

# spa business

COVER: THE SCARLET, CORNWALL, UK ©CHRIS CYPERT



destination

day

resort

hotel

club

medical

thermal

curative

uniting the world of spas



# WISDOM MEETS WELLBEING

Aromatherapy Associates has been creating pure essential oil-based products with real therapeutic power for 30 years.

Since the beginning, we have believed in the most effective and purest way of getting results. We develop products made from ethically sourced natural ingredients, and use them in spa rituals to achieve complete wellbeing for your client's body and soul.

What's more, we are just as committed to ensuring you're confident in using, applying and recommending our products. That's why we have a training and development team dedicated to the success of our clients.

To find out how our wisdom can empower your spa business, contact us to arrange a meeting.

+44 (0)208 569 7030

or email [sales@aromatherapyassociates.com](mailto:sales@aromatherapyassociates.com)

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



AROMATHERAPY  
ASSOCIATES

---

ESSENTIAL WISDOM. ESSENTIAL OILS.

# contributors

## READER SERVICES

### Subscriptions

Julie Albone +44 (0)1462 471915

### Circulation

Michael Emmerson +44 (0)1462 471932



### NEENA DHILLON

Neena Dhillon has contributed features on spa travel to publications including *Viva Espana*, *Highstyle* and *International Highflyer*. A former managing editor of *Great Hotels of the World Luxury Spa Collection*, she has also written for *Velocity* and *easyJet* magazines.

## EDITORIAL TEAM

### Editor

Liz Terry +44 (0)1462 431385

### Managing editor

Katie Barnes +44 (0)1462 471925

### Newsdesk

Sarah Todd +44 (0)1462 471927

Tom Walker +44 (0)1462 471934

Peter Hayman +44 (0)1462 471938

Martin Nash +44 (0)1462 471911

### North America editor

Peter Sargent +1 239 949 3394



### EMILIE FILOU

Emilie Filou is a freelance journalist specialising in business, the environment and development issues. She writes regularly about water and the carbon market and is the Maghreb correspondent of water magazine *Global Water Intelligence*.



### RHIANON HOWELLS

Rhianon Howells was launch editor of *Spa Business* and established it as a journal of note. As consulting editor she is closely involved with its continuing development, while also writing widely on health, fitness, travel and leisure as a freelance journalist.

## ADVERTISING TEAM

### Publisher/advertising sales

Nuzhat Hayat +44 (0)1604 415414

### Advertising sales

Tessa Alexander +44 (0)1462 471903

John Challinor +44 (0)1582 607970

Jan Williams +44 (0)1462 471909

Stephanie Rogers +44 (0)1462 471903

### Advertising production

Ed Gallagher +44 (0)1905 20198



### ANDREA JEZOVIĆ

Andrea Jezovitz has written on business, travel and lifestyle for publications including *Canadian Business*, *Toronto Life* and national newspaper *The Globe and Mail*. She recently returned to Toronto from the UK, where she worked as managing editor of Leisure Media magazines *Leisure Management* and *Attractions Management*.

## WEB TEAM

### spa-kit.net/product search engine

Sarah Todd +44 (0)1462 471927

### spabusiness.com

Michael Paramore +44 (0)1462 471926

Tim Nash +44 (0)1462 471917

Dean Fox +44 (0)1462 471900

Emma Harris +44 (0)1462 471921

Katie Eldridge +44 (0)1462 471913



### LEONOR STANTON

Leonor Stanton is the founder of LLS Consulting, specialising in market and commercial assessments and financial planning in the hospitality and spa sectors. She was previously with Deloitte Consulting and Deloitte Corporate Finance.



### CAROLINE WILKINSON

Caroline Wilkinson is a freelance journalist who focuses on writing about the fitness, spa and wellness industries. She is also a published photographer and is the features writer of UK consumer magazine *Digital SLR Photography*.

## DESIGN

Andy Bundy +44 (0)1462 471924

## FINANCE

Sue Davis +44 (0)1395 519398

Denise Gildea +44 (0)1462 471930

## CREDIT CONTROL

Rebekah Scott +44 (0)1462 733477

## THE LEISURE MEDIA COMPANY PUBLISHES



The views expressed in individual articles are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the publisher, The Leisure Media Company Ltd. © Cybertrek Ltd 2010. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the copyright holder, Cybertrek Ltd. Registered at Stationers' Hall 30851, Spa Business ISSN 1479-912X is available on annual subscription for UK £26, Europe £38, USA/Canada £28, rest of world £38, from the Leisure Media Company Ltd, Portmill House, Portmill Lane, Hitchin SG5 1DJ, UK. Printed by Mansons. © Cybertrek 2010 ISSN 1479-912X. Digital edition at [www.spabusiness.com/digital](http://www.spabusiness.com/digital)

# lasting longer



**I**n this issue we visit The Scarlet, a new eco-hotel which has been built in Cornwall in the UK (see p38) and examine how the team behind the project developed the hotel's unique spa facilities and philosophy.

The hotel has been conceived and developed by three sisters who are second generation hoteliers. The new venture sits near to the still thriving original business, the Bedruthan Steps – a family-focused holiday hotel – and has been designed as an adult-only luxury retreat which specialises in healing, lifestyle and wellness breaks.

In line with this approach, the spa menu has broken with the tradition of one hour time slots for treatments and offers a range of journeys which last four hours or longer. Spa manager Steph Crosby explains: "What we genuinely and authentically want to offer is the opportunity to truly relax, let go and release and that takes more than an hour. When guests book a massage, I explain that we've researched how long it takes to get to relaxation levels which benefit you in the long-term and they're generally interested and happy to book a journey."

This approach holds many attractions. It optimises staff resources, creates better value as a result of the purchasing of larger tranches of time and – done well – can give far more effective results. While The Scarlet has lengthened both treatment and session times, this approach could be extended to many aspects



**With many spas half empty at certain times of day, it makes sense to offer longer and more cost-effective treatments during these times, so customers seeking deep healing can put more time by for an effective treatment**

of menu design to the benefit of the customer, the therapist and the business.

The body takes time to respond to change – for blood flow to be restored and for muscles to unbind and lengthen, for example. There will always be a limit to how much can be achieved in a one hour treatment of any kind and in opting for this as a standard time slot, spas are falling in line with the norm, rather than giving treatments which create optimal results in terms of long-term healing.

Even the fastest-working therapist can't deal with all areas of the body in an hour, meaning there will be areas left untouched, undermining the holistic value of the treatment. I find that in most massages, for example, the arms are often overlooked. This doesn't make sense when you consider how much we use them and how tension and adhesions within them can have such a detrimental effect on wellbeing and can lead to other problems such as RSI and tension in the shoulders, back and neck. However, with all the other big muscle groups to deal with first, the arms are often simply passed over through lack of time.

This problem is exacerbated by the fact that many treatments, although booked for an hour, are often whittled down to 45 or 50 minutes once the changeover and consultation have been taken care of, leaving the customer in danger of feeling hurried and sometimes even short-changed.

With many spas half empty at certain times of day, it makes sense to offer longer and more cost-effective treatments during these times, so customers seeking deep healing can put time by for more effective treatments which give longer-lasting results and more profit for the spa – surely a win-win outcome?

Liz Terry editor [lizterry@spabusiness.com](mailto:lizterry@spabusiness.com)

## ON THE COVER:

The Scarlet eco-hotel in Cornwall, UK, see our report on p38.

PHOTO: © CHRIS CYFERT

## THE LEISURE MEDIA COMPANY

**Head Office/Europe Office**  
Portmill House, Portmill Lane,  
Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 1DJ, UK  
Tel: +44 (0)1462 431385  
Fax: +44 (0)1462 433909

**US Office**  
22311 Piazza Doria Lane,  
#201 Estero, Florida, USA  
Tel: +1 239 949 3394

## FIND GREAT STAFF FOR YOUR SPA

### spa opportunities

*Spa Opportunities*, the sister publication of *Spa Business*, focuses on recruitment, careers and news and is published every two weeks. It has a daily website and weekly ezine, as well as being available as a PDF subscription and on digital turning pages. To advertise for staff, email [sales@spaopportunities.com](mailto:sales@spaopportunities.com). web: [spaopportunities.com](http://spaopportunities.com) digital edition: [spaopportunities.com/digital](http://spaopportunities.com/digital)

### spa business

*Spa Business* is written for investors and developers, operators and buyers, designers and suppliers. Readers work in all areas of the spa market worldwide. *Spa Business* has a daily website, a weekly ezine, and print, PDF and digital turning pages editions of the magazine. email: [feedback@spabusiness.com](mailto:feedback@spabusiness.com) web: [spabusiness.com](http://spabusiness.com) digital edition: [spabusiness.com/digital](http://spabusiness.com/digital)



*Become a Thalgo spa partner today  
- call 020 7512 0872 for your information pack.*



**Thalgo is proud to support the Marine Conservation Society**

# Specialists in marine spa beauty



Through Thalgo, the sea has been unfolding its beauty secrets for over 40 years. Harnessing the extraordinary potential of the ocean, Thalgo develops facial and body treatments renowned the world over for their incredible results.

Combining a rich heritage in marine beauty and spa with constant innovation, we offer a comprehensive range of treatments and retail products, unique massage techniques, and outstanding quality and results. What's more, we work with you every step of the way to make Thalgo a success in your spa.

# in this issue...

spa business  
uniting the world of spas



The Scarlet eco-spa, UK p38



PHOTO: CHRIS CYPRIOT

The Elysian Chicago p44



Laurence Boulet, Accor, France p26



## 10 SPA VISION

Space-like spa experiences and a waterfall painting specialist from Japan

## 14 LETTERS

Industry research is scrutinised

## 16 NEWS

Paua becomes South China Cosmetics, a mega-development for Egypt and an illuminating launch for Yas Hotel, UAE

## 22 EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT ADVANCE PAYMENTS

Is prepayment the best way to deal with no shows, or does an up-front deposit deter customers? Katie Barnes reports

## 26 INTERVIEW LAURENCE BOULET

The spa development director for Accor tells Katie Barnes about the new Sofitel and Pullman spa concepts and how she is refining the group's thalassotherapy arm

## 32 NEWS REPORT GREECE LIGHTNING

Magali Robathan reveals more about Greece's €1bn Costa Navarino project

## 34 SPA TOURISM HOT SPOT

Uruguay's thermal spring region is a popular and affordable destination, but it could benefit by attracting a more upscale audience. Leonor Stanton investigates

## 38 TAKING YOUR TIME

Four-hour ayurvedic journeys are the mainstay at this new eco-spa in the UK. Kath Hudson pays a visit

## 42 THE WAY I SEE IT ADAM HORLER

An ex L'Oréal and Molton Brown employee reveals why he's thrown off the shackles of corporate life

## 44 AIMING HIGH

Neena Dhillon looks at the real-estate success of the Elysian Chicago

## 48 FLOATING IDEAS

The owner of a Venetian hotel chain shares her spa vision with Andrea Jezovit





Bauer Palladio, Venice p48



Masseria Torre Coccaro, Puglia p62



Trends: fish spa therapy p58



Spa training at Cornell University, US p52

## 52 TRAINING CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Caroline Wilkinson discovers why the spa degree modules at Cornell are some of the most respected in the industry

## 54 ASK AN EXPERT ALTERNATIVE WATER SUPPLIES

Having your own water borehole can cut down bills, but what does the installation process involve and what are the overall pros and cons? Emilie Filou finds out

## 58 TRENDS FISHY BUSINESS

Rhianon Howells takes a closer look at where fish spa therapy originated and how the trend is spreading globally

## 62 PUGLIAN PARADISE

Charlotte Senior goes underground to visit Aveda's eco-inspired cave spa in Puglia, south Italy

## 66 FITNESS STRIKING A BALANCE

Kathy Carter reports on the benefits of balance training and how it can be incorporated into fitness programmes

## 70 PRODUCTS

Product and equipment launches

## 74 FINISHING TOUCH STROKE OF GENIUS

Research shows that swimming can help you live longer than walking or jogging

## GO GREEN

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

Did you know that you can now receive a **FREE** subscription to Spa Business in its new, greener, paper-free, digital format?



Change the way you read Spa Business magazine  
SIGN UP ONLINE:  
[www.spabusiness.com/green](http://www.spabusiness.com/green)

# SPA VISION

Innovations, initiatives  
and ideas in the world of  
wellness and beyond

SARAH TODD • NEWS EDITOR • SPA BUSINESS

The Austria-based thermal spa within Reiter's Burgenland Resort in Bad Tatzmannsdorf has a unique signature treatment in the form of a massage from a Shaolin monk (see right).

During the treatment, the monk kneads, slaps and rolls acupuncture points on the body in order to stimulate the body, drawing on the physical strength for which the monks are famous.

The Shaolin Massage is intended to promote blood flow, release muscular tension and calm the nervous system. It has its foundations in traditional Chinese medicine.



Shaolin Monk  
Massage in  
Austrian spa

Monks are allowed to stay in Austria for six months at a time before returning home to the Shaolin Monastery in Song Shan in the Henan province of China [explore further...](#) [reitersburgenlandresort.at](#)

## A space odyssey

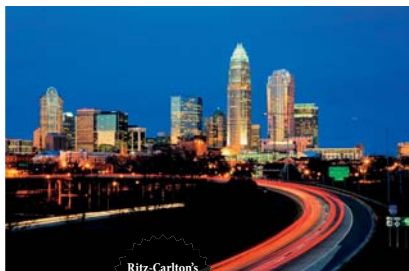
The spa at The Wynn Las Vegas, us, has partnered with the Zero Gravity Corporation (ZERO-G), to offer a weekend package where guests can soar into luxury.

Participants receive spa treatments at The Wynn spa before partaking in a ZERO-G experience – floating in complete weightlessness on board G FORCE ONE, a modified Boeing 727-200 aircraft at Las Vegas' McCarran International Airport. [explore further...](#) [gozero.org](#)



Courtesy of technology created by ReRev™, fitness equipment supplier Precor's elliptical machines can now deliver human-generated energy back to the electrical grid.

The technology works by capturing the kinetic motion of aerobic exercise and converting this otherwise wasted energy into productive renewable energy that feeds back into a building's electrical system.



Ritz-Carlton's  
first eco-friendly  
property

The Ritz-Carlton has taken its first step into eco-conscious design and operations with its latest hotel opening in Charlotte, North Carolina in the US.

The contemporary, 146-room property has been designed to achieve gold certification under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) benchmark. One highlight is a green roof – planted with more than 18,000 plants – which both insulates the building and cools the air through the evaporation of water from the leaves. In addition, selected employee uniforms are made from fabric derived from

regenerated plastic bottles, while there is also an in-house water purification and container system.

The hotel's 13,000sq ft (1,200sq m) penthouse Wellness Center also has an eco-friendly philosophy with its eco-based treatments, using Omorovicza and Laboratory of Flowers products: which are said to be 100 per cent organic and vegan friendly.

The bi-level centre has four treatment rooms, two thermal 'vitality' lounges, a fitness centre, a movement studio and a large saline-treated swimming pool and a whirlpool. [explore further...](#) [ritzcarlton.com](#) • [usgbc.org/LEED](#)

Aristotle  
(384BC to 322BC)

"Nature does nothing uselessly"

[explore further...](#)  
[oxfordreference.com](#) •  
[http://plato.stanford.edu](#)

Harnessing  
energy

Working exclusively with Precor's retrofitted elliptical machines, the typical amount of energy captured via ReRev's technology during a 30-minute workout will produce 50 watt hours of clean, carbon-free electricity.

Over the course of 10 hours in a typical gym, 15 ellipticals can generate energy equivalent to 16 central air conditioners running for one hour. [explore further...](#) [rerev.com](#) • [precor.com](#)

## Pick your time to spa at Cucumba

The UK-based 'urban pit stop' Cucumba has developed an on-demand spa model in the heart of London that offers a range of treatment times beginning at 10 minutes.

Located in Soho, the facility is open seven days a week from 10am to 8pm and apart from Sunday – when treatments are by appointment only – clients can simply visit unannounced if they find they have free time and pick the duration of time they'd like to spend at the facility.

Treatments have been designed to suit different time frames. The 10-minute TopUp options include hand and foot massage or mini facial, all at £10 (US\$17, €11), while the 20-minute PitStops consist of a manicure and a back, neck and shoulders massage, all at £20 (US\$34, €22).

Technology that's used to create giant video billboards can now, courtesy of a new technique, be made into flexible or transparent displays.

The method – pioneered by Professor John Rogers from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in the US – is based on manufacturing inorganic light-emitting diodes (LEDs) which allows them to be attached to materials such as rubber or glass.

The LEDs could even be made to fit the curves of a car or wrap around the human body. It is believed that this has a myriad of potential uses



Cucumba recently celebrated its fourth birthday and it believes that the fluidity its model, combined with its prime location have been key to its success. There are now plans to open at a second location in London, as well as to further extend the company's corporate services and develop its Organic Cosmetics skincare brand. [explore further... cucumba.co.uk](http://explore.further...cucumba.co.uk)



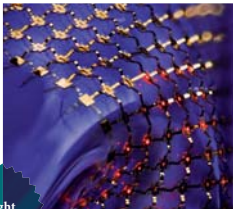
## Chasing waterfalls

One of Japan's most celebrated contemporary artists, Hiroshi Senju, has captured the interest of the hospitality industry with his enchanting paintings of waterfalls.

His paintings can be found in locations such as the chapel of the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Tokyo and the Daitokoji Temple, where Zen philosophy was first developed.

Senju began his ongoing series of waterfall paintings in 1990. His goal is to give the viewer the experience of the "sound of the roaring water, of the cool mist or smell of the air". He also acknowledges modernism and the role of Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and graffiti art.

Senju divides his time between painting in New York and teaching at Kyoto University. [explore further... sundaramtagore.com](http://explore.further...sundaramtagore.com)



A bright idea

in healthcare from biomedical imaging devices to wearable health monitors.

There are two types of LED technology – inorganic and organic. The majority of consumer electronics use

the inorganic version. These are brighter and more robust than organic LEDs but are more complex to manufacture, which makes them difficult to process in large volumes.

However, Professor Rogers and his team have now

created a method that can, theoretically, enable inorganic LEDs to be processed in high quantities allowing "you to put lighting sources... where you can't put them nowadays". [explore further... http://rogers.mse.uiuc.edu](http://explore.further...http://rogers.mse.uiuc.edu)

<http://rogers.mse.uiuc.edu>

Vampire bat saliva is responsible for research advances on stroke recovery

<http://strokeandjournal.org>



The Gran Hotel La Florida in Barcelona, Spain, has launched a children's spa menu based on Disney characters and themes.

The Fantasia menu includes Sleeping Beauty facials as well as Cinderella pedicures and is being marketed as "the ideal way" for six to 12 year-olds to enjoy a junior version of the spa treatments "while their mother is being pampered in the spa".

Disneyfication of children's spa experiences

This follows in the footsteps of Disney which, in June 2008, opened a second Disney salon for children (pictured) at the Cinderella Castle in the Magic Kingdom at Walt Disney World in Florida, US. Called the Bibbidi Bobbidi Boutique, the salon offers makeover packages for young girls and boys. The "fairy tale treatments" are available to those aged three and above. [explore further... hotellafloida.com](http://explore.further...hotellafloida.com)

# CLARINS



*InterContinental Geneva SWITZERLAND - Royal Palm MAURITIUS - Paradis Hotel&GolfClub MAURITIUS- Dinarobin MAURITIUS - Miyako Hotel&Ressort JAPAN - Grand Lisboa Hotel MACAO - Evian Spa Shangai CHINA - Hilton Qasr AlSharq SAUDI ARABIA - Sainte Anne Resort&Spa SEYCHELLES - Hotel Guanahani&Spa SAINT-BARTHELEMY - Le Lana Courchevel FRANCE - Le Blizzard Val d'Isère FRANCE - Côte Sable FRANCE - Royal Hotel Carlton ITALY - Palazzo Arzaga ITALY - LandhausWachtelhofHotel GERMANY - Les Jardins de la Koutoubia MOROCCO - La Casa que Canta MEXICO.*

## Why have many of the most prestigious hotels in the world chosen Clarins?



*Hotel Guanahani & Spa  
St Barthelemy*

Clarins offers the opportunity to increase turnover by 30% thanks to:

- 50 years of treatment expertise,
- Effective plant-based products formulated by Clarins Laboratories,
- A comprehensive choice of Massages and Treatments,

- Professional products dedicated to the spa environment,
- A permanent Training programme & Marketing and Media support,
- A genuine and sincere partnership of excellence.

Contact: [spa-activities@clarins.net](mailto:spa-activities@clarins.net)

# write to reply

Do you have a strong opinion, or disagree with somebody else's point of view on topics related to the spa industry? If so, *Spa Business* would love to hear from you.

Email your letters, thoughts and suggestions to [theteam@spabusiness.com](mailto:theteam@spabusiness.com)

---

## Segmentation in industry research is crucial for benchmarking

Leonor Stanton, founder, LLS Consulting

I frequently review industry research for *Spa Business* and find that while most surveys are interesting, not all are useful in practice. In particular, some statistical surveys which could be valuable for benchmarking and guiding operations often cover too wide a range of different spa sectors.

Many surveys do segment the industry into varying permutations of day spas, club spas, hotels/resorts, medical spas, destination spas, mineral spring spas and cruise ship spas. And in an industry-wide survey, logistically, that is probably as far as segmentation can go. Further, more in-depth segmentation is probably not needed to report on the overall size of the whole spa market.

However, when such surveys go on to cover varying issues such as the percentage of revenues from different areas in a spa – treatment rooms or a spa café, for

example – more detailed segmentation is vital to render the figures useful.

Consider the differences in only one of the segments such as hotels. The variety here is immense: spas in five-star hotels operate significantly differently from even those at the four-star level; city-centre sites usually with a higher proportion of business clientele will operate differently to those in resorts predominantly focused on the leisure market; the size of hotel may affect the size of the spa... and the differences go on.

So, in this example, the percentage of revenue from different areas in a spa will clearly vary enormously in all these



PHOTO: ISTOCK.COM/ANASTASIA VESELYNOVA

different types of hotels. The resulting average of all types of hotels/resorts has limited usefulness.

Researchers should be aware that more specific segmentation would increase the usefulness of a survey when it comes to actually running a spa.

---

## Surveys with less than a 5 per cent response are not 'research'

Julie Garrow, managing director, Intelligent Spas

I'm increasingly concerned about the volume of content circulating within the spa industry which is labelled as 'research'. Many such articles are promotional vehicles used to sell consulting or other services. Spa operators and other businesses need to be careful they are not misled by content tagged as research and should confirm the reliability of any information they use to make business decisions.

Two key guidelines to help operators identify the difference between professional research versus promotional content include disclosure and price.

Market research is a science, therefore, industry studies and benchmarking statistics should be developed based on

professional market research principles. This includes creating clear objectives, quantifying the population, qualifying participants and implementing a sound methodology. Each time research findings are released, this information should be made available and the description of the methodology, survey response rates achieved and the related sample size as a proportion of the survey population should be disclosed so the readers may accurately interpret the results.

