



Architect and designer Tag Galyean doesn't mind getting wet in order to show off the attributes of his \$100,000 SilverTAG shower at The Broadmoor in Colorado Springs, CO.

Making a Splash

Renowned architect and designer Tag Galyean shares how he developed a passion for spas and has turned hydrotherapy into an art form.

IN 1961, I BEGAN THE STUDY OF ARCHITECTURAL design, imagining spaces and forms that would exist as "living theater"—places, perhaps sanctuaries, where people would genuinely relax, experience a respite from the everyday, and find joy and laughter. I envisioned places to which people would return again and again. I spent the 1970s and early '80s working on projects with complex functional architectural components, such as corporate headquarters, university science centers, libraries, and hospitals. In 1986, sparked by a project in my home state of West Virginia, my architectural direction turned to luxury resort environments and spas as a profitable resort amenity.

Today's global culture expects convenient, feel-good entertainment to drive the environments people seek, and successful hospitality owners and operators understand appropriate integrated design is essential to success at the highest levels. Customers want to feel immersed and engaged. Whether traveling, commuting, or working, they respond to their surroundings.

In 1986, my interest in spas became serious when I was hired to redesign the historic Mineral Bath Department at the Greenbrier in White Sulphur Springs, WV. Founded in the 1700s around the region's natural sulphur springs, the Bath Department, which had attracted generations to the waters, was too historic to abandon and too dilapidated to keep. There, we created the first post-World War II luxury resort spa, based on the historic Greenbrier Mineral Bath Department, which proved to be an invaluable source of experience. It was there that I learned about hydrotherapy, began to research it, and became a believer in the healing powers of water. As a result, each of the treatments and therapies we designed for the Greenbrier was based on the natural essences and minerals found among these unique springs.

The Greenbrier represented a turning point in my architectural career and laid the foundation for a luxury resort specialty and future spa projects. Living

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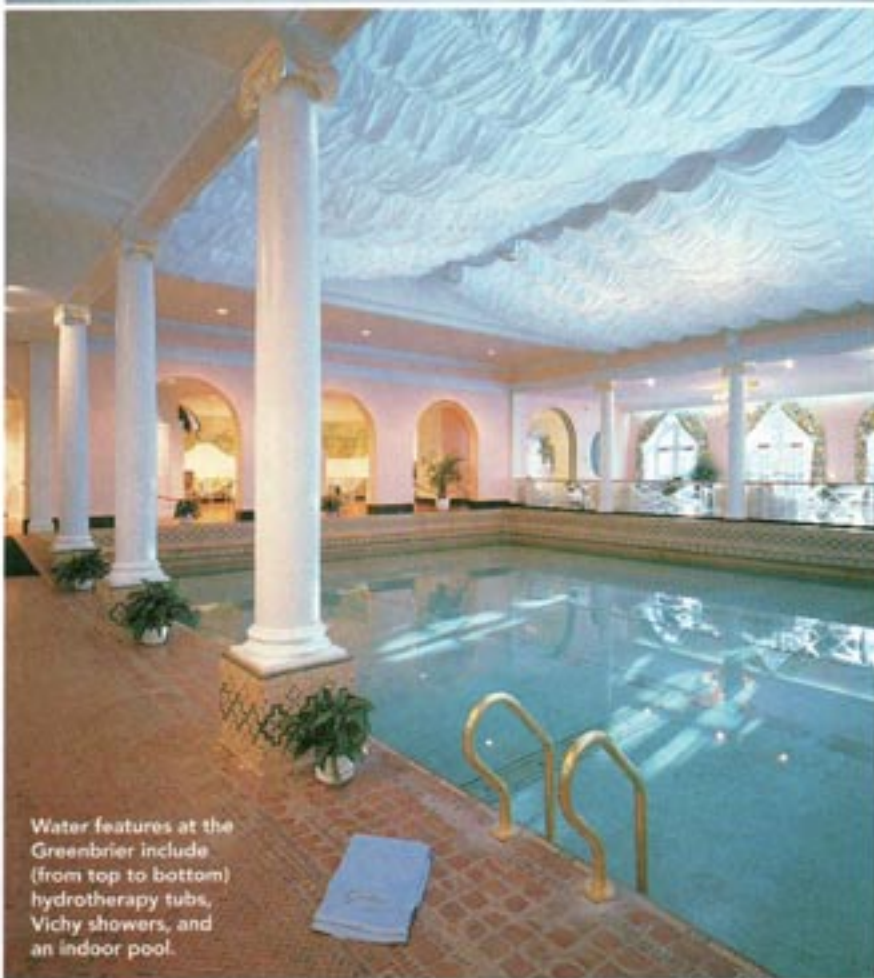
at the Greenbrier in the mid-1980s taught me about the resort business and prepared me to serve as resort master designer. The restoration of the historic Broadmoor in Colorado Springs, CO, afforded my first opportunity as master designer of an entire property. Opened in 1918, the Broadmoor was considered one of the country's finest hotels, but by 1989 it had fallen into some disrepair. It was purchased that year, and four years later work began on a \$300 million rebirth. Our objectives were to re-establish it among the country's premier resorts and increase profits. Both objectives have been achieved and continue to be improved upon each year.

