

healing profile

Q&A

ROBERT DESTEFANO

President & CEO Sleep Garden Inc.

By Melissa B. Williams

Robert deStefano, founder and president of Sleep Garden, Inc., set out to cure his own insomnia and instead created a program that has cured insomnia for people across the country. His innovative Sleep Garden collection includes the highly profiled *zYoga the Sleep Ritual* with Ann Dyer, workshops at the Fairmont Hotels, and, launching this fall, a skincare line to help you sleep more beautifully. Below deStefano sheds light on one of life's most important rituals—sleep.

**HL&S: Why did you start Sleep Garden?**

deStefano: *Its formation is a classic case of pure, accidental entrepreneurialism—my world-class, gold medal, chronic insomnia meets luck and opportunity. I couldn't find a sleep music CD that was enjoyable to listen to and most of all effective, so I made my own. It worked perfectly for me, and then for my family and friends, and it kind of took off from there. Now after nearly five years, I love my role of playing the holistic David to the sleep drug company Goliaths.*

HL&S: Tell us about zYoga the Sleep Ritual.

deStefano: *Part of my plan to beat insomnia included a daily yoga practice. Ann Dyer was my early morning yoga teacher at Rodney Yee's studio. Even though it was an a.m. class, Dyer's teaching philosophy centered on her belief that most Americans are simply exhausted. Sleep Garden had already been formed, zMusic was taking off, and I thought that Dyer could really contribute so I approached her with the idea of creating the first yoga for sleep DVD with me. During the shoot, I knew that a star [had been] born. Her sequencing, her ability to communicate, her magical voice makes her the perfect blend of a yogic sleep therapist and dream weaver.*

HL&S: How does poor sleep or insomnia affect one's health?

deStefano: *Many of the medical issues around sleep loss have been in the media for a while: heart attacks, high blood pressure, stroke, and weight gain. But what's not mentioned enough is that sleep loss sucks the very vibrancy out of our lives—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. The fact that humans are so adaptable is good in many cases. But not with insomnia! After what could be years of living with insomnia, a person might believe that it's normal to take sleep drugs, to feel and look exhausted, to pound mega cups of coffee, to fall asleep watching a movie, or to wake up in the middle of the night. No, that's not the way to live!*

HL&S: With your partnership with the Fairmont Hotels, what are you hoping to offer guests?

deStefano: *Here's the little secret the sleep drug companies do not want you to know—beating insomnia is not hard, you just need the intention, the know-how, and the tools. Bottom line: it's a self-help-driven cure, and I'm traveling the country telling people this story with the passion that comes from personal experience. Coast to coast, in beautiful venues like the Fairmont Washington D.C., our "Take*

back your sleep" national tour with Ann Dyer and me have been drawing hundreds of people [who are] ready and willing to cut the lock insomnia has held on their lives.

HL&S: I hear you're launching a new skincare line this fall. Can you tell us more about the line? How does it help you sleep?

deStefano: *Sleep loss accelerates aging, and the proof can be found on the face. I'm in the sleep positive ritual tool business, so I thought why not create a bedtime skincare line that would serve as a stress-releasing, sleep-inducing ritual as well as the most pure and effective organic skin nourishing and repair available. I know a lot about sleep of course, but nothing about formulating skincare. I was fortunate to team with organic skincare pioneer Melissa Jochim to form Rome Dejo Bella and, with it, the first organic beauty sleep ritual, "Nocturnals|Night Spa". For more than fifteen years Jochim has been setting the bar, formulating for brands like Avalon and Alba. She is also the founder of the American Alliance of Aromatherapy. With Nocturnals' three step ritual we've put the night back into night cream and the beauty back into sleep. It's amazing! 🌿*