

European Spa

THE NO.1 MAGAZINE

FOR SPA AND WELLNESS



Issue 39 | April/May 2014

www.europeanspamagazine.com

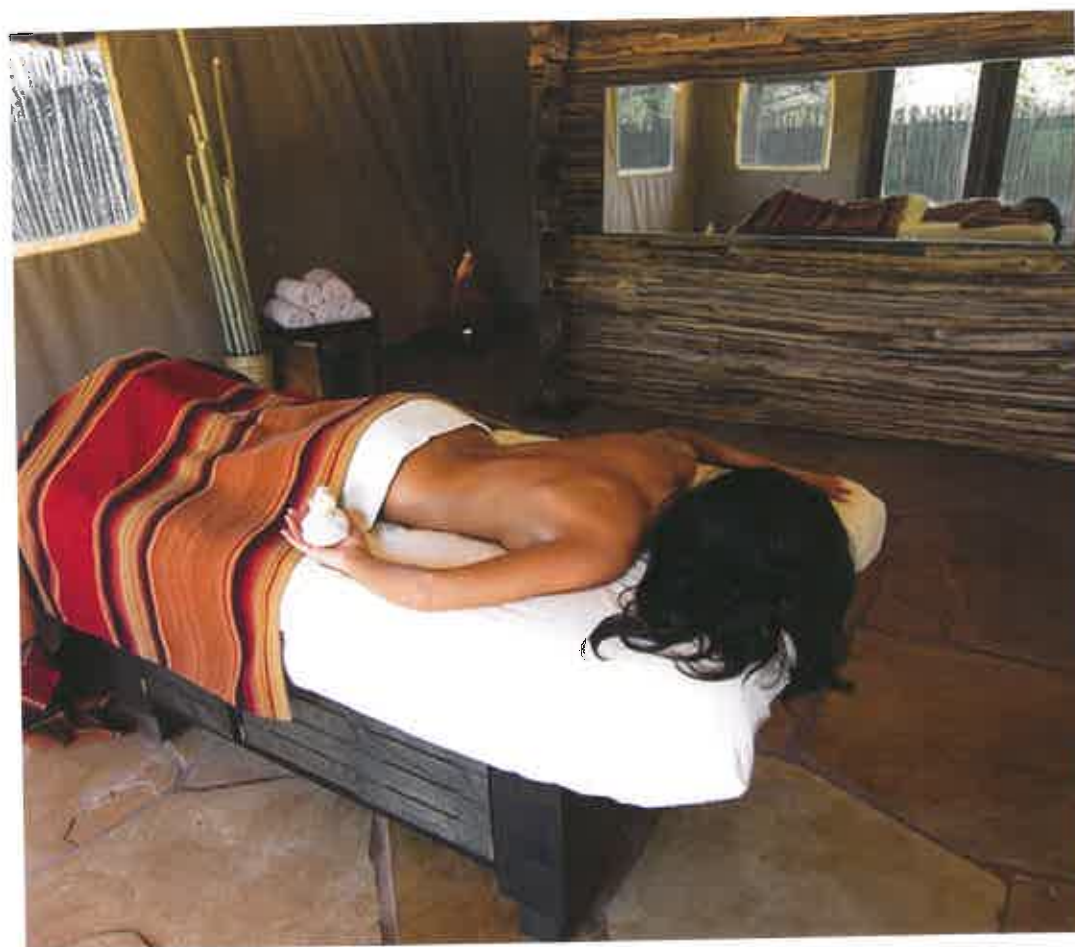


DORMY HOUSE SPA
The best of British design in
a historic Cotswolds setting

OAKWORKS' ROOTS
Furniture maker's growth from
small acorn to top of the tree

CLINIQUE LA PRAIRIE
Inside the refurbished medical
spa with a wholly holistic heart

TANTALISING TANNING
Our Expert Guide to flaunting
tanning and skin-finish



From left: Oakworks furniture pairs exceptional comfort with adaptable style; the Clodagh Libra pedispa-massage table; the Clodagh Leo treatment table

Heart of oak

Oakworks CEO Jeff Riach talks to *European Spa* about how the company earned its reputation for beautiful, ergonomic spa furniture



"The goal is to make the treatment bed disappear in the customer experience - the connection between the therapist and the client is the only thing that should matter"

Jeff Riach
CEO, Oakworks

From its base in Pennsylvania, USA, Oakworks has established a global reputation as a leading designer and manufacturer of spa tables, chairs and treatment beds.

Jeff and Linda Riach set up their company in 1977, producing handmade treatment tables with a specific aim in mind. As Jeff tells it, the couple wanted to create "beautiful products that support a therapist's ergonomic health and client's comfort, while ensuring good value through high quality construction".

This attention to the wellbeing of the practitioner, says Riach, is crucial in order to facilitate an optimal experience for the guest. Certainly, it is one of the design principles which has helped set Oakworks apart from its competitors.

As well as caring for spa guests and professionals, the company has also maintained strong commitments to both the environment and its employees.

Oakworks manufactures products that are built to last while having the smallest possible impact on the environment. As a Global Cooling Partner with Trees for the Future, the company has financed the planting of more than 375,000 trees - completely offsetting its carbon footprint in recent years.

Furthermore, Oakworks' manufacturing facility offers an extensive range of ergonomic work stations which ensure the optimum health of almost 200 people employed there.

The business is now divided into three core divisions: Oakworks Spa, Oakworks Medical and Oakworks

Massage. All three continue to create innovative and intelligently designed spa and medical furniture for a luxury client base across the world, including high-end hotel chains such as Ritz-Carlton, Waldorf Astoria and Shangri-La, as well as British spa brand ESPA.