Five per cent is typically considered a reliable sample size in industry research terms. If this information is not provided, the content was probably not produced by conducting professional market research,

or the study may not have succeeded due to a lack of responses. Such content is not reliable research and, consequently, should not be released, circulated, promoted or used.

Professional market research is too expensive to conduct for results to be simply given away for free to non-participants. Any 'research' which is free is most likely a marketing campaign. Conversely, just because you pay more does not mean the research is of higher quality.

*To initiate standards for industry research practices, Intelligent Spas has developed a guide for accurately reading and reporting spa statistics. Details [www.intelligentspas.com](http://www.intelligentspas.com).*

# beautyworld

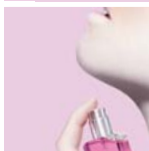
## MIDDLE EAST

The Largest International Trade Fair for Beauty Products,  
Cosmetics and Perfumery in the Middle East

June 1 – 3, 2010

Dubai International Convention and  
Exhibition Centre, UAE

**Book your  
stand now!**



**Epic Messe Frankfurt GmbH**  
PO Box 26761, Dubai UAE  
[Beautyworld@uae.messefrankfurt.com](mailto:Beautyworld@uae.messefrankfurt.com)

Sales representative UK  
Tara O'Brien  
Tel: +44 (0) 1784 415950

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

# news update



Villa Milocer was built in 1934 and its front faces the pink sand of the Milocer beach

## Montenegro resort nears completion

Amanresorts has revealed further details about an ongoing restoration project on the Adriatic coastline of Montenegro.

Called Aman Sveti Stefan, the resort will incorporate both the historic 15th century island of Sveti Stefan and Villa Milocer, a summer residence built in 1934 surrounded by more than 800 olive trees on 32 hectares (79 acres) of woodland.

The first development phase of Aman Sveti Stefan, which opened in December 2008, included six suites of the Villa Milocer. The second, and final, phase, will open in mid-2010, followed by the devel-

opment of a luxury spa offering on the resort's Queen's Beach. The spa will be next to Villa Milocer, which also boasts a front facing a pink sand beach.

When complete, the Aman Sveti Stefan site will feature 55 guest bedrooms and suites – 47 of which are located on the island of Sveti Stefan – six suites within Villa Milocer and two one-bedroom Queen Marija Suites.

Amanresorts' latest offering, Aman-giri, opened in October 2009 in Utah, in the. This property boasts the group's signature Aman Spa brand.



Ancient Sands will be located in El Gouna

## Mega-development for Red Sea coastline

A large, private mixed-use development is to be built on the Egyptian coast in the Red Sea destination of El Gouna.

Called Ancient Sands, the residential and golf resort will consist of a large spa and a fitness centre, swimming pools, an estate house, restaurants and bars.

The spa will be focused on ancient Egyptian traditions of balance and harmony. It will feature stone walls and is to be designed around an open light well, which is intended to bring natural light into the facility.

## Paua becomes South China Cosmetics

The Hong Kong-based Paua Group – formed in 2004 by Lucy Whittaker and Frederique Deleage – has been placed into voluntary liquidation as a consequence of being adversely impacted by the recent global downturn.

New investors acquired certain parts of the distribution and spa operating business of Paua Group and have relaunched the business as South China Cosmetics (SCC).

SCC will distribute the Elemis and Murad skincare brands in Hong Kong and Macau, as well as operating three spas in Hong Kong. There are also plans to expand into mainland China.

## Spa consultants form strategic partnership

Spa and wellness consultants Anni Hood and Nancy Nemer have joined forces to collaborate on new spa developments around the world.

Hood served as group director of spas for the Jumeirah Group in Dubai, UAE, while Nemer is the founder of the US-based consultancy Red Cashew.

The partnership is designed to offer a comprehensive, high-level menu of services to the global market. These will include creative brand development, strategic planning and fiscal responsibility – all helping to streamline a project's cost and delivery.





The hammam area features diffusions of marine salts, negative ions and iodine fragrances

## Villa Thalgo opens in prime location

Skincare brand Thalgo has unveiled its global flagship spa in the heart of the 16th arrondissement in Paris, France.

The €3m (US\$4.4m, £2.7m) Villa Thalgo has been built within a space that was originally a bank vault.

Water is the key design thread of this 8,600sq ft (800sq m) 'marine haven', which was created by sister company Thalgo Spa Management and THPS Global Design, an independent architect.

Other materials used include wood and stone and the overall effect is a luxurious, holistic atmosphere.

There are three main parts to the spa: an Energising Area, with a fitness centre and aqua gym; a Recreation Area, centred around a pool lounge and terrace; and a Recreation and Treatment Area, which hosts a hammam, 12 treatment rooms and a rest room.

Completely supplied by Thalgo, equipment includes the Thalgoskin Expert micro-dermabrasion machine and the iPulse anti-cellulite machine.

Signature therapies include marine hammam treatments, a restorative massage and an energising bamboo massage.



The mountainous region of Bernese Oberland will provide a backdrop to the spa

## Construction begins at Adelboden Baths

Work on a spa resort in the Bernese Oberland region of Switzerland is to begin in early 2010, with the facility opening by 2013.

The Adelboden Alpine Bath will combine a health spa and a hotel with panoramic Alpine views. The spa will cover 61,350sq ft (5,700sq m), of which

11,850sq ft (1,100sq m) will be water facilities. The Alpine Bath will include 15 treatment rooms, 21 mineral water swimming pools and a medical wellness centre, as well as a restaurant.

There will also be a 91-bedroom hotel, continuing the development's core themes of water, health and meditation.

## Senior management changes at Six Senses

Atsdaïr Junor has been appointed as chief operating officer (COO) for Six Senses Resorts & Spas, in Bangkok, replacing outgoing COO Jamie Waring.

Junor will relocate from his previous role as managing director for Six Senses in Europe, Middle East and Africa, based in Dubai, UAE.

His duties will include overseeing all operational aspects of resorts managed within the Six Senses portfolio.

## Greg Payne leaves InterContinental

Greg Payne has left the InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) after the company undertook a major restructuring of its management and operations team in the Asia-Pacific region.

Commenting on his five-year tenure at IHG, Payne said: "We have gone from operating five to 35 spas in Asia-Pacific. It's been an outstanding journey, I am very proud of our accomplishments and I wish them well."

Payne will be taking a short break to travel before he launches a new independent chain of spas in early 2010 that will feature in tropical resort destinations around the world.

## 2010 board members announced at ISPA

The International Spa Association (ISPA) has revealed its 2010 board of directors, including four fresh faces.

For the second year, chair Jean Kolb will lead the board. The four newly elected members are: Dr Kathryn Dundas, the CEO of Sublime Energy Medical Spa; the group director of spa for the Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group, Andrew Gibson; Ella Stimpson, spa director at The Broadmoor, Colorado; and Paul Schmidt, the owner of design company Living Energy Design.

Each member volunteers their time to help to lead the association and develop plans for enhancing membership and boosting the spa industry.



The resort and spa will be an integral part of a larger casino development

## Sparkling Hill spa property for Vermont

Further details have been revealed about the development of the Sparkling Hill Resort and Wellness Hotel, which is scheduled to open in March 2010 in the city of Vernon, BC, Canada.

The 152-bedroom Wellness Hotel will be an integral part of a larger casino development being built on the pinnacle of a rock overlooking Lake Okanagan.

The 35,000sq ft (3,250sq m) spa facility has taken its inspiration from European traditions and will feature a menu with more than 100 treatments.

Focusing on whole body wellness, spa therapies will comprise mud wraps, hot stone massages, reflexology and aromatherapy as well as a range of medical treatments. On top of this, resort guests will be able to have consultations with doctors and nutritionists.

Speaking about the new property, the president and CEO of Sparkling Hill Resort, Hans-Peter Mayr, said: "Our philosophy is to focus on our guest and what they need to do to relax and rejuvenate. We will be dedicated to helping them achieve their vision of wellness."

## 2010 debut for ESPA facility at Yas Hotel

A 15,050sq ft (1,400sq m) spa is to open in January 2010 at the Yas Hotel in Abu Dhabi. The ESPA at the Yas Hotel will cover two floors with 10 treatment rooms on the upper level and a hammam below.

Designed by Heidar Sadeki of Richardson Sadeki architects, the spa is intended to offer a modern and minimalist feel. The hammam, for example, will be housed in a cylindrical room called The Rotunda, with stone furnishings surrounding a central column.

The hotel, one of 20 opening on the US\$3.6bn (€2.4bn, £2.15bn) Yas Island development, launched this November and is the first site operated by Abu Dhabi's Aldar Properties. It consists of two buildings, connected by a bridge overlooking Yas Marina Circuit, an F1 racing track.



Exterior of the new Yas Hotel in Abu Dhabi

It also showcases some of the world's most advanced architecture including a 5,000 LED-panel gridshell. The panel features different shades of light, which illuminate the hotel to make it the largest colour LED displays ever.

## Goldeneye Jamaica to open in late 2010

The Island Outpost Group is to open and manage a number of luxury villas, beach cottages and a spa at Ian Fleming's former residence, Goldeneye, in the village of Oracabessa in Jamaica.

Launching in September 2010, Goldeneye also includes the original three-bedroom Fleming House – where the author wrote 17 of his famous *James Bond* adventures.

Island Outpost is run by music industry mogul and Island Records founder, Chris Blackwell. Other Jamaican properties in the group's portfolio include The Caves Hotel in Negrill.

## Indigenous Spa at La Selva Jungle Lodge

A wellness facility has opened at an eco-boutique, La Selva Jungle Lodge, in the Amazon jungle of Ecuador.

Built in a renovated building, The Indigenous Spa features two treatment rooms and shower facilities, including a large stone tub where guests are doused in tepid water, infused with Amazonian herbs as part of the signature Rainforest Shower experience.

Other natural rainforest ingredients are used in the spa's washes and oils, which the owners eventually hope to develop as a commercial product line.

La Selva Jungle Lodge was founded in 1984 by eco-explorer Eric Schwartz.

## South African reserve to gain luxury new spa

A spa will open at the Gondwana Game Reserve on the Garden Route in South Africa in March 2010.

It will be built in a style reminiscent to the homes of the Khoisan – the region's indigenous inhabitants – and will have two treatment rooms as well as an outdoor treatment space.

Products will include extracts of fynbos, vegetation which is found in abundance on the reserve, as well as a other local ingredients.

The reserve is set to further expand its wellness offering in the future to include a range of health packages comprising hiking, yoga, spa treatments, and indigenous spa cuisine.



The historic distillery was built at the end of the 19th century and has a castle-like façade

## Garrigae begins former distillery revamp

French developer Garrigae Investissements has revealed plans for a mixed-use redevelopment of a 19th century distillery in the medieval town of Pézenas.

Garrigae's original plans underwent optimisation in response to the current market conditions, and now include 49 freehold apartments, as well as a resort and spa, which will open in 2011.

The 1,400sq ft (130sq m) Mediterranean Spa will be built around a courtyard with olive trees and a fountain. It will boast three treatment rooms and an outdoor swimming pool.

Treatments will be performed using organic products including extracts from geranium, sage, calendula, grapes, lavender and olive oil.

There will be three areas to the property. The first will comprise 38 apartments and will become the heart of the resort and the hub for the Garrigae services – including the reception, a bar, a wine cellar and a Mediterranean garden.

The second area will feature a further 11 luxury apartments, converted from period houses while the third area, The Mansion house, will consist of 11 suites.



The property on the Tetiaroa atoll is encircled by coral reef

## Work begins on The Brando eco-resort

An eco-resort encircled by a coral reef is being built on the Tetiaroa atoll, located 35 miles from Tahiti in French Polynesia.

Construction of the retreat is now under way following official authorisation of the development by the Tahitian government. The Brando – named after the late Marlon Brando who purchased

the 13 islands in 1965 – will feature 47 bungalow villas with plunge pools, a swimming pool and a large wellness area.

The resort is being developed by Richard Bailey, a friend and business partner of Brando. Bailey, the chief executive of Tahiti Beachcomber SA, already owns four resorts in the region.

## Dusit International to expand into India

Thailand-based hospitality group, Dusit International, has announced its expansion into India with the opening of five hotels and resorts by 2013.

The plan is to pilot the company's first-ever Dusit Devarana hotel – the most luxurious of the brands in the Dusit portfolio – outside Thailand.

The first hotel, Dusit Devarana New Delhi, will feature a Devarana Spa and is expected to open in May 2010.

## Debut for spa at La Résidence d'Angkor

A luxury spa offering has launched at La Résidence d'Angkor hotel in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

The Kong Kea Spa, meaning 'water for the god', is located in a brand new wing of the boutique city resort, in the quietest area of the property.

The 5,100sq ft (500sq m), two-storey spa has six treatment rooms on the ground floor and eight spa suites on the first floor.

Its design focuses on water elements throughout, from bridges at the main entrance to oversized aquariums in the reception and illuminated water walls in each of the treatment rooms.

## Plans unveiled for Yorkshire property

Plans for a £100m (US\$168.1m, €113.1m) hotel and spa at Flaxby Park Golf and Country Club in Yorkshire, UK, have been revealed by developer, The Skelwith Group.

The proposals for the club – which first opened in 2004 and is hoping to submit a bid to host the 2022 Ryder Cup – include a 303-bedroom hotel and a 27-hole golf course.

On top of this, there will be a large spa built in partnership with Elemis, with at least 16 treatment rooms. The spa will also feature a heat experience area, which we be designed and entirely fitted out by hydrothermal specialist Dalesauna.

## DIARY DATES

### 25-28 February 2010 SPATEC NA Spring 2010

A three-day forum of one-to-one meetings and networking opportunities between operators of US-based spas and suppliers. Taking place in Key Biscayne, Florida, US.

T: +1 603 529 0077

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

### 1-3 March 2010 Professional Spa

A strategic and practical focus on the key areas of the international spa market. To be held at London's ExCeL venue in the Docklands, UK.

T: +44 20 7728 4218

[www.professionalbeauty.co.uk](http://www.professionalbeauty.co.uk)

### 13-15 March 2010 Mondial Spa & Beauté

A spa and beauty exhibition held in the Palais des Congrès in Paris. The event also includes free bilingual spa conference sessions, chaired by experts.

T: +33 4 93 06 26 26

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

### 18-20 May 2010 The Hotel Show

Hospitality and spa-orientated trade show – focused on interior, design and security products and services – taking place at the Dubai World Trade Centre in Dubai, UAE. There will also be a Hotel Spa event geared towards generating sales opportunities for spa suppliers and buyers.

T: +971 4 438 0355

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

### 16-19 May 2010 The Global Spa Summit

The 2010 GSS will be held at the Çiragan Palace Kempinski Hotel in Istanbul, Turkey. It will attract top-level business executives, who have an interest in the spa industry, from all over the world.

T: +1 212 716 1199

[www.globalspasummit.org](http://www.globalspasummit.org)

### 1-3 June 2010 Beautyworld Middle East

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

T: +971 4 3380 102

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



The resort and spa will represent Emirates' largest international investment to date

## 2012 opening for Emirates Cap Ternay

Emirates Hotels and Resorts group is to open a conservation-focused property in the Seychelles in late 2012.

Featuring two areas and representing a US\$253m (€170.2m, £150.6m, ) investment, the Cap Ternay Resort will be situated in a protected area on the island of Mahé.

The first area will be a private resort located on the forested slopes of the Matoopa peninsula, overlooking the marine reserve of Baie Ternay. It will have 110 acres (45 hectares) of protected nature reserve, with 1,312ft (400m) of private beach nearby.

The resort will comprise a Timeless Spa with eight rooms for beauty treatments and hydrotherapy, as well as a gym. Accommodation will include 13 water-bungalows as well as 27 two-bedroom villas. There will also be one of the largest swimming pools in the Indian Ocean, covering nearly six acres (two hectares) of cascading pools, lap pools and private inlets as well as a lazy river.

The second area, a development, on Anse Souillac beach, will focus on water-based activities, and include a small marina and a yacht bay.



A couple's suite at the inaugural So SPA in London, UK

## Third So SPA debuts at Sofitel Morocco


Following the launch of its social spa-wellness concept in London, UK, and Marseille in France, the third So SPA by Sofitel (see p26) has launched in Morocco.

The 800sq m (8,600sq ft) facility at Rabat Jardins des Roses opened this October and includes a fitness centre, a hammam, a whirlpool, an outdoor heated swimming pool and a sauna.

Sofitel Luxury Hotels will continue to roll out the So SPA concept worldwide

across its Sofitel portfolio with openings scheduled for Vienna, Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Mumbai, Mauritius and Bangkok.

The first £2.3m (US\$3.9m, €2.6m) So SPA had its soft opening in July 2009 at the Sofitel London St James. Covering 4,200sq ft (400sq m), the spa was designed by Sparc Studio with input from consultants Spatality. Products and equipment were supplied by Carita, Cinq Mondes and Dalesauna.



**Can you afford  
to miss it?**

“ Hotel Spa at **The Hotel Show** brings the region's spa community together to discover the latest equipment, suppliers and trends in this **fast-growing, profitable industry.** ”

**Sharon Barcock**

Spa Director, Mandara Spa, The Monarch Dubai  
Vice President, Middle East Spa Association



**the hotel show**

18-20 MAY 2010  
DUBAI WORLD TRADE CENTRE

**hotel spa**

**Book now!**

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

Everyone's talking about...

# advance payments



PHOTO: ISTOCK.COM/SERKEY TUMANOY

KATIE BARNES • MANAGING EDITOR • SPA BUSINESS

I recently booked a spray tan at my local beauty salon and was shocked, and immediately defensive, when asked to pay for half of the service on the spot. 'Why would they not trust me?' I wondered.

The owner explained that she's been forced to take this precaution as there are days when she thinks the salon has back-to-back appointments – so she turns clients away – only to have customers not turn up. In light of the global downturn, she said, people become even more unreliable as they make an appointment and then decide nearer the time that they can't justify the expense.

This experience throws up a question. How much of a problem are 'no shows' for a spa business? What percentage of customers miss appointments and how do operators handle this?

It's standard practise for spas to have a cancellation policy and whether

*Many operators are introducing prepayment policies for treatments to deal with 'no show' customers. But how are they doing this without alienating clients?*

or not this is enforced is a moot point. Research for this feature revealed that a deposit (usually around 50 per cent of the total cost) for group spa bookings or week-long packages is becoming the norm. Richard Carlson, owner of the Birdwing destination spa in the US says charging up front is something that all destination spas do, due to complexity of packages (see opposite).

Yet when it comes to individuals or a one-off service, is it really acceptable

to expect a customer to put down a payment in advance? After all, someone booking a table at a restaurant wouldn't expect to pay for a portion of their meal before they've eaten it.

In some cases, operators – such as Spa Montage in California – even ask guests to give their tip/gratuity on arrival, before having a treatment. Spa Montage declined to comment in this feature, but previously told *Spa Business* (SB05/3 p105) that asking customers to sign for a bill (which includes a service charge) at the very start of an experience allows them to fully relax during the treatment. Is this taking things a step too far?

Is charging customers for all or part of a treatment up-front an effective way of dealing with no shows? Do people still miss appointments anyway? And, how do operators introduce such a policy without alienating clients? We investigate the issue.

**W**e're a destination spa and we offer complete packages that comprise spa services, fitness activities, lectures and workshops, spa cuisine meals and lodging. Ninety-nine per cent of our guests stay overnight on property.

We charge a US\$100 (€67, £60) advance payment for day spa packages or an overnight stay. This goes up to US\$150 (€101, £89) for a weekend spa break and US\$300 (€202, £179) for anything that is longer than that.

Charging a deposit is something we've done from day one. I've been an officer for the Destination Spa Group and was also a board member of ISPA and from my experience all destination spas ask for a prepayment. Most of them charge up to half of the total beforehand and sometimes take the full balance a week prior to

## RICHARD CARLSON

Owner, Birdwing Spa,  
Minnesota, US



the visit. We could never be secure in the commitment of a reservation otherwise.

There are many components to our offerings – including food, rooms and various services and classes – and if a guest didn't show up it would impact on all of these, our overall scheduling and ultimately our entire staff force. Plus there is a direct cost for everything that is pre-booked. For example, our therapists are booked in advance and are paid per treatment. If there's a cancellation, we still pay our therapists half of the treatment price and the deposit we charge doesn't even cover that.

In our particular facet of the spa business, paying in advance is accepted

practice – it's never been a problem in my 25 years here and I've never heard a criticism from staff of guests not turning up.

It's different for a day spa operator because they only

offer individual services, so can be much more flexible: they have the ability to fill in a cancellation at the last minute.

Although I can see why a day spa might introduce a prepayment policy, asking for a tip before service isn't a good idea. We have a no tipping rule and guests seem to appreciate that, but consequently we pay our therapists more to compensate.

Day spas should also be wary of offending regular customers when introducing a prepayment policy. There's a certain amount of discretion here, for example, we might consider waiving the deposit for a repeat guest if we know it will make a difference between them booking or not.

"There's a certain amount of discretion. We might consider waiving a deposit for a repeat guest if we know it will make a difference between them booking or not."

*Birdwing Spa, set within a 300-acre wildlife preserve, opened in 1984. It has 15 guestrooms and six treatment rooms. It makes its prepayment policy clear in its brochure, registration forms and online. Details: [www.birdwingspa.com](http://www.birdwingspa.com)*

**I** don't understand how day spas can run a business without asking for advance payments.

We introduced our policy soon after opening because we had so many clients – about 30 to 40 per cent – that weren't turning up. At one point we even thought it might have been a rival business playing a prank.

All of our therapists work on commission, so if their clients miss an appointment they don't get paid.

Some people think 'oh it's only a 15-minute eyebrow shape', but that 15 minute can cut into an hour so we can't then book a facial for that time slot. If the person having the eyebrow shape then doesn't show up we've effectively lost two appointments in one go.

At the end of the day, if you're running a business you can't have customers not turning up. In the UK, if someone misses a dentist's or doctor's appointment, they still get billed. I used to work in day spas in London, where we always asked for payment up front, so I didn't see a big problem introducing it here.

## KEELE LAMB

Managing director and co-owner,  
Heaven Beauty, Hitchin, UK



We normally ask for 50 per cent of the treatment price in advance. This applies to all treatments, even something as small as an eyebrow tint. The customer loses that deposit if they cancel less than 24 hours before the appointment time, or if they miss it altogether.

Our prepayment policy is detailed on our treatment menu and our website. We also try to explain our policy in person: either face-to-face if a customer comes into the salon, or over the phone.

We take the payment upon booking and make a note of this on our system. Some of our regular clients have a £20 (US\$34, €23) running deposit to save them having to pay each time they re-book. If we know the customer well and know that missing an appointment was a genuine emergency, then we would not take that money.

Most clients are absolutely fine when we explain our policy – you've got to remem-

ber that if they're going to stick to their appointment then asking for an up-front charge shouldn't be a problem! You have the odd person who needs a bit more talking around, but

on the whole people do understand.

If someone doesn't want to pay in advance, they would either have to phone up on the day or come in on the off chance that there might be a free slot at the time they want, which is unlikely. If someone refuses to pay, I'd rather not have their business because they're more likely to let you down anyway.

