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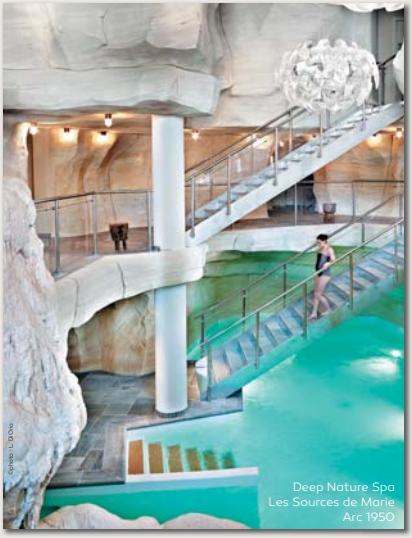

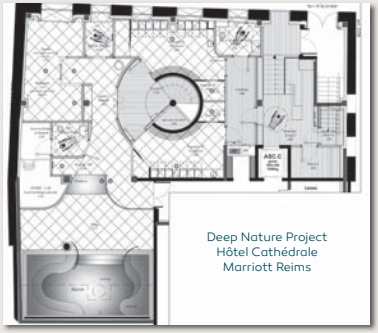

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If you have a spa project and would like to find out more please contact Ghislain Waeyaert at

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Changing the future

It's all joined up – happy people have better and more successful lives, earn more, pay more tax and create fairer, more democratic societies. This in turn leads to more stability and better prospects for the young. All we need is for our politicians to realise this and do something about it

The connection between wellbeing and political stability isn't immediately obvious, but new research and thinking on this subject is showing a powerful and very direct correlation which demands our close attention.

Speaking at the Global Wellness Summit in Austria recently, economist Thierry Malleret explained that we are hard-wired to object to unfairness and that our increasingly unjust world is giving rise to dictators, extreme political movements and civil unrest.

He said wellbeing strategies by governments around the world are essential to counteract this trend and also to offset the many factors which are causing 'unwellness', such as pollution, overconsumption of toxic social media content, unwell ageing, obesity, and diabetes.

The impact of happiness and wellbeing on geopolitical stability was also explored by keynote, Jan-Emmanuel De Neve, professor of economics at Oxford University.

He led with a quote from Ben Bernanke, economist at the Brookings Institution, who served as chair of the Federal Reserve: "The ultimate purpose of economics is to understand and promote the enhancement of wellbeing."

De Neve said there's a clear correlation between happiness, wellbeing and economic success – and in turn, an impact on political stability and social cohesion. He cited Greece as an example, saying wellbeing in Greece was at its lowest level on record following the country's economic collapse.

Research has found happiness is fragile – more easily destroyed than created – and people are twice as sensitive to loss of economic status as they are to its gain.

He showed a direct correlation between happiness and wealth – happier people have happier lives and this creates opportunity. People who are happiest at age 16, 18 and 22 will earn US$3,000 more a year than average by age 30. However, he said "today's adolescents are falling behind in terms of both wellbeing and mental wellness" and as a result will earn up to US$10,000 less than average in adulthood.

De Neve: direct correlation between happiness and political stability

> Happier people have happier lives and this creates opportunity. People who are happiest at 16, 18 and 22 will earn US$3,000 a year more by age 30

The deteriorating situation young people face in terms of their happiness, wellbeing and opportunity is a cause of huge concern. We're building a world in which they're more likely to fail and less likely to achieve their potential. Essentially we're building a less happy and less fair future.

With proven solutions available, we must mobilise as an industry and take every step we can to change this situation.

Liz Terry, editorial director @elizterry

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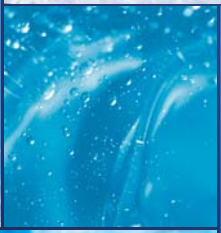

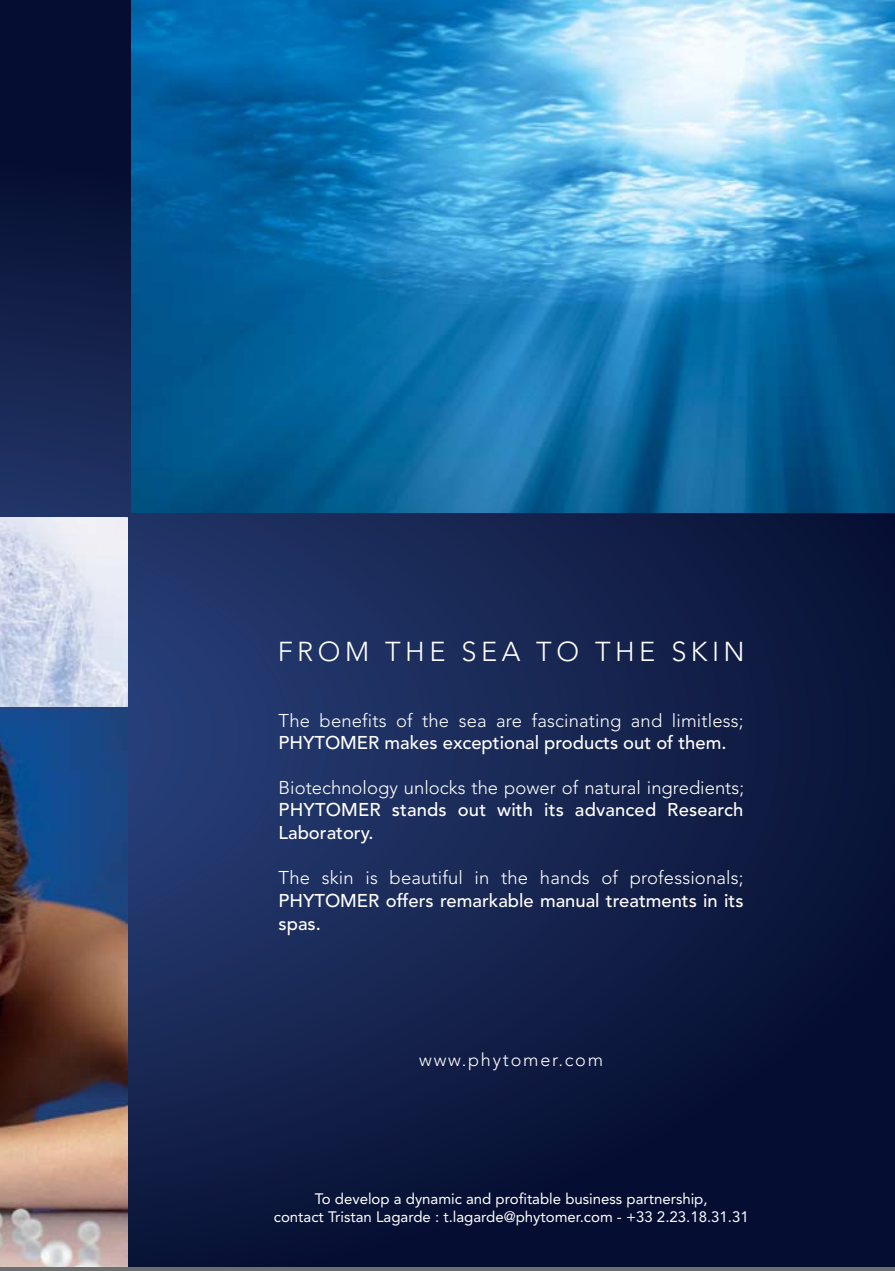
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PHOTO: ARIANNA HUFFINGTON/CYBERIMAGE

Arianna Huffington gets into wellness with new startup business (p26)

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Letters

KATIE BARNES, EDITOR, SPA BUSINESS

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

WHY NATURE WILL BECOME EVEN MORE IMPORTANT TO SPAS

Dr Marc Cohen, professor of health sciences, RMIT University

As the wellness industry grows, nature (and all its facets) will become an increasingly valuable resource – and the savvy spas of today will take note of this for the future.

Nature's healing power cannot be overestimated and while every part of the planet is now a tourist destination, people will seek out immersion in 'deep nature' that's far from technological and industrial influences. In the same manner, expect to see consumers looking for 'natural soundscapes' with wellness rooms that offer true silence, free from the hum of industrial 'noise'. There will also be a greater use of music as medicine – sound therapy devices, an emphasis on the benefits of singing and playing music with sounds of nature.

> People will seek out immersion in 'deep nature' that's far from technological and industrial influences

I also predict a rising demand for good quality water and air.

People are now realising their drinking and bathing water, even at spa and wellness locations, is often contaminated with heavy metals, pesticides, drugs and plastic. Soon we'll see smartphone compatible water-test kits and new water harvesting, filtering and purification technologies

Air quality is vital for optimal health and as more people realise how deadly traffic pollution is, they'll vacate cities to escape from toxic air. Expect to see new air filter technologies, indoor air quality meters and fitness/wellness centres highlighting air quality amongst their offerings.

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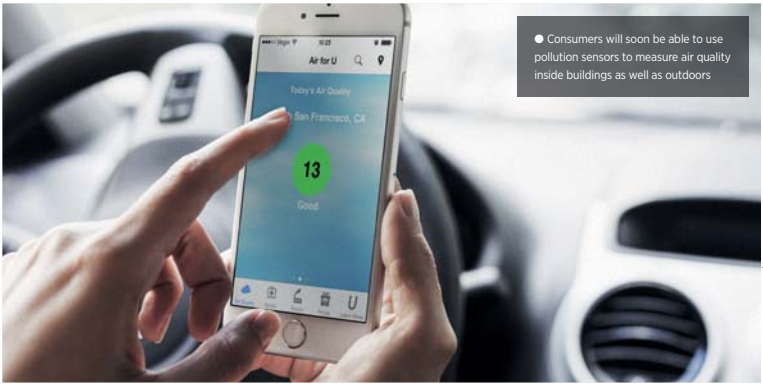


● Consumers will soon be able to use pollution sensors to measure air quality inside buildings as well as outdoors

SHUTTERSTOCK/ STUDIOMONKEY AirforU

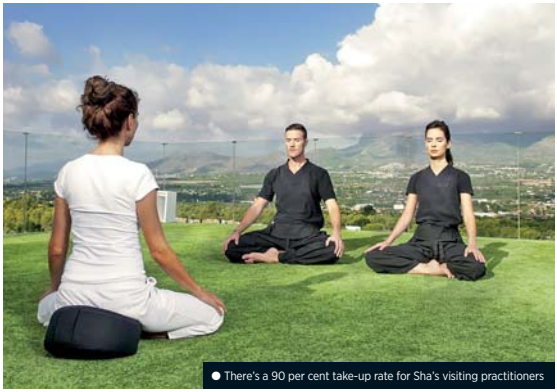
EDUCATION IS KEY TO VISITING PRACTITIONER PROGRAMMES

Dr Pedro Catarino, director of wellness, Sha Wellness Clinic

As Sha launched its Visiting Master Programme (VMP) a year ago, it was interesting to see *Spa Business*' Ask an Expert focusing on this topic (see SB16/3, p68).

We introduced the VMP to complement the Sha Academy which comprises a series of conferences and classes on everything from healthy cooking to relaxation, meditation and yoga. The aim is to create an awareness of wellbeing and to provide guests with the tools and knowledge to enjoy long-term physical, mental and emotional health.

We find that two visiting masters a month is a good number and they specialise in a wide variety of areas from beauty coaching, through fascia release bodywork to ancient healing methods like Japanese acupuncture.



● There's a 90 per cent take-up rate for Sha's visiting practitioners

Educating our guests, creating an enthusiasm for recommendations and advice, is the overall vision and mission at Sha. The selection and scheduling of our visiting masters is aligned with this ethos and we think that's been the secret to its success – clients book onto the programme as early as six months in advance and the practitioners get a 90 per cent attendance during their stay here.

> **The aim is to provide guests with the tools and knowledge to enjoy long-term physical, mental and emotional health**

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MASTER THE BASICS BEFORE TARGETING WELL-LIFE CONSUMERS

Linda Harding-Bond, global spa retail and engagement trainer

In response to Liz Terry's commentary Who Will Own the Well-Life Consumer? (see SB16/2 p7), I think we must first look at our current positioning and improve guest engagement. For anyone who doubts this is an issue, they need only to look at spa retail revenue results from the latest benchmarking reports which show the majority of facilities are still only selling 10 per cent retail at most.

Product sales are an important extension of service and a critical element in customer retention. And sub-standard sales are indicative of poor service.

> **We must first improve guest engagement. For anyone who doubts this is an issue, they need only look at spa retail revenue results**

So as the industry shuffles about wondering whether retail training generates sufficient ROI, rapidly expanding beauty outlets like Sephora and Ulta are fulfilling requests for the exact same products that therapists are unable to sell because no one has taught them how. No one is better positioned to capture the minds, bodies and dollars than the practitioners of skincare and bodywork in the spa industry. So before we try and figure how to fit into the bigger wellness picture, the most important players, the therapists, must be properly trained and in top condition. ●

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● Harding-Bond says therapists still aren't properly trained in basic techniques such as product sales

by Kim Megson, journalist, Spa Business

spa people

> We have to become more green in our design... otherwise we'll all die very soon because of climate change, conflict and the misuse of technology

Vo Trong Nghia, founder, Vo Trong Nghia Architects

Nghia is best known for his intricate bamboo leisure buildings

Architect Vo Trong Nghia is creating a floating bamboo spa on the Vietnamese island Phu Quoc.

The island, which is famous for its dense expanses of jungle, is a fitting location for Nghia who believes humans have become too disconnected from nature.

He says: "People think of human beings and nature as two separate things, but humans are just a small part of nature...

"In the very near future we have to become more green [in our design] – using things like green walls and roofs and environmental materials. Otherwise, we'll all die very soon because of climate change, conflict and the misuse of technology."

His latest project – Signature Spa – is part of a five-star hotel backed by the BIM Group, which is one of Vietnam's leading private investment companies.

The main part of the spa comprises 12 arched bamboo podiums hovering above a small lake surrounded by mangrove trees, with glass walls providing views across the water. The podiums, which provide space for relaxation

> We look at the surrounding nature and see how we can harmonise with that. Leisure buildings don't have to be concrete

and consultation services, resemble hands clasped together and interwoven fingers. Where the frames meet, a skylight diffuses changing light into the space.

Two separate buildings house the treatment rooms and back of house facilities and are reached via a floating bridge

The combination of stone, glass and bamboo is designed to evoke "a reserved simplicity" and to reconnect visitors with nature.

The aim of the design is to provide a place of solace, where guests can immerse themselves in the lush mangrove reservoir while nestled inside the bamboo podiums.

Signature Spa is part of a five-star hotel development backed by Vietnam investment firm BIM

Nghia adds: "With all our projects we look at the surrounding nature and see how we can harmonise with that. Spa buildings don't have to be concrete, especially in tropical climates."

A completion date for the project has not yet been released.

Nghia is best known for his intricate bamboo buildings. His work includes the Naman Retreat and Roc Von restaurant in Vietnam and a contribution to the 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale – a meditation zone surrounded by plants.

He arrived at this nature-conscious mindset after taking up meditation. He and his staff meditate twice a day, and he's attended five vipanassa courses, where you spend 10 days in silence and devote your time to meditation.

He says: "I think everyone – not only creative people – should refresh themselves in this way. It changes your way of observing the world and also changes your perspective. ●

by Jane Kitchen, news editor, Spa Business

> My emancipation – my freedom to be me, to get to know myself – was when I turned 60" Deborah Szekely

Deborah Szekely, co-founder, Rancho La Puerta, & **Debra Koerner**, host, *Senior Moments*

Spa industry veteran Deborah Szekely, co-founder of the iconic Rancho La Puerta destination spa in Mexico, is to appear on a new US TV show *Senior Moments*.

Hosted by Debra Koerner – co-founder of both education firm Imassage and the Well World Group consultancy – *Senior Moments* focuses on healthy ageing.

"We have to do something right now to empower and educate our older population to keep them healthy and in their homes for as long as possible," says Koerner, who's also executive producer of the show.

"When I began thinking about segments for *Senior Moments*, the story of 94-year-old Deborah Szekely immediately came to mind," she adds. "I've always held the desire to share her story with a larger audience."

Koerner (left) and Szekely, 94, (right) will appear on a US TV show focusing on healthy ageing

Szekely set up Rancho La Puerta more than 70 years ago

Speaking on the programme, Szekely says: "Everyone wants to make a difference in their life and I've been lucky – I've been making lots of differences." She goes on to tell Koerner that inner peace is her personal definition of wellbeing.

"First you have to know why you want a long life," Szekely says. "What is it you want to do? What fascinates you? And then you can work towards it. It's making deposits like in a bank. You're setting up not money, but preparations for that long life... and if you're enthused enough, then it's worth the work."

Szekely often speaks to guests at Rancho La Puerta about 60 being the 'breakthrough year'.

> We have to educate our older population to keep them healthy KOERNER

"At 60, you should be ready to say what you want," she explains. "So for me, my emancipation – my freedom to be me, to get to know myself – was when I turned 60. But at 60, if you can sit back and say, 'Wow, what now? It's wonderful. And you can look forward to it and then your years 60 to 90 are the best years of your life, because you picked them."

Koerner says she believes the spa industry has valuable stories that need to be told to a wider audience, and that spas can play a vital role in the journey to healthy ageing.

Spa software company ResortSuite has underwritten *Senior Moments*, and the International Spa Association is supporting it by helping cover crew travel costs. Skin Authority is also on-board as the show's exclusive skincare partner. ●

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by Jane Kitchen, news editor, Spa Business

> Since publishing *Thrive* and then *The Sleep Revolution*, I've dreamed of taking the next big step to help transform the way we work and live
>
> **Arianna Huffington**, founder & CEO, Thrive Global

In a bold step, *Huffington Post* founder Arianna Huffington has stepped down from her position as editor-in-chief at the media site she founded 10 years ago to start a new business focused on wellness.

The new company, Thrive Global, is launching on 30 November and will provide science-based training, seminars, e-courses, coaching and ongoing support on wellbeing and productivity for companies and individuals around the world. Its lofty mission includes changing how people work and live and eliminating the idea that burning out is the necessary price for achieving success.

"All the latest science is conclusive that, in fact, not only is there no trade-off between living a well-rounded life and high performance, but performance is actually improved when we prioritise our health and wellbeing," says Huffington. "It's time to move from knowing what to do to actually doing it."

The company has already been piloting its training and workshops with Accenture, a tech consultancy with a workforce of 375,000.

Thrive Global is collaborating with thought leaders including organisational psychologist Adam Grant and Wharton People Analytics to measure the impact of its services on employee retention, wellbeing and productivity, as well as organisational culture.

Huffington's bold, new venture will provide science-based coaching to support people's wellbeing

Other key partnerships are with sports medicine and training institute Altus for physical training; transcendental meditation teacher Bob Roth and the David Lynch Foundation (see SB15/1 p36) for meditation coaching; Sense by Hello for sleep education; and Thrive Market for food and nutrition.

Huffington and her sister Agapi Stassinopoulos have become regulars on the health and wellness speaking circuit in recent years, appearing at IHRSA and the Global Wellness Summit, respectively.

Huffington has also written two books about wellness.

