

LEISURE MANAGEMENT

ISSUE 1 2014

ANDY MURRAY

On opening his luxury Scottish hotel

MoMath museum

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ON THE COVER

Nathan Blecharczyk

Airbnb co-founder on starting a travel revolution

COPENHAGEN

Mayor Pia Allerslev
on getting seriously
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We don't just need garden cities, we need wellness cities – it's time to update our frames of reference

Recommendations that two garden cities are built in southern England to ease the UK's housing shortage have prompted debate and triggered political wrangling.

However, regardless of the politics, the opportunity to build two new cities from scratch is a thrilling one and if it goes ahead, a once in a lifetime opportunity for the leisure and wellness industries.

Cities designed from the ground up, using the latest sustainable design and green technology with fully integrated leisure, would be incredible places to live.

Things have moved on a long way since the last garden cities – Letchworth and Welwyn – were built and even the models used more recently for the UK's 'New Towns', such as Milton Keynes, Harlow and Stevenage, are no longer relevant.

We need a new vision of cities for this new age of leisure: wellness cities, not garden cities (although they'll need plenty of gardens and green spaces).

We now have a greater appreciation of the importance of things like humanscale development, the power of architecture to create communities and the importance of integrating green space and seamlessly embedding technology. We also have the tools, skills and knowledge to deliver something truly outstanding.

Britain leads the world in so many related disciplines: urban planning, architecture, sustainability, advanced technology, garden design, engineering and the creative industries. In addition, we have world class construction and surveying sectors and a great wealth of expertise in crafts and hand-building techniques.

But the most exciting part of living in a new city such as this would be the total integration of all the leisure

Purpose-built well cities, with places to walk, exercise and spend time outdoors and access to great facilities, would serve as a model for others to follow

– sport, leisure, wellness and health and fitness, hospitality, attractions and outdoor leisure.

In the last 30 years, Britain has moved from an industrial to a service and leisure economy and leisure is now the biggest area of consumer expenditure. A new city built with leisure integrated into other infrastructure such as education, transport, medical, commercial and retail – would create a world-class example of excellence showcasing the UK's skills and expertise. It would also be a world first.

It's recognised that in order for people to be healthy and lead long, happy and productive lives, wellness needs to be built into day to day life. A purpose-built wellness city [or well city] with places to walk, exercise and spend time outdoors, as well as with access to great facilities, would enhance quality of life, lead to better health and serve as a model for others to follow.

Let's assemble a team of experts and creative thinkers from across all these disciplines, put politics to one side and make something really exciting happen.

Liz Terry, editor @elizterry

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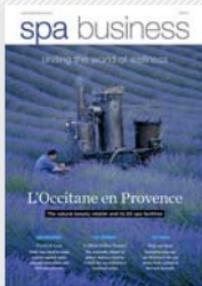


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PEOPLE

“I’m pleased to be able to give something back to the community I grew up in”

Andy Murray, Wimbledon champion & owner of Cromlix



Murray bought the £1.8m property in Jan 2013 with the aim of turning it into a five star hotel

Andy Murray’s luxury Scottish hotel, the Cromlix, is due to open 1 April 2014.

Wimbledon champion Murray bought the hotel in January 2013; it is currently undergoing extensive renovation to re-establish it as a luxury destination. The hotel is situated close to Murray’s home town of Dunblane, and was the venue for his brother Jamie’s wedding in 2010. It is set in 34 acres of secluded woodlands and will feature 15 rooms, including five suites, and a Chez Rouz restaurant offering fine dining using locally-sourced produce. The estate also has its own chapel, making it ideal for weddings.

“I’m really looking forward to the hotel getting up and running,” said Murray. “By re-establishing Cromlix as a leading luxury hotel at the heart of the Dunblane community we’ll be able to attract new visitors to the area, create new jobs and focus on supporting other local businesses. I’m pleased to be able to give something back to the community I grew up in.”

Cromlix is being managed on



behalf of Murray by Inverloch Castle Management International (ICMI), which also manages eight other independent properties in Scotland. The hotel is already fully booked for the Ryder Cup in September, which takes place close by at Gleneagles.

The Cromlix estate dates back to the early 15th century. The house was rebuilt after a fire in 1880 and was converted from a private residence to a luxury hotel in 1981.

Details: www.cromlix.com

“Now I can host my Brazilian friends”

Ken Hom, chef, tv presenter and author

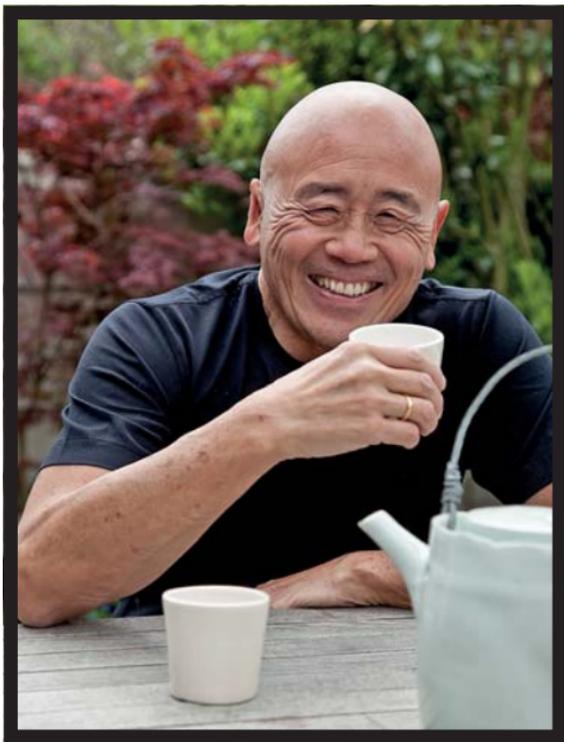
Ken Hom is to front a new restaurant being opened by Orient Express Hotels Ltd at Copacabana Palace hotel in Rio de Janeiro.

Work started on the 88-seat pan-Asian eatery, which is due to open in the first quarter of 2014.

“I had been going to Rio de Janeiro and staying at the Copacabana Palace Hotel for over 12 years,” said BBC tv chef Hom. “When a space at the hotel became available, I thought it may be a good idea to do an Asian restaurant there, and the management immediately loved the idea. It was a dream come true. I could work at a place I love and also share my love of food with all my Brazilian friends.”

The new restaurant will be located by the swimming pool of the legendary hotel, which celebrated its 90th anniversary in 2013. It will feature dark wooden floors and red walls in colours inspired by Chinese temples, with an onyx bar and upholstered silk chairs and sofas. Dishes will be prepared before guests on a long counter indoors, while three outdoor tables by the pool will offer alfresco dining.

Hom has teamed up with Orient Express Hotels to open the 88-seat pan-Asian eatery



“After 12 years of visiting countless restaurants, bars and lounges, I had a good idea what might appeal to Brazilians,” said Hom. “I love the country and have many friends there. Now I can host them in my restaurant!”

Hom has starred in various cookery series, and has written more than 30 cookery books. He is also opening a restaurant in Bangkok, Thailand, in 2014, with the Bandara Group, in a standalone colonial villa near to the Bandara Hotel (which housed Hom’s now-closed Maison Chin restaurant).

Details: www.copacabanapalace.com

“We’re able to give people the positive side of the calorie equation”

Helen Nuki, founder, StepJockey



Signs explaining how many calories are burned by taking the stairs instead of the lift will be added to public staircases as part of a government-backed scheme to improve the fitness of UK workers.

The scheme was developed by a Department of Health-funded web start up called StepJockey. Trials at three large office buildings, including the BBC in Manchester, found that signs advertising how many calories you could burn by taking the stairs increased the number of peo-

ple using them by up to 29 per cent.

“The aim of StepJockey is very simple: mark the built environment for calorie burn in the same way we mark foods for calorie-consumption,” said Helen Nuki, founder of StepJockey.

“We’re starting with stairs because stair climbing is classed as a vigorous physical activity and burns more calories than jogging.”

The idea for StepJockey was born when Nuki showed her eight-year-old daughter a packet of biscuits with the calorie and fat content listed, and her daughter asked why labels only ever

showed bad things. “In that moment, the idea to label the world for calorie burn was born. In doing this we are able to give people the positive side of the calorie equation,” said Nuki.

The service uses an app and website. Users will be able to scan ‘smart signs’ on the allocated stairways and track the calories they burn over time.

The scheme is based on nudge theory – the idea that positive reinforcement and suggestions can make people change their behaviour. “Because we can’t process all the information needed to make every single decision throughout the day, we rely on automatic behaviour to get us through. This behaviour is governed by many factors, a few of these being habit, ease, salience and what we see other people doing,” said Nuki. “We knew that if we wanted to change behaviour we needed something that would be easy for people to do, would have salience (the posters interrupt habits at the point of behaviour), would be for everyone and would give an incentive for people to change.”

Details: www.stepjockey.com



The StepJockey website allows people to calculate how many calories will be burned by climbing any set of stairs

“We’re trying to remove all the barriers to exercise that we can”

Jon Wright, managing director, Xercise4Less



Independent budget gym chain Xercise4Less has opened its first in-store Tesco gym in Stockton on Tees, following a partnership with the supermarket giant announced in July 2013.

The 3,000sq m club, which opened at the Tesco Extra store in Stockton-on-Tees in mid-November, is the first of a string of Xercise4less clubs planned for Tesco stores.

Managing director Jon Wright said that the partnership with Tesco will make working out more accessible for people. “With our standard monthly fees of £15 – or £9.99 off-peak – we’ve already addressed one of the biggest obstacles to joining a gym: cost. Now, by opening clubs in supermarkets, we’re also addressing the issue of accessibility. We’re trying to remove all

Jon Wright has said that he plans to open a further 100 clubs across the UK over the next five years

the barriers to exercise that we can.”

Equipment at the Stockton club is ‘zoned’ for different activities such as cardio, weights, a combat zone, a large ladies-only gym with a wide selection of female-friendly weights, and a dedicated personal training zone. Members have 40 free classes to choose from each week, ranging from boxercise to pilates and zumba.

Xercise4less was born in 2009 when Wright changed the model of his existing facility, the Xercise Health and Fitness Club in Castleford. “We switched to the budget model in

2009,” said Wright. “I don’t think we were visionary – the club just wasn’t making any money and we knew we had to do something different.”

Since then, the chain has opened 11 budget clubs, including the new Stockton on Tees site, and plans to have 100 clubs open across the UK by mid-2016. “One of the catalysts is the Tesco deal – it’s a great springboard to get us UK-wide,” said Wright.

The gym chain has also seen two additions to its board of directors, with the appointment of former Fitness First UK managing director Peter Boddy as non-executive chairman, and Simon Tutt as finance director.

From Health Club Management, September 2013

Details: www.xercise4less.co.uk



“We can dare to be ambitious”

Joanna Lumley, actress & Thomas Heatherwick, architect

British architect Thomas Heatherwick has released new images of his planned Garden Bridge across the Thames, and the Garden Bridge Trust has been launched, with Lord Mervyn Davies as its chairman.

Designed by British architect Thomas Heatherwick and championed by actress Joanna Lumley, the Garden Bridge is a new public garden planted on a new bridge that would link Covent Garden and the South Bank.

“The Garden Bridge is an incredibly daring idea; the chance to walk through woodlands over one of the greatest rivers in the world,” said Joanna Lumley. “This Garden Bridge is a bridge that will improve the quality of life of everyone in London. For commuters it will provide a quick and beautiful route to and from Waterloo Station. For dreamers, a quiet place to linger amongst trees and grasses and look at the views. For tourists, an unforgettable landmark. It’ll be a place to set hearts racing and calm troubled minds. It’ll be free to all; open to all.”



Joanna Lumley (left) and Thomas Heatherwick (right) are working together

At the launch of the Trust, Thomas Heatherwick said to *The Independent*, “We’re proud of punching below our weight in this country, but the Olympics has shown that we can surprise ourselves with what we can achieve. We can dare to be ambitious.”

The design features a 367m bridge that widens and narrows across its span, with a garden planted with trees, flowers and plants laid out in a

series of five habitats. Reconstituted stone and a copper nickel alloy are being considered for the exterior structure of the bridge.

Thomas Heatherwick worked with Arup on the designs, after they won a Transport for London tender for ideas to improve pedestrian access across the Thames. ●

Details: www.gardenbridge.co.uk

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Six Senses announces rapid expansion plans

Six Senses Hotels, Resorts and Spas has announced that four new spas and eight new development concepts are to open over the next three years through to 2016.

Four Six Senses Spas are included in the expansion plans with one opening in Kazakhstan, two in India and one in Oman.

Last month (December) saw the opening of Six Senses Spa at Esental Tower, in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The spa features five treatment rooms, a lounge and retail area with a juice bar, a fitness centre, a studio for wellness activities, wet facilities within female and male changing rooms and relaxation sound pods.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=p5c2n>



250 million wearable devices by 2017

Quarter of a billion health and fitness devices by 2017

Over a quarter of a billion wearable health and fitness sensing devices will be shipped worldwide by 2017, as fitness technology becomes more dominant in the wireless marketplace, claims technology research firm ON World.

In a survey by the firm conducted with 300 people, it was found that 20 per cent already own a wearable technology device.

Such is the growing rate (380 per cent since January 2013), ON has estimated that by 2017, Bluetooth chipsets used solely for health, wellness, sports and fitness will reach 95.7 million.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=M3n6a>



English Premier League clubs regularly hold friendly matches in the lucrative Asian market

Premier League secures football deal with China

The UK government has helped the English Premier League (EPL) secure an agreement with the Chinese Super League (CSL) to build up football at elite, youth and community levels in China.

The new partnership was signed on 2 December in Beijing by culture secretary Maria Miller and former England and Chelsea footballer Graeme Le Saux. The deal was announced as part of the UK government's trade mission to China, led by Prime Minister David Cameron.

The EPL will work with the CSL and the China Football Association on programmes to promote and develop football in China.

The CSL will also provide support and advice in the promotion and marketing of the EPL and its clubs in China.

The Chinese market has been targeted by many of the European elite football leagues and clubs due to its potential growth prospects.

According to EPL figures, the East Asian market is already worth around £200m a year to the league and to UK trade, with many clubs – including Manchester United, Liverpool and Chelsea – taking advantage of the market by holding pre-season friendly matches in the region.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=f9v4j>

Six Flags expands share repurchase plan by US\$500m



Six Flags has repurchased US\$800m of its stock

Six Flags Entertainment Corporation has announced that its board of directors has approved a plan to allow the company to repurchase an incremental US\$500m worth (£307m, £367m) of its stock.

Since February 2011, the theme park company has repurchased nearly \$800m (£491m, £588) worth of stock.

Jim Reid-Anderson, chairman, president and chief executive officer at Six Flags, said the repurchase plan would prove another way to deliver value to shareholders.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=6X57>

Beckham signs deal with Las Vegas Sands to create luxury resorts

Former England football captain David Beckham has signed a deal with global property developer Las Vegas Sands (LVS) which will see Beckham help create experiences at luxury resorts around the world.

Beckham, regarded as one of the world's most iconic men, will join forces with LVS's integrated resort properties in both Macao and Singapore, acting as the company's consultant and partner in the development of locations in Asia.

"We have billions of dollars invested in our own global, iconic brands and we clearly understand the importance of growing and sustaining those brands over time," said Michael Leven, president and COO of LVS. "We're very excited about the partnership and we fully expect it to grow in the years to come, especially as we



David Beckham has signed a deal to work with luxury property developer Las Vegas Sands

aggressively explore opportunities to further expand our presence in Asia."

At a press conference held in Macao, it was revealed that Beckham, described as a "tastemaker", will lend his expertise to

developing dining, retail and leisure concepts for the luxury property company.

"The scale, vision and calibre of all that they do is very impressive," said Beckham.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=H9p3d>

Tokyo Olympic stadium plans scaled down

The Japan Sport Council (JSC) has acceded to demands that a stadium planned for the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2020 be scaled down following concerns that its bulk would overshadow other buildings in the area.

The proposed stadium – designed by Zaha Hadid and with a shape described as being similar to a futuristic cycle helmet – would soar to 70m (229ft) in height, dwarfing neighbouring structures which are limited to 15m (49ft) in height.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=J8R8D>



A downsized version of the plans will be used

Marriott to buy African hospitality company Protea



Protea operates 116 hotels across South Africa

Marriott International has signed a deal with Protea Hospitality Holdings of Cape Town, South Africa to acquire Protea Hotels' brands and management business.

Protea Hotels operates or franchises 116 hotels across three brands, with 10,184 rooms in South Africa and six other Sub-Saharan African countries.

The transaction will nearly double Marriott's distribution in Africa to more than 23,000 rooms and help with the company's expansion plans in the market.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=p4x5P>



The development has faced opposition

£8bn redevelopment plans for Earis Court revealed

Capital & Counties Properties (Capco) has received outline planning consent for an £8bn regeneration of Earis Court.

The first detailed planning application will be submitted in the coming weeks. Plans include 37 acres of new open space, 6,775 homes, offices and workspaces, retail space, hotels and serviced apartments, a health hub, a primary school, a community and cultural hub and leisure space with a sports centre.

Hammersmith MP Andy Slaughter criticised the development for "speeding up the social cleansing of west London."

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=r3M2G>

Restricted entry for India's 'largest museum'

What has been dubbed India's largest museum is due to open mid January, with entry restricted to travellers passing through Mumbai Airport's new T2 terminal.

However, with the terminal having the capability of handling around 40 million passengers annually, local media has said that the new Jaye He museum could cost the Louvre in Paris its coveted top spot as 'world's most visited'. Occupying an area of 80,000sq ft (7,432sq m), the collection of art, craft and heritage pieces comprises around 7,000 artefacts – some dating back to the 8th century – plus an art wall displaying works by more than 1,500 artists.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?w=L7e2n>

PHOTO: COMO HOTELS AND RESORTS



The hotel will overlook Miami Beach

Metropolitan by COMO to make US debut in Miami

Metropolitan by COMO is launching in the US with a new Miami location opening at the end of January.

The 74-bedroom hotel overlooks Miami beach and is located at the centre of the city's Downtown Historic District. It will feature the COMO Shambhala spa with four treatment rooms, a yoga terrace, a steamroom, fitness room, rooftop hydrotherapy pool and a juice bar. The hotel also features a swimming pool, bar and two restaurants.

Interiors are by Italian designer Paola Navone, who contrasted the hotel's Art Deco heritage with urban, contemporary design.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?w=W9e6j>



The museum's entrance features a flaming bowl, which references the Olympic torch

Olympic museum reopens after \$61m revamp

The Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland, has re-opened to the public after a 23-month transformation costing approximately \$61m (£37m, £44.6m).

