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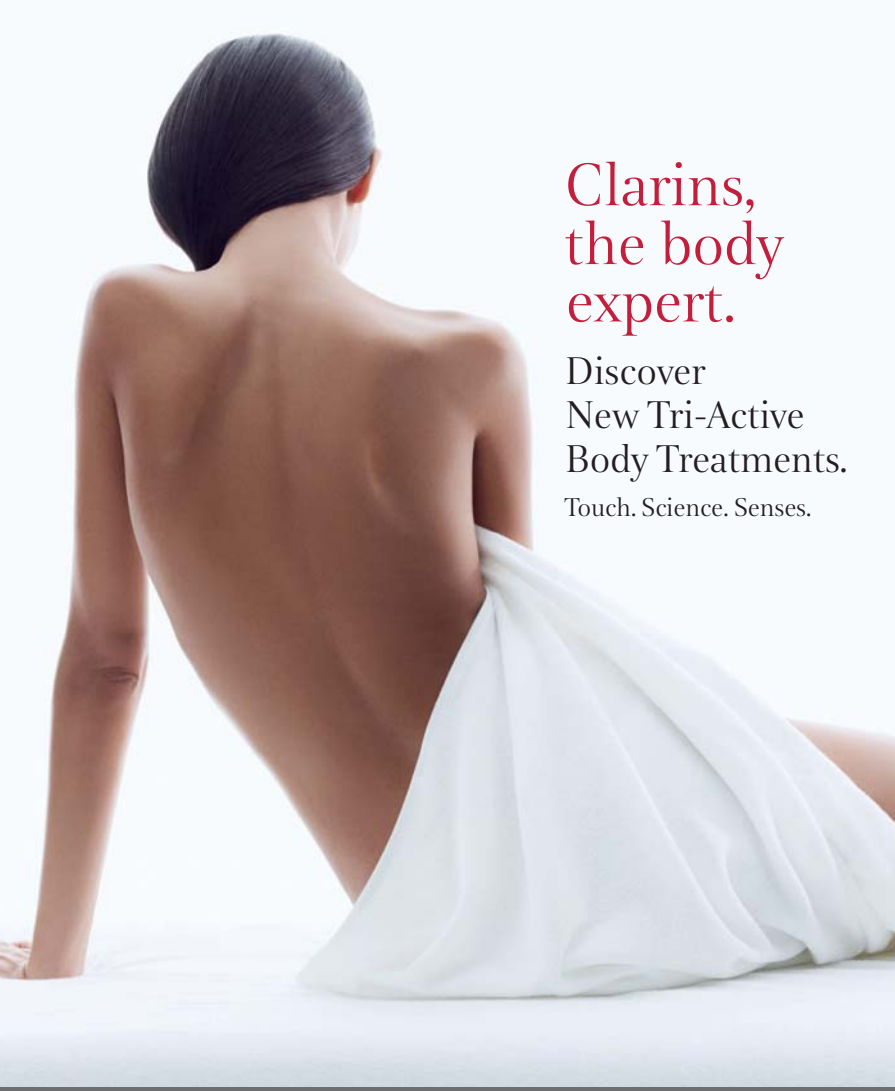

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Wellness for Cancer & Biologique Recherche

A ground-breaking partnership p32

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To test or not to test?

Spas that offer medical testing services to guests are at the top of their game, but there are many reasons people come to get tested and then for follow-up treatment at a spa – and some of them may not be quite as obvious as we imagine

To test, or not to test? That is the question. As more spas begin to tackle the opportunities presented by the move to wellness and wellbeing, one of the main decisions to be made is whether to offer medical testing.

In this issue, we examine the pros and cons of offering testing services in our Ask an Expert feature on page 52.

Test results – in the right hands – enable the prescription of more effective, customised treatments, superior outcomes for the guest and increased revenue for the spa.

However, there are pitfalls when it comes to offering medical testing and the process is not without risk for both operator and guest, especially if the spa doesn't have full-time medical staff on-site, so the balance must be weighed.

Spas that introduce testing will find an uptake from guests who want to enhance their visit and leave in better shape, but there's a bigger picture when it comes to motivation. Why do some choose to have tests done in a spa rather than in a medical facility? My strong inkling is that the decision may be related to insurance premiums.

Get tests done within the mainstream medical universe and your results will be kept on your medical records and, as a result, will be accessible by health insurers.

However, have your medical testing done in a private spa and the results are kept off the grid, meaning any adverse findings will not impact your ability to buy health or life insurances, or the premiums you pay for it.

In my stays at spas that offer medical testing, I've been intrigued to find large numbers of wealthy people who visit regularly for health tests. While the insurance aspect of the transaction is never articulated, it doesn't take a genius to figure out that's one of the reasons this is happening.

So if your clientele extends to the wealthy, and you're not yet offering testing, you may find there's an appetite for these services, should you decide to introduce them.

SHUTTERSTOCK/ALEXANDER RATHS

Some have health checks done in spas to keep ownership of results

> If your medical testing is done in a private spa, then the results are kept off the grid, meaning any findings won't impact your ability to buy insurances

Of course not everyone's hiding their test results from the insurers; many guests rely on their spa break to give them a life-saving reboot. Testing can be a vital part of the process, because it leads to accurate treatment which gets results more quickly, enabling them to optimise their visit.

Whatever the motivation, if customers need it and you're able to provide it, then testing can add a valuable and valued service which will elevate your business to another level, enabling you to offer a more rounded wellness service.

Liz Terry, editorial director @elizterry

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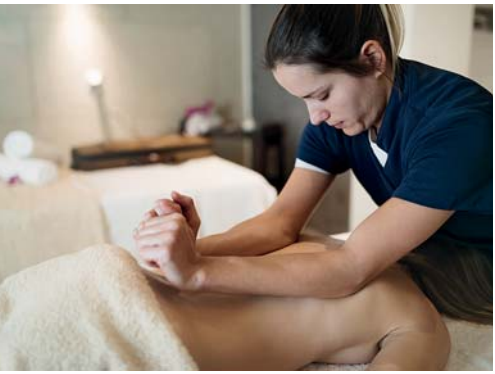

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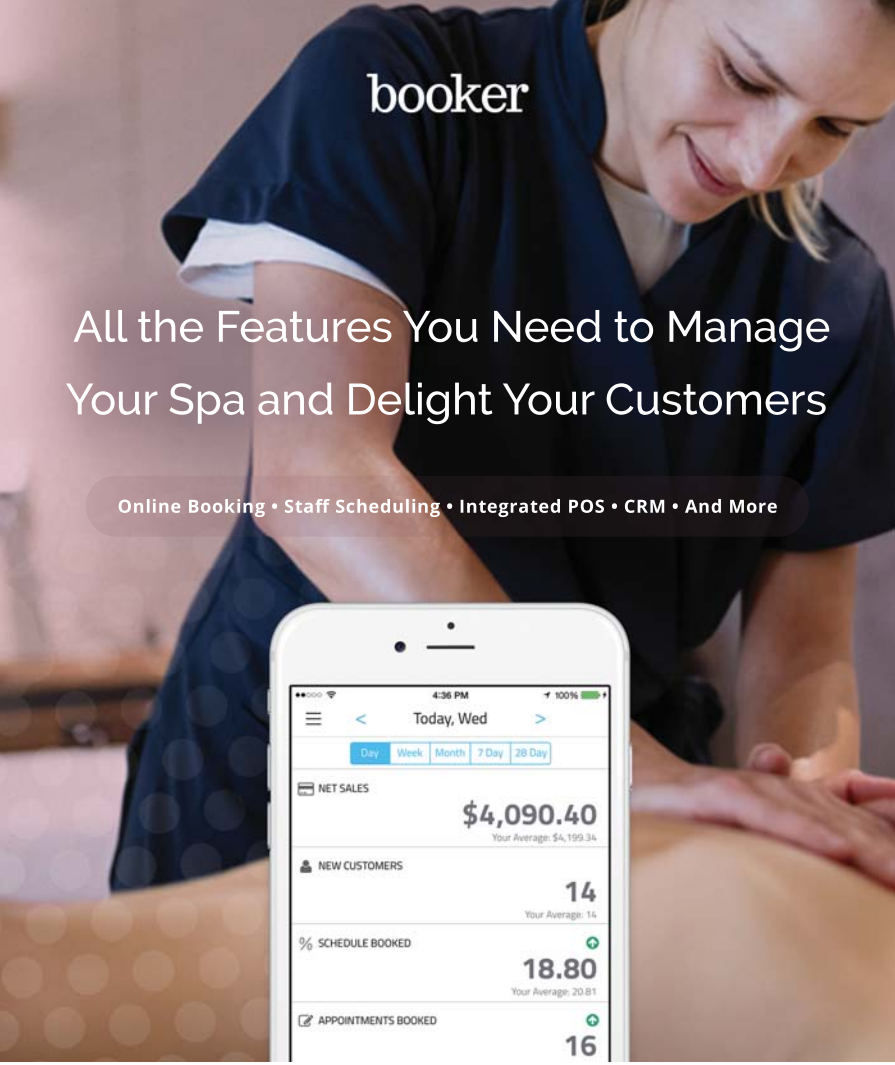

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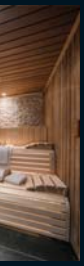

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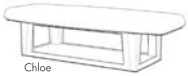

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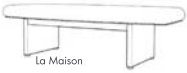

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Letters

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

Hyatt's Miraval acquisition is a gamechanger

Mia Kyricos, president, Kyricos & Associates LLC

Hyatt's purchase of Miraval for US$215m is not a particularly large deal in the greater world of hospitality, but for what the deal lacks in size, it makes up for in strategic genius. In fact, with the "big box" mergers of Marriott and Starwood or Accor and FRHI, bigger does not necessarily mean smarter. Consolidation may have given these companies leverage in terms of marketing, distribution and even negotiations, but it's yet to be seen if this will equate to consumer retention and acquisition.

On the other hand, Hyatt – in a rather stealthy move – has signaled that it recognises a need to better cater to the growing wellbeing needs of leisure and business travellers alike. Hyatt CEO Mark Hoplamazian has said that buying Miraval was fueled by Hyatt's effort to "retool its relationship" with its customers by adding more "empathy" to its product. In other words, Hyatt seems to be saying "we hear you," while the others appear to be saying "we want to win." Both sentiments are compelling to shareholders, but one will create more brand loyalists faster.

Ultimately, this deal stands to spawn some healthy competition in both wellness and hospitality – and the increasingly mixed world of "wellness hospitality." Any way you slice it, one thing is for sure: the game is on (see Top Team, p 43).

> What I love about this deal is that it stands to spawn some healthy competition

Hyatt and Miraval – the long game

Trent Munday, vice president, Steiner Spa Consulting

> Smart hotel brands are looking for more ways to engage with their guests

What's most interesting to me about Hyatt's recent acquisition of Miraval is that there are two trends at play that have the potential to merge at some point in the future. If they do, Hyatt will win.

First, it stands to reason that smart hotel brands today are looking for more ways to engage with their guests – and not just when they are in the hotel. The more contact guests have with a hotel brand, the stronger the connection, and the more valuable the relationship. We see this logic in the strategy of hotels selling beds or linens: if guests take the experience home, they have an ongoing connection with the brand.

Secondly, people are more focused than ever on wanting to live well, and wellness is something that guests want to be part of their day-to-day lifestyle. This trend also ties in with corporate wellness.

So wellness is becoming something we do every day. Hotel brands are looking for ways to create ongoing connections with guests. And there it is: with the purchase of Miraval, Hyatt is now perfectly positioned to extend its brand into not only the homes, but also into the day-to-day lives of its guests.

Gut health and mental wellness

Bryan Hoare, general manager - ESPA Baha Mar

I was happy to see that Liz Terry's Editor's Letter in the last issue of *Spa Business* addressed mental wellness as "the next frontier for spa." As a member of the Global Wellness Institute's Mental Wellness Initiative, this is an issue that's particularly important to me.

One of the projects that we are working on as part of the GWI Initiative is to produce a white paper on the growing body of research around the microbiota-gut-brain axis (MGBA) and mental wellness, which we plan to have ready to present at the Global Wellness Summit.

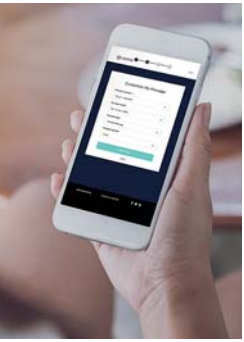
There are 500 million information-transmitting neurons in our gut – the same amount as are in a cat's brain. These form what is known as the enteric nervous system (ENS), also commonly referred to as the 'second brain.' In addition to these neurons, 40 trillion bacteria live in our gut, and together they work bidirectionally with the brain to keep our body in balance. A good proportion of the scientific literature on the MGBA addresses its effect on our mental wellness – from anorexia to Parkinson's disease, to depression. There's a lot of research out there – still in the early stages – but evidence suggests that if you don't look after your gut health, it won't be good for your mental wellness.

> **There are 500 million information-transmitting neurons in our gut – the same amount as in a cat's brain**

More studies are needed to understand what aspects of our lifestyles affect our gut microbiome, and we need to take the lead on ensuring that the information we share is valid and properly reviewed. We must guard against sensationalising our services, yet allow people who are interested in advancing their wellbeing to be informed and supported in this subject. Our aim should be not to over-promise and under-deliver, but to offer integrity and trust – and to promote services through the integration of our passion and knowledge.

On-demand providers fuelling industry change

Michael Tompkins, executive recruiter Hutchinson Consulting and immediate past chair, ISPA



The shortages of managers and providers in spa are staggering; in the US alone, there are 40,000 unfilled spa vacancies, and 80 per cent of hotel and resort spas have unstaffed positions.

But the most recent ISPA data show that incentives offered by spas don't necessarily provide therapists what they want from employers, namely: flexible schedules, electronic communication like texting, and not being obligated to to stay at work when they're not booked.

On-demand providers like Zeel and Soothe are not only changing the way consumers interact with spas, they're changing the way therapists work. They're making employment attractive because they offer flexibility in schedules, and they're also able to offer therapists a larger portion of the service fee – up to 70 per cent at Soothe – because they have such low overhead.

> **What employees like is flexibility and nimbleness within the digital process**

With the new model of digital on-demand massage, therapists can make more money, control when they want to work – and leave behind the pressure of retail sales. What employees like is flexibility and nimbleness within the digital process – especially Millennials, who are used to coordinating their lives through their phones. This creates a challenging market in the brick-and-mortar realm, and with real estate continuing to be more expensive, don't expect it to go away.

Spas need to think about what they can do to engage staff before they lose their business to on-demand providers. Change is coming, and we're going to have to manipulate our businesses. If you're not in the digital space, you need to ask how you can transform your business.

by Lisa Starr, senior consultant, Wynne Business

spa people

> Spas can help us re-boot our system and help us remember what life feels like when we're sleeping normally

Dr Mehmet Oz professor of surgery, Columbia University and host of television show 'The Dr Oz Show'

Dr Oz has long been a proponent of sleep health and will speak at the Global Wellness Summit

Spa clients often say they'd like to fall asleep after their treatments, something the schedule rarely allows. However, these same clients are often unable to sleep well at night, and studies show that the lack of sleep has long-lasting effects on overall health and vitality. At the Global Wellness Institute's release of the wellness industry economy data earlier this year, Dr Mehmet Oz – who has just been named as one of the keynotes at this year's Global Wellness Summit – made a surprise appearance and delivered some impactful messages on the power of sleep.

At the event, Dr. Oz said that sleep is the "single biggest underappreciated health problem," and that there is much more spas can do to promote healing.

"Spas can help us re-boot our system and help us remember what life feels like when we are sleeping normally," Oz tells *Spa Business*. "We can also disrupt our bad habits and learn hacks to maintain normalcy after returning home from the spa."

> We can disrupt our bad habits and learn hacks to maintain normalcy after returning home from the spa

Dr Oz sits on the Six Senses Wellness Board, which features specialist doctors and scientists who advise the spa and resort brand on nutrition, sleep, and cardiovascular and complementary medicine as part of the Integrated Wellness programme.

Sleep specialist Dr Michael Breus has worked with Six Senses to create a the Sleep with Six Senses programme, which includes a pre-arrival questionnaire, a meeting with a Sleep Ambassador, custom-made mattresses fitted with organic sheets, use of a sleep-tracking device, and a menu of sleep-inducing spa treatments.

"Six Senses is superb because it offers an entire ecosystem,

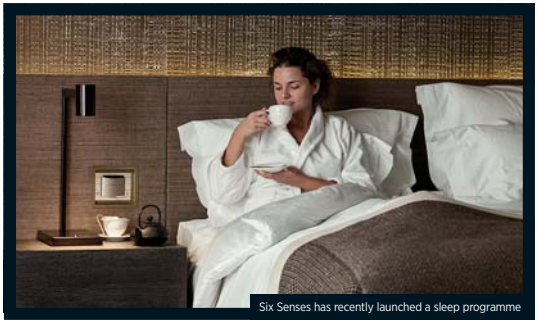
Dr Oz made a surprise appearance at a recent Global Wellness Institute event

so we can really feel the bliss of being rested," says Oz. "I had yoga nidra-based therapy in Six Senses Oman, and I was in a twilight that I have tried to emulate since."

Oz also points to wellness destination Miraval, which he says "does a nice job educating guests" on sleep health – another way that spas can get involved in the sleep wellness picture.

Other spa and wellness destinations – including One&Only, Ritz-Carlton, Grand Resort Bad Ragaz and Canyon Ranch – offer treatments or programmes designed to help customers sleep better. Even suppliers have got in on the game, with companies like Comfort Zone creating a Tranquility Pro Sleep Massage.

Oz has long advocated for the important role sleep plays in health and wellness, and recently entered into a joint venture called SleepScore Labs with ResMed and Pegasus Capital Partners. ResMed currently manufactures a non-contact, cloud-connected device called the S+, which uses bio-motion sensors to measure sleep patterns and is used at Six Senses. Beginning in late 2016, S+ devices were also shared with more than 20,000 consumers through Dr Oz's television show, and so far 1.5 million hours of sleep data have been recorded. The data shows that 70 per cent of people are sleeping less than the minimum recommendation of seven hours per night.



Six Senses has recently launched a sleep programme

We pay so much attention to making resolutions about diet and exercise. It's high time we pay more attention to sleep

"I've learned in my time as a public health teacher, advocate, television host and physician that the current standard of sleep quality in America is drastically unacceptable," says Oz. "We pay so much attention to making resolutions about diet and exercise. It's high time we paid more attention to sleep. We know if people have the right tools, they will be able to improve their sleep and overall health." ●

by Kim Megson, deputy editor, CLAD

> Creating layers and layers of stories that our guests can live seems to be a clear way forward
>
> **Bill Bensley** founder Bensley

For his latest grandiose Southeast Asian spa project, designer Bill Bensley has taken his inspiration from an unlikely combination of themes: the work of pioneering French naturalist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, the importance of higher education, Lewis Carroll's novel *Alice in Wonderland* – and mushrooms.

Bensley's typically whimsical design touches feature throughout the JW Marriott Phu Quoc Emerald Bay resort in the south of Vietnam – a project the designer describes as "perhaps my best."

The luxury 243-bedroom property is built within the buildings of the 19th century Lamarck University, whose eponymous founder built it to promote study of the natural world. The design concept focuses on the process of learning and discovery and the influence of Lamarck – who laid the groundwork for Darwin's theory of evolution. Hand-painted walls depict flora and fauna, sculptures of animals are present on the buildings, and objects preserved from the university can be seen throughout the hotel.

A key component of the resort is the Spa Chanterelle, which features six couple's treatment rooms, a body treatment suite, a hair salon and steam and sauna rooms.

The design is inspired by mushrooms – which Vietnam's French colonists long believed to have therapeutic properties, and which residents of Phu Quoc traditionally foraged for in the surrounding jungle.

Mushroom shapes are found in the furnishings and hand-drawn artwork on the walls, and biological illustrations adorn the interior ceilings, adding a surreal quality to the space. Bensley himself has collected some 20 samples of dried foraged mushrooms, which are on display at the entry to the spa, in a turn-of-the-century French glass and brass shop cabinet.