"Since publishing *Thrive* and then *The Sleep Revolution*, I've dreamed of taking the next big step to help transform the way we work and live," says Huffington. "Change is desperately needed if another generation is to avoid the burnout that all too often comes with success today. That's why I'm filled with excitement at the prospect of devoting the rest of my life to accelerating the culture shift away from merely surviving and succeeding to thriving."●

> Change is desperately needed if another generation is to avoid the burnout that all too often comes with success today

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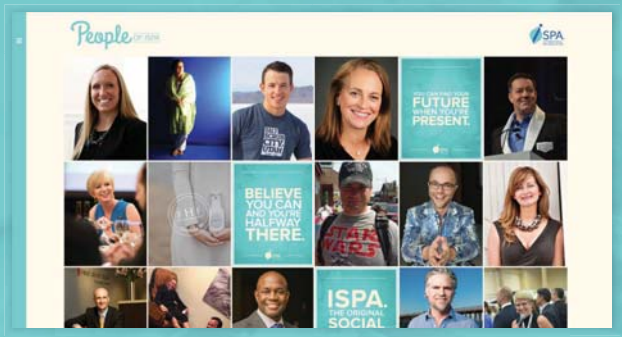

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> I've been making really quiet music to listen to when I do yoga or sleep or meditate or panic... and decided to give it away
>
> **Moby**, singer-songwriter

Global musician and wellness advocate Moby has told *Spa Business* that while wonderful, most ambient music doesn't allow people to switch off "because the people who make it want you to pay attention to it".

He says: "What I had a hard time finding was ambient music just designed to sit in the background to provide an atmosphere of calm."

This has prompted the music artist, who's sold more than 20 million albums worldwide, to create his own chill-out tracks which he's giving away for free. The *Long Ambients1. Calm. Sleep* album consists of 11 tracks and is available to download or stream and would make a great accompaniment for spas.

He describes the music as having "no drums, no vocals, just very slow, calm, pretty chords and sounds and things for sleeping and yoga and etc."

Moby explains: "Over the last couple of years, I've been making really, really, really quiet music to listen to when I do yoga or sleep or meditate or panic. I ended up with four hours of music and decided to give it away."

A believer in wellness himself, Moby practices yoga and is known to visit spas occasionally. "When I travel, I'll sometimes go to the spa if I'm staying in a nice hotel because if you have a day off in a strange city it can be a nice way to kill time," he told *Spa Business*, but he adds that there's still some way to go before consumers truly understand the concept.

"On the one hand it's really nice people are paying attention to health and wellness, but on the other hand there's still a disconnect. There's an idea that you can treat yourself terribly, but if you go to a spa every now and then it'll all work out."

Moby who's also a vegan, recently opened Little Pine, an organic vegan bistro in Los Angeles. ●

Moby's new *Long Ambients1. Calm. Sleep* album is available for free and would make a great addition to spa music playlists

CHRIS PIZZELLO/INVISION/PRESS ASSOCIATION IMAGES

The music artist has sold more than 20 million albums worldwide

> There's still a disconnect... an idea that you can treat yourself terribly, but if you go to a spa every now and then it'll all work out

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Natural cenote, temazcal experiences star at upcoming Mayan spa

Amy McDonald, owner and CEO of Under a Tree Health & Wellness Consulting, has created a spa which has been inspired by Mayan traditions for the upcoming Chablé Resort in Mexico.

Operated by Hamak Hotels, The Chablé Resort opened in November in Chochola, Yucatan, and features 38 glass-fronted casitas and two villas designed by Jorge Borja of Grupo BV.

"Although it is really high-end luxury, it is thoughtfully infused with local culture and nature," says McDonald. "The rooms are completely surrounded by glass – you are *in* the jungle."

The 3,022sq m (32,530sq ft) spa blends ancient mysticism with modern curiosity, and features a naturally formed cenote as well as three temazcal experiences.

The cenote – seen as a healing force in Mayan culture – is central to the spa and guests can even bathe in it.

The natural cenote is central to the spa, with treatment rooms located around it

The Chablé Resort has just 38 casitas

The spa features 12 single treatment rooms, one double and one spa suite – all situated around the cenote.

McDonald hired Bonnie Baker, owner of Mexico-based spa consultancy Satteva, to collaborate on all aspects of the spa. This includes a wide selection of Naturopathica and Body Bliss signature treatments, which are focused around one of three themes: Fountain of Youth, Tree of Life and Heaven on Earth.

For guests looking for a deeper connection with nature and a "rebirth to a state of higher consciousness", Chablé features three temazcal rituals, each inspired by a different tradition.

> "We really want people to come and experience a modern interpretation of traditional Mayan rituals"
> Amy McDonald

The spa also has a hydrotherapy journey that includes sauna, steamroom, whirlpool, hot and cold plunge pools, swimming pool, salt room and floatation.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=j6D3G_B

Asia Pacific Spa & Wellness Coalition returns with new board members

Industry body the Asia Pacific Spa & Wellness Coalition (APSWC) has relaunched and the new board, led by chair Andrew Jacka, is planning a roundtable in Bangkok from 16-17 March, 2017.

The organisation went through a period of "uncertainty" in 2014 and 2015, says Jacka, and the board at the time said it had decided to wind down the activities of the coalition.

A new, paid membership model has emerged, where individuals or organisations can sign up directly for a US$50 (€45, £40) joining fee and US$100 (€91, £81) annual membership, or can join with no fee through their national spa associations.

> "This change is no different from what other national spa industry associations have experienced across Asia, and while some have come out the other side stronger, some have yet to find a meaningful role for themselves" Andrew Jacka

Former chair Rhett Pickering has moved to a more "behind the scenes" role and Jacka – who headed up the organisation for four years before him – was approached to take up the reins once more.

The APSWC aims to be a united voice for the region and to encourage industry development by sharing resources, supporting national spa bodies and establishing standards.

The first annual roundtable set for March will culminate in a white paper homing in on industry issues and the APSWC's philosophy.

More: http://lei.sr?a=4m2H9_B

Six Senses partners with BIG for first North American property

Six Senses New York will have a rotating appearance and views of the High Line

Six Senses will debut in the US in 2019 with its first urban hotel, Six Senses New York, a luxury property which is being developed by HFZ Capital Group between Manhattan's popular High Line and the Hudson River.

The flagship urban location is located on 10th Avenue and encompasses an entire block in the heart of Chelsea. The overall project, named The Eleventh, features two soaring towers designed by architectural and design group BIG (Bjarke Ingels Group).

> "This project is a fascinating and exciting contrast to the typical Six Senses locations where we operate"
> Neil Jacobs

"This project is a fascinating and exciting contrast to the typical Six Senses locations where we operate resorts in settings with azure waters, UNESCO heritage listings and lush rainforests," says Neil Jacobs, CEO of Six Senses. "Six Senses New York will have the same touch-points and DNA, with some creative adaptation of course, but with no compromises on our commitment to community, wellness, sustainability and design."

The towers will have expansive views of the High Line and the Hudson River and feature stone and metal facades and a rotating appearance.

The hotel will be located in the east tower and will have 10 floors, 137 bedrooms and a Six Senses Spa that will offer a layered approach to wellness.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=r6G9W_B

Evian Spa to occupy 86th floor of Lotte Group's soaring Seoul skyscraper

The 555m-high Lotte World Tower will be Seoul's first super-tall skyscraper

Evian Spa will expand its presence in Asia with a new spa on the 86th floor of Lotte World Tower in Seoul, South Korea.

Lotte Group, South Korea's fifth-largest conglomerate, is building the 555m (1,821ft) tower, which will be Seoul's first super-tall skyscraper and the sixth-tallest building in the world.

Designed by Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates, the tower will include the first Signiel Hotel, a new luxury brand of Lotte Hotels.

The Evian Spa will occupy nearly 1,000sq m (10,764sq ft) including a wet area and pool. Set to open in 2017, it will use the journey of Evian mineral water in the French Alps as inspiration for therapies and design.

"Lotte World Tower will enable the guests to discover the Evian universe with our vision of wellness through the spa experience and daily premium hydration at the restaurant," says Florence Bossard, global business development director for Evian.

Evian launched its spa concept at the Palace Hotel Tokyo, Japan in 2012 (see SB12/4 p30) and Asia is a key market for the brand as it rolls out.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=r2m7x_B

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Brad Pitt building luxury resort in Croatia

Actor Brad Pitt is planning a proposed €1.5bn (US$1.7bn, £1.3bn) resort development in Croatia near the coastal town of Zablace, local media are reporting.

Project architect Nikola Bašić plans to transform the destination with a flagship luxury hotel, shops, villas and a school.

Pitt is not the first star to delve into luxury resorts; actor Leonardo DiCaprio is working with Deepak Chopra on a wellness facility in Belize, and Robert De Niro is developing hotels in Barbuda and London.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=t5T9U_B

"The acquisition of Eastwell Manor is a major milestone for the Champneys group"
Stephen Purdew

Champneys to open fifth destination spa in UK

UK spa group Champneys has acquired the historic Eastwell Manor country house in Kent, just 30 minutes outside of London.

Champneys at Eastwell has origins dating back to the Norman conquest and includes 62 bedrooms, two restaurants, a spa and leisure facilities. It will complete a refurbishment programme by mid 2017.

Champneys, owned by the Purdew family, is one of oldest and most well-known spa operators in the UK. The new location will be its fifth health resort spa. It also run six city spas.

The group recently added a detox and wellbeing facility to its flagship property in Tring and further investments are planned for its other sites.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=t6E2M_B

The 'heavenly villas' feature salt water pools and in-room treatments are also offered

Rancho la Puerta debuts new wellness villas

"The villas embody our philosophy of nourishing the mind, body and spirit"
Roberto Arjona

Mexican destination spa Rancho la Puerta has introduced three new Villas Cielo, or 'heavenly villas', which have been designed with wellness and relaxation in mind.

"The Villas Cielo are a natural expansion of The Ranch," says CEO Roberto Arjona. "They embody our philosophy of nourishing the mind, body and spirit, and they fulfil our guests' requests for casitas with more privacy and personalisation."

Each villa features a master suite that overlooks a living room, which can be transformed into a residential gym or business office. With 2,200sq ft (204sq m) of indoor and outdoor space, the villas include meditation cushions, indoor/outdoor speakers that play tranquil music, organic mattresses, outdoor showers, salt water dipping pools, daybeds and hammocks.

On Fridays, guests receive an in-room 90-minute spa treatment, Un Pedacito de Cielo, which combines massage and reiki.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=T9b7d_B

Roger Allen and Lynn Curry

"This merger will allow us to expand our services to existing and future clients who have wellbeing assets in hospitality developments"
Lynn Curry

Curry Spa Consulting merges with RLA

US-based Curry Spa Consulting has joined forces with wellbeing hospitality consultancy brand Resources for Leisure Assets, creating a new division of the company: RLA USA, LLC.

The merger represents RLA's expansion into North America – the company also has offices in Vienna and Dubai.

Curry Spa Consulting was founded by Lynn Curry in 2011 and has specialised in feasibility, creative concept, design development and pre-opening consulting for high-end and luxury resort and hotel spas.

RLA USA will be headquartered in Sonoma, California and led by Curry, who becomes president and co-owner.

"This merger will allow us to expand our services to existing and future clients who have wellbeing assets in hospitality developments," says Curry. "Not only will we be able to provide our clients with additional investment and operational consulting, but we are also increasing our team to include the world's leading professionals in wellbeing hospitality consulting."

RLA will now operate in three world regions.

Roger Allen, RLA group CEO, says: "We're very enthusiastic about working with Lynn and her team. The RLA board was impressed with Lynn's 30 years of experience and know-how in the wellbeing and hospitality industry.

"Furthermore, the success she had with her consulting company was a testament to her capabilities and value she could contribute in leading the RLA brand in North America."

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=r9P3B_B

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Delos expanding into cruise ships and airport lounges

Wellness real estate firm Delos is launching a Stay Well at Sea programme and several leading cruise ship operators have already expressed an interest in it.

The programme, which focuses on mindfulness and meditation, has been developed in partnership with Steiner Leisure, The Cleveland Clinic and Deepak Chopra's new wellness platform, Jiyo.

Passengers will also have access to three months of self-guided programming and eCoaches from the Cleveland Clinic after they disembark. "It's not just what happens on board, it's what you're going to learn – and what you're going to take with you after you disembark," says Alfredo Carvajal, president of Delos International & Signature Program.

In other news, Delos has debuted its first airport lounge at Seattle's Delta Sky Club, in partnership with skincare brand Comfort Zone and New York-based operator Asanda.

More: http://lei.sr?a=X7E6N_B

"The cruise industry is understanding that they have to start selling wellness and they have to put it up front"
Alfredo Carvajal,

The spa will include a range of indoor and outdoor treatment areas

Sea, sound, salt and sand inspire upcoming Auberge Fort Lauderdale spa

Spa consultant Tracy Lee of TLee Spas is behind a 10,000sq ft (929sq m) spa at the Auberge Beach Residences & Spa Fort Lauderdale in the US.

"We want to harness the sense of release, recovery and renewal that most of us equate with time spent at the seaside"
Tracy Lee

The Florida spa, due to open in 2018 to residents and guests, was inspired by the sea, sound, salt and sand, says Lee.

"This inspiration came from numerous sources," she says. "[including] the experience of one of the owners who grew up on this site and was profoundly shaped by these collective forces of nature.

"We want to harness the sense of release, recovery and renewal that most of us equate with time spent at the seaside wellness experience."

Nine treatment rooms will be available, including a speciality room with a Gharieni bed where a Sound & Sand Massage will be performed. A Purification Circuit will blend indoor/outdoor bathhouse experiences inclusive of a salt inhalation room.

Lee has a close relationship with Auberge. She worked as its VP of spas for 14 years and created many of its wellness facilities including Solage Calistoga in California. She left the hotel firm in 2014 to focus on her consultancy full time.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=A4D8q

The spa uses an interplay of light and shadow

Two-storey, 4,600sq m LivNordic spa to open at Katara Beach Club, Doha

Raison d'Etre, the spa consultancy, is to open a 4,600sq m (49,514sq ft) LivNordic Spa at the Katara Beach Club in the Katara Cultural Village in Doha, Qatar. Anna-Cari Gund, managing director of Raison d'Etre, tells *Spa Business* that it run the facility as a club, with a focus on memberships, day use guests, spa, and fitness.

Anna-Cari Gund

Set to open in Q1 2017, the Katara Beach Club by LivNordic Spa & Wellness will be offering the LivNordic Spa Menu – which focuses on Nordic health traditions combined with the latest in wellness – as well as Hydrafacial treatments and hammam therapies.

Designed by Gillian Docherty of Studio HBA in Dubai, the facility aims to bring the outside in with an interplay of light and shadow, making use of natural materials such as stone, and timber, with spaces designed to have a cooling and calming effect.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=k7m3t_B

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27-29 November 2016
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www.spameeting.com

19-22 January 2017
Les Thermalies
Paris, France
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www.thermalies.com

16-18 February 2017
ForumPiscine
Bologna, Italy
Expo and congress which focuses on the technology, design, installation and management of swimming pool systems – from those in spas to large commercial facilities. Runs at the same time as the ForumClub health and fitness show.
www.forumpiscine.it

26-27 February 2017
Professional Spa & Wellness Convention
London, England
International spa figures convene for two days of talks, networking opportunities and a trade show. Held alongside the World Spa Awards
www.professionalbeauty.com

6-7 March 2017
Healing Summit
Berlin, Germany
Event by the Healing Hotels of the World consortia which includes inspirational talks for light-hearted spa professionals. Covers topics such as a 'caring economy', personal wellbeing and sustainability.
www.healingsummit.org

17-20 March 2017
Cosmoprof Worldwide
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www.cosmoprof.com

Shreyas Yoga Retreat opens 20,000sq ft spa with dedicated ayurveda rooms

Shreyas Yoga Retreat in India has opened a new 20,000sq ft (1,858sq m) spa with four dedicated ayurveda therapy rooms, two rooms for mud therapy and a separate naturotherapy section.

Anaha, the Spa at Shreyas – designed by Akshay and Aditi Heranjal from the Purple Ink Studio in Bengaluru – includes a main building that is partially submerged into the earth, with the light and air movement planned from a series of sunken courts. The spa also features four rooms for Swedish massage, rooms for Thai massage, and rooms for hydrotherapy, acupressure and acupuncture, as well as steamrooms and experiential showers and a beauty salon for signature scrubs and facials.

The spa's main building is partially submerged into the earth and features sunken courts

The Spa features lounging spaces, a whirlpool, an organic juice bar and a Shreyas boutique that sells souvenirs, books, and Shreyas produce.

The Spa also has a gymnasium and four different areas for yoga sessions.
Read more: http://lei.sr?a=e2A5S_B

New York hotel hosts five-hour mind cleanse sessions

Fiona Arrigo is an intuitive healer and psychotherapist

The Surrey Hotel in New York City has brought psychotherapist, intuitive healer, mentor and life teacher Fiona Arrigo to Manhattan for a one-week New York Wellness series.

Arrigo hosted personal sessions including her five-hour one-to-one Mind Cleanse programme. The session is designed to examine patterns of behaviour and identify a past experience that may weigh down an individual. One of Arrigo's core messages is that everyone should be acknowledged, appreciated and emotionally nourished, feeding a more positive vision of themselves and of the future.

Prices start at US$300 (€271, £242) for a one-hour session, while a five-hour Mind Cleanse is priced at US$1,000 (€906, £807).
Read more: http://lei.sr?a=r6Y5u_B

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Gibson named VP of wellbeing at Accor

Andrew Gibson has been named vice president of wellbeing for Accor Luxury. Gibson was previously vice president of spa and wellness for FRHI Hotels & Resorts before Accor's acquisition of the company in July. Gibson says the hotel group is taking a wider look at wellbeing beyond spa.

Shea joins Hilton

Jessica Shea has joined Hilton's executive team as director, global brand spa. Shea previously worked for Hyatt Hotels in Asia and will lead the concept management and product development function for Hilton's spa discipline globally. She reports to Ryan Crabbe, senior director of global wellness for Hilton.

Linser Hospitality welcomes Adrian Egger

Industry figure Adrian Egger has joined spa and wellness consultancy Linser Hospitality as director of international business development, based out of the company's headquarters in Innsbruck, Austria.

Egger is responsible for the development of international business as well as creating detailed spa and wellness concepts and functional room plans. He most recently worked as managing director for hydrothermal equipment provider Thermarium.

"The practical success of Adrian in the companies he was working for speaks for itself after 20 years," says Franz Linser, owner and managing director of Linser Hospitality. Egger and Linser have already begun working on projects in Switzerland, Poland and Germany.

King moves to Elemis after 19 years at Dermalogica

Annet King has taken on the role of vice president of global education for British skincare brand Elemis, helping it to strengthen its position in the US spa and beauty market.

King (below) is known for her industry training expertise, having previously headed up beauty brand Dermalogica's International Dermal Institute for 19 years. As part of her new role, King will oversee the rollout of Elemis Education Hubs and Training Academies across the US.

Other Elemis appointments in the US include Lisa Heinemann as director of sales East Coast and Candice Burd as SVP of marketing.

