

# spa business



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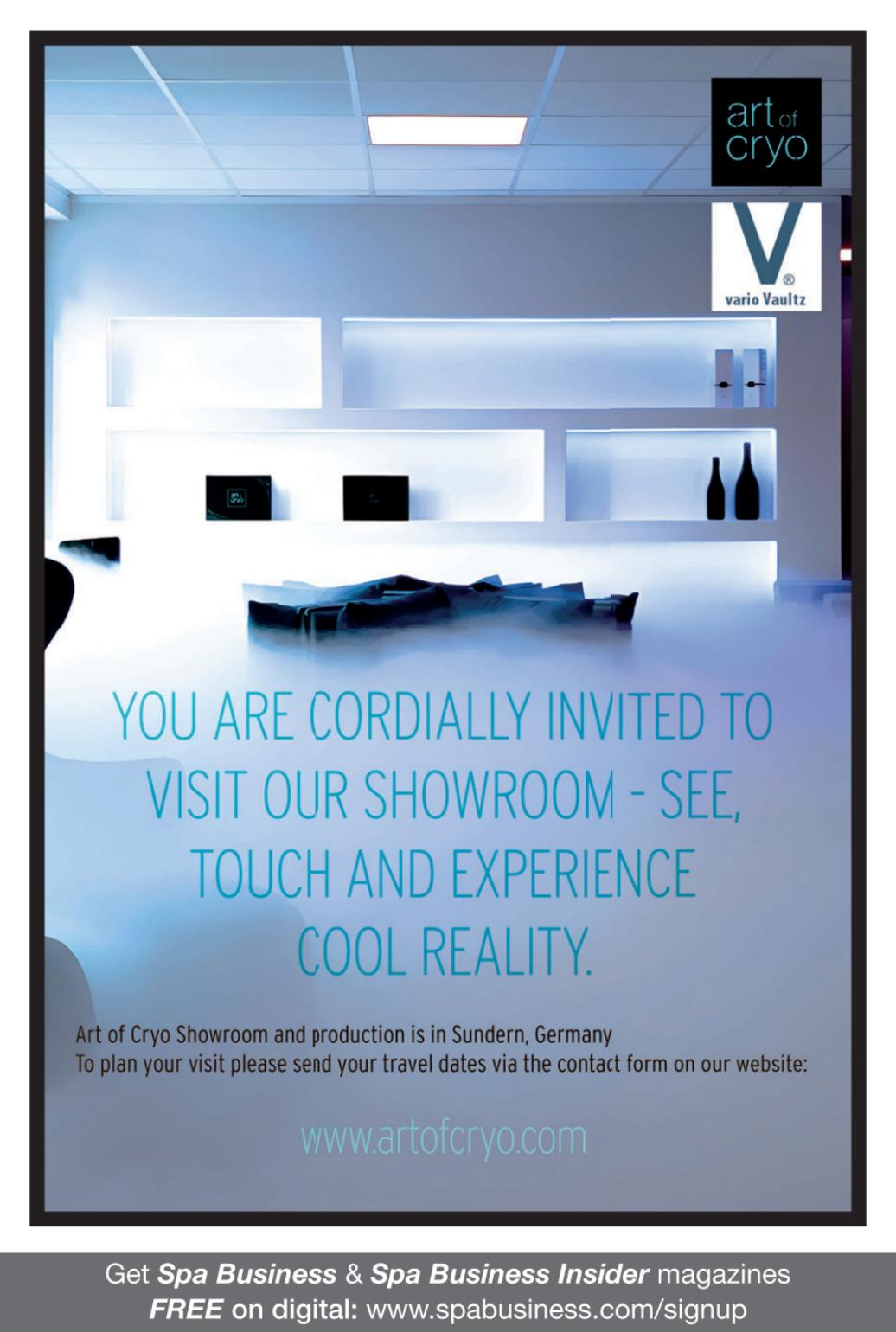
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PHOTO: GLOUBER

# The pursuit of happiness

As happiness becomes increasingly recognised as the ultimate measure of prosperity, the spa and wellness industry stands poised to play a pivotal role in cultivating joy and harmony on a global scale

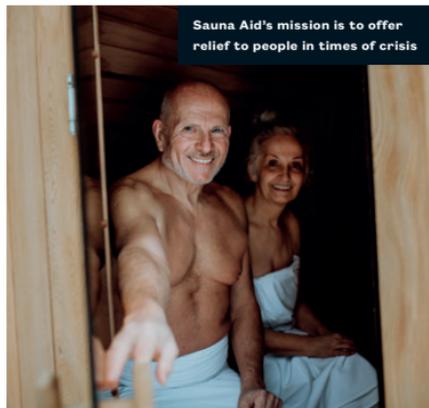
**T**he latest *World Happiness Report* shows that Finland is the 'happiest' country for the seventh year running, while the US has fallen out of the top 20 for the first time since the report was initially published in 2012. Fresh insights across different ages and generations also show that young people in the West are becoming unhappier.

The report, based on 140 nations, offers insights into the wellbeing of populations, societal trends and consumer preferences. It serves as a compass for spas as they create environments that nurture happiness and contentment.

At the same time, it also validates everything spas stand for. This issue of *Spa Business* is packed full of myriad examples that feed into happiness, such as Joali Being, a Maldivian island dedicated to transformative wellness (p60) and the debut of Janu, Aman's sister brand which celebrates "genuine human interaction" (p12). Yet perhaps the most profound, in a world grappling with escalating stressors, is the Sauna Aid initiative which is bringing respite to war-torn Ukraine (p24).

Happiness is also increasingly grabbing the attention of policymakers worldwide. On p30, we take a deep dive into the plans for a 'mindfulness city' that have been revealed by the King of Bhutan. The development, nearly as big as Hong Kong, is underpinned by the country's deep-rooted spirituality and its Gross National Happiness index - a measure indicating the wellness of its people that guides the government.

Most recently, the inaugural World Wellbeing Policy Forum - part of the World Happiness Summit - was held in the UK (see [www.spabusiness.com/wwpf](http://www.spabusiness.com/wwpf)). Based on the belief that "wellbeing progress should be the main objective of societies", the event saw international leaders



Sauna Aid's mission is to offer relief to people in times of crisis

PHOTO: VOZDEKAR

“The UN champions happiness and believes it to be a ‘fundamental human goal’”

explore the role that government, business, politics and education have to play in improving global wellness.

Coincidentally, both the happiness report and forum are backed by the United Nations, which champions happiness and believes it to be a "fundamental human goal".

Such high-level recognition - and action - in the pursuit of happiness can only be a good thing for our industry. By aligning services with this in mind, stakeholders can position themselves as indispensable contributors to individual and societal wellbeing. ●

**Katie Barnes, editor, [katiebarnes@spabusiness.com](mailto:katiebarnes@spabusiness.com)**

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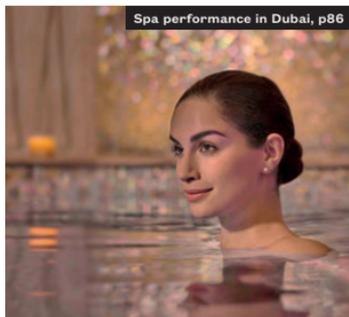
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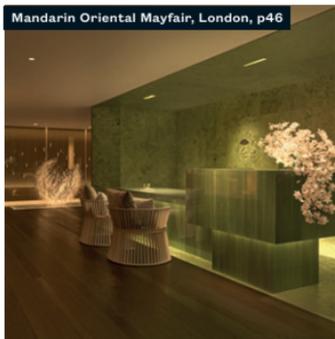
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**Print and distribution** Printed by The Manson Group Ltd. Distributed by Royal Mail Group Ltd and Whistl Ltd in the UK and Total Mail Ltd globally.

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ISSN 1479-912X (print) 2397-236X (online)



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# spa people



We're seeking to redefine luxury hospitality by celebrating genuine human interaction, playful expression and social wellness

**Yuki Kiyono** global head of health and wellness development, Aman



Kiyono will oversee wellness operations for Aman's new brand Janu



**B**outique hotel brand Aman, widely known for its strong spa focus, has just launched its much-talked-about sister brand Janu in Tokyo – complete with a 4,000sq m urban wellness retreat.

Janu Tokyo is only the beginning of the brand's global expansion plans, according to Yuki Kiyono, global head of health and wellness development at Aman.

Janu is a hotel, residence and lifestyle offering that's been five years in the making. Meaning 'soul' in Sanskrit, the concept is based on social connection, equilibrium and human interaction.

Much like Aman, Janu will have a strong emphasis on wellness but its distinctive approach will focus on enhancing wellbeing through the concept of connectedness and the notion of the shared social experience.

*Spa Business* spoke exclusively with Kiyono to learn about what's in store for Janu as it embarks on a rollout around the world.

#### What does your role entail?

I oversee all wellness, spa and medical operations for all of the group's hotels and resorts – for the Aman brand and now Janu. I work cross-functionally to develop the wellness concepts for each brand and curate their wellness offerings, as well as define the vision and strategy for them.

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Pools, traditionally places for socialising in Japan, are a central feature at Janu Tokyo

#### What's the vision for Janu?

The brand has been created for a new era of restorative travel. Building on Aman's dedication to "enrich lives through transformative experiences", we're seeking to redefine luxury hospitality by celebrating genuine human interaction, playful expression and social wellness.

#### How will it encourage connection?

Janu's approach to wellness is characterised by impeccable design and architecture. It's this, along with our group-based classes and programmes, that facilitates interaction and contributes to the physical and emotional experience of every guest.

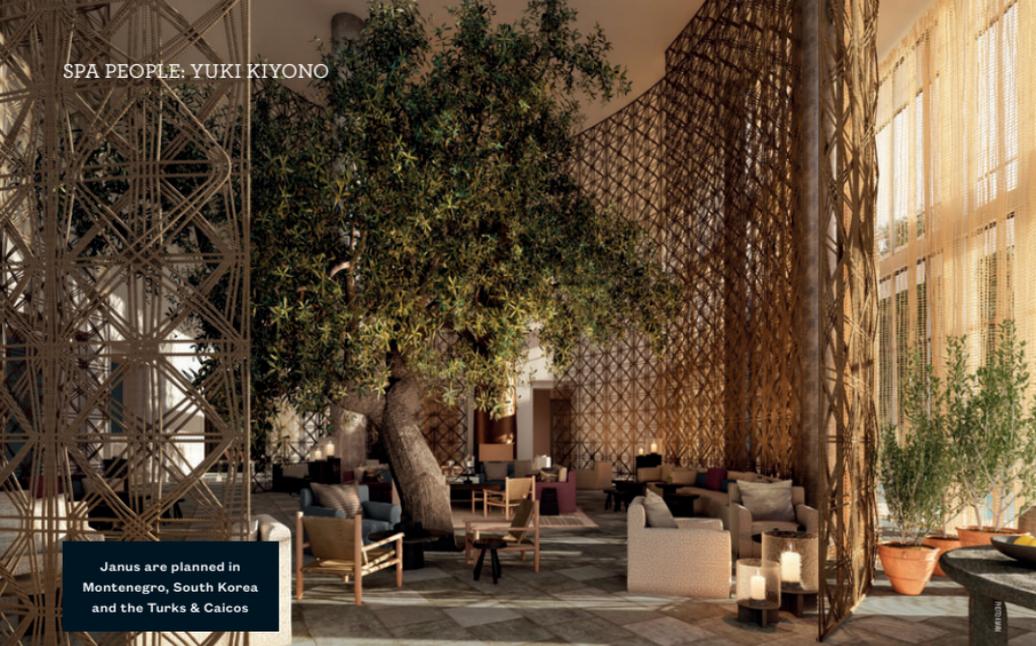
Our expansive spa and fitness areas enhance individual wellbeing by offering an array of spaces that enable people to come together for shared experiences - encouraging moments of collective joy.

At our debut property in Tokyo, for example, the 4,000sq m Janu Wellness Centre features an extensive hydrothermal area with hammams and a banya and is centred around a lap pool and separate lounge pool - traditionally a place for socialising in Japan.

As well as nine treatment rooms, there are two signature Spa Houses with cold and hot plunge pools. These can host up to four people at a time or can be booked exclusively for a more private wellness experience. ▶



Janu Tokyo marks the first of a 13-strong global pipeline



Janu are planned in Montenegro, South Korea and the Turks & Caicos

- ▶ It also boasts one of Tokyo's largest gyms (340sq m), in addition to five exercise studios – including a boxing ring – and a recovery cabin with a hyperbaric oxygen therapy chamber.

Our wellness programming is still being finalised but we have aspirations to roll out retreats and workshops.

#### Are there plans for a Janu wellness membership?

Yes. Our Wellness Collective members will have access to the centre and an exclusive private lounge. They'll also receive special rates for spa treatments and priority access to reservations for group classes.

#### What are your price points?

Guestroom rates start at JPY110,000 (US\$813, €750, £640), based on double occupancy. A 60-minute massage costs JPY32,000 (US\$212, €196, £167) and membership details are available on request.

#### What are your rollout plans?

Janu Tokyo marks the first of a 13-strong global pipeline of projects across urban, rural and coastal destinations. Countries of

## People have lost the art of interaction and conversation

interest include the Turks & Caicos, Montenegro, Portugal and Turkey, as well as Saudi Arabia and the UAE and South Korea, Thailand and the Maldives.

#### Why did Aman feel the need for another brand?

We've been at the forefront of hospitality for more than 35 years and now have 35 properties in Asia, EMEA and North America.

We've always had an incredibly close relationship with our guests and through listening to them, and talking with other professionals in the industry, we realised that there's a gap in the market.

One of the most rewarding things you can get from travel is meeting people. However, the world is also an increasingly lonely place and too reliant on the digital world, meaning people have lost the art of interaction and conversation. We want to kick-start human interaction again.

Yet Janu offers guests the 'best of both worlds'. We offer mindful seclusion or the opportunity to socialise under one roof. It's a place to truly re-balance.

#### What will distinguish Janu's wellness concept from Aman's?

Aman means 'peace' in Sanskrit, whereas Janu means soul; Aman is a sanctuary, whereas Janu is focused on connectedness; Aman offers refined respite, whereas Janu offers a lively, energetic vibe with a goal of creating inner contentment.

#### Will Janu target a different audience to Aman?

Guests are defined and characterised by their attitude and approach to living. Collectively, they're drawn to opportunities for self-exploration and inspired by purposeful experiences. Whether they stay at Janu or Aman depends on the purpose of their trip and the experience they're seeking. ●

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The self-care industry is going to blow up. Just as there's a gym on every corner, soon there'll be some type of self-care facility on every corner

**Dr Jonathan Leary** founder, Remedy Place

**You launched Remedy Place at the start of the pandemic, what impact did that have?**

We never expected to close right after opening, so the first couple of months were obviously traumatic, but one positive byproduct of the pandemic was the mass awareness of health and the trajectory of self-care. It was like the whole world woke up. The self-care industry is going to blow up. Just like there's a gym on every corner, soon enough there will be some type of self-care facility on every corner.

**As a social wellness club, your mission is to redefine social occasions: so people choose to celebrate with a meditation and ice bath over a steak and a bottle of wine. How has that played out?**

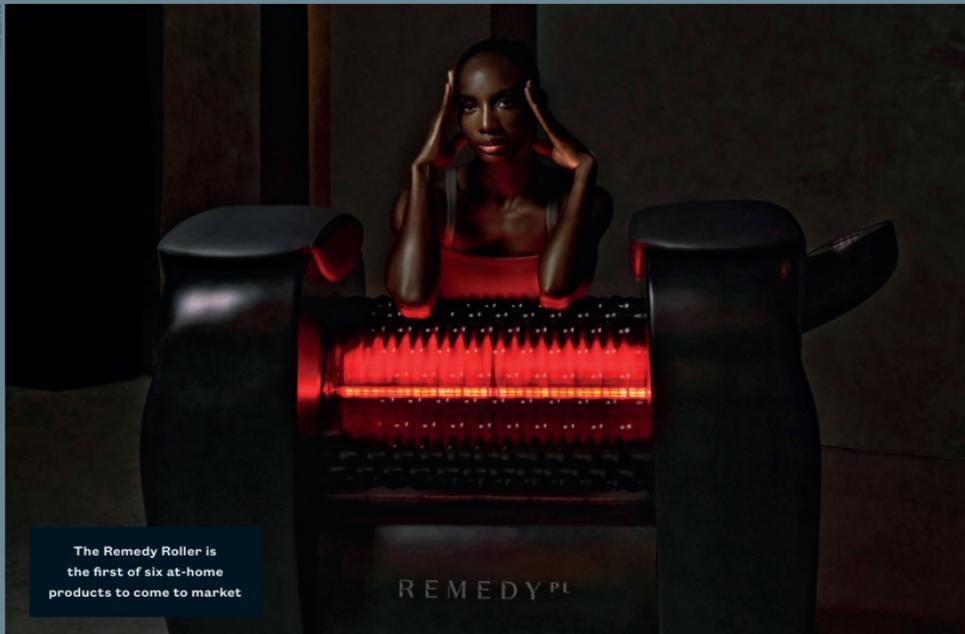
People are really connecting with the social side of our offering and we're emphasising this part of our identity more in each club. Increasingly, members and guests are having meetings at Remedy Place and using it as an after-work hang-out in place of other social norms, like happy hour. This inspired us to launch Remedy After Hours, where people can rent the club at night and work with our events team to design a bespoke experience for their needs and budget.

**Have you seen increased interest in social wellness?**

One hundred per cent. When we first launched Remedy Place the premise was a hypothesis, based on my experience in medical practice. Yet since 2019, with no paid

Leary was one of the first to bring the social wellness club concept to market





The Remedy Roller is the first of six at-home products to come to market

Our fourth club will be our biggest to date and set a whole new standard for the brand



advertising, we've enjoyed widespread enthusiasm and adoption, creating a buzz in the cultural conversation and attention from industry giants and being recognised as a top trend by the Global Wellness Summit.

FACT FILE // REMEDY PLACE

Remedy Place is the brainchild of Dr Jonathan Leary, who has a doctorate in chiropractic medicine.

Seeing firsthand how patients struggled to live a healthy lifestyle and still be social, he set about merging the two in a new business model which he called a 'social wellness club'.

There are currently two clubs: the first opened in West Hollywood in 2019, and Flatiron, New York followed in 2022 with more under development.

Each Remedy Place has four main components:

● **The Lounge**

A 'gathering space' for working or socialising where healthy food is served and non-alcoholic happy hours reign supreme

● **Tech Remedies**

Mostly touchless offerings such as cryotherapy, hyperbaric oxygen chambers and ice baths

● **Holistic Practitioners**

Ranging from functional medicine specialists to those focusing on gut health

● **Group Classes**

Includes breathwork, sound bath meditation and stretch/mobility

**Who are your customers?**

Pro-active people who prioritise their health and seek happiness. Although we host a range of guests from 18-year-olds up to octogenarians, our core is people in their 30s. It's an almost even split (51 per cent female) showing men are now just as invested in the self-care category.

We're inclusive, so we allow anyone to make a reservation and we cap the number of members per club, so we have fewer member visits than non-members. The split is around 35/65. Although we cater to an affluent demographic, we're seeing many people who've shifted their spending to prioritise wellness with us.

**What are your expansion plans?**

We have two clubs in construction and plan to open two a year going forward. Our third club will be in New York City's SoHo neighbourhood.

## SPA PEOPLE: JONATHAN LEARY

- ▶ We haven't disclosed the location of our fourth club yet, but it will be outside New York and will be our biggest footprint with the most amenities to date, setting a whole new standard for the brand.

### Tell us more about your experience in the events sector

We can 'Remedy' any event by serving workouts, meditation, breathwork and ice bath classes instead of cocktails. It's a significant new revenue stream – last year we facilitated more than 13,000 ice baths off-site and this year we're on track to double takings for this side of the business. We partner with a range of brands such as BMW, HBO, Coachella, Festival de Cannes and Soho House.

### Why did you decide to go after the home market with the Tech-Remedy Collection?

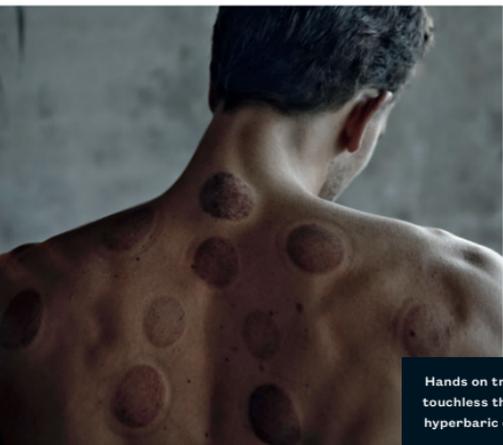
Guests asked for it over and over again. There's a growing market for creating the type of experiences we offer in the convenience of one's own home and as we continue to lead and innovate this new self-care industry, we also want to supply it, continuing to educate and inspire.

The Tech-Remedy Collection represents a new arm of the business



All Remedy Place sites feature a 'gathering space' called The Lounge

Our out-of-club events business is a significant new revenue stream – we're on track to double takings this year



Hands on treatments meet touchless therapies such as hyperbaric oxygen sessions



The IV Tunnel at Remedy Place in Flatiron, New York



Spa Business first investigated the social wellness club model back in 2020

[www.spabusiness.com/socialwellnessclub](http://www.spabusiness.com/socialwellnessclub)

in product design and is a really cool vertical which may end up bigger than our brick-and-mortar presence. However, clubs will always be our foundation, because that's where we create authentic connections and communities with our guests.

#### Why did you choose the Remedy Roller as your first product and how does it work?

Pain is a major issue in America, which resulted in an opioid crisis. Everyone has tight muscles and to restore motion you need to release the fascia and break up scar tissue. The Remedy Roller is a great way of restoring movement and blood flow to the muscles, fascia and joints - it can get into every crevice of the body, like the backs of the knees which frequently get overlooked in treatments.

It works by pushing the parts of the body against it, for example sitting on the bench and putting the feet on it and then moving up the legs. You can sit against it for your back and lean over it for abs and side muscles, or even straddle it to do the adductors.

At US\$11,000 (€10,067, £8,598) it's an expensive product, but it's something

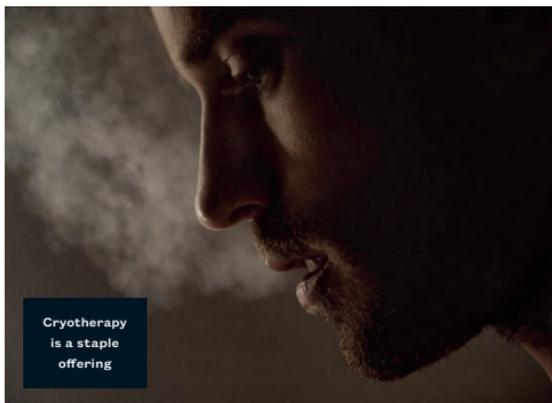
which can be used every single day and will make a huge impact for anyone who is trying to move better, eliminate pain, or alleviate any tightness.

#### What are your distribution plans?

We have a long list of contacts I've built over the years. It's the first time we've ever done a release outside of a club, but I've consulted with

our entire database of customers from gyms and hotels to country clubs and recovery centres.

We're currently working on six Tech-Remedy products, with the next launch planned for later this year. ●



Cryotherapy is a staple offering



## We create immersive hands-on experiences so guests can live the Blue Zones way for a week

**Celine Vadam** head of retreats & hospitality partnerships, Blue Zones

**E**xplorer Dan Buettner has renowned wellness leaders with his discovery of Blue Zones – five areas in the world with the highest concentration of centenarians. In 2018, delegates at the Global Wellness Summit heard how, with a team of medical researchers, anthropologists and demographers, he spent years studying these populations to find out their common denominators.

Buettner identified what he calls the ‘Power 9’ – shared lifestyle behaviours that keep people thriving 12 years longer than the 71-year global average (see p22).

Six years on, Blue Zones has a docu-series streaming on Netflix, a centre in Miami showcasing the next generation of longevity medicine and a partnership with Immunologie skincare. Most recently, it’s revealed a series of retreats globally – with Kamalaya in Thailand,

Andaz Peninsula Papagayo in Costa Rica and the Modern Elder Academy (MEA) in the US and Mexico – and is looking for more hosts.

