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LET'S FOCUS ON
THE "WE"
IN WELL-BEING.

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



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Announcing WellHOF

Spa Business will launch The Spa and Wellness Hall of Fame on 3 May to celebrate the pioneers of our industry, with Deborah Szekely the first inductee, as we celebrate her 100th birthday

In this issue of *Spa Business* we profile the wonderful Deborah Szekely, who celebrates her 100th birthday on 3 May this year. Jane Kitchen travelled to Rancho la Puerta in Mexico to talk to Deborah for our special interview which you can read on page 36.

We all rightly acknowledge Deborah as the 'godmother' of spa for many reasons, from her entrepreneurial spirit and business achievements, to her personal philosophies and commitment.

In an age where many in the industry preach about wellness, but do not themselves live a well life, she has walked the talk and has the incredible health, vitality and life force to show for it.

Deborah has pursued a lifelong quest for knowledge, coupled with a mission to educate that sees her lecturing each week to share her century of learnings with all who wish to hear it.

My time at Rancho la Puerta has been hugely enriched by her lectures and it's clear those present feel they're in the presence of greatness and privileged to have their minds opened by her fresh, challenging, invaluable perspectives.

Celebrating the wisdom of the tribe is an essential part of building healthy, vibrant and enduring communities and over the last few years it has become apparent to all of us at *Spa Business* that we're witnessing history in the making, as our industry maps out its course and drives forward. We believe pioneers such as Deborah who are doing this work must be celebrated and acknowledged, so we create our own mythology as an industry, celebrate our achievements and create a positive record of the great work being done.

As a result, I'm delighted to announce that the *Spa Business* team is gearing up to launch a global Hall of Fame for the industry, so we can recognise the work of our



PHOTO: RANCHO LA PUERTA

Deborah Szekely will be the first WellHOF inductee

“We’re witnessing history in the making as our industry maps out its course and drives forward”

industry pioneers, while also enshrining their collective wisdom in a central library that we can all be proud of.

I'm delighted to share with you that Deborah Szekely will be the first inductee into The Spa and Wellness Hall of Fame and that Andrew Gibson is to chair the organisation, which will go by the name of WellHOF, with a website at www.wellHOF.org.

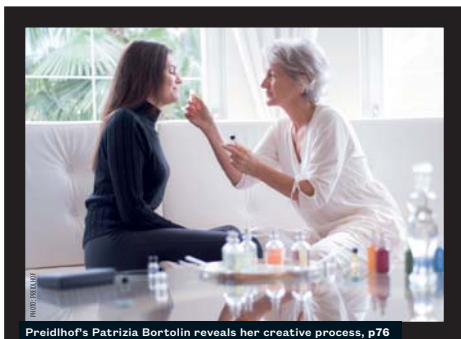
We'll be making further announcements in the coming weeks and I look forward to working with you on this exciting project. ●

Liz Terry, editorial director lizterry@spabusiness.com

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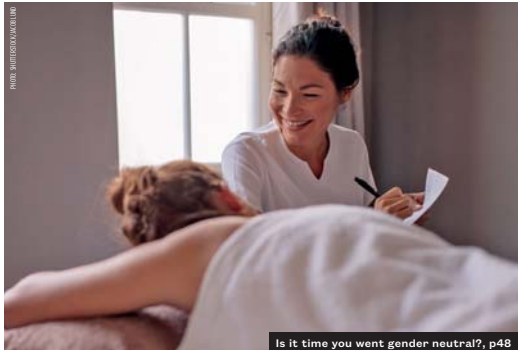


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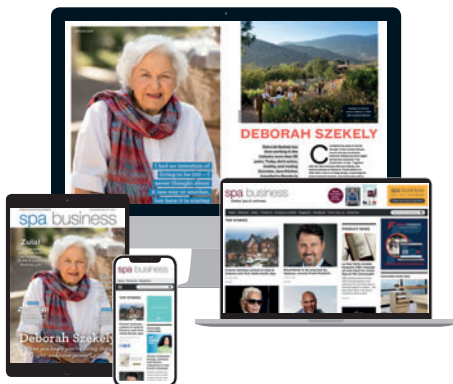
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spa people



There's nothing like our new Scandinavian Nordic spa model in the US. The only one that's similar is Aire Ancient Baths

Suzanne Corcoran
founder and CEO,
Scandinative

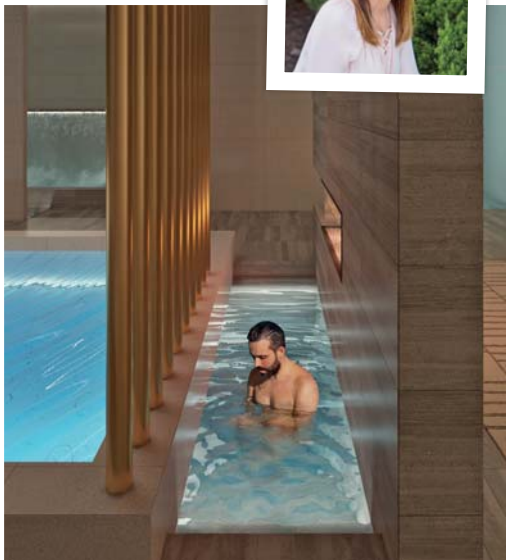


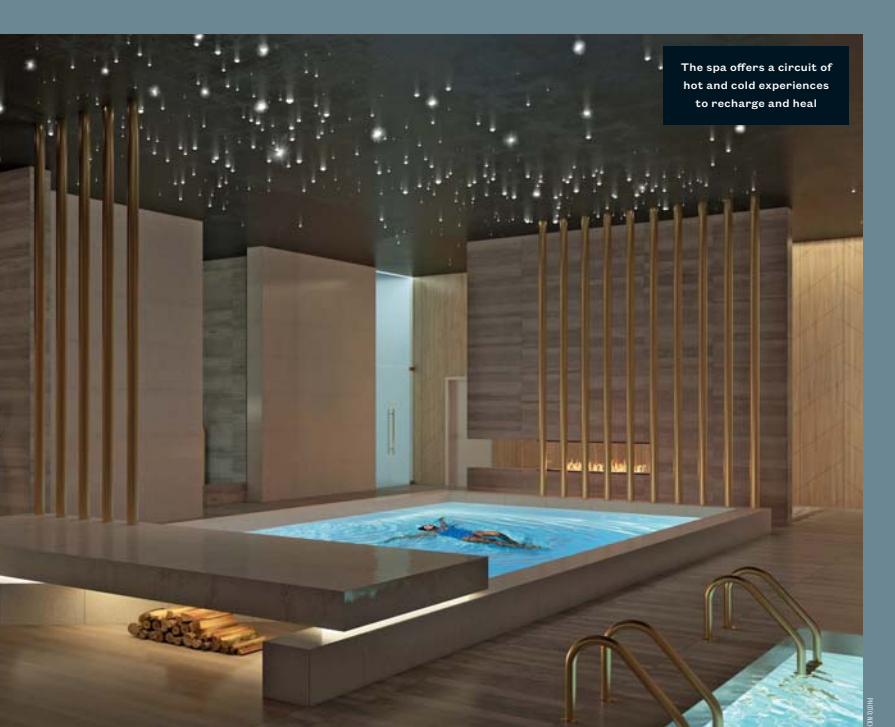
PHOTO: KAREN MAXWELL



People across the world are looking for ways to improve their mental and physical health and boost their morale and immunity. Suzanne Corcoran, founder of US-based Niche Wellness says the new Scandinavian thermal spa concept will offer guests a place to start this healing process.

Corcoran brings her real estate, hospitality and marketing background to her role, leading a team that includes Julia Sutton, COO and founder of Exhale, and Enrique Martinez-Lopez the former general manager of Aire Ancient Baths in Barcelona. Together they're working towards the launch of the first Scandinavian which will open in Alexandria, Washington DC in 2023, with other urban and resort US locations in wellness-conscious cities, such as Boston and Denver, also in the pipeline.

The adult-only, Nordic spa-themed wellness facilities will feature a range of bathing experiences, including salt pools, hot pools, steam and salt saunas, cold plunge and relaxation areas. Entry prices will start at US\$110 (£97, £81) for a standard thermal experience, and US\$155 (£137, £114) for a two- to three-hour experience, with a choice of massages.



The spa offers a circuit of hot and cold experiences to recharge and heal

The Scandinavian concept

"The team's mission is to offer guests an affordable, transformative thermal wellness experience to help them pause and centre themselves," says Corcoran. "Wellness was becoming a priority before the pandemic, but now, more than ever, people are interested in prevention and taking measures to improve their health."

"The Scandinavian spa experience, based on the Nordic spa model, offers an invigorating circuit that combines hot, cold and relaxation healing techniques to aid recreation and recovery for mind and body," she says.

According to the team's research, thermal spas are few and far between in North America, when compared to Europe. Their popularity is increasing, particularly in Canada, where Corcoran says more than 52 Nordic-type spas have been

operating successfully for some years. She became a fan of the model after her first experience in Quebec City, in 2017, and has been a regular visitor ever since. "There's nothing like the Scandinavian Nordic spa model in the US, in terms of the size and scope we're planning," she explains. "The only similar model is the 'Roman, Greek and Ottoman' bathing experience offered by Spanish operator, Aire Ancient Bath, at its US locations."

Based on the success of our competitors, our economic calculations show an expected profit after six months and strong returns thereafter



BATHING EXPERIENCE

Scandinavian facilities include:

- Two cold-plunge Frigidarium pools
- Salt floatation pool
- Vitality pool
- Caldarium (hot pool)
- Hot and cold showers
- Sauna
- Steamroom
- Snowroom
- 12 massage rooms
- Two 'speciality' treatment rooms
- Locker areas
- Wet and dry grooming areas
- Relaxation areas for mixed-use

Scandinave is positioned to provide the services that 70 per cent of the US integrative health market is ready to try

- Aire currently operates eight spas in the US, including New York and Chicago, as well as having spas in London, Copenhagen, Barcelona, Seville, Almeria and Vallromanes - with a new premises expected to open in Toronto this year.

Feasibility studies

The Scandinave team's plan is to extend the thermal spa concept into other US cities. "Scandinave offers a simple, clean and elegant way to relax alone or with friends, making it a winning concept that could be replicated throughout the US," says Corcoran.

The location for the first property, in Old Town Alexandria, was chosen by the team because research findings, highlighted in the ACSM Fitness Index and Mindbody Wellness Index, indicate



Washington DC is attracting significant investment in wellness

that Washington DC is one of the healthiest cities in the US.

With a population of 6.3 million, it's an affluent city and has an educated population, meaning a raised awareness of the importance of prevention and more spending capacity for wellness experiences.

The project is being financed privately with an estimated budget of US\$7.9m (£7m, £5.8m). The architect is Bryan Dunkelberger from S3 Design - with previous recreation and wellbeing projects that include spa facilities in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Florida.

The Scandinave feasibility study was carried out by management consultant Lynn Curry, and Corcoran says the team's detailed knowledge of the thermal spa business has been a real asset throughout. "Based on the success of our competitors, our economic calculations show an expected profit after six months and

Hydrotherapy treatments
can reduce the risk of
high blood pressure



strong returns thereafter,” she says. “We expect daily guest projections to reach approximately 97 guests in year one, rising to 135 by year five.

“We also expect to attract adults of all ages and demographics, including Millennials, Baby Boomers and Gen Xers, because the thermal spa experience offers an invigorating ‘wellbeing’ feeling and can be repeated on a regular basis for long-lasting preventive health benefits. It will also be attractive to existing spa enthusiasts who recognise that thermal spas offer a regular, affordable wellness health kick.”

Perfect timing

So has the pandemic made it hard to keep the first Scandinavian on track? Corcoran says it has actually helped the planning process. “Firstly, the lockdowns helped us negotiate a better financial deal for the building [a former

church school] and secondly, every detail of the experience was reconsidered with COVID in mind. For example, we’ve added a stone handwashing basin at the entrance to the spa which introduces the beginning of a touchless experience throughout most areas, while all surfaces, floors, walls and seating have anti-bacterial surfaces.

Corcoran says the pool environments are being planned with the highest ventilation rate of any interior space, and that airborne moisture will be constantly extracted through HVAC systems with filters that remove viral particles.

With such measures in place, Corcoran is confident about the future: “Scandinavian is ideally positioned to provide services that 70 per cent of the US integrative health market are ready to try – especially now wellness is such a preoccupation for so many people.” ●

THE SCANDINAVIAN CIRCUIT

1. CLEANSING

The circuit begins with a cleansing shower

2. RELAXATION

Salt-water floatation and waterfalls help release pressure on the neck and shoulders

3. HEAT

High-heat pool, sauna or steamroom

4. COLD

Cold-water plunge or cold experiential shower

5. RELAXATION

The circuit ends with restorative time in the relaxation areas

“

Kerzner has been quiet in terms of wellness, but I'm aiming to change that

Zoe Wall

Global wellness director,
Kerzner International



Wall has been tasked with defining each brand's distinct wellness offering

PHOTO: KERZNER INTERNATIONAL

PHOTO: KERZNER INTERNATIONAL / JARPER PEACE

The portfolio currently includes 12 One&Only resorts around the world



January 2022 signalled the start of a new direction for resort developer and operator Kerzner International. Having appointed former group spa director for MSpa International, Zoe Wall, to head up its wellness division, Kerzner indicated its intent to ramp up its spa and wellness offering.

"We want to position our hotels with wellness as a central resort hub and not just an add-on or an afterthought," Wall tells *Spa Business*.

At present, Kerzner's portfolio includes 12 One & Only Resorts, Mazagan Beach & Golf Resort in Morocco and three Atlantis Resort & Residences – with an anticipated cap of five being built, given their US\$2bn price tag. In 2021, the brand had also outlined plans to grow its portfolio with the launch of a new fitness-focused hospitality concept called Siro Hotels.

Wall has been brought on board to align and define each brand's wellness offering. She says the most important thing for Kerzner is that each hotel group is very distinct, so each concept needs to be unique to that brand. "Currently, properties that are part of a bigger portfolio – such as One&Only – are running almost independently from the collection," says Wall.



PHOTO: KERZNER INTERNATIONAL/REPORT PLACE

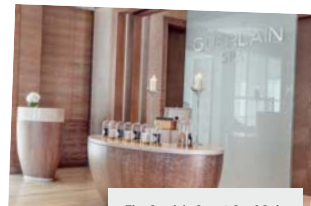


PHOTO: KERZNER INTERNATIONAL/REPORT PLACE

The Guerlain Spa at One&Only The Palm in Dubai delivers 130-150 treatments a day



PHOTO: KERZNER INTERNATIONAL/REPORT PLACE

"My job is to ensure we make the spa and wellness offering specific to each location while we also achieve consistency between properties under one brand."

Wall says Kerzner is unlikely to develop its own spa brand for One&Only until it has at least 30 properties worldwide.

The overall strategy

Ultimately, her main goal is to weave wellness through the experience of every Kerzner location.

"We want to leverage our destinations and have a flawless wellness flow throughout the entire resort," she says. "It's a big task, and there's only one brand out there that does it well and that's Six Senses."

Wall emphasises that her appointment doesn't just signal a new focus on spa, but also on Kerzner expanding its wellness reach in terms of fitness, recreation, nutritional F&B and retail, within both the resort and the spa.

One&Only has the largest wellness focus following an alignment with Chenot Group in 2019. Fast-forward three years and only two Chenot Spas have opened, in Malaysia and Montenegro. However, Wall says Chenot will feature at upcoming locations in Greece and Montana.

"When that deal was signed, it seemed Chenot would roll out across all properties," she says. "But Kerzner soon realised that medical wellness is complex and requires a completely different business model from a spa."

Adding medical across the One&Only portfolio isn't viable, says Wall and also doesn't really make sense. "Having worked on medical spas for years, I know demand is specific to certain locations and markets. The destinations where you launch must have the infrastructure to support it. You need the capacity for hospital collaborations so you can run diagnostic tests, for example."

We want to have a flawless wellness flow through the resort. It's a big task, and there's probably only one brand out there that does it well, and that's Six Senses

Licensing and expensive staffing are also pitfalls, especially because regulation varies by region, while refits are challenging. "If you're doing greenfield projects, you build your spa to meet requirements, but if you're pivoting an existing spa to incorporate medical, it's more difficult," says Wall.

Guest perspectives are also a factor, because positioning a medical offering where the majority are on holiday can cause a mismatch of expectations.

"I agree there's a space for medical in the right location, but that offering has to be adapted if it's a luxury hotel where guests are

SPA PEOPLE

► predominately on holiday," says Wall. "The biggest challenge going forward will be to make the medical model more hospitality-friendly."

Partnering up

One&Only properties will either open in partnership with Chenot or offer a holistic wellness pathway in partnership with other brands, something Wall is already pursuing.

She's gained inspiration from collaborations with fashion houses such as Guerlain, Givenchy and Dior, having seen strong results at the Guerlain Spa One&Only The Palm, in Dubai which delivers 130-150 treatments a day.

"I was impressed by the attention to detail in the spa, retail boutique and treatments," she says. "The entire guest journey is very high couture."

"Previously I think these luxury brands only wanted one exclusive spa, but now they're open to exploring collaborations with high-end hotels," she says.

"From their perspective, they've changed their business dynamics because these spas can be very profitable - they also

massively drive retail. A couple of well-known fashion house spas in Paris have a retail turnover of a couple of million euros annually.

"Much like Chenot, a partnership like this wouldn't be for every location," says Wall, "but perhaps more for urban locations where you have the footfall."

Wall says 40 per cent of Guerlain Spa's custom comes from day guests, something she's impressed by as it's not the most accessible location in Dubai. "The fact guests are willing to drive all that way is telling. So for city locations where we have the residential locations, I think partnerships like this could be interesting," she continues.

Wall doesn't confirm which brands she's looking into, but



Chenot will feature in more upcoming Kerzner openings

PHOTO: CHENOT GROUP



Zoe Wall career path

Steiner Leisure	2004 - 2008
Atlantis The Palm	2008 - 2013
Animator	2013 - 2015
Natura Bissé	2015 - 2017
MSpa	2017 - 2021
Kerzner	2022

One&Only at Kerzner's Nyungwe House in Rwanda



PHOTO: NYUNGWE INTERNATIONAL

she's searching further afield for fashion house tie-ups that are new to the spa market.

Introducing SIRO

The latest brand for Kerzner is SIRO (pronounced *sigh-row*), representing the pillars of Strength, Inclusive, Reflection and Original. Moving away from a traditional spa model, the brand will invite guests to aspire to live at their fullest potential through a blend of hospitality, fitness and wellness.

A fitness club will be at the heart of a SIRO hotel, offering a Technogym-equipped gym, space for yoga and meditation, classes, a pool and use of local sports venues.

Each will also offer a Recovery Lab, offering massage therapies, cryotherapy, infrared saunas, meditation classes and sports rehab, for mindful regeneration.

Wall sees the greatest opportunity to scale in the SIRO brand



Wall says SIRO will have a major focus on recovery which can either be approached holistically with sauna, steam, infrared or cryo, or via IV therapy, micro-needling and acupuncture.

The gameplan involves two openings in Porto Montenegro and another at One Zabeel, Dubai – a very interesting project, according to Wall: “The location consists of two towers joined at the middle and we’re splitting these into one for SIRO and one for One&Only,” she says.

The main connection between the towers will be the SIRO club where guests will be offered memberships and retreats. Kerzner has also partnered with AC Milan to leverage the club’s expertise in fitness and recovery.

“We’re looking to build more partnerships like this, where we can invite guests to our properties and entice them to train like an AC Milan footballer, or come and train like GB Olympic swimmer, Adam Peaty (a SIRO ambassador).”

SIRO has the biggest growth potential, says Wall: “We want to grow the brand in all major cities, so there’s synergy between locations, with unique programmes

and ambassadors – so if you’re visiting SIRO Dubai then progressing to the Montenegrino resort, there’s a flow,” she explains.

To achieve this, there’ll be a digital component, including an app, so guests can remotely check-in, log workouts, access nutritional advice, use videos, view class schedules, book retreats or reach out to team members.

Maintaining momentum

The task now is to keep up the momentum, but there are promising signs, says Wall: “If anything good has come from COVID, it’s been that it’s put the spotlight on wellness and made us hyper-aware we need to take time out – when you’re on holiday is a perfect time to do this,” she says.

More to the point, the Kerzner clientele have the disposable income and Wall says they want to indulge after such troubled times. Emirates One&Only Wolgan Valley in Australia is producing an ADR of AUS\$3,000 (£1,698, US\$2,249, €2,043) while One&Only Nyungwe House in Rwanda rolls in at US\$2,400 (£1,818, €2,181).

“COVID has caused a pent-up demand for wellness and people



SIRO has a tie-up with Italian football club, AC Milan for fitness

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/PABLO ANDREA BERTANI

One of the biggest challenges will be to make the medical spa model more hospitality-friendly

“

are eager to experience new things,” she says. “Some of the numbers we’ve been seeing are higher than in 2019. For example, at Atlantis The Palm, the end of 2021 saw the highest revenues since opening 13 years ago.

“Because guests have so much choice, I think the biggest job will be to keep up with the times,” says Wall. “Often spas get stuck in their ways and are not very adaptable, especially in retail. If we want this momentum to be sustainable we need to be more flexible, adaptable and listen to the markets.

“You’ll start to see a lot more from Kerzner,” she says. “Previously as a brand it’s been quiet in terms of wellness, but I’m aiming to change that moving forward.” ●



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First Mandarin Oriental spa and hotel launching in Egypt in 2024

Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group has announced a management agreement to rebrand the Shepherd Hotel in Cairo, marking its first foray into Egypt.

First opened in 1841, the hotel is undergoing a renovation with Paris-based interior designer Sybille de Margerie tasked with preserving the building's heritage while enhancing the facilities.

Completion is scheduled for 2024 when the hotel will re-open as Mandarin Oriental Shepherd, Cairo.

Situated on the eastern shore of The Nile river, in the heart of Downtown Cairo, the property will have 188 rooms and 88 suites, many with balconies, providing views over the city, the Nile and Gezira island.

Mandarin Oriental Shepherd, Cairo will be home to a Spa at Mandarin Oriental providing eight



The hotel will open in Cairo, the city home to the Great Pyramid of Giza

treatment suites and offering signature tailored Mandarin Oriental wellness experiences and treatments.

Further wellness facilities will include an indoor lap pool, rooftop swimming pool, beauty salon, fitness centre and kid's club.

Mandarin Oriental has added two more properties to its pipeline in 2022, revealing plans to open its first hotel and spa in Greece – Mandarin Oriental, Costa Navarino – in Q1 of 2023 – plus a new tropical resort and 12-treatment room spa on a private island in The Maldives, scheduled to open in 2025.



Jeremy McCarthy

More: <http://lei.sr/m9r7l>

Guerlain's first London spa to open at Raffles London at the OWO

Raffles' debut London property, Raffles London at The OWO, will be home to a brand new destination spa and health club partnered with beauty and wellness brand Guerlain, and movement and nutrition specialist Pillar.

The four-floor spa will be situated at the heart of the landmark Grade II* listed former Old War Office on Whitehall, which was completed in 1906 by British architect William Young.

The building was formerly the site of



Guerlain is devising an exclusive spa menu for the facility

the original Palace of Whitehall, home to Henry VIII and other monarchs. It's also witnessed world-shaping events while influential political leaders – including Winston Churchill – held office.

Opening in Q4 2022, the first Guerlain spa in London will offer a holistic wellbeing

experience, focused on restorative wellness and active training.

The opulent property will have nine spa treatment rooms, a barber and hair salon, beauty treatment spaces and a Guerlain boutique, as well as a separate VIP area and two couples suites.

More: <http://lei.sr/14A0l>



Belgin Aksoy

PHOTO: GLOBAL WELLNESS DAY

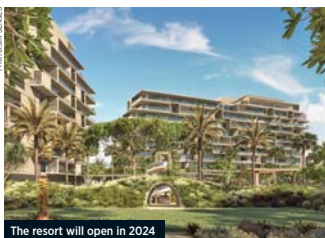
Global Wellness Day reminds people to celebrate joy

#ThinkMagenta will be theme of this year's annual Global Wellness Day (GWD) hosted on 11 June.

