

Trend watch: Mindfulness, social wellness and more

Austrian spa expert Wolfgang Falkner is the owner of The CampCompany, formerly Der Falkner Spa Marketing. In 2010 Falkner launched the first German-language BarCamp for the spa industry. Over the past six years SpaCamp has become one of the most important industry events for the German and European spa and wellness industry. This year's SpaCamp is taking place in the spa town Bad Saarow near Berlin.

In addition to the highly successful SpaCamps, Falkner's company also organises regular bar camps – NaturkosmetikCamp – for the organic cosmetics industry. Wolfgang Falkner talks to *Cosmetics Business* about trends in the spa market

What are the biggest trends in the German spa market at the moment?

Trend forecasts can be tricky: often a new trend will seem important at first and then turn out to have a small, short term effect only. Having said that there are, of course, several key trends in the international spa industry which are by now well-established, like mindfulness.

Mindfulness means being more aware of what is good for oneself and treating your own body with care and consideration. Mindfulness also means that we as human beings have to take responsibility and think and act sustainably on many different levels. This requires self-awareness and self-assurance. I think that we could all benefit from thinking more about spirituality and philosophy, with the goal of developing more joy in life for ourselves and a more ethical way of living which in turn will benefit society and nature. We will see what role the spa industry is going to play in this. I think the necessity is definitely there.

Counter trends are also interesting. Many people use apps or digital trackers (wearables) to monitor their health and fitness – the key word here is self-optimisation – while others will decide to do a digital detox, switching off their digital and technical gadgets.

Authenticity and regionality are still playing a key role in the spa market; at the same time people also have the impulse to try out new – and sometimes exotic – treatments. I have also noticed that natural and organic beauty is continuing to grow in popularity.

How has the whole “green” or organic spa trend developed over the last year?

The market is growing slowly but steadily. At some point, however, there will be a big jump forward – after all, it doesn't make sense that organic cosmetics are so much more successful in the retail industry than in hotel spas, which really should take a leading role here.

However, there are some innovative five-star hotels that have recognised this potential, eg the Severin*^s Resort on the German island of Sylt or Schloss Elmau in the Bavarian Alps.

And there are many exciting organic niche spa brands, like Team Dr. Joseph and Rosalpina Piroche from South Tyrol in Italy, Pharmos Natur and Cobicos from Germany, Annané from Switzerland or Marias Organic Care from Austria. Of course organic certification is also playing a big role in this category.

What are the most popular treatments among German spa clients?

Definitely face treatments and body massages. I have noticed that more and more men are booking facial treatments. The effect of a treatment – the functionality – is very important and this also applies to massages: myofascial massages, for example, still play a big role in this treatment category. Ayurvedic treatments also continue to be popular since they can be easily integrated into a holistic lifestyle of nutrition and yoga.

What are the big trends in the city spa/urban spa scene?

Social wellness is a really exciting trend in this sector. This was one of the key topics at our last SpaCamp event: people want to socialise and meet new people even while they are enjoying a relaxing wellness treatment. And this poses an interesting challenge for spa managers and spa architects: how can you create meeting areas within a spa while still offering enough privacy and quiet zones?

Urban spas also need to be authentic in the sense of offering a specific (life)style, a specific feeling. An important part of this are brands and treatments which have to match the overall character and style of a spa. The combination of fitness and spa also has a lot of potential.



Wolfgang Falkner