

american spa

THE SPA & WELLNESS AUTHORITY

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AUTHENTIC

immersion



CARTESIANO SPA AT HOTEL
CARTESIANO PUEBLA (MEXICO)

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Discover Cartesiano Spa in Puebla, Mexico, which brings science and nature together for a comprehensive guest experience.

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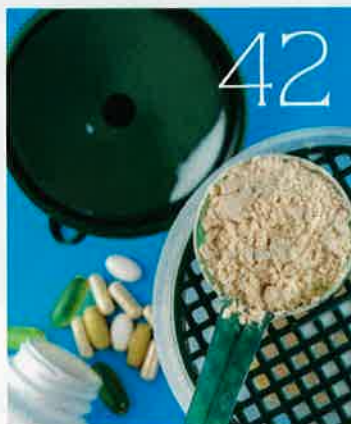
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a closer look at some of the spas that are making news in the industry both here and abroad

50 MAP TO WELLBEING

Hotel Cartesiano Puebla (Mexico)



Cartesiano Spa features an inviting reception area with a host of Naturopathica products on display.



The hotel's charming courtyard, inviting exterior, decorative accents, and stunning spa are bringing new life to the historic district of Puebla, Mexico.



PHOTOGRAPHY: HOTEL CARTESIANO

Map to Wellbeing

A NEW SPA IN PUEBLA, MEXICO, HELPS SPA-GOERS CHART A COURSE FOR WELLNESS BY BRINGING NATURE AND SCIENCE TOGETHER. **BY HEATHER MIKESELL**

Wanting to help restore Puebla, Mexico's historic district to its former glory, three friends—Edgar Hidalgo, Sergio de la Vega, and Alex Gehrke—came together to create Hotel Cartesiano Puebla, a luxury boutique hotel that encompasses two 16th-century colonial homes. Set in the charming colonial city founded by the Spanish in 1531, the hotel, named for the art and science of Cartesian map making, is home to **Cartesiano Spa**, which merges science and nature together. “Honoring the name Cartesiano, from Rene Descartes, the French philosopher, scientist, and mathematician who coined the phrase, ‘I think, therefore, I am,’ the spa offers a true mind-body, high-tech, high-touch approach,” says spa consultant Bonnie Baker, cofounder and managing partner of Satteva Spa and Wellness Concepts. In fact, it was Descartes’ work that led to the Cartesian map system that is used today. According to Baker, it was also instrumental in inspiring the spa’s overall concept. “We created a program that allows guests to create a life map for their spa experience, plotted along the Cartesian coordinate system into four principal wellness axis programs: Mental, Emotional, Physical, and Subtle Wellbeing.”

Not surprisingly, the spa’s location played an important role in its development. “Puebla is an iconic colonial city and represents Mexico’s cultural crossroads even from the time of the

Spanish arrival,” says Baker. “The city is at the foothills of two emblematic volcanos and is rich in both natural history and cultural traditions that still shape the city’s identity today.” With Descartes’ exploration and discovery in mind, the idea was to create an experience in which spa-goers could journey towards essential wellbeing. “Our spa program emphasizes the passage of time and how the past influences the present, and the future is created today,” says Baker. “Restoration is a major theme in our spa services, offering renewal on a physical, emotional, and mental level.”

According to spa director Miriam Arroyo, most guests arrive looking for a simple stress-relieving experience in the spa. “They want a spa experience that can introduce them to cultural traditions, state-of-the-art treatments, and to experience an integral physical, emotional, and soul-level state of wellbeing,” says Arroyo. Local and repeat guests are often drawn to the high-tech/high-touch treatment options, which often offer the most profound results. “When creating the spa menu, we wanted to focus on integrating the mind and the body, highlighting the mental and emotional effects on the physical body,” says Baker. “We wanted a holistic spa with natural elements and a transformative experience, yet we were drawn to the scientific approach of diagnostic equipment and high-functioning esthetics technology.” As a result, the spa utilizes the Bio-Well GDV

