

FLOATING in Nirvana

After being modernised and extended, this English spa and leisure complex has now opened its luxurious, new pools.

An experience worthy of its reputation. The Nirvana Spa in Wokingham, one of the best known and most luxurious in England, can now offer its many customers new services and facilities designed for health and relaxation purposes.

First opened in 1988, the complex has been modernised and extended several times (in 1993, 1996 and 2001) based on a very distinctive way of thinking. The idea was to create a welcoming shelter, an oasis of tranquillity cut off from the outside climate and, at the same time, provide club members with the chance to try out a more healthy lifestyle in a relaxed setting.

New Spaces and New Health Experiences

The common denominator in all the facilities is water: members can actually choose from nine different pools, each "specialising" in something and furnished with the latest technical systems. The pools are all set in theme rooms. The latest work, completed in summer 2001, involved the construction of new rooms (Celestial Room, Ocean Room and Roman Room) and three Plunge Pools (for water-therapy treatment). The Relaxation Pool and Surf Room (where the water-therapy Spa is located) have also been modernised.

The Celestial and Ocean rooms are devoted to flotation: guests float effortlessly on the

Photo 1. Relaxation under the Celestial Room's starry vault.

Photo 2. The Spa swimming pool for water-therapy, treatment restructured and enlarged in 2001.

Photo 3. Classic style setting of the Roman Room.

water propelled by jets which create the kind of suspension effect you feel in the absence of gravity. They are ideal for treating people suffering from rheumatism or arthritis, thanks to high concentrations of mineral salts from the Dead Sea. The Celestial Room is also embellished with a ceiling fitted with optic fibre lighting creating a "starry sky" effect.

These and the rest of the Nirvana pools use water from a natural spring. Nirvana "brand" water is now even bottled and sold.

Roman Atmospheres

The new facilities also include three small Plunge Pools (two in the Surf Room and one in the Ocean Room) for heat therapy treatment: brief immersions in water heated to a lower temperature than the rest of the pools. This is, in some respects, reminiscent of the customs of the Ancient Romans, who used to first visit the tepidarium (warm water spa) and then the calidarium before finally bathing in the cold water of the frigidarium.

The complex's main attraction is certainly the Roman Room, a spa built in classical style with a Roman vault and columns reminiscent of ancient cathedrals. This pool is surrounded by windows looking onto a patio, sheltered, in turn, from the outside by a thick screen of plants designed to guarantee guests' privacy.

Work

Mapei products were used for all the rooms and pools involved in the work carried out in 2001: the Relaxation Pool, Roman Pool, Ocean Room, Celestial Room and Surf Room.

The Relaxation Pool covering an area of 150m² is the centre's "historical" spa, the first to be built back in 1988. It was once the focus of everything going on at Nirvana Spa. Like all the others in the complex, its pool used IDROSILEX*, an integral waterproofer for cement-based mortars, mixed with sand and cement to obtain a waterproof render. MAPELASTIC*, a two-component flexible

