy Pahel

As a resort where wellness is deep, varied and the heartbeat of operations, Carillon Miami should be well-placed as consumers emerge out of the pandemic with health at the forefront of their minds. Whatever the wellness treatment, Carillon will most likely offer it and was probably one of the first to do so – from kung fu healing and executive coaching to IV therapies and Tibetan bowl rituals.

While the property opened in 1959 as an example of modern Miami style, it's possibly best known in spa circles as home to Canyon Ranch Living, which took over the property in 2008 and added residential towers and a sizeable David Rockwell-designed, 6,500sq m spa. However, it was unfortunate timing and the global economic downturn made success a challenge.

It was acquired by private equity group Z Capital Partners in 2015 for a reported US\$21.6m (£17.7m, £15.2m) and spa industry veteran and visionary

Tammy Pahel joined as VP of spa and wellness in May 2018. "If you really want to lose weight, eat healthier, whatever improvements clients want, we have options that provide for people to have more wellness in their life," comments Pahel. "And when you go somewhere and you have a great experience, you want to go back and try new things."

Reopening a hotel, residence and the largest spa on the eastern seaboard in the aftermath of COVID-19 has been a long, slow journey. Between human fears and mandated restrictions, there are many limitations on operations, but Pahel keeps pushing forward.

She's used the downtime to do minor renovations, bring in new equipment and begin fresh partnerships, such as bringing the integrative medicine company BioStation to operate the medical arm of the resort, and finding new suppliers with cutting-edge technology to sanitise and clean both the facility and equipment. She candidly shares some of the challenges of the past year with *Spa Business*.



Touchless therapies are popular with the over 60s (left); SilvaClean uses silver to disinfect linen (below)

Are you able to quantify the cost of COVID to Carillon?

Unfortunately we were closed for eight months and although we could have legally opened sooner we delayed our launch to ensure that, as a wellness resort, we had enhanced safety measures, training and processes in place. In 2020, the company losses amounted to millions of dollars, as did our competitors.

How did you help staff during the crisis?

Communication and support were vital. The management team was constantly providing solutions to create a safe environment for the staff as well as offer support and flexibility for those who were more challenged by the situation. From mid-March until mid-July 2020, everyone in the spa was furloughed. When the spa did reopen it was only initially at weekends as the hotel was still closed.

Have you been able to bring everyone back?

Considering that a lot of my therapists and wellness concierges were single mothers and/or taking care of elderly parents, they didn't want to return right away, but we were able to ramp up staffing each month. We're currently at about 85 per cent of our employee level from 2019.



PHOTO: CARILLON WELLS RESORT

How have you overhauled health and safety procedures?

Clients used to focus on luxury and pampering, but now they're more concerned with safety of the space that they're spending time in.

Our spa employees wear an apron, mask and shield, like all other resort staff, but additionally we've been using electrostatic sprayers to disinfect the entire facility – all 6,500sq m of it – each day at 4am.

One of the most interesting technologies we've employed is SilvaClean® from Applied Silver, which is a US-approved disinfectant. It's based on silver, a natural anti-microbial and anti-allergenic element which has been used in healthcare settings for years. SilvaClean is added to the laundry process during the final rinse and makes the fabrics residually anti-microbial, without changing their look or feel. We're using it on all of our towels and linens, keeping them COVID- as well as mould- and mildew-free.

We've also installed an air purification system from Active Pure which incorporates UV light to deactivate 90 per cent of viruses and pathogens within three minutes.

What changes have you made to treatments?

We're still holding 188 fitness classes a week, all with social distancing, but have increased outdoor classes and also offer a daily live stream through the TV community channel.



PHOTO: CARILLON MIAMI WELLSNESS RESORT

Spa in Miami can still only operate at 50 per cent capacity, says Pahal

► We've also introduced a range of touchless wellness experiences (see p77) which have been well received by our residents who make up 20 per cent of our market. They're in the 60-plus demographic and many of them had anxiety over returning to massage, facial and or body treatments. Around 20 per cent of them now participate in our touch-free offers.

How did you attract the local market?

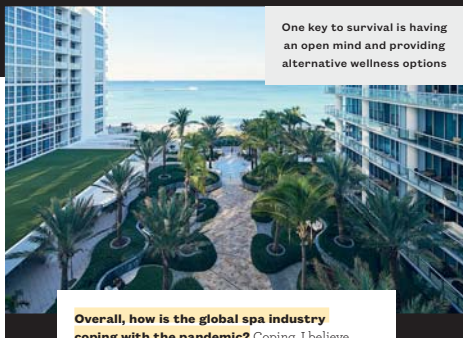
Residents who live nearby make up 50 per cent of our spa customers, but we broadened our promotions, shifting our focus to the regional area as we saw our drive-to market becoming one of our highest producing segments. We used our new touchless services to pique interest, while still offering our wellness, healing and spa treatments and combined these with pool and beach access to help people feel relaxed and enjoy the fresh air.

Did you change your pricing? We

evaluated the market and market conditions within our competitive set and we carefully set our pricing near our 2019 levels.

Any idea when you'll start hitting pre-COVID numbers?

Currently, spa in Miami are not permitted to exceed 50 per cent of occupancy. If we were able to go above this threshold, we would be at or near our revenues of 2019.



One key to survival is having an open mind and providing alternative wellness options

Overall, how is the global spa industry coping with the pandemic?

Coping, I believe, is the easy part. Keeping the spa busy, providing an income to the therapists that have returned is another thing. Operators need to have open minds and provide alternative wellness options for guests, creating a safe and comfortable environment that entices people to return back.

The keys to survival are pivoting, flexibility, open-mindedness and a passion for the spa and wellness industry. If we're going to call ourselves a true wellness resort, we have to be the leaders in modelling innovation and technology.

Lisa Starr is a contributing editor at *Spa Business* magazine
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FIRST-PERSON

Lisa Starr at Carillon Miami

Having not visited a spa for nearly a year since the pandemic, to say I was excited about my time at Carillon would be an understatement!

While there have been many rumours about the flaunting of COVID best practices in Florida, I saw none of that. The whole operation was extremely safety-aware. Temperatures were checked on arrival, a one-way traffic flow plan was in operation and masks were mandatory.