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OWNERS

Edgar Hidalgo,
Sergio de la Vega,
Alex Gehrke

SPA DIRECTOR

Miriam Arroyo

OPENED

January 2018

CLIENT BASE

52% female
48% male

MOST REPRESENTED COUNTRIES

Mexico
U.S.
Germany

SPACE

4,230 square feet;
4 treatment rooms

PRODUCTS & EQUIPMENT

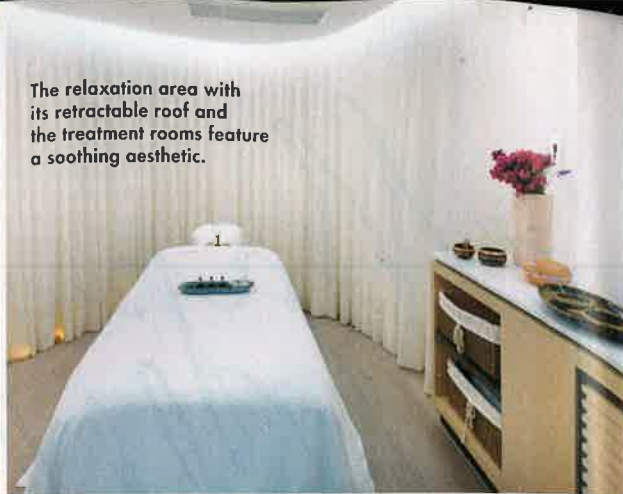
Berodin Waxing,
EPH&R, Jessica,
Living Earth Crafts,
Naturopathica,
Oka-B, PM Linens,
Technogym

ARCHITECT & INTERIOR DESIGNER

Felix Blanco (Mexico
City, Mexico)

SPA CONSULTANT

Bonnie Baker, Satteva
Spa and Wellness
Concepts (San Miguel
de Allende, Mexico)



The relaxation area with its retractable roof and the treatment rooms feature a soothing aesthetic.



SPA TALK *with* Bonnie Baker

Meet spa consultant Bonnie Baker, who has spent the last 21 years working in the spa industry.

What are the most challenging and rewarding parts of working in the spa industry? Most of my journey in the spa industry has been inspiring and motivating. The most rewarding moments for me are found in creating the bespoke concepts and treatments that are rooted in cultural and natural history and seeing how guests respond to the sense of place created. I love working with therapists in trainings, especially seeing their enthusiasm at the deeper impacts their work can have on their guests. I get discouraged when we lack congruency in our operations or our training.

What two things have surprised you about working in the spa industry? The overall lack of training for our spa professionals and how little we really understand about the impact our surroundings and interaction have on our health. We focus so much on products and ingredients but very little on the quality of human experience and

how to control the stress-response. I see that product companies dictate much of what happens in the industry when it should be the experiences that are guiding us.

What is the strangest client request you've fielded? That I sing to a client during a massage. I told him that was not a good idea for his relaxation.

What is the most bizarre treatment you've experienced? A shamanic healing in Mexico involving a ring of fire, an egg spirit cleansing, and a very painful abdominal massage.

How would you sum up your personal philosophy? I need to be prepared and aligned to be a channel for a greater energy to move through and animate me.

For our full interview and a video tour of the spa, visit www.americanspa.com.

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(Gas Discharge Visualization) Camera, which allows a therapist to conduct a human energy scan using the client's fingertips. The image is then used to customize treatments and chart their effects.

In choosing a product line for the spa, Naturopathica proved to be the perfect fit. "The line's 21st-century wellness philosophy offers a natural synergy for the Cartesiano Spa concept," says Baker. "Formulated entirely with natural, clean, and plant-based ingredients, Naturopathica offers modern tools and a scientific approach for mind, body, and spirit rooted in holistic and traditional practices." According to Arroyo, the spa's most popular treatment is the Baroque Massage (\$92, 90 minutes), a restorative treatment that uses aromatherapy and deep-tissue massage to relax the body and reboot the mind. "After knowing the spa concept, the fusion of the four elements and the four programs of the wellness axis, guests want to experience the trip we propose depending on their life map," says Arroyo. "In this case, it is the Wellbeing Rituals." They are made up of the Cartesian Coordinates Ritual (\$122, 2 hours), the Northern Alignment Ritual (\$122, 2 hours), the Terra Viva Couples Ritual (\$122, 2 hours), and the Bio-Energetic Balancing Ritual (\$122, 2 hours).

With five full-time and eight part-time employees, the spa is able to accommodate approximately 20 clients each day. With the spa's recent debut, Arroyo, Baker, and their team are focused on getting the word out about the spa's unique concept. "Our immediate aim is to keep inspiring our guests to come back for new experiences," says Baker. "We have much to expand on in our current offering, ensuring that guests identify Cartesiano Spa as a unique, special, peaceful, and transformative place, which blends the traditional healing methods together with the latest technology available in the market." ●