

**T TYPOLOGY OF SPAS INTERIOR IN 5-STAR CITY HOTELS IN  
PENINSULAR MALAYSIA**

**By**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SPA	<i>sanus per aquam</i>
ISPA	International Spa Associations
MAH	Malaysia Association of Hotels
AMSPA	Association of Malaysian Spas
MTPB	Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board
ASWPC	Asia Spa & Wellness Promotion Council
KL	Kuala Lumpur
ISWEC	International Spa & Wellness Exhibition and Conference
PWTC	Putra World Trade Centre

# **TIPOLOGI RUANG DALAMAN SPA DI HOTEL BERTARAF LIMA BINTANG DI SEMENANJUNG MALAYSIA**

## **ABSTRAK**

Pengertian sebenar perkataan spa adalah datang daripada perkataan Latin iaitu *sanus per aquam* (SPA) yang bermaksud "kesihatan melalui air". Spa menyediakan amalan rawatan tradisional secara turun-temurun termasuk mandi wap, urutan dan rawatan yang menggunakan pati bunga dan tumbuh-tumbuhan untuk tujuan penyembuhan. Industri spa sedang mengalami pertumbuhan yang pesat di Malaysia tetapi masih terdapat segelintir pihak yang mungkin tidak benar-benar memahami jenis-jenis spa dan definisi sebenar spa. Kajian ini adalah bertujuan untuk mengkaji tipologi reka bentuk dalaman spa di hotel bertaraf lima bintang di Semenanjung Malaysia. Penyata masalah yang cuba untuk dikenal pasti adalah reka bentuk yang sedia ada di dalam spa tidak memenuhi kriteria reka bentuk dan elemen-elemen yang perlu wujud di dalam spa. Selain itu, amalan spa tempatan kurang terdedah dalam rawatan spa dan reka bentuk semasa. Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk mengenal pasti jenis-jenis spa termasuk hotel spa, resort spa, spa destinasi dan spa perubatan. Pada masa yang sama, kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk mengkaji amalan spa untuk menentukan elemen-elemen reka bentuk dalam pelbagai jenis spa. Kaedah yang digunakan dalam kajian ini berdasarkan kaedah kualitatif. Pengumpulan data telah diperolehi daripada pemerhatian, koleksi data visual, dan temuduga. Kajian kes telah dilakukan di lima buah spa di dalam hotel bertaraf lima bintang yang terpilih berada di kawasan bandar iaitu Vila Manja Spa (Melaka), Spa Village (The Dist Calrton Kuala Lumpur), Angsana Spa (Crowne Plaza Mutiara Kuala Lumpur), Mandara Spa (Sunway Resort Hotel & Spa, Petaling Jaya) dan Spa Suites (The Northam All Suite, Pulau Pinang). Lima belas responden termasuk lima orang



pengurus spa, lima ahli terapi spa dan lima pelanggan dari spa masing-masing telah mengambil bahagian dalam sesi temuramah. Kajian mendapati bahawa jenis spa boleh dikenal pasti oleh reka bentuk khusus dan amalan tertentu dalam setiap spa. Contohnya, spa harian biasanya menawarkan rawatan spa secara eksklusif dengan menggunakan waktu yang singkat untuk memanjakan diri termasuk rawatan tunggal seperti muka, urut, manikur dan pedikur dalam suasana dan persekitaran yang tenang. Kajian ini menyediakan maklumat yang berguna dalam menentukan jenis spa dan amalan spa yang mencerminkan reka bentuk spa di dalam hotel bertaraf lima bintang di Semenanjung Malaysia.

# **TYOLOGY OF SPAS INTERIOR IN 5-STAR CITY HOTELS IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA**

## **ABSTRACT**

The original meaning of spa, *sanus per aquam* (SPA) is Latin for “health through or by water”. Spa provides various traditional treatment practices hereditary including steam bath, massages and all the treatments using essence of flowers and plants for healing purpose. The spa industry is experiencing very fast growth in Malaysia but there are still many people that may not really understand the spa types and definitions. This research examined the typology of interior design of spas in 5-star city hotels in Peninsular Malaysia. The problem statements attempted to identify the existing designs in the spa do not meet the design criteria and elements that should exist in the spa. Besides that, the local spa practices are less exposed in the current spa treatments and designs. The objective of this study was to identify the different types of spa including day spa, hotel spa, resort spa, destination spa and medical spa. At the same time, this research also aimed to study the spa practices and to define the design elements in different types of spa. Methodology used in this research was based on the qualitative method. The data collections were obtained from observations, visual data collections of the case study and interviews. The case studies were done in selected spas in 5-star city hotels which are Vila Manja Spa (Melaka), Spa Village (The Ritz Calrton Kuala Lumpur), Angsana Spa (Crowne Plaza Mutiara Kuala Lumpur), Mandara Spa (Sunway Resort Hotel & Spa, Petaling Jaya) and The Suites Spa (The Northam All Suites, Penang). Fifteen respondents included five spa managers, five spa practitioners and five customers from each spa participated in the interviews. The study found that the types of spa can be identified by its specific design and practices as day spa offers spa treatments exclusively on a

