



THE AMERICAS: UNITED STATES

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

There is a lot of positive news coming out of the US. The recently released ISPA figures showed that the spa industry grew this year on many fronts: revenue, employment, number of locations and number of spa visits. These measures augur well for our industry, especially in light of the past few years, when growth was relatively flat outside of Massage Envy's expansion.

Corporate wellness is gaining traction as enactment of the Affordable Healthcare Act draws closer. An increased emphasis on preventing illness and embracing wellness in the workplace is increasingly recognized as good both for employees and for business, which definitely benefits our industry.

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

Several companies have announced new openings. Most notable are Miraval's expansion into the underserved Northeastern market, and the new EVEN brand of healthy hotels which will soon be launched in New York City by IHG. The trend toward healthy hotels is a positive development for consumers and falls squarely into the growing wellness tourism arena.

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?

Hotels are embracing wellness, as evidenced by the "Stay Well" rooms at MGM Grand and the new EVEN brand. More and more "wellness touchpoints" are being addressed as hoteliers realize that sleep, nutrition, stress-reduction and even lighting are important to the wellness of their guests.

What is happening with destination spas?

Canyon Ranch has opened a SpaClub at the Homestead, Miraval will open at Natirar in New Jersey, and word has it that a new wellness retreat will be opening on the former site of Kutcher's in the Catskills in New York. The grand dame of Destination Spas, the Golden Door in Escondido, CA, is under new ownership and promises to be restored to its former glory.

What is happening with hot springs spas?

Two Bunch Palms has announced Kevin Kelly, former President of Canyon Ranch, as their new head, and they will be undergoing a renovation and expansion. Glen Ivy Hot Springs now has former Miraval Chef, Bill Wavrin, at the helm of their Café. Glenwood Hot Springs in Glenwood, CO, also underwent an extensive renovation. All of this speaks to a renewed interest in hot springs as well as their desire to become true wellness destinations for their guests. I'm sure we'll see a lot more development in this category in the next few years.

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

The mood of venture capital and private equity investors seems very positive in terms of investing in wellness and hospitality. Wellness is a very hot category, with many corporations launching wellness products and strategies. Examples include Walgreens, Whole Foods, CVS Pharmacy, and Pepsico, to name a few.

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

From my perspective, a defining moment for our industry was when Rancho La Puerta opened its doors 73 years ago, launching what I would call the modern destination spa industry, which is near and dear to my heart.

SUBMITTED BY:

Sallie Fraenkel
Executive Vice President
Global Spa & Wellness Summit
257 Park Avenue South, 10th Floor
New York, New York 10010 U.S.
sallie@gsws.org
www.gsws.org