Overlooking Lake Geneva, the Olympic Museum documents the complete history of the Games, spanning from ancient Athens to the present day.

A major renovation of the original 1993 building, by Swiss architects Brauen & Wälchli, has virtually doubled the display areas, as well as creating new exhibition space totalling 3,000m² (9,842 sq.ft).

At the same time, a completely new visitor circuit has been designed, produced

and installed by an almost all-British team led by Metaphor (master-planning), Mather & Co (museum display), Paragon Creative (creative fit out), Electrosonic (AV hardware) and Centre Screen (Audiovisual and multimedia production.)

The museum now features three permanent exhibition spaces, education rooms, temporary exhibition areas, a shop, a redesigned garden and a terraced café.

Three levels of redesigned galleries incorporate the latest technological innovations, using specially commissioned films and interactive displays.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?w=f6T4m>

Plans revealed for New Doha Zoo in Qatar



The attraction will be located in Qatar's capital

A masterplan design has been revealed for the New Doha Zoo in Qatar, with a sustainable focus on the natural and climatic features of Asia, Africa and South America.

The project is the culmination of work between the Arab state's Public Works Authority (Ashghal), newly-appointed construction supervisors KEO International Consultants and HHCP+PJA.

The total cost of the development is thought to be in the region of QR230m (US\$63m, £38.6m, £45.9m).

Read more: <http://lei.sr?w=h8I6w>

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Picsolve announces new US\$13m investment

Picsolve has announced a new US\$13m (£7.9m E9.4m) investment from Moonray Investors, part of Fidelity Worldwide Investment.

The image capture firm says the investment will help it achieve its vision for guest experience photography in leisure and entertainment.

With 20 years' experience, the company has expertise in designing end-to-end photo and video capture and distribution platforms to support retail experiences, with interactive products such as GSX.

Picsolve showcased GSX and its digital product suite for the first time at IAAPA 2013 Attractions Expo in November, in the US.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=E3W55>



Most guests expect to have free WiFi

Survey reveals top trends in hotel technology

Offering WiFi and providing ample plugs and bandwidth capabilities are ever more important, claims eRevMax, provider of hotel online distribution and management solutions, which has produced an infographic about the top trends in hotel technology.

Devices are considered very important to guests, with 45 per cent travelling with two and 40 per cent travelling with three devices.

Thirty eight per cent of guests said they consider WiFi a priority when booking a hotel and 85 per cent said they want free WiFi access at their hotel.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=W8T6N>



Disney overtakes Universal, having the most Facebook check-ins in the US compared with 2012

Disney dominates list of most Facebook check-ins

Facebook has released a list of global destinations based on the most check-ins in 2013, with Disney taking the majority of the top spots across different countries.

The data lists dominant check-in locations from 25 countries across the world, allowing both consumers and operators to view the locations most popular on people's social agendas.

The original data set includes check-ins at free, open spaces like public parks and shopping malls, leading to a fairly invaluable suggestion for providers and operators looking to gain insight on the popularity of certain commercial attractions.

However, when the list is split into purely commercial ventures, Disney heads most of the lists across different countries, with the company usurping Universal Studios Orlando for the most Facebook check-ins in the US compared with last year's findings.

In Asia, Tokyo Disneyland was Japan's leading check-in spot, while Hong Kong Disneyland is Hong Kong's most checked-in commercial location. Disney also enjoyed check-in success in France, where Disneyland Paris was ranked at the top of Facebook's data set for the country.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=n3d7Y>

Online communities shaping beauty industry trends



Online beauty discussion in forums and on social media is rapidly changing the beauty market and could hold the key to future industry trends, according to research by *Diagonal Reports*.

According to the report, digital communities – which have grown significantly over the past few years – are becoming just as important as the product house and retailer when it comes to shaping trends and ideas in the beauty market, helping to create “new cultural formations”.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=m5J3p>

Social media is influencing trends in the industry

Exercise later in life can help protect your heart

Even if you don't start exercising until your late 40s or 50s it can still have marked benefits, according to a study conducted by the University College London.

Those out of the 4,000 taking part in the study who did the recommended 2.5 hours of exercise a week, had lower levels of inflammatory markers in their blood. High levels of inflammatory markers have been linked to increased heart risk.

Those who said they had stuck to the recommended amount of exercise over the entire 10-year study had the lowest inflammatory levels, meaning they were least likely to suffer from heart problems..

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=S2s4A>



The scheme is government backed

Staircases get calorie counts in new scheme

Public staircases are soon to be labelled as exercise apparatus when a government-backed scheme comes into force to try and make office workers and commuters across the UK fitter.

Trials at three large office buildings in Manchester found that signs advertising how many calories you could burn increased the number of people using stairs significantly.

The service uses an app and website. Users will be able to scan "smart signs" on the allocated stairways and track the amount of calories they burn over time.

See *People News* for more details.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=G2m7D>



Moderate exercise during pregnancy has been shown to boost brain function in newborn babies

Exercise during pregnancy boosts baby's brain

Moderate exercise during pregnancy could boost a baby's brain development, according to new research.

The study, which involved 18 mothers-to-be, found that 10 days after being born, the children showed signs of having a more mature brain when their mothers exercised during the pregnancy.

For the study, researchers assigned 10 women to an exercise group and eight to an inactive group at the start of their second trimester. The active group engaged in at least 20 minutes of cardio vascular activity three times a week at moderate intensity – meaning at least a slight shortness of

breath – with the pregnant women typically walking, jogging, swimming or cycling.

Using an EEG to record the brain's activity, the researchers measured the newborn children's brain activity while sleeping at eight to 12 days old.

The babies whose mother exercised had brains which were "more efficient" and could "recognise sounds with less effort".

The research team has hypothesised that exercise speeds up a process known as synaptic pruning, whereby extra nerve cells and connections are eliminated, helping brain development.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=S5Z3w>

Microsoft chooses brand for Xbox One fitness system



The system operates using movements

Microsoft chose fitness brand Body Training Systems to provide video workouts for Xbox Fitness on the new Xbox One, released on 22 November 2013.

Body Training Systems and Group X Systems, the company that delivers the programmes to health clubs and leisure centres in the UK, have rebranded themselves to coincide with the new launch.

Now known as Mossa, the workouts on Xbox Fitness will enable consumers to use the programme from their own living room.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=k7R4v>

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ATTRACTIONS



The new attraction features 160 dinosaur models, some of which can move and roar

Dinosaur theme park opens in Queensland, Australia

Palmersaurus – a dinosaur theme park – opened to the public on 14 December within the grounds of the Palmer Cooloom Resort in Queensland, Australia.

The park was funded by Clive Palmer, the Australian billionaire who is also behind plans to launch a replica of the Titanic. It contains 160 dinosaur models, some animatronic, ranging from 2.5m (8.2ft) to 22m (72.1ft) in length and up to 10m (32.8ft) high.

Speaking about the new attraction, Palmer said the park would serve as a constant reminder of the importance of conservation to the planet.

"What we don't want to see is our world ending up like the dinosaurs did," said Palmer. "We've got to take better care of the environment and have a positive message for people."

"If you went to Disneyland in France or Japan, you wouldn't find a dinosaur park bigger than this."

Australia Zoo owner Terri Irwin, who along with her children Bindi and Robert helped to officially open the park, praised the ambitious project and said it would bring wider tourism benefits for Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=j3Q6v>

Madame Tussauds to open attraction in Singapore



Sentosa attracts five million people annually

Merlin Entertainments has announced that it will take over the management of Sentosa's well-known Images of Singapore (IOS) attraction, while also introducing its own iconic Madame Tussauds to Asia's leading leisure destination.

Madame Tussauds Singapore will be Merlin's first Singapore-based attraction, as well as the first Tussauds outside of London to include its own ride.

Madame Tussauds Singapore is set to open on Sentosa this year.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=c4c6N>

Grand Texas Theme Park opening date revealed

Plans to bring a massive entertainment complex and theme park to Houston, Texas, US have taken a step forward after an opening date of Q1 2015 was set.

The park will be part of the Grand Texas Sport and Entertainment District, which will also house Big Rivers Waterpark, Downtown Texas, a wakeboard lake, baseball stadium, hotels and an event centre.

The US\$118m (£76m, E88.8m) attraction will include a waterpark, amphitheatre, paintball arena, equestrian centre and a retail park. Additional developments would add a further US\$95m, bringing estimates up to around US\$220m.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=K5G8j>



Ronaldo called the CR7 museum a 'gift'

Cristiano Ronaldo opens self-dedicated museum

Footballer Cristiano Ronaldo has announced that he is opening a museum devoted to himself.

The museum is located on the Portuguese island of Madeira, where Ronaldo was born, and showcases memorabilia from his career, including trophies, footballs and photographs.

Ronaldo attended the opening on 15 December in person and described the CR7 Museum as a 'gift' to his supporters.

"I have room for more trophies," said Ronaldo speaking at the opening. "If the Ballon d'Or comes, there is extra room here."

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=2Q9D5>

DiCaprio purchases multi-million dollar home themed around wellness

Golden Globe award-winning actor Leonardo DiCaprio has purchased a multi-million dollar unit in Greenwich Village, New York, US, boasting more than 500 wellness and health features.

The property, designed by wellness developers Delos Living, is housed inside a converted factory originally built in 1987 and is described as "the world's first WELL-Certified residence."

While hotels and spas have increasingly marketed wellness environments to guests, Delos is pushing the idea into homes and has spent five years researching ways to develop and integrate holistic health and wellness solutions to be deployed in a home environment.

DiCaprio, who is an investor in the project, described the homes as "innovative



Leonardo DiCaprio has purchased one of the world's first WELL-Certified residences

building designs that enhance both human health and improve the environment."

A Global Spa & Wellness Summit representative commented: "Nearly all famous movie stars have multimillion-dollar homes,

but [DiCaprio's] commitment to living in a healthy environment and his celebrity status sets an example that people everywhere can and will follow, even in a simple dwelling."

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=C7X4P>

Italy's thermal spas starting to recover from recession

Italy is showing "timid signs of a turnaround" for its recession-hit thermal spas, according to new data from Federterme – the Italian Federation of Industries Spas and Hot Springs Healing.

In 2012 there was a 6 per cent drop in revenue compared with 2011.

There have been signs of a recovery however, as in the first nine months of 2013 total revenues for Italian thermal spas remained largely unchanged compared to the same period in 2012.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=T7a3G>



Thermal spas in Italy look to be recovering

Secrets Golf & Spa Resort opens in Mexico



All rooms include swim out pools or spa pools

AMResorts has introduced the newest addition to its portfolio under the Secrets brand with the opening of 500-bedroom Secrets Puerto Los Cabos Golf & Spa Resort in Mexico.

The 12,000sq ft (1,114sq m) spa includes 22 treatment rooms as well as a beauty salon, steamroom, sauna and a fitness centre. Treatments on offer in the spa include traditional massages, facials, manicures and pedicures, aromatherapy and a hydrotherapy circuit.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=f9z8D>



Bjurstam has praised Derby's spa course

Derby Uni hailed as 'best in the world' for spa training

Swedish spa expert Anna Bjurstam – who led a recent Global Spa & Wellness Summit (GSWS) survey highlighting the lack of educated spa professionals – has praised the University of Derby Buxton in the UK for providing the "best spa management training in the world".

Bjurstam hailed the university as "a pioneer in spa management" thanks to its methods which include hands-on experience in real-world work situations.

"If the industry knew how good your students are, then they would be standing in line to employ them," said Bjurstam.

Read more: www.lei.sr/8938502

Meliá Hotels expands into Jamaica with Branco deal

Meliá Hotels is to manage and operate one of Jamaica's flagship resorts after formalising a deal with the country's government.

The Braco Village Hotel and Spa consists of 226 bedrooms, five restaurants, a number of pools and bars, as well as a spa.

The company said it would undergo a "comprehensive renovation" until its opening as the rebranded Meliá Jamaica, which is set to open in November 2014.

The deal was finalised by Meliá Hotels chair Gabriel Escarrer, tourism minister Wykeham McNeill and minister of labour and social security Derrick Kellier.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=k2a5E>



The new hotel is set to open in 2015

Legoland Florida starts new hotel development

Legoland Florida is making a bid to become a multi-day resort, having broken ground on a new hotel.

With a multi-coloured exterior and entrance, the hotel will feature 152 brightly coloured and highly themed rooms and suites, Lego inspired décor, interactive play areas, a pool and a restaurant.

The park has more than 50 rides, shows, attractions, a waterpark and an interactive splash battle ride.

This is the fifth Legoland hotel to be developed. There are existing hotels at the parks in California, Windsor and Billund, with a fourth soon to open in Malaysia.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=z2X5w>



It has been reported that 21 per cent of businesses believe a lack of skilled workers to be of concern

School curriculum failing hospitality and catering sectors

School leavers are less prepared for work in the hospitality and catering workforces than they were midway through the 19th century, according to learndirect.

A report from the UK online learning provider, which explored 160 years of the curriculum, has found that current changes only partially reflect the shifting skill-sets required in the sector.

It was also found that 21 per cent of businesses report a lack of skilled workers to be a concern, with basic abilities in customer service, time management and problem solving hindering recruitment and staff retention.

The report has uncovered a number of problems created by the teaching of older, irrelevant subjects, as well as gaps around core skills such as communication, management and teamwork.

The report has made five recommendations to help counter such problems.

Proposed changes to the current system include more use of the maths curriculum while pushing the idea of offering Functional Skills as a GCSE alternative, with more of a focus on vocational pathways, better use of work experience and the harnessing of technology.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=j6M9a>

'Insatiable' appetite for UK hotels as spending tops £3bn



Foreign hotel investors are interested in London

There is an 'insatiable' appetite for London hotels from foreign investors, which has contributed to more than £3bn of UK hotel investment in 2013 – almost double 2012's total and the highest since 2007 – according to Savills.

Total hotel sales for the first nine months of this year hit £2.4bn. The report says that it expects the strongest performance of the year so far with at least a further £600m in deals to go through in 2013, bringing the total up to £3bn.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=r7V3B>

Libya has “much to show visitors” says tourism minister amid conflict

Libya's minister for tourism, Ikram Bash Imam, believes tourism can become a viable option for the war-torn nation over the next few years, although he has admitted that persuading the rest of the world that Libya – a nation still riddled with weapons and rival militias – is a holiday option that is safe to consider will be a challenge.

The country is rich in tourist attractions, with more than 1,000 miles (1,609km) of beaches, Roman and Greek ruins and Saharan troglodyte caves. Despite fierce fights between rebel groups, the country on the whole is remarkably unspoilt.

For the first time in decades, the country is open to the rest of the world following the demise of Muammar Gaddafi two years ago. That however is only half the story as tourism barriers include



Libya is still an incredibly volatile country following the death of Muammar Gaddafi two years ago

heavily armed militia groups, a weak central government, jihadi terrorism and the threat of state failure.

Imam however says that, while existent, the scale of violence in Libya has been

exaggerated by the media. “Everyone focuses on the violence but most armed clashes are between Libyan individuals and groups. It is not war,” she said.

Read more: www.lei.sr/8938502

Game of Thrones at the forefront of NI tourism drive

Northern Ireland's tourist board is planning to use hit TV show *Game of Thrones* in its quest to achieve record visitor numbers.

Much of the series is filmed in Northern Ireland and is already drawing visitors to seek out filming locations. The show will be used to promote the region, alongside the Giant's Causeway and Titanic Belfast.

Launching a Tourism Ireland strategy, enterprise minister Arlene Foster said she wants to increase overseas visitor numbers to more than 2 million a year by 2016.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=14k4r>



Much of the show was filmed in Northern Ireland

Regional tourism in the UK damaged by high train prices



Train prices are putting off international tourists

The head of the government's tourism agency has warned that the high price of taking the train is putting off visitors getting out to see attractions outside of London.

VisitBritain chair, Christopher Rodrigues, said that regional tourism is suffering and that there was “still work to be done” to promote the country's top attractions to international tourists.

He said: “We don't have a good rail offering for visitors from abroad and that holds back tourists.”

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=v5F3t>



Buckingham Palace claimed the top spot

UK's ‘dream’ activities for overseas tourists revealed

Buckingham Palace has been revealed as the number one attraction for tourists visiting the UK following a survey of 10,000 people conducted by VisitBritain.

Out of 19 countries surveyed, 15 named Buckingham Palace as the “dream” activity to do while in the UK, with viewing London from the Shard or London Eye coming in second place. Visiting Edinburgh Castle came third on the list.

Long haul and emerging markets have a tendency to stick to London, whereas markets such as France want to explore and venture out across the country.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=P4w7z>

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QPR reveals plans for 40,000-seat stadium as part of area development

Queens Park Rangers Football Club has unveiled plans for a new 40,000-seater stadium as part of a major regeneration project in west London.

The new scheme, which has been provisionally called New Queens Park, will see the stadium built alongside a new residential area with 24,000 homes and commercial space to include a 350-bed-room luxury hotel, studios, offices, cinemas and restaurants.

The news follows London mayor Boris Johnson's announcement that turning Old Oak into a new world-class city quarter is to be one of his main regeneration priorities for the city and that a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) – only the second after the Olympic Park development – is to be set up to promote it.



The new stadium will replace the Championship football club's current Loftus Road ground

"Not only will this give us a top quality stadium to cater for QPR's needs, but we are very excited about being the driving force behind creating one of the best new urban places in the world," said QPR chair

Tony Fernandes. "It will create a vibrant new destination in London, boosting local businesses, attracting new visitors and creating a thriving community."

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=c6E3g>

Lack of exercise policy is 'child neglect' says BJSM

A recently published editorial in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* (BJSM) has highlighted a lack of UK policy aimed at increasing children's exercise levels, with one of its co-authors suggesting such failings amount to the government's own definition of child neglect.

The journal claims there has been a lack of action aimed at increasing levels of exercise among younger people, despite growing evidence which shows the benefits of regular exercise during our younger years.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=b5U3A>



BJSM says the government's failure is 'neglect'

No change in people playing sport since London 2012



15.5 million people played sport over the year

There has been no change in the number of people playing sport regularly since the London 2012 Olympic Games.

15.5 million people in England played sport at least once a week for 30 minutes during the 12 months to October 2013 – the exact same figure as the year before.

While there were increases in five Olympic sports – cycling, equestrian, boxing, canoeing and archery – there was a sharp drop in the popularity of traditional sports such as football, tennis and netball.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=E4M6T>



Newcastle United's new training ground

Newcastle United unveils plans for training complex

Newcastle United Football Club has unveiled plans for a new state-of-the-art training complex as part of a multi-million pound redevelopment of the club's existing 35-acre training ground site.

