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Irene Forte

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Skin deep

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Who will own the well-life consumer?

It's the wild west out there and there's a land grab going on as interested parties make their play to own the well-life consumer. It's not clear yet how this will pan out as the industry matures, or where spa stands in the pecking order, but the threats are clear

Personal health and wellbeing is emerging as one of the standout consumer markets of this century and it's sucking in new entrants at breakneck speed.

The question is, who will end up dominating this market – if anyone – and where will spa stand in the pecking order?

It's time for spa businesses to become global brands and to build round-the-clock relationships with consumers

At the crux of this is the consumers'-eye perspective, because people who care about their health know it's a round-the-clock commitment, not just something you opt in and out of as you fancy.

People leading a well life care about the entire Circle of Wellbeing – the whole-life picture. They care about their sleep, lifelong learning, the air they breathe, the food they eat, how they work and exercise and relax, how they socialise and spend their free time, how they spend and invest their money, how they live, how they die. All of it.

For them, it's a total lifestyle choice and the power of this 24/7 dimension, when coupled with the spending habits of this fast-growing global tribe, have begun to catch the eye of an increasing number of major players.

Corporations such as Google, Microsoft, Intel, Apple and Amazon are racing to figure out how they can jump in: the prospect of this deep level of constant contact is alluring to those looking to own the consumer.

They also know this tribe is generally more affluent, educated and aspiring – whatever their background – making the prospect even more compelling.

The arrival of top level businesses like these poses interesting challenges, as well as raising the prospect of opportunity for partnerships and collaborations. Yet if big business wants in, then things will get bloody over the next decade as they battle for position and seek to create global consumer brands around personal wellbeing.

The challenge for the spa industry is that we are – on the whole – only geared up to sell time and experiences and not to engage round-the-clock with consumers.

You could argue other sectors within wellbeing are doing a better job of bonding with the consumer and providing 24/7 support – the health and fitness industry and the healthcare sectors are both making fast progress with the engaging tech they need to be able to do this.

And they're working with big business to do it, so wearbles are integrating with fitness apps and health and fitness businesses to create joined-up experiences.

It's time for spa businesses to become global consumer brands and to figure out how to fit in to this bigger picture. Time to move beyond selling time to a point where we can build round-the-clock relationships with customers and major players in the wider wellbeing industry.

This will take investment and ambition, but it's entirely within our scope. And if we don't, then there's a very real danger we'll see our market taken over by others.

Liz Terry, editorial director @elizterry

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CONTENTS

p38 Irene Forte gets into spa

p44 Keemala, Phuket

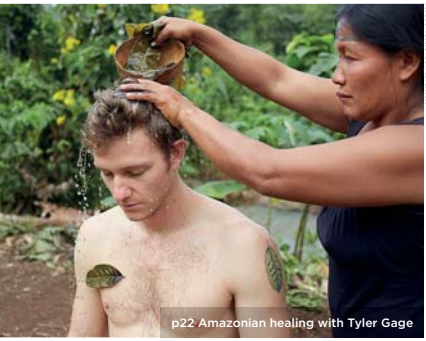

PHOTO: BEN ANDREW HEATHER

p22 Amazonian healing with Tyler Gage

p58 Skin expert Dr Claudia Aguirre

7 | Editor's letter
Liz Terry shares her thoughts

20 | Letters
Can spas do well by doing good?

22 | Spa people
Tyler Gage working with Channing Tatum in the Amazon; and Todd Hewitt takes up global spa role at Shangri-La

30 | News
Major new destination spa in India; and Morgans moves into mindfulness

38 | Interview: Irene Forte
Daughter of hotelier Sir Rocco Forte and niece of designer Olga Polizzi tells Jane Kitchen why the Rocco Forte Hotel's new spa concept is a family affair

44 | Design: Natural wonderland
Neena Dhillon visits the striking new Keemala resort and spa in Phuket and finds out about its unique design

54 | Ask an expert: Next gen skincare
Should therapists combine skincare with nutrition and psychology?

58 | Skin deep
Modern research is redefining the way we think about skin. Neuroscientist Dr Claudia Aguirre explains what the findings mean for spas

64 | Interview: Franz Linser & Susan Harmsworth
Katie Barnes speaks to the co-chairs of this year's Global Wellness Summit

70 | Healthy investment
Does investing in wellness stack up? Rhianon Howells investigates

 ©CYBERTREK 2016

p88 AntiGravity® Aerial Yoga

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p102 Standout sauna designs

PHOTO: JACK EMMERSON WWW.JISE.COUK

p64 Franz Linser & Susan Harmsworth

PHOTO: SPLORE CLINIC AND RESEARCH CENTER AT THE LAUDERDALE INSTITUTE FOR PAIN RESEARCH

p84 The science of floating

78 | Chain reaction – part 2
Jane Kitchen gets up to speed with spa franchise news from around the world

84 | Set adrift
Niamh Madigan talks to researcher Justin Feinstein who thinks floatation could be a shortcut to meditation

88 | Fitness: Defying gravity
The founder of AntiGravity® Aerial Yoga tells Niamh Madigan about the technique and a new suspension massage he's developing for spas

97 | Spa software: Tech talk II
News and views from software firms

102 | Design: Hot stuff
From rusty walls to floating designs, we round-up some great-looking projects in the world of sauna bathing

113 | Product innovation
Suppliers tell us about their launches

124 | Research: Feeling the love
Bromance may be good for men's health, say US scientists

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PHOTO: JAMIE JONES/CLATTU, INSTAGRAM

Channing Tatum champions Amazonian healing with Runa and Tyler Gage (see p22)

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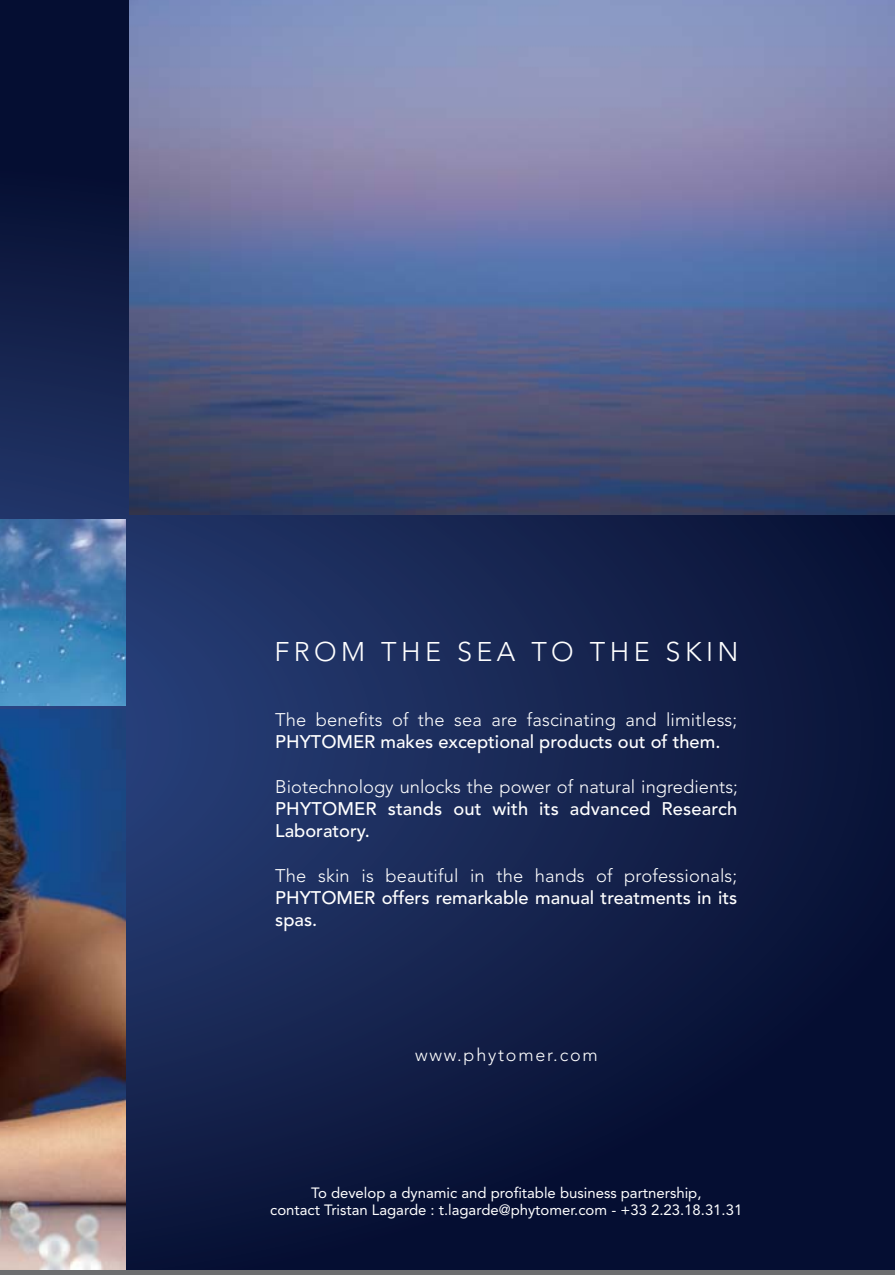
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Letters

KATIE BARNES, EDITOR, SPA BUSINESS

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

YOU REALLY CAN DO WELL BY DOING GOOD

Kevin Kelly, CEO, Civano Living

Two Bunch Palms had success with solar energy says Kelly

The term triple bottom line (TBL) refers to the economic, social *and* environmental benefit or loss of an investment, but balancing the three can be tough for businesses.

Most consumers emotionally support the TBL benefits and are cost-conscious, while investors usually demand short-term capital repayment timelines. Many firms believe they need to ensure that the economic bottom-line is achieved before having the luxury of focusing on the broader TBL objectives.

However, in my recent role as CEO at Two Bunch Palms Spa Resort – which was being transformed into a carbon-neutral property – we were able to achieve economic, social and environmental objectives simultaneously and had the best revenue and occupancy ever.

> **We were able to achieve economic, social and environmental objectives and had the best revenue and occupancy ever**

Partnering with Pear Energy we built a 550 kW solar facility that generated the equivalent of the resort's annual electrical needs. The capital investment generated a 10.5-12 per cent ROI through tax credits and cash payments based on a 21-year amortisation schedule. The 2015-2016 energy bill was 6 per cent less and the resort was less susceptible to public utility rate hikes. These savings flowed straight to the bottom-line and can proportionately reduce operating expenses if energy costs rise in the future.

Being eco-friendly resonated with spa guests and enhanced consumer loyalty

Equally important, since 80 per cent of Two Bunch Palm's spa-oriented target market resonated with being environmentally responsible, the brand was better aligned with its customers' core values, which enhanced consumer loyalty.

Lastly, when the resort introduced a solar field it was able to save the equivalent of 455 trees in just eight months. In the same time, it was able to generate over 500,000 hours of electricity, conserve 14 million gallons of water and offset the equivalent of 200,000lbs of carbon from entering the atmosphere, with more environmental benefit accruing each day.

In my experience, TBL is definitely achievable and by doing good, businesses can do well by reducing operating costs, having a deeper connection with customers and helping the planet along the way.

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There's potential for new pricing models say Madden-Nadeau

DOES VARIABLE PRICING WORK IN SPAS?

Lindsay Madden-Nadeau, director, spa integration and operations, FRHI

At the Professional Spa & Wellness event in Dubai in February, a thought-provoking panel discussion examined pricing. Each panellist came from a company with a different business structure which left me wondering, does variable pricing work?

Airlines and hotels utilise demand pricing, where the price changes from one minute to the next, but these transactions are based on schedule and convenience, whereas when booking a spa treatment, time can be managed more and is more flexible.

> **Can we compare the luxury of a spa treatment to the art of booking a hotel room or seat with an airline?**

I agree that resort spas should look at increasing prices in peak season to maximise revenues; and adjust prices in the off-season, when the demand drops, along with the hotel rates.

This is because seasonal pricing is less likely to upset guests, compared to having one treatment price on a Monday while getting charged a higher rate a couple of days later.

I asked one of our spas in California – which practices weekday versus weekend prices – if guests were ever upset at the difference in prices. The answer was no. The spa's normal asking price was the weekend rate, so the lower selling rate in the week was perceived as a discount.

Spas need to be careful not to upset clients, especially regular ones, with price disparities

It made me consider different spa models and what works in different environments. If spas are utilising discounts properly in off-peak periods and practicing yield management in peak times, this could also be interpreted as variable pricing. Food for thought.

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IS THE PRINT SPA MENU OUTDATED?

Anja Eva Keller, independent spa & wellness consultant

When was the last time you were given a hardcopy food/drinks menu in a restaurant? Maybe not so long ago, as the majority still distribute hard copies as well as having online versions. Same for most spas.

But as more spas gradually introduce real-time online booking options, it leads me to question whether printed spa menus are outdated?

The way some spas request customers to phone or email to make a booking definitely seems outmoded.

> **Mandarin Oriental is taking its online booking a step further with the paperless spa, checking guests in from tablets**

A phone call may not always be a preferred way of contact for a travelling guest or busy spa reception, for example.

An email bears the risk of time delays: message has to be sent, replied to and confirmed by both sides, etc.

Spa online booking is one answer, with operators who choose this route seeing an increase in revenue from more appointments released. One spa software company reports that spas which offer online, real-time booking are seeing up to 10 per cent of appointments made that way.

GAUDILAB/SHUTTERSTOCK

Customers are increasingly booking spa appointments online

Meanwhile, Mandarin Oriental is taking its online booking a step further with the paperless spa, checking guests in from tablets.

It will be interesting to observe the technological development in our industry.

I don't believe that print spa menus are going to – nor should – disappear entirely, but I am a total fan of the paperless office and online booking. ●

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by Katie Barnes, editor, Spa Business

spa people

> The spa industry would be a welcome partner in helping us create sustainable hospitality businesses in the Amazon

Tyler Gage co-founder and CEO, Runa

Gage's energy tea company Runa sources ingredients from the Amazon

Hollywood a-lister Channing Tatum is famous for starring in numerous blockbusters from comedy drama *Magic Mike* to the action-packed *White House Down*. But people in the spa industry will be more interested to hear about his work with Tyler Gage and his role in championing a native healing centre deep in the Amazon rainforest.

Gage is the co-founder and CEO of organic, 'clean energy' tea company Runa which sources gauyusa, its key ingredient, from indigenous families such as the Sápara in the Ecuadorian Amazon. Tatum is a brand ambassador and investor in the company.

Tatum has teamed up with Gage to champion a healing centre in the Amazon rainforest (above); Gage receiving a traditional cleansing (left)

PHOTOS ©BRIAN BOWEN SMITH

The centre will create value for the Sápara (above), one of the tribes which Runa sources gauyusa from (right)

The Sápara think of the Amazon as a living pharmacy and over the centuries have built up a profound knowledge of the rainforest's trees and plants, many of which could help in the search of cures for chronic illnesses such as cancer. Talking on YouTube Tatum says: "The people who live in the rainforest hold the key to unlocking the Amazon's healing potential. But destruction of the rainforest has forced the Sápara and other Amazonian people to the brink of extinction. A civilisation's worth of medical knowledge could disappear right along with them."

Recently, Tatum has teamed up with Gage and the Runa Foundation to launch an initiative to help create new value for the tropical forests that benefits local people. Opening in mid-2016, the Naku healing centre will see scientists working alongside native healers to highlight the efficacy of traditional treatments and ingredients.

"We'll have patients from all over the world suffering from a variety of illnesses already described by western doctors," says Gage. "The Sápara healers will do their own diagnostic before patients go through the Amazonian healing process.

"We'll record not only physical but also psychological and wellbeing data, and track their progress for improvement or change. This will lay the foundation for further phytochemical studies and clinical trials."

> The Naku healing centre will see scientists working alongside native healers to highlight efficacy

The healing centre, located deep in the jungle, is inspired by Sápara building techniques and utilises the latest in ecological design. It will have eight rooms where ▸

The Naku community has already hosted 200 people in the past two years – including Tatum – on a cultural immersion programme

patients will be given a course of treatments including whole plant remedies, diet guidelines and dream and sleep therapies that the Sápara have used for centuries.

"There's no phone or internet service at Naku, giving patients the opportunity to disconnect from hectic daily schedules and focus on their personal healing and wellness," says Gage. "To begin with, all visitors receive a traditional cleansing, or limpieza, to clear out all of the negative energies that we bring from the outside. Cleansing is performed throughout, using a mix of medicinal plant baths, tobacco, herbal saunas and other rituals."

As the Sápara use such a vast variety of medicinal plants – they have knowledge of more than 500 – Gage says it's hard to say exactly what direction the treatments will take after that. He explains: "Since Amazonian medicine recognises illnesses as having different causal pathways than western medicine, each person must go through a unique diagnostic process.

"For example, 10 patients suffering from what a western doctor calls Alzhiemer's, could be seen by the Sápara as 10 different illnesses, each with a distinct cause and a different treatment to be undergone."

Due to open in mid 2016, the healing centre is deep in the jungle and has been built using ecological design principles

> Channing hit it off amazingly with the Sápara people and was instantly motivated to help them

While the healing centre is yet to open, the Naku community has already hosted nearly 200 visitors in the past two years – including Tatum – on a cultural immersion programme. Guests become part of the Sápara community, staying in traditional indigenous lodges and learning about the tribe and the rainforest that they've inhabited for hundreds of years.

"Channing loved it," says Gage. "He hit it off amazingly with the Sápara people and was instantly motivated to help them to turn their vision of Naku into a reality.

"He's is down to earth, easy going and super creative and working with him has helped us to build awareness and support for Naku."

One of the most important things people take away from their Naku experience is how reconnecting with nature and community can help with wellbeing and this is something spas could learn from says Gage. "Spa owners already know that it's important for people to take a break from the rigours of their stress daily lives," he says, "but being able to have a meaningful cultural experience at the same time enables people to learn about how to be well all of the time, not just when they're on vacation."

In addition to Naku, Gage is also working on a similar project in Peru with the indigenous Shipibo people. The Rios Nete healing and research centre is due to open in late 2016.

Gage adds that the spa sector could get involved with such projects in the future. "There's for potential for collaboration with the spa industry in projects like Naku, as indigenous communities often lack the expertise and human resources to create successful businesses... The spa industry would be a welcome partner in helping us create sustainable hospitality businesses in the Amazon." ●

by Liz Terry, editorial director, Spa Business

> My strengths are quickly analysing businesses and seizing missed opportunities. I also have a knack for developing talent

Todd Hewitt corporate director of spa, Shangri-La

Todd Hewitt, formerly regional spa director at Four Seasons, based in Toronto, has moved to Hong Kong to head up spa for Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts.

Hewitt – an ISPA board member – was placed in his new role by top industry recruiter Lori Hutchinson, who sadly died earlier this year "I was her last placement," he says.

The new role – corporate director of spa for Shangri-La – will see him responsible for the company's 90-plus CHI spas and health clubs, as well as having input into the emerging Kerry Sports business.

Hewitt follows Ian Brewis, Shangri-La's previous head of spa, into the role, but the three year gap between the appointments means the business has been in maintenance mode since.

Hewitt's brief from Shangri-La CEO Greg Dogan and members of the family-owned business, is to give new momentum to the spa and fitness division. "It's clear they see greater opportunity for spa within Shangri-La and want leadership for the existing brands and to move forward on new projects," Hewitt tells *Spa Business*.

Shangri-La has three main spa, sport and wellness brands including the well-known Asian-themed CHI, The Spa concept in 45 sites and the Health Club brand, which is used in properties which need a boutique operation. There's also the new Kerry Sports brand – a family-orientated fitness and sports facility which Hewitt says is phenomenal. "I was just in Manilla visiting the latest location," he says, "and as well as a weight room, cardio room and fitness centre, it has a full-sized NBA basketball court, swimming pool and kid's zone – an entire floor is dedicated to different children's activities".

Hewitt says Shangri-La plans to grow its brand portfolio, with the eventual relaunch of its spas, but that this work won't be rushed: "You don't get a second chance to relaunch," he says. "It has to be done right first time."

Hewitt has moved from Four Seasons to Shangri-La to head up global spa operations

> Shangri-La is growing in Asia, with new spas opening in Manilla and Jeddah

Joining the business at a time of growth, Hewitt's first job has been to visit flagship locations in Singapore, Beijing, Shanghai, Maldives, Mauritius, Abu Dhabi and Dubai: "We're expanding," he says, "in Doha, Sri Lanka, Jeddah, Manilla and the surrounding islands – plus there's rapid growth in China."

As a team player, Hewitt is looking forward to working with the team at Shangri-La. "They're the nicest group of people," he says, "very down to earth, involved and hard working. Having grown up in a family business, I feel at home." ●

By Jane Kitchen, news editor, Spa Business

> We know that we can easily adapt this experience to the California wine country, the Colorado mountains, parts of New England and Hawaii, as well as parts of Florida
>
> **Steve Rudnitsky** president & CEO, Miraval Group

Miraval debuts its first branded spa at St Regis Monarch Beach, California

Steve Rudnitsky was named president and CEO of Miraval Group last October, and tasked with leading the global expansion of the brand, which includes the iconic wellness destination Miraval in Tucson, Arizona.

Now, Miraval has made its first big leap: the debut of a Miraval-branded spa at the St Regis Monarch Beach Resort in Orange County, California. The Miraval Life in Balance at Monarch Beach has 24 treatment rooms and 70 signature Miraval therapies, including things like ayurvedic-inspired Shamana-Karma energy rituals and floating meditation.

ESPA, which Miraval investors KSL Capital Partners also owns a stake in, has had a hand in the design and programming.

The St Regis Monarch Beach Resort is owned KSL too, no doubt making the move a no-brainer. But Rudnitsky says Southern California was picked because it has a heavy concentration of existing Miraval customers and destination spa-goers, many of whom are looking for alternatives to Tucson.

The spa is the first step in a major brand expansion for Miraval that will see the it try to replicate the full experience of its wellness destination spa in other locales. "The primary emphasis will be with other destination resorts," says Rudnitsky. "We know we can easily adapt this experience to the California wine country, the Colorado mountains, parts of New England, Hawaii as well as parts of Florida."

Rudnitsky joined Miraval last October and has been tasked will leading the global expansion of the brand

> There's got to be a certain amount of scale and traffic of wellness consumer or luxury spa consumer for us to be interested

In the next five years, Rudnitsky is "very confident" there will be up to seven "full-blown" Miraval resorts in North America. "We've got a very, very active pipeline for that expansion," he says.

One location not on that list is the 400-acre (162-hectare) Natirar in New Jersey, which was slated to become a Miraval property back in 2014 (see SB13/4 p38) – before Rudnitsky's came on board. "It's a magnificent site, but we're really focused on resort destinations first and foremost," he says.

It's thought the company will seek an alternative location within the New York City catchment.

Full-blown Miraval destination resorts will be augmented with Miraval Life in Balance spas – similar to the Monarch Beach property – located in four-plus star hotels with "owners who understand the value of a Miraval-branded spa."

While the company has a "pretty big expansion" plan in mind for the Life in Balance spas, Rudnitsky wants to first address the market with destination resorts, and then see what locations make sense for the standalone spa facilities.

Miraval has its eyes set beyond the US: locations in Mexico are on its short-list for development and Rudnitsky is also looking around London. "We'd love to get the product in the UK and really leverage ESPA," he says. "They add tremendous value to us, given their core competencies in spa design, spa management and their extensive skincare line."

But, Rudnitsky says, there are so many opportunities in North America – including sites in Mexico and Hawaii – that he wants to get up and running on home ground before crossing the pond.

"We have to be thoughtful about where we locate a property," he says. "There's got to be a certain scale and traffic of wellness or luxury spa consumers for us to be interested and roll up our sleeves and say, 'this makes sense'." ●

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By Jane Kitchen, news editor, Spa Business

> Maruia Springs – a multi-million dollar redevelopment – will create an experience in keeping with this magical location
>
> **James White** managing director, Maruia Hot Springs

Hot springs research and development consultant James White is the new managing director of New Zealand's Maruia Hot Springs and has promised a world-class bathing and wellbeing attraction, as well as a "total renewal of the Southern Alps bathing experience which fits harmoniously into the surrounding mountains."

South Islanders White and his partner, Kim Hamilton, are planning extensive revitalising and expansion of the open-air hot pools that will help Maruia Hot Springs "become the blissful New Zealand nature escape that it should be" he says.

While this is the first property White has co-owned and managed, he's no stranger to the industry. He headed up research for the Hot Springs Alliance Group between 2013 and 2015, which identified best practice in bathing industry.

His research analysed how global natural hot springs create, deliver and capture value. And it involved him visiting 20 countries and 122 hot springs sites, as well as conducting more than 180 interviews.

