

spa business



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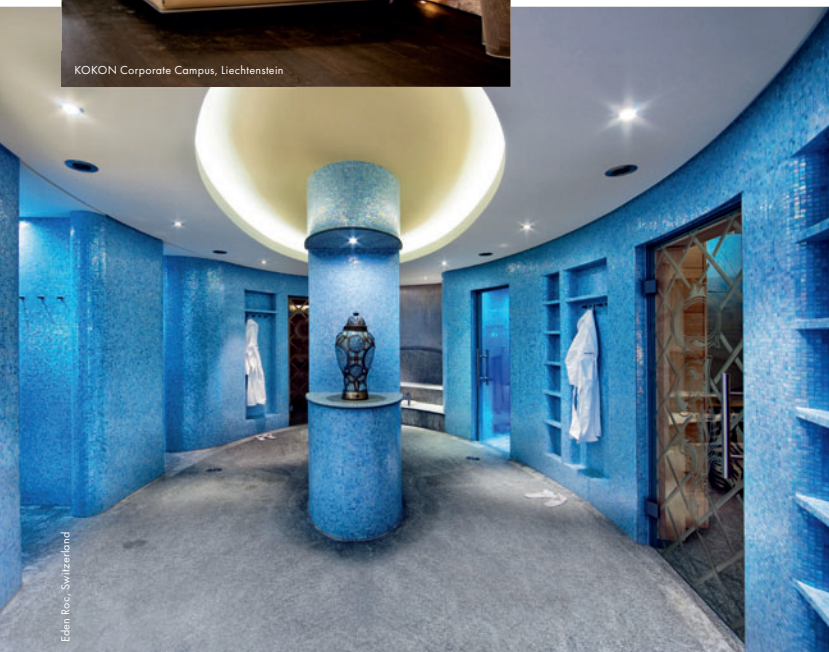
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Wellness economics

Fresh research reveals a direct correlation between spending on wellness and longevity and levels of happiness. We now need to highlight the value of wellness and its impact on productivity and GDP

Research just released by the Global Wellness Institute (GWI) shows that for every US\$800 (€806, £694) annual increase in people's wellness expenditures, happiness levels rise by 7 per cent and life expectancy goes up by 1.26 years.

These figures are the topline stats of the GWI's *Defining Wellness Policy*, an in-depth 40-plus page report which we cover on page 104. It makes the case for using wellness as a lens to reshape government policies that impact personal wellbeing to ensure being well and healthy is accessible to everyone – not just an elite few.

Public policies are important for spas because they increase consumer confidence in wellness – a sector that's still largely unregulated. They also determine what governments spend money on – from training and education to research and infrastructure.

We believe wellness would be higher on policymakers' agendas if they understand the fact that the key to economic success and productivity is a healthy, vibrant workforce.

This subject has been in the news recently, due to statements made in the UK by Andy Haldane, former chief economist at the Bank of England.

Speaking at The Health Foundation's Real Challenge lecture, Haldane said the declining health of Britons is stalling the nation's economic growth. "We're in a situation for the first time, probably since the Industrial Revolution, where health and wellbeing are in retreat," he said. "Having been an accelerator of wellbeing for the last 200 years, health is now serving as a brake on the rise of economic growth and the wellbeing of our citizens".

Policymakers need to understand that if countries are to run effectively, they need healthy, fit, engaged

Politicians need to understand the value of a wellness-focused workforce



“If countries are to run effectively, they need healthy citizens with mental and physical resilience”

citizens with mental and physical resilience and vitality and that everything that reinforces this – including our sector – is to be encouraged.

The GWI's revelation about the positive impact of wellness spending is an encouraging start to proving the value of wellbeing. But with the world facing so many serious challenges, now's the time to present even more evidence that the wellness sector is also already contributing to economic success and GDP so it can grab the attention of those in power. ●

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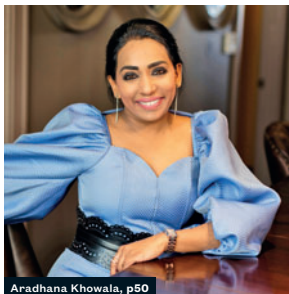
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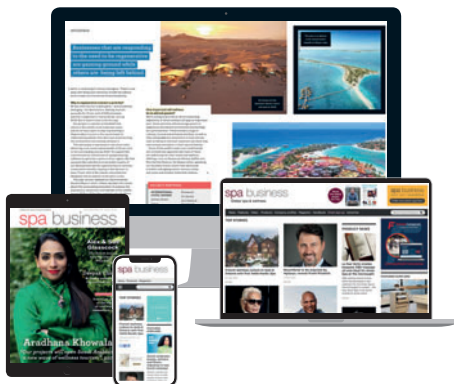
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spa people



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Our vision is to spread a culture of peace, love and understanding across the globe

Marc Cohen

medical director, Peninsula Hot Springs

Integrative medicine expert Marc Cohen has been fascinated by water since he can remember. At medical school, Cohen realised he learned best when relaxing in the bath so took to reading his textbooks while soaking in the tub.

The interest carried on into adulthood and most recently he's been appointed medical director at the Peninsula Hot Springs Group (PHSG), a thermal spa operator based in Victoria, Australia. The new role will see him directing the medical, research, science and educational activities across the group's three current properties and its two in the pipeline (see p14).

"This is my dream job," exclaims Cohen. "I'm getting to live out my passion supported by an inspired executive team." Their vision, he says, "is to create a culture of wellness that will spread peace, love and understanding across the globe."

A long history

Cohen, who has a background as a medical doctor and a professor of health sciences and complementary medicine, has a long history with PHSG and its chair, founder and creative director Charles Davidson.

Davidson says: "He's been a part of our story since we first met back in 2002 when I was running Mizu Spa." The facility, says Davidson,

was a test-bed for creating one of the first thermal facilities in the region. It was an arduous, eight-year journey he recalls, but Peninsula Hot Springs finally launched in 2005. "Marc was a shining light of energy, enthusiasm, passion, intelligence, ideas and inspiration who helped keep our dream alive as he believed in it almost as much (possibly more) than we did."

Davidson refers to his new team mate as a true pioneer of the global wellness sector, thanks to the fact Cohen was one of the founding board members of the Global Spa Summit (which has evolved into the Global Wellness Summit) and, for 16 years, was a professor of Complementary Medicine at RMIT University where he created the world's first Master of Wellness Programme.

He's also set up an Extreme Wellness retreat company based on



Peninsula Hot Springs is a fast-growing operator in Victoria, Australia



the limits of hot and cold bathing and breathwork and launched wellness tonic and water filter products.

Davidson says: "While this director role is a new one for PHS, we've been working in all the medical, science, research and education disciplines for many years - much of which has been together with Marc".

Scouring the globe

As part of his role, Cohen will be instrumental in fulfilling the group's expansion plans. He's already advising on potential new hot springs sites including alpine, outback, riverside, lakeside, coastal, urban and historic locations - and possibly even mobile offerings.

Work is already underway on two sites in Australia: a desert destination called Cunnamulla Hot Springs in south-west Queensland and Phillip Island Hot Springs

He'll help to develop a new thermal bathing diploma for Melbourne's Chisholm Institute



There are three sites in the group and two more will open mid-2023





Cohen says his hot springs journey has been "driven by a focus on fun"

► in Victoria – both of which are slated to open in mid-2023. There are also exciting plans for urban bathing facilities in Melbourne and a restoration project overseas.

Cohen will get inspiration for future projects by investigating unique wellness locations and offerings across the globe. His travels in the coming months will see him taking in hot spring sites in Israel, Italy, France and New Zealand.

"I'll meet with hot springs owners and operators, academics, architects and geothermal engineers to explore how we can develop further products, experiences and locations," he says.

Davidson adds: "Before a beautiful piece of art can emerge, the yarn needs to be collected. Marc is one of the colourful threads of our tapestry that tells the story of how to build beautiful hot spring-led wellness communities that can spread wellness around the world."

To support the company's growth, Davidson is also looking to appoint further people to new key positions in marketing, operations, wellness, culture, arts and development.

A crucial focus will be designing and implementing scientific studies

Multifaceted role

It's fair to say Cohen's new position is multifaceted. His workload spans guiding strategy, wellness experience design, staff education, programming, guest messaging, community outreach, health and safety and strategic collaborations to name just a few.

He's already been tasked with assisting in the development of a curriculum for a Diploma of Health Wellness and Thermal Bathing Therapies with Melbourne's Chisholm Institute to support career development in the industry. "This will not only help to develop career pathways within the industry and strengthen community outreach and messaging," says Cohen, "but, it will allow the hot springs sector to become renowned as a trusted thought leader and nature-based experience provider in the wellness space."



Experience design is just one area that Cohen will focus on

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Charles Davidson

Marc is one of the colourful threads of our tapestry that tells the story of how to build beautiful hot spring-led wellness communities



- Another mission is to explore the potential of integration with existing health services.

Davidson says: "Marc brings passion, intelligence, fun and academic rigour to our team. He's highly productive and focused on helping us deliver our purpose which is 'creating a better life, naturally.'" The long-term goal is to co-create a meaningful wellness culture through relaxing experiences in nature.

Evidence-based wellness

A crucial part of Cohen's work includes evaluating, designing, supervising and implementing scientific studies which build on his previous published research covering a myriad of topics – from how heat can treat viral infections such as COVID-19 and the mental health benefits of bathing to the clinical benefits of health retreats.

He and Davidson expect areas of interest for future research to include contrast bathing, the properties of different waters, the health effects of ingesting geothermal mineral water and developing international standards for best practice in hot

springs design. There are also aspirations to explore the social, environmental and economic impact of hot springs and the development of intentional wellness communities.

"My involvement and passion for hot springs has been a long and wonderful journey driven by a focus on fun," states Cohen. "The past decade has seen rapid growth of the global hot springs industry and I'm proud that Charles and I have been actively involved in this."

Davidson concludes: "We created Marc's role as it's time... We're growing rapidly and need to consolidate our collective energies to help make the push that will enable us to be the best conduit to worldwide wellness that we can be." ●



Cohen's past research looks at the clinical benefits of health retreats

PHSG PROPERTIES

Already opened

- Peninsula Hot Springs, Mornington Peninsula, Victoria, Australia
- Maruia Hot Springs, Lewis Pass, New Zealand
- Metung Hot Springs, East Gippsland, Australia (opened October 2022)

In the works

- Cunnamulla Hot Springs, south-west Queensland, Australia (outback) (opening mid-2023)
- Phillip Island Hot Springs, Victoria, Australia (opening mid-2023)

30 GHARLENI

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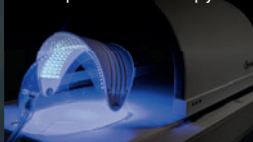
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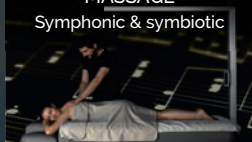


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PHOTO: PERROW PRODUCTIONS

“ This is one of the first wellness-focused businesses to take steps into the metaverse

Deepak Chopra founder, Seva.Love

Integrative health and wellbeing icon Deepak Chopra has staked his claim in the metaverse by launching his own platform focused on delivering a “peaceful, just, sustainable, healthier and joyful world”.

The metaverse, a 3D arena where people can interact with each other in virtual landscapes via VR goggles, is today mostly about gaming, retail and fitness. But Chopra's creation – called ChopraVerse (www.chopraverse.io) – is a virtual world which has been built with the purpose of enhancing people's wellbeing. This is one of the first businesses in our industry to take steps into the metaverse.

At the heart of ChopraVerse is The House of Enlightenment, Chopra's personal home in the metaverse which has been designed by wellness architect Veronica Schreiber Smith, founding principal of Vera Iconica Architecture.

The House of Enlightenment has been designed using eastern and wellness design principles such as vastu, sacred geometry and biophilia and was originally created by Schreiber Smith for the physical as well as the digital world.

She says: “It optimises health and wellbeing in harmony with nature. It is an education and awareness tool that anyone

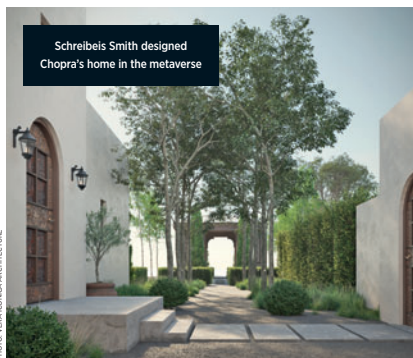
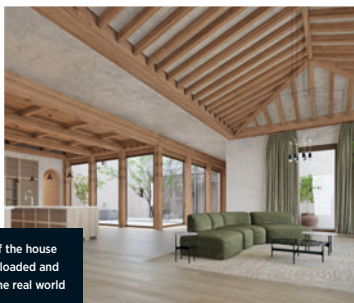


PHOTO: VERA ICONICA ARCHITECTURE

The House of Enlightenment
draws on vastu and biophilic
design principles



Blueprints of the house
can be downloaded and
recreated in the real world



can go into to learn meditation or how your surroundings are impacting your health and behaviour and what you can do to elevate your state of being."

Chopra says a digital twin is being made available to everyone to experience in the metaverse. Downloadable blueprints of the house are also enabled so it can also be built in the physical world.

The blueprints can be purchased via non-fungible tokens (NFTs) - virtual tokens which allow you to own digital goods in the virtual world.

He elaborates: "ChopraVerse is creating homes for multidimensional living, nourishing the body, mind, spirit and environment as a unified experience in awareness. It will give everyone an opportunity to generate their own abode for the return to wholeness and healing."

Schreibers Smith adds: "The goal is to build 100 homes across the world with appropriate local materials, systems and craftsmanship."

"Supported by our firm and The Chopra Foundation, the idea is to incite a grassroots movement where these homes become case studies to share and empower regenerative design and building practices."

Virtually, Chopra envisions the House of Enlightenment as a community for philanthropists, brands and businesses to gather where they can learn about building a more ethical and transparent world "spreading kindness fast to where it's needed".

He also hints at using it as a platform to deliver "curated wellbeing experiences".

ChopraVerse has been launched by Seva.Love, a

The platform may
be used to deliver
curated wellbeing
experiences

“

metaverse for wellbeing, which has been founded by Chopra himself and tech entrepreneur Pooanacha Machaiah. It's been created in collaboration with Utopia, a Web3 ecosystem which includes actress Eva Longoria as one of its four founders. ●



PHOTO: SEVALOVE

Utopia founders (left to right) Javier Garcia, Eva Longoria, Maria Bravo and Alejandro Saez

6

Clients verbally communicate with the massage robot to adjust its motion path or pressure

Christian Mackin

CEO and co-founder,
Massage Robotics



Brothers Christian and Sean Mackin are taking touchless therapy a step further by creating one of the first life-sized massage robots.

They are co-founders of tech start-up Massage Robotics and have launched an AI-powered robot, named Alex, which is attached to a motorised bed and has two arms with interchangeable attachments to deliver a range of therapeutic techniques, such as kneading, rolling, vibrations, heat or electric pulses.

Users can select pre-existing massage routines from an app, create their own or verbally communicate with Alex to adjust its motion path or pressure in real time.

"The robot remembers client preferences so it can deliver a perfect massage every time," explains Christian, co-founder and CEO, who owns a product design and engineering firm.

The inspiration for Massage Robotics came to him in 2013 following a severe off-road accident which left him with a broken back and neck. He says: "During physical therapy and rehabilitation, I imagined a robot that could both help me (and others) feel better as well as relieve therapists from their repetitive work."

The Mackins believe robots will solve many problems facing the massage therapy industry; labour shortages, issues with body privacy, lingering nerves about close contact and COVID-19, as well as affordability and time management.

"We will only offer a Robot-as-a-Service (RaaS) monthly subscription for B2B wellness clinics," says Christian, as the cost of the device is not practical for most operators. He anticipates the RaaS will be equal to a therapist's monthly salary and that "pricing will be competitive to make a strong business case in markets across the world".

He explains: "While a typical person may work around 2,000 hours per year, a robot is potentially capable of working 8,000 hours, so can be significantly more productive."

A typical therapist may work 2,000 hours per year, but a robot is capable of working approximately 8,000 hours

,

That said, Christian is keen to emphasise that Massage Robotics isn't trying to replace the vital role of human touch in spas. "I know introducing a robot into a 5,000-year-old, human-centric therapy is disruptive but we're not trying to make a robotic hand that exactly replicates a human hand."

"We're designing a robot that can approximate some therapeutic modalities and using biomimicry to apply those therapies. Using video recordings, we capture the human motions and then design algorithms that recreate them through the robot."

"It's a unique experience to be touched by a massage robot. You have to feel it to understand it. The robot moves like a human and talks like a human, but Alex has superhuman memory." ●



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World Spa's expansive 50,000sq ft urban bathhouse and wellness club launches in Brooklyn

New York's bustling borough of Brooklyn is the home of a new 50,000sq ft (44,645sq m) day spa offering an array of global bathing practices.

The facility features one of the largest co-ed hydrothermal bathing areas in New York and offers a host of bathing experiences from across Europe, Russia, Turkey, Finland and Japan.

Development companies BK Developers and RYBAK Development co-created the destination. The two organisations also worked alongside Feng Shui consultants and Design for Leisure to realise their vision. The three-storey facility was created following the transformation of a disused parking lot and more than a decade-long project.

World Spa has been designed to reimagine and redefine urban wellness

Thermotherapy experiences are at the heart of World Spa's offerings. These include both a Moroccan and a Turkish hammam, two banyas and four saunas, including an event sauna.

Guests can also enjoy a range of spa treatments, three restaurants, a snow room, a Himalayan salt room, private cabanas, a hydrotherapy pool, vitality pools and onsen pools.

World Spa says the mandate was "for total authenticity", so

building materials and equipment for each experience was imported directly from the original source.

In a nod to this, the hammams are bedecked with handmade Moroccan and Turkish tiles while Kelo pine was shipped over from Europe to create the saunas and banyas.

To offer an exclusive experience, World Spa has also launched with a private members-only club.

More: http://lei.sr/e2n6_Q_B

Arch Amenities Group acquires Hutchinson Consulting

Wellness and hospitality recruitment firm Hutchinson Consulting has been bought by Arch Amenities Group (AAG) marking its fifth acquisition of 2022.

AAG, a portfolio company of private equity firm CI Capital Partners, was formed earlier this year following the amalgamation of spa consultancy WTS International, corporate fitness firm LifeStart and hospitality services company Meet Hospitality.

It provides management and



AAG now has over 70 global spa clients

consultancy services in the leisure, commercial and residential sector and this year has also bought Innovative Spa Management, Spa Space, NYS Pool Management and Privati.

Barry Goldstein, CEO of AAG said the acquisition of Hutchinson Consulting "is a huge win for AAG and our customers".

He added: "With Hutchinson, we

evolve our ability to recruit the best possible candidates."

Hutchinson's entire team will now join AAG, including principal partners Michael Tompkins and Carol Stratford.

Tompkins will become MD of recruitment services and Stratford will take up the role of MD of wellness consulting.

More: <http://lei.sr/15w20>



CHIARA RONCHINI, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE GREAT SPA TOWNS OF EUROPE ASSOCIATION

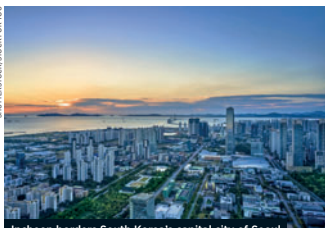
Chiara Ronchini to head up Great Spa Towns of Europe

The Great Spa Towns of Europe Association (GSTE) has appointed Chiara Ronchini as its new secretary general, effective from 13 February 2023.

Ronchini will take over from Paul Simons and join GSTE following eight years with Historic Environment Scotland where she's served as policy manager since 2020.

The application process involved an interview with mayors of the 11 Great Spa Towns of Europe. They felt she was a highly passionate candidate who was "extremely well-versed in World Heritage matters, both practical and academic".

More: http://lei.sr/B8X5B_B



Incheon borders South Korea's capital city of Seoul

Therme Group plans resorts in South Korea and Toronto

Thermal wellbeing developer Therme Group is partnering with the Incheon Free Economic Zone to create a year-round destination in the South Korean city of Incheon.

The group anticipates the wellbeing resort will welcome upwards of one million people per year and cost over US\$200m (€193.6m, £166.9m) to realise.

Therme claims that Korean traditions of saunas, hot pools, wellness experiences and health-giving food align closely with its concept and philosophy. It reports that the resort will reflect the country's distinct history and culture.

Just a week after the announcement of the South Korean project, Therme also revealed detailed plans to redevelop Ontario Place, an iconic destination in Toronto.

Therme has four existing resorts in Germany and Romania and an already ambitious development pipeline.

It's planning another site in Germany as well as flagship wellbeing resorts in England and Scotland, alongside introducing urban wellbeing centres to five US cities.

More: http://lei.sr/q4g2K_B



SHA Wellness team launches global real estate development firm

Alfredo Bataller, founder of established Spanish destination spa SHA Wellness Clinic (SHA), has launched a real estate development firm called AB Living Group (AB Living).

AB Living is the totality of AB Wellness which is responsible for the SHA brand, AB Hospitality and AB Properties.

The firm's first project is The St Regis Costa Mujeres Resort, a Marriott property just north of Cancun, Mexico, which is slated to open in 2025.

While the company has only just launched, over recent years the Batallers have been quietly searching for striking environments with large areas of surrounding nature, warm climates and easy accessibility that will allow them to develop properties that touch on each of AB's entities – wellness, hospitality and real estate.

"Our partnership and selection of the St Regis brand were due to our shared vision of luxury hospitality, standards of service, tradition and excellence," said Alejandro Bataller, VP of AB Living, adding that St Regis is also a leader in the luxury branded residences segment – a component that plays a major role in the Costa Mujeres project.

The St Regis site will open two years after SHA's highly-anticipated first Mexican outpost, launching in 2023. Both are in Costa Mujeres.

In late November, AB Living announced a further partnership with Marriott to develop three more all-inclusive properties in or close to Costa Mujeres by 2026. This will be for the JW Marriott, Luxury Collection and W brands.

More: http://lei.sr/Q5b9f_B



Therapists will learn to treat those recovering from or with cancer

CIDESCO focuses on cancer and sustainability

Global therapist training organisation CIDESCO International has partnered with cancer education charity Wellness for Cancer to launch an Oncology Wellness Diploma.

Comprising 15 modules, the diploma will be offered in CIDESCO's accredited 350 global training locations from early 2023.

To devise the curriculum, Wellness for Cancer founder and chair Julie Bach created a committee of oncologists,



Julie Bach

dermatologists, physical therapists, lymphedema specialists, beauty therapists and patient support.

The partnership and diploma have been years in the making and this is a huge step forward for the global spa industry.

In other note-worthy news, CIDESCO also recently introduced a sustainability guide to help spas and salons reduce their environmental impact.

More: http://lei.sr/g7P8y_B



SHUTTERSTOCK/ANDREWMAZAS.COM

Global survey launches to establish spa salary benchmarks

A new survey has been launched to review shifts in wages and employment in the global spa industry. The 2022 *Global Spa Compensation Survey* has been created by Lisa Starr, principal of Wynne Business and 36-year spa and wellness industry veteran.

The 26-question survey is the second iteration of its kind following on from the original version eight years ago.

The 2014 survey received responses from 35 countries and had its results published and analysed in the *Spa Business Handbook*.

This year's findings will also be published in the 2022/23 handbook, with results tallied by country.



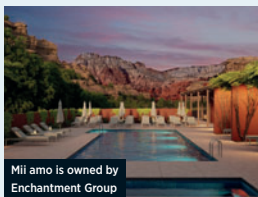
Lisa Starr

The survey welcomed responses from spa owners, directors or manager-level staff, who have an accurate working knowledge of the various pay rates and roles of their entire team of spa or wellness centre staff.

"If we're going to grow our industry – and I believe we have the potential to do so – we need a high-level view of the economics," said Starr.

She plans to make this survey a more regular initiative and is aiming to repeat the process every two years. She's also planning to launch a staff survey focused on job satisfaction and career growth in the years in-between.

More: http://lei.sr/q6w9j_B



Mii amo is owned by Enchantment Group

Mii amo

Mii amo resort relaunching following US\$40m revamp

US destination spa Mii amo in Arizona, will reopen in February after undergoing an extensive renovation and expansion project.

The 22-year-old resort closed in early 2021 and the refresh has cost over US\$40m (€38.9m, £34.1m).

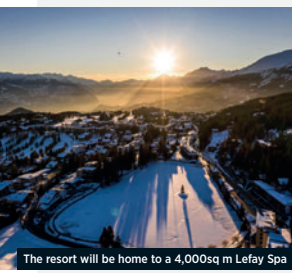
Mii amo's existing spaces have been updated and it's gained a new movement and fitness area, extra treatment rooms, a restaurant, a consultation wing and new accommodations.

"We decided to make this investment because we're committed to Mii amo and its continued standing as a trailblazer in the world of luxury wellbeing," said Tracy Tang, chair of Enchantment Group's board of directors – the US hospitality group behind Mii amo.

The spa will reopen with 21 treatment rooms and a focus on slow wellbeing, including extra long spa treatments.

Formerly offered in 60- or 90-minute sessions, all new rituals will last between 75-125 minutes.

More: http://lei.sr/Q7T9V_B



SHUTTERSTOCK/SANABREL

The resort will be home to a 4,000sq m Lefay Spa

Lefay ventures into contract management

Eco-spa resort operator Lefay Resorts & Residences has been appointed by developer Aminona Luxury Resort and Village SA to run its new spa destination located in Crans-Montana, Switzerland.