While existing training pitches and a modern indoor training hall will be retained, the club's current training centre building will be demolished and replaced by a much larger structure to accommodate newly-designed changing, training, rehabilitation, medical, leisure and catering facilities, plus a swimming pool and specialist equipment to aid injury prevention and recovery.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=A3P4h>

DESIGN NEWS

Lenny Kravitz, Zaha Hadid and an unusual indoor campsite



• The resort was previously used by celebrities trying to escape the media's glare

Project: **Laucala Island Resort**

Design: **Lynne Hunt London**

Location: **Laucala Island, Fiji**

Luxury island resort gets a makeover

The Laucala Island Resort in Fiji is currently being 'refreshed' by interior designer Lynne Hunt London, who was responsible for the original design alongside architect WATG and landscape architect Scape Design Associates.

After being used for years as a private retreat and a secret hideaway for stars hoping to escape the paparazzi, the island – which is owned by Red Bull co-founder Dietrick Mateschitz – was opened to the public in 2008.

The resort features 25 villas, five restaurants and bars, a golf course, a chapel, a culture and leisure centre and a spa.

Hunt London is updating the interiors, which have been inspired by the resort's surroundings, with the colours of the ocean and the flora and fauna incorporated into the design. Other features include the jellyfish-shaped chandeliers designed by Hunt London and interior walls finished in a



• Natural materials have been used throughout the resort

textured plaster onto which shells and bits of coral have been placed. The building construction is modelled after the traditional wood and straw huts of the region.

Before being bought by Mateschitz, the island was owned by publishing magnate Malcolm Forbes.



The themes for the caravans include 'Big Ben' and 'Flower Power'

Project: BaseCamp Bonn

Design: Marion Seul

Location: Bonn, Germany

German indoor campground launches

German hotelier Michael Schlösser has launched the appealingly eccentric BaseCamp Bonn, an 'indoor campground hostel' in a former storage facility in Bonn, Germany.

The indoor campsite features 15 vintage caravans, two railway sleeper coaches and four US airstream trailers, as well as a former GDR train and several VW camper vans, providing a total of 120 beds.

The caravans were designed by German tv and film set designer Marion Seul, with each featuring a different theme including furnished faux front lawns. Other features include deck chairs, rugs on the floor of the warehouse and a backdrop of a tropical beach. Prices range from E22 to E74 per night.



PHOTO: ANDREAS UELAND



The hostel campground is housed in a 600sq m former warehouse



BIG to design Montpellier museum

Copenhagen-based architectural practice BIG has won an international competition to design the new Cité du Corps Humain (Museum of the Human Body) in Montpellier, France.

The 7,800sq m museum will explore the human body from scientific, artistic and societal perspectives through a range of cultural activities, interactive exhibits, performances and workshops.

Project: **Cité du Corps Humain**

Design: **BIG**

Location: **Montpellier, France**

The museum will be on the edge of Montpellier's Charpak Park, and the architects have tried to use the design to maximise visitors' interactions with the surrounding park and urban landscape. The façades, for example

- which are conceived as "sinuous membranes meandering across the site" - are largely transparent, allowing views out onto the park and the city. The roof of the museum will be an 'ergonomical garden' - a mix of man made surfaces and plants and grasses designed to help visitors explore their bodies.

Construction will begin in 2016 and the museum is due to open in 2018.



The louvers on the building's façade change orientation as the sun moves

Project: **Serpentine Sackler Gallery**

Design: **Zaha Hadid**

Location: **London, UK**

Hadid's Serpentine Sackler Gallery opens

The Serpentine Sackler Gallery, a £14.5m arts and gallery space designed by Zaha Hadid Architects, opened in London in the autumn.

The Sackler is Hadid's first permanent structure to be created in central London and features 900 metres of exhibition space, a restaurant and room for socialising. The building is seven minutes' walk from the main Serpentine Gallery.

Located in Kensington Gardens - in an 1805 gunpowder store - the gallery honours Dr Mortimer and Dame Theresa Sackler, whose foundation made the project possible



● The light and transparent extension complements the existing building

through the largest single gift received by the Serpentine in its 43 years of existence.

The project has been ongoing since 2010, when the Serpentine won the tender from The Royal Parks to bring the Grade II listed building into public use for the first time in its history.

The building combines neo-classical architecture with a transparent modern extension, which sees a continuation in the partnership between the Serpentine and Hadid. Both worked together on the Serpentine Gallery Pavilion Commission in 2000.



- The guest rooms are reminiscent of cabins on a luxury ocean liner

Project: Viceroy New York

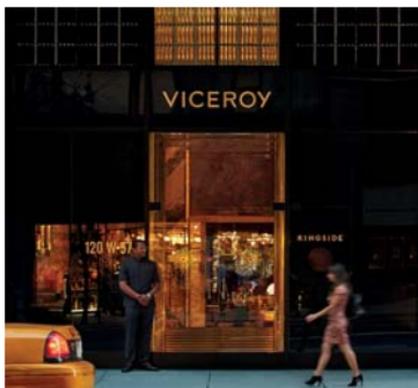
Design: Roman and Williams

Location: New York, US

Viceroy New York opens

The Viceroy New York has opened in Manhattan, with 240 guest rooms spread across 29 stories. It also features two restaurants, a Technogym fitness centre, an indoor pool and a library with a vintage bar serving cocktails.

Design firm Roman and Williams were responsible for both the interior design and the architecture, and were inspired by glamorous 1920s era New York. Architectural details include over-scaled cast-glass bricks at street level and black muntined windows, referencing the area's pre-war structures. Inside, luxury ocean liners were used as inspiration, with the guest rooms featuring iroko wood, brass and aluminium, and the Roof Lounge complete with leather sofas, brass details and photographs of sky, the sea and clouds.



- The exterior features glazed black bricks and steel



The hotel offers views of Central Park, which is just two blocks away



Project: Bisha Hotel

Design: Rudy Wallman, Munge Leung, Lenny Kravitz

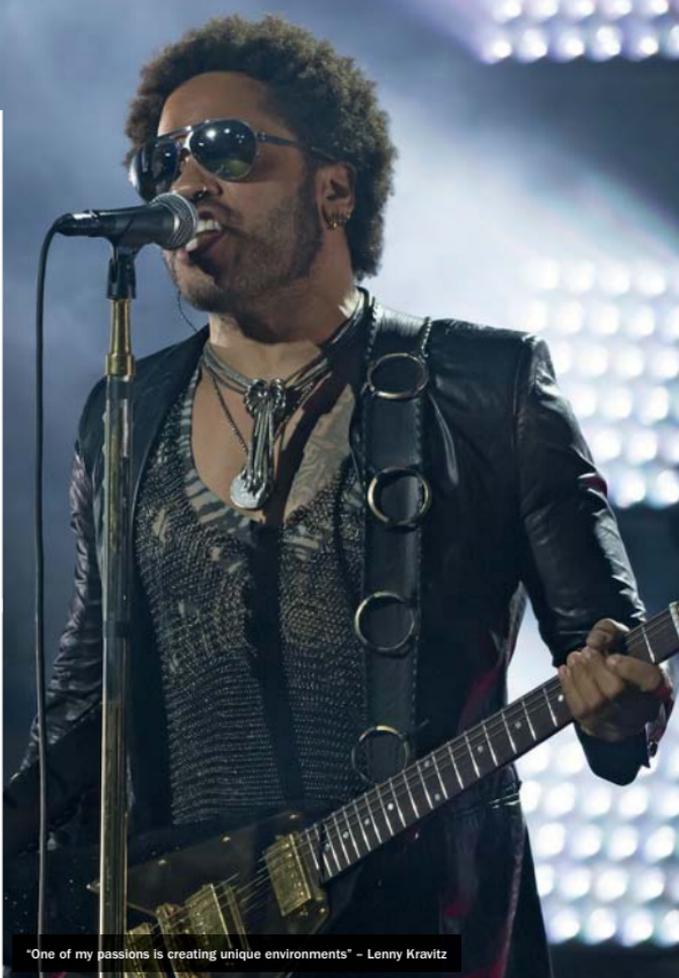
Location: Toronto, Canada

Lenny Kravitz to design floor at Bisha

Bisha Hotel and Residences, developed by Lifetime Developments and INK Entertainment, is under construction in Toronto, Canada.

The 41-storey tower – part condominium and part hotel – is designed by architect Rudy Wallman, with interiors by Munge Leung. Lenny Kravitz's Kravitz Design Inc was invited by Lifetime Development and INK Entertainment to design the upper floor of the hotel, which will feature opulent, glamorous interiors inspired by Kravitz's music, art and international travel.

The exterior will feature a dramatic glass and steel façade, which will contrast with the red brick cladding and stone trim of the original heritage building. It will house 334 condominium suites and 100 hotel rooms, and is due to open in 2016.



"One of my passions is creating unique environments" – Lenny Kravitz



● The building's rooftop will feature a bar, restaurant and infinity pool

LOCOG's park operations team demonstrates how to deliver effective venue operations

LONDON 2012: LESSON LEARNT SERIES

1 Leadership & Structure

2 Preparing for Work

3 **Venue Operations**

Park Operations

The completion within deadline of all the Olympic Park venues posed a slight problem; venues ready for use but no one to run them! Step forward LOCOG's Jonathan Branson, head of park operations and his Olympic Park Operations (OPO) team. As the first representatives of LOCOG to work on the Olympic Park, OPO were tasked with taking legal responsibility for the venues and park spaces following their completion, starting with the Velodrome in January 2011.

Venue operations managers (of which I was one) managed each venue, employing widely recognised facility management solutions. Joe Ryan of RDHS worked alongside the team helping to implement venue operational plans and risk-based health and safety management systems.

Stakeholder Management

Working in an environment congested with stakeholders, it would have been easy for the venues and OPO to be overwhelmed by politics, bureaucracy and high-profile activities (dignitary visits, elite athlete training and publicity opportunities). By adopting a simple approach to prioritising 'accountability and responsibility' the team has created an approach that can now be adopted in the leisure industry.

Accountability and Responsibility

Being legally responsible for the venues during LOCOG's period of tenancy it was imperative that the venue oper-

LOCOG managed the Olympic Park venues 18 months prior to the Games. Simon Adby, founding director of Active House Solutions and consultant to RDHS Limited, was LOCOG's venue operations manager for the Riverbank Arena. He explains how the team created a simple and effective approach to venue management



LOCOG managed some venues ahead of the Games

every activity and visitor within its perimeter. It was a simple approach that allowed each venue and area of the park to operate safely during the fit-out and strip-out work that took place either side of the Games.

Legacy

The London 2012 Games has proved that a focused approach to accountability and responsibility can be the backbone to the operation of a very successful sport and leisure environment. I'm sure there are more than a few of us beginning to fear what lies in store at the 2014 World Cup, and you don't have to look further than safety to understand what those concerns are based on.

In a period of austerity that is posing its financial challenges to leisure operators up and down the UK, perhaps this could be the simple solution that will change the face of leisure management? It is a legacy of the 2012 Olympics that the industry now needs to take advantage of.

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RDHS, supplier of health and safety support services (Olympic Park) to the London 2012 Games. For further information regarding services offered by RDHS, visit www.rdhealthandsafety.co.uk

The LOCOG team created a simple approach that can now be adopted by the leisure industry

ations managers took control of everything within the venue's perimeter. Security procedures were implemented directly after venue handover, while a huge amount of time was invested in ensuring that all statutory and mandatory venue operational processes and procedures were established. Contractors and visitors were allowed onto site once a permit-to-access system was implemented, which included a comprehensive venue induction that covered all aspects of health and safety, ensuring that the key messages were established from the outset. Contractors were only granted permission to work once satisfactory Risk Assessments and Method Statements (RAMS) were granted. Essentially a management framework was established that gave each manager full control of their venue, allowing them to be accountable and responsible for

NATHAN BLECHARCZYK

Since launching six years ago, online room renting scheme Airbnb has revolutionised the travel industry. Magali Robathan speaks to one of the founders to find out how they did it

It all started with two young designers renting out a couple of airbeds on the floor of their spare room for a few days to help pay the rent.

Today Airbnb – the service that allows anyone to turn their spare room or home into a hotel – is a global business, operating in 34,000 cities across 192 countries and offering accommodation ranging from traditional houses and apartments to converted aeroplanes, historic castles, river boats and treehouses.

The growth of the company has been phenomenal; in just six years it has grown into a global business with almost 500,000 rooms listed on its website. To put this into perspective, Intercontinental Hotel Group – the world's biggest hotel group as of January 2013 – has 675,000 rooms worldwide. Four million guests have booked through the site since its launch, and in early 2013, the company was valued at a staggering \$2.5bn.

"It's incredibly exciting to be doing things on a global scale and to realise that what you're doing is not only helping individuals but also creating a macro economic trend – the sharing economy. It's just amazing to be changing the world," says Nathan Blecharczyk, who co-founded Airbnb along with his friends Joe Gebbia and Brian Chesky in 2008.

It's a grandiose statement, but Airbnb has certainly changed the travel industry, and it has transformed the

Joe Gebbia and Brian Chesky decided to rent out airbeds in their San Francisco apartment to help pay the rent ▶



way people view travel. It has also become the poster child for the burgeoning sharing economy, which uses technology to bring buyers and sellers together to share access to everything from homes and spare seats in cars to electrical appliances and dog walking services (as Brian Chesky said last year, "There are 80 million power drills in America that are used an average of 13 minutes. Does everyone really need their own drill?")

The company's swift international growth has brought challenges at times, with parts of the hotel industry seeing Airbnb as a threat, and lobbying for a crackdown on people renting their rooms, sometimes in contravention of local laws. But it shows no sign of slowing down, with Asia being targeted for huge growth over the next year.

The premise is simple – hosts get to share their homes, connect with other people from around the world and make some extra money, while users get a more unique and personal experience than they would in a hotel. Airbnb takes professional photos of the properties, advertises them on its website and deals with payments, and in return charges the host 3 per cent

for each guest booking. The user is also charged service fees of between 6 per cent and 12 per cent, depending on the price of the booking.

HOW IT BEGAN

The idea was born when Blecharczyk moved out of the San Francisco apartment he shared with Joe Gebbia and Brian Chesky, and Gebbia and Chesky found themselves unable to pay the rent. The pair were both designers, and knew there was a design conference coming to San Francisco, so they decided to rent out their spare room.

"They were going to advertise it as a bed and breakfast, but the room had no bed, so instead they used airbeds and called it Airbedandbreakfast," says Blecharczyk (the name was shortened to Airbnb in 2009). They cobbled together a website and welcomed several guests into their home, cooking for them, giving them transportation passes and passing on details of their favourite restaurants and places to visit in the area.

The pair enjoyed the experience, but did nothing more about it until three months later, when Blecharczyk left his job as an engineer, and the trio



THE EARLY DAYS WERE TOUGH.

WE TRIED TO RAISE MONEY, BUT

PEOPLE DIDN'T SEE WHAT WE SAW



From left to right, Airbnb founders Brian Chesky, Nathan Blecharczyk and Joe Gebbia, who launched the company in 2008

decided to go into business together.

Airbedandbreakfast launched in August 2008. "It was all about being able to stay with another person and getting that very personal experience – basically about recreating what Joe and Brian offered to their first guests," says Blecharczyk.

For the first few months, the three entrepreneurs worked from Gebbia and Chesky's apartment, struggling to stay afloat. "The early days were quite tough," says Blecharczyk. "We financed part of the company through credit cards – we tried to raise money from angel investors and venture capitalists, but they didn't see what we saw. No one would give us any money."

Desperate for funding, they bought breakfast cereal in bulk, designed limited edition packaging to tie in with the upcoming US election, and sold their Obama O's and Cap'n McCain's cereal for \$40 a box. This raised \$30,000, but by the end of 2008 the company was still struggling and the trio were almost ready to quit.

As part of their last ditch attempt to make the business a success, Gebbia, Chesky and Blecharczyk agreed to take part in a programme called Y Combinator – a seed funding accelera-

tor that provides funding and advice for start up companies. This proved to be a very good decision.

"We got some great advice from Paul Grahams [one of the founders of Y Combinator]. He encouraged us to go and meet our users and build products to meet their needs," says Blecharczyk.

Over the next few months, they used the funding from Y Combinator to fly to New York several times. "We only had about 25 users in New York at that time, so it was a very manageable number," says Blecharczyk. They took professional photos of their users' properties, showed them how to use the Airbnb website and listened to their feedback. "We basically built a rapport with them – even inviting them out for drinks in the evening," he says. "We told them our story, so they wanted us to succeed, and as a result they bought into the whole idea."

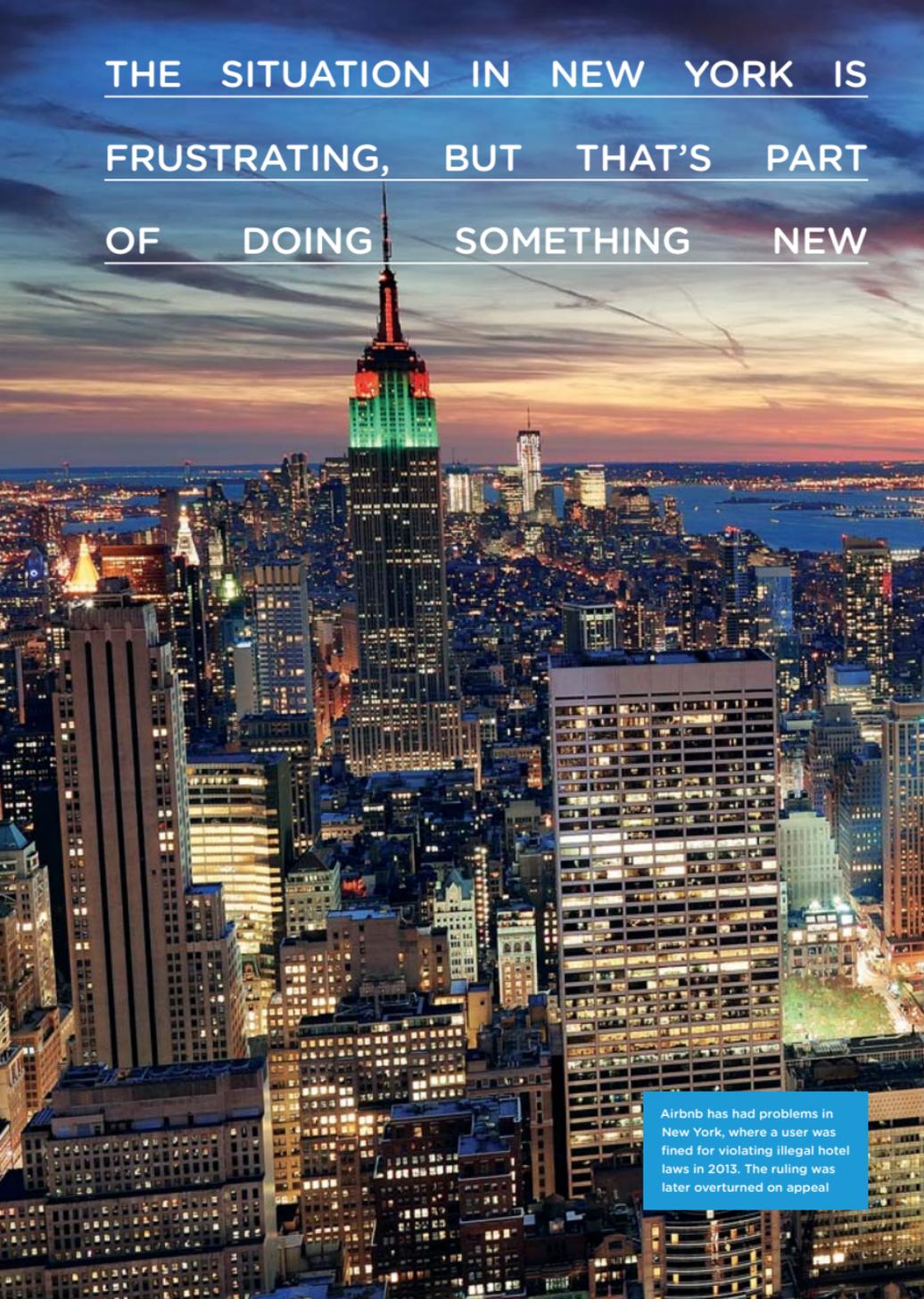
The trio also helped their users write better descriptions of their properties and gave them advice on what prices to charge. "Once we'd hand curated

the inventory and made the properties look very attractive, they started getting bookings," says Blecharczyk. "Once they started getting bookings, they told their friends. Their friends signed up as hosts and emulated the quality they saw on the site; meanwhile people were coming from around the world to New York and then going home. Often the guests would become hosts themselves in their home towns. Right from the start, there was this international cross pollination going on."

