

Writer Daniel Scheffler

The New Well-being

From pamper to spiritual wellness, the industry is showing its spiritual side



Wellness at its very essence is constantly evolving. And its definition caters for exactly that – “an active process of becoming aware of and making choices toward a healthy and fulfilling life.” Incorporating more than just the expected offerings, the empire of spa is gently evolving to somewhere new and unforeseen.

For the last few decades, with the wellness business growing exponentially (according to Euromonitor, a trillion dollar industry by 2017), the focus has been on instant gratification that leaned toward the superficial. There are too many massages that over pamper, products that are ‘more organic’ but wildly expensive yet indelible, and an over-cushioned feeling of hollowness post-treatment. The proverbial

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~ Claudia Santos

bells and the whistles, be it stock spa music, supposedly eco-friendly products, or irritating pandering, has left wellness seekers feeling more lost than found. But it seems times are changing with a shift towards substance.

HOLISTIC APPROACH

“The travel industry as a whole is moving more into focusing on overall wellness,

especially with energy, dietary trends and spiritual elements,” says Kim Kessler, director of public relations at the Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills. At the hotel the importance of bringing on a gifted Biomeditation energy healer Jeannette von Johnsbach, introducing healthy menu items (including a customised juice menu, LA’s only crudo bar, gluten-free and vegan options throughout) was evident for the city’s clientele. And Deirdre Bradford, director of spa at the hotel agrees, “Our spa has always focused on relaxation and rejuvenation and we will look in the next few years to introduce more specialised modalities on the menu for a deeper experience.”

The next step towards complete wellness is a holistic approach that includes

meditation, yoga that goes beyond the physical postures and even martial arts (with a focus on the spiritual side) into spa programmes. According to Erika Parrilla, clinic operations manager at SHA Wellness Clinic in Spain, most guests need to improve an aspect of physical health but adds that, “The new trend is people who come to attain spiritual and mental strength. Everything has to do with confidence, controlling stress and weaknesses, knowing more about and reconnecting with their inner self.” But as Parrilla explains people, don’t just do this for a limited time, they are now interested in “achieving spiritual, mental and physical stability over time” especially after leaving the premises.

This new evolved way of wellness infiltrates the industry from all fronts. Steve Jeanes, an intuitive healer who has worked with Aman Resorts for years, says, “People are tired of simply being pampered and having their egos stroked – they want love, sincerity and to become the best version of themselves.” Claudia Santos, spa manager at the Four Seasons Hotel Prague agrees: “A real treatment allows one to dive into body, mind and soul. It can be a life-changing moment where you will connect and organically align.”

MIND AND MATTER

People are hungry to connect somewhere beyond body and mind and subliminally spa followers are seeking a soul connection given the world’s decay and mistrust. Most spas have focused merely on the body and mind aspects but now soul is starting to play a bigger role. It means that spas are changing not only their menus and offerings but the way that are created and managed.

Boyd Ferguson, CEO of design house Cecile and Boyd’s and designer of the

African darling Singita lodges which includes their award-winning spas, says, “The essence of the place will provide a new dimension going forward. Like fair trade and kind food have played bigger roles in the lives of so many, how a spa is put together will become much more important. It expands to the people, the place itself and the entire product offering which will now all be measured on energetic vibrations.”

The new era of spas and wellness will be less of a place for just another monotonous pampering, and more a place

to come for truthful, thorough healing. With medical interventions combined with spiritual aspects at SHA Wellness Clinic, a consciousness at Singita and spiritual enlightenment at Aman Resorts, a new standard is being set for holistic wellness. It’s daring people to step outside the comfort zone and beyond what is tried and tested. It’s audaciously offering the willing and the open-minded an opportunity to be transformed. It’s a braver new world of changing not just our bodies, but our minds and perhaps even our entire beings. 🌿

Spas Worth their Word in Wellness

- Rosewood Beijing, in the eminent Chaoyang District, just opened their Sense Spa with an indulgent accent – balconied spa suites for overnight stays. www.rosewoodhotels.com
- The Amansara, in Cambodia, has been the retreat for seekers of spiritual wellness. Now the new Amanemu in Japan follows in its footsteps. www.amanresorts.com
- Singita Lebombo in the Kruger Park of South Africa is about to get a major revamp with new mindfulness infused. www.singita.com



THIS PAGE: SHA Wellness Clinic helps guests achieve spiritual, mental and physical stability. OPPOSITE PAGE: The Spa at Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills focuses on both relaxation and rejuvenation