

# R a n

AS A STANFORD FRESHMAN IN THE '60S, TINSLEY AZARIAH Galyean took a vocational preference test that matched the taker's responses with those of leading figures in various fields. "The results were ambiguous," recalls Galyean, a silver-haired southerner whose courtly manner masks a sly wit, "until one of the psychologists who'd developed the test noticed that my answers were almost identical to Leonard Bernstein's. I'd been planning to become a writer. He suggested that instead of working alone, I'd be much happier 'conducting' a creative team."

Literature's loss would ultimately be a boon to the spa world. After becoming an architect, Galyean, who goes by the acronym TAG, helped pioneer the kind of all-encompassing approach to spa design that has since become the norm. Although he's also designed restaurants and residences, among other things, Galyean is best known for flagship resort spas. The list includes the Greenbrier in West Virginia, Turnberry Isle Resort in Florida, the Spa at Pebble Beach and La Quinta Resort in California, and the Hotel Hershey in Pennsylvania. For one of his latest projects, a renovation of the Broadmoor, the venerable Colorado Springs spa, he recently installed two inventions that should secure his reputation as the wizard of waterworks: the \$100,000 SilverTAG Shower and the \$25,000 Flow Through Tub by TAG, both of which he developed and which are also available for home installation.

There was no eureka moment that led Galyean to become

IN THE LUXURY SPA WORLD, TAG GALYEAN IS THE WIZARD OF WATERWORKS BY JEFF BOOK

# M a n

the "the king of hydrotherapy," as Broadmoor spa director Ella Stimpson calls him. In fact, it would have seemed highly unlikely two decades ago, when he headed an award-winning architecture firm that employed 40 people, with offices in his native West Virginia and in Washington, D.C. "It was too much," he says now. "Instead of being a conductor, I was more like a stage manager." In 1986 he sold his practice and became an independent consultant.

Soon after came a call from the Greenbrier, the historic property long known for its soothing mineral springs. "I'd tried to get the Greenbrier as a client before, but they considered me too local and too young," Galyean says. Now the resort needed help—in a hurry—to totally remodel the indoor pool. ("Too historic to abandon, too shabby to keep," he quips.) Given a scant three months, Galyean moved onto the property and cranked a well-chosen team into high gear. When the project was finished on schedule and on budget, the Greenbrier asked him to stick around and rework the old mineral baths.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LARRY LAZLO

An attendant selects the desired program, and for the next five minutes you experience a symphony of sensations conducted, remotely, by TAG Galyean: pulsating chords, crescendos of warm water, glissandos of cool.



"At the time, *spa* could mean Baden-Baden or the hot tub at the Holiday Inn," Galyean recalls. "At the Greenbrier we invented the post-World War II luxury resort spa, without really knowing what we were doing. We set new standards for the terms *resort amenity spa* and *destination spa* to distinguish spas like the Greenbrier's from the few notable stand-alone spas of the time, such as the Golden Door and Canyon Ranch."

Galyean spent almost two years at the Greenbrier, gaining knowledge of not only spa design but also spa management and treatments. "They had Scotch hoses that had been there since the '20s," Galyean says, referring to the resort's signature Scotch Spray treatment, in which a therapist uses two of these high-pressure hoses to direct powerful streams of hot or cold water over the body to stimulate circulation. "We built new, improved versions of them."

