

spa business

INTERVIEW

Sharilyn Abbajay

Marriott's new vice-president for global spa & retail

Top of the world

Starwood's Iridium Spa debuts at St Regis Lhasa, Tibet

Robert De Niro

has his shibui spa got star quality?





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Stevens

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ON THE COVER

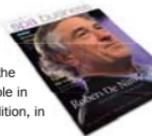
We mystery shop New York's Shibui Spa, which is owned by Robert De Niro (p44)

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EDITOR'S LETTER

Seduced by beauty

The beauty market has hit the headlines recently, with operators announcing record profits and growth. According to SRI's 2010 report, *Spas & the Global Wellness Market: Synergies & Opportunities* it represents a us\$679bn (€501bn, £424bn) market annually.

The sheer scale of the opportunity has caught the eye of investors – particularly because the market has ridden out the recession so well.

Now all sorts of companies are piling into the sector – and from the most unexpected directions.

This month UK food retailing giant Tesco announced it has successfully piloted in-store hair and beauty services and intends to begin a rollout to test the concept, with up to 70 sites being launched in the next year and more to follow.

Customers will be able to get “great value, high quality services from manicures to full waxing and styling” at their local supermarket along with their groceries.

Beauty services are also launching at motorway service stations and airports and it's likely we'll see more businesses with suitable existing infrastructure and large footfalls considering adding a beauty offer.

In this issue of *Spa Business* we discuss the opportunities which exist for spas to join this race for the beauty dollar (see page 20) and the challenges of doing so.

There are some in the industry who feel that spa and beauty are antagonistic and the way the industries are structured certainly reinforces the differences, with spa and beauty having separate trade associations, qualifications and events.

Indeed, in some respects spas were created as a reaction against the original ‘beauty salon’, with a philosophy of creating



Perhaps spas needed to distance themselves from the beauty market to establish spa as a discipline in its own right, but now the time is right for the two markets to re-bond on an equal footing

holistic journeys which are fulfilling physically, emotionally and spiritually – something that's difficult to do with a leg wax.

However, done thoughtfully, spas and beauty can integrate – to everyone's benefit. And with the drive for spas to improve both their profitability and their yield, beauty has to be part of the equation.

Right on trend, Steiner – owner of Elemis and Mandara – which acquired the Bliss beauty brand a year ago, is launching a new offer enabling other operators who want to ‘Blissify’ their spas to take on a package of seven beauty treatments called The Best of Bliss, supported by products, training and ‘Bliss in a Box’ retailing backup.

Perhaps spas needed to distance themselves from the beauty market to establish spa as a discipline in its own right, but now the time is right for the two markets to rebond on an equal footing.

Liz Terry, Editor
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PHOTO: ISTOCK.COM/@DRAGAN TRIFUNOVIC

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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

Structural alternatives to entering the Indian spa market

Todd Walter, president and CEO,
Elizabeth Arden Red Door Spas

As a western spa company looking to launch in India, I had two observations not explicitly addressed in *Spa Business's* feature on the country's spa industry (see SB10/4 p26). The first has to do with the structural alternatives of entering the market, the second relates to our obligation to protect the integrity and reputation of our industry in such an explosive market.

As an outsider looking in, there are three obvious approaches to entering a new market, each with its own risks and rewards: entering the market directly and going it alone; teaming up with a local joint-venture partner; and finding a master franchisee to license your brand.

Current regulations in India make it difficult for foreign corporations to directly own and operate retail locations, so for now, going it alone is out. Licensing your brand to a master franchisee minimises your economic risk, but it also requires ceding control of your brand (and guest experience) to a third party.

At Elizabeth Arden Red Door Spas, we're pursuing a joint venture, an alternative that for us best balances risk and reward, while still allowing us to remain intimately involved in the day-to-day operations. Key to this is finding a partner who shares our



Red Door Spas is looking to enter the Indian spa market under a joint venture partnership

core values and beliefs. No contract can possibly cover the myriad issues that we will face in the future; knowing our partner (when we do sign one) will share our business philosophy should help ensure we address these issues quickly and constructively when they do arise.

With regard to industry integrity, it is an unfortunate reality that the quality of services offered and the training spa technicians receive will vary greatly in each location. Unfortunately, and particularly given the nascent stage of the Indian spa

market, a bad experience can tar all service providers alike. To this end, we strongly support the joint efforts of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and the Quality Council of India's National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH) in their development of standards and a self-regulatory process for spa accreditation.

India's spa and wellness industry faces a very bright, robust, and long-term future, and we are looking forward to participating in it in the near future.

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Poor pay is another reason why high-quality therapists aren't found in spas

It's not surprising that modern spas can't offer good therapeutic services

Jasmine Mas, massage therapist, Park Lane Clinic, London

I read with interest you editors letter More than Mediocre in the last issue of Spa Business magazine (SB10/4 p5). I agree with Liz Terry wholeheartedly that the quality of massage within a spa environment often falls far short of customer expectation. I can however, tell you exactly why.

I have been a therapist for 15 years and have been employed within a spa environment both as a staff member and freelancer. I currently work within the medical, corporate and media industries as well as running a private practice. Most of my work is deep tissue massage of some description and I am booked up wherever I work.

I would like to point out two things. Firstly, a spa generally requires a therapist to work as if they're on a conveyor belt, performing back to back treatments, to maximise revenue. A therapist who constantly performs deep tissue massage

– and who is expected to work a six-hour shift with only a 15 minute break between treatments, for five days a week – either burns out very quickly, leaves or becomes injured and takes prolonged sick leave: the bête noire of all spa managers. I have personally seen it happen.

As a self-employed therapist, working alone, you quickly learn that pacing yourself – while not bringing you millions in revenue – does at least ensure some longevity in the industry allowing you make a decent living. So until spas schedule therapists to be able to work effectively, it is simply not possible to provide deep therapeutic massage on a constant basis.

Secondly, it is simply a case of supply and demand. A good therapist who has spent years investing their own time and money to build a solid practice is not going to work for a quarter (sometimes less) of the fee that he/she can attract outside of the spa industry. If spas want to offer more therapeutic treatments rather than the 'pampering', fluffy massage that is so often described on menus, then operators need to offer good training, a sensible schedule and a competitive pay structure. That way they will retain therapist loyalty and have a happy and healthy staff.

"A therapist who constantly performs deep tissue massage – on a six-hour shift, five days a week – either burns out very quickly, leaves or becomes injured and takes prolonged sick leave"

Urgent call to safeguard the natural health industry

Donne Alexander, founder, Joining Hands In Health campaign, UK

As a herbal food manufacturer, I couldn't understand why the majority of health practitioners, stores, spas, therapists, and the public were not aware of coming restrictive EU legislations, such as the Foods Supplements Directives (2002/46/EC) and the forthcoming Codex Alimentarius.

Under these legislations thousands of effective and safe natural products, foods, vitamins, supplements, remedies and practices were to be banned from the UK and European markets from April 2011. It would restrict access to natural products, therapies and practices.

For some reason the health industry was simply not taking the implications seriously and this 'in-action' has now led to panic over the survival of small health businesses, producers, suppliers, practitioners and therapists, alongside consumer health choice. From running my own business – Gramma's health products – I know how serious the threat is.

In answer to this ticking time-bomb, last year I initiated a petition The Nation Speaks – No! Not In My Name to safeguard the natural health industry, human rights and cultural heritage. It has generated tremendous support and I'm inviting spa owners and employees also to join in.

To help people understand this legal minefield, I had delivered a powerful, 41-page document to the Queen in December 2010, calling on her majesty to intercede to safeguard her citizens. Based on factual evidence, it confirms the implications we will face if the legislations become UK law in April. This makes a compelling case for the UK government to opt out and establish a new legal framework based on 'natural and common laws'. We hope this will then set a precedent for both EU and worldwide nations to follow. Our actions could very well serve as a template for others to free themselves from the legislations.

To succeed, 35 million UK signatures are needed. Therefore I urge the spa industry to act now by encouraging customers, family, friends, colleagues and social networks to sign petition today. Details: www.joininghandsinhealth.com/petition.

Redeveloped Hotel Bel-Air to debut in July

TOM WALKER

Hotel Bel-Air in Los Angeles, a Dorchester Collection hotel, will reopen this July after a 22-month renovation and redesign.

Two design firms – Champalimaud and Rockwell Group – have worked on the project which includes the creation of a new spa building. The 12,000sq ft (1,100sq m) spa includes three guest lofts for accommodation and seven treatment rooms. The spa will be managed by La Prairie and the company's products will be used as amenities in all of the guestrooms.



The spa boasts a total of seven treatment rooms

Six Senses reveals River Saigon resort and spa

TOM WALKER

Thailand-based resort and spa operator Six Senses has opened its Saigon River site in Vietnam. The resort includes 150 accommodation units – divided into guestrooms and villas – and a large spa. There is also a significant residential element (see p30).

Located on the river bank, the Six Senses Spa at Saigon River offers seven indoor and outdoor treatment rooms, a Thai massage room, relaxation areas, a yoga pavilion and a sauna and steamroom. Guests are transported to the spa on a wooden boat.

Spending up within the luxury travel sector

TOM WALKER

Global spending at five-star hotels rose by an average of 14 per cent during the year to October 2010 when compared to 2009.

Figures from the American Express Business Insights report suggest wealthy consumers and business travellers are prepared to pay for luxury once more. Sujata Bhatia, VP of the Business Insights department, said increased consumer confidence among wealthy travellers is a positive signal that economic conditions are improving within the high-end hotel sector.

Prince Spa opens in Rome

TOM WALKER

The Prince day spa in Rome has opened its doors at the exclusive Parco dei Principi Grand Hotel in Rome, Italy.

The 21,500sq ft (2,000sq m) spa houses 12 multi-sensory treatment cabins and two spa suites, thermal circuits, water features an extensive wet zone and a large relaxation area. Treatments will include chromatherapy, aromatherapy, watsu and a range of massages – Thai, shiatsu, Swedish and ayurvedic. The wet zone offers a 25m swimming pool,

Turkish bath, bio sauna, Finnish sauna and a thalassotherapy bath as well as a cold area with emotional showers, an ice cascade, tropical rainshowers and cold misting.

The main product line used at the spa is Maria Galland, with the Höbe Pergh range of hay treatments also being used.



The spa's large wet zone includes a 25m swimming pool and a sauna area

Other suppliers include Fisiosphere – a collection based on marine seaweed, mud and sea salts – and Germaine de Capuccini for the milk, chocolate and red grape treatments. The spa also boasts its own bar-restaurant which has 'biological' menu – with staff advising guests on personalised eating plans.

Joint venture for Stoup and Boykin

TOM WALKER

David Stoup, co-founder of La Prairie and former CEO of Red Door spas, has joined forces with hospitality entrepreneur Robert Boykin to form a new spa management and operations company.

Trilogy Spa Ventures will aim to "redefine the branded spa concept", with services ranging from creating spa brands to securing deals with suppliers, as well as developing retail opportunities on behalf of clients. The company also looks to secure exclusive deals with spa and beauty product suppliers and to offer them to clients.

Stoup said: "There is a great demand to be met in the branded spa business. Using my past experience in building beauty brands



The consultancy aims to help spas secure exclusive deals with suppliers

paired with Bob's expertise in the hospitality industry, we will redefine the spa category by creating powerful synergies between beauty brands and properties."

Fred Olsen Cruise Lines takes over spa operations

TOM WALKER

UK-based Fred Olsen Cruise Lines (FOCL) will take over the running of its onboard spa offer across its fleet of four cruise ships by mid-2011. The spas on the ships *Balmoral*, *Boudicca*, *Braemar* and *Black Watch* were previously

operated by The Onboard Spa Company and will retain the name Atlantis Spa under FOCL's direct management.

FOCL has appointed a new team of specialists to operate the spas, all of whom have been sourced from five-star hotels and resorts.

Jungle spa for Panama resort

PETE HAYMAN

An open-air jungle spa is to be included as part of a new eco-friendly private island resort scheme being developed by real estate company Amble Resorts in Panama.

The resort at Isla Palenque will be managed by the West Paces Hotel Group and sustainability has been a key focus for landscapers Design Workshop and design firm 4240 Architecture.

The spa, situated in a 30-bedroom boutique hotel, will use indigenous plant extracts in its invigorating treatments for the mind and body. Its open-air concept is intended to immerse guests in the heart of the jungle.

There will also be an extensive holiday-home community – comprising casitas, treetop residences and villa estates – that will “eclipse other Panama real estate developments”. Other resort



The private island is being developed as a super-luxury eco resort

features include a 220-acre (89-hectare) nature reserve; more than 10 miles (16.1km) of nature trails; a yacht club; and an organic farm.

Phase one of construction is expected to begin this year. Delivery of the first homes is scheduled for late 2012 and will coincide with the launch of the boutique hotel and spa.

American Leisure secures old Miraval contract

PETE HAYMAN

American Leisure has been named as the new management company for the spa at 515 East 72, the New York condominium development formerly known as Miraval Living. Miraval and the site's developer, River Terrace Apartments,

parted company last October following contractual disagreements.

The 40,000sq ft (3,716sq m) spa, fitness centre and pool is due to launch in March and will provide a “full array” of services. *For the latest on the spa real estate market see p30.*

Marriott launches Saray spa brand

TOM WALKER

Marriott International has just unveiled an in-house spa concept called Saray.

To be rolled out across the Middle East, the first Saray-branded spa opened at Dubai Marriott Harbour Hotel & Suites on 1 February.

The concept has been created using Arabic design elements and traditional remedies and all Saray products and ingredients will be sourced from the Middle East. Treatments include hammam rituals, Dead Sea mud and salt treatments, an Arabic Coffee Awakener and a Spiced Pomegranate and Moroccan Yoghurt Detoxifier. Saray will use its own branded products for the majority of the treatments, although additional suppliers include Phytomer and June Jacobs.



The new concept boasts its own products with locally sourced ingredients

The next three Marriott properties to launch Saray spas are JW Marriott Hotel Tripoli in Libya, Renaissance Doha City Center Hotel in Qatar and JW Marriott Marquis Dubai.

For more on the launch of Saray, see the interview with Marriott's Sharilyn Abbajay on p24.

Two new spa resorts

planned for Borneo in 2012

TOM WALKER

YTL Hotels, the hospitality arm of Malaysian conglomerate YTL Corporations Berhad, will open two new resorts in Borneo during 2012. The first one scheduled to open is Pulau Gaya with views of Mount Kinabalu. Facilities at the resort will include the renowned YTL Spa Village concept and a range of swimming pools.

Pulau Gaya will be followed by Pulau Tiga, which will be marketed as an ‘intimate hideaway’ and is located 48km (30m) south of Kota Kinabalu.



The deal adds 12,000 facilities on spafinder.com

SpaFinder partners with online software company MindBody

LIZ TERRY

Marketing company SpaFinder Inc has secured a deal with online software group MindBody which will see all 12,000-plus spa and wellness facilities which use MindBody's software being listed on spafinder.com.

From March, all SpaFinder customers will be able to search MindBody's inventory of fitness, yoga, pilates and martial arts studios and then book appointments online. In addition, Mindbody's clients will be able to take part in spa and wellness gift card programmes through both SpaFinder and its beauty divisions SpaWish and Glamblition.

Russian council for spa and wellness launches

TOM WALKER

A new non-profit organisation has been launched for the spa and wellness sectors in Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States. The first meeting of the Spa and Wellness International Council (SWIC) was held in Moscow on 30 January and issues discussed included the future cooperation of SWIC with the international spa community. The setting of national standards for the Russian spa industry was also on the agenda.

DEKRA teams up with European Spas Association

TOM WALKER

International assessment company DEKRA Certification is to carry out future audits for the EuropeSpa quality seal of approval, which is governed by the European Spas Association (ESPA). The EuropeSpa award was introduced in 2006 and there are now spas with the accreditation in 12 countries.

ESPA is the umbrella organisation of 20 spa associations (mostly national bodies) and is based in Brussels, Belgium. It is planning to publish its EuropeSpa med certification for medical spas later this year.



The resort will be designed as a French chateau

Berjaya Hills to unveil organic spa resort

TOM WALKER

Berjaya Hills, a subsidiary of Berjaya Corporation, will open a MYR100m (US\$33m, €24m, £21m) organic spa and wellness resort in Bukit Tinggi, Pahang, Malaysia in April. The Chateau Spa and Wellness Resort is located within a 150-million-year-old tropical rainforest and has been modelled on an 18th century French castle.

Facilities include 210 bedrooms and a luxury resort spa called La Santé. Berjaya will be marketing the spa as Malaysia's very first "organic wellness spa".

Kempinski's Zamani resort relaunches with new concept

TOM WALKER

Kempinski Hotels has branded its Zamani Zanzibar resort as Zamani Retreat Kempinski following a redevelopment.

The spa resort will be marketed as Africa's first holistic health retreat and will introduce a new concept based on three 'houses', offering guests a variety of treatments combining different healing traditions.

House of Africa will treat guests using indigenous herbs, House of Asia will feature Tibetan herbal medicine, while House of India will offer ayurvedic treatments.

Steiner to launch new spa brand

PETE HAYMAN

Steiner Leisure is to be the exclusive operator of a 9,500sq ft (883sq m) spa facility that is set to open in the third quarter of 2011 at the refurbished Tropicana Las Vegas Hotel and Casino in Nevada, US.

A spokesperson for Steiner said: "The spa will not be a current Steiner brand, but a new one developed for this project. It will be hip, with South Beach, Miami flavour."

Steiner has secured a 10-year agreement from the opening date of the facility, with an option to renew the deal for two five-year periods. Under the terms of the deal, Steiner will also contribute US\$5.2m (€3.8m, £3.3m) towards the construction.

Tropicana president and chief operating officer Tom McCartney said: "We are designing one of the most beautiful spas and fitness



Facilities include a landscaped outdoor relaxation area with a pool

centres in Las Vegas, with a casual elegance that matches the rest of our resort."

Located on the Las Vegas Strip, the Tropicana is nearing completion of a major US\$180m (€132m, £113m) renovation. In addition, the world's largest Nikki Beach™ beach club will debut at the resort by the middle of the year.

Hotel Chocolat to develop Saint Lucia site

TOM WALKER

UK-based chocolatier and cocoa grower, Hotel Chocolat, has announced plans to open The Hotel Chocolat – a boutique hotel set within the company's own cocoa plantation on the island of Saint Lucia, West Indies.

The first six Cocoa Cottage guesthouses will open their doors this February and will offer views of Saint Lucia's iconic Piton Mountains. An additional eight larger 'über-luxury' Cocoa Villas are scheduled for completion in the second half of 2011.

Facilities will include a spa and massage pavilion and a pool clubhouse and guests will be able to choose from a range of cocoa-infused massages and treatments, delivered by



The resort will have views of the island's iconic Piton Mountains range

the hotel's locally-trained, in-house spa team. Hotel Chocolat is located on the 140-acre (57-hectare) Rabot Estate within a UNESCO World Heritage Site near Soufrière.

9 Beaches resort reopening set for summer 2012

TOM WALKER

The 9 Beaches resort in Bermuda is set to reopen by August 2012 following a US\$80m (€58m, £50m) redevelopment.

When open, the resort will include 50 private cabanas that have been built on stilts over the

water, stretching over 18 acres (7 hectares) on the westernmost tip of the island. The resort offers an in-room spa service with treatments including a range of massages. The development also includes two- and three bedroom apartments which are available for sale.

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Herbal bath rose



4 Senses Lounger

US\$27.5m Dom Pedro Laguna unveiled in Brazil

PETE HAYMAN

Great Hotels of the World has just revealed the US\$27.5m (€20m, £17.2m) Dom Pedro Laguna Beach Villas, Golf and Spa Resort on the Aquiraz Rivera in Brazil.

The 102-bedroom resort includes the Spa Aquea, which has decorated using 'earth colours' and features five treatment rooms and CV fitness facilities. There's also a whirlpool and indoor, chromatherapy pool.

On-site sporting activities will include golf – on a nine-hole course – beach volleyball and football and surfing.



Mandara's latest spa has a more contemporary feel

Mandara enters the UK and reveals product range

TOM WALKER

Bali-based Mandara Spa has opened its first spa in Europe at the Park Plaza Westminster Bridge Hotel in London.

The 700sq m (7,500sq ft) spa has a contemporary edge, but maintains a luxurious Asian feel. There are nine treatment rooms and the spa will be the first in the world to offer Mandara's bath, body and home product line alongside its body therapies, Elemis treatments and Bliss beauty services.

Manadara is a subsidiary of Steiner, which also owns Elemis and Bliss (see SB10/4 p54).

Peninsula Hotels to enter European market in 2013

TOM WALKER

Hong Kong-based luxury hotel operator Peninsula Hotels will open its first European hotel in Paris, France in 2013.

The Peninsula Paris will feature 200 bedrooms and the interior will be designed by New York-based Thierry Despont.

According to a spokesperson, the concept designs are currently being drawn up for the hotel's guestrooms and public areas – including the spa – which will feature contemporary flair with reference to the building's original belle époque style.

Forum to measure UK's wellbeing

TOM WALKER

A group of 40 people from a range of backgrounds in business, academia, government and the voluntary sector have been drafted in by the Office for the National Statistics (ONS) to help measure the nation's wellbeing.

The national statistician, Jil Matheson has convened the Measuring National Wellbeing Forum to engage directly in the debate with key stakeholders, including policy makers, analysts, business leaders and academics in the UK and abroad.

The forum's role will be to discuss the main themes emerging from the national debate which concludes in April and provide advice on how to deliver credible measures of subjective wellbeing, and of wider national wellbeing, to meet policy and public needs.



The forum aims to measure issues around health and wellness in the UK

Matheson, who will chair the Measuring National Wellbeing Forum, said: "Through the Measuring National Wellbeing Programme, ONS is leading a debate in the UK about how best to provide a clear picture of 'how society is doing', that doesn't simply rely on economic data.

Endota launches Sydney day spa

TOM WALKER

Endota, the Australian day spa firm, has opened a new site at The Rocks in Sydney. The spa boasts seven treatment rooms, a spray tanning room and a relaxation lounge.

The treatment menu includes reflexology, massage and body wraps, as well as pedicures, manicures and other beauty treatments.