Although we still have a couple of people who may miss their appointment, despite paying a deposit, we usually find that if a customer makes a payment in advance, then they're more likely to stick to the arrangement. Introducing the policy made a huge difference to our business.

*Heaven Beauty Salon & Laser Clinic in Hertfordshire, UK, launched five years ago. It features six treatment rooms and specialises in cosmetics, lasers and skincare. Details: [www.heaven-beauty.com](http://www.heaven-beauty.com)*

**T**he majority of our clients are happy to pay in advance once we've explained the situation to them. First, we emphasise how important their custom is and then go into detail about how a special time has been allocated for their treatment.

I think that an up-front charge may deter some people as they find the procedure too complicated. If clients are put off by this, then they probably aren't really in need of a spa treatment. We feel that those clients who just don't want to pay aren't serious about having a treatment at all.

The prepayment policy applies to day spa guests, who account for 30 per cent of our business. As our spa is located in the compound of Bimasena – the mines and energy society in Jakarta – our other

## SRI IDA MULYANI

Spa manager, Bimasena Spa,  
Jakarta, Indonesia



includes about 20 per cent of the services we offer.

This policy is clearly stated on our website and we also tell customers about it when they come in to make a reservation or

when they phone up to book.

I think it's reasonable to expect customers to pay if you're a busy spa like us – not only were we losing revenue when clients missed a booking, we were also turning down other people because we thought all of our therapists were busy. Some guests still miss appointments despite paying, yet it's really a very minimal number.

customers comprise Bimasena members and guests of The Dharmawangsa, a hotel in the same compound. We enforce a standard cancellation policy for both members and hotel guests.

We introduced our advance payment policy seven years after opening because no shows were becoming a problem: up to 40 per cent of day spa customers were not turning up for bookings.

Under the policy, day spa guests are required to pay a deposit of 30 per cent on any treatment which costs more than 108500,000 (US\$53, €36, £32), which

*Bimasena Spa opened in 1997 and has 13 treatment rooms. It's located in the prestigious residential area of Kebayoran Baru. Details: [www.bimasena.co.id](http://www.bimasena.co.id)*

## SIMON WINTERS

Senior reservations executive,  
Utopia Spa, Rowhill Grange, UK



PHOTO: ISTOCK.COM/WERPHOTOGRAPHY

**O**ur spa is very popular. We're nearly always fully booked at the weekend and have a waiting list of people who haven't been able to get in.

Paying up-front confirms a treatment on our computer system and ensures that those who have booked are guaranteed a time slot. Plus, if we didn't have an advance payment policy our weekends could go terribly wrong: appointments could be missed at the last minute and we might not be able to fill them despite having a waiting list.

What I would also say is that prepayment saves customers having to worry about bringing money with them – they can relax in their swim suits and bath robes all day with the knowledge that they won't be inconvenienced again because everything is already paid for, although we wouldn't consider introducing a pre-service tip because we don't feel that that should be compulsory.

Of course the policy does also stop people missing appointments: we don't have a problem with no shows at all. If we only had a cancellation policy [as opposed

to advance payment], however, I could imagine that customers who didn't show up would argue that they weren't aware of charges for missed appointment. There's no mistaking that on our system.

Under our policy, a £100 (US\$168, €113) deposit per person is required for our Leisure Escape or Spa Escape packages which start at one night. In addition, we take the full balance – from hotel and day spa guests alike – for any individual spa treatment which are booked, even for something like a manicure.

This has been the policy at Rowhill Grange for 15 years now, ever since the current owners came on board.

The prepayment details are clearly outlined on our website and treatment menus. We also inform people verbally over the phone when we take a booking.

I would say about 80 per cent of people bring their cards out, ready to pay. A lot of our business is generated by word of mouth, so clients expect to pay in advance.

The rest may query why we have the policy, but are usually fine once we've explained. Yet they do like to have the

charge in writing, so we send out a copy of our terms and conditions in our confirmation letters. We don't lose any business due to our advance payment policy as we have such a loyal following.

If guests give us 24 hours or seven days notice, when cancelling individual services and packages, respectively, they can transfer their treatments to another suitable time. In this case their money goes into a holding account until something is re-booked. Or they can cancel the treatment altogether.

"If we didn't have an advance payment policy our weekends could go terribly wrong: appointments could be missed and we might not be able to fill them despite having a waiting list."

*Utopia Spa is the wellness brand for Alexander Hotels, which has three boutique properties in the south of England. The spa at Rowhill Grange has 14 treatment rooms and was refurbished in 2007. Details: [www.alexanderhotels.com](http://www.alexanderhotels.com)*



# Discover bright ideas at the UK's leading beauty event



## PROFESSIONAL **BEAUTY** 7-8 March 2010 **LONDON EXCEL**

- ✿ Meet and buy from leading skincare, nails, tanning, equipment and salon supplies brands
- ✿ Discover inspirational new products and ideas
- ✿ Benefit from exclusive show discounts
- ✿ Be inspired at free expert-led masterclasses
- ✿ Test your skills at the International Nail Competition
- ✿ Free entry to all beauty professionals and students

Register for free entry at [www.professionalbeauty.co.uk/london/ticket](http://www.professionalbeauty.co.uk/london/ticket)

Priority code: ESpaBusiness



## Laurence Boulet

The spa development director for the French-based hotel group Accor heads up two new spa concepts and a thalassotherapy brand, and will oversee 11 international openings within the next year. She tells us more

Upbeat, enthusiastic and with a sense of fun is how I would describe Laurence Boulet, the spa development director for the French-based hospitality group Accor. Maybe it's these traits that help to keep Boulet motivated in her challenging role at the helm of all new spa developments for this multinational company.

Accor has 14 hospitality brands and of these, five offer spas (see p28). As part of the company's ongoing investment programme, an additional 11 properties will get new spas in 2010.

While the Mercure and MGallery hotel groups may occasionally dip into the spa

world by adding a wellness facility, the brands that are truly focused on spa are Sofitel, which unveiled its new So SPA concept in 2009 and Pullman, which is on track to reveal its branded concept Fit & Spa Lounge by mid 2010.

In addition, Accor Thalassa – to be relaunched as Thalassa Sea & Spa in January – owns and operates 17 destination spa facilities around the coast of France.

### A PASSION FOR ONSEN

Boulet was born and educated in France. For the past 15 years she has mostly been working in the Asia-Pacific region within the luxury retail sector, holding executive

development and communication positions with brands such as Givenchy.

Her love of spa first blossomed while working for the LVMH group (which owns the Givenchy brand) in Japan, where she discovered onsen, the country's traditional hot spring bathing facilities. "I had an onsen near my place and while people could have a massage, they mostly went for relaxation baths and sauna. Surprisingly, it was also a place to socialise – the equivalent of a French café."

This passion eventually led her back to her home country, where she joined Accor in July 2008. "My role is like an in-house spa development consultant," says Boulet. "I, and my team, support hotel management throughout a spa project, advising on layout and technical decisions, supervising construction and helping with hiring and pre-opening training."

Boulet has two people working alongside her in the spa development division, but the team regularly has support from the group's spa specialist arm, Thalassa Sea & Spa, which operates 17 destination spas and owns 12 of them. Because of this expertise, Thalassa works like a consultancy within Accor: providing standard operating procedures (SOPs), HR and technical guides for hotel spas.

### FRENCH ELEGANCE

The main focus for Boulet at present is the rollout of the new So SPA by Sofitel concept. "It takes up about 95 per cent of my time," she says, "because spa is so important to the hotel's brand identity." Over the past two years, Sofitel has been repositioning itself as a luxury chain by



The inaugural site for Accor's social spa-inn concept, So SPA, debuted in London in 2009



PHOTO: ©OËL BILLETIA LIBRE DE DRCR



selecting the top 150 of its 200 properties and renovating them. The remaining 50 have been repositioned within Accor's portfolio and rebranded.

Part of this strategy was to shake up Sofitel's spa offering. "The previous concept [LeSpa] was five years old," says Boulet. "The spa market has evolved a lot since then." It took two years – and a collaboration between Sofitel's marketing team and the international consultancy Spatality (s808/1 p22) – to develop So SPA.

The brand is underpinned by French elegance. The menu pays homage to the French gourmet restaurant concept, offering Les Entrées: 30-minute services and Les Plats Principaux: 60-minute body massages and facials. The staple product houses include Carita, Clarins and OPI, while Cinq Mondes and L'Occitane are also brought in depending on location. "We wanted to work with French international cosmetic partners because of the roots of Sofitel," she says.

In addition, the aim is to have at least one member of the spa team from France. "It's important that the spa manager is local where possible, because they will understand the market," says Boulet. "But we like the assistant spa manager to be French so that they can handle the training aspects [from head office and the product companies]."

### SOCIAL BENEFITS

"Frenchness" has been at the heart of Sofitel's spa offer since Alain Massaza created LeSpa in 2003 (s809/3 p41). He left the company in October 2008 and Boulet says his legacy has been "to standardise the spa product and SOPs".

It took two years and a joint effort between Sofitel's marketing team and international consultancy Spatality to develop So SPA

Now, the new So SPA operation is pushing the Sofitel brand forward again. A major difference between the two concepts is the use of space and more precisely the social space, as Boulet explains: "Spas are not just sanctuaries any more – places where you meet in the dark." This is why the So SPA Tea Bar has been introduced: "This isn't just where you wait for your treatment, or relax afterwards. It's really a socialising space for networking and ladies' spa parties, for example, which are popular in Europe."

This social element ties in neatly with the brand's lighthearted approach which is epitomised by Les Desserts, a section on the treatment menu where guests can either indulge in a Martini & Manicure or a Pint & Pedicure.

The social space also has an emphasis on retail – a 'discovery bar' includes tester stands, while illuminated display units surround the Tea Bar for guests to peruse. Guidance on products is given by a spa butler, a role created by So SPA to personalise the visitor's experience. The butler welcomes guests and asks them to choose their preferred fragrance for the treatment room, along with the temperature, the pressure of their massage and the music.

Once the treatment is over, the butler then outlines the music, fragrance and

## PERSONAL FILE

### Laurence Boulet

**What's your favourite book?**

*Oscar et la Dame Rose* by Éric-Emmanuel Schmitt. It's about giving hope

**What's your favourite place?**

My heart is happiest in a Japanese onsen

**What's the best spa you've ever been to?** Pen Zan in Hakone near Tokyo

**What's your favourite spa treatment?**

A massage and Vichy shower

**How would you describe yourself?**

Creative, enthusiastic and adaptable

**How would your critics describe you?** Too direct

**What's the best piece of advice you've been given?** It's more a saying: 'Reasonable people have lasted, enthusiastic people have lived'

**Who do you admire most?** Richard Branson, because he has built an empire from nothing

products, which are available for purchase. "It's a discovery process, which is an excellent way to let the customers choose naturally," says Boulet. "We want to build a relationship between the butler and the client, and lots of coaching is involved because the explanation of the product is very important in the success of the visit."

### SO SPA ROLLOUT

In line with Sofitel's repositioning, Boulet describes the So SPA clientele as high-end and affluent. Around 60 per cent of guests visit during their leisure time and 40 per cent while travelling on business, although this does vary a little depending on location.

A typical facility will range from 400 to 800sq m (4,300 to 8,600sq ft) and will include a reception and Tea Bar as well as a manicure/pedicure area and at least one treatment room with an 'iconic bath' – including cedar and floatation tubs – as the central focus. Most will also feature a fitness area branded as So FIT.

The first So SPA had its soft opening in July 2009 at the London Sofitel St James, UK. Around £2.3m (US\$3.90m, €2.6m) was spent on the 260sq m (2,830sq ft), three-storey spa which is housed in a Grade II-listed former bank. "The feedback is that people really enjoy the quality of service and that the experience is not just limited to the treatment rooms," says Boulet.

Another So SPA, covering 600sq m (6,460sq ft) launched in July at Sofitel Marseille Vieux Port, in France, while a third 800sq m (8,610sq ft) facility debuted

in Morocco in October 2009 (see p16).

Overall, the aim is for 70 per cent of Sofitels to have a spa. There are eight openings scheduled over the next 12 months, with three So SPAs planned for Vienna, Casablanca and Mumbai.

### BUSINESS TIME

Elsewhere, Boulet has been developing a new concept for Accor's Pullman hotels. These upscale facilities mainly cater for business travellers who represent 55 per cent of rooms nights and 70 per cent of revenue. The concept – Fit & Spa Lounge – has been developed in-house over the last 18 months with the Pullman team. "We wanted something masculine, because Pullman's customers are mostly male business travellers and groups," says Boulet.

The new concept will have a socialising lounge linked to a fitness area with a

male-orientated club atmosphere. There will also be a strong focus on technology and efficiency. A dry float combined with luminotherapy and oxygen breathing will be offered to help jet lag recovery, for example, while massages will range from short 30-minute sessions up to 90-minutes.

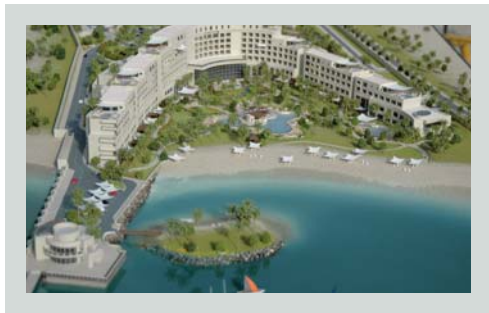
The most important aspect of the offering is the tie-in with fitness. There will be a series of combined fitness and therapy packages, structured according to the time of day or the client's internal body clock. "The Morning Up & Act might include a soft scrub [and a not-so intense workout]," says Boulet, "whereas a midday Keep Awake treatment will be far more stimulating."

A typical facility will range from 300 to 500sq m (3,230 to 5,380sq ft) and the idea is to introduce spas to about a third of all hotels, with the first facility opening at the Pullman Jumeirah Lake in Dubai in the second quarter of 2010.

### SEA CHANGE

You'd be forgiven for thinking that handling the rollout of two international spa concepts would be more than enough for one person, but Boulet has another string to her bow having just taken on the role of strategic marketing director for Thalassa Sea & Spa. "It's exciting to work on spa and thalassotherapy, the two are becoming closer and are combining pleasure, wellness and efficiency," she says.

Her goal for Thalassa is to redefine and strengthen the offer domestically – the majority of the destination spas are in France – by introducing more of a spa service philosophy, alongside the well-proven health benefits of seawater treatments, and then develop the concept internationally. "We already have our ex-



Sofitel Zallaq Thalassa Sea & Spa in Bahrain is hailed as the first seawater spa in the Middle East

## ABOUT ACCOR

Accor, the French multinational corporation, is listed on the French stock exchange and in 2008 reported a net profit of €575m (US\$860.8m, €511.6m).

Employing 150,000 people, the group has two core businesses: Accor Services, which oversees employee voucher and reward schemes for 430,000 companies; and Accor Hospitality which comprises more than 4,000 hotels worldwide and accounts for 75 per cent of the group's revenue.

Of the properties to follow, 22 per cent are fully owned by Accor, while 21 and 15 per cent are on fixed lease and variable lease agreements respectively. Another 22 per cent are managed by Accor and the final 20 per cent are franchised.

### Spa brand

**Thalassa Sea & Spa:** owner and operator of three hot spring and 14 thalassotherapy destination spas\*

### Luxury brand

**Sofitel:** five-star luxury hotels (126 hotels)\*

### Upscale brands

**MGallery:** boutique hotels with three and four stars (26 hotels)\*

**Novotel:** four-star hotels (392 hotels)

**Pullman:** five-star hotels primarily aimed at business travellers (40 hotels)\*

### Mid-scale brands

**Adagio:** apartment hotels (24 hotels)

**Mercurio:** three- and four-star hotels (671 hotels)\*

**Suitehotel:** three-star suites in Europe (26 hotels)

### Economy brands

**All Seasons:** two- to three-star hotels (60 hotels)

**Ibis:** two-star hotels (831 hotels)

### Budget brands

**Etap Hotel:** (399 hotels)

**Formule 1:** (361 hotels)

**Motel6:** (968 hotels)

**Studio6:** (52 hotels)

**Unbranded hotels:** (55 sites)

\* Brands with spas



Work is currently underway on the renovation of Thalassa's 5,000sq m flagship property in Quiberon in north-west France

port teams and fabulous coastal locations," she says. "Now we need to evolve our customer service based on the three Ts: time, talk and touch."

Boulet also feels there's a "tremendous opportunity" to highlight the many benefits of seawater treatments which can help everything from basic metabolism to easing respiratory problems and improving the health of the circulatory and cardiovascular systems, muscles and joints.

"Providing efficient, health-driven services, along with a pleasurable spa experience is a growing trend," she says. "There's an open market for a reinvented thalassotherapy offering based on pampering, time and personalised wellness packages which are built on four pillars: seawater treatment, massage, fitness and nutrition."

"We've started the evolution of our offer this year [2009] by providing more time for our thalasso treatments and by commencing the renovation of our flagship spa at Quiberon, north-west France. We're also introducing new methods, equipment and working with experts. Our slimming programme, for example, is being developed in conjunction with a renowned biology research centre, which is exciting. We want

*"It is exciting to work on both spa and thalassotherapy projects, the two concepts are becoming closer and are bridging the gap between pleasure and wellness."*

to offer leading programmes, whether it's anti-ageing, slimming, detoxification or nutrition."

The division has two projects in the pipeline for 2010. Due to open in June, is the Sofitel Zallaq Thalassa Sea & Spa in Bahrain, which will be the first seawater spa in the Middle East. The 2,000sq m (21,530sq ft) spa will boast 14 treatment rooms, eight of which will be dedicated to thalassotherapy, and two multi-station hydrotherapy pools. Later in the year will be the opening of Sofitel Agadir Thalassa Sea & Spa in Morocco.

Two other new projects include the overhaul of the 5,000sq m (53,820sq ft) thalasso centre in Quiberon, which is scheduled to re-open in 2011; and a hotel and health and spa centre for Paris City Council – an ambitious upgrade of the city's 1930's Molitor Pool – which is due for completion in 2012.

On picking partners for Thalassa, Boulet says: "Seawater is the main priority

and central activity. We don't choose the hotels, we choose the site for a seawater spa and then build a hotel."

#### STAYING CREATIVE

So, what else does the future hold for Boulet? She

certainly doesn't rule out creating more spa concepts and admits that she already has a "very clear idea" for what a Novotel offering would include. In terms of new markets, she says Asia and the Middle East look particularly promising: "in that part of the world [spa] is really an expected part of luxury hotel facilities."

She believes the challenge in Europe is to reignite interest in spa traditions, although there are issues in areas like personnel costs when it comes to developing new spas.

Although quality and standard of service is one problem she foresees, especially when it comes to managing an international network of spas, Boulet is also adamant that creativity is another challenge. "It will be more important than ever to keep up with creativity. Clients are becoming more demanding as they experience spa and as competition increases. Our strategy will be to constantly renew the offer and to always find new ideas." ●

# THE SPA TABLE





## A NEW ERA IN MASSAGE BEDS

---

*Imagine yourselves to lie down on the water line of a tropical sea while you receive a relaxant massage: a warm wave licking up your body ...this is ZERO<sup>1</sup>*

---

Every 30 seconds, it creates a very gentle wave that caresses the body, from the feet up to the neck, then slowly returning to the feet again | It allows for any type of massage or body/facial treatment to be executed while both the technician and the client never come in contact with the water | The original system enables the body to remain firmly anchored to the padded surface of the bed, enhancing the grasp of the client's skin by the therapist's hands | The operator can choose the color of the water and regulate its temperature | ZERO<sup>1</sup> can be installed with no prior set-up necessary, substituting the normal massage bed

---

# Greece Lightning

**P**ristine beaches, lush olive groves, rugged mountains and the backdrop of a sea so blue it almost takes your breath away. This is the Messinian Peninsula in the Peloponnese area of Greece, and it's easy to see why Vasilis Constantakopoulos, founder of Athens-based developer Temes SA (Tourist Enterprises of Messinia), is so passionate about his homeland.

Constantakopoulos, who made his fortune in the shipping industry, has spent the past two decades buying land in order to turn his vision for Costa Navarino into reality. It is a truly ambitious project. A €1bn (us\$1.5bn, £892m) resort covering more than 10 million sq m (108 million sq ft), it will feature 3,000 hotel rooms and suites, seven signature golf courses, six thalassotherapy centres and spas, a marina and conference facilities.

What's more, Constantakopoulos has pledged that Costa Navarino will be the first 100 per cent emission-free resort in the world, and will lead the way in a new era of more sustainable tourism for Greece.

"Messinia – and most of the Peloponnese – has been lucky not to succumb to the anarchic development seen elsewhere [in

Costa Navarino, a €1bn, 100 per cent emission-free holiday and spa resort, is aiming to change the face of Greek tourism. We find out more



Greece]" says Constantakopoulos. "Costa Navarino and other investments like it will bring about big changes."

## PHASE ONE

Costa Navarino will eventually consist of four separate resorts. The first two – Navarino Dunes and Navarino Bay – are due to open in May 2010 and 2012 respectively.

Navarino Dunes will cover 1,300sq m (14,000sq ft) and will feature a 4,000sq m (43,000sq ft) standalone spa and thalassotherapy centre, two hotel developments by Starwood Hotels and Resorts – The Romanos and The Westin – a 2,000 capacity conference centre, a signature 18-hole golf course, a private beach and a central entertainment village.

The Romanos, a Luxury Collection hotel, will feature 321 rooms and a range

of restaurants and bars. The 445-room Westin, meanwhile, will also boast four speciality restaurants and a range of bars. Both hotels offer low-rise villa style accommodation and use traditional Greek architecture as inspiration.

The spa, which opens in May 2010, boasts kinesiotherapy, thalassotherapy and floatation pools, 38 indoor and six outdoor treatment rooms, and a range of light therapies and heat experiences, including ice-grotto rooms, mist showers and herbal saunas. It will offer a range of Eastern and Greek treatments including therapeutic olive oil treatments based on ancient local practices. The spa operator has been signed, but not named.

Just a few miles down the road, Navarino Bay will cover 1,400sq m (15,050sq ft) and will feature two luxury hotels – the first operated by Banyan Tree and the other operator yet to be announced – and an 18-hole golf course. Navarino Bay's buildings will be 'earth sheltered' – embedded in the site's natural terrain with 'living roofs' made from plants. This will reduce energy consumption and provide natural cooling and insulation.

The Banyan Tree Costa Navarino – Banyan Tree's first hotel in Europe – is due to open in 2012 and will consist of 117 villas and three restaurants. The Banyan Tree Spa will comprise 10 indoor and four outdoor treatment pavilions, hydrothermal facilities, fitness training rooms and an indoor swimming pool. The treatments will be traditionally Asian in focus.



The resort investment will be funded by a combination of equity, debt and government funds





The €1bn resort will cover more than 10 million sq m and feature 3,000 hotel rooms and suites as well as six thalassotherapy centres and spas

**“Costa Navarino will create a significant number of new business opportunities, providing substantial motivation, especially for young people, to remain in their homeland”**

The final two resorts, Navarino Hills and Navarino Blue, are not yet under construction. Temes SA is still looking for operators for these developments.

