

DEPASQUA

When Carmen DePasquale set out to build his vision of the perfect beauty and wellness environment it was elegance and function of design that fueled his motivation. With the goal being to create “a journey of the senses” even the most minute of details was taken into deep consideration. Everything from the shape and slant of the walls, to the fragrance that wafts through the air was considered part of the “journey.” Two years later DEPASQUALE, The Spa was reborn and almost instantly the buzz began. Industry magazines, spa associations, beauty editors and international salon owners joined the over 2,000 clients per week in taking the journey. DEPASQUALE soon found itself on the cover of INTERIORS magazine, inside the pages of VOGUE and ALLURE, and on the receiving end of MODERN SALON’s Salon of the Year and CLUBSPA USA’s Most Distinguished Day Spa of the Year award. But as his business grew, so did his business savvy. Along the way, the new policies, programs and strategies that DePasquale needed to create became just as important as the new treatments and decorative innovations he was acclaimed for. This “Tuscan-toned temple to wellness and beauty,” as INTERIORS described it, came to be about more than just looks.

**by
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spa profile

want to create a smooth flow from service to service. You must always remember that the client is there to have a relaxing and enjoyable visit. The experience itself is just as important as the results." To keep the pace flowing smoothly, Mattos stresses the importance of booking all appointments with the proper time for changing, showering and rest between services. It's also wise to allot time for the sterilization and clean up of each room. "This is especially important when booking multiple appointments for a client. Every step of the way should be comfortable and relaxing as well as effective, with the entire experience geared toward the senses. It's like conducting an orchestra, making sure that each note is hit and that when put together, they all work in concert with each other."

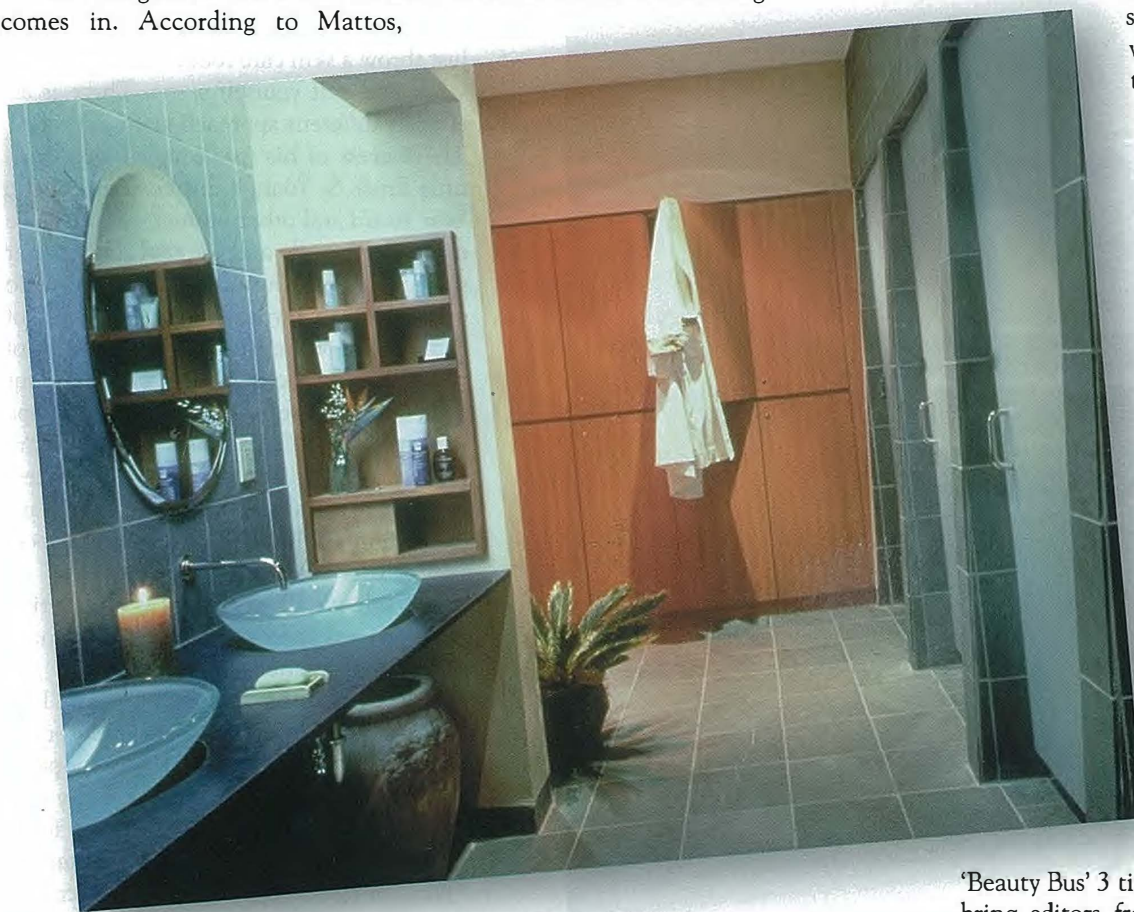
How does DEPASQUALE create a more harmonious visit for their clients? "Most spa rooms are designed to be multi-purpose so that clients can get a facial, a massage and other body therapies without the disruption of having to change rooms" said Mattos. Once in the room, a client's visit can be made even more seamless through technology. "Computerization is essential with the issue of timing. It gives instant access to client and treatment-oriented information and helps facilitate the visit in ways that a paper system simply cannot." However, the use of automation extends to more than just booking appointments and creating client profiles at DEPASQUALE. "Our steam system and steeping tubs are on timers run by a computer, as is each room's individual sound system and climate control. Everything can be pre-set for the clients experience to keep the aesthetician focused on performing the service. This has made such a difference in the flow of treatments. I would suggest that a spa at least consider computerization before they open their doors."