Maruia is on New Zealand's South Island and its waters reach 56˚C

White's findings concluded that Australia and New Zealand are well-placed to be premier destinations for wellness activities.

The people behind Australia's Peninsula Hot Springs (PHS), which is also undergoing a major expansion, are co-investors in the development which was acquired by a consortium for a reported NZ$2.26m (US$1.6m, €1.4m, £1.1m). PHS founder and CEO Charles Davidson sits on the board of the Australasian Spa and Wellness Association with White.

White and Hamilton have been rejuvenating what was a Japanese-style bath house at Maruia Hot Springs into two communal indoor bathing experiences. Other soon to be developed facilities include thermal massaging showers, heated stone beds, new changing facilities, relaxation lounges, a sauna, steamroom and more indoor relaxation experiences.

White and Hamilton bought the springs as part of a consortium for a reported NZ$2.26m in February

> I'm looking to transform Maruia Springs into an innovative, world-class hot springs destination

The outdoor and indoor bathing pools are fed from a natural 56˚C mineral spring and the eco-resort generates its electricity from its own hydro-power station.

"Over time, I'm looking to apply the knowledge gained from the global hot springs research to transform Maruia Hot Springs into an innovative, world-class hot springs experience and destination," says White. "Maruia Springs will be a multi-million dollar redevelopment to create an experience that's in keeping with this magical location." ●

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[comfort zone]

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New 65,000sq ft dedicated wellness destination debuts in India

Atmantan, a 65,000sq ft (6,039sq m), 106-room dedicated wellness resort near Pune, India, has opened, offering a results-oriented approach to wellness with eight signature retreats.

The property is nestled in the Sahyradri mountains overlooking Mulshi Lake and will be managed by Destination Spa Management (DSM). Based in Thailand, DSM is a spa consultancy and management firm, whose directors cut their teeth as the former senior leadership of Chiva-Som.

Set amid 40 acres (16 hectares) of garden and farmland, Atmantan – whose name comes from the Devanagari for soul (atma), mind (mana) and body (tann) – is owned by Nikhil and Sharmilee Kapur, who first conceptualised the resort in 2008.

The Wellness Pavilion features 23 spa and holistic treatment rooms, 10,000sq ft (929sq m) of fitness and physiotherapy, an indoor salt pool, a salon and retail area, as well as a specialist kriya pavilion for comprehensive ayurvedic programmes.

Atmantan is set to join the ranks of top destination spas in the world

The resort is located near Pune, India

"As an operator, it's a rare pleasure to have a resort that ticks all the boxes for a successful wellness property," said Joy Menzies, managing director of DSM. "The location is perfect, and the owners are fully committed to a results-oriented wellness concept."

Sharmilee Kapur said she's "thrilled" to see her vision taken forward by DSM.

"Our intention is for Atmantan to truly be a place for personal transformation and deep understanding of holistic wellness – both key ingredients for a happy life," she explained.

Dr Manoj Kutteri has been named wellness director at Atmantan.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=z2j9u_B

> "Destination Spa Management has been instrumental in shaping our earliest vision and we're delighted to appoint them as managers"
> Sharmilee Kapur, Atmantan

Results-oriented wellness is key

International Health & Wellness Alliance launches

The global non-profit association IHWA has officially launched, opening up membership to the spa and wellness industry. IHWA aims to unite all sectors of the wellness industry, identifying best practices and promoting true wellness at a grass roots level, the organisation said.

IHWA includes board members from Ananda in the Himalayas, Chiva-Som, Como Shambhala, Destination Spa Management, Kamalaya, Longevity Wellness, Rancho La Puerta, SHA Wellness and Wellbeing Escapes.

> "We believe massive change is possible if we build a community that inspires people to make lifestyle changes"
> Samantha Foster, IHWA

"We are very excited to launch IHWA to the world, and we invite every organisation and individual with a passion for health and wellbeing to join us," said Samantha Foster, president of the organisation.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=r5y7e_B

Universal Companies buys rival SpaEquip

Leading US spa distributor Universal Companies has bought SpaEquip, another spa product and equipment distribution company based in the US.

As part of the deal, some SpaEquip staff will join Universal in Virginia, while SpaEquip will still be based in California, operating as a division of Universal.

SpaEquip's customers will continue to work with preferred contacts but will now have full access to Universal's products, supplies, apparel and specialist services.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=X5k5S_B

> What makes Loma de Vida truly unique is its emphasis on mindful living, which means being open to more than traditional spa treatments
> Maggy Dunphy

La Cantera set to unveil new spa

Destination Hotels is opening a 25,000sq ft (2,323sq m) indoor/outdoor spa sanctuary in June 2016 at its La Cantera Hill Country Resort, located on 550 acres just outside of San Antonio, Texas.

Part of a multi-million-dollar transformation of the 498-guestroom resort, Loma de Vida Spa & Wellness will offer holistic, meditative and restorative treatments that blend indigenous Texas elements with European influences. Indoor and outdoor treatment areas as well as lush outdoor gardens with winding paths are designed to create a sense of place for peaceful seclusion and healing energy.

The spa features 25,000sq ft of indoor/outdoor space

"The architecture and design of the spa creates intentional spaces that are peaceful and comfortable as well as edgy and playful," said Maggy Dunphy, executive director of spa and wellness for Destination Hotels and La Cantera Resort.

Blu Spas acted as the spa and fitness design and planning consultants for Loma de Vida, which features 17,000sq ft (1,579sq m) of indoor space with 15 treatment rooms, including two Sky Lofts that accomodate small groups and feature old-fashioned cowboy bathtubs – plus another 8,000sq ft (1,579sq m) of outdoor space.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=x4Q9N_B

Mindfulness stars in Morgans Hotel programme

Hotel operator Morgans Hotel Group has launched a series of wellness programmes and partnerships.

Morgans has partnered with Mindfulness Everywhere to offer guests a free download of its popular buddhify app, which provides access to more than 80 meditations. Morgans guests will also receive in-room Mindfulness Cards with meditations and relaxation tips for travellers, created for Morgans by buddhify founder Rohan Gunatillake.

Meditation app buddhify is a partner

In collaboration with illustrator Peter Arkle, Morgans has also created a mindful adult colouring book featuring iconic elements from its properties.

"Today's travellers are looking beyond fitness to cater for all aspects of their wellbeing," said Morgans Hotel Group chief operating officer Chadi Farhat. "Morgans' new wellness programming gives us an opportunity to tell a new story and attract a new generation of guests."

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=q5m9G_B

Morgans' mindful colouring book

Florian was an industry inspiration

Global Wellness Day to honour Florian's memory

Global Wellness Day (GWD) this year will honour Charlene Florian, chief creative officer of Kerstin Florian, who died last month following a battle with cancer.

Belgin Aksoy, founder of GWD, has dedicated the global event to Florian "to honour and commemorate her memory".

The organisation has also partnered with reforestation organisation TEMA to plant 2,000 trees in Turkey, which will be known as the Charlene Florian Forest.

"Charlene was always a nature lover, and one of her passions was to make the world a better place," said Aksoy. "Charlene has left her footprints on the wellness world and will never be forgotten."

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=Y9N8F_B

Paltrow teams up with Juice Beauty

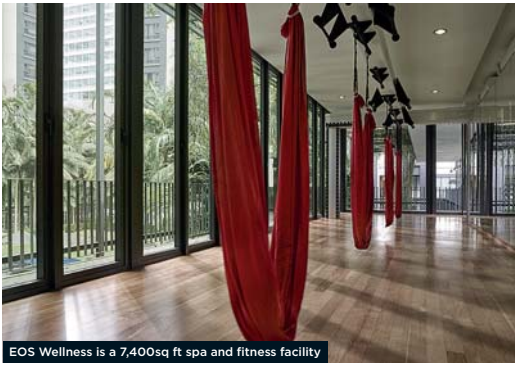
Gwyneth Paltrow debuts Goop skincare brand

Gwyneth Paltrow's Goop brand has launched its first branded product line – Goop by Juice Beauty – a skincare line that capitalises on the Goop aesthetic of "fresh-faced, glowy, natural beauty".

Paltrow worked with California-based skincare company Juice Beauty to create the collection, which is made with plant-based juices and organic ingredients. The line features six products, including an Enriching Face Oil, Exfoliating Instant Facial, Luminous Melting Cleanser, Revitalizing Day Moisturizer, Replenishing Night Cream and Perfecting Eye Cream.

The formulas are made with meristem plant cells, sourced from poet's daffodil and sweet iris, then blended with an antioxidant juice complex.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=C9J8D_B



EOS Wellness is a 7,400sq ft spa and fitness facility

WTS designs pioneering wellness facility in Kuala Lumpur

Spa, fitness and lifestyle consultancy WTS International has announced its latest venture, the newly-opened EOS Wellness in Kuala Lumpur's St Mary Residences. The project has been completed in conjunction with Eastern & Oriental Berhad (E&O) as part of a broader strategy to nurture a wellness pillar to complement its core property development business. WTS was responsible for the concept, design and pre-opening of the property, and will also manage it.

"EOS Wellness is a pioneering spa and fitness facility, and it has been a pleasure to work on this project with the team at E&O," said Mary Lynn Mellinger, director of planning and design for WTS International.

The 7,400sq ft (687sq m) EOS Wellness spa features four single 'curo' treatment rooms, and two couples 'duo' rooms with the latest in wellness equipment, including a full-spectrum infrared sauna, a Jason MicroSilk hydrotherapy bath and a Gharieni 360-degree floating bed that replicates a watsu experience on water, as the tabletop glides back and forth during the treatment.

> "We've married the very latest facilities with indulgent, results-driven treatments"
> Mary Lynn Mellinger, WTS

"When it comes to wellbeing, we don't believe in compromising on expertise or quality, which is why we chose to partner with WTS International," said Carolyn Peh, assistant general manager at EOS.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=9R8j8_B

The spa is run by Premedion and includes medical cosmetics

Hilton Alexandria launches with 6,000sq m spa and prevention centre

The 199-bedroom Hilton Alexandria King's Ranch has opened in Egypt with a 6,000sq m (64,583sq ft) Premedion Spa and Prevention Centre – the first location for international spa consultancy Premedion in Egypt.

The facility, which is managed by Premedion, has 49 treatment rooms and centres for rehabilitation, physical analysis, prevention, fitness, medical cosmetics and spa treatments. It specialises in detox, anti-ageing, rehab and weight management programmes.

Launched in Germany in 2004, Premedion runs just under 40 prevention, rehab and alternative medicine spas globally. It opened a Middle East office in Doha in 2010 and has worked on 12 spas in the region.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=p7N4c_B

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The all-white Mar Adentro

Satteva designing striking spa for design-led hotel

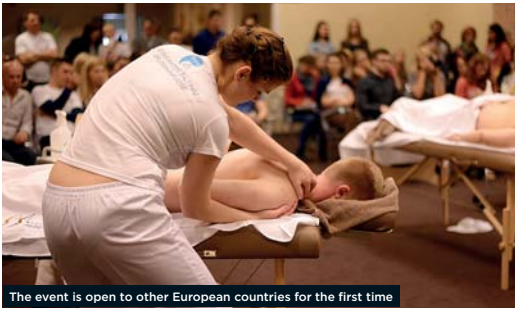
At the upcoming design-led, all-white hotel Mar Adentro in Los Cabos, Mexico, Bonnie Baker, co-founder of Satteva Spa & Wellness Concepts, is creating a spa in stark contrast – a dark, cave-like area inspired by local cenote swimming holes.

The Mar Abierto Spa is located deep within the property and a spiral walkway provides the sense of entering into a secluded cavern. Reflecting cenotes, seawater cascades from an opening in the ceiling into an aqua therapy lounge. The decor has been inspired by the colours and textures of the ocean and the rhythm and motion of the waves.

Baker's concept focuses on the idea of the spa as a portal that enables guests to open up to existence, life and wellbeing. She said: "It speaks to that ability to remove yourself from what's happening out there and find yourself in such a deep place."

A signature hotel for architect Miguel Ángel Aragonés, the stylised Mar Adentro is set to open this June.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=2Q5T8_B


The event is open to other European countries for the first time

Lithuania spa association to host massage championship

The National Spa Association of Lithuania is opening its massage championship to other European countries for the first time this year.

The event, sponsored by the non-profit association, brings industry professionals together to watch top therapists perform and win prizes and awards. In the past, it limited to participants from Lithuania, but this year, organisers hope to have at least 30 participants from 10 different countries take part in the Open European Massage Championship on 18-19 May. Participants spend 30-60 days preparing for the event.

"The key reason for going open and international is to give our industry players and therapists the chance to see how masters from other countries are performing," said association president Lukas Mackevicius.

> "It's an extremely valuable tool for staff motivation and personal development"
> Lukas Mackevicius

"[It will also enable us] to see the trends in other countries – while at the same time, letting other countries have a closer look at our own heritage... We wanted to share this amazing experience with associations in other countries, as it's an extremely valuable tool for staff motivation and personal development."

Rules will be provided in Lithuanian, English and Russian and there will be judges from Lithuania, Israel, Italy, Russia, Latvia and Estonia.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=s8Q6j_B

The Rosewood Papagayo is set to open in 2019

Rosewood Costa Rica to feature hillside treehouses

Rosewood Hotels & Resorts will open a location in Costa Rica in 2019, the Rosewood Papagayo, which will include the brand's signature Sense, A Rosewood Spa.

Located on the northwest coast of Costa Rica, the resort's 130 bedrooms and 30 residences will be nestled into the hillside in a forested setting. It's been designed by Dallas-based architects HKS.

The resort – including the spa – will use indigenous materials and feature locally-inspired artwork.

Sense, A Rosewood Spa offers "an environment of luxury and tranquility" and is inspired by authenticity with signature treatments using natural ingredients. Rosewood launched the brand in 2007 and today it has 13 spas in its global portfolio.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=N7z7p_B

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www.beautyworldme.com

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SpaLife Germany
Bad Orb, Germany
SpaLife brings its networking and conference event to Germany.
www.spa-life.co.uk

2 June 2016
Forum Hotel & Spa
Paris, France
Panel discussions and educational sessions at this one-day forum.
www.forumhotspa.com

8-11 June 2016
Spatec Europe
Albufeira, Portugal
Two days of face-to-face meetings with spa industry leaders.
www.spatecevents.com/europe

11 June 2016
Global Wellness Day
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Spa ambassadors around the world encourage people to change one aspect of their lives for the better.
www.globalwellnessday.org

25-27 June 2016
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www.iecsc.com

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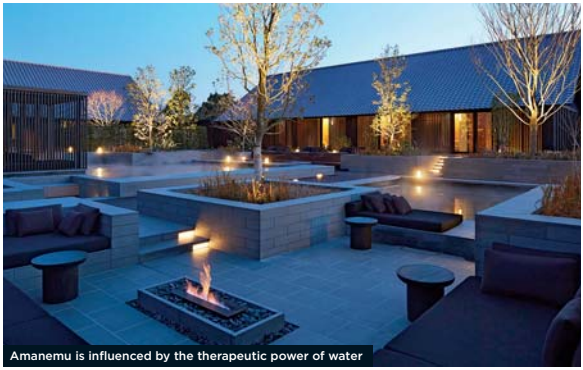
Amanemu is influenced by the therapeutic power of water

Aman opens first Japanese hot springs resort

Aman's first Japanese hot springs resort, Amanemu, has opened in Ise Shima National Park on the shores of Ago Bay.

Amanemu has adopted a classic Japanese aesthetic in the ryokan tradition with each of the 24 suites and four two-bedroom villas featuring their own onsen. Designed to be a relaxed, peaceful and contemplative destination, Amanemu aims to embrace 'omotenashi,' the Japanese welcoming spirit blending with warmth and respect.

Heavily influenced by Japan's natural hot springs and therapeutic powers of water, the 2000sq m (21,528sq ft) spa encompasses a large central onsen for communal bathing, plus two private spa pavilions – each with their own indoor and outdoor onsen. The holistic approach of the spa aims to promote wellbeing through the integration of treatments, relaxation, movement and nutrition. There's also a fitness centre, watsu suites and a glass-walled yoga studio with an outdoor deck overlooking a peaceful garden with a tabunoki tree at its centre.

Four additional treatment suites are for therapies that combine mineral-rich onsen water with the traditional herb-based practice of kampo.

This is Aman's second property in Japan – the first opened last October in the Otemachi Tower, Tokyo (see SB15/2 p52).

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=R7k7T_B

On-demand massage company Soothe debuts in Europe

> "Our massage therapists deliver spa-quality treatments, without the hassle of finding parking or dealing with traffic"
> Merlin Kauffman, Soothe

On-demand massage company Soothe has launched in London – the company's first location outside of the US. The news came after the announcement that Soothe had received an additional US$35m (€31m, £24m) in growth financing from its previous investor, The Riverside Company, bringing its total funding to US$47m (€42m, £33m).

Soothe has launched in 22 US cities since it started operations in 2013, and has plans to launch in 20 more by the end of 2016.

"As more and more people enjoy the convenience of having their must-haves delivered to their door, we're thrilled to expand to the UK," said Merlin Kauffman, Soothe founder and CEO.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=k3X3c_B

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IRENE FORTE

Irene Forte – daughter of legendary hotelier Sir Rocco Forte and niece of famed designer Olga Polizzi – has come into her own, developing a spa concept for 10 Rocco Forte properties in Europe. Jane Kitchen reports

Irene Forte quite literally grew up in the hotel business – her father is the famous hotelier Sir Rocco Forte, her aunt is renowned hotel interior designer Olga Polizzi and her cousin is hotelier Alex Polizzi who also presents UK TV series *The Hotel Inspector*.

"I always spent holidays in different hotels," says Forte. "It's definitely been a very big part of my upbringing. Every school holiday, I spent working in different areas of the business."

An Oxford graduate who studied French and Italian, Forte has worked in departments from reception to communications, but wasn't sure where she wanted to end up. She officially joined the Rocco Forte Hotels central team in 2013 as quality standards executive, before being named brand manager in 2014 – which includes overseeing spa and fitness.

"I came in with the intention of leaving and going somewhere else for a bit (before settling into the family business)," she says. "But now I'm so involved."

Aged 27, Forte has developed the group's first brand-wide spa concept, Rocco Forte Spas, which has just rolled out across its 10 luxury properties in Europe (see p40). "We had very nice individual spas, but no overall unified concept," says Forte. "And there was no health and fitness aspect. I saw a real gap there."

So she set out to create a concept that would work for existing spas – which include its flagship 4,000sq m (43,056sq ft) spa in Sicily, as well as more compact city properties, such as the iconic Brown's Hotel in London or the Hotel Astoria in St Petersburg. While each spa will incorporate local flavours through decor and nutrition – a crucial part of the concept – the rituals and branded skincare will remain consistent throughout.

Irene Forte favourites

FILM: *The Leopard* (for my love of Sicily)
BOOK: *La Storia* by Elsa Morante. She's one of my favourite writers
SEASON: As an Italian, I love the sun! So, the summer
TREATMENT: I love facials; my favourite is a Jet-M facial
SPA: I don't get to travel very often to non-Rocco Forte Hotels anymore. However, I really like Lime Wood in the UK
BEST ADVICE: My mother has always taught be to be generous and to treat everyone as you would like to be treated
WHO YOU ADMIRE: My father. He's always been a living example to me that success is not just a matter of course but something that you have to work hard for

> Spa is incredibly important, so many people are now health-conscious, and as a business, we want to help them continue healthy routines

"Spa is incredibly important," says Forte. "So many people are now health-conscious, and as a business, we want to help them continue healthy routines."

Creating the concept, she says, has been "a huge project in itself". It involved help from Amy Goller Keller of Italy's Wellness & Beauty Consulting, who worked at the flagship Verdura site, creating a concept based on naturopath Sebastian Kneipp's five pillars of wellness: water, plants, exercise, nutrition and balance.

The Rocco Forte spa concept combines spa treatments (Rocco Forte Rituals) with food (Rocco Forte Nourish) and in-house beauty products (Forte Organics) as well as Rocco Forte Fitness. "I really like having a simple and clear concept," says Forte. "We have four notions, which are easily understandable for guests. We can also continue build upon them."

While Forte headed up the development of the spa concept, she also benefitted from the insight of her aunt, sister and father – with each family member playing to his or her strengths and interests. ▸

Irene Forte (left) with her sister Lydia who helped with the spa's Nourish offering

Authentic Italian design at Verdura spa – Polizzi stays true to each locale in her work

Nourishing each location

Forte worked with her sister Lydia – just two years older than herself, and the bar and restaurant development manager for Rocco Forte – to create Rocco Forte Nourish. This involves using area chefs and nutritionists for local cuisine, as well as changing the minibar selections and offering a healthy corner at breakfast, with choices like sugar-free almond or soya milk and granola.

"It was the first project we worked on together," says Forte. "It was quite good to do something together and I think our Nourish element really stands out."

Chefs include Madeleine Shaw, health coach and author of *Get the Glow*, who's created nutritious options for Brown's Hotel in London. Also involved is record-breaking cyclist and TV presenter Mark Beaumont, who will help create the menu at The Balmoral in Edinburgh. "It's a big mix of people," says Forte. Rather than have one food concept across the brand, she explains, "it's important to use seasonal and local produce and people who are well-known in each location."

Because of the complexities of working with different chefs and nutritionists at each location, the Nourish part of the spa concept has taken longer to roll out, but all hotels are set to have their menus in place by May.

Rocco Forte Portfolio

Hotel Amigo, Brussels, Belgium
The Charles Hotel, Munich, Germany
Hotel de Rome, Berlin, Germany
Villa Kennedy, Frankfurt, Germany
Hotel de Russie, Rome, Italy
Hotel Savoy, Florence, Italy
Verdura Resort, Sicily, Italy
Hotel Astoria, St Petersburg, Russia
Assila Hotel, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
The Balmoral, Edinburgh, UK
Brown's Hotel, London, UK

Irene's father Rocco Forte and aunt Olga Polizzi influenced the spa fitness and design elements

Design and treatments

The design of the spas is also a big piece of the package, with each location incorporating local elements and retaining a unique feel. Her aunt, designer Olga Polizzi, was "heavily involved" and "very much in the lead in all the design [of the spas]," says Forte.

"My aunt's philosophy is to create something that looks authentic," she says. "So in each location, we use local artists and design influences."

In the brand's flagship spa at the Verdura Resort in Sicily, for instance, local ceramic artisan pieces from Sciacca are used, as are locally-made blankets and tiles, and a citrus scent – evocative of the resort's lemon groves – permeates the spa. A passage from one stage of a ritual to the next is signalled by the ringing of bells from the nearby Burgio bell foundry. "We want to still maintain a sense of individuality and authenticity at each location," says Forte.

Forte Organics, the company's new branded bio-cosmetic line, is made in Italy by Effegi Lab and features organic, natural and active Sicilian ingredients – many of which

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On trend: Rocco Forte Fitness includes boot camps, rooftop yoga and jogging tours

have been hand-picked from the resort. The base of the creams is oligomineral water from the nearby Sicilian Madonie Regional Natural Park and the line also incorporates Verdura's organic olive oil, Sicilian nut oil, plants, fruits and flowers.

Treatments using Forte Organics are kept simple, and include just four options – a facial, back, body or couples' ritual, with varying times from 15 to 160 minutes.

Spas across the group also have a broader array of treatments using additional skincare brands, with product houses picked for market interest. Suppliers include the likes of Swiss Perfection, Carita and Spiezia Organics.

But developing the in-house product line is one of the things that really makes them stand out says Forte. The line includes a range of products, such as almond cleansing milk, citrus toner, hibiscus serum and pomegranate face masks, and items are available for purchase at retail at Rocco Forte locations.

A passion for fitness

The fitness component is also woven into the spa concept and Forte – who describes herself as "a bit of a fitness fanatic" – had a strong hand in developing new programmes and updating equipment. While Forte is a semi-professional marathon-runner, her father also has a strong fitness streak. "He's had more of an impact on the sports side," says Forte. "He understands it – not everyone gets it."

> New trends are constantly developing – we just can't sit still... but you can only stay on top of it by being interested in fitness and healthy living

Rocco Forte Fitness, inspired by the Forte family's commitment to sport, uses cutting-edge gadgets and equipment and works with professional trainers for support. Hotels in the group have updated almost 50 per cent of their fitness equipment, with plans to complete the rest within two years.

The concept includes "more relevant" fitness programmes, says Forte, such as outdoor boot camps, rooftop yoga and jogging or cycling tours that incorporate sightseeing, for today's more inquisitive fitness customer. At Verdura, for instance, a trekking route meanders down a valley to a medieval castle and a town abandoned after an earthquake. "There's so much rich culture around Sicily," says Forte. "We're enthusiastic about linking nature and culture with fitness."