References from *Alice in Wonderland* – in which mushrooms play a key role – also feature heavily; the book was also published the same year – 1865 – as Lamarck University was inaugurated. In one corridor, asymmetric arches curve at mirroring angles to create a layering effect, echoing Alice falling down the rabbit hole at the start of the book.

"Mushrooms provide a historically correct fantasy element that seemed to be a perfect match for this spa on Rue de Lamarck," Bensley explains. "To coax guests outside of the comfort of our rooms, the spa has to be even more enchanting. Creating layers and layers of stories that our guests can live seems to be a clear way forward." ●

> To coax guests outside of the comfort of our rooms, the spa has to be even more enchanting

The Spa Chanterelle is inspired by mushrooms

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> You celebrate the fact you're on top of Lake Lucerne and overlook not one, but ten lakes

Maria Vafiadis founder MKV Design

This summer, the historic Bürgenstock Resort Hotel overlooking Lake Lucerne, Switzerland, will be transformed from its historic roots to include three hotels, a medical hotel and a vast 10,000sq m (108,000sq ft) glass-walled Alpine Spa.

Several architects have been recruited to transform each of the hotels, but interior designer Maria Vafiadis, founder of MKV Design, is charged with connecting the interiors of the three hotels and the spa, imbuing a sense of continuity between properties.

"We make things click together nicely, like little pieces of a puzzle," says Vafiadis. "You cannot ignore the individuality of the properties, and you cannot ignore the totality of the project. At the end, everything works together."

Vafiadis began working on the Bürgenstock project – which includes both modern, new-build architecture and historic renovations – six years ago, and has taken inspiration from the most striking aspects of the resort: its colourful 150-year history, and its breathtaking mountaintop views across Lake Lucerne.

The Alpine Spa is perched on a cliff top, 450m (1,476ft) above the lake, and is enclosed in floor-to-ceiling glass walls designed to create an atmosphere of tranquility. It will include a Kneipp bath, private bath chambers, an Arabian rasul made with local Bürgenstock rock, Turkish steamroom, panoramic sauna and tranquility room, whirlpools hidden within a cave, and 15 treatment rooms and three private spa rooms – all with views out over the lake – a dramatic departure from the typical windowless spa treatment room.

> We make things click together nicely, like little pieces of a puzzle

"Here, everything is about the view – you don't want to distract from that," says Vafiadis. "It has to be quite neutral, and quite modern." She used a simple palette, with natural materials of stone and timber that play with texture, and elements of fire interspersed throughout.

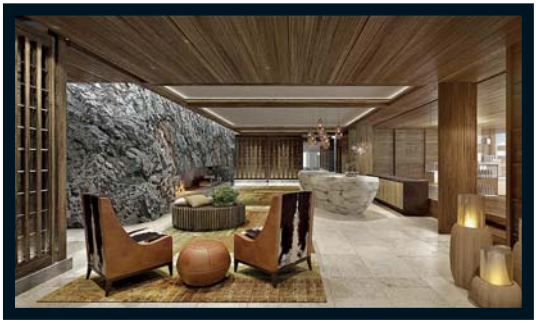
Guests enter the spa either directly from the hotels, or from a subterranean entrance three floors below, in the belly of the mountain. The spa journey is designed to take guests from this very internal, cocooned space to a continued cosiness in the thermal areas, and finally to an outward-facing resolution in the L-shaped relaxation room – with panoramic glass walls – or in the individual treatment rooms, which also make full use of their stunning views.

"This is where you celebrate the location – you celebrate the fact that you're on top of Lake Lucerne, and you overlook not one, but ten lakes," says Vafiadis. "You overlook the mountains, you overlook nature, and you are in Switzerland."

The dramatic 10,000sq m Alpine Spa is perched on a cliff top overlooking Lake Lucerne

 ©CYBERTREK 2017

Vafiadis makes full use of the location, with relaxation rooms and treatment rooms featuring glass walls with a view



The lobby is built against the mountain and features a dramatic solid rock wall

This is not the first large spa and resort Vafiadis has worked on; she is also responsible for Greece's Costa Navarino resort, which includes two hotels and a 4,500sq m (48,000sq ft) spa; the 1,200sq m (12,900sq ft) spa at the Royal Savoy Lausanne and the 1,500sq m (16,000sq ft) spa at The Metropol in Belgrade.

"A spa needs to feel intimate, so the bigger it is, the challenge is to not lose the intimacy and the warmth and cosiness that you expect," says Vafiadis. "What we try to do, even in very big spas, is to break the areas into smaller groups, so instead of going to a sauna or steamroom, you go through a series of them. So although it's big, you create more interesting journeys for the guest, and it doesn't lose its sense of intimacy."

The resort had an existing spa, first opened in the 1950s, and Vafiadis kept some of the details from that, including an organic-shaped outdoor swimming pool, the protected modernist changing rooms, and a bar with glass port holes that look underneath the water of the swimming pool. Vafiadis describes these bits as having a "James Bond-like atmosphere" – some parts of *GoldenEye* were even filmed here – with unusual details that are still relevant today.

In preparation for the job, she poured over historical documents and early photos. In its heyday, the resort was filled with members of the aristocracy, politicians and Hollywood stars such as Sofia Loren and Audrey Hepburn – who was married in the little Bürgenstock chapel next to the Palace Hotel.

"We don't want to recreate the past, but we want the guest to feel this history," explains Vafiadis. "We want them to sense that where they are meant something before, and that this is taking it to another level, and continuing the story." ●

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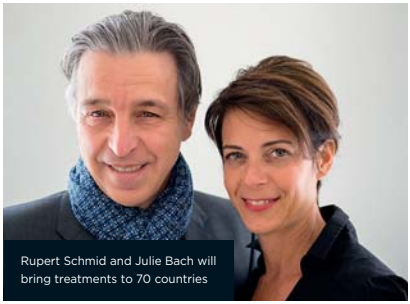
Biologique Recherche, Wellness for Cancer partner

Skincare brand Biologique Recherche has partnered with non-profit organisation Wellness for Cancer to adapt facial and body treatments to the needs of cancer patients and people in remission. Beginning in June 2017, treatments will be available in the US and France, and Biologique Recherche plans to expand to more than 70 countries, making it the only company adapting its methodology to all types of cancer patients worldwide.

> “We want to welcome guests who have cancer in the same way we welcome our usual guests”
> Rupert Schmid

“We are bringing to market something that should have been done a long time ago – bringing wellness and beauty to those who need it most, and to those who cannot always afford it,” says Rupert Schmid, chair of Biologique Recherche.

Treatments will be priced the same as traditional Biologique Recherche treatments, but each country will also align with a non-profit to help provide complimentary treatments and products to those who can't afford them.



Rupert Schmid and Julie Bach will bring treatments to 70 countries

Biologique Recherche will adapt its methodology to people who have been affected by all forms of cancer by offering a selection of products and therapies for each client, depending on cancer type, cancer therapy, surgery involved and long-term conditions, such as risk of lymphedema.

“It's important to see individuals beyond diagnosis or situation,” says Julie Bach, executive director of Wellness for Cancer. “This partnership is a crucial step for those dealing with cancer and their physical and psychosocial side effects.”

Treatment programmes will include standardised processes that can also be personalised.

Schmid says that one of the goals is to understand the benefit of facial and body treatments for people with cancer. “This hasn't been done in the past on a large scale, with the support of oncologists and medical doctors – this is the next step,” he says.

More: http://lei.sr?a=a8t3h_B

Treatments will be standardised but also personalised

Hoare named GM of ESPA's 30,000sq ft Baha Mar flagship Americas spa

Wellness specialist Bryan Hoare has been named general manager of the just-opened 30,000sq ft (2,787sq m) ESPA destination spa at the mega-resort Baha Mar complex in The Bahamas. Hoare previously worked as a wellness consultant and as the clinical team wellness lead at the Naufar wellness centre in Doha, Qatar, a 75,000sq m (807,300sq ft) sanctuary for wellness and the treatment of substance use and addictive disorders. “We want to develop strong community relationships and to build a vibrant future – caring for the whole person and cementing ESPA's flagship spa in the Americas, with potential to evolve our integrated wellness offerings,” says Hoare.

Bryan Hoare has worked in the industry for 20 years

> “Combined with the mega-resort that is Baha Mar, there are lots of synergies”
> Bryan Hoare

Located within the 1,800-bedroom Grand Hyatt Baha Mar, the flagship ESPA spa features 24 treatment rooms, including two couples and two express rooms, and an ‘Outdoor Reflex Chill Zone’ offers Chinese reflex foot massage or Thai and shiatsu massage. The spa also includes a nail studio, extensive fitness offering and spa boutique.

The Baha Mar project was slated to be finished in 2014, but a series of legal battles led to delays. Hong Kong-based global conglomerate Chow Tai Fook Enterprises Limited – parent company of Rosewood Hotels – bought the US$3.5bn mega-resort in December 2016.

More: http://lei.sr?a=J4M2S_B

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Amy McDonald creates dramatic blue-and-white Moroccan-inspired spa at historic California hotel

> “We're lifting this into a place where people will come to gather for wellness”
> Amy McDonald

A landmark 1925 California hotel with a storied history will be reborn this summer, complete with a Moroccan-inspired spa created by Amy McDonald, CEO, and Janna Auger, lead consultant, of Under A Tree Health and Wellness Consulting. The blue-and-white spa is part of a new build at Santa Barbara's Hotel Californian, and McDonald describes the spa as “modern and edgy in its design.”

It will include four treatment rooms, as well as a vitality bar with teas and a gallery that showcases artwork, designed as a space to create community events and host speakers centred around wellness. “We wanted to expand this to a bigger story,” says McDonald. “We're lifting it into a place where people will come to gather for wellness.”

Treatments will be from skincare brand Naturopathica, and Nick James, founder of aromatherapy brand Body Bliss, will serve as a local botanist who will be part of the programming for its signature components. Celebrity designer Martyn Lawrence Bullard has used Moroccan and Spanish Colonial influences throughout the property.

“The property's design is Moorish-inspired with a modern twist,” explains Bullard. “I wanted to preserve the history of Hotel Californian and pay tribute to Santa Barbara while also making it relatable to the new Funk Zone crowd – young, hip and fresh.”

More http://lei.sr?a=z9V6X_B

The spa is part of Santa Barbara's historic Hotel Californian

Miami's Turnberry Isle gets 20,000sq ft spa and wellness centre

> “The wellness centre has partnered with Rezilir Health, and offers specialist clinicians”

The 20,000sq ft (1,858sq m) Ame Spa & Wellness Collective has opened at Turnberry Isle Miami, offering integrative wellness programming with functional medicine, fitness, yoga, aesthetic medicine and body therapies, as well as weekend retreats.

The opening of Ame follows a US$2.5m (€2.3m, £1.99m) expansion in Turnberry's spa facility and a complete redesign of the spa's offerings.

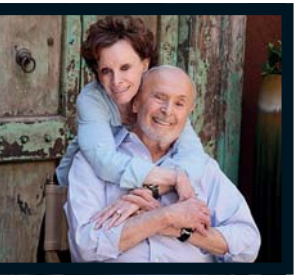
The wellness centre has partnered with Craig Tanio's Rezilir Health, and offers functional and integrative specialist clinicians, who will create customised health plans for clients focusing on wellbeing, cognitive performance, executive function, hormonal balancing, weight loss and stress.

Throughout 2017, Ame will also host weekend-long retreats with master yoga teacher Nikki Costello and plant-based chef and entrepreneur Matthew Kenney, as well as Sunday 'Ame-azing' programmes, designed as day-long retreats.

The spa includes 22 treatment rooms, a yoga studio, spinning room, Pilates room, a cryotherapy facility, ayurvedic treatment area and a Himalayan salt room.

More: http://lei.sr?a=N6S9R_B

Master yoga teacher Nikki Costello will teach at Ame; Craig Tanio, founder of Rezilir Health (left)



Enid and Melvin Zuckerman

Canyon Ranch founders step down

Canyon Ranch founders Melvin and Enid Zuckerman, along with Jerrold Cohen, have retired from the legacy brand after nearly 40 years, leaving the company in the hands of Susan Docherty, CEO, who was appointed to her position in 2015.

One of the original American wellness destination resorts, Canyon Ranch opened in Tucson in 1979. "Their vision of transformation through holistic wellness has had a profound effect on tens-of-thousands of lives, including my own, and I wish them a fulfilling retirement embodying the Canyon Ranch lifestyle they have created," says John C. Goff, chair and CEO of Crescent Real Estate Holdings, which owns Canyon Ranch.

More: http://lei.sr?a=g2u2f_B

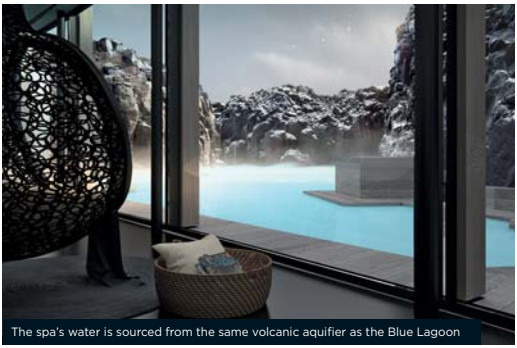
Spa revenues grow 10 per cent a year across MENA region

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) spa sector saw annual revenues jump from US$1.7bn in 2013 to US$2.1bn in 2015, representing 10 per cent annual growth – five times faster than the average global spa industry growth rate of 2 per cent.

These latest figures come from the *Middle East-North Africa Wellness Economy Monitor*, published by the Global Wellness Institute (GWI).

GWI chair and CEO Susie Ellis described the region as a "unique wellness tourism market."

More: http://lei.sr?a=M5j8z_B



The spa's water is sourced from the same volcanic aquifier as the Blue Lagoon

Details revealed for Iceland's upcoming Blue Lagoon expansion

This autumn, the famed Blue Lagoon in Iceland will open a subterranean spa and a 62-bedroom luxury hotel, all designed by Reykjavik-based Basalt Architects. Blue Lagoon managing director Dagný Pétursdóttir says this is an "important milestone."

"We are evolving and expanding our horizons," says Pétursdóttir. "Our foundation is the unique geothermal seawater, our stunning environment, and the commitment of our employees to provide exceptional service and create unforgettable memories, erasing the boundary between nature, wellness and hospitality."

Built into an 800-year-old lava flow on the south shore of the Blue Lagoon, the spa – dubbed Lava Cove – is designed to be a convergence of nature, architecture and the power of geothermal seawater. Design Group Italia have worked on the experience, including the interiors, service and design. The spa's water is sourced from the same volcanic aquifer of geothermal seawater as the Blue Lagoon, and will have plateaus, waterfalls and lava corridors designed to invite discovery and enable serenity.

Basalt Architects have designed the 62-bedroom hotel

"This is an important milestone. We are evolving and expanding our horizons"
Dagný Pétursdóttir

The spa journey moves through a 'concourse of lava' that encompasses dry heat, steam, massage, drip ceiling, relaxation lounge, a panoramic viewing deck, a cold air well, and the Lava Lagoon, ending with the Blue Lagoon Ritual, which uses the mineral salt, silica and algae from the thermal seawater experience.

The Moss Hotel will be built into a moss-covered lava flow dating from the year 1226. Powered by sustainable energy and surrounded by the mineral-rich waters of Lava Lagoon, it will feature panoramic windows overlooking the waters. The Blue Lagoon, which holds six million litres of geothermal water, is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Iceland.

More: http://lei.sr?a=P6s8X_B

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Resense will manage the 1,000sq m spa

Traditional Latvian pirts to feature at upcoming Kempinski Riga

Global spa management company Resense will manage a 1,000sq m (10,764sq ft) spa at the upcoming Grand Hotel Kempinski Riga in Latvia, due to open in Q3 of this year.

The spa will have six treatment rooms, as well as a heat bathing area with a sauna, bio sauna, aroma steam room, rasul mud room, cold plunge pool, experience showers, ice fountain and heated bench with footbaths.

It will also include a unique VIP 'Pirts treatment suite' modeled on the traditional Latvian bathhouse experience. The rasul mud room will use local Latvian muds – renowned for their healing properties – and the spa also includes a beauty lounge.

More: http://lei.sr?a=k9q5d_B

London is now home to a Vivamayr, which offers diagnostic consultations

Vivamayr opens first clinic outside Austria

Medical detox centre Vivamayr has opened its first location outside of Austria on London's Harley Street.

The clinic offers patients an introduction to modern Mayr medicine, a natural cure based on intestinal cleansing that combines medical detox, personalised diets and holistic healing treatments. The day clinic is led by Vivamayr's senior medical team, Dr Harald Stossier, Dr Sepp Fegerl, Dr Christine Stossier and Dr Doris Schuscha, who will each have a weekly residency at the clinic. The clinic primarily offers diagnostic consultations, as well as a curated selection of therapies, including diagnostic blood tests, intravenous infusions, oxygen therapy, manual abdominal treatment, applied kinesiology and stress testing.

Vivamayr London will also host cooking classes with Vivamayr chefs, who will demonstrate how to adapt the Mayr diet at home, and evening programmes of guest speakers on topics from integrating the Mayr philosophy into everyday life to the influence of diet on hormone regulation.

More: http://lei.sr?a=B5D8t_B

Blu Spas creates two-level spa for Four Seasons Kuwait

Global spa consultancy Blu Spas has worked in conjunction with designers Yabu Pushelberg and KEO International to create the 923sq m (9,935sq ft) spa at the upcoming Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait at Burj Alshaya, set to open in mid-2017.

The two-level spa will have seven treatment rooms and two luxury spa suites, as well as a hammam, fitness centres for men and women, yoga studio, a beauty salon and barbershop, and indoor and outdoor pools with a poolside waterfall, lush greenery and outdoor cabanas.

"This will be another spectacular and ultra-chic spa designed by Yabu Pushelberg," says Cary Collier, principal at Blu Spas. "The journey through the spa is full of wondrous surprises, curves and a sophisticated blend of organic finishes and furnishings." Collier describes the spa as a "sensory sanctuary" that is "spacious yet cozy, with orchestrated spaces for social gathering and solitude."

"The spa is a sensory sanctuary"
Cary Collier

The spa will include spaces designed for social gathering

The 284-room Four Seasons will be located in one of two soaring glass towers.

Gensler is the lead architect for the hotel, and has developed its design concept around a regional architectural tradition, using traditional Arabian carved wood latticework window treatments that offer both solar control and air circulation.

"The geometry of the wood shading fins covers multiple building facades, creating a strong, visual distinction from neighbouring buildings, while enhancing climatic performance for the occupied spaces," the firm said in a statement.

Yabu Pushelberg's guest rooms reflect a modern aesthetic with Middle Eastern motifs, and include 67 suites.

More: http://lei.sr?a=b6P2T_B

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DIARY DATES

1 June 2017
Forum Hotel & Spa
Paris, France
An international rendezvous for leaders in the hotel and spa industry.
www.forumhotspa.com

14-17 June 2017
Spatec Europe
Tenerife, Canary Islands
Brings together spa operators and suppliers for one-to-one meetings.
www.spatecevents.com/europe

10 June 2017
Global Wellness Day
Worldwide
An international day to create lasting awareness of how to live well.
www.globalwellnessday.org

19-20 June 2017
Spa Life Ireland
Dublin, Ireland
Following the original Spa Life UK, which includes an industry conference and trade show.
www.spa-life.co.uk

7-9 September 2017
SWAA Conference
Mauritius
The Spa and Wellness Association of Africa's annual conference.
www.spaassociationofafrica.com

14-16 September
SpaChina Summit
China
Three-day event for those relevant to or interested in China's spa industry.
www.spachina.com

9-11 October
Global Wellness Summit
Palm Beach, Florida, US
A key industry event for leaders in the spa and wellness industries.
www.globalwellnesssummit.com

16-18 October
ISPA Conference & Expo
Las Vegas, US
Three days of speakers and an industry conference.
www.experienceispa.com

The spa is part of an expansion of the Eagles Palace

Elemis spa opens in the shadow of Mt Athos

"This is one of the finest spas in Greece – actually a jewel among spas in Greece"
Ioannis Charalambous

A new 900sq m (9,688sq ft) Eagles Spa by Elemis has opened near the birthplace of Aristotle, in time to celebrate the great philosopher's 2,400th birthday. Located in Halkidiki, Greece, the spa is part of a larger expansion of the five-star Eagles Palace resort, which also includes the addition of Eagles Villas.

