



THE AMERICAS: UNITED STATES

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What is making news in your country with regards to spa and wellness?

In the USA, the rise in awareness of wellness, more importantly, preventative wellness has become a focus with the driving force of uncertain health care rules and regulations being debated in Congress. Savvy US spas are leveraging this great debate and marketing themselves and their offerings as not only preventative care, but utilizing important health and wellness statistics in their marketing campaigns.

What is happening with wellness tourism in your country? Medical Tourism?

According to Wellness Tourism Worldwide, US respondents have a vested interest in wellness and use their time away to start new health regimens. With over 93 percent holding a US passport planning to take a wellness vacation in the near future. And according to Travel Market Report of January 2012, a 35 percent growth in outbound healthcare tourism is expected. Medical tourism - i.e., US residents leaving the country for procedures - is on the upswing. Given the astronomical medical costs in US and the much more appealing prices of medication just over the Canadian border, it's a given that this area is going to increase as healthcare costs rise in the US.

Please give us one sentence to describe what is happening in your country for each of these categories:

Hotel Spas?

Hotel or resort spas continue to be an integral part of the facility. The hotel industry is experiencing a surge of growth in spa sales as of 2011 and it is expected to continue growth with massage services generating the most revenue for hotel spas¹.

Destination Spas?

Destination Spas, in their purest sense, as places one visits with the aim of making a lifestyle change, continue to struggle in the US. According to sources, they are stagnant in their practices and not evolving fast enough to maintain relevance to an evolving demographic. Factors contributing to this decline include: remote locations that make sourcing and retaining staff difficult; lack of connection to repeat networks of guests; and the facilities not being maintained to modern standards. This being said, a handful of these locations succeed in generating in excess of \$5M in spa revenue annually.

Hot Springs Spas?

Although a centuries-old practice, 'taking the waters' is not a common retreat or vacation practice among Americans. Many hot springs locations have fallen into disrepair or do not offer lodging. The recent acquisition of The Homestead in Virginia by Canyon Ranch, will perhaps drive more awareness of the benefits of hot springs and maybe more well known, tried and true locations in the US, such as Saratoga Springs and Calistoga, may see a surge in demand.

What is your country's position on investing in the spa industry in 2013?

With the recent financial debacle, investors are still leery of just about any investment in any industry. However, there is money to be invested, with the right project.

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

Watching the spa industry grow from a virtually non-existent industry 25 years ago to hearing Susie Ellis predict spa and wellness will reach the two trillion-dollar mark. THAT is a defining moment.

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