day-use basis which provides a day or half day pampering include single services like facial, massage, manicures and pedicures that is separated from the noisier salon environment. This study provided the useful information of spa types and spa practices that are reflects the spa interior design in 5-star city hotels in Peninsular Malaysia.

## **CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Background of Study**

Nowadays, individuals live in a fast-paced world. Modern lifestyle in the big cities and urban areas are often filled with stresses and long working hours. These stressors in turn affects people's beauty and health. Thus, it is very important to create awareness among people about health care. The idea of a gentle massage or a spa treatment is definitely the best choice after the hectic day in a bustling city. In 2011, spas continue to emphasize on health, wellness, and stress-release (The Sun, 2011). Nowadays people are encouraged to go for a vacation and take a rest in relaxing places like spa to pamper and reward themselves and ease the worn out muscles. Thus, spa designs are important to create a relaxing atmosphere and space where individuals can shut down their main system and relax their mind.

Moreover, spas are moving from their traditional settings in isolated locations to more convenient locations such as sports clubs, medical centres, shopping centres and beauty salons (Quartino, 2007). Hotels are also seen offerings spa services to attract tired individuals be it local or foreign tourists. When tourists arrive, they will check-in at hotels and would use the spa facilities, and thus, indirectly contributes to Malaysia spa industry.

Nevertheless, the spa industry here in Malaysia is still in its infancy stage, as compared to the world's popular health and beauty spas such as in Bali and Thailand. The director of Thalia Spa, Mr. Donald Cha said Malaysia is just not doing enough to promote the local spa industry as compared to countries like Indonesia and Thailand (The Star, 2009). Therefore, it is recommended that Malaysia continues to promote and document the valuable knowledge of traditional spa practices. Our spa is still

lacking in different treatment modalities, such as *urut* (Malay massage), Ayurveda and Chinese acupuncture. However, Melinda, one of the Managing Director of spa in Hong Kong believed that Malaysia which has a strong link to traditional and natural therapies is well positioned to become a spa destination (Chandravathani, 2007).

In overall, this study will discuss the spa types and present the understanding in spa design which can be adapted into the future development of spas and hotels in Malaysia.

### **1.1 Malaysia's Hotel Industry**

Malaysia is one of the well-known tourism destinations and offers a wide range of accommodation at competitive rates. International standard hotels, medium and budget hotels and youth hostels are just some of the types of accommodation available. The tourism industry is one of the sectors that contribute to the nation's largest income (Tourism Malaysia, 2009). In this regard, a wide range of travel services have been offered to meet the diverse interests and demands of tourists. Among the services includes the promotion of Malaysia as a wellness tourism destination. Wellness Tourism in Malaysia not only includes healing services and disease prevention but also on wellness and fitness aspects.

In Malaysia, hotels which mostly situated at the city are the provisions for accommodation to tourists that come to visit our country. They are often designed with a touch of exoticism as a standard of feature of many city hotels. The 5-star city hotels are commonly equipped with wellness centres and spas. Located within the hotel, a hotel spa provides professionally administered spa services, fitness and wellness components and spa cuisine menu choices (International Spa Associations (ISPA)).

As a country with the tropical climate, Malaysia has a unique natural environment surrounded with the flora and fauna of various species. Therefore, the country could make the tourism industry as a major source of national income if nature is fully incorporated into expanding the spa services in Malaysia's hotels.

#### **1.1.1 Hotels in Malaysia**

The key factors that attract tourists into the country include facilities such as transport, accommodation and communication infrastructure. This is because tourists who visit a country want a comfortable and relaxing environment. Comfortable accommodation facilities such as hotels, chalets, and others also become an important factor in attracting many tourists to visit our country. Accommodation plays a vital role in determining whether a tourist enjoys his or his stay or even in considering extending their stay in the country. If accommodation is comfortable and complete, this will encourage someone travelling to stay longer in the country, thus, increasing the country's revenues.

