

A PASSION FOR HOSPITALITY

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HOTELS

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Spa guests today want products, treatments and services they can't find anywhere else, and to deliver, many hotels are looking right in the neighborhood. St. Regis Aspen, for one, sources its body-care line from a company in nearby Boulder, Colorado, and design elements such as local stones, locally harvested decorative crystals and a chromatherapy wall reflecting the colors of an Aspen autumn also contribute distinctive ambience.

"All these elements come together to create a cozy and elegant feel that truly reflects the Aspen our clients know and love," says Spa Director Julie Oliff.

The Peninsula Hotels, in contrast, is relying on a global authority to give its spas greater authenticity. The group recently introduced two Simply Peninsula

Royal Thai massages devised in partnership with the Wat Pho Temple in Bangkok. "Peninsula therapists are taught authentic and traditional Thai massage by the world's leading authority, offering an unparalleled treatment that is true to the ancient art of Thai massage," says Robert Cheng, the group's vice president of marketing.

However, as hotels appear to race to deliver the next big thing in authentic spa treatments, a word of caution is in order. "We try to keep those things in moderation," says David Stoup, chairman of spa-management company Trilogy Spa Holdings. "If disproportionate amounts of time and money are spent to achieve what I'm calling cultural relevance, it can be a real drag on profits. You can't add an unlimited number of new services that look good but don't sell."

SPA SECRETS TO SUCCESS

LONG DISMISSED AS LOSS LEADERS, HOTEL SPAS TODAY INCREASINGLY ARE MOVING FROM THE RED TO THE BLACK. HERE ARE FIVE TIPS TO CONSIDER WHEN IT COMES TO BOOSTING YOUR SPA'S BOTTOM LINE:

1 Do your homework. "Some hotel spas haven't done well because the upfront homework wasn't done to determine the correct scale of operations or types of services delivered," says Meg Prendergast, Chicago-based principal at design firm The Gettys Group.

2 Find a strong leader. Hiring a spa manager with both hard and soft skills is critical, notes Susie Ellis, chairman and CEO of the Global Wellness Institute. "It's not just caring for people," she notes. "They also have to have the hard skills of marketing, finance and sales."

3 Put spa into the big picture. "Instead of considering the spa as its own thing, you want to have the spa manager as part of the hotel team," Ellis says. "If the hotel is behind the spa, integrating the spa into what it's doing, it will be so much more successful."

4 Cater to guests beyond the hotel. "You've got to be prepared to reach out to the local population, if it's there, to make sure upwards of 50% of total revenues come from the locals," says David Stoup, chairman of spa-management company Trilogy Spa Holdings.

5 Think broadly when it comes to revenue. In addition to things like the PR a spa can generate, Ellis says spas can draw corporate business or keep guests in house for F&B. "You have to look at it more broadly than just the revenue that's coming from the spa," she says.

BOLD PREDICTIONS

HERE IS A SAMPLING OF PREDICTIONS FOR THE NEXT BIG TRENDS IN HOTELS' SPA AND WELLNESS OFFERINGS:

"HOTELS SHOULD BE THINKING ABOUT HOW THEY CAN ENGAGE THEIR EMPLOYEES IN HEALTH AND WELLNESS."

— SUSIE ELLIS,
GLOBAL WELLNESS INSTITUTE

"IS THERE A SPA-LIKE DELIVERABLE FOR FOCUSED-SERVICE HOTELS? IT'S A FUN AND INTRIGUING EXPERIENCE-DESIGN PROBLEM THAT WILL BE IN OUR MIDST SOONER THAN WE THINK."

— MEG PRENDERGAST, THE GETTYS GROUP

"THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT NEED FOR RECONNECTING WITH OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS, TO GET OUT OF URBAN SETTINGS AND BE AMONG NATURE AT ITS FINEST."

— RAYE FETZNER, THE INN AT PALMETTO BLUFF

"THERE WILL BE AN INCREASED FOCUS ON MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION, AS A VACATION IS THE PERFECT TIME FOR PEOPLE TO LISTEN TO THEIR INNER SELF."

— ERIC FAVRE, THE ALPINA GSTAAD

"MAJOR PARTNERSHIPS WITH CELEBRITY FITNESS AND HEALTH ADVOCATES WILL SPRING UP ACROSS ALL HOTEL BRANDS."

— KATHRYN MOORE,
MSPA INTERNATIONAL

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