



Global Spa Summit

JOINING TOGETHER. SHAPING THE FUTURE.

Design Collaboration

Pre-Summit Collaborative Problem-Solving Sessions

Sunday, May 17th, 2009 2:00pm – 3:30pm

La Salle Rutchi, Victoria-Jungfrau Grand Hotel & Spa, Interlaken, Switzerland

Chaired by Anna Bjurstam, Managing Director, Raison d’Etre, Sweden and Susan Harmsworth, Founder & CEO, ESPA International, United Kingdom

Scribe: Andrea Leuenberger (Ecole Hoteliere de Lausanne)

Anna Bjurstam and Susan Harmsworth (session co-chairs)

When we talk about design, the most technically difficult aspect of a Spa is probably the wet area. Let us therefore talk about thermal and wet area experiences. We both think this area is in need of international standards. What is the opinion of the audience and what are your burning issues?

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

We are design manufacturers of wet areas. If it makes you hot, cold, wet – we do it. The last thing people think of when they plan a Spa is the design aspect of the wet area and they allocate it too late in the plan. The most successful projects are those where owners involve us from day one.

Discussion

The ROI depends on a Spa’s biggest cost, which are salaries, energy and laundry. Hydro will become much more important because the wet area is not primarily dependant on salaries, like the treatments; hydro is a more integrated part of a Spa and needs to be given the appropriate importance. Sitting in this room together to discuss our issues, our standards and what is required, we are at the beginning of something important. Water could be used more effectively, heating could be through solar panels, and there is much that could be improved.

Susan Harmsworth (session co-chair)

I am using ground water, no power showers, and am amazed how many Spas still use sweet water.

Don Genders

We have been working on experience showers; they are very popular but also dump a hell of a lot of water.

Susan Harmsworth (session co-chair)

... and they don't work.

Don Genders

... because builders do not want to put in decent piping.

Anna Bjurstam and Susan Harmsworth (session co-chairs)

We would love to have waste water management. This needs to be put into the standards.

Owners do not buy such systems because they do not know about them.



Discussion

Istanbul: We are focused on Hammam and the likes. We would very much like to understand how people feel about design concepts from our side.

Austria: We would like to share how infrared affects the body and would like to hear what others think.

Anna Bjurstam and Susan Harmsworth
(session co-chairs)

We would like to hear how others are dealing with the rising energy cost, how to make ideal use of space and achieve a satisfactory ROI.

Knut Bungen, International Project Consultant, Klafs GmbH, Germany

We are interested in revenue management.

Discussion

We are interested in meeting people who know about U.S. concepts.

Jim Chenevey, CEO, Living Earth Crafts, United States

We are manufacturers of Spa treatment tables.

Susan Harmsworth (session co-chair)

We feel that if all of you could get together and create the ultimate definition, we could create an amazing tool.

Jörg Demuth, President, the Organic Spa GmbH, Germany

You say "steam room" and you describe it on one page, it is difficult...

Rolf Longrée, Managing Director, Lux Elements GmbH & Co., Germany

I find myself selling equipment to owners and that is not my job.

Don Genders

There are a limited number of people who could write performance specifications, actually.

Susan Harmsworth (session co-chair)

What we need to put together are design and production guidelines. We need a controlling organization. The value of a wet area that is properly installed needs to be underlined.

Anna Bjurstam (session chair)

There is a lack of communication. Contractors play games, there are delays. We need to communicate to the owners why it is vital to have costly wet areas. It is about collaboration between competitors, getting together to shape the standards and take a hard look at the ROI.

Susan Harmsworth (session co-chair)

Because when we design, we create a brief, including the space aspect and the flow of operations and we include consultants. But owners do not provide heat experience experts, for example, they see them as an unnecessary cost.



Don Genders

Owners treat us as vendors of a box (heat box).

Susan Harmsworth (session co-chair)

If all of you got together in order to fully understand the process and had one common view through a defining paper it would make a difference to the way Spas are built. No owner wants only one quote. If all Spa professionals could form an association (like the Swimming Pool Association or the Fitness Association), everyone would benefit.

Don Genders

Actually, we are just starting on such an endeavour; it took off after a user conference recently. We are forming the Global Hydrothermal Association. Who sets the standards today? We need a group of knowledgeable international people to do so.

Susan Harmsworth (session co-chair)

I am opening Spas all over the world, in Kazakhstan, India... we are struggling with investors who are often developers and who dictate the budget so if they do not listen to us they will turn to a local supplier. We are a persuasive company but owners go off and get some local person who can undercut your rates but cannot perform on the same level.

