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## Mia Kyricos

Leading Hyatt's new global wellness business

### EXCLUSIVE

First look at Comfort Zone's €40m uber-green headquarters

# SUSIE & NERIO

Hosting the Global Wellness Summit in Italy's Wellness Valley

## Euphoria Retreat

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## Cancer awareness

Why are 90 per cent of spas still turning away people who are affected by cancer?

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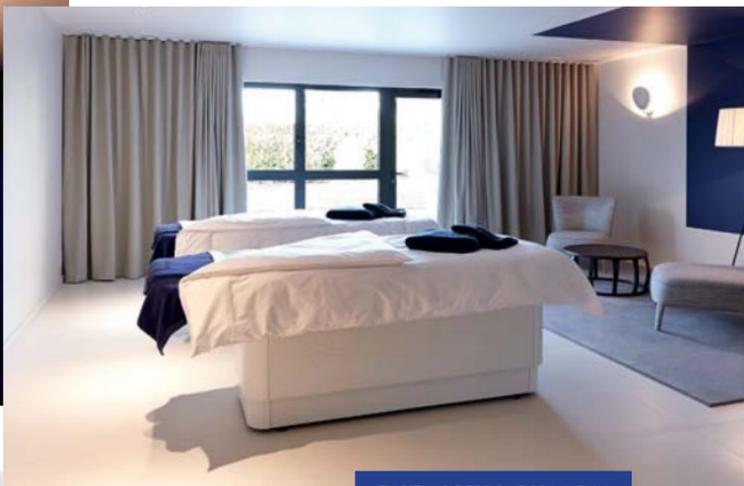
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## Healthy ageing

As the world's population ages, we need to find ways to live out our lives in better health. The healthy ageing industry is growing fast and now the spa and wellness industry is getting involved, with a new initiative launching in October

We're delighted to have been invited to support the launch of a new Global Wellness Institute Initiative for Healthy Ageing, in partnership with Amy McDonald of Under a Tree Consulting and with support from key figures in the healthy ageing community.

As the world's population ages, there's an increasing need to focus on health in the later years, while also being mindful of ways in which our industries can adapt to accommodate the needs of older customers.

The aim will be to share best practice and to examine how the spa and wellness industry can engage with and contribute to the outstanding work already being done in this area by organisations such as the International Council on Active Ageing and the World Health Organization's Department of Ageing and Life-Course in Geneva (WHO).

The WHO's official position is that "Every person - in every country in the world - should have the opportunity to live a long and healthy life." However, there's an acknowledgement that 75 per cent of the variance - when considering reduced physical and mental capacity in old age - occurs as a result of life circumstances.

Many of us have experienced firsthand the stark contrasts of the declining years of friends and family and seen how differently people age, depending on their life choices and circumstances.

Our industry has much wisdom to share in making a contribution to positive outcomes.

"There's no typical older person," says the WHO. "Some 80-year-olds have the physical and mental capacity of a 30-year-old. Others require extensive care and support for basic activities. Policy should be framed to improve the functional ability of all older people."



The new GWI Initiative will focus on healthy ageing

“There's no typical 'older person' says the World Health Organization. Some 80-year-olds have the physical and mental capacity of a 30-year-old”

The industry has already seen Wellness for Cancer make a powerful and practical difference on the ground and the aim is to be inspired by this and to rally expertise and support for a cross-sector initiative relating to ageing.

The purpose will be to improve prospects for people to live more healthy, purposeful and enjoyable lives in terms of mental and physical wellbeing in their later years.

If you'd like to contribute, please do get in touch.

**Liz Terry, editorial director @elizterry**

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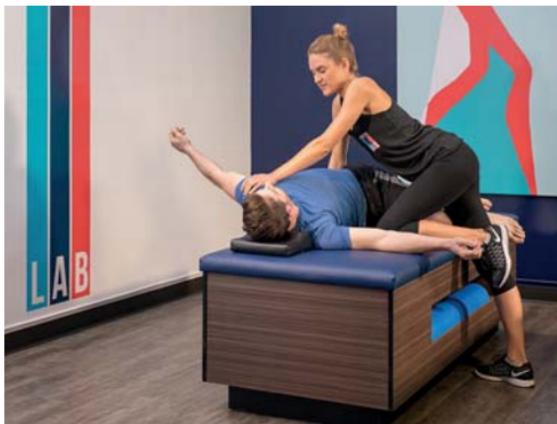
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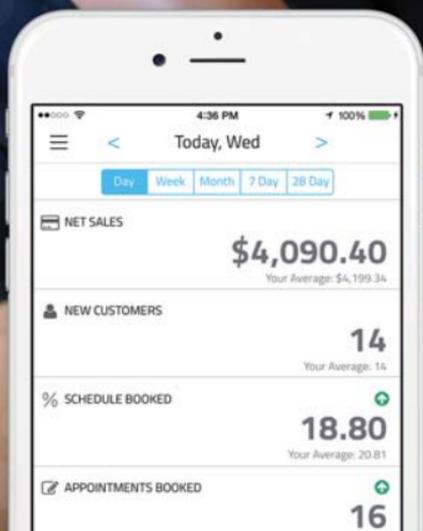
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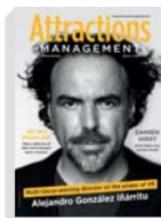


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Why are 90 per cent of spas still turning away people affected by cancer?



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## Spa Opportunities

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# Letters

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

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

## Spas can be profitable

Liz Holmes, director, Commercial Spa Strategies

While it's a common perception that spas rarely make money, I strongly disagree. It just takes forward planning...and a lot of it.

Three years on from introducing a high-quality spa Ramside Hall, UK is on track to reach £4.6m in spa revenue this year. Its secret is maximising all potential revenue streams.

Alongside a potential 250 hotel guests, the spa has close to 1,000 signed up members who pay in excess of £100 (US\$132, €112) a month, while during peak times the facility can host up to 100 day spa guests on a variety of packages from £55 (US\$72, €62) up to £375 (US\$494, €421).

The obvious challenge is managing the balance between these users and this is where robust planning comes in. At Ramside, for example, we created a pool and steamroom and sauna for hotel guests and a separate hydrotherapy, thermal and outdoor pool offering for those on a day spa package or residents looking to upgrade. We also added a VIP tranquility lounge, with its own pool and butler service, as a separate bookable space to take groups off poolside.

Equally potential 'pinch points', such as changing room capacity, at peak times need to be considered, as well as paying attention to scheduling. Spa days were created with



Liz Holmes

“Making all this work relies on a positive sales culture and real diligence in the reservations process”

different start times throughout the day to further manage flow.

Making all this work relies on a positive sales culture and real diligence in the reservations process. Revenue accountability cannot be left to chance either

and objective setting needs to reflect the aim of the business. Anyone opening a spa needs to underpin design and purchasing decisions with a clear business case to achieve great results.

● [commercialspastrategies.com](http://commercialspastrategies.com)

## Probiotics - the future of skincare

Steven Rosenfeld, president, FC Sturtevant Company

I applaud Dr Claudia Aguirre for her comments regarding the diversity of the skin microbiome and a call for more research, as prompted by the 2017-2018 Spa Foresight™ (see SB17/4 p20 and p68). Anytime a recognised authority speaks about the microbial ecosystems that live in and on our bodies, it increases the overall awareness and interest in the subject.

Dr Aguirre made some interesting observations in her submission and I especially



Steven Rosenfeld

“We can state emphatically that a new paradigm for the care and maintenance of the skin is on the horizon”

agree with the idea that further research into use of probiotics in skincare is very important. This is probably the reason why many of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies are collectively spending billions of dollars annually in this endeavour.

Our research began nearly 150 years ago, and today, we can state emphatically that a new paradigm for the care and maintenance of the skin is on the horizon. And yes, we believe that probiotics

will have a large role in this new paradigm. Already we are seeing the benefits of the proper use of strain specific bacteria in enhancing skin wellness protocols.

I expect that over the next few years we will be 'going back to the future' as we become reacquainted with our understanding of the body's natural healing capabilities and begin to engage in a regimen of skincare based on a more holistic platform. ● [columbiaprobiotics.com](http://columbiaprobiotics.com)



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# spa people



In my opinion, Hyatt's plans for wellness are a game-changer for hospitality

**Mia Kyricos** senior vice president, global head of wellbeing, Hyatt

**I**nternational hotel group Hyatt Hotels Corporation has appointed Mia Kyricos as its senior vice president, global head of wellbeing.

In this newly-created position, Kyricos will focus on wellbeing not only for customers at Hyatt's 750 properties worldwide, but also for its 110,000 employees. The two-pronged approach underscores the corporation's "commitment to care for people so they can be their best".

She will be responsible for shaping a multidimensional global wellbeing strategy, providing leadership and subject matter expertise to help establish the vision, objectives and strategic priorities for wellbeing at Hyatt.



Kyricos will focus on the wellbeing of both Hyatt customers and employees



Hyatt acquired wellness brand Miraval last year

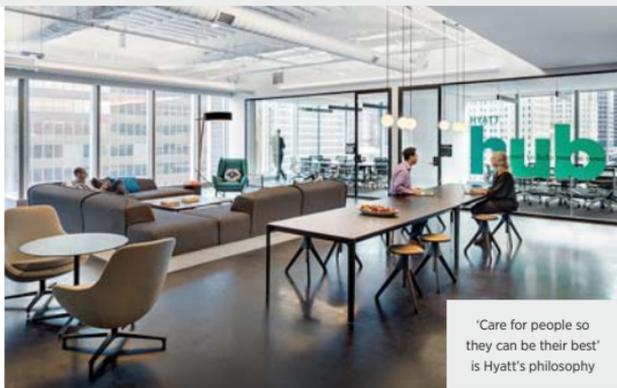
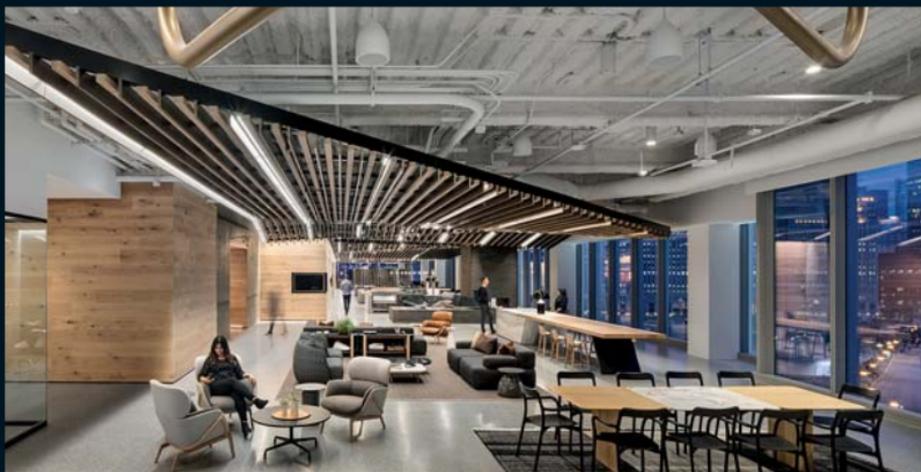
"This is the first time I've seen a company of any kind create a senior leadership position to oversee the global strategy of wellness-related products and services in the marketplace as well as the wellbeing of its employees," Kyricos tells *Spa Business*. "In my opinion, it's a game-changer for both hospitality and big business at large.

"The approach and level of priority that Hyatt is placing on wellbeing is unique. This isn't just about what happens in a certain segment of its hotel business such as spa, fitness or food and beverage,

it's about realizing the corporation's highest purpose - its *raison d'être* - and that is to 'care for people'."

Kyricos will report to Mark Vondrasek, Hyatt's chief commercial officer, who says: "As a pioneer in the business of wellness, Mia is uniquely qualified to further define Hyatt's wellbeing efforts... She's a respected leader in the wellbeing industry and her expertise across wellness, hospitality and brand strategy will fervently support and expand Hyatt's robust wellbeing offering."

Hyatt has 14 hotel brands in more than 55 countries,



Hyatt's HQ takes corporate wellness to a new level by giving employees a taste of its hotel experience

Instead, they've chased me down with a case prepared. And the significance of this shift, along with Hyatt's acquisitions of Miraval and exhale, have been industry and personal career milestones that my fellow pioneers of wellness will understand.

"I honestly can't wait to roll up my sleeves, partner with the team and further help to bring Hyatt's vision for wellness to life."

Most recently, Kyricos served as president and CEO of Kyricos & Associates, a boutique advisory firm providing guidance to wellness-driven hospitality, tourism and healthy lifestyle companies. Prior to that, she was chief brand officer at Spafinder Wellness, where she co-founded the Wellness Travel Awards programme, which was issued annually across 40 countries at the World Travel Market.

She also held leadership roles at Core Performance, the workplace wellness division of athletes performance firm EXOS and Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide where she created six international spa brands and signature wellness experiences (see SB10/3 p24). ●

including US wellness focused brands Miraval and exhale, which it acquired in 2017.

Kyricos will build on steps Hyatt has already taken on its wellbeing journey, such as investing in the growth of Miraval and exhale, including the renovation of existing sites and the opening of new Miraval resorts in Texas and Massachusetts.

Some of its other wellness initiatives include the World of Hyatt Credit Card, which provides bonus points for spend on fitness, and adding on-demand exhale video content and enhanced fitness

and wellbeing environments at Hyatt Place hotels. In addition, Hyatt has curated World of Hyatt member experiences designed to benefit mind, body and spirit.

From a corporate wellness point of view, Hyatt has also raised the bar with its new headquarters in Chicago – a Gensler-designed property that has been created to give employees a taste of its hotel experience.

Kyricos concludes: "This is the first time in over two decades that I haven't had to chase down the executive team of a company to make the case for wellbeing.

The approach and level of priority that Hyatt is placing on wellbeing is unique





## Millennials are infusing new life and excitement into sweat bathing rituals

**Mikkel Aaland** photographer, author and sauna enthusiast



Aaland is making an eight-part documentary focused on sauna culture around the world

**M**ikkel Aaland is on a mission to find 'the perfect sweat' – a mission which is taking him around the world to film an eight-part TV documentary. What he's discovered along the way is an explosive rebirth of ancient sauna (sweat) bathing traditions.

"Everywhere I go, I meet young people who are hungry for authentic, healthy experiences," he says. "Millennials are infusing new life and excitement into sweat bathing rituals."

"In Russia, for example, the banya was mostly a place to clean and drink vodka, but now young people have transformed it back to its original position as a healthy place you go to relax and share community. In Finland, in the 70s, public baths were closing on a near daily basis and now the opposite is true. Almost every month a new one opens, crowded with enthusiastic patrons."

Aaland has a life-long passion for heat experiences and in the mid 70s he spent three years researching and writing *Sweat*, a classic book detailing global bathing traditions. A lot has changed since then, he says,

The TV series is designed to inspire and motivate people to "include the healthy activity in their daily life"

including the accumulation of serious medical research proving the benefits of thermal experiences. He also feels the world is more stressed out than ever and *Perfect Sweat*, the series, "is all about educating, inspiring and motivating as many people as possible to include the healthy activity in their daily life".

Teaming up with local guides and directors, Aaland has already filmed episodes on the sauna in Finland and the banya in Russia and is set to focus on the Islamic hammam, Japanese mushi-buro, Mexican temazcal and American Indian and Eskimo sweat lodge.

"In the series I always ask what makes a perfect bathing experience? For some, it's about who they're sharing the bath [sauna] with. Others say the physical characteristic is the most important – does the bath get hot enough? Is the steam just right?"





"One of my favourite responses came from a banya steam master outside Moscow who said 'you have to allow time for the perfect bath'. Her words are a good thing for those of us living busy, hectic lives to take to heart."

During his travels, he's noticed that a number of luxury spas and wellness retreats are starting to embrace bathing traditions - which are increasingly popular with tourists and locals alike - and that those which offer just standard a steam and sauna room are missing a trick.

"I think of bathhouses like I think of restaurants," he says. "There are restaurants that serve cheap, fast food with little attention to quality... The discerning customer will always go for quality and authenticity."

"I love what's happening all over Europe with the sauna aufguss movement - spas that feature



Aaland has teamed up with local sauna experts and guides, and episodes on the Russian banya and Finnish sauna have already been filmed

aufguss rituals have experienced a huge uptick in customers."

Aaland, who's in talks with streaming companies such as Netflix and National Geographic, hopes to finish filming *Perfect Sweat* by the end of 2019. The series is being made in cooperation with Seattle-based Bray's Run Productions and Helsinki production company VAARA. ●



“As a young girl, I always dreamt of designing my very own spa and *Celebrity Edge* proved to be the perfect outlet for living out my dreams

**Kelly Hoppen** owner,  
Kelly Hoppen Interiors



Global interior designer Kelly Hoppen has taken to the seas by creating a 22,000sq ft (2,044sq m) nature-inspired spa and on-board accommodation for the new the *Celebrity Edge* cruise line.

Hoppen, whose career spans four decades, is known for her subtle “east meets west style based on clean lines and neutral tones blended with warmth and opulence”. She’s put her stamp on the home, yachts and jets of private clients around the world and now focuses on commercial projects including restaurants, bars, hotels – and spas.

“The spa has always been a sacred space to me. As a young girl, I always dreamt of designing my very own spa and *Celebrity Edge* proved to be the perfect outlet for living out my dreams,” she says.

“A spa is a place where one goes to relax and be pampered, so for me The Spa on *Celebrity Edge* had to be neutral in palette and complementary lighting, evokes a sense of calmness. Every aspect of the design is meaningful to me; from the dramatic crystal installation – which was inspired by the qualities that crystals have had on my life – to the imposing and dramatic, yet Zen sculpture acting as a reception desk.”



The spa’s neutral tones and clean lines are indicative of Hoppen’s interior design style

Natural elements are infused into the experience through a SEA – sea, earth and air – concept. The Thermal Suite, with eight heat experiences, for example, boasts a salt room, rainfall water therapy room, float room and crystalarium.

Meanwhile a Hot Mineral Body Boost, Zero Gravity Wellness Massage and Thousand Flower Detox Wrap are some of the signature offerings. There’s a huge range of 124 treatments available.

Elemis Biotec facials are also on the menu and the company has created an Elemis Ingredient Wall which gives insights into the science and natural ingredients

behind its products as well as acting as a retail concept.

Gharieni has supplied specialist treatment beds including the Spa Wave MLW Amphibia Table which features water-filled cushions to adapt to guests’ anatomy, as well as customisable colour therapy lighting.

A medi-spa, Kerastase hair salon and fitness centre offering Bungee Fit and Fitness on Demand virtual workout classes complete the spa.

Glenn Fusfield, president and CEO, One Spa World, which will operate the spa says: “We’ve created a concept that not only evolves spa and wellness but sets the new standard.”

Based in Florida, *Celebrity Edge* will make her maiden voyage in December with initial cruises around the Caribbean. It’s owned by *Celebrity Cruises* which has a fleet of 12 ships plus another three being built.

Lisa Lutoff-Perlo, president and CEO, *Celebrity Cruises* says the group turned to Hoppen to “completely transform the spa experience and develop an atmosphere that envelops you in luxury and soothes your soul.”

Other hospitality projects Hoppen has worked on include the Lux Belle Mare and Lux Grand Gaube, both in Mauritius (see SB17/4 p76). ●

“The spa has always been a sacred space to me

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## Watermark brings wellness programming to senior living

Under a Tree Health and Wellness Consulting has been retained by Watermark Retirement Communities to create wellness programming for the company's 52 senior living and care communities across the US.

"Watermark is transforming ageing, taking what we know of the best destination spas and their approach to caring for guests – including innovative programming like equine and horticultural therapy – and integrating it into each community," says Amy McDonald, owner and CEO of Under a Tree.

Watermark says it has a mission to dramatically improve the quality of life of its residents through transformative programmes designed to support physical and intellectual health, along with emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

McDonald will work on concept, design and pre-opening for each of the upcoming



McDonald says Watermark is "transforming ageing" through this programming

properties as the company's hospitality wellness expert. She says she'll also use her knowledge of five-star hospitality to bring a sense of high-end guest service to the communities. Signature touch points may include daily rituals for residents, self-care programmes for skilled nurses or caregivers, and the integration of wellness into the communities' design features.

McDonald also plans to help enhance intention and mindfulness at Watermark communities, and to will work with adult children of residents to engage them in the process of their parent's journey and celebration of their life – something that also is important to her on a personal level. More: [http://lei.sr?a=y4g8M\\_B](http://lei.sr?a=y4g8M_B)



“I know the difference transformative programmes and whole-person wellness can make in people's lives”  
Amy McDonald



Programming will include equine therapy

## Royal Champagne Hotel & Spa features 16,000sq ft Biologique Recherche spa

A new hotel in the Champagne region of France – one of the world's great wine regions – has opened, offering guests exclusive access to private Champagne houses, harvesting sessions with local wine producers, wine tastings and a destination spa spanning 16,000sq ft (1,486sq m).

The wellness centre at the Royal Champagne Hotel & Spa was created in partnership with French skincare brand

Biologique Recherche and comprises nine treatment rooms, fitness facilities, a wood-lined yoga studio, eucalyptus-infused sauna, manicure and pedicure stations and a mosaic-tiled hammam.

Completing the experience are two chaise-longue-lined swimming pools, along with dedicated staff who will deliver juice blends and guide guests to multiple relaxation lounges. More: [http://lei.sr?a=9F7V2\\_B](http://lei.sr?a=9F7V2_B)



The spa includes two chaise-longue-lined swimming pools

## Spa Strategy helps create three-storey wellness oasis for The Phoenician

The Phoenician Resort in Arizona, US, has unveiled a new three-storey spa as part of a massive, multi-year resort renovation. The new spa was created in partnership with consultants Spa Strategy, whose scope included business analysis for growth as well as design and technical review services.

"Arizona is one of the most competitive spa markets in North America, and Scottsdale has a very high concentration of luxury spas. A challenging market to operate in, it was imperative that the new spa set the benchmark high," says Claire Way, managing director of Spa Strategy. "Our business analysis, combined with input from director of spa Sheryl McCormick and the resort team, created a



“It was imperative that the new spa set the benchmark high”  
Claire Way

Phoenician Spa replaces the former Centre for Well-Being. A significant change was the decision to create a slightly larger footprint, so that the spa could enhance the guest experience and expand key revenue areas.

wish list of items for the new spa that would set it apart from its competitors and drive business growth – a key reason for the renovation.”

The 24-treatment-room

spa has views of Camelback Mountain

Changes include a larger fitness area so that membership can be offered, expanded retail space, updated luxury changing rooms, a hydrotherapy suite, a luxurious spa suite, dedicated relaxation area and a vertical expansion to add a third floor with a rooftop pool featuring views over Camelback Mountain – a key element in the redesign. “An important factor in the design process was to create a spa that is flexible,” says Way.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=3h758\\_B](http://lei.sr?a=3h758_B)



## Evolution Wellness acquires Fivements and plans brand expansion

Evolution Wellness Holdings has acquired integrated wellness lifestyle company Fivements for an undisclosed sum. Bali-based Fivements owns eco-wellness retreat Fivements Bali and the newly opened, holistic sports wellness retreat, Fivements Hong Kong (See SB17/2 p76).

“Evolution Wellness has an acute understanding and respect for the unique nature of Fivements and intends to preserve and build upon this,” says Simon Flint, CEO of Evolution Wellness. But he doesn't rule out expansion. “We envisage opening standalone yoga and sacred arts centres around the region – Hong Kong and Singapore, in particular – for new customers to engage with the Fivements brand.”

Founded in 2010 by Chicco and Lahra Tatriele, Fivements



Fivements Bali is set in a jungle clearing outside Ubud



“We envisage opening standalone yoga and sacred arts centres around the region”  
Simon Flint

Bali is set in a secluded jungle clearing just outside Ubud, and focuses on traditional Balinese healing philosophies, such as Tri Hita Karana. The Tatrieles will stay on with the company.

“Chicco and Lahra have been instrumental to the growth of Fivements since its inception, and they're an essential component of the brand itself,” says Flint. “We look forward to leveraging their passion, knowledge and expertise to take the brand to greater heights.”

Evolution Wellness was established in 2017, when it acquired two leading fitness brands in Southeast Asia – Celebrity Fitness and Fitness First. It now controls one of the largest fitness club networks in the Asian region with over 150 clubs in six countries.

More: [http://lei.sr?a=q9n3n\\_B](http://lei.sr?a=q9n3n_B)



Estonia has a long history of smoke saunas

## Estonia creates 'spa trail' highlighting traditional wellness experiences

Visit Estonia has launched a 'spa trail' inviting visitors to discover some of the best wellness, sauna and spa offerings available across the country.

The map highlights key areas that provide a range of wellness experiences across five categories: city spas, wellness spas, eco spas, saunas and sauna centres, and enables guests to choose their own trail across the country.

Experiences available on the trail range from typical Estonian traditions such as juniper body peels and home-brewed beer treatments, to more luxurious offerings and countryside smoke saunas. The smoke sauna traditions of Old Võromaa in Estonia have been added to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list.