*Spa Business* catches up with Celine Vadam, head of retreats & hospitality partnerships at Blue Zones to find out more.

### What do Blue Zones retreats focus on?

They’re organised into five modules – Happiness, Right Outlook, Purpose, Connect and Set for Success – guiding guests through all the Power 9 principles. Taking a life coaching approach, our goal is to empower guests to make long-term, sustainable wellbeing adjustments. Most importantly, however, we create immersive hands-on experiences so guests can live the Blue Zones way for a week.

Vadam’s aiming to host a retreat in all five of the Blue Zones countries this year

### How do you adapt the retreats according to location?

We integrate local experiences which include everything from sightseeing tours to arts and crafts activities, tailored movement sessions and social traditions.

In Thailand, for example, we’ll visit surrounding temples and islands,

Host properties, such as Andaz Peninsula Papagayo, have to help people to de-stress

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Local experiences, such as tea ceremonies in Thailand's Kamalaya, are key

*Spa Business* first spoke to explorer Dan Buettner about the Blue Zones concept in 2018

See [www.spabusiness.com/danbuettner](http://www.spabusiness.com/danbuettner)



## We're launching a Blue Zones course with Arizona State University

attend a tea ceremony and learn t'ai chi. In Costa Rica, we'll be fully immersed in nature and the pura vida and have the opportunity to go surfing or zip-lining.

**Some Power 9 categories don't have obvious wellness applications. How do you incorporate those?**

Wine @ 5 is more about the social aspect rather than the wine itself. It's an opportunity to gather towards the end of the day, exchange gratitude and take-aways and unwind before dinner. For Loved Ones First and Belong, we address relationships and connections from a broader perspective, looking at how to make friends as an adult, nurture healthy relationships and be a better partner, friend and human being.

**How do you make it fun and educational?**

We offer a range of reflective exercises, from examining your

weekly schedule and hosting a quiz night to hands-on activities such as learning how to cook or looking at how to rearrange your kitchen.

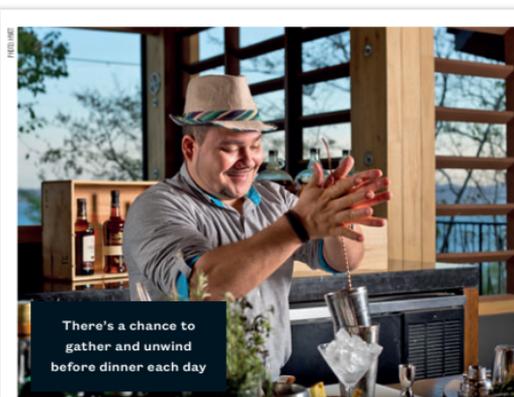
**Are spa treatments included in the programmes?**

We make sure that guests have free time to enjoy the facilities of the host property, depending on what they offer.

At Kamalaya, its signature consultation and treatments are part of the package. At Andaz Peninsula Papagayo, guests benefit from a spa treatment discount.

**Do you provide training or certification?**

We're building a network of facilitators, providing training on-site to employees, as well as launching



## POWER 9

The world's five Blue Zones are based in Sardinia, Italy; Ikaria, Greece; Nicoya, Costa Rica; Loma Linda, California and Okinawa, Japan

The lifestyle habits they all share fall under the following Power 9 categories:

- **Move Naturally**
- **Purpose**
- **Downshift** (routines which shed stress)
- **80 per cent Rule** (stop eating when they're 80 per cent full)
- **Plant Slant** (predominately plant-based diets)
- **Wine @ 5** (drinking alcohol moderately and regularly)
- **Belong** (having a faith-based community)
- **Loved Ones First**
- **Right Tribe** (supportive social circles)

Read about the first Blue Zones Center dedicated to longevity

[www.spabusiness.com/bzcentre](http://www.spabusiness.com/bzcentre)



Spa treatments are discounted in Costa Rica

► an upcoming course in partnership with Arizona State University.

### What's the target demographic?

Blue Zones' reach is diverse, especially since the Netflix documentary. The differentiator will be the destination. We expect the MEA campuses in the US and Mexico to attract middle-aged guests, for example, in Costa Rica, it might appeal more to nature and outdoor lovers, while in Kamalaya it might entice those looking for a wellbeing journey.

### How many participants can you fit on a retreat?

Our sweet spot is around 20 people, to allow for quality interactions. But we're flexible and can accommodate as few as 10 or as many as 40.

### What's your revenue model?

It has to make financial sense for the host property. Retreats last six to seven days and prices start at US\$3,885 (€3,556, £3,037) excluding accommodation.

Our contracts are based on a licensing agreement with revenue share and a facilitator fee.

### What do you look for in a host partner?

Beyond quality accommodation and service, we're looking for partners who embrace the Blue Zones Power 9 principles in their approach.

The properties need to be in an environment which fosters connections and downshifting while allowing for discoveries, natural movement and showcasing their local culture.

We work with chefs to feed guests Blue Zones-inspired meals and also make some content available for hotel employees while onsite.

### How many partners are you ideally looking for?

We don't have an optimum number in mind, but our goal for 2024 is to host a retreat at least in each of the five original Blue Zones countries. ●

PHOTO: MARIAN



Forming connections and practising natural movement are fully encouraged



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## Kerzner to open 'at least 100 resorts' under new Siro brand

Following the launch of its Siro wellness hotel concept, in the form of Siro One Za'abeel in Dubai, Kerzner International has revealed plans to create a global chain of properties under the brand.

The highly-anticipated flagship Siro property opened in February and is designed to empower guests to unlock their peak mental and physical potential.

The fitness and recovery hotel brand's philosophy has been built around five biohacking pillars – fitness, nutrition, sleep, recovery and mindfulness – with tech integrations built in. Health and wellbeing are a part of every step of the customer journey which includes access to extensive fitness and recovery facilities, nutritious F&B options



and sanctuary-like guestrooms designed to promote restoration.

Properties in Montenegro, Japan and Mexico are already on the cards but Zoe Wall, VP of Siro and wellness at Kerzner, said the company envisions opening at least 100 hotels.

Wall was promoted to her role after starting with Kerzner in 2022 as its first global wellness director. **More:** [http://lei.sr/P3W4x\\_B](http://lei.sr/P3W4x_B)

## Sauna Aid calls for donations for lakeside sauna complex in Ukraine

The International Sauna Association's (ISA) Sauna Aid initiative is asking for donations to establish a sauna complex in Ukraine, to provide a sanctuary for the country's people amid the conflict with Russia.

The organisation wants to raise €100,000 (US\$109,000, £86,000) to

develop a lakeside facility on Nebo Beach – just outside Kharkiv, which is Ukraine's second-largest city.

Plans include a large wood-burning sauna, a shared shower area, a spacious lounge with hay beds, gathering spaces, an outdoor terrace with two hot tubs, sun loungers and changing rooms.

Launched in 2022 in response to the outbreak of war in Ukraine, Sauna Aid's goal is to provide movable heat experiences and supportive services to offer relief to people in times of crisis, both natural and man-made.

Its work has struck a chord with the international spa and wellness community, resulting in numerous donations.

Therme Group, for example, has gifted a sauna which has been installed at a sports stadium in Staryi Sambir, a small town in western Ukraine. The Japanese Sauna Association also recently financed one of three saunas introduced across Kharkiv.

The Sauna Aid initiative is being led by Mikkel Aaland, a documentary maker and 'sweat guru' who *Spa Business* first interviewed in 2018 (see [www.spabusiness.com/mikkelaaland](http://www.spabusiness.com/mikkelaaland)) **More:** [http://lei.sr/G6q9r\\_B](http://lei.sr/G6q9r_B)



## GWI names US, China and Germany global wellness market leaders

The US, China, Germany, Japan and the UK have been identified as the five largest wellness markets in the world in new research by the Global Wellness Institute (GWI).

Called *The Global Wellness Economy: Country Rankings*, the study provides market size, rankings, analysis and per capita wellness spending for 145 nations.

Findings show the US is a goliath in wellness spending, with an annual market worth US\$1.8 trillion (£1.66 trillion, £1.43 trillion), and ranks first in nine of the 11 wellness sectors measured by the GWI.

Almost all the top 25 wellness nations have seen strong growth since the pandemic, with the UK, the Netherlands, the US, Mexico, Canada and Australia as standouts, surpassing their pre-pandemic market sizes by 120 per cent or more.

"For countries interested in growing their wellness economy, it's crucial to know where they stand in this massive global industry," said Ophelia



Yeung and Katherine Johnston, GWI senior research fellows.

The report is a sister publication to the GWI's *2023 Global Wellness Economy Monitor*, which provides a complete global update on all 11 wellness sectors (read more here [www.spabusiness.com/2023em](http://www.spabusiness.com/2023em)).  
More: [http://lei.sr/p9H5P\\_B](http://lei.sr/p9H5P_B)

## McKinsey report identifies areas for disruption in wellness

The market for wellness is being driven by consumers taking more control of their health, according to one of the latest reports by McKinsey.

The publication, *The Trends Defining The US\$1.8 trillion Global Wellness Market in 2024*, is based on insights from McKinsey's *Future of Wellness* survey which saw researchers question 5,000 consumers across China, the UK and the US in August 2023.

They found that the US wellness market has reached a value of US\$480 billion (£441.8 billion, £377.3 billion) and is increasing by 5 to 10 per cent annually.

The paper identifies seven key growth areas - women's health products; healthy ageing and longevity products and services; weight management; fitness; gut health; sexual health products; and sleep.



Key findings showed 87 per cent of Chinese consumers consider wellness a top/important priority, compared to 82 per cent in the US and 73 per cent in the UK.

Improving appearance is a top motivator, followed by gaining

better health and fitness, improving nutrition, sleep and mindfulness.

Meanwhile, gen Z and millennials are the most wellness-conscious consumers, buying more products and services than older generations.  
More: [http://lei.sr/p5Y4B\\_B](http://lei.sr/p5Y4B_B)

## Mega wellness project given green light in Oman

Oman's Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning (MoHUP) has revealed plans for an ambitious, high-altitude mixed-used development called Omani Mountain Destination (OMD) on Jabal al Akhdar.

Situated 2,400m above sea level and 95 miles from Oman's capital of Muscat, the US\$4.2 billion (€3.87 billion, £3.3 billion) project is a key part of Oman Vision 2040 which aims to achieve a developed, diversified and sustainable national economy.

OMD has been master planned by AtkinsRéalis and is based on its Seed approach which focuses on environmental, cultural and social wellbeing. It will comprise 2,527 residences, 2,000 rooms in upscale hotels and a health and wellness village called The Vessel.

It will also feature a biodiversity hub for both local and international research, dedicated wellness zones, a high-altitude



The OMD is a cornerstone of Oman Vision 2040

sports hub, amphitheatres, a museum and green spaces.

Oman Vision 2040 was revealed in 2018. Currently, the nation's economy is centred around the oil industry, but a core focus of the initiative is to drive tourism development.

Following in the footsteps of neighbouring Saudi Arabia (see [www.spabusiness.com/amaala](http://www.spabusiness.com/amaala)), it aims to attract US\$51 billion (€46.9 billion, £40.1 billion) in tourism investments in the next 16 years.

More: [http://lei.sr/T2t9s\\_B](http://lei.sr/T2t9s_B)



China has proven to be a pivotal market for Banyan Group

## Banyan Tree rebrands and is set to reveal 19 new destinations this year

Banyan Tree Group is ringing in its 30th anniversary by rebranding as Banyan Group to reflect its evolution into a multi-brand hospitality firm.

Having doubled its portfolio since 2019, the group now manages 12 global brands, 75 hotels and resorts, more than 60 spas and galleries and 14 branded residences across 22 countries.

The company shows no signs of slowing down its momentum for 2024 and plans to unveil an additional 19 destinations throughout the year.

This will include new properties and residences in Cambodia (one), China (10), Japan (one), South Korea (two), Thailand (two), Vietnam (two) and Mexico (one).

"This brand evolution reflects our portfolio transformation from a single luxury brand to the diverse



Eddy See

offering we have today," said Eddy See, president and CEO of Banyan Group.

See added the robust growth slated for 2024 has been driven by a resilient recovery post-COVID, surpassing pre-pandemic metrics across various regional markets.

More: [http://lei.sr/G7H9K\\_B](http://lei.sr/G7H9K_B)



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## DIARY DATES

8-9 April 2024

**Medical Wellness Congress**

**St Martins Spa & Lodge  
Frauenkirchen, Austria**

Figures from the medical and wellness spheres convene for a conference, networking, workshops and a gala dinner.

[www.mwcongress.com](http://www.mwcongress.com)

11-14 April 2024

**FIBO Global Fitness**

**Exhibition Centre,  
Cologne, Germany**

One of the world's largest fitness, wellness and health trade fairs.

[www.fibo.com](http://www.fibo.com)

23-25 April 2024

**ISPA Conference 2024**

**Phoenix Convention  
Center, Phoenix, USA**

This prominent event organised by the International Spa Association (ISPA) includes an expo and speaker schedule covering topics such as business strategy and management.

[www.experiencispa.com](http://www.experiencispa.com)

13-16 May 2024

**W3Spa EMEA**

**Conrad Chia Laguna  
Sardinia, Sardinia, Italy**

A meetings-based gathering for spa stakeholders located across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

[www.workwellevents.com](http://www.workwellevents.com)

30 May 2024

**Forum HOTEL&SPA 2024**

**Four Seasons Hotel  
George V, Paris, France**

This event is a meeting point for figures in the spa, hospitality and wellbeing industries. The agenda features a speaker programme, expo and gala dinner with an awards ceremony.

[www.forumhotspa.com](http://www.forumhotspa.com)

## Simon Casson named CEO of Corinthia Hotels

Veteran hotelier Simon Casson has been appointed CEO of luxury operator Corinthia Hotels, owned by the Corinthia Group.

Founded in Malta in 1962 by the Pisani family, Corinthia Group has grown into a multinational investor, developer and operator of hotels and real estate. Corinthia Hotels operates hotels in London, Budapest, Lisbon, St Petersburg and Malta.

Casson will start his new role on 6 April and head up Corinthia Hotels as it prepares to open locations in New York, Rome, Bucharest and Brussels in 2024.

The operator will also open new properties in Doha, Riyadh, Malta and the Maldives in the coming years.



Casson has dedicated more than three decades of his career to the hospitality industry

A distinguished figure in hospitality, Casson has spent more than three decades at Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts – throughout which he oversaw a significant period of growth and served as EMEA president for seven years.

During this time, he made a name for himself in wellness by advocating for spas and their integral role in hospitality.

**More:** [http://lei.sr/f4C2H\\_B](http://lei.sr/f4C2H_B)

## Massage Heights co-founder returns as CEO

US day spa franchise Massage Heights, which boasts more than 115 sites in its portfolio, is under fresh leadership with the return of co-founder Shane Evans as company CEO.

Evans takes the place of Susan Boresow, who has served as president and CEO for two and a half years. "Twenty years ago, when the company was founded, our vision was to provide unparalleled wellness experiences. It is with a deep sense of responsibility and commitment that I step back into this role," said Evans, who co-founded Massage Heights in 2004.

Evans was previously CEO of Massage Heights for five years, up until 2021. Currently, she's also a board member of the International Franchise Association and a partner of male grooming chain The Gents Place.



Evans brought Massage Heights to market 20 years ago

Massage Heights says it had a strong 2023. On top of new franchises, it rolled out a LED Light Therapy service and secured a partnership with former pro athlete, Bo Jackson. ●

**More:** [http://lei.sr/s9X6K\\_Bo](http://lei.sr/s9X6K_Bo)



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# King of Bhutan



Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar is planning a 'mindfulness city' underpinned by the country's deep-rooted spirituality and Gross National Happiness index. *Spa Business* finds out more

The monarch says the project will be his most significant undertaking

PHOTO: GUY LAWRENCE/REUTERS/GETTY IMAGES

The city will be nearly the size of Hong Kong and has been planned by Bjarke Ingels



**T**aking to the stage for Bhutan's 116th National Day in December, King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck delivered one of the most important speeches of his life. The revered monarch revealed his ambition to safeguard the future of the nation by creating an economic hub close to the size of Hong Kong in Gelephu – a small town in the south that borders India. Its key selling point? "It will be a 'mindfulness city', encompassing conscious and sustainable businesses, inspired by Buddhist spiritual heritage and distinguished by the uniqueness of the Bhutanese identity," said the king, referring to the country's culture of respect and compassion for others and nature.

It will also be anchored by the values of Bhutan's Gross National Happiness (GNH) index – a measure based on the wellness of people that guides the government of Bhutan, alongside Gross Domestic Product (see p34).

He declared: "I became king at 26 and now I'm 43 years old. I'll do everything in my power to realise this [mindfulness city] vision."

### All things Bhutanese

The monarch intends to transform Gelephu, which has a population of less than 10,000, into a central point for business, finance, communication and transportation covering 1,000sq km – an area just under the size of Hong Kong.



*I became king at 26 and now I'm 43 years old. I'll do everything in my power to realise our mindfulness city vision*

It will operate as a special administrative region, he said, giving it legal independence and autonomy to formulate laws, policies and incentives to provide a conducive business environment and attract foreign investment. This is not unique to other economic hubs worldwide, admits the king, but he's confident that the mindfulness approach will be the lynchpin to success.

"We build on strong foundations," he said. "Bhutan is globally renowned for its GNH and strong spiritual heritage ... admired for safeguarding our culture and traditions." This has led to a high level of credibility, he explained, without which "we would have never been able to embark on such an endeavour".



*“Healing centres and world-class spas will draw on Bhutanese wellness practices such as hot stone baths and sowa rigpa”*

John Reed

- Businesses will be screened to ensure they're sensitive to Bhutan's deeply ingrained wellness ethos – most likely favouring eco-friendly enterprises and prohibiting those involved with weapons manufacturing.

### Traditional wellness practices

John Reed, the wellness development advisor on the project, revealed to *Spa Business* that while it's still very early days we can expect the mindfulness city to feature healing centres and world-class spas drawing on Bhutanese wellness practices. These include meditation, hot stone baths incorporating 'menchu' (medicinal spring water) and 'sowa rigpa', traditional Tibetan medicine based on herbs and minerals and modalities such as acupuncture and moxibustion.

The hospitality consultant, previously COO of China's Octave wellness community and at Aman for 25 years before that, says: "Incorporating the spirituality of Bhutan is critical as we develop the wellbeing aspects for residents and guests – accommodation built from natural and renewable materials, indoor and outdoor areas for movement and meditation and green spaces for relaxation bathing and wildlife exploration."

### Master plan by Bjarke Ingels

To appeal to Bhutan's younger generations, the king has enlisted star architecture firm Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG) to design the master plan alongside Arup and Singaporean planning city consultancy Cistri. BIG, known for its 'hedonistic sustainability' approach, has imagined 11 neighbourhoods that each boast a Bhutanese public focal point – from a Vajrayana spiritual centre which will allow glimpses into monks' daily practices and a healthcare facility which bridges the gap between Eastern and Western medicine to a visitor attraction educating people about local culture. A new international airport, railway connections and a hydroelectric dam are also part of the bigger picture.

BIG's founder and creative director, Bjarke Ingels, says: "The Gelephu master plan gives form to His Majesty's vision to create a city that becomes a cradle for growth and innovation while remaining founded on Bhutanese nature and culture." ►



A number of 'inhabitable bridges' include features such as a Vajrayana spiritual centre (pictured) and a healthcare facility

An aerial photograph of a modern, multi-level building with a stepped, terraced design, surrounded by lush greenery and a river. The building features a series of horizontal and vertical concrete or stone-like structures that create a series of open-air spaces and terraces. The surrounding landscape is dense with tropical vegetation, including palm trees and other lush plants. A river flows through the scene, and there are terraced agricultural fields visible on the right side. The overall atmosphere is one of a sustainable and integrated architectural design.

Laws, policies and incentives  
will ensure a conducive  
business environment and  
attract foreign investment

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### ► **Natural and spiritual design**

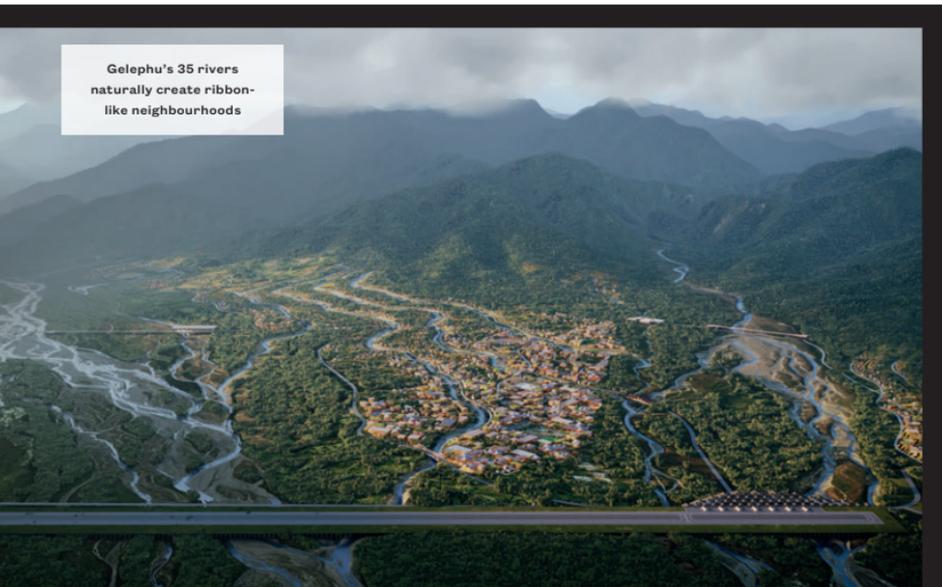
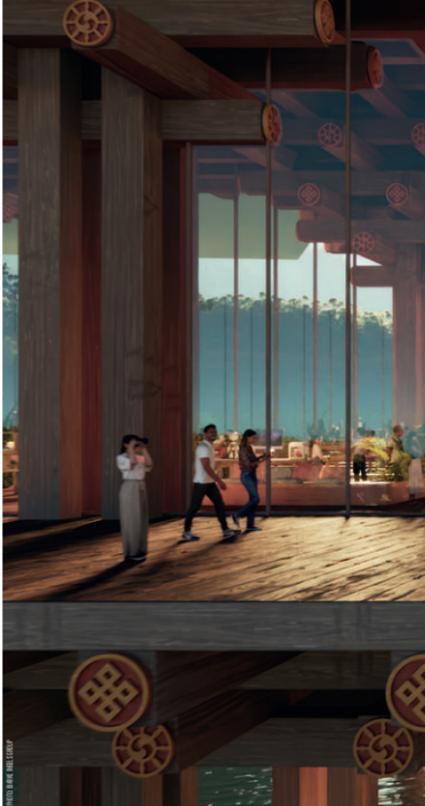
Bhutan, the world's first carbon-neutral country, is nestled between mountains, forests and rivers. With 70 per cent of the country covered in woodland, it's been labelled as one of the last biodiversity hotspots in the world and BIG's master plan aims to amplify this.

The mindfulness city design highlights a tapestry of interconnected neighbourhoods and ecosystems naturally shaped by the flow of Gelephu's 35 rivers and existing infrastructure. This results in ribbon-like neighbourhoods cascading down from the hills to the valley which are tied together by three main 'inhabitable bridges'.

Ingles says: "We imagine the mindfulness city as a place that could be nowhere else. Where nature is enhanced, agriculture is integrated and tradition is living and breathing, not only preserved but also evolved."

BIG has developed a language for local building typologies based on the nine GNH domains. These are repeated symmetrically around the central public spaces. Overall, there's a notable gradual transition in density - from small buildings dispersed in the landscape in the north to larger footprints within an urban environment in the south.

“*The mindfulness city will kick-start Bhutan's economy following years of voluntary isolation*”



Gelephu's 35 rivers naturally create ribbon-like neighbourhoods

The end goal is to  
create employment  
opportunities for locals



## GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS INDEX

King Jigme Khesar Namgyel's father, Jigme Singye Wangchuck – the fourth ruler of Bhutan – introduced the Gross National Happiness (GNH) index 50 years ago to measure the wellbeing of its people alongside its economic output.