Spa is normally a place or outdoor mineral spring water contains medicinal properties that are good for health. Of late, the spas are changing from their traditional settings to isolated locations such as in the hotels. Spa is becoming a major selling in the hotels to attract tourists indirectly promoting the health tourism in Malaysia.

#### **1.1.2 Hotels Ratings and Stars**

From the Malaysia Association of Hotels (Ministry of Tourism Malaysia), there are some minimum requirements for star rating of hotels in Malaysia. The ratings are given to 5-star hotels with certain criteria which include qualitative and aesthetic requirements where safe, functional and well-maintained facilities are

brought into consideration. The 5-star hotels provide all needs and areas such as reception area, bar, restaurant, conferences hall, outdoor and indoor area and entertainment area. Besides that, sanitary installation for common area and bedroom has to meet minimum requirements. Services, safety standards and staffs also are the main criteria in rating the star of a hotel. Therefore, 5-star hotels are the highest rating, fulfilling the minimum requirements. Orchid ratings are given to hotels which do not qualify for the one to five-star rating requirements. The statistics of hotel ratings for all states in Malaysia are listed in Table 1.1: Statistics Hotels Ratings.

Table 1.1: Statistics Hotels Ratings

STATE	STAR					TOTAL	ORCHID				TOTAL	GRAND TOTAL
	5	4	3	2	1		3	2	1	NOT QUALIFY		
SABAH	6	3	19	21	15	64	17	18	28	4	67	131
LABUAN	1	2	1	4	5	13	1	0	1	1	3	16
SARAWAK	6	7	19	11	10	53	18	50	40	5	113	166
TERENGGANU	2	4	5	6	2	19	10	21	4	0	35	54
PAHANG	5	11	15	23	5	59	8	18	14	9	49	108
KELANTAN	1	1	7	7	1	17	7	8	3	0	18	35
N.SEMBILAN	0	6	7	6	3	22	4	5	4	8	21	43
PUTRAJAYA	2	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
SELANGOR	12	9	14	4	5	44	3	20	9	0	32	76
K.LUMPUR	21	19	20	22	13	95	3	19	17	6	45	140
PERAK	1	6	8	21	11	47	10	19	12	6	47	94
PERLIS	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	2	1	0	3	5
P.PINANG	7	14	8	12	4	45	4	5	10	0	19	64
KEDAH	8	9	21	13	4	55	2	10	4	2	18	73
MELAKA	2	4	13	13	4	36	14	18	13	0	45	81
JOHOR	5	5	10	20	10	50	10	9	4	0	23	73
GRAND TOTAL	79	102	167	183	93	624	111	222	164	41	538	1162

Source by: Malaysia Association of Hotels, MAH (Rating of Hotels as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007).

Throughout Malaysia there is a wide variety of Hotel types at competitive prices ranging from De Luxe International Hotels, Boutique, Heritage, and Budget hotels. City hotels are situated in the heart of the hustle and bustle of city centres in Malaysia. Malaysian Hotels especially 5-star city hotels will be surrounded by

beautiful landscapes, providing easy access for their guests to local attractions, shops and transport; they are complimented by restaurants and night spots, sophisticated amenities and facilities such as a spa and wellness centre.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Spa is an international industrial offering service and treatment for health and beauty, traditional massage and other body and beauty treatments. However, many people are still unclear as to what services a spa can offer. This is because some services available at the spas are nothing more than those provided at a beauty salon for business. Also, there is a setback in the spa industry namely the fallacies that the public are made to believe about the activities going on behind the closed doors of a spa. For many, misconceptions of spas as largely associated with seedy business are because of some spa operators that misuse their business premises for immoral purposes. Therefore, spas are less appreciated in the country. Association of Malaysian Spas (AMSPA) president (Datin Ramona Suleiman, 2009) said it has been facing an uphill battle in trying to re-image the industry and give it the recognition and merits it deserves.

While traditional spa treatments have varied in popularity through the years, the valuable knowledge of traditional spa practices need to be documented to avoid losing them through the passage of time. The techniques of '*urut*' (Malay massage), *Ayurveda* which is a traditional medicine native to India and practices of Chinese medicine like *acupuncture* must be handed down from one generation to the next. The spa and wellness industry need to step up its efforts on this front and upgrade the existing skills and knowledge base.



Basically, there are no specific styles for designing a spa. There is also no proper documentation about the practices and spa types. Much research are related to Healthcare Systems but only few are directly related on architecture and the built environment for wellness centre (Goh et al., 2009).