More: [http://lei.sr?&q9j4h\\_B](http://lei.sr?&q9j4h_B)



Students also get to run Fresh, an organic restaurant

## Switzerland's Glion Institute launches Wellness to Business executive education

Hospitality management school Glion Institute of Higher Education is enhancing its focus on wellness and sustainability through the development of two new initiatives: Wellness to Business, a range of executive education programmes; and Fresh, a public restaurant specialising in healthy and sustainable cuisine.

The Wellness to Business Executive Education offers online learning, on-campus courses, customised workshops and consultancy services for hotel general managers,

spa directors and other leaders in the wellness and hospitality industry. The programme aims to fulfil a need for industry-relevant executive education, with an emphasis on how a strategic approach to wellness innovation and technology can drive business success. Wellness to Business is led by Mariana Palmeiro, a spa and wellness expert and faculty member at Glion with more than a decade of experience in luxury spa and hotel operations.

Glion has also partnered with the Switzerland's Clinique La Prairie to develop business case studies and standards. All this is complemented by Fresh, a student-run healthy restaurant.

More: [http://lei.sr?&6h8c9\\_B](http://lei.sr?&6h8c9_B)



“We are pleased to introduce this new educational offering at the executive level”

Mariana Palmeiro

## Israel plans major investment to revamp Dead Sea resort area



The Dead Sea is known for its saline water

According to media reports in Israel, the country's government is planning to expand and upgrade the neglected Dead Sea resort area into "one of the world's top tourism destinations."

National newspaper *Haaretz* reveals that the District Planning Committee for the south has agreed to invest ILS1bn (US\$276m, €236m, £208m) in the scheme, which will upgrade the main hotel zones of Ein Bokek and Hamei Zohar, and link them as a single attraction. The publication added that ageing facilities have led

to a decline in the number of Israeli visitors to the famous site, although it still attracts one million tourists each year due to the health-enhancing properties of its extremely saline water.

Moshe Safdie Architects are working on plans for the resort area and will add new restaurants, a central spa, visitor and cultural centres, a bicycle path, as many as 15 hotels and a beachside promenade to link it all. The buildings will be low-rise, "to fit the contours of the region's geography."

More: [http://lei.sr?&52y4j\\_B](http://lei.sr?&52y4j_B)



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## DIARY DATES

24-26 September 2018

ISPA Conference &amp; Expo

Phoenix, Arizona, USA

The International Spa Association's annual gathering offers three days of speaker presentations, plus an expo for spa and beauty suppliers.

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

30 September-1 October 2018

Olympia Beauty

London, England

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

6-8 October 2018

Global Wellness Summit

Technogym Village, Cesena, Italy

This key event gathers leaders to shape the future of the global wellness industry. This year's theme is Shaping the Business of Wellness.

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

16-17 October 2018

Independent Hotel Show

Olympia, London

A curated collection of more than 300 product and service providers from across the hotel supply chain.

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

23-26 October 2018

Spatec Middle East

The St Regis Dubai Al Habtoor, UAE

An event that brings together spa operators from the Middle East region to meet with suppliers for one-on-one meetings.

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

3-6 November 2018

Spa and Wellness

International Congress

Astana, Kazakhstan

An annual event for managers and owners of spa and wellness facilities in Russia and Eastern Europe.

[www.1swic.ru](http://www.1swic.ru)

7-9 November 2018

US Hot Springs Conference

Glenwood Springs, Colorado, USA

For hot springs owners, operators, GMs and facilities directors.

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



Le Spa has added a new, light-filled swimming pool

## Four Seasons Hotel George V unveils new spa

The Four Seasons Hotel George V Paris has unveiled its new Le Spa, after an extensive renovation that includes adding a new 17m (55ft) swimming pool, vitality pool with hydromassage water experience circuit, a 90sq m (970sq ft) fitness room and new results-driven treatments. The new Le Spa is spread over 720sq m (7,750sq ft), and has been designed by Parisian interior designer Pierre-Yves Rochon, who has drawn inspiration from ancient spa traditions.

The space includes six treatment rooms and uses a colour palette of light grey and silver tones.

"We meticulously selected materials, furniture and pieces of art that embody the spirit codes and harmony of the

hotel, both classic and resolutely contemporary," says Rochon.

As part of upgrade, new signature experiences have been developed, including a Kobido traditional Japanese facelift, based on the oldest facial tradition in Japan, dating back to 1472, when it was used exclusively for imperials and nobility.

Other fresh treatments include an Alena organic certified bio anti-ageing treatment and a Dr Burgener Escape.

"Focusing on results-orientated, non-invasive, manual skincare techniques has been key in my approach to offering our guests the very best in unique, made-to-measure, innovative skincare solutions," says Nathalie Delclos, spa director.

**More:** [http://lei.sr?a=N6q7z\\_B](http://lei.sr?a=N6q7z_B)



The spa has been designed by Pierre-Yves Rochon

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Saffron fondant potato, Parma ham wrapped asparagus, tender stem, and pan jus



**Fragrant Malaysian tiger prawn curry**

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**Mushroom and cashew nut wellington**

Parsnip and potato puree, confit carrot wedge, mushroom jus



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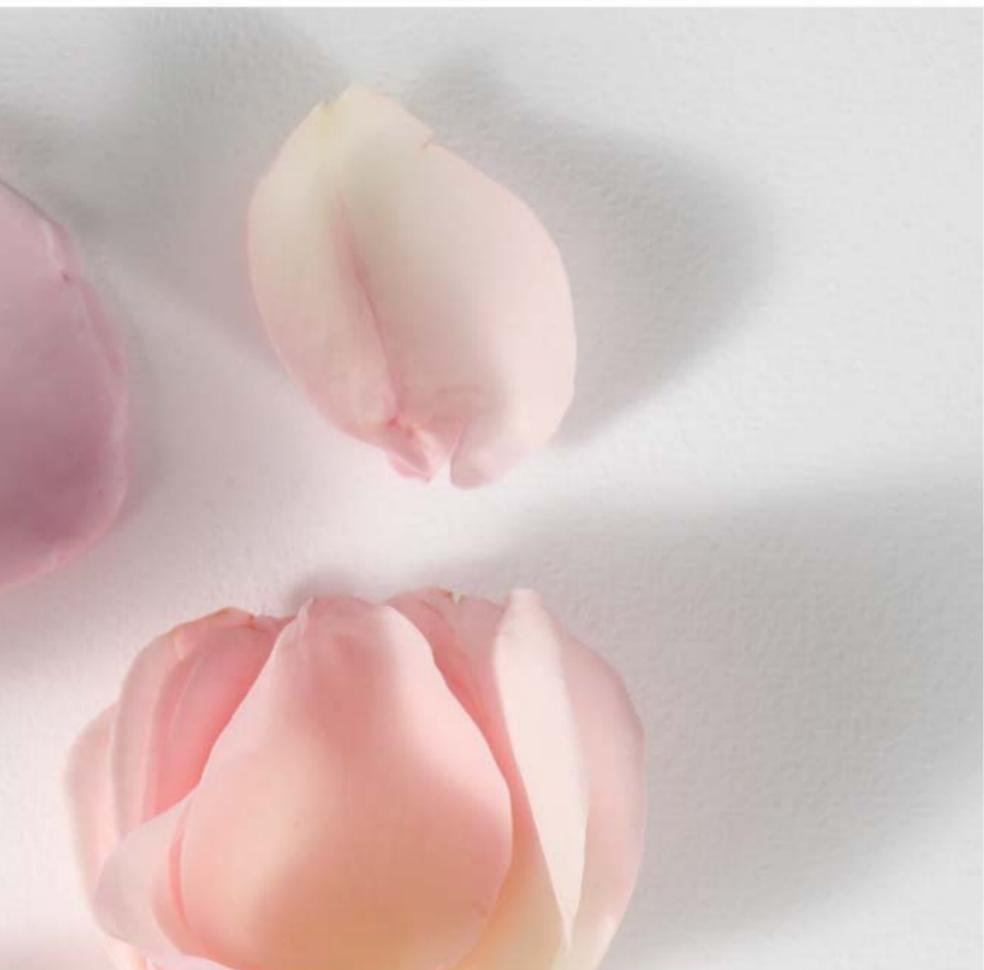


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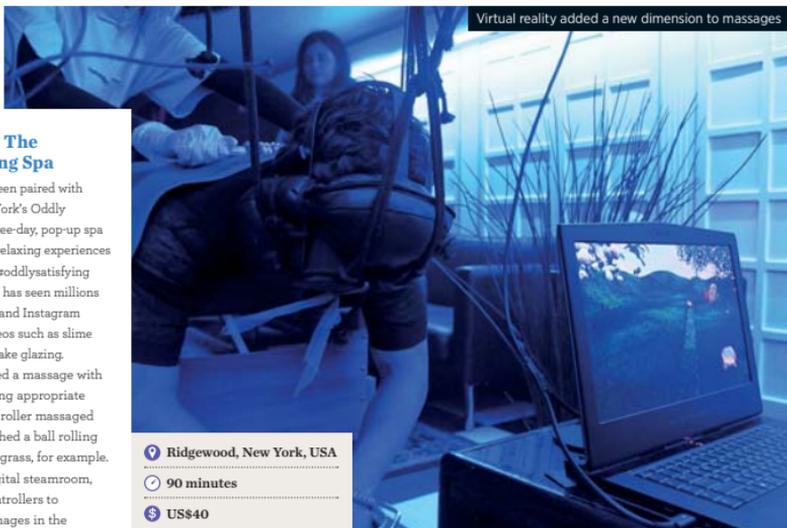
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# On the menu

In a new series, *Spa Business* reveals the tastiest wellbeing treatments, programmes and retreats being served up in spas and wellness resorts



## VR massage at The Oddly Satisfying Spa

Spa treatments have been paired with virtual reality at New York's Oddly Satisfying Spa. The three-day, pop-up spa featured a curation of relaxing experiences inspired by the rise of oddlysatisfying internet content which has seen millions of people on YouTube and Instagram tuning in to watch videos such as slime making and marbled cake glazing.

Treatments included a massage with a VR headset projecting appropriate 3D simulations – as a roller massaged the back, people watched a ball rolling through a field of tall grass, for example.

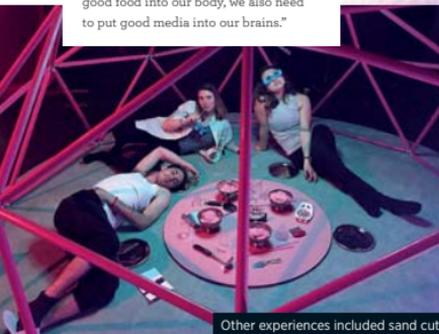
In the fog-filled digital steamroom, people used hand controllers to manipulate cosmic images in the headsets. Other experiences included drinking placebo cocktails and touching tactile surfaces and objects.

Co-creator Tyler Pridgen says the spa is a response to digital anxiety. "We have to have a sense of digital wellness. In the same way that we would only put good food into our body, we also need to put good media into our brains."

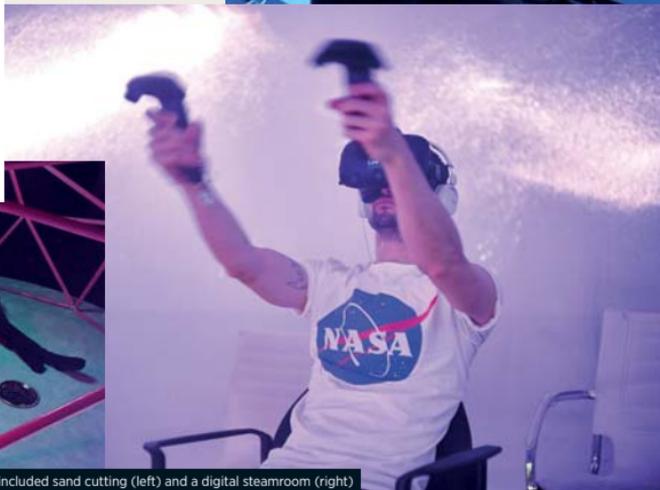
📍 Ridgewood, New York, USA

🕒 90 minutes

💰 US\$40



Other experiences included sand cutting (left) and a digital steamroom (right)



- 📍 Select Hard Rock hotels
- 🕒 50 and 80 minutes
- 💰 US\$150 (€130, £115) and US\$210 (€180, £160)

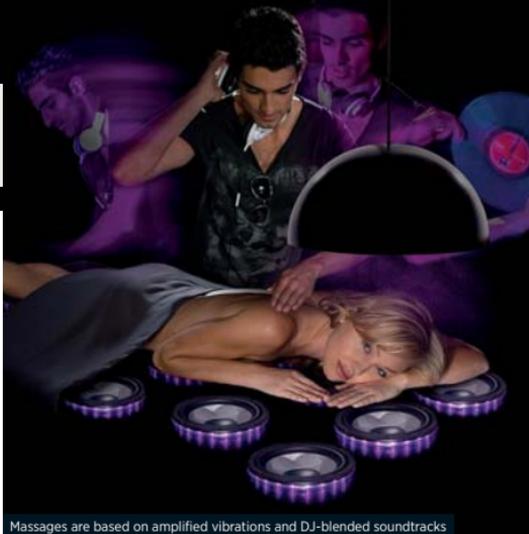
## Music-centric spa menu

The reinvented Rock Spas at select Hard Rock hotels feature a fully immersive music-centric spa menu, based on amplified vibrations, pressures and patterns.

The Rhythm and Motion treatments include Synchronicity, a rhythmic massage performed to a "masterfully blended" soundtrack. Vibrations ripple through the massage table's embedded subwoofer speakers

as beats from a pendant speaker above send pulses through the body, leaving guests feeling energised and invigorated. Other treatments include the Smooth Operator dry brush experience and a Wrap Mix envelopment.

Earlier this year, Hard Rock also launched the Rock Om in-room yoga experience combining original DJ tracks and on-demand fitness instruction.



Massages are based on amplified vibrations and DJ-blended soundtracks



Authors Gilbert (left) and Strayed (right) focus on creativity

## Eat, Pray, Love author hosts spa workshop

Elizabeth Gilbert, the author of *Eat, Pray, Love*, is to run a workshop to help people get started with creative pursuits at the US holistic resort 1440 Multiversity this September.

Participants of the Brave Magic programme will hear about Gilbert's creative life and take part in experiential workshops to unlock their own potential - exploring "pathways to expressing yourself and your story".

Gilbert says: "Something I find myself saying to people all the time is to 'start knowing'.

- 📍 1440 Multiversity, USA
- 🕒 Three days
- 💰 US\$550 (€468, £414) excluding accommodation

What are you waiting for? To know what to do? Let's work together and open your eyes for you to 'know'."

She will co-host Brave Magic with Cheryl Strayed, author of best-selling memoir *Wild*. The duo's workshop at 1440 Multiversity last year was a sell-out success.

California's 1440 Multiversity is a self-care spa where guests explore wellness through learning, connecting and healing

## Civana gives back to wellness professionals

US wellness hotel Civana is launching a Healers' Vitality Program which extends a discounted Friends and Family rate to wellness industry professionals.



Kevin Kelly

The Healers' Vitality Program slashes the daily room rates by an average of US\$100, with prices starting at US\$99 (€85, £75) a night in high season, plus an Experience Fee of US\$25 (€22, £20), which includes eight to 12 complimentary fitness classes.

"In order for our wellness industry to thrive, we need to support the healing professionals who give to others every day,"

says Kevin Kelly, chair and CEO. "They deserve an affordable respite to recharge and be inspired."

The programme is open to individuals in the health and wellness field including spa and wellness staff and those working for product companies. ▶

- 📍 Civana Carefree, Arizona, USA
- 💰 From US\$99 (€85, £75) per night



Room discounts and free fitness classes are included

## ▶ SPA PROGRAMMES



Guests choose their own ingredients for dishes



Gaushan de Silva

### Personalised culinary concept at Velaa

Velaa Private Island in the Maldives has introduced a personalised approach to gourmet cuisine. At the start of each day, diners choose from a range of fine ingredients, such as Japanese bluefin tuna, Maldivian lobster or Anjou pigeon. These then form the basis of their own personalised tasting menu.

The Essence of Taste concept is available to diners at Aragu - Velaa's signature restaurant

which serves contemporary European cuisine with an Asian twist. Cost depends on ingredients chosen and number of courses.

"I like to surprise my guests with flavour combinations they have never experienced before and perhaps have not even imagined are possible," says chef Gaushan de Silva. He's worked at some of the most notable Michelin starred restaurants in Europe and was once the private house chef at the Royal Palace in Jordan.



Meals can include organic tofu

📍 Velaa Private Island, the Maldives

💰 Personalised per ingredients and number of courses

An earth clay experience was led by an Aboriginal elder



### Peninsula Hot Springs celebrates Aboriginal culture

Didgeridoo sound meditation, smoking ceremonies and a bathe-in cinema experience were all part of NAIDOC week celebrations at Peninsula Hot Springs in July. The eight-day programme was developed to recognise the rich living culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

In a special workshop, Aboriginal elder Aunty Anne Warren shared her knowledge of traditional cultural clay rituals and people got a chance to paint themselves, friends and families in natural Australian earth clays. ▶

📍 Peninsula Hot Springs, Australia

💰 Prices vary and many activities were complimentary

Bathers meditated during a didgeridoo rendition

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## Singing bowl artistry at Four Seasons Vietnam

Sound healing therapist Oanh Ngo has taken up residency at Four Seasons Vietnam, the only property in the country to have a complete eight-octave set of crystal singing bowls. Singing bowls work by producing vibrational frequencies to induce a deep meditative, peaceful state and under Ngo's guidance all treatments at the hotel's Heart of the Earth Spa now incorporate the practice.

A menu highlight is the 2.5-hour Nam Hai Earth Song massage which begins with a spicy cleansing smoke of agarwood, a sound and



Oanh Ngo

📍 Four Seasons The Nam Hai, Hoi An, Vietnam

🕒 150 minutes

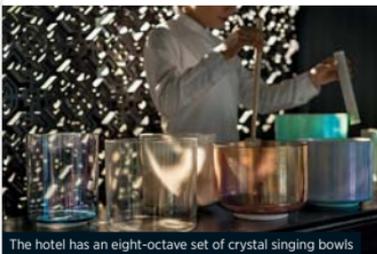
💰 US\$330 (€283, £250)

breath ritual and a Vietnamese scrub. These are followed by a deep pressure massage using gem-tipped tuning forks and a fully immersive sound bath using the crystal bowls.

"When I play them I feel at peace and it helps me to deeply connect back to myself as well as to our Mother Earth," says Ngo, who studied natural healing at Australia's Karyna Centre for Transformation before training in the artistry of singing bowls.



Gem-tipped tuning forks are used in the massage



The hotel has an eight-octave set of crystal singing bowls

## Su-Man Hsu takes up residency at the Sanderson

Celebrity facialist Su-Man Hsu, who's treated stars like Naomi Campbell and Sienna Miller, has become a resident specialist at the Sanderson's Agua Spa in London, UK.

Hsu's Skin Reborn Sculpting Facial has been likened to a "natural version of Botox" and includes her own massage techniques - developed over her years of experience in dance, pilates, shiatsu and Oriental facials - as well as her own skincare range.

"In my career as a facialist, I have touched and treated over 10,000 faces," she says. "Being able to transform people and bring them to a better place makes me truly happy."



Su-Man Hsu

📍 Agua Spa, the Sanderson, UK

🕒 60 minutes

💰 £250 (US\$332, €282)

Jacqueline Kneebone, regional director of spa and retail for Sanderson's owning company SBE, adds that Hsu's "expertise and revolutionary techniques fits extremely well with our ethos."

Hsu joins a range of expert therapists who are residents at Agua Spa, including Eve Lom.

Agua Spa at The Sanderson, UK



## Growing interest in 'wellness meeting' packages

A number of spa resorts are taking wellness a step further by launching corporate guest packages which combine spa treatments with other health-focused offerings.

This could potentially be the solution to enticing the MICE market - an audience spas typically struggle to capture - over the threshold.

Recent examples include Fairmont Quasar Istanbul's Mindful Moments and Como Metropolitan London's Helpful Meetings.

Meanwhile, Mandarin Oriental's Mindful Meetings initiative has launched in its 31 hotels worldwide. The five key wellness dimensions of the package include nourishment, movement, stillness, connections and wellbeing. Enhancements include healthy and energising menu choices,



• Mandarin Oriental is rolling out its Mindful Meetings worldwide



yoga sessions, guided meditations, digital wellness and jet lag tips, massage and movement breaks, custom spa events, expert health talks and group exercise activities. A promotional rate of US\$10,000 (€8,505, £7,540) per group or event runs until 30 September.

📍 Mandarin Oriental hotels worldwide

💰 US\$10,000 (€8,505, £7,540)

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## ▶ SPA PROGRAMMES

### Illuminating water story at Bad Ragaz

The story of the famous spring waters and the elements at Switzerland's Bad Ragaz spa resort will be depicted in a stunning 90-minute multimedia light show every day from June to September.

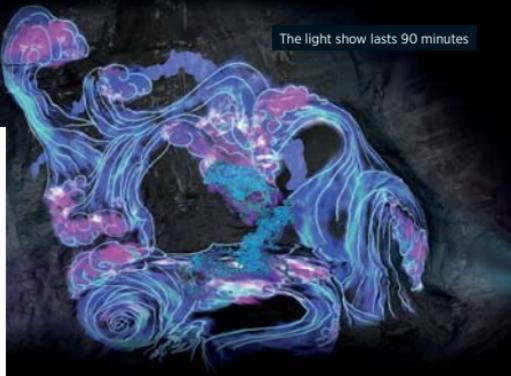
Light artists will project 1km wide 3D effects and images with millimetre precision on the rock face of Tamina Gorge, the source of Bad Ragaz's waters.

The 36.5°C thermal springs are the most valuable asset of Bad Ragaz (see p88) and

are used in its numerous pools and treatments. They were discovered 800 years ago by Benedictine monks and have a wide range of positive effects on the body.

The Light Ragaz project is a collaboration between the resort, Zurich agency Projektil and local tourism and government authorities.

The resort is offering a one-off Light Ragaz Special of CHF595 (US\$600, €512, £453) a night until 30 September.



The light show lasts 90 minutes

- 📍 Grand Resort Bad Ragaz, Switzerland
- 🕒 90 minutes
- 💰 CHF595 (US\$600) including accommodation



Bürgenstock's new wellness hotel



### Bürgenstock reveals rejuvenation programmes

Dermatologists and cosmeticians have created a trio of healthy beauty and ageing treatments at Switzerland's newly refreshed Bürgenstock resort.

Delight Pro, Bodyforming Pro and Rejuvenation Pro all focus on revitalisation. The most expensive, the four-night CHF2,140 (US\$2,156, €1,840, £1,630) Bodyforming Pro, includes a coffee peel and coffee bean oil massage, a body tone wrap by SkinCeuticals, an Icoone laser therapy body forming treatment and a cryotherapy session.

The treatments are a signature offering at Waldhotel Health & Medical Excellence, a new Matteo Thun-designed hotel, medical centre and spa which forms part of Bürgenstock's CHF550m (US\$544m, €516m, £438m) reopening (see SB18/1 p62).

Resort managing director Bruno Schöpfer says: "With Switzerland's excellent reputation in medicine and this spectacular setting on the lake surrounded by these beautiful mountains, we believe guests will be drawn here for both rejuvenation or simply a healthy getaway."



Cryotherapy is included

- 📍 Bürgenstock Resort, Switzerland
- 🕒 Four nights
- 💰 CHF2,140 (US\$2,156)



McCann (left) sees a need for transformational experiences

### Writing for renewal at Grayshott

UK destination spa Grayshott

Health Spa has taken a fresh approach to health with its new enrichment retreats. First in the series is a week-long Writing for Renewal and spa retreat. One to one sessions, group discussions and creative journal writing take a 'mindfulness to writing' approach and explore the themes of love, hope, desire, work, loss, chaos and confusion.

Inner Resilience, a retreat to support physical and emotional wellbeing, and Creative Well Being, which uses Emergenetics personal profiling and creative arts for personal development, complete the series.

"People are more inclined to open themselves up for self-reflection in a trusted, safe, healing environment - modern life gives us so little time or space for any depth of exploration," says general manager Sheila McCann, who used to run Chiva-Som in Thailand. "Today, people want to be transformed by their holiday and health experiences and we see this as a real need in the market - something designed to better equip people with tools and techniques to help them in life." ●

- 📍 Grayshott Health Spa, UK
- 🕒 Seven nights
- 💰 £2,750 (US\$3,633, €3,120)



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spa business uniting the world of wellness



The new headquarters will enable the company to increase production of spa products up to four times

# Comfort Zone moves into €40m headquarters

**Davide Bollati reveals to Katie Barnes why Comfort Zone's contemporary, uber-green home marks a new era for the company**

**D**avines International, the parent company of spa skincare brands Comfort Zone and Skin Regimen, has unveiled its new €40m headquarters in Parma, Italy, creating what chair Davide Bollati calls a "house for sustainable beauty".

Bollati is passionate about the ways in which beauty, innovation and architecture intersect – and about creating sustainability in each of those areas.

The Matteo Thun-designed uber-green headquarters, dubbed Davines Village, covers 25,650sq m (277,094sq ft). The stunning site houses R&D laboratories; a production and manufacturing plant; an education academy; an organic restaurant; clinical testing rooms for trialling products and protocols; and creative, administrative, sales and purchasing departments – all set around a botanical greenhouse and organic garden.

