

Nickerchen offers wellness services in one of Berlin's office districts



- Berlin's first "power napping space" offers a range of wellness services aimed at time-starved and stressed-out urban professionals
- Nickerchen Berlin has day beds that can be rented for 20, 30, 40 or 60 minute intervals
- Owner Irina Ivachkovets also offers a range of massage treatments which includes express and lunch-time treatments

"The concept of Nickerchen Berlin reflects international spa and wellness trends"

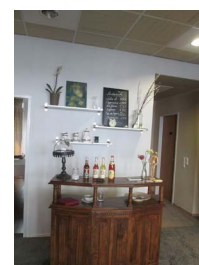
Slow it all down

According to Mintel Trend Slow it all Down, in a world that never seems to decelerate, slowness is earning a new appreciation. The growing need to take one's time is a counter to our "FSTR HYPR" trend, where the focus upon convenience, speed and 24/7 on-demand service culture rules. It seems the more we try to save time, the more we realise how important it is to savour it. Those who generally embrace the speed of life may appreciate the occasional 'brake' all the more.

One of the most interesting recent additions to Berlin's spa and wellness scene is Nickerchen Berlin. Although Nickerchen ("little nap" in German) is not a classic spa, the store offers a range of wellness services that reflect several contemporary spa trends and give consumers the chance to take a moment out of their busy days to relax.

Irina Ivachkovets opened her store in Berlin's Checkpoint Charlie neighbourhood in December 2014. The area around Checkpoint Charlie is dominated by office buildings, publishing companies and media agencies. Plus, one of Berlin's most popular tourist attractions, the famous Charlie checkpoint, is visited by thousands of tourists each week.

Each day between 7am and 7pm the area is full of office workers. As soon as the offices close, however, the streets empty rapidly. By that time, most of the tourists are gone, too. Restaurants and cafés in this area tend to open for breakfast and lunch only and most close at 4pm or 5pm at the latest.



Treatments on offer

Nickerchen Berlin follows a similar schedule for its power-napping and massage treatments, opening Monday to Friday from 11.30am to 18.00pm. Customers can book individual treatments after 6pm, but the official opening times of Nickerchen mirror the office hours of its target demographic.

The day bed area features eight beds in individual curtained-off spaces, decorated simply in white and grey tones, with soft lighting. From 11.30am to 3pm, a day bed costs €7 for 30 minutes. The price includes ear-plugs, eye mask and slippers plus a complimentary tea after waking. From 3pm onwards, the price rises to €10. Customers can book the day beds for 20, 30, 40 or 60 minute intervals.



There are two separate spaces with Brainlight shiatsu massage chairs. Brainlight is a German company that specializes in audio-visual relaxation therapy. The massage chairs are equipped with visualization goggles transmitting light impulses, on-ear headphones and pre-loaded relaxation programs. Customers can also choose to listen to a range of Brainlight mental training audio tracks during their power nap.

Ivachkovets offers massage treatments ranging from a 20-minute business express body massage to deep-relaxation aroma oil and hot stone massages. The prices are reasonable; 20 minutes costs €25, 40 minutes are priced at €40 and 60 minutes is €55.



In addition, there are special offers, like the “Power Pause” (power break) which is available from Monday to Friday and includes a 20-minute power nap and a healthy take-away lunch box packed with a sandwich, fresh fruit and a beverage. On Wednesdays and Fridays there are after-work salsa dance lessons for women and occasionally there are small art exhibitions hosted in the reception area.

The spa of the future

At 2015's Beauty International trade show – Germany's biggest trade fair for the salon, spa and wellness industry – trade association Deutscher Wellnessverband together with trade show organizers Messe Düsseldorf organized a special show entitled “Future Spa”.

Students from one of Düsseldorf's design universities, Peter Behrens School of Architecture at Fachhochschule Düsseldorf, were asked to develop ideas about how spas might look in the future. As a guideline, the students were given a list of current spa trends which, according to industry experts, will determine developments in the international spa industry over the next five to ten years.

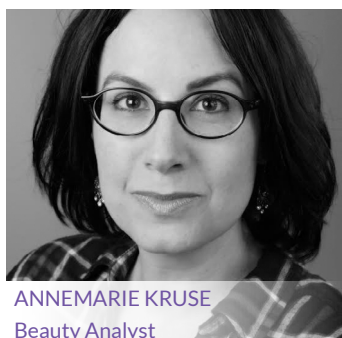
These trends include “authenticity and naturalness” in spa construction, building materials and treatments and “lounging and chilling”; in the future, spas will become living zones where clients will spend time rather than just go for a treatment. A related trend is “WeSpa” which sees spas as a place to socialize with others. Another key trend is “spa for everyone” – low budget and modular spa concepts – and “focus on lifestyle”, with spas increasingly offering services for self-optimisation, such as wellness and lifestyle coaching, meditation, stress-management techniques or healthy living.

The students were also told to consider the requirements of the so-called GYPSY's (Gen Y Protagonists & Special Yuppies), one of the key demographics for new urban spa types. This particular age group of 20-35 year-olds is defined as demanding, sophisticated and hedonistic yet socially aware and well-educated. They live in cities and are willing to work hard but feel that a proper work-life balance is also important.



Other than these parameters, the students were given free rein and 10 of the submitted spa designs were then exhibited at Beauty International. It was noticeable that several of the winning entries envisioned modular and flexible spa designs, addressing the needs of stressed-out urbanites with demanding lifestyles and little time for conventional relaxation.

One of the recurring concepts in the students' designs was the one-person spa capsule. These portable capsules, equipped with automatic massage beds and audiovisual equipment such as flatscreens and integrated sound systems, might be located in high streets, at airports or train stations or even within office buildings and can be found and booked through a carsharing-type of smartphone app. Another entry depicted glass spa globes suspended above the city, allowing customers the chance to escape the sensory overload of modern city life.



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THE ANALYST'S VIEW

The Nickerchen concept reflects several of these future spa trends. There are no capsules but the store offers customers a quick time-out from the hectic work day with a regenerating nap, a relaxation audio track or a massage treatment, combined with a convenient location, flexible time schedule and affordable prices. Ivachkovets says that eventually she also wants to target the masses of tourists wandering around the Checkpoint Charlie area but at the moment, most of her clients come from the offices that surround her store.



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Annemarie Kruse has been researching and writing about the German cosmetics industry for nearly ten years. Annie is based in the exciting city of Berlin, where she keeps a keen eye on the latest retail developments and cultural events. A talented photographer and writer, Annie has contributed to *Cosmetics International*, *European Cosmetic News* and *Soap, Perfumery & Cosmetics*

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