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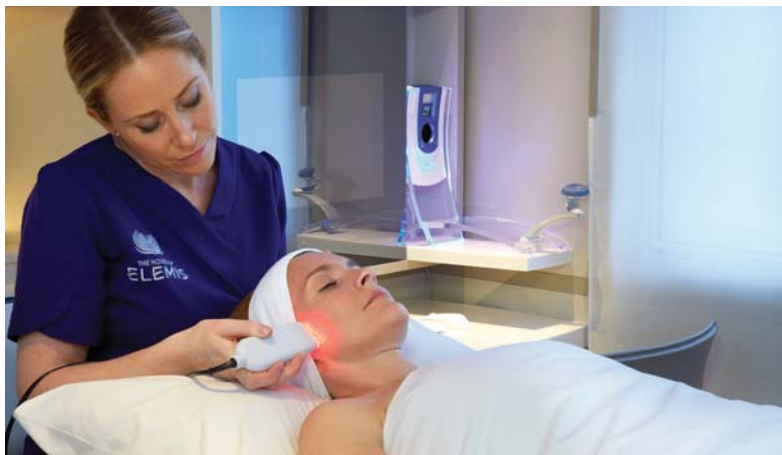
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EXCLUSIVE

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Ritz-Carlton
Spa brand

Workplace Wellness

Sneak preview
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spa business uniting the world of wellness

Spa can change your genes

The rapidly emerging field of epigenetics will transform the personal care industry and the spa and wellbeing sector will be at the heart of this change, with huge opportunities to grow engagement with customers who are committed to prevention

Scientists are increasingly convinced that the majority of disease – potentially up to 95 per cent – is preventable through making healthy lifestyle choices and that even the prognosis for unpreventable disease can be improved by a better lifestyle.

It was previously thought that genes were fixed for life and that they determine our 'biological destiny', however, research carried out around the sequencing of the human genome has taught us that many genes change in response to how we care for ourselves during each second of our lives.

This includes everything from exercising to sleeping, to the pollution we're exposed to, and from our stress levels to what we eat and drink and our state of mind.

Changes to our genes brought about by lifestyle – be they positive or negative – can either be specific to us, in that they alter how genes are expressed without altering the underlying DNA sequence, or they can be heritable and passed on to subsequent generations.

Increasing awareness of these findings make this type of research a huge game changer for industries related to self-care, such as the food and nutrition, sleep, spa, exercise, wellbeing and lifestyle sectors.

All stand to benefit from the fact that solutions to many ailments are cheap, available and straightforward to deliver and that – most importantly – prevention will be a huge industry in the years to come.

Who's interested in this new thinking? Firstly, anyone who wants to live a longer, healthier life, free from disease and secondly insurance companies, corporations and governments which want to save money on healthcare.



Soon our routine fitness test will tell us how our new diet, meditation and exercise regime has changed our genes and by how much

And it's likely to get complicated very quickly, because the greater availability of personal genetic testing kits means we'll be seeing interested parties starting to identify those most likely to succumb to genetic disease with the intention of either helping them (in the case of health services and the wellbeing sector) or isolating them in terms of risk and potentially charging them more for services (in the case of insurance companies).

And just as our current fitness test from the gym or spa reports on our strength or cardiovascular fitness, in future, it will reveal how our diet, meditation and exercise regime has changed our genes, by how much and in what way. We'll also discover if we've lowered our risk of developing a specific disease or increased our longevity.

This new thinking places our sector at the heart of a substantial and growing market for personal wellness services and will bring significant opportunity.

We have a robust knowledge base on which to build these new services and we need to tackle them head on by designing and introducing 'test and prescribe' modalities to ensure we're at the heart of the drive for prevention.

Liz Terry, editorial director @elizterry

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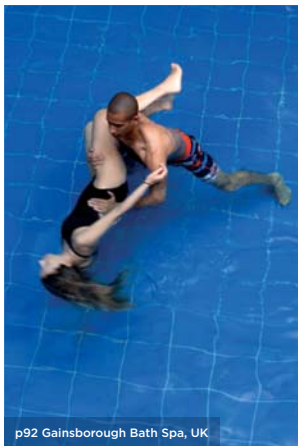
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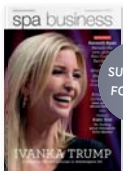
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Ivanka Trump will launch her own spa brand later this year (see p22)

Judy Chapman

Former editor-in-chief of *Spa Asia* magazine, Judy Chapman is now a spa consultant and travels the world, exploring and creating spa concepts, beauty products and treatment experiences. Most recently, she launched *The Chapman Guides*, a curation of the best in wellness travel.

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Ophelia Yeung

Ophelia Yeung has led global research and consulting projects for more than 20 years for SRI International. Since 2008, she's co-authored a number of studies for the Global Wellness Institute - including its new *The Future of Wellness At Work* report (see p60) - and is a senior research fellow for the organisation.

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Letters

KATIE BARNES, EDITOR, SPA BUSINESS

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

BOOST CUSTOMERS TO BOOST BOTTOM LINE

Tara Hanrahan, group director of spa operations, Centara Hotels & Resorts

In the majority of cases, I've found that the reason why a resort or hotel spa doesn't achieve top-line is simply due to a lack of customers. Many managers are effective in internal operations, which ensures guest satisfaction once they're at the spa - but what strategies are in place to persuade guests to come to the spa to begin with?

I recommend breaking the hotel journey down into three sections and then ensuring that the spa has a presence at each stage.

Pre-arrival: What contact does your spa have with the guest prior to hotel arrival? Are guests able to pre-book treatments, and if so, how do you communicate this to them? Can you reach out via reservations with a spa tagline or special offer? The sooner you can let your guests know about the spa the better.

Hotel arrival: What's happening at check-in? An arrival offer, valid for only 24 hours, could help. What script is the front office staff using to describe the spa? Consider giving them a commission to book guests on the arrival spa offer. One of my spas had a 40 per cent capture rate purely because the front office team was given a great incentive.



● Hanrahan has raised capture rates in a number of ways

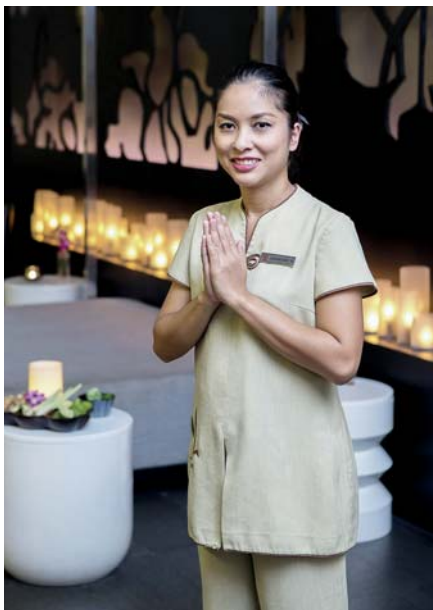
Throughout the stay: Breakfast is a key time to proactively engage and up-sell spa, as it's the one time that the majority of hotel guests are in one place. Set up a booking table near the entrance to restaurant and have lots of treatment samples, signage, and therapists showcasing treatments. Ensure you have the appointment calendar ready - expect that guests will book. I've seen spas turn around just with this one tactic.

Ultimately, increasing the number of customers is all about taking the spa to the customers. Don't wait for them to come to you - make it as easy as possible to book. I have a rule in my spas that if a therapist has down-time, 50

per cent of that time must be spent external to the spa - out in the resort and engaging with guests. This is the ultimate goal - be pro-active, go out there and get them!

Tara Hanrahan
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● If a therapist has down-time, send them into the hotel to engage with guests





● Therapists need lifestyle training too says Aleksandrowicz

THE CHALLENGES OF CUSTOMISED TREATMENTS

Beata Aleksandrowicz, founder, Pure Massage

Katie Barnes sums the dilemma of offering bespoke spa treatments very well in the last issue of *Spa Business* (see SB15/4 p46) when she asks how can brands protect quality without having standard operating procedures in place?

Offering thoughtful, personalised rituals is exactly how it should be, but these rituals need boundaries for safety, therapeutic and cost efficiency purposes.

I believe it's possible to customise the standard massage. Massage equates to 80 per cent of all treatments

booked. However the problem is that often therapists are not properly trained to give the client what they want/expect. Spas need to invest more in massage training that will allow them to offer quality and consistency. Not only because customers demand it, but also because it allows you to have a team of real spa professionals, who all work within the same ethos and values of your spa.

Taking customisation a step further, I believe today's clients want more simplicity and more advice – not necessarily

medical advice, just help with fitness, nutrition, relaxation and stress management.

This means that it's now also important for a professional therapist to believe in a healthy lifestyle; give advice about it; get excited about the changes they can contribute to; and for them to want to make a difference in the world.

This means a totally new revolutionary approach to training that includes not only techniques and communication, but also life coaching elements because

● Spas need to invest more in training so therapists can offer quality, bespoke massage

you need awareness to deliver a personalised massage or indeed any customised service. The good news is that this kind of massage training can be delivered in modules, adapted to time schedules and form part of the educational budget. This ultimately will benefit all customised treatments.

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CHINESE MARKET NEEDS ACCREDITED TRAINING COURSES

Jannita Mossel, founder, SpaTree

The Chinese spa sector is lacking professional trained people who are qualified to work in an international spa environment. There's an urgent need for accredited spa studies in the country.

There are several factors exacerbating the problem including the rapid expansion of foreign spa operators and major hotel brands in China and the fact the Chinese consumers themselves 'vote with their wallet' and demand the newest and most unique spa therapies. Also, there's a strong growth in the field of traditional Chinese therapies, which have been gaining wide acceptance around the world.

Our spa education consultancy conducted a



survey among 64 students about career planning and opportunities in the spa industry. Currently, 90 per cent of spa training in China is conducted by in-house or

product-house training. When asking students about the selection they make in further studies, all 64 students (100 per cent) said they are looking for accredited

● Students want accredited diplomas says Mossel (far left)

diploma studies, since they feel an accredited diploma will guarantee a strong career in the near future – while a certificate will not.

It's clear that the Chinese spa industry is facing major challenges in recruiting enough spa talent, and finds itself in a situation where the market has to compete with international best practices.

More training companies, organisations and schools need to fill the gap by setting an accredited spa academies across the country.

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spa people

“This is the first time Ivanka has put her name to a spa with the launch of The Spa by Ivanka Trump brand

Ivanka Trump, executive vice president of development and acquisitions, The Trump Organization

Ivanka Trump's signature 10,000sq ft (929sq m) flagship The Spa by Ivanka Trump is set to debut this year at The Old Post Office in Washington DC – soon to be the Trump International Hotel, Washington DC – before being rolled out across Trump's nine existing hotels, as well as future properties.

Ivanka is a former model and Trump Hotels is owned by her father Donald Trump, the US real-estate developer who's currently making headlines worldwide with his 2016 presidential campaign.

Spa consultants WTS International and Robert Henry Architects are both involved with the spa project in Washington

DC, which is part of the historic property's US\$200m (£144.4m, £119m) redevelopment.

Robert Henry says the spa will be a prototype introducing Ivanka's “unique positioning within spa and wellness”. He adds that “Ivanka has mandated that this will be a game-changing wellness project establishing a new benchmark for the wellness industry”.

WTS will help to launch and manage first spa in Washington DC. It will also be the management company of choice for The Spa by Ivanka Trump says WTS senior vice president Kim Matheson Sheldrick. She says: “WTS has partnered with Trump Hotel Collection Management, Ivanka Trump, as well as the Trump family to craft a fresh, authentic and purposeful spa concept. Ivanka Trump is synonymous with unpretentious elegance, exquisite design and sophistication.”

Matheson Sheldrick points out that in addition to Ivanka's role as executive vice president of development and acquisitions at The Trump Organization, she's also a busy mother, wellness enthusiast and avid traveller.

“Every moment of the guest journey and each touchpoint have been scrutinised by Ivanka and

The Old Post Office in Washington DC will be the first hotel with The Spa by Ivanka Trump when it opens later this year

“Ivanka Trump has mandated that this project will establish a new benchmark for the wellness industry





Previously at Trump

Ivanka has been involved in spa design and concepts at Trump hotels in the past, but this is the first time she's put her name to the brand



Being female, I've been to quite a few different spas and given all of the different locations we have hotels in, I've really experienced a lot

her team, as well as WTS to curate experiences gathered through Ivanka's international travels, made contextual to each spa location," says Matheson Sheldrick.

Ivanka has worked on previous spas for the hotel group and at the launch of Trump International Tower Chicago in 2008 she said: "Being female, I've been to quite a few different spas and given my travels and all of the different locations we have hotels in, I've really experienced a lot."

Matheson Sheldrick adds: "The Spa by Ivanka Trump personifies her lifestyle, embarking on every endeavour with energy and passion, but always taking the time to pause, heal and recharge."

Colony Capital LLC, a private investment firm, partnered with the Trump Hotel Collection to preserve the landmark post office building. The new hotel will feature 263 bedrooms, restored historic woodwork as well as crystal sconces and chandeliers.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to redevelop one



of this country's most historic buildings and we will spare no effort to ensure that the hotel, once completed, lives up to the legacy and integrity of this iconic landmark," said Ivanka at the groundbreaking ceremony.

Completion and opening of the hotel and spa are anticipated

Ivanka, her brothers and father Donald - who has a US presidential campaign - break ground in Washington DC

before the US elections in November this year.

The Trump Hotel Collection also includes locations in New York; Chicago; Las Vegas; Waikiki Beach, Hawaii; Panama; Toronto; Miami and Ireland. Trump International Hotel & Tower Vancouver is also slated to open in 2016.

“I like to incorporate old, esoteric principles – as well as those understood by modern science – to create a sound healing modality

Christine and Jahmaal Hays, founders, Eastern Vibration



Christine (above) learned about the bowls from Nepalese shamans, she says they can help with arthritis, inflammation and IBS

Christine Hays' spa career took her all over the world – from India to the Bahamas – but it was when she and her son were on holiday in Nepal that she heard the call of the singing bowls.

“They were everywhere and we just thought they were really interesting,” she says. “We really wanted to see them in the spa and wellness world.”

She brought some bowls back with her and incorporated them into treatments in her work as corporate director for Oberoi spas (see SB11/2 p50) and later in her work for Six Senses.

Then, three years ago, Christine left her corporate spa job and started her own company, Eastern Vibration, with her son Jahmaal. The mother-son team spent time learning about the ancient healing technique – looking at scientific research, studying with shamans in Nepal, hearing about the bowls' history with Tibetan monks.

Christine likens the effect of the bowls' vibrations to a cellular





massage, with the vibrations moving through the body and brain. She says: "It's like using hot and cold packs, but interacting on a basic molecular level." Christine believes the therapy can help with a range of issues, including arthritis, inflammation, irritable bowel syndrome, headaches and tension.

Jahmaal says: "I like to incorporate old, esoteric principles – as well as those understood by modern science – to create a sound healing modality. This is what makes us unique – we combine a structured method with intuitive work," he explains.

Eastern Vibration's singing bowls are handmade in Nepal with some so large than you can stand or sit in them to send vibrations through your entire body. Jahmaal adds: "Vibrations are the core of existence. We need to harmonise our bodies – our bodies have so many points that are working together, it's like an orchestra."

Christine suggests a minimum of 15 minutes for treatment of a specific area – which can

Jahmaal (above) says the vibrations harmonise the body; the bowls are handmade in Nepal (below left and right)



If you don't know how to use them, you just have a pretty bowl, but used as a healing tool it can improve someone's life

be scheduled as an add-on service – or full-body treatments of 30 to 80 minutes.

Eastern Vibration also has a three-day course to train therapists and spa managers in how to use the singing bowls effectively. Christine says: "We don't want to just sell bowls – we want to get them into

as many hands as possible. Our main goal is to teach people how to use them to heal people and improve their wellbeing."

Her son concurs: "If you don't know how to use them, you just have a pretty bowl, but used as a healing tool they can really improve someone's life."

“We saw the same problems year after year. There’s always a shortage of therapists and there’s always an issue with training

**Kathryn Moore,
managing director,
Spa Connectors**

After six years at MSpa, overseeing spas for Minor Hotels across the world, Kathryn Moore has set up her own company to fill a training and recruitment void in the industry.

Moore, who most recently oversaw 60 facilities as MSpa’s director of spa in Asia, says the launch of Spa Connectors was inspired by her experience in the industry. “We saw the same problems, year after year,” she explains. “There’s always a shortage of therapists, and there’s always an issue with training.”

Spa Connectors works with colleges in China, India, Indonesia, Thailand and Morocco to source high-quality therapists – screening them for English fluency, experience, motivation and attitude – before interviewing them and doing reference checks.

Once selected, therapists can then take one of two courses: a three-month course for those with no experience, or a two-week course for experienced therapists. The courses include Spa Connectors’ X-factor module, which teaches employee engagement, anticipating guests’ needs, up-selling, empathy and more.

Spa Connectors is aiming its services at five-star resorts in the Middle East, Asia and the Indian Ocean, with plans to

expand into China and Africa. The organisation will also train therapists in two specific protocols for the hotel they’re going to work in. “They’ll be ready to go and start generating revenue as soon as they start,” Moore says.

Hotels pay US\$1,000 (€916, £698) for a trained therapist, and turn-around time is between two weeks and three months.

Spa Connectors also offers a corporate social responsibility division and has partnered with Harmony House in India and BaliWISE in Bali to help place disadvantaged women into spa careers.

“A lot of hotels have massive CSR budgets that they could use for this,” says Moore. Instead of spending that CSR budget on planting trees or painting a school, she explains, they can put their money towards training a disadvantaged woman to be a

Moore, a well-known industry figure, is tackling spa staffing issues head on with her new company

therapist who works for them – a win/win situation. “I’m really excited about this division... I think we can make a really big difference,” she says.

Spa Connectors also offers spa pre-opening services and audits in addition to specialised spa manager training and recruitment. Moore says: “We’re working with a lot of consultants because they don’t want to do the training and recruitment, so they build our services into the package.”

Spa Connectors had a soft launch at the Global Wellness Summit in November, but officially got up and running in January and expects to have its first students ready at the end of March. The company also includes Julie-Anne Kelly, training and culture director; Simon Eadon, commercial director; Jaime Svensson, operations director; and Lisa McCarthy, marketing and PR manager.

“We’re working with a lot of consultants because they don’t want to do the training and recruitment





“I thought I knew a lot about tea, but this process has taken me on an even deeper tea journey

Ajit Madan, co-founder, Camellia's Tea House

Ajit Madan, co-founder of Camellia's Tea House in London, has just been appointed England's first certified master tea sommelier by the International Tea Education Institute – a surprising first in a country that drinks 165 million cups of tea a day.

Much like wine, teas produced by different estates have specific 'vintages' and differing levels of quality, depending on which

leaves are harvested during the production process, so certification as a sommelier is quite intense.

Madan has a background in molecular biology and formed Camellia's Tea House in 2007, along with his sister, Lubna Madan – a qualified homeopath – in an bid to create a wellness range of teas and revive the typical English tea room.

Today, the company not only operates its tea house in

Much like wine, teas produced by different estates have specific 'vintages' and differing levels of quality

London, it also supplies more than 100 different hand-blended teas to leading spas and hotels around the world, including Shangri-La and Corinthia hotels.

To qualify for the master tea sommelier title, Madan completed a two-year course, and had to analyse various tea types, their origins, processing methods and how they can be perfectly paired with foods. He also gained an extensive knowledge of various types of tea service in different hospitality settings, from Chinese tea ceremonies to traditional English afternoon tea.

Madan also travelled to tea gardens around the world to gain first-hand experience of tea production and manufacturing, attending the Japanese Shincha Festival – which celebrates the first new, green tea of the year – and spending many months discussing tea with tea masters from across the world.

"I thought I knew a lot about tea, but this process has widened my knowledge further and taken me on an even deeper tea journey," says Madan. "This will certainly help me with our company's mission to improve tea culture."

Madan now uses his Master Tea Sommelier experience to train spa and hotel clients, and also runs one-day classes aimed at those who work in F&B departments in spas and hotels.

Camellia's teas include Health and Wellness infusions, Classic Teas and Exotic Infusions, which are blended with flowers, fruits, spices and essential oils. ●

Madan has been certified as a master tea sommelier and is taking his deeper knowledge to spas and hotels



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GOCO Hospitality buys Glen Ivy Hot Springs

GOCO Hospitality has acquired the 155-year-old Glen Ivy Hot Springs Resort in California, USA. As part of the deal, GOCO has also acquired an adjacent 65-acre plot next to the 20-acre hot springs and spa, where it plans to develop a world-class wellness resort community.

The iconic resort attracts more than 160,000 annual visitors. It boasts 19 pools, thermal mud-bathing facilities and 40 treatment rooms.

GOCO has plans to expand it into a 90-room GOCO Retreat with a comprehensive wellness centre, medi-spa, organic farm, additional hot springs bathing zones, yoga academy, an education centre for holistic medicine and 125 residential units.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=9z6u3_B



Lori was much-loved in the spa sector

Industry recruiter Lori Hutchinson dies

Lori Hutchinson, founder and co-owner of US-based Hutchinson Consulting, died in late January.

ISPA – where Hutchinson served as a board member from 2007 to 2010 – announced the news. Its online post said: “Lori’s energetic spirit was a bright light as she served on countless task forces throughout the years and made an impact on the spa community both personally and professionally. She will be missed immensely and our thoughts and prayers are with her family and friends.”

Social media lit up in the days after her death, with industry friends posting thoughts under #lovetolori.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=b3k3x_B



There are 10 hotels across Europe and the flagship spa is at the Verdura Resort, Sicily (above)

Rocco Forte Hotels launches brand-wide spa concept

Luxury hotel group Rocco Forte has launched a new brand-wide concept, Rocco Forte Spas, with a flagship location at the company’s Verdura Resort in Sicily.

The new spa programme has four components, combining treatments with beauty products, fitness and food. Irene Forte, daughter of owner Sir Rocco Forte, is heading up the spa programme.

Rocco Forte Rituals – including a facial, back, body and couple’s treatment – are offered in all spas using the newly-created Forte Organics product line. The beauty range has been made in Italian-based company Effegi Lab.

The Rocco Forte Fitness offering uses cutting-edge gadgets and equipment and works with professional trainers for support. Italian luxury brand Back Label is to create a line of fitness clothing exclusively for the brand. Gyms are kitted out

by Technogym and many of the hotels now offer sightseeing running tours.

Rocco Forte Nourish menus are created with local nutritionists and chefs, including Madeleine Shaw, chef and author of *Get the Glow*, who’s created healthy options for Rocco Forte’s Brown’s Hotel in London. Also on board is cyclist and TV presenter Mark Beaumont, who will help create the menu at The Balmoral in Edinburgh.