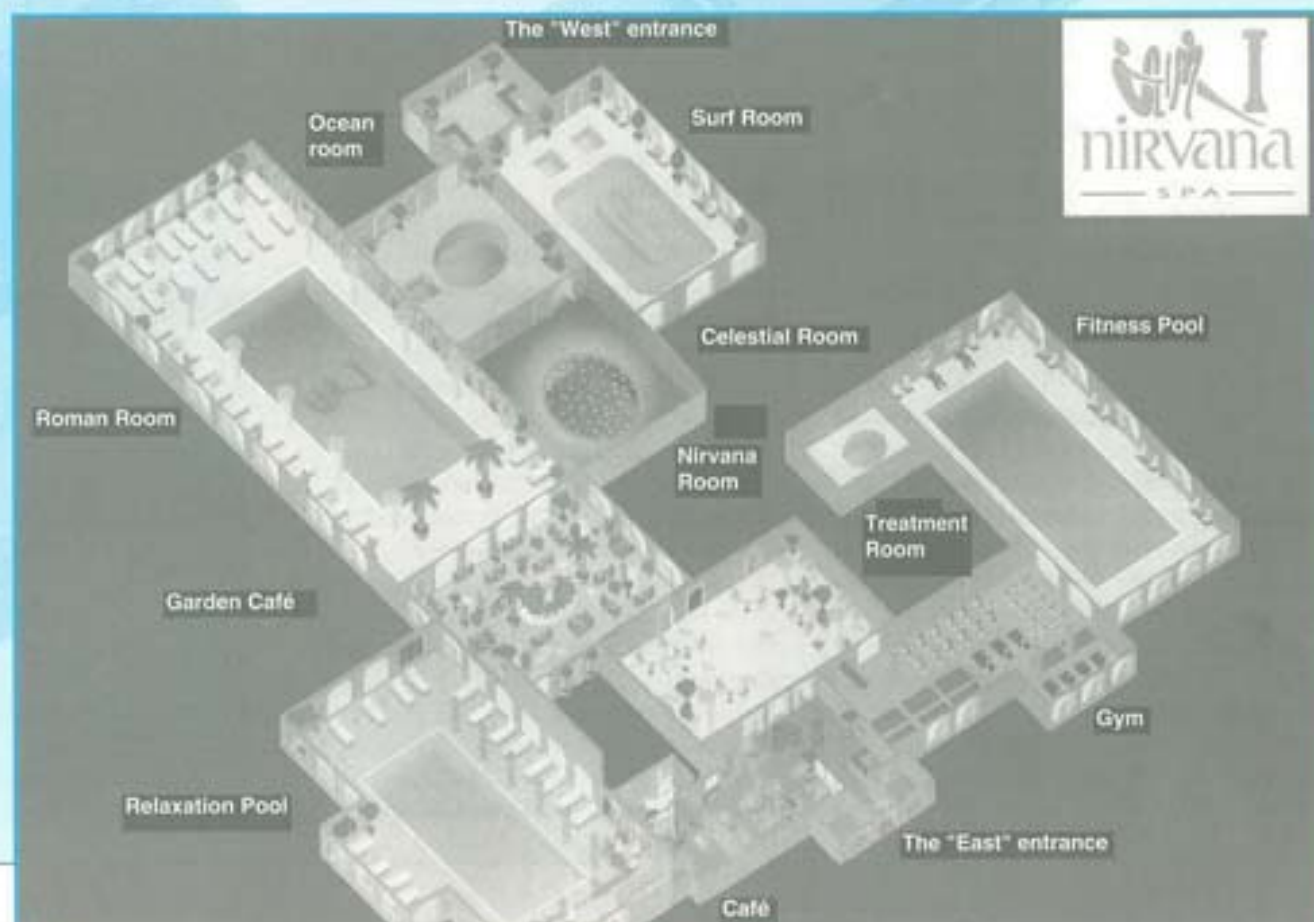
cementitious mortar ideal for waterproofing and sealing balconies and swimming pools, was then applied.

Bisazza Mauritius vitreous mosaic tiles were then laid using GRANIRAPID* two-component adhesive quick setting and fast hydration system. Grouting was carried out using the easy-to-clean acid-resistant epoxy mortar KERAPOXY*, which is also resistant to the aggressive substances found in the pool water.

An Indian sandstone floor was laid in the surrounding area over a screed of sand and cement covering a surface of almost 1,000 m². It was laid using ADESILEX P4*, a fast setting, medium-deformable full contact cementitious adhesive.

The grouting was carried out using ULTRACOLOR*, a rapid setting and drying grout, that does not produce efflorescence, in the colour Beige 2000. Indian sandstone was also used for the wall coatings, applied using GRANIRAPID*. Again, the grouting was carried out using ULTRACOLOR*. The Roman Room's magnificent pool was made using the same products. The Indian sandstone was also laid in this "ancient Rome"-style room, grouted with ULTRACOLOR* Beige 2000 which blends perfectly into the setting.

Mapei products are also featured in the Surf Room, a real paradise for water therapy thanks to the Spa pool fitted with 49 sprinklers for the jets of water spurting





out at a set temperature of 35 degrees. Mapei products turned out to be ideal for taking the pressure: the jets are so powerful that the water can shoot up to 60 cm above the surface. The two adjacent water-therapy Plunge Pools used NIVRORAPID* fast setting thixotropic cementitious levelling mortar, even suitable for vertical surfaces. One of the Nirvana complex's main attractions is the Celestial Room. The 80 m² pool built inside this visually striking room serves floatation purposes, as does the pool in the Ocean Room. The use of Mapei products ensured both these pools were great successes. Mapei products were also used for the showers, locker rooms and utilities, including KERAPOXY* acid-resistant epoxy grout and MAPESIL AC* solvent-free, mildew-resistant, acetic-crosslinking silicone sealant.

