The Grotto at Tigh-Na-Mara: A Sanctuary Refreshed



THE PROJECT:
Grotto Spa at Tigh-Na-Mara Resort

DESIGNER:
Studio AE Interior Design Inc, BC

GENERAL CONTRACTOR:
TS Williams Construction Ltd.

INSTALLER:
Cornerstone Tile, Nanaimo, BC

OWNER:
Tigh-Na-Mara Resort, BC

LOCATION:
Parksville, BC

COMPLETION:
2024

The Grotto Spa at Tigh-Na-Mara Resort in Parksville, BC, is a premier luxury spa destination that first opened in 2003. Over the years, it has won numerous awards, including the 2019 World Luxury Spa Award for Best Luxury Mineral Spa in Canada. The spa has been consistently recognized as one of the top wellness retreats in the country. After celebrating 20 years of service, the resort initiated a $2.5 million renovation project to modernize its facilities and elevate the guest experience. Updates included fully renovated locker rooms and the introduction of *The Grotto*, a new outdoor retreat featuring cedar barrel saunas in a nature-inspired setting.



Prior to the renovations, the changing room and showers were dark, heavily used, and visibly outdated. There was evidence of efflorescence, cracking, and broken grout, which not only affected the appearance but also indicated ongoing maintenance challenges. The existing shower drains were old cast iron models, giving the space an institutional feel rather than the tranquil, luxurious atmosphere expected in a high-end spa. The showers were not an inviting or relaxing part of the spa experience, making their transformation a key focus of the commercial renovation for a luxury spa.



OBJECTIVE

The goal of the renovation was to modernize and enhance the spa's bathroom, locker room, and shower areas while ensuring compliance with commercial building codes. A key part of the project was incorporating accessible spa features, like curbless showers, that seamlessly integrated with the spa's luxurious and relaxing aesthetic. Given the need to work with existing plumbing infrastructure, the project required flexible solutions that would accommodate off-center drain placements without compromising the design.

CHALLENGE

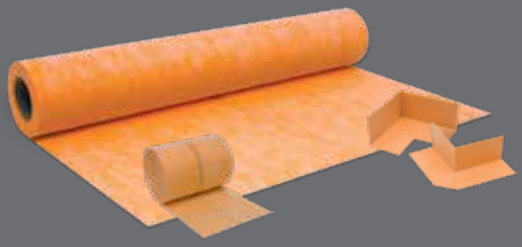
The renovation presented several challenges, including the need to adapt to existing drain placements without major plumbing modifications. Ensuring compliance with commercial building codes and accessibility standards was essential, particularly in creating curbless showers that met both functional and aesthetic requirements. The project also required a balance between achieving a sleek, modern design and ensuring durability for long-term use. Additionally, effective waterproofing solutions were critical to protecting against moisture exposure in the high-traffic spa environment.

PRODUCTS USED

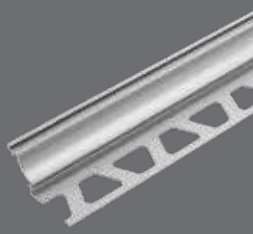
The following Schluter-Systems products were specified and installed to ensure a durable, waterproof, and visually appealing tile installation:



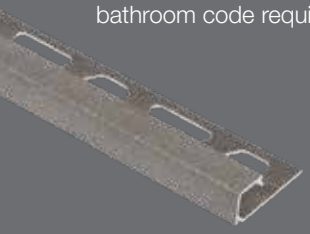
KERDI-LINE-VARIO linear drains: Installed in the change room showers,allowing for the use of existing off-center drain placements. The VARIO system provided the needed flexibility during installation, as it can be cut to specific sizes on-site. This adaptability allowed for precise fitting while accommodating existing drain placements, and it was paired with a SQUARE grate style for a modern finish.



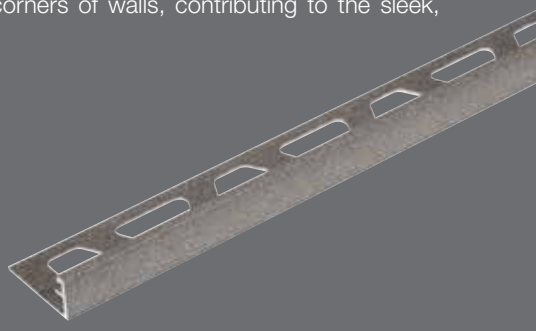
KERDI membrane, KERDI-BAND, and KERDI-KERECK corners: Used to create a fully waterproof shower assembly, preventing moisture infiltration and ensuring long-term durability.



DILEX-AHK (AE finish): A coved profile installed along with inside and outside corner pieces to meet commercial bathroom code requirements, providing smooth transitions, reducing maintenance, and enhancing durability.



QUADEC: Used as a capping profile for the base and vertical outside corners of walls, contributing to the sleek, polished aesthetic.



SCHIENE (Trendline finish): Applied to vertical wall outside corners for a high-end, refined look.

SOLUTION

To meet the project's requirements, the renovation team utilized Schluter's innovative solutions for waterproofing, drainage, and profile finishing. The **KERDI-LINE-VARIO** drain system allowed for easy adaptation to existing drain locations, minimizing the need for major plumbing modifications. The showers were designed to be fully curbless, improving accessibility while maintaining a seamless, spa-like aesthetic. This approach supported the resort's vision for a clean, open, and modern spa design.



The waterproofing system, consisting of **KERDI** membrane, **KERDI-BAND**, and pre-formed **KERDI-KERECK** corners, provided a complete moisture protection solution. Since a mortar bed was used instead of a foam shower tray, it allowed for a flexible installation process, accommodating the off-center drains more efficiently.



Cove-shaped profiles such as **DILEX-AHK** were installed to meet commercial building codes and enhance ease of cleaning. Decorative profiles, including **QUADEC** and **SCHIENE**, contributed to the spa's luxurious finish, ensuring both functionality and aesthetic appeal—ideal for a high-traffic environment following a commercial renovation for a luxury spa.

RESULT

The renovation successfully transformed the Grotto Spa's locker room and shower areas into a modern, accessible, and visually stunning space. By incorporating curbless showers, high-end finishes, and reliable waterproofing systems, the project elevated the spa experience while ensuring compliance with commercial standards.

Guests at the Grotto Spa can now enjoy a beautifully updated facility that enhances relaxation and wellness, reinforcing the resort's reputation as one of Canada's premier spa destinations. This renovation is a testament to how thoughtful design and high-quality products can work together to create a seamless, functional, and elegant space within a successful luxury spa renovation project on Vancouver Island.