Verdura Resort in Sicily is the flagship spa of Rocco Forte Spas, with a 4,000sq m (43,056sq ft) spa complex with 11 treatment rooms, a gym, pool, four outdoor thalassotherapy pools, a double-height steamroom, infrared sauna, Finnish saunas and a spa bar.

Inspiration for the Verdura Spa came from famous naturopath Sebastian Kneipp, who’s widely known for the Kneipp water cure. As such many treatments have water elements such as the steambaths, hydro-massages and the thalasso circuit. Health programmes integrating Kneipp’s five pillars of water, plants, exercise, nutrition and balance will also be available.

In addition, Verdura has created A Spa for the Mind, which includes themed reading material available in the spa library.

Family-run Rocco Forte, owned by British hotelier Sir Rocco Forte and his sister, Olga Polizzi, includes 10 hotels and resorts in landmark European locations. The brand has plans to expand into Jeddah this year and Shanghai in 2018.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=f4m9j_B



Rocco Forte’s daughter heads up the concept



Peninsula Hot Springs plans to add 16 new pools in the next two years, bringing its total to 57

Australia's Peninsula Hot Springs plans big expansion

Things are heating up at Australia's Peninsula Hot Springs, which has plans to grow its offerings over the next two years, add 126 overnight accommodations and create an official hot springs region. The owners have also recently purchased Maruia Hot Springs in New Zealand.

Sixteen new pools will be added at Peninsula, plus a mud area, an ice cave, a large group sauna as well as an amphitheatre for entertainment and education. The natural hot springs currently has 41 bathing pools and experiences and will

add the first eight new pools by the end of this year and another eight in 2017, growing its offerings to a total of 57 pools and increasing its visitor capacity to 600,000.

The company also plans to expand its current one-day wellness programmes with weekend and week-long retreats.

Owner Charles Davidson is also working with several groups in the area to create the Mornington Peninsula hot springs region, similar to New Zealand's Rotorua district, which Davidson was involved with.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=W5K3j_B

Comfort Zone to open new sustainable headquarters

Italian architects Matteo Thun and Luca Colombo have designed a verdant new village in Parma, Italy to house the new headquarters for Davines Group, parent company of skincare brand Comfort Zone.

Spread over 11,000sq m (118,400sq ft), Davines Village will feature a skin bar where visitors can try Comfort Zone's products, as well as education zones and the company's development laboratories, all set around a luminous glasshouse and biodiversity gardens.

The group said the project is designed to meet high standards of environmental and ethical sustainability and wellness. It is set to be complete in 2017.

"The site will be a contemporary interpretation of traditional forms and



Davines Village will be complete in 2017

patterns and gabled roofs," said a spokesperson for the group "...The distinct sense of beauty, professional values and mission of Davines will be symbolised by the architectural concept. It will be a home of sustainable beauty."

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=w4P7G_B



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Dr Oz is known for his US TV show

Six Senses teams up with Dr Oz for new programme

Six Senses Spas has collaborated with prominent doctors Dr Mehmet Oz – best known for his American television show – Dr Michael Breus and Dr Steven Gundry to develop Six Senses Integrated Wellness, a new programme which aims to address common issues people face in ultra-stressed daily lives.

Through the programme, Six Senses' in-house team will measure and analyse key physiological biomarkers to provide guests with lifestyle and nutritional advice and design a personalised programme of spa treatments, fitness and wellness activities.

The programme will focus on nutrition, sleep health, movement, alternative therapies, holistic spa treatments, yoga, meditation and mindfulness. The goal is to offer guests real benefits and guidance by providing in-depth information about their health and wellbeing.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=p8E3p_B

Mandarin Oriental Bodrum partners with Mayo Clinic

The Mandarin Oriental Bodrum has partnered with US-based medical non-profit Mayo Clinic to offer a combination of research-based medical expertise along with Mandarin Oriental's treatments and therapies.

The Mayo Clinic Healthy Living Programme at Mandarin Oriental Bodrum is a first for the clinic, and launched in January. Focusing on preventative wellness, the programmes will offer guests a choice of experiences, from one- to five-day retreats.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=R6V8F_B

Elizabeth Arden Red Door Spa buys Manicube

Elizabeth Arden Red Door Spa has acquired Manicube, an in-office beauty and grooming services provider, in the first of what the company says will be many changes in the year ahead.

Founded three years ago by two Harvard Business School alumnae, Manicube provides nail services and men's barbering in corporate offices in four US markets – New York City, Chicago, San Francisco and Boston – with the tagline of "Keeping professionals polished".

Manicube partners with the HR managers of corporate offices to set up weekly services, which it says increase both employee satisfaction and productivity. It books and takes payments for appointments directly on its website. Manicures can be done in as little as 15 minutes, prompting the company to dub the service "The coffee break with benefits".

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=V3q9W_B



The resort has been open for 75 years

Two Bunch Palms resort acquired by CCL Holdings

The 75-year-old Two Bunch Palms resort in California, US, has been bought by hospitality and real estate private investment company CCL Holdings for an undisclosed amount. The new management company JRNL Two Bunch Palms, an affiliate of CCL Holdings, will retain the leadership team, with Kevin Kelly as chief executive officer, John Trudeau as managing director and Rianna Riego as executive director of brand and communication.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=ESY2U_B



The Japanese designer brings a touch of haute couture to the Cambodian retreat

Fashion icon Kenzo Takada designing wellness retreat

Akaryn Hotel Group has plans to open a private island wellness retreat in Cambodia, with interiors by famed Japanese fashion designer Kenzo Takada, best known for his Kenzo brand of clothing, perfume and skincare.

Due to open in June, Arovada by Akaryn will be located on Koh Krabey and will embrace Akaryn's concept of 'outdoor living in,' with 40 villas and the 2,000sq m (21,528sq ft) Ayurah Wellness Centre.

Spa facilities include water therapy suites, medical and spa centres, a holistic

fitness offering and meditation trails. The centre fuses spiritual and medical care, integrating cutting-edge technology with time-honoured holistic therapies.

Ayurah Wellness is the spa brand for Akaryn and is based on four pillars of wellbeing: weight optimisation, anti-ageing, mind balance and detoxification.

There are already two Ayurah Wellness spas at Akaryn properties in Thailand and another is due to open at The President by Akaryn in Laos later this year.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=M4D6f_B

Surfing and 'parenting well' top Spafinder's 2016 trends

Spafinder Wellness 365's 2016 Spa & Wellness Top Ten Trends Forecast has identified health, fitness, technology and cultural influences that are likely to make their way into the spa world.

Trends include Surf's Up: The New Wave of Wellness, which highlights how the US\$130bn surfing and stand-up paddleboard market is influencing spa, with a changing demographic that includes more educated, high-earning women.

Sexual Wellbeing is another of Spafinder's trends, whether it's through sensual fitness like burlesque classes or yoga for better sex, or through orgasmic meditation or alternative fertility centres.

Parenting Well reflects the trend that parents are turning to the same wellness



Surfing is a new wellness trend, says Spafinder

therapies that they use to better their children's lives. A generation facing unprecedented levels of childhood obesity, screen addictions and stress and anxiety is fuelling this trend, mindfulness already being incorporated in schools.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=X6b9d_B



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The resort has a 3,000sq m spa

Massive Greek thermal spa set to open in May

Greece's Miraggio Thermal Spa Resort is set to open in May of this year in Halkidiki, with a 3,000sq m (32,291sq ft) Myrthia Thermal Spa, and plans for a medical wellness section to be added in 2017. The resort features a large thalassotherapy pool, fed directly from the sea, as well as four separate thermal pools filled with unique thermal waters of the region. Spa director Stavros Mavridis said the focus will be on interactive, healthy and memorable experiences.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=X8e6q_B



Blind therapists are common in Asia

Centara Bangkok invests in blind spa therapists

Centara Grand at Central Plaza Ladprao Bangkok has hired two blind therapists, Decha Phoosirind and Paranee Fongta. While blind therapists are common in Asia, their employment in five-star resorts is not, which Tara Hanrahan, group director of spa operations for Central Hospitality International, said is due to spatial challenges. "The blind therapist needs guidance to and from the work location, as well as safety to move in and around the area," she explained.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=E4f6s_B



Luhrmann designed hotel interiors (above) while the spa has a South American theme

Miami Beach's Faena features Baz Luhrmann interiors

Miami Beach's legendary Saxony Hotel, has been transformed by Argentine real estate developer Alan Faena and features interiors designed by filmmaker Baz Luhrmann and his wife, costume designer Catherine Martin. The Faena Hotel Miami Beach includes a 22,000sq ft (2,044sq m) South American-themed spa – called Tierra Santa – developed by spa consultant Inge Theron.

Theron, who was the undercover 'spa junkie' for the *Financial Times* for four years, travelled extensively to find inspiration for

Tierra Santa. She particularly focused on Mexico and the Amazon to develop holistic treatments using fire and smoke and incorporated materials such as sacred healing rocks and palo santo wood into the spa.

She said: "It's very unique – a sublime combination of ancient healing practise, art-inspired interiors and state-of-the-art technology, which makes this one of the most exciting hotel spas in the world, and certainly one of the best projects to be involved with."

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=Q4u2b_B

India's Vana retreat to unveil Tibetan Healing Centre

Indian wellness retreat Vana will unveil a new 12,464sq ft (1,158sq m) Tibetan Healing Centre in the coming months. With experts trained at the Tibetan Institute of Medicine and Astrology in Dharamsala, the centre is the seventh and final wellness space at the property.

Once complete, Vana will be able to offer traditional Tibetan treatments such as drugs, a compression therapy using medical herbs; hor gyi metsa, a therapeutic manipulation; and gom meditation.

The interiors of the centre have been designed to preserve the spiritual concept of Tibetan medicine, using linen and ceramics in shades of blue, inspired by the Medicine Buddha. There are also paintings by Tibetan traditional artists, depicting



The centre is the final part of the Vana complex

the chronicles of the Buddha, as well as pieces by in-house artist, Siraj Saxena.

The centre is surrounded by a pond for reflection, as well as a nearby shrine room, meditation cave and small library for spiritual study, discourse and discussion.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=e6H7T_B

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Seacrest hosts TV show *American Idol*

Ryan Seacrest to launch new men's skincare line

Radio personality, television host and producer Ryan Seacrest is teaming up with Beverly Hills dermatologist Dr Harold Lancer to launch a men's skincare line in late 2016.

The products will utilise the principles of the doctor's Lancer Method – to polish, cleanse and nourish skin – but will feature original formulas designed to navigate the specific skincare needs of men.

Seacrest is host to the top-rated US talent show *American Idol*.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=R9v7x_B



The Grand Hotel du Lac houses the spa

Dr Burgener opens flagship spa in Vevey

Skincare brand Dr Burgener has opened an intimate, flagship spa at the Grand Hotel du Lac in Vevey, Switzerland. The three-treatment-room spa uses Dr Burgener products exclusively and also features a room dedicated to the company's newly-launched Haute Couture anti-ageing facial treatments. Services include a full analysis of the skin – measuring hydration, lipids and elasticity – followed by a customised therapy.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=R3h8W_B



The resort will include a 107,500sq ft Canyon Ranch Spa, Fitness and Wellness Center

Iseli named MD for Canyon Ranch's Turkish location

Wellness operator Canyon Ranch has appointed Markus Iseli managing director for its inaugural international resort, Canyon Ranch Wellness Resort at Kaplankaya. The resort is slated to open July 2016 as the anchor brand of an exclusive waterfront enclave on the south Aegean coast, near the city of Bodrum.

Iseli brings more than 30 years of international luxury hospitality experience to the company, which chose the site in Turkey for its confluence of stunning landscape, rich cultural history and healing traditions.

Iseli will oversee operations for the property, which will include a 107,500sq ft (9,987sq m) spa and wellness centre.

"I feel privileged to join the renowned Canyon Ranch brand in its global mission of advancing the concept of transformative wellness," said Iseli. "My innate creative nature fuels my love for curating guest experiences that are not only excellent, but extraordinary, and there is no place more inspiring to accomplish this than Kaplankaya."

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=k6W4g_B

Z Capital furthers wellness portfolio with Swiss spa

US-based private equity management firm Z Capital Partners has acquired the historic Waldhaus Flims Mountain Resort & Spa in Flims, Switzerland. The deal further enhances Z Capital's health and wellness hotel portfolio, following its acquisition earlier this year of the Carillon Miami Beach, formerly operated as a Canyon Ranch property.

The company said it plans to maintain the property's heritage while upgrading the resort to a five-star luxury hotel. Its strategy includes expanding the spa and wellness facility, eventually developing an integrated medical wellness component.

James Zenni, president and CEO of Z Capital, said the property represents an ideal first international acquisition.



The Waldhaus Flims is a historic Swiss spa

"Following our acquisition earlier this year of Carillon Miami Beach...we are positioned to leverage our expertise and ensure that the Waldhaus Flims delivers an unparalleled experience to visitors of this truly exceptional destination," he said.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=f2z7m_B

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Marriott is to buy Starwood for US\$12.2bn, the group currently manages 175 spas

Major hotel mergers impact the global spa industry

The end of 2015 saw mergers across four mammoth hotel operators, as Marriott said it would buy its rival, Starwood Hotels & Resorts, for US\$12.2bn (€11.4b, £8bn) – creating the world's largest hotel company. Soon after, Paris-based AccorHotels announced plans to buy FRHI – the owner of Raffles, Fairmont and Swissôtel – for around US\$2.9bn (€2.6bn, £1.9bn).

Marriott operates and franchises hotels under The Ritz-Carlton, Bvlgari, Edition, JW Marriott, Autograph Collection, Renaissance, Marriott, Delta brands and more. The group manages around 175 spas and Kenneth Ryan is senior director of global spa operations (see p40).

Starwood brands include the St Regis, The Luxury Collection, W, St Regis, Design Hotels, Westin, Le Meridien, Sheraton, Four Points by Sheraton, Aloft, Element and Tribute Portfolio. Amanda Roman Al-Masri is Starwood's director of global spa development & operations, oversee-

ing a total of 477 spas worldwide with six branded spa concepts. Starwood has 93 spas in North America; 44 in Latin America; 128 in Europe, the Middle East and Africa; and 212 in Asia Pacific.

Accor operates Sofitel, Pullman, MGallery, Novotel and ibis brands, among others, and has around 3,800 properties.

Aldina Duarte Ramos is global director, well-being product, luxury and upscale brands, which represents a volume of 150 spas and 300 hotels worldwide. Accor also operates 100 spas in its mid-scale portfolio. "Wellness is a strong pillar of our strategy," said Duarte Ramos.

Sofitel's SoSPA brand operates 48 locations, with openings in Rio, Morocco, Ivory Coast, China and Thailand planned for 2016. Accor also runs 12 Fit & Spa Lounges – with a new location in Cayo Coco, Cuba, planned for 2016. In addition, there are 15 Thalassa Sea & Spas – the company's multi-brand thalassotherapy concept that stretches from luxury to economy properties.

The spa division at FRHI is headed up by Andrew Gibson, vice president, spa & wellness, with help from Lindsay Madden-Nadeau, director of spa integration and operations. The group operates spas in each of its brands – 21 at Swissôtel, 64 at Fairmont (24 of which are outsourced) and eight at Raffles (see SB14/2 p26). Read more: http://lei.sr?a=M9A2V_B



Accor has around 150 spas globally



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WHAT WE'RE
DOING WILL BE
GAME-CHANGING
FOR THE INDUSTRY

”

Kenneth Ryan

The global head of spas for Marriott talks exclusively to Katie Barnes about the brand new, worldwide spa concept for Ritz-Carlton and the group's mission to dominate the spa scene

“We’re putting a flag in the ground saying that we’ll have the world’s best luxury spas – that’s our goal and we’re claiming that space,” says Kenneth Ryan, senior director of global spa operations for Marriott International. The US-based hotel group manages approximately 175 spas worldwide amounting to a US\$200m (€183.5m, £140.1m) portfolio. And in 2016 we can expect even more success from its spa division as it faces a catalyst for change.

In November, Marriott announced a bid to buy rivals Starwood Hotels & Resorts for US\$12.2bn (€11.2bn, £8.4bn) to create the world’s largest hotel company with more than one million rooms. Just last month, it also revealed a spa concept for the Ritz-Carlton brand which will roll out across 60 existing properties and 25-plus pipeline projects. This follows the launch of its first in-house wellness brand Spa by JW for JW Marriott hotels in 2014.

“What we’re doing will be game-changing for the industry,” says Ryan

who’s spent four years getting Marriott’s spa arm to this point and who has even higher aspirations for the future.

Global Leadership Team

Ryan’s career has been dedicated to running hotel spas and he actually started out with Marriott 17 years ago before a 10-year stint at Fairmont working alongside well-known industry figure Anne McCall Wilson. He returned to his roots in 2011 when he says “it seemed Marriott was looking to re-energise its

spa division”. Ryan was brought in by Sharilyn Abbajay who’d been charged with shaping the group’s global spa strategy (see SB11/1 p24), but when she left just months later, Ryan stepped up to the task and inherited the responsibility for online retail and fitness for the group too.

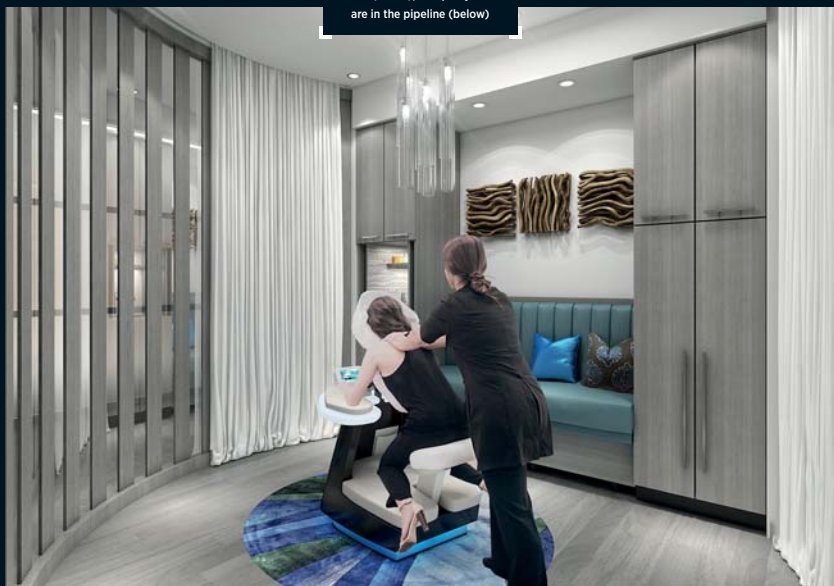
Over four years Ryan put a structure in place for the spa division with John Hopp supporting him at head office to set the vision and four essential regional heads to deploy it and oversee daily operations. Together, they make up Marriott’s Spa Global Leadership Team (GLT) and we take a closer look at their work on p50.

How this team will all be affected if the Starwood deal goes through later this year remains to be seen. Both hotel groups have strong, high-end brands. Marriott has Ritz-Carlton, Renaissance, JW Marriott, Marriott Hotels & Resorts, Bulgari and Edition in its portfolio. Meanwhile, Starwood owns St Regis, W, Westin, Sheraton and Le Méridien – all of which already have their own in-house ▶

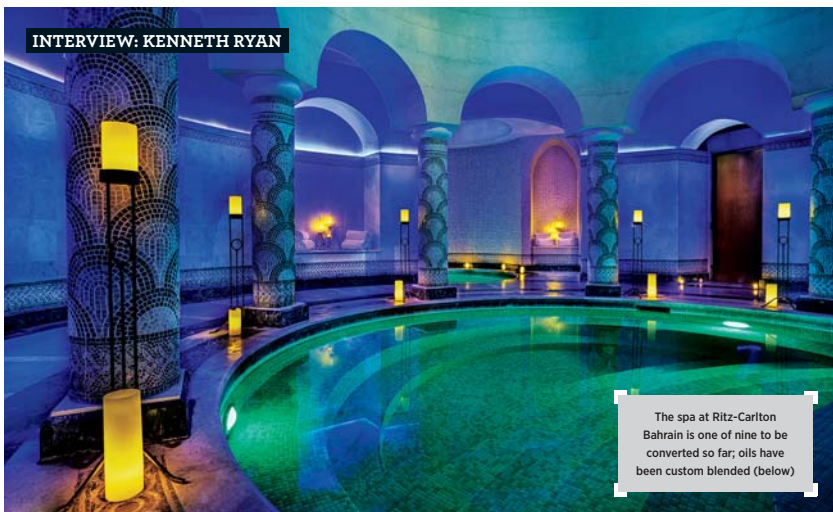
To read more about
Marriott's Spa
Global Leadership
Team turn to p50



The new Ritz-Carlton Spa
concept will roll out across 85
sites (above); 26 Spa by JW's
are in the pipeline (below)



INTERVIEW: KENNETH RYAN



The spa at Ritz-Carlton Bahrain is one of nine to be converted so far; oils have been custom blended (below)



WE DELIVER 1.3 MILLION
MASSAGES A YEAR, YET
THIS IS THE ONE AREA WITH
THE LEAST AMOUNT OF
FOCUS IN THE INDUSTRY

► spa concept or preferred third-party operator (see SB10/3 p24). It's early days for Ryan to say too much about the merger, but what he tells *Spa Business* sounds promising: "Arne Sorensen, our CEO, has said that we will be the largest travel company worldwide, we believe this will hold true for our spa division as well."

The Ritz-Carlton Spa

For now, Ryan and his team are focusing on the job at hand – the rollout of the brand new Ritz-Carlton Spa concept across 85 sites. "We have some of the most renowned and successful spas in the world at Ritz-Carlton," he says. "But we hadn't gotten our arms around them in a really long time and we wanted to take them from excellent to exceptional."

The aim is to build on Ritz-Carlton's legendary service to put the emphasis back on the customer, doing everything from redesigning the menu to developing a global collection of exclusive treatments



and oils. Perhaps most significant, however, is its pledge to raise therapists' skillsets so they can deliver tailored treatments and more meaningful experiences. Ryan explains: "We do 2 million treatments globally each year and 65 per cent are massage, yet this is the one area that has the least amount of focus in the industry. So we've created a training programme called Masters of Massage to put the energy back into our therapists to take their craft up several levels."

The programme will be delivered by 'spa ambassador trainers', a newly-created position for up to 12 specialists. In addition, Ritz-Carlton will introduce up to eight 'spa ambassadors' globally. This is another fresh role that's been put in

place to help drive consistency and results in the spa business. Spa ambassadors, explains Ryan, will visit each site every six months to conduct a full evaluation and audit of the business, including everything from front of house training to helping spa managers with revenue and yields.

