

# PULSE

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## Take-out Service

IN-HOME SPA ROUTINES LEAD  
TO REPEAT CUSTOMERS



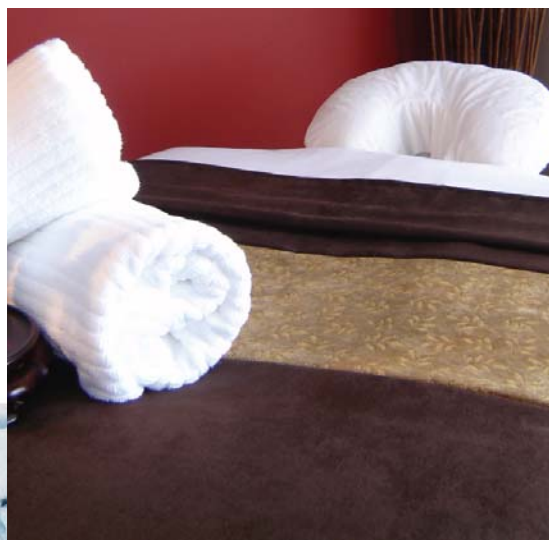
# THE REAL McCOY

PRODUCTS FOR  
2007 NEED AN  
AUTHENTIC STORY

BY CHRIS McBEATH



There was a time when spas set the pace for the style of experience they offered, but these days, spa operators are scrambling to keep up with the demand they have created. Spa consumers have become far more knowledgeable; they are multigenerational and have high expectations every time they cross your threshold. Treatments and services must evolve constantly to keep up with changing spa demographics, and products must work harder than ever to deliver results. But we're not talking about efficacy alone. Today's products need to create a market niche, fulfill a need, be timely to evolving trends, tell a story and contribute significantly to the bottom line. Here are some of the newest ideas to help give your spa marketplace a dynamic vitality.



Light is becoming a pivotal part of the spa experience.



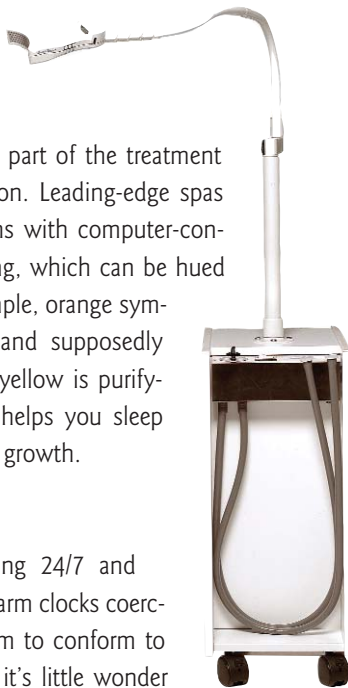
## Healthy Solutions

Even if you don't have the licensing requirements to be a medical spa, there are treatments entering the spa field that enable you to catch the "medi-wave" without having to make medical claims. "Once only available from dentists, there are now professional tooth whitening procedures that spa technicians can provide," said Marti Morenings, CEO of Universal Companies Inc. "There is also a very effective lighting therapy system for depression, SAD [Seasonal Affective Disorder] and insomnia. Since spas are all about alleviating stress and altering mood, whether it's with essential oils or 'feel good' music, these special lights can work well in spa relaxation rooms."

Using colored lighting as part of the treatment experience is also catching on. Leading-edge spas are equipping massage rooms with computer-controlled chromotherapy lighting, which can be hued according to mood. For example, orange symbolizes joy and happiness and supposedly increases your libido, while yellow is purifying, green is calming, blue helps you sleep and violet promotes spiritual growth.

## Sleep Well

With days spent multitasking 24/7 and light bulbs, televisions and alarm clocks coercing our body's natural rhythm to conform to an unnatural state of being, it's little wonder



that one in four North Americans are sleep-deprived. Through product sales and take-home relaxation techniques, spas have a terrific opportunity to help tired souls remember how to connect with that sacred, protected space called bedtime. A good resource is Sleep Garden Inc., one of the first companies to zero in on helping people reclaim a drug-free, good night's rest. Their clinically proven sleep aid music and relaxation videos are distributed worldwide and used extensively in sleep clinics, hospitals, spas and hotels. Now, Sleep Garden founder Robert de Stefano has teamed up with organic skin care pioneer Melissa Jochim to create Nocturnals Night Spa. It's the first-of-its-kind, organic beauty sleep ritual that combines sleep inducement with advanced, deep dermal skin nourishment. Using a blend of age-defying antioxidants, botanical extracts, essential fatty acids and vitamin-rich organic emollients, the skin care system works overnight to restore smoothness, firmness and texture.

