

GALLEN'S SPA NOTES



What to Watch

AOIBHEANN GALLEN looks at some more trends for the year ahead

Trends within the wellness world are evolving all the time and the following are just some of the trends I have researched and believe are of paramount importance to the Irish wellness sector. Susie Ellis of Spafinder also gave me an update on some international trends for the year ahead.

BUSINESS AT THE SPA

Business at the spa is an opportunity for hotel spas of Ireland to target companies who offer their staff incentive breaks. More and more business retreats and conventions will take place at the spa. Why play golf when you can spa? Or do both! This is a trend that serves a multi-purpose by giving the businesses a way to promote a healthy lifestyle amongst their staff and associates and sending the message that they value their staff. It also offers a great opportunity for companies to incorporate health education or stress reduction programmes into their conference programming. This trend is really taking off in the UK so watch out here.

SPAS FOR MEN

As I mentioned in *The Style Guide 2008*, a more 'unisex appeal' is important in spas, as more men are taking to spa-going. Spas in Ireland could offer extra facilities for men such as 'men-only grooming' areas. Women have their make-up rooms, manicure and pedicure stations – men too should have old school amenities, like traditional barber services along with a 'gentlemen's manicures and pedicures'. It is already happening and 2008 should bring the male spa experience more into the mainstream.

LUXURY DETOX

Most people start the New Year with a detox plan but what many don't realise is that certain detoxes can do more harm than good. I

would advise people who feel they must detox to do so under the supervision of a reputable clinic or detox spa. Detox programmes and weight loss bootcamps have long been associated with deprivation, spartan accommodations, and hard-line supervision – as if the guests were doing penitence for their 'sins'. But many spas, including Sanoviv in Mexico, the Farm at San Benito in the Philippines, and Cal-a-Vie in California, are beginning to treat weight loss and detox less as punishments and more as celebrations, which is great news.

There certainly is a gap in the Irish market and more spas should incorporate detox breaks into their treatment and lifestyle plans, providing the detox plans have been carefully sought by professionals within the industry.

SLEEP

People are now living much busier lifestyles and, as a result, we don't get enough sleep or a good solid eight hours, which is what is recommended by the Edinburgh Sleep Centre. 'A large proportion of the population consider themselves to be sleep-deprived,' says Dr Chris Idzikowski, director of Edinburgh Sleep Centre. Indeed, how often do you hear people say that they plan to 'catch up on their sleep' at the weekend, or even use holidays to get some kip? Spas in Ireland should encourage healthy sleep for guests. What started as an awareness has now become a focus, as evidenced by the 'sleeping room only' sleep-health workshops given at Rancho La Puerta and Red Mountain spas by Sleep Guru Robert deStephano. Hotel spas have an even better opportunity, as not only can the guest avail of sleep therapy treatments in the spa, sleep can further be induced in the hotel bedrooms by guests lying on beds that regulate negative and positive ions, therefore inducing sleep. What better way to relax? ♦

AOIBHEANN GALLEN, founder of Irelandspas, is Ireland's leading independent spa consultant. To find out more about Aoibheann and the services she offers to the industry log on to www.irelandspas.com or email her at agallen@irelandspas.com.

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