"We have the best spa directors, but when you have a fresh pair of eyes it's easier to find more ways to enhance the business," says Ryan. "Putting in spa ambassadors with a set of expectations and guidelines to follow – there are over 400 documents on the concept – absolutely does that. It supports our directors and adds an additional layer that's not currently found in the industry and that's a big differentiator for us." ►

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Spa by JW aims to demystify spa and an experiential (rather than a transactional) retail area is part of the concept

Unlike Spa by JW which is purely for new projects, all 60 existing Ritz-Carlton spas will be revamped, phasing out third-party operators when contracts expire. There are also over 25 new-builds in the pipeline. "Spa by JW is phenomenal but a huge project which required a tremendous amount of effort," says Ryan, "with Ritz-Carlton it's twice as complex."

A 70-page brochure, tool kit and video introducing the concept has already hit the desks of Ritz-Carlton GMs and Ryan expects nine conversions to be completed by February. He's aiming to finish them all in the next 18 months to two years. "This is

“WE HAVE A HUGE RESPONSIBILITY TO DELIVER A RETURN ON INVESTMENT FOR OUR [HOTEL] OWNERS

our biggest, most revenue-driving brand, so we'll keep very close to it," he says. "Since sharing the news with GMs, there's been a big pull from the market, confirming the pent-up demand for refreshing our spas."

Spa by JW

While Marriott had previously trialled concepts such as Quan Spa in Asia (see SB06/4 p22) and Saray in the Middle East (see SB11/1 p24), the Spa GLT wanted consistency worldwide. "For years our [Marriott] spas have been fragmented," says Ryan. "So working with brand and consumer insights and our customer base, we've defined our spa positioning." Spa by JW, which was unveiled in August 2014, was the first to global brand to launch.

Created for JW Marriott hotels, the aim was to 'demystify and re-imagine the spa experience' and to make wellbeing less of an indulgence and more of a necessity. In an innovative twist, it promised to address a common spa hurdle: underutilisation. "We have a huge responsibility to deliver a return on investment for our [hotel] owners," says Ryan. "Our first point is to always put [spa] customers first, but in order for us to gain credibility in the spa space we also have to make sure we deliver spas that are successful."

Spa by JW has many elements in place to achieve this. Accessibility is key – literally having no door at the entrance, a circular information hub rather than big reception desk and having a social, inviting lounge where guests can hang out regardless of whether they've booked a treatment. The menu is simple and focuses on four areas – calm, indulge, invigorate and renew – based on what



● A sophisticated tool kit introducing the Ritz-Carlton Spa concept has been sent to all GMs

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EASY TO GET THEM BACK

► a customer wants to feel. And each spa has one to three walk-in, express pods for customers to try out 15-25-minute services without having to take their clothes off.

"By demystifying spa, we've opened it up to the masses," says Ryan. "I've been watching the trend of express treatments in malls and airports for several years and they're always full. They're convenient and appeal to time-strapped people and it's very much a foray into spa."

"The great thing is seeing a customer who's willing, able and comfortable in coming to get an express treatment. Once our therapists get their hands on them, they automatically start to build that relationship and then it's an easy transition to get them to come back or to try a more advanced treatment."

With only four Spa by JW's open so far, Ryan says it's not possible to tell what the



● Guests can keep their clothes on for treatments in Spa by JW's express pods

impact on utilisation is but he's "really pleased" with the concept, not least with how it appeals to hotel owners. To date there are 26 under development and they're due to open in the next four years.

Small but mighty

As well as working with the Spa GLT, part of Ryan's role is to develop partnerships with suppliers, although always with

Marriott taking the lead. "We are a small but mighty team," he says, "but the reason we've been so successful is because we've developed these strategic, innovative partnerships outside of ourselves. There may be only two [spa] people [at head office] but if you look at the extension of people, my team is in the hundreds."

It's a tactic that worked well with Spa by JW where Marriott teamed up with consultancy Spa Strategy, product house Aromatherapy Associates (see p48) and Living Earth Crafts which made a customised massage chair for its express services (see above). Other preferred partners include spa consultancy WTS, SpaEquip and SpaSoft and Life Fitness, Matrix and Technogym for fitness.

Perhaps the most elaborate example of this, however, is its collaboration with ESPA on The Ritz-Carlton Spa brand (see opposite). With ESPA working behind the scenes, the two companies have joined forces over the last 18 months to develop the new treatments, SOPs and training programmes for the spa ambassadors and spa ambassador trainers. These personnel are ESPA employees working on behalf of Ritz-Carlton, effectively creating a company within a company and significantly boosting ESPA's global portfolio. The project lead for ESPA was its CEO Michael Harmsworth, son of the founder Sue Harmsworth.

Ryan says: "There were a few reasons [for picking ESPA]. We have a seven-year past relationship with them [as suppliers] ►

INDUSTRY PARTNER

Michael Harmsworth CEO, ESPA

Designing the new Ritz-Carlton Spa concept was very much a collaboration between us and both the Ritz-Carlton and Marriott design teams. We remained hands-on throughout – and continue to do so – though we work in the background with Ritz-Carlton taking the lead.

The concept will be implemented using our operational expertise and training and we have nine people at our UK headquarters leading the project from our side. The new concept does not use the ESPA brand name however, all spas will be wholly centred around Ritz-Carlton, while introducing even more customers to our natural product line.

This partnership is incredibly important to us. Of course it has commercial



● ESPA brings operational expertise to the new Ritz-Carlton concept says Harmsworth

significance, but more important is the establishment of a long-term relationship with Ritz-Carlton and the fact that we've been able to demonstrate just how flexible our spa services can be.



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► to many Ritz-Carlton spas] and they are renowned leaders in the luxury space. A lot of people don't know that the E in ESPA stands for education and the whole crux of what I was trying to do with 60 spas in existence was going to be around training and education. Michael is a visionary in that space and he saw the value of coming on that journey with us."

Impactful changes

In the four years that Ryan and the Spa GLT have been on board, he feels they've achieved a huge amount. "We've introduced professionalism and discipline [into the spa division at Marriott] and organised a lot of things," he says. But he still feels there's also much to do.

In conjunction with SpaSoft an online spa booking system has been in development over the last two years for

INDUSTRY PARTNER

Claire Way

Director of operations,
Spa Strategy

◀ Kenneth and John [Hopp] had worked with the Spa by JW concept a while before we were brought on board and it was great to work with a team that had such a strong, fresh and clear vision.

Our focus was to create and implement standards for training, menu programming, operations and design that were flexible enough for a global footprint – something which we've helped other companies navigate. After presenting our ideas for feedback, we moved forward to develop the brand standards and were involved for 10 months in total.

It was great fun to work with such an innovative concept and we also love



● Way thinks Spa by JW is set to become the new third place

how Spa by JW is set to become the new third place. It's a social, open and inviting space that removes barriers to the spa to create a seamless integrated spa and hotel partnership. ◀

Marriott spas. The platform is live in all of its managed spas in North America and in the pilot stages in Asia and the Middle East. Something similar is underway in Europe in collaboration with Concept Software Systems. "With our first full year in operation of online booking, I'm

projecting that we'll take between US\$7m-US\$10m [€6.4m-€9.2m, £4.8m-£6.9m] of business in North America through that channel," says Ryan.

He believes fitness is another area to focus on: "It's becoming a hot topic in our hotels... pools are being filled in and we're getting up to 3,000sq ft of fitness space. So we're looking at how to bring advanced fitness to our customers who are demanding much better facilities: not just equipment but spaces in general."

In the long-term, Ryan says the goal is to work through all hotel brands to create dedicated spa concepts.

"I love driving results and creation in all shapes and forms, and I feel super fortunate to work for a company that's allowed us to make impactful changes," Ryan concludes. "From an industry standpoint, when we do something at Marriott it has ripple effects throughout the sector, so that's pretty exciting."

"Within our company itself we are actually leading with spa for the first time which means we have huge value from a branding perspective and they [the owners] can see huge value in having a world-class, first-class spa." ●

INDUSTRY PARTNER

Geraldine Howard

Founder, Aromatherapy
Associates

Before she died in January, Geraldine spoke to *Spa Business* about her company's partnership with Marriott:

◀ JW Marriott looked at companies that could take the experience right through the guest's stay and we developed amenity products as well as treatments. We worked with Spa Strategy and the JW Marriott team to develop a spa offering that was adaptable, results-driven and easy to navigate.

The menu has a simple framework which allows guests to pick their service based on its desired effect. Express treatments of 15-25 minutes are available for the time-poor, while 60-90-minute treatments provide a more advanced experience.



● The Spa by JW menu is adaptable, simple and results-driven said Geraldine

We're thrilled to be the primary skincare line at Spa by JW although in larger spas, additional brands which complement the local market can also be selected. ◀

Work at Aromatherapy Associates continues under CEO Muriel Zingraff



Katie Barnes is the editor of *Spa Business* magazine
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TOP TEAM

Marriott International

The Spa Global Leadership Team at Marriott International talk to Katie Barnes about the group's two new global spa concepts, how they work together to run one of the biggest hotel spa divisions in the world and what else we can expect from them in the future

John Hopp senior director of global spa development

What's your main role?

I work on behalf of Marriott's hotel brands to provide spa concepts that support their long-term vision of the brand experience. My major focus is to manage the creative spa conceiving processes and monitor the progress of all our spa brands.

How do you work with other members of the Spa Global Leadership team?

Kenneth Ryan (see p40) and I support them by designing enhancement programmes and training to elevate either revenue, service standards or both. Much of my time is dedicated to overseeing quality, audits and standards.

What's exciting about the new Ritz-Carlton Spa concept?

It will provide systems, training and support never seen in the industry before. Spa has



● Spa concepts are key to getting hotel owners on board says Hopp

always been a hallmark of the Ritz-Carlton portfolio, so working to elevate the offering in a group that's already very successful has been an interesting and unique challenge.

What impact will it have on your role?

A significant one. We'll be undergoing an 18-month conversion of all existing Ritz-Carlton spas and I expect much of my time in 2016 will be dedicated to supporting each property as we roll out.

Spa by JW was Marriott's first global spa brand. What made it so significant?

It was our first complete spa concept, meaning there are multiple treatment, service and design elements that cannot be left out of the concept (see p44).

It was significant because we started from scratch without any preconceived ideas about what our customer wanted. It's also

What we've created will provide systems, training and support like never seen in the industry before

allowed the JW Marriott brand to squarely position itself in the wellbeing category.

What's the key to spa development?

I still believe it's getting the hotel owners on board. When we're able to share our ideas, concepts and proposals, owners are able to see our connection to the overarching parent brand and are less likely to scale back the spa project or look at outside operators for solutions.

What's new for 2016?

Part of my role at HQ is to enable communication for our global spa community through our internal websites and in 2016 we'll be adding a compendium of guidance tools. We'll provide examples of different scenarios and solutions that can be applied to a spa strategy, as well as tools to help enhance revenue streams and self-guided management tools to enhance associate satisfaction.

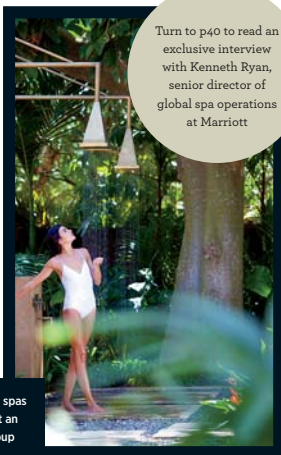
The other part of my role will be to support the tremendous growth of our spa discipline.



● Hopp will assist in the rollout of the new Ritz-Carlton Spas in 2016



● Forty per cent of Marriott's spas are in the Americas, making it an important division for the group



Turn to p40 to read an exclusive interview with Kenneth Ryan, senior director of global spa operations at Marriott

Suzanne Holbrook corporate director spa operations, the Americas

How important is the Americas spa division at Marriott?

The regions include the US, South America, Mexico, Canada and the Caribbean where we have over 70 facilities. This is around 40 per cent of all Marriott-managed spas and it's growing rapidly – we have 15-plus opening in the next two years.

Our guests' needs can be different from those in other continents. It's generally a results-driven culture and they want to see a difference quickly. However, healthy ageing and wellness is starting to become far more prominent.

What's your main role?

Developing programmes and platforms to create profitable businesses and memorable wellness experiences. And being a support and resource for our regional spas.

How closely do you work with the Spa Global Leadership team?

The brand team and Kenneth, John and I speak and collaborate very frequently. We're a close unit



● It's an exciting time for the spa team says Holbrook

and support each other, even if we don't always agree. Spending time with the other spa continent leaders happens less frequently, but it's always impactful – Alison Ainsworth in Europe is an amazing talent who has a wealth of knowledge.

How important is the Ritz-Carlton Spa launch to you?

It's taking the spa division to the next level of luxury with its spectacular, bespoke treatments. We have 35 Ritz-Carltons in the Americas and the concept has enough flexibility to enable us to capture the uniqueness of each location in the spa.

Continent leaders were asked for their input. We challenge but also listen to each other, which creates the very best outcomes

And what about Spa by JW?

We have one Spa by JW open and will introduce up to six more by 2018. It's such a dynamic, fresh concept that's held in high regard by property owners and spa-goers. The concept of fast and slow spa is also a solution that resonates with our guests.

How involved were you in both these concepts?

Continent leaders were asked for their input. We challenge but also listen to each other, which creates the very best outcomes.

What's on your radar for 2016?

My immediate focus is the new spa that's opening at Marriott Coronado Island, San Diego in February. It's a beautiful location where the communities are very

wellness focused. We've fully integrated the 'art of living well' throughout the hotel – from the arrival process, restaurants and lounges to the spa hotel rooms.

After that, we'll be developing new spa concepts for Renaissance and Marriott in the Americas.

Financial growth is always key. Last year we rolled out a treatment enhancement [up-sell] programme in the Americas and this has increased the average sale without increasing treatment time. We'll continue to develop platforms aimed at increasing overall utilisation and average spend.

Nurturing spa talent is also high on the list. Assisting career growth is extremely rewarding and a part of my role I've always truly loved. ▶

Alison Ainsworth senior director of golf, leisure and spa operations, Europe

How important is the European spa division at Marriott?

We have a wonderful mix of businesses from just over 20 full-service resort spas to health clubs which offer a core range of massages and facials. Combined, this gives us around 80 spas in 19 countries.

The distinct spa traditions in European countries make it an incredibly exciting continent to run. These help to guide the concepts – from a rasul and hammam to an ice or salt cave. Those subtle touchpoints give a unique, sense of place to the experience.

What are your main responsibilities?

I get involved with everything from initial concept and design, to taking full-blown operational and financial responsibility. It's an ideal blend of being able to set the direction, coupled with the sense of achievement when your ideas come to fruition.

How closely do you work with the Spa GLT?

Although we're all responsible for the performance of the spas in our region, a lot of global collaboration takes place to ensure all the Marriott brands and our spas are aligned.

The distinct spa traditions in European countries make it an incredibly exciting continent to run

The continent leaders are also good at sharing initiatives and solutions with each other – quite often the most lucrative ideas come from a piece of work by a spa manager on one of the continents.

What do the two new spa concepts mean for your region?

The new Ritz-Carlton Spa concept is an incredibly exciting development which will roll out across our nine Ritz-Carlton sites to reposition our portfolio in Europe.

The beauty is that it's a full-rounded approach which is operationally easy to introduce. A team of spa ambassadors take hotels through the conversion process which is seamlessly linked to training, collateral production and design. It also empowers our managers and therapists with new skills.



● Ainsworth is looking to build spa business via digital platforms

At the moment, the Spa by JW concept isn't in Europe.

How did you influence the Ritz-Carlton Spa concept?

Prototype designs and facility 'must haves' were shared with the continent teams for input and feedback. I also worked with Kenneth and ESPA to check and validate

their initial direction to ensure it was industry-leading and that it could be applied to spa operations globally.

What else can we expect from you in the future?

We'll open seven more spas by 2020, with one in Macedonia in 2016. This is an exciting project which combines the best of contemporary, western spa traditions with the locale. We also have a series of new Ritz-Carlton hotels opening in superb, gateway European cities.

As part of a global initiative, I'm developing an online booking platform for our spas (see p48). In Europe, I'm also focusing on other digital elements such as social media and exploring new platforms to build business via communities and recommendations. Both are so fundamental to the way we build business these days that we can't ignore them. ►



● Spas incorporate local wellness traditions such as hammams to give a sense of place

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Jennie Toh vice president, rooms operations, Asia-Pacific

The new Ritz-Carlton and JW spa concepts have given us an edge and also enable us to add local flavour

I started looking after spas for Marriott in Asia about four years ago along with my focus on bedrooms and general operations such as housekeeping. We have around 180 properties with more than 50 spas managed by us.

The new Ritz-Carlton and JW spa concepts with their high standards have given us an edge and they also enable us to add local flavour into the menu such as shiatsu, Thai massage, ayurveda and traditional Chinese medicine. We're waiting to convert 11 Ritz-Carlton Spas and we have another 14 in the pipeline. There are already three Spa by JW's in Hanoi, Bangalore



● Every new luxury hotel Marriott launches in Asia will have a spa, says Toh

and Mumbai and there are plans to open more than 10 in the region by 2020. Unique to our region, we also have the Quan Spa brand (see SB09/1 p26) which draws on the restorative properties of water.

We're going to double our hotel footprint in Asia and as every new luxury hotel we build will have a spa, this part of the business will grow concurrently. Our next openings will be in Sri Lanka, Langkawi, Perth and Sanya.



● Marriott manages more than 50 spas across Asia



● Rees has been overseeing spas in MEA since 2012

Africa is the hottest spa development spot for us. We have projects in Morocco, Cairo and Rwanda

John Rees senior director of operations, MEA

I've been overseeing Marriott spas in the Middle East and Africa (MEA) since 2012 and we currently manage 15 facilities with another 15 due to open by 2020.

Most of our spas have a bespoke treatment or feature you'd only find in this region such as hammams which are a major draw for guests. We also embrace unique local market offerings – Dead Sea products are a signature in our Saray Spa concept in many of Marriott hotels for example.

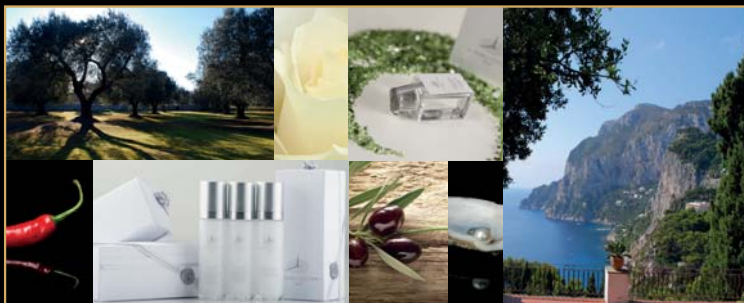
Africa is definitely the hottest spa development spot



● Saray Spa is the signature concept for Marriott in the Middle East

for us. We're currently working on four in Morocco, three with Ritz-Carlton and one with JW. We also have projects in Cairo

and Rwanda and many in sub-Saharan countries following Marriott's recent acquisition of the Protea portfolio. ●



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Bain update on Japanese spa chain acquisition

Private equity firm Bain Capital Partners doesn't typically venture into hospitality, so what was it about the Oedo Onsen deal that was so appealing and what are its plans for the hot springs operator? Jane Kitchen reports

Stable market: hot spring bathing is a very traditional form of leisure in Japan

If you consider that the number of tourists travelling to Japan grew from 6 million in 2004 to 13 million in 2014, then you can already see the scale of opportunity

In February 2015, private investment firm Bain Capital Partners bought a 100 per cent stake in Japanese hot springs and hotel operator Oedo Onsen Holdings, in a move to capitalise on tourism ahead of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

Oedo Onsen runs a chain of hot springs and hotels – including 23 inns and six onsen theme parks – in Japan employing 3,000 people and attracting 50 million customers a year. The business is on a strong growth trajectory, with sales increasing about 30 per cent year-on-year and a projected turnover of JPY35bn (US\$295m, £271.4m, £207.1m) in 2015.

One of the leading private equity firms in the world, Bain Capital was co-founded in 1984 by Mitt Romney – later a US presidential candidate.

A subsidiary of the company, Bain Capital Ventures, is also a backer of spa software supplier Booker.

Bain doesn't often invest in travel hospitality, so this move represents a departure for the firm. However, it does have a track record in consumer services, having grown chains such as Burger King and Domino's Pizza. It saw great potential in Oedo and was confident that it was the firm to help develop it.

Scaleable business

Onsen – Japan's take on hot springs – are an important part of Japanese culture, with thousands of locations throughout the country due to natural volcanic waters.

The Oedo Onsen chain originated from Tokyo's large-scale onsen theme park, Odaiba Oedo Onsen Monogatari, which houses a variety of baths using water from natural hot springs whose source is located 1,400m under ground.

As well as multiple baths and thermal experiences, the theme park includes an Edo-era theme festive mall and multiple restaurant choices. Spa treatments, including massages, exfoliation, reflexology and fish foot therapy are also available. Entry costs range from JPY1,000 (US\$8, €7.5, £5.5) for four to 12-year-olds and go up to JPY2,680 (US\$22, €20, £14.5) for adults at the weekend.

"This is a very scalable business," David Gross-Loh, MD of Bain Capital, tells *Spa Business*. "Oedo Onsen has enormous growth potential, both in existing branches and through expansion. There's a lot that Bain Capital is equipped to



David Gross-Loh, MD of Bain Capital says its looking at 17 potential new sites

help with, including looking at the cost base and finding ways to improve it, looking at pricing, and looking at how we attract and retain customers."

Gross-Loh feels Bain's experience working with retail chain operations will also help it optimise and grow the hot spring business. "In Japan, we've found that many businesses in this industry are facing founder succession and transition issues," he says. "We leverage our industry expertise, deal track record, experience and scale to partner with business."

Favourable market

Gross-Loh points out that onsen are a very traditional form of leisure in Japan, with over 400 years of history, which in itself provides a very stable market. And with consumers aged 50+ accounting for

50 per cent of the total hot spring business, Japan's ageing population makes for a favourable demographic shift.

"We developed a very close relationship with the founder for three years prior to the deal, so this is a business [and market] that we had come to know extremely well," says Gross-Loh.

Another advantage is that the Japanese government has positioned tourism as a core growth strategy. Gross-Loh believes this will give Oedo Onsen the opportunity to capture demand from the growing inbound tourism market.

Expansion plans

Bain has started building out the pipeline of new sites and has identified and conducted due diligence on 17 new sites over the past few months. It has also built and implemented a strategy to drive growth, profitability and market share.

"This covers a few areas – pricing, marketing and cost optimisation – to ensure we are effectively allocating our resources," says Gross-Loh.

The company has also added to the existing management at Oedo Onsen and continues to do so; currently, it's looking for a chief acquisition officer to help with the expansion.

With the 2020 Olympic Games set to take place in Tokyo, Bain is keeping its eye on the prize.