City hotel must accommodate the many desires and diverse needs of people. The interior of hotels must draw on local materials to create a welcoming, cool and relaxing environment. For instance, the interior design considerations of finishes, furnishing and lighting are preferred to be interacting with nature. The most effective way is that designers capitalized on the environmental assets and local cultures. As mentioned above, there are two problem statements which provoke this research. Firstly, there are no specific styles for designing a spa thus, making **some of the existing designs in the spa unable to meet the design criteria and elements that should exists in the spa**. In addition, there are people still unclear what services a spa can offer and the lack of documentation on traditional spa practices makes **Malaysians less exposed to the current spa practices**. Therefore, the research questions are developed to focus on this topic and can be covered more fully and in more depth.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The research questions identified below are the statements of what the researcher wants to discover:

- i. What are the types of spa that can be identified in city hotel?
- ii. What are the design elements adapted in the spa interiors and how do they influence the spa practices?

## **1.4 Objectives**

The purposes of this study are the following:

- i. To study the spa types and design elements in the spa interior.
- ii. To analyse the spa practices that is related to spa design.
- iii. To examine specific design considerations and recommendations to operate spa successfully in today's spa trends.

## **1.5 Scope and Limitations of Study**

Based on these objectives, the scopes of study are focused on:

1. Differences in types of spa and what they offer includes:
  - Day Spa
  - Hotel Spa
  - Resort Spa
  - Destination Spa
  - Medical Spa/Medi-Spa

2. Design elements applied in spa interiors.

The spa interior observations shall focus on the design elements which include materials, furnishing, details, colours, lightings, functions, structures and aesthetics.

3. Relationship between spa practices and spa designs.

This refers to the understanding of the activities inside the spaces which are related to the design requirements. This study examines how it affects users' behaviours and thus, their social interactions inside the spa. The important criteria to be observed in this study are design layouts, tropical components, function of spaces.

During this research, there were some limitations faced by researcher. The limitations were:

1. Time constraints was one of the limitation as only six months were planned to the fieldwork study to visit the spas in five star city hotels in peninsular Malaysia. Spa selection is only done in major cities such as Malacca, Kuala Lumpur, Petaling Jaya, Shah Alam, Subang Jaya and Penang due to willingness of hotels to participate.
2. During this study, researcher also faced problems in obtaining some data related to list of participating spas to tourism in Malaysia. Also, there is no list of spas in hotels obtained from Association of Malaysian Spas (AMSPA). Therefore, researcher has taken the initiative to take the list of five-star hotels in Malaysia Association of Hotel (MAH) website, which provided information on the five-star hotels which are equipped with spa facilities.
3. The third constrain is the data of the study. The researchers were not permitted to visit certain spas due to private and confidential parts of the companies' policy. Also, the spa managers were unwilling to entertain the researcher. So, the researcher had decided to select five chosen study areas to represent five types of spas refer to spas in Malaysia that have been classified by the Spa Association Malaysia (AMSPA), the day spa, hotel spa, resort spa, destination spa and medical spa. This study had been conducted in selected spa city hotels and will focus on hotel spa. Therefore, one cannot make the assumption that it can portray the overall impact on the Malaysia in general.

## **1.6 Research Outline**

This research contained six stages including preliminary understanding of Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Site Analysis and Data Collections, Data Analysis and Conclusions. The first stage allows people to get the general idea of what this research is all about. First stage contained the definitions of the terms in the topic, background information, the issues or objectives, the goals to achieve, the tasks to complete in order to attain the goals, explaining the basic points and pointing the direction of this research.

Second stage contained the secondary resources from articles, books or documents which are related to spa practices and design spaces. This also provides an introduction to spa origins and type of spas, spa practices and factors on designing spa interior.

Third stage introduced the methods used to answer the research questions and to achieve the objectives. The methodology indicated how qualitative research was used to collect and analyse relevant data. Furthermore, this stage involves two components: primary data and secondary data. For the primary data, the methods used are observation and interview by using questionnaire. These methods related to explain the case study background and visual data collections.

In forth stage, there are introduction of the site background for selected spas in 5-star city hotels. Case studies and information gathering are most important part in this study aim to see the current scenario of the study area. In this stage, the results from the data collection will be used in the next stage of analysis stage. Some documentation of layouts and pictures taken are compiled in this chapter.

Further in fifth stage, where criteria in each type of spas are differentiated and design elements showed in the spas are identified. In this chapter, the method of case study is used to get the visual analysis, design documentation and contents analysis which analysed from the photos taken and also interview sections with related individuals in this field.

