



Creating the right soundscape in your spa

Whether you are considering rejuvenating your spa or adding a spa to your hotel to enhance your overall guest experience, don't underestimate the power of audio in creating the ultimate spa experience.

When we think of spas we conjure up images of tranquility and relaxation. Spas give us the opportunity to escape, however briefly, from the stresses of everyday life; offering us a chance to recharge and reinvigorate our bodies and minds. They are havens of peace and relaxation amongst an ever increasingly hectic world; somewhere we can relax without phones ringing, the noise of traffic or the slamming of doors.

So as you plan to create and build, or refurbish your spa, it is vital to examine all the sources of sound in the area. You need to consider not only what music you should play, but how your chosen furnishings and infrastructure will affect the sounds created within your spa and what sounds you want to cultivate to create the right ambience for your spa's guests.

Sound can so often be overlooked, but during treatments when lights are dimmed and guests often close their eyes, other senses including hearing become heightened, so audio replaces colour and becomes a key factor in generating the most appropriate mood.

Eliminating the noise

There are many unwanted sounds which need to be removed or reduced in a spa environment. The sound of slamming doors, loud footsteps along corridors, phones & pagers ringing, passing traffic, internal plant & machinery noises or sound from other treatment spaces and other parts of your business. All these noises need to be diminished and replaced with a localised quality audio system.

Specialist sound, light & video systems integrators

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If you are building a new spa or adding a spa within an existing space, the first thing CGA Integration would recommend is engaging an acoustic environment consultant, (such as [the Acoustics & Noise Partnership](#)).

The acoustic environment consultant will measure the existing noise within the space designated for your spa. They will then advise you on how to mount internal noise generating electrical hardware and motorised equipment, (such as air conditioners and lifts motors), to minimise noise and how to construct walls of the right density to minimise 'audio bleed' between areas. Little details such as adding the right door closers and seals make a huge difference; minimising the seepage of sound through doors or reducing the noise doors make whilst closing.

Like rubbing all the markings off a picture to start again with a blank canvas, the more sound you can prevent from entering your spa or from moving between discrete spaces within your spa, the quieter your environment will be. This makes it easier to create the soundscape you want, rather than having to work around what is already there.

Painting the right picture

Once you have your blank canvas, think about who needs to listen to sound when and why. Should the audio be in the background or truly a large part of creating the guest experience?

Sound can help to create the right ambience in lounges and communal areas of your spa; transporting your guests to a place of calm tranquility. Within treatment rooms the audio needs to reflect and enhance the mood of specific treatments, fully immersing the guest in that individual experience.

Historically sound has not always been carefully thought through in spas. Often guests could be subjected to 'Whale Music' whatever their chosen treatment, but now guests are far more savvy and expect more.

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Research has shown that sound that is 'undefined' can create a bad experience for guests whatever the occasion. In addition, audio which is too bass heavy will not create the right mood for a spa and similarly, sound which is too sharp and heavy in mid & high frequencies is equally not relaxing.

Today we often have good audio all around us; in our cars, on portable music players and at home with television and home cinema surround sound. Your clients will know if the sound in your spa is poor. Sound should be full and balanced with a relaxing warmth to the low end but not a disco bass. Using good quality full range speakers can work with the correct back end system, or if the design is sensitive, smaller speakers can be fitted with strategically placed bass units to fill out the sound. However, care always has to be taken when mounting bass units to prevent sound transmission to other discrete spaces.

It is important to think about where your guests will be when they are listening. If they are lying down during treatments the ideal position for speakers should actually be at ear height either side of the treatment room to give a true stereo experience.

Equally why not add to the swimming experience by installing underwater speakers? Although these are now part of the specification for olympic pools, this is not currently the case for leisure pools and the correct music underwater can be a real talking point. As sound travels better through water than through the air, your guest will be able to 'hear' the sound through vibrations, without even putting their heads under the water!

Achieving the right results

To help to create the perfect experience in your spa your audio needs to be flexible. Your staff should have access to a range of music sources to reflect and complement the different treatments and type of trading on offer. CGA Integration recommend that each of the following areas should have their own identity and you should work with your music provider to ensure that each area is a discrete part of your audio design:

1. Reception area and lounge
2. Treatment rooms

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3. Manicure / Pedicure area
4. Pool
5. Cafe or Spa restaurant

In addition, some spas offer sockets in treatment rooms to allow their guests to bring their own music. This can work with a guest that has thought through their music choices, but please bear in mind that allowing your guest to choose their own music does reduce your ability to enhance the chosen treatment and reinforce your Brand identity.

Once the correct music sources are in place, it is vital to ensure that all volume and audio source controls are placed local to the speakers. It is paramount that your staff can actually hear the audio they are controlling. This ensures that sound levels are correct for the trading and or treatment conditions, without the need for guessing and negating the requirement to use internal phones.

Integrating audio with design

Most of the switched on design companies now routinely consider AV as part of spa design. They will be keen to engage an AV specialist, such as CGA Integration, as early as possible within the design process, to ensure that they deliver a great experience for both you and your guests.

Today speakers come in a huge range of sizes and shapes and can be finished in RAL colours to match your chosen design scheme. Please bear in mind however, that the smaller the speaker the less bass and warmth it will deliver, so the more likely you will be to require a bass unit. In addition, CGA Integration can deliver fully invisible speakers which can be plastered into ceilings or walls or built into wooden paneling to give a surrounding sound without any visual impact.

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Introducing SPAShell

There are many considerations for a hotel operator to appraise when thinking about a traditional build spa, not to mention construction noise and disruption to your existing business. In addition, it is essential to monitor the building process carefully to ensure standards. One builder not filling a wall void or drilling a hole in the wrong place can lead to noise seepage in your spa and result in time and expense spent locating and resolving the subsequent sound issues.

This is where SPAShell may well be the right solution for you. CGA Integration work closely with Spa Creators to create the audio for their unique concept SPAShell; a modular spa solution which is built off site and then delivered to your venue and set up to trade within 10 days. SPAShell greatly reduces building noise and disruption at your venue and ensures that the spa structure is audibly sound, as it has been designed and manufactured to the high standards and specification of both Spa Creators and CGA Integration.

Whether you need to give your existing spa a new lease of life, or create a new spa offering at your venue, don't forget the importance of sound in creating the best possible spa experience for your guests.

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