

spa business

Clinique La Prairie

*Opening 50 branded
sites worldwide, p30*

Niamh O'Connell

*Reveals her plans
for Jumeirah, p66*

Global wellness economy

*Now worth
\$5.6tr, p22*

SIMONE BILES

*The importance of mental wellness,
self-belief and taking time out, p10*



Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

CELEBRITY: GUY AROZ/GETTY IMAGES



Capristo elements

REAL
-110°C

0% HUMIDITY INSIDE; COLD IS
VISIBLE ONLY AT DEFROSTING

Ultra-large window

VAULTZ - FULLY ELECTRIC WHOLE-BODY CRYOTHERAPY CHAMBERS

Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

art
of
cryo



vario Vaultz

V3

vario Vaultz



VIDEO

www.artofcryo.com

Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

*Instrumental evaluation, 30 people, application of Luminant Serum and Luminant Cream morning and evening

[comfort zone]

conscious skin science

NEW
LUMINANT
3-BRIGHT TECHNOLOGY™

-31.5% DARK SPOTS VISIBILITY
CLINICALLY PROVEN AFTER 28 DAYS*

Efficacy tested on all different skin tones
and all types of hyperpigmentation.
Proven to be safe during pregnancy.



comfortzoneskin.com
MADE IN ITALY

Get **Spa Business & Spa Business Insider** magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup



PHOTO: ANDREW HARRISON

Early start

If spas are to keep flourishing, embracing younger generations and families will be key. The sector has an exciting opportunity to position itself as an educator in wellness to develop relationships with children as they grow

With the *Spa Business* team just back from this year's Global Wellness Summit (GWS), we have much to reflect on – and share our highlights on p88.

Fresh numbers revealed at the summit show the global wellness economy has grown to US\$5.6 trillion, with the spa sector and thermal/mineral springs segments being worth US\$104.5 billion and US\$46.3 billion of that respectively (see p22).

The majority of the other sectors which make up the global wellness economy – from wellness tourism to public health, prevention and personalised medicine – are all part of the spa ecosystem and with projections of a 52 per cent increase in the wellness economy by 2027, it means we're sitting within some huge and fast-growing markets.

To keep on this upward trajectory, spas need to branch out from their traditional gen X and baby boomer markets and at the GWS, there was a strong focus on capturing a younger clientele.

A conference panel talked about a huge market of younger people who are engaged with exercise, physical activity and sport and will eventually supersede the current generation of spa-goers, presenting operators with new audiences and opportunities to pivot their model to active wellness.

Krip Rojanastien, CEO and chair of Chiva-Som spoke about the importance of embracing families, highlighting efforts at sister property Zula Wellness in Qatar. On p66, Niamh O'Connell reveals how families will be a key focus for Jumeirah moving forward as well. Catering to multiple generations is a trend we've identified in our Spa Foresight report, with family-friendly facilities or family wellness programmes coming to market more frequently (see www.spabusiness.com/foresight2023).



PHOTO: ANDREW HARRISON

It's crucial wellness knowledge is built into education

Spas can provide much-needed services and also engage with the customers of the future

"It's crucial that wellness knowledge and understanding be built into early education so it lasts a lifetime," Rojanastien said. Spa consultant Amy McDonald echoed these thoughts, saying: "If resorts or day spas can reach out and bring something as simple as mindfulness to teens to teach them about gratitude, that could be transformational, as these are powerful tools."

The spa and wellness sector has a real chance to make a difference to the wellbeing of children – whether that's by adapting offerings so they're more family-friendly or sharing valuable expertise. Either way, it can provide much-needed services, while also engaging with the customers of the future. ●

Katie Barnes, editor, katiebarnes@spabusiness.com

Contact Spa Business: +44 (0)1462 431385 theteam@spabusiness.com
spabusiness.com @spabusinessmag Facebook.com/spabusiness

uniting the world of spa and wellness

www.spabusiness.com

**5 Editor's letter** Early start

Teaching younger generations about wellness can only benefit the sector

10 Spa people Simone Biles

Champions mental health at this year's Global Wellness Summit

12 Spa people Justin Wiggan

On inventing haptic suits which translate plant and rock frequencies into vibrations which massage people

14 Spa people Andrei Fomin

Banya No 1 founder's mission to take the Russian heat experience mainstream

19 Spa Business news**22 News report** Peak performance

Fresh research shows the global wellness economy is now worth US\$5.6 trillion

24 Menu engineering**At your service**

Ruby Wax to host stress-busting retreat and Bürgenstock creates contrast bathing circuits

30 Interview Simone Gibertoni

Clinique La Prairie's CEO reveals highly ambitious plans to open 50 branded properties

40 Everyone's talking about Pay-what-you-can packages

Is it possible for customers to only pay what they can afford, while still looking after the bottom line?

44 Philanthropy Your Safe Place

We take a look at Golden Door's work with domestic abuse charities

48 Association focus**Thermal heritage**

Jane Kitchen finds out how two key associations are protecting and promoting the unique cultural relevances of Europe's spa towns



WaldSpa, Austria, p76

PHOTOGRAPHY: TELFORD/PIRELLA GÖTTSCHE LOWE

Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts, p86



SHANE BULLOCK/REUTERS/GETTY IMAGES



Thermal spa towns across Europe, p48

WESLEY PIERRE/REUTERS

56 Interview Paul Simons

As he retires from the Great Spa Towns of Europe, the industry leader reflects on his long and esteemed career

62 Jeremy McCarthy Recipe for success

What does it take to create a thriving spa business? Our contributing editor investigates

66 Interview Niamh O'Connell

What does Jumeirah's first vice president of wellbeing have planned for the Middle East-based hospitality group?

76 Nature spas Tree of life

Lisa Starr discovers two retreats in Austria and Italy which base their wellbeing concepts on forests

88 Event report Global Wellness Summit 2023

International spa figures convene in Miami for the 15th GWS. Jane Kitchen reveals her top takeaways

98 First person Added value

Mary Bemis takes a peek at the revamped Golden Door and Mohonk Mountain House – two iconic US spa destinations

106 Software Forward thinking

How are spa software suppliers embracing AI? And what are the benefits for operators?

113 Product innovation

We shine a spotlight on some of the latest exciting spa product and equipment launches

120 Spa Business directory

122 Finishing touch Escape route

Destination spas fund a study examining the experiences of over 2,500 health retreat guests across multiple sites

THE SPA BUSINESS TEAM

For email, use contact's fullname@spabusiness.com



Editorial director
Liz Terry
+44 (0)1462 431385



Publisher
Astrid Ros
+44 (0)1462 471911



Editor
Katie Barnes
+44 (0)1462 471925



Assistant editor
Megan Whitby
+44 (0)1462 471906



Editor-at-large
Jane Kitchen
+44 (0)1462 431385



Contributing editor
Jeremy McCarthy
+44 (0)1462 431385



Contributing editor
Lisa Starr
+44 (0)1462 431385



- Customer service
+44 (0)1462 431385
- Advertising
+44 (0)1462 471911
- Subscriptions
+44 (0)1462 431385
- Circulation
+44 (0)1462 471932
- Finance
+44 (0)1462 471901
- Credit control
+44 (0)1462 471901

Choose how you read Spa Business

Print

Spa Business magazine is available in print from www.leisuresubs.com

Spa Business digital

Read free online and enjoy extra links and searchability www.spabusiness.com/digital

Spa Business PDF

A PDF edition is available to read offline at: www.spabusiness.com/pdf

More resources

Sign up for free digital www.spabusiness.com/signup

Spa Business insider www.spabusiness.com/insider

Spa Business Handbook www.spahandbook.com

Spa Business Library www.spabusiness.com/archive

Buyer Search Engine www.spa-kit.net

HCM magazine www.HCMmag.com

Fit Tech magazine www.fittechglobal.com

Get Spa Business in print

Sign up for Spa Business at www.leisuresubs.com or email subs@leisuremedia.com.

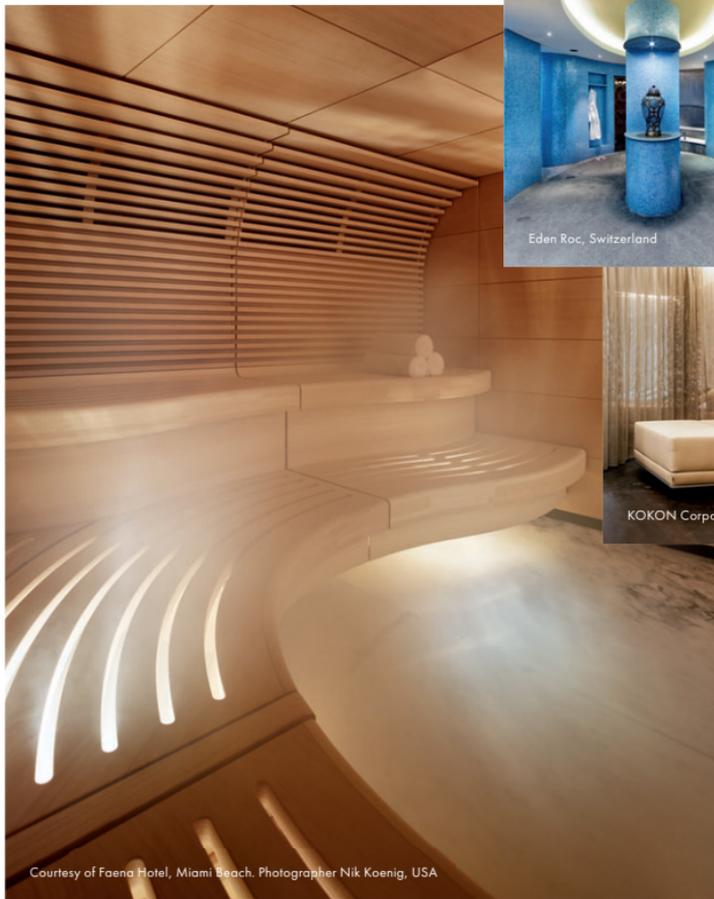
Annual subscription rates are UK £48, Europe £65, rest of world £94, students (UK) £25.

Copyright Spa Business is published four times a year by Leisure Media Global, PO Box 424, Hitchin, SG5 9GF, UK. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the publisher. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recorded or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright holder, Cybertrek Ltd.

Print and distribution Printed by The Manson Group Ltd. Distributed by Royal Mail Group Ltd and Whistl Ltd in the UK and Total Mail Ltd globally.

© Cybertrek Ltd 2023
ISSN 1479-912X (print) 2397-236X (online)

DEFINING SPA. SINCE 1928.



Courtesy of Faena Hotel, Miami Beach. Photographer Nik Koenig, USA



Eden Roc, Switzerland



KOKON Corporate Campus, Liechtenstein

KLAFS
MY SAUNA AND SPA

As a global manufacturer of premium saunas and spa solutions, we know what it takes to become a talking point: outstanding comfort and uncompromising quality. To bring each customer's unique vision to life we select only the finest materials and craft them with passion and painstaking care. Let us inspire you and help you offer your guests a one-of-a-kind spa experience.

Find out more at www.klafs.com

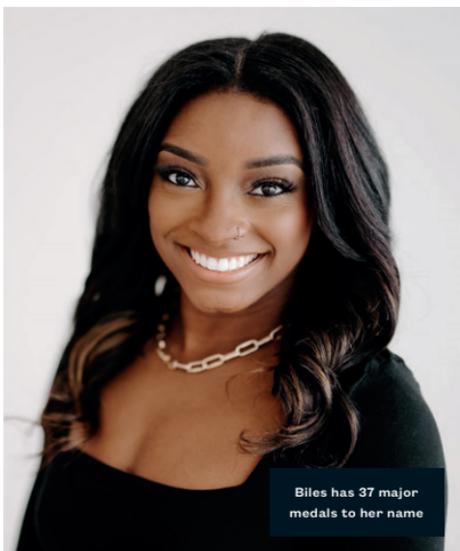
Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

spa people



I've done gymnastics on broken ribs, shattered toes, kidney stones and experienced sexual abuse

Simone Biles, US gymnast



The world's most decorated gymnast Simone Biles headlined the 17th Global Wellness Summit in Miami this November (see p88) with a keynote on mental health and resilience – an area that's gathering great momentum in spa circles.

Biles – who has 37 Olympic and World Championship medals under her belt – took to the stage to share how she's championing mental wellbeing.

PRIORITISING SELF-BELIEF

With more and more operators offering mental health programmes, adding a focus on self-belief could be key according to Biles, who competed in her first Olympic games aged just 16.

"When I was growing up and realised I had a gift for gymnastics, I was afraid of being great and would self-sabotage," she said, adding that it was only after seeking the help of a sports psychologist and learning to believe in herself that she began competing to the best of her ability.

"I know now that you can't be afraid of being great or to unleash that power in your mind because you can open yourself up to so many things.

"Obviously it was very hard being on a world stage at such a young age and having so many people judge me – and now you've also got everyone online trying to get their 2 cents in too. So I try not to think about it. I've become a lot better at blocking out that noise."

PAUSING FOR THOUGHT

Talking about the importance of prioritising mental wellness and taking a break, also resonated with delegates.

Although she's only 26, Biles has already overcome major challenges in her career. In 2016, news broke that she was a survivor of the USA Gymnastics sex abuse scandal and in 2021 she withdrew from the final of the Tokyo Olympics after suffering from a case of the twisties.



The gymnast keynoted at GWS, just a month after claiming two golds at the World Championships



was at my breaking point. I'm very happy that my mind and my body - although they were having that disconnect - knew I needed to stop and sit down."

OKAY NOT TO BE OKAY

Biles ended her fascinating talk by paying tribute to pro basketball player Kevin Love and tennis star Naomi Osaka for their hard work in opening up a dialogue about mental wellbeing in sport. "After Tokyo, I was able to join that conversation and help and teach people that it's okay not to be okay," she said.

In amongst her busy gymnast schedule - involving 6 to 7 hours of training every day - Biles makes her mental health a priority and attends weekly therapy sessions as well as taking medication for her anxiety. "Everyone deserves proper help, seeking it out shows how strong you are."

The summit concluded Biles' time at the event by honouring her with its annual Debra Simon Award. The accolade is given to an individual who has achieved excellence in the field of mental health and wellness and has been a leader, advocate or innovator in wellness programmes or pathways that help people thrive mentally. ●

After Tokyo, I was able to teach people that it's okay not to be okay

“

Biles received a summit award for her work in mental health



"People were saying: 'she's just quit'. That's not it. I've done gymnastics on broken ribs, shattered toes, kidney stones, experienced sexual abuse - and I still came back to the sport," she said.

"The twisties are where your mind and body aren't syncing up and you lose all air and spatial awareness.

"It's very scary and dangerous for gymnasts and can't be fixed overnight. It can take weeks and months."

Biles says the difficulty with the twisties is that it's an invisible mental ailment which meant people were unsympathetic because they couldn't see a physical problem. "I know a lot of people looked down upon it, but I



Wiggan is working with Myndstream and Six Senses

The haptic suits will translate plant and rock frequencies into vibrations to massage people

Justin Wiggan

sound artist and founder of Glass Twin

Inventor Justin Wiggan is creating a haptic suit that massages people by translating the electrical impulses and frequencies from vegetation and minerals into vibrations.

Wiggan composes soundscapes from plant, tree, rock and crystal energy – a process known as bio sonification – and believes the suits “will be a game-changer in the integration of human empathy and emotion in green spaces for spas.

“They’ll be fully immersive vibrational cocoons, almost like a green womb, to experience a grounding connection to nature and to re-tox,” he says, adding it’s a two-way conversation between plants and humans as readings change in accordance with the energy levels of the person near it.

Sparking spa interest

Hosted by his company Glass Twin, Wiggan’s healing soundtracks have caught the attention of several global spa companies. He’s recently secured partnerships with wellness music platform Myndstream, as well as Six Senses. He’s also working

with international consultants such as Bonnie Baker and Diana Mestre to realise sound art-based wellness initiatives.

They’re like green wombs ... which offer a grounding connection to nature

with international consultants such as Bonnie Baker and Diana Mestre to realise sound art-based wellness initiatives.

He suggests that bio sonification equipment could be set up in spa gardens and interactive living bio walls indoors, or in any rooms with plants and crystals, so guests can immerse themselves in the experience.

People who’ve experienced Wiggan’s quirky plant bio sonification pop-ups – hosted by his company Glass Twin – report big emotional and physical changes. In addition, a recent study of his work by the UK’s University of Plymouth indicated

a positive effect on blood pressure and stress levels.

The inspiration

Wiggan has been fascinated by sound from a young age after being told he might lose his sight as a child, which inspired him to keenly train his sense of hearing.

However, his focus on wellness came later on following a cancer diagnosis which revealed to him how powerful sound can be in vulnerable situations.

This led Wiggan to launch Glass Twin with the intention of improving people’s wellbeing by reconnecting them with sound. ●



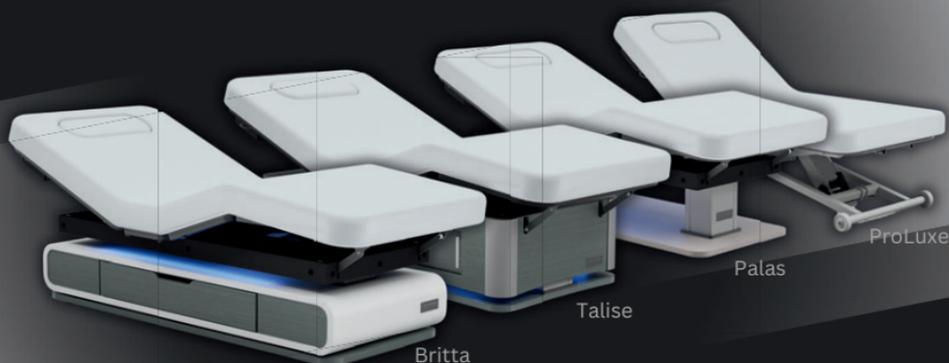


OAKWORKS®

ADA COMPLIANT
LOW-HEIGHT
COLLECTION

Excellence in wellness since 1978

MADE IN USA



Experience luxury with our award-winning ADA compliant low-height table collection measured at a true 18.9" (48cm).



Jessica Wadley | spatables.com | +1 717-659-7403 | jwadley@oakworks.com

Get **Spa Business & Spa Business Insider** magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup



PHOTO: JANE KITCHEN



“

Our goal is to take the banya into the global mainstream of wellness and spas

Andrei Fomin, founder and managing director, Banya No 1

When you enter the original Banya No 1 in London's hip neighbourhood of Hoxton, you're greeted with celebrity photos - Justin Bieber, Kate Moss, Renee Zellweger - all of whom have come here for the famous Parenie treatment. A revitalising ritual performed in a special Russian sauna that uses super-heated steam, Parenie uses oak, birch and eucalyptus branches to move the hot air around. It's similar to augguss, but the warm leafy bunches are also pressed to the body for

Fomin is looking at further sites in Georgia, France, Spain, Austria, Dubai and the US

”

deep muscle relief. Following this, a sauna master guides you to a cold bucket shower, then to an icy-cold plunge - to create a sense of invigoration, as well as to boost circulation and improve the immune system. But after the cold plunge, you don a snug robe and spend time resting before starting all over again.

Opened 11 years ago, Banya No 1 has steadily built up a following among both locals and visitors, according to founder and managing director Andrei Fomin. In 2021, a second location launched in the west London neighbourhood of Chiswick and

last year, the first international Banya No 1 opened in Tbilisi, Georgia, which includes overnight accommodation.

But Fomin also has his sights set further afield. "Our goal is to take the banya into the global mainstream."

Rest and refuel

The Russian banya has been around for centuries and Fomin knows he's not the first to open one in London, explaining that they were popular with Jewish immigrants in the late 19th century. But the last facility closed in 1943 and he feels Banya No 1 brings something different to the table.

Its cycle of hot-cold-rest-repeat sees guests usually booking a three-hour session. And the 'rest' part of the cycle is crucial, says

It's a cycle of hot-cold-rest-repeat and guests usually book a three-hour session



Food and drink are key - it's important to refuel between cycles

Fomin. "The banya session is very flexible. Some people visit the steamroom a couple of times, then have the Parenie or another treatment, while others go five times or even more. The only thing we recommend is to take a rest. The golden rule is to spend double the time that you spent in the steamroom for the rest."

Food and drink are also key - they refuel you and replenish the water and electrolytes lost when sweating. Guests are designated a restaurant booth for their stay and served traditional food like salt-cured salmon, mushroom tea or Kvass, a fermented drink made of rye bread and honey.

Banya to the core

The Hoxton Banya No 1 includes a public, shared area with a larger steamroom, cold plunge ▶

SPA PEOPLE

► and bucket shower, with prices ranging from £80 (US\$102, €92) for a 3-hour, off-peak banya with Parenie, to £190 (US\$241, €220) for the full package, including a three-hour banya at peak times, Parenie, honey and salt scrub, 25-minute massage, sea buckthorn tea and other delicacies.

A private banya, called Taiga, is also available to rent for up to 10 people at £200 (US\$251, €230) per hour for a minimum of 2 hours. It's popular with couples or groups of friends and packages including treatments are also available.

But at the heart of the offering is the banya. "Unlike saunas, which are often secondary facilities, it's a focal point," says Fomin. The authentic cabin is built from 6m-long kelo logs - a type of Arctic pine he's particular about because it continues standing for 50-100



Banya No 1 is a family-friendly experience

years after it dies and when cut is fully dried and immediately airtight so steam cannot escape. Humidity inside is up to 60 per cent and the 60-70°C steam - created at a scorching 700°C in a massive brick stove lined with cast iron - feels intense.

Global expansion

The experience at Banya No 1 is family-friendly. In the public banya, children must be at least eight years old, but in the private banya, it's at the discretion of the parents. Unlike many spas, the male/female ratio is an almost even 52/48 split. More than half (55 per cent) come with their partners, 30 per cent are solo guests and 15 per cent come as part of a group.

"Banya No 1 customers are typically well-travelled, curious people who love to try new things," says Fomin. "And because we take them out of their comfort zone, that creates a memorable experience. We're now building on the success story of the banya concept and taking it around the world - be it a

plug-and-play addition to a hotel spa or a standalone bathhouse."

A third London location in Fulham spanning 800sq m will open in 2025, as well as a larger facility in Tbilisi that will offer traditional mud treatments. He's also looking at sites in France, Spain, Austria, Dubai and the US.

"Banya is cultural," says Fomin. "It has nothing to do with nations or politics. Banya is everywhere - Kazakhstan, Armenia, Ukraine and the Baltic states. It might have different names - like in Latvia, it's a part - but the principles are the same."

He points to a sign from the 19th century for an original Russian banya in London, a copy of which is on display in the restaurant. 'Keep fit and well by regular visits to the real Russian Vapour Baths,' it reads.

"It's so interesting to me," Fomin concludes, adding that the marketing message hasn't changed in 100 years. "These are old and time-proven practices. It's all about the benefits of the heat and the cold. Everyone knows this now." ●

The sauna masters are specially trained

Because we take people out of their comfort zone, it creates a memorable experience



Protect + Smooth, Daily

WITH THE BAKUCHIOL + NIACINAMIDE
COLLECTION



95%
of users agreed skin
feels and appears
smoother*
BAKUCHIOL + NIACINAMIDE
MOISTURIZER

SPF 30
Lightweight
All Mineral SPF
RADIANT PROTECTION
SPF FLUID

Reveal a rejuvenated
complexion with bakuchiol
and niacinamide.

*In vivo study results after 12 weeks



ÉMINENCE
ORGANIC SKIN CARE
HUNGARY • SINCE 1958

www.eminenceorganics.com



Build a lasting partnership
with Eminence Organics!
Scan this code to learn
about partnership features.

Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup



SOTHYS

PARIS

Sothys, our differences.

01. A historic family business focused on excellence
02. Natural active ingredients created by Les Jardins Sothys™ (the Sothys Gardens).
03. The science of results.
04. Made in France with eco responsible production
05. Our brand ambassador... the beauty therapist
06. The art of professional treatments
07. Sothys exclusively in beauty institutes, clinics and spas.



© 2011 Sothys. Tous droits réservés. Toute réimpression ou utilisation non autorisée sans la permission écrite de la Sothys est formellement interdite. Toute réimpression ou utilisation non autorisée sans la permission écrite de la Sothys est formellement interdite.

WWW.SOTHYS.COM

EXCLUSIVELY IN BEAUTY INSTITUTES & SPAS

Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

John Lewis and Sports Illustrated get serious about wellness

A major UK retailer, John Lewis, is launching a service which will enable customers to be proactive about managing their health, while also getting guidance on exercise and nutrition.

The company, which already offers access to opticians and advice to expectant parents in its department stores, has teamed up with health diagnostics outfit, Randox Health, to offer the preventative health service.

Shoppers will be able to get tests for gut health, fertility and hormone health, as well as genetic screening, while add-on services will deliver options to help them optimise their physical activity, training and performance.

Prior to their consultation, customers will complete a medical and lifestyle questionnaire and once samples have been analysed, they'll be sent a diagnostics report within two to five working days. This will include their results, an interpretation of the findings and suggestions about next steps. The results can be shared with other medical professionals.

John Lewis joins a growing number of big-name brands joining the wellness movement.

Another prime example is established US publication *Sports Illustrated* which has announced

plans to open a network of branded resort and lifestyle complexes in the US, following a deal between Travel + Leisure Co and Sports Hospitality Ventures.

Each Sports Illustrated Resort campus is expected to feature a full-service hotel, a vacation club and residences, as well as a host of branded attractions from live-action sports and entertainment to wellness, dining and relaxation amenities.

All will share a design that immerses guests in iconic moments from *Sports Illustrated's* 70-year history. **More:** http://lei.sr/V4r3u_B

John Lewis shoppers will be able to get tests for gut, fertility and hormone health



TOPHER HAVEL/ALAMY/GETTY

Emlyn Brown predicts 2024 wellness travel trends

Athlete-inspired wellness, social wellbeing and active nutrition are three of the hottest trends set to shape the wellness sector in 2024, according to Emlyn Brown, Accor's global senior vice president of wellbeing strategy, design and development.

In Brown's opinion, today's guests are no longer content with indulging in traditional spa treatments alone.

He says it's widely acknowledged among the global hospitality industry that a fundamental societal shift has taken place over the past few



Social wellness is on the up



Emlyn Brown

years. What was once called the 'wellness trend' has taken root as consumers and travellers worldwide are making long-term commitments toward their health and wellbeing.

Looking to 2024, he expects optimising sleep for wellbeing, mindfulness enhanced

by technology and pro-ageing services including infrared saunas, IV therapy and high-tech face and bodycare treatments to become mainstream, along with nonsurgical aesthetic procedures, such as microneedling, lasers and oxygen jets.

More: http://lei.sr/d3UG6_B



Sandie Johannessen

Sandie Johannessen joins Minor

Sandie Johannessen has been appointed group director of spa and wellness at Minor. The hotel group owns and operates more than 500 hotels and 70 spas globally.

Johannessen now oversees the Asia branch of Minor's spa management arm, MSpa International.

A global industry veteran with more than two decades of experience, she's worked for Zulal Wellness Resort, Aman, Four Seasons and Shangri-La. **More:** http://lei.sr/u7r8B_B

ALB BRENK/SHUTTERSTOCK

ALAMY



RAKxa draws on traditional Thai medicine



Jayasom will be designed to attract a young wellness consumer

RAKxa unveils first European partnership in Tuscany

Five-star Tuscan resort Castelfalfi has marked the relaunch of its spa by securing a partnership with Thai-based integrative wellness operator RAKxa – which is affiliated with Bangkok's Bumrungrad Hospital.