Safety regulations also meant the spa was only allowed to operate at 50 per cent capacity and locker rooms were closed, so clients have to change in the treatment rooms or hotel guests arrive in their robes. Unfortunately the impressive range of wet amenities weren't open to the public either, although pools were.

I tried a number of low-touch treatments, including the Prism Light Pod, the Vibroacoustic Elector Magnetic Infrared (VEMI) experience and a Salt Bath Float. All were enjoyable, but my favourite was the Gharjeni Spa Wave table for providing an immediate, relaxing power-nap.



I also had a delightful Cryo One Facial and a Ginger Coconut Argan Sugar Glow on the Lemi Aemotio table, both with excellent (masked) therapists, and it definitely felt great to experience human touch.

While there's been much debate about whether clients will be interested in low-touch treatments, there's never a feeling of being left alone as spa staff explain how to use equipment and what to expect.

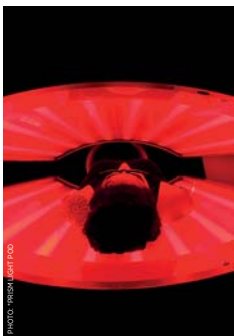
I was certainly glad of a therapist's presence when trying the new Everest electric cryotherapy chamber - and I wouldn't have been able to stand the -115°C temperature for two minutes without their encouragement on the other side of the door.

Not being able to use the thermal areas was definitely a disappointment and the entire experience felt more isolated. But it was certainly much better than not going to the spa at all.

As for high-touch versus low-touch, there's definitely no substitute for human contact, but augmenting with touchless options that permit clients to relax and have some mental downtime, seems like an ideal revenue configuration. ●

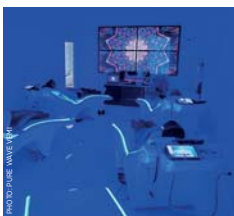
PHOTO: LISA STARR

Carillon's new touchless wellness experiences



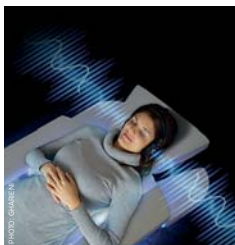
● **Prism Light Pod** is a full-body system which uses red and near-infrared light waves to help soothe joints, reduce chronic pain and inflammation, support weight loss and improve skin conditions and keep it looking younger.

💰 US\$49 (€40, £35) for 15 minutes or US\$360 (€294, £254) for a series of 12



● **Pure Wave VEMI** aims to recharge and detoxify cells in the body, leading to restored balance and rejuvenation. It does this through vibroacoustic, electro magnetic and infrared therapy and is meant to emulate a deep meditative state.

💰 Cost: US\$99 (€81, £70) for 25 minutes or US\$800 (€654, £565) for a series of 10



● **Gharieni's Spa Wave** experience combines music, gentle sound waves and chakra resonating vibrations to help with stress, concentration, mood and creativity.

💰 Cost: US\$99 (€81, £70) for 30 minutes or US\$800 (€654, £565) for 10



● Salt inhalation and infrared heat are combined in the **Breathe & Detox Suite by Halo** therapy Solutions. Benefits are believed to include improved respiratory health and immunity and a reduction in stress and inflammation.

💰 Cost: US\$99 (€81, £70) for 25 minutes or US\$800 (€654, £565) for a series of 10



● **The No Sweat Workout by VibraGenix** uses sonic vibrations to "exercise nearly one hundred trillion cells in the body simultaneously" which it says is the equivalent response to an hour's CV workout. Lymphatic health, weight loss and better circulation are said to be an extra plus.

💰 Cost: US\$99 (€81, £70) for 25 minutes or US\$800 (€654, £565) for a series of 10



● **The Rasha Triad** has been designed to harmonise the autonomic nervous system and bring the left and right hemispheres of the brain into balance via scalar plasma sound technology. It's been created to relieve stress, support relaxation and potentially transmute negative habitual patterns.

💰 Cost: US\$139 (€114, £98) for 45 minutes or US\$999 (€817, £705) for 10

Wellness time

How has the pandemic impacted people's attitudes to wellness and their spa habits? Katherine Wernet analyses the findings from a new consumer survey

AT A GLANCE

More than 50% of Americans and Brits say their mental health has declined because of COVID-19 and 48% of Australians agree

78% believe that wellness is more important than ever

59% report that they're more focused on their health and wellness since the pandemic started

The top reason people focus on wellness is to reduce stress, followed by wanting to be healthier and having more free time for wellness

79% of Americans believe it's important or very important for spa staff to wear masks and gloves and 75% of Brits and 60% of Australians say the same

Also of high importance are requiring clients to wear masks and reducing the number of clients allowed in a business at once

Meditation has grown in popularity during the pandemic

Responses show we shouldn't underestimate the importance of physical touch



Katherine Wernet

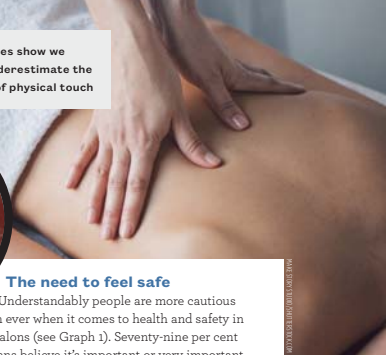


PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES/STOCK

We're now starting to get consumer feedback on the toll the coronavirus has taken on people's wellbeing. More than 50 per cent of Americans and Brits say their mental health has declined because of COVID-19 and 48 per cent of Australians agree. This is forcing them to reconsider their health. The vast majority (78 per cent) believe that wellness is more important than ever. Fifty-nine per cent report that they're more focused on their health and wellness since the pandemic started.

These are some of the findings from a consumer survey of 20,000 people in the US, UK and Australia, commissioned by software supplier Mindbody (see p82).

What's driving the interest?

The number one reason people focus on wellness is to reduce stress – something spas know something about!

The second most popular reason overall is wanting to be healthier to withstand disease. Wellness businesses would be wise to highlight health benefits of their offerings to get the attention of the many who are looking to improve the strength of their immune system.

The third most popular reason? Just under half (46 per cent) say they have more free time. This is a time when consumers have the time and are willing to try adding something new into their wellness routines.