"If you consider that the number of tourists travelling to Japan grew from 6 million in 2004 to 13 million in 2014, then you can already see the scale of the opportunity," says Gross-Loh. "In 2020, Japan expects to receive 20 million visitors." ●

STEVE KASS CONSULTING

A global leader in concept & design

Steve Kass, founder and former CEO of American Leisure, has launched a new business, Steve Kass Consulting. The global leader explains his goals as an innovative concept and design creator

Steve Kass has gained a reputation as an innovator and expert consultant, while having his feet firmly planted on the ground.

As founder and former CEO of American Leisure, Kass has been responsible for the conceptualisation and design of iconic projects in the US and internationally, specifically in the spa, fitness, lifestyle and wellness communities markets.

Following the sale of American Leisure in 2015, Kass launched his own boutique consultancy, Steve Kass Consulting, through which he will continue to work as a global leader and innovator, offering a world-class service to clients. Kass speaks exclusively to *Spa Business* about his goals and ambitions.

Tell us about the venture

The purpose of Steve Kass Consulting is to offer my services internationally as a concept and design consultant for the real estate and hospitality industries.

And your current projects?

We're working on luxury projects with some of the largest residential builders and hospitality companies in the world, including Lennar, Tishman Speyer and Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts.

We've been brought on board to be a part of the design team on a 50,000sq ft spa and wellness facility that will service 1,500 luxury apartments in Long Island City, US.

Other projects include the Spa at

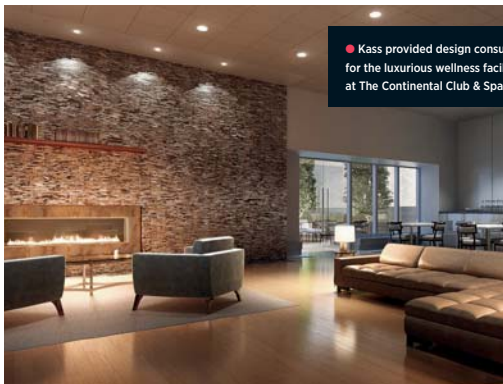


the Kimpton Hotel in the Cayman Islands, the new Four Seasons Hotel, New York City and the Four Seasons in Houston, Texas. All these jobs are exciting and I love the challenge. We get an opportunity to work with some very talented people.

What's the need?

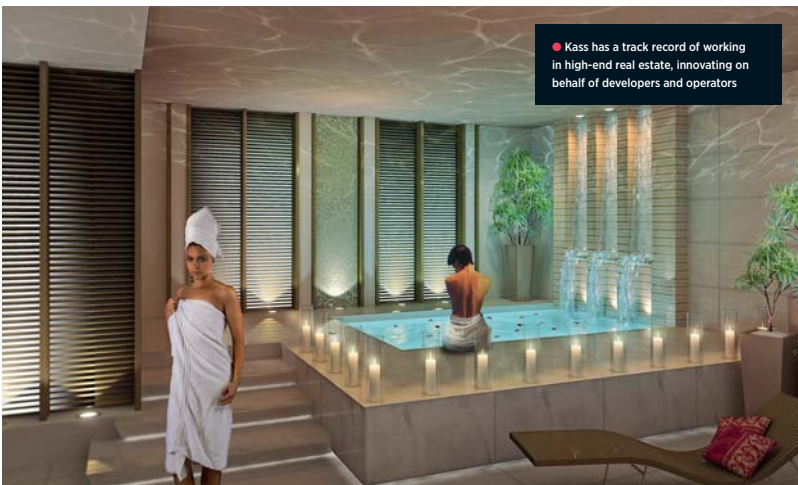
It used to be that when you were selling a residence, it was enough to give people a roof over their heads, but as a great quality of life has become essential, people want much more from the places they live in.

Developers who are building homes, condominiums, communities and hotels are recognising that it's advantageous to offer not only spas, but also other



● Kass provided design consultancy for the luxurious wellness facilities at The Continental Club & Spa





● Kass has a track record of working in high-end real estate, innovating on behalf of developers and operators

facilities for leisure and recreation, such as fitness, wellness and community social spaces. Creating wellness communities like these is my area of expertise: I partner with developers to deliver these components of the scheme.

Why should they choose you?

In many cases, the experts who conceptualise high-end spa and wellness facilities create aesthetically beautiful designs and features, but it's difficult or impossible to actually build them.

With experience of successfully operating hundreds of facilities, Steve Kass Consulting offers a highly effective alternative, by delivering the wow factor – new concepts, new ideas and new design features – while at the same time ensuring those features are operationally sound and can actually be built for a sensible budget.

At what stage do you get on board?

We like to get involved in projects early on, at the stage where the goals and aims are being defined. Then we present how our ideas, plans and designs will contribute to the success of the sales and enhance the bottom line of a project.

Is there a focus on adding value?

One of my proven strengths is forecasting trends and demand in facility design.

On new projects we typically start with the basics of what we know is expected as a minimum requirement. Then we get

“ We continue to work with clients because what we bring to the team is fresh ideas and effective solutions ”

creative and work to see how much value we can add within the budget to elevate the bottom line and social value of the scheme.

How much room is there for innovation?

In all of the facilities we're currently designing we add social components, such as bowling alleys and gathering spaces.

We've also devised the concept of the 'Living Lobby' which offers – among other things – social activities and has proven to be successful. In all cases we create custom solutions.

What does this new direction mean for you professionally and personally?

It has allowed me to step away from being a CEO of a company with varied responsibilities, to really focus on what I love to do the most: conceptualise, design and create world-class facilities.

It also allows me to apply the many lessons I've learned through working with some of the world's most respected architects, interior designers and engineers.

What are your goals and ambitions for Steve Kass Consulting?

To continue to be part of high-level teams working together to create outstanding luxury wellness-related projects and wellness communities.

We're very proud of the company we keep, such as Clodagh and David Rockwell, to name but a few. We continue to work with clients repeatedly, because what we bring to the team are fresh ideas that work, innovation and effective solutions.

What's the bottom line?

I hope Steve Kass Consulting will continue to make a difference and to do work that enables developers to sell their properties more quickly. Also that we bring added value which results in them being able to get higher margins on their investments. ●



STEVE KASS
CONSULTING

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Work it out

A new study predicts what the future of wellness at work will look like and how spas can help. Research co-author Opheila Yeung gives *Spa Business* a sneak preview



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● Businesses need to support employees if they are to thrive

People spend at least half of their waking hours at work. It's inextricably linked to our wellness, affecting our finances, psyche, health and relationships. And yet, there's a rising epidemic of an unwell population and an unwell workforce, which our global economy and local communities can scarcely afford.

The Future of Wellness At Work, a new study which will be released by the Global Wellness Institute (GWI) later this month, examines the state of wellness of the global workforce, predicts what the future of work will look like and makes the case for why wellness matters. As more employers wake up to the reality that wellness is not only critical to their employees' health but also to the survival of their company, there will be increasing opportunities for wellness businesses to partner with employers to infuse wellness into work.

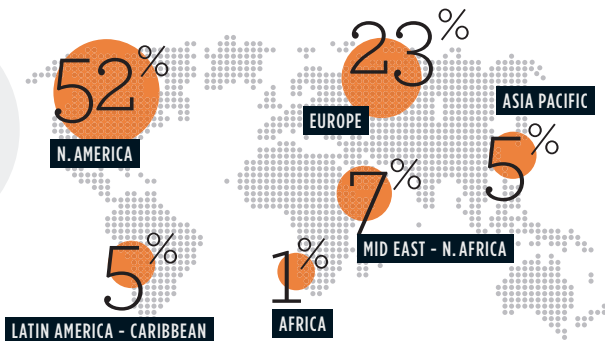
Unwell workforce

Ageing populations, urbanisation and unhealthy lifestyles are all driving a global rise in chronic disease. Work is often part of this problem. As our labour has shifted from manual to sedentary activities, more people are sitting and staring at digital displays, often with bad postures. Despite regulatory changes to protect workers, many people still work in unhealthy and even dangerous environments – from garment workers locked in factories, to office workers developing carpal tunnel syndrome, to nurses who are injured lifting heavy patients.

Work can also create mental and emotional distress – from the financial challenges of low wages, to long working hours and the inability to unplug and difficult relationships with bosses and coworkers. These stressors can lead to a negative work life balance and physical illness. In a recent survey carried out

DIAGRAM 1

Percentage of employed workers who have access to workplace wellness programs & services*



*Estimates by Global Wellness Institute



● Workplace wellness, including fitness programmes, is now a US\$40.7bn industry

by the GWI and Everyday Health, US respondents reported that when their job or workplace environment causes them to feel unwell, many other aspects of their lives are also affected, including mental/emotional health (69 per cent), physical health (50 per cent), family life (36 per cent), relationships (35 per cent) and overall happiness (66 per cent). The costs of work-related stress (including both medical costs and lost productivity) are enormous, estimated by various research studies at US\$650bn (£594.6bn, £459bn) in Europe, US\$3.9bn (£3.6bn, £2.8bn) in Australia, US\$2bn-US\$8bn (£1.8bn-£7.3bn, £1.4bn-£5.6bn) in Canada and US\$300bn (£274.4bn, £211.9bn) in the US.

Another manifestation of an unwell workforce is the widespread disengagement observed around the world – that is, employees who are unmotivated. Gallup's 2013 *State of the Global Workplace* study found that 87 per cent of workers worldwide are not engaged at work. Such employees are less productive, more likely to steal from their company, negatively influence their coworkers, miss more workdays and drive

customers away. Taken together, the cost of unwell workers – including healthcare costs, compensation for sick and injured workers and lost productivity from stress and disengagement – could amount to 10-15 per cent in lost global economic output, according to our estimates.

87% of workers worldwide are not engaged at work

Demand for wellness

Employers are becoming aware of this problem and have consistently increased spending on workplace wellness in the last five to 10 years, generating many related business opportunities. According to SRI International's *Global Spa and Wellness Economy Monitor 2014*, workplace wellness is now a US\$40.7bn (£37.2bn,

£28.7bn) global industry (see SB14/4 p94). That includes third-party providers of services, products and platforms that serve a wide range of employee wellness needs from exercise and healthy eating programmes to smoking cessation and stress reduction.

However, current initiatives only address a sliver of the global workforce. We estimate that less than 9 per cent of the world's 3.2 billion workers have access to any kind of workplace wellness programmes (see Diagram 1). What's more, the workers who do benefit from these kinds of services mainly live in high-income countries and work for large or multinational employers.

Judging from the low take up in workplace wellness programmes – various studies show participation rates ranging from 5 to 46 per cent – those who do have access to these services do not seem particularly keen. Many people are sceptical of their employers' intentions – believing they only want to save healthcare costs or squeeze more productivity out of them – and the effectiveness of interventions. Indeed, ▶



● The most obvious role for spas is on the fulfilment side, as providers of wellness

most programmes run on the premise that employees need help 'fixing' existing lifestyle problems such as poor health, unhealthy habits and stress; as a result, many are implemented in a fragmented fashion, sometimes as part of an off-the-shelf benefits package. Seldom is employee health and wellness treated as a corporate priority and integrated into the day-to-day operation of organisations.

Yet, employee wellness is increasingly important. In *The Future of Wellness At Work* we predict what the future of work looks like (see Diagram 2). As more of our tasks are replaced by computers and machines, people will have to add value by harnessing their unique human qualities – by being creative, innovative, perceptive, intuitive, empathetic and adaptable. We need to be in a heightened state of wellness – physical, mental and emotional – to be able to bring these qualities to work. Therefore, it's essential that businesses nourish and cultivate human energy and support the wellness of their employees if they are to survive and thrive in the future economy.

What about spas?

The most obvious role for spa businesses in an expanding workplace wellness market is on the fulfilment side, to be the providers of wellness for employees, such as offering body work, assessments, counselling/coaching, classes, getaways and so on. Employers are just beginning to understand the differentiated needs of workers and the importance of letting employees choose what they need to improve their own wellness. Because

DIAGRAM 2 The Future of Work*

| Past | Dimensions of work | Future |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Long-term commitment, job security, loyalty | Employer/employee relationship | Short-term, free agent work; aligned fit between employee & organization |
| Algorithmic, structured, supervised | Nature of work | Collaborative, multidisciplinary, learning through discovery |
| Titled roles | Leadership | Everyone can be a leader |
| Discipline, diligence, rule-abiding, specialized skills | Desired employee qualities | Creativity, curiosity, self-direction, constant learning |
| Hierarchy, management control on work process | Organization of work | Autonomy, temporary teams, accountability for work product |
| Carrots and sticks (money, promotion, threat of layoff) | Incentives | Fair pay, intrinsic motivation |
| Set location and hours | Where and when to work | Remote, virtual, anytime, anywhere |
| Clear boundaries and compartmentalization | Work-life relationship | Integration, search for balance |
| Money, status, prestige | Meaning of work | Personal satisfaction, contribution to something larger than self |

*The Future of Wellness at Work 2016, Global Wellness Institute

Spas are in a **unique position** to educate organisations and employers about **wellness** within the context of work

workplace wellness services are usually localised, there are opportunities for all types of spas – large or small, chain or independent, day or destination – to partner with employers of all sizes and industries to deliver services and to market to consumers who are armed with employer-sponsored wellness dollars.

Spas can also play a deeper role in workplace wellness. Because practitioners have a deep understanding of the multidimensional nature of wellness, spa businesses are in a unique position to educate organisations, employers and managers about wellness within the context of work. The existing workplace wellness market has largely been driven by human resource leaders who are grappling with the best approaches to reduce healthcare costs and to increase

employee engagement. Spa business and practitioners can bring their knowledge of healthy lifestyles and wellness modules to help these leaders develop more effective and holistic programmes and approaches to workplace wellness.

Finally, as employers in the wellness industry, spa businesses have an opportunity and a responsibility to establish themselves as models and examples of healthy workplaces. If we all work to promote a sense of caring and infuse wellness in our workplaces, we will inspire others to do the same. ●



Ophelia Yeung is a senior fellow researcher at GWI
Email: ophelia.yeung@globalwellnessinstitute.org



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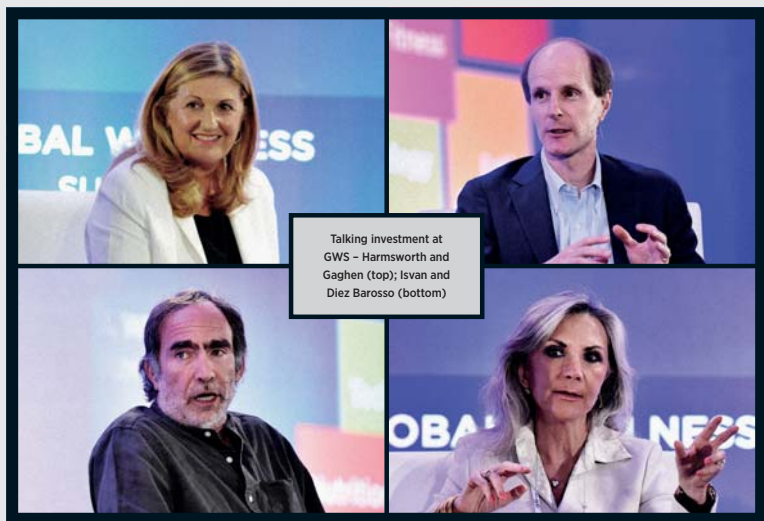
If you have a spa project and would like to find out more, please contact Ghislain Waeyaert at gwaeyaert@deepnature.fr

www.deepnature.fr

Ask an expert

Attracting Investment

As a growing number of investors look to get into wellness, *Spa Business* asks what they're looking for in a deal and what can operators do to secure that all-important funding?



With an increasing awareness of, and movement towards, all things wellness, more equity firms are scoping out potential projects in the wellbeing and spa arena. But what is it about wellness that's really piqued their interest?

This was the question that kicked off discussions between a panel of investors at this year's Global Wellness Summit (see p68). Sue Harmsworth of spa brand ESPA, who moderated

the session, noted: "What's interesting to me is that when I asked a panel [of investors] last year whether they'd heard of many deals in wellness or if it was something they were thinking about, it actually wasn't. The difference this year is that everyone on the panel is now looking at [wellness] projects."

Harmsworth wanted to know what return on investment (ROI) or internal rate of return (IRR) would make a deal appealing and over what time frame.

Having a wellness or spa element as part of a hotel is much different from a standalone wellness or spa destination, but is this nuance something that investors understand? And if so, how do they quantify the difference to work out which model is the most viable?

Harmsworth, whose company supplies and runs many spas globally, also tackled the subject of overdevelopment in our industry. Does the cost of building enormous, expensive

facilities really stack up against ROI? Can they be justified?

In this article, Harmsworth and the GWS panel give their views on investment in spa and wellness and also tell us what they think the most exciting opportunities for wellness investments in the future are.



Katie Barnes is the editor of *Spa Business* magazine
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KSL is increasing its investment around wellness for macro reasons – the growth of the mass affluent, for social reasons and because people are living longer and want to stay active longer. That all points to demand in wellness and we're really excited about the growth potential.

We want a 20 per cent-plus ROI and to double our money. Our time horizon for investing on behalf of organisations such as pension funds is pretty different from an individual owner. We look to make money in the first four to five years and would help a business to realise that return.

We're investing in hotels with a spa, or wellness aspect, as well as true wellness destinations [such as Miraval in the US]. The wellness destination is harder to execute as there's no one solution to take it beyond one location and scale it up.

When it comes to wellness, you have to be clear what you're dealing with as it's a



Matthew Gaghen,

Portfolio manager, KSL Capital Partners

very broad term. But I don't get hung up on defining wellness, it's just a starting point for putting it in a space. It's not ski, it's not clubs, it could be fitness, but it's not core hotels. It's something more, so I then have to ask a couple of questions to figure out the angle and the depth.

The main point is that if you're looking for investment, you need to position it for people like me to understand. Your offering can be experiential and very qualitative but you need to measure the customer experience – are they getting results, are they coming back? It's hard for investors to go through all of the content and work out what is the most meaningful,

so help us do that. If the demand is there and you can prove it, we will invest.

I'm bullish about the future of the wellness sector. There are a lot of interesting concepts and you'll see much more specialisation and different models for wellness resorts. Some of them will grow and there's already professionalisation in the industry. So in 12 months, two years, five years, KSL will be investing in wellness more as we'll see more demand.

KSL has investments in Miraval, ESPA International and Elements Massage. Gaghen has been with the firm since 2012. Details: kslcapital.com



It's hard for investors to go through all of the content and work out what is the most meaningful, so help us to do that. If the demand is there and you can prove it, we will invest



Wellness has been an ever-increasing component in hotel, resort and real-estate developments.

Everybody – investors included – sees that there's a huge trend towards wellness, healthy lifestyles and therefore the marriage of that with travel.

As far as I can see, wellness destinations are not necessarily conducive to very short turnarounds. And we wouldn't advise anyone to go into projects below a return profile of 12-13 per cent IRR depending on the economy of the destination. If the project is in a stable country with a strong economy, we might look at a discount, but if it's in a volatile region we'd obviously want a much higher rate of return.

Standalone wellness destinations are an interesting proposition and we're keeping our eyes out for the right product in that market space. Our problem is that it's very difficult to do a feasibility study on them. Hotels and resorts have benchmarks and we can use those metrics in most locations to get a reasonable forecast. We can talk about numbers with a wellness destination, but it's contingent on getting



Omer Isvan

President, Servotel

the right talent, aura and spirit to generate transformational results and to create a strong following; and that's not something you can easily measure or predict in the absence of institutionalised benchmarks.

Wellness destinations aren't something you can easily roll out either. Canyon Ranch has now started to make some moves internationally, but that's after many years of just being in the US. If you're going to do it right – a product that people are going to continue to pay for – you need to get the formula, talent, processes, spirit and aura right first through experience and client/patient feedback and monitoring results. Even then, the formula is still married to that one property and not tested cross-culturally.

Some hotel companies are starting to germinate wellness elements and

concepts, but I'm not sure that's the long-term answer. We've been stripping spas and restaurants out of hotels and giving them to third-party operators and I think that's what we need to do with wellness. Hotels typically benefit from specialist wellness operators who are focused on that part of the business.

I also see the wellness industry becoming a key player in the destination resort business, whether people travel to a resort purely for wellness or as part of a lifestyle choice when they go on holiday. There aren't too many thematic alternatives for a destination resort to create a meaningful and lifestyle-relevant differentiator or added value.

Isvan's experience in hospitality and investment spans 30 years, with projects in over 40 countries. Details: servotel.net

Consumers are now looking for alternative holidays and wellness is a part of that. As investors, we're actually in the process of rethinking a big project in Cabo San Lucas and turning a luxury five-star resort into a wellness destination because that's where we think the demand is.

In most cases, we're the majority shareholders in a deal and we look for a minimum ROI of 15 per cent, but typically we want 18-20 per cent. Our views on investment differ according to location, how you get in or out of a fund differs in Mexico compared to certain parts of the US for example. Our views also differ when it comes to determining the right size of a spa. Sometimes the economics are wrong: the size of a spa will be too big for a club, hotel and development so it won't make ROI as a standalone element. But you know it will help the hotel – people will choose to stay there because of the spa and these people usually stay longer



Gina Diez Barosso

President and CEO, Grupo Diarq

and book a suite or more expansive room. The difficulty is that you can't quantify that and that's where we struggle in terms of deciding whether a spa should be bigger or smaller.

Typically, if something is a good investment we'll stay with it longer. We think of wellness [and a good investment] as being a total wellbeing resort – somewhere that makes a difference to your soul and heart and really change the way you live. Not somewhere that you dip in and out of for the odd detox. But I don't think this can work as a chain. Any facility like this needs to be immersed in the local culture, that's what will make it a success. Copy-pasting the same model that they're

doing in Thailand wouldn't be right for Mexico, or the US or Europe.

In the past 12 months, the wellness industry has grown enormously and we're now able to get data on projections thanks to research such as SRI's *Global Spa & Wellness Tourism Economy Monitor*. If someone has a great business proposal, you need the numbers to prove it. And now we have the data. That's a big advantage for future investment in wellness compared to last year.

Diez Barosso set up Grupo Diarq, a real estate development and design firm in 1990. Most of its projects are in Latin America. Details: diarq.com



If someone has a great business proposal, you need the numbers to prove it. And now we have the data. That's a big advantage for future investment in wellness compared to last year



I think everyone wants more out of life, a purpose. Wellness dovetails into that. Whether people take it seriously, or it's a conscious lifestyle choice about taking your family on holiday to somewhere that has clean air and water. And that's why investors are getting more interested in wellness projects.

Both consumers and owners can see this, but they're ahead of hotel operators who haven't been able to change their structured approach when it comes to wellness. Integrating elements of wellness into food, hospitality, rooms and the whole offering is a completely different mindset and discipline. They need to define a different operating model, a wellbeing model for luxury hotels, to make it work.