## Product Power Online

By now, your spa should have a Web presence, but is it supporting your investment? Sending regular e-newsletters to clients, writing blogs and selling professional product online are ways of owning your spa-client relationship. You're missing the boat if you're not negotiating with your product supplier for support for online product sales directly from your site or through referral commissions to their site (see Evolution on page 28 for an example).

Products are also beginning to influence how spa-goers choose their spa experience. Craig Oliver, president of Spas of America, whose site features more than 500 spa listings, works

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## product trends

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with several product partners and is gearing up to feature them much more prominently. “Spa-goers have become quite discerning about products, to the point where it’s among the top five questions asked during their research on spas they plan to visit,” said Oliver. “As a result, our site will soon provide an additional cross-reference directory that highlights spa destinations by product.”

### Customizing the Experiential Journey

With the multigenerational nature of today’s spa-goer, the demand for gender specific and customized products is building momentum. Add to this the willingness of spa-goers to experiment with new well-being products and services, and you have a trend that’s broadening menu options and retail opportunities. Skin care products for men and tweens are hot examples, as are specialty products for detox and anti-aging programs. “We know the boomer generation and the X/Y generation group are, and will become stronger, clients of spas,” noted Beate von Huene, president of Baroness USA Inc., “so product solutions according to these demographics and their skin conditions is important.”

Increasingly, spas are claiming their niche with signature products that help bond customers to a particular spa experience. Even if you don’t have your own product range, there are gift items and other ways of keeping your spa front and center in the minds of your customer. Jimmy Belasco, president of Jimmy Belasco Lifestyle Collection, has created an innovative new packaging system for candles that won “Best New Packaging” from NY Extracts during last year’s New York International Gift Fair. It offers a nonbranded box for candles, which, when put together with a sleeve cover system, delivers a fully private label that can be seasonally updated as desired without the odious minimum order requirements.

(From left to right) Spa-goers are becoming more aware of what types of products are being put on their bodies during treatments. “The Seaweed Lady” Diane Bernard plays a hands-on role with her company, Outer Coast Seaweeds.



### The Aboriginal Allure

The indigenous and authentic concepts continue to play a vital role in the tidal wave of the public’s changing perspective on wellness ... spa-goers are simply upping the ante. Not only are they orienting more to natural or organic ingredients, which are perceived as high-quality (note that these terms are often interchanged), they want to hear the story behind and enjoy the creativity of the products themselves. For destination spas in particular, creating a signature line that reflects their locale is an important dimension to the spa experience.

For example, this summer, The Madrona del Mar Spa at the Galiano Inn on British Columbia’s Gulf Islands is transforming the infamous “BC Bud” into a healthy hemp experience. High in omega 3 and 6 oils, along with GLA (gamma linoleic acid) to heal the skin, products include a scrub of crushed hemp seed and oil mixed with organic cane sugar and a wrap involving hemp and BC glacial clay. In addition, the spa has created similar treatments using hand-picked island blackberries and blueberries, each of which have healing properties that help fight free radicals, strengthen the immune system and hydrate the skin.

Seaweed is also plentiful along this wild, west coast. As the

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domain of Diane Bernard, better known as “The Seaweed Lady” of Outer Coast Seaweeds, seaweed has contributed to spa treatments such as wraps and thalassotherapy. Two months ago, Outer Coast Seaweeds launched SeaFlora, a line of organic, vitamin-rich and mineral-laden seaweed skin care products. It is the only spa line to work with the entire plant, not just extracts. Products contain no dyes, animal byproducts or artificial fragrances, which, in case you’re wondering, aren’t needed. Because Bernard harvests live seaweed at specific growing times of the year, it has no smell. Her seaweed also contains its own natural preservatives that give the products an 18-month shelf life. To date, Outer Coast has supplied primarily West Coast spa outlets, but with this expanded line, is currently setting up distribution channels across North America.

