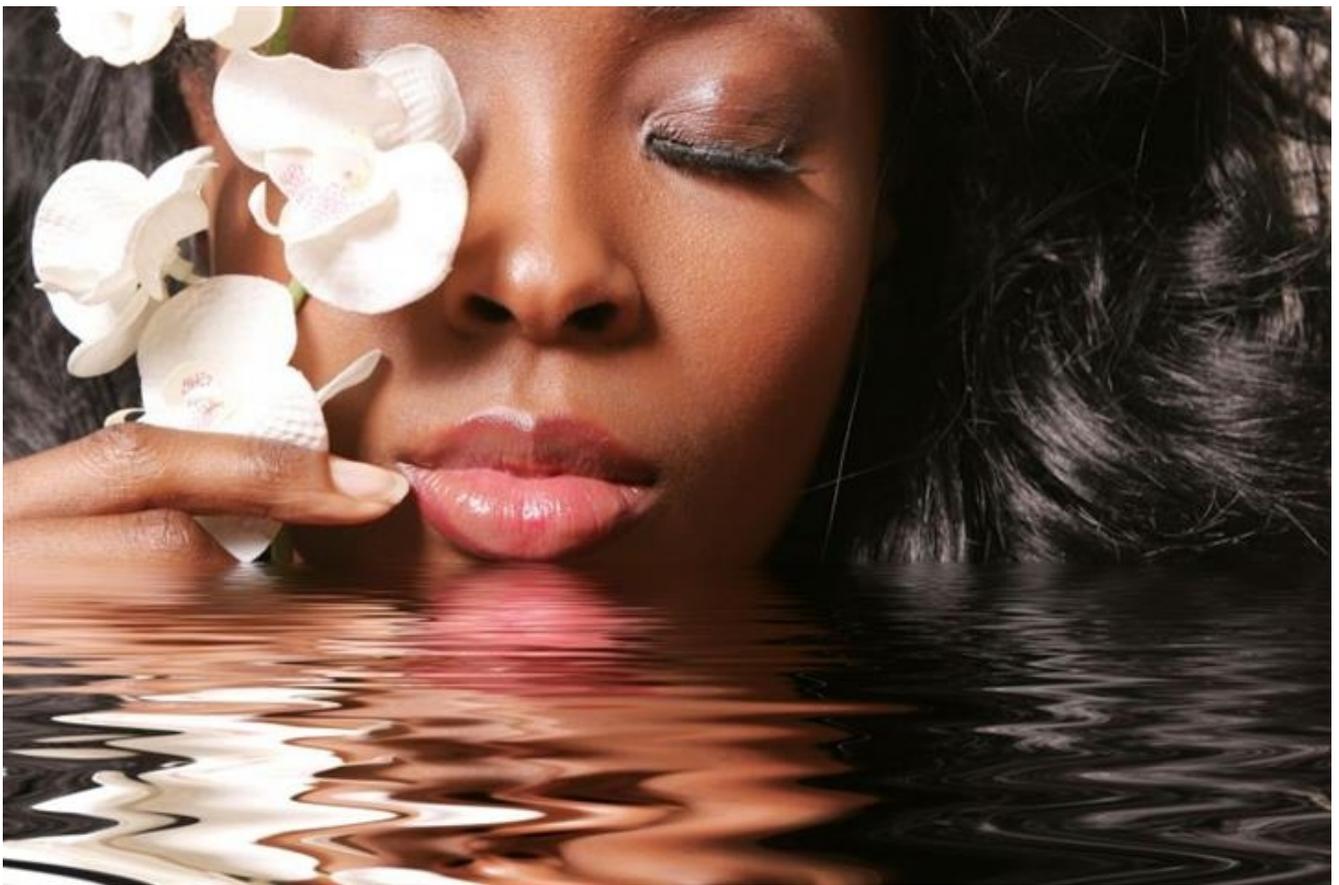


The Growing and Diverse Spa Market of South Africa

What sells South African Tourism is by far the diversity of this country. It offers a true first world experience in an African Country with unique experiences such as having a massage while overlooking the bushveld where the Big Five roams free...

With the amazing climate and wonderful scenery, there are so many perfect settings for real rejuvenation and 'decompression'. In South Africa, you will find an abundance of excellent spas and wellness centres scattered all around the country from mountain hideaways, sleek city spas, beach retreats, spas in the winelands spas at game lodges and wellness centres located on a golf courses.



Even though South Africa is not necessarily seen as a spa destination, it offers guests unique experiences in many ways. Some South African Spas have embraced the best of the international influences such as Thai Massages from the East, Roman Baths & Vichy Treatments from Europe and even some Moroccan influences in both rituals as well as architecture; however the true African influences have been captivated in most of the spas in architecture, interior design, rituals, treatments and products.

The spas have introduced signature treatments which have been inspired by African cultures and the use of natural resources. This might even include doing a body exfoliation with maize meal or using a knobkierie (an African walking stick) in some massage treatments. Local natural products such as marula oil & Rooibos extract have also been recognised as having healing ingredients.

A spa in Kwazulu Natal, Fordoun, even offers the African cultural experience of having a session with the local Sangoma (traditional healing doctor) who will give advice on natural remedies for

daily aches & pains.

It is therefore a necessity to include a South African Spa experience in any traveler's itinerary. When at a game lodge there is nothing more relaxing than a soothing massage after a bumpy game drive or after a round of golf cleansing the body & mind with some pamper therapy at the spa. Even a revitalizing day at the spa to get rid of jet lag is becoming more and more popular with international tourists.



It is however interesting to note that the Spa industry is probably one of the newest & fastest growing markets in the South African hospitality & tourism arena. The spa industry in South Africa had small cautious beginnings in the nineties but soon became a flourishing market in present day with more than 600 top spas on offer throughout the country.

What was once known as a treat for the rich and famous has become something of a lifestyle necessity. And what was once mainly a female environment has now become something which can be enjoyed by couples and singles, groups of friends and even corporate incentive groups.

The industry has only recently introduced a governing body in the form of the South African Spa Association and giving accolades to the best spas in the country is something still new & refreshing.

One must however take note of the fact that even though South Africa is a new player in the international spa industry, some of the South African spas have already received international accolades such as Pezula Spa (Garden Route) which was voted as being one of the Top 100 Spas in the World (Conde Nast Magazine). Other spas with international accolades include the Western Cape Hotel & Spa, Fancourt and many more.



The spa industry locally have also become aware of their social responsibilities such as Mangwanani Spa Group who offers disadvantaged women, ongoing training & employment enabling them to be sustainable and enrich their lives to better their standards of living. Spas have also realized that in the spirit of advertising wellness there must be an awareness of looking after natural resources with spas such as Vygenhoek Spa which was named one of the first truly organic spas in South Africa.

It is therefore clear that the ever-growing spa industry of South Africa has something on offer to both the serious spa-goer as well as for someone looking for a bit of relaxation while taking in the awe-inspiring experiences this diverse country has to offer. Let the pampering begin.....

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