

HOW HEALING IS YOUR SPA REALLY?

Reflecting the global movement toward a sustainable earth, a new breed of spa-goers has been born. These savvy green souls want to know what ingredients are being smothered upon their skin and if the water they are bathing in is beneficial for their health. And why not? After all, we promote the spa as a place of healing. **Judy Chapman** looks beyond the allure.

We all want to live on a pristine earth. Living in a sustainable world simply means living within our earth's means. Spas - the new universities for wellness - are sanctuaries where we can learn to take care of not only our own health, but that of our planet.

Indeed, today's spa trends look luminously green! In the words of Susie Ellis, President of Spa Finder and a 25-year industry veteran, "The pendulum swings back to a pure spa experience." In her report on spa trends for 2006, she explains that spa consumers will demand more information than what many spas thriving on an aura of mystique are accustomed to providing.

Does that mean therapists should get prepared for an onset of questions like, "What's in the lotion?" or "Is the water in the pool chlorine-free?"

The answer is a resounding *yes!*

Megan Larsen is the founder of Sodashi (sodashi.com), a high-end chemical-free spa therapy brand. She says today's traveller is increasingly savvy, and that many hotel, resort and spa guests are already practicing a wellness lifestyle at home, making it only natural that they should demand the same choices while on vacation. Megan is interviewed in more depth on page 74.

The good news is that "sustainable spa" does not mean living without. Rather, it is about having *more* last *longer*. Remember, the original meaning for SPA is "health through water", so it makes perfect sense that guests demand pristine water in everything from the outdoor bath to the swimming pool.

One company who genuinely walks the walk is Six Senses Resorts & Spas. Environmental Conscience for Six Senses is Pituck Jongnarangsin, who reports that all Six Senses Resorts have treatment plants for wastewater released



from their spas. They are also currently developing a new eco-friendly policy with a focus on water conservation, and will work closely with Green Globe (greenglobe.org), an International certification program that facilitates sustainable travel and tourism for consumers, companies and communities in the near future.

"Six Senses is already operating several environmental practices, such as a mushroom and ecological garden, whereby guests can taste the organic produce fresh from the garden. Their Zero Carbon Emission project ensures that our resorts have as little carbon emissions as possible," he says.

Another woman lifting the standard is Sabrina Franzheim from Beachloungespa (beachloungespa.com), a Singapore-based spa fashion company. This month, she launches a collection of yoga, martial arts and pilates wear as well as robes and towels made from bamboo and organic cotton. (Bamboo is possibly one of the most sustainable plants on earth and absorbs up to four times more carbon dioxide than any other plant.)

Ultimately, small changes can make a world of difference. According to Adam Spinner, an Environmental Health Practitioner, simply being aware of the products we buy, who is selling them and how they are made demonstrates our ability to address global challenges on an individual scale.

Certainly here in Southeast Asia we need to take note. Dynamic industrialisation has impacted our cities so much that we are living in some of the most polluted places in the world. Clever planning that considers environmental impact will be an important role in the design of future spas. 

Above: Remon Alphenaar, Executive Chef at Evason Resort & Spa, Hua Hin, Thailand, checks on spa cuisine ingredients in the resort's organic garden.