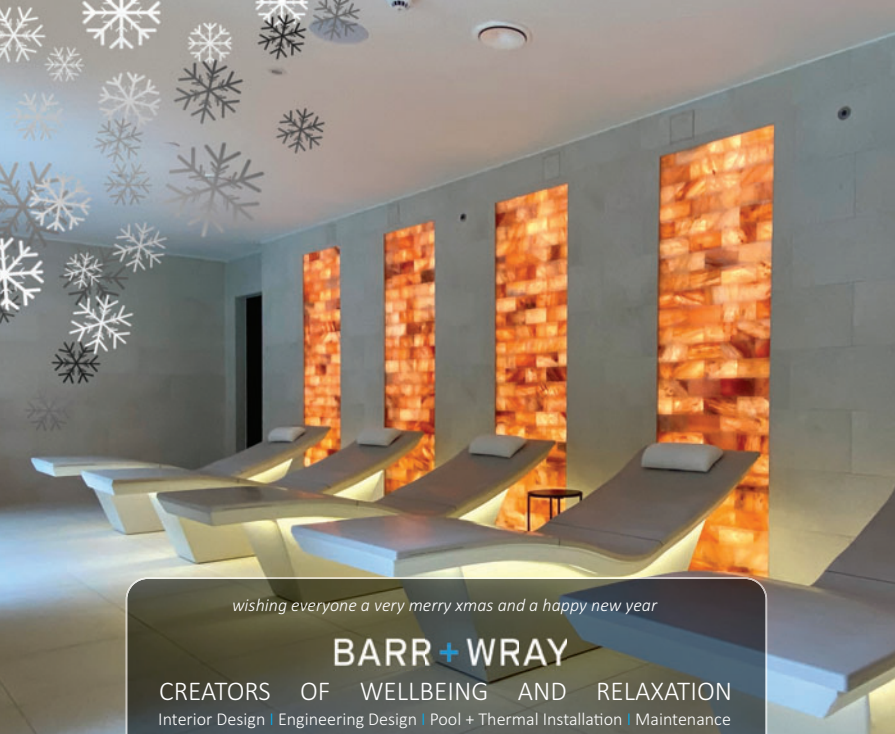
Overlooking the iconic Mont Blanc and Matterhorn mountains, the upcoming Swiss Lefay resort will mark the brand's first property outside of Italy, as well as its inaugural foray in to contract management. It already owns and

operates two well known destination spas in Brescia and Trentino.

"This achievement marks the first step in our international expansion plan," explained Alcide Leali, CEO of Lefay.

"We're pleased to continue our growth with the addition of such an outstanding destination which will strengthen our positioning as a leading Italian brand in the luxury wellness and hospitality sector."

More: http://lei.sr/7k2c8_B



wishing everyone a very merry xmas and a happy new year

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DIARY DATES

5-6 March 2023

World Spa & Wellness London

ExCeL, London, UK

International spa figures convene for talks, networking and a trade show. The event will run alongside Professional Beauty London.
www.worldspawellness.com

16-20 March 2023

Cosmoprof Worldwide Bologna

Fair District, Bologna, Italy

One of the world's biggest beauty trade fairs, with 10,000-plus exhibitors.
www.cosmoprof.com

26-29 March 2023

W3Spa North America

Chateau Elan Winery & Resort, Georgia, USA

Spa suppliers and decision makers from high volume luxury spas across the US will connect through a schedule of one-on-one meetings, networking and events.
www.wworkwellevents.com

3-6 April 2023

Spatec North America

La Cantera Resort & Spa, Texas, USA

US operators of hotel, resort, destination, athletic, medical and day spas meet with domestic and international suppliers for a series of one-on-one meetings.
www.spatecna.com

24-25 April 2023

Medical Wellness Congress

St Martins Spa & Lodge Frauenkirchen, Austria

Figures from the medical and wellness spheres gather for a conference, networking, workshops and a gala dinner.
www.mwcongress.com

9-11 May 2023

ISPA Conference 2023

Mandalay Bay Las Vegas, USA

Industry event with an expo and varied speaker schedule covering topics such as business strategy and management.
www.attendispa.com



Stilted eco-lodges will provide guests with impressive view of the area's vibrant wildlife

Wellness gets wild as Six Senses plans African debut

Barefoot luxury hotel, spa and resort operator Six Senses is set to open its first property in Africa in 2025. The location will front Princess Elizabeth Island on the approach to Victoria Falls, one of the largest waterfalls in the world.

Guests at Six Senses Victoria Falls will stay in one of 44 partially concealed, tree-level eco-lodges. Each of the understated sustainably-built accommodations will provide a viewing platform of the verdant nature and wildlife, including elephants, hippos, buffalo, big cats and primates.

The destination will provide spa and wellness experiences in the

savannah thanks to the inclusion of a signature Six Senses Spa.

Facilities will include four treatment rooms, a gym, a yoga deck, outdoor hot pools, a panoramic sauna and an integrated retail and concept store.

Additional amenities will branch off of the location's main pavilion and include a restaurant and lounge, speciality dining and braai bar and a sunset look-out bar.

Alongside on-site signature experiences such as the Earth Lab, Alchemy Bar and children's activities, the property will provide guests access to the river and the falls on a Six Senses cruiser, as well as game reserves.

More: http://lei.sr/Z4T5n_B



The resort's centrepiece will be a 735ft replica of the moon

Dubai's US\$5bn luxury 'moon resort' to feature spa

Ambitious plans have been revealed for a moon-themed luxury resort in Dubai, UAE.

Costing an estimated US\$5bn (£5.1bn, £4.4bn), the development is set to cover a 10-acre area and provide a "lunar colony" for tourists.

While exact details of the resort are yet to be confirmed, the designs show a giant replica of the Moon with a total height of 735ft.

The concept and designs are the brainchild of Canadian architectural company, Moon World Resorts Inc (MWR).

Attractions within the resort will include "low gravity moonwalks", a range of hotel rooms and other accommodation options – including 300 "sky villas". There are also plans for a wellness spa and entertainment venues.

The Dubai site is being planned as the first of a number of Moon World Resorts.

According to MWR, despite the structure's scale, the Moon resort will have a focus on sustainability and is being designed to achieve the requirements of a gold LEED standard.

More: http://lei.sr/c7V4W_B

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Banyan Tree enters Saudi Arabian market with tented desert wellbeing retreat

Banyan Tree has launched its first resort and spa in Saudi Arabia, ushering in the group's debut in the Kingdom. Banyan Tree AlUla is being operated by Accor on behalf of Banyan Tree, thanks to the two brands' strategic long-term partnership agreement which was announced in 2016. The deal means Accor develops and manages Banyan Tree-branded hotels around the world.

Set against a striking desert backdrop and imposing rock formations, Banyan Tree AlUla has been developed in the Ashar Valley of the AlUla region – a historical crossroad of ancient civilisations and a popular resting place for travellers and traders since the 6th century BC.

The vision for the resort was inspired by the architecture of the Nabataeans – a nomadic tribe of Bedouins who occupied the area 2,000 years ago.

A subtle desert landscape

Banyan Tree AlUla's 47 sand-coloured tents blend into the landscape, while a range of outdoor wellness experiences allow guests to connect with the natural surroundings.

Highlights include starlit open-air sound baths and a massage inside a hidden cave surrounded by precious minerals, incense and scented candles made with locally-grown ingredients.

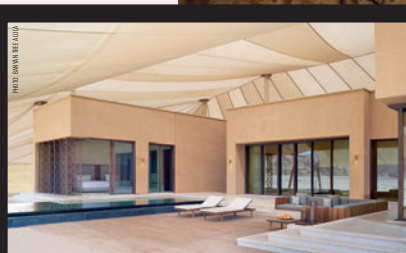
Guests can also unwind in a rock pool with views of the valley on the horizon, while a signature Banyan Tree Spa offers traditional Asian healing therapies in one of five treatment spaces.

Partners include Lemi, Talenti Spa and Pevonia.

A regular selection of yoga classes, retreats and workshops by world-renowned masters in their fields complete the offering.

Speaking to *Spa Business*, Banyan Tree revealed there are plans to expand the spa with thermal and wet facilities and a corresponding suite of rituals by Q4 of 2023. ●

More: www.banyantree.com/saudi-arabia/alula



Above, the three-bedroom pool villa.
Below, the rock pool





*Highlights include starlit
open-air sound baths
and a massage inside a
hidden cave surrounded
by precious minerals*

Rock formations and a
desert landscape make
for a striking backdrop



The all-tented villa
resort is being
managed by Accor

Herbal healing spa opens in former Belgian monastery

A 15th century monastery and chapel in Antwerp, Belgium, has been transformed into a 108-room hotel and spa focused on community, healing and comfort.

Botanic Sanctuary Antwerp sits next to the city's botanic garden and this leafy, natural setting has been central to defining the concept of the Botanic Health Spa which spans three floors.

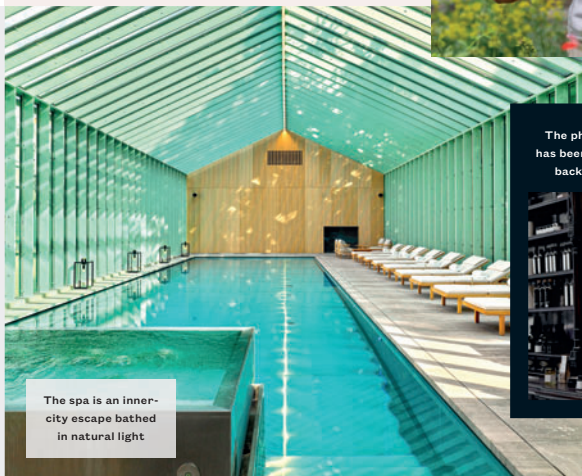
Designed to reflect a cloistral devotion to healing plants and herbs, the 10-treatment-room spa was brought to life by wellness consultant and designer Heinz Schletterer.

Schletterer's brief involved crafting an elegant space featuring natural, uncomplicated and sustainably-built interiors. The finished article is an inner-city escape bathed in natural light and finished with natural stone, wood and glass design detailing.

The spa features a pool and relaxation spaces, as well as infrared loungers, a fireplace, waterbeds, a botanical shower experiences, a whirlpool, vitamin and herbal bars and the Spa Bistro. Additional facilities



Alexander Ehrmann,
founder of Saint
Charles Apothecary



The spa is an inner-city escape bathed in natural light

The pharmacy
has been brought
back to life





Community, healing and comfort underpin the restoration of the 15th century monastery

LESS WARD, LOUIS-LEON

include a historically-inspired steamroom, a panoramic Finnish sauna, a textile sauna, a salt and mineral sauna and a Kneipp walk.

History shapes the present

Naturopathy, herbalism, phytotherapy and alternative medicine guide the healing philosophy of the spa. Plant-based treatments, herbal products and nutritional supplements provide solutions to help prevent lifestyle diseases.

The focus on herbal healing stems from the monastery's history when the convent's brothers and sisters would grow vegetables and herbs for food and to create remedies for the sick.

Furthermore, in the 16th century, renowned chemist Pieter Coudenberg established a medicinal herb garden next door – considered the precursor of the city's modern-day Botanical Garden.

IRET Development worked with AlDarchitecten to sensitively preserve the location's identity and create an urban retreat that brings together a sense of the building's history with contemporary sensibilities and sustainable design.

As part of the major restoration project, the monastery's former pharmacy has been brought back to life and established as a flagship store for herbal apothecary skincare ▶



PIETER ALDARCHITECTEN

Xavier le Clef at work

The healing focus stems from the monastery's history when vegetables and herbs were grown for food and to create remedies for the sick



PIETER ALDARCHITECTEN

NEW OPENING

► and spa brand Saint Charles Apothecary. As well as supplying products for treatments, it promotes holistic wellbeing by curating herbal pharmaceutical remedies and developing exclusive products and scents inspired by the hotel.

Traditional European medicine

The Botanic Sanctuary Spa's healing approach is also guided by a combination of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and traditional European medicine (TEM). This sees spa therapists working with European herbs within the parameters of eastern healing methods.

The spa menu offers guests anti-ageing facials, medical skin solutions, performance assessments, massages, body rituals, retreats and beauty services.

TCM diagnostics, full-body scans and in-depth consultations are also offered by the spa's dedicated holistic medicine and experienced TCM practitioner – Xavier Le Clef.

The team told *Spa Business* that, since opening, the average spa guest spend-per-visit has hit €160 (US\$158, £139) and the customer base has been split between 40 per cent locals and 60 per cent international tourists. Roughly 50 treatments are performed each day, with massages and facials remaining the most popular.

The Botanic Health Club offers nutrition, fitness and lifestyle coaching services to complete the selection of facilities on offer. The club has chosen Technogym to fit out its workout spaces.

Workshops, yoga, meditation and mindfulness classes complete the bill to re-energise guests' bodies and minds, while retreats are due to launch early in 2023. ●



Fitness coaching is on offer and wellness retreats will launch soon

SARAH HARRIS

Spa suppliers

CONSULTANTS:

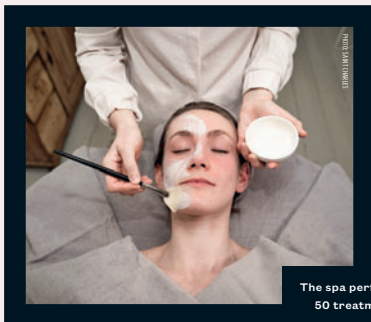
Schletterer Consult and Marketing Deluxe

EQUIPMENT:

SPA4, Watec NV and Dauwco BV

WELLNESS PARTNERS:

Saint Charles Apothecary, EviDenS de Beauté, Methode Physiodermie, Skin Vital Concept, Jet Peel, Technogym, InBody Scan, OMNIA3 and Ercolina Rehab



The spa performs around 50 treatments a day



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& SPA · EDGE SPA · THE RUIKUN SPA · THE RUIKUN SPA · THE RUIKUN SPA · THE RUIKUN SPA
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ATLANTA · FOUR SEASONS HOTEL · FOUR SEASONS HOTEL · FOUR SEASONS HOTEL · FOUR SEASONS HOTEL
LAS VEGAS · FOUR SEASONS HOTEL · DALTON STREET · BOSTON MANDARIN ORIENTAL · FOUR
SEASONS HOTEL PHILADELPHIA · ALCANTARA · CENTRAL · FOUR SEASONS HOTEL TORONTO · FOUR
SEASONS HOTEL WESTLAKE VILLAGE · FOUR SEASONS HOTEL · FOUR SEASONS HOTEL WESTLAKE
VILLAGE BEVERLY HILLS · FOUR SEASONS RESORT & RESIDENCES JACKSON HOLE TETON VILLAGE
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Geo force

One of the world's largest man-made geothermal developments is set to make a splash in Québec in 2024, *Spa Business* dives in to discover the details



Louis Massicotte

Plans for a net-zero geothermal bathing lagoon and chalet village near Québec City, Canada are blazing a trail in sustainability. GeoLagoon, a privately funded company, is on a mission to create a relaxing nature-centric eco-village which it claims will be powered entirely by natural resources in Charlevoix, a region north-west of the province's capital.

The beating heart at the centre of the destination is a man-made 120,000sq ft lagoon which is one of the largest of its kind in the world (see p34).

Underneath the lagoon a vast patent-pending thermal reservoir will be heated to 70 °C by a combination of geothermal, solar and biomass energy. This is designed to not only keep the lagoon at a toasty 38 °C throughout the year, but to also heat the accommodation.

If we want to respond quickly to demand, the franchise model is a real solution ”



Inspiration for the project came from Iceland's Blue Lagoon

It's proposed that the site will feature 300 prefab chalets clad in solar and thermal panels, which will power the water heaters in the reservoir.

GeoLagoon is owned by Louis Massicotte. The Canadian entrepreneur is the former president of the leisure complex Village Vacances Valcartier and also has a background in technology and marketing. He created the concept having been impressed by Iceland's iconic Blue Lagoon bathing destination.

He told *Spa Business*: "Our aspiration is to create an international benchmark for renewable energy models, the goal is to become carbon-positive and produce more energy than we consume."

FUNDING THE VISION

Massicotte estimates that the GeoLagoon will cost a minimum of CAD\$325m (US\$244.8m, €235.4m, £207m) and potentially up to CAD\$500m (US\$376.5m, €362.3m, £318.6m) to realise.

To finance the construction, GeoLagoon is selling the chalets to investors who can then rent them out in the short-term to tourists or people who

want to live in them. Prices for the chalets start at CAD\$819,000 (US\$615,400, €592,600, £519,400).

GeoLagoon won't provide rental management services for the properties but it will designate a firm for home-owners to use. The lagoon itself will be owned and operated by a third-party corporation, which will also handle ticket sales for day visitors, creating another revenue stream.

WEAVING IN WELLNESS

Massicotte says that up to 2,000 people will be able to enjoy the lagoon's warm waters at any one time. "Guests will be able to bathe and enjoy epic mountain views during the day and soak by star and moonlight in the evenings," he says.

The team is also looking to collaborate with a third party operator to open a world-class spa at the property. No spa consultant has been appointed yet as Massicotte feels this will be up to the operator.

He predicts the spa will cover around 500sq m and include 25 treatment rooms in addition to a floating massage service in the lagoon. ▶

WORLD'S LARGEST HOT SPRINGS

- At 120,000sq ft GeoLagoon would be one the world's largest man-made hot bathing pools, although there are bigger naturally-formed thermal lakes
- Bear Lake in Romania is a heliothermic lake covering 430,556sq ft. It's heated by the sun and maintains this warmth due to the composition of its saline waters
- Frying Pan Lake in New Zealand measures 409,029sq ft, but at 50-60°C is too hot for bathing in
- Lake Héviz in Hungary is reported to be the world's largest swimmable thermal lake covering 511,286sq ft
- Iceland's Blue Lagoon, one of the most well-known man-made geothermal lakes, is 93,646sq ft



*The team is looking
for a third party
operator to open
a world-class
spa service*

GeoLagoon wants to build
10 more sites across Canada

PHOTO: G. LAGUON



Energy will come from
300 chalets clad in
thermal and solar panels

► LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Work hasn't started on the Charlevoix site as a permit has yet to be granted. Massicotte is hopeful the company's focus on nature will help sway the authorities. His aim is to begin construction in March 2023 and to complete the project by December 2024.

It's highly ambitious. But then so is Massicotte. He already has sites mapped out for three more Geo Lagoons – in Lanaudière, The Laurentians and The Eastern Townships. Each on the same size and scale as the one in Charlevoix.

All locations have been selected thanks to their proximity to Québec City or Montréal meaning they're easily accessible to urban dwellers – each is around an hour's drive from one of the cities.

Massicotte's aspirations don't just stop there, however. "The business plan and the technology were created to be duplicated anywhere," he reveals, "we have 10 more GeoLagoon locations planned for Canada and we're already in talks with people from five other countries."

"If we want to respond correctly and quickly to demand, the franchise model is a viable part of our expansion plans." ●

PHOTO: G. LAGUON



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TREND WATCHING

McKinsey's latest research reveals the six most crucial US consumer wellness trends

A report released by McKinsey reveals insights into shifting consumer behaviour towards wellness in the US.

The *Future of Wellness Survey* gathered data on 2,000 US consumers. Overall, it predicts that the US wellness market will continue its rapid growth. The new report also reconfirmed the findings of previous editions of the survey – that the main consumer trends are focused on better health, fitness, nutrition, appearance, sleep and mindfulness.

Interestingly, however, the researchers observed that although spoiled for choice with wellness services and products, consumers still feel that their needs are unmet.

It highlights the six most crucial trends that will give businesses an edge and put them in the best position for success and growth in the years ahead.



47-55 per cent of Black consumers want more wellness products

1. 'Natural' and 'clean' have their limits

McKinsey researchers witnessed a decline in interest in products labelled as 'clean' and 'natural', with many consumers now valuing efficacy over these qualities. One factor at play, they say, is there may be a degree of overexposure to these claims and a perception they're a form of greenwashing.

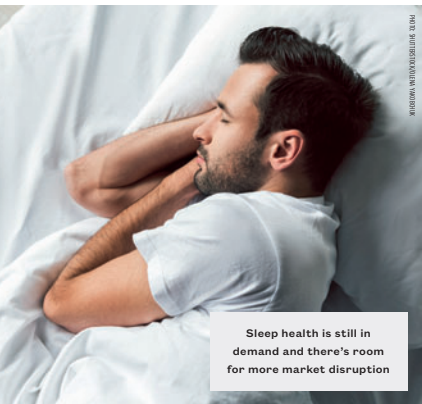
The report suggests companies reevaluate product messaging relating to clean and natural claims and "seek to differentiate themselves from the messaging of peers".

2. Differences in private-label preferences

The survey shows that US consumers are prioritising private-label and smaller brands differently, depending on the product category or how established they are.

In newer categories (such as juice cleanses) or where the science is starting to gain widespread acceptance (such as gut health), emerging brands are at the forefront of product and business model innovation, which consumers recognise and value.

McKinsey says the pace of innovation presents opportunities for companies to enter the market.



Sleep health is still in demand and there's room for more market disruption



There's a decline in interest in products labelled as 'clean' and 'natural'



3. Increasing focus on sleep

Forty-five per cent of McKinsey's respondents labelled better sleep a very high priority. Over a quarter say they'll "definitely place a higher priority on sleep in the next two to three years".

In comparison to previous years, consumers are now offered a wide variety of products to help improve sleep, such as wearables, smart mattresses and supplements. However, McKinsey highlights that it's the area with the greatest unmet consumer need and consequently there's a significant opportunity for new companies to enter the arena and disrupt it. Researchers suggest that companies that tie their products to tangible improvements in sleep will be the most successful.

4. Millennials spend more

Findings clearly indicate that millennials in the US top the bill as the generation that most prioritises health and wellness. They also exhibited the highest average purchase rate of wellness products and services of any generation in the six months to April 2022.

McKinsey recommends that to tap this crucial consumer base, companies should invest in marketing that's tailored to appeal to this segment, such as tapping influencers or celebrities for marketing campaigns or working with social media channels such as TikTok or Instagram.

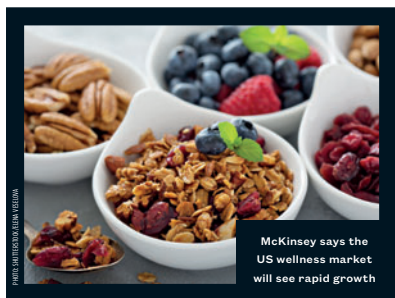
5. Black consumers' needs unmet

The report also exposes that Black consumers are the group with the greatest unmet needs, with 47-55 per cent of this segment saying they needed more wellness products and services to meet their needs. In comparison, only 35-39 per cent of Asian consumers and 30-35 per cent of White consumers said the same.

The sleep health product market is saturated yet consumer needs are unmet



Millennials had the highest purchase rate of wellness products



McKinsey says the US wellness market will see rapid growth

McKinsey feels this demand will only increase and recommends businesses allocate a portion of their R&D budgets to understanding what types of products can satisfy these consumers.

6. Corporate wellness surge

Researchers noted that since the start of the pandemic, there's been an influx of wellbeing-related employee benefits.

To remain ahead of this curve, McKinsey advises companies to explore corporate partnerships that enable them to offer their products and services as part of staff wellness programmes – itself a growing segment. ●

■ More: www.mckinsey.com

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A vibrant green rasul is part of a thermal area extension

Babylonstoren gets muddy with rasul rituals

South African wine estate, garden hotel and wellness retreat Babylonstoren, which takes inspiration from the hanging gardens of Babylon, has a deep connection to nature. In homage to this, it's just created a couple's mud ritual in its new vibrant green mosaic rasul.

Starting with a self-exfoliation, the do-it-yourself ritual sees guests apply a rich clay mask – harvested from a nearby lake and infused with essential oils extracted from African botanicals – to their bodies and hair. Following this, they relax in the steam chamber before cleansing and buffing the skin to remove the mask.

The rasul is part of Babylonstoren's new Hot Spa thermal extension which also includes an indoor-outdoor pool, salt room, sauna, steamroom, hammam and two vitality pools.

Channel your inner Viking at Eleven's Icelandic retreat

Adventure travel operator Eleven has curated a new wellness retreat for guests at its remote Deplar Farm lodge in Iceland.

Set on a secluded peninsula in northern Iceland, the Live Well Retreat, which launches in January, is a comprehensive wellness experience inclusive of cutting-edge spa amenities, nutritious cuisine and exhilarating guided adventures.

Daytime activities include intentionally curated practices such as mindful horseback riding and Nordic skiing, Viking sauna rituals and climate-based Tata Harper spa treatments.

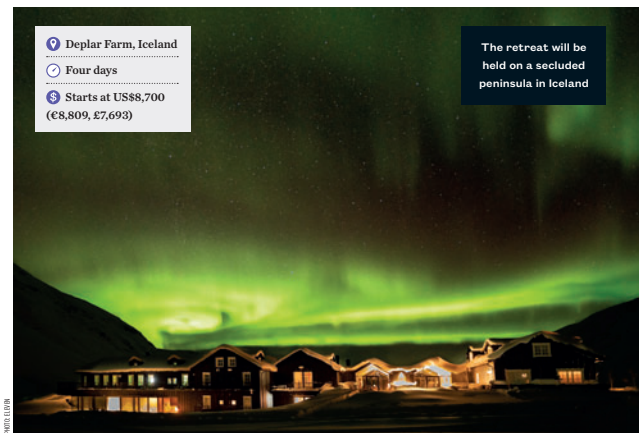
Guests can expect each element to be grounded in Eleven Life's four pillars: mindful movement, nutrient-dense meals, consistent breathwork and nature-based connection.

📍 Deplar Farm, Iceland

⌚ Four days

💰 Starts at US\$8,700 (€8,809, £7,693)

The retreat will be held on a secluded peninsula in Iceland





The cutting-edge circuit gathers data in a matter of 30 minutes

SHA reveals high tech diagnostic circuit

Just 30 minutes in SHA Wellness Clinic's new preventative diagnostic circuit and a series of non-invasive tests will glean vast quantities of information about a guest's state of health.

The data, used by SHA's medical experts to design bespoke programmes, would have previously taken days to collect.

The six-step circuit is the focus of a new Health Screening Lab. It measures everything from vital signs and AEG protein ageing markers to volumetric variations of blood circulation which can indicate arterial health and the functioning of the nervous system. There's also a body composition analysis, 3D body scanner and neurocognitive test.

SHA Wellness Clinic, Spain

30 minutes

€600 (US\$635, £527)

PHOTO: SHA WELLNESS CLINIC



LED therapy is one of three new modalities underpinning the concept

ESPA Life 2.0 – a spa evolution

Just in time for its 30th anniversary, ESPA has debuted its all-new Restorative Wellness concept at ESPA Life Corinthia in London.

The company says the launch is an evolution of the brand and is underpinned by the addition of three modalities – cryotherapy, lymphatic compression massage and LED light therapy.

These are used in five new facials and two body rituals which combine the technology with holistic therapy and mindfulness techniques. This, says ESPA, helps to futureproof guests' health and deliver preventative health outcomes.

The Restorative Wellness rituals have been devised to enable guests to step away feeling rebalanced, revitalised and equipped with new skills and self-care rituals that can be recalled and practised in daily life routines.

