



AGING GRACEFULLY

... OR MAYBE
THAT SHOULD BE
"SPA-FULLY"

IF YOU HAVE EVER VISITED AN OLDER

relative in an assisted living community or nursing home, you may have been struck by the fact that there was a beauty salon on site for the residents, despite it being such a small community. Certainly, many of the ladies who live in these facilities cannot imagine a world without a weekly trip to their hair stylist. But maybe there is a deeper explanation behind this. For a large portion of our aging population, the beauty salon has served as their social gathering place, in addition to providing services that boost their spirits.

Today's aging adult has a much wider range of options when choosing a place to live than they did just a few years ago. Developers have been responsive to the needs of our aging population, and residential options now include adults-only communities, senior apartments, assisted living, independent living and continuing care communities, providing a range of highly independent living options to more assisted living settings.

Regardless of their physical age or where they choose to reside, today's aging adults work hard to look and feel younger than their biological age. Older adults are embracing Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) therapies and spa and wellness services in record numbers as a part of their "intelligent aging" program. Is it shaking up the landscape of spa and aging services? You bet!

What is the salon of the future?

No doubt you have heard the statistics before. The average age of the American population continues to rise, and as a nation, older adults are tipping the scales. In the year 2000, the average age of the U.S. population was 35.3 years. By 2030, the average age is projected to be 39 years. The fastest growing segment of the population is the oldest of the old—those over 85 years of age. And we have not even begun to talk about the coming tsunami of baby boomers that are just starting to hit their retirement years. The Population Reference Bureau estimates the total number of boomers to be somewhere between 72 and 79 million, depending on how you define a baby boomer. The original group of baby boomers—those born between 1946 and 1964, has been increased by inbound immigration. Regardless of which number you agree with, that is a whole lot of aging going on!

BY PATTI BIRO

The expansion of spa-ing grows and enhances the role of the beauty salon

From Manhattan to Minnesota, Texas to Sacramento, older adults and active retirees are seeking out and using spa and wellness services. In response to the demands of the aging population, service providers are creating new versions of what we consider spa and wellness venues and the services they offer. Opportunities abound for enhancing the quality of life as we age—at the same time providing some economic “oomph” for the spa industry. Spa owners, operators and professionals can benefit from considering the needs and desires of the aging population in their communities.

The new service models are redefining what a salon is by adding to an ever growing menu of spa services such as massage, skin care, body treatments and nail care. More often than not, spas that target older adults are also providing a full complement of wellness services, including yoga, meditation, reiki, stretching classes and other CAM (complementary and alternative medicine) therapies. Classes, lectures, nutritional counseling and personal coaching are becoming common options.

What is driving the movement?

Data from the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM), a branch of the National Institutes of Health, estimated in 2007 that approximately 38 percent of adults use CAM therapies. Broadly defined, CAM therapies are treatments outside of traditional medicine that are used to prevent or treat diseases. The most popular of these therapies are natural products, deep breathing, meditation, chiropractic and osteopathic services, massage, yoga and diet-based therapies.

Older adults use these therapies—and the rate of use increases with age. Women are more likely than men to try alternative therapies, and as anyone who has recently visited an older adult community knows, the majority of residents are female. Education plays a role too. Adults with higher levels of education are more likely to use CAM therapies. Older adults are embracing CAM therapies as way to deal with the less attractive aspects of aging, such as pain and reduced mobility. Nationally recognized support groups such as the Arthritis Foundation are helping to fuel the movement by providing information about massage and other therapies on their websites. Massage Envy recently partnered with the Arthritis Foundation to promote massage and share information about its benefits in a one-day promotion called “Healing Hands for Arthritis.”

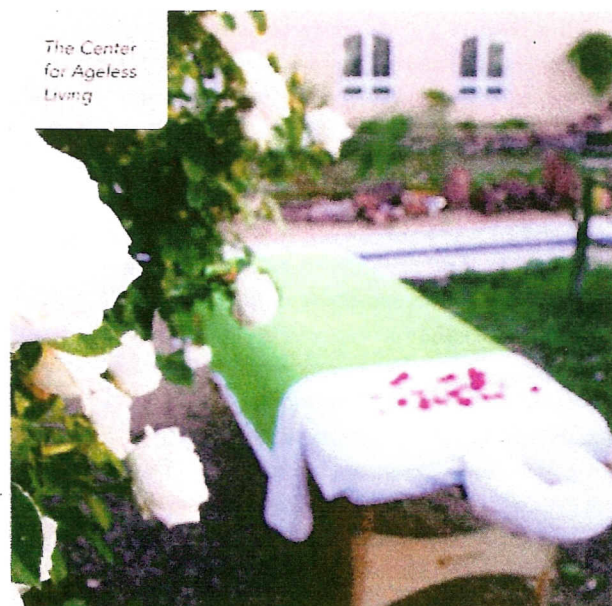
As older adults navigate the challenges of an aging body and a strong desire to look and feel good for as long as possible, it is no surprise that they would turn to spa and wellness therapies. Innovators in services for mature and aging adults are blending the best aspects of spa and salon services—improving well-being and sense of self in a manner that is both caregiving and innovative.