Thanks to the collaboration, the Castelfalfi Spa menu includes three RAKxa-branded treatments.

- Good Night Sleep – 90 mins (€270, US\$286, £236) or 120 mins (€350, US\$371, £305).
- Tension Release – 60 mins (€190, US\$201, £166), 90 mins (€270, US\$286, £236) or 120 mins (€350, US\$371, £305).
- Seven Chakra Hot Stone Massage – 60 mins (€190, US\$201, £166) or 90 mins (€270, US\$286, £236).

Each draws on RAKxa's philosophy which blends traditional Thai medicine, traditional Chinese medicine, ayurveda and energy healing.

RAKxa has also devised three retreats with a distinct theme: recovery; relaxation; and a one-day spa break.

More: http://lei.sr/q2c8b_B

Chiva-Som sister-brand Jayasom to focus on tech and target younger generation

Destination wellness operator and Chiva-Som sister brand Jayasom plans to launch in Saudi Arabia, Europe, Japan, India and Malaysia as part of a major rollout plan.

The brand's first property will launch in Saudi Arabia in 2024 at the vast upcoming integrative health resort called Amaala.

Speaking to *Spa Business*, Chiva-Som Spa Business development director and Jayasom board member Karen Campbell said plans are underway to open a 35-villa property in Ibiza, Spain, at a 300-year-old olive oil farm surrounded by a pine forest and fruit.

The third Jayasom destination will be a forest retreat in Japan where programming and design will take inspiration from onsens and forest bathing.



Karen Campbell

There are also plans for Jayasom to branch into India, Malaysia and France.

"Although the brands' values are the same, they're distinct," said Campbell.

"In contrast to Chiva-Som, which encourages a digital detox, Jayasom will target the younger generation and focus on tech integration."

Programming will be centred around spa, beauty, aesthetics, nutrition and mental health.

More: http://lei.sr/T7D4t_B



The spa will be completed with an earthy palette and natural materials

First glimpses revealed of Mandarin Oriental Mayfair's subterranean spa

Luxury hotel and spa operator Mandarin Oriental's second London site, Mandarin Oriental Mayfair, will launch in January 2024 with a new spa designed as a boutique sister location to its flagship UK spa at Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park.

With interiors by Tokyo-based design studio Curiosity, the underground spa will feature an indoor heated swimming pool, a sauna, vitality pools, experience showers, steamrooms and a gym.

The Mayfair outpost will be joined by a third Mandarin Oriental property in the UK capital – Mandarin Oriental Bankside – in 2028.

The upcoming openings will be in good company following an influx of recent 2023 spa launches in London, including flagship spas from Raffles and The Peninsula, with new retreats from Rosewood, Six Senses and The Maybourne Group on the way in 2024. More: http://lei.sr/n6Y5w_B

Kamalaya partners with Blue Zones for exclusive retreat

From May 2024, holistic wellness sanctuary Kamalaya Koh Samui in Thailand will host a programme in conjunction with Blue Zones.

The group retreat is based on 20 years of research by Blue Zones, an organisation which studies areas of the world with the highest concentration of centenarians.

Lasting six nights, the programme will enable participants to discover the secrets of longevity and wellbeing from the world's five Blue Zones – Okinawa, Japan; Sardinia, Italy; Nicoya, Costa Rica; Ikaria, Greece; and Loma Linda, California.

The goal is to inspire individuals to lead healthier, happier and more purposeful lives.

“Our collaboration has allowed us to curate an evidence-based



Kamalaya launched in Koh Samui in 2005

programme that uncovers the secrets of the world's longest-lived cultures, empowering our guests to make meaningful changes in their lives,” said Karina Stewart, Kamalaya co-founder and chief wellness officer.

The retreat costs THB246,173 (US\$6,929, £5,565, €6,376) and includes 26 treatments, activities and daily meals. **More:** http://lei.sr/K6u3h_B

DIARY DATES

8-11 January 2024

Hot Springs Connection Conference

Murrieta Hot Springs, California, US

Hot springs owners, operators, general managers, directors and industry professionals gather to discuss the future of the industry.

www.hotspingsconnection.com

2-4 March 2024

World Spa & Wellness Conference & Awards ExCeL, London, UK

Spa stakeholders convene for talks, networking, a trade show and the World Spa & Wellness Awards. Runs alongside Professional Beauty London.

www.worldspawellness.com

8-9 April 2024

Medical Wellness Congress St Martins Spa & Lodge, Frauenkirchen, Austria

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

www.mwcongress.com

11-14 April 2024

Fibo Global Fitness Exhibition Centre, Cologne, Germany

One of the world's largest trade fairs for fitness, wellness and health.

www.fibo.com

23-25 April 2024

ISPA Conference 2024 Phoenix Convention Center, Arizona, US

Spa sector event with an exposition and a varied speaker schedule covering topics such as business strategy and management.

www.experienceispa.com



Vivianne Garcia-Tunon (L) and Patrick Huey (R)



Hyatt and Auberge bolster spa leadership

Two leading hospitality operators, Hyatt and Auberge, have announced corporate wellness appointments to their respective teams.

In a first for the company, Auberge has named Vivianne Garcia-Tunon as its global vice president of wellbeing.

Garcia-Tunon has held health-focused roles in the sector for more than 25 years – for brands including The Well, Espa, Mandarin Oriental and GHM – and is also an interior designer, independent consultant, nutritionist and licensed massage therapist.

Meanwhile, Hyatt has welcomed Patrick Huey as director of global wellbeing operations. He'll report to TJ Abrams, who has led the group's global wellness division since December 2022.

Huey's hospitality and wellness career spans 20-plus years. He's worked around the world – in North America, the Caribbean and Asia – in key spa positions for companies such as Montage and Minor.

More: http://lei.sr/d5c5K_B and <http://lei.sr/p7p5w>

PEAK PERFORMANCE

Fresh figures show the global wellness market is growing at a rapid pace and will maintain momentum

The global wellness economy has exceeded US\$5.6 trillion and will reach US\$8.5 trillion by 2027, according to the 2023 *Global Wellness Economy Monitor* report.

The figures, just released by the Global Wellness Institute (GWI), represent a major turnaround after COVID-19 which saw the market shrink from US\$4.9 trillion to US\$4.4 trillion (11 per cent) between 2019 and 2020.

It's since grown 27 per cent and seven of the 11 wellness sectors now exceed their 2019, pre-pandemic values (see Diagram 1).

SPA-RELATED SECTORS

The report shows that the traditional and complementary medicine sector grew by 7.4 per cent and is now worth US\$518.6 billion.

The global spa market is valued at US\$104.5 billion and thermal/mineral springs at US\$46 billion. While these sectors increased by 22.3 per cent and 7.7 per

cent respectively in 2022, they're still behind their 2019 values of US\$113.8 billion and US\$65.7 billion.

Yet, GWI predicts that a full recovery for these markets will be swift, increasing by 8.3 per cent and 14.3 per cent a year respectively, given pent-up demand. By 2027 it estimates that the spa industry will be worth US\$156.1 billion and thermal/mineral springs will generate US\$90.5 billion (see Diagram 2).

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Wellness markets in all global regions have fully recovered from the pandemic, but North America (up 123 per cent), Middle East-North Africa (up 119 per cent) and Europe (up 114 per cent) have shown the most powerful growth rates since 2019.

In 2022, the North American market (US\$1.9 trillion) surpassed Asia-Pacific (US\$1.7 trillion) as the largest regional wellness economy. These two regions, along with Europe (US\$1.5 trillion), now make up 90 per cent of the entire wellness market.

Diagram 1: Global Wellness Economy – US\$5.6 trillion in 2022*



*Note: Numbers don't add to total due to overlap in sectors
*Source: Global Wellness Economy Monitor 2023

SUMMIT 2023



GWI chair Susie Ellis (in yellow) with report researchers Ophelia Yeung, Tonia Callender and Katherine Johnston

Diagram 2: Economy Growth Projections for Key Spa-Related Sectors*

	Market size (US\$ billions)		Projected market size (US\$ billions)					Projected average annual growth 2022-2027
	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	
Wellness tourism	\$720.4	\$650.7	\$867.9	\$1,029.5	\$1,152.6	\$1,275.1	\$1,399.6	16.6%
Traditional & complementary medicine	\$486.6	\$518.6	\$569.5	\$615.1	\$662.1	\$713.1	\$768.2	8.2%
Wellness real estate	\$225.2	\$397.7	\$472.7	\$566.6	\$667.0	\$770.1	\$887.5	17.4%
Spas	\$113.8	\$104.5	\$122.0	\$133.3	\$141.3	\$148.8	\$156.1	8.4%
Thermal/mineral springs	\$65.7	\$46.3	\$57.9	\$66.6	\$74.5	\$82.4	\$90.5	14.3%

*Source: Global Wellness Economy Monitor 2023



The global wellness economy will have a value of US\$8.5 trillion by 2027

The report also states that per capita spending on wellness is highest in North America (US\$5,108) and Europe (US\$1,596).

Presenting the findings at the Global Wellness Summit in November (see p88), report co-author Ophelia Yeung said: "We're very bullish about the wellness economy. Wellness has become a dominant consumer value and interest in it is only going to grow."

"But we also have a lot of unknown factors including widening wealth gaps, uncertain economic conditions and rapidly changing geopolitics that will affect the flow of people, capital, technology and ideas."

"How the wellness economy will do will depend on the interplay of all of these factors." ●

At your service

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



Bath & Barley,
Bruges, Belgium

60 minutes

€99 (US\$111, £85)

The baths are filled with beer, water, yeast and hops

Medieval beer baths in Belgium

A new subterranean spa in Bruges, Belgium is tapping into a wellbeing tradition from the Middle Ages which is claimed to cleanse people's skin and improve their mental health.

Bath & Barley's signature package sees guests bathe in a mixture of warm beer, water, yeast and hops while enjoying a draught of the drink as they sit in their tub. Guests complete the experience by relaxing on a bed of straw – another age-old practice which is believed to relieve sore joints and muscle pain.

This is the second site operated by the Belgian beer day spa brand, which opened its flagship location in Brussels two years ago.

Sustainable bee therapy creates a buzz in Scotland

Apitherapy – AKA bee therapy – is taking flight in Scotland where the vibrations of 60,000 honey bees are being used to massage and calm guests.

Herb Majesty is the company behind the offering and owner Charlotte Blackler says the vibrations from the bees' wings have a positive energising effect which calms and relaxes.

During the experience, guests lie in one of six wooden 'apipod' huts on a sheepskin-covered bed with a bee hive nestled underneath. The bees then come and go freely through a hive entrance and are separated from guests by a mesh screen meaning only sounds and smells pass through.

"You de-stress listening to the sounds of the bees going about their daily life, surrounded by the aromas of honey, propolis, nectar and pollen," Blackler says.



Monachyle Mhor
Hotel, Perthshire, Scotland

45 minutes

£80 (US\$103, €92)

Massaging vibrations come from bee hives under the beds

Banyan Tree locations in China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico and Thailand

Curated experiences highlight local traditions and culture

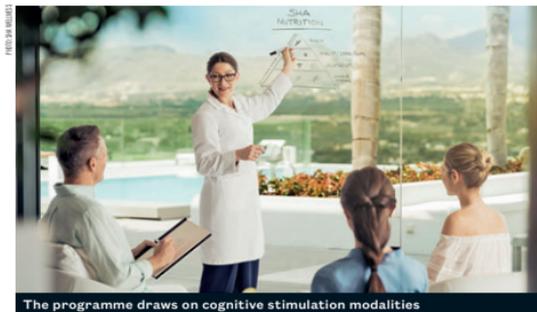
Banyan Tree connects guests with communities

Banyan Tree Group has launched a Stay For Good programme, to offer travellers authentic experiences that not only deepen their connection with each destination but also make a positive impact on the local communities by respecting and preserving their heritage and traditions.

The initiative offers a wide range of experiences carefully curated by the team, including exploring the bamboo forests of Anji in China, crafting traditional thatched roofs in Kyoto, discovering the Nyonya heritage of Penang and learning about the minority Muslim community of Krabi in Thailand.

“Our approach is inspired by the concept of regenerative tourism,” said Adhiyanto Goen, head of communications for Banyan Tree Group.

PHOTO: SHANGHAI SPA



The programme draws on cognitive stimulation modalities

SHA spotlights importance of wellbeing in leadership

Spanish destination spa SHA Wellness has devised a Leader's Performance Programme for executives facing high levels of activity, effort and stress on a daily basis.

Drawing on research and modalities from its Cognitive Development & Brain Stimulation Unit, the new medically-angled programme has been devised

to assist leaders to help them achieve optimal performance and productivity while showing them how to react to stress in the best way.

- SHA Wellness, Alicante, Spain**
- Seven days**
- €9,600 (US\$10,787, £8,238)**

Retreat targets teenagers

The Rewire Retreat has launched a programme to teach teenage girls how to regulate their emotions and develop a strong sense of self in today's increasingly digital world.

Hosted by transformation specialist Natasha Richardson, the experience sees attendants arrive with chronic anxiety including physical symptoms and a deep fear of the unknown.

Body-, brain- and breath-based techniques are used to manage emotions, while decision-making tools are taught to help the young adults embrace the unknown and become clearer about what they want in life and why.

The schedule is complemented with sound baths, morning yoga, live music, play, camp-fires, foraging and wild walks.

- The Center, The Hermitage at 42 Acres, Somerset, England**
- Three days**
- £1,500 (US\$1,964, €1,748)**

- 📍 Broughton Hall Estate, Skipton, England
- 🕒 Five nights
- 💰 £1,400 (€1,632, US\$1,833)

Ruby Wax to host stress-busting retreat

British-American comic Ruby Wax is heading to a country mansion in northern England in March 2024 to lead a five-night programme for those suffering from long-term stress.

She's teaming up with author Rahla Xenopoulos and Buddhist monk and meditation trainer Gelong Thubten to deliver the agenda.

"Five hundred years ago no one died of stress: we invented this concept and now we let it rule us," says Wax.

"Thubten, Rahla and I are offering this retreat because we know that when we feel connected to our bodies and minds, it's as if we've found home. And when we find home, things like uncertainty and loneliness don't pack the same punch."



This will be the second time Wax has led the wellness programme

Yorkshire bolthole

The upcoming programme will be hosted at Avalon Wellbeing, a retreat centre and spa which is part of Broughton Sanctuary – a 16th-century mansion in Yorkshire that's situated within 3,000 sprawling acres.



Country mansion Broughton Sanctuary will host the retreat



Time will be spent unwinding in the onsite Avalon Wellbeing spa

The space offers an abundance of wellness features ranging from modern spa facilities, daily meditation sessions and workshops to wild swimming, forest bathing and moon baths.

"The aim of this retreat is to help guests find that refuge, or help them build one," explains Wax, adding that the experience will feature yoga, guided walks,

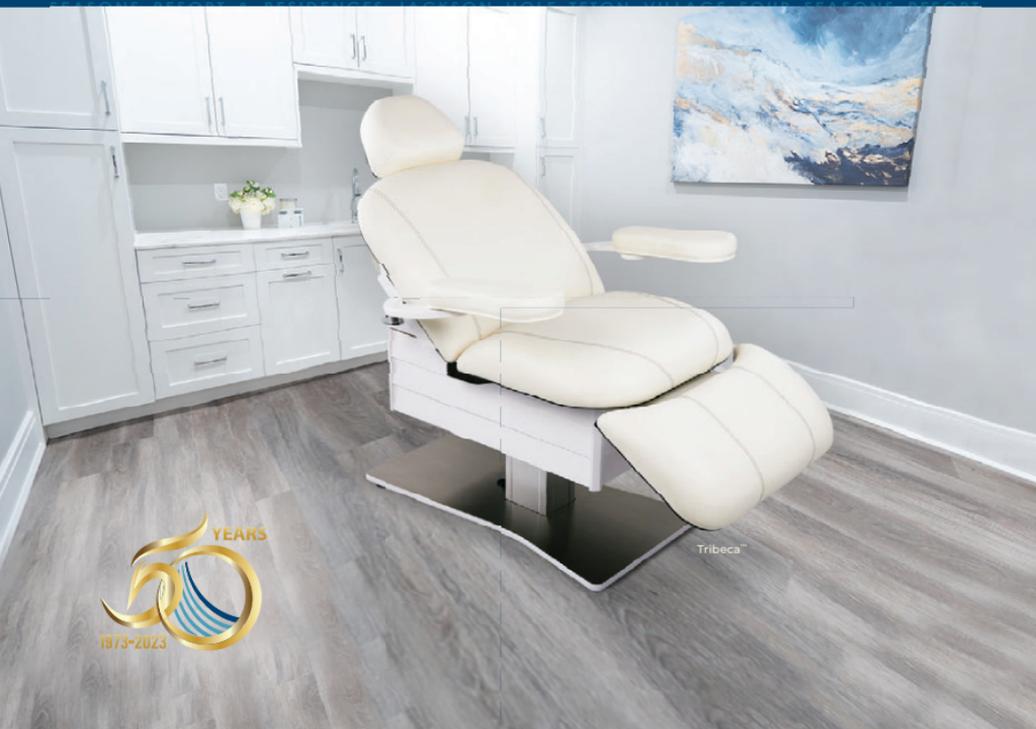
group mealtimes and time spent unwinding in the spa, including individual wellbeing treatments.

Therapies on offer range from acupuncture, shamanic healing and psychotherapy to herbal medicine, trauma release, varying forms of bodywork and sound baths.

The March event will be the second of its kind, following on from Wax's debut retreat in late 2023.

ACQUALINA RESORT AT SPA & RESIDENCES ON THE BEACH · ANDA SPA · ANDAZ SCOTTSDALE
 RESORT ARIA RESORT & CASINO · ARIA SKY SUITES · BACCARAT HOTEL NEW YORK · BANYAN
 TREE SPA MAYAKO · BILBAO · BIRCHMOUNT SPA · BIRCHMOUNT SPA AT EAU PALM ·
 BEACH RESORT & SPA · EDGE SPA · ELEGANT SPA · FAIRMONT HOTEL CRIM · FAIRMONT
 SCOTTSDALE PRINCESS · FAIRMONT SPA · FAIRMONT SPA · FAIRMONT SPA · FAIRMONT SPA ·
 CLUB · FOUR SEASONS HOTEL · FOUR SEASONS HOTEL · FOUR SEASONS HOTEL BOSTON · FOUR SEASONS
 HOTEL DENVER · FOUR SEASONS HOTEL LAS VEGAS · FOUR SEASONS HOTEL ONE DALTON
 STREET, BOSTON MANDARIN ORIENTAL · MANDARIN ORIENTAL · MANDARIN ORIENTAL HOTEL PHILADELPHIA AT COMCAST
 CENTER · FOUR SEASONS HOTEL · FOUR SEASONS HOTEL · FOUR SEASONS HOTEL WESTLAKE VILLAGE ·
 WESTLAKE VILLAGE · FOUR SEASONS HOTEL WESTLAKE VILLAGE BEVERLY HILLS · FOUR

The World's Finest Spas Choose



SUSTAINABLE | BESPOKE | INNOVATIVE



2016 Sustainable
Manufacturer
of the Year

GOLD SPONSOR



Built to Order
Configurable
Hand-finished



Award Winner - Equipment
2014, 2015, 2017, 2018,
2019, 2020, 2021, 2022

+1 760-597-2155 · info@livingearthcrafts.com

View our award
winning collection!



Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup



Kitchen was thrilled to see a focus on Kneipp walking

📍 The Bürgenstock Collection, Switzerland
 ⌚ 40-120 minutes
 💰 Free



Jane Kitchen

Jane Kitchen tries out new contrast bathing circuits in Switzerland

On a recent visit to Bürgenstock's Alpine Spa, one of four expansive hotel spas by the operator in Switzerland, I tried a new self-guided hydrotherapy programme that's been created to maximise the benefits of contrast bathing.

The three Hydrotherapy Journeys – Relax, Regenerate and Activate – last between 40 and 120 minutes and instructions are printed on waterproof cards which fit into spa robe pockets.

Myself and three friends opted for the Regenerate

pathway. The 90-minute circuit focuses on reducing inflammation, using heat to detoxify and cold to relieve muscle soreness and revitalise.

Maximising benefits

It began with light movement in an indoor pool for 10 minutes, followed by five minutes of Kneipp walking – something none of us had tried before. As a fan of Kneipp therapy, I was thrilled to see it highlighted and explained, especially as it's not so well known.

Next, we spent 10 minutes in the dimly lit Saline Floating Bath – the circuit suggested this was the right duration to reap the most benefits.

Two five-minute trips to an ice room – between rest and relaxation breaks – left us feeling alert and energised before warming up for 10 minutes in the Aroma Sauna. A quick cold plunge got us out of our comfort zones followed by a visit to the striking Panorama Sauna.

The journey ended in an outdoor natural pool,

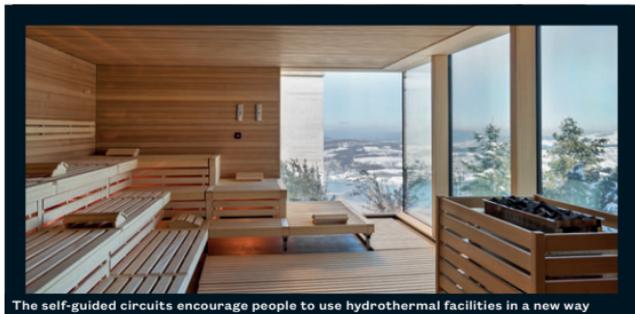
which in October was a few degrees cooler than the cold plunge, but we all managed to brave the waters, egging each other on.

Attracting new markets

Maggie Derblay, Bürgenstock's area director of spa, wellness and recreation, created the journeys with wellness specialist Paula Alons-Maside to attract new markets and drive repeat visits. She says: "We wanted to make sure that the journeys were accessible to all, including small groups or solo travellers, with different points of entry."

Derblay says feedback has been positive, specifically regarding ease of use, flow, elements of surprise and discovery and the overall feeling achieved afterwards.

As a group activity, the journeys were a lot of fun, encouraging us on a pathway we probably wouldn't have taken on our own. And the contrast bathing and social spa-ing elements are right on trend. ●



The self-guided circuits encourage people to use hydrothermal facilities in a new way

myBlend

WHEN TOUCH MEETS TECHNOLOGY

myBlend, the first personalised, global beauty ecosystem combining food supplements, cosmetic treatments and the best of beauty tech.



**HIGH PERFORMANCE SKIN CARE.
CUTTING-EDGE BEAUTY TECH.
HIGH TOUCH EXPERIENCE.**

Get in touch : contact@my-blend.com
Visit us at La Maison myBlend, 23 rue Debelleyme - 75003 Paris

Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

SIMONE GIBERTONI

Swiss medical resort Clinique La Prairie is on the cusp of a major global rollout which will see it open up to 50 properties. Megan Whitby talks to its CEO about what the future holds

Founded in 1931 by professor Paul Niehans, Clinique La Prairie (CLP) has carved out a name for itself as one of the leading medical wellness brands. CLP's flagship resort is based in Montreux, a picturesque Swiss town on the shores of Lake Geneva.

It focuses on four pillars – medical insight, wellness, nutrition and movement and its method stands out, thanks to its use of DNA testing to customise programmes, as well as the use of its famous Clinique La Prairie Extract, Cellular Genomic supplements and Holistic Health supplements.

Now approaching its centenary, CLP is entering a new chapter focused on global expansion and innovation. It's revealed city-based satellite sites – known as Longevity Hubs – in Madrid, Bangkok, Doha and Taipei. Health Resorts are also on the cards, with China and Saudi Arabia being the first destinations in the next few years. In total, the goal is to open an ambitious 50 new properties.

It's safe to say CLP is building up some serious momentum. But how will the brand stay true to its roots and enhance its existing offering while expanding? *Spa Business* speaks to CEO Simone Gibertoni to learn more.

How did you get into wellness?

I started out as a strategy and organisational consultant, overseeing projects for luxury businesses in Italy and internationally, before moving into GM and CEO roles in the cosmetics

PHOTO: GIBERTONI



Gibertoni has been at the helm of CLP for seven years



Clients are beginning to understand the importance of a long-term holistic approach

industry. I worked for companies such as Valmont and created several businesses in Asia.

I've been the CEO of CLP since 2016 and have the pleasure of driving the international development and diversification strategy of this iconic Swiss brand. Our mission is to become a global player with the ability to help people live a longer, healthier and better life.

What's been the key to CLP's success?

Guests know they can trust our CLP Longevity Method which draws on the pillars of medical insight, wellness, nutrition and movement to target inflammation, slow ageing and boost immunity. Our approach brings together advanced lab and genetic testing, longevity science, experts from multiple disciplines and more than 50 doctors under one roof in Montreux. We provide each guest with a

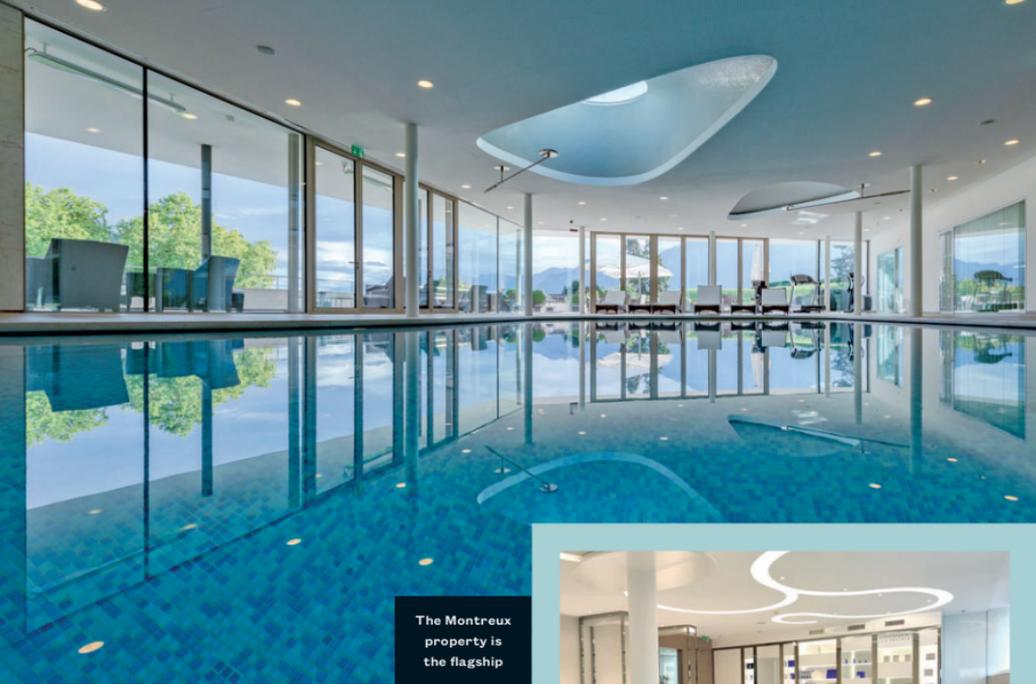
comprehensive overview of their health and a bespoke plan to change their cellular environment to optimise wellbeing. We also target and lower the inflammatory responses that are linked to genetic predisposition or lifestyle habits that can lead to a wide range of complications and diseases.

Who are your guests?