ESPA Life, Corinthia, London, UK

60 minutes

Start at £235 (US\$261, €269)

PHOTO: ESPA

► MENU ENGINEERING

📍 Ikeda Spa, Singapore
 ⌚ 90 minutes
 💰 SG\$270 (US\$188, €195, £174)

UV-treated
 nightingale faeces
 cleanses the skin

Singapore spa pays tribute to ancient geisha bird-dropping facial

Geishas are an iconic Japanese cultural symbol, easily identifiable by their stylised makeup. However, the performing artists historically used a surprising ingredient to cleanse their skin – nightingale droppings.

Ikeda Spa has tapped this tradition to create a treatment with a mask made of powdered UV-treated nightingale faeces which is claimed to cleanse, soften and brighten skin.

Eric Tan, CEO, says the droppings contain urea which

helps the skin retain moisture, as well as OGG1 which treats UV exposure damage. The ingredient also includes guanine, which is claimed to promote a glowy complexion.

The mask is followed by a 300-stroke Japanese

meridian massage, which has been designed to sculpt and encourage drainage. The facial also incorporates other traditional Japanese ingredients such as rice bran, camellia, azuki red beans and peach moon water.

📍 Bürgenstock, Switzerland
 ⌚ Five nights
 💰 CHF5,690 (US\$6,039, €5,808, £5,009)



Zita West

Zita West fertility retreat at Bürgenstock

Waldhotel, the medical & health centre at Bürgenstock wellness resort in Switzerland, is partnering with Zita West to launch a Fit for Fertility retreat.

A midwife for 40 years, West is one of the world's leading fertility specialists. Her approach is based on the mind-body connection and a tranquil spa is an ideal setting to reduce the stress that comes with trying to conceive. Not to mention Waldhotel's medical expertise and its tailored approach to nutrition.

Each guest will work with her to create a plan to take charge of their fertility. They'll be taught how to better understand their bodies, how to encourage a calm mindset and how to connect their brains, the head, heart and gut and also what West calls the uterus/pelvic 'brain'.

Spas are an ideal place to reduce stress to help those trying to conceive

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MENU ENGINEERING

**Ananda in the Himalayas,
Uttarakhand, India**

Seven days

**Starts at £4,201
(US\$4,534, €4,695)**

**It's for those seeking
self-acceptance and
silence within**

Soul-searching at Ananda

Ananda in the Himalayas has curated a Soul Detox package for those seeking self-acceptance and silence within.

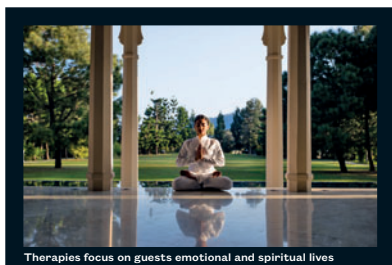
The programme is designed to help attendees release past traumatic impressions holding them back and rediscover their true self.

During the week, guests revisit and release some of their biggest emotional blocks and rediscover their energy through

processes that combine spiritual hypnotherapy, regression therapy, yoga, meditation and energy healing.

Led by a team of psychologists and spiritual hypnotherapists, the process of emotional healing will combine wisdom from eastern philosophy with western behavioural sciences.

● More on this topic at www.spabusiness.com/soul



Therapies focus on guests emotional and spiritual lives

**Cheval Blanc St-Barth Isle de
France, Saint Barthélemy, Caribbean**

One day

Starting cost of €710 (US\$685, £634)



**An expert therapist
leads a baby body
massage class**

Cheval Blanc teaching baby-wellbeing skills

Cheval Blanc's Baby Bonding wellness experience in St Barthélemy is designed to provide new parents with precious memories and skills to support their baby's wellbeing.

The experience includes a 30-minute baby body massage by an expert therapist to promote relaxation and bonding through skin-to-skin interaction, alongside a private session teaching parents the safest technique for massaging their baby and learning more about the physical and emotional benefits this can provide for the whole family.

Mothers can also receive a postnatal massage to help their body and opt for a one-hour Aqua-Osteopathy session for the baby, as well as a first swimming lesson with a qualified lifeguard providing guidance.



Kamalaya Koh Samui, Thailand

45-60 minutes (ozone); 60 minutes (oxygen)

THB6,827 or US\$183, £186, £162 (ozone); THB4,944 or US\$134, £135, £118 (oxygen)

The launch follows the arrival of IV therapy earlier this year

Kamalaya embraces ozone and oxygen therapy

Thai destination spa Kamalaya is breathing new life into its offering with the launch of ozone and oxygen therapy treatments.

Ozone therapy is believed to help boost the immune system, restore balance and combat infectious and degenerative diseases. Performed by Kamalaya's nursing team, it involves drawing a small amount of blood, mixing it with medical grade ozone and reinjecting it to help the body heal.

Oxygen therapy is carried out in a hyperbaric chamber to deliver more oxygen to the body via the lungs. Guests are fitted with an apparatus to directly absorb medical

oxygen via a nasal cannula while resting in the capsule. This therapy is designed to heal injuries up to three times faster than normal and also helps the body fight bacteria, stimulate stem cell production and promote overall physical and mental wellbeing.

The additions join Kamalaya's gamut of modalities, enabling the spa to offer a myriad of customisable approaches which bridge the gap between western science and ancient healing traditions of the east.

"People come to us for a 'reset' – whatever that looks like for them," says co-founder Karina Stewart. "That's why personalisation is so important."



Karina Stewart

People come to us for a 're-set' – whatever that looks like for them

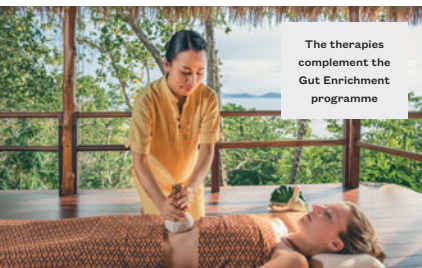
Ozone and oxygen therapy will initially be offered as standalone treatments and from 2023 will be incorporated into some of Kamalaya's 17 wellness programmes such as Resilience and Immunity, Enriched Gut and Sleep Enhancement.

They follow the launch of Kamalaya IV therapies earlier this year, as well as the rollout of its functional testing. The latter is provided in partnership with UK-based clinic Paar and sees guests

undertaking pre-arrival screening and wellbeing assessments to evaluate a range of health factors, including food intolerances and genetic predispositions.

In the future, Stewart hints at a Women's Health retreat covering the menstruation, fertility, perimenopause, menopause and postmenopause stages.

She says there's also a huge focus behind the scenes on developing Kamalaya's online platform. ●



The therapies complement the Gut Enrichment programme

IMAGE: KAMALAYA

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Stephan Wagner

As Saudi Arabia taps into tourism, the asset management director of Red Sea Global tells Julie Cramer how the company is looking to bring guests to a previously undiscovered part of the Kingdom

PHOTO AMAALA

For millions of Muslims, Saudi Arabia is a powerful spiritual magnet for those making the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. Yet the oil-rich Middle Eastern Kingdom has been much less well known as a tourism destination.

That looks set to change with the creation of a series of 'giga projects', designed to elevate the country's standing on the world stage (see p47).

This new direction, guided by the Kingdom's ambitious masterplan, called *Vision 2030*, was first announced in 2016 and has been created to reduce Saudi's traditional dependence on oil, to diversify its economy and open it up to the world.

The country's 'white oil' (tourism) is a key focus in the masterplan which involves developing vast nature reserves, doubling the number of UNESCO heritage sites, growing the culture and entertainment sector and promoting healthier lifestyles.

A number of significant projects are set to launch between now and 2030, based around two major developments, Amaala and The Red Sea, which are both being delivered by Red Sea Global (RSG).

Amaala has been billed as the first global integrated family wellness destination and will offer 'curated transformative personal journeys' inspired by arts, wellness and the Red Sea.

When complete, the 4,155sq km site will have eight resorts, 200 residential units and a marina.

The first notable opening, called Triple Bay, is scheduled for completion in 2024. This is one of three high-profile developments that make up Amaala, which is being dubbed the new 'riviera of the Middle East'.

Amaala lies at Saudi Arabia's largely untouched north-west corner, bordering the Red Sea, and is set to become the jewel in Saudi's new tourism crown, creating a new gateway to the region for local tourists and international travellers.

Stephan Wagner was appointed in April 2020 as asset management director of RSG, the company which is driving both Amaala and The Red Sea (see p50).

He's spearheading the development of the wellness offerings at the three Amaala locations and reveals details to *Spa Business*.

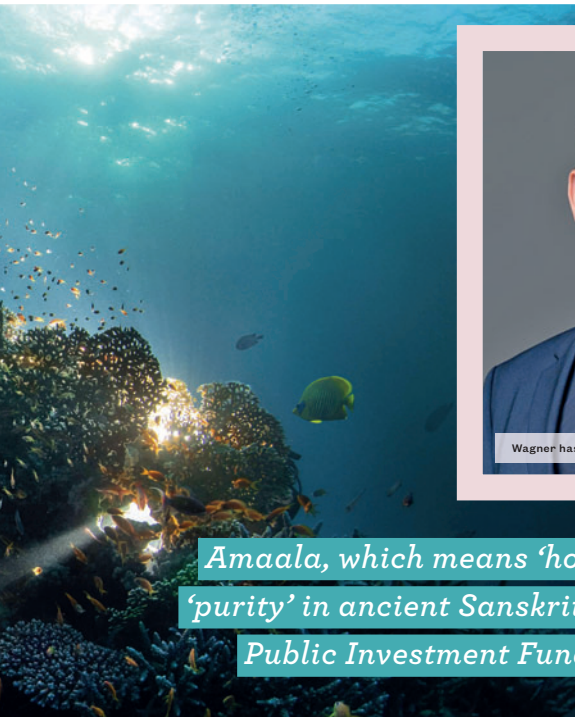


PHOTO AMAALA

Wagner has worked in the sector for 20 years

Amaala, which means 'hope' in Arabic and 'purity' in ancient Sanskrit, is backed by the Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia



PHOTO HKS ARCHITECTS

Triple Bay, Amaala's first project, will open in 2024

► THE FIRST PHASE

Amaala – which means ‘hope’ in Arabic and ‘purity’ in ancient Sanskrit – is backed by the Public Investment Fund (the sovereign wealth fund of Saudi Arabia) with external private investors. The trio of projects, Triple Bay, The Island and The Coastal Development, will be distinct themed destinations focused on wellness and sports, arts and culture and sun, sea and lifestyle.

Triple Bay, described as ‘a place for wellness, rejuvenation and longevity’, will launch in 2024, with building work already fully underway. The site has been masterplanned by HKS Architects – one of a number of architectural firms working on the project – and gets its name from its location, spanning three picturesque coastal lagoons in the Red Sea. Over 300 contracts have already been awarded to date, worth an excess of SAR6.6bn (US\$1.76bn, €1.79bn, £1.57bn).

“Wellness will be at the heart of the DNA of our brand and this extends not only to our guests, but also to all our staff,” says Wagner, who’s been working for luxury spa and resort brands around the world for over 20 years. Prior to his appointment in Saudi Arabia, he was director of spa and wellbeing at Switzerland’s Grand Resort Bad Ragaz and he believes that it’s important “to start by protecting our most precious assets, which are both the landscape we’re building on and the people who will deliver the vision to customers”.



The Coastal Development is one of three projects that make up Amaala

*We're at the crossroads of
Europe, Asia and Africa,
with 250 million people
within a three-hour flight*



The Island, with its Contemporary Art Museum, is the third part of Amaala

PHOTO: RED SEA GLOBAL

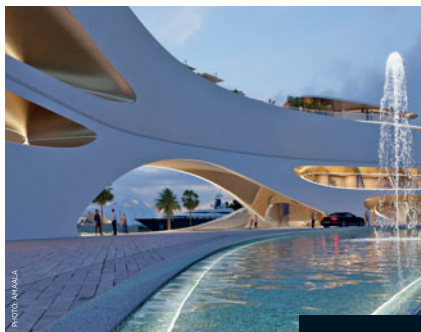
Work has already started on the Amaala Employee Village, which will eventually be home to 20,000 staff. The aim is for the staff resort to set new benchmarks in luxury community living and ensure that each member lives and breathes its sustainability ethos.

Corporate wellness will be key too, adds Wagner. “We’ll be offering US\$1,800 (€1,795, £1,577) to every employee for them to spend as they wish on wellness-related pursuits – whether that’s a gym membership or yoga lessons or a hiking holiday,” he says.

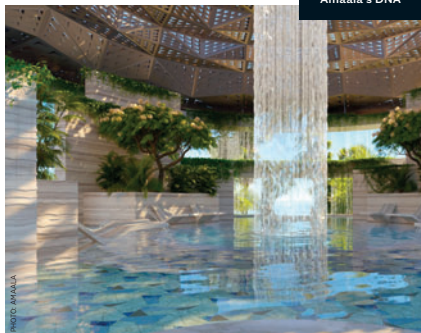
WELLNESS EDUCATION

Wagner recognises that because wellness as a tourist pursuit has not long been established in the Kingdom, a significant education process still needs to take place in the local market. Although, he says a shift in values is gradually starting to happen, aided in part by the recent global pandemic, which caused almost everyone to reflect on what they were doing to preserve, or improve their health.

Wagner says: “Previously, you’d have been more likely to encounter Saudis travelling to the traditional



Wellness will be
at the heart of
Amaala's DNA



VISION 2030 GIGA PROJECTS

AMAALA – a 'new jewel' on the north-western coast of Saudi Arabia in a nature reserve consisting of three developments: Triple Bay, The Island and Coastal Development

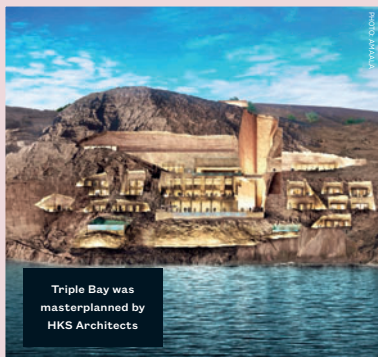
THE RED SEA – a tourist destination with phases due to open from 2023 to 2030. Once completed, it will have around 50 different resorts. The whole site, close to the size of Belgium, encompasses an archipelago of more than 90 pristine islands. See p50 for more details

NEOM – like Amaala, this sits in the north-west of the country close to Jordan. The focus is on urban life and creating 'a new model for sustainable living, working and prospering'. The first phase is due for completion in 2024

ASER DEVELOPMENT PROJECT – located in the Aser Mountains in the south, this will be developed as 'The Arabian Highland'. The aim is create a year-round tourist destination for up to 10 million visitors a year

DIRIYAH GATE – north-west of the capital of Riyadh, this project is centred around the world heritage site of At-Turaif. It's expected to boast 40 international hotel brands once it opens in 2025

QIDDIYA – an entertainment complex south-west of Riyadh which aims to attract the youth and family markets with its theme and water parks, stadium and kids sports centre and themed retail and dining offers




Triple Bay was
masterplanned by
HKS Architects

city tourism centres such as London, New York, Tokyo and Paris, but in recent years there's been a greater interest in wellness-oriented destinations such as Kerala in southern India, where they're more likely to engage in activities such as meditation, yoga and breathwork. This interest has come a little later to Saudi Arabia, but it's starting to happen nonetheless."

Wagner also admits that while their vision for wellness tourism is cutting edge and expansive, they're focusing on the basics first. "From the outset, we wanted to carefully define what wellness is in terms of the physical, emotional and the spiritual, how that will be conveyed to visitors, as well as how we can source the best services and operators to deliver an unforgettable luxury health experience," he says. "We have much to do to educate people about wellness tourism. What it is, what it provides, why exactly should Saudis spend their tourism cash on wellness."

Amaala is expecting at first to educate and attract domestic tourists before expanding to the other GCC countries (United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain) and then the rest of the world. ▶



Amaala is expecting to first attract Saudis before targeting other GCC countries

The destination will operate a zero-carbon footprint once it's fully operational, with the aim of being carbon positive in the future


► Wagner adds: "We're aware this will be an extended process. We aim to be a leading authority on wellness and we'll be proactive and continue to do our research. We're hiring the best and we'll partner with the best to build Amaala into an unparalleled world-class wellness destination."

"In June, we launched the Saudi Arabian Wellness Association – and we want to work with international leaders," he says, referencing Sue Harmsworth who sits on Amaala's board. "We don't claim to know everything and we're very open to others' input and ideas."

Wagner adds: "As Amaala opens up, we'll be promoting it to local people as a place they can chill out for just a few days, or as a day trip. It's only a couple of hours from Riyadh."

"For the international market, we have this advantageous position halfway way between Asia and Europe – making us a relatively short haul and desirable destination from both regions, rather than a stopover for long-haul travel."

"We're at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa, with around 250 million people within a three-hour flight time."



All giga projects are prioritising conservation and sustainability

PHOTO: AMAALA



PHOTO AMAALA



The Saudi Arabian Wellness Association launched in June

PHOTO AMAALA

PRIORITISING SUSTAINABILITY

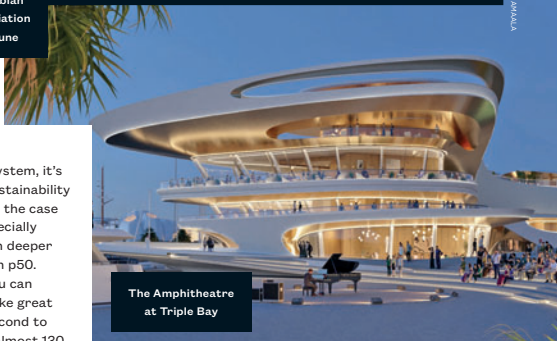
Situated in such a delicate natural ecosystem, it's not surprising that conservation and sustainability are key priorities at Amaala. This is also the case for the region's other *giga* projects, especially The Red Sea resort, and we take a much deeper look at its regenerative tourism plans on p50.

Wagner says: "Our message is that you can travel the world, but you also have to take great care of it. Our eco-credentials will be second to none and we're currently involved with almost 130 sustainability initiatives to preserve the landscape, wildlife and support neighbouring villagers. These range from tagging turtles and monitoring endangered species, to working with the locals to fish more sustainably and to painstakingly transplant the corals where necessary.

"It's not just about planting lots of trees (although Amaala has planted more than 70,000 so far) but making sure we use all the right materials, such as green concrete, and reuse and recycle as much as we can."

Amaala will be powered by 100 per cent renewable energy, which will create a saving of CO2 emissions that is equivalent to almost half a million tonnes each year. The destination will operate a zero-carbon footprint once it's fully operational, with the aim of being carbon positive in the future.

While tourists will have to wait a couple more years to have their first taste of Amaala, Saudi Arabia has been gradually opening itself up to more international tourists. Alongside Umrah visitors (pilgrims to Mecca) - which the Kingdom hopes to



The Amphitheatre at Triple Bay

increase from eight to 30 million annually - new opportunities and attractions are being launched to attract greater international attention.

One such event is the Riyadh Season, an entertainment festival in the capital featuring local and international music artists, sports activities and food. Launched in 2019, reports indicate it generated SAR6bn (US\$1.6bn, £1.2bn, €1.5bn), while the second season ran from October 2021 to March 2022 and hosted more than 7,000 events.

Wagner says: "The Saudis are welcoming, positive and open-hearted people with a natural sense of hospitality. After all, the Kingdom has been welcoming pilgrims to Mecca for thousands of years. Centuries before the concept of Airbnb, people were opening their homes and letting pilgrims stay with them. Saudi Arabia is more than ready to open itself, and its unique landscape, culture and heritage, up to the world." ●

More: www.amaala.com

‘*The vision is to deliver projects that open Saudi Arabia’s doors to a new wave of tourism*

ARADHANA KHOWALA

As Saudi Arabia’s ambitious giga project, The Red Sea, gears up to welcome its first guests in the next few months, the chair of its advisory board reveals key details about the destination to Megan Whitby and shares her passion for regenerative tourism

A

radhana Khowala is a strategy specialist in travel and hospitality, diversity, inclusion and women’s health.

With qualifications from Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne, Cornell and INSEAD, she’s leveraging her experience to chair the advisory board for Red Sea Global (RSG) – the developer behind The Red Sea, a resort destination nearly the size of Belgium.

RSG is owned by the Public Investment Fund of Saudi. The Red Sea, billed as

one of the most ambitious ever tourism infrastructure projects, extends across 28,000sq km of Saudi Arabian coastline.

Construction began in 2019 and work is on track to welcome guests in early 2023 when the first hotels open. This initial phase of development is set for completion in 2024, by which time it will boast 16 hotels, including wellness-focused brands such as Six Senses, Miraval, Raffles and Rosewood (see p54).

Once the entire destination is finished in 2030, it will have 50 hotels stretching across



Khowala is a women's health advocate and spoke on this topic at this year's GWS

WHAT'S THE LATEST WITH AMAALA, SAUDI'S WELLNESS-FOCUSED GIGA PROJECT?

Read our interview with Stephan Wagner on p44

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Regenerative tourism isn't anti-growth; it simply asks we grow the things that matter most in ways that benefit the entire system



The destination will have 50 resorts across 22 islands and six inland locations

- 22 islands and six inland locations, offering 8,000 hotel rooms and 1,300 residential properties.

The Red Sea will also have an international airport, which will be operational next year, marinas, golf courses and entertainment and leisure facilities.

The overall aim is to attract a million visitors a year – capped in line with its sustainability ambitions – by 2030 creating 70,000 jobs and contributing SAR22bn (US\$5.9bn, €5.1bn, £4.3bn) to the nation's GDP.

Khowala, who's been running her tourism consultancy Aptamind Partners for 15 years, says RSG's commitment to regenerative travel is game changing as it raises standards and accelerates the pace of change for everybody else.

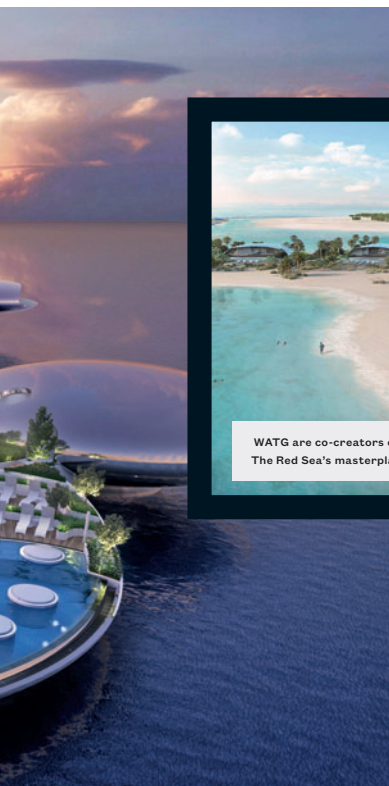
The company has committed to creating a destination with a net positive conservation impact, taking measures to not only keep the site as close to its natural state as possible, but also to enhance it.

Developed in partnership with WATG and Buro Happold, the masterplan focuses on the pristine natural environment, which is home to the world's fourth-largest barrier reef system, untouched corals and a significant number of endangered species. RSG's in-house scientists have recently concluded an 11-month-long Environmental Baseline Survey to assess the needs of the ecosystem ahead of and during development, as well as after opening.

Khowala sat down with *Spa Business* to give the lowdown on the project.

How does The Red Sea link to Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 strategy?

It's the largest of six giga projects that make up Vision 2030, the government's strategy to increase Saudi Arabia's tourist industry revenues from the current 3 per cent of GDP, to 10 per cent by 2030.



WATG are co-creators of
The Red Sea's masterplan

PHOTO: THE RED SEA DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

RSG's combined projects will contribute approximately SAR33bn (US\$8.7bn, €8.5bn, £7.2bn) to GDP, coupled with 120,000 new jobs.

I feel honoured to be able to support the transformation and the development of an industry that creates jobs, drives economic growth and showcases the richness of Saudi culture to the world.

What's the vision for the project?

The goal is to put people and the planet first, leveraging innovative technologies to deliver projects that enhance the wellbeing of customers, communities and environments. By doing so, it will open Saudi Arabia's doors to a new wave of tourism.

Guests will be able to experience the diverse landscape and rich history and culture of the region, exploring dormant volcanoes, diving with turtles, star gazing in one of the most stunning places on

THE RED SEA - SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

- ◆ Relying on 100 per cent renewable energy, using solar and wind
- ◆ Operating as a carbon-neutral destination
- ◆ Banning the use of single-use plastic
- ◆ Implementing dark sky lighting measures to reduce light pollution
- ◆ Pledging to send zero waste to landfill or the sea
- ◆ Mitigating noise pollution
- ◆ Creating a battery storage facility to allow the destination to remain off-grid during sandstorms
- ◆ Bringing in hydroponic greenhouses and vertical farming to help local farmers meet new demand
- ◆ Utilising low-carbon concrete made from recycled raw materials
- ◆ Promoting walkability
- ◆ Adopting a clean mobility strategy built around electric and hydrogen-powered vehicles, boats and aircraft
- ◆ Organising marine clean-ups with the local community
- ◆ Establishing a plant nursery that will grow 15 million plants for landscaping by 2030

Businesses that are responding to the need to be regenerative are gaining ground while others are being left behind

► earth or swimming in a turquoise lagoon. They'll come away with treasured memories of both the natural environment and the extraordinary hospitality.

Why is regenerative tourism a priority?

All too often tourism is disruptive – and sometimes damaging – for destinations. Globally tourism accounts for 10 per cent of CO2 emissions and this is expected to rise by 25 per cent by 2030. But it doesn't have to be this way.

Our project is centred on the belief that nature is the world's most important asset and we all have a part to play in protecting it. Regenerative tourism is the commitment to implementing policies that don't just avoid harming the environment, but actively enhance it.

This philosophy is expressed in one of our aims: delivering a net conservation benefit of 30 per cent to the surrounding area by 2040. To support this commitment we utilised marine spatial planning software to generate a picture of our lagoon. We then assessed the potential environmental impacts of our development and the opportunities to optimise conservation benefits, leading to the decision to leave 75 per cent of the islands untouched and designate nine as special conservation zones.

This year we also released our Environmental Baseline Report which collates detailed information about the surrounding ecosystem. It analyses the populations, behaviours and habitats of the wildlife across 200km of Red Sea coastline and will inform our development plans and conservation efforts.

We want to show that development, tourism and environmental destruction don't have to go hand in hand if done in the right way.

When will the first phase open?