The 42 villas, designed by architects 3sk Stylianidis, are nestled into a green hilltop and feature a minimalist aesthetic and private plunge pools. The move is designed to create more space and privacy for larger groups and families to enjoy the resort.

The Eagles Spa by Elemis will include six treatment rooms, doubling in size from the previous offerings, and a separate, intimate spa will also be available at the Villas. "This is one of the finest spas in Greece – actually a jewel among spas in Greece," says Ioannis Charalambous, director of brands and development for Elemis' distribution partner in Greece. "Just a breath away from the Holy Mountains, it has a magical aura within a majestic atmosphere. It makes the spa a truly spiritual experience."
More: http://lei.sr?a=b6E7D_B

Global Wellness Day takes place 10 June

The sixth annual Global Wellness Day will be celebrated on 10 June 2017, with more than 90 countries at 4,000 different locations worldwide taking part.

Founder Belgin Aksoy Berkin founded the event to help the world to realise that "one day can change your whole life," and participants around the world – including many spas – offer complimentary activities like yoga, dance, and nutrition workshops, along with breathing, art and mindfulness classes. "This year we are able to expand our focus to include the goals of spreading a message of happiness, kindness, gratitude and mindfulness, which I believe can be seen in our wide range of inclusive events, many of which are meant to help underserved communities," explains Aksoy Berkin.

"We are thrilled that Global Wellness Day is garnering such support worldwide"
Belgin Aksoy Berkin

Read more:
http://lei.sr?a=Q6h9g_B

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>
> Roger Sholanki, CEO of Book4Time

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Roger Sholanki, CEO of Book4Time says, "An average spa loses about 15 per cent of a day's business from turning away clients. Out of 100 appointments a day, that's 15 appointments at $150 (£123, €140) on average."

If you're open year-round and closed only for Christmas and New Year's, that's a total revenue loss of $816,750 (£670,000, €770,000).

"A regular will probably call back," says Sholanki, "but several studies have shown that first-time potential customers who are turned away will never call back, and that's where you will lose the most – possibly to a local competitor."

Current methods for dealing with this problem are ineffective: busy staff try to take notes and/or manually log the reasons for turning away customers, then management uses these logs to try to make changes to staff scheduling or facilities. This process is cumbersome and relies heavily on trial and error, leaving high potential for failure.

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Book4Time makes it easy to optimise your scheduling and facilities to accommodate as much business as possible in two easy steps.

The software helps to schedule the right number of staff

1. Collect the data
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2. Optimise
Knowledge is power. Once you know why you're turning people away, you can optimise your scheduling and facilities to accommodate the clients you're currently losing.

Sholanki says, "With Turn-Away tracking, spas know exactly how much facial or massage business they lost last month, for example, and the system will quantify that in dollars based on services requested. So when creating your schedules, you can staff more facialists or male massage therapists, and fill that demand."

It really is that simple.

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Hyatt's acquisition of Miraval helps position the brand as a leader in lifestyle wellness

TOP TEAM

Hyatt Hotels & Miraval Group

After acquiring Miraval Group earlier this year, Hyatt Hotels has set its sights high on the wellness hospitality ladder. Jane Kitchen talks to the people behind the brands

In what promises to be a game-changing move in the wellness hospitality industry, Hyatt Hotels acquired wellness resort provider Miraval Group earlier this year for US$215m (€201m, £175m).

The deal includes Miraval's flagship property in Tucson, Arizona, as well as the Miraval Life in Balance Spa brand. Hyatt will also continue Miraval's plans to redevelop the 220-acre (89-hectare) Travaasa Resort in Austin, Texas – being rebranded as Miraval Austin – and the 380-acre (154-hectare) Cranwell Spa & Golf Resort in Lenox, Massachusetts – now known as Miraval Lenox.

The move is a stealthy one in the wake of the mega-mergers of global hotel brands of the past few years, when US hospitality brand Marriott bought rival Starwood, and Paris-based AccorHotels Group acquired FRHI. While Hyatt's purchase in no way rivals Marriott's or Accor's – those deals were worth US$12.2bn and $2.7bn, respectively – it does allow Hyatt to position itself as a leader in lifestyle wellness, something it knows is increasingly important to its high-end travellers.

Steven Rudnitsky, left, Miraval president and CEO, and Mark Hoplamazian, Hyatt president and CEO, plan to grow the Miraval brand

For Miraval, which has been looking at expanding its brand for several years, having the backing of a global hospitality name may mean a quicker path in that direction. That said, Hyatt leadership has stressed the importance of not rushing to 'commoditise' the Miraval brand, and the need to stay true to the core of what sets it apart.

We talk to the people behind the two companies to find out what this new acquisition means for both brands, how Hyatt might grow Miraval, and how the Miraval experience might fit into Hyatt's bigger wellness picture.

Jane Kitchen is the managing editor of *Spa Business*.
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Email: janekitchen@spabusiness.com

Mark Hoplamazian president and CEO, Hyatt Hotels Corporation

How will the Miraval acquisition impact Hyatt's wellness offering?
Hyatt is committed to widening the lens through which we view our core customer desires, and clearly the wellness tourism market is one where we are well-positioned to capitalise on those opportunities. One of the key insights we have understood well through ongoing engagement with our guests is how important it is to integrate wellness into their lives.

With the Miraval acquisition, Hyatt gains the operational excellence, the specialists' expertise and a devoted clientele – as well as the Miraval Group suite of branded facilities, treatments and programming. We gain world-class wellness and mindfulness experiences for our guests, as well as the opportunity to grow wellness experiences in our existing portfolio. The acquisition is consistent with Hyatt's growth strategy and our commitment to holistic health and wellness, but more importantly, it is also a demonstration point around our core purpose of caring for people so they can be their best.

● Hoplamazian says he'll take the Miraval brand globally

> 'There is a great opportunity to integrate some of the Miraval experience into hotel operations'

How do you envision the two brands working together?
We think that there is a great opportunity to integrate some of the Miraval experience into hotel operations, and also beyond hotel stays. There are myriad dimensions along which we can extend the impact of the Miraval ethos and approach. For example, Miraval does a great job in engaging their associates in applying a mindful approach to care for guests. It could be that we tap into that spirit and adapt it to our existing hotel operations. Or we could work with owners to convert spas in some of our hotels to Miraval Life in Balance Spas if the fit is right.

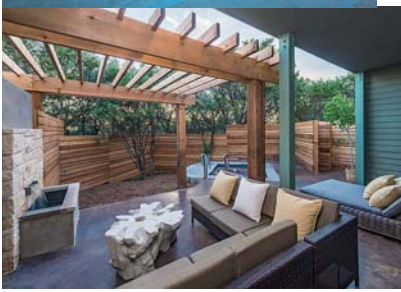
A lot of the exact ways that will be brought to life are still to be determined – purposefully – as we learn. What we won't do is grow the Miraval brand for the sake of growth. We'll do it if it makes sense and we can deliver the experience and the impact with integrity.

What plans do you have for expanding the Miraval brand?
We intend to take the Miraval brand global. With our development and operations expertise worldwide, Miraval will be able to expand to even more destinations – including Miraval destination resorts similar to the Miraval Arizona Resort & Spa. Miraval business development efforts have already produced a strong pipeline of expansion opportunities and we anticipate these new developments will drive growth and brand awareness.

What Miraval has developed, and the intensity of the love and engagement that the guests see, hear and experience, is something we

● Miraval helps guests integrate wellness into their lives with actvities like hiking

Programmes such as aerial yoga are popular at Miraval



Hyatt will continue to redevelop the Travaasa, which will become known as Miraval Austin

take very seriously and treat with a great deal of respect.

We want to make sure that we maintain the integrity of the brand and that we don't make any changes that would negatively impact guests' experiences. Everything Miraval guests love about the resort and spa experiences will be honoured as the Miraval team continues to evolve their approach. And, over time, guests will have more locations to choose from.

Hyatt is also actively pursuing a growth strategy beyond traditional hotel stays. By delivering more experiences, Hyatt can care for more people in more ways. The Miraval acquisition is an important proof point to this strategy – Miraval will spearhead a new wellness category within the Hyatt portfolio of brands.

How will the Miraval acquisition help Hyatt address corporate wellness?

This whole idea about wellness – through the lens of being more mindful about what you do and how you live your life – is increasingly in focus for major corporations. C-suite executives are very much thinking about how they can bring these kinds of holistic practices into what they do for their clients. This also has really taken hold with meeting planners and corporate travel planners. I think this is the beginning of what will be a very significant groundswell with a focus on wellness.

One of the key things I find so compelling about Miraval is the fact that mindfulness is at the centre of their approach. Mindfulness is something we've been working on at Hyatt for several years, working with outside researchers who were doing work on meditation and the impact it could have on your ability to practice empathy. We talk a lot about empathy being a central capacity within Hyatt – you can't care for someone unless you understand them, and that requires the practice of empathy.

> 'Miraval will spearhead a new wellness category within the Hyatt portfolio of brands'

So in our investigation of how to elevate the capacity for empathy, we've done a fair amount in the context of how mindfulness is finding its way into companies, into workplaces. Miraval's holistic approach, with mindfulness at the core, has great application to this increased interest in wellness by companies.

When I first came to Miraval Arizona, I did a floating meditation class. The ability to unplug from the day and really find an opportunity to calm your mind and reflect was very refreshing and calming – I came out of that experience with a great deal of awareness and focus.

The reason I'm so excited about this opportunity is that I wanted an approach that was grounded in a proven practice – one that has impact on people's lives. Miraval is consistently looked at as a thought leader in the spa industry, developing innovative treatments and programming that are truly best-in-class. ▸

Steven Rudnitsky president and CEO, Miraval Group

What differentiates Miraval as a brand?
Miraval's brand position is truly differentiated at the intersection of purpose and spa. For us, wellness and mindfulness are core products – for others, they're a sideline. No one knows better than Miraval how to help people pursue a life in balance; the programming we offer goes well beyond spa, and includes everything from photography to yoga. Our guests get to define balance by virtue of the experience they choose to have with us.

What does the acquisition mean for Miraval?
This alliance will unlock Miraval's full potential, as we partner with one of the foremost global hospitality companies focused on the high-end segment. Hyatt will help accelerate the Miraval brand's expansion, not just in North America, but globally. Our growth strategy will enable us to consider locations that meet our criteria for additional full-service Miraval wellness resorts and Miraval Life in Balance Spas for selected hotels and resorts.

Rudnitsky says the alliance will unlock Miraval's potential

How did the deal come about?
I have known Mark Hoplamazian for more than 10 years. When I called him last year to catch up, we talked about our respective initiatives and how we might collaborate. Over the course of several months, it became apparent that working together would be highly strategic for both organisations.

> 'Hyatt is committed to retaining the Miraval brand as a standalone entity'

How do you make sure you keep the unique character of Miraval as it becomes part of a larger hotel brand?
We'll look at each opportunity and proceed only if it makes sense and we're confident in our ability to deliver the Miraval experience with integrity. Hyatt is committed to retaining and protecting the Miraval brand as a standalone entity along with our proven leadership and distinctively unique programming and philosophies.

We're continuing to deliver our authentic, imaginative and meaningful classes, activities and spa treatments, as we always have. Everything our guests know and love about Miraval will remain the same, including our commitment to creating and sourcing innovative new programming.

Miraval's biggest opportunity for growth is exporting our focused, fully dedicated approach to wellness and mindfulness to other parts of the country and the world. Globalisation, technology and increasing competition have put most of the world's population under tremendous stress. Miraval provides a path for people to live in the moment, preserve their health and balance their work with their personal lives.

Naga Thai massage is offered at Miraval Arizona

Miraval fitness studios feature plenty of natural light and views of the outdoor environment

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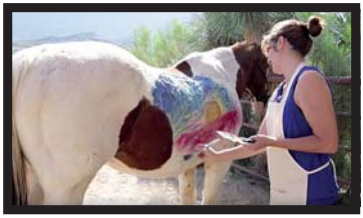
Sue Adkins vice president, programme development, Miraval Group

Adkins says Miraval's best ideas always come from its team

> 'I think Hyatt recognised that what we're doing is a little different'

Why do you think Hyatt was interested in acquiring Miraval?
Hyatt understands that wellness isn't just about fitness and nutrition, and that their guests are now seeking a more comprehensive approach to wellness, which Miraval has been promoting for years.

Miraval has evolved over the last 21 years I've been there, while never forgetting its roots. We've avoided the temptation of following the trends, and have instead focused on helping our guests learn to create a life of balanced living. I think Hyatt recognised that what we're doing is a little different, and they want to bring wellness into their brand in an authentic way that goes beyond simply putting a yoga mat in a guestroom or adding a healthy dish on the menu.



'Unforgettable Canvas' lets guests paint the side of a horse

What have been your most successful programmes?
Our most popular programmes are still our high ropes challenge courses and our Equine Experience activities. Guests learn so much about themselves in these programmes and they continue to sign up for them. 'Unforgettable Canvas', which encourages guests to use the side of a horse as a canvas for painting, and 'Floating Meditation', which involves lying in a silk hammock while listening to crystal singing bowls, are two of our more successful offerings outside the core programmes.

A programme is successful if it gets our guests excited to try something new and allows us to add a richness and depth to the quality of our offerings. Some certainly bring more financial gains to our bottom line, but that isn't the focus when we're developing them.

How do you come up with new ideas?
Our best ideas have always come from our team. We foster a sense of creativity in our team members and encourage them to consider new things that fuel their passions. That passion is what continues to keep our guests engaged in the programming.

What Miraval programmes will work well for Hyatt?
Since mindfulness is at the core of everything we do, I'd like to see continued opportunities to introduce more people to the concept. Our communities, employees and guests can only benefit. ●

High ropes challenge courses continue to be popular

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SPA TABLES 2.0

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Noella Gabriel

LIVING SKIN

Elemis has pioneered its holistic approach to skincare for more than 25 years. As the company prepares to launch its groundbreaking aromatic oils range, co-founder Noella Gabriel talks about how lifestyle, breathing, natural ingredients and science all play their part in a modern skincare regime

After 27 years with Elemis, what do you feel has contributed to the company's enduring success?
When we launched in 1990, we introduced a big concept into the market. Skincare back then was mostly seen as topical, with moisturisers being the primary products.

We introduced Elemis as a whole lifestyle concept, educating consumers on how they could change the look and health of their skin through the right skincare regime and lifestyle. We've always been committed to skincare education – for both therapists and customers – and we've never wavered from that concept. We've just opened our new 'Academy of Excellence' in London, offering structured training, where therapists learn to be both lifestyle advisers and business people. It's a place where they learn an in-depth understanding of skin and skincare, and leave having totally fallen in love with the brand.

How important is science to Elemis?
We set out to create a brand where the science of nature meets the science of the skin. We invest heavily in clinical trials, not just focus groups. We push the boundaries of innovation to get the best clinical results, so we're totally confident each product and treatment does exactly what it's proven to. In 2014, we launched eight Biotec Facials – a fusion of touch and technology using high-potency actives. The 5-in-1 technologies work in perfect synergy with the skin's natural bio-electric field for instantly visible results.

Biotec facials from Elemis fuse technology and touch for clinically-proven skincare results

In 2016, we launched our most significant skincare range since Pro-Collagen – the Biotec Energising Skincare System – a highly active, clinically-proven formula to give skin cells a kick-start. It's one of our best-selling skincare ranges, and has received multiple industry awards. Our product innovations are being driven by consumers' ever-changing needs and skincare demands, and we're continuing to push the boundaries with our premium formulations and textures.

Where do you source your ingredients?
We're a British company that sources extracts from all over the world. Our amazing seaweed, Padina Pavonica, found across our Pro-Collagen line, is harvested for us off the south coast of France. It's a unique Mediterranean algae with outstanding anti-ageing benefits – it's unicellular, which means it closely resembles the structure of the skin. We have a lot of ingredients grown exclusively for us; for example, Night Scented Stock, found in our newest formula out later this year, which is grown for us by farmers on the east coast of England.

Your new range is Life Elixirs. What's the philosophy behind the products?
Our new Life Elixirs are a modern take on aromatherapy. The five Life Elixir blends are designed to create both an emotional and a physical response. They harness the power of natural aromatics – a concept that lies at the heart of Elemis, and has done since we first launched the company 27 years ago.

Most people don't make the connection between skin health and the breath and a good night's sleep. The olfactory system is connected to every hormonal pathway in our body. Life Elixirs is designed to work in synchronicity with this, delivering a direct effect on our emotions, breathing and sleep patterns, and of course the body's largest organ: the skin.

Elemis' new Academy of Excellence in London is dedicated to creating highly skilled therapists

> Life Elixirs embodies the Elemis values of pure ingredients, advanced science, skin health and healthy living

Tell us more about Life Elixirs

These very complex aromatic formulations have taken five years to develop. Technically they're very sophisticated formulations with up to 19 essential oils, and each blend has up to four base oils. The range consists of perfume oils to put on your wrists, temples or behind your ears; bath and shower elixirs that disperse into beautiful milks you can soak in; and candles that allow you to inhale the aromatic benefits all around your home or office.

'Fortitude' is a powerful formula containing ylang ylang, cedarwood and geranium to encourage confidence. 'Clarity' is about clear thinking – with notes of bitter orange, warming ginger and cardamom. 'Embrace' embodies romance with notes of frankincense, rose and vetiver. 'Calm' has clary sage to encourage serenity, while lavandin works to relax and soothe. 'Sleep' contains patchouli and palmarose, which helps prepare the body for a good night's sleep. Alongside the retail launch, we're also starting to introduce Life Elixirs into our treatments. What clients experience at the beginning of a treatment can truly shape their whole Elemis experience.

What skincare trends are emerging?

Consumer behaviour is changing. One of the key drivers is that the 'mature Millennial' is time-poor, and demands products and treatments that deliver immediate skin health and radiance. We know we should be eating better to ensure our skin functions at an optimal level, but it's not always possible.

To feed the skin, our Superfood Facial Oil delivers an easily absorbed formulation of vitamins, minerals and omegas to the skin for natural radiance and luminosity. At spas, our Superfood Pro-Radiance Facial gives a nutritional boost – rich in superfoods, minerals and trace elements to leave the skin glowing with health. Available as a one-hour or 30-minute treatment for maximum results in minimum time. As spas adapt to this time-poor trend, increasingly we're seeing express areas in spas and resorts.

Mindfulness and 'me time' have become become more prominent pursuits. People often perceive meditation as too difficult, but are learning to approach everyday life in a more conscious way by taking short bursts of time out on a daily basis. People really need help with this, and spas can play a role in educating clients on how to recreate wellness at home. Elemis Life Elixirs is designed to support you on this journey whenever you need to take a moment to stop, breathe and 'tune in to you.'

What else is in the pipeline?

In July, we'll launch our Peptide4 Night Recovery Cream-Oil – a ground-breaking formula designed to support the skin's natural night-time circadian rhythm of repair and renewal. Skin appears fresher and more hydrated when you wake. We call it 'beauty sleep in a bottle,' so watch this space!

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Diagnostic tests are becoming cheaper, more widespread and more accurate

Ask an expert

Should spas offer diagnostic testing?

Diagnostic testing can help spas create customised wellness programmes, but there are some important considerations. Jane Kitchen asks the experts

Spas are continually searching for ways to differentiate themselves in a competitive landscape, increasingly by offering more personalised services and results-driven therapies. One way to do that is with diagnostic or medical testing, which can cover anything from sleep tracking to DNA testing to full medical screenings. The results from these screenings can then be used to create individual treatment plans for guests, incorporating diet, exercise and customised wellness programmes.

However, there are many things for spas to consider before bringing testing services to the menu. While medical spas often have the equipment, staff and resources on-hand, a traditional spa will need to approach the subject in a different way, or look at adding costly equipment and specialist medical staff. Then, there's the matter of guest privacy and keeping records safe. Laws vary from country to country, but in general, safeguarding procedures must be thought through and proper procedures followed.

