

Beautiful

Pellikaan took its client David Lloyd Leisure to Europe to learn about spa. The result is the largest Amida spa to date.

SIZE MATTERS, and when it comes to spa the bigger the better. That's the view of Richard van Emmerik, managing director of Pellikaan Construction in the UK, which has been designing and building leisure facilities including spas for 20 years.

"A larger spa facility allows you to provide a true day spa experience with a range of hot and cold experiences, relaxation areas as well as a food and beverage operation. The result is that guests will stay for longer," says van Emmerik.

This opinion is shared by Paul Guyer, group property director for David Lloyd Leisure, who together with Pellikaan has delivered DLL's latest Amida Spa at the new £10m club in Farnham, Surrey.

At 13,875sq ft, the spa is the company's largest to date. Bigger than the next largest in the group at Chelsea Harbour, the Farnham site is one of five Amida spas in the company's 90-strong estate and pushes the boundaries in more ways than one.

Pellikaan, which built the Amida club in Hampton for previous owners Stax Leisure, was keen to show DLL how the concept of spa is embraced in Europe, where the key difference is scale, says van Emmerik: "Spa is not new in the UK, but sites are typically smaller. In Holland and Germany spas have a wider range of experiences and a lot more relaxation space, both inside and out."

The team visited a number of sites including monte mare in Bedburg, Germany. Designed and built by Pellikaan, the swimming pool and wellness centre opened in 2010 and features a variety of saunas and pools set in a garden. Indoors, additional saunas are available as well as relaxation areas, feature showers, an Indonesian mud pool, solarium and treatment rooms.

The visits made a deep impression on DLL, causing them to rethink the design of their spa at Farnham.

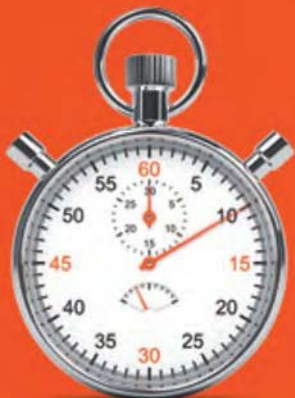
"Seeing the popularity of the spas in Europe encouraged us to evolve our design and build something a lot bigger than ever before," says Guyer.

They were already a few weeks into the build when the team decided to alter the internal arrangement. Having such a close working relationship with Pellikaan allowed the team to respond quickly to the changes, sacrificing a court in the sports hall and converting this into additional spa space to accommodate an indoor salt pool on the ground floor with a 280sq m relaxation area and two deep relaxation rooms on the first floor.

In addition to its size, the Amida spa differs from its sister sites with its range of spa experiences. The facility offers a 25m lap pool, five indoor and outdoor saunas, two steam rooms, a salt grotto, ice chute, tepidarium, hydrotherapy pool and a salt pool. Six treatment rooms, a nail bar, pedispa and a dedicated spa bar as well three relaxation rooms complete the offer.

Buckingham Pools was responsible for the wet facilities at the club including the main 25m indoor pool and the indoor children's pool.

Within the indoor spa suite, the company supplied an indoor cold plunge pool and a relaxation pool of infinity edge design. The temperature of the 1.2m x 1.2m plunge pool is controlled by a chilling system that maintains the water at approximately 13°C.



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The infinity pool measures 8.2m x 3.4m with a constant water depth of 800mm. The pool finishes out of ground and is accessed by a deck side step arrangement linked to the internal pool tiled steps. It features underwater lighting and salt is automatically dosed into the pool.

Outside, there is a 20m x 6m feature swimming pool again with a constant depth of 1.2m. The pool is installed with four air loungers and four bucket seats which have a range of therapy jets and air track in the zone for back and body massage. The pool also features underwater lighting and the addition of salt.

A 3m circular tiled spa pool sits adjacent to the outdoor pool. The spa pool has a range of therapy jets and can seat up to eight bathers, and is finished in porcelain mosaics with underwater lighting.

All pools have been finished in a range of tiles and mosaics, and are served with independent commercial filtration and water treatment systems.

Although the spa is attached to the club, it has its own entrance which is an

important factor in creating a distinct identity for the spa and also a key consideration for day visitors. Evolving the Amida concept allows DLL to attract a wider demographic of visitors. Club members typically hail from a 20-minute drive time, but day spa visitors will travel from much further afield especially with prices starting at £49.

While DLL is keen to attract day visitors to the spa, it has been "very encouraged" by the take up of the new facility among club members, says Guyer. The club opened with just over 2,250 members of which more than 60 per cent of adult members have signed up to the elite membership package, which includes access to the spa.

In fact, they've been so encouraged by the early adoption of the facility, that plans are underway to add the spa concept to an existing DLL club this year and another in 2013.

"We are taking a cautious approach to where we introduce these facilities; the demographics have to be strong and we need to have the space within an

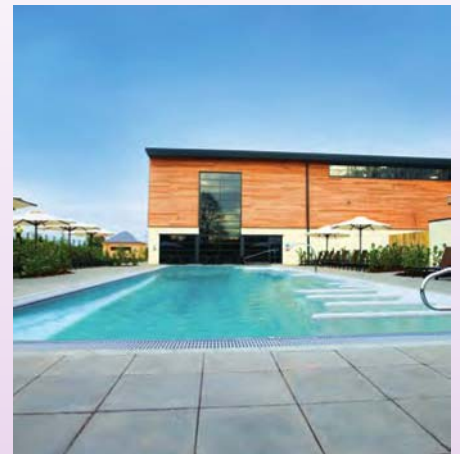
existing club that we can convert.

Fortunately, many of our existing clubs do provide the space we need and have the demographics to support the model," says Guyer.

The challenge now is to operate and manage the new concept effectively, which will involve some education of both staff and visitors. In fact, DLL will be visiting the monte mare site in Germany again to learn more about how it manages the facility, and how these practices may be translated to the UK, says Guyer.

"We can learn a lot from many of the European operators who have been successfully running such facilities for much longer than we have. We have seen how well the concept can work (in Holland and Germany), and there's no reason why it can't be as successful here as part of a bigger health and tennis facility such as the one we have opened at Farnham." ■

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