Matthews leaves Steiner

Jeff Matthews has stepped down from Mandara Spa and its parent company Steiner Leisure after 20 years with the company – most recently as president and COO of Mandara Spa Asia – and has started his own consultancy, Spa Foundations, which will be based in Canada and Asia but work worldwide.

"I'm seeing a real need in the industry to bring both the spa company or consultant together with the hotel, and create contracts that have a win for both sides and not one that has each party unhappy two years down the road," says Matthews.

Claire Way appointed MD at Spa Strategy

Claire Way has been named managing director at international consultancy Spa Strategy. Way joined the company in 2006 and was previously director of operations and business development EAME. She leads Spa Strategy's work in market research, concept development, design and brand development.

Way has more than 20 years of experience in the spa industry, and prior to joining Spa Strategy was group director of spa for Per Aquum Resorts & Spas.

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Male millennials are experimenting beyond massage, trying out facials and manicures

SHUTTERSTOCK/CANDIROX IMAGES

ISPA study: now is the time to focus on younger spa-goers

> Millennials will be the core spa-going generation for years to come

More than half of US millennials have visited a spa in the past year, new research from ISPA and PwC has found

The perceptions and preferences of millennials – those born between 1980 and 1997 – was the focus of this year's *Consumer Snapshot Initiative* by the International Spa Association (ISPA) and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), results of which were released in September. And out of the 1,000-plus 17- to 35-year-olds who responded to the survey, 56 per cent reported having visited a spa in the last 12 months, compared to 44 per cent who had not.

This is the first time in the five-year history of ISPA's consumer surveys that spa-goers have outnumbered non-spa-goers – evidence that young people have become powerful players in the spa market. "Millennials will be the core spa-going generation for years to come," notes Russell Donaldson, senior associate of research at PwC.

Perhaps most notably, 46 per cent of the male millennials surveyed are spa-goers. And men are increasingly exploring treatments outside of massage; 52 per cent claim to have had a manicure or pedicure, and over half – 59 per cent – have had a facial at a spa. That said, 24 per cent of the men who did go to a spa said they were put off from visiting more often because they were either not comfortable or familiar with the spa environment or etiquette, suggesting the industry would do well to address this.

Not surprisingly, the majority of millennial spa-goers – 64 per cent – are aged 25-35, with just over one in three aged 17-25. However, significantly more millennials aged over 25 think spa-going is too expensive, compared to those aged 25 or under (71 per cent compared to 53 per cent).

Most millennials are infrequent spa-goers – 83 per cent go to a spa less than five times a year – and a high amount (60 per cent) stay no longer than two hours and spend between US$50 and US$150 on treatments (61 per cent).

Money (65 per cent) and time (51 per cent) are the two top reasons for not visiting a spa more often, which is in line with previous ISPA/PwC consumer studies of other demographics.

Interestingly, millennials' affinity with technology hasn't spilled over into the spa industry yet. Just 32 per cent book their spa appointments online (by laptop, smartphone or tablet), compared to 40 per cent who book via telephone.

That said, men were more likely to make an appointment online (36 per cent) rather than by phone (30 per cent). In contrast, 49 per cent of women booked treatments by phone, compared to 29 per cent who booked online.

ISPA's consumer surveys are published in addition to its annual industry study, the latest of which shows that spa revenues in the US passed the US$16bn (€14.5bn, £13.1bn) mark in 2015. ●

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Turn to p80 for other highlights from this year's Global Wellness Summit

Global spa market worth US$98.6bn

The world's spa economy grew by 5 per cent between 2013 and 2015 to reach US$98.6bn (€90.1bn, £80.6bn), according to preliminary findings from the *2016 Global Wellness Economy Monitor*

The topline figure includes spa facility revenues of US$77.6bn (€71.1bn, £63.4bn) as well as the associations and education, consulting, media and event sectors that support spas, which are valued at US$21bn (€19.2bn, £17.2bn).

And while worldwide spa revenues increased by a modest 2.3 per cent from 2013 to 2015, researchers at the Global Wellness Institute (GWI) – the organisation behind the report – says this is largely due to the US dollar currency conversion from large spa markets across Europe and Asia. If global spa facility revenues are converted to the euro instead, the market actually grew at a robust 25 per cent.

Spa locations worldwide jumped from 105,591 in 2013 to 121,595 in 2015 – meaning the industry has added just over 16,000 spas, more than 230,000 workers (to reach 2.1m) and US$3.5bn (€3.2bn, £2.9bn) in revenue.

These figures from the spa sector feed into the wider international wellness market which the GWI estimates is now a US$3.72 trillion (€3.4tn, £3tn) industry, a number which has increased by 10.6 per cent since 2013.

"Recent years have been marked by global economic contraction and disruptive geopolitical events, but a 'wellness economy' just keeps rising, with an upward trajectory that seems unstoppable," says GWI senior research fellow Ophelia Yeung.

Yeung pointed to 'megatrends' of an emerging global middle class, a rapidly ageing population, increase in chronic disease and stress, the failure of the 'sick-care' medical model, and a growing subset of more affluent, educated consumers "seeking experiences rooted in meaning, purpose, authenticity and nature", as fuelling the growth in the market.

Presenting the data: different size balls represent the 10 sectors in the US$3.72tn wellness industry

> "A 'wellness economy' just keeps rising, with an upward trajectory that seems unstoppable"
> Ophelia Yeung

Revenue-earning thermal and mineral springs added 660 facilities across 109 countries between 2013 and 2015, earning US$51bn (€46.7bn, £42bn) in 2015, up 2 per cent from 2013. The GWI said that while these gains look modest, its research finds rapidly rising consumer interest in springs-based activities – and similarly, 2015 revenues are also heavily impacted by the depreciation of European currencies against the dollar.

Wellness tourism grew 14 per cent in the same two-year period – more than twice as fast as overall tourism expenditures. World travellers made 691 million wellness trips in 2015.

Wellness real estate – which includes residential, hospitality and mixed-use developments incorporating wellness – was one of the fastest-growing sectors, up 19 per cent to US$118.6bn (€108.6bn, £97bn) in 2015.

Other subsets measured in the report include beauty and anti-ageing; workplace wellness; fitness and mind-body; healthy eating, nutrition and weight loss; preventative and personalised medicine and public health; and complementary and alternative medicine. ●

■ **The preliminary figures were unveiled at the Global Wellness Summit in late October, ahead of the full research which will be released in January. Turn to p80 to read about the summit in more depth.**

Yeung said more than 16,000 spas opened between 2013 and 2015

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Hot spring representatives carried on conversations at this year's Global Wellness Summit, which we review on p80

Hot spring leaders convene at first-ever Global Thermal Think Tank

How is the worldwide hot spring market developing and what are the latest trends? Jane Kitchen joins a gathering of thermal spa operators to find out

The inaugural Global Thermal Think Tank (GTTT) took place on 13-14 October at the Toskanaworld Hotel and Therme in Bad Orb, Germany, bringing together leaders in the hot springs industry from around the world for a packed day of presentations, networking and the exchange of ideas.

The meeting began with representatives from around the world giving short presentations on their hot springs culture, the types of hot springs in their market and current and future trends.

Mike Wallace, brand manager for Danubius Hotels Group – which operates wellness and thermal spa hotels in Hungary, Great Britain, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Romania – introduced the session, saying: "If we want to be truly global, it's important to look at things from outside our own country" – a theme that permeated the spirit of the event, which focused on collaboration and open dialogue.

Asia's hot springs mix business and pleasure

Samantha Foster, director of Thai-based Destination Spa Management, gave an overview of hot springs in Asia – the region with the most facilities and highest revenues.

Asia has 20,298 thermal bathing establishments, according to Global Wellness Institute (GWI) figures from 2013, generating US$26.7bn (€24.2bn, £22bn) in revenues.

Foster said 51 per cent of facilities are in three countries: China, Taiwan and Japan,

Spa Business' Jane Kitchen (front row, third left) finds out about future hot spring trends

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Foster said entertainment hot springs, which can include theme parks and thermal bathing, are growing in China

> Asia has a whopping 20,298 thermal bathing establishments which generate US$26.7bn in revenues

which has more hot springs – locally known as onsen – than any other country.

In Japan, the onsen market is largely domestic-focused, with day, local public and boutique hotel operations (ryokans) touching a wide variety of price points and customers. Every hot spring has its own 'onsen ID card', which shows its origin, mineral composition and potential curative effects.

In China, there are more than 4,000 thermal bathing establishments representing US$12bn (€1bn, £9.9bn) in revenue, and the number of hot springs tourists is increasing by 20 per cent.

Facilities in China are varied and run the gamut from hot springs spas to sauna hot springs and those focused on rehabilitation. A recent trend is for hot springs resorts to incorporate conference facilities to increase occupancy during the week and low season, said Foster.

Entertainment hot springs, which can include full theme parks in addition to thermal bathing experiences, are growing in China, she said, and adding in the element of fun is another way to entice year-round business.

Projects a plenty in Australia

Charles Davidson, founder, CEO and owner of Peninsula Hot Springs in Australia, took a look at what's happening with thermal water in the country, which boasts hot springs in every state – though only a few have been commercialised.

Several thermal resorts are under construction, including the Phillip Island Hot Springs in Victoria, a AU$10m (US$7.6m, €6.9m, £6.2m) development on the coast that will include 45 bathing pools of varying sizes, a day spa and treatment rooms.

Other Australian projects in the works include a hot springs resort in Warrnambool, Victoria; Tawaari Hot Springs in Perth; and a plan to turn an old coal mine into a thermal bathing establishment.

Davidson is looking to create a hot springs district in Victoria, where Peninsula Hot Springs is based, and is coordinating packages for tourists that include activities like biking, walking, swimming with dolphins and horse riding in combination with stays at different thermal resorts.

"It's great for community-building, but it's also great for our business," said Davidson. "That collaboration is really important and hot springs have the ability to be the magnet for an area."

Phillip Island is one of many hot spring developments underway in Australia said Davidson

Demand driving development in the USA

Wendi Gelfound, director of marketing for Ojo Caliente Mineral Springs and Sunrise Springs, both in the US, took a look at the relatively young history of hot springs culture in America.

With 217 thermal and mineral springs locations in the US – including 106 that also have spas – the industry is responsible for US$488m (€446.7m, £401.3m) in revenue, according to the GWI. Locations with spas contribute a vast proportion – US$327m (€299.3m, £268.9m) – of the revenue.

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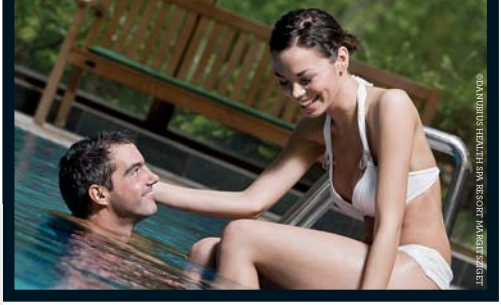

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There are 217 thermal springs in the US (left); 'wellness weekenders' are a new market for spa resorts in Europe (right)

While revenues are relatively small when compared to other areas of the world, Gelfound said "expansion is hot" and looked at GOCO's planned extension of the famous Glen Ivy Hot Springs in California, as well as the Iron Mountain Hot Springs, under construction in Colorado. "It's demand that's driving this," she added.

Europe's thermal spas attract new audiences

Wallace then looked at GWI's take on the European market, which boasts 5,035 thermal water establishments making US$21.7bn (€19.9bn, £17.8bn) in revenue.

After China and Japan, the European countries of Germany, Russia, Italy, Austria, Turkey, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Spain round out the top 10 nations in world in terms of the number of facilities and takings.

With a strong tradition of healing, combined with medical treatments and use of natural resources such as local muds, many European thermal facilities offer medical spa stays that include accommodation with full board, doctor and health examinations, and three to four treatments a day such as physiotherapy, massage, hydrotherapy, inhalation and electrotherapy.

While traditional customers in these European thermal spas are seniors, Wallace added that there's opportunity for market diversification with a new breed of active seniors, as well as 'wellness weekenders', families and guests from the Middle East.

> "There's an oversupply of hot springs offering very much a similar product, so we need to find a way to diversify"

European thermal spas are also diversifying their offerings to attract this new clientele by adding larger water areas, more sauna experiences, new massage varieties, more modern medical treatment methods, and detox and weight-loss programmes.

The very fact that Europe has so many thermal spa facilities is a challenge. "There's an oversupply of hot springs offering very much a similar product, so we need to find a way to diversify," Wallace explained. But with an ageing and more health-focused population in the region, as well as a growing trend for natural treatments, he said there are many opportunities for the segment to expand – including investment possibilities for rundown, historic spa resorts.

More research needed

Wallace – and many others – mentioned the need for clinical trials backing the health effects of thermal waters as an important factor in growing the industry, plus a need to give people reasons to visit for prevention purposes as well as for medical treatments and relaxation.

James Clark-Kennedy, a hot springs researcher based in Australia, presented on bathers' characteristics, motivations and experiences, looking at data from Peninsula Hot Springs. His findings suggest that thermal water can help boost guests' mood, sleep and mental health. "If we can provide potential for reduced reliance on medication, that's massive," he said.

Meanwhile, Marc Cohen, a professor of health sciences at Australia's RMIT University, spoke about the importance of starting research into the 'bathing biome' to understand the bacteria in water – both good and bad – in much the same way as we're studying the gut biome. "Hot springs are the origin of life," said Cohen. "Yet as far as I know, no one is studying the bathing biome. We have to look at water as a solution to many of the ills of the world. This group [GTTT attendees] – can come up with innovations that don't just help this industry, but that have global impact." ●

■ **The GTTT took place ahead of the 2016 Global Wellness Summit and we reveal the takeaway messages from this event on p80. Many GTTT attendees are involved with the summit's Global Hot Springs Initiative which aims to drive sector development.**

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Wipawadee Sirimongkolkasem

The managing director of Dusit's Devarana Spa brand tells Katie Barnes about her 20 years with the Thai company and other exciting projects in the pipeline

By her own admission, Wipawadee Sirimongkolkasem is a detail person. Working as an assistant to the executive director at Thai hospitality company Dusit International, she was involved in numerous projects from helping with due diligence in acquisitions to co-ordinating with Goldman Sachs on executive shares.

But when the chance came to really take ownership of something from the ground up she embraced the challenge. It just so happens that spa was that opportunity. It felt special being able to "build up something from zero," she says, "it's like my baby!"

That was back in 2000. Sixteen years on and she's the managing director of Dusit's Devarana Spa brand that's now in 11 of properties worldwide and is expanding into new markets. But how did she create the concept, how is the spa team structured and what new ventures will she be focusing on next?

Three-fold rationale

Dusit is a well known Thai-based group which owns and/or manages hotels under five brands, including the luxury Dusit Thani concept. It was founded by businesswoman Thanpuying Chanut Piyaoui in 1948 and in 1970 it launched the 510-bed Dusit Thani Bangkok – one of the city's first five-star properties.

Today, Dusit's portfolio comprises 29 hotels and resorts and there are ambitions to add nearly 50 more. And while the company has a large base in Asia, especially Thailand and a growing presence in China, it's also establishing itself in the Middle East.

> "It felt special being able to build something up from zero. It's like my baby"

With a strong history in Thailand, Dusit is a popular choice for many natives who want to get into hospitality and Sirimongkolkasem is no exception. Returning home from business school in the US in the early 90s, and after working in the family chicken business for a few years, she secured a role as assistant to Chanin Donavanik – Piyaoui's son and Dusit's then executive director. "It was great to work on so many things," she says about being involved with Donavanik's various business development projects, "kind of an eye-opener".

One such project was creating an in-house spa concept for the flagship Dusit Thani Bangkok with the intention of rolling it out. The rationale for the addition was threefold Sirimongkolkasem says. "We had the space from a number of guestrooms which were too small for modern hotels and we saw potential for driving revenue apart from just selling rooms and F&B."

However, the other main reason for introducing a spa was for it to maintain position as a leading ▸

Sirimongkolkasem worked on various Dusit business projects before focusing on spa

hotel against other major players in the market such as Mandarin Oriental and Banyan Tree which both had a strong wellness offering.

A spa is born

With Dusit's own philosophy based on Thai culture and tradition – Dusit Thani means 'town in heaven' in Thai sanskrit – it was an obvious move to have the spa concept follow suit, especially given the country's long-standing focus on wellness. But Sirimongkolkasem says: "We wanted to do something different to other people [competitors], so we hired an outside consultant."

↑ The spa brand helps Dusit to maintain its position as a luxury hotelier

↓ Dusit was founded by businesswoman Thanpuying Chanut Piyaoui in 1948

The group enlisted the help of Ploy Chariyaves, a creative concept designer and consumer lifestyle columnist. "She read a lot of Thai literature and related our concept to the Tribhumphraruang text which describes the 'gardens of heaven' – or Devarana," says Sirimongkolkasem, adding that brand strives to offer a nurturing, soothing environment.

To get a feel for the market, Sirimongkolkasem toured spas in Bali, Hong Kong and Phuket and got operational advice from Spa of Siam. While no longer in business, the consultancy worked with Devarana Spa for three years on technical aspects such as management and staff training and one of its key employees was industry figure Samantha Foster, who Sirimongkolkasem has nothing but praise for.

The three of them, along with Donavanik, were able to make some quick decisions and by late 2001 – just a year after sitting down with a blank canvas – the first Devarana Spa opened. A general manager was initially drafted in to head up the spa department to help introduce the concept in other Dusit hotels. But when she left in 2002, Sirimongkolkasem was an obvious choice to take the lead instead.

Consistency is key

There are two distinguishing features of the Devarana Spa brand according to Sirimongkolkasem. The first is its back to basics, authentic take on Thai therapies which are deliberately machine free. "We wouldn't even use a Jacuzzi for water treatments," she says. And despite consumer demands for instant results,

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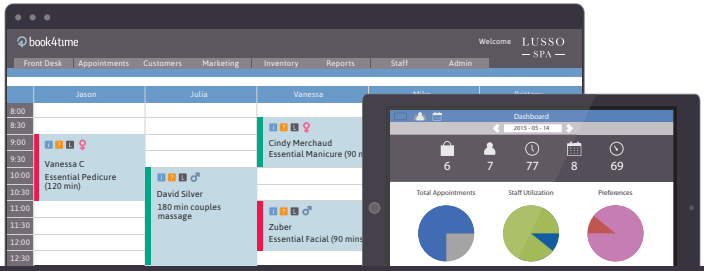

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which sees many spas turning to technology, she's insistent that Devarana will remain hands-on only.

The second standout aspect is its strong focus on training in order to deliver outstanding services at each property. "When you have multiple operations, consistency is one of the most important factors," says Sirimongkolkasem. To achieve this, every new therapist faces an intensive two-month training course and a practical exam. "Of course they know how to massage," she says. "But they have their own standards and that of the company they used to work for and we have our own." There's also an annual five- to six-day refresher course to keep staff on track.

The standards of the 100-plus spa staff are overseen by a dedicated trainer at head office, who usually also picks out a therapist at each property to carry on with team development throughout the year. "One of the things that makes me feel most proud is when customers comment on how impressed they are that our service and quality is the same everywhere they go – and our guests say this to our staff a lot," Sirimongkolkasem says.