However, I'm not convinced that even investors or owners understand what wellness really is or the extent of it. ESPA designs and runs spa and wellness facilities on a third-party basis and one of my biggest hurdles is getting to the bottom of what clients want. I'll spend three days with them trying to define their take on wellness, but as soon as I begin



Susan Harmsworth

Founder, ESPA International

asking how they're going to deliver it – the practicalities of licensing or insurances for example – they start backing off. So I don't think some of them know what they want.

The issue is that there are so many variables. It's almost as if you need to take a philosophy and run with it. I ran a health farm in the UK 30 years ago and we had a wellness philosophy, a philosophy which might not have been for everyone but customers came for a certain period of time and got results and felt better. We had a 60-70 per cent guest return rate.

In terms of investment, I think there's also a discussion to be had about over-spending too. In the spa industry people question whether hugely expensive, big spas will ever see an ROI. If you have a hotel in the middle of the city that has 80 per cent occupancy from the corporate

market, then I would argue that you're better off not doing a spa than doing it too small or not effectively. On the other end of the scale though, we do still occasionally have trophy owners at ESPA who want the biggest and the best and, contrary to popular belief, such spas can sometimes perform well.

At Corinthia London, the owner wanted to put the hotel on the map as the brand wasn't known in the UK. He used ESPA to put in a 3,500sq m (35,000sq ft) ESPA Life wellness, lifestyle spa in 2011 (see SB11/3 p50). Everyone said it would never make money, but it is and we had 500 journalists visiting in the first six months.

GWS board member Susan Harmsworth has a portfolio of over 350 spas worldwide. Details: www.espa-consulting.com. ●



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A WIDER LENS



■ Spas have a huge role to play in disease prevention said Chopra



■ GWS chair Susie Ellis said there's been a 'purposeful evolution'

The 2015 Global Wellness Summit took a step away from its traditional spa focus to provide the industry with inspiration for future development. Katie Barnes reports on the highlights from Mexico

Only 5 per cent of illnesses are genetic. Most other disease is lifestyle related and avoidable and the spa and wellness industry has a huge part to play in helping people to achieve optimal health. It was this statement by alternative health guru Deepak Chopra that had delegates at the 2015 Global Wellness Summit (GWS) sitting up and paying attention.

Chopra, who addressed a full house at the summit in Mexico City in November, is an advocate of self-healing (see SB15/4 p36). He explained that scientists no

longer believe that genes are fixed – they respond to everything we do, including what we eat, how much sleep we get, the exercise we do and our emotions (especially stress). “Think of your epigenome [the chemicals which govern genes] as a light switch or a thermostat,” said Chopra. “It can turn off harmful genes and switch on good ones” according to the lifestyle decisions you make.

Although spa operators might not be able to act on this new science immediately, it gives an insight into how they can potentially develop their businesses in the future: ‘a spa for your



■ The *Spa Business* team reported live from Mexico over the three days



■ Passionate spa educator Mary Tabacchi tunes in



■ Fun and lively sessions entertained delegates



■ Spa delegates grabbed any opportunity they could to network and socialise (above right and right); the gala evening included a private performance of traditional dance at the fabulous Palace of Fine Arts, Mexico City (left)



genes' if you will. It provides inspiration for growth beyond the typical routes for spas and other sessions at the summit covering areas such as workplace wellness, psychodermatology, cancer and the medical community took this tack too. It was a deliberate move by the event organisers who dropped the word 'spa' from the summit's title to reflect its more diverse wellness content. As such there was a broader range of delegates with professionals from clinical institutions, nutrition and fitness sitting alongside spa leaders, government officials and travel and tourism experts. Noticeably, more

than 50 per cent of the record number of 450 delegates were first-time attendees.

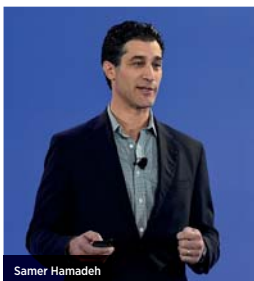
Susie Ellis, chair and CEO of the GWS explained: "This year's theme is Building a Well World and it could not be more appropriate. The wellness world is broader than it ever has been. We started out as a fragmented spa industry nine years ago and collectively helped to usher in a wellness movement... It's been a purposeful evolution of our name and focus. But it's not because we've abandoned our roots in spa, beauty and hospitality, but rather because we've recognised the opportunity to open up as we cast a wider net."



■ Chopra with his copy of *Spa Business* which features an exclusive interview with him



Claudia Aguirre



Samer Hamadeh



Katherine Johnston

■ (Left to right) Thought provoking sessions on psychodermatology; the business of massage by Zeel, and workplace wellness research

INDUSTRY INSPIRATION

Each year the summit places a special emphasis on one or two topic areas and in Mexico it was workplace wellness (see SB15/4 p64) and the convergence of the wellness and medical worlds.

SRI International, working with the Global Wellness Institute, revealed early findings on a report on wellbeing at work. Workplace wellness is a US\$40bn (£37bn, £27bn) industry globally but many schemes are missing the mark – only three out of 10 people participate – and the solution is to integrate wellness into company culture. The full SRI report will be released in February and we summarise what this means for spas on p60.

A powerhouse panel with speakers from the Mayo Clinic, Cleveland Clinic and Duke University were asked if the clinical and wellness sectors are starting to work together. The consensus was “yes they are”

6 Massage is an impulse buy – 55 per cent of Zeel consumers want a treatment within four hours of thinking about it

and it's more than just a fad. As healthcare systems move from disease management towards preventative measures they're embracing complementary medicine. Growing competition in the medical world also means that clinicians are looking to spas for examples of customer care. “They [spas] do a great job of providing the right experience,” said Dr Adam Perlman of Duke Integrative Medicine. “I think this has created a level of interest and willingness to engage that we didn't see a few years ago.”

In a fascinating presentation, neuroscientist Claudia Aguirre, who sits on Comfort Zone's scientific committee, outlined the skin: brain connection. She spoke about the impact of emotions on skin, how it reacts to light to effectively tell the time, and newly-discovered C-tactile fibres in hairy skin which tell us how we feel when we're touched. She said: “We're only just beginning to untangle the neuroscience behind how the skin is represented in the mind and how the mind is then eventually represented in the body (particularly the skin)... By understanding the link you can learn to treat skin in a more holistic way.” Using more than just products to treat the skin is something *Spa Business* also predicted in its 2015 Spa Foresight™ (see SB15/3 p36).

ZEEL PROFESSIONAL

Samer Hamadeh, founder and CEO of Zeel spoke about optimising the business of massage. He set up his at-home massage company because there are so many missed appointments in the industry. “We discovered the industry was really inefficient,” he said. In his experience, massage is an impulse buy – 55 per cent of Zeel consumers want a treatment within four hours of thinking about it. Many spas struggle to meet this demand because of staff shortages or restricted opening hours – 64 per cent of Zeel appointments occur after 5pm, and 21 per cent after 9pm.

Hamadeh revealed the launch of Zeel Professional, which spas can use to find therapists for last minute bookings rather than turn customers away. You can read more on this in *Spa Business* SB15/3 p70. ▶



■ An impressive line up of medical experts spoke about wellness

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HA 6PM - ACIDE HYALURONIQUE DE BAS POIDS MOLÉCULAIRE / LOW MOLECULAR WEIGHT HYALURONIC ACID

****THE FORMULAS OF THE HYDRATING RANGE INCLUDE THREE KEY ACTIVE INGREDIENTS: THE PATENTED 1055 BOLETUS EXTRACT, LOW MOLECULAR WEIGHT HYALURONIC ACID OR HIGH MOLECULAR WEIGHT HYALURONIC ACID SOLUTION.**

*** COENEOMETER MEASUREMENTS. AVERAGE ON 5 PEOPLE. AVERAGE FOR THE TOTAL PANEL OF 14 PEOPLE: +30%

spa business uniting the world of wellness

“A ‘trends jam’ made for lively listening – living buildings, connecting with nature, electronic skin and robot therapists were all flagged up”



■ Ellis with 2015 co-chairs Gina Diez Barosso and Alfredo Carvajal waving the flag for Mexico

► SENSE OF HUMANITY

This year was the first time the GWS was held in Latin American and Mexico City – a sprawling, colourful metropolis with a population of 20 million – provided a fitting backdrop for such a varied agenda. A ‘trends jam’ made for lively listening with everything from living buildings and connecting with nature through to electronic skin and robot therapists flagged up. Another particular programme highlight was a gala evening at the Palace of Fine Arts where delegates were treated to a private performance reflecting traditional dance and culture from dance company Ballet Folklórico de México.

Susie Ellis paid tribute to co-chairs Gina Diez Barosso of local creativity firm Grupo Diarq and Alfredo Carvajal from wellness real estate company Delos, for their imagination and passion. They introduced a noticeable sense of humanity over the three days including a plea to spas to stop turning cancer sufferers away



■ In a delightful session, children gave advice on being positive and grateful

(see p76). Belgin Aksoy, who owns Turkish destination spa Richmond Nua Wellness, highlighted the success of her Global Wellness Day (GWD). GWD is a social movement Aksoy set up to encourage people to healthy lifestyle changes (see SB15/2 p30) and in 2015 it was celebrated in more than 600 locations across 72 countries. This year GWD falls on 11 June and is expected to be even bigger.

There was a call to arms from 93-year-old industry veteran Deborah Szekely. Szekely, owner of the famous Rancho La Puerta destination spa, urged delegates to come together to back her Wellness Warrior campaign to “empower people with the wealth of knowledge they need to actively engage in to protect their own health and that of their families, friends, neighbours and communities”.

Life skills of a different kind were a focus of pupils of the Thomas Jefferson Institute of Mexico who demonstrated what they’ve learned as part of programme to wipe out bullying in schools across the city. In a fun, delightful session,



■ We’re all ‘spiritual warriors’ said Greek soul sister Stassinopoulous

the children gave delegates advice on empathy, being positive, establishing goals, self-management and gratitude.

Meanwhile, motivational speaker Agapi Stassinopoulous, treated people to a “heart to heart with your Greek soul sister”. Calling delegates ‘spiritual warriors’, she implored the audience to first value and love themselves to strengthen their position in helping to heal others.



■ Global Wellness Day was celebrated in 72 countries last year said Aksoy

[comfort zone]

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spa business uniting the world of wellness

SPA SUB-SECTORS

While wider wellness topics dominated the keynote talks, 'spa' was the domain of the breakout forums. Many of these addressed year-round sub-sector initiatives driven by non-profit organisation the Global Wellness Institute (GWI) and task forces comprising those working in the sector.

In a training and education forum, based on the spa industry's **Global Career Development Initiative**, delegates heard about a brand new website which provides information on how to get into the spa sector and develop a nurturing career. Spawellnesscareers.com, which is now live, was created by Leisure Media, the publisher of *Spa Business* and *Spa Opportunities* magazines.

News about a PR campaign to champion a career in spas was also revealed and an update was given on the development of a global spa internship programme. In addition, a round of applause went out to the team of the global spa mentorship programme (see SB15/2 p82).

“ Hot spring spas have the opportunity to make the most difference to the most people and to bring the most to the bottom line ”



■ Amy McDonald (centre) with hot spring spa representatives from around the world

The programme, which helped mentor 34 spa managers last year, was voted as being either 'successful' or 'very successful' by 98 per cent of the participants. The goal for 2016 is to coach up to 100 mentees.

New in 2015 was a **Spa Consultants forum**. The gathering, headed by Lisa Starr of Wynne Business, heard about a hub that's been set up on the GWI website to give guidelines on spa consultant services and pointers on how to pick the right person for spa projects.

It includes a list of 140 consultancies and there was much debate about whether they should be vetted – should product/equipment suppliers be included? Are those listed qualified/credible? – And what filters would make it easier to navigate?



■ Lisa Starr headed up the inaugural forum for global spa consultants

Amy McDonald of Under a Tree consulting, who led the **Global Hot Springs forum**, said “Hot spring spas have the opportunity to make the most difference to the most people – to make health and wellness accessible – and to bring the most to the bottom line”.

Mark Henneby of CP Holdings, which owns Danubius Hotels in Europe, confirmed this – profits at his hotels with thermal spas are north of 20 per cent and guests stay for an average of 11-12 nights, compared to only 2.5 nights at those without. Brook Ramage, general manager at Peninsula Hot Springs in Australia, shared impressive footfall figures. Up to 440,000 visitors a year come to bathe in its 22 pools and it's hoping to start on an expansion this year (see p31) so it can eventually cater for up to 600,000 visitors.

In other news, McDonald announced the launch *Geothermal Mineral Water: A User's Guide*. The book, which has been



■ A breakout session on wellness communities was particularly popular



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Aelle (aelle-music.com)
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“Turning away people affected by cancer, people who arguably need healing touch more than anyone, has got to stop”

► put together by the hot springs taskforce over the last year, was created to help consumers grasp the value of, and to learn facts about, hot spring bathing.

Putting a value on spa and wellness also underpinned a session on GWT's **Wellness Communities Initiative**. Chaired by Mia Kyricos of Kyricos & Associates, owners and operators of wellness communities – from US developments such as Serenbe, Lake Nona and Two Bunch Palms – discussed ways to measure their success to ultimately attract investment to fuel future growth. According to the panel, there's a 5-35 per cent premium for wellness-branded, single-family homes, a 7-10 per cent premium on wellness rentals and a 15-30 per cent premium for wellness-branded hotel rooms. What's more, these often green-focused projects save on energy costs and bring a value proposition to real estate which can lead to quicker sales and help to differentiate them in a competitive market.

To read a more in-depth article from the GWS about what spa operators can do to attract investment turn to p64.



Julie Bach (left) and Geraldine Howard (right) spoke poignantly about cancer

Battling the big C barrier

A plea for spas to be more open-minded about helping people suffering from cancer was a poignant takeaway from this year's Global Wellness Summit. While cancer is becoming more prolific worldwide – affecting up to one in three people – many spas are still wary about offering patients services for fear of doing more harm.

Turning away people affected by this disease, people who arguably need healing touch more than anyone, has got to stop said Julie Bach

of Wellness for Cancer, a non-profit cancer education organisation. Bach and her team have developed an affordable cancer awareness training programme for therapists and are working tirelessly to roll it out worldwide.

Geraldine Howard, founder of Aromatherapy Associates and a much-loved spa industry leader, also had an emotional message for delegates about her own battle with cancer. Geraldine who sadly died in January, just two months after the event, appeared on a

video speaking about the healing power of scent “Your mind has to stay positive during treatment and aroma is a huge factor in that,” she said. As a memorable treat, she shared a specially formulated aromatherapy oil with delegates on perfume test strips. As she spoke, the comforting scent of roses, neroli and citrus filled the conference room.

Later on in the summit, Geraldine was also presented with the Leading Woman in Wellness award.



Franz Linser will be co-chair for this year's summit in Austria

ALL EYES ON AUSTRIA

“I have to say that it's been a magical year,” said Susie Ellis in her closing remarks for the 2015 summit. In agreement, Carvajal commended co-chair Diez Barosso for “not only showing the best of Mexico, but showing the heart of Mexico.”

In time-honoured tradition, the event concluded with the announcement of where the next summit will be held. On 17-19 October 2016 wellness professionals will convene in Austria with spa consultant Franz Linser and Susan Harmsworth, founder of spa brand ESPA, serving as co-chairs. Delegates will head to Kitzbuhel in the Tyrol, a small province which accounts for only 8 per cent of the country's population, but 40 per cent of its tourism (10 million tourists a year).

Linser, an Austrian, said: “The Tyrol was one of the first regions to adapt wellness tourism: the first wellness hotel corporation was founded there 26 years ago.

“We're privileged to live in a country with clean air... with millions of cubic meters of fresh snow every year, with lakes and rivers of fresh drinking water. I would even dare to say that we not only have hundreds of wellness centres in Tyrol, but that Tyrol is a wellness centre!”

The destination sounds a fitting backdrop for the high-end gathering, which celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2016. ●



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She turned every situation to a positive. Even her cancer treatment inspired the launch of a new oil, called Inner Strength, which she used as a fund-raiser for a new cancer protocol she had benefitted from



Geraldine Howard

a personal note

Geraldine Howard, co-founder of Aromatherapy Associates, died in January. Liz Terry pays tribute to an extraordinary woman

By Liz Terry, CEO of Leisure Media



Geraldine Howard was the best of us, she was a light spirit and a joyful soul who worked tirelessly to make the world a better place through her endeavours, gifts and energies.

She was hugely creative and compassionate and her first instinct was always for others. These gifts directed her life's work. She led her team at Aromatherapy Associates to build a business with great integrity which creates meaningful products people need and value.

She's left a great legacy: a company which leads the field in innovation, standards and consistency; a list of loyal clients who view their relationship with Aromatherapy Associates as far more than just business; and a lifetime spent training others and passing on her knowledge, passion and enthusiasm for aromatherapy.

Geraldine was a businesswoman and understood that in order to spread the word about aromatherapy and make it a force for good, she had to build a successful company. However, her business-focus was driven by her ideology and not by personal greed, so her many successes were all the more authentic as a result.

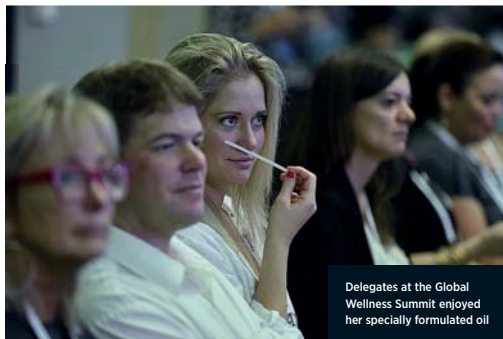
She got great satisfaction from seeing the enthusiasm for her products among her loyal customers, who use them as part of their personal wellbeing regimes and from the fact that their lives are changed for the better by using the products she created.

It was also important to her that others are also able to lead happy, fulfilling lives with



Andrew Gibson

VP spa and wellness, FRHI: The world has lost one of its wonderful people and we in the spa industry have lost one of our most loved leaders. Geraldine Howard passed away after celebrating Christmas at home. Her engaging smile, energy, enthusiasm and passion for wellness will be missed by all and may her positive energy continue to brighten the heavens.



Delegates at the Global Wellness Summit enjoyed her specially formulated oil

Jeremy McCarthy group director of spa, Mandarin Oriental: Geraldine was truly a bright light in the spa industry and was loved and admired by everyone who knew her. While the world is a bit less bright without her in it, the legacy she leaves behind in terms of the people she has touched and the products she has created will go on for years to come.

good employment prospects – be it within her own business or those of her clients – as a direct result of her work.

There's a group of people, who can proudly say 'I was trained in aromatherapy by Geraldine Howard' and to feel it as a badge of excellence – they will carry on her work and are one of her greatest achievements.

She had a genius for aromatherapy and an incredible 'nose' which – when combined with her highly empathetic nature – enabled her to intuit the healing needs of others and formulate products which met those needs. It's important we remember that this powerful gift was the bedrock of her work.

On a personal level, for the many who counted Geraldine as a friend or mentor we've been very blessed to have her in our lives. She created positivity in so many ways and lit up the room with her smile.

She led by example and her grace under pressure in the face of the illness which took her from us far too soon, is a true inspiration



Inner Strength: an oil to help people through difficult times

in how to take what life dishes out and make the very best of it right to the end.

She turned every situation to a positive and even her cancer treatment inspired the launch of a new oil – called Inner Strength – which she created and used as a fund-raiser for a cancer protocol she had benefitted from.

Even after drastic chemotherapy in 2015, she still found the strength to devise a treat for friends, colleagues and delegates at the Global Wellness Summit in Mexico City.

Unable to attend due to her failing health, she mixed a special aromatherapy oil and sent it – along with a taper for every delegate – to enable everyone present to take a break and inhale the scent. She planned this with

Jeff Matthews president, Steiner Spa Consulting:

Geraldine was a pioneer, but not just because of her amazing blends of oils or treatments she created. She brought many things to the spa industry and two to me in particular. The first was integrity in her product, something she never wavered from. The second, a state of calm in doing business. It was like she took me by the hand and said 'now Jeff this is the way to do it' – then she let me get on with it. She will be missed by all. Rest in peace.

Elaine Fenard managing partner, Spa Strategy:

As a leader Geraldine was the best: gentle, compassionate yet strong. As a friend she was all that and more. She recently told me she believed our loved ones are in our hearts always, life is about enjoying the small treasures and the people who bring us joy and comfort. Geraldine certainly did that.

huge attention to detail and it was such a generous and thoughtful thing to do. The purpose being to raise awareness of the need for hospitals to use essential oils in patient treatment regimes.

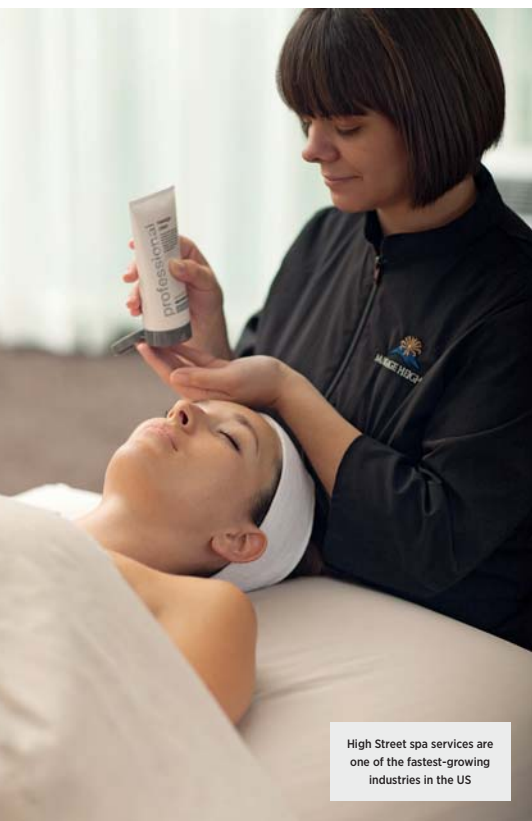
In an accompanying video, she explained how she had found great comfort through the use of oils while in hospital herself and wanted to pass this idea on to the wider world.

Later on at the summit, there was a standing ovation from delegates when she was honoured via Skype with the Leading Woman in Wellness Award in the Global Wellness Awards.

Geraldine's legacy and gift to us is a set of powerful lessons: to make the most of every second of precious life, to put our heart and soul into our work and find joy in it, to give selflessly of ourselves, to keep fighting right to the end and never give up, to set the highest standards in everything we do and most importantly, to never lose our sense of humour. ●

Massage Heights

Could you lead a revolution in the delivery of spa services in the UK?



