

Improving Men's Health Through the Spa

BY
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Men in the Spa

The good news is, male spa attendance is already on the rise. According to ISPA's ongoing research through Consumer Snapshot Studies, the proportion of spa-goers who are male has shot up from 31 percent less than 10 years ago to 47 percent and growing. "Men are starting to realize spa isn't just for women," says Claudine Riemer, spa director at the Sabila Spa Villa Del Palmar in Loreto, Mexico. "As the population is aging, men too are realizing the importance of being healthy and taking care of themselves."

Renvye Byrd, spa director at Safety Harbor Resort in Safety Harbor, Florida agrees: "Men are also becoming increasingly aware of the fact that spas are not only about beauty and pampering, but mostly about health and wellness, which is for everyone, gentlemen included. This shift in mindset is a huge contributor to the rise in male spa attendance."

The same Consumer Snapshot Study found that men are going to spas because they are stressed out and tired. Most work in management positions and use the spa as a break from their hectic lives. Per the study: "Compared to his non-spa-going counterpart, the male spa-goer is more likely to report higher levels of stress; a feature that appears to be correlated to higher levels of profes-

June is Men's Health Month, which aims to promote health and wellness among men around the world. According to the Men's Health Network, men, in general, take less care of themselves than women. With that in mind, it's not surprising that MHN also reports that men are dying an average of five years younger than the women of the world. This statistic seems staggering, but luckily the spa community is in the perfect position to change it.

Wellness can often be perceived as a female endeavor, when in reality both sexes should be focusing on improving their overall health. As centers of health, wellness and healing, spas are uniquely able to tap into the male market and improve the stigma that being well is a feminine concept.



Spa treatments like pedicures no longer have the stigma of being "for females." Sabila Spa Villa del Palmar makes men feel more comfortable by catering the atmosphere to their interests.



The Day Suite at The Borgata is purposefully gender-neutral so both sexes feel comfortable.

sional responsibility, but may also be driven by the fact that the male spa-goer reports higher levels of physically strenuous activity both in and outside of work.”

So, what are spas doing to meet the needs of today’s stressed-out man?

Making Men Comfortable with Spa

“Men have different needs than women,” Jennifer Arons, director of spa operations at Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa in Atlantic City, New Jersey, points out. “Men are often more attracted to services that include work, such as a sports or deep tissue massage, rather than a relaxing body treatment. The descriptions of male-targeted services should indicate effective results.”

As massage remains the most popular treatment for male spa-goers, this is the perfect place to start when attracting new male customers. From there, you can strive to educate male guests on the wellness benefits of your other treatment varieties.

Lia Wout, assistant spa manager at The Ritz-Carlton Spa in Palm Beach, Aruba, suggests incorporating an entirely male-focused menu. “Having a section directed specifically to gentlemen allows for a space to educate men about the health benefits of the different services we have to offer as well as make them feel like they belong in a spa.”

And a sense of belonging is important. ISPA’s 2016 Consumer Snapshot Initiative, which focused on spa-going habits of millennials, found that a major reason millennial men aren’t visiting the spa is because they are either not familiar or not comfortable in the spa environment. Creating a separate menu or space for men to feel comfortable and learn about your spa could help break down the barriers and misconceptions some men feel about the spa and potentially open an untapped spring of new patrons.

“We are currently designing a new menu that includes a section entirely dedicated to the gentlemen visiting our spa,” adds Wout. “Men respond to different terminology and this should be

Men are often attracted to services that include work, such as sports or deep tissue massage, rather than a relaxing body treatment.

reflected in the descriptions of our services. Having promotions on packages that are specifically for men also contributes to getting gentlemen to see spas in a different light. We basically need to teach our gentlemen how to spa.”

Arons agrees: “The wording used in the names of services and the descriptions are key to attracting male customers. They should be concise and clearly define expectations of the service. We have also found that including descriptions of the spa lounge amenities is a great attractor for men.”

If creating a separate menu or space for men isn’t in the cards, try making your treatment options unisex, so men don’t feel alienated. At Sabila Spa, the golfers’ massage can be experienced by either male or female guests as it focuses on the specific areas of the body stressed during golf. The activity, not the sex, is emphasized, which allows men to feel less separated from the traditional spa experience.

Targeting the Male Market

To increase the percentage of men in your spa, you need to catch their interest. For

resort or destination spas, that may include reaching out to men on the property by seeking them out in other activities within the resort.