Gyms are kitted out by Technogym and Rocco Forte Spas will also be introducing the fitness company's Cloud Wellness app, which allows training to be tracked and monitored by the hotels' personal trainers, wherever the guest may be.

Training and trends

Forte, who's also worked in training, has developed a 100-page SOP guide and a training matrix. She's also introduced three spa master trainers, who can work across all of the properties.

"With Forte Organics, we can do cross-training," she says. "We also want to reward therapists by sending them to another hotel, which was something we couldn't do before."

Although the concept is officially rolled out, Forte isn't resting on her laurels. And she continues to keep her finger on the pulse of the industry.

She's partnered with DNA Fit, a programme that uses human genomics to analyse the relationship between genes, nutrition and lifestyle. She's also launched #BeForte, a social media marketing campaign and has overhauled the brand's website templates. In addition, she's been working on new uniforms for the spa team – something she calls a "passion project".

"New trends are constantly developing – we can't just sit still," she says. "Personally, I'm on top of it anyway... but you can only stay on top of it by being interested in fitness and healthy living." ●

Jane Kitchen is the news editor of *Spa Business* and *Spa Opportunities*
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*** Corneometer measurements, average on 5 people. Average for the total panel of 14 people: +39%

Natural Wonderland

A forest sanctuary that embraces culture and holistic living in equal measure, Keemala is the vision of the Somnam family. Neena Dillon heads to Phuket to meet them

Phuket's most hotly anticipated hotel is a family business in every sense. Inhabitants of Thailand's largest island for four generations, the Somnams were once involved in the tin mining industry before becoming merchants, landowners and then hoteliers. Today their main hospitality concerns, both of which they own and operate, are the Kee Resort and Spa open since 2011 in Patong and the enchanting Keemala, unveiled in December 2015 from a setting of verdant woodlands overlooking Kamala Village on Phuket's west coast. 'Unique' is an overused word but for Keemala, an all-pool-villa retreat nestled on close to 29,000sq m (312,153sq ft) of canopied hillside, it is fitting. Realised through an investment of THB650m (US$18.5m, €16.3m, £12.9m), the new property comprises 38 distinctive cottages, tree houses and villas complemented by facilities conceived to offer a window into the cultural and wellbeing aspects of the indigenous lifestyle.

Family entrepreneurs: sister Samornpun Somnam (top) and brother Tanapong (above)

Guests at the US$18.5m resort are given a chance to escape everyday life and to get to know an undiscovered side of Phuket

Keemala, with its rustic luxury feel and focus on traditional Thai wellbeing, stands out in Phuket's saturated resort market

Changing perceptions

Along with his sister Samornpun, Tanapong Somnam represents the latest generation of the entrepreneurial family; both siblings are actively involved in sales, marketing and operations at an executive level at Keemala. "My grandmother purchased this plot of land with its natural resources, orchard, streams and groundwater over five years ago," he recalls. "We didn't initially have a concrete idea about how to use it but then my mum decided she wanted to bring something different to Phuket's resort offering, based around a village community concept where ancient Thai knowledge about health and wellbeing as well as cultural customs could be shared with modern travellers. When people think about Phuket, they see beach resorts, luxury hotels, Thai or Sino-Portuguese design, even architecture inspired by our tin mining tradition – all these concepts have been done. So we knew we had to create a genuinely unique experience – somewhere that guests could escape from everyday life while getting to know an undiscovered side of Phuket."

Having been active in hospitality for 15 years – Samornpun and Tanapong's

Many treatments draw on traditional healing techniques and have an energy-based approach

parents, who remain managing directors, first stepped into the business at the helm of a three-star property since demolished to make way for Kee Resort – the Somnams are conscious of how overdevelopment has affected parts of Phuket. With roots that go deep, the family is also concerned about the preservation of natural resources. These twin considerations – to introduce an alternative ethos to the resort market and to highlight the island's tropical landscape in a sustainable way – have underscored every step of Keemala's development. Aimed at travellers seeking rustic luxury, wellbeing and relaxation, the retreat is attracting couples, honeymooners and small groups, with Australia, China, Germany, the UK and Thailand top feeder markets to date. Featuring a full-service spa, ozone-filtered resort pool, fitness centre and an abundance of outdoor space for physical pursuits and cultural activities, it's expected to make a return on investment in 10 years.

Fiction feeds design

Committed to working with local contractors, the Somnams invited Thai firms to respond to a design competition, selecting Bangkok-based Architect Space and Pisit Aongskultong of Pisud Design Company for architecture and interiors respectively. "Both these partners came with their own inspiration and an inherent understanding of our desire to build something distinctive," explains Somnam. "As we were determined to keep as many trees as possible and work around the land's steep incline and topographical conditions, we knew we would be pushing construction techniques. We needed partners who would accept a certain fluidity because we had to change drawings to build around the vegetation – we actually have decks and a villa with trunks incorporated into the structures."

> To take the creative vision into the realms of the magical, a story of four fictional clans has been developed complete with accompanying traditions, rituals and skills

Rescued water buffalos are among Keemala's residents (above); exterior of the all-suite Mala Spa complex (below)

Acknowledging Phuket's history, which over the years has seen Chinese, Thais and Europeans move to the island and live together peacefully, the Somnams were keen to incorporate a village narrative into the design of Keemala. But to take the creative vision into the realms of the magical, they agreed to Aongskultong's suggestion that a story of four fictional clans be developed complete with accompanying traditions, rituals and skills characteristic of these early settlers. "Khun Pisit is the dreamer," reveals Somnam. "He imagined a maritime caravan [carrying the early settlers], a fleet of ships heading from west to east on a Silk Road trading route. Forming a strong bond, these people encountered a storm while crossing the Indian Ocean en route to China and, set adrift, end up starting a new life on this arable rich-island."

With the grounds designed as an expansion of the natural landscape, harnessing mature trees, streams and mini waterfalls, Keemala's built environment comprises four accommodation types, closely connected to the fictional clans. As the highest category, Bird's Nest Pool Villas reflect the opulence, intellect and spirituality of the 'Rung-Nok' community,

Australia, China, Germany, the UK and Thailand are top markets (above); the spa is a key part of the resort (below)

with roofs formed of an interwoven mesh and bathrooms installed with a mural highlighting the clan's belief that bathing under moonlight replenishes souls. In the Tent Pool Villas, the nomadic lifestyle of the 'Khon-Jorn' clan has prompted semi-permanent homes made from twin layers of tent fabric, coupled with decorative references to animals and exploration, while furniture in the two-storey Tree Pool Houses is suspended from ceilings, the house exteriors encased by bamboo and metal shells shaped into hanging pods, in deference to the 'We-Ha' or sky people who worship the universe.

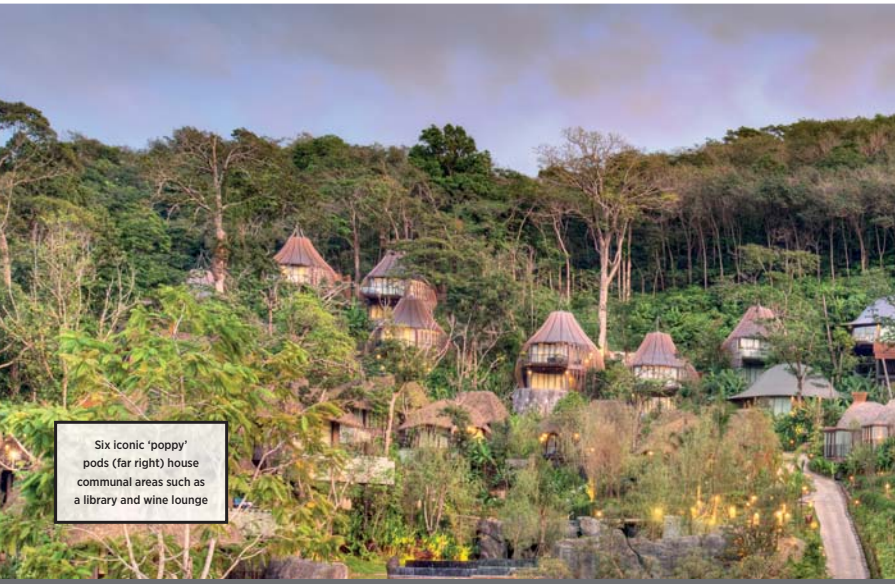
The welcome pavilion is enlivened by mosaics hand-laid by a native artist

Land and ocean motifs

For communal areas such as the spa, lobby, bar and restaurant, such narratives are merged to collectively display the settlers' societal traditions. Six iconic pods, constructed from wood-plastic composites, bamboo accents and rubber-shingle roofing, rise from behind the welcome pavilion to dominate the arrivals area, their shape inspired by the poppy flower that has great significance in ancient eastern cultures.

> As we were determined to keep as many trees as possible and work around the land's steep incline and topographical conditions, we knew we would be pushing construction techniques

As is evident across the retreat, Mala Spa features wood, rattan and bamboo furnishings, with the design of the eight tranquil double treatment rooms influenced by traditional fishing tools. The two types of double room – one rectangular in shape featuring clay-effect cement surfaces, the other rounded with a synthetic thatch roof and seemingly sunk into the water – both include a connected bathroom amenities such as steamrooms. Referring to the design, Aongskultong explains that the flowing water surrounding the treatment rooms



Six iconic 'poppy' pods (far right) house communal areas such as a library and wine lounge

Wellbeing is not just about a spa session – daily activities include tai chi, yoga and Muay Thai

Wellness consultant Cherisse Yang

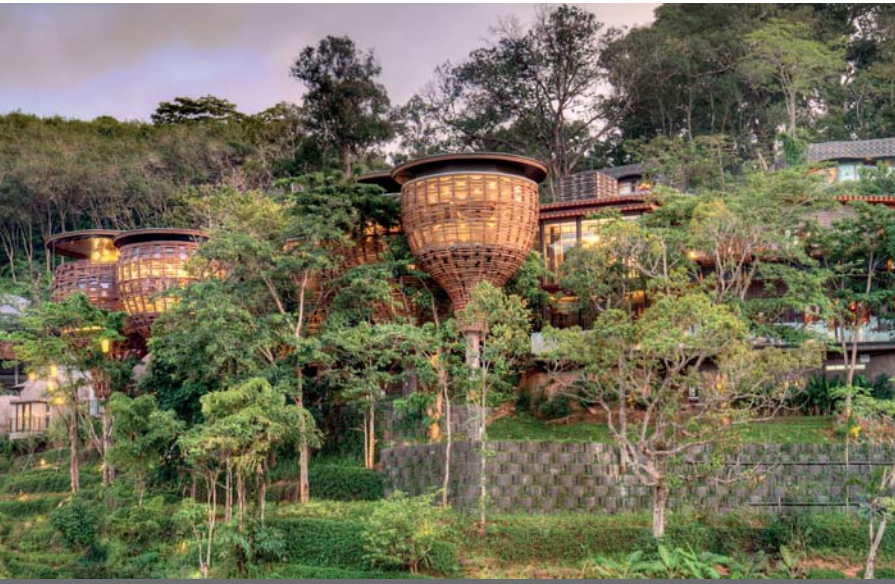
is "reflective of the ocean where fishing tools are used – a key part in the survival of ancient folks – while symbolising peace and serenity". For interiors, decorative brass pendants appear like falling leaves and rattan chairs allude to the royal seating placed upon elephants.

Back in reception, a hand-laid mosaic mural by Chiang Mai native Surachai Sripaiboon has two reflective parts: the ceiling is inspired by meditative bells seen in Tibetan monasteries and Indian temples while the floor section mirrors the blue colour and petal shape of a Thai herb.

A sacred triune

Wellbeing infuses its way throughout Keemala. Southeast Asia-based wellness consultant Cherisse Yang, who's overseen Mala Spa's concept, says she was impressed by the owners' attitude. "The family recognises that wellbeing is not just about a spa session, it permeates everything from how you sleep to what you eat and the products you put on your skin," she observes. "Our bathroom amenities are 100 per cent natural from Siam Botanicals, guests can sample slow-cooked cuisine in Su-Tha Restaurant and daily activities vary from tai chi, yoga and Muay Thai to luk pra kob-making classes where guests learn how to create a healing herbal compress. Alternatively, lotus flower folding calms the mind."

Yang's approach has seen her reach back to learning from tribal and traditional communities, placing focus on the interconnectedness of body, mind and spirit, considered the triune at the core of healing. Keemala's spa team of seven has had four months of training with Yang looking at how an intuitive, energy-based approach to massage and movement can facilitate a deep rapport with guests. While first-timers opt for familiar treatments such as the Harmonising Massage, the more adventurous are trying specialised therapies including Raindrop Healing – where oils are applied from a height along energy lines, in combination ▸



> Yang has a network of international masters who work with both guests and the in-house spa team when they visit

with specific massage techniques – and integrative Thai bodywork. Local practitioner Cholatee Intachak delivers the latter and healing methods used in response to individual needs during her session can include tok-sen, chi nei tsang (see SB06/3 p90) and pranic healing. Feeding into the sea story of Mala Spa, meanwhile, are facial and body treatments from Ireland's Voya (see SB12/3 p78). "In addition to local brand Siam Botanicals, we wanted to work with an international supplier whose philosophy chimed with our own," notes Yang. "As a family-based business that hand-harvests its organic seaweed, following sustainable practices, we felt there was an alignment in terms of our rustic, authentic approach."

Herbs and healing

The Somnams and Yang believe in the age-old power of Thai herbs and medicinal plants. As part of Keemala's Holistic Living Retreats programme – which presents four packages themed Purify, Energise, Unwind and Rejuvenate – all daily tonics are formulated in Bangkok, some drawing on a fermentation process that sees local herbs and honey left in a jar for a year to create an enzyme- and probiotic-rich drink. Keemala's three or six-day retreats are gentle, bringing together consultations, pampering treatments, bath rituals and stress-management sessions. Yang adds that Keemala's team can tailor retreats, with one guest asking for only meditation, energy healing and assisted deep-breathing sessions to manage his stress.

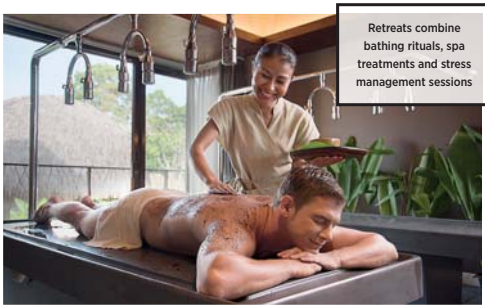
Another facet of the spa is the visiting practitioners programme involving traditional healing specialists dropping in for a 10-day residency. Although the preference is to employ local practitioners, Yang has a network of international masters who work with both guests and the in-house spa team when they visit. Recently, Phil Davies from The Sanctuary in Hong Kong offered vibrational attunement – an energy healing therapy, while Japan's Yutaka Homma provided Namikoshi shiatsu (see SB15/3 p88). Other examples of sessions include Mayan abdominal massage, Tibetan singing bowl healing and clinical aromatherapy.

While it's too early to give an accurate spa capture rate, Tanapong Somnam is confident that by giving an insight into traditional therapeutic healing, Mala Spa will impact positively upon Keemala's occupancy and average length of stay. It is, after all, a central component of the wellbeing philosophy of this resort embedded in nature promising retreat from everyday life. ●

Somnam is confident that the spa will impact positively on resort occupancy

KEEMALA BY NUMBERS

- **Clay Pool Cottage** prices start at THB19,050+++ (US$543, €476, £380) per night
- **Bird's Nest Pool Villa** prices start at THB25,500+++ (US$726, €637, £508) per night
- THB3,200 (US$91, €80, £64) is charged for a 60-minute **Harmonising Massage**
- **A 90-minute Raindrop Healing therapy session** is priced at THB3,800 (US$108, €95, £76)
- **The 'Purify' Holistic Living Retreat** is THB35,000 (US$997, €874, £697) for a three-day programme or THB76,500 (US$2,179, €1,910, £1,524) for six days, per individual
- **Visiting practitioner sessions** start at around THB5,000+++ (US$142, €125, £100) for 60 minutes



Retreats combine bathing rituals, spa treatments and stress management sessions

Neena Dhillon is a spa, hotel and travel journalist
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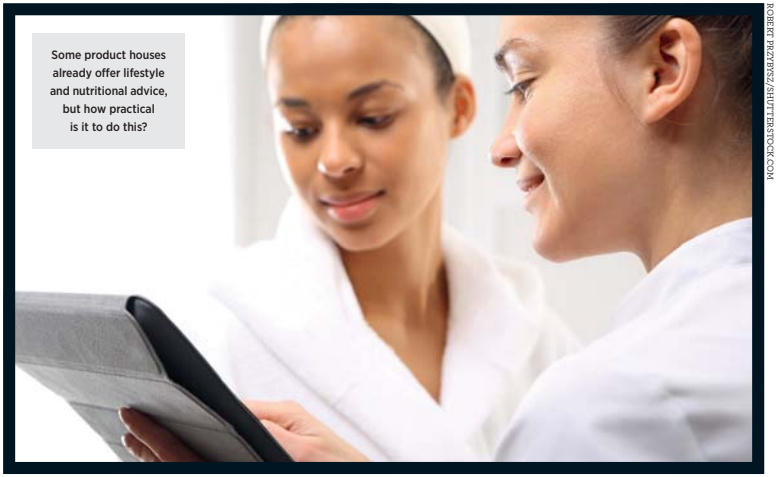
Ask an expert

NEXT GEN SKINCARE

Will the future of skincare be more than just about the products you put on your face? Katie Barnes investigates



Some product houses already offer lifestyle and nutritional advice, but how practical is it to do this?

ROBERT PRZYBYSZ/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

How we feel, what we eat and our overall lifestyle has an affect on our wellbeing, so it stands to reason that it also has a visible impact on our appearance as well. Psychodermatologists have built a profession on the belief that everyday stress is a trigger for a growing number of reactive skin conditions ranging from blushing and rosacea to acne and eczema. On p58 we delve deeper into the mind-skin connection. Meanwhile nutricosmetics, supplements which support the function and structure of the skin, is an industry in its own right: and one which is gaining much traction.

In our 2015 Spa Foresight™ report, (see SB15/3 p36), we predicted that given the growing demand for visible results, the next generation of skincare will take this into account and that treatments will be much more than the creams we put on our face or the supplements we take. We foresee a time when going for a facial will involve a specialist looking at the body as a whole, analysing lifestyle, psychological and nutritional factors and prescribing regimes which take into account these factors, as well as an appropriate treatment and skincare routine.

Product houses such as Dr NV Perricone, Comfort Zone, Gazelli and most recently Murad already offer lifestyle and nutritional advice as part of their service. But how are they rolling this out in spas and to what levels does this advice go?

> ‘Will it be necessary for therapists to be educated in psychology and nutrition?’

The ramifications this will have for spa operations and the workforce also remain to be seen. Longer consultations will be inevitable, but is this feasible from a business point of view? Will it be necessary for therapists to be educated in psychology and nutrition? If so, how in-depth/long should training be? Who should give it and how can it be integrated into schedules, given there's not always time for standard development and training in the first place? We ask the experts...

Turn to p58 to find out about new scientific findings on skin

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Email: katiebarnes@spabusiness.com
Twitter: @SpaBusinessKB

Barbara Gavazzoli

International marketing director, Comfort Zone

What we eat and how often, when we exercise and our mental balance are all factors which influence the way we look and can definitely have an impact on the efficacy of skincare.

This forms the basis of our lifestyle guidebook which has been created with the input from our Scientific Committee – comprising medicine, nutrition, pharmacology, dermatology, genetic and psychology experts – to detail the mechanisms that regulate the ageing process, particularly in relation to the skin. The guidebook, which is available in our spas, gives healthy tips, recipes and remedies to avoid accelerated ageing.

These findings also underpin our best-selling Skin Regimen line which combines skincare products with suggested food supplements and lifestyle recommendations for an overall 'skin diet'.

Therapists have a very important role in embracing this holistic approach. They need to become lifestyle coaches and motivate guests. Comfort Zone gives an in-depth, one-day class and training manual (plus the lifestyle guidebook) to provide therapists with nutritional and lifestyle recommendations for specific sessions. We also organise seminars and classes, not only with our trainers, but also with the Scientific Committee.

Before the Skin Regimen Longevity Facial, there's a 15-minute consultation with a questionnaire to better understand client habits and an in-depth visual analysis. The Skin Expert Analyzer test also measures hydration, sensitivity, dyschromia, sebum and wrinkle levels to truly understand skincare needs.

Spas charge around US$60 (€53, £43) for the service which only takes half the time of a traditional facial. Thanks to the ingredients and our signature neuromuscular techniques inspired by the kabat method, we can offer amazing results in just 30 minutes. Independent efficacy tests show it can increase skin moisture by 26 per cent and wrinkles appear reduced by 17 per cent.

We believe that conscious consumers, and definitely millennials, will request this kind of approach to skincare more and more. As a consequence, spas will need to evolve their offering as well.

Italian spa brand Comfort Zone distributes to more than 40 countries. Gavazzoli has worked for the company since 1998. Details: www.comfortzone.it

> **There's definitely a limit to how far spa advice should go... skincare therapists are not 'therapists' in the sense of dealing with psychological trauma or disorders**

Dr Claudia Aguirre

Neuroscientist & mind-body expert

Psychological stress can end up on the skin as redness, rashes, pimples and general inflammation and can dehydrate otherwise healthy skin. Stress also inhibits healing, so that rash or pimple will take even longer to heal. On the other hand, psychological wellbeing can result in a healthy skin appearance.

In a way, spas already address this by offering a place of relaxation where skin therapists or bodyworkers provide relief. A thorough consultation covering details about client stress levels, diet and lifestyle, combined with a proper skin health assessment is critical to an effective treatment. The more a skin therapist knows about a client's habit and lifestyle choices, the better the treatment.

There's definitely a limit to how far spa advice should go. Only someone with a medical licence, or a licensed clinical psychologist can recommend antidepressants or anxiolytic drug use, for example. And skincare therapists are not 'therapists' in the sense of dealing with psychological trauma or disorders – if a client comes with a recurring problem that's considered psychological in nature, they should gently open a dialogue about speaking to a professional.

What a therapist would be able to explain is the effects of stress on the skin. They could also give lifestyle advice, perhaps suggesting techniques to relieve stress at home or a modality such as meditation. Education is key to this, although finding the right expert or trusted educational resources on the nuances of treating stressed skin could be challenging, as the field of psychodermatology is relatively new.

How would spas go about implementing a combined psychological/skincare programme? Perhaps just providing comfort and lifestyle tips can be a starting point. A more advanced facility could go so far as having a licensed clinical psychologist on board. Educational material for clients could also be useful.

Thinking about the entire person when treating the skin is not new, but is often forgotten. Time can be a challenge – lifestyle consultations may take longer and impact on treatment schedules – but the advantages of yielding better results far outweigh the extra minutes spent learning about that person.

Dr Aguirre is a neuroscientist specialising in the mind-body connection. She works with many companies in the health and wellness industry, including Comfort Zone. Details: www.doctorclaudia.com

Samantha Gowing

Chef, nutritionist & mentor, Food Health Wealth

Great skin starts in the belly with the best diets including plenty of vitamin C-rich fruit and vegetables such as citrus and dark, green leafy vegetables. In Australia, I use kakadu plum (gubinge) which has the highest vitamin C content of any food. It also has high folate and is an antioxidant, so it's beneficial to skin because it helps reduce free radical damage, such as wrinkling and other sun damage. In addition, it helps collagen synthesis, which plumps up the skin.

Skincare nutrition is something that spas should absolutely address. In the spa and hotel kitchens I work in, I always consult with the therapist to ensure we have a concurrent 'food as medicine' theme running through the resort. My work is predominately in the kitchen and advice is not delivered by the spa, but I do see this changing as therapists become more involved in how to eat for better skin.

If spas were to implement a combined nutritional/skincare programme, it would be essential to have a credited, qualified health practitioner who can back up therapist claims with research. As soon as staff start prescribing supplements or a specific eating regime then it becomes the nutritionist's domain. A therapist will only be able to deliver such advice if they're a qualified nutritionist – it depends on the location, but in the majority of countries you cannot make loosely-based claims on nutritional healing.

Another challenge would be to ensure a spa is nutritionist-approved. This would require an initial outlay for a independent business which could conduct nutrition audits and a critical path analysis for pre-opening, launching and ongoing high-standard procedure checks.

But if these correct channels are followed the benefits will pay off. The healing lines between the spa and the kitchen are becoming more integrated. Spas which want to stay ahead of the game would be wise to incorporate food as medicine into their menu offering.

