

**Does Spa
Have a Future?**
Petrea King's
Inspiring Vision

HEAD & HAIR
SPA STYLE

Easy ways to
TRIPLE
Mother's Day Sales

IMBUE YOUR SPA WITH
NATURAL HEALING

**+ Hilton Gets Serious:
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The FUTURE VISION



Petrea King

Petrea King is a well-known Australian author, inspirational speaker, counsellor and workshop leader. Through her Quest for Life Centre and her books on coping with terminal illness, she has inspired thousands of people – many readers will recall her emotive and inspirational opening address at the 2004 ASpa Conference. She is a qualified naturopath, herbalist, hypnotherapist and yoga and meditation teacher and is recognised as a luminary in the field of holistic health. Here she gives us her insight into the future of spa and how she sees it as the starting point for a truly integrated model of wellness provision.



A therapist's caring touch can elicit physical healing and emotional release.

People hope that the nurturing environment will magically address emotional healing.

Real health is a dynamic state of being where physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness creates a solid foundation for living.

This multi-faceted yet holistic approach to health and wellbeing is in increasing demand from people looking for ways to enhance their level of vitality and happiness. Spas are perfectly placed to further respond to the growing interest in sustainable health and wellness being delivered through a variety of creative services within their existing structures.

I had a conversation recently with Marc Cohen, foundation professor of complementary medicine at RMIT University, about an innovative service offering by a hotel group. The hotel would log in details of the guest's wellness and lifestyle management preferences and strategies – for instance their preferred fresh morning juice recipe, yoga regime and meditation schedule, fitness requirements and dietary considerations – enabling the guest to check into one of the chain's hotels anywhere in the world and have a consistent experience of care tailored to their needs and preferences.

I believe it is this level of individual service that spas could deliver for every guest. Everyone yearns to be fully recognised as an individual and to have a sense of belonging. I envision that the next step for spas could be to address the whole person;

expanding the primary focus from the physical or aesthetic aspects of their clients.

THE SPA INDUSTRY is constantly expanding and creating new ways of delivering services to an increasing population group eager to access them. Whether through a local day spa or the more immersive destination experience, people are interested in optimising their sense of health, vitality and wellbeing.

People attend spas to utilise effective treatments that deliver aesthetic results in a professional yet nurturing environment. However, they often have an additional agenda that may not be obvious or articulated but that lies at the heart of their decision to attend a spa: In addition to the focus on the physical aspects that the spa industry addresses so well, everyone yearns to have someone acknowledge and address the needs of the “being within the body”.

So often in society, people focus and comment on the outer appearance of a person rather than enquiring about whether the person feels as good as they look. Our inner reality is often completely at odds with how we look. Indeed, for many people, being told that they look fabulous when they feel terrible can heighten their sense of distress and isolation.

This is never truer than when a person has low self-esteem or is grieving; depressed; recovering from illness, medical treatments or surgery; or is in need of quiet reflection after a traumatic event. It is also true for

WORKSHOP IDEAS

Some spas around the world have developed workshop series that focus on understanding and managing the inner world, such as:

- managing and expressing feelings
- improving nutrition
- learning to still the mind
- accessing intuition
- living with a greater sense of wellness

the person who needs some time out from a hectic life, a space to recover from many of life's challenges or simply to rest.

The word “convalescence” has virtually gone out of our vocabulary. There was a time when convalescent homes provided a safe, nurturing environment where people could take time out to recover their health, strength and vitality after illness, surgery or trauma. These days, people are rushed out of hospital as soon as physically possible without any of the deeper emotional trauma around illness or surgery being addressed. Convalescence allows people to recover their health and strength as well as integrate the trauma that they might have experienced.

PEOPLE OFTEN ATTEND spas with this unspoken agenda. Their hope is that the nurturing environment and a retreat from the world will somehow magically address these deeper issues of emotional healing. I imagine all therapists have had the experience when their gentle treatment has

Spas have the opportunity to facilitate workshops and events that reach deeper than relaxation, such as couples retreats and marriage counselling.



Spas are perfectly placed to educate, inspire and empower.

elicited either tears or a deeper conversation about what is happening in a person's life. Sometimes, the moment someone is gentle or kind towards us, it becomes impossible to keep the emotions that have been kept submerged from bubbling to the surface.

With this in mind, I see that the next stage of growth for the spa industry is to address the invisible world of the client – their mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Along with the physical treatments on offer, this embodies a holistic approach to creating real and sustainable wellness based on a trusting and professional relationship.

When people run away to a spa as a way of having some time out and pampering, they are often searching for a lift to help them deal with life's issues. Wouldn't it be wonderful if spas could offer them some inner renovation as well as the more visible outcomes of spa treatments? Wellness is a continuum that has physical, mental and emotional health and spiritual wellbeing as its goal. This allows spas to develop long-term professional relationships by providing assistance with a person's next stage of growth. Imagine going home from the spa both looking great and feeling empowered and equipped with practical skills and strategies to address conflicts and challenges in a more meaningful way.

There is great potential for both urban and residential spas to develop in the area of educating, supporting and inspiring their

clients' inner realities by having yoga teachers, meditation instructors, counsellors and inner change facilitators working alongside the beauty, massage and spa therapists.