Founded by Belgin Aksoy, GWD will invite people to #ThinkMagenta, recommending simple but effective affirmations to remind people that living well begins in the mind.

"#ThinkMagenta is about being realistic," explains Aksoy. "Sometimes difficulties or failures become the greatest teachers. No matter what is happening we can always find a way to choose joy."

More: <http://lei.sr/s8v3F>



The resort will open in 2024

Six Senses will open in UAE with coral-inspired wellness sanctuary

Six Senses will enter the UAE in 2024 with a 61-room hotel and 162 branded residences along a private stretch of beach on Palm Jumeirah's West Crescent in Dubai.

At the core of Six Senses

The Palm, Dubai, will be a 5,574sq m social and wellness club called Six Senses Place – a new departure for the company as revealed in the last issue of *Spa Business*. The club will be crowned with a Six Senses Spa, with design inspired by textured coral reefs. The wellness menu will focus on recovery treatments and reconnection programmes, while the spa will be complemented by a longevity clinic, IV lounge, biohacking room, massage circuit pool, squash court and workout spaces.

Commenting on the brand's decision to launch in the UAE, Six Senses CEO Neil Jacobs said: "This project marks a new milestone for the Six Senses brand as it enters this remarkable destination."

More: <http://lei.sr/F8C3h>



Neil Jacobs

PHOTO: SIX SENSES



PHOTO: BANYAN TREE VEDA

Veya's offering is based on Banyan Tree's eight wellness pillars

Banyan Tree debuts wellness resort concept Veya in Phuket, as part of five-brand rollout

Hospitality group Banyan Tree Group has launched a new wellbeing brand called Banyan Tree Veya in response to the pandemic.

Veya aims to address people's urgent need to reconnect mind and body on a daily basis.

Opened in March, the flagship Banyan Tree Veya in Phuket is a wellbeing-centred resort offering bespoke programmes, built within Banyan Tree's existing Phuket resort.

Lee Woon Hoe, senior assistant vice-president and executive director of wellbeing, says Veya's programming has an emphasis on "embodiment therapies", built on Banyan Tree's eight pillars of wellbeing.

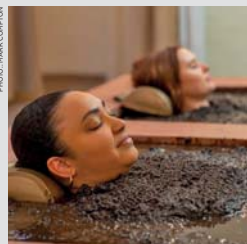
The Veya experience is led by certified multi-disciplinary wellbeing hosts and based around a three-step protocol of awareness, discovery and sustenance.



Lee Woon Hoe

"The pandemic has brought unprecedented stress and trauma to our generation – the full impact of which remains to be fully assessed," said Lee. "The Veya team of resident wellbeing specialists and external experts aim to guide, encourage and celebrate with our guests in discovering a new conscious way of living."

Veya is one of five new brands being launched by Banyan Tree in 2022. Throughout the year, it will also introduce Garrya, Homm, Escape and Folio. More: <http://lei.sr/B3Y8b>



The spa has used local mud for 70 years

TLEE Spas refreshes iconic Calistoga mud spa

Dr Wilkinson's Backyard Resort & Mineral Springs – the resort and spa claimed to first bring mud baths to the Californian spa town of Calistoga – has completed a multimillion-dollar restoration.

Founded in 1952, the resort became a celebrated wellness retreat offering mud baths, spa rituals and mineral pool soaks.

The resort has undergone a comprehensive renovation and has been redesigned with mid-century-inspired styling.

The new iteration of the resort includes the addition of an on-site restaurant, updated guest rooms, a new pool area and a thorough remodelling of the spa facilities – designed by TLEE Spas.

"An accomplished team collaborated to bring Doc's pioneering vision back to life and celebrate all that is Calistoga: mud baths, geothermal bathing, and most importantly, pleasure and fun," says president and founder of TLEE Spas, Tracy Lee.

More: <http://lei.sr/c5l1d>



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www.attendispa.com

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www.hotspingsconnection.com

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George V, Paris France

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www.forumhotspsa.com/en

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www.spa-life.international/uk/



ARBERGE RESORTS

The resort will be 90 minutes from New York City

Auberge appointed to manage Wildflower Farms retreat

Auberge Resorts Collection has been appointed to manage Wildflower Farms, a new resort nestled on 140 secluded acres in New York's Hudson Valley.

Located 90 minutes from New York City, the 65-key Wildflower Farms, Auberge Resorts Collection is being designed as an oasis of nature and wellbeing.

The resort will open in late 2022 with a 9,000sq ft Auberge Spa, including five single and one couples' treatment rooms, outdoor hot tubs and an indoor saltwater pool, which will serve as an area for relaxation pre- and post-treatment.

Wildflower Farms will sit amidst an expansive landscape with views

of Shawangunk Ridge with a river flowing along the forest's edge.

The destination's extensive grounds will be home to orchards, animals, heirloom gardens, a namesake farm and fields of wildflowers.

"Wildflower Farms will reinvent

luxury in an understated and experiential way, which makes it a fitting collaboration for Auberge Resorts," says Craig Reid, president and CEO.

"There will be no better place to escape for an abundance of green space, a greater sense of wellbeing and transformative culinary experiences, all just 90 minutes from New York City."

More: <http://leisr/U2x5G>



PHOTO: BUNNAN STUDIOS

The destination's spa will be inspired by treehouses

Ritz-Carlton Reserve to debut in Costa Rica

The first Ritz-Carlton location in Costa Rica will launch in 2024, situated within the 1,400-acre private club and resort community, Peninsula Papagayo.

Located in Guanacaste, Peninsula Papagayo sits on the north Pacific coast of Costa Rica, deemed to be a nature haven and one of the world's most biodiverse locations.

The coastal retreat will be known as Nekajui and will include a Ritz-Carlton Reserve with a luxury spa and exclusive residences.

The design vision for Nekajui's spa is inspired by treehouses offering a

spacious open-air wellness environment with a low impact on the surrounding natural environment. Spa and wellness consultancy Blu Spa has been working on the project since 2018.

Facilities will include outdoor water gardens, a selection of warm and cold pools, a salon, gym and movement studio, private changing rooms and lounge decks.

Both resort guests and residence owners will be able to access the spa and start their journey by crossing a dramatic hanging bridge.

More: <http://leisr/s3n7q>

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Healing oasis

Zoya, a new integrative health and wellbeing retreat is opening in the Middle East, as Megan Whitby reports

Entrepreneur Ameer Said lost both his wife and mother to cancer, inspiring him to invest in preventative healthcare in their memory.

The result is Zoya, a new health, medical wellness and fitness concept with which Said aspires to set a gold standard for wellness in the Middle East.

The first property opened recently in Ajman, UAE, called Zoya Health and Wellbeing at Al Zorah, and Said has brought in consultancy and contract management company Premedion to handle the operations.

"Zoya is my life's work," he says. "Our methods are integrative and holistic and we use a range of treatments to create customised wellbeing journeys for our guests. Detoxing and therapeutic fasting are central to what we offer, combined with physiotherapy, aesthetic medicine and the right nutrition to boost vitality."



PHOTO: Zoya Health and Wellbeing at Al Zorah

Zoya is my life's work
Ameer Said

Commenting on Premedion's role within the project, CEO Dr Yasser Moshref said: "Zoya is a unique destination that protects, nourishes and invigorates the mind, body and soul. It addresses the ailments of the modern world by offering preventative rather than curative treatments, and provides exceptional support to enable our guests to live well without the need for medication and assistance."

A wellbeing oasis

Zoya has been planned as a first-of-its-kind, authentic Middle Eastern wellbeing sanctuary, where guests can go to heal and



PHOTO: Zoya Health and Wellbeing at Al Zorah

Zoya's holistic protocols are designed for preventative health



Conceived as a healing sanctuary, the Zoya resort is located within the Al Zorah nature reserve

take time out to focus on their health, supported by modern medicine and within customised holistic wellbeing journeys.

To create this sanctuary, it was important to Said that Zoya was located in a healing environment, which is why he built it within the UAE's tranquil Al Zorah nature reserve.

Surrounded by beaches, lagoons and lush mangrove forests, the reserve is home to a variety of native marine and plant life, as well as flocks of resident and migratory birds.

The 61-room resort falls under the umbrella of the Al Zorah mixed-use hospitality and residential development – co-developed by the Government of Ajman and Lebanese developer Solidere International.

Personalised journeys

Zoya will also offer a variety of wellbeing treatments that focuses on the organisation's three main pillars – Prevention and Rehabilitation, Fitness and Recreation and Pampering, with packages that include detox, therapeutic fasting, prevention, physical rehabilitation, aesthetics and anti-ageing programmes.

Each guest is treated individually and starts their journey with a medical consultation, ▶



There are plans to grow the Zoya concept, with two more locations planned in Salalah, Oman and in Al Taef, Saudi Arabia

NEW OPENING

► diagnostics testing and wellness assessment.

This is followed by a bespoke nutrition plan and personalised treatment programmes, alongside an aftercare programme for at-home use.

These nine retreat programmes include: wellness; immune support; detox; physiotherapy and rehabilitation; weight management; liver support; rejuvenation; get fit; and anti-ageing. They're tailored to meet guest needs, and a combination of multiple, complementary treatments make up a holistic integrative journey. The length of these retreats at Zoya vary from three to 14 nights and include access to state-of-the-art resort facilities, as well as a selection of leisure activities.

Wellness facilities

The wellness facility is the resort's anchor offering and has 45 treatment rooms, an integrative medicine clinic, aesthetic and anti-ageing centre, chronic disease management and diagnostics services, physiotherapy and a medical spa.

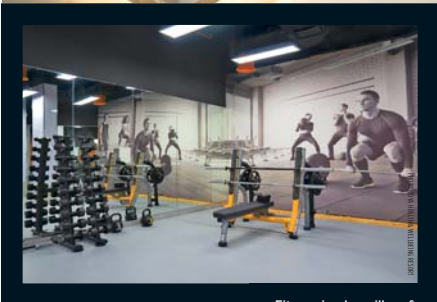
These facilities are complemented by a women-only spa, a mixed-sex spa, beauty services, fitness facilities, yoga and meditation spaces, a library and lecture room and a vegan restaurant and juice bar.

Thermal facilities include a Turkish hammam, steam sauna, infrared sauna, Finnish saunas, warm and cold therapy pools, whirlpool tubs, medical baths and Vichy showers.

Fitness is a key pillar of Zoya, so guests are given access to a medical gym, aqua gym, boot camp sessions, PT services and up to 60 weekly fitness classes that include cycling, watersports and golf activities.



The wellness facility has a medical clinic and anti-ageing centre



Fitness is a key pillar of Zoya, and facilities include a medical gym, aqua gym, classes and PT services





PHOTO: PROXMED



Zoya is a unique destination that protects, nourishes and invigorates the mind, body and soul Dr Yasser Moshref

The bigger picture

Moshref predicts the destination's target audience will be GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] domestic tourists, and he believes the pandemic has helped to drive demand for local wellness solutions, due to a growing awareness of the importance of personal wellbeing and immunity.

"The pandemic has provided an opportunity for Zoya, as our facility provides the perfect environment for wellness-seekers looking for healing journeys. This kind of concept is unique in the UAE and this in itself is a unique selling point," Moshref explains.

He adds there are plans to grow the Zoya concept with two more locations – in Salalah, Oman and in Al Ta'if, Saudi Arabia – as well as plans for a fitness-focused Zoya facility in Dubai, called Zoya Sports City. ●

Zoya Wellbeing & Health Resort

Key suppliers

TREATMENT ROOMS:

Gharieni, Proxomed, Weyergans, Trautwein and Narvi

SPA PRODUCTS:

Biologique Recherche and Voya

GYM EQUIPMENT: Proxmed, Matrix



The majority of guests are expected to come from the domestic market

PHOTO: ZOYA HEALTH & WELLNESS RESORT



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At your service

We share some of our favourite treatments, programmes and services

Ice floating is believed to boost circulation and detox the body

📍 Ouellette Lake,
Val d'Isère, France
⌚ Two hours
💰 €90 (US\$101, £75)

Wellness gets wild with ice-floating in Val d'Isère

A new ice-floating relaxation experience in Finland is available for the first time at Val d'Isère's Ouillette Lake.

Wearing a waterproof ice survival wetsuit, participants slip into the frozen lake for a bracing moment of relaxation. The free-floating experience includes at least 30 minutes of ice floating, and is designed to connect visitors with nature and provide a unique wellness boost.

Ice floating is also claimed to detox the body, improve circulation and support the immune system.

Visitors begin their journey with a gondola ride on the lake, leading to an altitude of 2,513m, before the walk to Ouillette Lake for the ice floating.

PHOTO: G. CHIFFRE

Soak under starry skies at Peninsula Hot Springs

Peninsula Hot Springs (PHS) is offering a social moonlit bathing experience between the hours of 11pm - 5am for guests booked into its accommodation.

"Midnight Bathing was introduced to provide our overnight guests with the opportunity to bathe under the southern stars, and also to offer the relaxing gift of hot springs bathing to guests who are shift workers or insomniacs," says PHS founder and creative director, Charles Davidson.

Available for guests aged 18 and above, Midnight Bathing is available seven-nights-a-week, due to PHS' 24-hour operation and guests can enhance their experience with a selection of beverages from the refreshment menu.

📍 Peninsula Hot Springs,
Victoria, Australia
⌚ 11pm-5am
💰 AUS\$65 (€41, US\$47, £35)

Shift workers or insomniacs especially, may enjoy a midnight dip



IMAGE: JEFFREY TILSON



Indulgent three-hour Valmont facial at Lake Austin

Valmont has packed in six masks, four massages and a complete collagen treatment for the face, neck, décolleté and the eyes into its globally exclusive three-hour facial available at Lake Austin Spa Resort in Texas.

The Regal Facial combines Valmont's Essence of Gold Sturgeon and l'Elixir des Glacier product ranges, plus Celluma LED therapy and HydraFacial cleansing technology.

📍 Lake Austin Spa Resort, Texas, US

🕒 Up to three hours

💰 US\$1,050 (€953, £789)

Described as the essence of cellulotherapy, the facial is said to penetrate the nucleus of the skin's cells, delivering 'peerless anti-ageing properties' including triple DNA and liposomal RNA.

Employing a technique inspired by surgical lifting, the facial targets the face muscles to tone and smooth facial lines and restore elasticity.

The facial is described as 'the essence of cellulotherapy'

The Well launches herbal river baths in Costa Rican jungle

The Well's recently-opened jungle retreat in Costa Rica (www.spabusiness.com/thewellCR) is providing couples with a new immersive wellness experience designed to facilitate internal shifts by bathing the senses in the sound, vibration and touch of the natural world.

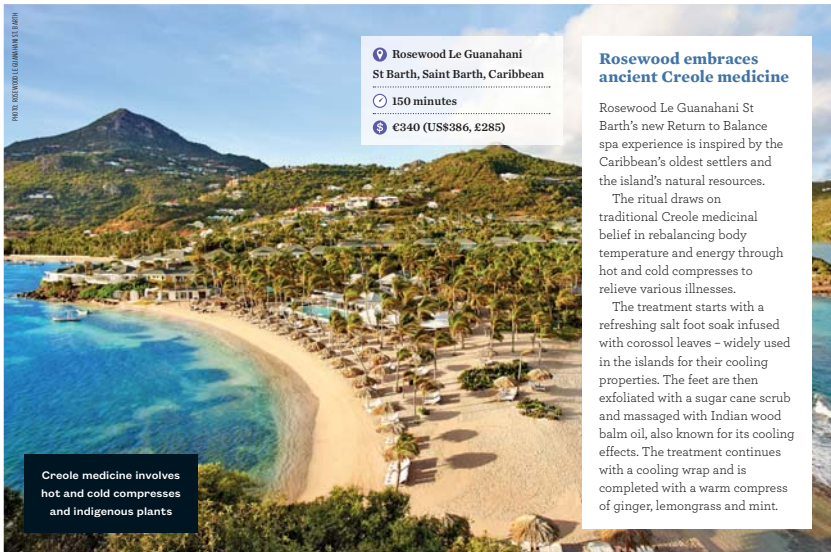
The process begins with a riverside meditation, accompanied by the tranquil sounds of nature, to relax guests before their treatments. Couples then experience a 60-minute herbal bath to warm muscles and soothe away any aches or pains. The ritual is completed with a 90-minute therapeutic riverside massage where therapists apply wild bergamot to the spine, scalp, hands and feet.

📍 The Well At Hacienda AltaGracia, Pérez Zeledón, Costa Rica

🕒 240 minutes

💰 US\$1,050 (€953, £789)

The jungle treatment experience begins with a riverside meditation



**📍 Rosewood Le Guanahani
St Barth, Saint Barth, Caribbean**

🕒 150 minutes

💰 €340 (US\$386, £285)

Rosewood embraces ancient Creole medicine

Rosewood Le Guanahani St Barth's new Return to Balance spa experience is inspired by the Caribbean's oldest settlers and the island's natural resources.

The ritual draws on traditional Creole medicinal belief in rebalancing body temperature and energy through hot and cold compresses to relieve various illnesses.

The treatment starts with a refreshing salt foot soak infused with corossol leaves - widely used in the islands for their cooling properties. The feet are then exfoliated with a sugar cane scrub and massaged with Indian wood balm oil, also known for its cooling effects. The treatment continues with a cooling wrap and is completed with a warm compress of ginger, lemongrass and mint.

Creole medicine involves hot and cold compresses and indigenous plants



PHOTO: JEFFREY K. ALLEN

The treatment is rounded off with an oxygen-based beverage

Montage helps guests acclimatise with altitude spa treatments

Luxury operator Montage Hotels and Resorts is welcoming guests to its new luxury, all-season alpine resort in Southwest Montana, complete with a signature Spa Montage.

As the retreat sits 7,000sq ft above sea level, the destination's spa team has created a dedicated treatment to help guests acclimatise to the resort's high altitude. The massage ritual is designed to ease

altitude sickness symptoms and help open the diaphragm and lung points, ease headache tension and ground guests. The experience is then rounded off with an oxygen-based beverage.

**📍 Montage Big Sky,
Montana, US**

🕒 60-90- or 120-minutes

**💰 Starting cost of US\$280
(£248, £210)**

The perfect recipe for mindfulness

Baking is the focus of a new course designed to help people learn about mindfulness.

The new course, created by The Mindful Baker company, allows guests to learn meditation techniques and strategies for coping with anxiety and stress while learning how to bake artisanal sourdough bread and pizza.

Company founder, lawyer-turned-life-coach, Tim Leach says: "Baking is a

methodical, calming process and helps people slow down.

"Bread making is not something you can rush, which is why this activity dovetails so well with mindfulness - as it's all about taking the time to appreciate the moment."



**📍 The Mindful
Baker, Suffolk, UK**

🕒 Five hours

💰 £69 (US\$92, €83)



The methodical process of baking helps people slow down

PHOTO: JEFFREY K. ALLEN



Guests enjoy a daily guided hike before a dip in Buxton's spa waters

Buxton Crescent couples outdoor adventure with thermal bathing

One of the UK's first spa hotels has launched a retreat showcasing Northern England's picturesque Peak District and the town of Buxton's natural mineral waters.

Each day, guests take part in a privately-guided hike before returning to Buxton Crescent spa to soothe their aching muscles in mineral pools that are powered by warm-water springs beneath the hotel.

The experience is completed with three recovery spa treatments, including the

📍 Buxton Crescent, Derbyshire, UK

🕒 Three nights

💰 Starting cost £650 (US\$877, €775) per person, including accommodation, dinner and breakfast

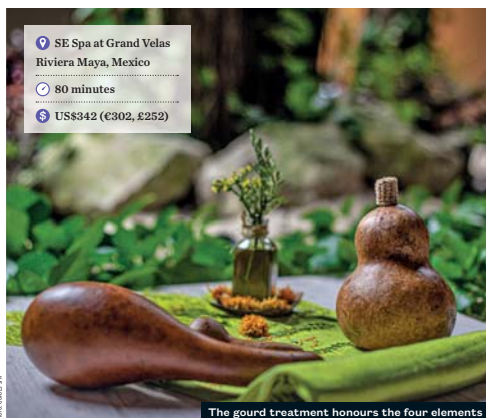
Therapeutic Thermal Mud Pack which incorporates mineral-rich mud sourced from Heviz, Hungary.

After being heated to 40 degrees, guests apply the mud to warm their muscles and relieve aching joints.

Participants also receive an Underwater Jet Massage and CO2 Infusion Mineral Bath.



PHOTO: BUXTON CREST



📍 SE Spa at Grand Velas Riviera Maya, Mexico

🕒 80 minutes

💰 US\$342 (€302, £252)

Mayan gourd massage honours indigenous practices

The new Xkalim Mayan Gourd Massage offers spa guests a whole-body massage using different sizes of dried calabash gourds.

The treatment begins with a traditional Mayan blessing that honours the four natural elements – represented by hot stones, water mist, seashells and a bowl of millet seed.

Guests are then given a back massage with the gourds with increased pressure applied to reflexology points.

Before guests turn over, the therapist performs a traditional barrida (sweep) of the body with alcohol on a bouquet of herb-of-grace. The gourd ritual then progresses to the front of the arms and legs before a final face and head massage is given to activate vital energy.

The gourd treatment honours the four elements

PHOTO: GRAND VELAS

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*IN 12 WEEKS, AFTER 10 DAYS OF APPLICATION OF THE FOLLOWING BEUTÉ CELL SHOCK AGE INTELLIGENCE RECOVERY SERUM AND ESSENTIAL SERUM, VOLUNTEERS HAD A SKIN pH BALANCING POSITIVE TEST. *UP TO 44% INCREASE IN MOISTURIZATION (VOLUNTEERS WITH DRY SKIN) AND UP TO 15% REDUCTION IN SEBUM PRODUCTION (VOLUNTEERS WITH OILY SKIN). *UP TO 26% INCREASE IN SEBUM PRODUCTION (VOLUNTEERS WITH DRY SKIN). *100% OF THE VOLUNTEERS HAD A SKIN pH BALANCING POSITIVE TEST. *IN 12 WEEKS, AFTER 10 DAYS OF APPLICATION OF THE FOLLOWING BEUTÉ CELL SHOCK AGE INTELLIGENCE RECOVERY SERUM AND ESSENTIAL SERUM, VOLUNTEERS HAD A SKIN pH BALANCING POSITIVE TEST. *UP TO 44% INCREASE IN MOISTURIZATION (VOLUNTEERS WITH DRY SKIN) AND UP TO 15% REDUCTION IN SEBUM PRODUCTION (VOLUNTEERS WITH OILY SKIN). *UP TO 26% INCREASE IN SEBUM PRODUCTION (VOLUNTEERS WITH DRY SKIN). *100% OF THE VOLUNTEERS HAD A SKIN pH BALANCING POSITIVE TEST.



I had no intention of
living to be 100 – I
never thought about
it one way or another,
but here it is staring
me in the face

The soon-to-be-
centenarian is a legend
in the wellness industry

PHOTO: SHANEAL BROWN

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Szekely started the ranch in Mexico in 1940, with husband Edmond

DEBORAH SZEKELY

Deborah Szekely has been working in the industry for more than 80 years. Today, she's active, healthy, and reading Socrates. Jane Kitchen travelled to Rancho la Puerta in Mexico to talk about the industry, the power of nature and plans for her 100th birthday

Considered by many to be the founder of the modern fitness resort and spa movement, Deborah Szekely has thoroughly earned the nickname 'The Godmother of Spa'. Together with her late husband, Edmond Szekely, she started Rancho la Puerta in Tecate Mexico in 1940 with a focus on living simply, respecting the body's inherent wisdom, and embracing a life in nature – principles that still guide the resort today.

While Rancho la Puerta has come a long way since its start – when guests brought their own tents and paid US\$17.50 (£13.30, €15.80) a week – its motto of 'Siempre Mejor!' ('Always Better!') has helped it grow and change with the times while remaining true to its original mission of helping people live a healthier life in both body and mind.

