

Optimism for Thailand's post-COVID spa and wellness landscape prevails

For months now, almost all wellness-themed destinations have been off-limits – gyms laid bare, parks gated shut, and spas closed indefinitely. This lack of access to wellness spaces, paired with a newly acquired understanding of health and immunity, has begun to change the landscape of wellness across Thailand. As consumers adjust to their own idea of 'new normal', wellness is expected to form a more significant part of our daily lives than ever before.

"The COVID-19 experience has presented a unique opportunity for the wellness industry in Thailand. As one of the world's top ten spa markets, it is well equipped to adapt to a new era of post-COVID wellness," says Ingo Schweder, Founder and CEO of GOCO Hospitality. "We can already see a substantial change in how people are consuming wellness, driven by new insights into their own health and immunity."

GOCO Hospitality is a world-leading wellness firm that conceptualises, designs and manages the latest wellness developments for the world's top hospitality and real estate brands, based in Bangkok. In addition to the various wellness development projects his company is engaged in worldwide – including the newly developed Four Seasons and Capella properties on the banks of the Chao Phraya River and a \$16 billion luxury mixed-use wellness destination resort along the Red Sea – Schweder is looking closer to home in order to help local industries incorporate wellness and help usher in a new era of wellness-driven real estate investment.

According to the Global Wellness Institute, the global wellness market is valued at a whopping \$4.5 trillion, and has seen year-on-year growth nearly twice as fast as global economic growth. As of 2019, wellness real estate market was valued at \$134.3 billion, with Asia-Pacific making up \$46.8 billion of that market value.



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"Because of the current crisis, the benefits of wellness practices such as thermal bathing, mind & body workouts and traditional medicine and therapies are now stepping firmly into the mainstream," he adds. "As a result, businesses, hotels and real estate owners in Thailand will need to be nimble and innovative to accommodate the consumer's new drive for wellness-based living. Wellness practices already adopted in the offices of GOCO Hospitality, such as air purifiers on every floor, unlimited alkaline water and daily wellness lunch, will become commonplace across industries."

Wellness real estate also benefits buyers, developers and operators. From a buyer's point of view, wellness lifestyle real estate typically achieves faster value appreciation than traditional real estate.

Developers benefit from higher returns as a result of the price premiums achieved from the sale of wellness lifestyle real estate units.

"Crises like this one present as many challenges as they do opportunities," Schweder concluded.

"Those living in Thailand already have incredible access to spas and wellness, but in the post-COVID landscape, I see a new wellness standard that will redefine the places where we live, work and play."

For more information about GOCO Hospitality, visit www.gocohospitality.com.

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