The first hotels will welcome guests in early 2023 and the project will be fully operational by 2030.

We're constantly adapting and working on solutions to the challenges we face and given our ongoing commitment to improving the natural surroundings and economic vitality of the region, I can only see our work increasing as time goes on.

PHOTO: RED SEA DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

How important will wellness be to attract guests?

We're aiming to provide an all-encompassing experience, in which wellness will play an important part. Some activities will encourage guests to experience the natural environment and heritage at a personal level. These include a range of culinary, musical and artisanal activities, as well as hikes and guided eco-excursions on land and sea, such as hiking on dormant volcanoes and observing rare animals and plants in their natural habitat.

Some of the world's most iconic hotel brands are involved (see 'Project Partners' table) and many of these are well-known for their health and wellness offerings, such as Rosewood, Miraval, Raffles and Ritz-Carlton Reserve. Six Senses will be operating our Southern Dunes resort that will include a holistic anti-ageing centre, sensory suites, wet zones and outdoor treatment cabanas. ►

PROJECT PARTNERS

INTERNATIONAL HOTEL BRANDS

Edition Hotels

Faena

Fairmont

Grand Hyatt

InterContinental

Jumeirah

Miraval

Raffles

Ritz-Carlton Reserve

Rosewood

Six Senses

SLS Hotels &

Residences

St Regis

ARCHITECTURAL FIRMS

Foster + Partners

Killa Design

Kengo Kuma



Six Senses in the Southern Dunes resort will open in 2023



The aim is to deliver a net conservation benefit of 30 per cent

PHOTO: THE RGS DEVELOPMENT COMPANY



Grand Hyatt is one of a number of iconic brands RSG is partnering with

PHOTO: THE RGS DEVELOPMENT COMPANY



The first hotels will open in 2023 but the project won't be fully complete until 2030



PHOTO: APARTAMIND PARTNERS

RSG ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

September 2022/alphabetically

- ◆ Philippe Cousteau Jr, president, EarthEcho International
- ◆ Carlos Duarte, professor, Red Sea Research Centre
- ◆ Maryam Ali Ficociello, chief governance officer, RSG
- ◆ Sue Harmsworth, founder, Espa
- ◆ Frances-Anne Keeler, specialist in tourism destination marketing
- ◆ Aradhana Khowala, CEO, Aptamind Partners
- ◆ Piers Schmidt, founder, Luxury Branding
- ◆ Horst Schulze, co-founder of Ritz-Carlton, chair and CEO Capella
- ◆ Dr Mohamed Waheed Hassan, fifth president of the Maldives

► What kind of visitors do you expect to attract?

Our airport will be within eight hours' flying time of 80 per cent of the global population, so we hope we'll have a very diverse guestbook.

What does regenerative tourism mean to you?

My passion stems from the fact that I couldn't sit on the sidelines and ignore the widening gap between what we talk about and what's happening around us.

I founded my consultancy, Aptamind, with a mission to make sustainability, community empowerment and diversity and inclusion non-negotiable pillars for every business in the travel, tourism and hospitality sector.

We lobby about the importance of these values, both in terms of economic power and positive change in the societies and communities that travel touches.

Why is it important for business?

I genuinely believe the most successful companies of the future will be those that profit from fixing the world's problems, not from creating them.

Regenerative tourism isn't anti-growth; it simply asks that we grow the things that matter most in ways that benefit the entire system and not at the expense of others.

Public opinion is shifting so fast that those businesses sensing and responding to the emerging need to be regenerative are gaining ground while others are being left behind.

Increasingly guests are developing an appetite for connecting with the soul of a destination. The community-enhancing regeneration that underpins higher levels of care for everyone is a real differentiator. ●



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We create velvet products with a steel soul, able to evoke emotions. Myrtha modular panels become the steel soul of 'Made in Italy' wellness products, ranging from saunas to steam rooms, from Kneipp pools to salt walls, and from ice fountains to emotional showers.

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www.myrthawellness.com

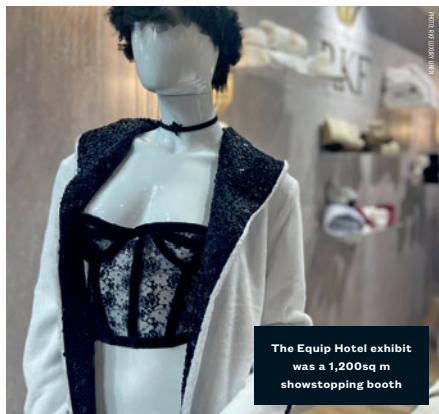
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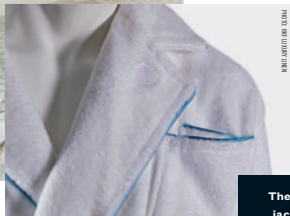
Following exciting new launches at Equip Hotel in Paris, including the new DresSoft line, RKF Luxury Linen is gearing up for an eco-friendly and fashion-conscious 2023

After a four-year hiatus due to the COVID lockdowns, the biennial hotel industry event Equip Hotel returned to Paris in November 2022 with a stylish and much-anticipated flourish. And nowhere was luxury, flamboyance and five-star quality more on show than at RKF Luxury Linen's showstopper 1,200sq m booth at the event.

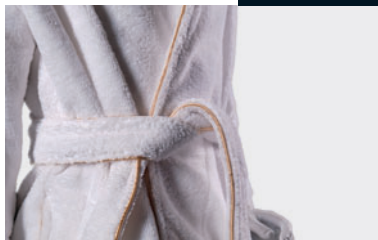
Housing a fully-equipped spa salon, three massage beds for delegates to sample, including a quartz bed treatment by a world champion masseur, a French Palace-style bedroom and bathroom suite complete with RKF's bespoke haute couture organic linens and robes, and even a three-star Michelin dining area, the RKF event stand was a show highlight that no visitor wanted to miss.



RKF makes bed linen in a wide range of luxury fabrics



The new DresSoft line of jackets and trousers is made from Dreamsoft fabric



In spite of the global downturn caused by the pandemic, RKF Luxury Linen has been forging exciting new partnerships and keeping extremely busy

PUTTING ON A SHOW

RKF founder and CEO Riadh Bouaziz says: "Everybody in the luxury hotel and wellness industries had been waiting for this show since 2018 after the enforced absence in 2020 due to the pandemic.

"So we really wanted to create an 'extra wow' experience and judging by the reaction from the designers, architects, CEOs, managers and wellness professionals who flocked to experience the stand every day and kept our team of 20 busy from morning to evening, the event was a huge success."

As an energetic, pioneering and very hands-on CEO, Bouaziz isn't a man who does things by halves - rather he likes to multiply standards by at least, he would no doubt affirm, 100-fold. The Equip Hotel booth represented his biggest investment so far (a sum he understandably does not wish to publicly disclose) in this type of industry event.

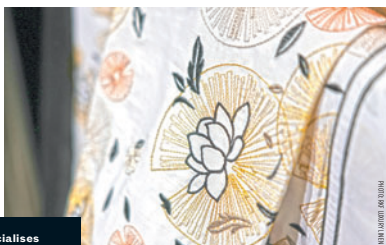
This huge investment made complete sense because, as Bouaziz says: "To really understand the RKF culture and universe it's best to come and experience the quality, feel the quality of our

award-winning fabrics, try on our designer spa and hotel bathrobes, lie on our luxury bed linen and see the depth of colour and quality of branding and monogramming we can bring to bespoke items."

In spite of the global turndown caused by the pandemic, Bouaziz and RKF Luxury Linen have continued to keep extremely busy, innovating, developing, signing new deals with major industry names and forging exciting new partnerships throughout this challenging period.

"The RKF brand is now directly present in 85 countries around the world, and indirectly via our partnerships with leading luxury brands such as Guerlain and Dior, that reach extends to 135 countries worldwide," said Bouaziz. "Added to this, we've equipped over 40,000 luxury properties worldwide with signature RKF linens."

Added to RKF's already impressive list of 15 patents and brands and 19 international awards, the French company this year received the 2022 H Pierantoni Innovation Prize for the Best Innovation in France related to the technologies behind its



► eco-friendly fabrics such as Timeless and Dreamsoft; and also won the Fashion, Lifestyle & Accessories category for its haute couture bathrobes in the international Global Architecture & Design Awards 2022.

While RKF has long been a leader in the development of technology-driven fabric, it has in more recent years put a much greater focus on creating garments for the spa and hospitality industries that feel much more attractive and fashionable to wear, while at the same time being comfortable, durable and easy to care for.

"The spa bathrobe is a prime example of something that has always been functional and utilitarian, but not at all comfortable or flattering for spa-goers to wear. It's very unforgiving for different body types and sizes. So the launch of our couture bathrobes has set a new standard for the industry," says Bouaziz.

RKF LAUNCHES DRESSOFT FOR WINTER

But RKF does not intend to stop at stylish bathrobes. At Equip Hotel, the company launched its latest evolution in spa garments in the form of a new range called DresSoft using its Dreamsoft fabric.

DresSoft loungewear includes comfortable trousers and tops, fitted t-shirts and a slimline, fitted coat.

"These eco-friendly garments can be comfortably worn both indoors and out and protect against the cold, making them ideal for cooler environments. Much better than draughty bathrobes!" says Bouaziz.

"The jacket is so stylish that it could even transition into evening or more formal wear paired with trousers or jeans. We offer a summer collection in a lighter fabric, or a winter collection using a double layer of Dreamsoft. There are items for women, men and children in the new range."



DresSoft loungewear can be worn both indoors and out and comes in a single thickness for warm climates and double for cooler climates

With 2023 just around the corner, it feels like RKF – whose original fabrics factory has been operating in France for 188 years – is really only just getting started on this 'new direction' of eco-friendly, haute couture spa and hospitality garments.

"We have so much more to come next year, with a new patent, new haute couture industry workwear and an even more extravagant presence at Paris fashion week," says Bouaziz.

"We continue to work with the biggest and most luxurious brands in the industry, including Jumeirah Burj Al Arab, Mandarin Oriental, Aman Resorts, St Regis, Fairmont and Raffles and look forward to unveiling our finished work on so many huge wellness projects in Saudi Arabia which will take shape over the next few years."

He concludes: "As a company we always like to think outside of the box, push boundaries and delight our partners and customers. Watch this space in 2023 for many more exciting innovations to come." ●

More: www.RKF.fr

swiss line
BY DERMALAB

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Everyone's talking about...

Cold water immersion

A new scientific paper warns of the significant risk of cold water therapies.

What does this mean for spa operators offering extreme bathing programmes?

The reported benefits of cold water immersion (CWI), championed by the likes of 'ice man' Wim Hof, and a growing hunger for all things health-focused are driving a demand for extreme wellness.

It's believed CWI can do everything from boosting the immune system and metabolism to improving cardiovascular health and sleep. Most recently, research also suggests that it has the potential to suppress tumours and reduce body fat (see p130).

From Marc Cohen's Extreme Wellness retreats in New Zealand to Schloss Elmau in Germany, operators are offering CWI programmes themselves or partnering with specialists to deliver them – whether they include jumping into freezing lakes or braving icy plunge pools.

Experts, however, are warning that CWI carries a great risk if not done responsibly. For warm-blooded mammals like humans, it can potentially lead to respiratory, cardiovascular and, possibly, peripheral neurovascular injury. 'Cold shock', the most dangerous response, is

caused by a rapid fall in skin temperature and includes gasping, hyperventilation, release of stress hormones, hypertension and arrhythmias.

A scientific paper, published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine** in September, outlines how to mitigate risks associated with CWI. These include taking a medical assessment before entering cold water, nominating a safety observer and entering the water slowly and gradually.

Michael Tipton, a professor of sport science at the University of Portsmouth, UK, co-led the study. He says: "This is a challenge that should not be undertaken casually; CWI is a major cause of accidental death internationally, but it is possible to reduce the risks to an extent."

He's hopeful the paper will act as a safety guide. But what specific advice does he and other experts have for spa and wellness operators? And what precautions are they already taking?

● Source: Tipton M, Massey H, Mayhew A, et al. *Cold water therapies: minimising risks. British Journal of Sports Medicine*. September 2022

Mike Tipton professor of human and applied physiology, University of Portsmouth, UK

There are many anecdotal accounts of the physical and mental health benefits of cold water immersion (CWI) activities. In contrast, the scientific jury is still out with regard to the benefits and the underpinning mechanism; too few properly controlled studies have been completed and the findings are mixed.

One thing we are sure about is the potential risk associated with sudden immersion in cold water; in particular drowning and heart problems caused by the 'cold shock' response (CSR), evoked by rapid skin cooling on initial CWI. The uncontrollable breathing and sudden demand placed on the heart by the CSR account for about 60 per cent of the annual immersion deaths in the UK, so, it's wise for spas to take some precautions before guests embark on CWI programmes.

They need to ensure participants have a medical check-up from their doctor to ensure they're fit and healthy enough to expose themselves to the significant stress of CWI. Doctors should check if they have any relevant cardio-respiratory, peripheral vascular, neural or immune disorders that will be negatively affected by CWI, or are on any medications such as pro-arrhythmic drugs such as anti-histamines that could increase the likelihood of a problem occurring.

If given the all-clear, people should only undertake CWI in safe places when supervised by a group with experience. It's important they enter the water slowly, stay in their depth, only stay in for a few minutes (don't just rely on how they feel). They should also avoid face immersion with breath holding.

In open water, swim parallel to the shore, wear luminous

People should only undertake CWI in safe places when supervised by a group with experience



clothing and use a swim float and wetsuit if needed – and rewarm before driving.

These precautions should help minimise the risks and maximise any benefit of CWI.

Stephanie Lehnert co-director, Carlton Hotel St Moritz, Switzerland

Ice bathing takes place in St Moritz lake directly in front of our property and is part of our signature Moving Mountains programme designed to restore vitality, reconnect with nature and celebrate joy.

We were one of the first hotels to offer ice bathing in St Moritz last winter and word spread very quickly in the village and among guests from other hotels, so we offered it a lot. The hour-long programme is free to hotel guests if it's included in their stay or costs CHF150 (US\$151, €155, £134) externally.

Moving Mountains is offered across the Tschuggen Collection's four properties



in Switzerland, but ours is the only one to offer CWI. We attended a special Wim Hof Method course for execution and guidance and take many precautions to avoid risks such as hypothermia and cold shock.

When registering, participants are asked about health problems – CWI isn't

We were one of the first hotels to offer ice bathing in St Moritz last winter

suitable for people with cardiovascular disease and non-swimmers and should be avoided by people who have a cold or a weakened immune system – and fill out a waiver. We make sure they know what to expect and advise them to practise with alternating showers beforehand.

Our custom-made pool is cut into the ice so participants can easily get in and out of the water and descend into the deepest part at their own pace. Breathing meditation is performed

five minutes before entering the ice hole and guests can take one or more dips.

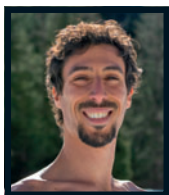
All of this is overseen by a trained member of staff, such as myself or our fitness instructor and at least two accompanying people from the spa team. While one of them is leading the programme, the others are supervising those in and outside of the water – offering towels, blankets, hot tea, muesli bars, bananas, warm shoes, gloves and hats. A vehicle is available for the return transport.

Leo Pelagotti founder, Inspire Potential

Since the pandemic, my retreats and workshops, based on breathing techniques and CWI, have gained attention across Europe. Over the last seven years, I've guided about 7,000 people who are looking to improve immunity, stress management and learn to deal with the cold.

Personally, I do it to test my willpower, for mental focus, to strengthen my immune system and to give me an energy boost.

My courses take place mainly in nature (lakes, rivers, sea, waterfalls) in Italy and France, but sometimes in big cities (Milan, Florence and Paris) where I partner with hotels and spas with cold plunge pools, showers and warmer whirlpools and saunas.



The main risk comes from over-doing CWI when starting and not having proper knowledge about the timings - one minute in the water may be enough initially and building slowly up to staying in for two to three minutes for maximum benefit and safety.

It's especially risky for people with cardiac conditions or pregnant women and if not

It's especially risky for people with cardiac conditions or pregnant women. Hypothermia and frostbite are also a concern

done properly, hypothermia and frostbite are also a concern.

Until people know what they're doing, it's best to be guided by professionals who have learned by mistakes and through years of practice. I'm a yoga teacher, Animal Flow coach, Oxygen Advantage master instructor and also a Wim Hof Method instructor.

I've developed my own cold water programmes based on the Wim Hof Method as it places importance on safety, the theory and science of cold water exposure and human physiology.

The Wim Hof Method has a three-step protocol which involves learning how to do cold showers, ice baths and any other kind of CWI. The steps include preparation and concentration; relaxing once in the water; and then gaining back core body temperature once out. The participants on my course learn how to do this and then reproduce it correctly.

I've also developed specific movements and breathing exercises for warming up and avoiding extra cooling down when in the cold.

Pelagotti runs cold therapy programmes in Italy and France



PHOTOS: INSPIRE POTENTIAL



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PHOTO: DORIAN PRINCE

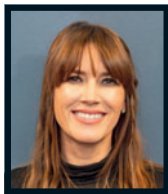
Hayley Dorian cold water therapy specialist; founder, XHayle

Safety is paramount when dealing with cold water exposure and was my top priority when I developed a series of workshops for Serenity Spa at Seaham Hall in the UK.

Risk mitigation starts pre-arrival with thorough checks and detailed preparation guidelines.

The 6.5-hour programme, which costs £155 (US\$173, €178), focuses on the importance of breathwork and the power of the mind, as well as CWI. We look at the science behind them and practice specific techniques – such as exhaling for longer and how to reduce the perception of pain – that will help keep the mind and body relaxed when going into the cold, enabling participants to overcome the natural fight or flight response.

It's important to enter the water slowly and to



build up exposure time gradually. Participants are invited to stay in for up to two minutes, though this is completely optional.

Although the spa offers a comforting environment, some participants can take a little longer to warm up afterwards and there's risk of an 'after drop' which can cause the body to shiver and feel cold to the core. This is prevented by sticking to the recommended exposure times and by warming the body up using slow, gentle

For the majority, it's a fantastic way to improve mental and physical health

movements in a way which generates heat from the thigh muscles. CV exercise which puts a strain on the heart is avoided.

As a cold water exposure coach, I carefully observe the participants and look for any signs of panic or adverse reactions. I hold an up-to-date first aid certificate and continually keep my

knowledge current with the latest science relating to CWI.

If CWI is done under proper instruction, health risks can be minimised.

For the majority, this type of workshop is a fantastic way to improve mental and physical health and leave feeling empowered, happy and fulfilled. ●



PHOTO: DORIAN PRINCE

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*Innovation is
at the heart of
what we do*
Rainer Bolsinger

A COLD REVOLUTION



The new package
combines three Art
of Cryo systems

CHAS J. DE WILDE

Art of Cryo is set to revolutionise the cryotherapy experience
with its new biohacking solution – the Tec-Spa Module

Art of Cryo offers more than cold therapy, creating opportunities for operators to meaningfully deliver against clients' aspirations.

Two years ago, the company shook up the market with bespoke AI-powered treatments informed by each customer's physical goals. Since then, it's been experimenting with complementary therapies and data-driven tech to take cryotherapy to the next level.

"Innovation is at the heart of what we do," says Rainer Bolsinger, chief sales and marketing officer. "The inspiration behind this philosophy is the desire to offer even more results from cryotherapy."

Now, Art of Cryo is ready to unveil the next generation of cryotherapy in Q1 2023; the Art of Cryo Tec-Spa Module.

Introducing Tec-Spa

The new offering is designed to provide one of the most powerful biohacking solutions on the market by bringing together three Art of Cryo appliances and three health-tracking devices to create one complete journey.

Art of Cryo's signature electric Vaultz cryo chambers will form the core component of the offering, with the Multi Cryo-Hacking System (MCS) being the second element.

The MCS cabin offers three types of light therapy (blue, green and red), ionised oxygen therapy, aromatherapy and long-wave heat therapy.

The Tec-Spa trio will be completed by the Art of Cryo Flow System, which provides intermittent vacuum therapy to stimulate lymphatic drainage, encourage recovery and deliver performance enhancement.

Tangible health outcomes

Although Art of Cryo knows the benefits of these therapies speak for themselves, it appreciates the new wave in consumer demand for tracking health data. In order to measure guests' physiological changes and progress, the company will complement the journey with a pre- and post-treatment 3D body scan, a breath analysis ritual and a wearable smart ring, called MCRC Vital X.

Guests and clinicians will be able to access results via a mobile app, where it'll be possible to upload and compare data, as well as book appointments, send gifts and participate in exclusive events.

Exceeding expectations

With a vision for the future and an understanding of the market and what matters in life, Art of Cryo offers concepts that improve people's lifestyles and quality of life through science, technology and biohacking.

Powered by this philosophy, the Tec-Spa Module has been designed to help humans operate at the next level by improving sleep, nutrition and activity, resulting in better overall health, increased energy, less stress and a better chance of living a long life. ●

More: www.artofcryo.com

The Tec-Spa
Module takes in
data from health-
tracking devices

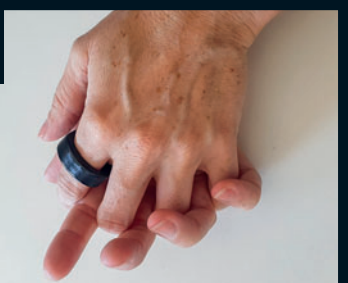


PHOTO: ART OF CRYO



Inner strength



We must look after ourselves before we can look after others was the underlying message at this year's Healing Summit in Portugal. Lisa Starr reports

It's been a challenging couple of years for spas, but the future is finally looking brighter. Consumers have never been more interested in wellness, although staffing in the sector is still a struggle. As we continue on the path forward, it's an ideal time to embrace 'the healing of everything' which was the theme for this year's Healing Summit.

Now in its seventh year, the summit is definitely unique among wellness industry conferences. It's intended to provoke thought and a collective consciousness regarding the future. "The three main influences on climate change are tourism/hospitality, fashion and food - and we have to find ways for hospitality to become a change maker, I truly believe this," says event co-founder Anne Biging. "As I evolve the Healing Summit, this will stay front of mind."

"There are lots of industry events that give people chances to do business and there is a place for these. Our aim, however, is to bring people together from different cultures to learn from and support each other and to grow. By understanding and empowering ourselves first makes us more able to manifest change in other ways."

Over two days there are impactful speakers, panels and networking opportunities, yet no power points or handouts. Rather, sessions are mixed with meditation, breathwork and sensory guides and we're encouraged to sit with an open mind and really listen.

SPEAKER HIGHLIGHTS

The Pine Cliffs Resort in Albufeira, Portugal, a serene destination overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, provided a fitting backdrop for the 100 spa, wellness, hospitality and travel professionals who gathered in search of inspiration as well as purposeful direction. Mornings began with movement or breathwork sessions, a dip in the bracing sea and a healthy breakfast, before gathering in a sunny conference room above the tree-studded lawns.



Event co-founder Anne Biging (left) with Gina Diez Barroso (right)



*We're drowning
in knowledge but
starved of wisdom*

Karin Bleecker, psychologist



Rancho La Puerta's
Brightwood led the
closing ceremony



Delegates enjoyed
each other's company
at a gala dinner

At a glance: Top takeaways

- Amelia Kang, founder of Ame de Lumière Holistic Consultancy in Singapore, led an engaging discussion on quantum mechanics via Zoom. "Many drops of water can penetrate a rock," she analogised, advising us to ask for help from those around us as it makes us all stronger
- The amazing and generous Molly Melching, founder of the NGO Tostan, who's lived and worked in Senegal for 48 years said: "In local culture, you do a good deed not to get it back, but to do something for someone else; people are people's medicine"
- Jaya Kader Founder & Principal of KZ Architecture, explained permaculture as "the growth of agricultural ecosystems in a sustainable way," and recommends blending indigenous wisdom with modern technology
- "We're drowning in knowledge but starved of wisdom," said Karin Bleecker, psychologist and clinical director of wellness retreat New Life Portugal. Bleecker shared some excellent suggestions for cultivating wisdom within ourselves, such as being aware of our urge to feel comfortable, rather than embracing the unknown. Others included modelling intellectual humility, asking good questions and normalising uncertainty so you don't fear that feeling
- "Transformation drives change that doesn't change back," and "The stone age did not end because we ran out of stones!" These gems came from Janet Rogan, COP26 regional ambassador for the Middle East and Africa

Paul Polman, former Unilever CEO, discussed the need for healing now, framed by his latest book *Net Positive*. Since leaving the corporate world, he's been heavily involved with the UN and WTTTC to help advance SDGs globally. We need to understand reasons behind the 'great resignation' he said – people still want to work, just with more clarity of purpose. With a higher sense of awareness, we can bring more humanity to the business world, resulting in positive change. Polman also noted that through the pandemic, the most resilient companies were those with a diversified business model.

Mexican entrepreneur and educational activist Gina Diez Barroso urged us to think beyond stereotypes and work on our empathy and collaborative skills. In a panel discussion, she cited a McKinsey study which highlights the gaps in workforce skills in a post-COVID world. So-called soft skills such as empathy, leadership and adaptability have grown greatly in importance since 2019.

You can't underestimate the passion of Barroso, who says she found her "why" – to improve educational opportunities for women – at age 42. She started CENTRO, a university for creativity in Mexico City, in 2014, when everyone told her

Dips in the bracing sea prepare delegates for the day ahead



“
Ayurvedic practices support the healing of the mind
Mahesh Natarajan,
Ananda in the Himalayas

► it couldn't be done. The entire campus is LEED platinum certified and currently enrolls 3,000 students. Her other company Dalia Empower also champions female empowerment globally.

The founder and owner of Euphoria Resort in Greece, Marina Efrainoglou, discussed an issue facing many in attendance – how to bridge the duality between being a healer and an entrepreneur. She recommended that we can reach balance by holding on to our intention for our projects and having the courage to ask for help when we need it.

Diving even deeper into mental wellness, Mahesh Natarajan, COO of Ananda in the Himalayas, explained how ayurvedic practices such as meditation and mindfulness support the healing of the mind, and the importance of the inner journey. Natarajan shared the Sanskrit term *kosha*, meaning layers, which represents how knowledge resides in the interlocked sheaths of our personalities. By observing these ancient practices we can become adept at controlling

our minds and reach the highest state of unending bliss, a space of wisdom and clarity.