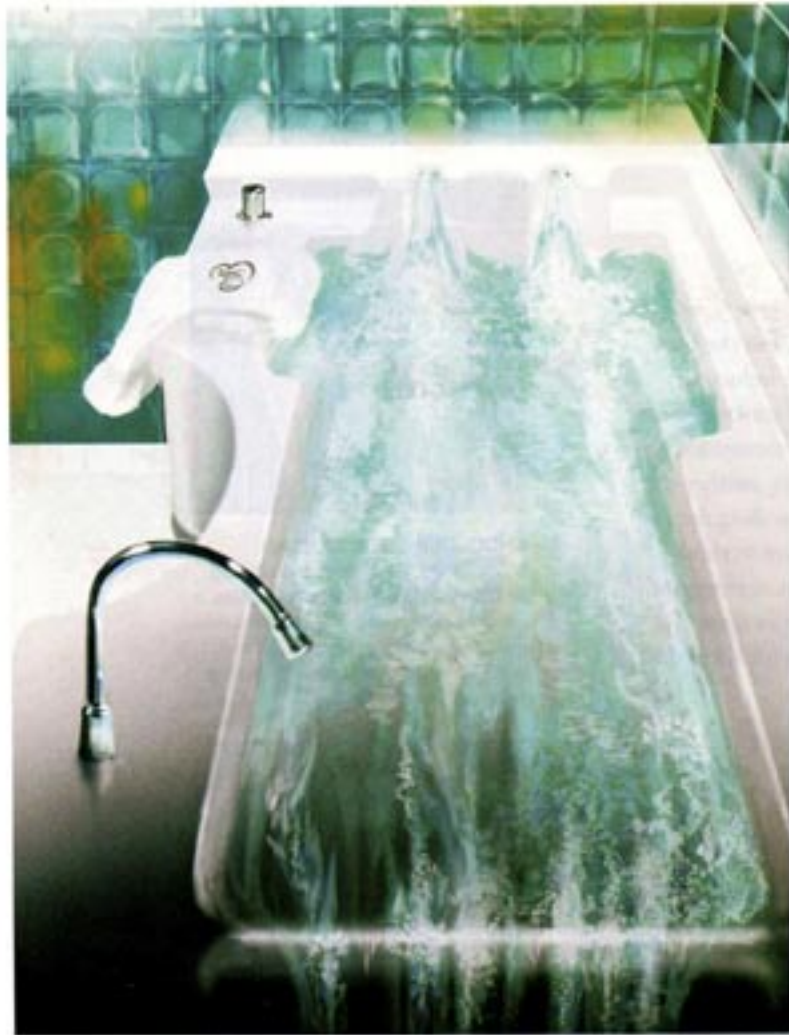
In a taste of the future, Galyean also revamped the Greenbrier's traditional Swiss shower into a 16-head wonder with two zones, each with manual controls for temperature and pressure. "Every spa I've done has had showers like that and soaking tubs," he says. "A massage is 300 percent better if it's preceded by good hydrotherapy, which prepares your nervous system for it."

It took Hollywood, or, rather, a Hollywood producer, who'd found Nirvana in one of Galyean's Greenbrier showers, to bring the SilverTAG into existence. He called Galyean and commissioned a big-budget hydrotherapy shower for his Beverly Hills mansion, an aquatic epic complete with computer-generated special effects. Galyean collaborated with his architect son, Taylor, with added input from his other son, Tinsley III, a digital-media expert. (Both have advanced degrees from M.I.T.) The waggish Galyean says their biggest accomplishment was not the technology but "getting plumbers and computer scientists to work together. Those guys don't even speak the same language."

A taste of his own medicine: Galyean stands beneath the forked showerhead specially designed to massage the muscles around the shoulder blades.

The producer, says Galyean, called the \$100,000 price tag "the best money I ever spent." The Broadmoor was impressed enough to install two of the showers (one for men, one for women) last spring, replacing four of Galyean's previous gee-whiz showers, which cost a mere \$65,000 each.

"The SilverTAG couldn't have been built ten years ago," Galyean says, because the computer technology, which controls the myriad changes in temperature and pressure (as many as 120 during a five-minute treatment), was lacking. A splashproof touch screen commands a computer linked to six servo-controlled valves that precisely regulate water temperature and flow to the 18 showerheads. "Through the servomechanisms we're playing with the cardiovascular hydrodynamics," Galyean tells me, a perhaps nonsensical phrase, as it was deliv-



ered over drinks around midnight. The showerheads themselves are divided into six zones—lower legs, upper legs, lower torso, upper torso, shoulders, and overhead—and their placement has been scaled to the average height of men and women. The heads are not unusual looking, except the one for the shoulders, which is forked to direct the powerful streams away from the spine. It looks like an ancient weapon.

"The valves are industrial-grade ones like those used in commercial bakeries and photo labs," explains Taylor Galyean. "With them we can change flow and temperature every 15 seconds, or 20 times per zone during a five-minute treatment. The temperature range could be as wide as the water temperature in the pipes, but that would be a great shock. We use a range from 70 to 112 degrees."