Gowing is one of Australia's top spa chefs and works for operators such as Gwinganna, Kempinski and Four Seasons. Details: www.foodhealthwealth.com

> My work is predominately in the kitchen and advice is not delivered in spas, but I do see this changing as therapists become more involved in how to eat for better skin

Jamila Askarova

Co-founder, Gazelli

Nothing in the body works in isolation and at Gazelli House London we've worked with psychologists, nutritionists, skincare and lifestyle experts to create a tool to assess guests' physical and emotional wellbeing as well as their skincare needs. This approach began more than 40 years ago with my mother, genetic scientist, Dr Hamzayeva. Specialising in preventative medicine, a thorough patient and family history were crucial to her treatment programmes.

Our three-stage diagnostics procedure takes 45 minutes and costs £50 (US$71, €63). It allows us firstly to gather an in-depth background on each guest's core values, lifestyle, priorities and emotional state. We then conduct the skin diagnostics – a seven-phase analysis of fundamental skin characteristics – and teach guests how to read their own skin. To conclude, we create a Prescriptive Facial based on these findings and suggest a blend of appropriate products, massage techniques and technologies for a subsequent session. This additional 60-minute Prescriptive Facial is priced at £160 (US$227, €199).

Following the analysis, guests are also referred to relevant practitioners and workshops – we have specialists in nutrition, life coaching, hypnotherapy, energy work, body image and breathing – to support other areas of their life.

Of course a diagnostic approach isn't easy. The key challenges are in the customer journey, pricing strategy and showing unwavering support to the guest when dealing with personal matters.

Some guests aren't ready to engage on an emotional level and it's important not to force it. So after extensive trialling, we concluded that the full three-stage diagnosis should remain optional rather than included in all treatments.

The training of our team is crucial – when a client does open up it's important that they're met on an emotional level. All of our facial and body experts are hand-picked and undergo an extensive three-week programme with our head of education as well as private sessions or workshops with each practitioner.

The diagnostic and prescribed treatment programme earn their place not strictly through revenue, but through the loyalty of guests and cross-referrals to our other practitioners and workshops. Though challenging, the benefits of this next generation of skincare are undeniable. If you're dedicated to helping guests find an authentic sense of balance and happiness, it's possible to build a lasting, honest relationship, and trust and loyalty is earned through continuing positive results. ●

Askarova co-founded Gazelli with her mother in the late 90s. Gazelli has a flagship spa in Azerbaijan and in London. Details: www.gazellihouse.com

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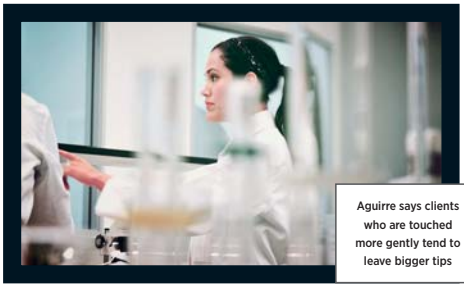
SKIN DEEP

Modern research is redefining the way we think of skin, showing that it has an untameable intelligence all of its own. And we've only just begun to scratch the surface says neuroscientist Dr Claudia Aguirre



Aguirre says clients who are touched more gently tend to leave bigger tips

The past decade has unearthed a myriad of discoveries about the human skin. Some of these may be 'rediscoveries', but the new science is redefining skin as we know it and while this may not be on the radar of the majority of spa professionals yet, it has the potential to have a huge impact on therapists, skincare suppliers and spa-goers alike.

More and more research shows that the skin, far more than a fragile veneer, is in fact an integrated part of the nervous and neuroendocrine systems and even the digestive system. Findings show that skin is intimately tied to the functions of other organs and may reflect our psychological and physical wellbeing more than we ever imagined. We've always known that a blush gives away our mind's secrets, but could a persistent redness be triggered by the skin's own manufactured hormones? Or can we learn about the ageing brain by examining the ageing skin?

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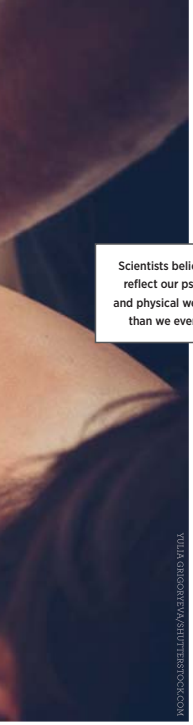

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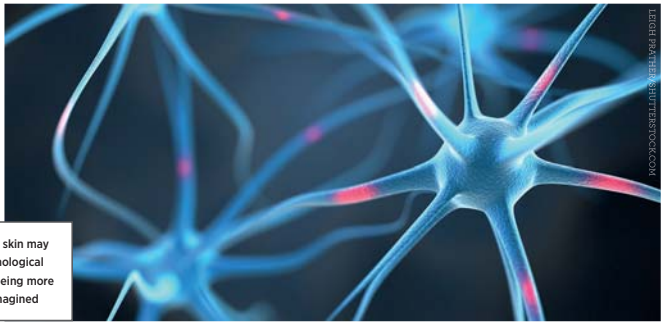


LEIGH PRATHER/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Scientists believe skin may reflect our psychological and physical wellbeing more than we ever imagined

Working with Comfort Zone

In addition to consulting internationally on scientific advancements in skin and mind-body therapies, Dr Claudia Aguirre sits on the Scientific Committee of skincare company Comfort Zone and has worked with the group since 2015. In her committee role, she provides insights into neuroscience and advises on the research and development of products.

On p54 Dr Aguirre, Comfort Zone and other spa professionals give their opinions on the amounting evidence of the mind-body connection in relation to skincare and spa treatments and what impact this will have on spa businesses of the future.

Aguirre advises on mind-body therapies

As science furthers our knowledge about our body's largest organ, we can take comfort in knowing that the skin possesses an array of talents that we may one day tap into for enhancing our health and our experience in the world.

A social organ

In the 90s, the science of touch ramped up, with neuroscience techniques leading the way to a greater understanding of ourselves – via our skin. We all feel the benefits of a massage, or simply of holding a loved one's hand. Researchers like Tiffany Field (see SB07/1 p70) and Paul Zak made strides in boosting our understanding behind the power of touch, with their work on infant care and oxytocin, respectively. But there was a parallel discovery that's now shedding light on the mechanics of how we're wired for touch.

> We are, in fact, wired for social touch

A patient, known to Swedish scientists as GL, was 31-years-old when she lost sensation across many parts of her body after taking penicillin for a cough and fever. Her unique condition, which left her numb to any pokes, tickles and pressure, but receptive to warmth, bolstered the discovery that humans have a specific neural network devoted to a gentle caress. Sensations of pressure and vibration were always thought to travel along fast-conducting nerves that terminate in a part of the brain known as the somatosensory cortex. But studies on GL, conducted by the University of Gothenburg, revealed that there was a particular type of touch that she could still feel and that relayed to a different part of the brain altogether. This type of touch, a gentle stroke in fact, reached the brain at a much slower rate than traditional touch, meaning it came from slow-conducting fibres. The scientists named these slow fibres c-tactile, or CT, fibres. The interesting thing is that CT fibres are only stimulated by specific light touch at skin temperature – the kind that we feel during a gentle massage. Unlike the nerves that transmit what we touch, these special nerves signal how we feel when we are touched. We are, in fact, wired for social touch.

Whether you're a spa-goer or a therapist, the benefits of touch go beyond momentary skin contact. It helps release bonding hormones like oxytocin – making a massage or facial a bonding experience that can have wellbeing benefits beyond the treatment room. And it doesn't hurt that clients who are touched gently tend to tip more than those who don't receive a welcoming pat or embrace. That feeling ▸

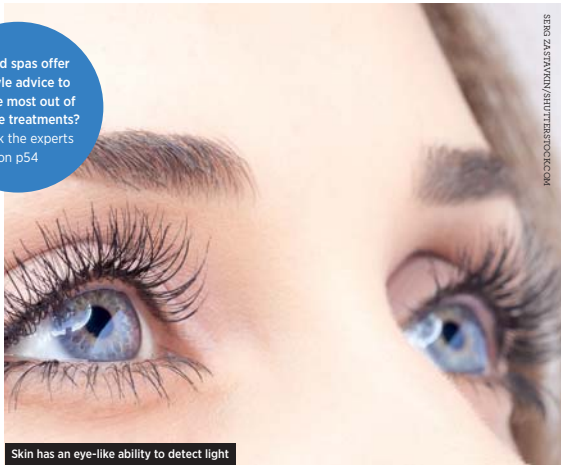
Should spas offer lifestyle advice to get the most out of skincare treatments? We ask the experts on p54

of intent travels through the skin and neuroscience is only beginning to shed light on how this complex dynamic of touch and connection develops.

The listening skin

Imagine a mosquito buzzing around your bedroom at night. Your hearing becomes acutely tuned into the high-pitched whizzing and your skin may even become hyper-aware of any light touch, in case it's the darn mosquito landing on your skin for a feast. Scientists are currently exploring why our sense of touch is influenced by our sense of hearing. Both rely on mechanical tweaks to cells, with ears and skin using similar mechanisms to make sense of the vibrations or sound waves. Not only do the two senses use similar processing mechanisms in the body and in the brain, but scientists theorise that hearing actually evolved out of the sense of touch.

Researchers are currently exploring how touch affects our hearing. In a study by the University of British Columbia, Canada, participants listened to the similar sounding syllables 'pa, ta, ba or da'. Aspirated sounds such as 'pa' or 'ta' require the speaker to expel a puff of air, but in this experiment all four sounds were randomly accompanied by puffs of air hitting the skin. Whenever the syllables were combined with the air, participants would indicate that they heard aspirated sounds of pa or ta, whether correct or not. While this shows how our skin sensations affect our hearing, other studies show our brain integrates information from various senses to build a bigger picture of our surroundings. For instance, researchers from Duke University, USA found that smelling something awful can modulate how pleasant a touch feels, while those from Liverpool John Moores University, UK believe pleasant touch can make us feel like time is shortened. Clearly, there's more to our skin's role in sensory perception than we ever imagined.



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Skin has an eye-like ability to detect light

> Light hitting our eyes modulates our circadian rhythm; perhaps the light hitting our skin can also contribute to our daily sleep cycle

Music is often used in spas and this research, while scant, suggests there may be more to the synergy between sound tracks chosen and the effects of bodywork. So it couldn't hurt to offer a selection of music in the treatment room. Our bodies are constantly receiving (sometimes invisible) information about the world and designing spa areas with all senses in mind could, from a scientific perspective, enhance wellbeing even more.

There may be a synergy between sound and bodywork

The seeing skin

A few years ago, Brown University scientists in the US found that melanocyte skin cells detect ultraviolet light using a receptor previously thought to exist only in the eye. The team discovered that melanocytes contain rhodopsin, a photosensitive receptor used by the eye to detect light.

This eye-like ability of the skin to sense light triggers the production of melanin within hours (more quickly than previously thought) in an apparent rush to protect against damage to DNA. So when the tanning process is fast, it's a signal that our skin is quickly producing pigment to prevent DNA damage. And this process happens much more rapidly than the UVB-induced redness and burning.

So it's believed that skin is built with similar machinery to the eyes to process light. The skin could potentially work in concert with other sensory organs to not only help us understand our environment, but to drive whole-body changes. For instance, the light hitting our eyes modulates our circadian rhythm; perhaps the light hitting our skin can also contribute to our daily sleep cycle.

As we learn more about the new science of skin, it opens up a whole new world of possibilities, not only in skin science, but also in treatment and care of skin. More than any other industry, including the medical world, the skincare and spa sector is poised to make a lasting impact on society's wellbeing. The complex neuroscience of supportive touch is not only validating centuries-old techniques, but providing a haven for human connection. ●

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Dr Claudia Aguirre is a neuroscientist specialising in the mind-body connection
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A PERFECT MATCH

Clarins' head of Spas, My Blend and Retail, Prisca Courtin-Clarins, talks about the strides the company is making in highly prescriptive skincare, and the development of hotel spa concepts with the My Blend brand

Prisca (above) is grand-daughter of the skincare brand's founder Jacques Courtin-Clarins

What's the philosophy behind Spa My Blend by Clarins?

Quite simply, the pursuit of excellence. A Spa My Blend by Clarins facility is designed to be an exclusive place where Clarins' legendary expertise and the high-tech beauty of My Blend meet, to offer tailor-made treatments created by Dr Olivier Courtin-Clarins.

We aim to build an elite group of exceptional hotels across the world able to offer this ultimate spa and skin experience. With the Clarins brand, clients benefit from six decades of operational savoir-faire in skincare from a European leader. We offer a completely manual method for face and body treatments, a collection of cult products and a pioneering approach to beauty using plant extracts.

My Blend offers highly personalised facials delivered with a precise skin diagnosis and the creation of a unique product blend in real time.

My Blend has just been relaunched. What changes have you made?

We've streamlined the range and focused even more on customers' individual beauty concerns. We also recognised the need to be all the more environmentally responsible by getting rid of bulky boxes and reducing packaging. Our jar can be used indefinitely by simply replacing the personalised refill. Packaging volumes have been greatly reduced and the paper for the packaging comes exclusively from sustainably managed forests.

We've launched an additional Booster product called Invisible Pore, and it's now possible to combine two Boosters in each Essential Formula for a result that is twice as personal. We've also re-launched our facial treatment protocol, Youth Synergy.

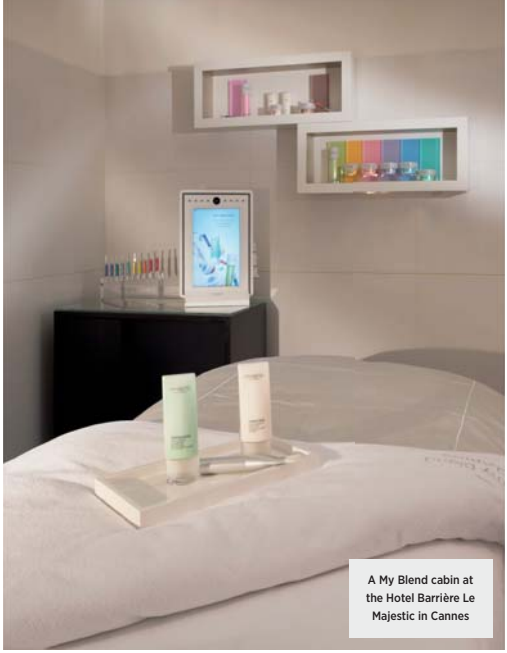
We've streamlined the range and focused even more on customers' individual beauty concerns

Can you explain this protocol in more detail?

Youth Synergy is based on the scientific reality of your skin. In addition to its type and nature, your lifestyle influences your skin. The protocol consists of a sequence of remodelling, gentle smoothing and sliding knuckle massage with the fingers, counterbalanced by the use of two or three anti-age technologies depending on the facial chosen (1h or 1h30).

Technologies include My ColorBlend, an LED light therapy mask which combines colours known for their soothing, anti-age and purifying actions; My WaveBlend, which is active vibration and stimulation technology for firming or revitalising, lymphatic drainage and a deep sensation of relaxation; and My CryoTech, a cryotherapy method known for its remodelling and revitalising powers.

More than just a facial, Youth Synergy extends its benefits from the face to the neck and top of the back and décolleté,



A My Blend cabin at the Hotel Barrière Le Majestic in Cannes

including the hands and feet. It's an indulgent, sensorial experience that leaves the client feeling totally rejuvenated.

How does the My Blend prescriptive process work in practice?

Because the skin lives, changes, evolves and reacts (whether its due to the environment, food habits, stress levels or quality of sleep), My Blend uses a skin diagnosis machine called My Skin Diag.

This is an exclusive high-tech software application that questions, analyses, diagnoses and prescribes the appropriate skincare regimen in real time, taking into account age and lifestyle.

Alongside this, My Blend now features an impressive range of more than 360 Essential Formulas, two Boosters blends and nearly 6,200 day-night combinations.

What do you look for in a spa partner, and how do they benefit from My Blend?

We plan for long-term, win-win partnerships and look for partners who share a common vision and values. We look for high quality standards in terms of facilities and equipment, brand positioning and property location. We're also extremely demanding with the level of staff skills and expertise.

In return, partners benefit from Clarins' 60 years of know-how in spa development, strong visibility through PR events and press releases; plus assistance in spa layout for an enhanced guest experience and maximised profitability; design of the retail area; extensive pre-opening support; menu engineering with the development of a signature treatment; an annual customised marketing plan; pre-opening on-site training and continuous education for both brands; follow-up through operations and assistance to the management where needed.

Who are some of your Spa My Blend clients?

To name them: Royal Monceau – Raffles Paris, France; Ritz Carlton in Toronto, Canada; Hotel Barrière Le Majestic in Cannes, south of France; Velaa Private Island in the Maldives; St Regis in Florence, Italy; Villa Agrippina in Rome, Italy, and the brand new Le Guanahani, on the island of St Barths in the Caribbean.

Partners benefit from Clarins' 60 years of know-how in spa development

What other Clarins projects and partnerships will be launching in 2016/17?

We have some projects in the pipeline for 2016/2017 but we can't reveal them right now. We're currently opening Spa My Blend by Clarins at The Guanahani. This splendid hotel is celebrating its 30th anniversary and 12 of those years have been with a Spa by Clarins; by adding My Blend, the hotel has seen the opportunity to enhance and vary the customer experience with an exclusive offer that's very innovative and high-tech.

We have projects all over the world because the Clarins Group is perpetually moving ahead. A big project scheduled for the end 2016 is an all-new and innovative merchandising concept where the client is really going to experience cosmetics like never before. Our first openings will be Paris and Hong Kong.

How will the Clarins brand stay ahead of the competition and meet the changing expectations of consumers?

Today, Clarins is the leader in skincare in Europe; tomorrow, we want to be the most desirable skincare brand worldwide.

We're creating new developments in make-up that are very innovative, and we're gaining market share everywhere with this; in Russia we are number one.

From the very beginning, Clarins has cultivated a philosophy of being close to the client through respect and listening. Clarins wants to surprise and will always pursue innovation, while continuing to care and to listen. The client is and always will be at the centre of our actions. ●

CLARINS

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Franz Linser & Susan Harmsworth

In October the Global Wellness Summit will celebrate its 10th anniversary. *Spa Business* talks to this year's co-chairs to find out what they're planning for the milestone event in Kitzbühel, Austria

What's going to be different about the summit this year?

Harmsworth: We want to shine a spotlight on Europe and we're keen to open the summit to more professionals in this region, especially in eastern Europe, who may not be as familiar with the event.

Linser: Every summit is unique to its location and what we'll be doing is not for the sake of being different, but because we want to give delegates a notion of wellness as it's been developed in Europe.

The golden ages of 'the cure' – when medical-led health programmes were delivered using natural resources – go back at least 100 years in Europe. And not just in Austria, but in the thermal/mud baths in Italy, and also in Czechoslovakia, southern Germany and Hungary.

Harmsworth: The famous FX Mayr detox cure, which is based on gut health, originated in Austria about 40 years ago and I've been visiting a Mayr facility there annually for the past 10 years. The visits are a necessity for me to continue work at the pace I do. They allow me to completely detox physically and mentally and I leave with renewed energy, clarity of thought and usually a few pounds lighter!

> It was one of the first regions to adopt wellness tourism

Linser: Kitzbühel is in the Tyrol, which is a small Austrian province that accounts for only 8 per cent of the country's population but which attracts 40 per cent of its tourists (10 million visitors) each year. It was the first region to adopt wellness tourism on a wider scale. The origins of our hotels are very different – they're sports-based and focused on things like hiking, golfing and even tennis. The first wellness hotel corporation was founded here 26 years ago.

With millions of cubic metres of fresh snow every year, with lakes and rivers of fresh drinking water, we not only have hundreds of wellness centres in Tyrol, I would even dare to say that Tyrol is a wellness centre in its own right.

How will 'Austrian wellness' be reflected in the programme?

Linser: If you're touching on a new topic in what we call 'wellness', I think it all starts just by drawing attention to what the philosophy is. The step from spa to wellness is much greater than most people are aware of. Spa means operational units, management, staffing, products and logistics. Wellness is a philosophy. It's a way of living which embraces the outdoors, nature and social health, where people leave a facility somewhat changed and that's what we want to focus on.

Harmsworth: Many of the delegates will be from Europe and eastern Europe so by

Spa Business with the GWS co-chairs and organisers on location in Kitzbühel

Discussing the agenda – how to make wellness viable for spas will be a focus

Bio-hotel Stanglwirt, a possible summit venue, epitomises Austrian wellness

that very nature the summit will be more wellness and spa focused. Plus we would like to have longer sessions this year so that we'll have time to thoroughly discuss important topics such as 'what wellness is'.

At the same time, we'd also like more interaction so that we can get conversations going about how spas are going to deliver wellness – and how they deliver it successfully.

Linser: Another way we'll be getting across a flavour of European wellness is by how we're hosting people. Delegates will be in small, cosy hotels where wellness isn't necessarily about the spa or treatment rooms, it's about the 10-minute walk they'll have to the main venue. They'll breathe in healthy fresh air, see the beautiful surrounding mountains, will come into to contact with people and really connect to the culture and destination. We're hoping that some of the sessions may be outdoors too.

> One of my passions is integrative medicine... I want to focus on prevention and lifestyle at the summit

How will the agenda incorporate this year's theme of Back to the Future?

Linser: We'll be looking back to see how far we've come, but also looking forward to see what the next 10 years might look like. Ten years ago, we could have not predicted that life would be as fast and as intense as it is today. Spas are finding it hard to keep up as they're not yet thinking about life as a whole – the next stage is honest, authentic wellness delivered 'as one' and not as separate components and I think it's our duty to get this message across.

Ten years from now, I see psychiatrists and priests joining us and I'd also like to approach representatives from other spheres such as architects and constructors of healthy buildings who might not realise the role they have to play in delivering wellness.

As co-chairs, what do you bring to the table and how will you influence the summit?

Harmsworth: I founded ESPA, the spa product, training and consultancy company, over 40 years ago and it's grown into a very commercial enterprise – we've got 600 spas in 60 countries. But we've always tried to keep it authentic and not let the numbers rule the [spa] offering.

One of my passions is integrative medicine and now the industry is moving into a different [wellness] era, I want to bring more of this into the programme and focus on prevention and lifestyle. ▸

The *Spa Business* team sampling Kitzbühel's mountain air with a local tourist guide (left)

Linser and Harmsworth want to address poor spa training standards at the summit

Meet the co-chairs

FRANZ LINSER A Tyrolean native, Linser has run a spa and wellness consultancy for over 20 years and prior to that was a professional athlete and national sports coach

SUSAN HARMSWORTH Founder of spa brand ESPA, Harmsworth started her company more than 40 years ago and today it has a portfolio of 600 spas in 60 countries

Doctors in Europe are recognising the benefits of complementary health, many of them study it as part of their medical training. And we want to put them on the same panel as those from the allopathic medical world. I've never thought one is right and one is wrong – you need both: medicine when you're sick, but preventative medicine to keep you well So we want to look at the intersection of medicine and wellness and to get those things moving in an integrative way.

Linser: I was a professional athlete and then coached Austria's national ski team, so I have a strong background in health and wellness. For more than 20 years my consultancy has helped over 60 hotels and organisations across Europe in wellness/business branding, positioning and programming.

What's unique about hotels in central Europe is that 95 per cent of them are private, family-owned businesses. Previously, the summit has been dominated by the big hotel chains, so we want to have an exchange of ideas between the two to see what they can learn from each other. Hotel groups are more professional when it comes to financials, strategic planning and operating procedures. But they don't have the autonomy or flexibility of the independent hotels.

What takeaways will there be?

Harmsworth: We want people to apply what they learn to their own businesses, so we'll have a session dedicated to wellness that's deliverable and viable. Realistically, it's difficult to replicate wellness destinations like Vana and Miraval and make them commercially successful. You need to think about the cost of specialist staff and equipment for things like blood infusions or MRIs if you go down the semi-medical route. The last thing our industry needs is lots of things coming along and failing in the name of wellness.

SAVE THE DATE
Global Wellness Summit 2016
17-19 October
Kitzbühel, Tyrol, Austria

Linser: We'll highlight successful wellness case studies in the Tyrol and openly talk about mistakes so people can learn from that. We're currently collecting facts and figures to prove there's more revenue in wellness than in normal leisure hotels – spas can help with length of stay and make a seasonal business a year-long one.

Harmsworth: We're also planning on having an investors panel again.

What other major threads can we expect?