↑ **Each new therapist undergoes an intensive two-month training course and exam**

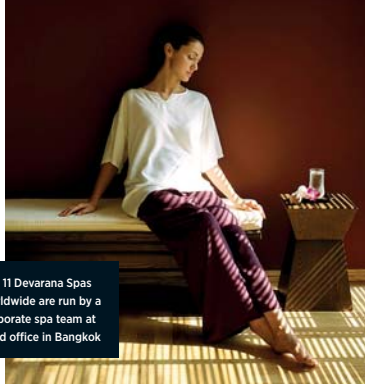
↓ **Hands-on therapies are a fundamental part of the Devarana Spa offering**

Corporate spa team

While Dusit is rapidly adding hotels to its portfolio, Devarana Spas still have a relatively low profile in the global spa industry. This could be in part because the facilities are only in select properties – there are 11 to date and these are typically located in the top-end Dusit Thani hotels or those which have a high rack rate. "The average room rate of a hotel needs to be of a similar price point to the spa, otherwise it doesn't make business sense," says Sirimongkolkasem, adding that in Bangkok, the average room rate is THB3,000 (US$86, €77, £68), which is the same price as a 90-minute Swedish massage.

To overcome this issue in some locations, the company has developed a sub spa brand, Namm, which has a less extensive offering and lower price point. So far, there's a Namm Spa in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, but pitching Devarana remains the priority.

All Devarana Spas are run from head office in Bangkok on a third-party basis for hotel owners, although on-site managers also report into hotel GMs. The corporate spa team comprises nine people – Sirimongkolkasem who, as managing



The 11 Devarana Spas worldwide are run by a corporate spa team at head office in Bangkok

New focus: Suthumpun (left) has replaced Donavanik as Dusit's CEO and is the first non-family member to head up the company

> Society is ageing so we want to look at that. It's a great opportunity to do something new

director, "tends to look at the bigger picture", the group trainer and those working in operations, developments/new projects and marketing and PR.

Sirimongkolkasem says: "We look at it [the spa department] as an independent profit centre because we collect set management, marketing and incentive fees from the owners, but then on the expense side we have the payroll for our office and other expenses."

With regards to spa performance, a close eye is kept on average spend per guest and room utilisation and Sirimongkolkasem feels business "in general is OK" but being dependent on the number and mix of hotel guests can prove troublesome. To tackle this in locales such as Bangkok and Manila three are membership schemes with about 40 active participants and discounts are sometimes offered elsewhere.

A time of change

Having focused on Devarana Spa for 14 years, Sirimongkolkasem actually left Dusit for 12 months in late 2014 to go back to the family business. But such was the pull of the brand that she "couldn't resist coming back," in earlier 2016

Her reunion coincided with a time of change for the company when Dusit appointed Suphajee Suthumpun as its first CEO outside of the family. Suthumpun, previously CEO of telecommunications firm Thaicom, stepped into the shoes of Chanin Donavanik – now vice chair and chair of the executive committee – to push the Dusit portfolio and its property development business even further.

"We've gone through a lot of changes," says Sirimongkolkasem who, as part of the shake-up is excited to take on a new project as well as heading up the spa department. She's currently researching a potential new market for Dusit. "Society is ageing so that's something we want to look at. It's a great ▸

↑ Namm Spa is Dusit's four-star wellness brand, but the group prefers to focus on Devarana

> At the moment, we only have Devarana Spas in Dusit properties – I wish we could go outside to other hotels

opportunity to do something new, I love it. It's the same feeling I had when I built-up Devarana because I can start something from scratch."

Sirimongkolkasem will be splitting her time equally between the new venture and Devarana Spas and anticipates a very busy end to the year. "I'd like to push everything and get it approved by the end of 2016 so it's quite tight right now."

Greater aspirations

While relishing an opportunity to be involved with something new, Sirimongkolkasem still has a love of spa and is especially driven by seeing therapists flourish. "I like to grow the brand and to have a place where people can also grow," she says. "We only recruit internally first so a receptionist could become a supervisor, then a manager. Or when we have a new opening, a therapist which shows potential can transfer to that country or even other countries."

At present, the spa team in Bangkok have three new facilities that they're working on directly. These include one in Vietnam (2017), Singapore (2018) and Australia (2018/19), representing a debut for Dusit in each of the countries.

Meanwhile, in China they're also co-ordinating on a number of Devarana Spas in hot springs resorts which are being developed by Dusit in collaboration with Chinese partner the Fudu Hotel Investment Management Company. The thermal resorts – which are located in Fuzhou, Fuijan Province; Suzhou, Jiangsu Province; and Zhuzhou, Hunan Province – are scheduled to open in the next two to three years and make an interesting departure from Dusit's staple hotel spa proposition.

↑ Dusit is partnering with a Chinese firm to create a series of hot spring spa resorts

Sirimongkolkasem explains that there's a separate corporate spa person based in Dusit Fudu's headquarters in Shanghai, who's already worked on two Devarana Spas in China, who will be overseeing the wellness offering at the new hot springs. "She came to Bangkok for a couple of months for training, so she knows what all of our standards are," says Sirimongkolkasem. She'll have to follow our guidelines, but has input from a local perspective to keep it relevant. "When starting a new project, we [head office] will give feedback on the layout and planning and come up with the treatments with a local accent specifically for them. We'll then discuss whatever extras they would like."

All of this aside, Sirimongkolkasem still has even greater aspirations for the spa brand she loves so much. "At the moment, we only have Devarana Spas in Dusit properties – I wish that we could go outside [to other hotels as a third-party spa operator]," she concludes. "It's not easy these days because all the major chains have their own spa departments, but I'd love to see that happen." ●

FAVOURITES: Wipawadee Sirimongkolkasem

Books: *Peppa Pig* – I've read them a lot lately with my twin nephews!
Film: *What Dreams May Come*
Season: Rainy – when everything is so green
Spa treatment: A decent oil massage
Spa: Peninsula Spa, Tokyo
Best advice: Trust your own instinct. Advice given by my cousin
Who you admire: My dad. He came from China with his brother and my grandparents with nothing. Now, the company he's built up with his siblings has a turnover of THB16.5bn (US$474m, €423m, £372m)

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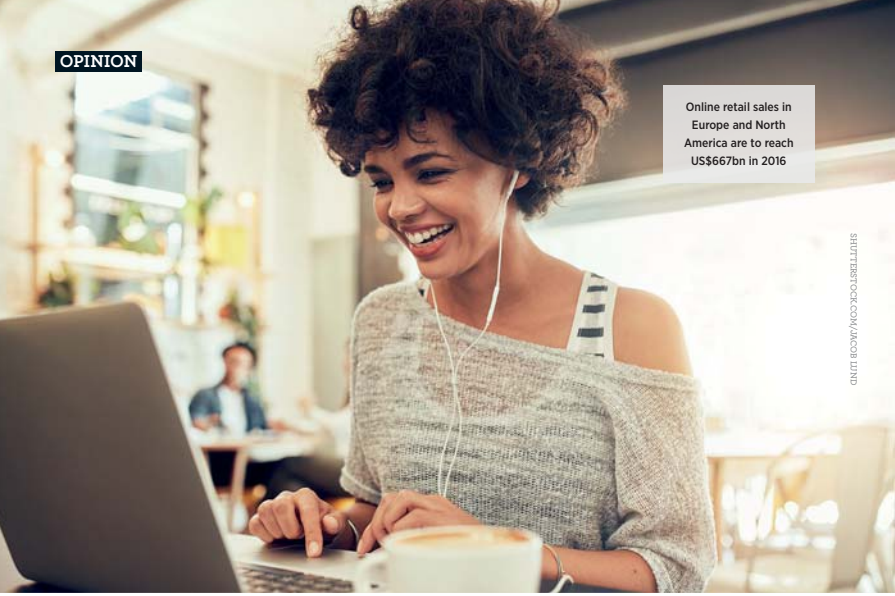

Online retail sales in Europe and North America are to reach US$667bn in 2016

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Ask an expert

Online retail

With increasing numbers of consumers buying professional beauty ranges online, how have industry product houses responded and what does this mean for spas? Kate Parker asks the experts

The retail landscape looks very different today than it did 20 or even 10 years ago, with a massive shift towards online purchasing.

According to the Centre for Retail Research, web sales are the main driver for retail growth internationally. While annual growth rates for all types of retailing only range between 1.5 per cent and 3.5 per cent, online sales are expected to increase by 16.7 per cent in Europe and by more than 15 per cent in North America in 2016 reaching €216.32bn (US$244.5bn, £182.9bn) and US$422.44bn (€373.7bn, £316.1bn) respectively.

Professional beauty suppliers have not been immune to these changes. Traditionally only selling through spa facilities, many forward-thinking brands are now evolving their e-commerce strategies developing both in-house platforms and partnering with third parties such as Feelunique, Glossybox and LookFantastic. With e-commerce giant Amazon starting to dabble in pro-beauty retailing too, the landscape becomes even more interesting and possibly contentious.

The realm of e-commerce opens up new and exciting ways for product houses to interact directly with consumers, but who's doing it well and how? What are the pitfalls to avoid? What do they look for in a third-party partner?

At the same time, how are they selling online without taking business away from spas? Will a focus on digital give the end-user a more rounded experience and ultimately drive more customers to spas in search of their favourite product or as an extension of the brand? There's a delicate balance to be made between suppliers increasing their own retail revenue while at the same time supporting spas. How are they making it work? We ask the experts...

> With e-commerce giant Amazon starting to dabble in pro-beauty retailing too, the landscape becomes even more interesting

Freelance journalist Kate Parker is a regular contributor to Leisure Media magazines
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Tracey Woodward CEO, Aromatherapy Associates

E-commerce is extremely important to our business. It provides us with the opportunity to launch new products online first, revealing the consumer's reaction to the range and whether our retailers will be interested in purchasing. It allows us to understand the Aromatherapy Associates (AA) customer and this in turn helps us to support our spa and retail partners.

We sell in excess of 50,000 units a year through several third party sites including Net-a-Porter, Cult Beauty, Feelunique, John & Ginger and Travel by Amanda among others.

That said, online retail constitutes a single digit percentage of our overall business and we're currently working on relaunching our e-commerce site. A common pitfall of beauty sites is the focus on discounts, resulting in a constant need for a promotion to drive revenue and edging a brand away from its luxury positioning. To counter this, we endeavour to drive our business through knowledge, experience and value.

> It allows us to understand customers so we can support spa and retail partners

The goal is to provide more educational content on the benefits of aromatherapy and to build on functionality – adding questions on health and wellness to our search facility, for example. We can also collaborate with like-minded brands to educate consumers about health and wellbeing to reach a greater audience.

Far from taking away custom from spas, online retailing raises a brand's profile providing more opportunities for engagement. Once familiar with a brand, a customer is more likely to choose a spa where it's stocked. Half of the relationship is built before the guest walks through the door, and if they enjoy the experience they'll return.

■ *Woodward joined AA this April having worked in the beauty retail sector for leading UK consumer-facing businesses such as M&S and Harrods. Details: www.aromatherapyassociates.com*

Nigel Lawmon commercial director, Feelunique

We've seen the growing trend for consumers to buy online first hand, with the acquisition of over half a million new customers every year. We currently work with more than 450 beauty brands, 30 of which are professional firms such as Elemis, Darphin and Decléor.

To really succeed in e-commerce, professional beauty brands need to drive awareness over and above what they do in their physical points of distribution. To do this, they need to know their customer and where to find them, particularly digitally. They also need a willingness to work with the [online] retailer, giving them the incentive to recommend their products through their media and providing them with the tools to encourage people to purchase online.

We have several tiers of partnership, from a simple listing on the website to a full package of support including a range of visibility, enhanced brand rooms and communication to audiences via email and social media.

> Professional beauty brands need to drive awareness over and above physical points of distribution

In response to the argument that professional beauty products should [only] be sold by qualified therapists, I say that at Feelunique we pride ourselves in providing expert advice on the products we carry. Our customer care team has access to training by brands and a database of information on the products. We have a core of advisors with beauty qualifications, together with a trained pharmacist on the team. We're soon to launch a new help and advice area so external ambassadors will be able to field questions posted by customers. We are actively recruiting qualified therapists to join this community of experts.

■ *Founded in 2005, Feelunique is one of Europe's largest independent online luxury beauty retailers. Lawmon himself has 18 years' experience in retail. Details: www.feelunique.com*

James Cheeseman director of marketing, ESPA

The impact of the arrival of Amazon on the pro-beauty scene really does depend on the customer's relationship with each brand. Our customers absolutely prefer a rounder experience. Yes, they love the opportunity to make a quick re-purchase and next-day delivery, and yes, they appreciate occasional promotions – which they also receive in-spa – but they have come to expect and enjoy the expert advice, regular new content and excellent customer service from us too.

Our dedicated e-commerce and digital communications channel espaskincare.com, showcases ESPA's products, treatments and spa partners. We also retail via some of our [department store] partners' websites, including Harvey Nichols and Liberty in London. As a rule, we actively choose not to partner with online-only retailers

as these channels require unique discounted offers.

While our digital channel is growing, it remains a smaller proportion of our overall business where we have a multi-channel approach and it's important these channels work together rather than compete. Our website, for example, isn't purely focused on sales as this inevitably leads you down the route of discounting which damages how customers perceive you and conflicts with the experience customers

> Our website isn't purely focused on sales, as that leads to discounting

receive in spa. Instead, it links to our 500-plus spa and retail partners globally, as well as providing on-tap expert education, tutorials on how to use products, blogs, spa and treatment information.

Primarily, our customers discover us and frequently re-purchase via our spa or store retail partners, but we know they also like to undertake preliminary research online at a time convenient to them, exploring products in more detail, identifying what else they might like to try, before discussing with their therapist.

■ *ESPA has more than 3,500 therapists administering over 3 million treatments a year. Cheeseman joined the company just over a year ago. Details: www.espaskincare.com*

ESPA offers product advice on its website and provides links to spa partners

Rob Williams chief digital officer, Elemis

As a global brand, Elemis has an omni-channel distribution model. Our worldwide network of 1,600 spas and beauty salons is our biggest channel but we also trade through [high street] retailers, concept stores, TV shopping (see SB14/3 p84) – and e-commerce.

To compete in a global market you must sell online and an important part of our strategy is to make our range of products as available as possible, without compromising on service. We sell our products through our own websites – elemis.com and timetospa.com – through third-party beauty specialists

such as Lookfantastic and Feelunique, as well as through ASOS and Amazon. This gives the company exposure to different types of consumers in a variety of demographics – and any time that a consumer comes into direct contact with Elemis is

> To compete in a global market, you must sell online

an opportunity to drive them back to our spas and salons.

Our digital toolset has become the key communicator through which we can talk to our customers – for many, the website constitutes the first point of contact with the brand, no matter where they end up purchasing. As consultation and education has always been at the heart of what we do, it's vital that our website tells the Elemis story, gives recommendations on the right products for each and every person and explains how they can benefit their lifestyle.

At the same time, e-commerce enables us to gather data on shopping habits to ensure that we provide the best possible service, wherever they shop, as well as helping us to make key decisions on where we should focus our [ongoing sales and product development] efforts. ●

■ *Williams has been focusing on Elemis' digital operations since January 2016. Details: www.elemis.com*

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Skincare from the source

As a pioneer of marine skincare, Phytomer represents a story of three impassioned generations and a dedication to cultivating the purest sea ingredients from the northern French coast

The story of Phytomer – a leading global marine skincare brand for spas, salons and resorts – started with the vision of one individual from the picturesque French seaside town of St Malo in Brittany.

In the 1970s, Jean Gedouin was already a successful import/export entrepreneur. However, when he started to suffer from recurring gout he instinctively turned to his lifelong passion – the sea – to try to find a cure.

Gedouin self-prescribed himself a daily glass of seawater and before long his ailment had completely disappeared. From then on, he became passionate about harnessing the curative power of the sea and bringing its benefits to others.

His granddaughter, and Phytomer's marketing director Mathilde Gedouin-Lagarde explains: "Growing up in St Malo, my grandfather was always passionate about the sea. He was also an innovator and a visionary and set his sights on capturing the remarkable properties of the sea and applying it to skincare – at a time when no-one had begun to do this."

She continues: "The sea is the origin of all life, the most vital element on earth, and a source of unparalleled biodiversity. It enjoys a unique affinity with our cells, containing all the elements that are essential to our skin's health and beauty."

Gedouin started to gather seaweed from the Brittany coast and to freeze-dry seawater into a powerful mineral concentrate. This process led to the development of his first product – Oligomer® – and the birth of his skincare company Phytomer.

"Oligomer® is still one of our flagship products. In the form of a bath powder it helps to combat fatigue and to relieve tension. We've also included it in all our products for its exceptional remineralising properties," says Mathilde.

Phytomer's story began and continues in St Malo (above); Oligomer® is used in all products (left)

> My grandfather believed that everybody should have the chance to experience the invigorating properties of the sea, wherever they lived

Taking the sea to the city

At that time in France, thalassotherapy centres were just beginning to take off but beyond bathing in seawater, there were few treatments on offer. Gedouin started to work with these facilities to develop their treatment offers, while at the same time expanding the Phytomer product range.

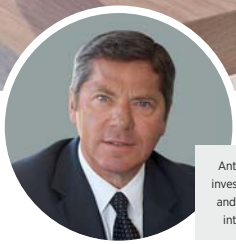
Mathilde continues: "My grandfather believed that everybody should have the chance to experience the invigorating properties of the sea, wherever they lived. So with Phytomer, he took the sea to the city."

With the prospect of global expansion on the horizon, it was time for another family member to enter the business – Mathilde's father, Antoine Gedouin.

She says: "My father had a PhD in finance, but he also had a great passion for science and shared his father's passion for the sea.

Pionnière XMF is Phytomer's next generation range of skincare products

Phytomer has been leading the way in marine skincare for almost 50 years



Antoine Gedouin has invested heavily in R&D and turned Phytomer into a global brand

"He could see the future for marine cosmetics, and wanted Phytomer to be able to create its own active ingredients here at the source."

So at the start of the 21st Century, Phytomer became a pioneer in marine biotechnologies as the family, guided by the vision of Antoine, invested heavily in research and the development of its own dedicated laboratories.

The facility draws on the unique marine habitat that exists in Brittany, using its diverse ecosystem of seaweed, algae and sea micro-organisms in a sustainable way to form the basis of Phytomer's ingredients.

Unlimited potential

To date, the company's growing research team has identified around 800 micro-organisms that can each produce a unique marine sugar, and has patented 30 of them for future developments.

"The sea's potential is limitless. We've really only discovered around 10 per cent of its properties and how we can truly benefit from them," says Mathilde.

In addition to investing in biotechnology, Antoine's goal was also to turn Phytomer into a global brand. He started with Japan and the US and 30 years later, Phytomer's 200-plus products and treatment protocols are available in more than 70 countries.

The company's classic 20-year-old products like Rosée Visage (a mix of aromatics, sea plants and rose water) remain just as popular as its cutting edge creations, like Pionnière XMF – a cream launched in 2012 which contains a biotechnological marine sugar formulated to visibly smooth out wrinkles in an hour.

"Whenever we launch into a new market, Rosée Visage always quickly becomes a bestseller. It's a timeless, versatile skincare product that cleanses, tones and removes make-up all in one. People absolutely love it," says Mathilde.