European Spa spoke to Jeff Riach about what the future holds for Oakworks.

What makes Oakworks products so special?

We have been designing products for the spa and medical markets for more than 35 years. We understand that making clients comfortable and supporting the ergonomic needs of therapists delivers the best massage. There is nothing more important to the spa experience.

What key factors should be considered when installing your products?

For electric beds and chairs, having the electricity come up from the floor under the unit or very close by is preferential. For plumbed products, like our Clodagh Libra, plumbing should also come up under the table. Sufficient power must be available for the table and all the other electrical accessories that will be used, such as hot towel cabins, table warmers and hot stone warmers.

How can spa operators maximise the use of a treatment bed?

When massage is the main service offered, a salon-style treatment bed offers the most flexibility. If the main use is not massage, but more aesthetic treatments, then a procedure chair is preferable, as it provides great access to the client, with the ability to recline to a flat position for massage when required.

Which is more important, style or comfort?

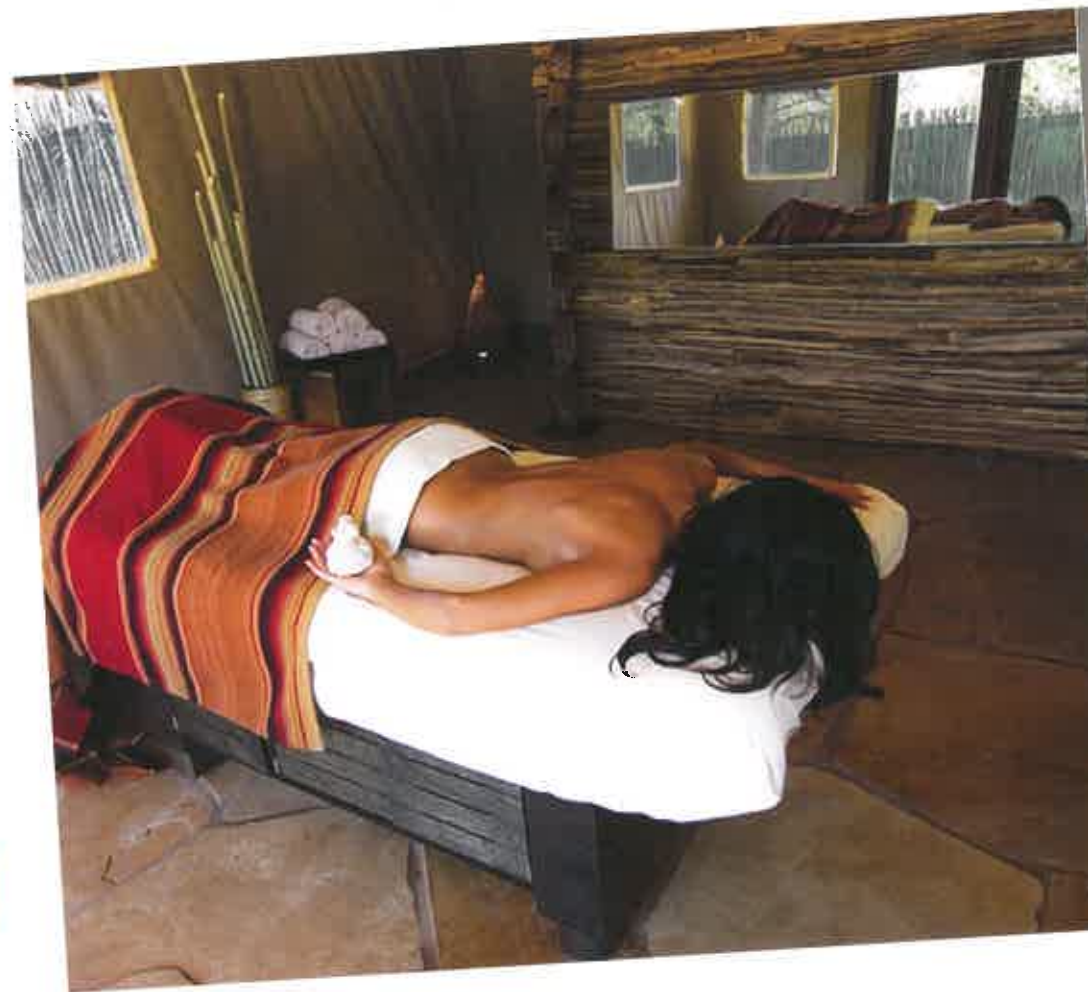
Many spas believe the comfort of most tables is about the same, therefore they buy based more on aesthetics. However, this is not correct. Oakworks offers many features that make a big difference to the comfort of clients, especially for women. In many cases, the tables are almost completely covered by various table draping materials, so aesthetics are less important than comfort and ergonomics.

How are functionality and aesthetics balanced?

Enabling the most comfortable client experience is always a primary concern. This defines the size and padding in the top, along with the need for an adjustable face rest instead of a built-in face hole.

FIVE TOP TIPS

- 1 The comfort of treatment beds and accessories is the most important part of your client experience - even beyond the interaction with the therapist
- 2 All treatment beds are not the same. If possible, you should experience a full massage on a product you wish to consider buying
- 3 Quality costs money, but in the end this delivers to your bottom line
- 4 Remember the 'bed wars' that the major hotel chains have had? Comfortable beds bring people back
- 5 Designs that allow different treatments help ensure higher usage rates



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