Harmsworth: I want to bring it back to education as I think training standards around the world have dropped. Because there was so much demand and not enough therapists, short courses were introduced as a quick fix. In the UK, you can do a three-month massage course and then go out into the marketplace. People don't realise that in Austria and [mainland] Europe there's still a high level of training in anatomy, physiology, kinesiology, complementary health and massage which underpins the quality of work they do. So I want to have a panel looking at this and I want to moderate it.

Linser: Sue's exactly the right person to moderate it. She's travelled the globe and seen the training of therapists first hand. If she comes to the conclusion that therapists in this part of the world are some of the best then that carries a lot of weight. I'd like to see a big panel of educators from Austria and Europe and also from the US and the UK to really get some heated discussions going!

To sum it up, what's your ambition for this milestone summit?

Linser: To focus on wellness as it was meant to be. How does that sound?

Harmsworth: That's absolutely relevant to our theme, 'Back to the Future'. I think our ambition is to get back to authenticity, integrity and real spa and wellness. ●

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Massage Heights

The perfect UK business model?

There's a clear gap in the UK spa market for an affordable local offering that places an emphasis on top-quality treatments and services. Is Massage Heights, the successful US franchise chain, the solution?

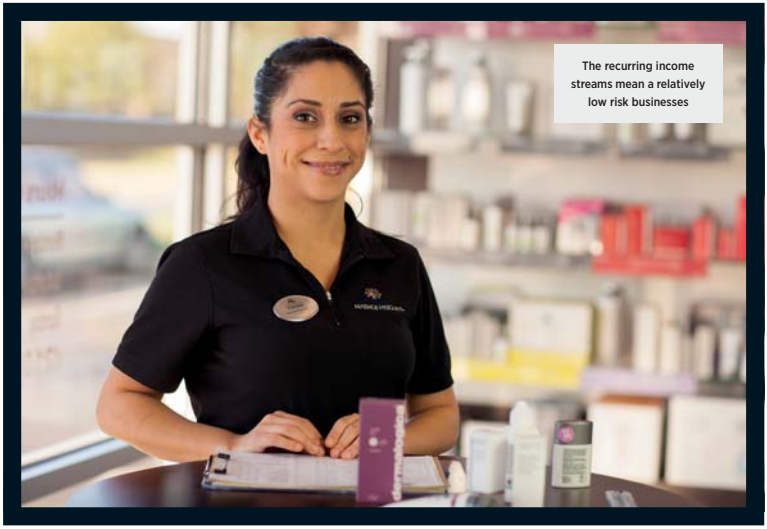
With its recurring membership model and multiple revenue streams, the global gym industry has been extremely successful in popularising personal fitness training for the high street market.

With the health club sector now worth £53bn (US$75.1bn, €66.5bn) worldwide, the concept of taking previously premium custom services and making them more widely accessible to fitness conscious consumers – exemplified by firms such as Fitness First with its monthly subscription solution – has now become a benchmark of what is a proven and highly profitable business model.

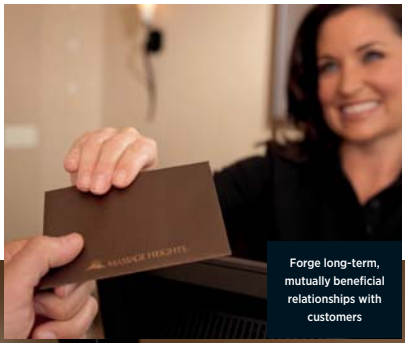
Such membership-based models provide businesses with the opportunity to forge long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with their customers. The recurring income streams generated mean that the businesses are relatively low risk and are able to quickly become cash-flow positive – meaning every attention can be focused on improving client experience.

Within this context, one British industry to so far remain predominantly exclusive and 'boutique' is the UK spa sector. This is surprising since the increasingly health conscious Brits make over 6 million annual spa visits, with the demand growing yearly. And it's luxury hotels with spas that account for over 41 per cent of all these yearly visitors.

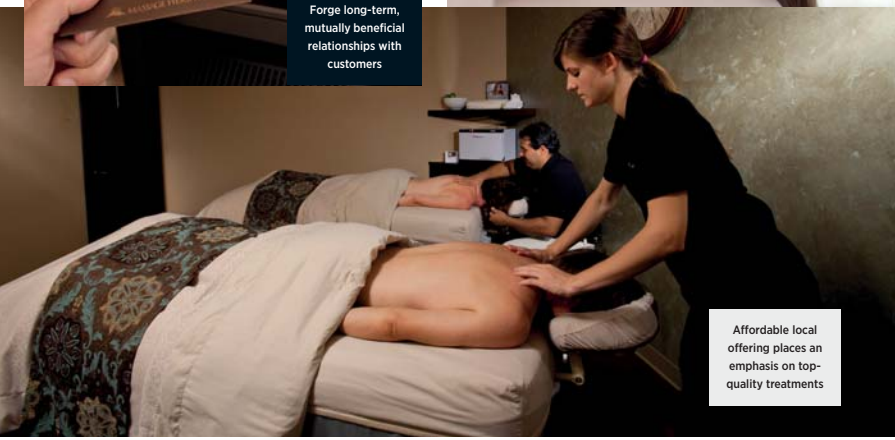
Clearly then, there's a gap in the market for an affordable local solution that places the emphasis on top quality spa and massage services.



The recurring income streams mean a relatively low risk businesses



Forge long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with customers



Affordable local offering places an emphasis on top-quality treatments

> Once considered a treat, **massage** has now gone **mainstream in America** and we've identified the **UK** as the **next new market** that's **ripe for expansion**

Step forward Massage Heights, the Texas-based chain that's successfully deployed the membership model to bring five-star resort style spa services to the high street.

Founded in 2004, the company has achieved its goal of making massage and spa services more accessible and therefore more frequently experienced. It now has 125 outlets across the US and Canada run by hand-selected franchisees.

With spa retreats located in busy urban areas and open during hours to suit local people – and with well-trained therapists, multiple levels of membership and product up-sells all contributing to revenue – dedicated Massage Heights outlets are able to offer an unrivalled client experience and as such generate more income per square foot than their competitors.

Given the current levels of opportunity in the UK spa sector – combined with Massage Heights' proven subscription business model – the stage is set for early adopters to establish a strong foothold in the British luxury massage and spa market.

That's why the search is on for an enterprising British entrepreneur to take the reigns at the forefront of the firm's UK expansion, to grow the Massage Heights brand and franchise network into a household name across the country.

"Once considered a treat, massage has now gone mainstream in America and we've identified the UK as the next new market that's ripe for expansion," says Alice O'Donnell, vice president of marketing at Massage Heights. "We've developed a model that's proven to be successful and transferrable, so becoming our UK master franchisor is a low-risk opportunity with high potential rewards."

Could this UK master franchisor role and enticing opportunity be for you? ●

MASSAGE HEIGHTS.

Contact Iain Martin to find out more
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healthy investment

A growing number of hotels and resorts are investing in dedicated wellness offerings, but does it make business sense? Rhianon Howells investigates

It doesn't seem long ago that spas became the must-have addition to any self-respecting luxury hotel or resort.

Now, a growing number of operators are incorporating not just spas but dedicated wellness services – and in some cases standalone wellness centres – into their offering.

This trend is being driven by consumer and media interest in keeping healthy, an overall industry movement away from pampering and struggling national medical systems.

The definition of 'wellness' is as open to interpretation today as 'spa' was 15 years ago. But, in general, it's taken to mean health-orientated treatments rather than those that focus only on beauty and relaxation.

While wellness has traditionally been the domain of destination spas, an increasing number of hotel and resort oper ators, and the spa management companies that serve them, are now looking to stake their claim as providers.

But while an on-site wellness centre might bring a certain cachet, the extra resources needed to run it – not least the speciality staff required – make it no small investment. So is it worth it? We ask the operators behind two of the most significant wellness centres to open last year to share their insights.

Villa Stéphanie and Haus Julius

Brenners Park Hotel & Spa

Brenners Park-Hotel & Spa in Baden-Baden is the flagship property of the Oetker Collection which is investing heavily in wellness worldwide. A well-known hotel in Germany's famous spa town, it's no stranger to the wellness game and has offered medical services for over 30 years. But with a newly opened destination spa and medical centre now on-site, it's taking the concept to another level.

Hans Peter Veit

Located in a renovated historic building adjacent to the hotel, Villa Stéphanie is five-floor dedicated destination spa/wellness centre which opened in January 2015. It aims to offer something for everyone, with a wide range of beauty, detox, nutritional and emotional wellbeing services. Facilities comprise 15 treatment rooms, a gym, hammam, plunge pool, mixed sauna and ladies sauna (very important for key Middle Eastern guests). In addition, there are 15 guest rooms, aimed at those booking seven- to 10-day wellness packages.

Housed in another separate mansion, the 1,700sq m (18,3000sq ft) Haus Julius is home to six teams of specialists – focused

▶ Villa Stéphanie at Brenners Park has an average capture rate of 20 per cent and gives the resort a real USP says Veit

Shiatsu aids mental and emotional wellbeing and Pierre Clavreux's Kiyindo technique helps ease pain

on medical check-ups, gynaecology and obstetrics, ophthalmology, dentistry, aesthetic medicine and physiotherapy – and more than 20 doctors.

In addition to these facilities, the main hotel building houses a pre-existing fitness centre, pool and butler-serviced spa suite.

The guest rooms at Villa Stéphanie, enable Brenners Park to now attract serious spa or medical travellers who might not want to mix with 'normal' hotel guests, says spa manager, Hans Peter Veit: "Everything is under one roof, they can come down to breakfast in their bath robe and if they're doing a detox or weight loss programme, they don't have to walk past a cheese presentation first."

A particular draw is that all package guests have a menu drawn up based on individual preferences and needs. As a bonus, the hotel's double Michelin-starred chef Paul Stradner will even cook them a weight loss or detox meal during their stay.

To date, room occupancy at Villa Stéphanie has been in the high 70 per cents, somewhat higher than in the 100-room hotel, where it's 62 per cent. And this in spite of Villa Stéphanie rooms being sold at €100 more than the average room rate of the main hotel. But although Villa Stéphanie clearly works as a destination spa, the inclusion of beauty and relaxation

European kickboxing champion Henri Charlet helps guests to burn calories and increase flexibility

services means it's also attractive to those who simply want a one-off treatment during their stay at the main hotel. The average capture rate is around 20 per cent, though sometimes as high as 50 per cent.

One of the reasons the company agreed to invest in an extensive wellness offering, says Veit, is that it helps to drive occupancy in low season. Another is that it has international appeal. He says: "Our clients are very international; only 35 per cent are Germans. Our clients are from the US, Russia and the Middle East and we have to offer them something that will persuade them to choose us over our competition – and that's not going to be a beauty salon, restaurant or rooms."

In terms of keeping costs down, staffing is key. While all 30 of the Villa Stéphanie spa team (including receptionists, therapists and nutritionists) and are employed by Brenners Park, Haus Julius works differently. All doctors and other medical specialists pay a low monthly rent and continue to run their own private practices, seeing local clients as well as hotel guests. But as part of the deal, they guarantee Brenners Park guests a priority service, including the ability to book appointments at short notice. "They cannot fully book themselves," says Veit.

As a family-owned hotel, Brenners Park is in it for the long haul and is not looking for a quick return on investment, says Veit. That said, by 2018 it's hoped that Villa Stéphanie will be running at 100 per cent occupancy and the business overall – across all departments – will be beginning to see a return. "Offering medical services is very challenging," says Veit. "But if you do it like this, at a high level, it's very hard to copy and it can be a really unique selling proposition."

If successful, Balance Wellness Centre could be the blueprint for other wellness facilities by MSpa

Aye Mon Yee

> The team focused especially on problems associated with the region, including weight management and joint pain linked to extremes of temperature

Balance Wellness Centre

Banana Island Resort Doha by Anantara

Balance Wellness Centre at Banana Island Resort Doha by Anantara is not only the first resort-based wellness centre in the Middle East, it's the first dedicated wellness concept from MSpa International. A subsidiary of Asia's Minor Hotel Group – which owns the Anantara, Per Aquum, Avani and Tivoli brands plus the Mandara licence in Thailand – MSpa manages close to 50 spas. At Banana Island, for the first time, it's chosen to open a standalone wellness centre as well as – not instead of – an Anantara Spa. If successful, it could be the blueprint for wellness centres at other MSpa properties.

The 141-room resort, owned by Al Rayyan Hospitality, launched in the Balance Wellness Centre January 2015. It features eight treatment rooms and two consultation rooms, relaxation areas, a fitness centre, a reflexology pool and indoor botanical garden. It offers a range of health-focused programmes over two or more days – from Relaxation, Detox, Fitness and Weight Management to Yoga and Ayurvedic Therapy – and an on-site organic café. In contrast, the spa, with nine treatment rooms and an extensive wet area, focuses on beauty and relaxation services only.

Services at the wellness centre are drawn from a variety of disciplines, with treatments such as lymphatic drainage massage, colon therapy, facial acupressure and reflexology offered alongside yoga, mindfulness and fitness sessions. Ayurvedic therapies, overseen by an in-house ayurvedic doctor, are a speciality. But technology is also being embraced – the centre is currently in the process of installing several items of wellness equipment including a body composition analysis machine, a flotation pod, a treatment cabin combining chromatherapy, hydrotherapy and Vichy showers, and an infrared sauna.

According to Aye Mon Yee, the resort's director of spa and wellness, MSpa did a lot of research into what was already available in the target market GCC states – as well as what was needed – when devising the treatment menu. The team focused especially on problems associated with the region, including joint pain linked to extremes of temperature and weight management. The conclusion, says Yee, was "that combining equipment with hands-on therapies would get the best results".

In a paradise island setting, yet very accessible for people from Doha, Banana

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CHRISTINA

It just works

The centre (above) will attract longer-stay guests; an indoor botanical garden is part of the offering (right)

Island is already proving popular with short-stay guests and occupancy at the resort is 40-60 per cent mid-week and 70-80 per cent at weekends. It's hoped the Balance Wellness Centre will eventually help it to attract longer-stay regional guests – those who would usually go to Asian resorts such as Chiva-Som or medical specialists in the UK to meet their wellness needs. EU nationals in transit to other parts of the world, who might be persuaded to combine a stop-over with a wellness retreat, are another target market.

Since the launch, the capture rate for the wellness centre has been a very modest 2.5-3 per cent, compared to an impressive 79 per cent for spa and wellness combined. However, the new equipment is only now being installed. Once this is in place, Yee plans to start working with travel agents to actively market the Balance Wellness residential retreats (combining rooms with programmes) with a view to attracting more primary wellness travellers.

The local market is also crucial to the centre says Yee. Day guests from Doha already account for more than 40 per cent of business, and she expects this to rise.

Since opening, a few adjustments have been made at Balance Wellness Centre. Originally, it only offered programmes lasting two days or more, although full-day or half-day programmes and even single treatments, were provided on request. Since this March, à la carte treatments have been included on the menu. Under the heading Healing Treatments Around the World, these include Indian healing massage, Thai massage and shiatsu.

In total, the centre employs 11 full-time staff, including the ayurvedic doctor and five specialist therapists with backgrounds ranging from nursing to physiotherapy. Yee admits that this, as well as the investment in equipment, has been costly, but says it's a must to have a top offer. ●

Rhianon Howells is a business journalist specialising in spa, fitness, architecture and HR
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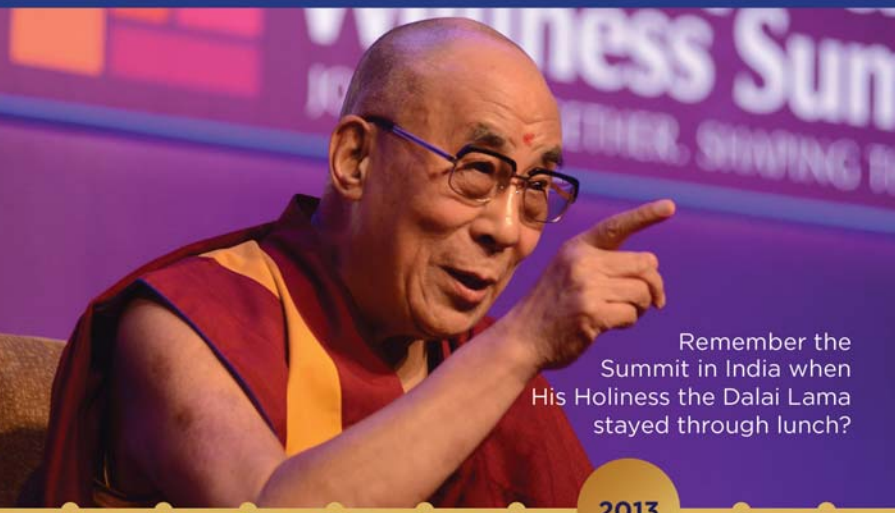

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spa business uniting the world of wellness

SHAWNA MORNEAU

From a director of spa at Four Seasons to an entrepreneur who introduces exciting new beauty brands to five-star facilities, Shawna Morneau's experience on both sides of the industry is enabling her consultancy to have an impact worldwide

What's the core business of Neaumorinc?
We're a beauty brand development consultancy based in Dubai, and our mission is to help emerging skincare, beauty, fragrance and lifestyle brands expand their reach globally.

We work with businesses, many of which are family-owned, that have developed exceptional products and had some success in smaller markets, and we help to pair them with the best five-star spa facilities around the world.

It's so rewarding to see these small businesses grow and achieve their goals.

As we're based in Dubai, we're also in a strong position to help brands looking to enter the UAE market in particular. We assist them in finding reputable distributors and negotiate the best terms, as well as handle all aspects of the UAE registration process on their behalf.

The final strand of our business is product formulation, and we can help companies and private clients develop their own bespoke ranges.

These are not white label, generic products, but formulations that we know have the ability to become known brands, based on our market research.

What's your background in the industry?
I studied medical aesthetics in Canada and went on to become a lead therapist for Suki's International in Vancouver. I then worked for Four Seasons in Sydney before travelling through Asia and learning acupressure and Thai massage. From there I went to New Zealand and then back to Canada where I knew I didn't want to return to working for just one company.

Shawna Morneau, founder of Neaumorinc

The company is currently developing skin products with prickly pear (left) and saffron (below)

> We're extremely careful about where and how we source our ingredients – they must be pure and fair trade

In Vancouver I launched the original version of this consultancy in 2009, and we've been expanding ever since, working with leading companies in worldwide locations – including developing the spa for the First Lady of Azerbaijan, Mehriban Aliyeva, at the Four Seasons hotel in Baku.

I'm also currently studying cosmetic chemistry at the Society for Cosmetic Science in London.

What service do you provide for product brands?

We only work with brands that have high quality products, and we effectively coach them in all aspects of their business – from staff training to treatment development and product packaging – so we are then able to position them in front of the kind of five star facilities that might normally be more challenging for them to reach.

How does your consultancy benefit the five star facilities?

The many years I've spent working both in and alongside five star hotels and spas means that I know exactly what will assist these companies. As a consultancy we don't just go into these sites and talk about the products we represent. We do key market analysis and benchmarking, so we're able to prove exactly why a particular brand will work for them.

You're soon to launch your own hammam range. Can you tell us more about this?

I've been working for the past six years to develop an all-natural hammam range. I identified a need for it in the market, and it will launch later this year.

I started my research while working as head of department for the spa at Richard Branson's Kasbah Tamadot in the foothills of the Atlas Mountains, just outside Marrakech. While working there I lived alongside the Berbers, and as a hobby started to experiment with the many local plants and botanicals for cosmetics.

I've always been fascinated by formulations. My grandmother used to work for Procter and Gamble, in charge of the Cover Girl, Max Factor and Oil of Olay brands. I used to spend hours as a child playing with her cosmetic products, mixing eye shadows into creams and coming up with all sorts of concoctions. In Morocco, I came up with 47 all-natural formulations, so I guess it's in my genes!

What qualities do you look for in potential skincare ingredients?

We're extremely careful about where and how we source our ingredients. They must be pure and fair trade. Currently we're working with figue de barbary (prickly pear), found in North Africa, which produces a highly anti-ageing and antioxidant facial oil. We've also extracted the anti-inflammatory and anti-ageing properties from saffron while eliminating the problem of its yellow staining.

The laboratory we use in Morocco picks ingredients from the trees on-site and take them straight to the lab. You can't get fresher or more local than that.

How important is packaging?

It's key, and like our ingredients, we're careful with our sourcing. Materials must be green and recyclable. For example, with my hammam range, the containers are recyclable and the tops are engraved with rose gold and henna, so they can convert to decorative coasters when the customer has finished the product.

For design, we work with our partner design firm in Paris, which creates packaging for several famous brands.

What excites you about the industry?

I love the fact that it's ever evolving, and also that we're mindfully creating products and experiences that make people feel better. The more I travel, the more I realise it's a very small industry. I attend eight major trade shows a year and always look forward to meeting and learning from my peers. Industry influencers like Sammy Gharieni, CEO of Gharieni, and Riad Bouaziz, CEO of RKF Luxury Linen, have been great mentors to me.

I also enjoy a close working relationship with Kathryn Moore of Spa Connectors. We regularly swap entrepreneurial ideas and inspire each other.

I always say that I don't have a job, I have a passion. Working in the wellness industry has also taught me how to find balance in my own life so that I'm better able to serve others. ●

NEAUMORINC

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CHAIN REACTION

PART TWO

In part 2 of our franchise series, Jane Kitchen moves away from the US and takes a look at some of the biggest franchises across the rest of the world – from France, to China to Australia

Spa franchises are growing leaps and bounds, offering time-starved consumers quick, focused options in convenient locations – and often at attractive prices. While the majority of spa franchise models have found success in the US (see SB16/1 p82), they're quickly gaining traction worldwide, with niche opportunities opening up across the globe.

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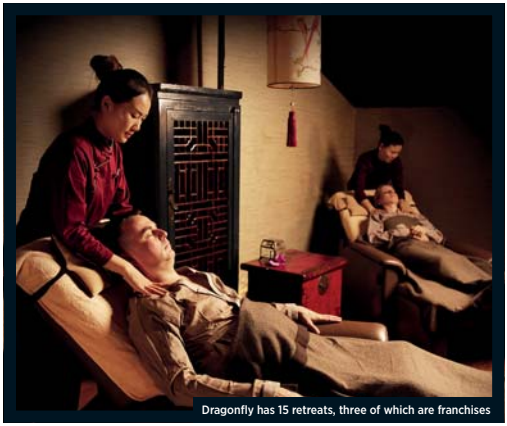

Dragonfly has 15 retreats, three of which are franchises

Chinese massage is a newly-added service

DRAGONFLY • CHINA

Founded 12 years ago in Shanghai by Hong Kong-born celebrity hairstylist Georgie Yam (see SB09/4 p20) and local Chinese business partner Eve Zhou, Dragonfly has 15 retreats, three of which are franchises.

The team later brought in Canadian business partner Randal Eastman and a fourth business partner, Grace Zhou. Yam has since passed the reins of operations to the other partners.

Eastman says the Dragonfly model is built around relaxation services that are appealing to both men and women. "It's a lifestyle concept that is more accessible to a wider audience than a typical beauty-oriented day spa," he explains.

> I PREDICT MORE CHAINS GROWING IN CHINA AS THERE IS INCREASING CONSOLIDATION IN THIS SECTOR
>
> RANDAL EASTMAN

Projected initial investment for a new spa in China – including construction, fit-out, decoration, supplies, print materials, staff training and franchise fees – is around CNY2m, (US$306,200, €277,820, £219,590).

"China is a different market," says Eastman. "It's full of spa offerings and very fragmented, but many franchise or chain operations have closed or are struggling in recent times. I predict more chains growing in China as there is increasing consolidation in this sector."

Eastman says Dragonfly is focused on expanding its business in China. It's added traditional therapies such as Chinese massage, moxibustion and scraping to appeal to locals rather than catering just to its core customer base of expatriates.

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ONE TO WATCH

Sense of Touch
• Hong Kong

There are six day spas already and plans for at least 20 more

With six locations, two of which are franchises, Hong Kong-based Sense of Touch has not focused on franchises so far, but CEO Neil Orvay says that's likely to change – he has plans to open at least 20 more spas and is talking with a master franchisee in Vietnam.

Initial franchise payment is approximately US$50,000 (€45,370, £35,860), with ongoing payments of 5 per cent of turnover plus a 2 per cent marketing contribution. Franchisees receive support in marketing, training, menu development, sourcing staff, inventory and ordering and spa management system updates.

Sense of Touch's main product partner is British brand Elemis and the franchises offer this along with Dermalogica.

So far all spas are in Hong Kong, but Orvay is talking to a master franchisor in Vietnam

SIAM WELLNESS GROUP • THAILAND

One of Thailand's well known spa chain operators, the Siam Wellness Group, is looking to expand internationally using franchise models.

