

SPAS

THE BEST SPAS IN TOWN



What are spas doing to be different?

Spas are competing with outstanding décor elements, high-end beauty products and unique treatments. How to make sure your spa isn't left behind?

Once considered a competitive advantage and a luxury found only in the best hotels, spas have become a must-have facility in anything above a 3-star property. As life becomes more hectic and pressure-driven, interest in spas has soared, prompting both business and leisure travellers to seek their favourite spa treatments and discover new ones.

A spa should be a relaxing yet rejuvenating experience in every sense. The décor must be appealing and promote a feeling of comfort. It should also offer a variety of equipment and treatments. Water treatments, heat treatments, massages and more must be applied by trained, certified specialists using top notch high-end equipment and products.

It is essential that you do your homework before designing or refurbishing your spa. Visit several spas, both locally and abroad, to

understand the most popular treatments and economic realities of the concept. A spa should also be unique, such as creating treatments not common in other spas. For example, some high-end spas in Dubai offer Ayurvedic spa and massage treatments (based on ancient Indian remedies) but these are less common in Lebanon as there aren't any native Indian practitioners of Ayurveda. Whether updating, renovating or starting a new concept, you must create uniqueness and foster curiosity in your spa products and services. Here's a look at what some of the best spas in the region are doing.

World Class Spa, Le Royal Beirut

Johan Hellstrom, country manager at World Class Spa, Le Royal Beirut, believes that many spas and health clubs actually forget what they are selling. "They only sell memberships or treatments, forgetting the service level that is required in a spa." In addition to service, Hellstrom believes that the World Class Spa excels at building bridges between the spa and the health club - services that should go hand in hand and never be separated as many spas do in the region. "We have a Turkish bath of a level that is hard to beat," he adds, "and our range of group exercises is outstanding." The World Class Spa treats its



clients to dead sea mud, the latest Paris Phytomer Vie collection, services like a four-hand massage, detox mud wrapping and private balcony massage. There are also bride and groom treatments, hot stone treatments, reflexology, aromatherapy and Swedish massage conducted by a Swedish therapist, Thai massage and more. The décor elements include an unbeatable panoramic view through 12-meter glass windows overlooking Mediterranean sunsets and Beirut's sparkling city lights at night. "Natural light equals natural health," says Hellstrom.

Mövenpick Hotel and Resort, Beirut

The Essential Spa at the five-star Mövenpick Hotel & Resort Beirut boasts a 2000m² fitness facility

with palm trees, a water fountain and natural daylight. It is covered by a large glass dome which allows sunlight to enter the centre of the facility which boasts a thermarium area including a sauna, aroma steam room, herbal steam, laconium, 4 water beds, serial mud chamber,

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This Italian company produces high-quality bathrobes, towels, hand towels, guest towels, bath mats, slippers, head-bands, bath-wraps, turbans, and much more in a large range of fabrics. Hi-tech research has led to a line of terry fabrics produced with particular cotton yarns, extra soft finishing, extraordinary absorbing power and minimal shrinkage (up to 34% only). The range features a wide availability of stocks as well as advanced production techniques and ISO standards. They are of excellent quality and offer good value for money. Items can be enriched with logos in chiselled jacquard, bordered jacquard, embroideries, printings or personalized labels.

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SPAS



tatami bed, Jacuzzi, chakra table and more. "We use the exclusive brand ESPA in all of our treat-



MOVENPICK HOTEL AND RESORT, BEIRUT

ments," says Daniel Poulin, director of the Essential Spa and Health Club. "As part of the renowned ESPA Spa Company, we follow strict standards of hygiene and the quality of our services is unmatched." The décor of the treatment area incorporates dimmed lights, aromatherapy, relaxation music and candle lighting. The rooms are very large, each equipped with a high tech massage table and a heating blanket.

Mövenpick Resort and Spa, Dead Sea

The Zara Spa is located at the lowest point on earth at the Mövenpick Resort & Spa Dead Sea and with its 6000 m² it is the largest spa in Jordan and one of the biggest in the Middle East. Needless to say, Dead Sea products are used for all

treatments. The spa includes female and male thermariums, a hydro-pool (with different massage jets, airbeds, whirlpools and geysers), a Kneipp foot massage pool, an indoor Dead Sea pool and an infinity pool. Altogether there are 24 treatment rooms including a hydrotherapy treatment suite, mud therapy suites and royal suites. The spa terrace has a breathtaking views over the sea.

