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LAURENT HOUEL

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is it really such a bad thing?

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EDITOR'S LETTER

Thinking local

In this issue, we talk to the team at Miraval about their challenges, successes and future strategies (p60).

Chair Philippe Bourguignon says investments and innovation have created a product which is fine-tuned and ready to be rolled out. There are now plans to develop up to five more US resorts in addition to the original.

I asked Bourguignon how he'll ensure the new locations don't end up competing with other spas and was intrigued by his response. He dismissed this challenge, saying he foresees the sector developing as a proximity market: "We think we can get half our clientele from within a two-hour drive time," and predicting that a significant proportion of business in future will come from the short break market – "somewhere you can go on a two-day trip."

Trends support this local, short-break model. Travel trade statistics show a growing interest in local vacations/holidays, as people weary of the increasing complexity and cost of travel. Spas which develop strong local customer bases and spa memberships will have an advantage as fuel prices increase and the airline industry struggles with consolidation and profitability. Local customers can become more regular users, so they become more high-yielding and engaged.

At the height of the recession, spas with a higher proportion of local business traded more profitably than those who depended on tourists, so having a higher proportion of local clients creates greater stability.



Philippe Bourguignon, chair of Miraval, predicts that a significant proportion of future spa business will come from the short break market – "somewhere you can go on a two-day trip"

The US is the only developed nation without statutory rights to paid time-off, so it's a precious commodity and getting value out of it is a priority. Research shows short, intense experiences can be as memorable and gratifying as longer, less eventful ones, so spas – with their option for intense programming – can leave short-break visitors feeling they've really stepped off the world, even if the time away has only been a couple of days.

Corporate wellness also presents opportunities. As corporates engage more with spas for the provision of preventative services and screening for executives, operators with a network of facilities near major population centres will have a commercial advantage.

Bourguignon is a visionary with an uncanny ability to predict trends. He also has a broad background in leisure which shapes these perspectives and it will be fascinating to see how this plan evolves and whether our market does become more local.

Liz Terry, editor twitter: @elizterry



Read all our editor's and contributors' letters on our blog at blog.spabusiness.com

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Katherine Johnston

Katherine Johnston is a senior economist at the US-based non-profit research institute SRI International. She has 13 years of experience in industry analysis and economic modelling internationally. She has also led four key spa studies for the Global Spa & Wellness Summit.



Lisa Starr

Business consultant, trainer and educator and overall curious person, Lisa Starr has been helping spa companies maximise their performance – in front and back of house operations – for 30 years. She also blogs on spa management issues at gramercyone.com/blog



Mindy Terry

With over 19 years' experience in the spa sector, Mindy Terry is the president of Creative Spa Concepts. Currently based in Thailand, Terry's diverse expertise has led to her respected work as a writer, speaker and educator on the business aspects of wellness.



DEBORA TAYLOR

ON THE COVER

Designer Clodagh, one of the visionaries behind the new Miraval spa (p60)

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Letters



Do you have a strong opinion, or disagree with somebody else's point of view on topics related to the spa industry? If so, *Spa Business* would love to hear from you.

Email your letters, thoughts and suggestions to theteam@spabusiness.com

Corporate wellness: a taxing challenge in Australia

Sharon Kolakka, general manager,
Gwinganna Lifestyle Retreat

Gwinganna is currently offering Dr Friedland's Achieve Peak Performance programme – mentioned in your corporate wellness feature (see SB12/3 p24) – as a post-retreat package for managing stress. We may offer this to corporate companies in the future, however, health services and laws in Australia pose complex obstacles.

All experts in the article had insightful points, yet being all from the US, their views may not translate elsewhere. Australia, for example, has a different healthcare system which negates some of the points made.

We're lucky to have a government-funded healthcare system with free hospitals. Additional specialist care is offered by private insurers and bought by individuals with an incentive for tax relief to help ease the burden on the national system. Yet, to date, not one insurer is offering a provider number – which is needed for a valid claim – for spa or wellness operators: only to individual therapists, such as naturopaths or remedial therapists who meet their regulations.

In the big picture, government-funded healthcare means health plans are not

To date, not one insurer in Australia is offering a provider number for spa or wellness operators only to individual therapists



Gwinganna is capable of delivering corporate wellness packages, but they're taxed as a fringe benefit

paid for by employers so, unlike in the US, they've no costs to reduce.

Increasing productivity and absenteeism is on their agenda and at Gwinganna we do have corporate clients – usually past guests who purchase packages for their employees, but we've found that most of these packages are offered as an incentive for performance – typically for reaching sales targets.

Some smart corporates are recognising it's better to send employees to Gwinganna than on a vacation of overeating and drinking, as we send them back focused, happier and healthier.

Unfortunately, the catch is that companies paying for employees to engage in any wellness and spa activities

in Australia attract a fringe benefit tax – where they're taxed for non-cash benefits they offer employees – and this is a big obstacle for spas and corporate wellness programmes in our country.

When companies are paying for performance incentives, plus paying fringe benefit tax, there's little chance they will also pay for health prevention with an additional fringe benefit tax – hence the incentive-driven aspect rather than the preventative healthcare perspective.

There are ways around fringe benefit tax that we're currently trying to navigate, however, it's complex. And I imagine each country will experience its own unique challenge in being successful in the corporate wellness arena.

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Danubius Health Spa Resort in Budapest will host a London College of Fashion study tour

Spa management training courses need international perspectives and collaboration

Yvonne Mills, course leader Foundation Degree Science Beauty and Spa Management, London College of Fashion

I appreciate *Spa Business* drawing attention to the industry issue of producing adequate spa managers (see SB12/2 p38 and SB12/3 p60) – the investigation was informative and long overdue.

Due to the depth of business and scientific theory they learn, graduates from our degree in beauty and spa management are more than capable of running a spa. However, operators should appreciate that anyone starting in a new establishment realistically needs six to 12 months to become accustomed to policies and procedures before implementing their own – although one of our graduates managed this in three months.

To create more effective spa managers moving forwards, the international aspect of our industry should also be considered – spas in the US or UK, for example,

may have an entirely different provision to those in Asia or Europe. Indeed, I've just set up a weekend study tour with the Danubius Health Spa Resort in Budapest (see SB05/3 p24) for up to 25 of our second- and third-year students to better understand and experience spas which are much larger and older, have thermal pools and are more medically focused.

Particularly, Danubius places a strong emphasis on rehabilitation for ailments associated with ageing, such as aching joints and poor blood circulation. The students will receive lectures from Mike Wallace, the brand manager at Danubius, and its head trainer, on how beauty, wellness and fitness can be implemented into medical spas and the challenges of managing such facilities. I'm hopeful that this may also lead to work experience and employment opportunities.

Meanwhile, I'm also developing a work experience partnership with Toskana Terme Bad Sulza, a German thermal and medical spa (see SB05/2 p52).

I truly believe that interaction and engagement with international spa operators is the key for the future growth of our industry.



The Lithuanian lecturers are developing an international wellness degree

Lithuanian college gets EU funding for international wellness degree

Alison Snelling, managing partner, Urban Healing

With a renewed industry focus on spa management training, driven in part by the new GSWS study on the subject (see p56), I wanted to draw attention to an exciting international venture.

Klaipeda State College, a well-respected academic institution in Lithuania – which also has strong ties with the country's spa association – has received EU funding to develop an international degree programme in wellness service management.

To gain more knowledge for course content, 10 lecturers from the college recently visited the UK for a two-week study tour organised by Urban Healing.

The lecturers met with spa educational providers including ITEC and colleges in Bath, Warwickshire and Barnfield. At the University of Derby, Buxton (see SB05/4 p60) they found out about how to structure an international spa degree programme that combines practical and theoretical learning.

They also gained insights from some of the country's leading spa operators including Hilton, Pennyhill Park and Champneys, which has its own therapist training academy. The history of wellness was also covered in a trip to the original Roman Baths in Bath.

The aim of Klaipeda State College now is to develop of the degree programme for its first intake in September 2014.

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US spas exceed their pre-recession peak

Last year, US spas continued to build on the moderate growth of 2010, according to the new *ISPA 2012 US Spa Industry Study*, carried out by PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Total spa revenues expanded by 4.5 per cent in 2011 to US\$13.4bn (€10.3bn, £8.4bn) – surpassing the 2008 pre-recession peak of US\$12.8bn (€9.8bn, £8bn). This increase was largely driven by a 4.1 per cent rise in client visits. Yet to stay competitive and keep visits up, prices have remained fairly static.

At the same time, spas have shown adaptability by expanding their portfolio of services, offers and products to provide more choice and flexibility to busy customers. Going forward, 78 per cent of operators were confident or very confident that revenues will continue to grow. See *p40* for a more in-depth analysis of the study results.



Sheraton's Shine Spa lobby at Moscow airport

Russian spa market is gathering pace

The Russian spa market is poised for more growth in coming years, according to Manfred Ronstedt a spa consultant who has been working on spas in the country for more than 10 years.

Ronstedt, CEO of German consultancy, PCCG, has said that although Russians have traditional banyas (steamrooms), in the past these have been more about parties than health, but now the tide is starting to turn.

The consultant is currently working on two projects in Russia. A 1,000sq m (10,700sq ft) Shine Spa at Sheraton Airport Moscow will open next year. Facilities will comprise four treatment rooms, a gym, steamroom and three saunas.

Meanwhile, work is set to begin on a 2,500sq m (27,000sq ft) day spa at the Country Park Moscow, that's due for completion in 2014. Targeting the north part of Moscow, as well as guests at the 280-bed hotel, this spa will have eight treatment rooms, a VIP treatment area, a pool, relaxation area, gym, saunas, steamroom and hammam. Read more: <http://lei.sr7a=9q5X8>

AOL founder opens Brazilian spa

As Brazil gears up to host the 2016 Olympics, a group of entrepreneurs has invested in a resort to take advantage of the expected tourism uplift.

AOL co-founder, David Cole, founder of The Body Shop, Gordon Roddick, and Ricardo Semler, owner of Semco SA – one of Brazil's most famous companies – and his wife Fernanda, have unveiled the country's first 100 per cent Brazilian spa.

Part of the Botanique Hotel & Spa retreat – set in 700 acres (283 hectares) in the Campos do Jordão mountains between São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro – the 10,000sq ft (929sq m) Spa at Botanique offers signature treatments encompassing ancient native healing and relaxation rituals. There are eight treatment spaces, relaxation suites, as well as an indoor pool and dry and wet saunas.



The mountain location is part of the appeal of the Botanique retreat

Showcasing Brazilian style, the interior of the spa and retreat's six suites and 11 private villas were overseen by famous local designers. Rare local materials such as chocolate slate have been used and it will feature locally commissioned furniture and artwork. Read more: <http://lei.sr7a=r9rk>

Delano Marrakech introduces Pearl Spa

Moroccan resort, Delano Marrakech – the second global outpost of Morgans Hotel Group's signature luxury brand – has opened a 1,800sq m (19,375sq ft) spa to complement its offerings of four restaurants, three pools, a nightclub and boutiques.

The salubrious Pearl Spa boasts 14 cabins, a subterranean mosaic pool and private hammam area, with its own lounge, spa bath, steamroom, sauna and two limestone treatment plinths.

Product ranges in use are Aromatherapy Associates, the anti-ageing Valmont and marocMaroc, which uses traditional Moroccan ingredients, such as pale Moroccan rose.

Treatments include Aromatherapy Associates' Jet Lag Cure and Escape, a 60-minute exfoliation treatment, combining



The spa features a subterranean mosaic pool and a large hammam

the traditional kessa massage, with a detoxifying body balm, followed by a soaping with orange flower water.

The spa also includes a fitness centre, with weights and cardio room, pilates classes and a beauty salon which offers manicures, pedicures and hair styling and colouring. Read more: <http://lei.sr7a=h6s4C>

Inaugural Thai spa-goer research released

Thailand's first dedicated spa consumer survey is now available. The research was completed by Intelligent Spas on behalf of the Thai Spa Association and gives valuable information about spa goers' recent behaviours and preferences which have not been known to date.

According to the research, on average, the Thai spa goers questioned had visited a spa near them 6.6 times in the last 12 months. The majority visited with a spouse, friend or relative and three quarters went for relaxation. Details: www.intelligentspas.com

€9m investment for floating spa

It is estimated that up to €9m (US\$11.7m, £7.3m) will be spent on transforming a competition-winning sustainable floating spa design concept into a commercial business.

Originally thought up by Dutch architect Anne Holtrop and Studio Noach for a futures design competition for the Netherlands Architect Institute, Floating Gardens is scheduled to open on lake IJmeer near Amsterdam's city centre in 2014.

The designers have also revealed what facilities will be featured. The ground floor will boast five saunas, two of which will have panoramic lake views; five pools and two restaurants/bars (one dry and one wet). The top floor will house three treatment rooms and a large area for group therapy such as hot yoga.

Innovative treatments are likely to include elements of psychoneuroimmunology – which looks at how emotions and health are linked.



Amsterdam's innovative floating spa will pump out oxygen

The spa is being built using GreenRexwall, a type of recycled polystyrene which is stronger than steel and provides excellent insulation. It is also buoyant, which allows the spa to float. Botanical artist and engineer Patrick Blanc, has also come up with a way of coating the design in vegetation – using vertical gardens – so that it will breathe oxygen. *Read more:* <http://lei.sr?a=R6u6E> and <http://lei.sr?a=M7R1s>

Ski spa to open in St Moritz in time for Swiss winter

The 126-bed Kulm Hotel in the Swiss ski resort of St Moritz is set to unveil a CHF12m (US\$13m, €10m, £8m) spa this December.

The 2,000sq m (21,500sq ft) facility will feature 12 treatment rooms, a large VIP spa suite and a range of hydrothermal experiences for

spa-goers to relax in and skiers to recuperate in after a day on the piste.

The spa's philosophy is relax, detox and regenerate. Product houses are Swiss anti-ageing brand Niance; and Alpine, which uses Apline plants. *Read more:* <http://lei.sr?a=0f6E9>

Conrad launches new in-house spa brand

Hilton hotel chain Conrad has unveiled the first site in its new in-house spa concept at the Conrad Algarve, which opened its doors in the Portuguese resort of Quinta do Lago at the start of October.

The 1,800sq m (21,375sq ft) spa has five therapy rooms, each with its own cabana, so guests can choose from indoor or outdoor treatments.

In line with Conrad's philosophy of the 'luxury of being yourself' the ethos of the hotel and spa is quality and customer experience. Antoine Couve, Conrad's director of business development Algarve says: "This is the first Conrad Spa and the new brand standards will be replicated elsewhere."

Concept development has been led by a global spa team at Hilton (see SB11/3 p28),



Spa Conrad is the second branded concept unveiled by Hilton

including its senior director of global spa brands Tyra Lowman. The Hilton group launched eforea, its first branded spa concept in 2010 and there are now 50 eforea spa planned for development around the world. *Read more:* <http://lei.sr?a=Y1UjK>

WTS International and Blu Spas Inc announce merger

Two leading US-based spa consultancy firms WTS International (see SB12/1 p68) and Blu Spas Inc (see SB05/4 p90) joined forces in October in an official merger.

While WTS specialises in pre-opening and contract spa management services, Blu Spas focuses on spa concept, design and project planning. Together they offer a complete, turn-key solution for spa businesses.

Collectively, they've worked on hundreds of high-end spas across the globe. *Details:* www.wtsinternational.com and www.bluspasinc.com



Holbrook will oversee spas in the Americas

Holbrook to head up Marriott spa division

Suzanne Holbrook has been promoted to director of spa operations for Marriott in the Americas. She will be responsible for driving spa performance at the group's Ritz-Carlton, JW Marriott, Renaissance, Marriott & Gaylord properties through a focus on marketing, revenue generation, service and training.

With over 30 years' experience in the industry, Holbrook is widely credited for moving forward the Ritz-Carlton spa brand. *Details:* www.marriott.com

SA Spa Association calls for listings

The SA Spa Association is inviting South African spa operators to participate in the SA Spa Association Spa Index 2012. With the aim of providing the best consumer reference and showcasing the top spas and spa brands in Africa, this edition will be distributed in conjunction with the December issue of consumer magazine *Longevity*.

Now an annual publication, the Spa Index was first launched in 2010, with the intention of growing a trustworthy industry and build confidence in spa therapies. *Details:* www.saspaassociation.co.za

Langham acquires famous Sydney hotel and spa

Langham Hospitality Group (LHG) has debuted in Australia, with the acquisition of The Observatory spa hotel in Sydney.

Previously branded as an Orient-Express hotel, The Observatory is located near Sydney's historical Rocks and central business districts. Its day spa features 10 treatment rooms, a 20m indoor pool, sauna, steamroom and spa pools.

Brett Butcher, LHG's CEO, said: "This acquisition signifies the group's plans for a long-term strategic expansion and to be a major player in the quality end of the market in the Pacific region." Most recently, LHG unveiled two sites in Qingdao, China.

Orient-Express sold its only other Australian property – Lilianfels Blue Mountains Resort & Spa – to Starwood in 2010. *Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=W3E5O> or www.orient-express.com*



This is Langham's first hotel and spa in Australia

Bahamas luxury resort expands occupancy

Albany – the luxury resort community jointly owned by Tavistock Group and golfers Tiger Woods and Ernie Els in the Bahamas – has started work on its new Marina Residences.

Three six-storey towers with a total floor-space of 275,000sq ft (25,548sq m) are being built to house the 35 residences, while two of the three buildings will house ground floor offices.

The project has been designed by Morris Adjmi Architects; Gwathmey Siegel Kaufman and Associates Architects; and HKS Architects. All three towers will be completed in 2014.

Albany first opened in 2010 and spans 600 acres (243 hectares) on the south-western end of New Providence. Facilities already include a boutique hotel, a marina and a full-service spa with five individual treatment pavilions surrounding an outdoor garden. Services focus on stress relief, anti-ageing and wellness solutions. *Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=X5t0z>*

Massage Green plans 1,000 spas

Allie Mallad, founder of US franchise spa chain, Massage Green, has announced plans to have 1,000 spas open within eight years.

The Michigan-based chain was founded four years ago and builds its spas using eco-friendly materials. It currently has numerous units in California, Michigan, Florida and Texas.

The spas, which each employ up to 30 people, are intended to offer 'affordable luxury' and have one-hour massages starting at US\$29.95 (€23, £19). A wide-range of massages are available including Swedish, cranial sacral, prenatal, hot stone and trigger point therapy.

Mallad expects Massage Green to have opened about 25 company-owned corporate stores by the end of 2012 and approximately 75 more by the end of 2013. He also expects to sell more than 300 franchises in 2013.



There are franchise and fully-owned spas. Each will employ up to 30 people

"Massage Green is being organised and grown to be the largest chain of spas in the fast growing health and wellness segment of our economy," he said. "We will offer consumers affordable luxury and our franchisees an amazing business model with an easy cost of entry, amazing atmosphere and simple operation."

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=v5A2E>

Les Thermes d'Evian completes refurb

Water firm evian* is investing heavily in its spa facilities. Its public spa in Evian-les-Bains, France – Les Thermes d'Evian – has just reopened after a seven month overhaul and a second spa in the town is set for a rebrand.

Designed by architect Olivier Chabaud, Les Thermes d'Evian is themed around water and uses the same natural spring source which evian bottled water is based on. The water is said to aid cell healing.

The refreshed spa has been split into three zones, with the Aqua area boasting 26 hydrotherapy cabins, two pools, a sauna and a hammam. Unbescheiden has supplied Vichy showers and bath tubs. The treatment area has been redesigned to allow in natural daylight and the fitness area has been relocated to offer better views.



Water is very much a theme at the Evian-les-Bains refurbished spa

Meanwhile, the spa at Hôtel Royal in Evian-les-Bains is to be relaunched as a flagship evianSpa. This is a new brand concept, ready for an international rollout (see p30), which was unveiled at the Palace Hotel Tokyo. *Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=X3d7N> or <http://lei.sr?a=W3U1d>*

Iranian skincare market is burgeoning

Marketing and advertising efforts and rising oil prices, which have boosted the average national income for Iranian consumers, has led to an increase in spending on skincare products according Euromonitor International.

The market grew by 24 per cent in 2010 to

reach US\$300m (€230m, £187m), with both international and domestic skin care players expanding their foothold. Changing consumer patterns and a growing youth population is likely to fuel further growth. *Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=P9Y2O>*

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Underwater hotel in Dubai will have a luxury spa

Plans are moving forward on a futuristic underwater hotel project in Dubai, which will allow guests to sleep with fish swimming outside their bedroom windows.

The Water Discus Hotel will have 21 submerged rooms, as well as 30 above the surface, a dive centre, luxury spa, two restaurants, a swimming pool and a helipad.

According to Bogdan Gutkowski, CEO of Big Invest, which is one of the partners in the project, the design concepts are now being finalised, talks are ongoing with investors and he is confident the hotel could open as early as 2015.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=F7F3>



Breaking barriers: the Water Discus Hotel

Telomere and anti-ageing focus for Sha medi spa

Sha Wellness Clinic near Alicante in Spain (see SB09/2 p38), is to launch the Sha Anti-Ageing Programme, which will include charting guests' genetic ageing levels with telomere analysis (see SB11/3 p90) and then creating a personalised treatment plan based on the findings.

Launching in January 2013, the seven-day programmes are priced at €7,000 (US\$9,100, £5,700) and will see telomere testing via blood samples followed by a medical team advising patients on lifestyle changes they can make in order to improve life expectancy and to help with anti-ageing.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=U4h7e>

2013 GSWS in India will be held later in the year

Next year's Global Spa and Wellness Summit (GSWS) is likely to be held either at the end of September or the beginning of October 2013, slightly later than is usual. This is because New Delhi, north India has been chosen as the gateway city and the climate is too humid in May or June, but pleasantly warm later in the year.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=U3r4x>

Radisson Blu in Ukraine resort

The Rezidor Hotel Group has opened a new 252-bed-room Radisson Blu-branded property amid the Carpathian Mountains, which form part of the western Ukraine ski and spa resort of Bukovel.

Among the facilities at the new Radisson Blu Resort, Bukovel is a 2,000sq m (21,528sq ft) spa and wellness facility offering a full range of treatments using Anne Semonin products.

Led by Yana Shebelskaya, the spa has been designed by Bost interior design group and houses 12 treatment rooms, four VIP rooms and a beauty salon, along with Finnish and bio saunas. It also incorporates a steamroom and a caldarium. Elsewhere, there's an indoor pool, a spa bar serving healthy cocktails, a fitness room, five large relaxation rooms and an area dedicated to AlphaSphere relaxation loungers.



A 2,000sq m spa is among the facilities at the Radisson Blu resort

A spokesperson for the resort said: "The hotel spa complex boasts an extensive range of health and beauty treatments and exceeds the needs of well-travelled guests."

Radisson Blu Resort, Bukovel also offers two restaurants – Montblanc and B-Zone – and four bars. Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=L6fon>

Rocco Forte gets into preventative health

Rocco Forte Hotels has unveiled Vita Health – a new approach to preventative healthcare, in partnership with integrated medicine physician Dr Nyjon Eccles.

The concept launched at Rocco Forte's Verdura Golf & Spa Resort in Sicily, Italy in September, marking the first time that Eccles' has combined his treatments with a resort stay.

The Vita Health Wellness Centre is located in the resort's 4,000sq m (43,056sq ft) Verdura Spa. Existing space

was reconfigured to create a dedicated reception and several treatment and consultation rooms.

