



'Not Your Grandmother's Spa': Spa as Hip Social Clubhouse, Combining Lounging, Drinking, Dancing, and High-Tech Experiences, Wins Global Spa Summit's 'Spa of the Future' Design Contest

Institut de Management International's (IMHI) 'Chill House' Wins Competition For Best Concept Appealing to Gen Y Spa-Goers

New York, NY– June 18, 2009 – With 'Gen Y' poised to replace Baby Boomers as the spa industry's core clientele, the Global Spa Summit, together with leading international hospitality management school Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne, recently announced the winner of its groundbreaking *Student Spa Strategy Challenge*, awarded to the graduate school team presenting the best new spa concept aimed at the 21-to-30-year-old demographic. The Institut de Management International's (IMHI) *'Chill House Lounge & Spa,'* with its deeply social vision of spa going, took home the prize for the most 'feasible and innovative' spa concept for the Gen Y market.

The contest was introduced for the first time at the 2009 Summit held in Interlaken, Switzerland and was the brainchild of, and coordinated by, Demian Hodari, Professor of Strategic Management at Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne. Student teams first competed against other teams at their respective institutions, and finalists from leading hospitality schools the Institut de Management International (IMHI) of Paris and the Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne (ELH) of Switzerland were invited to showcase their concepts for the 'spa of the future' before a panel of distinguished judges. The judging panel included executives from some of the most prestigious industry establishments, including Susan Harmsworth, Founder and CEO of ESPA International, and Wolf Hengst, Chairman of Wahanda.com and former President of World Wide Hotel Operations for Four Seasons.

As Susie Ellis, member of the Global Spa Summit Board of Directors and president of SpaFinder, Inc. noted, "The student proposals demonstrate that the Gen Y spa wave represents more than just a simple demographic shift: to compete in the future spas will need to re-think everything from design, treatment menus, programs, and pricing models, to technology and wireless connectivity *inside* the spa, as well as Internet marketing strategies *without*." Ellis added that spas would need to re-shape their experiences to meet the demands of this extraordinarily social, tech-obsessed, ethnically diverse, wellness-demanding generation."

The winning entrant 'Chill House' gives new meaning to the concept of social spa-ing, revealing how little interest the next-generation spa consumer has in the hushed, pampering-focused, luxury spa-palaces of old. With its playful hyper-social 'clubhouse' experience (centered around a mixed-use 'chill out' atrium that goes from spa lounge by day, to after-work bar, to weekend dance club), Chill House re-imagines the spa as the social hub of young adult communities – a place where people go to network, eat, drink, work out, unwind, as well as get a treatment. The communal seating/lounging areas around a series of pools as well as the glass-front saunas show the emphasis is on social observation and interaction - while light,

music, video and Internet options reveal a powerful technology focus. New offerings for men and multi-racial-friendly treatments and retail offerings underscore a focus on diversity.

The pricing model encourages membership and making the spa a social 'hang-out,' rather than an infrequent indulgence. In a cash-free environment, users swipe their 'Chill Card' for lounging hours, treatments, organic snacks or drinks, and for purchases at the on-and off-line retail store – and all transactions can be viewed at a personalized online page. Weekday 'Happy Hours' featuring alcoholic smoothies and the 'Drinks and Detox' package (where groups visit Chill House and a partner club one night, then return for brunch and a detox treatment the next morning) reveal how far the concept diverges from the puritanical atmosphere at traditional spas. Marketing revolves heavily around the Internet (social networking sites, YouTube, the Chill House Site); deploying brand ambassadors from the fashion, music and design world; partnerships with local dance clubs and businesses; as well as theme parties with trendy music and social personalities.

The runner-up concept from Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne (ELH), with its college-campus-integrated spa 'Spa4U,' also shows a clear focus on the social 'spa-clubhouse' model (recreation areas, communal hot tubs, a café) - as well as embedded high technology (Wi-Fi throughout the spa and a 100% online booking model at the Spa4U portal).

Each member of the winning team from IMHI received a certificate for free registration to a future Summit (a prize worth US \$2,290 per student).

Next year, the Global Spa Summit plans to expand the *Student Spa Strategy Challenge* to include leading international architecture and design institutions, in addition to top hospitality management schools.

Learn more: To learn more about the 2009 Global Spa Summit Student Challenge, or to speak to a Summit Board Member, please contact: Betsy Isroelit @ RBI, (213) 300-0108, betsy@rbicom.com.

About Global Spa Summit

The Global Spa Summit is an annual event that attracts top-level business executives from all over the world with interest in the spa and wellness industry. Representatives from diverse sectors including hospitality, investment, finance, real estate, medical, manufacturing, technology, consulting, product and other related industries attend this intimate, high-level gathering focused on moving the spa and wellness sector forward. With representatives from all continents and myriad countries from all over the world attending its yearly Summit, the Global Spa Summit and its website have become the hub for industry research worldwide, a connection for spa associations and educational resources around the world.