



Shamana Spa, The Grand Hyatt, Goa



Mission Hills



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SPA-CE

Design 10 Things about spa ambience design

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A Spa is like a building: each and every element of its conception and design is a stone that is part of the foundation supporting the 'building' or the ambience of the spa if you will. If the aesthetic elements are important in the creation of the ambience, structural elements are even more essential to it. Here are 10 of these most important 'ambience building stones'.

SCENTS

Triggering the emotional memory

Olfaction is the most developed sense for emotional memory. A similar scent to your grandmother's kitchen can bring back instantly to the memories and emotions of 40 years ago. It is one of the most important ambience elements. A well designed scent is one of the corner stones of a memorable spa ambience. In many spas, the signature scent is part of the operational and marketing plans. But it is not because you like certain odours and perfumes that it will be agreeable to everyone. Most ambience scents are made of essential oils, and some are more toning while others are more calming or refreshing. The best way to develop the right aroma for a spa is to retain the services of an aromatherapy specialist.



COLOURS

The good and the bad

Most of the time, the colours inside the spa are defined by the theme or the style of the facility. And almost all colours are appropriate for a spa. What makes the colour inappropriate is not the colour itself, but its tone. A 'bright orange' colour will most likely be terrible, while a 'fire orange' could be great. Sometime, the colours and tones are great, but it is the combination that creates a disaster. Each colour and tone have a specific energy and it is this energy that will create the ambience. Do not forget that the colours on the walls and ceiling will reflect on the skin, and if the reflection makes the skin look unhealthy (yellowish, greenish, etc), no matter how good is the facial treatment you offer, you just lost your client!



Kaya Kalp, Agra



LOCKER ROOMS

Make it the beginning, not the end

When your spa has locker rooms, it is generally where the spa experience begins. If you don't want it to end right there, here are 4 important tips that will set the ambience:

1. It has to be big enough proportionately to your spa guests capacity so that the clients won't even have the stress of having accidental

physical contact with another person while changing.

2. The lighting system has to be bright without intensity and balanced, eradicating any dark area.

3. When possible, create private spaces for changing within the locker room.

4. Make sure the robes are size appropriate, absolutely clean, as well as soft and agreeable to wear



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MATERIALS AND THINGS

How it looks... How it feels.

Natural versus Synthetics : Real versus Fake experience

A true ambience is a real one, not a fake one. To reach your goal, you must use the real things. If you are going to have plants, avoid plastic fakes. Each and every thing a clients touches in the spa must feel natural, warm and agreeable. If they sit or lie down on a vinyl cushion, the ambience will feel as real and warm as... the vinyl!

RELAXATION SPACE

Calming privacy

The perfect ambience for a relaxation room is one that makes every client feel peaceful and safe in a non private area. The lights must be bright enough to avoid threatening dark zones, but dime enough to set a calm and private feeling. The seating should be individual, not too close, but not too far either. The scent must be calming, neutral enough to avoid discomfort. Materials must be smooth, warm and agreeable to the touch, and the sound must be soothing, melodious and not too repetitive.



RETAIL BOUTIQUE

Pushing sales or welcoming buyers?

If the experience inside the spa is perfect, but the client feels pressured in the boutique, you just killed the ambience! To put the client at ease while maximizing retail sales, here are some design tips: Stimulate the 5 senses of the clients in strategic places throughout the spa with non aggressive marketing supports. Place the retail products at appropriate reaching heights for client's comfort. Present the products in a manner which will set the perceived value of the products.



MUSIC

The sound of bliss

Some people like classical music while others prefer 'heavy metal'. Some sounds are "Spa appropriate" while others are not. The music and sounds in your spa must be part of the expression of the identity of the spa. It should help set the energy level of each space and vary according to the needs. From a sound perspective, you can divide a spa in 4 different zones:

1. Reception and all 'public' areas: Calm with character
2. Corridors: You feel it more than you hear it
3. Relaxation: Meditative, soothing, melodious... A drifting resonance
4. Treatment rooms: Give some choice to the client but keep it calm. PS: No water sounds!





Oryza Spa



Six Senses



Cochin India Spa

CORRIDORS

How to kill the ambience

Ambience creates the experience and corridors could kill it! Corridors exist just to go from one space to another, and while they are “wasted spaces” you have to have them. So many spas focus their available space on the treatment rooms and try to make their corridors as narrow as possible... Your clients need to move between areas without any stress, and specially without the fear of physical contact while passing in the traffic, or this will impact negatively the experience. Forget narrow! Think short! Your corridor must be wide enough to avoid not only the contact, but also the stress of potential contact.



Mandara Spa, Alibaug

TEMPERATURE

Warm but not hot, cool but not cold.

A warm and cool ambience doesn't require mixing hot and cold air, but temperature has its role in the creation of the ambience, and an important one! Different spa zones require different temperatures.

Zone 1: Reception, boutique, administration, staff areas: comfortable (around 68 degree F)

Zone 2: Corridors and public areas inside the spa: just above comfortable

Zone 3: Locker rooms, powder rooms, relaxation area, wet areas: Just a touch up from zone 2

Zone 4: Treatment rooms: Individual thermostat for each room so temperature can be changed according to the treatment type and the needs of the client.

In a spa environment, ambience and client experience are like the thumb and the index of one hand: and these are the two fingers that hold the clients credit card! Manicure them well! 🍷



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