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LEISURE management

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VOLUME 30 NUMBER 3

WHAT DOES
THE NEW
GOVERNMENT
MEAN FOR
LEISURE?

BRIGID SIMMONDS

ON THE FUTURE FOR
BRITAIN'S PUBS

**Cardiff International White
Water:** How the Olympic
standard facility took shape

**BIG
ambitions**

ABU DHABI CREATING
A LANDMARK WILDLIFE
PARK IN THE DESERT

Aberdeen's Sports Village - fit for future

Historically, Aberdeen's cold, dark winters have been the defence of many for not participating in sports - but no more as Aberdeen's Sports Village is officially opened.

The complex, a £28m joint venture of Aberdeen City Council, the University of Aberdeen and sportsScotland, was designed by award winning architects, Reich & Hall, to meet the diverse needs of the people of Aberdeen and the wider community.



In addition to the customary sporting facilities included in the design, the complex also boasts an indoor 3G football pitch (the first of its kind in the UK), an indoor sports hall featuring sprung timber flooring, a 135m, six-lane running straight... all in all, an indoor solution for any outdoor activity.

Adhering to the Council's 'fit for future' initiative that aims to provide a comprehensive, high quality range of sporting facilities; Reich & Hall specified Armitage Venesta (AV) whose products they have found to be reliable. Demonstrating it's flexibility, AV's cubicle range, Stadia, which is totally impervious to water, was used in all changing, shower and washroom areas. Choosing from an extensive colour palette, the architect co-ordinated the cubicle ranges on each level with the three colours within the facilities' logo.

AV's pre-plumbed system, IPS *Evolve*, with factory fitted sanitaryware, was also colour co-ordinated and used throughout to provide easy clean surfaces that promote hygiene and allow easy access for ongoing maintenance.

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Stadia

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BACKING TOURISM

New secretary of state at the DCMS, Jeremy Hunt, used one of his first ministerial outings to boost the prospects of UK tourism, saying in his speech, "I believe the tourism industry is one of our most undervalued national assets," and pledging to the industry that "if you're prepared to strain every sinew to take tourism forward, we'll give you a government that stands foresquare behind you." It doesn't get much better than that in terms of rhetoric.

So what will this mean in practice? Cuts will come first, as with all departments, but there seems a clear recognition of the potential value of tourism to the economy, so there will also be initiatives to stimulate growth, including a new fund designed to create £1bn worth of PR and marketing for Britain up to and around London 2012.

Tourism is the UK's fifth biggest industry, with visitor spending of around £90bn each year and an estimated direct and indirect value of £115bn to the national economy. It generates more than £16bn in earnings, welcomes 30 million inbound tourists annually and employs 1.5m people.

He also suggested that if tourism is encouraged, it could be the fourth fastest growing sector over the next 10 years, indirectly or directly supporting around 3 million jobs by 2020.

Visitor numbers fell by over 2 million in 2009 when compared with 2008, however, those visitors who came actually spent more during their visit, offsetting the fall in numbers. Visit Britain is forecasting a further decline in numbers of 0.7 per cent for this year.

The global tourism market is increasingly competitive and

"Factors like the weakness of sterling and the recession have improved our tourism balance of payments, and overnight trips by domestic tourists were up 7 per cent in 2009, with spending up 4 per cent. Overnight trips to the seaside were up by an enormous four million"

the UK is losing ground against destinations with aggressive tourism investment strategies, such as Dubai and China, which have improved their ranking in the international table of receipts, pushing the UK from 5th to 7th place.

So what will the new government do to help? In addition to the PR fund and £1bn target, details of which will be announced at the end of September, there will be a drive to reduce red tape and talk of 'simplifying' the work of the quangos that affect tourism. Very significantly, we now have a dedicated tourism minister in John Penrose.

Factors like the weakness of sterling and the recession have improved our tourism balance of payments and overnight trips by domestic tourists were up 7 per cent in 2009, with spending up 4 per cent. Overnight trips to the seaside were up by an enormous four million. With UK tourists currently splashing 36 per cent of their tourism spend in the UK, Hunt has challenged the industry to work to increase this to 50 per cent and has called on the industry to collaborate with the DCMS to make this happen.

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Buyers' guide:

For suppliers of products and services in the leisure markets, turn to p72

World Leisure

£61m Pompidou- Metz opens

Centre Pompidou-Metz, the offshoot of Paris's famous Pompidou Centre, opened in mid-May in France.

The £70.8m (£60.8m, US\$89m) new cultural centre, located in the north eastern city of Metz, is the first provincial branch of the famous art gallery.

Owned by Communauté d'Agglomération de Metz Métropole, the building was designed by Japan-based Shigeru Ban Architects (SBA) in partnership with architect Jean de Gastines.

The centre will boast paintings, sculptures, installations, graphic arts, photography, video, sound works, film,



The building was designed by architects Shigeru Ban and Jean de Gastines

architecture, design and more within its 5,000 sq m (107,000 sq ft) of gallery space. Artists featured will include Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso and Joan Miro.

The arts centre includes public areas in addition to the many exhibition areas, a creative studio for projections, an auditorium, and a restaurant-cafeteria.

Aldar to develop Yas Island waterpark

Abu Dhabi-based Aldar Properties is to open a 16.4-hectare waterpark on Yas Island, the company's major leisure and entertainment destination, in 2012.

The park will feature more than 40 rides and attractions including four one-of-a-kind rides that Aldar said have never been seen before in a water park.

Conceptual planning approval from the Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council has already been received, while UK-based Atkins has been appointed as the lead designer for the project.

The prequalification process for main contractors for the scheme has now been



The park is scheduled to open in 2012

launched and construction work is scheduled to commence in July 2010.

Aldar has also committed to making the new attraction one of the most sustainable water parks in the world.



The new wizard-based theme park

Harry Potter at Universal Orlando unveiled

The world's best known wizard has arrived in Florida, US, with the opening of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Universal Orlando Resort.

The new attraction comprises three themed elements - *Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey*, a newly created ride system at the heart of Wizarding World, plus *Flight of the Hippogriff* and *Dragon Challenge*.

Forbidden Journey involves visitors venturing through Hogwarts Castle, which includes iconic locations taken from the films, including Dumbledore's office, the Gryffindor Common Room and the Defence Against the Dark Arts Classroom.

The full ride, including the queue line, takes about an hour.

Major revamp for Baltimore art museum

Following a four-year US\$10m (£6.7m, €8.1m) funding package from the State of Maryland, US, the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) is to commence a US\$24m (£16m, €19.4m) capital renovation project.

The project includes renovating galleries for three major art collections - contemporary, American, and African - in addition to improving visitor facilities and upgrading essential infrastructure. The work is expected to be completed in 2014 in time for the BMA's 100th anniversary.

The scheme builds on the successful renovations of the Cone Wing (a US\$4m [£2.7m, €3.2m] project in 2001) and European Art galleries.

Plans will be more fully developed after an architect is selected for the scheme, but proposed improvements include state-of-the-art lighting in the Contemporary Art galleries to permit changing displays of prints, drawings and photography and a gallery devoted to the great works created by Maryland artists.

CSR buys Mountain Creek

Crystal Springs Resort (CSR) is the new owner of Mountain Creek, the New York metropolitan area's closest winter resort.

The acquisition will create the region's largest four-season resort destination, spanning five miles through the Vernon Valley region towns of Vernon, Hardyston, Hamburg and Franklin. The combined resorts currently offer 15,000 acres of year-round amenities including golf courses, spas, hotels, an 80,000-bottle wine cellar, ski and snowboard venues, a waterpark, and mountain bike park.

Mountain Creek has been owned by Canadian-based Intrawest ULC for the past 12 years, during which period the resort installed five new lifts and ongoing snowmaking upgrades, the latter including – at the time – the largest single installation in North America.



The resort is located in New Jersey

In the non-winter seasons, the resort is home to the Mountain Creek Waterpark – whose original builders are the principal owners of Crystal Springs.

ACE backs new public health initiative

A comprehensive new public health initiative designed to encourage more people across the US to become physically active has been backed by the American Council on Exercise (ACE).

Initially proposed in 2006, the National Physical Activity Plan (NPAP) aims to help remove barriers that prevent people taking part in exercise, as well as also tackling obesity levels.

ACE – one of the world's largest fitness training organisations – has joined with industry experts to implement the plan, which covers areas such as school policies and workplace programmes.



The strategy aims to boost participation

Scott Goudeseune, president and chief executive officer of ACE, said: "We believe in the need for a united front to inspire and empower Americans to lead more physically active lifestyles."

Sustainable Mexican resort and spa opens

The Imanta Punta de Mita resort hotel and spa has opened on Mexico's Riviera Nayarit near Puerto Vallarta on the country's Pacific coast.

Designed by the US-based architectural firm Overland Partners with an emphasis on sustainability and luxury, Imanta features seven accommodation lots, each constructed with locally-sourced and environmentally friendly materials.

Five free-standing, Casas provide living areas, indoor/outdoor showers, pools and

terraces, while a further two two-bedroom Casonas include a full kitchen, living room, dining room, pool and terrace.

Also available is a full-service spa, with naturopathic treatments in-room, on the beach or in the spa itself, plus other activities such as biking, hiking, bird-watching, eco-adventure tours and horse riding.

Sailing, kayaking, kite surfing, surfing, diving and whale-watching are all on offer. Golfers are provided for by six courses within an hour of the resort.

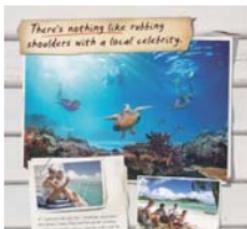
easyHotel to open first hotel outside Europe

Budget hotel group easyHotel is to launch its first site outside Europe, with the easyHotel Dubai Jebel Ali.

The 216-bedroom hotel will remain faithful to the brand's 'no frills' approach, with those who book early will pay less, and hotel services such as housekeeping, luggage storage, early check in/late check out, vended snacks and wi-fi internet access will be available at an additional charge.

Calum Russell, easyHotel commercial director, said: "Dubai is well known for being a luxury destination, but not everyone can afford the price tags that luxury demands.

"We believe the easyHotel Jebel Ali will provide a great opportunity for those looking to stay in Dubai at an affordable price."



TA has spent £2.5m on the campaign

Tourism Australia launches new campaign

Tourism Australia (TA) has launched a new global advertising campaign called *There's Nothing Like Australia*.

Featuring personal recommendations from Australian people, the £2.5m campaign uses media to show what is special about Australia.

TA managing director, Andrew McEvoy said at the heart of the campaign was a new online interactive map of Australia, featuring almost 30,000 images and stories submitted by the Australian people.

"Our research found that 80 per cent of Australians wanted to promote their country as a travel destination so we invited them to share their pictures and stories at the campaign website," he said.

Property

ACC backs City Square vision

Plans for a major multi-million pound overhaul of Union Terrace Gardens in the heart of Aberdeen have been accepted in principle by the local authority.

Businessman Sir Ian Wood has pledged £50m towards the cost of the City Square Project, which has received the backing of Aberdeen City Council (ACC) following a debate into the future of the site.

An international design competition is now expected to get underway to advance the £140m project, despite more than half of respondents to a recent consultation opposing the development.

Proposals for Union Terrace Gardens include reclaiming 5 acres (22 hectares) of land by raising the site and covering a dual carriageway and a cultural hub.

An outdoor performance stage, water features designed to reflect the impor-



The proposed new look City Square

tance of Aberdeen as a major North Sea port, an amphitheatre and green space have also been mooted as part of the proposed city square development.

THFC unveils revised stadium proposals

Tottenham Hotspur Football Club (THFC) has unveiled its revised plans for the Northumberland Development Project.

In addition to a new 56,250-seat stadium, the plans now boast a redesigned southern area of the North London site to provide a new vision for a proposed new hotel and residential buildings.

An enlarged public square on a raised podium extending from the High Road to Worcester Avenue, and a club store with a museum form part of the scheme.

Meanwhile, a new courtyard will provide a setting for the retained Grade II-listed Warrington House and three



Plans include a raised public square

other historic properties, which will be refurbished and brought back into use.

The club's Bill Nicholson Gates and Golden Cockerel statue will also be re-used within the new public realm.

Alfa Laval regeneration plans approved

Assael Architecture's plans for the regeneration of a former 1.85-hectare (4.6-acre) industrial site in Brentford, west London, have been given the green light.

Hounslow Council has approved proposals for a £100m redevelopment of the Alfa Laval site, which has been derelict for more than two decades and will see the existing Alfa tower retained.

The plans – submitted by the London-based architects on behalf of Carlton Properties – include a 180-bedroom and a

151-bedroom hotel; 4,205sq m (45,262sq ft) of office space and residential units.

New public open spaces, pedestrian and cycle routes and "extensive" ecological improvements are also incorporated in plans for the regeneration scheme.

Assael Architecture managing director John Assael said: "Having secured consent, a strategic and derelict site can be brought back into use and the challenging transformation of this pivotal part of Brentford can finally get underway."

Developer launches Leeds Arena legal action

Montpellier Estates has launched legal action against Leeds City Council (LCC) after the developer was unsuccessful in its bid to build a new entertainment arena in the city.

According to the *Yorkshire Evening Post*, the company is now poised to issue deceit proceedings against the council, which said the new Leeds Arena would be built in Claypit Lane.

Montpellier Estates argued that LCC had "actively concealed" plans by not including Claypit Lane on a shortlist of potential sites.

A LCC spokesperson said: "Montpellier Estates has indicated that it may seek an injunction to prevent Leeds City Council from entering into any contract for the development of the Leeds Arena."



The pumphouse will be regenerated

Barry pumphouse contractor appointed

Swansea-based contractor John Weaver has been appointed by the Vale of Glamorgan Council to revitalise a historic Pumphouse in Barry.

The Grade II-listed No1 Dock Hydraulic Pumping House is set to benefit from a £1m external restoration designed by Pembroke-based Acanthus Holden Architects as part of an Innovation Quarter for the town.

Funded by the council and the Welsh Assembly Government, the plans have been designed to preserve one of Barry's most important industrial heritage sites.

Council leader Gordon Kemp said: "This important Innovation Quarter project will save a historic building for the benefit of future generations."

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Health & Fitness

Anytime confirms UK plans

US-based operator Anytime Fitness has revealed plans to open 50 sites in the UK and Ireland by the end of 2012 after it secured a master franchise agreement.

The company, which is looking to expand its international operations, runs 1,250 clubs in the US and has also opened nearly 100 facilities in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico and India.

Potential sites are currently being considered in the Greater London area and across southern England, with locations including suburban markets near large cities and smaller towns that do not already have a health club.

Anytime Fitness' UK clubs will be 4,000sq ft (371.6sq m) in size, fitted with a range of cv and strength machines and open 24 hours a day. Membership is likely to cost between £25 and £35 per month.



The US-based group is set to enter the UK

Justin McDonell, Anytime Fitness master franchisee for Australia and New Zealand, will lead the master franchise group for the UK and Ireland.

Pure Gym announces expansion plans

Health club operator Pure Gym has confirmed plans to open 24 new sites across the UK over the next two years, following a £10m investment in the company.

A successful fundraising effort by Magenta Partners - led by principal investor and retail entrepreneur Tom Singh - will allow the health and fitness operator to add to its existing five sites.

Pure Gym, which currently runs health clubs in Sheffield, Manchester, Leeds, Edinburgh and Wolverhampton, offers monthly memberships starting at £9.99 and provides 24 hour access to all of its sites, seven days a week.



Pure Gym aims to open 24 new clubs

Two new clubs - Birmingham and Glasgow - are set to open shortly, while a further six sites are in the pipeline, with Aberdeen, Belfast and Derby among prospective Pure Gym locations.

New £25m Harlow facility unveiled

Harlow Leisurezone - a new £25m leisure complex being developed as part of the wider regeneration of the Essex town - opened its doors to the public on 23 June.

Facilities at the new centre will include a 25m swimming pool with seating for 300 spectators, a learner pool, an indoor tennis hall and a sports hall built to national club standards for badminton, basketball and trampolining.

A gym, three fitness studios, four squash courts and a health spa will also

offer at the centre, as well as a lounge bar/restaurant, a nursery and a café.

Abingdon-based contractor Leadbitter had been due to hand the complex over to the Harlow Gateway Partnership by Christmas last year, before an issue with the installation of fire dampers delayed the project's completion.

Harlow Council leader Andrew Johnson said: "[Leisurezone] puts Harlow back at the forefront of sporting provision in the region and is a tremendous asset."

£100,000 revamp for Atherstone facility

Plans for a £100,000 revamp of the Lifetimes Fitness Suite at Atherstone Leisure Complex have been given the green light by North Warwickshire Borough Council (NWBC).

The venue will benefit from new equipment and technical advice from Matrix Fitness Systems as part of the work to improve facilities for users.

IFI-accredited cv and strength equipment from Matrix is set to be offered at the fitness suite, which will benefit from new flooring and decor.

NWBC leisure facilities manager Peter Wheaton said: "This investment in the Lifetimes Fitness Suite at Atherstone Leisure Complex will ensure we keep our commitment to help improve health and wellbeing opportunities for the community."



The centre will include a fitness suite

Green light for new Rushden complex

A new £13m leisure centre is to be built in Rushden, Northamptonshire, after the development was given the green light by the local authority.

East Northamptonshire Council approved plans for the Manor Park Leisure Centre, which will boast a six-lane, 25m swimming pool and teaching pool and a fitness suite, as well as leisure water facilities.

A six-court sports hall and a crèche are also included as part of the Faulkner Browns Architects-designed plans, which will now go before the Government Office for the East Midlands for final approval.

Manor Park Leisure Centre is set to replace the town's existing Splash Leisure Pool and Pemberton Centre.

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Commercial

Donington appoints new leaseholders

New leaseholders have been appointed at the Donington Park motor racing circuit near Kegworth, Leicestershire.

Kevin Wheatcroft, the son of the late owner Tom Wheatcroft, has signed a deal with Worcestershire-based property investment specialist the Adroit Group to help restore the circuit to its former glory.

Donington has been part of British motor racing for 80 years, but in recent times it found itself mired in operational and financial turmoil.

When it was awarded the British Grand Prix ahead of Silverstone in Northamptonshire, the previous operator



Adroit's Steve Watton (left) with Broome (middle) and Wheatcroft (right)

was unable to secure the necessary funding and went into administration.

Adroit managing director David Broome said: "Through a calm, cautious,

credible and sensible approach, we know that we have the experience, expertise and absolute commitment to bring the glory years back to Donington."

Goals unveils first US football centre

Goals Soccer Centres has unveiled its first five-a-side football venue in the US, with a new facility in Los Angeles, California.

Officially opened by former US footballer Alexi Lalas, the new facility includes 10 five-a-side pitches and one seven-a-side pitch fitted with rubber crumb turf, as well as a clubhouse.

Goals Soccer Centres managing director Keith Rogers said of the launch: "We are confident that the Goals concept will be very successful in California.

"Our centre opening coincides with the 2010 FIFA World Cup and we expect to benefit from the subsequent euphoria."



Goals has unveiled its first US site

The opening of the company's first US site follows an announcement at the end of April that three new UK sites are set to open during the current financial year, with plans to roll out six venues in 2011.



A nine-screen multiplex is planned

Cineworld to open new Wembley multiplex

Cinema operator Cineworld Group has secured an agreement with property group Quintain Estates and Development for a multi-screen venue at Wembley City, London.

Cineworld, which was founded in 1995 and runs nearly 80 sites in the UK and Ireland, has agreed a 25-year lease for a nine-screen cinema adjacent to Wembley Stadium.

Capable of accommodating 1,800 people in total, the cinema is due to open in 2013 as part of the 280,000sq ft (26,013sq m) Wembley City leisure and retail hub.

Cineworld chief executive officer Steve Wiener said: "We are delighted to have been chosen to be the cinema operator for Wembley City."

Silverstone's Stowe Complex opened

The new Stowe Complex at the Silverstone motor racing circuit, Northamptonshire, has opened.

Its focal point is a new multi-surface 1.088 mile (1.751km) fully-licensed race track, which can be used to demonstrate chassis control systems such as ESP and ABS on modern vehicles.

The complex is also home to a new split braking area and a three-lane irrigated wet handling pad, which provides drivers with varying degrees of grip.

Elsewhere at Silverstone, the Pit and Paddock Complex - scheduled for completion in 2011 - will provide new garages, a race control building, a media centre, hospitality and VIP spectator zones, as well as a primary paddock.