The need to feel safe

Understandably people are more cautious than ever when it comes to health and safety in spas and salons (see Graph 1). Seventy-nine per cent of Americans believe it's important or very important for staff to wear masks and gloves and 75 per cent of Brits and 60 per cent of Australians say the same.

While spas have always been extremely clean and hygienic, explicitly communicating the cleaning process to clients is crucial. Rigorous sanitisation guidelines and even having a sanitisation certification are important factors for a majority in deciding to frequent a business. Some facilities have deployed sanitising UV light fixtures and upgraded air purification systems to make staff and clients feel more comfortable.

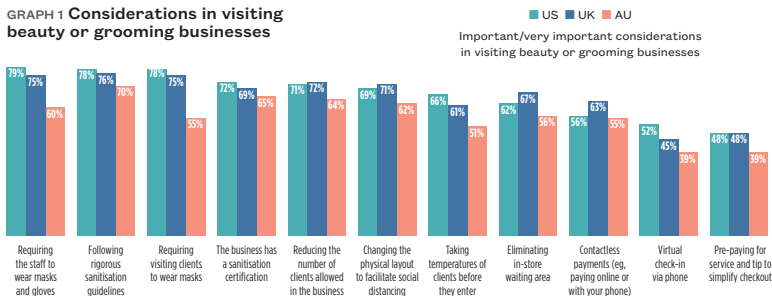
Also of high importance are requiring clients to wear masks and reducing the number of clients allowed in a business at any one time.

A time for low touch?

Lingering concerns for consumers also spill over into service choices. Although what people say they want doesn't always tally with their actions.

Fifty-eight per cent say they're less interested in trying 'high-touch' spa services since COVID. Yet when asked which spa treatments they've tried more frequently since the onset of the pandemic, massage was the top answer – 19 per cent of respondents had enjoyed one since the coronavirus outbreak and 23 per cent of that group now get massages more frequently. ▶

GRAPH 1 Considerations in visiting beauty or grooming businesses



Source: 2021 Mindbody Wellness Index

Low touch therapies allow health-seeking individuals to feel they're doing something proactive for their wellness without coming into close contact with therapists

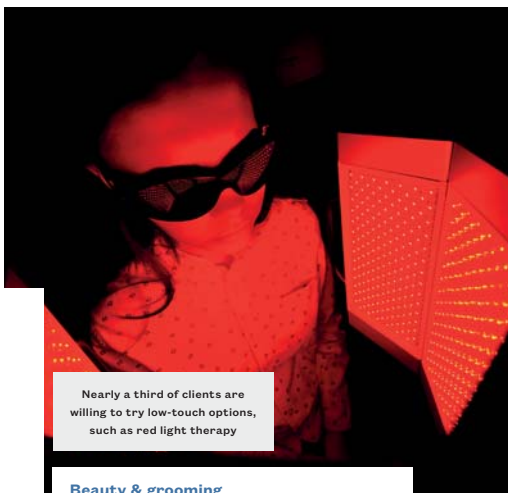
► In 2020, we were wondering if guests would ever return to spas for hands-on therapies, but these results reveal that we cannot underestimate the importance of physical touch to our guests.

In comparison, 31 per cent of people are more interested in trying 'low-touch' options, such as cryotherapy, infrared saunas, red light therapy and floatation. Yet these are the least popular choice of treatments since the pandemic started, with only 12 per cent of consumers trying one of these services.

The only exception was meditation, which became more popular. Seventeen per cent of respondents practice it and a quarter of that group report they've meditated more since the pandemic started.

Ten per cent of Americans tried health or life coaching last year and 6 per cent of Brits and Australians did the same. Of those who received coaching, 14 per cent of Americans received it more frequently since the start of the pandemic compared to 9 per cent of Brits and Australians.

We expected to see significant gains in relation to services such as cryotherapy, infrared sauna, red light therapy and floatation, as they allow health-seeking individuals to feel they're doing something proactive for their wellness during complicated times without coming into close contact with therapists. However, it's likely that the majority of spas do not have many low-touch options and there may be less awareness of these services generally. It's still encouraging that almost a third of clients are willing to try low-touch options and this may still be the time to introduce such services.



Beauty & grooming

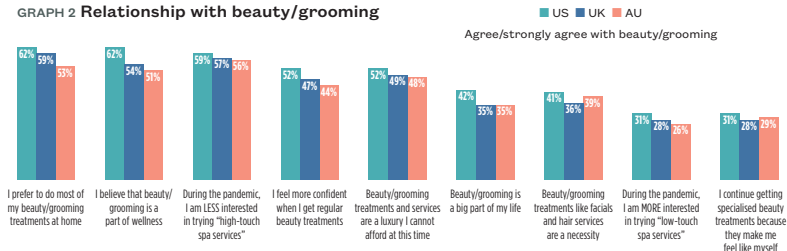
Consumers across the three countries, the UK, US and Australia, report similar relationships with beauty and grooming, as shown in Graph 2.

Sixty per cent say beauty and grooming, which includes services like haircuts, facials and skin treatments, are part of wellness. Fifty-one per cent of respondents say they feel more confident when they receive regular beauty treatments and 40 per cent say facials and hair services are a necessity. Thirty per cent say specialised beauty treatments such as lash extensions and blowouts make them "feel more like themselves".

This suggests that spas and salons which offer beauty and grooming could reap the benefits as economies reopen and clients resume their former activities.

When asked why they book beauty or grooming services, the number one reason was to relax and 'take care of oneself' (28 per cent book for this reason), 23 per cent do so to maintain their appearance, 20 per cent to boost self-confidence and 11 per cent to prepare for an event or special occasion.

GRAPH 2 Relationship with beauty/grooming



Source: 2021 Mindbody Wellness Index



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Of the services tried since COVID-19, the most popular is haircuts, with 39% saying they got one since the pandemic began

► When it comes to the time spent on beauty and grooming, 62 per cent are spending the same amount of time they were pre pandemic or even more. Americans are most likely to spend time and attention on beauty and grooming (20 per cent), while 18 per cent of Brits and 14 per cent of Australians say the same.

Despite being in a pandemic, people want to look and feel good. Of the services tried since COVID-19, the most popular is haircuts, with 39 per cent saying they got one since the pandemic began. Twenty-one per cent got their hair coloured, 18 per cent received manicures or pedicures, 15 per cent opted for barber services and 15 per cent got facials.

