



Reception area



Creating

By Christine Castigliano

With a passion for yoga, health and wellness, and a love of great spas, Tracy and Michael Bateman of The Bateman Group in Edmonton, Alberta conceived a vision: a very special place to enjoy both yoga and spa treatments, or a combination of wellness experiences.

Consider the unique conditions of an Edmonton winter, the northernmost city in North America. Once you've changed out of all your cold-weather gear, and you're in a lovely warm environment, you simply want to stay there. And become rejuvenated in mind, body and spirit to face the cold again.

A Unique Challenge: Blending Two Worlds

The Batemans knew that the world of spas and yoga would create a natural mix. They studied the competitive landscape in their area; most of the yoga studios offer very little spa services, perhaps one or two treatment rooms, not a full range of services.

Excited to bring this unique, original statement to Edmonton, with its cross-marketing and wellness potential, the Batemans needed a strong design to support a wide range of possibilities: spacious yoga studios, hot yoga, personal training, other classes, kinetic exercise equipment, meditative spaces, a lecture series for guest doctors, physical therapist, etc.

The yoga spaces needed to inspire as well as work for different activities. Heat radiating from the ceiling, visual excitement in the walls, changing color, façades and rhythms, soft music.

The wish list included areas for spa treatments, from manicure, pedicure, and make-up to laser, minimally invasive medical spa

Bliss

Sculpting a Unique Yoga Spa for Edmonton

treatments, for both men and women, with separate changing areas. The challenge was not to interrupt the flow of spa guests wearing robes, with yoga clientele coming in in street clothes.

Beyond the extensive wish list, return on investment also demanded enough space to accommodate a high number of people in yoga class.

Design for Optimal Experiences

With a background in the grocery business, Michael Bateman believes strongly in taking care of guests, and that their experience should be primary. He also felt that his wife and partner, Tracy Bateman, an experienced interior designer for homes and small businesses, should design the facility.

Yet after attending an International Design Concepts class presentation at a spa conference, Tracy realized the value of establishing flow for their guests. She knew their dream vision needed the organic sense of place that the IDC team brings to each project.

IDC began by reviewing the design work Tracy had started, and found a relatively lineal floor plan within a fixed width. Because of the challenges of fitting the diverse needs of both yoga and spa for both men and women, IDC saw a large design challenge: dealing with up to 50 people that leave yoga class at one time. Especially in the convenience areas - restrooms, shower rooms, locker rooms.

"We didn't want people to run into one another at the wrong time," said Michael Effler, Design Principal of IDC. "It's also a sound issue: to keep the peaceful, serene quiet spa zones separate from throngs of active, chatting yoga students. We needed more room."