Away from the track, two new hospitality buildings have been constructed with an eye on the automotive and corporate events markets. The first group of units will serve the new Stowe Complex and the second the existing Southern Circuit.



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Hospitality

Mayor's tax plans slammed

Some of the world's largest hotel companies have written to London mayor Boris Johnson, slamming plans to introduce a levy on hotel developments in order to fund the Crossrail project.

In a bid to raise £600m towards the £16bn route between Heathrow Airport and Canary Wharf via the West End and City of London, Johnson has proposed a 'tax' of £60 per sq m in Central London and £82 per sq m on the Isle of Dogs.

A letter signed by companies including International Hotels Group, Wyndham Hotels and Travelodge claimed the plan would jeopardise future growth.

The letter said: "Given your previous strong support to the tourism industry in London, we hope you see the folly of introducing this tax and choose not to press ahead with its implementation."



Crossrail is set to cost £16bn to develop

Whitbread's chief executive Alan Parker added: "Imposing this levy will act as a disincentive for Premier Inn and other hotel providers."

Hospitality firms to receive music refund

Hotel, restaurant and pub operators are set to be able to claim refunds from Phonographic Performance Ltd (PPL) following a successful appeal against recorded music tariffs.

Claim forms are now being sent out to PPL-licensed properties after the Copyright Tribunal ruled last October that tariff increases dating back to 2005-2006 had been "unreasonable".

Businesses which paid excess charges during the period are now set to claim a share of £15m, following the appeal by the British Hospitality Association (BHA) and British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA).



PPL-licensed pubs could be refunded

BHA deputy chief executive Martin Couchman said: "This successful result shows, once again, the importance of having a strong trade association to defend the industry's interests."

'Fair Hotels' campaign launched in Ireland

More than 40 hotels across Ireland have signed up to a new campaign designed to encourage consumers to support hospitality businesses that promote the fair treatment of their staff.

The Fair Hotels initiative, which was unveiled at Liberty Hall Theatre in Dublin, will use the collective purchasing power of 850,000 workers to make an 'ethical choice' about where they stay.

Endorsed by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and confederations in 120

countries around the world, the Fair Hotels campaign is set to see more than 60 events held at participating properties between 2010 and 2013.

A spokesperson for the Irish workers' union Siptu said: "More than 40 hotels across Ireland in which workers have collective bargaining rights have signed up to the campaign which will encourage trade unions and their members to use fair hotels for family holidays and breaks, conferences and meetings."

Aldo Zilli opens second Center Parcs eatery

Center Parcs has teamed up with celebrity chef Aldo Zilli to open a Zilli Café at Center Parcs Elveden Forest.

The restaurant will be the second Zilli-branded site within the Center Parcs portfolio, the first having been launched at Longleat Forest in 2009.

Located at the Aqua Sana Spa, the 100-cover restaurant replaces the Conservatory Café and will offer a menu by Zilli himself.

Center Parcs has signed a three-year franchise agreement with Zilli and the group is hoping to add Zilli Cafés to the other two Center Parcs.

Center Parcs chief executive Martin Dalby said: "We know that Zilli Café has been a huge hit with our guests at Longleat Forest and I am sure that it will be at Elveden Forest too."



The proposed Liverpool property

Work begins on £15m Liverpool hotel

Work has begun on the £15m Hotel Indigo in Liverpool, which is partly being funded by a £10m package from the Co-operative Bank.

The 151-bed, four-star property is being built by Wigan-based contractor Denizen and will be owned and operated by Sanguine Hospitality. Falconer Chester Hall Architects and its associate company, FCH Interiors, have been appointed to design the hotel, which is due to open to the public in spring 2011.

Nick Taplin, Sanguine's managing director, said: "In spite of one of the worst recessions in recent times, the city region continues to grow as a destination of choice for domestic and international visitors."

Spa & Wellness

Brand extension for The Sanctuary

The women-only Sanctuary spa brand is to be extended with a series of 'High Street' day spas opening around the UK.

The first in a series of the High Street spas are scheduled to open on Cambridge's Grand Arcade in July 2010, followed by Hill Rise in Richmond and Bristol's Cabot Circus in Quaker's Friars.

Each facility will incorporate five treatment rooms, which will comprise three multi-purpose treatment rooms and two Skin Spa/Medi treatment rooms. There will also be two champagne nail bar manicure stations as well as a further two mani/pedi stations in the spa area.



An artist's impression of Sanctuary's Cambridge site

A relaxation room and a skin diagnostic area with a skin camera complete the offering, while treatments will include some of the most popular signature treat-

ments from the Covent Garden menu as well as new elements such as lava shell massages. A medical spa element will also be incorporated into the facilities.

Spa expansion for Bannatyne

The Bannatyne Group has announced it will create four new spas as part of a £15m investment programme scheduled for 2010/11 across the UK.

The new developments will include spa additions to a number of the company's health clubs, as well as a hotel acquisition in the form of the 26-bed Charlton House Spa Hotel in Shepton Mallet, which has recently been bought from the administrators. The hotel will be extended to increase the number of treatment rooms and introduce a fitness area.

Bannatyne also has planning permission to add spas to its Banbury and



Bannatyne plans to invest £15m in spas

Broadstairs health clubs, taking its UK spa portfolio to 30, while a new spa location has been identified by the company in Shrewsbury. Plans for the Shrewsbury site are thought to be in the early stages.



Plans include a 200-bedroom hotel

Green light for £40m hotel development

Plans for a £40m hotel development at Glenberrie House Hotel near Falkirk, central Scotland, have been approved by Falkirk Council.

The Aurora Hotel Collection is planning a new 200-bedroom hotel; a spa; leisure and recreation facilities and a grand ballroom capable of accommodating more than 1,000 guests.

Facilities at the three-storey Glenberrie Spa will include a 22m (72ft) indoor ozone swimming pool; internal and external roof hydro pools; a dry sauna and a wet sauna.

Squash courts, 18 beauty treatment rooms and associated relaxation areas are also proposed, as well as a branded hair salon, a dance studio, a gymnasium and a juice bar.

Local authority rejects £1.3bn resort plans

Woodland Trust Scotland has welcomed Perth and Kinross Council's (PKC) decision to refuse planning permission for a new £1.3bn resort at Pittlochry, Scotland.

The trust expressed concerns that plans submitted by Dall Estate and M James Developments would result in the loss of 160 hectares (395 acres) of historic forest, while an additional 240 hectares (593 acres) would be at risk.

The resort plans would have seen the estate redeveloped into a private mem-

bers' club featuring a 104-bedroom hotel with restaurants and bars, and a health spa with 10 suites.

A body enhancement clinic, a concert hall and two 18-hole golf courses also formed part of the scheme, as well as a members' retail area and residential units.

Plans were refused on the grounds that the scheme would go against national policy and guidance, including the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna Regulations 1994.

Public Sector

Jeremy Hunt reveals £88m spending cuts

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has confirmed it will reduce expenditure by £88m in 2010-11 as part of government cuts totalling £6.2bn.

Departmental savings plans will lead to a 3 per cent cut in its core budget and a 3 per cent reduction to sector agencies. The Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) will also see its budget reduced by £27m.

A further £5m is set to be cut from Arts Council England's (ACE) budget, although the DCMS will work with the organisation to allow it to access historic reserves.

Culture secretary Jeremy Hunt said: "I have asked our bodies to make these



Hunt aims to implement the savings while protecting services "wherever possible"

savings while protecting frontline services wherever possible, and without interrupting the Olympic programme. I will be doing all I can to help our sectors through

the next few difficult years, and want to do all I can to ensure that never again are our sectors as vulnerable to sudden booms and busts in public funding."

NAO publishes Sport England report

The National Audit Office (NAO) has welcomed "positive developments" in Sport England's bid to increase sports participation after previously failing to meet its aims for priority groups.

During the three-year period to March 2008, the report revealed that £660m was invested in the promotion of sport and physical activity but "lacked a focus" in targeting priority groups.

However, the NAO said that Sport England's new strategy for the period 2008-09 to 2012-13 - including efforts to boost participation by 1 million - offered more value to the taxpayer.



The NAO reviewed two spending periods

A Sport England spokesperson added: "We welcome the NAO report and the positive statements it makes about the value for money offered by our new strategy and funding processes."



A tourism 'legacy' is planned

Government plans to 'prioritise' UK tourism

Culture secretary Jeremy Hunt has announced plans to "harness the full potential" of the London 2012 Olympics to establish a permanent tourism legacy for the whole country.

In his first keynote speech on the industry, Hunt said the Department for Culture, Media and Sport would aim to draw up the world's best national marketing strategy.

Hunt proposed the creation of a fund to generate £1bn worth of marketing activity in priority markets around 2012, which will also incorporate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

Other pledges include targets to increase the domestic spend by UK residents to 50 per cent of the total and a review of sector quangos.

Mayor unveils 2012 strategy consultation

London mayor Boris Johnson has launched a new consultation into a draft arts and culture strategy designed to take advantage of the 2012 Olympics.

Cultural Metropolis outlines the mayor's plans to showcase the capital's arts sector and capitalise on the millions of people set to visit the city during 2012.

In addition to the London Games, a 12-week arts festival will be held to mark the conclusion of the Cultural Olympiad, with art commissions, outdoor perform-

ances and free events scheduled for public spaces across the capital.

In his draft strategy, the mayor sets out plans to work with the sector to provide funding through the London Development Agency, as well as a Culture Diary to provide a guide to events.

When launching the consultation, Johnson said: "By any measure, London is a cultural powerhouse. Here you find beauty, creativity and innovation, the like of which are to be found nowhere else."

Attractions

Mayor calls for UK Harry Potter park

London mayor Boris Johnson has called on Harry Potter fans to lobby for the development of a theme park dedicated to the fictional wizard in the UK capital.

Writing in a column for *The Telegraph* newspaper, Johnson said he "deeply and bitterly" disapproved of the new Harry Potter theme park in Orlando, Florida, US.

The mayor urged children and "their Potter-fiend parents" to write to Warner Brothers, Universal and author JK Rowling for a similar park in London.

Johnson wrote: "I want to know why this Kingdom of Potter is not being built in the UK, and I won't be fobbed off with



Johnson wants a Potter park in the UK

any nonsense about the weather. They built Eurodisney in the Valley of the Marne, where it is at least as cold and drizzly as it is in London."

The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, which opened in Orlando, US, on 18 June, comprises a range of rides based on the stories of JK Rowling's fictional wizard.

RAF Museum unveils 'beacon' project

The Royal Air Force (RAF) Museum has announced plans to develop a new landmark exhibition building dedicated to the Battle of Britain at Hendon, London.

Under the proposals drawn up by Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios, the proposed Battle of Britain Beacon will feature a tapered body and will be 116m (350ft) high - taller than London's Big Ben.

The beacon scheme, which has been revealed ahead of the 70th anniversary of the historic World War II battle - is designed to enable extended public access to the museum's collection of Battle of Britain aircraft.



The 'beacon' will be taller than Big Ben

An exhibition using audio-visual and holographic displays will set the scene for the battle and the Blitz, before visitors are transported to the top of the building to stand amid a reconstructed dogfight.

Funding pledge for Margate theme park

Plans for a new heritage attraction in Margate, Kent, have been given a boost after the local authority agreed to contribute up to £4m towards the scheme.

Thanet District Council (TDC) has approved £2.2m investment towards the regeneration of the Dreamland site, which is set to create one of the world's first amusement parks of historic rides.

Councillors also agreed to borrow up to £1.8m if the theme park scheme is unable to attract alternative funding.

In addition to the funding commitment, TDC cabinet members have agreed to start work on transferring part of the Dreamland site from owner Margate Town Centre Regeneration Company.

The council will take on the freehold of the Dreamland Cinema as part of the acquisition, which will enable the development of the heritage amusement park in partnership with the Dreamland Trust.

Funding support has already been secured from Heritage Lottery Fund.

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Parks & Countryside

Prince backs playing fields campaign

HRH Prince William has launched a new campaign designed to protect 2,012 playing fields across the UK as part of efforts to mark Her Majesty The Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

The Prince has also been named as a patron of the project, which is led by charity Fields in Trust and aims to provide protection for areas of outdoor space to be used by local communities.

Protected fields will be named The Queen Elizabeth II Fields and The Queen Elizabeth Fields in Scotland as part of the scheme, one of the largest UK programmes to preserve outdoor space.



The campaign aims to protect more than 2,000 playing fields over the next two years

Local authorities are now being encouraged to nominate the recreational areas that should be protected, which will then be put to a public vote.

Prince William said: "The sad truth is that, over the years, thousands of playing fields have been lost to development, and many more are under threat today."

£17m HLF funding for UK landscapes

A number of the UK's most iconic landscapes will receive a share of £17m as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund's (HLF) Landscape Partnerships (LP) initiative.

The scheme, which has seen more than £70m invested over the past six years, is designed to help conserve areas with "distinct" character and also provide support for projects that seek to generate long-term benefits for rural areas.

Among the 10 landscapes to receive a first-round pass from the HLF is the Clyde and Avon Valley LP in Scotland, which is in line to net £2m towards plans to introduce a programme of practical activities.



HLF funding will benefit the Belfast Hills

The Tees Vale and Barnard Castle, Staffordshire Moorlands and the Solway Wetlands LPs have also been earmarked for nearly £2m. Druridge Bay is set to benefit from nearly £1.9m.



Williams (centre) unveiled the trails

New MP3 audio trails for Welsh forest park

More than 5 miles (8km) of new MP3 audio trails have been officially launched at Coed-y-Brenin Forest Park in North Wales by television wildlife presenter Iolo Williams.

Guides have been made available for download onto MP3 players or iPods by Forestry Commission Wales (FCW), which will enable visitors to find out more about local wildlife.

The new audio trails are among the first to be established in Welsh Assembly Government-managed woodlands and were devised by FCW ranger Graeme Stringer.

Visitors will be invited to switch on MP3 players at points along the route, which will provide information about specific parts of the forest park.

£30m Redcar seafront plans revealed

Plans for a major £30m transformation of Redcar seafront - which include a new 80ft (24.4m) vertical pier - have been put on show by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council (RCBC).

Residents, businesses and visitors are being invited to comment on the project, which aims to regenerate the area and also includes The Hub, which will provide creative industries with a local base.

It is hoped that a planning application will be submitted this summer with a

view to starting construction work in the autumn. Funding will be provided by the Environment Agency and the council.

Regional development agency One North East, European Regional Development Fund and the Enterprise Team is also supporting the scheme.

Sheelagh Clarke, cabinet member for culture, leisure and tourism at RCBC, said of the plans: "This project is certainly one of the most important the borough has seen for many years."

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION



Wedged Door



Close Up



Outcome



Incident

Name: Mary Jones Received: 07 / 12
DOB: 03 / 08 / 56 Date
County: [REDACTED] Race
Age at time of offense: 53 Ha
Weight: 100st Eyes: GRNY MR
Native County: [REDACTED]
Prior Occupation:
Prison record:

EVIDENCE IDENTIFICATION

Date: _____ Time: _____ Case No: _____
Test For: BALLISTICS FIREARMS OTHER
Classification: _____
Name: _____ (Please use in your photos)
Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Reference: _____
No. _____ Color: _____ Sex: _____
RIGHT HAND
1. Thumb 2. Index finger 3. Middle finger 4. Ring finger 5. Little finger
LEFT HAND
6. Thumb 7. Index finger 8. Middle finger 9. Ring finger 10. Little finger
Impressions taken by: _____ Date: _____
Signature of officer taking prints: _____
Date impressions taken: _____ Take double impressions: _____ Four fingers taken simultaneously: _____
Left Hand _____ Right Hand _____
These prints may be used for answering examination 7.
Laser # _____ File No. 345 J INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE

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Design news

From The Savoy to Dublin's new 50,000 stadium, we check out some recent projects

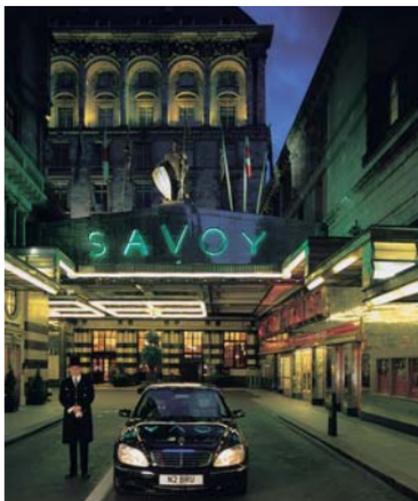
Project	The Savoy
Design	Pierre Yves Rochon
Location	London UK

£100m Savoy revamp nears completion

The Savoy is preparing to unveil its new look in October, following a £100m restoration project.

The project encompasses the entire building, from the courtyard and American Bar to the 268 guestrooms and public areas. Designer Pierre Yves Rochon, responsible for the George V in Paris, is in charge of the redevelopment.

A new two bedroom Royal Suite is being added and the refurbished hotel will also feature a rooftop pool, a glass-enclosed fitness suite and a winter garden gazebo.



The revamped Savoy is set to open on 10 October



The resort features three restaurants

Project	Egnathia Spa
Design	Raison D'Etre
Location	Puglia Italy

Borgo Egnazia spa opens

The latest phase of the five star Borgo Egnazia hotel development in Puglia, southern Italy, has now launched. The 1,800sq m Egnathia Spa features 10 treatment rooms spread over two floors, a large wet area and two Roman bath scrub rooms. The spa has been created by Raison D'Etre.

The Borgo Egnazia resort has opened in stages starting with the launch of 28 villas in August 2009. It also has a hotel with 63 guest rooms, a village area with 93 townhouses, a golf course, four pools, tennis courts, a kid's club and library.



New concourses now link the MAC site

Project	Midlands Arts Centre
Design	Doug Branson / Chetwoods
Location	Birmingham UK

New facilities for Midlands Arts Centre

A Birmingham arts venue has reopened to the public after closing for two years for a £15m renovation. Work at the Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) has included the creation of the Gallery, the venue's first purpose-built exhibition space, plus refurbished visual arts, crafts and performing arts studios.

The refurbished centre also features a new visual arts education suite and an audio and visual media studio. Initial ideas were by Doug Branson of Branson Coates Architects and the project was taken to completion by Chetwoods.



Project Aviva Stadium

Design Populous/
Scott Tallon Walker

Location Dublin, Ireland

Dublin stadium reopens

Dublin's 50,000 all-seated Aviva Stadium – formerly the Lansdowne Road Stadium – reopened in May.

The stadium, which will be the new home for Ireland's international rugby and soccer teams, is a joint venture by the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) and the Football Association of Ireland (FAI). Funding of €191m was provided by the government for the project, which cost just under €410m.

The stadium was redeveloped by Populous and Scott Tallon Walker. The brief was to create a modern architectural statement without impacting environmentally on the Dublin skyline. Sustainability was also important.

The stadium sweeps down at the northern end in respect to the nearby housing



Tom's Terrace provides views over the Thames and South Bank

Project Tom's Terrace and Tom's Kitchen, Somerset House

Design Compass Group UK / Michaelis Boyd / SHH

Location London UK

A fresh food offer at Somerset House

London's Somerset House now features two new restaurants, with the opening of Tom's Terrace and Tom's Kitchen.

The River Terrace Café and Admiralty restaurant have been completely redesigned to create the two new restaurants, which both feature menus by chef Tom Aikens.

The concept and design of Tom's Terrace was developed by Compass Group UK's Roy Westwood together with SHH architects. Tom's Kitchen was developed by Roy Westwood, Michaelis Boyd architects and Tom Aikens.



The Delaire Estate was acquired by Graff in 2003

Project Delaire Graff Lodge and Spa

Design Palm Architects / David Collins

Location Helshoogte Mountain Pass, South Africa

South African Lodge and Spa launches

Graff Diamonds International (GDI) has unveiled its latest property, the Delaire Graff Lodge and Spa in South Africa.

Located near Cape Town's two wine districts of Stellenbosch and Franschhoek, the hotel and spa have been designed by architect Pierre Bories of France-based Palm Architects. The interiors are by David Collins.

The property has 10 lodges, each with its own heated infinity pool, surrounded by camellia and jasmine hedges. The spa has four treatment rooms, a sauna and steam room. ●

apm design

Specialising in designing interiors for the leisure industry, APM Design's clients include the Lowry Centre, Compass Group and Holiday Inn

What does APM Design offer?

The company works across all sectors of commercial interior design but specialises in leisure and catering.