Representing the third generation, Mathilde focuses on marketing and development, and building strategies for the future. She says: "We wish to inspire every single one of our customers to reveal and rejuvenate their authentic, natural beauty."

Family values

And so the story of one man, now in his 80s, became the success story of three generations. The landscape of the Phytomer business may have changed since its inception, but its core vision remains.

Mathilde says: "We've grown Phytomer into one of the most advanced marine skincare brands in the world, but our family never lost sight of my grandfather's vision. Quite simply, he wanted the application of Phytomer products and treatments to feel as healing as a swim in the ocean, and as invigorating as a fresh sea breeze, producing the same lively glow on your skin."

"Half a century ago, Jean Gedouin was the visionary who turned the sea into skincare and with all that we've created from our base in St Malo, we're excited about what the next 50 years will bring." ●

PHYTOMER

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Beyond *the* SURFACE

Could a breakthrough in medical diagnostics revolutionise the skincare world? Neena Dhillon talks to California-based Skincential Sciences to find out

As a window to our body's health, skin can reveal and even enable us to predict a range of conditions and diseases. The key to unlocking this valuable information is the extraction of certain biomarkers that give unique genetic and environmental clues about a person, at a molecular level, and which can be used for a variety of diagnostic tests, as well as for the collection of DNA.

The medical community's interest in finding ways to harvest such biomarkers has been intense, but skin hasn't always proven a cooperative subject. Traditional extraction methods include biopsy – often invasive, leaving a scar – and special adhesive or Scotch tape, an unreliable procedure. But in 2010, American doctors Samir Mitragotri and Robert Langer pioneered a non-invasive and effective alternative for the collection of proteins, nucleic acids, lipids and molecules from the skin's surface with a view to improving cancer research. Put simply their breakthrough approach, or what they refer to as 'technology', combines the use of surfactants with water for extraction.

Lebovitz says the technology behind Skincential products could have huge implications for the wider skincare sector

Intrigued by the news of this breakthrough, entrepreneur and fellow scientist Russ Lebovitz joined forces with the pair, raising investment to establish a medical diagnostics firm in California and then – after a fortuitous 'aha!' moment – take the technology into the skincare market.

A surprising discovery

"What captured my attention was that the technology extracted a lot of proteins and enzymes from the skin, which then remained

Smooth the way

The Clearista pen and gel jumpstart the skin's exfoliation process to increase softness and hydration and a small line of concentrated professional products are also available for facials

 ©CYBERTREK 2016

SKIN BIOMARKERS CAN REVEAL UNIQUE GENETIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL CLUES ABOUT A PERSON AT A MOLECULAR LEVEL

The scientists realised their technique, which uses surfactants and water to extract biomarkers from the skin, also had a smoothing, anti-ageing effect and could be used in cosmetics

active for more than a week and that it did this without causing any inflammation," recalls Lebovitz. "This is not typical. With Scotch tape, for example, it's difficult to preserve the biomarkers you collect. We realised this new technology could be used, in principle, to extract biomarkers from the outer layer of any tissue."

Indeed, the technology is so unique that it's even captured the interest of In-Q-Tel, a venture capital fund of a very unlikely source – the CIA. It's been reported that Skincential's simple way of collecting biochemistry markers in the skin was an attraction for the covert organisation.

But what's the connection to skincare? Embarking on further research to validate their findings, the doctors were surprised to find their formulation also produced a lasting smoothing effect on the skin's surface, reflecting light differently, while diminishing imperfections. And so the decision was made direct their journey towards the cosmetics world. This led to the establishment of Skincential Sciences and a line of patented resurfacing products marketed under the Clearista brand.

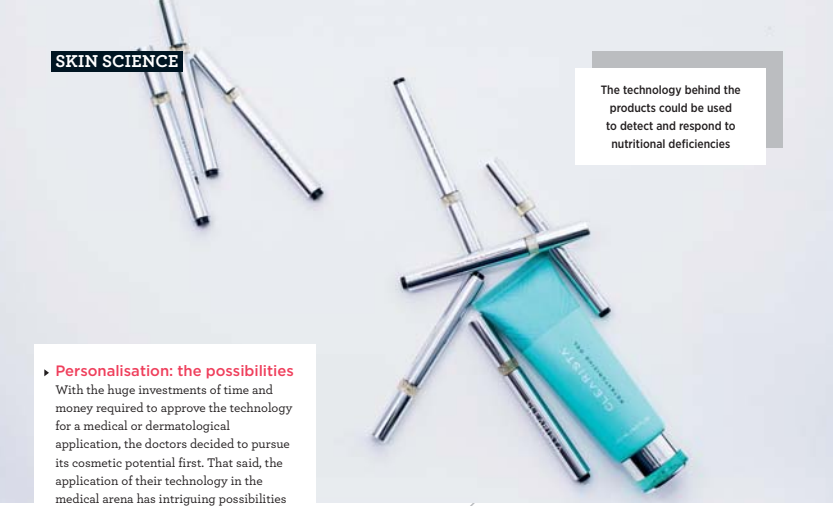
"Our core technology gently solubilises keratin, loosening bonds, allowing surface cells to be lifted and increasing softness and hydration," explains Lebovitz.

Consumers can purchase a refining pen for rubbing on the skin and a retexturising gel for general application. In addition to smoothing and anti-ageing benefits, gained through jumpstarting the skin's exfoliation process, the products are designed to improve rough, dry and bumpy patches, extending to unsightly conditions such as chicken skin (keratosis pilaris) and barnacles (seborrheic keratosis).

Drawing on the science

Skincential has been able to draw on the results of studies it carried out while still exploring quasi-medical applications for its technology. "We originally conducted clinical trials for two skin conditions because we thought we would be more medically focused," reveals Lebovitz. "Now we're cosmetic and public-facing, we still use the data to support our claims because today's consumers are educated and care about ingredients and efficacy."

Available to aestheticians and spa professionals, Skincential also supplies a small line of concentrated professional products, currently offered as part of the Clearista facial in 40 to 50 outlets on the west coast of the US. Lebovitz says partner spas compare results to "a chemical peel or microdermabrasion but without the associated redness or irritation".



The technology behind the products could be used to detect and respond to nutritional deficiencies

Personalisation: the possibilities

With the huge investments of time and money required to approve the technology for a medical or dermatological application, the doctors decided to pursue its cosmetic potential first. That said, the application of their technology in the medical arena has intriguing possibilities for both the skincare and spa industries.

From a very lateral point of view, spas could – at some point down the line – create therapies using the simple biomarker collection technique to detect and treat a range of diseases. Lebovitz, however, feels this is unlikely. "Medical diagnostics have important health consequences. For this reason, they're highly regulated. Our current spa offerings aren't intended to diagnose or treat medical conditions. While it's possible that this could be done in a medi-spa setting in the future, this is not currently under consideration."

What he thinks is the most obvious way ahead – albeit still an ambitious route – is to focus on the link between skin, nutrition and customisation. He explains: "Let me give you an example. No two breast cancers are alike, so if you're able to gather biomarkers to determine whether an individual has mutation A or mutation B, then you're able to treat the disease in a personalised way with a specific set of therapies. If that can work for known diseases, then imagine how it might work for a big industry such as skincare."

As skin chemistry changes in response to genetic and environmental factors, it's able to reflect what's going on below the surface, and when the body ages, certain vitamins and antioxidants become depleted. Skincential's technology means there's now a way to non-invasively sample skin and respond in a personalised manner to such deficiencies. "We're exploring the idea of using this technology to determine 'baseline' levels of desired nutrients in a variety of subjects of all ages," Lebovitz says. "By doing so, it should be possible to identify the nutrients lacking in individuals as they get older and to track the replenishment of these nutrients with products already available on the market. This may eventually lead to personalised spa treatments based on the sampling of baseline values in individual clients."

> ONCE YOU'RE ABLE TO QUANTIFY THE 10 MAJOR MISSING NUTRIENTS, YOU CAN THEN CREATE PRODUCTS THAT FEED THESE BACK TO THE SKIN IN A NATURAL WAY

Skincare revolution?

In practical terms, this means setting up a viable and funded model under which multi-country, multi-ethnic studies could be established to monitor the nutritional base which defines the composition of skin.

As the company remains committed to following a scientific approach, Lebovitz envisions the establishment of central labs where cosmetics or spa professionals, who have collected biomarker samples by rubbing pens against the skin for a few minutes, can send off the detached tips for data analysis. There may even be the opportunity to develop equipment suitable for validated in-spa testing.

To pursue these avenues, the company is looking for a strategic cosmetics or spa partner. "In the US, our preference is to license the technology to large strategic partners able to do effective national and global marketing," Lebovitz adds. "In Europe and Asia, we are still exploring the relevant advantages of various licensing and partnership models."

As a natural progression, Lebovitz imagines the conception of a larger line of products, either under the Clearista brand or another cosmetics name, which responds specifically to major trends identified as part of the data analysis. "Once you're able to quantify the 10 major missing nutrients, you can then create products that feed these back to the skin in a natural way, especially since our formulation is water-based. Really, we're seeking partners interested in exclusively building a platform for the business of personalised skincare."

While further development and investment is required for Skincential to fulfil the potential of its technology, there's no doubt the road ahead could lead to a fascinating revolution in skincare. ●

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A higher degree of service

The Nine Degrees Spa brand from Esadore International is committed to keeping ancient Middle Eastern, Orient wellness traditions alive while providing facilities with a concept that offers cutting-edge design and profit-enhancing practices. MD Theodora Kioussis explains

Theodora Kioussis

What's the concept behind Nine Degrees Spa?

It's a unique spa brand that reflects an enchanting journey through several Middle Eastern, Orient regions, absorbing cultures, traditional methods and healing remedies along the way.

There are so many delightful ingredients in the Middle East that have been effective healers for the body, mind and soul for centuries – and the heritage, culture and hospitality remains strong to this day. Our brand is committed to keeping these traditions alive, while increasing public knowledge and understanding of the vital importance of health and relaxation in daily living and leisure time.

We've selected a wonderful collection of ancient health and beauty practices that have been passed down from generation to generation and combined them with modern technologies to develop a collection of signature treatments, unique rituals and wellness concepts.

Tell us more about the design philosophy behind the brand

The philosophy employed at Nine Degrees is simple but effective – establish a story for each space that can be translated with the help of our team into a beautiful design and overall experience. This story is told through the unique concept, menu and service. Our aim is to make each space aesthetically pleasing but functional to ensure that operation is seamless, with revenue-making a priority.

Each Nine Degrees Spa includes a modern interpretation of the traditional hammam, with simple, functional and beautifully designed treatment rooms that contain Middle Eastern design elements such as antique mirrors, Persian carpets and traditional mashrabiya screens for privacy and natural mood lighting.

Another unique offering of the Nine Degrees Spa concept is the Souk at the Nine, our homage to the traditional souk, which displays essential spa and skincare retail products used in the various treatments, artefacts and curios from different souks in the region, as well as handmade products from local entrepreneurs and artisans.

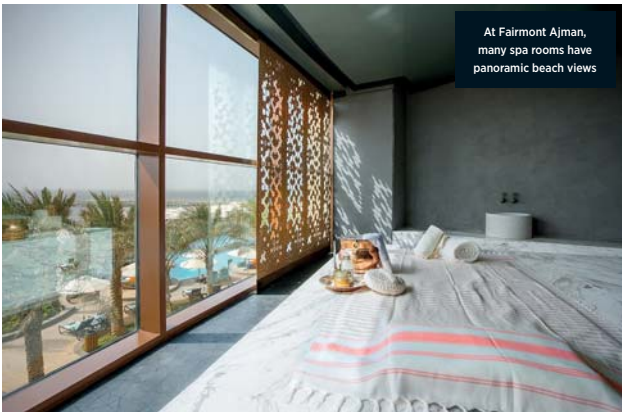
Ancient health practices have been mixed with modern wellness offers

Tell us about the first Nine Degrees Spa, at the Fairmont Ajman.

Our Nine Degrees Spa is now open at this five-star getaway in the UAE, offering a distinctive experience supported by a team of gifted international therapists.

The spa comprises eight treatment rooms and one room catering to couples. There are also relaxation rooms with panoramic views of the beach and a modern interpretation of the traditional hammam, showcasing a unique Sunset Hammam treatment, which takes place while you bask in the dramatic glow of the setting sun setting over the Arabian Sea.

It's only been open a few months and the initial response has been overwhelmingly positive. We were shortlisted in four categories at the recent Middle East



At Fairmont Ajman, many spa rooms have panoramic beach views

> Establishing strong and genuine relationships with clients is what truly sets the Nine Degrees spa concept apart

Spa and Leisure Awards, as well as in the retail category of the highly coveted Commercial Interior Design Awards, not to mention the recipients of the Luxury Emerging Spa award at the 2016 World Luxury Spa Awards. So far so good!

What are your unique selling points?

Establishing strong and genuine relationships with clients is what truly sets our spa concept apart in this increasingly competitive environment. Without these connections, you'll get lost in all the noise.

By endeavouring to understand customers' specific wants and needs and therefore providing a better service, we've maintained a loyal client base that keeps coming back for more.

A homegrown spa company like Nine Degrees has the ability to personalise the spa experience and offer bespoke concepts that resonate with discerning spa goers who are always on the lookout for something different.

What services do you offer facilities?

Our highly qualified team focuses on four main disciplines – architecture and design, hydro-engineering, operational deployment and set-up and operational management, so we're involved in all key phases of a project.

Our ethos is simple: garner all the innate knowledge and experience of the team and brainstorm, analyse, debate and review so the final product or service is the best it can be. We provide a complete solution, from design, construction, concept, training and recruitment through to pre-opening support and management, so clients can expect superior quality across the board.

Souk at the Nine is the spa brand's retail space – a modern take on a traditional souk

How do you help facilities to thrive in a competitive market?

Nine Degrees Spa is a sustainable business model that increases net worth by focusing on three key components. Firstly, establishing a USP in every spa we create, which provides the hotel, resort or wellness facility with additional revenue generating features. Secondly, providing a solid spa brand that will add value to an existing or new-build project. Finally, promoting guest loyalty by giving back and expanding their knowledge of health, wellbeing and longevity.

What projects are in the pipeline?

In the next few months we'll be announcing details of several projects including a Nine Degrees wellness spa at the Dead Sea, Jordan and spas at the InterContinental Resort Spa, Fujairah and the InterContinental Resort Spa, Muscat Hills in Oman.

Why should operators choose to work with Nine Degrees?

Our main team is based in the UAE and so our regional knowledge and experience is unmatched. Our approach is far from cookie-cutter and we're known for being trendsetters thanks to our novel and bespoke approach to every spa project we undertake. ●

Spa NINE DEGREES

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the well NORWAY

After trekking her way round Norway, **Alice Davis** headed to one of the newest and most innovative spas in the country for some much needed relaxation. But does it live up to expectations?

Free rituals are offered in the aufguss sauna (above); The Northern Lights laconium is a novel experience (right)

Background

A jungle sauna and Northern Lights laconium are just two of the novelties at The Well in Norway which opened in late 2015 with some of the most contemporary hydrothermal experiences in today's spa industry. The three-storey bathhouse – one of the biggest in Europe – is looking to attract up to 100,000 visitors a year with its huge range of pools, steamrooms and saunas inspired by global spa traditions. It's built in the pine forests of Sofiemyr, south of Oslo, by Norwegian architects Halvorsen & Reine and has been a key project for Thermarium, a division of Klafs, which specialises in wet spa design. Treatments by British brands Elemis and Mii make-up, and Norway's Dermanor are also available in one of 25 suites.

The Well is the brainchild of entrepreneur Stein Erik Hagen, the second-richest man in Norway, (see p74). His investment firm Canica manages a diverse portfolio from e-commerce groups to grocery stores, but Hagen's had experience in wellness since opening the famous Farris Bad mineral spa in Larvik in 2009.

Experience

After nine days of exploring western Norway, a visit to The Well was highly anticipated. Every muscle was aching from scaling mountains, circling placid fjords and negotiating the cultural delights of Oslo and Bergen. But that didn't mean the NOK275m (US$33.2m, €30m, £26m) spa facility was guaranteed to impress. Norway is breathtaking – and that's a hard act to follow.

The Well was easy to find by car, 20 minutes from Oslo down the main E6 road. There's also a dedicated shuttle bus to and from the capital – a smart touch for an out-of-town spa that, to be worth the effort, needs people to stay all day.

Thankfully, The Well has more than enough to offer as a day-long destination and an all-day ticket is very reasonably priced at NOK495 (US$60, €54, £46). On arrival, I was greeted by Eric who was impeccably presented, fluent in English and polite. Without hesitation, he explained The Well's concept, including the delicate subject of its rules on nudity.

The Well is a longtime dream for Hagen, who wanted to introduce the tradition and social atmosphere of the Roman bathhouse to Norway. Further inspired by the open culture of Europeans, he made it a naked spa. Eric swiftly added that it isn't compulsory to be naked as long as visitors wear The Well's branded swimwear, which can be purchased for NOK125 (US$15, €14, £12).

Davis found the water jets sheer bliss on her aching legs

> Every detail is beautifully finished and the quality of the materials, fittings and furnishings can't be faulted

On checking in, I was given a wristband which operated the lockers and doubled up as a convenient cashless system. I had trouble using the locker because the instructions were only in Norwegian. The lack of translation was a recurring issue and I missed out on details about complementary aufguss sauna rituals and a warning to wear slippers on hot floors (ouch)! However, The Well says it's "absolutely working to make it easier for international guests", adding further translations and developing signs with pictograms and symbols.

At the heart of the spa are the baths, which are surrounded by saunas, steamrooms and showers. These were filled with people relaxing and enjoying themselves: floating, swimming and using the massage jets and hot tubs. Every detail is beautifully finished and the quality of the materials, fittings and furnishings can't be faulted. The level of craftsmanship is compelling and this was the same throughout the building.

It was almost impossible to drag myself away from the massage jets, which are sheer bliss, but eventually I moved to the thermal area. There are 15 heat experiences in total, some offering special treatments ▸

> The essence of The Well was the element of surprise and variety of experiences

The pool area stretches over three levels and provides a great central attraction

such as the stea sm and aromatherapy rituals in the aufguss sauna. The standout sauna has to be the two-storey Austrian-style loft. Not only is it the hottest, it boasts log-cabin décor and brushed spruce walls for a traditional feel.

A cinema (TV) sauna features special ambient lighting that changes colours according to the visuals on screen. The jungle sauna creates a tropical world with windows of greenery and a mango scent. The art deco tepidarium is stunning – painstakingly covered in gold mosaic. In amongst the saunas, a couple of ice-cold plunge pools and numerous multi-setting showers were easily accessible.

When it was time for lunch, I found the restaurant served a variety of freshly-prepared salads, pizzas and more. Prices were affordable, hitting the right note for a place that wants to keep people all day.

Back to the spa, where a major highlight was the shower grotto. Step inside and your ears are filled with the sound of water – it's intense, like standing under a waterfall. In this dark cave, surrounded by sheets of falling water, a variety of powerful showers beat down on your body.

Upstairs there's an impressively authentic Japanese lounge, with meditation area, steambath and a cosy fire room. Chilling outside in the onsen, the steam rising as the cold Norwegian rain falls around you, is seriously good.

