

Spa mantra

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Awakening the Senses

Sonu Shivdasani talks about
'Intelligent Luxury'

Ananda
in the Himalayas

A Retreat for the Body, Mind & Soul

A DESIGN that supports your BUSINESS

Writer | Sam Margulies

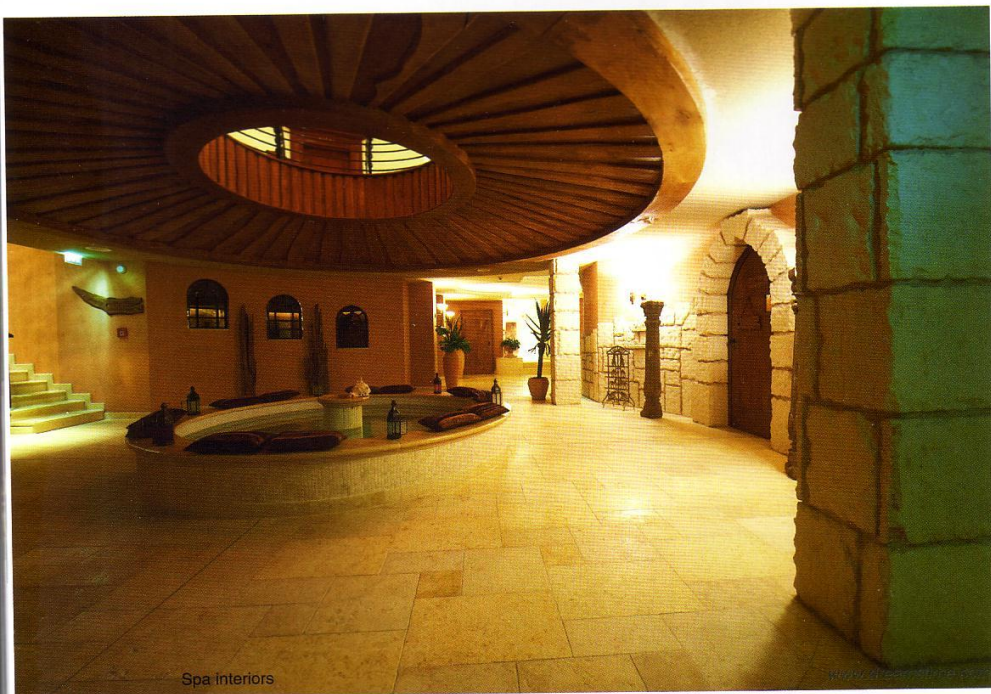
These days, it has become vital to conceive every spa project in the most savvy business manner right from the beginning, given the extensive and aggressive competition in the spa industry.

The best business plan will be worthless if it is not supported by an adequate structure.

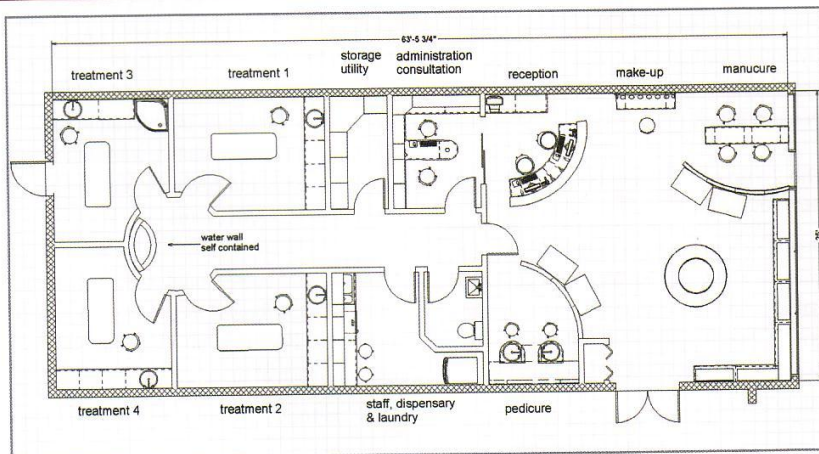
The conception and design of the floor plan of the spa/medical spa is the element that will have the most dramatic influence on the business aspect of the spa. Although the colours of the walls and the type of flooring material are important elements, it is not what will 'make it or break it'.

More treatment rooms don't always mean more treatments, more income. In some cases, it just translates into higher costs and more expenses. It is the utilization rate of each treatment room that makes the difference. In order to reach the best utilization rate for each treatment room, your spa designer must conceive the plans with a deep knowledge of how a spa/medical spa operates, the general and specific needs of this industry as well as of the specific project, incorporating the correct amenities for the structure, creating the best traffic flow with the right supporting spaces.

Let's take two different examples. Two minutes added to each treatment because of the incorrect location of a dispensary in the floor plan can lead