#### IMPACT ON LOCAL ECONOMY

The huge €1bn investment – which doesn't include the cost of the land – is being funded by a combination of equity, debt and government funds.

As the largest tourism development in Greece, Costa Navarino has been debated in parliament with both of the main political parties voting in favour of the project. The development fits well into the plan of the Greek government to move the country away from mass tourism towards higher quality tourism, and also to try to attract tourists to Greece year round.

One of the problems faced by the Greek tourism industry is the seasonal nature of its offer, with 70 per cent of tourists visiting between May and October. Temes SA is determined to ensure Costa Navarino will attract visitors throughout the year with ongoing activities including water sports, rock climbing and especially golf.

“Golf has become an increasingly important part of luxury tourism worldwide,” says Marina Papatsoni, marketing

and communications director of Temes SA. “Although there are many opportunities to enjoy the sport throughout the Mediterranean, the same cannot be said about Greece. We decided to change this.

As for the local economy, Constantakopoulos estimates that 750 new jobs will be created initially, rising to 1,200 once phase one becomes operational. Temes SA has pledged that Costa Navarino will recruit mainly from local communities, and will also use local products and services as much as possible.

Papatsoni says: “Costa Navarino will create a significant number of new business opportunities, providing substantial motivation, especially for young people, to remain in their homeland.”

#### ECO MEASURES

Costa Navarino's electricity needs will be met by solar power – the developers have applied for a permit for a 22MW photovoltaic system to be hidden in the mountains – and a geothermal installation will be installed under the Dunes golf course to provide cooling and heating for the resorts. A cooling system using technology based on seawater circulation is currently under development.

Hotels and golf courses are notoriously water-hungry so, to meet this demand, two reservoirs have been built which will store some of the excess run-off from nearby rivers. The resorts will also use recycled water and collected rainwater.

A replanting programme has seen 5,500 native olive and fruit trees uprooted and temporarily relocated nearby, ready to be re-established on site. Organic fertilisers are being used in all green areas and comprehensive waste management and recycling programmes will be run.

Temes SA is working with environmental organisations including the Hellenic Ornithological Society to monitor and protect local wildlife. The developer has also teamed up with the Bert Bolin Centre for Climate Research at Stockholm University to build a research centre at Costa Navarino, which will study the Mediterranean climate and environment.

No-one can accuse Constantakopoulos of not thinking big with Costa Navarino. His vision is for a truly sustainable, luxury resort that enables visitors to enjoy the local area while building infrastructure to help Messinians to stay in their homeland. Only time will tell whether he manages to achieve all of his aims. ●



ALL PHOTOS, STATISTICS & MAP: MINISTERIO DE TURISMO Y DEPORTE DE URUGUAY

# HOT SPOT

TOURISM IS WARMING UP IN URUGUAY'S THERMAL SPRING REGION.  
WE TAKE A LOOK AT THE INDUSTRY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

LEONOR STANTON • CONTRIBUTING EDITOR • SPA BUSINESS

Formerly known as the 'Switzerland of South America', Uruguay's 3.4 million inhabitants today enjoy a relatively high standard of living – the country was ranked third among those in South America (50th worldwide) in the United Nations Human Development Report 2009, which looks at country development according to life expectancy, educational attainment and per capita GDP.

Covering 176,215sq m (68,037sq miles), it is the second smallest country in South America, yet according to the nation's ministry of tourism (Ministerio de Turismo y Deporte) it attracted 2 million overseas, or incoming tourists, and 366,000 cruise ship passengers, generating just over us\$1bn (€669.6m, £595.6m) in 2008. When taken together, overseas and domestic tourism represent 6 per cent of the country's GDP.

Uruguay's tourism product consists of beach and sun destinations, thermal springs or 'litoral thermal', cultural and historical sites, business/meeting venues, ecotourism developments, sites for sports enthusiasts and cruise ship passengers. When grouped together the beach and sun destinations (Punta del Este, Costa de Rocha, Costa de Oro and Piriápolis) drew in 43 per cent of overseas visitors in 2008 (see Table 1 opposite).



The six thermal resorts are in the regions of Salto and Paysandú in north-west Uruguay

However, the largest single destination for overseas tourists was the capital Montevideo: pulling in 34 per cent of overseas visitors in 2008. The thermal springs have consistently been the third most important destination in Uruguay since 2005, deriv-

ing between 9 per cent and 11 per cent of incoming visitors.

## LITORAL THERMAL

It was in 1940 that the thermal springs in Uruguay were discovered by chance when the Uruguayan Geological Institute was drilling for oil in Arapey: a small town near the River Uruguay and the west coast (see map left). Today, the six main thermal destinations are Arapey, Daymán, Salto Grande, San Nicanor, Guaviyú and Almirón, which are located in the north-west of the country in two regions: the Department of Salto and the Department of Paysandú. The water for the spa towns comes from the Acuífero Guaraní groundwater reserve and the temperatures range from 39 to 45°C.

Arapey, a peaceful small town, is the most northerly of all the thermal springs and it features a variety of municipal thermal pools.

The town offers a mix of private and municipally-owned and operated accommodation units; seven in total which offer 1,906 bed spaces and 5,500 camping pitches. The largest unit is the privately-owned, all-inclusive Arapey Hotel & Thermal Resort with 412 bed spaces and its own, extensive thermal pools.

Daymán is a busy resort, but it has been developed haphazardly. While the 10 main



The privately-owned Arapey Hotel & Thermal Resort boasts extensive thermal pools

Table 1 | Destination of Overseas Tourism in Uruguay

	Montevideo	Punta del Este	Litoral Thermal	Colonia	Costa de Rocha	Costa de Oro	Piriápolis	Otros	Transito
2005	36%	28%	11%	6%	3%	3%	3%	6%	5%
2006	38%	28%	10%	5%	3%	3%	3%	5%	4%
2007	38%	31%	7%	6%	3%	4%	3%	5%	3%
2008	34%	30%	9%	8%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%

thermal pools are municipally owned and operated, the 109 accommodation units – which offer 3,803 bed spaces – are private and vary in quality. The centrally located Complejo Médico Hidrotermal Daymán, for example, is a no-frills spa with a medical bias. The resort also offers an aqua park aimed at the family market and 2,400 camping pitches. Across a bridge from the main town – and in the Department of Paysandú – is the Los Naranjos Hotel which has a tranquil setting where farm animals stroll within metres of the outdoor thermal pools.

**Salto Grande** consists of one five-star hotel, Horacio Quiroga, and an aqua park covering four hectares (10 acres).

**San Nicanor** comprises a small 'estancia' mansion, a private thermal water well, along with substantial land for livestock farming. The business was recently sold for a reported us\$10m (£6.7m, £6m) to Ralph Harteneck, an Argentinian entrepreneur, previously involved with Microsoft US. The facility is currently closed for refurbishment and expansion.

**Guaviyú** has 429 bed spaces in its motel accommodation offering, plus 3,600

camping pitches. The infrastructure of the municipally-owned pools is slowly being repaired following years of neglect and a search is under way for a management company to run the facilities.

**Almirón** is the only destination to be fed from the Acuífero San Gregorio groundwater reserve and is unique in its salty thermal water which is cooler in temperature (at 34°C). Like at Guaviyú, the infrastructure has suffered from lack of maintenance which is slowly being rectified. The accommodation is at the lower end of the market and consists of 800 camping pitches and 147 bed spaces. These are owned municipally, but managed by a private sector sub-contractor.

#### GROWING STRONG

Tourism in Uruguay hit an all time low in 2002 – with the ministry of tourism reporting only 1.35 million incoming visitors that year – following the Argentinian/Uruguayan banking and economic meltdown. Numbers have steadily increased in the last seven years: tourism experienced a 10.1 per cent year-on-year growth in 2008 and the first quarter figures for 2009 show

only a marginal decline on the 2008 visitor numbers in the global financial downturn.

Tourism within the thermal springs region in no exception to this growth. This is despite medical challenges such as foot and mouth, dengue fever and swine flu, as well as ongoing political conflicts with Argentina and the worldwide economic downturn.

The six resorts reportedly pulled in approximately 610,000 overseas and domestic visitors in 2007 and 750,000 in 2008, of which around 40 per cent were day visitors. Independent research for this feature found that the region's upmarket hotels, all privately owned, operate at between 55 and 70 per cent occupancy levels, despite extreme peaks and troughs. Uruguayan and Argentinian holiday periods and weekends are particularly busy, reputedly with high levels of frustrated demand. Average achieved room rates vary between us\$45 (€30, £27) and us\$55 (€37, £33). The municipal hotel in Arapey, which trades as a three-star property, apparently runs at a 70 per cent occupancy generating a surplus, regardless of artificially high payroll costs.

In general customer surveys show high satisfaction rates with consequent high levels of repeat business despite the state of wear and tear of much of the accommodation and thermal pool areas.

As a result, there are a number of projects currently under way, such as at San Nicanor. A new, international standard, five-star 100-bedroom hotel is being planned in Arapey. In addition, the other two high-end hotels in the region, in Daymán and Salto Grande, are considering expanding. In Daymán there are plans to add more bedrooms, a golf course and to possibly introduce a residential element, while in Salto Grande it is mooted that a new hotel may be built within the grounds of the existing accommodation. Hyatt is rumoured as a potential hotel operator for one of these new sites.

On top of this, there are proposals to develop new wells in the region.

### OPPORTUNITIES AROUND

Overall, Argentina generates 70 per cent of all visitors to the thermal springs region, while Uruguayans make up 15 per cent and Brazilians account for 10 per cent. However, the distance from key cities in these source markets – Rosario and Buenos Aires in Argentina and Montevideo in Uruguay – is holding Uruguay's thermal springs back from attracting additional visitors and possibly a more higher-end profile. The five to six-hour



Hotel Horacio Quiroga is a five-star hotel in the thermal town of Salto Grande

drive from some of these areas acts as a barrier, particularly for short breaks: the average stay in the region is just over four days. However, the upgrading of the Ruta 14 to motorway standard in the next five years will reduce drive times between Buenos Aires and the thermal region to around three hours.

In addition, Buquebus, a local passenger transport company, was reportedly in negotiations to start a flight linking Buenos Aires and Salto, the capital of the Department of Salto, which would cut travel times to two hours from the Argentinian capital. Yet there is now some uncertainty as to whether this will go ahead.

Once, and if, these infrastructure developments are completed, it is likely that there will be a greater interest in the region from investors.

Another point to note is that even with a reasonable high influx of tourists, there is relatively little money spent by visitors to thermal spring region.

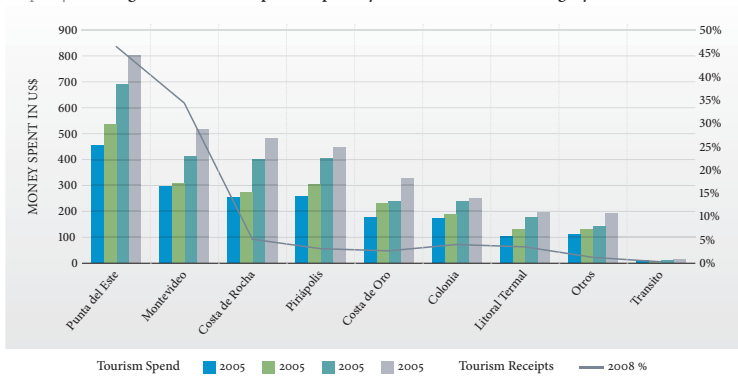
Tourism receipts (showing the total income from tourism) have increased rapidly in Uruguay since 2002, with particularly steep rises in the last few years (see Graph 1 below). Yet the thermal springs account for only 3 per cent of total receipts. While average spend per visitor was just under us\$200 (€134, £119) in the thermal spring area in 2008, it was just over us\$800 (€535, £477) in Punta del Este, a celebrated beach resort.

This is because to date the thermal region has been recognised as offering an affordable tourism product. Overall the market is a price conscious one for families (Guaviyú) and couples (Almirón).

One hotel manager says "thermal tourism in Uruguay is not perceived to be for the affluent traveller". In addition, Monica Lozano, head of thermal products for the Ministerio de Turismo y Deporte sports cultural differences. She says: "unlike in Japan or Europe where spas are seen as oases of peace, here we see water as much for fun and recreation as for relaxation. Over there, spas are primarily quiet, tranquil locations. We are happy playing and relaxing in water, but we make noise... we are not so used to having treatments."

On the whole, existing treatment facilities in the thermal spring towns are

Graph 1 | Percentage of Tourism Receipts and Spend by Visitor Destination in Uruguay





Daymán is a busy resort which offers 10 main thermal pools that are municipally owned and operated

currently small, often subcontracted and according to the owners few are profitable. At the moment treatments prices are low in comparison, with hotel spas in more upscale Uruguayan resorts. Yet Dr César Suarez, a medical doctor who manages

treatment facilities in Arapey, confirms that a wealthy Argentinian market for spa treatments does exist.

A higher end audience may be attracted by a more modernised offering within hotels and a stronger focus on upscale treatment and pampering facilities.

Other opportunities to increase spending could come in on marketing. For example, a thermal water cheese is made at Almíron, but this possibly one of the only attempts at merchandising in the area.

Potential also lies in selling packages based on the medicinal benefits of the water. The thermal waters contain minerals such as fluorine, iron, bromine, boron, iodine, chrome, sodium and phosphorus, which are good for treating the respiratory system, skin conditions and particularly rheumatism, yet very little has been done to market these advantages.



Los Naranjos: a high-end hotel in Daymán

### INVESTING IN URUGUAY

Tourism is recognised as an important industry in Uruguay supporting some 125,000 direct jobs. The first National Plan for Sustainable Tourism 2009 – 2020 was recently launched and consultants are currently reviewing tourism in the thermal region to maximise future potential. Indeed, "tourism has been incentivised in Uruguay for a long time", according to Cynthia Carballo, senior manager at the accountancy firm Deloitte in Montevideo. She says: "There are significant tax incentives in place to promote new investment such as tax rebates depending on the amount invested and the employment generated or the ability to import plant and construction materials free of duty."

Further Mark Teuten, of the Uruguayan law firm Teuten Abogados, adds: "The socialist Frente Amplio party, which has

*Thermal water is plentiful, but investment has largely come from the public sector.*

*As yet there are no international operators with spa know-how and marketing muscle in the region*

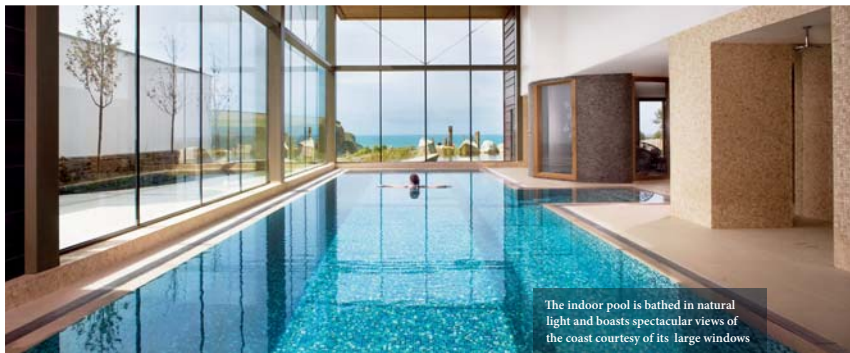
been in government for the last five years, has come to recognise the importance of foreign investment in creating jobs. The party also feels that a solid legal system and respect for the rule of law, which do exist in Uruguay, are an important component in any foreign investment decision."

There is no doubt that there are opportunities to expand the thermal tourism market in Uruguay. Some of the existing facilities are in need of modernisation and there is room to increase the pampering treatment offering as well as exploiting the medicinal benefits of the waters. This would acquire attracting a new, more internationally diverse and upmarket clientele. Hot thermal water is reportedly plentiful, but investment has largely come from the public sector. There are currently no international operators with spa know-how and marketing muscle operating in the region. ●



## taking your time

Quick-fix massages are off the menu at a new spa in Cornwall in the UK. Instead, guests are persuaded to surrender to four-hour ayurvedic journeys. We find out more about this ambitious approach



The indoor pool is bathed in natural light and boasts spectacular views of the coast courtesy of its large windows

Clinging to the cliffs above north Cornwall's Mawgan Porth beach, its sea-thrill roof and glass frontage already a landmark, The Scarlet, as the name suggests, is a bold and brave offshoot of the long-established Bedruthan Steps hotel, slightly further up the cliff.

The 101-bed Bedruthan is run by three daughters of the original owners: Emma

Stratton, Debbie Wakefield and Rebecca Whittington. Needing to give vent to their own entrepreneurial spirit, the sisters have spent the last three years working on this £10m (US\$16.7m, €11.2m) boutique eco-hotel. Unlike the family-focused Bedruthan, The Scarlet is an adults-only, luxury retreat, with a Michelin-starred chef and a 700sq m (7,534sq ft) spa. The 37-bed Scarlet is all about slowing down

– there's even a hotel dog to encourage people to walk on the beach.

Whittington explains the proximity to Bedruthan meant they had to come up with a distinctly different spa concept. "The Ocean Spa at Bedruthan recognises that a lot of the guests have young children and therefore they will only be able to steal away for an hour or two," she says. "However, with The Scarlet we're expecting people will be coming to slow down and it will be a child-free environment. To focus on wellbeing and make a difference, we have designed seven separate spa journeys, each lasting around four hours."

### Promoting deep relaxation

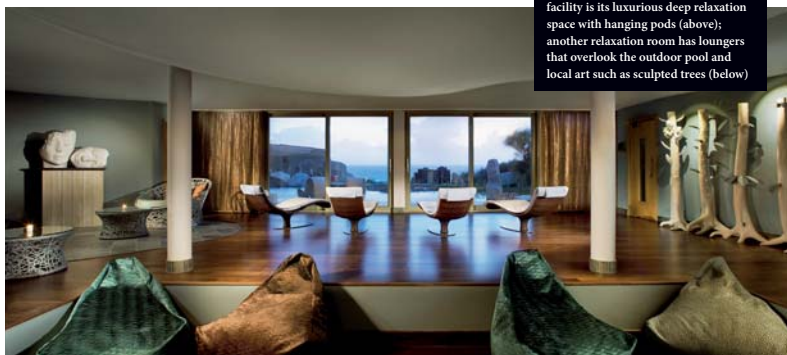
Whittington has been a fan of ayurveda since travelling to Kerala in 1996 and worked closely with Sunita Passi, founder of ayurvedic consultancy Tri-Dosha, to create the journeys. Each starts with an in-depth consultation, to determine the dosha type and prescribe the right journey. Guests are then taken for a bathing and cleansing ritual. This could either be a seaweed bath; a rasul mud massage or a scrub



The £10m luxury retreat is the sister hotel to the long-established Bedruthan Steps



One of the standout features of the new facility is its luxurious deep relaxation space with hanging pods (above); another relaxation room has loungers that overlook the outdoor pool and local art such as sculpted trees (below)



and hot poultice massage in a hammam. Next is some relaxation time, with the option of taking a guided meditation or pranayama (breath control) session, before 90 minutes of ayurvedic treatments, which vary according to the journey. The experience is rounded off with relaxation time in a silent, darkened room, in a cocoon-like pod hanging from the ceiling.

"We're being very brave not offering an hour's massage," says spa manager, Steph Crosby. "But what we genuinely and authentically want to offer is the opportunity to truly relax, let go and release and that takes more than an hour. When guests book a massage, I explain we've researched how long it takes to go to relaxation levels which benefit you long term and they're generally really interested and happy to book a journey. The price hasn't been an issue. What we are asking people to do is spend their money on time, not products."

For those who can't quite commit to a full journey, there is an hour-long taster session, for £60 (US\$100, €67). Some shorter treatments are available for hotel guests: the three bathing experiences and facials using products from Tri-Dosha

## THE JOURNEYS

**RESTORE** A nurturing journey to soothe the mind, restore emotional balance and allow the body to let go of anxieties.

**RE-BALANCE** For those who feel their body is out of sync or their emotional equilibrium is off-balance.

**DETOXIFY** This clears the system of toxins and kick starts the metabolism.

**ENERGISE** Raises the metabolism and improves circulation and vitality.

**UNLOCK** For people suffering from deep seated neck, back and shoulder tension or other aches and pains.

**SOUL-HUNTING** For people at a crossroads, aiming to open the mind to choices and opportunities and give courage for a new start.

**RE-DISCOVER FOR COUPLES**

A bonding time for couples, where they will learn massage techniques and have champagne in a scented bath.

Each journey costs £175 (US\$293, €196) apart from soul-hunting which is £250 (US\$419, €280), the price reflecting the fact that it uses two therapists.

and Voya, which supplies certified organic seaweed and seaweed products. Manicures and pedicures are offered in the bedrooms.

### Green team

The three sisters are genuinely passionate about cutting the hotel's carbon footprint. The hotel has a green team, headed by Bedruthan's sustainability manager, to do

energy audits and share knowledge between the businesses. A bio-mass boiler is used for hot water and heating, the building is tight-sealed and an air-to-air heat exchanger is also utilised.

The indoor pool is heated by solar panels and treated with a special low-dosage bromine system. The outdoor natural pool, which has no chemicals at all and is cleaned by reeds, is topped up by har-



*"We're being very brave not offering an hour's massage, but we genuinely want to offer the opportunity to truly relax"*

vested rainwater. Although the outer edge looks a bit like a garden pond with rushes and plants, the swimming part is clear and inviting and has been warmly received by guests. To cut down on laundry, guests are asked to come to the spa in the robes from their room. Where possible, sarongs are used instead of towels and guests are given flip flops made out of recycled tyres. "There's a strong, ethical, decision-making process for everything," says Crosby. "For example, the spa uniforms are from the US. We weren't going to get them there because of the carbon footprint, but when we looked at other factors – they're durable, breathable and don't need to be ironed, they became the most environmental option. Not every decision is clear cut."

### Spiritual environment

The spa has three tented treatment rooms, with potential for two more, a couples' suite with a double bath, an indoor 13m pool, a hammam, a rasul for mud treatments, a meditation room, a relaxation area overlooking the outdoor pool and the



There are three tented treatment rooms with potential for two more as well as a couples' suite with a double bath

ocean, a deep relaxation space with hanging pods and two outdoor, log-fired hot tubs. A yoga, pilates and tai chi studio is nearing completion to complete the offer.

Design is a strong element of The Scarlet, Whittington says they wanted to make it aspirational and luxurious, while staying true to its eco roots. The spa is decorated in earthy tones, with reclaimed walnut floors, and robes and towels are light brown, rather than white. Local art is tastefully

displayed. Perhaps the most interesting design element is the canvas-tent arrangement in three of the treatment rooms.

Whittington explains the inspiration for this: "I went on an ayurvedic course and met a lot of practitioners who said a normal spa didn't embody enough spirit for ayurveda. I knew I needed to create an environment which would feel spiritual and connected, in order to get clients and practitioners into the right mind state,

but I didn't want to create a bit of India or a bit of Bali." The tent idea gradually evolved with input from lots of people, they were made by sailing product manufacturers and an acoustician made recommendations to stop noise transfer between rooms.