APM Design offers a wide range of design and architectural-based services including interior design; exterior/architectural design; colour consultancy; space planning; 3D CAD modelling; computer-generated renderings and visuals; computer generated walkthroughs; and sketch and watercolour artists impressions. We also offer commercial kitchen design; corporate identity and branding; urban landscaping; and CAD drafting.

When did the company launch?

APM Design was formed in 1988. The company now employs four designers.

Where do you work?

Operating primarily in Lancashire and Greater Manchester, we also offers interior design services across the north west and the rest of the UK.

What is APM's approach to design?

APM's involvement across all sectors means that we've built up an extensive, transferable skill base. This enables the effective delivery of innovative solutions, which single discipline companies may be unable to provide.

What else are you working on?

We have been commissioned to produce blue sky redesign concepts for the dining, lounge and cabin areas for offshore oil rigs based in the north sea and the Gulf of Mexico.

CHAIRMAN'S LOUNGE

Manchester, UK

APM Design were asked by Manchester City Football Club to redesign the Chairman's Lounge and private terrace at the City of Manchester Stadium.

APM were commissioned to create an interior scheme for the Chairman's Lounge, which is used exclusively by the chairman and his guests. They were also asked to provide an overall space planning solution, including structural alterations, a lighting package and bespoke joinery items.

One of the key elements of the brief was to ensure that the chairman and his guests had complete privacy from the moment they entered the stadium until they reached their private terrace. This could only be achieved by creating a private link corridor through other areas of the stadium leading to the lounge itself and then directly onto the terrace. This proved to be one of the major space planning challenges faced by APM Design, as the cost implications were considerable.



The LED lighting system means the ambience can be changed easily

APM were given a blank canvas from an interior design perspective. The main requirement was to ensure that the space would cater for the tastes of a small number of exclusive guests. This allowed the designers to use high end bespoke finishes which would be cost prohibitive on most schemes.

In order to open up what was previously a dark and uninviting space, a number of structural alterations were necessary. A new frameless glazed

entrance from the terrace now floods the space with natural light. The lounge is now also equipped with a new computerised LED lighting system.

The scheme included a dining area and bar, as well as the lounge. High end technology was used, including flat screen tvs and integrated AV systems. Traditional finishes give the space a timeless feel; these include traditional Venetian polished plaster and walnut veneered wall panelling.



The spa features a steam room

FX LEISURE

Leyland, UK

When FX Leisure opened a health club in Leyland in 2009, APM Design were asked to provide interior design and space planning expertise.

The project began with a comprehensive space and zone planning exercise, which involved a detailed configuration of the health club's facilities.

These included a reception area, gym, aerobics studio, yoga room and cardio zone, a pool, a steam room, tepidarium and sauna. The space planning required close collaboration between APM Design and the various specialist



FX Leisure Leyland is the company's flagship health club

parties including the M&E consultants, gym equipment suppliers, pool and spa installation specialists, acoustics consultants and the architects.

A key element of the vision for the spa was the creation of an outdoor pool area complete with an Oriental garden and water feature. This presented a number of challenges,

including the need to minimise heat loss from the spa. This was achieved by installing a fully retractable glazed roof and by using a water curtain.

Other technical challenges included soundproofing the yoga room using cutting edge acoustic materials, and the installation of a snow-making machine in the fire and ice room.



APM Design have kept the interiors deliberately simple and uncluttered in order to allow the views to dominate



The two storey glass and timber building sits on the harbour in St Aubin

THE BOATHOUSE

Jersey, UK

Opened in St Aubin, Jersey, in June 2009, The Boathouse restaurant is the Boat House Group's flagship venue.

APM were commissioned to design the interiors of the two storey building. APM's responsibilities encompassed lighting design, space planning, signage, artwork and soft furnishings.

The Boathouse comprises the Quay Bar, a ground floor bar and eatery, and first floor restaurant Sails Brasserie. It also features external terrace seating.

APM Design created a clean, contemporary look for the restaurant, allowing the huge windows and views of the harbour to take centre stage.

The Boat House Group owns three other restaurants - The Beach House, The Farm House and The Tree House - plus a wine import company. ●

Inspired by famous Australian artists, the Art Series Hotels feature in-house art curators and original works of art. Founder Will Deague tells Jennifer Harbottle why Melbourne is the perfect launch pad for his company

WILL DEAGUE

How did you first get into the hospitality industry?

Our family has always been in the commercial and residential property market so real estate is in my blood. I joined our family company, the Asian Pacific Building Corporation, in 1996 as a property developer and two years ago I became CEO. From that point onwards, I started driving our business into the boutique hotel market.

How and when was the idea for the hotels born?

Our company was the first in Australia to manage and operate commercial car parks and the first to lease office space, so we wanted to lead the pack in the hotel market too.

We saw the explosion of boutique hotels overseas, particularly in New York, London and Paris, and thought it would be a great opportunity for us to combine our passion for real estate and the arts. At the time when we thought up the idea, there were only three boutique hotels in Melbourne and no one had used art to brand a hotel. When the sites became available, we knew it was the perfect opportunity for us to enter the boutique hotel market.

What was the vision for the Art Series Hotels properties?

We wanted to create art hotels, and wanted to name and dedicate the hotels to a single artist rather than several artists.

We always wanted to create something with the artists' original artworks in the foyers and digital reproductions in the guest rooms. We knew people were bored with corporate hotels and were searching for other options.

The Cullen opened in Melbourne's Prahran area in November 2009, followed by our flagship hotel, The Olsen, in South Yarra in April 2010. Our next hotel is called The Blackman and opens in August. We are opening three more



PHOTOS OF THE CULLEN: ANSON SMART

Will Deague became CEO of the Asian Pacific Building Corporation in 2008

hotels in Melbourne over the next 12 months. We've also bought a property in Adelaide to develop into an Art Series hotel and we're looking for sites on the Eastern Seaboard.

What do the hotels offer?

Right at the start, we sit down with the appointed architect to come up with an exterior design that reflects the individuality of the artist. The Cullen for instance, is contemporary and slightly edgy, while The Olsen is more elegant. Inside,



The Olsen features 229 suites, two restaurants and a gym with a glass bottom pool (above left)



the colours and styles of the rooms are a reflection of the artist's work, and all rooms feature reproductions of their art. We even design bed linen to reflect the artist's personality.

We have books on the artist in the foyer of each hotel, each room has an art TV channel and we have an in-house art curator who can spend time with guests who want to know more about the artworks on display. She also spends time each week with the hotel staff so they are able to answer any questions guests might have about the artists and their work.

Each hotel has Art Series Smart cars and bicycles decorated with the artist's work for hire and a retail shop that sells the artist's prints. We do understand that some people who stay with us aren't into art and for that reason, the art isn't shoved in your face. If people aren't interested in art, it's still a well designed hotel and a great place to stay.

How do you choose the artists?

So far, we've chosen artists that our family has personal relationships with and artists whose work we've collected.

In 2002, my father, David Deague, took 15 Australian artists to Lake Eyre in South Australia to create an Australian

The Cullen (top right and bottom right) was included in the Conde Nast Traveler US 14th Annual HOT List for 2010. The Olsen (above) is more classic and traditional

landscape art collection. Each artist produced 10 paintings that were initially hung in our home and offices. John Olsen, one of Australia's most distinguished artists was one of them.

Adam Cullen is quite a controversial figure. Did that worry you?

We haven't hung some of Cullen's more daring or controversial pieces in the hotel because we know that not everyone wants to wake up and look at pictures of naked women with their heads missing! We love his style and he's a great, fun guy. His art is perfect for the hotel's vibrant location so we weren't worried about putting people off.

What unites the different hotels?

All the hotels are five star so have everything you would expect of a top end hotel brand. The shampoo and conditioner, the out-sourcing of the F&B outlet and the staff uniforms are consistent throughout. When you check into any of the hotels you get a canvas with a little paint set.

Operationally, they are run with the same energy and commitment to superb customer service, but we try to keep them as individual as we can so they don't feel like they are

part of a chain. We employ different types of people for each hotel. At The Olsen, the staff are a little older and more elegant, while in The Cullen the staff can get away with a bit more.

What are your plans for Art Series Hotels for the next 12 months?

To keep expanding and looking for new sites. We're considering potentially licensing out the Art Series name to make it a national brand, but the partners would have to be completely right before we'd be comfortable about doing that. Right now, if we were to consider the overseas market, we'd be looking at South East Asia because we don't like to travel too far to work!

Why did you launch in Melbourne?

We live within a kilometre or two of all the hotels so we're passionate about the area – it's our home!

How would you describe Art Series Hotels' customers?

We attract a lot of single, independent corporates during the week and a lot of leisure travellers at the weekend. We're also popular with celebrities and our hotels are used regularly for photo shoots and premieres.

How much has been invested in the project?

How is the rollout being funded?

We have invested AUS\$150m to date in the three hotels. This has been funded through our company, Asian Pacific Building Corporation, and also through the bank. The rollout is consistent with our long term growth for the company.



All rooms at The Cullen have their own kitchenettes so that guests can cook for themselves

What has been the biggest challenge of the project so far?

It has been a challenge finding staff who are friendly and enthusiastic and willing to go out of their way to give guests outstanding customer service. I don't think the employment situation here in Australia is as bad as everyone makes out so contrary to what we're being told, there aren't heaps of great people sitting around unemployed.

Typically, our room rates are a lot lower than other boutique hotels worldwide so they may have to lift and that could be a challenge.

Which is your favourite Art Series hotel and why?

If I'm in a cheeky, party mood, The Cullen is great but I prefer The Olsen if I'm feeling romantic and want a quieter time. The Olsen is our flagship hotel and it's bigger than The Cullen.

It also has a stunning glass-bottom pool that looks out onto the shoppers below. Overall, I think The Olsen would have to be my favourite of our hotels.

What has been the highlight of your career so far?

The successful opening of the first two of the Art Series Hotels was a real high point for me.

We thought up the idea years ago and to see it through from the initial planning stage to the cutting of the ribbon on the opening night was extremely fulfilling.

What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?

The harder you work, the luckier you become. ●

the blackman

The newest hotel in the Art Series Hotel Group, The Blackman, will open its doors on St Kilda Road in Melbourne in August 2010.

The hotel will feature 209 guest rooms and suites and a gym, and will showcase a range of paintings and sculptures by Charles Blackman. The interior design is described by the company as 'edgy boutique', and the rooms will feature glass balconies. Smart cars and bicycles decorated with Blackman's artwork will be available for guests to hire.

Charles Blackman is one of Australia's most famous living art-

The guest rooms will feature prints of Blackman's work

ists. He was born in Sydney in 1928 and was awarded an OBE for his services to art in 1997. He is probably best known for his Alice in Wonderland series of paintings.

The Blackman is the third Art Series hotel to open. The company is planning to open a total of



six artist-inspired hotels in Melbourne over the next 18 months.

STOCK THE BRAND WITH MORE MUSCLE.



Red Bull is synonymous with energy. After all, we've been helping consumers achieve peak performance for over 20 years now. But do you know just how much extra muscle we could add to your bottom line? Red Bull is the UK's favourite functional

energy drink and no.1 soft drink by rate of sale.* Used by some of the nation's top athletes, Red Bull has been proven to enhance physical performance, increase reaction speed and stimulate metabolism. It's the brand of choice for consumers

looking for extra energy to support their training regime. To help your clients get more from their workout - and boost your profits at the same time - call 07971 164 018. And remember, **Red Bull Gives You Wiings.**

We check out some of the latest energy drinks promising to give customers a boost this summer

ENERGY > BOOST



The new Red Bull Energy shots join the traditional 250ml can

RED BULL SHOT HITS THE UK

Following a successful launch in the US, Red Bull Energy Shots drink have been available in the UK since the spring.

Containing the same amount of energy as the existing 250ml can, Red Bull Energy Shots are non-carbonated and come packaged in a 60ml 'shot', in both standard and sugar-free varieties.

Red Bull have a range of display solutions to ensure that the Energy Shots are merchandised

effectively and advise retailers that it should be stocked in ambient impulse locations within facilities to add incremental value.

As a relatively new drinks category, Red Bull believe that energy shots represent a great sales opportunities for retailers. Additionally, the Red Bull Energy Shot doesn't have to be chilled before use and can be used to provide an energy boost before a gym session or a sporting event.

ULTRA BODY LAUNCHES NEW ICE RANGE

New from wellness and sports nutrition specialist Ultrabody comes the ICE product format, offering an alternative to traditional supplement drinks.

The ICE format allows powder-based supplements to be mixed with crushed ice to create a chilled drink designed to accentuate taste effectiveness.

Ultra-Body offers a number of products which are compatible with 'ICE'. These include its range



ICE provides a different way of drinking supplements

of DY Protein and Lean Gain products as well as meal replacement Inch Loss Shakes and the new range of delicious Frappes drinks to help provide customers with a wide range of choice.



Consumers collect codes from the bottles

GATORADE GIVES BACK

Gatorade is several months in to a year-long project to reward active men and women in the UK.

The project – called Gatorade gives back – see the company team up with partners including New Balance, Polar, Power Music, Neilson Active Holidays and The National Magazine Company. Gatorade is offering its athletes the opportunity to redeem more than £1m in rewards, including sports equipment, music downloads and holidays.

Individuals need to collect codes from each bottle, which correspond to a nominal points value. Codes can then be banked at the Gatorade website or via text and used to cash in.

Adam Draper, Gatorade brand manager said: "We are delighted to have the opportunity to put something back into sport and reward athletes at all levels with the 'Gatorade Gives Back' programme. We hope to get as many people involved as possible and I hope that schools, clubs and athletes will take advantage of the fantastic rewards that are available."

The Viper Boost is part of Maximuscle's new range



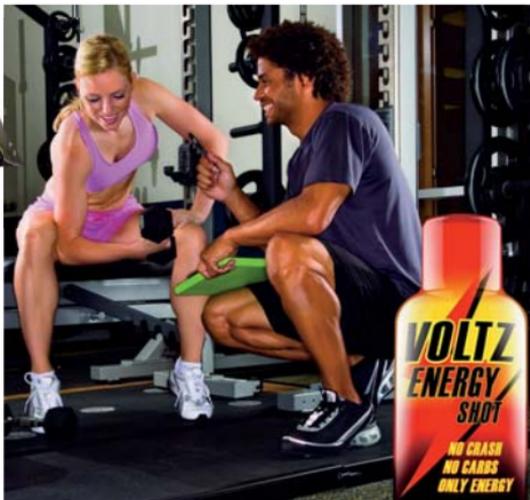
GIVE WORKOUTS A BOOST WITH MAXIFUEL

Sports nutrition company Maximuscle has unveiled a new range of nutrition-based products.

Called Maxifuel, the brand is primarily intended for the endurance market. It launched nationwide in June and has been developed with leading sports nutritionists and doctors.

The entire range consists of three systems – focus, energy and recovery – and includes gels, energy bars, capsules that can be added to a water bottle and ready-to-go drinks.

Ultra-Body, Gatorade and Lucozade are exhibiting at Leisure Industry Week. 21-23 September 2010. NEC Birmingham



The drink is aimed at people needing a quick energy boost

TWO CALORIE ENERGY DRINK

A two-calorie 'energy shot' health drink has been introduced.

Manufactured by Medichem International, the berry-flavoured drink consists of a blend of B vitamins, amino acids and antioxidants, and is distributed

exclusively by Voltz Distribution UK. The drink is said to be free of sugar, caffeine and carbohydrates, and is intended to ensure that users don't 'crash' later.

It comes in a 60ml bottle and can be sold alone or in packs.

NEW PRODUCTS FROM LUCOZADE

A new low calorie sports drink called Lucozade Sport Lite has been unveiled by GlaxoSmithKline, joining the company's popular Lucozade Sport product.

The 500ml drink is available in two flavours – lemon and lime and summer berries. Lucozade Sport Lite is formulated to deliver electrolytes as well as energy-releasing B-vitamins and contains 70 per cent less sugar than regular sports drinks.

Also new from Lucozade come the Body Fuel Jelly Beans. Apparently developed with input from top athletes and sports scientists, the jelly beans are intended to effectively deliver fuel, power and strength to exercisers and sports participants.

The jelly beans are available in orange and raspberry flavour.



The Body Fuel Jelly Beans are said to help you train harder for longer

They are part of a new line that also includes the Pro Muscle 'All in One' Carbohydrate Protein and Creatine Bar and the Body Fuel Carbohydrate Energy Bar. ●



The shake is ready to drink

LEAN BODY SHAKE FROM LAMBRA NUTRITION

Labrada Nutrition has launched the Lean Body shake. This ready-to-drink 40g protein shake has zero sugar, is trans-fat and lactose free, and is fortified with 22 vitamins and minerals. Distributed by Tropicana Health and Fitness, the shake offers both fast- and slow-release proteins for a sustained flow of amino acids, Lean Body aids faster muscle growth. It comes in a range of ice cream flavours including strawberries and cream, choco and vanilla.

BRIGID SIMMONDS

The new chief executive of the British Beer and Pub Association talks to Magali Robathan about taxation, supporting struggling pubs through the recession and the ongoing controversy surrounding Britain's tied pub system

Last time I met Brigid Simmonds, she was chief executive of Business in Sport and Leisure. Since then a lot has changed – she is now chief executive of the British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA), with a new office overlooking the Thames, a new remit and a whole new set of challenges. What hasn't changed is Simmonds' determination, boundless energy and the sense that wherever she focuses her attention, things are going to get done.

"I'm very driven," says Simmonds. "I have a strong work ethic, I'm energetic and I have a lot of hours in my day."

It is no doubt this drive and energy, as well as her proven track record in public affairs, that prompted the BBPA to headhunt Simmonds following her departure from BISL last September after 17 years at the helm.

The BBPA represents 98 per cent of beer producers in the UK and around two thirds of the nation's pubs. The beer and pub industry is currently having a tough time, and Simmonds joined during a period when the effects of the smoking ban, the recession and huge rises in the tax on beer were resulting in the closure of 52 pubs a week.

The number of pubs closing has slowed to 39 a week, but as Simmonds says: "That's still a very high number. Pubs are a British institution and are hugely important to the

economic and social life of communities. They contribute an average of £80,000 a year into their local economies, and pubs and brewing employ 540,000 people directly and 380,000 in associated trades. We have to stop the closure of pubs."

EARLY DAYS

Simmonds started her career with the Women's Royal Army Corps, joining in 1978 and serving in the UK, Germany and Hong Kong. At the age of just 19 she was in charge of 120 servicewomen and she later worked as the only woman in an all male artillery regiment. This period was "hugely important in terms of leadership, administration and organisational skills," says Simmonds. After eight years, ending with two at the Ministry of Defence, she joined architects S&P as head of marketing and PR in 1986. She had her first child in 1991, and after taking a brief career break she was asked to join BISL as chief executive in 1992.

During her time with BISL, Simmonds grew the organisation from 13 member companies to around 120, and lobbied tirelessly on behalf of the leisure industry. Her biggest achievement at BISL, says Simmonds, was "creating a greater understanding about partnerships, particularly around sport and health and fitness."

She also found time to complete a six-year term on the board for Sport England, during which period she was chairman for the English Institute of Sport in Sheffield. She was chair of the Tourism Alliance from January 2005 to July 2006 and has been the chair of the CCPR for five years. Oh and she has also raised three children and run four marathons, raising around £20,000 for Sports Aid. In 2006 she was awarded a well-deserved OBE for services to sport.

Simmonds admits she was "very sad" to leave BISL. "It was a great organisation and I loved working there," she



The BBPA has launched a website advising the public on the best beers for weddings and other social occasions



Brigid Simmonds OBE joined the British Beer and Pub Association on 7 September 2009

says. "However I see my work at the BBPA as an extension of the work I did there, and I'm still very supportive of BISL.

"I never expected to be offered this job," she admits.

"The BBPA has never had a woman [as CEO] before. I left BISL with no idea what I wanted to do next and was very surprised when I was headhunted for this job."

The offer came at the right time; Simmonds was keen to work for a bigger organisation and with her children more independent, she no longer needed to work from home as she had at BISL. "I was ready for a bigger role," she says.

IN AT THE DEEP END

Simmonds' first nine months as CEO of the BBPA have been hugely busy. She has concentrated on putting together a strategic plan for the organisation, and has travelled and met as many BBPA member companies as possible, getting up to speed with the industry: "I've been round endless

breweries," she says. "I knew quite a lot about the pubs industry but very little about beer. I hadn't appreciated the link between beer and agriculture, for example. I've found it very interesting learning about how beer is produced."