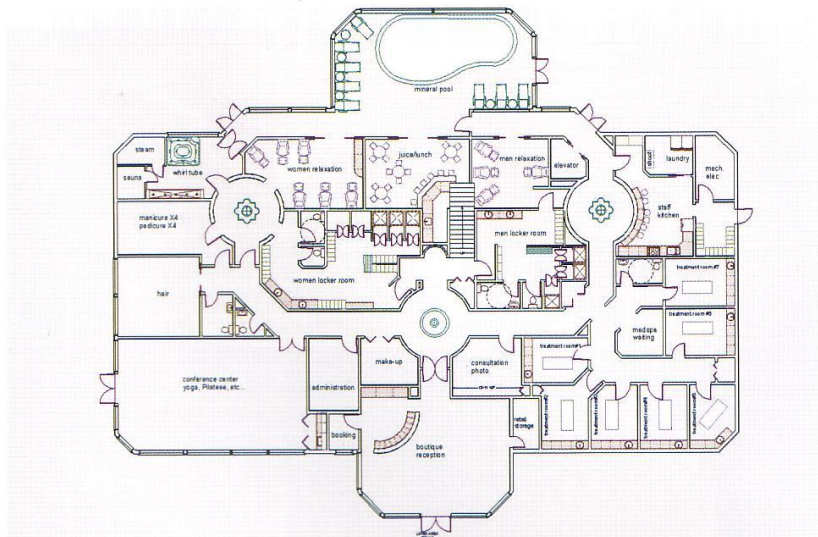


Spa interiors



to a significant loss of direct income throughout the year. Similarly, other conception mistakes will prevent your clientele from coming back regularly and will force you to multiply your marketing expenses in order to keep a viable utilization rate of your treatment rooms. Some other mistakes will be related to the equipment for the 'high-tech' treatments... so while conceiving your floor plan and lighting and power plan, your designer *must* know what are the needs of the equipments for now, as well as potentially, for the future.

But let's go back to the utilization rate of the spa. Most of the time, a project begins with a business plan. When that plan is ready, one needs to build or to find an existing location that will fit the needs of the business plan and support its goals. For example, if the business plan income calculation is based on 15 treatment rooms, it means that you need to allow some space for locker rooms, relaxation area, maybe separating men and women, staff room, dispensaries, utility room, corridors, etc. All these spaces will not generate direct income, but without a corridor, you don't get your clients to the treatment



rooms and without a utility room, you don't provide heat, AC, light nor water to your treatment rooms.

Let's take the example of the locker rooms. If you have just a few treatment rooms, you don't need absolutely to have some, but when you have a larger number of rooms, you'll need the locker rooms in order to keep an acceptable level of utilization rate for each room, or your ratio of treatments per room

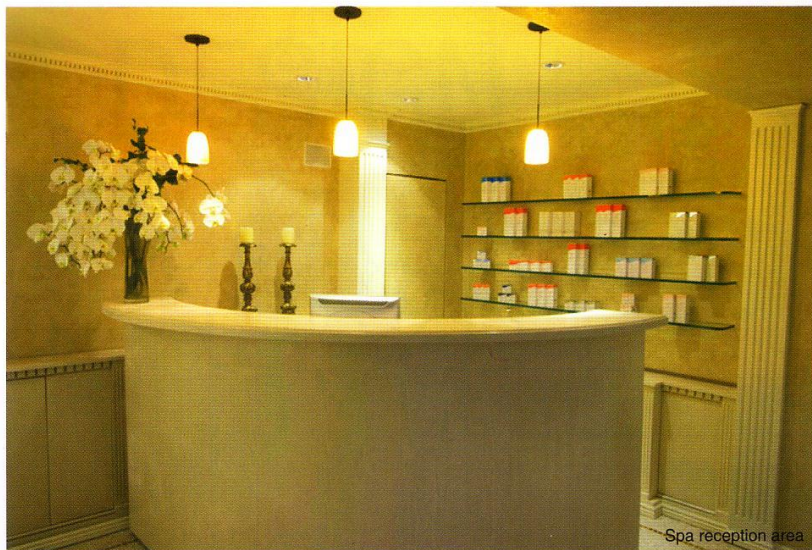
will drop dramatically. But how big should the locker rooms be? This will depend on the number of treatment rooms based on which, you need to calculate how many clients could be at the same time in the locker room, and make sure that you have enough space there so that the clients do not to feel stressed about being forced into a physical contact with each other. In other words, for every square foot that will generate direct income, you need to have additional space that will not generate any direct income but without which your spa will not be fully operational.

When you have your business plan ready, and before you begin to look for a location, I highly suggest you spend one or two days with an experienced spa designer that will define with you the type and dimension of the location you need in order to support the projections of your business plan, giving to you the right direction to develop the kind of business you expect to have.

Another big investment in the spa is the furniture, all the cabinetry in the treatment rooms as well as in the reception, the retail area or the locker rooms. It is important to make the distinction between the custom built and the custom fit. The first



Spa lobby, reception and product display



Spa reception area



Relaxing lounge

one, custom built, means designing from scratch all of the furniture, and contracting a company to manufacture every piece for your project. The second - custom fit, is choosing within a manufactured collection the style, dimensions, colors, hardware, etc., and have this manufacturer assemble each piece for your project. In general, custom built will be more expensive, but will give you the opportunity to create a one-of-a-kind identity to your project. Of course, a cheap custom

built will be less expensive than high quality custom fit. You really need to define from the beginning what kind of image and identity you want your client to have, when they think of you.

While speaking of furniture, the first piece that your client will see is the image of the reception desk and the retail area. Some spas invest heavily in this furniture, but end-up scaring their clients with a cluttered reception. Some believe that in order to have

good retail sales, you need have as much merchandise as possible in your display. The truth is that it all depends in the kind of products you want to sell. If your products are cheap, low quality products, the right way will be the supermarket way: as many products as possible per square foot. But if you propose high quality products at a higher price, you need to give more space to each kind of product on the shelf to raise the 'perceived value' of each product. Don't forget that the 'perceived quality' of your products is also the reflection of the quality of the treatments proposed in your spa.

Clearing the clutter can be a challenging task. For some people, clutter is like a wall they build around themselves, giving to them the impression that nobody will be able to touch them, making them feel more secure. But how would you feel as a client coming into a spa to get taken care of, to get massages, wraps, facials, etc., which is cluttered? Do you really think that you would feel comfortable in this situation? By avoiding any clutter, you make a clear statement to your clients - "This is a safe place where you don't have to worry for your safety and privacy".

Remember always that your most important investment in a spa or project is the construction of the facility. Mistakes in the conception of the project could cost you your dreams and your business. 🍌

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