Established in 1998, Siam Wellness Group owns 23 spas in the country under the RarinJinda Wellness Spa, Let's Relax Spa and Baan Suan Massage brands. It claims to have treated over 3 million clients, the majority of whom are global tourists, and last year the group had a total revenue of THB34m (US$952,730, €864,420, £683,260).

Wiwattanakrai says the group had a total revenue of just under US$1m last year

> SIAM WANTS TO TARGET ASEAN COUNTRIES WITH ITS FUTURE FRANCHISES... AND HAS A GOAL TO PENETRATE ALL OF THEM BY 2018
>
> NARUN WIWATTANAKRAI

The group now plans to use franchising to grow the businesses outside Thailand with one already open in China. "Each brand has its own character," says Narun Wiwattanakrai, executive director. "People are becoming more brand users, thus the right brand will capture the right target market."

Franchisees pay a fixed-sum payment for the training of staff, design consultation, SOP and installation of the operating system, and then a percentage of gross operating revenue for quality control and brand marketing.

Wiwattanakrai says Siam wants to target the Association of South-east Asian Network countries (ASEAN) comprising Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam with its future franchises. The ASEAN has a pan-Asian economy which launched last year and the aim is to set up its first franchise store in the region this year and to penetrate all of the countries by 2018.

ENDOTA • AUSTRALIA

Based in Melbourne, and started by high school friends Melanie Gleeson and Belinda Fraser in 2000, Endota has 90 day spa franchises in Australia. Fraser left the company in mid 2015 and new partners have since come on board.

With a predominantly female audience, the spa franchise recognises that women often put the needs of others before their own and encourages them to 'be your best me'. The spas feature a signature, calming scent, as well as originally-composed music and its own-branded skincare line. Other suppliers include Dermalogica and HydroPeptide.

Costs of fitting out a spa are between AU$350,000 (US$251,290, €228,000, £180,210) and AU$450,000 (US$323,090, €293,140, £231,700). Franchisees attend Endota Spa introduction and education courses and the company also provides four days of in-spa training before opening. Endota Spa training schools also offer refresher courses for product education and retail sales.

> ENDOTA HAS 90 DAY SPAS ACROSS AUSTRALIA

Gleeson (top) started the chain (above) in 2000. Today it employs more than 1,000 people

> BODY'MINUTE – WITH 400 FRANCHISES IN EUROPE – HAS OPENED IN MIAMI AND HAS AMBITIOUS GROWTH PLANS

BODY'MINUTE • FRANCE

Based in Paris, Body'minute got its start back in 1998 and has grown to include 400 beauty centres across Europe – mostly in France. The company also has one location in Miami, USA and wants to launch in the UK, Italy, Spain, Belgium and Luxembourg.

These membership-based, female-only beauty salons offer waxing, facials, body treatments, relaxation and manicures – all without an appointment.

Body'minute has positioned itself as a low-price player, but had a turnover of around €100m (US$110.2m, £79m) in 2012. Membership is €9.90 (US$11, £8) per month with facial and body treatments ranging from €9.90 to €48 (US$50, £36).

Cost of a Body'minute franchise starts at €130,000 (US$143,280, £102,760) and there's a fixed monthly fee per treatment room. Average day spa turnover is reported at €250,000 (US$275,540, £197,610) after two years.

It makes its own products and also has a training school in Paris. IT, managerial and marketing training is provided as well as an annual seminar and regional round tables.

ONE TO WATCH

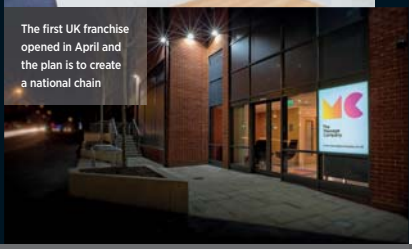
The Massage Company • UK

The Massage Company debuted in the UK in April 2016, with its first 14-treatment room flagship location in Surrey, England.

This is a new venture from Charlie Thompson – former head of health and beauty for UK's Virgin Active, and Elliot Walker – former managing director of Murad UK. It will offer a membership package with monthly massages at £44.95 (US$63, €57).

> WE'RE BUILDING MASSAGE AS A ROUTINE PART OF LIFESTYLE
>
> CHARLIE THOMPSON

"We're building massage as a routine part of lifestyle," says Thompson. "We're changing the way that people view it in the UK and bringing it into the mainstream."



The first UK franchise opened in April and the plan is to create a national chain

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See the last issue of *Spa Business* for our focus on spa franchises in the US

"WE SEE A GREAT DEMAND FOR OUR NORDIC LIFESTYLE CONCEPT"

ANNA-CARI GUND

ONE TO WATCH

LivNordic • Sweden

Not a franchise per se, LivNordic is a spa concept available for licensing from Swedish-based spa consultancy Raison d'Etre, it launched in April 2015 on Viking Star Cruises (see SB15/3 p32) and focuses on holistic wellbeing, drawing inspiration from Nordic culture and inspired by nature.

The first land-based LivNordic Spa & Wellness opened in January in the Cayan Tower in Dubai, and this April, a second LivNordic is due to open on-board *Viking Sea*.

The licensing opportunity is mainly geared towards hotels, where the spa is a standalone brand, yet integrated into overall operations. The business model is a management and joint venture partnership between Raison d'Etre and the hotel owner.

The plan over the next five years is to have at least 15 LivNordic Spas open, says Anna-Cari Gund, managing director of Raison d'Etre.

"We see a great demand for our Nordic lifestyle concept, where wellness is incorporated in everyday life," says Gund. "People all over the world are longing for a closer connection to nature."

● The Nordic spa concept launched on the *Viking Star* cruise ship last year and has a focus on bathing rituals with a modern Scandinavian design

"IN INDIA, THE MARKET IS JUST OPENING UP – THE PENETRATION RATE FOR SPAS AND MASSAGE IS IN THE LOW-SINGLE-DIGITS"

ANURAG KEDIA

FOUR FOUNTAINS • INDIA

Launched in 2007 in the tech-hub city of Pune, India, Four Fountains now has 30 franchisees in three cities across the country.

With backing from private equity firm Fulcrum Ventures, the chain was set up by Anurag Kedia, Saurabh Garg and Sunil Rao, three business school graduates working as sales and consulting managers who were frustrated by their inability to afford luxury spas.

The team created Four Fountains in an effort to put the health benefits of spa therapies within reach of more people and their ambitious target is to have 300 spas in 10 major Indian cities over the next few years, says Four Fountains company director Kedia.

"Spa franchises continue to grow," he explains. "In India, the market is just opening up – the penetration rate for spas and massages is in the low-single-digits, and hence there's a long way to go from here when it comes to growth."

Currently every Four Fountains spa has a turnover of close to INR10m (US$146,000, €132,470, £104,710) annually.

Total cost of setting up a spa with Four Fountains is around INR6m (US$87,600, €79,480, £62,820), which includes cost for interiors, furniture, fixtures, security deposit and working capital. Four Fountains doesn't have an up-front franchise fee, but instead, charges a royalty on the total revenue franchisees generate. ●

Dr Pauline Burgener

Dr Burgener Switzerland
Haute Couture Skincare, a Scientific Innovation

Leading skincare range, Dr Burgener Switzerland, is renowned for the true customisation of skincare. Founded in Lausanne in Switzerland in 1955, the luxurious and innovative brand combines natural ingredients with advanced technology products and treatments.

With its spa line firmly established at a number of exclusive hotels, namely in Cap-Ferrat, Dubai, Moscow, St Petersburg, Seychelles, Beirut and Switzerland, mainly in Four Seasons as well as other luxury hotels; Dr Burgener is set to launch the Haute Couture range in mid 2016.

Three years in the making, the focus of Haute Couture technology is to personalise products and treatments specific to the client's skin needs. Dr Pauline Burgener, co-founder and CEO, explains: "Haute Couture is a revolutionary skin treatment that personalises products and treatments to each person's skin, using cutting edge technology."

Every Haute Couture product contains natural extracts of iris and cedar wood, powerful anti-ageing ingredients. High tech ingredients include ceramides, specific peptides to relax facial muscles and chronopeptides to stimulate the natural defences of the skin, enriched with vitamin D.

Dr Burgener adds: "We're working on restoring the mechanisms of the skin by adding elements that will improve the reaction and full functioning of the cells."

CUSTOM-MADE

A Haute Couture treatment begins with an in-depth analysis of the skin, including an individual genetic pattern defining the hereditary ageing predispositions of each skin. Using special equipment in a controlled temperature and hygrometry room, depth of wrinkles, skin capillaries quality, hydration, lipids, and melanin are measured.

The Haute Couture range will launch in mid 2016

> Haute Couture is a revolutionary skin treatment that personalises products and treatments to each person's skin, using cutting edge technology

Dr Burgener says: "I look at the needs of the skin and the level of ingredients that are required for that skin type. The findings go to my laboratory in Switzerland and we produce a personalised product range for the client based on these results."

The Haute Couture service continues for the client with monthly treatments, during which products are activated into the skin, improving microcirculation and boosting cell regeneration. A full re-analysis of the skin takes place every three months and Dr Burgener adapts new products to the client's needs.

SPA REQUIREMENTS

A spa needs to allocate two rooms to provide a complete Haute Couture service. One is for a private consultation and skin analysis and the second is dedicated to the tailor-made treatments. Quality of excellence is also expected from the spa therapists, who will receive three months training at the Dr Burgener centre of expertise in Switzerland. "These high-end treatments are a blend of dermatology and cosmetics and the therapist should have a high level of education in dermatology and aesthetics," Dr Burgener adds.

The Haute Couture line will launch at the Dr Burgener Haute Couture Spa at the Relais & Châteaux, Grand Hôtel du Lac in Vevey, Switzerland this summer as well as the Four Seasons Grand Hôtel du Cap-Ferrat on the French Riviera. The Four Seasons in Moscow has also engaged in advanced discussions to host the concept this year.

Dr Burgener hopes to continue to forge partnerships with other high-end hotel spas in locations like Hong Kong and New York, with plans to be in 10-15 countries by the end of 2018. ●

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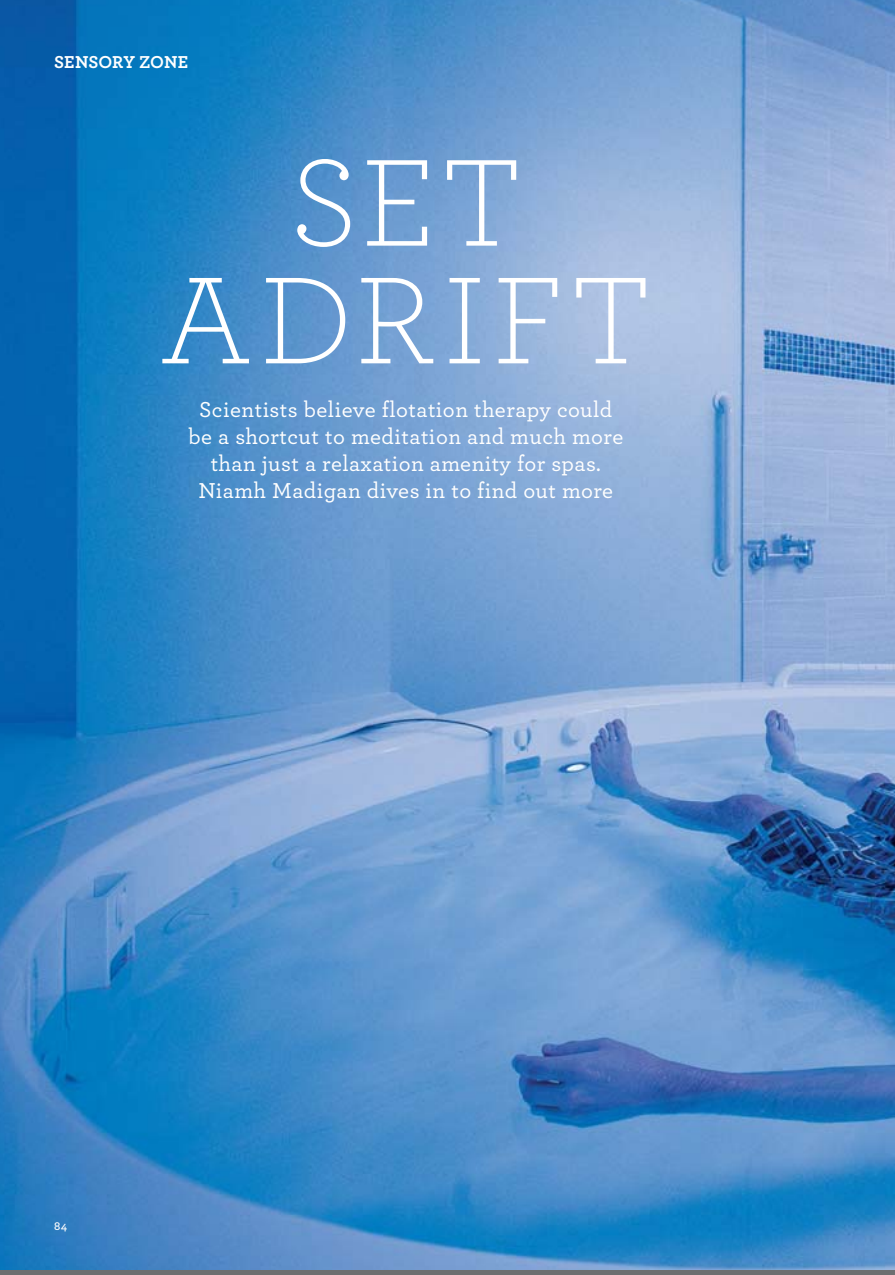
SET ADRIFT

Scientists believe flotation therapy could be a shortcut to meditation and much more than just a relaxation amenity for spas. Niamh Madigan dives in to find out more



Anyone who's ever tried to meditate will know how difficult it is to sit quietly, shut out distractions and go into a state of complete tranquility. In a world where our brains are constantly being primed, there's little chance to focus inwards. But what if the many widely-reported benefits of meditation could be achieved in another way – by the simple act of floating?

Neuropsychologist Justin Feinstein thinks this is a possibility and says: "floatation creates what I might say is the ultimate environment for focused, internal meditation". Last year, he set up the Float Clinic and Research Center at the Laureate Institute for Brain Research in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It's one of the first labs to look at the therapeutic benefits of floatation and initial findings indicate that it could be used to treat conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), chronic pain and even anorexia.

What Feinstein and his team are working on could have wider implications for spas. Instead of overlooking flotation pools and pods and thinking of them as an expensive extra just for relaxation, there may be grounds for operators to incorporate them into wellness programmes or use them as a standalone treatment for more serious ailments.

Making sense

Originally called isolation tanks, floatation pools have been around since the 1950s but had little credibility with scientists – not least because studies were often combined with hallucinogens like LSD. But as we move towards an era when mindfulness is being taken more seriously by western society, a number of researchers are trying to provide concrete evidence for its healing benefits.

Justin Feinstein

Feinstein first became interested in floatation 10 years ago when studying the brain function of patients with psychiatric conditions such as PTSD, social phobia and drug addiction. His interest was in the concept of interoception. In other words, how the brain senses the internal workings of the body; from the heart beating and blood pulsating to feelings from the gut and the immune system. He believed that disturbances in these body maps were the crux of mental health issues and discovered that floatation can help correct that dysregulation. He explains: "For the first time in people's lives, they have a chance to connect with those senses which are being overshadowed and understand who they are a little bit better." Floating also creates a state of profound relaxation, which is the complete opposite to a state of anxiety.

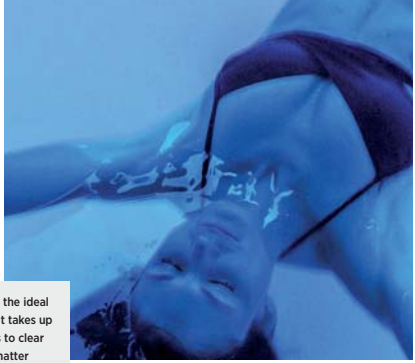
Research results

Feinstein's research is still in its early stages and he's still trying to understand the basic science behind floating and how it affects the brain and the body.

Preliminary studies show a lot of visceral systems are entering into a relaxed state, with a reduction in heart rates, respiratory rates, blood pressure and brain waves. He says: "Most people outside of a float pool average 15 breaths a minute. Without much practice, floating reduces this to about five breaths a minute, which is quite a change."

He's just completed the first float fMRI brain imaging study to see what impact the experience has on the amygdala, a part of the brain that plays a key role in the processing of emotions. When the amygdala is over-stimulated it activates our fight or flight response which can trigger stress and anxiety. In the research, 40 healthy people were split into two groups – one enjoyed a 90-minute float, the other control group spent the time relaxing in a reclining chair. Their brain activity was scanned before and after, and fMRI results show ▸

> The most important point is to enter into an unperturbed state of consciousness



90 minutes is the ideal float time as it takes up to 25 minutes to clear initial mind chatter

that unlike the control relaxation group, the amygdala shut off post-float, causing the body to relax and have a similar effect to anti-anxiety medication and meditation. Feinstein says: "Floating is a great environment to enhance meditation – sensory distractions are minimised and you can really focus inwards."

In another first, Feinstein is conducting the first float electroencephalogram screening. This allows him to measure the brainwaves of patients during a float by placing a waterproof, wireless device on their foreheads. "We hope to characterise the neural signature of what happens during a float experience," he says. "Some preliminary results reveal that the brain's going into a state of deep relaxation."

Efficacious experience

Costs for a floatation pool start at US$25,000 (€22,810, £17,580), plus wet-room conversion prices. But for spas thinking of taking the plunge, it's not just a case of 'build it and they will come'. It's about creating the right offering for the most efficacious experience. The custom-made flotation pools at Feinstein's clinic are not encased, which is deliberate. He says: "Some pod-style tanks are very enclosed. They look like coffins and the average person isn't very excited about trying out floating, because of that."

Instead, his UK-built Floataway pools are 2.5m in diameter and the circular shape creates a self-centering effect for the person floating.

Each pool is filled with 2,000lbs of Epsom salts, which allows the body to effortlessly float and the salts themselves are said to have therapeutic properties. The warm water is set at 35°C to match the body's temperature and the temperature of the air is the same. This creates a unique situation, where the user is no longer able to distinguish the boundaries between air, body and water. A wave of an arm turns the lights on or off and music is played through embedded speakers. "There's probably a list of about 20 different variables we control in our lab... The most important point is to enter into an unperturbed state of consciousness and that's why it's key to calibrate the environment so precisely."

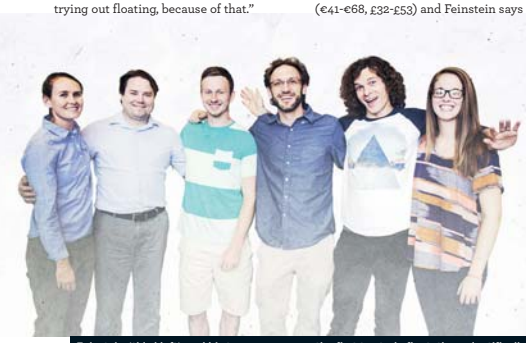
Commercially, the cost of a 60-minute float session ranges from US$45-US$75 (€41-€68, £32-£53) and Feinstein says positive effects can be felt after 30 minutes. But for him, the perfect length of time is 90 minutes. He explains: "It takes about 25 minutes to an hour to fully relax and clear mind chatter, so the idea is to sustain that for a little bit longer. In circadian terms, the basic rest activity cycle tends to run in 90 minute increments and we're finding that it seems to maximise the relaxation response."

To increase the benefits further, Feinstein feels there are many spa treatments which complement floating and could be combined with it in packages. Such treatments include yoga, acupuncture and massage which help to loosen up muscles before a session and allow the person to maintain a deep stillness during a float.

Floatation renaissance?

Spurred on by a growing interest in mindfulness, it's possible that there's a resurgence in floating. The Float Locations directory lists 297 float centres in the US compared to only 85 in 2011, but it's not able to give accurate figures in Europe yet. Meanwhile, in Sweden, a number of studies suggest that floatation relieves chronic stress, depression, fibromyalgia and insomnia and the government is now incorporating float therapy into its national healthcare programme.

As for Feinstein, he feels much more research is needed: "My hope is that as more results are published, more and more scientists will get excited about floating and begin to study this as well." ●



FLOAT CLINIC AND RESEARCH CENTER AT THE LAURENTE INSTITUTE FOR BRAIN RESEARCH

Feinstein (third left) and his team are among the first to study floatation scientifically

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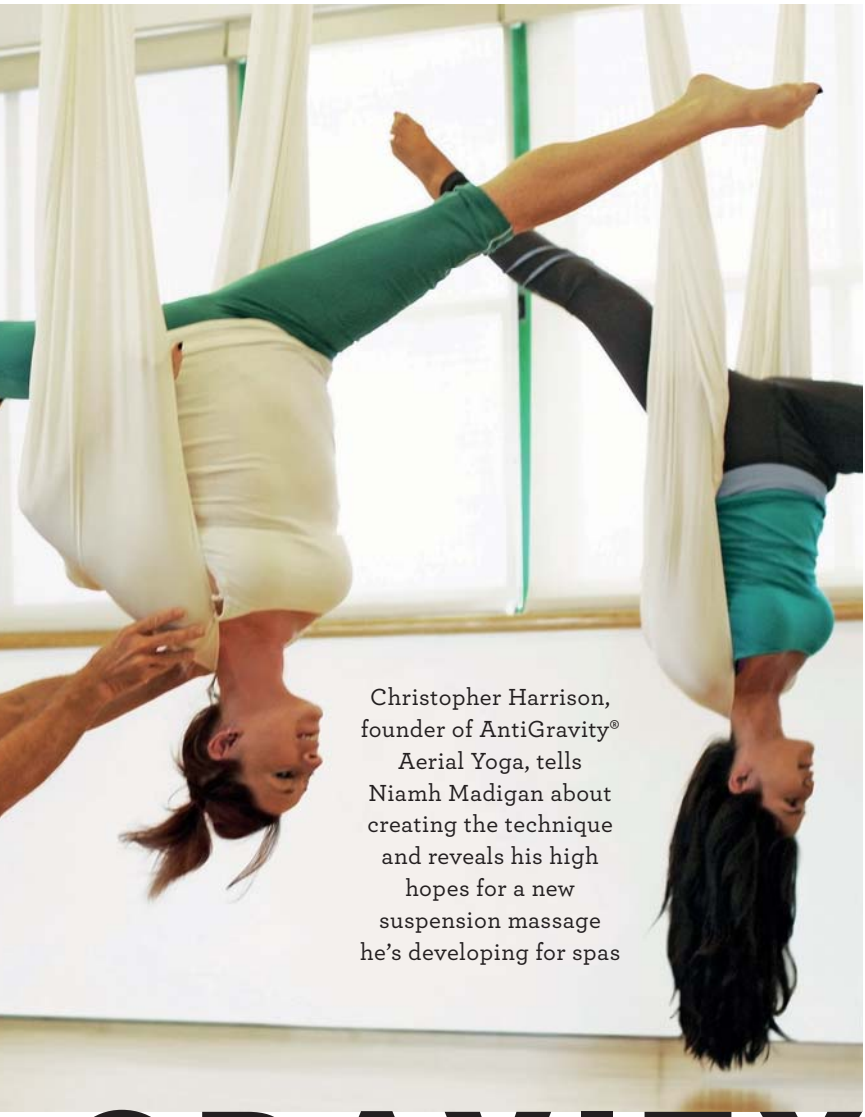
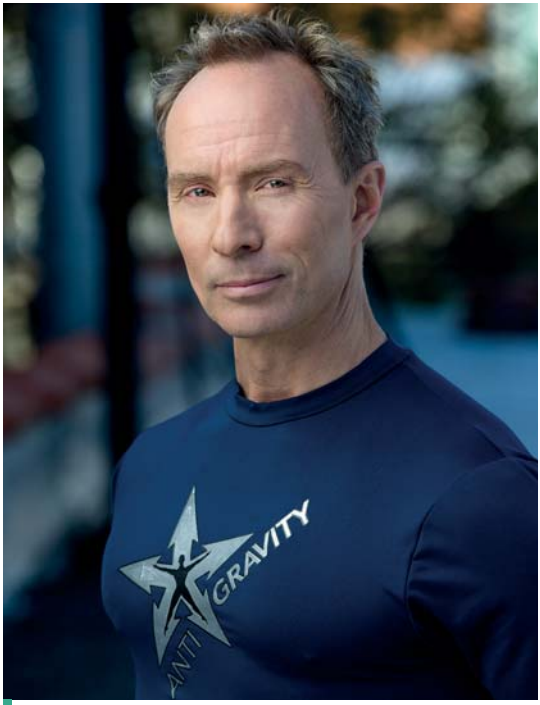


Christopher Harrison, founder of AntiGravity® Aerial Yoga, tells Niamh Madigan about creating the technique and reveals his high hopes for a new suspension massage he's developing for spas

GRAVITY



Christopher Harrison is a man whose feet rarely touch the ground.