WORKING ON YOURSELF

"It's obvious that our world needs healing," concludes Elisabeth Ixmeier, who heads up the event alongside Biging. "We showcased the areas where change must occur, from economics to sustainability. We started this summit with the understanding that true change can only occur when we change ourselves and ended with the insight that when we heal ourselves, we can change everything."

Attending this event feels less like working on your business and more like working on yourself. Because the delegation was smaller, we were able to really connect with each other. Led on a lawn overlooking the ocean, a closing ceremony by Sarah Livia Brightwood and Alex Von Bidder from Rancho La Puerta, was uplifting and left us filled with hope for a future where we can balance giving and receiving in our businesses, and in ourselves. ●



Biging (left) with the event's inspirational speakers



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EFFECTIVE BY NATURE

Comfort Zone has revealed three new products, including a new neck and décolleté fluid, leveraging the power of botanical bioactive extracts



The skin on the neck is particularly delicate, revealing the effects of ageing more than other areas of the body and if it's been subjected to things such as excessive sun exposure, this can exacerbate the problem. The effects of ageing are visible from around 40, due to reductions in the skin's natural oils, along with changes in hormone levels which cause it to become drier and thinner, leading to loss of tone.

To prevent further structural damage and enable the skin to repair, it's important to select targeted solutions, just as we do for our face, explains Barbara Gavazzoli, education and communication director at Comfort Zone, who says: "To counteract loss of density and tone, our laboratories have developed a new concentrated formula – the New Sublime Skin Neck & Décolleté Fluid.

"The new product has been formulated to make skin visibly firmer and smoother for an immediate and long-lasting reduction of wrinkles and folds," she says.

MORE ADDITIONS TO THE LINE

"To complete the Sublime Skin range, we've also designed a new redensifying Rich Cream," says Gavazzoli. "A nourishing biomimetic texture contrasts extreme dryness in mature, thinning or fragile skin, replumping the delicate Y Zone – the jawline, neck and chest areas – for a brighter, more even complexion.

The line was inspired by the Scientific Garden at the Comfort Zone Village in Parma, Italy, with the Neck & Décolleté Fluid developed after the company's R&D lab team investigated how Achillea Millefolium could be used to increase collagen production to lift the skin.

Comfort Zone sources this powerful botanical bioactive ingredient – which has been proven to boost collagen production by up to 35 per cent – using regenerative organic agricultural practices. The serum's biomimetic texture, enriched with precious Abyssinian oil and jojoba seeds, has an immediate and long-lasting effect and has been clinically tested to make skin visibly firmer and smoother, reducing wrinkles up to 25 per cent.



Neck and décolleté skin require specific, targeted formulas to achieve visible results

Barbara Gavazzoli

MORE INNOVATION

In addition, the newly-enhanced Comfort Zone Eye Patch gives immediate relief and freshness to the eye area, visibly reducing puffiness and signs of fatigue.

Consistent with the brand's sustainable ecodesign, packaging and production are carbon neutral and feature recyclable and refillable solutions made with bio-based and recycled materials. Furthermore, all its formulas are vegan, rich in high percentages of natural-origin ingredients and free from animal derivatives, silicones, parabens, mineral oil and artificial colourants. ●

More: www.comfortzoneskin.com
[@comfortzoneskin_official](https://www.instagram.com/comfortzoneskin_official)



Tangible results for optimal living

Camiral Golf & Wellness delivers integrative programmes as part of a 360-degree wellness model that treads new ground for the industry. Neena Dhillon pays a visit

The Camiral Golf & Wellness resort in north-east Spain is famous for its link to the Professional Golfers' Association (PGA). It has one of the world's top PGA golf courses and has hosted the PGA European

Tour numerous times since opening in 1999.

Once known as PGA Catalunya, it rebranded to Camiral in late 2022 to reflect its location on the ancient Cami Ral hiking route between Spain and France.

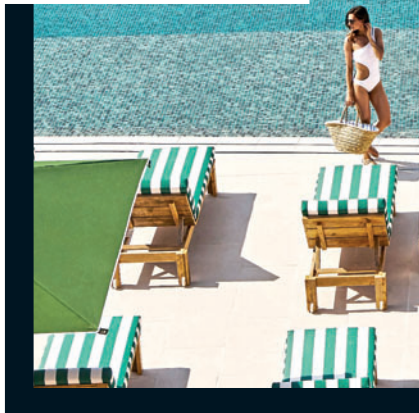
Resort owner, Irish entrepreneur Denis O'Brien, who also owns the Quinta Do Lago golf resort in Portugal, has spent the last two decades developing it as a year-round destination.

The most recent investment is a €5m (US\$5.3m, £4.3m), 1,000sq m Wellness Centre, adding to the resort's existing restaurants and leisure facilities, hotels and holiday rentals and high-end residences.

Ramping up the spa offering

Although the resort featured a small spa and gym previously, CEO David Plana admits it needed more. "Golf is not enough," he explains. "You need family activities, outdoor pursuits, sports, gastronomy and, of course, wellness. People expect this and we're looking for the new Wellness Centre to attract people for longer stays and also to appeal to guests with different budgets and demographic profiles."

Despite a year of on-off COVID restrictions, the summers of 2021 and 2022 highlighted a regional appetite for travel, with hotel occupancy more than 75 per cent in July and August, while golf and hotel revenues returned to 2019 levels. Plana wants to retain this increasing regional and domestic clientele, and adding more wellness is part of achieving that mission.



MARKING PHOTOGRAPHY



We're looking for the new Wellness Centre to attract people for longer stays

David Plana, CEO



Relaxation, a massage and a robe are simply not enough these days

Greg Payne, consultant to Camiral Golf & Wellness



Guests at Camiral can enjoy a '360-degree' wellness programme



Camiral encourages guests to invest in their wellbeing with precision and efficiency

'Accessible' and 'recovery' may not be buzzy marketing terms, but they sit neatly at the heart of the Wellness Centre's concept. A 60-minute holistic massage at Camiral costs €120 (US\$116, £107). Meanwhile, its programme-based approach that lies between clinics like Chenot, Lanserhof and SHA Wellness, and operators such as Aman or Mandarin Oriental, encourages guests to invest in their wellbeing with precision and efficiency.

A new business model

Industry figure and consultant Greg Payne, who worked with the resort's team to conceive the offering, explains more: "The bigger-is-better spa model hasn't worked for the hospitality industry

since the 2008 financial crash, with return on investment in 2,000sq m-plus facilities failing to add up. There's been a vacuum since, as we've waited for the next model to be developed.

"Relaxation, a massage and a robe are simply not enough these days, with consumers wanting more tangible results. In short, luxury alone is no longer the story.

"At Camiral, we've created day-long and short-stay programmes that are designed to support clients looking for symptomatic relief. They combine elements you'd find at world-leading wellness clinics, but also offer incredible value for the operator when you remember they're being delivered in a 1,000sq m space. ▶



Relaxation, movement and nutrition are expertly blended together



The concept represents a 360-degree offering to anyone seeking to restore equilibrium, resolve a problem, or take preventative action

Núria Camins, wellness manager

- “Considering that spa facilities and thermal areas in particular have an average build cost of €3,000 (US\$3,200, £2,600) per sq m, this translates into real financial impact on the potential for profit.”

The Wellness Programmes, which start at €385 (US\$411, £327) per person, per day, combine movement, relaxation, holistic touch therapies, nutritional expertise and high-tech treatments – some very new to Spain – with a recovery focus. “Back in 2018, I visited a football club and saw how state-of-the-art technologies such as cryotherapy and oxygen chambers were being used to get athletes back on their feet,” says Payne. “I thought about the golf/sports setting at Camiral and how there could be a continuum from spa right through to athletic performance for anybody interested in optimal living.”

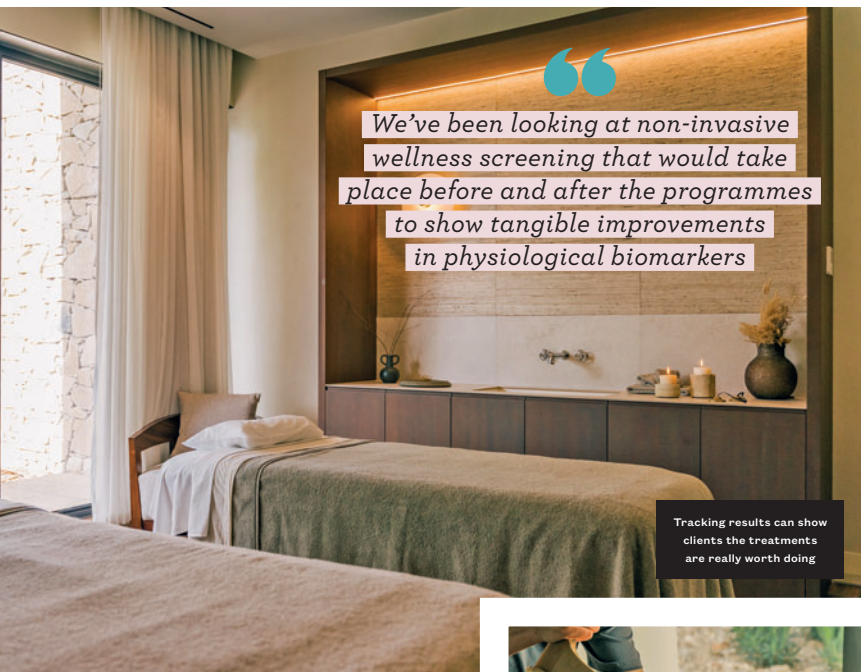
Wellness manager Núria Camins, a 15-year spa veteran, says the new concept represents a 360-degree offering to anyone seeking to restore equilibrium, resolve a particular problem, or take preventative action. This holistic approach benefits from the integration of high-tech therapies because “they are able to access a level of the body – the deeper cellular levels – which hands cannot.”

The important distinction, however, is that the tech works as a complementary and amplifying component to touch, nutrition and movement.

The programmes

The varied menu comprises individual spa treatments and rituals alongside celebration experiences, for example, the one-day Spa-Cation is €300 per person (US\$321, £255) or a two-day Bridal Countdown at €450 (US\$481, £383), to appeal to the Wellness Centre’s target audience. This ranges from residents who have homes or rentals at the resort, and local visitors – be they from Girona, Barcelona or the wider Catalonia region – to European guests, including from France and other source markets, such as Germany, the Nordic countries, Switzerland and the UK.

While the menu will continue to evolve, there are currently three wellness programmes: Immunity Support, Weight Loss and Detox and Ageing Well. The two-day Ageing Well programme, priced at €755, (US\$807, £642) includes a signature hammam experience, a 60-minute massage, an IV vitamin infusion, four additional high-tech therapy sessions, light lunches and wellness refreshments.



“We’ve been looking at non-invasive wellness screening that would take place before and after the programmes to show tangible improvements in physiological biomarkers

Tracking results can show clients the treatments are really worth doing

“We personalise elements to suit our client’s needs, but each programme addresses specific concerns that are relevant today,” says Camins. “COVID-19 has shown the importance of a healthy immune system, so our Immunity Support programme works to improve its functionality through Kneipp and hammam treatments combined with infusions, photobiomodulation and oxygenation therapy.

“With our Weight Loss option, we believe that the body benefits from a seasonal reset and detox, so here we work on optimising a client’s metabolism, stimulating their circulation and sharing nutritional advice that moves them towards clean eating, rather than calorie counting. Finally, our Ageing Programme is really about the client’s quality of ageing rather than being ‘anti-ageing’ in its focus.”

Getting assessed

Experts assess guests, looking for things such as issues with sleep, feelings of tiredness, burnout or sadness and dehydrated skin and then recommend the most appropriate high-tech treatments.

If they don’t want to commit to a programme, however, guests can also take a single therapy



The Wellness Centre offers a mix of high-tech and high-touch therapies

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About Camiral Golf & Wellness

Less than an hour from Barcelona, 20 minutes from the Costa Brava and 15 minutes from Girona, Camiral Golf & Wellness is based around real estate development.

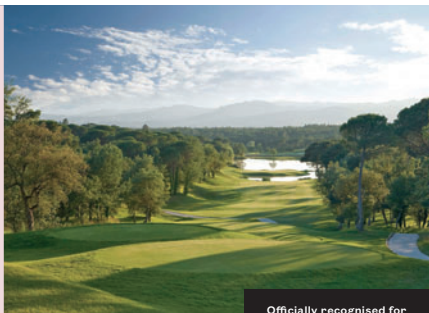
It incorporates two championship golf courses, two hotels – the five-star Hotel Camiral, designed by architect Lázaro Rosa-Violán and the contemporary Lavida Hotel – as well as a Kids' Club facilities and five restaurants.

Camiral Golf & Wellness offers outdoor activities designed to enable guests to enjoy the surrounding countryside, including Forest Park – a family adventure park with a zip-wire, cycling, trekking and horse-riding on trails through nearby forests and mountains.

Villa plots are for sale, enabling owners to develop their own property in keeping with the resort's architectural concepts, while the resort offers move-in-ready, architect-designed villas.

The Residents' Club offers owners and guests access to facilities including a 20m outdoor pool, solarium, children's pool, Technogym-equipped gym and the new spa and wellness offering.

www.camiral.com



ALVARO PALAZUELA

Officially recognised for its sustainability, the landscape of the resort is akin to a nature reserve





The wellness offering takes an integrative approach that sits between clinics such as Lanserhof and SHA and operators such as Mandarin Oriental

► session to deal with a particular complaint, such as problems with the sciatic nerve.

Indeed, the choice of technologies is designed to aid sports and workout recovery for sports enthusiasts, semi-professionals and professionals alike. Recent visitors have included English and Polish football players who were particularly enthusiastic about their experience of whole-body cryotherapy – this is proving to be one of the most popular high-tech therapies and is priced at €60 (US\$64, £51) per session.

During a cryotherapy session, clients step into a Mecotec chamber, initially set at a temperature of -60°C for 30 seconds followed by two-and-a-half minutes at -110°C. “As a client stands in the extreme cold, blood in the body rushes to protect vital organs. As soon as they step out, it floods back into the system, boosting circulation, moderating adrenal stress and releasing endorphins,” says Camins.

Popularised by personalities from Lewis Hamilton to Cristiano Ronaldo, the therapy is designed to reduce inflammation and muscular pain.

Equally intriguing but less extreme, photobiomodulation light therapy also priced at €60 entails clients lying down for 20 to 30 minutes inside a MitoGen pod, during which time a red laser light powers cellular regeneration by stimulating ATP energy production. The third tech option is oxygen chamber therapy, while the fourth involves IV infusions provided by London’s NADclinic.

NADclinic collaboration

The Camiral team worked with Dr Saskia Kloppenburg of NADclinic to produce three specific infusions containing different combinations of vitamins, minerals, amino acids and electrolytes: the first is formulated for sports recovery, the second to boost the immune system and the final for essential

Whole-body cryotherapy is a popular treatment



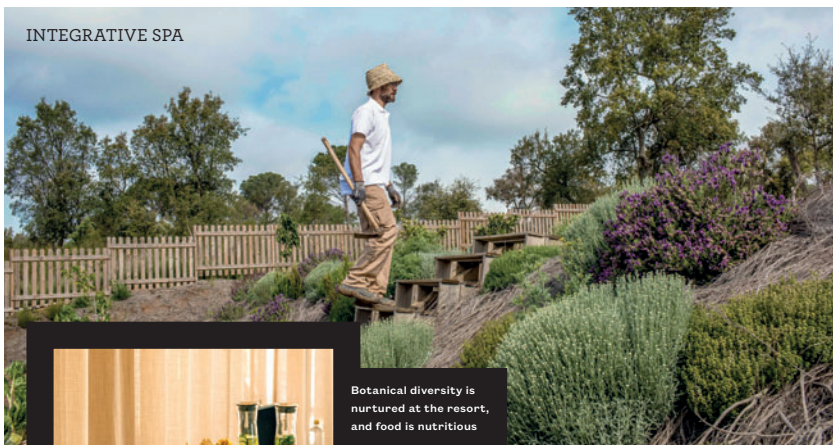
PHOTO: POLA GOLUBOVA

immunity. They’re delivered on-site by a registered nurse in the privacy of a treatment room.

Camins acknowledges that IV infusions are proving the most challenging to introduce: “International guests, from the US, are the most likely to be familiar with them, so we’ve had to think carefully about how to introduce them to our European guests. We’re still testing this but, as with all the technologies, it helps when our therapists explain how they work in person during an introduction to the spa, and how they can specifically support a guest’s particular needs.”

This challenge of ‘the unknown’ is also picked up by Payne, who says: “A few years ago, cryotherapy would have been regarded as too extreme to be included in a spa environment, but now it’s going mainstream. And with the IV infusions, we’ve had to tread carefully to consider the correct level of staffing and medical oversight to deliver them with a sense of security and assurance.”

So are there any promising early signs about tech uptake? “When we opened in spring [2021], we made the decision to focus on spa over the summer, returning to wellness in the winter to prepare for 2022,” says Payne. “Despite not pushing wellness, we were encouraged to see that the high-end leisure market already had an appetite for tech-led treatments, which made up 26 per cent of the treatment mix in the summer months. But the most interesting fact was that they were additional treatments, contributing to an average of 1.8 treatments per guest over a three-day stay, ►



Botanical diversity is nurtured at the resort, and food is nutritious



ALL IMAGES: SPA GALLERY



We believe in using integrative nutrition to help our clients achieve all-round health; not just to lose weight

Mireia Cervera, nutritionist



We're preserving green infrastructure, nurturing botanical diversity and reintroducing near-extinct species

Oriol Dalmau, biologist

► meaning they represented incremental income and not just a shift in the therapies sold."

As to be expected of a facility that aims to become one of the leading European wellness centres, Camiral's spa partners are highly regarded and include Aromatherapy Associates and Biologique Recherche. Clients booking individual rituals, treatments and facials have access to the thermal pavilion in which to recover and relax by experiencing the hot and cold pools, sauna and steam.

Food and environment

Nutritionist Mireia Cervera has worked with the destination's executive chef David Vives to create menus for each wellness programme. "We use integrative nutrition to help our clients achieve all-round health; not just to lose weight," she says. "In a world that can make it challenging to maintain control over your diet, we guide clients by showing them how a natural, nutritious diet can help prevent disease and improve symptoms."

Cervera is available to personalise diets, but there is a sample seasonal menu created in advance for

each programme. For example, a typical Immunity Support meal includes a salad of cabbage, celery, apple, pomegranate and raisins, followed by tofu, mushroom and pumpkin lasagne, and fruit salad with a soup of green tea, fennel and celery to finish.

Enclosed in 540 hectares of tranquil green landscape and a recipient of the IAGTO Sustainability Award for Nature Protection, Camiral's environment is akin to a nature reserve. In-house biologist, Oriol Dalmau, is responsible for "preserving green infrastructure, nurturing botanical diversity and reintroducing near-extinct species to the terrain". With its own organic garden, vineyard and beehives, the destination's secure and spacious green setting is well suited to the addition of the Wellness Centre, which was built from scratch. ●



The most impactful therapeutic sequencing was when tech was followed by hands-on treatment and then rest

Neena Dhillon tried out the Immunity

Support programme at Camiral Golf & Wellness

First Person

Personal reboot

I'd been feeling fatigued, with dull aches in my back – a sure sign of inflammation, which is a classic symptom of a long-term lung condition I suffer from, so the Immunity Support programme seemed the right option.

I was most nervous about the cryotherapy, but as I was in the hands of the caring therapist, I felt reassured as she talked me step-by-step through the process. I loved that I could choose my own music and was able to see my therapist through the glass; she gave me countdowns, so even though time seemed to slow, I never felt unable to endure the chill.

While in the chamber, numbness became apparent, as did intense aching in my knees.



IV infusion was a first for Dhillon



Chilling in the cryo chamber

PHOTO: NEENA Dhillon

Stepping out into a warm dressing gown, however, felt incredible and for the first time, every nerve ending in my body felt intensely alive.

After a 15-minute break with tea, in which a lovely feeling of hyper-awareness remained, I moved on with the same therapist to a hammam scrub and cleanse, during which hot, warm and cold water was used. The intuitive touch of the therapist felt even more welcome following the cryotherapy and the use of alternating hot-cold was very effective.

Other firsts

In other firsts, I tried photobiomodulation, a warming and enveloping experience, as well as an IV infusion, which passed pleasantly enough thanks to the regular observation of the staff. Fortunately, I don't think mind needles. Perhaps those who do will need more persuasion to sign up in a wellness/spa setting.

Over the course of two days, I felt the most impactful therapeutic sequencing when tech was followed by hands-on treatment and then rest in the Thermal Pavilion. I can safely say I'm a convert to these high-tech therapies, but the winning aspect of the experience remained the combination of tech and touch.

The therapists at Camiral are a real asset; a sign of any good holistic massage is when you feel your therapist has understood your very particular and idiosyncratic vulnerabilities through her touch.

In this case, her observations about my pain and tenderness were spot on, and her recommendations of how to optimise the rest of my time in the centre were welcome. My overall sense of wellbeing was notably lifted, my back pain-free and my energy revived.

More than a month on, I still felt the benefits of my short stay. It would undoubtedly elevate the programmes further to have some form of physiological testing to fully validate the experience. ●

SKIN *restructuring*

Skincare experts at Biologique Recherche have created **Sérum Collagène Originel**, a product containing Collagen Type 0, a patented pure collagen formulation

The R&D team at Biologique Recherche, led by Laure Bouscharain, has located the purest collagen in the world in marine jellyfish.

This organism, which hasn't evolved in more than 600 million years, is so ancient it contains the mother of all collagen – the historical strain and origin of all collagen types, being the original protein in its raw state.

Working with an exclusive partner specialising in marine biotechnology for the medical sector, Bouscharain and her team extracted the substance and called it Type 0 Collagen.

From this the company has developed a new skincare product, Sérum Collagène Originel, adding silene extract to stimulate increases in type IV collagen production, soybean glycopeptides to act



PHOTO: BILOGIQUE RECHERCHE

Laure Bouscharain



The serum re-densifies skin in all three dimensions, making it tighter, smoother and plumper



Sérum Collagène Originel
from Biologique Recherche

on type I collagen and primitive green marine microalgae to increase levels of type III collagen in the skin.

"We developed Sérum Collagène Originel to specifically target the main types of collagen in the skin," says Bouscharain. "Each of its active ingredients has a specific effect on a target tissue, enabling the serum to re-densify skin in all three dimensions, making it tighter, smoother and plumper, while the length of established wrinkles is significantly reduced."

How does it work?

The new serum is rich in proteins and essential nutrients, helping restructure the skin by stimulating the production of collagen and elastin at both gene and protein levels. This regenerates the skin, improving connections between its



**Sérum Collagène
Original reduces
the length of
established wrinkles**

inner and outer layers that can weaken with age, so the skin regains firmness, skin tone, density and tightness and the appearance and length of wrinkles are reduced.

The collagens in Sérum Collagène Original also restore the wavelike structure at the junction of the skin's layers, which is a characteristic of younger skin, counteracting the effects of chronological and biological aging.

In the spa

For spa and wellness operators, the Biologique Recherche Skin Instant Lab gives a skin diagnosis, allowing treatments to be devised that precisely match client needs.

The company's VisioLab gives even more finely-tuned results, thanks to high definition imaging and scientific analysis of the face. Experts provide a personalised facial according to the diagnosis. Sérum Collagène Original is recommended for people who are found to have 'established wrinkles'.

Biologique Recherche was founded 45 years ago by a family of passionate skincare experts and has a unique methodology focused on hyperpersonalisation and results-driven treatment procedures and products that guarantee results. ●
More: www.biologique-recherche.com

ABOUT COLLAGEN - FAST FACTS

- Collagen is a member of a family of proteins whose main function is to support the structural integrity of connective tissues such as skin, bones, cartilage and tendons
- There are 28 types of collagen in humans, with diverse structures and biological functions. They provide strength and rigidity to tissue
- Collagens also play various essential roles in cell communication
- Skin mainly contains collagen types I and III, along with a small percentage of type IV collagen
- Collagens represent about 30 per cent of the total protein mass of the human body, including more than 70 per cent of the dry weight of the dermis
- It continues to accumulate until about age 25. After 25, collagen levels in the skin naturally decrease by about 1 per cent each year, causing the skin to flatten and sag
- Skin is also more fragile and becomes thinner and more wrinkled as we age

INTERVIEW | by Jane Kitchen, editor at large

The Ranch is a business,
but it really helps people
– the programme truly
changes people's lives

Alex Glasscock, owner

Alex & Sue GLASSCOCK

The Ranch Malibu has gained loyal followers with its seemingly simple programme of long hikes and limited calories – with a hefty price tag of US\$10,000 a week. Jane Kitchen visits its new outpost in Italy and catches up with the owners

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Alex and Sue Glasscock
started the business in
California 12 years ago



© JAMES M. HARRIS

When I tell people I'm going to spend a week in Italy, hiking four to five hours a day and eating a very limited diet – no gluten, caffeine, dairy, meat or alcohol – the first question I get is: "why?" It's a question I will also ask myself at various points – when the alarm buzzes at 5.30am each morning, when my legs scream at me back down the mountain we've spent two hours climbing up, when a man I barely know pops a blister for me, when I face yet another bowl of something with chickpeas in it.

But why does anyone do anything remotely challenging? To see if they can. Or because they can. Or to remind themselves that they can. Or to feel proud that they did. In my case, there's one more reason: to find out what keeps people coming back to do this again and again – and to pay roughly US\$10,000 (€9,699, £8,383) for the privilege.

ADDING NOT SUBTRACTING

I am set to visit The Ranch Italy, the newest offshoot and first European location for the very successful The Ranch Malibu. Started in California

12 years ago by Alex and Sue Glasscock, The Ranch boasts A-list celebrities among its clientele – Rebel Wilson, Mandy Moore and Lea Michele are all alums – and has a limit of 25 guests each week, who must adhere to the strict 1,400-calorie vegan, gluten-free, caffeine-free, sugar-free, alcohol-free menu while hiking four to five hours each morning and attending fitness and yoga classes in the afternoon. Lest you despair, daily massages and nap times are also programmed in.

"What we say to guests is: don't think about subtracting. It's about adding better things: more plants, more water, more sleep," says Alex.