> ‘Some diagnostics can be added with little cost and without the need for medically trained staff’

With scientific and technological advances, some diagnostics can be added with little cost and without the need for medically trained staff. Non-invasive tests that don't involve drawing blood or taking urine samples are much simpler. DNA tests, which require only a saliva sample, offer little risk to the guest – although an expert is needed to interpret the results.

Educating and empowering guests about their own bodies can help them take steps to lead healthier lives. In the end, it's important to know your guests. If you're attracting people who want pampering and indulgence, adding health testing doesn't necessarily make sense. But if your guests are seeking knowledge and lifestyle change, diagnostic testing could help them – and provide your spa with a new level of credibility.

In the coming years, testing services show the possibility for great change, with wearables becoming more accurate and DNA testing becoming more widespread and cheaper. Are spas ready for this kind of responsibility? Will it facilitate more meaningful programming and create guest loyalty? What sorts of issues do spas need to be mindful of? We asked the experts...

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Dr Luis Felipe Menezes Martins

clinical director, Kurotel - Longevity Medical Center and Spa

Kurotel has been offering genetic testing since 2001. Currently, we offer nutritional and metabolic testing, and we also provide genetic testing that provides information on gene predisposition for exercise and sports.

We collect samples on-site and then send them to a genetic lab. Our treatments are designed around results from the tests; once the technical report is received, a team of physicians, nutritionists and fitness experts build a report with diet and exercise suggestions. It is an integrated approach to total wellness.

Predictive genetic testing is an exceptional tool to help identify a predisposition to developing specific disorders related to diet and

exercise, as well as chronic degenerative diseases like heart and brain disease, type 2 diabetes, insulin resistance and Alzheimer's. But it's important for guests to understand that these tests only show a genetic predisposition – meaning that the situation might never occur.

This kind of testing is definitely a plus for spas. It increases the quality and

> Testing increases the quality and effectiveness of interventions

effectiveness of interventions, providing better results on weight management and physical performance, leading to better quality of life and longevity. The spa is the perfect environment to change habits with the guidance and support of an inter-disciplinary team.

Most tests and therapies can be safely performed within a spa environment. Any procedure involving risk must follow all safety procedures, and the performance must be constantly assessed. The findings must be carefully interpreted by a trained, specialised clinical staff. Genetic testing offers no risk for guests, but results must be combined with traditional medical and nutritional assessment. Choosing a qualified lab is important to protect the genetic data and client records. This testing is still expensive, but with the speed of technological advancements, we believe the costs will be much more affordable and accessible soon.

In the future, genetic engineering might hold the solution for most diseases. Knowing predisposition factors before the illness appears – and taking preventative actions – is the best way to live a longer and more joyful life.

Melissa Fielding

spa director, Carillon Miami Wellness Resort

We've been offering comprehensive diagnostic and health consultations at Carillon since 2008, including pulmonary function tests, bone density tests, EKG, cardiac stress tests, body composition and food sensitivity testing.

These tests help us better understand and diagnose our guests, and allow us to put together a more personalised plan to ensure they can meet their overall wellness needs. We have doctors and nurses on staff who administer the tests, and the doctor normally interprets the results. We don't have a lab on site, but have agreements with various labs.

Guests come to a spa to have diagnostic tests done for three reasons: environment, service and convenience. A traditional doctor's office experience can

be viewed as stressful. In a spa setting, people can receive these tests in a more relaxed environment, but still get the information they need to understand their overall health.

The biggest challenge involved in introducing testing services is finding the licensed people to administer and interpret the results. Labs will offer assistance with interpreting results, but it's extremely important

> Focusing on overall wellness should be the goal of any spa facility

that the doctor on staff has the right education and background and is highly knowledgeable with all the testing services you offer.

Spas that are interested in adding testing services should look at why people come to their facility and what they do while they're staying there. It takes a lot of research. You need to know your guests and decide how far you want to go in terms of offerings. And you need to protect yourself from potential liability.

You also need to ensure that you're following all the local medical regulations, and that confidentiality is strictly enforced. And because specialised equipment can be costly, it's worth doing research to ensure that you'll get a return on what can be a very large investment. Another thing to keep in mind is that sanitation standards are elevated in a testing environment; you need to have a plan to dispose of biohazardous material.

Focusing on overall wellness should be the goal at any spa facility. If testing can assist with helping spas understand guests' current medical status, and help create a better health plan for them, then I think it's something spas should consider adding to their list of services.

Anna Bjurstam vice president, Six Senses Spas

Since 2015, we have offered two screening services at Six Senses: wellness screening, which measures key physiological biomarkers of health; and the Movement Efficiency Test by Fusionetics, which identifies areas of strength and weaknesses for fitness and movement. We've also recently launched the Sleep with Six Senses programme, where, among other things, guests have their sleep measured.

We recognise that each person has individual characteristics and that by using smart technology we can measure a set of health biomarkers that allows our experts to make recommendations on treatments, activities, even foods to favour or avoid, which are specific to each guest.

The wellness screenings are performed by our wellness experts, who analyse the data and guide the guest on the right programme to follow. For example, a guest might want to detox. However, if the screening reveals a high nervous system response, the destress/sleep programme would be more appropriate, together with relevant food options.

Our wellness experts undergo an intensive training and testing period before they can perform the wellness screening. We don't analyse biomarkers from a medical perspective; our wellness screenings suggest only possible preventative health and lifestyle changes.

> Diagnostics provide an invaluable insight into someone's state of wellbeing

Spas that want to offer testing and diagnostic services need to make sure that the equipment is operated by trained employees who can provide sound advice and don't blur boundaries between lifestyle and medical advice. Offering these tests provides a business advantage as it allows treatments, activities and programmes to be tailored to specific needs, rather than providing one-size-fits-all solution.

An increasing number of companies within the wellness industry recognise that there are many people in this world who have different needs and should be served uniquely. Testing and diagnostics provide an invaluable insight into someone's state of wellbeing and create opportunities to personalise programmes. This allows guests to discover more about themselves and understand ways they can improve their lifestyle. Naturally, this leads to a more satisfied guest – plus a more preventative approach to health.

Dr Rastislav Gašpar medical director, Danubius Hotels

At Danubius, we use a broad range of lab tests, from basic biochemical parameters to immunology tests and even microbiology. These services have been available long-term, as we are a healthcare facility.

In general, test results alone do not have an impact on the treatments we choose, as we have enough information from other resources like patient history, medical documentation and doctor's exams. During the medical examination, the doctor may propose some tests, which are conducted in certified laboratories on a contractual basis. Samples, such as blood and urine, are taken in our facilities by

trained medical personnel. Final interpretation and communication of the results to our guests is up to the doctors.

For spas that are interested in adding testing options, the key is to find the appropriate tests for your spa. Adding testing services is not necessarily

> Adding testing is not necessarily financially viable for spas to do in-house

financially viable for spas to do in-house, but on a contractual basis, it's possible. Lab tests are an expense; however, if the spa is focused on guests with similar conditions and has the appropriate medical personnel able to manage tests, then it could help a spa to differentiate itself. The risk is in misinterpretation of the results by guests – or by unqualified personnel.

Interpretation of test results should only be done by a medical doctor; it requires solid medical knowledge and an understanding of the relationships between different human pathologies. If the intention is to run screening programmes with some basic parameters, nurses can assist. You will need to follow rules related to medical documentation; for us, that includes compliance with respective local and EU legislation.

Tests may be a "nice to have" service in a spa, but they are not the sole reason for visiting a spa. The main reason should be the treatments.

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Taking *the* heat

New research shows the benefits of thermal bathing go beyond relaxation, and may even affect mental wellbeing. **James Clark-Kennedy** shines a light on the findings

The past 30 years has seen a large body of academic evidence amass showing the benefits of hot springs bathing for an uncooperative hand, a temperamental knee or an angry lower back.

Now we are increasingly seeing researchers explore the effects of hot springs bathing above the water surface – on mood and mind. The newer research has the interest and backing of hot springs worldwide because it holds learnings well beyond marketing, learnings that may inform such fundamentals as resort landscaping, pool and building design, mission and values.

I took part in a new research project in conjunction with the RMIT University School of Health and Biomedical Sciences in Australia and the research was recently published in the *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*. The findings were drawn from a study of 4,265 respondents who bathed at Australia's largest commercial hot springs, Peninsula Hot Springs. Located on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, the hot springs resort opened in 2005 welcomes more than 430,000 visitors annually. An expansion is under way to accommodate 600,000 visitors per year by 2018.

Bathers seek hot springs therapy to treat a wide range of medical conditions

'Me time' or healing time?

Therapy appears to be a large driver of Australian hot springs visitation. In an industry that has mostly marketed to domestic tourists seeking relaxation and escape over the past several decades, the study found that bathers are increasingly seeking therapy for a wide range of medical conditions, with significant benefits achieved: hot springs bathers report they are beating pain and moving more easily.

The study found that what was previously viewed as a tourist attraction is important to 28 per cent of respondents for the relief of specific medical conditions, and that 99 per cent of bathers with medical conditions feel better after bathing in the hot springs. Musculoskeletal issues – combining back pain, arthritis and joint pain – were the most prevalent medical conditions, with 22 per cent of bathers who responded reporting these problems, including 14 per cent who suffer regularly from back pain.

Hot springs bathing might provide relief for those suffering from depression or anxiety

Brook Ramage, general manager of Peninsula Hot Springs, says the findings provide further credibility for Peninsula Hot Springs' health and wellness initiatives, which include warm water exercise programmes and a DVD that caters to those seeking back pain relief. "The research provides us with evidence to support what we have been seeing for many years," he explains. "What we can say from the study is that bathing in geothermal mineral water puts your body in the best possible place to heal itself."

Among the 14 per cent of respondents who had back pain, 88 per cent of them reported some sort of relief (39 per cent reported 'significant relief' – defined as lasting more than two days and/or reducing reliance on other treatments – and 49 per cent reported 'slight relief') and of the 6 per cent of respondents with arthritis, 86 per cent reported relief (39 per cent of those reported significant relief, while 47 per cent reported slight relief).

> Bathing in the geothermal mineral water puts your body in the best possible place to heal itself
>
> Brook Ramage, Peninsula Hot Springs

The findings that balneology reduced their reliance on medication might be of great significance as we see more hot springs emerge: the pools are more than just entertainment, escape or indulgence.

These findings are consistent with a 2014 systematic review of 18 European randomised controlled trials of musculoskeletal conditions, which concluded that balneotherapy is an effective remedy for lower back pain, as well as knee and hand osteoarthritis.

Above the water, into the mind

With the World Health Organisation estimating that 350 million people worldwide suffer from depression, it is of note that hot springs bathing also appears to provide significant relief for people with depression and stress or anxiety. Of the 11 per cent of survey respondents reporting stress or anxiety, 89 per cent reported relief, and of the 5 per cent of survey respondents reporting depression, 71 per cent reported relief. Seventy-one percent of those with depression rated their condition as 'severe,' with treatment from a health practitioner required, with 34 per cent of those rating hot springs bathing as providing significant relief – defined as lasting more than two days and reducing reliance on other treatments – and 37 per cent rating slight relief.

Another major finding for mental health is that bathing in hot springs shows significant sleep benefits. The research found that 82 per cent of respondents ▸

More than 60 per cent of respondents rated the social aspect of hot springs as important

reported better sleep after hot springs bathing, with 62 per cent of those saying that the effect lasted for two days or longer. Additionally, 77 per cent of respondents with insomnia reported relief.

However, it is unlikely that the sleep benefits can be attributed to the specifics of high magnesium content or other mechanics of the geothermal mineral spring water alone. While bathing itself may be relaxing, the design of Peninsula Hot Springs also further encourages relaxation, with the provision of a specific relaxation room along with deck chairs and seats that overlook tranquil natural settings. Are hot springs bathers sleeping better because of a geothermal mineral bath, for having made an 'escape' from their worlds, or for resort qualities such as landscaping and natural surroundings?

"That the bathing environment generally precludes the use of mobile phones and other technology may further allow people to escape their usual routines and more fully relax and immerse themselves in nature, thereby further enhancing the relaxing effects of bathing," says professor Marc Cohen, supervisor of the study and head of the Wellness Discipline at the School of Health and Biomedical Sciences at RMIT University.

Nature is key

While you probably could establish a geothermal mineral springs by drilling below a shopping mall, it's unlikely to offer the same benefits to bathers. Mineral elements such as magnesium and sulphur have been found to be important to muscle relaxation and alleviating pain over many years of study, but this new research found it might be the natural setting of the springs, including things like the sound of the water, that's just as important.

Peninsula CEO Charles Davidson calls the findings 'extremely important'

'Connection with nature' was an important motivator for 74 per cent of those surveyed

While 'relaxation,' 'peace and tranquility,' 'indulgence' and 'escape' were the most important motivators for hot springs bathing at Peninsula Hot Springs, 'connection with nature' was rated as an important motivator by 74 per cent of those surveyed, and 'the sounds of water and nature' were rated as either important or somewhat important by 72 per cent of respondents. "These factors have a huge bearing on our mental health, reflected in the extremely important relief findings for anxiety, depression and insomnia, and the excellent outcomes for guests' sleep," explains Peninsula Hot Springs founder and CEO Charles Davidson.

Social connectivity

Over a decade ago, Davidson envisioned a place where quiet escape in tranquil surroundings could be offered parallel to a social experience. While some hot springs destinations may pitch a serene escape, it seems social bathing with free-flowing conversation is an important draw for many. "Peninsula Hot Springs often has bookings from families with three and four generations from the same family taking time out to enjoy and connect with their pure nature," says Davidson.

The study asked regular bathers to give their reasons for visiting the hot springs, and more than 60 per cent rated the social aspect of connecting with friends and family as important, with nearly 70 per cent rating 'being with other people' as an important or somewhat important factor that positively influences their bathing experience – another pathway for future mental health research.

The study's findings suggest an important evolution in social connectivity towards relaxation in healthy surroundings, and there are apparent outcomes for mental health. Peninsula Hot Springs sees a role for itself in a combination of these elements which it calls 'community connectivity'; in 2016, it became a corporate friend of Mental Health Australia, and last year it partnered with an organisation that helps improve the quality of life of people who have muscle, bone and joint conditions.

The geothermal springs industry worldwide is expected to grow at a rate of approximately 7 per cent over the next 10 years, with Australian investment soaring – but predominantly with a relaxation and escape offering. "Further research is important for this growing industry," says Davidson. "We can apply and integrate the learnings to constantly improve facilities, programmes and even landscapes for people who are coming for therapeutic health and wellbeing outcomes." ●

James Clark-Kennedy is a PhD student at the School of Health and Biomedical Sciences, RMIT University, Australia and lead author of the study

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Five reasons to go digital with your spa wellness intake forms

Electronic intake forms save your staff time, create a more professional impression for your guests, and reduce costs. We explain how it works

1 Make a great first impression

You have only one chance to make a first impression at your spa, so make it a great one. You've trained your staff and perfected how they greet and escort the guest, but then they hand them a clipboard with copies of your paper wellness intake form for them to complete. Now, imagine presenting a sleek tablet offering a branded intake form experience — pre-populated with their basic registration information. Which makes a better impression?

2 Make an even better second impression

When the guest returns to your spa, the system alerts you of their repeat status and indicates they have a wellness intake form on file. If the form is still current, you inform the guest they will not need to complete it again. What a great way to recognise and serve repeat guests, helping to ensure continued guest loyalty.

3 Show off your brand

Electronic spa wellness intake forms offer a full colour, vibrant way to brand the wellness intake process. Not only is the look of the application customisable, but the questions are, too. Gather the information you need to personalise the spa experience for each and every guest so you can wow them with service, and they'll remember every wonderful moment.

4 Reduce administrative costs

Digital wellness intake forms automatically save to the guest profile, no filing needed. Your Spa Concierge can focus on guest service instead of shuffling and sorting papers.

> **Electronic wellness intake forms will promote your brand's image, elevate your guest's experience and lower costs**

5 Enhance wellness visibility

Deploying wellness intake forms electronically, your staff can more quickly review the guest's information behind the scenes, allowing them to proactively address any particular issues or questions. The ability to collect and review the forms digitally establishes a contemporary environment in which to create the personalised experience that will wow each and every guest.

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WELLNESS SPAS

Intelligent Spas' first-ever industry benchmark report for wellness spas shows the niche industry poised for growth – and generating more revenue than industry averages. Julie Garrow shares more details

Independent spa research company Intelligent Spas has produced its first-ever industry benchmark report for wellness spas, which revealed that wellness spas employ more people, attract a greater percentage of local residents and generate more revenue per square metre/ft compared to all other spa types on average.

The Wellness Spas Benchmark Report involved a group of 16 selected spas across Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia, with an average size of 3,026sq m (32,570sq ft). For the purposes of the research, Intelligent Spas defined a wellness spa as offering a variety of spa treatments and packages incorporating wellness attributes; health and fitness-related services, classes and consultations; along with an emphasis on wellness throughout its corporate branding.

How are wellness spas performing financially?

The annual revenue generated in the last financial year averaged US$1.3 m (€1.2m, £1m), compared to the industry average of US$690,000 (€635,500, £548,000). On average, 67 per cent of wellness spas' revenue was generated by treatments, with 4 per cent coming from retail sales.

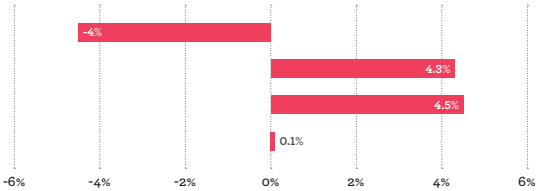
Annual revenue per square metre was US$857 (€794, £687), and annual expenses per spa amounted to just over 40 per cent of revenue. Wellness spas retained an average of 20.3 employees, while the industry average for spa employees is 14.

Who visits wellness spas?

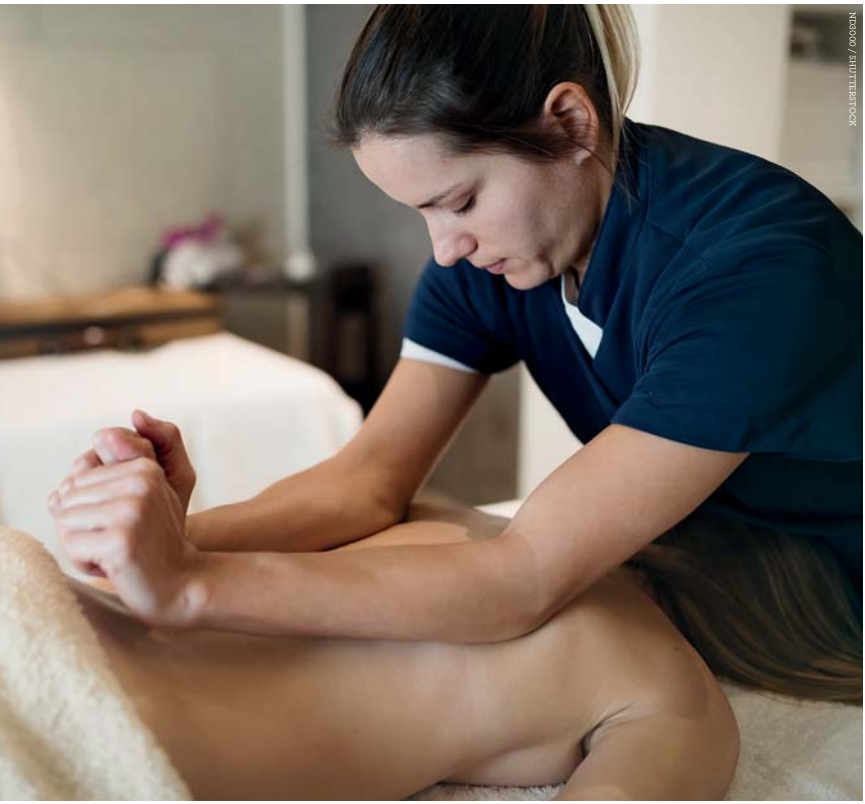
Wellness spas welcomed 9,526 guests on average in the last financial year, 46 per cent of whom were return visitors. The gender segmentation of those visitors is

Wellness spas employ more people, attract a greater percentage of local residents and generate more revenue

Wellness Spas: Outlook for 2017



SOURCE: INTELLIGENT SPAS



NDOOO / SHUTTERSTOCK

> More hotel groups are incorporating wellness spas, and these new statistics help them better plan and implement the facility as a revenue-generator, as opposed to a need-to-have cost centre

fairly close; 56 per cent of visitors were female and 44 per cent were males This is slightly different from average spa segmentation, where 41 per cent of visitors are male and 59 per cent are female.

