



ASIA: INDIA

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

The growth of the industry at 18% over the last year to reach 700 billion INR, despite an economic downturn. This can be attributed to adoption of the spa lifestyle by an increasing number of upwardly mobile executives in their thirties and forties.

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

Medical tourism has been prevalent in specialities like cardiac, orthopedic, and eye surgeries. Patients come mainly from the Middle East, the United Kingdom, and sometimes the United States. Wellness tourism is flourishing because of India's strong heritage of Ayurveda and yoga. The State of Kerala is a natural destination, as are places like Ananda and Soukya.

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?

This is a fast growing segment because the hospitality industry has expanded rapidly in the last few years. But many hotels lack their own brands and outsource management and operations to global spa brands like Six Senses or ESPA, or Indian ones such as Sohum or Svastii. Jiva Spas is the first Indian hotel spa brand of note, and newer brands are coming up. Most offer memberships to outside clients to maintain profitability.

What is happening with destination spas?

Stand-alone destination spas are few for obvious reasons. Most bank on a specific USP to attract customers.

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

People are investing, but cautiously. The industry is learning from the mistakes of its formative years and is wiser and more knowledgeable now.

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

India's defining moment is NOW. It is facing many challenges and at the same time is increasing acceptability and demand. What we do now will determine the future of our industry.

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