The GNH index is based on nine domains:

- Psychological wellbeing
- Health
- Education
- Time-use
- Living standards
- Good governance
- Community vitality
- Ecological diversity and resilience
- Cultural diversity and resilience

In 2011, The UN General Assembly passed a resolution which recognised happiness as a “fundamental human goal”. It's been urging member nations to follow the example of Bhutan in measuring happiness and wellbeing ever since.



*“We imagine the mindfulness city as a place that could be nowhere else ... Where tradition is living and breathing”*

Bjarke Ingles

This, says BIG, is in keeping with the design principles of a mandala – a geometric pattern used in Buddhism.

### Inflection point

The rationale behind the mindfulness city is to kick-start Bhutan's economy following years of voluntary isolation – the country has staunchly protected its culture for years by closing off its borders, but now recognises that things need to change.

“South Asia is experiencing an unprecedented economic transformation,” said the king, highlighting his vision to create a “vibrant economic corridor” linking Gelephu to north-east India and, beyond that, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, ▶



A temple will be built into a hydroelectric dam

► Malaysia and Singapore. He said: "This is a period of growth and a period of immense opportunities ... We [Bhutan] are in a unique position to reap great benefits if we seize the opportunity, make good plans and work together diligently."

The goal is to create employment opportunities for locals, thousands of whom are being driven abroad, to places such as Australia, Singapore and Thailand, for work. "Our challenge is that we have barely 700,000 people in our country. Unless we find the right solution, our population may dwindle to the point when we have more shops than customers, more restaurants than diners and more houses than tenants," said the king, urging Bhutanese



*Gelephu will become a gateway connecting Bhutan to the world and the future*

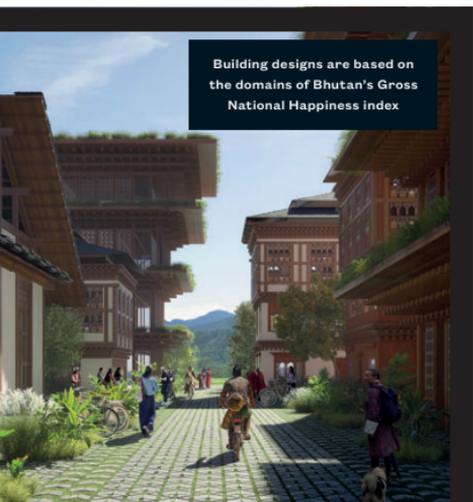
people living in other countries to come back home to be a part of the mindfulness city project.

The inflow of foreign investments will see major improvements in public infrastructure such as roads, bridges and railways, as well as the construction of offices, residences, hospitals and businesses such as hotels, shops and restaurants. It's this growth that will generate more jobs for younger generations as well as demand for local goods and services, especially from farmers, he predicts.

"During my reign as king, and for our generation, this is one of the most significant undertakings," he concluded. "It's an inflexion point, a moment in history that's very important for us.

"Gelephu will become a gateway connecting Bhutan to the world and the future. The road we have chosen is a gateway to the world - to markets, capital, new ideas, knowledge and technology towards our future - to chart our destiny.

"Our responsibility is not just for the immediate future ... Let's build a legacy that will continue to benefit Bhutan 500 years into the future." ●



Building designs are based on the domains of Bhutan's Gross National Happiness index

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# Self-care safari experience to debut in Botswana wildlife haven

Listen to buffalo rustling in the scrub as you have a massage, watch hippos wallow as you relax post-treatment – a wellness retreat is central to a “nature-connected safari self-care experience” which will debut in Botswana’s wildlife-rich Okavango Delta this May.

Marking the latest venture from Ibiza’s Atzaró Group, the Atzaró Okavango Camp will be a 12-suite property, situated by the Moremi Game Reserve.

Its 130sq m wellness retreat – with two treatment suites, yoga shala, gym, 20m freshwater pool and large outdoor lounge area – is surrounded by lush greenery and perched above a tranquil lagoon. Its strategic location means that guests can gaze out over the watering hole which is frequented by elephants, hippos, lions, leopards, cheetahs and buffaloes.

## BAOBAB-INFUSED RITUAL

To add a deeper African connection, treatments and products are supplied by Terres d’Afrique. The South African-based company specialises in wellness experiences inspired by the continent’s rich botanical heritage and traditional spa therapies.

It’s crafted a brand new signature treatment for Atzaró using products powered by the baobab tree – known as the symbol of life in the arid savannah – and found in abundance in the Okavango.

Claimed to be a powerful antioxidant, baobab is called a superfruit due to its high concentrations of vitamins, minerals and prebiotic fibres.

The treatment will be offered as either a 60 or 90-minute ritual and start with a bespoke exfoliating mask using baobab powder, kigelia extract, crushed baobab seeds and baobab oil to gently scrub, reduce oxidative stress and help restore the skin barrier. A soothing and hydrating pure aloe gel will then be applied before a detoxifying pinda head massage with heated baobab seeds is administered.

Other therapies will range from facials, massages, scrubs and body treatments to hair and scalp treatments, post-sunscreen services and hand and foot rituals.

Beyond wellness, guests will be able to indulge in private game drives, community visits, guided safari hikes, stargazing, helicopter safaris, candlelit dinners by the lagoon and canoe expeditions. ●





Listen to buffaloes in the scrub as you have a massage, watch hippos wallow post-treatment

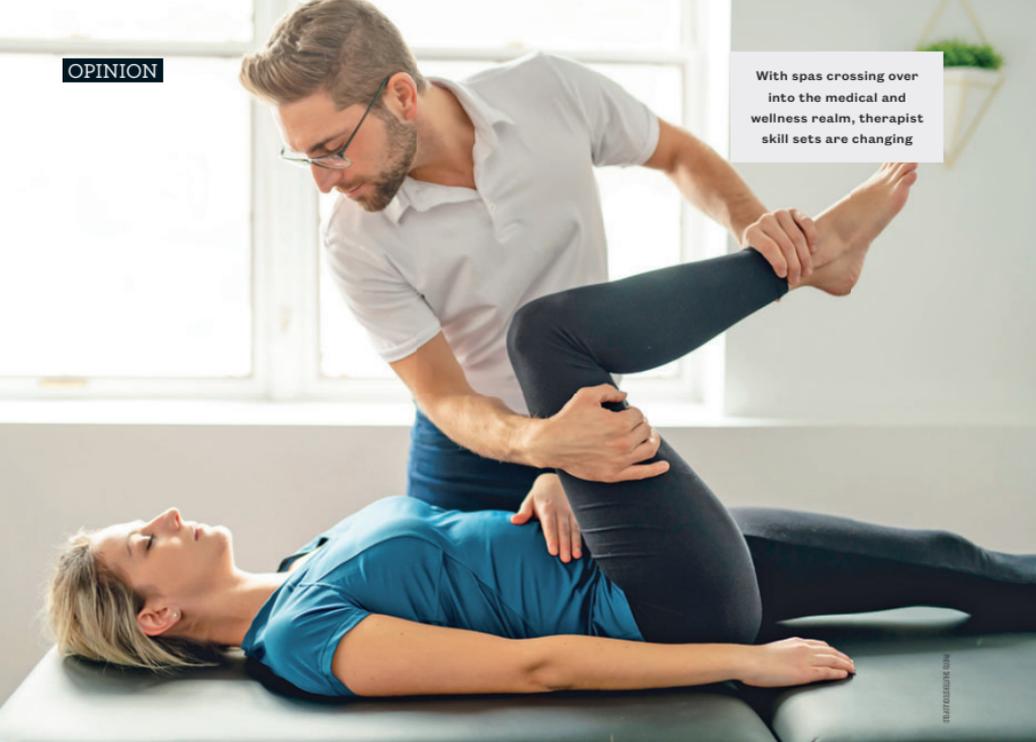
The latest site from Ibiza's Atzaró Group is based in the wildlife-rich Okavango Delta



The retreat overlooks a tranquil lagoon which attracts numerous animals

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With spas crossing over into the medical and wellness realm, therapist skill sets are changing



*Everyone's talking about...*

## Continuing professional development

**If spas are going to be taken seriously by the medical industry, partner with wellness providers and be seen as places to heal, does continuing professional development need to be mandatory? Kath Hudson reports...**

Continuing professional development (CPD) can take many forms – self-learning, courses, work-based training and sharing reflections. As wellness is such a broad arena the opportunities for CPD are immense. There's so much potential for therapists to diversify their skills into different modalities and specialise in a certain area, so it seems sensible for CPD to be something which all therapists and operators commit to. But does this mean it should be compulsory?

As the industry seeks to gain further credibility with both clients and the medical sector, mandatory CPD might be beneficial. It also makes sense given the growing crossover between spa, wellness and medical facilities. But in a vast, global industry with various schools, colleges and educators, even if that's desirable, would it be practical?

What would be the advantages of making CPD mandatory and what are the obstacles? We talk to key stakeholders to canvass their opinions.

## Nikos Kouremenos education and project manager, Raison d'Ére

CPD is necessary as many therapists lack formal qualifications and it's difficult to tell by looking at a CV who can really do the job.

Several therapists don't have a college certificate or diploma: they've attended a massage school, or a course run by a private organisation and then acquired some professional experience along the way. Numerous certifying organisations, colleges and institutions around the world are not even accredited by a recognised body.

Besides the abilities required for the specific position, there are other competencies which



therapists need to acquire, such as interpersonal skills, self-organisational abilities and sales experience. Many therapists don't consider sales to be part of their work, however, promoting the products used in a treatment or additional therapies is often well received, and even appreciated, by guests.

### If we make CPD mandatory, who could enforce it?

There are some recognised certifying bodies, such as CIDESCO, which offer a number of courses which can provide additional knowledge and value to spa professionals.

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) also has an Exercise Is Medicine Credential for wellness practitioners and fitness instructors who receive referrals from healthcare teams.

One of the issues of making CPD mandatory is the question of who could enforce it: since it would not be a straightforward task and is likely to differ

from country to country. Perhaps on a global scale, ACSM or CIDESCO could take it on. It could also be led by something similar to the European Register of Exercise Professionals, an organisation which sets and lists qualified fitness professionals.

Although there's a clear need for CPD, it might not be essential to make it mandatory. The industry might take care of that itself as ambitious therapists and aspiring managers, looking to make their CVs stronger and climb the career ladder, identify what knowledge they lack.

## Erika Ferreira global head of marketing, CIDESCO

We've seen the basic level of college training of therapists decline due to market changes and insurance companies covering practitioners with reduced hours of training. Standards vary around the world - some qualifications require up to three years of training, while others only look for as little as 300 hours.

In light of this, CPD courses help to maintain high standards of work and enhance career prospects. As therapists encounter changing regulations within the industry, and advancements in



techniques, CPD is an essential way to keep up. CIDESCO receives a lot of requests from leading spas and hotels for its graduates and the demand far outweighs the number of therapists graduating each year. A CIDESCO diploma can take a student

### CPD is essential to keep up with changing regulations and advancements in techniques

up to 1,200 hours longer to be trained, which is a high financial burden and time commitment on students, but the rewards are greater due to the demand for CIDESCO graduates.

While CPD is so important to keep therapists up to date with all areas of treatments and their own professional development and employability - especially as our industry continues to evolve - making it

mandatory would have to be a government initiative.

The US has a form of obligatory CPD overseen by the government, where therapists need to gain credit points, by taking registered programmes, to maintain their license to operate. I feel it should be mandated in all countries. Knowledge is one thing no one can take from you and with better training your client will have a better experience.

**Khursheed Irani** director of global training and development, Subtle Energies

Generally in the complementary medicine space, you have to conform to a certain standard before you can practice and this usually includes CPD points. Regulations, however, vary from modality to modality. They're usually led by therapy-specific associations, but then offshoot organisations crop up and have a different set of standards. From my own experience, I know that in countries such as Australia and the US, therapists have to meet overarching, government-recognised qualifications to be able to practice.

Generally, we find that those who attend beauty colleges, don't



EMMA DARBY

have much experience of body mechanics, or the necessary finesse to be able to talk to clients or simply how to drape correctly. So, CPD is needed to cover these areas, as well as to further enhance body workers' techniques and retail skills.

However, it also has to be acknowledged that some therapists who haven't had a huge amount of formal education, like

**It's a huge task to have one body cover and streamline qualifications in such a broad industry**

in Asia, often take on our training very well and deliver it with integrity. Conversely, those with a lot of formal training can act like they already know it.

Although it would be positive for spas to make CPD mandatory, it's a huge task to have one body cover and streamline such a broad industry with so many different modalities. A managed portal with a list of qualified brands and treatments may act as a solution for therapists to collect their CPD points, which should cover education and practice.

In the absence of this, we believe it should be incumbent on spas to commit to yearly courses for their therapists, or at least offer dedicated time for reviews of the modalities they offer.

Subtle Energies doesn't award certificates straight after training courses, we go back six months to a year later to assess people. The certificate also has an end date, which means we have to keep reassessing them. Although this is time-consuming, this ensures the quality and standards remain high.

**Emma Darby** COO, Resense

We recruit from all over the world and the standard of therapists varies greatly. Some countries spend longer on their training, others have massage and touch as part of their culture and now the formal training is catching up. However, in some countries, such as the UK, there are currently gaps in the education system and many of the skills are taught as a box-ticking exercise.

At no point in their education are therapists taught any business



EMMA DARBY

acumen which would help them in a management position later on in their career, for example using a spreadsheet or PowerPoint, taking inventory, understanding the cost of treatments and buying in bulk and

**Spa operators must start speaking to the educational bodies about what they need**

KPIs. All of these are key skills and would mean that the industry could retain talented individuals who sometimes leave after they've had children.

Although CPD is obviously desirable, making it mandatory could add a lot of pressure. If spas invest in developing their staff and they stay loyal, that's fantastic. But, on the flip side, if employees get trained and leave, spas are paying for someone

else's future. For smaller companies, this could be challenging. Therefore, I wouldn't advocate making CPD mandatory, but I think spas should make use of it to attract and retain talent and to be seen as a preferred employer.

As an industry, we also need to start speaking to the educational bodies about what operators need and the level that we expect therapists to come out of school with.



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## Monica Mescol spa manager, Lefay Resorts

There is a skills shortage in the spa industry, but we find it's more about the ability to provide great guest experiences and the soft skills, rather than the hard skills and manual techniques.

When therapists come out of college, they know the theory and techniques well, but these alone are not enough to satisfy the great need for excellence in luxury hospitality. Only soft skills, sensitivity and understanding can make a difference. Therapists also need to undertake field experience.

Lefay offers more than 50 signature treatments



SHARON HAYES

developed in association with doctors and requires therapists to carry out all these protocols so we had to take matters into our own hands. We've always offered in-house training, but have just formalised this and launched our own spa academy. Our course starts at the time of recruitment



Lefay found skills in delivering a luxury experience are also lacking

SHARON HAYES

## We took matters into our own hands and launched a spa academy

and offers an intense theoretical background and practical on-the-job training, with a total duration of three years.

It would be difficult to make CPD mandatory. The industry is still barely aware of the need and

reluctant to accept it. Few operators understand the importance of the human and holistic dimensions of treatments in a luxury and holiday context. Many believe technical skills and knowledge are still more important.

## Sue Harmsworth integrative health, wellness and spa expert

Until the 80s & 90s, most new therapists were at least 20 years old and had done a minimum of two years of training in advanced massage, in-depth skincare, hygiene and more. In Eastern Europe and other regions, training was much longer and more intense, and in Asia, most workers had no formal education but an instinct for holistic treatments.

With the growth of spas, however, courses got shorter and employees younger. Now there are courses as short as 12-24 weeks and quick routes to employment, such as apprenticeships, which aren't government-approved. If we don't get the basics right then it's difficult



SHARON HAYES

to do effective advanced and post-graduate courses.

This is creating the perfect storm - more educated consumers, higher expectations for spas to address lifestyle issues and younger therapists without the necessary qualifications to deal with them.

As the industry morphs from spa to wellness/wellbeing/integrative health and medical, it's

## Employers surely have to ensure staff can treat anyone

going to need more advanced therapists and practitioners. Is mandatory CPD the answer?

Probably. But I'm not sure. Employers surely have to ensure staff can treat anyone - whether they're obese, have had a triple heart bypass, have been affected by cancer or any other lifestyle conditions. But you probably need a government body to enforce it.

What I do know is that we need to offer therapists education and a career pathway that enables them to continue to grow and branch out into other roles

such as those focusing on wellness coaching, mental health, nutrition and many others. Fields such as psychology and nutrition will need longer, approved courses, but shorter postgraduate modules could cover things such as advanced massage, spa etiquette, life skills, how to talk to people and understanding contraindications.

Dovetailing with this, we need to make sure therapists are also reimbursed according to their experience and skill set. This is the only way to retain and grow talent. ●



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# LONDON LUXE



PHOTO: ANDREW BROWN

Leading hotel brands are investing in London, while icons such as The Ritz and BT Tower are being redeveloped. How will they differentiate themselves in the competitive UK capital? Katie Barnes finds out

£1 billion has been spent on transforming the Old War Office into a Raffles hotel and spa

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## RAFFLES LONDON AT THE OWO

Opening date: Q3 2023

Guestrooms: 120 Residences: 85

● Raffles' new UK home is steeped in history. The former Old War Office (OWO), dating back to 1906, was the base for Winston Churchill in WW2 and was once the site of Henry VIII's Whitehall Palace before it burnt down

● It features Guerlain's first spa in London. The French skincare brand is most known for its consumer-facing products, but now operates more than 40 branded spas and institutes worldwide

● The 27,000sq ft spa is spread over four levels

● Robert Jeffers, director of wellbeing, has worked in wellness for 18 years including head roles at BodyHoliday in St Lucia and Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong

● OWO is owned by the Hinduja, the UK's richest family who have made their fortune in a diverse number of sectors - from real estate and healthcare to transport, finance and energy

● They bought the site in 2014 for a reported £350 million (US\$444 million, €409.8 million) and spent £1 billion (US\$1.3 billion, €1.2 billion) on its refurbishment

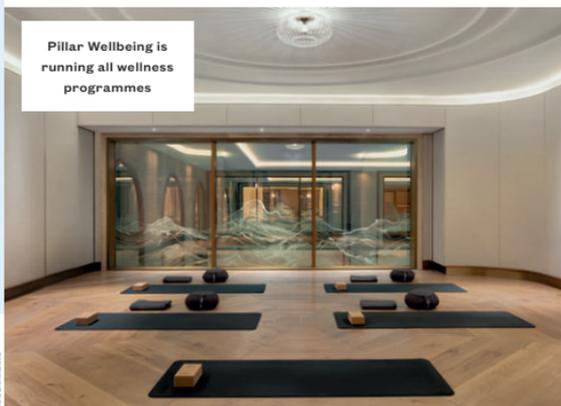
● Raffles has been a part of the Accor group since 2015

### READ MORE:

[www.spabusiness.com/rafflesowo](http://www.spabusiness.com/rafflesowo)



The spa is spread over 27,000sq ft and marks Guerlain's debut in the UK



Pillar Wellbeing is running all wellness programmes

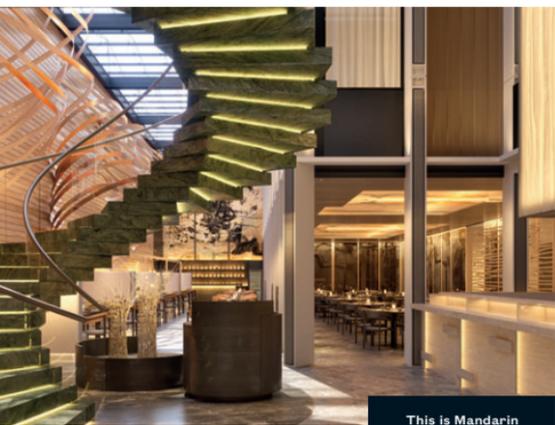


Part of the spa reception at Raffles OWO

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A sleek and stylish wellness spa will open in July



This is Mandarin Oriental's second site in London and a third one will open in 2028



## MANDARIN ORIENTAL MAYFAIR

Opening date: Q2 2024

Guestrooms: 50

Residences: 77

- Bookings for Mandarin Oriental's second London outpost are available from 1 July
  - A subterranean spa has been imagined by Tokyo-based design studio, Curiosity
  - The vision is to create a hub of nature and art, resulting in a sleek and stylish wellness space that draws on the greenery of Hanover Square on its doorstep
  - Spa partners will include Swiss Perfection, Seed to Skin, OTO and Aromatherapy Associates
- 
- Mandarin Oriental first landed in London's Hyde Park in 1996 and spent £100 million (US\$126.8 million, €117 million) on a major renovation, including its 14-treatment-room spa, in 2018
  - The group has already revealed a third property in London Mandarin Oriental Bankside, which is due to open in 2028

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The Whiteley will be the launch site for Six Senses social wellness club concept

#### READ MORE:

Find out more details about Six Senses social wellness club concept in our exclusive interview with CEO Neil Jacobs: [www.spabusiness.com/neiljacobs](http://www.spabusiness.com/neiljacobs)

#### READ MORE:

Six Senses' wellness pioneer Anna Bjurstam also reveals more details here: [www.spabusiness.com/satellitesites](http://www.spabusiness.com/satellitesites)

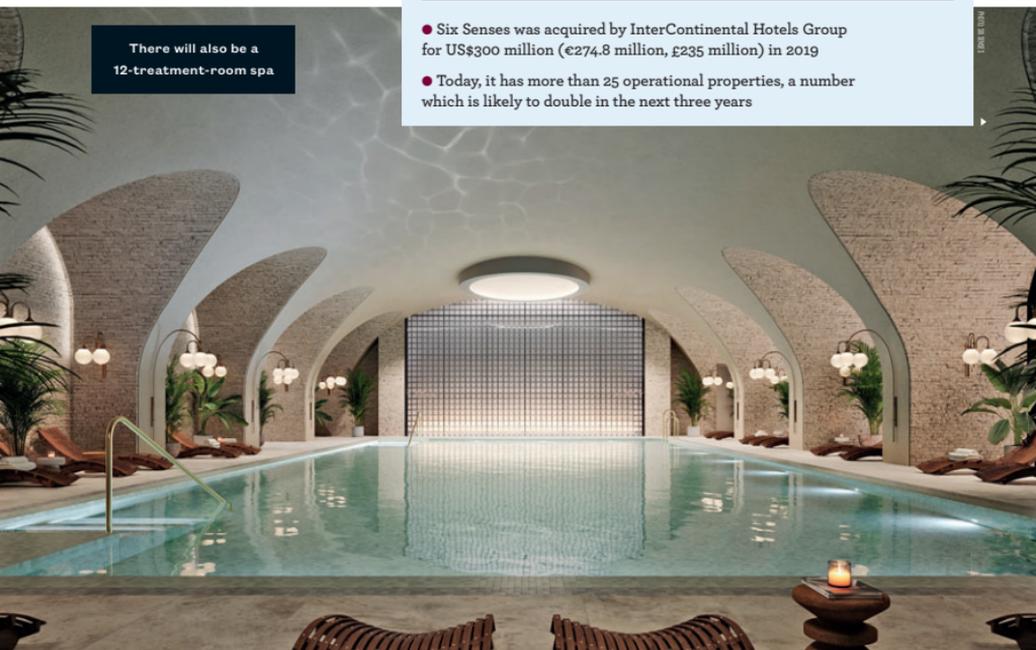
## THE WHITELEY (SIX SENSES)

Opening date: 2025    Guestrooms: 110

Residences: 139 (14 branded as Six Senses)

- A reported £3 billion (US\$3.8 billion, €3.5 billion) has been invested in transforming The Whiteley, one of London's first department stores which opened 130 years ago, into a notable property destination
- It will be home to the first Six Senses Place - an exciting new social wellness club concept for the brand which will offer wellness rooms alongside a central bar and lounge restaurant, co-working spaces and meeting rooms
- On top of this, the Six Senses hotel will still include a major focus on wellness and feature a separate 12-treatment-room spa, alchemy bar, gym and pool

- Six Senses was acquired by InterContinental Hotels Group for US\$300 million (€274.8 million, £235 million) in 2019
- Today, it has more than 25 operational properties, a number which is likely to double in the next three years