In November, Simmonds launched the *I'm Backing the Pub* campaign, with the aim of mobilising consumers, politicians and publicans in support of the pubs sector. At the same time the BBPA also published its manifesto *The Life and Soul of Britain's Communities*, calling for, among other things, a reduced duty rate on lower strength beers and greater support for pubs serving food.

Tax is a major issue for the industry. Tax on beer has risen by 26 per cent since March 2008, and one of Simmonds' major challenges has been lobbying the gov-



ernment to prevent further rises. The freeze on beer tax in the Emergency Budget saw the industry breathe a sigh of relief, and was welcomed by the BBPA. "We applaud the government's decision to freeze beer tax and deliver on its promise made in the coalition agreement to not penalise pubs, responsible drinkers and important local industries," says Simmonds. "This is a welcome relief for struggling pubs during difficult times."

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

Simmonds' background means that she sees the wider picture for the pubs industry, and she is keen to ensure pubs are viewed as part of the tourism and hospitality sectors, rather than just part of an industry selling alcohol.

"One of the things I've been keen to do is move us away from alcohol, per se. Because beer is a low alcohol drink and because the vast majority of pubs are suburban or rural and have diversified into serving food, they are much more part of the hospitality and tourism sectors than they are the alcohol industry," she says. "When tourists come to the UK, part of the reason is to visit our pubs."

With this in mind, Simmonds has had lots of discussions with VisitBritain and Visit England, and last year the BBPA supported British Tourism Week.

Simmonds' strategy also involves working with PR agencies and the media to change perceptions of beer.

"We have a lot of work to do to encourage the population to understand more about beer," she says. "There has to be a change in the way it's presented – why not serve it in smaller glasses to encourage women to drink more beer? Why not use beer for the toast at weddings or bring in the New Year with a glass of beer? It's about getting the message out there that beer is a great British drink, it's popular here and it's actually healthy too."

"We welcome the new government. We'd had the last government for a long time and we needed some new ideas. I think this government will be liberal, less interventionist and more interested in supporting business"

CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

Another big issue for the industry and the BBPA is the ongoing controversy over Britain's tied pub system. Critics of the system, which sees tenants benefit from lower rents in return for agreeing to buy their beer from the pub company (pubco) landlord, say it is anticompetitive and that publicans are being overcharged for beer supplies.

Last May, the Business and Enterprise Select Committee published a report raising concerns about the tie, and CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, complained to the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) that the tie was inflating beer prices and restricting consumer choice. The complaint was dismissed in October, but the OFT has agreed to reopen its inquiry into the system following an appeal by CAMRA.

Simmonds acknowledges that there are problems with the tie, but says that she is firmly in favour of the system.

"I'm a great supporter of the tied pub system," she says. "A lot of the arguments picked up by the [Business and Enterprise] select committee were about the fact that tenants went into some of these agreements without really understanding what they were doing. There's no doubt that we needed to improve the transparency of the system and the industry has to change. That doesn't mean that we believe the tie should disappear, because I think it's a valuable part of providing a low cost way of entering business."

In January the BBPA, the British Institute of Innkeeping (BII) and the Federation of Licensed Victuallers Associations (FLVA), published a framework code of practice aimed at improving the transparency of tied agreements between pubcos and leasees and tenants. BBPA member companies are implementing the code by producing their own framework codes and submitting them to the BII's accreditation body. "We've been given until June 2011 by the select com-

BRIGID SIMMONDS' CV

1978

Joins the Women's Royal Army Corps, serving in the UK, Germany and Hong Kong before spending two years in the PR department of the Ministry of Defence

1986

Appointed head of marketing for architect S&P

1992

Appointed chief executive at Business in Sport & Leisure, where she works for 17 years, lobbying government and growing the membership base from 13 to around 120



Simmonds is keen to address the perception among women that wine is healthier than beer: "Beer takes longer to drink, it fills you up and it's very healthy"

mittee to introduce our new system and to make it work," says Simmonds. "If they feel the system still isn't working well they have the ability to legislate."

ANEWERA

The industry is still waiting to see how the change in government will affect it, long term, but Simmonds says that, overall, the BBPA is supportive of the new administration.

"We welcome the new government," she says. "It's good to have change. We'd had the last government for a long time and we needed some new ideas. I think this government will be liberal – with a small 'l' – less interventionist and more interested in supporting business."

Since the coalition government came into power, it has announced plans to abolish supermarkets selling below price alcohol, a move which the BBPA has welcomed. It has also announced plans to 'overhaul' the 2005 Licensing Act.

"I think it will concentrate on very specific issues relating to the Licensing Act," says Simmonds. These, she says, will include the issue of paying for late night policing and increasing fines for people who serve underage drinkers. On the issue of late night policing, Simmonds says: "If that comes in I think everyone must contribute – takeaways and

restaurants, as well as pubs. The industry already pays huge amounts in tax and really I think that should be sufficient." As for underage drinkers, she believes that it's not enough to just take action against those serving the alcohol; there should also be a way of taking action against young people who are "persistently lying and forcing their way into licensed premises."

Overall, Simmonds believes the Licensing Act has worked for the industry, and hopes the new government will resist the urge to legislate for the sake of legislating.

As the interview draws to a close, I ask Simmonds whether she is optimistic about the future for pubs.

"I am optimistic," she says. "I think we've got some great pubs out there that are really doing well. As the economy recovers, pubs will also recover to a certain extent, although we will lose more. What we need to ensure is that those pubs that are there are equipped and able to make a decent living and flourish in this economic climate."

"Pubs are a British institution and will continue to be so." ●

1998

Becomes a member of the Sport England board

2002

Joins the board of Leicester City FC

2005-06

Chair of the Tourism Alliance

2005-present

Chair of the Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR)

2006

Awarded OBE for services to sport

2009

Leaves BISL and is appointed CEO of the BBPA

The AWPR will give visitors a chance to learn about arid land wildlife and conservation



A GREEN OASIS

In the Abu Dhabi desert, a project is underway to create a huge wildlife park and spread the word about sustainable living. Kath Hudson finds out more about the Al Ain Wildlife Park and Resort

The desert is a source of great pride to the people of Abu Dhabi and it is now the focal point of the government's plans to create an educational desert safari. The masterplan for the Al Ain Wildlife Park and Resort (AWPR) sets out the creation of a landmark attraction at the 2,100 acre site, to support the region's tourism economy and provide a cultural and heritage showcase.

One of the aims of the resort is to create a major tourist destination, which travellers can tag on to a trip to

Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Al Ain is the heritage heart of Abu Dhabi, the largest of the seven emirates which make up the United Arab Emirates. An hour's drive from the country's capital, Abu Dhabi city, and 150k inland from Dubai, Al Ain is surrounded by seven oases and has a history of archaeological remains dating back over 3,000 years. AWPR will give a flavour of the culture of the region, show how life is sustained in the desert and allow visitors to get close to desert animals.

"The oases served as a site of rejuvenation for those trekking across the

The Sheikh Zayed Desert Learning Centre (pictured, right)

Empty Quarter and have sustained life in the region for more than 5,000 years," says AWPR CEO Dr Frederic Launey. "Humans learned to adapt to the extremes of desert climates with the help of the desert plants, animals and natural resources."

FIVE SAFARI EXPERIENCES

The existing 40-year-old Al Ain Zoo, which has a track record in conservation and wildlife rehabilitation, provides the starting point for the plan. Added to this, there will be a museum, a world deserts zoo and five different safari experiences. The hotel offer will extend into Kenyan-style safari encampments, featuring luxurious camps tucked into the rocks.

Views from the hotel will look out over animals on a 24-hour feeding



The park will include residential accommodation on the perimeter of the safari area





rotation, in what is called the jewel box. Giraffe, wildebeest, zebra, oryx, and gazelle will graze almost close enough to touch within the hotel grounds and visitors in the safari encampments will sleep among the howls and hoots of the wild animals. The luxury camps will also feature night safaris, guided tours and desert campfires. The menu is yet to be determined, but the intention is to replicate the experience of safari encampments in Africa.

It's a phased development, the first part of which will launch at the end of 2011. This part will include The Sheikh Zayed Desert Learning Centre, a 10,000sq m natural history museum, focusing on the geology, geography and anthropology of the desert regions of the world. Visitors

will learn how plants, animals and people adapt to extremely hot, arid lands and about sustainability and conservation. Interactive exhibits, high definition theatre and 4D will help push home the message. Phase one also includes the North Kenya Safari, the UAE deserts, a 210-bed hotel and a residential cluster of 250 villas.

The second and third phases will be delivered between 2011 and 2015. Phase two comprises the creation of the North Sahara Safari and the Arabian Safari, as well as the remaining portions of the world deserts and an additional residential area. Phase three will see the completion of the Asian and Arabian Safari and the last instalment of the residential offer.

Residential villas will be sold, for use both as holiday homes and perma-

nent dwellings, and their sale will help fund the programme. Although the cost of the project is not being disclosed, the financial investment is significant. "Funding is coming from a variety of sources, including public and private organisations," says Launey. "There is seed money from the government, from which a number of different offers will be constructed, and further revenue will be generated from the admissions, food and beverage and hotel accommodation."

The existing zoo will be replaced with the much broader World Deserts Zoo, which will be a traditional walking zoo, incorporating landscapes, plants and animals of the Sonoran Desert, UAE's desert, and African and Asian deserts. There will be a children's discovery zone and an amphitheatre for



A SUSTAINABLE PROJECT

Sustainability is at the heart of the AWPR project. The team will make use of the latest sustainable practices from leading international initiatives.

Ecosystems, biodiversity and air and water quality will be protected and measures will be taken to reduce waste. The creation of an economically viable project, with reduced opera-

tional costs and improved economic performance, is key to the model.

As well as protecting and preserving the local habitat, AWPR will aim to educate residents and visitors about the oasis city's rich history, celebrating the culture, architecture and traditions of the Bedouin lifestyle.

This approach ties in with the Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority's campaign to

deliver substantial sector-wide energy, water and waste reduction by the end of 2010. It wants to cut energy use by 10 per cent, water use by 20 per cent and send 20 per cent less waste to landfill. A series of seminars are being run to help hotel operators implement sustainable programmes. ADTA wants to see its hotels become among the greenest in the world.

educational shows. Ecosystems of the various deserts of the world will be recreated using plants, animals and landscaping. The animals will be discreetly enclosed with trenches and other state-of-the-art designs, rather than fences, and so will appear to be roaming free in recreations of their natural environments.

The landscapes of the different deserts will be created using plants, animals and specialist rock formations. Rock structures are being created using 'mock rock' artists, who will cleverly recreate mud walls, sand stone cliffs, dry river beds and magmatic rock formations.

There are already 4,500 animals from more than 200 species at Al Ain, and highlights of the existing experience include bird of prey shows and giraffe feeding. However, in order to meet its ambitions to portray other global desert habitats, more animals will need to be sourced from conservation organisations throughout the world. Settling the new animals into the environment won't be a problem, says Launey, since the plants and animals are all from hot, arid ecosystems.

"Visitors will see plants like baobab, columnar cacti and acacia trees, as well as fossil-filled cliffs, desert sands

"No other wildlife park in the world combines all the elements of the Al Ain Wildlife Park and Resort, although several provided inspiration"

and many animals, from hippo to houbara, giraffe to gazelle and Arabian oryx to Arabian leopards," says Launey. "No other wildlife park in the world combines all the elements of AWPR, although several provided inspiration, including the San Diego Zoo and the San Diego Wild Animal Park."

ADVENTURE TOURISTS

The site already attracts one million visitors a year, mainly from UAE and Oman. However, it is hoped AWPR will draw other residents from the Gulf as well as international tourists from Europe, Asia and Russia, bringing in 2.5 million visitors a year and significant revenue. "Abu Dhabi is working very hard to establish itself as a major tourism destination. We are interested in families, adventure tourists and the MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and events) market," says Launey. "We want to entertain and educate people for a day, a week or a lifetime! Currently our visitor base is the day visitor from within 100 miles

of the park. As we expand and offer hotel accommodation, we can extend our reach to the multiday visitor."

For the past few years, the park has been evolving and attendance has steadily grown, from 550,000 visitors in 2005, to 750,000 in 2009. This year the park is expected to welcome a million tourists. The government feels there's an untapped market of potential visitors, with the UAE a popular destination for international tourists, many of whom visit Dubai and Abu Dhabi without experiencing the inland desert communities.

Dubai currently offers a luxurious destination to holidaymakers, with hot weather and high end hotels. AWPR will attract a different type of visitor; one who wants to experience the desert and find out about the local culture. AWPR creates a new kind of tourism experience, drawing on Abu Dhabi's natural habitat and local environment, and pushing the message of the importance of wildlife conservation and sustainable living. ●

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RIDING THE RAPIDS

Flexibility is the key to success for the newly-opened Cardiff International White Water centre, which has been designed for everyone from Olympic athletes to hen parties. Magali Robathan went down to check it out

It's a chilly morning at the Cardiff International White Water centre. Several kayakers are paddling around the course, while another plays in one of the white water features. Around one of the bends, a group of instructors from training provider Rescue 3 are testing the course for its suitability for swift water rescue courses.

"Could you turn it up a bit?" shouts one of the wetsuit-clad instructors from the water.

With a couple of clicks of a mouse, the amount of water being released by the centre's four pumps is adjusted from eight to 10 cumecs (a cumec is a cubic metre per second, which is equal to a tonne of water per second). The instructor disappears under a torrent of white water, then reappears moments later, giving the thumbs up.

This flexibility is key to the offer at Cardiff International White Water (CIWW), which opened on the International Sports Village site on Cardiff Bay at the end of March. Unlike a river, the water quality and speed are not affected by the weather, and the course itself can be changed using moveable plastic barriers to accommodate elite athletes, first time white water rafters, experienced paddle sports enthusiasts and everyone in between.

The 250m course is the UK's first Olympic-standard pumped water canoe slalom course. It was designed by French company Hydrostadium, which also designed similar courses for the Athens, Sydney and Beijing Olympics. CIWW

took just over one year to build and cost £13.3m, with £9m coming from the Cardiff Harbour Authority, £1m from Tourism Wales and a £3.3m capital loan from the council. The centre is being managed by the Cardiff Harbour Authority on behalf of Cardiff Council.

"We offer a fantastic white water experience in the middle of the city that is dynamic, exciting and safe," says CIWW centre manager Chris Hadfield. "The opening of this centre brings another world class facility to Cardiff, it makes paddle sports accessible to communities and it attracts people from all over the UK to Cardiff. And from a corporate and conferencing perspective, we offer something completely unique."

As well as the course itself, the centre features a café, a retail area and two conference rooms. It also has a retained water pool, separating the course from the River Ely. This pool allows novices to practice paddling away from the rapids and provides the centre with a safe area to run a range of introductory paddle sports courses boasting EU and Blue



CIWW charges from £252 per raft for a two hour white water rafting session for six people





CIWW offers a range of paddlesports courses, from introductory sessions to British Canoe Union coaching awards. The emergency services also use it as a training facility

Flag bathing standards. The other unique feature is the conveyor belt, which means users can travel from the bottom to the top of the course without having to get out of their boat.

"The conveyor belt maximises our potential commercially," says Hadfield. "The public gets more time on the water and it opens us up to different users. On other courses you have to get out of the water, carry your raft and walk it back up to the start of the course. Physically, some people – particularly younger users – just can't do that."

A LONG TIME COMING

Planning for the centre began a decade ago, when Canoe Wales, the national governing body for canoe sports in Wales, approached the Cardiff Harbour Authority. The Cardiff Harbour Authority was looking at facilities for a visitor attraction as part of its strategy for development, and the two organisations discussed various projects.

"Part of our remit was to look at developing facilities for canoe sports," says Richard Harvey, CEO of Canoe Wales. "One of the problems we have had is that river conditions vary so much. This can lead to frustration and embarrassment if you are trying to put on an international event. Also it's a challenge finding places you can go to practice the

sport and develop it 365 days a year."

The idea to develop an artificial white water centre was

born. Canoe Wales funded the initial feasibility study, and several sites in the Cardiff Bay area were considered. By 2006, the options had been narrowed down to two sites on the Bay: one on the International Sports Village (ISV) site and one within the Graving Docks.

By this time the ISV was picking up momentum, and the proposed white water centre fitted in well to its theme of 'water, snow and ice'. The ISV site was chosen and construction work started on the centre in 2008.

Today the ISV site features the 50m Cardiff International Pool and a temporary ice rink, as well as CIWW. An indoor snow centre, a permanent ice rink – which will become the home of the Cardiff Devils – and a large hotel are planned.

CIWW's location is a massive advantage, says Hadfield, with the international pool currently attracting 800,000 people a year and the temporary ice rink attracting a further 200,000 a year. "That's a million people coming to the site for recreational purposes anyway," says Hadfield. "That's a

million people that could potentially wander down the path to CIWW and be exposed to white water for the first time.”

Initially it was hoped that the centre would be considered to host the 2012 Olympic canoe slalom. However the British International Olympic Committee chose to develop Broxbourne in the Lee Valley instead, at which point the focus for CIWW changed. “It was a disappointment for Wales, for Cardiff and for us as a team,” admits Hadfield, “but it just made us more focused on the leisure and corporate markets and on attracting Olympic training camps.”

CIWW is on the official list of Olympic training camps for 2012, and Hadfield says several countries have expressed an interest in using it to train before the Games.

WIDENING ITS APPEAL

While the centre is set up to host international events and Olympic training camps, Hadfield is keen to emphasize its accessibility for the general public. “Everyone in the paddle sports world is aware of us, but making the public aware of CIWW and how unique it is is one of our biggest challenges,” he says. “We don’t want to be seen as just an Olympic standard facility, because that might put people off who think we are only for elite athletes.”

The centre is developing partnerships with several hotels in Cardiff to offer CIWW visitors special deals and packages. “We want to draw on the bigger attractions of Cardiff, so that people coming to the city to watch football or rugby, or go shopping, will also think about coming here and trying something new for a couple of hours,” says Hadfield.

The white water rafting is one of the biggest sources of revenue for the centre. CIWW offers a two hour white water rafting session for £49 per person (peak), including hire of a raft, all equipment and an experienced guide. The hen and stag markets, as well as corporate and team building days are key to building this core activity.

Other activities include hot dogging – riding the rapids on a one- or two-person inflatable kayak – and Hydro Speed, which involves a float similar to a bodyboard. The centre offers a variety of courses and off-site activities including rock climbing, gorge scrambling, sea kayaking and surfing.

Visitors with their own kayaks or canoes can pay £10 and play on the white water whenever the pumps are on, or £4 to practice in the retained water pool. The pumps are expensive to run, so part of the challenge is making the most of the times when they are on by attracting as many people as possible. “Today, for example, the Royal National Lifeboat

CIWW AT A GLANCE

Cardiff International White Water (CIWW) was officially opened by Winter Olympics gold medalist Amy Williams on 26 March.

CIWW is the UK’s first Olympic-standard pumped water canoe slalom course, offering canoeing and white water rafting for all abilities. The 250m course is expected to attract more than 50,000 users once it is fully established.

The £13.3m course was designed by French company Hydrostadium. Construction took just under two years and was carried out by Dean and Dyball Civil Engineering. The centre has been constructed in concrete with moveable plastic barriers. It can hold up to 2,000 spectators on temporary stands for special events.

CIWW has been developed by Cardiff Council with assistance from the Welsh Assembly Government and the Welsh Canoe Association. Cardiff Harbour Authority manages the new centre on behalf of the council.



Institution (RNL) is training here, so the pump time is paid for,” says Hadfield. “When the pumps are running we work to maximise that time by letting people know via websites and different mediums. We drive all our bookings towards set pump times, and when those bookings are full we open another session and advertise that.”

CIWW is also a recognised training venue and has partnered with the RNL and South Wales Fire and Rescue. Other focuses for the centre include working with schools and colleges and the Duke of Edinburgh Award’s Scheme to provide a range of educational and paddle power activities.



The conveyor belt (left) means participants don’t have to leave their crafts





Different challenges can be created by moving the blue plastic barriers and adjusting the speed of the water being pumped around the course

DESIGN PLANNING

Designed by Hydrostadium, the course is 250m long and features four pumps. Obstacles and water features are created using plastic barriers – called Omniflots – which can be moved to create a variety of different challenges.

At the design stage, Hadfield and his team visited a number of white water centres for ideas. They were particularly inspired by Dutch Water Dreams in the Netherlands, and consulted extensively with the management there. Hadfield is particularly pleased with the first floor café, which provides views over the course, and the intimacy of the site. "We wanted the facilities to be as close to the water as possible," says Hadfield; the training room, first aid room and café all provide direct access to the water.

