

DEPARTMENT ► *The Architects*

Help Hospitality Clients Deliver Healthy Spaces

Include these five factors when designing environments that promote physical improvement and overall well-being.

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As more hotels, spas, and restaurants seek to differentiate, the pressure is on to translate facility-design ideas into revenue streams. Hospitality and food-service sector leaders have found that health, physical self-improvement, and well-being are significant motivations for travelers and buyers. According to research by SRI International, Menlo Park, CA, wellness tourism is a \$500-billion worldwide industry, enjoying significant annual North American growth (7% to 8%) and double-digit global growth.

The wellness-conscious consumer thinks far beyond heart-healthy menus and fitness rooms. The response from the industry has been to suffuse entire experiences with opportunities for “brand messages” about how their destinations and venues are better for the well-being of guests and customers than the competition. This trend opens doors in commercial architecture, including more ways to incorporate:

- new amenity spaces focused on the body and spirit
- low-toxicity materials
- daylight and fresh air
- active design, such as stairs
- ergonomic and adjustable furnishings
- plants, wood grain, and other biophilic elements
- uplifting interiors
- branded therapeutic scents and sounds.

Groups such as Delos Living LLC, New York, with its WELL Building Standard, seek to quantify and certify these design ideas. Yet many of these are simply best practices that also create opportunities for hospitality organizations to set their offerings above the rest. “Even the top cruise lines are now like floating spas,” said David Fritz, a Naples, FL-based travel expert and president of Cruise Everything, “with special packages for the health conscious, menus for those with dietary restrictions, and even staterooms with a fitness theme.” Some hotels point out that their guestroom designs



Above: The Arlee's Raw Blends juice-bar design, in Princeton, NJ, uses uplifting colors, daylighted interiors, and exposed reclaimed timber from the Superstorm Sandy cleanup to create a healthy atmosphere that matches the organic-juice products.

Left: The Moonlight Noodle House restaurant at the Sands Macau in China uses moon gates and other symbols and colors to allude to regional ideas of wellness, good spirits, and good fortune.

offer varied health-promoting features, as at the new Virgin Hotel in Chicago. Other examples range from the small scale to the big sweep. At the Venetian Resort-Casino, Las Vegas, activating healthy dessert options took a unique spin with the Zio Gelato scoop shop. At a recent opening of the Arlee's Raw Blends juice bar in Princeton, NJ, the focus was on uplifting colors, daylighted interiors, and reclaimed timber from the Superstorm Sandy cleanup.

On the other side of the globe, the sky garden at the Marina Bay Sands resort in Singapore encourages outdoor activities and lounging—57 stories above the city's heavily trafficked streets—including at the wood-finished and whitewashed interiors of the Sky on 57 restaurant, where organic farm-to-table produce and wines provide an invigorating break from the urban bustle.

What does the project team need to know about designing for clients who want to capitalize on this trend?

First, understand the hospitality client's mission and their attitudes regarding guest health. The team should assess their identity in 3-D terms, applying colors and patterns and creating imagery and views to capture the client's vision.

Second, assemble a pre-schematic “wish list” of potential ways that programmatic and architectural construction solutions can support healthy brand dimensions.

Third, investigate green-building and health-oriented standards, including WELL and local guidelines such as the Active Design guidelines in various cities, in order to develop technical solutions.

Fourth, make the invisible benefits visible. At a recent presentation by JZA+D on indoor-air quality and hotels, we discussed how graphics, signage, and even plantings can be used to make guests aware they are breathing

high-quality clean air. Similar strategies can be used on menus to indicate healthy, organic, and locally sourced ingredients, or to encourage use of fitness amenities (even suggesting use of stairs versus elevators).

Fifth, include the psychological components. An example is Moonlight Noodle House, a restaurant at the Sands Macau in China, with its colors and overt symbols—such as “moon gates,” typically found in the region's gardens—alluding to regional ideas of wellness, good spirits, and good fortune. In the United States, a “wellness theme” could include images of the natural landscape to help ease the minds of stressed business travelers.

Whether your client is a hotel, spa, restaurant, or food-service kiosk, following these guidelines can assist in conveying a message of health and wellbeing to patrons. In a competitive and rapidly expanding market, clients need a design team that can support their desire to be seen as the healthiest choice among healthy choices.

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Interview With Joshua Zinder

Learn more about healthy-space design in our interview with architect Joshua Zinder at commercialarchitecturemagazine.com/architects.