However, it's also worth noting that 61 per cent of people now perform most of their beauty treatments at home. This is likely due to several factors. This survey was done during a pandemic so venues may not

Most people (60%) consider beauty and grooming to be a part of wellness

have been open or, if they were, had limited capacity and hours making it difficult to secure a convenient appointment. Safety could still be of concern and there are probably financial implications at play as well.

Reasons for optimism

While it's clear that COVID-19 has impacted wellness around the world, the 2021 *Mindbody Wellness Index* offers reasons for optimism. People are more focused on their wellness than they were and the services that spas and salons offer are crucial in helping consumers restore their physical and mental health.

Clients still clearly value the services spas and salons provide and are appreciating the health and safety guidelines in place. Many spas and salons have been operating at or close to capacity since reopening, with clients shifting to online booking and being very understanding about business limitations.

Anecdotal, we know that consumers have, in general, been more open to changes, including a more limited menu selection, price adjustments and personnel shifts.

Spas and salons have always been clean and safe businesses and now is the time to focus on solidifying relationships with clients as they return and we move forward together towards a post-pandemic world. ●

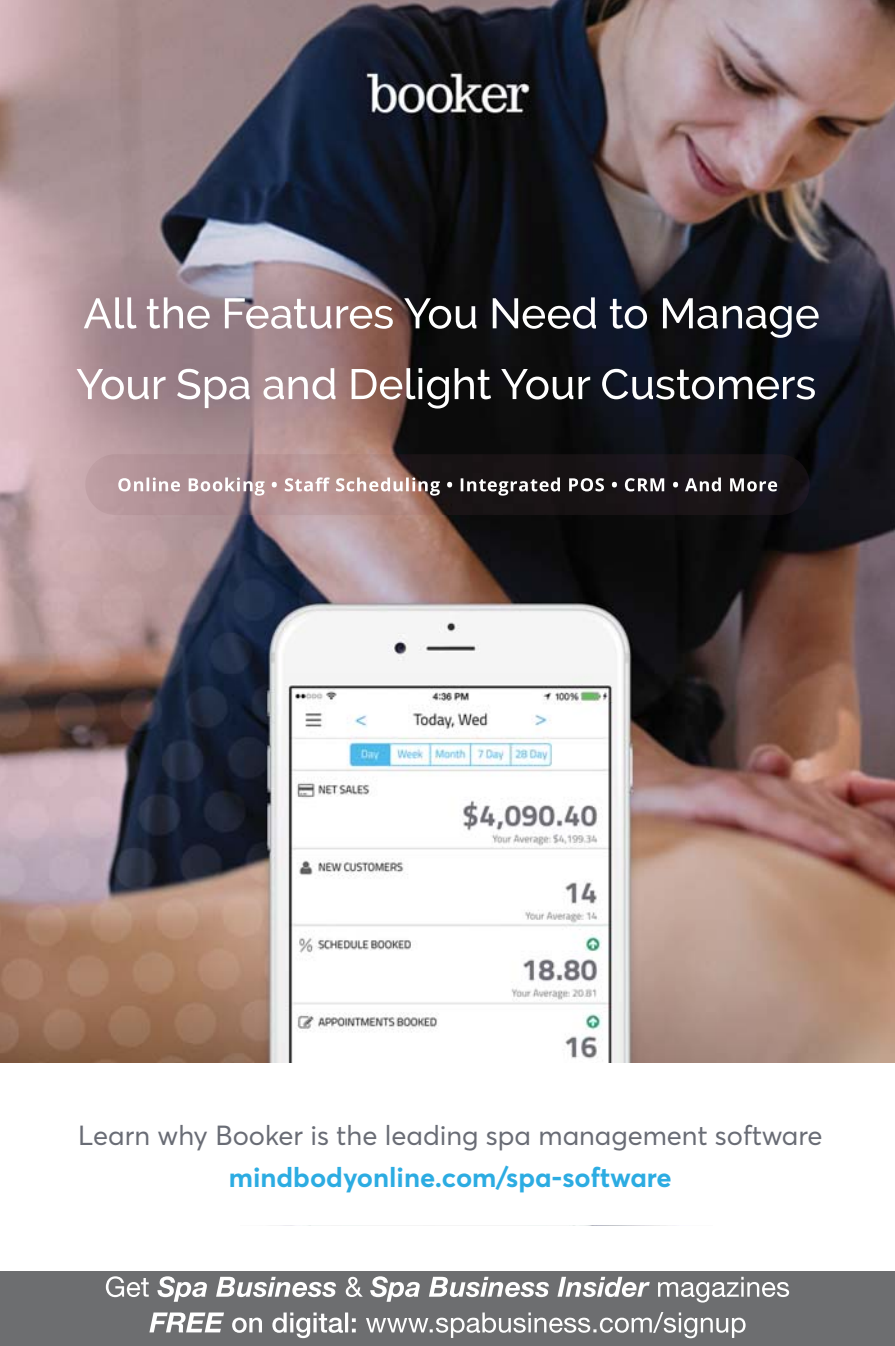
ABOUT THE SURVEY

The 2021 *Mindbody Wellness Index* is based on a survey of consumers in the US (19,882), the UK (1,525) and Australia (1,512). A third-party agency provided survey participants from the general population aged 18-65. The survey was conducted between mid-October and mid-November, 2020. See all findings here: www.spabusiness.com/mindbodyindex

Analysis in this article has also been based on an additional survey asking consumers about their opinions on returning to spas/salons post-vaccination. These viewpoints were gathered from 1,058 participants, aged 18-65, only in the US in February 2021. Learn more about the results of that survey here: www.spabusiness.com/mindbodyvaccine



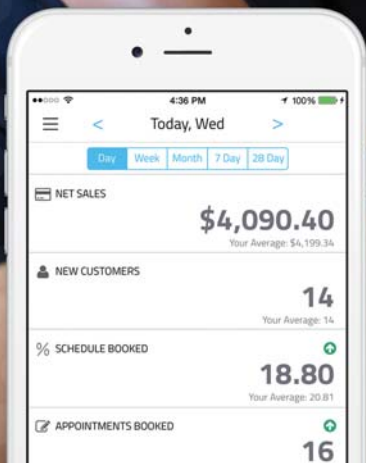
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Focus on:

IV nutrition therapy

Is IV nutrition therapy as credible as some spas claim?