Unlike the SilverTAG Shower, the Flow Through Tub by TAG can be easily retrofitted to create a home-spa hydrotherapy center in one fell swoop. Made of reinforced fiberglass, the FT Tub has charcoal filters to purify the incoming water, an infinity foot, and electronic temperature and fill controls.

The SilverTAG's many variables allow the Broadmoor therapists to offer four distinct hydrotherapeutic shower programs. Relax is an anti-stress treatment that relies on pressure more than temperature. Relief uses heat and pressure on large muscle groups to relieve tension. ("Pressure intensifies the effect of temperature at both ends of the range," says Galyean.) Tonic invigorates by

employing a wide temperature range (80 to 112 degrees), and Shape and Shape combats cellulite by targeting the lower body to increase circulation.

"That sequence uses colder water on your lower torso while keeping other zones warm," Taylor adds. "The goal is always balance. And each sequence ends with 15 to 20 seconds of cool water to close the pores and reset you for entering the real world again." (The "cool" water is 90 degrees, as anything much below the body's core temperature of 98 degrees feels cool, while 100 to 102 degrees registers as neutral, or comfortably warm.)

Taking a SilverTAG shower is akin to going through an automated car wash. An attendant selects the desired program, and for the next five minutes you experience a symphony of sensations conducted, remotely, by TAG Galyean: pulsating chords, crescendos of warm water, glissandos of cool. It's a stimulating overture for the treatments to follow. If five minutes seems too short, "most people find ten minutes too intense," the maestro says. Adds spa director Stimpson, "You don't know what's coming next, so your senses are aroused." Indeed, the designers tempered the temperatures after finding that the element of surprise tended to make the water seem hotter or colder than it actually was.

Just as automated car washes save on labor, so does the SilverTAG Shower. At \$30 per five-minute treatment, the Broadmoor expects to recoup the shower's cost within eight

## The flow of history

While therapeutic bathing goes back to antiquity, "showers weren't common anywhere in the world until the early 1900s," notes Galyean. "So the development of heated water sprayed under pressure is relatively recent." He found one early-American antecedent not far from home, at the Homestead in Warm Springs, Virginia. Thomas Jefferson is credited with designing the men's stone pool there to contain the flowing springwater. (Who knew that Jefferson was a founding father of the American spa?) A system of wood gates released water to cascade onto bathers, who stood below the pool, clinging to ropes for support. "It works the same way today," marvels Galyean. "The SilverTAG Shower is really a high-tech, 21st-century version of Warm Springs."

## It reigns, it pours

The SilverTAG Shower has 18 showerheads in all, 1 overhead, 1 at the back, and 4 in each corner arranged vertically. The shower valves are industrial grade, and the flow through each one is controlled by a pair of servomotors (one for hot, one for cold). The escutcheons, which cover the connection between pipe and wall, are made of hand-blown glass. However, neither the technology nor the plumbing was the most difficult part of installing the shower. "It was the testing," recalls Galyean. "It took 80 minutes to run through the 16 different shower settings, and every adjustment necessitated starting over." Galyean, son Taylor, and two other team members arrived at the Broadmoor and alternated showering almost continuously for three days to ready the SilverTAG for its debut.



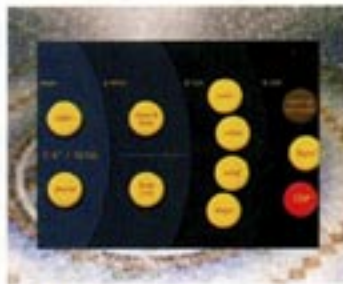
### SHOULDER SHOWERHEAD

Made of stainless steel and costing \$2,000, the fork-shaped head gives a deep massage to the shoulder-blade area by delivering wedges of water without hitting the spine. "It makes you melt," says Taylor.



### FLOOR MOSAIC

The glass tiles, some of them gilded, were made in Murano, the ancient Venetian center of glassblowing.