Little discoveries and moments like this made The Well remarkable. There's the obvious size and beauty of the place, but the essence for me was the element of surprise and the variety of experiences (including up to 100 showers). It's about creating your own journey in a free and non-prescriptive way and the facility seems to be driven by a desire to make guests, quite simply, feel good. The Well is a day-long destination for people from all around the world, all walks of life, all adult ages – and all as naked as they want to be (or not). In this wellness utopia, there's something for everyone.

Areas are inspired by different spa cultures such as Japanese onsen

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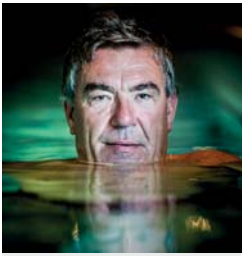
Stein Erik Hagen

owner, The Well



Hagen is the second richest man in Norway and a wellness enthusiast

Why did you invest in The Well?
We wanted to create something big and spectacular, something new and unique in Norway. Because of my love for spa, it ended up being this experience paradise and wellness centre for adults. It's a business, but it's also a dream and passion for me.

What's the concept?
I've taken the best spa traditions I've experienced around the world and merged them under one roof. Behind every door you're transported somewhere else and experience something different. From the zen of the Japanese garden to the freezing Nordic plunge pool and the steaming heat of an Austrian loft sauna.

Personally, I take great pleasure in bathing and sauna, it purifies and provides tranquility, strength and energy. It's a gospel I want to make known among more people. It fits well with modern society's focus on living a happier and healthier life. With the escalating problems of climate change, I also think the market and need for 'daycations' will increase rapidly.

When are you expecting an ROI?
People think I'm crazy for doing this, but if you stop doing projects that don't fit the norm, the world would become a very boring place. As a lifelong entrepreneur, I have a strong passion for everything I do and The Well is like my baby. It has been an amazing journey. Investing tens of millions of euros in a plot of land in the forests outside of Oslo has to be motivated by more than just financial gain and we have no aspirations to break even in the first years. However, we do think that it will make a contribution to Norway and make us some money, too [eventually].

Who's the target market?
There are 1.5 million people living within a 30 minute driving distance from The Well and that's our core market. But word travels fast and we're already receiving a significant percentage of visitors from countries like The Netherlands, Germany and Italy.

Juergen Klingenschmid managing director, Thermarium*

What areas did Thermarium work on at The Well?
It was responsible for the whole layout, design and technical planning while some areas, such as the pool, were done in cooperation with the architects.

What was the design brief?
To generate a contemporary design for the whole spa, but to also integrate different ambiences for each of the experiences themed around worldwide wellness traditions. Overall, the interiors are spacious and airy and use unobtrusive materials, but the design of special areas are completely different – they immerse guests in a narrative of each new [spa] world with stylish, complex materials and lavish colour concepts.

Expereinces feature stylish, lavish materials

The Well was a huge project says Klingenschmid

What are the standout features?
Reaching across three levels, the huge pool area is surrounded by a complex columns structure, which gives the hall a sacred character. The two-storey loft sauna is also very impressive.

What difficulties did you face on this project?
Due to the spa's sheer size, it was an enormous challenge to design and realise the project in the available time. Most of the thermal cabins are extraordinary sizes. Many of them had to be prefabricated and mounted at our headquarters, then dismantled and reinstalled at The Well. In addition, we were constantly looking for energy-saving solutions and new technologies to help regulate their temperature and humidity. ●

**Spa equipment manufacturer and consulting firm Thermarium was acquired by the Klafs Group in 2015. Since mid 2016, Thermarium has been integrated into the Spa Division at Klafs. The Well was a key project for Thermarium, with much of the work overseen by previous MD Adrian Egger.*

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History LESSON

The Kneipp natural therapeutic system is poised for a renaissance in today's modern spa world. Spa historian Jonathan Paul De Vierville explains why by looking at its past and future potential

How would you describe Kneipp therapy?

It's a holistic natural therapy system based on the Kneipp kur/course of treatments which integrates the five principles of water (hydrotherapy), exercise (kinesiology), herbalism (phytotherapy), nutrition (dietetics) and balanced lifestyle management (regulative therapy).

What are its origins?

It was founded by a German priest, father Sebastian Kneipp, in the mid 1800s. Suffering from tuberculosis, he discovered a book outlining the effectiveness of fresh water treatments which led him to experiment with regular bathing in the icy Danube River. In doing so, he succeeded in energising, invigorating and strengthening his body.

He was inspired to use the gifts of nature within the context of service to the Divine for the purpose of physical and spiritual healing. He perfected the approach, adding exercise, diet etc to the mix, by treating ailing members of his parish in the village of Bad Wörishofen, Bavaria which is considered the birthplace of Kneipp therapy.

Sebastian Kneipp, a German priest, developed the therapy in the 1800s to treat his tuberculosis

How did it grow in popularity?

By the 1880s, Kneipp's reputation for healing had spread throughout most German speaking countries. With the 1889 publication of *My Water Cure* – in over 100,000 copies, including foreign translations – his work at Bad Wörishofen gained worldwide recognition. An important point to note is that, reaching North America, the philosophy formed the foundation of modern naturopathy.

What does a Kneipp course include?

An authentic programme will integrate all five principles and simple applications for at least a week with a take-home regime. Some can even go up to three months depending on the client's disorder and therapeutic needs.

While many associate the Kneipp programme with hydrotherapy – Sebastian Kneipp is known as the 'water doctor' – it's inclusive and integrative of the four other pillars. That said, water is the most powerful and there are more than 120 applications for it including ablutions, wraps, packs and compresses, jet/shower sessions, baths, steam and sauna experiences, water treading and dew walking and – especially – cold water treatments.

Jonathan Paul De Vierville lectures on the Kneipp kur

> "In North America, Kneipp therapy formed the foundation for modern naturopathy

How does it work and what does it treat?

Everything in the Kneipp system works to facilitate the body's own thermal reaction, reflexes and immune responses. The various water applications, for example, range in temperature from icy and cold to tepid, warm, hot and steamy and work to

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©KNEIPHEIMBAD TALHEIMERGARTEN

Water is the most powerful pillar in Kneipp therapy and there are over 120 applications for it. Modern spas (below right) are showing a renewed interest in the system

©KNEIPP ORIGINAL BAD WÖRISHOFEN

©MAIN PALACE HOTEL, ITALY

improve blood flow, lymph circulation and regulate the metabolism.

Kneipp therapy can be used to treat an extremely wide array of ailments from cardiovascular and respiratory illnesses to digestive disorders and rheumatic and neuralgic conditions. It can also be used in prevention or to help with overall personal wellness – to increase happiness levels (via parasympathetic stimulation), for example, or even help with fatigue, memory and attention (by addressing dehydration).

All of this has been backed up by scientific research over centuries, starting as early as 1884 with the foundation of the International Kneipp Doctor's Society.

How popular is Kneipp therapy today?

There are some centres and hospitals in Germany where state insurance pays for three weeks of Kneipp treatment every four years – although given the uncertain economic outlook this may change. Bad Wörishofen is known as a major healing destination with famous facilities including The Sebastinaeum and Kneippianum. Other spa towns are Bad Grönenbach, Bad Lauterberg and Ottobeuren.

Austria, Italy, the Netherlands and Denmark have facilities which focus on the traditional programme. Meanwhile, Brazil's Kurotel Clinic and Spa has made a name for itself by specialising in Kneipp.

Do you see a growing demand for the therapy?

There appears to be an increasing regional concern and worldwide awareness for wellness, natural therapies and complementary medicine. And I can foresee a demand for spas and other healthcare organisations to offer a low cost, effective, natural health system – remember that monetising the system was not a priority for father Kneipp who wanted to heal people as part of his religious calling.

In the US, there's certainly a renewed interest and rebirth of Kneipp therapy among naturopathic physicians and universities such as the National ▸

University of Natural Medicine in Portland and Bastyr University in Seattle.

Groups of US students and practitioners travel to Bad Wörishofen annually to learn about Kneipp techniques. In addition, recent exchange visits have taken place between healthcare professionals from Germany and other European countries as well as Singapore and China.

What would an authentic, modern day Kneipp kur centre offer?

It would offer first-hand experience of the five principles, as well as simple techniques for homecare, such as baths and wraps for extremities which culminate with cold water showers or treading in a bathtub/bucket of water.

An authentic centre should have indoor facilities for the baths, wraps and showers. There should also be direct contact with nature for remedial, curative and healing elements which is something that's often overlooked. Alfresco features would ideally include herb and vegetable gardens, grassy lawns for dew walking along with cold water arm and footbaths.

Kneipp Bund, an umbrella organisation for over 600 Kneipp societies, has a certification system for facilities and provides a wealth of information on the Kneipp kur. It also operates The Sebastian Kneipp Vocational School and the Sebastian Kneipp Academy.

©KNEIPP ORIGINAL BAD WÖRISHOFEN

Spas wanting to stay true to classic Kneipp therapy should offer outdoor facilities says De Vierville

©KNEIPP-BUND HOTEL

A course should last for at least a week with various treatments based on the five principles offered over that time

> "It would appeal to anyone who knows the importance of being connected with nature, harmony and spirit"

How easy is it to misinterpret Kneipp therapy?

Very. Especially when it's fragmented into portions (rather than focusing on the five pillars as a whole) and attempted over too short a period of time – the kur removes a client from their normal way of life which is often a critical factor for certain mental and spiritual disorders. Providing quiet areas for health purposes is often overlooked as well.

Many spas do not apply the water and temperatures correctly and try to shorten the service time which results in lack of proper stimulation and sufficient body heat reactions. And often, there are no written instructions or follow through for at-home care for clients.

Where in the world do you think a Kneipp centre would work well?

The system is best delivered in rural and natural settings, but there's especially a need for it in urban areas in which case parks would make ideal locations.

Central Park in New York has been used for Kneipp activities. And although challenging, I could see something similar spreading in the green spaces in London, Manchester and Bristol in the UK, as well as Detroit, St Louis and Chicago in the US and other major metropolitan areas that have some open parklands for walking and wading. Perhaps there could be a cooperative relationship with golf courses on rainy days?

Who would benefit the most from Kneipp therapy?

It would appeal to anyone who desires, knows and understands the vital importance of being connected with nature, harmony and spirit. ●

Professor Jonathan Paul De Vierville is a spa historian and lectures worldwide on the kur programme, natural therapies, hydrotherapy and balneology. Email: alamospa@me.com

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Breath of fresh air

Spa professionals worldwide embrace the outdoors and Austrian wellness for the 10th Global Wellness Summit. Katie Barnes reveals the highlights from the milestone event

Summit co-chairs Dr Franz Linser (left), of Linser Hospitality, and Susan Harmsworth (right), founder of ESPA

Spa Business reveals more global spa statistics on p42 and reports from an international hot springs conference on p44

A record 500 delegates convened in picturesque Kitzbühel, Austria for the Global Wellness Summit

Soaring into the mist on a mountain paraglide, taking in the green surroundings on a biking route and gulping in fresh Alpine air on a hike. Not your typical scene for a business conference – but a perfect fit for the Global Wellness Summit (GWS), which celebrated its 10th anniversary in October.

Spa operators, owners, developers and investors around the world made up a large proportion of the 500 delegates (a new summit record) from 45 countries who convened in the picturesque town of Kitzbühel, in Austria's Tyrol region, to soak up the healthy surroundings and spend three days learning about wellness trends, research and best practice – and finding out what the future has in store.

In his opening remarks, summit co-chair Franz Linser, whose wellness consultancy is based in Tyrol, said: "I'm really proud to have 500 international experts here today. Each and every one of you is a contributor of knowledge, insight and wisdom... from all facets of our industry. Having been a former Olympic coach for the Austrian ski team, for me this summit is like the Olympic Wellness Games – showcasing the best of the best that this industry has to offer."

European wellness

Linser revealed how Tyrol was one of the first regions in the world to adopt wellness tourism on a wider scale by developing and promoting a cluster of sport and spa hotels 26 years ago.

> "This summit is like the Olympic Wellness Games – showcasing the best of the best that this industry has to offer"

In fact, Austria ranks 11th in the world for spa revenues – generating €1.45bn (US$1.6bn, £1.28bn) in 2015 – and seventh among European countries. Those numbers are part of the *2016 Global Wellness Economy Monitor*, the preliminary findings of which were released at the summit. The report, generated by the summit's parent organisation, the Global Wellness Institute (GWI), valued the global spa economy at US$98.6bn (€89bn, £79bn) in 2015, an increase of 2.3 per cent since 2013, making it a modest cluster within the wider US$3.72tn (€3.36tn, £2.98tn) global wellness industry. **We summarise the report's figures on p42 and will dig deeper into the numbers in our next issue.**

The wellness setting dovetailed neatly with the summit's theme of Back to the Future, which looked at what the industry has achieved in the last decade, while also predicting where it's heading in the next 10 years. But it wasn't all about Austria. Anna Bjurstam, vice president of spa and wellness for Six Senses, moderated a panel that shone a spotlight ▸

Delegates were able to soak up the healthy surroundings, walking to lunch each day

on European bathing traditions, including thalassotherapy, Russian banyas (see SB14/2 p50), Latvian pirts (see SB16/3 p82) and the aufguss sauna – the latter of which captured delegates' imagination when details of its traditional rituals were described (see p70). In the coming years, the panel said it foresees a bathing renaissance, as relaxation and prevention becomes increasingly important to society.

In another nod to European spa prowess, summit co-chair Susan Harmsworth, founder of ESPA International, moderated a session that drew attention to the area's health practitioners and alternative medical practices – such as Lanserhof, Brenners Park Hotel & Spa, Schloss Elmau and Vivamayr medical spas.

Anna Bjurstam moderated a panel focusing on European bathing traditions

Nordic Hotels' Lasse Eriksen discussed the sauna aufguss in a panel at the GWS

Harmsworth said: "I have 600 spas in 60 countries and from a global perspective I don't think you [spa operators] realise what you have here. You have amazing practitioners... And you're so far ahead in your medical wellness with the Mayr principle that's so prevalent, as well as in the holistic side in terms of personal training and nutrition." She said that as the global spa industry looks to get more into the 'wellness business' it has much to learn from Austria's lead. But she also voiced concerns over how deliverable and viable wellness is for spas, considering the specialist medical staff, equipment and necessary protocols that come with it.

> "We're inspired by what Delos and others are doing and have thought a lot about how we can do a wellness hotel in Las Vegas, as well as in hospitals

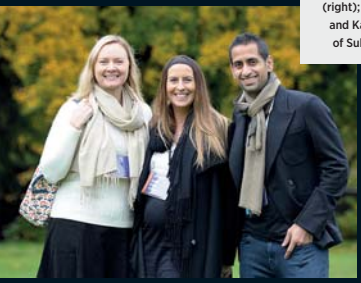
Amazon subsidiary reveals interest in wellness hotels

In a talk at GWS, Maggie Hsu, advisor to online clothing company Zappos, hinted that the firm – which is owned by Amazon – is eyeing up the wellness hospitality space.

The e-commerce company is already looking at customer service in hospitals as part of its Downtown Project in Las Vegas, where it's based. A portion of its US$50m (€46m, £41m) investment in the redevelopment scheme is funding Turntable Health – a primary care clinic that will run on a membership model. As part of a monthly fee of around US$100 (€91, £82), patients will have unlimited access to physicians, who will therefore be financially incentivised to keep patients or 'customers' healthy.

Hsu said hotels would be a natural follow on from this. "We're very interested in the hospitality space because of its focus on customer service and putting two different things together in downtown Las Vegas. We're inspired by what Delos and others are doing and have thought a lot about how we can do a wellness hotel in Las Vegas, as well as in hospitals."

A Tyrolean cocktail reception (top left); delegates pose with Olympic ski champion Stephan Eberharter (right); *Spa Business'* Jane Kitchen and Katie Barnes with Nick Irani of Subtle Energies (below left)



Enjoying the fresh air over lunch (left); exploring art as wellness (right); biking atop Hahnenkamm Mountain (below right)

Standing above the clouds atop Hahnenkamm Mountain (left); enjoying the autumn colours in Kitzbühel (above and right)

Mental picture

An underlying focus for this year's summit was on mental wellness. Jan-Emmanuel De Neve, a professor of economics at Oxford University, gave a compelling and lively talk outlining how governments and financial bodies are waking up to the value of people's happiness and mental wellbeing. This was echoed by economist Theirry Malleret, who foresees a time when "wellness will become mandatory" for countries and policy makers.

Based on the UN-endorsed *2016 World Happiness Report*, the next edition of which De Neve will co-edit, delegates heard how happy employees are 7-12 per cent more productive, and that people who are the happiest at age 16, 18 and 22 will earn about US$3,000 more per year than the national average when they reach 30.

The happiest countries in the world are Denmark and Switzerland, said De Neve, but we should be mindful of those that aren't so content or have experienced losses in growth, such as Greece. "It's in times of crisis and losses that the wellness industry has the most to do and ought to be most active, as that's when people can benefit from it the most," he said. Similarly, he said other research shows there's an argument to focus on adolescents "who are falling behind in terms of wellbeing and mental wellness" as they're likely to earn up to US$10,000 less than the national average when they grow up.

Psychologist and public health academic Dr Gerry Bodeker said that with the World Health Organization flagging up mental health as one of its top priorities in the next decade, now is the time for spas to get in on the act, as the many mental, nutritional and physical modalities they offer are already proven to have physiological and neurological benefits. He explained: "They [the modalities]

> "It's in times of crisis and losses that the wellness industry has the most to do and ought to be most active"

Psychologist and public health academic Dr Gerry Bodeker (left); and Oxford economics professor Jan-Emmanuel De Neve (below)

Isvan says that investors have recognised the growing need for integrative wellness

Wellness: the investment gap and the huge opportunity

Omer Isvan, president of international investment consultancy Servotel, piqued interests in his GWS presentation when he said investors are looking for "more than just a spa that delivers the feel-good factor". They've recognised the growing consumer need for integrative wellness and transformational experiences and are ready and waiting to put money into integrative wellness destinations.

"We have the cash, we have the intent," he said. "And there's no shortage of land, labour and capital to put it together. But we have a shortage of know how. There's a depth of knowledge [about wellness operations] in this room, but no one has packaged this up into a pill that an investor can swallow. In the hospitality industry, you can go buy a 'hotel management package' from the likes of Hilton. There's a huge supermarket where you can buy brands, management, distribution, marketing and sales, recognition and PR. But this has not happened with integrative medicine and wellness and that's where the big gap is today."

> "There's a depth of knowledge about wellness operations, but no one has packaged this up into a pill that an investor can swallow"

He added that scaleable integrative wellness is where the money is and that the success stories so far have been standalone preventative medical centres such as Vivamayr and Chiva-Som. "But you as an industry have not been able to replicate this in other destinations – like North Africa for example," he said. "This is our challenge and the underlying message."

Read more *Spa Business* reports on this topic in our 2016 Spa Foresight™ (see SB16/3 p48) and our first issue in 2016 (see SB16/1 p64).