CLP's clientele is part of an affluent international community and is drawn from more than 80 countries in Europe, Asia, the Americas and the Middle East. The average age of our guests is 46 and our programmes are booked largely by couples.

What demands are you seeing from clients?

In the past, a lot of guests were looking for a quick fix, hoping to follow a programme for a week and then continue as usual throughout the year. ▶



The Montreux property is the flagship



PHOTO: CLOUTIER LAFRANCE

► Today, they're coming to us with very clear objectives and seeking serious results. They know what type of experience they're looking for and are not willing to compromise.

We've noticed that they're also beginning to understand the importance of taking a long-term holistic approach, which is precisely what we offer. Following their stay, clients are encouraged to keep in contact with our team to help them maintain an optimal routine at home and thus prolong the benefits of their programme.

Is the CLP Extract still administered to patients?

Yes, it remains at the core of our signature seven-day Revitalisation programme to stimulate cell regeneration, fight the signs and causes of ageing and enhance overall mental and physical health.

The extract has been honed to perfection by our on-site scientists over the past few decades, in keeping with advances in longevity research and is administered in an oral formula.

Since 2021, the extract has been offered in conjunction with two bio-stimulants to improve cell function further.



Our mission is to become a global player... We have a team of 15 people dedicated to our international development



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

Guests undergo a battery of tests to determine treatments



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

What markets are in your sights?

We already have Longevity Hubs open and operating in Qatar, Madrid, Taipei and Bangkok, with Dubai opening in January 2024. More locations will follow in Asia and Europe.

Our debut Health Resort will launch in Anji, China, in 2024, followed by another in Amaala, the wellness-focused Saudi giga project, in 2025.

The US is the next territory on our roadmap because it's an important market for expansion.

The long-term plan is to reach about 40 Longevity Hubs and 10 Health Resorts, while always maintaining exclusivity and reinforcing that the flagship property in Montreux is the pinnacle of our portfolio.

Why China for CLP's Asian debut?

Health Resorts are big projects, as you can imagine. In Anji, for example, it's a 1.3-hectare site which offers 29 rooms and suites spread over seven villas. On top of this, there's a core building that houses the medical, wellness, movement and nutrition departments.

It takes years to grow such properties from the first exchange to being able to announce and open them and we're very selective in the destinations and their exclusivity. Over the past five years, we've engaged in active discussions with several partners across several countries about creating Health Resorts with us. The Anji project was the first to emerge as the perfect location to meet all our criteria but it also reflects the demand from our Asian clients. ▶



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

Cryotherapy will be offered in CLP's city hubs around the world



Chronic and age-related illnesses are on the rise and our city hubs focus on prevention and early detection

► **Why is now the right time to expand?**

Chronic illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and age-related conditions such as Alzheimer's are on the rise and our Longevity Hubs help people prioritise preventative medicine and early detection.

They offer a first-access approach to CLP services such as health assessments, cryotherapy, far-infrared light, nutraceuticals, IV drips and brain stimulation. Importantly, they allow our international clients to continue their journey closer to home, enabling them to regularly engage with our experts and build healthy routines.

The Health Resorts will bridge the gap between the Longevity Hubs and our flagship site. Set in stunning locations, these highly

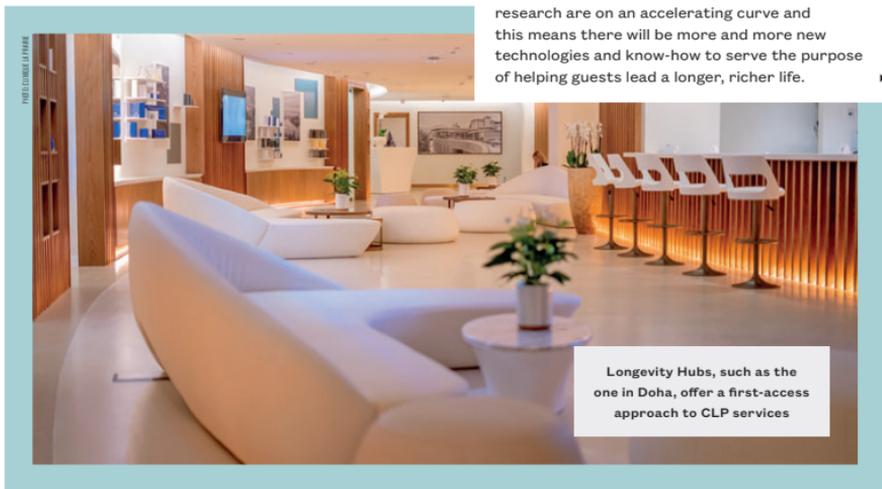
CLP is planning to open 40 city hubs – one of the first is in Bangkok



PHOTO: CLP/HEALTH RESORTS

exclusive destinations will be very similar to our flagship – in-house medical and wellbeing experts will deliver week-long longevity and detox programmes combining preventative medicine and genetic/epigenetic testing, with wellbeing, lifestyle and nutrition plans – but on a smaller scale, with around 50 bedrooms.

Also, and this is core to our 90-year pioneer approach, the advancements in longevity research are on an accelerating curve and this means there will be more and more new technologies and know-how to serve the purpose of helping guests lead a longer, richer life. ►



Longevity Hubs, such as the one in Doha, offer a first-access approach to CLP services

G.M. **COLLIN**[®]

COLLAGEN SUPREME SERUM

A NEW ERA OF COLLAGEN



Up to
89%

Decrease in
WRINKLE VOLUME*

G.M. **COLLIN**

COLLAGEN SUPREME
SÉRUM
Soin anti-âge
SERUM
Anti-Aging Skin Care
30 ml - 1 fl. oz.

LOOKING FOR DISTRIBUTORS

export@gmcollin.com

GMCOLLIN.COM

* Clinical study on 40 women (avg. age 57 years old), all skin types. Morning and evening applications of serum over 4 weeks. The efficacy and tolerance were tested on days 1, 4 and 28. Individual results may vary. Performed by Lab. Dermo-Cosmetik (G.M. COLLIN) on site.

Get **Spa Business** & **Spa Business Insider** magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup



Brain health is an emerging trend and we're developing a programme for this

► Will you adapt the concept globally?

Preserving CLP's DNA while also expanding on a global scale is paramount. I look at it in terms of preserving our core competencies as a company – our unique longevity philosophy, top-class culture and expectation-exceeding service.

We have a team of 15 people dedicated to our international development and experts in Montreux – specialising in disciplines from medicine to science to nutrition to wellness to hospitality and more – who make sure our global outposts encapsulate the expertise and experience of CLP in every detail.

Adaptation to the market may come depending on the environment. In Amaala for example, we're in an incredible location that made us push the boundaries from an architectural perspective. This is how we came up with the idea of having a central Longevity Plaza at the heart of the architecture, with every one of the four pillars stemming from that.

How has the Holistic Health supplement line been received?

Longevity lies at the heart of all that we do. This is what drove us to develop our Holistic Health nutraceuticals range in 2021 following five years of scientific research. It includes four



CLP launched a nutraceuticals range in 2021



The first CLP Health Resort will open in Anji, China in 2024

lines – Age-Defy, Balance, Energy and Purity – each of which has a core complex made up of three layers of nutrients, to tackle the root causes of ageing and promote cellular longevity.

Since the launch of Holistic Health, we've built strategic partnerships with Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park and Harrods – both in London – for bespoke programming, as well as opening our first Holistic Health boutique at Marina Bay Sands in Singapore.

What else is in the pipeline?

CLP is proud to be the first partner to provide AudioVitality's innovative sound therapy technology.

Conducted in a soundproofed treatment studio, the experience consists of a 40-minute session where guests lie and listen to an AudioVitality soundtrack blending low-frequency sounds with optional harmonic distortions and binaural components.

Known as RubesaSounds, these blends can create physical, biological, neural and mental systemic stimulation that positively affect health, wellbeing, performance and longevity. They can also stimulate the body's natural capacity to heal and regulate body vitality.

AudioVitality sessions are now integrated into our Master Detox programme and are available as an add-on to any programme.

We're now also offering a new combined Revitalisation and Beauty Stem Cell Programme. ▶



CLP will also open a Health Resort in Amaala, Saudi's wellness-focused giga project

PHOTO: JAMES J. SMITH



PHOTO COURTESY CLP SPA

CLP is one of the first spas to offer AudioVitality sound therapy



We're working on an assessment powered by AI, which will be very interesting for the future of epigenetics

- ▶ This is a blend of our longevity-focused Revitalisation journey with stem cell treatments to rejuvenate the face. Created by the clinic's medical specialists, the seven-day stay is designed to regenerate both body and mind, activate the immune system and add cutting-edge aesthetics intervention to help guests regain a more youthful appearance.

What's the next big thing in wellness?

Brain health has emerged as a growing trend due to increased awareness that the brain is so interconnected with multiple factors of our physical health. This is also linked with mental health concerns and growing cases of age-related cognitive disorders.

To this end, we're developing a brain health programme in collaboration with the Department of Neuroscience at the University of Lausanne. Our scientific committee has already edited a white paper about it and our experts are now

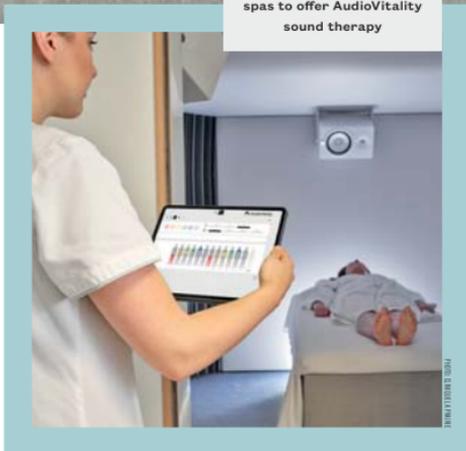


PHOTO COURTESY CLP SPA

developing the content so it can launch imminently. The objective is to comprehensively work on the lifetime factors governing guests' brain health, including nutrition, lifestyle behaviours, sleep habits, cardiovascular risk factors and chronic inflammation.

Another movement not to be overlooked is personalised medicine using AI. By considering an individual's genetic makeup, medical history, lifestyle and environmental factors, AI can add a highly interesting layer for our physicians to tailor prevention strategies to a guest's specific needs.

At CLP, we're working on an assessment powered by AI. There's not much I can reveal right now, but it will be very interesting for the future of epigenetics. ●

Lemi
ITALIAN WELLNESS EQUIPMENT



MILANO EVO

MILANO LINE

THE SPA BEDS THAT REDEFINE LUXURY. A SPA EXPERIENCE WHERE **TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION** MEETS THE **ELEGANCE** OF **ITALIAN DESIGN**. **MILANO** & **MILANO EVO**, NOT JUST WORK TOOLS BUT TRUE **WORKS OF ART** REFLECTING **ITALIAN CRAFTSMANSHIP**, WHILE THE **MEMORY FOAM MATTRESS** PROVIDES UNPARALLELED **COMFORT**. DESIGNED FOR THOSE WHO SEEK **ONLY THE BEST**.



www.lemispa.com

info@lemigroup.it

**NEW
2023**



SCAN ME!

MILANO



Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

Some practitioners invite participants to pay extra, if they can, to support people who can't pay full price

Charlotte Church's retreat offers places based on what people can afford

Everyone's talking about... Pay-what-you-can packages

Could asking customers to pay only what they can afford for spa retreats and services be a way to widen access, while still looking after the bottom line? Kath Hudson investigates

Pay what you can and pay it forward are already established models in other sectors. The waste food café movement invites people to pay what they can spare and opens up the eating-out experience to those on less or no income. Some in the arts sector, for example, Battersea Arts Centre in London, offer pay-what-you-can tickets for performances and encourage those with more money to pay above the standard ticket price. This is a move which has had a great impact on allowing different demographics to access its shows, it reports.

The wellness sector is a great fit for egalitarian principles and spas are starting to take note. The Dreaming, a Welsh retreat opened by celebrity singer Charlotte Church, is offering one place on each package on a pay-what-you-can basis to make it more inclusive.

Could pay-what-you-can work as a way of broadening access to the wellness industry? And would it be able to do this while still turning a profit? What else might be a feasible way for the industry to be more inclusive – especially given the cost of living crisis – to those who can't currently afford to pay full price? We take a closer look...

Ali Gunning founder, Resonant Being

I'd like all types of wellness to be open to everyone, regardless of their financial and life circumstances. I run a variety of sound healing events with different pricing, which means there's usually an opportunity which is accessible to everyone.

Concessions are planned into my offerings, so I don't regard them as a financial hit. On top of this, two spaces are available for people who cannot afford any financial contribution and I also offer the option of exchanging a place for helping me pack up. I've noticed other practitioners invite participants to pay extra, if they can, to support people who can't pay full price.

Generosity is a spontaneous quality which shows you have confidence in your offering

I don't ask for any proof of what people can afford, they just choose the option which is right and applicable for them. Some people might have had a hard month and attend for free, but pay full price the following month. For me, trust and adaptability are central to a wellbeing business.

All businesses have different overheads and responsibilities, but I feel generosity is a spontaneous quality and it shows you have confidence in your offering. Being of service is part of a spiritual

path which doesn't have to be separate from running a business. That doesn't have to mean doing everything for free, but it may mean thinking about working

in ways which benefit a wider range of people. Going forward, I think we will see more creativity in pricing options as interest in self-care grows.



IMAGED BY SHONA

Lauren Moloney CEO and founder, The Spa Collaborative

It feels possible spas could experiment with a pay-what-you-can-afford approach, although if it's adopted it would likely be challenging to operationalise. Any spa interested in initiating this type of offer should first establish its key objective. If any part of the objective is to generate PR citing charity or altruism it could be seen as cause-related marketing and ultimately devalue and derail any real benefit.

A more feasible, transparent and realistic option to broaden access to wellness would be to implement strategic dynamic pricing or clear

Dynamic pricing is a more feasible, transparent and realistic option than pay-what-you-can

charitable initiatives. This could include mid-week rates or morning rates, which offer a base entry-level option for guests during times when the spa has availability. Another option could be organising mobile spa excursions to care homes, hospitals, or youth centres.

To truly expand the benefit of spa experiences to those who may not be able to afford the listed

price, it's important to clearly define the target group and then research and understand this demographic and how your business can best address their needs. It's not a spa's role to determine what individuals can or cannot afford, nor should we judge their wealth or worthiness. Instead, a simple, targeted and transparent approach is the best way to deliver this type of endeavour.



IMAGED BY SHONA

Donna Lancaster founder, Deepening into Life

I offer pay-what-you-can slots at my personal development and healing workshops. The amount of these varies – if a workshop doesn't sell out, I offer the remaining spaces as free or pay-what-you-can. I also hold regular pay-what-you-can events, like Circle of Grace, which are specifically for people who can't afford to access my other workshops but want to do inner work. On average I'd say there are five to 10 people who come on free or discounted places at my one-day workshops.

Coming from a very poor background myself, I know only too well how hard it can be to access health and wellbeing resources. In my view, retreats are not



a luxury but a necessity for physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual wellbeing. Frankly, those who struggle the most financially – like many single mums – deserve a retreat and I don't like the idea of them being limited to wealthy, privileged people.

I find that most people who can pay a little more do and this helps mop up some of the financial losses. But I'm also okay

Coming from a very poor background, I know how hard it can be to access wellbeing resources

with working for free at events sometimes so people can still access my services. If someone can't afford to pay anything at all, they can help in other ways, like setting out chairs, making tea or even bringing cakes. It's important they feel like they're contributing in some way as lack of money comes with a lot of shame for many.

I don't ask for proof that people can't pay much, I trust them and I've never really experienced people taking advantage. I simply make it clear in my promotions/website

that places will be made available for free or pay-what-you-can, for those who need it. I also make it clear that these slots are not for people who have the money but are simply not willing to invest in themselves.

It feels good and right, kind and loving to offer pay-what-you-can and the world needs more of this! There are more important things than making a profit. Often the benefits are just as much for those who offer the pay-what-you-can places, as for those who receive them. It's a win-win for the heart and soul.

Roger Allen CEO, RLA Global

Successful brands want to be seen as making a positive contribution to society and as a gesture and intention, the pay-what-you-can option is of tremendous value. However, how operators sustain it is specific to the brand, the offering and the market segmentation.

It also needs to be taken into consideration that flexible pricing of services requires buy-in from multiple stakeholders,



including front-line staff who need to administer it. In addition, brands have to be conscious of how to offer it so that consumers who can afford

In some industries, flexible pricing is easier to control and manage

the experience do not take advantage of the initiative.

In some industries, flexible pricing is easier to control and manage. Take Pret A Manger for example, the hugely successful sandwich franchise was able to apply lower product pricing in its shops in neighbourhoods which have a lower income bracket. This is a manageable and

controllable solution for discounting and a way of targeting a particular segment with a charitable intention.

With a singular outlet, allowing people to pay what they can afford is open to abuse. But it could work for those who can apply discretion in their pricing, such as people who are self-employed, one-person or small businesses.

Glen Ivy Hot Springs offered a pay-what-you-can package in the pandemic



Ingo Schweder CEO, GOCO Hospitality

Even when the wellness industry was booming pre-pandemic concerns were being raised about it focusing on wealthy customers, while global inequality increased and the world's poorest - who are most likely to suffer from sickness, depression and premature death - were unable to access the benefits. And since COVID-19, many have even less disposable income.

Going forward, the importance of balancing health with financial subsistence will become an increasingly mainstream



topic of discussion. The wellness industry must acknowledge this narrative and address a growing number of guests with more moderate budgets. This may lead to diversification and a natural shift towards greater democratisation,

Some people took full advantage, only paying 10 per cent of the real costs

manifesting in more provision of mid-range wellness offerings and increasing accessibility.

During the pandemic, we opened Glen Ivy Hot Springs up to people on a pay-what-you-can-afford basis, as we wanted to do good and be emotionally close to regulars during a time of global stress. Some people were outright cheap and took full advantage, only paying 10 per cent of the real costs, while others were more

mindful. However, we've experienced a substantial interest in the growth of a more democratised wellness model and have created, and are developing, more offers aimed at the wide middle class. I firmly believe the greater population needs to partake in more, often rather simple, wellness regimes and be exposed to the many offerings available to get healthier, feel better and function more consciously. ●

Making a difference

As a destination spa which takes its social commitment seriously, Golden Door donates its net profit to charity. Kath Hudson finds out how its latest project is helping victims of domestic and sexual abuse

Every year hundreds of affluent guests flock to California's Golden Door in search of wellbeing. But not many know that the destination spa's ability to make a difference to people extends way beyond its Zen-like setting.

Since acquiring the property in 2012, Joanne Conway – married to Carlyle Group billionaire Bill Conway – pledged to donate 100 per cent of the spa's net profits to charity. Golden Door's COO, Kathy Van Ness, says the motivation comes from the company's belief that it has a responsibility to extend the benefits of the spa beyond the four walls. The charity work undertaken by The Golden Door Foundation has become meaningful to both guests and staff, who enjoy making a difference to the local community and the wider world.

BREAKING THE CYCLE

"As we call San Diego home, it's important to us to make a meaningful difference in the region," says Van Ness, explaining that the company is a thoughtful

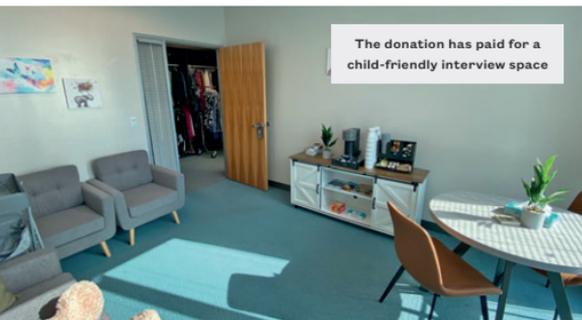
caretaker of the 2,200 acres surrounding Golden Door that provide miles of local hiking trails.

Another cause close to its heart is child abuse prevention and the charities it supports have this in common. Most local, but some national, they work to transform lives today and break the cycle for the future.

"The more we've learned from people doing great work in this field, the more compelled we were to help," Van Ness says.

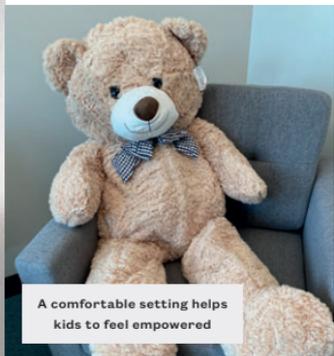
One of its latest beneficiaries is Your Safe Place, an agency which helps child abuse victims. The partnership extends back to 2021 and its most recent donation of US\$100,000 (€94,555, £82,050) has allowed Your Safe Place to create forensic interview rooms at its San Diego site.

"Years ago we learned about the critical process of highly-specialised forensic interviews in obtaining evidence which is necessary to help child abuse victims seek justice and stop abusers," says Van Ness.





Child abuse is much more prevalent than people realise, says Doherty



A comfortable setting helps kids to feel empowered



Diane Doherty, Your Safe Place



If you're a therapist and see something, don't just let it slide

The cash injection has been a game-changer for the facility to offer a children-friendly interview space. It includes a sympathetically decorated interview room, with technical forensic equipment, a law enforcement observation room and a family waiting room.

Diane Doherty, executive director of Your Safe Place, says it's so important to offer a safe and comfortable setting to the children being interviewed: "So often the children are under the control of someone else, but simply being given a choice of where to sit and which toys to play with helps them to feel empowered and find their voice."

This type of facility is badly needed. Doherty points out that child abuse is so much more prevalent than people realise and post-COVID-19 the trafficking of minors has become even more widespread. "These rooms will help with our work to stop the violence in our community before it perpetuates and start to address intergenerational violence," she says.

WORKING IN SYNERGY

Doherty says the two organisations have great synergy in terms of wellbeing and healing and she hopes this is the start of a long-lasting partnership. "I visited Golden Door recently to talk to staff about the impact of the donation and afterwards so many employees shared their ideas, contacts and personal experiences, so now we're talking about doing a follow-up training to brief therapists to look for signs of abuse or trafficking," she says.

"It's really easy to be a bystander, but that's sending a message to both the harm-doer and the person being harmed that what is going on is ok. My message to any therapist is that if you see something, say something, provide some resource via a quick Google search but don't just let it slide, because you might be the only person who is in a position to act."

Doherty is keen to stress how appreciative the charity is for Golden Door's help since these rooms could not be created without the donation. Van Ness says there are business benefits to charitable work too: "We can all make important causes within our communities a part of our businesses. It makes our service with each and every guest even more meaningful." ●

Highest French distinction for RKF's CEO

After receiving the highest civilian award for services to the French nation, Riadh Bouaziz, CEO of RKF Luxury Linen, reflects on his company's many achievements and considers what lies ahead

In its 23 years of operation as a 'Made in France' innovator of luxury fabrics for wellness and hospitality, RKF Luxury Linen has been steadily adding to its collection of awards for fashion and innovation.

Prior to October 2023, the company was the proud recipient of 19 such industry awards, as well as being the holder of 15 patents and brands. But RKF's landmark 20th award was received with an extra degree of gratitude, says the company's pioneering CEO, Riadh Bouaziz.

At a formal gathering in north-east France with Marie-Guite Dufay, President of the Regional Council of Bourgogne-France Comte, Bouaziz was honoured with the title of 'Knight of the National Order of Merit', a prestigious service decoration given by the French President to individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the country.

A GREAT HONOUR

"It was a great honour to receive such a decoration in recognition of RKF's work and for my own contribution as CEO. I already had great respect for Mme Dufay as a very skilled business leader, so it was particularly special to have received the award from her," he said.

"Beyond the red ribbon Order of Merit that is given to outstanding achievement in the military, the blue ribbon Order of Merit is the highest accolade that can be given to a civilian in France, so receiving it was a very special moment. I also believe it's the first time someone from our industry has received it," says Bouaziz.

Key members of RKF's management team, a number of employees, friends and family were in attendance to witness the event. And it's a testament to the strong relationships that Bouaziz has forged with clients and colleagues in the hospitality and wellness industries that many of them were there too.

"We had people fly in from all over the world – from Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, the US, Switzerland, the UK and Dubai and other countries. It was honestly very wonderful and touching to see them all there in support," he said.



Bouaziz's award is the highest honour for a French citizen

As a company we must never stand still. We're always innovating and pushing the boundaries of what's possible

Riadh Bouaziz, CEO, RKF Luxury Linen

COVID CONTRIBUTION

While the award is a recognition of the work of RKF since its inception as a company in 2000, it also specifically acknowledges Bouaziz's enormous contribution to supporting the French government taskforce during the COVID-19 pandemic.



RKF's CEO, Riadh Bouaziz, receiving his 'Knight of the National Order of Merit' from Marie-Guite Dufay in northern France in October 2023

PHOTO BY STEVEN BROWN

Bouaziz says: "As lockdown hit in France, within just two days we had assembled a new factory with full logistics, complete production line and 400 new workers who quickly swung into action, producing gowns and masks in huge numbers to protect our medical workers and citizens here in France. We were operating 24/7 for almost six months."

Being RKF, these were no run-of-the-mill medical products of course. Bouaziz says: "They were high quality garments and not just for single use. They were fully recyclable and good for 50 washes, with a certification from the French government, as well as international certification."

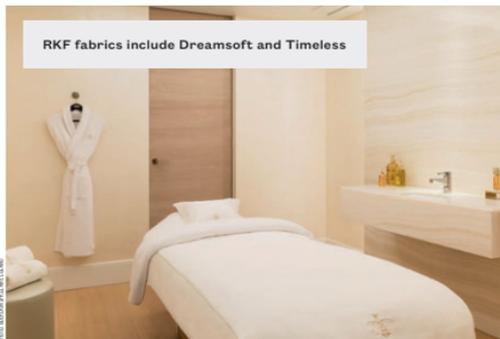
Post-pandemic, it's now back to regular business for Bouaziz and his dedicated team - many of whom have been with the company for 10 to 15 years. Hard work, high standards and exceptional delivery of quality is something that's firmly implanted in RKF Linen's DNA.

To date, the company has worked on more than 45,000 global luxury hospitality and spa contracts. Its products include everything from bed, bath and fine dining linens, to high fashion spa robes in patented ecological fabrics (such as Dreamsoft and Timeless).

PUSHING BOUNDARIES

Bouaziz says: "As a company we never stand still. We're always innovating and pushing the boundaries of what's possible within our industry. As a leader, it's my job to ask the challenging questions and to inspire others in the industry to do the same."

"Hospitality and spa and wellbeing still operate as two separate entities that come together



RKF fabrics include Dreamsoft and Timeless

PHOTO BY STEVEN BROWN

under one roof, but we must work towards greater collaboration," he says. "These two luxury experiences should be fully integrated, with no barriers."

"How will the industries achieve this? These are the big questions that we must be asking ourselves now," he says.

Bouaziz has not shied away from big goals and big achievements during the past 23 years, and there are no signs of him slowing down. His plans for expansion continue, he says, "at an even more rapid pace".

With so many new projects in the pipeline, the worlds of luxury hospitality and wellness can expect to see so much more innovation, transformation and future gazing from the 'RKF universe'. ●

More: www.RKF.fr



THERMAL HERITAGE

The unique cultural relevance of European spa towns is being protected, celebrated and promoted through two organisations: the European Historic Thermal Towns Association and the Great Spa Towns of Europe. Jane Kitchen talks to the people heading up both associations



After railroads connected capital cities and industrial areas, they didn't go to the seaside – they went to spa towns. These were the original tourist destinations

Friedrichsbad Spa is in Germany's Baden-Baden – which is both an EHTTA and GSTE member town

Europe has an incredibly rich and deep history when it comes to spas, with much of it dating back more than 2,000 years. The Romans built cities around natural thermal springs which now sit at the epicentre of countries such as England, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Portugal, France, Serbia and Bulgaria.