Szekely will celebrate her 100th birthday on 3 May this year; she still travels from her home in San Diego to Rancho la Puerta once a week, where she holds a special evening talking to guests, regaling them with stories and answering questions.

Her status among guests – most of whom have visited numerous times – borders on celebrity. I sat down with Deborah on the sun-dappled



Nature gives you faith – it's very hard to have dark thoughts when you're surrounded by trees



▸ terrace of the Ranch's restaurant for a late breakfast, and we paused our conversation numerous times as guests snuck in a quick hello, or wanted to ask a question or recommend a book or just be briefly in her presence.

In our own industry, she is a legend, and we celebrate her as an embodiment of all we stand for: a life lived well, in good health in body, mind and spirit. As she approaches her centenary in excellent health, she is still sharing with others, finding joy in nature, and doing her best to make the world a better place for the next generation.

It was my honour to sit down with Deborah in the shade of trees she planted 80 years ago and discuss the industry, the democratisation of wellness, and plans for her birthday celebrations.

How can the industry realise its true potential?

I believe that for the spa industry to go outward, we first have to go inward. Staff have to be given time for massages and exercise classes for themselves, so they know what they're talking about, and they can really be examples.

We have a whole wellness programme for all our employees that includes a doctor, family counsellor, psychologist, and nutritionist and all our staff are able to take treatments. All our employees also bring their kids to work every year so they see where their parents work and they understand. Being involved with the staff so the staff feels loyalty is key. In our case, we have those whose grandmothers worked for Rancho la Puerta, so they're not just people who come for a paycheck.

Part of the place's magic is the sense of community among guests, but you also feel it from staff members – they feel like part of the family, they're proud of their work and happy to be here. If you build that sense with the community and the staff first, then it will spill over into how guests interact and how they feel when they stay with you.

Spas also need to reach out to become part of the community, which is another way to focus first inwards, then outwards. You need to think from the ground up, whether it's your employees or your community or the food you plant.

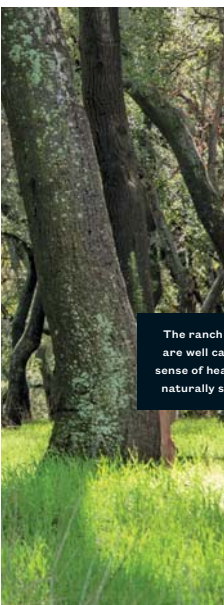
How do you hope the industry will look in 2050?

I hope they'll be out of business because everybody is living the right way! I hope spas will work better together, support one another, train each other's staff, and share new ideas. I also hope there'll be less of a separation between spa life and everyday life.

As an industry, we've gone from a focus on spa and massage, and now – especially with COVID – it's coming back around to a focus on the whole body and the mind/body experience. My husband, Edmond Szekely, was a brilliant man and ahead of his time. He was the inspiration for Rancho la Puerta and the destination spas that followed. He was talking about the mind/body connection long before anyone else.

How can we democratise wellness?

People must develop an appetite for wellness first – they need to realise how important activity and food is to their health. We have to start in schools with



The ranch ensures its staff are well cared for, and that sense of health and happiness naturally spreads to guests



PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFREY



Szekeley headlining at the GWS

more health and nutrition education, and work on offering healthy lunches. In the US, many kitchens in schools are gone because they were too expensive to maintain – now it's all frozen food. Our whole culture will change when we've educated the next generation about wellness. Health begins in youth and pays off throughout a lifetime. I had no intention of living to be 100 – I never thought about it one way or another, but here it is staring me in the face.

Wellness starts with education. We must teach children that we humans are part of something immensely important – nature – and bring it into everyday life. People should take their kids to the park – they need the curing effects of greenery and it doesn't cost a thing. Most cities have parks, yet we don't see as many kids in them as we should. Nature gives you faith — it's hard to have dark thoughts when you're surrounded by trees.

Through the non-profit we started here – Fundación La Puerta – we teach children about ecology and environmental protection. That should be a course in every school, so children learn that we're part of a phenomenal universe. We're also part of a dying planet, and we have to slow and soon stop that decay because our planet is in trouble. The future is in all of our hands – it's our responsibility and not our children's – and we all have to be conscious of the fact that we're building tomorrow and each of us must contribute to that.

What do you consider your greatest achievement to date?

My daughter. But beyond that, it's the role I've had in politics. I've always been involved and when I was in my 60s, I ran for Congress. I didn't make it, so I moved to Washington and



The most important thing is for the food industry to clean up. We have a right to eat food that's good for us and not full of chemicals

The ranch fosters a sense of community, and lasting friendships are made

► ran a federal agency. I put together 12 retired Congressional chiefs of staff and we created the *Congressional Management Manual*, a 300-page book about how to run a congressional office, and nothing like it existed at the time.

Congress still uses it; it's in its 17th edition. I had the idea and I put together the people, and I'm very proud of that – it's had a real impact.

And of course I'm very proud of The Ranch, because my husband and I started it from scratch. We actually came up with the idea of the fitness spa – there was no such thing at the time. We had a mountain, fresh air, a river and a creek and guests had to bring their own tent. And we had lectures – my husband spoke every day at 4.00pm under the big tree, and everyone attended. Then we'd all have dinner later under that same tree. So the importance of the mind and the wisdom of the elders was always very important – there's so much that we can learn from them.

The Ranch has been carefully designed so there's an easy flow between the inside and the outside. I credit my daughter Sarah Livia with the siting and architectural thoughtfulness. My husband wanted everyone to walk three miles every day, and so the buildings are all scattered.

If you want to go to the dining hall, or the gym and get a massage, you walk at least

three miles a day – much more if you take one of our hikes. The people who come regularly exercise at home and watch what they eat. Yet they – and the very few other people who don't exercise – are still impacted by their stay, while the percentage who return is tremendous.

You're building residences at the ranch now

Yes, and with one exception, the people who've bought a residence are former guests. Many would like to retire and so they buy them as future retirement homes. And they know that they'll live in a community of like-minded people and they'll support one another, and the attraction will be nature – we happen to be enormously fortunate when it comes to nature.

Is there anything you still hope to accomplish?

At my age, no. But I still contribute through the Center for Science and Public Interest. The most important thing is for the food industry to clean up. We have a right to eat food that's good for us and not full of chemicals.

The cumulative effect of smidgens of this and smidgens of that makes a lot of smidgens. Everyone has hundreds of chemicals in their body that accumulate over time. We're in a constant battle between common-sense ►



PHOTO COURTESY OF RANCHO LA PUERTA




PHOTO COURTESY OF RANCHO LA PUERTA

Deborah with daughter, Sarah-Livia Szekely Brightwood, president of Rancho la Puerta (above); Everyday life at the Ranch (below)



PHOTO COURTESY OF RANCHO LA PUERTA



Rest and recovery are an essential part of the Rancho la Puerta philosophy

► practices that protect people, and businesses that protect their profits rather than people.

There's still a lot to learn – I'm always reading something for fun and something to learn from; right now it's Socrates and he addresses so many problems we can relate to today.

How will you celebrate your 100th birthday?

We built a huge park for the residents of Tecate, with a soccer pitch and tree-shaded terraces, and we'll celebrate there on 1 May, which is May Day. Everyone is invited – I like to think we're celebrating their contribution to the Ranch's success, rather than my longevity. We'll have entertainment, fireworks, and chefs cooking wonderful dishes.

Anyone who wants to give me a gift has been asked to contribute to a programme we're calling 'Green Umbrella' – a fund to plant trees in Tecate's schoolyards, churchyards, and parks. The idea has its roots at the Ranch, where we've planted so many trees over our 82 years.

I look at those and wonder at how much they've grown along with the Ranch ... and my own long life. So many were planted as saplings, and now I can barely get my arms around them.

Trees help give children a love of nature, cool the town, and cleanse the air. Kids are smart

and they're building their thought processes from a young age, so their environment truly contributes to their growth into healthy, productive, happy adults. We'll make sure they have a dose of nature every day.

Any further words of wisdom?

Throughout my life my friends have been my most important support system. They bring out different things in me and their interests in art and music, religion and medicine enrich me.

I like to say I always pick friends who are smarter than me, better educated, and younger!

Nobody should be lonely, and we must help those that are, especially later in life. Here at the Ranch, everybody makes new and soon-to-be permanent pals and they often come back together at the same time. We change people's lives – we offer so much to learn and when you leave you don't realise how much has crept into your mind – it's like a week of college. You'll experience and learn things to think about long after you go home. And then, when that begins to fade, it's time to come back again. ●

More reading: Access the *Spa Business Insider* interview with Deborah Szekely celebrating her 90th birthday at www.spabusiness.com/Deborah90 ►

The Ranch has land holdings that ensure an unspoilt setting



DEBORAH SZEKELY

A few things I like to say...

'You can't give with a closed hand'

In the act of giving, you receive

'Right is might'

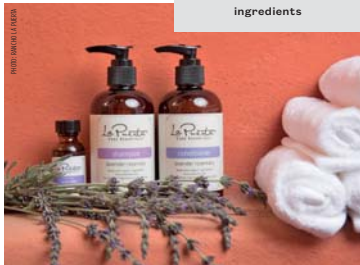
When you're doing things right and you know you're doing things right, you have power

'Do your best, God does the rest'

Doing your best is all you can do, and after that, have faith that the universe or something bigger than you will take care of the rest

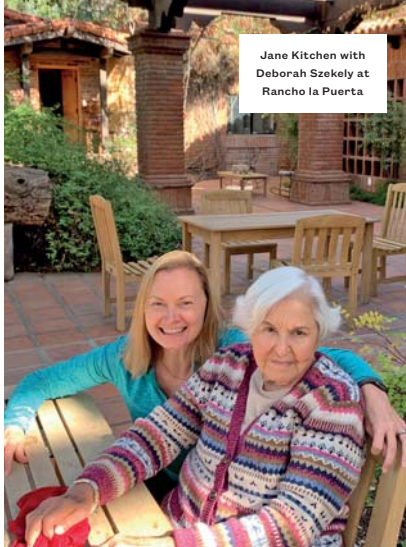


The focus is on natural living and pure ingredients



Siempre Mejor!

After 82 years, Rancho la Puerta is still beloved among guests around the world, who return year after year for a dose of holistic wellbeing. Jane Kitchen spent a week at the Mexican resort to discover how the spirit of 'Siempre mejor!' or 'Always better!' lives on in the 21st century



Jane Kitchen with Deborah Szekely at Rancho la Puerta

“I don't think I've ever hit my 10,000-step goal before breakfast,” my friend Caroline says on Day One of our stay at Rancho la Puerta. We were up before the sun, watching the day break as we ascended Mount Kuchumaa on a guided hike with a group of 30 other guests. Now, we're digging in to a breakfast we feel we've earned – eggs with homemade tortilla, avocado and salsa alongside bowls of mango, yogurt and bircher muesli. I feel hungry, exhausted and energised all at once.

Rancho la Puerta has been purposely laid out so even without tackling an early-morning hike, guests will get their exercise in throughout the day, walking from one of the 86 casitas to the dining hall, spa or a fitness class. Edmund Szekely, who founded the Ranch in 1940 with wife Deborah, had a simple philosophy decades ahead of its time: live simply, respect the body's inherent wisdom and embrace a life in nature. He was an early proponent of incidental exercise, and getting around on foot means Caroline and I will add at least another 10,000 steps to our day before it's done.

FIRST-TIMERS

On our first hike, we meet Katy, a woman in her 40s from Los Angeles who's been coming to the Ranch with her mother since she was 14. She's the first of many friends we will make during our week at the Ranch, which is populated mostly by women, though a handful of men tag along. Nearly everyone comes for a Saturday to Saturday stay, and meals are served in a communal dining hall at set hours; at dinner the first night, we sit at a big table with strangers, but

we soon know each other's names and where we're from: there are two pairs of sisters, a couple of solo travellers and Caroline and me – friends of more than 20 years who live a few thousand miles apart.

Over the course of the week, we meet Steve and Holly, a vibrant Californian couple in their 80s who will hit the dance floor on the final evening; mother-daughter duo Laurel and Teal, visiting from Oregon on their second trip (though Laurel first came decades ago with her own mother); and visiting chef Joey and his wife Jaeme from San Francisco.

Almost everyone has been before – so much so that Caroline and I have nametags on our backpacks identifying us as 'first-timers'. "After a week, you'll see why people come back," Katy tells us. "After a few months away, you'll start planning your next trip".

Edmund Szekely had a simple philosophy: live simply, respect the body's inherent wisdom, and embrace a life in nature



LEARNING FOR LIFE

But right now, over that first breakfast, Caroline and I are busy planning our day; the myriad of options is a bit overwhelming; in addition to the hikes, more than 50 fitness classes are offered – obvious things such as yoga, Pilates, and strength training, but also more specialised lessons in Gyrokinesis or Feldenkrais. Add to that art lessons, lectures, cooking classes, bird watching, history tours, sound healing and a wide range of aquatic and racquet offerings (it was Pickleball week during our stay) and we began to worry a week wasn't long enough. But it's thrilling, plotting schedules – a little like choosing your first university classes and thinking about all you'll learn. We try to find a mix of doing and being, and by day three we seem to have it down.


We try things we've never tried before (Gyrokinesis) and new takes on things we have (deep water aerobics), and if the key to longevity is to continue to make new neural connections, then Rancho la Puerta is the fountain of youth. We start each day with a guided hike at 6am among the 4,000 acres of the resort – the Professor's Hike, the Pilgrim, Alex's Oak, names that reflect the Szekely family's lasting imprint on the land – and we pass boulders of magnificent forms, horses roaming wild on the mountains and scale heights where we can see as far away as the partially built border wall, and down into the dusty valley to the nearby city of Tecate.

Jane Kitchen with friends new and old at Rancho la Puerta for *Spa Business* magazine

But we soon discover it's also important to schedule down time. Sitting by the pool, lounging beneath the unbelievable boughs of decades-old oaks in colourful hammocks, reading in the silence of our private terrace, taking time for a spa treatment, or enjoying a glass of wine at the Bazaar del Sol are all equally beneficial to our wellbeing – especially for two busy moms who normally only see each other once a year – and Rancho la Puerta's thoughtful landscaping, designed by Rancho La Puerta president, Sarah-Livia Szekely Brightwood – a trained landscape architect – is filled with hidden nooks for quiet and contemplation. Caroline and I take time to slow down and connect, sometimes trying activities together, but just as often, going our own way and meeting up for lunch or dinner. I can see why this framework is ideal for mother-daughter and sister combos, and start thinking about bringing my own daughter when she's old enough.

MINDFUL EATING

With seven days and evenings to catch up without the distraction of husbands or kids, we feel we can spare one night to try something called the silent dinner – which is exactly as it sounds. We're not sure what to expect – the idea of eating a



Caroline harvesting at the Ranch's organic farm

► four-course meal in complete silence sitting across from strangers sounds both horrifying and challenging, and like nothing we've ever done before, which is why we sign up.

The dinner takes place in a private dining room away from the rest of the guests and about twelve of us gather around a large round table, where our host, Hazel – one of the Ranch's yoga instructors – gives us tips and instructions. The idea is to slow down and eat mindfully, she says, and perhaps to give thought to all that had to take place for the food to be served to us: the rich earth that grew the vegetables, the farmers who harvest the crops, the chefs who plan the meal and cook the food, the servers who bring it to us, the dishwashers who clean our plates.

Really take the time to notice how the food looks and smells before we put it in our mouths, we're told, and then chew slowly, noticing not just the taste, but the texture, so we're using as many senses as possible. We've been given a sprig of rosemary, which we bend one way to indicate to our waiter whether we want the vegetarian or the fish option for the main dish, and those with special dietary requirements are also given silent indicators. Hazel rings a small chime, and the silence begins.

It's easy at first, then unnerving. Caroline confides later that she found it hard not to laugh. I smile at the waiter as he brings and clears each dish, fighting the urge to say 'thank you' and attempting to communicate my gratitude with eye contact instead. The circular table means we're looking across at everyone, watching as

these strangers silently eat and mindfully taste their food. Many close their eyes (Hazel has told us this might help us to focus on the food), but I find myself looking into the faces of these strangers instead. At the end of the meal, which takes around two hours, Hazel again rings the chime, and invites us to share our experience with the group.

Many say the food tasted richer and more flavourful; one shared how the experience had him reflecting on meals where he'd come together with family to celebrate. For me, it was about connection – yes, the conscious connection to the food and the earth it grew from, but somehow, over a meal where nothing was said, I felt a deep connection to these people with whom I had not shared a word, but with whom I'd shared an experience.

CHANGE, GROWTH, CONNECTION

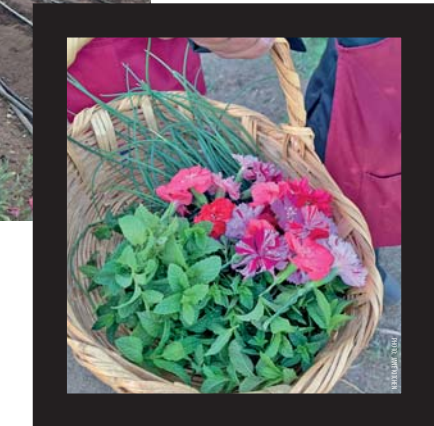
It's that idea of connection that keeps coming back to me over my week at Rancho la Puerta; the time to reconnect properly with an old friend, the space to connect with myself, the magnificent setting in which to connect with the natural world, and the shared experiences that connected me to new-found friends.

Many have likened Rancho la Puerta to summer camp for adults, which might only make



La Cocina Que Canta
cookery school sits in the
heart of the organic farm

WILLIAM J. HARRIS - CLUM



WILLIAM J. HARRIS - CLUM

If the key to longevity
is to continue to make
new neural connections,
then Rancho la Puerta is
the fountain of youth

sense if you're American, and grew up in a certain demographic where you were sent away for a week or two in the heat of the summer to sleep in dorm-like cabins filled with bunk beds and where, in the course of a week, you could come back a changed person, with new friends, having experienced your first taste of something like independence.

We're all of us years (mostly decades) into our own independence, but the summer-camp spirit that's rekindled is one of change and growth and connection. The idea that spending time in nature grounds us in a way that we often miss in daily life, that taking on new challenges is both hard work and rewarding and that making new friends is one of life's richest rewards.

When I sit down to interview Deborah Szekely, who will shortly celebrate her 100th birthday, it's not

surprising to hear her reflect on so many of these ideas: the importance of the natural world, the value of continued learning for mental wellness, and the fact that myriad friendships have been a key to her long and healthy life. The Ranch's motto, a favourite greeting of Edmund Szekely, is 'Siempre Mejor!' or 'Always better!', and reflects this idea of continued growth – mentally, physically, intellectually and spiritually – throughout life, no matter what your age.

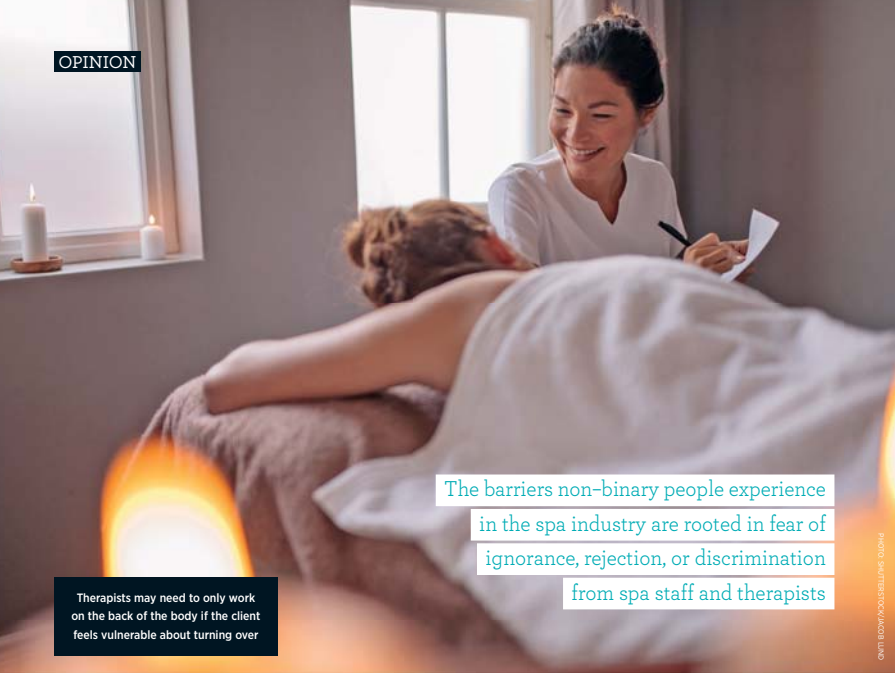
The final night – the one where Steve and Holly tear up the dance floor – is a celebration; there's a live band, wine with dinner and hugs and phone numbers shared, photos taken and promises made to come back at the same time next year. Everyone lingers over their meal, not wanting the magic to end.

Caroline and I pack the next morning and wheel our bags to the reception at the front of the Ranch, where we've barely passed by since our arrival. Our suitcases stand ready for the bus that will take us to the border, and suddenly, it arrives, and a fresh round of guests disembarks, most smiling and exclaiming how good it is to be back, but with a few looking wide-eyed and hesitant, not quite sure where to go. "Was that us just a week ago?" I ask Caroline. It was. And I think Katy was right: this place changes you, and I get it now. I can't wait to come back. ●

More: www.rancholapuerta.com

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The barriers non-binary people experience in the spa industry are rooted in fear of ignorance, rejection, or discrimination from spa staff and therapists

Therapists may need to only work on the back of the body if the client feels vulnerable about turning over

Everyone's talking about...

Going gender neutral

Many trans and non-binary people would love to visit a spa but report having concerns about the experience and the welcome.

It's time to go gender neutral, reports Kath Hudson

The trans and non-binary population is a growing minority, as discrimination is rolled back and the world gradually becomes a safer place for people with gender dysmorphia when it comes to presenting themselves in accordance with how they feel.

Currently 40 per cent of trans people and 50 per cent of non-binary people adjust the way they dress because of fear of harassment or discrimination. Alarmingly, 85 per cent of trans people consider suicide and 41 per cent attempt it.

A world without prejudice, where people are accepted as being human, as opposed to

being classified as a gender would impact these figures positively, saving and enriching lives.

Spas that set out to create safe and nurturing environments are a great place to start.

Some changes are easier to implement than others: adjusting built environments and creating new marketing campaigns can't happen overnight. But imparting knowledge, inspiring teams and encouraging people to be more compassionate can bring about immediate change.

This can go a long way towards making people in the trans and non-binary community feel welcome.

We ask our experts for their insights...

Frances Reed Freed Bodyworks Holistic Wellness Center

The population data is still catching up with the explosion of social awareness about gender identity, however it's clear that a huge wave of non-binary individuals are going to be seeking wellness services over the next decade.

The best data we have currently estimates 11 per cent of LGBTQIA+ adults in the US – approximately 1.2 million people – identify as non-binary (Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law). Seventy six per cent of non-binary adults are aged between 18 and 29, and 89 per cent are from urban areas.

If we're going to be ready to welcome non-binary clients into our spas, we need to start making some changes.

The barriers non-binary people experience in the spa industry are generally rooted in fear of ignorance, rejection, or discrimination from spa staff



and therapists. It starts with the first interactions. Binary gender identification is generally required when booking, so non-binary customers are frequently deterred from a business immediately they engage with the website or reservations team.

Often staff or therapists register confusion when they meet non-binary people and this prevents them being able to relax. Ignorance in relation to language – such as pronouns, identity words, or non-legal names – is alienating.

Binary gender identification is generally required when booking, so non-binary customers are often immediately deterred

Spa owners need to ensure staff and therapists have basic training about gender.

A non-binary customer's experience of a spa and their willingness to recommend it will be dramatically improved by the simple act of asking a person which pronouns they use and then using the correct language for the remainder of their visit.

Most non-binary people avoid spas altogether, because changing areas, lounges, and areas where services occur are often segregated into male and female. Offering gender neutral options and using garments that don't indicate gender, would relieve stress for

non-binary customers. If you do this, make this information available on your website to help these customers choose your spa over others.