There will also be a 12-treatment-room spa

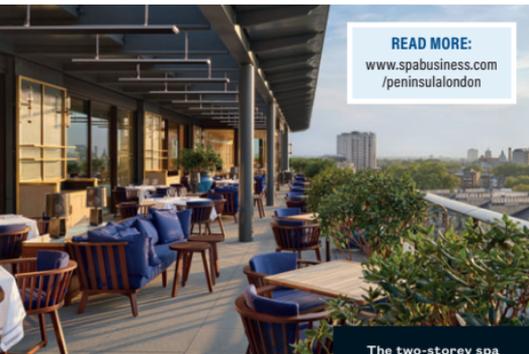
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## DESTINATION FOCUS: LONDON

Spa designer Peter Marino is known for his work with Dior, Chanel and Louis Vuitton



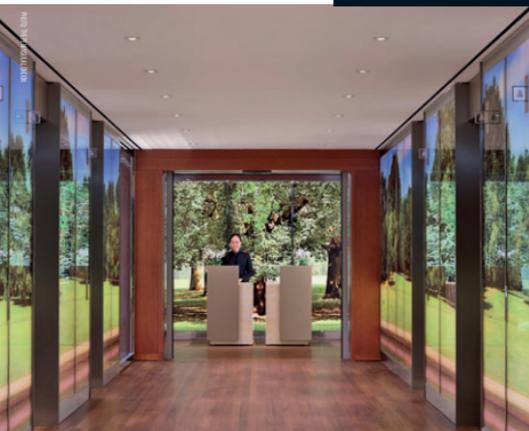
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The two-storey spa has been inspired by London's famous parks



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## PENINSULA LONDON

**Opening date:** Q3 2023

**Guestrooms:** 90

**Residences:** 25

- UK debut for the high-end Asian-based operator that's been seven years in the making
- Spa director Louise Molloy has more than 20 years of experience and has spent much of her career in Hong Kong and the UAE
- The two-floor spa and wellness facility has been inspired by London's famous parks and created in guidance with a feng shui master
- The spa was designed by US architect and designer Peter Marino, a creative who's also worked with Cheval Blanc, Dior, Chanel and Louis Vuitton
- Suppliers include Subtle Energies and Margy's Monte Carlo – Peninsula's preferred skincare partners – as well as Barr + Wray, Gharieni, Italidea linen and ZeroWaste by Urb'n Nature

● Established in 1928, Peninsula Hotels has 12 properties in 10 major cities in its portfolio

● The brand is owned and operated by The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels Ltd, which was incorporated in 1866 and is one of Asia's oldest hotel companies that's still in operation

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## SNOWROOM

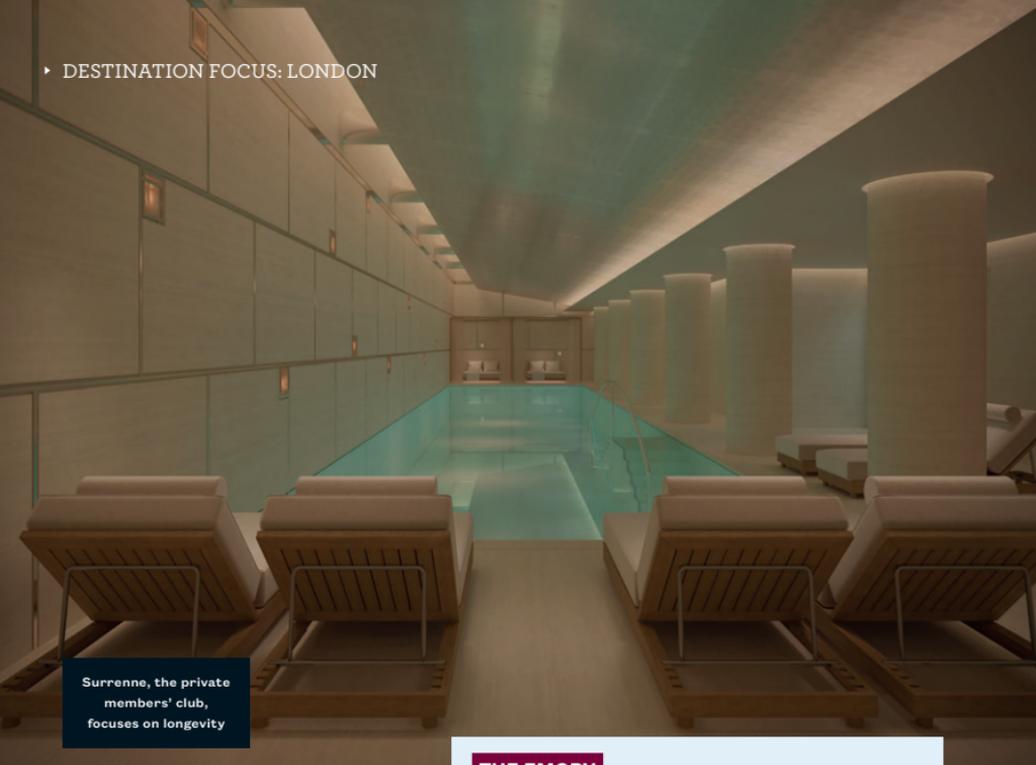
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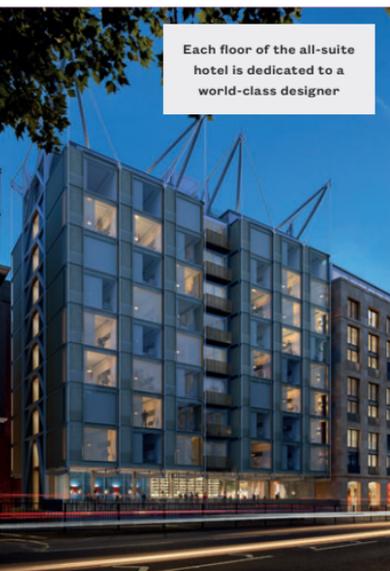
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Surrenne, the private members' club, focuses on longevity



Each floor of the all-suite hotel is dedicated to a world-class designer

## THE EMORY

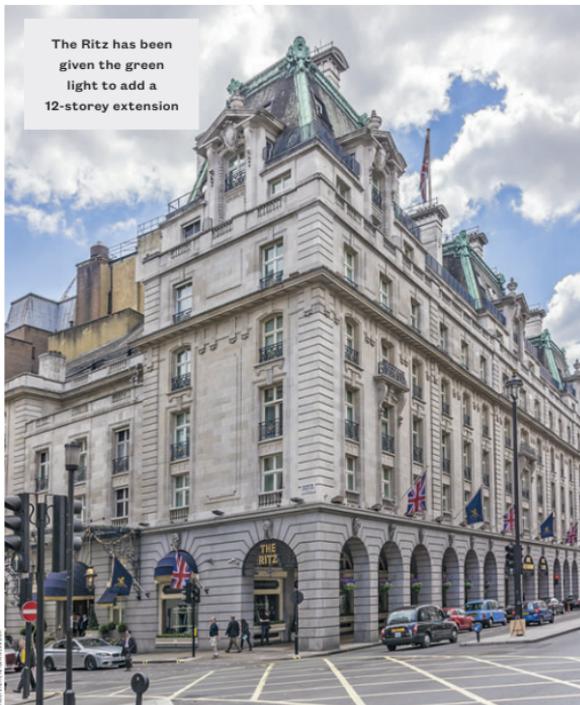
Opening date: Q2 2024

Guestrooms: 61

- Opening in April, The Emory is the latest development by the Maybourne Group, which owns and operates Claridge's, The Connaught and The Berkeley
- The all-suite hotel has floors dedicated to different world-class interior designers including Alexandra Champalimaud, André Fu and Pierre-Yves Rochon
- Spanning four floors and 2,000sq m, its private members' club, Surrenne, is a major new wellness retreat for the capital
- Surrenne facilities will be free to hotel guests, while an annual club membership sits at £10,000 (US\$12,662, €11,752), plus a £5,000 (US\$6,331, €5,876) joining fee
- It promises a blend of immersive spa, beauty, recovery and fitness amenities and is firmly positioning itself in the longevity bracket – think Virtusan wellness tech, hyperbaric chambers and cold plunges mixed with skincare by plastic surgeon Dr Lara Devgan, aromatherapy sauna, snow shower and ashiatsu massage
- An entire floor is dedicated to classes by fitness pioneer, Tracy Anderson, who has a celebrity following for her sculpting method
- Itanda, the spa design agency led by Inge Theron, is charged with developing all wellness concepts for The Maybourne Group

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The Ritz has been given the green light to add a 12-storey extension



## THE RITZ

**Opening date:** 2028

**Guestrooms:** Up to 155

- A spokesperson from The Ritz has revealed to *Spa Business* that plans to modernise the famous hotel are still forging ahead
- The refurbishment was announced in 2021 and will reportedly cost more than £300 million (US\$378.7 million, €350.2 million)
- The green light has been given for an extensive 12-storey extension – including a five-floor basement – that will see leisure facilities added to the grande dame for the first time in its 118-year history
- It's believed that a spa spread over multiple levels, offering anything from eight to 18 treatment rooms, will be a key feature
- Qatari investor Abdulhadi Mana Al-Hajri purchased The Ritz from the Barclay family in 2020 for an estimated £700 million (US\$883.7 million, €817.1 million) ▶

The Emory is a sister property to Claridge's and The Berkeley



### READ MORE:

Find out more about Claridge's first-ever spa: [www.spabusiness.com/claridgesspa](http://www.spabusiness.com/claridgesspa)

### READ MORE:

Visit [www.spabusiness.com/surrenne](http://www.spabusiness.com/surrenne) for more details



The BT Tower was once the tallest structure in London

**READ MORE:**  
Find out more about Rosewood's first London spa here: [www.spabusiness.com/rosewoodlondon](http://www.spabusiness.com/rosewoodlondon)

### THE CHANCERY ROSEWOOD

**Opening date:** 2025    **Guestrooms:** 146

- Rosewood is due to open its second site in London next year
- It will feature an Asaya spa, an integrative wellness concept which the group launched in late 2017 and is now rolling out with much momentum globally
- Canadian design studio Yabu Pushelberg is imagining the spa, while British architect David Chipperfield is leading the transformation of the hotel which was once home to the US Embassy

- Rosewood opened its first hotel and signature Sense spa in London in 2013, marking the group's debut in Europe
- The Chancery project is being delivered by Rosewood in partnership with real estate developer Qatari Diar ●

### BT TOWER

**Opening date and guestrooms: Unconfirmed**

- News broke in late February that London's iconic BT Tower is going to be transformed into a luxury hotel after being sold to MCR Hotels
- MCR, which owns 150 US hotels, will work with London-based design firm Heatherwick Studios on the project
- BT Group, the telecommunications conglomerate, sold the property in a £275 million (US\$347 million, €321.3 million) deal
- The 620ft tower is a well-known landmark spanning 37 floors
- It opened in 1964 and was the tallest structure in London until 1980

**READ MORE:**  
[www.spabusiness.com/bttower](http://www.spabusiness.com/bttower)

### READ MORE:

What is Asaya's interpretation of 'integrative wellness'? See [www.spabusiness.com/rosewoodopteam](http://www.spabusiness.com/rosewoodopteam) to find out

It will feature Asaya, Rosewood's integrative wellness concept

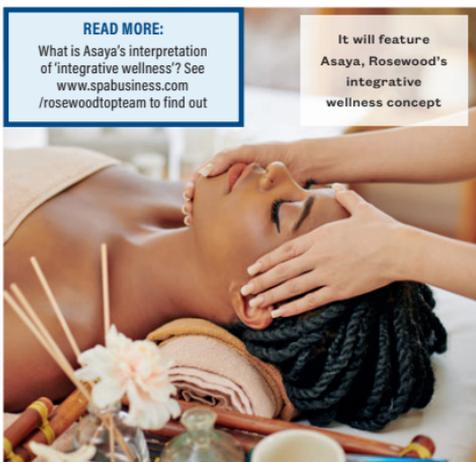


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# MADE IN ITALY

Beltrami has over 50 years' experience creating bespoke textile products for spas around the world, with a focus on quality

Italian company Beltrami Linen is well-known for the quality of its products, but this isn't the only characteristic that makes the brand stand out in the spa and wellbeing sector: what distinguishes the company is a strong focus on personalisation.

Beltrami has been manufacturing textiles for over 50 years and supplies spas all around the world directly from its factory in the north of Italy. "The quality of our linens is an essential element in making the guest experience a moment of pure pleasure" explains CEO, Cinzia Imberti Beltrami. "We supply spas with a complete range of products and create full treatment bed setups, adapting each element to every shape and style".

This concept is best demonstrated by the company's signature collection which is made from Autentica Fibra di Legno Beltrami (FDL), a fabric which is exclusive to the company and made from wood fibre.

FDL is thermoregulating, extremely soft, breathable and pleasant on the skin. It enhances

*The quality of our linens delivers moments of deep comfort to guests*



Cinzia Imberti Beltrami,  
CEO of Beltrami Linen

every spa treatment and wellness experience, adding an unforgettable touch of luxury.

## NEW COLLECTION

A new collection of spa wear made from FDL has recently been added to the Beltrami range, including bathrobes and dressing gowns, shiatsu garments, body wraps and a complete range of accessories, such as turbans, hair bands and paraffin gloves.

"Our FDL fabrics include sateen, light honeycomb, Jersey and Terry in several weights and constructions," says Beltrami. "The range has timeless styling while also being elegant and comfortable". Some spas are also using the fabric for therapists' garments.

Through continuous R&D in design and functionality and its philosophy of respecting the identity of each customer, Beltrami focuses on personalisation: "Our projects are fully bespoke, which is key to creating products that are aesthetically pleasing and aligned with the philosophy and the image of the brand, while also paying attention to functionality," says Beltrami.

## CLOSE COLLABORATION

Close collaboration with clients and designers enables Beltrami to create products for the delivery of specific treatments.

"We manage the complete production process of all our textiles, from the early stages of design, through to weaving and customer service, which delivers the highest quality standards," says Beltrami. "Our flexible service and specialised assistance start from the very first steps of the project, putting our know-how and expertise completely at our customers' disposal." ●

More: [www.beltrami.it](http://www.beltrami.it)



The new collection is made from breathable, luxury fabrics



THE HOSPITALITY GROUP

# DETAILS *matter*

Attention to detail is a superpower, says Jeremy McCarthy. If you have this skill, use it. If you don't, develop it

One of the first general managers I worked for in the early 90s was Chris Hart at the Four Seasons Biltmore Resort in Santa Barbara. Recently appointed supervisor of the pool area, I was doing a walk-through of the facilities with him. He paused for a moment and asked me to point out anything out of place. I glanced around - the pool was clean and tidy, towels folded neatly and loungers all in a row. "I don't see anything in particular," I told him nervously.

"Look at the cabanas," he said. "The curtains are all raised to different heights. Most guests will not pick up on this or complain about it. But if you made them all the same height, the space would feel different and guests might notice that feeling. Details matter."

This would be the first (of many) lessons in my hospitality career about attention to detail. Attention to detail, I've learned, is a superpower. When used well, it's a powerful tool that means:

- 1** We create spaces that are relaxing, enjoyable and harmonious
- 2** We design flawless service interactions - "They thought of everything!" guests will say
- 3** We anticipate what guests want before they even know to ask

## PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Throughout my career, I've had many opportunities to develop my attention to detail. I spent months at a hotel in Beverly Hills, for example, agonising over the best system for the perfect folding of pool towels. At a resort in Maui, the manager would check the cleanliness of the steamroom with a cotton swab to find any dirt or mould hiding in the creases of tiles. In another hotel spa, I fixated on sourcing the perfect container for tea bags so they neatly aligned, with just enough sticking out for guests to know what flavours were available. Details matter.

If you have this skill, it will serve you well in a career in wellness or hospitality. If you don't have it yet, you can hone it with intention. The best way to practice is to walk through your department with the eyes of a guest. What do they see when they lie on your massage bed? When relaxing in your tea lounge? When sitting on the toilet in your changing room?

Working in luxury means we don't just go from good to great. We strive for perfection - to eliminate flaws no matter how minuscule. Our job is first, to notice. Then, to fix it.

## EVERYTHING MATTERS

Great hospitality professionals are known for obsessing over details. We fluff the pillows just so, fold our napkins into origami artwork and place a flower under treatment beds for something to look at during a massage. For the true hotelier, no detail escapes our attention. Everything matters.



PHOTO: MANDARIN ORIENTAL HOTEL

Attention to detail has helped McCarthy create exquisite spa facilities and experiences



## *What do guests see when they lie on your massage bed, or when relaxing in your tea lounge?*



Working in luxury means striving for perfection

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/STEFANO

And once you have this skill, it's like a beacon you can't turn off - even when you're outside work. In every establishment we visit, we see the dust on the top of the cabinet. The employee noticeboard that's obstructing the customer's view. The ever-so-slightly misaligned merchandise on the shelf. Ask us about a recent interaction with any business and we'll give 30 suggestions for details that could be improved.

It's a superpower that means you become better at everything you do. Attention to detail helped me to be successful in creating exquisite spa facilities and experiences. And it surely helped Chris Hart, who climbed the ranks of Four Seasons for more than three decades, eventually becoming president of Asia and then the Americas. ●

*Jeremy McCarthy has worked in the spa industry for 34 years. As group director of spa and wellness for Mandarin Oriental, he oversees spa, wellness and leisure operations at 35 luxury hotels globally. Contact him with your views on Twitter @jeremymcc*

# Esin Güral Argat

The owner of Joali Being is on a mission to make the Maldives the go-to destination for wellness travellers. Neena Dhillon reports from the island dedicated to transformative wellbeing

Güral Argat heads up the tourism arm of Turkish conglomerate the Gürök Group

Around 95 per cent  
of programmes are  
personalised



Read more about  
Claire Way and  
Gerry Bodeker's  
involvement at  
[www.spabusiness.com  
/jbpreview](http://www.spabusiness.com/jbpreview)

Even before launching Joali Being in the Maldives, Turkish businesswoman Esin Güral Argat was deeply invested in her own wellbeing, incorporating mindful eating habits, yoga, long walks, meditation and daily exercise into her lifestyle. Still, as she geared up to create her own wellbeing hospitality concept, she faced a significant learning curve. "We knew this would require a deeper understanding of the industry's nuances and the ability to craft a unique experience for our guests," she says. "So we identified an expert team to explore the most valuable offerings, incorporating science-based principles."

Güral Argat was at the top of her business game five years ago, working as vice president of family business Gürok Group, a Turkish conglomerate spanning industries from glassware to construction, tiles to tourism. Since 2008, she'd been managing the tourism division of the business, including Turkey's Ali Bey brand. But the Maldives had a special place in her heart, for its "breathtaking beauty, genuine local hospitality and ease of access".

This passion for the destination resulted in the entrepreneur and her team launching Joali in 2018. The island resort brought a fresh, art-immersive concept to the Maldives. At the same time, Güral Argat spotted an opportunity to develop another



Every detail of the resort has been meticulously planned around wellbeing

► island in the same Raa Atoll. Seeking to carve out a distinct identity for this sister resort, she brainstormed the possibility of devoting a Maldivian island to transformative wellbeing.

#### POOL OF EXPERTISE

Güral Argat and her team dived into research, connecting with practitioners globally to forge the philosophy for this new resort. “We travelled extensively, seeking insights from experts and experiencing various wellness concepts and products,” she reveals. “Immersing ourselves in events, such as the Global Wellness Summit, proved invaluable. During these explorations, we had the privilege of connecting with consultants, professor Gerry Bodeker and Claire Way. Both the expertise of Claire at Spa Strategy [especially on design and layout] and professor Bodeker’s research work on the science behind our core concept became key assets for our new destination.”

Joali Being opened on Bodufushi island in November 2021, providing an immersive, 360-degree wellbeing offering. “Every detail has been meticulously studied, ensuring a thoughtfully crafted guest journey,” says Güral Argat. “We’ve built our offering around four pillars – Mind, Skin, Microbiome and Energy. For me, the Mind pillar resonates the most because it offers solace and rejuvenation, helping people find balance.”

These pillars work in combination with a central theme of weightlessness, which informs

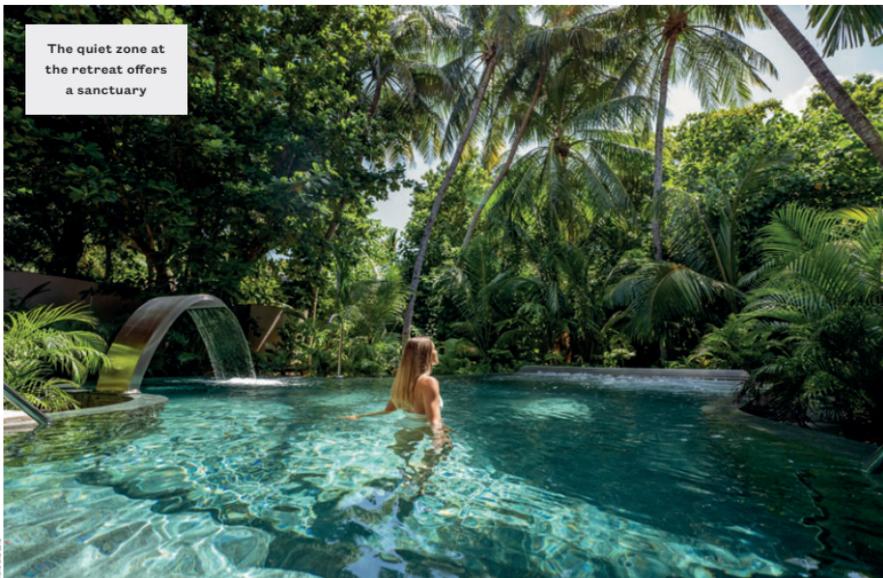
*Devoting an entire island to transformative wellbeing requires a deeper understanding of the industry’s nuances*



Spaces have been created to promote a feeling of lightness and joy

The quiet zone at the retreat offers a sanctuary

PHOTO: DAVID BAKER



the resort's biophilic design principles, with spaces created to facilitate the flow of energy and promote lightness and joy.

There's a moment of symbolic arrival at the Gate of Zero welcome jetty, which invites guests to shake off excesses and baggage. But it's the four pillars that really guide individual journeys, with a 15-minute pre-arrival Wellbeing Consultation followed up by a 60-minute Integrative Lifestyle Assessment on the first day, performed by senior wellness consultants such as ayurvedic doctors, naturopaths, a TCM specialist and nutritionists. After this diagnostic assessment, guests are assigned one of the four pillars, with meal selections, treatments, workshops and movement guided by this choice.

While there are 13 pre-designed packages, 95 per cent of guests have a personalised programme.

#### FOUR PILLARS OF HEALTH

"Our practices are rooted in the four pillars, to align with the broader scope of wellbeing," Gural Argat explains. "In my personal view, there's a difference between wellbeing and wellness, with the former encompassing physical, social and mental health while the latter generally focuses on physical health and preventative care."

The facilities on the island are indeed truly comprehensive, from a herbology centre to watsu pool, cryotherapy chamber to sound therapy hall, culinary learning centre to meditation deck and aufguss sauna to



Entering the spa at Joali Being

Himalayan salt inhalation room. The island's 68 villas are matched by 39 treatment rooms, a ratio reflective of the wellbeing focus. Multidisciplinary studio Autoban, responsible for designing both Joali resorts, has created a series of incredible, high-ceilinged structures that reinforce connections to the island's rich natural vegetation through organic indoor-outdoor transitions.

Gural Argat visits the island regularly, most recently staying with her family for a month. Her feedback on treatments is relayed to the resort team of 350 staff. As a fan of the Mind pillar, two therapeutic experiences stood out during her last stay, as she explains: "Aligned with our philosophy of 'joy in weightlessness',

## TARGETING THE WELLNESS TRAVELLER

Picking up awards from Condé Nast to Forbes, Joali Being is attracting consumers who are keen to be seen at the next big thing in luxury Maldivian hospitality. Such is this demand that the resort could fill its spacious villas with this business – occupancy, at its highest rate since opening, has hit 70 per cent. However, the resort's senior management is determined to preserve the centrality of wellbeing and is working closely with travel agents and influencers to give the industry a chance to get to grips with the proposition.

The aim is to increase the ratio of wellness travellers. Although the resort is unable to disclose what that ratio is, it reveals the repeat business from this guest pool is high, at around 25-30 per cent. While guests don't have to choose a retreat programme to visit, a short complimentary wellbeing consultation is available should they wish to convert during their stay.



