

Created by: Debra C. Argen  
**Great Spas Specialists**



The world of Spas and how they have changed over the last 25+ years, and Great Spas of the World provides their expertise.

To celebrate our Spas section of Luxury Experience Magazine, we wanted to look at how the world of spas has evolved and changed over the past 25+ past years, and decided to ask Spa experts, Gerie and Bernard Bauer of [Great Spas of the World](#), for their expertise.

On April 26, 2005, I had the opportunity to interview Gerie and Bernard, a charming couple, with infinite spa knowledge. The Great Spas team consists of Gerie and Bernard Bauer, and Wendy Friese ( [PrivateEntrance@aol.com](mailto:PrivateEntrance@aol.com)) of Private Entrance Collection, who assists them with Marketing and Sales.



**Luxury Experience Magazine:** Tell me a little about Great Spas of the World. When did you start Great Spas of the World?

**Gerie:** After years of writing a travel book series, “Especially for Women”, and researching what women traveling alone or with another woman were looking for, I found that they were very interested in healing resorts around the world, beauty, and the rejuvenation programs available in Europe. In the travel books, one chapter of each book focused on “Beauty Comes First”, which included spas, beauty, and salons. Based on my research, I opened a travel agency, “Especially for Women”, which was travel for women only, and featured spas, and the rejuvenation programs in Europe: plastic surgery, cell therapy, hair transplants, etc. In 1978, I created Santé International, which later evolved to Great Spas of the World in 1988, when I incorporated my company with Bernard’s company, Leisure Hospitality Marketing. We met in Geneva, Switzerland, and married our businesses as well as each other.

**LEM:** What type of services does GSOTW offer?

**GSOTW:** We consult with clients to determine their spa expectations: medically, socially, psychologically, economically, physically, etc. We factor in everything to determine the right spa for them. It is not so important for the client to tell us where they want to go, but rather what their spa goals are, so that we can determine the right spa for each client. We work with the Directors of the Spas so that we can custom tailor a spa program that is suitable for each client. Once a Spa has been selected, the client can book the reservation directly with GSOTW.

**LEM:** Great Spas of the World has been in the Spa business for the past 27 years. What changes have you seen in the Spa industry during that time?

**GSOTW:** (Gerie) When I started working with the European Spas for the travel books series, I told the Spas that Americans were not going to travel for just the mud and water treatments. I worked with Spa owners to help educate them on what programs would draw Americans: beauty, fitness, etc.

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Now people are also going to Spas for medical treatments as well. Also, one of the reasons why spas are so successful for women travelers is that they meet other people the very first day they arrive, in the classes, waiting for treatments, etc.

**LEM:** What Spa trends do you think are overdone? In other words, been there, done that, everyone is doing that?

**GSOTW:** (Gerie) Fitness, especially aerobics, where everyone is doing the same exercise without taking into consideration the individual client. Also, aromatherapy, which is wonderful, but not just to scent the room, without taking into account each person's needs, scent allergies, etc. For example: what does the client need, are they looking to relax, need a bit of energy, etc. (Bernard) Diets. Using the same diet for everyone, again without taking into account each client's special needs.

**LEM:** What new Spa trends would you like to see more of?

**GSOTW:** Spas should be thought of as being like a prism, multi-faceted: medical, therapy, themes, etc. Don't put a Spa in a box in the corner.

**LEM:** Over the years have you seen a change in the type of Spa client? Younger, men, families?

**GSOTW:** Most definitely. Clients are younger, and also men are the new Spa clients. In the past, most people that went to Spas were looking for arthritic cures. Today, people are becoming leery of surgical and chemical problems and mistakes, and are looking for natural solutions. Wellness is a new important area. (Bernard) In the past, people went for treatments to improve, today, the Spa client going to the same Spa is younger and is looking to prevent illness, and is going for preventative measures. People are also looking to combine Spa treatments as part of their vacations. I work with the client to let them know what else is available for them to do in the area, so they have ideas on how to spend their leisure time. (Gerie) Also, there are new Spa programs for children, which teach them how to bend, how to move, how to recognize if they have injured themselves through sports, etc. Children are also receiving massages to help stretch the spine, because they are growing.

**LEM:** If you could create the "perfect" Spa, where would it be? What types of services would you offer? What would make it perfect?

**GSOTW:** Actually the perfect location already exists in the Tuscany region, where they have married old-fashioned curative treatments &ndash; mud, mineral waters, etc with modern treatments, as well as having the right touristic climate, like a tapestry where they have woven in something for everyone. Our "perfect" Spa would have natural thermal waters, the best of treatments, including holistic, Ayurvedic, modern therapy, Thai, which would be provided always after a consultation to determine which is the most appropriate for each client. We would want to offer something for everyone, with authentic therapists with therapeutic background.

**LEM:** Gerie, what is your favorite Spa treatment? Bernard, same question, what is your favorite type of massage?

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**GSOTW:** (Gerie) I like to have massage treatments, but not deep-tissue massages. I also look for a comfortable massage table, with a cutout for the head. (Bernard) I like neck and shoulder massages, which help get you through the day. I also like aqua therapy, underwater massage, jets in pools and hoses.

The world of Spas has certainly evolved, and Luxury Experience Magazine looks to experience many new Spas around the world, in our effort to bring our readers the latest information. In the meantime, I think I'll go and have a massage!

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