Non-binary customers prefer to choose the gender of their therapists, rather than having that assigned based on visual assumptions. Finally, treatments and services should be available to all people, rather than being designated as 'women's services' and 'men's services'.

■ Frances Reed is a massage therapist and owner of Freed Bodyworks. She's also a business consultant in LGBTQIA+ issues and a transgender health educator

Sam Marshall Be Trans Aware

A large proportion of the LGBTQIA+ community feel spa environments are not for them, despite the fact many have the desire to go and would enjoy the benefits as much as anyone else.

Spa marketing is the first barrier. It tends not to be inclusive or diverse and is usually focused on heterosexual, good looking, slim, able-bodied couples.

The spa experience can also be full of disappointments and awkward situations for trans and non-binary people, including having to endure looks from other clients and personal questions from therapists.

To make this community feel welcome, it's important



to look at their whole journey, which could start with a phone call prior to the visit to discuss how the visit could be made more comfortable for them.

Offering a choice of therapists is welcomed by most spa clients, but it's ideal if this can be done with a picture and a bio and,

Therapists need to be prepared to modify treatments – to work around wigs and binders and possibly only work on the back of the body

ideally, the option of a Trans Awareness-trained therapist.

This is especially the case as therapists will need to be prepared to modify treatments, for example to work around wigs and binders. They may also need to only work on the back of the body if the client feels vulnerable about turning over.

A gender neutral changing room and toilet would make the visit much less stressful

for trans and non-binary people. However, many spa owners don't believe this is an investment they have to make.

Others feel that they don't want to upset their current clientele by welcoming non-binary customers. However, by taking this attitude they are insulting part of the population.

■ Sam Marshall co-founded Trans Awareness for Spas www.spabusiness.com/trans

Keri Blue Be Trans Aware

In a binary world it's easy to feel left out if you identify as trans or non-binary. In the UK there's not much data on the size of the market yet, as it wasn't until the last census that people could state they were non-binary, but it's believed to be between 1 and 2 per cent of the population. However, that's only the people who are out - many aren't, or don't want to label themselves.

Non-binary and trans people have to risk-assess every outing, including the shops we go in and whether there are individual fitting rooms and toilets.



Sometimes it can cause too much anxiety to do the things we would like to do.

The spa environment can create a lot of anxiety - concerns that we'll get stared at, that other clients might

Spa environments can cause a lot of anxiety
- concerns therapists might ask intrusive
questions about who we used to be

complain about us, or that other customers might think we fancy them. We worry we might not feel pretty enough and therapists might ask us invasive questions, particularly about the person we used to be.

Being given a choice of therapist is important, because personally, if I'm going to take my clothes off and make myself vulnerable, I'd like to be with a female (cis- or

transgender) or non-binary therapist, and I would also like the opportunity to have the treatment modified, for example having a towel over my front if I'm lying on my back.

■ Keri Blue is founder of *Hair Has No Gender*, a campaign fighting for gender equality in the hair industry, as well as co-founder of *Trans Awareness for Spas*



Offering spa garments that don't indicate gender may relieve stress

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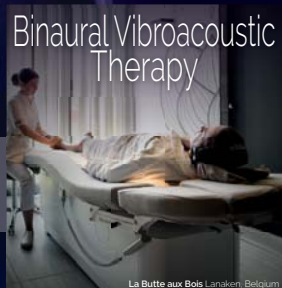


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Remove descriptions of male and female treatments from the spa menu

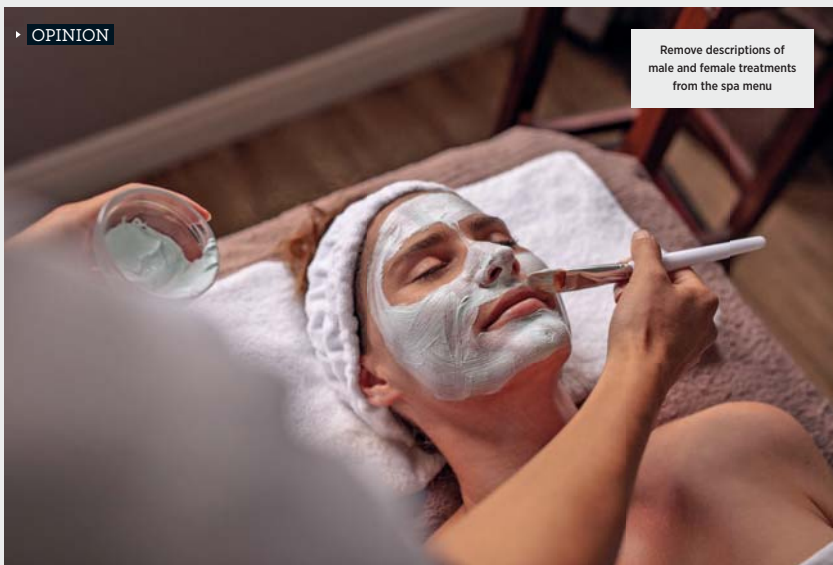


PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/LUCIO LUNO

Lynne McNeas ISPA

There's been a welcome shift in the industry towards greater inclusivity for trans and non-binary guests in recent years, and ISPA is exploring opportunities to collect useful data about this through our various research initiatives.

In 2019, we hosted a well-received education session at our conference, entitled *Serving transgender and non-binary clients with dignity*, which highlighted best practice for inclusivity and educated guests about the challenges trans and non-binary guests face in the spa.

Since then, awareness and advocacy has increased and spa operators are more conscious than ever of the need to have inclusive practices for guests and staff.

Awareness and action are different things, but by



increasing the visibility of these guests and having honest conversations about how we can do better as an industry, we can put ourselves in the best position to practice empathy and establish policies and protocols that allow all guests to feel welcome.

Last year, some of the ISPA team and board met with a trans spa professional and advocate who had worked within their spa to make inclusivity-focused

When it comes to making inclusivity-focused improvements, we must be aware of the importance of emotional and psychological safety

improvements. One of the things that jumped out from listening to their story was the importance of emotional and psychological safety. This has to be established first and it starts with leadership. If inclusivity is clearly established as a value by leaders, creating change is easier.

Trans guests and staff often run into barriers to inclusion and may feel unsafe in bringing those barriers to others' attention without support from leaders. The individual we spoke with felt supported by their team and was able to make meaningful

progress in providing a changing area for trans and non-binary guests and offering employees multiple choices of uniform rather than only gendered options.

Language is also important. A step as simple as listing the preferred pronouns of staff or eliminating gendered language from job descriptions or guest communications can signal to trans and non-binary people that they are visible to the spa and that their needs are being considered.

■ Lynne McNeas is president of ISPA which represents 3,200 wellness providers

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Tara Moore Galgorm Spa and Golf Resort

When I attended the online Trans Awareness for Spa training I was amazed and saddened to hear the journey that trans people go through and the obstacles they face, and as an operator I feel we have to ensure everyone feels included, irrespective of their gender.

I looked at the situation from the point of view of a receptionist, therapist and manager and thought about how each role should deal with situations should they arise. What's needed is an open and honest dialogue, making our staff and guests know we want to understand what they need and to look after non-binary people with the same level of mindfulness as any other guest.

So far we've made a number of small changes to our operations, including sending more staff on the Trans Awareness course and promoting staff awareness that our company ethos is to be inclusive to everyone. For example, sanitary bins have been added to the spa's male changing areas and



we aim to add them to the resort and staff areas. We've removed gender from our booking form and descriptions of 'male' and 'female' treatments from the menu.

Changes we know are needed include advertising on our website that we're trans aware and everyone is welcome; providing training that's specific to each role type; and introducing a changing area which is non binary.

Although we've taken the first steps, I'm aware we have a long way to go. However, I'm delighted we've started this important journey.

■ Tara Moore is spa manager at the Galgorm Spa and Golf Resort

As an operator, I feel we have to ensure everyone feels included and welcome, irrespective of their gender

GOING GENDER NEUTRAL

Our expert panel advise on how to get started

- Audit your pricelist to remove gendered pricing and offerings
- Use pronouns and Mx: put them on the booking form and confirm with people which pronouns they use at the outset
- Treat people as humans, not as their gender. Don't ask personal questions
- Make sure there's a trans/non-binary-friendly culture in your workplace
- Audit your marketing across all channels, so it's inclusive and diverse, with images of people of different genders, sexual preference, race, disability and size
- Avoid gendered language such as ladies and gentlemen in all your communications
- Ensure your team members undertake Trans Awareness training

SOME TERMINOLOGY

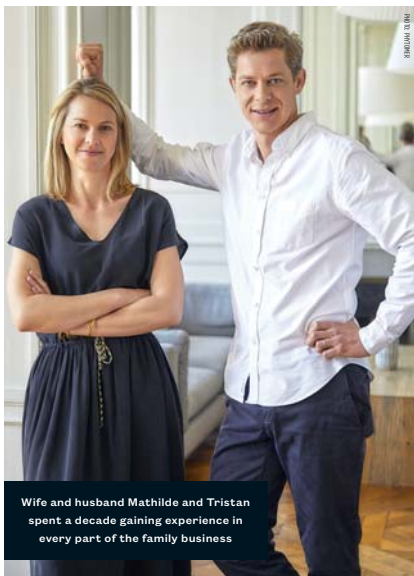
- **TRANS:** presenting as a different gender identity to the sex assigned at birth.
- **CIS:** presenting as the same gender identity as the sex assigned at birth.
- **GENDER DYSMORPHIA:** when there is a mismatch between the gender someone feels and how they look.
- **NON-BINARY:** not identifying with birth gender, but doesn't want to transition. This is not a third gender, non-binary people don't conform to a binary world.
- **AFAB:** assigned female at birth.
- **AMAB:** assigned male at birth.



Celebrating THE SEA



The story surrounding Phytomer is one of a unique wellness vision, a loyal family, remarkable marine science and pioneering skincare. We talk to deputy general manager Mathilde Gédouin-Lagarde as the company celebrates its 50th anniversary



Wife and husband Mathilde and Tristan spent a decade gaining experience in every part of the family business

It's been five decades since French entrepreneur Jean Gédouin sought to harness the essential benefits of the sea around his native Brittany, and turn its powerful properties into an iconic skincare brand that's now loved and used the world over.

The captivating family story of Phytomer involves three ambitious generations – grandfather Jean, who pioneered the idea of turning the sea into wellness skincare; his son Antoine, who focused on developing exceptional marine research and development standards, and putting Phytomer on the international stage; and Antoine's daughter Mathilde, who together with her husband Tristan have spent more than a decade gaining detailed experience in every part of the business – from product development, branding and distribution, to launching two Phytomer spas.

Mathilde and Tristan are the dedicated couple who are now poised to lead the brand into its next exciting half century. Mathilde says: "We've made Phytomer a leading spa brand while remaining true to my grandfather's aspirations. We believe more than ever in a world where people want to reconnect with what is essential: nature; physical and mental wellness, and other people."

Passion for research

The bracing coastal environment around St Malo in Brittany is still very much the physical home and spiritual heart of Phytomer. It's where

1972

Jean Gédouin creates Phytomer so that everyone can experience the sea's exceptional benefits. Launches Oligomer, a powerful sea concentrate

1978


Phytomer opens its first laboratories on the former family farm in Brittany

1981

Jean's son Antoine joins the family business. He develops the company internationally and invests heavily in state-of-the-art research facilities

1982

International expansion begins, with the first country being Italy



The captivating family story of Phytomer spans 50 years and involves three ambitious generations



The coastal environment around St Malo in Brittany is the physical home and spiritual heart of Phytomer

the company has developed 10,000sq m of laboratories that are setting the benchmark for marine biotechnology globally.

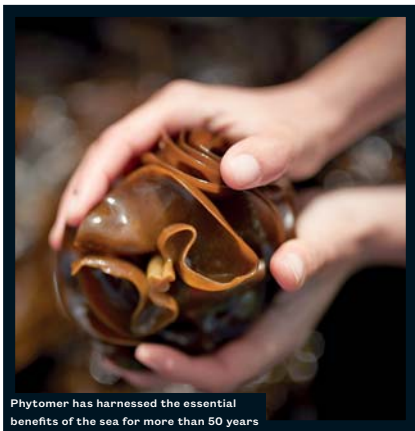
Mathilde says: "Research has been a key driver from the very beginning. We've extended our science facilities and invested in the most advanced technologies and human skills, year on year.

"We have state-of-the art processes to cultivate marine plants micro algae and plankton to produce natural active ingredients which deliver remarkable results for the skin.

"We have the testing capabilities today that would have only been open to medical facilities in past decades. Our scientists are using advanced genetic and biological analysis models to evaluate the effectiveness of these molecules on skin cells."

Within those impressive R&D facilities can be found 30 researchers (many of Phytomer's staff have been with them for decades), 1,000sq m of sustainable algae and 4,000sq m of organic plant cultivation, plus a manufacturing plant that processes two million units per year.

Phytomer products and treatment protocols can now be found in over 10,000 spas across



Phytomer has harnessed the essential benefits of the sea for more than 50 years

1985

New R&D labs opened, with Romuald Vallée, who is still Phytomer's head of science. Also, first joint venture in the US

1991

Antoine Gédouin co-founds the International Spa Association (ISPA) in the US

1998

Major success in Japan. The Japanese love Oligomer!

2000

Phytomer opens its first spa, in St Malo, Brittany

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10,000sq m of laboratories are setting the benchmark in marine research

80 different countries - from Mongolia to the Maldives, Finland to Australia.

Mathilde says: "We always partner with local distributors who have a very strong knowledge of their own culture, and make the most of their feedback to adjust our offers locally.

"We started as early as 1983 in Italy, 1985 in the USA and Canada, before exploring the whole world. It has made us very humble when it comes to deciding which treatment is going to be a hit in each country, or which tone of voice we should use. We listen to local needs and customise the offer as much as we can. I think this is the cornerstone of our success abroad."

Holistic treatments

Treatment protocols have always been as important to Phytomer as its products, and as early as the 1980s, Phytomer created

Phytomer is proud to work with some of the most prestigious spa resorts worldwide



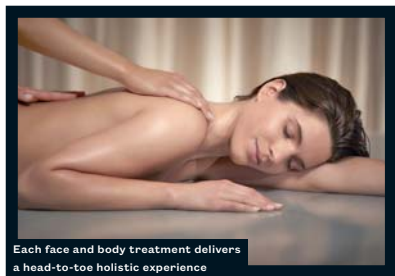
a holistic spa experience that was as good for the skin as it was for the mind.

Mathilde says: "Each of our facials and body treatments deliver a head-to-toe holistic experience. Our protocols are 100 per cent manual, valuing human contact, and replenishing body and soul, all using spa formulas with the highest concentration of natural, active ingredients.

"Phytomer is proud to work with some of the most prestigious spa resorts worldwide, and assist them in creating bespoke spa menus and signature treatments that cater perfectly for their customer profile."

The first Phytomer spa opened in St Malo in 2000, and in recent years the brand has opened two flagship spas in Paris. Providing a focus for the brand, Mathilde says the spas have also created a space to gain valuable direct feedback from customers on products, and to better shape its treatment and therapist training protocols in a live environment.

While a large chain of its own spas is not in the masterplan, Mathilde says Phytomer may consider opening a few more flagships in different countries, if there is an appetite from its leading distributors.



Each face and body treatment delivers a head-to-toe holistic experience

2007

New filtering gardens in Brittany to clean the production water in a sustainable and eco-friendly way

2010

Mathilde Gédouin-Lagarde and her husband Tristan Lagarde join the family business

2012

Creation of a new marine biotech laboratory, where the iconic Pionnière XMF line is born a few years later

2017

Phytomer receives the EcoVadis Gold Certification in recognition of its CSR work, ranking it among the world's most sustainable companies



The first Phytomer spa opened in St Malo in 2000, and the brand has recently opened two flagship spas in Paris

Phytomer products are made from natural marine extracts, with concentrated active ingredients



Much to celebrate

So what celebrations lie in store for Phytomer's 50th anniversary this year? Mathilde says she's very happy to leave behind the multiple pandemic lockdowns of the past two years and get back out meeting B2B customers face to face. There will be a big event for the company's international distributors in St Malo in May, an anniversary roadshow visiting 10 cities around France, as well as many celebrations across Phytomer's worldwide network.

Innovation-wise, Phytomer will release Oligo 6, a marine concentrate, packed with trace elements, vitamins and prebiotics, as well as a premium facial treatment, offering remarkable anti-aging results.

Above all, she acknowledges the privilege of soon heading up a spa skincare company that has remained an independent family business for 50 years. "We remain true to our values and work ethics," she says. "With no outside pressure from investors, we can make all our decisions based on what's right for the brand, our employees, our customers, and of course the environment."

"We're proud of what we've accomplished thanks to our partners and colleagues, and excited for the future."

Our decisions are based on what's right for the brand, our employees, our customers and the environment

Over the next two years, there will be more focus on developing organic lines (the first, Cyfolia, launched in 2020), a biotechnology production unit (2024), an ambitious merchandising programme to help clients with spa design and product staging, and refillable product containers.

So much has been achieved in the past 50 years, but when it comes to harnessing the power of the sea, Mathilde admits that science has only just scraped the surface. "Around 90 per cent of marine organisms are microscopic and only 1 per cent of them have been identified. And from just one extracted organism comes the potential for many different formulas. So there is still much work to do, and so many incredible marine wellness benefits yet to discover." ●

2018

Phytomer opens its first wellness spa in Paris, a few minutes from the famous Champs-Élysée

2020

Launch of new sustainable packaging, and the organic Cyfolia line

2021

Phytomer opens its second spa in Paris, a short walk from the Eiffel Tower

2022

Phytomer is celebrating its 50th anniversary in more than 80 countries, in collaboration with 10,000 spas and some of the best therapists in the world

BOSTON STRONG

The Global Wellness Summit had to pivot once again in 2021, moving the annual conference from Tel Aviv to Boston. Jane Kitchen was there to see first-hand what this 'New new era in health and wellness' looks like



Let's get this out of the way first: this Summit was not the international gathering of wellness minds from across the globe of pre-COVID days, when we used to jump on a transatlantic flight without a thought in our mind or a lateral flow test result in our hand. But it was, all things considered, a step in that direction.

The Summit's theme, 'A new new era in health and wellness', was showcased with an impressive roster of speakers, as organisers took advantage of Boston's reputation as a hub of academic and medical research to bring in an exceptional lineup.

Some of the top medical advisors from around the US were in attendance, including Summit co-host Dr Michael Roizen of the Cleveland Clinic; Dr Richard Carmona, 17th surgeon general of the US; and Dr Michelle Williams, dean of the faculty at Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health.

The agenda kept up with the times; several panels and speakers focused on women's health and communities of colour and in this age of anxiety, new research on sleep health, breathwork, and the power of psychedelics for mental wellness were presented.

As would be expected, many of the speakers and panellists focused on how COVID has impacted our wellness – mental, physical and economic.

As it's done since 2015, when the name of the Summit changed from the Global Spa & Wellness Summit to the Global Wellness Summit, this year's programme took one small step further away from spa, to focus more on topics such as technology (set to be a big subject at the 2022 Summit in Tel Aviv), wellness architecture and real estate, and bridging the gap between medicine and wellness.

Personal and planetary wellness

After the traditional opening of beautiful cinematography from filmmaker and mushroom-lover Louie Schwartzberg and a welcome from GWS chair Susie Ellis, co-host Dr Michael Roizen opened the Summit with a bombshell: between 2020 and 2030, we'll see an exponential increase in life expectancy of at least 30 years and by 2030, 90 will be the new 40, he said.

"We've extended life expectancy by two-and-a-half years every decade since 1890, when life expectancy was 40; now, it's 78 or 79," he explained. "Up to now, we've delayed ageing; now we're going to be able to reverse it."

Dr Roizen talked about the importance of lifestyle – exercise, nutrition and stress management – in making sure that if we're living longer, we're living longer 'well'. He explained that physical activity affects which genes are on or off,

Chair Susie Ellis opened the conference with a passionate address



stress management controls whether markers for inflammation are turned on, and we should “only eat food we love and that loves us back”.

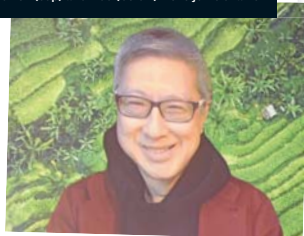
“You are a genetic engineer for you,” he explained. “You, by simple lifestyle actions, can change whether genes that promote cancer are on or off.”

Co-host Victor Koo, who attended via video link from China, reminded us that human health, planetary health and animal welfare are all interconnected, that “there’s no true personal wellness without global wellness when it comes to pandemics” and that the density of factory farms increases the risk of more disease spreading. Importantly, he said, we’re facing the greatest threat to mental wellness since World War II.

“Humanity has looked for more and for better – with no end in sight,” he said. “More



Roizen (top) and Koo (below) were joint chairs



- countries are realising that true wellbeing of citizens is a better way to measure success."

Psychedelics, music and mental wellness

Schwartzberg also focused on the link between planetary and personal health. "What's the benefit of living to 90 or 100 if we don't have a planet that can sustain life?" he asked.

He is well-known to the GWS audience, who have delighted in his time-lapse footage of the natural world. Earlier in the pandemic, his film *Fantastic Fungi* was picked up by Netflix, inspiring viewers across the globe, and causing *The Los Angeles Times* to declare "mushrooms are the new superheroes."

"Coming out of the pandemic, the most difficult thing to deal with was disconnection," said Schwartzberg. "Mushrooms are an underground network, and the timing of that message couldn't be better. We're in a kind of mushroom zeitgeist culturally; they're everywhere – skincare, coffee – mushrooms are a portal into understanding nature and how we need to live in harmony with the planet."

But beyond that, Schwartzberg's film – and his talk at the GWS – focused on the power of psychedelic mushrooms in helping people overcome PTSD. Dr Rick Doblin, founder and executive director of the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, also spoke about new research into psychedelics and mental wellness, specifically, MDMA (known more commonly



More countries are realising that true wellbeing of citizens is a better way to measure success

Victor Koo



There will be spas where people will go for massage and meditation and micro-dosing with psychedelics

Dr Rick Doblin



We have a whole generation who are less comfortable taking risks – they're anxious, fragile and depressed

Freddie Moross



Susie Ellis is chair of GWS and GWI

as the party drug Ecstasy) which he predicts will be approved by the US's Food and Drug Administration for prescriptions by 2023. "Our goal is mass mental health, and that's what we're moving towards," said Dr Doblin. "Psychedelics have been used for thousands of years, so it's not surprising there's value in them."

Dr Doblin said that much as we've seen the mainstreaming of yoga and mindfulness, psychedelic use will soon follow. "If you're not working in psychedelics now, you will be," he told the audience. "There will be spas all over the place where people will go for massage and meditation and psychedelics."

If you're not quite ready for micro-dosing at your spa, Freddie Moross, co-founder and CEO of Mynd Group, spoke about the importance of music for mental wellness and creating authentic connections – especially for millennials and Gen Z. Moross pointed to statistics showing that 35 per cent of Gen Z and 31 per cent of millennials have taken time off from work due to anxiety or stress since the start of the pandemic.

"We have a whole generation who are less comfortable taking risks – they're anxious, fragile and depressed," said Moross. "They have a digital

Lifestyle actions
determine whether
genes that promote
cancer are on or off

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

*If we think of
wellbeing as a skill
– similar to learning
how to play the violin
– the key is practice*

pacifier. Music and audio can form a fantastic break from screens. Music as a tool for mental health can transcend cultural boundaries.”

Public health and mental wellness

This crisis in mental health – which was already an issue way before the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, but has been exacerbated by the events of the last few years – was echoed by many throughout the Summit. Music, mindfulness, breathwork and social connection were all offered as avenues to help heal the world – and from a business perspective, are all things that can be brought into a spa.

“The pandemic has exacted a toll on our global wellbeing,” said Dr Richard J Davidson, founder and director of the US-based Center for Healthy Minds. “In every single country in the world, the level of depression is greater than pre-COVID, and in many countries, it’s significantly greater.”