The largest market segment by age for wellness spas was also quite young, with the coveted 30-to-39-year-old range coming in on top. On average, 63 per cent of wellness spa visitors were local residents and 22 per cent were international tourists, compared to 50 per cent and 27 per cent respectively in industry averages. At hotels and resorts, 37 per cent of total spa visits were captured from guests staying at the property co-located with the wellness spa.

What does the wellness hotel achieve?

On average, hotels offering wellness spas contain 209 guest rooms and achieved achieved 63 per cent average annual occupancy during the last financial year, with an average daily rate of US$401 (€372, £322). Revenue per available room (RevPAR) for hotels with wellness spas was US$159 (€147, £128).

More hotel groups are incorporating wellness spas into their offering, and these new statistics help them better plan and implement the spa facility as a revenue-generating department, as opposed to an assumed, need-to-have cost centre. A detailed campaign is required to continually entice hotel guests to the spa, thus increasing RevPAR for the hotel ▸

How do wellness spas stack up?

Key performance indicators and unique selling propositions for this niche industry

WELLNESS SPAS:
Financial benchmarks (us$)

Annual Revenue per Spa	1.3 M
Revenue Breakdown - Treatments	67%
Revenue Breakdown - Retail	4%
Annual Revenue per Square Metre	875
Annual Expenses as a % of Revenue	42%
Average Employees	20.3

WELLNESS SPAS:
Visitor benchmarks

Annual Spa Visitors	9,526
Repeat Visitation Rate	46%
Visitor Breakdown - Females	56%
Visitor Breakdown - Males	44%
Market Segment - Top Age	30-39 yrs
Market Segment - Local Residents	63%
Market Segment - International Tourists	22%
Total Visits Captured from Hotel/Resort	37%

WELLNESS SPAS:
Hotel benchmarks (us$)

Number of Guest Rooms	209
Average Annual Occupancy	63%
Average Daily Rate	401
Revenue per Available Room	159

WELLNESS SPAS:
USP benchmarks

Hammam or Hammam-style Treatments	62%
Bath Experiences	67%
Conventional/Complimentary Medicine	53%
Separate Gender Relaxation Rooms	80%
Steam Room	94%
Sauna	82%
Private Consultation Room	67%

SOURCE: INTELLIGENT SPAS

POZNYAKOV / SHUTTERSTOCK

> Creating a spa menu with wellness-inspired experiences is critical to being a wellness spa

business, while generating guest loyalty by providing spa and wellness options.

What is the unique selling proposition of wellness spas?
This was the first time Intelligent Spas incorporated a question about unique selling propositions (USP) in its spa benchmark survey. The majority of respondents stated their wellness treatments and facilities strongly contributed to their USP.

- 62 per cent of wellness spas offered a hammam or a hammam-style treatment
- 67 per cent offered a relaxing bath experience
- 53 per cent provided consultations for medical-related services, being either conventional and/or complementary
- 80 per cent of spas surveyed stated they offered separate relaxation rooms for females and males
- 94 per cent of spas had a steam room
- 82 per cent provided a sauna
- 67 per cent of wellness spas were designed with a private client consultation room

Creating a spa menu with wellness-inspired experiences is critical to being a wellness spa. In addition, offering unique facilities including water experiences and various relaxation areas is necessary in the physical design of a wellness spa. Relevant marketing items – for example, website content and images – as well as wellness-related campaigns, must be designed to support and reflect the overall wellness concept of the spa.

Outlook for 2017
It looks like an eventful year ahead for wellness spas, as many of the key indicators are predicted to fluctuate. Despite more demand for wellness services, with average visitor numbers forecast to increase by 4.3 per cent per spa, owners and managers of wellness spas believe average revenue per guest could drop by 4.5 per cent. Average revenue per spa is forecast to be stable. However, the number of employees required to operate a wellness spa is set to increase by 4.3 per cent, which will drive total expenses up by 4.5 per cent year-on-year.

Wellness spas, not dissimilar to any spa type, may manage constant changes in key benchmarks by regularly monitoring them, which enables timely action to be taken to correct areas of the business which need slight improvement. Also, benchmarking gives owners and managers time to pivot the business when it experiences a major disruption, such as a new spa entering their marketplace.

The full report on Wellness Spas Benchmarks is available at **intelligentspas.com**

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LIVING WELL EUROPE

In Part 2 of our series, Jane Kitchen takes a look at wellness communities in Europe and profiles some of the biggest projects in development

The Global Wellness Institute has estimated wellness real estate to be a US$118.6bn (€107bn, £95bn) sector that's growing at a rate of nearly 20 per cent, with communities cropping up worldwide. This has spurred a GWI Initiative on wellness communities, as well as the first-ever dedicated research report on the subject, to be released at this year's Global Wellness Summit at The Breakers in Palm Springs, Florida in October. "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," says Ophelia Yeung, GWI's senior research fellow, who will be co-authoring the report.

The GWI Initiative put together a white paper last year, which helped to define the category. The committee determined that at a minimum, in order to deem a community "well," it must feature some kind of environmental consciousness, with sustainable development and operating practices; have a commitment to holistic health and wellness through programmes and facilities that encourage residents to proactively take care of themselves; and must foster social connections.

Return on investment

Wellness communities are ultimately real-estate assets that are designed to generate a return on investment. Research and experience suggest that people will pay more for healthier, sustainable living options if they're designed and positioned correctly. "We've seen not only an increase in consumer demand for health and wellness-related products and services across all segments of the economy, but also an overall willingness to pay a premium, particularly when it concerns where one lives," says Mia Kyricos, chair of the GWI Initiative on wellness communities and founder of strategic advisory firm Kyricos & Associates.

> There are many different drivers and value systems for wellness communities
>
> OPHELIA YEUNG, GLOBAL WELLNESS INSTITUTE

REBEN IMAGES; EFFEKT ARCHITECTS

Ingo Schweder, CEO of GOCO Hospitality, which is developing several wellness communities around the world (see Kaiserhof Rügen, p 72), says that properties in wellness communities can sell anywhere between 7 to 25 per cent more than average – but that there are also higher costs in building them. Putting aside more land for walking trails, building with green materials and setting up on-site organic farms all add extra benefits, but they also add extra expense.

Kyricos notes that while most real estate is positioned somewhere between luxury address and value for money, wellness communities are instead set to be positioned as unique. "Market disruptors sell uniqueness first, and we believe that wellness communities – real estate ultimately developed with the optimum health of our planet and its citizens – are indeed disruptive," she explains.

Steve Nygren, founder of US-based wellness community Serenbe, says his ▸

ReGen Village

THE NETHERLANDS

OPENING: 2018

ReGen Villages is a tech-integrated real estate development company that's creating a new kind of wellness community – a regenerative model for eco-communities with self-sustaining energy and food. The first community is being developed in Almere, The Netherlands, with 300 homes, and other developments are also being considered in Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Germany and Belgium. ReGen raises investment from wealth funds looking to divest from fossil fuels and then partners with local municipalities to develop the communities.

> We want to make it easy, convenient and accessible to choose a sustainable lifestyle off the grid
>
> JAMES EHRLICH, REGEN

"ReGen Villages is engineering and facilitating the development of off-grid, integrated and resilient neighbourhoods that power and feed self-reliant families around the world," says founder James Ehrlich. "It's all about applied technology. We're simply applying already existing technologies into an integrated community design, providing clean energy, water and food right off your doorstep."

The idea for the communities is to address the challenges of a growing population, increasing urbanisation, scarcity of resources and the growing global food crisis – as well as reducing global CO2 emissions and reducing burdens on municipal and national governments. It also wants to create a sense of community, reconnect people with nature and consumption with production and restore biodiversity to the surrounding landscapes. "We like to think of ReGen as the Tesla of ecovillages," says Ehrlich. "We want to make it easy, convenient and accessible to choose a sustainable lifestyle off the grid."

A community centre will include space for yoga, meditation and other wellness curriculum, and Erlich says there could be opportunities for spas to be part of the community.

community has seen a reduction in school absences, which he believes is tied to Serenbe's school design. "Research is just coming out tying the built environment to improved health, and once this is better documented and tied to cost savings that can be measured, we will see a lot more happen in this space," he says.

Schweder agrees that the industry is young and sure to see growth as it evolves. "The model is in evolution right now," he explains. "It's a big business, but it's not necessarily practiced and proven."

Existing models

There are a few communities that have been in place for several years that the industry can look to. In South London, BedZED is a large-scale, mixed-use sustainable community that's been a model for low-carbon, environmentally friendly housing for 15 years. Completed in 2001 by Peabody Trust in partnership with Bioregional, it's also a showcase for how removing car parks and increasing opportunities to walk and cycle can not only help residents be healthier, but can also foster socialisation and reduce consumption. "Our biggest takeaway is that simple strategies work better than complex ones," says Ben Gill, technical manager for Bioregional. "Our biggest success has been in showing that a more sustainable way of living can be a better way of living."

> "Our biggest success has been in showing that a more sustainable way of living can be a better way of living"
>
> BEN GILL, BIOREGIONAL/BEDZED

Gill reports that two-thirds of residents at BedZED say they've been influenced to change their behaviour about cycling and eating. And in Washinton at Seattle's Grow Community, another Bioregional project that launched in 2010, a survey suggests residents experienced an 85 per cent increase in walking and 31 per cent increase in biking after moving in. All this translates on some level to a place people are willing to pay a premium to live in; at BedZED, properties sell for up to 20 per cent more than the local average.

While BedZED has a community centre that offers things like dance, yoga and karate, it doesn't have a dedicated spa or wellness facility, due mostly to its size – though Gill wonders if there are spa elements that can be scaled down for the location. BedZED does tick the wellness

London's BedZED is a mixed-use community that's been a model for low-carbon, sustainable housing for 15 years

Kemeri Park will include a wellness community alongside a five-star hotel

Kemeri Park

LATVIA

OPENING: first stage, 2018

> This will be a different kind of luxury experience, based on local heritage and using healing sources
>
> ALLA SOKOLOVA, INBALANS GROUP

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

The wellness community, located just west of capital of Riga, will include a five-star hotel with a 1,500sq m (16,146sq ft) spa that's due to open in 2018. There will also be a wellness clinic comprised of multiple historic buildings and with a focus on balneotherapy treatments, which is due to open in 2022. Linser Hospitality is spearheading the strategic development and the health, medical and wellness concept for both hotels, plus providing pre-opening, staffing and training for the existing hotel.

The local population includes about 2,000 people. A public/private investment plan between the Jurmula City Council and Griffin Partners has been set up to revitalise the existing community, adding in activities and infrastructure to promote health and wellbeing and community living, and redevelop existing houses. Down the line, there's a vision to build a school, sports ground and a new, modern residential wellness facility.

The village will also include fertility, sleep and performance programmes, and the hotel will feature balneotherapy suites and a mineral water inhalation centre, in addition to the 12-treatment-room spa.

Kemeri is a source of natural mineral waters and curative muds, and has been a wellness destination since the 16th century. The five-star hotel is being developed in a historic 1936 health resort building that was originally built by Riga architect Eižens Laube as a symbol of Latvia's first independence.

There are also plans to create a "knowledge centre" in the national park that will host interactive exhibitions on science and natural history. The "Laboritorium" will allow guests – and children – to test the muds and waters and "understand the compositions and what it takes for a source to become healing," says Sokolova. The knowledge centre will also include art and performance pavilions and will serve as a base for working groups to come together to initiate research programmes on topics such as health and lifestyle. Bicycle and walking routes will be developed through the community and park, and the city infrastructure will be developed using evidence-based principles of creating healthy communities.

The hotel is being developed in a historic 1936 health resort building

Llanelli Wellness and Life Science Village could transform the region

Llanelli Wellness and Life Science Village

WALES

OPENING: late 2019

The Welsh government is funding a masterplan for a multi-million-pound wellness village in South Wales. The Llanelli Wellness and Life Science Village is located on the Carmarthenshire coast and will include an education centre to deliver training and skills development in the wellbeing arena. The Village aims to transform the way the region delivers care and promotes wellness and wellbeing by pairing health, research and life science with leisure opportunities.

The development will include a wellness hotel, a sports and wellbeing centre and the Institute of Life Science (ILS) focusing on near market-ready research and innovation. On-site communities will focus on healthy living, rehabilitation and respite and include suitable living environments for people with disabilities to live with their families and friends and a community health hub offering an integrated facility for primary and community care and associated research activity. There are also plans for a wellness primary school.

The project was conceived as a result of a Global Wellness Roundtable held at Swansea University last year. Dr Franz Linser, managing partner of Linser Hospitality – who spoke at the event – advised the team early on about the spa concept.

community boxes when it comes to social connections. Gill says that residents know on average more than 20 neighbours by name, compared with a UK national average of eight – which points to a significantly more connected community.

Professor Terry Stevens, founder and managing director of UK-based consultancy Stevens & Associates, says that many of the attributes in today's wellness communities are actually things that were taken for granted 100 years ago, when people lived in smaller communities that naturally offered things like social connections. "Somewhere in this model of a traditional community, we find what it is we're looking for on this new horizon," he says. Looking back 100 years reveals another model, says Stevens: every village had a doctor, who was as interested in the prevention of illness and disease as in the treatment of it. "We have turned our doctors into institutions," he says. "And there's a huge opportunity for spas to move into this."

> "Somewhere in the model of a traditional community, we find what it is we're looking for on this new horizon"
>
> PROFESSOR TERRY STEVENS

Historical European model

Many areas of Europe have a long tradition of health and wellness being integrated into daily life, from historic spa towns in Germany, to the government-funded Soviet-era sanatoriums, to thalassotherapy facilities in France. Throughout many European countries, cities with spas or thermal mineral waters at their hearts are often given special designations or names – 'terme' in Italy, Lázně in the Czech Republic, and, of course 'spa' in England – and have a long history of visitors "taking the waters" for their health. But perhaps nowhere is this more prevalent than in Eastern Europe, where natural resources like thermal springs and healing muds run thick – Bulgaria alone boasts more than 500 mineral springs.

"The concept of a wellness community is very much comparable to the spa cities that are so common in Eastern Europe," says Alla Sokolova, CEO of Latvian-based wellness consultancy Inbalans Group and

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Kasierhof Rügen is located on a site once owned by Otto von Bismarck

> Kaiserhof Rügen will include a 3,544sq m on-site wellness centre with 42 treatment rooms

GOCO Retreat

KAISERHOF RÜGEN

OPENING: 2018

Spa and wellness consultancy and management company GOCO Hospitality has plans to develop a GOCO Retreat on the German island of Rügen, located on the Baltic coast and known for its sandy beaches, quiet lagoons and dramatic peninsulas. Subject to planning permission, the GOCO Retreat Kaiserhof Rügen will be located in the southeastern part of the island, on a site originally owned by the Prussian statesman Otto von Bismarck.

Designed by Berlin-based Frank Architectural Design, the mixed-use wellness development will include a 50-bedroom wellness retreat and 54 wellness condominiums, and will offer views over the famous Sellin Pier and the Baltic Sea. The 3,544sq m (38,147sq ft) on-site wellness centre will include 42 treatment rooms, heat and water experiences, a medispa, gym, mind and body studio, health restaurant, tea lounge, library and meeting and learning spaces.

chair of the Global Wellness Institute's initiative on Eastern Europe. Spa cities are historic areas or regions that promote wellbeing or health – often built up more than 100 years ago around health-related natural resources like thermal waters, mud or salt caves – and Sokolova explains that these spa cities need to contain the infrastructure and availability of natural resources in order to be classified as such.

In Poland, towns ending in the suffix -zdroj – which translates as 'health' – are dotted across the country, a reminder of the country's wellness roots. Slovenia, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia all have similar towns. During Soviet times, science played a major part in these spa cities, when many were established as research institutes. Now, says Sokolova, they're "in need of modernisation and a boost of investment. With the rise of the popularity of the concept of the wellness community, the whole post-Soviet block is in a similar situation, and there's a big opportunity to attract foreign investment in developing these villages – and to open doors to new international travellers. The history and the heritage makes these towns very authentic – there's an opportunity for really strong positioning."

Sokolova also says there's an opportunity for public/private investments for developers, as EU investment funds are sometimes available, and local governments are keen to redevelop these areas. She's involved in one such wellness project outside of Riga, Latvia (see Kemeri Park, p 70).

Kyricos says that because of Europe's long wellness history, residents may find wellness communities easy to relate to. "The business of spa and wellness has a great opportunity to reinvent itself in a highly profitable way within a wellness community," she says. "Spas have an incredible opportunity to not just exist at the side of things, but to live at the very heart of these communities." ●

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spa business uniting the world of wellness

BABOR

Babor has been a leading pioneer of science-based skincare for six decades. CEO Michael Schummert explains how the company's expertise in results-driven treatments makes its precision 'Made in Germany' products more relevant than ever before

How did the company come to be founded and what was the world of European skincare like in the 1950s?
Babor was founded by a biochemist, Dr Michael Babor. When he created the first precision formulas, he'd never heard of terms like cosmeceutical, but he was convinced that concentrated active ingredients tailored to your skin's needs give you the most beautiful skin. Pharmacist Dr Leo Vossen bought the company from Dr Babor early on and continued with his approach – and so scientific research has always been a part of Babor.

Can you tell us more about HY oil and why it underpins all of Babor's formulations?
In the 1950s, Dr Babor researched ways of combining water and high-quality natural oils. He saw this as the key to beauty because it merged the ancient tradition of using oils to care for the skin with the renowned hydrotherapy techniques developed by Sebastian Kneipp. He created a bi-phase cleanser with hydrophilic (water-loving) oils: HY-ÖL. Its gentle, deep-cleansing action enables the skin to optimally absorb active ingredients. It was revolutionary in the 1950s; today it's legendary.

HY-ÖL was invented in the 1950s

CEO Michael Schummert says family-owned Babor stands for science, precision and quality

> Making our partners strong is a key factor in our philosophy, which goes way beyond creating exceptional products for them

What has helped drive Babor forward through six decades?
The reason for Babor's success has always been our endless curiosity and enthusiasm for beauty. The black rose is the symbol of Babor and it reflects this quest perfectly. Of course there are no black roses in real life, but the fact that something seems impossible has never stopped us from trying to achieve it.

Today we have a deeper understanding of our skin's needs than ever before, allowing our products to take precise action, and supporting this with high-tech devices. The beauty market has evolved from products that have a mere cover-up effect to products and devices that can really change your skin.

What does 'Made in Germany' mean to Babor?
Babor stands for science, precision, results, and the exceptional quality that is 'Made in Germany.' We develop and produce all our products at our HQ in Aachen. The attention to detail that comes with being a family company sets us apart from many competitors. We're proud to be the biggest independent family-owned company in the global spa industry.

What are your key products?
We focus on developing precision formulas. The active ingredients are perfectly coordinated to ensure the best possible results. This is done to the utmost perfection in our ampoules, which have become iconic in the skincare world.

High-dose active ingredients are sealed inside delicate glass ampoules, which are made to milligram precision for a single use on the face, neck and décolleté.

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▲ Above: Babor's retail area at new elb spa at The Westin Hamburg hotel in Germany

◄ Left: Babor's spa for the residents of the Porsche Design Tower in Miami, Florida

Originally inspired by medicine, every ampoule is tailored to a specific skin need – from intense moisture to liquid lifting. This makes them the perfect add-on in any facial, as clients receive a very customised treat. Two mls of fluid can achieve an instantly visible effect, as it's more for effective than creams. The ingredients traverse the skin's barrier faster and stimulate cell activity in the deeper layers of the skin. Ampoules are a masterpiece of skincare, and a great retail product for spas.

Do you have any upcoming launches?
We've just launched an exciting cosmeceutical line that understands the anatomy of cosmetic lifting: Doctor Babor Lifting Cellular offers precise formulations that keep your plastic surgeon waiting. We're very excited about relaunching our cleansing line, with essences that strengthen the skin like a protective shield against environmental stresses.