High Street spa services are one of the fastest-growing industries in the US

The UK is about to experience a revolution in the way spa services such as massage and skin care are offered. Massage Heights has been in the forefront of the revolution in North America, and is now searching for an entrepreneur to be its strategic partner in the UK. Could it be you?

In recent years, North America – and in particular the US – has experienced a revolution that has moved the delivery of spa services, such as massage and skin care treatments, from being a rare treat at a hotel spa to being an accessible, often-repeated High Street experience.

Massage Heights, a Texas, US-based franchise, has hundreds of 'retreats' in the US and Canada, and is planning to bring this revolutionary concept to the UK. The company is looking for an experienced entrepreneur to lead the charge.

Commoditizing massage

"Our aim is to make professional spa treatments more affordable and accessible for people, so they become a more frequent experience," says Alice O'Donnell, VP of marketing for Massage Heights. "In the US, we've successfully transferred the membership model used by the fitness industry to our strip-mall spas. Our retreats are in urban locations, open long business hours to increase convenience, and our customers pay a monthly fee for regular professional massages and other spa treatments."



Texas-based Massage Heights has hundreds of 'retreats' in the US, and is now bringing its concept to the UK



“

Our aim is to make professional spa treatments more affordable and accessible for people, so they become a more frequent experience

”

A rare opportunity to revolutionise an industry

Every so often, an opportunity arises to change the way products or services are delivered – think Starbucks, Amazon, or even one of the fast-food chains.

High Street spa services are one of the fastest-growing industries in the US, and the concept is now heading across the Atlantic with Massage Heights.

When opening a new market – however similar to the original – there are always key local factors to consider. This is why Massage Heights is looking for a Master Franchisor to work with the company to grow the franchise chain in the UK.

This is an ideal opportunity for a motivated entrepreneur with previous experience in the health and wellness industry, as well as the skills and finance to build a franchise network using a proven brand and business model.

“Once considered a treat, spa treatments

have now gone mainstream in America, and we've identified the UK as the next virgin market that is ripe for expansion,” says O'Donnell. “We've developed a business model that is proven to be successful and transferable, so becoming our UK Master Franchisor is a low-risk opportunity with high-potential rewards.”

UK consumers made an estimated 6 million visits to spas across Britain in 2014, according to *Spa Creators 2014 UK Spa Market Analysis* report. Hotel spas dominate the market, accounting for 41 per cent of the total number of spas, while fitness clubs make up 27 per cent.

With demand for spa services predicted to see significant growth as studies continue to demonstrate their benefits, there is a huge opportunity in the UK to fulfil this demand with local, high-quality and affordable massage services.

Massage Heights' retreats generate more dollars per square foot than its

competitors, because they offer five-star, resort-style services on the High Street. The company also has a reputation for the best experience, and features well-trained therapists, high-quality products, and spa-quality linen and interiors.

Are you the ambitious business leader with the commercial skills to bring this revolution to the UK market? If so, you could be responsible for leading the commoditization of the spa industry by rolling out the Massage Heights franchise network in the UK.



MASSAGE HEIGHTS.

Contact Iain Martin to find out more

Tel + 44 1562 26162

Email: iain@thefranchisingcentre.com

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CHAIN REACTION

Spa franchises are taking the industry by storm. In this two-part series, Jane Kitchen takes a closer look at the market and asks which brands are selling the most, how and where they're growing and who the newcomers are to watch out for

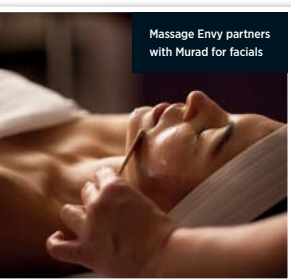
Now in their second decade, spa franchises have made their presence felt in a big way. Their accessibility and affordability have brought spa and wellness to a new audience – one that used to think of massage as a special treat rather than something that could be incorporated into day to day life.

By far the biggest market for franchising globally is the US, where momentum shows no sign of slowing and many brands are set for international expansion. In fact, entrepreneurs and investors are snapping them up faster than you can say 'deep tissue'.

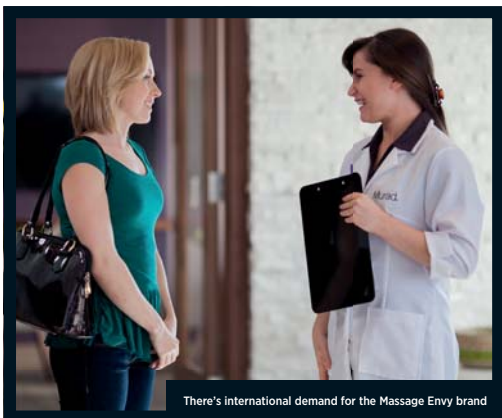
So who are the bigger players? And which are ramping up their franchise roll outs and worth keeping an eye on?



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Massage Envy partners with Murad for facials



There's international demand for the Massage Envy brand

MASSAGE ENVY

With the largest network of massage and facial spas in the US, Massage Envy is the behemoth of franchises, having led the trend when it first emerged 13 years ago.

Owned by Atlanta-based equity firm Roark Capital Group, the brand has more than 1,100 locations in 49 states and US\$1bn (£915m, £672m) in earned sales.

Lee Knowlton, SVP of its global franchise sales and international division, says consumers are becoming more proactive when it comes to wellbeing and he doesn't see a slowdown in the massage franchise industry. He says: "Consumers spend US\$5bn-US\$7bn a year (£4.6bn-£6.4bn, £3.4bn-£4.7bn) on massage treatments and as they become more educated on why massage and skincare services can be an integral part of their wellness plan, we believe the demand and growth will continue."

Monthly memberships are US\$59.99 (£55, £40) and include one massage, or a Murad facial for US\$10 (£9, £7) more. Customers can roll over unused services

and add family members at a discounted rate.

When setting up a franchise the range for investments is from US\$413,700-US\$960,850 (£378,410-£878,890,

£277,890-£645,410), depending on the real estate. This includes the initial franchise fee of US\$45,000 (£41,160, £30,230). Additional locations taken by a single franchisee are US\$35,000 (£32,010, £23,510).

In the US, Massage Envy plans to continue its focus on growing strategically in small and large markets, as well as opening in Wyoming (its 50th state). And it's not ruling out growth further afield: "Internationally, we see a lot of interest in our brand," says Knowlton.



There are 10 franchises and a national beauty school will launch to support the expansion



MARILYN MONROE SPAS RECEIVED A US\$20M INVESTMENT IN AUGUST, WHICH WILL BE USED TO FUND DOMESTIC AND GLOBAL EXPANSION PLANS

ONE TO WATCH

Marilyn Monroe Spas

Marilyn Monroe Spas has 10 locations across four US states – including several in Hyatt hotels – but received a US\$20m (€18m, £13m) investment from JCR Holdings in August, which will be used to fund domestic and global expansion.

The company named James M Lewis, a former Disney and Walmart executive, as CEO last year and as well as heading the expansion, Lewis is set to launch a national beauty school business for the company. Founded by spa industry veteran Niki T Kearns (née Bryan) and former Disney executive Allen R Weiss, Marilyn Monroe Spas was granted an exclusive licensing agreement in 2012 to operate the spa, salon, nail and health concept using Monroe's name.



The chain was granted an exclusive licence to use Monroe's name in 2012

ELEMENTS MESSAGE

Based in Colorado, Elements Massage is part of WellBiz Brands. This year, private equity firm KSL Capital Partners – the company that owns Miraval and ESPA International – bought WellBiz for an undisclosed sum.

Elements Massage began franchising in 2006 and today has more than 200 studios in 36 states. In December, it opened its first international location in Vancouver, Canada.

The company offers just one service – massage

– and offers The Elements Wellness Program, a month-to-month membership that has 75,000 members. Prices vary by location, but typically cost US\$69 (€63, £46) for a 1-hour massage for members.

Keep reading to find out how Yelo Spa plans make its mark in the franchise market, and which star is the new face of Hand & Stone...

► SPA FRANCHISES



● From cars to spas: owner Leff made his name in automobile franchises

HAND & STONE

Offering 1-hour massages and 1-hour facials for US\$49.99 (£46, £34), plus hair removal, Hand & Stone has more than 250 locations across the US and Canada and was projected to hit US\$188m (£172m, £126m) in sales in 2015 – 50.4 per cent up on 2014. The company plans to open another 60 locations in 2016.

Launched in 2004 by physical therapist John Marco,



● The chain was projected to pass US\$188m in sales in 2015

● US soccer star Carli Lloyd is the new face of Hand & Stone

Hand & Stone is now owned by Los Angeles-based equity firm Levine Leichtman, along with franchising veteran Todd Leff, who headed up the US's two largest auto transmission franchisors before moving into the spa world.

Hand & Stone has built its brand serving the middle market, opening in locations like malls where consumers normally do their shopping.

The company recently partnered with soccer star Carli Lloyd, who will be featured in its marketing.



HELEA ESTER/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



● Woodhouse's USP is its wide range of services

WOODHOUSE DAY SPAS

Established by avid spa lover Jeni Garrett in Victoria, Texas in 2001, the Woodhouse Day Spa differs from other franchises in the scope of its treatments – more than 70 – including facials; Vichy showers; Swedish, deep tissue or volcanic hot stone massages; manicures and pedicures.

With 46 locations in 18 states, Woodhouse Day Spas also distinguishes itself by using organic, wild-crafted products; making a commitment to sustainability and using American-made products.

Woodhouse currently has 350 locations under development for the next decade, with plans to open 20-30 new locations each year.

ONE TO WATCH

Yelo Spa

With licensed locations in New York, San Juan and São Paulo, Yelo Spa is not a traditional franchisor, but Nicolas Ronco, CEO and founder, says he's spent the past 12 months working on a model that's fully franchisable.

Founded eight years ago in New York, Yelo has created a model of high-end, city-centre spas offering innovative services such as the Yelocap nap treatment.



‘YELO SPA WILL BEGIN FRANCHISING THIS YEAR’

NICOLAS RONCO

With membership starting at US\$99 (£91, £67) for a 50-minute treatment (US\$133 or £122/£89 without membership), its costs are almost double that of competitors

Yelo Spa franchises will be high-end with services nearly twice as expensive as rivals



– but Yelo isn't competing on price. “We went where no other spas wanted to go,” says Ronco. “All of these guys are fighting in the same ocean. We have our own niche.”

Ronco is working with iFranchise to begin franchising this year and hopes to have five locations by 2017 and up to 250 locations in the US in the next five to seven years.

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The tablet screen shows a digital intake form titled "Intake Form" for a customer named JANE AUSTEN (JAY1 481.7634). The form includes the following questions and responses:

- Have you undergone this treatment before? ☐ No ☐ Yes
- Do you use any of the following? ☒ Retin-A ☐ Renova ☐ AHA ☐ Retinol
- Do you have any skin problems?
- Have you previously had collagen or other skin treatments? ☐ No ☐ Yes, when?
- Have you ever had chemical peels, laser or microdermabrasion? ☐ No ☐ Yes, when?
- Your Signature: I understand and agree to the Terms & Conditions. *Jane Austen*

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● There are currently 100 Massage Heights in the US, with plans to add 35 more

MASSAGE HEIGHTS

Launched in San Antonio, Texas in 2004 by husband-and-wife team Wayne and Shane Evans, Massage Heights has more than 100 locations, with a goal of opening 35 new retreats – as they call them – in 2016. Long-term, the company hopes to have 300 retreats in 20 states by the end of 2018.

“We have been growing rapidly and we are just in the beginning stages,” says Bret Franson, director of franchise development.

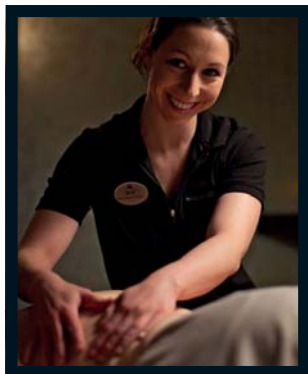
Monthly memberships start at US\$49.99 (£46, £34), which

“WE HAVE BEEN GROWING RAPIDLY AND WE ARE JUST IN THE BEGINNING STAGES”

BRET FRANSON

includes a 1-hour massage and aromatherapy each month. Facial memberships start at US\$59.99 (£55, £40) and the company has recently introduced 30-minute targeted massages as well.

Massage Heights is currently searching for a master franchisor in the UK, a country which it wants to target this year.



● Massage Heights is looking to grow internationally and the UK will be the first country it targets for growth



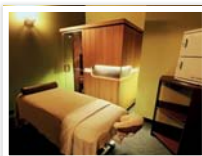
“MAKING MESSAGE THERAPY AFFORDABLE ALLOWS PEOPLE TO EMBRACE THE CONCEPT OF INCORPORATING IT INTO THEIR LIFESTYLE”

ALLIE T MALLAD

MASSAGE GREEN SPA

Massage Green currently has 100 day spas in the US, almost 1,000 more in development and plans to launch in Canada, Europe and Australia.

“I think the spa industry will continue to climb, because making massage therapy affordable allows people to embrace the concept of incorporating it into their lifestyle,” says Allie T Mallad, chair and CEO, who was the world’s largest Little Caesar’s pizza franchisee before founding Massage Green Spa in 2008.



● Over 1,000 spas are in development

Massage Green offers massages – in 1-hour, 1.5-hour and 2-hour increments – for stress management, pain management and functional mobility, with enhancements of aromatherapy or hot stones.

Prices vary per location but start at US\$39.95 (£37, £27) for a 1-hour full-body massage.

The company has month-to-month membership and has differentiated itself by allowing up to four people in the same household to use it, and

by using green, sustainable materials in its build-out material, says Mallad.

Franchisees pay an initial US\$232,000 (£212,210, £155,840) investment and then pay 6 per cent commission on services. ●



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BEAUTY FROM BHUTAN



Kate Sim, Oberoi Group

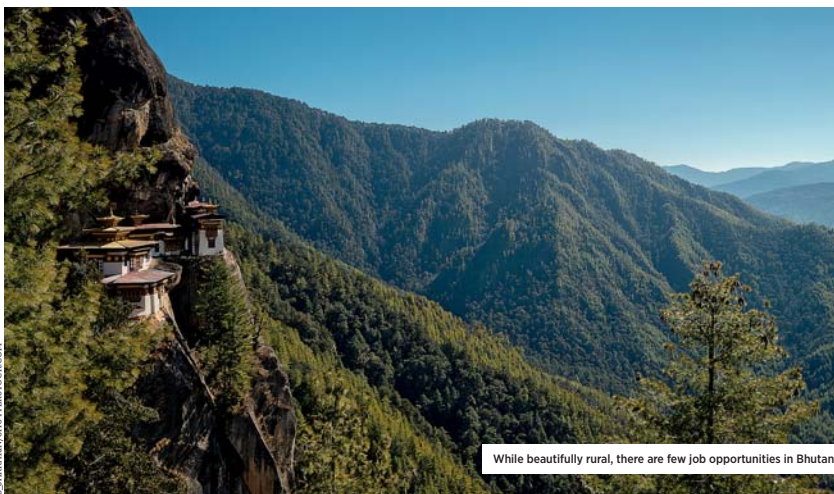
Kate Sim, head of spa operations for The Oberoi Group, tells Judy Chapman how an initiative created by the Bhutanese government has resulted in more than a third of its therapists originating from the country

Lack of qualified therapists is one of the biggest challenges in our burgeoning industry and spa operators the world over struggle to find the right employees. However, since 2010, The Oberoi Group has managed to cleverly sidestep the issue by recruiting its talent through an initiative put forward by the Bhutanese government.

Kate Sim, who's been head of spa operations at Oberoi for nearly two years, explains that through this programme, around 40 of its 110 therapists now originate from Bhutan. They work in spas across its 30 Oberoi- and Trident-branded properties, the majority of which are located in India.



Oberoi has been recruiting therapists from the programme for two years



While beautifully rural, there are few job opportunities in Bhutan

Helping its youth

Bhutan is a majestically beautiful, mountainous country bordering Tibet and the majority of people live in rural areas. While undeniably idyllic there are, however, few opportunities for young people to find work outside farming, which is the main livelihood. It's with this backdrop that the Bhutanese government set up a therapist training initiative, along with others in the fields of medicine, IT and engineering, to create meaningful employment opportunities for its youth.

Government officials first interview and recruit applicants for the programme, after which they undergo a three-month training course at the International Institute of Wellness Studies school near New Delhi, India. Around 400 go through the course a year. After training, they're given job placements at major establishments in India, as well as abroad.

Five years on from its launch, the initiative has proven so successful that Bhutan is exploring similar programmes for other areas of hospitality, including F&B, front desk and housekeeping.

What's encouraging is that the government funds the entire programme and doesn't take any commission from placements. "They're genuinely passionate about providing education and excellent working conditions for their people," says Sim. On the latter point, she explains that they're understandably cautious

“
They'll only send
their youth to
work in reputable
and five-star
establishments
”

about which establishments they select. "Spa is not part of Bhutanese culture... The ministry of labour sends officers to inspect venues to ensure they're dignified and will not hesitate to withdraw their appointment and bear the cost of sending them home to the safety of their family, if the spas are not professionally managed."

She adds: "They'll only send their youth to work in reputable and five-star establishments." This is something which works in Oberoi's favour because, due to its reputation, the group has priority in the selection of students during recruitment.

Tapping into the potential

Sim inherited the Bhutanese training programme when she took over the head of spas role from Christine Hays in January 2014 (see p24 and SB11/2 p50).

Starting out as a therapist, Sim had entrepreneurial spirit which quickly drove her to open her own spa in Singapore. Prior to joining Oberoi, she spent several years with ESPA and also worked for other leading spa operators such as Peninsula, Ritz-Carlton and Mandarin Oriental. She personally interviews and skill tests the therapists at the training institute before deciding on a shortlist of 10 to 15 staff.

While the initial course covers the basics of anatomy and physiology, massage, reflexology, body scrubs, nails and skin, therapists don't get a chance to practice on real guests. "There's still much more training to be conducted after they graduate," she says, explaining that the students undergo much deeper training with her. Even after they're sent to various Oberoi properties, education continues, until they gain more confidence.

"I'm inspired to teach therapists how to tune in, stand properly during massage to protect themselves, apply the correct pressure," she says. "These elements are crucial to being a good therapist with career longevity. I also focus on the soft skills, such as learning how to deal with difficult guests and the difference between service and servitude."

One challenge she hadn't anticipated, however, was that family always come first for the Bhutanese and there's an expectation for the girls to get married. Sim explains: "If their elder at home is ▶



The gentle, giving nature of Bhutanese people makes them natural therapists

► unwell, they'll drop everything to return home to care for their family. The family bond is very strong."

In response to this, Sim recently introduced a suspension contract so that if the therapists need to leave for family reasons they're welcome to join back. This has proven successful and over 60 per cent of the Bhutanese therapists at Oberoi have stayed for more than their initial two-year contract. "Most will extend their contracts for another two years so we can continue to train and grow them."

As the Bhutanese are predominantly Buddhist, giving is part of their culture, meaning the therapists have a head start in certain aspects of the role. "This can be seen in the way they communicate with guests and deliver their treatments," she says. "They learn very quickly and are gifted in attitude and in aptitude."

It's also in their nature to behave respectfully to each other, which helps as well. "During my first ever training session, for example, I was amazed at how mature the girls were," says Sim. "Normally when you have 20 young women in a room there are bound to be challenges – but not with the women from Bhutan."

Creating a nurturing and inspiring work environment for the therapists is one of Sim's main motivations. "One therapist who started on the programme is now a supervisor and we're grooming her to become a manager. My passion is to help

“
Normally when
you have 20 young
women in a room
there are bound to
be challenges – but
not with the women
from Bhutan
”

our therapists retain their uniqueness rather than follow a script. I find ways to celebrate their individuality."

Spa image revamp

Aside from her focus on training and three new openings this year (in India, UAE and Morocco), the exciting news is that Sim is now creating a spa identity for Oberoi.

While the group has had a successful relationship with Banyan Tree for a number of years – Banyan Tree previously ran its spas on a third-party basis before Oberoi took spa management in-house – Sim is now keen to establish an Oberoi identity. "The Banyan Tree brand has left a strong imprint so my goal

is to redefine our spa image and infuse Indianess into our brand identity."

Although she won't share specifics, Sim hints at sari-style uniforms, a foot ritual based on traditional vedic practices and Indian fusion sufi-style music "to provide a more authentic experience for guests".

On top of this, Sim is exploring a pilot project to conduct training in Bhutan. "I strongly believe that the girls will feel more comfortable training in their own country," she says, adding that it will bring pride and honour to her senior Bhutanese therapists to lead some of the modules.

And while she doesn't want to source all her therapists from Bhutan exclusively – it's important to have variety, and Oberoi has successfully recruited talent from north India for a number of years – she can't help but be impressed by the initiative. She concludes: "I'm overwhelmed by the commitment and integrity of the Bhutanese government and also how the Buddhist culture makes the Bhutanese therapists at heart. It's in their nature to put others first. They're outstanding people and I can't tell you how happy I am working with them." ●



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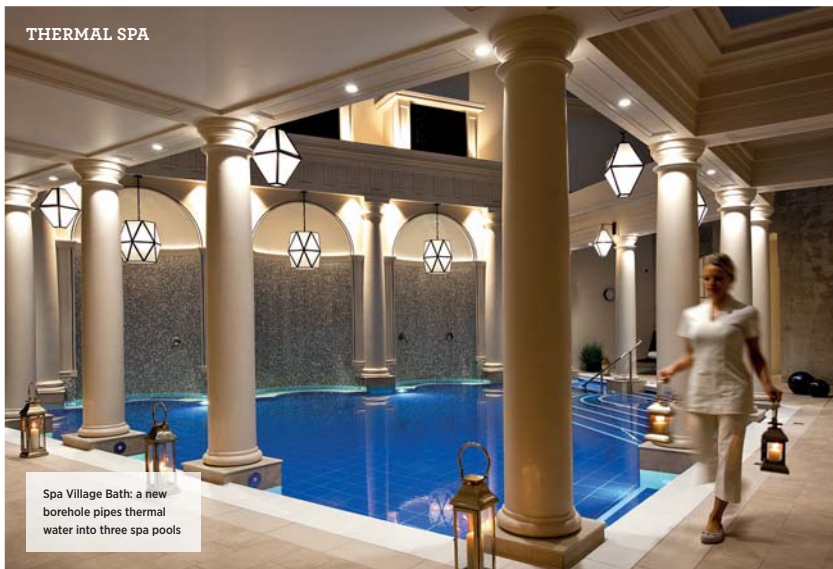
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THERMAL SPA



Spa Village Bath: a new borehole pipes thermal water into three spa pools

Thanks to its thermal waters, the City of Bath, UK, has been a wellness destination since Roman times.