A spokesperson from Endota said: "We use natural Australian ingredients in all of our spa treatments, and the Endota skincare range is certified organic – meaning that it is free from chemicals, and made from ingredients grown without pesticides. One per cent of sales from Endota spa-certified organic skincare is donated to



Launched in 2000, Endota currently operates 60 spas in Australia

Bush Heritage Australia to help preserve valuable bushland, water and wildlife."

Endota, which was launched in 2000, now owns more than 60 spas around Australia.

Starwood secures deal for Sharjah spa resort

TOM WALKER

Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide has signed with deputy ruler HH Sheikh Abdullah Bin Salem Al Qassimi, to manage its first hotel in the UAE state of Sharjah. Located on Al Muntazah Beach in the north of the emirate,

the new 343-bedroom Sheraton Sharjah is scheduled to open at the beginning of 2013.

Facilities will include a 950sq m (10,225sq ft) spa, the brand's signature Sheraton Fitness by Core Performance health club, restaurants and a pool/beach grill on a private beach.

Franchise first for Sense of Touch

TOM WALKER

Hong Kong-based spa operator Sense of Touch will open its first franchise site in Sai Kung, Hong Kong in April.

The 1,400sq ft (130sq m) day spa, designed by Artichaut, will be managed by the franchise owners with support from Sense of Touch.

The site will be split onto two levels and will have a private garden area for pedicures and spa parties.

Products will be supplied by Elemis and Dermalogica and the treatment menu consists of a full range of skincare and body therapies as well as selection of beauty services like waxing, threading and nailcare.

The Sense of Touch brand is owned and operated by Asia Spa and Wellness Ltd and currently has five outlets in Hong Kong. The Sai Kung outlet will be the company's first



The day spa will be the first operated under a franchise agreement

franchise and the plan is to offer further franchise licenses in selected areas of Hong Kong and elsewhere across Asia.

Sai Kung is a registered area of outstanding natural beauty in the north east of Hong Kong near the China border.

Glen Ivy Hot Springs president launches consultancy

PETE HAYMAN

John C Gray, the former president and chief executive officer of Glen Ivy Hot Springs Spa in California, US, has launched a spa consultancy service. Gray has teamed up with architect Todd S Voelker to embark on the Voelker Gray

Design venture after more than 30 years at the helm of Glen Ivy near Corona.

Among the services to be offered by Voelker Gray Design is master planning solutions for hotel and resort developers, spa owners and health and wellness doctors.

New spa to debut at Conrad Indianapolis

PETE HAYMAN

An Aveda Spa & Salon is to open at Conrad Indianapolis in Indiana, US, following a signed agreement between the hotel and local entrepreneurs Todd and Cindy Leuck.

The 5,400sq ft (502sq m) spa and salon at Conrad will occupy the sixth floor of the landmark hotel and is due to open at the end of March following a US\$400,000 (£293,000, £251,900) upgrade. Facilities will include five treatment rooms, a hydrotherapy room, a relaxation space and an hair and beauty salon, along with retail provision. The spa will be open to members of the public, as well as hotel guests.

The Leucks have entered into the venture with more than 25 years of experience in the



The spa will be housed in the imposing Conrad Indianapolis building

hairdressing and spa industries, the last 20 of which have been as Aveda educators and partners/franchisees. The pair have already established two successful Aveda salon and day spas in elsewhere in Indiana.

DIARY DATES

12-14 MARCH

Mondial Spa & Beauté

Palais des Congrès, Paris, France

This spa and beauty exhibition is now in its sixth year and will include free bilingual conference sessions chaired by experts.

Tel: +33 4 93 06 26 26

www.msbsparis.com

18-21 MARCH

The Fairground District, Via della

Fiera, Bologna, Italy

Cosmoprof Spa

Cosmoprof, the world's biggest beauty trade show, will offer a special spa focus in 2011 for the third year running.

Tel: +39 02 796 420

www.cosmoprof.com/en

14-16 APRIL

Crocus Expo International Exhibition

Center, Moscow, Russia

Intercharm Professional

Russia is a burgeoning spa market and with 370 exhibitors last year, this exhibition for the spa, beauty, cosmetic and hairdressing sectors would be an interesting event to attend in 2011.

Tel: +7 495 937 6861

www.intercharmpro.ru

4-7 MAY

SPATEC Europe

Corinthia Hotel Budapest, Hungary

A two-day forum of face-to-face meetings between UK and European spa owners, directors and senior personnel and leading spa suppliers.

Tel: +44 20 8547 9830

www.mcleaneventsinternational.com

16-18 MAY

Global Spa Summit

Laguna Resort & Spa, Nusa Dua, Bali

This invitation-only annual summit – now in its fifth year – brings together top-level executives from around the world who have a strong interest in the spa and wellness industries.

Tel: +1 212 716 1199

www.globalspasummit.org

24-26 MAY

Beauty World Middle East

Dubai International Convention &

Exhibition Centre, Dubai, UAE

A trade show for cosmetics, beauty products, fragrances and the wellness and spa industry in the Middle East.

Tel: +971 4 3380 102

www.beautyworldme.com

the race for beauty



PHOTO: ISTOCK.COM/BRICH LIEGG

Spas are targeting the beauty market to develop new revenue streams, but face fierce competition from the high street

With pressure on operators to produce greater profits and yields for their investors and clients, the beauty market holds tantalising promise.

Beauty treatments can be offered in much smaller spaces than spa treatments, are a lower risk in terms of capital investment and – because most are associated with maintenance and self-care – they attract very high levels of regular repeat business from loyal customers who can then be upsold to spa treatments.

These are all characteristics which make the prospect of extending the beauty offer an appealing one for operators in the spa market – especially as it's a sector which tends to attract lower-volumes of business.

As spas focus on developing more regular income streams and building local business – including through membership schemes (see S809/3 p20) – it's likely more will turn to the beauty industry for the services with which to achieve these goals.

New research shows the beauty market has survived the recession well and could bring much needed additional revenues to spas

So the case for combining beauty with spa seems clear cut: consumers will enjoy the high-end ambience of the spa while enjoying their regular beauty treatments, and they'll fill in the quiet times for spa operators and improve the business yield.

But spa and beauty aren't easy bedfellows and operators must be sensitive to the challenges of combining the two disciplines. This is largely because staff tend to come from very different backgrounds.

The central focus of a salon is to offer treatments – manicure or eyelash tint, for example – while spas offer a journey where

the treatment is part of the experience and more attention is given to the preparation for it and the transition back to reality.

As a result, customer service and staff training need to be adjusted to ensure the new services fit seamlessly into the spa.

But it isn't just spas which are targeting beauty as a lucrative sector. Everyone from motorway service station operators to supermarkets are announcing forays into the market as the competition for grooming, waxing and plucking gets hotter.

And the crossover isn't just in one direction, as major consumer beauty brands eye the spa market with a view to expansion.

The Dior Institute, for example, has just opened its second site at the Es Saadi Palace Spa in Marrakech – it's first within a hotel outside France and within a spa.

So should spas invest in beauty facilities and adjust their operations to accommodate an increase in these services. If so, how can they ensure the two bed down well together? We investigate.

Based on Coyle Hospitality Group's consumer surveys conducted over the past year, we see an emerging consumer trend toward beauty. However, this trend is toward a more 'basic' form of beauty maintenance.

When asked their primary purpose for recent spa visits, 60 per cent of those polled said they'd recently visited a spa for hair, nail or waxing treatments and 44 per cent to improve appearance [respondents were permitted to select more than one response]. With spending remaining conservative, we anticipate that consumers will continue to schedule services like this, which they view as 'necessities', over those that they consider 'luxuries'.

There's been some speculation as to whether 'maintenance' or 'beauty' treatments can serve as a marketing tool. This means the spa utilises basic services to draw the consumer in and then promotes additional spa services to those consumers, with the intention of retaining same-store sales.

STEPHANIE PERRONE GOLDSTEIN

VP of sales and marketing,
Coyle Hospitality Group



In the *Coyle Global Spa Survey* this year, 54 per cent of respondents indicated they were likely or very likely to try waxing or hair removal at a spa they had never been to before, 83 per cent said they would try a manicure or pedicure, and 14 per cent they would try a 'medical' procedure like Botox or collagen injections. This indicates that when viewed purely as a marketing tool, basic services would be more likely to draw consumers in than the elaborate ones.

In terms of the popularity of beauty treatments, 57 per cent of respondents reported they had five or more manicures/pedicures a year, 38 per cent had five or more waxing or hair removal services and only 1 per cent had medical beauty services. In comparison, 38 per cent reported having five or more massages per year and 17 per cent reported five

or more facials. Again, this clearly indicates that when considering offering beauty, basic services are still the clearest way to attract and retain clients but maybe no more than traditional spa treatments such as massages and facials.

One must also consider, as always, the bottom line. In most situations, medical-based beauty treatments have a much higher price point than traditional beauty treatments such as nail or hair services. Additionally, depending on the spa's pricing model, they can potentially yield far more to the bottom line. When considering adding beauty treatments, the spa will, of course, need to consider this and what the purpose of adding the treatments is: to draw consumers in? Retain them? Produce additional revenue? Or perhaps all of the above.

It's always advisable for spas to survey or interview the best and most loyal clients during the planning stage to identify how these services would benefit existing and new customers. Without demand, even the best, most elaborate services can yield nothing.

It's advisable to survey or interview loyal clients to see how beauty services would benefit new customers. Without demand, the most elaborate services can yield nothing

Stephanie Perrone Goldstein is a graduate of the Cornell Hotel School, with experience in sales, room division operations and spa in the luxury hotel market. Details: www.coylehospitality.com

The beauty and anti-ageing sector is an incredibly important revenue generator – recent research shows they're responsible for the largest share of the US\$1.9tn wellness arena. With revenues of US\$679bn annually, according to the 2010 SRI International report, *Spas & the Global Wellness Market: Synergies & Opportunities*.

Spas have long supplemented their offerings with traditional beauty treatments, including manicures, pedicures, waxing and facials. But now we're seeing a move towards a whole new kind of beauty. SpaFinder's 2011 Spa Trend Report[®] flagged up extreme beauty as one of the top trends to watch for.

Though medi-spas can boast of new and improved injectables – in themselves extreme – spas that want to appeal to the new breed of consumer looking for natural yet significant results will be turning to treatments like derma-rolling, acupuncture facials and buccal facials – an intense facial massage done from inside the mouth

CASSANDRA CAVANAH

Executive director, SpaFinder Europe



to target the parts of the face where tension and stress are stored, leading to a tighter, smoother complexion.

These are all about naturally boosting collagen production and they promise to tone sagging skin without the artificial look which can occur with Botox or fillers.

And lest you forget that beauty is more than skin deep, facials aren't just for faces anymore. They're now being applied to the whole body – inside and out. Of course, back, foot and hand facials are common, but spas are also now doing 'booty' and vagina facials.

The Smooth Synergy Day Spa in New York pampers your behind – exfoliating it using microcurrent therapy to help reduce the appearance of cellulite and then applying spray tan. Phit, another spa in New York, focuses on pelvic health and encour-

ages good muscle tone and restoring labial and vulva contour to a plump firmness with a process involving lasers, while vagina facials are finding a market to help women deal with the effects

of waxing by removing ingrowing hairs.

Another non-invasive treatment hitting spas is a fat-freezing treatment from Zeltiq, which claims to remove cells from targeted areas of the body. Unlike traditional fat reduction, this requires no needles, surgical incisions, anaesthesia or recovery period – making it perfect for a day at the spa. The first Zeltiq device in the UK is at the Beyond MediSpa clinic in Harvey Nichols, London.

There's no doubt that spa and beauty go hand in hand and that the growth in non-invasive, but effective beauty treatments can fuel an operator's bottom line.

Cassandra Cavanah is executive director of SpaFinder Europe, with responsibility for the division's overall marketing and PR. Details: www.spafinder.eu.com

EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT

the race for beauty

ANDREW GIBSON

Group director of spa,
Mandarin Oriental



Any business that provides body treatments and skincare simply can't afford to ignore the fast-growing, multi-billion dollar beauty industry.

Research by STR shows that spa treatments yield more revenue-per-treatment-per-hour than beauty treatments, leading many spas to perceive things like waxing, manicure and pedicure as additional, cumbersome services with low profit margins.

But beauty isn't limited to grooming and with so many innovative ways of providing treatments with a mix of therapeutic relaxation and health benefits, there's plenty of room for beauty in spas, especially given STR found revenue-per-hour from spa treatments has declined in the US over the last two years, while revenue from beauty has been stable.

Market demand for vanity is so great that all spa operators should consider the role of beauty in their business, but not let it dictate the ethics of that business.

Spas should have a philosophy and a story behind the journeys they offer. This creates an identity that enables guests to connect. Spas may be holistic, for example, with stated or implied natural products and treatments, or they may pride themselves on result-driven treatments using the latest technology. Simply adding beauty services may completely destroy the brand message that has been built, with consequences for the existing customer profile and loyalty. If your spa is part of a chain, the action of one spa could affect the business of all others. Imagine the brand confusion if one outlet of an all-natural spa chain started offering Botox!

Assuming a clear union of spa and beauty treatments can be found, there are excellent revenue opportunities for spas. The STR figures indicate that beauty doesn't yield as much per hour as spa treatments, but a little further explanation is required. The figures don't look at the return per square metre or the retail ratios and when these factors are taken into account, beauty looks an attractive proposition.

A well thought out beauty strategy can significantly boost revenues and have a number of other benefits, including attracting new customers, strengthening the spa experience – and therefore the pricing – and meeting the demand for shorter treatments.

Launching into beauty also gives operators the opportunity to create beauty rooms that are smaller than spa treatment rooms, so more can occupy the same footprint and generate higher overall revenue. In addition, there will also be opportunities to design additional multi-use stations such as those for hair, manicures and pedicures.

In some operations, introducing a beauty offer could also transfer some of the lower profitability treatments out of the spa and into the beauty rooms.

Since suppliers tend to have excellent retailing experience, adding beauty also enables operators to leverage the marketing and promotional power of major beauty brands, improve the visual presentation and retail science of product displays and increase retail opportunities through product recommendations and homecare sales.

Beauty maintenance is a regular purchase which can increase the frequency of visits by customers. This business can then be enhanced by offering multiple sessions or courses to address particular requirements.

One of the consequences of a maturing spa industry is that research provides more information about the business models of spas. Coupled with the economic pressures to justify investment cost and regardless of the validity of the information, investors and owners are more inclined to seek a quanti-



PHOTO: ISTOCK.COM/BRICH LEGG

Treatments like manicures can be completed quickly in a very small space – in some cases in public areas

able return on investment for their spa.

Heat and wet areas, large hydro-pools and areas that are offered free to guests don't generate transparent returns, whereas treatment rooms have established formulae showing return per square metre. This puts pressure on the design of future spas, making beauty treatments in small rooms – with high pricing, regular repeat guests and good retail margins – a compelling proposition.

If the design of spas is changed to the model currently being developed on the high street by prominent names, then the guest journey and experience will be lost and there will just be salons in hotels.

There's a place for both and that's why Mandarin Oriental will launch a philosophy for beauty soon which will allow our spas to develop their own beauty strategy without compromising their core principles. In fact, it will meet one of our philosophies to provide our guests with informed choices.

Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group operates spas within its hotels across the globe. Details: www.mandarinoriental.com

Market demand for vanity is so great that all spa operators should consider the role of beauty in their business, but not let vanity dictate the ethics of that business

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For more information on Shiseido Spas, please find us on www.shiseidospas.com

SHARILYN ABBAJAY

The development and consistency of spas is paramount to Marriott International as it repositions itself as a lifestyle hotel brand. We talk to the woman who's been brought in to shape its global spa strategy

KATIE BARNES • MANAGING EDITOR • SPA BUSINESS

Marriott International is no stranger to spas. It has been operating them for more than 20 years and today runs 170 of them across its hotel portfolio, which comprises the brands Marriott Hotels & Resorts (including JW Marriott), Renaissance Hotels, Ritz-Carlton, Bulgari Hotels & Resorts and EDITION – the boutique chain it launched in collaboration with renowned hotelier Ian Schrager in late 2010.

Until recently, however, the group regarded spas as an 'add-on', with no cohesive approach to its concepts, except for pockets in certain regions, such as the Quan Spa brand in Asia-Pacific (see SBo6/4 p22). In an attempt to reposition itself as a lifestyle hotel offering – and to also shake off its business traveller hotel image – it has stepped up its interest in spas significantly.

"There has been a great shift in Marriott: it is realising that the spa business can help

perpetuate its growth globally," says Sharilyn Abbajay, who was appointed to the newly formed role of vice-president of global spas and retail in June 2010. "It has realised that spas can add value and authenticity and enable it to stay competitive. It now truly respects and honours the spa with retail discipline."

A TURNAROUND AGENT

Abbajay has more than 30 years' experience in the salon and spa industry, but actually started her career as a professional dancer for a regional dance troupe in Washington DC. "I grew up surrounded by make-up artists, hairdressers and physiotherapists who looked after the troupe," she says. "I also had nine aunts in the beauty business, so as a 'starving artist' who needed to supplement her income, I became a nail technician and then a beauty therapist after that."

While working in the hair industry, Abbajay met Noelle DiCaprio, a day spa owner who went into partnership with the Gillette

Company because it wanted a more upscale channel (rather than drug stores) to sell its products. They opened several Noelle Day Spas across the US and Abbajay helped to develop the concept. "Not many people in our industry realise that Gillette had a huge stake in refining the day spa concept," she says.

In the 80s, Abbajay was recruited by Elizabeth Arden to help redefine its concept and business model. She also owned a spa consultancy and worked with the Neill Corporation – one of the largest independent distributors of Aveda products – where she oversaw the operations of 18 Aveda Consumer Lifestyle Salons and Spas. In addition, she currently sits on the executive committee at ISPA.

"I've been labelled as 'the turnaround agent' and I think that's a worthy title. If a business is ailing, or if it needs help and support, I can give that. How many people can say they've worked for Gillette, Elizabeth Arden and Estée Lauder [which owns Aveda] and have the spa experience [I have]?"

So, it's no wonder that she was "whisked in" quickly by Marriott with a view to overseeing its global spa initiatives. Under a new structure, she will be supported by a director of spa operations in each continent, with two in the Americas as that's where 60 per cent of the spa business lies. These directors will be responsible for all spas in their specific region, whereas previously the director roles were divided according to the hotel brand with separate directors for spa operations for Marriott Hotels & Resorts, Renaissance and Ritz-Carlton globally.

Marriott is repositioning itself as a lifestyle hotel offering, with resorts like this JW Marriott Camelback in Scottsdale, Arizona.



"I'm going to bring in retail and sales experts to help us develop a training programme. My aim is to get 30 to 35 per cent of spa revenue coming from retail globally. I think that really would be a huge achievement"

Abbajay has more than 30 years' experience in the salon and spa industry but started her career as a professional dancer, supporting her income as a beauty therapist

For the first six months, Abbajay kept a low profile while taking stock of the situation. "I went on a two-week global tour [of the spas] in six countries and visited 29 properties," she says. "I needed to enlighten myself on some of the weaknesses of spas at Marriott as well as the strengths and to also look at what the opportunities and challenges were. This trip gave me a great global perspective and some insight into what direction I should take."

CONCEPTING AND CREATING

The short-term plan, says Abbajay, is to "work with the low hanging fruit" by working with existing spas to tighten up operations and developing a thread of consistency across the board in terms of the pre- and post-visit stages and the entire guest journey. "We want to have touch point standards that every single brand displays," she says. "That is not happening right now, everyone is just doing their own thing."

In the longer-term, her focus will be on new spa openings. "Marriott has a very strong pipeline, with about 90 spas in the next three years," she says. "However, I do not want the Marriott [spa] portfolio to fall

into a sea of sameness and this is where the concepting comes in.

"JW Marriott guests, for example, are very cultured people who like to have meaningful experiences but prefer to be guided in decisions, whereas Renaissance guests are more adventurous and want to discover the culture for themselves. This will all be reflected in the spas, from the architecture – we have concept architects who are already on board – to the facilities and treatments, and this will all differ at a local level."

The majority of spa concept work is still in the planning stages, with a committee of individuals to help Abbajay transform her visions

into reality. "I'm a dreamer and the choreographer in me comes out in work like this, but I'm working with Marriott's brand leaders, the marketing team and operators – so really there's a whole concept team involved."

However, there is already one spa that is finished and has just come to market. In February, the Saray spa concept launched at the Dubai Marriott Harbour Hotel & Suites. In Persian, the word saray means caravan, explains Abbajay, and traditionally those travelling by the Nile on camels would take rest under tented sarays, so the concept is based on the philosophy of providing "a restful place for weary travellers".



“The reason why I like concepts rather than spa brands is because you can take the essence of what the concept is and adapt it”

► The inaugural Saray spa features six treatment rooms (four for ladies and two for men) and a hammam. A sense of place is given through the colour scheme of earthy hues and gold, with Middle Eastern inspired treatments such as a Spiced Pomegranate and Moroccan Yoghurt Detoxifier and an Arabic Coffee Awakener. There's also a bespoke product line that's been made using native spices such as frankincense and myrrh. Other product houses include Phytomer and June Jacobs.

While the plan is to roll out Saray spas across the Middle East – they will soon open in Libya, Qatar and Dubai – Abbajay sees no reason why it couldn't work in other international locations. “The great thing about Saray is that you can model ‘the restful place for weary travellers’ idea. This is the reason why I like concepts rather than spa brands – because you can take the essence of what the concept is and adapt it”

In terms of pipeline developments, forging strategic partnerships with management companies and product houses is something else that Abbajay is working on. “I'm in discussion with a few companies about this, but I can't divulge anything more yet,” she says.

At present, Marriott has 260 spas, 170 of which are managed in-house and Abbajay says that it wants to keep this balance. Yet she is in the process of evaluating its third-party spa management companies. “We need to make sure that they're in alignment with the Marriott culture, expectation, standards and philosophy and to ensure that the company is secure: there are a lot which are going out of business at the moment.”

When it comes to product houses, she says: “Marriott is a very trusted consumer brand, so we have partnered with professional spa products such as Kerstin Florian, Naturopathica, Eminence, Aveda, La Prairie and June Jacobs.” Yet one of the challenges Abbajay foresees with developing consistency across an international, growing spa portfolio is the logistics of shipping products. “It's going to be quite difficult, but I am a realist,” she says. “If we can get 50 per cent and then modify for con-



.....
The initial aim is to create consistency across Marriott spa journeys in terms of pre- and post-visit stages and the entire experience
.....