Finally, Sixth stage provides a summary of the findings and the conclusion drawn regarding the spas design in Malaysia in each type of spa. Summary of this study covers the profiles of spa visitors, criteria in different types of spa and design elements needs. This stage was also designed to answer the questions of the study and thus achieve the goal of this study.

## **1.7 Proposition**

The understanding of typology of spas shows a symbiotic relationship between spa practices and spa designs.

## **1.8 Summary**

Overall, this chapter is an outline of this research study. This section describes the overall idea in general and also the research background of the topic selection, source of information, the objectives studies, issues and problem in understanding the study of spa types and spa design elements. Therefore, spa designs are important to create a relaxing atmosphere which can attract people to go and pamper their bodies and minds. Indirectly, it will also attract tourists from all over the world. In conclusion, this research, when complete, will present the understanding in spa design which can be adapted in the development of spas and hotels in Malaysia with the study points to contribute future approaches to planning and design guidelines that will be more effective to improve the wellness tourism in

Malaysia. This research is necessary to guide and provide knowledge to the planning of the rapidly growing better organization of spa in late future.

## CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter will present previous studies that are related to the aspects of the study. This part will describe the topics and to be study in detailed. It involves the secondary data from books, journals, magazines, newspaper articles and related previous studies. In this literature review section, the contents will include the definition of spa, types of spa and spa designs.

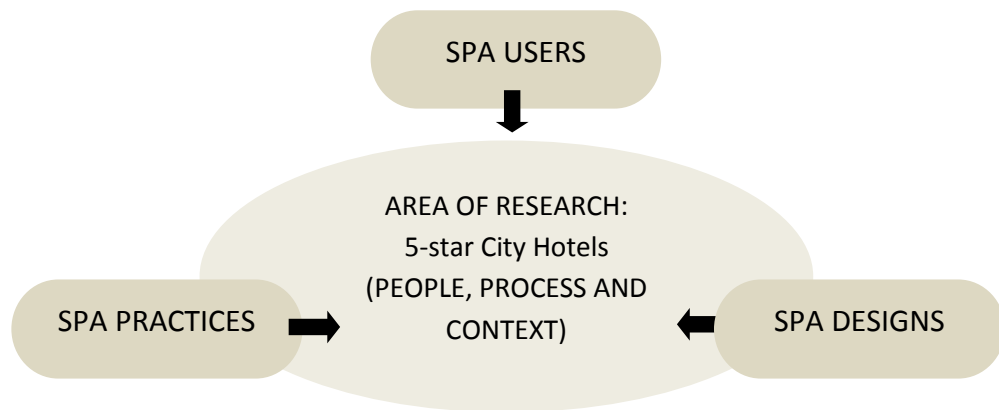


Figure 2.1: Visual overview of a Contextual Review

(Example from Pengelly, PhD 1997)

This structure characterizes the area of research which involves people (spa users), spa practices (process) and the working environment (design issues) (Figure 2.1). In conclusion, the researchers need to understand this part of study in greater detail to give exposure and clear picture during the study.

## 2.1 Definitions of Terminology

Spa is a place to unwind and relax where one can hide away from the daily bustle. Therefore, the design of a spa should aim to create a tranquil atmosphere suitable to its function. Spa is a refined centre dedicated to relaxation, beauty and health. Spa in resorts and hotels are some of the new options available for public that is more and more eager to combine hobbies with relaxation and with the desire of escaping the daily routine.

According to Anne Williams, some speculate that the word “spa” can be traced to the name of the Belgian town Spa but it more likely comes from the Latin words *espa* (fountain) and *sparsa* (from *spargere*, or “to bubble up”). *Sanus per aquam* (SPA) is Latin for “health through or by water”, and *solus per aqua* (SPA) means “by water alone” (Williams, 2007). It is difficult to ensure the origin of spa therapy because mineral springs and thermal mud were probably used long before civilizations evolved and history was first recorded. Many early civilizations had a version of the spa bath that combined some form of social interaction with cleanliness.

The International SPA Association (ISPA, 2009), an internationally-recognised professional association representing over 1,000 health and wellness facilities and providers and the voice of the spa industry worldwide, defined spa as “entities devoted to enhancing overall well-being through a variety of professional services that encourage the renewal of mind, body and spirit” and the "Spa Experience" is described as being "Your time to Relax, Reflect, Revitalize and Rejoice."