However, for almost 40 years, since the closure of its municipal thermal baths in 1978, Bath was a spa town in name only. The opening of the Thermae Bath Spa day spa in 2004 went some way to addressing the lack of access to the city's famous waters, but unlike most other European spa towns, Bath still had no five-star spa hotel.

Until now that is. The opening of the Gainsborough Bath Spa Hotel in 2015 means the city now has both a day spa and a luxury spa hotel, and tourism chiefs hope it heralds the start of a resurgence for the city of Bath as a global spa destination.

The project has been many years in the making. Plans for a hotel were announced in 2004 but stalled in the recession until Malaysian conglomerate YTL – which also owns both the Thermae Bath Spa and local utilities firm Wessex Water – took it on in 2011.

taking the waters

Following the opening of the Gainsborough Bath Spa – the only hotel in the UK with direct access to natural thermal waters – Magali Robathan speaks to the key people behind the project



■ The Gainsborough is YTL's first hotel in the UK

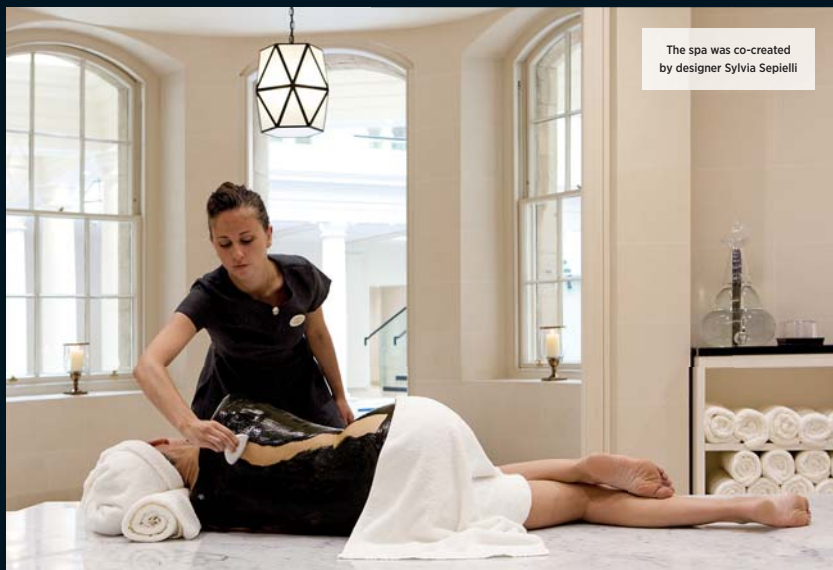
The hotel occupies two Grade II listed buildings above the remains of ancient Roman baths, which made the refurbishment extremely complex. Delays were caused by the discovery of more than 17,000 Roman coins and an original Roman mosaic on site.

Finally, however, Gainsborough Bath Spa hotel is open. It's operated by Bath Hotel and Spa Ltd, the YTL subsidiary which also manages the nearby Thermae Bath Spa.

New hotel spa

The hotel taps into natural thermal waters via a newly created borehole. It has 99 bedrooms, including three above the spa which have direct access to it.

The 1,300sq m (13,993sq ft) Spa Village Bath within the hotel is spread over two levels. Highlights include three pools with thermal water cooled to 40°C, a salt room, ice grotto, infrared sauna and relaxation terrace. The 11 treatment rooms include a VIP suite with a Japanese ofuru thermal bathtub and two tatami rooms.

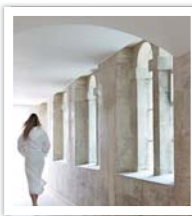


The spa was co-created
by designer Sylvia Sepielli



The Grade II-listed hotel
sits above the remains
of ancient Roman baths

THERMAL SPA



- Spa Village Bath was designed by Sylvia Sepielli, who's known for creating YTL's original spa village in Pangkor Laut, Malaysia (see SB11/3 p46). As a result, the UK spa has some Asian influences, such as treatments using Malay, Thai, Chinese and Indian massage.

Sepielli created the spa with Melissa Mettler a consultant who's worked exclusively for YTL for six years. Mettler worked on the concept, seeing it through the design and planning stages, recruiting the team and helping ensure the vision was delivered.



■ **Hotel guests have restricted access to the spa to help maintain tranquility**

Sepielli worked with DaleSauna on a number of the thermal experiences and with Barr + Wray on the filtration and water treatment system. The hotel's interior design was by Champalimaud, while EPR were responsible for the architecture.

As Bath emerges on the world stage as a leading wellness destination, we speak to the key people involved in the project.



Magali Robathan is the managing editor of design title *CLADmag*, a sister publication to *Spa Business*
Email: magali@CLADglobal.com

Colin Skellett chair of Bath Hotels & Spa Ltd, YTL Hotels

Why did YTL take on this project?

YTL was already a significant investor in the Bath area so it was a natural development for us. Creating a five-star hotel and spa, which is the only one in the UK with direct access to natural, hot waters in a city such as Bath, was an irresistible opportunity. The Gainsborough Bath Spa is a key development for YTL and the start of our growing hotel and spa business in the UK.

Why did YTL take on the Thermae Bath Spa in 2014?

YTL had a long association with Henk Verschuur, the former director of Thermae Bath Spa, who sadly passed away in April 2015. Indeed, we sponsored the Three Tenors concert that celebrated its initial opening.

With the development of Gainsborough Bath Spa,

“The Gainsborough Bath Spa is a key development for YTL and the start of our growing hotel and spa business in the UK”

acquiring the operational contract for Thermae Bath Spa made enormous sense and Wessex Water's expertise in treating water means we can ensure that these precious thermal waters are properly managed.

What's your role?

I look after YTL's interests in the UK and this includes chairing both Thermae Bath Spa and the Gainsborough Hotel.

What's the aim of the hotel?

To create a five-star luxury experience for our guests – bringing back the thermal waters in the way the Romans experienced them.

Why did you decide to restrict hotel guests' access to the spa to 7-9am and 8-10pm?

Because we really want the spa to be an oasis of calm. If you allow unrestricted access it becomes too busy and that would be detrimental to what we're trying to achieve. Guests having treatments can use the facilities at any time. The treatments start after 10am and usually finish by 6pm so we try and keep that time very quiet. If you're paying a lot of money for a massage you don't want overcrowding in the spa, you want peace and serenity. Our uppermost limit is 30 people at any one time.



■ **Spa access is restricted to avoid overcrowding says Skellett**

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Peter Rollins marketing director,
Gainsborough Bath Spa and Thermae Bath Spa

What does the opening of the Gainsborough mean for Bath?

To have a successful day spa and now a five-star spa hotel puts Bath on a level footing with many of the other great spa destinations in Europe. It has added real credibility. Bath is an incredible tourist destination. The whole city is a UNESCO World Heritage site and it attracts 967,000 staying visitors and 4.8 million day visitors a year.

It doesn't just benefit Bath either. I've worked closely with other spa towns in the UK, including Buxton, Droitwich, Harrogate, Malvern and Royal Leamington Spa, and they're all really supportive of what we're doing. If it helps to raise the spa culture in the UK, those other places will benefit too.

What was the vision for this hotel?

To create the UK's only natural thermal spa hotel. From day one, the Spa Village concept was absolutely at the heart of the hotel.



Royal permission to use the waters was granted in 1590

“ To have a successful day spa and now a five-star spa hotel puts Bath on a level footing with many of the other great spa destinations in Europe ”

What's the history of the thermal waters?

In 1590, Queen Elizabeth I granted the thermal waters to

the people of Bath in a royal charter, under the guardianship of the local corporation. The local corporation is now Bath and North East Somerset council, which looks after the waters on behalf of the people of Bath.

How do you treat the waters?

When the waters come out of the springs, they go through a filtration system. We add minute elements of chlorine – not because the waters aren't pure, but because of the elements that humans introduce. We use the minimum amount permissible by law.

The waters are 45°C when they come out of the ground, but we cool them to 35-40°C [a more comfortable temperature].

You worked for Thermae Bath Spa which faced a many challenges.

How did you turn it around?
Initially everyone in Bath was really excited about the

Thermae Bath Spa, but because it opened three years late and cost a lot of money, there were understandably many detractors.

It wasn't easy to win back the hearts of people, but I think we've done that now. It's been hugely successful. Thermae Bath Spa attracted around 280,000 visitors in 2015, which is our busiest year to date.

Did that experience affect people's attitudes towards the Gainsborough project?

There were a few throwaway lines, but the majority of local people really welcomed the fact that a significant building was opening up again.

The two projects are very different. Thermae Bath Spa is a public initiative and the Gainsborough has always been planned as a private project. The Gainsborough was only a few months late opening – YTL was determined to get it right. ►



■ The Thermae Bath Spa attracted 280,000 visitors in 2015

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Jessica Grant Brugada, manager, Spa

Village Bath at The Gainsborough Bath Spa hotel

Can you talk us through the spa experience?

When guests arrive, they sit down at the Aroma Bar with one of our therapists, who will create a personalised pouch using a blend of Neal's Yard aromatherapy oils which they can take into the sauna.

A spa attendant will then talk them through the self-guided bathing ritual. This takes around an hour and is a very important part of the spa experience. It involves taking the waters in the three thermal pools, relaxing in the sauna and steamroom, and cooling down in between with cold showers and in the ice grotto. As part of this ritual, they can relax in the spa suite with a cup of chocolate infused with cardamom and cinnamon, a drink which was inspired by the Georgians who were strong believers in the health-giving properties of chocolate.



The magnesium-rich waters are good for aches and pains

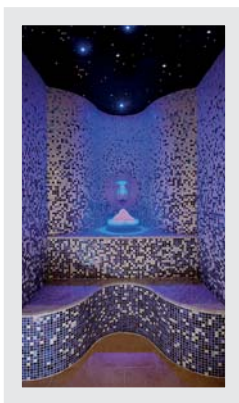
“ Most spa members have joined because of the thermal waters: they want to invest in their health ”

What are the benefits of the healing waters?

Our water is very rich in magnesium, copper and calcium. Magnesium is particularly good for aches and pains, sore joints and tired muscles.

Many of our hotel guests are leisure guests who come because it's Bath and we are part of their experience. Eighty per cent of our guests come from the UK; 75 per cent of whom visit as a result of Spa Village Bath.

We have 100 spa members who make up approximately 12 per cent of our customers. Most of them have joined because of the thermal waters and because they want to invest in their health.



■ A personal oil is blended at the Aroma Bar (left); a bathing ritual includes alternating hot and cool experiences (right)



Reflecting YTL's background, the spa includes Asian touches such as egg rolling (left) for the face and ofuru baths (right)

Spa Village Bath treatments

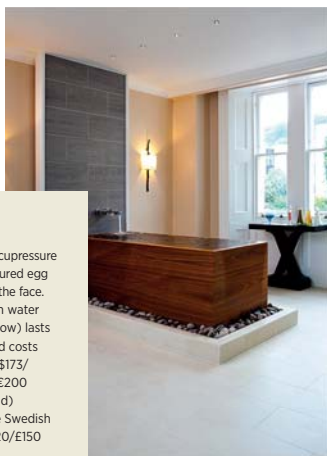
■ The 120-minute Malaysian Experience costs £240/£300, US\$347/US\$433, €319/€398 (week/weekend).

Malay massage techniques include long kneading strokes with a warming spiced oil blend. Next is an Indian scalp massage and the experience finishes

with Chinese acupuncture and time-honoured egg rolling to tone the face.

■ The Freedom water treatment (below) lasts 45 minutes and costs £120/£150, US\$173/US\$217, €159/€200 (week/weekend)

■ A 60-minute Swedish massage is £120/£150



Spa Village Bath, Freedom treatment

First-person experience:
Magali Robathan

Spa Village Bath is centred around a four-storey, glass-roofed atrium, which houses the main pool – it's a beautiful, calming light-filled space. My experience started with the self-guided water ritual with the alternating hot and cool experiences, which really helped relax me for my treatment.

I chose the signature 45-minute Freedom treatment, which was designed specially for the spa by Mexican watsu practitioner Raphael Quiroz. I was slightly apprehensive and unsure of what to expect, but my therapist Sarah put me instantly at ease and the treatment turned out to be one of the most amazing I've ever had. I relaxed on my back in the water, with Sarah supporting my head. She then carried out a series of stretches, moving me through the pool.

It's a dynamic treatment: you're constantly moving through the water, sometimes quite quickly.

Towards the end, Sarah squeezed my arm to let me know that she was

going to take me under water. This was the part I was worried about as, although I love being in water, I'm not good at holding my breath. Sarah was very tuned in to my body and as I put my trust in her we settled into a rhythm where she was anticipating my breathing and taking me under accordingly.

The treatment turned out to be one of the most amazing I've ever had

At the end of the treatment I was held upside down in the foetal position for what seemed like a minute or more. But by then I'd entered a meditative state, relaxed at a very fundamental level and felt as though I'd gone deeply into myself, so I was able to cope without any problems.

I found the Freedom treatment an extremely powerful experience, with the real strength being the fact you have to let go completely. As a mother of small children, I spend a great deal of my life looking after others, so it felt amazing to let go and allow someone to look after me for a change.

Afterwards my body felt light and free of tension and I carried a feeling of serenity with me the rest of the day. ●



The Freedom treatment involves guided movement in the water and was created by Mexican watsu practitioner Raphael Quiroz



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■ The Pavigym 3.0
Interactive Floor enables
trainers to design and
track workouts

COMPETITIVE EDGE

Could adding a touch of rivalry help spas to engage more customers in fitness and push them to get better results? Niamh Madigan looks at how operators can tap into that competitive streak

Technology is having a massive impact on the way people exercise: from wearable devices and motivational apps to interactive training and virtual classes – the range of choice to suit all levels of fitness is huge. In hand with this, technology allows people to gamify their workouts to track and help improve their own performance or to compare their efforts with others. You only have to look at TV programmes such as *The Biggest Loser*, where obese couples race towards a target weight, to see how competition motivates the unlikeliest people to exercise.

It's no secret that spas struggle to get customers – whether a member or one-off guest – to make full use of their fitness facilities and classes. So could competition or gaming be the key to boosting their engagement? We take a look at what operators can do to motivate people to exercise.



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GETTING INTERACTIVE

Multisensory Fitness Inc

Sensory motor activity reaction training (SMARTfit™) programmes by Multisensory Fitness Inc combine cognitive and physical game-based workouts. Its interactive Trainer wall, the SMARTfit Multi Station Trainer, uses alphanumeric multicoloured targets, a scoreboard and a timer to encourage competing team play.

It's designed to stimulate the body and brain so the user gets an intensive full-body workout. This is something that appealed to Fairmont Singapore which installed the SMARTfit in its new cutting-edge fitness centre. "By using the concept of games and competition, guests get a quick cardio workout," says Thea Huang, director of spa and wellness. "There are between 70-100 programmes which include different forms of physical activity, such as running, cross-training or circuit training. You can achieve a very intense cardio workout after only 10 minutes."

She says the SMARTfit programmes are ideal for group workouts, a fun activity

for corporate groups and have been a hit when it comes to personal training. They also act as a differentiator in the marketplace. Huang adds: "We want our guests to remember that we have this offering which they cannot get anywhere else at the moment."

"We've found results to be really effective especially when competition is encouraged"

Simon Heap, Rugged Interactive

Pavigym

In Dubai, Fairmont has also installed Pavigym's 3.0 interactive floor and wall panels in its health club. Integrating LED lights controlled by touch screen software, the surfaces enable trainers to design and track workout sessions.



The average cost for a SMARTfit Trainer is US\$20,000 (£18,780, £13,280). Pavigym says prices vary greatly according to facility size and mix of products.

Rugged Interactive

Similarly, CardioWall by Rugged Interactive has several light push points that illuminate in different sequences for various games. People can use their hands to set off the lights or incorporate accessories such as weighted balls, boxing gloves or balance boards into the mix.

CardioWall uses engaging vocal commands, colours and sounds to interact with and motivate the user. As an added incentive, scores are displayed on both an built-in screen and via a website to push users to beat their own total or those of rivals – anywhere in the world – to get a CardioWall ranking.

Simon Heap, who's the founder of Rugged Interactive, says: "We've found results to be really effective especially when competition is encouraged. Our research has shown equivalent exertion with other gym equipment, but with a much higher user satisfaction rating."

With worldwide distribution, CardioWall costs £6,000 (US\$9,050, €8,530) to install. ▶



■ Rugged Interactive supplies a range of products to stimulate the body and mind

■ Fairmont Singapore uses SMARTfit to motivate guests (above); Dubai Fairmont uses Pavigym flooring (right)

ON THE LEADERBOARD

CrossFit

CrossFit's high-intensity cardio and strengthening workouts have become an explosive fitness phenomenon – there are now over 11,000 affiliated gyms globally – fuelled in part by the annual CrossFit Games for the “The Fittest on Earth”. To qualify for the games, people submit workout scores on an internet leaderboard: a tactic that attracted nearly 140,000 contestants in 2013 according to *Forbes* magazine.

Myzone

Other companies such as Myzone® are using rating and points systems to engage spa fitness customers.

The Myzone chest strap tracks heart rate, calories burnt and time spent

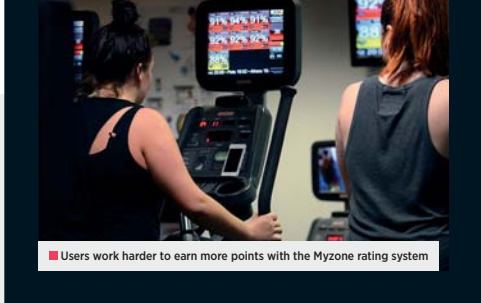
exercising and is used to calculate Myzone Effort Points (MEPs) which are awarded for every minute spent active. The more intense the workout, the more points earned. This information is displayed on a monitor or streamed to an app in real time.

Using the MEPs system, challenges can be set to keep users engaged and on track to achieve goals. With built-in leaderboards, status rankings and social integration, it's easy to monitor progress

and earn points, turning fitness into a game with an option to compete against others.

The Spa Naturel Fitness Club at Mercure's Southgate Hotel, UK installed Myzone® a year ago. Gym manager Steve Forbes says: “Usage went up, people want to come to the gym to get their MEPs so they can appear on the leaderboard.”

Myzone is available globally and costs £295 (US\$445, €420). Operators pay a monthly licence fee of £99 (US\$149, €141).



■ Users work harder to earn more points with the Myzone rating system

GAMING & IMMERSION

Les Mills International

Mixing indoor fitness with virtual reality is a popular way to motivate people to exercise. Leading the charge in this arena is group exercise specialist Les Mills. In mid 2014, it launched the Immersive Fitness™ experience that projects cinema-quality video content onto a screen, while instructors cue exercise moves to synchronise with music and graphics. Les Mills says an immersive environment brings a heightened sense of anticipation and reward. By suspending belief, people stop thinking about the duration of the workout and push themselves further.

Webracing

Webracing is also combining gaming, virtual reality and competition.

Webracing™ gives spa fitness goers on machines such as bikes, rowers and cross trainers a chance to compete against individuals or groups, while watching



“If exercisers are more mentally engaged, they’re likely to put in 10-15 per cent more effort... and to complete a course or session”

Duncan Lawson, Webracing

themselves in a virtual world. A small device fitted to the equipment connects everyone online for an on-screen race. With voice over internet protocol, users can talk to competitors or training partners, turning static exercise into an engaging event.

“If exercisers are mentally engaged, they’re likely to put in 10-15 per cent more effort and anecdotal evidence shows that people are much more likely to complete a course or session,” says Webracing founder Duncan Lawson.

■ Les Mills' Immersive Fitness launched in 2014 and is available globally

He says the Webracing Peloton programme for multiple bike racing would be a good fit for spas with studio space. It requires an average of five static bikes and a projector or LED screen with costs starting at £5,000 (US\$7,540, €7,110).

Embedded Fitness

Embedded Fitness blends physical fitness with entertainment, new media, technology and gaming. Using interactive devices, users can

play games while they exercise. Activities include ice-skating, rowing, dancing, trampolining and even basketball. With some devices the user can set a high score and use it to compete against others.

CEO Carla Scholten says: “Embedded Fitness is fun, but also therapeutic. For spas we prefer to make specially designed and personalised interactive rooms.”

The Dutch-based company already has an installation in Qatar and is looking to continue its global expansion in 2016. ●

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Making the switch



■ Center Parcs uses Ojmar's innovative locking system in its Aqua Sana spas

“Using the wristband, guests can operate lockers, access accommodation and make cashless payments. This means no more trips to the locker to collect a wallet to pay for drinks or food by the pool”



■ Simple 1 click technology avoids confusion in the changing areas



A growing number of spa operators across the UK are working with Ojmar to upgrade their traditional keyed locking systems to electronic solutions.

Why? Because, as wearable devices continue to impact the health, wellness and spa industry – the American College of Sports & Medicine (ACSM) cites wearable technology as the top fitness trend for 2016 – operators are realising the benefits that electronic locking systems working in conjunction with Mifare wristbands can offer.

Leading innovator Center Parcs was an early adopter of the technology working with locking solutions specialist Ojmar to install its OTS Transponder System at the new Center Parcs Village at Woburn Forest. Following their successful installation at Center Parcs Whinell Forest and in a number of the group's Aqua Sana spa facilities, approximately 2,000 locks were installed throughout the Woburn Forest village, including the Aqua Sana Spa. Using the wristband, guests can operate lockers, access accommodation and make cashless payments. This means no more trips to the locker to collect a wallet to pay for drinks or food by the pool. The Mifare wristband is becoming the wearable of choice for operators. As well as being cost effective, the silicone wristbands are waterproof and can be branded with the facility's logo for further marketing opportunities. In addition, operators can increase their secondary spend through band rental and cashless purchasing.



■ Omar's NFC programmer allows simple wireless management of lockers



■ Locker design is enhanced by the wire free subtle locks Lockers by Albert Ewan Design

Electronic Revolution

These are just some of the operators benefiting from Ojmar's electronic solutions:

- Ojmar listener Parcs
- Marriott Hotel & Spa Group
- Ribby Hall Spa
- Royal Crescent Hotel & Spa
- Champneys
- Shoreditch House
- Soho Farmhouse
- Babbington House
- Village Hotels
- Thorpe Park Hotel & Spa
- Q Hotels
- Thoresby Hall Hotel & Spa
- Foxhills Health Spa

“The locks can be future-proofed with simple firmware updates, achieved by touching the unit to the lock”

Easy integration

Implementing an electronic system requires operators to take a leap of faith. They need to be assured that the system is reliable, cost effective and easy for staff to manage and maintain. The technology also has to perform well with existing systems without complicated integration.

Ojmar's systems are constantly being upgraded to work seamlessly with other technologies such as cashless payment systems, cardio equipment from suppliers like Technogym, Precor and Milon, as well as with membership systems provided by the likes of Gladstone MRM.