.....
tents that we can't reach, without losing the foundation of what we're trying to convey, then we will be successful.”

SALES CULTURE

Another key priority in Abbajay's strategy is to focus on retail within the spa environment. “There is no sales culture in our facilities and that's something we really need to focus on. We're not starting right at the beginning because there are already many channels of retail that are activated – through the spa, gift certificates, hotel shop, e-commerce and in-room amenities. But, firstly, we need to identify all of these and look at how they're performing and what we can work on.

“Secondly, we're going to focus on education. Training is the key – if I had \$100 to spend on either marketing or training then the wise choice would be training; because that becomes your marketing. We need to bring retail and sales experts in to help us develop a training programme and this will probably take another six months, if not longer.”

The aim is to get 30 to 35 per cent of spa revenue coming from retail globally. “That would be a huge achievement,” she says.

The retail sales percentage, however, is only one part of the equation. Abbajay says that, moving forwards, the idea is to have a full spa finance matrix in place: “One thing I've learned about Marriott is that its [spa] matrix is measured very closely to how its hotels are measured,” says Abbajay. The spa matrix will cover a myriad of aspects from revenue per available treatment room hour to the utilisation rate, and it will eventually include more detailed numbers such as what area of the spa is bringing in the most profit ►

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PERSONAL FILE

Sharilyn Abbajay

Favourite film: *A Few Good Men*

Favourite way to relax: I take a hot bath... I'm a simple person!

Favourite spa: Westglow Spa in the Blue Ridge Mountains, North Carolina, US

Favourite spa treatment: Reflexology

Who do you most admire? My father.

He gave to life without prejudice. He was loving, trustful, kindly, quiet and giving, and a very special human being

What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given? It was from my father who was a baseball player. He taught me to "never take your eye off the ball"

▶ – beauty services, body treatments, facials or retail etc. The system is already partially in place: "I moved very swiftly in the first four months to get information and we're working with Marriott's financing department and asset managers to create a global finance recording of our profit."

In addition, Abbajay holds monthly meetings with her directors of spa operations in each continent to identify and set suitable benchmarks. "This is part of the expertise that I really bring to Marriott. From day one I have been taught that spas are a business, just as if you're running a restaurant or a manufacturing company. They're independent profit centres and that's the difference."

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

So, where and what are the plans for rolling out Marriott's spas? The greatest amount of development will – unsurprisingly – take place in Asia and the Middle East, while the focus of brand expansion is on JW Marriott, Ritz-Carlton and Renaissance.

One of the challenges in developing and running international spas, is that "strong leadership is essential," says Abbajay. She certainly seems to have that characteristic, as well as a strong sense of passion for her job and industry. "I am driven by the knowledge that we all have the power to make a difference to people's lives. Some may think that sounds self-serving, but I truly feel that I can help people to feel better about themselves. I think that stems from how I was brought up – my dad was a very loving and caring individual and he taught me that we all have something to contribute to society, even if it's only a gracious smile.

"My overall mission, however, is to help the spa industry to become more relevant in people's lives – rather than to be thought of as just a pampering experience." ●



Marriott has teamed up with Studio 54 creator for the new boutique hotel chain EDITION

The next EDITION

In 2007, Marriott International and hotelier Ian Schrager, announced a partnership in launching EDITION: a boutique hotel chain to rival brands such as Starwood's W hotels.

Schrager, the style icon most famous for creating the Studio 54 nightclub in New York, assumed the role of creative director, and promised the brand "would be unlike anything you've seen before". The notion was that each hotel would be completely unique and authentic to its location and social milieu – a strategy that would make it stand out in the marketplace.

The first EDITION property opened at the end of 2010 on Waikiki Beach in Hawaii and further properties are planned for Istanbul in the first quarter of 2011, then Barcelona, Bangkok, Mexico City and Miami. There will be a spa element in each hotel.

Sharilyn Abbajay, vice-president of global spas and retail at Marriott International, says: "EDITION spas haven't come onto my radar yet and even if they had I wouldn't be able to say too much! I think that this may change in the next three to four years and there will be more involvement from head office, in the meantime we're here to fully support him [Schrager] and make any recommendations and suggestions."



The Saray spa concept, with its signature coffee and Dead Sea salt therapies, launched in Dubai in February and will be rolled out across the Middle East

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REALTY CHECK

Residential spa communities have been a hot topic in the global wellness industry ever since operator Canyon Ranch unveiled its seminal 'Living' concept in 2003. And in the wake of this news, a flurry of other developments were announced: several more high-profile operators revealed plans for wellness communities in the US, while substantial spa facilities swiftly became must-have amenities for luxury real estate developers the world over.

However, the spa/real estate love affair – in the US, at least – hit the rocks when the world was plunged into financial crisis. By the time Arizona-based destination spa operator Miraval and New York developer River Terrace Apartments announced the end of their partnership – for the Miraval Living condominium development – last October it had long been over. Although, it should be noted that New York-based operator American Leisure has since taken over the Miraval development, which has been renamed 515East72.

Even before the inaugural Canyon Ranch project opened in Miami Beach in 2008, the company's plans for two other Living projects – in Bethesda, near Washington DC, and Chicago – had been cancelled, while last year the Miami-based Pritikin Longevity Center and Spa also shelved plans for a Pritikin Living development in Houston,

As the global economy recovers from financial crisis, we ask what the future holds for the spa living sector in the US – where the trend began and where it's suffered some of the greatest losses – and touch upon what's happening elsewhere in the world

Texas. Those projects that have opened in the last three years – including Clinique La Prairie Lifestyle Residences at Ten Museum Park, Miami, and Cooper Life at Craig Ranch in McKinney, Texas – have done so in a very challenging marketplace.

The fate of these projects might not be indicative of all residential models with spa elements in the US – urban apartment blocks with scaled-down fitness or spa facilities and golf communities with built-in spas appear to have done better – or indeed developments in other parts of the world. However, it's to be noted that more substantial spa real estate projects have certainly suffered a dramatic fall from grace, with the US market, as a pioneer in this field, inevitably one of the hardest hit.

However, along with the stirrings of economic recovery, there are some early signs that the spa real estate trend is by no means dead in the water – in the US or elsewhere in the world. Canyon Ranch is already moving ahead with an international rollout of its Living brand, a residential development from UK health-resort operator Champneys is set for a 2012 opening in Marbella, Spain (see p34) and other projects across the globe are successfully mixing real estate with significant spa offerings in different guises: Four Seasons and Six Senses are just two operators that can testify to this (see p33).

But how much potential does this sector really have, given its difficult last few years? Will the obstacles it's encountered disappear as the housing and financial markets stabilise, or is it a trend ahead of its time, a fact the economic crisis has simply thrown into relief? Which models have proved the most resilient and offer the most opportunity for growth? And while the US has been the leader in the sector to date, what's going on in other markets elsewhere?

Living the dream

Given the difficulties experienced by the Canyon Ranch Living and Miraval Living projects in the US, Susie Ellis, president of media and marketing company SpaFinder, is unsure whether there's sufficient



Canyon Ranch is already moving ahead with an international rollout of its Living brand, despite two US sites being cancelled in 2008





demand for dedicated residential communities modelled on destination spas – that is, with extensive daily spa, fitness and medical programming in addition to a full range of amenities. “I think that’s a challenging model,” she says. “It is the ultimate for people who are core spa-goers, but unfortunately I just don’t think it pencils out in the long run.”

Yet while Gary Milner, vice-president of development for Canyon Ranch, acknowledges that the last few years have not been easy, he is surprisingly sanguine about the strength of the Canyon Ranch Living model. “We launched in Miami in November 2008, two months after the failure of Lehmann Brothers, the project’s financial partners. What happened in ‘08 was devastating on a macro level to virtually everyone in the US real estate market, so we couldn’t have launched at a harder time. But what’s happened since is that buyer confidence has improved.”

As a result, Canyon Ranch Living Miami – which already has 60 per cent of close to 600 units sold, and more under contract – is seeing “the best sales traffic and activity we’ve seen in a long time,” says Milner. “Right now we’re seeing about 100 prospects a week, which is maybe a three- or four-fold increase from early ‘09.”

Canyon Ranch Living Miami is attracting about 100 sales leads a week, which is around a three-fold increase from early 2009

As for the cancellation of the Bethesda and Chicago developments, Milner simply blames the collapse of the real estate market, saying: “We were the victims of the world’s worst timing on those projects, definitely... I really believe if they had come to the market six months or nine months earlier, they would have sold out.”

So why was Canyon Ranch Living Miami able to weather the economic downturn when Miraval Living was not? Miraval declined to speak to *Spa Business* about this issue, but according to a report in the *New York Times*, Miraval executives said the developer had repeatedly missed payments and not complied with the terms of its contract, while James W Sheehan, the project manager, said troubling delays with the opening of the spa led the developer to end the partnership and look for a new operator (which it found in American Leisure). At that time, it was reported that fewer than half the 365 units had been sold since the building went on the market in 2007.

Part of the trouble with Miraval, believes Ellis, was that in addition to the incredibly difficult economic climate it was launched in, the property was beleaguered with city zoning restrictions that ▶

The Miraval Living project was beleaguered with city zoning restrictions that meant it could not include memberships or day-spa memberships in its model, either of which would have helped increase revenues and cover overheads



American Leisure's The Edge is a successful residents-only development with extensive wellness amenities

▶ meant it could not include memberships or day-spa business in its model, either of which would have helped increase revenues and cover overheads. "It just didn't really have a chance," she says.

Canyon Ranch Miami, by contrast, does not rely solely on residents: crucially, the model includes a condo-hotel, whose owners are able to put their properties into a rental programme when not in residence. "The hotel is essential from the revenue standpoint, because the hotel guest is a more intensive user of everything – the restaurant, the spa services, the doctor – than a resident would be," says Milner. "[Another reason] the hotel is interesting is that it's the number one source of buyers. They come here, they enjoy everything we have to offer and then they enquire. A very high percentage of people who buy have visited the hotel previously."

The property is also set up to sell memberships if needed, he says, although "after this winter season, between the increased closing and occupancy of units and the increased occupancy of the hotel, I really don't think we're going to have the capacity."

Wellness lifestyle

While Ellis concedes that including a rental programme and/or a local business element makes the model more viable, she remains unconvinced of the immediate potential for destination spa-style real estate developments. "Canyon Ranch Living Miami has gotten through and I'm delighted it's continuing and I wish it every success. But if Canyon Ranch can't do it easily, it's going to be extremely difficult for others to make it work."

What she does see as a trend, both in the US and further afield, is the consumer's appetite for 'wellness lifestyle': residential developments where people can access the kind of services they need to lead a healthier, more fulfilled life – spas, fitness and/or sports facilities, relaxation spaces, restaurants serving healthy food – but without the heavy-duty programming of a destination spa (or its associated overheads). And it's a trend Ellis believes is only going to grow as the health-conscious Baby Boomer generation reaches retirement age, adding that affluent young families are another key market.

Tom Johnston, chief operating officer of American Leisure, which specialises in delivering wellness lifestyle solutions to residential developments, agrees the demand is there: while pools, health clubs and even small spas have been features of luxury apartment buildings for some years now, a large number of condo developers are now investing much more heavily in wellness and leisure amenities, he says. "People want luxury, but they don't have the luxury of time, so they're looking for a lifestyle where all the amenities they need are at home – the spa, fitness centre, community spaces – all under one roof."

Although some US developers with this kind of offering are struggling to move units in the wake of the recession, particularly in the cities, this is not indicative of the US market as a whole, says Johnston, who points out that American Leisure grew its business in 2010. Nor does he believe that developments must include condo-hotel units, sell memberships or open up to day guests to justify a significant wellness investment – the key, he says, is to make sure that the amenities are not overbuilt: "I wouldn't say they're essential, but



when you lack the ability to include those elements, you've got to take a hard look at your model."

As an example of a successful residents-only development with ample wellness amenities (40,000sq ft/3,700sq m), Johnston points to American Leisure's The Edge in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. At the time of writing in December, the 565-unit development had over 100 units closed and 100 more in contract, and since occupancy began in August had averaged a deal a day. "We're pretty confident it's not overbuilt, the units are selling and the developer is extremely happy," says Johnston.

And it's not only in the US that real estate developers are seeing the value of investing in wellness lifestyle. Johnston says American Leisure is talking to a number of developers abroad, particularly in the Middle East. Examples of similar projects already popping up elsewhere in the world include the Soul development currently under construction on Australia's Gold Coast which is selling well (despite being down the road from existing residential property the Q1 Resort and Spa) and Antel Spa Residences in Makati City, in the Philippines.

Hotel and away

Also tapping into this appetite for 'wellness lifestyle' with some success are several large hotel and spa operators, including Hyatt, Fairmont, Ritz-Carlton and Four Seasons, which are increasingly adding private residences to many of their urban and resort settings. Four Seasons has 21 properties across the world with full-ownership

Six Senses Private Residences division has performed remarkably well. Its Saigon River site just soft-launched locally

private residences – and more offering fractional ownership – and says 75 per cent of all future properties will have a residential component.

Smaller spa resorts in various global markets are also seeing the potential of adding some residential real estate to their core offer. In the US, destination spas Miraval in Arizona, Canyon Ranch in Arizona and Massachusetts, and Red Mountain in Utah have had success selling on-site private residences, while in Asia Banyan Tree and Six Senses (both resort companies with very strong spa and wellness offerings) have burgeoning private residences arms.

Despite launching three years ago, just before the economy imploded, Six Senses Private Residences division has performed remarkably well, with three developments currently being marketed – two in Thailand (Soneva Kiri and Six Senses Yao Noi) and one in Vietnam (Six Senses Con Dao, opened in December) – and a fourth, Six Senses Saigon River, which has been soft-launched locally. According to Adam Taugwalder, who heads up the division, all the properties are meeting sales expectations – looking at the two Thai resorts, 15 of Soneva Kiri's 20 units and five of Yao Noi's 15 units are already sold, despite 2009 being one of the Thai market's toughest years ever thanks to the combination of political troubles and the global downturn. In Vietnam, meanwhile, eight of Con Dao's 15 units had been sold before the resort even opened.

The key to this success, believes Taugwalder, has been not betraying the company's roots as a resort operator and keeping numbers



► small. “We usually take the number of resort units and then add a maximum of 50 per cent in residential units,” he says. “We get a very healthy premium with our brand and it would be impossible to achieve 50 per cent sales in this climate, with that premium, if we were selling 200 units rather than 15 or 20.”

In terms of what the residences arm brings to the resort business, the capital generated by real estate sales is one advantage, says Taugwalder: “Financing is harder to come by and the costs of building a five- or six-star resort are going up and up, so it’s definitely a factor.” Beyond that, the residences help create a community feel, he says, while the rental programme means there’s a greater variety of rooms to offer hotel guests. The rental programme also helps attract buyers by promising a return on investment, says Taugwalder, although he stresses the company only sells “to lifestyle buyers who want to be part of the community.”

Another spa real estate model that appears to have weathered the downturn relatively well – both in the US and elsewhere in the world – is the golf-cum-wellness community, with examples including Cliffs Communities and Cooper Life at Craig Ranch in McKinney, Texas, in the US and Mission Hills Shenzhen in China.

Mixing it up

It perhaps comes as no surprise to learn that, when it comes to weathering an economic downturn, some of the hardest models have been the hybrids. But does this mean that dedicated spa communities in the Canyon Ranch vein – where real estate combined with extensive wellness programming is the primary focus – are indeed ahead of their time?

Ray Payne, managing director of Champneys, thinks not: Champneys Marbella, a 72-villa residential development centred around a wellness centre comparable with the company’s destination-spa offerings in the UK, is already two-thirds sold, despite the fact that

Four Seasons has 21 properties offering full-ownership private residences, and more with fractional ownership

other luxury housing developments in the region “have either stopped completely or are lying empty.” Originally scheduled for completion this year, the property is now due for a 2012 launch, but only because of construction delays linked to unprecedented rainfall in Spain.

Although he admits they are selling at the “worst possible time in Europe” – especially with the weakening of the pound against the euro – Payne believes that in a strange way the downturn may actually have helped to attract buyers. “We’ve marketed very much to existing Champneys’ users who know the brand [and who see this as] a lifestyle opportunity where they can also get a return on their investment. Opportunities to invest money and get a return are few and far between at the moment and although this is a new opportunity, and there is a risk attached to it, our track record of UK occupancies [gives our investors confidence].”

Importantly, the development includes a rental programme for owners, and Marbella is only a 45-minute drive from Malaga Airport, a hub for budget airlines flying from the UK. The spa will also be open to day guests and memberships may be considered, depending on occupancy.

Looking ahead, Payne believes the model could be a very effective way to expand the Champneys brand internationally. “Really it’s about finance and development,” he says. “Creating a facility the size of what we have in the UK requires a huge amount of investment and the climate at the moment is not the best one in which to acquire that, [whereas this model] appears to be a very attractive business proposition.”

On the other side of the Atlantic, Milner shares this confidence for Canyon Ranch, revealing that the company is already in talks with a number of international developers regarding taking the Living concept overseas. “The only thing that held us back is the macro-economic climate,” he says. “We’re expecting to have a record season.” ●



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PLAYTIME

Lifehouse, a new £30m destination spa in the UK, has taken a more playful approach to wellness. We take a look around

Pick a kite and fly it around historical listed gardens, let your taste buds tingle with a popping candy palette cleanser or work up a sweat using the outdoor gym. These aren't exactly things that you'd expect from a spa, but that's precisely why Lifehouse stands out. "It's a playground," says managing director Berni Hawkins. "You come here to enjoy yourself and we'll also enrich your knowledge: through the healing power of touch or maybe by having a session with our life coach, so you can take ideas home and evolve your standard lifestyle."

There are only a handful of UK destination spas, but those which do exist – such as Champneys and Ragdale Hall Health Hydro – have dominated the market since their health farm days decades ago. This new-build £30m (US\$48.5m, €35.2m) con-



The spa had its soft opening in December and aims to attract 50,000 guests in 2011

temporary spa in Essex, east England, however, is promising to shake things up.

IT HAS MOJO

Set in 130 acres (53 hectares) of historical and conservational land, the 89-bedroom Lifehouse, which is very spacious and flooded with natural light, had its soft opening in December. The 90,000sq ft (8,400q m), two-storey spa has 35 treatment rooms, a swimming pool and hydropool, thermal spa

and relaxation areas, 15 manicure and pedicure stations, make-up bays, a hair salon and a boutique; plus a gym, outdoor fitness circuit and yoga/pilates studio.

The key feature is its signature Oriental Bathing Experience. In this 31,000sq ft (2905q m) area, which is based on an Asian bath house, a personal therapist guides guests through a two-hour experience which includes eastern massage techniques for the feet and ankles, bathing and plunge pools, water rooms and a full body exfoliation and essential oil back and shoulder massage. The £120 (US\$194, €141) journey culminates in specially designed sleep pods on the floor above. But how can Hawkins justify dedicating such a large area to just one treatment? "Because it encompasses everything and more of what most people's perception of spa is," she says. "Will it be difficult to see an ROI on this? Absolutely not. Yes it's a high capital area, but it will leave people totally zoned out and wanting more."

To list the facilities at Lifehouse doesn't do it justice. "There's an energy about this place, it has mojo," says Hawkins. "I can't put my finger on it, but you're just sucked in." A former army officer, Hawkins started her spa career as operations manager at Champneys in the late 90s before creating her own consultancy. "I came here to help support spa operations and to bring the project to fruition," she says. "I guess the board liked me and what I did,



Visitors are encouraged to make the most of the beautiful, listed grounds in which the spa is set



Guests are guided around the Oriental Bathing Experience by a personal therapist

so they offered me my MD's position." She also sits on the main board as an executive director, alongside chairman Steve Brown, non-executive marketing director Angela Horsman and three other directors.

Coming up with the Lifehouse concept was very much a team effort. The directors of Tangram Leisure Ltd, Lifehouse's owning company (see p38), wanted fitness and an Asian spa touch while Horsman, who came from SAGA, specialised in package holidays: there are a selection of themed breaks from 'dance factor' and healthy eating ones to fitness boot camps.

Hawkins says: "For the last eight years I've worked on spas in Asia, the US and Europe and visited them as a consumer too, so I also had my own ideas of what spa and fitness is and how to bring them together with the food element. But we also knew we needed specialists to help us.

"We love partnerships and picking people that we had chemistry with was always part of the critique." Such partners include architects and designers The Manser Practice, which is renowned for its innovation and the product house Babor which is Lifehouse's exclusive skincare and make-up supplier. "We had a lot of big beauty brands present to us," says Hawkins, "but Babor said they would tailor make a menu that would work for us rather than trying to get the biggest opening order possible."

LIFEHOUSE SUPPLIERS

The equipment and product suppliers at Lifehouse include: Aveda (haircare), Babor, Emeyu (teas), Fashionizer Spa (uniforms), Inner Balance (massage chairs) Jessica (nailcare), Matrix (fitness equipment), Neom Luxury Organic, Oakworks, Ojmar (locker locks), Penguin Pools, Premier Software, Safe Space (lockers) and Schletterer Spa and Wellness

BEST IN CLASS

Hawkins has put together a top team to help her run Lifehouse, from a life coach, spiritual coach, executive chef and fitness expert – who everyone has nothing but praise for – to ex-Chiva Som naturopath Sue Davis. "They're the best in class because I want a best in class proposition," she says.

Davis, Lifehouse's health and wellness manager, came on board seven months before the launch and was heavily involved in creating the wellness menu which includes therapies such as acupuncture, kinesiology, physiotherapy, reflexology and reiki. "I drew up an A-Z list of alternative therapies and I picked a varied selection of physical and spiritual treatments," says Davis. "But the most important thing was that every ther-



Facilities include plunge pools and heat experiences, as well as 35 treatment rooms

apist had to be credible, not someone who's just done a weekend workshop."

Davis's team includes four wellness consultants – all ex-nurses who have another string to their bow like polarity therapy, cranial-sacral therapy or meditation – and an array of alternative practitioners who work on a part-time or self-employed basis.

Every guest at Lifehouse is sent a health questionnaire and if certain issues such as ►

DESTINATION SPA

▶ severe injuries are flagged up they'll automatically see a wellness consultant. Those on short stays get a quick health check, while guests staying for a week also get an initial consultation as well as one mid-week and before leaving. The consultations are just one way of not overwhelming people, says Davis. "We don't throw a brochure at people and tell them to read it. We'll go through their objectives and recommend the most appropriate thing."