The centre is on a public right of way, meaning people can wander in from the walkway along the River Ely. This, says Hadfield, is an advantage, meaning that more people see the course. "It's good for our partners too," he adds. "The RNLI like it, for example, because it gives them exposure. The public can watch their training exercises and it means they can see where the money they are donating is going."

A range of planned events will also raise the profile of the centre, with canoe festivals, open days and a live music and white water rafting event called Rock and Raft all planned for the coming months. Canoe Wales in association with

CIWW will also be running a series of national competitions and international events, which it hopes will generate interest in the centre and in paddle sports more generally.

"We have got plans to run international slaloms and freestyle competitions and there are great links and infrastructure for spectators to come down and have a look," says Canoe Wales' Richard Harvey. "When the water goes off and the competitors are all safely in the changing rooms, the course can be adjusted and the spectators can be out on the white water within 15 minutes. Hopefully they will then get bitten by the white water bug."

It's early days for the centre, and Hadfield knows that the offer must adapt and be flexible. For now though, he's taking pleasure in seeing the centre open and filled with people from all walks of life enjoying themselves, and he's especially pleased that it's happening in his native country.

"I'm a very passionate Welshman and I wanted to deliver something unique to Wales," he says.

"I'm very proud of the fact that we have managed to develop something like this in Cardiff, and the fact that this centre is attracting people from all over the country. We offer something you can't get anywhere else." ●



The façades are based on a variety of traditional Zaandam Houses



WILFRIED VAN WINDEN

Zaandam's eccentric new €15m hotel is the trailblazer of the Dutch town's redevelopment and is guaranteed to raise a smile. Kath Hudson speaks to its creator, Wilfried van Winden, founder of WAM architecten

How did you get involved with the Zaandam Intel Hotel project?

In 2006, I was invited by Soeters Van Eldonk architecten, the architects behind an urban renewal project which is seeing the inner city of Zaandam being radically restructured, to meet Intel Hotels founder Michel Geurts. Geurts wanted to redevelop the existing 65-bed Intel Hotel in Zaandam. Intel Hotels is an independent hotel company and Geurts is a civil engineer, which made the project very easy, because I dealt only with him and he knows how to build.

At that time I was in my former office of Molenaar & Van Winden. In 2009 I started a new company called WAM architecten and continued with the hotel redesign.

What does the Zaandam redevelopment involve?

The city of Zaandam is an architectural disaster: a lot of its charm and intimacy was destroyed in the 1960s. Buildings were demolished and replaced with a modern shopping centre and a lot of empty space. The regeneration, by Sjoerd Soeters, is reinstating Zaandam's historical street layout, reopening a canal and restoring an atmosphere of congeniality into the heart of the city. In total there are about 25 new building projects taking place in Zaandam, including a new town hall, shops, offices and housing. The hotel is the first part of the regeneration to be completed.

What was your brief for the hotel?

The area is dominated by two types of building: early industrial constructions, like the 19th century brickwork factories, and traditional wooden houses. For the hotel, Soeters asked us to use the wooden houses as inspiration.

Can you describe the hotel?

We have designed it to look like a lot of traditional Zaandam wooden houses stacked on top of one another.

The hotel features five different designs of houses, including a notary's residence and a worker's cottage. There are 70 individual houses altogether, in four shades of the traditional green of the Zaan region. There is also one blue house, which refers to Monet's *The Blue House in Zaandam* painting.

What facilities does the hotel have?

It features 160 bedrooms, a swimming pool, a wellness centre and a bar-restaurant. Conference accommodation is set to open this autumn across the road from the hotel.

Where did the inspiration come from?

We worked on several ideas for the hotel. Our starting point was that the hotel should feel like a temporary home, rather than an anonymous building like so many hotels.

One of our early concepts was a huge house; we also had an abstract design, which used the repetition of a clock-like façade, which you see on many of the houses around here.

Eventually we decided on the stack of traditional houses. The owner liked this idea, because he wanted to have lots of different-sized rooms and this design made it possible to have rooms of varying sizes spread all over the hotel.

What reaction have you had to the hotel?

It's been quite overwhelming, both in the Netherlands and all over the world. As Zaandam hasn't invested too much in aesthetics over the past decades, Soeters' urban scheme marks a turning point for the city. The hotel is the issue's first visible result



The hotel is the flagship of a redevelopment project transforming Zaandam

of this and that makes it a bit of a high-light. Most of the people living here are proud it's in their city.

Who is the hotel aimed at?

The previous Inntel hotel catered mainly for business guests, but people have already come from all over the world to stay here. It's only 10 minutes from Amsterdam, so the hotel attracts quite a lot of tourists.

What are you most proud of?

I'm proud of the way we managed to work out the idea. It's a mixture of repetition and variation; a very well thought out composition. I'm also proud of the blue house. It's a kind of accent in the whole composition. If you don't make an exception, it's just a stack of houses.

What eco-friendly measures were used?

The façade is made out of a recyclable material, which is manufactured in Belgium and looks like wood, but doesn't need the same amount of maintenance. We have a heat exchange system, which uses very little energy. The hot and cool air is divided and balanced out around the hotel. Also, we re-use the heat of the water.

What were the biggest challenges of the project?

Our efficient design meant that we could fit 160 rooms into the hotel, which we thought would please the client, but he said he only wanted 120 rooms! This would have meant

INTEL HOTEL ZAANDAM - THE FACTS

The Inntel Hotel Zaandam officially opened in April 2010. Phase two, which includes the conference accommodation, is due to be completed during the autumn. It features 160 guest rooms, a bar-restaurant called Pur Saen, a swimming pool and a wellness centre with a Finnish sauna and a Turkish bath.

The hotel was constructed by Heddes Bouw BV from timber and Eternit fibre cement cladding. It is painted in four different shades of the traditional green of the Zaan region, with the exception of the Monet-inspired 'Blue House'.

knocking off the top two storeys, but Soeters wanted to keep the height. Eventually the owner came round to the idea.

The idea for the stacked houses developed from a collage. Making it three dimensional was difficult; it was like an enormous puzzle. The corner house extends out, which makes it more convincing, but it only comes out in one direction, which made construction easier. Then there was the issue of getting the rainwater to drain away from all the different rooftops. Eventually we worked out a system, but it took a week or two to come up with a solution for that one.

As an architect, what do you specialise in?

I don't have any specialisations. What is important to me is not the type of commission, or the client, it's the ambition of the client to create something amazing.

How would you describe your approach to architecture?

I describe it as fusion architecture. I like to get inspiration from different cultures and identities, whether that's a mixture of traditional and new, or East and West. ●

ISTANBUL INSPIRES

As Istanbul celebrates its year as European Capital of Culture, Terry Stevens takes a look at the journey from bidding for the title to organising the 2010 events



PHOTOS: WWW.GOTTRIPPER.CO.UK

It's been 25 years since the title European Capital of Culture was given for the first time. In 1985 Athens became the first to benefit from a concept proposed by Melina Mercouri, then Greek minister for culture. Launched by the European Union Council, the scheme is designed to recognise a city each year that adds value to European culture. From 2000 the policy has shifted to allow more than one city to be designated each year and for cities from EU candidate countries to be included.

With these changes to the 'rules' it is no surprise that Istanbul was proclaimed European Capital of Culture 2010. This great city is widely regarded as the cradle of world civilisation and culture; the iconic capital of Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman Empires. It's a city that has been shaped by pagans, Christians, Jews and Muslims, and which straddles two continents either side of the Bosphorus.

This is a city on an enormous scale. It comprises 39 boroughs and 72 municipalities that, for 8,000 years, have been a crucible of geographic, political, commercial, philosophical and cultural ideas and identities.

Istanbul shares the title of European Capital of Culture 2010 with Pecs in Hungary and Essen in Germany.

When the EU's jury announced that Istanbul had won Capital of Culture, the unique way in which the city had organised its bid was commented on. Sir Jeremy Isaacs, UK

panel member, said "the bottom-up process and the active civil participation detected in the preparation of Istanbul's application were viewed as decisive qualifications".

According to Hayati Yazici, state minister and chair of the Istanbul 2010 Coordination Board, the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) year will be used to raise the city's profile and drive change. "ECoC 2010 aims to make Europeans knowledgeable about the 8,500-year-old history, fabulous cultural heritage and natural beauty of Istanbul, reminding everyone that the roots of European culture lie in Turkey," says Yazici. "What we have is a recovery project and the beginning of change. The key message is that this is one of the world's most inspiring cities, where cultural riches have been shared in tolerance and peace for centuries."

THE ORIGINS OF THE BID

The decision to open up the Capital of Culture process to candidate countries stimulated a group of individuals from NGOs in Istanbul to establish The Initiative Group in 2000. This was a break with tradition as previously Capital of Culture bids had been led by local or national governments.

The involvement of the NGO movements in Istanbul not only gave the process a different dimension, it also helped establish new criteria for celebrating European culture.

After five years of preparatory work, research, bench-



Hagia Sophia (right) was once a church, then a mosque, and is now a museum. Istanbul straddles the Bosphorus river (above and left)



marking and lobbying, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced full support for The Initiative Group and invited all public and non-governmental bodies to back the bid. Remarkably, within just nine months the Istanbul bid was delivered to the EU in December 2005. A year later Istanbul was declared European Capital of Culture 2010.

CITY OF THE FOUR ELEMENTS

From the outset, the concept for Istanbul's celebrations was based on the ancient theory developed by the sixth and seventh century philosophers Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes. This theory holds that the universe is composed of different combinations of earth, air, water and fire, providing the foundations for science and philosophy. This theory was used to provide the underlying concept for the 2010 EcoC programme of activity.

The 2010 Capital of Culture Agency was charged with taking the 2010 initiative forward. The agency has been responsible for the planning, management and coordination of the programme's three main areas of activity, each of which are being implemented through existing directorates of Istanbul's government. The three areas are: art and culture; urban projects and heritage conservation; and tourism.

Securing and ensuring the strategic cooperation between the state, the city and the NGOs is the responsibility of the

Istanbul 2010 Coordination Board, appointed by the Prime Minister. Alongside the Coordination Board is the Istanbul Advisory Board, which is regarded as the 'source of ideas and suggestions' and is chaired by Hüsamettin Kavi. The Advisory Board includes the Turkish foreign, finance, culture and tourism ministers; Turkish radio and tv representatives; the governor of Istanbul; representatives from the Istanbul municipalities and chamber; the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies; architects and universities.

An executive board drives day-to-day activity, and implementation is managed by the Board's general secretary, Yılmaz Kurt. This executive has seconded staff from the ministries of culture and tourism as well as from the Governor, the Mayor and the Chambers of Commerce and Industry. This is a vibrant and creative team.

Turkey's commitment to 2010 is very strong. The national government firmly recognises the power of European Capital of Culture to reflect Istanbul's European candidature ambitions and to highlight its contribution to European culture. It also draws attention to the need to develop intercultural dialogue and linkages; and to the city's potential to connect the geographic periphery of this huge metropolitan area with its heart and to engage with many different local groups.

The budget costs for Istanbul 2010 are 99 per cent funded by central government, with the remaining 1 per

THE TURKISH HOTEL SECTOR

It is estimated by Mintel (2010) that there are 2,200 hotels in Turkey with a total of 250,000 bedrooms and a bed-space capacity of 531,000 (average size 90 rooms and 215 beds).

The country's hotel stock is concentrated in its three main cities (Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara) and its coastal resorts (Dalaman, Bodrun and Side). The sector is dominated by upscale hotels – almost two thirds of all facilities are 4-star or 5-star.

The largest hotel provider is the Joy Group (7,500 beds primarily in large resort complexes) followed by the Dedeman Hotel Group. Alongside this indigenous investment is a growing commitment by international brands to the development of tourism in Turkey. As a result, global brands such as Kempinski, Hyatt, Hilton, Barcelo, Starwood, Ritz Carlton, Swissotel, Four Seasons and SAS Radisson sit alongside home grown brands such as Les Ottomans, Dedeman and Rixos.

The Turkish Tourism Investors Association (TYD), originally established



in 1988, today has 180 members in the private sector with a current investment portfolio of \$22bn (£15bn, €18bn). This represents two thirds of all total private investment in the country.

At the beginning of 2009 many existing hotels embarked upon a programme of renovations and upgrades, especially of their spa and leisure fac-



Hyatt's Park Hyatt Istanbul (above) opened in 2008. Hyatt is one of a growing number of global brands in Turkey

ilities. In part, this was stimulated by Istanbul's impending celebration as European Capital of Culture 2010.

The rewards of these investments have been

immediately realised, especially in Istanbul. Across Turkey reports are showing revenues are up 10 per cent in the first quarter of 2010 compared to the same period in 2009.

cent funding support coming from the EU. The total budget of E250,000,000 for the period 2008–2010 has been allocated as follows: 65 per cent to culture (including heritage and museums); 25 per cent for events; and 10 per cent to tourism promotion and communications.

THE BENEFITS AND THE LEGACY EFFECTS

According to the chair of the Executive Board, Sekib Avdagic, the overall aim for Istanbul 2010 is to "make Istanbul more visible on the global cultural and artistic map of the world". As a result, the city will benefit from new state-of-the-art museums, a range of transformational regeneration projects, new cultural venues and the creation of major new job opportunities. Istanbul's creative industries will be given a new platform for growth and will benefit from an injection of international talent.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Istanbul 2010 EcoC Agency projects, which are produced and realised in three strategic fields, are carried out in 14 different areas. Through Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture projects, art and culture is being successfully animated with numerous projects in different areas such as visual arts, music and opera, performing arts, literature, cinema, urban culture and traditional arts. Urban projects are implemented in Urban Applications, Cultural Heritage and Museums and lastly Urban Projects Coordination directorates. In addition, Tourism and Promotion, Maritime and

International Relations directorates are heavily involved with projects, which are mainly aimed at creating awareness of Istanbul 2010 EcoC in the international arena.

According to Ozgul Ozkan Yavuz, director of Tourism and Promotion at the EcoC 2010 offices, in 2009 Istanbul received 7.5m international tourists. Post-2010, the ambition is to increase the volume of international arrivals to 10m by 2015 and to have a stronger product base that will increase the length of stay in the city from three to four nights with a commensurate increase in spend per head.

The hotel infrastructure is already in place with 100,000 bedspaces in 1,000 establishments and a further 20,000 bedspaces under construction. There are 42 5-star hotels operating in Istanbul, 28 of which are international brands.

CONCLUSION

In the nineteenth century, the French poet Alphonse de Lamartine described Istanbul by saying: "There God, man, nature and art created such a perfect place that it is well worth seeing." European Capital of Culture 2010 provides an additional stimulus to accept this invitation. The 2010 investment programme is, however, geared to creating projects and urban enhancements for the long term.

This strategy, resulting from the bottom-up organisational approach and national buy-in, should ensure ongoing success for Istanbul's tourist economy. ●

Terry Stevens is managing director of Stevens & Associates



CUTTING COSTS

As the new government announces major cutbacks, Capita Symonds' Chris Marriott asks: **Can local authorities afford to continue managing their own services?**

The recently announced budget cuts for local authorities have been brutal. Savings of between 25 per cent and 40 per cent will need to be delivered over the next four years.

For some time, councils have been working out what they can cut, how much they can save, and when they can do it.

All services will now come under intense scrutiny. All are likely to suffer; some more acutely than others. So, as a non-statutory service, what's the future for leisure and arts? Some councils may be tempted to close their leisure centres and theatres and sack staff. Closing facilities is a very efficient way of making savings, but while councils don't have to provide leisure and arts services at all, they do represent some of their most visible activities and are integral to the delivery of a far wider social and economic agenda.

So what's the alternative?

For those councils which are operating their facilities directly, the simple answer is to get someone else to do it, under contract. About 65 per cent of leisure centres in England are still operated in-house. The other 35 per cent are run by a mature stable of specialist private contractors (Leisure Connection, DC Leisure, Parkwood, SLM, Serco) and trusts (Fusion, Greenwich Leisure, Active Nation, SIV).

Leisure operators typically charge the council a management fee in return for taking on the financial risk of operating the facilities. Councils tend to find it cheaper to contract with a partner rather than deliver services themselves. This is for a number of reasons, including more commercially astute management, better marketing and

programming and faster decision-making, leading to higher sales and lower costs.

Also, trusts – but not private operators – benefit from business rate relief and tax benefits which they can pass on to the council via a reduced management fee.

One of the leading leisure contractors in the UK will tell you that it typically delivers a £200,000 saving to a council for each leisure centre it takes on (reducing the net cost from £300,000 to £100,000).

PROTECTING STAFF

Cynics might worry that contractors will reduce the facility's staffing base. In fact council employees are transferred across as part of the contract and their terms

a combination of better pay and higher numbers of staff. Councils are going to need to address this if they want to retain the scope of their service and continue operating in-house. Up until now it's an issue they've been unwilling to tackle.

MAKING A CASE

Proponents of in-house delivery argue that councils are more in tune with the needs of their community and are better at delivering sports and arts development programmes. While this may be true, leisure officers will have a difficult job convincing their chiefs that this is important in the current climate, and that they are indeed better than a third party contractor.

Even if they can put forward a compelling case for retaining a sports and arts development service in-house, the business of managing the facility is a separate issue.

Councils will find that it's a very competitive market out there. The fact that all councils

will be reviewing their options at the same time is positive. There will be opportunities for like-minded neighbouring councils to club together and jointly offer a larger portfolio of facilities to the market.

The bigger scale opportunities tend to be more aggressively pursued by operators and can help drive a keener price, while councils can share the burden of the procurement costs.

In the face of cuts and competing budgetary priorities, local authorities will need to demonstrate a sound business case for operating their services in-house.

In fact, from now on, the onus is likely to be on councils to justify why they shouldn't outsource their service. ●

"The fact that all councils will be reviewing their options at the same time is positive. There will be opportunities for like-minded councils to club together and offer a larger portfolio to the market"

and conditions will be protected under the Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment (TUPE) regulations. That's not to say that contractors won't be banking on making savings through improving the productivity of their workforce – savings they will pass on to the council in the form of a lower management fee.

Given that staffing typically represents the single biggest cost of running a facility, it warrants some consideration. Capita Symonds has undertaken a number of reviews of local authority leisure operations over the past few years. Compared to trust- and privately-operated facilities, staffing costs for council run facilities were significantly higher. This was due to

What do you think? Can third parties save councils money and provide a better service, or should local authorities continue to manage leisure services in-house? Email magall@leisuremedia.com with your thoughts

a fresh start

When Pontins holiday park in Hemsby closed in 2008, the future for the Norfolk resort looked grim. Simon Middleton tells Magali Robathan how he plans to change the area's fortunes by creating 'the Eden of the East' and capitalising on its Viking past



How did you get involved with the Hemsby project?

In March 2009 I was approached by James Gray, proprietor of Lost World Adventure Golf, a small attraction in Hemsby. Gray was having a tough time - along with many other small businesses in the area - due to the recession, cheap overseas holidays and the British seaside falling out of fashion, as well as the closure of the 1,300-bed Pontins site in 2008. He asked for my help and I agreed to work pro bono with the community.

I quickly discovered that Hemsby had been founded by Vikings in about 800AD so I decided to focus on that Viking heritage to give the resort a new story to tell. The Hemsby village sign now features a new Viking logo (with bucket and spade) and the slogan: 1,200 Years of Seaside Fun!

What did the Viking festival offer?

The Viking story gained a huge amount of media coverage and more followed when I announced the creation of Norfolk's first Viking festival.

The Hemsby Viking Festival ran from 18 June to 20 June this year with a host of attractions including a Viking village, re-enactment of the real-life Viking battle of Hemsby around 800 AD and the ritual burning of a longship.

A 70-strong clan of 'Vikings' set up camp in the village and visited schools as well as entertaining thousands of visitors.

How was your idea for a new holiday park born?

The Viking story and the festival really changed the mood in Hemsby and galvanised local traders into action. One festival doesn't regenerate an economy though, so I wanted to go further in changing the resort's fortunes.

I decided to approach Northern Trust, the owners of the former Pontins site, to see if they would consider my plan for a new kind of holiday park on the 22 acre site.

