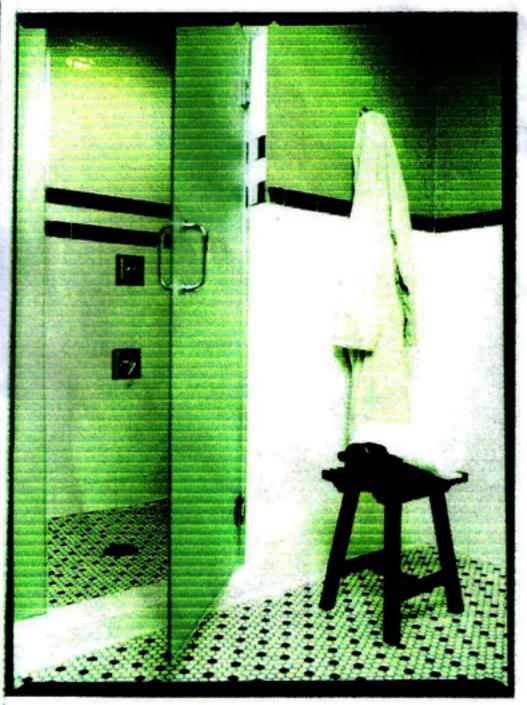
NEW The Male Consumer

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SIR Spa, a men-exclusive day spa in Chicago, keeps interiors masculine with leather seats, neutral-colored tiles and flat screen TVs.





n some ways, men are the perfect spa customers simple demands, easy to please, decisive—and once they see value, they come back. Although getting them in for their first spa experience can be a challenge, it's well worth the elfort because men represent a huge untapped market.

"The typical male client is professional. 25-60 in age, and that an above-average household income," says Pete Hillman, owner of SIR Spa, a full-service day spa in Chicago dedicated for men. "He sees a spa as more of a lifestyle need or a way to maintain or enhance athletic performance."

"They are concerned with their appearance, but are also searching for well-being," says Jean-Guy de Gabriac, president of Tip Touch, a france based training company for spa therapists and managers. "In destination spas, men will mainly come with their spouse or significant other, but in urban day spas or city hotel spas, they are confident enough to come regularly on their own."

"Even through the recession, men continued to frequent our spa with an influx of both new and steady repeat clientele basis—over 12,000 men to date," adds Hillman. "Operating a day spa that basically serves men exclusively over the past five years proves men represent an untapped and growing market."

What Wen want

Most men are looking for deep tissue massage as a way to relax or for sports recovery. As men become more comfortable in the spa environment, they tend to broaden their spa experiences with different treatments such as skin care services.

"Most men will go for the basics and elemental services such as deep tissue or sports massage, and maybe a man's facial to go with it, but rarely choose body treatments," says Emmanuel Arroyo, spa and leisure director at Hilton Caricun Golf & Spa Resort in Cancun, Mexico. "Men are also interested in golf improvement performance massages to maximize flexibility."

Gabriac indicates massages are far more popular than facials among men, including Swedish, deep tissue. Shiatsu, and Thai massages. "Then, if the spa team really recommends it." he says, "men will try cleansing facials and specific eyecontour sessions."

A masculine, relaxing environment is critical for attracting and retaining male customers. Create a professional environment with modern touches that doesn't talk down to male clientele with clichés—"no need for sports jerseys or a pool table to make a guy comfortable," says Hillman. "Work in woods, leather, classic and neutral color schemes and give them space and privacy. Large treatment rooms, full-sized lockers, manly robes, towels, and sandals—it is all noticed and makes a difference."

Different Needs

Men tend to be easier to please than females in terms of the extra amenities—"and they tell you what they want, which eliminates any guess work," says Lara Davidson, spa director at The Spa at Pebble Beach in California. The spa added a TV, scale, warm shaving cream, and hot towels to steam the face at the request of its male guests, as well as the availability of beer with the sports pedicure.

"We recently began offering complimentary shoe shine in the men's locker room and hired a barber to do straight razor shaves, both of which have been very successful," says Davidson.

FANTING

According to ISPA's 2010 U.S. Spa Industry
Study, spas are actively seeking to widen and
diversify their client base. About 45 percent
of spas have introduced packages aimed at
specifically attracting men.

"Most of our male clients want a good hydro facility area with cold/hot plunges, large pools with hydro jets available, steam and sauna rooms, and a good massage, more so than cosmetic and beauty products," says Arroyo.

According to Gabriac, most men aren't as concerned as women about anti-aging or firming treatments—instead they focus on anti-fatigue with energizing boosters to look good quickly as well as eye treatments. "This will probably change with the younger generations who take better care of their skin," he says. "Men are likely to use eye-contour treatments and eye-patches, but still seldom use masks."