How can Babor help spa businesses?
Babor is the partner for spas that want outstanding quality for their offer along with a holistic retail philosophy. This starts with our products and continues with merchandising, marketing – and even a store concept. Our partners are among the most profitable spas in the industry.

Babor is now working on a qualification and certification programme which reflects the legal requirements of education, protocol, communication and hygiene. We're the first brand worldwide to implement such a programme and are convinced that quality makes all the difference. Making our partners strong is a key factor in our philosophy, which goes way beyond creating exceptional products for them.

How about some recent spa projects?
We're extremely proud to be partner of the elb spa on the sixth floor of the new Elbphilharmonie concert hall in Hamburg, which is part of The Westin Hamburg hotel. We offer our premium products and services and a Babor shop.

Another exciting project is the Porsche Design Tower near Miami, Florida, which hosts the 'Porsche among the spas'. The residential tower has 132 sky-homes, each equipped with an elevator for owners' cars, and there's a beautiful spa for residents. It seemed natural for two luxury German brands to team up to offer something special to this clientele.

What trends do you see in today's market?
Near-medical, high-tech, device-driven beauty procedures will continue to be a major driver. We'll see European hotel spas increasingly offer "I-want-immediate-results" treatments using all types of cutting-edge beauty technology and result-driven skincare, as is reflected in our Doctor Babor cosmeceutical range.

The target group of the future is millennials. They really love technology, so we in the beauty and spa industries should be using this to our advantage.

Respecting the individuality of a person and their skin is also one of the biggest topics in the spa industry. From a Babor point of view, this trend isn't new at all, because we've been doing this for decades, but it's exciting to now see this evolve into an overall focus for the industry. ●

Chicco & Lahra Tatriele

FIVELEMENTS

Lahra and Chicco Tatriele, the driving forces behind Bali's Fivelements, have brought their integrated wellness lifestyle concept to Hong Kong. Neena Dhillon paid them a visit

Founders Chicco and Lahra Tatriele have opened a Fivelements destination in Hong Kong

The first Fivelements opened in 2010 in Bali, and offers retreats from three to 21 nights

Having collected more than 30 awards recognising the spa, wellness, environmental, design and culinary aspects of its flagship Bali destination, Fivelements has launched its second location – an urban retreat in the hillside setting of Hong Kong's Sai Kung district.

Those who are familiar with the company might have expected expansion to another Bali-like location – somewhere spiritual like Bhutan, where the harmonious connection to nature is fully respected. But it was always the intention of the founders to develop a model that would facilitate the company's evolution into different environments: retreat destinations in culturally rich places, standalone urban retreats, wellness hubs in mixed-use developments, or culinary academies and restaurants serving their innovative plant-based cuisine. Talks are underway with developers in various countries, but for now, Hong Kong is a major step, as the Fivelements team introduces its wellness concept to a financial city centre.

"People want wellness where they live," says co-founder and vision director Lahra Tatriele. "We see the strategic opportunity to bring wellness services close to people who need and demand them the most. This urban model allows us to continue supporting guests over time, versus one- or two-week immersions in a destination retreat. The financial potential is great given the density of population."

> "ONE OF OUR GUESTS REFERS TO US AS THE 'CHANGE ANGELS'

Making an impact

Founded by six people – including four unnamed investors – hailing from Italy and the US, the first Fivelements opened in late 2010 near Ubud, along Bali's Ayung River, through an investment of US$3.5m. With a combined background of strategic planning, brand development, production, creative entrepreneurship and hospitality, Lahra and her husband Chicco met over their deeply ingrained love of Bali; Lahra had wanted to make a bigger impact on the world, and Chicco was interested in opening a healing centre and eco resort. Their visions were merged, resulting in a mission to integrate traditional healing wisdoms and philosophies with innovative wellness concepts. Drawing on the ancient culture of Bali, the philosophy of Tri Hita Karana guides everything they do, calling as it does for a harmonious connection between humans, the physical environment and the divine.

"We don't offer clinical-oriented wellness," points out co-founder and managing director Chicco Tatriele. "What we decided to do in Bali was to create spaces for people seeking some type of life transformation, enabling that journey. You can access our Bali retreat in a number of ways, from a delicious lunch to dropping in for a beauty ritual, but where we measure our real success is the feedback from our retreaters. One of our guests refers to us as the 'change angels.'"

Retreats vary from three to 21 nights. The signature rejuvenation retreat entails a body ritual upon check-in, followed by a consultation with a Wellness Liaison so the team can identify the physical and mental areas of the guest's life needing attention. During seven days, a guest might experience a Balinese ▸

The entrance to Fivelements Hong Kong, which is part of the Hong Kong Golf & Tennis Academy

Fivelements Hong Kong aims to provide a connection to nature through its interiors

blessing ceremony, energetic healing sessions, water healing, massages, yoga, meditation, beauty rituals, a sacred art such as expressive movement – and advice on how to continue embracing change at home. Just as importantly, the epicurean plant-based cuisine – with a focus on raw food nutrition to improve the body's physiological state – plays a role, as does the design of the destination, which is embedded in nature. The seven-night Panca Mahabuta Retreat costs IDR70,930,000 (US$5,289, €5,000, £4349), plus taxes based on single occupancy.

"Our Bali clients are high-flyers in stressful jobs," says Chicco. "As early adopters of the wellness lifestyle, they are well-travelled, but seek something deeper – a reconnection to nature and to themselves. The longer the stay, the bigger the transformation – although we've seen people come for a long lunch and noticed a change in energy levels."

The Bali location works on a boutique level, with just nine hotel suites and 13 treatment rooms. Chicco points out that the Bali model is not typical: "In a destination resort, you might have a spa make a maximum of 10 per cent of revenue. We have more treatment rooms than suites to cater for day visits and retreats, which are popular in Bali. This means 45 per cent of our revenue comes from wellness, 30 per cent from rooms and 25 per cent from F&B."

When asked to quantify success, Chicco underlines that their concept is about human experience, and refers to impressive testimonials online. The destination retreat became profitable in its fourth year, with an average occupancy of 85 per cent. Fivelements aims to add 12 more suites and a professional culinary training kitchen to accommodate food-based retreats. "We have the capacity to add rooms without making too many changes because we already employ a high number of staff – 75 in Bali," he says.

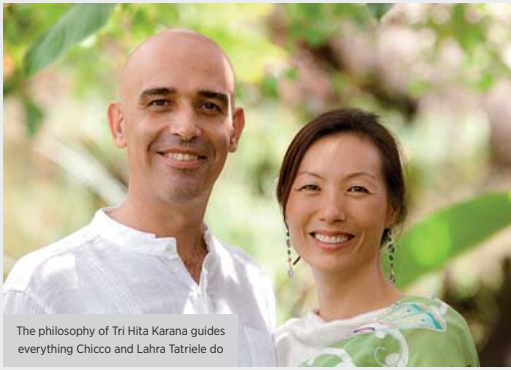
The natural setting of Fivelements' Bali location

Sustainable style

The new Hong Kong venture varies in a few key ways. As the territory's first holistic sports wellness destination, the Hong Kong Golf & Tennis Academy is owned by New World Development, with Fivelements one of three operators alongside the Jack Nicklaus Academy of Golf and Bruguera Tennis Academy. Access to the eight-hectare site is through an annual admission payment, which is available to individuals, families and corporations. Located in a cul-de-sac, Fivelements Hong Kong occupies a 2,000sq m (21,528sq ft) wellness centre with 2,000sq m of landscaping.

Lahra sets the scene: "Applying our guiding principle of Tri Hita Karana, we have designed north and south gardens with a palpable energy distinct from the rest of the academy, cultivating a

New rituals and therapies were specially designed for Fivelements' first urban spa



The philosophy of Tri Hita Karana guides everything Chicco and Lahra Tatriele do

> THEY SEEK SOMETHING DEEPER – A RECONNECTION TO NATURE AND TO THEMSELVES

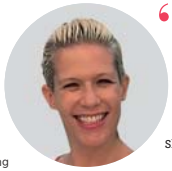
tropical sanctuary feel, with landscaping handpicked in China and Indonesia for an integrative Fivelements style.

"Our Royal Tea Lounge overlooks a terraced garden of tropical foliage, fruit trees, flora and medicinal plants."

The 12 wellness suites with private ensuite facilities, along with the food and beverage outlets, provide a connection to nature in the interiors through stone waterfall features, natural curved walls and fittings made from unprocessed materials, renewable bamboo, recycled timbers, rattan and reclaimed wood furnishings. Most of the suites include Fivelements' signature hand-carved volcanic stone bathtub, and the team is now applying for the local sustainability certificate, Beam Plus Interiors. In addition to renewable materials, other environmentally-friendly practices include the use of low-flow water fixtures, energy-efficient lighting, and attention to indoor air quality.

Because of the academy's patrons, Fivelements Hong Kong expects to support athlete training and family

Wellness at Fivelements



> What I saw in Bali was an integration of all different aspects of wellness that is authentic, real, and filters from the top down
> Sharon Codner

In July 2016, Sharon Codner joined Fivelements Hong Kong as wellness operations director, after nine years with The Peninsula Hotels. The move came at a time when she was seeking personal and professional growth. "I was lucky enough to be invited to Bali," she recalls. "One of the first things I noticed was how tasty the plant-based cuisine was, its purity, and the commitment to sourcing locally. I was taken on a healing journey around Nusa Penida island, something I've never done before and wouldn't choose normally. But I was mind-blown by the experience, and felt it was indicative of the attention Lahra and Chicco give to their people."

The Fivelements team adopt a service philosophy called 'Love in Action' and for the co-founders, this means starting with their team.

The epicurean plant-based cuisine is important in the concept

Staff members begin their day with yoga or meditation and are taken on healing journeys around pilgrimage, cultural and natural sites. Codner says this approach struck a chord.

"What I saw in Bali was an integration of all different aspects of wellness that is authentic, real, and filters from top down. I think the industry has forgotten this heart-based aspect of what we do, about caring for staff and guests, rather than just thinking about numbers, and paying attention to the environments they are in."

Aside from setting up the 40-strong Hong Kong team, Codner has sourced vegan and biodegradable products, including unbleached cotton, linens, cruelty-free products and pure essential oils from one of Australia's leading aromatherapy producers, and organic bath products from Thailand. Eschewing bottled water on site, aiming for an operation that is zero waste to landfill this year and contributing to local conservation projects are some of the ways in which the Hong Kong team is working to take care of its environment.

Left: therapies for children at Fivelements Hong Kong
Right: Michael Hallock leads water-based sessions

Mineral-rich carbonised black bamboo powder is a plant-based alternative to traditional hair ash, and is used in signature treatments

wellness, mostly through non-residential visits, although the academy does offer accommodation, so short wellness stays are possible. But does this model have its limitations in terms of client base?

"Yes – however, the patrons are part of our target market, so we have the opportunity to cater to those already interested in health, sports and wellbeing for themselves and their families," Lahra says. "The academy is making a big effort to bring in MICE business, so we're able to offer executive wellness programmes too."

From a financial perspective, the model allows Fivelements to expand with low capital investment and limited risk.

Drawing on tradition

Whenever Fivelements expands, the intention is to draw from the destination in terms of shaping the healing approach. New World Development didn't want traditional Chinese Medicine because it is widely available across Hong Kong, so Lahra instead worked with her team and consultant Professor Gerry Bodeker to study the centuries-old trade and tributary relations between Bali and Imperial China.

Breaking this down to a second round of research, the team looked at the traditions used by Balinese royal families, midwives and healers. "Hair ash was a common ingredient in ancient rituals, but it isn't plant-sourced, so we modified our search for an ingredient with the same intention," says Lahra. "Having found toxin-absorbing, mineral-rich carbonised black bamboo powder, we are now using this in our Signature Black Diamond Detox that combines deep body exfoliation with a back, neck and shoulder massage to enhance circulatory movement, which is ideal for golf and tennis players."

> WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO CATER TO THOSE ALREADY INTERESTED IN HEALTH

Intriguing ingredients feature heavily on the 80-page treatment menu, including a Balinese medicinal spice mix in a body scrub; white kaolin clay and green tea powder in a skin-rejuvenating therapy; cacao butter in a child-friendly treatment for those aged between five and 11; and live vegan ingredients ranging from turmeric, centella asiatica, neem, honey and coconut milk in a superfood facial.

Children and teens are well catered for. There is even a massage for babies, where therapists show parents how to perform a simple massage on the baby post-bathing, just as the Balinese have done for years.

Fivelements has not cut back on its signature spiritual and intuitive treatments, offering energetic healing, including a tea ceremony meditation, a meditative journey to the sounds of a gong, and water healing in a watsu hydrotherapy pool. Michael Hallock, a professional with more than 20 years of experience, leads these water-based sessions, guiding the body through an unfolding rhythmic dance in the pool.

Fivelements has not adopted a cookie-cutter copy of its Bali menu in Hong Kong, choosing instead to research new rituals and therapies for its target audience in Sai Kung. Taking the time-starved, urban clientele into account, the offer ranges from 45-minute therapies to three-night retreats. Yet the guiding philosophy and integrated approach to design, sustainability, wellness and nutrition remain intact, anchoring the Fivelements concept in its new Hong Kong home. ●

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London's new lifestyle club

Following the relaunch of The Lanesborough Hotel in London in 2015, the property's urban club and spa is now open. Jane Kitchen paid a visit

You'd be hard-pressed to find a better location for a hotel than that enjoyed by the Lanesborough. Strategically placed in the heart of London, the former home of Viscount Lanesborough overlooks the beautiful Hyde Park to the front and Wellington Arch to the side, as it opens into Green Park and, further along, to Buckingham Palace.

In July 2015, the Georgian property reopened as part of the Oetker Collection. It had undergone an extensive renovation, for which interior design studio Alberto Pinto was tasked with returning the hotel and its 93 guest rooms to a Regency-inspired style. Now, the hotel marks the opening of an 18,000sq ft (1,672sq m) wellness centre, designed as an exclusive private members' fitness and health club.

The hydropool at The Lanesborough Club & Spa features a dramatic cascading waterfall edge

> You'd never expect a club like this in a hotel
>
> **Philippe Perd, chief operating officer, Oetker Collection**

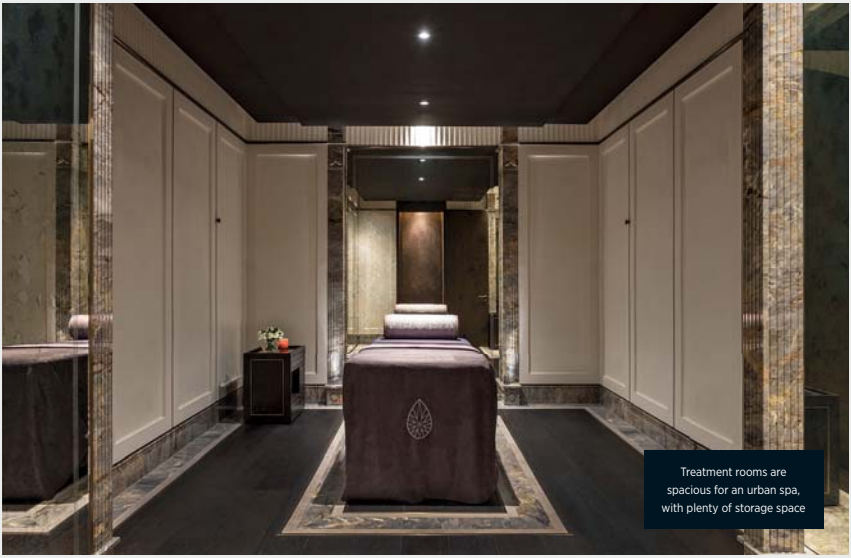
Oetker's COO Philippe Perd says the spa is exceptional for a hotel

The Lanesborough Club & Spa is geared towards both hotel guests and members who are juggling high-pressure, busy lives, providing them guidance on wellbeing and lifestyle. For London locals, this personalisation and exclusivity doesn't come cheap. Memberships are limited to 400 in order to keep things at the right level of personalisation – the club includes spa butlers who launder members' gym kits, among other things – and annual charges range from £4,000 to £6,000 (US$4,954 to US$7,431, €4,606 to €6,909).

"You'd never expect a club like this in a hotel," says Philippe Perd, chief operating officer for Oetker Collection. "There's been a clear strategy right from the beginning to make it what it is today."

Classic aesthetic

Set in an adjacent building to the hotel, the spa features an entrance from the hotel as well as a private members' entrance. Designers 1508 London have accentuated the tone of Alberto Pinto's



Treatment rooms are spacious for an urban spa, with plenty of storage space

Designer Louise Wicksteed took inspiration from the ancient Roman Baths

A social area has a restaurant and semi-private dining area

work, while simultaneously creating new design details exclusive to the spa, taking inspiration from the ceremonial spaces and private areas associated with the ancient Roman Baths in Bath.

Interiors feature British styling combined with classical details, such as silk wallpapers, oil paintings in gilt frames, dark wooden panelling and leather upholstery. Peacock blue satins, deep green silks and bronze trims work to complement classic elements and materials such as oak, marble and stone.

"In designing the spa, we really wanted to create a beautiful extension of The Lanesborough Hotel," says Louise Wicksteed, creative director and partner at 1508 London. "It's such an iconic British hotel, and it has such an amazing quality to it. It's an extension of your personal space, and it feels very personal, so that's what we tried to bring into the spa design. The 'language' is taken from The Lanesborough itself – the Portland stone, the timbers and the panelling – it's very rich and layered and detailed."

The separate male and female wet areas include steam experiences, saunas and experience showers. A snug private bar on the male side is designed to be a sit-down private getaway and has a 'rare' theme, with rare books and a collection of rare butterflies, while a shared hydropool features a dramatic cascading waterfall edge and is designed to encourage quiet contemplation and relaxation. There is also a shared relaxation space, a social area with a restaurant and semi-private dining area, and a manicure and pedicure suite. ▸

The manicure and pedicure suite features rich details of marble, gold and dark wood

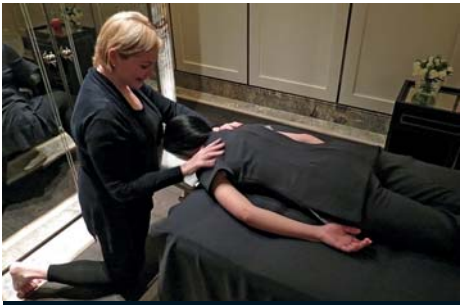
The female changing area features a story about the Lanesborough flower, with hand-worked floor mosaics and a hand-painted glass lighting fixture, both featuring flower motifs. "We wanted each room to have its own story," says Perd. "It's all about the journey of discovery."

Partnering with purpose

Spa consultant Neil Howard worked on the project, bringing in lifestyle brand Bodyism for the fitness portion, 'super-therapist' and facial expert Anastasia Achilleos and massage trainer Beata Aleksandrowicz of Pure Massage. Skincare partners include La Prairie and ila, with saunas by Corso and custom massage tables from Gharieni. Ila has created a bespoke product range exclusively for The Lanesborough, including a balm and a facial serum, as well as a signature therapy, Kundalini Stillness, which is a back treatment for exhaustion, stress and chronic fatigue that uses ancient marma therapy and warm herbal poultices, along with sound healing and chakra balancing.

Achilleos brings her cranio sacral expertise and facial massage and will be available in a once-a-week residency for one-on-one sessions, priced at £475 (US$610, €560) for 90 minutes. "We're in the business of creating transformation

> This place is about world-class treatments, and about closing the gap between the five-star hotel and the five-star spa
>
> **Anastasia Achilleos**



Beata Aleksandrowicz has trained the staff in her 12-principle Pure Massage method

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– whether it's in the way we touch you or the smells we create," says Achilleos. "This place is about world-class treatments, and about closing the gap between the five-star hotel and the five-star spa."

Aleksandrowicz has trained therapists in her signature 12-principle method, designed to protect them from injury and burnout. The method incorporates details such as working in bare feet – "It supports your lower back and grounds you energetically," Aleksandrowicz says – and using low tables that enable therapists to bend their knees as they work. She has also created Body Movement by Pure Massage, a treatment exclusive to The Lanesborough which fuses a range of massage styles, and is given with clothes on. It starts with 10 minutes of gentle rocking to calm the body and loosen the joints and ligaments, then moves into stretches designed to energise and relax.