"To pamper our clients, we use therapeutic products of the Dead Sea and with over 60 different kinds of treatments, such as mud wraps, salt scrubs, treatments in dry floatation, alternative therapies, facial and skin care, body slimming and firming treatments to name a few," says Andrea Balazs, the property's PR coordinator. Guests are offered fruits, mineral water and herbal tea to detoxify. The spa's architecture complements the surrounding resort complex, which is built in a close-to-nature, low profile manner with most of its guestrooms in a village-like traditional stone and plaster construction. Pleasant scents, candle light, flowers, natural materials and soft music create the appropriate atmosphere.

Phoenicia InterContinental Spa, Beirut

This spa's unique features include options such as balneotherapy (bathing treatments in hot water to stimulate circulation and healing). The décor incorporates daylight illumination, a sky dome and indoor palm trees to create a relax-

ing atmosphere and the facility also targets the male market, especially businessmen. "We pamper our clients by offering hi-tech equipment, branded treatment products such as Phytomer and Kanebo, as well as continuously designing packages that appeal to our client's needs," says Bassam Abou Chleih, guest relations manager at the spa.

Retreat Spa, Grosvenor House, Dubai

The Retreat Spa is part of a whole floor at the Grosvenor House dedicated to grooming, relaxation and exercise. Treatments are inspired by the sea and based on organic health products to follow the outdoor theme. "Our guests are pampered in seven treatment rooms named after wild flowers," says Farida Parekh from Le Royal Meridien Beach Resort & Spa, Dubai, and the Grosvenor House West Marina Beach. "Treatments include moisturizing, exfoliation, anti-ageing, contouring and massage." This also includes male and female treatments that vary from reinvigorating facials to full body holistic massage treatments.

Moving away from exotic, low lit décor, the Retreat Spa opts for an outdoor experience. Natural light and spring colours are at the heart of its design and treatments. Light green and other soft spring colours are the main focus, without being too bold or overly-styled. Heated benches and beds provide a relaxing environment in-between treatments and the ice fountain allows

for a sensory contrast to reinvigorate the senses.

Lighting is very important. "We have darker rooms for specific treatments, but the rest of the spa is awash with light to rejuvenate and give a feeling of space," says Parekh. The natural Middle Eastern sunlight is complemented by the upwards lighting and scented candles scattered around the spa.

Aroma Spa, Lifestyles Health Club, Beirut

The Aroma Spa at the Lifestyles Health Club is reputed for its comfort and treatments for both men and women. "We use Decleor products and treatments with specialized training," says Toufic Akl, operations manager at Lifestyles, part of Premier Leisure, Boubess Group. Treatments include massages, facials, make up, body wraps, hair styling, waxing, manicure, ultratone, hydrobath, solarium and IPL. The club's greatest décor features include marble tiling throughout, stucco, and an aerial glass walkway.



LIFESTYLES HEALTH CLUB, BEIRUT



GROSVENOR HOUSE, LE MERIDIEN DUBAI



LE ROYAL HOTEL, BEIRUT



GROHE SHOWER INNOVATIONS
Grohe's multi-jet side Aquatower 1000 and 2000 showers, introduced in Germany in 2005, are now available in the Middle East. Hinged in a 30 degree swivel joint, each of these showers comprises 12 nozzles which can produce both soft and vigorous jets of water. Both systems incorporate modern thermostats to keep pressure and temperature steady. The Freehand shower is the first to combine shower head and body spray functionality into one easy to use and easy to install unit. Freehand's unique design joins two shower heads on a sturdy tubular arm which pivots 180° and easily converts shower heads to body sprays. Movario is the first handspray to feature a fully rotating showerhead. The RotaHead can be rotated by 360° in eight steps to meet the user's specific preferences. By turning the head, the angle of the water flow can be changed, for instance, to provide a targeted massage of the neck and shoulders. levant@grohe.com www.grohe.com