The term spa is associated with water treatment which is also known as balneotherapy, spa towns or spa resorts offering such treatment or the medication or equipment for such treatment. The concept of a spa originated from the use of natural water for therapeutic purposes. The various kinds of therapies available at a spa include hydrotherapy, massage, reflexology; colour, music, nutrient and herbal therapy and meditation. The function of the spa is to bring relief from internal ailments, rejuvenate the body, increase body metabolism and relief mental stress and pressure.

Nowadays, spa is frequented for the tired souls as it catered for many different situations and is widely available in most places. There are different types of spa. The first is the spa that caters to the wellness of the client. This type of spa is also known as Medical Spa/Medi-Spa. Medical spa is catered for individuals with history of medical ailments and treatments are vested after discussions with the client's licensed health care specialists. Most individuals visiting these spas for treatments are usually recovering from operations and those who are attempting to quit smoking or drinking. Treatments are administered to the patients according to their specific needs..

The second type of spa which is club spa takes into consideration the fitness of the client. They are specially designed for those who want to relax. Activities such as aerobics and outdoor sports are provided here to promote better physical fitness and serves as a form of relaxation for the client. Thus, club spas are specifically designed for individuals who are more playful at heart. They would enjoy this program because they are given a chance to learn more activities in the spa.

The third type of spa is the holistic spa. The main reason people join this spa is to learn more about spirituality. This is the best place to head to if one is interested in learning more about self-realisation. There is different meditation techniques taught here and these treatments come from different cultures and beliefs like the Chinese Tai Chi meditation.

The fourth and the more famous spa is the day spa. People who visit these spas are usually the ones who are more beauty-conscious. The clients are making a visit to these spas to beautify themselves and to relax by different types of treatments provided such as mud packs, sauna baths, massages and yoga.

Besides the basic four types of spas, other types include Hotel Spa which is located in a hotel. Hotel spa usually offers hotel facilities such as gym along with it. Resort spas located in resort settings have a wider variety of spa treatments and packages, star cuisines and holistic exercises such as yoga. Destination Spa located in a remote area with a minimum time frame attached to adopt some lifestyle change. Another types of spa identified are Mineral Springs Spa, Cruise Ship Spa and Airport Spa.

Hotel spa is located in a hotel offering spa services, freshness classes and suitable for travellers and families. Hotel Spa also has a spa leisure centre - this generally includes a swimming pool, sauna, steam room and Jacuzzi plus treatment rooms where therapists administer individual treatments. The 5-star city hotels are commonly equipped with wellness centres and spas. A hotel spa is a spa owned by and located within a hotel property providing professionally administered spa services, fitness and wellness components and spa cuisine menu choices (International Spa Associations (ISPA), 2009).

Five star hotels are Luxury hotels, most expensive hotels/resorts in the world and consisting numerous extras to enhance the quality of the client's stay (for example: some are with private golf courses. In Malaysia, city hotels mostly provide accommodation to tourists that visit the country. They are often designed with a touch of exoticism as a standard of feature of many city hotels. Spas are health care treatment centres that mostly use products with natural ingredients. The concept of designing a spa interior would be with a touch of nature to create a relaxing ambience that brings tranquillity.

## **2.2 Origin of Spa**

Nowadays, there are more and more people looking to spas as a space for health, wellness, anti-aging and relaxation. In fact, spa-going has been described as a new cultural trend. In fact, spa has been in practice for thousands of years - from the Mesopotamians, Egyptians and Minoans, to the Greeks and Romans. It is difficult to make certain conclusion on the origin of spa therapy because mineral springs and thermal mud were probably used long before civilizations evolved and history was first recorded. In Asia, spas are still new and the development sector is increasing. However, the practice has started in earlier times when Asian communities visit craters or natural hot springs for bathing as Malaysians believe this source of hot water has the advantage to cure as well.

In Southeast Asia, massages always have been a part of its cultures and traditions. In the olden times, it was practiced as “folk medicine” with herbal healing and traditional massages. Reichert (1996), Managing Director of Mandara Spa Thailand, stated that historical texts suggest that in Southeast Asia, these traditional practices migrated from India with Buddhist monks and the Brahmins during the 2<sup>nd</sup>

and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC while the Chinese migrants were well-versed in ancient traditional Chinese medicine. They then mixed it with deep-rooted folk beliefs in the supernatural, mystical and astrological. Commercial application of these services did not come through till the advent of capitalism and commercialism in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century (Mandara, 2011).

In early 1990s, local entrepreneurs who understood the western concept of “Spa” recognized the potential of this business. The original meaning of spa *Sanus per aquam* (SPA) is Latin for “health through or by water”. With the rich culture, varied natural resources, traditional healing and skills of its people, the Southeast Asian spa concept was born with its focus on relaxation, pampering and rejuvenation.