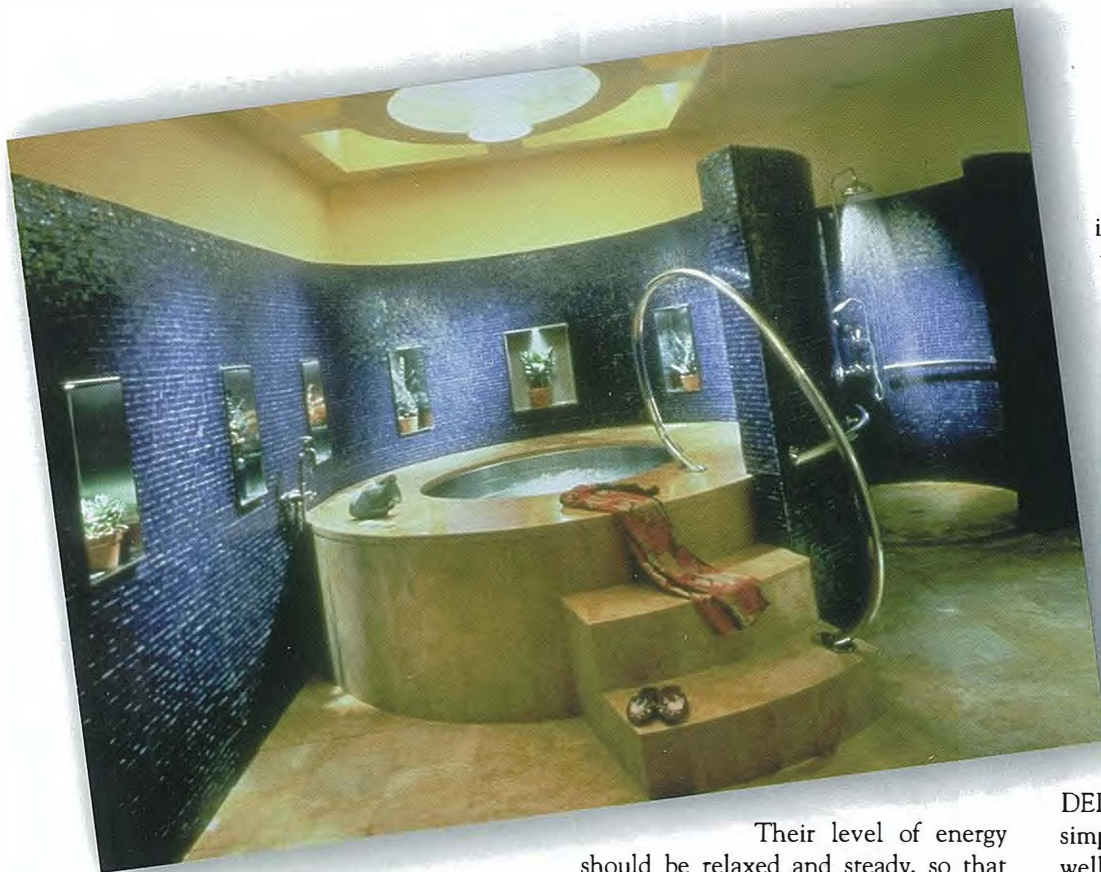
How to get the clients in those doors is where the art of marketing comes in. According to Mattos,



