



ASIA: INDIA

What is making news in your country when it comes to spa and wellness?

As the land of authentic Ayurveda and Mystic Yoga, India has always had the ability to attract travelers from around the world. Today more than ever, the world is turning towards India, the birthplace of this unique heritage, seeking answers to questions that have besieged mankind for centuries. Yoga and Ayurveda are burgeoning globally, yet the quest for true knowledge continuously brings seekers to this ancient land where it is practiced in its authentic form. To cater to this growing segment of travelers, Select Taj Hotels offer multi-day Jiva Yoga retreats and Ayurveda Journeys, which highlight the physical, mental, and health benefits of an improved quality of life. Nutrition is also a part of the Jiva wellness plans, with several locations offering healthy spa meal options. This is a growing segment and we are observing a steady increase in number of guests who are seeking such experiences.

What is happening in your country when it comes to wellness tourism and/or medical tourism?

The Indian spa and wellness market is currently experiencing considerable growth; making it one of the most interesting and exciting spa markets in the world at the moment. One economic sub-sector experiencing significant growth and evolution is the spa industry in India. The Indian spa industry, with over 2,300 spas, generates revenues of around \$400 million annually. With over 700 spas predicted to open in the next 2-5 years, there's no doubt that the spa industry in India is growing fast. It represents one of the most interesting global spa economies to watch out for. India will also continue to be a hot spot for those seeking travel services that incorporate diverse wellness packages, including people who couple medical procedures with spa indulgences, Ayurveda treatments or cultural immersion experiences.

Medical tourism is also on the rise, and with India's options of some great healthcare centers and the growing community of medical practitioners - both mainstream and alternate medicines - the potential for medical tourism is immense.

Please give us one sentence to describe the latest developments in your country for each of these spa categories:

What is happening with hotel spas?

"Wellness everywhere" hotel chains with spas are becoming an integral offering and more mainstream.

What is happening with destination spas?

Authentic rituals and other Ancient Revivals; comprehensively executed holistic wellness experiences at Spas. People are increasingly looking at long-term wellness programs to change their lifestyle and health quotient.

What has been the general attitude about investing in the spa/wellness arena in 2013?

With the wellness industry in India poised to touch Rs1,00,000 crore (Rs1 trillion) by 2015, with a compounded annual growth rate of 15-17 percent, from about Rs70,000 crore in 2012, the attitude towards investment is quite upbeat. The industry has seen interest from private equity and venture capital firms since March 2009, and this trend is only on the rise.

Looking back at the past four decades of spa and wellness, what would you consider “a defining moment?”

To most outsiders, India is a destination of mystic magic, healing sages and saints. However, the Indian market has only offered true healing and recuperation in Ashrams and Yoga Schools. Having said that, today a few authentic spas offer an Indian wellness experience to its guests. Jiva is one such brand, with its philosophy deeply rooted in ancient Indian healing traditions. However, such players are few and far between. The Indian spa industry is in its nascent stage, with most spas adopting various techniques and practices. A plethora of spas has mushroomed – both stand-alone and in hotels - and initial attempts at quality accreditation have not been effective.

The real “Defining moment” for the Indian industry will only arrive when the industry takes pride in a rich and diverse ancient heritage offering authentic services, and is able to make this the differentiator in attracting global tourism.

SUBMITTED BY:

Ms. Deepa Misra Harris
Senior Vice President - Sales & Marketing
Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces
Oxford House, 2nd Floor, 15/17 N.F. Road,
Apollo Bunder, Mumbai 400 001, India.
Tel: +91 22 6665 1236 | Fax: + 91 22 2281 8849