At the start of the Y Combinator programme, they drew up a revenue graph. Their goal was to get to \$1,000 a week – what they termed 'ramen profitability' (enough money to pay the rent and buy noodles). Revenue quickly increased, from around \$200 a week in January 2009, to \$5,000 a week by April 2009, and during that period Greg McAdoo, a partner at Sequoia Capital, offered to invest \$600,000 in the business.

From that point on, the company grew rapidly, and in November 2010 it raised \$7.2 million in Series A funding from Greylock Partners, Sequoia Capital and other angel investors. By January 2011, it had had more than one million bookings; by the end of

THE SITUATION IN NEW YORK IS
FRUSTRATING, BUT THAT'S PART
OF DOING SOMETHING NEW



Airbnb has had problems in New York, where a user was fined for violating illegal hotel laws in 2013. The ruling was later overturned on appeal.

IT'S ABOUT STAYING WITH ANOTHER PERSON AND GETTING A VERY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE



2011 this had risen to four million, and by June 2012 they'd had 10 million bookings. In May 2011 the actor Ashton Kutcher made a 'significant investment' in the company and joined the team as a strategic advisor and in July 2011 the company raised a further \$112m in funding. The money was used to expand into new countries, and in 2012 Airbnb opened 11 new offices in cities including Barcelona, Paris, Milan, Moscow, Sydney and Delhi, and launched in nine new markets.

A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

The Airbnb founders have always seen themselves as more than just accommodation providers, says Blecharczyk. "We want to provide experiences.

That's done through the property itself and through the host; through being in an area that's not your typical tourist neighbourhood, and being introduced to local cafés and restaurants and other people." The website facilitates this, with each listing featuring detailed information about both the property and the host, as well as reviews from people who've stayed there.

Around a year and a half ago, the founders shifted their focus. "We realised that a lot of what we'd done to date was to invest in the website, which is really just there to help with bookings. What really matters is the offline experience," says Blecharczyk.

In order to help enhance the users' experience, the company recently hired

Airbnb's website features some unusual rentals including this beachfront Airstream in Australia (left) and Vermont treehouse (right)

Chip Conley, founder of Joie de Vivre Hospitality, as head of global hospitality. "He's thinking about how we can give our hosts guidance and education on hospitality; really set an example of what great hospitality looks like," says Blecharczyk. "We want to show them the minimum expectations that people have, and also share aspirational standards – examples of people going above and beyond. People are incredibly motivated, but sometimes you need to be a bit more explicit about what the possibilities are."

One example of hosts going above and beyond happened during Hurricane Sandy in 2012. When the hurricane hit New York, Blecharczyk and the team spotted a tweet from one of their users, who said she would make her room available to anyone who needed it, free of charge. "We thought, wow, that's really inspiring. I wonder how many other users would be willing to do the same." Blecharczyk – who's in charge of the company's technical strategy – got the team together, and they spent all night working on the website so that people could list their properties for free.

"We sent out an email to all our users the following morning and within a couple of days there were around

1,000 rooms available free of charge to people who needed them.

"It was so cool to be able to use our platform for something that it was never intended for but which made a real positive difference for people in a time of need."

TRICKY TIMES

There have also been a few hitches along the way. In 2010, a host's house was vandalised and robbed. Back then, Airbnb didn't offer insurance for hosts, but recognising that security was a vital issue for them, they introduced the host guarantee property protection programme, which insures hosts up to \$600,000. They have also worked hard on security, introducing a verified ID system in early 2013, which requires people to scan or photograph a piece of photo ID so that the company can compare it to the information in their online identity, via their Airbnb, Facebook or LinkedIn profile.

"The idea is that it's easy to steal someone's online ID, and easy to steal someone's offline ID, but it's very difficult to do both," says Blecharczyk.

In some parts of the world there have been calls for a crackdown on people renting out their homes for short stays without permits. New York has been the most problematic market for the company – in early 2013 an Airbnb host was accused of violating New York's illegal hotel laws and fined \$2,400. This decision was reversed on



● Modern Retreat, Michigan City, US



● Provence Charming Caravan, Ventabren, France



● Cheshire Cottage, Cheshire, UK



Every Traveller Deserves a Home

Airbnb has launched its first ever major advertising campaign, using the idea of the ultimate travellers – migratory birds.

The campaign, called *Every Traveller Deserves a Home*, was created by advertising agency Pereira & O'Dell. The company commissioned a team of artists to create 50 birdhouses inspired by real Airbnb spaces. These birdhouses were on public display in New Orleans at Audubon Park's Tree of Life during December.

The campaign includes a short documentary-style film, which shows the birdhouses being made, and then ends with birds 'coming home' to them. It began running on tv, in cinemas and online in mid-December.

Media partners include Travel Channel, Afar, Gawker, Huffington Post, BBC, Dwell, Brit + Co and Lonely Planet.

appeal, but the case has highlighted how complicated New York's laws are (the gist being that it's only legal to rent out your home if you're in it).

"It's frustrating, but that's part of doing something new," says Blecharczyk. "Historically there have been rules for businesses and rules for people, and suddenly the line is blurred between them. I think every one is realising that there's a good thing happening, but in order to fully accommodate it, some of these lines need to be redrawn and the rules rethought through."

The New York Attorney General also wants Airbnb users to pay hotel occupancy taxes, something which Airbnb has said it agrees with – Blecharczyk says the company would love to partner with the city to make paying the taxes easier for individuals. The founders are less keen on the demands by the Attorney General for information on all 15,000 users who have rented out their homes in New York. They argue that the demand is unreasonably broad, and lobbying group the Internet

Association has backed them up, saying that it would set a "dangerous and harmful precedent," allowing local governments to request information without any proof of wrongdoing.

LOOKING AHEAD

As well as educating hosts about hospitality, another big focus for Airbnb is on developing the mobile experience for users. "We're really investing in our iPhone and android mobile applications," says Blecharczyk. "Our hosts often have full time jobs and are hosting on the side, so we're giving them tools to respond to messages, update calendars and accept reservations on the fly." In November, the company launched new apps on both iOS and Android so that hosts can do everything they need to do while away from home.

The next year or so will see the company targeting Asia, which is seen as having huge potential for growth. "We've had properties in Asia for a long time, but for the first time we have critical mass and sustained growth and we're going to continue to invest over

there," says Blecharczyk.

I ask him what he does for fun, and he grins. "I love what we're doing at work – it's totally thrilling," he says, before adding that one of his favourite things to do is meet the hosts. The founders hold regular nights worldwide where they invite hosts to their office and talk to them about their experiences with Airbnb.

"You realise you are impacting people's lives," he says.

Blecharczyk concludes with a story about a couple he met during one of these events in Beijing. "They'd adopted four children, who all had complex medical needs. Last year, the father lost his job and they couldn't afford the children's medicine. They decided to host travellers for Airbnb. They told me that not only were they making enough money to pay for the children's needs, but they'd got the whole family involved. They'd turned it into a family activity, and an educational, fun and constructive experience.

"That was a really awesome, warm and incredible story." ●

THE AMERICAN DREAM

From hip hotels to burger joints, we take a look at some of the US concepts taking the UK by storm

London Edition ★

Hip hotelier Ian Schrager returned to London for the first time in 15 years, with the opening of the London Edition in Fitzrovia in September. It's the first hotel Schrager has opened in the capital since Sanderson and St Martins Lane a decade and a half ago.

"The London Edition is the next generation of lifestyle hotel; one that has incredibly exciting visuals, great, friendly, attractive and personalised service, exciting food and beverage concepts, and a unique vibe," says Schrager. How did he create that unique atmosphere? "By just following my instincts and giving people what they want. It's seeing things other people don't see... connecting the dots."

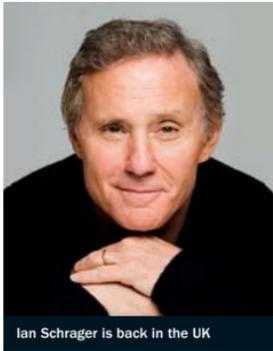
It's the second Edition Hotel, a brand Schrager conceived in a partnership with Marriott International (the first opened in Istanbul in February 2011). Further Edition hotels are planned for Miami Beach in 2014; Abu Dhabi, New York, Gurgaon in India and Sanya in China in 2015; and Bangkok and Shanghai in 2016.

"I think of my hotels as an extension of me," says Schrager. "They aspire to complete simplicity and purity, devoid of all artifice and contrivance."

The 173-room London Edition was apparently inspired by the 'traditional English country manor and the quin-



The London Edition lobby (above). Schrager introduced the idea of making hotel lobbies a social space



Ian Schrager is back in the UK

tesential London private gentleman's club'. The Georgian building was originally built in 1835 as five separate townhouses, which were combined to form the Berners Hotel in 1908. Some of the original Georgian features remain, while the interiors include Grade II listed examples of Belle Epoque architecture from the

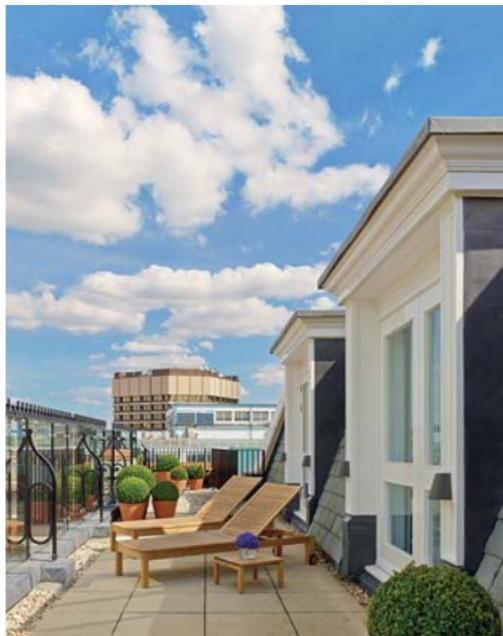
period when it was transformed into the Berners Hotel. Modern additions include the huge Ingo Mauer polished silver sphere light that hangs over the entrance, the Christian Lacroix black metal furniture and the Salvador Dali-inspired floor lamps.

Schrager created the legendary Studio 54 nightclub in the 1970s with his late business partner Steve Rubell. They went on to launch the Palladium nightclub in the 1980s, before introducing the concept of the boutique hotel with the opening of Morgans Hotel in 1984. Schrager opened many other influential hotels, as well as his 'urban resorts' the Delano Hotel in Miami and Mondrian Hotel in West Hollywood.

As well as the Edition Hotels, Schrager is also working on a second hotel brand, PUBLIC, which offers innovative design at reasonable rates. ▶



Berners Tavern is a dramatic space (this picture). The muted guest rooms (below)





Rosewood Hotels ★

Ultra luxury' hotel management company Rosewood Hotels, which is based in Dallas, US, has come to Europe for the first time with the opening of the Rosewood London.

The grade II listed Belle Epoque building in High Holborn, which previously housed the Chancery Court Hotel, underwent an £85m (\$130m) renovation before opening as the Rosewood London in October.

The hotel has 262 guestrooms and 44 suites, the Mirror Room restaurant, a bar, a Sense spa and a fitness suite. The Holborn Delicatessen and the Holborn Dining Room are due to open in February 2014.

The rooms, event spaces and public areas have been designed by Tony Chi and Associates while the bar was designed by Martin Brudnizki. One of the hotel's suites, the Grand Manor House Wing, is accessed by a private elevator, has its own street entrance, and even its own postcode.

The building's original architectural features have been carefully restored,



Rosewood president Radha Arora

including the Grade II listed street frontage and dome, and the grand Pavonazzo marble staircase which rises up through all seven storeys of the hotel beneath the 166-foot cupola. Guests arrive at the hotel via a carriageway which leads to a courtyard.

According to Rosewood Hotels & Resorts president Radha Arora, the Rosewood London fits in perfectly with Rosewood's 'A Sense of Place®' philosophy, meaning that the hotels in the portfolio should reflect and celebrate

the location's culture, history and geography. "Rosewood London is a milestone addition to our portfolio; not only as it's in a major European capital, but because the legacy of the historic building itself is a true representation of our A Sense of Place philosophy," he says. "We are delighted to introduce a classic and one-of-a-kind hotel to our Rosewood guests."

Rosewood Hotels & Resorts was founded in 1979 by Caroline Rose Hunt, the daughter of oil tycoon HL Hunt. Rosewood's first hotel, The Mansion on Turtle Creek – a restored historic Texas mansion – opened in Dallas in 1980. Today, the group has 18 hotels and resorts in eight countries, including the Carlyle, A Rosewood Hotel in New York and Rosewood Tucker's Point in Bermuda.

Rosewood launched its spa brand, Sense, in 2007, with the first spa opening in 2008 at Rosewood Mayakoba in Mexico.

The company plans to continue to roll out the Rosewood brand, with particular focus on Asia and Europe, doubling its current portfolio within five years. The next Rosewood is due to open in Beijing in early 2014.



Balthazar London is modelled closely on the original Balthazar in NYC. The food has been tweaked slightly for the UK market



Balthazar ★

Although he's actually originally from London, Keith McNally is such an entrenched part of the New York dining scene we thought we had to include him. More than 35 years after he moved to New York, where he made a name for himself as one of the city's hippest restaurateurs, McNally returned to the UK to open Balthazar London with Richard Caring in February 2013.

Balthazar London is modelled on the original Balthazar, in Manhattan, New York, which McNally opened in 1997. It serves traditional French bistro food in the old Theatre Museum in Covent

Garden, which has been converted into a Parisien-style brasserie by Method Architects and New York interior designers Graying Design. Balthazar Boulangerie sits next door.

McNally moved to New York in 1975, where he worked as a bus boy and later a maitre d' while looking for acting jobs (he started his career as a stage and film actor). In 1980, he opened his own restaurant, Odeon, with his then wife Lynn Wagenknecht.

McNally moved to France in the late 1980s to make his second feature film, *Far From Berlin*. In his own words, his interest in French food

stemmed from "spending a few years as a deadbeat in Paris," and when he returned to New York he opened the French-style bistro Cafe Luxembourg, where he gave River Cafe founder Rose Gray her first kitchen job.

He followed that up with caviar bar Pravda, then Balthazar in 1997, and has since opened Pastis, Schiller's, Morandi, Minetta Tavern and Pulino's, all in New York City.

In 2011, McNally decided to move back to London. He teamed up with Richard Caring, and they started building Balthazar restaurant and Balthazar Boulangerie in January 2012. ▶



London-based Universal Design Studio designed the hotel's funky, minimalist interior

Ace Hotels ★

Arguably America's funkiest hotel brand hit British shores in September, when Ace Hotels opened its first European site in London's Shoreditch.

The fifth hotel to open in the boutique chain, the 258-bed Shoreditch site comprises the usual Ace ingredients: vintage and re-purposed furniture, flea market curios, original artwork and retro touches, such as vinyl and turntables in the bedrooms. Revo radios with Ace-curated radio stations are standard and some of the better rooms even have acoustic Martin guitars as part of the furniture. The aim was to create rooms that feel like a friend's Shoreditch apartment.

The über cool brand has been curated and nurtured by Alex Calderwood. Prior to joining the hotel industry, Calderwood co-founded a chain of barber shops in Seattle, before being offered the lease on a 28-bed flophouse in the city.

Calderwood recognised there was a shortage of thoughtfully designed, authentic and affordable hotels and set out to create one. The Seattle hotel, which was a collaboration with designer Eric Hentz, launched in 1999, offering a hotel experience with style and shared bathrooms. It aimed to be a clean, minimalist haven for travelling



Alex Calderwood died on 14 Nov

"Alex Calderwood had an insatiable appetite for culture and people, and always wanted to remain fresh and innovative. He loved new things and new ideas"

artists, musicians and entrepreneurs.

Portland was launched in 2007 and included some of the details now synonymous with the brand. This was followed by a 170-bed hotel with a pool in Palm Springs and a hotel in New York in 2009. The American Trade Hotel in Panama opened in December 2013 and Ace Hotel Downtown Los Angeles opens in January.

All the hotels are quirky and eclectic, and each have their own identity, which is rooted in the history of the building and location.

In Shoreditch, the company collaborated with Olympic torch designers Universal Design Studio to create a property that reflects the area's creative pedigree. Materials relevant to the area were chosen, such as dark engineering brick, cast bronze and galvanized steel. Artist Max Lamb was commissioned to design the bar cladding, bar stools and cocktail tables.

The Shoreditch hotel features an English modernist brasserie, Hoi Polloi, and the lobby is home to a flower

shop, Hattie Fox, and a coffee shop, Square Mile Roasters.