"People can be skeptical so we don't force them to try anything different, but we hold therapy talks and workshops and often in a resort environment it's more word of mouth – guests like to hear about treatments from those who have tried them first-hand."

At a time when many spas are jumping on the wellness bandwagon, Davis feels the Lifeshouse offering stands out because: "We don't pay lip service to it. Many spas say they offer wellness, but really just have spa treatments. We are delivering a wellness service – an offer that looks at all aspects of health in terms of emotional, mental, physical and the external and internal."

ROOT INTO THE COMMUNITY

Hawkins believes that involving the local community is key to the success of Lifeshouse. Ninety-five per cent of the 220-strong workforce are from the surrounding areas, as are the suppliers. "It's great that we've been able to do this," she says, "I really thought people would be our biggest challenge but it was almost the easiest task."

She's worked hard on developing local ties by getting involved with surround-



The signature two-hour experience culminates in specially designed sleep pods

ing business network groups and creating a robust membership offering starting at £600 (US\$970, €700) a year for the 6 to 10pm weekday Twilight package to the £3,000 (US\$4,850, €3,500) Wellness Membership that includes 240 minutes of treatment/activity time, four consultation sessions and discounts for stays. The number of members will be capped at 350 and so far 160 have been sold; and now locals have seen what the spa entails there's apparently been "a phenomenal upgrade from standard memberships to the wellness one."

Hawkins says: "We have a very loyal customer base because for nine years there was a beauty studio here. Also, for generations, people have lived next to and played in the gardens and woods of Thorpe Hall [which Lifeshouse has been built in the grounds of]. Often members are seen as a necessary evil. But to me they're the root into the community, they're my ambassadors, my bread and butter and they will be treated like royalty."

She also has a wide remit for other potential guests: "We're very much a resort that happens to major in spa, but we don't just want to attract the stereotypical spa-goer, we want the leisure-goer, the holiday-goer, the young, old, fat, thin, national or international traveller for whatever it is they want to do and not what we tell them they should be doing."

A particular plan to attract international customers is to link in with Babor's customer following, subsidiary companies and travel agents – to let them know that the Lifeshouse

is Babor's UK partner; and trips to its institutes in Russia, the Americas and Sweden have already been set up.

DELIGHT AND SURPRISE

For the three months after opening, the plan is to closely monitor the packages, breaks and offers that work well. "We've put together a group of packages that we think show off all aspects of our product and we'll be analysing them on an hour to hour and day to day basis," says Hawkins.

Next on Davis's list is to create a take-home programme for guests. "We want to educate and empower people, but hopefully this will also be a way of pulling customers back in," she says. "The first time someone comes will probably be on a one- or two-night taster, but my goal is to get them to stay longer on their second visit so they can have a more deep and meaningful stay."

While Hawkins is reluctant to disclose her KPI aims, she does say that her goal is to get 50,000 customers through the doors in 2011. She also hints at other possible new spa experiences to sustain customer interest. She says: "I've saved a space in the spa which could fit in 15 more treatment rooms. However, I think the market's going to change and I've already got an idea of what I'll put there – I'd rather delight and surprise and be the constant innovator in the industry."

In addition, a roll out of the Lifeshouse concept is also on the cards. "We'd love to roll out and we will," she says. "We're not saying whether we'll rollout the concept in its entirety or if we'll just pick independent components. We're not writing off acquisitions either. It's a blank piece of paper. At the moment I'm absolutely delighted with everything [now it's open]. It is beyond my wildest dreams and joining the Lifeshouse is the best decision I have ever made." ●

TANGRAM LEISURE LIMITED

Tangram Leisure Ltd was set up in 2000 with the purpose of developing a destination spa in the grounds of Thorpe Hall, Essex, 85 miles from London, UK. It had three founding directors: development director Paul Cronk; finance director Peter Troy; and operations director Martin Wootton, who is no longer on the board but remains a shareholder. While Cronk and Troy have a fitness industry background, Wootton was the spa man – having previously been the MD at UK destination spa Ragdale Hall Health Hydro 20 years ago.

With 12 acres (9 hectares) of historic, listed gardens and vast conservation areas, the 130-acre (53-hectare) site was a planning permission minefield. After seven years, construction of the Lifeshouse finally began and in December 2010 the £30m (US\$48.5m, €35.2m) development had its soft opening. Investment monies came from private shareholders, Hotbed – a UK-based syndicate of private investors, while debt funding was provided by Clydesdale Bank.

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It is estimated that around 75 per cent of the guests at the 29-bedroom Lime Wood country house hotel will use the new Herb House spa in some capacity. It is hoped that the new £7.5m facility will drive bookings for the hotel, especially during the off season and in the week.

FOREST RETREAT

THE UK FIVE-STAR COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL LIME WOOD HAS JUST OPENED ITS HERB HOUSE SPA. WE FIND OUT WHAT IT'S EXPECTED TO BRING TO THE HOTEL

Since opening in November 2009, the five-star, 29-bedroom Lime Wood country house hotel in the New Forest region, south England, has attracted much attention. From hosting Jamie Cullum and Sophie Dahl's wedding to winning awards for interior design and appearing in *Condé Nast Traveller's* Hot List 2010, it has been noticed for all the right reasons. Up until recently, though, something was missing.

That something was a spa, which opened in the shape of Herb House in November 2010. A destination spa was always part of the plan for Lime Wood, but in 2009 the spa plans were put on hold to allow the team to concentrate on finishing the hotel and to give them time to really think about what kind of facility they wanted to create.

"The spa market is competitive and I didn't want ours to just be another hotel spa," says

Robin Hutson, chair of the Lime Wood Group, a small collection of luxury hotels, restaurants and chalets in Europe. "I wanted to create something destination-worthy."

After considering various different concepts, Hutson and his team decided that the spa should take its inspiration from the beautiful New Forest surroundings.

"We thought it important to create something British that was as natural and organic as possible in both the design and the treatment offer," says Hutson. "We decided to create a herb-covered roof garden on top of the spa, and Herb House was born."

HERB HOUSE

The spa is spread over three levels and has 10 treatment rooms, a 16m ozone-treated indoor pool with retracting doors to the garden, a hydrotherapy pool, a rooftop gym, a mud house, a caldarium, a steamroom

and a sauna, as well as a room for manicures and pedicures. The pools are by Barr + Wray; the thermal experiences by Klafs. The equipment in the gym has been supplied by Technogym and Trister.

The treatment rooms include two signature couple's rooms: The Bath House, with an indoor double bath and a steamroom; and The Bath Garden, with a steamroom and a private garden featuring a double bath. The Herbery roof garden boasts a selection of fresh herbs, which are used in both the treatments and the food on offer at the spa's café. It will also be used for outdoor yoga, tai chi and meditation classes, evening barbecues and parties.

The original design was by top interior designer David Collins but was tweaked by the in-house design team at Lime Wood, and the fit out cost £7.5m (US\$12m, €8.8m). In keeping with the ethos that it should fit in with its surroundings, natural materials including slate and wood have been used extensively, and herb-filled planters are dotted throughout the building. Enormous windows provide views of the forest and allow masses of natural light into the pools, sauna and café, while pale greens and creams create a warm, uncluttered feel.

Herb House also features The Raw Bar, a café serving smoothies and champagne, as well as salads and raw and cured meats and fish. "In spas the food offering is often a bit of an afterthought," says Hutson. "We wanted this to be a strong offer in its own right."

HOW IT TOOK SHAPE

The Lime Wood story began in 1999, when Jim Ratcliffe – owner and chair of the Ineos chemicals group, the UK's largest privately owned company – teamed up with Hampshire chef Alex Aitken and bought what was then the Parkhill hotel. In 2004, Ratcliffe and Aitken closed Parkhill and embarked on a five-year, £30m (US\$48.4m, €35.2m) renovation to

transform it into one of the best country house hotels in the UK. The original Regency building was almost entirely rebuilt. In 2008, Ratcliffe approached Hotel du Vin founder Robin Hutson to help oversee the project. Hutson had sold Hotel du Vin in 2004; he then worked as chair for the Soho House Group, before it was sold to Richard Caring in 2008.



"We converted a little building in the grounds to a smokehouse when Lime Wood first opened, to smoke and cure our own fish and meat. We came up with this concept of serving raw and cured meats and fish, alongside salads prepared in front of the spa guest." The hotel and spa use as much New Forest produce as possible, and a dedicated forager has been employed to search for food in the surrounding woodlands.

Herb House was designed to be British, natural and organic in both its design and its treatment offering. The spa's building features a herb-covered roof garden (above); while the 16m ozone-treated indoor pool supplied by Barr + Wray has retracting doors opening on to the gardens (right)



FINDING PARTNERS

Having decided that they wanted the spa to be as natural as possible in décor and the treatments on offer, Hutson began to look for suitable product houses. "We wanted products that were a bit different, that weren't available on the high street, from the British Isles and as natural as possible," he says. The team settled on natural skincare brand NUDE by Fresh & Wild founder Bryan Meehan and Bono's wife Ali Hewson; Irish spa brand Voya, which uses hand-harvested seaweed to create organic beauty products certified by the Soil Association; ayurvedic specialists Tri-Dosha (see p60); and Daylesford Organic's Bamford range.

Herb House is the first spa to offer Bamford Body treatments outside of Daylesford's own Hay Barn spa and the partnership is something of a coup for Lime Wood. "It's a very happy relationship," says Hutson. Muds, herbs, salts and sauna/steam essences were supplied by Blue Spa and Leisure, a con-

sultancy which also worked on the spa's feasibility studies, operational budgets and space planning.

Treatments include the ayurvedic Forest Dream, which costs £215 (US\$345, €252) for 180 minutes and includes a dosha consultation, samvahana (synchronised four hands massage), mukhabhyanga (face massage), shirodhara, a steamroom session and a lifestyle sheet to take home; and the 120-minute Bamford Signature Treatment at £125 (US\$200, €146) which includes an oil foot bath, body exfoliation, full body massage and Indian head massage.

A BUSY YEAR AHEAD

"The year ahead should be a year of consolidation for Lime Wood," says Hutson. "It should be about getting the spa established. I'd like to see the membership properly bedded in – we're aiming for 400 members and currently have around 150. I'd like to see the

occupancy and room rate for the hotel climb, so we have a really solid business."

An annual membership at Herb House costs £1,800 (US\$2,900, €2,100) – or £3,000 (US\$4,850, €3,500) for a joint membership – with a £250 (US\$403, €293) joining fee.

It's early days, but Hutson estimates that around 75 per cent of hotel guests will use the spa in some capacity. The majority of the guests come from the UK, with around 90 per cent from London. From early 2011, Lime Wood will appear in Relais & Chateaux guides, which should result in an increase in guests from outside the UK. Occupancy for 2010 stands at around 70 per cent, which Hutson says is "pretty pleasing for our first year" and the average room rate is about £240 (US\$387, €282) net. Hutson expects Herb House to drive bookings for the hotel. "I think the spa will help with bookings during our off season and in the week. Herb House completes the picture here." ●



Guests are enticed into the spa via a gift card scheme which makes up 30 per cent of revenue

SKY-HIGH AMBITIONS

Launching a day spa that brought the tranquility of nature to urban Montreal was a longtime dream for SkySpa president Patrick Rake; now he's ready to take his successful concept across Canada

ANDREA JEZOVIT JOURNALIST SPA BUSINESS

A tranquil, year-round outdoor thermal spa facility minutes from downtown Montreal may sound impossible. But it's something that the city's urbanites have been enjoying ever since Patrick Rake launched SkySpa – a Nordic-style day spa – in December 2007.

Opened atop a seafont leisure development on Montreal's south shore, the 16,000sq ft (1,486sq m) facility has an indoor-outdoor concept. Guests complete their journey on a 5,000sq ft (465sq m) terrace overlooking the city, with a Nordic waterfall and cold bath, two warm California whirlpools and heated floors to keep winter ice away.

It's a concept that has won accolades from Montreal's Chamber of Commerce, which named SkySpa a finalist in its 2010 new business category. And Rake has big plans for it. "We plan to expand this kind of spa across Canada," he says. "In 10 years, we'll have spots in every big Canadian city."

ACHIEVING A DREAM

Rake fantasised about launching a chill-out concept for stressed city workers long before he even entered the spa industry. In 1995, his life in the family insurance business was hectic; he became inspired to create an experience that mirrored the tranquility of nature during visits to the nearby Laurentian

mountains. He worked on the idea for eight years, first attempting to open a spa in Montreal's old port. When plans for that fell through, Rake busied himself by opening Nordic Station – a day spa concept similar to SkySpa – in Magog, Quebec in 2004. His vision for a city centre development eventually became a reality when he found a location for the Montreal spa on the fourth floor of the Quartier DIX30 complex.

Rake was set on bringing a thermal bathing experience to SkySpa from the start. "I'm the first client of my business, and maybe two or three times a week I'm in the bath myself," he says. "For me, it was important to share my passion and give people the opportunity to discover that. Because I think it's the only way to cancel stress." But the installation was tough. The equipment came from Europe and local engineers were unfamiliar with the European engineering methods required. "They knew how to build hotel pools, but whirlpools are completely different," says Rake, noting that making the outdoor area winter-proof was also especially difficult. He's proud of the final result. "I've never seen a spa like this before. We have 100,000 litres of water here on the fourth floor [in the three exterior pools]."

The alfresco terrace also includes a café: FlavourSky Station. Indoors, the thermal circuit includes a Finnish sauna, the SkyLumina chromatherapy sauna, and the SkyAroma steambath, where steam is combined with eucalyptus oil. There are also 20 treatment rooms where guests can experience massages,



A large outdoor winter-proof terrace with water experiences is a key selling point



facials and body treatments; customers can add on a thermal circuit session for an extra CAS20 (US\$20, €15, £13). Pricing is structured this way to allow visitors more flexibility, Rake explains. "Urban people sometimes want treatment only sometimes, and thermal other times," he says.

About 50 per cent of visitors go for the thermal circuit alone, with 50 per cent also seeking treatments. The most popular option is the Cloud9 package – a one-hour Swedish massage, plus a thermal experience.

OPEN ALL HOURS

SkySpa's location in a high footfall entertainment complex, among cinemas and restaurants, with its late hours – it's open daily from 10am to 10pm – also help it to stand out from competitors. Customers take advantage of packages the spa offers in conjunction with restaurants and theatres in the complex and many drop into the spa with friends as a social activity, rather than deciding to go shopping or catch a movie – 40 per cent of visitors walk in without an appointment. "SkySpa is the same sort of activity as going to the cinema," Rake says. Interestingly, he actually considers cinemas and restaurants to be his biggest rivals, as opposed to other spas.

The spa also has an interesting accessibility philosophy: "I want the spa to be accessible to everyone, not just the rich," says Rake. To achieve this, SkySpa charges CAS25 (US\$25, €18, £16) for its thermal experience on Tuesdays and Wednesdays (it costs CAS39

Located in a leisure complex, SkySpa attracts 16- to 35-year-olds in search of a social/leisure activity

(US\$39, €29, £24) the rest of the week), while students can use the circuit for CAS24 (US\$24, €17, £15) at any time. "It's important for new clients, who've never been to a spa before, to have a good experience [that's not too expensive]," says Rake. "Maybe after that they will then want more specific treatments."

The approach has worked. The majority of SkySpa's demographic is in the 16 to 35 age range. "Very different from the usual spa," Rake laughs, noting that the spa's marketing has been web-based to appeal to this group. Treatment room occupancy hovers around 40 per cent, with most guests visiting on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays; Rake's happy with this right now but plans to continue to try to increase numbers.

GETTING CUSTOMERS HOOKED

Rake puts the repeat customer rate at 80 per cent; contributing to this is the SkySpa Privilege Card. Guests purchase the card for CAS10 (US\$10, €7, £6) on their first visit and receive a CAS5 (US\$5, €4, £3) rebate on each of six future visits – saving CAS30 (US\$30, €22, £19) in total – as well as a two for one

SKYSPA BY NUMBERS

- SkySpa employs a staff of 110
- The cost of a 60-minute facial or body treatment without a thermal experience starts at CAS79 (US\$80, €58, £49)
- A 60-minute facial or body treatment with a thermal experience (including the Cloud9 package) is priced at CAS99 (US\$100, €73, £62)
- Overall revenue streams include treatment sales (60 per cent), gift cards (30 per cent), product retail (5 per cent) and SkySpa Privilege cards (5 per cent)
- Thermal circuit experiences – as a standalone service – make up 40 per cent of spa service revenue

thermal experience and another two for one thermal experience and massage. More than 1,000 of the cards, which can also be used at Nordic Station, have been sold so far. Gift cards are also very popular and make up 30 per cent of overall revenues.

In an effort to further the SkySpa brand, the spa is currently experimenting with its own product line after switching over from Comfort Zone products; gift baskets are available, but retail isn't a big part of the business yet, Rake says.

No specific decisions have been made yet for what city to take SkySpa to next – for now, it will remain a peaceful thermal oasis on the seafloor. "We have a lot of rivals, but right now we don't have competitors exactly like us," Rake says. "It's tough to find a location like ours. We're in the best environment that you can be in." ●

Shibui Spa at the Greenwich Hotel



Robert De Niro has invested heavily in the Tribeca neighbourhood of New York. Wendy Bosalavage goes undercover at his Japanese-themed Shibui Spa to see if it's got star potential

WENDY BOSALAVAGE • PRESIDENT • AMERICAN LEISURE

The Shibui Spa in the Tribeca neighbourhood in downtown Manhattan, is a space for guests of The Greenwich Hotel, although there are a few appointments for outside visitors. The owners of the hotel and spa, which opened in 2008, are celebrity Robert De Niro and real estate developers and hoteliers Ira Drucker and Richard Borden of BD Hotels. De Niro has invested heavily in the area since the late 80s and is known as Tribeca's unofficial mayor.

The 4,500sq ft (418sq m) spa offers a place to unwind where you can cleanse the body, mind and heal. Its aesthetic echoes the rustic interiors of the 88-bedroom hotel but with a Japanese theme – thanks to designer Mikio Shingawa – which focuses on the balance between the traditional and modern and nature and city. Incredibly, a 250-year-old authentic Japanese farmhouse was carefully reconstructed to house the spa's basement

pool without the use of a single nail – by applying an ancient knot-tying technique and using wooden pegs, a craft which only three people still know today. The plaster walls come care of another specialised traditional Japanese building application that combines very un-21st century plaster and straw.

Shibui is Japanese and refers to "a subtle and unobtrusive approach". It is based on a beauty that is low-key and grounded, not too fancy, yet rich. This is just how it felt during my time there. There are four distinct treatment rooms including the Japanese bathing room, where services are performed traditionally on tatami mats and ritual and seasonal Japanese baths take place in a black stone soaking tub; and massage rooms which have wooden bars on the ceiling for ashiatsu massages. The product houses include Elemental Herbology, Epicuren, A.R.457, Red Flower and an organic in-house blend for massage and body work.

THE VISIT

The offer

The offering combines Japanese-inspired treatments, with staple massages and facials plus beauty services. The price points are in line with a luxury hotel (see below).

Booking

I had to call the hotel to book my treatment as the spa's direct line wasn't listed. The phone rang seven times before someone answered and I was transferred. When I enquired about the different types of treatments, it was clear the receptionist was reading off a menu – she only mentioned massage and body scrubs and said if I wanted a facial they would have to arrange for someone to come in as they did not have anyone on staff. While she said the 50-minute deep tissue



The treatment was very impressive but outside noise could be heard during the experience

VITAL STATISTICS

Address: 377 Greenwich Street, New York, NY 10013, US

Prices: The 80-minute signature Sake Ki massage was priced at US\$280 (€206, £174); the Shibui Relaxer Swedish massage ranges from US\$180 (€132, £112) for 50 minutes or US\$250 (€184, £155) for 80 minutes; and a 30-minute facial is priced at US\$110 (€81, £68)

Times: Open 6am to 10pm every day. The treatment hours are 9am to 9pm.

To book: +1 212 941 8900



The spa has been built in a reconstructed Japanese farmhouse (above); the bathing room boasts a black stone tub (right)

massage was the most popular, I chose the Shibui Relaxer Swedish massage. She asked me for my credit card details and my email address to send a confirmation, however, I never received this.

Location & access

I couldn't find a sign for the hotel entrance (there was a very small one, but I missed it) and I walked around the block before giving up and asking for directions. When at the hotel front desk, I also had to ask where the spa was as there was no sign. You'd definitely need to know there was a spa, as you would never guess from just passing by: it's one of the best kept secrets in New York City!

Disabled access

Wheelchair users can access the spa by using the main guest elevator. The rest of the facilities also comply with disability laws.

Design

The spa is on two different levels, with the locker rooms (which include a small steam-room and a toilet) and pool on one level and the treatment rooms one floor down. You access the treatment rooms by walking down a corridor, passing the fitness and reception area, before taking a flight of stairs. The spa's decor was rustic and beautiful, but



it felt very disjointed having to walk such a long distance to the treatment rooms.

Cleanliness

Everything was very clean and several times an attendant came into the locker room to tidy.

The staff

While my therapist was very attentive to my needs, the reception staff were indifferent.

The experience

When I entered the spa there was an unmanned reception desk. I waited a few minutes and someone finally came out and asked if they could help. In the changing

room, I was told to pick any locker with a key and to 'take a steam' by just pressing the button. The grey metal lockers were different and interesting to look at but not practical – they were narrow and had no hangers.

I took a steam in what felt like a very small space and was almost sitting on the lap of another guest as it was hard to see! It was really a steam shower – although there was no sign to say this – and shouldn't have been used by more than one guest at a time (unless you are very good friends). I then went to wait by the pool in my lovely, heavy, plush robe for my therapist to collect me. As my slippers were a size too small, however, the long walk to the treatment room was tricky: not helped by the fact they were a little wet from my steam session and that I had to negotiate the stairs.

MYSTERY SHOPPER

WHAT'S THE SCORE?

Ease of booking	7
Facilities	8
Cleanliness/maintenance	9
Staff	7
Experience/treatment	10
Value for money	8
Overall experience	8

▶ My therapist was very well presented and engaging and started my treatment promptly. Although I didn't fill out a consultation form, I was asked if I had any special areas that needed attention. I've been experiencing a really big problem with my shoulder and my therapist obviously knew her 'stuff' and was really attentive to the needs I'd mentioned throughout the treatment. I could tell she been very well trained and her touch was amazing. Unfortunately, I did hear other people talking during my experience, which was disturbing and the floor was very cold which came as a shock start to my treatment. Yet overall my treatment was excellent – I never felt rushed at all and the journey was great – and on a scale of one to 10, I would rate it a strong nine.