All of the staff – including the therapists – have been chosen for their empathy and experience. "Lots of the therapists have already been on their own personal journey," says Whittington. "We ask them to come in fresh-faced and well-rested rather than made-up and to allow themselves time to centre themselves before work."

She says it won't be a high throughput spa, but they're hoping for steady use by hotel guests and day guests coming for journeys. She believes it has the potential to become a destination spa.

It's a brave and innovative concept, and one which has been carefully thought through. ●

## SOUL-HUNTING JOURNEY, THE SCARLET, CORNWALL, UK

First-person experience: Kath Hudson

**I** love the way ayurvedic treatments work so deeply on all levels, and really promote release, so I was thrilled to try a soul-hunting journey.

The experience began with a hammam, using an invigorating Scarlet-made salt scrub, followed by a hot poultice massage. The bashing I was given made me think of meat being tenderised, but it was such a relief to have someone tackle my knots, especially when Katie, my therapist, started foraging beneath my shoulder blades.

After a lengthy relaxation, Katie was joined by Tamarin, for the next phase – a four-handed treatment, known as samvahana. It was utterly wonderful. Having wound down, I felt I could let go and



although they worked deeply, I also felt it was nurturing.

After the treatment, I was led, like a sleepwalker, into another treatment room for the shirodhara treatment where hot oil was poured over my forehead and hair for 45

minutes. This was very soothing for the mind, I could almost feel the stress leaving my head, especially when they wrung out my hair. Finally, I was taken to a hanging pod. I could have stayed there for hours.

After the experience, I felt like my one-year-old son looks after a good nap: rosy cheeked, bright eyed and raring to go. It benefited me on the physical, emotional and spiritual levels and I hope the effects of such deep relaxation, and dumping off so much tension, will last a while.



# Wearing too many hats? SpaBooker is All You Need



The only online spa software  
solution that delivers

Millions of New Customers

New Revenue with Instant Printable Vouchers

24/7 Online Appointment Booking

Marketing Toolbox that Helps Sell Appointments

For a free consultation visit  
[www.spa-booker.com/europe](http://www.spa-booker.com/europe)



## Adam Horler

39, managing director, Osmosis Ventures

Horler has worked in the beauty industry for over 18 years, within companies such as L'Oréal, as commercial director, and Molton Brown Asia, as CEO. He is known as a retail specialist in the UK and a sales, marketing and branding expert in Asia. In November 2008 he set up Osmosis Ventures – a business to help consumer companies, retailers and hotel groups promote and source eco-friendly brands – with his wife. Horler also heads up Asia-Pacific LOHAS, an enterprise focused on sustainability (SB08/3 p62), and is planning to host the first Asian LOHAS Forum in October 2010.

*I grew up in Harpenden, a town in the green belt around London, and my childhood was spent running amok in English woodlands with friends. This gave me a great appreciation for nature: I used to get very upset seeing new housing estates being built and that has stayed with me forever. I then moved to the Wirral, Merseyside, a fairly rough place near Liverpool. You have to be street smart to thrive and survive there, thank God, because those were the best lessons I have ever had in life.*



The worst business decision I made was turning down my boss's offer to hire someone to work alongside me. I was too proud to admit the job was complex, but I then lacked anyone to bounce ideas off. That pride eventually cost me my job as I was replaced due to poor profits performance. Next time, I'll be quick to admit I need help and will embrace offers with open arms.



*I first encountered the wellness industry at large in 2006 at a Wellness Summit, where my wife Ann [Gowing] was a master practitioner running yoga sessions. Ann teaches yoga, pilates and fitness – she has worked at Mandarin Oriental and Four Seasons – and constantly puts me back on track, helping me to achieve a work-life balance. It's great working together: we're good with individuals (Ann) and organisations (me). We have the same views on spas and are equally critical from an operations standpoint.*

I feel liberated having thrown off the shackles of corporate life. LOHAS and the rest of my environmental work has given me a true purpose in life. My greatest wish is for LOHAS to take off in Asia to really improve the sustainability of business here. My long-term ambition is to see it run by Asians. I eventually see myself back in Europe, living a simple life in the country with my family.

Even the best spas are very bad at retail. I'm constantly astonished by how poorly products are displayed, sales spaces are laid out and employees are trained. Spa retail is just like any other retail, it operates on the same sets of rules but doesn't get treated that way. The industry can learn from consumer brands [such as Dove and Nivea] which are launching spas, but should also consider them a threat.

I was overcome by guilt following my successful career in pushing palm oil and petrochemical-derivative products. When I first started I wasn't aware of the issues in working for a big FMCG company. I am now driven by the desire to change people's habits, perceptions and motivating them to realise that there is a better way. That's why we started Osmosis Ventures. Our mission is 'promoting conscious living'. People now know we're credible and are starting to make enquiries.



## Spa Wellness Solution Provider

GeoSpa boasts a unique experience in developing unsurpassed spa wellness facilities worldwide.

We provide developers, hoteliers, private investors and spa owners with stunning and innovative spa experience zones.

### *Design by Desire*

We pride ourselves in partnering world-renowned architects, designers & spa consultants in the flourishing market of spa.

Together we create new concepts, trends and business opportunities for investors.

Conceptualise

Plan

Design

Install

Train

Support Services

Thermal Lounger  
Relax Lounger  
Water Lounger  
Kneipp Therapies  
Spa Accessories  
Spa Furniture

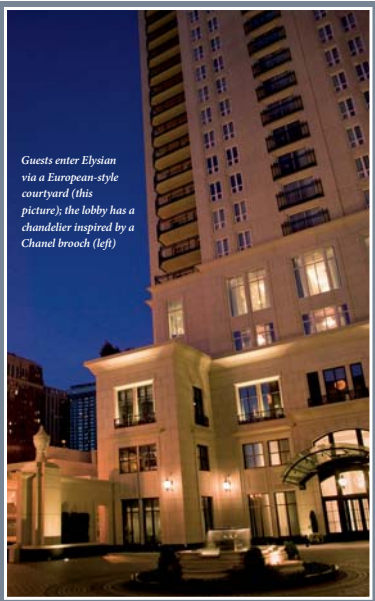
Laconium  
Finnish Sauna  
Soft Sauna  
Kelo Sauna  
Aged Wood Sauna  
Light Sauna

Ice Fountain  
Ice Cabin  
Snow Cabin  
Crystal Grotto  
Frigidarium  
Serial Bath

Salty Steam Bath  
Salt Peeling  
Hamam  
Hamam Massage Table  
Hamam Bench  
Hamam Scrub

Snail Shower  
Round Shower  
Experience Shower  
Hydro Pool  
Floatation  
Swiss Hydro Compact

Tepidarium  
Caldarium  
Inhalation Bath  
Aroma Bath  
Crystal Bath  
Cultural Bath



Guests enter Elysian via a European-style courtyard (this picture); the lobby has a chandelier inspired by a Chanel brooch (left)

# Aiming HIGH

The Elysian Chicago, a five-star hotel with private residences, has opened in troubled economic times. So what are its prospects and what role will the in-house spa play?

**D**espite launching during a financial downturn, the Elysian Chicago which opened in December 2009 in the US, the Windy City's hotel marketplace, with a promise to deliver a new level of luxury.

Situated in the affluent Gold Coast neighbourhood, the US\$280m (€187.5m, £169.7m) mixed-use project is the inaugural property of Elysian Hotels & Resorts, a Chicago-based company with bold plans to open upscale hotels in gateway cities around the world. Yet Elysian's CEO David Pisor believes the company has much to prove in its own backyard before looking further afield. "We are a young business... we have to walk before we run," he says.

What he's achieved so far is impressive considering that a number of high-end hotel/condo developments in the city have been put on hold or cancelled altogether

(see p46). So, just how has he managed to succeed where others have failed?

## Real estate success

The 60-storey Elysian Chicago combines 188 guest rooms, with 52 private residences. Costing from US\$3.9m (€2.62m, £2.34m) each, just four of the residences remain on the market, with the majority sold in a pre-opening campaign that began in 2004. The early success of this real estate component has been a key factor in moving the development ahead.

Thinking back to his 18-month search for the right site, Pisor, who invested seed money with three other partners, recalls: "When I found this plot, I offered the most anybody had ever paid for a similar parcel of land because I knew the deal would support it and that having the best location in Chicago would be very important when it came to [selling] the real estate."

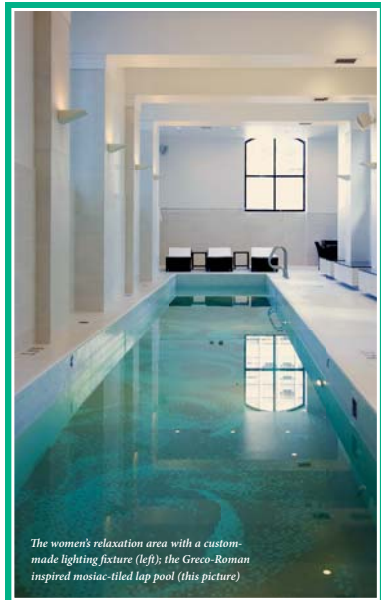
The business model for Elysian involved homes being sold at high price points to generate revenues to offset expensive hotel construction. This strategy resulted in new financing then being secured from Hypo Real Estate Capital Corporation in 2006.

However, Pisor is the first to admit there are tremendous challenges ahead, not least because room revenues and occupancy rates are significantly depressed across the city. "We will be at the top end of the Chicago market but our opening rates will be lower than originally projected," he comments. "Since we want to be a rate leader, it will take longer for us to achieve hard-won customers. This will also mean longer timelines in terms of seeing a return on investment."

## Luxury addition

Building a strong brand image is key to coming through these difficult times. The Elysian team has committed to spending more money on marketing than it would have in a buoyant economy. Target marketing rather than generic advertising was favoured, with communication vehicles including the website, online

The early success of the real estate component to Elysian Chicago has been a key factor in moving the development forward – just four of the US\$3.9m private residences remain on the market



*The women's relaxation area with a custom-made lighting fixture (left); the Greco-Roman inspired mosaic-tiled lap pool (this picture)*

campaigns, social media, public relations, blogs and word of mouth.

In terms of an international audience, the Elysian has been accepted as one of The Leading Hotels of the World and will be promoted through Virtuoso and American Express. Sales people from the local competition such as the Peninsula and Four Seasons have also been employed so that existing client relationships can now be nurtured at the Elysian.

But to truly stand out from other high-end offerings, Pisor wants to reset the stage for five-star hospitality by redefining what luxury means. "It's an over-used word but we see the word luxury as an experience that is individual, personalised and dedicated to the details," he says. "You can only truly make this possible by scaling back to a small operation with a limited number of bedrooms."

He confirms that a spacious, 14,000sq ft (1,301sq m) Spa & Health Club has been a key component of the luxury offering from the outset, especially since it will operate as an independent profit centre and be expected to drive 10 per cent of overall revenues.

## The Elysian Chicago

### Facts and Figures

- The hotel design, by Lucien Lagrange Architects, resembles a French estate
- The 188 rooms range from 614sq ft (57sq m) to 2,600sq ft (242sq m)
- 83 per cent of rooms are suites
- Rooms start at US\$395 (€265, £237)
- There are 52 private residences measuring from 3,400sq ft (316sq m)
- Facilities include two restaurants, a gentleman's bar, a junior ballroom, 4,500sq ft (418sq m) of meeting space and a spa
- Facials and massages start at US\$165 (€111, £99) and US\$160 (€107, £96)
- Suppliers include Carita, Naturopathica, Earthworks, Sprayology, Hommage, Spa Ritual, Matrix and Stott Pilates

### Design dazzle

While the hotel's interior design by Simeone Deary reflects a glamorous European art deco aesthetic, the US\$7m (€4.7m, £4.2m) spa, situated on the fourth floor,

picks up on a distinctive theme. Principal Lisa Simeone explains: "When David approached us, he told us that the Elysian Fields – the resting place of the Greek gods – were an inspiration for the project. This immediately brought up Greco-Roman imagery, which wasn't quite right for the hotel, but one that we were able to follow in the spa and health club."

In a nod to both Greek and Roman baths, the spa's layout divides men's and women's facilities with relaxation areas comprising warm water baths, saunas, steamrooms and lounges – the men's side also features an atelier offering grooming treatments. A saline lap pool, 13 treatment rooms, a hair and nail spa, fitness centre, pilates and gyrotonic studio and outdoor terrace are available to all.

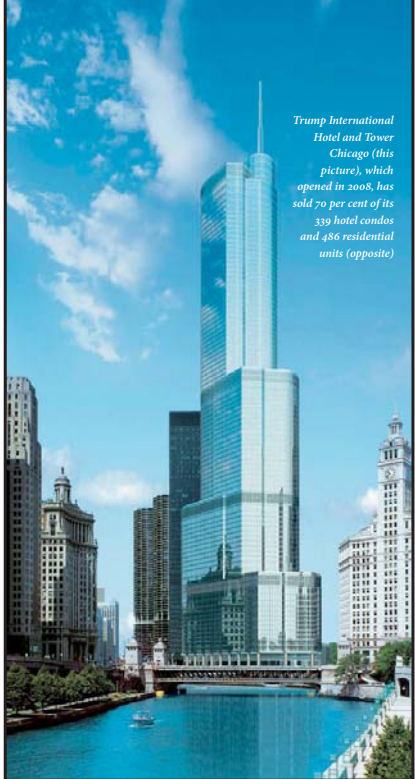
Columns, colonnades, mosaics, black flooring and white walls form the cornerstone of the design and the reception area dazzles with drama. Simeone elaborates: "Guests immediately see a white onyx wall behind a monolithic marble reception desk overhung by a lighting feature resembling a jewel-encrusted egg. Then there are beautiful mosaic tiled water walls



## Real estate fortunes in the Windy City

Difficult economic conditions have meant that notable Chicago hotel/condo developments have been cancelled or delayed in the past two years, including Canyon Ranch Living, which was due to open in 2010. Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts, meanwhile, announced the opening of a Chicago property back in 2005 as part of the new Waterview Tower site. Offering 223 hotel rooms and over 200 elite residential condominiums, the plug has since been pulled on the Shangri-La property, which would have represented the brand's first foray into the US market. 2005 was also the year in which the Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group revealed its plans to manage a new 250-room luxury hotel and 50 branded residences in the city's Millennium Park neighbourhood. The project is now on hold, while developer Illinois Center Development pursues the required levels of funding.

Faring better than many of its competitors in the luxury category, the us\$1bn (£670.5m, £600.2m) Trump International Hotel and Tower Chicago, which opened in phases throughout 2008 with 339 hotel condos and 486 residential units, is now 70 per cent sold. The largest residential building in Chicago complete with its own signature spa, Trump's hotel condos vary in size from 550 to 2,200sq ft (46 to 204sq m) and residential units from 600 to 4,000sq ft (56 to 372sq m), with prices starting from us\$580,000 (£388,850, £348,050). Penthouses measure up to 14,000sq ft (1,301sq m).



Trump International Hotel and Tower Chicago (this picture), which opened in 2008, has sold 70 per cent of its 339 hotel condos and 486 residential units (opposite)

with Greek male and female faces to act as signage, plus white lacquered closets to subtly showcase products for retail."

Although the Elysian is Simeone Deary's first hotel spa, it threw up only a handful of challenges. "Layout was straightforward because we had early input from consultant Sylvia Sepielli and Mario Tricoci's family who operate day spas [as part of Red Door Spa Holdings s809/2 p24]," says Simeone. But some alternations were made when spa director Fabienne Lindholm – formerly director of education and business development at Decléor USA – came on board. One such example

was reviewing the retail area to ensure it looked good but worked commercially.

### Spa with purpose

In keeping with therapeutic Greco-Roman spas, Lindholm's philosophy is to pass on bite-sized information about lifestyle and therapies while still providing an enjoyable experience. Her treatment menu is concise and accessible because the spa's technicians are trained to customise therapies for clients. "If you book the Elysian massage, for example, we can incorporate some Thai, Swedish and deep tissue techniques to suit your needs," she says. She hopes

this approach will differentiate the facility from competition and draw in clients

Having employed local master technicians, the Elysian plans to attract the Gold Coast community through grass roots marketing initiatives and limited spa memberships. Day visitors, residence owners and hotel clients are all priorities for sales, with Lindholm aiming for a 60:40 split for day versus hotel guests. While she would like to achieve a hotel capture rate of 10 to 12 per cent within months of opening, her ultimate goal is to reach 20 per cent as soon as possible.

"We know it will be tough to persuade visitors to come to us for the first time, but once people have experienced our service sequence, I am sure we will retain them," Lindholm concludes. "Hopefully, our main problem in the future will be juggling too much demand!" ●

Building a strong brand image is key to coming through difficult times. The Elysian team committed to spending more money on marketing than it would have done in a more buoyant economy



**sacred nature**  
pure organics for the skin. for the planet  
**in the best spas worldwide**

**[ comfort zone ]**



99% natural with organic certified active ingredients  
made in italy with energy from renewable resources

[www.comfortzone.it](http://www.comfortzone.it)



## floating ideas

Bauer Palladio hotel and spa is the latest addition to a Venetian hotel empire, but if the owner has her way, the quiet retreat might grow into the city's first destination spa

Venice has always attracted vast numbers of tourists. They come for St Mark's Square, gondola rides across the canals, Murano glass shopping and to experience one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

If there's one thing tourists don't come to Venice for, however, it's spas. "You'd go to a remote island somewhere in the Pacific for a spa, but you don't choose Venice," says Francesca Bortolotto Possati, chairman and CEO of Bauer Hotels Venezia. She wants to change that.

The Bauer, the first hotel which overlooks the Grand Canal, was purchased by Bortolotto Possati's grandfather in 1930. Since taking control of the property in 1997, Bortolotto Possati has built a mini luxury hotel empire in the city, opening three more properties. And she has big ambitions for her latest, the Palladio, a €50m (US\$74.6m, £44.8m) hotel and spa opened in 2006 that she's already expanding with the aim of creating Venice's first destination spa. "The Palladio's current spa is almost like having a restaurant: it's a popular service, but it's not so much a des-

ination," Bortolotto Possati says. "It has to become larger and develop into something different, which is one of my projects. I hope we'll become a destination spa."

Bortolotto Possati's Bauer Hotels Venezia properties are the only independently-owned large luxury hotels in Venice, and have held their own against the international chains. Her portfolio also includes Il Palazzo, a Venetian palace-themed boutique hotel Bortolotto Possati created by redeveloping half of the original Bauer; and Casa Nova, a site offering apartments and suites.

Bortolotto Possati has had a particularly hands-on role in developing each property, personally completing the interior design and making architectural decisions with the support of a full time, in-house architectural team. Il Palazzo has a small spa with a sauna, steamroom, whirlpool, massage and a fitness room, but the Palladio, a quiet retreat just a few feet from the lagoon on Venice's Giudecca island, has been her first real spa project.

The Palladio is located in a 16th century former convent designed by Renaissance

architect Andrea Palladio, which had been neglected for over 100 years. Charmed by the building's spectacular architecture and big garden – large green spaces are a rarity in Venice – Bortolotto Possati decided it was time for Venice to offer a new resort hotel where visitors could escape the hectic pace of the crowds in St Mark's.

Developing it, however, was a challenge: building in most historic cities in Europe means adhering to tight restrictions, and Venice has more than most. After two years of creating different proposals for the site, Bortolotto Possati was finally forced to change the spa's location to a separate building next door to the Palladio and halve the size to from 900sq m (9,700sq ft) to 450sq m (4,850sq ft).

### Original atmosphere

Though she envisioned a spa hotel rather than a hotel and spa, Bortolotto Possati is happy with the results and feels they form a strong basis on which to expand the site's offering. The three-floor hotel has retained much of the convent's original atmosphere.





A small church still used by locals remains embedded in the front of the building; the hotel is built around it in two wings, and features original open brickwork walls, Venetian terrazzo floors, high ceilings, and large open spaces such as the common area on the ground floor.

The spa features wooden beamed ceilings and muted colours, accented with panels of floral fabric. Facilities include a communal sauna, a facial room, a manicure/pedicure room, a massage room connected to a steamroom for two with double showers, a couple's treatment room with an Obermaier bathtub for two, and a steam bath room offering Venice's only Vitalis multi-bath system: a patented bath claimed to break down steam into especially small molecules to aid detoxification. The relaxation room, the spa's crowning feature, has a sofa facing a giant one-way mirror window with a surreal, postcard view of St Mark's on the other side of the lagoon's hypnotic waves.

"I think a spa has to have a strong link to the environment, the city or countryside it's set in," Bortolotto Possati says. "Some-

times you go into a place and you don't know if you're in Europe or America or Italy. I like to be in a very comfortable, secluded, private spa, but to also see where I am."

With its secluded atmosphere and romantic lagoon view, the spa caters to couples, often honeymooners, and this is reflected in the treatment offering. The most popular is the €198 (US\$295, £177) per person Me & You Spa for Two package, which starts with a sauna, followed by an exfoliating total body treatment with raspberries, a purifying whirlpool session with a raspberry and milk-based bath and a one-hour massage.

The spa uses Maria Galland and Daniela Steiner products, and also sells Bauer's own product line, Santa Maria degli Angeli, which features shampoo, conditioner, moisturisers and shower gels with natural, anallergic ingredients. Bortolotto Possati had a hands-on role in developing the line – she's been producing products for her hotels for the past five years, working with a cosmetic laboratory

As The Palladio hotel (both pictures left) is located in a former convent built in the 16th century; its green spaces are a rarity in Venice (above). The relaxation room is the spa's crowning glory (top)

established by the Rio Terà dei Pensieri cooperative in the botanical gardens of the 14th century Le Convertite on Giudecca.

As part of a social initiative, the products are handmade by female inmates of the local jail, who are trained by volunteers and supervised by a licensed organic chemist. In the pipeline over the next 12 months is a line of ointments and creams that can be personalised for clients in advance of their treatment based on a computer-aided questionnaire.

The hotel and spa has not participated in any eco-friendly benchmarking programmes, but Bortolotto Possati is fiercely proud of the sustainable elements she's incorporated into the property. "We do everything possible to try to be eco-friendly," she says. Aside from using environmentally-friendly water-soluble products in the spa, the hotel is fitted



With its secluded, private atmosphere, the spa frequently caters to couples, often honeymooners and the most popular package is the Me & You Spa for Two

with energy-saving light bulbs and rooms are fitted with key card systems that shut down electric sources when a guest is out. There's a recycling programme, a water conservation system that gathers rain and condensation from the air conditioning units to water the gardens, and guests are encouraged to reuse towels and linens. The hotel purchased a solar powered vaporetto boat, Venice's first, to transport Palladio guests to and from the mainland and staff's uniforms and fabric used around the spa are made from natural fibres. "I think I'm one of the only spas in the world that has used pure silk for curtains and drapes," Bortolotto Possati says.

### Standing out

The Palladio's spa has five staff and typically treats no more than four people at once. According to manager Hélène Lobel, it's this intimate atmosphere that sets it apart from its competitors – spas at the Hilton and Cipriani hotels, also located on Giudecca. "It's difficult to call them competitors because it's not the same concept. The philosophy is quite different in the Hilton and Cipriani (SBO5/2 P104). What they have is right for them, with the number of rooms they have," she says. "Our spa is more intimate and special."