I've brought my husband, Christian, with me – a man who has a penchant for getting hangry – a quality I'm concerned about as we head into our week-long programme. The Ranch Italy has set up shop at the newly opened Palazzo Fiuoggi, a medical wellness destination located just under an hour from Rome. We arrive on Sunday and slide into the obligatory orientation meeting and I'm surprised to be greeted by so many American accents. There are 11 of us this week and everyone is from New York or L.A., it seems. We're all weighed and measured and



Daily hikes deep within the Apennine Mountains last four to five hours

► hooked up to an ECG – a requirement of the Italian government before participating in the programme.

During a tour, we're introduced to Fuggi's natural mineral waters and its many benefits – it's been found to lower blood pressure and is great for kidney health; Michelangelo, who suffered from kidney stones, was a frequent visitor to Fuggi. The newly built Roman Spa has a station where you can drink the healing waters, though we're warned that it can have a diuretic effect. The spa – which was created with support from GOCO Hospitality – also includes a sauna and cold plunge in the changing rooms, as well as a coed infrared sauna and a Kneipp path to help recover from hiking. Additionally, there's a thalassotherapy suite that can be booked for €70 (US\$74, £60) an hour, where guests can float in pools filled with Fuggi water combined with dense salt and magnesium for an even deeper recovery.

REPEAT CUSTOMERS

After the tour, we are hustled into an hour-long fitness class, where I discover everyone – including two women who are recent grandmothers – is much fitter than we are. I'm worried about exhausting my legs before we even start the hiking, so I spend some time in the Kneipp walk and the thermal pool afterwards, where I meet a mother-daughter combo from New York who are also part of our group. The daughter, a 30-year-old doctor who started her career in the midst of the pandemic, needs a break, mentally and physically, and the mother, who has been to The Ranch Malibu multiple times, thought

The Ranch Italy would do the trick. This seems to fit with a pattern the Glasscocks are seeing.

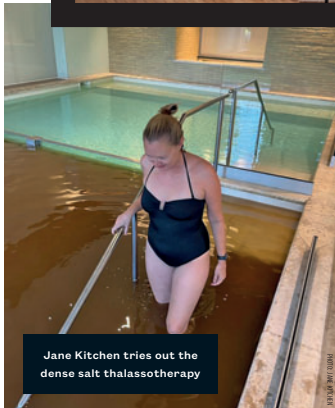
"The majority of our guests are in their 40s and 50s, but now with their kids we're getting the next generation," says Sue. "Typically half the guests have been here before and 35 per cent have been referred by other people who've been."

With a maximum occupancy of 25 guests each week, the Malibu location is fully booked four months in advance. "It just stays full, with a waiting list all the time," says Sue. The Ranch Italy has been more than 50 per cent occupied in the first few months of opening, and is about to launch a Ranch 4.0 version of the stay, where guests settle in for a long-weekend programme of four days rather than a full week. There's also a new location planned in upstate New York, just an hour outside of Manhattan, where the Glasscocks hope to expand with incentive travel, corporate meetings and companies which are infusing wellness into their work culture.

RELINQUISHING RESPONSIBILITY

At 7pm, we gather again in the room where we will be served all our meals, which features an impressively long table surrounded on three sides with views over the ancient hill town of Fuggi. Dinner is a beautifully presented aubergine parmesan stack with macadamia ricotta so creamy, I don't miss the fact that it's not real cheese.

Afterwards, one of our Ranch guides checks in to see how we're all feeling. "We don't want to starve



“You’ll hate it, and it’s like torture at times, but at the end, you’ll feel incredible. And like you’ve accomplished something”

you,” she says. “If you ever feel like you need more food, let us know.” She looks at Christian and at another tall, fit man from L.A. “Do you need double portions?” she asks. She tells us we’ll feel hungry throughout the week – we’re only eating 1,400 calories a day, after all – but if it’s hunger like we don’t feel like we’ll make it through the night, then we should ask for a second portion. The men both agree they feel like they’ll make it through the night. Everyone does.

Alex says they hire employees for character over experience at The Ranch. “The most important thing is the quality of the staff and the way we communicate with the guests,” he explains, and staff must be both nurturing and professionally intimate in order to create the kind of trust you need to complete the programme. To be sure, each day starts with footcare, where Ranch guides slather our feet with a white, anti-chafing cream,

wrap any twisted knees or ankles and even pop our blisters for us. Professionally intimate indeed.

On that first night, the guides remind us that they can take care of everything for us and that we don’t have to think about anything. This is an option-free programme, designed for busy executives – or any of the rest of us – who suffer from decision fatigue and the idea of relinquishing responsibility is first on the list of Ranch values stencilled on the wall of the fitness studio along with other mantras like: “Be honest with yourself. Get off the grid and focus on yourself. The world will still be there when you get back.”

Sue explains: “We really wanted to create something so all you need to do is show up – you’ve got this positive, nurturing staff and you’ll have positive results at the end of the day. We all make so many decisions all day, it was important not to have to make decisions here.”

The hope is that this approach will give guests a reset – access to a clear mind and a pathway to creativity, says Alex. “We focus on a framework and a programme and then people figure out what they need to get out of it,” he explains.

The Ranch Italy has been over 50 per cent occupied in its first few months... and now there's a new location planned in upstate New York

Palazzo Fiuggi is the sister site to spa destination Forte Village in Sardinia

► **'YOU'LL FEEL INCREDIBLE'**

On that first night, however, my mind is full; we are loaded with information: how to use our Camelbak, advice on hiking posture, how to use hiking poles, the benefits of forest bathing, a request not to use headphones while hiking (both for safety and for mindfulness), information on how the walkie talkies we're required to keep with us in case we get lost work, details on how the paths will be marked with flags to tell us which way to go. We're told the hikes will be for time, not distance and advised to go at our own pace. Four guides will hike with us: one each at the beginning and end and two in the middle. I ask about toilet breaks, and am told we'll be given a small plastic bag with toilet paper in it that we need to use in the woods and bring back with us. I'm somehow stunned that people who pay US\$10,000 a week will gladly pee in the woods.

We go around the table and introduce ourselves, and say something we're thankful for. The one other British woman at the table looks awkward. "We don't do this kind of thing in England," my husband offers helpfully. Most people have been to The Ranch Malibu multiple times. Two people give the same answer when asked what brings them back: "You feel incredible at the end of the week." One explains further: "You'll

hate it, and it's like torture at times, but at the end, you'll feel incredible. And you'll feel like you've accomplished something." Tall, fit LA guy and his partner have not been here before and the partner raises concerns about him being hangry. "Do you have many divorces afterwards?" he asks, mostly joking.

In the morning, we're told, we have the option to do bloodwork and urinalysis before we go and then meet with Palazzo Fiuggi's on-site doctor later in the week for a broader picture into our health. And at 9pm it's bedtime, as we have an early start. I have difficulty falling asleep that night, my mind racing at all the information we've been given. And I think I'm a little bit nervous about what the week will entail.

AT YOUR OWN PACE

At the 5.30am wake-up call, a very chipper Ranch guide wishes me good morning. We begin at 6am with a stretch class, followed by breakfast of Ranch granola, before we pile into vans that will take us to our first day's hiking spot, deep within the Apennine Mountains.

We're given hiking poles and asked to test our walkie talkies – it's an out-and-back hike, so when we've hiked roughly two hours, the guides will make an announcement to turn around and head back. We



PHOTO: MARINO DIANA @ H&B20 REPRESENTED



Fitness, yoga and massage sessions take place in the afternoons

PHOTO: MARINO DIANA @ H&B20 REPRESENTED



Guests enjoy views of the village of Fuggi

CONTEMPORARY COURTESY OF H&B20 REPRESENTED

gather in a circle and our guide says something brief and inspirational and then we set off. The hike is steep, the day is hot and the three litres of water in my Camelbak feels heavy on my shoulders. Competitive by nature, Christian plunges ahead, while I echo the words I've been told both by Ranch guides and alums: go at your own pace.

With loose, rocky pathways, a temperature outside my comfort zone and a wave of insects buzzing around my face, that pace turns out to be in the bottom third of our group, but I settle into conversation with our lovely guide Simone and the other woman from England, grateful for the distraction and for the stability the hiking poles afford. Throughout the hike, we're reminded through our walkie talkies to drink plenty of water; The Ranch Malibu's signature call of "water, water, water" is transformed to an Italian "aqua, aqua, aqua". We hike up hills, through meadows and past stunning views – scaling elevations over 2,000 metres.

"Being in nature is in the top things that are great for your overall health," says Alex. "And wherever you live, you can access that somehow." The hope is that guests can easily take a bit of what they learn at The Ranch home with them.

At the last dinner we share thoughts about our week and the awkwardness we felt at the beginning has vanished

Bonding with fellow guests is listed as one of the benefits of the programme

► In the same spirit, our snack is something easily replicated at home: seven almonds, something The Ranch has become known for. The idea is not to starve you, they say, but to make you aware that sometimes a small amount is enough to offer satisfaction. Just before the two-hour mark, we stop to eat our almonds with a view down the valley. It does the trick, giving me enough energy to turn around and walk back.

When we return to Palazzo Fuggi, we hobble straight to lunch, sweaty and tired and aching, where we check the massage schedule, sign up for afternoon fitness and yoga and shovel down mouthfuls of healthy food. My body is too sore for the fitness class, but I happily join in for yoga and make use of the Kneipp paths, infrared sauna and cold plunge pool in an effort to help my muscles recover. I'm entirely convinced that these contrast bathing therapies are what allows me to continue with the hikes, day after day.

MEASURABLE RESULTS

We meet again for dinner, then do the whole thing over again the next day. And the next and the next and next and the next. The hikes are different each day, but little else changes. We titter with excitement over a small cauliflower pizza, or when the afternoon snack involves something approximating chocolate (but which in reality is mostly dates). And we get to know each other, little by little.

At the end of the week, we're all weighed and measured again and, not surprisingly, there are real, measurable results (I am down five pounds, Christian is down 10). On the last dinner, we go around the table to share some thoughts about our week and all the hesitancy and awkwardness we felt at the beginning has vanished. Almost everyone speaks with real feeling about the sense of accomplishment

they have from the programme and, in particular, about how grateful they are for the amazing group of people that they've spent the last week with.

"Bonding with fellow guests" is listed as one of the benefits, or results, at The Ranch (alongside improving overall health, gaining strength, increasing mental clarity, losing fat and inches, jump-starting a healthy lifestyle, spending time in nature, losing weight, unplugging from daily life, increasing metabolism, improving cholesterol levels, and finding a sense of accomplishment) – and indeed, that sense of connection is one of the most important.

"It reminds people how we're really the same at our core, and brings us back to our humanity," concludes Alex. "The Ranch is a business, but it really helps people – the programme truly changes people's lives." ●



Kitchen and her husband lost 15lbs between them over the week



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L'CHAIM at last

The 16th annual Global Wellness Summit convened in Tel Aviv to discuss the biggest issues in wellness following the pandemic. Jane Kitchen reports on the highlights



After three years, the Global Wellness Summit (GWS) finally made it to Israel. The summit was originally set to take place in Tel Aviv back in 2020, before the pandemic hit, then was postponed again in 2021 due to unrest in the area. But this year, the 16th annual GWS brought upwards of 400 delegates representing 39 countries to convene in Israel's commercial capital to discuss themes of technology and healthcare, longevity, inclusive wellness, faith's role in wellbeing, nutrition, art and music and the natural world.

As has become tradition, filmmaker **Louie Schwartzberg** opened the summit with a preview of *Gratitude Revealed*, a film which set the tone for the three days ahead, reminding delegates of the power of being grateful for both our physical and mental wellbeing. GWS chair **Susie Ellis** then reminded us of all we have to be grateful for as an industry: the Global Wellness Institute (GWI) is predicting that the wellness market has surpassed 2019, pre-pandemic levels and is valued at more than US\$5tn (£4.1tn, €4.8tn) this year and that it will grow at an impressive 10 per cent annually through to 2025. And wellness travel is set to grow a stunning 21 per cent a year from 2020 through to 2025 – from a US\$720bn (£587bn, €684bn) market to over US\$1tn (£815bn, €950bn) in 2025.

"What's happening in the industry is in a way, astonishing," she said. "People are demanding that wellness sits at the centre of almost everything they do. From where and how they live, to where and how they work, to how they travel and what they want to experience while travelling, to how they track their health, hack their biology and be the best they can be, physically and mentally.



The ever-insightful Omer Isvan co-chaired this year's GWS with Amir Alroy



What's happening in the industry is astonishing, said GWS chair Susie Ellis

People are demanding that wellness sits at the centre of almost everything they do... adding up to increased opportunities for our industry

simply a new consciousness about the importance of both healthcare and self-care, all of it adds up to increased opportunities for our industry."

Co-chairs **Amir Alroy**, co-founder of Welltech Ventures in Israel, and **Omer Isvan**, president of Servotel in Turkey, delivered a packed three-day programme put together by GWS chief creative officer Nancy Davis. The theme 'Open Minds. Open Hearts. Open for Business', was designed to recognise the importance of embracing an open attitude as the world reels from years of challenges. They brought some of the top minds from Israel and around the world in medicine and technology to speak to delegates, alongside familiar faces from the spa and wellness industry.

Alroy explained that wellness innovation in Israel is on the rise, with more than 500 wellness startups and 2,000 health tech companies in the country. "The wellness arena in the Middle East is vast, both in needs and offerings," he said. Isvan said that while hospitality has been important in integrating wellness into life, he thinks we're graduating out of that space now. "We're seeing a change, moving from the hands of the wellness industry provider to the hands

Good place to talk shop
- Tel Aviv is Israel's commercial capital



“

The wellness arena in the Middle East is vast, both in needs and offerings

Amir Alroy





PHOTO: SHAI EFRATI/STOCK MARKET PHOTO

► of the individual," he explained. "Knowledge and self-adoption of wellness regimes have integrated into daily life. We need to be so much more mindful of the sophistication of the individual."

The game-changing science of hyperbaric medicine was highlighted

HEALTH, TECHNOLOGY & LONGEVITY

Technology is one reason for the increasing sophistication of the individual when it comes to wellness – and its ability to both inform and connect means that people are increasingly taking greater control of their own wellness and discovering new ways to track and boost their health.

Dr Michael Roizen, chief wellness officer for the Cleveland Clinic, reminded us that society has expanded life expectancy by about two and a half years every 10 years since 1890. "We are entering a great age reboot," he said, where you can control your genetic inheritance and how you function epigenetically by your actions, so that we can live not just longer, but better.

Roizen, who was summit co-chair in 2021, was joined on stage by **Dr Tzipora Strauss**, head of neonatology at the Sheba Medical Center in Israel and head of the hospital's upcoming Longevity Centre. She spoke about technology's role in longevity medicine, where AI is increasingly important, as well as the need to motivate people to maintain their performance as long as possible. "Babies that are born today will live at least 100 to 150 years," she said. "We need to bring those babies not just lifespan, but healthspan."

Shai Efrati, a professor at the Sackler School of Medicine & Sagol School of Neuroscience at Tel Aviv University and director of the Sago Center for Hyperbaric Medicine & Research at Shamir Medical Centre in Israel, spoke about one way to do that: through the game-changing science of hyperbaric medicine. Efrati detailed how



We can actually generate neurons... and build brain tissue like we build muscle

Shai Efrati

hyperbaric chambers, which have been successfully used for wound healing for decades, can help with brain health and function as well, effectively reversing ageing by improving cognitive function, memory, attention and executive function. "We are actually taking the biology back in time," he said. "We can reverse many things in the past that we thought were not reversible. We can actually generate neurons. We can build brain tissue like we build muscle."

It's these kinds of medical advances that have the wellness industry inspired to take on bigger issues of health and longevity, like the Wellness Moonshot for a world free of preventable disease. Despite the multi-trillion-dollar wellness market, the World Health Organization reports that in 2022, 74 per cent of all premature deaths globally are the result of non-communicable diseases. It also reports that obesity, diabetes and hypertension rates have more than doubled in the last two decades.

First launched at the 2017 GWS, the Wellness Moonshot is a mission to eradicate preventable, chronic diseases, and this year, it received a boost from a partnership by Fountain Life, a fast-growing



Babies that are born today will live at least 100 to 150 years. We need to bring them not just lifespan but healthspan

Dr Tzipora Strauss



Think of genes as embedded software systems: if you give them good input you can recode them

Dr Richard Carmona



Naveen Jain spoke about microbiome testing

company with a preventative healthcare model to identify and treat illnesses at their earliest stages.

Fountain Life's co-founders, **Dr Peter Diamandis** and **Dr Bill Kapp**, spoke to delegates at summit to discuss the mission, while high-profile co-founder and philanthropist **Tony Robbins** sent a pre-recorded video message.

Kapp said: "This is the seminal issue of our time. We want to help people become the CEO of their own health," while Diamandis explained further: "Technologies are converging to give us insight into the molecular biology of ageing – we're in the middle of this revolution," he said. This includes senolytic medicine and stem cell and gene therapies.

In a separate session, **Dr Richard Carmona**, chief of health innovation at Canyon Ranch and 17th Surgeon General of the US, discussed the epigenetics of wellness and asked delegates to



The runway to health is through our mouth... The standard American diet will kill 680,000 Americans prematurely this year

Dan Buettner

think of genes as embedded software systems:

"If you give them good input, these genes act in a positive way," he explained. "Your whole life you get to recode your genes by the actions you take."

Naveen Jain, CEO of Viome, a company that offers gut microbiome testing, echoed that sentiment. "Your genes are not your destiny," he said. "How you express your genes is your destiny." A holistic view of wellness should include a focus on nutrition, stress reduction, exercise, sleep and mindset, he said. "The body is all connected and that's how you have to look at wellness," he explained.

Dan Buettner, founder of Blue Zones, who spoke at the 2018 summit in Italy, was back to talk about longevity and wellness and what he's found based on the research into the healthiest communities around the world. With a new cookbook out, Buettner focused his talk on the role nutrition plays in longevity and health. "The runway to health is through our mouth," he said.

Each of the Blue Zones has different diets – sourdough bread in Sardinia, purple sweet potatoes in Okinawa – but they are all 90-100 per cent whole food and plant-based, with meat less than five times a month and beans are the cornerstone of every Blue Zones diet in the world. ▶



"We're entering a great age to reboot," said the Cleveland Clinic's Dr Roizen

- Most Americans don't eat anywhere near this and Buettner said that the standard American diet will kill 680,000 Americans prematurely this year. "This is the Number 1 enemy to wellbeing worldwide," he said. "Our environment has changed, and if we really want to promote wellness we need to shift our focus to our homes, our neighbourhoods and our nations, so the healthy choice is not only the easy choice, but the unavoidable choice."

INCLUSIVE & EVERYDAY WELLNESS

The idea of making wellness easy and accessible was echoed throughout the summit and it's no wonder; if there's one thing that we've learned during the pandemic years, it's how interconnected we all are when it comes to health and wellness, but how disproportionate our healthcare and access to wellness is.

Denise Bober, SVP of human resources for The Breakers, detailed the Florida resort's recent partnership with **Dr Nicola Finley** to create a pilot programme on health equity for team members of colour, which has shown promising real results. "We wanted to make sure our team members feel seen, heard and cared for," said Bober.

In a panel on wellness real estate, **Amy McDonald**, CEO of Under a Tree Health & Wellness Consulting, said that many of her projects are moving from spa and wellness to mixed use and residential, with developers interested in bringing wellness into every aspect of the design. **Ricky Burdett**, director of LSE Cities and professor of urban studies at London School of Economics, outlined the development of the east London neighbourhood of Stratford, which has built wellbeing into the design,



Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati led a spiritual ceremony



Developers are interested in bringing wellness into every aspect of the design

Amy McDonald

saying: "You can design cities to either make people healthy and well, or you can do the opposite."

Even the GWI's research this year focuses on wellness policy, in an effort to bring wellness to more people. "The wellness economy is going to leave behind people who don't have the money to spend on it," said **Ophelia Yeung**, GWI senior research fellow and co-author of the study. "We have reached a turning point and we need to act now."

Katherine Johnston, also co-author and senior research fellow with the GWI, explained how micro-level policies, such as warning labels on food, can nudge our behaviour towards wellness, meso-level infrastructure at the community level such as schools, or parks can help even further, but that on the macro level, things such as poverty or the environment often feel out of our control and need help from government policies. "Wellness shouldn't be a luxury," said Johnston. And importantly, she said, "wellness policy is not the same as health policy; it needs to cut across all different government domains." And wellness policy can have real results; she estimates that for every dollar invested in health prevention and promotion, there's an ROI of US\$4 to \$14, and wellness spending is correlated with both happiness and life expectancy. On p104 we give a more in-depth analysis of their research

FAITH & WELLNESS

Faith can also play a part in both happiness and life expectancy, but it is a subject the GWS only dabbled in briefly back in 2019, when religious scholar Martin Palmer spoke at the summit. Palmer questioned



Yeung, Ellis and Johnston present the latest GWI research

Eighty-six per cent of people globally subscribe to some form of faith, delegates heard

why faith and spirituality were not part of the wellness conversation, and the GWS took that to heart, using the setting of Israel – with its long and complicated religious history – as the perfect time to explore the subject further.

Spiritual leader **Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati**, president of the Divine Shakti Foundation, set the tone after the opening night cocktails, with an hour-long fire ceremony. Saraswati also spoke during the summit, highlighting a study on heart attacks that found participants were 25 per cent less likely to die during the study if they regularly attended a religious place of worship. "Ultimately, the problem is in a broken connection between ourselves and the divine and ourselves and our self," she said.

A panel featuring **Jean Sung**, head of JP Morgan Private Bank's Philanthropy Centre, in conversation with **Brian Grim**, founding president of Religious Freedom & Business Foundation and **Judith Richter**, founder and CEO of Medinol, addressed the question: 'Does faith drive business and lead inclusion?'



Does faith drive business and lead to inclusion? asked a panel



“
Wellness is ubiquitous, but it's often misunderstood
Simon Shelley

"There's an urgent need for values-driven business and faith in our work," said Sung. With 86 per cent of people in the world subscribing to a faith, making people feel comfortable about it is important, said Grim. "When you let people bring their whole self to work, it starts to feel like family," he explained.

Feeling like family is part of what the GWS does; in that spirit, familiar faces from the industry were invited to give short 'Passion Stories' about things that matter to them. While not specifically about faith, **Amy McDonald** tackled the difficult subject of dying well, telling the story of her ageing parents and a caregiver and how even in the midst of death, there can be beauty and peace.

ART, MUSIC & COLOUR

And beauty and peace are very much a part of wellness. This year's summit reflected that through an exploration of the role that art, music and colour can play in our wellbeing.

Tal Danai, founder and CEO of Artlink, discussed his company's culturally sensitive, narrative-based approach to providing art in the hospitality industry. "There are many ways to tell stories with art, to inspire, to uplift," he said.



with art, to inspire, to uplift," he said.

Simon Shelley, VP of BBC Programme Partnerships, showcased a series BBC Storyworks produced for the GWI called *In Pursuit of Wellness: The Art & Science of Living Well*. This included a segment on music for neurodiversity and a look at young Kenyans who are finding appreciation for the benefits of Africa's healing plants. "Wellness is ubiquitous, but it's often misunderstood," said Shelley.

Ari Peralta, neuroscientist and sensory designer for myCocoon, led a fascinating session on the power of colour to affect mood. "What we perceive is what we feel – sensation, perception and attention are all intricately linked," he said. "Perception is key to wellbeing and the senses can influence each other and shift perception, offering new opportunities to promote wellness outcomes."

Peralta detailed some of the work he's done with Six Senses Douro Valley in Portugal involving colour and synesthesia. In one example, he altered the way wine tasted just by changing the colour in the room. "Colour is a brain computation and doesn't exist outside your brain," he explained. "When we

use colour in an abstract way, we remove the meaning from colour and our brain is searching for meaning."

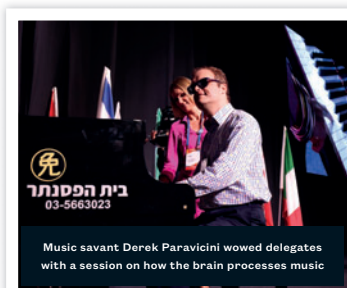
The way our brain processes music is equally complex, as illustrated by a live musical performance by music savant **Derek Paravicini**, who is both autistic and blind. Paravicini is able to play almost any piece of music on the piano after hearing it just once and wowed the audience with live, real-time requests.

Freddie Moross, managing director of Myndstream, a provider of music for health and wellbeing, brought Paravicini to the summit to illustrate the incredible power of music for wellbeing. Moross was later awarded the Debra Simon Award for Leader in Furthering Mental Wellness for his work using music as a tool for healing and a bridge to help people feel included and respected and particularly for his impact on neurodiverse communities.

Moross also brought the musical duo of **Charlie Laubacher** and **Skooby Laposky**, known as Palm Reading, who presented their unique musical talents. Palm Reading captures biodata from plants, which is then translated into notes that create musical compositions. Laubacher and Laposky found their inspiration by a quest to listen more closely to nature, and have recorded plants in Malibu, California and Joshua Tree National Park. But at the GWS, they unveiled a short video in which they had captured music from plants in both Israeli and Palestinian territories during the summit, showing that nature knows no political boundaries.

NATURE & WELLNESS

The power of nature to heal has always been a strong theme in the spa and wellness industry, but never more so than in the years since COVID, when





Music is a tool for healing and a bridge to help people feel included

Freddie Moross



There's an explosion of start-ups that provide nature-based solutions

Thierry Malleret

people have looked to the natural world as a way to recover from years of lockdown and uncertainty.

Global economist **Thierry Malleret**, co-founder and managing partner of the Monthly Barometer, asked us to start thinking about nature as a form of capital, as half of the world's GDP is reliant on nature. "Nature is a perfect antidote to today's ills," he explained. Because of this, there's been a recent "explosion of start-ups that provide nature-based solutions," he said.

"You have to look at things from a holistic perspective and ensure that we don't just achieve individual wellbeing, but the wellbeing of society and our planet."

Robbie Hammond, who brought The Highline to New York City and who's recently joined Therme Group US as president and chief strategy officer, explored the idea of nature in cities and its ability to create community. Hammond came up with the concept of The Highline as a way to bring nature, art, entertainment, play, wellness and community together in a disused rail line, with events such as the Mile-Long Opera inspiring a new, younger generation to explore the arts and the outdoors at the same time. "The way people want to consume leisure or culture has changed," said Hammond. "People want to do things together and they want to have an experience." It's that sentiment that has brought Hammond to Therme Group, which provides an accessible thermal experience in cities through a volume business model – its Bucharest location can handle 10,000 people at a time and Hammond reports that only 10 per cent of them are going alone.

