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SEASONS

FOUR SEASONS PRIVATE RESIDENCES BANGKOK AT CHAO PHRAYA RIVER
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



PASSION FOR WELLNESS

From interviewing Bob Marley at the Bahamas to being named Hotelier of the Year, Ingo Schweder’s career has taken some interesting turns – just like the river that inspired him and the team at GOCO Hospitality to design two exceptional spas at the hotels within the gates of Chao Phraya Estate.



Auriga Spa Treatment Room; Capella Bangkok, Thailand

With wellness being one of the fastest growing trends today, Country Group Development commissioned an ensemble cast of luminaries in the health and wellness world to pool their talents for the creation of the rejuvenating spas at Four Seasons Hotel Bangkok and Capella Bangkok at Chao Phraya River.

From spa concept development, to its design, operational services and the creation of rejuvenating treatment menus, Four Seasons’ spa and Capella’s Auriga Spa has been thoughtfully crafted to become the ideal destination for those seeking a spiritual escape. The dream team is made up of Kitiporn Chanda, Manager of Design & Development; Josephine Leung, Group Director of Design & Development; and Ingo Schweder, CEO and Founder of GOCO Hospitality.

With facilities and a waterfront setting that cultivate a culture of escapism, the spa at Four Seasons Hotel Bangkok at Chao Phraya River is focused around an urban resort concept; a sanctuary to unwind in the heart of Bangkok, nestled in a protected oasis on the riverfront boasting a panorama that is uniquely stunning and beautiful. “What makes these two hotels provide such unique experiences is the river,” Ingo says. “Writers, poets and lovers are all inspired as they relax by the pulse of the city, so we made sure the design of each facility drew on the river’s vivaciousness, as well as matching the aspirations of the sophisticated clientele who will choose to spend their time at a luxury spa in Bangkok.”



Ingo Schweder
CEO and Founder, GOCO Hospitality



Elegant, subtle and calm, Four Seasons’ spa incorporates Thai design elements and personalised amenities that are influenced by warm colour tones, and offers a unique spa suite with a vitality pool and indoor garden, accompanied with a variety of services and facilities including a spacious consultation and lifestyle area. On the floor above, a state-of-the-art gym and mind & body studio will deliver fitness classes such as yoga and Pilates.

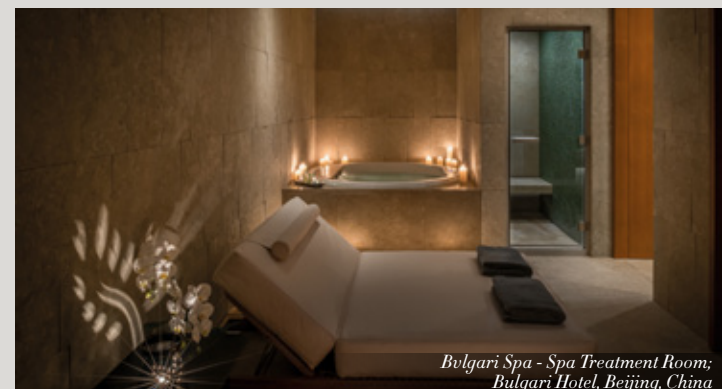
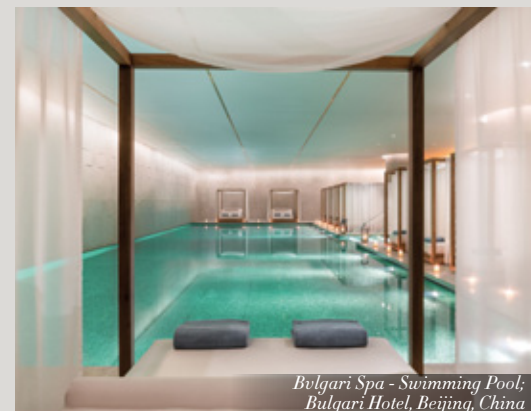
Ingo describes Capella Bangkok’s Auriga Spa as exuding “a sophisticated pan-Asian design, very modern and sleek with darker tones and strong moods.” It will feature outstanding large spa suites with Jacuzzi bathtubs and gender-specific heat and water facilities featuring heated loungers, saunas, steam rooms, vitality pools and experience shower.