On offer are four tailored programmes based on Eccles' specialities of nutritional, non-invasive and anti-ageing medicine as well as



The new centre focuses on stress management, detox and better ageing

natural therapies. The programmes are available in one- and two-week sessions and will focus on the core health issues of stress management; detoxification; weight loss; and better ageing. Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=D5M4v>

Red Door Spa brand ready for accelerated growth

The Elizabeth Arden Red Door Spa brand looks set for accelerated development, following the news that the company has partnered with JH Anderson Holdings to invest in Red Door Spa Holdings, which is owned by North Castle Partners (see SB09/2 p24).

Global cosmetics company, Elizabeth Arden and spa developer and consultant, John Anderson of JH Anderson Holdings have collectively invested US\$19.3m (€15m, £12m) for a minority interest in Red Door Spa Holdings. Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=17J6p>

First L'Occitane spa for Spain

The spa at the Gran Hotel Bahía del Duque in Tenerife is set to undergo a rebrand, after signing a deal between French consumer cosmetics brand L'Occitane en Provence to open the first L'Occitane-branded spa in Spain.

L'Occitane is currently working with the resort's spa team on a new treatment menu which will have an emphasis on ecologically-friendly practices. Facilities at the spa include 20 treatment rooms, five outdoor cabins, three thalassotherapy booths,

a hammam and sauna. A hair and beauty salon, a salt water vitality pool and a fitness club also form part of the spa, along with a chi exercise studio and a garden café restaurant.

Alain Harfouche, general director of L'Occitane en Provence, says: "The uniqueness of the spa's facilities, the professionalism



Gran Hotel Bahía del Duque now has a L'Occitane spa

of the team and the special attention to environmental issues have been key elements in the signing of this agreement."

Consumer skincare brand L'Occitane launched its first spa in 2001 and now has around 40 sites worldwide including stand-alone spas. *Read more:* <http://lei.sr?a=eiZ2N>

IHG delighted with Vietnamese resort

After six years in the making, the InterContinental Danang Sun Peninsula Resort, has opened near Da Nang in Vietnam.

The 197-bed hotel, with a contemporary yet traditional style, has been created by renowned Asia resort designer, Bill Bensley.

A spa spanning approximately 1,360sq m (14,639sq ft) incorporates eight treatment villas and two residential spa villas. Thailand-based, Harnn, is supplying the spa products and also helped Bensley with the spa design. *Read more:* <http://lei.sr?a=2x7B6>

Four Seasons opens Toronto's largest spa

October saw a homecoming for Canadian company, Four Seasons, when it launched its flagship site, comprising Toronto's largest spa.

The spa at the Four Seasons Toronto spans 30,000sq ft, (2,800sq m) and a whole floor of the hotel. The largest spa of any Four Seasons urban hotel, it represents where the brand is heading. Features include 17 treatment rooms, a hair and nail bar, indoor relaxation pool, two steamrooms and an outdoor terrace overlooking the Toronto skyline.

Amala is the skincare brand in use, which is made using whole plant ingredients. According to Todd Hewitt, senior spa director of Four Seasons Hotel Toronto: "Amala is a natural choice for The Spa at Four Seasons Toronto.



The Toronto spa will also be a flagship facility for the Canadian firm

The brand's purity, luxurious feel and tangible results will help us deliver an uncompromising spa experience befitting Four Seasons' new flagship hotel and this great cosmopolitan city." *Read more:* <http://lei.sr?a=t9ksy>

DIARY DATES

19-20 NOVEMBER

Spameeting Asia

W Hotel, Seoul Korea

This forum will host 90 meetings between 50 spa suppliers and 50 project holders from Japan, South Korea, China and Taiwan. Spameeting Middle East & India follows a week later, 27-28 November, in Yas Hotel, Abu Dhabi, UAE. This two-day forum will involve meetings between 50 suppliers and 50 project developers.

Tel: +33 1 44 69 95 69

<http://asia.spameeting.com>

<http://me.spameeting.com>

28-30 NOVEMBER

Sustainable Cosmetics Summit Europe Paris, France

The European edition of the Sustainable Cosmetics Summit will bring together key stake holders in the beauty industry, such as cosmetic manufacturers, ingredient and raw material suppliers, retailers and distributors, industry organisations and certification agencies, researchers and academics, as well as investors.

Tel: +44 20 8567 0788

www.sustainablecosmeticssummit.com

2-4 FEBRUARY 2013

Cosmobellezza & Wellness

Gran Via M2, Barcelona, Spain

The 19th Cosmobellezza & Wellness international beauty trade show has been designed to provide a platform for those working within the hairdressing, aesthetics and wellness sectors to meet and talk business.

Tel: +34 93 241 46 90

www.feriacosmobellezza.com

6-9 FEBRUARY 2013

Kosmetik Expo

Russia

This expo attracts beauty and cosmetics industry professionals. Its Wellness and Spa Forum provides a place for the exchange of business experience in the Russian market.

Tel: +7 495 937 13 18

www.ki-expo.ru

25-27 FEBRUARY 2013

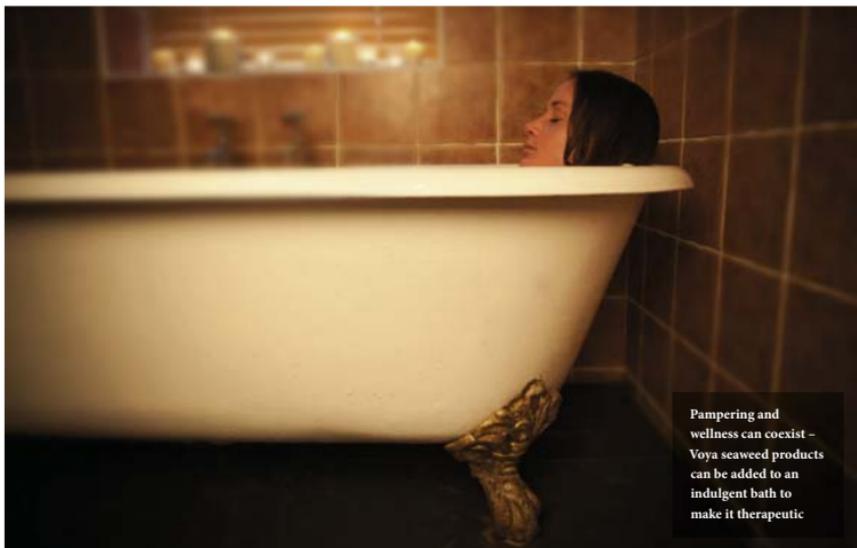
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Pampering and wellness can coexist – Voya seaweed products can be added to an indulgent bath to make it therapeutic

EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT...

PAMPERING

Since the recession in 2008, many operators have started to move away from the idea of spa 'pampering' experiences, feeling that presenting their services as an indulgence or a one-off treat has become increasingly inappropriate for a consumer base wracked with money worries.

Instead, a growing number of spas are offering 'wellness'-orientated, health-focused treatments, such as healing baths and lymphatic massages. They're beginning to focus on the scientifically-proven medical benefits of their services (see SB10/3 p54) rather than the vague promise of making clients feel better.

But are those spas that are seeking to entirely disassociate themselves with what they perceive as the frivolity of pampering actually missing a trick? For Jeremy McCarthy, director of global spa development and operations for Starwood Hotels & Resorts, who spoke on this subject at the Global Spa

Is a pampering image really such a damaging one for the spa industry, or is the link between 'me time' and happiness more important than ever? We canvass some industry opinions

and Wellness Summit this June (see SB12/3 p54), without a doubt, yes.

"Happiness tends to have a bad reputation – it's very superficial and somewhat hedonistic," he said. "I think we wrestle with our own pampering identity and making people feel good and therefore try to focus more on wellness than pampering. But there are some real, serious, beneficial outcomes that are tied to happiness and I think this is something we should really pay attention to."

Furthermore, for McCarthy, there are already thousands of medical institutions

that offer scientifically-proven treatments much more effectively than a spa ever could. What spas do really well is provide healing that people really love. "There's no other healing institution that people look forward to going to, that they enjoy when they're there, or that they remember fondly afterwards the way they do with spa," he emphasised.

Not everyone in the spa industry, however, feels the same, with a growing number of experts and operators increasingly believing that today's cash-strapped consumers are only interested in paying for a treatment if it will improve their health in a measurable way and advocating a return to the root of the spa movement when people visited hot or cold springs solely for their therapeutic and healing properties.

But is there a middle ground between pampering for pampering's sake and entirely science-based treatments? We ask key industry players for their take on the matter.

The problem I have with the word pampering is what it conjures up in the mind. Indulgence equates to excess, waste and lack of conscious behaviour and is linked to the capricious behaviours of the privileged class. In some ways, it's just the opposite of enlightenment and mindfulness, which are key components for the psychological orientation of a healthy being. Moreover, it has a strong association with babies, which, in my opinion infantilises the spa experience and demeans the professional image we are trying to create.

Pampering has a limited appeal to a small segment of the population but is a huge turn-off for the larger portion, the people who we need to make understand our industry and hopefully partake in what it has to offer.

MICHAEL STUSSER

Founder, Osmosis Day Spa Sanctuary; and Green Spa Network



Since 2008, the industry has been on its knees. People have become much more sophisticated about what they're willing to pay for and accept in a treatment. They're looking for substantial value and want to know that the time and money they're spending in a spa is going to contribute in a measurable way to improving their quality of life – beyond feeling good for a day.

It's time for this industry to wake up and smell the coffee. We have to change our value proposition if we're going to move beyond a struggle for survival. I think it's really time for us to go deeper into the roots of what

created the spa movement in the first place – which is healing and wellness. We strayed away from that during the years of opulence but I don't think it is going to serve the future of our industry to continue to go down that road.

I cringe every time I hear the word pampering but, unfortunately, it's deeply embedded in our spa culture. Both consumers and marketers continue to use it frequently but, in my opinion, I don't want to use it at all in our vernacular as we promote our business. We can do much better and we will have to do much better if we're going to be able to meet people where they're going now. It's time we moved beyond the solipsistic idea of spa we've been living in and understand how to become more relevant to what's happening with wellness globally. Our industry needs an identity change.

It's time we moved beyond the solipsistic idea of spa we've been living in and understand how to become more relevant to what's happening with wellness globally

Stusser, the founder of Osmosis Day Spa Sanctuary, is also a founding member of The Green Spa Network, an association of eco-friendly spa professionals. Details: www.osmosis.com; <http://greenspanetwork.org>

As money has become a bigger factor in consumers' decisions, the spa industry has become concerned that if we're perceived as a luxury or indulgence, people will stop coming. So there's been a general feeling that if we could focus more on wellness and health, consumers would really value our services and spend money with us, even in tough times.

But if the industry moves away from pampering, we move away from what differentiates us. There are a lot of other businesses and industries focused on health, but what spas do really well is offer healing that feels good and that people look forward to experiencing. If we can emphasise that as the strength of our industry, we could solidify our place as leaders in an aspect of wellness that few people are covering.

At Starwood, we think very deeply about the psychology of the spa experience, and

JEREMY McCARTHY

Director of global spa development and operations for Starwood Hotels & Resorts



we think it has a lot to do with time. A lot of what happens in a spa doesn't have so much to do with the treatment being received, it has to do with the fact that you're being separated from technology for a while and you're alone in a room with silence. So, even before the therapist lays their hands on the guest, there are many things that are happening that are important to the guest's psychological wellbeing.

Moreover, there are some pretty clear scientifically established links between feeling good and being well. For example, when we're feeling better we become more open to positive health lifestyles and behaviours. And positive emotions act as a buffer, protecting us from the harmful effects of stress

(see SB12/2 p98). Of course there is a superficial side to pampering and spas don't want to be associated with that, but what I would argue is that what people don't like about the concept of pam-

pering is that it seems excessive. Yet, for me, the opposite is actually true: people aren't being pampered enough. When we go to other healing institutions in our society, such as hospitals and clinics, they don't make us feel good, and they don't treat us the way we want to be treated.

The biggest mistake that we make is assuming that you have to be one or the other – pampering or wellness. I think what spas do really well is both and that's what the industry is moving towards. By sharing some of the science behind positive emotions, I've been trying to elevate the discussion to move people towards more of a mindful approach to wellness and pampering, and I think we're getting there.

The biggest mistake we make is assuming that you have to be one or the other – pampering or wellness. What spas do really well is both

McCarthy has over 20 years of experience in operating luxury resort spas and recently completed a masters degree in Applied Positive Psychology. He's also recently authored The Psychology of Spas & Wellbeing. Details: www.starwoodhotels.com

Pampering is very much part of the whole holistic wellness experience – if you're looking after your health, part of that is 'me time' and pampering. It's an emotional rather than a physical thing – it's not necessarily about the quality of the treatment or therapist, it's about that hour of being totally looked after by someone else.

I've seen spas, particularly in the day spa/salon world, moving away from pampering towards holistic and wellness experiences because they think that is what people are looking for. But I don't necessarily believe that to be true. If anything, The BodyHoliday does more pampering now, and we're actually in the process of building a new manicure-pedicure suite and bringing on a full range of organic cosmetics. Our guests are actually telling us that they want that

MARK LYTTLETON-FRANCES

General manager, The BodyHoliday



'me time', that they want to be looked after and that they want to feel good.

I've seen a big change since the economic meltdown. I'm finding that those in the high-income group who still have money are spending it on time, rather than material things – they're buying something emotional, something to make them feel better. Similarly, people in the middle-income bracket are coming out here [to the resort] because they have saved up to take themselves off and use these services to refresh, relax and refocus. I'm finding there's more of a move back towards pampering rather than away from it.

But pampering is changing and we're seeing a big move towards organic cosmetics. People are also moving away from things like Botox and surgical facelifts to natural pampering treatments such as thalassotherapy. The pampering is still going on, and it's going on more than it ever did, but it's refocused.

I don't think spas moving towards wellness and holistic therapies will lose out on any business, but I do think they will become a dime a dozen – everybody will be offering the same health and wellness programmes. However, those who continue to offer pampering will find themselves capturing both ends of the market.

We did 108,000 treatments last year, so I think anyone out there who is giving salons or spas a hard time about pampering because it's seen to be frivolous and for the wealthy got it wrong. Pampering is more for everyman than it ever has been before.

We did 108,000 treatments last year, so I think anyone giving spas a hard time about pampering because it's seen to be frivolous and for the wealthy got it wrong

Lyttleton-Frances has been in the hospitality industry for over 20 years and currently runs St Lucia's The BodyHoliday resort. Details: www.thebodyholiday.com

The distinction between pampering and wellness is about how the two things are perceived. Pampering is often seen as something indulgent or selfish while wellness is defined as being in good physical condition and mental health.

Indeed, sometimes spas offer exactly the same services but use different words. For example, at one point soaking in a bath with candlelight and flowers could have been seen as pampering, while the inclusion of aromatherapy and mineral-rich ingredients could have seen it packaged as a 'luxury' treatment to improve wellbeing. Now, however, we're trying to create baths that are built around wellness. One example of a radical bath that is driven by healing is by Voya – the Irish company that hand harvests seaweed products (see S812/3 p78) uses them in a bath treatment to ease aches and nourish the body.

For me, it's really about stating the distinction between pampering and wellness, and seeing pampering as a discipline to achieve wellness or good health. Engaging in services that nurture, heal and feed the body is pampering but it's an investment in oneself and the end result is wellness.

JENNIFER HAACK

Corporate director of spa development, Rosewood Hotels & Resorts



But although it's a matter of semantics for me, for others, it's a deciding factor – pampering is the first thing off their list as it's become synonymous with something you can live without. People need to be re-educated about the word pampering. If we tie it together with wellness, people would begin to see it as something that isn't disposable.

We're trying to do this at Sense [Rosewood's spa brand]. We source skincare and equipment charged with precious gems, representing luxury, but use these in tandem with biotechnology and science. For example, we're using tables infused with amethyst or quartz which have been designed to help restore vitality and eliminate toxins. Indeed, we market our services as 'a balance of science, nature, wellness and beauty, choreographed to achieve an improved state of wellbeing.' As an industry, we're trying to change our language to use words such as science, heal and wellness, rather than diluted words like revitalise and relax.

We also need to become more universal as we have to appeal to two separate groups of people. There are those who think only about pampering and we want to re-educate them so they see

a visit to the spa as improving their state of being; and there are the people who we want to bring in who are looking for wellness but might not choose to come in because they think that what we're doing is superficial.

My hope is that we grasp both with the same straw; the goal is to find a way to join the concepts and create awareness that pampering is, by nature, an opportunity to improve wellness. This can be achieved through the choreography of our services, careful selection of products and expert training and attention to detail. Our responsibility to the people who come in is awesome; we need to constantly be connected to the potential outcome of pampering: wellness.

Haack, has been with Rosewood for six years and oversees its nine Sense spas. She has four pending projects in the Middle East and more than five in development in Asia. Details: www.rosewoodhotels.com



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LAURENT HOUEL

Water brand evian® has created a new licenced spa concept that's set for a strategic rollout around the world. We talk the global brand development director to reveal more about this exciting venture

KATIE BARNES • MANAGING EDITOR • SPA BUSINESS

Evian®. A global brand based on pure spring mineral water, health and vitality which promises to help people 'live young'. What better fit for a branded spa concept that's been developed for a global rollout? The first facility has just debuted at the Palace Hotel Tokyo as part of a US\$1.2bn (€923m, £745m) redevelopment and there are already more in the pipeline.

It's an ideal match, says evian's global brand development director, Laurent Houel: "Evian is a water brand so there's an obvious link with spas, but it's more than that. If you delve into our history, evian water has always been closely associated with health and wellbeing. It was discovered in 1789 by a French aristocrat, count de Laizer, who's kidney pains dissipated after drinking it. This



Evian will target five-star hotels, such as the Palace Hotel Tokyo in Japan, in the rollout of its licenced spa concept

The move into spas was spurred by evian's successful Roller Babies campaign which gave the brand a real global platform



spurred on thermal spa experiences in the French Alpine town of Évian-les-Bain, with the first facility opening in 1824 and in 1878 the health benefits of the water were recognised by the French Academy of Medicine.

"Firstly, we think this move makes sense as a relevant proposal in the spa industry. But secondly, it's an interesting business opportunity to develop our brand. It leverages our DNA and reinforces our image as a premium brand and our wellbeing anchor."

NEW CATEGORIES

Spas aren't entirely new to evian, as Danone, its parent company, already owns two hotels with spas (Hôtel Royal and Hôtel Ermitage) located in its exclusive Evian Resort – previously known as Royal Parc Evian (see s804/q1 p45) – in Évian-les-Bains. In addition,





the group owns the town's original thermal baths, Les Thermes Evian. In a one-off venture in 2004, the group also opened its first day spa in Shanghai's leisure development Three on the Bund (see s804/q1 p52).

It wasn't until a few years ago, however, that the decision was made to create an evianSpa concept suitable for global rollout. Houel explains: "In 2009, the evian brand was relaunched with Roller Babies, a new worldwide campaign which became a massive success – it's one of the most viewed web advertisements ever with more than 200 million views on YouTube. For the first time, evian had a real global platform and now we've reignited excitement towards the evian brand, it's the time to deploy it further."

Houel started at evian at the same time as the Roller Babies launch. Having spent his

career working in marketing and business development for FMCG and luxury companies such as Procter & Gamble, Coty and LVMH he was ready for a new challenge. "Evian has a fantastic history and when you come from the luxury business, as in my case, heritage and roots are key. I was very impressed with the brand's richness, which gives a strong foundation to build on."

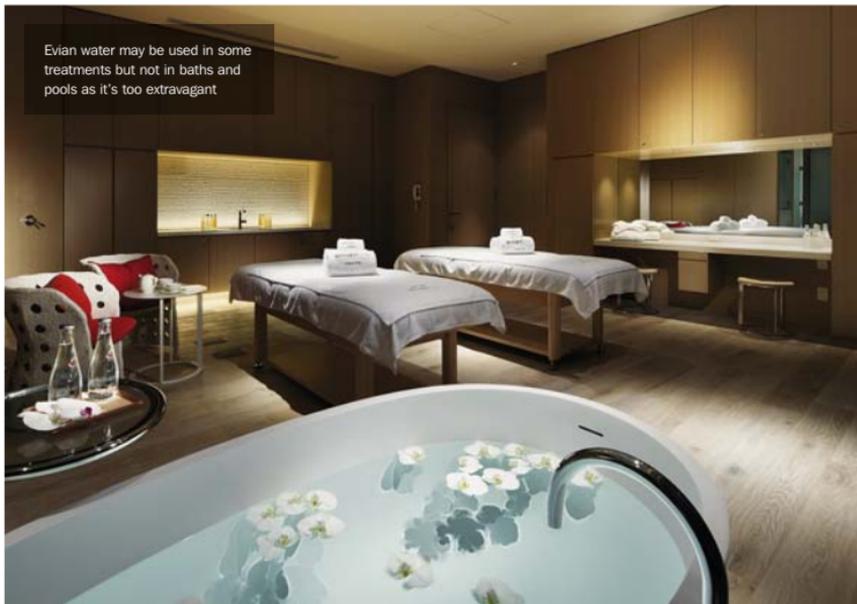
His role is to develop evian in "new categories and services" with a recent project including the MyEvian.com website which enables customers to personalise evian water bottles for special occasions from weddings to business conventions. He's reluctant to give away details of other confidential areas of expansion – "they're all very diverse projects and involve other aspects of the brand". But spa, of course, is another avenue.

TELLING A STORY

Testing the waters, so to speak, the first evianSpa opened in Japan this May at the luxury Palace Hotel (see Info Panel). Houel says: "We found a great hotel partner, or rather they found us via Yoriko Soma, a Japanese spa consultant [from Conceptasia Management & Consultants] acting on their behalf. It offers the utmost in Japanese hospitality and like evian has a long history [originally opening in 1961]. This is the second time it's been completely rebuilt. Also, Japan is one of the most demanding countries in terms of consistency and quality in overall consumer experience. If you get it right there, you can get it right anywhere."

Houel is pleased that they've created a robust spa offering. "I think our concept is a compelling one because it tells a story and it ►

Evian water may be used in some treatments but not in baths and pools as it's too extravagant



▶ has something to attract consumers beyond a great facility," he explains. "We would not have just put an evian logo on a spa and say 'this is great.' We had to tell an evian story."

The story takes its inspiration from the 15-year journey that the spring water makes before emerging at the source in the heart of the Alps. The evianSpa menu has 16 signature therapies themed around the water journey – four for each of the stages. First is celestial, the start of the water cycle in the sky, which, says Houel, is represented by 'let go moment' treatments; second is mineral, the journey the water takes through the rocks, that lends itself to detox treatments; third is precious, where the water gathers in a reserve, which is linked to anti-ageing; and fourth is vital, the flow at the source of the water, which includes rejuvenating treatments.

These core signature treatments will be offered at all evianSpas, but there will be the possibility of adapting or adding more therapies according to local cultures. Equally there won't be a set agreement with product houses,

▶ Evian water has always been closely associated with health and wellbeing



"It's an interesting business opportunity to develop our brand. It leverages our DNA and reinforces our image as a premium brand and our wellbeing anchor"

although skincare companies will need to work with the set treatment protocols.

Water is obviously a USP, but while some masks, facial sprays and steamers for beauty services actually incorporate evian water, you won't find an evian-filled pool or bath. Houel reasons: "The minute you put water in a pool you have to treat it, so it won't be evian anymore. We're not planning evian baths because we don't want to get into extravagant luxuries. Evian is close to the people and nature and an expensive treatment is not in keeping with the brand philosophy."

