

THE INTERNATIONAL SPA ASSOCIATION HIGHLIGHTS KEY SPA INDUSTRY TRENDS FOR 2006

LEXINGTON, Ky. – As the spa lifestyle is woven more prominently into mainstream culture, several newsworthy trends are actually becoming expectations for spa-goers. As the respected voice of the spa industry, the International SPA Association keeps a pulse on current and future trends through its network of 2,500 members in 73 countries.

“As the spa industry is the fourth largest leisure industry in the United States, the spa experience is increasingly being highlighted in movies, television shows, ads and numerous articles,” said ISPA President Lynne Walker McNeas. “The attention that’s being paid to the benefits of the spa experience is helping consumers incorporate spa into their everyday lives.”

Key Spa Industry Trends:

- Spa at home – From cooking classes, to lessons on balance and managing stress, lifestyle classes at spas teach guests how to take the healthy lessons of the spa home with them. Additionally – spa décor – including tubs, showers, products and massage tables as well as clothing and candles is mainstream. Plus, home spa parties are popular for bridal/baby showers and birthday celebrations.
- In-room spa amenities – At some resorts/hotels, there’s no need to leave your room to enjoy the spa experience. Spa suites and sleeping rooms with massage tables, high-end amenities and spa-like bathrooms are becoming mainstream. It’s all about making guests feel comfortable and helping them enjoy their stay to the fullest.
- A spa here, a spa there, a spa everywhere – Location is becoming a big factor for spas. Spas are in health clubs, resorts/hotels, doctors are adding spa elements to their practices, and you can find treatments being offered in airports, malls and on cruise ships. Additionally, there are spa lifestyle communities and living at the spa through rental and ownership programs at destination and resort/hotel spas.
- Healthy aging treatments and products – The emphasis for spa-goers is increasingly that of self-preservation. Therefore, spas have gained a new aura of respectability. Baby boomers and their children will pay to look young and healthy. ISPA members have seen a surge in spa-goers looking for healthy aging treatments and products that deliver results. Some guests view these products and treatments as a more attractive alternative to injections and surgery. Additionally, guests are also looking for personal care programs that can be used at home.
- Medical components – From dentists to dermatologists, the partnership between spas and doctors is due to requests from guests. People are savvier about the spa experience and they are busier than ever before - they are looking for a one-stop-shop. Now a woman or man can have their annual physical or a medical procedure, and at the same time, treat themselves to relaxing spa treatments. Medical spas offer guests the opportunity to focus on complete health and wellness and stress reduction under one roof.

- Can I stay just a little longer? – As we are all more crunched for time, spa-goers are requesting longer treatments - allowing for an extended, enhanced and more meaningful spa experience. Spa professionals are responding to consumers by offering selections of 90- and 120-minute treatments as well as packages that last several hours, a half day or a full day
- Cactus flower, barbecue sauce and sweat lodge ceremonies, Oh My! – Spas are offering one-of-a-kind experiences to guests, while also creating a unique point of differentiation between each property, by incorporating elements that are indigenous to each locale and supporting the traditions of native cultures. Incorporating local ingredients and indigenous cultures into a spa's offerings makes the experience even more interesting , rejuvenating and memorable for the guest.
- Spa-ing as a group – Groups going to spas (families, girlfriends, business associates, bridal parties) is an ongoing movement. For those who are new to spas, a group outing may be a more comfortable setting. Activities such as hiking, yoga and dance classes are popular with groups. And, spa suites are a popular way to accommodate several people at the same time for treatments.
- The multi-generational appeal of spas – The spa industry is definitely offering more services and programs to meet the expectations of families traveling together. Spas offer the perfect environment for children, teenagers and their parents to relieve stress, relax and gain quality time together. ISPA members are teaching children and teens important lessons such as healthy-eating habits, grooming skills and the importance of living a balanced life
- Booking time, instead of a treatment – Reserving a block of time, instead of a treatment, gives the consumer the flexibility to choose what they want based on how they feel when they arrive at the spa. It's all about consumer demand!

Editor's note – ISPA is happy to put you in contact with members who could serve as interview resources for the above trends. Please feel free to contact Debra Locker at the above contact details for ideas on members to accompany your piece.

About ISPA

ISPA is recognized worldwide as the leading professional organization and voice of the spa industry. Founded in 1991, ISPA strives to advance the professionalism of the spa industry by providing invaluable educational and networking opportunities, to promote the value of the spa experience to society and to be the authoritative voice of the spa industry.

Spas are entities devoted to enhancing overall well-being through a variety of professional services that encourage the renewal of mind, body and spirit.