



# ASIA: MALDIVES

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## **What is making News in Mauritius when it comes to spa and wellness?**

Mauritius is moving into a market segment shift as fewer Europeans, particularly the French, are traveling to the destination than previously. For a traditional island destination with an established reputation, this has caused the local operators to rethink their strategies and focus on emerging markets to boost business levels. The market shift has forced the operators to improve operational efficiencies to better manage costs and payroll whilst being aggressive in terms of pricing, and actively working to develop partnerships in new markets. This has had the local media discussing the viability of the tourism industry, is one of the major employers on the island. This has caused spa managers to become more entrepreneurial to attract guests and offer new treatments to cater to the increasing number of Chinese and Asian guests.

## **What is happening in Mauritius when it comes to wellness/medical tourism?**

Mauritius is not well known as a wellness /medical tourism destination. Rather it has a reputation for luxury and traditional spa experiences. One destination resort exists, offering a range of wellness services with LUX\* now entering the market, offering leisure wellness packages incorporating fitness, spa, nutrition and yoga.

A developing market is the eco adventure market with Mauritius perfectly suited to a range of activities such as trekking, mountain climbing, mountain biking and a range of water sports including kayaking, kite surfing, stand up paddle boarding and swimming with dolphins. Combining these activities with wellness services such as spa, yoga, nutrition and fitness could define a new market for Mauritius over the next 20 years.

## **Please give us one sentence to describe the latest developments in Mauritius?**

### **What is happening in hotel spas?**

There are a number of new openings and renovations occurring in Mauritius at the moment, with some major brands moving into the market. The properties have focused mainly on traditional spa concepts, and on modern spa architecture to attract clientele, rather than new innovative concepts.

### **What is happening in destination spas?**

With only one destination spa in Mauritius, there is not a lot on the horizon. The Mauritian market is focused more on family and couple vacations and is currently not seen as a destination spa location.

### **What is happening in hot spring spas?**

There are no hot springs in Mauritius, and hence no thermal spa projects.

## **What has been the general attitude towards investing in the spa and wellness arena?**

The general attitude is to invest as part of new hotel facilities. All the new projects have well-developed spas and are using the spa as a key feature to sell the hotel rooms. The problem is a number of older properties have spas which need to be renovated, which is not happening due to the current focus on cost containment and a reluctance to spend on existing facilities until business stabilizes.

**Looking back on the past 40 years of spa and wellness, what would you consider a defining moment?**

The defining moment for me was when spas became an essential facility in a hotel. No longer an option, but a critical element to any 4- or 5-star property. It took spa from the fringe and exposed it to a larger market, which is still discovering the benefits and experience of spa. From here we now have the opportunity to combine more closely with fitness facilities and nutrition within resorts which currently exist, however with little focus. Fitness currently is driving the wellness boom and there is an untapped opportunity in the hotel and resort environment to combine fitness and spa elements to create a wellness solution with more substance than pure pampering.

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