That Mr Schweder has a floral way with words should come as little surprise to those familiar with the celebrated hotelier’s achievements. Prior to moving into the hospitality sector in the mid-1980s, the German national worked as an intern in New York City for legendary pop artist Andy Warhol’s Interview magazine. It was there, while still only in his 20s, that he caught the wanderlust bug.

“I knew already back then that I wanted to travel the world, meet extraordinary people and learn from them – working in hospitality seemed like the perfect way to achieve this,” he says.

Ingo spent the next decade honing his craft while working with some of the biggest names in the industry. His resume reads like a who’s who of high-end hotel brands. The early ‘90s saw him launch the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Hong Kong before moving on to become general manager for the Shangri-La Kowloon and subsequently the Shangri-La Taipei. He later moved to Oberoi Hotels in 1996 and was instrumental in establishing the group as India’s premier five-star hotel brand.

As a member of the operating board of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group from 2000 to 2006, Ingo was responsible for the setting up of 15 global resorts and spas, and was subsequently showered with accolades including ‘Spa Personality of the Year’ and ‘Excellence in Hospitality Design’. A wake-up call in the form of a medical scare then encouraged him to opt for a more holistic approach to



hospitality with a shift in focus almost exclusively to wellness. In 2007, GOCO Hospitality was born and now offers a vast range of professional services, ranging from consultancy to development and management.

"We are all about wellness hospitality. Whether that means 1,000 square metres on the river in Bangkok, or 500 acres in the rainforest in Costa Rica," he says. "We create destinations where people go to refresh, rejuvenate and leave feeling better."

Since its inception a decade ago, GOCO Hospitality has gone on to conceptualise and create wellness spaces for Bulgari Hotels and Resorts in Shanghai, Dubai, Beijing, Tokyo and Moscow, as well as Four Seasons Hotel Tokyo and the iconic Capella Maldives.

Following on firmly from Ingo's solo career, the firm has made a name for itself working on exceptional projects in great locations. Ingo feels the latest venture, however, is one of the most challenging – and rewarding – to date.

"When a major project like Chao Phraya Estate comes in, it moves the centre of gravity in the city," he says. "With this in mind, we have created spas that are not only for international visitors but commensurate with people living in Thailand, in terms of their design and their price point."

From the comparatively minor, albeit essential, task of creating the treatment menu cards, through to high-level marketing

strategies and five-year demand forecasts, GOCO is now overseeing the development, design and implementation of the spas at both of Chao Phraya Estate's flagship five-star hotels. Ingo's eye for design plays a significant role – and the spas at Four Seasons Hotel Bangkok and Capella Bangkok certainly aren't short of elegant inspiration. True to the firm's nature, both take full advantage of the location while offering state-of-the-art amenities.

"To give you a taste, the spa at Four Seasons Hotel Bangkok includes an exclusively private suite that seamlessly blends indoor and outdoor experiences, accompanied with its own private vitality pool for extended treatments and relaxation time," he says. "Meanwhile, Capella Bangkok's Auriga Spa combines the resort's indulgence and rejuvenating amenities, which include the wonderful riverside garden courtyard and fitness and yoga deck facing the river, with our dedicated foot treatment area to offer guests Thailand's signature treatments in a unique ambiance."

Ingo Schweder may have come a long way from his early days in New York with Andy Warhol interviewing music legends, but he has never lost the sense of creativity and adventure instilled in him during those formative days.

"I have never really worked. I just do what I love," he says.

WELLNESS TRENDS FOR 2018

Ingo Schweder's spa and wellness insights

GUT FEELING

Although there's still much to learn about the gut microbiome, Ingo believes a greater understanding of the organisms in our digestive system can help tackle a plethora of illnesses from mental health problems through to brain diseases.

DYNAMIC APPROACH

The boom in organic food production and subsequent awareness will continue to grow in 2018. According to Ingo, biodynamic food will be at the forefront of this trend with farms becoming self-contained ecological systems.

FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS

Rather than going solo to the gym, more and more people are getting involved in group exercise activities as a way to add fun to the task of keeping fit. Ingo says this pushes people to go further with their exercise than they might do individually.

MIND YOUR BUSINESS

With more than 1,300 mindfulness apps on the App Store, Ingo says mental wellness is increasingly front of mind for many people looking to overcome the stresses of modern life.