The OTS Advanced locks have been improved to work with multiple technologies, including Ojmar's new Near Field Communication (NFC) programmer offering wireless reporting from the locks and over 100 use events logs as well as instant lock programming and battery testing. The locks can be future-proofed with simple firmware updates, achieved by touching the unit to the lock. Ojmar will continue its programme of innovation throughout 2016.

With the new 12-sided £1 coin due to be introduced in 2017, there has never been a better time to go digital.



Contact Ojmar

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TECH TALK

What's happening in the world of spa software today? Who better to tell us than the CEOs and managers of some well-known spa technology companies?

Jennifer Hull product manager Spasoft

What are you doing that other companies aren't?

We're focusing on the usability of our software and finding innovative ways to engage users and reduce training costs. We're dedicated to providing resources for spas to further their knowledge of the system including monthly webinars, online training resources and an active customer community.

What's the key to making spa software user-friendly? Testing.

We work closely with clients to evaluate how user friendly any new features or functionality are for them. It's easy to make software complicated, but

It's easy to make software complicated, but making it simple requires research and thoughtful restraint

making it simple requires research and thoughtful restraint.

How are you reacting to consumer trends? We've incorporated instant messaging into our Atrio Spa application in response to consumer demand for in-app chatting or instant messaging. Atrio Spa is our new cloud-based activity



management system which has guest-centric features and business-friendly dashboards.

What are the trends in spa software? We're really excited about responsive websites and of growing our online booking offering for spas. With customisation available, spas feel comfortable using online

booking. This is going to be the primary booking channel in a few years and a robust solution is imperative for spas that want to capture more business.

How are you staying ahead of the competition? It's exciting how many spa directors understand the value and return on investment when they choose the right system. There is a lot of choice in spa software today and we stay ahead by focusing on customer service and support while continually enhancing our systems to keep them relevant with changing trends.

Spa-kit.net keyword: Spasoft

Roger Sholanki founder & CEO Book4Time

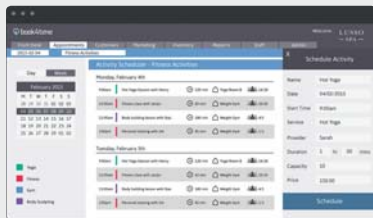
What are you doing that's unique? We recently assembled an innovation team to help us identify and evaluate promising new ideas. It works to anticipate our spas' needs and problems, selecting the issues with the greatest potential business benefits and bringing solutions market.

What's your most recent piece of spa software? Increasingly, word of mouth is spread via online review sites, so when we heard from spas just how

complicated and frustrating it was to stay on top of what their customers are saying online, we knew there had to be a better solution.

We created Spa Monitor in response, the simplest way to monitor, share and generate a spa's online reputation. It picks up on reviews as they get posted, displaying them in one easy-to-use dashboard. And spas can build better relationships by responding to customer reviews with a single click.

When we heard how complicated and frustrating it was for spas to stay on top of what customers are saying online, we knew there had to be a better solution



● Book4Time has a dedicated innovation team to test new ideas

What's the key to making spa software user-friendly? We take a 'people first' approach and think about a product from multiple perspectives – those of our clients, end users and their customers. Another crucial element is in designing and testing prototypes based on customer feedback.

What are the trends to watch? Open cloud-based APIs are increasingly in demand with

clients focused on boosting business by getting their various software platforms working together in harmony. Using our powerful APIs, they build custom experiences for online booking that are connected to their website or mobile app. They can also create email marketing events based on past purchases or services booked.

Spa-kit.net keyword: Book4Time ▶



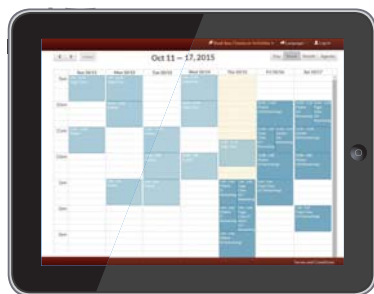


Frank Pitsikalis founder & CEO **ResortSuite**

What are you doing that's different? ResortSuite is a fully integrated multi-module resort software system. As well as being able to handle small and large spas, it manages all other areas of operation such as classes, fitness, activities, rooms, golf, food and beverage, catering and retail.

What's your most recent piece of spa software? Activity Scheduler, a new addition to our web-booking engine, provides guests with the ability to view a calendar of pre-scheduled activities, classes and events and book-in themselves. It creates a one-stop shop where the guest

The spa guest of today wants to create their own schedule and they're not keen to take time out of their work day to book over the phone. This is triggering an enhancement in online and mobile booking functionality



● With Activity Scheduler, guests can self-explore and book the full experience offered at a property ahead of their arrival

can self-explore and book the full experience offered at a property.

What challenges are you facing? We have many multi-property resorts implementing ResortSuite Spa, among other modules, in a single database environment. Our software enables each property to manages and configure its spas a little differently, but they all share central guest profiles, preferences and purchase history.

What's the key to making spa software user friendly? Make it intuitive. The booking process in ResortSuite is simple and intuitive in that it recognises where and when treatment

areas and therapists become available. Make it simple. A new staff member could easily make a booking in ResortSuite on their first day on the job. **What consumer trends are you picking up on?** The travel consumer has changed. The spa guest of today wants the ability to define their own experience, creating their own schedules and they're not keen to take time out of their work day to book over the phone. This trend is triggering an enhancement in spa software online and mobile booking functionality.

Spa-kit.net keyword: ResortSuite

Josh McCarter CEO **Booker**

What are you doing that other companies aren't? Our cloud-based software helps spas run their businesses seamlessly, as well as giving them the smart and robust tools they need to grow.

In addition to online booking, employee scheduling, reporting and inventory management, we offer automated marketing tools to help spas with customer retention. This complete suite is housed in one place on our system, accessible via all desktop and mobile devices.

What's your most recent piece of spa software? Our Business Intelligence dashboard is exciting. Offering a complete overview of how a spa's advertising and marketing is performing, it allows spas to pinpoint where their business is the most visible and to capitalise on that information.

What market trends are you seeing? The rapid switch from installed to cloud-based software is one to watch. This

Many spas miscalculate the value of a good customer retention programme. We're aiming to re-shape the current mindset and help them realise the massive potential

is now a standard need for spas looking to grow and run their business. The increased use of mobile apps, by spa owners and consumers is making this an even more exciting core feature of cloud-based spa software.

Consumers are increasingly attached to their mobile devices and spas are now leveraging the use of apps in order to stay top-of-mind with their clients.

What's on the horizon for your company? We're looking at the importance of customer retention. Many spas miscalculate the value of a good

customer retention programme. We're aiming to re-shape the current mindset and help them realise the massive potential in additional revenue that lies in their not-yet-loyal customers.

We're working on a whole new set of fully integrated automated marketing tools to help spas increase their revenue through existing customers.

Booker's goal is not only to give customers a suite of tools to run their spa, but to help it grow successfully too.

Spa-kit.net keyword: Booker ▶



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Marrissa Mundy - The Bridge Hotel and Spa



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Stefan Drummond managing director **Ez Runner**

What are you doing that's different? We offer a one-stop solution, from booking on multiple platforms, voucher fulfilment, Apple Pay, to automated marketing and KPI notifications.

What's your most recent piece of software? We've introduced a voucher fulfilment solution

which holds all information in the same database. Tied in with our automated marketing tools, this means we can run campaigns on the purchase and redemption of vouchers; offering non-commission style management fees for voucher fulfilment, giving huge savings in time and fulfilment.



Engaging with your customer is so much easier now, whether through social media, emails or text messages. This area is set to evolve and grow



● Ez Runner will be introducing Apple Pay imminently

What are the trends in spa software? Personalisation: what sets you apart from the spa down the road and how can our software help? Engaging with your customer is so much easier now, whether through social media, emails or text messages. This area is set to evolve and grow.

What's on the horizon for you? Introducing Apple Pay and focusing on automated alerts

and engagement is prominent for us. We are developing rules within the system that will alert spa managers based on pre-defined parameters. For example, these could indicate that a spa's usage has been low in a particular week, or that the forecast for the next week falls under the KPIs required.

Spa-kit.net keywords:
Ez Runner

Leonie Wileman operations manager **Premier Software**

What's your most recent piece of spa software? Core by Premier, which caters for spa businesses of any size now has automated reporting and marketing facilities, streaming operations and communications with clients. There are a number of complementary tools including Premier Kiosk to reduce congestions at receptions and online membership sign-ups.

What makes your company unique? We pride ourselves on our dedicated training team who take the time to understand each of our spa's requirements. Training is fundamental for spas get the

most out of their system and we make sure staff fully understand the software ahead of using it in a real-life environment. Equally important is the level of support and after-sales care.

What have been the biggest changes in spa software in recent times? Being able to access diary and client information on a smartphone or tablet has gone from being a nice addition to a must-have feature. Premier's new client card app allows therapists to carry out consultations with clients and update their records in real-time, delivering a superior guest experience.



● Mobile access to diary and client info is now a must-have feature

How are consumer trends shaping spa software? Spas need to ensure they hold availability back for last-minute bookings, a growing trend, and have the facilities available to allow clients to book at a time convenient to them. Integrated online booking is a way to allow your clients to book 24/7 while also freeing up staff to focus on treatments.

Many spas now offer specially tailored treatments, such as for people who have, or have had, cancer. Contraindications can be added to our software and will be flagged on a client card during booking. This helps sites to provide a safe and nurturing environment for customers. ●

Spa-kit.net keywords:
Premier Software

“We pride ourselves on our dedicated training team... we make sure staff fully understand the software ahead of using it in a real-life environment”



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Product innovation

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Somadome meditation pods rollout globally

Somadome, the company behind a colour therapy meditation pod, has announced plans for international growth with new worldwide distribution.

The pods are designed to use colour, binaural beats and special tiles (often used by acupuncturists) to alter disruptive EMF frequencies to achieve peacefulness of mind and body.

Six Somadomes were installed in US spas last year including at the Ojai Valley Inn, California and the Surrey Hotel, New York.

Adobe has installed the pod at its HQ in Silicon Valley and Richard Branson also showcased it at Virgin Disruptor's

roundtable discussion on corporate wellness.

Founder and Somadome CEO Sarah Attia says: "The vision for Somadome is for it to be a way to quiet the mental clutter."

Guests pay an average of US\$50 (£46, £34) per 20-minute session and Attia says most spas book between five to seven sessions a day. She adds: "The business value proposition is in selling time – not selling the dome."

Purchase options include an outright cost of US\$35,000 (£32,080, £24,630), rent at US\$2,000 (£1,830, £1,410) a month or an ongoing finance scheme.

Spa-kit.net keyword:
Somadome



■ Attia says the 5x5ft dome takes up little space (above); Richard Branson tries the pod at a Virgin event (left)





■ The two new products complete the Dry Skin range (left); laminaria digitata seaweed is a key ingredient (above)

Voya on a roll with its brand evolution



▲ Voya co-founder Kira Walton calls the hydrating products 'pioneering'

Irish organic skincare company Voya continues its global growth campaign with the launch of a facial range and treatment for dehydrated skin.

The Dry Skin Facial range and prescriptive facial, follows its Oily Skin Facial range launch in mid 2015 and precedes Voya's Sensitive Skin Facial line that will complete the collection when it arrives in March.

Kira Walton, Voya co-founder, says the range "not only epitomises Voya's branding evolution with beautiful new packaging, but it also reflects Voya's status as a leading organic force within the industry."

She says that both dry range products are "pioneering due to their deeply nourishing and

organic ingredients which work to actively increase hydration levels for those with dry skin."

The new Hydra Veil hydrating mask and Pearlesque facial moisturiser sit alongside four other items which have updated formulas and all are presented in Voya's new-look, eco-friendly packaging.

The range for dry skin combines laminaria digitata seaweed with natural active ingredients and essential oils to help repair the skin's functional barrier, increase moisture, decrease sensitivity and increase hydration levels. Rose of Jericho, a desert plant which retains moisture, is also used.

Spa-kit keyword: Voya



▲ The organic seaweed Voya uses is hand-harvested



▲ Pressman says spas can make up an album of 12 tracks

Now you can sell your branded music on iTunes

Spas can now make branded albums that will be sold in the iTunes store and other digital platforms – and enjoy a US\$2 royalty for each one sold.

"It's the next evolution in streaming music and downloads with niche genres," says Brad Pressman, president and chief of music programming at Private Label Music, which provides the service. "It brings worldwide attention to spas and lets users discover new music and spas they might never have been to – all online."

Spas can make up an album of 12 tracks from Private Label Music's catalogue of more than 27,000 songs in styles ranging from Instrumental Spa to New Age, Asian, Hawaiian, Nature & Water, Light Jazz.

Spas may choose to have their album live in the iTunes store, or may opt for a more exclusive download of their music on the privately-hosted site spamusicdownloads.com.

Spa-kit.net keywords: Private Label Music



▲ Four Seasons and Spa Montage are fans



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Ultimate breast comfort thanks to Oakworks

"People are amazed that even a slight adjustment makes a substantial difference in increasing their comfort," says Rich Elsen, Oakworks senior VP of sales, about the company's

new Adjustable Breast Comfort (ABC) System. He believes there's nothing else like it in the market.

The patent-pending system consists of a panel built into a treatment bed which can be quietly adjusted to offer

the latest breast comfort for clients in a prone position without them needing to leave the bed. The panel moves up and down, as required, creating a balance of support and space while also taking pressure off the breasts and tension out of the back.

"We're not just thinking of new things, we're creating new things," says Elsen.

Suitable for all clients, male or female, regardless of shape or size, the ABC System works especially well for clients with breast sensitivity due to augmentation, mastectomy or post-surgical tenderness.

When clients are on their backs, the panel can be raised above the table surface to be used as a head support or for pectoral muscle stretch.

Spa-kit.net keyword:
Oakworks



▲ There's nothing else like it on the market says Elsen



▲ The panel is built into the bed and can be quietly adjusted



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Thalion creates post-flight recovery treatment



▲ Dyrland-Lagadec says the facial can be combined with a Thalisons body ritual

"We wanted to offer more than just another spa facial treatment, that's why we created Anti-jet Lag Illuminator," says Thalions sales and marketing director Ulla Pia Dyrland-Lagadec about the marine spa brand's latest therapy.

The 45-minute US\$48 (€45, £33) facial, is designed to help clients rejuvenate after a long flight and incorporates two new products. The regenerating Energy Boost Mask contains vitamin E, F and B5, plus brown seaweed and sea fennel for activating micro-circulation within the skin. The Revitalizing Face Oil combines sea fennel with the intention of improving the skin's firmness, along with vegetable oils with anti-radical and anti-oxidant properties.

"We gathered all the key elements of our spa professional treatment concept – named Thalisons – as well as our laboratories know-how in marine active ingredients and transposed them into this



▲ The 45-minute facial features a new mask and oil which incorporate seaweed and sea fennel

unique protocol," explains Dyrland-Lagadec. "Anti-jet Lag Illuminator is the perfect combination between sensorial and visible results, providing the skin with an immediate healthy glow."

"It can also be combined with one of our five Thalisons body rituals for a comprehensive package as well as infinite relaxation and emotions from head to toe."

Spa-kit keyword: Thalions

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Comfort Zone turns to ancient natural healing



■ Latilla says the salt comes from one of Pakistan's oldest and largest salt mines near Kashmir

Comfort Zone has incorporated Himalayan salt into a new 60-minute massage and scrub to provide year-round detoxification and revitalisation.

Antonella Latilla, Comfort Zone's international spa treatment development and education master, designed the treatment in collaboration with cardiologist Dr Massimo Gualerzi and Dr Mariuccia Bucci, a nutridermatologist.

Antonella Latilla says:

"Himalayan Salt has been known since ancient times as a symbol of life, happiness, health and wealth and for its therapeutic benefits – it protects, purifies and heals."

The salt comes from Khewra, one of Pakistan's oldest and largest salt mines, where toxin-free salt fossils are harvested by hand and then washed, dried and stone ground.

Latilla adds: "This extraordinary ritual begins with a body massage using warm Himalayan salt stones, which immediately bestow relaxation, alleviating tension, stress and anxiety. It then proceeds with an



▲ Warm salt stones massage the body before an exfoliation

exhilarating salt scrub, with a combination of pink Himalayan salt and a nourishing aromatic oil to detoxify the body, ease aches and pains, stimulate the metabolism and restore vitality and balance."

The treatment kit includes 16 salt stones, as well as 950g of salt crystals.

The massage, which has a recommended price of US\$87 (€75 to 85, £60), can be used alongside the Comfort Zone Body Strategist firming, detox-slimming and anti-cellulite treatments.

Spa-kit keywords: Comfort Zone

Angel of Water targets medi-spa sector

In 1989, Rocco Bruno entered the then little known field of colon irrigation. After 10 years of perfecting the device, he formed Lifestream Purification Systems to produce The Angel of Water – which is now being marketed to the medi-spa world.

The device, which has FDA clearance, is designed to hydrate, activate and evacuate the contents of the bowel.

"People bathe and brush their teeth," says Gary Russ, director of sales and marketing. "Similarly, cleansing of the bowel allows

the innate wisdom of the body to do what it does best."

The Angel of Water features a comfortable, reclining chair and understated lighting, and patients will relax to the sound of falling water. Russ says the unit is sanitary, odourless, easy to clean and maintain and requires only a small room for installation. Lifestream provides a two-day training course for staff.

"Colon Irrigation is quickly becoming a popular modality and is in high demand in medi-spa settings," he says.

"The Angel of Water is not only a profit center for the spa, but also provides clients with an unprecedented state-of-the-art colon-cleansing experience."

Spa-kit.net keyword: Lifestream



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▲ The unit is said to provide a comfortable, cleansing experience



▲ Sales director Gary Russ



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Saltability offers healthy alternative to hot stone massages



▲ The rich mineral content of the stones is absorbed by the skin says Brown

Saltability's new salt reflexology bowl includes warmed Himalayan salt balls that can be held in hands for grounding, used for arthritis or other pains, or rolled on feet for a reflexology treatment.

"So many clients are looking for multiple ways to get healthy in one treatment, and Himalayan salt stone is a great way to do that," says Ann Brown, founder of Saltability and 20-year veteran of the spa industry.

The bowl can be used professionally or sold to clients. It doubles as a salt lamp with an emotionally uplifting, earthy glow that



◀ The bowl doubles up as a lamp which releases purifying ions releases anti-microbial negative ions, which purify the air and skin while providing a sense of wellbeing. Saltability started in 2014 with the debut of its Himalayan Salt Stone Massage,

which uses warm, hand-carved salt stones from the Himalayan mountains to stimulate specific meridians on the body. "The stones can be used with any good oil and when they glide over the skin, their rich mineral content is left to be absorbed," says Brown.

Spa-kit.net keyword: Saltability



▲ The machine is designed to enhance mood and to relax people

New Kodobio therapy combines light and aroma

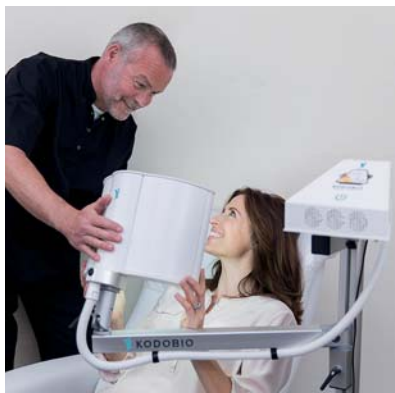
A device which uses light and scent stimuli to boost mood is to be used by European spa group Aspria in Brussels.

Launching in February, Kodobio Sensory Therapy, created by cell physiologist Tim Jacob of Cardiff University, UK, uses a device placed in front of the face for 15 to 30 minutes. It emits bright white light (similar to sunshine) up and down during a 60-second cycle. At the same time, pleasant essential oil aromas such as lemon, are emitted.

Jacob claims that as well as enhancing mood, the machine has a relaxing effect on blood pressure and can lower the heart rate.

He says: "I've spent many years researching light and smell and their effect on human psychophysiology. Combining the two sensory stimuli, each of which on their own induce positive benefits, has synergistic and profound effects."

Jacob adds: "We immediately saw that the benefits were too good to ignore and so we set about designing equipment that could deliver the therapy commercially, in a professional



▲ The 15-30 minute treatment is already being offered at Aspria in Brussels

environment such as a high quality health spa. We feel that Kodobio is ideal for a spa environment because it has such a short treatment duration and does not require lengthy therapist training, yet it still delivers measurable results."

Spa-kit.net keyword: Kodobio ●



▲ Founder Tim Jacob is a cell physiologist

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HAPPY TALK

Where does happiness live? Researchers in Japan use MRI to find out and say it could be the key to increasing wellbeing. Jane Kitchen reports

Scouring self-help books, exercising, taking time-out, going to spas... we go out of our way to make ourselves happy.

But do we really know what happiness is?

Scientists at Kyoto University, Japan, think they've found the answer by using MRI to narrow in on the neural structures behind subjective happiness. They hope their findings will have larger implications for happiness training.

Grey mass matter

Associate professor Wataru Sato and his team scanned the brains of 51 people using MRI. Participants then took a survey asking how happy they are generally, how intensely they feel emotions and how satisfied they are with their lives.

Their analysis, published in *Scientific Reports** in November, revealed that those who had a higher happiness score had more grey matter mass in the precuneus. The precuneus is a region in the medial parietal lobe that becomes active during states of consciousness – such as when people are self-reflecting or daydreaming.



■ Scientists hope their findings will have larger implications for happiness training

I'm very happy that we now know more about what it means to be happy

There was about a 15 per cent difference in size between the smallest and largest precuneus in the participants.

Sato's findings complements a study by Harvard Medical School and the University of Chinese Medicine which shows that less activity in the precuneus may be associated to depression.

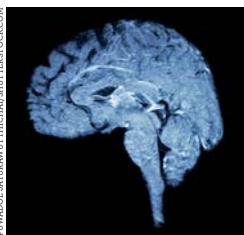
Tapping into happiness

"Over history, many eminent scholars like Aristotle have contemplated what happiness is," says Sato. "I'm very happy that we now know more about what it means to be happy."

This is one of the first studies to use MRI to investigate happiness and the Sato believe that this paves the way for future scientists to clinically measure what things make people happier.

He's also hopes his work may be useful in creating interventions to make people happier, especially if combined with meditation. Sato says: "Several studies show that meditation increases grey matter mass in the precuneus. This new insight on where happiness happens in the brain will be useful for developing happiness programmes based on scientific research." ●

* Sato et al. *The structural neural substrate of subjective happiness. Scientific Reports. November 2015.*



■ Brain activity was measured in 51 people



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Jessica joins Oakworks with extensive relationships and experience in the spa and massage industries. For over twelve years, she has been coaching, speaking to, and helping franchise salon, spa, massage, and medical professionals build their businesses and advance their careers.

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*Vice President of International
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