It's Bortolotto Possati's aim to grow the spa into a destination to accommodate more guests while retaining an intimate atmosphere. Currently, the spa is marketed to Palladio guests and guests at other Bauer properties, as well as day guests, and brings in up to €25,000 (US\$37,250, £22,400) a month in revenue. Bortolotto Possati wants to increase this to around



### BAUER PALLADIO HOTEL & SPA BY NUMBERS

- The hotel's occupancy rate is usually 75 per cent, though it has gone down to 60 per cent this year
- Rooms start at €750 (US\$1,100, £672) for a double room, per night, based on two people sharing; prices range up to €1,570 (US\$2,550, £1,400) per night for a lagoon-view suite
- Average length of stay is three to four days
- The spa's capture rate is 60 per cent
- Forty per cent of guests across all Bauer hotel properties visit the Palladio spa
- The Palladio employs 50 staff



- The Palladio has 37 rooms and 13 suites; meanwhile, the Bauer Hotel has 91 rooms and 18 suites, Bauer Il Palazzo has 44 rooms and 38 suites, and Bauer Casanova has 10 rooms and nine suites

€50,000 (US\$74,500 £44,800) per month in the near term, and further in the future. She is currently looking at bringing in a wider range of visitors with a €100m (US\$149.7m, £89.6m) addition to the Palladio set for completion by early 2010, and the future addition of a medical spa.

The addition to the Palladio will see 20 new rooms added to the hotel, and the garden expanded and given new features such as a swimming pool and an area for open air spa treatments.

Also set for an early 2010 launch is a new lagoon-front property, steps away from the Palladio, which will function as a villa-style, longer-term residence, with 10 apartments from suites to three-bedroom. Guests will be able to enjoy butler and hotel services, as well as their own garden and swimming pool.

Bortolotto Possati hopes to establish the medical spa in a building she owns which is in between the Palladio and the villa property. "I'm in the process of searching for and evaluating different partners to see if we can bring this new concept to Venice," she says. "It's in a phase where we're still

looking into the feasibility and financial plans." It's too early to provide details, but Bortolotto Possati says the new spa would take two years to build and get up and running, and could start at 400 to 600sq m (4,300 to 6,450sq ft) and potentially grow. Medical spa or not however, she's working on having the Palladio open year-round – the hotel currently operates seasonally, from April to October. "Venice doesn't have an incredible climate over the winter, but we're hoping, if not in 2010, then definitely by 2011 to be open year-round."

Bortolotto Possati will be especially looking forward to the medical spa's launch – much as she loves her hands-on work, her favourite part of any project is the conclusion, and it's been no different with opening the Palladio. "Looking at it today, finally, it's so rewarding, the garden is absolutely stunning right now and even the spa has the feeling I wanted to give to that property and I'm very happy about that," she says. "In life, you often say 'I wish I'd done that' or 'I could have done this better'. I can say 'I'm happy with it and I like it just as it is.'" ●

# Scientific amalgamation for Prevention & Cure

MIND  
Rehab

BODY  
Cure

SOUL  
Relief

- ✓ Diabetic Management
- ✓ Arthritis Management
- ✓ Weight Management
- ✓ Ancient Medicine
- ✓ Naturopathy
- ✓ Rehabilitation
- ✓ Cosmetology
- ✓ Massotherapy
- ✓ Anthroposophical  
Medicine

designed by [www.leoearz.com](http://www.leoearz.com)



LEOjuventa®  
Centre for Integrated Medicine

Leonia Holistic Destination, Hyderabad, India.

Tel: +91 40 6640 0000, Fax: +91 40 6640 4040, E-mail: [juventa@leonia.in](mailto:juventa@leonia.in), [www.leonia.in](http://www.leonia.in)

Leo Juventa operated by **Leo Juventa Holistic Health Spas Pvt. Ltd.**

For Franchise Enquires Contact: Tel: +91 40 6640 0000, Fax: +91 40 6640 4040, Email: [franchise@leonia.in](mailto:franchise@leonia.in)



## MARY TABACCHI

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR,  
CORNELL UNIVERSITY



"All spa modules were designed to educate future spa business leaders, entrepreneurs and corporate personnel. When students graduate, they know the spa and wellness industry through and through because of the work they do. They have read and analysed almost all of the research released by ISPA, PKF, STR, HVS and Intelligent Spas and will have interned with the leaders in the spa industry. Few schools have students who are vice presidents or on the corporate level of companies such as Banyan Tree, Four Seasons, Mandarin Oriental, Canyon Ranch, the list goes on..."

# Cornell University

Cornell University's spa degree modules are some of the industry's most long-standing courses. We find out what makes them stand out



## IN A NUTSHELL

Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, US, introduced its first spa-specific course – Spa and Spa Resort Development and Management – at its School of Hotel Administration (Hotel School) in 1985. Today it also offers modules in Contemporary Healthy Cuisine and Tying Wellness with Corporate Financial Success.

These courses focus on the business and management functions of spas and on industry research. Over the years, many corporate leaders have graduated and Cornell is highly regarded in the spa industry.

## BACKGROUND

The Hotel School was founded in 1922 and for decades it has topped polls for hospitality education. The school offers four degrees which can integrate the spa modules: a Masters of Management in Hospitality, a Masters of Science, a PhD and a four-year undergraduate Bachelor of Science in Hotel Administration.

## WHO'S WHO?

The Hotel School has 60 faculty members, but only one spa expert: industry

veteran Mary Tabacchi (SB05/1 p34), who developed the first module after Deborah Szekeley – the founder of Rancho La Puerta and the Golden Door – invited her to learn the business at Golden Door for the purpose of introducing a management course at Cornell. Tabacchi leads all of the courses, which combine her extensive experience with hundreds of spa companies and her 37 years of research and teaching worldwide.

## WHO'S IT FOR?

The modules are aimed at Hotel School fourth-year undergraduate and Master of Hospitality Management students, although other Cornell students can apply. They are preferably offered to high achieving class men and graduate students.

The spa modules are offered in the spring and fall [autumn] semesters and there's an intake of 30 to 50 students per course. Rigorous entry requirements include high grades, exceptional writing, conceptualisation and math entry test scores, excellent communication and leadership skills and evidence of motivation. All prospective pupils must have experience working in hospitality.

## ON THE MENU

The spa-related courses run for 14 weeks and comprise two 80-minute sessions a week. The courses focus heavily on the business and marketing of day, resort and destination spas worldwide. Students receive an overview of the global spa and fitness industry along with its economic state and structure and are taught how to evaluate the feasibility of new spas and the financial health of existing ones based on market research.

Module topics include yield management, the growth of US, Asian and European spas and the potential expansion into other markets, the development of customer service and online booking. Other important subjects include personnel, safety, legal and ethical issues, all of which are compounded by the teachings of guest speakers from the corporate spa industry – many of whom are former graduate students, such as Mia Kyricos and Greg Hagin (see comments above) – as well as key entrepreneurs.

The Hotel School ensures a balance between real-world experience and classroom learning. Undergraduates

## MIA KYRICOS

DIRECTOR OF GLOBAL SPA BRANDS AND PROGRAMMING, STARWOOD HOTELS & RESORTS



"Starwood hires Hotel School spa students for a variety of junior to mid-level management positions. As a 2005 master's graduate, and having been Mary Tabacchi's graduate assistant, I'm aware of how rigorous the programmes are and the skills they equip students with. I believe in the curriculum because it marries business skills, learnt via real-life consulting projects, with operational experience which students are required to have before coming to campus. Graduates are equipped to understand and employ the rationale behind tactical decision-making at a property level."

## GREG HAGIN

GENERAL MANAGER,  
THE SEA RANCH LODGE



"When I chose Cornell, I was working as a restaurant manager, but wanted to change career to focus on hotel spas. I was impressed by the prestige of Cornell's Hotel Management programme. At the time, Cornell was the only school that covered both hotel and spa in one programme. Professor Tabacchi was the first serious academic to take an interest in the spa industry, conduct industry research and communicate the spa experience through academic channels. Her intimate connections with industry leaders represents a huge advantage over other spa programmes."



are required to complete 800 hours of work experience in their chosen hospitality-related field over their four years, including at least one internship a year. On top of this, they must also spend their summer and winter breaks working in the industry. A minimum of 120 residential academic credits are required. Each spa module counts for three credits.

As part of their academic spa courses, students consult with a client, often a corporate executive, allowing interaction with industry leaders. The client sends students real problems to be solved or a programme to be developed. Students research the issue and complete an in-depth analysis with recommended solutions.

There are many papers produced at Cornell, for example: *Tracking Consumer Spending During Down Economic Times* for Hyatt Spas, 2009 and *Marketing Health and Healing Services for Canyon Ranch Lenox*, 2006; and *Online Booking: Opportunities for Spas* for SpaFinder, 2006.

Tabacchi places most of her students personally, thanks to her industry connections, and these often lead to job opportunities after graduation.

The Hotel School aims for a balance between classroom learning and work experience: students are required to complete 800 hours

### WHO BACKS IT?

Tabacchi's students are employed around the world, helped by having internship agreements and management trainee programmes with almost every hotel and spa chain from Canyon Ranch and Fairmont Raffles to Hyatt, Marriott and Shangri-La, to name but a few.

The Hotel School's Centre for Hospitality Research is heavily subsidised and endorsed by 76 corporate sponsors and associates, who also frequently participate in the school's research projects and corporate partnerships. Students of the Spa and Spa Resort Development and Management course must get involved in industry research with the assistance of Tabacchi and Cornell's partners.

The latest research paper is an extensive study called *Analysing the Spa Effect on Hotels*, which is the first substantial paper to examine the financial performance of

regions before and after hotels introduced spas. Others include the *Spa Canada Spa Consumer Survey*, jointly done by Spa Canada and Cornell University; and *Spa Influences on Average Daily Rate, Revenue Per Available Room and Occupancy*, which was a collaboration between Tabacchi, SpaFinder and Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne.

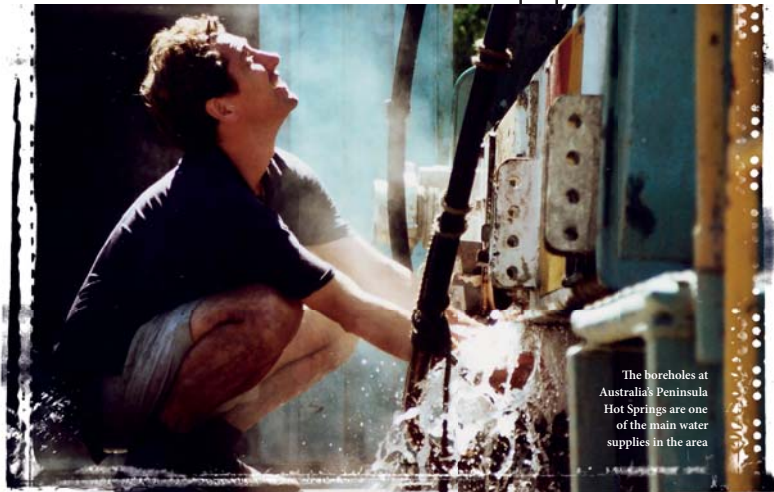
### THE STORY SO FAR

Cornell enrolls more than 20,000 students per year – 800 of whom join the Hotel School. Around 100 to 150 pupils enroll in spa-related courses yearly, and almost all perform very well due to Cornell's rigorous admission standards. Most terms, the courses are at the maximum capacity of 50 students, aged between 18 and 40, from more than 30 countries.

### WHAT'S NEXT?

Professor Tabacchi continually develops her research, both independently and in collaboration with her students. Her latest paper, which is yet to be published, is a study on the effect of the global recession on the spa consumer and on the growth of the spa market. ●

# alternative water supplies



The boreholes at Australia's Peninsula Hot Springs are one of the main water supplies in the area

**W**ater can be a strong selling point for spas, so having your own supply may sound like a dream come true. The benefits can include smaller bills (although amounts vary enormously), purer water, no reliance on a utility company and the creation of a new marketing asset.

But drilling a borehole (or well) to access groundwater is no 'silver bullet' and the decision shouldn't be taken lightly. Not every spa will have access to groundwater: it will depend on local geology. If your spa does sit above an aquifer – a groundwater reserve – you'll need to consider the water quality and quantity and local regulations.

Jim Root, president of Glen Ivy Hot Springs in the US, a spa where hot and cold water comes from boreholes dug in the 19th century, says modern water rights, health and safety regulations and environmental concerns would make

*Boreholes can cut water bills, but what does the installation process involve and what are the pros and cons of using this alternative supply?*

it far harder to secure a groundwater extraction licence today.

Also, the cost of installing the equipment is expensive. Csanádi Péter, head of maintenance at Danubius Hotels Group, estimates a cost of over €1.1m (US\$1.49m, £895,000) to replace two geothermal water boreholes installed at the group's hotels in Sárvár and Hévíz, Hungary, in the 1970s. Meanwhile Charles Davidson, a director at Peninsula Hot Springs in Australia, says its latest borehole cost AU\$550,000 (US\$505,000, €338,650, £303,100).

These investments can be recouped over time, particularly for large consumers, although this doesn't take into account energy costs for the pump, maintenance of the equipment and water treatment (groundwater quality varies widely, from acid to brackish).

The choice will depend on a spa's circumstances: remote locations may not have many alternatives to using groundwater supplies, or conversely, mains water may be relatively expensive and groundwater resources abundant. Either way, the decision to opt for a borehole should be part of a sustainable water management framework that minimises environmental impact. Groundwater resources are often non-renewable or recharge very slowly and, therefore, require careful management. This is particularly relevant in arid environments or developing countries.

We asked a range of experts to share their experiences on this issue.

**O**ur role as consultant hydrogeologists is to manage the risk of exploring borehole supply. The success of a borehole is controlled entirely by the local hydrogeology. If you're sitting on 500m (1,640ft) of clay, it's unlikely you'll have any water there. So the first stage is to carry out a feasibility study. If it's conclusive, you can do a test drill and that's when you take the biggest risk. You can do the best desk study and still be surprised by what you encounter.

There are several reasons why a spa would consider having its own supply. Cost can be one of them: drilling and installing the pump can be expensive but you're producing your own water at very low cost. Compare that with water from the mains and the difference can be substantial.

## JOHN FINDLAY

Director and co-founder,  
JDIH, UK



Another reason why a spa might look at its own water supply is for marketing. Every groundwater is different and has its own character and properties. That's how the original spa towns were developed in the first place in the UK.

The regulation for groundwater supply varies greatly from one country to another. In England and Wales, you need a licence from the Environment Agency to extract more than 20 m<sup>3</sup> per day. In Europe, groundwater abstraction is regulated under the Water Framework Directive, but the way it is interpreted and introduced at local level may vary. There are also regula-

tory systems in place in most developed countries such as Japan, North America and Australia, but these can be very different. The issue at stake is the protection of groundwater

resources: if you abstract more water than the natural recharge rate, aquifers will be depleted over the medium and long-term.

Another interesting offshoot of groundwater supply is the possibility of using its heat. In the UK, water comes out at 12°C: it's not hot enough to heat a building in its own right, but with a heat pump, it's over three times more efficient than using gas or electric heating – and it comes from a renewable source. This would go a long way in recouping upfront drilling costs and minimising your carbon footprint.

"An interesting offshoot of groundwater supply is the possibility of using its heat. With a heat pump, it is over three times more efficient than using gas or electric heating"

*John Findlay, a chartered engineer, has 27 years' international geosciences and engineering project management experience, ranging from oil exploration to water resource management. Projects he's worked on include Thermae Bath Spa and Center Parcs holiday villages in the UK. Details: [www.jdih.co.uk](http://www.jdih.co.uk)*

**W**e have three water bores at Peninsula Hot Springs: a hot one that provides geothermal mineral water (47°C), a cold bore that provides fresh groundwater, and a third bore that is nearly finished and that will be used to send geothermal water back down to the aquifer after filtration.

We use the hot water in all our pools and the cold water in our pools and for landscaping. We have mains water for drinking and showers, however, in the future we will add a valve to enable us to easily switch between mains and fresh groundwater for our showers.

The primary reason for our water practice is the environment. The geothermal water re-injection bore enables us to leave the resource as we found it, minus some heat and minerals which are absorbed into the surrounds [by bodies during bathing] as it flows through the pools.

Our mains and fresh groundwater practice is driven by [the] drought [in Australia] and cost. Victoria will soon commence its state-operated desalination of water, which will result in mains water prices rising by some 100 per cent in the

## CHARLES DAVIDSON

Founder and director,  
Peninsula Hot Springs, Australia



next year. Being able to access our own fresh water gives us some level of security and social responsibility.

As for the sourcing process, the cold water bore existed when we bought the site in 1997: it's one of the primary water supplies in the area (golf courses use it, for instance). This water comes from a shallow aquifer (10m, 33ft) and is made up of rain water which naturally filters back down through limestone, sand and soil.

But we had to drill the hot bores, which are 630m (2,067ft) deep. We are about to finish the re-injection bore, which has been relatively straightforward. The first geothermal bore, however, took five years to complete. A trial bore, in 1998, failed due to human error. On our second attempt we had major problems with our contractor and what should have been a three-month task ended up taking a year and a half, and it took a further year to replace the investors who pulled out because

of the delay to the project. We eventually completed our first hot bore in 2002 and opened to the public in June 2005.

That's the thing with hot springs development in

Australia: not only is the drilling of bores expensive and relatively risky, there is also little commercial history in this field, so banks are reluctant to finance projects. If we had been in Japan or any other country with a lot of geothermal activity, financing would not have been an issue.

To commence the drilling programme for the hot bores, we applied for a permit to Southern Rural Water, the local water authority. Overall, maintenance has been relatively straightforward and we have not had any problems since we started operating. We've had just one day off to change the pump. At that time we got a little frustrated, but, when you put it into perspective, one day [out of action] is not a bad performance.

*Charles Davidson founded Peninsula Hot Springs in the state of Victoria, Australia, with his brother Richard and investor Norm Cleland. He previously worked in agriculture. Details: [www.peninsulalahotsprings.com](http://www.peninsulalahotsprings.com)*

**IAN BREWIS**

Senior director, group spas and health clubs,  
Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts



In the Villingili Resort in the Maldives, bore water is the primary source of raw water

**E**ight out of our 65 hotels use borehole water supply. In seven of these cases, borehole water is there as a backup to mains water, in case of water shortages or burst mains. They can provide 30 to 50 per cent of the total daily consumption of these resorts.

But in our Villingili Resort and Spa in the Maldives, bore water is our primary source of raw water. The resort is on a very remote island south of the atoll, and there are no alternative supplies. It's a very fragile environment and to ensure we don't drain the aquifer we try to recycle wastewater as much as possible. We also have rainwater reservoirs, so how much we draw from the aquifer varies depending on the season (rainwater is the main water source for us during the monsoon season).

We have to filter the groundwater and treat it; we can then use it for everything except drinking. Our bore is 30m (98ft) deep to minimise environmental impact and prevent subsidence problems.

Villingili only opened in July 2009 and the high season is between November and April so it's only then that we'll know how much we're going to rely on groundwater.

The key to groundwater is to do an impact assessment in the early design stages. In many cases it would not be considered due to environmental, regulatory grounds

or practicality. It also has a cost: as well as drilling the bore, you sometimes have to pay a licence to extract groundwater (such as in the Maldives). The pump will run on fuel or electricity and you'll have to factor in the cost of the water treatment. Rainwater can work out a lot cheaper and groundwater is like desalination – an alternative or complement.

"The key to groundwater is to do an impact assessment in the early design stages. In many cases it would not be considered due to a variety of factors, such as practicality"

*Ian Brewis joined Shangri-La in 2002 to develop CHI, the group's spa brand. Brewis has worked in Asia for more than 15 years and also managed Grayshott Hall in the UK. Details: [www.shangri-la.com](http://www.shangri-la.com)*

**T**he idea of having our own supply came up during a chance meeting with hydrologists. We found out we were in an area where we could potentially get our own water supply. Initially, we thought it was a pipe dream, that it might be too expensive or too complicated to put in place.

There is a large capital outlay involved to create a test borehole, and a number of stages to go through before you know whether it'll be viable or not. You must test the quality of the water, the sustainability of the supply and its impact on other groundwater users, and you need a licence from the Environment Agency [the body that regulates environmental matters in England and Wales].

You're not guaranteed to pass all these stages so you need strong financial nerve. You have to accept these costs as speculation. Over the long-term, the borehole

**TIM HARDING**

Managing director  
Nirvana Spa, UK



we'd need a pretty robust contract with a service provider otherwise the business could shut down at the slightest problem.

Nirvana is known for its pool facilities so having locally-sourced water has boosted the appeal of a traditional spa experience. We also bottle the water and use it in our cafe; it's part of our all-inclusive packages so we don't make a commercial profit from it but it gives us something extra.

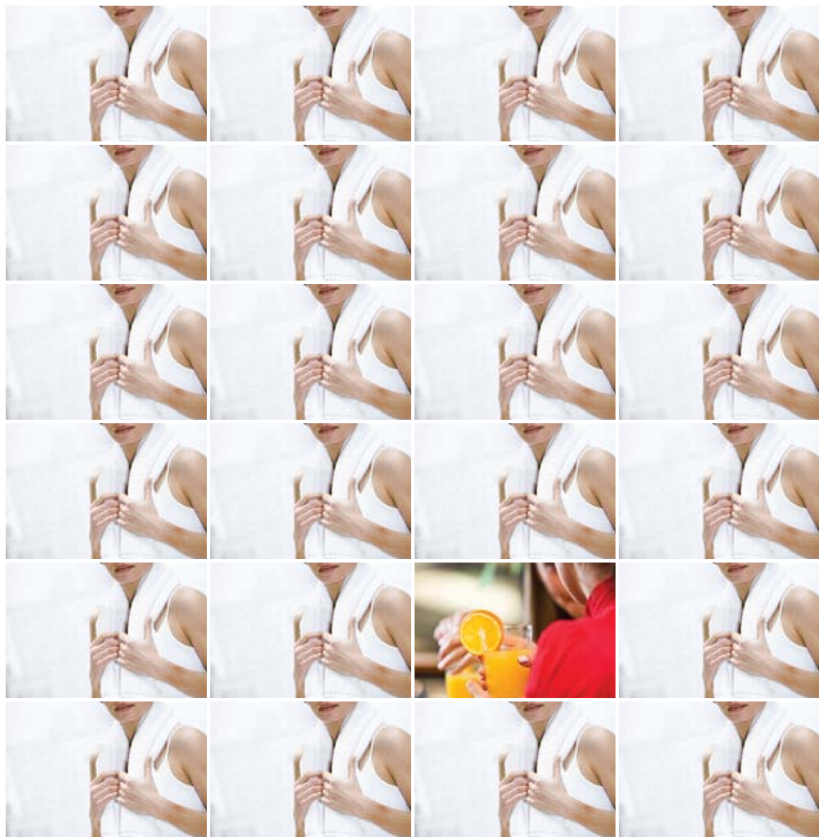
We're now considering using the heat from our water. It comes out at 11°C but, with a heat pump, it could be used to heat our facilities. We're exploring this potential for the future to save on energy costs.

will have saved us money on water supply so I am pleased that we did it. Had we not been successful, however, and you asked me if it was a good use of company money, I might answer differently.