My vision is for a 21st century holiday park, featuring



PHOTO: ANDREW HORELOW/VIKINGS OF MIDDLE ENGLAND

Re-enactment group the Vikings of Middle England gave battle displays and visited local schools as part of the Hemsby Viking Festival

stunning accommodation, built and managed to the very latest standards of environmental sustainability. It will have a very strong experiential learning theme, allowing visitors to enjoy and learn about sustainable living. It

won't be earnest, it will be a fun holiday park, but it will have a serious message underlying it. I want the new park, which has been nicknamed Eden of the East by the media, to be a truly destinational holiday choice.

What facilities will the holiday park offer?

It will feature approximately 500 beds, in two, four and six-bed eco-lodges of various designs. There will be lots of sustainable activities on offer for children and adults, from adventure play to learning about, and trying out, alternative technologies. Guests will also be able to visit the magnificent beach of Hemsby and explore The Broads and North Norfolk.

Are you hoping to buy the Pontins site?

I have approached Northern Trust about buying the site, and we are currently in tentative discussions. But I don't necessarily have to own the site, if we can come to some kind of lease or joint venture agreement in due course.

Who is Simon Middleton?

Simon Middleton is a 'brand strategy guru'. He has worked with companies and charities including British Airways, Pret A Manger, Aviva, Comic Relief, and St John Ambulance. He also advises on the brands of visitor destinations, including Great Yarmouth, Hemsby & Newport, Felixstowe and The Broads (a member of Britain's National Park family). He appears on *Seaside's Last Resort* as expert brand advisor to Duncan Bannatyne.

Middleton is founder and CEO of Norfolk Leisure Limited, a company created to develop visionary tourism projects in Norfolk and beyond.

What is your role in this project?

I am the driver and the visionary. I have created a company to make this project happen, along with other Norfolk tourism ventures. I presently own 100 per cent of Norfolk Leisure Limited, but I expect my equity to diminish as investors come on board.

I am unlikely to operate the park myself, but I want to drive the project forward until it has traction.

How has the closure of Pontins affected the area?

It has had a disastrous effect on the area. During the summer, 1,300 fewer people per day are spending money in the resort than they were when Pontins was open.

What do you hope your project will do for the area?

I hope that it will attract new visitors with higher spend, increasing income to the community.

I also hope that it will improve the long term prospects of the area by creating a landmark destination holiday park which will become a truly national brand.



Simon Middleton (above) was approached by Hemsby's business community in 2009 to help rebrand the area and increase tourism

What stage are you at with the project?

I have first drawings and a feasibility study from my architects. We are developing those drawings now and are a few weeks from being able to take

them to the local authority and to the investment market.

How much do you think the park will cost?

I can't give an accurate figure at the moment. Let's just say it's a multi-million pound investment.

How are you planning to raise the necessary funding?

Through a mixture of private equity and major investment. This part of Norfolk is a major tourist area and figures suggest that this development will attract great interest. ●

The American Dream

The history of American Leisure is in many ways the American Dream made real. At the age of 18, Steve Kass was working as a lifeguard on the gloriously kitsch resort of Coney Island in Brooklyn, New York. But Kass wasn't interested in Coney Island's amusement park, boardwalk or hot dog stands.

"Across from my post, there was a new luxury housing development, which had a swimming pool," he recalls. "I found it so interesting that a residential development should be offering recreational facilities... that was the start of the business."

Fast-forward more than four decades and the leisure management company Kass set up in 1967 as a three-man operation now employs over 500 people and operates 75 leisure facilities – including pools, fitness centres,



STEVE KASS

TOM JOHNSTON

Launched in 1967, American Leisure has grown from a small fitness operator into a global leader in the delivery of lifestyle services. Rhianon Howells speaks to founder Steve Kass and COO Tom Johnston

spas and lifestyle amenities. These are primarily within luxury housing developments, but also within hotels and resorts and as standalone sites.

Within the New York metropolitan area, where most of its managed facilities are based, the company is a byword for luxury lifestyle services in a residential setting, with big-name clients including the Trump Organization and Tishman Speyer. But although the US, and New York in particular, remains its largest market, the

company's horizons have broadened dramatically in recent years.

Having already garnered international experience through its design and consulting arm, the company signed a deal last year with Saudi Oger, a hugely influential Saudi Arabian company owned by Sheikh Ayman Hariir. American Leisure was brought on board to deliver almost a million sq ft of leisure facilities plus ongoing management services to the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), an iconic new development on the eastern shore of the Red Sea at Thuwal, Saudi Arabia. The vision of King Abdullah himself, this post-graduate research institute is not only Saudi Arabia's first co-ed university but also the first to accept academics from around the world, with students from more than 60 nations already enrolled.



The Setai in New York features a spa (above and right) and a health club



PHOTOS: DANIEL ALBRY FOR SETAI



So how exactly did this once-small regional operator become the kind of company able to command so prestigious a project? And where do its founder and his new right-hand man – Tom Johnston was appointed as COO in November 2008 – see its future?

FUN AND PARTICIPATION

Although American Leisure started out offering recreational management services to pools and country clubs, it wasn't long before Kass had achieved his goal of working with residential property developers, designing and managing leisure offerings that would help them market their real estate.

Then, in the 1970s and 1980s, the business diversified into tennis, racquetball and eventually fitness clubs. "We started to introduce the Nautilus line of equipment, which at that time was almost a generic name for exercise equipment, into our racquets clubs," says Kass. "That was, I think, the beginning of the trend towards fit-

American Leisure was responsible for the spa at the recently-opened Hotel Plaza Athénée in New York (above)

ness clubs as we know them today." True to Kass's original vision, the design and operation of swimming pools, including several summer-only facilities, has also remained a high-profile part of the business.

But it is in the arena of lifestyle services within residential communities that American Leisure has perhaps the greatest claim to be a pioneer. While property developers have been incorporating pools and fitness centres into their offerings for decades, American Leisure was one of the first companies to take the idea of recreation-at-home and run with it, delivering a complete lifestyle concept. In addition to gyms, pools and spas, American Leisure equips its communities with cinemas, libraries, saunas and demonstration kitchens, as well as extensive social programmes – cov-

ering everything from dance classes and sporting events to parties – and the people to run them.

In New York, the concept has been so successful that no self-respecting luxury development is now complete without some kind of lifestyle offering, but American Leisure remains at the vanguard of the trend. "I don't want to be immodest, but we did start it," says Kass. "We've come up with many innovative ideas that have gone on to become across-the-board offerings. For example, in one rental building aimed at young professionals, we created a breakfast club where people could stop off and get a healthy breakfast on their way to work."

According to COO Tom Johnston, while healthy living is central to the American Leisure philosophy, the emphasis is always on fun and participation. "We recognise that fitness is one of the cornerstones of a healthy lifestyle, but we know that [working out] isn't for everybody," he says. "So

KAUST: CREATING A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

The King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) opened in Saudi Arabia in

September 2009. American Leisure was brought on board to create a lifestyle concept for the university. The goal was simple yet ambitious: to create the healthiest community in Saudi Arabia.

Facilities include two large multi-sports clubs with segregated male and female fitness centres as well as a climbing wall and a 16-lane bowling alley; a racquets club for tennis, squash, badminton and racquetball; a university fitness centre, and a recreational facility offering billiards, table tennis and Wii games. There are also 14 parks, open-air swimming pools, outdoor tennis courts, a 5,000-seat sports stadium, a public library, a cinema



Saudi Oger brought American Leisure on board to create a leisure offer at KAUST

15,000 over time, American Leisure is signed up for the long haul. "The project has been a massive undertaking and it has tested us, frankly," admits Johnston. "But we're proud of the accomplishment and we recognise [as a result] that we're certainly capable of taking on some big challenges."

instead we're creating a different kind of model that allows us to meet people where they're at in the wellness continuum, through social programming that encourages individuals to adopt a more active lifestyle while getting to know their neighbours."

Giving the company another edge is the fact that it has its own, modest property management arm, comprising 15 residential communities in the New York suburbs, all of which have a significant lifestyle offering. "It's a small operation," says Johnston, "but it gives us an additional perspective on what's going on with the end user."

CREATING LIFE

Johnston started his career as a gym instructor in the early 1980s before moving first into sales and then into management. In 1990 he became gen-

eral manager of the Weymouth Club, one of the best-known fitness clubs on the east coast, before joining the Saw Mill Sports Management chain as vice president of operations in 1997.

By the time he left that company to join American Leisure 18 months ago, he had amassed a huge wealth of experience in fitness industry operations – but, by his own admission, his knowledge of running lifestyle amenities in residential buildings was scant. "The opportunity to move into the lifestyle segment really intrigued me, but it was all new," he says. "So I really had to jump into the trenches, look around me and get to understand the business as best I could."

Having come on board just as the recession really began to bite, his first job was to assess the business from the ground up; make staffing changes,

and a theatre. In addition to overseeing all these facilities, recreation manager Jay Francis leads a team generating events and activities to bring them to life – recent examples include World Health Day, Earth Day, a gift bazaar, kite-flying, go-kart racing, youth football, swimming lessons and a summer camp for kids.

Since the university opened last September, 2,000 people have moved in, but with numbers expected to reach

including cuts, where needed; and implement new best practices. It's partly as a result of those measures, he says, that the company has "not only survived but is going to flourish as it comes out of this recession; we've taken this opportunity to strengthen our core competencies and we're now poised to really grow the brand."

Johnston hadn't been with American Leisure six months, however, before he had another focus: the KAUST project. The opportunity was, he admits, more the result of serendipity than strategy. "One of our residents in New York recommended us to Saudi Oger," he says. "He'd had such a wonderful experience with American Leisure that when they were looking for a company to develop a lifestyle offering at KAUST, they called us."

EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES

Inspired by the success of the KAUST project, American Leisure has forged a 'strategic alliance' with Saudi Oger, with a view to offering similar services in real-estate and academic developments across the Middle East – especially in Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Lebanon. As the global economy recovers, Johnston also anticipates that American Leisure's international consulting business, which all but disappeared during the recession, will start to come back.

Stateside, the company already has several projects underway on both the east and west coasts. Although funding continues to a big challenge, says



American Leisure is providing spa and fitness facilities for The Edge, a major condominium project taking shape in Brooklyn, New York



Kass, "we are seeing some signs of life". But while he believes both the hotel/resort and real-estate sectors will recover well, he is less sanguine about standalone fitness clubs. "That's been one of the most affected areas; we don't see that coming back for at least another three years. Unfortunately, the financial institutions don't understand that business as well as businesses [such as the hotel sector] that have been around longer. Also, businesses that address current trends and have an easy point of entry, such as fitness clubs, are often over-built and the banks have become very sensitive to that."

Fitness within a real-estate or hospitality setting, however, remains a primary focus for American Leisure, as does the spa sector. In February, the company opened a spa at The Setai, a luxury condo development in the heart of New York's financial district, which it's also managing. It's since consulted on the concept and design for a second Setai Spa in New York – at The Setai Fifth Avenue, a condo/hotel development set to open in November

American Leisure's Aqua Grotto concept brings full-scale spa facilities to luxury residential developments

– and also worked on the new spa at Manhattan's Hotel Plaza Athénée, opened in May. "We're moving very strongly into the spa field because it's an area where we've developed a great deal of expertise," says Kass. "We're able to run spas profitably, which is something many [real-estate and hotel] operators find challenging."

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

One of Johnston's own areas of expertise, of course, remains the world of fitness. A registered yoga teacher, he is passionate about exercise.

In line with the American Leisure philosophy of fun and participation, he believes there's a growing demand for activities that bring people together: yoga, group exercise, and small-group personal training. "You need staff that understand part of their job is to build relationships with people, and to connect those people with other people," he adds. "It's all about connecting."

This emphasis on people is also the driving force in how the company chooses suppliers. "We look at the quality of the equipment, but it's also about the quality of the relationships," says Johnston, who names Precor, Life Fitness and Star Trac as partners.

When it comes to building relationships with his own staff, Johnston looks for inspiration in his yoga practice. "I'm really interested in seeing how I can take what I learn on the mat and apply it to business," he says.

"Yoga is all about alignment, and one of my philosophies is that my job is to create alignment within my team.

"We're always going back and checking that alignment, and making adjustments to ensure that we're all on the same page internally. As a result, we're decisive about where we want to go and also, frankly, about where we don't want to go."

From a Coney Island beach to a global business to a partnership with one of the most influential companies in the Middle East, one thing's for certain: American Leisure has already come a very long way. ●

A growing empire



Making a fortune by being successful in one industry would be enough for

most people. Not Richard Caring. Worth £600m according to *The Sunday Times Rich List*, the tycoon had already proved himself by becoming the biggest supplier of clothing to a huge chunk of the British high street, including the likes of Top Shop and Next, and big American retailers such as Walmart, owner of Asda.

Now Caring is achieving acclaim for his success building a restaurant empire. His leisure group has been assembled over the past five years and encompasses such leading eateries as The Ivy, Le Caprice, Harry's Bar, Scott's and J Sheekey. Caring's stable is not restricted to the chic and upmarket. The rag-trade millionaire owns Côte, a 12-strong chain of French-style brasseries concentrated in south-east England, and has a 12 per cent stake in Carluccio's. "It's a powerful portfolio of brands," says Jon Lake, a restaurant specialist at Deloitte.

MAJOR DEALS

There have been some spectacular deals on the way through, not least when Caring made an £85m turn from buying and selling the Strada chain of pizzerias. He acquired the business for £55m from veteran restaurant investor

With a leisure group that includes The Ivy, Le Caprice and Daphne's, Richard Caring has become a major player in hospitality. Matthew Goodman takes a look at what's next for the tycoon

Luke Johnson, and sold them just 20 months later for £140m.

Having established a unique collection of assets in the UK, Caring, 62, is now quickly setting about expanding his interests overseas, taking some of the most prized names in his restaurant business and opening sister sites around the world. A branch of Caprice has opened in New York, for example, Dubai is now home to the Rivington Grill and there is a second Daphne's restaurant in Barbados.

It's not bad going for someone who has only been in the game since 2005, and then more through circumstance than any long-held ambition to enter the hospitality sector. Caring's entry into the leisure industry came when he was offered the chance to buy championship golf course Wentworth, a deal that was too enticing for golfing enthusiast Caring to turn down.

He ended up paying £130m for the course and once installed as the new owner, he decided the food and beverage offer needed an upgrade. The catering arm of the Caprice group was called in, prompting Caring to decide to buy that business, too.

It served as the basis for a whirlwind of activity. While much of what the

Caring restaurant empire has achieved has been well received – Scott's was moribund before he acquired it, now it is routinely described as one of London's finest dining rooms – there have been question marks over some of his expansion plans.

Specifically, some query whether such exclusive industry names risk having their image watered down through overseas expansion. Reviews for the New York version of Le Caprice, for example, could politely be described as mixed. "There are a few good things to eat," wrote *The New York Times* rather caustically.

AVOIDING THE PITFALLS

Some observers believe that there is a fundamental problem with setting out to reproduce iconic venues in fresh locales. Richard Harden, co-author of the *Harden's* series of restaurant guides, credits the way that Caring has maintained standards at his empire but asks: "Is it possible to replicate these institutions? There must be a question as to whether these restaurants can have real authenticity in their transplanted locations."

The experience of Gordon Ramsay, who received much criticism for over-expanding after opening venues across the globe, is one that Caring will want to avoid. So far, he seems to have avoided such pitfalls, and the rapid growth of his restaurant empire, both domestically and abroad, doesn't seem to faze him. Indeed, in one inter-

Caring isn't holding back when it comes to expansion. He is planning to open 20 sites in the UK alone this year and receives between 30 and 50 proposals each week



view he described the brands under his control as “crown jewels” and said simply that “they can travel”.

BIG AMBITIONS

Caring isn't holding back when it comes to expansion. His company is planning to open 20 sites in the UK alone this year. Elsewhere, it is drawing up plans for a venue in Sydney and a hotel in Shanghai, and it receives proposals for between 30 and 50 new businesses every week.

The Soho House chain, in which Caring is a majority 80 per cent investor, has seen the most expansion activity. The most recent openings saw the group arrive in the West Hollywood district of Los Angeles and Berlin. Berlin is also due to house a branch of London's West End restaurant Cecconi's, while LA already has a branch of the fashionable eaterie. In the pipeline are further Soho House venues in Miami and Chicago, to add to the existing Soho House New York.

Caring's Caprice Holdings group encompasses brands including Scott's, Le Caprice, Daphne's, The Ivy and Rivington

Despite scepticism in certain quarters, some observers applaud the way Caring is conquering the globe, and point to his restaurant group as a rare British success story when it comes to branching out into new, often tough, markets such as America.

Deloitte's Lake says: “There are only a few businesses that really are penetrating overseas markets now, and Caring's is one of them. The big prize will be establishing itself in both the USA and the Far East.”

Lake argues that rather than devaluing the brands when they open in new locations, there could be a reverse benefit – namely, that visitors to newer outposts of the brand may be more inclined to try the original versions of the venues when they visit the UK.

Those who deal with the company suggest that while all the brands and restaurants maintain their own identities, Caring and his team have been able to achieve success because the various groupings and operations have been integrated well. The disparate organisations that Caring has bought together have managed to maintain distinct identities while being run coherently as one. This bodes well for the future, they argue. The figures would seem to support this. Caring's restaurants and clubs made earnings before interest payments and tax of £65m last year and are expected to top £80m next year. That's not too shabby for a man who is routinely applauded for his hands-off style and who's only been in the industry for five years. The challenge will be maintaining the same level of success for the next five years and beyond. ●

Matthew Goodman is a business journalist at The Sunday Times

Training the industry

When I arrive at Lifetime's Bristol office, founder and CEO Heather

Frankham manoeuvres her way past piles of boxes to greet me.

"Sorry about the mess, but we're moving," she says, ushering me into her office. Frankham doesn't look sorry at all, though; in fact she looks positively pleased.

That's because the mess is a result of Lifetime's success. The company has seen such rapid growth that Frankham has had to rent an extra floor of office space in order to accommodate her ever-expanding workforce.

Lifetime offers a range of courses, apprenticeships and NVQs aimed at training employees for the active leisure sector. It is the seventh largest provider of apprenticeships in the UK – across all sectors – and its clients include LA Fitness, Leisure Connection, DC Leisure, Fitness First, SLM, Birmingham City Council and Esporta. More recently,

Back in the early 1990s Heather Frankham spotted a need for better training for leisure professionals. Today her company, Lifetime, is the number one training provider for the active leisure sector. She tells Magali Robathan how she did it

the company has branched out into hospitality training, with clients including Marriott Hotels and Hilton. Its core business has been built on accessing government funding for training, and around 80 per cent of its turnover is currently government-funded.

"I set Lifetime up to be about quality training," explains Frankham. "It's about making sure we provide real skills, not

just pieces of paper. Students can go to a college and be trained by someone who's never worked for the industry. While they may be able to teach the academic elements of the course, the reality of what it's like to work in a gym doesn't get taught. When we recruit tutors, we recruit people who already work within the industry and we train them to be teachers or assessors. That way we can respond to what the industry actually needs."

This approach certainly seems to be working. Last year the company delivered training to more than 12,000 learners. In the past three years, it has more than quadrupled its turnover, from £4.2m to around £17m, and has grown from around 60 staff to almost 200. In the next 12 months it is forecast to deliver a turnover of £25m.

BUILDING THE BUSINESS

After graduating in 1991 with a degree in PE and maths, Frankham went into teaching. In her spare time she got an aerobics teaching qualification and ran classes at a local gym. She was then asked to teach on aerobics instructor classes and spent her evenings and weekends teaching trainee instructors in Bristol and London. In 1993, she decided it was time for a change, and enrolled on a Masters degree in exercise and health science at Bristol University, which she fitted around a part-time teaching job.

It was while she was teaching on an instructor course at Redwood Lodge – a Whitbread-owned hotel and country club in Bristol – that Frankham spotted a business opportunity.

"It was a lovely facility but the aerobics programme wasn't well attended," she says. "Instructors regularly failed

Frankham was voted on to the board of directors for the FIA at the end of 2009

Transforming a Generation

This year is seeing the roll out of the

Transforming a Generation (TAG) charity, which Lifetime has been involved with since the launch of its pilot in 2008. TAG was set up by LA Fitness





to turn up and some classes only attracted two or three people. I put a proposal to them saying I'll sort your aerobics programme out, I'll guarantee you the income you are currently getting and a profit share of what we make above that. We got the classes full and expanded the timetable. I got the right instructors in and made sure that the classes always ran."