A New Use for MAPELASTIC*

The project is particularly interesting for the special use of MAPELASTIC* based on a method of application developed by Watertite Solutions Ltd., a firm (founded in 1987) specialising in solutions for the swimming pool industry. Hairline cracks in the pool render or concrete structure have traditionally caused major problems in the construction and operation of pools. MAPELASTIC*, which can be applied directly to the concrete structure or render, completely eliminates these hairline cracks, making the whole structure completely watertight. Instead of trowelling the MAPELASTIC* onto the

substrate, a low pressure spraying process is used, which is up to six times quicker and achieves a consistent application thickness without any wastage. Sean Barley of Nirvana stated that "This is the perfect solution for pool linings. Whether or not it is a new building or refurbishment project, we are convinced that we can make great savings in time and money and produce a quality that is second to none". MAPELASTIC* is a multi-purpose product that can also be used to protect concrete foundations and basements, retaining walls, pre-cast concrete structures etc. It is the ideal protective coating for concrete surfaces that are subject to chemical attack from de-icing salts and sulphates, and it can be used as a waterproof membrane under interior and exterior ceramic tiles. Philip Breakspear, Sales Director for Mapei UK Ltd., is delighted with the results of their collaboration with Watertite Solutions Ltd. and Nirvana. "We are working side by side with Sean Barley with so many products. Mapei always like to work closely with professional installers and specifiers to ensure their high performance products are used to their best advantage". The Nirvana complex won the "Spa of the Year" award for 2002, and the building is also on a special list of BBC venues and film locations. The complex has already been used as a set for filming scenes from "Changing Rooms" and a music video starring Robbie Williams and Kylie Minogue.





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* The products referred to in this article belong to the "Building Products" and "Products for Ceramics and Stone Materials" ranges. The technical data sheets are available on the CD entitled "Mapei Global Infonet" and at the Internet site:

www.mapei.com.

The Mapei adhesives and grouts conform to EN 12004 and EN 13888 standards.

Idrosilex: an integral waterproofer for cementitious mortars

Mapelastic: a two-component flexible cementitious mortar ideal for waterproofing and sealing balconies and swimming pools

Granirapid (C2F): two-component quick setting and drying adhesive for ceramic tile, naturals and agglomerates (up to 10 mm adhesive thickness)

Kerapoxy (RG): two-component acid-resistant epoxy mortar for grouting joints of minimum width 3 mm. Available in 26 colours

Nivorapid: fast drying thixotropic cementitious levelling mortar, also suitable for vertical surfaces

Adesilex P4 (C2F): a rapid setting, medium-deformable full contact, cementitious adhesive for ceramic tiles

Ultracolor (CG2): rapid setting and drying grout for joints 2-20 mm, available in 26 colours; it does not produce efflorescence

Mapesil AC: solvent-free, mildew-resistant, acetic-crosslinking silicone sealant, available in 26 colours and transparent



TECHNICAL DATA

Nirvana Spa & Leisure - Wokingham, Berkshire, Great Britain

Built: 1988

Modernised: 2001 (previous work carried out in 1993 and 1996)

Project: Nirvana Spa & Leisure

Material laid: Bisazza Mauritius vitreous mosaic tiles (for the pools) and Indian sandstone (for coating both the walls and floors of the corridors and locker rooms)

Mapei products used:

- for the pools: IDROSILEX, MAPELASTIC, GRANIRAPID, KERAPOXY, NIVORAPID
- for the floor coatings of the corridors around the pools: ADESILEX P4, ULTRACOLOR
- for the wall coatings: GRANIRAPID, ULTRACOLOR
- for the utilities, showers, locker rooms: ADESILEX P4, ULTRACOLOR, KERAPOXY and MAPESIL AC

Mapei Consultant: Philip Breakspear.