Spa and salon services target the aging population

Optimal health, well-being and balance of mind, body and spirit are certainly not just for the younger spa goer. I have heard it said that aging is hard work—and anything that enhances the journey is a good thing!

The approaches to providing spa and wellness related services to the aging population are as diverse as the choices of spas and spa-lons for the general population. Services can be provided on site at the residential community, off campus or by an individual who works as an independent contractor for a senior residential community. Holding “spa days” as special events for residents is one way of introducing spa services to a community. Regardless of the venue and business model, this trend is here to stay!

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The Center for Ageless Living



SNAPSHOTS OF DIFFERENT MODELS:

The Center for Ageless Living

Imagine receiving a spa service of your choice every week in a lovely location just 30 miles south of Albuquerque, NM, featuring a salt water pool, organic garden and bistro, along with support services to make life easy. The Center for Ageless Living in Los Lunas, NM features a full service day spa, hair salon, gourmet food and healing lifestyle services for every resident as part of their personal touch therapy. Their motto of "Grow Ageless" is incorporated into all aspects of the center.

Director Suzette Lindemuth is a visionary who launched the assisted living/spa community in 2005. Inspiration for the concept came from several years of owning and managing residential care homes. "Massage services were always a part of the services for residents," she explains. When the Los Lunas property became available in 1990, Lindemuth had the space to build the type of community she had always envisioned. The Garden Gate Spa is on the campus of the community and open to the public. They offer a full range of spa and salon services, and are the only true day spa in the small community of Los Lunas. Residents of the center have the option to select a spa or salon service every week, as well as participate in classes and other wellness activities. The spa is also a perk for employees at the center.

Lindemuth says that every 10 years brings a change in the elderly population. "It's a new generation of elders, and they are looking for different options than before," he explains. Today, adults with aging parents are looking for communities that offer more wellness-oriented services and spa treatments. Programs focused on range of motion, stretching, yoga and walking are designed to accommodate individuals with differing fitness levels, and are offered each day at the program. "Part of the Center for Ageless Living mission is the belief that the body and mind benefit from personal services that touch the heart and soul," says Lindemuth.

The Center for Ageless Living is also known for their sustainable practices and outstanding food—some of which is grown onsite in their own organic garden. The similarities to a destination spa cannot be missed, except you don't have to leave because you are already home!

Salon PS: redefining the traditional salon

Scott Fisher, founder of Salon PS, LLC, explains the mission of the facility. "We are dedicated to elevating the spirit of our clients through the gateway of their self-image, by providing the highest quality salon and spa services available in a professional and caregiving manner," he says.

When my mother was in an assisted living facility, one of our favorite mother-daughter activities was taking a trip to a local salon to enjoy a service. Unfortunately, arranging

this simple pleasure was an extensive process. It entailed locating a nearby salon that was willing to accommodate a guest with mobility limitations, having several conversations with service providers about necessary adaptations for her health issues, transporting my mother and her wheelchair and juggling schedules—all just to enjoy a joint manicure/pedicure service. The whole trip could easily take a half day for just one hour of service! I am happy to report that a better option is emerging in senior communities across the country, making it much easier to share a salon experience with an older parent or loved one.

