



SPA WARDS

Spas are no longer seen as luxury experiences, but as a way to dramatically improve our health. Imagine cutting-edge diagnostics and check-ups in heavenly destinations. **Judy Chapman** reports on the arrival of the medical spa

It hardly seemed the most sensational news – yet another luxury spa was about to open its doors to the Middle East. But when the Four Seasons Hotel unveiled its palatial Spa and Wellness Centre in Doha last year, it marked a new chapter in the pamper industry: the medical spa. While we all love a day filled with massages, mud masks and manicures, it appears the next generation of savvy spas-goers want more. The result is purpose-built retreats where everything from obesity, impotence, heart disease, diabetes and stress are treated in the height of opulence.

Trend analysts predict that future travellers will make their holiday decisions based on the potential health benefits of their hotel rather than the virtues of the destination. Indeed medical tourism is considered the fastest growth area of the spa industry, catering to a new breed of tourist who wants to return home from vacation not only feeling fabulous, but with new-found knowledge of how to better take care of themselves.

“Spas are no longer seen as luxuries,” says Mark Wuttke, principal of Wuttke Group, a marketing specialist. “For an ageing and stressed population, spas provide a more

holistic approach to help clients reach a higher plateau of wellness.” What sets medical spas – or medispas as they are more commonly known – is they must have a licensed medical practitioner on the premises. But as Wuttke warns, any spa-goer considering services offered by medical spas should research them thoroughly to determine their accreditation and credentials.

According to doctors longevity and anti-ageing are the driving forces behind the medical spa trend. Weight loss and detox programmes are proving to be the most popular, where machine-based and traditional diagnostic therapies are given as part of the overall package. Other treatments range from traditional ayurveda and traditional Chinese medicine to cutting-edge thermage and laser rejuvenation treatments. The convenience of having a yearly examination at one location is also boosting the stocks of the medical spa. “Our guests are increasingly interested in taking all their health tests in one place. This is because they are busy executives that would prefer to get it all done in one go,” says Sue Davies, health and vitality manager at the Chiva Som International Resort. The

advantage, she says, is that the medical staff has more time to look at the bigger picture and can intergrate long-term solutions to health problems rather than quick fixes.

And forget sterile white clinics. Medical spas offer all the usual plush advantages of the conventional spa. It’s just that diet-friendly cuisine, yoga, fitness and spiritual healing are also encouraged as the daily regime. “Pleasure needs to be apart of the cure to be effective,” says Raoul Andrew Sudre, from Aspen Spa Management. “Where once fat farms and centres prescribed fasting or surgery, health practitioners and doctors at spas offer well rounded programmes with nutritional advice, fitness and therapies that creates long-term results.”

While, the operating table is not usually part of the experience, an increasing number of hospitals are starting to add spa therapies for patients to take pre and post surgery. Basically the philosophy of the medical spa is that all areas of life are looked after including physical, mental, spiritual and emotional.

Here’s a round up of some of the best medical spas. ●



S MEDICAL SPA, THAILAND

Bangkok's hippest day spa has dedicated three floors to world-class medical facilities.

Treatments & activities

Anti-ageing, dermatology, gynecologists, rehabilitation, Thai massage, Botox and colon hydrotherapy, yoga, pilates and gymnastics.

Diagnostic therapies

Live blood analysis, tumour markers, urine analysis, liver and kidney function test with chest X-ray, EKG, whole abdomen ultrasound and more.

Programmes Detox, weight and stress management and anti-ageing programmes, nutrition advisors, personal trainers and hormone replacement therapy.

Contact info@smedspa.com/
www.smedspa.com

SANOVIV MEDICAL INSTITUTE, MEXICO

Located in idyllic Baja, this centre is considered the most advanced medical facility in the world and has been likened to the 'Ritz Carlton of hospitals'.

Treatments & activities

Overlooking the Pacific Ocean is the stunning European-style spa delivering massage, bodywork and Mercury-free dentistry.