PHOTO: GUY LAWRENCE



PHOTO: GUY LAWRENCE

- ▶ I found our watsu treatment to be particularly transformative. The experience of floating and being guided gently through the water was incredibly profound, allowing me to let go of physical and mental tension and leading to a sense of inner peace. Sound healing, curated by the talented [visiting] practitioner Aurelio Hammer, was also a soul-enriching journey, with the ethereal sounds and vibrations leading to a state of deep relaxation and introspection."

### FEMALE EMPOWERMENT

Güral Argat faced logistical challenges when it came to persuading a small army of professionals to relocate to Bodufushi. The resort team, drawn from more than 30 nationalities, has a female ratio of 35 per cent, the highest in the local hospitality sector. This is no accident, as Güral Argat is renowned for championing female entrepreneurship, with her glassware company dominated almost entirely by women.

Senior managers at Joali Being work hard on staff retention – an issue for Maldivian resorts, which find it hard to keep young, ambitious employees on one island for more than a year. A weekly wellbeing

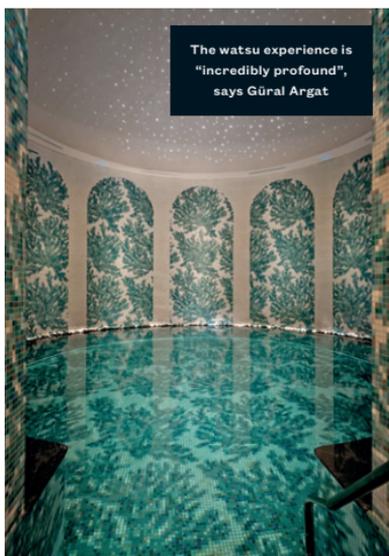
While there are 13 pre-designed packages, 95 per cent of programmes are personalised



*The island's 68 villas are matched by 39 treatment rooms, a ratio reflective of the wellbeing focus*

programme for staff includes massages, nutritional activities, access to the pool and gym and regular sports tournaments to keep up spirits. This helps create a close-knit camaraderie and some employees have been with Joali Being since launch.

This also means staff can share the resort's wellbeing intentions in a natural, non-intrusive way. The food is delicious, nutritious and plentiful, for example, but employees may need to explain why salt or a traditional bread basket aren't automatically available, or why tea is gently promoted as a beverage of choice, rather than alcohol. This doesn't mean alcohol isn't available, it's just not advertised. Instead, it's matched by an equally appealing list of nutritionally beneficial mocktails. ▶





The aim is to increase the ratio of wellness travellers

#### ► EVOLUTION AND EXPANSION

The ambition to become established as a global leader in wellbeing hospitality means keeping technology and treatments updated. Reiki, chi nei tsang and outdoor group cycling are all being added to the menu, along with treatments from magnesium-rich product line The Tides Wellness and anti-inflammatory skincare brand Dr Barbara Sturm.

Most recently, the spa at the original Joali resort has been rebranded as Joali Being Cure to create an "elevated experience". It now offers a taster of the signature massages, specialised treatments and a network of visiting experts from the wellbeing island.

Overall, the goal is for the Maldives to become a viable alternative to Thailand or the Middle East for wellness travellers.

Beyond Bodufushi, Gural Argat is eyeing expansion for the Joali brand, as she confirms: "We're open to opportunities in other captivating destinations around the world." Meanwhile, back in Turkey, Gurok has revealed a new hospitality brand called Bijal. Given Gural Argat's mission to keep driving the tourism arm of her family business, could this become her next introduction to the Maldives?

*Championing female entrepreneurship: Joali Being has the highest ratio of women on staff locally*

Tea is gently promoted as the beverage of choice over alcohol





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# LEARNING FROM THE EXPERTS

**D**uring my three-night stay at Joali Being, I make the most of the complimentary wellbeing activities programmed daily, gaining insights from the experts I interact with.

There's a fascinating talk with senior nutritionist Sneha Rai who offers simple, attainable advice that's applicable in real life, while a perfume-making workshop took me on a journey of discovery into how our mind processes smells.

In the Aktar Herbology Centre, director of wellbeing Magdy Abdelaty talks me through the healing properties of medicinal herbs used in treatments and I'm bowled over by a session led by Polina Samargina – the only certified tea master in the Maldives – learning how good quality tea, brewed correctly, brings about so many positive effects in the body, from boosting metabolism to strengthening bones.

Learning aside, my sound healing and watsu experiences were particularly high points.

## SOUND HEALING AT SEDA

I've undertaken sound healing in a few different settings around the world but when I'm led into the low-lit sound therapy hall at Joali Being, I'm impressed. There are more than 10 svaram instruments, including chimes and gongs, surrounding a specially constructed massage bed called the Nidranator, under which 50 strings and a resonator are installed (see p61). Having had a consultation with my therapist, who specialises in energy and chakras, I'm invited to lie on the bed.

Over the next 45 minutes, my mind rushes through thought after thought as vibrations reverberate through my entire being. But at some point, my mind quietsens. I start drifting off and I'm surprised when it comes to an end. Post-treatment, my therapist explains which chakra she felt was particularly blocked, an observation that chimes with the hormonal shifts I've been feeling.



Talks were fascinating and experiences were truly moving, says Dhillon

*As I whirl in the water, twinkling lights add to the otherworldly atmosphere*

## AQUATIC MASSAGE

In the glorious domed surroundings of the mosaic-lined watsu pool, I'm invited to put my trust in the warm and empathetic therapist Josephine Wairimu Njenga. Weightless, but supported by neck and arm floats, she moves me around the warm water with small movements at first, getting me used to the different angles and shapes she's choreographing. There's a growing sense of freedom: I almost feel balletic at points, far more graceful than when on land.

Josephine stretches parts of my body, focusing on acupressure points and a form of aquatic massage to release energy blockages and tension points. As I whirl, the twinkling lights from above add to the otherworldly atmosphere. It's a truly moving experience. ●



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All Amra treatments draw on the latest innovations in skincare science

# Tailored opulence

AMRA Skincare shares its bespoke approach to crafting unforgettably decadent spa journeys

**D**ifferentiation is key to success in the luxury spa industry – a field where Amra Skincare has emerged as the artisan of bespoke spa treatments that elevate spas from everyday facilities to award-winning wellness destinations.

The premium brand is celebrated for combining results-driven bioactive ingredients with the latest scientific advancements to create personalised facials, massages and body treatments that balance indulgence with results.

A dedication to efficacy is rooted in Amra's robust R&D approach, which involves a meticulous selection of active ingredients backed by scientific research.

Boasting a portfolio of nine collections, Amra has emerged as the epitome of results-driven skincare, with its opulent spa accounts consistently ranked as the world's finest. Amra graces the treatment rooms of renowned luxury spas globally, including Atlantis The Royal

and Bürgenstock Resort, as well as properties managed by esteemed names such as St Regis, Waldorf Astoria, The Langham and Four Seasons.

Amra's partners are privileged to have access to a curated spectrum of unique treatments that are designed to deliver quantifiable outcomes, consistently surpass customer expectations and stimulate revenue growth. Luxury spas discover a dynamic ally in the artistry of Amra's personalised service.

Products merge opulence and pioneering science



**Amra's Micro-Cellular Actives**  
*are the powerhouse behind its results-driven skincare*

### SHAPING THE VISION

Once a spa has partnered with Amra, the team conducts a comprehensive analysis of its aspirations and goals. Amra's treatment development team then closely collaborates with the operator to refine a clear and detailed business vision.

This plan extends beyond mere objectives, also taking into account the complete journey the spa aims to craft for its clientele, ensuring a turnkey approach to its development and implementation.

Part of this strategy is shaped by a meticulous analysis of neighbouring competitors' strategies and offerings. In doing so, Amra identifies opportunities to innovate and differentiate, ensuring that its partner spas are always a prominent destination on the map.

### GUEST-FIRST APPROACH

Once the benchmarks are established, the focus shifts to the guest experience - the essence of every spa.

Amra operates with a Tri Pillar Approach, offering its spa partners three distinct spa proposals: City; Signature; and Resort.

Whether addressing the urbanite's struggle with pollution or the jet-setter's quest for rejuvenation, Amra will help spas to create a concept that will guarantee that each treatment aligns seamlessly with its client's lifestyle and specific skin concerns.



Amra has recently partnered with the spa at the St Regis Red Sea Resort

PHOTO: ST REGIS

### URBAN SPA

Amra City Spas benefit from the brand's selection of urban-centric treatments, strategically formulated to combat the effects of pollution with potent bioactive ingredients that detoxify and strengthen the skin. These rituals serve as essential respites for city dwellers, offering a shield against the relentless pace of urban life.

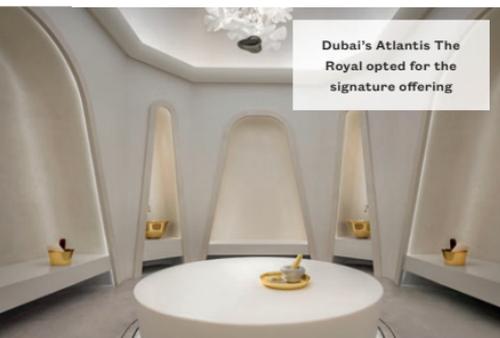
Designed to deliver instant results, these treatments offer express solutions targeting the effects of jet-lag and clarifying therapies tailored for the business-minded individual.

For instance, the Pearl Urban Barrier Facial on offer at St Regis Riyadh is meticulously crafted to fortify the skin against modern world pollutants. Featuring Amra's Tahitian Black Pearl complex, this ritual supports elastin fibrils, enhancing luminosity and promoting natural exfoliation. Advanced AFR technology eradicates impurities and repairs free radical damage, while PPF+ strengthens the skin's barrier, offering unparalleled protection against environmental pollution.

### SIGNATURE SPA

Amra's opulent Signature Spa concept showcases a selection of its most signature rituals, each a testament to the spa's unique identity. These offerings encompass cutting-edge skincare solutions and advanced active facials, ranging from anti-ageing peptides to cellular renewing technology.

Having opted for the Signature Spa proposal, Atlantis The Royal in Dubai indulges its guests with the luxurious 24kt Gold Hot Stone Massage. This opulent treatment envelops guests in golden decadence, courtesy of Amra's exclusive 24kt Gold Intracellular treatment oil and 24kt Gold plated massage stones. The experience culminates with the application of Amra's Precious Drops of Gold serum, bestowing the ultimate luminescence upon the body. ▶



Dubai's Atlantis The Royal opted for the signature offering

PHOTO: ST REGIS

The 24kt Gold Hot Stone Massage



► RESORT SPA

The Resort Spa concept completes Amra's trio of offerings and features treatments designed to help guests experience a decadent retreat into indulgence. Each one of these restorative olfactory regimens help to rejuvenate both the skin and mind.

The brand's Resort Spa partners – such as The St Regis Red Sea Resort – are provided with treatments that seamlessly integrate with extended experiences, such as Amra's Olfactory Yoga or Meditation, or participation in lifestyle events focused on skincare and wellness.

PIONEERING SKINCARE TECHNOLOGY

All three of Amra's offerings are super-charged by the brand's high-performance Micro-Cellular Actives – a range of innovative molecular agents formulated to redefine Amra's clinically-driven skincare applications for unparalleled results.

Each active has been formulated to counteract particular skincare concerns, ranging from the effects of environmental pollution, low cell turnover and dehydration, to the impact of blue light and UV, men's skin health and more.

Emblematic of the brand's relentless pursuit of skincare excellence and dedication to science, these efficacious ingredients form the cornerstone of a results-oriented strategy that resonates with each guest's distinct lifestyle and skincare requirements.

Amra has enriched its nine skincare ranges with a unique formula of the bespoke actives, which provide both immediate enhancements as well as enduring rejuvenation.

The premium Rarity Collection represents the pinnacle of its offering, fuelled by the brand's sophisticated StemCell8 complex featuring extract from the stem and flower of an orchid, this range helps shield the skin from oxidative harm and urban pollutants while optimising intracellular repair.

The powerful formula is further bolstered by extracts of green caviar, gold, diamond, platinum,

*Amra Skincare is grounded in advanced scientific research*

ruby, sapphire and meteorite and is meticulously engineered to foster cellular rejuvenation and deliver results that resonate with clinical precision.

With a visionary approach to skincare, Amra focuses on both pre-emptive and restorative measures in its formulations and remains committed to proactive dermal care that fuses indulgence with scientific advancement.

FINDING THE PERFECT SOLUTION

Amra's ethos is elegantly simple yet profoundly impactful: every individual's skin tells a unique story.

As such, its treatment journey always begins with a thorough consultation, where experts explore the often overlooked facets of their guests' lives. Are they contending with sleep disturbances? Is their skin exposed to urban pollutants? Are there indications of hormonal imbalances? Each query is a thread woven into a tapestry that informs the customised skincare regimen at Amra.

Through a bespoke methodology and unwavering dedication to individuality, Amra is driving the future of spa, where every individual is guided towards their optimal self. ●

**For more information about AMRA Skincare contact [info@amraskincare.com](mailto:info@amraskincare.com) and/or go to [www.amraskincare.com](http://www.amraskincare.com)**



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The Buchinger Wilhelmi fasting method is almost 105 years old, but the family behind it are still pushing ahead with exciting research and innovations. Megan Whitby talks to the father-son duo driving change



# THE WILHELMIS



Raimund and Leo Wilhelmi (back); Katharina Rohrer-Zaiser, Victor and Francoise Wilhelmi (front)

At the bucolic setting of the Buchinger Wilhelmi integrative medicine clinic on the shores of Lake Constance, south Germany, a 93-year-old guest has legendary status for visiting twice annually for the past 40 years. He's one of more than 7,000 clients from around the world who come to either the German

site or sister property in Marbella, Spain, for its famous fasting method each year. The method, developed by medical doctor and philosopher Dr Otto Buchinger in 1920, involves a daily intake of organic fruit juice and soup averaging 200-250 calories, accompanied by gentle physical activity.

Programmes starting at 10 days (see p80) are used to prevent and treat a wide range of pre-existing conditions. Most recently, in-house researchers are looking at fasting impacts when combined with weight loss drugs, while its effect on Alzheimer's and multiple sclerosis are in line for investigation.

Other innovations include adding music and art therapy to the mix, which, over the years, has already been bolstered with more than 250 different modalities. Plans for further sites and the creation of an interior design concept – inspired by a partnership with architect Matteo Thun – are also on the wish list.



The fasting method  
includes gentle  
physical activity daily

### ***Four generations of fasting***

What sets Buchinger Wilhelmi apart the most, however, is its nurturing touch – thanks to being a family-run business spanning four generations. Otto Buchinger first passed the baton to his daughter Maria (Wilhelmi by marriage) who opened the second clinic. Her children – Raimund and Jutta and their respective partners – later took over, with each couple managing a clinic.

Now, the business' future lies in the hands of Otto's great-grandchildren, Katharina Rohrer-Zaiser and Victor Wilhelmi, who oversee the Marbella clinic, and Leo Wilhelmi, who heads up the flagship facility in Lake Constance.

*Spa Business* sat down with father-and-son duo, Raimund and Leo, for an update about the business and plans for the next chapter. ▶



*Fasting is a gift we  
found and developed  
and it's nothing  
short of a miracle*



*Art has a physical effect on your body and fasting is a deeply physical experience*



▸ **Raimund Wilhelmi**  
*President*

Raimund has dedicated more than 40 years of his life to Buchinger Wilhelmi – 34 of which he spent running the flagship with his wife and head of the research institute, Dr Françoise Wilhelmi de Toledo. In 2019, he was succeeded as managing director by Leo and began serving as group president and chair of the advisory board.

"The men in our family nurtured the innovation and entrepreneurial side of Buchinger Wilhelmi alongside the women, but the women gave it spirit," he says. "My mother – known as the Grand Dame of Fasting – loved caring for people and her legacy lives on in the compassionate way we treat every guest like family.

"This impacts every step of how we operate, from the way our staff warmly embrace guests, to the sense of belonging and community that's fostered between fellow fasters." Tellingly, 70 per cent of clientele at Lake Constance are repeat customers and many say they feel a powerful urge to return and top-up after their first, often transformational, visit.

Raimund adds: "Fasting is the most powerful, non-pharmacological, intervention in medicine.



The flagship clinic in Germany sits on the shore of Lake Constance



It is a gift we found and developed and it's nothing short of a miracle. Our offering is unique because we're a family-owned clinic – not a resort – with a science-first approach. If you couple this with our natural healing environments, the tangible effects guests get from fasting and our exceptionally strong team, we've created a business model that creates the need for people to return."

### ***A people business***

Guests are in a delicate state when fasting so it's imperative the team can empathise with this, says Raimund. In response, Buchinger Wilhelmi ensures every employee fasts at least once before starting their role. This includes the team of 10 doctors at Lake Constance and its 40 practitioners who specialise in everything from rheumatology and naturopathy, to homoeopathy and diabetes. Massage therapists, counsellors, nutritionists and personal trainers bolster the offering. "The staff are deeply committed to providing guests with the very best care, both physically and mentally," says Raimund.

He describes Buchinger Wilhelmi as a people business that's heavy on personnel – "but, we



know our customers love it because that's why they return." In fact, staff are so well received that some regular guests will decline to visit until their preferred team member is available.

It's perhaps no surprise then, that Raimund is keen to expand the brand with further locations.

### ***Psychology, art and mental strength***

At present, his focus is on how the clinics can support guests mentally – something he believes is just as profound as the physical impact of getting the most out of the fasting journey.

During his tenure, this led him to supplement the therapeutic team with psychologists and also to hire an art consultant. He explains: "Art has a physical effect on your body and fasting is a deeply physical experience. To me, art is capable of enhancing how you feel." ▶

The average age of guests has dipped from 50 to 45 in recent years



► He feels that the environment, music, architecture and art that guests are exposed to while fasting can enrich their experience. This inspired him to establish both music and art therapy as staple offerings at Buchinger Wilhelmi and now both feature heavily in the clinics' activity schedule.

Last year a refresh of parts of the flagship site in Germany sparked another idea. The minimalist, nature-centric renovation of its fasting salon and dining area was led by Italian architect and designer Matteo Thun - who also happens to be a long-term guest.

Raimund says there are ambitions to develop a Buchinger Wilhelmi interior design concept that can be used throughout their locations. It will guide the choice of fabrics, artwork, lighting and furniture placement, influencing how people use a room, adding intuitiveness and ultimately enhancing the overall experience.

## Leo Wilhelmi MD, Lake Constance

Following in his father's footsteps, Leo has overseen the Lake Constance clinic for almost five years and is working on its next chapter.

The team recently rolled out modern programming, including IV therapy, hyperbaric oxygen therapy, microbiome analyses and epigenetic testing.

The clinic has also welcomed two new specialists in psychological therapy and Traditional Chinese Medicine, expanded its meditation and yoga activities and announced a partnership with Berlin-based cosmetics brand, I+M, to launch an all-natural cosmetics line.



*Investigating how fasting reacts in combination with weight-loss drugs is on the agenda*



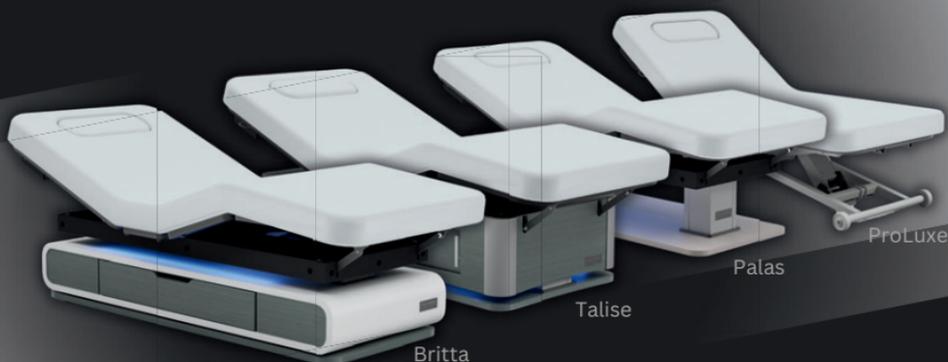


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## HISTORY: A DEEPER DIVE

2024 marks the 70th anniversary of Buchinger Wilhelmi, a clinic on the shores of Lake Constance in south Germany which specialises in the fasting method founded by Dr Otto Buchinger in 1920.

Featuring 150 rooms, the clinic, together with its 101-key sister property in Marbella, Spain, receives more than 7,000 guests from 60 countries annually.

During their stay, guests receive consultations with a doctor, daily nurse check-ups and have 24-hour access to medical personnel as well as a varied daily activity schedule including yoga, spa treatments, hiking, meditation, music concerts, art classes and cooking demonstrations.

Packages range from 10 days, two weeks or three weeks and



Dr Otto Buchinger created the fasting method in 1920

5-10 per cent of guests stay longer – with the maximum stay capped at 40 days. The starting price for a 10-day package is €2,745 (US\$2,978, £2,340) per person.

### ► *Tech innovations*

Fasting is the crux of Buchinger Wilhelmi's model but Leo says the team is constantly honing the offering in line with technological advancements.

"Obviously, we can't make fasting technologically dependent but we can use tech to support it," he says, revealing that there are plans to integrate nutrition tracking via a glucose monitor and app and to roll out sports testing such as spirometry, ergonomic assessments and breath analysis.

Leo also has ambitions to develop a supplement line which will support the microbiome and digestive system after fasting. This, he says, is a crucial step as the "two weeks post-treatment are where you regenerate everything you've depleted as the body is in super repair mode".

Another big focus for Leo is research. In-house scientists have already demonstrated how the Buchinger Wilhelmi fasting method has positive effects on weight loss, cardiovascular health, detoxification, liver health, blood pressure,

mood, blood sugar levels, cholesterol, arthritis and Type 2 diabetes. However, he wants to uncover more information about the physiological mechanisms at play and reveal further benefits.

### *Research goals*

Cancer, Long COVID and the microbiome are current areas of research, although this work remains in the early stages.

In the long term, the goal is to produce concrete evidence that fasting can help with Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and multiple sclerosis.

Investigating how fasting combines with weight-loss drugs such as Ozempic and Wegovy is on the agenda too, as growing numbers of guests are intrigued by this. "These [weight loss drugs] aren't things that we believe in



A wide range of healing therapies are offered to support fasting

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The library at Buchinger Wilhelmi Marbella

## “ Plans for further sites and creating a interior design concept are on the wish list

from a philosophical point of view, because our approach is always a non-pharmacological one for longevity, healthspan and health,” he says. “But, it’s human nature to avoid hard work and look for a quick fix so we need to learn more.”

### **Longer stays, more men**

In 2023, the average length of stay at Buchinger Wilhelmi Lake Constance grew from 10 to 14.5 days, which Leo says is a testament to both the rise in hybrid working as well as the overwhelming re-prioritisation of health. He feels some consumers now place the same importance on booking health breaks as their regular holidays.

Other key patterns include guests increasingly booking in groups, a fall in their average age from 50 to 45 and a more even 50/50 split between male and female guests. The latter in particular marks a change from pre-pandemic times when the guest base was predominantly women visiting for prevention, while a small proportion of men would come following a health crisis.

“For men to visit a clinic like ours before the pandemic was often an admission of weakness. We used to have male guests asking us not to reveal they were staying because people would think they were burned out. Now, the mindset has shifted and men are no longer ashamed to invest in their health,” he explains.

### **Pioneers of fasting**

Looking ahead, the Wilhelms intend to safeguard their legacy traditions while at the same time continuing to explore opportunities to innovate and grow.

“We’re in the business of empowering people to live a healthy and fulfilling life and remaining a family operation is the guarantee for our success,” Leo says. “We want to continue to be the pioneers of fasting and push for our approach to become the best in the world. This is why we remain so committed to conducting research, publishing what we know and constantly evolving our unique and powerful fasting approach.” ●

# BY ROYAL APPOINTMENT

Lindsay Madden-Nadeau has a hypno healing experience at Atlantis The Royal, Kerzner's sister property to the iconic Atlantis The Palm



**W**ith the vast array of choices consumers are overwhelmed by in Dubai, starting anything new there isn't easy. Add the anticipation of an iconic sister property, years of ongoing construction, world-class architects, restaurateurs and esteemed clients, there's no room to disappoint.

