

## Spa therapies blending high-tech with tradition

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NEW YORK — Hyperlocal ingredients, a blend of technology and tradition, and treatments focusing not just on beauty but also on remedying stress and pain are some of the trends turning up at spas.

Members of the International Spa Association offered examples of all of them at ISPA's annual trend showcase in New York Aug. 18.

ISPA also released statistics showing the U.S. spa industry is starting to recover from the recession, with \$12.8 billion in revenue in 2010, up 4 percent over 2009, according to an annual study by PricewaterhouseCoopers. Spa visits increased from 143 million in 2009 to 150 million in 2010. But spa locations decreased by 3 percent, from 20,600 to 19,900, suggesting that the industry could not support the number of existing spas even though demand was slightly up.

"We have to continue to wow people," said Jean Kolb, director of wellness at Kohler Co., which operates Kohler Waters Spas in Wisconsin and Illinois. "They're looking for something that's different and memorable."

Some spas are taking a cue from the locavore food movement by using locally grown ingredients. Aspira the Spa in Elkhart Lake, Wis., grows colorful flowers and herbs like chamomile and lavender for use in a "chakra massage," one of a number of yoga-related treatments offered by the spa (80 minutes, \$190). The spa at the Oneida Nation's Turning Stone resort in upstate Verona, N.Y., uses "things indigenous to the area like pine, cedar, and flowers," and even maple syrup in various treatments, products and massages, said Loretta Taylor, director of spa operations.

At the same time that they're going locavore and looking to traditional therapies, spas are also embracing technology. Miraval, located in Tucson, Ariz., is offering a unique treatment called Taiz Sensorium that combines aromatherapy, massage and sound. Guests listen to a soundtrack ranging from sounds of nature to composed rhythmic and instrumental music while vibrating wooden balls are applied to shoulders, neck and other pressure points (\$250 for 50 minutes). "Someone likened it to being a human tuning fork," said spokeswoman Maura Duggan. "People who aren't familiar with yoga or meditation, it allows them to quickly and easily reach that meditative state."

The Spa at Trump demonstrated a pulsating light treatment on hands at the ISPA event; the LED therapy is used in facials at Trump Hotel spas (\$150 for 30 minutes at Trump Soho). The Trump team also showed off a sparkly new line of SpaRitual vegan nail polish (animal fat can be an ingredient in nail polish).



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Envy outlets give a million massages a month; a typical membership is \$59 a month, which covers one massage.



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"Back in the day, a massage was something you did to treat yourself," said C.G. Funk, Massage Envy's vice president for industry relations and product development. "Now it's to manage pain and stress. People are fitting

this into their wellness regimen."

Water treatments have been an essential spa experience since Roman times, but Kohler Waters Spa is updating the tradition. Its Custom Vichy Shower can be preprogrammed for different water treatment settings so that "the therapist's hands never leave the guest," said Kolb. And Kohler's American Club Resort recently debuted the luxury Eau de Vie suite (\$1,500 a night) with a deep whirlpool tub that lets you bathe in different hues of colored light at the touch of a button.

Spas are also zeroing in on specific symptoms and causes of stress. Gwinganna Lifestyle Retreat in Queensland, Australia, has a program "dedicated to sleep," said Tony de Leede, Gwinganna's founder. "People come for four days to learn how to sleep."

Asked for some quick tips, he said, "It's all about training people to get their minds to relax, teaching them ways and little tricks. It ties into what and when and how you eat, the amount of exercise you get — you don't want to exercise too vigorously at night — and also alcohol consumption." Rates vary depending on accommodations but the four-day program starts at about \$1,810 U.S. per person, double occupancy. Another technique Gwinganna uses to help guests relax is Rockpuncture, a fusion of acupuncture and hot stone therapy.

Mohonk Mountain House in New Paltz, N.Y., has a series of "solutions for modern living," including the "Texting Tension Tamer" massage for multitaskers, focusing on shoulders, neck, hands and forearms (50 minutes, \$120). And with "men making up 30 percent of the spa-going population," according to Nina Smiley, Mohonk's director of marketing, Mohonk is also offering "skin fitness for men," a four-step facial (50 minutes, \$120). Smiley added that Mohonk is seeing a new type of man at the spa, "the retrosexual," with a traditional masculine style perhaps inspired by "Mad Men."

The ISPA event also showcased two hotel spa concepts that depart from tradition. Suite Spa is a company that's developed a portable cart to bring a full spa menu to hotel rooms the way room service brings in meals. The carts enable therapists to provide massages, body wraps, manicures, facials and pedicures (including a foot "smoothie" to take care of rough skin, shown at the spa event). Suite Spa started at the J.W. Marriott in Grand Rapids, Mich., in 2009 and is now available at a half-dozen other locations including the Andaz Fifth Avenue in New York and the Park Hyatt in Washington.