By the 10th century, many European spas had been taken over by monasteries, which held spiritual beliefs around the healing qualities of water. But in the 18th and 19th centuries, a new kind of spa town was emerging. These locations combined therapeutic and natural landscapes, high culture and fashionable resorts, casinos and sports halls. And the railways brought the people there.

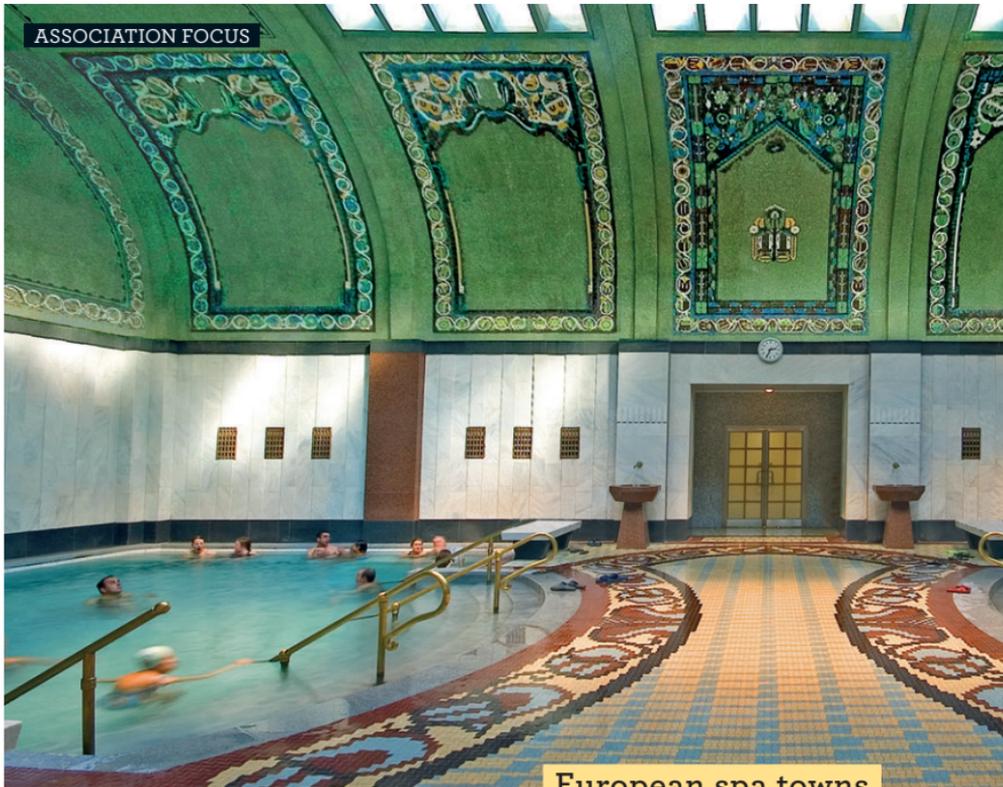
"The European spa towns were the original tourism destinations," explains Paul Simons, retired secretary general of the Great Spa

Towns of Europe (GSTE). "After [the railroads] connected capital cities and the great industrial areas, they didn't go to the seaside – they went to spa towns. Spa towns were the prototype of what are now resorts in the modern tourism business."

Europe's royalty gathered in the towns and artists, writers and composers – including Mozart and Beethoven – sought patronage as well as peace and quiet while 'taking the cure' and producing new work. By the 19th century, more than 600 spa towns existed across Europe. Today, over 400 of them remain, many of which still have a strong tradition of wellbeing and culture.

A CULTURAL ROUTE

In 2009, a group of six historic thermal towns came together to create an organisation to celebrate their unique offering. The European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA), which today includes 50 member spa towns



European spa towns

were the places to see

and be seen – a sort of

18th-century social media

► across 18 countries, is a political representation of its member towns, lobbying on their behalf and connecting them to other European institutions. Its mission is to enhance, promote and protect thermal tourism and thermal heritage in Europe.

On top of this, EHTTA also serves as, and manages, one of 48 Cultural Routes created by the Council of Europe. These routes encourage visitors to take “a journey through space and time” to understand Europe’s shared and living heritage and provide marketing and communication to consumers.

“The association is the backbone – the organisational and institutional frame,” explains Simone Zagrodnik, executive director of EHTTA. “But the Cultural Route – this is where you can really play up the cultural tourism and health tourism aspects.”

Towns or municipalities pay a membership fee to be part of EHTTA and there’s also funding from sponsorship and other projects. In addition to sharing knowledge, expertise and best practices, members benefit from

SPA TOWNS BY RAIL

Member benefits of EHTTA include press and familiarisation trips. Most recently, the association collaborated with Eurail to take select VIPs – including *Spa Business*’s Jane Kitchen – on a tour of some of Europe’s best and most famous spa towns.

They travelled via train – the wellness tourist’s transport of choice back in the day – to Spa in Belgium, Bad Ems in Germany, Baden bei Wien in Austria and Budapest in Hungary. The trip also marked the 50th anniversary of the iconic Interrail Pass.

At the core of spa towns, including Budapest, are natural therapeutic waters which people bathe in



WWW.STYLING.COM

marketing efforts as well as press trips and travel agent familiarisation excursions (see p50). This is something many of the smaller spa towns could never accomplish on their own.

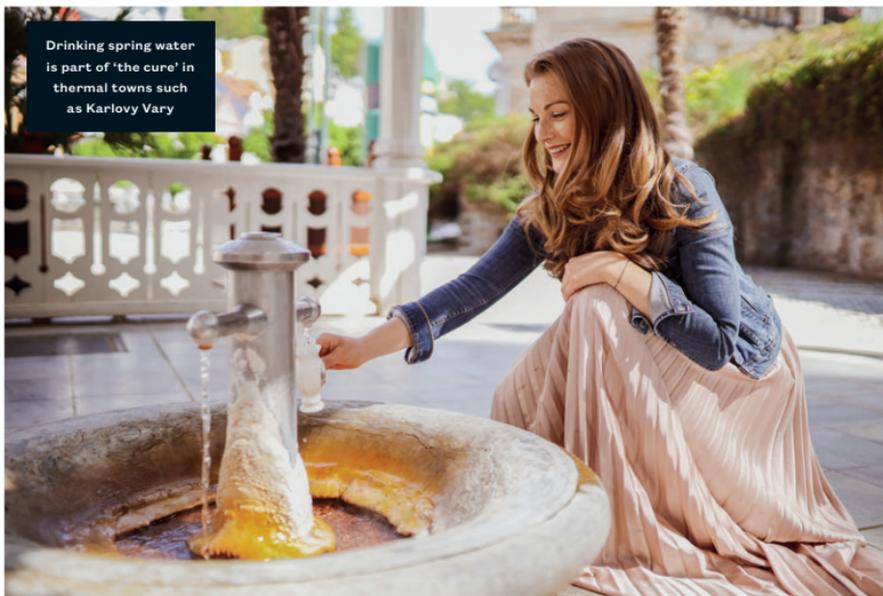
MAKING SPA TOWNS GREAT AGAIN

Then in 2021, GSTE, which represents Europe's most iconic spa towns, gained World Heritage status from UNESCO following a 10-year process and 1,200 pages of documentation. The 11 famous thermal locales in seven countries (see p53) are a 'serial transnational' World Heritage Site which "deserve global recognition as a phenomenon which helped to shape the Europe we know today".

Chiara Ronchini, the new secretary general of GSTE, says: "Together, these 11 locations represent excellence in terms of spa towns with a living tradition. Individually they were picked because they all showcase outstanding examples of spa architecture, infrastructure and urban form. There was a really long process of selection – we started with over 40, then narrowed it down to 16 and finally to 11 – so these are the top, top, top. They have to be representative of excellence."

Zagrodnik explains further: "If someone wants to experience the phenomenon of a thermal town or a spa town, the first in line is GSTE

Drinking spring water is part of 'the cure' in thermal towns such as Karlovy Vary



WWW.STYLING.COM

The landscape in and around spa towns, such as Bad Ems, is incredibly important

We started with 40 possible great spa towns and narrowed them down to 11 – so these are the top, top, top

▶ because they are all pearls – the crème de la crème. But if someone wants to experience more, the Cultural Route has a broader range in terms of small villages and thermal regions.”

Each GSTE location has multiple features in common that unite them. From the springs themselves and surrounding architecture to the parks and gardens and leisure institutions – such as opera halls – to some of the oldest sports facilities in the world. But many of the spa towns in the EHTTA also share some, if not all, of those attributes.

Being a serial transnational World Heritage Site means that all 11 GSTE work together as one while retaining their individual identities. The management board then brings additional support, including cultural programmes, conservation, regeneration, investment and education in each spa town. Being a part of a World Heritage Site also brings responsibilities in terms of protecting each spa town's features and keeping it safe for future generations.

“It's important to stress that these are towns and municipalities – not individual sites,” says Zagrodnik. “That is the challenge for both organisations. We represent towns, municipalities, destinations, not a single Roman bath or historic building.”

WELLBEING LANDSCAPE

The landscape that surrounds spa towns is incredibly important to the overall sense of wellbeing, with most incorporating a planned promenade to walk along – and to see and be seen. This was a vital part of a spa town's appeal in its heyday – a sort of 18th-century social media, where you might spot a queen or a prince or a musician rubbing elbows with members of regular society.

The spa parks and gardens provide essential green space within the towns, but



surrounding forests and landscapes with trails for exercise have also been an important part of the wider cure associated with the waters as well. Many towns took advantage of picturesque views, with funicular railways transporting visitors to higher-up vistas.

Local restaurants traditionally served healthy food and in many areas, the thermal water (and is) part of the cuisine. In Caldes de Montbui in Spain, for instance, the Sanmarti company has been making pasta with thermal water since 1700, local craft beer is brewed with thermal water and in the summer months, gazpacho is made from local tomatoes (irrigated with cooled thermal water) and thermal water.

“All spa towns offer a mix of wellness, culture, relaxation and outdoor activities,” says Ronchini. “We want to make sure that that diversification of offer is truly sustainable through the promotion of locally sourced produce, walking and cycling routes and the sustainable use and re-use of water.”

Since COVID-19, she's noticed a particular growing interest in slower, greener tourism and



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ALAN WILSON



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ALAN WILSON

GSTE's Chiara Ronchini (above) and EHTTA's Simone Zagrodnik (below)



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ALAN WILSON

Many sites, including Łądek-Zdrój in Poland, showcase outstanding examples of spa architecture

THE GREAT SPA TOWNS OF EUROPE

- Baden bei Wien, AUSTRIA
- Spa, BELGIUM
- Františkovy Lázně, CZECH REPUBLIC
- Karlovy Vary, CZECH REPUBLIC
- Mariánské Lázně, CZECH REPUBLIC
- Vichy, FRANCE
- Bad Ems, GERMANY
- Bad Kissingen, GERMANY
- Baden-Baden, GERMANY
- Montecatini Terme, ITALY
- Bath, UK

in people seeking quality rather than quantity. "Spa towns are the perfect destination for this, having been conceived as a whole with the surrounding therapeutic landscape," she says. "This really forms part of the experience, with the spa treatments coupled with walks or cycles in the forest, panoramic views and natural springs in the wild."

MEMBER BENEFITS

The mayors of the 11 GSTE pay an annual membership fee based on each town's population, which ranges from 5,500 people to 88,500. Benefits of having World Heritage Site recognition can include new investment in infrastructure, transportation and visitor

► facilities, but disadvantages can include overcrowding and stress on local communities.

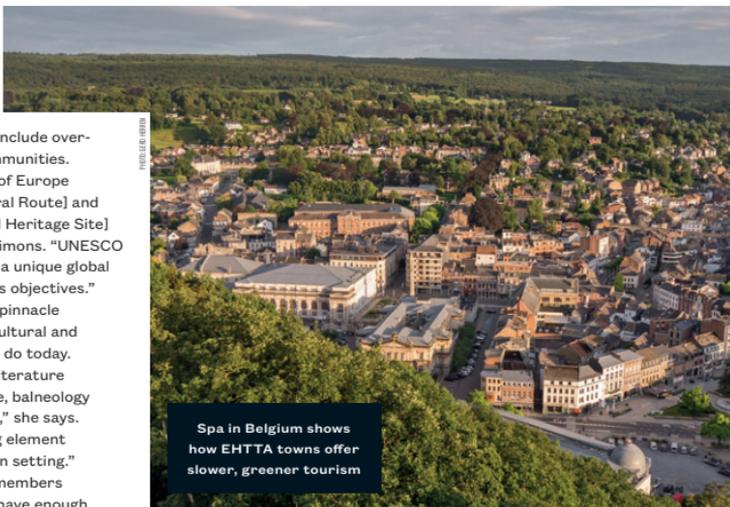
"The objectives of the Council of Europe [representing EHTTA as a Cultural Route] and UNESCO [where GSTE is a World Heritage Site] are really quite different," says Simons. "UNESCO ultimately focuses on protecting a unique global heritage. Tourism is not one of its objectives."

Ronchini explains that at their pinnacle the GSTE generated incredible cultural and artistic initiatives – and they still do today. "We've got festivals, music, art, literature and all that is related to medicine, balneology and other spa-related disciplines," she says. "There's a vibrant, dynamic living element that you can only have in an urban setting."

Simons says that some GSTE members don't want more tourists – they have enough already. Their goal, instead, is to encourage higher spending and longer stays. By contrast, the smaller towns in EHTTA want to use the Cultural Route to entice more visitors.

"We have to spread our influence and help the lesser-known places benefit from the bigger places," explains Simons. "GSTe can use its influence to diversify the impact from places that are possibly already experiencing over-tourism

PHOTO: LEO BERNI



Spa in Belgium shows how EHTTA towns offer slower, greener tourism

and help some of the less popular towns. So there's a great synergy there to work together."

As for future plans, GSTe's Ronchini wants to focus on responsible tourism and climate action, while Zagrodnik wants to expand EHTTA's membership, especially in eastern and south-eastern Europe.

Zagrodnik concludes: "Europe's spa towns are not known with the depth that they should be. I want to create more attention and awareness and make a lot of noise on an international level. There's so much potential for us to share what we are." ●

Spa towns such as Bad Ems had planned promenades frequented by the rich and famous

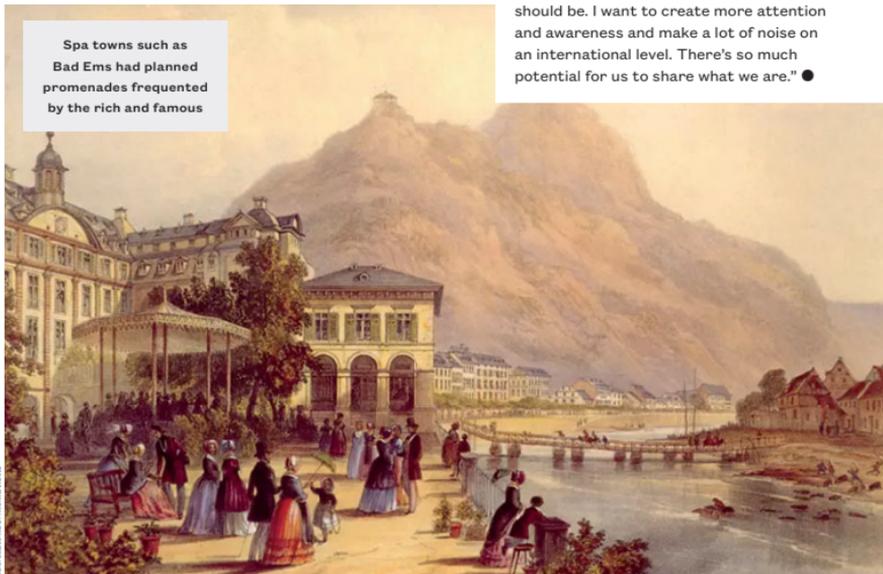


PHOTO: BISHOP HANCOCK/STOCK MARKET

Sustainability Innovation Satisfaction Quality



Aromee®

Fragrances for steam baths, saunas, whirlpool, hot tubs and experience showers



Technico®

Sauna, spa and wellness technology: Technology for experience showers, saunas, hammam, steam baths and rhasoul, dosage systems, inhalation systems, light technology



Pure

Cleaner/conditioner for sauna, spa and wellness facilities. Disinfectant and cleaner for whirlpools and Jacuzzis

Kemitron is a manufacturer of high-quality products for the spa, sauna, and wellness markets (technology, fragrances, cleaners, cosmetic). The company's focus is on best quality and workmanship. All items are "made in Germany".

Kemitron's products are sold on the international spa and wellness market and can be purchased via our webshop on our homepage. www.kemitron.com

E-Mail: info@kemitron.com • Telefon: +49 (0) 70 24 / 950 60 • www.kemitron.com

 **Kemitron®**
Premium. Wellness. Technology.

Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

Paul Simons

An important figure in the European spa industry for the past 30 years, Paul Simons has retired from GSTE. Spa Business sat down with him to hear about his long and esteemed career

An architect by training, Paul Simons has been an influential figure in the preservation and promotion of European spa towns for the past 30 years. While he has retired this year from his day-to-day duties in his position as secretary general of the Great Spa Towns of Europe (GSTE), he will remain involved in an advisory role on many projects, including the recently restored Cleveland Pools in Bath, England – the UK's oldest outdoor public swimming pool.

How did you first get involved in spas?

I'm an architect who specialises in the conservation of historic buildings and I know that the solution to any historical building is to identify its use and its future use. I've been involved in bringing cultural life back into city centres and so I became involved in tourism. In 1994, I was named director of tourism in Bath, England. Nobody told me about the spa – it had closed down in the 1970s and we had a lot of empty buildings associated with the spa.

At around this time, the advent of budget airlines meant that our city break heritage business was instead going to Amsterdam and Barcelona for the weekend. So I said 'let's do a major project to have tourists not only visit our Roman baths and stare at the thermal waters



Simons has been a key figure in several spa associations in Europe

in the historical site, but let's let them bathe in them again.' I was able to convince the local authority, Bath and North East Somerset Council (BANES), to give me money and then we raised money through a government fund to resurrect the thermal baths in a modern building in the centre of the town. That was Thermae Bath Spa, which I was the project director for. The operator says up to 280,000 people visit the property a year and estimates that they also spend an additional £13.5 million (US\$16.4 million, €15.5 million) locally.

How did your career evolve after that?

BANES sent me all over the world to look at spa towns – which is a pretty good job – and I suddenly became



Simons was behind the UK's famous Thermae Bath Spa



PHOTO: HENRIK ERIKSEN

Thermae Bath Spa attracts up to 280,000 visitors a year



PHOTO: SIMONS ARCHITECTURE

The newly restored Cleveland Pools was a passion project for Simons



Spa towns were at the fundamental centre of the democratisation of health

incredibly fascinated with the concept of spa and health and wellbeing and what it could be in the future. They are places dedicated to health, hospitality and welcoming and looking after people. In all the books on urban planning globally, nobody defined spa towns, but it is a very specific use. We realised we were sitting on a gold mine in many ways and it all goes back to hot springs, mineral waters and natural resources.

In the last 20-odd years since building Thermae Bath Spa, I've been involved in what was the British Spas Federation and the European Spas Association, as well as GSTE and the European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA). My focus has been the preservation of spa architecture, promoting the importance of thermalism and balneology and its significance for the future. And I've left a mark on the city of Bath that I'm very proud of.

Why are spa towns important?

Spa towns created what we in the West call national health services (NHS). The rich and the famous visiting the these towns – who could afford to go to the opera when they weren't bathing in the water or drinking it – also set up charities so that the ill and the elderly and the infirm could access the water for their health. And way back in the 18th century that created the concept for what would become the NHS in the UK and others in Europe. Spa towns were at the fundamental centre of the democratisation of health.

We've realised that significance now. Spa towns are significant architecturally, urban-planning-wise and in terms of landscape, but they're also key to governmental responsibility towards people's health and wellbeing and vital to the core of health across Europe. ●

Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines **FREE** on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

NEW WAYS WITH WATER

Working globally with architects and interior designers allows Myrtha Wellness to embrace the latest trends in the international hospitality sector, as director Stefano Cattaneo explains



STEFANO CATTANEO



When it comes to wellness product development, Myrtha Pools has been a world-leading innovator in pool design and technology for the past six decades.

Its revolutionary use of stainless-steel vessels in the design of all types of facilities – from competition pools to waterparks – has given the company a foundation in design that has enabled it to launch an international wellness division.

With a global operation in more than 70 countries, Myrtha Wellness has a unique understanding of bathing cultures through its partnerships with international architects, designers and engineers that has led to the creation of innovative, cross-cultural spa solutions.

This global knowledge, coupled with its engineering expertise, has inspired a stunning line of water-inspired wellness facilities – including saunas, steamrooms, Kneipp pools, salt rooms and salt walls, tepidariums, ice fountains and experience showers, vitality and experience pools, frigidariums and heated loungers – all of which benefit from exceptional 'made in Italy' design.

EXPERT PARTNERS

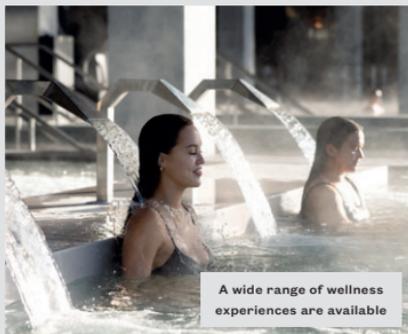
According to director Stefano Cattaneo the company has gained a wealth of knowledge in its role as a supplier to the last six Olympics and supplier for the upcoming Paris 2024 Olympics and World Championships around the globe, as well as from working on major international hospitality projects with its partners.

This expertise extends to materials science, patented technologies, millimetric precision engineering and high-end manufacturing.

Its reputation for sustainable product design has also been elevated through the excellence of its partnership working. "Our unique use of modular, laminated stainless steel in the design of thermal bathing facilities offers exceptional 15-year warranties for the wet thermal structures and cabins," explains Cattaneo.

"In addition, our products are designed, engineered and manufactured using environmentally-sustainable processes and comply with up to six of the nine LEED certification categories, which means we use the most environmentally progressive products for our wet areas, cold plunge pools and relaxation pools," he says.

PHOTO: THE WELLSHOT PROJECT



A wide range of wellness experiences are available



Thermal bathing can add economic benefit for spa operators due to reduced labour costs and increased customer flow

TRACKING TRENDS

Keeping track of the trends that drive innovation in the spa sector is important to Myrtha and Cattaneo says an increased recognition of the healing and therapeutic effects of thermal bathing are helping transform the design and flow of these experiences in new spa and wellness builds.

Water can be a key component in contrast bathing, which Cattaneo says is gaining popularity across the world, due to the increase in research studies showing its healing and health-giving benefits. "Repetitive vasoconstriction and vasodilation gained through contrast therapy flushes toxins from the body accelerating soft tissue recovery, while also reducing inflammation and stimulating the immune system," he explains.

"Although these benefits have been understood for thousands of years by indigenous people around the world, it's only recently that scientific research has allowed a more thorough understanding of them," he says.

"The spa and wellness industry is ideally placed to deliver thermal bathing facilities to enable people to enjoy and benefit from intuitive aquatic journeys," says Cattaneo. "This can be achieved through the design and composition of a facility's mix of experiences, such as sauna and steam cabins, snowrooms, experience showers, hot vitality pools and cold plunge pools, hammams, ice fountains, tepidariums, frigidariums and other related 'hot and cold' water concepts".

"Thermal bathing can deliver economic benefit for operators, due to reductions in labour costs and increases in customer flow," explains Cattaneo, adding that thermal bathing circuits also attract people from local communities into hotel, spa and wellness facilities.

Regarding design approaches that support this emerging trend, Cattaneo says wellness areas can benefit from layouts focused on zoning and flow. "Myrtha Wellness favours the elimination of narrow corridors and claustrophobic thermal cabins to create convivial social circulation or piazza spaces and cabins with expansive glazing facades," he says. ▶



Intuitive aquatic journeys can be achieved through the design and delivery of a mix of experiences

- ▶ "The design and positioning of the spa in areas of the building where it's possible to integrating the indoors and outdoors and involve nature and the external landscape results in improvements to the user wellness journey," he explains.

GLOBAL EXPERTISE

The company's industry know-how and trend-tracking expertise has resulted in it being engaged to create many high-profile wellness facilities across the world, many of which reflect a unique market or geographical location.

Cattaneo is particularly proud of the company's installations in the recently-opened Wai Ariki Hot Springs & Spa in Rotorua, New Zealand.

This 4,453sq m spa and wellness centre is grounded in Te ao Maori culture, which emphasises the relationship between nature and people. This includes the design of the building and the two main spa areas: Te Āhuru Mōwai (The Sanctuary) and Wai Whakaora (Restorative Journey), which is made up of hot and cold experiences designed to maximise therapeutic benefit. The journey includes a herb pool and a mud experience and a frigidarium.

Myrtha Wellness and its industry partners are also involved in a project which is due to open at the Mandarin Oriental in Los Angeles, and the first three luxury hotels of the new Saudi Tourism Development under Red Sea Global.

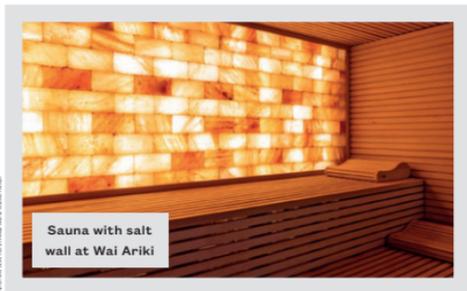


PHOTO: WAI ARIKI HOT SPRINGS & SPA

This is in addition to projects due to open soon in the Middle East with a number of leading hotel operators.

In Europe, Myrtha has finished a project in the Accor MGallery Collection's Domaine Reine Margot in Paris, while major upcoming projects in Italy include a Baccarat in Florence and a Marriott Edition in Lake Como.

A Myrtha luxury wellness area is also in the planning stages at a Four Seasons resort in the Bahamas.

When asked the secret to Myrtha's success, Cattaneo says: "Our principles of design, innovation, technology and customer service have been widely recognised for years and are now in force at Myrtha Wellness, shaping projects and creating unique experiences for customers." ●

More: www.myrthawellness.com



THE WELLNESS REVOLUTION

Myrtha Wellness creates, engineers and manufactures sustainable products that delight the clientele. Myrtha modular panels technology are the epitome of 'Made in Italy' thermal bathing wellness products - including saunas, steam rooms, vitality pools, plunge pools, ice fountains & experience showers and swimming pools. The exceptional technical team of experts at Myrtha Wellness works globally in concert with architects, designers and engineers throughout the project lifecycle to create memorable experiences, leading the latest technological trends in the hospitality sector.

www.myrthawellness.com

Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup



RECIPE for success

Spas are complex, challenging businesses, yet many still turn a profit. Jeremy McCarthy explains what these thriving facilities all have in common

You've probably heard the joke . . .
Q: What's the easiest way to make a million dollars in the spa industry?
A: Start with 2 million! It's not easy to be successful in our sector for two reasons.