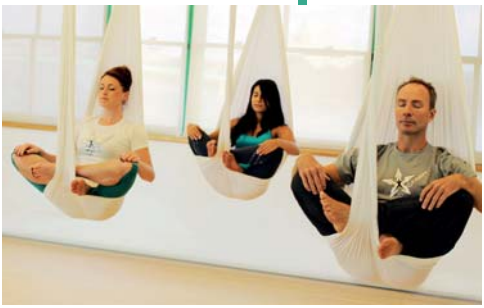
A world-class gymnast and Broadway dancer, he founded the entertainment brand AntiGravity® in New York in 1991. Since then, he's designed over 400 aerial productions in settings as diverse as Broadway, Olympic stadiums and the inauguration of President Obama.

Harrison is also the creator of AntiGravity® Aerial Yoga, one of the seven techniques which sit under the umbrella of AntiGravity® Fitness. The restorative form of yoga has become famous for its zero-compression inversions using a silk hammock and has gained a huge following from celebrities like Madonna and Gwyneth Paltrow to martial arts athletes and professional skiers. His mission is to spread health and happiness through movement and spas are very much on his radar – in fact, the spa-like discipline of yoga is really where it all started.

Inspiration from India

Harrison began practising yoga after visiting India in the mid-90s. It helped him to become more mindful and present in his life and movement. "I gained a meditation practice and discovered that things started to flow easier because I could let go of the frantic energy of living in New York City," he says. "As a gymnast and a dancer who'd performed in *Cats*, I'd pushed my body so hard it was so beat up by [the time I was] 33. I discovered the best way to deal with compression injuries is decompression. The one way to decompress in our society is through practising yoga."

Harrison, a dancer by trade, combined a hammock he'd used in stage performances with yoga to develop the creative technique



To help eliminate compression on the spine even further, Harrison began experimenting with a hammock he'd originally created for stage performances which has been used by artists such as Britney Spears and Mariah Carey. The silk fabric of the Harrison AntiGravity® Hammock, acted like a soft trapeze to suspend the body during yoga and help with alignment.

It also had health and fitness benefits as an exercise device. By putting the hammock at the same height as a ballet barre, he started adapting different moves from other disciplines such as pilates, aerial arts, gymnastics and dance. He realised that by using its support, he could also go deeper into a pose and the possibilities were endless.

FITNESS ENLIGHTENED BY

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Spa appeal

Two decades on, AntiGravity® Fitness has, for want of a better saying, really taken off. It's approved by numerous safety and fitness organisations and includes seven programmes ranging from suspension fitness and pilates to those for children. It's available in over 400 facilities, including 20 high-end spas, in 50 countries.

The AntiGravity ®Aerial Yoga and Restorative Yoga are particularly popular with spas such as those at the Four Seasons in Bahrain, Bali, Sayan and the Maldives. It's a natural fit for wellness operators says Harrison: "The feeling of being suspended somehow allows you to no longer feel the gravity of life. A meditation can really soar and a floating shavasana is so peaceful."

Harrison refers to aerial yoga as his baby because it's the first technique that evolved out of AntiGravity® Fitness. To take part in a class, the user sits in the hammock, which can be height-adjusted. They balance between the hammock and the floor for 80 per cent of positions, using both to move in different directions and to change the relationship with gravity.

> When you're hanging **upside down**, it **takes away** all the **stress** that's been **pushing** on the discs of **your spine**

A typical class, which anyone can do, is low impact with a focus on mobility and agility. For the more advanced, there are a number of challenging poses that work the cardiovascular system and build strength. A session lasts 60-90 minutes and can include crunches, squats, push-ups and jumping jacks. The hammock acts as a support for other moves such as inversions, handstands and front flips.

One of the main benefits this form of yoga brings over traditional practices is the ability for users to go into a zero-compression inversion. "When you're hanging upside down, it takes away all the stress that's been pushing on the discs of your spine," explains Harrison. "You're creating space, which allows the discs to hydrate and very often helps relieve back pain from the first session.

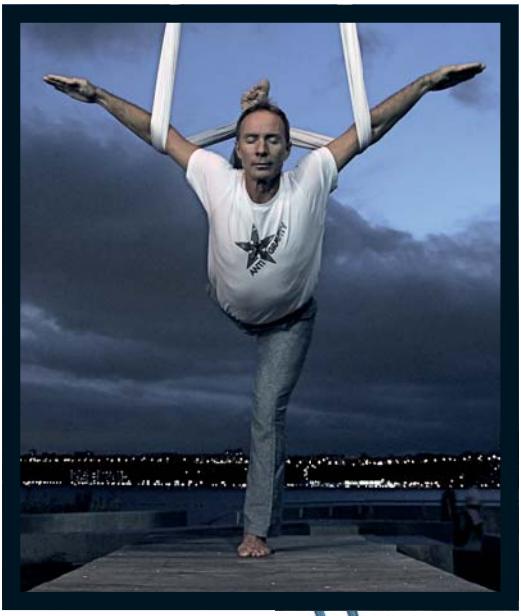
> **The famous zero-compression inversion move isn't something you can do in normal yoga sessions**

"It also releases serotonin, endorphins, oxytocin and dopamine; happy hormones, which make it easier for you to cope with life, lose weight and refresh the digestive system." He adds that other positive side effects include improvement in flexibility, alignment, balance, joint mobility and muscular strength.

An average class has between eight to 16 pupils, although some studios offer private spaces for two or three pupils. Harrison recommends more than one person per class, as it's easier to learn from watching someone else.

Suspension massage

Harrison says that spas are very much a focus for him in the future: "People come to the spa for the sake of decompression – of their mind and their bodies through relaxation and massage. One of the things that we're very excited about is the launch of AntiGravity® 10n1."



Harrison is on a mission to spread happiness through movement (left); Four Seasons are fans of the classes (above); the new D-kink warm down for personal trainers (below left)

AntiGravity® 1on1 is a new programme for personal fitness trainers which debuted in 15 countries in late February. Harrison feels the person-centric approach will work particularly well in spas, especially its 30-minute current session design called 'D-kink.' Incorporating the hammock, the D-kink sequence enables personal trainers to add a variety of moves to fitness regimes such as enhanced stretching, spinal traction, the zero-compression inversion and a floating rest, to provide a balanced workout. It's also effective as a workout cool-down he says – instead of instructors stretching or massaging clients on a mat or table, they can use D-kink to decompress the spine and elevate the moves. D-kink is the first of many 1on1 therapeutic sessions Harrison is designing for personal trainers.

Something that's even more suited to spas, however, is a specialist treatment called AntiGravity® Floating Massage, which Harrison's currently developing. As it's still being created, he's reluctant to share too many details, but he describes it as a complex technique which will allow a licensed therapist to manipulate the client into a weightless state (presumably using the silk hammock somehow) in combination with massage therapy.

He adds: "All I can say is that once suspended in mid-air, the body reacts to manipulation very differently. The therapist has leverage that he/she would not be able to attain if the body was lying on a hard surface. The resulting benefits to the recipient are truly amazing."

Expect to see Floating Massage rolling out in high-end spas by the end of the year, with Four Seasons already signed up. "I showed their [a Four Seasons] spa director what I had and she was very enthusiastic," says Harrison. "She gave me the encouragement to proceed with the development of the technique."

Switching off

So what does the master of antigravity do to come back down to earth? He laughs and says, "I use my practices to relax. I go into the hammock every morning and start with restorative postures to open space in my back and my neck followed by suspension moves."

He concludes: "It's like giving yourself an amazing refresher. You find balance in your workout; between compression and decompression, strength and flexibility, agility and mobility and between body and mind. You are in greater flow, in less pain and things become a little bit easier because of it." ●

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The Quartz table offers a unique hot sand experience (left). CEO Sammy Gharieni has been a spa innovator for 25 years (below)

Gharieni

As Gharieni prepares to celebrate 25 years in the industry, founder and CEO Sammy Gharieni talks about the company's culture of innovation, and how there will so many more exciting products to come

Gharieni celebrates 25 years in the industry this year. What was the market like when you first started?
I trained in electrical engineering and started out designing and selling facial lifting devices that used electrical currents – which was a very new concept back then.

However, the treatment beds in facilities at that time were very basic with few functions. So I started to get a vision of what a massage table should be, and every year since then we've created and launched better and more innovative designs for tables.

What were some of your early successes?
My approach has always been to listen first to the needs of the market and then innovate. As an engineer I also look at what's happening in other industries and see if it can be applied to wellness.

For example, some of our early designs were the first to incorporate heated massage pads and lumbar support into beds – new technology that I drew directly from the automotive industry.

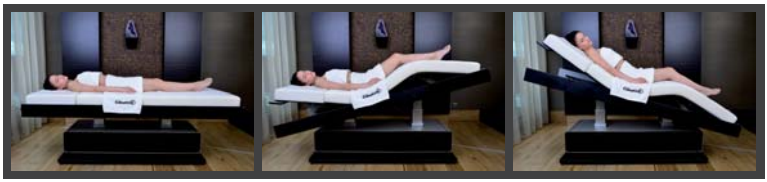
In 2005, we were the first to create a table with electronic armrests that could be lowered, so the client did not have to lie uncomfortably with their arms by their side. This bed is now our Classic MLW table that still leads in the market today.

What are Gharieni's core markets?
There are three pillars to our business. Spa and Wellness (wet and dry sectors); Beauty and Cosmetics; and finally Medical, where we create equipment for many different disciplines, from podiatry to gynaecology and dialysis. We're now seeing more intersection between the spa and medical worlds, which will provide many opportunities going forward.

Tell us about some of your most recent innovations
We have many. Our technical team is growing and our rate of innovation is speeding up! At a recent trade show in Düsseldorf we had 13 innovations on display, when in past years we've usually had two or three.

In March we launched our Gharieni-Smart-Remote (GSR) Tablets with an app that can control all the functions of our massage beds, from the movement to the music, at the simple touch of a button. We also see our new Quartz bed as a game changer. I got the idea from a man who made hot sand boxes for physiotherapy centres and I instantly saw how this could be applied to a massage bed.

For the Quartz bed we offer very thin blankets that allow the client to have the experience and benefits of lying on warm sand without coming into contact with it.



Gharieni's new Wellmassage4D treatment turns massage from a flat experience into a dynamic, multi-dimensional experience

 ©CYBERTREK 2016

The PediSpa Square can be used for manicure, pedicure, facial, make-up, haircare and Kneipp treatments

The MO1 EVO is the lowest massage bed on the market

The Spa.Wave enables spas to offer power napping

We can also add salt into the heated bed so that the treatment room becomes like a salt cave. People can have a body scrub or massage while also having the feeling of being relaxed at a beach, with salty sea air.

It's unique in the world and I'm sure it will be in all high-end spas in the future.

Is there anything else you see as an industry first?

Our new Wellmassage4D is a massage treatment that transports the wellness experience to another dimension. In March, we won the Innovation Award of the German Wellness Association for best body treatment. We worked with Jean-Guy de Gabriac who developed the treatment protocols and we created the technology.

We like to joke that we are like Christopher Columbus! He showed people the world was not flat it was round. With Wellmassage4D, massage of the future will no longer be a flat experience.

We also created the award-winning 5-in-1, multi-talent PediSpa Square – a chair for pedicure, manicure, facials, make-up and haircare, that has Kneipp foot massage jets; as well as a type of horizontal Vichy shower with sophisticated automatic Kneipp temperature controls.

What's your approach to design?

We always like to create what does not exist in the market. The drawbacks are

> **It has to be an amazing experience for the client, and highly functional for the therapist**

that you then have to convince people that it's what they need. But I much prefer to be an innovator and leader, than a follower.

Also, we always listen to our clients and design with both the spa-goers and the therapist in mind. It has to be an amazing experience for the client, and highly functional for the therapist.

For example, a few years ago Mandarin Oriental approached us about making a bed that could go very low for Asian treatments but that also had storage.

At first I thought this was impossible, but I love a challenge! I spent two years with my engineers working on a concept.

Now this bed – the MO1 EVO – is not only the lowest bed on the market (down to 45cm) it's also great for disabled people. It's been a great success at the Mandarin Oriental and is in great demand from other leading spa brands.

What trends do you see happening in wellness?

One emerging trend I see is power napping, and of course we have developed a product that meets this demand. Our Spa.Wave is a new system that incorporates binaural acoustic and vibrational stimulation to put people into a deep state of alpha sleep for around 30 minutes. Spas can essentially sell time to clients, whether they're stressed out executives or jet-lagged travellers. It eliminates the need for a therapist and so can generate more profit for the spa.

It uses technology that was developed in the US for soldiers in the Iraq war. It quickly brought them down from a high state of stress on the battlefield to a therapeutic alpha state. There have been clinical studies done to show its efficiency.

So what's next for Gharieni?

We're always launching something new. There are two more launches set for 2016 that I can't tell you about yet, but I'm sure they'll both win innovation awards.

We'll also unveil a major new showroom in Germany to coincide with our 25th anniversary in September, and I promise it will be something really special. ●

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Aside from its work with Canyon Ranch at sea (above), Concept Software has just signed a deal with a major global hotel chain

TECH TALK II

Leading the way in spa software innovation, we asked some of the biggest names in the business to tell us about their latest developments and predictions

Kate Parker, writer, kateparker@spabusiness.com

Malcolm Rennie managing director Concept Software Systems

Tell us about your most recent software update
Key add-ons within our latest releases include eCommerce, gift certificates, mobile check-in, digital marketing integration and extended business intelligence reporting. Our business intelligence tools provide detailed KPIs, income simulation and 'what if' analysis, all tailored to assist in improving a spa's bottom line

What interesting projects are you working on? We're currently working with Canyon Ranch to deploy our solutions on board its 18 cruise line spas. The cruise line business is very interesting as it's truly international, raising particular challenges. For example, we need the ability to change tax depending on where a ship is located.

Operating out in open sea poses unique challenges in itself, such as the ability to operate centrally with sporadic access to the internet. We're therefore pioneering new database technologies with the ability to sync data from the ships to their land-based servers and vice versa.

What are the trends in spa software? Customer-facing apps are increasingly in demand and consumers are generally requiring a more efficient spa experience. From a spa management perspective, customer recognition, system reliability and ease of use have been key for years and will continue to be a standard requirement.

> Concept Software is pioneering new database technologies with the ability to sync data from cruise ships to land-based servers and vice versa

How is business going?
Business has been remarkable in the last 18 months. We've secured a major contract for a top hotel spa operator with several hundred resorts (we can't say which due to non-disclosure). Our software is now in nearly 70 countries, we're developing our European markets and we're seeing increased opportunities in South America. Meanwhile Dubai is flying and Asia and North America continue to expand rapidly for us.

Spa-kit.net keywords:
Concept Software

Thomas Roessler managing director The Assistant Company (TAC)

What's the newest piece of spa software you've launched? Spa management is not a job that's linked to only one locality or one computer. We recently introduced Sense onto the market. With this module, spa employees can access our software from all common browsers on smartphone, tablet, laptop or desktop PC.

What's been TAC's biggest news recently? We bought HIS Solution, a big German spa software company, and have now reached a high of 1,200 customers in 54 countries. We've also made a huge step into the B2C-market since acquiring WellnessBooking.com – Germany's top spa booking platform – in July 2015.

> TAC has made a huge step into the B2C-market since acquiring WellnessBooking.com – Germany's top spa booking platform – in July 2015

What trends are you spotting? A seamless availability of spa offers is increasingly required by consumers. Digital signage is therefore as important as mobile access to last-minute offers. Spa software must adapt to this trend and set up corresponding interfaces.

We also believe that hands-on experience in using spa software is crucial. Some universities are offering our spa software course to their spa students, helping job seekers to get a smooth transition into the industry.

● Universities are now offering TAC's spa software course

How are consumer trends shaping spa software? We see great potential in booking platforms, as customers search for information relevant for making a booking online – if you're not listed online, you're non-existent. Our software automatically transfers all online bookings into the software, therefore preventing any double-bookings occurring online or on-site.

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

Blanka Szecsenyi business development director TNG International

What are you doing that other spa software companies aren't? We work with hospitality software experts in our company who help us understand the spa as part of a puzzle, while we can focus on what spas need as standalone operations.

What's your most recent piece of spa software? TNG has just been extended with a face-recognition feature which allows spas to identify a guest with a camera instead of swiping a card or reading a bracelet.

In addition, we're also currently releasing the browser-based version of our software which has a brand new design, making TNG accessible on a tablet and mobile, as well as PC.

What's the key to making spa software user friendly? The most important thing is to combine real customer feedback with software expertise. We actively ask our customers about their individual needs and practices, while creating a universal solution that's a benefit to all our clients.

> TNG now offers a face-recognition feature which allows spas to identify a guest with a camera instead of swiping a card or reading a bracelet

What have been the biggest changes in spa software recently? It seems that the gap between simple, downloadable, low-cost solutions and our enterprise type of locally implemented solutions is becoming smaller. We want to appear simpler, lighter with extended features, but customisation will always remain a clear differentiator.

What consumer trends are you noticing? Everybody wants everything at their fingertips: to book online anytime, close all transactions without a call or personal contact, but not all spas are ready. As a software company we need to stay one step ahead, use the newest technology without forgetting that between the consumer trends and our software lies the actual spa which has to decide which way to go.

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

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WWW.PREMIER-CORE.COM/CASESTUDIES/BRIDGEHOTEL

AJ Toor co-founder & director Gappt

What are you doing that's different? We solve three problems facing spa owners: filling short notice white space; the complexity of dealing with bookings; and meeting the slow and resource-hungry communication between clients and front of house.

Booking systems are good at managing what's booked, but they don't market what's not been booked. That's why more spas use Gappt, in addition to their current processes, to make clients aware of late notice availability and let them easily express interest in a specific time or package. Spas receive, and can quickly reply to, booking requests with text messages straight to clients' phones.

> Booking systems are good at managing what's booked, but they don't market what's not been booked

What spas are you working on? UK destination spa Ragdale Hall approached Gappt to provide a solution to fill its spa day and spa break spaces while improving communication with new and existing clients. It wanted to advertise short notice availability and high value packages efficiently to maximise profits. Since launching at the beginning of January, Ragdale Hall has realised Gappt's impact – Tracy Lawrence, internet marketing manager says: "We were astonished that we received our first request for a weekend spa package within a few minutes of going live! And requests have been flying in ever since."

● Spas have had an "astonishing" client response with Gappt

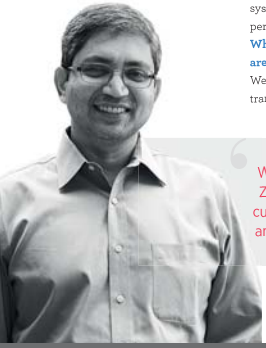
What consumer trends are you noticing? We see three: busy lifestyles, convenience, mobile. Making an enquiry with one click and receiving a short and concise reply direct to your mobile phone will soon become industry standard. A big shift towards user-friendly software, will allow spas to market their services actively and in real time, catering to the 'fire away and forget' immediacy mind-set that drives high-value consumers.

Spa-kit.net keyword: Gappt

Sudheer Koneru CEO Zenoti

What are you doing that other spa software companies aren't? Zenoti is a cloud platform and we decided early on to invest heavily in best-of-class infrastructure to ensure our service is always fast and reliable.

We also built our platform top-down and this is what makes Zenoti such a strong software for multi-location business. We're able to provide extensive support for corporate staff at headquarters while also supporting centre level operations at the same time.



What's your most recent piece of spa software? We recently launched Zenoti Dashboards, a customisable reporting and analytics platform. Our users can track daily metrics as well as performance against monthly goals. We're investing heavily in making the entire reporting system straightforward and personalised for each user.

> We recently launched Zenoti Dashboards, a customisable reporting and analytics platform

What challenging projects are you working on currently? We're in the process of transitioning a number of large, multi-location spa chains onto the Zenoti platform.

● The dashboards can track daily metrics against monthly goals

Moving a large network of spas raises interesting challenges as there's a need to strike a balance between retaining best practices that work, while helping to support newer, more efficient processes where they make sense. We have a number of tools and processes in place to train a large, distributed group of staff, managing a timely transition for the entire network and providing personalised support during the first few weeks after switch-over.

What have been the biggest changes in spa software? With spas moving to cloud software, they can expect so much more from their software. One of the biggest changes is in the adoption of mobile technology, transforming how a spa is run and how staff and customers interact with the business. ●

Spa-kit.net keyword: Zenoti

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HOT STUFF

From rusty steel walls to curved grotto-like interiors, and from floating saunas to the world's largest. We round up some great-looking projects in the booming world of sauna bathing

Located in the Arctic Circle, the Agora Sauna is part of a moveable cultural initiative called SALT

The amphitheatre-style seating in the sauna can also be used for a varied programme of events

AGORA SAUNA
Sandhornoya, Norway

Design: Rintala Eggertsson Architects & Joar Nango

SALT SAUNA, BODØ, NORWAY. ©MARTIN LOSVIK. COURTESY SALTEU.NO

THINKING BIG

A sauna – billed as the world's largest at 180sq m (1,938sq ft) – opened in mid 2015 on a remote Norwegian beach on an island in the Arctic Circle as part of a cultural programme of art and music.

Jointly built by Norway-based Rintala Eggertsson Architects and artist and designer Joar Nango, the glass-fronted Agora Sauna holds more than 100 people and looks out onto the Arctic Sea, offering views of the mountainous seascape. It also features its own bar.

Norwegian musician and recording artist Biosphere has created a specially commissioned ambient soundtrack, called *Polar Low*, which plays in the sauna.

Located in Sandhornoya, the Agora Sauna is part of a unique, moveable cultural initiative called SALT, which aims to bring together art, architecture, music and food in the Arctic landscape. Its amphitheatre-style seating means the space can also be used for a programme of events, including talks and performances.

Designed as a temporary installation, the sauna and SALT project are likely to remain in Sandhornoyha until September. After that, the idea is to tour northern locations like Scotland, the Faroe Islands, Iceland, Greenland and Alaska. ▸

The sauna's design was inspired by traditional Norwegian fish racks

Located on a private island in Ontario, Grotto Sauna juts into a lake and provides views over Georgian Bay

GROTTO SAUNA
Ontario, Canada
Design: Partisan

The curved interior was inspired by natural grotto walls, which are worn smooth by the water

Charred cedar was chosen for its natural, weathered appearance and was prepared and antiqued using ancient Japanese methods

INSPIRED BY NATURE

Designed by Toronto-based practice Partisans, the battered-looking charred timber exterior of the Grotto Sauna in Ontario hides a curved, sensual, warm interior.

The sauna is perched on a private island in Georgian Bay, Ontario. The design was inspired by the rugged northern Canadian landscape, and by natural waterside grottos – with curved chambers worn smooth by water currents.

The exterior is built from charred cedar chosen for its weathered appearance and prepared using the traditional Japanese Shou Sugi Ban method (an ancient art of burning timber to preserve and antique it). Inside, large curved windows flood the space with natural light and provide views across the bay.

The sauna was designed using 3D modelling and was constructed off-site before being transported to its home by boat.

The architects of the project says: "The Grotto Sauna is a feat of old-world craftsmanship and new-world sustainability made possible by cutting-edge software and fabrication technology. It is a sculpted space, a sensual experience and a sophisticated exercise in building science."

The project is the work of students at the Scarcity and Creativity Studio, part of the Oslo School of Architecture and Design

THE BANDS
Lofoten Norway

Design: Oslo School of Architecture and Design students

A wood burning stove provides heat for the building. The design is clean and simple, with larch used throughout

The structure is designed to look like three separate buildings, but the interior is actually one space

BANDING TOGETHER

Students at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO) have designed and built a quayside sauna and terrace from three connected wooden 'bands' that step down to the water in the fishing village of Lofoten in Norway.

The Bands is a project by students at the Scarcity and Creativity Studio, a graduate design and build studio with the AHO. The larch-lined structure was inspired by three historic buildings on the site: a fisherman's cottage, a cod liver oil production building and a cod salting building, which all date back to the early 1900s. The AHO graduates were tasked with designing the sauna and exterior facilities as part of a wider project which also involves the renovation of the three historic buildings.