It is particularly important as spas move toward becoming more social environments (see "Social Spa-ing", *Spa Australasia*, Volume 43) to harness the opportunity for groups of people to come together to support, educate and encourage each other in a professionally facilitated environment. For instance, some of the 'spa parties' hosted by spas today are 'pink' – that is, they are specifically conducted for cancer survivors. When someone has physically recovered from an illness or their medical treatment, there are often major internal issues that are still in need of healing. When people are confronted by their mortality, it can precipitate questions about their relationships, career, how they are living their life, the purpose and meaning of their life. It frequently impels people to address these deeper issues and focuses them on creating greater wellness in their life.

PERHAPS THE GREATEST potential threat to the spa industry is it being perceived as not being real; as providing shallow, skin-deep care that doesn't address an individual's inner needs or honour the social and environmental challenges we individually and collectively face.

If it is perceived as only working on the

vener of life, making people feel momentarily better without working on the deeper human issues, as well as being wasteful of resources on many levels, the industry will get out of sync with current social needs and trends.

There are many challenges at present that cause people to feel a constant low-level of anxiety. In addition to their personal issues, these might include economic and environmental instability and the uncertainties and lack of commitment in creating a sustainable future for all of humanity. The spa industry is perfectly placed to educate, inspire and empower people to address their personal issues by helping them to cope better, be more inspired, wiser, happier and more courageous in rising to meet today's challenges.

The spa experience could become not only somewhere to escape from your own daily reality for a while, but a place of knowledge into which you retreat to find your clarity and access your wisdom and from which you emerge better able to engage with your world in a more meaningful and vital way.

The spa then becomes a place of replenishment and clarity, so people return to their life more capable and in tune with themselves, more loving and compassionate and more beautiful within as well as on the surface.

This approach acknowledges that people are more than their bodies. Some of the

As the population ages, older clients will require (and be willing to pay for) optimal wellness programs appropriate to their situation.

Our inner reality is often completely at odds with how we look.

forward-thinking spas are already offering tailored programs that allow their clients to address complex issues. People are yearning for this knowledge so that they can more actively engage with the challenges within their personal and global lives.

HOW DO WE go about this? Some of the ways are simple. Experience shows that when people are having a spa treatment, emotions may surface. When a spa therapist notices this, it creates a perfect opportunity for her to recommend some of the “inner” treatments by saying, “Do you know that we have a meditation class?” or, “We have a wonderful counsellor here.” Just as a therapist might recommend a specialist skin treatment when required so she might recommend a profoundly useful next step for the client who is looking for more assistance with personal growth.

The marketing for inner development classes and services can invite clients to address their inner beauty: to “beautify” their relationship with themselves and others, by learning valuable skills in conflict resolution, creating emotional stability and wellness, contributing more joyfully to family and community and developing more practical tools for living skilfully.

For spa parties, for instance, go one step further and instead of people just coming together for sharing and pampering, have someone facilitate a group process that leads to greater self awareness and understanding.

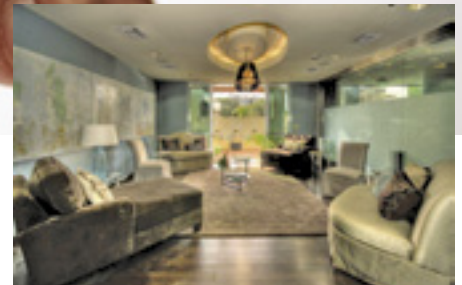
For instance, a facilitator could assist cancer survivors to talk through their experiences and process the magnitude of emotions in a supportive group environment.

THE GREATEST CHALLENGE for this future spa industry is to find committed and gifted staff and pay them what they are worth. With careful analysis and appropriate marketing, the demand for these services and programs will enable this to be not just possible but financially profitable.

For destination spas, offering programs that are educational and empowering on deeper levels is an ideal way to ensure occupancy mid-week and in quiet times of the year. Bringing in specialists to consult and present inner skills workshops and courses allows promotion through the facilitator’s own networks as well as that of the spa, and can attract good PR through the facilitator’s own editorial contributions.

Looking into the future, developers with foresight are considering the whole journey of life and how to address the mushrooming desire for wellness. Retreats and residential facilities, both short and long term, are also required by our ageing and seriously health-challenged population, with appropriate care being delivered by compassionate professionals taking a holistic approach.

The wellness industry represents an almost two trillion dollar global market that is constantly increasing. The potential



PERHAPS THE FUTURE IS NOW

Will this vision manifest as a marriage of ancient eastern healing traditions with cutting edge western medicine, situated in a facility at the forefront of cancer treatment? The Start Center for Cancer Care in San Antonio, Texas, recognised this as a missing link in its services for cancer patients, survivors and caregivers. Since its opening on December 1, 2010, Inspiritas Spa has provided evidence-based therapies that are proven to be medically effective in reducing the pain and stress associated with cancer and its treatment, from therapists trained specifically in cancer care. It’s an inspiring view of the possibilities open to us. stoh.com/patient-services/start-wellness-center.html

to expand the services of the spa industry to meet the growing desire for optimum wellness is evidenced by the innovative programs being developed by the leaders in the field. Each spa, regardless of its size, can expand its services to better meet the wellness needs of its clientele and, in this way, forge a sustainable path into the future. 🌿