The idea is that evianSpa architecture will also take its cue from the Alpine environment – walls will look like the curves in mountains that have been shaped by water, while Houel also talks about sensory stimuli that will "really immerse the guest in the evian universe". For example, natural sounds – not music – like flowing water and wind rustling through the trees will be triggered when

customers get to certain points and there will be a signature Alpine scent.

COMMERCIAL MODEL

The majority of the evianSpa concept was developed by Houel and outside designers. But by his own admission, he isn't a spa specialist: "I'd been exposed to the spa business indirectly in the past at companies like LVMH, so I had a certain knowledge, but I'm not an expert." So, he started to look for an industry person to team up with. Two months before the Tokyo launch he found Patrick Saussay (see p36) who was previously the managing director and in charge of international growth for the Swiss spa skincare company After the Rain.

With a 15-year career in business consulting for global companies such as BearingPoint, combined with the spa focus, Saussay was the right fit says Houel: "I have the brand and marketing knowledge, but Patrick has the real passion and expertise when it comes to spas, the spa sector and the spa business." Saussay helped put the finishing touches to the evianSpa concept ▶



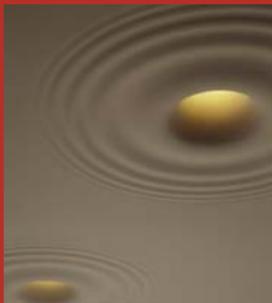
EvianSpa design will reflect the water's Alpine source with stones (pictured) and curved mountain-like walls



▲ The first spa is located on the fifth floor of the new US\$1.2bn Palace Tokyo Hotel that reopened in May



▲ Lighting in evian spas will vary in brightness according to the natural cycle of the sun and time of day



▲ The treatment room ceilings at evianSpa Tokyo feature water ripple effects

Info Panel: EvianSpa Tokyo

The first evian-branded spa in Japan opened at the newly redeveloped 290-bedroom Palace Hotel Tokyo, across from the famous Imperial Palace, in late May 2012.

Occupying 1,200sq m (12,917sq ft) on the fifth floor, it comprises five treatment rooms with Earthlite massage tables; a double suite;

male and female relaxation lounges with a sauna, heated soaking tub, soaking pool with jets and plunge pool for men and a marble sauna and heated soaking tub for women; a Technogym fitness facility; and a 20m pool offering views of the palace. The product houses are Anne Semonin and Omnisens.

The design by MEC Design International Corporation – part of Japan's Mitsubishi Estate Group – has been inspired by the Alpine origin. Features include a loose stone garden in the reception that signifies the water's mountain top source, while treatment room ceilings have a water ripple effect.



The priority will be to launch spas in countries where evian has a super premium image

▶ as well as working on the finer points of its licensing agreement and the overall business plan. His role moving forward will be to focus on the commercial model and development of evianSpa via hotel partners. In order to do this, Saussay set up a consulting and management company in March called Global Project and Spa Advisory, with evian as its first client.

So, why hotel spas and not standalone day spas? "Licences are easier to set up with hotels and there's the potential for more success from a business and revenue standpoint," says Houel. "We don't want to be alone and we're happy to partner with a hotel and to benefit from its history, location and marketing – as long as it's the right fit – just as the hotel will benefit from having an evianSpa as an extra revenue stream and a boost for occupancy and, potentially, room rates."

Evian is also ruling out the idea of running spas too. "The overall mission at Danone is 'health through nutrition for all' – evian belongs there clearly, but spas are not part of our core business," he says. "We'll provide a complete concept and full logistical support for implementing the license, but we're happy to join our forces with experts in the field [in operational terms]."

RELEVANT ROLLOUT

As the location for the launch of the concept, evianSpa Tokyo has been a success that Houel says he and the hotel partners are "very happy with." But now the idea is to grow the concept in the right markets and

Favourites

Book: Tom Sharpe's *Wilt* series is absurd and hilarious
Film: *The Party* (Peter Sellers) and *Dr Strangelove* (Stanley Kubrick)
Food: A Saint-Honoré cake from Pâtisserie des Rêves in Paris is a real treat
What do you do in your free time? I cook, I travel, I discover. With my family and friends
Time of year: Each season

is special and I need this change of time
Best non-evian spa: Les Fermes de Marie (see s805/1 p62) in Megève, France. It offers a great consumer experience – service is friendly and excellent
Spa treatment: a full relaxing treatment combining deep tissue massage that really acts on stress points, and a scalp massage
Best advice: "It ain't

over til it's over", not really personal advice but a Lenny Kravitz song. It's another way to say keep pushing if you believe in what you do
Who do you admire most? All entrepreneurs who build a successful business from scratch. And my wife for her impressive multitasking and wit, combined with this mysterious feminine gift of being able to walk in 12cm heels

countries with the right hotel partner. "It's not a question of going massive for us," says Houel. "It's a question of being relevant."

With evian distributing to over 150 countries, Houel says the priority will be on those where the brand has a "super premium image". Typically these are countries in Asia, such as Japan, Korea, China and Singapore where distribution is focused on hotels, restaurants and other high-end businesses. The UAE and Russia also show promise. In comparison, the distribution in markets such as France and the UK is larger and more ubiquitous. "In Asia the brand is more linked to luxury which makes it a better fit for spas," says Houel. "But we'll obviously look at potential projects in other countries where we have a strong image and awareness though."

The goal will be to target five-star, urban hotels which have enough space – at least 800sq m (8,611 sq ft) – to do the concept justice. In France, the priority will be to create a flagship evianSpa with the imminent renovation of the Hôtel Royal. But it's too early to disclose details of other possible developments: "We're still in the process of meeting various operators," Houel says. "We'll be very happy to identify a handful of projects by the end of the year and then go from there."

"It's really exciting to deploy a brand in a new category. We think the spa concept we've developed is a distinctive one. But at the same time we're humble. We know we're not the first ones in the market and we know we have to learn. But the initial reaction we've had from potential partners has been positive so far." ●

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PATRICK SAUSSAY

We talk to the spa consultant charged with international development for the new evianSpa brand

KATIE BARNES • MANAGING EDITOR • SPA BUSINESS

What's your background?

I've been in consulting for 16 years including senior manager roles at global business consultancy firms Andersen and BearingPoint. I've been involved with the modernisation of major multinational companies in varying sectors – from aeronautics to consumer goods. For three years, I focused on healthcare organisations, including the healthcare ministry in France and several French hospitals.

My work and travels eventually led me to the wellness industry, where I thought my experiences of project management in complex environments would help. I spent three years as managing director of the Swiss spa and skincare brand After the Rain with a view to developing it internationally.

How did you hear about evianSpa?

I crossed paths with Laurent Houel in early 2012 when he was finalising the first evianSpa concept in Tokyo (see p30). I was immediately taken by the concept and intrigued by his ambitions to roll it out worldwide. He had the marketing and business development expertise in the luxury sector and a deep knowledge of evian's core values; while I had the spa experience and business development/project management expertise.

I set up the Global Project & Spa Advisory consultancy and evian is my first client.

I helped to put the finishing touches to the concept and business plan and to set up the development strategy. I'm now setting up meetings with hotel partners that will hopefully lead to projects

What will your work involve?

I'll be focusing on the international development of evianSpa. Initially, I helped to put the finishing touches to the concept and business plan and to set up the development strategy. As part of the development process, I'm now setting up prospective meetings with hotel partners that will hopefully lead to projects and implementing the evianSpa brand. As part of the licence we'll provide all the necessary support from understanding the concept to treatment menu and therapist training and operating protocols. Management support is also available via my consultancy if it's required.

It all depends on the hotel's needs. Our common goal is to secure consistency and quality of the evianSpa brand. We can work with a hotel to implement an evianSpa that fits with its specific positioning – whether its introducing more locally-inspired treatments, therapies for couples or children, or working on something that can increase a guest's length of stay.

Will evianSpa be your sole client?

Not exactly. Launching a worldwide spa concept is a huge project, which requires deep involvement and working in lots of different areas. So, evian is the main focus for Global Project & Spa Advisory, but there are some other possibilities in the pipeline.

Wellness is a young and exciting industry. There are lots of challenges, especially the growing need for delivering high-quality experiences consistently and developing financially sustainable businesses. But there are also lots of opportunities.

What's exciting about evianSpa?

The arrival of evian in the wellness industry, with a new and fresh approach is clearly exciting and it generates a real business opportunity. The idea of making the concept relevant to different markets and cultures is what really inspires me. ●



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STEADY STATES

RESULTS FROM THE *ISPA 2012 US SPA INDUSTRY STUDY* SHOW THAT THE COUNTRY'S OPERATORS ARE MAKING FURTHER, POSITIVE PROGRESS.

PwC'S COLIN McILHENY ANALYSES THE FINDINGS AND THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

COLIN McILHENY • GLOBAL RESEARCH DIRECTOR • PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS

The 2012 *US Spa Industry Study* by the International Spa Association (ISPA) provides a profile of the spa



industry in the US throughout 2011 and also into the first half of 2012. Its findings are based on a survey of 807 spa operators across the US, including day spas, hotel/resort spas, medical spas, club spas, destination spas and mineral springs spas. Criteria analysed include the regional distribution of spas, their type, ownership structure, number of client visits and service/product offerings.

This year's study focused on the industry's performance as it kept pace with an economy still in gradual emergence from the recession, and as spas adapted to an increasingly competitive marketplace where cost-conscious consumers are shopping around.

The report gauged the extent to which the industry has stabilised and experienced growth. This was measured by examining the change across five key factors: revenues,

spa visits, number of locations, floor space and staffing levels (see Table 1).

To gain insight into more recent and emerging trends, spa operators were also asked about their experiences during the period of September 2011 to March 2012. Their answers reveal that the steady upward trajectory has continued from 2011.

Survey questions also identified the key challenges facing spas as they regain ground and the changes operators have made to ensure they stay competitive and deliver value and professionalism to clients.

GRADUAL PROGRESS

During 2011, the spa industry in the US continued to build on the moderate growth experienced in 2010 when business gradually picked up after the downturn and customer visits increased (see SB11/4 p38).

All five key performance factors for the spa industry either grew or held steady compared to their 2010 performance. Total spa revenue for 2011 rose to US\$13.4bn (€10.2bn, £8.3bn) – a 4.5 per cent increase on 2010 and

a figure which has now surpassed the pre-recession peak of US\$12.8bn (€9.8bn, £8bn) achieved in 2008. This is an important milestone as the industry recovers.

The performance mirrors the overall recovery rate across the US economy. In 2011, total consumer spending on services in the nation grew by 3.7 per cent. While, for the second year in a row, average revenues per spa expanded, rising by 4.9 per cent in 2011 to US\$673,000 (€513,350, £417,000). This increase in spa revenues is driven largely by a boost in visits, up by 4.1 per cent in 2012 to 156 million. But while visits were up, revenue per visit stayed virtually unchanged at US\$86 (€66, £53), with a slight lift of 0.4 per cent compared to 2010. Nonetheless the notable increase in visits is a positive sign.

Across the US, the total number of spa locations now stands at 19,850, largely unchanged from 19,900 in 2010. After declines in both 2009 and 2010, this is welcome news. In those years, spa locations fell by 1,400. Day spas are still by far the largest category, representing 78.9 per cent of all spas in the US, followed by medical spas at 8.8 per cent, resort/hotel spas at 8.7 per cent, club spas at 2.9 per cent, destination spas at 0.4 per cent and mineral springs spas at 0.3 per cent.

Total employment held steady, with a 0.2 per cent increase between May 2011 and May 2012. Yet there's been a marked shift towards full-time employees, up by 9.3 per cent; a further sign that the industry's back on track.

Total square footage also held steady, with an expansion of less than 1 per cent.

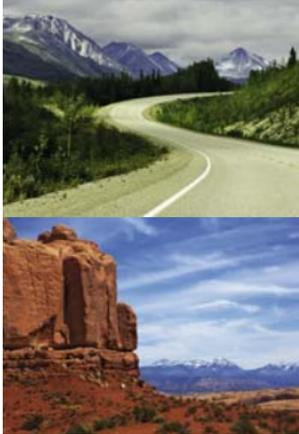
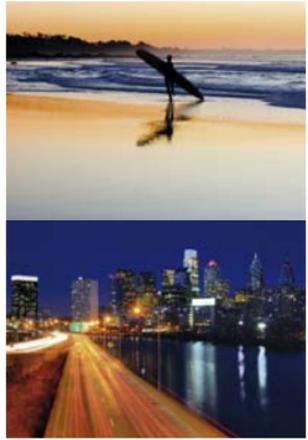
MORE RECENT TRENDS

The survey of spa operators covering from September 2011 to March 2012 revealed a continuation of the upward trend. The majority of spa operators reported a lift in demand compared to the same period one year ago. ▶

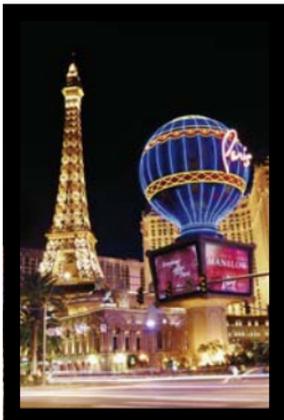
★ TABLE 1: THE BIG FIVE STATISTICS: 2011 OUT-TURN AND % CHANGE IN 2011*

	*2010 (YEAR END)	*2011 (YEAR END)	% CHANGE
REVENUE	US\$12.8 billion	US\$13.4 billion	+4.5%
SPA VISITS	150 million	156 million	+4.1%
LOCATIONS	19,900	19,850	-0.4%
	2011 (MAY)	2012 (MAY)	
TOTAL EMPLOYEES	338,600	339,400	+0.2%
FULL-TIME	149,200	163,100	+9.3%
PART-TIME	134,200	128,500	-4.3%
CONTRACT	55,200	47,800	-13.4%
SQUARE FOOTAGE	76 million sq ft	77 million sq ft	+0.8%

*Source: ISPA 2012 US Spa Industry Study



Total spa revenue for 2011 rose to US\$13.4bn – a 4.5 per cent increase on 2012 and a figure which has now surpassed the pre-recession peak of US\$12.8bn in 2008. This is an important milestone





Fifty-five per cent of spas in the US added new retail products

PHOTO: RHD DOORFINS



Guest numbers are up by 4.1 per cent which has boosted revenues

PHOTO: MASSAGE ENZY

There's been a marked shift towards full-time employees, up 9.3 per cent; a further sign that the industry is back on track and gearing up for rising visitor numbers

► Almost six in 10 said visits were up and 55 per cent reported increased client spending per visit, across all types of spas. Sixty per cent of operators saw a growth in revenues. Staffing levels stayed evenly balanced.

These are positive developments, showing an improvement on the 2011 survey results when a minority of 45 per cent reported a growing spend per visit.

RISING PROFIT MARGINS

Driven by increasing demand, profitability is on the upswing. Fifty-five per cent of spas reported a 2011 profit percentage topping 10 per cent, up from 49 per cent in 2010. Most also said that profitability had improved between September 2011 and March 2012 compared to 12 months previously. But almost one in five spas, reported a net loss in 2011, virtually unchanged from 2010 (18 per cent). Together, these results show an industry that has stabilised in terms of staffing and location numbers and is experiencing a modest but broadly-based recovery.

STIMULATING DEMAND

Spas have been adopting a range of strategies to stimulate demand and increase visits in an arena which is highly competitive, and where consumers are now more price conscious than before the recession.

Operators are keeping prices steady to maintain competitiveness against a backdrop of rising consumer prices. Average price per spa service – US\$80 (€61, £50) – remained unchanged in 2011 compared with both 2010 and 2009. This is likely to reflect the moderate pace of consumer spending and the use of discounts and rewards to encourage visits and loyalty. However, holding prices steady also means that improving profitability is likely to remain challenging for many spas for the time being.

At the same time spas across the board are expanding their portfolio of services, offers and products, to provide more choice and flexibility to busy customers. Over 83 per cent reported making one or more changes over the past 12 months in response to recent economic conditions. Nearly one in four added additional health and wellness programmes such as individual wellness consultations, nutritional programmes and group wellness packages. In addition, 28 per cent introduced shorter treatment offerings of 30 minutes or less to bring greater value and efficiency to time-pressed clients. Almost one in three operators expanded their spa treatment menu and 55 per cent have added new retail products. On average spas have made 2.5 changes to their operations in the past year.

Ninety-six per cent of spas have their own website and are stepping up the use of online social media, up from 82 per cent in 2011 to 88 per cent in 2012. Three in four spas offered one or more gift card promotions.

CONFIDENT OVERALL

As the industry makes further progress along the road to recovery, spa operators we questioned noted there were a range of challenges the industry still faces. These included:

- The economy and consumer spending;
- Pricing, inflation and profitability. In a competitive environment, with consumers shopping around for the best deals, spas are seeking to maintain quality but without raising prices. Against a backdrop of rising costs, margins are being squeezed;
- Shortages of qualified staff and rising payroll costs; and,
- Perceptions and the need for education. Spas continue to tackle a public perception of luxury and pampering. There remains a need to educate consumers about the health benefits of the spa experience and to position spas as places which promote wellbeing.

Overall, however, an overwhelming 78 per cent of all spa operators are confident or very confident that revenues will continue to increase in the next six months. ●

ABOUT ISPA RESEARCH

ISPA is recognised worldwide as one of the voices of the spa industry, representing providers in more than 70 countries. It has been publishing in-depth studies of the spa industry in the US since 2000.

Topics covered in detail in the full *ISPA 2012 US Spa Industry Study*, prepared by PricewaterhouseCoopers, include: industry size and continued modest growth; an industry profile looking at size and geography by type of spa; facilities, including elements of indoor square footage; serv-

ices and products offered; prices and the composition of revenue; and visitor and employee numbers.

The full report is available at experienceispa.com. ISPA members can download a copy and non-members can purchase the report via this site.

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SKIN REGIMEN

LONGEVITY: A REAL BEAUTY AND HEALTH PERSPECTIVE

A talk with Dr. Bollati, the founder of the new Skin Regimen line

AFTER SO MANY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE SPA BUSINESS WITH THE [COMFORT ZONE] BRAND, WHERE DID THE IDEA OF A NUTRICOSMECEUTICAL LINE COME FROM?

In a way it all started many years ago... While at university, studying pharmacy, I chose to follow in the footsteps of my parents, entrepreneurs in the field of cosmetic development and production. The thesis of my pharmacy dissertation proposed a range of cosmetically-oriented answers in response to the two critical sources of stress to the skin, which I identified as the formation of free radicals and inflammation.

Now, many years later, having accumulated precious experience in the cosmetic world, and working side by side with thousands of professionals in the beauty and spa industry from all over the world, I decided to study the theme of longevity more deeply, and share the knowledge of the mechanisms which dominate and accelerate the process of ageing to offer an advanced, stronger and wider response which goes beyond skin care. Enriched by other notable perspectives, and in a pioneering spirit, I propose innovative countermeasures which are finally accessible to everyone.

YOU HAVE CREATED A UNIQUE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE: WOULD YOU TELL US SOMETHING MORE ABOUT IT?

This is the true innovation we are proposing: a sort of "new renaissance model" applied to [comfort zone] research and development: a modern humanist approach including different perspectives to truly understand what happens and what can be done from a multidisciplinary approach.

When speaking of cosmetics, spa and beauty today, we must take into account the progress made in different fields such as medicine, nutrition, pharmacology, dermatology, genetics and psychology. For this reason, I gathered a Scientific Committee of top professionals, well-known and highly esteemed in their respective fields: Dr. Ongaro, a former doctor to astronauts, expert in anti-ageing medicine; Dr. Gualerzi, cardiologist; Dr. Bucci, nutridermatologist and university professor; Dr. Marzatico, pharmacologist and university professor; and Ms. Bronée, nutritionist and meta-medicine health coach. Each of them has been bearer of a specific point of view, and, once united, the mechanisms that regulate the ageing process in general, and in particular of the skin, were revealed. All their findings and indications have become a book available worldwide.

It has been an extraordinary experience and I never imagined that I would find myself dealing with such relevant and diverse themes of human conditions. Comparing knowledge and different opinions, what impressed me the most is to have found confirmation in the different disciplines that the mind-body balance has a relevant impact on our general ageing process.



*Dr Davide Bollati, founder of [comfort zone] (centre)
and the Skin Regimen Scientific Committee*

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR CONCLUSION AND HOW HAS IT INFLUENCED THE CONCEPT OF THE NEW LINE?

What everybody stated is that the most dangerous menace for health and beauty is inflammation, and the first preventive medicine is consciousness. It became very clear that a new advanced scientific holistic approach was necessary including both a spa and skin care offer as well as indications of correct nutrition, customized physical activity and the offer of dietary supplements to compensate what we cannot achieve otherwise.

Stress management remains an obvious key aspect: it is still undervalued and needs to be much more considered in our lifestyle approach. This can be achieved thanks to the support of valid professionals, doctors and researchers, but also professionals in the wellbeing industry.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE SKIN REGIMEN PRODUCT MIX?

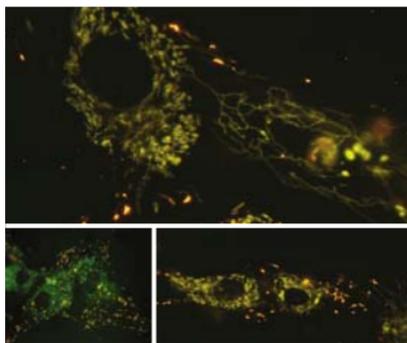
The nutricosmeceutical line includes corrective and protective face products with a very high concentration of natural and high-tech ingredients, and an advanced omega 3 supplement enriched with unique, innovative, active components to contrast inflammation from inside out. The hero facial formulas are hydra-pro and longevity-pro boosters which both contain our exclusive LONGEVITY



THE SCIENCE OF LONGEVITY
A NEW ERA IN SKINCARE



Longevity science: exploring the factors accelerating ageing and the health and beauty lifestyle solutions to be adopted



Innovative mitochondrial energy test by the University of Pavia, Italy measuring the efficacy of the Skin Regimen Longevity Complex™

COMPLEX™ with principles known for their anti-inflammatory, anti-glycation and anti-oxidant action. Carnosine is combined with spinach, maqui berry (the strongest anti-oxidant berry ever known) and chia seeds (with an impressive content of omega 3). They are also enriched with hyaluronic acid, encapsulated retinol and the very new maslinic acid to guarantee deep hydration, erase existing wrinkles and re-plump skin. There is a duo cleanser, which cleanses and tones in one single gesture, and a night renewer, a new-generation very intense peeling mask, which deeply renews and prepares the skin for the booster's action. A pro-collagen biomimetic peptide, stimulating collagen production, is also in the two hydra-pro and longevity-pro creams for a stronger firming action. A very active and compact line to be used from ages 25 to 120, throughout the seasons!

“Today, it is very clear that correct nutrition, physical activity, stress management, and the help of dietary supplements to improve organ function, along with a topical application of advanced skin care, are equally vital components for health and beauty”

HOW DID YOU MEASURE THE RESULTS?

Tests *in vivo* have measured the reduction of wrinkle depth up to 17%, the increase of elasticity, up to 9%, and of hydration up to 26%. In order to measure the longevity activity, with the University of Pavia, we have made a very innovative test on mitochondria, the source of cellular energy and life. After the application of the booster the energy level was increased up to 50% more than normal activity.