Firstly, these are complex businesses which require a lot of knowledge in diverse areas including leadership, customer service, wellness therapies, products and retail, finance, sales and marketing, software systems and more.

Secondly, they are low-margin operations which require large numbers of highly paid and well-trained employees. Most spas simply don't make enough money to pay for the calibre of talent necessary.

This relationship between complexity and profitability is the greatest challenge spa owners and operators face. However, many have still found ways to create successful businesses. So how do they do it? Here are some strategies they use:

1 Partner

Many successful spas can be found within hotel premises, where they can offload some of the complexity – relying on the property's expertise and support in areas such as housekeeping, maintenance, marketing and food and beverage. In this synergistic relationship, the hotel also benefits from offering a great experience that builds loyalty and goodwill.

2 Size

A larger spa with more treatment rooms has greater revenue-generating potential, leading to higher margins and supporting more experienced leaders. This can create an upward spiral resulting in increased success. Unfortunately, because spa margins are not high, there's often pressure from investors to reduce size and smaller facilities struggle to make enough money to offset the fixed costs and turn a profit.

3 Scale

Having multiple locations can allow a spa business to draw enough income from across its operations to fund an experienced central leadership team who can share their support and expertise in each business unit.

4 Specialise

Spas can reduce complexity by streamlining their offering down to a few key services and building a reputation for doing those services very well. Many spas try too hard to keep up with all of the latest wellness trends and continually expand their menu to offer so much that it confuses customers and costs more in terms of stock and training.

5 Passion

Much of the success of the spa industry is fuelled by the passion of our people. People who have foregone



Do a few key services really well to reduce complexity, says McCarthy



Most spas simply don't make enough money to pay for the calibre of talent necessary ... but some do

other, potentially more lucrative career opportunities, in favour of working in a more meaningful industry that gives them a deep sense of purpose. The spa industry would simply not be what it is today without these hard-working individuals who have a passion for wellness and for helping people feel at their best. One of the best ways for a spa operator to be successful is to create a working environment that attracts the best people and enables them to do their best work.

6 Experience

Give your guests a great experience that they'll want to have again and again and will want to tell all their friends about. The winning spas are those who really know their guests and give them exactly what they need.

7 Storytelling

Give your guests a story to tell. The best spa is not necessarily the one with the most products or treatments. It's the one that has a compelling story. And simple stories are easier to tell and to remember.

Essentially, most strategies for successful spa operations work by virtue of their ability to reduce or offset the complexity of the operation. The key to success is the focus on quality, caring and above all, simplicity. ●

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

CUTTING EDGE

Ara Patterson from Equinox Hotels talks about a partnership with Gharieni that's delivering ROI and innovative treatments for guests

Tell us about the spa at the Equinox Hotel in New York City

Our award-winning The Spa by Equinox Hotels is known for its science-backed, results-driven spa menu and services, all designed for inner and outer body excellence to help guests perform at their highest level.

In addition to popular spa offerings – such as massages and facials – we push the envelope when it comes to innovation with cutting-edge treatments. These include the Icoone Roboderm, a non-invasive lymphatic drainage and body-sculpting device; the Gold Collagen Facial in collaboration with Dr Lara Devgan; and the Welnamis table, which harnesses immersive sound and vibrational therapy to provide the equivalent of three hours' sleep in just 30 minutes.

We're also proud to be the first spa in New York to offer the revolutionary Triple Detox Therapy: MLX i3 Dome. After treatments, guests can continue their full-body care with private access to the on-site infrared sauna and cryotherapy chamber for contrast therapy.

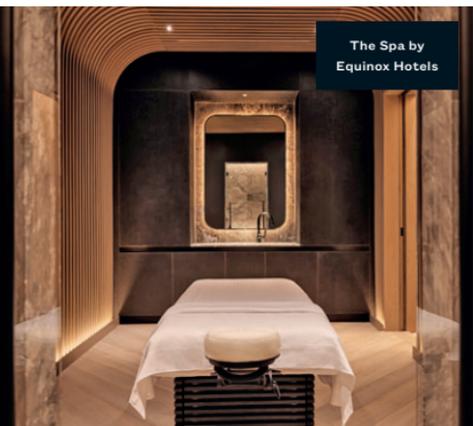


We push the envelope when it comes to innovation, with cutting-edge treatments



Ara Patterson, VP food, beverage & spa, Equinox Hotels

The hotel was designed by Joyce Wang

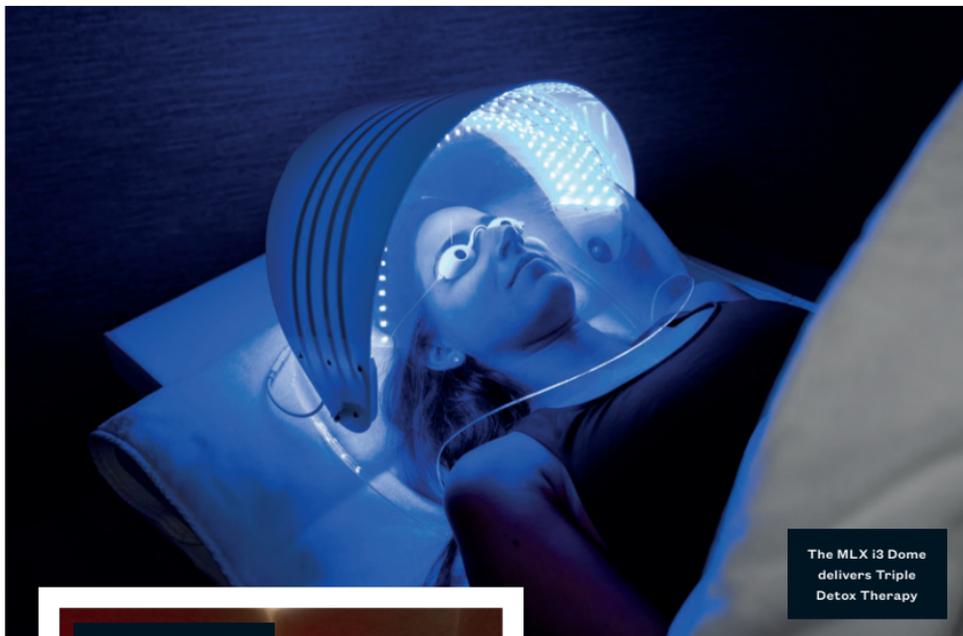


The Spa by Equinox Hotels

What sets the spa apart?

Our commitment to continuous innovation when it comes to our facilities, spa menu and offering.

The spa's treatments are not commonly found in competitor hotels or luxury spas, reflecting our cutting-edge approach. Furthermore, the team's attention to detail and deep alignment with the Equinox philosophy cultivate an exceptional guest experience where our pillars of movement,



The MLX i3 Dome
delivers Triple
Detox Therapy

The MLX i3 Dome is the
first in New York City



nutrition, regeneration and community are woven into the fabric of our offering, catering to both the physical and mental wellbeing of our guests.

Tell us about your collaboration with Gharieni

Gharieni is a renowned leader in innovative spa equipment. We chose to partner with the company because of its expertise in creating state-of-the-art spa solutions that align with our commitment to providing unique and high-performance experiences for our guests.

Gharieni's technologies and designs pair well with our spa treatments and complement our vision of offering the best in relaxation and rejuvenation.

How does it elevate the guest experience?

Equinox Hotels are designed to promote better sleep. One standout offering at the spa is the Welnamis bed, a touchless treatment that

incorporates acoustic and vibrational technology, training the brain for deep relaxation and aligning with our mission to promote better sleep.

We've also recently introduced the MLX i3 Dome – another touchless therapy that includes triple detox: far-infrared sauna, plasma and colour light therapy. Our guests have shown great enthusiasm for this, particularly those who are regular users of traditional infrared sauna, as they appreciate the enhanced sauna experience offered by the MLX Dome.

Looking to the future, we're considering the addition of G-Vac, an innovative technology poised to revolutionise lymphatic drainage treatments and body contouring. The benefits extend beyond aesthetics, with a significant impact on overall wellbeing and health.

How do you balance hands-on and touchless?

Balancing touchless and high-tech with traditional hands-on therapies is the foundation of our spa experience. Our guests appreciate the harmonious blend of both approaches. It's not a matter of one replacing the other; instead, they work together to enhance the overall wellbeing experience.

What ROI do Gharieni products deliver?

With the popularity of the spa and the innovative technology, we've achieved a return on investment in several months. ●

More: www.gharieni.com

Niamh O'Connell

Appointed by Jumeirah Group as its first vice president of wellbeing, what does spa industry veteran Niamh O'Connell have planned for the global hospitality group? Julie Cramer finds out

When Niamh O'Connell arrived in Dubai to take on the newly created role of vice president of wellbeing for Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts in June, she landed in a scorching hot Emirati summer. Having spent almost two decades working in five-star wellbeing in Asia – for Hyatt then Rosewood – Irish-born O'Connell was more than ready to take on the heat of the Middle East along with a whole new culture and career challenge.

"Asia stole my heart for 18 years and it was hard to leave. But when the offer came from Katerina [Giannouka, CEO of Jumeirah] it was impossible to say no," says O'Connell. "The company has never had a dedicated VP of wellbeing before. It's a massive opportunity and the scope of the work is vast, touching on all elements of the brand."

Since starting, O'Connell has wasted no time in diving deep into Jumeirah's current proposition and operations. She says: "Going forward, wellbeing will be a core pillar for the brand and very much at the forefront, which is very exciting. It's so rare to be offered the



Talise spa at
Jumeirah's iconic
Burj Al Arab

*Refreshed and refocused, O'Connell
is more than ready to take on a whole
new culture and career challenge*

chance to shape a brand and there's so much appetite at Jumeirah for this change."

Talise, Jumeirah's in-house spa concept, currently exists in 14 of its properties along with a handful of other non-Talise facilities. While there's a 'golden thread' of Middle Eastern influence that runs through the spas, they're all adapted to their particular location and clientele.

Jumeirah is a subsidiary of Dubai Holding, the investment portfolio of the emirate's ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid. It owns 27 properties, 12 are in Dubai and others are nearby in Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia.

As part of the group's Mission 2030, revealed in June, its goal is to become a global hotel leader. There are already sites in Bali, the Maldives and China, as well as the UK (London), Italy (Capri), Spain (Mallorca) and, most recently, in Switzerland following the acquisition of Le Richmond hotel on the banks of Lake Geneva. ▶

PHOTO: SHARON WELLS/ISTOCK



Wellness
facilities in
Dubai attract
up to 40,000
visitors a month

spabusiness.com issue 4 2023 67

Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

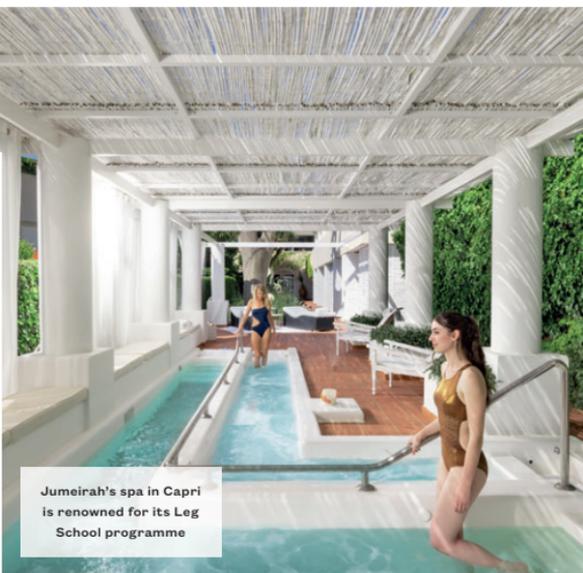
► The Dubai market

For now though, at least, O'Connell's remit is firmly on Dubai. She says: "Jumeirah properties are heavily patronised by the local market and visitors from the UAE. They regularly use the restaurants, spas and membership clubs or enjoy staycations on their time off. Local expats make up the next tier of customers, followed by international tourists, with many from Britain, Europe, Russia and CIS countries.

"Jumeirah welcomed a lot of tourists from new destinations during the pandemic because Dubai opened up when many other countries were still closed. For instance, the Chinese stopped visiting during COVID-19, but we saw a big rise in visitors from South Korea and they have continued to come."

So gifted with almost a 'blank canvas' in terms of what comes next for wellbeing at Jumeirah, what is O'Connell looking at? While she hints at 'new projects in the pipeline' and creating brands, at the moment, the focus remains on the Talise spas and wellness interpretation and integration into all aspects of the estate. "We don't want to see wellbeing isolated to spas – it's going to be part of the overarching Jumeirah experience with different touch points throughout all hotels," she says.

Wellbeing will be a core pillar for the group in the future



Jumeirah's spa in Capri is renowned for its Leg School programme

The group is in 'advanced talks' with two potential medical spa providers

"We think the family market is hugely underserved, so we're looking at how we create offers that parents and children actually want. Families face enormous time pressures these days, so how do we create an environment where they can come together, switch off from social media and enjoy healthy activities? It may be that only one parent visits the spa, but how can we ensure that the whole family can benefit from a wellness experience while they stay with us?"

Women's wellness, in particular perimenopause and menopause, and the male equivalent 'andropause', will be brought more to the fore as well as more medical offers focused on longevity, with Jumeirah currently in 'advanced talks' with two potential medical providers.

While there are currently no medical offers across Jumeirah's UAE properties, O'Connell says there is a medical spa in its Capri property that's especially renowned for its Leg School, a unique programme developed by the resident professor Francesco Canonaco which treats vascular problems of

FAVOURITES

TREATMENT - Choosing only one is tough! I'd say chi nei tsang

SPA - I'm still in search of the ideal spa experience destination

FILM - *Goodfellas*

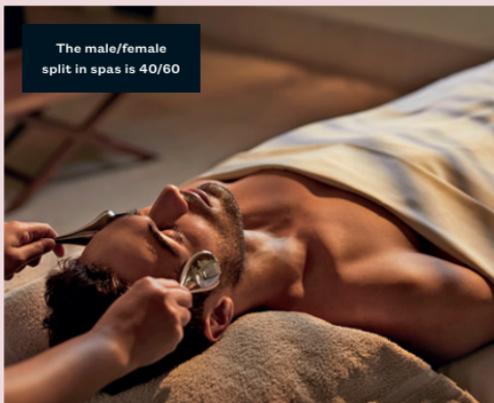
BOOK - *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* by John Le Carre

PLACE - Southern Spain

SEASON - Summer (although in Dubai I prefer winter!)

BEST ADVICE - Gordon Fuller, who was an area VP at Hyatt, used to tell me: "If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got." He inspired me to challenge the norm and mentored me in change management

The male/female split in spas is 40/60



SHANE LITTLE/SHUTTERSTOCK

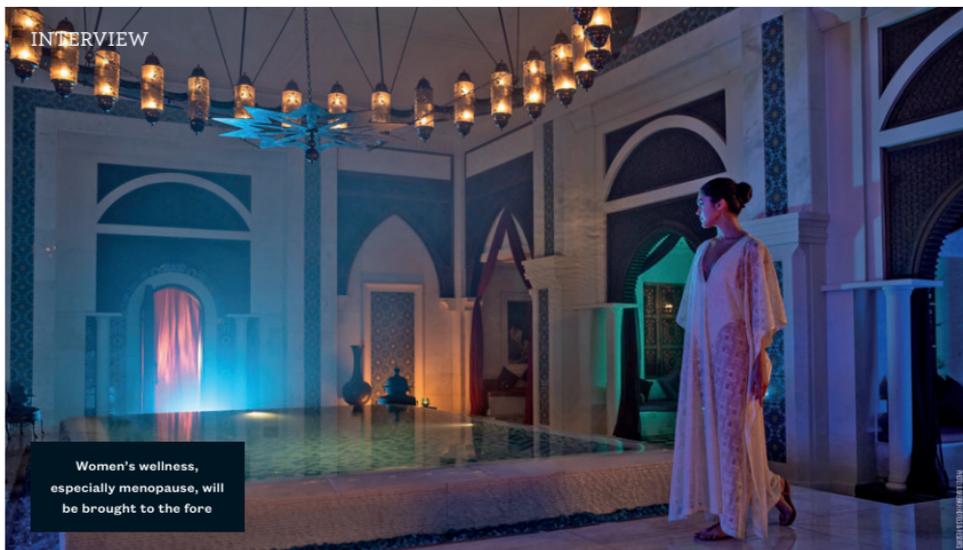
the lower limbs. "I was there just a few weeks ago as part of my research and met two ladies who'd flown in from New York just for the Leg School. It's highly regarded and very popular."

She continues: "I believe medical offers and spas can coexist perfectly together. We need the medical tech to be able to offer diagnostics and a baseline that proves to guests that the programme they're following is working. Incorporating nurturing experiences such as touch therapy or mindfulness can further enhance a medical offering."

Other propositions in the planning are cognitive health programmes, incorporating hyperbaric oxygen chambers and the use of nootropics, as well as looking at gut health. ▶

"The family market is hugely underserved," says O'Connell





Women's wellness, especially menopause, will be brought to the fore

Cognitive health programmes will incorporate hyperbaric chambers and nootropics

► Wellness expansion

While all these ideologies may take time to filter through the estate, we'll soon get an insight into the future of wellness at Jumeirah with the much-anticipated opening in 2024 of its biggest property to date, the Jumeirah Marsa Al Arab. Commanding a prime location on the Dubai peninsula, adjacent to the group's current iconic jewel, the sail-shaped Burj Al Arab, this new ultra-luxury hotel will feature 10 world-class dining concepts, a spa spread over three floors and rooms inspired by 'glamour of a bygone era'.

"Jumeirah Marsa Al Arab will feature our most significant wellbeing offering so far, which will be very much ingrained in all aspects of the property from spa through to F&B," she says.

As Jumeirah's new world of wellness unfolds, O'Connell will most certainly be keeping a close eye on the business figures. She's spent three highly productive decades in the spa industry across Asia, Europe and the US, including working for Steiner on its cruise ships in the early days, followed by 11 years with Hyatt and most recently six years with Rosewood in Hong Kong, where she was VP of wellness and brand experience. It's fair to say that what O'Connell doesn't know about running profitable and successful spas, isn't worth knowing.



Jumeirah is known as a Middle Eastern brand, but is prioritising global expansion

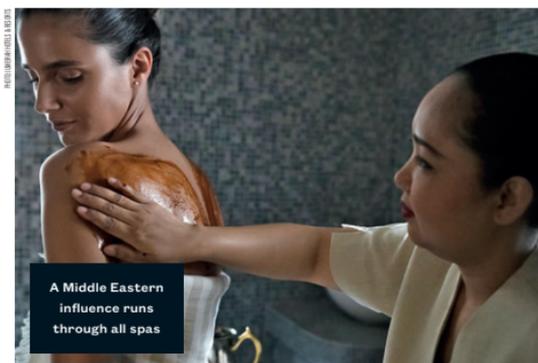


Opening in 2024, Marsa Al Arab will rival Jumeirah's iconic Burj Al Arab

With the move to Jumeirah, she's walked into a wellness business that's showing healthy returns, but that also has huge potential for growth. She says: "Across its Dubai properties, Jumeirah welcomes around 40,000 unique visitors each month to its wellness offers (including gyms and membership clubs) with a 60/40 female/male split.

"Among the many KPIs we look at, some of the headliners are therapist utilisation, capture rate, guest mix and average cheque. From these metrics, we can gauge the success of marketing initiatives. Our therapist utilisation currently ranges from 52 to 73 per cent, the guest mix comprises 45 per cent from in-house and the average treatment time is 120 minutes. The spas have been excelling in the past two years, due in large part to the boom in 'revenge travel' post-COVID.

"The wellness aspect will evolve as part of Mission 2030 and our strategic growth plan. The interest in these new activities



A Middle Eastern influence runs through all spas

and products are intended to bolster the revenue streams from spas."

Personalisation matters

With such big plans ahead, it's just as well that O'Connell managed to take her own extended spa break – an 18-month sabbatical immediately after leaving Rosewood, which saw her travel to India and Spain. She says: "I went to Spain to learn the language and of course indulge in all the wonderful cuisine. In India, I spent a lot of time doing yoga and enjoying traditional ayurvedic treatments."

Refreshed and re-focused, O'Connell is now very much concentrating on the immediate tasks at hand, while keeping a well-trained eye on a future where the wellness landscape is ever-evolving.

"We're currently piloting smart hotel beds," she says, "which adjust to support the sleeping position of the guest as well as their body temperature, to help enable



PHOTO: JUMEIRAH HOTELS



Spas have been excelling in the past two years, due in large part to the boom in 'revenge travel'

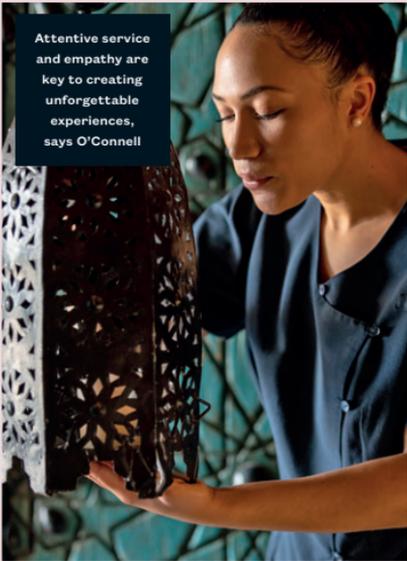
► a healthy and uninterrupted night's sleep.

We're also looking closely at our food and beverage operations. We don't want to call it 'wellness food' but we'll be creating more nutritious dishes to help people live well."

While a high degree of customising is always expected by Jumeirah's ultra-wealthy guests, it's a central concept that has been fundamental throughout O'Connell's career. So what does 'personalised wellness' mean to her?

"It's about developing deep listening skills and anticipating what a guest wants and needs, perhaps even before they know it themselves," she says. "My very first boss and mentor in Ireland was a nurse who had opened a small clinic to heal and really take care of people. This was way before wellbeing was even recognised as a thing. Through Helen, I learned about developing empathy and truly listening to a person's needs. This approach lies at the core of everything I create and it's something that makes for a standout and unforgettable wellness experience."

With this deeply personal approach and an unparalleled knowledge of spa operations, all backed by the might of a formidable and ambitious luxury hospitality brand, it will certainly be interesting to watch where O'Connell takes Jumeirah's spa and wellbeing offers in the years ahead. ●



Attentive service and empathy are key to creating unforgettable experiences, says O'Connell

book4time

- 85+ Countries
- 15 Languages
- 24/7 Live Support
- HIPAA
- GDPR & PCI Compliant
- 99.9% Uptime
- Live Product Training



[Book a Personalized Demo](#)

Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

SPONSORED

 *The cold of a snowroom is gentle, controlled and comfortable*

Lasse Eriksen

Contrast therapy is gaining attention for its healing effects. We ask the aufguss and sauna expert to share his views on the perfect experience

Recognition of the healing benefits associated with hot and cold treatments is making contrast bathing a growing global trend. It's increasingly being used to deliver wellness therapies, sports performance and medical interventions, due to the benefits it delivers when used for recovery, pain management and full-body rejuvenation.

An increasing number of research studies offer a deeper understanding of its physiological effects on the body, as well as its positive impacts on mental wellbeing.

Contrast therapy convert

Professional saunamaster, Lasse Eriksen, is a contrast therapy convert, enjoying regular sessions for his own health: "My personalised approach to contrast therapy allows a full-body immersion into the experience, which creates a comprehensive and enjoyable session catering to both relaxation and the beneficial effects of temperature fluctuations on the body," he explains.

Snowroom & Snowsky BY TECHNOALPIN

The TechnoAlpin **Snowroom** offers an invigorating winter-themed, -10°C cool-down experience in dimensions and designs to suit any setting.

Users can benefit from the gentle cold in winter-themed settings and enjoy hand-to-skin, snow massages.

The TechnoAlpin **Snowsky** room offers an eye-catching snow-fall feature, creating a calm, relaxing experience for users in wellness environments as snowflakes fall gently from the ceiling.

Water and power consumption are kept to a minimum in all cases.

More: www.indoor.technoalpin.com



Enjoying the TechnoAlpin Snowroom at the World Aufguss Championships

Get *Spa Business & Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

World renowned aufguss-
master, Lasse Eriksen, talks
about contrast therapy



When it comes to delivering the cold element of the therapy, Eriksen believes the snowroom environment offers the perfect cooling to balance the hot phases of the experience, saying it delivers a head-to-toe 'feel-good' benefit to guests and is cooling without the risk of dizziness. "The cold of a snowroom is gentle, controlled and comfortable," he explains.

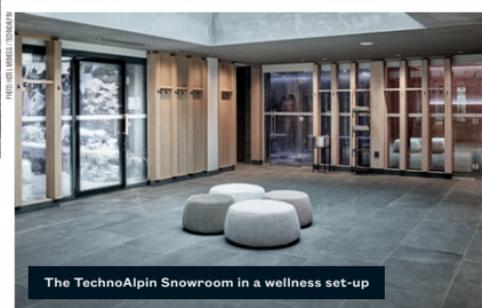
Here Eriksen shares his 'perfect' contrast therapy experience, noting that if a longer sauna session is possible, this can enhance the experience.

LASSE ERIKSEN'S PERFECT CONTRAST THERAPY SESSION

"I begin the session in fresh, cool air to allow my body to adjust to the environment," he says. "If cooler outdoor air isn't available, I take a light shower to moisten the skin or enjoy some time cooling off in a snowroom by inhaling the cold air."

"My first session in the sauna is conducted at a lower temperature to gently introduce my skin and cardiovascular system to the increasing heat," he continues. "Following this, I might take a light shower at a moderate temperature or briefly step back into the snowroom."

"I then gradually increase the intensity of the contrast therapy by increasing the temperature in the sauna and extending the duration of the cooler part of the session, such as time in the snowroom."



The TechnoAlpin Snowroom in a wellness set-up

"If the environment and my body allow, I finish with a strong steam session in the sauna, followed by a plunge into a cold environment - whether it's an ocean dip, a cold plunge pool or a snowroom - where I can apply snow to my skin - as the contrast of extreme temperatures is very invigorating."

"After the intense contrast, I allow my body to slowly adapt back to a normal temperature, either through a warm shower or by relaxing in a comfortable environment," he concludes. ●

Read the full interview with Lasse Eriksen at www.indoor.technoalpin.com/de/interview-lasse-eriksen

FIRST PERSON

TREE OF LIFE

Lisa Starr goes in search of the ultimate nature spa and discovers two European retreats which base their wellbeing concepts on forests



Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

WaldSpa is built
around a 30,000sq m
bathing lake

Consumer research over the last few years consistently shows that wellness travellers prioritise being outdoors when looking for destinations (see www.spabusiness.com/wta2022). On top of this, numerous studies highlight the multitude of benefits of forest bathing and just spending time in nature.

Recently, I was fortunate enough to visit two properties which base their entire concept on trees and nature - waldSpa at Nature Hotel Forsthofgut in central Austria and Forestis in the Italian Dolomites. Two excellent, well-thought-out hospitality and spa experiences, yet seeing them both within the same week highlighted their very different approaches.

My main point of investigation? Are the spas doing enough to satisfy those who value being in the fresh air surrounded by gardens, woods, lakes and streams? How much of what they offer, in terms of facilities and programming, is outside? How extensively do they incorporate nature inside and does this reap similar benefits? ▶

Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

WALDSPA

400-YEAR LEGACY

The timber-clad Forsthofgut hotel, built around a 30,000sq m bathing lake and garden, sits at the base of Asitz Mountain on the perimeter of the town of Leogang, a popular ski and hiking/biking destination. With the arrival of wellness resorts Puradies and Krallerhof just months ago, the locale is also gaining recognition in the spa and wellbeing arena.