Tragically, on 14 November, Alex Calderwood was found dead at the Shoreditch hotel, six weeks after its launch. Aged 47, Calderwood's death was sudden and unexpected. The industry has lost an original and visionary individual, who undoubtedly would have continued to surprise and delight.

Kelly Sawdon, executive vice president of Ace Hotel, said of him: "Alex loved and embraced change. He had an insatiable appetite for culture and people and always wanted to remain innovative and fresh. He loved collaborating because he saw it as an opportunity to tweak his ideas.

"He loved new things and new ideas and surrounded himself with people who felt the same way. When discussing changes within the Atelier Ace recently he said, 'You don't know what is on the other side but that is the excitement of life ... It will be different and great.' He was one of a kind and will be greatly missed."



Shake Shack ★

Shake Shack crossed the pond to open its first ever UK burger joint in Covent Garden in London in the summer.

Shake Shack started life as a hot dog cart in Madison Square Park in Manhattan, New York in 2001, created by New York restaurateur Danny Meyer to support the Madison Square Park Conservancy's first art installation. The popular cart opened for three summers in the park, until in 2004, Meyer's Union Square Hospitality Group opened a permanent kiosk in the park, serving burgers, hot dogs, frozen custard, shakes, beer and wine.

Despite the popularity of the first restaurant, Danny Meyer and the founders resisted opening another Shake Shack for several years, arguing that the DNA of his company was based on doing one of a kind restaurants. In 2010 he finally opened a second and third Shake Shack in the Theatre District and the Upper East Side in New York, and a further restaurant in Miami Beach. Today they have 21 restaurants in the US, and 13 outside of the US – 10 in the Middle East, two in Istanbul, Turkey, and the new Covent Garden restaurant. The next Shake Shack is due to open in



Danny Meyer (right) and Randy Garutti (left) in Covent Garden

Moscow at the start of 2014.

"It's the modern version of the old American roadside burger stands, which started in the 1950s and 1960s and which were community gathering places," says Randy Garutti CEO of Shake Shack. "Over time, though, America really ruined fast food – it just became about how fast and efficient it could be, and about using the lowest quality ingredients.

"We're a fine dining restaurant company – we've been running New York's favourite restaurants for 28 years – so we took that understanding and applied it to burgers, fries and shakes."

Meyer's Union Square Hospitality

Group runs a range of New York restaurants including Union Square Cafe, Gramercy Tavern, Blue Smoke, Jazz Standard, The Modern, North End Grill and Cafe 2 and Terrace 5 at MoMA.

Shake Shack in Covent Garden opened in May 2013, serving Aberdeen Angus burgers, fries, Cumberland sausage hot dogs, St John bakery brownies, and the company's famous frozen custard.

There are no plans at present to open more Shake Shacks in the UK. "Our goal is to make this Shake Shack great," says Garutti. "If that happens, we believe there is a lot of opportunity in the UK, throughout the UK."

Five Guys ★

Run by Jerry and Janie Murrell and their five sons, the Five Guys chain started as a burger restaurant in Arlington, Virginia, which opened in 1986. Today there are more than 1,000 Five Guys restaurants, and the chain counts Barack Obama as one of its fans.

Five Guys teamed up with Carphone Warehouse founder Charles Dunstone, who co-owns the UK franchise, to bring the chain to Covent Garden, London

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CHICKEN STRAWERS PEARL FRESH BEEF	6.4
5.0Lb	6.4
6.0Lb	6.4
7.0Lb	6.4
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■ The aquarium is on the island of Amager, around 10km from central Copenhagen

KIM HERFORTH NIELSEN

Denmark's iconic new national aquarium, The Blue Planet, has won awards for its design. 3XN's Kim Herforth Nielsen tells Kathleen Whyman how the project took shape



■ Kim Herforth Nielsen is founder and principal of Danish design firm 3XN

Can you describe the design?

Our inspiration for the design was water. We worked for seven weeks on the competition and spent the first five weeks coming up with the right concept. We eventually decided on the idea of shaping the building like a whirlpool, pulling people into a world beneath the surface of the sea.

As it's located next to Copenhagen Airport, people look down on the roof when they land and take off, so how it looks from above is very important. From a distance, the building has the same propeller shape that a whirlpool has, but it's an abstract shape that takes on other images, such as that of a whale, when you get nearer.

The façade is covered with small diamond-shaped raw aluminium

plates, known as shingles, which resemble the scales of a fish.

What's the internal design?

The inside is the same shape as the outside. We have used light on the walls and ceiling to simulate reflections, and have used sound to add to the feeling of being underwater.

Visitors come into a circular foyer in the centre of the building, then choose which river, lake or ocean to explore in the aquarium.

Attractions include a large hot water tank for the tropical fish and the sharks, with a tunnel where visitors can walk through the water.

Most of the areas are fairly dark, as the only light comes from the aquariums, but there's a lot of light in





■ The interior design aims to create the impression that visitors are under the sea

the tropical Amazonian forest area. Visitors can walk under the forest and look into the water to see the piranhas and other fish.

What was your original brief?

To create an interesting, iconic building for the sea elements. We won because we had a very clear story about what we wanted the building to be – it's not just a big home for fish.

The operators wanted to be able to extend the building by at least 30 per cent in the future, as at some point they will build a large tank for whales. With our whirlpool shape, they can just add on to it as much as they want to because it never ends.

We won the bid four years ago, so it's been quite a speedy process. We

had two years to do the drawings and tendering and then two years to build. It's been a very smooth process. The date for the opening was 21 March 2013 because it was the first day of the Easter holidays and the Queen of Denmark came to open the aquarium. We couldn't really be late for her.

What were the biggest design challenges?

There are 53 aquariums and displays, containing seven million litres of water and 20,000 sea animals. Also, there's so much technology in the building and as many square metres underneath and on top of the public spaces, which are laboratories for cleaning the water and preparing it. It was a big challenge to contain all this within the building.



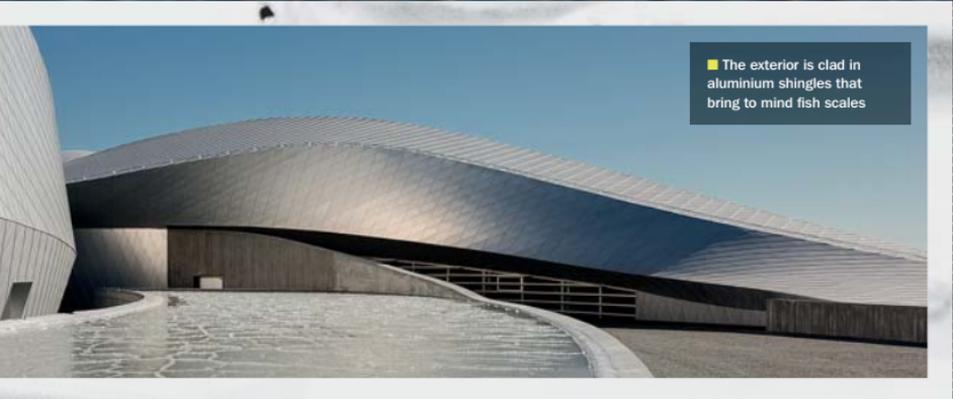
■ The sea animals have been sourced from around the world

■ The shape of the aquarium resembles a giant whirlpool

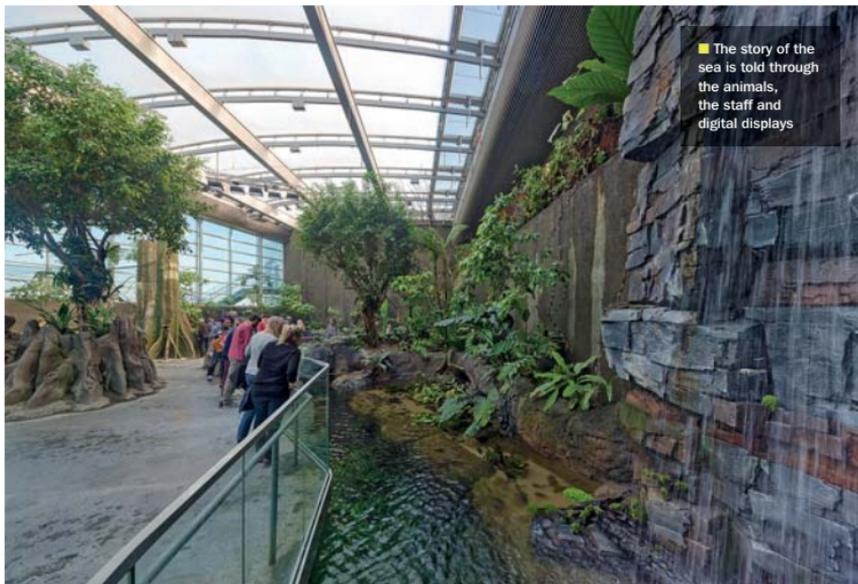


■ The aquarium features 20,000 sea animals and 450 species





■ The exterior is clad in aluminium shingles that bring to mind fish scales



I'm particularly proud of how flexible and unusual the shape is. We borrowed the whirlpool shape from nature and there's a reason nature makes its shapes the way it does



So much has been done to get the animals' environments right. We've worked with specialists AAT Advanced Aquarium Technologies to ensure they have the correct lighting, amount of water and sized tanks.

Another difficulty is that it's a very aggressive environment with salt water and damp, so it was difficult to make a construction that could be upstanding and sustainable for a long time, both inside and out. The building is on the tip of the water, and in winter it's freezing and very windy, so it was a challenging place to build in.

What's in the outdoor areas?

The design didn't stop with the building – it spread to the outside. Moe & Brødsgaard designed the overall planning and layout of the external areas. The building extends beyond the original coastline, so visitors can look out across the sea from inside the aquarium. There's a lake with carps and sea lions and a 15m (49ft)-high display

of the Faro Islands' bird cliff, which is home to many birds including puffins, while siki sharks, halibuts and catfish swim in the sea beneath. There are also outdoor play areas for children, picnic sites and a pond.

Bushes have been planted around the car park, so in time the cars won't be visible. The building is lifted up from the landscaping around, to ensure it gets all the focus.

What materials did you use?

The building is clad with raw aluminium shingles, which reflect the sky in the same way water does. When you see the building from the air it looks white because it reflects the sunlight. From ground level it's the colour of the sky. In the evening it becomes yellow with the sunset.

Inside the building we used very simple concrete and plaster in dark grey so that the surroundings don't compete with the aquariums – the focus should be on the fish.

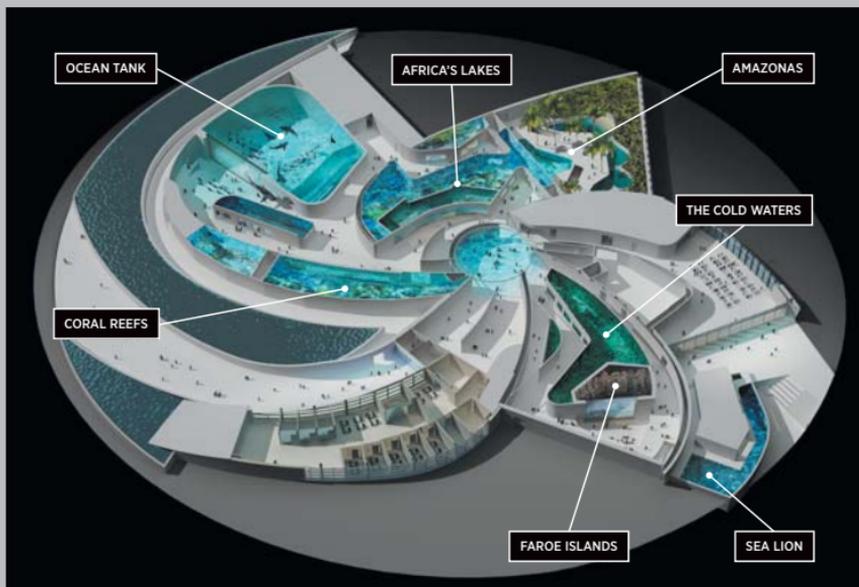
What have been the construction challenges?

Because the building's a morph shape, we couldn't put any radius or diameters into it, so there's no repetition in the shape. We tried many different building methods before we settled on a fairly traditional method of creating a few frames that have the outside shape, in the same way a wooden boat is built. We then clad it with the aluminium shingles.

What are you most proud of?

I'm particularly proud of how flexible and unusual the shape is and how it takes up all the different challenges. We borrowed the whirlpool shape from nature and there's a reason nature makes its shapes the way it does. Nature is very flexible.

A good building needs a good client. The foundation that sponsored the aquarium has been really collaborative and professional. That's why this project has been a success. ●



BLUE PLANET ZONES The content – from the tropics to the poles

OCEAN TANK

The largest aquarium is a four million-litre basin hosting hammerhead sharks, rays, moray eels and hundreds of small fish. Visitors can experience the animals at close range through a 16m- (52ft)-long acrylic tunnel below the water and from a 16m x 8m (52ft x 26ft) amphitheatre.

AFRICA'S LAKES

Showcasing the diversity of life in Africa's greatest lakes – Victoria, Tanganyika, and Malawi. The aquariums' granite rock, sand, and canoes have been selected and collected in Africa. In addition to colourful fish, visitors can see dwarf crocodiles, sump turtles and the big Nile crocodile.

CORAL REEFS

This huge aquarium displays colourful fishes of many species living in and by the corals. The animals are separated into four aquariums, which are invisible to the human eye. In the centre are the living corals, on either sides are coral-eating fish and at the back are reef predators, such as bass, Napoleon fish and sharks.



FAROE ISLANDS

A 15m (49ft)-high Faroe Islands' bird cliff display is home to puffins, siki sharks, halibuts and catfish.

SEA LION

A lake features carp and sea lions, which can be viewed both inside and outside.

AMAZONAS

The world's longest river, the Amazon, holds an incredible variety of wildlife, which is on display in the large rainforest

hall. As well as free-flying birds and butterflies, the rainforest hall has four large aquariums, which house giga arapaimas, red tailed catfish and a cousin to the piranha, the omnivorous pacu. Europe's largest colony of 3,000 piranhas inhabit the area close to the great waterfall.

THE COLD WATERS

Sea animals from cold environments around the planet are featured, including a school of herring.

GREEN SHOOTS

Millions of European travellers returned to the market in 2013, according to recent research by PhoCusWright. Analyst Marcello Gasdia talks us through the findings

Finally, the European economy is starting to pick up, and consumers who skipped their holidays when times were tough are feeling confident enough to return to the market.

According to a recent report by travel industry research authority PhoCusWright, a leisure travel recovery is underway in France, Germany and the UK.

The share of adults who took at least one holiday over the past year jumped four per cent in France (to 70 per cent) and Germany (to 72 per cent) compared to 2012. In the UK, the share increased three points to reach 78 per cent. Europeans are also spending more



on travel – consumers in Germany spent an average of E206 more on holidays in 2013 versus 2012, and spending among UK travellers jumped E283. In France, however, where trip spend lags the other two markets, annual house-

hold leisure travel spend dropped slightly year-on-year.

When choosing how to spend their discretionary income, consumers in all three markets report that they prioritise holidays over a wide range of recreational goods and services, including dining and nightlife, entertainment and sports, fashion, and electronics.

Here PhoCusWright analyst Marcello Gasdia takes a look at the report's findings in more detail.

What do you consider to be the most interesting findings from the European Consumer Travel Report?

The most powerful thing that we look at when we're trying to take the pulse of a market is travel incidence. We take a sample of the adult consumer population aged 18 and over, and measure how many took at least one overnight leisure trip 100km away from home that included at least one night paid lodging or a flight.

Nine times out of 10, as you can imagine, those who don't take a trip aren't travelling because they can't afford to. So when you're looking at a population, the percentage of adults who can afford a trip away is very telling as a barometer of the economic health of that country.

Macro-economic trends are taking a slight turn for the better, with some stating that the recession is over. The

A leisure travel recovery is underway in France, Germany and the UK

The number of people taking a trip that includes a flight or paid lodging is on the up



SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/NIKOLA STRETOVA



Domestic travel is popular in France, with travellers often staying with family

SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/VINCESLAV LOPATIN

picture still isn't rosy, of course, but things are starting to pick up. I wasn't sure whether that would show up in my data, but it did.

The percentage of adults in each of the three markets (France, Germany and the UK) who took at least one leisure trip increased by 2 or 3 or 4 percentage points. The traveller pool (adults who took at least one leisure trip) grew from 75 per cent to 78 per cent in the UK, 68 per cent to 72 per cent in Germany and from 66 per cent to 70 per cent in France.

Those don't sound like dramatic changes, but when you branch that 3 per cent across the adult population, it means that millions of travellers are returning back to the traveller pool. We're heading back towards pre-recessionary levels.

Can you talk through the findings for France, Germany and the UK in more detail?

Travellers took slightly fewer trips, but overall, trips were longer. Fewer took quick, cheap weekend trips, and trips of one or two weeks represented a larger part of the whole, which represents a sign of health.

Germany shows the strongest rebound. German consumers don't travel very often, but they take really long trips. They go further than travellers in the UK and France, they spend more and they buy complex holidays.

The UK leisure traveller is paving the way in terms of technology adoption

France is rebounding as well, albeit at a slower pace. French travellers often stay with friends or family, so domestic travel is popular. It's a unique market. You don't have to go far in France to find a great destination. What's interesting about UK consumers is that they put a really high priority on travel and tourism. Overall, travel incidence in the UK climbed up by three per cent, which is great, and we hope for more next year.

How does this compare to the US?

In the US, leisure travel incidence has been a bit more stagnant, remaining in the low 60s (per cent) since the recession. Recovery is taking a bit longer in the US; it's going to be a long road.

Which markets are performing best in terms of travel at the moment?

Europe is looking much healthier than the US. Almost four in 10 US adults skipped vacations in 2012. We've been waiting for that to figure grow, but it hasn't happened yet. Other economic indicators, like retail spending, are showing improvement in the US, but I think there's going to be a lag in terms of leisure travel.

Recently, Asia Pacific surged past Europe to become the world's largest regional travel market in 2012, with US\$326bn in gross travel bookings.

What do you expect from 2014 in terms of travel behaviour?

I wouldn't expect another year of strong European growth like we saw in 2013. Things improved a lot during the year, and if that holds, the industry will be in good shape.

What are the main trends driving consumers at the moment?

Compared to other European markets, the UK leisure traveller is paving the way in terms of technology adoption. They are a bit savvier in terms of shopping for hotels and flights on their tablets and smartphones. Germany is lagging a bit further back, with France somewhere in the middle.

We're also seeing online shoppers take on more and more complex shopping routines. Not only are more people shopping on the web each year, but more people are also accessing interactive maps, professional photography, ratings and reviews, professional videos and incorporating social media.

What drives you?

