

HOSPITALITY DESIGN

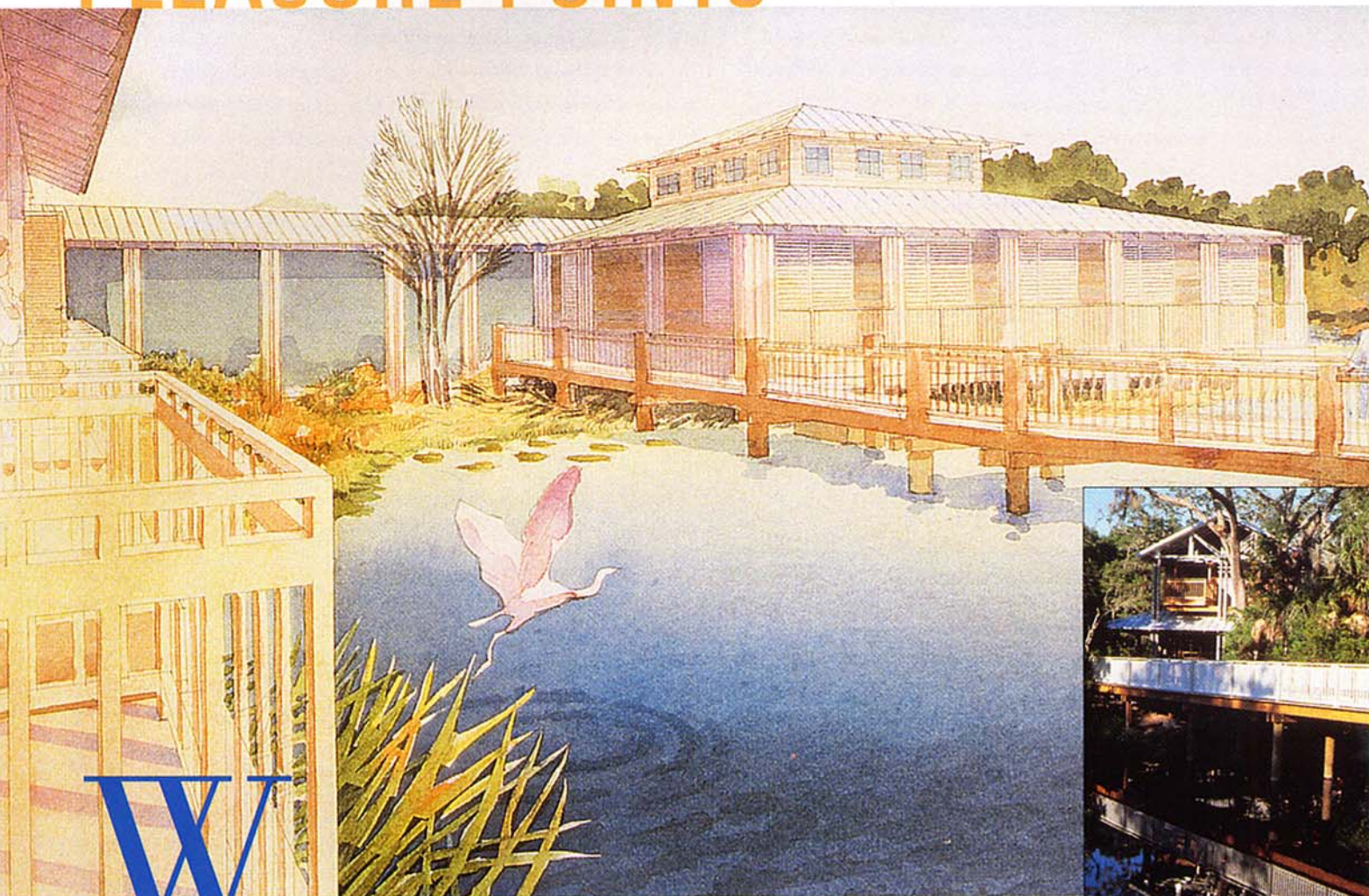
special issue

20

people, projects,
and ideas
that are defining
our industry

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PLEASURE POINTS



Amelia Island Plantation Resort & Spa

Watsu, tai chi, qi gong, and ayurvedic are slipping into our vocabulary as ancient practices—and wisdom—are resurrected and blended, impacting spa design. A cultural shift has created a soaring demand for the spa experience, as all ages attempt to destress, preserve youth, and attain a mind/body balance. And more and more properties are hearing the call—adding spas in order to keep that competitive edge.

This 2,000-year-old industry grew from “800 million in 1992 to 7.5 billion last year,” says Dan Fryda of New York-based Spa Technologies International. We are not only high-tech but also high-touch. And, we are maturing enough to reject novelty therapies like chocolate wraps in favor of legitimacy.

Europe, with more than 1,000 spas between France and Romania, has long been considered the leader. The Far East, however, has extraordinary spas, as does the United States, which knows how to make them profitable. Medical and day spas are the fastest growing, as we obsess about health while enduring a

lifestyle that permits only abbreviated vacations. Two new projects suggest the bar for spa design is rising. Opening in August, the spa at Amelia Island Plantation Resort in Florida “pushes the envelope for the American market,” says Robert D. Henry of New York-based Robert D. Henry Architects. The 14,000-square-foot eco-sensitive design is centered around a meditation garden. Signature treatments, such as watsu, a tai chi/water ballet combo, are offered on a smaller island accessed by a foot bridge.

In June, Spa Mystique, a massive 30,000-square-foot spa with 34 treatment rooms and two Japanese furo pools opened at the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles. Using feng shui principles, the elements of water, fire, metal, wood, and earth are expressed uniquely by a collaboration between Stephen Francis Jones of SFJones Architects, Marina Del Ray, California, and Teixeira, Los Angeles.—MC