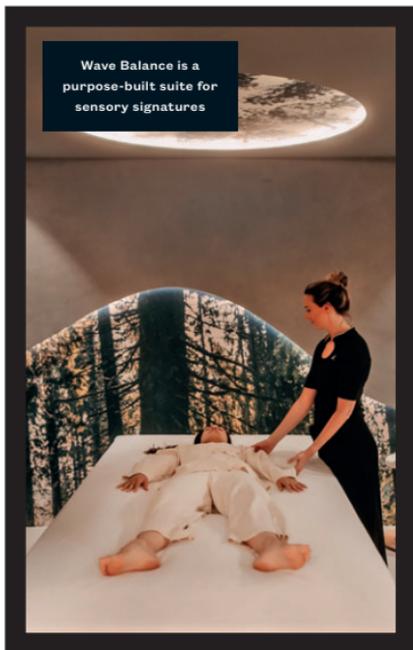
The farming and forestry property, managed by the Schmuck family for more than 400 years, began its hospitality life by offering two guestrooms in 1960. Multiple expansions have brought the current number to 105 – with prices starting at €210 (US\$222, £183) and including meals – along with a spa that opened in 2013 and was expanded in 2016 and 2021. In total, there are 10 treatment rooms and multiple heat experiences, pools, fitness spaces and relaxation lounges spread over 5,700sq m.

SENSORY SIGNATURES

Walking into the main spa reception, I feel instantly calmed by the soothing muted colour palette and the abundance of wood – local knotty pine is plentiful and takes centre stage. The style,



The facilities take full advantage of the setting



Wave Balance is a purpose-built suite for sensory signatures

Outdoor treatments
take place on
platforms in the trees

echoed throughout, is inviting and comfortable yet there's nothing to crowd the brain.

There's a lovely retail area, a nail and facial bar, therapy rooms and Wave Balance – a purpose-built suite for signature treatments – being a particular highlight. Its creative forest decor and large soft-pack table set the scene for rituals combining touch, acoustics, vibrations and water with a proprietary skincare brand formulated from natural ingredients such as pennywort, ivy and botanical hyaluronic acid. Ranging from 50-80 minutes and €105-170 (US\$111-180, £92-148), the therapies have been “inspired by the image of a strong tree” and are designed to leave guests feeling strong, balanced and re-energised.

EMBRACING NATURE

The newer adults-only spa resides in a three-storey wellness paradise where floor-to-ceiling windows flood the rooms with natural light and showcase the panoramic mountain views. It took great willpower not to just sit and take it all in for hours. In fact, interiors throughout the whole resort – featuring natural materials, textiles and colours – make you feel like you're outside. It's a free-flowing modern space with a large sauna area and communal changing spaces as opposed to dedicated gender-specific locker rooms.

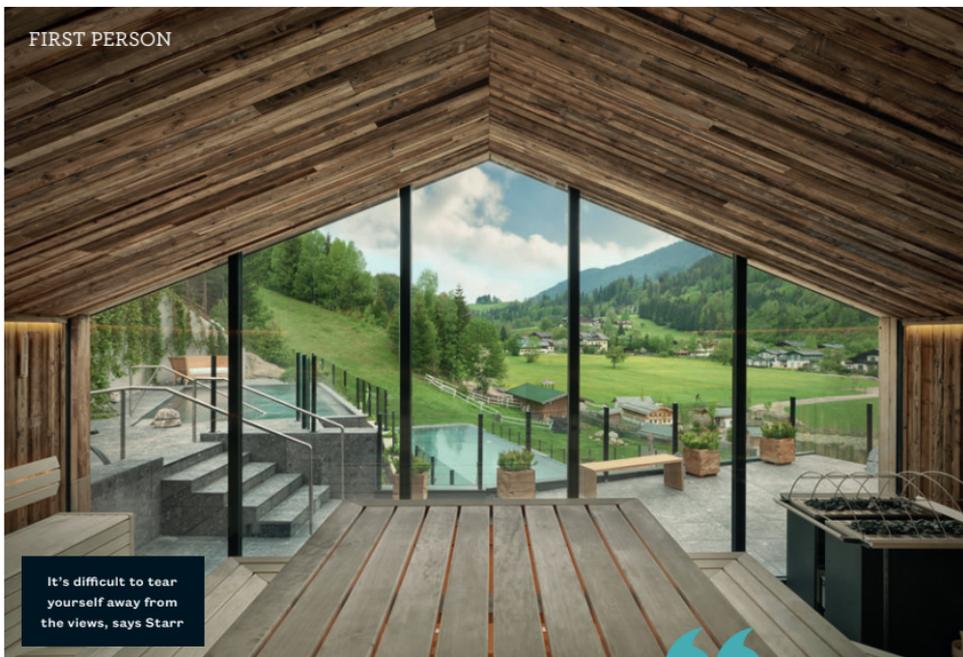
I'm struck by how the facilities take advantage of the setting. You can breathe the fresh mountain air while relaxing in a whirlpool or swim laps in the 25m heated sports pool. There's a 40sq m outdoor sauna which I imagine to be especially enjoyable on a snowy afternoon. Then, accessed through an underground passage, the waldSpa Lakehouse provides an enormous relaxation lounge with 50 recliners and waterbeds, access to the swimming lake



*I'm instantly calmed by
the muted colours and
abundance of wood*

The family-centric resort
offers many child-friendly
facilities and activities





It's difficult to tear yourself away from the views, says Starr



► and a floating Finnish sauna where birch branches are offered for self-administered rituals.

In the warmer months, treatments and yoga are taken outside and hiking is a popular pastime. While in winter, skiing is to hand and spa therapies help soothe aches and pains from a day on the slopes. This is a resort which makes the most of its setting and ties in the indoor/outdoor connection well.

FAMILY WELLNESS

A dedicated two-level family spa nestles in the centre of the resort. It's a fun area where pine and textile saunas are child-friendly and a kid's water world boasts pools, slides and an aqua play zone full of fountains, geysers and waterfalls. Parents and children could easily spend hours here. And that's important because this resort and spa totally caters to families – when I first arrived at the hotel, it was to a lobby with shoes strewn about, dogs sitting with their owners and children happily playing: a steady bustle of activity. There's even a children's petting farm onsite, a dedicated teen chillout room, a kid's art studio and free childcare.

In summary, Nature Hotel Forsthofgut is an ideal destination for a family escape, to engage in activities that embrace nature and the outdoors and then return to the resort to enjoy healthy food and a variety of invigorating and relaxing spa experiences. ►

The style is inviting and comfortable yet there's nothing to crowd the brain



The Schmucks have managed the property for over 400 years



BELTRAMI®
designing textile experiences

MADE IN ITALY

+39 035 716315 • export@beltrami.it • www.beltrami.it

Get **Spa Business** & **Spa Business Insider** magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup



Forestis was originally built as a sanatorium for European royalty

FORESTIS

ROYAL CONNECTION

Around 115km further south in Italy, you can reach Forestis via a windy route up into the Italian mountains. Here the slopes, dense with trees, give way to a woodland hideaway. At 1,800m above sea level, I'm immediately wowed by the view of the UNESCO World Heritage Dolomites and beyond.

The original building was erected in 1912 by the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, who intended to use it as a sanatorium to take advantage of



If I was to write a book, this is the place I would visit

the mountain air, mild climate, above average number of sunny days and light spring waters. It fell into disuse after the war until discovered by hotelier Alois Hinteregger on a walk one day. He opened the building as a hotel in 2010 and it was reimaged by his son as a truly unique five-star retreat 10 years later.

As well as the listed manor-house-like building, Forestis boasts three towers with wooden facades which rise into the sky like trees. In total, there are 46 spacious suites which cost upwards of €530 (US\$560, £462) a night, along with a 2,000sq m spa and a restaurant. Because it's set on a steep slope, guests are always at eye level with the trees and the mountains and the vistas of the wood, rock, sun and sky really are the stars of the show.

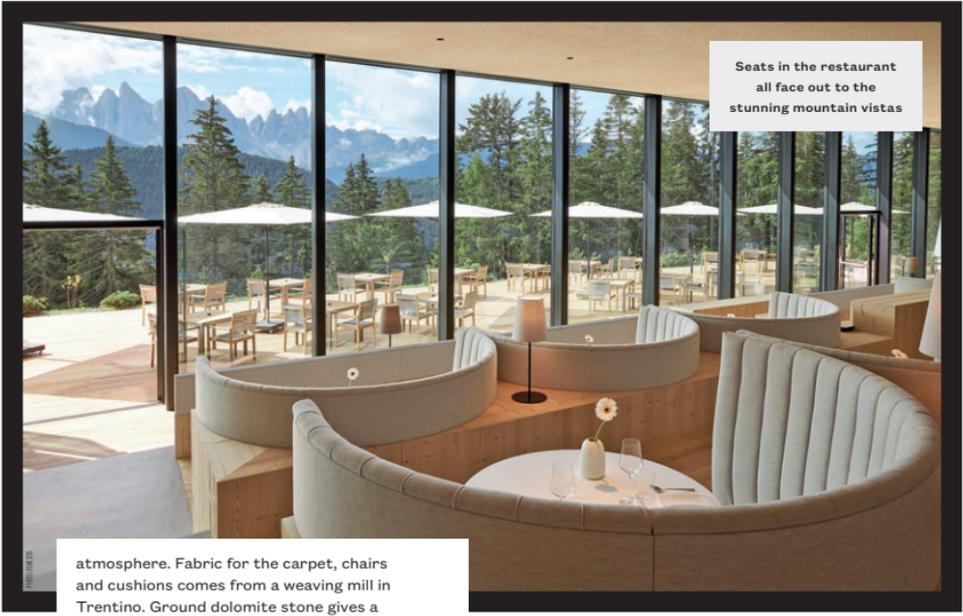
CONTEMPORARY, MINIMALIST LUXURY

The stylised resort exudes contemporary, minimalist luxury. The two-level spa, located beneath the towers, features thoughtful design touches. It lives and breathes simplicity and relies on natural, local materials to create the

PHOTO: GUSTAV



A sauna is housed in a traditional wooden Tyrolean hut



Seats in the restaurant
all face out to the
stunning mountain vistas

PHOTO: STEVE
atmosphere. Fabric for the carpet, chairs and cushions comes from a weaving mill in Trentino. Ground dolomite stone gives a stylish finish to the walls and pool. The stark sparseness might sound cold and uninviting, but it's not – the use of natural materials adds a soft edge to what is a very calming setting.

The spa entrance leads straight to a 20m indoor pool, which flows into an outdoor pool of a similar size and there's a traditional wooden Tyrolean hut housing a small sauna.

Everything is geared towards relaxation and wellness. A huge terraced seating area around the indoor pool features daybed hideaways and a serene Tea Lounge with a bijou library offers a comfy retreat. If I was to write a book, this is the place I would visit.

To declutter the mind, there's a dark and cosy Silent Room with a central fireplace, inviting loungers and a star-covered wall. To unwind in a more active way, there's a brine steamroom, three indoor saunas – which radiate the scent of the wood they're made from in the heat – and a cold plunge.

Treatment rooms, seven in total, are located on the first floor as well as another relaxation area, gym and a wyda room with mountain views. Wyda, a form of yoga and meditation, dates back to the nature-centric spiritually elite druids and is designed to promote inner harmony.

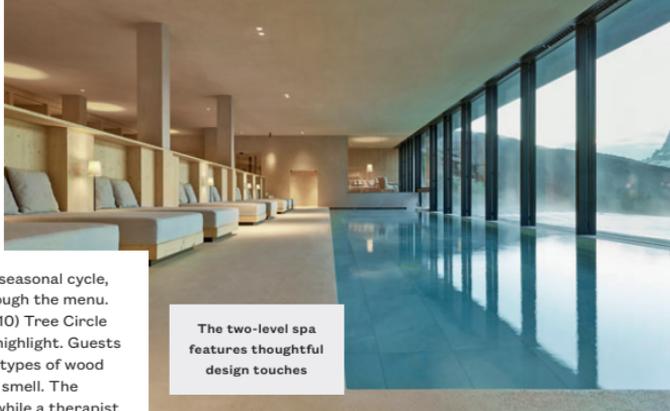
TREE TREATMENTS

Staying true to the forest and nature connection, all of the treatments at Forestis are based on the four indigenous trees: mountain pine, spruce, larch and Swiss stone pine. Recognising ▶



Natural materials create a soft edge (above); local wood and healing stones are used in rituals (below)





The two-level spa features thoughtful design touches

► that trees, like humans, follow a seasonal cycle, these parallels are explored through the menu.

The 3-hour, €470 (US\$497, £410) Tree Circle Ceremony is without doubt the highlight. Guests intuitively select one of the four types of wood based on how they look, feel and smell. The chosen scent is then circulated while a therapist gets to work wrapping, scrubbing, moisturising and massaging you. Pine, spruce or larch sticks and healing stones are used to release blockages and create harmony, along with vibrations which match the frequencies of the respective trees. It's a very detailed and unique therapy, but expertly performed to induce a deep state of relaxation and at no point did it feel rote. It's an incredibly indulgent experience – I mean how often do you get 3 hours of someone dedicated to working on your body in the name of wellness?

Adding another nature-inspired layer, the products have been custom-developed. Used in treatments and amenities, they're plant-based, rich in vitamins and minerals and contain active ingredients from the four local trees. They're available for sale in the spa retail boutique, which also showcases a highly-curated collection of comfy locally-made textiles that make you want to relax just looking at them!

HIGH-ALTITUDE MEDICINE

But does the resort capitalise on its wellness-centric setting? Yes, in a resounding way, with a number of outdoor activities designed to make the most of its 'high-altitude medicine'.



The 3-hour Tree Circle Ceremony is without doubt a highlight ... it's incredibly indulgent



The resort exudes contemporary minimalist luxury

Wyda sessions take place in the forest, along streams or mountain rocks if weather permits, while all-year-round guided hikes explore the dense woods or neighbouring Puez-Odle Nature Park. In addition, there are four bike routes and 45km of slopes for this ski-in, ski-out resort.

Retreats are offered and custom-designed based on the notion that strength can be drawn from nature for both physical and spiritual regeneration.

And it would be remiss not to mention the cuisine at Forestis. Dinners are a seven-course delight in a stadium seating style setting which offers unobstructed views of the trees and mountains. Mushrooms, berries, herbs, nuts, flowers and other local and natural ingredients are featured on menus that change every day. The imaginative and beautifully presented options never leave you feeling overfull and left me feeling better every time.

In short, Forestis is an ideal destination in which to spend extended time, either alone or with a loved one, in reflection and contemplation, moving slowly and purposefully towards wellness goals and feeling recharged upon departure. ●



PREMIUM FLOATING TANKS

PERFECT RELAXATION

EXCLUDE THE OUTSIDE WORLD AND FLOAT WEIGHTLESSLY ON BODY-TEMPERATURE,
MAGNESIUM-ENRICHED SALT WATER



MAXIMUM HYGIENE LEVELS • 4+1 FILTRATION STEPS • 100% SELF-DRAINING POOL
WITH WATER RESERVOIR • SOUND-, LIGHT- AND AROMATHERAPY

float SPA[®]

In 30+ countries, since 2009.

the premium floating tank manufacturer

More info: www.floatspa.com

Get **Spa Business** & **Spa Business Insider** magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

Spirit of excellence

Rupert Schmid and Pierre-Louis Delapalme, owners of Biologique Recherche, discuss the global rollout of its 'Ambassade' flagship spas

Biologique Recherche is already the skincare partner of choice for luxury hotels and exclusive medical and day spas in over 85 countries. The global rollout of its 'Ambassade Biologique Recherche' concept is set to further grow its reputation for delivering results-driven treatments in a luxury setting.

According to company owners Rupert Schmid and Pierre-Louis Delapalme, the 'Ambassade' (embassy) concept was created by the brand's founder, Yvan Allouche, who had a vision of creating a network of exclusive Biologique Recherche flagship properties to showcase the brand's products and unique methodology for spa clients around the world.

"Our main goal is to expand our Ambassade network to the most emblematic cities and if possible, open one in each of our partners' countries," say Schmid and Delapalme.

The most recent locations opened in October in Stockholm and Brussels. Both near the heart of the city, in exclusive shopping areas close to other luxury brand flagships.



PHOTO: BILOGIQUE RECHERCHE

PHOTO: BILOGIQUE RECHERCHE

BRIEFING

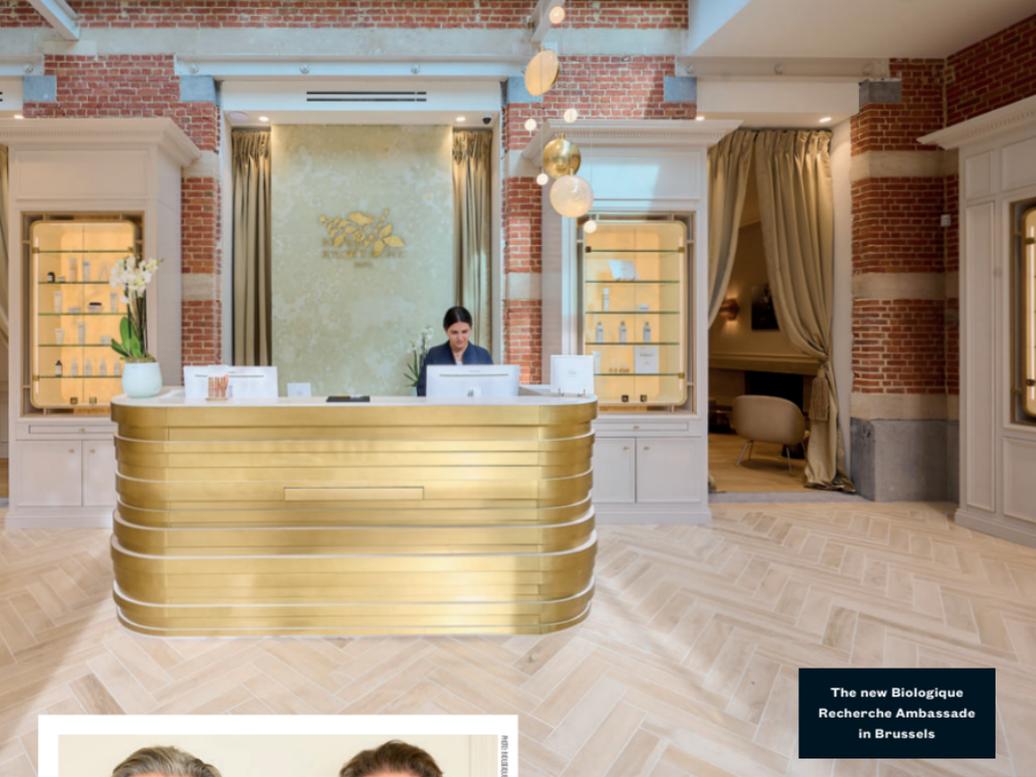
THE BILOGIQUE RECHERCHE STORY

Founded over 50 years ago by a family of experts passionate about skincare, Biologique Recherche is today managed by Rupert Schmid and Pierre-Louis Delapalme, while the son of founders Yvan and Josette Allouche - Philippe Allouche - leads the R&D team.

Remaining loyal to the brand's fundamentals, Schmid, Delapalme and Allouche continue to safeguard its unique methodology and results-driven, personalised approach, which combines powerful products and effective bespoke treatment procedures with respect for the skin's structure to deliver excellent results.



PHOTO: BILOGIQUE RECHERCHE



The new Biologique Recherche Ambassade in Brussels



Our goal is to expand our network of flagship locations to the most emblematic cities in the world

Rupert Schmid and Pierre-Louis Delapalme, Biologique Recherche

The company has also opened Ambassades in Paris, Los Angeles, Rome and Shanghai, with further locations coming online soon in New York and Boston and more international openings in the pipeline.

Schmid and Delapalme say spa menus reflect the company's commitment to skincare excellence, while interiors are consistent with its luxury design principles.

"To extend the authenticity of the brand and create continuity, we borrowed elements from the original Ambassade in Paris to bring the same spirit to each destination," they explained.

The Ambassades in Bruxelles and Stockholm each contain original pieces of furniture made to measure by cabinet makers and glass artists to reflect the brand's identity.

They also incorporate decor with white, blue and gold touches, as well as the use of onyx displays and brass-trimmed cabinets to showcase products.

This consistency, together with the company's powerful products, effective treatment protocols and customised solutions, is increasing its global visibility and enhancing its reputation.

As Schmid and Delapalme conclude, "Building brand recognition on an international scale ultimately benefits our entire network of partners." ●

More: www.biologique-recherche.com

A TIME OF transformation

This year's Global Wellness Summit – which relocated from Doha to Miami in just weeks – was a star-studded event that proves wellness is on everyone's mind. Jane Kitchen reports



In what seems a run of unfortunate circumstances for the Global Wellness Summit (GWS), unrest and war in the Middle East forced organisers of the 2023 event to pivot from Doha to Miami in the US only three weeks beforehand.

I'm not sure if the team has simply had enough practice with last-minute changes – four of the past five summits have had to move for a wide range of reasons, from civil unrest to the pandemic – but you'd be hard-pressed to notice it was ever meant to be anywhere else. Amazingly, the dates were kept the same, the celebrity keynote speakers were all still able to make it and the event found a flavour of Miami, with morning walks among the Brickell high-rises, a salsa band at the opening party held under palm trees on the shore of the Miami River and a throng of industry icons letting loose on a pulsating dancefloor at the colourful gala dinner at Sexy Fish.

"When we decided on this year's theme of 'a time of transformation,' we had no idea we'd be the ones doing the transforming," said **Nancy Davis**, the chief creative officer and executive director of the summit, in her opening remarks. That theme of transformation ran throughout, with music producer **Timbaland** telling attendees of his personal journey from addiction to wellness; Welsh



PHOTO BY GUY LAWRENCE FOR SPABUSINESS.COM

GWS researchers Yeung, Johnston and Callender showed that the global wellness economy is now worth US\$5.6tn



PHOTO BY GUY LAWRENCE FOR SPABUSINESS.COM

“For years, the industry has been moving slowly; now it's truly taking flight ... There's a real reason for optimism”
Susie Ellis



PHOTO BY GUY LAWRENCE FOR SPABUSINESS.COM

Timbaland is using his synesthesia to create a new kind of wellness music, he revealed



When I visit spas, I wonder ‘why don’t they play my music? It’s cool to be in the club, but I could be in your spas too – Timbaland

The event had a true Miami flavour, despite having only three weeks to relocate

PHOTO: GUY LAWRENCE/GETTY IMAGES



Wales is on a mission to move beyond GDP as a measure of wellbeing

Sophie Howe

future generation commissioner **Sophie Howe** talking about her mission to move beyond GDP as a measure of wellbeing; and gymnast **Simone Biles** detailing her bravery in standing up for her own mental wellness (see p10 for more on this).

GWS chair and CEO Susie Ellis also said it's the industry itself that's going through a great revolution. "For years, it's been moving slowly; now, it's truly transforming and taking flight," she said. "The metamorphosis is fuelled by many factors, including technology, geopolitics, post-pandemic awareness and demand, medicine, tourism and more."

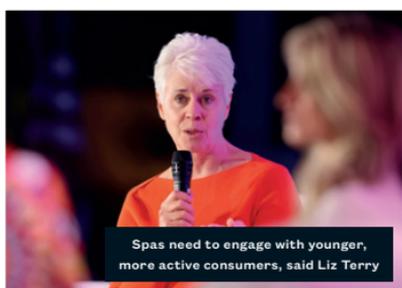
That shift can be seen in real numbers as Global Wellness Institute (GWI) researchers **Ophelia Yeung, Katherine Johnston and Tonia Callender** revealed on stage that the global wellness economy is now worth US\$5.6 trillion (see p22). "There's real reason for optimism," Ellis said. ▶



Simone Biles' keynote talk about mental wellness resonated strongly with delegates



Delegates take a moment to stretch and refocus



Spas need to engage with younger, more active consumers, said Liz Terry

PHOTO: KEVIN MAZUR FOR SPASOURCE 2023

PHOTO: LINDA BELLUSCHI FOR SPASOURCE 2023



Sports tourism is a blind spot and it's a perfect market for an array of people

Patricia Ladis

► HOSPITALITY DISRUPTION

Evolution, change and transformation within the hospitality space were hot topics this year.

A panel on the intersection of wellness, sports and hospitality, moderated by Ellis, featured **Amber Donaldson**, VP of sports medicine for the US Olympic & Paralympic Committee; **Patricia Ladis**, founder & CEO of WiseBody; **Enrico Manaresi**, global PR & media relations for Technogym; and Leisure Media CEO **Liz Terry**.

Ellis detailed how technology from the sports field – cryotherapy, hyperbaric chambers, or infrared saunas – is making its way into spas. “Many spas are starting to look like a sports recovery station,” she said.

Lots of people travel for reasons involving sports, from running a marathon in a large city to escorting kids to regional tournaments or visiting a new country for a professional sports game. “This is a huge market. It’s a blind spot and it’s a perfect market for an array of people,” said Ladis, highlighting how players like the Nadal Academies or the new Sports Illustrated Resorts are moving into the space.

“These kinds of developments are going to rub alongside spa and wellness,” said Terry. “What’s driving this is a whole new generation of consumers. The people who are going to spas at the moment are going to be superseded by this new generation

who want to be more active – so there’s an opportunity [for spas] to engage with them too.”

On a separate panel in which the heads of spa & wellness for four industry giants – Accor, Hilton, Hyatt and Westin – took to the stage, **Emlyn Brown**, global VP of wellbeing for Accor, concurred. “There’s an absolute tidal wave of demand for wellness and wellbeing and it’s getting ever more sophisticated with a new generation coming through,” he said.

The panel – moderated by **Mia Kyricos**, president of Kyricos & Associates – saw wellness leaders discussing the ways that they’re working to transform hospitality.

“Now more than ever, in 2023, the guests need something different from us,” said **TJ Abrams**, VP of global wellbeing experiences for Hyatt, saying his team are looking to move beyond just serving people to creating a lifestyle of wellbeing experience.

At Hilton, VP of wellness **Amanda Al-Masri** said she’s seeing a “tsunami of demand for wellness” across all of the group’s 22 brands. “More than half of guests, even at the lower end, are travelling and engaging with wellness,” she said. “Regardless of brand, regardless of the reason for travel.” This

is driving the group to think about how it delivers wellness in a different way. She continued: "Guests don't want it [wellness] any less because they're staying in a different brand. This is a guest experience innovation, not just a wellness innovation."

Similarly at Accor, which has nearly 6,000 hotels across 40 brands, it's about bringing wellness to a diverse audience. Brown said: "Four out of five of our guests across all our brands are doing something every day to prioritise wellbeing, so we need to support that."

Catherine Flint, senior director of global brand management for Westin, said that leveraging partnerships, such as the one it has with massage recovery specialist Hyperice, has been a great way for the brand to differentiate itself.

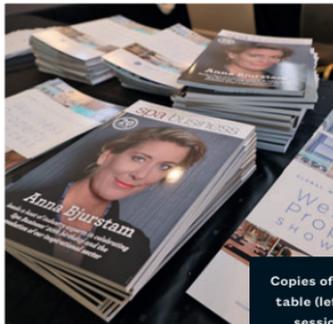
Abrams said transformation is required. "We're one of the most dynamic industries in the world and we can't show up and be relevant if we're not willing to listen and transform," he said.