We have also measured the clients' satisfaction and found out they were not only satisfied with the results I just mentioned, but also with the decrease of spots and sensitivity: they felt their skin was healthier, luminous and stronger. Finally. A true step further in skin care!

YOU MENTIONED THE SUPPLEMENT. WHAT IS REALLY NEW ABOUT IT?

We have been developing it with the support of Dr. Buccì and Dr. Marzatico according to the most advanced nutrigenetics studies to obtain a perfectly balanced supplement rich in omega 3 plus a unique and exclusive combination of astaxanthin and choline bitartrate. Astaxanthin is a red carotenoid: its molecular structure explains its high potency (500 times more potent than vitamin E and 10 times more potent than beta-carotene), and it acts directly in the cell membrane. As a visible result it aids in cellular health and maintains collagen structure, lending a youthful and fresh look to skin. Choline bitartrate works as a mood rebalancer to help counterbalance stress.

FINALLY, A KEY QUESTION: COULD THE SEARCH FOR BEAUTY BE CONSIDERED AS A NATURAL HUMAN INSTINCT FOR REACHING IMMORTALITY?

I, along with my team, who have passionately and professionally worked, and continue to work with me, alongside professionals in the beauty and wellbeing sector, believe it to be true. This is why we dedicate every day to the creation of new ideas, projects, products and tools which can significantly improve the life of those who choose to follow us, now and in the future, and definitely skin regimen gathers our experience and our perspective and will favour an evolution for spas aiming at becoming health and beauty coaching centers.

DEACTIVATE AGEING ACTIVATE LONGEVITY



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[**comfort zone**]



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CANADA'S CREATIVE SPARK

Terry Stevens looks at the tourism industry in Québec and how the province is establishing itself as an innovative wellness destination



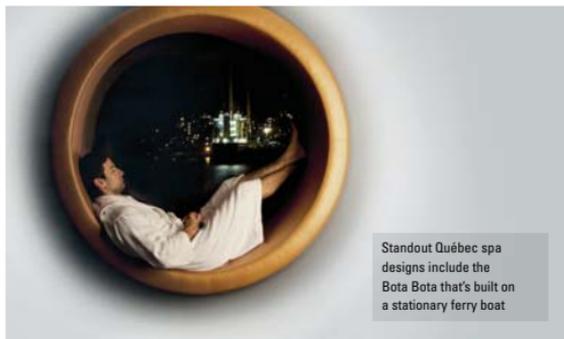
Spa businesses are fast emerging in Québec. But to understand why this sector is growing, you need to look at the bigger picture. Covering 1.7 million sq km, Québec is three times the size of France and Canada's largest province. As over 90 per cent of it is made up of the Canadian Shield, an uninhabitable rock, most people live in urban areas near the St Lawrence River between the city of Montréal and the capital Québec City.

Figures from the government body Statistique Québec show that substantial natural resources have long been the mainstay of Québec's economy. Yet knowledge sectors such as aerospace, ICT and pharmaceuticals, along with tourism, also play leading roles. Interestingly, there's also a focus on research and development – 2.63 per cent of GDP was channelled into R&D spending in 2011, above the European Union average of 1.84 per cent and more than any other Canadian province.

This is clearly a province of innovation, reflected in an advanced, market-based open economy. In 2011, its GDP was CA\$32.7bn (US\$33.3bn, €25.6bn, £20.7bn) making it the second largest economy in Canada and 37th in the world. Innovation is also present in the province's tourism industry, especially where spas are concerned.

SPA TOURISM HUB

In 2011, Québec welcomed 26 million tourists according to the province's Ministry of Tourism. This accounted for 2.5 per cent of GDP, 400,000 jobs and 30,000 businesses. The province is split into 22 tourist regions with Québec City and the area surrounding the St Lawrence River – commonly called ▶



Standout Québec spa designs include the Bota Bota that's built on a stationary ferry boat



Station Blu has three pavilions, two of which house a sauna and steamroom big enough for 40 people



CASE STUDY 1

Station Blu

Forty minutes north-east of Québec City, Station Blu is a Nordic bath complex that's nestled in a birch woodland in a meander of the river Lombrette. Opened in June 2011, it consists of three pavilions built by local architect Alexander Blouin in a modern, clean-line style using glass and the blackened wood. While one pavilion houses the reception and Oasis healthy food restaurant, the other two are focused on bathing – one has a large sauna, the other a big steamroom (both for 40 people), plus each have changing rooms, relaxation areas and five single and one double massage room. The buildings surround two warm whirlpools and ice plunge pools, with the option of also bathing in the river, to complete the cycle which alternates between hot and cold experiences



The setting gives a feeling of being at one with nature (left); a wood fire-heated boulder provides the warmth in the sauna

to benefit muscle relaxation, stimulate blood circulation and purify the skin.

The man behind Station Blu is 40-year-old Martin Gladu, the former director of global firm Manulife Financial who had a vision to create a wellness centre that, unlike others in Canada, enabled people to reconnect with nature – especially water. Together with eight partners, he raised CA\$5.2m (US\$5.3m, €4m, £3.2m) to transform the former farm into an offer based on relaxation, socialising and fun while being at one with nature. The landscape smoothly runs into buildings, expansive windows give generous views in all directions and heat for sauna is delivered by a wood fire-heated 4 tonne granite boulder.

The bath cycle experience costs CA\$35 (US\$36, €27, £22) Monday to Thursday and US\$45 (US\$46, €35, £28) Friday to Sunday. Timescales for each experience are given, but guests are encouraged to stay to take advantage of the walking trails, good food, socialising or special events, such as watching shooting stars from the open air whirlpools. Massages aren't sold separately, but a massage and Nordic bath package is available at CA\$95 (US\$97, €74, £60) in the week and CA\$105 (US\$107, €82, £66) at the weekend and around 35 per cent of guests go for this with the fire opting for bathing only. Tourists/day visitors make up 80 per cent of the clientele, followed by corporate group bookings at 15 per cent and members at 5 per cent.

Despite one of the buildings being struck by fire in earlier this year, Station Blu has already re-opened with a re-energised Gladu and team in place.

The Association Québécoise des spas launched in May and already has 39 operator members. Its aim is to develop cohesion between industry players and to represent and promote them

► the St Lawrence Lowlands – attracting 4.6 million, or 18 per cent of, international visitors a year who typically come from the US, France, the UK, Germany, Mexico and Japan. And while 70 per cent of tourism businesses are located outside of Québec City and Montréal, Québec City is a hub for spa and wellness tourism.

The city, and its surrounding area, has seen a number of new spa developments open in both traditional resorts and more contemporary city sites and in our case studies, we highlight a variety of those on offer.

Most notably, in order to really push the growth of the spa industry, a new association – Association Québécoise des spas (AQS) – was launched this May and it already has 39 spa operator members. AQS's strategy is to develop a cohesion between the players in the industry, to represent and promote spas in the region and to create tools and strategies to assist in challenges they may face. See our interview with AQS's president and CEO Lucie Brosseau on p52.

In a nod to the investment the province dedicates to R&D, Québec City prides itself on being a place where creative ideas can thrive. For years it's been a meeting ground of different cultures, languages and people. This is notable in the trend of Nordic-themed spa facilities focused on thermal and water circuits. Traditionally situated in natural settings such as at Station Blü (see case study 1), Nordic spas are now finding their way into the urban sprawl and include SkySpa, which opened in Québec City in January 2012 following its first site in Montréal (see S111/p24); Spa Tyst Tradgard and Zone Spa.

Elsewhere, Daniel Gauthier, the former president and co-founder of Cirque du Soleil – which was first established on the east shores of the St Lawrence River – is now venturing into wellness. The 2,500sq ft (2325sq m) Spa du Verger which is also



CAS7m has been spent on hotel improvements over the last eight years including a full-service spa supplied by Pevonia

CASE STUDY 2

Boutique & Spa signé Pevonia, Hôtel Manoir Victoria

This traditional four-star hotel in the centre of Québec City dates back to the 1830s, when it was known as Hôtel Victoria and was originally connected to the a Turkish bath and pool complex by an overpass. By the 1920s, it had become the fashionable place to be seen, but was forced to close in 1978 as it unable to compete with more modern facilities.

It was reborn as Hôtel Manoir Victoria in 1988 following a CA\$12m (US\$12.2m, €9.4m, £7.6m) for initial refurbishments. In the past eight years, a further CA\$7m

(US\$7.1m, €5.5m, £4.4m) has been spent on improvements including the creation of a full-service spa catering to a local day market, accounting for 40 per cent of clients, as well as guests of the 156-bedroom hotel who make up the remaining 60 per cent of customers.

Incorporated in the lower levels of the hotel, Boutique & Spa signé Pevonia has eight treatment rooms, an indoor pool, fitness facility and a sauna. It offers a wide range of treatments by Pevonia, with a 60-minute Swedish massage priced at CA\$120 (US\$122, €94, £76)

focused on the Nordic bath cycle is due to open in December in Hôtel La Ferme, a contemporary 145-bed hotel that's part of a wider CA\$300m (US\$306m, €235m, £190m) integrated tourism scheme called La Massif de Charlevoix. The scheme, includes a corridor of development in Québec's Charlevoix region across three environments – the mountains, a train line and a regenerated farm (ferme). The spa features six treatment rooms, including one double suite; a thermal therapy circuit comprising

an aromatic steamroom, Finnish sauna, two outdoor whirlpools (one for 25 people), cold plunge pool and snow dispenser; a relaxation area; a healthy drink and food bar; and a gym and mind body studio.

So, Québec... a region where tradition meets modernity and creativity abounds. Increasingly, the environment (natural, cultural, rural and urban) is shaping investment priorities with the spa sector contributing significantly to the overall appeal of this as a place to live, work and visit. ●



The spa is seeing a demand for sports-focused treatments due to the numerous outdoor activities nearby

CASE STUDY 3

Spa Chateau, Chateau Mont Sainte Anne

The 220-bed, four-star Chateau Mont Sainte Anne is located 35km north-east of Quebec City in the heart of a traditional snow sports destination close to the pilgrimage town of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré. In the past 10 years, it's been developed as a four season business – helped by a conference centre for up to 900 people, plus the creation of mountain biking and walking trails to reduce dependency on snow activities. In turn this has generated new audiences.

Its three-year-old Chateau Spa has also been fundamental in creating a year-round offering. The boutique spa has six treatment rooms including one double suite and two manicure and pedicure stations. There are also indoor and outdoor pools and whirlpools, a sauna and a fitness room. The treatment menu is based on Babor products and the numerous outdoor activities generate demand for sports massage, sports injuries and after sport recovery treatments and relaxation. Meanwhile, the resort has a strong, award-winning focus on sustainability and in keeping with the natural theme, balneotherapy and mud therapy are key ther-



apies. Prices range from CA\$40 (US\$41, €31, £25) for a 20-minute bath session and go up to CA\$85 (US\$87, €67, £54) for a 60-minute volcanic mud treatment.

Over the next two years, the plan is to reshape the spa according to Nordic bath principles – but full details are yet to be revealed.

The three-year-old spa helps the hotel to operate as year-round business and has six treatment rooms, including a double suite

ASSOCIATION PROFILE

KATIE BARNES • MANAGING EDITOR • SPA BUSINESS

LUCIE BROUSSEAU



The CEO and president of a newly formed Québec spa association on the strength of the industry in the region and the vital role the organisation will play



The Ovarium day spa is over 30 years old

This May a new body for the spa industry in Québec, Association Québécoise des spas (AQS), was formed, with the purpose of helping the already fast-growing sector to develop even more quickly. The move came during the annual general assembly of Alliance Spas Relais santé (SRs), an existing group of top operators in the region, where it was decided that a larger more representative organisation should be created for the whole of the spa industry in Québec.

While SRs will continue to focus on the quality certification of spas in Québec following the spa standards it developed with Tourism Québec in 2010, AQS will prioritise issues concerning the whole of the province's spa industry such as training and skills development, lobbying government and sector promotion. We gain some insight into the region's spa sector and future plans from Lucie Brosseau, AQS's CEO and president.

How big is the spa industry in Québec?

In 2006, Canadian Tourism Commission's *Spa, Health & Wellness Sector Study* (see SBO6/4 p42) reported that there were 395 spas in Québec. However, this figure included beauty, hair and tanning salons. The AQS uses SRs' definition of spas as being 'an establishment contributing to people's wellness in an environment conducive to relaxation, offering as the main activity one or more forms of water therapy and one or several types of professional treatments' and based on this, we estimate that there are 200 spas in Québec. We are planning to conduct a market study in October to get a clearer picture of our industry.

The industry has certainly been booming over the last decade – it's a strong sector and more robust because it's different.

What's different about spas in Québec?

Québecer spa owners travel the world to find inspiration and they're always looking

to offer products that stand out, such as the Bota Bota spa on the stationary ferry boat in Montréal and Spa Bromont with its hydro-massage pool circuit and 52 powered water jets. There's also Spa Eastman, the only destination spa in Québec and the Ovarium day spa which are both over 30 years' old.

The main difference, however, is our Nordic spas which have become increasingly popular. These are based on thermotherapy cycles traditional to Scandinavia, which alternate between hot, cold and relaxing therapies and experiences to maximise therapeutic benefits. In 2001, there were only three Nordic spas in the region while now there's around 40 and only two others in the rest of Canada. They're usually located in a natural setting with a variety of baths, saunas, whirlpools, cascades/waterfalls, relaxing areas, rivers, lakes and ponds, but lately they're coming to urban spas located on top of buildings and downtown areas.

During school breaks, the Nordic experience is open to families which is initiating children to spas. They're also becoming a popular social trend for younger X and Y generations (those born between 1960-1979 and 1980-2000) who make up members. Operators tolerate low-voiced discussions in dedicated areas and bachelorette parties are all the rage.

That said, I don't think all of them will survive, as the market is now saturated and is ripe for consolidation. But there's still room for more day and destination spas.

How important is the spa industry to tourism in Québec?

Québec's Ministry of Tourism (known as Tourism Québec) identifies 22 tourist sector associations representing regional 'products' such as golf, ski, camping, visitor attractions and spa. Tourism Québec has financially supported the SRs for a long time and has pledged to do so for at least the next three



The Québec spa market is becoming saturated, but there's still room for destination and day spas



years. It has also worked closely with us to develop the spa standard that forms a part of our quality certification programme.

What are the main challenges facing the spa industry in Québec?

Access to qualified manpower – from massage therapists and aestheticians to managers – is a daily concern for owners. With more than 19,000 massage therapists in Québec, the training and regulation of the profession is also vital – yet there isn't even formal recognition of the profession at a regional level by the government at the moment and that's something the AQS will be addressing.

The craze of collective purchasing via companies such as Groupon, Tuango and Living Social not only depreciates the value of our services, but cannibalises our clientele. Less than a quarter (22 per cent) of coupon buyers a new clients, a third (34 per cent) have been to establishments occasionally, while 44 per cent are regulars.

What impact has the death of a woman in a Québec health centre last year had on the overall spa industry?

The responsible parties were charged at the end of July 2012, but it highlights how the word 'spa' has been misused to identify everything from a hot tub installation to

Québec has unique spas such as Bota Bota, yet Brosseau feels it would still benefit from a classification system like hotel star ratings

a beauty salon. That's why we want a spa classification system like that already used in the hotel industry. SRs already has a spa certification and other countries such as France and Malaysia have compiled guidelines for ratings. I strongly believe that the Global Spa & Wellness Summit (see SB12/3 p54) should play a key role in developing a cohesion between operators worldwide to assure customers a level of quality when it comes to services, products and staff; spa set-up; maintenance, hygiene and safety of equipment and sites; as well as the quality of water; environmental standards; and all relevant licences.

How will the AQS be more representative than SRs?

The only requirement is that an AQS spa fits the definition outlined earlier, whereas with SRs spas needed a minimum of five treatment rooms, a full-time receptionist and certified pool operator employees.

Membership will be cheaper too – CA\$695 (US\$705, €541, £438) compared to CA\$8,000-\$10,000 (US\$8,100-\$10,150, €6,250-€7,800,

€5,050-€6,300), so will the cost of the certification process and annual evaluations. But on the other hand, members won't benefit from marketing, commercialisation and advertising as with the SRs.

So far we have 39 spa members and seven partner (supplier) members with nine waiting to be signed. Our overall goal is 150 spa members and 50 partner members in the next three years.

What are the aims of the AQS?

To support, represent and defend all players in the spa industry in Québec. We'll use the funds from Tourism Québec to conduct the industry study and promote Quebec spas outside of the province via trade shows, brochures and advertising in specialised magazines. Our goal is to develop a cohesion between all players in the industry; and devise strategies and tools to assist in challenges they may face as well as compile details of best business practices and training programmes.

We'll also be lobbying government in key areas such as for a provincial-level regulation to open and operate a spa; for inspectors to test water quality – the law is already written, but there aren't any inspectors to enforce it; and for formal recognition of the massage therapy profession. ●

VALUE PROPOSITION



If you're thinking of investing in a spa bigger than 300sq m, a feasibility study – at a cost of only US\$10k-US\$18k – can reveal the business model most likely to succeed. We talk to WTS International president Gary Henkin about the best use of this powerful tool

FOLLOW THE SERIES

- ▶ 1. Feasibility studies
2. Concept & brand development
3. Design consulting
4. Pre-opening & daily management
5. Operational consultancy



WTS International carried out a feasibility study for the Wequasset Resort and Golf Club in the USA

A feasibility study is important in gauging the viability of a spa development and its potential profitability. It's also vital in determining whether or not to proceed with the project and in helping decide the appropriate size and scope of the facilities.

What exactly do clients get from a WTS feasibility study?

WTS undertakes all aspects of the study from assessing the potential market, to recommending the appropriate size and scope of the facility, and from doing the first preliminary space design to assessing the competition. Then, finally, we do a full five-year financial analysis.

The market and demographic analysis examines the number of people and businesses within a certain radius of the property and their income levels and other demographic and sociographic information. This knowledge is critical to the success of spas – for example – developments in urban areas,

where the spa is in a hotel. The operator won't always be able to count on attracting short-stay business guests to the spa, so they need to know the potential for attracting non-hotel guests and then to be advised how they can maintain that traffic to create a sustainable and profitable business.

How do you assess the competition?

We give a competitive set analysis which looks at local, regional and categorical competition to the spa and what they're doing – their price points, menus, services, charges and so on. We give a thorough analysis so operators really thoroughly understand what the competition is, as opposed to what they think it might be based on preconceptions.

What about the scale of the investment?

As part of our initial space analysis, we tell the owner what the spa should look like based on its square footage. We don't do a schematic design at this stage, but we look at the breakdown of the space, for example,

we show how big the locker rooms should be and the size of the treatment rooms.

The financial analysis includes every assumption for revenue sources. On the costs side we break down every expense generated by a spa.

What do developers gain?

It will help them determine the costs of building and operating a spa. We give clients a real roadmap for understanding what it is they're getting into, both from a build cost and an operating cost perspective.

Why do spa owners need a feasibility study if they haven't previously had this as part of their development process?

Things have changed so much compared with six or seven years ago and today there's no such thing as a risk-free development.

Economic conditions are tougher and there's a lot more competition than there used to be. As a result, it's very important to have an informed approach.



The Spa of Colonial Williamsburg: space analysis gives spa developers guidance on the allocation of floor space for various functions

DMITRY SHIRONOSOV/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



“ We advise clients not to leap off the diving platform without knowing whether there’s water in the pool. They may have a vision, but it makes sense to have that vision validated to ensure it matches market potential ”

Who have you worked for?

Clients we’ve recently done feasibility studies for include the Wequassett Resort and Golf Club, The Spa of Colonial Williamsburg and numerous sites for Remington Hotels.

What are the downsides of not undertaking a feasibility study?

If the spa is going to be above 3000sq m (3000sq ft), then a feasibility study is needed and spending a few dollars at the outset can save big dollars later. Without it, the developer or owner risks going ahead without understanding the competition or knowing the true financial potential and operating or build costs and how large and sophisticated the spa should be.

If a developer or owner could have met their objectives building a 10,000sq ft spa but they end up building a 16,000sq ft spa, that extra 6,000sq ft has significant build costs associated with it which are completely unnecessary and will undermine the success of the project.

How can a study affect the spa vision?
We believe a feasibility study can save clients significant amounts of money. Because developers so often build what they want, not what they need.

We focus them on building what’s needed to accomplish their goals without compromising the look or the aesthetic appeal of the spa. Many multi-million dollar spas are overbuilt and have lots of wasted space at a cost to the owner. We try to save our clients from that.

Feasibility studies focus on what makes sense in their locale and with their clientele.

What’s the cost of a feasibility study?

The cost is based on flat fees which take into account geography and travel times and range from US\$10,000 to US\$18,000.

What advice would you give first-time developers?

We advise them not to leap off the diving platform without knowing whether there’s

water in the pool. We would advise them do their homework and study if the decision makes sense, and what the appropriate size and complexity is. They may have a vision but it makes sense to have that vision validated to ensure it matches market potential.

WTS has recently acquired Blu Spas, the worldwide spa consultancy firm. How will this affect the feasibility services offered to clients?

The merger will have a very positive impact on the feasibility services we offer in that clients will be able to benefit from Blu Spas experience, capabilities and resources at the feasibility stage. We’re very excited about the opportunities this merger creates.

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Work it out

What can the industry do to tackle the serious lack of skilled spa managers and directors? SRI International's Katherine Johnston reveals the findings and suggestions from its innovative new study

KATHERINE JOHNSTON • SENIOR ECONOMIST • SRI INTERNATIONAL

Spa businesses are facing a fundamental challenge in their management workforce – they're simply not able to find enough people with the right skills to fill management-level positions. In an online survey conducted by SRI earlier this year, 95 per cent of spa industry leaders said they face problems in hiring spa managers/directors with the right combination of qualifications and experience, while 52 per cent believed these problems will stay the same or worsen over the next decade. These challenges are critical for the future of the industry, because spas are fundamentally about the experiences they provide. To be innovative and competitive, a spa's employees are its number one asset.

The Global Spa & Wellness Summit (GSWS) commissioned SRI International to examine the many challenges in hiring strong, well-qualified spa management personnel, as well as the root causes of these challenges. Presented at the 2012 GSWS con-



ference in June (see SB12/3 p54), *Spa Management Workforce & Education: Addressing Market Gaps*, presents recommendations in how to address gaps in the supply and demand for skilled spa managers and directors.

It's important to recognise that these challenges are not unique to the spa industry. Over the last 25 years, as the economy in many parts of the world has shifted from manufacturing to services and knowledge-based industries, economists have documented that: a workforce is increasingly the most important factor for success in an increasingly competitive global economy; and also that skilled and talented workers are increasingly difficult to recruit and retain, especially at the managerial level. The leading global management firm McKinsey & Company has dubbed this challenge the 'war for talent'.

At the same time, as a relatively young and fast-growing industry, the global spa sector also faces a number of particular obstacles.

SPA-SPECIFIC CHALLENGES

Part of the problem is that spa management is a very challenging career that requires a huge mix of hard and soft skills, combined with a deep passion and understanding of spa. Most people require both significant formal education/training and practical, on-the-job experience in order to build this skill set. However, since there's no well-defined educational or career pathway for entering spa management, most spa managers and directors are deficient in at least one of these key skills areas. Spa managers and directors who are promoted upwards from lower-level spa positions (often therapists) have typically received little to no training in hard skills such as business, management and finance. Spa managers and directors who are hired from outside the spa – or outside the industry – may have management experience/skills, but may lack the requisite soft skills and understanding of spa. Additionally, spa management is a highly demanding career which often involves long hours/weeks and requires significant travel. This can lead to employee burn out and makes it difficult to be or difficult to sell the role as a lifestyle career. Generally, hard skills in business/management are considered to be the number one deficiency among today's spa managers and directors (see Table 1)

Other challenges are focused on education and training providers. There are few education and training programmes specifically preparing people for careers in spa management. SRI has identified 64 spa management-related degree programmes available in universities, colleges, and schools around the world. These include degrees specifically focusing on spa management; hotel/hospitality/tourism management degrees with a spa management component; and spa therapy programmes with a management component.