Diagnostic therapies

There are over 20 diagnostic techniques to analyse your health.

Programmes Prevention and cure of degenerative diseases like heart disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's Disease, Alzheimer's, arthritis, obesity and diabetes, as well as various types of cancer.

Contact www.sanoviv.com

GWINGANNA LIFESTYLE RETREAT, AUSTRALIA

Set on 400 acres of natural bush, this is Australia's newest health retreat destination.

Treatments & activities

Organic beauty treatments, traditional Chinese medicine, nutritionist, naturopath, counselling, abseiling, high ropes course, hiking and cycling.

Diagnostic therapies

Blood test examining the liver function and mineral content. Vitality, longevity and anti-ageing assessments and cardio respiratory fitness tests.

Programmes They offer a seven-day raw food detox, as well as customised lifestyle retreats.

Contact info@gwinganna.com/
www.gwinganna.com

SANTE WINELANDS HOTEL & WELLNESS CENTRE, SOUTH AFRICA

Built in the heart of the South African wine country, there are 15 villas with their own vineyard and swimming pool.

Treatments & activities

Vinotherapy, hydrotherapy and afrostone massage. Non-surgical procedures like Botox, yoga and Tai Chi, mountain biking and fly fishing.

Diagnostic therapies

Medical and nutritional consultations, fitness assessments, laboratory tests for anti-ageing and hormone profiles.

Programmes Detox, weight loss, quit smoking, anti-ageing and stress reduction.

Contact info@santewellness.co.za/
www.santewellness.co.za



CHIVA SOM INTERNATIONAL RESORT, THAILAND

Since opening 11 years ago, Chiva is still one of the world's best health retreats.

Treatments & activities

Oxygen facials, reiki, hydrotherapies, ayurveda, yoga, fitness, pilates and Tai Chi. A new addition to the resort is the recently opened Niranalada Medi-Spa which offers Botox, laser skin rejuvenation and thermage.

Diagnostic therapies

Iridology, live blood analysis, bio-terrain and naturopathy. Machine-based diagnostics include EQ4 for food and environmental intolerances, body composition to measure fat, muscle and water percentages and Medgem to calculate resting metabolic rate and calorie requirements.

Programmes Detox, spa, golf, yoga and weight loss.

Contact www.chivasom.com



KAMALAYA, THAILAND

Thailand's newest sanctuary on the island of Koh Samui where getting well is promoted as a joyous experience.

Treatments & activities

Ayurveda, traditional Chinese and naturopathic medicine, colon hydrotherapy, Ozone, homeopathy, flower remedies and infrared sauna, pranayama, pilates and sound yoga.

Diagnostic therapies

Medical, naturopathic and holistic consultations.

Programmes Quit smoking, weight loss, improved fitness, stress reduction and burn out.

Contact enquiriesinfo@kamalaya.com/
www.kamalaya.com



THE FARM AT SAN BENITO, PHILIPPINES

One of the world's best raw food retreats.

Treatments & activities Colon hydrotherapy, life coaching sessions, hilot massage, yoga, craniosacral therapy, kidney liver and gall bladder cleansing.

Diagnostic therapies Live blood cell analysis, blood chemistry study, body resonance imaging, ultrasound and psycho-emotional diagnostic techniques.

Benefits Advance screening and detection of illnesses in the early stages, prevention and cure of acute or chronic degenerative diseases including cancer, respiratory disorders, chronic insomnia and fatigue.

Contact www.thefarm.com.ph

OTHER REMEDIES

- Soukya, India www.soukya.com
- Canyon Ranch, United States www.canyonranch.com
- Cooper Clinic, United States www.cooperclinic.com
- Pritikin Longevity Centre & Spa United States www.pritikin.com
- Clinique La Prairie, Switzerland www.laprairie.ch
- The Danubius Hotel at the Gellert, Budapest, Hungary www.danubiushotels.com