Following in the footsteps of Atlantis The Palm, which launched in 2008, Atlantis The Royal burst onto the scene in January 2023 with a celebrity-filled grand reveal, which included Beyoncé's first live performance in five years. Both are operated by Kerzner International, which also includes One&Only and the new fitness-focused Siro brands in its portfolio. Nearly 12 months

after opening, is this 795-room property still managing to deliver a star-worthy experience?

## GRAND ARRIVAL

Sitting on the exterior crescent overlooking Palm Jumeirah, the location of Atlantis The Royal creates a destination in itself. It feels like you're getting away without it being a hassle to reach.

Stepping into the spacious lobby on an early Friday morning, it feels grand yet pleasingly intimate. Having worked in luxury hospitality all of my career, I'm impressed at how the arrival runs like a well-oiled machine - the synergy within departments is indicative of back-of-house and operational excellence that makes the process feel weightless.

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Its location on the exterior crescent of Palm Jumeirah feels like a destination in itself

Atlantis wellness director Lyndell Nelis tells us how well the spas are performing on p86

#### DESIGN QUALITY

On a tour of the hotel, the design quality is apparent. The use of daylight creates a sense of space which is enhanced by soothing, subtle tones in the decor. Exotic marble flooring with sprinkles of gold line the hallways, artistic fountains dance throughout and the use of the 'elements' is distinct and refreshing.

Food and beverage outlets offer something for everyone, with Michelin-star chefs in every corner. This is a true destination for dining.

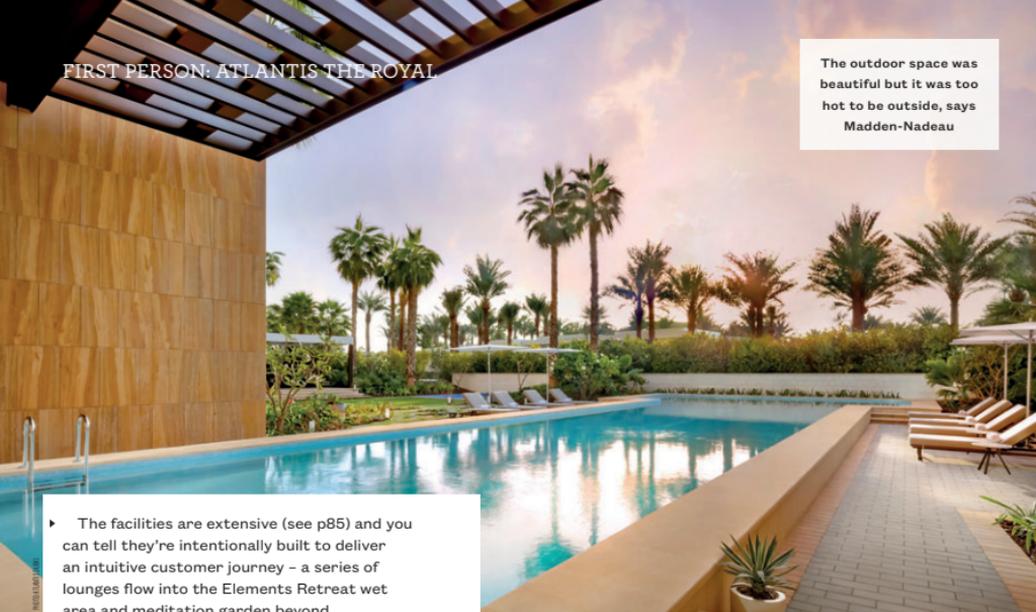
The guestrooms are an absolute luxury with 360-degree viewpoints of the Dubai skyline being a particular highlight. It's evident that no matter what time of the day, the use of light in the room will be exceptional. Other memorable touch points include a pillow menu, Technogym in-room workout kits and a gold toothbrush, comb and razor.

#### HALF-HECTARE SPA

Last but not least we made it to the Awaken spa which, according to marketing material, "offers half a hectare of transformative wellness". As someone who values the essence of design, the large windows and use of daylight provide a feel-good sensation and make everything look ideal. ▶

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The outdoor space was beautiful but it was too hot to be outside, says Madden-Nadeau



► The facilities are extensive (see p85) and you can tell they're intentionally built to deliver an intuitive customer journey – a series of lounges flow into the Elements Retreat wet area and meditation garden beyond.

The ambience and lighting in the chromotherapy lounge is utterly relaxing and the variety of hot and cold experiences in a therapeutic circuit in the Elements Retreat is well-thought-through. However, the rainshower experience is underwhelming as the sound is compromised and the overall installation feels poorly planned.

The outdoor wellness space, with a meditation and yoga pavilion, pool and loungers is beautiful but unfortunately, it was too hot to use it. Making the gardens as lush as possible would also enhance the sense of wellbeing.

“

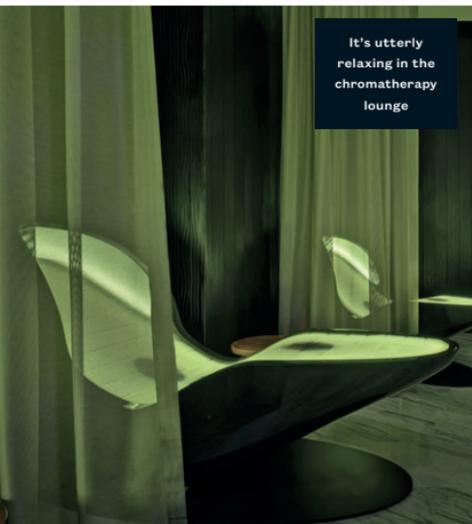
*Training all therapists in reiki is a next-level commitment*

#### NEXT-LEVEL COMMITMENT

Overall, Awaken's treatment menu is a thoughtful one. Price points, starting at AED720 (US\$196, €186, £162) for most 60-minute treatments, are higher than competitors on The Palm, but the breadth of the facilities and services along with the 'destination' perception means you're getting more value in my opinion.

Locally inspired wellbeing traditions such as the six-room Hammam Sensorium experience use La Sultan de Saba and Amra products. And the mix of family, teen and couples treatments presents a unique multilayered approach to appeal to different generations. On top of this, an outstanding selection of products complement one another and are top of the consumer demand list (see above).

Out of four A-List signature therapies, I experienced Hypno Healing comprising a body and head massage complete with sound immersion and deep breathwork. It was a quiet and comfortable treatment. Being asked to choose oils at the start was unexpected and delightful



It's utterly relaxing in the chromotherapy lounge



The flow of experiences  
is intuitive and well-  
thought-through

## SPA FACILITIES AND SUPPLIERS

- ◆ 17 treatment rooms and suites
- ◆ A six-room Hammam Sensorium
- ◆ Changing rooms with heat and hydro facilities
- ◆ Welcome, relaxation and chromotherapy lounges
- ◆ Elements Retreat hydrothermal area featuring halotherapy salt rooms, snow room, vitality pool, charcoal sauna, tepidarium, aromatherapy steamroom and heated ceramic loungers
- ◆ Meditation garden
- ◆ Fitness centre, movement studio and 25m lap pool with aquatic training
- ◆ Product houses include Dr Barbara Sturm, 111Skin, La Sultane de Saba, Amra, Augustinus Bader and Subtle Energies
- ◆ Other suppliers include Lemi, Sommerhuber and HydraFacial
- ◆ Wet spa design and fit-out by Barr+Wray

and the harmonious sound of bow vibrations further set the scene. Melting into my luxurious Lemi bed marked the start of my journey into getting lost and letting go.

All therapists at Awaken are trained in reiki and I love this approach. This is a next-level commitment by the operators to genuinely bring the element of wellness to the table. Indeed, well-trained staff are also evident throughout the hotel.

My visit culminated with lunch at the Mediterranean restaurant Milos where majestic dancing fountains added to the grandiose wow factor. In a first for me, a chef came to my table and – rather than relaying the menu – asked what I wanted. It felt like a customised order and the freshness and flavours were so potent yet simple that I didn't want my meal to end.

“  
*It feels very corporate  
somehow rather  
than authentic*”

### MISSED OPPORTUNITY?

As a local using the facilities, I feel there are better ways the property could attract day spa guests beyond a basic 3-hour spa package. I can't quite place my finger on it, but from a 'nurturing' perspective the approach still feels very corporate somehow rather than authentic and enriching. It has all the right ingredients so it could be doing more to play into the realm of wellness.

It got me thinking, how do modern-day spas curate packages similar to the experiences you get in Bali or India? Is this an opportunity that others are missing too? That said, it wouldn't stop me from returning.

The target market at Atlantis The Royal is elitist, appealing to influencers and high net-worth individuals who can afford the rack rate, which starts at AED4,149 (US\$1,203, €1,126, £978). Russian and British guests were the main visible source markets. Prices are high, but let's face it, they're high everywhere in Dubai and as someone who appreciates excellent service, quality and thoughtfully designed spaces, I'd make it a mission to come back. ●

“

*A definer for us is that all 70 of our spa employees are trained in Reiki I and II*

# LYNDELL NELIS

Katie Barnes gets the lowdown on spa performance and business streamlining from the wellness director for Atlantis Resorts

In its first year of opening, Awaken spa at Atlantis The Royal in Dubai has had to add 16 people to its workforce to keep up with demand. Therapist utilisation is always above 60 per cent and up to 30 per cent of guests have at least two treatments during their stay. It's no wonder that wellness director Lyndell Nelis says the team is "smashing it".

On p82 Lindsay Madden-Nadeau gives her first-person impressions of the spa, which has a lot to live up to considering its sister destination is the iconic Atlantis The Palm. Here, Nelis – a seasoned spa professional of more than 20 years who's worked for leading names such as Shangri-La, Fairmont, Mandarin Oriental and Resense – talks to *Spa Business* about creating an overarching spa concept for both properties as well as streamlining the two operations and standing out in the highly competitive Dubai market.

## How is Awaken at Atlantis The Royal making its mark in Dubai?

It's an extremely competitive market, but we have a clear understanding of who we are. Atlantis The Royal is like a docked cruise ship and 90 per cent of spa visitors are hotel guests rather than locals. The spa at Atlantis The Palm on the other hand has been open 16 years and stands out because it has no off-season. My brief was to create a spa concept for the group that delivers a whole gauntlet of wellness opportunities and then figure out what that looks like at each property.

## How similar are the two spas?

The Awaken brand, which I've been working on for four years, is based on the elements and how they relate to us – Earth represents the physical body and its ability to heal, Water represents emotion and so on. The spas share about 50 per cent of their DNA.

PHOTO: SHANTON



Nelis has created a spa concept for the group and hints at a wider rollout

See p82 for our review of how, or if, Awaken spa at Atlantis The Royal is delivering on its brand promise

HELE ELLIOTT

► There are slightly shorter, more fun treatments at The Palm which people can fit in between other activities, but at The Royal we offer longer, elevated treatments. It's not just a regular stone massage, it's a 24-karat gold stone massage and there's a focus on family where up to four people can come together in a suite and have the same experience. Lemi has even custom-made  $\frac{3}{4}$  size treatment beds for our younger guests which are beautiful.

Nothing possibly ground-breaking there, but it's how it's being delivered...

#### Tell us more about your USPs

A definer for us is that all 70 of our spa employees across the two properties, including our fitness providers and receptionists, are trained in Reiki I and II. We brought in Ewa Mahina, a reiki master from Sweden, to teach staff and she also elevated the knowledge of our in-house reiki master. It's part of our onboarding process and the first week of orientation includes two days of reiki training.

#### What are the benefits of having all employees trained in reiki?

From a business point of view, it means we can use the same service providers between properties. If the spa at The Royal is fully booked, guests can go to The Palm, or we can get therapists to come here. It also means employees don't get bored and with such a big team it means we're not just communicating via a WhatsApp group - we work together energetically and more

90 per cent of spa visitors are hotel guests rather than locals

“

*The spa is performing above and beyond my expectations - and I'm a pretty optimistic person!*

cohesively. Staff turnover is negligible and that speaks volumes given that working at such a high-profile property makes you such a hot commodity.

Guests feel it too. We've created an energetic space that people feel safe in. We work closely with our butlers and incredible VIP Services team so about 70 per cent of bookings come through them and recent stats revealed that of those guests, 30 per cent have a minimum of two treatments during their stay - on consecutive days or soon after. ►

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### What's your most popular treatment?

We have our A-List signatures and another section called our Local List which has therapies such as the Dubai Desert Sand Scrub based on a date, which is revered here. Up to 85 per cent of the treatments we perform come from one of those two categories.

Up to 60 per cent of our business comes from just one treatment - our Awaken Massage which includes an initial crystal consultation, a choice of oils and four slightly different techniques (it's actually like four massages in one) that hit the top 20 muscle groups. It's very therapeutic.

Our second most popular service is a Chakra-Balancing Massage that incorporates tuning forks.

But, to be honest, there's no real sluggish performer. Guests are curious to try different things and we add on lots of extras such as localised cryotherapy, the Theragun and Celluma LED.

### How is business going?

It's performing above and beyond my expectations - and I'm a pretty optimistic person! Therapist utilisation is always above 60 per cent and some days up to 70, 80 or 90. We have 15 treatment rooms and the hammam with six rooms and utilisation for those is very high too. Since opening, I've added 16 people to our headcount including five therapists and reservationists just to handle the sheer volume of calls and information requests. It's really on a growth trajectory.

But, we're very conscious that we're the "in thing" and need to deliver what we're promising to keep up the expectations of our strong brand image and loyal guests.

Families enjoy spa time together in the suites, says Nelis



### Is the plan to take the Awaken brand to Atlantis Sanya in China too?

I think that's a possibility, yes and there are a couple of other projects in the pipeline. But I respect that Atlantis knows who they are - these are huge propositions which aren't just going to pop up anywhere for the sake of being in a cool place. Location is paramount... but watch this space! ●



The Awaken Massage accounts for 60 per cent of business



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# Famous Hawaiian spa transformed with US\$55m revamp

**H**ilton's Grand Wailea, a Waldorf Astoria Resort, in Maui, has unveiled its meticulously reimagined spa. Inspired by the Kilolani – stargazers of ancient Hawaii – the 50,000sq ft sanctuary's concept centres on the Hawaiian moon calendar and is aligned with the natural currents of the world.

Kilolani Spa's transformation is the culmination of a US\$55 million (€50.8 million, £43.5 million) investment and more than two years of work.

Formerly The Spa Grande, the facility opened in its first guise in 1990 among 40 acres of lush tropical gardens, with design by renowned spa consultant Sylvia Sepielli.

## Elevating an icon

The overhaul was led by Tracy Lee, president and founder of TLEE Spas + Wellness, in collaboration with designers from Tihany Design and Rachael McCrory, Hilton's regional director of spa and wellness.

"We wanted to create more than just a spa; we aimed to craft a sanctuary where guests can reconnect with nature, immerse themselves in authentic Hawaiian healing arts and emerge revitalised," explains Michael Lahm, vice president and COO of TLEE Spas.



Sound healing created by Kalei Uwēko'olani includes native chants of wisdom

## Programming continuously evolves in tandem with the anahulu moon cycle

Dale Hipsh says his involvement in the original Grand Wailea led to his lifelong 'love affair with spas'.

Read more at [www.spabusiness.com/dalehipsh](http://www.spabusiness.com/dalehipsh)

The project involved reframing the spa's Roman bathing concept to a quintessentially Hawaiian wellness space featuring authentic cultural touch points, a blended indoor/outdoor design and abundant mixed-gender experiences.

It now offers a contrast bathing circuit with DIY scrub stations, a steamroom, a sauna, a vitality pool, waterfall showers and a reflection garden. Each of these amenities is available as gender-specific experiences which then connect to an expansive co-ed environment featuring the island's first hammam and saltwater flotation pool – along with halotherapy/infrared saunas and a wet lounge.

### Noteworthy additions

Kilolani boasts 40 reconfigured treatment rooms, including four for couples and self-contained suites overlooking the Wailea coastline, as well as four scrub rooms in the hammam.

Other noteworthy additions include The Portal, a multisensorial decompression space that integrates key cultural elements of the Hawaiian moon calendar, sound healing and plant medicine.

Tracy Lee, TLEE Spas president and founder, says: "Kilolani harnesses the pioneering vision and lasting heritage of the island's original wellness destination, delivering experiences that reflect a deep reverence for nature, active lifestyles and authentic healing practices steeped in the soul and spirit of Maui."

### Hawaiian healing

The spa's programming continuously evolves in tandem with the current anahulu (10-day moon cycle) and features hand-selected native botanicals, holistic ▶

The Portal is a multisensorial decompression space

## NEW OPENING: KILOLANI SPA

Indoor/  
outdoor design  
is a key feature

### KILOLANI SPA SUPPLIERS

- ❖ **Spa consultant:** TLEE Spas + Wellness
- ❖ **Hydrothermal consultant:** Bradford Wellness
- ❖ **Interior design:** Tihany Design
- ❖ **Equipment:** Living Earth Crafts and Lemi
- ❖ **Fitness:** Peloton, Tonal and Technogym
- ❖ **Medical wellness:** The Biostation, Future Cosmetics and Haute Beauty
- ❖ **Body and skincare:** Ala Lani, Cause + Medic, Botanika Life, Cryo T-Shock, HydraFacial, Jetpeel, Kauai Pharmacy, Lokelani, Malie, Ola Tropical Apothecary, Pure Noni and U'a
- ❖ **Salon:** Oribe, Dazzle Dry, Shellac and Alana Hair Care



Tracy Lee

*Kilolani Spa harnesses the lasting heritage of the island's original wellness destination*

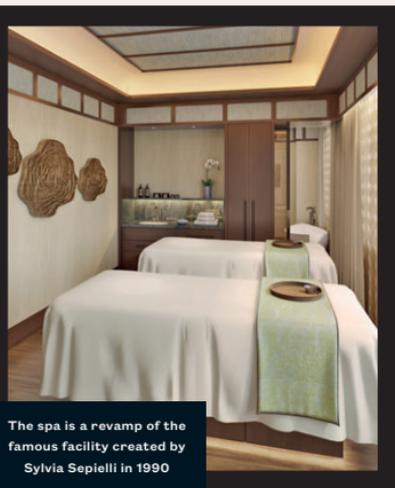
► bodywork treatments and mindfulness practices enhanced by modern innovations such as the Mynd-Sync vibroacoustic, zero-gravity lounger from LEC.

The menu ranges from Hawaiian cleansing ceremonies, breathwork and astrology readings to a new type of sound healing incorporating oli – native chants for wisdom. The latter has been developed by the property's cultural programme manager Kalei Uwēko'olani.

Programming was overseen by Jessica Shea, Hilton's VP of wellness, retail and leisure operations in the Americas and David Erlich, the hotel's spa director.

In addition, there's a separate medical wellness clinic operated by Florida-based practice, the Biostation. Here, guests undergo advanced testing on more than 100 biomarkers and in-depth personal consultations with a medical provider who then tailors treatment plans incorporating things such as bioidentical hormone therapy, nutrient therapy, sexual health programmes, medical aesthetics, weight loss and more.

A wellness café, a meditation lounge, a relaxation space, a 2,500sq m fitness centre and a full-service salon complete the offer. ●



The spa is a revamp of the famous facility created by Sylvia Sepielli in 1990

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*Regenerative agriculture enhances the soil ecosystem, producing healthier crops yielding more powerful extracts that have clinically proven effects on the skin*



# Stand for regeneration

Comfort Zone is focused on growing the future by embracing regenerative organic agriculture



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

Inspired by its mission to support both skin and soil regeneration, Comfort Zone is fostering product innovation and taking climate action by using new proprietary ingredients cultivated by growers following the principles of regenerative organic agriculture. Comfort Zone is a sustainability pioneer, having achieved B Corp status back in 2016, while a recent recertification achieved a score of 123.5 points. The company's commitment to regeneration also recently led to the foundation of the first

The limited-edition soap bar with organic *Achillea millefolium*

European Regenerative Organic Center (EROC) by the Davines Group Village in Parma, Italy, in 2022, in partnership with the Rodale Institute.

Now in 2024, Comfort Zone is proud to say it's starting to use extracts of *Achillea millefolium* – grown in its own fields for the first time – in a limited-edition Stand for Regeneration hair and body wash bar.

This product will be available starting April 2024 from Comfort Zone's partner spas and beauty centres and also online at [www.comfortzoneskin.com](http://www.comfortzoneskin.com)

Extracts of *Achillea millefolium* from regenerative agriculture are also used in Comfort Zone's Sublime Skin anti-aging line, as it has been proven to stimulate skin tone and softness, as well as boosting the production of collagen by +35 per cent\*.

## MITIGATING CLIMATE CHANGE

Regenerative organic agriculture goes beyond biodiversity protection: it rehabilitates and enhances the entire ecosystem, offering an ever-more positive approach by sequestering carbon in the soil.

Comfort Zone's goal is to research 100 active botanical ingredients from regenerative organic agriculture by 2030. ●

More: [www.comfortzoneskin.com](http://www.comfortzoneskin.com)  
Join us and #standforregeneration

\* In-vitro test after 48 hours on Fibroblasts





*Achillea millefolium* from regenerative organic agriculture is used in Sublime Skin Serum

## THE REGENERATIVE SCIENTISTS

Comfort Zone innovation is supported by its own internal R&D lab, in synergy with its botanical research department and the co-founded European Regenerative Organic Center in Parma, Italy



**EVE MERINVILLE**

Comfort Zone R&D director

With over 20 years' experience in the skin care industry, Eve leads Comfort Zone's innovation and formulation team of experts to develop clinically-proven, effective-by-nature solutions.



**DARIO FORNARA**

Comfort Zone EROC research director

With a PhD in ecology, Dario is an author and co-author of over 90 scientific publications, his studies at EROC are proving the multiple beneficial effects of biodiversity and regenerative practices on soil health.



**DR SIMON JACKSON**

Comfort Zone pharmacognosist

With a PhD pharmacy in pharmacognosy and 30 years' experience in industry, Simon's expertise supports Comfort Zone's R&D in selecting and growing proprietary botanical ingredients.

EVENT REPORT

# Hotting up

Thermal water aficionados from around the world gather at Murrieta Hot Springs to learn and connect.

Jane Kitchen reports from California

Host venue Murrieta Hot Springs was in its pre-opening stages

*What makes this event so powerful is the strong relationships that come out of our time together*

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This year's gathering attracted 170 participants (the most to date), including *Spa Business*' Jane Kitchen (back row, fourth from right)

There are more than 50 hot springs projects in development in the US  
[www.spabusines.com/thermalusa](http://www.spabusines.com/thermalusa)

**S**amuel del Sol, the owner of Termas del Sol hot springs in Chile, is looking to develop his facility into one of the most preeminent thermal spas globally. But, he admits, "living in an area as remote as Patagonia, we are distanced from what other hot springs around the world are doing".

Looking for inspiration and perspectives, he attended the fifth annual Hot Springs Connection for hot spring operators worldwide.

The largest event yet, this year's gathering attracted 170 participants at Murrieta Hot Springs in California, USA. Held on 8-11 January, it offered a mix of speakers, a trade show and trips to local thermal spa icons such as Glen Ivy and the freshly unveiled Spa at Séc-he.

Exhibitors made up 10 per cent of the attendees and included Book4Time, Gharieni, Tara Spa Therapy and Universal Companies, while spa consultants such as Lynn Curry of Curry Spa Consulting and Karen Golden of Dwell Concepts for Belgravia Group also came to learn and network. Although American participants dominate the event, five other countries were represented with Gold waving the flag for Australia and del Sol for Chile.

### Murrieta sneak peek

A conference highlight was a hardhat tour of Murrieta and its 50-plus geothermal pools and extensive facilities which opened to the public a month later.

"We spent 18 months creating the framework of our wellness offerings," said David Dronet, owner of Olympus Real Estate Group, the parent company of Murrieta. He revealed that standout features include a contrast bathing circuit, a panoramic rooftop sauna and a terra thermal mud loft. "We wanted to think about how we can impact wellness as a complement to the waters," he added.

Outlining the opportunities and challenges of restoring the historic property is something that

resonated with many attendees. Usually, hot springs sites in the US are small family-owned businesses without spa and wellness facilities. Seeing what Murrieta had planned provided much inspiration.

### Helping to navigate issues

Perhaps more importantly, the Hot Springs Association, which runs the conference, also helps these small businesses navigate industry-specific issues.