The graduates of these existing degrees meet only a tiny fraction of the industry's growing needs for well-trained spa manage-

Table 1: Training Gaps and Future Training Priorities Identified by both Industry Leaders and Spa Managers/Directors Are Remarkably Similar

Spa Managers/Directors Priorities for Future Training	Industry Leaders/Executives Key Spa Management Training Gaps
1) Strategic planning skills	1) Strategic planning skills
2) IT skills	2) IT skills
3) Public relations/promotional skills	3) Revenue management skills
4) Revenue management skills	4) Legal/regulatory compliance
5) Legal/regulatory compliance	5) Public relations/promotional skills
6) Financial management/accounting skills	6) Financial management/accounting skills
7) Sales/marketing/retail skills	7) Practical/on-the-job experience; 7) Leadership; Problem-solving (tie)

Source: SRI International online survey of 188 global spa industry leaders/executives and 469 spa managers/directors, conducted during January-March 2012



The Ananda Spa Institute is one of only 41 providers of spa management continuing education globally

There are already many training resources, books and credentials that have been created in recent years that few people know about, let alone are supporting and developing

ment personnel. There are approximately 4,000 students on such programmes, while there's an estimated 130,000-180,000 spa managers and directors worldwide, and this figure is continuing to grow. Therefore, the spa industry places very little emphasis on educational credentials when hiring spa managers and directors – which contributes to the gaps in the technical/business skills. Additionally, since most spa management-related degree programmes are fairly new and very small, they're not as well-connected to the spa industry as they ideally should be.

As well as degrees, there are at least 41 providers of spa management continuing education globally which offer workshops, short courses and credentials for people already in the workforce. The providers are also new, fragmented and constantly evolving, and there's no one proven model for effectively delivering training to employees

already in the workforce. The greatest challenge for continuing education is to provide meaningful and in-depth training, but also deal with the very limited time and financial resources for training.

There are also obstacles relating to spa businesses as very few spa businesses invest adequate resources and efforts into training and professional development activities as staff move up the ranks into management-level positions. This then augments the gaps in hard skills and technical/business skills. Without succession planning and career pathways, employees are not likely to be prepared for management-level positions as they advance. Most training for spa managers and directors is done when people are first hired, but few companies provide training beyond that point. Most training is done entirely in-house. Relatively few companies utilise online/distance learning for

their spa managers/directors, even though this model can be both time- and cost-effective. What's more, few draw on external training providers or externally-developed training materials – even though there's a growing range of these in the marketplace – and few pay for management employees to take external courses.

DEVELOPING THE WORKFORCE

To address the management talent gap, the industry needs a more proactive and partnership-oriented approach towards management workforce development (see Diagram 1).

Right now, there's a huge amount of fragmentation in the workforce system. Industry people don't know what schools and training programmes are available, while schools find it hard to connect with industry members. There are many training resources, books and credentials that have been created in ▶



▶ recent years that few people know about, let alone are supporting and developing. ISPA and the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute, for example, have put together an extensive series of spa management-related textbooks and curricula.

There are several critical steps that can be taken by the spa industry to overcome this fragmentation and address management workforce gaps. SRI suggest:

- Building awareness of existing spa management resources and programmes. The industry must work together to disseminate information about spa management degree programmes; continuing education providers; spa management books and training resources; and internship opportunities. This is a critical first step, because how can the industry work on improving spa management education/training if industry members do not even know what programmes and resources already exist, much less use them?

- Reaching out to universities and schools that already offer spa management programmes. Spa businesses need to be proactive about reaching out to the spa management degree programmes in their local region or country – it's as simple as making a phone call and enquiring about how to get involved through internships, mentorships and guest lectures, etc. In addition, the industry should also think about how to reach out to key universities and schools that don't have any spa management offerings – including hotel and hospitality management schools and spa therapy schools – to educate them on the career opportunities in spa management and to encourage them to develop relevant programmes.

- Proactively investing in human resource development. Spa businesses need to think about how to be more proactive in supporting employees as they move through their careers. How can you provide more training? Can you work on succession planning so that therapists are prepared to move up the ranks to management positions? Can

Diagram 1: A Well-Functioning Management Workforce System for the Spa Industry Requires the Interaction of Three Key Stakeholders



* Source: Spa Management Workforce & Education: Addressing Market Gaps. SRI International 2012

Spa businesses need to think about how to be more proactive in supporting employees as they move through their careers

you develop more internship or management trainee programmes so that students and graduates have good opportunities to build practical skills and experiences? Can you raise the bar for what you expect of new hires – requiring new managers/directors to have or obtain a degree or credential in spa management? It's unlikely that spa management education/training programmes and resources will continue to grow and improve until industry demand grows.

By working together effectively to support existing resources and new initiatives like those outlined above, spa businesses, educational programmes, and industry asso-

ciations alike can make a significant impact on addressing workforce challenges that are critical to the future of the industry.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

Commissioned by the GSWs, this study was conducted by SRI International, a world-wide independent, non-profit research firm originally founded as the Stanford Research Institute in 1946.

The study incorporates extensive primary and secondary research, including: two globally distributed surveys of spa industry leaders and executives and spa management personnel; interviews with over 45 spa industry executives and educators; an inventory of over 100 spa management-related education and training programmes worldwide; and a review of existing research and information on spa management workforce and education issues. ●

- The full version of the Spa Management Workforce & Education study can be found at: www.globalspaandwellnesssummit.org
- To read Spa Business' own investigation into global spa management training visit: <http://lei.sr7a=X755H> and <http://lei.sr7a=25Q6j>



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CLARINS

MIRAVAL

When Miraval celebrated the opening of its new Life in Balance Spa with Clarins earlier this year, it was an important milestone for the top team.

We talk to them about how their strategy in the face of recession has been a springboard to greater things

LIZ TERRY • EDITOR • SPA BUSINESS

AOL founder, Steve Case, purchased Miraval through his company Revolution in 2004 from founders and co-owners, Bill O'Donnell and George Ruff – allegedly after having failed to strike a deal for the purchase of Canyon Ranch.

Philippe Bourguignon – formerly at Club Med, EuroDisney and Davos – joined in 2006, becoming CEO of Miraval in 2009.

The resort had its best year ever in 2007 and then recession struck. The top team's response was to re-focus on innovation, ensure they were optimising the resources they had and then to push forward with infrastructure investment, while controlling spending. The aim was to come out of the recession in the best shape possible.

The team also created strategic partnerships with Dr Andrew Weil, who has a clinic

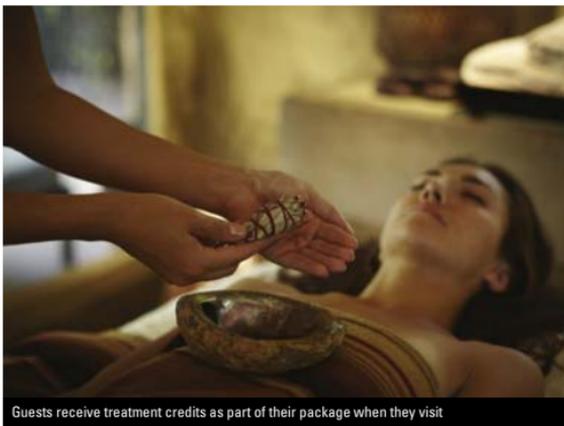
at the resort, National Geographic Expeditions and most recently Clarins, which has lent its name to the latest investment – the Life in Balance Spa with Clarins. The aim of these partnerships has been to find synergies between like businesses.

On the development front, Miraval teamed up with designer Clodagh and architect Mithun to add 16 suites, and 16 villas to the resort – eight owned by Exclusive Resorts [a Revolution company] and eight private. The two-beds sold at US\$2.2m (£1.6m £1.3m), and the three-beds at US\$3m (£2.3m £1.9m) – well above the rate for the local Tucson area, according to Bourguignon.

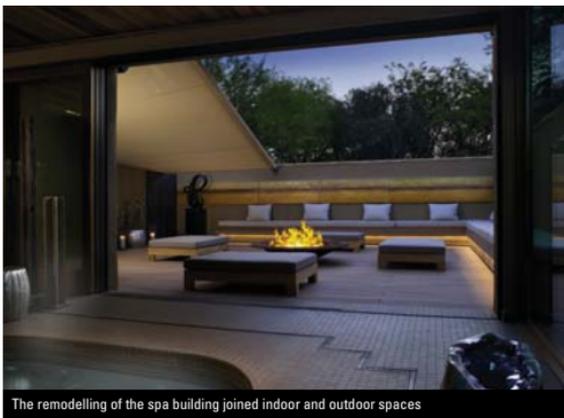
The resort's kitchen and restaurant have been refitted, while the new spa – created from the shell of the old by a radical US\$5m (£3.8m £3m) refurbishment and redesign – is the long-anticipated icing on the cake.



Bourguignon says Clodagh's new entrance to the spa is transformational and adds significantly to the customer journey



Guests receive treatment credits as part of their package when they visit



The remodelling of the spa building joined indoor and outdoor spaces

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PHILIPPE BOURGUIGNON

Chair
Miraval Resort & Spa

“When I became CEO,” says Philippe Bourguignon, “the marketing people were in charge, there was no innovation and Michael Tompkins, wasn’t empowered to take risks. So I changed the marketing people, promoted Michael and told him ‘go and innovate – make Miraval the best it can be.’”



“We froze development for two years to focus on innovation, so we could use this as a base from which to grow, rather than spending on marketing an old product.

“We created a programme called Experts in Residence to create a flow of new ideas and then selected the best of them. This brought about improvements, but Miraval isn’t just about the programmes, activities and therapists – we also had to improve the facilities.”

“The old spa didn’t reflect where Miraval was going – we were doing innovative treatments in an out-of-date facility, so we’ve invested in a total redesign to create the new Miraval Life in Balance Spa with Clarins, with design by Clodagh and architecture by Mithun. The spa is stunning, warm, elegant and straightforward – and not bling bling. Clodagh has created a wonderful transitional experience with the new entrance.

“Now we have the ideal product, our plan is to duplicate Miraval. We need to go to update New York, south-east USA, southern California and northern California/Oregon – and

maybe one more. We don’t want loads – perhaps four to six over the next few years.

“We believe spa will develop more as a proximity market – somewhere you can go on a two-day trip. As air travel gets more difficult and expensive, we see the driving market as a strong trend and think we can get half our clientele from within a two-hour drive.

“Spas are becoming mainstream,” says Bourguignon, “they used to be for idle women and in some cases for if you were ill, but they’re becoming part of people’s lives. The good they can do is incredible, most especially in enabling people to become more educated about how to keep themselves healthy.

“People come to Miraval to discover something more about themselves. You don’t come to Miraval to change yourself, you leave Miraval having discovered that you can change yourself.” ▶

MICHAEL TOMPKINS

CEO
Miraval Resort & Spa

“When the economic crisis started,” says Michael Tompkins, “I sat with Philippe, Steve and spa director, Simon Marxer, and we agreed our strategy would be one of strength, innovation and creativity. We’d hold together as many components of Miraval as possible – including the team, many of whom have been here 15 years or more, so we didn’t disrupt the guest experience and we’d invest, so when the economy turned around, we’d come out of it strong and lead the industry.”

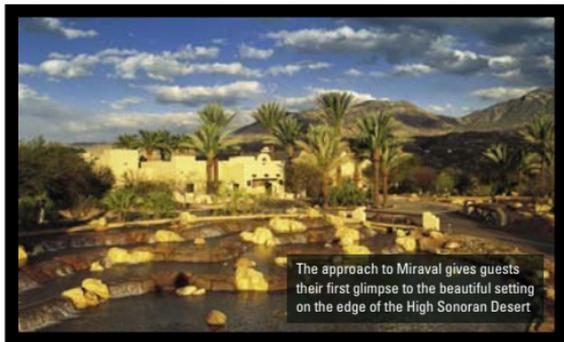


“That investment has been wide ranging, culminating in the launch of our new Miraval Life in Balance Spa with Clarins and we have plans now to continue investing by upgrading the yoga studio.”

“In designing the spa, we aimed for a ‘life enhancing minimalism’” says Tompkins. “At the opening, the designer – Clodagh – said: ‘We wanted to design a spa that has everything you need, but not one thing more.’”

“To create exquisite spaces, Simon and I specified soundproofing and touch-controls for the treatments rooms, we linked inside and outside spaces and brought in art because it’s so very mindful.”

“Quiet areas are one of Miraval’s signature features so we separated operations from the guest areas: guests are now upstairs and



The approach to Miraval gives guests their first glimpse to the beautiful setting on the edge of the High Sonoran Desert

INSIDE THE MIRAVAL LIFE IN BALANCE SPA WITH CLARINS

- Area: 16,000sq ft (1,486sq m)
- Treatment rooms: 17 indoor and six outdoor comprising 15 for massage; four for facials; and four wet rooms
- Three pedicure and two manicure stations
- VIP suite
- Nāga studio
- Yucca cabana
- Aqua Zen pool
- Sauna, steamrooms and hot tubs

staff downstairs, so they don’t mix, which is hugely important and we added a VIP suite – a spa within a spa, which Simon designed.

“We’ve been developing new treatments, for the new spa,” says Tompkins, “Miraval was the birthplace of the hot stone massage 17 years ago and we wanted to create some new, higher-value services using existing skills and facilities. I hoped Simon and his team would come up with the next big thing.”

“They’ve developed more than 40 new treat-

ments, among them our signature treatment, the Nāga [see box]. These unique fusion services are successful because they’re effective and this is the only place you can get them. Our guests are savvy spa-goers – they travel the world, going to the best spas. The fact they keep coming back is testament to what our team has created. I’m so grateful to Simon and the therapists for the amazing treatments they’ve developed. I’m a massage therapist by training and I find they create a much longer period of relaxation that can hold for two to three days. When you’ve had a treatment that effective, you want to repeat it.”

So what kind of return rates does Miraval enjoy? Tompkins says it’s high and increasing “By typical hotel standards – ie, if your guest has returned two or more times in two years – it’s around 20 per cent, but if you look at total repeat visits it’s around 55 per cent.”

Typical guests are executive business women, women in groups and, says Tompkins, now Miraval has private villas – families with 18-25-year-old kids, who are coming so they can learn life skills and self-care before heading to college or getting married.

“The villas are sold out,” he says, “we’re at 95 per cent occupancy for those in the rental pool and we have 460 acres and the option to build more. And people who move here full time have gotten extremely healthy and are approaching their lives in the same way – ie, I’m going to be as healthy, strong, active and engaged in life as I can be. It’s great to see.”



Desert hiking: activities at Miraval are opt-in, with no pressure to participate



Spa guests first enter the spa lounge, which has access to a relaxation terrace with amazing views of the Santa Catalina mountains



Clodagh designed the interiors of the beautiful private villas at Miraval – 16 of which have been built to date – with architecture by Mithun: mithun.com



CLODAGH

Designer

Clodagh's natural, pared down style defines Miraval's new spa. "The biggest challenge was to make it look as though it belonged there," she says "to pick up the Zeitgeist of the land in the choice of materials and use of space."



"Philippe's a believer" she continues, "he bought in to the fact that as a designer, I work hard to make the invisible visible. When there's energy to be picked up and transmitted for people's wellbeing I do this. "He understands the power of that approach, not just from a financial point of view, but

the value of creating a place where people can go and not only have their body healed, but also their mind and spirit.

"It was fulfilling for me when I discovered the owners of Miraval wanted to create a mind/body/spirit experience."

The spa at Miraval has been laid out as a journey "My job was to create an environment where people could find themselves," she says. "From the minute you cross the bridge – cross the water – there are tourmalines with cleansing energy and then the garden with its soft grasses, which are totally strokable, then the reflecting pool, the symbol and the door – and at night you have the fire pit. It's a transitional walk [see page 60].

"I wanted to create a series of moments where everywhere someone looks is beautiful, so they leave the spaces I've designed feeling supported and rejuvenated.

"I think it's great from an environmental point of view that they didn't knock the old spa down and the new one has been made out of the shell of the old," she says.

The aim is also to be practical and create something enduring: "We work with the operations people," she says, "and advise on the most environmental way to clean and maintain the materials we use."

In addition to working on the spa redesign, Clodagh was also responsible for designing Miraval's outdoor spa area, with its air conditioned spa treatment tents which are set in a desert garden. As a result, the design is consistent across the resort.

"I worked for seven years in Spain," she concludes. "The Spanish have a saying: 'tell me who you walk with and I'll tell you who you are.' And I feel as though we're all walking together on this project."

BARRY McCAFFREY

National director of sales, hotel and spa division, Clarins

“Miraval will generate US\$500k (€386k, £310k) in retail sales of Clarins products this year,” says Barry McCaffrey, “which is exceptional. It shows what’s possible with a substantial headcount and the right brand and marketing support.



“I have to give credit to Michael Tompkins and Simon Marxer and his team at Miraval,” he continues. “One of the keys to making a successful brand change is the people at the top. They need to champion the brand and make sure everyone’s on board – that’s essential to success.

“When we first presented to Miraval,” says McCaffrey, “we explained we have three million US consumers we can expose to Miraval. Our Spa Life game has a million registered users and Clarins.com, has 300k visitors a month. We also have 700 department store counters in the US and with retailer approval we can use these for offers and marketing.

“We’ve spent millions of dollars building the Clarins brand and distribution network and we put that power behind Miraval’s marketing to drive sales. For example, Claire Courtin-Clarins visited in February and *Marie Claire* sent out a fashion photographer. The result, was a 14 page feature on Miraval in *Marie Claire*’s US June edition. “Our only aim is to elevate our brand and



▲ The new retail area in the spa at Miraval will drive US\$500k of Clarins sales in 2012

“We’ll be offering Miraval treatments at Clarins day spas. The first two – a Miraval Grounding Facial and Mountain Berry Clay Ritual will launch at the New York Skin Spas”

to partner with the most authentic properties where we can elevate their brand in return,” says McCaffrey.

“At the moment, we’re working on a co-branded Miraval/Clarins retail spa kit and the bigger picture is that we’re going to be launching select Miraval treatments at a number of Clarins day spas in the US.

“The first launch will be at our two Skin Spas in New York, which will offer the Miraval Grounding Facial and Miraval Mountain

Berry Clay Ritual and then we’ll do a rollout in the department store spas. It’s a way of expanding the exposure of our partnership to our customers and raising the profile of Miraval in a way that benefits us both.”

“Some spas were hesitant about Clarins,” says McCaffrey, “but they’re learning we’ve got 60 years’ experience in spa, and having Michael Tompkins advocating our brand and confirming it’s been achieving results has been a great thing for us.”



The Nāga is unique to Miraval and has been trademarked by the company

SIMON MARXER

Spa director
Miraval Resort & Spa

“The foundation of the Miraval experience is touch, so when creating services we steer clear of fashionable new equipment and focus on utilising the skills of our staff,” says Simon Marxer.



“For example, I was interviewing a new member of staff and found she was highly skilled in Thai massage and also trained in acupuncture and craniosacral therapy, so we worked with her to create the Chi Grounding and Chi Journey, which blend these modal-

ities. They’re phenomenal treatments and have been popular with guests.

“Our new Nāga Thai treatment was developed by therapists Peter and Melanie who’d spent time in Thailand. The therapist is suspended on silks to enable a greater variety of angles and pressures and works with the client on flexibility and strength in a treatment based on Thai massage.

“In executing innovative treatments like these, you need very talented staff who are able to communicate intention and it’s important to facilitate that special connection between them and the guests which can be so gratifying,” he says.

“We talk to our customers – they tell what treatments they like and we match them with a therapist. The more they share their needs and wants, the more we can help them.”



Miraval has a number of outdoor pools one for lap swimming, one for watsu and another – shown here in the spa – for lounging and lunching

FIRST PERSON: LIZ TERRY, EDITOR, SPA BUSINESS

My first impression of Miraval is of a place with a sense of purpose. It's a resort which is being reborn, as the shiny new Clodagh-designed facilities – which suit the location so perfectly – replace the original much-loved, but dated, parts.



I stayed in an older-style room which is scheduled for an upgrade and although it was spacious, comfortable and clean, things like wonky wooden louvre doors on cupboards don't hack it these days and it will be great when the last of the old has been swept away.

The day at Miraval starts at dawn, with a range of desert hikes which ensure you've had a good dose of stretching, cardio and fresh air before breakfast. Personal choice reigns and guests are encouraged to go at their own pace, so some I met were undertaking activities on the hour every hour, while others were stretched out by the pool with a good book.

I mixed treatments, activities, classes and educational sessions and met quite a few people who were there to learn how to take better care of themselves so they could cope with stress – effectively seeking a body manual for living and carrying bulging folders of notes.

The new spa is simply beautiful, with great spaces and facilities. I had a mixed bag with the treatments – one of the best massages I've ever had, for example, but also a very average one. However, I understand the ethos of Miraval is to match guest and therapist with care and I arranged my second treatment on impulse without time for consultation, so this could explain the less than great fit with the therapist.

There's an occasional lack of attention to detail in housekeeping: the tea tray which was so kindly brought to me on my late arrival was still in my room when I checked out, for example, but there's so much right about Miraval it would be churlish to dwell on this.

Overall I enjoyed the experience tremendously. The service is friendly and efficient, the place spotless and the location – with the wild desert and the backdrop of the mountains right outside your door – takes you out of yourself and connects you with nature at the very deepest level. There's even a juice bar that squeezes to order: my idea of heaven.

I opted for the Equine Experience – time spent with a small group, a horse and a therapist in a quest for self-knowledge – and found



▲ Therapist Wyatt Webb leads the Equine Experience which raises self awareness

it extremely thought-provoking and unusual. A friend who's also experienced it remarked to me that anyone who had would always remember it and I agree completely.

Being in the desert, it's unrealistic for Miraval to offer organic food, and although the food's beautifully presented and delicious, I was a little disappointed by the lack of whole foods. However, when I queried this, I was told almost all guest are on special diets, so had I asked, it would have been provided.

When I bumped into Michael Tompkins at ISPA recently, he told me he was hurrying home, because Miraval was running at capacity, so the investments and teamwork are obviously paying off and that's great to hear.



The further you go into the mountain, the hotter the caves

KATIE BARNES • MANAGING EDITOR • SPA BUSINESS

RADIATE HEALTH

Austria's Grand Park Hotel offers radon therapy packages in conjunction with the famous Gastein Healing Caves as just part of its all-encompassing spa offering to help older adults age better



Sitting in a train cart in my bikini and robe in a rock tunnel, surrounded by German-speaking adults with an average age of 60, wasn't exactly what I imagined as part of my stay at the high-end Grand Park Hotel in north-west Austria. Neither was I prepared for the 2km journey into the Radhausberg mountain where I was to lie (and sweat) in one of many alcoves heated to 37-41.5°C by steam from natural thermal waters deep in the earth that also contained



The caves treat up to 12,000 people a year and are one of the largest pain management centres in the world

low doses of radon gas – yes, as in radiation – as a by-product of mineral rock formation.