Lisa Starr investigates this increasingly popular spa offering

Perusing spa menus today, you may come across IV nutrition or vitamin therapy. If hearing 'IV' makes you think of something medical, you're not far off the mark.

Sir Christopher Wren crafted the first intravenous device for human and animal blood transfusions in the late 1600s from a writing quill and pig's bladder. Thankfully, the delivery system had been updated by the time it came into regular use by the medical establishment in the early 1900s and since then the scope of the treatment has widened.

The concept is based on injecting fluids, vitamins, minerals and amino acids directly into the bloodstream, bypassing the digestive system. Although the method isn't without its sceptics (see p86), hospitals use it as a quick way to hydrate patients and get them essential nutrients and in the 1960s John Myer, a US doctor, became famous for his 'cocktail' of ingredients which help manage the symptoms of many conditions such as cardiovascular disorders, fibromyalgia, asthma and seasonal allergies. The mixture included vitamins B and C, selenium, magnesium sulphate and calcium gluconate and while the exact recipe died with Dr Myer in 1984, it forms the basis for many infusion menus today.

What's on offer?

As spas extend their menus for differentiation and venture into medi-wellness, IV nutrition therapy has become more available in these settings. It's customary to see options that promise everything from a general wellness boost and hydration to fat-burning, anti-ageing and immune system benefits,



PHOTO: ELIUS CLINIC, AT MANDARIN ORIENTAL DUBAI

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Instagram and word of mouth recommendations have brought in customers at VIVID Bangkok

as well as drips that address specific conditions such as hangovers, jet lag and morning sickness.

IV nutrition therapy is offered in a variety of settings, from wellness clinics and spas to chains and franchises such as VitaLounge and The Elixir Clinic. A 1-litre bag infusion typically takes 20-30 minutes and an individual treatment is usually priced between US\$104-US\$225 (€88-€188, £75-£162).

Training/partnerships

IV therapy is deemed a medical service so regulations require the involvement and/or oversight of a physician or healthcare practitioner. Spas in the medi-wellness domain typically employ nurses to administer it and in some cases have medical teams to create their own IV 'recipes'.

Those that don't have medical personnel can form partnerships with existing clinics or providers. Mandarin Oriental in Dubai, for example, offers IV therapy in conjunction with The Elixir Clinic.

The Elixir Clinic has nine locations worldwide and specialises in VitaDrip® infusions. Other spa partnerships are with Emirates Palace in Abu Dhabi and ESPA Life at Corinthia in London.

When a client requests an IV treatment at a spa, a local Elixir Clinic physician will send a nurse to administer the drip in either a treatment room or a relaxation area.

Why should spas offer it?

At Mandarin Oriental Dubai, senior spa director Sara Codner reports that guests enjoy the ability to have a clinical infusion in a spa setting.

It's customary to see options that promise everything from a general wellness boost and hydration to fat-burning, anti-ageing and immune system benefits

Customers having a mani/pedi service will often request a drip, which can be received at the same time, or the spa can provide an anti-ageing vitamin infusion to complement a facial.

Codner says they're great for last-minute small group bookings. If five guests book and there are only four therapists available, a drip can be offered to the fifth person – and then "everyone wants it!" Since COVID-19, guests have also been very responsive to having immunity-boost drips, she adds.

In Thailand, the Anantara Siam Bangkok Hotel has partnered with local healthcare provider Verita to create VIVID Bangkok which it describes as a "vibrant IV drip bar, anti-ageing and aesthetics hub". And the duo is set to launch another two in the country. VIVID offers IV infusions alongside other regenerative treatments such as ozone therapy and injectables.

Hotel PR manager Camilla Coburn Davis says many VIVID clients are new guests who've sought out the facility after seeing it on social media, or from word-of-mouth recommendations. "We've

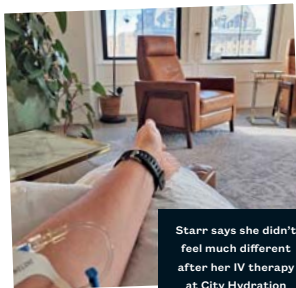


PHOTO: PICTURE BY LISA STARR

► received overwhelmingly positive feedback about the IV therapy and we're particularly proud of the glowing reviews of our qualified nurses," she says.

The most popular package is an off-the-shelf infusion delivered once every two weeks for optimal results. However, one-off IVs can be personalised to suit the lifestyle needs of individuals.

First-person experience

I tried IV therapy at City Hydration, a clinic owned by a physician, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The studio is a natural, light-filled space with six comfy seats, in a small office building in the city centre.

I was the only client when I visited at 1.15pm, although they said they'd been busy earlier. I was greeted by the only employee present, an emergency room nurse who works a few shifts a week, and presented with the menu. I opted for the US\$155 (£111, €128) Health Maintenance and Energy drip, which was basically a Myer's cocktail - 1 litre of saline with b-complex, magnesium, calcium and vitamin C.

I settled into my recliner and a needle was expertly and quickly inserted and I rested my arm on a disposable pad on top of a pillow. The nurse told me the drip would take about 30 minutes and using my free hand to scroll through Instagram and play a few games on my mobile, the time went by quickly.

I was advised that the treatment would make me feel more energetic that afternoon and the next day, and that no, I wouldn't have to use the restroom more than normal!

Later that evening I'd forgotten about my visit until I saw the plaster on my arm and, in honesty, I can't say I felt any different. If I was at a spa for an entire day, this might be something I'd try in what would otherwise be downtime, but for the money required, I'd likely opt for a more physically enjoyable treatment.



Lisa Starr is a contributing editor at *Spa Business* magazine
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Spas offering vitamin infusions should be careful not to make any misleading statements regarding their effects

THE SCEPTIC'S VIEW

Rick Pescatore, attending physician, Einstein Medical Center, USA

For the vast majority of healthy individuals, IV vitamin infusions are neither effective, useful, nor recommended since most consumers do not suffer from vitamin deficiencies. In the rare scenario that they do,



oral supplementation is more than sufficient. Spas offering vitamin infusions should be careful not to make misleading statements regarding their effects.