When a rival David Lloyd health club opened nearby, Frankham was asked to stay at Redwood Lodge in a consultancy role, to look after the aerobics programme, develop the gym and work on retaining members. After six months she was asked to look at three more clubs for Whitbread, and was then asked to act as group fitness manager, on a self-employed basis. "One of the things highlighted was the need for training," she says. "The industry was realising it needed a recognised qualification for fitness instructors."

Frankham worked with Whitbread on pilot programmes for training fitness instructors, before realising that the company didn't have the funding to roll out the programmes across its clubs. It was then that she decided to get involved with the newly launched apprenticeships through

Lifetime's courses range from fitness instructing and lifeguarding to hospitality supervision training

the then Training and Enterprise Council. "That was my first experience of accessing government funding for training, which I implemented through Lifetime," she says. "It was the beginning of Lifetime as a company, as opposed to me as a sole trader."

Lifetime was launched in 1995, and over the next few years it focused mainly on apprenticeships, delivering training and sourcing funding for health and fitness operators. The early days, says Frankham, were all about survival. She had no capital, and the company was built using small business development loans. "Initially the business survived month-to-month," she says. "Because we worked nationally, but through a local training and enterprise council, the delays in funding were huge. Cash flow was a real issue."

THE BREAKTHROUGH MOMENT

The breakthrough came in 2002. "It all came together at that point," says Frankham. "We won a contract with Livingwell and got all their staff onto REPS Level 2. As a result we very quickly got referrals and that was when the growth really started to happen for us."

and FIA chair Fred Turok, with the aim of preparing 18-24 year olds not in employment, education or training (NEET) for a job in the health and fitness industry. Participants take part in a six-week training programme, delivered by Lifetime, and then in a four-month work placement at a local

gym. Each has a dedicated mentor, and is taught a range of skills, from customer service to time-keeping.

"It's about taking these individuals and giving them some aspirations and self confidence," says Frankham. "The TAG programme is very important to us. It's about making a difference."

Lifetime is the partner for the scheme, which has attracted £11.7m in funding from the Department for Work and Pensions. The programme launched in January 2010. The aim is to get 1,800 young people to achieve a Level 2 REPS qualification and a job in the health and fitness industry.

"I love what I do. I love looking at the industry and working out where the next opportunity lies. That's where I get my excitement from"

"I'd done the first year of an MBA programme with Open University, so I had a greater business understanding. We were beginning to get a reputation for quality and it was also a time when government funding [for training] was much freer, so we had an opportunity to grow. It just all came together."

Since then, the business has seen extremely fast growth, leading to a new set of challenges.

"During the course of 2008, we went from 60 to 180 staff," says Frankham. "We had recruited our board of directors when Lifetime was delivering a £2m turnover. Suddenly we were delivering £10m turnover and we needed a different set of skills."

In 2009 Frankham brought in several new directors. David Foster was appointed as COO, Nigel Wallace became director of training, Peter Mitchell joined as finance director and Patrick Henchoz joined as a non-executive director. A final new appointment – Iain Beadle, sales and marketing director – was confirmed earlier this year. This has freed Frankham up to be able to take a more strategic role in the business. "The day-to-day operation is now with David Foster and his team, which gives me a completely new freedom to do the things I love and enable the business to grow even more," she says.

BRANCHING OUT

Last year saw the launch of Lifetime Awarding, established to meet the need for "fit for purpose" qualifications for the fitness and leisure sectors. Lifetime Awarding was recognised as an official awarding organisation by the qualifications regulator Ofqual in July 2009.

"Previously, the awarding organisation would design the courses we ran," says Frankham. "Because that process is quite lengthy, by the time you had a qualification approved the industry had moved on. Lifetime Awarding is about being able to respond to the industry much more quickly."

Future plans for growth will see Lifetime looking to acquire other training providers, and it is also diversifying its offer. It recently started offering hospitality training, and Frankham says she is looking into offering training for other sectors. "We'll look at aligned, customer-orientated sectors; the entertainment and wellbeing industries, for example."

CHALLENGES FOR THE INDUSTRY

It's a tough time for the industry, says Frankham, with increased competition and the difficult economy meaning it's important for operators to work out where they sit in the marketplace. "The challenge for the industry, once operators have realigned themselves, will come in identifying where the pinch points and the opportunities lie," she says.



In 2009, Lifetime appeared on the Sunday Times Fast Track 100 for the first time

Frankham hopes that a growing necessity to retain members will result in a move away from what she sees as a focus on sales figures at the expense of customer service. "We've

had a period of time when operators have been driven by spreadsheets and numbers," she says. "General managers now spend their time behind a desk as opposed to being out talking to members and driving good service."

"Until recently, operators got enough walk-ins that they could deliver what they needed to this way. Now, with increased competition, they can't rely on that so they've got to stop members leaving. I think we'll see a swing back to how things used to be, with managers coming out of their offices, driving good service and mentoring their teams."

Other issues for the industry include the growing focus on the health agenda, continues Frankham. "We're moving to support some of our employers in more community-based activity, outreach work and in looking at the health and lifestyle and nutrition agendas as opposed to pure personal training for those who can afford it. We are diversifying our product range to meet that growing opportunity."

When Frankham launched Lifetime, her goal was to earn enough money to buy herself a little sports car. Now, she says, it's a passion for work that drives her.

"I love what I do," she says. "I love problem solving and I love looking at the industry and working out where the next opportunity lies. That's where I get my excitement; much more so than from financial return."

"I guess I could retire today in a very comfortable situation, but I still love the business too much." ●

As the leisure industry waits to see how the new coalition government will affect it, BISL chair David Teasdale takes a look at the first couple of months



COALITION LIFE

So far coalition life is slower. Getting policies sorted isn't just a matter of applying the government's manifesto, because there are two of them, and because there has to be more consultation. We in the sport and leisure sector are still awaiting firm and clear policy directions for our industry.

What have we learned? There's been one clear message: this Tory/LibDem administration puts fiscal priorities first. There have been £6bn worth of cuts in government spending already, for this year. Only the Department of Health was spared. This government will be driven, in policy terms, by the Treasury.

THE STORY SO FAR

Among the bits and pieces of policy emerging, a review of the Licensing Act has started, and BISL has met and briefed civil servants. This was a good process, in which there was a clear desire to understand where the existing system works and where it doesn't. There has been little real activity so far on gambling. The new tourism minister, John Penrose, who also has responsibility for gambling, has family links with horseracing so we can expect some sympathy and understanding. He's made clear he is ready to listen.

Sports minister Hugh Robertson has said that winning the 2018 World Cup bid, delivering the 2012 Olympics and driving a sports legacy off the back of the Games are his key priorities. He has given Sport England a strong vote of confidence by handing it responsibility for 2012 Olympic legacy. Robertson and culture secretary Jeremy Hunt are also keen to replace the UK School Games with a School Olympics.

An early example of times to come lies in tourism. Jeremy Hunt recently gave his first major speech on tour-



Sports minister Hugh Robertson has made the 2018 World Cup and the 2012 Olympics priorities

"Ministers will want to make progress and achieve change, but they won't have the usual public money to secure delivery. Instead they will seek to use private and voluntary resources"

ism at the National Sailing Academy in Weymouth. Hunt and Penrose made it clear that tourism is a top priority for the government. They want to increase the tourism spend in the UK, via a huge marketing and PR campaign. Penrose will listen to suggestions between now and September, when details of the plan will be revealed, which will mainly be funded and delivered by the industry.

We can expect this pattern to be repeated. Ministers will want to make progress and achieve change, but they won't have the usual public money to secure delivery. Instead they will seek to use private and voluntary resources, with departments in the steering role.

For the next few years, enter stage right/centre a new breed of ministers – ones with no money to spend.

We can't argue with the figures; the nation needs to tackle the deficit. It all makes for harder than ever decisions about priorities. But the first Budget was clear as day; sorting the deficit is what matters, so VAT was increased, even

though we all knew both sides of the Coalition wished to do anything but.

For the next two months, ministers and officials will remain short on policy decisions and initiatives while they argue over the public spending cuts. The outcomes will change our lives.

So, what can we do? BISL's six working groups have been busy drawing up policy priorities. Clearly, much will be in our own hands – that's the Conservative style anyway. We believe the government needs to understand that sport and leisure is that rare and precious thing in today's hard times – a growth industry.

With 2012, and other big events coming to the UK, with increasing leisure time, and with global growth in the experiential economy, sport and leisure will grow. The industry is encouraging healthy lifestyles and can help reduce soaring NHS costs. With our growth comes jobs – another vital benefit we can deliver to the country and the government.

There are no easy times ahead. Let's fight our corner together. ●

From illuminating the world's largest cruise liner to providing the sound system for London's hottest new venue, we take a look at how leisure venues are being brought to life by sound, light and AV

BROUGHT TO LIFE

CIRCUS ENLISTS SOUND DIVISION FOR ITS AV

As reported in *Leisure Management* Issue 2, 2010, restaurateur Trevor Davies opened the £2m Circus cabaret diner in London's Covent Garden this spring.

Designed by Tom Dixon, the venue features a unique quartz dining table running the length of the club which transforms into a dance platform later in the evening (with trapeze rings). The main room is surrounded by ancillary lounge, restaurant and bar areas.

For Davies, it was important that the AV technology lived up to the striking design. In order to fulfill his dream of having the venue entirely under computer control, with full recording and four 'virtual' deck mixing, Davies enlisted the Sound Division Group.

The Sound Division Group decided to fit the UK's first Allen & Heath Xone:DX mixer (with Serato ITCH DJ software) in the venue. This new software controller is compatible with various input formats and the system is routed via a 20-channel USB soundcard featuring total integration of the full 4-deck software. This provides the ability to send up



The quartz dining table (pictured above) becomes a stage for performers

to 168 individual MIDI control messages and connect to multiple external devices, all via Davies' laptop.

"With this system DJ sets can be mixed and saved, while I can also restrict DJs to playing what's on the hard drive," says Davies.

Via the Zero 88 Jester 24 lighting board, seven ETC Source 4 Junior profile spots and four Martin smart MAC moving heads project patterns and graphics onto the pelmet under the conservatory roof. The performers are illuminated by two powerful 400W UV cannons.



£190,000 was spent on sound and light

OLD SCHOOL SOUND FOR CLUB COUTURE

When Walsall club owner Graham Pinches bought the former Zanzibar in Stafford in June last year, he knew he was inheriting a building with a rich heritage.

Formerly owned by Springwood Leisure (and later Nexum) the newly-

named Club Couture can trace its roots back to the era of disco as Cinderellas Rockerfellas, and also Northern Soul haunt, Top of the World.

Couture Leisure's general manager, Scott Miles, was determined to reintroduce classic club sound and lighting. Ministry of Sound's former head of technology Dave Bradshaw — now part of Sound Technology's Project Support team — advised Miles on a

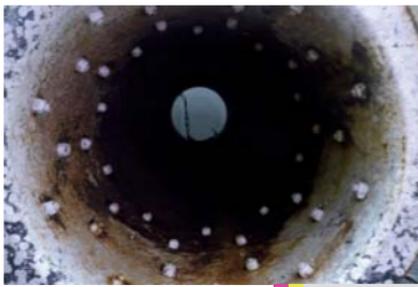


NEW AUDIOBOX II POWERS SOUND INSTALLATION AT SOMERSET HOUSE

This spring saw London's Somerset House host River Sounding, a piece of work by sound artist Bill Fontana. Visitors were invited on a journey through the hidden sound worlds of the River Thames.

This new work was made possible by Richmond Sound Design's brand new AudioBox II, which is capable of controlling up to 576 channels of audio using a variety of standard computer audio interfaces and represents a significant breakthrough in multichannel sound.

Fontana recorded a series of sounds along a hundred mile section of the Thames for the commission. Visitors were taken on a journey through Somerset House's subterranean spaces, which are normally closed to the public, and out to the Great Arch on the Embankment. Along the way a soundtrack of the Thames was projected through loudspeakers, installed at river level in the hidden pathways beneath Somerset House's courtyard. The sounds included whistling buoys, steam pumps and rushing water at river locks. The sounds were played alongside Fontana's video images of the recording locations, which include Tower Bridge, HMS



Belfast and the Thames Barrier.

Part of the installation's aim was to pay homage to Somerset House's connection to the river – Somerset House was originally built as a grand riverside palace in the sixteenth century. In the eighteenth century it became the home of Admiral Nelson's Navy Office, with boats entering through Somerset House's Great Arch.

The sounds include the ringing of the bell on Southend Pier (pictured above)



matched system, based on JBL components, that would deliver the classic sound that he was looking for.

"What we've tried to do is recreate what nightclubs used to be about — with separate light jockey and a sound system that would make people go 'wow'," says Miles.

Four JBL AM6340/95s were placed in each corner of the dancefloor, with four ASB6128s, coupled in pairs, in

front of the DJ podium. Further JBL SRX712ms and an SRX718S sub were provided for high-class DJ reference sound. At the club's far end a pair of JBL AC2212/95s are recessed into the newly-extended stage apron.

Finally 12 JBL Control 25s provide infill around the main club periphery and in the Games Arcade.

Around £2m was committed to completely refitting the 1700-capacity club.

"We've tried to recreate what nightclubs used to be about, with a sound system that would make people go 'wow' without shaking the place to death"

Scott Miles, Sound Technology



ANOLIS ILLUMINATES RENOVATED VIRGINIA PARK

A new Anolis LED landscape lighting project has been completed in the newly renovated Town Point Park in the heart of the city of Norfolk, Virginia, USA.

The 2.8 acre waterfront park has been regenerated by the City of Norfolk in a project aimed at enhancing the experience of visitors and residents. The park was closed during the nine month renovation project, which was completed in July 2009.

The park is the home of frequent festivals, local events, and concerts produced by the city's event planning organisation, Norfolk FestEvents.

The City of Norfolk called in local lighting experts, Blue Steel Lighting

Design from Virginia Beach, to design and implement a landscape lighting project for the park.

Bluesteel created a blueprint for the project, then specified the Anolis ArcSource Inground 12 RGB LED fixtures and called on the installation expertise of Stage Right Lighting, also from Virginia Beach, to engineer all the project's technical aspects.

When it came to selecting the LEDs, Anolis was chosen for its high efficiency output, low power consumption and easy maintenance.

The city began with the idea and the budget to up-light just 20 trees with a single light each. However, they were apparently so impressed by the initial

tests that they found additional funds to illuminate 83 trees, each with 2 lights. In total, 166 Anolis ArcSource Inground 12 RGB fixtures were used.

At sunset every day the lights are activated and the 83 trees are illuminated. The LEDs scroll slowly through multiple colours, running through various pre-programmed sequences.

During the festival and concert season, when the park is filled with music and people, the landscape lighting again enhances the energy and mood of the green space, with a simple and easy program adjustment.

The trees are lit up at sunset every evening. The lighting scheme can be adjusted for special events



NEW LEASE OF LIFE FOR NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES BUILDING

Llanelli-based Vaughan Sound Installations (VSI), part of the PAI Group, has installed and integrated new sound, lighting, video and control elements for The Pierhead in Cardiff Bay, transforming the main room of the Grade I listed building of the National Assembly for Wales into a multi functional space.

It's one of Cardiff's most familiar landmarks, originally built in 1897 as the HQ for the Bute Dock Company.

The stunning venue's main hall can now be run as an interactive visitor attraction or used for varied events and functions. VSI worked to a technical specification originated by theatre consultant Paul Covell, adding their own expertise and specialist knowledge.



Both lighting and sound systems were supplied with their own control consoles that can be used independently

The new installation includes a projection system that shows a seven minute video biography detailing the history of the Pierhead. This combines various archival and current materials and is projected onto six large electric roll-down screens. The projection is via six Panasonic machines.

The History Show is fully automated. The content is replayed from a 7th Sense Delta media server, and at the heart of it is an AMX control system which can be manually triggered from a preset control panel in reception. This allows the show to be run when there are enough people in the space, complete with all the audio, lighting and video switching and triggering.



MARTIN LIGHTS UP WORLD'S BIGGEST LINER

Royal Caribbean's Oasis of the Seas, the world's biggest cruise ship, recently set sail featuring a range of Martin Professional lighting and smoke solutions.

The \$1.4bn Oasis of the Seas is 360m-long with room for 5,400 passengers and a crew of 3,000.

The demanding nature of the environment – constant motion, salt water, humidity and high temperatures – mean the visual systems on board must be extremely reliable.

Oasis of the Seas features seven distinct themed areas, each featuring Martin visual solutions. These include the Royal Promenade – the ship's central meeting place. Along the length of the Promenade, Martin visuals blend atmospheric and show lighting throughout the day and night.

The musical *Hairspray* is per-

formed in the ship's Opal Theater, beneath a large rig of Martin gear, while the AquaTheater – a large pool that hosts several shows – is illuminated by Martin lights. The Studio B and ice rink is used for exhibits, fashion shows, concerts and an ice show, and features Martin MAC moving heads, LED battens and Jem smoke effects.

Additional clubs, lounges and bars for adults including Blaze nightclub and the adults-only Solarium, feature Martin visual solutions, as do social spots for youngsters.

Martin is also supplying an identical equipment package to the Oasis' upcoming sister ship, Allure of the Seas.

The liner's Opal Theater presents three different shows, including the musical *Hairspray* (shown above)



LEDS USED TO CREATE ANIMATED SKY FOR SNOG STORE

Frozen yoghurt chain Snog opened its latest outlet in London's Covent Garden in March, featuring an LED canopy ceiling created from glass spheres.

Cinimod Studio was given a brief to create a high-end interior environment for the café. The British summer was used as inspiration for the design, which features grass floors, floral graphics and a 'digital sky ceiling'.

The canopy of lights that undulates throughout the entire store is comprised of thousands of individually addressable glass spheres of LED light, each mounted on stainless steel rods descending from the white aluminium ceiling above. These fixtures

were designed by Cinimod Studio especially for this project, and make use of the latest LED technologies.

Inside each of the globes are three tricolour CREE led chips and accompanying electronics. Each fixture is capable of millions of colours.

The ceiling was designed using parametric software to create the smooth undulating form that varies in depth and pitch across the store. Controlling the system is a media-based server from lighting control specialists E:Cue, allowing for real-time audio responsive colour mapping across the store. A 3d control interface was developed allowing for complex 3d simulations to assist in the programming.



The store's 'digital sky ceiling' is made up of thousands of LED lights



What does Couture offer?

Couture is a national concession caterer offering freshly-prepared, locally-sourced British food with a twist. We work across four sectors: the arts, which covers theatres, galleries and museums; business and industry; on location based out of Pinewood Studios; and historic venues. Clients include the Manchester Museum, People's History Museum; Cornerstone Arts Centre; and Stockwood Discovery Centre.

We took over the catering at Pinewood Studios in March last year.

You provided the catering for the Drive-In Movie Nights at Pinewood Studios. What did this involve?

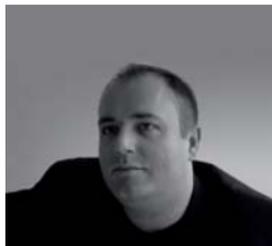
Pinewood Studios wanted to increase revenue so they put on a series of outdoor, drive-in movie nights for the public. The films were projected on to Europe's largest bluescreen at Pinewood, and included *The Shining*, *Superman* and *Planet of The Apes*.

Customers drove in, were given an FM radio signal to tune into and sat back and watched the film.

Our staff were wearing cigarette girl trays around their necks, and they went from car to car offering a selection of food. We had hot food in tubs including mini fish and chips, bangers and mash, hot dogs, vegetarian cottage pie and veggie bangers and mash, as well as more traditional cinema food like popcorn, ice cream and sweets. We also served drinks.

We operated a few stands at the screenings, serving barbecue food, hog roast and drinks, which people had to get out of their cars to access.

Providing catering for outdoor events has its own set of challenges. Couture Catering MD Marc Warde talks drive in movie nights, gourmet picnics and locally-sourced produce



EATING OUT

How did you decide on the menu?

The hot food was chosen to be deliberately non noisy and non smelly, to take into account the fact it would be eaten in a car full of people. We also looked at catering outfits we admire – in this case the Electric Cinema in Notting Hill – and were very much inspired by the food they offer for cinemagoers.

What other outdoor events have you catered for?

We also provided the catering for Picnics in the Park at Pinewood. They are a series of days with film-led live, classical music played outdoors.

We put together gourmet picnic hampers for these events. These contained everything you'd need for a proper, old fashioned picnic – a blanket to sit on, scatter cushions, a flask

of tea and a proper china tea pot, real crockery, champagne and ginger pop for the children. The food included homemade scotch eggs, sandwiches, pork pies, vegetarian pies and cakes. The hampers even came with instructions on how to serve the food.