"This is an exciting, memorable moment for our company after 35 years," Bollati tells *Spa Business* magazine.

## Carbon neutral

Bollati chose Thun to design the external architecture of Davines Village because of his record of creating buildings with low carbon emissions and integrating buildings into the landscape. Thun's projects of note include the JW Marriott Resort &



Davide Bollati

Spa in Venice and the new Waldhotel Health & Medical Excellence hotel at the Bürgenstock resort in Switzerland. Thun says: "The theme of sustainability in every aspect is part of our DNA".

The headquarters boasts one of the biggest geothermal systems in Italy and makes use of solar energy. Comfort Zone is also proud to confirm that the village will be carbon neutral, as it's able to compensate for the production of products by sponsoring a reforestation project.

Traditionally, Parma is an agriculture region and this is reflected in the architecture and the site which features 54,000sq m (581,250sq ft) of green space. "All the buildings are designed as open, transparent spaces surrounded by greens



Our new headquarters pays homage to the type of economy we believe in – a humanistic approach where business is conducted ethically

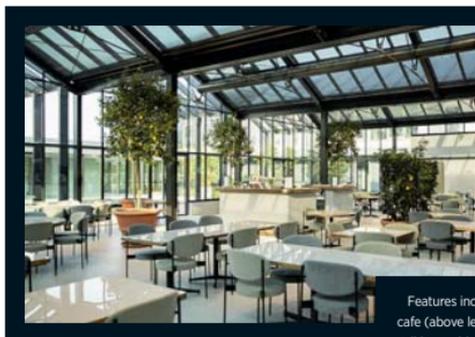
– bringing nature inside," says Thun. "We tried to find a balance between landscape, architecture and light to create a positive work environment. It's about nature, transparency and simplicity."

## Home from home

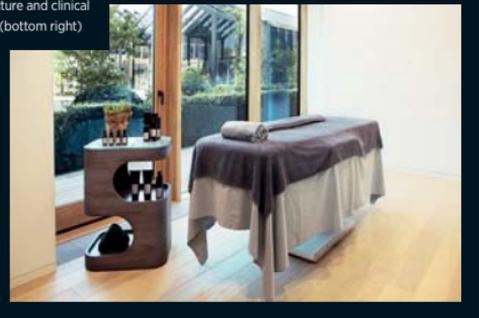
While creating an environmentally friendly building was a priority for Bollati, he also wanted to foster a quality of life for employees by creating a 'home from home'. For this he turned to Italy-based interior designer Monica Signani who brought a personal touch with her meticulous selection of furnishings, materials, finishes and accessories. "The attention to detail and sophisticated interiors are something you'd find in a



The R&D department will overlook the botanical garden, which Bollati says is an important connection



Features include an organic cafe (above left), green spaces, striking architecture and clinical testing rooms (bottom right)



## NEW OPENING

house, not a business – in fact, I used the same interior designer in my own home.”

He also reveals that “it’s a place where interaction is welcome.” Communal spaces such as a café, restaurant and courtyard encourage employees to socialise more and Bollati’s already noticing a difference. “We’re bumping into each other more. I think it’s very good for business because companies are made through interaction and relationships, not formal meetings, schedules and calendars.”

Employees moved into their new home in mid July and although it will take another six months or so for the botanical plants to fully establish themselves, Bollati is clearly happy with what’s been achieved so far. “Personally, it means to me that after having many years of not feeling good enough at times, or having the resources to do what we wanted, we now have more than enough,” he says. “It definitely meets expectations and I’m so happy and grateful for what we’ve built.”

### Business edge

With such a robust, modern base, Comfort Zone is looking to advance its business in numerous ways. Bollati refers to the manufacturing plant where the company has taken “big steps forward” in innovation, hygiene standards and technology. The new site will enable Comfort Zone to increase production up to four times and significantly raises the bar in terms of automatization, sustainability and quality of processes.

Meanwhile, an on-site teaching/training academy will host Comfort Zone and Skin Regimen spa clients and business partners. “My aim is not just to have a

Matteo Thun was chosen to design the external architecture of the new HQ because of his focus on sustainability



Communal spaces, such as a beautiful courtyard, encourage employee interaction

All the buildings are designed as open, transparent spaces surrounded by greens – bringing nature inside

MATTEO THUN

building that celebrates how great we are,” explains Bollati. “We want to dedicate it to our visitors, clients, partners and community – it will be a learning centre and a place to provide inspiration. Clients and partners can come and nurture themselves and learn how to be better in their profession and also as human beings [through our focus on ethics].”

The feature that Bollati is most proud of, however, is the botanical garden and greenhouse where plants used in the company’s skincare products will be grown alongside those it wants to study, such as actives with anti-inflammatory or preservative qualities. The garden and all landscaping has been overseen by UK-based del Buono Gazerwitz Landscape Architecture, while Hartley Botanic (also based in the UK) worked on the greenhouse.

Significantly, the gardens are overlooked by the R&D department and 30-plus chemists and pharmacists. “The interaction between our R&D department and the botanical garden is the most critical part of the project in terms of our core offering, which is our products,” Bollati explains. “Our scientists will face the botanical garden all day long, only divided by a

wall of glass. It’s an important connection which can only influence their work.”

### New starting point

Above all, Bollati feels Davines Village makes an important political statement, one which emphasises the company’s ‘humanistic approach’. “Our new headquarters pays homage to the type of economy we believe in – a humanistic approach where business is conducted ethically and where we offer a good life for all through beauty, ethics and sustainability,” he says. “We’ve changed our focus since we don’t want to be the most admired beauty company ‘in’ the world, instead we’re aspiring to become the best beauty company ‘for’ the world.”

Although the village is still in its soft opening phase – an official global launch is planned for October – Bollati is already looking to the future. “The opening is definitely an achievement, but at the same time it’s a starting point, as it’s allowing us to raise our purpose and to start even more rewarding and exciting new ventures.” “We have all these ideas popping up, like introducing a university, or opening a restaurant [for the public], or a cinema or a theatre for the arts. It’s a new platform for our next set of challenges,” he concludes. ●



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# KEEPING POSITIVE

US spa revenues, visits and locations all increased in 2017 according to ISPA's latest industry study. Colin McIlheney takes a closer look

**T**he spa industry in the US has been boosted by another year of healthy growth, according to the International Spa Association's 2018 US Spa Industry Study, which was carried out in collaboration with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and funded by the ISPA Foundation.

The research is a nationwide overview of the spa industry's size and performance and looks at data for 2017 through to May 2018. The report is the result of a large-scale survey of spa operators across the US. Respondents provided key metrics for 2,375 spa locations and this year's

estimates show a sector that continues to grow. Against a nationwide backdrop of higher GDP and employment numbers, there are increases in spa revenues, visits, locations and employment, marking the eighth year of positive growth since the financial downturn of the late 2000s.

## THE BIG FIVE

Each of the 'big five' statistics increased in 2017, reinforcing the industry's growth (see Table 1). Total spa revenue is estimated to have reached US\$17.5bn (€15bn, £13.3bn) in 2017 – another all-time record figure for the industry. With the wider US economy growing more rapidly

in 2017 (up 2.3 per cent compared to 1.5 per cent in 2016), the spa arena reflects this trend, with growth picking up from 3.1 per cent in 2016 to 4.3 per cent in 2017.

The last year has also seen a more modest rise in total visits to 187 million (+1.6 per cent) – the equivalent of over 511,000 people visiting US spas each day. Bringing the revenue and visits data together means that revenue per visit rose healthily in 2017, up 2.7 per cent to US\$93.70 (€80.20, £71.50).

With overall employment in the US economy rising by 1.6 per cent in 2017, the number of people working in the US spa industry has reached an all-time high,



Around 10 new sites opened every week in 2017 including the spa at Cliff House, designed by Blu Spas Inc

Forty-one per cent of US spas are actively targeting men with promotions and services

## THE BIG 5 STATISTICS

out-turn and percentage change in 2017

	2016 (YEAR END)	2107 (YEAR END)	% change*
Revenue	US\$16.8 bn	US\$17.5 bn	4.3%
Spa visits	184 million	187 million	1.6%
Locations	21,260	21,770	2.4%
Revenue per visit	US\$91.3	US\$93.7	2.7%

	2017 (May)	2018 (May)	% change*
Total employees	365,200	372,100	1.9%
Full-time	165,800	170,900	3.1%
Part-time	164,500	173,900	5.7%
Contract	35,000	27,300	-22.0%

\* calculations of percentage change are based on unrounded figures



MICROGEN/SHUTTERSTOCK

Total spa revenue is estimated to have reached US\$17.5bn in 2017 – another all-time record figure for the industry

increasing for the second consecutive year to 372,100 (+1.9 per cent). By a wafer-thin margin, part-time employees are now more numerous than full-time staff. The total number of part-time workers grew to 173,900 in 2017 (+5.7 per cent), compared to a more modest growth in the number employed full-time (170,900, +3.1 per cent). Backing up a long-standing industry trend, this year's results show a further fall in the number of contractors to 27,300 (-22 per cent), with this group now representing fewer than one in 10 of the workforce.

Spa locations in the US are now at an all-time record high. Growth of 2.4 per cent in 2017 means that the 21,770 establishments surpasses the previous high of 21,300 recorded in 2008 just before the recession. The net increase of 510 spa locations in 2017 equates to just shy of 10 new spas opening every week.

### LOOKING AHEAD

Spas are continuing to use a variety of methods and techniques to ensure they remain well-positioned for further growth. Their use of modern communication channels continues to come to the forefront, with over three quarters (78 per

cent) reporting that they offered social media promotions in 2017 and almost a third (32 per cent) offering special promotions to consumers who gave their spa a positive mention on social media or review sites. In addition, 77 per cent said they offered their clients electronic appointment reminders.

To keep themselves current, spas are actively refreshing their offering, with 60 per cent reporting that they are planning to offer new treatments in 2018 and 45 per cent planning to add new product lines. A recent trend is the continued rise of male spa goers and in accordance, 41 per cent of spas are actively targeting this key growth segment with special promotions.

Spas are also making behind-the-scenes advancements to strengthen the business, with 59 per cent planning to adopt new or revised standard operating procedures in the next year and 54 per cent seeking to provide employees with new training opportunities. This is a very positive trend as ISPA's new *Spa Workforce Study* (see SB18/2 p44) shows that therapists and managers are great advocates for the industry – especially when they have a positive working environment. ●



### ABOUT THE RESEARCH

The *ISPA 2018 US Spa Industry Study*, prepared by PwC, focuses on financial performance, growth and employment, as well as ownership structures, product and service offerings, future trends and emerging issues.

The full report is due for release at ISPA's 2018 conference on 24-26 September. Upon release, ISPA members may download a free copy at [experienceispa.com](http://experienceispa.com) and non-members can purchase it through the site.

Based in the US, ISPA represents operators and suppliers in more than 60 countries covering all aspects of the global spa industry.



Colin McIlheney is global research director at PwC. Email: [ispa@ispastaff.com](mailto:ispa@ispastaff.com)



When the formidable Spa Village Pangkor Laut opened in 2002, it also opened the eyes of the global spa industry



## TOP TEAM YTL Hotels

The three key figures behind YTL Hotels' much-lauded Spa Village concept tell Katie Barnes about group dynamics, how to stay ahead of the curve and exciting new developments



Lai-Ping Chik, Sylvia Sepielli and Melissa Mettler (left to right) are the driving force behind YTL Hotels' spas worldwide

When YTL Hotels, the hospitality division of a Malaysian infrastructure conglomerate, opened its first wellness facility in 2002, it also opened the eyes of the global spa industry at the same time. Not only was Spa Village at the Pangkor Laut Resort a formidable spa in a spectacular setting – treatment pavilions, healing huts, bath houses, spa huts, nap gazebos and a spa boutique are sprawled over four acres of beachfront on the Malaysian island – its philosophy of honouring local healing cultures and spa traditions was ahead of its time.

Fifteen years on and the Spa Village concept is going strong with a portfolio boasting one destination spa and nine others, including one outside of Asia in the UK and the newly-opened Spa Village at Ritz-Carlton Koh Samui, Thailand. As

spas launch in new locales, the company remains true to its roots by seeking out local healers, authentic wellness practices and other traditions which guests can experience in everything from beauty and health treatments to bathing, fitness, food, music and decor. Aside from this, there are luxury spas at a handful of other YTL Hotels properties (see p53).

The three women behind the successful Spa Village brand and additional spas have been working together for eight years. They tell *Spa Business* about their group dynamics, what makes a winning spa formula and reveal details about four intriguing new spas in the pipeline. ▶



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Spa Village Pangkor Laut's treatment pavilions, bath houses and nap gazebos are spread over four acres

Ritz-Carlton Koh Samui opened in late 2017 and boasts the newest Spa Village – bringing the brand total to 10





**Lai-Ping Chik** vice president  
spa division, YTL Hotels

**What's your background**

**at YTL Hotels?** In 1999 YTL Hotels bought JW Marriott Kuala Lumpur where I had set up the fitness centre and was working as a recreation manager. Soon after, Dato' Mark Yeoh [executive director of YTL Hotels] approached me to develop a series of spas and head up the spa division. I was born and raised in Malaysia, surrounded by Malay, Chinese and Indian healing traditions - it was a way of life - so I couldn't believe it when he asked me. I was excited about my new journey and about learning from Sylvia who I'd already met: she's a very good teacher.

Today, I'm responsible for the entire development and

operations of Spa Village including its results, brand standard delivery and image.

**What's your relationship with Sylvia and Melissa like?**

Sylvia has been my mentor since I came on board the Spa Village project. Melissa joined us in 2010. We have a shared passion for the spa industry, especially providing excellent guest experiences. Each of us brings different skills and cultures to the table, we listen to each other and agree on good ideas but we're not shy

Capture rate  
can be as high  
as 30 per cent  
in our resorts



● Lai-Ping Chik oversees all spa development and operations

about expressing our own views. At the end of the day we have to rationalise everything we do and present it to Dato' Mark who's smarter than the three of us put together.

**How do you decide who does**

**what?** We recognise each other's strengths and discuss who the best person might be for a job. I compare it to a painting. Sylvia will draw

the bigger picture, Melissa will paint it with colours and life and I'll decide on the practicalities of how and where to hang it. It's always a combination of efforts and we have fun with what we do.

**What makes the Spa Village brand stand out?**

Its ethos of honouring the healing culture of the region ensures the guest journey is always unique. In order to get there, however, we do our research thoroughly by studying the local area, exploring it and meeting regularly with elderly healers. We don't just scratch the surface and if something is not good enough for our best guests, we'll omit it.

**What do spas bring to YTL**

**Hotels as a business?** They were initially introduced as a luxury amenity, but today Spa Village is regarded as one of the best brands at YTL Hotels and it's a profitable business in its own right. The spas are expected to produce

● Lai-Ping Chik with YTL Hotels' executive director Dato' Mark Yeoh (left)





Spa Villages achieve a profit margin of 40 per cent on average



## YTL HOTELS' SPA PORTFOLIO

### Destination spa

Spa Village Tembok • Bali

### Spa Villages

Kuala Lumpur • Malaysia  
Pangkor Laut • Malaysia  
Tanjong Jara • Malaysia  
Cameron Highlands • Malaysia  
Malacca • Malaysia  
Gaya Island • Malaysia  
Hangzhou • China  
Bath • UK  
Koh Samui • Thailand

### Others

La Tente by Spa Village at  
The Muse St Tropez • France  
The Majestic Spa by Spa Village at  
Majestic Hotel • Malaysia  
Starhill Spa by Spa Village at  
JW Marriott Kuala Lumpur • Malaysia

### Development pipeline

The Floating Spa by Spa Village  
at Monkey Island Estate  
Bray, UK (opening Q3 2018)  
Mr Ma's Teahouse Spa by Spa Village at The Academy  
London, UK (opening Q3 2018)  
Spa Village Ritz-Carlton Reserve Niseko  
Japan (opening 2021)  
Rooftop spa by Spa Village at The Glasshouse  
Edinburgh, UK (opening to be confirmed)

results – we aim for 60 per cent profitability and achieve 40 per cent on average and the capture rate can be as high as 30 per cent in our resorts.

**What are the highlights of your latest Spa Village at Ritz-Carlton Koh Samui?** It's our first spa in Thailand and to be in Koh Samui, such a beautiful island, is a double joy.

**YTL Hotels has a close relationship with Marriott. How do you decide on spa brands and management for properties?** This is the decision of the YTL Hotels and Marriott management

teams at a higher level. If a Spa Village is assigned to a project, we usually manage it and design it with the help of a YTL Hotels architect/designer.

Our next Spa Village will be at the Ritz-Carlton Reserve Niseko that's due to open in the Japanese ski resort in three years' time. No decisions have yet been made on other joint projects.

**What's the overall development strategy for spas at YTL Hotels?** The ideal is to have a Spa Village in every new luxury hotel/resort, as guests now expect one when they visit YTL Hotels properties.

## Our next Spa Village will be at the Ritz-Carlton Reserve Niseko

I'm very interested in Japan [and Ritz-Carlton Reserve Niseko]. It's a country I always like to visit because of its rich culture, fresh food and people who have high integrity and discipline. But I also see the challenge of manpower for us and operating costs being high. It will be difficult to maintain our current performance and we'll have to be prudent and efficient in productivity to operate in this country.

## What other spas are you working on at the moment?

We're currently in the pre-opening stages of the spa at Monkey Island Estate in the UK (see p56). On top of this, we're in the process of researching the spa concepts for The Academy London and The Glasshouse Hotel, Edinburgh, two other UK properties which YTL Hotels acquired last year.

**What's your long-term goal for spas at YTL Hotels?** We only have one destination spa in Tembok Bali – I'd love to see more and it's something we're pushing for. ▶



**Sylvia Sepielli** spa advisor and brand guardian, YTL Hotels

**What's your background at**

**YTL Hotels?** I was invited to Malaysia by Dato' Mark Yeoh in 1997 to consult on a spa for Pangkor Laut Resort. We hit it off immediately, bonding when I declined an invitation to dinner at a high-end restaurant for food at a hawker's stand instead. That was the beginning of exploring the real Malaysia and getting to know this visionary.

He was emphatic about not wanting to copy a western style spa. He told me about Chinese children giving grandparents neck massages, about an invigorating 'Shanghai scrub' he'd experienced in China and about what Malay people give their children to keep healthy. That was the genesis for the brand - 'to honour the healing culture of the region'.

Malaysia consists of three main groups of people: Chinese, Malay, and Indian. The commitment of Dato' Mark came through loud and



● Sepielli is the guardian of the Spa Village brand

clear when he agreed to not only offer the therapies, but to build a hut dedicated to each culture and staff it with authentic specialists. The brand name emerged from this first spa, because Spa

Village Pangkor Laut, spread over four acres, really looks and functions like a village.

**What's your role at YTL Hotels?** I'm the spa advisor and I work alongside Lai-Ping

We all know each other well and respect each other's opinions

as she operates and develops all Spa Villages. I'm also the guardian of the brand. In the early days, this meant helping to develop and strengthen our path. In recent years, it means helping the brand stay true to its core, while expanding into new markets such as Spa Village Bath in the UK (see p56).

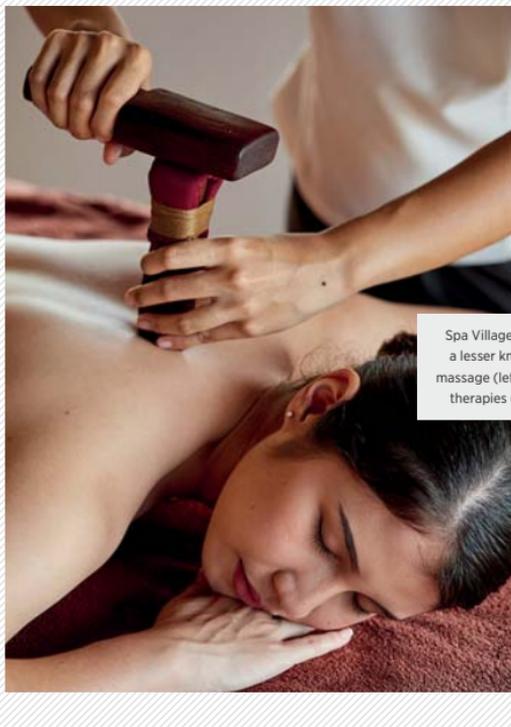
My strength lies in longevity in the business and having global experiences that shed light and keep staff informed about spa and wellness internationally. This comes from consulting and operating spas around the world for 20-plus years with my consultancy Sylvia Planning And design (SPAd).

**What are the strengths of the Spa Village team?** Well, first of all, we truly love each other. I've known Melissa since she was just out of college. I gave her her first job in the spa industry. Decades later she found herself in Malaysia and I introduced her to Lai-Ping. Lai-Ping is one of the hardest working, most astute operators I've ever worked with.

We all know each other well and respect each other's opinions. We don't always agree on things, but we somehow manage to either come to a consensus, or just move on.

● Malay, Chinese and Indian therapies are a staple offering at Spa Village





Spa Village Koh Samui offers a lesser known tok sen Thai massage (left) and water-based therapies (right and below)



**What makes the Spa Village brand so special?** Beyond the tagline, it's a brand that digs deep. You can be sure that if an offering or experience is on a Spa Village menu it's authentic. If it's new, it has staying power and efficacy.

The most special thing, however, is the people who work together to serve the guests and each other. Built into the DNA, all trainings and daily briefings is the intent to "serve with our hearts through our hands".

**How has the concept developed over the 15 years and how do you stay ahead of trends?** The core concept and service standards have not changed much. However, guests are more well-travelled, know what they like and have very high expectations and this keeps us sharp and

motivated. Also, expanding into urban markets with guests who have less time to relax is encouraging us to become more flexible in both operations and concept offerings.

I honestly don't look much or care what the industry is doing. With Lai-Ping, Melissa and myself at three points around the world (Malaysia, UK/Europe, North America) we keep our ears tuned to what guests, and people in general, care about. YTL Hotels is in this for the long-term. The freshness and staying ahead applies not only to the guest experience, but to building a strong, well trained, satisfied and self-motivated team (see p57).

**What was your involvement in the Spa Village in Koh Samui?** Conceptually, following the inspiration of architect Zaidan

You can be sure that if an offering or experience is on a Spa Village menu it's authentic

Tahir, I was very involved in content and development. And, through Lai-Ping, I provided overall advice and consultation. Melissa did much of the menu planning and hands-on training.

**What makes the spa stand out?** Situated on an island, water is a vital part of the experience. Treatment pavilions surround a large pond and there's a pool for 'Thai Aquatic Freedom' sessions. Most treatments begin with the Songkran Shower, a playful tossing of water indicative of the

Thai New Year ritual and a symbol of renewal. While Thai massage is now popular worldwide, tok sen is a lesser known therapy offered involving a wooden wedge and mallet that is gently pounded by the therapist to create an incredible vibration to relax the muscles. Guests can also try a Muay Thai Boxing session - singlet and baggy boxer shorts are provided.

**What drives you in your role at YTL Hotels?** The Yeochs are like family to me and my family. I'm blessed to be involved with YTL Hotels for so many years. It's never boring and Dato' Mark always keeps pushing the envelope. Also, the exciting new developments in the UK and Europe with fresh ideas by Melissa, and Lai-Ping at the helm, is definitely keeping me engaged!



**Melissa Mettler** spa consultant, YTL Hotels

**When and how did you start working for YTL Hotels?** It was serendipity really. I was an independent spa consultant and having just moved to Kuala Lumpur from the Caribbean needed a friend. I called upon Sylvia, my very-first spa boss of 20 years ago, who delivered me to a connection at Spa Village Kuala Lumpur. I went in search of a friend and walked out with a job! That was eight years ago.

**What's your role at YTL Hotels and what are your strengths?** My official role is spa consultant to YTL Hotels' spa division. I'm now based in Barcelona and I'm the Spa Village representative and face in Europe which is one of our key areas for expansion. I provide hands-on development of the regional portfolio, as well

Europe is one of our key areas for expansion

as consultancy on operations. Independently, I still also run my own company Melissa Mettler Consulting.

My unofficial role is the stubborn, creative sister who has mad ideas of how to bring wellbeing to our programmes with a sense of fun and vibrancy. I hope that's my strength, but Lai-Ping and Sylvia may disagree - I'm sure that I drive them around the bend sometimes!

**How did you tap into local influences for your first UK spa?** We've tapped into the heritage of Bath, a UK spa town, to offer aquatic body



● Mettler is the Spa Village representative in Europe

therapies in the naturally-heated magnesium-rich pools - it's the only hotel in the country with direct access to thermal waters. Our signature Freedom treatment is particularly special and I'll never forget bringing our Mayan healer from Mexico to share this magical water therapy with the UK team.

We've coupled this with the historic use of aromatherapy and old English herbology and have partnered with Neal's Yard for our bespoke Aroma Bar. Here a therapist will create a personalised aromatherapy pouch which guests can take into the sauna.

**How difficult was it to open an Asian brand in the UK?**

Training our team was the most challenging aspect as we were trying to infuse the practice of working intuitively 'from the heart through the hands' in an environment

where spa education stems from a cognitive platform. Learning the body from the mind translates very differently in situ than learning the body from the hands and heart.