The Broadmoor offered me the opportunity to bring varied and specific talent together from across the country and to work collaboratively and with continuity as a team on one property, something I now do for every project that I master design. It also served as the genesis of "The Galyean Family Design Circus," an interesting description of our accomplished team of family and extended family whose varied strengths, ranging from design and technology to apparel and aesthetics, provide the experienced talent to tackle virtually any project.

My interest in hydrotherapy has continued, not surprising when you realize that all earthly cultures have developed water treatments since the beginning of time. European hydrotherapy is widely used and accepted for its health benefits and is considered preventative care by many health insurance plans. In the U.S., however, we are just beginning to discover hydrotherapy for its healing qualities. History and science both continue to prove the healing properties of hydrotherapy.

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Wet is Galyean's recently launched collection of bath and body products.



Water features at the Greenbrier include (from top to bottom) hydrotherapy tubs, Vichy showers, and an indoor pool.



Spa-goers are greeted with a scenic view when gazing out over the infinity pool at The Broadmoor.

"All earthly cultures have developed water treatments since the beginning of time."

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A lifelong interest in design, paired with an enduring appreciation for hydrotherapy, has inspired me and my team to create a range of related services and products. We recently launched Wet (Water Embodied Therapy), a collection of bath and body products that features 11 all-natural products that draw on age-old water therapies to deliver water's restorative and therapeutic qualities. In partnership with SaniJet, we are creating a new line of baths with pipeless hydrotherapy

technology and a blend of Renaissance and Art Nouveau design. TAG Signature is also developing a collection of spa apparel and resort and club furniture and has a resort home interior design studio.

Unfortunately, too few spas incorporate water treatments. It requires a financial investment upfront, and there's a bit of a learning curve for even the most experienced spa staff if they haven't administered hydrotherapy before. Smart resort operators know,

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The women's changing area at The Spa at The Hotel Hershey in Hershey, PA, is another example of Galyean's work.

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however, that hydrotherapy can attract returning guests and be very profitable. One of our \$100,000 SilverTAG showers typically pays for itself in less than a year.

With The TAG Signature spa treatments line, we are taking traditional, centuries-old therapies and adding technology to deliver them with precision. The SilverTAG is a computer-controlled shower programmed to fit the user's body size and treatment desires and features up to 30 shower frequencies and 18 showerheads in six zones. Likewise, the TAG FlowThru Tub is a therapeutic soaking tub designed to mirror the qualities of natural hot springs. These two treatments in tandem increase the benefits of massage and are profitable spa enhancements.

Today, out of The TAG Studio in the mountains of West Virginia, we're currently working on a trio of diverse projects. We are leading the design team at the Jerome Hotel in a \$45 million redesign of the historic and beloved hotel in the heart of Aspen, CO. In Bermuda, we are designing a spa for Tucker's Point Club, which will open at the end of 2008. Closer to home, we are beginning the interior master design of the **Peacock Hotel & Spa** in Greenville, SC. This 108-room boutique hotel will debut in 2009, catering to the international luxury business traveler.

Every one of our projects is unique. There is no formula—it's simply a spirited process driven by personal experience and a wonderful team with decades of expertise. For the Peacock Hotel & Spa, the owner expressed a desire for an interior with a modern Asian style. With sketchbook and passport in hand, we traveled together to China for two weeks, fully immersing ourselves in the culture. What we learned will inspire virtually every aspect of this new project.

We are best known for combining innovative and visionary design principles with a comprehensive understanding of the hotel industry. Our credo is simple: "We specialize in resort master design for exceptional properties independently managed by nice people." I've been fortunate to find owners and operators who share our passion and our commitment and value what we do.—*Tag Galyean*

Tag Galyean, AIA, RIBA, ASLA, IIDA, is the founder and master design conceptualist of The TAG Studio in West Virginia, a family of resort design professionals. You can contact Galyean at (304) 647-3520 or email info@tagstudio.com.