"We have a robust marketing strategy that includes internal efforts such as speaking to men on property via in-room

flyers or plasma screens located within the Borgata Poker Room and other areas of the casino," says Aarons.

Riemer at Sabila Spa also uses other areas of the resort to attract male spa guests, and even goes as far as cross-training employees in other departments

on the spa's offerings and incentivizing them to send guests to the spa. "We offer in house training where an employee from another department gets a massage and our therapist can practice new techniques," she says. "It's a win-win situation and allows other staff the

A MAN'S TAKE

TODD HEWITT ■ Corporate Director of Spa, Health Clubs and Recreation
Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts ■ Hong Kong

Pulse: Why do you think male spa attendance is on the rise?

Hewitt: Men are realizing the importance of looking good and feeling good. I think there has been enough press out there (and the significant women in their lives) that has educated them to the benefits of massage and other spa treatments.

P: Should spas consider adding male-directed or specific treatments to their menus? Please explain.

H: I think spas should consider not necessarily adding male-directed treatments but add wording that will appeal to male clients. We found a significant increase in our deep tissue massages when we renamed it Deep Tissue Sports Massages and when our description said that it was highly recommended for active individuals.

P: What are some unique ways for spas to reach the male market?

H: 'Invite a male friend' promotions are a great way to bring someone in. They increase traffic flow and awareness of what services your spa offers, plus it will build up your database.



ROBERT VANCE ■ Managing Director
Well & Being Spa at the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess ■ Scottsdale, Arizona

Pulse: Why do you think male spa attendance is on the rise?

Vance: I would attribute it to three A's: acceptance, accessibility and adaption. Acceptance by men of the tangible physical and mental benefits of what the spa has to offer. Accessibility through value programs like Travelzoo or Groupon allow more men to dip their toe into the luxury resort spa experiences without the sticker-shock. Once comfortable with the benefits and the process, they will gravitate to an environment that has adapted to the needs and motivations of men.

P: Should spas consider adding male-directed or specific treatments to their menus? Please explain.

V: Absolutely. Unless your spa has identified itself as a gender-specific environment I believe it is my responsibility as the director to sculpt a menu of services that speaks to the needs of my diverse clientele and their motivations.

P: What are some unique ways for spas to reach the male market?

V: We have found wonderful success in subtly integrating the spa into events that would seem out of the norm. This includes setting up massage stations at the Waste Management Phoenix Open's Clubhouse and VIP areas for both golfers and enthusiasts to enjoy, offering mini-massages in the foyer of group breakout business sessions or even adding personalized hands-on services to the experience of a new tequila launch. Once we have established trust and a professional reputation with these men in an environment they are comfortable in, we have seen a strong conversion into our true spa experiences within the facility.



EDITOR'S NOTE: As I took a second look at the sources for our Men in the Spa article, I couldn't help but notice they were all women. So I asked myself, would a male spa director have a different perspective on what men are looking for in a spa? See for yourself and check out their responses below.

knowledge to recommend treatments to guests throughout the resort. The key is to get everyone involved.”

Some great places to start are golf pros, fishing guides, and other sport instructors who have one-on-one inter-

Wives, girlfriends, sisters, friends; most men get their first taste of spa by accompanying another person, usually a woman.

action with male guests and understand the toll strenuous activity can take on the body.

Reaching out to male athletes doesn't have to be limited to resorts. Day spas can easily reach out to local athletic clubs, men's clubs or fitness studios to reach a spa-minded male client.

Colby Ring, Site Manager at Massage Trilogy Riverside, a wellness-centered day spa concept in California, targets local athletes to increase male spa attendance. “We reach out to athletes to educate



The Sabila Spa Signature Golf Massage uses actual golf balls for trigger point therapy.

them on how sports massage can benefit them,” she notes. “For instance, golfers love hearing how massage can benefit their swing and range of motion, which will greatly improve their game.”

Sports aren't the only way to a man's heart. Wout suggests using their female partners to attract men to the spa. “Wives, girlfriends, sisters and friends, most men get their first taste of spa by

accompanying another person, usually a woman,” she says. “By offering gifts to our female clients that they can share with the gentlemen in their lives, we indirectly reach our male customers.”

Byrd agrees by adding, “our couples' massage is very popular and we have a large cross-over of men from the couples' massage to individual massage treatments after they see the benefits.” ■



NEED A QUICK LIST? Head to pulse.experienceispa.com for quick tips from ISPA members on how to attract men to the spa.

FEATURED SOURCES



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