While rare, there are always risks, such as overdose of fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E & K), as well as infection from improper medication or medical supply handling techniques.

PHOTO: RICK PESCATORE

Before any service, there's a diagnosis, as medical services in the UK are heavily regulated

THE OPERATOR'S VIEW

Dr Ursula Levine, general practitioner, Lanserhof Arts Club, London

We've offered IV treatments at the Arts Club since opening in July 2019 and they're an integral part of Lanserhof's programmes across Europe. This includes the FX Mayr gut health method we're known for, which is supported by both oral and IV supplementation and we're pioneering this

in the UK where it's not as advanced as it is in German-speaking countries.

For us, IV treatments are medically-driven. Before any service, there's a diagnosis, as medical services in the UK are heavily regulated. We provide a menu of drips, but advise on the best option. Most of our infusions are tailored to the individual before being administered by nurses.

IV bookings have risen by 20 per cent since the pandemic. People are trying them to help support their immune system and for detoxing and allergies in the spring. Many clients come in once a week for a month and then stretch out the treatments.

We expect popularity to continue, especially as we've just launched the first walk-in version of our renowned, customised fasting programme in the UK. The aim of the US\$6,950 (£5,754, £5,000) package is to reset the gut in seven days by using IV therapy alongside lymph drainage, abdominal treatments, massage and personal training. ●



PHOTO: LANSERHOF THE ARTS CLUB

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E-commerce

The past year has proven how vital online sales are for spa businesses. How are software suppliers helping operators to sell via the web?

Spas which had the most success with online retail ran personalised promotions based on past service and purchase history

Roger Sholanki

BOOK4TIME

Our approach to e-commerce is to leverage existing solutions, like Magneto and Shopify, rather than forcing spas to change their system.

Online product and gift card sales kept revenue coming in when businesses were forced to close. The spas which were most successful were the ones that ran reports on past service and purchase history identifying specific customer preferences, such as product brands, to personalise offers rather than sending generic promotions to their entire customer base.

This combined with personalised

at-home packages and maintaining strong local customer databases saw many spas increase retail sales. They saw tens of thousands added to the bottom line and, in some cases, six figures' worth of revenue.

In the future, we're looking to deepen our integrations with Magento and Shopify to facilitate upselling in a spa. For example, giving therapists the ability to make a recommendation in-room, load a shopping cart and have the retail items shipped to a client's home versus having them pack the items in luggage and face hassles at customs.

Enabling staff to make sales online is a future goal



Spas offered virtual workshops and services teaching clients how to relax at home using their retail products

Matt Lerner

MINDBODY

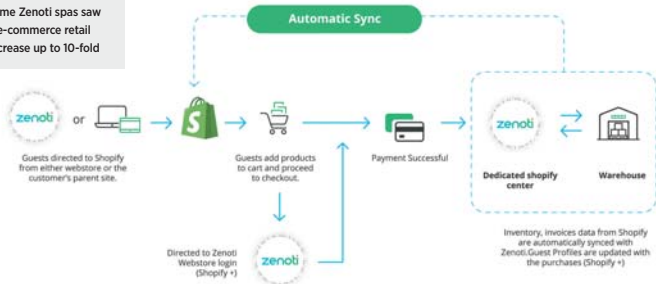
With Mindbody's spa software, spas can sell gift cards, service credits, memberships and link to their online product stores. Mindbody also has an integration with Shopify that allows spas to enter products, manage all inventory in their spa software and report on both in-store and online sales.

With many spas closed retail became a critical revenue stream. Owners had more time (and financial incentive) to focus on setting up an online retail presence. Some spas put together relaxation kits and even offered virtual services and workshops, teaching clients how to relax at home using their retail products. While this was an important source of revenue, even more important was the loyalty it built with consumers looking to support small businesses.

In total, revenue from online product sales increased by 19 per cent.



Some Zenoti spas saw e-commerce retail increase up to 10-fold



Sudheer Koneru

ZENOTI

Zenoti offers a gift card webstore for sale of virtual, branded gift cards and Shopify integration for product e-commerce.

Our spas promoted gift card and online product sales heavily during lockdown.

Many operators offered a percentage of the gift card purchased to be donated back to the employees. These promotions in support of providers, became a great industry rallying cry, fuelling online gift card sales – they

accounted for 12-15 per cent of sales prior to the pandemic and peaked at 60 per cent during COVID closures.

Our active Shopify customers saw e-commerce retail sales increase up to 10-fold, bolstered by virtual events that extended that experience with retail offerings. Examples included at home mani/pedi workshops and step-by-step facials all with e-commerce products for purchase immediately following.



Gift card purchases where a percentage of the revenue was donated back to employees fuelled online sales



Shez Namooya

EZ-RUNNER

The pandemic pushed Ez-Runner's spa operators to fast forward their digital strategy with good results. They saw an uptick in skincare sales online, some by nearly 50 per cent, in 2020 compared to the previous year.

We partner with e-commerce platform EKM to enable operators to sell retail items online while also being able to use their existing competitive merchant agreements.

Functionality includes free

Some spa operators saw a 50 per cent increase in skincare sales online in 2020, compared to the previous year

templates, the ability to chat online and to optimise via Google. We also offer a 28 day free trial.

In addition, Ez-Runner partners with various distribution companies to make it easier to get products to customers.

The ability to sell products online was a great option for spas during lockdown and gave them a way to continue trading. Operators had some great strategies in place such as self-care marketing campaigns.

Ilana Alberico

SPA SPACE

Spa Space is a new software platform that's been in development for several years. It's currently being beta tested and we expect it to launch with a number of spas imminently.

The main functionality of the software is to allow spas to fill their empty treatment rooms with guests who have been matched with expert therapists recruited and compensated by Spa Space. But when it launches, there will also be an app which guests can download and use to purchase retail items that can be shipped directly to their home, allowing the facility to earn retail revenue without having to stock their own shelves. ●

There will be an app which consumers can use to purchase retail items that can be shipped directly to their homes



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Product innovation

Industry suppliers tell us about their latest product, treatment and equipment launches

Hytte introduces Nordic-style modular cabins

For spa operators looking to offer a stand-alone experience – including anything from wellness treatments and meditation to floatation – and where social distancing and exclusive use is a given, the new modular cabin by Hytte could be a solution.