## Eco-conscious

“Green” has leapt to the forefront as both a political and economic priority. And with a clientele that tends to be eco-aware, spas especially need to demonstrate eco-leadership that promotes good health for the planet. Building design can incorporate solar-powered electricity and geothermal systems for climate control. Spa cuisine can adopt the principles of slow food (i.e. - local, fresh and featured), and spa interiors can be revamped to reflect an eco-consciousness.

For example, although bamboo floors have been around for a while, this durable surface now comes as exotic-looking countertops, laminated with a completely nontoxic, food grade, formaldehyde-free adhesive. Bamboo grows up to 2 feet a day and can be harvested every four years, making it an invaluable sustainable resource. Cork, too, is sustainable, harvested every nine years without damage to the tree. It’s soft under foot and a

good choice for relaxation areas. For treatment areas, think marmaleum, an all-natural linoleum that is hypoallergenic, easy to clean and exceptionally durable. And let’s not forget recycled glass for decorative backsplashes.

And if your spa isn’t carrying mineral makeup, get with the program. Mineral cosmetics are the new look and, unlike their chemical counterparts, have been called “virtual skin care.” Made from pure crushed minerals and natural pigments, they contain no harsh chemicals, dyes or fillers. Most contain ingredients such

as jojoba oil, beeswax, cornstarch and vitamin E, and many contain elements such as: zinc oxides, which have healing properties; titanium dioxides, which provide a natural sunscreen; and light-reflecting mica to minimize the look of fine lines. Best of all, mineral makeup keeps its glow all day long, even in the most humid of climates. Check out eco, Nvey USA’s organic makeup line, or Ervaviva, one of the few certified organic brands on the marketplace.

## Accessorize

Although “the way of spa” isn’t yet ubiquitous in daily life, spa products continue to make impressive inroads with plusher accessories and more creative ways to enjoy that pampering spa feeling at home.

Owned by two registered massage therapists, Jana Asman and Maggie McDowell, Therapeutic by Design Inc. is a new company offering a luxurious range of easy-care linens that actually stand up to the wear and tear of a treatment room. “Because linens are such an integral part of the spa experience, we’ve created a complete line of table covers, skirts, thermaphore and cervical pillow covers and other textured designs that complement, even transform,

Suppliers are now aligning themselves with Fair Trade cooperatives or donating a serious percentage of profits to causes where they can really make a difference.

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the way a treatment is presented and enjoyed,” said Asman. “And they’re all – including the ultrasuede – wrinkle- and stain-resistant, machine washable and dryer friendly.”

When Peter Seltzer patented his chenille-like fabric, Kashwere, he never imagined that it would evolve from throws and robes (which Oprah has named as one of her favorite things) into a lifestyle brand of spa wear and home furnishings. The breaking news is Kashwere’s new and innovative line of ultra-formfitting slipcovers that will hit the marketplace this spring. “You’ll never have to worry about spills again,” said Seltzer. “The covers fit snugly, they’re totally washable and they can be mixed and matched, custom colored and made with custom patterns to harmonize, individualize and totally revamp the look of your spa and

treatment rooms.” In addition to operational savings, Kashwere will be offering a preferred pricing program to enable spas to retail items to consumers.

## Fusion Fad

We know it’s happening in food, in décor, in spa treatments and certainly in spa products, but fusion is no longer confined to an East-West blend. The trend is now exploring ever-more diverse crossovers and ethnicities. Product fusion is raising global consciousness to become active advocates of multidimensional care. For example, suppliers are now aligning themselves with Fair Trade cooperatives in developing countries or donating a serious percentage of profits to causes that not only reflect their values but where they can really make a difference. In addition to inquiring how a company’s product is giving back, consumers are also starting to ask spas what they are doing to support the greater good. Spas are in the business of wellness, and the time is here to think holistically, not only in terms of mind, body and spirit of the individual but of a broader recipient, including Mother Earth! ■

**CHRIS McBEATH** specializes in spa health and wellness. Her article, “Treatment Trends” (*Pulse*, May 2006), won first prize in North American Travel Journalists Association 2006 Awards for writing excellence. Her Web site is [www.greatestgetaways.com](http://www.greatestgetaways.com).



## PRODUCTS NEED TO:

- Reflect efficacy with authenticity and results
- Create a market niche, often indigenous and organic
- Fulfill a need, such as current hotties anti-aging, detoxifying and hygiene
- Tell a story, usually indigenous and multidimensional
- Contribute to the bottom line with efficiency or retail sales potential, including signature labels