

Global Spa Summit JOINING TOGETHER. SHAPING THE FUTURE.

Galvanizing Interest in & Understanding Hydro/Thermal Spa Experiences to Increase Profits

Concurrent Breakout Session

Monday, May 18th 2009 4:00pm – 5:00pm

La Fontaine 1&2, Victoria-Jungfrau Grand Hotel & Spa, Interlaken, Switzerland

Moderator: Ingo Schweder, Managing Director, Spatality International, Thailand

Roundtable Experts:

Don Genders, Managing Director, Design for Leisure, United Kingdom/United States

Paul Haslauer, General Manager, Haslauer GmbH, Germany

Rolf Longree, Managing Director, Lux Elements GmbH, Austria

Elmar Nagele, CEO, Thermarium Baeder-Bau GmbH, Austria

Peter Rietveld, Managing Director, Barr + Wray, United Arab Emirates

Rudolf Christian Sommerhuber, Managing Director, Sommerhuber, Austria

Scribe: Medea Grimm (Ecole Hoteliere de Lausanne)

Ingo Schweder (moderator)

The aim of this session is to demystify the understanding of wet areas.

What are the health benefits of hydro/thermal spas?

Rudolf Christian Sommerhuber

Heat is healing, a key benefit is relaxing, because when the infrared touches the skin, it comes in contact with the nerve system, and then the information gets transported to all the organs – warms up the organs, detoxifies and makes you feel relaxed then.

The advantages of steam?

Don Genders

Helps/benefits the respiratory system. We can also introduce essences and oils to make add an aromatherapy experience, which will benefit you further with the inhalation of the steam.



Health benefits of Jacuzzi?

Peter Rietveld

If you knew what is in a Jacuzzi, you would not go there anymore. Often made with plastic, there is a lot of ground for illnesses.

What about the name confusions – differences between a rasul, salving terra, steambath & sauna?

Paul Hasaluer

Rasul is a tremendous success, mud in between the skin and the hand which gives a soft/warm touch. Salving terra: swivel the guests in mud.



Don Genders

The steambath comes from the Roman culture. They heated the floor and walls, and the boiling waters produced steam. 40-45°C.

The Hamman, on the other hand, is not a steam room, but a hot room in which people get washed. To make it comfortable, the Hamman is heated from below and then radiates around the room. Humidity is caused by the amount of water used for the cleaning, but not introduced as in the steambath. <40°C.

Is the temperature in Russian bagnas the same in Swedish saunas?

Don Genders

The average sauna cabin operating temperature: 80-90° F

Further north, Scandinavia, warmer saunas, as people get used to it: 95° F

Russian countries: 110-115° F

Money, Cost – How can we save money?

Don Genders

With a special, but pre-fabricated design we can save costs. Moreover, we need specialists when projects start to define space allocations and control.

How can we make money out of wet areas?

Elmar Nagele

Increase hotel competency, room rates, occupancy and charge the clients for kid spas/family spas. Iconic developments of wet areas generating money - global best practices.

Flamengo in Helsinki: 60% water, 40% other, Sensaparcs in UK, Slovenia, South Africa – scrub, exfoliation, Vichy – water therapy treatments...

Wet areas are not designed to generate profits, but to be a support. Nevertheless the cost and maintenance is very high, so in order to generate profits a solution could be developing treatments in wet areas.

Asia: The water is respected and fresh, and the people giving the treatments are trained. It's the training that brings the customer back, not the equipment. Furthermore, the water is more respected and fresh there, and the quality of the water is crucial in order to get the maximum benefit out of the treatment.

Key Points

Discussion centered on nuances, technical and cost distinctions between the design and implementation of different wet areas, such as hammam, rasul, etc. Essentially, the philosophy and health benefit of each type of hydro/thermal area was deemed to be similar, although costs varied widely depending on technology employed.

While profitability of wet areas to date has lagged behind traditional spa facilities, there is a strong need to properly educate and market the usage of hydrotherapy facilities to the consumer, particularly in cultures without bathing ritual traditions.

Successful operators have marketed wet areas on a pay for access basis, and have made it separate from other treatment areas. Despite high initial capital investment costs, wet area operations can drive volume and profitability for a spa. There are low labor requirements and self-administered treatments.

The existence of data on the performance of successful wet areas is relatively scant. The co-operation of the industry is required to further the availability of relevant data from successful projects. This data can be presented to developers to enable arguments for investment into ore innovative wet facilities.

The life cycle cost of wet areas must be considered, with proper professional consultants on board at project inception to recommend the appropriate facility, save costs, correctly implement the equipment, and supply materials for training and maintenance. This also takes into account, the availability and skills of the local labor force.



The Global Spa Summit is an international organization that brings together leaders and visionaries to positively impact and shape the future of the global spa and wellness industry.