

## TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

# Hoteliers around the world are shifting their focus to define their wellness strategies': Accor

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*A new white paper from Accor features insights on the evolving role of wellness in hospitality. Image credit: Accor*

By AMIRAH KEATON

Global hospitality group Accor is advancing its commitment to optimizing guest experiences.

Its latest white paper, [Making Waves: Rethinking Spa and Wellness Design for a Modern Era](#), features insights on the evolving role of wellness in hospitality. Presenting strategies for using cutting-edge design to increase revenue in this area, Accor outlines the degree to which seasoned travelers are moving beyond traditional amenities, making holistic environments a baseline expectation of today's luxury stay.

"Wellness has become a leading driver and differentiator for us, particularly in the areas of luxury and lifestyle design," said Anne Becker Olins, global chief design and technical services officer of ultra-luxury and luxury at Accor, in a statement.

"It is also an exciting area of design that touches the hearts and lifts the spirits of our guests more profoundly than almost any other aspect of the hotel experience," Ms. Olins said. "With Making Waves, we aim to educate, inspire and innovate the ways in which the hospitality industry approaches wellness and well-being design."

## Wellness design 101

According to Accor's research, wellness is a priority for 79 percent of its guests.

Citing Skift's 2023 Luxury Traveler Survey, industry-wide findings indicate that 80 percent of travelers consider well-being a factor in travel decisions.

To address this demand, Accor is rethinking wellness design with an emphasis on personalization, social connection and operational efficiency. Its study hones in on transforming centers such as the hotel gym, spa and salon.

"We are approaching spa design in the same way - for the people who live next door or who work down the street," said Emlyn Brown, global SVP of well-being, strategy, design and development at Accor, in a statement.

"We are creating clubs, thermal facilities, wellness centers, and fitness offerings that are on par, or better, than the local gym," Ms. Brown said. "Our hotel spas are where the locals want to go to get fit, to be social, and to feel better."



*Raffles London at The OWO's Pillar Wellbeing offers guests a gym, pool and movement studio, accompanied by an on-property Guerlain Spa. Image credit: Accor*

Authors stress the importance of thematic design, moving beyond standardized layouts to create distinct wellness journeys. Elements such as sensory-driven spaces, biophilic design and technology integration are highlighted as critical to enhancing the guest experience.

"If we treat our spa design with the same level of planning, expert consultation, and consideration for the overall guest experience that we do with restaurant design, we will change the game," said Ms. Olins, in a statement.

Accor's report additionally advocates for a broader approach to wellness, incorporating community-driven spaces and club-style fitness offerings.

The company sees significant opportunity in membership models, which provide recurring revenue and deepen brand engagement. Additionally, the rise of social bathing and communal wellness rituals is identified as an emerging trend shaping guest preferences.

One key tenant of the whitepaper is the "avatar approach," wherein guest profiles inform design decisions. By understanding consumer behaviors, fitness preferences and spending habits, hospitality brands can tailor wellness spaces to different demographics.

This strategy ensures that hotel spas and fitness centers remain relevant and adaptable over time.

### **Wellness as a market driver**

Beyond aesthetics, Accor's whitepaper stresses the need for operational efficiency, highlighting how wellness design can boost guest satisfaction and revenue for hospitality businesses.

The company suggests that hotels prioritize high-impact, profitable services while eliminating underperforming areas such as oversized treatment rooms or underutilized yoga studios. Flexible, multipurpose spaces that cater to both local members and hotel guests are seen as a key driver of success.

Making Waves states that, according to boutique advisory firm RLA's Wellness Real Estate Report 2024, the biggest gainers last year were hotels with minor wellness plays, generating less than \$1 million or 10 percent of revenue from wellness, garnering a 26 percent increase in TRevPAR, or average total revenue per available room.

Accor also addresses the role of technology in modern wellness facilities. From self-guided fitness experiences to AI-powered recovery treatments, digital integration is positioned as essential for meeting guest expectations while streamlining operations.