Holistic fitness

Lifestyle brand Bodyism has curated the fitness space, with Technogym equipment such as the Ultraslide, Skillmill – a curved, more naturally positioned treadmill – and the adaptable Kinesis, all helping to create the holistic exercise environment.

"Instead of counting reps and steps, you're having fun, and you can be present and be in the moment," says Bodyism founder James Duigan (see SB17/1 p88). "The new frontier in wellness is the mind. The psychological energy you put in to your movement affects you on a molecular level and cellular level."

The approach extends beyond the fitness space. Duigan and Aleksandrowicz are bridging the gap between spa and fitness for a more personal experience, where therapists are communicating with trainers.

"It's just breathtaking in the ambition and the scope of what we want to create for people," says Duigan. "It's like nothing else, and no expense has been spared." ●

> Instead of counting reps and steps, you're having fun, and you can be present and be in the moment
>
> James Duigan

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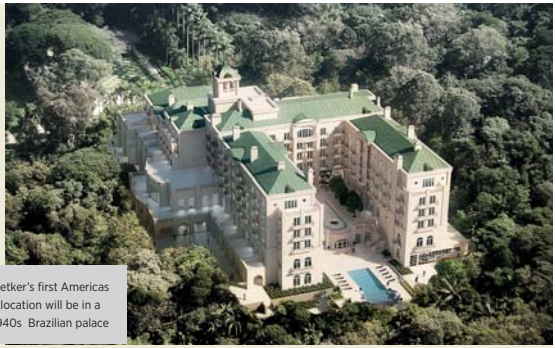
OETKER'S PLANS FOR GROWTH

The Lanesborough is not Oetker's only big spa opening this year; in June, it will open its first location in the Americas in São Paulo, Brazil – Palácio Tangará – which will include a 1,600sq m (17,222sq ft) Sisley Spa.

The 141-bedroom hotel is being built in an abandoned Brazilian palace constructed in the 1940s and designed by iconic late architect Oscar Niemeyer, along with landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx. B+H Architects, Bick Simonato and PAR Arquitetura are overseeing the restoration and renovation, while interior designers William Simonato, Luis Bick and Patricia Anastassiadis have been commissioned to complete the hotel's guest rooms and public spaces. The trio has been inspired by 1940s Brazilian glamour and elegance, including the rise of Brazilian abstract art and Bossa Nova music.

Anastassiadis has designed the spa, which includes an indoor swimming pool with a glass roof and treatment rooms on the mezzanine floor above, a garden terrace with juice bar and a second pool in the garden.

The Oetker Collection owns eight other design-led hotels including Brenners Park Hotel & Spa in Baden Baden, Germany; Hotel Du Cap-Eden-Roc in France; and Le Bristol Hotel in Paris. Perd says the group plans to open 15 to 20 properties in the next 10 years, with a focus on the US. Perd also says Europe will continue to be a focus, with Madrid and Rome high on the list, and that Asia is a possibility, where he has his eye on cities like Tokyo, Hong Kong and Singapore.



Oetker's first Americas location will be in a 1940s Brazilian palace

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THE BUSINESS OF HEALING

Just over 100 people from 23 countries gathered in Berlin in March for the 2017 Healing Summit. Jane Kitchen reports on CSR, emotional healing and more

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Healing Hotels of the World

Samantha Foster
Destination Spa Management

Asa Siegel
Holistic health counselor

Organised by the Healing Hotels of the World, the Healing Summit's mission is to provide content and inspiration to help build a global healing business community.

The event looks at what role businesses can play in finding new awareness, understanding and tools that can help benefit humanity. Speakers from across the spa and wellness industry, and beyond, looked at ways in which we can help create not just healing spaces, but healing environments, from the top down.

"The world has changed in ways we didn't think possible, but there's still work for all of us to do," said Anne Biging, founder and CEO of Healing Hotels of the World, as she opened the conference. "Business and doing good can actually live side-by-side – it's not either/or."

Standing out

Samantha Foster, director at Bangkok-based Destination Spa Management, highlighted ways that spa and wellness centres can stand out in the healing sector. "You can be better, be different, or change the playing field," she explained. Foster said spas can be better by providing exemplary service, such as a wellness advisory team, which can offer support on the whole spectrum of wellness, or through offering personalisation of services, including diagnostic testing. "From the inside out or the outside in, technology is helping us produce better results for our guests," said Foster. "It's happening whether we like it or not, so we have to decide to what extent we engage."

Being different might include offering the same services, but in a new way or location, such as 'heli-yoga' on a remote mountain top, or entertainment-based group exercise, such as drumming, said Foster. "Look at the culture of where you are and how you can package that for wellness," she suggested.

Corporate social responsibility

Asa Siegel, holistic health counselor and founder of US-based Stamba Superfoods, which produces nutritional supplements, spoke about successfully integrating doing good into a business model.

"When you learn something positive about what a company is doing, and you have the opportunity to give your business to that company or to a competitor, which one do you choose?" Siegel asked. "The easiest way of understanding this shift in paradigm is to think about how simple that decision is."

Siegel also said that socially responsible investing is now the fastest growing

Delegates heard that socially responsible investing is the fastest growing segment of the investor community

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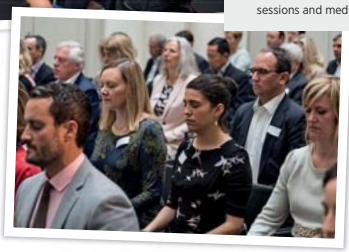
Held at the Rocco Forte Hotel de Rome in Berlin, the Summit included breakout sessions and meditation



> We are moving from individualism to a sense of interconnectedness, which fosters compassion
>
> Dr Marjorie Woollacott

segment of the investor community, and that companies such as How Good, a New York-based organisation that monitors and rates food on the grounds of its sustainability – and makes that information available to consumers through an app – are "set up to grow, expand and completely change the way the business world works."

Rupert Schmid, president of skincare brand Biologique Recherche, said that having a corporate social responsibility report is crucial for a company. "State what you've done and what you will do," he said. "We have to link what we're doing here with the real world. If you invest in CSR, if you take care of the stakeholders, if you invest in the long-term, then you'll be more profitable in the long run."

A shifting sense of connection

Neuroscientist Dr Marjorie Woollacott looked at how meditation increases a sense of connection with the world around us. "We're moving from individualism to a sense of interconnectedness, which fosters compassion," she explained. "Activity-dependent neuroplasticity means that our brain is constantly being shaped by what we're doing and what we think, and much of the time this happens unwittingly. We need to make a conscious shift in what's coming into our brains."

Consumers are feeling that change as well, and are increasingly looking for ways to connect and learn, said Stella Photi, founder and MD of Wellbeing Escapes, a travel company specialising in healthy holidays. "In 2007, people were looking for something that would make them look good," she said. "Now, people are asking, 'How can I be better and feel better?'"

Trends popular with her wellness clients include therapeutic rest, digital detox, tailor-made fitness and emotional healing. "People want to mend their hearts," Photi said. "There are emotional traumas that happen and they manifest in our bodies – and finally people are realising this."

Dr Mariela Silveira, co-owner and medical director at Kurotel Longevity Medical Center and Spa in Brazil, spoke about the science of wellness and the role spas can play in emotional healing. "Even adults who have been through childhood trauma can be positively stimulated through different opportunities and feelings," she said. "The human brain has the amazing ability to change throughout life, regardless of the age people are."

Dr Silveira looked at how a search for happiness has changed us culturally and biologically, with dopamine training us to look for the easy reward pathway of pleasure, distracting us from other, deeper emotions. "Happiness does not exist in the way our community and culture have tried to define it," she explained. "We have this pressure to be happy all the time – we've never had this issue before. We're searching for happiness, and we get distracted with pleasures." ●

Dr Marjorie Woollacott
Neuroscientist

Rupert Schmid
Biologique Recherche

Stella Photi
Wellbeing Escapes

Dr Mariela Silveira
Kurotel Longevity Medical Center and Spa

Senior moment

Katja Ekvall is the entrepreneur behind Activage, a fitness centre and training academy in Sweden that caters for seniors. She talks to Kate Parker

Katja Ekvall

> The people we spoke to simply didn't feel the fitness industry represented them. They felt excluded

What's Activage, and what inspired you to create it?
The idea for Activage came five years ago, borne out of a wish to help my dad when he fell sick with a joint and muscle disorder. I was travelling a lot with my work and couldn't be with him as often as I wanted, but when I did visit I wanted us to do something positive together.

At the time, I was part of the management team of a big fitness company in the north of Sweden and knew something of the effects of training and exercise for older people. So when I visited my dad, I started with some simple exercises – and very quickly I could see it really helped. I therefore decided, together with my family, to hire a personal trainer to visit him a couple of times a week.

I started by talking to 15 or 20 personal trainers, but no-one wanted to take this job on. That was really frustrating. Many simply didn't feel confident working with an older person, because it hadn't been covered during their training.

I'm an entrepreneur – and the daughter of an entrepreneur – and to me this was really crazy. Here was a service I wanted to buy and it just wasn't available. I knew I'd have to bring my heart and my entrepreneurial thoughts together to solve that.

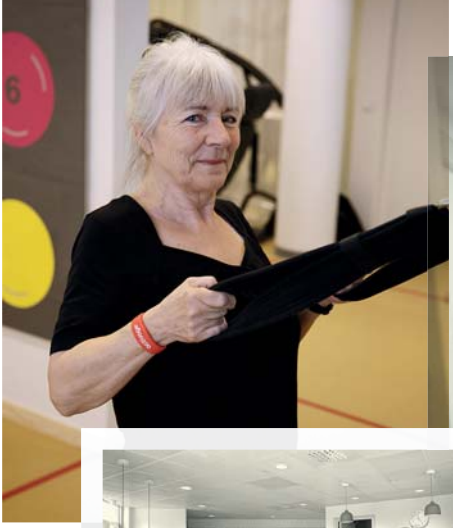
Then my research began in earnest. If you wanted to work with seniors exclusively, where did you get your training? I found there were no comprehensive courses at that time. I could see a real gap in the market, and I started to talk to potential business partners, together with physiotherapists and researchers in the area of senior fitness.

We also began to work on a more thorough analysis of the market for senior fitness, both in the Nordic countries and in wider Europe, where there are more than 96 million people over the age of 65 years. We also went to the US, where senior fitness is a huge, well-established industry; the education system produces specialists in senior fitness, while some gym chains operate exclusively for seniors.

Senior fitness is already a large and well-established sector in the US

How did you shape the Activage offering?
We worked with Nina Lindelof, a physiotherapist and post-doctoral researcher at Sweden's Umeå University, together with distance education organisation the International Sports Sciences Association to develop and build a qualification that would train people to become senior fitness specialists. Two years ago, we launched the Activage Academy.

We also knew we wanted to open a gym for seniors, so we talked to more than 400 seniors who had never set foot inside a gym, asking them what would make them take that first step. We got some



Most Activage members are in their 70s and had never been to a gym before

really interesting answers, but among the main reasons was that many seniors thought the music was too loud and everyone seemed so young. That isn't helped by the way the industry chooses to market and portray itself; there are very few images depicting seniors. The people we spoke to simply didn't feel the exercise and wellness industry represented them. They felt excluded.

How are you different?

We took the information we had gathered, built our concept and opened our first flagship gym in Stockholm in March 2016. We have a completely different model compared to other gyms. Every feature of the space has been thought through, millimetre by millimetre, from the sound and lighting to the colour scheme and atmosphere.

Our gym is small – not more than 170sq m (1,830sq ft) – and half of that is social space, where you can meet new and old friends and have a cup of coffee or something to eat. From our research among seniors, we know this social aspect is as important as the physical exercise.

Kristoffer Sjoberg, our gym manager, has been exercising with the over-90s for many years and is a well-known name in Sweden when it comes to senior strength training. With his knowledge and experience, together with the expertise of our physiotherapists, we've put together an offering that includes strength, balance and functional training, working with very small groups.

It's really important that the gym is exclusively for seniors. All of our members need a personal trainer for the first eight weeks, so we can assess and reassure them that we have exactly the right kind of training to meet their specific needs.

How much does membership cost?

Weekly fees cost anything from 150 to 400 Swedish Krona (US$17-$45, €16–€42, £14–£37), depending on the amount of personal training that the member requires. Since we opened, we've seen membership grow beyond our estimations. Our youngest member is 58 and the oldest 88. The majority of our members are in their early 70s and most had never been in a gym before.

Do you have plans to open more Activage centres?

We created the concept to make it scalable and we already have interested parties wanting to be franchisees. We'd like to open more Activage centres in Sweden in 2017 – either our own or franchises – and then expand into wider Europe, depending on investor input. Ultimately, we want to have Activage gyms in every country in Europe. ●

Kate Parker is contributing editor of Spa Business
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BOOKING ONLINE

Clients want 24/7 accessibility for bookings, but how are software companies balancing customer convenience with operators' business needs? Kate Parker investigates

Online booking poses particular challenges when looking at the combined needs of operator and customer, with one seeking to control and optimise the whole process for business efficiency and the other desiring 24/7 accessibility and total convenience. So how are software companies fulfilling the brief to make online booking ever smarter and more intuitive for everyone?

DIGITAL NATIVES

In 2017, smartphone use is ubiquitous, online shopping is a norm, and today's spa customers expect to access appointment booking at a time that's convenient to them. Add to this the fact that increasing numbers of digitally dependent Millennials are becoming wellness consumers, and there's a demand for software companies to integrate an online platform within their programmes.

Josh McCarter, CEO of spa software company Booker, says younger people expect to be able to accomplish tasks online, quickly and on a whim – without having to make a phone call. "About 60 to 70 per cent of online bookings are made via smartphone in Booker," says McCarter. "Millennials' expectations for customer service, technology integration and mobile friendliness are high. Online booking is less of a 'nice to have' today than a necessity to deliver the kind of experience these customers want."

Booker client Julie Bevel, owner and operator of Fox River Spa & Salon in Illinois, US, says that adding online booking has enabled her business to target these groups. "Our younger clientele – customers 40 years and younger – are much more likely to book online," she explains. "We see a lot of appointments booked between 10pm and midnight, when clients are making plans."

Fox River Spa & Salon lets clients access 90 per cent of services online all the time. Bevel says that between 25 and 35 per cent of all treatments are booked online each month, and that online booking is helping her business grow. For example, she says in March 2016, 160 bookings were made online; in March of this year, that number went up to 234. "With an average ticket price of $73, that's over $5,400 worth of additional revenue made through online booking year-on-year," she explains.

BOOSTING REVENUE

The latest innovation from software company Mindbody is an app that allows spas to make all of their available appointments easily searchable and bookable. The app lists all the spas, salons, fitness studios and yoga studios that are

Younger clients expect to be able to book treatments online – and on a whim

We see a lot of appointments booked between 10pm and midnight, when clients are making plans

Julie Bevel, owner, Fox River Spa

At Harrison Hot Springs Resort, there's been an uptick in people booking multiple services online

using Mindbody software, and consumers can search for services based on their location, search available appointments, and then book and pay for treatments, all in one place. "It's a lead-generation tool for spas, allowing you to get new prospects to your door," says Stephanie Jennings, Mindbody's senior vice president of sales.

Spa technology provider SpaSoft says its online booking engine is used by 25 per cent of its customers, and has recently upgraded with a feature for add-on services. "Guests can now choose to enhance their service by electing to add things such as an eyebrow wax, facial or aromatherapy oils," says marketing manager Amanda Wisell. "This helps spas boost revenue while customising services to each guest."

Healing Springs Spa at the Harrison Hot Springs Resort in Canada uses SpaSoft's online booking engine and has seen 14 per cent of its bookings coming from the site, accounting for almost CA$20,000 in bookings per month. Angela Striker, spa and resort manager, says that she's also seen an impressive 75 per cent increase in enhancement bookings – services set to

I've seen a 75 per cent increase in the booking of our 'enhancements'

Angela Striker, spa manager, Healing Springs Spa

be upsold within the booking system. "As all spa directors know, these are like gravy – very little cost in terms of product and layered into an existing service – so have zero time costs," she says. "I also see more people booking multiple services."

With online booking, spa staff also spend less time inputting data manually, freeing them up to spend time where it's really needed – offering face-to-face service when customers come through the door for their treatments. Mindbody client Nicole Thobani, managing director of London-based Spa & Massage, Boutique Spa and Camden Beauty Spa, says that online booking has had a positive impact on her business. "Online booking has saved a lot of time for our front-of-house team in a number of ways: it reduces time spent on the phone booking appointments, reduces data errors, reduces miscommunication regarding spa policies, and reduces check-in and check-out times," she explains.

THE OPERATOR BALANCING ACT

While user experience is key, spa operators themselves have to offset customer convenience with their business interests. A key area of concern for spa operators centres on control and the visibility of the spa booking calendar. However, software companies say that they're giving operators the expertise to shape online booking to their advantage.

"Spa owners sometimes approach online booking with the concern that ▸

they'll lose control over their manual booking strategies," says Frank Pitsikalis, founder and CEO of software company ResortSuite. "But once they learn the flexibility built into ResortSuite WEB – with controls like web-enabling only certain services, or the ability to yield-manage which services to make web-bookable at which times to maximise revenue opportunities – they see where online booking can actually improve their operations, and their bottom line."

Software company Premier Software's flagship business management system, Core, has a fully-integrated web-suite within its functionality, which incorporates a personalised online booking facility, set to be upgraded later this year. The company's chief operations officer Leonie Wileman explains: "Core clients often raise concerns regarding diary management and the visibility of their schedule to the outside world, but what the outside world sees is completely within their control. Spa operators can control which bookings are available, either by room, treatment or time."

UK-based franchisor The Massage Company, a Premier Software client, built its company on top of online booking rather than the other way around. Operations director Charlie Thompson says that because of this, the online booking facility is an integral part of the business, and 38 per cent of his bookings are done online – well above what he says is an industry average of 15 per cent.

Online booking has saved a lot of time for our front-of-house team

Nicole Thobani, managing director, Camden Beauty Spa

"Online booking as a whole increases the efficiency of our business, improves the customer journey and reduces front-office costs," says Thompson.

Thompson also says Premier Software's direct search function is working particularly well for digital marketing. "With this feature, we can set the link used in our Facebook or Google Adwords campaign to send clients straight to the treatment in question," he explains. "This ensures there is a smooth journey from the point-of-advert to the point-of-purchase."

RETAINING RAPPORT

Customisation plays a vital role in integrating the booking process, ensuring a consistent customer experience on and offline, with clear brand identification.

As Mindbody's Jennings says, "Our branded web and app solutions embed our booking tools into a spa's website, Facebook page or custom app. That means spas can brand their customers' online experience, whether they're booking via a browser, social media or a mobile phone."

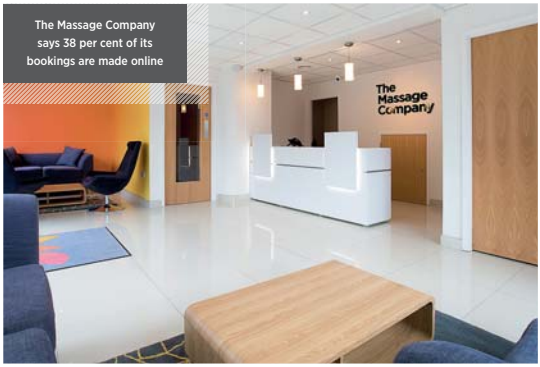
Once a customer has bought into your brand identity, personalisation then ensures online booking retains that feeling of rapport with a customer that some operators may fear is lost online. Booker's McCarter believes the best way to retain a customer relationship online is to drive people to make appointments through smart use of email and social media. "Offering specials and automated appointment reminders that are personalised to that individual can deliver that personal touch and keep customers coming back," he explains.

Online booking also provides trackable data, providing useful insights to be used to understand customers, or to better manage staff schedules and facilities.