The ability to turn human behaviour into a data set, and then explore that data set to see what makes us tick. ●

"If voluntourists are not experiencing discomfort I am not doing my job"



DAVID CLEMMONS

I've never had an interview almost fall through because the interviewee was suffering from a tropical disease, but David Clemmons walks the walk as well as talks the talk. He says that discomfort among his recruits is one of the indicators of the success of a project. Clearly a man who faces down hardship and who regards nasty diseases as part of the job, he did the interview from his sickbed.

It took a while to track Clemmons down in the first place; he was in Bolivia "in the field" with no telephone access, looking to set up some project opportunities, as well as formalising a voluntourism institute in Latin America.

A few projects are in the pipeline in Bolivia, including at a village near San Javier, where a resident has proposed constructing cabanas to host voluntourists, as well as building a bridge across the Rio Arriba and developing a 'beach' to enjoy the river. Another potential project involves dinosaur fossil preservation and conservation.

It all sounds rather exciting, but Clemmons stresses voluntourism is

Tropical diseases, cold showers and outbreaks of war... it's all part of the job for VolunTourism.org founder David Clemmons, as he tells Kath Hudson

not glamorous. Tourism is part of it, but being of service comes first. "The experiences can be raw: cold showers, if at all, lots of insects, sickness of various kinds and lengthy transfers from one destination to another," he says. "If voluntourists are not experiencing discomfort I'm not doing my job."

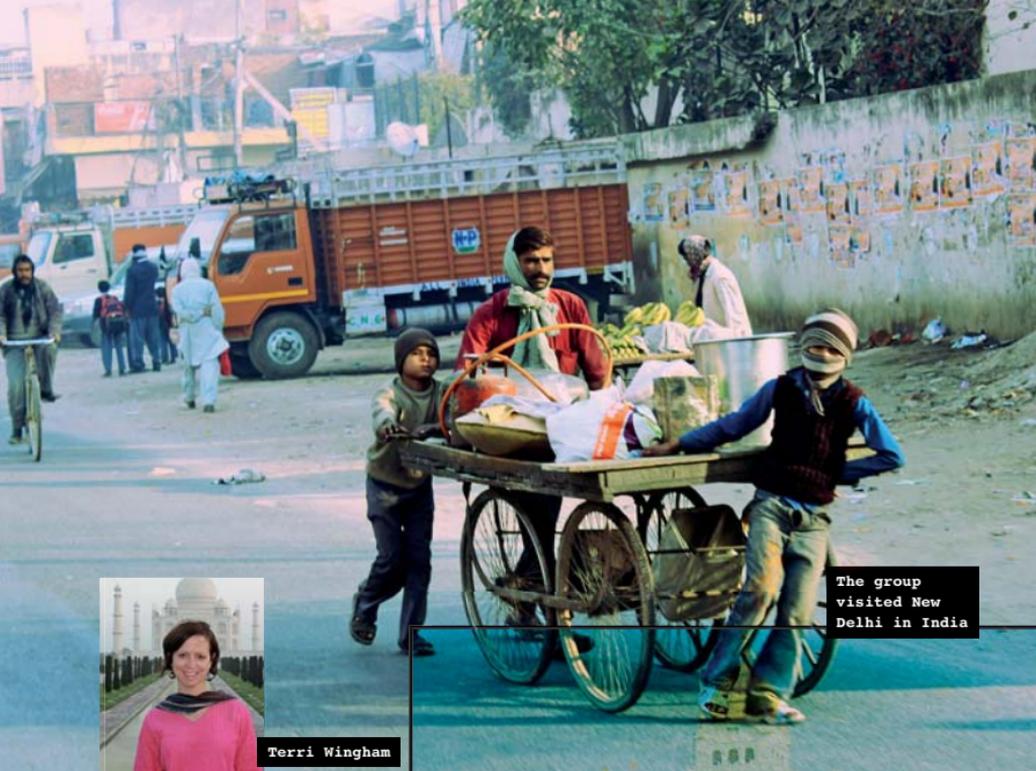
With its primary role being education, VolunTourism.org was set up 10 years ago in response to global changes, which Clemmons says threaten to derail the self-serving and self-indulgent travel industry.

"The tourism industry has, for many years, built a niche within destinations by distancing itself from the socio-economic, political and environmental challenges of a destination, instead highlighting the sun/sand side," he says. "This approach is no longer sustainable in a world that is becoming ever aware of the limitations of human

beings, the cutbacks in social investment on the part of governments and the fact that communities must fend for themselves to a greater degree in the face of global climate change, increases in population, and greater strains on natural resources."

Voluntourists do both voluntary service and travel and tourism-related activities while at a destination. Trips last one to two weeks and involve voluntourists working with a local community on something of importance to its residents. Participants fund the trip themselves and the local community makes a contribution of labour, oversight, materials or supplies to bring the project to fruition.

According to Clemmons, one of the main challenges in setting up the organisation was the backlash from traditional thinkers who "wanted to shield volunteerism's purity from the one-sided profit-seeking modality of tourism." Clemmons, however, strongly believed there was a need for an organisation that could educate 21st century travellers trying to navigate their way through a host of ethical conundrums, including global climate



The group visited New Delhi in India



Terri Wingham

CASE STUDY

FRESH CHAPTER ALLIANCE FOUNDATION, INDIA

The Fresh Chapter Alliance Foundation believes that after trudging through treatment, cancer survivors deserve an opportunity to believe in big dreams again.

From 16 February to 2 March 2013, the Fresh Chapter Alliance Foundation (www.afreshchapter.com) partnered with Cross-Cultural Solutions (CCS) to pilot a programme for 12 cancer survivors from across North America, to travel to New Delhi, India. The programme incorporated volunteer work, cultural activities, and a bucket-list worthy trip to the Taj Mahal.

While in India, CCS matched each participant with a local community project. Whether helping wash floors at Mother Teresa's Home for the Dying & the Destitute, participating in English lessons at a school for children in one of Delhi's



A trip to the Taj Mahal was part of the experience

many depressed areas or providing an extra set of hands to serve meals at special needs schools, each survivor discovered a renewed sense of purpose by acting as a volunteer and a cancer ambassador in communities where cancer is often veiled in shame, secrecy, and stigma. Thanks to a partnership with adventure travel company, G Adventures, each of the participants also

had the chance to watch the sun rising over the Taj Mahal.

The programme was designed to give participants a renewed sense of purpose. The Fresh Chapter Alliance plans to bring more cancer survivors to India and Africa. "We continue to change the world - one survivor at a time," says Fresh Chapter Alliance founder Terri Wingham.

I suppose we all have our essential duty to fulfill in life. This Happens To Be MINE



Ritz-Carlton launched its Give Back Getaways volunteerism programme in 2008

► change; social, economic, and educational disparity; human rights abuses; overpopulation; religious fundamentalism and radicalism; and natural and man-made disasters.

Over the past 10 years, the organisation has undertaken research and sparked debate through workshops, seminars, conference presentations and the website. The 2009 *Voluntourism Survey* brought voluntourism to the public's attention, and this research has been augmented with additional research from academics.

Clemmons liaises with communities, NGOs, tourism professionals, academics, students and public sector representatives, explaining what voluntourism has become and where it's headed. He also hunts down project options and works with the pilot voluntourists to discover how they have responded to the experience and whether it would be possible to engage groups to come to that location.

Currently based in Bolivia, Clemmons had to relocate from Jordan because of the outbreak of war in Syria. "We had spent months working on a plan to develop a robust voluntourism initiative in Jordan, when war broke out in Syria. There were already challenges due to the Arab Spring, however when the violence in Syria broke out, it was obvious travellers would be unlikely to come to the region," he says. "The tourism industry in Jordan could not maintain itself under such pressures; a number of operators went bankrupt or sim-

CASE STUDY

THE RITZ-CARLTON GIVE BACK GETAWAYS

Engage, inspire and contribute. These are the guiding principles of The Ritz-Carlton Give Back Getaways programme, launched in 2008. Guests staying at Ritz-Carlton hotels and resorts are invited to participate in half-day volunteer projects which are unique to the destination and make a lasting contribution.

The programme appeals to a broad demographic including families, honeymooners and seniors - and feedback highlights the fact that the opportunity makes travellers' trips personally enriching and much more memorable.

Projects are unique to the destination and support the mission of the community partner organisa-

tion. Partners include: Big Cat Habitat in Sarasota, USA; Vivarium: Place of Life in Wolfsburg, Germany; Blue Iguana Recovery program in Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands; Sea Turtle 911 in Sanya, China; Malama Ke Aina in Kapalua, Maui; and Battery Urban Farm in New York, USA.

All Ritz-Carlton hotels and resorts offer Give Back Getaways, with the frequency of the experiences varying by location. Some are available daily, while others may be weekly, monthly or seasonal. The only requirement to participate in Give Back Getaways is enthusiasm to take part. There are some age limitations for participating children but otherwise the programme is available to any interested guests.

Details and a list of the range of Give Back Getaways can be found at <http://corporate.ritzcarlton.com/en/About/GiveBackGetaways.htm>

ply closed their doors. Voluntourism, which requires investment on the part of the tourism sector, could not thrive under such conditions."

Asked about his own motivation, Clemmons needs to think hard: "I suppose we all have our essential duty to fulfill in life. This happens to be mine." And what has been the highest point? "There hasn't been a high-end high associated with our work at VolunTourism.org," he says. "Our work is never done, and quite often represents a series of thankless tasks built upon one another. Our motto is a sim-

ple one: keep plugging along."

So is there an upside? Emphatically, yes, says Clemmons. The destinations are exciting, exhilarating, of incredible interest with multi-cultural, historic, geographic, and environmental wonders with which to engage and explore. "Most important is the response from communities," he says.

"With numerous interactions occurring in a given setting, the feedback from communities can truly tell us how successful these efforts are being in the minds and hearts of those who are most directly impacted." ●



Voluntourists work with locals and also take part in tourism activities



Beautiful Minds

The founders of the New York Museum of Mathematics tell Rhianon Howells how they're on a mission to get ordinary people to fall in love with maths

On the subject of mathematics, Glen Whitney and Cindy Lawrence, co-founders and executive directors of the Museum of Mathematics (MoMath) in New York City, are surprisingly lyrical – they talk less about formulae, theorems and proofs than they do about beauty and wonder, excitement and falling in love. Yet despite this undisguised passion, they're the first to admit that maths has an image problem.

"Math is too often presented as a cookbook of recipes to memorise, and it's really a cultural problem," says Lawrence, a certified public accountant (CPA) who spent 16 years as national editor for CPA education provider Becker, and runs a programme for gifted maths students in her spare time. "If I go to a party and get into a conversation about what I do, people are not ashamed to say, 'I'm terrible at math.' If I said I was an author, no one would say, 'I'm a terrible writer,'



✦ Glen Whitney (left) and Cindy Lawrence (right) teamed up to create the Museum of Mathematics

whereas to say 'I'm not a math person' is almost a badge of honour."

Through MoMath, which celebrated its first anniversary in December, Whitney and Lawrence have made it their mission to turn this common perception of maths as difficult and dull on its head.

"We're not trying to shame anyone," says Whitney, a Harvard- and UCLA-educated mathematics professor and former quantitative analyst for hedge fund Renaissance Technologies.

"We're just trying to show the face of mathematics that people would naturally want to engage with."

With MoMath's visitors for year one topping 173,000 (massively exceeding the projected 68,000), Whitney and Lawrence are clearly doing something right. Here, they talk about changing public perceptions, the dangers of 'maths illiteracy' and what's next for North America's only math's museum.

How was the idea for MoMath born?

Glen Whitney (GW): For about 20 years, there was a tiny math museum on Long Island. I went along, and it was sort of run down, but I had a great time. I thought nothing of it until I started coaching the math club at my daughter's elementary school. I was talking to some teachers when the topic of the museum came up and I found out it had closed down. I thought perhaps this was an opportunity to create an institution with a similar flavour and feel, but a little bit



✦ String Product is the museum's centrepiece. The 23-foot-tall paraboloid fills the central staircase and teaches visitors about multiplication



✦ All of the exhibits were designed for MoMath. These include the Square-Wheeled Trike (top right) and Rhythms of Life (second from top left)



GOOGLE GRANTS

Among MoMath's major sponsors was Google, which donated \$2m to the museum in 2011. In total, the internet giant awarded \$12m to seven science centres across the US and the UK in the same period.

Each year, through its charitable arm, Google Giving, the company donates \$100m in grants,

50,000 hours and \$1bn in products to good causes. These range from Global Impact Awards – focused on education and computer science; the environment; development; and empowering women and girls – to Community Impact Awards, covering not only disaster relief but also deserv-

ing non-profit organisations in the countries where Google is based.

Community initiatives supported by Google include the Roberta Initiative in Germany, which aims to get children interested in robotics; the restoration of Bletchley Park in the UK; and The High Line in New York City.

more of an ambitious mission.

Cindy Lawrence (CL): I had also visited that museum with my family before I met Glen. Then our daughters became friends. One day, Glen was picking up his daughter from my house when he asked if I'd ever heard of this museum. I said, "Sure, I love that museum!" And he said, "Well, it is no more."

In the next breath he said, "But I'm going to open another math museum." And I said, "Wow, if you need any help with that let me know!"... I thought, "What fun!" In my career I didn't do anything focused on math, then suddenly here was this project that sounded like all play and no work.

What's the aim of the museum?

GW: Our mission is to change public perceptions of mathematics and share its evolving, creative, dynamic, beautiful nature. These are not words that people associate with mathematics, but they give a much better description of what it really is than the ones most people would use.

Before MoMath, you launched a touring exhibition called the Math Midway. Tell us about that

CL: We got together a group of sympathetic people and started having monthly meetings. Then Glen met someone involved with the World Science Festival in New York City, who said we could have a booth, and I volunteered to spearhead that initiative. I thought I'd be sitting at a table handing out brochures, but Glen's vision was to build an exhibit that would have a life beyond the festival, that would travel to other science centres around

the country and be a sort of proof of concept for us. Out of that came the Math Midway, which has been travelling the country without a break since June 2009, and was in fact an excellent proof of concept. We had 3,000 to 4,000 people show up on the first day... So it really showed us, and showed people considering investing in the project, that it had legs.

The museum cost \$23m. How easy was it to raise the money?

GW: I don't know that raising money is ever easy! You have to get people to share your passion and vision, get them excited, and try to meet as many people as possible. We were fortunate that our vision, and the fact that we're the only institution of our kind in North America, resonated with some people.

What are the most popular exhibits in the museum?

CL: The one that's got the lion's share of attention is the Square-Wheeled Trike. It's just such a surprising thing. We all know square wheels don't roll. So the fact that mathematics can teach you to create a track on which a square wheel will roll just as smoothly as a round wheel does on a flat surface is shocking to people, and they will line up for the opportunity to try it out for themselves.

Another is the Enigma Café, a puzzle area that's designed to feel like a café. It's amazing how many people gather in there and how long they spend.

GW: One of the reasons we wanted the Enigma Café is that for folks to get into mathematics, puzzles are one of the biggest hooks. You get your teeth

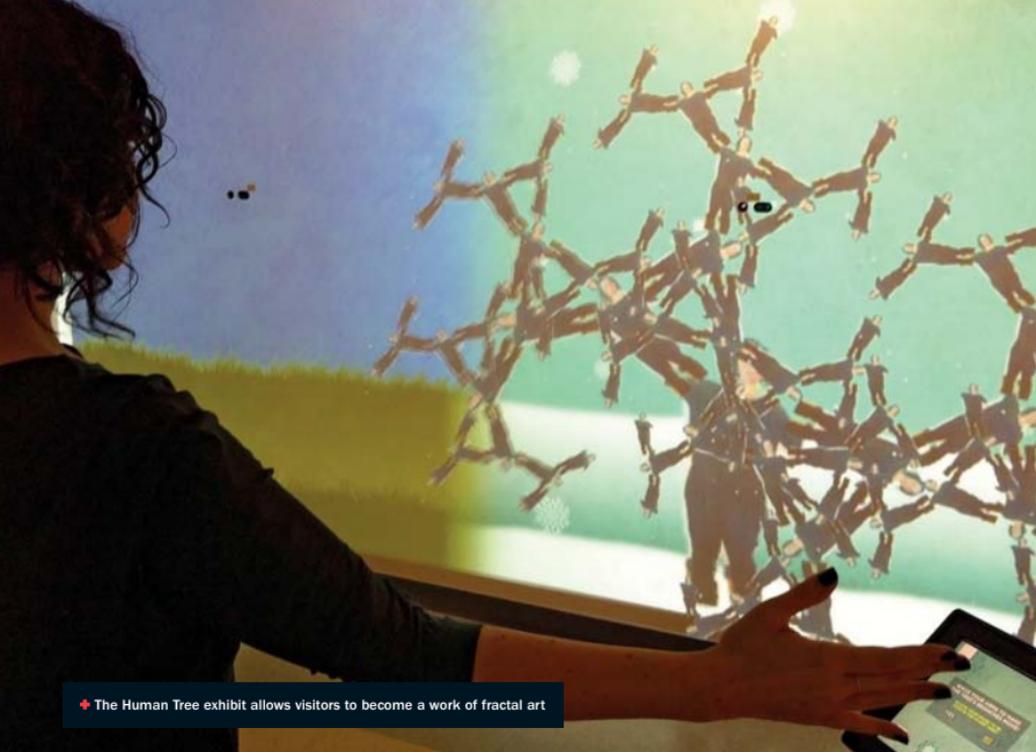
sunk into a knotty problem and you want to know the solution. And when you get it, the pieces fit together conceptually in your brain – or physically in the case of a puzzle – and you have a new perspective: you look at the world in a slightly different way than you did before that moment.

Which exhibit or exhibits best sum up what you're trying to achieve?

CL: What people miss about mathematics is that it has a lot of depth: you might not like long division, but that doesn't mean there isn't some part of math that can speak to you. And there are concepts in math that can speak to people at different levels. For me, the exhibit that best exemplifies that is String Product. It's a giant paraboloid – a paraboloid is the curve you get when you throw a ball in the air – rotated to make a long bowl; it has lots of strings running through it and when you press numbered buttons they light up.

A toddler will press the buttons and get the sense that numbers are fun. Slightly older children will notice that when they press 5 and 6, the string connecting them happens to cross the centre point at 30 – so they realise they're looking at something beautiful that somehow conveys the multiplication table. Kids who have finished algebra and know a little bit about geometry can sit down with the equation of a paraboloid and the equation of a line and work out why that has to happen. And even mathematicians who see the exhibit and didn't know about that property are delighted by it.

