

Whose Spa Is It **ANYWAY?**

Which of the following statements represents the most accurate or most important point of view?

1. *(Designer):* My spa must be designed to offer the guest the best possible environment in which we can orchestrate a vast array of guest experiences and spa treatment(s).

2. *(Guest):* My spa must provide the best selection of amenities at prices I can afford within an aesthetically pleasing environment.

3. *(Operator):* My spa must be maintenance-friendly, durable, easy for staff and guests to process through, and all with an eye at capturing and maintaining a dominant market share.

4. *(Owner):* My spa must consistently generate revenue at our projected ROI with the least amount of capital expenditure and still compete favorably within our competitive set.

Because many of us are either designers, architects, owners, operators, vendors or sales representatives, we often tend to evaluate a facility based solely on our own set of criteria and values. While this tendency is natural, it rarely, if ever, brings out the best in a project if it is designed from only one viewpoint.

Within the Spa and Fitness market area, there are a number of types of spas. Each of these occupies a key niche within the spa market.

Type 1: This spa facility has minimal services and functions primarily as an adjunct to an existing fitness room. It is not intended nor is it capable of being an independent source of revenue. It is typically staffed with outside contract professionals on an as-requested basis.

Type 2: This spa facility is structured to provide a moderate level of fitness and related amenities (massage and body treatments of various types) either singly or packaged with multiple amenities. It is typically staffed in-house, with trained and licensed professionals.

Type 3: This spa facility provides day-spa features primarily focused on pampering and beauty amenities (massage, nails, hair, facials). It is typically staffed with in-house, trained and licensed professionals. Physical space limitations often restrict the breadth of services and amenities to either this model or #2 above.

Type 4:

This spa is structured as a full-service facility, in either a day-spa format or in an extended-stay, live-in format. This spa addresses virtually every aspect of the



Carl Ross, President
Carl Ross Design, Inc.

guest's experience; physical, mental and spiritual. While these facilities are the most expensive to develop, build, operate and maintain, they also continuously redefine spa standards and represent the premier niche of the spa market.

In a world where the work week continues to lengthen, the stress levels and personal demands are increasing, technological development is literally doubling every 18-24 months, and the durations of vacations or the ability to take time off are decreasing, there is an interesting counter point which spa-goers are discovering. With all the advancement, technology, hustle, and rigors of the modern work world, more people are seeking and discovering the restorative qualities of spas. The competition for unique treatments and amenities in the spa market spans from exotic to ancient, esoteric, holistic, ethereal, scientific, and beyond, each striving to be the new, new thing which will heal, restore, relax and rejuvenate the body, mind and spirit.

The key to the creation of any quality spa project is a clear understanding of the intended user and the market niche. This knowledge automatically defines the corresponding project criteria of budget, quality, theme, schedule, and operations.

The opening statements of this article made by each of the project team members are a direct reflection of the individual focus of each member. It is tremendously important to also understand that each statement is correct and that no one viewpoint can succeed without the others.

The truth is that it is everyone's spa. It is this dynamic interrelationship, which is all too often ignored or dismissed, that is key. It is also what I regard to be the most important factor in responsible spa design. ■

Mr. Ross can be reached at 310.333.1982, email: carlr@carlrossdesign.com.

2002
President
John J. Sponer

2001
President
John J. Sponer

2000
President
John J. Sponer

1999
President
John J. Sponer

1998
President
John J. Sponer

1997
President
John J. Sponer

1996
President
John J. Sponer

1995
President
John J. Sponer

1994
President
John J. Sponer

1993
President
John J. Sponer

1992
President
John J. Sponer

1991
President
John J. Sponer

1990
President
John J. Sponer

1989
President
John J. Sponer

1988
President
John J. Sponer

1987
President
John J. Sponer

1986
President
John J. Sponer

1985
President
John J. Sponer

1984
President
John J. Sponer

1983
President
John J. Sponer

1982
President
John J. Sponer

1981
President
John J. Sponer

1980
President
John J. Sponer

1979
President
John J. Sponer

1978
President
John J. Sponer

1977
President
John J. Sponer

1976
President
John J. Sponer

1975
President
John J. Sponer

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
John Sponer

1974
President
John J. Sponer

1973
President
John J. Sponer

1972
President
John J. Sponer

1971
President
John J. Sponer

1970
President
John J. Sponer

1969
President
John J. Sponer

1968
President
John J. Sponer

1967
President
John J. Sponer