If pricing were more streamlined among international companies... if a base could be created from which to work on. The Sauna is not so complicated but the wet zone, steam room, the hammam, they are.

Anna Bjurstam (session co-chair)

We try to get you, the suppliers, in as early as possible but what you need to come up with is ideally a paper outlining specifications and standards.



Anne McCall Wilson, Vice President Spas, Fairmont Raffles, Canada

We make sure we have our wet areas designed properly. Still, we have guys who say, “We have never done this.” It doesn’t mean we suppliers write the standards. Consultants should write the standards. In Dubai they build relatively cheap, if a little more was spent, ROI would be achieved in two years.

Susan Harmsworth (session co-chair)

What I am trying to do is use a formula that gets you in. We need the basics and surely you all agree, when clients use local installations we have huge problems at the end and have to re-do the installation within 3 years. There is a need to define a benchmark on prices for a wet area; they range from \$25,000 to...

Don Genders

I am with you on the cost per square foot.

Susan Harmsworth (session co-chair)

If we have an approved industry list, I have something to show to my clients and we can do a proper tender on a project.

Samir Patel, Managing Director, Six Senses Resorts & Spas, Thailand

It is a nightmare to evaluate tenders, the time you have to put in is enormous. Wet areas are a question of liability, they are dangerous areas.

Jörg Demuth

Not one neutral engineering company in the world can put together a tender.

Susan Harmsworth (session co-chair)

From my perspective, the consultants have the spa design process covered. Where there is an engineering component to it, it is separate. Consultants can do everything except hydrothermal.

Anna Bjurstam (session co-chair)

So what could be defined are tender standards, ROI standards, timeline standards...

Susan Harmsworth (session co-chair)

... and recommendation lists of suppliers who are committed to the standards.

Anna Bjurstam (session co-chair)

Let me ask, how many in this room are willing to get together and write the standards?

Susan Harmsworth (session co-chair)

... and have the consultants contribute by giving requirements Just think how many consultants and operators there are in Dubai, Eastern Europe, the US... in the process of putting a Spa project together Who will take the lead?

Don Genders

I will.

Anna Bjurstam (session co-chair)

Could you write down your email address on this piece of paper and could we be assured of your commitment?

Susan Harmsworth (session co-chair)

Can I just make it clear that I want to get the cowboys out so that developers and owners no longer use unqualified locals.

Anna Bjurstam (session co-chair)

What we will have accomplished in the end:

- Every supplier becomes a member
- Write your issues to Don Genders
- Don makes a list which will be distributed through the Spa summit organizers
- Deadline: by end of June

Don Genders

Let us aim at having a draft at the end of August.

Anna Bjurstam (session co-chair)

Figuratively speaking, we can buy a Rolls Royce or a Volvo so we have a minimum and a maximum from which to chose from, this should be considered. Just to say, the time we spend on wet areas, which then end up having to be renewed...

Susan Harmsworth (session co-chair)

Do you allow all your clients to use the wet area? Do you educate your clients? Europeans have inherent knowledge (many others do not) on when and how the use of wet areas is appropriate. This too needs to be standardized.

Samir Patel

Education of the clients is lacking, operators pass it on to consultants and so forth.

Don Genders

We, the manufacturers, have the responsibility to teach Spa attendants how to use the sauna correctly.

Ian Lyons Managing Director, the Private Spa, Indonesia

We should teach attendants and include this into the standards. You supply – you teach.

TRENDS

- The Hammam is back
- Private Spas at home
- Rooms that are multifunctional
- Private Space for socializing
- DIY Do-it-yourself and therefore saving on labour cost
- Paying for proper wet area experience
- Problem with ROI often stems from producer – if a Spa is not a garage, no wonder there is no ROI
- Gender separation in a Spa with 3000 square meters was gender separated and revenue tripled, trend strengthening in USA, UK, Japan
- Only different timing for gender separation does not work
- Fabric free areas are single sex, mixed areas require dress code
- Infrared as a sanitizer and a treatment, C long waves are beneficial
- By 2025 the fresh water crisis will be at the equivalent of today's financial crisis
- Deepak Chopra: Divine Water Book and film
- Energetic healing of damages caused by cell phone
- Healing sleep deprivation

RECAP

By June 30 all consultants and operators email their input to Don Genders

In August, manufacturers and producers to establish Global Hydrothermal Association.



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.