The 60-year-old Gasteiner Heilstollen, or Gastein Healing Caves, were first discovered by miners seeking gold. While the miners didn't find the metal, they discovered something more precious – a unique healing environment. The radon gas has been scientifically proven by the University of Innsbruck to not only be safe, but to even have a cell-renewing effect, as well as the ability to reduce inflammation, produce

pain-relieving agents and boost the immune system. It's also been shown to have positive effects on the respiratory system and skin disorders. In fact, the caves, which have a GP and physiotherapy health centre alongside them and attract 12,000 patients and visitors a year, are known as one of the largest pain management facilities in the world and are a top destination for health tourism.

This was a no-fuss spa experience, but one which made a refreshing change from fancy and far less therapeutic facilities. Judging by

the packed-out train on an off-peak Thursday afternoon, it's obviously an experience that's in great demand. But, it's only one of the selling points of the spa offering at the Grand Park Hotel which has a mix of standard body and face treatments, traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), fitness, innovative health programmes and some of the tastiest spa cuisine I've eaten in a long time. The goal? To give older adults everything they need to maintain their quality of life and health as they age. ▶

MINERAL SPA



Visitors flock to the Gastein Valley for its range of outdoor activities



Grand Park Hotel was originally built as a hospital



A Tibetan bell massage is just one of the traditional Chinese treatments offered at the hotel

► THE GRANDE DAME

Fittingly, the five-star Grand Park Hotel in Bad Hofgastein was originally built in 1912 as a Protestant hospital. Only 50 minutes south of Salzburg, it's also located on the edge of the Hohe Tauern National Park in Austria's Gastein Valley which is known as the 'health valley'. Here healthy doses of radon gas hang in the air and natural thermal spring waters run through the mountains which provide a backdrop for Nordic walking, cycling and rock climbing in the summer and the country's second biggest ski resort in the winter.

The 89-bed hotel, owned by the Economic Chambers of Salzburg, is affectionately referred to as the 'grande dame' and has a fin de siècle style reminiscent of decadent European architecture at the turn of the century. Housekeeping staff wear authentic Austrian dress and accordion players and singers serenade guests at dinner with

traditional songs. Its design isn't contemporary, but it does have a welcoming feel, with comfy armchairs and a roaring fire in the reception and lounge area.

It's easy to see why it appeals to the target audience who range from 40-90 years and come predominately from Austria (30 per cent) and Germany (30 per cent). Most guests are couples, rather than families, as this is a child-free property except at Christmas.

HIGH CAPTURE RATES

"The spa is one of the biggest reasons guests come here – that and our special kitchen," says general manager Claudia Wachter. "It brings business and increases room rate."

Covering 2,000sq m (21,528sq ft) and two storeys on the lower ground floor, the Grand Spa was built seven years ago, but still looks new, and has a wide array of facilities. It includes a thermal pool with water sourced

from the nearby Elisabeth Spring, numerous spring-water drinking stations, two whirlpools and seven treatment rooms – two of which have baths built into the ground for radon water treatments – and a VIP double suite which was added last year.

There's also a fitness suite and exercise studio and a large heat experience area with a tepidarium, three saunas, two steamrooms, an ice cave and a salt inhalation grotto. Every evening, Walter, an entrant in this year's Austrian Sauna Championships, performs different sauna rituals by circulating the air with a towel or using effects such as lavender and salt infusions and Tibetan singing bowls.

With 80-plus therapies including rituals from Comfort Zone, make-up services by Eva Garden and medi-spa treatments by QMS (quick magic system) the menu is overwhelming. And that's excluding the equally wide range of health and medi-



GHARLENI

High-end spa tables, beds, equipment
and furniture. Made in Germany.



References: Le Meridien, Stuttgart Germany · Hotel Hyatt Regency, Düsseldorf & Mainz Germany · Ritz Carlton, Wolfsburg Germany · Burj al Arab, Dubai, UAE · Crans Ambassador, Crans Montana, Switzerland · The Dolder Grand, Zurich, Switzerland · Hotel Arlberg, Lech am Arlberg, Austria · Hotel Union, Geiranger, Norway · The Westin, Costa Navarino, Greece · Hotel Prezydent, Krynica-Zdrój, Poland · Grand Hotel Kempinski, Strba-Strbské Pleso, Slovakia · Crowne Plaza, Amman, Jordan · Crowne Plaza, Kuwait City, Kuwait · Hiltonia Health Club & Spa at Hilton, Abu Dhabi, UAE · Jumeirah Zabeel Saray, Palm Island, Dubai, UAE · DoubleTree by Hilton, Istanbul-Moda, Turkey · JW Marriott Hotel, Ankara, Turkey · The Ritz Carlton, Istanbul, Turkey · Hotel Hout, Bay Manor, Cape Town, South Africa · Hotel Chateau Spa & Organic Resort, Malaysia · The Ritz-Carlton Seoul, South Korea · Sofitel Marrakech, Morocco · And many more...



**Dr Liane Weber:
an alternative approach**

Dr Liane Weber, a doctor from Germany, has been in the medical profession for 25 years – and up until 12 years ago focused on the western approach to treating patients. “You mainly prescribe drugs but after a while you have to treat their side-effects and it’s a vicious circle and I had a feeling it wasn’t enough to do this” she says.

In 2000, she joined the department of rheumatic diseases at the Healing Caves in Gastein Austria, which used a mix of physiotherapy and radon therapy to alleviate the condition. “Every year I saw the improvement when patients returned and I was surprised that people could just stop taking pain killers,” says Dr Weber who focuses on treating people with the chronic pain syndrome fibromyalgia as well as those with rheumatism. “It really opened my eyes.”

Holding qualifications in tui na, acupuncture and other aspects of Chinese medicine, Weber has also created a seven-night TCM Retreat for Grand Park Hotel where she works as a TCM specialist in addition to seeing patients in the caves. The retreat combines initial and closing medical examinations along with nutritional advice, tui na massage and acupuncture to restore the body’s balance, energy and blood flow, strengthen the immune system and promote emotional wellbeing. “In a lot of medical cases, it’s the combination of western and TCM that is most successful. I support a preventative approach for individuals and this is where TCM really differs from western medicine.”



Head chef Franz Huick (and his team) cook up healthy, well-balanced spa meals

► pal-focused programmes (see further on). However, there’s certainly something for everyone and around 35 per cent of hotel guests have at least one treatment as well as using the spa facilities. This is good news considering the spa really only serves those staying at the hotel as locals and day visitors are more likely to visit Bad Hofgastein’s nearby public thermal baths.

“Our spa is more intimate, quiet, relaxing and luxurious,” says Wachter. “The public baths are usually more crowded, with up to 3,000 people a day and I heard they did 24,000 treatments in August alone! Our guests may come here for a leisure holiday and just want a beauty treatment, or there is the health side such as the wellness [TCM

therapies] or the radon therapy and that’s why the percentage is high.”

AHEAD OF THE CURVE

The health of guests is definitely high on the agenda. Wachter, who’s worked in hospitality for 30 years across all hotel departments, has a hands-on approach and makes a point of talking to every guest at dinner if not in the day. “It’s really important to know how they’re feeling, I ask them how they are and I’m genuinely interested – it’s not just a polite question,” she says. “It’s this special atmosphere and personal service that makes the big difference.”

She explains that everything the hotel does is geared towards not just making a



General Manager Claudia Wachter makes a point of talking to guests at dinner daily



Covering 2,000sq m, the Grand Spa has a wide range of facilities



Spa director Astrid administers treatments as well as heading up a team of six therapists

guest's stay great, but fits in with "strategy for better ageing – our customers are older and will only continue to age. We have the deep knowledge and skills and we're trying to develop innovative programmes." When Wachter says 'deep knowledge', she's referring to a number of health experts which Grand Park Hotel has teamed up with to create specialist packages. "You have to be involved in the market, and offer something new and we try to always stay ahead of the curve."

Programmes include a seven-night TCM Retreat by Dr Liane Weber, a TCM practitioner who also works as a medical doctor seeing patients at the caves.

Cuisine using local and organic produce is another a key focus for Grand Park Hotel. Head chef, Franz Huick, has created a five-course gourmet menu, while a low-fat Grand Spa option – featuring carefully balanced recipes free from gluten and lactose – was introduced two years ago. Then earlier this year, the hotel partnered with Dr Bodo Werner, a specialist in the FX Mayr detox method that's based on creating a healthy digestive system through diet, a daily dose of epsom salts and good eating practices such as chewing food a minimum of 50 times before you swallow to help break it down (see s807/3 p92). Between them, they've developed four detoxification programmes



Walter, the sauna master, performs different rituals in the sauna every evening

ranging from seven to 21 nights each which run from May to August.

Most recently, following increased demand, they launched a seven-day insomnia programme. Led by Dr Weber, it includes a medical examination plus Helios Sleep Analysis – using a machine with sensor, video and audio-measuring devices – and treatments encompassing TCM, anti-stress and spa treatments, radon therapy (in the caves and onsite) and nutritional advice.

Wachter says that these new programmes have tempted only a few guests so far. The FX

Mayr detox can be a tricky sell because of the initial side effects of weaning people off poor diets, while guests might not have enough time to fit in the full sleep package.

"It's still important for us to offer complementary programmes, as they're an additional benefit for our demanding five-star clientele," she reasons. Plus the team is working hard to raise the profile of the packages by initiating talks by the spa manager and relevant experts on Tuesday evenings and educating staff who, in turn, talk to customers throughout their time at the spa. ▶



Radon gas is a natural by-product of mineral rock formation and has been proven to ease joint pain as well as boost the immune system

► CAVE STORY

Then, of course, there's the connection with the Gastein Healing Caves which are located about a 20-minute drive away. As the official five-star partner to the caves, Grand Park Hotel is recommended to its patients and visitors who usually take part in the cave's standard 10-session radon therapy programme once to twice a year. The sessions last for 90 minutes but include the train journey – the further you go into the mountain, the hotter and more humid the caves become – and a 30 minute rest afterwards. Sometimes the cost of the cave sessions are covered by health insurance companies in Austria and Germany which recognise the efficacy of the treatment.

In addition, the hotel itself offers a selection of packages that combine a medical consultation with Dr Weber, spa treatments, nutritional advice and drinking and bathing in thermal and/or radon water and inhaling its steam both at the caves and onsite. Most people on the packages suffer from chronic pain or fatigue and have up to four healing cave sessions a week.

"We're lucky to have the radon connection and the caves are unique," says Wachter. "Other radon caves exist, but none have the same mix of heat, humidity and silence and at an elevated 1,000m above sea level. People come here from all over the world.

"There are many hotels in Austria where guests go for disease treatment, but we're

Grand Park Hotel Bad Hofgastein prices

- The entry price for double bedroom with breakfast only between April to December is €94 (US\$123, £76) per person
- A signature, 60-minute Grand Spa massage is €98 (US\$128, £80)
- The seven-night TCM Retreat starts at €1,330 (US\$1,750, £1,100) per person in a double bedroom
- The Classic Detox programme begins at €1,463 (US\$1,900, £1,150) per person in a double bedroom for seven nights and goes up to €3,929 (US\$5,150, £3,200) for 21 nights
- Seven-night programmes combining thermal water, radon therapy and cave healing sessions start at €1,477 (US\$1,950, £1,200) per person in a double bedroom

different because we have a luxury setting rather than a hospital environment. Most couples come here on holiday and while one of them might go to the cave for treatment, the other will go the spa."

LOYAL CUSTOMERS

With a 50 per cent repeat custom rate, Grand Park Hotel enjoys a loyal customer base.

"There are guests who have been here 70 times," say Wachter. "And we usually offer a special discount of 5-10 per cent for those who come frequently to encourage this. The average length of stay is 4.6 nights because on the one hand we have guests who stay for a short wellness holiday, but others stay for a long time because a [radon] cure needs two to three weeks."

She feels that one of the reasons why so many people come back is that the hotel really responds to customer needs. "We always listen to what our guests tell us. We also try to pinpoint trends and create new products for the future."

Currently the team is developing a stress-management programme to target corporate executives, while a programme introducing fitness training suitable for older adults with joint and muscle problems is underway. Therapists are being taught to add sensory stimuli to treatments. Of the latter Wachter says: "It all depends on the smell, temperature, the right timing and music – there's actually music with special effects that has been scientifically-proven to ease pain and we're hoping to introduce this."

She concludes: "Overall, what drives me is being part of our team with a vision to reach a common goal – we really want to be the only five-star hotel worldwide with this special mix of spa, wellness, healthy cuisine, radon therapy and experts in better ageing." ●

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Four generations underpin the healthy living approach based on natural medicine at Lapinha Spa in Brazil. We talk to a family who are passionate about preserving and evolving their holistic vision



THE BREPOHLS

“My great grandmother fulfilled her dream of introducing natural medicine to Brazil when she began working on Lapinha in the 1950s,” observes Marianne Novaes Brepohl. “My dream today is that every Brazilian is given the opportunity to learn something about achieving a healthier lifestyle through our concept. As my father says, ‘we shouldn’t just repeat what our parents did – we should think bigger.’”

Ambitious talk for the young marketing and sales director of one of Brazil’s original medical spas. As one of the country’s leading holistic health retreats, the zero-carbon Lapinha draws on natural healing systems to address medical issues and introduce lifestyle change among its affluent clientele, all in the setting of a 550-hectare (1,360-acre) organic farm surrounded by an evergreen forest.

NATURAL INSTINCT

Seven key pillars focused on natural medicine (see info panel) form the basis of the spa’s philosophy, which originated with

founder Margarida Bornschein Langer, a Brazilian of German descent.

Marianne’s father, Dieter Brepohl, who inherited Lapinha and is the CEO, remembers his grandmother well. “Alert, determined and an observer of people, Margarida never had any formal training,” he explains. “She ran an embroidery business despite losing her father at 14 and having to support her younger brother. As an entrepreneur, she became the co-owner of a successful metallurgical [metals purification] company and subsequently built a real estate portfolio. In 1953, prompted by a gastric illness that wasn’t responding to traditional medicine, she travelled to a clinic in Switzerland and discovered the work of Dr Maximilian Bircher-Benner.”

It was at the Bircher-Benner medical centre that Margarida became inspired by doctors such as Ralph Bircher who advocated that nutrition could have a healing effect. Falling under the umbrella of natural medicine, where the whole person is treated rather than just the symptoms by the forces of nature, Margarida began to believe that

diet, exercise and spiritual peace could combine to restore a healthy body and mind.

She returned to Brazil with a new direction, purchasing a farm in Paraná state in a region over one hour from the nearest city of Curitiba. Step by step she raised the investment to introduce electricity, communications and other integral services. Lapinha officially opened in 1972 although Margarida faced fierce criticism.

“The project was a huge risk. After all, how could she expect [São Paulo] city dwellers to fly 550km to try such new services? Her relatives seriously doubted her judgment,” says Dieter. “Small and fragile, Lapinha has slowly grown as it passed to my parents and then my wife and I. We decided to move on from our lives as Christian missionaries to assume management because we could serve Brazilians in a sustainable and curative way while maintaining our heritage.”

THE LAPINHA OFFERING

Today Lapinha has 150 staff, including three doctors, two nutritionists, two physiothera-



The new technologically advanced spa building is part of a four-year, €5m refurbishment.

“ In Brazil, spas are still associated with losing weight and have a hard, depressing image. So we’ve softened and renewed our brand through new visuals, more inviting language and fresh online elements ”

pists, five fitness trainers, 10 therapists and a specialist in integrated Oriental therapy which incorporates Asian techniques such as shiatsu and acupuncture. Clients, who must commit to a minimum five-day stay, begin with medical and personal objective consultations, with goals ranging from lowering cholesterol to combating stress-related conditions. The majority go for bespoke programmes, although there are set packages, such as Detox or the top-selling Slim. The most basic, which varies seasonally from BRL\$2,910-5,360 (US\$1,450-2,650, €1,100-2,050, £900-1,650), includes full board, medical care, lab tests, body composition evaluation, massages, educational lectures, physical training sessions and lessons in other activities from ballroom dancing and art workshops to relaxation techniques.

Most clients follow the signature egg-lacto-vegetarian detox diet, a nutritional plan that entails giving up caffeine, alcohol and sugar. There’s usually a ‘crisis of abstinence’ after two days when headaches set in, which is why clients stay for an average of eight days.

Lapinha does cater to body-conscious Brazilians, who comprise 85 per cent of clients, with weight-loss methods and non-invasive aesthetic treatments but these are integrated into programmes that also try to deal with stress factors and cell detoxification.

Just like Margarida, Dieter and his wife Margareth have drawn from their travels to introduce holistic therapies. Dieter came across the intensive Mayr-Kur digestive treatment (see s807/3 p92) when stationed in Austria as part of a Christian mission. This is offered at Lapinha via a 10-day stay in which time participants clean and alkalise their digestive tracts by drinking mineral-enriched broths and eat basic foods such as potatoes or aged bread. More recently, on a visit to Lanserhof, an Austrian destination spa, Marianne became interested in its lactose- and glucose-intolerance testing and has brought some of this back to Brazil.

BOLSTERING THE BUSINESS

Although Marianne had been involved with the family business since she was 13, when ▶

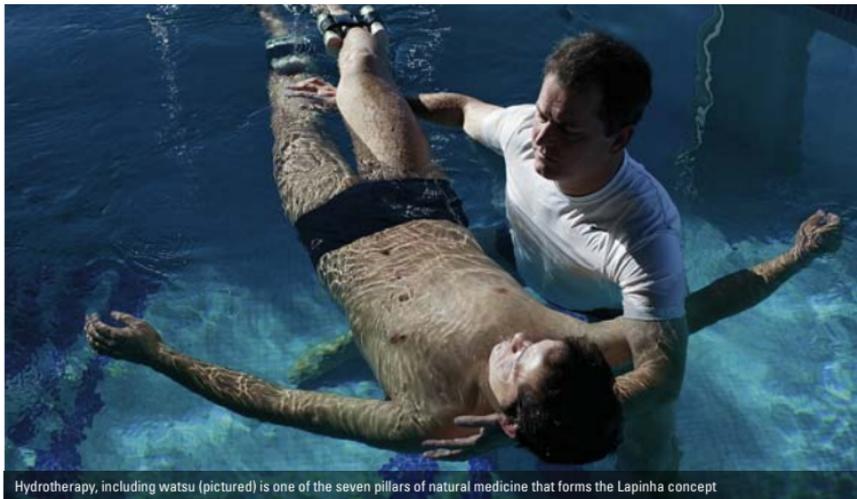
FAVOURITES

Marianne Novaes Brepohl

Author: Ernest Hemingway
 Film: *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*
 Song: *Smile* by Charlie Chaplin
 Season: Summer
 Place: Rio de Janeiro
 Food: Salad
 Leisure Activity: Jogging
 Spa: Lanserhof
 Treatment: Acupuncture

Dieter Brepohl

Author: CS Lewis
 Film: *Chariots of Fire*
 Song: *Argentine Melody* by Andrew Lloyd Webber
 Season: Summer
 Place: Florianópolis, south Brazil
 Food: Japanese
 Leisure Activity: Trekking
 Spa: Ananda
 Treatment: Thai massage



Hydrotherapy, including watsu (pictured) is one of the seven pillars of natural medicine that forms the Lapinha concept

she began a series of summer internships, her adult career has been in marketing and development for firms like Citibank and Toyota. But her father persuaded her to return to Lapinha in a full-time marketing role. "I wasn't too keen on the idea initially but decided to give it two years," admits Marianne. "When I arrived in 2010, I wanted to introduce what I'd learnt about implementing processes and quality controls. That must've been a challenge for my parents because I started to encourage a company culture of questioning why we did things."

She's also contributed to Lapinha's business plan, including the realisation of a four-year, €5m (US\$6.5m, £4m) investment phase that has bolstered the business' line up. In addition to the refurbishment of 20 out of 38 guest rooms, other improvements have been a new 1,000sq m (10,764sq ft) technologically advanced spa building, an outdoor pool and standalone fitness centre, designed by architect Joerg Gertsch.

Previously, spa facilities were located in the main house alongside guest accommodation, but thanks to the new building everything is now conveniently altogether under one roof. Features include a caldarium, indoor and outdoor Kneipp stations, a thalassotherapy pool, 10 treatment rooms – three for aesthetic services, plus one with a Vichy shower and another with a Dermalife capsule – a beauty salon and three medical consultation rooms as well as medical monitoring facilities.



▲ There are 38 rooms in total which can accommodate up to 60 guests at any one time

Another facet of the business – one that has evolved since 1972 – is the production of organic Lapinha food such as jam, bread, cheese and honey, which are sold onsite as well as being distributed to markets in São Paulo, Curitiba and Rio de Janeiro.

Investment money has also been poured into marketing initiatives as Marianne explains: "In Brazil, spas are still generally associated with losing weight. They have a hard image and are perceived as depressing places, with myths circulating about regimental rules. So we've worked on softening and renewing our brand through new visu-

als, more inviting language and fresh online elements. We bring journalists over to show them first-hand that Lapinha is an uplifting location in which to take care of your body and soul. We work with bloggers who talk about fashionable trends, we are present at lifestyle events catering to our target customers and we have become known as a medical spa, rather than a clinic."

Relationships with Brazilian medical associations, homeopaths and acupuncturists have been fostered in a bid to increase awareness of natural medicine. "Holistic approaches still aren't very popular in Bra-



▲ Lapinha has recently joined the Healing Hotels of the World consortium



▲ Packages range from combatting stress-related conditions to lowering cholesterol



▲ As well as 10 spa therapists, there is a specialist Oriental therapy practitioner



▲ Since 1972, Lapinha has been producing and serving up its own-branded organic food

zil; rather we follow the American way and look to prescriptions to solve all our problems," Marianne points out. More recently, she has also worked on securing an international presence by persuading her parents that Lapinha should become a member of the Healing Hotels of the World: "This wasn't just about attracting more customers, rather I wanted to be a part of something bigger than us. I've developed friendships with healing spas in other parts of the world, which means I can share challenges and keep abreast of trends. Simultaneously it's demonstrated that Brazil has something more to offer than Zumba and capoeira."

AMPLIFYING THE VISION

Marianne and her parents do find it tough to switch off even when they're supposed to be spending personal time together. They've had to learn how to leave disagreements at work. Marianne acknowledges she's had to work extra hard to negate the perception that she had the job handed to her on a plate. Still the pros have far outweighed the cons – working for a smaller business, family ties have been strengthened and Marianne admits she loves the product.

There have also been heartening business outcomes, with occupancy at Lapinha standing at 70 per cent, up 7 per cent on 2011. Income (before payments on investments) has shown a 16.4 per cent increase, which builds on the 14.8 per cent rise for 2011 over 2010.

The biggest highlight for Marianne, though, has been receiving her parents' blessing to get creative and develop priorities for Lapinha over the next 10-20 years. Dieter confirms: "We feel that it's crucial for Marianne to preserve the DNA of the business yet to renew and amplify our vision with her own initiatives."

The family is currently in negotiations with the Jockey Club of São Paulo to secure a site for a medical day spa in the city, where 60 per cent of their clientele is derived from. Set in a green park, the urban outpost is expected to attract new clients while supporting existing customers in maintaining lifestyle changes after a stay at the main location; plans are afoot for a daily delivery service of nutritional food, for instance, initially to be supplied by produce from the farm although another organic source close to the city will be selected in the long-term.

Alongside the physical expansion, Marianne is developing an online community, based around a regular blog, which will deliver tips on how to introduce healthy holistic-based habits at home with little cost. One example could be how to harness the power of healing salts and warm water as inspired by hydrotherapy.