After the treatment, my therapist said to take a moment to relax. Then she showed me two exercises for my shoulder: that was a bonus as they really are helping me now. Back at the pool I took another steam – this time I was alone and loved the experience but, unfortunately, the drain wasn't working and I was standing in three inches of



The majority of spa users come from the hotel (above), which creates a private and peaceful ambience

water. By this point I felt quite thirsty, but I was never offered a drink by anyone: even though I found a bottle of water and I had heard a rumour that they offer a warm ginger tea to guests on arrival.

The lighting in the locker room was very low so I couldn't see to put on my make-up and there weren't any amenities. There was mouth wash and soap available, but the holders weren't labelled and they were placed next to each other... oops!.. I figured out which was which quite quickly! There was also something wrong with the plumbing – a siren sounded for a minute when I first put the shower on.

Aftercare

The retail area was small and very uninteresting and I was not offered any information

on products. When I went to check out, I noticed the amount on the bill was higher than the treatment price that I had been quoted. The receptionist informed me that a 20 per cent gratuity was added – this was fine with me as the service warranted that. When I asked for a menu, she looked around and said she did not have one, but that she would print one out. I waited, but she never gave me one. Additionally, I was not asked for any contact information.

Summary

The Shibui Spa experience was very different – I felt as if I was in someone's beautiful home and peering at the other three treatment rooms, all were unique to each other and exotic. It seems to me that this spa is primarily an amenity for the Greenwich Hotel guests and that it doesn't expect clients who are not staying there to use it. There is an air of exclusivity in the hotel and it carries through to the spa. This creates a very private, unhurried and peaceful ambience.

I was not made aware by the staff that the spa had a signature massage, Sake K, and it was not made clear on the website that I could download a menu in advance. The Sake K entails muscles being anointed with ginger and black pepper and then compressed via steaming, sake-soaked towels – I would definitely consider returning for this and wish I had been told me about it beforehand as it would have been my top choice. ●

RIGHT TO REPLY

Cristina Paradelo, spa manager, Shibui Spa

Thank you for the feedback. We're currently re-launching our spa menu and have redesigned many of our treatments to enhance the guest experience. The Sake K mentioned has been replaced with The Drunken Lotus massage which incorporates white lotus, organic jujuba and cucumber oils. We're sorry for any technical or service-related issues which resulted in a less than perfect experience. To address points specifically – our confirmation emails are generated automatically, so it's possible we misspelled it. The 'small steamroom' is a single room and only intended to be used by one person at a time. With regards to locker room amenities: more are available on request, but as the majority of guests are from the hotel they've got these in their room already. In concern to the retail experience, we've recently expanded this area to include high-end spa and beauty products, as well as a collection of one-of-a-kind gifts and accessories from around the world.



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The luxury resort is surrounded by mountains and has an unpolluted microclimate

QUALITY OF LIFE

The Longevity Wellness Resort has teamed up with La Clinique de Paris to create Portugal's first medical, age-management spa in a luxury hotel environment. We find out more

As the first of its kind in Portugal, the five-star €55m (US\$75m, £46m) Longevity Wellness Resort Monchique (LWRM) which opened in July 2010, has a lot to prove. Its offering is ambitious and comprehensive, aiming to introduce a preventative approach to wellness that clients can adopt for their entire lives. Spa director Teresa Malheiro says: "Our concept is completely unique – offering such a tailor-made, medical approach in a luxury hotel. We don't do 'standard' here."

Located 45 minutes from Faro airport, nestled into the mountainous nature reserve of Monchique, the resort boasts a 195-suite condo-hotel, a restaurant by celebrity chef Olivier Da Costa and an 850sq m (9,149sq ft), €1.5m (US\$2m, £1.3m) medical spa.

The spa is divided into three distinct areas. Medical Evaluation has three consulting

rooms and Aesthetics contains two rooms for beauty and rejuvenation treatments – such as light therapy, skin resurfacing and oxygen therapy – and one for biophysical examinations. Nearby is a Zen Room for meditation and fitness classes. The third, Relaxation, is the main area and this houses a hydrotherapy room, a Turkish bath, a sauna, an indoor pool and five treatment rooms (for therapies by Elemis), plus a Technogym gym.

DREAM TEAM

LWRM is managed by the Longevity Group – a Portuguese real-estate firm – and it's clear that the team driving it is committed to an almost utopian vision of better health for today's society. Key players CEO Nazir Sacoor; medical director Dr Antonio Boaviada; and Malheiro all have a stake in the company, while Sacoor is a major shareholder in all Longevity Group businesses.

Sacoor, who previously lived in Canada and worked in finance, was inspired to change career by leading wellness spas such as Canyon Ranch (see s807/1 p24). Alive resort in Canada and SHA in Spain (see s809/2, p38). He worked with Malheiro over four years to develop the LWRM concept. Malheiro, a spa consultant since 1989, had failed in the past to create her own integrated wellness facility due to costly requirements, such as cutting-edge equipment.

Malheiro put Sacoor in touch with Dr Boaviada, a specialist in preventative and aesthetic medicine. She also introduced him to Dr Claude Chauchard, an expert in preventative medicine and total ageing management who founded La Clinique de Paris (LCDP) anti-ageing clinic in France (see p50). The Longevity Medical Spa by La Clinique de Paris (the official name for LWRM's spa) is the first in a joint venture between Chauchard and the Longevity Group where the aim is to develop a network of resort-based or standalone medical spas within Portugal and abroad.

Malheiro says: "I dream about this concept for years and now we've done it. Although it's a big challenge, we're all so passionate about it. We're really excited and I

The in-house medical team comprises six specialist doctors, picked for their skills in areas such as integrated medicine, preventative healthcare, ageing management and psychology



believe we have everything we need to make a difference in the market."

MEDICAL APPROACH

LWRM's mission statement is 'live better, live longer': derived from Chauchard's healthy living programme of the same name, which he operates at his clinics. With Chauchard's blessing and consultation, LWRM took this concept and wrapped it up in a luxury resort setting along with a spa and gourmet restaurant.

What gives it a particular edge, however, is its medical approach to wellness. There are 18 spa packages available and while there are ample à la carte treatments and relaxation/beauty programmes, LWRM's USP is its eight preventative healthcare packages, which help clients "grow older with vitality and wellbeing". These range from the three-day Basic Evaluation, which costs €1,858 (US\$2,500, £1,550), to the 15-day Fast Slimming & Detox priced at €5,463 (US\$7,400, £4,600) and the €11,181 (US\$15,150, £9,400), 30-day Total Ageing Management package.

There are five stages within these healthcare programmes, the first – and most important – is a series of biochemical, biophysical and medical evaluations. Blood and urine samples are taken and sent off to a laboratory in Barcelona (with results returned in 48 hours). An electromagnetic machine is used to check if there are any imbalances in the body – looking at the endocrine, nervous, digestive and lymphatic systems as well as organ function, the immune system and

infections. On top of this is a nutritional assessment, a stress evaluation by a psychologist and checks on BMI, percentages of water, fat and muscle in the body, fitness and energy levels and circulation/blood pressure.

Malheiro says: "Our biochemical testing is far more complex than other spas – we sometimes run 200 tests per client." This, she explains, shows just how scientific the offering is. "In terms of 'detoxing', we do what other spas claim to do because we have all the tools."

The second stage of a healthcare package is to discuss the results with clients. Next comes a tailor-made programme which can encompass a nutritional plan and various activities, relaxation and aesthetic treatments, on-site educational workshops, fitness classes and other relevant therapies. Then there's the delivery – from an in-house medical team of six specialist doctors who have been hand-picked by Malheiro for skills in integrated medicine, preventative healthcare, ageing management, nutrition and psychology.

The overall aim is to give guests a greater understanding about the body and making healthy choices. Sales and marketing director Cristina Ventura says: "We provide a greater quality of life: with our treatments, but most especially through what we teach and what our guests takeaway with them." The final stage of a healthcare programme

"Our biochemical testing is far more complex than other spas – we sometimes run 200 tests per client... In terms of detoxing, we do what other spas claim to do because we have all the tools"

is the 'follow up'. Just because a guest leaves, it doesn't mean the experience is over: the team at LWRM provide phone and email consultations and organise a return visit if necessary (for an additional cost).

AT ONE WITH NATURE

Another selling feature of LWRM is its location and eco-friendliness. Monchique enjoys an unpolluted microclimate and from a marketing perspective has the benefit of a long association with wellness, thanks to the natural thermal waters of the nearby village of Caldas de Monchique. And much has been done in the resort to emphasise nature.

Local stone such as sienito and xisto has been used in the construction, which was overseen by Portuguese designers Focus Group, as well as sustainably sourced Brazilian wood called sucupira. Even the colour palette is predominately natural and understated: greens, greys, browns and whites. ▶



Much has been done to make the resort eco-friendly, including the use of huge glass windows to let in light and save electricity

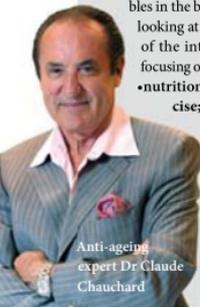
Live Better, Live Longer

Dr Chauchard has worked in the field of anti-ageing and preventative medicine for over 30 years. It's his belief that "we can really improve our quality of life through a systematic approach to preventative medicine" and that if treated correctly, all people should be able to live to 120.

Chauchard set up his first anti-ageing clinic La Clinique de Paris in France in 1982 and since then has opened 16 clinics across the world – from London and Spain to Qatar, China and Japan – under the La Clinique de Paris International (LCDPI) brand.

His clinics focus on the healthy programme – Live Better, Live Longer – which is based on 10 points: •measure, testing and monitoring ageing variables in the body; •detox; •absorb, looking at the optimal function of the intestines; •rebalance, focusing on the immune system; •nutrition; •relaxation; •exercise; •happiness; •sleep; and •breathing.

In addition, he's developed an anti-ageing skincare line as well as a range for in-spa use such as wraps, muds, seaweed and salt scrubs.



Anti-ageing expert Dr Claude Chauchard

► Huge glass walls and skylights are designed to allow as much natural light in as possible. But it's not just about looks. Built into the hillside, LWRM has been designed to minimise impact on its surroundings (83 per cent of which is protected). Efforts are made to be ecologically conscious; large windows mean less need for electric lighting during the day, rainwater is collected and used in landscaping and solar panels on the roof will provide 65 per cent of the resort's water heating.

GROWING BUSINESS

Despite tough economic times, LWRM has been well received so far: especially when it comes to real estate. Under its condo-hotel system, property owners combine usage with income generation in a freehold ownership. At the time of opening, 50 per cent of the suites had already been sold to investors, with a minimum of €300,000 (US\$406,450, £252,300) required per unit.

In terms of visitors, the target market includes those from the UK, Germany, Spain, Angola, Portugal, the Benelux countries, Scandinavia and Canada. What the spa brings to the resort is a strong marketing edge and a chance to attract market segments – from wellness lovers, nature lovers and walkers, couples and high-powered business executives – all year round without being restricted by holiday seasons.

As the medical spa is the star attraction, its capture rate is high – it is reported that each resort guest has at least one treatment independent of those which are included as part of a package. The most popular packages are Side by Side for couples and Escape to Serenity – both of which are focused



Each guest has at least one extra treatment on top of those included in spa packages

on relaxation and wellness. The take up of health prevention programmes so far has been slower due to their specialised nature. The resort is hoping that numbers will increase by word of mouth recommendations and testimonials.

In the long-term, the Longevity Group and Dr Chauchard aim to develop more medical spas together in Portugal and beyond. They expect to announce their second project later this year. ●

Charlotte Senior flew from London Gatwick to Faro, Portugal, with Monarch Airlines: www.monarch.co.uk

ANIKA

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PHOTO: STEVE GRANITZ/GETTY IMAGES

Guendalina Gennari Curlo,
associate, Lausanne
Hospitality Consulting



The unique Professional Certificate in Spa Management is a blended learning programme, designed to offer the perfect balance between academic study and real-life experience. The one-year course gives attendees the time to develop their management skills and to put their newly found knowledge gained from their own spa case project into practice. It also gives students hands-on learning experiences within spas. By the end of the course, students are able to develop their own management toolkit which will assist them throughout their careers. In addition, all LEE graduates will join the EHL alumni network, one of the most powerful professional networks within the hospitality sector.

Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne

Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne launched its first spa-focused qualification almost a year ago. We find out how well it's been received

IN A NUTSHELL

Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL) in Switzerland launched its Professional Certificate in Spa Management in June 2010. The programme aims to meet the spa industry's growing need for well-trained and focused management employees.

This one-year spa management course balances both academic study with real-life work experience, combining theoretical

learning on campus with practical days held at partner spas. This two-pronged approach is consolidated by continual work on a specific case study which is commissioned by a company within the spa sector.

Students learn directly from those already working in the spa and hospitality industry; and the school's overall educational aim is to provide graduates with knowledge and skills which can be put to use straight away.

BACKGROUND

EHL, one of the oldest and most renowned hotel schools, was founded in 1893 by Swiss Hotel Association member Jacques Tschumi and offers three main programmes: a Diploma in Hotel and Restaurant Management, a Bachelor of Science in International Hospitality Management, and a Masters in Hospitality Administration. The bachelor and masters degrees involve several introductory sessions and specialisation modules, which are intended to give an understanding of the spa business.

In 1976, a subsidiary company, Lausanne Hospitality Consulting (LHC), was set up to provide external consultancy services based on the school's unique expertise. Its Executive Education arm – which offers a variety of extra hospitality management programmes – became the driving force behind the new spa management programme.

WHO'S IT FOR?

The spa programme is dedicated to reinforcing talent in the industry and was developed

The course targets existing spa owners and managers, hotel school graduates and therapists aspiring to become managers



PHOTO: © BEED BUSINESS INFORMATION/ECOLE HÔTELIÈRE DE LAUSANNE

**Elizma Hoffman,
head therapist, Talize**

I took a three-year college course in beauty and holistic therapies, before working as a cruise ship therapist. I also worked at various hotel spas where I realised that there's more to spas than just treatments. I wanted to learn more about budgeting, rooms' revenue and product costs. Emanuel Berger, a board member at EHL and owner of the Victoria-Jungfrau group, nominated me for a scholarship place on the spa management programme, which I won in May 2010 at the Global Spa Summit. The programme has allowed me to learn from professionals within the industry, from their experiences, knowledge and expertise. This information has made me understand how the businesses run and why the smallest detail can make the biggest impact.



**Verena Lasvigne-Fox,
spa director, Four Seasons
Hotel George V**

Nowadays, it is increasingly rare for a hotel to open without a spa. For this reason, I'm pleased to deliver a module for the Professional Certificate in Spa Management programme at EHL. Indeed, we are in high need of qualified spa managers – one of the most difficult positions to hire within the hotel business today. I have a background in the hotel industry and spa is my passion. I enjoy sharing my knowledge with students, who will hopefully choose working in spas as their future profession. I would also like to encourage hotel schools to follow EHL's direction of considering the position of spa managers as a new but very important job profile requiring certification via a combined theoretical and practical programme.



for those seeking to strengthen their management skills or apply them in a spa environment.

The course is designed for hotel spa managers, independent spa owners or entrepreneurs, spa supervisors aspiring to grow into the management ranks and recent hotel school graduates wishing to pursue a career in spas. Two participants currently attending the programme, for example, are José Villegas, COO at Natura Bisse International, Dallas, US and Alexia Martin, spa manager at Martin's Hotel, Genval, Belgium.

The minimum academic level required for entry is a bachelor's degree or equivalent. Students can ask employers to sponsor or fund part of the course, but must otherwise pay for themselves. The price of the course is CHF21,000 (US\$22,083, €22,083, £13,868). One scholarship is also awarded each year.

ON THE MENU

The one-year Professional Certificate in Spa Management programme requires attendees to participate in four visits to the EHL campus. Each contact session lasts seven days and focuses on a specific concept: marketing,



PHOTO: F. SCHNEIDER © ECOLE HOTELIERE DE LAUSANNE

human resources, finance and operations and facilities management.

In addition to this class-based tuition, are six Art of Spa days. Four professional day visits provide attendees with hands-on experience at an actual spa, where they can interview members of staff at all levels to fully appreciate and understand the A-Z of working within and managing a spa. Two experience day visits to spas located around the Lake Geneva region give attendees a chance to learn the differences between wellness centres and four- and five-star spas. Participating spas include Victoria-Jungfrau Grand Hotel & Spa, the Cinq Mondes spa in Beau-Rivage Palace, Buddha-Bar spa in Hilton at Evian-les-Bains and the Willow Stream Spa at Fairmont Le Montreux Palace.

Overall assessment of the programme is based on a spa case study, which is continu-

The one-year course includes four visits to the EHL campus (above) as well as six practical days within a spa environment

ally worked on throughout the course. The Spa Management Case Project requires students to put what they have learned in class into practice in a real-life situation. It is a measure of their practical learning and ability development. The topic and content of the project are chosen by each participant and then approved by both the organisation where the participants are assigned and EHL's Academic Review Board. Within each project, attendees must analyse business issues and develop appropriate solutions. During the course year, they are also given opportunities to test their solutions. The results of this project are an added bonus for the spa/company sponsoring the project. ▶

TRAINING



- ▶ Half-way into a term, the students present the progress of their project to an elite industry and academic panel which is consists of coaches and experts with an academic background and others coming directly from the industry, such as Martha Wiedemann, wellness advisor at Badrutts Palace in St Moritz and Sophie Meusnier, Givenchy spa manager at Le Mirador Kempinski, Mont Pèlerin.

WHO BACKS IT?

The Lausanne Executive Education (LEE) is responsible for the spa programme. LEE is a subset of EHL, which is accredited by the University of Applied Sciences of Western Switzerland (HES-SO) and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). LEE is also supported by the Swiss Hotels Association – Hotellerieuisse. However, this particular programme is the first of its kind and as it is classified as executive education space, it does not require specific accreditation.

WHO'S WHO?

The programme is staffed by EHL faculty members, LHC consultants and external experts. All the LEE activities and programmes are supervised by Alexia Muteke Ceppi, who is a consultant in international and hospitality education.

Guendalina Gennari Curlo, who heads up the spa management programme, is an associate at LHC and delivers LEE courses that relate to luxury business and protocols. She also works on consulting mandates, princi-



“All LEE graduates will join the EHL alumni network, giving them access to one of the most powerful professional networks within the hospitality sector”

pally in the marketing of deluxe real-estate projects in Switzerland. Gennari Curlo joined LHC in January 2010 as an intern, and holds a Bachelors in Foreign Trade and a MBA from the Università degli Studi di Torino in Italy. She also has experience in marketing, especially branding and communication in luxury management.

Other key people involved with the spa programme include: Ines Klemm, professor of Hospitality Concepts and Interior Design

Students (left) gain hands-on experience via industry partners such as the Beau-Rivage Palace (above) with its Cinq Mondes spa

at EHL; André Mack, director of LHC; Debra Adams, managing director and head trainer at Arena 4 Finance Ltd, UK; Verena Lasvigne-Fox, spa director at the Four Seasons Hotel George V, France; Nicolas Graf, professor, ESSEC Business School, France and visiting professor at EHL; and Sofia Brandao, corporate director of sales, marketing and spa at Aquapura Hotels, Portugal.

THE STORY SO FAR

There are two intakes a year: in February and in October. The enrolment structure fits within LEE's philosophy of enrolling small groups for explicit and tacit learning.

The programme's first intake enrolled three students, from the UAE, US and Belgium, who met the establishment's high selection standards.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The aim is to attract eight to 10 students for each future intake, although selection standards will remain a key priority. As the programme is less than a year old, it will be stabilised and developed over time to incorporate modules reflecting the changing trends and developments in the spa industry. LHC will also continue to grant a scholarship for the spa management programme, which will be presented at the Global Spa Summit in Bali this May. ●

WHERE THE WORLD GOES FOR SPA



It's a fact. Independent research* shows that more consumers search for spa information on SpaFinder than all search engines combined - including Google, Yahoo! and Bing. From the annual *SpaFinder New Beauty Guide to Global Spa, Wellness & Beauty* and the SpaFinder supplement in *NewBeauty* magazine to our global network of websites and publications, we're proud to be the ultimate resource for spa goers around the world.

*Coyle Hospitality Research, 2010 study

To learn more about SpaFinder marketing programs, contact:
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TOP OF THE WORLD

One of the world's highest cities, with a name which means holy land in Tibetan, Lhasa is the perfect site for the jewel of Starwood's spa portfolio. Although the company has five in-house spa brands (see SB10/3 p24), this one is considered the most special. Iridium Spa has been created specifically to appeal to St Regis customers, who are known to be wealthy, well-travelled and for enjoying the finest things in life.

With its view of the Mila and Tanggula Mountains, Iridium can lay claim to being the world's highest spa. At 3,680m (12,000ft) above sea level it is literally in the clouds, giving it a mystical feel. The upside of this birds' eye location is that the views are stunning, the downside is that oxygen levels can be low in winter, so guests are encouraged to increase their cardio activity before a visit.

In the last decade, Lhasa has been made more accessible by the completion of the world's most elevated railroad, which traverses three mountain ranges and is so scenic that many of the stations are designated as sightseeing stops. Tourism to Tibet has been building steadily: some six million visitors were predicted for 2010, mostly from the US, Germany and Japan, which has generated prosperity. With the Iridium Spa, Starwood is aiming for the local market, wealthy Chinese and Tibetans and connoisseurs of world travel.

The brand development was led by Mia Kyricos, Starwood's director of global spa brands and programming (see SB10/3 p00), with input from a cross-functional team comprised of St Regis' global brand and design teams, development support from Jeremy

Named after a material as desirable as platinum, but harder to find, Iridium Spa is Starwood's new in-house five-star spa brand. The flagship site has only just opened its doors in Tibet

McCarthy, Starwood's director of global spa development and operations, and a global network of spa consultants – most notably Maggie Gunning and her associates at Spa Synergy. The company, still operating as Spa Synergy despite being acquired by AW Lake last May, worked on the concept so it was sympathetic to the location – consulting architects and interior designers – and also liaised with Starwood's head office to develop the Iridium Spa brand globally.