Damian Albright, project manager for Quinn's Hot Springs Resort in Montana, for example, explained how precipitated silica, which is common in many natural thermal sources, can corrode copper pipes and cause misreading in temperature valves.

Meanwhile, Richard Nash, CEO of Nash Construction Company, detailed how 3D imaging for things like mechanical rooms is now a reality, helping with



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Investment in thermal spa facilities in Australia and New Zealand totals AU\$550 million in recent years  
[www.spabusiness.com/thermalauz](http://www.spabusiness.com/thermalauz)

PHOTO: STEVE KOTWIK/PHOTOFEST.COM

PHOTO: MARIANNE



Hot Springs Association's Vicky Nash (third from left) with attendees from Chile and Australia



Field trips included a visit to the nearby Spa at Séc-he

**Hot springs operators need a united front to address the hodgepodge of regulatory, legal, insurance and construction challenges they face**

► construction challenges. "Hot mineral water is not like any other water," he explained, noting that many who work in the space are pool designers rather than hot springs designers. "Hot springs require specialised equipment, piping, pumps, filtration, chemical treatment, water quality control and water collection, storage and discharge systems."

Geothermal energy consultant Jeff Birkby outlined concerns about current standards in natural flow through, a process by which thermal water flows in and out of the pools every few hours so that chlorine is not needed. These standards vary immensely from state to state (and country to country). New research Birkby is conducting aims to create a national standard for flow-through rates based on evidence of what the minimum replacement rate should be for hygiene – a welcome development for many hot springs owners.

"It's important for the hot springs resorts to have a united front in addressing the hodgepodge of regulatory, legal, insurance and construction challenges they face," said David Wickline, founder of Alchemy Resorts, who has worked in the sector since the 80s. "Hot springs resorts are typically owned and operated as independent small businesses that can ill afford the high costs of diverse regulatory and legal challenges. The Hot Springs Association can consolidate

expert sources of information and lobbying efforts to help reduce the costs facing individual properties, but that are common challenges to all of them."

**Positive energy**

In the evenings, conference delegates had further opportunities to connect and discuss business while they soaked in the thermal baths, with contrast therapy circuits guided by Dr Marcus Coplin, medical director at Murrieta, on offer.

"What makes this event so powerful is the strong relationships that come out of our time together," said Jessica Meath, executive director of the Hot Springs Association. "We learn from each other and take care of each other – and that shows in the enthusiasm and positive energy that occurs during and after the conference." ●

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The beautiful Hoar Cross Hall now has a luxury gym by Matrix Fitness

# HIGH END

Hoar Cross Hall has a new gym to match its award-winning hotel and spa. We find out more about the transformation

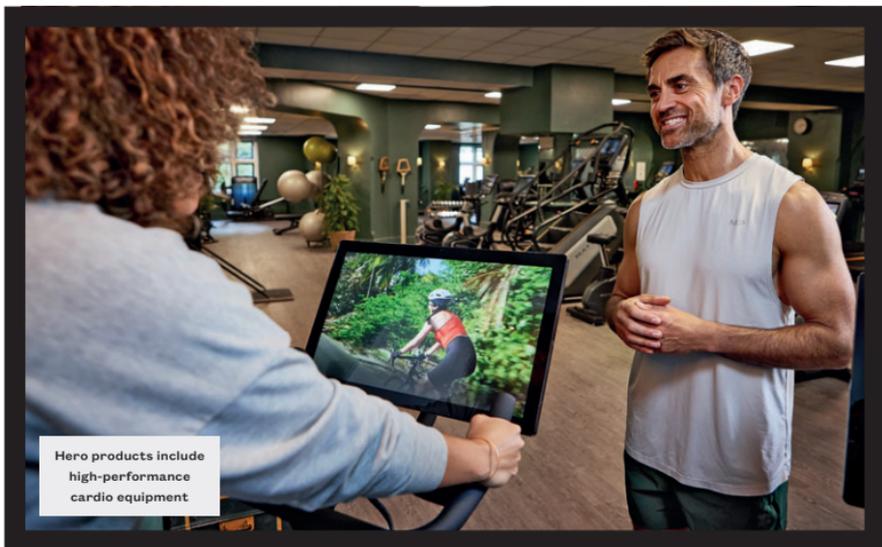
**H**oar Cross Hall in the UK has one of the largest spas in Europe, located within an award-winning hotel that promises state-of-the-art facilities and amenities.

In keeping with its luxurious spa and launch of a new lifestyle membership, The Wellness Club, Hall Cross Hall's leisure offering includes a varied group fitness and holistic class timetable, outdoor facilities, including tennis courts, a golf driving range and archery field, as well as an innovative Wellness Suite kitted out with the latest Matrix Fitness equipment and a Peloton training zone.

Phil Murphy, MD of Hoar Cross Hall, explains: "Fitness, health and wellness are at the forefront of our guests' needs and as one of the UK's leading spa destinations, it's important we keep up with the latest trends and provide top class facilities for our guests and members."

"Our collaboration with Matrix and Peloton has facilitated this beautifully," he said, "The gym is spacious and meticulously designed to provide each user with a unique experience, tailored to their individual needs."





Hero products include high-performance cardio equipment



*The gym is meticulously designed to provide each user with a unique experience*

Phil Murphy



**A TEAM EFFORT**

The fitness development has been supported by consultant James Golden, who was tasked with the job of revamping the facilities in a modern style with an emphasis on mindset, movement and performance.

The Wellness Suite has had a complete facelift and now provides a modern range of cardio and strength equipment from Matrix Fitness, with improved décor and lighting to create a more inspiring gym space.

Hero products include high-performance cardio equipment, advanced strength equipment from its Ultra series and precision-engineered virtual training cycles.

"The overall guest experience has been elevated digitally with connected fitness options and a more sophisticated range of equipment," Murphy continues. "We instantly felt aligned with Matrix and its values. The approach was exactly what we'd envisioned for Hoar Cross Hall and we were impressed with the equipment, which is of the highest standard while also providing a premium look and feel."

Nigel Tapping, head of spa and hospitality at Matrix Fitness UK, managed the process and took the project from CAD designs through to completion.

"At Matrix, we aim to be a partner to our customers, not just an equipment supplier. We strive to support the entire design and build, right the way from concept to completion," Tapping explains. "Premium fitness studios and versatile gym designs are playing an increasingly vital role in the hospitality sector and Hoar Cross Hall now has a gym facility to match the high quality of its hotel and spa facilities." ●

More: [www.matrixfitness.co.uk](http://www.matrixfitness.co.uk)



The new gym features cardio and strength equipment from Matrix Fitness

Spa-goers share a lot of personal details which makes GDPR compliance crucial

# BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Using personal data to stay in touch with spa guests and customising experiences can increase repeat visits, but GDPR can make this challenging and operators have been fined millions for breaches. So how can software suppliers help?

## Sneha Thuppul

### Agilysys

The Agilysys Spa solution provides valuable information to employees to enhance the guest experience and retain wallet share for future visits, whether that's via automated, targeted campaigns or one-to-one outreach. Onsite, staff can use Agilysys' common profile and single itinerary view to identify and cater to guests – if they're only staying and playing golf, for example, staff can target specific offers to entice them to book a spa appointment too.

Agilysys Spa enhancements allow properties to create custom policies that enable staff to collect guest consent to retain guest information for a specified period. After the specified period, if guest consent to keep their data longer isn't obtained, that data is rendered anonymous to comply with region-specific data protection and privacy acts, such as GDPR and CCPA.



Sneha Thuppul

“ Agilysys Spa enhancements allow properties to create custom policies for collecting and retaining guest information

## Craig Griffin

### Journey

With Journey, spas can easily capture customer information and send messages via the client's preferred contact method – email, call or SMS.

Marketing is restricted to clients who opt-in for such messages; this complies with GDPR requirements. Contacts can be segmented based on times of visit, treatment types and spending history. Those who've not explicitly opted-in to receive marketing are marked for service emails only such as booking and/or payment confirmations.

Spas must maintain customer records within Journey's system, including removing and deleting their data and updating preferences when required. Spa clients can update their details and preferences online; updates act as an electronic signature meeting the 'right to rectification' requirement of GDPR.

Journey helps simplify data processes for spas. Our software is GDPR and PCI-DSS compliant, keeping customer data secure. We regularly audit customers and assess our software's functionality, releasing updates to ensure spas meet and retain GDPR compliance.



Craig Griffin

Journey regularly releases updates to ensure spas meet and retain GDPR compliance

## Devon McKercher

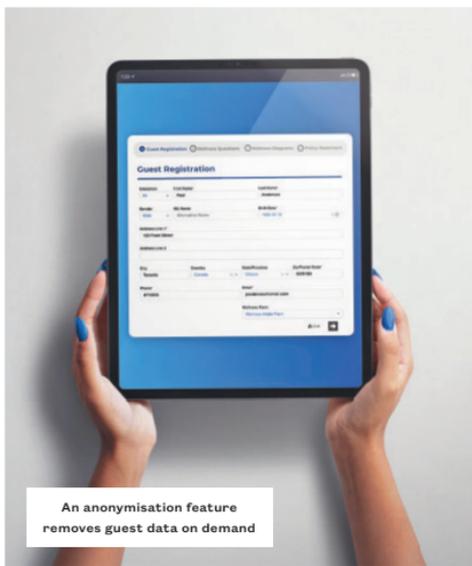
### Spasoft

Due to the nature of the spa industry and the type of services offered, guests share a lot of information and operators need to be careful that all their systems and data processes – not just software – are GDPR compliant and that employees are trained on how to respond to inquiries and requests.

SpaSoft has strong reporting capabilities allowing staff to pull reports on past guests. Combined with customisable wellness intake forms and post-service surveys spas have all the data they need to recommend services that are personalised to guest preferences.

SpaSoft has developed a series of features that allow spas to comply with GDPR and enhance overall guest data security. These include:

- Enhanced change logs that allow spas to track any guest anonymisation with change reason codes
- A report that lists the personal information that is retained for a guest. This report can also be shared with a guest for verification
- An anonymisation feature that removes all guest information retained in the system on demand – although references to some items are inserted with generic tags that allow the operational data to remain intact for reporting and historical accuracy.



An anonymisation feature removes guest data on demand



Devon McKercher

SpaSoft's enhanced change logs allow spas to track guest anonymisation

### Sal Capizzi

#### Book4Time

It's been proven that when a guest feels seen and heard, they're more likely to spend more time at your spa, increasing the overall ticket amount. Book4Time offers a digital intake solution which guests fill out before they even arrive on site, allowing operators to get to know them before their treatment and potentially provide an exceptional experience. Our system also easily enables spas to create customised marketing campaigns.

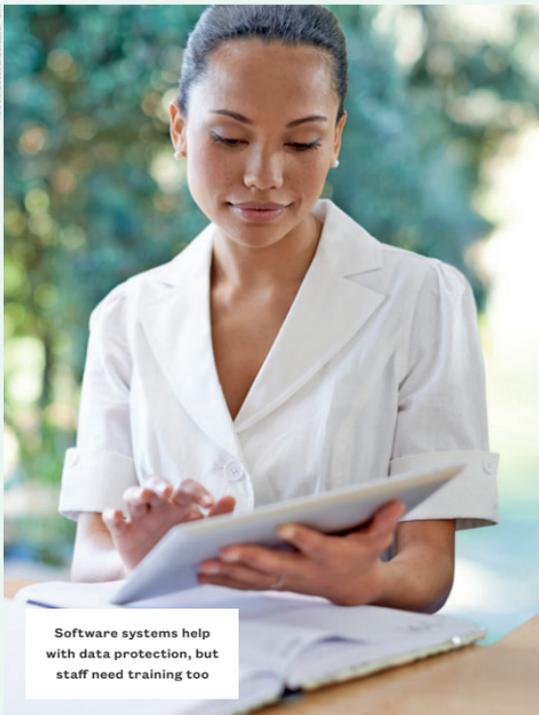
Book4Time ensures that personal data stored on the system is compliant with ever-changing regulations. Enterprise and global reporting gets stripped of personal data (name, address). We also have a data processing agreement with operators and give recommendations on how to use the information once collected.



Sal Capizzi

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES



Software systems help with data protection, but staff need training too

Book4Time has a data processing agreement and gives recommendations on how to use information once collected



Charity Hudnall

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

### Charity Hudnall

#### Vagaro

Vagaro's spa software offers spas a robust suite of marketing features to effectively keep in touch with clients to help with retention, loyalty and recurring revenue.

In addition, Vagaro's Forms feature allows service providers to create client SOAP notes – to further customise treatment plans and product suggestions – as well as intake questionnaires and surveys for feedback.

This amounts to a lot of personal information and spa owners are ultimately responsible for keeping records of their clients safe and secure. Any data breach can compromise the trust between a business and

its customers and has the potential to invite huge fines and litigations.

Regularly updating staff training on best practices for data protection is essential for maintaining GDPR compliance. Software systems can help too – Vagaro encrypts all customer data and stores it securely. In addition, spas can limit which employees have access to view, add, edit or delete SOAP notes.

As per GDPR guidelines, customers can request businesses to delete all their data. If spa owners are manually managing their customer data, this could pose a major issue. It's beneficial in this instance to use spa software such as Vagaro, which provides a process for customer data deletion and helps businesses to be GDPR compliant at all times. ●

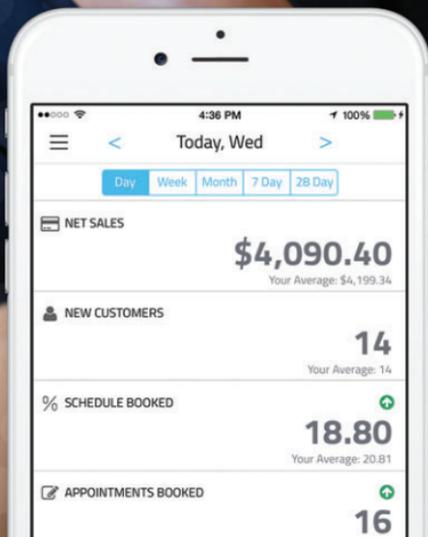


Vagaro encrypts all customer data and stores it securely

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# VIVA Las Vegas

Lisa Starr tries out a next-generation signature facial at Fontainebleau Las Vegas – the newest and tallest hotel on The Strip. But does the experience soar above expectations?



PHOTO: JEFFREY M. HARRIS

In development for 15 years and costing US\$3.7 billion (£3.4 billion, £2.9 billion), the Fontainebleau Las Vegas finally opened in December. This newest and tallest hotel on The Strip, which has 3,644 rooms, features a soaring entry canopy and airy, modern lobby, evocative of its sister hotel, the Fontainebleau Miami Beach.

Helmed by Vegas spa veteran Jennifer Lynn, the 55,000sq ft Lapis Spa is spread over two floors, with 44 treatment rooms and expansive men's, women's and co-ed thermal areas providing saunas, steam rooms, vitality pools, heated loungers and zero gravity recliners.

I visited to experience the US\$330 (£306, £262) Lapis Signature Facial, listed on the menu as 90-minutes "designed to bring out the best in your skin". This next-level treatment utilises GeneoX – a facial machine which launched last year.

## Pops of blue

The tone for my spa journey is set by large, well-equipped locker rooms decorated in neutrals but brightened by pops of blue furniture – the tables in this case, but later on sofas in the thermal area. It's a purposeful colour which pays tribute to the spa's namesake, lapis lazuli, a deep blue crystal associated with qualities of power and wisdom. I also noticed a bow tie motif dotted subtly around the property, a signature of Morris Lapidus, the architect of the original Miami location.

The tasteful and calming interiors continue throughout with other highlights including a Celestial Waters multi-sensory room with communal healing waters, customised by season, time of day and desired mood and one of the largest event saunas in the US boasting a massive video screen and several aufguss sessions daily. The Starry Night and ReBoot Lounges were delightful too.

The 55,000sq ft spa has tasteful and calming interiors

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Starr was impressed with the layering of tech and manual therapies

## ABOUT GENEOX

GeneoX, a fresh device on the professional spa scene, delivers “a next-generation facial” in three steps

- **Oxfoliation™:** a cleansing and exfoliating process where OxyPods react with a Primer Gel to create a bubbly, CO<sub>2</sub>-rich environment on the skin's surface
- **Ultrasound:** micro-vibrations are used to stimulate and condition the skin, as well as to increase its permeability to help with nutrient absorption
- **Massage:** a gentle massage works on lymphatic drainage to help sculpt and detox the face

The device offers pre-scheduled and customisable protocols and six ingredient blends to target specific skin concerns – whether customers want a Glam Facial treatment with gold flakes, a Hydrate Facial with blue spirulina and niacinamide or go for other options to illuminate, detox, balance or revive.

“This facial is emblematic of what’s required for today’s treatment-savvy clients

### Traditional meets tech

Lying on a Gharieni treatment bed, my aesthetician, Claudia, quickly established a connection with me by gently pressing her hands on my body and feet and relaxing me with deep breathing accompanied by chimes. A nice touch before launching into the facial.

The GeneoX is a fascinating device which combines effective skincare tools and products with an experiential component, all packaged in an intuitive computer interface. As well as using a wand to deliver an ultrasound step and massage, Claudia performed an excellent hands-on lymphatic drainage massage. Additional components included a cryotherapy massage with ice-cold globes and the application of a Knesko eye mask while putting my face under a Celluma LED face shield, during which time my hands and arms were also massaged.

I’m usually ready to get up after 60 minutes on a treatment table, but the 90 minutes passed easily. The treatment was well-paced and the result was glowing and hydrated skin which lasted for several days – not easy to achieve in the desert climate.

My closing thoughts are that this facial is emblematic of what’s required for today’s treatment-savvy clients. Spa-goers of the moment are looking for more than a regular facial steam and massage. Incorporating modern technology tools while maintaining conventional and personalised, hands-on components is the recipe for the facial of today. ●





# ADD LIFE

Increasing life expectancy is one of the great achievements of our times and Starpool is working to bring real meaning to longevity

**A**cquiring healthy lifestyle and habits is far from easy, but is within everyone's reach – especially if people are willing to be guided by science in the field of wellness.

The world of spa can play its part in delivering this support and the demand for products and services is changing – personal appearance is no longer the priority and the focus has shifted to improving psycho-physical status through the strengthening of the immune system and reduction of inflammation, which is the cause of many diseases connected to ageing.

Starpool has harnessed its 50 years' experience in mental and physical wellbeing to design the 'Longevity Spa', a concept for those who wish to

dedicate space to supporting health and longevity. It includes a synergistic combination of technologically advanced equipment and user programmes that realise the body's natural health potential by combining the physiological effects of heat, cryotherapy and dry flotation, through programmes developed according to the Starpool Method.

#### ABOUT THE STARPOOL METHOD

The Scientific Research Department at Starpool delivers programmes using a range of different technologies, also combining them in line with research findings to make a positive impact on the four pillars of health – longevity, stress management, sleep and performance.

"I've always believed the wellness industry has a duty to go beyond aesthetic results and

*Today, thanks to scientific research and product innovation, we offer our Longevity Spa to hotels, spas and resorts*



Starpool Longevity Spa is available in four configurations

care about people's psycho-physical wellbeing," says Starpool CEO, Riccardo Turri.

"I was convinced of this when we scientifically studied the effects of spa experiences and was further persuaded when we launched our dry float systems- Nuvola and Zerobody Dry Float - to deliver the regenerative power of dry float therapy.

"Today, thanks to scientific research and product innovation, we offer our Longevity Spa to hotels, spas and resorts. This innovative format delivers the best health innovation technologies, as well as user programmes aimed at delivering preventative health and longevity services.

"Zerobody Dry Float and our brand-new Zerobody Cryo, combined with the anti-aging power of molecular hydrogen and photobiomodulation, are our ways of delivering wellbeing from within. Our aim is to enable people to embrace their use and turn this into a powerful daily habit," he concludes. ●

**More: [www.starpool.com](http://www.starpool.com)**

## STARPOOL'S LONGEVITY SPA PRODUCTS

### 1. Zerobody Dry Float

A patented system designed to regenerate body and mind Zerobody Dry Float was developed based on research into the benefits of floatation and reduced gravity.

Dry Float Therapy allows body and mind to regain energy in an easy and versatile way.

The body floats on 400 litres of warm water, without the need to get undressed or wet.

This regenerative wellbeing service has a positive impact on stress, muscle and joint pain, sleep, focus and psycho-physical recovery.

### 2. Zerobody Cryo

This is Starpool's revolution in the world of cold therapy.

Zerobody Cryo ensures gradual exposure to the cold, offering users the comfort of dry floatation and this makes the approach to cold therapy easier, resulting in the same benefits as traditional cryotherapy or cold water immersion.

Innovative in its simplicity, safety and accessibility, it features a patented water membrane that wraps the body entirely without the need to get wet, at a functioning temperature of 4-6°C.

### 3. Molecular Hydrogen Booster

The Molecular Hydrogen Booster is an easy-to-use nasal inhalation system. It's innovative, accessible to all, easy to use and with a broad variety of psycho-physical benefits.

Molecular hydrogen is the lightest element and thanks to its size, can reach cells in the body quickly, working as a selective collector for free radicals and acting on the ones that are the most harmful.

### 4. Photobiomodulation

This therapeutic technique is based on low-frequency light energy emissions which penetrate cells through the skin, enabling them to function more effectively, while reducing inflammation and oxidative stress.

This can have a beneficial effect the brain, improving focus and mental sharpness. It's also a valuable support for the skin, improving the intake of nutrients and oxygen and boosting collagen production. Skin appears brighter, more hydrated and smoother after use.

### 5. Wellness Coach

This versatile, intuitive software allows users to select an activity of their choosing, according to their own wellness goal, and the desired difficulty level.

A virtual guide for the wellbeing of body and mind, the interactive Wellness Coach enables people to feel fit through the delivery of brain training content.

With Wellness Coach, time dedicated to rest turns into an experience of psycho-physical regeneration.

The guided mindfulness and breathing programmes were developed to ensure a type of mental wellbeing that impacts positively on many aspects of life, from work, to education and professional sport.

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MyEquilibria's latest installation at Mandarin Oriental Abu Dhabi

PHOTO: MANDARIN ORIENTAL

# PRODUCT INNOVATION

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

## MyEquilibria combines art and outdoor exercise, says **Gian Luca Innocenzi**

"We summarise what we do in two words – functional art," says Gian Luca Innocenzi, CEO and founder of MyEquilibria, which specialises in high-end outdoor exercise equipment.

Most recently, the company has worked with Mandarin Oriental Abu Dhabi, installing its iconic 7m-high MyTree product and the 12m-long MyBeast Sports Performance structure. Both are made out of concrete and stainless steel.

MyTree is designed for free body and callisthenics activities. Its four stations include rings, a traction bar, parallel bars and hooks for suspension training.

MyBeast has been created for functional activities and is divided into stages for training

all muscle groups and is said to be ideal for fitness classes.

A nearby totem provides information about the equipment as well as a QR code to access more than 1,000 PT-led video tutorials.

With nature-based activities topping wellness consumer wishlists, Innocenzi feels MyEquilibria is ideally suited to spas. He adds that other solutions for more mindful movement, such as stretching and dance/choreography, are available too.

"The outdoor spaces of resorts create a significant additional value for guests," he concludes, "... embracing workouts in the open air gives people the opportunity to enjoy a more active lifestyle, close to nature."



PHOTO: MANDARIN ORIENTAL

**People can enjoy a more active lifestyle, close to nature**

Gian Luca Innocenzi

spa-kit.net keyword:  
MyEquilibria



© SAMMY GHARIENI

It seamlessly transitions from lying flat on the floor to a conventional height

Sammy Gharieni



## Sammy Gharieni unveils multifunctional MLR Transform bed

Thai and shiatsu massages can easily be administered in the same space as conventional spa treatments, thanks to the new MLR Transform bed from Gharieni.

The innovative model, which made its global debut at Dior Spa Cheval Blanc Paris in France, seamlessly transitions from a bed that lies flat on

the floor to a conventional elevated spa table. When flat, the mattress extends to 120cm in width – making it ideal for ground-level treatments – but swiftly transforms into a standard 80cm-wide spa table when it rises.

