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## Wellness: SPA RESORTS

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# Keep well

The Lake Spa Retreat, Polynesian Spa, Rotorua

The spa sector, both internationally and in New Zealand, has made giant steps in the past few years and there seems to be no abating in interest when it comes to including a 'wellness' component in a holiday or incentive programme. Responding to the interest a new spa collective - The Best Spas of New Zealand Inc - was set up and launched earlier this year.

Philippe King, who manages the new spa group, says that in the past there has not seemed to be a clear cohesiveness to the way the sector is marketed or a measure of how successfully it is being done.

"We have applied the golf cluster model - which has been very successful. The principal is to target the top end, wrap some quality measures around the group and get people working together. In the golf cluster we have focused on the international market, but with spas there is still a big demand for some domestic marketing."

## Polynesian

Martin Lobb, managing director of Polynesian Spa in Rotorua, says the recession has not led to a downturn in spa and wellness therapies.

"Regardless of the recession, we are busy. People still need to be pampered and they need stress relief - maybe they need it even more."

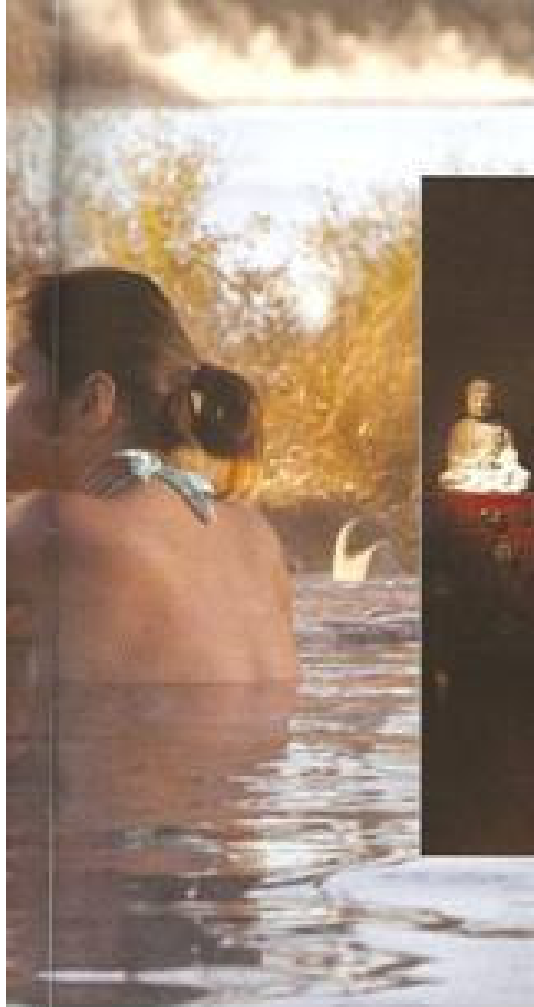
However, Lobb emphasises that spa and wellness facilities can not just rely on the growing popularity of the sector. The quality is important, you need qualified therapists and you need to provide a high standard of service and the product to match it. There are a lot of wannabes, here there and everywhere but to be successful you need to provide that quality."

Lobb says that spas continue to be a huge attraction worldwide. "Overseas no new hotels are being built without a spa. But we offer something completely different, like Hammer Springs we are a stand alone spa built around natural hot springs - we are not down below a hotel somewhere, and people have been coming here for eons."

He says the relatively new development at Polynesian Spa is the offering of therapies - something which started in 2000.

"In that area we are pretty much booked out the whole time. We are most popular with the western markets because we are suited to the independent traveller rather than the group market."

He says that while much of the clientele consists of leisure travellers, people in Rotorua for a conference or other business event are also making good use of the therapies on offer.



The Dream Room at Chuan Spa, The Langham, Auckland

"When we have large conferences here we certainly get delegates through. Having the Energy Events Centre close to us has been a real boon."

### Chuan Spa

The Chuan Spa, which opened this year at The Langham, Auckland, is (like Polynesian Spa) a member of the Best Spas of New Zealand Inc. The wellness spa, based on the traditions of Chinese medicine, is widely regarded as providing a new level of facility in the Auckland market.

Louise Ercog, director of sales and marketing at The Langham, Auckland says Chuan Spa has had a particularly strong response from the local Auckland market and New Zealand corporates. The two "havens" (accommodation suites) which are offered only to guests who purchase one of the Chuan packages, are also going down well with the business market.

Ercog says the suites are booked virtually every Friday and Saturday night up to and including New Year's Eve and week night bookings are also strong.

"We have a lot of Auckland based clientele using the havens and the spa for special occasions, treats and getaways."

"We have strong incentive and corporate gift business - a lot of gift vouchers are purchased."

Chuan Spa is based on the principles of TCM,

which has a holistic approach to the human body and therapies aim to achieve balance and relaxation to encourage wellness. The Chinese Five elements (Wu Xing) of wood, fire, earth, metal and water are an integral part of TCM.

In addition to the luxurious Chuan treatments such as massage, Chuan Spa offers TCM consultations with a qualified TCM consultant.

Also on offer is a 'tri-bathing ritual' which includes a snail shower, ice experience and herbal steam rooms. The \$4 million Chuan facility has six treatment rooms, individual and dual suites, a heated outdoor infinity pool and jacuzzi, relaxation lounges and a new fitness centre.

### Best Spas

Philippa King, of The Best Spas of New Zealand, says the group has five members - along with The Langham and Polynesian Spa are Hammer Springs, Millbrook Resort (Queenstown) and Bliss.

"We have developed quality criteria in conjunction with members and Qualmark, so we have a standard which we have never had before."

She says that if individual companies are marketing it can be very expensive. The clustering concept works well. If you can spread the cost of international marketing you can get a brand out there and market cost effectively.



[www.bestspasofnewzealand.com](http://www.bestspasofnewzealand.com)