### **2.2.1 The Importance of Spa**

Spas usually offer a combination of several types of treatment methods including water wave therapy (hydrotherapy), heat therapy (thermotherapy), electrical therapy (electrotherapy), massage therapy, reflexology, colour therapy, music therapy, therapeutic or medicinal herb plants, therapeutic nutrients, meditation and treatment approaches according to religion. Depending on the needs of an individual’s body, all methods of treatment in the spa can provide a positive effect if done correctly. Besides being able to cure internally, spas refresh the body, provide energy and oxygen to tightened muscles, refine the skin, and increases body resistance to fight against diseases, improve the body's metabolism, reduce tension and calm the mind.


Spas in the future by their very nature are indefinable, ever changing, diverse and evolving. Therapists and clients are embracing spa treatments as a means of promoting health and wellness. Taking care of oneself by being willing to receive





care and pampering is an important aspect of healing in a spa environment. The most important perhaps is the idea of integration. Everything is connected: feeling beautiful, feeling joyous, feeling healthy and energetic are signs of balanced life. Spas provides a space where clients can experience each element's movement, touch, beauty, a connection to environment, cultural expression, social contribution; the healing of quality of water and nourishment of both body and soul are the essential concepts of spa (Williams, 2007).

### 2.2.2 Different Types of Spas

There are different types of spas that cater to different needs like relaxation, conditioning and rejuvenation to avoid stress in daily life. There are generally classified as follows. Refer to Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Types of Spa

Types	Descriptions
<p><b>Day Spa</b></p>  <p>E.g.: Elemis Day-Spa, London.</p>	<p>It offers basic treatment in everyday use. Mostly also offers salon services.</p>

<p><b>Destination Spa</b></p>  <p>E.g.: Six Senses Destination Spa, Phuket, Thailand.</p>	<p>Spa, which aims to promote healthier lifestyle through spa treatments, exercise, and educational programming. Offers at least two nights. Some have minimum stays of three to seven nights. Spa cuisine is served exclusively.</p>
<p><b>Resort/Hotel Spa</b></p>  <p>E.g.: Spa Village, Tanjung Jara Resort, Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia.</p>	<p>It is located within a resort or hotel. It offers spa services, fitness classes and spa cuisine. Also suitable for business travelers and families.</p>
<p><b>Medical Spa</b></p>  <p>E.g.: TriBeCa MedSpa, New York City.</p>	<p>It offers treatments that require doctor's supervision, such as laser resurfacing and Botox injections. It also offers spa treatments.</p>
<p><b>Mineral Springs Spa</b></p>  <p>E.g.: Polynesian Spa, New Zealand.</p>	<p>It has natural mineral, thermal or seawater that is used in hydrotherapy treatments.</p>

<p><b>Club Spa</b></p>  <p>E.g.: The Health Club &amp; Spa, Hyatt Regency Hangzhou, China.</p>	<p>A day spa located in a fitness facility or health club.</p>
<p><b>Cruise Ship Spa</b></p>  <p>E.g.: The <i>Silver Whisper's</i> spa</p>	<p>Spa services aboard a cruise ship that provides spa treatments, fitness and wellness components and spa cuisine menu choices.</p>
<p><b>Airport Spa</b></p>  <p>E.g.: The Xpres Spa at San Francisco International Airport.</p>	<p>It is located in an airport and specializes in short treatments aimed at the traveler, like 15-minute chair massage and oxygen therapy. Some also offer longer treatments.</p>

Sources: <http://spas.about.com/cs/spa101/a/typesofspas.htm>: Spa Types

Many parties have their own criteria in categorizing spa types to suit their own place. In terms of defining spa experiences, different definitions of the following categories have been developed by the Spa Association of Australia namely:

- i. Day Spa – Spa services offered to customers based on daily spa with daily appropriate facilities.
- ii. Destination Spa – Spa that provide treatments with staying accommodations or spa in room environment.
- iii. Natural Bathing Spa – Spa that conducted in a quiet location, offers in water pool equipped with spa services. Also provides staying accommodation or otherwise.
- iv. Others related spas – the combinations of principles of the spa into the philosophy and practices with minimal water treatment facilities and visitor facilities.

Intelligent Spa is a fully independent research company specializing in spa industry founded in Singapore in 2001. It has pioneered the study in spa industry in the Asia Pacific region. Intelligent Spa is an organization that has conducted research on spas in many countries. The following definition is definition adopted by the Intelligent Spa ([www.Intelligentspas.com](http://www.Intelligentspas.com)) to classify the types of spa. The following are three main types of spas and each type has its own sub-categories.