"We want to spearhead the trend for healthier living in a way that means people can relate to Lapinha even if they don't have the time or money to visit," Marianne concludes. "We want to expand not just as a spa but as the Lapinha concept." ●

THE SEVEN PILLARS

- 1 HEALTHY AND ORGANIC CUISINE** – a nutritional approach based on the teachings of Dr Maximilian Bircher-Benner, designed to energise, detoxify and cleanse the body. Fruit, vegetables, salad, egg and some dairy products, sourced organically from Lapinha's farm and other local suppliers, combine to create a balanced diet that can vary from 500 to 2,000 calories per day
- 2 HYDROTHERAPY** – water-based treatments including Kneipp, thalassotherapy, watsu, sauna and fango (mud) therapy.
- 3 PHYTOTHERAPY** – the use of natural extracts, especially herbs, as medicine and aids to health
- 4 PHYSIOTHERAPY** – the promotion of mobility through a menu of 30 different massages, advice on relaxation techniques and posture, and other physical therapies
- 5 BIORHYTHM THERAPY** – listening and responding to the natural cycles of the body and earth. Clients, for example, are invited to go to bed at 9.30pm when darkness approaches and to rise at 6.30am as the sun comes up. Food is not served after 6pm to provide 12 hours of cleansing time
- 6 MOVEMENT** – sedentary lifestyles are discouraged through an array of physical activities from ecological walks of up to 10km to water aerobics. It also offers Liangong, pain management technique based on deep stretching derived from qigong, yoga and pilates
- 7 SPIRITUALITY** – clients are given opportunities to interact with each other and exchange experiences and connect with nature

business family

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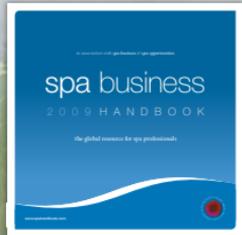
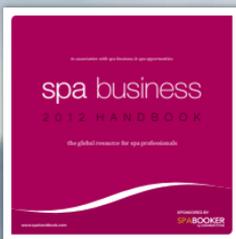
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Tria Integrative Medical Institute

Mindy Terry gets much more than the anti-ageing facial she planned at Tria, an integrative medical institute and wellness centre in Bangkok, Thailand

■ BACKGROUND:

Not far from Bangkok's main international airport, Tria – one of Asia's leading medical spas – opened in 2008 and is owned by and located next to the private Piyavate International Hospital. The hospital offers everything from organ transplant to gene therapy, as well as aesthetic surgery such as breast augmentation and non-invasive beauty treatments like Botox and laser hair removal; while Tria focuses on complementary medicine and was developed for those interested in taking a proactive approach to health and ageing. Tria also offers a wide array of spa treatments by Pevonia and Comfort Zone. The US\$15.4m (€11.7m, £9.5m) three-storey building covers 140,000sq ft (13,000sq m).



The three-storey centre has both spa and medical facilities like blood testing laboratories

Tria attracts medical tourists, local members and a day spa clientele who have an average age of 45-60.

■ THE OFFER:

The philosophy of Tria, meaning 'three', is that true wellness lies in the harmony of three essential components – structural, elemental and emotional wellbeing. Structural addresses movement, exercise and improving the body's physical alignment. Elemental is related to the body's biochemistry and nutritional state, including hormonal imbalance and toxins. Emotional is focused on mental wellbeing and how patients think about their bodies and health.

At first glance, Tria's 150-plus treatments and programmes can seem overwhelming, but are split into more navigable categories such as weight management, movement and body shaping, anti-ageing, detoxification, mind and emotions, rehabilitation and pain management. The most popular programmes, I was told, are those relating to anti-ageing and detoxification.

Using physician consultations along with lab work and advanced screening and diagnostic methods, Tria's team of physicians, naturopaths, chiropractors, Chinese

medicine specialists, bodywork therapists, personal trainers and health coaches help guide clients along the way.

In Thailand, massage prices range from US\$8-150 (€6-114, £5-93) an hour depending on location and skill level of the practitioner. At US\$72 (€55, £45) for a 60-minute essential oil massage, Tria's pricing is more than reasonable for the market – particularly considering the facility and amenities.

■ WEBSITE:

Tria's website, in Thai and English, is packed full of information and I was impressed to see a library of articles and scientific research and videos demonstrating alternative therapies (although these were only in Thai). This is exactly how an integrative medicine centre should market itself. It's clear that, unlike in the US, Asian consumers are very educated about complementary medicine as it's very much a part of the culture.

The online booking system could have been more effectively presented, but is helpful and relatively easy to navigate.

■ LOCATION & ACCESS:

While Tria is conveniently located, my local taxi driver had trouble finding it with the ▶

VITAL STATISTICS

Address: Behind Piyavate Hospital on Rama 9, 998 Rimklongsamsen Road, Bangkok, Thailand

Times: Tria opens at 7am every day and closes at 10pm Monday to Friday; 9pm on Saturday; and 8.30pm on Sunday

Details: www.triaintegrativewellness.com or +66 2660 2602



Hydrothermal facilities are valued as highly therapeutic and not just for relaxation

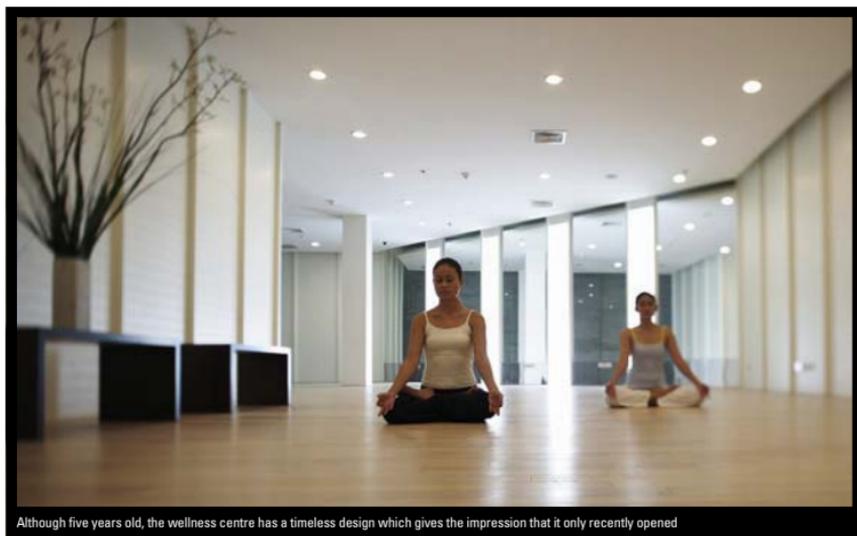
This is exactly how an integrative medicine centre should market itself. It's clear that, unlike in the US, Asian consumers are very educated about complementary medicine as it's very much a part of the culture



▲ Terry's exceptional massage combined Thai massage, yoga moves and herb poultices



There's a seamless link between luxury-resort like facilities and the medical component.



Although five years old, the wellness centre has a timeless design which gives the impression that it only recently opened

► English map from the website. I was dropped off at an entirely different hospital! A Thai version would prevent such a situation.

■ DISABLED ACCESS:

Tria is beautifully designed to cater to individuals with disabilities.

■ DESIGN:

The facility is large, inviting and thoughtfully planned. Guests are greeted with soothing tones along with modern yet comfortable furniture, a lovely water feature and a calming aromatherapy scent. Although five years old, the timeless design gives the impression that it is recently opened.

The first floor features the main reception and waiting area, retail boutique, organic café, changing rooms, 50 treatment rooms – including couples rooms and water suites with baths and Vichy showers – four hydrotherapy wet areas, an infra-red sauna, steamroom and gym. It felt like a luxury resort.

The second floor houses the diagnostic and consultation areas, physician offices, lab services and reception area for medical services. While it's decorated in the same inviting tones, it felt more like a beautifully-designed and highly professional medical centre.

Taking into account the number of treatment rooms, I suspect Tria is over-built for current levels of business. However, with an

aim to attract corporate groups – conference facilities are available too – it's been built with a long-term perspective.

■ CLEANLINESS:

The centre is meticulously maintained and kept fastidiously clean.

■ THE STAFF:

While friendly and helpful, there were language barriers with some of the spa and medical reception staff. But with the high levels of Thai hospitality, I knew I would be properly cared for.

■ THE EXPERIENCE:

After lengthy exploration of the myriad options, I settled on an anti-ageing Cryo Stem Cell Facial and emailed Tria with a query I had along with my desired date and time. Within eight hours, I received a call to say that treatment was no longer available. As I specifically wanted an anti-ageing facial – rather than a straightforward spa treatment – the polite woman suggested I schedule (and helped me book) a US\$25 (€19, £16) consultation with Dr Chaiyaporn, an anti-ageing and hormone specialist. Considering Tria's philosophy of helping people optimise their health, a consultation is key and I was impressed they suggested this approach and did so in such a sincere way that didn't make it feel like an upsell.

I voiced my concern that I wouldn't get a treatment at all, but was reassured there ►



▲ There are more than 150 treatments on the menu, including those with Vichy showers



would be plenty of therapists on staff who would surely be able to fit something in on the day I was there.

Due to the taxi conundrum, I was 25 minutes late but this didn't seem to be a problem. I was immediately escorted up to the medical services floor, sat in a comfortable chair and presented with a cup of tea. Dr Chaiyaporn soon greeted me and guided me to his office where he asked a series of quick, simple questions related to exercise, nutrition, sleep patterns, stress levels and general moods. I told him I thought my hormones might be out of balance as I'd been feeling much more tired and less cheerful than usual, so he suggested blood work and analysis for an accurate diagnosis. This would take a couple of hours, so he recommended I used the hydrotherapy facilities for free while I wait as they have therapeutic qualities. The advantages of heat and wet experiences are nearly always overlooked in the west and, once again, I was struck by Tria's more open-minded approach.

I decided to indulge a bit more and booked a 90-minute US\$75 (€57, £46) Thai herbal massage, but not before having a delicious salad and smoothie. The food was organic, flavoured and reasonably priced at just under US\$10 (€8, £6). I had 30 minutes to enjoy the herbal steam-room, infra-red sauna and various vitality pools before my treatment and by the time I entered the well-appointed room for my massage, I was deeply relaxed.

WHAT'S THE SCORE?

Ease of booking:	6
Facilities:	9
Cleanliness/maintenance:	10
Experience/treatment:	8.5
Value for money:	10
Overall experience:	8.5

My therapist was highly skilled, spoke excellent English and delivered a wonderful treatment combining Thai massage with yoga moves and herbal poultices. She was strong, understood the body and what I needed and worked intuitively. I was then led to a beautiful relaxation room to rest with a hot cup of tea before collecting my blood results.

Dr Chaiyaporn took great care to explain what my tests showed and answer my questions. He also had easy-to-read printouts identifying my key biological and hormonal levels. While I don't want to go into detail about the diagnosis, I will say that he prescribed a course of hormonal and vitamin supplementation that I could buy from a pharmacy (either onsite or elsewhere). He thoroughly explained his recommended course of treatment, the anticipated outcome and how long it would be before I would feel a difference, before leading me

▲ Tria attracts local and day-spa visitors but is also popular with medical tourists

to the reception desk to schedule a follow-up appointment for me.

I felt lousy for the first two and a half weeks of taking the supplements, and it would have been nice to have been warned about that. But four weeks on and I'm seeing results. My energy levels have increased and I have a significantly improved sense of wellbeing. I feel great! And the best thing is it didn't break the bank. The blood tests and analysis cost was US\$200 (€153, £124), whereas in the US it would just be too prohibitive and not typically covered by insurance.

■ SUMMARY:

I was pleasantly surprised with my experience at Tria. There were more patients/guests than I would have expected to see for a Tuesday afternoon. And I was astonished to see how receptive and proactive they were about health and wellbeing. Although, considering how ancient healing traditions are so ingrained in the culture, perhaps I should not have been.

In the end, I spent over six hours at Tria. Lab-work was performed and analysed. I spent one and half hours with the doctor, ate a delicious meal, enjoyed world-class spa amenities and had an exceptional massage all for just under US\$400 (€305, £248). I now feel empowered about my health and plan many more visits. ●

SHORT STORY

There's been a surge in interest in short, but intense exercise regimes – known as high-intensity interval training – in the fitness sector.

We investigate the background and benefits of this protocol for spas



HIT training principles have been used by athletes the world over since the 1930s



The milon circuit uses traffic lights to take exercisers through a 30 minute workout

In the last few years, the health and fitness industry has seen the emergence of a number of shorter, results-driven workout concepts for 'time poor' consumers. Women-only franchises Curves and VivaFit have offered a 30-minute, circuit-based workout for some time, but are now being joined by the likes of Fit n Fast in Australia, where Quickie workouts are available in activities such as cycling, boxing and circuits – and where the intensity is being ramped up to challenge a younger demographic.

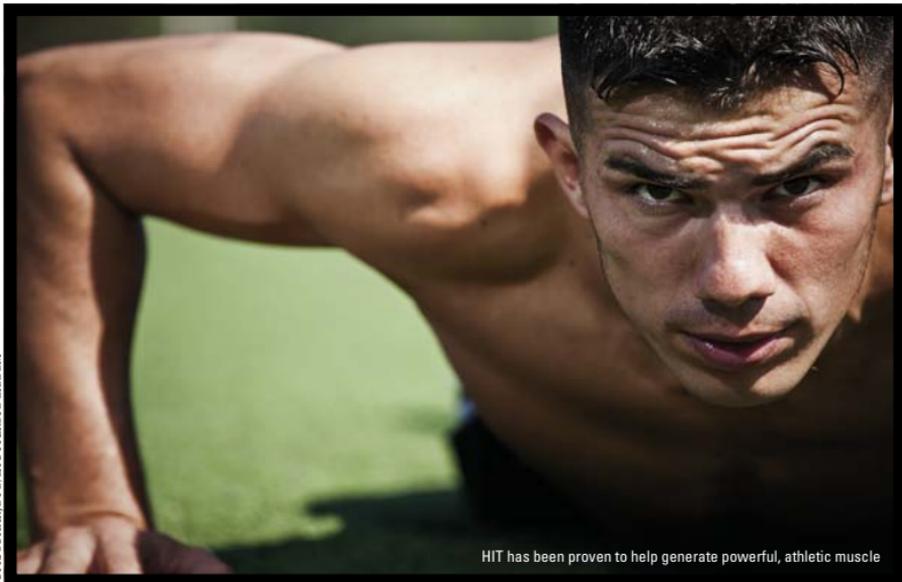
From a fitness equipment supplier perspective, milon's eccentric and concentric resistance equipment has been designed to maximise results via a circuit workout that takes around 30 minutes. Power Plate also recently demonstrated a 20-minute concept which combines its vibration training platform with its new powerBIKE with vibrating pedals. Classes are getting shorter.

AN ELITE HERITAGE

They're also getting tougher. Because what this is all leading to is the emergence of HIT (high-intensity interval training). Or should we say re-emergence? After all, in essence HIT is a training method that's been around for many years in the elite sports arena.

Interval training in its modern form dates back to the 1930s, when Woldemar Gerschler (Germany) and Gosta Holmer (Sweden) used it to enhance the performance of their national teams. And in Finland, Lauri Pikhala was creating interval training programmes for runner Paavo Nurmi back in 1910.

Holmer dubbed the approach fartlek – Swedish for 'speed play' – thanks to the use of 'faster than race' pace. Concentrating on simultaneous speed/endurance training, the training protocol puts stress on both aero-



HIT has been proven to help generate powerful, athletic muscle

“We must establish a common vocabulary to avoid fancy names for programmes that have existed for 40 years”

bic and anaerobic energy systems due to the alternating pace and intensity of the exercise. It's now used the world over to offer variation in an elite athlete's preparation throughout the year. And now it's coming to fitness centres and gyms in the form of HIT. So how do we define HIT?

DEFINING HIT

Len Kravitz and Lance Dalleck – researchers at the University of New Mexico, in the US – define interval training as “high-intensity, short duration training sessions performed at workloads above the lactate threshold, marked by an abrupt increase in blood lactate that forces the muscle to revert from aerobic to anaerobic metabolism”.

Clearly this is hard to measure within a gym environment. However, in a review paper undertaken in February by New Zealand's AUT University (see the Literature Review panel), HIT is defined as

RESEARCH PAPERS

A 2005 study of 38 elite cyclists, published in the *Journal of Strength & Conditioning Research*, showed that interval training leads to improved respiratory function, including better blood flow through the lungs and oxygen-carbon dioxide exchange. In the study, HIT increased performance by improving ventilatory threshold and VO_2 max, boosting the body's ability to use oxygen to generate energy.

Another study, published in the *Journal of Physiology* in July 2006, found improved adaptations in muscle cells after interval training in contrast to traditional steady-state endurance training. The study compared two groups of active

either working at over 75 per cent of heart rate maximum (HR max) or 75 per cent of maximum oxygen uptake (VO_2 max), followed by rest periods.

Intervals vary from 1:1 (work:rest) ratios, to 2:1 or other variations depending on fitness levels. The rest phase can either be complete rest or dropping back to a moderate intensity to enable recovery.

“However, 75 per cent HR max and 75 per cent VO_2 max are very different intensities and not to be confused as being the same,” stresses Randy Huntington, global director of marketing, performance, education



HIT led to improved respiratory function

young men over two weeks. One group engaged in traditional long-duration training for 90–120 minutes, while the other did four to six sets of sprint intervals (30 seconds all-out and four-minute rest intervals). It revealed superior adaptations in muscle tissue of the HIT group.

and research at fitness equipment specialist Keiser. So there are no clear-cut guidelines as yet, other than that the work phases should be ‘hard’ or ‘very hard’.

Huntington, meanwhile, categorises HIT as a form of circuit training. “In 1953, RE Morgan and GT Anderson at the University of Leeds [UK] created circuit training – of which interval training is a subset – with Manfred Scholich going on to write the bible on interval/circuit training in 1986,” he explains. “There are many ways to do circuits and Scholich has already labelled them quite well, setting a series of criteria: sets, ▶

“To bring HIT into a gym, we need to make it fun so people continue to do it, thereby gaining a cumulative effect”

- ▶ repetitions, load, type of exercise, order of exercises, number of exercises, rest interval, work interval and density.

“It’s important that a common vocabulary be established within the fitness industry, otherwise we’ll end up with fancy marketing names for programmes that have actually existed for over 40 years – and in some cases, where the roots are over 100 years old.”

BENEFITS OF HIT

But if precise terminology and parameters are still to be decided, there does seem to be broad agreement on the benefits of HIT.

“Research shows that HIT delivers results that surpass conventional, steady-state training,” says Bryce Hastings, technical consultant for group exercise company Les Mills International (see s80/83 p100). “These include accelerated aerobic conditioning, getting you fitter faster; an improved anaerobic threshold, letting you go harder for longer; improved insulin resistance and growth hormone changes, with enhanced hormonal responses; and the generation of athletic, powerful muscle, giving you the tone you dream about.”

Huntington adds: “Interval training has the potential to burn more calories than conventional aerobic/strength training and is an effective means of improving strength/muscular endurance. In addition, it has always delivered faster results. However, all this is at the potential expense of injury and endocrine burnout. It takes a while to adapt to such workouts, and in most cases adherence is less than the required time to adaptation. If we’re to bring it into the gym, we need to make it fun so people will continue to do it, thereby gaining a cumulative effect.”

There’s also an argument that a HIT circuit may not deliver optimum results. Huntington continues: “In the late 80s and early 90s, Keiser developed the XPress Circuit for time-conscious, non-elite members. This was done in the full knowledge that circuit training will always compromise the true effectiveness of the five S’s – strength, speed,



In several studies, HIT produced 5-10 per cent greater increases in VO2 max

LITERATURE REVIEW

AUT University’s review of 45 published journal articles, carried out on behalf of Les Mills, focused on 24 papers that compared HIT with steady-state moderate intensity exercise. The authors focused on moderately trained recreational athletes through to those with general metabolic syndrome (including obesity and hypertension) as more representative of the general population. The training studies ranged from two to 20 weeks, with typically three to five sessions a week.

Some studies used supra-maximal intensity (up to a reported 170 per cent of VO₂ max). But most used ‘work’ phases of around 90 per cent VO₂ max – also described as 15-17 out of 20 on a self-rating scale of perceived exertion (hard to very hard). Sessions generally lasted around 40 minutes, including work and recovery phases: work phases were typically 30 seconds to two minutes; with recovery mostly one to four minutes of light to moderate exercise (70 per cent HR max).

In several studies HIT produced 5-10 per cent greater increases in VO₂ max, often in less time. In some cases even

greater differences were observed. Where the steady state group did experience significantly greater increases in VO₂ max “it was patently owing to very big differences in training volume”.

In all cases, HIT produced greater improvements in anaerobic fitness, insulin sensitivity, endothelin function and body fat levels, with significantly greater reductions also observed in systolic and diastolic pressure in several studies.

Although often anecdotally quoted as a benefit of HIT, only one study specifically examined EPOC (excess post-exercise oxygen consumption) and found no significant difference compared with steady-state moderate intensity exercise.

Several of the papers commented anecdotally that subjects typically reported their enjoyment of interval-style training more than steady-state training, leading to good adherence.

The authors of the review found no evidence that repeat high intensity exercise bouts had a harmful effect on any of the populations. They also found no evidence that exercise intensity alone has a negative effect on resting hormone levels (testosterone, cortisol etc).

skill, stamina, suppleness – when they’re not done as discreet parts of a programme. Does this make HIT or circuit training bad? Absolutely not. It just means that the best results you can get will be less than the best result you could achieve by focusing on any one of the five S’s individually.”

For non-elite athletes, however, the benefits will already be very compelling. Not only that, but the AUT University/Les Mills review paper highlights benefits for a far more diverse range of exercisers than might have been expected. Gym-based use of HIT could, it seems, have a broad appeal. ●



ITALIAN STYLE
IN WELLNESS CONTRACT

AMENITIES

HAVING SPA BRANDED AMENITIES IN HOTEL BEDROOMS CAN INCREASE SPA ENQUIRIES BY 83 PER CENT. WE FIND OUT MORE



Providing branded amenities has become a popular service offered by many high-end hotels and various travel businesses. While this could reflect a growing expectation among guests for branded products, how does the business actually impact spa brands, and the hotels themselves? A trial conducted by spa brand Sundari showed that enquiries at a Florida hotel spa rose by 83 per cent when its amenities were added to guest bedrooms.

Matching the right brands is key in creating a win-win business partnership, so what are spa brands looking for from potential hospitality partners and vice versa? Ideally the brands should work perfectly together to, ultimately, sell the idea of a spa treatment, first at the hotel reception and then again in the bedroom before the guest happily saunters to the spa. We review some of the offerings in our two-part amenities special.

YURI ARCURS/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



VOYA

The range: Voya offers hair, skin and bodycare products for hotel bedrooms, public areas and changing rooms at various price points. It also has accessories such as teas, candles, vanity products and shower caps, which can be branded and supplied accordingly. Most Voya amenities contain the same formulations as its retail products with less active content when price is an issue.

Clients: The Burj Al Arab Dubai, The Martinhal in Portugal and The Chateau in Malaysia (see SB12/3 p36).

Requirements: Voya requires a treatment offering and commitment to stock its retail line from partners.

Why amenities? Amenities alone generate little profit, but Voya regards the business as marketing tool, enabling customers to sample its products in the bedrooms and creating treatment and retail sale opportunities.