In conversation with Dr Roizen, Dr Davidson discussed the plasticity of wellbeing and the four pillars associated with different brain networks: awareness (our capacity to regulate our attention), connection (healthy relationships, kindness and gratitude), insight (curiosity and knowledge of oneself – a key to our wellbeing is



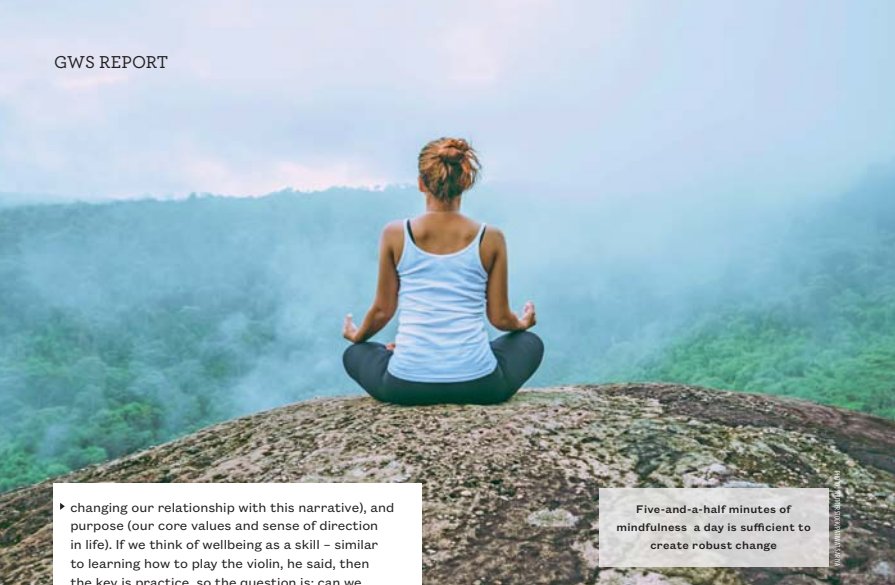
“

In every country in the world, the level of depression is greater than pre-COVID, and in many, it’s greater

Dr Richard J Davidson



Nancy Min and architect Veronica Schreibeis Smith



► changing our relationship with this narrative), and purpose (our core values and sense of direction in life). If we think of wellbeing as a skill – similar to learning how to play the violin, he said, then the key is practice, so the question is: can we develop a precision medicine for wellness?

Dr Davidson shared data from a new study that suggests that just five-and-a-half minutes of mindfulness a day was sufficient to create robust change – just slightly longer than most of us spend each day brushing our teeth. “We are in a serious crisis of wellbeing throughout the planet, and we need strategies to cultivate wellbeing urgently,” he said. “Humanity needs to take our minds as seriously as our teeth.”

Five-and-a-half minutes of mindfulness a day is sufficient to create robust change



Health has become the baseline – investors are now seeing it as essential

Joanna Frank

Wellness real estate and senior living

Another area that was already underway before COVID but has exploded since the start of the pandemic is wellness real estate and architecture.

“The demand for healthy buildings was strong before COVID – during pandemic the demand has skyrocketed,” said Joanna Frank, founder and CEO of the Center for Active Design. “Where you live and where you work is having a measurable impact on your health, whether you’re aware of it or not.”

Frank said tenants are driving demand for healthy buildings across all segments – residential, commercial and industrial – and that according to a pre-COVID MIT study, certified healthy buildings get 4.4 per cent to 7.7 per cent more rent per square foot than non-certified and non-registered. “Health has become the baseline – investors are now seeing it as essential,” said Frank. “Investor sentiment around healthy buildings has changed massively because of COVID. Everyone’s eyes have been opened to the importance of public health.” ►



GWS researchers looked at the impact of COVID on the sector



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- ▶ A panel on wellness architecture looked at the idea of 'thin places' – energetic areas where the physical and the spiritual are closely connected – but also delved further into biophilic design and its impact on creativity and stress management, and how COVID has shifted the demand for healthy buildings. "The cool new amenity in buildings is clean air," said Joseph Allen, director of the Healthy Buildings Programme and associate professor at Harvard's TH Chan School of Public Health. "We didn't know how a lot of respiratory diseases spread, and there has been a full shift [since COVID]."

Chip Conley, founder of the Modern Elder Academy, spoke about the coming disruption in senior living. Conley – a seasoned hotelier who founded Joie de Vivre at age 26 and later helped put Airbnb on the map – is working on a regenerative community in Baja, Mexico, and said that 'intentional communities' are about to go mainstream, in part because the senior living industry doesn't see that there's an increased desire for community, wellness and purpose.

Community wellness

Community is also at the heart of wellness strategy when it comes to reaching people of colour; GWS advisory board member Dr Nicola



Dr Nicola Finley (above) and Mickey Beyer-Clausen



Spa Business magazine was given to delegates at the Global Wellness Summit

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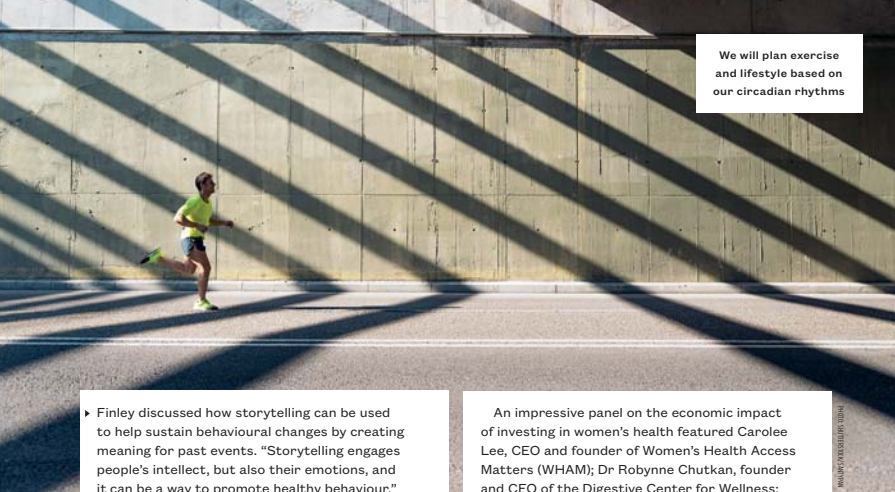
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► Finley discussed how storytelling can be used to help sustain behavioural changes by creating meaning for past events. "Storytelling engages people's intellect, but also their emotions, and it can be a way to promote healthy behaviour," she said. "It's particularly effective among racial and ethnic groups with a tradition of storytelling and a history of medical mistrust."

Dr Michelle A Williams, dean of the faculty at Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health, spoke about the inequalities in healthcare – particularly in the US – that COVID exposed. "COVID has done something that has made the invisible more visible," she said. "Race, ethnicity and your zip code all determined how well you made it through the pandemic."

She also talked about the toll that COVID has taken on women's lives, with a 25 per cent increase in violence against women during the pandemic. "We're taking back four decades in the advances we've made for women as a result of this pandemic," she said. "This has to be a moment that says public health equity justice should not be undervalued."

An impressive panel on the economic impact of investing in women's health featured Carolee Lee, CEO and founder of Women's Health Access Matters (WHAM); Dr Robynne Chutkan, founder and CEO of the Digestive Center for Wellness; and Dr Suzanne Steinbaum of SRSHeart Inc. As Lee explained, women are not only 50 per cent of the workforce, they also control 60 per cent of wealth, 85 per cent of spending, and 80 per cent of healthcare decisions. "Women's health is an economic issue that we cannot afford to ignore," she said. "I believe women drive the economy – yet women are an understudied species and totally underrepresented in health studies."

Lee went on to tell a stunned audience that it took an act of Congress in 1993 for the National Institute of Health to include women in their research, and it wasn't until 2016 that the NIH required female test subjects to be included in medical research.

Dr Chutkan went on to discuss the ways in which the female digestive tract is completely different from the male (we have a longer colon and a wider pelvis, which is a lot more crowded



We're a treatment-driven society and we need to be a prevention-driven society

Dr Suzanne Steinbaum



Renee Moorefield, Richard Carmona and Susie Ellis



Photo Credit: Bamford Wellness Spa, London

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the Art of fine linen
du linge raffiné



Photo Credit: Spa Guerlain -The Woodward, Geneva

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► by our reproductive system, and there are hormonal differences). With all we know about the gut microbiome these days, these differences are more important than ever. "The health of our microbiome is inextricably tied to the health of our bodies," said Dr Chutkan. "We have seven-times more nerve cells in our gut than in our spinal cord, and most serotonin is made in the gut. We're animated by our microbiome." And while there has been much discussion about the gut/brain connection, Dr Steinbaum talked about the important connections between the mind and the heart. "It's really about how we live, and stress management is a big part of that," she said. "The cardiology community really needs to look at people holistically. We're a treatment-driven society, and we need to be a prevention-driven society."

American TV personality and CEO of State of Menopause, Stacy London, talked about the need for "an entire menopause ecosystem" that resides at "the corner of self care and health care."

"Between 45 and 60 we're becoming culturally irrelevant – you can start to feel you're losing who you were," she said. "Knowledge, education and information are essential to the impact of menopause."

Sleep and breathwork

Sleep expert Dr Michael Breus enlightened us on the importance of understanding your chronotype in thinking about sleep health, and the importance of a 'body movement schedule' for consistent energy throughout the day. Dr Breus suggested stretching movements in the morning, shaking mid-morning, bouncing after lunch, building mid-afternoon, and balance movements before bed. In the end, he said, it comes down to the simple fact that your "energy gains have to outpace your energy drains".



Clodagh with Roberta Arjona from Rancho la Puerta



Women's health was a major subject of debate



Energy gains have to outpace energy drains: stretch in the morning, shake mid-morning, bounce after lunch, build mid-afternoon and balance before bed

Dr Breus

But, he explained, those gains can sometimes come from unexpected places. "You'd be shocked at how much energy an act of kindness gives you," he said. "And laughter changes your perspective; music changes your entire energy pattern."

Dr Rebecca Robbins, a sleep specialist from Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, said that while sleep deficiency costs the United States US\$411bn (£371bn, £301bn) and the EU €680bn (US\$754bn, £563bn) in lost productivity each year, only 10 per cent of workplace wellbeing programmes address the need for sleep health. This fatigue cost has become even more pronounced since the pandemic began, said Dr Robbins, with 39.3 per cent of Americans reporting disturbed sleep due to COVID, 40.9 per cent reporting adverse mental conditions, and sleep medication sales up 18 per cent since the pandemic. Aside from its impact on the workforce and on our physical health, "sleep is a back door to improving mental health," said Dr Robbins.

Mickey Beyer-Clausen, founder of circadian rhythm app Timeshifter, brought

- Dr Steven W Lockley, a neuroscientist at Brigham and Women's Hospital, and former NASA astronaut Mike Massimino on stage to announce the debut of a Timeshifter for shift workers, who suffer negative consequences by having their circadian rhythm disrupted. Shift workers are less productive, have high absenteeism, weakened immune systems, a 30 per cent increased risk of accident or injury, and are three times more likely to be hospitalised due to COVID, said Beyer-Clausen.

These statistics are a window into the importance of circadian rhythm. "We have never been so distracted from our biology, and it genuinely disrupts our health and wellbeing," said Beyer-Clausen. "We're working to build a future where our individual circadian time is synchronised with our clock time."

Beyer-Clausen stressed that everyone has an individual circadian time, and in future, we'll use it to inform our lifestyle. He said: "Circadian time is affecting all of us – soon you'll take your vaccine, train for a marathon, and plan your diet and exercise based on your circadian time," he said.

The power of breathwork

Dr Andrew Huberman, professor of neurobiology and ophthalmology and psychiatry at Stanford University School of Medicine in California, outlined ways for highly effective mind-body control using breathwork. Common variables in breathwork include rate, intensity, nasal versus mouth, inhale and exhale ration, and ribcage expansion versus diaphragmatic breathing. "Meditation and breathwork can change the mechanical and the chemical," he explained.

Bathing your cells in dopamine and serotonin is completely different from bathing them in cortisol and adrenaline, said Dr Jeffrey Rediger, assistant professor at Harvard Medical



(L-R) Pornthip Noppakoon, Esther Fieldgrass and *Spa Business* assistant editor, Megan Whitby



Our path to wellness and longevity will be driven not by spinach and yoga, but by technology

John Nosta, NostaLab

School and author of *Cured: How to heal your life*. "A lot of us live in chronic fight-or-flight mode, and we're not even aware of it."

Dr Rediger's book looks at evidence around people with incurable illnesses who have suddenly healed, and why this happened. "As doctors, we're trained to make a diagnosis and prescribe medicine, but we don't understand how people heal," he said. "There's nothing spontaneous about spontaneous remission – everything has a cause, it's just that we're not asking the right questions."

His research showed it was the people who have made major shifts in lifestyle and perception who changed outcomes. "There's huge relevance in this for the 85 to 90 per cent of illnesses we treat as incurable, but which in fact are lifestyle-related and reversible: diabetes, heart disease, cancer, lung disease, and autoimmune illness," he said.

For John Nosta, president of NostaLab and an expert on the field of digital health, the future is clear. He said: "Our path to wellness and longevity will be driven not by spinach and yoga, but by technology."

Mia Kyricos of Kyricos and Associates left us with some pointers on where the industry should be heading, calling for a new role of 'chief wellbeing officer' to change the culture. She added: "It's time to make wellness part of our DNA." ●



Gil Basche talked about medical integration

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PLANT POWER

Benefiting from its founders' passion for plants, Yon-Ka's new brand identity reflects its past and its continued research into the healing power of plants which enables the company to craft innovative formulas that deliver results

French aromatherapy pioneers Cécile, Ernest and Charles Mühlethaler established the Laboratories Multaler in 1954, armed with a passion for understanding the therapeutic properties of plants from around the globe.

They developed a line of phyto-aromatic skincare products, known as Yon-Ka, based on knowledge shared through their network of scientists, chemists and doctors.

Today, the family business is led by the founders' daughter and niece, Françoise (CEO) and Catherine (MD) Mühlethaler – a biochemist and an aesthetician – whose complementary skills have brought a unique dimension to the brand.

Over the years, the two have collaborated to ensure Yon-Ka plays a pioneering role in the creation of holistic skincare by overseeing the development of products that contain unique combinations of aromatherapy, aromachology, phytotherapy and gemmotherapy ingredients, that harness the power of nature to offer real results for authentic beauty at every age.

Product efficacy

Yon-Ka's collection of almost 100 face and body retail and professional products are created from an average of 92 per cent of natural ingredients. Most of these products are vegan, all are gluten free and organic sourced ingredients are used wherever possible. They also comply with European manufacturing regulations that guarantee the highest levels of efficacy and safety. The raw materials and the finished products are not tested on animals.

Product efficacy is vigorously tested during clinical studies conducted in independent testing laboratories and supervised by expert dermatologists. Safety assessments on cell cultures are conducted by independent toxicologists and physico-chemical and bacteriological controls are conducted by Yon-Ka's expert laboratory scientists, while product production and primary packaging takes place in clean rooms within optimal safety conditions to guarantee maximum bacteriological security.



FIVE COMPANY VALUES

- Effectiveness through nature – products are based on a combination of four plant sciences and active ingredients with proven efficacy
- Excellent formulations – using organic, gluten free ingredients that meet the criteria of a strict charter developed by a team of experts
- Expert techniques – using unique spa treatment techniques, including Eastern and Western protocols
- Experience for the senses – essential oils ensure relaxing, aromatic treatments that benefit the body and mind
- Ethical commitments – Eco-friendly, 100 per cent French-made products and a brand committed to caring for the planet.



Therapists are trained in the product benefits and treatment techniques

PHOTO: YON-KA



Yon-Ka products are made from an average of 92% natural ingredients

© YON-KA



Product efficacy is vigorously tested during clinical studies conducted in independent laboratories and supervised by expert dermatologists

New brand identity

The company has recently redefined its brand identity to promote The Experience of Phyto-Aromatic Skincare through new, authentic, nature-focused visuals that convey its respect for nature. These subtle changes reflect Yon-Ka's continued commitment to ensuring every treatment is created using ingredients and technology that are kind to the planet and offer users unique experiences that are effective and pleasing to the senses. The new brand platform also promotes Yon-Ka's commitment to becoming increasingly eco- and nature-inspired within its operations. The new visuals convey care, expertise and natural product know-how, together with a sensorial approach to wellness through light and shadow designs that convey warm elegance, soft faces and aesthetic bodies.

Spa engagement

Six thousand international spa professionals already use Yon-Ka's comprehensive range of phyto-aromatic skincare products for their clients who want natural, results-driven treatments.

An effective treatment solution is available for every client's beauty or wellbeing concern, which therapists can identify through the Yon-Ka skin diagnostic test. For example, the Aroma-Fusion body care treatments include

YON-KA HERO PRODUCTS

- Yon-Ka Lotion - created from 99.6 per cent of natural ingredients including the brand's Quintessence - essential oils of lavender, geranium, rosemary, cypress and thyme
- Hydra N°1 hydrating product range
- Age Exception, the premium global anti-aging collection
- 4 Boosters - a range of products that can be used to personalise day and night creams - tailoring them to problems such as fatigue, the changing seasons and harsh external factors, according to individual needs
- Phyto-Bain - used in the bath or shower - the 'spa at home' essential for draining and toning the skin thanks to the powerful and balancing lavender, helichrysum, petitgrain, rosemary and sage essential oils.

PHOTO: YON-KA



Yon-Ka's phyto-aromatic skincare range allows for natural, results-driven treatments

body scrubs, massages and rituals that can be performed using different therapy techniques and in varying degrees of intensity. A choice of essential oils offer olfactory notes and effects that meet individual needs.

Therapists can expand their product knowledge, while learning specific treatment protocols and techniques either through introductory and advanced training at Yon-Ka training centres or within their spa setting or through virtual sessions. From a business point of view, Yon-Ka can assist spa and wellness operators with the creation of specific spa concepts by devising treatment menus and adapting the spa environment to suit the needs of the clientele.

Both therapists and reception staff can also be trained in how best to promote home-care products, while a marketing toolkit is available to help them communicate effectively with current and potential Yon-Ka customers. ●

More: www.yonka.com

Paradise at Preidlhof

Lisa Starr made the trip to the South Tyrol to meet Patrizia Bortolin and experience the award-winning Preidlhof resort

Departing the autostrada at Bolzano in the South Tyrol, you begin a series of twists and turns through deep valleys with the Italian Alps rising on either side. The air is crisp and clear and the valley floor is planted with apple trees that have supplanted the grapevines you see further south.

Road signs and business names are in German and churches and buildings have the chalet-inspired design of their northern neighbour, making it easy to forget you're still in Italy.



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Preidlhof was first in the world to get ISO 17679 certification – the international standard for wellness spa services



Guests enjoy Kneipp therapy in the outdoor relaxation garden

Fifteen minutes past Merano you arrive in the sweet town of Naturns and a few turns past the church is the entrance to the Preidlhof luxury resort, where you're greeted with prosecco and nibbles and a warm Italian welcome.

Nestled among lemon, olive and cypress trees near the 46th parallel north, the micro-climate sees palm trees juxtaposed with snow-covered mountains.

Journey of discovery

Preidlhof's lotus flower-inspired logo turns out to be an apt metaphor, as the property reveals itself gradually. Spread over three buildings, it has 71 rooms and suites and 5,000sq m of wellness space, including a spa with 14 treatment rooms, six swimming pools, five hydrotherapy pools, a medical spa and a sauna tower with 16 steam, sauna and relaxation spaces.

Preidlhof was opened in 1966 by the Ladurner family, three generations of which are still involved with the resort, but it was the arrival of spa director Patrizia Bortolin in 2019 that sparked the blossoming of the wellness offering.



Patrizia Bortolin (second from left) is a master of spa design and delivery. Pictured here with her transformational wellness team, who deliver many unique therapies at Preidlhof

PHOTO: PREIDLHOF

FIRST PERSON

- Twelve transformational wellness retreats were added, offering signature rituals and treatments, fitness and beauty concepts and a wellness VIP lounge, as well as a signature food philosophy and menu.

Already a multi-award-winner, in 2020 the resort was the first in the world to get ISO 17679 certification – the international standard for wellness spa services (www.spabusiness.com/ISO17679).

The stay

Rooms in the Dolce Vita Lodge are modern and well-equipped, with a cafe table and seating area, enticing mini-bar, flat-screen tv and expansive bathroom. But my favourite feature was the large balcony with daybed. I transferred my duvet and slept out there, listening to the quiet sounds of nature and waking with the sun coming over the Dolomites – absolutely wonderful! Fluffy robes, slippers, spa bags and backpacks are also provided for use throughout your stay.

In addition, different bed systems, mattress toppers and pillows are available, and if needed, a relaxation basket with sleep aids can be delivered to your room. Perhaps the feature most helpful to sleep is that the resort turns off the WLAN antennas at night, so you're not tempted to turn on your devices.



The 'wall of love' where guests leave affirmations



The walk to the spa has engaging features, such as a 'wall of love' with messages written by guests



Relaxing in the
Sauna Tower



Dr Angerer (left) is
Preidlhof's resident
medical physician

About

Dr Alexander Angerer

Dr Angerer grew up near Preidlhof, in the Vinschgau Valley and says from an early age he was fascinated with the health benefits gained from the water cures and teas made from local herbs and botanicals.

Now, in his role as Preidlhof's resident medical physician, he establishes evidence-based facts about each patient before using homeopathic remedies and traditional medicine to help to reinstate a balance of their body, mind and spirit.

Current specialities include oral therapy, infusion therapy and magnetic field therapy.

Off to the spa

The walk from the lodge to the spa can be navigated entirely indoors but can be a little confusing, as they're on different levels and several hallways are involved. However, on the plus side, each transition area has engaging features, such as a 'wall of love' with messages written by guests.

The 14-treatment room spa is adjacent to a lovely outdoor relaxation garden with pools and a sauna. The large reception is filled with natural light, offering tea and water and displaying retail options from Comfort Zone, Su-man, Terme di Comano and Lehalani. Bortolin is also busy finalising the development of a signature Preidlhof product line for professional use and to retail at the resort.

The facility showcases the excellence of a Bortolin-created spa and wellness centre and each treatment is a true experience, as delivered by her well-trained team. The menu is augmented with unusual and bespoke services, such as anmo tuina, osteo-balancing and sleep massages and Ayurvedic options. I enjoyed an ancient healing session in which practitioner Martin Kirchler built on TCM and whole-body practices to integrate massage with breathwork and movement.

A zen shiatsu session with Andrea Martinelli used meridian work to gently clear imbalances, while

an excellent lifting effect facial definitely worked as advertised. However, the most impactful spa treatment was a 'glowing flow' session with healer Stefano Battaglia, who used both conversation and hands-on bodywork to release emotional blocks and correct imbalances, leaving me in joyful tears.

Wellness offerings

For guests who want to enjoy wellness treatments at their own pace, the sauna tower is a wonderful way to while away a few hours. The six-story building provides beautiful views at every level and guests can take advantage of multiple steam and sauna experiences, some clothed and others not, as well as relaxation areas, lockers and showers and an open-air rooftop pool.

The deep-sea room promotes relaxation through a three-dimensional sensory experience lasting 20 minutes, while sauna masters are on hand to provide augguss experiences at scheduled times and robust and healthy snacks are available throughout the day, along with tea, water and juices.

There are so many nooks and crannies with delightful relaxation elements around the property that it was impossible to discover let alone enjoy them all during the three days of my visit.

The resort offers crisp, clear air, and spectacular views of the Italian alps

PHOTO: SPABUSINESS

► Medical options

The goal is to provide every guest with personal, holistic regeneration that harnesses medical, complementary and preventive health approaches.

If you're hoping to improve your wellness from a quantitative perspective, the Preidl Med Spa awaits, under the direction of Dr Alexander Angerer, a complementary medicine physician. Here you can experience a range of services, from TCM and meridian diagnosis, to DNA tests, acupuncture and aesthetic medicine.

I had a heart rate variability test, which – along with giving readouts on aura, energy and brain frequencies – also determined that my biological age was 44, which I was quite happy about!

