

september/october 2006 hdmag.com

hospitality design

spas that soothe
wave of the future 2006
latin design heats up

departments

EDITED BY
STACY SHOEMAKER RAUEN

News 37	Trendtracker 125	Latin American
Calendar 63	On Site 133	Designer Profiles 145
To Market 69	Scene and Be Seen 139	Hotel of Tomorrow 153



Spa Scene

"The whole theme is voyeurism—the complete opposite of what is typical in a regular spa," says Michael Poris, talking about Steamworks, a full-service bathhouse for Toronto's gay population that his Birmingham, Michigan, firm McIntosh Poris recently designed. "It's not necessarily about sex. It's more of a community center for people who don't necessarily have one. That's the success of it."

In fact, the 11,000-square-foot space—decked out in stainless steel and a lot of glass—is designed with a labyrinth of hallways that lead to a network of 75 changing rooms (some private, some semi-private), a gym, treatment rooms, two lounges, a DJ booth, showers and bathrooms, wet and dry saunas, two hot tubs, and a locker room. The two lounges act as courtyards where visitors have the opportunity to socialize and network, and monitors offer guests a birds-eye view into each space. "That's the other part of voyeurism," Poris explains. "It might not be a big gathering space but it allows them to watch who is where and then decide to go meet them." For a more direct see-and-be-seen interpretation, glass windows, tinted amber yellow, give those in the Grand Central Lounge a direct view into showers, while the wet sauna and hot tub areas (featuring blue-tinted lighting fixtures and exterior windows glazed in blue film) are enclosed in clear glass.

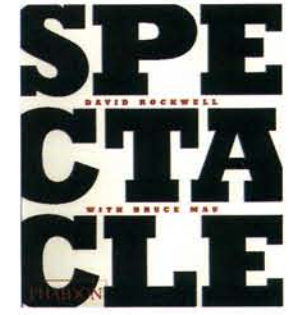
But according to Poris, choosing quality materials for the 24-hour, seven-days-a-week operation was a must. "The brand has high standards. Compared to the other bathhouses in the city, we brought the level of quality way up," he says, adding that the design will also serve as a prototype for the chain's future clubs. "We like to call it the W of bathhouses."

Book Nook:

LARGER THAN LIFE

In *Spectacle* (Phaidon Press, \$49.95, November 2006) David Rockwell, in collaboration with designer Bruce Mau, explores the allure of larger-than-life events around the globe. Through interviews with such legends as Muhammad Ali, Quincy Jones, John Waters, Steve Wynn, and Guy Laliberté, and more than 200 color photographs, *Spectacle* takes readers on a tour of more than 60 of the most outrageous manmade events around the world, from the running of the bulls in Pamplona and the Holi Festival in India, to Carnival in Rio de Janeiro and Burning Man in the Nevada desert. Historical facts, statistics, and a reference section with a monthly calendar listing of global spectacles, maps, and insider tips round out the 256-page hardcover.

"An empty stadium, an open field, or a busy urban thoroughfare—each one a public space—undergoes and alchemic process when transformed by spectacle," Rockwell says. "A group of strangers fuses into an instant community. By physically attending an event, you declare yourself; you become something greater than you."



Spa Openings

New York City's **Townhouse Spa**, a second for owner Jamie Ahn (her first was the Acqua Beauty Bar), has the best of both worlds for both sexes. The 6,000-square-foot space, designed by local firm New World Design Builders and painter Eva Buchmuller, dedicates one floor to males with a private spa and video games; another to women offering both hair and makeup stylists; and a



Clockwise from top left: WET's pedicure station; a waterfall at the Spa Coeur d'Alene; and the locker room at the Regent Beverly Wilshire.



third for shopping and dining—all of which are outfitted with wood, mother of pearl, and onyx.

The renowned **Regent Beverly Wilshire** will now boast its own spa and Robert Barry of his namesake Los Angeles firm has infused natural elements into the design to create a calming space. "The challenge of converting an inventory of existing guestrooms all with very low ceilings into a luxurious spa became our inspiration to design and create intimate and tranquil spaces," he says, adding that arriving guests are welcomed by a curved water wall and amethyst crystal. "The challenge was our advantage."

Appropriately, water is the theme throughout **WET**, the new spa at Treasure Island in Las Vegas. Decorated with vibrant coastal colors that capture the illusion of water, lighting that enhances the translucent, textured glass panels, and furniture in blue and turquoise tones, the space is "about serenity, simplicity, and open spaces," says