It's not 'free water' though. There are significant running costs to maintain the equipment. We have two boreholes (in case one of them fails), pumps, storage and a water treatment plant (the water contains high levels of iron). If you become reliant on your borehole supply you won't have the same security as you would with mains water supply, so we have a maintenance team of four full-time engineers looking after our infrastructure. If we didn't have that on-site presence,

*Tim Harding has headed up Nirvana Spa & Leisure Ltd, a family-owned and operated business, since 1990. He was previously a director of the UK's Spa Business Association. Details: [www.nirvanaspa.co.uk](http://www.nirvanaspa.co.uk)*





Even after hundreds of workouts, a Miele keeps towels feeling like new. No sweat.

A Miele Professional washing machine provides outstanding cleaning and thermal disinfection with every wash. Its unique honeycomb drum is also gentle on fabrics, significantly extending the life of your towels. They're engineered to perform for years to come, meaning less downtime, longer replacement intervals and ultimately less cost. Giving both your members and your accountant great comfort.

For years of perfect performance, it must be a Miele.

Call **0844 893 0777** or visit **[www.miele-professional.co.uk](http://www.miele-professional.co.uk)**



**Miele**  
PROFESSIONAL

# Fishy Business

To the uninitiated, the practice sounds strange, if not downright distasteful, and it's even been banned in some US states. But fans of 'doctor fish' therapy – and a growing number of spa operators – swear by its benefits. We investigate

The sight of people being eaten alive by a pool full of hungry little critters is probably something you're more likely to associate with a bad horror movie than with a spa. But the ever-growing number of spa operators now offering 'doctor fish' therapy – not only in Turkey, where it originated, but also in Asia, the US, Africa and parts of Europe – are adamant that the practice is as good for business as it is for their clients' skin.

Doctor fish are a species of carp called *garra rufa*, native to Turkey and the Middle East, which – given half a chance – love to feed on flaky or diseased skin. Get in a pool with these tiny, toothless creatures, and they will suck at the dead cells of your epidermis to reveal a fresh new layer beneath. Although ticklish, the process doesn't hurt and is claimed to be especially good for combating psoriasis.

The medical benefits of the fish, which typically grow to no more than 6cm in length, were first discovered near the Turkish towns of Kangal and Sivas in the early 20th century. A shepherd bathing in

a thermal spring found that the fish helped to heal the skin on his scarred legs, after which the locals excavated more pools. In 1988, a psoriasis treatment centre plus a 250-bed hotel was opened in Kangal, which today attracts more than 3,000 visitors a year from all over the world.

Over the past few years this trend has also caught on in other parts of the world – particularly in China, Korea and Japan. However, due to the expense of importing *garra rufa* from the Middle East, some Asian operators have controversially opted to use cheaper fish, such as the *tilapia* (or *chin-chin*) species native to China.

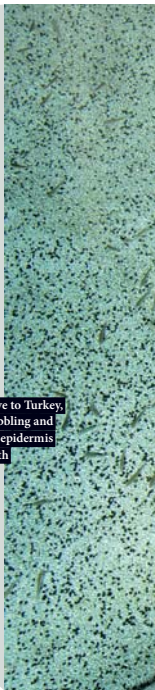
## SOMETHING FISHY

Although similar to *garra rufa* in both size and appetite, *chin-chin* fish are notably different: they can grow teeth, which has obvious drawbacks, while their saliva does not contain dithranol, an enzyme said to contribute to *garra rufa*'s skin-healing prowess. After travelling to both Turkey and China to investigate, entrepreneur Joe Ng decided that only the authentic Middle Eastern breed would do for his fish

**Garra rufa fish, which are native to Turkey, love to feed on flaky skin by nibbling and sucking at the dead cells of the epidermis to reveal a new layer underneath**

spa concept in Malaysia. When it opened two years ago, Ng's first site – The Sampuoton Spa in Petaling Jaya, near Kuala Lumpur (KL) – made waves by transporting doctor fish therapy from a hot-spring environment to a modern, day spa setting. As well as two fish pools, the facility has four massage rooms and a traditional Malay tea house. Treatment prices start at MYR150 (US\$44, €30, £27) for a one-hour session, which is not cheap by local standards.

Overall, he invested MYR850,000 (US\$250,800, €168,400, £151,300) in the spa, of which RM200,000 (US\$59,000, €39,600, £35,600) was spent on fish. But luckily for Ng, his instinct that there was a market for



A total of MYR850,000 was invested in the first Sampuoton Spa in Petaling Jaya (above and top), of which MYR200,000 was spent on the fish



a high-end fish spa was right; the media and public came in droves, and within eight months, he had seen a return on his investment. Ng is now marketing a Sampuoton Spa franchise model and already has two projects in the pipeline.

Although there are over 100 fish-therapy sites in the KL area alone, he's positive the market is far from saturated. "Although Malaysia probably has more fish spas than any other country in Asia, 97 per cent of the population still hasn't tried it," he says. "I think we have a bright future."

#### NIBBLE AND PEDICURE

Another business promoting fish therapy as a high-end spa concept is the newly formed Dr Fish Spa Therapy South Africa, and its sister company, Dr Fish Spa Therapy (UK & Ireland). The founders of the South African enterprise, Max and Marna Lourens, are both lawyers by trade, but moved into spa operations a few years ago. Their company, Sosumi Spas, manages the spa and wellness centre at the Lanzerac Hotel in Stellenbosch (s809/4

p32), and it was there, last year, that the couple trialled the doctor fish therapy.

"I grew up on a farm with a fabulous river and, as kids, we used to love swimming with the carp and having them nibble on us," recalls Max Lourens. "Years later when we opened our spa, the fish were always in the back of my mind... It was only when I saw a TV show about doctor fish that I realised it could work."

Working with his brother, who is a vet, Lourens prepared a treatment area at Lanzerac with pools and tanks, introduced test fish and experimented in caring for them – to date they have spent ZAR200,000 (US\$26,600, €17,850, £16,000) on pools and equipment and ZAR50,000 (US\$6,650,

€4,450, £4,000) on trial and error with the fish. The company is now establishing its own breeding colonies to avoid the expense of importing authentic *garra rufa* from the Middle East, where the species is protected from over-harvesting. Meanwhile, Lourens has developed a licensing package for setting up and running a fish-spa business.

The trademarked Dr Fish Spa Therapy packages combine fish therapy with conventional treatments. Prices range from ZAR450 (US\$60, €40, £36) for a 15-minute 'nibble and pedicure' to ZAR1,240 (US\$164, €111, £99) for a 30-minute, full-body 'nibble' followed by sauna/steam sessions and a 50-minute massage. Lourens says: "Ninety-nine per cent of people are ap-

"I grew up on a farm with a fabulous river and, as kids, we used to love swimming with the carp and having them nibble on us. Years later when we opened our spa, I saw a TV show about doctor fish and realised the concept could work"



PHOTO: DR FISH SPA THERAPY SOUTH AFRICA

Most customers, the operators claim, are keen to try the treatment, with natural curiosity generally outweighing any misgivings or squeamishness

prehensive, but they want to try it and when they do, they're sold on the idea. And since it gives results, it attracts a high percentage of repeat users, too."

It's also paying financially. The Lanzerac spa is on target to see a return on its investment within three months, and the company is already working with licensees in Cape Town and Nigeria. The Lourens' sights are set further afield than Africa, however, and it's with a view to rolling out the concept to Europe and the US that they have partnered with Irish entrepreneur Robert O'Shaugnessy, to create Dr Fish Spa Therapy (UK & Ireland).

O'Shaugnessy first encountered doctor fish on a trip to Malaysia and was so taken with the therapy that he set up a website – [drfishspatherapy.com](http://drfishspatherapy.com) – dedicated to researching and sharing information about the phenomenon.

#### HOOK, LINE AND SINKER

There are already a few fish-spa operators in Europe – in Germany, Austria and Croatia, as well as the UK and Ireland – and some, such as Skin Therapy Ireland, are already offering franchises.

However, Lourens and O'Shaugnessy are confident that their focus on high-end pampering (rather than medical treatment) combined with a watertight business model will make them a serious contender in this market.

One can't help but wonder, though, how easy they'll find the US market, where over

Fish therapy has been banned in at least 14 US states due to concerns over disease transference... Lourens, however, is convinced that this response is a reactionary judgement based on ignorance rather than evidence of problems

the last couple of years independent fish-spa operators have met with significant opposition from both the authorities and the media, with the therapy being banned in at least 14 US states due to concerns over disease transference. New York State Senator Jeff Klein is the latest politician to wade into the debate, by introducing a bill outlawing 'fish pedicures' in his jurisdiction. Quoted in the *New York Post* in October 2009, Klein said: "It's an unsavoury practice; you can't sanitise fish." He added that the therapy was also cruel to the animals, which were starved.

Lourens, however, is convinced that this kind of response is a reactionary judgement based on ignorance rather than on any evidence of problems with the therapy itself. "We advocate replenishing the water in the tanks after every use, but even if this is not done the filtration system we use replaces the water at least 10 times an hour," he says. "The fish are clean, and if their environment is kept clean, there is no danger to anyone." He also refutes the cruelty claim, saying that his fish are fed every evening to top up their daily meal

of dead skin, and arguing that they would not feed at all if unhappy.

Aside from disease transference concerns, scare stories about being bitten – such as the article in the *Peninsula Morning Post* about a man in China whose private parts were left bleeding after an encounter with doctor fish – don't help the cause, either. This is why educating customers about the different species of fish used in spas is so important, says Ng, as chin-chin, unlike garra rufa, can cause injury if they grow to a certain size.

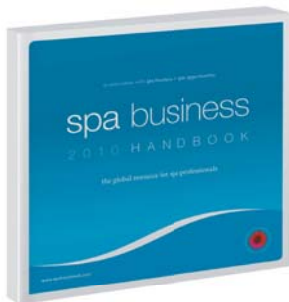
When left to make up their own minds, most customers, the operators claim, are keen to try the treatment, with natural curiosity generally outweighing any misgivings or squeamishness. "The initial tickling sensation tends to get people laughing, which eases stress levels, and after that it is really quite relaxing," says O'Shaugnessy. "And this is not a gimmick: there are instantly visible results."

In other words, once they get over the 'ick' factor, the majority of clients are – if you'll pardon the pun – well and truly hooked. ●

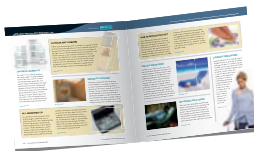
# spa business 2010 handbook

*the global resource  
for spa professionals*

Available  
in Print  
& Online



The *Spa Business Handbook* is the ultimate reference guide for the international spa market. Published in January 2010 as a comprehensive resource for operators and suppliers worldwide, it will be distributed to key decision makers including leading hotel and spa operators, suppliers, developers, consultants and other experts. It will also be distributed at key spa events, making it a must to be seen in.



## What's in the handbook?

### { Operator information }

- Industry movers and shakers
- Global market hot spots
- Key industry statistics and research
- A 2010 diary highlighting events, shows and networking opportunities
- Predictions and trends for 2010
- A development pipeline
- Spa design
- Disability
- Fitness in spas

### { Supplier information }

- Company profiles including key information, contact details, images of products and a picture of a key contact
- A-Z listing of trade associations
- A-Z listing of green resources

POWERED BY  
**spa-kit.net**

*in association with  
spa business &  
spa opportunities*



Advertising and marketing  
bookings are being taken now.  
To reserve your company's space

Copies will be available to purchase online

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

call +44 (0)1462 431385  
email [sales@spabusiness.com](mailto:sales@spabusiness.com)

# puglian paradise

Aveda has created an underground cave spa in the heart of Italy's Puglia region as part of a five-star, eco-inspired, natural resort with charm

CHARLOTTE SENIOR • CORRESPONDENT • SPA BUSINESS



The Aveda spa at Masseria Torre Coccaro in Puglia – the ‘heel’ of Italy’s ‘boot’ – makes visitors quite a promise: to offer a relaxing oasis of tranquility, where they will experience the simple lifestyle of the past.

With a spa boasting everything from organic ingredients which are grown on-site to an eclectic selection of treatments of Chinese, Japanese, Himalayan, Indian, Caribbean and, of course, Italian origin, guests can surely expect an experience worthy of the resort's five stars.

## Underground Sanctuary

Masseria Torre Coccaro occupies an original 16th century ‘masseria’, or farmhouse, of typical Puglian charm. It was chosen by the owners, the Muolo family, for “the beauty of the place” and the most has been made of the estate's original elements, which include a small chapel, haylofts and an olive mill. The 25-hectare (62-acre) grounds also have 1,600 olive trees and

a number of limestone caves which have been converted to offer various amenities.

Among the cave facilities are two suites, one of which has a private garden and pool, other caves house a large meeting room for weddings and events, a billiard and cigar lounge, and the resort's 700sq m (75,350sq ft) Aveda destination spa.

The unusual underground location gives the spa instant appeal and a feeling of being close to nature. Owner and general manager Vittorio Muolo views the spa's atmospheric cave location as creating a special experience for guests.

The resort is 4 km from the coast, where it has its own private beach club with a restaurant and sushi bar. There are a further three restaurants on-site, with an emphasis on local cuisine and fresh ingredients.

Guests can discover more about the joys of local food in the popular cooking school which offers the chance to pick, prepare and finally eat local ingredients and learn how to make such Puglian

**Guests stay an average of five to seven nights in the summer, enjoying the outdoor pools and private beach club**

specialities as orichette pasta, panzerotti (stuffed pastries) and fresh fish dishes.

## Family First

Torre Coccaro, is part of The Apulia Collection (see box opposite), a chain of four family-owned hotels which is headed jointly by Muolo, his father and brother. His sister Rosana, a travel agent, is also involved with the business and resort manager Piero Longo says this approach permeates the business: “We’re a big family. From the owners through to every member of the team. Family is very important.”

On visiting, this certainly appears the case. A warm and relaxed atmosphere is instantly apparent. Spa manager Angela Ignobile confirms that the family environment is fostered throughout. Manager since the spa opened eight years ago, Ignobile has



a maternal, calming air and smiles broadly as she guide guests through the caves. You can imagine her at the centre of a bustling family kitchen as easily as managing the spa. She says: "I love this work. I wouldn't know how to do anything else."

### A Natural Approach

Because of the challenges associated with converting the caves, the Muolos chose to work with Aveda for its connection to natural architecture. While Aveda is best known for its products, it does get involved with design (see s806/4 p104), especially for Aveda destination spas such as this.

This spa opens into a ground-level glass-walled area with light wooden floors which has both a small gym and a relaxation area. Stairs lead down into the caves through a small reception and into the main area. There's a distinct, authentic cave feel without it seeming too enclosed or claustrophobic. The layout is slightly labyrinthine; a central, undulating path

Visitors can enjoy the ambience of ancient olive groves and caves

leads into the middle of the spa which has a small pool, a whirlpool and a cushioned seating area beneath high windows. The lines of the path, pool and rooms are curving and fluid to reflect the communion with nature which is championed both by Aveda and the Muolos.

Branching off beyond the main walkway are changing rooms, a cold shower room, a Turkish bath and three cubby hole treatment rooms with an enticing 'grotto' appeal. There are three more treatment rooms upstairs, and a cabin with a tatami mat floor which is

### APUGLIA COLLECTION

- » The Apuglia Collection is owned by the Muolo family. In addition to Masseria Torre Coccaro, they have three other hotels in Puglia: two four-star and one five-star resort and spa – Torre Maizza – which also boasts an Aveda spa, natural thermal springs and a nine-hole golf course.
- » All of the properties are located close to the city of Fasano on the Adriatic coast between Bari and Brindisi (both of which have airports), eliminating competition within the immediate vicinity. Muolo views his main competitors as spa hotels on the Amalfi coast.
- » The family plans to continue working towards promoting Puglia as a holiday destination and trying to make it as well-known across the rest of the world as it is in Europe.
- » Upcoming projects include a new five-star hotel in Bari and an 18-hole golf course adjacent to Torre Maizza.

used for ayurvedic massage. Six therapists work in the spa, and one at the beach club, where treatments are given by request.

Aveda products are used exclusively in the spa. The line is regarded highly by the Muolos and Longo says the spa's clients

regularly ask for natural products and appreciate the fact that the range uses organic plant and flower extracts. The in-house spa treatments also utilise everything from broad beans to grapes and capers, all grown locally.

There's a proud emphasis placed on Olive Therapy, a selection of treatments created two years ago which feature olives and olive oil – rich in vitamin E and antioxidants to regenerate skin cells – from the resort's farm. Muolo says that the resort's oil is of the absolute highest quality: "we believe all clients should experience that".

In addition, the spa offers a range of ayurvedic massages, which Ignobile says is in keeping with Aveda's philosophy of taking care of the mind and body.

### The Experience

In typical Italian style I was greeted with enthusiasm and then kept waiting outside for 20 minutes. Once escorted to the spa, I waited for a further twenty minutes. This sums up the 'domani' culture of Puglian life completely – be happy, enjoy the sunshine, and don't worry if things take a little longer than they necessarily should. In truth, what better setting for the provision of relaxation and wellbeing?

On the morning I visited I had the place to myself – I was told the majority of treatments take place in the afternoons,

as during the summer, visitors generally spend their mornings at the beach.

The treatment I'd opted for was the signature three-stage Olive Paté Detox. Before it began, my feet were bathed in a china bowl and I was given a choice of Aveda oils to be incorporated into the various stages of the treatment.

The first stage was a massage using warm muslin sacks filled with crushed olive leaves. The next part was a detoxifying exfoliation with Dead Sea salts and olive leaves, followed by a hot Turkish bath to allow the ingredients to penetrate the skin. The final part was a massage with

olive paté, designed to detox, nourish and restore the skin and body.

Overall the treatment was relaxing, enjoyable, and professionally delivered by Ignobile. The highlight was the end massage, as the rich black olive paté smelt good enough to eat – which of course, it was.

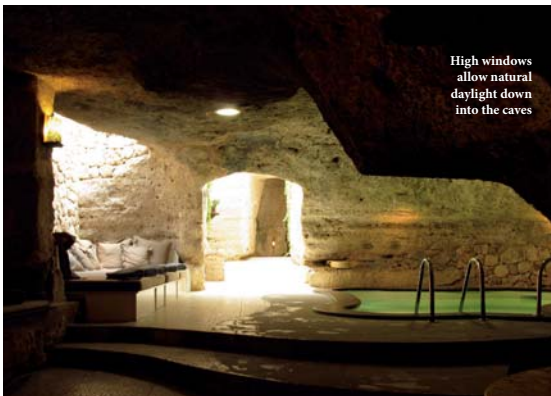
My only negative was the Turkish bath, my enjoyment of which was compromised by black mould covering the ceiling of the cave. As the steam intensified, so did the musty odour, and I found it difficult not to imagine the spores I was inhaling.

On closer inspection, I could see significant mould in all the moist areas of the caves: the pool, showers and toilet. Muolo assured me the walls and ceilings were cleaned regularly, and that the mould was not harmful to health, being an 'ancient variety that is dried'. The smell certainly added to the authenticity of this historic cave sanctuary, although from a relaxation point of view I don't think was ideal in a small, enclosed steamroom.

Despite the relaxed attitude to time-keeping, the wellbeing of the guests was taken seriously. Longo told me that it's not unusual for him to work an 18- or 20-hour day, but that he wouldn't have it any other way: "I'm happy every day. I love it all – everything".

Muolo's favourite memory of life at Torre Coccaro is of a guest spending four of his seven nights sleeping in a hammock by the vegetable garden. With so much unspoiled nature to embrace, why not?

Torre Coccaro's natural approach – in its location, architecture, products and treatment – and warm family environment complement Muolo's primary business objective: trying to better the quality of life of other people – both staff and clients. ●



High windows allow natural daylight down into the caves

### MASSERIA TORRE COCCARO BY NUMBERS

- » The resort has 33 bedrooms, with an annual average occupancy of 42 per cent. Muolo describes typical guests as: "European, well-travelled couples and friends, and young families who want to teach their children an eco-friendly way of life and maintain contact with nature."
- » Average length of stay is five to seven nights during the summer, and weekend visits during winter.
- » €500,000 (US\$753,900, £451,450) has recently been invested in the spa. A return on this is expected within five years.
- » There are 98 employees at the resort and spa. Although summer is the most profitable season the Muolos keep the resort open year round to minimise staff turnover and maintain a standard of consistency and stability for returning guests.
- » The spa accounts for 10 per cent of the resort's revenue. Muolo aims to increase this to 18 per cent.

#### » The spa's capture rate is 30 per cent.

The target for this is 40 per cent.

#### » Treatment prices range from €50

(US\$75, £45) for reflexology to €220 (US\$332, £199) for the Himalayan Rejuvenation Treatment, a 150-minute full-body treatment. This is the least popular due to the price.

#### » The most popular treatments are the

Tourmaline Facial, €150 (US\$226, £135), and the Torre Coccaro hair conditioning treatment, €65 (US\$98, £59), which uses Torre Coccaro olive oil and capers.

#### » Spa packages generate 20 per cent of

turnover. They range from a half-day Relax with lunch at €240 (US\$362, £217) to a choice of five weekend packages from €385 (US\$581, £347) to the Vitality Week package at €990 (US\$1,500, £894).

» The spa also offers nutritional consultation, and instruction in both yoga and qigong.





# striking a balance

What are the benefits of balance training, should spas incorporate it into their fitness programmes and how do they address the needs of all types of exercisers?

**B**alance is a state of equilibrium, defined as 'the ability to maintain the centre of gravity of a body within the base of support, with minimal postural sway'. But is this something spas should offer in their fitness programmes alongside resistance, cardiovascular and flexibility training? If so, are spas offering the right kind of balance training to improve the performance of guests and possible fitness members?

Fitness training commonly focuses on two types of balance. The first is core balance training, which involves exercises designed to improve the muscular anatomy supporting the abdominal region, spine and pelvis, as well as proprioception (body awareness). The second is body equilibrium training. In addition to developing proprioception, this 'whole structure' training focuses on improving major muscles – particularly in the legs – and the dynamic stability of the supporting muscles, ligaments and tendons.

Paying attention to the whole body in this way, with balance training that boosts muscle strength and power, is crucial according to Peter Hope of stability equipment company BalanceMaster. "Structural balance allows us to use our muscular

strength functionally. It increases our range of movement and is essential for everyday living, including using fitness equipment safely" he says.

Fitness training commonly focuses on two types of balance – core balance training, designed to improve muscular anatomy and body equilibrium training, or 'whole structure' training

strength functionally. It increases our range of movement and is essential for everyday living, including using fitness equipment safely" he says.

Personal trainer Nick Mitchell, of UK health and fitness consultancy Ultimate Performance, adds that achieving optimum structural balance is a highly important component of building muscle. "If your 'big' muscles are strong, but the fixators and stabilisers that support them are weak, what do you think will happen?" he asks. "The answer is injury and impaired performance. To work on stability, focus on the large muscles and the stabilisers that enable them to fire properly."