Operationally, it was also a learning curve as there are so many rules and regulations in the UK. We're used to using fresh raw ingredients in our treatments which we can't do there for example. Navigating a more reserved and modest clientele required some adaptations in protocol too.

**The UK is a key focus for YTL Hotels, what other spas do you have in the pipeline?**

In September, we'll open The Floating Spa at Monkey Island Estate in Bray (about an hour outside of London). It's an historic property on a private island in the River Thames which is a pretty special springboard to start from. The hotel will have all the trappings



Body therapies in natural thermal waters are on offer at Spa Village Bath, UK - the first Spa Village outside Asia



Training is taken very seriously and the Spa Village Academy is supported by the Malaysian government



## SPA VILLAGE RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

Spa Village employs over 200 therapists and with high-quality service a USP, recruitment and training are taken very seriously. Chik has created a protocol to "train and nurture our 'stars'" and insists that every one is treated "like an asset, not a number – we invest in them". Sepielli reiterates this explaining that "Spa Village staffers are the germ of any new team and are vital in ensuring the brand culture, traditions and standards are second nature to the new spa".

In 2015, YTL Hotels' International College of Hotel Management launched a Spa Village Academy, which is supported by the Malaysian government, and aims to recruit and train fresh, local talent as well as to hone the skills of current therapists. Candidates go through a three-month course and a year-long internship. In addition, corporate trainers carry out site audits, taking into account guest feedback, and teach any new programmes. Therapists are provided with a clear career path and receive incremental

wage increases when they become certified in new modalities or get promoted.

The college also has a 2.5 year spa management course which covers team leadership, staff training and customer service skills, with a refresher offered every two years. To keep up motivation, managers can request a transfer to a different site every 18 months and all convene for an annual spa management meeting to go through and analyse business performance and come up with a plan for the year ahead.

of a fine English country hotel – kitchen gardens, bee hives, the lot. I felt there was one missing element... The River Thames. The spa will bring to life the spirit of adventure on this great river. Poems, stories and the power of the river will feed our offering... and it all happens on a bespoke widebeam river boat.

Around the same time, we'll also open Mr Ma's Teahouse spa in the charming garden of The Academy Hotel in London. The hotel is set in Bloomsbury in the West End and its quirky, creative concept is based on The Bloomsbury Set – the influential group of writers, intellectuals and philosophers, such as Virginia Woolf and EM Forster, who lived and worked



● The Monkey Island spa is based on a river boat

in the area in the 1920s. In my research, I discovered Lao She's delightful book *Mr Ma and Son* which offers a humorous perspective of a Chinese immigrant navigating the conventions of English society, endeavouring to find coveted comforts of home. I thought it would be a beautiful way to

bring an Asian 'tea house' spa to the area. We'll offer Asian therapies with a traditional Gong Fu Cha tea ritual.

At some point, we're also hoping to open a rooftop spa at The Glasshouse Hotel in Edinburgh. We're exploring ideas for this – all I can say is that it will be very cool.

**What projects are you working on in Europe?** We've just opened The Muse in St Tropez which I'm excited about. The spa is a luxury safari tent nestled in the hills behind the resort. Open air, surrounded by juniper and olive trees.

In terms of expansion, Spain is a country that interests us.

**What drives you?** Creativity and freedom. When I'm pulling out my hair I think 'wouldn't it be lovely to roll out a standardised corporate spa?' But I'd wither and die. We are so blessed by Dato' Mark with a somewhat free hand. Each spa is unique. Each spa is alive. And each spa bears the watermark of Lai-Ping, Sylvia and Melissa. ●



# ELEMIS

## DRONE PEPTIDE TECHNOLOGY

### takes Elemis skincare to new heights

Described as ‘the most exciting and powerful formulation’ in the history of Elemis, the latest addition to the brand’s Smart Pro-Collagen range uses ‘Drone Peptide Technology’ to deliver unprecedented skincare results.

**W**ith the launch of Elemis’ new Smart Pro-Collagen Overnight Matrix, skincare just gained a new secret weapon.

The formulation uses targeted

‘Drone Peptide Technology’ to seek out the areas of the skin most in need of treatment and working through the night to help restore natural balance.

Like a heat-seeking missile, Drone Peptide Technology guides encapsulates towards specific surface skin cells, delivering their precious cargo to its intended destination. Areas of skin showing the visual effects of stresses such as pollution, lifestyle and ageing are the main target for this delivery system.

Clinically proven\*, this latest addition to Elemis’ hugely successful Pro-Collagen range is the first product to employ this type of ‘Smart Technology’ and puts the brand even further ahead in the field of science-led skincare.

Elemis co-founder and President Noella Gabriel says: “Our Smart Pro-Collagen Overnight Matrix is changing the landscape of skincare. Using drone peptide technology, it targets a specific area of your skin, so the skincare experience it delivers is completely bespoke to the individual.”



Elemis founder Noella Gabriel knows that today’s consumers expect overnight skincare results

#### Skin-damaging lifestyles

The Pro-Collagen range has been developed to specifically combat the signs of ageing that can be caused by today’s challenging environments and lifestyles.

Smart Pro-Collagen Overnight Matrix uses a clever combination of two peptides that work in tandem to help hydrate and plump the skin with moisture.

These independently-tested active ingredients have been shown in-vitro to boost hyaluronic acid production as well as elastin synthesis. Both hyaluronic acid and elastin contribute towards a

more elastic and supple feeling skin.

The result is skin that looks revitalised, radiant and youthful and a reduction in the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles.

Putting science aside, the cream’s efficacy is also down to the inclusion of Elemis’ superstar ingredient – padina pavonica – an active algae that is rich in fatty acids and polysaccharides that naturally complement the skin’s moisture barrier for an instant hit of hydration.

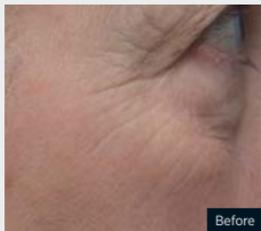
The formulation also contains microalgae that produce a mild exfoliation effect to leave the complexion looking



Smart Pro-Collagen Overnight Matrix helps stressed skin 'bounce back to life' (above); Elemis' Drone Peptide Technology (inset)

Independent clinical trials of the latest Pro-Collagen family member have produced some impressive results

### Independent user trials for Elemis Smart Pro-Collagen Overnight Matrix



Before



After

(\*) Independent Clinical Trial Results. (\*\*) Independent User Trial Results, 2017. The trial was 32 people after four weeks of use. (\*) Based on annual global sales

- 100% of users agreed that their skin looks less crumpled in the morning\*\*
- 100% of users agreed that the product dramatically improved deep set wrinkles\*\*
- 100% of users agreed the stress in their skin has disappeared after using this product\*\*
- 100% of users agreed their skin bounced back to life after using this product\*\*

flawless and more youthful. Finally, wild indigo oligosaccharides, sourced from the seeds of wild-harvested plants in India, complete the skin-enhancing cocktail.

### New Pro-Collagen family member

Smart Pro-Collagen Overnight Matrix joins Elemis' growing Pro-Collagen family, which includes its best-selling Pro-Collagen Marine cream (one pots sells every nine seconds around the world-); Pro-Collagen Super Serum Elixir, which is rich in plumping bio-actives; and the

ultra-light Pro-Collagen Marine Oil that delivers heavyweight hydration.

Independent clinical trials (\*) of the latest Pro-Collagen family member have also produced some impressive results.

Testers have reported that by morning, skin looks more relaxed, less crumpled and more youthful. After four weeks of use, fine lines and wrinkles are visibly reduced, and the skin appears to "bounce back to life".

Gabriel says: "Five years ago in the world of skincare, customers had to wait months to see any visible results from a skincare product. Now they expect to see

results overnight. That comes down to our advanced scientific innovation, powerful natural extracts and expert formulations.

"Smart Pro-Collagen Overnight Matrix represents our next generation of anti-ageing skincare that will allow both spas and consumers to benefit from ground-breaking results."

### Contact Elemis

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Web: [www.elemis.com](http://www.elemis.com)



Biologique Recherche is one of only a few skincare brands to make its services and products cancer-friendly

*Everyone's talking about...*

# Cancer awareness

Why are up to 90 per cent of spas still turning away people affected by cancer? How can the industry change this? Katie Barnes investigates

New figures estimate that one out of two people born after 1960 will be diagnosed with cancer and that, today, there are more than 17 million survivors. Chances are, many of these people are already spa customers and spas are perfectly placed to welcome them. Caring touch can go a long way to support people physically and emotionally at a time when they need it most. What's more, a host of complementary modalities – from massage and facials to yoga, meditation and breathwork – have a range of benefits and are being used in hospitals to help cancer patients or those in remission. But yet spas still aren't stepping up.

The industry has already come a long way in cancer awareness over the last decade with spas in more than 40 countries investing in proper education and modalities, according to Julie Bach of the Wellness for Cancer charity. Some forward-thinking operators, including chains such as Sandals, COMO Shambhala

and Canyon Ranch, are stepping up. As are skincare brands like Biologique Recherche, ESPA, Voya and Comfort Zone. Yet, shockingly, it's believed that up to 90 per cent of operators still refuse to serve customers affected by cancer. So what's going wrong?

Is insurance cover still an obstacle, where the fear is that therapists could make conditions worse, creating liabilities?

Or is training an issue? Are operators struggling to offer services because staff aren't able to deal with customers affected by cancer? With no benchmarks for education in this area, how can operators ensure they pick the right course? And is this a focus for leading training schools and organisations to consider so that therapists are already trained when they start employment?

Perhaps the barriers are all of the above and more. If so, what can spas, and the industry at large, do to tackle these challenges head on and to start truly embracing those impacted by the terrible disease?

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 Twitter: [SpaBusinessKB](https://twitter.com/SpaBusinessKB)



## Julie Bach executive director, Wellness for Cancer

About 80-90 per cent of spas are still turning people affected by cancer away and the number one reason why is therapist training. Unfortunately, most therapists are used to following a set protocol - 'massage here for three times, move there for three times' - so they don't have adequate knowledge. You can't reduce someone to a cancer protocol.

Part of the issue is that operators can have a high turnover of staff so they don't want to keep paying for training. Training companies aren't keeping up with the times either. But this is starting to change and our charity is on the cusp of announcing a partnership with a major, global training organisation.

Benchmarks are needed around how long a course should be and what it covers. I'm working with leading medical and wellness figures



at the Wellness for Cancer Initiative to get guidelines in place. The minimum length a course should be is 24 hours but, horrifically, some are only eight hours long.

A course has to cover adaptations for short- and long-term effects of cancer treatment on the body - therapists are body workers after all. It also has to cover the conditions that therapists need to be aware of, such as the effects of surgery and a compromised lymphatic system. You have to adjust

## Therapist training is the number one reason why spas are still turning away people affected by cancer

your level of pressure and you certainly shouldn't be doing a deep tissue massage when the body is trying to heal.

Our mantra is 'site, pressure, position'. Are there restrictions like a port? Does someone have a limited range of motion after a mastectomy? Is there a risk of lymphedema? It's all about a personalised approach, which can serve as a template for heart problems, pregnancy and any condition - not just cancer.

Another barrier to treating people affected by cancer is vermacular - using terms like oncology massage and cancer care, and taking a disease approach in a wellness industry. This alienates customers as they don't want a cancer 'stamp', it puts off operators who don't want

'sick' clients and using such medical terms suggests a 'higher' type of treatment which leads to liability concerns. The Wellness for Cancer Initiative has identified a need for guidelines on how we're presenting cancer-friendly treatments to the public and my position is to simply present them as 'personalised treatments'.

Once we have standards for training in place and clarity around vermacular, this will hopefully reduce perceived liability.

■ Julie Bach delivers Wellness for Cancer training in over 40 countries. She's also chair of independent body the Wellness for Cancer Initiative. Details: [www.wellnessforcancer.com](http://www.wellnessforcancer.com)

## Brent Bauer director, Mayo Clinic Complementary and Integrative Medicine Program

Lingering misinformation and fear is why spas are still denying cancer patients and survivors services. Rather than excluding such people, it makes more sense to bring them into the spa in a thoughtful manner, working with experts to identify therapies that can be helpful, enjoyable and safe.

At Mayo Clinic we offer an array of services to patients with cancer including massage, acupuncture, meditation, tai chi, yoga and reiki. We don't offer one type of massage for people with cancer, however. What we do ensure is that the massage provided to anyone is done by a trained



and skilled provider who has the opportunity to review the medical data and adapt the treatment as needed.

Can complementary therapies be harmful? My general rule is that anything that's powerful enough to affect your body positively can also

## At Mayo Clinic we offer cancer patients massage, acupuncture, meditation, tai chi, yoga and reiki

do harm. That's why specific training for the whole staff is key and Wellness for Cancer is one of the leaders in this area. I'm also seeing more of my medical counterparts willing to be a part of the solution in giving guidance. And if we can keep the dialogue going between medical doctors, spas and patients/clients, I think we'll win.

A great way for spas to overcome reticence is to first make their facility friendly to cancer survivors. Assuming

that experience is a positive one, each spa can then decide whether to be more open to serving people undergoing active treatment. If that is the direction chosen, the spa team can then pursue high quality training for all staff members to make it a successful offering.

■ Medical doctor Brent Bauer has been on staff at the Mayo Clinic for 23 years. The clinic is a leading US academic medical centre. Details: [www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org)

**Susan Harmsworth** global spa and wellness expert

Given the alarming rise in the number of people with cancer, how to treat customers touched by the disease is only going to become a bigger issue for spas. But if we deal with this now and get protocols and guidelines in place, it will become a non-issue.

It's very likely that spas already treat customers who have, or have had, cancer but clients don't tell them and therapists find out halfway through a treatment.

Getting insurance can be a barrier, especially for global hotel groups with huge legal departments. When I was at ESPA, we had to push hard for cover and in the short-term I think owners need to get on side to push boundaries – as with anything new.



But in the long-term we need a central body to set benchmarks on contraindications, processes and protocols. Think of it like pregnancy massage – it used to be seen as high risk, but then standards emerged for a responsible way of doing it and avoiding the first trimester.

Another way to overcome the insurance issue will be reaching critical mass. The

If we deal with this now and get protocols and guidelines in place, it will become a non-issue

more spas (especially the big names) which welcome people affected by cancer without any repercussions, the lower the risk becomes in insurers eyes.

The word 'cancer' scares the industry, but it's generally considered by the nursing profession and oncology clinics alike that massage is good – psychologically as well as physically.

The biggest issue spas face is in the dilutions of therapist training. Operators are trying to minimise the length/type of training because they don't understand the importance of it. My view is that if therapists do advanced training, it's

going to help them with any contraindication – from those who've faced trauma to people with high blood pressure.

But standards are also needed because companies are jumping on the bandwagon to offer short courses. In theory, anyone can call themselves a trainer and that worries me.

The industry needs to get together for the greater good to act responsibly. If everyone gets behind it, it will go so fast.

■ *Susan Harmsworth founded global spa firm ESPA 25 years ago. She left in March to develop new projects and partnerships.*

**Rupert Schmid** chair and co-owner, Biologique Recherche

Skincare companies, as well as spa operators and training organisations, need to take responsibility for providing cancer-friendly treatments and products. It's obvious to me. People with cancer, or who are in remission, represent some 10-20 per cent of wellness customers. How can spas not only ignore, but deny serving these people?

It took Biologique Recherche about 18 months to make changes and I was surprised how relatively easy it was. We liaised with doctors, dermatologists and the French government to test our products to see which ones are suitable for people affected by cancer, paying attention to aggressive ingredients



such as fruit acids or those that could cause blockages.

We also partnered with the Wellness for Cancer training programme to adapt our therapies depending on cancer type, surgery done and treatment type. Its approach is to assess people as individuals and as our methodology is based on

People in remission represent some 10-20 per cent of wellness customers.

How can spas deny serving them?

personalised wellness, the process was less complicated than I imagined. There's no special oncology massage or facial because we consider someone who has cancer to be like you and me. They deserve the same treatment... or perhaps an even better one.

Sharing this new methodology with our 2,000-plus centres in over 70 countries is not so simple. It's an ongoing process to train therapists, but my dream is that one day they will all be capable of treating people affected by cancer.

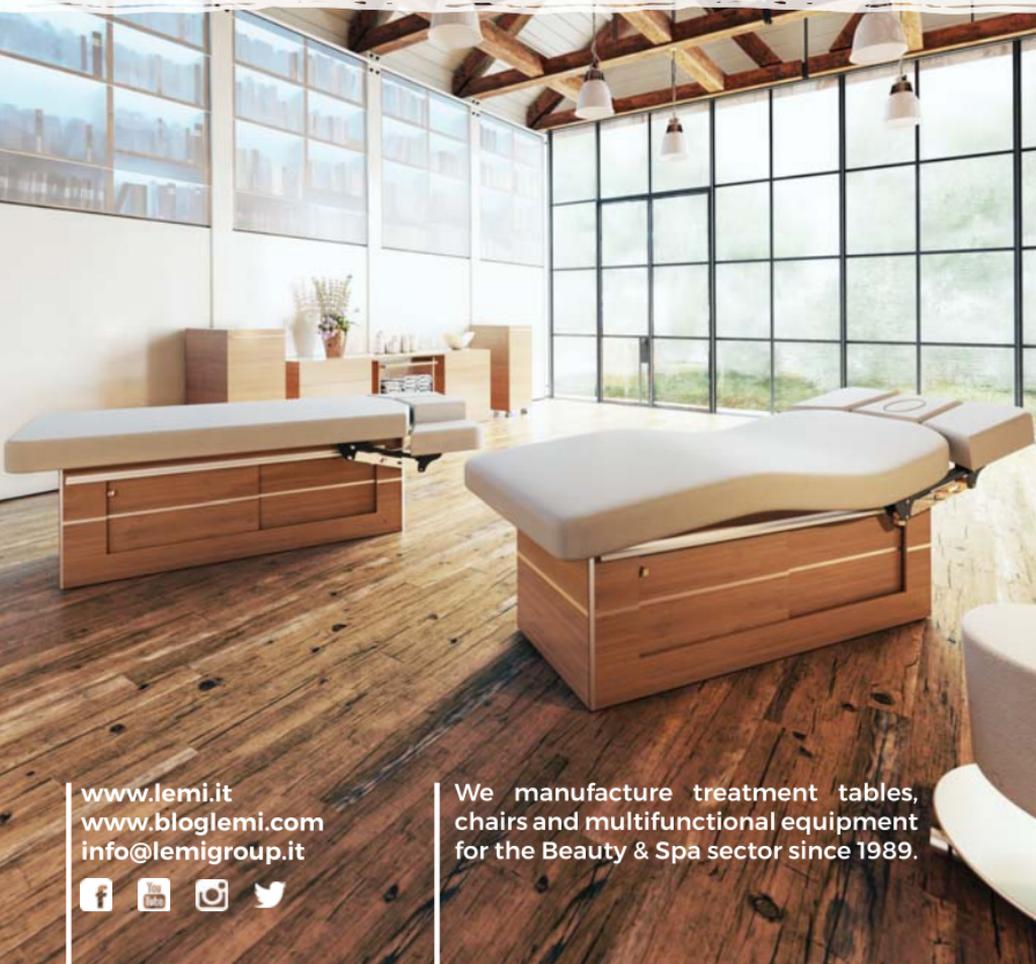
The next step for Biologique Recherche is to fund scientific, randomised control trials looking firstly at how cancer impacts the skin and then at how cosmetics may be able to help. I was shocked that no serious research exists in this area and we're collaborating with the University of Colorado in the US to do this. ●

■ *Professional cosmetics brand Biologique Recherche launched 40 years ago. Rupert Schmid has been on board for over 10 years. Details: www.biologique-recherche.com*

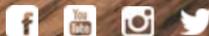
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Owner, Marina Efraimoglou

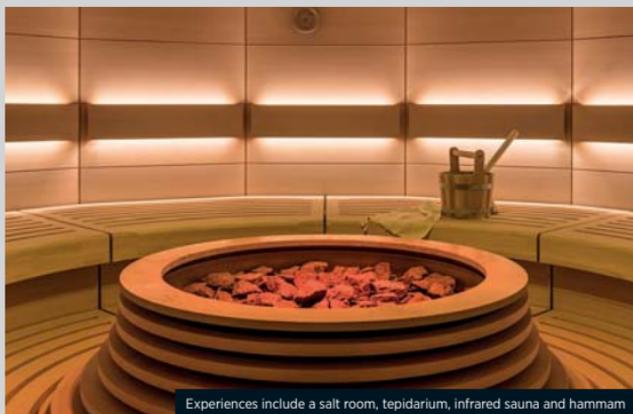
Offering a unique blend of Hellenic and Chinese modalities, the Euphoria Retreat in Greece promises to deliver a transformational experience of mind, body and spirit

# JOURNEY *to* BLISS



The holistic retreat is a very personal achievement for Efraimoglou who first discovered the mind body connection during experimental chemotherapy

PHOTOS: WWW.STYLINGBYKATIE.COM



Experiences include a salt room, tepidarium, infrared sauna and hammam



A communal dining area will help guests to connect with each other



Euphoria Retreat is one of the most exciting spa openings of 2018. Efraimoglou invested €20m of her own money into the project

“When I discovered this place 11 years ago, I immediately felt its magical energy”

When Marina Efraimoglou first found the land where her Euphoria Retreat now sits in the Greek Peloponnese, she knew she'd discovered a place where transformations could happen. Opened in July, the 45-room retreat also marks the culmination of a journey of discovery for Efraimoglou, who quit her high profile career in Greek banking in 2001 to travel, experience and learn about the world's best healing modalities.

Her creation, Euphoria Retreat, now nestles in a valley of pine forests, citrus

trees and olive groves and sits close to the Byzantine town of Mystras. "I'd been searching for the perfect place to build my retreat and when I discovered this place 11 years ago I immediately felt its magical energy," says Efraimoglou. "A builder had started to develop an old mansion on-site but became frustrated with strict Greek regulations related to historical sites."

Efraimoglou bought the land and, once through a lengthy bureaucratic process, renovation of the structure and a new spa build took just 20 months. The total investment of €20m (US\$23.6m, £17.6m) came from her personal resources.

### Sunk into the earth

The finished site includes 45 bedrooms and the spa with 15 treatment rooms, salt room, tepidarium, infrared sauna, hammam, indoor and outdoor pool, two yoga spaces and TRX and pilates studio. The renovated six-bed mansion has six bedrooms and can be rented separately.

"For environmental reasons, we had to sink the new spa building into the mountainside - but it's also in keeping with our philosophy. The closer you get to the earth the more healing can take place," says Efraimoglou. "You can't experience healing if you're on the 21st floor of a skyscraper!" ▶



All treatments have a focus on mind, body and spirit

The Greek meaning of 'euphoria' is a state of happiness and bliss – a continuous balance between body, mind and spirit – and this is what Efraimoglou wants to help guests at her retreat to achieve.

#### Chinese five elements

The spa's signature programme – the Euphoria Emotional & Physical Transformation – runs as a seven night retreat and is priced at (€2,768, US\$3,228, £2,440). It's offered to groups of six to 10 people at specific times of the year. Efraimoglou says it fuses ancient Greek practices with the theory of the Chinese five elements to address guest's physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

She explains: "I've designed each day to focus on an element (water, wood, fire, earth and metal). We spend the morning working on the emotions and offer relevant body massages in the afternoon. For each element there's a different massage technique because each has a different [energy] flow.

"The water element is related to our kidneys and bladder and is linked to fear and shock. We'll do a guided meditation to get in touch with our bodies and understand where we store our fear. In the afternoon I've designed a water treatment – a special massage that works on opening up the kidneys and bladder to flush out toxins and open up the meridians.

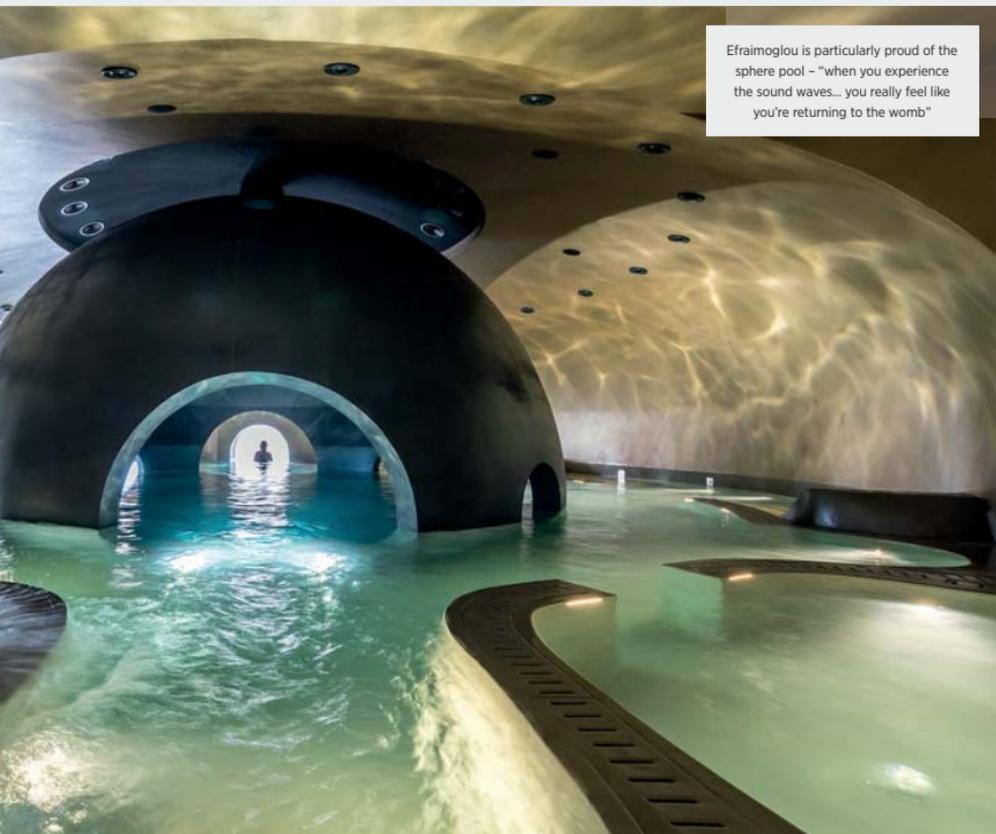


Vaulted ceilings and arches reflect nearby churches and the overall feel is zen-like

Other therapies at the retreat include acupuncture, reiki, watsu and forest meditation. All guests also receive a personal consultation on the emotions and imbalances that each one faces.

