



ASIA: INDIA

What is making news in your country when it comes to spa and wellness?

The spa and wellness industry is going through a very interesting phase, especially in therapies. Even international spas like Mandara and Six Senses, which have open their branches in India, are doing innovations in their spa menus and newer therapies are being introduced. These therapies are a mix of ancient Indian healing traditions like Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Yoga and Oriental remedies like Indonesian, Thai and Chinese healing processes. Hospitals are also attentive to the fact that spa is here to stay and are now at various stages of planning to have their own wellness and healing centres within the hospital. Spas and wellness are on a high growth path with not only the traditional hotel, resort and day offerings; it has now entered into real estate, hospitals and clubs.

What is happening in your country when it comes to wellness tourism and/or medical tourism?

Wellness is one of the fastest growing industries in India. Being the birthplace of Yoga, Ayurveda and meditation, India witnesses an influx of world travelers seeking the most authentic experience. Juxtaposing the same, the Ministry of Tourism, has drafted a well-planned charter, which facilitates both structural, and financial aid in the sector of spa and wellness. The tourism boards of various states for instance, Kerela, Utrakhand, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan even Punjab, are promoting their states as wellness destinations.

Similarly big hospitals like Fortis, among others, are planning spas and wellness centres, which will serve as after treatment relaxation for patients who need massage treatments. Government is also taking steps to ensure that the spas are regularized and accredited for safe and secured treatments.

Please give us one sentence to describe the latest developments in your country for each of these spa categories:

What is happening with hotel spas?

Practically every hotel is planning a spa or already has a spa today. While many big brands have already made their way to the Indian wellness industry, there are home grown brands which are already a major player in the wellness fray such as Jiva by the Taj group, Aura by The Park Hotels, Kaya Kalp by ITC group among others

What is happening with destination spas?

There is a demand for the same with fine examples set by Ananda, places like Amritsar (istaa Spa), Mussori, (Jay Pee HOrtel) (Upcoming luxury wellness abode Vanaa by the Fortis Group) Shimla , (Oberoi, wild flower) Kerala (Bekal Hyderabad (Leonia) , Sikkim (Mayfair) and Goa (Park Hyatt, Taj, among others) are now looking at creating similar experiences. The future for destination stands bright as people look forward to an experience of wellness in a destination teamed with the local culture and flavor.

What is happening with hot springs spas?

There are a lot of hot springs in India, which have developed as tourist attractions across the country especially in the Himalayan region. Places such as Manikaran, near Kullu in the heart of Parvati Valley; Vashishth near Manali on the banks of river Beas, Yumthang in North Sikkim; Taptapani near Simla on the banks of river Satluj, and Taptapani in Orissa, about 40 kms from Bhubaneshwar; are all well-known for their hot springs. These hot springs have also been associated with religious places and have developed as a halt for the pilgrims. None of them are developed in a way that can attract international clientele so far. The aggressive development of the spa industry with hot spring spas in India is

still at a very nascent stage, and remains a market that is still waiting to be explored.

What has been the general attitude about investing in the spa/wellness arena in 2013?

The investments in spa and wellness have scaled up tremendously. This could be attributed to an increase in the standard of living of young urban professionals. This segment of consumer hails from the higher middle class and are earning double-digit salaries and are more cautious about their wellness and health as compared to last generations.

Looking back at the past four decades of spa and wellness, what would you consider “a defining moment?”

India has always been famous for its traditional therapies, but now these therapies have been adopted and exported to the international world. Ayurveda, Yoga are now available all over the world, and India is fast moving towards becoming the therapeutic abode for travellers.

SUBMITTED BY:

Parineeta Sethi
Chief Editor and Publisher
Asia Spa India