### CONTROL PANEL

The 16 shower settings are controlled from this waterproof touch screen and can be altered by Galyean via the Internet. Through the touch screen, the spray is customized to a person's height, since, says Taylor, "a taller person's shoulders are where a shorter person's face is." The software has firewalls to prevent hackers from getting in and giving a client a cold shower.

months. "With manual control, even a skilled therapist can't achieve this shower's quickness and accuracy," Taylor declares.

Before you order a SilverTAG, you should know that it requires 1½-inch inflow pipes (½- or ¾-inch is the norm) to handle the 230 gallons necessary for a five-minute über-spritz. Then there's the drain, which "could swallow a carp," says Taylor. The shower is also best installed in a house under construction. All of which may only make the SilverTAG a new status symbol for those who already have a Viking range in the kitchen, especially since it can be programmed over the Internet. "The client can fine-tune sequences on a secure website; then the changes will be downloaded to the controlling computer," says Galyean. "That way the client can customize sequences—temperatures, flows, duration—then try them out."

A more likely candidate for home installation, whether new construction or retrofit, is Galyean's six-foot-long Flow Through Tub, which mimics the "flow through" action of natural hot springs. A touch pad controls temperature, a timer prevents initial overfilling, and filters cleanse incoming water of chlorine and other impurities. The water courses in from two over-the-shoulder outlets (preferably set at different temperatures for a stimulating contrast), then flows down and over the foot of the ergonomically designed tub, as it would in an infinity-edge pool. There's also a kicker, the Bath Fizzy, a two-inch-diameter tablet placed behind the back. It fizzes like an outsize Alka-Seltzer for five minutes, releasing therapeutic marine extracts and essential oils. The sodium-bicarbonate effervescence also deionizes the air around the head and disperses the aroma of the essential oils. (The ingredients, created with FloraSpa, are proprietary.)

Doubling as a conventional tub makes the FT Tub (patent pending) practical in a home spa. (But you might want to hold off on buying one, as the TAG team is working to bring down the price.) It's popular with spas because, unlike recirculating-water tubs, the FT is easily sanitized. With sessions lasting ten minutes or less, spas can count on three treatments per hour.

That Galyean is mindful of how his products can improve a spa's bottom line reflects his dual nature as creative force and profit-minded impresario. Shunning full-time employees and publicly traded corporate clients, Galyean has succeeded as a virtuoso "conductor" of project-specific teams geared toward independent high-end resorts.

"I never thought of myself as just the shower guy. I like to create a story that's unique to the property," he says. "The key is to do something different for each one—and every time, to up the ante."

**JEFF BOOK** specializes in writing about travel and luxury lifestyle.

For more information on TAG products, call 304-793-2247, e-mail sales@tagsignature.com, or visit [www.tagsignature.com](http://www.tagsignature.com).

## The Broadmoor



So many of the world's great hotels were created by brilliant eccentrics," TAG Galyean observes, referring to Spencer Penrose, who in 1918 built the 700-room Broadmoor on Cheyenne Lake in Colorado Springs, where the Great Plains run into the Rockies. A master marketer, Penrose promoted his remote resort by building a road to the top of Pike's Peak and hosting a trainload of honchos from elite eastern hotels. "He wanted the Broadmoor to embody European elegance and western hospitality," says Galyean.

Since its purchase in 1988 by the Gaylord family, an Oklahoma publishing dynasty, the Broadmoor has undergone a lavish renovation, overseen by Galyean. Guest rooms in the handsome main building were gutted and reconfigured, allowing for roomy new baths. The spruced-up interiors suggest the stately home of a European noble transposed to the rugged West. After a \$3 million makeover, the spa now has 25 massage rooms, 10 aesthetician rooms, cozy fireplace-warmed lounges, and Galyean's FT Tubs and SilverTAG Showers, the latter sheathed in jewel-toned glass tiles and floored in mosaic ones. There is also a lap pool, a fitness center, hairstyling stations, and a spa café. A large new infinity pool appears to merge with the lake. The Broadmoor deserves credit for pushing ahead while staying true to its winning mix of old-school elegance and western warmth. Rates: \$285–\$800. Reservations: 800-634-7711. Website: [www.broadmoor.com](http://www.broadmoor.com)