With more than 150 salons in seven states and more locations popping up every month, Salon PS, LLC is one of the largest operators of high quality, professional salons and "spa-lons" operating inside senior living communities. Their headquarters are located in the greater Cleveland, OH area. According to CEO John J. Polatz, the beauty salon has not been a strong marketing feature or revenue source for the operators of many senior living communities. Management has historically struggled with operational issues, and many salons have suffered from a dated appearance, inconsistent hours of operation and limited services. Salon PS addresses all of those issues with a salon "makeover" and a professional management approach that provides the high level of services that residents expect. In less than three years, Salon PS has not only changed the physical aspects of the beauty shop, it is also addressing the cultural connection and social hub that a salon brings to a community. Every Salon PS partner community has the opportunity to add massage and facial services to their menu of traditional hair salon services, and most are embracing the chance to offer an amenity that sets them apart. Employees and family members enjoy the option of using the salon and spa services. In many cases, the prices for services are maintained—and sometimes even lowered. Building on the concept of cultural connection, the salon functions as an active partner in the residential community, offering special events such as Manicures N'Movies, Cuts 'N Cards or full makeovers for residents. Initial conversations can lead to a full makeover of the existing salon into a Salon PS partner in as little as a couple of weeks! Employment op-

Salon PS renovated and re-opened Arbour Square's salon at Arbour Square of Harleysville, located in Harleysville, PA.





Bonsai
Holistic
Spa

portunities are enhanced, as spa and salon professionals are all Salon PS employees and enjoy steady hours, benefits and opportunities for advancement and relocation.

Brompton Heights: assisted living bathing experiences

The literal meaning of “spa; sanitas per aquas” is “health through water.” The Brompton Heights, Inc. communities in Western New York have taken this concept to create a personalized spa bathing experience for residents at their Hammister-affiliated communities. For many aging adults, bathing has become a challenge, and the joys of a long, relaxing soak have been lost. Addressing the positive benefits for body and soul bathing experiences has led to a renewed interest in creating this classic spa service in senior residential communities. The program adopted at Brompton Heights focuses on three essential elements: the spa experience, private in-room bathing and individualization. Spa elements include soothing music, massage and lots of towels! Preferred bathing times and special needs are considered in scheduling and assisting residents with their bath. The “spa bath” concept grows in popularity as benefits for residents and staff are reported.

Brompton Heights is not alone, as senior residential communities are taking steps large and small to transform one of the activities of daily life into a spa-like experience. This approach seeks to help guests rediscover the benefits of bathing safely while enhancing the quality of life on a daily basis. Across the country, assisted living, long term care facilities and other senior residential communities are making changes large and small to enhance the opportunity for spa bathing. Both philosophical and physical changes are being made. Small touches such as plants, music, spa robes and massages can go a long way toward transforming a ho-hum routine into a delightful experience.

Bonsai Holistic Spa: The Palms of Largo

Meditation, personal trainers and reflexology, along with exercises in tai chi, balance and stability are just a few of the offerings on the comprehensive menu of services at the Bonsai Holistic Spa. Located in the Tampa Bay metro area in Florida, the spa is set on the 95-acre campus of the Palms of Largo, an intergenerational residential community. The full service day spa is open to campus residents, employees and

local spa guests. The Bonsai may be the only spa attracting potential new fans onsite through The Learning Center, an experiential pre-school for children, ranging in age from eight weeks to five years. The goal of the spa is to create a supportive environment for mind, body and spirit, where individuals can make decisions about their own health. A Zen garden, heated indoor pool, fitness center, boutique and café make those choices much easier! The Bonsai is approximately 3,000 square feet, with a staff of five people who utilize their wide range of talents to service the clients and community five and a half days a week.

Spa director Ian McGarrity has worked at the Bonsai for nearly nine years, first as a contractor. He reports that the most popular course offered at Bonsai is water aerobics. Given that the campus is 95 acres, they have found that it works best to have spa staff actually travel to various residences to provide classes and chair massages when the residents cannot come to them. One of the new additions planned for the coming year is the expansion of the program’s spiritual component with more chapel services.

Spa days, a “spa-on-the-go” concept.

Renée Eaves, the community liaison for North Carolina from Utopia Home Care Inc., is taking the spa concept to senior communities in a series of “spa days,” which she introduced almost two years ago. She was inspired by a favorite aunt, who was residing in an assisted living community at the time. Eaves would often give her an arm or hand massage when she visited. One day a light bulb went off, and her idea to provide “spa days” for residents in assisted living communities across the Chapel Hill area was born. Eaves partners with local skin care consultants to provide complimentary on site mini-manicures, facials, hand massages and makeovers. The program has become so popular at participating facilities that the ladies often line up for these services on “spa day” before they have even started. Eaves says it is not unusual for eager participants to arrive early—and not just for the refreshments! Eaves says that the spa days have become a “road show,” sometimes serving as many as 35 residents at a single event. “It’s important for families to realize that our older loved ones still want to look good, and a spa day is an important event to boost spirits,” Eaves explains. In addition to introducing spa services to residents, the events are an innovative way to market the home health company she represents.