Effectivity: A client hotel switched to Voya amenities after using a lower cost option, and found that the profit from Voya retail sales covered the entire costs of the bedroom amenities for the hotel.

Plans for expansion? Voya is updating its packaging and formulation to be even more eco-friendly and high-end.

SPA-KIT.NET KEYWORD: VOYA



CLARINS

The range: The line includes shower gel, shampoo, conditioner, body milk, body exfoliator, small bottles of Eau Dynamisante, cream bar soaps and glycerine bar soap, in Clarins branding and spa formula. A non-branded matching accessory range (shower caps and vanity kits) by Groupe GM, Clarins' amenity supplier (see below) also available. The amenities are offered in hotel rooms and in public areas, pool, health club and spa and public bathrooms.

Clients: Hotel Royal Monceau, Paris (see SB11/3 p64); Gran Melia hotels; Breitner House, Amster-

dam; and Hotel Russel London. Clarins also supplies cruise companies and luxury clinics.

Requirements: Hotels need to have a five-star rating or a Clarins Spa. Some four-star hotels with an exceptional location as well as an excellent image may be eligible.

Why amenities? Clarins launched its amenities range in 2008 to accompany its growing spa development in hotels.

Effectivity: Clarins amenities are not a revenue generator but are used to develop brand awareness and to enhance the Clarins image.

SPA-KIT.NET KEYWORD: CLARINS

ELEMENTAL HERBOLOGY

The range: Shampoo, conditioner, bath and shower gel, body lotion, hand soap, facial moisturiser, facial spray, hand cream, lip balm refreshing towel, hand wash and eye cream amenities are offered by Elemental Herbolgy. The products are placed in bedrooms, spas, health clubs pool areas and changing rooms. Formulations and packaging are the same as its professional line.

Clients: Mira Hotel, Hong Kong; Kempinski Spas; The Greenwich, New York (see SB11/1 p44); Desroches Island Resort, the Seychelles; and The Cosmopolitan, Las Vegas.

Requirements: Elemental Herbolgy looks for a brand match based on hotel look, feel and positioning, rather than room count.



Why amenities? Elemental Herbolgy launched its amenities this year as a business opportunity to generate awareness for its spa business and brand.

Plans for expansion? The plan to offer ranges of retail skincare kits as VIP amenities packages. Airline and cruise liners are a key future target.

SPA-KIT.NET KEYWORD: ELEMENTAL



GROUPE GM

The range: Shower gel, shampoo, conditioner, body lotion, hair and body gel, bar soaps and dispensers are included in Groupe GM's organic certified amenities that come with matching accessories. The products are offered in hotel bedrooms, public areas, restaurant bathrooms, spa and gym bathrooms and changing rooms and cruise ship cabin bedrooms.

Clients: Groupe GM supplies independent and boutique hotels as well as large international chains worldwide. It also supplies cruise ship companies, airlines and luxury clinics.

Why amenities? Groupe GM began creating and selling guest amenities in 1975. As well as its own range of amenities, it also supplies 11 spa branded ranges.

SPA-KIT.NET KEYWORD: GROUPE GM



CINQ MONDES

The range: Cinq Mondes amenity items include shampoo, conditioner, soap, body balm, moisturiser, facial cream, hand cream, facial spray, lip balm and refreshing towel sachets. There's also a vanity box to store unbranded accessory items including sewing kit, shower cap and shoe mitt. These are supplied in public areas, hotel spas, health clubs, changing rooms and pool areas.

Clients: Beau-Rivage Palace, Switzerland; Monte Carlo Bay Hotel; Kempinski Dubai; Le Méridien Hotels globally; and Club Med's 5 Trident luxury hotels.

Requirements: Partners are picked according to look, feel and positioning. **Why amenities?** Cinq Mondes launched amenities hotels in 2007, and for airlines earlier this year. It did so to have a strong brand exposure and to supply guests with a well-know cosmetic brand instead of a generic product and to create more traffic to the spa.

Effectivity: Anecdotal evidence of guests carrying a Cinq Mondes amenity into the spa suggests a strengthened connection with hotel bedrooms.

Plans for expansion? Cinq Mondes is developing a dispenser range.

SPA-KIT.NET KEYWORDS:
CINQ MONDES



ALINA OZBROVA/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

ELEMIS

The range: Revitalise Me shower gel, shampoo conditioner, body lotion and skin nourishing soap which match the spa formulation. The range is supplied to hotel bedrooms and vanity areas in large dispensers. The products are manufactured by amenity specialist Pacific Direct.

Clients: Center Parcs, UK; the Colony Club in Barbados, Holland and America; and the exclusive Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Club. It also supplies amenities to 1,200 spas and salons globally and hotel, airline and cruise ships (its parent company is cruise line operator Steiner Leisure).

Why amenities? ELEMIS launched its amenities in 2004 to create a link between the spa and retail and assist sales by placing the brand into



the hands of as many people as possible.

Effectivity: Guests who visit the spa sometimes mention the amenities they've sampled in-room, indicating increased awareness of the brand.

Plans for expansion? A brand refresh is underway on all ELEMIS amenities to mirror the ELEMIS Spa@home bodycare range launched in 2011.

SPA-KIT.NET KEYWORD: ELEMIS



SUNDARI

The range: Sundari's amenities comprise shower gels, shampoos, conditioners, tubes of body lotion and hair and body gel, bar soaps, Ecopump bottles and matching presentation trays, plus unbranded matching accessories if required. The products use the same fragrance, and ingredients as its main skincare line. The packaging uses motifs from its spa products.

Clients: Seaham Hall, UK; Villa Kerasy, France; Park Central, Miami; Chikusenso, Japan; and Sweet Atlantic Hotel & Spa in Portugal.

Requirements: A minimum star qualification for hotels varying from country to country.

Why amenities? Sundari amenities were launched in 2011 to offer a complete brand experience for hotel guests and to increase the interaction points with the brand to raise the chances of more business at the spa.

Effectivity: A trial at a Florida resort showed in-room amenity brand interaction increased enquiries at its spa by 83 per cent, lending support to the idea of amenities business benefits.

SPA-KIT.NET KEYWORD: SUNDARI



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Cinq Mondes skin peeling range

Cinq Mondes has introduced two skin peeling products which have the fragrance of citrus, ylang ylang and vetiver. The Phyto-Peeling Lotion is a skin peel designed to tighten the pores and smooth the skin. The Gel Masque Phyto-Peeling is a three-minute gel which is intended to exfoliate the skin and is for use twice a week. The product ingredients include organic citrus fruits and B vitamins.

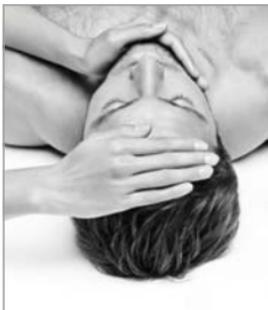
spa-kit.net keywords **cinq mondes**



Biodroga's medic skincare

Biodroga has entered into the medical skincare arena with Biodroga MD. The line has been created using the practices of phytopharmacy (the research of medicinal products with botanical ingredients), dermatology, biotechnology and cosmetics. It includes four cleansing products; two Skin Boosters; two Perfect Hydration moisturisers, three sensitive skin products, three for anti-ageing and two for hair growth.

spa-kit.net keyword **biodroga**



Sothys Homme with volcanic rock

Magnesium-rich volcanic rock is a main ingredient in the new Sothys skincare product range for men. The Sothys Homme collection comprises six items including Energising Face Cleanser; Hair and Body Revitalizing Cleanser; shaving foam; Hydrating Fluid; Eye Roll On and Eau De Toilette. The products have been launched alongside new face and body treatments for men.

spa-kit.net keyword **sothys**



No mess wax to remove just hair

Waxperts has created a professional product range which is lavender based and has a low melting point. It is a flexible hot wax made from advanced polymers and resins designed to cling to the hair and not the skin. The aim is the wax removes the hair only and leaves no sticky residue but a smooth finish. The products comprise Hot Wax; Strip Wax; Cleanser; Pre Wax Oil; Post Wax Oil and a Trio Pack.

spa-kit.net keyword **waxperts**



'Second skin' cream by Phytomer

Phytomer has introduced an anti-ageing cream made with marine sugar combined with orchid extract. The Pionnière XMF (Extra Marine Filler) 'second skin' cream is designed to create an invisible film on the skin surface to smooth and correct signs of ageing. It is also designed to act inside the skin by stimulating the synthesis of collagen, elastin and hyaluronic acid to firm and tighten the skin.

spa-kit.net keyword **phytomer**



Agadir Argan Oil haircare

The Agadir Argan Oil hair styling and treatment range by D&L is made with oil high in essential fatty acids. It is designed to condition and repair the hair and is suitable for all hair types, including dry hair and scalp conditions. The product range comprises Shampoo; 24hr Hold Oil Spritz Finishing Spray; Conditioner; Moisture Masque; Hair Oil Treatment; Spray Treatment and Styling Mousse.

spa-kit.net keyword **D&L**

For more information, or to contact any of these companies, visit www.spa-kit.net



New Klafs one-for-all cabin

Klafs has introduced its new D12 Vario which combines five moisture baths in one cabin. The product has been designed to provide multifunctions in minimum space. Its functions include a shower, steam bath, bathtub, Dornbracht horizontal shower and onsen bath of hot water and steam. Aimed at small spas and hotels, it is also suitable for private individuals and family spa experiences.

spa-kit.net keyword **klafs**



Melatogenine AOX Pro-biotics

Gatieneu has launched the Melatogenine AOX Pro-biotics skincare range for anti-ageing. The line is designed to protect the skin using natural antioxidants and probiotics. Products include the Essential Skin Corrector cream; the Essential Eye Corrector with Camelia Oil; the Advanced Rejuvenating Cream; the Advanced Rejuvenating Eye Concentrate and the Youth Activating Beauty Serum.

spa-kit.net keyword **gatieneu**

Carita's Cinetic Lift Expert

The Cinetic Lift Expert by Carita is a beauty device for the face, body and hair developed as an alternative to cosmetic surgery. It uses microcurrents, luminotherapy and ultrasonic micro-massage for the skin and scalp, and Carita says it has produced a reduction of wrinkles of more than 50 per cent in trials. Modern and simple in design, its accessories include a skin refiner, precision massage pens and metallised massage gloves. Using a

microcontroller, a pulsed current works to stimulate the muscles of the face and body. Blue, yellow and red LEDs are used to boost cell metabolism using luminotherapy. Ultrasound vibrating energy gives a micromassage to stimulate the cells and promote oxygenation.

spa-kit.net keyword **carita**



Seaweed haircare by Repêchage

The Hydra-Amino18™ Hair Spa collection by Repêchage is designed to restore and revitalise damaged and ageing hair. The collection uses seaweed plants with 18 amino acids intended to act as building blocks of protein to restore chemically-treated hair. The range includes the Hydra-Amino18 Hair Spa Thermal Seaweed Mask and Hydra-Amino18 Hair Spa Serum to treat frizzy, stressed hair.

spa-kit.net keyword **repechage**



23 Carat Gold for your skin

La Sultane de Saba has launched the 23 Carat Gold skincare range with gold, honey, mother of pearl and caviar ingredients. The products comprise a Gold Anti-Ageing Scrub with 23 carat gold, micronise pearls and corundum extract; a mask with pearl extract; a Serum Elixir with caviar extract, vitamins, argan oil and 23 carat gold particles and a Gold Anti-Ageing Cream with hyaluronic acid.

spa-kit.net keyword **sultane**

TECH TALK

The latest developments from spa software suppliers

TAC educates spa students

TAC has been working with the Swiss Hotel Management School (SHMS) for its training curriculum. TAC's spa and activity software programme, Reservation Assistant, is being used at SHMS' onsite training spa and is included in its theoretical curriculum. Students have been trying out the features, from scheduling to personnel planning, stock management, guest relationship management and detailed reports and statistics.

Guenther Poellbauer, director of marketing and sales at TAC says: "The students of the SHMS are the spa managers of the future and hence, our customers of tomorrow. Their future employers and TAC benefit from their know-how about the ideal way of working with Reservation Assistant."

Meanwhile, One to One Hotel – Ain Al Faïda, a top health resort in Abu Dhabi, has just become one of TAC's newest clients. The resort will use Reservation Assistant to manage activities including boating, picnics, 10 pin bowling and spa treatments



in its spacious wellness area. Besides the administration of the hotel's resources, the Reservation Assistant will also handle the process of voucher management.

SPA-KIT.NET KEYWORD: TAC

SpaBooker continues to innovate with its latest version

SpaBooker has launched an upgrade to its cloud-based management software for spas, salons and fitness facilities – called Booker 8.3.

The business management and marketing software now includes a number of new features including Today's Wait List that lets spas build an interactive queue of customers willing to wait for appointments.

With wait times, count-downs, colour coding, and integrated booking functionality, Today's Wait List is designed to keep queues moving and customers informed. It'll send multiple customer text messages with updates – especially useful for resort spas.



The new Vertical Time Interval feature lets operators view and enter appointments in their calendars in five minute intervals for short services such as waxing. The system can now also sync to other calendars, including Google Calendar, Outlook, and iCal. In addition, Booker 8.3 features an easy-to-skim View Appointment page with colour coding to highlight group bookings or flag up clashing appointments.

SpaBooker has also developed Android and iPhone apps to let spas manage their business from mobile devices and to allow customers to book services on-the-go.

SPA-KIT.NET KEYWORD: SPABOOKER



Mindbody launches booking app for Facebook

Mindbody has created an appointment booking app that connects a spa's Facebook page to its appointment schedule. The app is designed to make it easy for fans to book and pay for appointments without leaving Facebook. The spa's real-time bookings are then integrated with their Mindbody schedule. The app can be installed at <http://apps.facebook.com/Mindbodyapp>

Meanwhile, Mindbody has struck up a number of software partnerships. Demandforce is a web-based application that integrates with Mindbody's salon and spa software to automate outreach tools including email, text, and social media. It offers a two-way text messaging product so Mindbody clients can speak with consumers via text and automates emailed appointment reminders and confirmations. Client reviews are also tracked and managed via the tool to boost the business's online exposure.

As an added bonus, Mindbody clients are automatically included in SpaFinder's online directory of wellness locations and can upgrade to become part of SpaFinder's worldwide gift certificate scheme.

SPA-KIT.NET KEYWORD: MINDBODY

The Millennium Experience

Millennium has rebranded its annual user group conference to become The Experience UK. The event will take place at the Park Plaza Riverbank hotel in London on 11-12 November. Millennium users worldwide are being invited to participate in the two days of education, a casino party night and networking opportunities at www.millenniumsoftware.co.uk/experience

SPA-KIT.NET KEYWORD: MILLENNIUM



Concept Software Systems green app

Concept has developed an iPad app that can help spas to become more greener. The Guest Consultation Forms app allows guests checking in for a treatment to complete their consultation questionnaire on an iPad device, rather than a paper form. The product also includes signature capture, so when the guest has signed their disclaimer, the questionnaire is then stored against their profile. This functionality is used for membership data capture.

SPA-KIT.NET KEYWORDS:
CONCEPT SOFTWARE



Champneys is a leading UK operator with four destination spas and eight days spas across the country

ResortSuite and Champneys team up

ResortSuite software has been chosen for Champneys Resorts and Day Spas. The solution will be deployed in a centralised private cloud environment and will serve Champneys' four health resorts and eight day spas with a single guest profile database.

ResortSuite will replace numerous systems from multiple vendors to consolidate multiple guest profiles and streamline operations. In total, ResortSuite will replace approximately seven separate customer databases.

Frank Pitsikalis, ResortSuite founder and CEO says: "We feel Champneys' highly

personalised, guest-focused business approach is an ideal match for our guest-centric product design philosophy."

Alex De Carvalho, Champneys group managing director, says: "ResortSuite has a proven track record providing destination spa properties around the world with enterprise technology to ensure efficient booking experiences via multiple channels, streamlined operations and unmatched business intelligence."

SPA-KIT.NET KEYWORD: RESORTSUITE

New SpaSoft version

PAR Springer-Miller has launched a new version of SpaSoft spa management software – version 3.3.0. Its features include point of sale, daily discounts, promotional products tracking, customisable marketing selections, detailed summaries of guest purchases and customisable reports. Features available for the Premium and Elite spa software editions include reservations which can be submitted as a group, saving time and reducing the number of booking steps among other features.

Meanwhile, SpaSoft will be part of a new exclusive distribution partnership by PAR Springer-Miller Systems with FAMA Technologies in Saudi Arabia.

"Hotels and spas in Saudi Arabia are coping with the increased sophistication of their client base and need to equip



PHIL DATSHUTTER/ISTOCK.COM

themselves with the best-in-class tools." says HH Prince Khaled Bin Fahd Al Saud, owner and MD of FAMA Technologies.

SpaSoft users also are being invited to attend the SpaSoft Users Group (SUG) conference in Wisconsin, US in November.

SPA-KIT.NET KEYWORDS:
PAR SPRINGER-MILLER



Book4Time iPad app

Book4Time launched its mobile application for the iPad in October. The new feature provides clients with convenient access to their spa management software from a mobile device. The app is designed to integrate seamlessly with current Book4Time data.

To promotion the launch, the company will give away free iPads to new clients who sign up via www.book4time.com/ipad

SPA-KIT.NET KEYWORD: BOOK4TIME

THE MAKING OF...

A MASSAGE TABLE



Lisa Starr takes a peek under the sheets at the Oakworks factory to see what goes into making a quality massage table

LISA STARR • SENIOR CONSULTANT • WYNNE BUSINESS

A massage table may host up to 50 bodies a week and it's a therapist's most important tool besides their hands. If it does its job well, the table will remain unnoticed under the layers of bedding. However, if it's uncomfortable, squeaks or wiggles, you'll have an unhappy client. But you could probably count the things you know about massage tables on one hand.

A husband and wife team who know considerably more are Jeff and Linda Riach who started the Oakworks plant in New Freedom, Pennsylvania in 1977. The couple learned about wood-working and how to make massage tables while living in a commune which hosted wellbeing retreats. Today, their 90,000sq ft-plus factory and office employs more than 100 people and turns out around 30,000 tables a year.

RAW MATERIAL

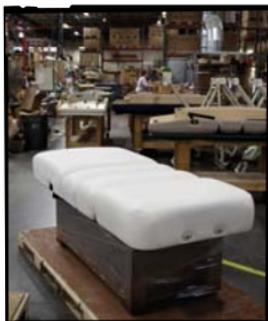
The 60 different models of spa, medical and portable tables all start out in the raw materials storage area which houses eco-friendly wood from around the world and, if possible, locally. Then in the mill section, the table tops and frames are cut to size, drilled, glued, sanded and lasers are used to custom cut logos. T-nut bolts are used rather than screws which can become loose over time.



Oakworks supplies some of the world's top spas including Miraval (pictured) and those by Starwood Resorts



The factory makes 30,000 tables a year and each can have up to 600 parts –that’s 18 million components in total



Jeff says: “Running the cutting machines is the most intellectually challenging job. It can take up to two years to master the skills which include operating computer control programs, picking up exactly the right materials and lining up the table, fixtures and jigs.”

In the upholstery department foam and fabric are applied to the top part, which Jeff says is the most physically challenging part of production. But first the quality of foam is tested for its density and Indentation Force Deflection (IFD) – the amount of force needed to make a dent. Ideally, says Jeff, high density/low IFD foam is desirable for comfort and durability. AeroCel foam, which is lightweight, contains no fibres and absorbs sound well, is preferred. Similarly, 100 per cent polyurethane fabrics are designed to be longer-lasting and have fewer off-gases.

THE END PRODUCT

Next stop is the finishing department where motors and other parts that move the table top and lift it are installed. This is also where cabinetry is added, the wood is stained, the top is married to the frame and accessories

“ Staff work as a close team and all are cross-trained in different aspects of production to prevent repetitive stress injuries, and to keep the jobs interesting ”

are added – there are 70 extras including the therapist-designed Boiance face rest (pictured), featuring water spheres embedded into the foam for added comfort.

If the table passes the 20 quality tests, it’s boxed for shipment to the possible 34 different countries around the world.

The factory staff works as a close-knit team and all are cross-trained in different aspects of production to prevent repetitive stress injuries, and to keep their jobs interesting – the double production line for portable tables can crank out 160 units a day.

Jeff says: “There can be up to 600 parts in a single table, and everything must work, look good, and not make noise. It’s quite a change from our days on the commune, but our goal is still the same – to make the best products we can.” ●



THERAPIST DESIGN

The Boiance face rest is one of 70 possible additions. It’s been designed by a therapist to give greater customer comfort

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THE
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TOUCHMeditators had
fewer days off
sick and less
severe symptoms

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THE COLD WAR

While the common cold is a mild illness, it costs society billions every year – especially in terms of lack of workplace productivity due to days off sick.

Previous scientific studies have highlighted the fact that people who workout more or have low stress levels aren't as likely to get ill. But now research published by the *Annals of Family Medicine* in July* has also suggested that positive thinking – via mindfulness meditation – as well as exercise leads to less severe symptoms of acute respiratory illnesses (ARI), such as colds and influenza, or may even prevent them altogether.

A MINDFUL STUDY

Dr Bruce Barrett, an associate professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and colleagues randomly assigned 149 participants aged 50 years and over to three groups.

One group took part in an eight-week meditation programme of two-and-a-half hour group sessions a week and 45-minute of at-home practice on a daily basis. The programme was based on mindfulness meditation which works on the idea that an increased awareness of your own body, thoughts and emotions may lead to a healthier mind-body response to stress.

The second group underwent a matching eight-week exercise programme of one two-and-a-half-hour group session a week and 45 minutes of physical activity a day. The exer-

Meditation or exercise could significantly reduce sick days due to respiratory illnesses such as colds and the flu, shows a small study

cise was of moderate intensity and mostly consisted of stationary bike, treadmill and equipment workouts in the group sessions, and brisk walking or jogging at home.

The third group was simply included for control purposes.

The researchers then observed participants from September to May – considered the US cold and influenza season. Via bi-weekly calls, they kept track of when people reported having a cold/flu, the severity of symptoms, the number of days missed off work and the number of visits to a doctor.

HEALTHY RESULTS

During observation, 40 bouts of ARI were reported in the control group, compared to only 27 cases in those who had meditated and 26 in the exercise group.

Meditators also reported less severe symptoms. The symptoms were measured using the Wisconsin Upper Respiratory Symp-

tom Survey which rates 24 ailments – from a runny nose, sneezing and sore throat to headache/congestion, body ache and fever – on a scale of 0–7 for severity. The symptoms weren't singled out, but overall the average score in the meditation group was only 14.4, compared to 24.8 for exercise participants and 35.8 in the control group.

People in the exercise and meditation groups felt sick for five days on average, while those in the control group felt sick for an average of nine days.

"I suspect this is because they [the meditators] are better able to cope with the symptoms," independent mindfulness researcher James Carmody told Reuters press agency. "[With mindfulness] people learn to redirect their attention so they don't stay stuck on unpleasant thoughts."

Notably, people in the meditation and exercise groups also took less ARI-related sick days from work during the study. Meditators missed 16 days of work due to ARI in total; while those who exercised took 32 days off work for ARI. In contrast, people in the control group took 67 days off work.

There wasn't much difference in the number of times people visited the doctor because of ARI. ●

*Barrett, Bruce et al. *Meditation or Exercise for Preventing Acute Respiratory Infection: A Randomized Controlled Trial*, The Annals of Family Medicine, July/August 2012



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