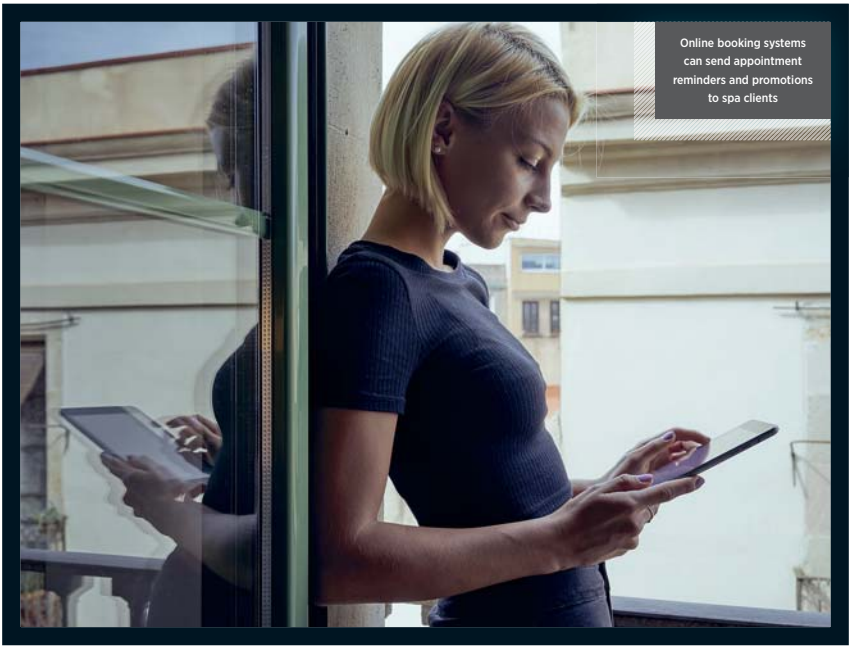
Fox River Spa & Salon's Bevel describes how they were able to import the Booker app to live within their salon website's page, and by doing so, are able to analyse customers' movements through the site. "We find that clients typically go from the specials page, then to service descriptions and team profiles, and then to booking," she says. "By tracking their journey through the app, we were able to see how important employee profiles are. With 19 employees with different strengths, we

Online booking increases the efficiency of our business, improves the customer journey and reduces front-office costs

Charlie Thompson, operations director, The Massage Company



The Massage Company says 38 per cent of its bookings are made online



Online booking systems can send appointment reminders and promotions to spa clients

tailored profiles to speak to each of the team's ideal client. It helped strengthen our business because customers feel as though they know who they're working with."

CHANGING LANDSCAPE

Social media shapes opinions, and spa operators realise that brand reputation and loyalty can be built – or damaged – online. "People are sharing more now than ever before, their experiences are being broadcasted through live streaming on Facebook, pictures are instantly uploaded to Instagram and Twitter and people are leaving real-time reviews," says Roger Sholanki, CEO of software company Book4Time. "All this leaves irrevocable content that makes bookings spike or dwindle, depending on how your business is set up to deal with online bookings, not to mention increased online promotions, coupons and gift-card buying."

More than 80 per cent of software company The Assistant Company's (TAC) customers use online booking in their spas. Managing director Guenther

Experiences shared on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, and real-time reviews, can make online bookings spike or dwindle

Roger Sholanki, CEO, Book4Time

Poellabauer recognises the myriad effects of social media on a changing landscape. "Spa bloggers and their user-generated content have become a powerful influence factor when it comes to booking inspiration and online bookings," he explains. "Decisions are no longer based on one-way information from companies, but on recommendations on social media."

So what are spa operators predicting will be the key changes to online booking over the coming years? With the continuing drive towards mobile, software companies see customers being able to access online booking from any digital device, including wearables, smart-home devices and virtual assistants like Apple's Siri or Amazon's Alexa. Others see increasing levels of personalisation as key to the future, with behavioural advertising and ever-more sophisticated cookies driving revenue. But one thing's certain – from the development of AI bots that increase conversion and just-in-time booking opportunities, to the integration of health apps on wearable devices linked to medical profiles and from online spa therapists, to gamification and augmented reality – spa software will continue to make things more accessible, efficient and convenient. ●

Kate Parker is contributing editor of *Spa Business*. email: kateparker@spabusiness.com

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Product innovation

Industry suppliers tell Lauren Heath-Jones about their latest product, treatment and equipment launches

By Lauren Heath-Jones, assistant product editor

Sammy Gharieni shows off his transformative sofa

Massage table supplier and manufacturer Gharieni has introduced the MLW Transform, a sofa that easily converts to a massage table, offering new possibilities for the spa and hospitality industries.

"We have literally transformed the spa massage world – this makes massage accessible to anyone," says owner Sammy Gharieni. "It opens a completely new channel for us – really, it's competition to the portable massage bed."

Gharieni explains that the couch can be used in situations that would normally require a therapist to cart a portable bed with them – at the office, in a hotel suite, or even in a fitness area. "This is a product that you can sell through many different markets," he says.

The MLW Transform is electrically adjustable in height, has an integrated heating system and has a built-in battery so it's fully operational without a power connection.

The headrest can be adjusted in inclination and height, and a variety of upholstery covers are available, with the possibility to incorporate custom materials.

spa-kit keyword: Gharieni

"We have literally transformed the spa massage world – this makes massage accessible to anyone"

The MLW Transform is a sofa that easily converts to a massage table, and can be used in hotel suites, offices or fitness areas

Noella Gabriel shares the inspiration behind Elemis' new Life Elixirs

Life Elixirs has been created to bring everything back to the potency of modern aromatics

Elemis Life Elixirs are a range of bath and shower oils, perfume rollers and scented candles, available in five aromatics.

They're designed to complement the brand's skincare lines in a holistic way, providing long-lasting and multi-layered scents using essential oils, aimed at having an effect on both the body and mind. Available in Calm, Clarity, Fortitude, Embrace and Sleep, the Life Elixirs each have a specific need that the scent is designed to focus on, from quieting the mind to focusing it.

Noella Gabriel, co-founder and creator of Elemis Therapies, said the line was developed as "a real evolution of 25 years of knowledge."

Life Elixirs use essential oils, with an aim to have an effect on both the body and mind

"Life Elixirs has been created to bring everything back to the potency of modern aromatics," says Gabriel, adding that Elemis developed the product after listening to its clients. "When the day overwhelms you, these complex, delicate, yet scientifically formulated blends will tune in to you, restoring harmony, settling the mind, quieting the body, while harnessing your inner dynamism."

spa-kit keyword: Elemis

Stephan Helary harnesses African traditions with new tea range

Skincare brand Terres d'Afrique has announced a collaboration with South African tea manufacturer Yswara to create a new line of wellness teas. The collection is made up of six blends: Ishalo Comet, Comoe Sky, Okavango Star, Mela Constellation, Meru Moon and Quirimbas Sun.

"We wanted to add taste to the wellness experiences we create," says Stephan Helary, founder of Terres d'Afrique. "It was a logical extension to create a range of luxury African health teas to complement our treatments."

We wanted to add taste to the wellness experiences we create

The range is created in collaboration with South African tea brand Yswara

Ishalo Comet is designed to boost the immune system, and contains green rooibos, baobab, and carrot, while Comoe Sky is formulated with green tea and lemongrass and is designed to detox. Okavango Star aims to aid digestion, and features organic hibiscus and peppermint; Mela Constellation contains lemon verbena and rose to restore; and Meru Moon features honeybush and lavender to aid rest.

"This range harnesses African tradition," says Swaady Martin, CEO of Yswara. "We have created these blends to reconnect people to the oneness of each other and with healing nature."

The teas are offered in the Four Seasons in Johannesburg, Six Senses in the Seychelles and The Silo Hotel in Cape Town.

Spa-Kit keyword: Terres d'Afrique

PROMOTION

Steve Spiro discusses the benefits of halotherapy

Halogenerators crush pharmaceutical salt into micro-particles that go deep into the lungs and on the skin

Steve Spiro, founder and managing partner at Global Halotherapy Solutions (GHS), wants to clarify the differences between halotherapy and Himalayan salt usage.

Halotherapy is the use of salt vapour to treat respiratory problems, skin complaints and stress, using a halogenerator – a machine that crushes large particles of pure pharmaceutical salt and disperses them as a dry salt aerosol. This allows the salt to be inhaled into the lungs, where it can deliver a number of different health benefits.

Himalayan salt treatments, on the other hand, may involve spending time in a room with salt-covered walls or salt crystals, but Spiro says without the halogenerator dispersing the crystals as an aerosol, the treatment is not as effective.

The sleek, lightweight Halo FX halogenerator delivers a powerful true halotherapy solution

"Halogenerators produce halotherapy by crushing pure pharmaceutical salt into micro-particles that go deep into the lungs and on the skin," explains Spiro. "That's what halotherapy is – without a halogenerator it is just not halotherapy."

When salt particles are inhaled into the lungs in aerosolized form, they have a number of health benefits for those suffering from asthma, chronic bronchitis, sinusitis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cystic fibrosis, hayfever and other airborne allergies. Salt inhalation can also ease symptoms for those suffering with acute/chronic respiratory diseases, viral infections and chronic ear-nose-and-throat illnesses.

Global Halotherapy Solutions' Halo FX halogenerator is designed to deliver a powerful and reliable halotherapy experience. It features a sleek, lightweight design that makes it easy to install, and has a number of settings that can be adapted to suit the customer's needs.

It has recently been certified by Underwriter Laboratories (UL), an American company that ensures safety standards in electronics across the US.

Amy McDonald, spa and wellness advisor at GHS, says: "The Halo FX can be put into massage rooms or lounge areas, but it can also be put into movement studios. This allows operators to utilise the space available to earn revenue, and offer classes in a room that has the added health benefits of halotherapy. The Halo FX is also available on GHS' pre-built equipment including salt beds, booths and cabins. "

Spa-kit keywords: Global Halotherapy Solutions

Louise Riby introduces new bath and body oils from Elemental Herbology

The oils are based on the five elements found in traditional Chinese medicine

Skincare brand Elemental Herbology has launched The Five Elements range, which consists of five bath and body oils based on the five elements found in traditional Chinese medicine: wood, fire, earth, metal and water.

Each oil has its own blend of essential oils formulated to revitalise and relax, and can be used as a moisturiser to intensely hydrate the skin.

Louise Riby, managing director at Elemental Herbology, says the oil blends are designed to help people find equilibrium at home. "Each oil has been specially formulated with a dual purpose and can be used while bathing in the bath or shower for a wonderful aromatherapy experience, or placed directly onto dry skin to instantly nourish and hydrate," she explains.

Wood Rejuvenation is designed to invigorate the mind and body, and contains rosemary, ho leaf and nutmeg. Fire Zest features sweet orange, rosemary and basil to energise the mind and reduce stress. Earth Balance includes mandarin, cedarwood and lime to soothe and restore energy. Metal Detox contains rosemary, grapefruit and juniper berry to improve circulation and remove toxins. Water Soothe contains lavender, ylang ylang and rose damask to aid rest.

"Each oil has been specially formulated with a dual purpose, and can be used in the bath or shower"

spa-kit keyword: Elemental Herbology

Andreas Dornbracht explains new LifeSpa concept

"Water applications can enhance a health-conscious lifestyle in a variety of ways"

Dornbracht has launched an innovative new water treatment concept for at home and professional use. The LifeSpa concept, which debuted at ISH 2017, is a modular system designed to integrate adaptable health-enhancing water applications into spas and bathrooms.

"Water applications can enhance a health-conscious lifestyle in a variety of ways, not just with regard to physical fitness, but also as far as mental performance and life energy are concerned," says Andreas Dornbracht, managing director of Dornbracht.

Applications include the Aquapressure vertical shower and the WaterFan and WaterCurve jets. Inspired by acupressure, Aquapressure is a vertical shower that features multiple outlet points and different flow modes, and is designed to deliver a variety of treatments, including water massage and contrast showers.

The LifeSpa concept is a modular system for home and professional use

The WaterFan and WaterCurve are height-adjustable massage jets that provide targeted massage to the neck, thoracic vertebrae and lumbar vertebrae areas. The jets feature a fan-like flow mode designed to alleviate and prevent muscular tension. The treatments are designed to improve wellbeing and increase energy levels over time.

spa-kit keyword: Dornbracht

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

Ulla-Pia Dyrlund-Lagadec discusses Thalion's new liquid care Mineral Booster

Marine skincare brand Thalion has released the Mineral Booster, a new liquid care facial treatment, which is designed to provide a 'shot of marine energy' for a smooth, plumped and radiant complexion. It's a water-based innovation that claims to deliver the benefits of water directly into the skin through light, meltable formulae that are designed to dissolve into the skin on contact.

"This product is thalassotherapy for the face," says Ulla-Pia Dyrlund-Lagadec, director of sales and marketing at Thalion. "It offers a genuine mineral biomimetic recharge to give the skin the trace elements and minerals it needs." The booster is formulated with active water and mineral trace elements from the sea, designed to re-energise fatigued skin, and features an aqueous gel-like texture.

spa-kit keyword: Thalion

> **This product is thalassotherapy for the face**

Mineral Booster provides a shot of trace minerals to the skin

Kurland's SnowBliss is a multi-sensory experience, says Esa Ranta

Spa consultancy and supplier Kurland has developed a new snowfall shower designed to bring the power of nature into the spa experience. SnowBliss is a fully customisable, sensory experience that can be integrated into any wellness area.

Guests can choose between two settings: snowfall and snowstorm. Snowfall features a gentle sprinkling of snow, while snowstorm features thunder and lightening, and snowflakes swirling around the user on all sides. SnowBliss uses corn snow, a coarse, granular snow formed by alternate cycles of freezing and thawing, which melts on the skin for a refreshing experience.

Kurland has recently completed an installation of SnowBliss at the Ye Olde Bell Hotel in Nottinghamshire, UK. Kurland consulted with UK distributor and spa consultancy SpaVision to create the SnowBliss concept, which was custom-designed for the Ye Olde Bell, but the product has been released to a wider market.

"Unusual wellness concepts are our expertise," says Esa Ranta, CEO of Haslauer, Kurland's parent company. "As a result, our SnowBliss can be integrated into any spa in any conceivable design. The cabin can be individually customised and sound and lighting effects are integrated into the SnowBliss, which allows for a unique experience that addresses all the senses."

spa-kit keyword: Kurland

Guests can choose between two settings for SnowBliss: snowfall and snowstorm

> **Sound and lighting effects are integrated into the SnowBliss, which addresses all the senses**

Anne Semonin's Glow combines makeup and skincare, explains Aline Marcadet

French skincare brand Anne Semonin has released Glow Instant Radiance Essence, a complexion enhancer that claims to give the skin a healthy glow while also delivering skincare benefits.

The essence, created by Anne Semonin owner and CEO Aline Marcadet, is designed to complement all skin tones and has a lightweight bi-phase formula that features ingredients rich in antioxidants, essential fatty acids and beta-carotene, to brighten the complexion and fight signs of ageing.

"Glow is a fusion between makeup and skincare for those women (and men) who want a healthy, sun-kissed look all year round without the need for self-tanning or foundation," says Marcadet. "In addition, its powerful antioxidant and super-nourishing ingredients help restore skin radiance and luminosity by adapting to all skin tones in an intelligent way."

The formula includes apricot kernel oil, which contains vitamins A and E and essential fatty acids to hydrate the skin and repair the protective skin barrier.

Other ingredients include tomato seed oil, Buriti oil and natural orange water, which are selected for their restorative properties, to protect from UVA/UVB rays and deliver essential nutrients into the skin. The formula also features micro-prism pigments selected for their light-polarising properties, which are used to reflect light and to add radiance to the skin.

spa-kit keyword: Anne Semonin

The Glow includes apricot kernel, tomato seed and Buriti oils

Glow is a fusion between makeup and skincare for women who want a healthy, sun-kissed look year round

David Foster shows off 'practical, beautiful' Zen tile collection

Our Zen collection is made of recycled glass, making it a beautiful and sustainable choice

Designworks Tiles has created a range of professional use porcelain tiles for spas and swimming pools. The Zen collection is a series of mosaic tiles that takes inspiration from natural stone, marble and wood. The tiles are available in a range of tranquil colours designed to evoke a feeling of relaxation.

David Foster, head of leisure sales at Designworks Tiles, says: "Our Zen mosaic tile collection is not only practical, but is also made of recycled glass, making it a beautiful and sustainable choice for leisure businesses."

The line is made up of more than 20 designs including Phyllite, a dark grey tile featuring subtle veining to look like marble; Pale Cherry, a grained, light brown tile designed to look like wood, and Bluestone, a stone-like cobalt blue tile.

The tiles have a matte finish and are compatible with Designwork's JointPoint technology, a system where silicone points are used to join individual mosaics together to form a single panel. JointPoint is designed to ensure that the panels are laid uniformly, resulting in easy installation, better adhesion and superior grip.

spa-kit keyword: Designworks Tile

The Zen collection takes inspiration from natural stone, marble and wood

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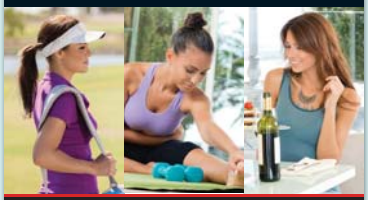

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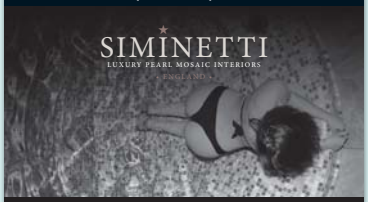

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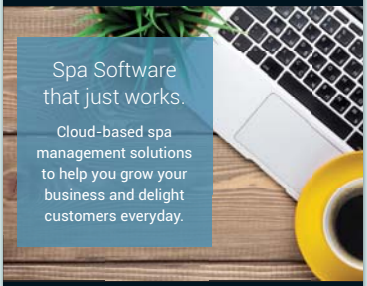

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RANKING HAPPINESS

The 2017 *World Happiness Report* finds people are happier in countries with strong social support. Jane Kitchen finds out more

ALVOV/SHUTTERSTOCK

Norway tops the global happiness rankings this year, followed closely by Denmark, Iceland and Switzerland

Social support is key to happiness, and the *World Happiness Report 2017*, released by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network in late March, shows just how important those foundations can be in shaping the overall happiness of a country.

Norway tops the global happiness rankings this year, moving up from 4th place in 2016, followed closely by Denmark, Iceland and Switzerland. All of the top-four ranked countries score highly on the factors found to support happiness: caring, freedom, generosity, honesty, health, income and good governance.

But the report points out that about half of the differences in rankings can be explained by things like having someone to count on, generosity, a sense of freedom and freedom from corruption – all key to strong social foundations. The other half is attributed to GDP per capita and healthy life expectancy – both of which also depend on the social context.

"The Scandinavian countries are very big on social support," Dr Jan-Emmanuel De Neve, one of the study's associate editors and a speaker at the 2016 Global Wellness Summit, told *Time* magazine. "The top countries, you can see, have societies which are not at each other's throats. But they also have high GDP per capita."

> "In Western societies, diagnosed mental illness has more of an effect on happiness than income, employment or physical illness"

The US dropped one point this year to number 14, despite increases in income and healthy life expectancy. But the four social rankings – generosity, social support, trustworthy governance and freedom – all dropped, suggesting that American happiness is dwindling primarily due to social causes rather than economic ones.

Mental health is also extremely important to happiness, the report finds. In Western societies, diagnosed mental illness has more of an effect on happiness than income, employment or physical illness. In every country, physical health is also important, yet in no country is it more important than mental health. In all countries, the most powerful effect would come from eliminating depression and anxiety, which are the biggest forms of mental illness.

The report also found that people in China are no happier than they were 25 years ago, and that much of Africa is struggling when it comes to happiness.

The first *World Happiness Report* was published in 2012. Since then, happiness is increasingly seen as a measure of social progress and a goal of public policy.

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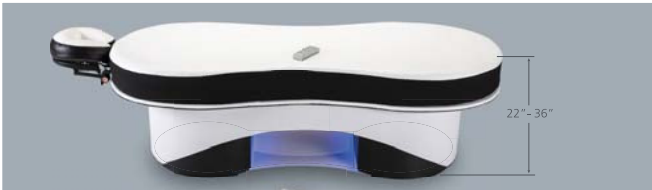

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