

Avoiding appointment 'no-shows'

THE CLIENTELE of the Urban Retreat spa at Harrods expect to escape the hustle and bustle of capital living and indulge in some time, space and comfort.

Maintaining and managing its client list is the booking system Premier Spa from Premier Software. The past year has seen the entire salon system convert to the software, to include stock control, marketing and staff payroll.

Bookings, however, remain the driving force of the business. The sheer number (clients can choose from 34 different facials) and specialist nature of the treatments means that appointments have to be managed with precision. Premier Spa's system allows detailed treatment and therapist information to be input so that when clients make a booking, it can see if a time slot is available and also books the treatment by therapist and treatment room. It will not allow a treatment to be booked if there isn't a qualified therapist available and a suitable treatment room or equipment available.

SMS messaging

Reducing appointment no-shows was another key factor for Urban Retreat. With appointments starting from £55 and heading beyond the £100 mark, a no-show is a costly annoyance, especially when there are other clients who could have filled the slot with a bit more notice. Urban Retreat has been using the software's integrated SMS messaging service to send appointment reminders to clients two days prior to their scheduled treatment.

"The SMS feature is the number one thing that has cut down no-shows significantly and added value to the business," explains Marcus Allen, Urban Retreat's salon manager. Prior to using the system, reception staff could spend two to three hours a day calling around 300 clients to remind them of their appointment.



Above Computerised reception at Urban Retreat.



Infrared bathing

THE NEW Armana infrared sauna (above) manufactured by US-based Sunlight, is available in the UK from Nordic. The units output 'far-infrared' heat to improve pain relief, detoxification, circulation and increase peripheral blood flow. The freestanding sauna line comes in four sizes and is crafted of non-toxic hypoallergenic basswood and red Canadian cedar with a flat-screen TV among the luxury options available.

Bringing baths up to temperature

BRINGING the Turkish baths at Ironmonger Row in the City of London up to around 85°C involves heating full fresh air to around 150°C in a single pass to raise the internal air temperature to the required level.

The 1930s building had previously been heated by its original gas boiler but this no longer met current performance requirements. Consequently, a heating system from Reznor was engineered to serve the unusual application.

Awkward access

A standard heater was specially engineered to answer two prime criteria. Firstly, the heating system had to be able to fit into an existing space in the building's basement that was awkward to access. Secondly, it had to be capable of producing unusually high temperatures and withstand near constant usage.

The basic model used was a Reznor X1075D gas-fired warm air heater. Two units were brought to site unassembled and brought into the plant room in pieces, to be assembled in situ, sidestepping the issue of accessibility.

The X1075D is a powerful heater, but it had to be specially modified to cope with the intense temperatures required in this application. Super-heated air is delivered into the first (and hottest) of the Turkish baths' three rooms, raising the internal temperature to a steamy 80-100°C. The heater circulates the air into the adjoining rooms, the temperature gradually decreasing as it does so and finishing at a balmy 50°C in the third bath room.

A replacement control panel was also fitted, providing fully automatic operational control. ■



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