

ASIA: SOUTH KOREA

1. What is the latest spa and wellness news in your country?

All kinds of new health spas catering to the elderly are being created, such as Ginsang Bath, Korean Herbal Bath and Germanium Bath. Among younger generations, sports and aquatic spas are popular, and water park construction is a booming industry, with about 30 water resorts now open across Korea. Mountain climbing is booming among the middle aged, since 67 percent of the Korean peninsula is mountainous. Sports walking is generally accepted as a wellness technique for all generations.

2. The industry is buzzing about wellness technologies. How do you see spa and wellness establishments in your country using wellness technologies now and in the future?

Eastern styles such as Gimgilbangs treatments (a Korean style, dry-heated chamber), classical temple meditation and Korean herbal medicine will soon be applied to western-style technologies in wellness establishments all over Korea.

3. What is happening in your country in terms of wellness tourism?

A new business model, wellness camp, which I developed in 2010 with government-aided research, is slowly but surely emerging as a trend within the wellness tourism sector.

4. Please provide one sentence that best describes the latest developments in your country for each of these categories:

Hotel Spas: International hotels such as the Park Hyatt, Hilton, and Amman Resort have set more sophisticated and luxurious standards for domestic hotel spas in Korea.

Destination Spas: The hot springs sector is growing in terms of investments, budgets and construction size.

Hot Springs Spas: Some of the historic hot spa complexes have been through difficult times, both because their facilities are out-of-date, and because of the serious competition between them.

Wellness living communities: One outstanding example of our wellness living communities is HealiENCE Village, located in our northern mountainous region. This unique community is revolutionizing the wellness living life-style.

Corporate or Employee Wellness Programs: Corporate and employee wellness programs are not yet fully developed in Korea.

5. Fast-forward five years and tell us what you think the spa and wellness industry in your country will look like.

Korean society is leading the world in wellness because of our increasing annual income per capita and our extended life expectancy. These factors have created a new paradigm of wellness recognition in South Korea.

The future of the wellness industry is extremely bright in three regions in Korea:

Jeju island is a very attractive site for vacationing that has attracted investment from Korean and Chinese investors, since it has a nice, warm semitropical climate. It attracts tourists and medical retreat seekers from all over Asia.

In Busan, the second largest city in Korea, located in the southern tip of the peninsula with wonderful ocean scenery (and the distinctive Diamond Bridge), five super deluxe hotel projects are currently being implemented, including the Wellness Hotel and the Anan Pant House.

Pyeongchang, host-city to the 2018 Winter Olympics, has seen a boom in state-aided construction in preparation for the Olympics. Its development concepts are directly related to nature and wellness philosophies.

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