The social component of thermal bathing was explored further in a panel featuring **Tina Newman**, from Castle Hot Springs in Arizona; **Stelian Iacob**, COO and senior VP of Therme Group and **Bharat Mitra**, co-owner of Peninsula Hot Springs in Australia. "Where there is community, there is wellness," said Iacob, whose Bucharest Therme



Spa Business' Jane Kitchen, Astrid Ros and Liz Terry



It's about community. We're trying to make our hot springs as accessible as possible

Bharat Mitra



If left unprotected, it's possible that the Dead Sea will vanish in our lifetime

Oded Rahav



welcomes 1.4 million visitors each year. He revealed more about the company to *Spa Business* in early 2021 (see www.spabusiness.com/stelianiacob).

Mitra agreed with Iacob and revealed the plans for additional hot springs resorts he's developing in Australia. "Our goal is to create immersive experiences for people to relax in nature, connect with themselves, each other and the inner world of their being," he said. "It's all about community – we're trying to make it accessible to as many people as possible."

But perhaps the most striking look at the natural world was a presentation from **Oded Rahav** of the Dead Sea Guardians, who reported that every day, we lose half a centimetre of water from the Dead Sea, in large part due to man-made activities. This has led to a series of sinkholes – now numbering more than 7,000 – and if left unprotected, it's possible that the Dead Sea will vanish in our lifetime. Rahav has dedicated his life to saving the Dead Sea and remains optimistic that it's possible.

▶ LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Noam Gabison, industry manager for digital health at Meta Israel, had us looking at a very different kind of future – one that involves meeting up in the metaverse. Deepak Chopra is one of the first in our industry to make the leap into this virtual world (see p16) but many are still trying to wrap their heads around what it is. Gabison said: "Health and wellbeing is the third pillar gaining traction in the metaverse." Part of this is because how we approach healthcare has changed, he said; we've moved from a personal model to a social model with a holistic focus including diet, exercise, traditional medicine, mental health, alternative medicine and more. And importantly, "metaverse experiences are social first," he said.

Cathy Feliciano-Chon, founder and MD of CatchOn, looked at how the pandemic has changed the nature of travel. "The future of wellness travel will depend on understanding changing consumer behaviours towards wellness, building sustainability into tourism growth and preparing for the 'renewed' outbound Chinese travel segment," she said.

Feliciano-Chon said that wellness pursuits continue to gain traction, with the 'soft adventure' category – things like walking, hiking and biking – dominating the list of consumer interests. "Being on foot in nature or urban settings is the single most preferred wellness activity," she said. "The single most profound expression of being well is being able to move."

With Chinese travellers soon beginning to look outside their borders, Feliciano-Chon said it's important to look at what a 'woke' Chinese traveller looks like. While 12 per cent of mainland China holds a passport, 30 per cent of those passport holders are under 30, she said. And while fear of COVID still looms large, importantly, "the Chinese have prioritised wellness and wellness is shifting to mental wellness."



We need to prepare for the 'renewed' outbound Chinese travel segment

Cathy Feliciano-Chon

Six Senses CEO **Neil Jacobs**, the profile interview for *Spa Business* last issue (see www.spabusiness.com/neiljacobs), spoke about the future of hospitality, highlighting themes of community and connection, regenerative travel and transformative travel. "People have changed," said Jacobs. "They want a takeaway from properties – they want properties with personalities and a very strong story – there needs to be more to their stay."

And **Sue Harmsworth**, founder of ESPA, spoke about what she thinks is important to our industry: teaching resilience, focusing on innovation, clearing up the confusion between spa and wellness, helping with anxiety, supporting the public health system and paying more than lip service to sustainability.

Harmsworth, a 50-year veteran of the industry, was later given the 2022 Leading Woman in Wellness award. In accepting the award, she said: "This industry has been a lifetime's work for me. It gives me so much spirit and energy. If I think back to the early days of my career and how life evolves, I can see it goes in cycles and I believe the wellness industry is more important now than it ever has been... This tribe of people who are driving change across the wellness industry keeps developing and changing and becoming more effective and dynamic."

To conclude the summit, members of the GWS team filled the stage as they announced next year's location – again defying tradition by returning to the Middle East for a second year, this time in Qatar, with dates to be announced in the near future. ●



Susie Ellis, Nancy Davis and Omer Isvan presented the Leading Woman in Wellness award to Susan Harmsworth



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Wellness FOR ALL

GWI's new study defines 'wellness policy' for the first time ever, providing a framework for businesses and governments to make healthy lifestyles fully accessible

If we're to address the global health crisis, it's essential that wellness – preventative approaches and healthy lifestyles – is accessible to everyone.

We regularly highlight how the global wellness economy is valued at US\$4.4tn (€4.42tn, £3.84tn), according to the Global Wellness Institute (GWI). Yet not everyone has the resources, motivation, knowledge or enabling environment to actively pursue wellness. Arguably the spa industry, which has wellbeing at its core but mostly targets high net worth individuals, struggles with this as much as any other sector. Public policy is essential to fill this gap.

With this in mind, the GWI released its *Defining Wellness Policy* report at the Global Wellness Summit in Tel Aviv in early November (see p94). In the 40-plus pages, GWI researchers Katherine Johnston and Ophelia Yeung give an analysis of the relationship between wellness spending, happiness and health outcomes across countries for the first time ever. They also provide a framework and a compelling case

for business and governments to make healthy lifestyles a priority for everyone, not just an elite few who can afford it.

"Wellness should not be a luxury," says Johnston, "it's a critical resource we all need and can benefit from no matter what our life circumstances are."

Who's it for?

Spas are already highly aware of the benefits of wellness and offer it to customers in many forms – whether that's something as simple as a massage to release stress or a full-blown approach to helping them achieve optimum health. But this report shows why operators should care about 'wellness policy', become an advocate of it and partner with governments and communities to make a real difference.

Public policies are important because they can increase consumer confidence in wellness that, in turn, protects the integrity of our sector and its modalities. Yeung says: "Unfortunately, a lot of our industry remains unregulated, which is why good policy is needed." ▶

Prime example: New Zealand's government has reshaped its policies through a wellness lens

“ For every US\$844 (€848, £736) increase in wellness spending per person, the average happiness level increases by nearly 7 per cent ”



Findings were presented by Yeung (left) and Johnston (right) at the GWS

PHOTO: GUY LAWRENCE/ISTOCK

PHOTO: GUY LAWRENCE/ISTOCK

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What is wellness?

As a backdrop to the report, GWI draws on its previous research which defines wellness as "the active pursuit of activities, choices and lifestyles that lead to a state of holistic health". It's not passive, people intentionally seek it. It's also holistic and incorporates physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social and environmental dimensions.

Wellness should not be a luxury.

It's a critical resource we all need and can benefit from

High-end spas are a luxury available only to the very few

- Policies also determine what governments spend money on – from infrastructure in developing regions, training and education, research or as an overspill from healthcare for instance. All of which impacts the growth of the spa industry.

For government leaders, the study details why wellness policy is essential for public health and wellbeing. For policy makers or civil servants, the report gives ideas on how to work within existing policy siloes, departments and funding structures to advance the cause of wellness. The framework and evidence about the impact of wellness in the study can also be used by any other member of the public or a community seeking to champion healthy lifestyles.

Why is it important?

The key takeaway from the report is that for every US\$844 (£848, £736) increase in wellness spending per person, the average happiness level increases by nearly 7 per cent. In addition, an increase of US\$769 (£773, £670) in wellness spending per person, is associated with 1.26 years of extra life. These are valuable statistics.

"We do have to remind you that this is correlation analysis," says Johnston. "We can't say that spending money on wellness 'causes' happiness or life expectancy levels

to increase. But what we can say is that there is a close and positive relationship."

GWI collaborated with a key author and statistician of the *World Happiness Report* for this and also used data from its own *Wellness Economy Monitor* as well as from Gallup and the World Bank.

Despite this indication of the positive impact of wellness expenditure, there's acknowledgement that "unfortunately, there's still a large gap to fill before there's universal access to it". The belief is that public policy can address that, but until now wellness has not been officially mapped out in this arena.

What's in it?

Wellness policy, as defined by the GWI, is a "set of cross-cutting actions that encourage healthy lifestyles and create supportive environments for human health and wellbeing," says Johnston.

At a top-down macro level, this means governments reshaping all policies relating to wider society and the economy with a view to improving human health and wellbeing. It cites New Zealand, Iceland and Scotland as prime examples of making this happen, but says only a handful of countries have attempted such a high-level feat. While having the biggest impact on society, macro level policies take a very long time to implement. Johnston says:

Table 1: Wellness policy domains covered in GWI's Wellness Policy Series*

Wellness policy domain	Government departments	Wellness economy sectors
Wellness Activities and Lifestyles (micro-level)		
Mental wellness Improving individual and community resilience, especially to address stress and loneliness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Education ● Housing/community development ● City planning ● Parks/recreation ● Sports/youth ● Health/public health ● Labour/employment ● Social services/social affairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mental wellness ● Physical activity ● Wellness real estate ● Workplace wellness ● Public health, prevention, and personalized medicine ● Wellness tourism ● Spas ● Thermal/mineral springs
Traditional and complementary medicine Increasing the safety, quality, and efficacy of T&CM; expanding consumer access; and protecting T&CM resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Health/public health ● Agriculture/food ● Trade/commerce/industry ● Environment ● Indigenous peoples ● Culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Traditional and complementary medicine ● Wellness tourism ● Spas ● Thermal/mineral springs ● Personal care and beauty ● Healthy eating, nutrition and weight control
Wellness-supporting environments (meso-level)		
Wellness in tourism Ensuring that all tourism is wellness-enhancing for visitors, destinations, and local communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tourism ● Parks/recreation ● Sports/youth ● Culture/arts ● Environment ● Trade/commerce/industry ● Labour/employment ● Agriculture/food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wellness tourism ● Spas ● Thermal/mineral springs ● Personal care & beauty ● Mental wellness ● Physical activity ● Wellness real estate ● Workplace wellness ● Traditional and complementary medicine

Source: *Defining Wellness Policy*, Global Wellness Institute, 2022. *This table only depicts the wellness policy domains most relevant to the spa sector

"We can't just sit back and wait for governments to wake up and decide to take action on wellness."

So GWI focuses on wellness policy at meso- and micro-levels as it's more achievable for spas and it can complement national-level actions but with more immediate effect. Johnston says: "There are so many things all of us can do to have an impact on health, wellness and wellbeing right away, without waiting for those big macro issues to be solved."

"Every single one of us, as individuals, communities, non-profits and businesses, we can advocate for wellness policy and we can be partners in implementing them."

On a meso-level, the aim is for policies to home in on "creating living environments that support and encourage healthy behaviours and lifestyles". Examples include investing in green spaces to improve mental wellbeing and help us exercise outdoors.

Policies on a micro-level "encourage individuals to proactively make healthy choices, establish healthy habits and live healthy lifestyles" – some of this is down to our individual choices, says Johnston, but others can nudge us into good behaviour such as health warnings on cigarette packets or the sugar tax.

The report makes a case for how wellness can be used as a lens through which we can view

Public policies are important because they increase consumer confidence in wellness and protect the integrity of our sector

Iceland is another country which focuses on wellness policy

► and reshape – but not replace – existing health, happiness and wellbeing policies.

Defining Wellness Policy identifies seven specific domains in which to do this at meso- and macro-levels.

At a meso-level the domains focus on supporting environments and include:

- Wellness in the built environment
- Wellness at work
- Wellness in tourism

While the macro-level domains are based on those which affect individual behaviour, namely:

- Healthy eating
- Physical activity
- Mental wellness
- Traditional and complementary medicine

The wellness domains are not independent of each other and there are many crossovers between them – but the ones which are most applicable for the spa industry are traditional and complementary medicine, mental wellness and wellness in tourism. Similarly, the domains cut across many different government departments and depend on many different businesses and sectors. Table 1 on p107 gives an example of how the three wellness domains most relevant to spas might do this, while the full study details all seven.

Plans for 2023

GWl's vision does not just stop at defining wellness policy. It's planning to use the seven wellness domains identified to set the stage for the year ahead. In 2023 GWl will release a series of Wellness Policy Toolkits addressing the 'why' and 'how' in each domain. Why is there a need for wellness policy action in each area? How can stakeholders take action to address the issues and gaps?

Now is the time to act
urge Johnston
and Yeung

"This report and the toolkits are intended to be just the beginning of a cross-cutting, global conversation," say Yeung and Johnston. "We hope they spark a wellness policy movement that can be championed by any interested stakeholder groups."

They conclude that with COVID-19, climate change and global conflicts triggering a cascading crisis in physical and mental health now is the time to act. "It's urgent that we act immediately to reorientate public policy and our public and private resources toward health, wellness and wellbeing." ●

More: *Defining Wellness Policy* can be downloaded for free at www.spabusiness.com/wellnesspolicy



Britta
Low Height - 18.9" (48 cm)

ADA Compliant

SoVi System

Zero Gravity

Tilt Function

ABC System

Fuzion Heated Top

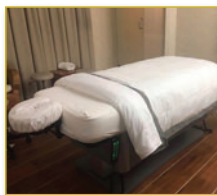
Low Height Masters' and Signature Collection



The Performalift creates unparalleled guest experiences at the Beverly Hills Hotel.



The low height ProLuxe tables combine the best features of a spa and treatment table at the Hlatus Spa.



The Talise is feature rich with storage and warming drawer options. Shown here at Laguna Cliffs Marriott.

Jessica Wadley | studio.spatables.com | WhatsApp: +1 717.659.7403



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NEW WAVE OF WELLNESS

Myrtha Wellness has been innovating in wellness product engineering for six decades, creating world class products while also delivering Italian style

“The last three decades have witnessed technological advances in virtually every industry, as new and longer-lasting materials, improved engineering, more sophisticated technology and increasingly stringent safety criteria have raised standards virtually everywhere,” says Myrtha Wellness CEO, Roberto Colletto.

“However, parts of the wellness industry have lagged behind – the production of steamrooms, Roman baths, swimming pools and hammams, for example, have remained largely unchanged,” he explains.

“A 30-year-old approach to production sees some suppliers using a range of legacy materials which can leak bacteria, mould and odours in humid wellness environments, causing hygiene issues, while also having poor structural and fire ratings.

“As a result of these kinds of practices, the wellness industry was begging for an injection of smartness and we’ve answered this call,” says Colletto. “Myrtha Wellness is brought to you by Myrtha smartness.”

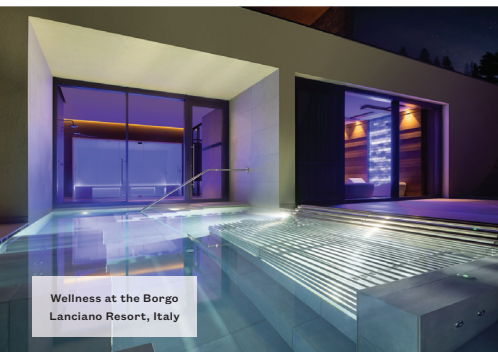
ENGINEERING RELAXATION

With 60 years experience in designing and building pools for clients ranging from La Reserva Club Sotogrande in Spain, to SLS Brickell Hotel and Residences, Miami, US, Myrtha Wellness is committed to delivering to the highest standards in terms of design, construction and after-sales service.

The innovations Myrtha has brought to its selection of wellness products are based on ideas engineered and developed over the company’s decades as a world leader in pool design and technology.

Myrtha’s revolutionary use of stainless-steel panels in the design of everything from competition pools, to waterparks, gives the company a solid foundation on which to build when creating its wellness portfolio – the company’s products deliver superior waterproofing advantages and even have earthquake-proof certification.

“Featuring ‘Made in Italy’ design, our technology has inspired a breathtaking line of saunas, steam baths, Kneipp pools, salt walls, ice fountains,



Wellness at the Borgo
Lanciano Resort, Italy



Roberto Colletto

Relaxation has
never been so
well engineered





Myrtha Wellness at
La Reserva Club,
Sotogrande, Spain



The spa at The Estates at Acqualina, Miami



The Myrtha Wellness YouForest sauna

experience showers and more," says Colletto. "Relaxation has never been so well engineered."

Myrtha's design team uses a 3D system that's compliant with BIM standards and streamlines the approval process, allowing the company to identify possible issues before manufacturing even begins. The result is Myrtha's 'prefab process' that comes together with plug-and-play ease.

Each wellness area or treatment room is prefabricated and assembled in-house, meaning they are literally as strong as steel, while panels and components can be easily inspected, removed and replaced, minimising disruption during maintenance.

Design and customisation are important considerations in the development of welcoming, rejuvenating wellness environments and mosaics, marble and other fine finishes are then used to add to the Myrtha Wellness experience.

"The benefits of our technology extend to areas critical to a well-conceived wellness facility," Colletto explains. "Our products deliver insulation material of Class B fire

resistance, while stainless-steel components result in a 90 per cent reduction in bacterial growth and odours."

Myrtha Wellness products are engineered, designed and manufactured using environmentally sustainable processes, with the company's products contributing in up to six of the nine LEED certification categories.

EXCELLENCE IN INSTALLATION

For The Estates at Acqualina in the US, Myrtha is providing 55 spa pools, 12 suspended pools and a complete wellness centre. The project is a synthesis of Myrtha's values, the beauty of 'Made in Italy', the comfort of the company's solutions and the sustainability guaranteed by its technology.

"The design flexibility of our modular system, the structural integrity of our steel components and the ability to customise with beautiful finishes, make it possible for us to create sensational wellness spaces to the highest standards for hotels, spas and wellness customers," says Colletto. ●

More: www.myrthawellness.com

Up close & personal

As wellness continues to take a hold in the hotel sector, hospitality expert Sonal Uberoi asks if hyperpersonalisation is the way forward

Hyperpersonalisation became a trendy word several years ago – now it's fundamental to success.

Populations are changing and it's predicted by 2030 the bulk of the population in the West will be between 55- and 64-years-of-age whereas, traditionally, the majority were young and productive.

In less than a decade, the hospitality and spa sectors will be catering to five decades of consumers, from guests in their 20s to those in their 70s, all contributing to the global economy and with the purchasing power to actively consume.

Each of these consumers comes with very different needs, consumption patterns, lifestyles, aspirations and wellbeing goals and the way to meet such a vast swathe of requirements successfully and sustainably is with meaningful, thoughtfully integrated and hyperpersonalised wellness.



Sonal Uberoi

WELLNESS VS WELLBEING

It's important to highlight the subtle yet important difference between wellness and wellbeing. Wellness is the tool and wellbeing the goal. Confuse these terms and you'll end up with very short-term strategies.

Some operators still treat wellness as an amenity to support the core business of selling rooms and fail to see the value in investing in wellness concepts, however, to be successful – and profitable – wellness must become an integral part of the asset ecosystem of the business.

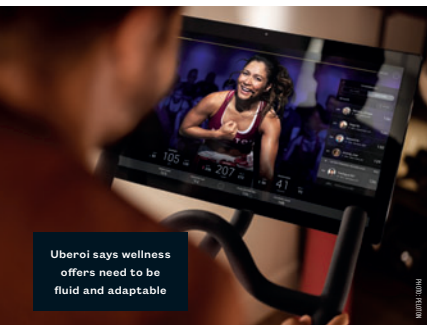
If you design or pivot your wellness offerings around new tools – the latest restorative therapy sensation, for example – instead of your goals, you're setting yourself up to struggle.


Whether it's a hotel gym or standalone spa, the offer needs to provide guests with the tools to access greater wellbeing – physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

TRANSFORMATIONAL EXPERIENCES

The pandemic has caused a seismic shift in value systems and wellness offers now need to be fluid and adaptable, always ready for the next consumer trend.

However state-of-the-art they are, spa or fitness spaces can never be personalised for every





In-room
fitness can be
hyperpersonalised

Spas will soon be catering to five
decades of consumers... each with
very different needs, consumption
patterns and wellbeing goals

guest's needs, however, take an in-room wellness concept – an exercise bike and/or app, for example – and suddenly a business can offer every guest a hyperpersonalised wellness experience, any time.

This might be the chance to work up a sweat on the bike or to use the app to do a yoga class, stretch or meditation session – each can be done exactly how and when they want but still with a sense of community.

This kind of set-up – which is now available from a number of suppliers, such as Technogym, Peloton Commercial, Les Mills/Stages and Body Bike, creates an affordable wellness offer that delivers those transformational experiences in a simple, yet effective way.

Additionally, offering wellness accessories in guest rooms allows the hotel or spa to increase ADR, guest satisfaction and employee satisfaction to boot.

Hilton sees the value in it. This October, it announced a deal that will see nearly all of its 5,400 hotels in the US feature at least one Peloton bike by the end of the year. This follows

partnerships with Westin and Kempinski for in-room and/or fitness centre provision.

Offering an in-room wellness solution also creates the opportunity to upgrade room rates, stand out as an innovator, create a draw for repeat business and tap into a brand's existing tribe, as well as offering guests the chance to access wellness their own way and in their own space, for minimal additional outlay.

There are other benefits to working with consumer brands, as Peloton Commercial's Dean Wood explains, saying: "Our Hotel Finder, which allows people to search for hotels equipped with our bikes across the globe, receives 44,000 hits per month and directs users to the hotels' own booking engines, driving hotel bookings."

FOCUS ON THE HOW

This is just one example of how operators can focus not on their *what*, but on their *how*. How can you solve guests' real wellbeing problems? What toolkit can you offer to all the guests walking through the door and aspiring to experience wellbeing during their stay?

You can treat wellness as just another operating department, choose to ignore this new era, or you can take it to another level. Every brand must embrace wellbeing in some way, shape or form to thrive well into the future. ●

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AUTOMATION

Many spas already automate their marketing. But how else could they use automation in their software to free up employee time and streamline operations?

Matt Lerner

MINDBODY

Eighty-five per cent of first-time customers whose calls are unanswered by spas are not willing to call back. This is a precious, missed opportunity faced by many businesses which are short-staffed.

That's where Mindbody's AI receptionist, Messenger[ai] can provide a much-needed solution. When a spa misses a call, Messenger[ai] automatically sends a text to the caller, asking how it can help. It can field frequently asked questions and book appointments all on its own, saving spa staff from having to take time out of their already busy days to do so.

Additionally, Messenger[ai] works 24/7, which means it can make



Matt Lerner

When spas miss a call, Messenger[ai] automatically texts the caller

sales while the business is closed. By providing customers with an efficient booking method, the tool improves overall experience with the business. Messenger[ai] also gives customers what they want as 89 per cent of people say they like to interact via text.

Ricky Daniels

TRYBE

We've just introduced a new waiting list feature



Ricky Daniels

Our cloud-based, automated booking system is incredibly popular and it's been shown to increase total revenue, total bookings and average spend.

Customers can book into live availability so reservation teams spend less time on the phone or computer. They can make payment when booking as well as curate their own itinerary and at this point operators can automatically upsell and cross sell too – giving options to add champagne on arrival or afternoon tea, for example.

We've also just introduced a new waiting list feature. If a customer cancels, an automated alert will go to others who've opted to be on the wait list, meaning cancelled reservations are more likely to be filled.

Sherry Cuti

SPRINGER-MILLER



Sherry Cuti

SpaSoft seamlessly handles multiple appointments in a group reservation

When you think about bookings, the more the merrier. However, group bookings can be overwhelming, not to mention incredibly

time consuming, if your software doesn't automate the booking process for large groups.

SpaSoft seamlessly strings together multiple appointments in a group reservation and automates the creation of each guest profile with a single import form. Don't have all group members identified?

No problem. SpaSoft will allow you to book desirable time slots for the group and then update profiles at a later date.

Other automated features include alerts when hotel and spa reservations are discrepant and auto booking based on predefined provider preferences and priorities.

Guenther Poellabauer

THE ASSISTANT COMPANY (TAC)

Our software and hardware enable fully automated solutions for spas – take our access/check-in process as a great example.

TAC's Webshop, which can be configured to a spa's corporate design, offers an intuitive booking process. The simple sale of gift certificates, tickets or products is just as quick as the reservation of treatment appointments or loungers. Digital questionnaires can be filled in advance too.

Once at the spa, guests can use a QR code to



Guenther Poellabauer

Our new self-service vending machines speed up check-ins

access a RFID wristband from our new self-service vending machine (see p126). This ensures fast lane entry and the band can also be used to make cashless purchases and even for check-out.

Imran Zalfackruddin

MILANO

Popular automated functions include dynamic pricing and activity capacity management

Automated features remove manual and tedious tasks for staff – as well as the margin for error – while speeding up processes.

Dynamic pricing, synchronising hotel package and spa bookings, activity capacity management and reservations based on gender are just some of the functions we offer that make the biggest difference to how spas run on a daily basis.

The automated processing of forms and appointment confirmations and reminders are our most popular features. These make the check-in process effortless, reduce clutter at the reception desk and limit the number of no-shows.



Imran Zalfackruddin

Charity Hudnall

VAGARO

Our inventory feature helps keep spas organised and well-stocked, without tedious administrative oversight.

Users can set a low quantity warning for products and a maximum quantity level which will automatically reorder products as they get low. They can also create and



Charity Hudnall

Automated inventory keeps spas organised and well-stocked

send smart purchase orders with automatic detection of low quantity products. What's more, when orders come in and are marked as received, products are automatically imported into the inventory.

Our most popular automated function, however, is our forms feature. This automatically prompts clients to fill out customised or templated

forms before receiving certain services, which are then auto-saved to their profile.

Using this feature, spas can also record client preferences and purchase details, as well as automate surveys after appointments to gather insights on the customer experience. All of which can help operators deliver appropriate aftercare and follow-up reminders.

Daniel Griswold

AGILYSYS



Daniel Griswold

Our eForms make the biggest difference to a spa business

One of our most popular functions is a retail module which automatically maintains inventory counts when staff sell items. Purchase orders and

receiving of merchandise are also automated.

Our eForms, however, make the biggest difference on a daily basis. Having in-take forms and health waivers easily accessible online allows clients to fill them out at a time that is convenient for them before arrival. This makes the check-in

process more seamless for guests, enhancing their overall experience.

Having eForms available in the Agilysys Spa application relieves staff of the time it takes to check-in clients while providing the information necessary for the therapist to provide a treatment specific to the client's needs.

Ilana Alberico

SPASPACE

Spa operators use us because our automations ultimately help them to be more efficient and create more revenue.

