



THE AMERICAS: UNITED STATES

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

The big news in the USA is the increased awareness or “mindfulness” of more people concerning their health and the acceptance of a total approach to wellness. More people genuinely understand the impact that stress, poor diet, lack of nutrition, smoking, etc., have on the human condition and the general quality of life. Thus many are seeking both new techniques and venues to deal with the challenges of living in the new century. As a result, spa guests are looking for measurable and sustainable results as well as a meaningful life-extending experience. As spas shift to wellness and recovery, Lifestyle Coaches are moving spa customers to wellness treatments such as Ayurveda, Polarity, Reiki and Aromatherapy. More spas are providing educational classes to promote mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing along with the more traditional stress reduction modalities. There has been an especially notable increase in the use of Therapeutic Bodywork in Water as more spas offer such therapies as Water Shiatsu, Aqua Veechi, and Water Dance. As more modalities are offered, more patients will be able to utilize spa facilities as they expand to service these emerging market segments.

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

The traditional “vacation” is quickly becoming redefined as more wellness-branded hotels and spas offer programs for fitness, healthy eating, sleep therapy, weight management and a wide variety of other health related issues. Especially significant is the realization that patient recovery from an array of surgical procedures does not have to be confined to the traditional recovery rooms that hospitals and clinics have relied on in the past. Moving to a spa-like environment has provided significant opportunities for designers, consultants, therapists, manufacturers and distributors of spa related services, supplies and equipment. Many of these facilities are now offering such non-traditional services as Fitness Training, Physical Therapy and even Shamanic Treatments. These services are being extended to Senior Living and Child Care Development Centers; one to ease the passage into old age and the other to establish healthy living habits from an early age.

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

What is happening with hotel spas?

Many hotel spas are now offering special overnight retreat/wellness packages targeted to their local community and the male population.

What is happening with destination spas?

Destination spas are marketing their facilities as detox centers for stress reduction, dietary guidance, exercise programs and medical procedure recovery.

What is happening with hot springs spas?

Many famous western US hot springs spas continue to offer everything from a simple one-time visit to a full resort experience; however, new property development has been almost non-existent.

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

Many financial analysts are very optimistic that investments in medical related spa services will be a source of tremendous growth in 2013 and beyond. As wellness and recovery becomes an integral part of the spa experience, investments in new sciences, such as assay technologies for Telomeres Analysis (malleable part of DNA), will explode as spas become places where you can have your DNA tested to isolate specific conditions or tendencies that could be improved by certain lifestyle changes. As personal health technologies expand, spas are in the perfect position to take advantage of these modalities, which many believe hold the secret to rewinding the clock for aging cells. As the industry shifts from pampering to wellness, and personal health technologies expand, a whole new market segment with millions of potential consumers will open up. This has made many investors bullish on the spa market in general. This is especially true given the prospects of a redefined industry with substantially more customers, no longer reliant on older consumers with disposable income.

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

The realization that as modern-day humans we are becoming more cut off from nature and the healing effects of a healthy connection to the Earth. More and more, people are returning to their roots in such movements as “Earthing” or making a genuine commitment to cleaning up the environment, recycling and the development of clean, sustainable sources of energy. I believe that the recent development and expansion of massage franchises is an extension of the deep seeded desire for people to reconnect to the Earth, their bodies and a healthier way of life. These franchises have made it possible for “Main Street USA” to afford and benefit from the health advantages of massage; giving millions of people an affordable way to begin their own personal healing.

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