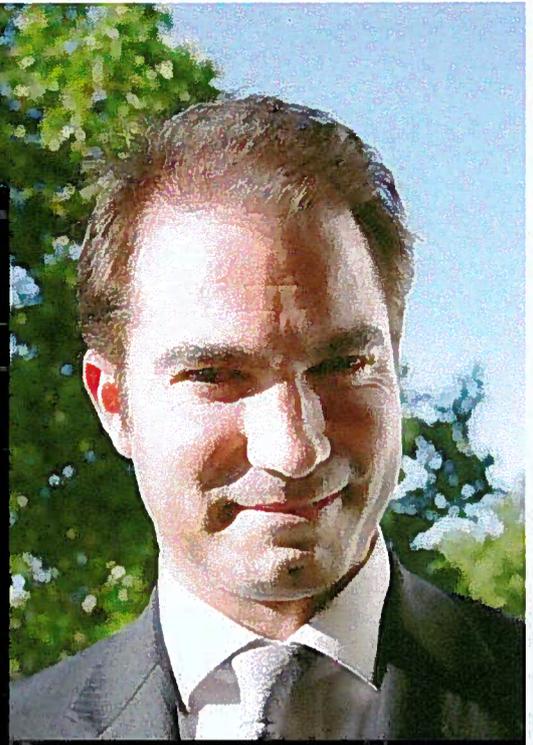


The Spa YEAR AHEAD

Jean-Guy de Gabriac, founder and chief executive of training and consultancy firm Tip Touch International and a World Spa & Wellness Awards judge, shares his industry predictions for 2013



Here at Tip Touch International we foresee a number of trends for 2013, including:

- **Reduced water usage:** What clients want is more time for the actual massage and other treatments. They're therefore looking for products that will penetrate their skin more thoroughly, so that they don't need to spend 10 minutes rinsing off after a scrub or wrap, incurring unnecessary water and towel usage in the process. Hot towels infused with essential oils will suffice to wash the clients' hands and feet before a massage or other treatment and to remove any excess oil afterwards.

- **A new definition of spa:** In 2013 we could see the meaning of the spa acronym change from Sanitas Per Aquam (healing through water) to Service Personalisation Attitude. With the exception of marine and thermal spas, it is not the water that makes a difference when it comes to what causes clients to flock to and come back regularly to your spa. What really creates a point of difference is excellent customer service and the connection between the clients and the spa team.

- **Spa apps:** The use of tablet and smartphone applications is on the rise and will continue to

increase. The more interactive the app the better. For example, use video clips to recommend the most appropriate facial or massage for your clients, after asking them to take a brief lifestyle quiz. Give your spa app a wow factor, while helping your clients save time.

- **More subtle massage techniques:** These will emerge as a stronger trend in 2013. This is in part because as they get older, past the age of 50 and beyond, therapists look for techniques that are less wearing and draining to perform, while still allowing them to help tense and busy clients relax and unwind. Examples of these softer approaches are the breathing and relaxation technique of sophrology and haptonomy – which teaches parental bonding with the unborn child through touch. The holistic Fasciatherapy approach, focusing on loosening and unknotting the fascia (sections of interconnected tissues that surround muscles and nerves), is another such example. 

Jean-Guy de Gabriac is one of the judges for the 2013 World Spa & Wellness Awards. The awards ceremony will be held at 7.30pm on Sunday February 24 at the Hilton Park Lane, London. For more information or to book a table, click here.

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