Value engineering

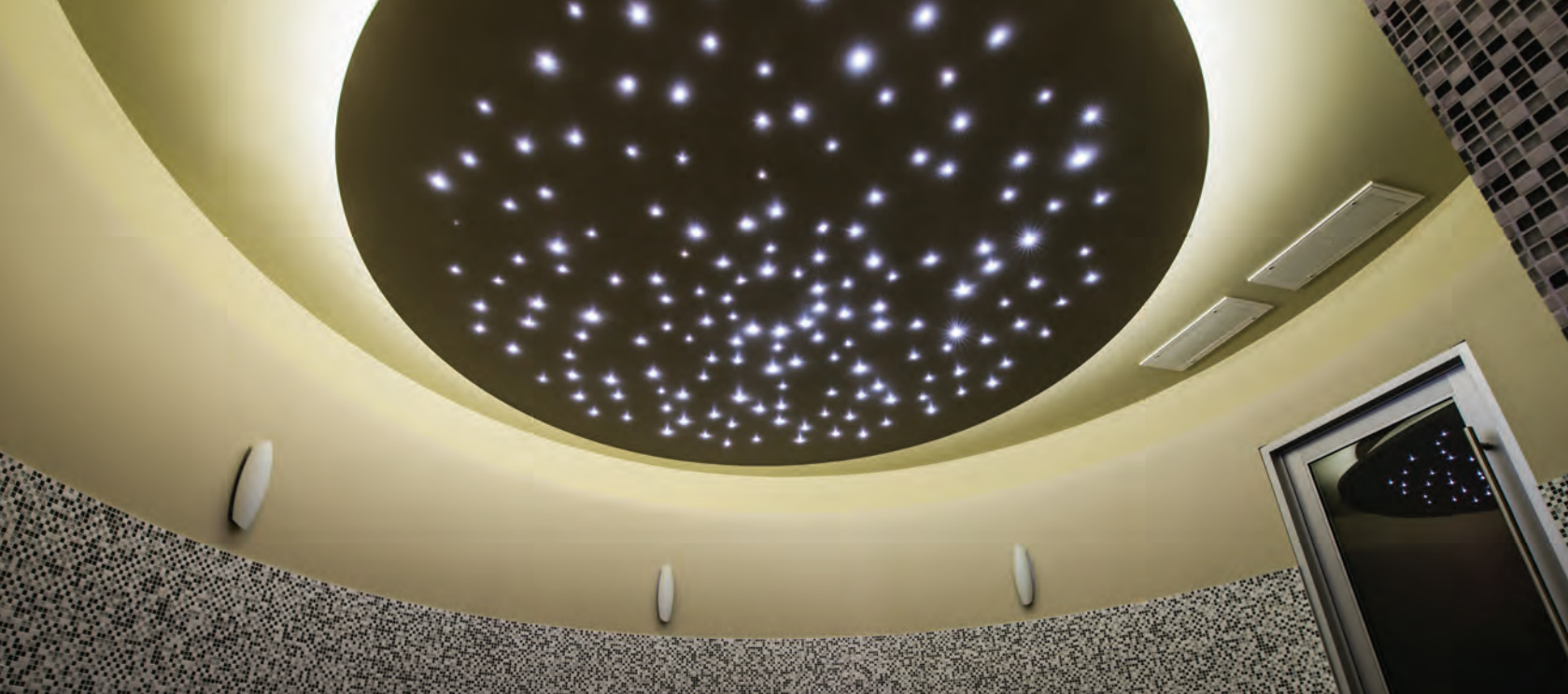
To add to the challenge, Michael Bateman believes strongly in taking care of his people. The daily experience of his staff is a very important second to the experience of each guest. But there simply wasn't space to support his desire to care for the caregivers, by adding a relaxing lounge for staff to nourish and rejuvenate.

"We tried to get an expanded lease to accommodate more space, but that was simply not possible," said Effler.

Instead, IDC recommended building up a level and creating a mezzanine. Instead of paying rent on additional floor space, owners incur Initial building cost but no long-term lease. This extra space made room for the staff lounge area.

The rest of the design was a carefully executed, strategic puzzle, resulting in an 8,000-square-foot facility that flows from two hot yoga studios to eight treatment rooms.

"We had to carve out a working, functioning sculpture that would house the number of requested treatment rooms, as well as the specialized areas for manicure, pedicure, make-up, visual merchandising, including yoga-specific visual merchandising: mats, clothing, equipment and refreshments as well as a hydration bar where people can mingle before or after class."



Bliss Signature Service: The Calderium



VIP Lounge



Spa dressing area



The larger of two yoga studios offers soothing multimedia to set the tone for the experience



Doing what Others Don't: Unique Specialties for Edmonton

To make their yoga studio stand out from all the others, the Batemans requested special amenities designed for cold and snow. At the entrance, a Terrazza marble vestibule provides a vapor block and allows guests to shake off the snow. Guests slip off their Uggs and into cozy slippers and hand their boots to the Boot Concierge. Their boots are washed while they're taking yoga class, and they leave the spa with the simple bliss of freshly cleaned boots.

Signature Service

Part of the IDC philosophy is that every spa business benefits from a totally unique combination of space and service that guests can't get anywhere else.

IDC proposed The Caldarium – a warm space under a starry sky for taking refreshment, ice and relaxation amid music, soft lighting, and warm seats. Strategically placed in the center of the facility, the Caldarium can be enjoyed as a part of the service ritual, while waiting for spa services, between treatments, coming from yoga, or at any point during the visit.

The VIP Treatment

A major centre for the oil and gas industry, Edmonton is enjoying an economic boom, including a growing demand for the VIP experience.

The Bliss facility include a couples VIP suite, a signature room for two people that includes a fireplace. The VIP lounge provides an area to relax in a semi-private environment and stay connected via iPad or iPhone while being warmed by the fireplace. Specialty membership services include a VIP perk for yoga, too: washing and storage of your yoga mat.

After IDC completed the design, The Bateman Group collaborated with CK Designs to coordinate permitting, construction, finishing and fabrication. The end result is a “premier facility, one that transports you to a place that hasn't existed in Edmonton before—one that provides a unique sense of peace, harmony, and well-being.” -- blissyogaspa.com

Photos by Jerry Jin: jerryjin.ca courtesy of CK Designs

For more about IDC, please visit idc-design.com or call 800-IDC-1034.