## STABLE VS UNSTABLE SURFACES

Balance training, however, commonly focuses on developing the core: strengthening the muscles around the abdominal region, spine and pelvis. This can be achieved with unstable exercise using a stability ball or a wobble board, challenging the centre of gravity and improving balance using reflex responses. In an online article on functional strength training, American personal trainer Ken Kashubara, of Kash Personal Training, explains that "while standing on an unstable environment, the body's sensory receptors tell the brain, 'We're about to fall'.



PHOTO: ISTOCK/ANNE CLARK

"Structural balance is essential for everyday living. It allows us to use our muscular strength functionally, increases our movement and enhances sporting performance"



PHOTO: ISTOCK/CARLOS ALVAREZ



Stability balls may help with core strength, but using only unstable exercise in balance training is not conducive to 'whole body' structure

PHOTO: ISTOCK/COMIENSON

The brain then tells the body what muscles need to contract to balance."

Advocates of stability balls such as the Swiss Ball or Fit Ball rightly say that exercising on a ball will improve vital strength in the abdominals and lower back, with the unstable surface requiring the user to constantly adjust their balance. Personal trainer Scott Bryant, a corrective holistic exercise kinesiologist (CHEK) practitioner, believes the Swiss Ball, pioneered by the American Paul Chek as a performance enhancer in the 1980s, to be one of the most versatile pieces of equipment available. "They utilise neurologically-induced muscular responses, to establish and restore core balance," states Bryant, of [activebryantsystems.com](http://activebryantsystems.com).

However, Paul M Juris, executive director of the Cybex Institute in the US, says spa and fitness facilities should examine their provision of balance training. Juris believes that using unstable exercise as the only form of balance training in a workout is not conducive to 'whole structure' balance, and therefore not sufficient to address the need for dynamic muscle stability – a vital component of safe exercise.

Richard Mattis of Pipedreams – distributor of The Vew-Do Balance Board – also advocates the use of both core balance and whole structure balance

## BALANCE RESEARCH

### Fatigue and balance

Moderate fatigue is thought to lead to an immediate reduction of balance performance, as fatigued people may be less focused. Spa fitness instructors should ensure members are not over-exercising, as injury may occur as a result of a subsequent loss of balance.

*Journal of Neuro-engineering Rehabilitation*, 3: 22, 2006. 'The effects of moderate fatigue on dynamic balance control and attentional demands', Simoneau et al

### Reducing sprain risk

A 2008 study sought to find out whether prophylactic balance and co-ordination training could reduce the risk of sustaining lateral ankle sprain. Researchers found that completing at least six weeks' balance training after an acute ankle

sprain substantially reduced the risk of recurrent ankle sprains.

*Journal of Athletic Training*: 43(3):305-15, 2008. 'Systematic review of postural control and lateral ankle instability, part II', McKeon et al

### Vision and stability

A French study analysed the use of visual information in the postural ability of football players. Testing posture with eyes opened and closed, analysis revealed the importance of vision in postural maintenance was less in professional players than amateurs, suggesting that structural balance plays a more prominent part than vision in people undergoing targeted sports training. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports*. V:16 I:5, 2005. 'Effect of expertise and visual contribution on postural control in soccer', Paillard et al

as an exercise protocol. "Used together, they can enhance both neuromuscular activity and muscle force and power," he says, adding that good neuromuscular communication – synergy between the central nervous system, muscles, tendons and joints – enhances balance. It's claimed that performing functional exercises on an

unstable surface promotes balance," Juris adds. "I believe focusing on core stability is actually counterproductive to real functional stability. Trying to stabilise the body while also trying to move leads to nothing more than inefficient and skill-less motion, which is why most research examining the effects of unbalanced training on motor

skills actually demonstrates an inhibition of skill, not an improvement.”

Hope agrees: “Exercise involving static balance control on an unstable surface is fine for developing core balance. However, in most [real life] instances, re-establishing equilibrium requires adequate power applied to a stable surface – for example, if you are recovering from a trip. Substantial research, including that by the University of New South Wales in Australia, has determined that equilibrium may be enhanced through muscle strength development. This leads me to think it’s illogical to use an unstable surface designed for static balance control where dynamic balance control on a stable surface is required.

“Whatever a person’s requirements, I’d recommend a balance test at the assessment stage. Balance training should be incorporated into all exercisers’ workouts. However, different types of member will require different intensities of training.”

### THE DECONDITIONED GUEST

“Balance should be taught before embarking on any programme, as well as being developed during regular training,” says Pipedreams’ Richard Mattis.

For deconditioned exercisers, traditional cardio and resistance equipment could be beyond their initial capabilities, in terms of both fitness and lower limb strength and power. For these members, an initial thorough warm-up period with stretching exercises, followed by some introductory work using hand weights that focuses on posture, will help improve mobility and strength. Movements such as back extensions, to work on strengthening the back’s erector muscles, and side bends to strengthen the abdominal obliques, are especially useful for posture.

The addition of low-impact aerobic training using suitable mechanised gym equipment, for example, walking on a treadmill (if balance is adequate), will enhance general fitness and also help maintain bone strength. For purposes of ongoing equilibrium, it is important to

A fit spa guest is the ideal candidate for targeted work to improve structural body balance, which in turn will help to increase muscle force capacity and provide a form of injury prevention

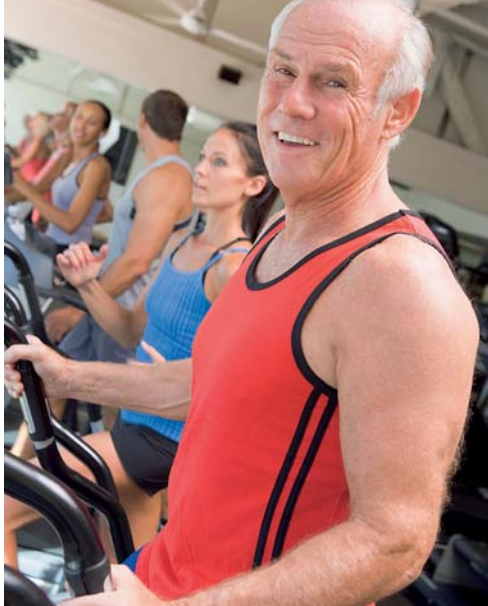


PHOTO: ISTOCK/CATHERINE YETTER

Balance training for older adults could combine conventional exercise with low-impact aerobics classes or yoga, pilates and tai chi

develop through exercise a synergy between the central nervous system, muscles, tendons and joints.

### WORKOUTS FOR OLDER ADULTS

As the number of older adults increases globally, many spas and fitness facilities are also targeting the ‘grey market’ with exercise plans designed to improve strength and balance. For example, in addition to conventional cardiovascular exercise for the over-55s, instructors of the international health club chain LA Fitness also recommend low-impact aerobics classes to boost general body equilibrium, and gentle freeweights to improve muscle strength – and subsequently balance.

Global charity Help The Aged says that yoga, pilates and tai chi can develop strength, flexibility and proprioception, and that attending professionally-run balance classes designed for older people is one of the most effective ways to significantly reduce the risk of falling.

The UK’s National Service Framework for Older People also acknowledges the role of specific exercise in preventing falls in older people, says Dr Dawn Skelton of the research consortium HealthQWest at Glasgow Caledonian University, UK. “The framework identifies the need to find programmes of suitable activities that have

balance improvement at their core, but that also address poor power and lower limb asymmetry. In particular, exercises that improve lower limb strength and power can contribute to better stability.”

Hope adds that balance training can have both physical and mental benefits for older exercisers. “By making them more stable, it helps prevent falls, allows them to maintain independence and have a more active lifestyle,” he explains.

### FOR THE FIT AND BALANCED

A fit spa guest is the ideal candidate for targeted work to improve structural body balance. Colin Gilbert, healthy living development officer at Cathall Leisure Centre in London, UK, says that for fitter people and athletes working at a high level of training, tailored exercise that improves body awareness and stability is especially important. “A fit and balanced person may have a higher chance of injury than others, due to the level and amount of work they’re doing, so anything that increases muscle force capacity will provide a form of injury prevention,” he says.

“Undertaking balance work and lower limb stretching exercises provide an increase in the range of a person’s motion, which can really help maximise their fitness programme,” adds Hope. ●



# health club management

## 2010 HANDBOOK



The 6th edition of the Health Club Management Handbook, published in association with the Fitness Industry Association (FIA), is being distributed in January 2010. The handbook is a comprehensive guide and reference tool distributed to industry suppliers and operators, FIA members and to industry buyers at events such as LIW, SIBEC and IHRSA.

---

### WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

#### for **industry suppliers**

- Multiple listings of all industry suppliers by:
  - A-Z
  - Phone book
  - Web address book
  - Product selector
- Company profiles including key information, contact details, images of products and a picture of your company contact
- Vertical strip adverts in the address book section

#### for **industry operators**

- Who's who? of key industry personnel from the private sector, public sector and trade associations
- Updated State of the Industry reports
- Competitive edge – charity events to motivate your staff and members for the year ahead
- Diary dates – a guide to all industry events, shows and networking opportunities
- Predictions for 2010 from key industry figures
- Features and reference material

---

To reserve your space in the handbook call: **+44 (0)1462 431385**

or email: [displaysales@leisuremedia.com](mailto:displaysales@leisuremedia.com) [www.healthclubhandbook.com](http://www.healthclubhandbook.com)

# Spa Products



## Easy as ABC with OAKWORKS®

The US-based manufacturer of spa, massage and medical equipment, OAKWORKS®, has introduced a system aimed at helping women who have issues with prone (downward facing) positions. The Adjustable Breast Comfort (ABC) System has been developed by Contour Table Systems – which signed a deal with OAKWORKS in August – and is patent pending. It's been designed to allow therapists to adjust the contour of a treatment table top during a service, to insure maximum comfort in prone or supine (upward facing) positions.

The table also features a padded platform which can be elevated or lowered via a foot pump system without disturbing the client or interrupting the treatment.

[spa-kit.net](http://spa-kit.net) KEYWORD: **OAKWORKS**



## Morgan extends Boston furniture range

The UK-based furniture manufacturer Morgan Furniture has unveiled its latest collection with the launch of the Boston Terrace range, designed for outdoor spaces.

The range – including a ladder back lounger (pictured), dining side and coffee and console tables – is made from iroko, a sustainably-managed African hardwood, which when left untreated, will turn a silver grey colour. All upholstery is water repellent while the loose cushions come with handles for easy storage.

[spa-kit.net](http://spa-kit.net) KEYWORD: **MORGAN**



## KLAFS' exclusive steam cabins for German complex

Hydrothermal manufacturer KLAFS has completed the installation of two exclusively designed glass steamrooms for a restored brine bath complex called the VitaSol Therme in Bad Salzufen, Germany. Designed in collaboration with 4A Architekten, both structures feature a glass-enclosed steambath with coloured tessera seating benches.

Another KLAFS line gaining increasing exposure is the eco-friendly Biorhythm Sauna, which has been created in collaboration with architecture firm 3deluxe Biorhythm under KLAFS' designer Nik Schweiger. Featuring curved lines, the sauna is intended to convey the impression it has been carved from a wooden block. In addition to this is a complementary Biorhythm steam shower.

[spa-kit.net](http://spa-kit.net) KEYWORD: **KLAFS**

## Comfort Zone unveils Sacred Nature products

Italian skincare company Comfort Zone has launched its latest collection, Sacred Nature, an eco-certified natural, organic and sustainable skincare line. The collection has been produced to Ecocert® standard, which is a globally recognised organic certification and is housed in packaging that is 100 per cent recyclable.

Items include a nourishing protective cleansing milk and mask, a renewing scrub, an anti-ageing face cream and a toning body oil.

[spa-kit.net](http://spa-kit.net) KEYWORDS: **COMFORT ZONE**





### Organic beauty from Thalgo with Terre & Mer range

Marine-based skincare company Thalgo has just revealed an organic facial skincare range. Called Terre & Mer, the wholly organic products are Ecocert®-certified and adhere to the Cosmebio charter while the containers are made from recyclable glass and plastics, also authorised by Ecocert.

Intended to be a reflection of the brand's dual sense of belonging – to the sea and to Mediterranean plant life – the range comprises a professional salon facial treatment and eight retail products. There are cleansers, toners and scrubs, as well as fluids, creams and balms. The collection is completed by a Soothing Concentrate containing cade wood and an Anti-Ageing Concentrate with Roman chamomile.

spa-kit.net KEYWORD: **THALGO**

### The Zeiss table from Gallotti&Radice

Gallotti&Radice offers a range of furniture for use within spas, hotel lobbies and seating areas. The Zeiss table (pictured) features a 15mm transparent bevelled glass top with stainless steel legs. There is also a Zeiss mirror, available in small, medium and large sizes that can be finished in either a lacquered wooden frame, or with a fabric effect in chestnut, sand or canapa (hemp).



spa-kit.net KEYWORDS: **GALLOTTI AND RADICE**

### Dell and OPI join forces for unique laptop range

Computer manufacturer Dell has introduced 26 exclusive colour choices for some of its laptops as part of an exclusive partnership with nail varnish company OPI.

The colour choices are available for the Dell Inspiron Mini, Inspiron and Studio laptops, and include some of OPI's most popular shades, such as 'I'm Not Really a Waitress', 'Kyoto Pearl' and 'Big Apple Red'.

The OPI colour options will be available in the Dell Design Studio at dell.com in the us from November 2009, and later in other countries.

spa-kit.net KEYWORD: **OPI**



### Barr + Wray introduces SPATUB

Barr + Wray has released a new spa bathing product called the SPATUB. The bath can be designed for a spa suite, a couples' suite or a hotel's VIP suite. It is ergonomically-shaped for maximum comfort while bathing and can accommodate up to two people. LED mood lights are included, as well as finishes in any chosen colour. Barr + Wray has more than 50 years' experience in providing engineering solutions for both water and thermal experiences. This new bath joins the company's Myrtha pool and Konigs Salz salt cubes.

spa-kit.net KEYWORDS: **BARR AND WRAY**



### Silver service from Tempus

Tempus Salon & Spa Wear has brought out a new range: X-static silver uniforms. Available throughout the US and mainland Europe, silver is woven into the reverse of the fabric to help provide a number of antibacterial benefits.

spa-kit.net KEYWORDS: **TEMPUS CLOTHING**



### LG makes air conditioning arty

LG Electronics has launched an air treatment unit featuring a front panel that can be adapted to hold any image, from a painting to a marketing message. The Art Cool units come with an infra-red remote control that allows guests to control air circulation, fan operation and room temperature. There are sleep, operation and single-event modes, as well as a 24-hour timer function. On top of this all models are fitted with an air purifier to help combat airborne bacteria.

spa-kit.net KEYWORDS: **LG ELECTRONICS**

### Explaining Pilates

From Lotus Publishing comes *The Anatomy of Pilates*, written by the UK-based pilates instructor and physiotherapist Paul Massey. Complete with 150 full-colour anatomical illustrations, the book is designed to show the reader what happens inside the body while pilates exercises are undertaken. Said to be ideal for pilates teachers, physical therapists, health professionals and those who practice the activity, it informs the reader on how it lengthens and strengthens all the body's muscle groups.

spa-kit.net KEYWORDS: **LOTUS PUBLISHING**



### Aromatherapy-infused textiles

US-based textile designer Andrew Morgan Collection is to introduce an aromatherapy-infused and eco-friendly textile collection.

The company's range of throws, scarves, robes, wraps and towels will house microscopic shells containing fragrances that will be released as these capsules break during use over a period of time. There will be three fragrances to choose from – Euphoria, Paradise and Aphrodisia – all designed to stimulate the user's sense of smell, with the scents intended to last around 25 washes.

spa-kit.net KEYWORDS:

**ANDREW MORGAN**



### Ericson launches Phyto-drink range

A range of nutritional concentrates, designed to improve both body and mind, have been unveiled by French company Ericson Laboratoire.

The four drinks – Phyto-Slim drink, Phyto-Fine, Phyto-Stress and Phyto-Age – have been formulated with a variety of plant extracts, essential oils and other natural ingredients ranging from ginseng to dandelion.

The Phyto-Slim drink has been designed to help aid digestion, while Phyto-Fine is intended to regulate cholesterol levels as well as improve bowel movements. Phyto-Age contains a range of antioxidants to ease rheumatism and cramps, whereas Phyto-Stress is said to aid sleep and contains vitamin B6 to give a sense of wellbeing.

spa-kit.net KEYWORDS: **ERICSON LABORATOIRE**

### ScentAir creates enticing environments with diffusers

ScentAir has unveiled its new range of air freshening products. Called ScentSticks, the diffusers are intended to create enticing environments for smaller areas and rooms in a salon or spa. The pre-scented sticks deliver a consistent level of scent that is said to outperform traditional liquid-based reed diffusers. The sticks can be prominently displayed or tucked away into existing décor or plants. Dry to the touch, ScentSticks do not require oils and are infused with high-quality fragrances. Available in more than 12 scents and colours, each stick will bring fragrance to an area for between seven to 10 days.

spa-kit.net KEYWORD: **SCENTAIR**



# spa business directory

showcasing products and services for the spa buyer

to book, please contact the sales team

tel: +44 (0)1462 431385 email: sales@spabusiness.com

## SAUNA

DALESALUNA ARE SUPPLIERS OF A WIDE RANGE OF HEAT EXPERIENCES, INCLUDING SAUNA, STEAM ROOMS, RASUL, SALT INHALATION ROOMS AND HAMMAMS

TEL: +44 (0)1423 798630  
WWW.DALESALUNA.CO.UK



## EXERCISE EQUIPMENT

STOTT PILATES

pilates solutions



STOTT PILATES® is the world's leading full-service pilates company providing premium quality equipment and instructor training across the globe.

0800 434 6110  
[www.pilatesolutions.co.uk](http://www.pilatesolutions.co.uk)

© Registered trademark of Matthew Seaman, and other names. 0007-00000 Copyright © Matthew Seaman

## FITNESS EQUIPMENT

PRECOR

INNOVATIVE & PROFITABLE:

Precor, the world's leading fitness equipment supplier, offers a unique entertainment system, ClubCom. Tailor-made to your venue, ClubCom offers a superior guest experience and a secondary revenue stream.



[www.precor.co.uk](http://www.precor.co.uk) [www.clubcom.co.uk](http://www.clubcom.co.uk)

## FITNESS EQUIPMENT

PRECOR

INNOVATIVE & PROFITABLE:

Precor, the world's leading fitness equipment supplier, offers a unique entertainment system, ClubCom. Tailor-made to your venue, ClubCom offers a superior guest experience and a secondary revenue stream.

[www.precor.co.uk](http://www.precor.co.uk) [www.clubcom.co.uk](http://www.clubcom.co.uk)



## SPA MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

Premier Spa® is the internationally renowned scheduling and management software system for destination, resort and hotel spas and is the chosen system of five star establishments worldwide.

"Premier Spa has evolved from deep knowledge of the industry and years of feedback from many of the world's top spa concierges!"  
Mike Preston, Prisma Consulting Ltd



Tel: +44 (0)1543 46650  
[www.premiersoftware.co.uk](http://www.premiersoftware.co.uk)

## SPA EQUIPMENT



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

+1 800 616 4613

## SPA PRODUCTS

**TERRAKÉ** THE ULTIMATE experience FOR THE spa connoisseur



Enquiry@terrake.co.uk  
T: 020 7987 0535 [www.terrake.com](http://www.terrake.com)

## SPA PRODUCTS

battista



TECHNIDESIGN® Italy Tel: +39 045 7150888 [www.nuocarbata.it](http://www.nuocarbata.it)

## SPA THERAPIES

THALGO

Specialists in marine spa therapies

0800 146041  
[www.thalgo.com](http://www.thalgo.com)



## the finishing touch



PHOTO: ISTOCK.COM/SHIBARU VANCE

# STROKE OF GENIUS

Swimming is a popular spa activity: whether it's in the form of a gentle, more relaxing workout, or fast laps to get the heart pumping. One study, carried out in the UK, even shows it can be a nation's favourite type of exercise, full stop (see box below).

Now research published in the *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education* shows just how good it is for you. A study on more than 40,000 men has found that swimming can help you live longer than either walking or jogging.

### GATHERING DATA

The study, which was carried out by the University of South Carolina in Columbia, US, took place over a period of more than 30 years, from 1971 to 2003. It focused on

A study has found that if you swim regularly you're half as likely to die prematurely as those who walk or jog

40,547 men aged between 20 and 90 years, a large majority of whom were white and came from the middle or upper socio-economic demographic.

Each participant underwent a health examination. Their physical activity status was then categorised into four groups according to the type of workouts they did during the three months before each examination.

Sedentary participants were those who said they didn't take part in any exercise. Walkers were those who reported taking part in a run/walk/jog programme with an average pace of 15 minutes a mile or slower, and who agreed that they walked for 75 per cent of the programme. Runners participated in a run/walk/jog programme with an average pace of under 15 minutes a mile and said they walked for less than 25 per cent of the programme. Swimmers were those who were exclusively engaged in swimming for exercise.

The split between groups was: 15,883 sedentary people, 3,746 walkers, 20,536 runners and 562 swimmers.

### THE RESULTS

There were 3,386 deaths during the study, all of which – compared with the survivors – were older people with lower fitness levels and a higher prevalence of major cardiovascular disease. A larger number (52 per cent) of those who died were sedentary, followed by runners (39 per cent) and walkers (9 per cent). The swimming group had the least number of deaths (only 0.003 per cent).

After adjustment for age, body mass index, smoking status, alcohol intake and family history of cardiovascular disease, swimmers had a lower all-cause mortality risk than the men who were sedentary, walkers or runners (53 per cent, 50 per cent and 49 per cent respectively). ●

### HAPPY SWIMMERS

Research by the UK funding body Sport England shows a high level of satisfaction among people who swim. Overall, 79.1 per cent of swimmers questioned in a survey by the organisation said they were happy with their sport – a higher satisfaction level than those who take part in football, hockey and netball.

In the survey, regular participants from 45 sports gave satisfaction ratings for the physical activity in which they were

involved. To calculate this, participants were asked to rate their sport across 10 areas including coaching, exertion and fitness, facilities and value for money.

The activity with the top level of satisfaction was taekwondo (85.9 per cent), followed by orienteering, judo and golf.

The survey was conducted among 44,390 people across England – general participants in sports as well as affiliated club members.



PERFECT HYGIENE ◦ VITALITY ◦ CERAMIC HEAT  
[www.sommerhuber.com](http://www.sommerhuber.com)

  
**SOMMERHUBER**  
Keramik Manufaktur Steyr 1491



**OAKWORKS®**  
Bodies Talk. We Listen.



clodagh   
*Leo*™



Corporate Sponsor  
**Green Spa Network**



The mark of responsible forestry  
903-COC-00587



Please call for details regarding OAKWORKS® FSC approved products

[www.oakworks.com](http://www.oakworks.com) • 800.916.4613

© OAKWORKS, Inc. 2009