



ASIA: INDIA

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

Ayurveda as therapy has evolved considerably in the last few years and many practitioners have started to develop customized therapy modules to suit the demands of their international clientele. The spa culture has become very popular among the middle and upper middle classes to the extent that a spa visit or therapy has now become an integral part of their life style. This is relevant not only in major metros but also in tier II and tier III cities. Mature spa goers have moved on to look for more authentic and healing therapies that are available. Wellness concepts offered by major spas are well appreciated. A focus on healthy skin and hair is something that many expect from spas now. Today, with the influx of many local and international brands and extensive international travel, people have become more aware of the spa and wellness culture.

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

Medical tourism has grown exponentially in the last few years. Many states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh have invested considerably to boost wellness/medical tourism. These states have collaborated with major hospital chains to cater to this growing segment of travelers. Most clients are from UK and Middle East. The traditional Ayurvedic houses in Kerala have seen an increase in the number of guests who visit to experience authentic Ayurvedic Panchkarma therapies. The Government of Kerala has introduced several special arrangements to enhance the experience of these travelers. Many major hospital chains have developed wellness centers exclusively to cater to lifestyle diseases.

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?

Spas in hotels have become a necessity rather than a luxury.

What is happening with destination spas?

The growth is slow in this sector but two or three major wellness retreats are opening up in the next year.

What is happening with hot springs spas?

Not much! There is huge potential, although is localized to the sub-Himalayan valleys.

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

Because of delays in many major hotel projects, investments have also slowed down on spa projects. Many stand-alone spas have flourished within their segments. The economic slowdown has also taken a toll on the spending capacity of spa clients.

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

In the last four decades, the spa industry in India has grown from a concept of health clubs and Ayurvedic hospital/clinics to encompass well-defined Spas with wide-ranging repertoires. In the last decade alone, spas have developed exponentially, offering a multitude of traditional and contemporary therapies.

A defining moment for the spa industry would be the rise of major spa houses from Asia and the acknowledgment of Ayurveda and traditional therapies from Asia as an integral part of any new spa concepts.

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