BRAND VALUES

Kyricos says the spa brand's development was informed by the St Regis heritage. "Iridium was born from the DNA of our brand, originating with the famed Iridium Room [a prestigious ballroom] at the St Regis New York in 1938," she says. "The word Iridium comes with a rich history and is also one of the world's most precious and rarest elements on earth, akin to platinum but far less abundant. Like its meaning, Iridium Spa is rare and refined."

No expense has been spared with the spa and there are elegant touches, including a gold-lined swimming pool, using 7,450 pieces of gold, and an all-suite format, doing away with communal changing areas. In fact, the whole project has been a hefty investment: RMB750m (US\$113.6m, €82.5m, £70.5m) was spent on the resort, with RMB11.5m (US\$1.7m, €1.2m, £1m) allocated to the spa. According to Kyricos, as this is the first luxury hotel resort in Tibet – not to mention the global launch pad for its newest spa concept – it is a very significant project.

Rather than booking treatments, Iridium Spa gives the option of booking blocks of time intended to cover the treatment as well as pre/post treatment activities. "The aim is to offer an experience which is tailored and discreet," says Gunning. "From arrival to departure, Iridium Spa provides guests with the rarest of luxuries: time." At the time of going to press, prices were still being finalised. The therapist puts together a tailored programme for the guest, based

■ Iridium in Lhasa is the world's highest spa, but transporting goods to the site for construction was a complicated process





on their needs and goals. As much as possible, one therapist will stay with the guest throughout his/her time at the spa and perform all the treatments. All therapists are being trained in the spa's signature Tibetan and Iridium treatments, as well as in facials, basic manicure and pedicure and traditional Chinese/Tibetan hand and foot treatments.

"As part of the arrival ritual, we present the guest with a traditional Tibetan jewellery box for them to store their watch and other jewellery. This is a symbol of intention for them to forget about time, relax and enjoy the time they have booked for their treatment," says Gunning. When they leave, guests are given a satchel of tea, from the tea ritual, as a memento.

Central to the spa brand is the all-suite format. At Lhasa site, there are four single suites and two couples suites, each with its own toilet, vanity area, experience shower, sitting and consultation area, treat-

■ Iridium Spa at St Regis Lhasa boasts an opulent pool lined with 7,450 pieces of gold, as well as an all suite format

ment bed and even a hydrothermal facility, such as a sauna or spa bath. Other facilities include a yoga studio and meditation garden. There are separate entrances and exits, as people are expected to arrive and leave with different mindsets.

REFLECTING THE LOCATION

Tying each of the sites to its location is an important element of the Iridium Spa brand, through signature programmes and also by incorporating local ingredients and remedies. Because of the altitude, treatments at this inaugural spa have been geared towards helping guests relax and breathe more easily. Sleeping at night can be a challenge due to the lack of oxygen, so an aromatherapy treatment has been created to aid this.

For the second stage of training, the spa will focus on more traditional Tibetan-influenced treatments, using local ingredients and products. Aromatherapy Associates were chosen as the international ►



▶ brand, while AW Lake has researched Tibetan medicine, history and culture to create the products for the signature treatments.

Therapists will be trained in a native massage known as *ku nyé*. Derived from Tibetan medicine, it helps cleanse the body of toxins, increase energy, calm nerves and reduce stress. When performing *ku nyé* for the first time, therapists will carry out a consultation to determine the guest's dominant humour (element): wind, bile or phlegm. The two-hour treatment uses herbal oils and pastes corresponding to the dominant humour.

Gunning says varying treatments at future spas will bring each destination to life: "Each property can develop its own signature treatment, based on the showcased culture/destination. St Regis hopes this will enable distinctive, hand-crafted experiences."

Launching a premium brand in such a remote location hasn't come without challenges. "It was not easy to transport goods during construction as they had to come a long way by road," says Gunning. Yet access for potential guests is straightforward, as flights run daily to Lhasa from major cities in China and the road into Lhasa is excellent. Another difficulty is having "to endure low levels of oxygen during winter time; although in the summer it is extremely pleasant, with trees and plants giving off higher levels of oxygen."

Finding staff has also proved to be challenging. Although all the therapists had to be trained from scratch, the team tried to recruit individuals who have had traditions of healing, through massage and herbal therapies, passed down to them. As the spa will have many Chinese-speaking guests, a number of Chinese therapists have been hired and many of the others will be Tibetan. AW Lake provided a comprehensive training programme, including detailed customer service training to match the expected high-end clientele.

THE EXPECTATIONS

Starwood predicts that the spa's capture rate will be at least 25 per cent. "We would expect international guests to at least try the foot and leg massage treatments, especially if they've been walking all day sight-seeing," says Gunning. "We expect facials to be popular, as the skin can become very dry within just a couple of days here." Starwood expects 60 to 65 per cent of the spa revenue to come from hotel guests and

ST REGIS LHASA BY NUMBERS

- The resort has 122 rooms, 28 villas and 12 suites
- Rooms range from RMB1,650 (US\$250, €182, £155) to RMB50,150 (US\$7,600, €5,500, £4,700) per night
- Starwood is aiming for 40 per cent occupancy in the first year
- Other facilities include a tea room, three restaurants, a ballroom, meeting rooms and the spa
- The tiered spa memberships will range from RMB23,100 (US\$3,500, €2,550, £2,150) to RMB33,000 (US\$5,000, €3,650, £3,100) a year
- The spa will open with six full-time therapists, building up to 12 during peak times

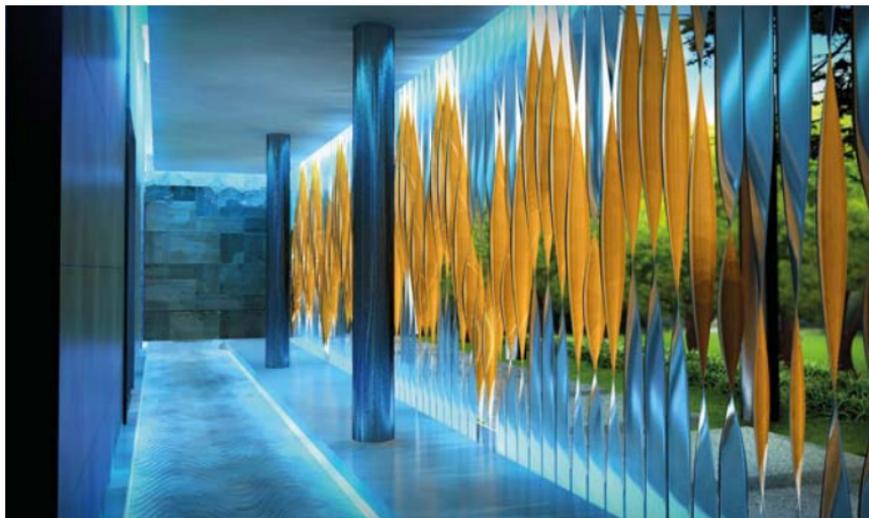
■ The huge lobby window at St Regis Lhasa beautifully showcases the spectacular night-time view of Postala Palace

35 to 40 per cent from locals, perhaps rising to as much as 90 per cent in the winter. Long term, Starwood is hoping to encourage more travel during winter, but locals will still be important and to reflect this, three membership packages have been created. These include benefits such as discounts at the spa and F&B, a complimentary one-night stay in the presidential suite and invitations to special events. In terms of KPIs, Starwood will be measuring revenue per available treatment hour; retail revenue as a percentage of treatment revenue; hotel capture rate percentage and therapist productivity percentage. As this is a new market no specific benchmarks can be shared yet.

The Iridium Spa brand is now available to roll out in other St Regis hotels, although owners can also opt for a Remède Spa by Steiner Leisure: St Regis' preferred third-party spa brand. The location and market is likely to determine which one hotel owners will choose. Although there are brand requirements for an Iridium Spa – a minimum 3,500sq ft (325sq m) footprint, all-suite areas, separate entry and exit – it is expected that each site will reflect its own location. Proprietors will be able to select their own skincare lines. All future Iridium Spas will be priced in the luxury tier, although costs will vary based on the demands of each market.

The next Iridium Spa is due to open in St Regis Florence, Italy, this year. Two more Iridium Spas are in discussion, but are still under wraps; these could open by the end of 2011. Two more properties have been confirmed for China – St Regis Tianjin and St Regis Yalong Bay – slated to open by 2012. Asia is Starwood's fastest growing market for its hotel and spa brands and EAME is another key growth area. A lot of work has been put into this brand, so there are high hopes for it: "In many ways we've saved the best for last," says Kyricos. "It's the sixth brand we've developed internally, so there's a logical benefit to years of experience. I feel there's a good marriage between St Regis and the concept we've created for Iridium Spa. They're highly synergistic and share the same core values, which has culminated in a beautiful end product." ●

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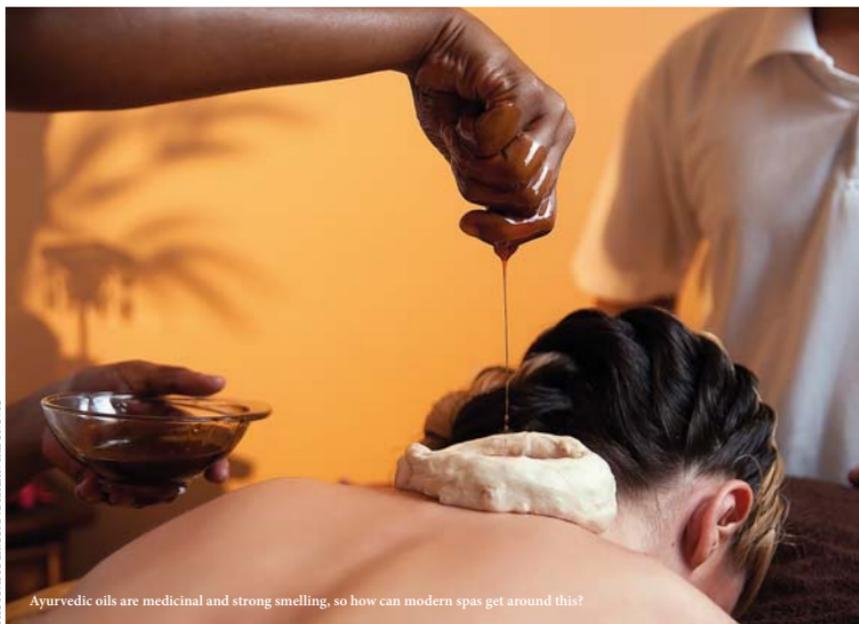
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Ayurvedic oils are medicinal and strong smelling, so how can modern spas get around this?

Ayurveda, the Indian system of wellness, is one of the oldest existing bodies of knowledge on the healing process. It is a way of life which addresses the body, mind and spirit and a system of traditional medicine which works at the level of both preventative and curative health. It is primarily known for its efficiency in managing ailments like arthritis, gastro intestinal disorders, neuro musculoskeletal problems, skin complaints and hormonal issues.

In India, ayurveda is a legitimate medical system which is used by 70 per cent of the population. The country has an estimated 2,500 ayurvedic hospitals and more than 100 colleges offering degrees in traditional ayurvedic medicine.

What's more, the country is fiercely protective of keeping the practice authentic. In 2001, the government of India set

Can traditional ayurveda really work in a commercial spa setting?

up the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) as repository of 1,200 formulations of various systems of Indian medicine, including ayurveda (see SB10/3 p12). In 1995, the Department of Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy was established to provide focused attention on education and research in ayurveda and to raise awareness of it domestically and overseas.

As the luxury hotel spa market grows in India (see SB10/4 p26), many operators are turning to ayurveda for inspiration for spa concepts, including Taj Hotels, Oberoi, Orient and Serena Spas (see SB10/4 p30). And growing interest in the west has also seen ayurveda adopted by operators who

want to give their spa a unique selling point and an exotic appeal.

On the one hand, this provides a fantastic opportunity for ayurveda to grow in popularity and for India to cement itself as a centre for wellness among spa enthusiasts. Yet ayurveda, traditionally a medical and curative practice, presents a number of challenges to luxury spa operators. The oils have a strong, medical smell devoid of the soothing aromas that are usually found in spas. Some treatments focus on stimulating marma points as opposed to a flowing massage which helps customers to relax. Plus, many believe that spas offering a one-hour ayurveda treatment without a doctor's consultation, cannot possibly be authentic.

So, how can modern spa facilities offer ayurveda without diluting the traditional offering? And what changes can they make, while still being true to its roots?

What the Indian government is doing to protect the tradition of ayurveda is an excellent effort. Ideally, the government should now work towards creating ayurveda expert physicians who are well versed with the original texts.

Without the experts, you cannot offer authentic ayurveda. For example, a herbal therapy only becomes true to ayurveda when an experienced physician prescribes the particular herb based on their understanding of a given context and original text.

I have offered advice to numerous spa groups which want to offer ayurveda and my recommendation has always been to focus on preventative aspects. There is so much awareness that spas can build about ayurveda if their vision is to create a wellness offering. Generally, those spas which are the most true to ayurveda are the ones that cater to the need of the client; rather than their desire. However, others present an ayurveda menu and permit the client to choose whatever they want. This is certainly

DR RAMKUMAR KUTTY

Director, Punarnava Ayurveda,
Coimbatore, India



not a good idea, because the client does not necessarily know what they need.

Ayurveda has never been about short-term pampering. It has always been about long-term wellness. Hence pampering at the cost of wellness is not to be advocated. To give an example – shirodhara is one of the most sought-after ayurvedic treatments in spas, but unfortunately it is wrongly administered in many contexts. Like many ayurvedic treatments, shirodhara is an intensive therapy which requires the client/patient to follow appropriate dietary and lifestyle advice for a particular period after the treatment to gain the most benefit. This could be anything from avoiding sitting or standing excessively to not sleeping during the day, keeping out of the sun or not eating uncooked food. The texts explain in detail 'untoward effects' that may occur if this advice is not followed.

Some of the effects may not be noticeable immediately, but could become apparent after a longer time.

Shirodhara also requires the use of the appropriate medium (medicated oil or buttermilk) based on the need which is determined by an ayurvedic physician. The oils are composed of five elements, which are effective in specific conditions. When artificial elements like colour and fragrance are added, there is some re-alignment of these elements, which could possibly contribute to the oil being less effective. The texts also detail the need for intensive treatments to take place in a protective environment – those which are sheltered and free of interruptions and pollution. A luxury spa could indeed offer this, provided the intent is there.

It is difficult to explain authentic ayurveda to spa-goers. However, ayurveda which is administered by knowledgeable, experienced and qualified practitioners, and where the practitioners or the spas can actually explain the process referring to the original texts, would come the closest to being authentic and reliable.

"Ayurveda has never been about short-term pampering... shirodhara, for example, is often wrongly administered when dietary and lifestyle advice is not given as a follow up"

Dr Ramkumar is a qualified ayurvedic physician with over 19 years' experience. He is currently developing a green ayurveda healing community in southern India. Details: www.vaidyagrama.com

Jiva from Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces is the only Indian spa brand in the world with unique Indian signature spa therapies and spa experiences and it is only natural that ayurveda would be a part of our offerings. The ayurvedic treatments we offer are absolutely authentic. In fact, we only offer ayurveda at our facilities that have a resident vaidya – an ayurvedic physician – who first gives a diagnoses based on the person's body type and need and then prescribes the treatment and oil accordingly.

When creating Jiva's experiences and treatments, we enlisted the help of qualified and authentic ayurvedic doctors from the old and famed ayurvedic institutions of India. We did extensive research and incorporated their suggestions into our menu and services. We only offer rejuvenative ayurveda (which focuses on promoting good health and preventing disease) and not curative ayurveda (which is used to treat people with ill-

BINA PATEL

Vice-president – spa operations & development,
Jiva Spas, Taj Hotels Resorts & Palaces, India



nesses), because we believe a spa is a place to rejuvenate and re-energise and not necessarily a medical centre.

In that sense, there is a happy medium where a spa can offer rejuvenative and lifestyle ayurveda and still stay true to its authenticity. In our menus, we clearly urge people to take a minimum number of treatments (and regularly) to ensure that they get the maximum benefit out of that therapy. Nothing is altered or tampered with and the oils that we use are pure and from a well-known, highly reputed ayurvedic pharmacy. The oils may be pungent, but many of our spa guests find the experience more beneficial than great smelling spa treatments.

There are so many aspects that need to be considered and monitored before you can offer true ayurveda in a spa and altering any one of these could actually take away from the benefits that accrue. Simply put, if you tamper with nature, nature has its own way of levelling with you. Modern spas unfortunately have jumped on the bandwagon of what is exotic and will attract more customers. So, I would say that there is a need for an ayurvedic regulatory body that can take cognizance and accredit only deserving spas.

The opportunities definitely exist where you can offer the basic version of ayurveda and still be successful. Today's customers are looking more for result-driven treatments and not strictly for the pampering ones. And by its very essence, ayurveda can become a new way of doing spa.

The opportunities definitely exist where you can offer the basic version of ayurveda and still be successful. Today's customers are looking more for result-driven treatments and not strictly for the pampering ones. And by its very essence, ayurveda can become a new way of doing spa.

Bina Patel created the award winning Jiva Spa brand in 2003. Today there are 22 Jiva Spas worldwide and a further 23 in development. Details: www.tajhotels.com/jivaspas

Our Ayurveda C-Spa launched in Westport, Ireland, last August. Before creating our concept, Michael Kearney, our chief executive [of The Carlton Hotel Group], travelled to Kerala – an ayurvedic hub in India – to research and experience the practice first-hand. We also had an ayurvedic spa consultant to assist in the development of our spa from inception to opening.

We've adapted ayurveda to suit the Irish spa industry. While we wanted to promote something traditional, we still wanted to attain our regular clients: so we run ayurveda alongside typical beauty services. Our team of two ayurvedic spa therapists and myself come from Kerala. We've grown up with its remedies and have a vast knowledge of this ancient practice. By hiring directly from India, we've brought authenticity to our offering.

DR THOMAS PAMPACKEL

Resident ayurvedic doctor, Carlton Atlantic Coast, Westport, Ireland



At Ayurveda C-Spa we provide a variety of professionally administered treatments using oils and herbal powders sourced from the evergreen rainforests of Kerala. My team and I strive to offer the exact same treatment we've observed and experienced in Kerala – including identifying the mind-body constitution and selecting products accordingly. Following the treatment, we will also offer advice on how to maintain the dosha balance and to lead a healthy life, which is another main aim of ayurveda.

We even go so far as to source our equipment directly from India. For instance, the wooden table used for our shirodhara and

pizhichil treatments is made from medicinal wood from the Indian vengra tree.

Many spas worldwide offer ayurvedic treatments but not all offer authentic therapies. Our ayurvedic team have invested a lot of time to ensure our clients receive genuine treatments. The ayurvedic approach is different from conventional spa treatments as its main focus is on an individual's holistic health rather than merely the physical body. This is the most beneficial aspect of ayurvedic medicine.

While ayurvedic treatments usually last longer than an hour, we offer a variety of experiences ranging from 40 minutes to three hours to suit all our client needs.

Our research shows that people are going back to nature for its curative properties and that ayurveda is a proven profitable business model and is a segment with a vastly untapped growth potential. We plan to campaign to raise the level of awareness of ayurveda in Ireland.

"Our two ayurvedic experts and myself come from Kerala. We've grown up with its remedies and have a vast knowledge of this ancient practice which we've brought to the spa"

Ayurveda C-Spa is Ireland's only dedicated ayurvedic health and wellbeing spa. Details: www.carlton.ie/atlantic-coast

Offering ayurveda in a commercial spa operation is diluting the traditional practice, but it is also creating awareness and enabling more people to experience it. There is room for both – those who seek very traditional offerings will find the clinics, while those searching for a more luxurious experience, focusing on wellness, will hunt out the spas.

More spa-goers are looking for less superficial wellness experiences and want proper health guidance and aftercare, which is at the heart of ayurveda. Ayurveda also supports the notion of inner wellbeing – meditation, visualisation – and the major opportunity for this practice is that it offers the tools and techniques to live in balance.

Unfortunately, many proprietors see ayurveda as a USP, but don't understand the concept. If the understanding doesn't start at the top, it can't be relayed to the rest of the team and a project is likely to fail. But if the system is in the right hands and evolved in a respectful manner, it can succeed.

Commercial spa operators looking to offer ayurveda would be best to work with a specialist advisor/consultant. Trying to piece the jigsaw together alone can be cumbersome and

SUNITA PASSI

Founder and creative director, Tri-Dosha



many mistakes can be made. You may end up with something that looks and feels very disjointed and doesn't portray the essence of what ayurveda is. There are many examples of this in the market today.

There are certain things that need to be changed, such as the oils. Traditional ayurvedic oils are made with a medicinal heritage and are pungent in smell. Their aim is to cure an ailment, not to support delivery of a pampering treatment. We have worked with traditional vaidyas (ayurvedic physicians) to create an authentic herbal infusion, and we've worked with a leading fragrance expert in the UK to create the aromas. As far as I know, we are the only company that has created ayurvedic oil blends to this level.

At Tri-Dosha, we also alter the treatments to suit a modern spa. Our consultation focuses on 'vikriti' – body types as they appear today and not 'prakriti' – body types as they are genetically, which is what an ayurvedic doctor in a medicinal venue would take the client

through. Also, training needs to be specific to western therapists. Traditionally, the doctor gives the consultation, then tells the Indian therapist what to deliver. In which case, however, therapist training focuses on understanding the characteristics of the seven doshas or body types and prescribing treatments according to imbalances or simply to bring harmony.

In addition, the massages themselves need to evolve. Traditionally, the procedures have no structure behind them, marma points are pressed hard but not necessarily within a flowing routine. So, we've created treatments that harmonise classic Indian techniques, such as stimulating the marma points, but which also have a stronger focus on structure and a professional delivery.

Treatments are typically administered on a dromi: a wooden table designed to allow excess oil to drain away easily. But, modern spas use less oil than normal, so it's possible to use a western treatment bed to give more comfort to the client.

Tri-Dosha has its own an ayurvedic product range, treatment programme and training courses. Details: www.tri-dosha.co.uk

are
the next?
or you?