The larch clad structure – which has been designed to look like three separate buildings, but is actually interconnected inside – houses a sauna, wooden benches and a wood burning stove. The outside terrace features benches and a table, as well as a barbecue and hot tub/plunge pool.

The folds echo the rugged landscape and reference the historic buildings on the site

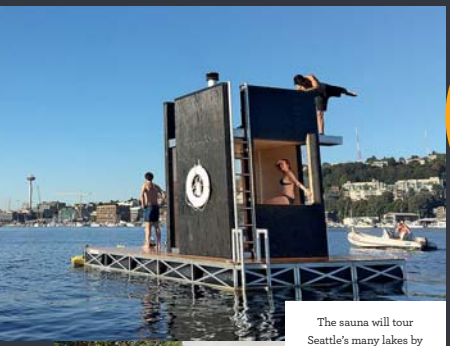
The dressing room, steamroom, plunge pool and shower are nested vertically in this New England sauna

SPRUCE SAUNA
New England, USA
Design: Matter Design

SMALL BUT PERFECTLY FORMED

Boston-based firm Matter Design has designed an unusual maze-like sauna structure,with several rooms nesting vertically inside the narrow building, for a private farm in New England.

Spruce Sauna features a dressing room, shower, plunge pool and steamroom. The building features a curved ceiling, which, according to the designers: "Holds the steam at a specific elevation that one can slip above and below as moving through the programs."



The sauna will tour Seattle's many lakes by an electric trolling motor

PHOTOS: GOCSTUDIO

FLOATING SAUNA
Seattle, USA
Design: goCstudio

ON THE WATER

Seattle-based architects goCstudio have built and launched a floating sauna in Seattle, providing locals with a new perspective of their waterfront city.

The designers wanted to create a tranquil refuge which could tour Seattle's many lakes. Designs were drawn up in January 2014 and a successful Kickstarter campaign raised over US$40,000 to keep the project afloat. Construction was completed in late 2015, and the vessel – named the *wa_sauna* – has now been tested and registered to sail.

The sauna is transported from lake to lake by its operators and is propelled through the water by an electric trolling motor. Heat is provided by a wood burning stove.

BATHING CULTURE
Gothenburg, Sweden
Design: Raumlabor

Visitors access the sauna via a wooden bridge. It is part of a wider project aiming to revitalise the harbour

ROUGH & READY

When the City of Gothenburg wanted to revitalise its battered harbour front, as part of a wider scheme to regenerate the Jubilee Park and Frihamnen areas, the architects in charge – Raumlabor – turned to the Sweden's rich sauna bathing tradition for inspiration.

They planned to create a project called Bathing Culture, with a first phase being the building of a beach and the Sauna in Frihamnen.

The 20-seater sauna building, constructed by volunteers out of local recycled materials, has bank-side changing rooms, riverside walkways and landscaping.

Phase two will see the creation of a public bath next to or in the river, as well as outdoor water play, cultural buildings, a roller derby track and an urban garden space.

The sauna won the architects of Sweden Västra Götalands architecture prize in 2015. ●

The sauna was made with entirely recycled materials, with a wooden interior and corrugated iron cladding

COLON CLEANSING
with elegance, simplicity & dignity

Rocco Bruno, founder and CEO of Lifestream Purification Systems, talks about its premier colon irrigation device – The Angel of Water ®CM-1 Surround. He discusses its growing popularity as a modality in spas and wellness centres globally

In 1989 Rocco Bruno started out on a journey to create a high-quality colon irrigation device for the healthcare practitioner and client. He and his wife, Amy Heilman Bruno, set up Lifestream Purification Systems and spent the next 15 years researching and designing The Angel of Water® CM-1 Surround, an open system colon hydrotherapy device, which hydrates, activates and evacuates the contents of the bowel.

Since it was cleared to market by the FDA in 2002, The Angel of Water has significantly increased its international footprint and been exported to 38 countries. Primarily installed in medi-spas, there's now more demand for the unit from luxury resorts, skincare centres and naturopathic clinics.

High-end spas which have already invested in the device include The Talise Spa at the Jumeirah Resort in Dubai, The Grand Tarabya in Istanbul, The Atmantan Wellness Resort in India and the Ti Sana Spa in Italy.

Rocco Bruno

> "The **first rule** of thumb when you **manufacture** something like this is to make it **elegant, beautiful, invitational and safe**"

Revolutionising colon irrigation

Colon cleansing has been practiced for more than 3,000 years and indeed the name of the device was inspired by a group of people called the Essenes. In a passage found in the Essene Gospel of Peace, they referred to the elements of creation as the Angel of Air, the Angel of Sun and the 'Angel of Water' while engaging in bowel cleansing.

Rocco says: "Though there is anecdotal evidence to support certain indications requiring treatment, the evidence-based science is still slim. Manufacturers of this equipment must stay within current regulations that state that this is a prescription device for use when medically indicated."

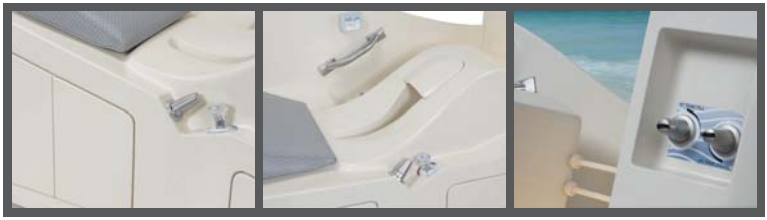
Bruno's vision is to bring bowel cleansing into the 21st century in an elegant, simplified and dignified manner. Colon irrigation is being taken more seriously by GI doctors, as the evidence mounts that the procedure offers a safe and hygienic way to prepare patients for colonoscopy procedures, as up to 20-25 per cent of colonoscopies in the US are reported to have an inadequate bowel preparation.

Bruno adds: "I was inspired to create this device and pioneer in this field because I wanted to help validate what colon irrigation could do and get to a stage where doctors, scientists and medi-spa owners can help forge its usefulness in the integrative healthcare marketplace."

Unique design

The unit includes unique features, which make the procedure more comfortable and hygienic for the client, while also ensuring their safety. "The first rule of thumb when you manufacture something like this is to make it elegant, beautiful, invitational and safe," says Bruno. For instance, the ergonomic design of

Medi-spas typically charge US$125-US$175 a session and provide a private and spacious setting



Bruno feels the unit makes a practical addition to any spa and the company offers a two-day operations training course

the basin prevents the over insertion of the sterile, rectal nozzle to avoid any injuries. Meanwhile the backrest is made of a medical grade vinyl in order to resist bacteria. Its design, with the reclining angle of the basin, puts the client in a comfortable position for the complete elimination of waste material.

Relaxing experience

Once the patient has been set up on the device, the filtered water, which is set between 99-103°F, is gravity fed to the patient at a very gentle pressure of 1 psi.

The water flows into the colon and initiates peristalsis – a series of muscle relaxations and contractions that takes place in the lining of the intestines. The body responds by releasing water and waste repeatedly until the bowel is completely cleansed, which takes about 30-40 minutes.

Abdominal reflexology or acupressure may also be applied in some cases to the client to help remove waste all the way up the colon to the ileocecal valve, which lies between the small and large intestines. A session is practitioner-led and Lifestream offers a two-day operations training course for qualified practitioners.

Complementing spa treatments

Angel of Water sessions, when medically indicated, are often used in conjunction with other spa therapies, including skincare treatments, massage, acupuncture, yoga, exercise and fitness programmes.

The unit is a practical addition to spa environments, Bruno says, as it's easy to clean and maintain and requires only a small room for installation. Bruno believes the design of the unit will help bring a wider demographic of clients to the spa. "The Angel of Water's beauty and effectiveness is a great complement to every spa's offerings," he says.

The retail cost of a unit is US$24,995 plus shipping and installation, and Lifestream recommends an average session fee of US$150. ●

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Product innovation

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

Kate Corney, product editor & Jane Kitchen, news editor

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

From apps to meditation pods – Headspace's Rich Pierson talks evolution

The pod has been design by Oyler Wu architects and was inspired by geological formations

App developer Headspace – which boasts three million users – has launched a meditation pod designed by Los Angeles-based architects Oyler Wu. Billed as "the first physical manifestation of Headspace", the meditation pods are available for preview now, will a full global launch scheduled for later this year.

"We're continually striving to create the most compelling invitation for people to practice meditation," says Rich Pierson, co-founder of Headspace.com. "Part of the challenge is how do you make meditation – which is an intangible exercise – tangible? The pods are an innovative way to do this and will hopefully encourage people to reevaluate how they look at meditation."

Pierson says users will have access to the entire Headspace library of guided meditations

The pods reflect Oyler Wu's signature style of experimental design, material research and fabrication. Inspired by the tranquil atmosphere of natural geological formations, the Headspace Meditation Pod juxtaposes a modern minimalist exterior with an organic interior. It's created from multiple layers of machine-cut wood, laid on top of a steel structure which forms an environmentally-conscious product.

With a sleek, curvilinear seating position, the pods have been designed to create a comfortable and soothing environment. An internal screen gives access to a variety of content, including the entire Headspace library of guided meditations as well as bespoke material for specific locations.

Putting on headphones and watching the screen recessed into the pod at eye-level, users will be guided through a meditation led by Headspace co-founder Andy Puddicombe – mirroring the functions of the app.

Spa-kit.net keyword: Headspace

The 3d-printed patches have a high amount of hyaluronic acid (above and right); expect more innovation says CEO Delapalme (below)

Pierre-Louis Delapalme on Biologique Recherche's 3D-printing treatment debut

Making its debut in spas, Biologique Recherche's Masque Seconde Peau Treatment – or Second Skin – is a lifting and regenerating therapy that's been 10 years in the making.

Seconde Peau also uses a 3D-printing methodology to create electrospun patches. The patches are made up of 80 per cent hyaluronic acid and a serum with active ingredients.

"It offers a perfect dispersion of the hyaluronic acid in a woven matrix that mimics the skin surface, like a second skin," says the company's CEO Pierre-Louis Delapalme.

The production of the patches starts with the injection of pure hyaluronic acid into the 3D printer, nanofibers of which are then woven into them. Biologique Recherche says this means the hyaluronic acid found in the treatment is 40 times more concentrated than in traditional cosmetics.

The Masque Seconde Peau Treatment is designed to plump facial features, provide an immediately visible tightening effect and target wrinkles and fine lines. It's also been formulated to accelerate cell renewal, brighten the complexion, repair and regenerate skin tissue and increase the skin's cohesion, firmness and density.

The treatment is launching exclusively at select spas across the world, but will eventually be rolled out for wider distribution. Delapalme says Biologique Recherche is also working on other actives that can be delivered by the new technology.

Spa-kit.net keywords: Biologique Recherche

Arnaud Diaz introduces Thalgo's iMetric skin analysis device

IMetric provides 10 skin analyses in 10 minutes

Thalgo has developed a wireless, analytical face and body tool to help spas recommend treatments and products for clients.

The iMetric skin device comprises three elements – a bioimpedance sensor to measure hydration levels; an infrared sensor, which determines the grade of cellulite by measuring the temperature of the skin in fat prone areas; and a piston sensor, which measures firmness. The device also has two HD cameras to screen the skin. In 10 minutes, it provides 10 skin analyses, including details about evenness, pigmentation, texture and radiance.

Measurements are analysed by a microprocessor, giving the therapist readings to recommend the most appropriate treatments and skincare products for the client. IMetric stores the measurements to show improvements in the skin and body at later skin tests following treatment and product use.

"The iMetric, Thalgo's professional diagnostic device, has a unique design that represents the latest in technological advancements," says international director Arnaud Diaz. "It provides the ultimate tool for salons and spas to recommend the best treatments and homecare products, therefore enabling maximum client loyalty, while maximising sales revenue and providing an intelligent marketing tool for customer engagement."

Spa-kit keyword: Thalgo

Diaz says the device will help spas with customer loyalty and revenue

Spa trainer Anne Bramham explains the Earth Matters Apothecary range

Bramham created her own range because she was frustrated by other natural product lines

The range uses organic seaweed extracts and essential oils

Frustrated with the efficacy of natural skincare products, spa trainer and therapy expert Anne Bramham has created Earth Matters Apothecary (EMA). Bramham is the founder of the Advanced Spa Therapy Education Certification Council (ASTECC) and her range uses natural, synthetic-free ingredients based on organic seaweed extract and essential oils.

Created first as online retail products, the range has just been extended to include professional spa and retail products along with treatments tailored to the individual client. Products include a natural facial cleanser and serum and an EMA introductory or travel kit.

"I've been in the spa wellness business for my entire adult life and have always believed in the simplicity and integrity of products," says Bramham. "For years I've taught my ASTECC students how to select and mix the right bio-chemical elements for their clients' regimes and this is what I wanted to deliver: a line that would make a difference.

"The simplicity and the therapeutic potency of EMA is in turning to the planet's richest nutritional source – the ocean. Coupled with the power of organic essential oils which act as catalysts as well as bringing their own unique healing gifts, EMA is able to facilitate a very personalised experience of self-care."

Spa-kit keywords: Earth Matters Apothecary

Elemis' Noella Gabriel on the significance of Biotec skincare launch

In what has been hailed as its 'biggest launch since Pro-Collagen', skincare brand Elemis has unveiled the Biotec energising skincare system.

Biotec skincare has been in development with Elemis' cosmetic scientists for more than three years and has been formulated to re-boot the skin's performance with a patented technology that includes encapsulated zinc and copper to increase cell energy. The initial line includes a cleanser, day cream and night cream.

"Cell energy is crucial to skin health," say Noella Gabriel, co-founder and creator of Elemis therapies. "I wanted to create a system that would turbo-charge the skin from within, delivering true vitality to the complexion. This is ground-breaking technology, where the best of science and the best of nature are harnessed for extraordinary results."

In addition to the encapsulated zinc and copper, Biotec skincare includes a trio of acids and amber. The combination is said to help combat lifestyle challenges such as UV exposure, stress, poor diet and the menopause and ageing– all of which can deplete cell energy – resulting in poor skin function, visible skin problems and a dull, tired complexion.

Both creams are packaged in a two-phase bottle. This means the acids and bio-energy complex only mix when the pump is activated, keeping the minerals fresh.

The skincare can be used on its own or works in synergy with Elemis' Biotec machine (see SB14/1 p104). The machine, which launched in late 2013, incorporates a number of advanced technologies to deliver eight different facials.

Spa-kit.net keyword: Elemis

This is Elemis's biggest launch since Pro-Collagen says Gabriel

The skincare can be used with the Biotec machines and increases cell energy

Caudalie's Mathilde Thomas on the relaunch of Vinosource

Organic grape water is the key ingredient used in a fresh, 'simple' skincare approach by French spa brand Caudalie.

Caudalie's key Vinosource range, reformulated and repackaged for young adults, comprises Organic Grape Water; SOS Thirst Quenching Serum; Moisturizing Sorbet; Moisturizing Mattifying Fluid; Moisture Recovery Cream and Rescue Cream.

Described as a soothing and moisturising line, the collection is presented in a palette of pinks and is created by pressing grapes using a low-pressure process to isolate water from the grape juice by evaporation.

Caudalie says the grape water penetrates easily into the skin's cells to saturate them with water to immediately hydrate and soothe the skin.

Part of the brand refresh was to appeal to younger clients says founder Mathilde Thomas: "The Vinosource range is for women and men of any age who feel that their skin needs extra hydration. We felt that the time was right for us to speak to a young audience who might not have experienced the brand yet. Vinosource Moisturizing Sorbet is a fun, colourful product with a very fresh and modern skincare formula which we believe will appeal to a younger generation."

She adds: "I wanted to recreate the feeling of pure joy when you bite into a grape packed with water and sweetness through the Vinosource Collection textures that are combined with organic grape water."

Spa-kit keyword: Caudalie

▲ Significant relaunch: Vinosource is Caudalie's key product line

■ Thomas believes the fun, colourful products will appeal to a younger generation

African biomes inspire new Terres d'Afrique oil blends says Stephan Helary

▲ There was a strong demand from guests for the body oils says Helary

Terres d'Afrique has used the characteristics of African flora and fauna to inspire five new aromatic aromatherapy oil blends.

Stephan Helary, Terres d' Afrique CEO, says: "The scents evoke geographic locations in Africa and time of the day. Tropical Dusk for instance evokes that time of day in the tropic when flowers such as ylang ylang exude their scent in the warm humid air. Savannah Dew evokes the smell of morning wet grass in the African savannah."

Other oils include Island Greens with citronella, Madagascan Zanampoly, ginger and lime and Fynbos Crush, using South Africa's indigenous health tonic buchu, plus Madagascan black and pink peppers. The Moroccan Gardens oil features cedar wood from the Atlas Mountains, Moroccan cypress, peppermint and wild African sage.

Helary adds: "The oils also give us more options for our bespoke treatment offering. Spas can use them in a variety of therapies such as aromatherapy, Swedish or hot stone massage.

▲ The range has been inspired by different locations in Africa

From a retail point of view, there was a very strong demand from guests for body oils."

The professional range, which uses an organic sunflower and grapeseed base oil, comes in 500ml and 5l containers. The retail range uses fairtrade marula, Kalahari melon and manketti base oils, in 100ml and 200ml bottles. Bath oils and diffusers are available in 10mls.

Spa-kit keyword: Terres

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Helo's Patrick Bolte details the Kokoro space-saving, yoga sauna

Helo offers therapist training in yoga courses and exercise says Bolte

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Kokoro is a new space-saving sauna concept from Helo that's designed with a steam function, sauna, infrared treatment and yoga session in one.

The Kokoro reinforced benches are made to accommodate yoga and exercises in the sauna. They can be used for workout moves, but also double as relaxation benches for traditional sauna use.

Helo's Himalya heater includes 100kg of sauna rocks and is designed for more gentle temperatures for yoga. It also has a water reservoir so can be used for steam experiences as well.

"We believe that a sauna can and should bring a return of investment, if the sauna is included in an overall spa concept and is integrated in spa treatments," says Patrick Bolte, general manager of Helo. "Wellness is currently dominated by yoga and this trend can be easily combined with a Helo sauna."

The concept can be implemented in all Helo sauna rooms and can be retro-fitted in existing rooms. Helo also offers training for therapists in special sauna yoga courses and exercises.

Spa-kit.net keyword: Helo

Benches have been reinforced for yoga moves, while gentle heat makes it more comfortable to exercise in

RKF Luxury Linen's Riadh Bouaziz reveals benefits of Timeless eco-fabric and its star model

The long-lasting fabric is modelled by French singer Aelle

RKF Luxury Linen has spent two years researching and developing the new patent-pending Timeless fabric, with an eye towards addressing the biggest issues in spa and hotel linen: absorption, softness, life of the product, experience and laundry costs.

"We are focused on improving the complete process from beginning to end," says Riadh Bouaziz, CEO of RKF Luxury Linen.

The Timeless fabric can be used in everything from bathrobes to sheets to towels and offers an absorption rate that RKF says is five times higher than traditional terry and lasts 17 times longer.

In addition, Bouaziz says the fabric will save users between 70 and 75 per cent on laundry costs, as it takes up less space in washing machine and holds less humidity at the drying stage, saving on electricity.

At the same time, Riadh says Timeless will cost the same as a traditional terry.

RKF has also partnered with French folk singer Aelle, who serves as both model and muse for the line. In it's marketing, she wears a couture trench-coat-style robe made from the Timeless material in order to showcase its versatility.

"We want to completely change the philosophy of using linen," says Bouaziz. "I think it will be the future."

Spa-kit.net keywords: RKF Linen

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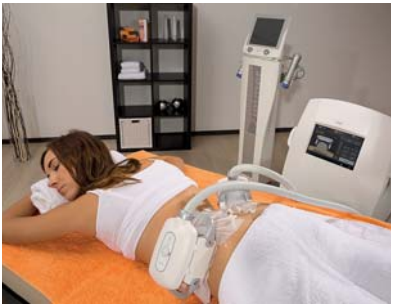
Zimmer's new cryo-contouring explained by Frank Brenner

Zimmer supplies cryotherapy chambers and Brenner heads up its Aesthetic Division

Permanently reducing body fat is the aim of a new system for spas by Zimmer MedizinSysteme from Germany which specialists in cryotherapy chambers.

Designed following 45 years experience in medical cold air applications, the Z Lipo Cryolipolysis™ system cools fat deposits to -10˚C, which Zimmer says causes the cells to eventually die. The applicator heads come in three sizes and apply cooling and suction to the treatment area at varying intensities. Two applicators can be used at the same time to save time.

"Since the surrounding tissue does not respond to the cold treatment in the same way as fatty tissue, the treatment is considered as safe, gentle and non-invasive" says Frank Brenner, who's the director and sales manager Zimmer's Aesthetic Division.



▲ Cryotherapy is used to target body fat and cellulite

"[Our] studies show that the effect of the Z Lipo is more effective when used together with our [existing] shockwave treatment programme, including the Z Wave Pro device. With this combination the patient gets a better fat reduction in a shorter time." The Z Wave Pro targets cellulite via electromagnetic pulses.

Spa-kit keyword: Zimmer

Customised mists are a cool addition to Body Bliss says Nick James

Natural skincare company Body Bliss has launched a new category into its Intentional Aromatherapy app, Au Soleil, which allows guests to customise face and body mists poolside, bringing the wellness experience outside the spa.

Using the app and Aroma Design Bar, guests can choose different combinations of essential oils, ranging from calm to uplifting, which will be mixed by 'blending alchemists'. The aloe-based products are designed to help fight sun damage and contain a CO2 extract of sea buckthorn berry, which is rich in omega-7s, beta carotenes and vitamins.

"The Aroma Design Bar allows our spa partners to create a personalised, memorable experience for the guest, while supporting and enhancing their wellbeing," says Nick James, CEO of Body Bliss. "The new Au Soleil category allows our resort partners to take the spa experience outside. Once the guest chooses their personalised blend, they mist it on and around their face or body to provide cooling re-hydration throughout the day."

Developed in conjunction with spa consultant Amy McDonald of Under a Tree Health & Wellness Consulting, the mists debuted recently at the Le Guanahani resort in St Barth, where James created a custom blend for the resort's 30th anniversary.

McDonald is training spa staff in the programme. The front desk, restaurant and bar staff will all be trained as 'blending alchemists' as well.

Spa-kit.net keywords: Body Bliss ●

▲ James with spa consultant Amy McDonald who will train staff

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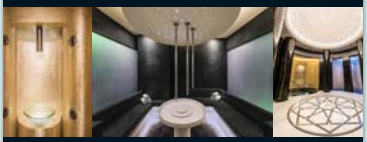

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Bromance may be good for men's health say US scientists

Spas looking to boost men's wellbeing might consider offering male-only group packages if findings from US research released in March* are anything to go by.

In a study of male rats, scientists at the University of California, Berkeley found that male friendships could provide positive health effects similar to those seen in romantic relationships, especially when dealing with stress.

Human studies show that social interactions increase the level of the hormone oxytocin in the brain, and that oxytocin helps people bond and socialise more, increasing their resilience in the face of stress and leading to longer, healthier lives. Studies of male-female rat pairs and other rodents, such as monogamous prairie voles, confirm these findings.

The UC Berkeley research extends these studies to male rats housed in the same cage. It demonstrates that mild stress can actually make male rats more social and co-operative than they are in an unstressed environment, in much the same way as humans come together after non-life-threatening events, such as a national tragedy.

After a mild stress, the rats showed increased brain levels of oxytocin and its receptor and huddled and touched more.

"A bromance can be a good thing," says lead author Elizabeth Kirby, who started work on the study while a doctoral student at UC Berkeley and continued it after taking a postdoctoral fellowship at Stanford. "Males are getting a bad rap when you look at animal models of social interactions, because they are assumed to be instinctively aggressive. But even rats can have a good cuddle – essentially a male-male bromance – to help recover from a bad day... These rats are using their rat friendships to recover from what would otherwise be a negative experience."

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Spas could offer more male-only packages to help men deal with stress

> **Males are getting a bad rap when you look at animal models of social interactions, because they are assumed to be instinctively aggressive**

The research also has implications for post-traumatic stress disorder, says senior author Daniela Kaufer, a UC Berkeley associate professor of integrative biology. The work supports attempts to treat PTSD with oxytocin nasal sprays as a way to encourage social interactions that could lead to recovery.

"We think oxytocin, which is released after stress, is a way of bringing people closer in times of acute stress, which leads to more sharing, bonding and potentially better fear extinction and an increase in cognitive health," says first author Sandra Muroy, a UC Berkeley graduate student. ●

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** Kirby, E et al. Moderate Stress-Induced Social Bonding and Oxytocin Signaling are Disrupted by Predator Odor in Male Rats. Neuropsychopharmacology, March 2016*

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