With a Nordic aesthetic, the cabins blend into the natural surroundings, are built using FSC-certified wood and insulated using natural and recycled materials to ensure energy efficiency.

They have a minimum footprint of 24sq m and arrive onsite fully constructed and fitted out, ready for use within 24 hours. Off the shelf options are available or units can be custom made with potential features including a king size bed, seating area, toilet/shower, stove and kitchen.

Hytte is a new company formed in partnership with architects



Koto Design, which draw inspiration from Scandinavia, and interior design and branding firm Aylott & Van Tromp.

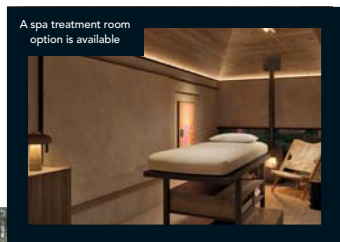
Co-founder Nathan Aylott says Hytte "can be used to adapt and grow a business, expanding and adapting to market conditions in an incredibly short time frame, in a way that you just can't with a traditional hotel "

 spa-kit.net keyword:
Hytte



The cabins arrive onsite fully constructed and fitted out

“We provide both clients and consumers with something a little bit different



A spa treatment room option is available



The wooden-clad cabins blend in with natural surroundings

PHOTO: HYTE - MERED VISUALIZATION

Bbspa_Group's antiviral uniforms are certified as PPE, says Régis Boudon-Doris

Bbspa_Group has branched out from its traditional consultancy work to unveil 100% You, an antiviral spa uniform collection created to be durable, safe, fashionable and eco-friendly.

The chic range is blended out of a natural yarn called polypropylene that is antibacterial, waterproof and can be disposed of in plastic waste.

The collection is available in six sizes in various colours for men and women, all of which are officially certified as PPE.

CEO Régis Boudon-Doris says the line is "inspired by the need to equip operators in the beauty,

The professional clothing is safe, durable and comfortable

wellness and spa sectors with safe, durable and comfortable professional clothing, especially in light of COVID-19".

The fabric is moth-proof, mould-proof, hypoallergenic, anti-odour and stain proof, meaning washing only requires 10 minutes of immersion in cold water.

Boudon-Doris reveals that bbSpa_Group is now looking to harness polypropylene to produce spa linen and uniforms for healthcare professionals.

 **spa-kit.net keywords:**
BbSpa_Group



The clothing line is a new venture for spa consultancy bbSpa_Group

Tur's Celloxy oxygen device is ideal for medi-wellness, says Maria Papadopoulou



Celloxy complements any rejuvenation, detoxification or anti ageing treatment

German medical supplier Tur Therapietechnik is targeting spas which are looking to get into medi-wellness with its brand-new Celoxo oxygen therapy device.

The company specialises in altitude training equipment which uses depleted oxygen to induce a state of hypoxia. This encourages

the body to mobilise inner resources – breathing becomes more frequent and blood circulation increases to promote vitality.

Celoxo implements gas separation techniques, more commonly used in aviation and aerospace technology, to alternate controlled hypoxia and oxygen-enriched air. Software ensures treatment parameters are altered according to each person.

Maria Papadopoulou, commercial director at Tur, says a session lasts 45 minutes and can be used as a spa add-on or even carried out at the same time as some services.

"Celloxy complements any rejuvenation, detoxification or anti ageing treatment," she says. "It also boosts the immune system and trains the body to breathe more effectively – both of which are predicted to be the focus of the wellness and medical industry in 2022."

Sessions can train the body to breathe more effectively

 **spa-kit.net keywords:**
Tur Therapietechnik



PHOTOS: TUR THERAPIEOTECHNIK



Anna Teal reveals Aromatherapy Associate's wellbeing home collection

Aromatherapy Associates is building on its heritage of mood-enhancing spa treatments by creating at-home products for retail in spas or online – at a time when people are spending more time in their houses than ever before.

The centrepiece of the collection is the “revolutionary” Atomiser, sold for £120 (US\$170, €139). The portable diffuser doesn't use water or heat, helping to maintain the oil's purity and also enabling users to switch blends instantly.

There are five 100 per cent pure essential oil blends – Deep Relax,

Revive, De-Stress, Breathe or Forest Therapy – which cost £25 (US\$35, €29) for a 10ml bottle.

Each fragrance can be used at different times of the day to evoke a variety of moods, in different parts of the house or even depending on what people are doing or who they're with.

“Consumers are looking for new ways to incorporate wellbeing into their lives,” says CEO Anna Teal, adding that “our at-home collection allows you to layer and combine our powerful blends to create a truly 360, multi-sensory

The ‘revolutionary’
diffuser doesn't
use heat or water



PHOTOS: AROMATHERAPY ASSOCIATES

Our at-home collection
allows you to create those vital
moments of reset we all crave

experience – creating those vital moments of reset we all crave”.

Four vegan soy wax candles with a burn time of up to 40 hours complete the offering. The potent candles contain the equivalent of up to two bottles of essential oils and cost £48 (US\$68, €55) each.

spa-kit.net keywords:
Aromatherapy Associates

Noella Gabriel introduces Elemis' retinol substitute

British skincare and spa product house Elemis says its new Pro-Collagen Renewal Serum is a gentle, yet visibly effective alternative to traditional retinols.

Following years of research, the formula has been created to mimic the clarifying, skin-smoothing results of retinol, all while balancing and protecting moisture levels.

Noella Gabriel, Elemis global president and co-founder, explains that the company believes great skin starts with skin health, respecting the skin's microflora, the lipid barrier and ultimately supporting the skin's ecosystem.

“We're delivering the results of a retinol while respecting the lipid barrier with a skin-friendly formulation,” she says.



We're delivering
the results of a
retinol while
respecting the
lipid barrier

The serum is infused with a blend of brown algae and red microalgae, along with lucerne and stevia extracts to deliver retinol-like benefits without irritation.

spa-kit.net keyword:
Elemis

PHOTOS: ELEMIS



The serum is infused with
a blend of algae, lucerne
and stevia extracts

Use CBD to enhance drinks, says La Rue Verte's Emma O'Neil

CBD wellness brand La Rue Verte has introduced a water-soluble CBD product to enhance refreshments and upgrade wellbeing routines.