"We've drawn on ancient Greek philosophy – which focused on joy and connection, not on guilt or beating yourself up," says Efraimoglou. She confesses that during the years she spent experiencing spas around the world they "frequently lacked joy...and a soul. The European spas in particular can be quite medical."

She expects the core Euphoria Retreat market to be females aged from 30-70, with many visitors coming from the UK and US. "We have a strong emphasis on activity and the outdoors and in that way we're closer to many of the spas in the US rather than Europe."



Efraimoglou is particularly proud of the sphere pool - "when you experience the sound waves... you really feel like you're returning to the womb"

## Making connections

At Euphoria Retreat both the design of the site, and the programmes, have been oriented towards forging deeper connections. There's a communal dining area and getting-to-know-you events are offered to guests. Each person is assigned a guide for their stay and on the longer programmes they're offered a consultation on their "deeper issues".

The architecture has also been conceived around the guest's personal physical and emotional journey. For this important task Efraimoglou recruited her architect sister Natalia and award-winning Greek architectural firm Decca.

"My sister brought the female energy, and Decca brought the male energy to the project - yin and yang," she says. "We've used local cultural references such

as vaulted ceilings and arches to reflect the nearby churches. We've also used rich Byzantine colours like red, blue and yellow, but only as accents. Where we've used gold, it's a matt gold."

The overall feel is a zen atmosphere respecting the environment and offering the latest technology and comforts, using whites and greys that represent the cooling metal element, she says.

Efraimoglou is particularly proud of Euphoria's sphere pool, inspired by the massive dome at Hagia Sophia basilica in Constantinople, which has a 4m deep pool in its centre and is surrounded with hydro jets. "When you dive in and experience the sound waves it creates, you really feel like you're returning to the womb and experiencing a rebirth. Nothing like this exists elsewhere in the world." ▶

The retreat aims to attract women aged 30-70, with the UK and US pinpointed as core markets



## ► TRANSFORMATION SPA

Symbolism has been built into every part of the new four-storey spa. It's built around a well with a 25m empty cylinder rising up from the base, which Efraimoglou says "represents the light and the emptiness at the core of us all".

She explains: "Guests go on a journey from the bottom, and the dark, up towards the light. It's like the Greek concept of catharsis – a kind of purification. They start with water therapies like Kneipp on the ground level and move up through the pool, the tepidarium, the treatment rooms and onto the cocoon-like relaxation areas."

### Strong team

To deliver these experiences, Efraimoglou has gathered a strong team including Patrizia Bortolin as temporary spa director (see opposite) who's well-versed in transformational retreats from her days at Vair Spa at Borgo Egnazia, Italy.

The 10 therapists, whose nationalities include Greek, Lebanese and Russian, have been through a four-month training process prior to opening to become immersed in the Euphoria philosophy.

The main spa brands used are Biologique Recherche from France and

### PATRIZIA BORTOLIN, SPA DIRECTOR

Patrizia Bortolin is Euphoria Retreat's spa director and has been responsible for the design and creation of many of its holistic treatments and programmes. "I'm very interested in mental wellbeing and the psycho-emotional approach to life is at the base of all treatments I design," she says.

Prior to this Bortolin led spa developments at Borgo Egnazia in Italy (see SB15/2 p71) which is known for helping people with emotional and physical tension. She came off a sabbatical to help see the retreat through its initial launch phase. She says: "I've always been in love with Greece and after



“  
The psycho-emotional approach to life is at the base of all treatments I design

spending seven years in Puglia, I wanted to stay in a similar atmosphere and natural setting.

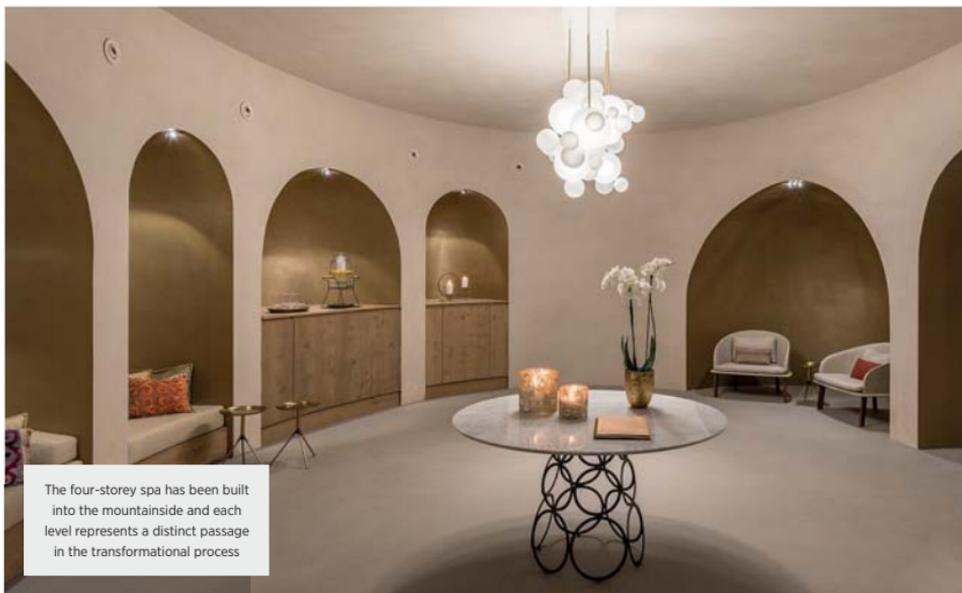
She believes the ingredients for a truly transformational retreat are "the experiential and engaging touches of the whole experience, some adventure and the invitation to go out of your comfort zone... self-discovery consultations, along with therapists and spa people with a high vibration and genuine service attitude."

the Greek company Fresh Line, as well as some local companies which have been chosen for their oils, herbs and soaps.

There's a resident doctor, Ioannis Dimitriou who's experienced in both western and eastern medicine, while Stefano Battaglia, who also came from Borgo Egnazia at the same time as Bortolin, is the resident shaman.

### Personalised nutrition

As much as Euphoria Retreat leans towards the spiritual, Efraimoglou has also grounded the programmes in science. All guests can experience 3GL Therapy developed in collaboration with Greek wellness firm Eucrasia and biochemist Dimitrios Kouretas. A few drops of blood are used to measure three key biomarkers



The four-storey spa has been built into the mountainside and each level represents a distinct passage in the transformational process



The design ethos is 'mysticism and elegance' and the 45 bedrooms feature soothing colours

for metabolic health – glycogen, glucose and glutathione (hence 3GL) – and guests receive a customised plan combining nutrition, exercise and healing recovery therapies to rebalance them “achieve homeostasis in their body”.

Euphoria Retreat also offers a programme involving nutrigenomics – where over 100 metabolic indices are tested and monitored to reveal tendencies towards major illness and ageing.

Guests returning home with a treatment plan can get follow-up blood tests at an approved clinic, upload their results to the Euphoria Retreat platform and discuss them with a doctor.

Every programme is delivered with a high degree of personalisation, especially when it comes to diet. The retreat offers a rich Mediterranean menu full of local produce with herbs and extracts from Euphoria’s kitchen garden.

However, the analyst in Efraimoglou doesn’t leave nature to chance. Using the same bio-lab machine used in its 3GL therapy, she says they can “measure the antioxidant values of the food, which can vary depending on the season and the soil in which they were grown, even locally. When we’re designing precise nutritional protocols for our guests, we have to be sure the nutrients meet their exact needs.”

## “ In my early 20s I was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma and given a 20-25 per cent survival rate ”

### Journey of self-discovery

It’s clear the ex-banker has left no stone unturned – and she admits it’s been a long, sometimes difficult journey, to get to this point. “In my early 20s I was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma and given a 20-25 per cent survival rate. I went to New York for experimental chemotherapy treatment. It’s there that I first made the connection between mind and body.

“Every time I vomited I imagined cancer cells leaving my body. People around me were dying but I managed to sail through treatment. It left me with some big life questions – why did I get sick, but more importantly why did I heal?”

She returned to Greece knowing she could no longer work for someone else. She founded her own investment bank and became the first female banking CEO in the country – scooping the award for business person of the year in 1999. But around this time she was also burning out. She sold the bank in 2001 and embarked on a journey of self discovery that led her to study the Chinese five elements in Asia

and numerous modalities in the US under leading lights like Deepak Chopra.

While the opening of Euphoria Retreat might feel like a culmination of a lifelong journey for Efraimoglou, it’s also just a beginning. “We want to establish a mode of joyful healing that can be replicated.

“We’ll spend time here putting our modalities into practice. Once we’re satisfied with the results, we plan to build more Euphorias in Europe and the US. We want to help people find their raison d’être, because if you find this, you’ll always be able to connect to your purpose.”

Considering Efraimoglou’s journey to this point, it’s clear that she’s authentically living her purpose. This will no doubt radiate through the people delivering her healing work, and the many guests who will receive it in the future. ●



Julie Cramer is a health and wellness journalist and SB contributing editor. Email: juliecramer@me.com

# OUT OF AFRICA

Luxury ethical spa brand Terres d'Afrique has seen rapid expansion in its first years of business. CEO and co-founder **Stephan Helary** explains how the company has now transitioned to creating bespoke spa experiences from concept to completion

## What's your background?

I grew up in Madagascar, surrounded by nature and medicinal plants. Later I trained as a vet in Belgium, and completed a Masters in Environment and Wildlife Management. I've always been passionate about conservation and was offered an opportunity to join a government agricultural project in Namibia. From there I did a PhD in the nutritional ecology of the black rhino.

## What brought you to the world of skincare?

Once I'd achieved my dream of working in conservation I realised I needed another career path that would allow me to continue working in South Africa. So I decided to use my passion for ethnobotany and create my own luxury

skincare brand. I saw an opportunity for an ethical, fair trade product using African ingredients that would fit well with the needs of Western wellness markets.

My previous experiences have really helped develop the business. I have a science background so know how the skin works; I have a development background that allows me to understand the supply chain and the challenges of working with indigenous plants. I also respect the livelihoods of the farmers.

## What's the ethos behind Terres D'Afrique?

Africa talks to the imagination, to the spirit, to all the senses, and this is what we aim to encapsulate in all Terres d'Afrique products and experiences. All our botanical

ingredients are uniquely African – many being ancient tribal remedies – that are combined into potent formulations underpinned by science.

As a company, we abide by the African humanist philosophy of Ubuntu – 'I am because you are' – made famous by the likes of Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

It's about balance and ensuring a healthy ecosystem – one that creates value for the community as a whole.

## When did you first start working with global spas?

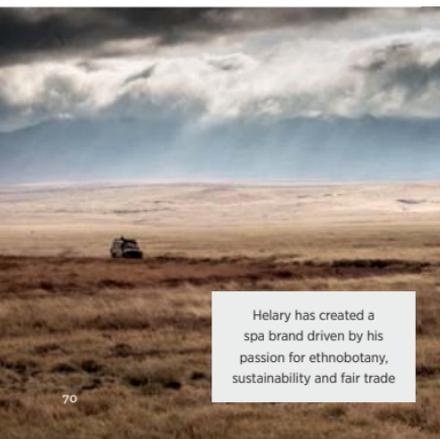
We had originally planned to focus on the luxury African safari market but five years ago the market at that time was not as receptive to our passion for sustainability.

We did our first overseas exhibition in Dubai in 2013 and had an overwhelming response, perhaps because our African botanical brand was so unique.

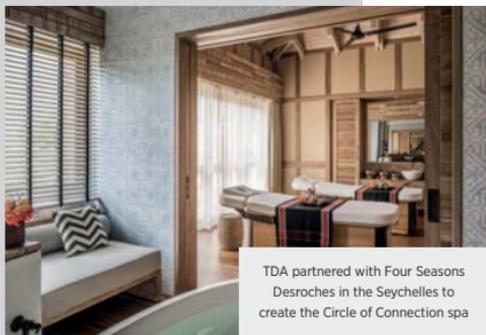
We secured our first international deal – with Four Seasons Mauritius – and expanded rapidly from there.

## What services do you offer spas and resorts?

We've evolved from developing African wellness products and treatments into a company that can create and deliver a full spa concept. We research deeply into the



Helary has created a spa brand driven by his passion for ethnobotany, sustainability and fair trade



TDA partnered with Four Seasons Desroches in the Seychelles to create the Circle of Connection spa



TDA abides by the African humanist concept of Ubuntu, where community is nurtured



We've evolved from developing African wellness products and treatments into a company that can create and deliver a full spa concept



history, climate, culture and food of an area to create bespoke concepts.

For our recent collaboration with Four Seasons Desroches in the Seychelles we created the holistic concept called the Circle of Connection spa.

The spa offers are highly experiential. For example, taking inspiration from the colours of the islands through the cycle of the day, one treatment uses flowers in the bath, different crystals and visual meditations and sound therapy to take guests on a journey linked to elements of the sea, the beach, the forest, and night sky. It's multi-sensorial.

**You talk about the seven dimensions of wellness – how do these apply to a spa project?**

These dimensions are the physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, environmental, occupational and social. The first three are relatively easy to address in the spa.

For intellectual activities we can create learning opportunities such as an educational spa garden. For environmental, it's about creating opportunities for guests to interact with nature.

For the social element, which can be lacking in many spas, we create concepts such as opening and closing ceremonies,

where guests have the opportunity to come together and get to know each other through group activities.

The occupational is the only element we can't address in the spa but we can teach people ways to cope with the stress of an unsuitable job.

**What projects are you currently working on?**

We have many exciting projects in the pipeline – including launching the new menu at Four Seasons Serengeti, Luxury Collection in Aqaba and other exclusive properties in Africa such as Delaire Graff Lodge and Spa in South Africa and Miavana in Madagascar. We're working on future collaborations with Four Seasons Marrakech, Kempinski in Ghana, Kenya and Jordan and Park Hyatt in Zanzibar.

**What are your plans for the next few years?**

After a period of rapid growth, we spent a year restructuring the business and now we're ready for further expansion. We're developing new luxury amenities that will be mood-based (relaxation, detox, energy etc) and relaunching our collection of



Terres d'Afrique uses many of the same ingredients used in ancient African tribal remedies

award-winning African teas. We're setting up trading in Morocco as a new market and will look to enter the EU by 2020.

**What excites you about the current direction of the spa market?**

I'm happy to see luxury five-star hotel brands now embracing wellness concepts. Some brands have been quite conservative in their spa menus but this is changing. Customers are also having the option to eat healthier food.

I'd love to see more brands incorporating the idea of a digital detox. People think they're disconnecting when they go to a spa but mostly they're not. A retreat where guests can only use the internet for an hour a day would be highly beneficial.

I'd also like to see more spas embracing holistic modalities like vibrational therapy.

So less focus on beauty, and more focus on wellness. ●

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Phone: 00 27 (0)78 953 50 51  
f www.facebook.com/TerresDAfrique

# Valley of wellness

The Romagna region of Italy has created a unique wellness ecosystem involving public and private investment to boost tourism in the area, improve public health and get its people moving. Jane Kitchen visits to find out more

Health is important for everybody – because a healthy lifestyle decreases the health costs for governments, increases the productivity for companies and improves the quality of life for everybody,” says Nerio Alessandri, founder and president of gym equipment supplier Technogym.

So what if everybody worked together to promote health and wellness at a local level? Wouldn't everyone benefit?

That's what Alessandri thought, back in 2001, when he proposed that public and private stakeholders in Romagna, Italy – where Technogym's headquarters are located – work together to bring wellness to the region.

## Wellness Foundation

“The idea was to develop the Romagna area, creating the first district in the world that forms a benchmark for quality of life,” says Alessandri. “Using Technogym as the catalyst, we mobilised all stakeholders in Romagna – companies, public administrators, tourism operators, schools, universities and the public health system – to work together to improve public health, boost the economy and raise the quality of the environment in order to attract

more and better qualified people who were in search of a wellness experience.”

To do this, he set up the Wellness Foundation, a non-profit that unites the region in all things wellness. Governments, hospitals, universities, schools and businesses all work together to create a ‘wellness ecosystem’ called the Wellness Valley. The foundation's aims are twofold: to improve the quality of life for those in the region, and to promote wellness tourism as a way for

“The idea was to develop the Romagna area, creating the first district in the world that forms a benchmark for quality of life... We used Technogym as the catalyst”

## EDUCATION

The University of Bologna has relocated a large portion of its degree courses and masters courses focused on quality-of-life subjects to its Romagna-based campuses. This includes subjects including food sciences, architecture, psychology, biotechnology, cultural heritage and tourism economics.



The Wellness Multicampus University is a project to develop studies with a wellness focus and includes 57 programmes in movement, health, biotechnologies, tourism, economy, the arts, and nutrition.

A new graduate degree programme on Wellness Culture: Health, Sport and Tourism began in October 2017.

Alessandri says people in Cesena are 10 per cent more active than the rest of Italy thanks to the Wellness Valley



Numerous initiatives across the region have been created to help children and adults to keep active



## PHYSICAL FITNESS

Each spring Technogym trainers help 18,000 residents enjoy free physical activity classes as part of the 'Muoviti che fa bene' - 'Movement that's good for you' - campaign.

Rimini has a Walk Smart initiative to encourage residents to discover the town and seaside on foot.

The Play Wellness initiative gets 10,000 children, presenting physical fitness in a fun way. More than 500 teachers have been trained in the programme, which is free for both for institutes and families.

The Piedibus programme is designed to encourage primary school children to walk to school and gets 1,000 children on their feet.

those from outside Romagna to discover the region.

### Best practices

More than 40 best practices have been developed since the Valley's formation, from the launch of bio-organic food companies and tourism operators selling wellness holiday packages to the area, to an initiative that teaches schoolchildren and their teachers about physical fitness.

Even the local libraries have been outfitted with wellness balls to keep locals moving while they read. Education has been a key component of the scheme and getting children into the habit of exercise from a young age has been important in establishing routines.

After 16 years, the results are starting to show. More than 17,000 schoolchildren

### The Wellness Valley boasts

96  
Cycling routes

53  
Wellness hotels

15  
Parks and nature reserves

12  
Thermal resorts

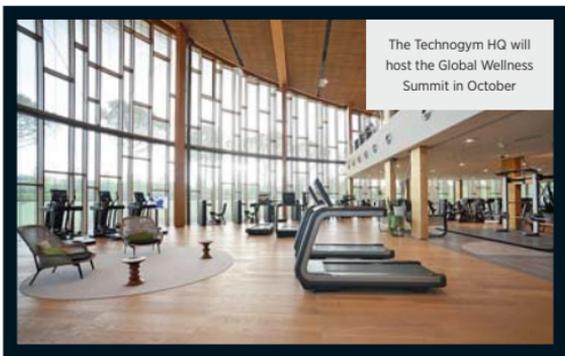
31  
Kilometres of coastline

and 500 teachers have taken part in Gioca Wellness, a programme that teaches physical fitness in a fun way, and the population in the area has increased its physical activity by 10 per cent. "That means people in Cesena are 10 per cent more active than the average Italian, thanks to the education and the culture [of the Wellness Valley]," says Alessandri.

The Wellness Valley has been presented at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, as an example of an ecosystem dedicated to health and welfare.

In 2009, Italian provinces were ranked according to GDW (Gross Domestic Wellbeing) and the province of Forlì-Cesena in Romagna was ranked highest in the country. Two other provinces in the region, Ravenna

The Technogym HQ will host the Global Wellness Summit in October



● Jane Kitchen with GWS chair Susie Ellis (right) checking out this year's location

and Rimini - also scored highly. In addition, Emilia Romagna has also been rated 9.7 out of 10 points for health by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Regional Well-Being ranking - putting it in the top 7 per cent across all OECD regions internationally.

“We admire the longevity here and we see the lifestyle is about joy and happiness”

### Technogym Village

The Technogym Village serves as the entrance gateway and the beating heart of the Wellness Valley, and is where this year's Global Wellness Summit will take place, from 6-8 October. Designed by the architect Antonio Citterio - who will speak at the summit - the Technogym Village was built according to the principles of bio-architecture, meaning it reflects structures that are found in nature.

The village combines Technogym equipment production plants, offices, product research & development and the T-Wellness Center - a dedicated facility for the development and promotion of wellness in the educational and medical-scientific research fields. Its conference facilities include wellness balls rather than chairs, to keep delegates moving even while seated and an on-site restaurant serves healthy, organic food.

It's one of the reasons the location was chosen for the GWS, which has a focus on the 'business of wellness' this year. Here,

### PUBLIC HEALTH

Emilia Romagna was the first region in Italy to authorise the medical prescription of physical exercise as therapy, in 2014.

A Health Round Table created by the Region of Emilia Romagna and the Wellness Foundation aims to enable fitness and wellness operators to administer physical exercise for therapeutic purposes.

An initiative between local doctors and the Wellness Foundation has led to an agreement where doctors will promote exercise as medicine, with physical activity prescribed as the principal drug in the fight against chronic disease.

GONS WITTE/WINDY/SHUTTERSTOCK



Romagna has been promoted as wellness destination since 2014

### TOURISM

Tourism is promoted with a wellness focus, through spa programmes, biking holidays and local food culture.

Romagna is promoted and marketed under the Wellness Valley brand as a destination specialising in holidays that combine movement, outdoor

routes, food and wine excellence, culture, art and landscape

Since July 2014, the Wellness Valley Tourist Promotion Association has actively promoted hotels, beaches, events and tourist routes selected by the Wellness Foundation. Wellness holiday packages are sold through the website [www.visitwellnessvalley.it](http://www.visitwellnessvalley.it)

delegates will be able to see not only the headquarters of a major international wellness brand, but also an entire region that has focused on improving the quality of wellbeing for its residents.

"Italy has a lot to teach us about wellness," says Susie Ellis, GWS chair. "We admire the longevity here and we see the lifestyle is about joy and happiness."



### FOOD & GASTRONOMY

An organic produce supply chain has been set up in Romagna as part of the Wellness Valley, creating considerable added value for the products.

Casa Artusi is a centre of Italian gastronomic culture includes 2,800sq m (30,140sq ft) of space with a library, restaurant, cookery school, wine cellar, bookshop, museum and events location

Foodwell, a four-day food festival dedicated to healthy food for those who are in motion, takes place each year in Rimini offering food tastings, cooking classes and recipe contests.

### Global Expansion

Soon, the lifestyle that has been cultivated throughout the Wellness Valley will be exported to other countries. After receiving requests from all over the world to create similar projects, Alessandri has created a consultancy, Wellness Partners, which aims to develop these wellness ecosystems in different regions internationally. "Our aim is to masterplan and create other wellness valleys around the world," he says.

Wellness Partners has been in the works for two years, with the first year-and-a-half focusing on creating a scalable model and assembling international experts in major cities like New York, London and Singapore. And while the consultancy already has a few projects in the pipeline, Alessandri is remaining tight-lipped about where they are. But in the future, it looks like the Wellness Valley model may be coming to a region near you. ●



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# GLOBAL WELLNESS SUMMIT 2018

PARTIAL LIST OF  
SPEAKERS & PRESENTERS



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Technogym



**Gina Diez**  
Barroso de Franklin,  
Grupo Diarq



**Prof. Gerry Bodeker, PhD,**  
University of Oxford



**David Bosshart,**  
PhD, Gottlieb  
Duttweiler Inst.



**Mark Britnell,**  
KPMG  
International



**Dan Buettner,**  
Blue Zones



**Dr. Richard H. Carmona,**  
Canyon Ranch



**Dr. Anjan Chatterjee,**  
Univ. of Penn.



**Antonio Citterio,**  
A. Citterio P. Viel  
and Partners



**Clodagh,**  
Clodagh Design



**Jan-Emmanuel De Neve, PhD,**  
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**Catherine Feliciano-Chon,**  
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**Madelyn Fernstrom, PhD,**  
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**Dr. Nicola Angelo Fortunati,**  
Italian  
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**Melisse Gelula,**  
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**Neil Grimmer,**  
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**Mindy Grossman,**  
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**Susan Harnsworth, MBE,**  
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**Andrea Illy,**  
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**Katherine Johnston,**  
Global  
Wellness Inst.