“The MLR Transform is a real game-changer for the treatment room,” says founder and CEO

Sammy Gharieni. “It eliminates the constraints of traditional spa setups, allowing for a more versatile treatment room which helps cut down costs and elevates the treatment experience.”

spa-kit.net keyword:  
Gharieni

## Yon-ka tackles stress and sleep health with new Serum CBD, says Kety Manga

Heightened stress and poor sleep are said to accelerate the ageing process twice as quickly. Under extreme conditions, skin cells struggle to regenerate (especially at night) which results in a duller complexion and makes it more prone to imperfections – redness, pimples and dry patches.

To help combat this, Yon-ka has released Serum CBD along with a 90-minute face and back sleep therapy ritual which uses the serum and also works on energy points and destressing techniques with aventurine quartz.

“Night after night, defying stress, beautifying the skin, Serum CBD is an absolute must for every evening beauty routine,” says product manager Kety Manga.



© KETY MANGA

Pure CBD, dosed at 300mg, is grown sustainably in Colombia

Kety Manga

The star ingredient is pure CBD, dosed at 300mg and grown sustainably in Colombia. The formula also features cells from the sacred lotus flower, reishi mushroom extract, organic oils of hemp and inca inchi and essential oils of lavender chamomile and neroli.



© KETY MANGA

spa-kit.net keyword:  
Yon-ka

## Full Balance's Kurt Wallner reveals all-natural reflexology board

Austrian-based Full Balance has created a Big Foot massage board for communal spa areas which guests stand on to "closely mimic the experience of professional reflexology treatments".

Reflexology, which works on energy pathways by stimulating specific parts of the feet, is known to have several benefits from aiding circulation and eliminating toxins to releasing muscle tension and combatting stress.

The board, measuring 34x34cm, has been designed to replicate that effect with its 94 stones and can be heated for added wellbeing.

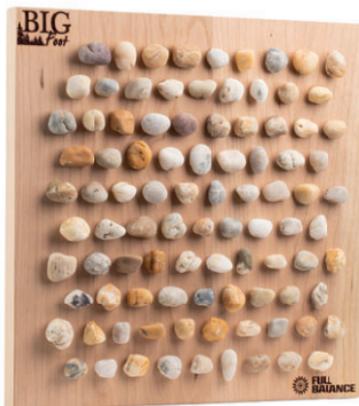
Creator and CEO Kurt Wallner says "it not only delivers therapeutic benefits



DAVID WILSON

but also embodies the essence of nature," referring to the Alp-sourced stones and the choice of local pine, cherry or walnut wood bases.

Full Balance has worked with a physiotherapist to develop a series of exercises for the experience – whether guests want to feel grounded, improve their mobility or stimulate all zones in their feet. It teaches these guides to therapists and provides descriptions for spas wanting to make signs.



HEIDI TILLY HACKETT

The board can be heated for added wellbeing

“A physiotherapist developed exercises for the experience”

Kurt Wallner

spa-kit.net keywords:  
Full Balance

## Rainer Bolsinger on Art of Cryo's 12-person, walk-through cryo chamber

Cryotherapy supplier Art of Cryo has created a new 12-person walk-through chamber at Cryo Center Coolzone Madeira.

Described as "the Bugatti of cold chambers", Art of Cryo says the 48sq m Unical Vaultz V12 is not only the longest and widest cryotherapy chamber in the world, but it's also the first-ever walk-through one.

Guests begin their journey in a room cooled to -10°C and progress into another chilled to -60°C before bracing a -110°C chamber. The experience culminates in a final -60°C retreat room.

Rainer Bolsinger, company CMO, says: "It's a beautiful thing when technology and passion come together. Having 12 people in a -110°C cryotherapy chamber is pure luxury and everyone has the freedom to move and stretch."



OLIVIERO TOSCANI

“The innovation paves the way for an ‘event cryo’ movement”

Rainer Bolsinger

This latest innovation paves the way for an 'event cryo' movement as it can be used for friends and family sessions and corporate gatherings and by sports teams.

spa-kit.net keywords:  
Art of Cryo



The four-room cryo installation at Coolzone Madeira is one of the biggest in the world



PHOTO: OLIVIERO TOSCANI

## Bioline Jatò's **Tommaso Corradini** on revamped brightening line

Bioline Jatò has reformulated its Primaluce Exfo&White line, 30 years after it first launched. The vegan range includes 11 products which focus on regeneration, brightening and dark spot correction and is showcased in a new 60-minute facial.

Tommaso Corradini, GM of the recently certified B Corp company, says the line "is a global bestseller, loved by dermatologists and aesthetic medicine and beauty institutes".

He adds: "It leaves users with healthy, luminous and even skin thanks to different acid



*It's suitable for even the most sensitive skin*

Tommaso Corradini

concentrations, suitable for even the most sensitive skin."

Formulas feature fruit and poly-hydroxy acids for exfoliation, extracts of Japanese cedar, larch, mulberry and white lily and two of Bioline's own whitening complexes.

PHOTO: BELLA B&O



Products focus on skin regeneration, brightening and dark spots

spa-kit.net keyword: Bioline

## AKT's **Malbert and Maran** launch Skyy treatment bed range

AKT, the French group behind bespoke premium spa bed and design line CODE, has developed a new range which includes sustainability, smart technology, durability and competitive pricing as its USPs.

The Skyy collection features the same stylish clean lines and intuitive features as its sister brand but has a 20 to 30 per cent lower price point. Co-founders Laurent Malbert and Angelica Maran say: "Whether you're looking to enhance your spa's offerings, focus on value for money or work with a future-oriented solution, Skyy beds are your solution for the new era of wellbeing."

There are four electronic models which have the same core functions but are differentiated by their design. All can be customised with a range of colour finishes, round or squared edges and accessories such as chromotherapy lights and speakers.

Guided by eco-consciousness, Skyy tables are designed to have some



Skyy boasts the same clean lines and intuitive features as its sister brand CODE

of the lowest emissions of toxic volatile elements on the market and comply with Green Key sustainability and bio-compatibility standards.

The range has also been developed with precise face holes to ensure the entire body is in the optimal stance and positioning for treatments.

In addition, all four models feature a triple-layer foam mattress designed to offer durability and provide comfort and long-lasting body support for users.

spa-kit.net keyword: Skyy



*Sustainability and competitive pricing are among the USPs*

Laurent Malbert & Angelica Maran

Voya has adapted its global strategy to suit local consumer needs, says **Chantal Sanders**

Rish marine seaweed brand Voya is celebrating a significant development in its global expansion, having entered the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) market.

"We're renowned internationally for our seamless supply chain, so it was vital to establish a subsidiary in the GCC to provide equivalent service and access to our partners in the region," said Chantal Sanders, global head of sales at Voya.

"To ensure our success, we've adapted our global strategy to suit local consumer needs and devised a thorough planned go-to-market strategy, supported by wise investment."

**Building a presence**

Voya has formed partnerships with a number of properties, including:

- **Talise Spa**, at the Madinat Jumeirah Al Qasr – situated in the lush gardens of Jumeirah Al Qasr.
- **Anantara Mina Al Arab** at the Ras Al Khaimah Resort.
- **Waldorf Astoria Dubai International Financial Centre.**
- **Waldorf Astoria Doha**, West Bay.
- **Five Palm Jumeirah Dubai.**
- **Grand Plaza Mövenpick Media City.**

Additionally, the brand has worked in collaboration with Emirates Airlines for several years.



Voya has developed seven new rituals for the GCC market



PHOTO: VOYA

“We offer a high-quality, organic and sustainable service

Chantal Sanders - global head of sales

"Our strong and fruitful partnerships stem from our steadfast dedication to being a dependable ally," added Sanders.

"We offer a high-quality, organic and sustainable service that matches the high standards of discerning customers, while adeptly managing complex supply chain challenges."

**Marking the occasion**

To celebrate its entry into the region, Voya has developed a new treatment menu with a heightened sense of luxury, tailored for its GCC partners.

Ranging from anti-pollutant facials, aromatic mud wraps and abdominal massages to specialised treatments which contour and tighten the hip and thigh area, Voya has unveiled a total of seven new decadent treatments.

The rituals augment its established menu of results-driven seaweed-based face and body treatments.

**Pioneering in sustainability**

As a leader in sustainable practices, Voya has set new benchmarks for luxury organic skincare globally

since its launch in 2006 as the world's first certified organic, seaweed-based skincare brand.

From ethically sourcing its ingredients to using eco packaging and manufacturing processes, the brand integrates sustainability into every step of its production. Additionally, rigorous independent scientific research ensures its products are both environmentally responsible and deliver top-tier results.

**Harmony with nature**

The GCC is known for luxury and innovative architecture and operators in the region are picking up on the sustainability trend – making it an ideal fit for Voya's advanced green beauty philosophy.

This trend is part of a wider movement towards living in harmony with nature, leading to a growing number of GCC consumers embracing natural skincare as an essential part of sustainable living.

spa-kit.net keyword: Voya



Voya is a champion of green beauty

PHOTO: VOYA

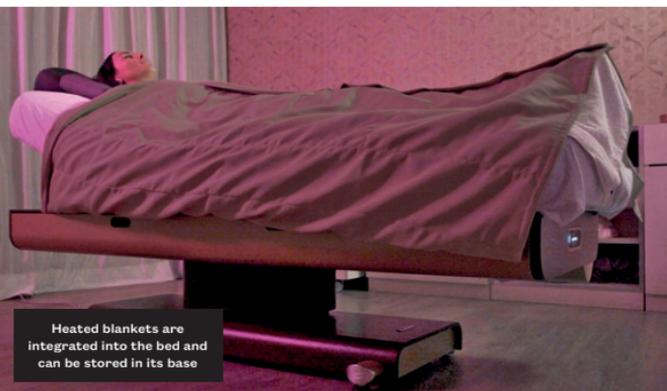
PHOTO: LEMI



PHOTO: LEMI

Features add a layer of wellbeing to rituals and enhance pre- and post-treatment experiences

Matteo Brusaferrri



Heated blankets are integrated into the bed and can be stored in its base

### Lemi taps into vibroacoustic and heat therapy with new bed, says Matteo Brusaferrri

More than just a treatment table to lie on, Lemi says its new ThermoSoft V bed also helps to relieve tension and stiffness, encourage detoxification, restore balance, purify the skin and support the immune system.

That's because the memory foam bed features in-built vibroacoustic technology as well as a pair of heated

blankets which are integrated and can be stored in its base.

"The lounger creates a massage experience that transcends the traditional," says Lemi GM Matteo Brusaferrri, "it offers a gateway to a world of tranquillity, to awaken the senses and rejuvenate the spirit."

He adds that the features can be incorporated into rituals to

add another layer of wellbeing, or used to enhance pre- and post-treatment experiences.

A horseshoe headrest and electric motors which adjust height, backrest and leg-rest positions complete the couch.

spa-kit.net keyword: Lemi

### Sothys' Christian Mas introduces solar protection collection

French spa brand Sothys has developed the Sun Range to protect the skin against sun damage.

Christian Mas, Sothys CEO, says: "With an ultra-sensorial texture and a brand-new fragrance, the products combine pleasure and effectiveness so users can enjoy all the benefits of the sun and a radiant complexion all summer long."

The pro-ageing line comprises five products, each infused with a delicate floral fragrance with top notes of vanilla. The collection includes a protective SPF50 face cream, SPF30 oil for face, body and hair, an after-sun milk,



PHOTO: SOTHYS

The products have an ultra-sensorial texture and delicate fragrance

Christian Mas

after-sun face cream and a shimmering body and hair oil.

The line has been formulated using buriti oil, golden seaweed and butterfly tree flower as well as selected chemical filters to create a strong defence system against UVA and UVB rays. ●

spa-kit.net keyword: Sothys



Key ingredients include buriti oil and golden seaweed



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# At your service

We reveal some of the latest, most thought-provoking spa and wellness treatments, programmes and experiences from around the world

**📍** Amanpuri, Phuket, Thailand

**🕒** Three days

**💰** Available upon asking

## Maria Sharapova to deliver debut retreat at Amanpuri

Tennis star Maria Sharapova, handpicked as Aman's first global wellness ambassador, is preparing for her inaugural retreat for the group.

Hosted at the flagship Amanpuri in Phuket, Thailand, the schedule will combine Sharapova's physical and mental expertise as an elite athlete with the property's specialist wellness facilities and experts.

The intimate programme led by Sharapova herself is limited to eight guests and will cover mindfulness, breathwork, movement, nutrition, recovery and human connection sessions with a goal of optimising guests' performance and recovery, as well as creating longevity-focused routines for daily living.

Spa treatments will consist of a Thai Nuard Boran massage, IV drips and a body analysis and consultation session with Amanpuri's medical doctor.

Therabody founder Dr Jason Wersland will also attend to provide recovery experiences to complement group hiking trips, outdoor workouts and curated group dining experiences.



The tennis star is Aman's first global wellness ambassador

📍 RoseBar Club at Six Senses Ibiza, Spain

🕒 Seven days

💰 Starts at €4,800 (US\$5,192, £4,106)

Individuals learn how to take care of their health span, not just their lifespan

Read about Mark Hyman's work with Hutchinson Consulting at [www.spabusiness.com/MHHC](http://www.spabusiness.com/MHHC)

## Mark Hyman develops longevity programme for Six Senses

Functional medicine expert Mark Hyman, a senior advisor in the field for the Cleveland Clinic, has created a programme for RoseBar – the longevity club at Six Senses Ibiza.

He says: "This programme empowers individuals to take control of their health span, not just their lifespan, through cutting-edge practices and personalised guidance."

Launching in April and available year-round, the seven-day Young Forever Detox programme will offer insights into Hyman's Young Forever methodology of optimising health in collaboration with RoseBar's own practitioners and modalities such as IV nutrition, cryotherapy and saunas.

It's been designed to leave individuals feeling lighter, more energetic and younger and will include:

- Daily movement, meditation and spiritual practices
- Advanced longevity practices such as hormesis therapies and ozone, hyperbaric oxygen and hypoxia treatments
- And an anti-inflammatory, detox diet supported with supplements

Hyman, who's also the chief medical officer at RoseBar, will lead digital seminars and then on 6-12 May will host a retreat in person.

The programme includes daily movement

Dr Mark Hyman

PHOTO: MARK HYMAN

PHOTO: SIX SENSES IBIZA

STYLING: JESSICA

Guests are invited to unapologetically release pent-up emotions

📍 Armathwaite Hall, Keswick, UK

🕒 Half a day

💰 Weekdays £125 (US\$157, €146), weekends £135 (US\$170, €158)



## Spa haven unleashes scream therapy

Scream therapy is said to offer a cathartic outlet to release pent-up emotions and stress by letting out resounding, uninhibited cries in a therapeutic environment.

Armathwaite Hall Hotel & Spa in the UK has taken inspiration from this to create a new half-day journey. The experience includes a self-guided scream session on the estate grounds, a 55-minute face or body treatment and 4 hours' access to spa facilities.

Lorela Moveleano, spa manager, says: "While our spa offers relaxing treatments, there are moments when a more unconventional approach is called for. Within our sprawling 400 acres of private woodland, we've curated a haven where our guests can unapologetically release pent-up emotions."



Visit [www.spabusiness.com/schlosselmau](http://www.spabusiness.com/schlosselmau) to delve deeper into the culture of the fascinating spa

## Schloss Elmau taps into passion for dance

Dancing has a long history at the Bavarian destination spa and hotel Schloss Elmau. Johannes Müller – founder and philosopher – created the retreat as a sanctuary where guests could become aware of the true essence of their being by listening or dancing to classical music or gazing at the beauty of nature.

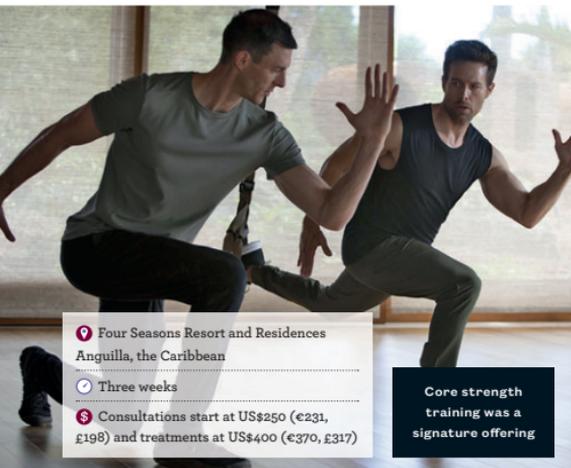
For 2024, the team is celebrating the art of dance with a new five-day retreat. Guests can immerse themselves in Schloss Elmau's wellness facilities by day and join guided dance classes at night, ranging from the tango to the waltz.

The celebration of dance extends post-class with live bands or DJ sets where guests can come together and socialise.

📍 Schloss Elmau, Krün, Germany

🕒 Five days

💰 €2,680 (US\$178, £141) based on two people sharing



📍 Four Seasons Resort and Residences Anguilla, the Caribbean

🕒 Three weeks

💰 Consultations start at US\$250 (€231, £198) and treatments at US\$400 (€370, £317)

Core strength training was a signature offering

## Sensei plans pop-up in Anguilla

Tech-forward wellbeing company Sensei, co-founded by billionaire Larry Ellison, hosted a residency at Four Seasons Anguilla on 1-22 March.

Hotel guests and locals were offered rotating fitness and meditation classes, consultations with Sensei specialists and a selection of Sensei's signature treatments leveraging its proprietary technology.

A highlight was Sensei's Thermal Body Mapping and Massage utilising the brand's patented thermographic technology to create a heat map of the body allowing for a customised massage.

Other spa journeys included core strength training, sports massage for recovery, walking beach meditation and aquatic bodywork incorporating reflexology, joint mobilisation and stretching.

Why did tech-magnate Larry Ellison turn his attention to wellness? See [www.spabusiness.com/larryellison](http://www.spabusiness.com/larryellison) to find out

## Tech-forward rest and recovery in Bali

The Healing Village Spa at Four Seasons Resort Jimbaran Bay has launched a pilates studio complete with a modern assessment and recovery zone where technology is being employed to support everyone from those with injuries to advanced athletes.

Equipment available includes compression boots – using compressed air to massage limbs, boost circulation and accelerate recovery; Flex Beam – a wearable infrared therapy device designed to relieve pain, repair muscles and re-energise; and Therabody hand-held percussion massager that release fascia, increase blood flow and speed up rehabilitation.

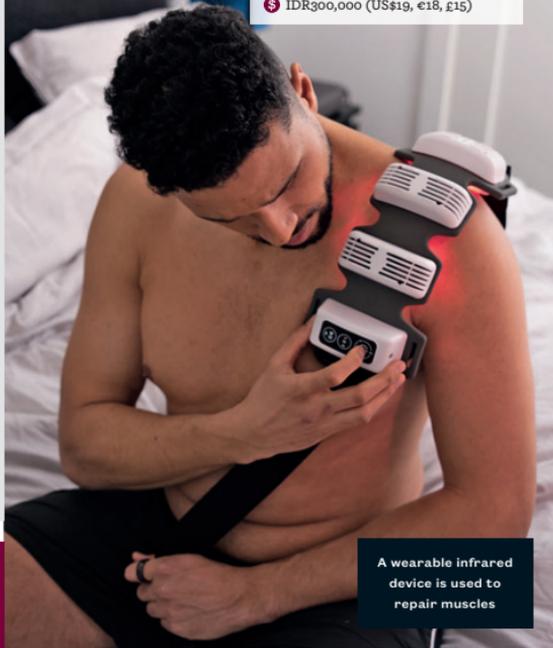
The latter two are available for guests to purchase on-site to continue their healing at home.

**Deeper dive:** Luisa Anderson, Four Season's regional spa director for Asia Pacific, shares her Healing Village Spa highlights at [www.spabusiness.com/luisaanderson](http://www.spabusiness.com/luisaanderson)

📍 Four Seasons Jimbaran Bay, Bali, Indonesia

🕒 20 minutes (tech recovery session)

💰 IDR300,000 (US\$19, €18, £15)

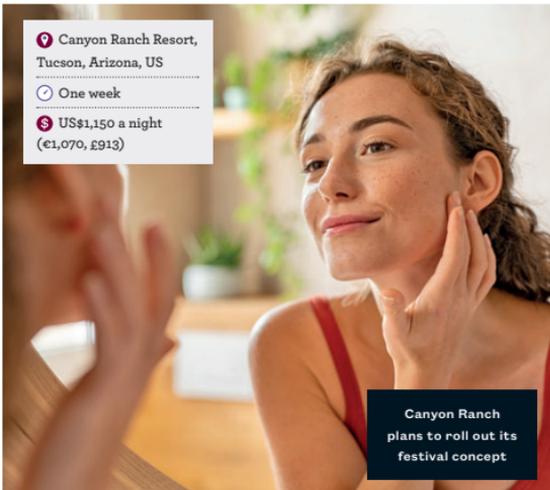


A wearable infrared device is used to repair muscles

📍 Canyon Ranch Resort, Tucson, Arizona, US

🕒 One week

💰 US\$1,150 a night (€1,070, £913)



Canyon Ranch plans to roll out its festival concept

## Canyon Ranch unveils wellness and beauty festival concept

Destination spa Canyon Ranch hosted the first edition of its beauty and wellness festival, called Enchant at its flagship property in Arizona on 17-21 March.

Free to resort guests, the event covered everything from beauty and haircare to aesthetics and pro-ageing skincare.

Industry experts and more than 25 brands – including Therabody and Biologique Recherche – were in attendance and hosted panels, provided demonstrations and offered bespoke services.

In addition, the operator says attendees were able to create a gift bag worth more than US\$2,500 (€2,330, £1,993).

Similar festivals will be rolled out across Canyon Ranch's other sites throughout 2024. ●

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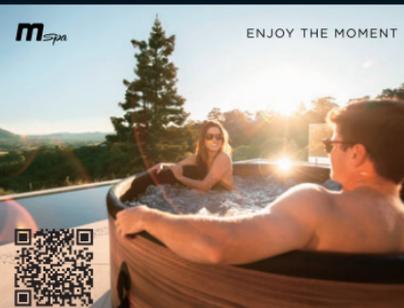


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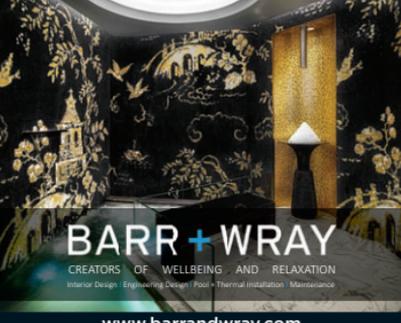
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# ALL IN THE TIMING

When we exercise is more important than workout type or length in ensuring health benefits, say scientists from Leiden University Medical Centre in the Netherlands

**S**pas which offer a fitness element might benefit from thinking about the timings of sessions, according to new research from Leiden University Medical Center in the Netherlands. The study, published in the *European Journal of Preventive Cardiology*\*, found that the most benefit from exercise came when workouts matched the body's circadian rhythm and that this was "more important" than the type or length of activity.

## 80,000-PLUS PARTICIPANTS

A team of researchers, led by physical therapist Gali Albalak, monitored 86,657 participants aged 42-76 over six years, using wearable trackers to chart heart rate data.

During the follow-up, 2,911 participants developed coronary artery disease (CAD) and 796 participants had suffered a stroke.

Risk patterns for CAD, stroke and ischaemic stroke were identified by investigating their associations with when they had been exercising.

## PATTERN OF ACTIVITY

In terms of preventing CAD, stroke and ischaemic stroke, the researchers found that the optimum time

Participants with the highest daily physical activity performed during the late morning, had a 17 per cent decreased risk of stroke

of day to move was 8am-11am. Whereas exercising between 12 noon-6pm was not as beneficial.

Crucially, the data showed the same results, irrespective of personal chronobiology - in layman's terms, whether the participants were 'night owls' or 'morning larks'.

"The study adds to previous evidence that timing of physical activity is an additional independent contributing factor to cardiovascular risk and therefore adds a novel dimension to cardiovascular risk prevention," the researchers wrote in their final report.

"Most notably, we observed that participants with the highest daily physical activity performed during the late morning had a 16 per cent decreased risk of CAD and a 17 per cent decreased risk of stroke." ●

\*Albalak, G et al. *Setting your clock: associations between timing of objective physical activity and cardiovascular disease risk in the general population. European Journal of Preventive Cardiology, February 2023.*

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