Whether you want to address your health and wellness from a data-driven, a sensory or an emotional perspective, Preidlhof has the bases

covered. The signature concept, created by Bortolin, aims to balance hedonic (emotional) and eudaimonic (purposeful) wellbeing, as she explains: "Our goal is to promote a lifestyle with a hedonic approach to the present and to savour it, while also bringing a eudaimonic approach to the past and the future, to make them count."

Heading outdoors

Opportunities for outdoor wellness abound. The valley supplies most of Italy's apples and guests can enjoy an 'apple journey' with neuropsychologist and fitness trainer, Norma Jean Botticelli. This one-on-one experience showcases different apple varieties, which Botticelli uses to encourage guests to slow down and appreciate texture, aroma and taste in the act of mindful eating.



Guests collect botanical samples and make a personalised smoke bath with barks and resins and enjoy a refreshing drink direct from the mountain stream

Bortolin – herself a trained transformational wellness coach – also offers a sensorial wellbeing consultation, during which essential oils are used in an associative process to help guests identify potential growth areas in their personal life.

My favourite outdoor experience, however, was the forest bathing walk during which guests are accompanied by 74-year-old local, Irmgard Moosmair, who leads the way from the resort down across the river at the valley floor, pointing out local flora and fauna along the way.

Guests collect botanical samples and make a personalised smoke bath with barks and resins and enjoy a refreshing drink direct from the mountain stream before heading back to Preidlhof. This experience recently won second prize in the Holistic Treatment of the Year Award 2021 from online platform Destination Deluxe.

A daily bulletin details numerous additional hikes, walks, fitness activities and entertainment, but as the property is located adjacent to a nature park, you don't necessarily need an organised activity to explore the trails and outdoor spaces, it's just difficult to find the time with so much on offer!

Time to dine

The cuisine is a highlight of any wellness experience and Preidlhof doesn't disappoint. The restaurant has been awarded three toques from Gault Millau and there are local and regional menu options, some of which use ingredients grown and harvested on-site.

Breakfast and lunch buffets are expansive, while dinner is served a la carte from a wide selection of options and cocktails and wine are available for an extra fee. There are several dining rooms that also spill onto outdoor terraces – weather permitting – and you can elect to dine in a VIP



PHOTO: JADEN KREIBER

Irmgard Moosmair leads award winning forest bathing walks

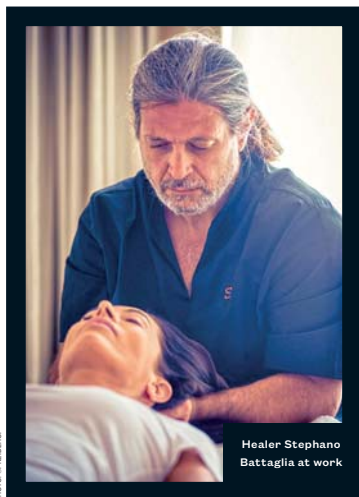
The menopause retreat

Preidlhof is one of the first international destination resorts to offer a menopause retreat. This six-day experience comprises a choice of treatments and activities, which include massages and baths, as well as classes, consultations and wellness events.

On arrival, attendees receive a medical wellness evaluation and heart rate variability test, as well as either sleep measurement analysis or acupuncture sessions, depending on their needs.

The retreat includes carefully-planned nutritional meals and six prescribed classes, including yoga nidra, mindful eating and laughter yoga, together with optional transformational dance, sound healing and forest bathing activities.

Retreat attendees say the experience has made a real impact on their state of wellbeing. For example, one attendee said that, after her retreat, her energy levels were back up to the same levels experienced before her menopause began.



Healer Stephano Battaglia at work



The most impactful treatment was a 'glowing flow' session with healer Stefano Battaglia, who used conversation and bodywork to release emotional blocks, leaving me in joyful tears

PHOTO: SPREIDHOF



- Wellness Lounge at private tables that look out over the delightful countryside.

For a special treat, you can partake of a wellness healing gourmet dinner menu, which changes nightly and offers seven-courses without soy, egg, lactose, added sugars or gluten.

In line with its sustainability policy, which has been developed to preserve and respect the beautiful local environment, much of the food is sourced locally to create zero carbon dining options. In addition to this, the property harnesses solar power to heat the pools while using biodegradable detergents and energy-saving light bulbs. Most of the furniture is made with locally sourced materials and Preidhof is also a plastic-free environment.

The financials

The spa alone exceeds €1m (£857,200, US\$1.3m) per year in revenue, driven by an impressive therapist utilisation rate which Bortolin expects to hit 90 per cent in 2022.

Spa and wellness treatment prices at Preidhof are quite affordable, driving this volume, as they range from €45 to €250 (£38 – £214, US\$51 – US\$286).

Room rates vary throughout the year from €196 (£167, US\$224) per night in the low season to €277 (£217, US\$317) in the high season, with certain suites and penthouses priced somewhat higher.

Resort guests
enjoy a choice of
six swimming pools

Themed retreats of four to seven days are priced between €488 and €1,587 (£413 – £1,343, US\$551 – US\$1,792) – plus the price of the hotel stay – and include an array of spa, fitness and medical treatments.

A newly-launched six-day (minimum stay) menopause retreat costs €1,587 (£1,343, US\$1,792) plus accommodation, and includes ancient healing and glowing flow sessions as well as a medical consultation.

The people

A special mention must be given to the excellent staff; at Preidlhof. I was travelling with an elderly cousin and the team sprang into action any time she needed anything.

Although traditional spa treatments can always be personalised with special touches and rituals, Preidlhof is a perfect example of how to step things up to another level by combining the highest standards of hospitality with fun and unusual experiences that are unique to the property. It helps to have a story-book setting, but we know in spa that ultimately it's the people that make the experience and I, for one, can't wait to return. ●



Lisa Starr is a contributing editor at *Spa Business*
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Medicinal mineral bathing

Preidlhof has introduced a new medicinal bathing offering, following a five-year project.

Costing €2m (US\$2.26m, £1.7m), the new hydrotherapy experience comprises an 80sq m indoor pool and a selection of private whirlpool baths.

All are filled with mineral-rich water sourced from a 400-year-old spring located under Naturno's Reinhold Messner Castle, 5km from the resort.

The upgrade is fitting for Preidlhof, as Naturno is only a 20-minute drive from the famed Italian spa town of Merano that's home to a host of public bathing facilities powered by its famous healing waters.

"This project is the result of an independent, combined community initiative led by the local hospitality industry," says Patrizia Bortolin.

Bortolin has curated new spa programming, incorporating the medicinal baths with highlights including private bathing experiences in the whirlpools infused with detox or regenerative bath oil blends, inspired by the traditional Merano bathing ritual.



Living like this has healed my life and helped me unlock my professional potential

Patrizia Bortolin

Lisa Starr talks to the award winning visionary who's injecting new vigour into Preidlhof



Bortolin says her life is '24-hour wellness research'

What have been the highs and lows so far?

The resort was already an extremely successful wellness retreat for couples and leisure guests, mainly from German-speaking markets, but owners, Klaus and Monika Ladurner, are very interested in health, medicine and wellness that improves lifestyle and as a result, my brief was to create a meaningful wellness philosophy that could showcase treatments and overall wellness as the main reasons to come to Preidlhof. My aim was to also create a framework for our offering and make it more appealing for international guests.

What's the starting point for any change?

It depends whether it's a new-build or an existing location, but generally after staying a couple of days I can sense the main direction that should be taken to express its potential.

How do you know when you're happy a property is finally where you want it to be?

I'm extremely creative and my life is 24-hour wellness research, always tuned and updated, so once the flow of creativity starts it goes far and fast – I then adapt to the limitations of the project, whether resource, space or budget.

When it comes to creativity and concept development I sometimes dream of working with an unlimited budget, as in my mind, I feel there is always more that can be achieved.

When it comes to execution, I benefit from logistics, management, marketing and people skills. Everything is in a state of continuous change for me – development never stops until I see and feel coherence, flowing operations, strong results from guests and effective sales and marketing actions.

When living and working in the place feels positive,

inspiring and seems peaceful for guests and the team, at that point I can call myself happy.

What's your process for discovering a property's essence and then building out its spa menu?

This is my favourite part, it's pure creativity and intuition, combined with experience in travel, hospitality and wellness.

My process is 'idea-research-study-design-develop-trial-go-live' and my aim is to use my love for the spa world and my deep trust in holistic therapies to bring everything to life. I once saw a quote I love that captures this. It comes from a dialogue between Socrates, Phaedrus and Eupalinos during which Eupalinos refers to buildings which are 'mute', some which 'speak' and others which 'sing'.

Where do you get your inspiration?

Spirituality permeates my life and gives me the capacity to think, be mindful of and receptive to the environment and people, and to develop my social intelligence and get in touch with my talents.

I now live more in the flow, connecting the inside and outside and seeing things in perspective. Living like this has healed my life and helped me unlock my professional potential. When my daily creative flow can't be expressed in my work, I use it to cook, to play, to draw, to dream and to coach friends and colleagues... otherwise I get stuck.

I enjoy meeting new people who inspire my mind and fill my soul, as well as observing guests and talking to them, which also gives me precious information. I'm also obsessed with the experiential side of life and never stop studying, so I'm developing a rich background of knowledge that pops up unexpectedly with new connections and ideas. ●



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ISPA continues to support its members
to ensure they have access to the
tools they need to succeed



Reconnect with ISPA

After a two-year absence, ISPA's annual Conference offers its members an opportunity to reconnect and to learn more about the available tools that can help them recharge their businesses

The international spa industry has been heavily impacted by the evolving challenges presented by the pandemic during the last two years, including restrictions on business and travel.

However, despite these obstacles, the resilience of the spa community has been on full display, as professionals from across the globe have come together to address exceptional, unforeseen issues within the sector. These efforts have repeatedly showcased the industry's commitment to working together to maintain the high standards and benefits related to the international spa experience.

Viva Las Vegas

The industry's 'must attend' 2022 ISPA Conference event, which is taking place from May 2-4 at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas, Nevada, offers a fantastic opportunity for members to reconnect,

gain insight, inspiration and celebrate the industry with their colleagues from across the globe.

For those that may have experienced a difficult couple of years that may have triggered stress and burnout, the conference offers the perfect opportunity to rejuvenate and to benefit from three days of speaker presentations that cover a range of topics including business strategy, customer service and management.

ISPA Talent Toolkit

Some of the most pressing issues currently facing ISPA members, and up for discussion at the ISPA Conference, relate to staff shortages and employee retention. In response to these challenges, volunteers from the ISPA community have been putting their heads together to develop the ISPA Talent Toolkit, which will serve as a roadmap for members in need of guidance on this critical issue.

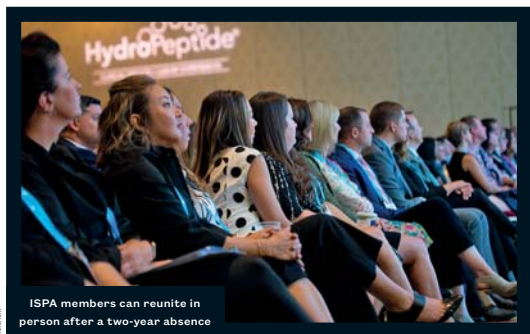


PHOTO: ISPA

JOIN ISPA

ISPA connects professionals from every corner of the global spa industry. Through constant networking, education, research and exposure opportunities, ISPA members can use member resources to assist in their professional development and help them build their business.

Learn more about membership at:
www.experienceispa.com



This year's ISPA Conference
will be held in Las Vegas

In addition to the numerous resources related to talent recruitment and engagement strategies, the toolkit will also include: a checklist to help members know what to prepare in advance to help new staff members hit the ground running when they begin on day one; a conversation with workforce trends expert Seth Mattison on workplace leadership and evolution; job description templates; and an on-demand session on talent management strategies - taken from the 2021 ISPA Stronger Together Summit.

Another valuable member resource is the ISPA Career Center, which contains a Job Bank where members can post an unlimited number of open positions at their location. It only takes a couple of days for job postings to attract hundreds of views from visitors looking to progress their career or enter the industry.

Informing decisions through research

Don't forget that ISPA members also benefit from a wealth of opportunities and tools to help them succeed, and the ISPA Research Library is one of the popular resources. The library offers hundreds of pages of research reports spanning the gamut of critical industry topics and key metrics.

For example, an important annual report, conducted in partnership with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), is the *ISPA US Spa Industry Study* which presents the state of the industry as indicated by total revenues, spa visits, average revenue per visit, the total number of spa locations and staffing levels. These are referred



Offering an opportunity to
exchange ideas and network

to as the 'Big Five' statistics and are collected through a nationwide survey of spa businesses.

ISPA also conducts consumer research studies to monitor and identify the patterns of consumer behavior within the spa space so spa professionals can continue to make informed decisions on how to best reach today's consumer.

These Snapshot Surveys offer a constant flow of insight for spa professionals seeking a real-time impression of how spa and resource partner members are handling trending issues in the industry. With a new topic for each survey, as well as running quarterly performance reports, Snapshot Surveys are what ISPA members use to gain ideas to support innovation and critical decisions.

Whatever your business needs, ISPA offers the chance to embrace the future together. ●

More: www.experienceispa.com



*We're reviving the ancient wisdom of
Traditional Arabic and Islamic Medicine*



Daniele Vastolo

**As Chiva-Som opens its first location outside Thailand,
Spa Business talks to the GM about its TAIM focus**

Who owns Zual and who's running it?

Zual Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som is owned by Msheireb Properties, a Qatari real estate developer – it will be operated by Chiva-Som.

This is Chiva-Som's first location outside Thailand, where it operates its flagship property in Hua Hin and a Wellness Academy in Bangkok.

The Zual resort is in Khasooma, a private development in the north of Qatar, with stunning sea views and a peaceful setting. It's the largest wellbeing resort in the region at 280,000sq m, and has been designed as a wellness getaway.

What's the story behind the development?

The vision behind Zual Wellness Resort is aligned with Qatar's *National Vision 2030* and its goals of environmental management and social development.

The objective is to revive the ancient wisdom of Traditional Arabic and Islamic Medicine (TAIM)

by raising awareness of its therapeutic benefits using locally sourced medicinal herbs, alongside traditional methods and spiritual practices.

We're aiming to encourage an appreciation and understanding of the ancient knowledge of TAIM, which is an intrinsic part of Qatari heritage, and share the lasting health benefits of mindful living – not just locally, but around the world.

We want to become the reference point in the region when it comes to holistic family wellness. Our ethos is to offer the most efficient, time-tested practices while using cutting-edge techniques, a unique wellness cuisine and professional guidance in health-related matters to inspire our guests to adopt healthy habits in the long term.

Tell us about the name

Zual means 'purified water' and the choice was inspired by the historic journey across land





Pools and beaches reflect Zulal's name, which means purified water

to the sea that people have been following for centuries in the search for water – the stuff of life.

It's a quest that sits at the heart of the history, culture and heritage of Qatar.

Drawing on Chiva-Som's years of experience and aimed at a discerning global audience, Zulal is aiming to hit international service standards, while retaining a connection with local culture and traditional Qatari hospitality.

We'll deliver on our commitment to sustainability, using local produce and supply chains.

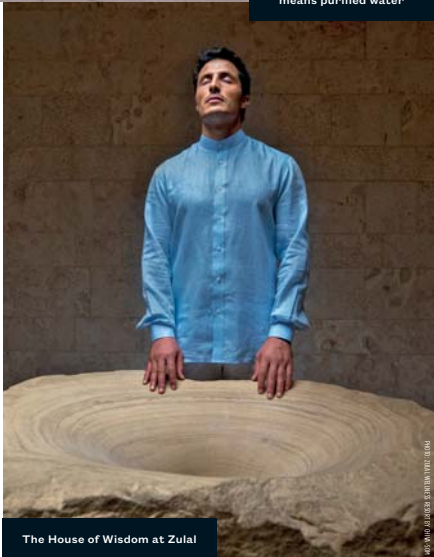
What is Zulal's target market?

Qatar is attracting interest as a health and wellness tourism destination. We expect significant interest and a good geographic mix of guests because of the resort's location, expertise and diverse offering and also – importantly – the Chiva-Som connection.

The domestic market will be key, as this is the largest wellness resort in the region and the TALIM and family offering is unique.

With the backdrop of the dramatic desert landscape overlooking the sea, the setting is uniquely and distinctly Qatari; the menu of services and products further highlights local treasures.

Our aim is to educate international guests on this incredible country, by offering an immersive experience inclusive of local family values.



The House of Wisdom at Zulal



The beach is an integral part of the Zula experience



A key element of our holistic approach incorporates wellness for our guests, our environment, and our world

► What makes Zula different?

The resort is divided into two sections; 'Zula Discovery' offers a stimulating environment for families and 'Zula Serenity' has been designed to be a peaceful, adults-only space.

We have more than 130 spa therapists who ensure all guests get undivided attention, with specialist treatments for children.

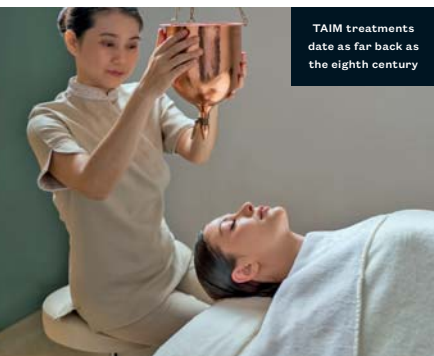
Sustainability is a major focus in Zula Discovery, as well as its approach to family wellness. We're educating all generations about the responsible approach to nature, and the Zula team designs its retreat programmes to bring families together to learn about local flora and fauna and contribute to their protection by taking part in the Zula Mangrove Planting initiative.

Tell us more about TAIM

The development of TAIM started in the eighth century with the translation of the medical works of Galen and Hippocrates, philosophical works by Aristotle and Plato and mathematical works of Archimedes and Euclid into Arabic.

The final phase of its development started in the 12th century. The most noteworthy works are the translation of Ibn Sina's *Canon of Medicine*, in addition to Al-Razi's book *The Comprehensive*, which continued to dominate medical teachings in Europe and remained a mandatory textbook for more than 300 years.

TAIM has also built on the ancient knowledge of systems of medicine, such as Traditional Chinese Medicine, Ayurveda, Unani, Ancient Egyptian Medicine, and Persian Medicine and combines their knowledge with the wisdom and knowledge acquired from Islamic medicine and the Prophetic Tradition. ►



TAIM treatments date as far back as the eighth century

PHOTO: ZULA MANGROVE PLANTING INITIATIVE



Zulal Serenity is a peaceful, adults-only space. Below, the apothecary



About Zulal Serenity

Zulal Serenity is designed for guests aged 16 and above. It offers 60 rooms and suites, including the Qataf Suite, the Shinan Suite, 11 junior suites, and 47 grand deluxe rooms. It is a sanctuary of holistic experiences to support the emotional and physical balance, including 64 treatment rooms and a wide-ranging hydrothermal suite.

Facilities include VIP treatment villas, male and female hydrotherapy treatment rooms, physiotherapy rooms, Ayurvedic, naturopath and nutrition consultation rooms, male and female relaxation areas and a pharmacy. The Aesthetic Centre includes a VIP waiting area, dermatologist consultation room, aesthetic treatment rooms, skin analysis room, and a nurse room.

The Fitness Pavilion includes a fitness assessment room, diagnostic room, Watsu pool, group movement studio, yoga studio, Pilates studio, and a mixed gym. It also includes a range of thermal facilities, including male and female hammams, salt caves, Arctic room, steam rooms, saunas, experience showers, indoor plunge pools, multiple mineral baths, lounges, outdoor pools with relaxation lounge, and indoor hydrotherapy pools.

Resort facilities include the House of Wisdom welcome area, Tea House, swimmable lagoons and multiple gardens for quiet contemplation. ●



Zulal Serenity has extensive gardens and green spaces

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About Zulal Discovery

Zulal Discovery is dedicated to families and has 120 rooms and suites, including six executive suites, 14 junior suites, 56 deluxe lagoon-view rooms, 33 deluxe sea view rooms and 11 superior rooms.

The facilities have been designed by child and family specialists specifically to ensure families can feel comfortable bonding. The decor is inspired by traditional Qatari village motifs, clean lines, and natural textures. The rooms are mapped out between the desert, sea, and the resort's lagoon, with views of nature from every window. Taste and wellness cuisines are combined in dedicated restaurants offering Arabic and Mediterranean cuisine, with dedicated children's menus.

Families can enjoy activities together, ranging from wellness family consultations to joint mindfulness treatments such as Reiki, breathing meditation, Tai Chi Chuan, yoga, and fitness classes centred around balance and agility. There is also a selection of creative workshops to teach the use of essential oils and traditional ingredients,

in which groups can make their own body scrub, herbal compress or herbal inhaler, as well as baby massage and family cooking classes.

With a focus on play and the discovery of their physicality and the world about them, Zulal family wellness experts develop weekly calendars of engaging wellness activities, divided into age-appropriate categories. These include:

- Hedgehog activities for toddlers aged three and up
- Foxes activities for kids aged four- to eight-years - including arts and crafts, cooking, games, and dance, alongside excursions to the nearby mangrove island, a falconry adventure and exploration of the night sky
- Falcon activities, for children aged from nine to 12 years, include sand sculpture, mindful meditation, a chef vegan workshop and an overnight camp adventure under stars with fire making
- Oryx adolescents, aged 13- to 17-years, are encouraged to expand their horizons and nurture their fitness, endurance and cognitive exploration through physical activities, including kayaking, slacklining, orienteering and dance. ●

Facilities have been designed by specialists to ensure families feel comfortable bonding



AND WHO SAYS SPA IS ONLY FOR WOMEN

The Zulal Discovery Experience has a strong focus on family wellbeing



AND WHO SAYS SPA IS ONLY FOR WOMEN

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Mixed gyms and studios
are available in some
parts of the resort



PHOTO: ZULAL WELLNESS RESORT BY ZULAL.COM

► At Zulal we combine TAIM with modern science to bring guests a true harmony of healing. All our treatments are performed with strict adherence to the traditional methods and teachings, but we employ the latest tools and techniques to maximise health benefits and bring the most out of this amazing art.

Many of our TAIM concepts and philosophy originate in Ibn Sina's work, especially his Six Essential Pillars of Health, which are: air and breathing; diet and nutrition; physical movement and rest; digestion and elimination; adequate sleep and wakefulness; and mental movement and rest.

At Zulal, we cover all six pillars, with the use of TAIM products and services that cover aesthetic beauty, diet and nutrition, physiotherapy, physical fitness, spa therapies and holistic therapies – as well as meditation and spiritual healing.

Tell us about the customer journey

Before arrival guests choose their retreat offering and on arrival, they're welcomed by our team of health and wellness advisors who assess their health status.

Each guest's needs are assessed during a consultation, with the client intake form providing in-depth information. We then work with guests to schedule a range of treatments and therapies for each day of the retreat, offering them a customised holistic wellness experience. Arabic and Mediterranean wellness cuisine complements the journey.

Our Zulal Wellness advisors monitor each guest's progress and provide them with long-term recommendations to ensure the impact of their stay is sustained. ●

More: www.zulal.com



We're a truly sustainable destination, with care for the environment embedded within our concept

Daniele Vastalo top treatment choices

Within the many wellness treatments, activities, and retreats available, Zulal caters to a diverse range of clientele and offers individuals and families a truly bespoke journey.

● Favourites include the **Al Batin massage** – a therapeutic internal organ manipulation, followed by a warm Jade stone massage, which focuses on the abdomen, where stress and negative emotions are held, to release energetic tension and promote long-lasting health and vitality.

● The **Al-Ra** is a head massage where acupressure points are gently pressed to release tension along the meridian channels of the face, head, and shoulders, followed by a massage of the temples using Zulal's locally-extracted essential oil.

HUMAN NATURE

As travel ramps up again, nature and safety are ranked as extremely important by consumers.

Anne Dimon reports on the latest findings from Wellness Tourism Association research

The key challenge for the Wellness Tourism Association (WTA) 2021 *Wellness Travel Consumer Survey* was to establish what wellness-minded consumers consider to be most important as global travel begins to grow again.