**Alcide Leali,**  
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**Dave McCaughan,**  
Biblosexual



**Aldo Melpignano,**  
Borgo Egnazia



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**Bob Roth,**  
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**Louie Schwartzberg,**  
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**Liz Terry,**  
Leisure  
Media



**Matteo Thun,**  
Matteo Thun &  
Partners



**Ophelia Yeung,**  
Global Wellness  
Institute

Join us October 6-8 at Technogym in Cesena, Italy

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spa business uniting the world of wellness

# Holistic SUSTAINABILITY

The Madison Collection is committed to creating high-quality hotel and spa linens while at the same time protecting the environment, promoting workplace wellness and supporting clean water rights. Owner **Charmaine T. Lang** and **Gilad Lang**, vice president of business development, tell us more

## What makes your robes and towels different from others on the market?

**Charmaine:** We start with the finest yarns; yarn is graded for quality from 0-7, and we only buy from grade 5.5 up. This means that the fibres are longer, which ensures greater absorbency. We also use a sophisticated dyeing stuff, which is an optical solution with a little bit of peroxide, rather than the industry standard, which uses bleach. This gives a higher quality of dyeing. And we wash and dry our fabrics four times before we cut and sew, so there is less shrinkage.



The Madison Collection offers stylish, thinner robes that are more absorbent and sensual to the touch

We've also replaced thick robes with stylish, thinner counterparts that are more absorbent, while still being sensual to the touch and alluring to the eye. Our towels take up less storage space – something we know is important to spas – and use less water, less electricity and less labour to launder.

Put it this way: the norm on the market for a bath towel is on average 17 pounds for a dozen; ours are between 8 and 11 pounds a dozen. That means you can launder as much as twice as many towels for the same energy and water costs, which saves hotels and spas money – and is really important from an environmental impact standpoint.

## Sustainability is really important to you as a company – what are some of the ways The Madison Collection is helping the planet?

**Charmaine:** The factory uses recycled paper for our boxes and flour and water as adhesive for the tape. The plastic bags used to pack the towels are biodegradable. We use 100 per cent cotton in our products – no microfiber, which contains non-biodegradable plastics.

We've also recently been awarded the Butterfly Mark, a third-party certification that identifies luxury brands that are committed to holistic sustainability – both social and environmental. Earning the mark means we had to pass a very stringent assessment, but we thought it was important



The Madison Collection uses the finest cotton yarns to make robes and towels

## Our towels take up less storage space and use less water, less electricity and less labour to launder

to have our efforts verified by a third-party certification, to show how committed we are to these principles. In the end, we received 11 certifications – for our waste reduction, environmentally friendly packaging and our responsible sourcing of raw materials, among other things.

## You've carefully chosen the factory you work with – can you tell us what makes it so special?

**Charmaine:** The factory we use in Brazil has been in the same family since 1932, and is one of a very few in the world that does the spinning, weaving, drying, cut and sew on the same premises, which does the double-duty of both reducing the carbon footprint and offering consistency of product.

Excess fluff from the spinning process and the dirt from cleaning the cotton is collected and made into briquets. We buy



Gilad Lang, vice president of business development, and founder Charmaine Lang



It's not just the factory processes that are important; it's the way the workers are taken care of as well

the waste wood – only from replanted trees – from local furniture factories, and make wood chips. We then use the briquets and the wood chips to fuel a fire, which heats the water to power the factory.

The factory also has a water-purification system that uses live bacteria rather than chemicals to break down any dye pigment, returning water to the river cleaner than it was captured.

But it's not just the factory processes that are important; it's the way the workers are taken care of as well. The factory employs 1,400 people, who are given free transportation to work, free meals, an on-site medical centre, day care, community centre, an on-site nutritionist and a fitness instructor who comes to the factory twice a day to give them exercise for 15 minutes. Employees also share 25 per cent of the factory's profits, and have a voting say on management. Generation after generation have been working there.

**You also believe in giving back; what causes have you chosen to support, and why?**

**Gilad:** When it comes to corporate social responsibility, we have to look at what ills we're causing in the world. And while our towels use less water than average, laundry costs and water usage is still a big issue for the industry.

The most basic human right and necessity is water, and so we decided to partner with the nonprofit Wine to Water to help families in Haiti and the Dominican Republic get access to clean drinking water. For every bathrobe ordered online, our customers gift one family with a ceramic water filter, providing them with five years or more of safe drinking water. We're giving our customers the opportunity to make an impact; so far, we've helped around 100 families in Haiti, which translates to 700 people. [www.themadisoncollection.com](http://www.themadisoncollection.com)

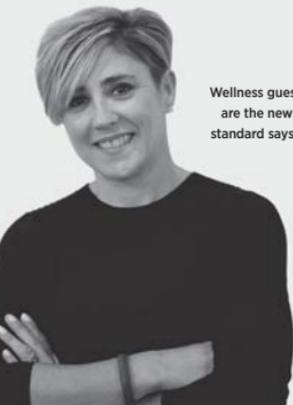


The Madison Collection works with Wine to Water to provide clean drinking water

# STAYING WELL



Wellness and fitness are continuing to make their way out of the spa and gym – and into hotel guestrooms and public spaces. Jane Kitchen takes a look at how some of the biggest operators are addressing the new trend of wellness rooms



Wellness guestrooms are the new hotel standard says Molloy

Just six years ago, the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas and wellness real estate firm Delos partnered to create the first Stay Well rooms – designed as hotel rooms that “optimise and support the physical and emotional health and wellbeing of guests”.

Delos worked with doctors at Columbia University Medical School and the Cleveland Clinic, as well as architects and engineers, to develop the first 42 Stay Well rooms, which made their debut in 2012, offering features like circadian

lighting, air purification, aromatherapy and vitamin C-infused showers – all available at an upcharge of around US\$30 (€26, £23) a night (see SB14/1 p28).

Today, the idea has expanded, with both Marriott and Four Seasons collaborating with Delos and other hotel brands to create their own in-house versions of wellness rooms to cater for growing demand.

Whether they're offering fresh air, tools for a better night's sleep, in-room fitness or a space to meditate, these rooms aim to help guests take their wellness lifestyles with them when they travel. Mark VanStekelenburg, managing director

Four Seasons LA has seen a 50 per cent increase in sales of its well rooms

## FOUR SEASONS

Four Seasons is the latest operator to launch wellness rooms, in a pilot programme with Delos at its Beverly Hills property.

Five guestrooms and three suites, located on the fourth floor spa level, have been created to optimise physical and emotional wellbeing, with features such as circadian lighting and air and water purification systems.

**Michael Newcombe**, vice president of spa & wellness for Four Seasons, reports that just two months into the programme,



he's seen a 35 per cent increase on the suites and 50 per cent increase on regular rooms (see SB18/2 p22). On top of this, the hotel charges a premium for the rooms.

Guests in the well rooms have access to sleep and nutrition programmes developed by the Cleveland Clinic, guided meditation videos by Deepak Chopra, exercise equipment and yoga mats, as well as healthy in-room snack options.

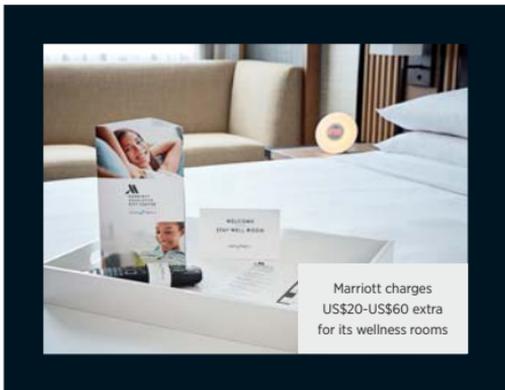
**Cost:** around US\$50 (€43, £38) extra



at CBRE Hotels Advisory in New York says: "There's a global desire for access to wellness and fitness. Consumers want a choice. And while the implementation of this continues to evolve, access to wellness is here to stay rather than being a fad."

Louise Molloy, head of consultancy for Dubai-based The Wellness, says wellness rooms can help create unique positioning, add to the guest experience and set a brand apart from its competition. "A better understanding of just what kind of reach wellness has beyond the spa is becoming more apparent than ever," says Molloy. "I think it will be inevitable that wellness rooms will become a standard part of any hotel brand's design guidelines."

Here then, we take a look at some of the ways in which hotel operators are taking wellness outside of the spa and into the guestroom – and beyond.



Marriott charges US\$20-US\$60 extra for its wellness rooms

## MARRIOTT

In 2016, Marriott added Stay Well rooms – created in partnership with Delos – to six US properties.

Features include advanced air purification, essential oil aromatherapy, circadian mood lighting, non-toxic cleaning products, dawn simulation, vitamin C-infused showers and a healthy mattress. Through the Stay Well Mobile App, guests also enjoy access to a jet lag tool, as well as sleep, nutrition and stress management programmes developed by Cleveland Clinic.

"Now more than ever, health and wellness are a top priority in nearly every facet of our lives," says Jim Connelly, senior president of operations and owner services at Marriott.

The rooms are popular with both business and leisure travellers and families alike. The company says Marriott Reward Members often request the Stay Well rooms as their room of choice.

**Cost:** US\$20 (€17, £15) to US\$60 (€51, £45) extra, depending on location

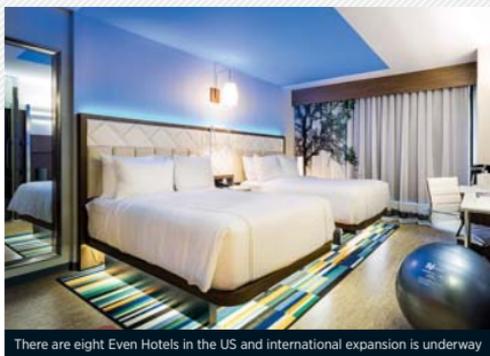
## INTERCONTINENTAL

InterContinental's Even Hotels brand launched back in 2014 as a lifestyle hotel with wellness at its core – though the hotels do not include spas. The group designed aspects of the hotel across four components: eating well, resting easy, keeping active and accomplishing more.

The hotels feature in-room fitness elements with a dedicated workout space, fitness equipment and 18 different workout videos. Running maps are available at the front desk, and bedrooms have been fitted with high-tech lighting and bedding options – such as

eucalyptus linens and colour-changing mood lights – as well as aromatherapy amenities, intended to encourage a good night's sleep. Grab-n-go, health-conscious food is available from the brand's Cork & Kale cafe.

There are now eight Even Hotels open, including three in New York City and recent openings in Eugene, Oregon and Sarasota, Florida. There are 12 additional properties in the pipeline in the US and international expansion is also on the cards, with a development deal announced for a portfolio of hotels across



There are eight Even Hotels in the US and international expansion is underway

Australia and New Zealand, and three properties in the works in China – the first of which is set to open in 2019 in Sanya. "Around the world, we know that there's growing consumer demand for wellness-focused

travel," says Keith Barr, IHG CEO. "Since debuting in the US, the brand has resonated strongly with guests and owners."

.....  
**Cost:** room rates vary depending on location



Swissôtel's stylish Vitality Rooms feature 'wellbeing walls' (right)

## SWISSOTEL

Swissôtel's Vitality Room was developed in collaboration with *Wallpaper* magazine (see SB15/4 p78) and offers wellness features such as black-out blinds, dedicated space for exercise and relaxation, air purification system, lighting and scent options in the shower, a Vitality snack bar with fruits and superfoods and circadian lighting features. A 'wellbeing wall' gives guests a choice of three training modules in a compact space, with simple, self-explanatory equipment and a cyber-trainer.

The rooms, which made their debut at Swissôtel Zurich in



2016, also feature a clean, calm material palette and a reconfigured layout to optimise views and improve functionality.

"There's a growing desire on the part of travellers to view their accommodations not just as a place to stay, but as a place to reconnect, replenish and revitalise," says Lilian Roten, vice president of Swissôtel.

Vitality Rooms will soon be developed in North America, Asia and the Middle East, with reports of hotels in Singapore and Dubai being next to add the concept.

.....  
**Cost:** 30 per cent more than average daily rate



## PULLMAN

Pullman is bringing wellness concepts to its rooms, rather than redesigning them. The operator has worked with Rythm, a neurotechnology company, to trial its wearable sleep-tech product, Drem, with guests at hotels in Paris and San Francisco.

Drem is an active sleep solution designed to enhance sleep quality – a headband uses ultra-fine sensors to track key information such as brain waves, heart rate and breathing, and discreetly diffuses sound to the inner ear. It claims to help

users fall asleep more easily, enhance deep sleep and wake the user at the optimal time.

“A good night’s sleep is a cornerstone of Pullman’s wellness ethos,” says **Aldina Duarte Ramos**, director of wellbeing for Sofitel, Pullman and Swissôtel. “Our clientele of hyper-connected entrepreneurs and global nomads are always looking to balance productivity with personal wellbeing,” she says.

Guests can request the headbands for free with priority given to Accor club members.

Pullman is trialling the Drem headband to track and promote sleep



A good night’s sleep is a cornerstone of Pullman’s wellness ethos

## WESTIN

Last year, Westin Hotels unveiled a multi-million dollar Let’s Rise advertising campaign, highlighting the importance of wellbeing for hotel guests during the inevitable disruptions and the unpredictability of travel.

Westin already had programmes including a Gear Lending workout, developed with New Balance, which have been designed to “embody the brand’s Six Pillars of Wellbeing”: sleep well, eat well, move well, feel well, work well and play well.

“Around the world, we’re seeing travellers realigning their priorities to put their wellbeing first,” says Brian Povinelli, global brand leader.



Westin worked with New Balance on a fitness ‘gear lending’ programme

Yoga teacher Celest Pereira leads a yoga session designed to help guests relax



## MANDARIN ORIENTAL

Mandarin Oriental is taking wellness outside the spa walls through its newly launched Mindful Meetings concept (see p40) as well as a partnership with Grokker to create health and wellness video programmes for its guest rooms.

Guests are given free access to a digital library of custom health and fitness video content that they can practice in-room, including a bedtime yoga routine, 20-minute fitness sessions, pilates and



five-minute guided meditation.

The programming is already available at a number of Mandarin Oriental hotels and will be rolled out across the company throughout 2018.

“These activities allow us to leverage the great expertise

and talent that we have in our Spa & Wellness division to give a better overall experience to all our guests,” says **Jeremy McCarthy**, Mandarin’s group director of spa and wellness. ▶

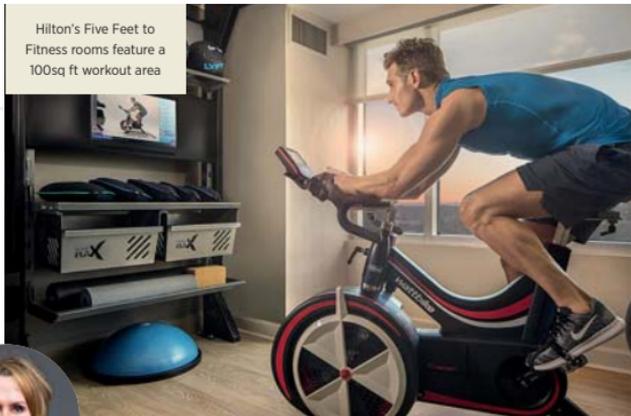
## HILTON

Hospitality giant Hilton unveiled an in-room wellness concept last year called Five Feet to Fitness, which brings 11 different fitness equipment and accessory options into the hotel room and includes more than 200 bespoke fitness videos.

The new room type has a 100sq ft (9sq m) fitness space with a Wattbike and dynamic Gym Rax stations, to deliver strength, core, suspension and interval training. At the heart of the concept is the Fitness Kiosk offering equipment tutorials and guided workout routines. Also included: a meditation chair, blackout shades and Biofreeze products for muscle tension.

"We haven't just placed workout equipment in a room, we've completely deconstructed the hotel room and carefully designed a space with an

Hilton's Five Feet to Fitness rooms feature a 100sq ft workout area



uncluttered training area, with sports-performance flooring and a separate area for rest and relaxation," says **Melissa Walker**, global fitness director for Hilton. Hilton currently has 11 hotels and 31 rooms trading under the Five Feet to

Fitness programme, with an additional 23 properties in the pipeline.

The rooms are trading at a 20 per cent premium and achieving a 75 per cent occupancy rate.

Cost: around US\$45 (£38, £34)

Health club operator Equinox will reveal its first fitness hotel in 2019



## When the gym becomes the hotel

High-end health club operator Equinox has plans to enter the hotel space – starting with a location in New York City's Hudson Yards in 2019 – with a focus on movement, nutrition and regeneration.

The hotels – which will be located in US urban markets and other gateway cities, including London – will offer healthy food that's tailored to the workout

and travel regime of the guest. They'll also aim to maximise sleep quality by removing disruptors such as light pollution and noise. The target guest is one who already embraces a healthy lifestyle.

Equinox's goal is to "raise the bar on what a hotel experience should feel like, and evolve the idea of travel as something that can fit seamlessly into a healthy lifestyle."



Vitamin C showers at MGM Grand

## MGM GRAND

The Stay Well rooms at the MGM Grand – the first hotel to adopt the Delos wellness protocols – include 17 features designed to help sleep quality, reduce allergies and promote healthy eating.

Created in partnership with Delos, Stay Well rooms incorporate features like vitamin C showers, circadian rhythm lighting and healthy mattresses.

MGM started with an initial 42 Stay Well rooms when it launched the concept in 2012, but after the first year, it added more, bringing the total to 171 – which now take up the entire 14th floor of the hotel's main tower.

Stay Well rooms are also slated to be part of the upcoming Park MGM Hotel in Las Vegas, due to open later this year.

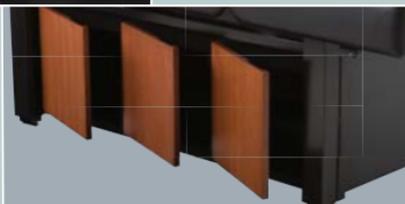
Cost: around US\$30 (£26, £23) extra per night



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### SIX SENSES

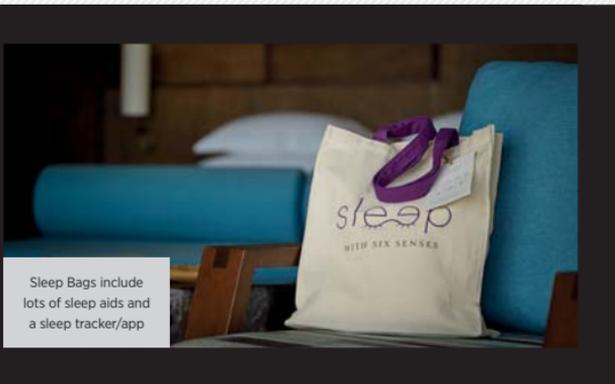
Six Senses worked with sleep doctor Michael Breus to create the Sleep With Six Senses standard, which includes handmade mattresses by Naturalmat, organic pillows, duvets and sheets and Madison Collection toweling and bathrobes in the guestrooms.

Guests can upgrade their sleep experience, which includes answering an online questionnaire so that a sleep ambassador can fine-tune the room based on their preferences. The upgrade also includes a Sleep Bag with aids such as bamboo fibre pyjamas, eye mask, ear plugs, sleep spritzer, bathroom amenities from The Organic Pharmacy and Withings Aura Sleep Tracker/App.

Six Senses introduced the concept in 2016 and is rolling it out across all of its 11 resorts worldwide.

**Cost:** The sleep upgrade is priced at US\$165 (€135, £118) extra for the first night; US\$30 (€26, £23) for each additional night

Six Senses worked with sleep doctor Michael Breus on its concept



Sleep Bags include lots of sleep aids and a sleep tracker/app



The suite has won this year's European Health & Spa's Innovation Award

### Preidh Hof Hotel & Spa

The Preidh Hof Hotel and Spa in Italy, has just revealed a new Dream Well Suite, which has won this year's Innovation Award at the European Health and Spa Awards.

Developed in collaboration with Sonami AG, the suite features a nature-inspired acoustic ceiling which absorbs and reflects sounds like treetops in a forest. Controllable colour LEDs simulate sunrises and sunsets, and guests can

awaken to a slow-starting bird concert and sunbeams finding their way through treetops, or fall asleep to a sunset at a small mountain lake.

The Dream Well Suite aims to provide the ultimate 'private spa experience', and comes with its own sauna, hot tub, pool and gym. ●

**Cost:** from €3,450 (US\$4,035, £3,065) for a minimum three-night stay on a full board basis

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# PIONEERING Personalisation

More than 40 years ago, Parisian skincare brand Biologique Recherche was founded, with a focus on research and personalisation. Co-chairs **Rupert Schmid** and **Pierre-Louis Delapalme** discuss what's made the brand so successful – and where the future will take them



Rupert Schmid

#### Can you tell me a bit about how Biologique Recherche offers personalisation in its products and treatments?

**Pierre-Louis:** Personalisation has been in our DNA from the very beginning. When Yvan and Josette Allouche – a biologist and a physiotherapist – founded Biologique Recherche just over 40 years ago, they combined their expertise to create products with a high concentration of active ingredients for personalised skincare. Their son, Philippe Allouche – who today still heads up our research department – took it one step further, developing the Skin Instant Lab, a unique system for analysing, diagnosing and prescribing products and treatments. Everyone is talking about personalisation lately, but we've been doing it for more than 40 years, and the way in which we personalise is unique.

#### What is the Skin Instant Lab and how does it work?

**Rupert:** The skin can change very quickly – even overnight – depending on things like your level of stress, changes in hormones, or even the weather, and of course no

two people have the same skin. Our Skin Instant® Lab measures moisture content, transepidermal water loss, skin elasticity, skin melanin index and sebum content, and that, combined with an in-depth dermocosmetic diagnosis, determines the products and treatments that are recommended for that day. If a client comes back in three weeks time, the treatment and product recommendations may be different. With this kind of personalised treatment, people instantly see the results; we make them feel their skin has changed.

#### Why do you feel that research & development is so important?

**Pierre-Louis:** The skin is the most complex organ in the body; that's why R&D is our biggest spend; we want to have the best, most thorough understanding possible of the skin. We have a multidisciplinary team made up of doctors, PhDs and engineers and based at our headquarters in Paris. Our R&D lab is closely connected to our product development team, and there is a very close collaboration and partnership. La Grande Crème, our newest product, looks at the epigenetic approach of improving skin condition. This new science is really trying to foster the expression of genes that are favourable, while blocking those that are not.

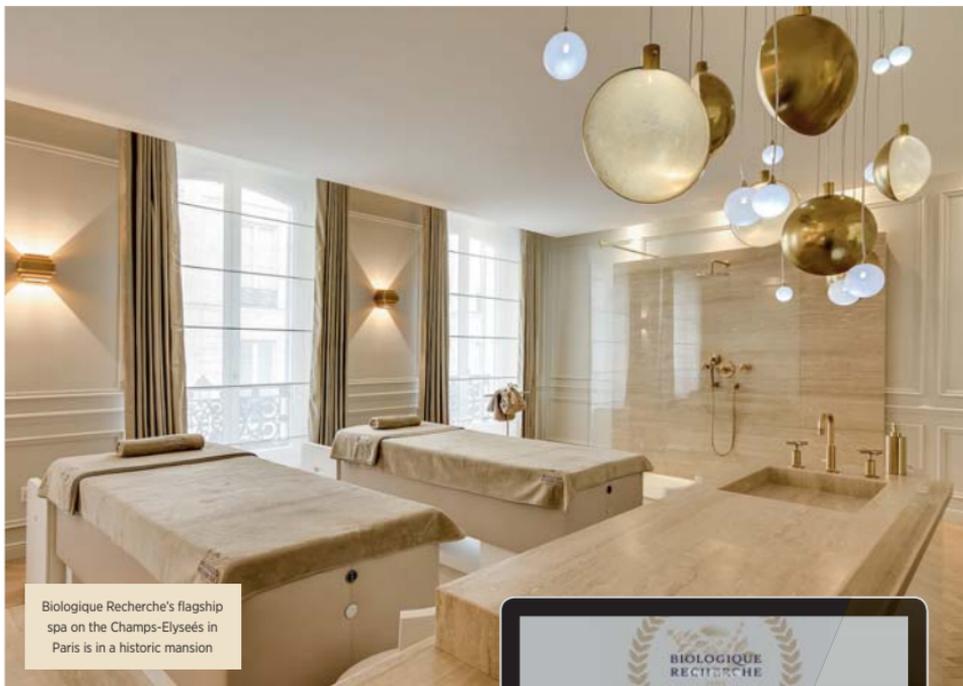
**Rupert:** La Grande Crème is only the start – we have lots of research that will look at how to improve the quality of good proteins while hindering the production of



Pierre-Louis Delapalme



La Grande Crème uses new research into epigenetics to help positive expression of skin-related genes and rejuvenate cells



Biologique Recherche's flagship spa on the Champs-Elysees in Paris is in a historic mansion



The online academy was launched last year

*We want our therapists to offer the best, most unique personalised treatments and advice*

bad proteins, as well as continuing research on epigenetics and the microbiome.

Building better skin is the essence of what we do. We've got 40 years of research under our belts, and we've always stayed true to the obsession of understanding the skin.