- i. Day Spa – This is a stand-alone spa industrial.
- ii. Destination Spa – A spa industry becomes integrated in a lodging property.
- iii. Other spa – This mean spa enterprises that not related to the daily spa.



Table 2.2: Type and Sub-categories Spa

Type	Sub-categories
Day Spa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day Spa</li> <li>• Wellness Spa</li> <li>• Medical Spa</li> <li>• Club Spa</li> </ul>
Destination Spa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resort Spa</li> <li>• Hotel Spa</li> <li>• Health Destination Spa</li> <li>• Cruise Ship Spa</li> </ul>
Others Spa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural Bath Spa</li> <li>• Home Bath Spa</li> <li>• Salon Spa</li> <li>• Retail Spa</li> <li>• Slimming Centre Spa</li> <li>• Request Spa</li> </ul>

Sources: Intelligent Spa (2001)

### 2.2.3 Spa Treatments

The concept of a spa originated from the use of natural waters for therapeutic purposes. The various kinds of therapies available at a spa include hydrotherapy, massage, reflexology; colour, music, nutrient and herbal therapy and meditation. The function of the spa is to bring relief from internal ailments, rejuvenate the body, increase body metabolism and relief mental stress and pressure.

According to Anne (2007), some normal treatments for the spa include exfoliation treatments, body wraps, spa foot treatments, Fangotherapy, Thalassotherapy, Ayurveda and stone massage. Exfoliation treatments are where the skin is polished manually or by using an enzymatic or dissolving product. In body wraps, the body is enclosed in sheets or plastic and insulating blankets to trap heat. This stimulates detoxification through perspiration and helps the skin to absorb any products that are applied. Foots treatments include foot assessment step, soaking and cleansing step, exfoliation, treatment mask, massage and reflexology techniques. Reflexology is a technique that is often used in foot treatments. It is a holistic therapy based on the belief that there are points on hands, ears and feet that correspond to all areas of the body. Through stimulation of these points, the body will relax, allowing it to rest and recover. Fangotherapy is the use of mud, peat and clay for healing purposes. Thalassotherapy is a broad term for many different types of treatment that are based on sea products or seawater. Ayuverda is a traditional medical system from India. In stone massage, both hot and cooled stones can be combined with various massage techniques to produce a unique treatment that can be adapted to meet different client needs. Stone massage can be given for relaxation, injury rehabilitation, energy balance, deep tissue and reflexology work.

Besides that, the use of water for health and wellness known as hydrotherapy is a historical cornerstone of the spa experience. Aromatherapy is both a complex area of study and a simple enhancing technique that can be added to any spa service. Aromatherapy is the use of essentials oils for healing the mind, body and spirit.

To further facilitate spa designing, the information to some sequences in spa practices and foundation skills for spa treatments need to be introduced. These skills include spa draping, appropriate positioning of client for product application, the use

of a variety of application methods and the smoothing and removal of spa products. Enhancers such as steamy aromatic towels, firming face massages and simple foot treatments provide moments of particular radiance in a spa massage. There will be dry and wet rooms used to apply and remove products.

#### **2.2.4 Traditional Spa Practices**

Traditionally, most Balinese healing techniques come from the ancient palm-leaf manuscripts called *usada*. The manuscripts are both theoretical and practical and cover topics such as metaphysics, cosmology, mysticism, plant life and rituals. Some spa such as Mandara has adapted some of these ancient recipes for their traditional body treatments. Balinese *Boreh* is a herbal treatment that originates from *usada*. Balinese believe that most illness results from an imbalance of hot and cold – much like the Chinese concept of yin and yang – and boreh is used to correct this imbalance by either creating more heat or more cold like a warming body rub.

Medical texts mentioning detailed descriptions of Thai massage were also recorded in the Pali language on palm leaves. After decades, all these historical surviving texts were preserved by having it carved in stone as descriptive epigraphs in a temple in Bangkok popularly known as Wat Pho.

The typical Thai spa menu which include traditional *Thai*, *Swedish*, *Javanese*, *Lulur* or *Sports* massage, therapies for jet lag, aromatherapy, reflexology, foot massage, skin care treatments such as facials, mud and body wraps, scrubs, treatments for hair, skin and face, acupressure, herbal steam rooms, and floral baths. While herbal steam baths and massage techniques have evolved from traditional healing methods and herbal remedies, other state-of-the-art options including hydrotherapy and re-contouring are also available.