PHOTO: HILTON HOSPITALITY



▶ Spa figure Mia Kyricos (right) with Hilton's Amanda Al-Masri

PHOTO: ACCOR HOSPITALITY



Copies of *Spa Business* flew off the table (left); early morning fitness sessions by Sanctum (right)

PHOTO: ACCOR HOSPITALITY



Heads of spa and wellness from Accor, Westin, Hilton and Hyatt shared their wisdom in a powerhouse panel chaired by Mia Kyricos (centre)

Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup



▶ MULTI-GENERATIONAL WELLNESS

Robbie Hammond, president and chief strategy officer for Therme Group US, talked about making wellness more affordable and accessible, highlighting that loneliness is growing fastest in the youngest age group.

Hammond spoke about the need for 'wellbeing infrastructure' in cities in the same way that we have infrastructure like roads, subways and even libraries. "If we really want better outcomes, this is what we need to think about," he said. He contrasted a Therme facility - which is open from 6am to midnight, 365 days a year - to a sports stadium, which sits vacant and surrounded by empty parking lots on most days.

The giant hydrothermal facilities also attract a wide range of people, from seniors in the morning to families in the afternoon and young people at night. "One of the most important parts of wellness is social interaction," he said. "You want wellness to be fun. People are not coming to Therme necessarily for their health - they're coming because they want to meet up with their friends or their family. That's an important part of making it more accessible to more people."



PHOTO: CLAREN WILHELM/STOCKMART



Social interaction is an important part of wellness ... you want wellness to be fun

Robbie Hammond

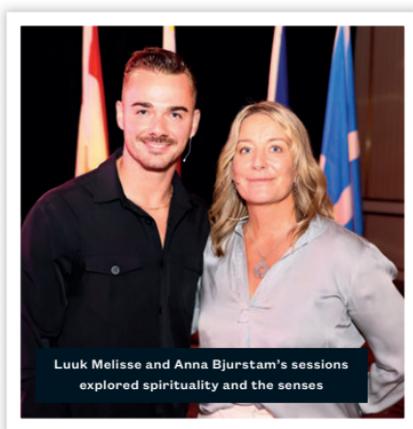


PHOTO: CLAREN WILHELM/STOCKMART



Our industry can make a valuable contribution to multi-generational wellness

Krip Rojanastien



Luuk Melisse and Anna Bjurstam's sessions explored spirituality and the senses

Creating places for family connections is also important to **Krip Rojanastien**, chair and CEO of Chiva-Som International Health Resorts. Chiva Som's Zula Wellness Resort in Qatar focuses on cultivating close family relationships and inspiring the next generation. "It's crucial that wellness knowledge and understanding be built into early education so that it lasts a lifetime," said Rojanastien. "Our industry can make a valuable contribution to building multi-generational wellness into our lexicon. We have a part to play in solving the chronic problems facing our societies and it's time to share the knowledge far and wide."

One of the last sessions of the summit also focused on the wellbeing of children and the big opportunity our industry has to make a difference. "All over the world, there's an epidemic of really serious mental health issues among teens," said **Amy McDonald**, CEO of Under a Tree Health & Wellness Consulting. "If resorts or even day spas can reach out and bring something as simple as mindfulness to teens and



Jim Chenevey, Kim Matheson and Tony de Leede on the gala night



Susie Ellis, Frank Pitsikalis and Lynelle Lynch get party ready (right); attendees share a moment of gratitude (left)



“*There’s a tidal wave of demand ... and the new generation is ever more sophisticated*

Emlyn Brown



Leading spa designers pose for a selfie

teach them about gratitude - those are powerful tools. Our industry has catered to 25- to 65-year-olds really well, but that younger group really needs us.”

SENSES AND MUSIC

An interactive session led by **Anna Bjurstmam**, wellness pioneer for Six Senses, tapped into the inner emotional and spiritual realm, as she explored the idea of transforming wellness through sensory integration. Bjurstmam gave real-world examples of some of the cutting-edge programming Six Senses has created, including somatic experiences combining floatation with sounds of the ocean, bio-alchemy sculptures infused with scent and a geodesic dome with vibroacoustic floor. “By using sensory integration, we can multiply our senses,” she said.

Bjurstmam was joined by **Luuk Melisse**, founder of Sanctum, a fitness company designed to “empower the body and expand the mind.” Based in The Netherlands, Sanctum uses special blue-glowing headphones to deliver their classes, which combine music, spoken word, chanting, breathwork and mindful movement practices and verge on the spiritual. GWS attendees were able to sample the classes in early-morning sessions on the riverfront.

A panel on beauty delved into the visual side of wellness. Featuring GWS regular **Dr Anjan Chatterjee**, a neuroaesthetics expert, as well as **Jessica Jesse**, CEO and founder of BuDhaGirl and wellness architect **Veronica Schreibeis-Smith**,



Davis and Ellis raise a glass to celebrate this year's summit

▶ the panel explored the theme of how seeing something beautiful affects the mind.

Dr Chatterjee talked about his mission to teach 'slow-looking', savouring works of art and how looking at beautiful things engages multiple parts of your brain. Schreibeis-Smith added: "True beauty - you know it when it moves you. It's a full experience of your entire body and your emotions."

A second panel on beauty, moderated by Irene Forte, CEO of Irene Forte skincare, saw representatives from Elemis, Biologique Recherche, Natura Bisse and Babor, discussing how sustainability innovations are transforming the sector.

Freddie Moross, the founder of Myndstream, focused on the music and wellbeing connection. In an onstage



Spa education veteran Mary Tabacchi (left) with Judith Nduati - the winner of this year's student competition

COMING TO SCOTLAND

Next year's Global Wellness Summit will be held at the Old Course Hotel, Golf Resort & Spa, a Kohler resort, in Scotland on 4-7 November



PHOTO: GUY LAWRENCE/SHUTTERSTOCK

conversation with Timbaland, the two talked about the music producer's journey from Oxycontin addiction to wellness and weight loss before detailing their partnership. The duo are collaborating to create a new kind of wellness music based on Timbaland's synesthesia abilities - where he sees colours when he hears music.

Timbaland talked about using frequency to change the mood of a room and finding tones that move through the body in different ways. "When I visit spas, I listen to the music they're playing and I wonder 'why don't they play my music?'," he said. "It's cool to be in the club, but I could be in your spas too."

Between Timbaland and Biles, this year's GWS was a star-studded event, proving that wellness has indeed moved into the mainstream. As Louie Schwartzberg - whose beautiful films have opened summits for years - said at the start of the summit: "If you want to create a new culture, throw a better party. And that's what this is all about." ●



99%

agreed that the oil melted away traces of makeup and left the skin feeling hydrated*

Nourishing upcycled seed oils from Grape, Pumpkin and Apricot leave skin feeling replenished, soft and supple.

Naturally caffeinated Green Coffee Seed Oil and Myrtle and Olive antioxidant complex leave skin feeling protected, energised and healthy-looking.

ESPA

To find out more, please contact us at enquiries@espainternational.co.uk [espaskincare.com](https://www.espaskincare.com) | [@espaskincare](https://www.instagram.com/espaskincare)

*Independent 2 week user trial, 120 respondents.



NEW
Optimal Skin
Pro Cleansing Oil

Gentle oil-to-milk cleanser to nourish, refresh and purify skin.

Get **Spa Business** & **Spa Business Insider** magazines **FREE** on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

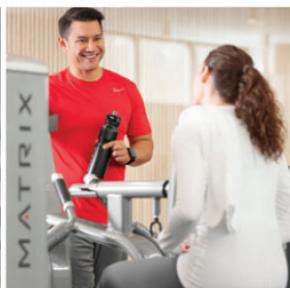
MATRIX



Create A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE

Your brand and your business are unique. Your relationship with Matrix will be too, because we'll work with you to create an exercise experience that reflects you and what you do perfectly.

From complete fitness centres to in-room solutions, we'll help you combine the world's finest equipment, the latest trends and connected technology to maximise your resources and delight your guests like never before.



Learn more at [matrixfitness.com](https://www.matrixfitness.com)

Get **Spa Business** & **Spa Business Insider** magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

SPONSORED



Matrix Fitness has delivered new wellness facilities in Bicester

Outstanding performance

Bicester Hotel & Spa is working with Matrix Fitness to enable wellness guests to train like athletes with a unique offering

In 2020, the luxurious Bicester Hotel and Spa launched a purpose-built fitness and performance facility to create a standalone, unique offering to attract a new more active demographic to the site. This included a performance gym equipped by Matrix Fitness, a custom-made 200m swimming lake, an assault course and an outdoor 500m grass running track.

Now, to complement this existing premium offering, the team has unveiled a refurbished health club with a modernised aesthetic and the latest resistance and cardiovascular equipment from Matrix Fitness to provide an integrated gym floor, three large studios and over 70-instructor led sessions per week.

A TOTAL HEALTH AND FITNESS SERVICE

Health club manager, Andrew Foreman says: "Our goal is to deliver something for everyone. We have so much on offer for our members - from state-of-the-art equipment to fantastic trainers in our group classes and our unique range of facilities - that we can now cater for anyone's training needs."

Matrix Fitness has a long-standing rapport with the company, having already been chosen as the supplier for its performance gym which was a self-contained project with the highest quality required when it came to service, support and products.

The health club includes a full Matrix Fitness connected solution with all-new Performance Cardio with touch-screen technology, as well as a Connexus functional training station, Ultra V2 Strength range with Intelligent Training Consoles and two dedicated instructor-led and virtual training studios, as well as an indoor cycling room with Matrix Fitness CXP bikes.



With our unique range of facilities, we can now cater for anyone's training needs

Andrew Foreman,
Bicester Hotel and Spa

VERSATILE AND MODERN

Nigel Tapping, head of spa and hospitality at Matrix Fitness UK adds: "Versatile gym designs and a modernised, member-centric fitness offering is playing an increasingly important role within the hospitality sector and the team at Bicester Hotel and Spa has taken a unique approach with this development.

"The modernisation of the club perfectly complements the performance-led centre, providing a full, wraparound fitness journey for every member, no matter their goal or the stage of their fitness journey they're at. The team has been forward-thinking and innovative and the result is an impressive, cutting-edge facility."

The Performance Gym includes the Magnum half and full racks, Magnum plate-loaded equipment and bespoke track flooring for strength training activities and functional-focused training. On the second floor, a space has been designed for movement screening, small accessory functional training and one-to-one personal training. ●

More: www.matrixfitness.co.uk and www.bicesterhotelfieldsandspa.com

Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

ADDED VALUE

Mary Bemis takes a peek at the revamped Golden Door and Mohonk Mountain House, two iconic US spa destinations



PHOTO: SHANE RAYNE



Bathhouse renovations at Golden Door

How do you renovate an iconic spa in this age of technology, yet keep its authenticity? This was the biggest challenge Kathy Van Ness – chief operating officer and general manager of Golden Door – faced with a US\$5 million (€4.6 million, £3.9 million) overhaul of the 2,550sq ft bathhouse at the heart of the Californian property.

I was eager to see the result. Golden Door had been on my mind because its 101-year-old founder, the equally iconic Deborah Szekely, had recently regaled me with stories of the Hollywood starlets she had invited to put the place on the map.

ZEN AESTHETIC

Originally revealed in 1958, Golden Door was the first to introduce Zen architecture to a western spa and owes a debt to Szekely's travels and vision. Before opening, Szekely and her architect embarked on a pilgrimage to educate themselves about Japanese bathing culture by visiting 21 inns in 25 days. It takes its aesthetic from the country's honjin, or inn, and

bamboo forests, koi ponds and Japanese gardens abound – as does an incredible (and very valuable) Asian art collection she amassed over the years.

This was my third stay at the property in 15 years, my second under the discerning eye of Van Ness, who has guided it through a series of upgrades since its acquisition by Joanne and Bill Conway in 2012 (see www.spabusiness.com/kathyvanness). Remarkably, the Golden Door is even more chic nowadays but the modernised bathhouse, reimagined by San Diego-based designer Kristine Smith, remains true to its Japanese roots.

DIGITAL ART

In a quietly radical move, Van Ness brought in time-lapse nature filmmaker Louie Schwartzberg to create "a moving healing visual wall". A focal point of the bathhouse, the large digital screen is positioned in front of a hydro pool with a backdrop of elegant black bamboo tiles and a small Oriental rock garden. The area is enclosed by authentic Japanese screens to create

Louie Schwartzberg
has created a new
moving healing
visual wall

The 'incredible
and valuable' Asian
artwork still remains



Bemis (left) with Golden
Door COO Kathy Van Ness

a secluded, yet social, area
within the limited footprint.

"People can gather and pause [there], have the quiet energy of other guests, but also have a space to lower their energy," explains Van Ness. "And if you can combine warm bubbling water with slow-moving visual imagery, a Japanese raked garden and a private space, you will absolutely change your pace."

This healing space is where I spent my time each morning and evening. Every day, I stared at Schwartzberg's images, trying to decide how I felt about the new addition. They are breathtakingly beautiful, but did I want to be digitally transported from simply soaking in the bathhouse at the Golden Door? I admittedly am a purist. I don't really want the distraction. But I was most definitely in the



*Every day, I stared
at the new digital
images trying to
decide how I felt
about them*

minority on this one. A 50-something fellow guest suggested that digital art has been introduced because younger guests are so accustomed to screens. And, sure enough, the demographic here has changed, skewing younger. Yes, there are those loyal grande dames who have chalked up 40-plus visits in their day, but over the past 10 years, there's been a shift towards professional women aged between 35 to 55.

NEW ADDITIONS

But back to the bathhouse. Three treatment spaces, dedicated to the classic and deservedly legendary herbal linen wraps (created at Rancho la Puerta in the 40s), are joined by a new Lightstim LED therapy area (guests had been asking for modalities to address inflammation, noted Van Ness) and much-needed rebuilt sauna and steamroom. A chic little space with shimmering walls of metallic gold tiles features a black stone soaking tub for both ice-cold plunges and hot aromatic baths, while a wet room boasting a state-of-the-art Vichy shower by Kohler concludes the update. And it's this last addition which was a delightful and nice surprise to this spa purist.

A chic space with gold
tiles features a black
stone soaking tub



Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

Mohonk Mountain House spa refresh

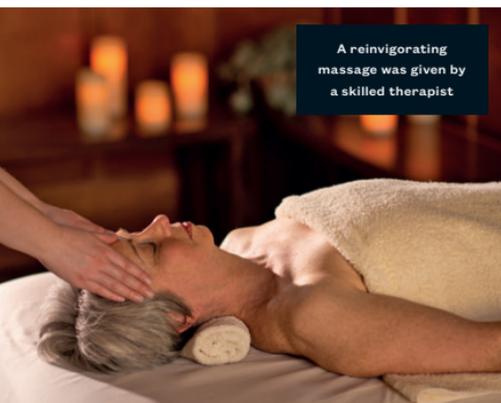
A couple of years ago, while watching the hit series *Upload*, I saw a futuristic version of heaven on earth and recognised it immediately. That virtual 'heaven' was Mohonk Mountain House, the very real Victorian-era resort 90 minutes from New York City. Recently, I learned that its spa had been refreshed and I was curious – how do you improve a natural paradise?

Nature has always guided Mohonk Mountain House. Founded in 1869 by Albert K Smiley – a lover of the outdoors who led guests on meandering trails – Mohonk, still family-owned and now run by the fifth generation, has managed to stay true to its founder's mission. That 154-year-old mission? To provide opportunities for recreation and renewal of body, mind and spirit in a beautiful setting.

In 2005, this National Historic Landmark resort and Historic Hotel of America debuted its 30,000sq ft, three-level spa wing at a cost of US\$14 million (£12.8 million, £11 million). "It was designed to bring the outside in, to complement and extend opportunities for guests to enjoy nature," Nina Smiley, director of mindfulness programming, shared with me at that time. And it did just that in spades.



Nina Smiley leads mindfulness sessions



A reinvigorating massage was given by a skilled therapist

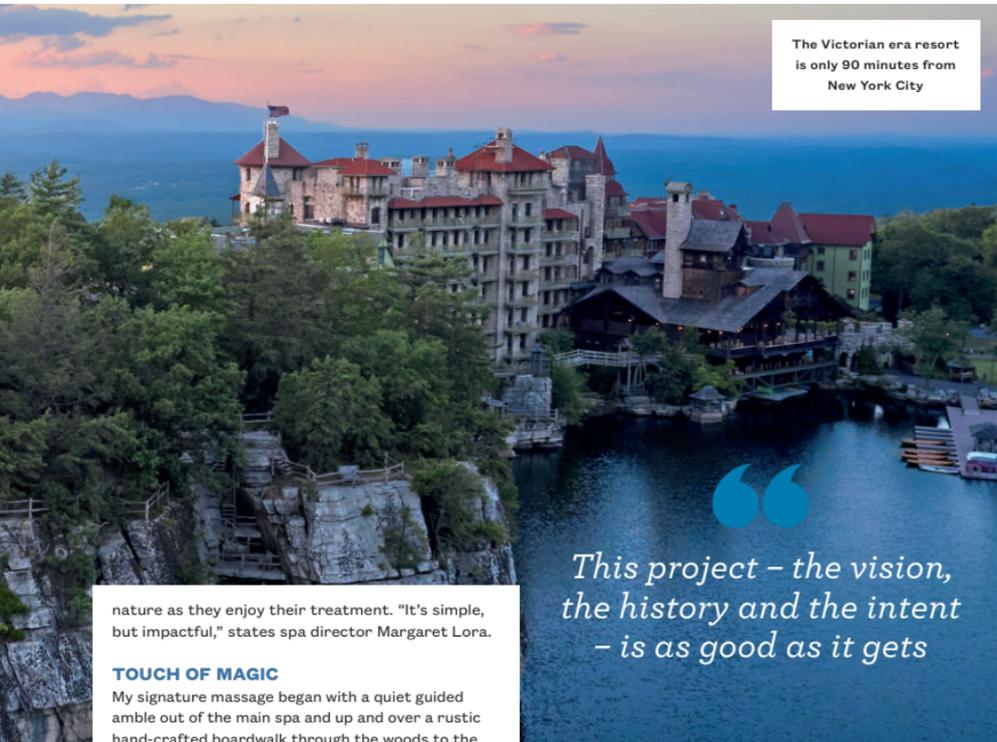
OUTDOOR SANCTUARY

When I came back to see the spa's stunning new Lakeview Summerhouse and subtle refresh, I was touched by nature in marvellous new ways.

Architect Robert Henry, a regular Mohonk visitor for more than 30 years, worked in collaboration with its Rustic Crew to craft the pavilion in keeping with the property's other 120 historic summerhouses. "You have the perfect person to respect and honour nature," says Barbara Stirewalt, vice president and general manager. "Robert gave us some really good insights. Combine that with our Rustic Crew's awareness of what nature was going to do to the structure over time and you have a wonderful conglomeration."

The 240sq ft Lakeview Summerhouse, set on a cliff overlooking the majestic glacial lake, is constructed from local wood and serves as an outdoor sanctuary where guests can connect with the healing power of

The Victorian era resort
is only 90 minutes from
New York City



nature as they enjoy their treatment. "It's simple, but impactful," states spa director Margaret Lora.

TOUCH OF MAGIC

My signature massage began with a quiet guided amble out of the main spa and up and over a rustic hand-crafted boardwalk through the woods to the new pavilion. The views are breathtaking and being given extra time outside while I had a hydrating hand treatment helped me get into the rhythm of nature.

Inside the open-air summerhouse, sheer billowing drapes add a touch of magic. I loved the private-label oil used in this treatment. Created by Tara, it's a luscious combination of cedarwood, fir and bergamot notes. The massage left me feeling both relaxed and reinvigorated by the skilled hands of the therapist and the fresh mountain air that circulated throughout.

Smiley, a Princeton-trained psychologist, also leads mindfulness sessions in the summerhouse. Joining her on a forest bathing wander she quoted Lao Tzu: "Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished".

SUBTLE REFRESH

And speaking of accomplished, the refresh to the main spa is just right and includes an update of furniture, fixtures and textiles. Working closely with Lora, Henry has chosen an organic earth-tone palette and lots of natural wood and stone features. I loved the Calacatta green tile that adorns the walls of the showers and steamrooms, the green marble countertops and the flooring – a green Vermont slate tile. ▶



*This project – the vision,
the history and the intent
– is as good as it gets*

Earthy tones and fresh
furniture enhance the
2005 spa wing



PHOTO: DAVID LARSEN/ISTOCK

spabusiness.com issue 4 2023 101

Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

FIRST PERSON

Billowing drapes in the open-air pavilion add a touch of magic, says Bemis



▶ “Another impact that Robert made is really thinking through the guest experience from start to finish. That led to us paying a lot of attention to the treatment room hallway,” enthuses Lora, adding that it’s an area that’s neglected quite often, but it’s the first thing a guest sees. I was particularly pleased to find that the spa’s custom lily pond carpet which I fondly remembered from my past visits has not been done away with.



Robert Henry oversaw the spa refresh

SALON OVERHAUL

Additionally, the salon has been completely transformed. Of special note are three pedicure stations that have been “lifted almost like stadium seating to get a clear view of the beautiful lake”. Men’s and women’s changing rooms have been refurbished with showers and steamrooms completely gutted and rebuilt.

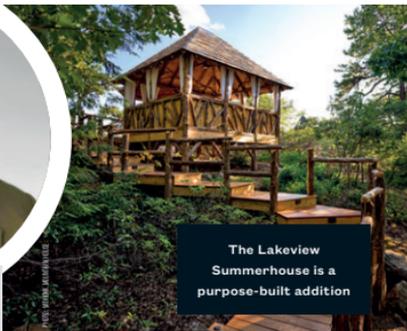
The iconic rocking chairs on the verandas and in the solarium have been reupholstered in lush green velvet and updated stone and wood refreshment stations feature throughout.

On top of this, a new treatment room showcases both a steam and cold rain shower for contrast bathing therapies.

I was pleasantly surprised to see Pietro Simone is now a supplier and enjoyed its Repair and Restore Facial with a unique cotton thread exfoliation and dry facial massage. Other product lines include Eminence, Naturopathica, Seed to Skin, Swissline by Derma Lab, Om 4 Men, InnerSense and Dazzle Dry nailcare. There’s also a Tara Well Bar that is quite popular with guests.

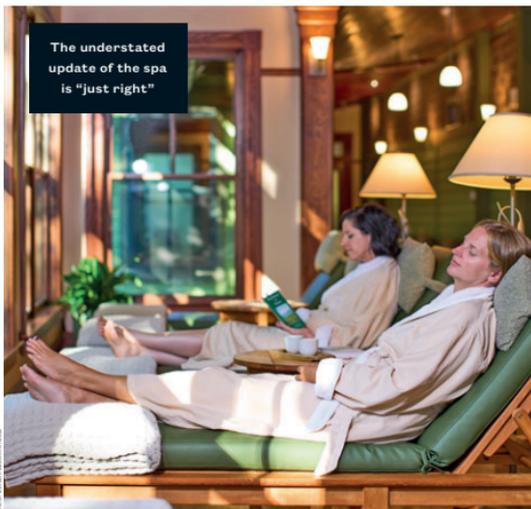
While Stirewalt doesn’t disclose the cost of this latest project, she does tell me that millions are invested annually in the upkeep and improvement of the historic property. And that investment is clearly evident.

“Enhancing nature is what it is all about,” Henry concludes. “This project – the vision, the history and the intent – is as good as it gets. In wellness design, nature is salve and you need to be humble and learn from it.” ●



The Lakeview Summerhouse is a purpose-built addition

The understated update of the spa is “just right”





LES MILLS

Transform Hotel and Spa Wellness

Enhance your guest experience and transform your facilities with our world class fitness and wellness solutions.

lesmills.com/hotel-fitness-programs

Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup



Exclusive Range

*Luxury Linen & Bathrobes
for your Spa*

www.bcsoftwear.co.uk

Get **Spa Business** & **Spa Business Insider** magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup



SoftWear
a touch of luxury



Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup



FORWARD THINKING

How are spa software suppliers embracing AI? And what are the benefits for operators? Katie Barnes takes a closer look

Frank Pitsikalis

AGILYSYS

With more consumers searching for and booking things via natural language, Agilysys is working on a natural language interface to respond to text or voice data.

Our Service product already allows guests to liaise with staff and/or an automated chatbot for common service and information requests, but this new functionality will allow guests to conduct a full natural language interaction which will sound something like this:

- Guest: "Do you have a 60- or 90-minute Swedish massage available at 2.00pm with a male therapist?"
- Ask AI: "I don't have a 2.00pm treatment, but I do have a 3.30pm, 90-minute Swedish massage with a male therapist. Would you like to book that?"

We currently use AI for optimal service mix and placement, so unsold gaps are not

left scattered in the schedule. The Agilysys Digital Marketing solution also provides powerful capabilities to ensure content is served up to guests, based on what they have or haven't booked - suggesting additional individualised options to a guest before they arrive, for example.

However, the most profound benefit of AI currently available in Agilysys Spa comes via its Dynamic Pricing and Dynamic Availability revenue management features.

Depending on demand, Agilysys Spa can either change the price of a treatment (by a percentage or fixed amount) or simply make the service unavailable (dynamic availability).

Dynamic availability is preferred, as it simply turns off less profitable services during peak demand periods in real-time. The result is an optimal mix of services booked which yield a much higher profit overall, without changing the published price.



Frank Pitsikalis

Agilysys is working on a natural language interface to respond to text or voice data

Thomas Rössler

TAC

TAC uses AI for dynamic pricing for spa admission tickets/passes which is hugely beneficial for operators who are looking to maximise profit margins and increase revenues.

Using AI, price adjustments are calculated depending on the

number of checked-in visitors compared with the same calendar day, over the past five years.

In addition, AI in TAC's software looks at weather types and correlates these with bookings. Prices can be increased by 5 per cent when heavy rain is forecast or temperatures are freezing, knowing that

demand will be higher during those times.

Spas can choose how many days elapse before selected date/price adjustments take effect, to ensure weather forecasts are reliable.



Thomas Rössler

AI in TAC's software looks at weather types and correlates these to pricing

Craig Griffin

JOURNEY

Journey is leveraging data, analytics, AI and automation in its booking experience to provide hyper-personalised journeys.

We can tailor marketing to individuals at the right time, the right place and through the right channel to increase the propensity to book.

Generative AI also allows us to display pictures during the booking journey that hook into a certain client's aspirations or needs.

We can augment existing imagery with details that are not only relevant to the guest but also other contexts, such as the seasons - adding a Christmas tree to drive festive bookings, for example. In the most extreme cases, Journey can even use AI to create relevant imagery from scratch, which is indiscernible from the real thing.

All this helps increase guest conversion, average booking values, Net Promoter scores, satisfaction and relevance of results for customers.



Craig Griffin

Generative AI allows Journey to display images that hook into a spa client's individual aspirations or needs



Trybe uses AI to minimise manual tasks

Ricky Daniels

TRYBE

Trybe's intelligence simplifies staff management and enhances the customer experience by designing the booking process in a more intuitive way.

When booking a treatment or package, guests are only offered dates and times linked to the live availability of the treatment specialist.

This minimises white space and gaps in the calendar to help maximise property revenue and relieve staff of manual booking tasks - it's our most beneficial component for spa teams by far.