GW: The exhibit that comes to mind is the Human Tree. A camera picks



◆ The Human Tree exhibit allows visitors to become a work of fractal art

up your image and projects it onto a screen, but replaces your arms with a smaller picture of you, and the arms of that smaller picture with yet another picture of you, and so on, producing a pattern known as a fractal – a pattern which is similar to itself on a smaller scale. There's a whole rich landscape of fractals you can make just by varying the angles and length of your arms.

Some of the key elements we use to draw people in and show them the beauty and creativity of mathematics are right there: it's visually beautiful, you see surprising patterns and you're engaged with your entire body.

What was the biggest challenge of opening the museum?

CL: We're one of the only science centres I know of that has opened with all its exhibits designed completely from scratch. That was both a joy and a challenge. We had ideas contributed from mathematicians around the world, so our first challenge was whittling those down. Then we'd create

drawings and a little storyline for each exhibit and go out to companies that might be able to build it.

Some got thrown out because they were too expensive, others because the fabricator had no idea how to do it – but what one company would say was impossible, another would say, "Oh, that? Yes, we can do that."

GW: We ended up with eight different contractors, when the advice was to have two or three. Managing all those different providers was a challenge.

Who or what made you love maths?

GW: When I was in grade school, I didn't like math. I found it came fairly easily to me and I got good grades, but I had no enthusiasm for it. Then one summer my parents sent me to a math camp. The very first weekend I broke my collarbone playing soccer, and from that point on I couldn't do much apart from work on the problems set in our daily math classes.

Somehow this answer would line up with that answer and I started to

see patterns emerging. Then I'd get glimpses of the reasons for these structures and that would open up new vistas. I discovered that it was all really quite beautiful. Plus, I was in a community of peers who were just as excited by it as I was. So I fell in love with math, and have been in love with it ever since.

CL: I enjoyed math as soon as soon as I realised it was something you could understand rather than just memorise, but it was a wonderful calculus teacher in high school who really made me feel that it could be beautiful.

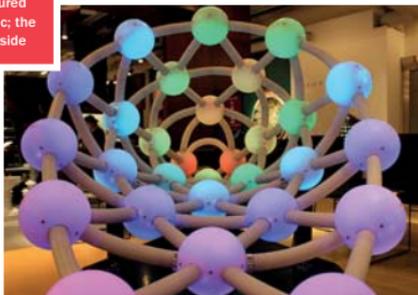
Can you give some examples of how we use maths in everyday life?

CL: Just trying to work out the most efficient order of all the errands you need to do is very mathematical.

I need to go to the grocery store, the post office and the bank, and stop off at the school to pick up a child – what order should I do that in? You're using mathematics when you make those calculations in your mind.



◆ Clockwise from top right: maths helps people recognise the ginkgo tree; visitors touch the coloured spheres to make music; the learning continues outside



GW: Yes! Companies like FedEx pay mathematicians good money to figure out exactly that: what is the most efficient route from A to B.

CL: Glen does math tours that underscore the fact that math is all around us: in the timing of a traffic light, the way the subway runs... We have a place that sells ice cream shakes near the museum that has very long lines and Glen has taken people there to talk about queuing theory, or he'll talk about the math in the way certain plants grow.

GW: The ginkgo tree is a good example. It's a tree you see fairly often in New York City and one that everyone is able to recognise at a glance, though they don't really know why.

It turns out that it's because, unlike most other trees, all of the junctions of its branches are right angles. It's not something most people realise, but when you have it pointed out to you, you say, aha, there it is! It's the geometry of the tree that gives you the ability to recognise it.

What common mathematical mistakes do people make?

GW: There are certain aspects of math that people are naturally quite adept at, but there are other areas where our intuition leads us astray. One of the most notorious is assessing risks and probabilities. An important example is in medicine, when you have a routine screening for a rare condition and you get a positive result. You ask, "How reliable is this test?" and the doctor says, "Well, it's 99 per cent accurate: 99 per cent of the time, if it says you have the disease, you have the disease." So you immediately think, "Oh no, there's a 99 per cent chance I have this disease!"

But that's not at all the case. If the disease has a frequency of only 1 in 10,000 in the population at large, it's actually extremely likely that you've got a false positive, just because the original disease is so unlikely. Even though only 1 per cent of positives are false positives, it's much more likely that you're that one in 100 than the one in

10,000 that actually has the disease. So people do have difficulty understanding probabilities and it can lead to errors of judgement. It's called the base rate fallacy.

What's next for MoMath?

CL: We're working on a number of programme ideas right now, so we're back in fundraising mode. For example, there's a lot of interest in having a math and music concert series here.

GW: We're also commissioning our first new exhibits since we opened. One is entitled Motion Scape and will help visitors better understand the relationship between position, velocity and acceleration. The other is a dramatic lobby piece.

What drives you?

GW: The opportunity to share the beauty and wonder of mathematics.

CL: The excitement of coming up with ideas, then the absolute pleasure of watching kids and adults enjoy the things we have created. ●

GRAND DESIGNS

Some of the world's most iconic new buildings were celebrated at the recent World Architecture Festival Awards. We take a look at a few of the winners

World Building of the Year

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, New Zealand

Frances-Jones Morehen Thorp and Archimedia

The Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, which opened in September 2011, is an extensive public project that includes the restoration and adaption of heritage buildings; a new building extension which more than doubles the public exhibition areas; extensive basement storage and support areas; and the redesign of adjacent areas of Albert Park.

The design creates an openness and transparency to allow views through, into and out of the gallery circulation and display spaces into the green landscape of Albert Park. The building

features 'tree like' canopies that were inspired by the nearby pohutukawa trees. These canopies cover the forecourt, atrium and gallery areas.

Paul Finch, director of the World Architecture Festival, said the building won because it transends various categories. "It explores the relationship between new and old, it is a civic and community building, it is a display building, it engages with the difference between man-made and natural, it deals with art and science, and it is certainly about culture," he said.



PHOTO: FRANCES-JONES MOREHEN THORP AND ARCHIMEDIA

+ The canopies are made from wood panels

Landscape Project of the Year

The Australian Garden, Australia

Taylor Cullity Lethlean

The Australian Garden is a new botanic garden in Cranbourne, on the site of a former sand quarry. The garden showcases 170,000 plants across 1,700 species, all adapted to the challenging site conditions, using the Australian landscape as inspiration to create a sequence of sculptural and artistic landscape

experiences. The judges said, "This garden brilliantly summarises the great variety of Australian flora as well as the large part of the country which is arid desert. This landscape stood out with its strong evocation of Australian identity without having to use any signs – just the beautiful flora of Australia's countryside."

PHOTO: TAYLOR CULLITY LETHLEAN



+ The Australian Garden is set across 15 hectares



+ The Bankside hotel is close to the Tate Modern

Hotel/Leisure

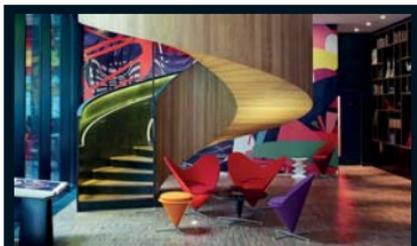
CitizenM Bankside, London, UK

Concrete

CitizenM Bankside opened in London's Southwark in July 2012, the fourth hotel from the Dutch hotel group citizenM. The hotel features a courtyard – the first for a citizenM hotel – which has been designed as an out-

door living room and which brings light into the rooms and the public areas.

The judges said of the project, "The questions asked by the designers led to a process that has amazing immediacy."



+ Bright colours were used throughout



+ The central courtyard provides an urban oasis

PHOTOS: CONCRETE LETHLEN

PHOTOS: 3NX



+ The shingles reflect the sky and the water

Display

The Blue Planet, Denmark

3NX

Denmark's new national aquarium, the Blue Planet, opened in March 2013 near Copenhagen. Designed by 3NX (see Architects Focus p50), it is shaped like a giant whirlpool and is located on an elevated headland, north of Kastrup Harbor. The façade is covered with more than 33,000 small diamond-shaped alu-

minium shingles, which adapt to the building's form.

The judges were particularly impressed by the entrance experience and the sculptural form. They said, "It deals successfully with the site and finds opportunity where there is little context. It overcomes significant engineering and technical challenges."

Sport

Splashpoint Leisure Centre, UK

Wilkinson Eyre Architects

The £17.9m Splashpoint Leisure Centre opened in Worthing, West Sussex in May 2013. Designed by Wilkinson Eyre Architects, the centre's facilities include a 25m competition pool, a combined learner/diving pool, an indoor leisure pool with rapids, flumes and an outdoor paddling pool, a spa area, a health and fitness centre, café, crèche and flexible

space for other activities.

The fluid design was chosen to represent the idea of water, while the building's sawtooth roof recalls the dunes that lead to the coast. The judges praised the sensitive breakdown of external massing to match the scale of Worthing's Regency terraces. They said, "There is a lovely use of clerestories to allow light into the main pool spaces."



PHOTO: WILKINSON EYRE

+ The large windows allow lots of natural light in

PHOTO: FARRELLS



Future Projects Masterplanning

Earls Court Masterplan, UK

Farrells

Farrells' proposals for Earls Court in west London are based on the belief that urban developments should blend in with existing urban settings and become thriving, vibrant neighbourhoods in their own right. The masterplan design proposes the transformation of the Earls

Court & West Kensington Opportunity Area into a new urban district.

The Earls Court Masterplan will create four urban villages and a 21st century high street. The design will provide sustainable urban living comprising new homes, offices, hotels,

work space, education and community facilities, and a new destination for leisure and culture.

The judges said, "The design takes cognizance of the urban fabric of London and connects the districts on either side through similar planning principles and

spaces as have existed in London for many years. Rather than trying to create a different kind of typology, which could have been done in a project of this scale, the design shows continuity, deep-rooted design inferences and is a sustainable role model."

+ The scheme has been granted outline planning permission



+ The stadium will host a wide range of events

Future Projects Leisure-Led Development

Singapore Sports Hub, Singapore

Singapore Sports Hub Design Team (AECOM, DP Architects and Arup Associates)

In 2014, Singapore will celebrate the opening of Asia's first integrated sports, leisure, entertainment and lifestyle destination – the Singapore Sports Hub. Located on a 35 hectare waterfront site close to the heart of Singapore, the

Sports Hub will provide a wide range of sporting, community, retail, recreational and leisure spaces within easy reach of the city centre and international airport.

The main buildings – the National Stadium, the Aquatic Centre (AQC) and

the Sports Halls – have been designed as flexible multi-sport venues, supporting a wide variety of events.

The stadium itself will be the first in the world designed to host athletics, football, rugby and cricket all in one venue.

The judges said, "Singapore Sports Hub won this category due to its exemplary masterplanning vision, engineering, solutions and handling of diverse programme scales to generate an important new addition to Singapore."



Future Project of the Year

National Maritime Museum, China

Cox Rayner Architects

Brisbane-based Cox Rayner Architects' project won the competition to design a new 80,000sq m National Maritime Museum in the port city of Tianjin, near Beijing, in April 2013. The

design consists of a central hall with five hall structures radiating out from it: Hall of Nature and Oceans; World Maritime Civilisation Hall; Chinese Marine Culture Hall; and Historic Vessel Hall.

The fifth hall will house public education, research and curatorial facilities.

The judges said, "The project demonstrates a strong conceptual clarity. In its response to the sea, the

design evokes a strong sense of the maritime experience. It brings together vast collections of elements of China's rich maritime history and offers references to global maritime cultures." ●

+ The museum will highlight China's maritime history

CREATIVE THINKING

Floating football pitches and a ski slope on the roof of a factory – just two of the ideas that demonstrate Copenhagen's creative approach. Leisure and culture Mayor Pia Allerslev tells us more

It's cool, quirky and green, with a city council that has a reputation for saying yes instead of no to ambitious new projects.

The past few years have seen Copenhagen's council clean up the once polluted harbour and build harbour baths, featuring a series of pools for people to swim in.

The nearby Blue Planet aquarium, opened in March 2013, has thrown a spotlight on the area, as have the hit series *The Killing* and *Borgen*, both filmed in the city. Copenhagen's Noma was voted the world's best restaurant for three years in a row, and its founders have spearheaded a new culinary movement, promoting Nordic cuisine in Denmark and around the world. Its green agenda is an inspiration for other cities worldwide, with plans in place for Copenhagen to become the world's first CO2 neutral capital by 2025. And it's seen as one of Europe's most bike-friendly cities, with 55 per cent of Copenhageners cycling 1.2 million kilometres daily. It has 400 kilometres of well-designed bike lanes and a comprehensive municipal bicycle policy aiming to get even more Copenhageners on their bikes.

All this adds up to a content population – the Danes are the world's happiest people, according to Columbia University's 2013 *World Happiness Report*, and a study by Green Growth Leaders has shown that Copenhagen's green ambitions

PHOTO: SIF MENCKE

Pia Allerslev has been Copenhagen's Mayor for Culture and Leisure Administration since January 2008



have led to a significant improvement in the quality of life for the residents of the Danish capital.

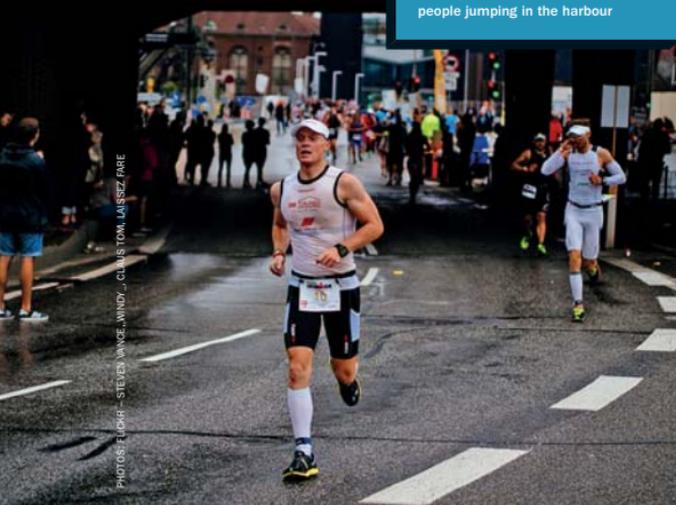
Future projects include the opening of a major new arena in 2015 and a new metro system set to open in 2018. A pioneering waste to energy plant is currently under construction, and funding is being sought to build a ski resort – designed by Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG) – on the plant's roof. And Copenhagen is attracting more and more major

sporting and cultural events, with the Iron Man competition and the Eurovision Song Contest just two of the events taking place in the city next year.

The local government of Copenhagen consists of a governing body, the city council, which has seven mayors, each with a responsibility for a different area. Here Pia Allerslev, Mayor for Culture and Leisure Administration since 2008, talks about her plans to make the city even more vibrant.



Clockwise from top right: cyclists in the city, the Ironman contest, Noma, people jumping in the harbour



PHOTOS: FLORIAN STEVENS; WINCE; WINDY; CLAUUS TOM; LAJESZ PARE



PIA ALLERSLEV

Mayor, Culture and Leisure,
Copenhagen City Council

What is your vision for leisure and culture in the city?

For me, it's very important that Copenhagen is an open, active and vibrant city, where you can always find something to do. It has to be very easy to have a fantastic life in

Copenhagen, whether you are a tourist, a student or you live here permanently.

Has it changed much since you became Mayor?

When I became Mayor, six years ago, it was very difficult to get permission to hold events in Copenhagen's parks, squares and open spaces. Now it has become very easy; the people who grant permissions have gone from saying no to everything, to saying, 'maybe

this isn't the best place for your event, but if you try this other location you should get permission'. That's been a big change. We invite people to be active and to create their own events as part of living in Copenhagen.

What's your favourite thing about Copenhagen?

It's the people and the feeling you get when you walk around it. It's a warm, open, vibrant and safe city. It's also



PHOTO: FLORIAN - OLAM

■ The UCI Road Cycling World Championships were held in Copenhagen in 2011

► quite small, so you can walk or bike around Copenhagen very easily.

The council has a reputation for saying yes to ambitious projects. Has this been a conscious decision?

Yes. If you want to have a fantastic city, you have to be brave and take chances. For instance, when we held the UCI Road Cycling World Championships here in 2011, it was a big risk for us. A lot of Copenhageners thought that the event was going to be rather annoying and inconven-

ient because we had to shut down the whole inner circle of the city for three days. We turned it into a fantastic experience for everyone though. Copenhageners had a chance to ride on the track themselves, and to watch the event from the first row in their own city. We turned the experience into something really positive.

For me it's very important that if we want Copenhagen to be this open, vibrant and cool city, we have to walk the walk. We must be able to say yes to varied and big events.

What will the opening of Copenhagen Arena mean for the city and its residents?

I have been really focused on the new Copenhagen Arena [see below for more information], which is due to open by the start of 2016.

It's so important for our city to be able to host bigger concerts and events, which are currently going to other countries or occasionally to other parts of Denmark. It will be a big benefit for the city. It will bring lots of people here, and hopefully they will stay for a

COPENHAGEN TO GET A NEW ARENA

Architectural practice 3XN are responsible for the design of the Copenhagen Arena, a new multi-million euro sports, music and culture indoor arena being developed in Ørestad South, a few kilometres outside of Copenhagen's city centre. It is due to open in 2015.

3XN won a design competition for the arena in 2012, with a flexible design that could be used to host a wide range of music and sporting events. The development team includes sports and venue specialists from AECOM, HKS Architects, Arup, ME Engineers and Planit.

The 35,000 sq m (376,736 sq ft) facility will have a capacity of 12,500 spectators for sporting events such as handball matches and a 15,000 seated and standing capacity for concerts.



■ The Copenhagen Arena is due to open in the third quarter of 2015

It will also feature large foyer areas and space for cafés, restaurants and bars.

3XN created a wave-like semi-transparent façade that allows people on the outside to catch glimpses of the activities within. The 'waves' lift up slightly above the entrances of the Arena, helping visitors to navigate the venue easily.

The City of Copenhagen and strategic philanthropic association Realdania

have each made available DKK 325m (€43.6m, £37.8m) for the project with the rest of the money coming from commercially backed funding.

The arena will be able to host events and championships for sports such as ice hockey, handball and table tennis. In addition, it will be constructed to hold concerts and cultural events such as Disney on Ice and Cirque du Soleil.

BIG'S WASTE TO ENERGY SKI SLOPE PROJECT

We reported on the highly innovative mixed use waste to energy plant back in 2011 (LM Q1 2011). The project is the brainchild of the Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG), who decided that Copenhagen's new waste to energy factory should be more than just a functional facility generating energy for the city – it should also be an iconic landmark, and should incorporate recreational facilities for locals.

The result was a design for one of the world's cleanest waste to energy plants, with an artificial ski slope on its roof, a visitor centre and surrounding parklands, a green façade planted with foliage and a chimney blowing coloured smoke rings.