- Hotel Hyatt Regency***** Dusseldorf / Mainz, Germany
Arabella Sheraton Hotel***** Munich, Germany
Le Meridien***** Stuttgart, Germany
The Ritz Hotel***** Paris, France
The Dolder Grand***** Zurich, Switzerland
Grand Hotel Kempinski***** Strba-Strbské Pleso, Slovakia
Jumeirah Zabeel Saray, Palm Island***** Dubai, UAE
The Ritz Carlton***** Istanbul, Turkey
Hotel Hout Bay Manor***** Cape Town, South Africa
Hotel Arlberg***** Lech am Arlberg, Austria
Crowne Plaza***** Kuwait City, Kuwait
Hotel Union***** Geiranger, Norway
Hotel Prezydent***** Krynica-Zdrój, Poland
Vidago Palace***** Portugal
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Turkish Delight

We analyse the spa tourism market in Turkey and its potential as a leading thermal tourism destination

PROFESSOR TERRY STEVENS • MANAGING DIRECTOR • STEVENS & ASSOCIATES

In many ways 2010 was a defining year for Turkey, with the designation of Istanbul as one of the European Capitals of Culture creating a significant platform to showcase the country's unique culture, heritage and environment.

Turkey has a long and exceptionally beautiful coastline, good weather, many natural attractions and unique historical and archaeological sites. It also has an improving infrastructure for tourism. Accordingly, the Turkish tourism sector has been one of the most important drivers behind the country's economic development. In 2009, combined with the travel sector, the industry generated TR95.3bn (US\$60.3bn, €43.6bn, £37.3bn) of economic activity – equating to approximately 10.2 per cent of Turkey's GDP – with an employment of around 1.7 million people, representing 7.2 per cent of the total workforce.

According to Deloitte's 2010 Tourist Industry Report for Turkey, Germany, the UK and Russia are the top sources of tourists, together comprising approximately 36 per cent of all international arrivals. Antalya and Istanbul are the most popular cities, attracting around 60 per cent of arrivals.



GAIA SPA, GRAND HYATT, ISTANBUL

CASE STUDY

The renovated 360-bedroom Grand Hyatt Istanbul reopened in 2009. Around 80 per cent of all hotel guests use its 1,000sq m (10,764sq ft) Gaia Spa complex.

Thirty treatments are on offer, with a strong focus on authentic hammam rituals. It features four therapy rooms, a relaxation lounge, steamrooms and saunas and a fitness studio.

In 2008, Dogus Holdings, owner of Grand Hyatt Istanbul, also invested in the 90-bedroom Park Hyatt Istanbul. This comprises a three-treatment room spa, relaxation area and fitness centre exclusive to hotel guests. The hotel also offers 25 residential spa rooms featuring a steamroom and heated bathroom floors for Turkish bath treatments.



The country's economy is robust too. A 2009 report by the IMF shows that Turkey is ranked as having the 15th largest economy in the world and the sixth in Europe. As a result of the size of its internal market, its stable economy and a real GDP growing 6 per cent per annum, Turkey is regarded as an attractive place to invest. By 2050, Goldman Sachs estimates that it will have the ninth largest economy globally.



ÇIRAĞAN PALACE KEMPINSKI SPA, ISTANBUL

CASE STUDY

Opened in 1990, the 313-bedroom Çırağan Palace Kempinski sits on the western shore of the Bosphorus and last year hosted the Global Spa Summit (see SB10/3 p38). Its spa is managed by Sanitas Spa & Wellness: a Turkish consultancy and management company with over 20 years' experience which prides itself on offering a high-quality staff and service. The 830sq m (8,934sq ft) compact spa with five treatment rooms is centred around one hammam and two steamrooms and its signature treatment is a deep massage. But the offer is varied – also on the menu are four ayurvedic treatments, six spa journeys based on Asian rituals and a chocolate massage.



HOTEL AND SPA SECTOR

Last year, Mintel estimated that there were 2,200 hotels in Turkey with 250,000 bedrooms and a bed space capacity of 531,000. And according to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, there are many hotels in an investment stage with an additional capacity of 258,287 beds. The country's hotel stock is concentrated in the three main cities of Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara and the coastal resorts of Dalaman, Bodrum and Side. Importantly, the sector is dominated by upscale hotels – almost two thirds of all facilities are four- or five-star.

The largest hotel operator domestically is the Tui Group, which manages 13 resorts, followed by the Dedeman Hotel Group. Other homegrown talent includes: Richmond Hotels, part of the Aksoy Group; Les Ottomans, an independent operator (see s810/2 p34) and Rixos. Alongside this indigenous investment is a growing commitment by international brands such as Kempinski, Hyatt, Hilton, Barceló, Starwood, Ritz-Carlton, Swissôtel, Four Seasons and SAS Radisson. On top of this international spa operators such as Six Senses and Anantara have also followed suit.

HILTON DALAMAN RESORT AND SPA

CASE STUDY The 410-bedroom Hilton Dalaman arrived on Turkey's Mediterranean coast in 2009. It includes a 6,000sq m (64,583sq ft) spa, split into two parts: a free-access area offering basic thermal experiences and a pool, and the Glamour Luxury Spa with a set entry fee. Facilities of the latter include 22 treatment rooms and two Turkish baths – a traditional one and a more elaborate one incorporating a sauna, steamroom, massage room and an Oriental-themed relaxation area. Ayurvedic treatments, a four-hand massage and wellness packages are highlights of the menu. The spa is managed by Sanitas Spa & Wellness, which also runs the spa at Çırağan Palace Kempinski.

Ümit Yasar Atalay, general manager of Richmond Hotels, says: "There are an estimated 400 spa and wellness centres in Turkey, of which 245 are in resort spas as part of five-star hotels, mainly located along the coast." The others lie in city locations.

Almost two thirds of hotels in the main cities and coastal resorts are four- to five-star, like the Hilton Dalaman

Indeed, over the past five to 10 years Turkey's spa and wellness industry has been transformed as a result of a number of factors (box, p66). The advantages of attracting wellness tourists is that they have an average 10-night stay and are high-yielding international visitors. Also, wellness tourism is helping to drive internationalisation in Turkey and is driving up quality standards and attracting international brands.

THERMAL WAY AHEAD

A core element of wellness tourism provision in Turkey is the hammam – a bathing ritual dating back to the 11th century and transformed by the Ottomans. Today there are more than 57 traditional hammam bath houses in Istanbul. This strong, domestic wellness offering has become fundamentally integrated in modern spas, albeit with a more contemporary design or service delivery. The challenge now is for global brands to think up new approaches on incorporating such traditions to avoid formulaic spas. ▶



The Sultan's private treatment room at the Richmond Nua Wellness Spa situated by Lake Sapanca near Istanbul

Wellness tourism could potentially home in on Turkey's thermal waters. According to the Turkish Geothermal Association (TGA), the country had 1,300 natural thermal sources, yet only 10,000 people a year visiting the springs to cure their ailments, recover from illness or simply relax. These figures mean that Turkey is ranked first in Europe in terms of its thermal resource potential and third for usage. The TGA believes the thermal waters could cater for as many as 30 million visitors a year, bringing in an extra €9.4bn (US\$13bn, £8bn) into the economy.

It is, therefore, no surprise that health and thermal tourism development was one objective of Turkey's 2023 Tourism Strategy – published by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture in 2007 to direct the framework for investment in the sector. Under the guise of the Thermal Tourism Cities Project (TTCP) the ministry aims to establish Turkey as a world-leading thermal tourism destination.

More than €56.3m (US\$77.8m, £48m)

Turkey has 1,300 natural springs... and the Turkish Geothermal Association believes the thermal waters could cater for as many as 30 million visitors a year, bringing in an extra €9.4bn

RICHMOND NUA WELLNESS SPA, IZMIT

CASE STUDY

Located an hour east of Istanbul by Lake Sapanca, the 131-bed-room Richmond Nua claims to have the first and only destination spa in Turkey. The 2,700sq m (29,063sq ft) wellness centre and spa has a traditional setting with contemporary architecture. It opened in 2005 and offers 72 spa services with a particular focus on packages such as detox and pregnancy programmes to tailor-made journeys. General manager Ümit Yasar Atalay says: "These packages positively influence the sales of special treatments and massages." Designed by Schletterer, it has 14 double treatment rooms and thermal, water and relaxation experiences.

has been allocated for the development of thermal resorts and associated infrastructure; and TTCP has identified four specific regions for their geothermal potential:

- South Marmara, which covers the cities of Balıkesir, Çanakkale and Yalova
- South Aegean region comprising Aydin, Denizli, Manisa and Izmir
- Phrygian region comprising Afyonkarahisar, Ankara, Uşak, Eskişehir and Kütahya
- Central Anatolia, encompassing Aksaray, Kırşehir, Niğde, Nevşehir and Yozgat

With every passing year the ministry is devoting a greater proportion of its efforts to promoting the spa and wellness sector when presenting Turkey to the world. It's participating in expos, advertising in magazines and organising press trips. ●

WELLNESS TOURISM TRANSFORMED

This table identifies the key push and pull factors responsible for transforming Turkey's wellness tourism industry over the past five to 10 years:

PULL

- Wellness tourism has benefited from major structural reforms in tourism
- Creation of a business-friendly environment welcoming foreign inward investment
- Strengthening domestic investment base working with global hotel and spa brands
- Confidence within domestic businesses to develop strong Turkish wellness/spa products
- A young, ambitious and increasingly well-educated population
- Increased levels of disposable income in the population with increased levels of domestic leisure demand
- Investment in generic tourism facilities (hotels, resorts, golf courses) all requiring spa and wellness provision – for example, 12 of Turkey's 15 golf courses are in tourism resorts with spa facilities
- Ability to add value and price to hotel bed stock

PUSH

- Turkey's expressed desire to become an EU country (it has been an accession country since 2005)
- Tourism is now fully embedded in national and regional policy
- Ambitious targets for growing the value of tourism by 2023
- Realisation of the exceptional natural wellness 'asset' base including geothermal waters, natural environment, climate and traditional rituals
- The need to establish standards and accreditation
- The strong research and educational resources in Turkey to support spa and wellness development. There are five university centres specialising in these areas

OPPOSITES ATTRACT

Sometimes going against mainstream ideas can create innovative businesses. Susie Ellis explores the counter-trend notion

Each year SpaFinder, Inc issues its Spa Trend Report™ to identify key global spa trends that could influence spa experiences for both consumers and the industry in the year ahead – and possibly decades to come. As well as sharing our

2011 predictions, I thought it might be fun to add another perspective: the concept of the counter-trend. Sometimes very creative and successful ideas emerge when businesses move against the mainstream. I hope it will provide some food for thought...



Susie Ellis



PHOTO: THE SANCTUARY, UK

Watch out for the Gen X and Millennials (30 to 45-year-olds)

AGEING... RAGING

Mature market vs young ambition

As millions of Baby Boomers are turning 65 each year, spas will begin to incorporate exercise physiologists, orthopedics and naturopaths focusing on rejuvenation of joints, pain relief and mobility – while pain relief massages, corrective facials and everything anti-ageing will increasingly hit menus. Thermal bathing and an emphasis on exercising in water will experience a renaissance, as the benefits of ‘sanitas per aqua’ are rediscovered. But the ‘over 65’ catch-all category will become history as it’s realised that there’s a huge difference between a 70-year-old who plays tennis three times a week and an 85-year-old seeking pain relief.

Counter-trend: In SpaFinder’s 2010 State of Spa Travel survey, it was reported that if Boomers represent the biggest spa-travelling demographic (52 per cent), Gen X and Millennials (roughly 30-45) aren’t far behind (41 per cent). Many spas will target younger generations (with more spas for kids, teens, young adults and families), but will need to draw from a large enough market to make it work.

To access the detailed version, visit: www.spabusiness.com/2011spatrendreport

To read Susie Ellis’ biography, see p4

2011
SPA TREND
REPORT



PHOTO: SHOCKDOM/CEISO PING RODRIGUES

Brazil dominates spa development in the Americas

ALL EYES ON ASIA

East is east, but don’t forget Russia and Brazil

Historically, there’s been a mass exportation of Asian spa influences worldwide. However, we’re now seeing explosive growth of hotel/spa development within Asia (a market of 4.1 billion people), especially within the two fastest-growing world economies, China and India, where extraordinary new class mobility is being unleashed. Asia-Pacific has the largest number of spas and hotels under development of any region in the world and by 2015, China will have around 100 million outbound travellers, many seeking

a luxury lifestyle, including the western spa experience.

Counter-trend: If India and China dominate spa/hotel development among BRIC countries, don’t forget Brazil and Russia. Brazil dominates the south/central American hotel spa pipeline and Russia has muscled into the top three in Europe. And while there is very little growth in some areas, such as the US, a new spa opening there might garner a significantly larger share of press – an advantage for those making headlines in slower markets.



Oxygen inhalation is already offered by Danubius

SALT ROOMS AND SALT CAVES

Salt therapy or air apparent

➔ Healing salt caves may be centuries old, but they're coming of age in modern spas and salt therapy – or halotherapy – is one of the hottest 2011 trends. Clinical trials reveal halotherapy is beneficial for respiratory and skin conditions. Spas are finding stylish ways to recreate the salt cave microclimate and with little need for a therapist, the treatments are attractive from a cost side.

Counter-trend: It might be fun to point to the popularity of black and cayenne pepper in treatments/products – just to be amusing. But a real counter-trend could include a fresh angle on inhalation therapies – like oxygen. And in contradiction to no-therapist experiences, there's also an upswing in therapist-intensive treatments, like the four-handed massage.

SALT ROOMS AND SALT CAVES

Big deal vs done deal

➔ Online group-buying deals have burst onto the global scene and spa/wellness deals are a mainstay of generic deal sites like GroupOn or LivingSocial. With these companies backed by millions in venture capital, deals will certainly remain in the spotlight in 2011, but SpaFinder forecasts change. Watch for consolidation and a dot-deal shakeout; personalised, spa-specific deals from spa-only platforms; deals 'on the spot', thanks to mobile apps; and an intense focus on retention of the 'deal customer'.

Counter-trend: Sometimes a trend becomes so intensely saturated, that a backlash quickly causes a counter-trend. One example: the preference for a regular spa appointment with a favourite therapist rather than saving a few dollars. Another counter-trend to rock-bottom spa deals: an uptick in ultra-luxe treatments like the US\$1,250 (€912, £778) facial with Dangene in New York, which is booked up for months!



Brands are exploding, but there's still room for one-offs, such as the Tschuggen Hotel Group's Bergosse mountain spa with its iconic 'light trees' in Switzerland

SPA BRANDWAGON

To brand or not to brand?

➔ The industry is moving rapidly towards branded experiences and 2011 will prove a watershed year for global spa franchise expansion and brand-spanking-new spa brand models. International brands are aggressively moving into hot, emerging markets such as China and India. Brands indigenous to these emerging markets are expanding and major hotel brands are busy launching carefully crafted, new in-house concepts. Fuelling this 'brandwagon':

sheer globalisation, strengthening economies and consumer demand for the 'know-ability factor'.

Counter-trend: While brands are exploding, there will always be a spa consumer segment that values unique, customised one-of-a-kind spas. This could be a facial clinic down the street operated by a passionate owner or a destination spa in a special location, where the experience is shaped by the super-distinct vision of the founder.



Ultra-luxe treatments, such as MeBath's US\$50,000 bath ritual, are a counter-trend to spa deals

THE SCIENCE OF SPA

Proof and pampering

➔ Get ready for a new era where more questions about the effectiveness of therapies and products will be asked and answers will be more transparent, as the emphasis on the science behind spa heats up (see SB10/3 p20). With more medical professionals embracing integrative medicine, clinical studies on the benefits of various modalities will accelerate in 2011, and smart spas will yoke their offerings to a growing archive of medical data.

Counter-trend: Our industry will not, and should not, succeed by promoting things that don't have real benefits or are not good for people. But some spas might take counter-angles: emphasising the sheer value of pampering and feeling good. Or a spa may choose to be transparent about modalities not yet scientifically proven and encourage people to be part of the 'living research'.



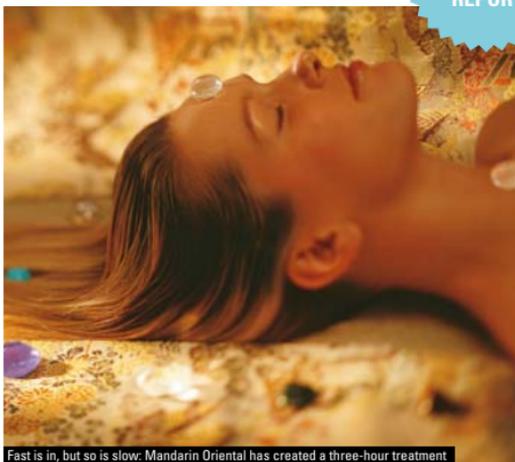
Japanese inspiration at Golden Door, California

HYPER-LOCAL SPAS

Local flavour or taste of the exotic?

➔ For a good few years, spas have been meeting spa-goers' intensifying desire for authenticity to place and culture. But spas are now going hyper-local, putting unique twists on the 'farm-to-table' movement, with farm-to-spa cuisine and farm-to-massage-table treatments. Hyper-local also means ramped-up community/philanthropic projects, 100 per cent locally-sourced building materials and mandating local hiring policies. Others are gardening, farming, preparing their own food and making expeditions to local artisans and schools.

Counter-trend: With spa treatments, a good case can be made for emphasising exotic experiences from other worlds. For example, Golden Door destination spa in California, takes the form of a very authentic Japanese ryokan (inn), including Japanese art, gardens and yukata robes. Also, the heavily themed spa resorts of Las Vegas (fanciful Italian, French, Middle Eastern environments) are striking counter-trend examples.



Fast is in, but so is slow: Mandarin Oriental has created a three-hour treatment

SPA, IN A NEW YORK MINUTE

Quick, quick slow

➔ Many of us inhabit a stressed-out, 24/7 world and the spa industry is responding, helping people spa anytime and offering mini (15- to 13-minute) and simultaneous treatments performed by multiple therapists. Suddenly, a 9pm closing time is the norm and 'open late' now means 2am or all night. The trend is also towards earlier: 6 to 7am opening times attract business people jump-starting their day and revellers calling it a night.

The explosion of airport spas worldwide plays into the express trend neatly. The quest for efficiencies is also reflected in new facility design directions, with

locker rooms on the decline and even check-in counters being rethought. Also expect to see more spa-goers embracing 24/7 online and appointment booking via mobile phone apps.

Counter-trend: A clear counter-trend is to slow it way down, with many more leisurely spa experiences emerging simultaneously. Some spas report that the 90-minute massage is becoming more standard than the 60-minute, with requests for two-hour massages on the rise. One example is the new three-hour treatment offered at the Mandarin Oriental Spa in New York.

EXTREME BEAUTY: SPA EDITION

Extreme beauty vs make-up and mirror free

➔ Botox® move over, beauty-seekers are taking it to the max. Stem-cell facials, plasma therapy (where blood is drawn and re-injected) and ultratherapy (using ultrasound to regenerate skin collagen) are the new buzzwords. There are extremes like military-style boot camps, rolfing and bikram yoga, where pain meets pleasure. The most thought-provoking extreme: people seem to be able to partake in both natural and invasive cosmetic procedures without conflict. People demanding extreme results are happy to pay the price: the beauty market represents a staggering US\$67.9bn (£495.1bn, £422.9bn) annually.

Counter-trend: An interesting experiment: create a spa or spa experience that absolutely eliminates the all-consuming pursuit of beauty. There might be something liberating and appealing about places where no one wears make-up, nail polish or has their hair coloured, perhaps without mirrors. The emphasis on external beauty is virtually eliminated... to focus on mind, wellness and inner beauty.

SURPRISING SPECIAL EVENTS

Make it special, or keep it simple?

➔ Destination spas are increasingly developing super-distinctive, speciality programmes. Retreats now span everything from a high-flying trapeze experience to more sober gatherings for survivors of loss. Celebrity authors, artists and personalities often headline these stays. Hotel/resort spas will continue to surprise traditional and business groups with unpredictable programming: from therapeutic carpentry and falconry to tight-rope walking. The sky's the limit as spas find creative ways to satisfy people's desire for learning and new experiences.

Counter-trend: A segment of spas are also going back to basics, by shortening and streamlining menus to please overwhelmed consumers, who typically default back to tried-and-tested treatments. While hyper-unique events can be extraordinarily memorable (even life-changing), the counter-trend of embracing the comforts of familiarity are attractive to many spa-goers as well.

healing earth

Inspired by Africa's ancient healing traditions, Healing Earth is a luxury, natural and sustainable spa brand that combines premium products and therapies with international training protocols and consultancy. Here, the company's founder, Elisabeth Brandt, shares her vision

What's your background?

I've been in this industry for 25 years. I was born in Slovenia and started out in hotels in Europe, before moving to South Africa 15 years ago to open one of the country's first five-star spas: the Sérénité Wellness Centre in Cape Town. We took a very holistic approach, offering yoga, meditation, detox and life coaching, which was new in South Africa at the time. It was very successful: our average occupancy was 95 per cent and we had visitors from all over the world.

A few years later, I was asked to create a turnkey concept for another spa resort, in which I was a shareholder. That was Santé Wellness Centre in the Stellenbosch Wine-lands, South Africa's first vinotherapy spa. I've also consulted on numerous other luxury spas in South Africa and Namibia.

What inspired you to set up Healing Earth?

While running my own spas, I was very unhappy with the products available, which were full of parabens and other synthetic ingredients. It didn't make sense to me that we were offering fantastic organic foods and detox programmes, while the products used in our spa treatments were so impure.

So I started researching alternatives, and came up with a Pinotage grapeseed oil, using ingredients sourced from local farmers, which I developed into a range of Pinotage vinotherapy products. Then, six years ago, I decided to sell my interests in Sérénité and Santé in order to concentrate on developing a holistic, pure and natural product line. We launched Healing Earth in 2007.

How would you sum up your brand concept?

We take a nurturing, conscious approach to beauty, based on love for oneself, humanity and the Earth. We follow sustainable and fair-trade practices to create natural products that deliver proven results, and we're proud ambassadors of Africa's indigenous heritage.

Can you tell us a bit more about your main product lines?

Our two main ranges are Pinotage Vinotherapy and Earth Soul. Pinotage is a facial and body range which leverages the strong antioxidant



"We follow sustainable and fair-trade practices to create natural products that deliver proven results, and we're proud ambassadors of Africa's indigenous heritage"

qualities of vitamin C, vitamin E and proanthocyanidins (OPC) found in the seeds, skin and leaves of Pinotage, South Africa's signature red wine grape. OPC is one of the most potent free-radical fighters available, about 50 times stronger than vitamin E.