The third survey of its kind conducted since the WTA launched in 2018, the objective this time was to give spa operators and the hospitality industry a clearer understanding of consumers' priorities as they start planning to travel.

Business improving

Members of the WTA are reporting business is looking up. Kimberly Rossi, wellness and business development director at the Art of Living Retreat Center in North Carolina, says there has been a steady stream of visitors since reopening: "People are ready - more than ever - to explore, be with others and practice radical self-care," she says.

Some operators are running at higher capacity and charging more than pre-COVID. "In some segments, we're seeing more than a 20 per cent increase in both guests numbers and room rates when compared with 2020 and 2019," says Denise Perkins, vice president of marketing at the Garden of the Gods Resort and Club and Strata Integrated Wellness and Spa in Colorado.

In Switzerland, Marina Oshchepkova, senior medical sales manager, at Bürgenstock Hotels, says the Healthy by Nature wellness concept, launched in 2019 at the Waldhotel in Switzerland, welcomed three times as many guests between January and September of 2021.

Davina Bernard, director of wellness for Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise in Canada says enquiries for multi-day, wellness-focused retreats have significantly increased. "People are searching for holistic programmes now, which they would never have considered prior to the pandemic," she says.

Three main themes emerged from the wellness travel survey – safety, access to stillness and quiet spaces and nature and the outdoors



Bali is one of the top destinations cited by consumers interested in wellness travel

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Cleanliness 'a top priority'

A certified safe and clean hotel environment ranked number one across the three main generational cohorts surveyed (Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers) and research sponsor, WeTravel – which reached US\$20m (€17.4m, £14.6m) in wellness-related bookings last year – reports retreat leaders are booking out places such as boutique hotels for groups of six to 12 people.

Sustainability and green practices also ranked highly, with consumers reportedly pushing retreat leaders to choose eco-friendly accommodation, donate a portion of sales to a cause, or add a volunteering dimension to their trip.

Researchers asked an open question in relation to what would be considered 'must-haves' and three main themes emerged – safety, access to stillness and quiet spaces and nature and the outdoors.

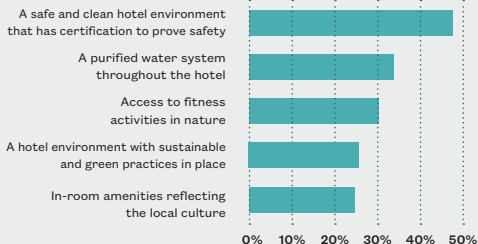
Desire for nature

Even though "access to fitness activities in nature" was included in the overall top five offerings and was rated extremely important by respondents, these same consumers also overwhelmingly included references to nature and the outdoors in their responses to the open question.

The importance of nature has been an overriding theme for wellness travellers since the WTA began conducting surveys in 2018, and there's every indication that the demand for access to easily accessible

The search for tranquility is a major driver for consumers

These 5 offerings were rated as extremely important



The most frequently used words describing a chosen destination were beautiful, beaches, ocean, climate, outdoor adventures and tranquility

natural assets – along with the opportunity to spend time in nature – will continue.

When asked what might influence them most when it came to booking wellness-travel over the next two years, respondents cited price; flexibility with both bookings and cancellation policies; trust in the supplier, and destination management in relation to how well local lawmakers are managing the pandemic.

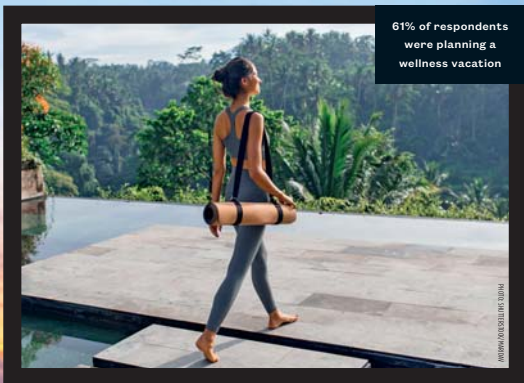
Call of the ocean

Another question asked which geographical regions would be favoured when people feel comfortable travelling again. Reflecting the demographic of the respondents, the US was the most popular country, and Hawaii the most preferred state. South east Asian countries, particular Bali and Thailand, were mentioned and Italy was the most selected country in Europe. Costa Rica was the favoured country in Latin America, and the Caribbean was an often-mentioned destination.

When asked why they chose those places, the prominent theme was nature, with recipients using words such as beautiful, beaches and ocean, climate,

These 10 offerings were rated as less important

- ◆ Restaurant menus that catering for dietary restrictions
- ◆ Access to medical practitioners for one-on-one consultations or medical testing that could predict a predisposition to future medical issues
- ◆ Access to fitness trackers and apps (that can monitor heart rate and body temperature in real time)
- ◆ Touchless points of access (digital check-in/ check-out, motion-sensor amenities, voice-controlled elevator technology, digital room keys, phone controlled features, face recognition, etc.)
- ◆ Wellness-focused opportunities integrated into building design (incorporating nature indoors, in-room fitness spaces, pathways to encourage use of stairs instead of elevators, active workstations such as treadmill desks, etc.)
- ◆ Access to mental health professionals
- ◆ Access to nutritionists
- ◆ Access to other wellness practitioners
- ◆ Access to learning opportunities (wellness-focused classes, healthy-eating demos etc.)
- ◆ Spaces / classes / activities to meet and engage with like-minded people



61% of respondents
were planning a
wellness vacation

- ▶ outdoor adventures and tranquility. Others made their selections based on locations being safe, easy and close to home or being on their bucket list.

Overall, the takeaways for stakeholders are that demand for wellness-focused travel is increasing. Consumers rank nature and safety as top priorities when planning their wellness travels, and Millennials especially are currently planning trips. Finally, regenerative travel, which incorporates sustainability efforts, green practices, engaging and giving back to local communities, will continue to gain prominence. ●

Anne Dimon is CEO of the WTA

Millennials especially
are planning trips,
while regenerative
travel is also gaining
prominence

ABOUT THE WTA SURVEY

The three-month online survey was carried out during April, May and June 2021.

The gathering of survey data was administered by the Wellness Tourism Association (WTA) in collaboration with WTA research associate, Danny Kessler PhD, assistant professor at Dongseo University, while the International College in Busan, South Korea, collected responses from close to 2,500 consumers from 52 countries and territories.

About the respondents:

- ◆ 64% female
- ◆ 65% between the ages of 26 and 54
- ◆ 43% have an annual income of more than US\$75,000 (€64,660, £55,000)

- ◆ 60% have a Bachelor's degree or higher.
- ◆ 84% reported they participate in wellness activities when they travel
- ◆ 61% reported they're planning a wellness vacation
- ◆ 50% of those planning a wellness vacation were Millennials
- ◆ 75% were from the US

Participants were asked to rank a collection of 16 assets, amenities, activities and other offerings that had been sourced from industry data and expertise.

The data collected revealed what offerings are most important to key consumers as they plan their future wellness travel.

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WELLNESS

AUFGUSS

The first aufguss sauna experience in the US has opened in Las Vegas, as Cassandra Cavanah reports

“

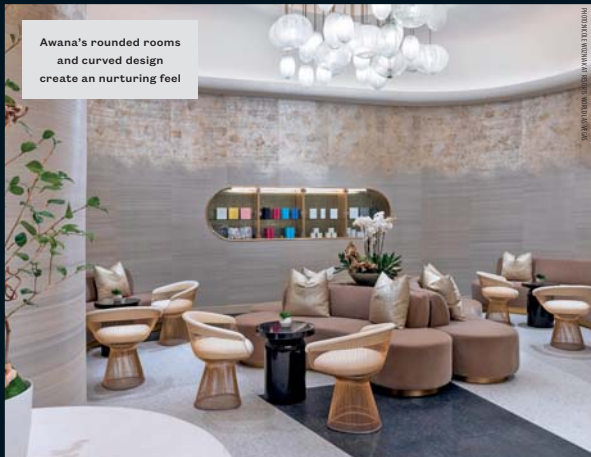
It's hard to think of a better place than the Las Vegas strip for the first event sauna in America

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS FOR SPABUSINESS

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Awana's rounded rooms and curved design create an nurturing feel



PHOTOGRAPH BY JESSICA HARRIS FOR SPABUSINESS.COM

The new Awana Spa and Wellness at Resorts World in Las Vegas features a wellness experience unavailable anywhere else in the US: a grand-scale event sauna, with the capacity to seat an audience of up to 40 people who sit together and enjoy the theatrical art of sauna aufguss.

Inspired by the European tradition of communal bathing, where a sauna is not only a place for rest and rejuvenation, but also a social gathering point that builds community and bonding around the shared purpose of wellbeing.

Awana's theatre-inspired, 360sq ft sauna was created by Design for Leisure (DFL) in collaboration with aufguss consultants Lasse Eriksen, vice president of Aufguss-WM and Rob Keijzer, a three-time world aufguss champion and professional trainer – in collaboration with spa consultant Cary Collier at Blu Spas.

DESIGN DETAILS

The sauna, from Klafs, is made from Canadian Hemlock shaped to the contour of the curved walls – a key feature of the spa's sacred geometric design.

Event saunas must be designed and built for purpose, and Awana's has been specially created for sauna aufguss performances, with theatre-style lighting and a club-quality sound system, complete with sub-woofers hidden under the benches and capable of high volumes.

Space between the centrally-positioned heater and the first bench ensure sauna masters are able to move freely among guests, performing elaborate moves with their dancing towels that are choreographed to music, lighting and their own custom aromatherapy.

The sauna heater has also been manufactured to suit aufguss performances, as it acts as the

The sauna features theatre-style lighting and club-quality sound system



- focal point, being creatively clad in marble and illuminated for maximum visual impact. The heater needs to be powerful enough to quickly reheat the sauna rocks after each dramatic infusion of water and/or aromatic ice balls by the sauna master.

TRAINING THE MASTERS

Sauna aufguss has evolved significantly in recent decades as a performance art and can be anything from an elaborate and theatrical show with mesmerising towel work and audiences clapping and singing, to quieter, almost out-of-body, meditative journeys and sound baths.

Traditionally, aufguss was less ritualistic and more utilitarian: sauna attendants (or masters) were on hand to help circulate heat, humidity and infusions, without much fanfare. But times change and now, a new breed of enthusiastic and dedicated sauna masters is constantly evolving the art, making it far more performative and interactive.

"It's hard to think of a better place than the Las Vegas strip for the first event sauna in America," says DFL CEO, Don Genders. "There's an amazing pool of talented performers living locally, many of whom have already embraced wellness in their daily lives and appeared in large Las Vegas shows, such as Cirque du Soleil. Clearly, sauna masters with that kind of talent will be able to capture the attention of Vegas spa-goers."

I can already see this team of sauna masters taking the Aufguss World Masters by storm

Genders, alongside Eriksen and Keijzer, spent a week at the property working with spa director Jennifer Lynn Raftery training a team of sauna masters in the art of aufguss.

Prior to the European team's arrival, Awana's new sauna masters had watched aufguss YouTube videos and were already performing their own, uniquely American sauna theatrics. Eriksen predicted this would be a precursor of things to come, saying: "I can already see this team of sauna masters taking the Aufguss World Masters by storm in the not-so-distant future." Raftery has already offered Awana to host the first-ever North American heat of this event.

If the enthusiasm of guests at Awana is any indication, sauna aufguss is destined to make its way to many more spas in the US. All came out buzzing, saying they'd never experienced anything like it. Aufguss is an entertaining, emotional and spirit-lifting way to enjoy true wellness benefits. ►

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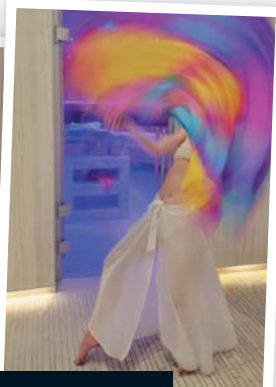
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Professional dancers have been trained as sauna masters

PHOTOS: JESSICA CHAMBERS



Aufguss fun in Vegas

Lisa Starr enjoyed her first US aufguss experience

If you want to visit a fabulous spa, few cities in the US have more to offer than Las Vegas. Each of the many casino hotels offers massive spa and wellness spaces, but the new Awana Spa at Resorts World has debuted a novelty that no other spa in the US can boast – an event sauna.

My visit turned out to be the perfect antidote to fatigue caused by several days of sensory bombardment at a busy trade show.

With professional dancers who've been trained as sauna masters to create an immersive and entertaining heat experience, Awana's aufguss experience included aromatherapy, special lighting effects and accompanying music in a choice of different sauna shows throughout the day.

The sauna masters added a heightened element of performance and sizzle to my sauna experience, which helped me forget how long I'd been sweating.

After the sauna I was presented with a multitude of relaxation options, including six vitality pools, a heated crystal laconium, steamrooms, cool mist showers, tepidarium chairs and an experiential rain walk – all of which are available with any spa treatment at the facility or by using a special Fountain of Youth pass.

Healthy snacks and beverages were also available in the delightful mixed-sex relaxation space, equipped with loungers and TV screens, where I relaxed and got a foot treatment while watching TV.



The sauna masters added a heightened element of performance and sizzle to my sauna experience

Awana's internationally-inspired spa treatment menu focuses on end results, with the desired effect of each listed. I enjoyed the 90-minute Machu Picchu massage, which incorporated aromatherapy and crystals for balancing, and was delivered by a very skilled therapist. The treatment rooms featured a soothing earth-toned colour palette and beautiful lighting, while the calm environment allowed me to forget that I was only steps away from the Las Vegas strip.

Finding the spa within the massive, three-hotel building wasn't easy, but it was well worth the effort. ●

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Getting (hyper) personal

Targeting a wider range of customers is increasingly straightforward, thanks to software that drives generational marketing, creating hyper-personalised offerings, as Karen Maxwell discovers

Nicole Stanaway

SPASOFT

The more spa and wellness operators know about their guests and community, the more they can leverage opportunities to grow their business through targeted and demographic marketing.

SpaSoft offers an activity management system with multiple tools and trackable metrics to allow businesses to better understand their customer base and identify growth opportunities based on the collected data.

Within the system, spas are able to define unique guest classifications and gather specific details such as age, occupation, language, citizenship, interests and why they originally became customers.

Promotions and discounts can also be tracked to help analyse customer responses to special offers and a survey link can be added to an automated post-visit email to gather customer feedback.

Using this collected data, our clients can better understand their customer base and provide unique targeted offers to specific demographic groups.



NICOLE STANAWAY

Trackable metrics allow businesses to better understand their customers and identify growth opportunities based on data collected

Sal Capizzi

BOOK4TIME

We realise that many wellness properties have multi-dimensional facilities that extend beyond the spa. Our clients can just key in a customer's birth date, gender or member sign-up date into our system and run a multitude of reports to find out which of their services are the most popular within certain market demographics.

Our clients can also monitor customer feedback through Book4Time's analytic reports. These show which customers are receiving their services or participating in classes or activities, which helps them to allocate operational budgets.

Most spa software solutions are great for managing operations at a single facility, however, Book4Time offers a choice of modules to ensure the management of spa

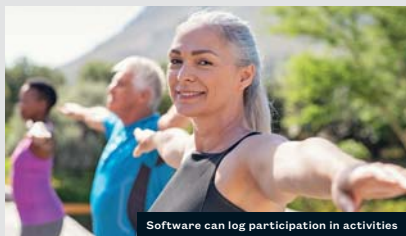


SAL CAPIZZI

We're working with our clients to help them analyse customer data and to further enhance our market segmentation capabilities

operations, fitness classes, rentals and other activities become easy to administer.

We're also working with our clients to help them analyse their customer data and testimonials to further enhance Book4Time's effective market segmentation capabilities.



Software can log participation in activities

BOOK4TIME



Targeting specific market segments, such as spa-loving millennials, can boost ROI



PHOTO: CHARITY HUDNALL

Spa operators can determine how to run efficiently year-round by observing fluctuation and making data-informed decisions

Charity Hudnall

VAGARO

Vagaro allows users to create general tags – a keyword or phrase that can be added to a customer's profile. For example, 'VIP' can be used to designate specific profiles with that status, and an email marketing campaign can be filtered to be sent specifically to customers with this tag – this way you ensure that the offer gets sent to the customers most likely to act on it.

Our platform also collects different data points that can be used for campaign segmentation, these include new customers; customer birthdays; repeat business; customer spend; and customers with certain preferences or linked to a specific employee.

Regarding ROI measurement, after an email marketing campaign has been sent out, you can see how many were delivered, opened, how many clicks on the CTA button

and how many appointments were booked directly from the campaign. Based on this analysis, operators can easily determine which offers are performing well and which need improvement or refining.

Analytical data can also be collected from multiple revenue streams besides the standard service appointment, including online sales, merchant services and treatment bookings. Daily deals or digital flyers can also be created and posted on the Vagaro marketplace by using pre-made templates, which offer an easy way to specifically target potential customers in the vicinity.

Our clients are able to boost ROI, increase retention, improve products and services and save time, without increasing expense. Through segmentation analysis, spas can determine how to run efficiently year-round by observing fluctuation and making data-informed decisions – so they know exactly who to target and when.



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/MAKAREWICH/ALTA

The right promotion to the right client at the right time, is key

Matt Lerner

MINDBODY



PHOTO: MATT LERNER

In a recent study, 22 per cent of Mindbody spa and wellness clients admitted that customer acquisition and/or retention is their biggest challenge right now.

A key part of bringing in and retaining customers is the ability to market strategically to varying demographics, however, many wellness businesses don't have the time, the knowledge or the staff needed to create sophisticated marketing programmes.

Mindbody's Marketing Suite puts marketing on autopilot. It helps keep schedules full by automating marketing operations with the creation of personalised, highly targeted email and text campaigns - allowing spas to reach out to their customers with perfectly-timed reminders to rebook, based on their interests and needs.

The software creates personalised campaigns for varying demographics and can also use real-time customer feedback to adjust the campaign messaging to suit customer needs.

Businesses may typically see customers spending five times the cost of their monthly subscription in purchases, and can benefit from the additional exposure they get from online reviews inspired by Marketing Suite interactions.

Spas can reach out to their customers with perfectly timed reminders to rebook, based on their interests and needs

Guenther Poellabauer

THE ASSISTANT COMPANY

TAC software uses an integrated CRM module for market segmentation, which can be used to better understand customer preferences and allows the targeted marketing of spa and wellness promotions to specific demographic groups.

The software also promotes 'hot deal' last-minute offers on available spa appointments, as well as special offers that customers are only able to reserve on selected days.

The daily quota for these deals can be individually defined and adjusted at any time by the spa operator. These

appointments can be reserved quickly and booked online in real-time. Promotional codes can be used to reach both existing and new guests in a targeted manner.

Trial products are offered at a reduced price on-site, while birthday discounts are sent out by email to strengthen long-term relationships with existing customers.

'Bring a friend' campaigns, as well as campaigns for new products via traditional or digital media, can also increase the company's reach for potential new customers into different demographic groups.

In this way, connections with existing customers are maintained, while new customers are constantly being reached. ►



PHOTO: GUENTHER POELLABAUER

Trial products can be offered at a reduced rate on-site



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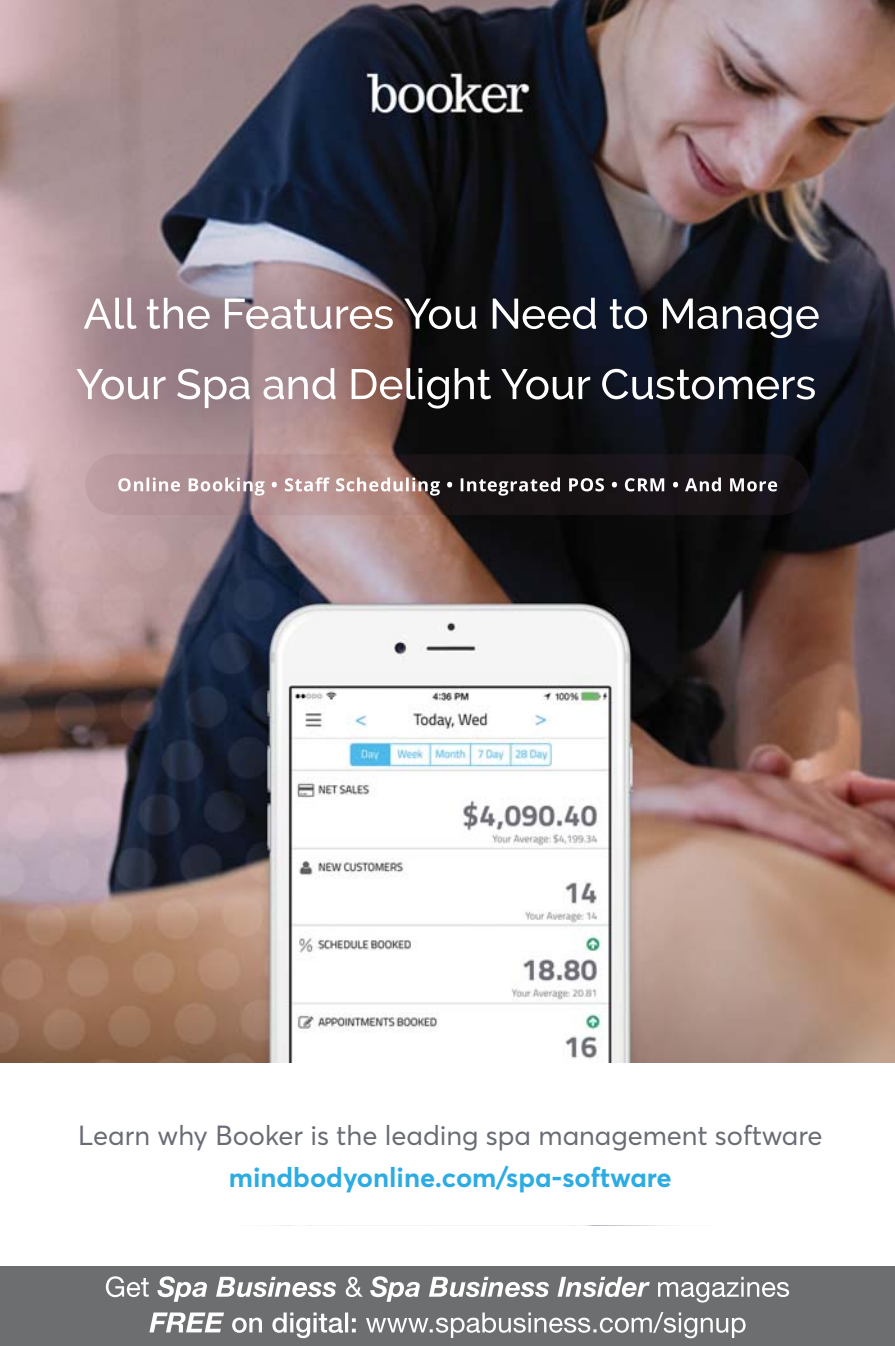
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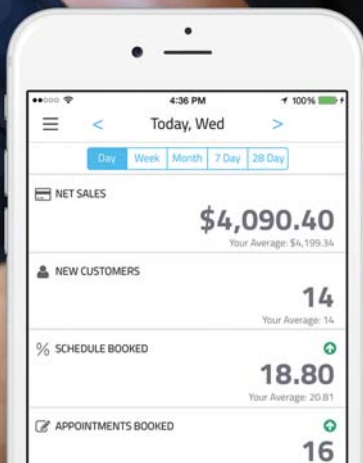
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CHRISTY WATSON

We've witnessed an improvement of 25 per cent in guest satisfaction at wellness facilities that use our market segmentation software

Ilana Alberico

SPASPACE

SpaSpace software is supported by a powerful CRM tool that allows spa and wellness operators to understand the needs of their customers, which helps with effective, targeted promotional activities.

To ensure that wellness experiences within a spa environment are not offered on a 'one-size-fits-all' basis, our patent-pending software tracks guest usage and monitors ratings to assist spa and wellness operators in adapting their marketing activities and

customising their services to suit guest experiences in each demographic.