**Tell me about the training that you offer?**

Rupert: We want our therapists to offer the best, most unique personalised treatments and advice, so investing in knowledge and training is something that makes sense. Last year, we launched an online academy that's the most advanced professional online training on the market. By the end of the year, it will be available in 15 languages. It's designed with different chapters to teach an understanding of the skin, as well as brand history, products, procedures,

customer marketing, and the different machines we use. There are units designed for the therapists, but also shorter segments for a spa's PR and marketing department, and for those who aren't performing treatments, such as spa receptionists.

**How do you stay true to the brand's ethos as you grow as a company?**

Pierre-Louis: We keep a very select and limited distribution; we have 1,500 spas in 70 countries, but we're very focused, targeted and selective in how we choose them. Right now, 80 per cent of our growth is coming from our existing partners – their own clientele is growing, and their clients are loyal to the brand. With limited distribution, it's easier to control the quality as well as the training.

**Why do you think there is so much client loyalty to Biologique Recherche?**

Rupert: Forty years ago, when we first started, people were looking for magic bullets, but Biologique Recherche did something different. Today, more people want to understand and be responsible for all aspects of their life – what they eat, how they exercise, what they put on their skin. With Biologique Recherche, the clients are much more involved in the treatments than with any other brand, and people are looking for that interaction, and for something unique. Right now, we're exactly where we want to be, and our growth, recognition and exposure in the market is our best reward.

<http://www.biologique-recherche.com/>

# Mountain THERAPY

Ancient healing waters, a spectacular setting and a highly skilled team have helped Grand Resort Bad Ragaz become a leading spa in Europe. With a new CEO at the helm, will there be a change of direction or more of the same? Patrick Vogler talks to Kath Hudson

**B**ased in the heart of the Alpine region of Heidi-land, Grand Resort Bad Ragaz has the setting we all imagine when we think of Switzerland: mountains, superb scenery, ideal terrain for outdoor activities, it's a wine region and even has its own healing waters – all within an hour of Zurich.

Taking advantage of this sublime setting, the original hotel, the Grand Hotel Quellenhof, celebrates its 150th anniversary next year. Since opening, a history of continued investment has led to the resort, and its reputation, growing to offer something for everyone.

Currently there four hotels, seven restaurants, a café and a sushi takeaway, a casino and two golf courses. The two separate spas include Thermal Spa and the famous Tamina Therme public thermal baths with its "precious healing



CEO Patrick Vogler

waters". There's also an on-site Medical Health Center with 30-plus doctors focusing on everything from sports injuries and nutrition to fertility and mental health.

CEO Patrick Vogler, says that each part of the resort is viewed as an independent profit centre. Although this has not always been the case, each of the businesses are currently firing on all cylinders. Occupancy is 65 per cent and the resort has a loyal following: some of its guests have been coming for more than 50 years.

While keen to look after these customers, Vogler also has attracting new audiences as one of his key aims. He says: "We have many loyal guests who've been with us for decades, but now it's time to acquire newer, younger guests, so we're realising projects with this in mind."

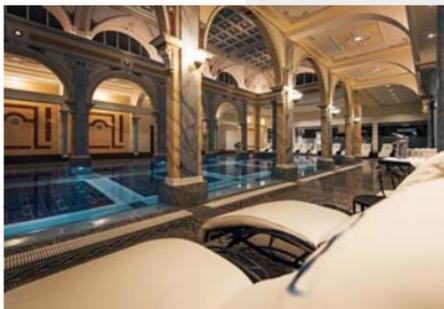
Vogler has been with the organisation since 2008 and, as CFO, worked closely with his predecessor, Peter P Tschirky, to pilot the resort through tough economic times. This was achieved both through investment, innovation and seeking new audiences, a strategy which Vogler will continue to take forward.

Over recent years, since the credit crunch, the resort has seen a shift in its audience, from predominantly Swiss and German guests to those

It's time to acquire newer, younger guests, so we are realising projects with this in mind



The resort, which celebrates its 150th anniversary next year, has four hotels and two spas



Bad Ragaz is famous for its Tamina Therme public baths (right) which boast "precious healing waters"



## THERMAL SPA



Bad Ragaz has just added a family spa to attract the emerging three generation family market

► from emerging markets like Russia, Middle East, and the US. Being flexible to change, despite its size, has been key to the success of Bad Ragaz, and is something Vogler will be building on.

### Three generation families

After taking over as CEO in July 2017, one of Vogler's first tasks was to look at the brand and web presence. "The launch of a new website and a rebrand has been a big focus, because I believe that having a strong brand and a clear, engaging website is crucial in gaining new customers," he says. "Elderly guests frequently come to us for our clinical services - more than half of the guests use the medical facility somehow - but we're actively looking for ways to hook in new audiences who are not necessarily focused on medical health."

One of the new audiences to be identified is the three generation family market, which are being catered for with a family spa launched in May. This is a wise move: finding audiences who will again stay with them for decades. "We're keen to open our resort up to three generations and have done so in response both to guests asking us and identifying a market demand," says Vogler.

Created by Swiss interior designer Claudio Carbone, the 550sq m (5,920sq ft) family spa is open to children up to the



Spa director, Lucia Bergmann

What sets us apart from other spas is our bespoke programmes

### Bespoke treatments

**Ragazer Balance** focuses on detoxifying and is a five day programme costing CHF1,430 (US\$1451, €1232, £1085) without accommodation

**Ragazer Vitality** is aimed at relieving fatigue. The starting price is CHF550 (US\$558, €473, £417) for two to four days

**Ragazer Relaxation** is all about relieving stress and costs from CHF675 (US\$685, €581, £512) for two to four days

age of 16 and offers treatments like Bling Bling Nails, Sweet Honey Massage, using lavender oil, and Happy Feet, a foot bath and massage finished off with a pedicure including tiny gemstones. The bathing zones range from 0.2m to 1.3m deep and offer many exciting activities such as Aqua Latin Dance, mermaid swimming lessons, swimming classes for babies and toddlers and a weekly kids' party. The overall theme picks up on the rustic rock faces of the local Tamina Gorge, the source of the resort's thermal waters, and a wooden Alpine hut is a reminder of the Heidi story.

Additionally there are four new family rooms, with views of the Heidiland region, to accommodate two adults and three children. The play facilities are currently being upgraded, with the addition of a billiards room and a kitchen with facilities for 50 children to cook.

### Spotlight on spa

The Thermal Spa is a major draw for the resort with many guests coming primarily to use its facilities which include an extensive Sauna World and three pools. There are also 19 treatment rooms, the new family spa, one private spa suite and a dermatology practise.

"Many of our guests don't want to go and see their doctor who will prescribe medication, but are looking for other

[ comfort zone ]

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## THERMAL SPA

### No other spas in Switzerland offer these types of programmes



► solutions which can help them destress and bring their lives into balance," says spa director, Lucia Bergmann. "What sets us apart from other spas is our bespoke programmes, which are two to five days long and help our guests to relax and bring their bodies back into balance. We offer a break from the daily routine, which addresses the body, mind and soul. No other spas in Switzerland offer these types of programmes."

Developed in conjunction with French bodycare specialists, Altearah Bio, the Ragazer spa programmes (see p90) are the most popular offering at the spa, incorporating consultations, treatments and, depending on the package, PT sessions, yoga, pilates, floating sessions or aquafit.

"At the outset, the therapists meet with the guests to design an individual programme for them. As well as one or two treatments a day, they will have some form of exercise and a relaxation session," explains Bergmann. "We're a big team and constantly communicate with each other so we can take a holistic approach to each client. The programme is a blend of medicine and wellness, and we give them advice and tools to take away."

One of the challenges which the spa deals with is responding to the demands of different audiences and the team recognises different preferences among guests from Europe, Russia and the



The Quellenhof is due to undergo a US\$42m refurb to bring it up to date with the rest of the resort

Middle East. One of the trends Bergmann has noticed is an increase in demand for beauty treatments for men, including facials, manicures and pedicures.

#### Ongoing investment

The next major project on Vogler's to do list is next year's CHF40m (US\$42m, €34m, £30m) refurbishment of the original Grand Hotel Quellenhof, on its 150th anniversary. Formal and traditional in comparison to its contemporary spa suites, the refurb will combine the history and elegance with a more modern look.

"All 106 rooms will have air conditioning added, the technology will be updated to improve internet connections, there will be more space on the ground floor for the restaurant and it will house the main reception for the resort," says Vogler.

Another project on the drawing board is the addition of a football pitch, so the resort can build on its success in treating its elite sports clientele. Among its customers it currently counts the Swiss Olympic teams and Saudi Arabia's football team, UK club West Ham United and Germany's Borussia Dortmund. The addition of a football field will attract

more top international teams to keep their athletes in peak condition – and no doubt drive more business to the medical centre.

Vogler wants Grand Resort Bad Ragaz to become Europe's leading hotel in wellbeing and medical health and is confident they have the tools to achieve this. The medical spa, and its breadth of expertise, and the heritage and mythical magic of the healing waters are top of the list in terms of the resort's main attractions, complemented by its innovation in terms of programming such as a sleep diagnostics programme and continual investment in keeping its facilities at the top end.

"We have a successful combination of a variety of high standard businesses operating together, extensive medical expertise and thermal waters," says Vogler. "With the continuous development of new business ideas, we want to secure, and deepen our position as the leading wellbeing and medical resort in Europe." ●

#### Suppliers

**Product houses:** La Prairie, Sisley, Ericson, Carita, Sensai, Niance, Thalgo, Soglio (regional and natural Swiss massage products), Altearah Bio and Babor (in Tamina Therme), La Roche-Posay, Avène and Eva J (dermatology and medical skincare)

**Fitness equipment:** Technogym

**Software:** TAC's Reservation Assistant

**Heat experiences:** Klafs



Kath Hudson is a regular contributor to *Spa Business* magazine. Email: [kathhudson@leisuremedia.com](mailto:kathhudson@leisuremedia.com)

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# HOT TOPIC

Anni Hood reveals her takeaway points from the inaugural International Onsen Summit in Japan



SHANTIPORN/ISTOCK

Japan boasts around 3,000 hot springs

Enabling regional growth of the hot spring industry and how to optimise thermal waters as a natural energy resource was the theme of the first-ever International Onsen Summit held in Japan in May. The underlying question some 1,000 global delegates gathered to discuss – what can operators in the global hot spring industry do to help further develop the sector?

## Calls to action

An international cross section of global experts led talks and provided insights on growth potential. Yolanda Perdomo, former director UNWTO Affiliate Members Programme; Asa Brynjofsdottir, director of research and development at Iceland's Blue Lagoon; and David James, director of tourism, Bath UK to name but a few.

- Overall, their calls to action were:
- to emphasise the benefits of bathing in hot springs more widely
  - to cultivate hot spring tourism growth

- to expand academic and industry research proving the benefits of thermal waters
- to increase geothermal energy use in new areas, such as in food growth and cooking.

## Hot springs tourism

Cultivating growth in the hot springs tourism sector maps effortlessly with Japan's national strategy.

As a volcanically active country, it boasts up to 3,000 hot springs and thermal bathing facilities – known locally as onsen. Beppu, the host town, is acknowledged as Japan's unofficial onsen capital based on its number of hot spring sources and the 'gush volume' of the water. Other, perhaps more famous, onsen spots in the country include Kusatsu and Hakone.

Tourism in Japan has increased dramatically in recent years, rising from

**Tourism in Japan has increased dramatically in recent years, rising from 8.4 million in 2012 to 28.7 million in 2017**

8.4 million in 2012 to 28.7 million in 2017. This is largely due to a relaxation in visa restrictions and a weakening of the Yen. The goal is to increase international

tourism footfall to 60 million by 2030. In the more immediate future, the hosting of the Rugby World Cup next year, the Olympic Games in 2020 and a bid to host Expo 2025 means the country is well placed and keen for

the benefit of tourism to be felt beyond the key cities of Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto.

What greater opportunity could there be for hot spring operators? Certainly, residents and facilities in Beppu are expecting a significant increase in tourists as the town becomes involved in these world-stage events. For less-endorsed destinations to successfully capture the burgeoning visitor market, it was agreed that promotion and ease of access is highlighted.

Back on a global scale, it's clear from summit talks and discussions that success in the hot spring industry is seen as a collaborative effort between public and private sector.

Much food for thought for the next event which is likely to take place at a similar time in the country in 2019. ●



Up to 1,000 hot spring operators attended the summit



Anni Hood is a global wellbeing advisor and consultant. Email: [anni@annihood.com](mailto:anni@annihood.com)



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# LOVE TO SAUNA

Heat experience enthusiasts from 24 countries took part in the 17th annual International Sauna Congress in June. Those attending share their insights

Scientific presentations, workshops, sauna bathing, food, music, excursions and activities were all part of the four-day International Sauna Congress held in June.

Organised by the International Sauna Association (ISA), the congress is held every four years in different parts of the world with this event taking place on the border between Sweden and Finland.

More than 200 people with a passion for saunas attended the congress, including delegates from new sauna countries such as Pakistan and Kenya, as well as a group of 20 delegates from Japan.

## A cultured experience

An opening barbeque celebrated the ISA's 60th anniversary and was followed by a chance to explore 18 alternative and intriguing saunas in a Midnight Sun Sauna experience. The range included those in metal spheres and wooden huts to some in tents and military trucks.

"An important part of the event is the practical side, meaning sauna visits in interesting historical places, whisking, making whisks according to old habits, etc," says Risto Elomaa, ISA president. "We hope that the visitors can bring some of that sauna culture and experiences with them when going back home."

Presentations and workshops celebrated saunas from around the world including shinrin yoku (forest bathing) and sauna, the vanishing practice of Estonian smoke saunas and modern Lithuanian baths.

"The discussions around different sweat cultures were a strong point for me this year," says sauna aufguss master Lasse Eriksen from Norway. He adds that many bridges were built by cultures sharing best practice examples and common issues such as the need for a



generic sector name – the term 'thermic bathing' was popular. "Representatives from all sweat cultures – Japanese baths, Lithuanian and Latvian pirts, Russian banyas, Turkish hammams, Native American sweat lodges, Norwegian badstus and Finnish saunas – agreed to focus on this terminology, to become one family."

## More research needed

Health science was another key topic of the congress. An overview of some of the latest studies revealed how saunas can aid cardiovascular health and even impact gene expression.

With the medical community now increasingly accepting the benefits of complementary therapies such as acupuncture and massage, it's hoped



A passionate congress: presentations, workshops and social gatherings celebrated sauna culture from around the world



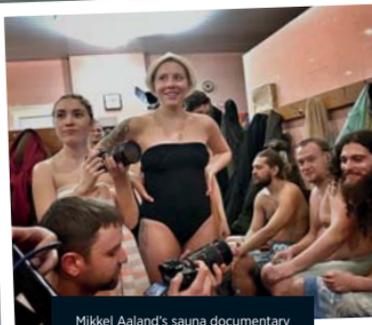
A sauna project in Norway attracts younger people with its mix of socialising, art and music



Sweden's Solar Egg sauna



Arctic Bath is a floating hotel and spa



Mikkel Aaland's sauna documentary has uncovered an "explosive rebirth" in sauna, particularly with the younger generation in Russia

that thermal experiences may one day be prescribed too – but there's a need for funding and more clinical trials.

Elomaa says: "We need studies with control groups, which have bigger samples (across multiple countries) and which look into the deeper reasons behind the benefits of sauna.

"Due to ageing populations, research focused on sauna and people with dementia would be a key area."

As well as the physical benefits of saunas, it was also noted that heat experiences bring people together in a relaxed setting to create a sense of community, help people connect and aid mental wellbeing. Sweat guru Mikkel Aaland, who gave two presentations at the event, says: "Very few human activities satisfy our social, physical and spiritual needs under one roof like the communal sauna/sweat bath...

"Something magical happens – social and economic barriers melt and intimate conversation flows easily,"

## Something magical happens – social and economic barriers melt and intimate conversation flows easily

### Sauna of the future

Presentations and workshops delved into all aspects of sauna technology, design and architecture – from building a mobile smoke sauna to contemporary sauna architecture and style over substance.

Eriksen says: "While saunas of the past focused on function, those of the future are about connection with nature in forests, on cliff edges or even sitting on water. Many also make a visual statement." Examples of standout design include Sweden's Solar Egg – a sauna encased in a giant golden egg sculpture (see SB17/3 p22) and the Arctic Bath – a floating hotel and spa (with saunas) reminiscent of a bird's nest.

There was much talk about attracting millennials to future-proof saunas. Many countries are struggling with their lack of interest in the traditional activity. But there are glimmers of hope. The SALT project

in Norway is appealing to millennials by combining sauna with art, DJs/music and lectures in a social environment. Its public sauna, housing up to 100 people, has opened next to Oslo's iconic Opera House.

Meanwhile, Aaland is making an eight-part documentary, *Perfect Sweat*, which has uncovered an "explosive rebirth" in sauna, particularly in Russia. "Young people are hungry for authentic, healthy experiences," he says. "Millennials are infusing new life and excitement into sweat bathing rituals." ●  
■ See p24 for more details on Mikkel Aaland's *Perfect Sweat* documentary.



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# FLEXIBLE THINKING

A combination of being hunched over desks and dynamic workouts has led to a new trend in stretching studios. Is this the next big thing and should spas be adding assisted stretching to their offering? Kath Hudson reports

Stretching every day is as important for self-care as sleeping, eating, flossing and bathing," says Diane Wayne, owner of Stretching by the Bay. "For those with sedentary jobs, it mitigates the effects of limited movements, compromised positions and repetitive actions. While for those who are active, it optimises performance, restores the body and brings it back into balance."

Wayne has offered assisted Active Isolated Stretching (AIS) for 21 years at her San Francisco clinic and says interest is growing: "People are waking up to the importance of shedding stiffness every day. Not just boomers either - young

people come to me to work on their flexibility and posture, knowing they need to move beyond a sedentary lifestyle.

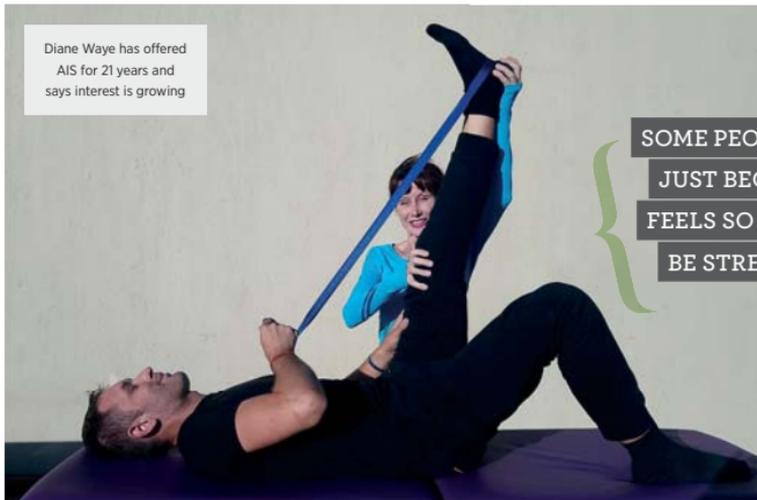
"Recreational athletes come to improve performance and longevity of their activities; some people come to save their joints - tight muscles compress joints and wear them out too soon, and muscle imbalances make problems and pain. Some people come just because it feels so good to be stretched!"

According to Wayne, AIS is also helpful for people with many neurological conditions including Parkinson's, stroke, MS, and other challenges such as fibromyalgia, functional leg length difference, kyphosis and scoliosis.

Flexibility training is a good place to start for sedentary people who are starting to exercise, because it increases the range of movement, allowing them to go on to exercise and build strength safely.

Lou DeFrancisco, president of the Californian-born chain of stretch studios, StretchLab, says it's not surprising that stretching is becoming so popular: "If you asked 100 people if stretching was good for you, 100 people would say yes," he says. "It's also been driven by the boom in group exercise and high intensity interval training over the last 15 years: people are following the example of the pro-athletes and showing more interest in active recovery."

Diane Wayne has offered AIS for 21 years and says interest is growing



SOME PEOPLE COME JUST BECAUSE IT FEELS SO GOOD TO BE STRETCHED!



Xponential is aiming to open 40 StretchLab sites in the US this year

### StretchLab

StretchLab is one operator which looks set to bring stretching into the mainstream. Founded in California in 2015, by Saul Janson and Tim Trost, it was acquired by Xponential Fitness last year, to create a franchise business. This year will see the launch of 30 to 40 sites in the US, with 150 more in 2019, as well as overseas expansion. It's a simple business model and fit out, with open plan studios and 10 stretch benches. As a result, it

has the lowest cost of entry in Xponential's portfolio, costing US\$150,000-US\$225,000 (€127,420-€191,140 or £111,760-£167,650)

Two treatments are offered, both of which have been developed in house by director of education and stretching expert, Brad Walker. The 25 minute stretch works the major muscle groups and 50 minutes treats the whole body. Price points vary per location, but the average is US\$65 (€55, £48) for 50 minutes.

### Assisted stretching

So why are people paying to be stretched, rather than just stretching themselves? Many people don't know what to do, or feel pain, but mainly choose assisted stretching because it's more effective, as the body can be eased past the point of natural resistance. Even people who do yoga and pilates are buying into stretching services because it gives them so much more flexibility in their practise.

Entrepreneur, Kika DuBose has developed her own method of assisted stretching and is franchising her Kika Stretch Studios. "In 2011, when I first opened my studio, in New York, no one was into the assisted stretching concept. People thought I was crazy," she says. "But, after educating the public and showing them how much better their results would be if they allowed someone to help them, they were hooked!"

Following the lead of independent entrepreneurs, like Wayne and DuBose, big name operators



People see much better results with AIS, says franchisor Kika DuBose



are now getting in on the trend.

StretchLab – which was created by a personal trainer – has been acquired by Xponential Fitness (see above).

Stretching is spreading beyond the health and fitness industry too. UK restaurant chain Leon is training its staff in AIS so they can stretch one another at the start and end of shifts. Leon's director of wellbeing, Julian Hitch, says: ▶

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## FITNESS

### Price points

**Kika Stretch Studios:**

US\$80 (€69, £60) for 45 minutes

**Massage Envy (member prices):**

US\$36 (€31, £27) for 30 minutes

**Stretching by the Bay:**

US\$160 (€137, £120) for 60 minutes

**StretchLab:**

US\$65 (€55, £48) for 50 minutes

**Ten Pilates:**

£70 (US\$93, €80) for 60 minutes

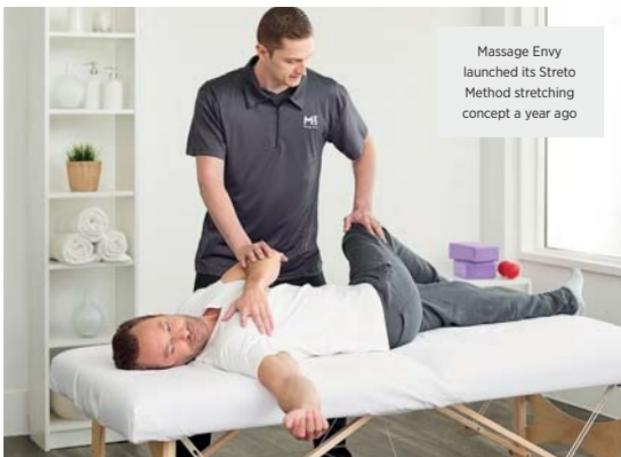
- "With the restaurant business being physically intense, we find AIS helps to get the body functioning better. We're in the process of training even more team members in AIS so that this can become a part of every team members daily life."

Meanwhile, spa franchisor, Massage Envy, launched its own stretching concept, the Streto Method, about a year ago.

Developed in conjunction with acclaimed chiropractor, massage therapist and an ergonomist, this involves 10 stretching sequences which work from the top down, helping to improve flexibility, increase mobility and boost everyday performance. Members pay US\$36 (€31, £27) for a 30-minute session or US\$60 (€51, £45) for 60 minutes, while non-members pay US\$50 and US\$100.



Restaurant chain Leon is training staff in AIS to help with physical demands



Massage Envy launched its Streto Method stretching concept a year ago



Kevin Ramsey, Massage Envy

ONLY ABOUT ONE THIRD  
OF PEOPLE KNOW THE  
PROPER STRETCHING  
TECHNIQUES

### Part of a wellness routine

Lead stretch therapist and trainer for Massage Envy, Kevin Ramsey, says: "Although this category is gaining momentum, only about one third of people know the proper stretching techniques. As consumers become more aware of the benefits of stretching, they'll need more products and services, which will not only help to educate them about proper stretching techniques, but also help them to seamlessly incorporate stretching into their wellness routine."

Unlike a massage, assisted stretching does not make people feel relaxed and sleepy, as it's an active rather than a passive experience. Treatments take place in a communal room and there's conversation between the therapist and client as they ask them to engage certain muscles and interact in the treatment. "People leave feeling invigorated, taller, with better posture and ready to attack the rest of the day," says DeFrancisco.