We cover three main operational areas: professional applicant and onboarding; facility inventory and payroll; and guest booking and service selection.

The sooner a new candidate starts, the faster a spa can start realising revenue from their presence. SpaSpace automatically checks an applicant's license credentials and gets them approved in less than a week, getting them on the schedule and working five times faster than the traditional processes.



Ilana Alberico

Our AI recommends services to guests, saving calls to the spa

Our integrations mean managers don't have to submit payroll every month so professionals receive their pay in hours/days rather than weeks/months.

Finally, our AI recommends services to guests, saving calls to the front desk.

Sal Capizzi

BOOK4TIME

Prompts for guests to self guarantee their appointments have really taken off



Sal Capizzi

We offer many automated functions via our scheduled task feature - from appointment confirmation emails to prompting clients to confirm their attendance or fill out digital intake forms before arriving.

Prompts for guests to self-guarantee their appointments have really taken off over the past couple of years due to GDPR and privacy laws. Most spas require a credit card hold or deposit for bookings, yet clients may not feel comfortable leaving their credit card number with a receptionist. Book4Time directs guests to a secure website to enter their financial details so they can self-guarantee their treatment in their own time.

Oliver Cahill

PREMIER SOFTWARE
SOLUTIONS

For spas which want to keep their finger on the pulse of their business, automated reporting is essential. With Core by Premier Software, staff can select from over 400 reports to be emailed on a date and time of their choosing.



Oliver Cahill

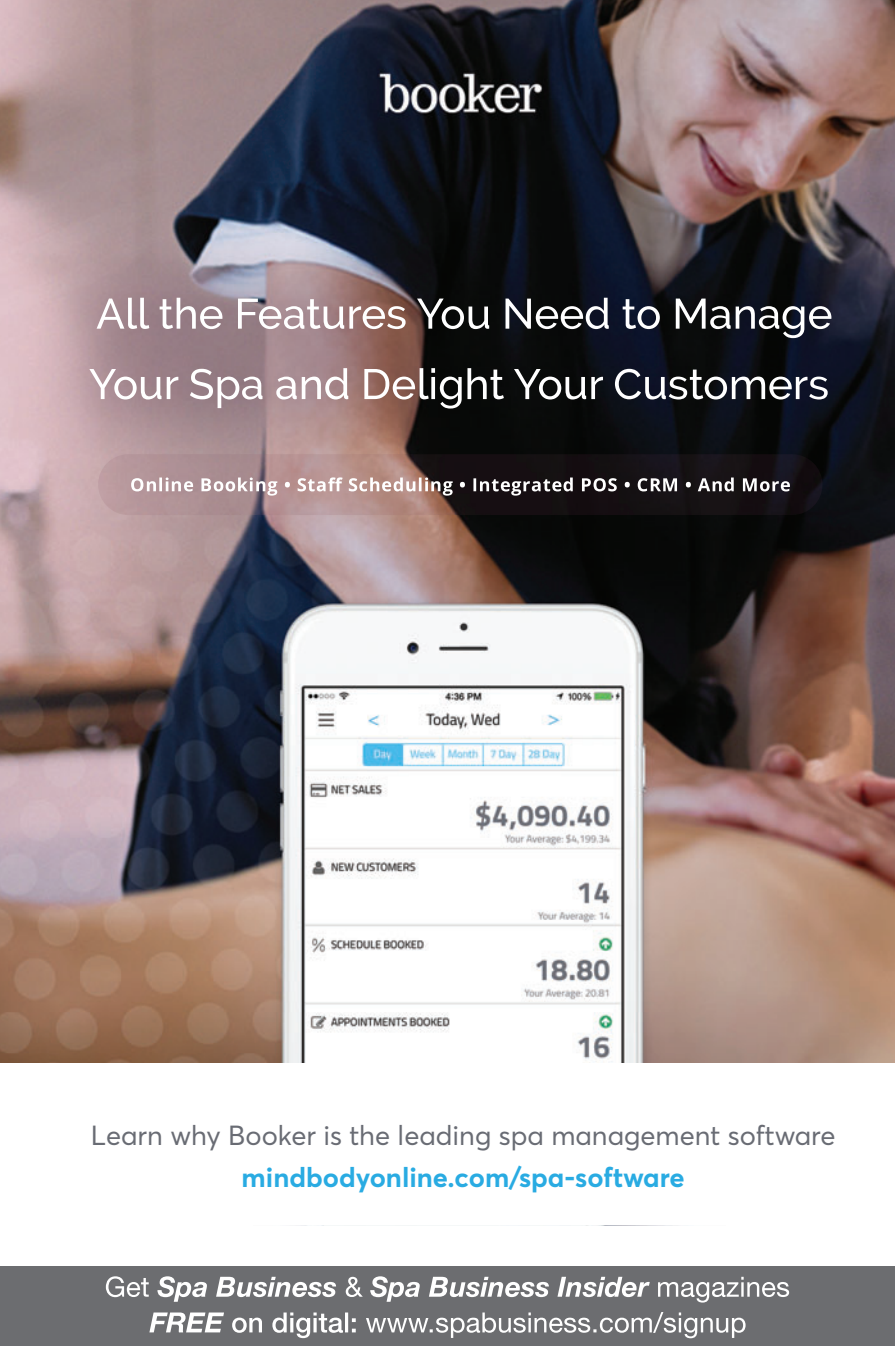
Staff rotas can be created for up to 12 weeks

This includes the Staff Snapshot report which is ideal for appraisals and performance monitoring and just one way our automated functions help with staff retention - something that's imperative given our industry's workforce crisis.

Another key feature is rolling staff rotas which can be created

for up to 12 weeks so operators can boost team morale by helping their employees plan ahead.

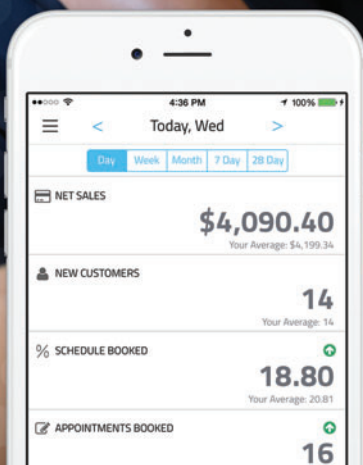
Features such as Core's Repetitive Strain Injury Indicators are even more powerful as they prioritise employee wellbeing. By setting an RSI limit on an individual's working week, operators can protect staff from overexertion. ●



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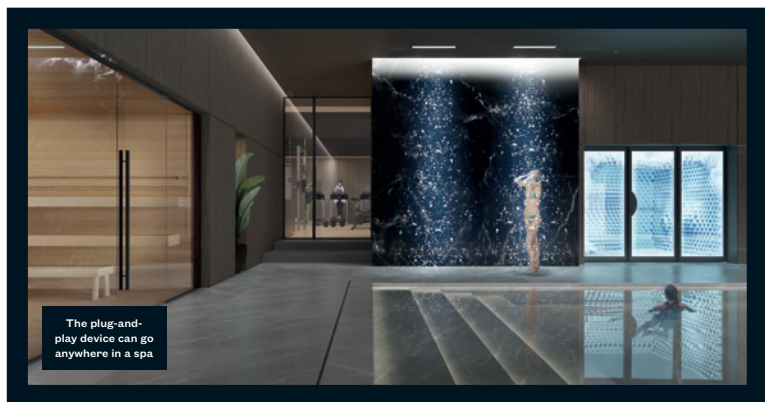


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Product innovation

Spa and wellness industry suppliers tell us about their latest product, treatment and equipment launches



Sara Brenninger reveals TechnoAlpin snow shower recreating alpine winter magic

TechnoAlpin has unveiled Snowsky, a cold therapy device designed to cocoon users in a cascade of delicate snowflakes and provide a cooling effect.

Sara Brenninger, TechnoAlpin product manager, told *Spa Business* that Snowsky has been created to provide a fresh alternative to traditional cold therapy applications in spas.

"When most people think of snow, they imagine delicate snowflakes gently falling from the sky on a cold winter's day. With this in mind, we spent two years exploring

how to simulate a natural snowfall indoors," she said.

Integrated easily into the ceiling of new or existing facilities, Snowsky can be installed in a variety of spa and wellness environments, including as a complementary therapy following an experience shower, over a pool, in a spa entrance area or even outdoors. Operated at room temperature, Snowsky is a silent and compact plug-and-play device.

The 1sq m product requires only 20 litres of water per hour and also features lighting options.



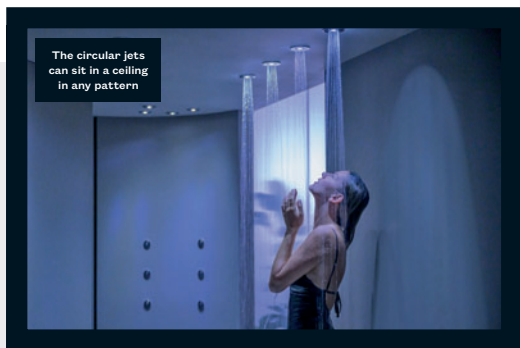
"We spent two years exploring how to simulate a natural snowfall indoors"

spa-kit.net keyword: TechnoAlpin



PHOTO: AQUAFORM

“There are no constraints with this system, only of the imagination”



The circular jets can sit in a ceiling in any pattern

PHOTO: NEW TELECOM

Island Walk is an adaptable alternative to spa showers, says Aquaform's Stefano Moretti

Wet spa specialist Aquaform has created an Island Walk experience for spas to offer in smaller spaces.

Typically, its wide shower heads (35sq cm) can only be placed in a line overhead and need enough room to fit them side-by-side. The Island Walk, however, uses smaller circular jets (8.5cm in diameter) which can sit in a ceiling in any pattern – in a circle, around curved walls or a straight line – so spas can get

really creative with the customer journey in the space they have.

There are four different types of jets – spray, rain, nebulising and aerated tropical – and all are integrated with colour LED bulbs to create different atmospheres.

To relax muscles, spray jets of 40°C can be used with green lights, while nebulising jets at a cooler 26°C can be combined with blue light effects to make users feel regenerated.

Aquaform's newest aerated tropical jet is said to be perfect for a soothing experience when set at 36°C and combined with white light.

Sound and aromatherapy are optional extras as well.

“There are no constraints with this system,” says founder Stefano Moretti, “only of the imagination.”

spa-kit.net keyword:
Aquaform

Natalie Pergar on Eminence's microbiome skincare powered by kombucha

“Are your clients dealing with breakouts, dryness, redness or dullness?” asks Eminence Organics lead skincare trainer, Natalie Pergar. “If so, it may be time to look at their skin's microbiome.”

A healthy skin microbiome promotes a well-functioning skin barrier, she explains, enabling it to retain moisture, protect against stressors and aid skin renewal. Yet environmental stressors can disturb it.

With this in mind, the company has launched its Kombucha Microbiome Collection.

The range includes a foaming cleanser, balancing essence, serum and leave-on mask containing microbiome-friendly



PHOTO: EMINENCE

“The complexion will look more healthy and luminous”

ingredients such as kombucha, and ginger, as well as pre- and pro-biotics.

“The aim is to achieve a complexion that looks healthy and luminous,” she concludes.



The range taps into microbiome-friendly ingredients such as ginger and kombucha

spa-kit.net keywords:
Eminence Organics

Noel Asmar reveals medical scrubs line

Noel Asmar Uniforms is entering the medi-spa and healthcare domain with the launch of its Asmar Scrubs collection.

The pandemic was the catalyst for the collection, says founder and CEO Noel Asmar, adding that "more medically-focused treatments are being offered [in spas] and new approaches to wellness and self-care are emerging".

Consisting of styles for men and women in an extensive size range (from XXS-3XL, including petite and tall lines), the tops and bottoms feature an ample number of well-placed pockets to keep essentials close at hand, badge tabs and reflective branding for safety. The real sellings points are "the fit, the fabric and the feel".



"The uniforms have been specifically made for the way a medical professional moves," says Asmar. "They're comfortable, stretchy and breathable and have a water-repellent finish to improve durability, while also being quick-drying and fade- and pill-resistant."

"They're designed to be modern and flattering and will make anyone look and feel fantastic," Asmar concludes.

spa-kit.net keywords:
Noel Asmar



Colours have been chosen for their healing qualities

They're designed to make anyone feel fantastic

Heinrich Unbescheiden reveals next generation of Unbescheiden Vichy shower

Unbescheiden has unveiled a new Vichy shower model with enhanced functionality and treatment options.

Called Vichy Supérieure, the new shower is equipped with oscillating jets, as well as traditional fixed Vichy jets.

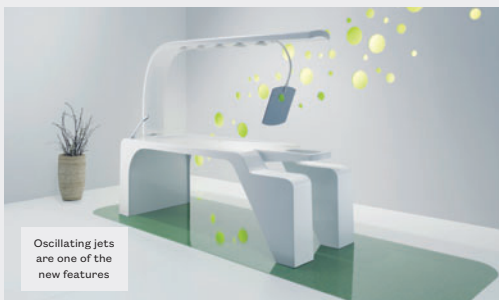
The spouts are integrated into the shower arm and constantly swivel back and forth to ensure the guest's entire body is worked on. In addition, both types of jets can be programmed to accommodate unique treatment sequences while water temperature can also be easily adjusted to complement the ritual.

"It was our goal to totally reinvent the Vichy shower treatment," explains Heinrich Unbescheiden, director of sales and marketing, "we took the time to create a treatment

which offers an attractive journey for guests, but to also design a profitable piece of equipment for operators."

Unbescheiden believes the Vichy Supérieure is resource-savvy thanks to its low water requirements and ability to offer touchless treatments that don't require staff.

spa-kit.net keyword:
Unbescheiden



Oscillating jets are one of the new features



We want to totally reinvent the vichy shower treatment

Hydrafacial's Andrew Stanleick star-struck by JLo partnership

Hydrafacial has gained star status by teaming up with JLo Beauty for its new skincare booster.

Jennifer Lopez is known for her glow, which is recreated by her JLo Glow serum. And it's this hero product that has inspired the booster.

Lopez says: "Hydrafacial is one of my favourite treatments that helps me maintain my glow, so it makes sense that we would come together

The formula features nutrient-rich ingredients to tighten, brighten and hydrate the skin, including a blend of snow mushroom, beetroot and tiger grass.

These ingredients are delivered to the skin via Hydrafacial's vortex fusion technology.

Andrew Stanleick, CEO of Hydrafacial's parent company



Lopez says Hydrafacial is one of her favourite treatments

BeautyHealth, says: "We're thrilled to be among one of the first companies to bring celebrity beauty to the professional skincare space... we're putting a retail brand consumers know in the hands of the skincare professionals they trust the most."

spa-kit.net keyword:
Hydrafacial



PHOTO: HYDRAFACIAL

“We're bringing celebrity beauty to the professional skincare space

Annee de Mamiel unveils bioactive serum for stress-induced dullness

British spa brand de Mamiel has introduced the Fatigue Fix serum for skin affected by external aggressors such as UV, pollution, poor lifestyle habits and lack of sleep.

Annee de Mamiel, company founder and integrative clinical facialist, explains: "Fatigue Fix is the latest addition to our 'Fix' range and is designed to target stress-induced dullness and dehydration. This occurs when long-term elevated cortisol slows down cellular turnover and disrupts the protective skin barrier, reducing the skin's ability to retain moisture".

She adds that "the advanced formulation is clinically proven to repair and protect the skin and give a much-needed glow to revitalised, tired, dry skin and restore radiance".

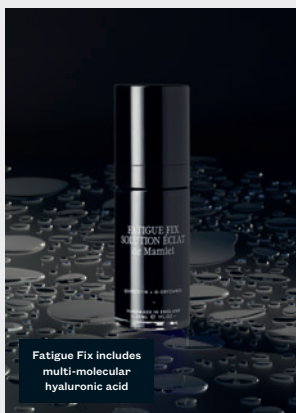


PHOTO: DE MAMIEL

The formula is powered by rock samphire, ferulic acid, optical pigments, bio-fermented minerals and multi-molecular hyaluronic acid, as well as polygluconic acid, prebiotic glycoin and superoxide dismutase.

It will be used in de Mamiel tailor-made spa rituals when relevant to the guest's needs.

spa-kit.net keywords:
de Mamiel



Fatigue Fix includes multi-molecular hyaluronic acid

“The advanced formulation is clinically proven to repair and protect the skin



The RLX Satori
lounger can supplement
treatments or work as
a touchless option

Yield management isn't just for the airline industry, says Sammy Gharieni

Spa operators are faced with numerous operational challenges, including the efficient utilisation of booking systems, staff and facilities to optimise profitability – particularly the optimal use space, both revenue and non-revenue-generating.

For a spa to achieve its potential as a tangible asset, operators know they have to be dynamic in their pricing, availability and service offering and although savvy managers will generally advise against discounting across the board – particularly in luxury markets where it can be seen to devalue a brand – yield management has proven to be a powerful revenue maximisation tool.

Opportunity for more profit

"We believe spa and wellness operators need to be creative with revenue management and take a cue from how the airline and hotel industry manages unused inventory," says Sammy Gharieni. "The products on offer are perishable and capacity is fixed, so using yield management tools brings into greater focus what can also be done with non-revenue-generating spaces in order to drive maximum profits."

There are many options in the yield management toolbox: adding extras



Sammy Gharieni

Touchless tech can make a valuable contribution to yield management

on top of existing treatments can increase profits and differentiate spa offerings, for example.

Gharieni's Mind/Body Wellness Technologies have been designed to work both individually and as standalone treatments and also to be integrated into a spa's treatment menu to create bespoke treatments and offer unique experiences.

Touchless drives ROI

Gharieni's RLX Satori Wellness Lounger provides clients with an effortless way to improve their mental and physical wellbeing while creating a deeply relaxing and enjoyable experience – without the need for a dedicated therapist.

As a standalone treatment, this creates an opportunity to make use

of non-revenue-generating spaces, while cutting down on therapist time. It also provides an instant solution for staff shortages, while additional benefits include the delivery of consistent results and reduction in therapist fatigue.

Gharieni's touchless technologies can also prevent lost revenue due to unexpected unavailability of staff.

"Touchless technologies can make a valuable contribution to yield management in many ways," says Gharieni. "By adding value to spa protocols in treatment rooms which traditionally only generate revenue when a therapist is involved, or integrating them into non-revenue-generating spaces, turning them into sources of income."

"To date yield management in spas is not being used to its full potential" says Gharieni. "In order to maximise it, accurate assessments must be made of spa's individual needs, as the pursuit and delivery of meaningful experiences should remain the main priority for any wellness space – one that combines innovative products and services to provide value and align with what's important to guests."

More: www.gharieni.com

➔ spa-kit.net keyword:
Gharieni

Spongellé buffers create spa experience at home or on-the-go, says Elaine Binder

Spongellé founder and CEO Elaine Binder – an internationally trained perfumer – has expanded her company's collection of fragrant body wash-infused buffers.

Los Angeles-based Spongellé has recently introduced The Private Reserve Spongellé collection, a line of exfoliating travel-sized sponges which have been infused with skin-nourishing herbal extracts of yuzu, edelweiss and vetiver root.

Available in Morning Bloom, Peony Flower, Black Orchid and Blackberry scents, the new buffers have been created to offer floral and berry scents for a holistic bathing experience while on the go.

Binder comments: "These buffers will cleanse, exfoliate, massage and hydrate the



PHOTO: SPONGELLE

"These buffers will cleanse, exfoliate, massage and hydrate the skin"

skin for a spa-like pampering experience at home or on the go. Each sponge creates a scented lather that endures for at least seven washes per product."

spa-kit.net keyword:
Spongellé



The travel-sized sponges are infused with different scents

STYLING: JESSICA

Guenther Poellabauer introduces TAC vending machines

Customers can now check into a spa, pay for extras and check out without having to engage with staff or carry cash, thanks to TAC's latest launch.

"Our vision is to provide the most digitised solution in the thermal bath and leisure market," says MD Guenther Poellabauer, "so employees can concentrate on pampering guests."

The software company has created a self-service vending machine which integrates with its technology and dispenses TAC's RFID wristbands.

Using TAC's Webshop, for example, guests can purchase spa tickets and sign contracts in advance and collect the bands from the machines using a QR code. This ensures fast lane entry, even in times of staff shortages.

TAC Wrist 144 is a wall-mounted dispenser which can



PHOTO: TAC

"Our vision is to provide the most digitised solution"

hold 144 bands, while TAC Wrist 900 is a freestanding machine with the capacity to hold up to 900 bracelets.

The company has collaborated with third-parties to develop other self-service vending machines which dispense items such as snacks and beverages, cold drinks and towels. ●



PHOTO: TAC

The machines can hold either 144 or 900 wrist bands

spa-kit.net keywords:
The Assistant Company

The TechnoAlpin Snowroom made our Grand Aufguss Masters event extra special, says Robert Heinevetter

The aufguss master enters the sauna arena, filled to the last seat with an audience eager for another gripping storytelling ritual. Waves of heat and aromas of citrus fruits and herbs waft over the audience as the performer skilfully waves and whips his towel across the steaming stones.

"And don't forget to cool down afterwards," called Robert Heinevetter, world champion aufguss trainer, as he brought the Grand Aufguss Masters 2022 event to a close.

Contrast bathing effect

In recent years, there's been a rise in demand for large, communal event saunas – known as sauna aufguss – that seat 40+ people. However, to get the most out of any sauna session it's essential to follow the heat with a burst of cold to create the contrast bathing effect, ensuring the body receives the full physiological benefits.

This can reduce inflammation, relieve muscle soreness, stimulate circulation, support mental wellbeing and contribute to fat-burning and improved sleep.

The ritual of combining social sauna and cold therapy is fast

Snow and cold air are the perfect combination after aufguss



PHOTOS: TECHNOALPIN



Everyone was delighted by this special sensorial experience

Robert Heinevetter

becoming a hot trend, according to the Global Wellness Institute, with converts gathering to share the experience at a growing number of well-attended events.

One such example – Grand Aufguss Masters – was recently organised by Heinevetter in Satama Sauna Park near Berlin. Sponsoring the event this year was Italian snowroom specialist TechnoAlpin Indoor, a company passionate about championing cold therapy and its numerous health benefits.

To ensure guests complemented their sauna performances appropriately, TechnoAlpin Indoor supplied one of its signature snowrooms filled with real powder snow and refreshing cold air.

This meant aufguss masters could hand out portions of snow to the audience to help cool them down during performances. Plus, visitors and performers alike could chill out after the heat of the sauna with a revitalising visit to the TechnoAlpin Indoor Snowroom.

"We had a great variety of aufguss masters competing from 10 different nations, all with different techniques and strengths," said Heinevetter, "but the TechnoAlpin SnowRoom made our event extra special. It was always well attended and everyone was delighted by this special sensorial experience. It was a gentle yet memorable and effective method of cooling down.

"The TechnoAlpin Indoor SnowRoom offers something completely different from traditional cold therapy modalities," says Robert Heinevetter, world champion aufguss trainer. "Instead, the room filled with fresh snow right after the aufguss providing a special and unforgettable moment to complete the contrast bathing cycle," he added. ●

More: www.indoor.technoalpin.com

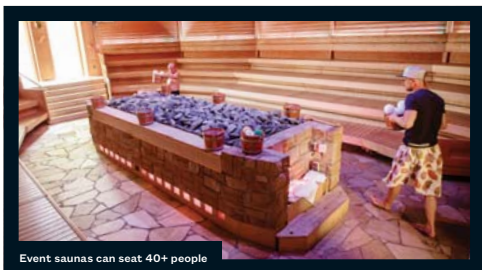


PHOTO: TECHNOALPIN

Event saunas can seat 40+ people

➤ spa-kit.net keyword: TechnoAlpin

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COLD CALL

Two new studies reveal the potential benefits of exposure to low temperatures and swimming in icy waters

Cold is the new hot in spa circles, but sceptics question whether the benefits of such practices are proven. Two separate studies published in August and September, however, suggest there are still avenues to explore.

Boosting 'good' fat

In a review of multiple scientific papers, researchers from Norway say there's evidence that an icy swim may increase 'good' body fat and reduce the risk of diabetes.

The review, published in the *International Journal of Circumpolar Health**, analysed 104 studies looking at the health benefits of cold water swimming, paying attention to sample size and other limitations.

Themes covered by studies that were eligible for review included inflammation, adipose tissue, blood circulation, immune system and oxidative stress. Some of these provided evidence that cardiovascular risk factors are improved in swimmers who have adapted to the cold. Yet others suggest the workload on the heart is still increased.

The authors did, however, highlight the positive links between cold water swimming and brown adipose tissue (BAT), a type of 'good' body fat that's activated by cold. BAT burns calories to maintain body temperature unlike 'bad' white fat which stores energy.

According to the review, cold exposure in water – or air – appears also to increase the

production of adiponectin, a protein which plays a key role in protecting against insulin resistance, diabetes and other diseases.

In conclusion, the researchers said that more evidence was needed to identify risks associated with cold water immersion and this is something we explore in more detail on p62.

Tumour suppression

Another separate study by Swedish scientists at the Karolinska Institute** has found that low temperatures make it more difficult for cancer cells to grow.

Published in the journal *Nature*, the paper compared tumour growth and survival rates in mice with various types of cancer, when exposed to cold versus warm living conditions. Mice acclimatised to temperatures of 4°C had significantly slower tumour growth and lived nearly twice as long compared with mice in rooms of 30°C.

The theory is that turning down the thermostat activates heat-producing brown fat that consumes the sugars that tumours need to thrive.

Corresponding author professor Yiwei Cao says: "We found that cold-activated brown adipose tissue [BAT] competes against tumours for glucose and can help inhibit tumour growth in mice."

"Our findings suggest that cold exposure could be a promising novel approach to cancer therapy, although this needs to be validated in larger clinical studies." ●

Low temperatures make it more difficult for cancer cells to grow

*Source: Mercer, JB et al. *Health effects of voluntary exposure to cold water – a continuing debate. International Journal of Circumpolar Health*. September 2022

**Source: Cao, Y et al. *Brown-fat-mediated tumour suppression by cold-altered global metabolism. Nature*. August 2022

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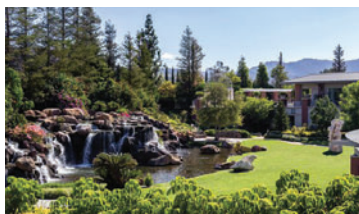


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