



Casa Madrona: Standing Out in Wellness Travel

Wellness: a buzzword in our society that's overuse quickly diminished its significance, like boutique hotels and bespoke experiences. But for some properties, wellness is an offering that's rooted in brand identity, and showcased from staff beliefs to guest experiences. So poses the question: With so many wellness additions to properties worldwide, how do hotels create an outstanding experience?



Established in 1885, [Casa Madrona Hotel and Spa](#), has seen its share of evolution. Once referred to as a 'dream in time,' the Bay Area hotel is renowned for its ability to maintain relevance throughout the ever-shifting travel demands. Their most recent renovation is a response to the demand for [wellness offerings](#), inspired by Carmen Cruz, the property's General Manager who joined in January 2016.

"Innovation and constant evolution is in our DNA as we are always redefining the ultimate luxury experience. Wellness was the next logical step when conceptualizing what the future of that ultimate experience could be." — Carmen Cruz



Joining Casa Madrona from a background in holistic health, Cruz worked with the ownership team to revamp their wellness offerings through tech and experience; an opportunity that takes well-being beyond traditional, physical fitness and nutrition. This includes [Eight Sleep](#) Smart Beds, technology that tracks sleep data, as well as [Muse 2](#) meditation headbands that provide real-time feedback on mental activity, heart rate, breathing and body movements.

“Often times, wellness is viewed as programming that will demand a specific vacation time or travel to a remote resort to be experienced for a few days. At Casa, wellness is a lifestyle that you can continue on, or newly adopt, while traveling for business, in as little as one day or as long as your stay with us.”

I spoke with Carmen to learn more about Casa Madrona’s renovations and her personal motivations to creating this kind of wellness experience in a world where wellness is everywhere, yet no one quite seems to know what it means.

Carmen, the hotel’s recent renovation includes an immersive wellness experience which was inspired by your passion for holistic health. Tell me a little more about your background in holistic health.

My passion for holistic health stems from my own lifestyle, daily practice and overall vision and understanding of our world and our humanness. Creating experiences, impacting and inspiring change that improves the life and wellbeing of anybody that I interact with on a daily basis is what drives me every day. With that intention in mind, I wanted to create an immersive wellness experience that could be available for any of our guests, regardless of the reason for their travels.

How did you incorporate your past experiences in holistic health into the renovation plan?

I worked closely with the design team and our ownership group to ensure that our brand new spaces were best suited to provide the utmost holistic and fitness experiences. I personally researched and curated our partnerships to bring forward the best and most immersive nutrition and tech forward wellness programming that exist nowadays.





What can guests now expect at Casa Madrona?

Our guests can expect four different “Casa Experiences”: full with the creativity, uniqueness and personalized impeccable service that we are so well known for.

Would you explicitly label Casa Madrona as a wellness resort?

I refer to Casa Madrona not as a hotel or a resort but as an experience; as mentioned above, we currently offer four of them:

- Our [Harbor Experience](#) with modern touches, balconies and views of the Bay
- Our brand new [Wellness Experience](#) with its own private wellness courtyard and direct access to our spa, in addition to our immersive curated programming
- Our [Hillside Experience](#) with private cottages, private entrances and balconies overlooking the magnificent Bay
- Our [Mansion Experience](#) for the most discerning travelers offering mansion rooms, suites, guest houses and our ultimate luxury residence, the [Alexandrite Suite](#).



What type of traveler are you looking to attract?

With our Wellness Experience, we are not only hoping we can become an extension of the lifestyle of wellness driven individuals, but also a new option for those who would like to dive into a healthier, more balanced and conscious way of life, or those who are just curious about how intentional technology can improve our daily lives and overall well being. For those reasons, I believe our new concept has a component for anybody that is open to new experiences.

How do your new experiences stand out from other wellness-oriented resorts on the west coast?

Our experience stands out by having a full immersive experience with pioneer technology that has never been used in the hotel industry. Our concept touches all corners of wellbeing: from the most fundamental aspect, sleep, to holistic, fitness and nutrition. Our programming is based on “what’s your wellness passion?” And thus, tailored to the experiences our guests are looking for while staying with us. Our partners, Eight Sleep, VI Sense, Muse, Fitness on Demand, Urban Remedy and Moon Juice, are also pioneers, disruptors and leaders of their industries and we have them all together packaged for our guests—nobody has ever done something like this.



What do you think resorts need to do in order to stand out in the wellness sphere?

I would ask, "what's your intention?" Answering that question drives my work every day. Once the intention is clear, use the creativity that will come your way to impact and improve people's lives. Be truthful to the essence of your resort and location and use it to tell your story and connect with your customers. Be mindful and aware that we are ever-changing and evolving and thus, your offerings should too.

How do you foresee wellness travel developing as travel evolves? Is it just a trend or here to stay?

I believe wellness travel is just beginning, I view it as an extension of our evolving humanness and thus, I don't consider it a trend, but quite the opposite. I believe that as we become more in tune with who we really are and the balance that we need in our mind, body and spirit, we will seek wellness in our travels as we'll do in our daily lives. For that, I do believe we are bringing the future of hospitality to life!