In the future, we're looking to add other AI functionality to enhance the journey between booking and treatment.



Ricky Daniels

Consumer-facing tools such as AI chatbots are on the horizon for Trybe

Consumer-facing tools such as chatbots are also on the horizon, further removing manual tasks that tend to be dealt with by spa teams, while still improving the customer experience.



AI-driven pricing can generate up to US\$76k extra a year

Dheeraj Koneru

ZENOTI

A couple of our AI applications really make a difference. One is SmartBot, a 24/7 AI chatbot Zenoti spas add to their website and mobile app. It answers clients' questions - using natural language processing - and can help book and reschedule appointments or even suggest add-ons. This feature accounts

for around 5 per cent of all bookings.

SmartBot also monitors missed calls and automatically sends an SMS message to conduct an AI conversation to encourage booking.

Another function is our AI-driven dynamic pricing which can potentially account for an additional US\$76k of sales a year at top-performing locations.

Our AI algorithms understand what clients

are willing to pay and intelligently raise prices when service demand is high. Clients see the usual price and the higher rate, because we think transparency is key to client connection and loyalty.

It's important to remember that AI needs a very high volume of data to deliver the greatest impact, because there's more information to learn from and Zenoti has one of the industry's largest customer footprints.



PHOTO: ZENOTI

Dheeraj Koneru

Zenoti's SmartBot accounts for 5 per cent of bookings



PHOTO: ZENOTI

Sal Capizzi

Calculating utilisation rates and adjusting prices accordingly is an ideal fit for AI functionality

Sal Capizzi

BOOK4TIME

Book4Time meticulously calculates utilisation rates, allowing for analysis of customer traffic patterns based on variables such as the day of the week, time of day, practitioner or overall spa capacity. Once a specific threshold - determined by a spa director - is reached, the system initiates an automated process to dynamically adjust prices based on real-time demand.

This feature is an ideal fit for AI functionality to further optimise revenue

generation, resource allocation and overall operational effectiveness.

In the future, I see AI helping spas to analyse large volumes of data generated by software systems to provide valuable insights into customer trends, popular services, and overall business performance.

I also truly believe AI will be incorporated so spa operators can use customer data - including preferences, previous treatments and feedback - to offer personalised recommendations for services to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. ●

SpaSoft

Spa & Activity Management Software
on premise or in the cloud to take your business to the next level



Take complete control of your wellness operations.

- ✓ Appointment Bookings
- ✓ Guest Experiences
- ✓ Staff & Resources
- ✓ Product & Inventory
- ✓ Point-of-Sale
- ✓ Guest Retention
- ✓ Revenue Management
- ✓ Analyses & Reporting
- ✓ Security & Privacy

Visit www.spasoft.com to learn more!

Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

SPONSORED

If you can't measure it, you can't improve it and Premier Software covers just about every report you need to assess the performance of the business

Michael Kay, Low Wood Bay Resort & Spa

Tried & trusted

Premier Software's Laura Meeson explores the top three benefits of purchasing new spa management software



Managing a successful spa or wellness business requires careful attention to revenue optimisation and guest satisfaction, as well as investing in a trusted software system that's customisable to your property needs is key.

Premier Software has been a leading provider of spa management software for nearly 30 years, providing a complete business overview at the touch of a button, helping operators maximise profitability, manage day-to-day operations and identify areas of growth.

There's a reason a majority of UK spa managers choose Premier and that's the operational control it delivers.

Spas of all sizes, ranging from Harrods and Intercontinental Hotels, to boutique properties, such as

The Gainsborough, choose Premier Software for its depth of functionality, so they have full commercial oversight.

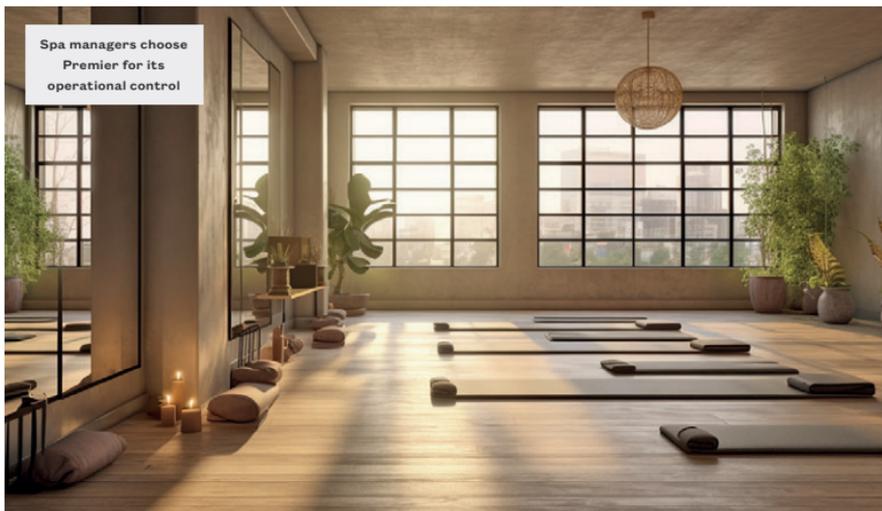
From staff scheduling to marketing, membership to reporting, we've built our tech alongside the industry so it really is the most comprehensive solution on the market for any spa.

Investing in a comprehensive and trusted spa and leisure management software is a wise decision for any wellness business. By prioritising revenue management, enhancing guest satisfaction, and optimising operational efficiency, spas can scale growth in this ever-evolving industry. ●

More: www.premiersoftware.uk

Laura Meeson is director of spa at Premier Software - part of Journey Hospitality

Spa managers choose Premier for its operational control



Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines **FREE** on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup



STYLING: ANDREW HARRIS FOR THE EDITORIAL

Spas of all sizes
choose Premier
Software

When choosing your software, look for comprehensive reporting functionality designed to meet the needs of spa owners and finance teams

With up to 72 per cent of spa guests choosing to book online, look for a software management system that integrates with best-in-breed online e-commerce platforms, such as onejourney

1 The importance of revenue management

Revenue management is crucial for spa businesses, as it involves predicting consumer behaviour, optimising product availability and setting prices to maximise revenue growth.

By selling the right services at the right time and price, spas can boost their profitability and with the right software, spa directors can easily identify revenue management opportunities and yield accordingly.

This strategic approach can significantly impact the bottom line and ensure long-term success.

2 Enhancing guest satisfaction

Guest experience is a key factor that sets spas apart from the competition and in today's digital age, customers expect the convenience of booking appointments online at any time.

A custom online booking site designed for your spa can reduce missed appointments and improve guest satisfaction and with the right software, customers can book appointments at their convenience, resulting in a seamless and personalised guest experience.

Additionally, software with built-in CRM capabilities can help manage loyalty and memberships allowing spas to enhance guest satisfaction and tailor their offerings.

Look for a system that has comprehensive features and functionality to save time and increase profitability

3 Boosting profitability through efficient operations

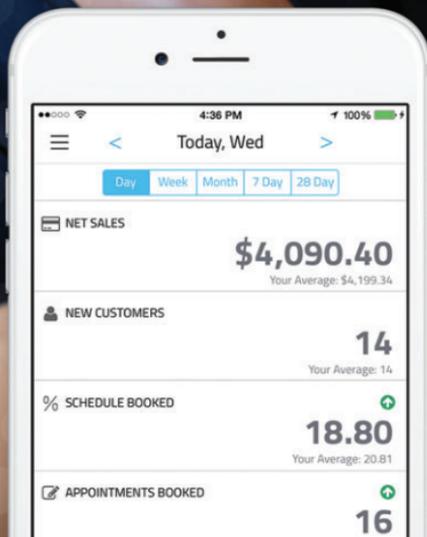
Spa software can streamline various aspects of operations, including staff scheduling, white space management and inventory control and by automating these processes, spa directors can save time and reduce the risk of errors.

Additionally, software with thorough analytics enables spa businesses to track KPIs, customer buying trends, and demographics, allowing for data-driven decision-making and revenue optimisation.

booker

All the Features You Need to Manage Your Spa and Delight Your Customers

Online Booking • Staff Scheduling • Integrated POS • CRM • And More



Learn why Booker is the leading spa management software

mindbodyonline.com/spa-software

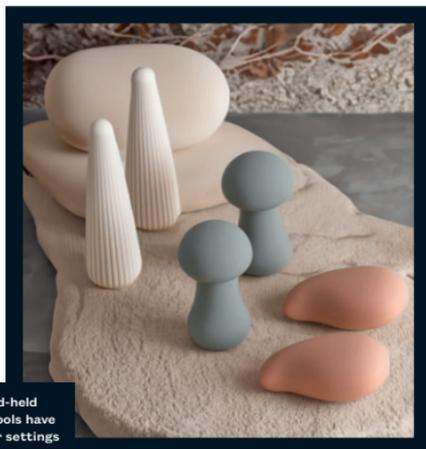
Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

Product innovation

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



The hand-held vibration tools have three power settings



Vie Healing's **Mona Dan** channels TCM for mini massage tools

Vie Healing, the LA-based brand known for its 24k Gold Ear Seeds, is launching a range of vibration therapy tools.

Said to be "like a massage gun, but softer and without all the noise", Vybra includes three differently shaped silicone models. Enoki, Shroom and Fig have three power settings and can be used in various ways - for playful pulsations, surface stimulation or targeted trigger point therapy - to help with anything from enhanced circulation and pain relief to lymphatic drainage.

Vie, which draws inspiration from traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), has also created complementary treatments which incorporate Vybra and strategically placed magnets on the body.

Founder Mona Dan says: "My vision is to seamlessly blend acupressure, magnetic therapy and vibration, replicating the transformative effects of acupuncture within the comfort of a home or spa."

The company already supplies spa operators such as Auberge, Four Seasons and Marriott.



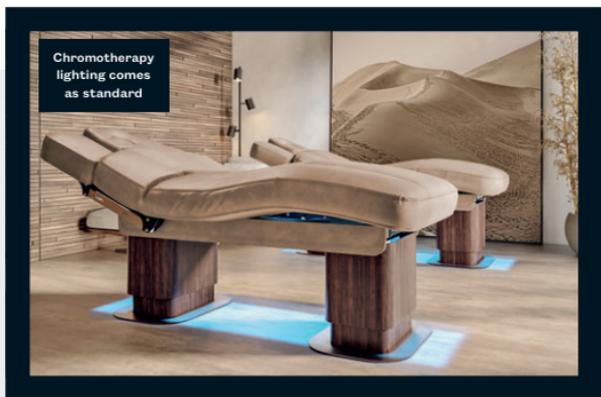
"We want to replicate the transformative effects of acupuncture"

- Mona Dan

spa-kit.net keywords:
Vie Healing



“Milano symbolises our love for the art of wellness”
- Matteo Brusaferrì



Matteo Brusaferrì introduces the Milano treatment bed range

Lemi Group's new Milano treatment bed range symbolises the company's love for the art of wellness, says Matteo Brusaferrì, general manager.

The couch is equipped with a 15cm-thick memory foam standard mattress, underside chromotherapy lighting and a foot pedal to adjust the height, back and seat arrangements.

It also has the capacity to memorise two positions.

There are two models available. The Classic features a horseshoe sponge headrest fixed to the support in resistant, durable and hygienic plastic material. The model also features side handles so therapists can adjust the inclination of the head and distance from the mattress.

The Evo is differentiated by its HBS Stress Relief system to alter the armrests and headrest individually.

In other news, Brusaferrì has just authored a new publication - *Spa Experience: the Perfect Room for a Successful Spa*.

spa-kit.net keyword:
Lemi

Cell to cell communication underpins Seed to Skin's latest launch, says Jeanette Thottrup

Crocus chrysanthus bulb extract is at the heart of a new day cream and night complex by Seed to Skin.

The ingredient is used in The Light Source and Night Force to stimulate 'cell to cell communication' in mature skin to target all signs of ageing. A 50ml pot has an RRP of €279 (US\$306, £242)

The Light Source is a day cream that's designed to soothe dry and aged skin, restore its cushion and bounce and repair and protect the lipid barrier.

The Night Force is a leave-on cream masque that's formulated to smooth lines and wrinkles, redensify ageing skin and brighten the complexion.



A 50ml pot is being retailed at €279

In total, there are more than 30 actives, including herb-infused marula oil and fermented red ginseng oil.

"We've looked into every single ingredient in depth to understand how we could further improve its efficacy," says Seed to Skin founder and owner Jeanette Thottrup. "It's



“It's all about how the ingredients are structured and put together” - Jeanette Thottrup

all about how those ingredients are structured and put together.

"There is really nothing that's not active in this formula. I call this 'adaptogen ethnobotanical advanced skincare' - the future of result-driven, natural skincare."

spa-kit.net keywords:
Seed to Skin

Phillip Rock reveals Klafs infusion bowl

Heat experience specialist Klafs has created an automatic infusion bowl as part of a series of upgrades for its Profi commercial saunas.

The Enya bowl, which operates via a timed control or at the touch of a button, has been created to provide a continuous and varied scent for sauna sessions and ceremonies.

It's been designed to evenly distribute the liquid, while a wide rim prevents hot splashes or water pools on wooden surfaces.

The bowl can sit on existing stoves with water supplied from below, via an outlet in a wall or, for a more



The Enya bowl releases aromas continuously

dramatic effect, coming down from the ceiling.

CEO Phillip Rock says: "Enya offers another way to enrich the world of sauna culture while optimising existing capabilities at the same time."

Other Profi additions include two new sauna bench and lamp designs, 3D laser engraving for decoration and a simpler touchscreen control system.

spa-kit.net keyword: Klafs



PHILIP ROCK

Water supply can come down from the ceiling for a more dramatic effect - Phillip Rock

Nick Irani on Subtle Energies' new bioactive aesthetic line

In celebration of its 30th anniversary, Australian skincare brand Subtle Energies has unveiled a bioactive aesthetic line. Nick Irani, director of operations and brand development, says it delivers an instant "cosmetic look and feel, using only the best and purest natural ingredients, which in turn give you transformative results".

Biotechnology Skincare includes three products, along with complementary facials and advanced holistic massages.

Vegan Collagen Serum has been formulated with proteins that mimic human collagen to act as a natural filler and restore elasticity and plumpness.

Designed to help improve skin tone and moisture levels, Multi Molecular Hyaluronic Acid serum offers a broad range of molecular weights



NICK IRANI

combined with pomegranate extract and kakadu plum.

Pomegranate Enzyme Mask includes active aromatics and botanicals and is intended as a gentle exfoliator.

The family-run company, which specialises in combining aromatherapy and ayurvedic solutions, has also upgraded its entire packaging line to make it more sustainable.

spa-kit.net keywords: Subtle Energies



The line includes a vegan-friendly collagen serum

GENE WILSON

They deliver a cosmetic look and feel ... and transformative results - Nick Irani

The system can deliver up to 240 massages a month

AI massager is coming soon, says Robosculptor's Dennis Ledenkof

Robosculptor, an AI robot used for body treatments, is in the final stages of development.

Created by Dubai-based group Beautyliner, the system employs a high-speed 3D camera to scan the user and track their body movements.

A robotic arm with a rotating massage roller is then used over the body and adjusts position, pressure and speed based on real-time camera feedback. The user is given a remote control so they can also adapt or stop the treatment manually.

Beautyliner sees potential services including physiotherapy, medical massage/rehabilitation, external ultrasonic body surface scanning and aesthetic body contouring.

"Automating treatments through robotics, AI and machine learning makes massages more accessible," says founder Dennis Ledenkof. "Operators can offer up to 240 sessions a month, tripling the industry standard of 80."

spa-kit.net keyword: Beautyliner



A robotic arm with rotating massage roller is used over the body - Dennis Ledenkof

Natalie Pergar on Eminence Organic's gentle alternative to retinol

With the aim of mimicking the pro-ageing effects of conventional retinol while avoiding its potential skin irritation, Eminence Organic has unveiled the Bakuchiol + Niacinamide Collection.

The two products include a lightweight gel cream to smooth wrinkles and lock in hydration and an SPF30 fluid to address existing damage and protect skin from the harsh effects of the sun.

Natalie Pergar, lead skincare trainer explains: "For this line, we combined bakuchiol - a botanical retinol alternative - with niacinamide (a form of vitamin B3) to smooth uneven texture and proactively address the visible signs of ageing without irritation, dryness or UV sensitivity."



Key ingredients include bakuchiol and niacinamide



It proactively addresses signs of ageing without irritation - Natalie Pergar

spa-kit.net keyword: Eminence



Iyashi Dôme fuses wellness and technology, says CEO Shogoro Uemura

In today's demanding wellness world, finding ways to harness the power of both wellness and technology has become a major challenge. Fortunately, innovative companies such as Iyashi Dôme have succeeded in fusing these seemingly opposing worlds to offer an exceptional luxury spa experience.

The combination of luxury and technology in spas is the future of wellness and Iyashi Dôme is at the forefront of this revolution, not only for end customers, but also for owners and entrepreneurs in the wellness, beauty and health sector.

"Much more than a simple sweating device, the Iyashi Dôme offers the opportunity for spa professionals to respond to the growing demand for wellbeing and aesthetics, personalisation and technological innovation," says CEO Shogoro Uemura, who explains how this technology has been revolutionising the beauty industry for 20 years.

"Spas equipped with the Iyashi Dôme have an undeniable advantage in terms of attractiveness," says Uemura: "In a competitive market, differentiation is essential. The infra-therapy of the Iyashi Dôme Japanese sauna is high-tech and attracts the attention of customers looking for unique experiences and results. Whether it's for detox, slimming, anti-ageing, relaxation, muscle preparation, recovery or improved sleep, the benefits are scientifically proven year after year."

Customisation & profitability

"Customers can enjoy intense sessions, gentle sessions, Omedeto treatments and so much more," says Uemura. "This is because the Iyashi Dôme allows treatments to be individually personalised.

"Spas can offer their customers tailor-made experiences, adapted to their specific needs and requests - this customisation not only improves

The Iyashi Dôme blends cutting-edge Japanese technology with luxury comfort
Shogoro Uemura

customer satisfaction, it also allows premium rates to be charged, increasing the spa's profitability.

"The Iyashi Dôme has been designed to blend cutting-edge Japanese technology with luxury comfort," says Uemura. "The quality materials used in its construction are more than just a technical component, they're the foundation of performance, safety, durability and brand image.

"These premium materials ensure that every session in the Iyashi Dôme is an exceptional sensory wellness experience, while providing a solid foundation for industry professionals to thrive in the world of high-end spas.

"Not only is the Iyashi Dôme a pioneering product in the integration of cutting-edge technology into the world of wellness, it also offers an exceptional opportunity for spa professionals to reach new heights in differentiation, personalisation, profitability and reputation. For wellness professionals, the union of luxury and technology through the Iyashi Dôme is the key to success in this ever-evolving industry."

More: www.iyashidome.com

➤ spa-kit.net keywords:
Iyashi Dôme

The bed delivers an infra-red Japanese sauna treatment



Hyperice and Escape are redefining recovery, says **Jim Huether**

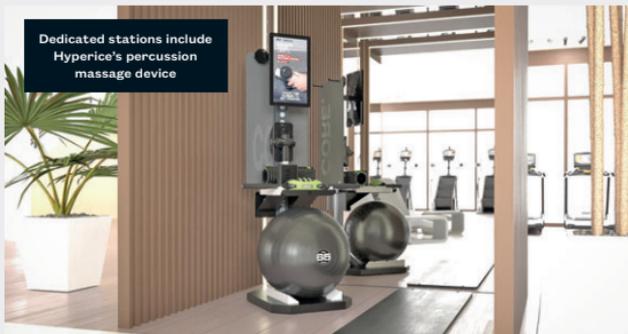
Gym suppliers Hyperice and Escape Fitness have teamed up to create dedicated recovery stations for spas, fitness centres and high-performance sport-specific training facilities.

The stations feature Hyperice's Hypervolt 2 Pro percussion massage device and Escape's Multi-Activity Resource Station screen providing virtual one-to-one coaching 24/7.

With a small footprint, the unit is set up so that the Hypervolt 2 Pro percussion device is tethered via a flexible cable, to enable constant charging and ensure the technology is always available for use.

Jim Huether, CEO of Hyperice, said: "Our dedicated recovery areas, pods and

Dedicated stations include Hyperice's percussion massage device



"We're raising the bar for warm-up and recovery" - Jim Huether

merchandised offerings are raising the bar for accessible warm-up and recovery technology and education."

spa-kit.net keyword: Hyperice



Daniel Watson launches Emperor Ice Baths

Tapping into the growing interest in cold water immersion, Emperor Ice Baths has created what founder Daniel Watson calls "the most bespoke [portable] ice bath on the market".

"We've thought of everything," says Watson, explaining that the traditional timber-clad coolers (and the inner mould) come in various finishes and colours - 14 as standard, but Pantone shade matching is available too.

There's also a choice of underwater LED lights and optional extras such as ozone filtration, a built-in external drawer for storing accessories and a shelf with a phone slot.

The plug-and-go system, which has been made to bring the temperature

PHOTO: DANIEL WATSON



down to 2°C without adding ice, can be managed via a touchscreen LCD control with wifi capability and an app. ●

spa-kit.net keyword: Emperor

"We offer the most bespoke ice bath on the market" - Daniel Watson



Ozone filtration is an optional extra for the portable coolers



Yon-Ka Your Spa partner



Le Vallon de Valrugues & Spa 5*
France



Four Seasons Hotel
Jakarta - Indonesia

French family-owned skin care brand since 1954.

Pioneer in phyto-aromatic care, creator of experiences.

A unique and renowned know-how featured in more than 60 countries.

A partnership grounded on a common vision for quality and performance.

The expertise of personalized skin care, the commitment to visible results.

The Experience of Phyto-Aromatic Skincare

Laboratoires Multaler - 1 rue Ambroise Croizat - 95100 Argenteuil - France - Tel. +33(0)1 41 19 56 56

Contact: infoexport@multaler.com - www.yonka.com

Get **Spa Business & Spa Business Insider** magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

spa business directory

SPA & BEAUTY EQUIPMENT



GHARIENI
WWW.GHARIENI.COM

HIGH-END SPA, WELLNESS
AND MEDICAL EQUIPMENT
MADE IN GERMANY



www.gharieni.com

LINEN

The Spa Linen Experts



Bc SoftWear
a touch of luxury

UK & INTERNATIONAL enquiries@bcsoftwear.co.uk
Sales: +44 (0) 845 210 4000 www.bcsoftwear.co.uk

www.bcsoftwear.co.uk

BESPOKE FURNITURE / CHANGING ROOMS



CROWN
SPORTS LOCKERS

Tel: +44 (0)1803 555885
Email: sales@crownsportslockers.co.uk

More than just lockers

www.crownsportslockers.co.uk

SPA DESIGN & INSTALLATION

your wellness partner



STARPOOL
wellness concept

www.starpool.com

CRYO CHAMBERS



WHOLE BODY CRYO-THERAPY CHAMBERS

LIFE IS BETTER WITH CRYO

sales@mecotec.net

MECOTEC
THE SPA TECHNOLOGY

www.mecotec.net

SPA & BEAUTY EQUIPMENT

Lemi
ITALIAN WELLNESS EQUIPMENT

NEW 2023
#1 ITALIAN SPA EQUIPMENT

MILANO & MILANO EVO
THE SPA BEDS THAT REDEFINE LUXURY.



www.lemi.it

Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup

SPA DESIGN & INSTALLATION



DEFINING SPA.
SINCE 1928.

klafs.com

KLAFS
THE ORIGINAL SPA

www.klafs.com

SPA & BEAUTY EQUIPMENT



 **OAKWORKS**

ignite your imagination
Design Your Dream Table

studio.spatables.com

LINEN



 **RKF**

l'Art
du linge raffiné

www.rkf.fr

SPA & BEAUTY EQUIPMENT



The world reference
for long infrared

 **IYASHI DÔME**
L'ART DE LA BIEN-ÊTRE

SAFETY | PROFITABILITY | EFFICIENCY
DETOX | SLIMMING | ANTI-AGEING

www.iyashidome.com

SPA & BEAUTY EQUIPMENT



 **LEC**
LIVING EARTH CRAFTS

THE CHOICE OF
WORLD CLASS SPAS

ISPA INNOVATE AWARD WINNER
TECHNOLOGY CATEGORY

MIND-SYNC™
HARMONIC WELLNESS LOUNGER

www.livingearthcrafts.com

SPA DESIGN & INSTALLATION



BARR + WRAY
CREATORS OF WELLBEING AND RELAXATION

Interior Design | Engineering Design | Pool + Thermal Installation | Maintenance

www.barrandwray.com

ESCAPE ROUTE

Relaxation is still the main reason people seek out spa retreats

Destination spas fund one of the world's first published studies examining the experiences of more than 2,500 health retreat guests in multiple locations

Despite the popularity of health retreats globally, little to no research explores who goes to them, why and for what benefits. With this in mind, a new study in the *International Journal of Spa and Wellness** looked at the demographics and motivations of 2,600 retreat-goers from more than 60 countries.

The research was supported by destination spa operators worldwide including Lapinha in Brazil, Bodyholiday in St Lucia, Danubius in Europe, Sheenjoy in China and Elysia (previously Golden Door) in Australia. Industry figure Marc Cohen was also a co-author.

RETREAT MOTIVATIONS

One of the main reasons for going on a retreat is relaxation and a holiday (30 per cent), according to the findings, followed by improving general health and learning coping mechanisms (18 per cent) and reducing stress and improving mental health (also 18 per cent).

Nearly all respondents felt better (74 per cent) or somewhat better (22 per cent) after a retreat stay. In addition, the vast majority felt so happy that they would return or recommend the stay (71 per cent) or were satisfied that it was worth the time and money (25 per cent).

MANAGING DISEASE

Forty-one per cent of respondents had one or more medical conditions and of those, 45 per cent experienced considerable relief from

45 per cent felt considerable relief from medical conditions after a health retreat

symptoms and another 26 per cent said it helped slightly. The greatest relief was most commonly experienced by those suffering from stress (64 per cent), fatigue (61 per cent), back pain (57 per cent) and arthritis (50 per cent).

Yet longitudinal and randomised controlled studies are still needed to prove the efficacy of programmes.

SELF-FUNDING MAJORITY

Other findings confirm the importance of local source markets, with 64 per cent living less than 5 hours away from retreats.

The ongoing need to strengthen ties with medical institutions was also highlighted. Despite the potential for retreats to help with escalating healthcare costs, very few participants were referred by practitioners. Instead, they visited retreats following recommendations (50 per cent) or online searches (37 per cent). What's more, a mere 3 per cent of people received either health insurance or government funding, with an overwhelming majority valuing their health so much that they paid for themselves. ●

*Source. Naidoo, D et al. *Vacation or therapy? Demographics, motivations and experiences of wellness retreat guests around the world.* *Int'l Journal of Spa and Wellness.* July 2023



»» FOLLOW YOUR
Dream
TO PHOENIX

Mark your calendar for the **2024 ISPA Conference**:

APRIL 23–25
PHOENIX CONVENTION CENTER

\$749

Now – January 24

\$879

January 25 – April 19

\$969

Onsite Registration

Secure
early bird
registration rates at
attendISPA.com

Get *Spa Business* & *Spa Business Insider* magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup



RKF®
LUXURY LINEN



l'Art
the Art of fine linen
du linge raffiné

Get **Spa Business** & **Spa Business Insider** magazines
FREE on digital: www.spabusiness.com/signup