Remington Medical Resorts

Your first clue that this is not just a health care facility is the fact that you are called a “guest” rather than a patient. Great news! If you are recovering from a knee surgery or have had a medical condition that requires rehabilitation, it does not mean you have to forgo your spa services! Hospitality meets health care in the first of its kind hybrid model, which

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combines the personalized services of a resort hotel with medical rehabilitation services. Every guest has a private suite with access to room service, an onsite Internet café, lovely dining facilities, a therapy pool and state of the art fitness equipment. The spa menu includes massage, facial and manicure/pedicure services. With two facilities open in Texas and new facilities planned for Denver, Dallas and Houston, Remington Medical Resorts are raising the bar for what "recovering" looks like. Currently, 20 percent of

the guests use one or more spa services during their stay. Roxanne Moreno, community and physician liaison at the San Antonio facility, has noticed an increase in the number of guests asking for and using spa services since the facility opened two years ago.

Older adults are more likely to have the need for transitional care, like what is provided by the Remington Medical Resort. Their services are designed for the "discriminating patient" who needs a short term of medical therapy or rehabilitation. Their niche is the guest who needs more than home health care but less than a hospital stay. Remington Medical Resort caters to clients who expect five star services in health care and wellness therapies. Based on their growth plans, they are onto a good idea!

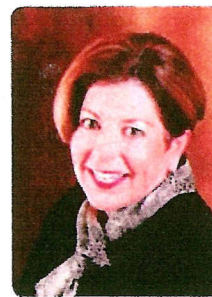
NCCAM'S DEFINITION OF "CAM" THERAPIES

DEFINING CAM IS DIFFICULT, BECAUSE THE field is so broad and is constantly changing. NCCAM defines CAM as a group of diverse medical and health care systems, practices and products that are not generally considered part of conventional medicine. Conventional medicine is practiced by medical doctors (M.D.s) or doctors of osteopathic medicine (D.O.s), along with their allied health professionals, including physical therapists, psychologists and registered nurses. Contrary to what some believe, D.O.s are fully licensed physicians. They provide a full range of services, from prescribing drugs to performing surgery, and employ a "whole person" approach to health care. D.O.s focus special attention on the musculoskeletal system, a system of bones and muscles that makes up about two thirds of the body's mass. They may use osteopathic manipulative treatment, a system of manual therapy, to treat mechanical strains that affect all aspects of the anatomy, relieve pain and improve physiologic function. The boundaries between CAM and conventional medicine are not absolute, and specific CAM practices may become widely accepted over time.

"Complementary medicine" refers to the use of CAM, together with conventional medicine, such as using acupuncture, a family of procedures that originated in traditional Chinese medicine. Acupuncture is the stimulation of specific points on the body by a variety of techniques, including the insertion of thin metal needles through the skin. It is intended to remove blockages in the flow of qi and restore and maintain health, as well as help lessen pain. Most use of CAM by Americans is complementary. "Alternative medicine" refers to the use of CAM in place of conventional medicine. "Integrative medicine" combines treatments from conventional medicine and CAM, for which there is some viable evidence of safety and effectiveness.

The economics of spa services for older adults

Just as it is for the general population of spa enthusiasts, services are primarily a discretionary expense for the older spa goer. Salon PS has made it easy for friends and family to purchase services through their online store. Spa services as part of the total residential package were found only at The Center for Ageless Living, and discounted services for residents are more frequent. The fact that these are services in addition to other monthly costs should not deter the spa or salon professional that is interested in pursuing work targeted to this population. The Pew Research Center reports that adults age 65 and older hold more wealth (home equity and net financial assets) than younger adults, and the Pew study indicates that the gap has increased since 1984. Since 1967, income has increased faster in older adult households than it has in younger homes. This translates into more discretionary dollars for spa and wellness services, combined with a growing population and increasing demand. Not all older adults buy those services for themselves. When one considers all the holidays in a year where an adult son, daughter or friend might send a gift, it would not be hard to keep your favorite older adult delighted with spa services rather than flowers, candy or other typical gift that does not get used! ■



Patti Biro has more than 25 years of experience designing and implementing professional education and client education programs, with a diverse background in corporate education, continuing professional education, medical spa, wellness, bridal and consumer publications. She is the creator of *Elder-ssage™*, a massage therapy program that focuses on aging adults, and the owner of Patti Biro and Associates, a professional education consulting company. Biro is a frequent lecturer for the Day Spa Association and the International Medical Spa Association.