Our body range, Earth Soul, harnesses the medicinal powers of South Africa's native plants, flowers and herbs, and includes oils, creams, butters, polishes, wraps and bath salts. However, unlike some of our competitors, we don't only use the well-established African ingredients of rooibos, marula and aloe ferox. Every one of our products contains active ingredients that have been carefully researched and selected with a specific goal in mind – so, for example, we use Kalahari melon for its excellent moisturising properties, African ginger for firming and slimming, mongongo nut for detox, and coffee, orange and cinnamon for cellulite.

Why did you decide to focus on South African healing traditions and ingredients?

I'd studied local healing techniques in Bali, India and Thailand and had seen first-hand how effective indigenous treatments could be, but to the best of my knowledge no one in the spa industry had really explored African healing traditions and I was interested

to see how much potential there was.

I bought a book called *Medicinal Plants of South Africa* by Nigel Gericke, Ben-Erik van Wyk and Bosch van Oudtshoorn, which opened my eyes to the multitude of medicinal plants in the country and the many ways they could be used – for example, my daughter had been born with bad neurodermatitis, but after treating her with some of these natural remedies her condition improved dramatically. So I decided to come up with a concept that would draw on these incredible ingredients and traditions, as well as the very powerful energy of the African sun.

How much research has gone into your products?

The products have been developed in close consultation with John Knowlton, an internationally renowned cosmetics-industry scientist based in Johannesburg, who previously held senior positions with Johnson & Johnson and Justine-AVON. John compiled the product



information files for the brand, and conducted extensive scientific trials, while Dr John Hopkins, another leading scientist based in London, carried out toxicology tests to ensure the products are 100 per cent toxin-free and ready for the market.

How natural and sustainable are your products?

When I was developing the range, I was very inspired by *The Green Beauty Guide* by Julie Gabriel, which really opened my eyes. None of our products contain any potentially harmful, synthetic chemicals, such as parabens, formaldehyde-based preservatives, sulphate-based detergents, or artificial enhancers, dyes or fragrances. We only buy ingredients that have either been organically grown on local farms or wild-harvested in a sustainable way. We also strive to make our packaging as environmentally friendly as possible, using only biodegradable or recyclable materials, such as wood and glass.

How much of a focus is fair trade?

It's very important – we're committed to promoting the development of Africa and empowering local farmers, and we work very closely with local communities. We've just applied for Fair Trade certification through the Fair Trade Foundation in the Netherlands, and will be working towards achieving that this year.

What kind of treatments do you offer?

We offer a vast range of signature treatments, but our priority is to create a menu that meets the client's needs. For operators with a holistic focus, we might recommend an energy treatment linked to the body's chakras, while for those who want something simpler, we'll concentrate on treatments using established techniques.

However, all our signature treatments begin the same way, with the African Foot Cleanse, which combines a traditional foot-cleansing

Healing Earth's two main product ranges are Pinotage Vinyotherapy and Earth Soul

ritual with a short reflexology test and consultation. This really helps the therapist and client to connect before the treatment begins, in a way that simply isn't possible in a typical consultation, where the therapist just sits in front of the client and fills out a questionnaire.

What's your training philosophy?

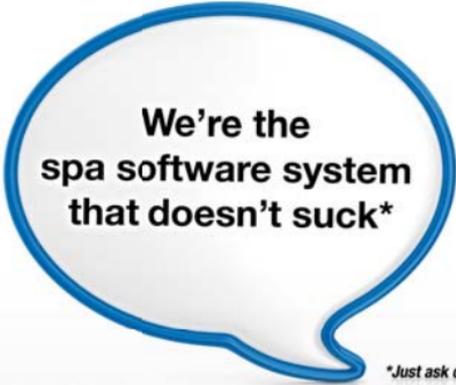
The people we train are the ambassadors of our brand, and we believe you can't give to other people if you don't look after yourself. So as well as the usual product and treatment training, we've created a short programme of yogic breathing and meditation to help our therapists clear their energy when they arrive at work, and we encourage them to repeat it when they get home, too. We help them take care of themselves so they can give more of themselves to the client.

What's next for Healing Earth?

We've just launched a green hotel amenity range and we're developing some new accessories to complement our African concept.

On the research and development side, we're running a pilot project with one of our partner farms to produce ingredients using biodynamic methods – a sustainable approach to farming that's strongly influenced by the rhythms of the sun, moon and planets. We're also researching the energetic properties of different indigenous African stones, such as amethyst and quartz, with a view to incorporating this into our product development.

Another priority is widening our distribution network. We already work with many top spas in South Africa and Namibia, we have distributors in Germany, the Benelux countries and the US, and we're about to sign a contract with a distributor in Russia and the Middle East. On the consulting side, we're setting up a unique green spa in the Winelands, as well as working on several exciting developments in Mozambique, so we're feeling very positive about the future. ●



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Let's face it, spa software is boring. Most spa managers we talk to are not happy with what they have. Forced to use whatever system was put in place many years ago. They all wish they had a reliable, fast, user-friendly system. Many have not yet started powering online reservations.

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The ability of spa management systems to support mobile and online booking is becoming more important as mobile devices grow in popularity with customers

ISTOCK.COM/STEVE COLE

SMARTER SYSTEMS

Specialist software can underpin the entire management and operation of a spa, increasing profitability and building sales. Over the next few issues, we'll be outlining available systems

LIZ TERRY • EDITOR • SPA BUSINESS

SpaBooker by GramercyOne is a complete web-based management solution for operators in the spa industry.

It provides business management tools, including an appointment book, a customer database and a membership management system. It can also be integrated with Property Management Systems and used to manage salon, health and activity operations.

The system also includes an employee management function to track performance and commission and fully customisable reporting functionality, including user-defined filters and a KPI dashboard.

SpaBooker has a built-in online booking and payments system which enables spa operators to offer an ecommerce portal to customers from their own website.

The software is fully accessible on iPad, freeing staff from the front desk and in addition - from this month - it will be possible for

SpaBooker by GramercyOne

NEW YORK, USA

staff to take payment with a swipe on mobile devices. Customers can also book treatments from their iPads and smartphones.

SpaBooker has built-in yield management tools and reports and a suite of marketing and integrated email, SMS and social media functionality that can create and distribute special offers and discounts to drive business during slower periods. The system can also generate customisable, bar-coded gift certificates.

SpaBooker supports retailing by monitor-

ing product levels and managing purchase orders from multiple vendors. The system also creates automatic purchase orders when stock levels fall to a predetermined level.

SpaBooker is scalable for businesses from a single room to thousands of sites, like long-standing client, Hilton Hotels.

GramercyOne offers on-site or free web-based training. Online training materials include a Practice Environment and a library of videos and manuals. Support is include via telephone, Skype and email, while customers get access to a Suggest-a-Feature area and five free software upgrades every year.

SpaBooker has customers in 35 countries, is available in nine languages and supports all major currencies and tax structures.

www.spa-booker.com

Tel: +1 866 775 7774

Reservation Assistant by TAC

HARTBERG, AUSTRIA

Reservation Assistant by TAC is installed/online software that co-ordinates functions such as reservations, billing, retailing and guest relationship/membership management, including the generation of SMS and email reminders.

The software can handle bookings for all aspects of an operation from restaurant reservations to golf course bookings. In addition, it can control employee scheduling, inventory and webshop activity, voucher management and mobile loyalty cards.

Reservation Assistant is accessible from iPad for bookings and payments, allowing staff to leave the reception area to sell treatments on the move around the resort or spa.

The software offers management functionality via a dashboard allowing operators to keep track of key KPI: treatment room and therapist utilisation, turnover, top-selling product- and guest origin-data can be viewed at a glance. Reservation Assistant also offers more than 1,000 report options.

The software supports variable dynamic



The Reservations Assistant software runs on iPad to enable the sale of treatments on the move

ISTOCK.COM/PANK CHAITWIN

pricing to improve yield management while an interface with TAC Digital Signage enables operators to sell short-term treatments by flagging up last-minute availability and automatically posting this to electronic boards to attract passing customers' attention.

The software has more than 110 interfaces with external systems such as access control and hotel Property Management Systems.

Reservation Assistant can be purchased, leased or procured as a Software-as-a-Service solution. Remote access and multi-property options are also available.

Clients get 24/7 support by telephone, fax, email and Skype as part of the software service and software licence contract. TAC's training programme – called the RA Uni-

versity – offers user-training, webinars and management coaching on a regular basis. Prices for training depend on the duration and topic: the price for a 90 minutes webinar, for example, is €49.

Customers include Hyatt Hotels, La Mamounia, Grand Resort Bad Ragaz, Inter-alpen-Hotel Tyrol, The Dolder Grand, Rocco Forte and Radisson SAS Grand Hotel Victoria-Jungfrau and Belle Mare Plage Mauritius.

Reservation Assistant software is available in 18 different languages, including Chinese, Turkish, Finnish and Russian.

www.reservationassistant.com
Tel: +43 3332 6005 990

Book4Time is a bespoke web-based spa software and management platform: the entire system is tailored to clients' business requirements and is centralised to give spas a real-time view of their entire operation via a dashboard.

The software can integrate with OPERA and Galaxy Property Management Systems in addition to any system that supports a Micros generic interface. It was specifically built for large multi-unit spa operations such as Starwood Hotels & Resorts, Elizabeth Arden Red Door Spas, Bliss, Medifast, Morgans Hotel Group and Cowshed.

Book4Time has a membership module with various options, including monthly membership, automated billing, multi-tier membership levels and pricing, automated discounting on both service and retail purchases and the ability to sell minutes.

The software's inventory allows enables spas to create worksheets, purchase orders, manage vendors, adjust physical counts, receive orders and use barcode scanners.

Book4Time

RICHMOND HILL, CANADA

Book4Time has role-based security, which enables managers to give staff as much or as little access as required to perform their job. This also provides full-system audits to record who did what and password prompts where needed to ensure only managers can perform certain functions. The system also has staff scheduling and commission structures, as well as hundreds of report options.

Because the system is web-based it can be accessed from any computer and an IP lockdown enables operators to limit users' access so they can only log onto the system from within a specific spa or hotel if needed.

The software can be paid for by traditional licence fee, or alternatively by transaction fee which replaces up-front investment with a charge based on sales volume. The rate for busy spas can go as low as 0.25 per cent.

Book4Time has on-the-go SMS capabilities to keep track of late appointments and also to generate email and SMS reminders. It has an email receipt option to increase opt-in rates and social media integration. When it comes to training, the system has a live help section, complete with training videos showing how to utilise/perform various functions.

The company also offers both on-site and web-based training (which is included at no additional cost on all accounts) and gives 24/7 critical helpdesk support to clients from its corporate headquarters.

Book4Time currently supports over 500 spa clients in 15 countries.

www.book4time.com
Tel: +1 905 707-0070

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ResortSuite Provides Industry-Leading Software to Manage your Spa

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- Recipe Level Inventory Management

ResortSuite is integrated hospitality management software that runs all major operations in hotels and resorts, including room management, F&B, spa, golf, ski, retail and concierge services. The system enables online reservations and also integrates with Property Management Systems such as OPERA. It's built on an ORACLE database.

The software can be used by single and multi-location spa and resort businesses.

GuestSense™ technology creates a guest-centric workflow so guest's preferences can be aligned with resources such as room and therapist availability for faster bookings.

The software works off a single, centralised guest profile database with gift card management and reporting built in. An integrated membership management module is available

ResortSuite

TORONTO, CANADA

and the system has a remote access option.

Yield management capabilities include dynamic pricing and availability restricted by time/day and spa and hotel occupancy.

The system does mobile inventory counts, and shortage projections based on booked services to ensure stocks don't run low.

A dashboard gives access to real-time

intelligence with over 200 report options.

ResortSuite Connect enables email marketing and SMS through integration with ExactTarget which supports targeted, automated communications. ExactTarget also has social media forwarding, content control and social tracking to monitor results.

Software is US\$10k-\$25k per location with annual support fees of 15-18 per cent/year. Prices include 24/7 support via phone, email and webchat and all software upgrades.

Training is delivered on-site, remotely or by online video. The system can be set up in any language with user-defined translations.

www.resortsuite.com

Tel: +1 416 259 0715

IntelliSpa is a worldwide business solution provider for wellness, spa and activity operators. It operates on standard hardware with Microsoft's SQL Server.

The software has a number of modules, including online booking, integrated nutrition and membership and fitness management. Its modular design means spas only pay for the components they need, so the system can be built up over time.

Clients range from individual day spas to chains of more than 100 locations across different time zones and include residential retreats, resorts, hotel spas and fitness facilities. IntelliSpa integrates with hotel Property Management Systems and can also support the booking of activities, tours, golf and restaurants where needed, through

IntelliSpa from Intelligenz Solutions™

BRIGHTON, UK

optional bolt-on modules. The software has a fast booking option and gives 'at a glance' details of every service, client, room and staff member to simplify the daily management of resources.

Additional features include integrated point of sale and inventory management, payment processing and a full accounts

receivable system, together with integration to third-party financial systems.

All bookings become part of a single client record and can be viewed before, during and after a client visit or stay.

This complete history can include preferences, special requirements, purchases, treatments, comments and a detailed history of how payments were made.

The system can generate personalised gift vouchers and has a loyalty points system to reward valued customers. A Customers Really Matter CRM system generates email and SMS notifications.

www.intelligenzsolutions.com

Tel: +44 7757 065 658

Premier Spa management is installed software which provides a wide range of management functionality for spa operations, from optimising the day-to-day scheduling of treatments and services, to providing enhanced reporting and maximising business development.

Premier links to all major hotel Property Management Systems in a number of ways, from a simple posting interface to full two-way integration. Its design enables the management of multi-property businesses, while customisation gives each site and head office access to live data from all locations.

Premier's yield management analysis tools allow the manipulation of pricing and maximisation of treatment room occupancy to enable operators to assess the true profitability of a single treatment: yield management

Premier Spa and Premier Spa+

CANNOCK, UK

systems can be tailored to suit operators' specific requirements at the installation stage.

The software has an inventory system with a complete Point of Sale offering, stock control and inventory management. It records individual client purchases to help pinpoint up-selling and repeat purchase opportunities.

Premier's software includes membership management functionality that accommo-

dates a range of packages. All guest, member and visitor information, along with a history of visits, preferences and buying habits, can be stored to maximise CRM efficiency.

The software has built in SMS messaging to enable operators to reach clients instantly with confirmations and reminders as well as promotions to fill late spaces.

Premier delivers training and support programmes both on- and off-site. The company currently works with businesses from Russia to China and the US and has multi-lingual and multi-currency settings.

The price is tailored to the specific requirements and size of the business.

www.premiersoftware.co.uk

Tel: +44 1543 466580

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Mike Blake, CIO Hyatt Hotels Corporation





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- **Connect with Twitter and Facebook**
promoting your specials and last minute appointments will become easy and instant!
- All of this, plus point-of-sale, customer records and more for a **Low Flat Monthly Cost**

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



Bathe in 360° images in LivinGlobe's Relaxation Dome

LivinGlobe is targeting spa operators with the advanced version of its Vidarium Relaxation Dome. The enclosed sphere features a padded seating (or lying) area and a seamless 360° projected video image of tranquil scenes which can be relaxing, informative, magical or stimulating. The size of the dome and the images can be completely customised.

spa-kit.net keyword **livinglobe**



Glorious mud from Hungary has curative effects

Excavated from the Hungarian countryside and 100 per cent organic, hungary-mud offers a unique mineral and thermal composition and fine consistency. This new product can be used all over the body and mixed with essential oils. Certified as curative by the country's Ministry of Health, hungarymud is already used in medical spas in Budapest.

spa-kit.net keyword **hungarymud**



Cloud-like relaxation from KLAFS' latest spa innovation

KLAFS has teamed up with Viennese artist sha to create Wolke 7 Cloud 9, a highly stylised, ergonomic recliner which swings gently to and fro to simulate a cloud-like feeling. An upper cradle has a screen showing cloud images, while both of the cradles also radiate a soft, calming light. The team have also created CloudSpace – a sensory room to house the recliner.

spa-kit.net keyword **klafs**



Jane Iredale enters the self-tan arena with latest line

Mineral make-up company Jane Iredale has ventured into the tanning sector with its first self-tan line called Tantiasia. Its ingredients are designed to work with an individual's melanin so users can produce their own, unique tan. The product is said to be streak-free, with an invigorating fragrance and no after smell. It also incorporates wheat protein to hydrate the skin.

spa-kit.net keywords **jane iredale**



Beautiful, intricate lighting designs from Yahya

Yahya worked as a martial arts instructor and in nightclubs in London, before discovering his artistic talents while traveling. Now based in Marrakech, he custom-makes intricately designed lights, furniture and decorative accessories using natural materials such as metal, stone and wood. His lights are a popular choice in spas, including at La Maison Arabe (above).

spa-kit.net keyword **yahya**



Spa Ritual tells the TRUTH with its new colour collection

Inspired by "truth in nature, in life, in love and the truth within us", the new TRUTH Collection by Spa Ritual debuted in February. Featuring six shades – a bold pink berry, electric blue, sun-kissed yellow, anjou pear green, luscious coral and blushing pink – in rich, highly pigmented crème finishes, Spa Ritual nail lacquers are also vegan-friendly.

spa-kit.net keywords **spa ritual**

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



Zenvi sound cushion rules out background noise

Treatments or relaxation times can be easily spoiled by background noise and disturbances. The Zenvi Sound Cushion by Earthlite provides a simple solution to this. The lightweight cushion – which has built-in speakers and is rechargeable – can be connected to iPods, phones or other MP3 players and fits on most face cradle and headrest platforms.

spa-kit.net keyword **earthlite**



Éminence vitamin supplements target acne, rosacea and ageing

Organic skincare specialist Éminence has unveiled a new line of vitamin supplements and co-ordinating masques to treat acne, rosacea and ageing skin. The VitaSkin™ supplements employ a 'pill within a pill technology', which is said to prevent water migration and maintain stability of the ingredients as they travel through the body to ensure optimum results.

spa-kit.net keyword **eminence**



Creative Nail Design to reveal 12 new Shellac shades

CND is to unveil 12 fashionable and classic shades of its Shellac line this March – bringing the collection to 24 colours. Shellac, launched in May 2010 is a hybrid of nail polish and UV gel. It's applied at a salon/spa, is cured under a UV lamp and has a high gloss that lasts up to 14 days. It's 3-free (no formaldehyde, toluene or DBP) and can be removed safely.

spa-kit.net keywords **creative nail design**



Precious unveiling for Celestial's gem stone range

Celestial Spa Authentic uses gem stones in its two face and body skincare ranges, which include Comfort, featuring hydrating rhodochrosite extracts; and Clarity, with balancing malachite. There are also three treatments – a scrub, a wrap and a hot stone massage incorporating gemstones, rather than basalt. The newest arrival is a hotel amenities line.

spa-kit.net keyword **celestial**



Sodashi introduces a soothing, nourishing eye mask

Sodashi has expanded its eye care line with a deeply nourishing Eye Mask to reawaken skin around the eye area. Gotu kola (a medicinal herb) has been used to improve circulation, while cistus hydrosol has firming and tightening properties. The mask is said to dramatically reduce the appearance of fine lines and strengthen the delicate tissue around the eye.

spa-kit.net keyword **sodashi**



Oakworks gets into beading and chromatherapy

The Clodagh Leo massage table by Oakworks has been modified to incorporate a nickel-plated bead curtain hanging down from the underside of the table and a chromatherapy option that shines through the curtain. A hidden shelf below the bed also provides a discreet storage space. To improve comfort, a full six inch Aero Ceol foam top is also available.

spa-kit.net keyword **oakworks**

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The study compared the results from Swedish massage to a lighter-touch treatment

BODY OF EVIDENCE

New scientific research shows that just one massage session can cause significant physiological changes

KATIE BARNES • MANAGING EDITOR • SPA BUSINESS

Anyone involved with spas will, of course, know about the benefits of massage. And proof of such claims is becoming increasingly important if the industry is to be seen as offering more than just a pampering experience (see s810/3 p20). Smaller studies on the health benefits of massage do already exist, but research published last October* is believed to be the first systematic study of a larger group of healthy adults which focuses on the effects of massage. It revealed that even one massage can have real physical benefits within an hour of treatment.

STUDY SET UP

The researchers based at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles – who were sponsored by a division of US National Institutes of Health – focused on 53 mentally and physically healthy adults who were aged between 18 to 45 years old.

Twenty-nine participants received a 45-minute Swedish massage incorporating effleurage, petrissage, kneading, tapotement and thumb-friction techniques. The massage was administered in prone and supine positions and used non-aromatic massage oils. The other 24 subjects received a 45-minute massage by the same therapist with an identical

protocol, except that the masseuse used only a light touch with the back of the hand.

Before the massage, each subject was fitted with an intravenous catheter in order to take blood samples. Samples were collected five minutes and one minute before the treatment began and one, five, 10, 15, 30 and 60 minutes afterwards.

It was not only stress levels that were affected. The study also found that a single massage session can have an acute effect on the immune system

MASSAGE BENEFITS

According to the results, people in the Swedish massage group experienced a large decrease in arginine vasopressin, a hormone that is understood to increase the stress hormone cortisol. In addition, Swedish massage also caused a small decrease in actual cortisol levels.

It was not only stress levels that were affected, however. The study found that a

single massage session can also have “fairly profound acute effects on the immune system” based on the fact that people in the Swedish massage group had significant increased numbers of lymphocytes: white blood cells which play a large role in defending the body from disease.

Another finding was that Swedish massage caused a notable decrease in cytokines – molecules which carry signals between cells in the nervous system – produced by stimulated white blood cells. In particular, there was an absolute decrease in TH-2 cytokine levels, which are associated with allergic inflammation ailments including asthma. Therefore, massage might be used as a “biological basis for reports that massage therapy mitigates the symptoms of asthma in children”.

It was suggested that future research may benefit from a greater number of study participants, although it is believed that “these biological differences [from the effects of massage] are likely to be real and replicable in a larger sample size”. ●

*Hyman Rapaport M et al. *A Preliminary Study on the Effects of a Single Session of Swedish Massage on Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal and Immune Function in Normal Individuals*. Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine. Vol 16, No 10, p1079-1088. Oct 2010.

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