

The Rise of Award-Winning Indian Spas

Design, benchmarking & global validation have put Indian spas on a pedestal, even as they are being benchmarked as wellness destinations.

Words | Bindu Gopal Rao



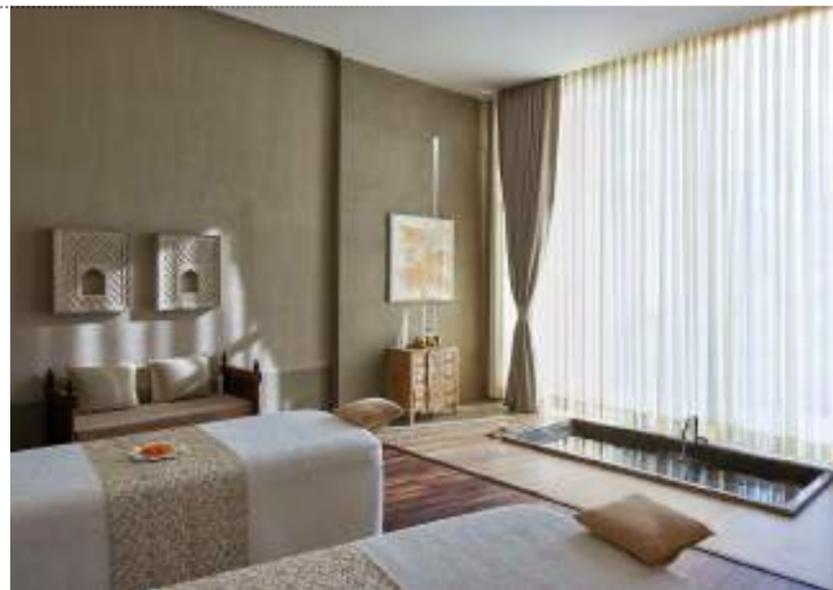
As Indian spas are being recognised on platforms like the World Spa Awards, the Global Spa Awards, and the AsiaSpa Awards, there is a quiet shift from being perceived as a spiritual wellness hub to a design force to be reckoned with.

Winning Edge

With a slew of spas in the country, those that win at major platforms are the ones that go beyond surface aesthetics. And it is certainly not about scale or opulence. Rather, it is about spas that are making a difference by offering authenticity.

So, whether it is a rooted wellness philosophy (Ayurveda, Siddha, or Himalayan traditions) or cultural integrity in architecture and ritual design that nods to the location, the spas that tell a cohesive story from entry to exit have an edge.

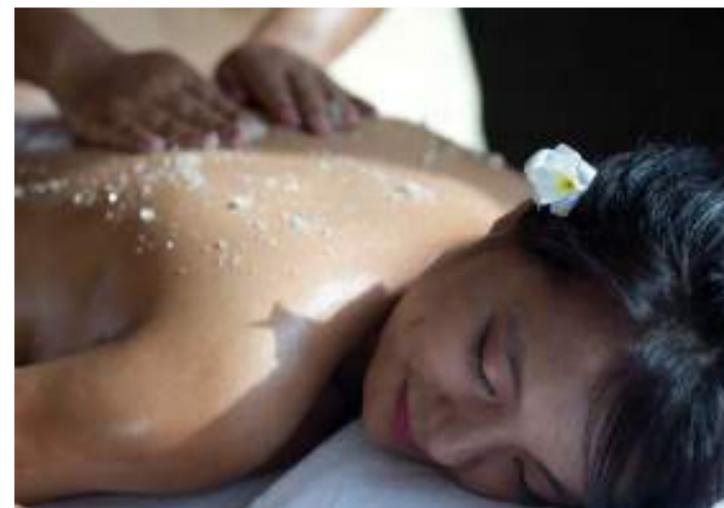
One example of this is the **J Wellness Circle at Taj Aravali Resort & Spa, Udaipur**, which has won **India's Best Resort Spa 2025** at the **World Spa Awards** and is rooted in deeply transformative healing journeys. The spa itself is all about holistic rejuvenation of mind, body, and soul that is grounded in Ayurveda and its healing traditions.



Experiential Design

As spas are spaces that are meant for relaxation and rejuvenation, there is an extra level of care that is required in their design. This includes elements like arrival sequencing, sensory layering from sound, scent, light, texture, and aura, privacy gradients that ensure seclusion, as well as the flow between wet and dry zones. In fact, the flow of the design language in award-winning spas ensures that these spaces are integrated and yet independent of one another.

The **Atmantan Wellness Centre at Mulshi, Pune**, has won **Best Holistic Wellness Retreat** at The **Global Spa Awards**. It sits on a unique crystal hill surrounded by over 42 acres of lush Sahyadris and is designed to balance the mind, soul, and body. The doctor-prescribed programmes here are scientifically researched, and the integrated wellness therapies merge the traditional Indian sciences of Ayurveda & Naturopathy with Chinese medicine & alternative sciences. NABH certified (National Accreditation Board of Hospitals & Healthcare Providers of India).



Operational Cues

At the heart of any spa are the therapists and masseurs, and one of the important parameters of judging spas is based on the depth of the therapist training. Also, spas that have a clear training plan for the team – whether it is initial training or a continuous learning programme in place that covers both technical and guest servicing aspects – often find favour with judges. Another aspect that is considered is the treatment personalisation protocols, as today they are often tailored specifically to guest requirements.

Ananda, in the Himalayas, for instance, has won several awards, and most recently, in 2025, it won the **Best Wellness Retreat & Best 100 Hotels by Tatler Best Awards**, the **Best Global Yoga Retreat at the Luxury Spa Edit Awards**, and the **Best Wellness Retreat at Vogue Beauty & Wellness Honours**. This destination wellness retreat has been at the forefront of India's luxury experiences and has therapies rooted in Ayurveda.



Going Global

Indian spa developers are looking beyond India and are taking learnings from abroad as well. So, whether it is destination spas in Europe, integrated wellness resorts in Southeast Asia, or medical-wellness hybrids in the Middle East, there are positives from all places that are being incorporated in award-winning spas. And as the focus of people, especially in a post-COVID era, shifts towards holistic wellness, spas that offer longer-format wellness journeys instead of single-treatment bookings are being preferred too.

The **Imperial Spa in Delhi** won three major honours at the **World Luxury Spa Awards 2025**, including **Best Luxury Spa Retreat**, **Best Luxury Yoga Retreat**, and **Best Luxury Wellness Retreat in Asia**. The bespoke experiences offered in this spa ensure that guests leave feeling completely relaxed. Spas that demonstrate clear positioning, authentic storytelling, design coherence, therapist-led excellence, true commitment to sustainability and clear guest transformation outcomes are finding favour, and rightly so. **SS**