Given that everyone can benefit from assisted stretching and that both being active and being sedentary necessitates the need to stretch, and that even yoga and pilates isn't enough to undo

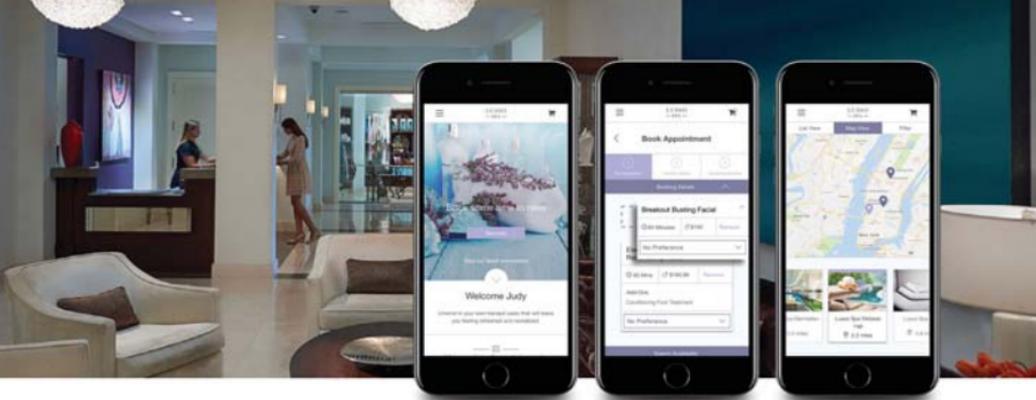
the postural problems we create for ourselves, this does indeed look like a trend which is here to stay. So how can spa and fitness operators engage?

The main challenge is to ensure staff are correctly trained, as wrongly stretching a client could lead to injuries. As with any trend when it takes off, there are positives, such as increased access, and negatives, in terms of mixed quality. It's important to fully research and vet any training programmes and collaborators before making any investments.

It won't be long until assisted stretching becomes as popular in Europe as it is in the US. Ten Pilates, which has eight sites in the UK, is already offering the service and StretchLab is on the hunt for a master franchisor. Meanwhile, Virgin Active has added a complimentary stretching and self massage class to its menu, which includes trigger point therapy, dynamic and static stretches. ●



Kath Hudson is a regular contributor to *Spa Business* magazine. Email: [kathhudson@leisuremedia.com](mailto:kathhudson@leisuremedia.com)



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# Maximising Software Potential

Are spas just scratching the surface of their software systems and, if so, how are suppliers helping them dig deeper?

Sophisticated software systems now supply spa operators with countless solutions to support their businesses from smart marketing and mobile technology to data and analytics functions. However, are spas maximising the potential of their software management systems to reap the rewards or are they merely using the same functions on a daily basis? What are the constraints facing spa staff in embracing the technology and how can software companies ensure their customers are getting the most out of all that's available to them?

## CATCH 22

With a depth of functionality, spa software systems hold the promise of speed and efficiency of operation like never before. Yet one of the biggest barriers to understanding a system's full capabilities is time. This leaves functions under-utilised, often in the very areas that would free up the greatest amount of time and bear the most significant business rewards.

Leonie Wileman, COO of Premier Software, says: "Our business management system, Core, has a significant depth of functionality and while spas often utilise the same areas of the software on a daily basis, there are a few key functions which are under-used, but if used correctly, will have a huge impact on helping to improve turnover and profitability."

"Revenue management and yield reports are under-utilised," she says. "Sometimes it's because of a lack of knowledge, which we address during training – or not realising the power of the reporting function."

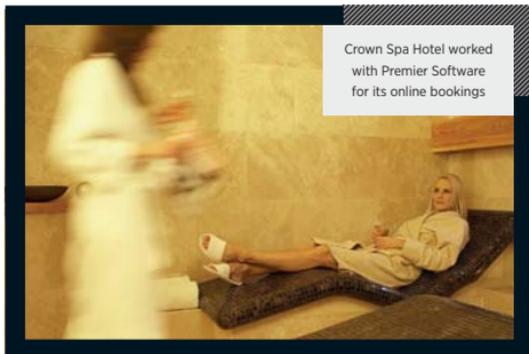
"Reports which use data in different ways to help improve yield and determine pricing structures that are attractive, but competitive, are key."

For Premier Software customer Stuart Russell, health club and spa manager at Crown Spa Hotel, UK, the principal area of under use was online booking. As he explains: "Client behaviours are changing and we felt we were missing out on the online market. The addition of Online by Premier Software [Online] solved our problem. We set the appointments and packages available and Online does the rest."



Within the first month, spa treatment bookings increased by 20 per cent

STUART RUSSELL,  
CROWN SPA HOTEL



Crown Spa Hotel worked with Premier Software for its online bookings



## TECHNOLOGY

▶ retreats and we've been able to repurpose two to three hours of labour per day, per retreat to tasks other than administration."

### TIME TO TRAIN

So if time-saving and simplicity of use are factors in designing software to encourage spa operators to take up their systems' greater functionality, how else are software companies supporting spas?

From front-desk, training, in-house or bespoke training to webinars, customer care portals and 24/7 support – not to mention workshops, chatbots and how-to guides – there's no shortage of training resources available to spa operators. And every software company we spoke to is armed with a multitude of support options for its customers. But again, time is an issue. .

According to The Assistant Company's (TAC) managing director Guenther Poellabauer, it also comes down to investing in individual spa staff, with a focus on recruiting well-educated, computer-literate employees who aren't afraid of using today's technology on a daily basis. He says: "We joke at TAC, that each customer needs only 10 per cent of our huge software portfolio. Interestingly, each client needs a different 10 per cent. TAC's Reservation Assistant has one of the richest features in the market, so we have the chance to completely tailor



### Spas should swiftly shift their focus as millennials begin to surpass boomers

FRANK PITSIKALIS,  
RESORTSUITE



TAC works with spas to analyse/prioritise software functions to maximise potential



### We joke at TAC, that each customer needs only 10% of our huge software portfolio.

Interestingly, each client needs a different 10%

GUENTHER POELLABAUER, TAC

our all-in-one software to the needs of a client's business model. Together with our customers, we analyse/prioritise how best to implement software for the respective company and because our software is configured to the exact needs of the customers, the churn rate is comparatively very low."

### MANAGING THE MINDSET

And here perhaps is the greatest challenge to unlocking software potential: helping spas understand what they actually need and making the software work for them. ResortSuite's founder and CEO Frank Pitsikalis stresses that spa and resort guests today, especially the millennial generation, expect to be able to self-explore and book their experience online and on their mobile devices. "But some spas fear that high-tech cannot be high-touch and that their guests always want to speak with someone in person to book their experience," he says.

Pitsikalis believes that spas need to set clearly defined goals for themselves in order to focus on improving various aspects of the guest experience and make full use of their software systems to serve those areas. "Do your guests have the ability to book services, classes and programmes online? If the answer is no,

then spas should swiftly shift their focus as millennials begin to surpass boomers in terms of wellness spend in 2018. If the answer is yes, do you have a mobile app for your spa that has the ability to book services, treatments, classes etc and can also be used as another marketing tool? Spas need to consider the market they want to cater to and how best to approach that particular market segment and create loyalty amongst their guests," he adds.

### INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

As spa software continues to evolve, so too does the need to keep up and keep track of its capabilities. The resources are there and it's up to the spas themselves to check the e-shots and prompt sheets they regularly receive from their provider. As Premier Software's Wileman adds, "Spas are looking for quick solutions, but there's a need to invest time to fully understand the functions they need. Only then will they fully reap the benefits of their software system." ●



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# Product innovation



By Lauren Heath-Jones,  
assistant product editor

Industry suppliers tell Lauren Heath-Jones about their latest product, treatment and equipment launches

## Denise Leicester launches Soul Medicine vibration therapy



“Pure and healing sound vibration can be heard by the soul.”

Denise Leicester, founder of organic spa brand Ila, has collaborated with drummer and composer Tom Simenauer to create Soul Medicine, a series of vibrational therapy music tracks designed to promote wellbeing and cellular balance, as well as decrease stress levels and boost resilience.

Consisting of four tracks: Being Held, Being Present, Being Loved and Being Lifted, Soul Medicine enables listeners to choose a vibrational remedy best suited to their needs.

The tracks are based on 432Hz tuning and Leicester says they're clinically proven to have a positive effect on the brain and central nervous system and that they aid immune response, thanks to increased white blood cell activity and red blood cell circulation.



Leicester (right) has worked with doctors to research the impact of the music tracks

Bio-resonance testing also shows a reduction in cellular stress.

She says: “Hearing is one of our primal senses. Sound can relax, alert, soothe, inform and transport us. Pure and healing sound vibration can be heard by the soul and can activate the deepest healing responses.

“Soul Medicine lets you connect back to your essence, learn to listen to your heart and allows your soul to shine.”

In addition, Leicester has created two meditation mists, Inner Calm and Inner Smile, to enhance the user's listening experience.

**KEYWORDS:** SOUL MEDICINE ▶

## Helmut Eigenmann explains new visual relaxation experience, Wave Dream Multicolour

Swiss company, Thin Waters Design has launched the Wave Dream Multicolour (WDM) – a visual relaxation experience that displays calming images of water onto the walls and ceiling.

Designed for relaxation rooms, the WDM consists of a projection lamp positioned beneath a water

basin. Using a high-powered LED bulb, the projector illuminates the surface of the water from beneath and projects it around the room while a system of coloured LEDs located on the border of the water basin provide a soft ambience, that continuously changes colour.

An upgrade of its previous model, the Wave Dream, the WDM



Eigenmann says the latest Wave Dream model has up-to-date LED technology

“It creates a fascinating relaxation experience”

features two key improvements: up-to-date LED technology, which enables easier maintenance and higher quality projections, and a revamped projector, powered by a high-powered LED, which acts as a direct light source without the need for a mirror.

“The new Wave Dream Multicolour works on the principle of direct light projection instead of reflection by mirror, thanks to new LED technology. This optical improvement, combined with a sophisticated colour LED system creates a surprising and fascinating relaxation experience,” says Thin Waters Design founder Helmut Eigenmann.

“Spa guests with refined aesthetic tastes would expect to find WDM in an art museum, which is where its story began.”

**KEYWORDS:** THIN WATERS DESIGN

## Sophie Alemany reveals Thalion's colour changing mask

Marine skincare brand Thalion has launched a brand new face mask, which features patented technology to signify when it needs to be removed.

A professional peel-off mask, the Chrono-Colour Youth Mask contains active marine ingredients, including sea age 3A, palmaria palmata algae and vitamin C to hydrate the skin, smooth fine lines and wrinkles. It's also been formulated to reduce inflammation and give a youthful appearance.

The mask uses natural colour change technology, a Thalion exclusive,



The mask changes colour once ingredients are absorbed, so therapists know to peel it off

“We're always imagining innovative treatment techniques and developing new textures”

to change the mask to a light pink colour, serving as a time indicator for the therapist, letting them know that the ingredients have been absorbed into the skin and the treatment is over.

“It's in Thalion's DNA to create new treatment experiences.

As a creator of cutting-edge marine cosmetics, we are always imagining innovative treatment techniques and developing new textures,” explains Thalion's training director Sophie Alemany.

“This new professional mask follows this brand strategy: patented colour-change technology combined with marine active ingredients to arouse clients' sensations and emotions,” she adds.

**KEYWORD:** THALION ▶



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“The wall seamlessly adds their branding into another aspect of the space.”



The retractable walls disappear into the ceiling

## Solace Spa project highlights Tudelü’s versatility, says Joel Klein

Tudelü, a New York-based creator of bespoke room partitions, has developed the Double Wall System, an innovative electronic room separator.

Recently installed at The Solace Spa in Tewksbury, Massachusetts, the Double Wall System features two retractable walls that disappear into the ceiling. It is designed to enable operators to optimise and adapt the space they have at just the touch of a button.

For The Solace Spa project, the company was tasked with creating a system that would separate the reception and treatment areas, and would ensure privacy, while also being flexible enough that operators could open up the space for events, as well as being attractive to look at. Now serving as a backdrop for the main reception area, the Tudelü wall has been designed to be indistinguishable from the

other walls and features the spa’s colour scheme and branding, with the spa logo at its centre.

“The Solace Spa project exemplifies the versatility of Tudelü and how it can be used in the most tranquil of spaces,” says Joel Klein, founder and CEO of Tudelü.

“Serving a dual purpose, the wall seamlessly adds their branding into another aspect of the space,” Klein adds.

**KEYWORD:** TUDELÜ

## Deep Nature launches skincare range to appeal to a new generation of spa goer, says Ghislain Waeyaert



The collection consists of DIY face masks

Spa consultancy firm Deep Nature has developed a range of skincare using proven active ingredients to target different skincare concerns.

The four-piece collection consists of DIY face masks, with a copper mixing bowl and whisk and a body scrub.

The masks were developed using Brazilian clay, Japanese bincho-tan charcoal, and seaweed sourced from the Iroise Sea, to detoxify, clarify and soften the skin. Meanwhile, the body scrub is formulated with Icelandic volcanic powders to naturally exfoliate and cleanse the skin.

The mixing bowl and whisk are added to encourage users to mix and match the products in order to create their own bespoke skincare routines

“We had a lot of requests for this kind of offering. We also wanted to control the quality of the products we were selling in



“Our guests should be able to customise their products to their needs and desires.”

our spas, so we developed our own,” says Ghislain Waeyaert, VP of development at Deep Nature.

“We chose a DIY concept to appeal to a new generation of spa goers and encourage their creativity. We believe that our guests know what’s best for them and should be able to customise their products to their needs and desires.

**KEYWORDS:** DEEP NATURE ▶

# GHARIENI

## 'A complete, multi-sensorial experience': Sammy Gharieni on innovation in hydrotherapy treatments

Hydrotherapy is having something of a resurgence at the moment, and Gharieni's HydroSpa collection has completely reinvented the experience. Sammy Gharieni tells us more



What are the benefits of water therapies, and why are they such a key spa trend at the moment? Water therapy is an integral practice in traditional ancient medicine, with roots dating back to the Romans. The sacred method of rehabilitation has been used over centuries and is still highly valued in modern-day healing.

The healing power of hydrotherapy is recommended for both physical and emotional health, and today's spa clients are looking for unique treatments that address both those things. Hydrotherapy can help with various aches and pains, arthritis, sore muscles, and poor circulation – and can also revitalise by reducing stress and stimulating blood flow. Water therapies can also create opportunities to socialise with friends and family, where groups can gather, relax and talk – just like in Roman times.

What experiences can spas offer with Gharieni's HydroSpa collection? Cutting-edge in design, the HydroSpa collection creates a new water experience with products like the Libra Edge K or the

PediSpa series. All items of the collection are designed for wet areas and incorporate high-tech elements such as chromo and sound therapies, steam encapsulation, and scented capsules in the equipment.

### What are the benefits of the HydroSpa collection?

The Libra Edge K reinvents the Vichy shower, taking it to the next level, where it is a complete, multi-sensorial experience that incorporates touch, sound, smell, vision and hearing. The integrated and interactive control panel provides a unique choreography of varying water temperatures and pressure, which is programmable and is preset for balancing, stimulating or relaxing effects while clients are in a relaxed supine position on a heated treatment table that is fully adjustable in height and length.

All treatments can be combined with salt scrubs, body masks or wraps. Its focus is to rinse different spa products gently off the body,

*Bringing a modern vision to hydrotherapy is part of our mission to always be at the forefront of innovation*

inducing a soothing and relaxing effect, while simultaneously circulating the recently absorbed products through the system, enhancing the overall benefits.

Bringing a modern – even futuristic – vision to hydrotherapy is part of our mission to always be at the forefront of innovation.

Why is it important to create equipment that offers experiences? We strive to create an unparalleled and memorable experience for clients.

Taking wellness to the next level, we want to create a distinctive guest journey that integrates the mechanics of superior equipment with the practiced touch of the provider – and truly reflects the authenticity and messaging of each and every client's brand identity.

Today, spa-goers are becoming increasingly sophisticated and demanding. Therefore, Gharieni continually strives to offer supreme comfort, as well as unexpected features that offer an element of surprise and delight, such as built-in sound or scent diffusers, vibro-massage, and much more.

**KEYWORD:** Gharieni



Gharieni's new Libra Edge K treatment table

The Hydrospa Collection was awarded the "Favourite Hydrotherapy Manufacturer" by American Spa Magazine in 2017



## Yon-Ka's Aroma-Fusion treatments are a sensory experience, says Bruno Le Deun



*“It combines effectiveness and wellbeing with aromatic concentrates”*

Parisian skincare brand, Yon-Ka, has developed a range of aromatherapy products and treatments inspired by the provinces of France.

Designed to deliver a sensory experience, Aroma-Fusion treatments combine aromatic concentrates with a body scrub and massage. Each concentrate has its own retail line of products.

Detox combines lavender essential oil with other ingredients including grape seed and sweet almond oils to provide “a feeling of luxurious calm”. It features a relaxing bath treatment, body milk, detox body oil and scrub.

Silhouette is a body oil containing cedar, cypress, rosemary and pink pepper essential oils to reduce the appearance of cellulite.

Vitality consists of a hand cream and an exfoliating sugar scrub, it has notes of sweet orange and mandarin to re-energise and ease stress, while Relax features a nourishing body oil and sugar scrub, formulated with tiare flower and jasmine to aid relaxation.

“We created a new collection based on aromachology and aromatherapy inspired by four French regions and their emblematic plants,” says Yon-Ka export director, Bruno Le Deun.

“It combines effectiveness and wellbeing with aromatic concentrates. The retail range of nine products completes the journeys to Provence, French Forests, Corsica and French Polynesia”

**KEYWORD: YON-KA**



## BC Softwear's spa linen offers a “feeling of total pampering”, says Barbara Cooke

Luxury towelling specialist, BC Softwear has partnered with Irish spa consultant Peigin Crowley to create a new range of bespoke linen designed specifically for the treatment room.

Pure Spa Linen is an eight-piece collection, consisting of pillowcases, sheets, duvet and duvet covers, specially sized for treatment



*“A five-star treatment begins with the touch of a bathrobe”*

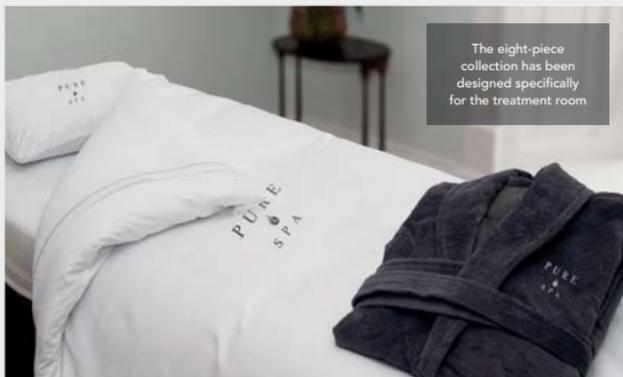
couches, as well as towels, jumbo sheets for bigger treatment beds and custom valances.

Manufactured in Turkey, the linens are made from 100 per cent combed white cotton and feature a hand embroidered border. They're available in three different colours – silver grey, pebble or pure white to coordinate with BC Softwear's existing towelling product range.

“We believe that a five-star treatment begins with the touch of a bathrobe and the smooth feel of the spa linen on the skin before the treatment commences,” says Barbara Cooke, managing director of BC Softwear.

“This collection has been created with some of our most exclusive clients in mind. The cotton linen is very stylish with a sensation of exceptional luxury and softness, designed to give clients a feeling of total pampering during their spa treatment,” Cooke adds.

**KEYWORDS: BC SOFTWEAR** ►



The eight-piece collection has been designed specifically for the treatment room

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spa business uniting the world of wellness

## Sothys Athletics targets those who exercise says Christian Mas

Sothys has named professional tennis player Caroline Garcia as a brand ambassador for its new Athletics range.

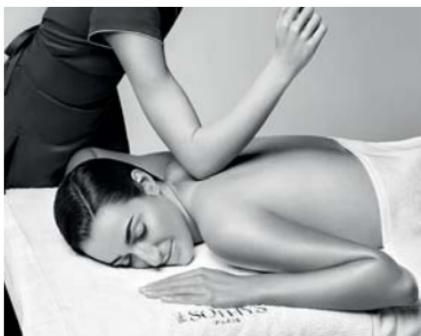
Designed to prepare and repair the skin before and after exercise, Sothys Athletics consists of two body treatments: *Smoothing/Warming* and *Nutri-relaxing Modelling*, as well as a two-piece product line.

*Smoothing/Warming* combines a warming effect with a foam wrap for a sensory treatment that warms and tones the skin, prepping it for exercise. *Nutri-relaxing Modelling* tones and comforts the skin, and combines smoothing actions with drumming motions to relieve strain and ease tension.

The product line features a Smoothing Warming Gel and a Nutri-relaxing Oil, and incorporates active ingredients,



“We have chosen Caroline Garcia to be an ambassador for Sothys Athletics range”



Caroline Garcia (above) is a French professional tennis player

including camphor, cypress essential oil, vitamin F to soothe, nourish and tone the skin.

“Customers who enjoy bodycare and those who practice sports, either as a hobby or at an elite level, often share the same types of concerns,” says Sothys CEO Christian Mas.

“We have chosen Caroline Garcia to be an ambassador for Sothys Athletics range because tennis and beauty share the values of excellence and performance. The partnership with Caroline was essential and we are happy to have her on our side,” Mas adds.

**KEYWORD:** SOTHYS

## Nicolas Viau urges guests to transform spa experiences with Kikao



The scents can be used in saunas and steamrooms

“Our ambition is to use fragrance to transform moments of relaxation into new olfactory experiences”

Inspired by the tradition of French perfumeries Enki Laboratory, a french cosmetic company, has created Kikao, a line of fragrances to transform traditional wet spa activities – saunas, steamrooms, hammams – into luxurious sensory experiences.

Aiming to create personal paradises for each guest, the fragrances utilise the olfactory senses to evoke memories. They are available in a wide variety of aromas, including floral, woody and fruity scents and are free from alcohol and preservatives, as well as essential oils to minimise the risk of slipping, making them safe to use in wet areas, as well as safe to use on the skin.

Guests using Kikao are able to choose a scent, each selected for its own set of properties, to



Nicolas Viau (left) and Yacine Hoffman

enhance their experience, as well as tailor it to meet their needs.

“Our ambition is to use fragrance to transform moments of relaxation into new olfactory experiences, turning spas, steamrooms, pools and saunas into a piece of paradise,” says Nicolas Viau who co-founded Enki with Yacine Hoffman.

**KEYWORD:** ENKI

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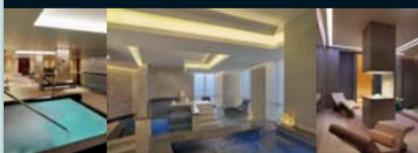
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## Finishing touch

## DIGITAL DETOX

It's time to log off and check into wellness according to a new report which details the profound effect technology has on our wellbeing

Digital detox sessions are becoming increasingly popular in spas as people put away their electronic gadgets for a couple of hours, or even a couple of days, in order to truly embrace 'me time'. Mandarin Oriental was one of the first operators to introduce 'digital detoxing' in 2016 and now Jeremy McCarthy, the group's director of spa and wellness, has collaborated with figures in medicine, hospitality, economics and technology on a white paper highlighting the "substantial" impact that technology has on our lives. *Wellness in the Age of the Smartphone*, published by the Global Wellness Institute's Digital Wellness Initiative in May, is a 32-page report summarising current research focusing on the effect technology has on sleep, obesity, mental health, relationships, personal safety and workplace productivity.

### Disrupting sleep

"Adults are expected to get eight hours of sleep per night, yet the distraction of new technology may be preventing us from meeting this target," the report says, adding that up to 60 per cent of adults experience sleep problems.

The blue-light emitting screens on digital devices mimic natural sunlight, keeping us feeling more alert and suppressing the release of sleep hormones. "Using devices in the bedroom or during the hour or two before sleep

Teens who spend five or more hours a day online are 71 per cent more likely to have at least one suicide risk factor



Digital devices disrupt sleep (above); leave your phone in a pouch at Mandarin Oriental (left)

makes it difficult for us to fall asleep." Our quality of sleep is profoundly affected too, resulting in 'junk sleep' which is neither long enough nor of a high enough quality for the brain to feel rested.

### Mental wellness

According to the report there are rising rates of depression and anxiety in the UK, with a third of teenage women reporting symptoms. "The cause is not clear but rising rates seem to coincide with the growth of social media," it says. In extreme cases, teens who spend five or more hours a day online are 71 per cent more likely to have at least one suicide risk factor.

Screen time and TV viewing also has negative associations with childhood cognitive development and is linked to inattentiveness, internalisation of problems and lower self-esteem.

"But the biggest challenges to mental wellness appear to come, not from technology itself, but from the added pressures and pace of life in the digital

age," the report finds. The lines between personal and professional lives are blurred, we're never too far from our devices and social media can make us feel insecure.

As McCarthy told *Spa Business* at the launch of Mandarin Oriental's Digital Detox programmes: "Technology has brought us many great advances, but the

expectations for instant communication and the increasing pace of change in the world can have a negative impact on our wellbeing... The spa is one of the few places left in modern society where it is acceptable and even encouraged to disconnect from technology."

● Download a full copy of *Wellness in the Age of the Smartphone* at [globalwellnessinstitute.org](http://globalwellnessinstitute.org)



Katie Barnes is the editor of *Spa Business*. Email: [katiebarnes@spabusiness.com](mailto:katiebarnes@spabusiness.com)



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