GWS delegates donned sparkles for an evening at Swarovski Crystal Worlds

A glittering evening at Swarovski

Guests donned their best sparkles for the Global Wellness Summit's gala dinner, held at the Swarovski Crystal Worlds in Wattens, Austria.

The evening began with a stroll through the venue's Chamber of Wonders, where Swarovski crystals are displayed in different themed artworks.

After dinner, an auction to benefit the Global Wellness Institute was held, with more than US$100,000 raised to help fund industry research.

really make the case for a mental wellness category pathway that's distinct from what's been seen as the world of mental health in the past. It's time to stick a flag in the ground and say not only do we care about this, but that we're already doing something about it." Spas that will really succeed in this arena, he added, will prioritise regular visits, research and post-visit follow ups and consultations.

Other speakers shared their different perspectives on how to achieve mental wellness. For Dieter Mueller-Elmau, owner of Germany's Schloss Elmau Luxury Spa & Cultural Hideaway, mental wellness is about converging music, literature, poetry and spa. Meanwhile, in a rare appearance, Olympic ski champion Stephan Eberharter motivated delegates with his vision of mental toughness – based on 'the fun factor', setting goals and passion – before accompanying them for an afternoon of mountain activities in the fresh Alpine air.

Delos expands into cruise ships, airport lounges

Representatives from wellness real estate firm Delos spoke on wellness real estate during the summit, revealing that the firm is moving into new sectors of cruise ships – in partnership with Steiner Leisure, The Cleveland Clinic and Deepak Chopra's new wellness platform, Jiyo – and airport lounges. **Read more on p34 of this issue.**

Spa Business' Liz Terry (far right) moderated a panel on wellness architecture

Building a vision

Wellness architecture and design was another key topic highlighted at GWS 2016. In a session moderated by Liz Terry, editor of leisure architecture magazine *CLADmag*, a case for buildings that improve your wellbeing was made. "This [wellness design] matters to everyone of you," said Terry, who's also the editorial director of *Spa Business*. "All of you rely on there being a building of some kind in order to do your business. We spend millions creating these facilities, and we need to be sure that they're not only fit for purpose now, but for tomorrow and the lifetime of the building."

With this in mind, a team from global architecture firm Arup painted a picture of the not-so-distant future, when people carrying personal pollution sensors won't enter buildings if they're toxic. This has the potential to completely change the value of real estate, and Arup's focus was how to minimalise pollution in architecture, build sustainably and even create health-giving environments in line with the WELL Building Standard (see SB14/1 p28). They also described an exciting way that they're prototyping buildings using virtual reality, biometric sensors and other feedback methods to gauge a customer's response and amending designs accordingly.

In the same session, Lars Krückberg from GRAFT architects, a preferred design firm of Six Senses, said: "Architecture is ▸

Aksoy received a Leading Woman award

Aksoy and McCarthy honoured at summit

Belgin Aksoy and Jeremy McCarthy were both honoured with awards during the Global Wellness Summit.

Aksoy was honoured as a Leading Woman in Wellness for her work in founding Global Wellness Day, a non-profit grassroots movement that has now reached more than 90 countries.

And McCarthy, group director of spa and wellness for Mandarin Oriental, received the first award for Leader in Furthering Mental Wellness for his work in bringing the power of positive psychology to the spa industry.

McCarthy's been in industry for 20-plus years, has a masters degree in psychology and is the author of *The Psychology of Spas and Wellbeing*.

always for people. If we're trying to create spaces for people to heal and become well, fit and strong, then the building should do it first." Both Krückberg and Six Senses CEO Neil Jacobs spoke about the evolution of Six Senses and the importance it places on biophilic design, by having a visual connection with nature, a presence of water and using natural materials. Taking things a step further, Six Senses Douro Valley Portugal is based on 'space healing' and incorporates elements of sacred geometry, healing through energy, vastu and feng shui. Jacobs said it was one Six Senses' most profitable locations.

In a separate talk, Tom Bauer, COO of hot springs operating company Vamed Vitality World, announced the imminent opening of one of the world's first silent spas, which will be located in Austria. In fact, the importance of 'silence' was a recurring topic across the three days, and is something that's set to gain traction in the spa sector moving forwards.

Vital to Vamed's new property is the spiritual design of the spa, which has been built according to the Golden Ratio and incorporates stone masonry, symbols and structures designed to evoke inner peace.

Six Senses CEO Neil Jacobs spoke about biophilic design at GWS

Spa taskforces

Each year, the summit gives an update on sub-sector initiatives, backed by the GWI, which taskforces work on year-round with a goal to address and solve fundamental industry issues. There are currently 16 such initiatives, and there have been marked developments in many of these, including those homing in on the hydrothermal arena, spa training and careers, as well as GWI 'passion projects' such as Wellness for Cancer. **On p44, we report on the Global Thermal Think Tank event – a pre-summit gathering of thermal spa leaders who are involved in the GWI's Global Hot Springs Initiative.**

This year, a key emphasis was on the Wellness Communities Initiative spearheaded by spa consultant Mia Kyricos. In 2015, the GWI estimated wellness real estate to be a US$118.6bn (€107bn, £95bn) sector, a 19 per cent growth since 2013, and communities are cropping up worldwide – from Serenbe in the US, to the 10 Healthy New Towns proposed in the UK and from Worldcare

First-ever Shark Tank of Wellness expands annual student competition beyond spa

Shahrin Ali Raivi from North South University in Bangladesh accepted the award via Skype

The first-ever Shark Tank of Wellness Student Competition, which took place during the Global Wellness Summit, awarded a top prize of US$5,000 to Shahrin Ali Raivi from North South University in Bangladesh.

Ali Raivi won for her concept to make sustainable sanitary pads accessible to the 80 per cent of women throughout Bangladesh who currently rely on unsanitary and ineffective options like sand, leaves, mud and unsterilised rags.

Her Mukto Sanitary Napkin concept makes use of materials left over from the country's cotton industry, and promises to reduce the health and social problems associated with this issue. Ali Raivi accepted the award via Skype from Bangladesh.

A panel that included judges from across the wellness industry interrogated three student finalists live on stage before deciding on the winner.

GWS senior VP and executive director Nancy Davis said that the goal of the new format for the student competition was to attract more students – not just those in the spa industry – and to embrace all facets of wellness. Students from all over the world studying disciplines as varied as architecture and technology were invited to submit wellness innovations.

"We really wanted to create an interactive event that delegates will want to come to and be a part of," explained Davis.

The two runner-ups – Regina Tarany with "TreatAdvisor" and Svejetlana Radakovic's "Spa Watch" – were both from the IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems in Austria, and received US$2,500 each.

Left to right: 2017 summit co-chairs Maggie Hsu, Dr Gerry Bodeker and Clare Martorana; GWS chair Susie Ellis; representatives from The Breakers

Wellness Village in Dubai, to Avira Living in Wellness in Malaysia.

Aside from the wellbeing benefits that come with such developments, there's also a compelling economic driver fuelling their growth. Homes can sell at a 35 per cent premium and the often green-focused projects save on energy and bring a value proposition to real estate that can lead to quicker sales and help differentiate in a competitive market. How much of a role spas will play in such developments, however, remains to be seen.

The initiative has just published a white paper to address critical issues surrounding the fast-growing sector. And the industry should expect to hear much more about wellness communities in the year ahead, as it was revealed that the 2017 GWI's main body of research, to be released at next year's summit, will focus on the wellness real estate sector.

> There's a big shift in the growth of wellness communities, but they're not evenly distributed around the world

Save the date

US-bound: The 2017 Global Wellness Summit will take place on 9-11 October at The Breakers in Palm Beach, Florida it was announced

Ophelia Yeung, GWI's senior research fellow, who will be co-authoring the report, said: "There's a big shift in the growth of wellness communities, but they're not evenly distributed around the world and there are many different drivers and value systems for them. Our agenda is to home in on a [globally acceptable] definition [of wellness communities] and to look at different consumer needs, drivers and opportunities to help inform a framework for investor and developer discussions. We also want to dig deeper into best practice examples of such developments and the financial returns which can be expected for owners and operators."

Consultant Mia Kyricos heads up the Wellness Communities Initiative

Hello Palm Beach!

In her closing remarks, GWS chair Susie Ellis praised Linser and Harmsworth, her "fabulous" co-chairs, exclaiming that "we've had a lot of fun." A quiet anticipation then swept over the congress centre before she revealed that next year the summit will be heading to the US. The Breakers, in Palm Beach, Florida – an iconic, family-owned resort with a 120-year history based on wellness – is to host the event on 9-11 October, 2017.

To help deliver the summit, there will be three co-chairs. Technology will be a major theme and helping to steer that part of the agenda will be Maggie Hsu, advisor to online clothing retailer Zappos, and Clare Martorana, formerly of Web MD, who's just started a role in digital services at the White House. Dr Bodeker will join the duo, bringing an emphasis to mental wellness, beginning with the launch of the GWI Mental Wellness Initiative this month. ●

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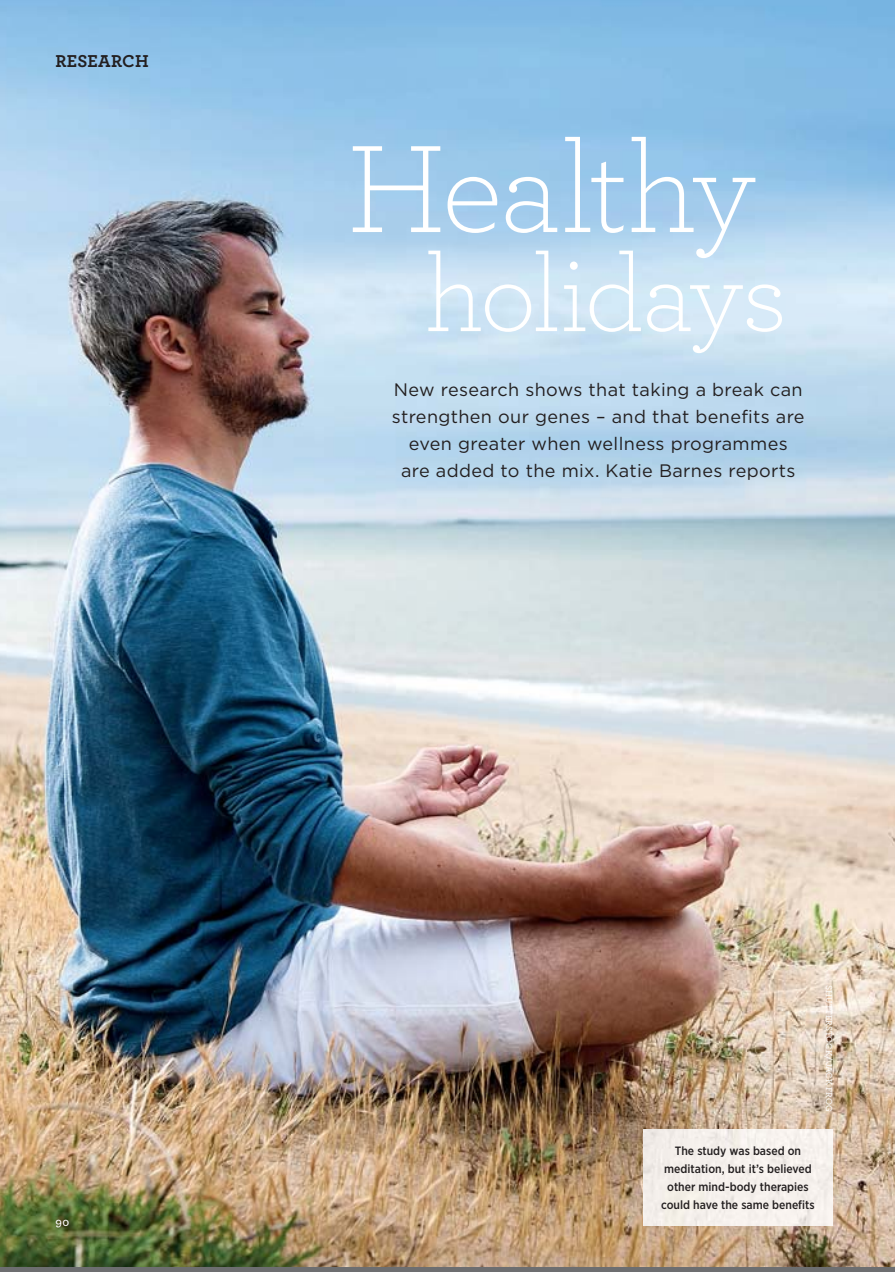
Healthy holidays

New research shows that taking a break can strengthen our genes – and that benefits are even greater when wellness programmes are added to the mix. Katie Barnes reports



The study was based on meditation, but it's believed other mind-body therapies could have the same benefits

While it's known that having time away from work can help us switch off mentally, the physical benefits of getting away from it all aren't so well documented. A study released this August*, however, has found that a break of just six days sets off genetic changes which can boost the immune system, decrease symptoms of depression and dementia and reduce stress.

What's more, breaks that include wellness programmes further increase our wellbeing – and the effects last for up to a month.

"We know intuitively that taking a break reduces biological processes related to stress," says the study's first author Dr Elissa Epel of the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), "but it was still impressive to see the large changes in gene expression people experienced after being away from a busy pace of life, in a relaxing environment, for such a short period of time."

The findings are good news for spas located around the world, as they're one of the main providers of wellness-focused retreats and holidays.

CHOPRA RETREAT

The study, by scientists from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai UCSF and Harvard Medical School, involved 94 healthy women aged 30-60.

One half of the participants were randomly selected to join a meditation retreat at the Chopra Centre for Wellbeing in California for six days, while the other half simply holidayed there. The retreat included training in mantra meditation, yoga and self-reflection exercises.

PHOTO: ©GSWS 2012

It was impressive to see the large changes in gene expression after being away from a busy pace of life

DR ELISSA EPEL

PHOTO: ©VICTOR RODRIQUEZ

Even though we have genetic dispositions, it's now known that biological ageing is influenced by lifestyle habits such as meditation, diet, stress and sleep

DR DEEPAK CHOPRA

Sixty-four women in the study were new to meditation while 30 others regularly practiced the discipline. For greater insight into the long-term effects of what scientists dubbed the 'meditation effect' compared to the 'vacation effect', the team also observed a group of 30 experienced meditators who were enrolled on the Chopra programme during the same week.

The researchers collected blood samples for genetic analysis and gathered self-reported surveys on wellbeing before and directly after the holiday, as well as a month and 10 months later.

GENE ACTIVITY

The results from the study show that all groups – novice meditators, experienced meditators and vacationers – had significant changes in molecular patterns after a week at the resort. The most notable changes in gene activity were related to stress response and immune function.

Upon assessing the wellbeing surveys, the researchers found that novice meditators had fewer symptoms of depression and less stress for far longer than those who were just on holiday. They reported significantly more positive effects in both the one-month and 10-month follow up wellbeing survey.

More research is needed to determine whether similar effects can occur at home compared to a resort setting.

The study was published in Springer Nature's neuroscience journal *Translational Psychiatry* in August.

Study participants took part in a meditation retreat at the Chopra Centre for Wellbeing in California

EXPERT INSIGHT

Epel, a professor of psychiatry at UCSF, is no stranger to the spa industry, having spoke at the 2012 Global Spa & Wellness Summit on the subject of telomeres and cellular ageing (see SB13/1 p55).

She told *Spa Business* that the effects on mental health lasted longer in the group trained in meditation because "it leaves you with more than a residue of peace and calm." It enables people to observe their thoughts without getting sucked into them, something she refers to as 'metacognition'.

However, Epel also believes the benefits aren't restricted just to meditation. "There are many other activities, mainly mind-body ones, offered at spas, that can produce this enhanced state," she says.

The findings of the study, which was part-funded by The Chopra Foundation, dovetail neatly with alternative health guru Dr Deepak Chopra's own beliefs that genes can be altered by healthy lifestyle changes.

In an interview with *Spa Business* (see SB15/4 p36) he said: "Even though we all have genetic dispositions, it's now known that biological ageing is influenced by lifestyle habits and daily activities such as meditation, movement, diet, stress management and quality of sleep.

"By making conscious choices and focused awareness, we choose to have a joyful energetic body, a restful alert mind and lightness of being." ●

** Epel, ES and Schadt, EE et al. Meditation and vacation effects have an impact on disease-associated molecular phenotypes.* Translational Psychiatry. *30 August 2016*

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SOFTWARE NEWS

What's happening in the world of spa software? *Spa Business* takes a look at the latest developments

Kate Corney, product editor & Jane Kitchen, news editor

Chopra (left) addressed over 1,000 business owners

Mindbody conference attracts star speakers

Complementary health guru Deepak Chopra (see SB15/4 p36) was a keynote speaker this year's BOLD conference, the annual event for cloud-based management software provider Mindbody, which was held in LA in October.

The conference attracted 1,000 owners in the wellness, beauty and fitness industries which use Mindbody's system to manage, build and market their businesses.

Chopra, who's partnering with Mindbody to offer access to a wellness-related classes and activities through his new mobile app Jiyo, spoke about how the transformational impact healthier lifestyle choices can have – even on our genes. A topic which he also covered at the Global Wellness Summit last November (see SB16/1 p68).

Another star speaker at the conference was Jillian Michaels, the original fitness trainer on *The Biggest Loser* TV series, who share tips on how to best motivate clients and build strong relationships.

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

Michaels, from *The Biggest Loser,* gave motivational tips

Spas will be able to use Frederick to display positive reviews on their website

Booker buys marketing & online review platform

Cloud-based software provider Booker has acquired Frederick, a marketing automation platform that offers a set of features for customer feedback, online reviews and referrals for spas and salons.

Frederick also includes a new widget that spas can use to instantly display positive reviews on their website.

The platform automatically syncs with a spa's management system, accessing historical customer and transaction data, along with schedule utilisation information. This informs when a business has open appointments on its calendar, so Frederick can promote those openings through targeted, two-way text and email campaigns to the customers it deems are most likely to book.

Frederick also automates collecting and posting positive reviews to a spa's website as well as Yelp, Google and Facebook pages and provides a feedback loop to owners.

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

Zenoti to enter new markets with US$20m-plus funding

Spa software specialist Zenoti has secured US$15m (€13m, £12m) in a second round of funding from California-based growth equity investment firm Norwest Venture Partners, which it will use in part to expand into the fitness and yoga space.

Zenoti – which had previously raised US$6m (€5m, £4.6m) in funding from Accel Partner – will also use the money to establish itself in the European market.

In addition, co-founder and vice president of marketing Saritha Katikaneni says the monies will be used for "more sales, more marketing, more reach," hiring new talent and product innovation.

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

> "Our vision was to create a system that our clients would love in terms of usability, but also one that solved challenges and which translated into real business results"
>
> Saritha Katikaneni

Katikaneni is Zenoti's co-founder

ISAMARE/SHUTTERSTOCK

TAC launched Sense so spa managers can run their business while on the go

TAC gets into mobile spa management

Spa software firm The Assistant Company (TAC) has created Sense – Mobile Spa Management: a new product for mobile devices, such as smartphones or tablets.

The Austrian developer, which recently won a contract to supply the InterSPA group with its Reservation Assistant Spa & Activity Software, has launched Sense to help spa managers control their business while on the go.