Each service can then be customised specifically and guest feedback allows our software to learn and refine marketing campaigns as required. This means that spa operators don't need to spend time refining specific protocols that

may not fit the needs of every guest and allows more time for spa professionals to focus on providing services that have been curated for their exact needs.

Via data from the analytics reporting, we've seen a 25 per cent improvement in guest satisfaction at spas using our market segmentation software.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK / ZENBUHUTTER

Generational marketing wins over 'one-size-fits-all'



PHOTO: PICTURES

Small prompts give guests the power to tailor their ideal experience at the click of a button

Ricky Daniels

TRYBE

With Trybe, operators can segment their database using customer labels which enable them to segment and analyse their market, based on specific factors, such as demographics.

Using the data collected from these reports, operators can then create packages and promotions with targeted add-ons or up-sells.

Bookings of targeted packages and promotions are automatically fed into Trybe's reporting

tool, enabling operators to analyse campaign success, while the system automatically updates the Trybe booking engine so customers can review the data straight away.

Trybe has the ability to target a wide range of customer profiles, so operators can create and sell as many targeted treatments, classes, packages, and promotions as they wish.

Pulling straight from the operator's live inventory,

these can then be booked and paid for without the need for a staff member to process them. This allows operators to be reactive to customer demands, and also reap the rewards of out-of-hours bookings.

Mother's Day packages, for example, offer up-sell opportunities such as the purchase of a bottle of champagne on arrival. Small prompts like this give guests the power to tailor their experience at the click of a button.

art^{of}
cryo



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BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Art of Cryo is blending its high-performance cryotherapy solutions with intermittent vacuum therapy to offer a complete and effective whole-body wellness experience



Intermittent vacuum therapy enhances the effects of cryotherapy

Whole-body cryotherapy (WBC) is a natural 'cold' remedy with more than 50 areas of application. It can be used to treat anything from sleep disorders, rheumatism, arthritis, pain syndromes and inflammation, to anxiety, depression, psychosomatic disorders and numerous chronic health disorders.

Initially adopted by medics, cryotherapy has been taken up by high-performance sportspeople as well as spa, wellness and fitness operators.

Skip to the present day and pioneers in the wellness industry are now looking to enhance the effects of WBC by combining it with intermittent vacuum therapy (IVT).

IVT was first developed by NASA and the German Aerospace Center and is claimed to complement WBC by enhancing its capacity to promote recovery, contour the body and strengthen connective tissue.



How it works

Cryotherapy works by forcing the body to send blood to the brain and the core in a process called vasoconstriction. Afterwards, vasodilation takes place, whereby blood, with its enriching load of oxygen, nutrients and enzymes, flows back into the peripheral tissue.

According to WBC specialist, Art of Cryo, a subsequent session inside one of its IVT models will amplify these benefits by promoting capillarisation.

Although this sounds futuristic, Art of Cryo is ahead of the curve and already providing spa operators with the means to provide WBC

For our lifestyle customers, the most important effects are prevention, regeneration and strengthening of connective tissue

Rainer Bolsinger

and IVT experiences, both of which are touchless therapies.

The company offers a range of cryotherapy chambers, as well as a dedicated IVT solution, in the form of the compact Art of Cryo Vacu model.

About the experience

Art of Cryo suggests the combined experience should last 45-60 minutes, with guests spending between 1.5 and five minutes inside one of its Vaultz cryotherapy chambers – depending on personal preference and the model in question – and then completing a 30-minute Art of Cryo Vacu session, with accompanying rest periods.

Art of Cryo's Rainer Bolsinger says: "For our lifestyle customers, the most important effects are prevention, regeneration and strengthening of connective tissue."

Today there are increasingly more lifestyle centres combining cryo-chambers with Art of Cryo Vacu, such as Coolzoone in Cologne (www.coolzoone.de) and Cryodukt in Zurich (www.cryodukt.ch/en).

If you're interested in tapping into this high-performance wellness trend and offering your spa guests a new way to refresh their wellbeing, contact Art of Cryo for more information. ●

More: www.artofcryo.com

PHOTO: ART OF CRYO



Art of Cryo specialises in the creation of cryotherapy experiences



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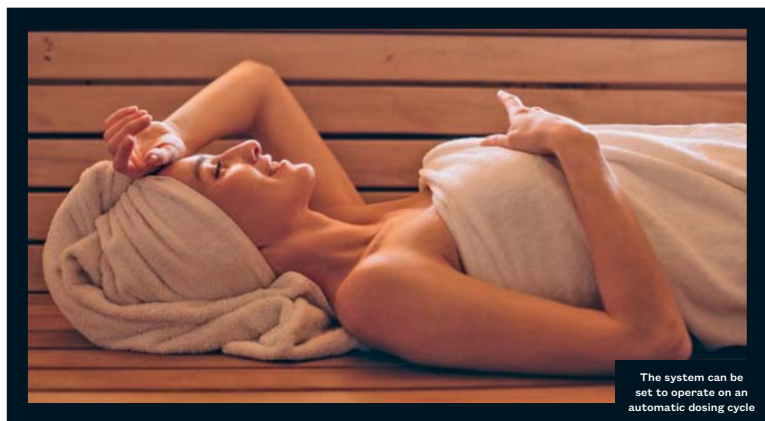
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Product innovation

Spa and wellness industry suppliers tell us about their latest product, treatment and equipment launches



Stephan Mayer-Klenk unveils Kemitron's upgraded spa fragrance dosing system

Sauna technology developer Kemitron has reimagined its Select.Arom fragrance dosing system for steamrooms, experience showers and saunas.

The pump can now accommodate four fragrance options so spa operators can easily control the fragrance, its intensity, interval times and programme the system to run on an automatic dosing cycle. The pump operates at a pressure output of four bars, for the effective spread of fragrances.

Kemitron has developed the dosing system with a long life although, due to its powerful dosing capacity, the pump can be installed in convenient locations so it can be easily reached for maintenance, rather than located high on walls like most other fragrance pumps.

"Fragrances can have a great impact on wellbeing, as they're absorbed through the nose and transmitted directly to our limbic system in the brain," says Stephan Mayer-Klenk, Kemitron CEO.

Fragrances offer customers the maximum relaxation experience



"Fragrance dosing systems help to provide holistic experiences in wellness areas and provide customers with the maximum relaxation experience."

spa-kit.net keyword: Kemitron



“It's essential these hand sanitiser dispensers complement the design aesthetic of the spa

Vaask offers discrete hand sanitation solutions for spas, says Jon Olsen

Vaask, the hand hygiene company, has launched a permanent, touchless hand sanitising fixture, designed to be built into spa walls.

The system offers precise sanitiser delivery and demonstrates a facility's commitment to cleanliness and its concern for customer and employee safety.

“Hand sanitising dispensers are a necessity in spas and it's essential these

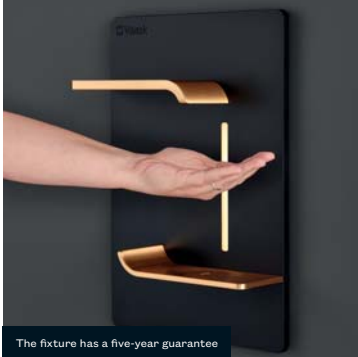
amenities complement the design aesthetic,” says Jon Olsen, Vaask founder.

The cast aluminium wall fixture is available in custom powder coating, plated metal or bespoke finishes. It can hold up to two (refillable) litres of alcohol-based gel and features a precision pump control to prevent leakage or contamination. The intuitive PalmPilot hand sensor automatically retracts

sanitiser when hands move away, which prevents drips.

The unit is easy to install and service and is hard-wired to AC power, requiring no batteries. The programmable multi-coloured LED light display catches the eye to encourage potential users and alerts spa staff when the sanitiser liquid is running low.

spa-kit.net keywords:
Vaask



The fixture has a five-year guarantee

Neil Orvay: New Evolution-U psychology-based spa business training optimises profitability

Evolution-U Spa Academy has launched an online spa business training course that blends core team skillsets with corporate-level business psychology. The course content includes training modules for spa managers, therapists and receptionists.

Evolution-U, which is run by Neil Orvay – a 20-year spa industry veteran and CEO of Hong Kong day spa chain Sense of Touch – delivers soft skills training solutions, that come in more than 150 unique

modules, to corporate clients and senior executives working in a variety of leisure sectors.

Commenting on the new course, Orvay says: “This training takes corporate level communication skills and applies them to the spa sector.

I've realised from the operation of my own spa chain that there was a training gap, as although my team were well trained in treatment protocols and retail product knowledge, they needed help to sell themselves and build

long-term client relationships. I wanted to have a repository of easily-accessible best practice information so staff can review their skills, managers can retrain their teams and new staff could be brought up to speed.”

spa-kit.net keyword:
Evolution-U



“The training takes corporate level communication skills and applies them to spas

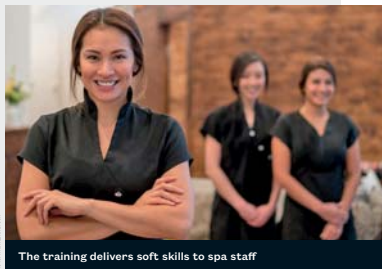


PHOTO: ANDREW STOK

The training delivers soft skills to spa staff

PROMOTION

PHOTO: COMFORT ZONE



We're doing everything possible to reduce our plastic footprint
Davide Bolatti, Founder



PHOTO: PLASTIC BANK/DAVINES GROUP

For each product sold an equal amount of plastic will be collected

From 2022, Comfort Zone's products are going plastic-neutral, certified by Plastic Bank

Comfort Zone and parent company, the Davines Group have ramped up their 'plastic neutral' target for 2022.

For every product sold, the company has committed to collecting and recycling an equal amount of ocean-bound plastic.

This new target continues work done by the company during 2021 when a global campaign – called 'Rethinking Plastic' – saw 100 tons of plastic collected from coastal areas in Brazil, the Philippines and Indonesia by social enterprise, Plastic Bank.

Plastic Bank works on behalf of Davines Group, collecting and removing plastic from beaches, processing it and giving it a new lease of life so it can be reintroduced into the global supply chain.

In addition to the benefit to the environment, this also improves the life of local collectors who exchange the plastic they collect for bonuses that provide access to basic family necessities, such as food, fuel, school fees and health insurance.

As a result of this activity, Davines Group's products are now certified as being 'Plastic Neutral' by Plastic Bank.

Ongoing partnership

The partnership is based on shared objectives – supporting the development of a regenerative society through a revolution in the plastic lifecycle, improving the lives of collector communities and keeping plastic out of the oceans.

Plastic Bank has stopped more than 40m kg of plastic entering the seas by building ecosystems that see the material reborn as Social Plastic feedstock, which can be used in products and packaging as part of a closed-loop supply chain.

"Plastic Bank ticked all the boxes for us, as the organisation has created an ethical ecosystem around plastic collection," says Davines Group chair, Davide Bolatti.

"Our brands are present in 90 countries and we're aware of the impact this has on the planet. That's why our commitment extends beyond our borders and is focused on doing everything possible to reduce our plastic footprint and transform our activity, so it has a positive impact on the planet and its inhabitants."

David Katz, Plastic Bank founder and CEO, said: "By making the bold choice to offer sustainable, plastic neutral products, Davines Group is thoughtfully shepherding the beauty industry and consumers towards the right side of history."

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[comfort zone]



🔗 spa-kit.net keyword: Comfort Zone

Mathilde Thomas shares Caudalie's refreshed Premier Cru anti-ageing product range and facial

Vinotherapy skincare company Caudalie has reformulated its signature Premier Cru product range after its collaboration with Harvard University.

Following a 10-year research programme, the product partners have co-patented anti-ageing technology, TET8, which has been designed to stimulate youth proteins in the skin by correcting wrinkles,

fine lines and dark spots, while promoting firmness, elasticity, radiance, volume and hydration.

"I created Premier Cru to offer skincare that corrects all signs of ageing, without compromise," says Caudalie co-founder Mathilde Thomas. "It's the most effective and sensorial collection we've developed so far...the ultimate anti-ageing solution."

The vegan collection features a serum, cream, rich cream and eye cream, and all packaging is recyclable.

The skincare line is blended with grapeseed polyphenols, viniferine and resveratrol extracted from vine shoots harvested in France.



PHOTO: CAUDALIE

spa-kit.net keywords:
Caudalie

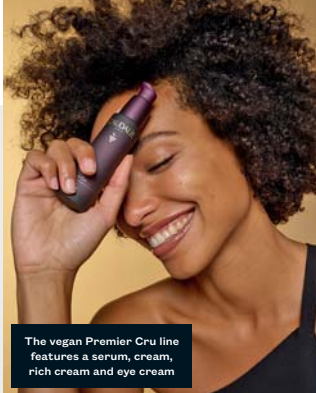


PHOTO: CAUDALIE



“It's the most effective and sensorial collection that we've developed so far



“The bed is known to help treat injuries, reduce pain, and relax muscles



PHOTO: BEAM SUPREME

Touchless Body Boost Bed therapy targets inflammation, says Richard Warden

The Body Boost Bed is a total body photobiomodulation light therapy (PBM) system for spas and aesthetic beauty clinics.

"The Body Boost Bed is known to help treat injuries, reduce pain, relax muscles and joints and increase circulation, as well as promote anti-ageing effects on the skin and an overall sense

of wellbeing," says Richard Warden, owner of Body Boost Bed distributor Beam Supreme.

"Launched in Australia, the bed uses blue-, red- and near-infrared light and is currently being sold in the US, the Netherlands, France and the Czech Republic."

Complete with small LED panels, the bed can be used to

treat the face or the whole body. Sessions typically last 25 minutes and can be used to complement and enhance other treatments.

The bed has EC and FDA approval, and is EU medically-certified.

spa-kit.net keywords:
Body Boost Bed



“The Iyashi Dôme infrared sauna has proved to be a good return on investment

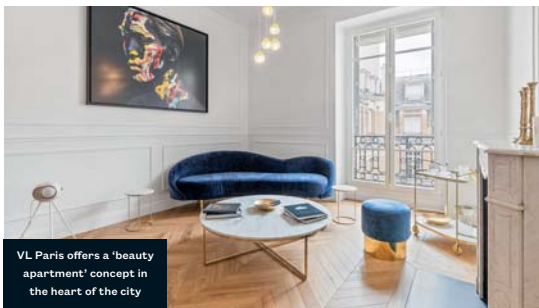


PHOTO: VL PARIS

Vanessa Landreau says Iyashi Dôme is driving profits at the VL Paris ‘beauty apartment’

When Vanessa Landreau set up VL Paris, a Parisian ‘beauty apartment’ located in an exclusive part of the French capital, she installed a Iyashi

Dôme sauna bed to complement her salon’s ‘integrated, preventive and regenerative beauty treatment concept.’

“The Japanese sauna sessions fit perfectly with the holistic health and beauty services provided at the ‘beauty apartment,’” Landreau explains. “These services include technological treatments, personal

advice, dietary supplements and cosmetic treatments that are carefully combined to suit our client’s individual needs.

“We offer personal and results-driven treatments designed to break down the boundaries between health, wellbeing and beauty,” she says. “Each of the treatment components treat the body from an inside and an outside perspective and are carefully created to help energise, nourish and purify the body.”

Infrared benefits

Within each 30-minute, full-body Iyashi Dôme sauna session, the gentle

infrared light stimulates the client’s blood circulation and perspiration. On average a person can sweat up to 1,200ml in each session, which can prepare clients for, and improve the tangible benefits of, customised treatments.

Landreau says she chose Iyashi Dôme because she “wanted the best” for her clients and as the company has been a pioneer of infrared therapy in the health and beauty sector for almost 20 years, she felt confident in the partnership and that so far it has “proven to have a good return on investment”.

Business support

“The Iyashi Dôme sessions have been very popular and have given our clients great results so far,” she explains. “We recommend that our clients have a course of 16 30-minute sessions over two months to lose an average weight of 3.6kg and that these should be combined with a balanced diet and exercise.

“It’s easy to use, and once a session is set up, salon staff are free to return to other areas of their work,” she says, adding that its contactless handsfree option has also been very beneficial during the COVID-19 restrictions.

Landreau is also pleased with the ongoing support offered within the partnership. “If I get good aftersales service from my technology provider then I can guarantee a good service to my customers too,” she concludes.



PHOTO: VL PARIS

➤ spa-kit.net keyword: Iyashi Dôme



PHOTO: ESPA

“We want to offer everyone the chance to find skin, body and mental wellbeing



The vegan line features one powder and three elixirs

SPK12/2019

Espa's supplements help consumers embrace a wellness lifestyle, says Daniel Golby

Espa has created a new line of supplements with the help of nutritional experts, dietitians and proven evidence from biological studies.

The vegan range is made up of four products, including one powder and three elixirs. Each one targets a wellbeing concern, ranging from skin hydration and defence against ageing to complexion and immunity.

The collection is designed to complement Espa's skincare range to offer consumers a complete wellness regimen.

Daniel Golby, Espa managing director, says: “Our mission is to empower people to embrace a wellness lifestyle and offer everyone the chance to find total skin, body and mental wellbeing.

“We're dedicated to being a true, modern-day,

360 wellness brand, and our new range is the key to harmonious, total wellbeing.”

The supplements are enriched with vitamins, nutrients and antioxidants and can be mixed into water or smoothies. They're available online, and will soon also be sold in spas.

 spa-kit.net keywords:
Espa

LEC's Mind-Sync Harmonic Sleep Lounger offers unattended wellness experiences, says Blake Feeney

Living Earth Crafts (LEC) has launched the Mind-Sync Harmonic Sleep Lounger – a zero-gravity lounger featuring clinically-tested, Mind-Sync vibroacoustic resonance therapy to support stress reduction, restorative meditation and enhance sleep.

The lounger offers six immersion programmes utilising four full-spectrum transducers to flow quantum harmonic sound waves through the body.

Noise-cancelling headphones offer two channels of proprietary brainwave entrainment frequencies, masked by gentle music and nature sounds to help move clients into a relaxed, parasympathetic state. These programmes last between 25-60

minutes and are controlled via an interactive touch-screen.

Designed for pre- and post- spa treatments, the chair is claimed to offer significant unattended revenue potential, as both an add-on or a standalone spa experience.

Blake Feeney, LEC's VP of business development, says: “In these tight labour markets, my spa and wellness clients are increasingly seeking unattended, effective wellness experiences to augment their traditional spa, medical and beauty services. The new Sleep Lounger is a perfect addition to their offerings.”

 spa-kit.net keywords:
Living Earth Crafts



The lounger is available with MSRP set at US\$9,950 (€8,830, £7,542)

PHOTO: LIVING EARTH CRAFTS



PHOTO: LIVING EARTH CRAFTS

“My spa clients are seeking unattended, effective wellness experiences

Valmont's Sophie Guillon designs new spa collection for the next generation of women

Skincare house Valmont has launched the Luminosity range, which is powered by plants and inspired by the luminosity of ice.

The product line features four components: LumiPeel, a rich exfoliating fluid; LumiMask, a creamy resurfacing mask; LumiSense, a pore-refining serum water; and LumiCream.

This collection works on skin tone and texture to produce a glowing effect, and packaging is 100 per cent recyclable.

Sophie Guillon, Valmont CEO says: "I created Luminosity with a specific audience in mind: the new generation of women who are in absolute harmony with their environment and themselves."

The formula is underpinned by the Swiss Phyto-Complex, a

PHOTO: VALMONT



It's for the new generation of women who are in harmony with themselves



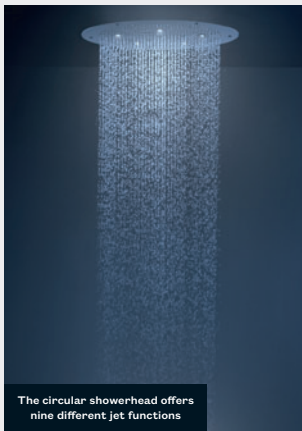
PHOTO: VALMONT

The range is blended with white mulberry, an ingredient revered in Japanese skincare

cocktail of seven Swiss-grown plants known for their skin benefits, plus white mulberry, an ingredient revered in Japanese skincare that helps to smooth the skin and enable it to reflect light. The new collection has been launched in combination with a 60-minute Luminosity of Ice facial which incorporates the new product - Lumi Boost.

spa-kit.net keyword:
Valmont

Stefano Moretti unveils aquaform's new round-headed experience shower



The circular showerhead offers nine different jet functions

PHOTO: AQUAFORM



PHOTO: AQUAFORM

Using water, lights, sounds and perfumes, our systems create evocative environments

Shower system specialist Aquaform has launched a circular showerhead complete with programmable water jets, chromotherapy, aromatherapy and sound effects.

Offering nine jet functions, the showerhead uses modular sector technology to enable greater jet power and flexibility. The showerhead is available in either a 20, 30, 50 or 65cm diameter.

"Aquaform experience showers are designed with a very precise idea in mind; wellbeing through water," says Stefano Moretti, Aquaform CEO.

"Using water, lights, sounds and perfumes, our systems create

evocative environments where users can benefit from an intense, water regenerating effect."

Aquaform's collection is available in nine different finishes, most of which are designed with chemical and scratch-resistant properties.

The company's portfolio is divided into two categories; professional and private.

The first is operated by spa managers and users can only partially manage the shower preferences. The private group includes a selection of internal touch screens that allow users to control every parameter within the shower.

spa-kit.net keyword:
Aquaform

spa business directory

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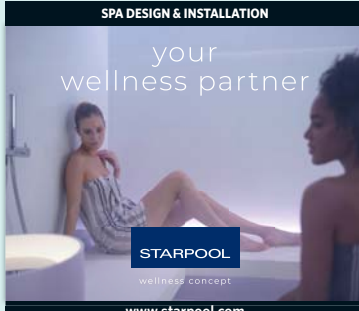
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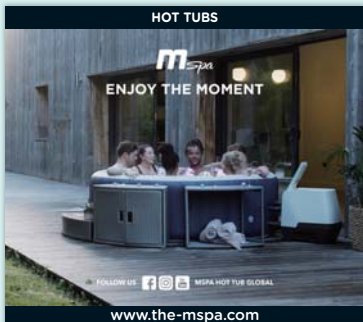
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Music psychologist,
Brian d'Souza
wants spas to look
beyond linear sound

Finishing touch

ELEVATING SOUND

Swell by Brian d'Souza launches to deliver immersive sound environments for spas, as research shows singing, listening to or playing music can improve mental wellbeing

Singing, listening to or playing music can improve mental wellbeing and quality of life, according to a recent research review published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

The work, titled *Association of music interventions with health-related quality of life*, showed that the benefits to mental quality of life of experiencing music are similar to those associated with exercise or weight loss.

The review could encourage spa and wellness operators to incorporate more music into their guest journey, such as offering music-centric rituals or retreats.

More: www.spabusiness.com/JAMA

Creating soundscapes for spas

In other news, music psychology specialist Brian d'Souza recently launched a new business to offer transformative sound experiences to the spa, wellness and hospitality industries.

Called Swell, the company delivers bespoke music and sound solutions combining field recording, music

composition, nature and sound therapy to improve relaxation while promoting positive listening habits.

d'Souza says the traditional linear listening experience can result in 'listener fatigue' if guests and staff hear the same music on repeat.

Swell is aiming to provide therapists with an audio solution to elevate treatments and create more immersive environments.

Supporting software platform

The company designs develops and supports its own software platform and apps which enable the user to sync music selections and compositions to any kind of physical or therapeutic journey.

The Swell team has also recently partnered with Scottish spa and skincare brand ishga to create personalised treatment sequences, paired with Swell's sound wellness concept.

Swell is an offshoot of d'Souza's primary business – Open Ear Music, a music design delivery service creating bespoke playlists and on-brand solutions for businesses such as Google, Nike and IHG.

Open Ear recently collaborated with the Kimpton Blythswood Square Hotel in Glasgow to deliver La Chambre Verte, (www.spabusiness.com/verte), Scotland's first biophilic hotel room, inspired by forest bathing. ●
More: www.spabusiness.com/Swell

{ The traditional linear listening experience can create listener fatigue }



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