It all seemed to go quiet for a while, and there were fears the plan might have been scrapped, but the waste to energy plant broke ground in March 2013, and funding is currently being sought for the ski slope element of the



project. The incinerator, which will burn the city's rubbish to generate electricity, will replace the city's 40 year old Amagerforbrænding energy plant, and is due for completion in 2016. At 100m high, it will be one of Copenhagen's tallest buildings, meaning it could support a 500m-long ski slope aimed at different levels of ability. The plant will supply 97 per cent of Copenhagen's homes with heating, and around 4,000 people with electricity.

The idea is that an external lift will take visitors to an observation platform at the top of the building, offering views over Copenhagen. They will be able to ski down the roof on a recycled synthetic surface, and a visitor centre will teach them about the workings of the plant. In order to demonstrate the energy usage of the city, the smokestack will release smoke rings into the air each time one tonne of carbon dioxide is collected.

few extra days and bring life to our city, restaurants, hotels and shops.

What impact has the opening of the Blue Planet aquarium had on Copenhagen?

The Blue Planet isn't actually in the city of Copenhagen – it's on the island of Amager, around 10km from the city centre. It's a fantastic place and a fantastic landmark, and is important for us because it's one of the attractions of the area. We are proud of having it in our area, but we can't take any credit for it.

Have you been involved in Bjarke Ingel's plans to build a ski slope on the roof of Copenhagen's new waste to energy plant?

Yes, I have. Work has started on the waste to energy plant and we are trying to find the funding to create the ski slope on the roof and turn this fantastic project into a reality.

We have to build the waste to energy plant anyway, so why not try to incorporate a recreational area into it? Everyone thinks it's a fantastic idea and I'm sure we'll find the funding to make it a reality.



■ The Iron Man competition took place in Copenhagen in August 2013

What impact have the harbour baths had on the city?

Back in 2002 we cleaned up the harbour [by modernising the sewage system]. Once it was clean, we decided that instead of people just looking at the harbour and thinking about how clean the water was, we should allow them to actually swim in it.

We built four harbour baths, and the first opened in 2002 – two of them are open all year round. During the

winter time when it's freezing and the harbour is covered in ice, you still see Copenhageners jumping into the water. During the summer, they are extremely popular. They are open all day and they're free – people can use them as they would use our parks and open spaces. I really want to have a few more harbour baths, because we want all Copenhageners to have easy access to our clean and safe water.

What events are taking place in Copenhagen over the next 12 months?

The Eurovision Song Contest will be taking place in May 2014 in Copenhagen. We are already preparing for it and building a whole new venue for it. We're trying to include Copenhageners as much as we can. We'll have a huge party and try to make it as good as they did in Sweden.

We will also be hosting the Iron Man competition in August 2014. It's one of my favourite events – we held it here for the first time in August 2013. It takes place right in the centre of the city, and is really fantastic, with lots of participants and spectators and a great atmosphere. ▶



■ The Kalvebod Bølge promenade opened in August 2013, providing space for a range of water activities including kayaking

► **What are your main aims over the next year or two?**

My main aim is to continue to attract big events to Copenhagen, but also to make the city even more accessible. When you come here as a tourist you should have the feeling that it's a very open place that's easy to get around.

We also need to build more sports facilities. We have a lack of facilities, and we need to be creative because we don't have much space left. Right now I'm trying to negotiate with private companies to see if I could buy or rent their

rooftops to create basketball courts on, and also with the company in charge of the harbour to see if we could create a floating football pitch on the water. They have done it in Singapore [in Marina Bay] and it really works.

How does Copenhagen's climate action plan influence what you do?

We have to be very sure, when we hold big events, that they are being run in a sustainable way. When people ask for permission to hold big events in the city, they have to explain to us

how they plan to make them as sustainable as possible.

We need to be even better at creating more green areas for Copenhageners to use for sport and recreation. The harbour baths are a good example of how we try to combine the sustainable with the liveable.

Are there plans to make the city even more bike friendly?

Fifty per cent of Copenhageners travel by bike every day, which is amazing, but we want even more people to cycle. ►

THE NORDIC CUISINE MOVEMENT

The growing Nordic Cuisine Movement was born in Copenhagen in 2004, when Claus Meyer and René Redzepi, founder and chef/manager of Copenhagen restaurant Noma respectively, invited chefs and food professionals from all over Norway to discuss Nordic cuisine. During the symposium, the attendees developed the New Nordic Kitchen Manifesto and the Nordic Cuisine Movement was born.

The Nordic Cuisine Movement revolves around the idea of using seasonal Nordic produce, promoting animal welfare and sound production methods, developing



PHOTOS: FLORR – CYCLONEBILL

■ Michelin-starred restaurant Noma champions the Nordic Cuisine Movement

new ways of using traditional Nordic food products and combining local self-sufficiency with regional sharing of products.

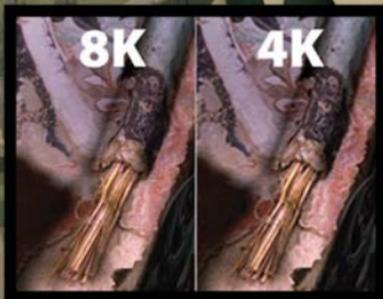
It's fair to say that Meyer and Redzepi know a thing or two about food – since opening in 2003, Noma has won two Michelin stars and was voted the world's best restaurant by *Restaurant* magazine for three years in a row (it was knocked off the top spot in 2013, but still came in a very respectable second place after El Celler de Can Rocca in Girona, Spain).

The effects of this movement can be seen in many restaurants, but also in Danish home cooking – people became inspired to cook local dishes instead of southern European food, which had become a staple of the country.

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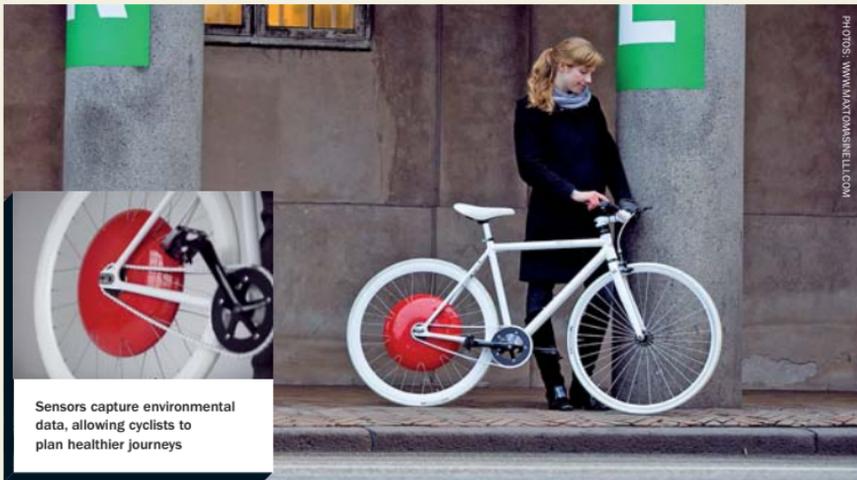
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Sensors capture environmental data, allowing cyclists to plan healthier journeys

EASIER CYCLING WITH THE COPENHAGEN WHEEL

The developers behind the Copenhagen Wheel were inspired by a desire to get more people cycling in Copenhagen. Despite the fact that Copenhagen has a high percentage of cyclists, that number has remained static for a long time. A team of students at the SENSEable City Lab, MIT, in the US developed the Copenhagen Wheel in order to try and

get that figure even higher by removing some of the barriers to cycling.

The Copenhagen Wheel transforms bicycles into hybrid electric bikes with built in sensors that provide feedback on pollution, congestion and road conditions in real time. It works by allowing cyclists to capture the energy dissipated from cycling and braking and use it when they

need a bit of a boost on long journeys or up hills. The wheel is controlled via smart phone, which can be used to lock and unlock the bike, change gears and choose when to use the electric motor. Sensors in the wheel also capture data about how many calories are being burnt, road conditions, pollution levels, temperature and humidity.

We have a history of good designers, architects and creative people in Copenhagen. We are trying to educate our children and students to continue being creative

► It's a fantastic way of getting around, it's sustainable and it's great exercise.

Every year we add new bike lanes or new additions to make the city more bike friendly. We have 400km of bike lanes – it's very important for us that people can get around easily by bike. We are also talking to the big truck companies about making cycling safer.

The people of Copenhagen have a reputation of being very creative. Why do you think this is?

We have a history of good designers, architects and creative people here in the city. We are trying to educate our children and students to

continue being creative, and are trying to ensure they have the space and opportunity to be creative and develop their ideas. Last year we invested E3m into supporting a number of projects in the creative industries including the Copenhagen Cooking and Interactive Denmark festivals and the establishment of Euroma, a new international cross-media school.

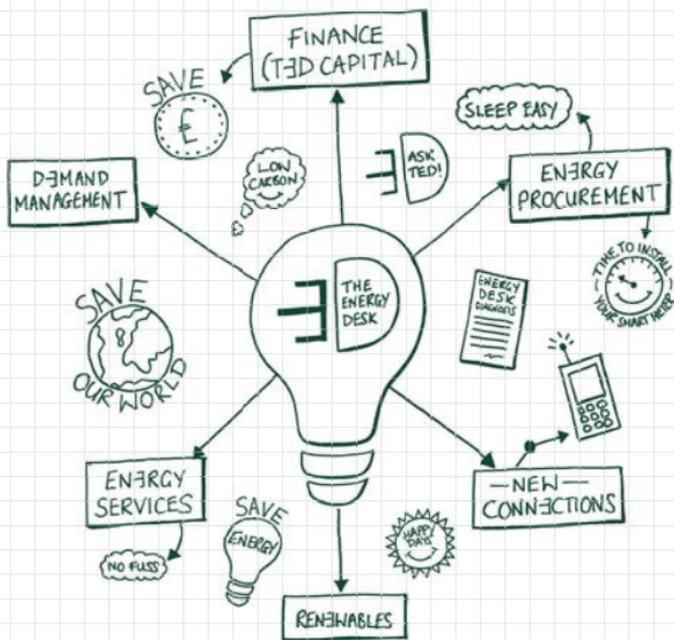
We have just launched a Copenhagen Film Fund and are trying to attract as many international film productions as we can. It's part of telling the story of Copenhagen and of the Danish film tradition and the reputation we have right now for series

like *Borgen* and *The Killing*. I've worked very hard on bringing the film foundation to life in Copenhagen.

What are the biggest challenges for leisure and culture in Copenhagen?

The greatest challenge is also one of the greatest things about Copenhagen – we get around 1,000 new inhabitants every month moving to the city. They all need a place to live and somewhere to send their kids to school, but they also need places where they can be active and enjoy culture. We need to build new facilities and think about how we can keep these people from leaving. It's a big challenge. ●

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BEATING THE MARKET

Across the UK we're becoming increasingly aware of energy price rises. While news reports have focused on price hikes for domestic consumers, it's a similar picture for commercial energy users.

There are a variety of energy conservation measures that can help keep energy bills down by minimising electricity and gas use. However the truth is that these resources are, and always will be, an essential part of our utility bills. With this in mind we are faced with a challenge – finding ways to be super savvy when buying energy in order to avoid paying through the nose for this costly commodity.

Average industrial electricity prices, excluding green taxes, rose by four per cent in 2013 compared with 2012, and we are now facing an increase of approximately 20 per cent in wholesale prices by 2015. So the problem isn't going to go away. However, the glimmer of hope in this news is that although prices will increase overall, there will be fluctuations along the way and if you buy smart, you can strike when the market is at its most financially attractive.

Energy price rises are affecting us all, but there are some clever ways of keeping costs down, says the Energy Desk's Luther Kelly

The trick to playing the market lies in finding the right contract to suit your operations. Energy use varies from business to business depending on a multitude of factors. No matter what factors impact your energy use, the cornerstone of all procurement is knowing how much electricity and gas you need and then deciding how to buy it.

Take for example a parent company that has 10 leisure complexes in its estate, each of which has an annual electricity consumption of 1,000,000 kWh. The company will need to purchase at least 10,000,000 kWh to keep all 10 facilities running for one year. Obviously there are other, more complex considerations to take into account, such as potential expansion, but all energy procurement starts with a baseline of energy required per year. Then comes the question of which type

of contract you want to utilise in buying your electricity and gas.

So what contracts are available to commercial users? There are a lot of variations available, making it possible for businesses to find the best fit for them. There are fixed options that help those that need close budget management by allowing them to lock into a set price for their contract duration, or flexible contracts for those who have a greater appetite for risk.

FIXED CONTRACTS

We'll start with a fixed contract. This option allows you to lock into a set price, which you'll pay for the duration of your contract. If your contract begins when the market is low then you obviously benefit from a good rate, which won't increase when the market prices for electricity or gas go up. This type of contract comes in different forms and your choice will depend on just how much budget certainty you want. Fixed contracts give you a set unit price for your electricity or gas and once this is locked in, it won't change. What will change, however, are the additional charges that make up 25 per cent of your bill. These are the distribution network charges and an assortment of green taxes, which will go up despite your contract being fixed.

That's where a fully fixed contract comes in – a variant of the fixed contract that includes the benefit of a fixed unit price for electricity and gas, with the added advantage of fixed network charges, taxes and levies. The



Energy makes up around 30 per cent of the running costs for a typical sports centre

It's important to look at renewing energy contracts early in order to get the best deal



UTILITY CONNECTIONS

Ask TED, The Energy Desk's specialist help desk, answers your questions

How do I know if a fixed or flexible contract is best for me?

This depends on how much appetite for risk you have. Fixed contracts are more suited to those who need a high degree of budget certainty and flexible contracts are for those who will take the risk of playing the wholesale market. There are benefits of both type of contract but ultimately you want to find the one that will give your business the best price.

How do I manage a flexible contract?

A flexible contract will, unlike a fixed contract, require a lot of management, and for this reason many companies

have agents who handle this process on their behalf. Flexible contracts can only work to your benefit if you know what the market is doing at all times so that you can strike when electricity and gas prices are low.

If I choose a fixed contract, how do I make sure I get a good price?

The trick in all energy procurement is shopping around and this is why you are best off starting the process as early as 12 months before your current contract ends. This will give you the time and space to tender as many providers as possible to get the best price

and lock into an electricity or gas unit rate at the best time.

Should I choose a fixed or fully-fixed contract?

These are two quite different options so it's important to know which one you're going for, as this will impact your budget for energy bills. With a fixed contract you will get a set electricity or gas price but the additional charges on your bill won't necessarily stay the same. Fully-fixed is the most budget-friendly option, through which you have a fixed energy price, with all additional charges also staying the same.

obvious advantage here is that you have full budget certainty and know what you're going to be paying for the entire contract duration. The disadvantage is that even if you lock into a good rate, you don't have the freedom to change this rate if the wholesale price for energy goes down.

FLEXIBLE CONTRACTS

This is where the flexible option comes in – a contract that allows for greater freedom in making the most of the best rates as and when the wholesale market changes. Unlike fixed contracts, flexible contracts enable you to take advantage of the fluctuations in elec-

tricity and gas prices by allowing you to trade your consumption against the wholesale market when prices are low. Budget certainty is not as strong with these contracts but the advantage lies in your freedom to take advantage of the market at its lowest.

Separating good and bad energy contracts can be an arduous process, but the main thing to remember is not to start this process too late. Renewing your energy contracts in advance, by even as much as 12 months, will give you a great footing because it'll help you find the right deal at the best price and will give you the time to shop around.

The rising cost of energy is a real concern, and we shouldn't be complacent. Energy makes up approximately 30 per cent of the running costs for a typical sports centre (according to the Carbon Trust), so make sure you're thinking ahead and getting a deal that best fits your needs. ●



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JULIE MOSKALYK

Dynamic Earth in Ontario celebrated its 10 year anniversary with the appointment of a new senior manager. Julie Moskalyk reveals her plans for the earth sciences centre

What is Dynamic Earth?

We're one of two science centres in our attractions. Science North is a general science centre and Dynamic Earth focuses on earth sciences – primarily geology and mining.

Sudbury is a very unusual geological landscape. About 1.85 billion years ago, a huge meteorite hit the Earth and created the Sudbury Basin, which is visible from space. The structure is home to some of the world's richest nickel mines and we still operate and mine nickel extensively in this region.

Dynamic Earth is built on the outer edge of that meteorite crater and has a model underground mine tour experience, which lasts 45 minutes.

What's your career history?

I have worked at Science North since I was hired as a student science demonstrator aged 15. Since then I've worn many different hats, from leading our education department to overseeing exhibit floors. In July 2013, I became senior manager of Dynamic Earth.

What does your new role involve?

I lead the science centre in achieving its strategic goals and mission.

These include our large goals, but also the day-to-day core operation. Our visitors deserve a fabulous experience and I'm often out on the exhibition floor communicating with them. Recently, I was here at 3am because we had a family sleepover and I was lucky enough to get the early shift.

What are your plans for Dynamic Earth?

We have a \$5m (£3.7m, £3.1m) renewal planned for Dynamic Earth that will open in 2015, which will include adding an outdoor geology science park onto our 14-hectare site. We're also going to change our underground experience to focus even more



Visitors learn about the area's mining history

on modern mining and technology, add exhibits and make changes to our galleries and open a 200sq m (2,153sq ft) special effects theatre. I envisage some kind of 3D effect that really showcases the meteorite hitting the earth and creating the Sudbury Basin.

What will the new exhibits be?

One of the important areas for us to focus on is communicating what modern mining is all about and how different it is from even 20 years ago.

We'd also like an exhibition about the diamond industry in Canada. This has been a developing mining sector in the last decades and we now have the highest quality diamonds in the world coming out of Canada.

What are the challenges?

Securing the funding to do everything we want to do. There's no limit to our ideas – the limit is the budget. We anticipate having continued support from the mining sector and special government grants and programmes that will help us to tap into funding.

What is the Big Nickel?

The summer of 2014 is the 50th anniversary of the Big Nickel – a gigantic five-cent coin. Dynamic Earth used to be called The Big Nickel Mine, which was opened by a local businessman named Ted Szilva. He created the Big Nickel and the model mine tour experience. Science North opened in 1984 and took over the Big Nickel Mine.

Ten years ago it transformed it into an earth sciences centre with galleries, an HD theatre, gift store and F&B, as well as the underground experience. We'll have a huge party on 22 July with fireworks and hopefully the Canadian band Nickleback will play. We'll also host a new exhibit about currency called In The Money.

What are your future plans?

I work for an attraction that I love. I see myself staying and leading new projects and initiatives at a senior executive level for the next 10 or 15 years. Who knows what'll happen after that. As we say at Dynamic Earth, change is always in motion. ●

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