knowing who you're marketing to is just as important as knowing your product. "It's not like selling beauty or style in general. Within a spa environment you have so many different services, each one distinct in its own identity. For instance, you would not market a lymphatic drainage massage to a teenager. You would direct your advertising to those suffering from excess swelling or sports injuries," said Mattos. How you market a lymphatic drainage is also important. "Cross-referencing with the medical industry is a great way to market therapeutic treatments," Mattos adds. Other marketing venues that she mentions include print ads, billboards, corporate gift-giving programs, in-spa promotions, and of course, the Internet. "We utilize everything from our website, to our billboard to promote awareness. We host a

'Beauty Bus' 3 times a year, in which we bring editors from all the major consumer beauty magazines in for services. We have instituted a very successful gift-giving program geared towards indi-





viduals and corporations *and* we have begun hosting 'Solutions Seminars' to educate clients. The key is to be consistent and steady, exploring all your options. Where there is information there is opportunity."

With an influx of clients and a system that flows smoothly, the third point

Their level of energy should be relaxed and steady, so that the client instantly feels comfortable and secure," Mattos said. But what about knowledge? "Continued education is something that we recognize in the salon but tend to overlook in the spa. Being certified is only the beginning. The business of wellness commands that we have a deep understanding of the body beyond just what feels

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— *Staffing* — is the foundation of a spa's success. According to Mattos, a spa owner needs to look at many more elements when hiring an aesthetician than a salon owner does when hiring a stylist. "Obviously, technical skills and experience are important, but in the business of wellness *temperament* is crucial. You can't have an aesthetician who is self-centered, cold or anti-social. A good aesthetician needs an innate sense of compassion and warmth, as well as the ability to pamper a client.

good or what makes us look better. All of our aestheticians are trained through ®AVANCÉ's Root Cause Analysis, which is the most comprehensive way to approach a client. We also send our staff for continual training at the University of Aesthetics and Wellness. Only through higher education and consistent learning can we really advance in the spa industry."

Renown Spa Consultant and DEPASQUALE Associate Debra Bouton agrees with Mattos, stating "It's

important not only to attract the right people, but also to find ways to keep them. When it's all said and done, it doesn't matter how good your vichy shower is or how great the treatments are, if you don't have the right people you won't succeed." Bouton suggests that a key question to ask spa owners is "Would you work for you?" Bouton cites DEPASQUALE's "Employee's Right To Grow" program, which uses a level system, split shifts and a strong focus on environment, education and benefits as a great foundation. Bouton also points out that

DEPASQUALE recognizes even the simplest aspects of staffing, like placing well-worded want ads, creating recruitment programs and using specially-trained interviewers. This way, the hiring process effectively weeds through candidates who aren't right and communicates the spa's vision to those who *are*.

If DEPASQUALE sounds like the ultimate spa environment, it has become so through trial and error just as much as it has through planning. Carmen DePasquale is the first to admit that even the best laid plans may have to be changed, revamped and reconsidered. "When I sat down and created the plans for DEPASQUALE, The Spa, many of the ideas were so new that we were literally forging ahead into uncharted territory. Some of them came out as planned, some came out better than planned, and with others it was sheer chaos. It took us many months and many dollars to get everything up to the standard that I wanted." Now, follow up and follow through are the most important tasks the staff at DEPASQUALE face everyday. To Carmen, the future goal is clear, "Anyone can do something right *once*. Real success, however, comes from doing it right over and over again." ■