The Santé formula can be added to any hot or cold drink, including alcohol, without changing the flavour of the original beverage.

Emma O'Neil, La Rue Verte founder, says Santé's main benefit is that it stimulates our natural endocannabinoid system which plays a role in regulating important bodily functions including sleep, mood, inflammation, appetite and memory.

"Santé is a toast to your health, distilling a sense of calm with every drop," she adds.



PHOTOS: LA RUE VERTE

Santé distills a sense of calm with every drop

The new product is also enriched with vitamin C and vitamin B12.

La Rue Verte plans to first launch the product in spa cafes and hotel bars, partnering with hospitality brands such as IHG.

spa-kit.net keywords:
La Rue Verte



The formula can be added to any hot or cold drink without altering its flavour



It turns routine moments into extraordinary ones

Patricia Fisas reveals Natura Bissé's luxurious body care collection and spa rituals

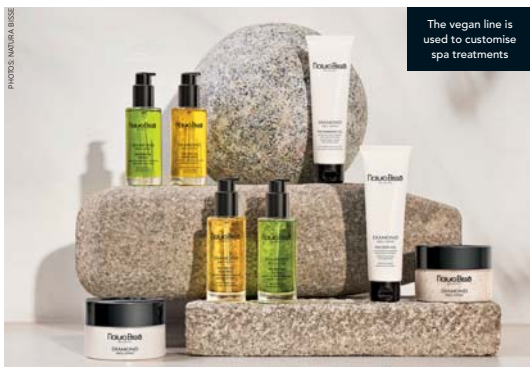
Natura Bissé has introduced a range of eight uplifting body products, named Diamond Well-Living.

The vegan line has its own menu of customisable spa treatments, allowing therapists to tailor rituals and how long they last depending on the client's mood and needs.

Three main treatments are offered: body scrubs, body masks and massages, and multiple combinations of the three. These can then be personalised with fragrant body oils – Energizing, De-Stress, Detox or Fitness. A Warming Gel or Cryo-gel can also be added for a touch of warmth or freshness on specific areas.

"Diamond Well-Living is designed to transform your mood, boost endorphins and turn routine moments into extraordinary ones," says Patricia Fisas, senior VP of research and innovation.

spa-kit.net keywords:
Natura Bissé



The vegan line is used to customise spa treatments

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Christian Sommerhuber reveals elegant ceramic lounger

Ceramics manufacturer Sommerhuber has created a new heated lounger model inspired by chic spa design and reconnecting with nature.

CEO Christian Sommerhuber says: "Organic, light shapes and the comforting feel of natural infrared warmth are an invitation to dream and relax."

The Lounger One Plus offers a soothing and relaxing touchless thermal experience via a gentle

infrared heat. The warmth is stored, and emanates from, the ceramic surface which covers the ergonomically-designed lounger.

Available in 15 different glazes, it can be customised to match its environment and can be upgraded with a USB charging port.

The product's electrically heated ceramic surface has been designed to be maintenance-free and only includes two transverse joints, making it easy to clean.



It combines organic, light shapes and the comforting feel of natural infrared warmth

spa-kit.net keyword:
Sommerhuber

Lounger One Plus offers a touchless thermal experience



PHOTO: SOMMERHUBER

YogiFi hailed as first smart yoga mat

Launched recently, YogiFi is being marketed as the world's first smart yoga mat.

YogiFi Series-1 (Pro) is designed to deliver personalised yoga sessions with an immersive virtual studio experience.

It uses AI to recommend programmes based on the user's history, current limitations and future goals. Pressure sensors embedded in the mat respond to touch, with visual and haptic feedback for posture correction.

A projection view allows users to choose thematic landscapes as a backdrop for their sessions – ranging from

Programmes are delivered via an app or wrist wearable



PHOTO: MELLINETS, YOGIFI

Visual and haptic sensors provide feedback for posture correction

Himalayan mountains, waterfalls and rainforests to exotic beaches.

Meanwhile step-by-step audio instructions also include soothing background music and therapeutic

aroma dispensers have also been embedded inside the mat.

spa-kit.net keyword:
YogiFi

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Dr Sarah Berry, an epidemiologist from Kings College London, was the study co-author



Finishing touch

GOOD FOOD GUIDE

What should we eat to boost our immune system? One of the world's largest studies on dietary intake and the gut microbiome sheds some light

Gut health programmes which improve our microbiome are not new in the spa industry as wellness experts and scientists recognise the links between good bacteria in our intestines. The wide-reaching benefits include improving our heart and metabolic health, helping people who suffer from diabetes and obesity for example, to regulating our hormones.

But *Spa Business* predicts the 'food as medicine' approach, championed by operators such as The Original FX Mayr, Buchinger Wilhelmi, Chenot and Sha Wellness, will boom in popularity as consumers recognise how essential the microbe community in our bowel is for developing our immunity, defending us against pathogens and for our brain function/mental health.

Findings from new studies like Predict, one of the first to take a deep look at dietary intake and its effect on the gut microbiome and health outcomes, could further strengthen spa offerings.

The study, published in *Nature Medicine* in January, monitored the gut microbiome composition, diet and cardiometabolic blood markers of 1,100 participants from the US and UK, and is one of the world's largest research projects investigating individual responses to food.

The key revelation was the identification of 15 'good' and 15 'bad' naturally-occurring gut microbes that can correlate with key markers of health status in a positive or negative fashion, including inflammation, blood pressure, blood sugar control and weight.

Results showed diets fuelled by fibre-rich, whole and unprocessed food support the growth of the good microbes, while diets containing a higher concentration of processed foods with added sugar and salt, promote bad gut bacteria associated with illnesses.

This indicates we have control over our gut microbiome and can positively impact our future health outcomes

by changing what we eat, explains Dr Sarah Berry, study co-author and epidemiologist at Kings College London.

"Surprisingly, findings also suggested that due to the personalised nature of the microbiome, a personalised approach to what you eat for your unique biology is the best way to positively impact your health," she adds.

"I'm excited to share this research as our findings show how little of the microbiome is predetermined by genes and therefore how much is modifiable by diet, how we may be able to modify it by diet and how this may impact our subsequent health." ●

It's exciting to discover how little of the microbiome is predetermined by genes and therefore how much is modifiable by diet



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