A European Influence

The spa experience for men in Europe tends to be simple and results-oriented. "We can see a slight shift in the American spa market to more of a lifestyle need, as most Europeans already do," says Hillman. "Men don't want to pampered: instead, they want to recharge."

European trends are typically more elemental with a strong focus on the basics. "Large hydro facilities and the use of marine ingredients are popular, such as Thalasso therapy-based products that contain algae-based ingredients and antioxidants," says Arroyo.

According to Gabriac, unlike the American male spa-goer, the European men are still more timid and uncomfortable with going to spas, especially on the idea of being told to wear undersized bathrobes or shower caps during facials.

Another difference on how certain male consumers in dif-

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DECODING THE MALE LINGO

ip Touch President Jean-Guy de Gabriac says careful choice of words when marketing to men can be the difference between turning them away or converting them into loyal spa-goers.

"Men are not complicated; they stop shopping around once they have found a place where they can go late in the afternoon or evening, where they are warmly recognized on arrival, where they have their routine (locker, exercise, steam or sauna, and massage). They do not want to waste their time on pampering fluff. Give them lasting results, and they'll book for more!" Here, he advises spas to decode the male lingo.

MEN WANT TO HEAR:

Deep bodywork
Energy and light

Performance

Tailor-made

Booster

Clean and fresh

Hydration and comfort

Week-end kit

Special focus on

INSTEAD OF:

Relaxing, pampering experience

Radiance

Beauty enhancement

Personalized

Concentrate or serum

Gentle exfoliation

Moisturizing

Home-care regimen

Particular attention to

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ferent parts of the world vary is in the types of extras or amenities they expect. While American men like the added amenities like large screen TVs to watch football games, drink light beer, wine or liquor, this is not the case among French male spa-goers. "French men would not go to a spa for a massage and watch a game or enjoy a wine-and-cheese event at the same time," he says. "However, they like the extras, like being able to customize their experience, ranging from hot stone options with sports massage to a choice in music."

Marketing to Males

The most effective way to bring in new male customers is by marketing directly to their wives, girlfriends, and male friends who already know the joys of spa treatments.

"Many of our male guests attend with a friend or business partner who has talked them into it," says Sue Annetts, public relations specialist for Golden Door in Escondido. California. "We also see fathers bringing sons and brothers. We market to these groups via e-blasts and brochures."

Men who check in at The Spa at Pebble Beach are provided with a collateral piece that promotes its golf-specific services. The resort also provides componentary services perodically to the golf team so they will be more inspired to promote spa services to the guests they accompany on the courses.

Hilton Cancun Golf & Spa Resort keeps it simple by providing a "For Him" spa package—a combination of massage and facial, including a kit of testers for use during and after shaving.

Gabriac emphasizes the verbiage used in spa menus, as well as the language used by desk attendants or stylists, is still very feminine and needs to be "masculinized" or "vinized" to fully engage the male audience. "They want to hear about deep bodywork and performance, not radiance and beauty enhancement," he says.

And there is, of course, the female factor. It is essential to market to the wives and girlfriends of potential male guests—these women see the potential that spa visits can have on their partners by reducing stress and promoting healthy lifestyle changes. They also purchase gift certificates and introduce men to the spa, often through a couple's massage.

"For a man who has never been to a spa, women are a critical component to get him through the door," agrees Davidson. "Once he arrives, the spa sells itself. Couple's mas sages, testimonials from other men, and Valentine's Day

Spas are finding creative ways to attract the male consumer. Some offer men spa-goers the option to stay in their comfort zone with "happy hour" during spa treatments. Visit digital Pulse at experienceispa.com to discover which spas are buzzing with liquor-based treatments.



specials are our biggest capture for male guests who are new to the spa world."

And Gabriac agrees. "It is essential to promote male treatments to women because they are the main gift certificate buyers, and about 50 percent of all male products are still being purchased by women for men!"

Parting Thoughts

To recruit men, focus on the science of the benefits of massage, rather than the spa experience. "If we can convince them our massages will improve their golf swing, they are more likely to come in than if they think we offer just a "rub," says Davidson.

Communication and education are essential—from the front desk and reservation team to the therapists. Make male guests feel comfortable and introduce them to their visit and experience so there are no questions or concerns on what to do or expect. "Keep things straight-forward," says Hillman. "Focus on the results that make a man feel better about himself and his life, and he'll be back."

Many of the male guests at Golden Door – Escondido are multiple returnees. "Three men have reached 100 visits and many have reached 50," says Annetts, "Some of them credit these visits with being able to function well in their high-bowered business environments. They also find that the week can be a real bonding experience and often keep in touch with each other during the year between visits."