Developed with responsive design, touch-optimised operation, intuitive features and clear presentation, Sense enables spa managers and fitness club owners to carry out key tasks. These include booking and scheduling appointments, updating guest data, point of sale and printing reports to get an insight into the revenue history.

Spa products can be bought online with TAC's WebShop

Sense was introduced at the TAC Business Partner Meeting in September. At the meeting, TAC also revealed new features to its WebShop service, which integrates with Reservation Assistant and the spa client website, letting customers buy products anytime, anywhere.

Spa-kit keyword: **TAC**

Sequoia Soft reveals marketing, management and loyalty platform

Sequoia Soft is launching Asterio, a cloud-based, customisable multi-activity platform to help wellness businesses with marketing, management and customer loyalty. It's designed to enable customers to find, book, arrive, enjoy, share details about and return to spa facilities.

The platform is also said to increase visibility on major online booking sites, add web bookings to schedules and confirm them with a personalised email or SMS.

Front desk and check-in tasks are centralised on a single page and an interactive plan grid lets spas change, move and transfer treatment bookings in just a few clicks.

On top of this, Asterio helps with spreading the word about events, deals and useful information and provides an online satisfaction survey that can then be published on a spa's website.

Spa-kit.net keywords: **Sequoia Soft**

Spa goers can find, book, check-in and share details about spa facilities with Asterio

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

Stanaway will build on her background as a SpaSoft trainer to grow the brand

Stanaway to drive spa business for Springer-Miller

US-based Springer-Miller Systems, provider of spa and hospitality management systems, is to strengthen its position in the wellness arena with the appointment of a new SpaSoft business development manager.

Nicole Stanaway will be consulting with spas to identify opportunities for the SpaSoft spa management system. She brings her experience of travelling the world installing the software as a SpaSoft trainer.

"Nicole has a strong passion for the spa industry and for SpaSoft," says Michelle Young, also recently appointed to the role of vice president of sales and marketing for Springer-Miller.

Young adds the company now plans to expand its list of SpaSoft installations and further improve customer service.

SpaSoft, used by many high-end spas, can run on-premise or be hosted in the cloud. One of its newest features includes the addition of business intelligence dashboards. Another of its features includes the ability for spas to send appointment reminders by SMS.

Spa-kit keyword: **SpaSoft** ●

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Product innovation

Industry suppliers tell *Spa Business* about their latest spa design, product, treatment and equipment launches

spa-kit.net
for the latest product and supplier news

Kate Corney, product editor & Jane Kitchen, news editor

My Blend to embrace light, vibration and cyrotherapy technology reveals Prisca Courtin-Clarins

Courtin-Clarins says the Youth Synergy treatment debuted at Velaa Private Island in the Maldives and will roll out across other Spa My Blend by Clarins locations

My Blend by Clarins has debuted its newest innovation, Youth Synergy, at Velaa Private Island in the Maldives with a view to rolling out the tech-focused treatment worldwide.

Prisca Courtin-Clarins, director of spas, My Blend and Clarins retail, says Youth Synergy builds on its bespoke beauty approach: "This new treatment is more high-tech – with a skin diagnosis, three treatment machines and four high-precision skincare accessories – more sensorial and even more personalised, with customised blends and after-treatment routines."

Following the Youth Synergy facial, a My Colorblend light therapy LED mask is placed over the face emitting wavelengths with specific colours: red to calm, boost collagen cells and reduce signs of ageing; blue to purify and kill bacteria; and pink to accelerate skin recovery.

Next, My Wave Blend is applied. In this 12-minute session, vibrations are used on the face and décolleté to stimulate lymphatic drainage, drain toxins and decrease puffiness.

Finally, My Cryotech is a cooling wand using cryotherapy technology to tone the skin for an instant glow and tighter pores, before make-up application.

Spa-kit keyword: Clarins

An LED mask boosts collagen and purifies the skin (top and left); vibrations help to drain toxins (above)

Spa owners can design their own tables says Oakworks' Dafne Berlanga

Berlanga says spa owners can design a table in real time with its new online tool

Studio by Oakworks Spa is a new interactive, visual online tool that allows spa directors or consultants to design their own massage tables – choosing from thousands of combinations of styles, materials, finishes and features – and see the creation come to life on-screen.

"In order to keep up with changing design trends, we want to offer a level of table customisation that has not been available in the spa industry before," says Dafne Berlanga, vice president of international business development.

Studio lets you see the table design change in real time and the programme is in high-definition, so details like wood grains and textures stand out. Concepts can be saved and shared with others, making for easy collaboration.

The programme also makes it possible to create a bespoke table that can reflect a spa's style or brand. Want to see what that table looks like in your spa's signature purple? Click a button and watch it come to life. Prefer a wood-grain base? Click again.

In case you don't know where to start – or need inspiration – Oakworks has created five design groups including contemporary and industrial styles for spas to customise.

Spa-kit keyword: Oakworks

Thousands of table combinations and styles are available

TouchAmerica's Stewart Griffith on partnering with Robert Henry

TouchAmerica, the family-owned spa equipment manufacturer, has teamed up with industry architect Robert Henry to launch a collection of convertible and portable furniture and equipment.

The Robert Henry Design by TouchAmerica has been created for hotels that want to offer spa treatments but don't want a full-service facility – something which both parties feel there's a gap in the market for.

"Based on feedback from our advisory board, TouchAmerica is prioritising the development of equipment, furniture and retail solutions to take the wellness experience outside the spa's four walls," says TouchAmerica's CEO Stewart Griffith.

With those goals in mind, Henry designed three core pieces. The Masquerade is a hospitality day bed that converts into a massage table for easy guestroom massages; while The Concierge, a roaming spa cart that includes a warming drawer, attachments for mag lamp and steamer and pull-out manicure table, can be taken to a pool area for outdoor treatments. The Zero-G is a lightweight zero-gravity lounger that features stretch bands to evenly distribute weight.

In other news, Henry has also partnered with Salt Chamber to design the Salt Booth – a halotherapy cabin that's the size of a large shower.

Spa-kit keyword: TouchAmerica ▸

Griffith (left) and Henry (above) say the new, portable line has been designed for use in all areas of a hotel – not just in a spa setting

The lightweight Zero-G lounger

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Judith Compton on Mala + Mantra's mindfulness jewellery

Semi-precious gemstones and sustainably-sourced woods form the basis of the new Yoga Mala necklace and bracelet spa retail collection by Mala + Mantra.

The accessories, hand-crafted by fair trade Filipino artisans, come with a written mantra based on the holistic properties and energies of each gemstone and material to evoke an overall sense of mindfulness and wellness.

"We started this business in an effort to create a meaningful brand whose products would resonate with conscious consumers and, through our products, help to spread the powerful message of mindfulness," says founder Judith Compton.

"We source the highest quality sustainable raw materials, consciously produced with fair labour. This includes paying fair wages and providing a safe, supportive working environment."

The beads retail at top hotel spas such as at Red Mountain Resort, Utah and The Ritz-Carlton Aruba.

Compton adds that integrating Yoga Mala into a yoga or meditation practice enhances the wellness experience: "The beads symbolise the namaste mantra, which translates to 'the divine light in me honours the divine light in you'."

Spa-kit.net keyword: Mala

The accessories make a fitting retail line for high-end spas

Barbara Close reveals Naturopathica's tea, tinctures and honey

Skincare company Naturopathica is expanding into therapeutic ingestibles for the first time by introducing 13 teas, tinctures and fortified honeys.

Created by founder and CEO Barbara Close, who is also a master herbalist, the new arrivals are designed to work with the body's natural processes to boost health and vitality from the inside out.

"Herbal remedies play an essential role in bringing wellness full-circle as we continue to educate our community about ways they can live better and take charge of their health," says Close. "With the rise of chronic imbalances due to the stress of our 24/7 lifestyles, consumers now want a more holistic approach to wellness, rather than relying on symptom management."

Four new remedy teas focus on specific needs such as muscle and joint pain, skin health, stress and vitality. Naturopathica herbal tinctures are said to assimilate more quickly into the bloodstream than capsules.

The company's raw, organic wildflower honeys are infused with adaptogenic herbs and are used to increase the body's resistance to stress and disease.

Spa-kit.net keyword: Naturopathica

Therapeutic ingestibles are a new focus for the skincare firm

Close, a master herbalist, says the range can address imbalances in the body

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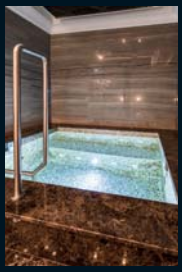

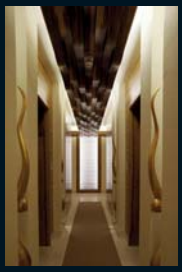

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Comfort Zone debuts massage for sleep health by Dr Claudia Aguirre

Skincare brand Comfort Zone has launched a new massage created in conjunction with neuroscientist and skin expert Dr Claudia Aguirre (see SB16/2 p58) that's designed to help produce better sleep.

The Tranquillity Pro-Sleep Massage uses Comfort Zone's re-released Tranquility range and targets three senses – smell, hearing and touch – to clear the mind and create a deep level of relaxation.

Using the principles of aromatherapy, the Pro-Sleep Massage stimulates the limbic system with both oil and massage cream. A Tranquillity soundtrack, specifically created for the ritual, provides a slow, hypnotic rhythm.

"This repetitiveness immediately becomes familiar to our brain and enables the mind to disconnect, since there is nothing new to process and disturb it," Dr Aguirre explains. "With the level of attention decreasing, anxiety and distracted thoughts are also banished. Sounds merge with the slowness of movements, creating a reconciling and protective atmosphere."

Reformulated Tranquillity products (left) are used in the Pro-Sleep Massage

The massage draws inspiration from ayurvedic medicine and Malay massage. Kneading movements are replaced by more gentle touches and geometrical techniques, mainly with overlapping hands. Wide movements are created with specially designed flat, soft brushes to induce relaxation.

"The gentle touch and the alternated and combined use of two extremely soft brushes stimulate special nerve fibres called C fibres that have been recently identified for conveying a pleasant sensation to the brain," says Aguirre. "They're only stimulated by gentle, warm caresses, and thus deliver a pleasant emotional signal to the brain."

Spa-kit keywords: Comfort Zone

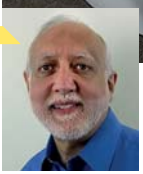
Dr Aguirre says Pro-Sleep draws on ayurvedic and Malay massage

Neurologist Dan Cohen designs lounger to relax the brain

The SolTec Lounge, developed by neurologist Dan Cohen, uses synchronised sound and vibration to produce a state of relaxation by causing the areas of the brain responsible for maintaining stress to be inhibited.

"Sometimes, we're a lot better off when we can turn off our brain," says Dr Cohen. "The brain is the seat of the ego, not the soul, and it is the major – if not sole – contributor to stress in our lives."

The chair, with its one-piece seat, puts clients in a zero-gravity position and features an amplifier and transducers that vibrate. It uses layered music with multiple soundtracks playing simultaneously – designed to be pleasant, but random enough that the brain stops trying to make sense of it and relaxes instead.



The chair uses synchronised sound and vibration says Cohen

Typical sessions are 25 or 50 minutes and can be done on their own, or before deep tissue or alignment therapies for added relaxation and benefit.

During initial sessions, the company says most people drift between wakefulness and a very relaxed state of drowsiness, but are able to quickly resume normal activities afterwards. Later sessions are said to create greater levels of awareness and deep physical, emotional and mental relaxation as the brain gets used to the experience.

Spa-kit keyword: SolTec

PROMOTION

ESPA's new three-in-one anti-ageing formula meets the changing skincare needs of today's beauty consumer, says Suzy Blackley

"Our new Tri-Active™ Advanced Instant Facial is designed for women looking to address the early and developing signs of ageing, but who aren't yet experiencing the more specific skincare needs that arrive later in life," says Suzy Blackley, senior brand manager for natural skincare brand ESPA International.

She describes Instant Facial as a "seriously potent, multi-action formula". A first of its kind in the UK, it combines a super-charged facial serum, treatment oil and essence – ultimately delivering a triple-action result – providing short, medium and long-term age-defying results while helping customers achieve a much-desired post-facial glow.

Blackley says: "Facial oils can be a polarising area for some customers. They offer so many important benefits for the skin, even more so as it ages, which some customers are very familiar with, yet others tend to be wary of as they think oils will feel too heavy on their skin.

Blackley says the new formula is like 'a super-charged serum' while still feeling 'incredibly light'

Instant Facial is one of ESPA's most potent skincare formulas to date

"Following much research and feedback through our ESPA therapist network, a great deal of consideration went into Instant Facial to make it an incredibly lightweight formula.

"We've encapsulated a blend of oils, including jojoba, evening primrose and avocado, that disperse on the skin – leaving it light and luminous on the surface, while also penetrating deeper. Combined with natural plant extracts and marine actives, the formula offers exceptional age-defying results, compared with a serum alone."

Instant Facial includes a number of "UK firsts" in terms of ingredients, says Blackley. The product contains white truffle extract, which is said to enhance elasticity, minimise the appearance of fine lines and boost the skin's moisture content; and also macroalgae cell extract – an antioxidant that helps to improve the skin's natural ability to protect itself from ageing.

"Instant Facial effectively helps the skin to help itself," adds Blackley. "It delivers that instant skin brightening and smoothing effect that all our customers desire, but then goes to work on their problem areas while at the same time stimulating the skin's antioxidant capacity so that it can better protect itself."

ESPA

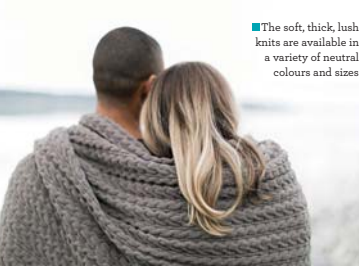
The formula also contains hyaluronic acid, vitamin C, olive extract, bentonite clay, green algae and winged kelp to make it one of ESPA's most powerful formulas to date.

She concludes: "The ESPA range is totally prescriptive. Our expert therapists are all highly trained to carry out a detailed SkinVision™ analysis with all spa customers. A personalised combination of products are then selected for the treatment to meet the client's needs.

"Instant Facial gives our therapists another highly effective tool to offer their clients, and particularly those experiencing early or developing signs of skin ageing."

Spa-kit keyword: ESPA

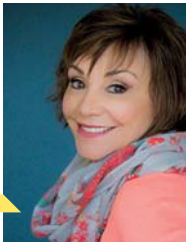
Towels and throws enhance Comphy's offering says Mia Richardson



The soft, thick, lush knits are available in a variety of neutral colours and sizes

Spa linen supplier Comphy has launched a selection of towels that include organic, cotton and bamboo, in addition to blankets for professional spa use.

"It's a big year for Comphy with all of our product releases and we couldn't be more excited to be able to offer our clients a full range that will meet all of their linen needs," says Mia Richardson, founder and CEO. "Whether it's sheets, towels or beautiful knits for guest areas, our new lines offer the same famous Comphy softness we're known for and come in a wide selection of sizes, colours, designs and fabrics."



Richardson says Comphy can now meet all spa linen needs

Comphy's new towel lines include the superior quality Bamboo, highly absorbent Essential, eco-friendly cotton Simply Organic, dual-textured Serenity, and premium cotton Opulent, as well as salon, make-up and fitness towels.

Comphy has also debuted a luxury range of soft, thick, lush knits for spa treatment rooms and relaxation areas. The UV resistant Bubble Cable Throws and Damask Blankets are for indoor or outdoor use and are available in a variety of neutral colours and patterns. The fabric is warm but lightweight, as well as anti-microbial, anti-bacterial, stain-resistant, and has been designed to not lose shape, pill or shrink.

Spa-kit.net keyword: Comphy

Christian Mas reveals Sothys biggest launch of 2016

La Crème 128 is only available in premium Sothys spas says Mas

As part of its 70th anniversary, Sothys reveals a significant new product – La Crème 128 Secrets de Sothys premium cream – supported by a 2.5 hour, 11-stage face and body treatment.

The cream is formulated with stem cells from a specially developed Bernard Mas Sothys Rose and porcelain flower oil, with packaging by French porcelain house, Bernardaud.

Sothys CEO Christian Mas says: "When my father [chair of Sothys] turned 70 we offered him a specially designed rose bearing his name to be planted in the Sothys botanical garden. He brought this rose to the lab, which extracted the stem cells.

"So by its formula and actives this cream is unique. It is also unique for its packaging, a Bernardaud porcelain jar – which tells a story of French refinement and lifestyle – and of course by its results on the skin."

La Crème 128 is only available in Sothys premium spas and salons. Mas adds: "We hope it will make them [the facilities] stand out... This treatment is state of the art, our premium signature, with instant results in terms of anti ageing."

Spa-kit.net keyword: Sothys ●

It uses stem cells from a Sothys branded rose and packaging is by Bernardaud

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ART OF WELLBEING

Making art can reduce stress-related hormones according to new US study. Jane Kitchen finds out more

Operators such as Morgans and Miraval which offer mindfulness colouring sessions and art therapy could be doing more than just helping guests to unleash their inner creativity. A new study by Drexel University, USA, has found that whether you're a Van Gogh in the making or a stick-figure sketcher, making art significantly reduces stress-related hormones in your body.

Although researchers believed that those who had past experience in creating art might have an advantage, their study found stress-reducing benefits across the board.

"It was surprising and it also wasn't," says Girija Kaimal, assistant professor of creative arts therapies. "It wasn't surprising because that's the core idea in art therapy: everyone is creative and can be expressive in the visual arts when working in a supportive setting. That said, I did expect that perhaps the effects would be stronger for those with prior experience."

DRAGON IMAGES/SHUTTERSTOCK

Seventy-five per cent of participants had lower cortisol levels thanks to art therapy

Freestyle art

For the study 39 adults, aged 18 to 59, participated in 45 minutes of art-making and just under half of them described their art experience as "limited". Levels of the stress hormone cortisol were recorded via a saliva sample before and afterwards.

> "After about five minutes, I felt less anxious... Doing art allowed me to put things into perspective"

Materials available to the 'artists' included markers and paper, modelling clay and collage accessories. As it was a freestyle session, no directions were given as to what materials to use and participants could create anything they desired. An art therapist was on hand to help if requested.

Cortisol reduction

The results of the study, published in the journal *Art Therapy**, showed that cortisol levels went down in 75 per cent of the participants during their 45 minutes of making art. And while there was some variation in how much cortisol levels lowered, there was no correlation between past art experiences and lower levels.

Written testimonies of their experiences afterward revealed how the participants felt about the creating art. "It was very relaxing," one wrote. "After about five minutes, I felt less anxious. I was able to obsess less about things that I had not done or need[ed] to get done. Doing art allowed me to put things into perspective."

It was revealed that the younger study participants had the lowest levels of cortisol. As a result, Kaimal suggested that they may find using art as a form of de-stressing to be particularly effective. ■

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Kaimal, G et al. Reduction of Cortisol Levels and Participants' Responses Following Art Making. Art Therapy. May 2016

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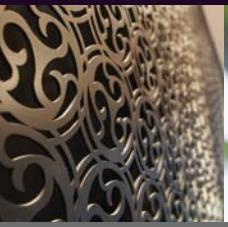
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