What is the biggest challenge of catering for outdoor events?

The weather. It's important to provide alternative options if the weather is bad, but a lot of people just won't turn up when it's raining.

Why are seasonal menus and locally-sourced produce so important to you?

We believe strongly in seasonality. Food that is in season is cheaper and it tastes better. You won't find straw-



Couture Catering tries to use locally-sourced and seasonal ingredients where possible



berries on our menu in December because they just don't taste nice and we don't believe in shipping them over from the other side of the world. Being environmentally sound is important to us and we want to reduce food miles as much as possible. We source as much of our produce as we can within a 30 mile radius of our kitchens and we go direct to the point of supply where possible. We work directly with a butcher to provide our pork, for example, and we have our sausages made especially for us. We also make a lot of our produce ourselves.

Using local suppliers is important for us but it does present challenges. If you are trying to make cost savings you don't want to use loads of different suppliers. We get round this by making a lot of the food ourselves.

What food trends are you seeing at the moment?

Recently it's been all about local produce, with people wanting to know where the food they are eating has been grown or raised. However, in the current climate people are really focusing on value for money. People are still interested in food miles and the environment, but they also want the cheapest and best food. We have to be sure we are offering great value.

At Couture, we are about quality not quantity. We'd rather offer a few things, done really well, than a massive but mediocre menu.

We cater for a lot of outdoor events and it's important to be able to serve people quickly. They don't want to be queuing for a long time – they want to get their food as fast as possible so

The company uses an old Routemaster bus as a mobile café

they can get back to the concert or event. That means we need to think about food that can be served fast, and other time-saving devices such as rounding prices up or down so we're not fiddling around with change.

What are you working on for this summer?

Stockwood Park is holding some big concerts this summer and we're providing the catering for those. We're doing the catering for more screenings and Picnics in the Park at Pinewood. We also provide children's lunchboxes and adult airline-style lunches to go for the museums we work with. ●

In a crowded world with too many restaurants and too much competition, doing things a little differently can attract customers and improve your bottom line, argues Grahame Senior

How to be different

How to set yourself apart and attract new customers without becoming a fashion victim

How do you make your place stand out from the crowd and get yourself a better share of the market? 'God (and the devil) is in the detail'

I think the first thing to say is that you don't want to be too different. The back catalogue of Deloitte in its role as administrator of failed hospitality businesses is littered with great concepts such as Gaucho Grazing, Russian Revolutions and Pacific Rim Fusion. Such wildly alien ventures usually crash and burn. Being too different can make it very hard to find enough of a market that will come back once the shock of the new has worn off. It is a fact often ignored that the key to a truly successful hospitality outlet is longevity. We all need long periods of time to elapse between bouts of capital investment. A concept that's too different often takes off like a rocket and then falls back to earth like a damp squib. Truly successful restaurants stand out because they



deliver the expected services that little bit better and with that bit more personality. They don't stray into freak territory or outlandish innovations.

Different but not distinctive

Petrus (not the old Petrus operated by

Marcus Wareing but the new Petrus owned by Gordon Ramsay and fronted by Jean-Philippe Susilovic) is an interesting new idea. The rivalry between Ramsay and Wareing and the fight over the Petrus brand has perhaps confused the issue here. The 'new Petrus' is definitely different to the old model but it may well be insufficiently distinguished and distinctive of itself.

The restaurant pantheon has no smoother or more professional restaurant manager than Susilovic. He fronts this new generation with the passion you would expect, but somehow even he can't make an appetizer of different kinds of popcorn make up for what was overall a rather bland experience.

The 'new Petrus' is deliberately less 'haute cuisine' than the Marcus Wareing version was, but somehow what it delivers, though superbly executed, seemed to me ultimately rather dull. That said, I've been there just the once, chosen from their lunch menu and have every intention of going back.

If I know anything about Susilovic, he will make a success of this concept by adding in the extra little points of difference which will bring it to life. My hunch is that, over time, certain little changes will occur in Petrus and it will start to shine and stand out from the mass of mediocrity. I wouldn't mind a side bet that the popcorn appetizer will soon become history.

A jewel in the crown of the ethnic sector

Even seasoned professionals' outfits like the Ramsay operation sometimes struggle to find the right points of difference, how much more challenging must it be in the most crowded part of the UK restaurant market? We all know that ethnic restaurants, particularly Indian restaurants, are hugely popular, so how on earth do you find

SENIOR'S SEVEN - DEVELOPING ENOUGH OF A DIFFERENCE WITHOUT BECOMING A FREAK SHOW

1 Identify your competition and try and allocate a point of distinction to each operation.

2 Examine your own business and ensure that you have at least one clear point of difference that makes you distinctive from all the competition in your sector.

3 Make sure that your branding, positioning and service proposition

reflects this point of difference.

4 Research it with your core market and ensure that a) they agree it's attractive and b) that you can credibly deliver it.

5 Focus your menu offering to reflect the point of difference (local produce / seasonal produce / unique selection of wines / special service style / entertainment etc.)

6 Develop collateral material

that communicates this and mail your core market on at least three consecutive occasions.

7 Invest time and energy in PR to communicate it via the local media and the website to ensure that this is effectively transmitted to all new potential customers.

Remember - the difference is in the detail.

Anokaa – A modern Indian with a difference

In a street of Indian restaurants, Anokaa looks smart and modern, but the real difference starts when you walk through the door.

The waiting staff are dressed in traditional Indian garb and greet each guest personally. Table selections are rigorously observed. Their points of difference start with their trays of pickles and relishes and the quality of their small pappadoms.

The big surprise is the menu, which mentions the traditional popular choices only as an afterthought. What you have is page after page of clearly described dishes featuring fresh ingredients cooked with distinction. It's a lot of work which has to be underpinned with a credible and satisfactory delivery. The fact that the restaurant was completely full on a slow Monday night



Anokaa prides itself on offering traditional Indian cuisine with a twist

with some people being turned away and with many tables having double covers, indicates that this operation delivers the business.

Perhaps the most distinctive element was the confidence of all the

staff we talked to in their ability to describe accurately the dishes they were offering and to advise on the right combinations. This place is alive with a passion for doing a better job. The citizens of Salisbury clearly appreciate it.



Gordon Ramsay re-opened Petrus on Kinnerton Street in Knightsbridge in March

a point of difference and distinction in this sector? The answer is in the detail – do everything that little bit better.

Even in a small city like Salisbury, there's a veritable street of Indian restaurants and yet, somehow, in the midst of this, one operation stands head and shoulders above the rest. It also seems to have just about as many customers crammed in as the rest of them put together, so it's clearly doing quite a lot right. For details of this particular restaurant, see the panel above.

When you can't make enough of a difference – diversify!

I've written before about the Wesley House in Winchcombe. It remains absolutely spot on in terms of good value accommodation with real character and a splendid restaurant. However, it has been caught out by the general drop in high street business and arguably has too many covers and too much standing overhead to really pay.

Unlike so many operators faced with such a dilemma, owner Matthew Brown has avoided despair, hasn't

dropped his standards but instead has diversified into a catering operation which amortises all the overheads and is a real cash generator for the whole operation. Offsite catering, particularly weddings, have become a very solid revenue stream. The high reputation which Wesley House maintains in the local area makes it a first choice for those who want the best for their celebrations. Stretching the brand to cover the outside catering business has proved a well judged extension.

There are times when market factors make it impossible to turn a low level of business into a sufficiently profitable operation. It's at times like these when developing new revenue streams can be the only way to go.

Dare to be different

Whatever your business, being that little bit different will give you an edge. The key is to define the characteristics you want to give your business, and then detail the aspects of service delivery that actually create that difference.

Whether you choose some aspect of your food offering or better trained staff, it doesn't really matter. The important thing is to deliver it with confidence.

Dare to be distinctive – decide to be the best and it will definitely make a difference to your company's resilience in a tough marketplace. ●



ZOLL's new LifeVest

The innovative LifeVest Wearable Defibrillator has been designed by ZOLL to be used for a wide range of patient conditions. These include patients at risk of sudden cardiac arrest, following a heart attack, before or after bypass surgery or stent replacement, as well as for those with cardiomyopathy and congestive heart failure, and people waiting for pacemakers and heart transplants. It was recently named one of the most innovative and life-changing medical devices of 2009 by the Medical Device Network.

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zoll medical



AIREX® develops X-Large Balance-pad

Global gymnastic mat producer AIREX® has created a new extra large version of its Balance-pad. The multi-functional piece of kit is 98cm (38.5in) in length and is said to be particularly suitable for lateral position exercises although it is also suitable for endurance work. The pad is usable on both sides and has many uses for instructors including promoting inter-muscular coordination as a part of strength training.

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alcan airex

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Imaginative creative clay sets debut from National Geographic™

Inspired Gifts and Toys (IGT) has unveiled a range of new National Geographic™ 3-D Creative Clay Sets. Suitable for children of four years old and above, the net proceeds from the sale of each clay set – which contains air-drying clay – will go towards supporting exploration, conservation, research and educational programmes. Sets available include dinosaurs, creepy-crawlies, bird of prey and jeep safari. Also from IGT is the COBI® Small Army range of construction sets, which range from 60-piece to 1,000 piece packs of military kit.



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NESCAFÉ® Milano™ beverage solution

The new NESCAFÉ® Milano™ machine has been created as a high-end soluble coffee system for the leisure market. Inspired by the Italian espresso, it offers the delivery of a cup of coffee at the touch of a button in a variety of popular formats. Neil Stephens, managing director UK and Ireland for Nestlé Professional® said: "Drawing on NESCAFÉ®'s 70-year coffee heritage and global insight, we've created what we believe is the most exciting soluble system in years."

Spa at Trump CD released by Prescriptive Music

Prescriptive Music was tasked with creating a bespoke private label CD programme for the spas within the Trump Hotel portfolio. The CD was created to accompany one of the five Trump Personal Intentions treatment programmes. These focus on different themes including Calm, Balance, Purify, Heal and Revitalise while many of the rituals use precious gemstone-infused oils. There is currently a total of four Trump luxury spas in the US, located in Soho, Chi-



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prescriptive music

cago, Las Vegas and Waikiki. Each features an exclusive agreement with skin health expert Kate Somerville as well as signature products by Shiffa that are used for all therapies.



ILA unveil new amenities range

A new amenities range has been added to the ILA product line. Housed in the brand's signature packaging and containing the same blends, the Essentials Range has distilled the essence of the retail range to provide guest bedrooms with a taste of the ILA experience. It includes a Shampoo for Revitalising Hair, enriched with extracts of quillaja, ylang ylang and geranium. There is also a Turn Down Range, which includes a perfume gift and a pillow spray, as well as the Spa Bar range, which allows guests to take home one of the travel packs with sample-sized versions of ILA products.

leisure-kit.net keywords
ila-spa

Take a leap into the unknown with Bodyflight

The Bodyflight extreme leisure and entertainment centre in Bedford, UK, has unveiled a new activity called Vertigo. Marketed as 'a bungee jump without the bounce', Vertigo is one of the tallest POWERFAN™ jumps in the UK and enables customers to free fall for two thirds of a 125ft drop before a cable gradually slows them down. Participants are fastened the entire time to handrails via a body harness.



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bodyflight uk



Mix and mosaic with Trend of Vincenza

From the Italian mosaic tile maker Trend of Vincenza comes the Vitreo, Brillante, Shining (VBS) collection which combines vitreous glass tesserae with a backing membrane matrix made from polyurethane threads for easier, faster installation. Comprising three colour 'families' – the opalescent Vitreo, aventurina-accented Brillante and iridescent Shining – the hand-cut mosaic squares can be used individually or combined for custom mixed designs.

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trend of vincenza



ViPR from FitPro

FitPro's ViPR is essentially a heavy-duty rubber tube with various hand grips that comes in seven weights from 4-20kg. It provides a full body workout, building muscle and burning calories through strength and movement training as users lift, drag, throw and step on the tube. ViPR can be used to perform a wide range of different exercises thanks to its adaptability: it mimics the utility of seven different pieces of equipment, including a number of core training tools such as kettlebells and barbells.

leisure-kit.net keyword
fitpro



Let TAC's RA4.0 assist you!

TAC has unveiled its latest version of its Reservation Spa and Activity software. Called RA 4.0, the software has been developed in close co-operation with usability experts and features a fresh design with advanced user-friendliness. Simplified administration also means that working with RA 4.0 is more intuitive, so beginners can become familiar with the systems more quickly, meaning the risk of user error is greatly reduced.

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TAC



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og ireland

Óg Ireland's peat skincare range debuts

A new range of peat-based skincare for both men and women has been unveiled by Óg Ireland. Products include a cleanser, toner, moisturiser, body scrub and body mask all rich in essential oils and fatty acids. Pure 9,000 year-old peat is used in the mask while peat extract is used in the creams. A full menu of treatments to accompany Óg Ireland's products has also been produced.

Vendor's continuous towel IQ cabinet

Vendor's new IQ continuous towel cabinet uses patented technology which allows scrim reinforced paper towel to be topped up at any time. For added hygiene, used towel is rolled up in the towel cabinet, completely separated from the new towel, so no bin is required. Similar to a traditional tower dispenser, the Vendor IQ produces a loop of paper towel using a portion control mechanism. But, instead of a single roll of towel, the cabinet takes 'cassettes' of folded paper, which can be topped up any time, thereby ensuring the cabinet is both hygienic and kinder to the environment.



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vendor international



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matrix

LIVESTRONG® by Matrix is unveiled

The result of a partnership with LIVESTRONG®, Johnson Health Tech North America (JHTNA) is pleased to unveil the LIVESTRONG® by Matrix commercial line. Endorsed by seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong, the LIVESTRONG by Matrix cardio line was developed specifically for the light commercial market. It includes recumbent and upright bikes (the R1x and U1x) as well as two treadmills (T1x and T1xe) and an elliptical trainer (E1x).

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sleep director



From launching a £10m Sleep Manifesto to introducing luxury dog beds and hi-tech pyjamas, Travelodge's sleep director Leigh McCarron is obsessed with ensuring guests sleep tight

What does your job involve?

As Travelodge's sleep director, my job is to look at every point of the customer's journey to ensure that they get a good night's sleep while staying with us.

This will include evaluating the check-in process, testing mattresses and pillows, checking the intensity of room lighting and monitoring room temperature and noise levels. We also talk to our customers to get their feedback on how we can help them sleep better, and conduct independent research to find out what is keeping Britons awake at night.

Why did Travelodge decide to introduce a sleep director?

People generally stay at a Travelodge hotel either because they are away on business or for leisure reasons. What they want is a clean room with a comfortable bed in it so that they can have a great night's sleep. As we are in the sleep business it makes perfect business sense to have a director of sleep whose responsibility it is to ensure our customers get a really good night's sleep.

What are you currently working on?

I have just launched a £10m sleep manifesto which includes a raft of new sleep initiatives fronted by our first television advertising campaign in two decades.

In preparation for the new advertising campaign I initiated a company-wide 'sleep audit' which involved refurbishing more than 1,000 rooms and replacing hundreds of beds, mattresses and pillows. Even the door catches in 100 of our hotels were replaced to ensure that the doors closed with minimum noise. Travelodge's 5,500 employees have all received training on reducing noise, new noise abatement policies have been introduced and we have reorganised delivery times at hotels to ensure our customers' sleep is not disturbed. Our tv advert features our new sleep team - Mr Sleep and the Z Squad, who will wage war on anyone or anything that gets in the way of our customers sleeping well.

UK drained by 'sleep debt' says Travelodge

Research published by Travelodge claims the average Briton is getting just six hours and 21 minutes sleep per night, well below the recommended eight hours.

The research also suggests that, on average, adults are getting 51 minutes less sleep than in 2008, resulting in a national 'sleep debt' of 29 billion hours.

The current sleep shortfall is estimated to be costing employers around £1bn per year, as eight million sick days are taken as a result of a bad night's sleep.

81,000 pillows have been replaced as part of Travelodge's Sleep Manifesto

What other projects have you worked on?

I've worked on a number of interesting projects. These include launching the UK's first hotel pet bed during Crufts week. Hundreds of dogs and their owners stay in Travelodge hotels in Birmingham for Crufts, so we wanted to help the pets sleep well. The pet beds on offer included a mini replica of Travelodge's king size bed, complete with a mattress, pillow and duvet.

We introduced the Cuddillow in 2007 for lonely guests, after carrying out research that found 57 per cent of guests found it hard to sleep without their partner. The Cuddillow was a bespoke cuddling pillow two and half

feet in length, with two arms for guests to snuggle into.

We trialled a fish therapy room in a number of Travelodge hotels across the UK. Research has shown that watching fish has a calming effect on people, so we wanted to give our customers a chance to unwind ready for bed by offering a goldfish hire service. We also launched the UK's first hi-tech pyjamas in 2008, made from a fabric called DermaSilk. The pyjamas allow the skin to breathe, regulate body temperature and maintain the skin's moisture balance.

What is the best part of your job?

I find sleep a very interesting subject. A good night's sleep has become a luxury in today's fast-paced world. I am very fortunate that my job actually helps people sleep better.

What would surprise people about your job?

People are surprised about how passionate we are about sleep and the fact that I get paid to sleep for a living. ●

DIARY DATES

18-20 JUL 2010
Cosmoprof North America

Mandalay Bay Convention Center, Las Vegas, US

This business-to-business international beauty trade show event is organised by product categories and features four pavilions that cover the entire spectrum of the beauty industry.

Contact Eric Z Horn

Tel +1 (480) 455-3431

 Email eric@probeauty.org
www.cosmoprofnorthamerica.com
20 JUL 2010
Sustaining Services and Finding Funds

Hall Aitken, Manchester, UK

Free half-day taster workshops: Sustaining Services; Finding Funds and Improving Performance; Achieving Outcomes. At a time where cost-cutting is key, why not attend one of the workshops and get some free advice?

Contact Emma Scott

Tel +44 (0)141 225 5500

 Email emma.scott@hallaitken.co.uk
www.hallaitken.co.uk
27 JUL 2010
Turf Science Live

Sports Turf Research Institute, Bingley, Yorkshire, UK

Turf Science Live will be the first opportunity for turf managers to see some of the latest developments in turf agronomy, along with hands-on demonstrations by leading turf researchers, agronomists and specialists. The event is organised by Syngenta, Scotts Professional and the STRI.

Contact Karen Roberts

Tel +44 (0)1223 883466

 Email karen.roberts@syngenta.com
www.greencast.co.uk
28-29 JUL 2010
SPLASH! Pool and Spa Trade Show

Conrad Jupiters, Gold Coast, Australia

An event for manufacturers, retailers, pool builders, contractors, architects, landscapers and service technicians to stay ahead of market directions, trends and new technology.

Contact Melanie Robertson

Tel +61 (0)2 9660 2113

Fax +61 (0)2 9660 9786

 Email info@splashexpo.com.au
www.splashexpo.com.au
04-08 AUG 2010
IDEA World Fitness Convention

Los Angeles Convention Center

Billed as the largest, longest-running international fitness event in the world, this is the 28th Annual IDEA World Fitness Convention.

Tel (800) 999-4332

Email contact@ideafit.com
www.ideafit.com/world
28 AUG - 05 SEP 2010
ChunCheon 2010 World Leisure Congress and Leisure Games

Kangwon National University, ChunCheon City, Korea

More than 2,000 participants from over 50 countries are expected to come together in ChunCheon for the 11th World Leisure Congress. The first-ever World Leisure Games are to be held on the theme: Improving the Quality of Life through Leisure Experiences.

Contact Ms JUNG Sunyoung

Tel +82 33 250 4117

 Email jsy352@korea.kr
www.worldleisure2010.org
07 SEP 2010
LPF Late Summer Party 2010

At the offices of LGLLP, London, UK

Please note, this is a members' only event. The party is free for members and their guests, but it is by invitation only. If you're not yet a member and would like to attend, please contact the LPF Administration team.

Contact Michael Emmerson

Tel +44 (0)1462 471932

 Email info@leisurepropertyforum.org
www.leisurepropertyforum.org/subs.cfm
12-15 SEP 2010
European Spa Exhibition and Summit

Portes de Versailles, Paris, France

Founded in 2007, the European Spa Summit held in parallel with the trade show is aimed particularly at hotel sector professionals and covers all of the problems inherent in setting up and managing spas. The 2010 European Spa Summit will incorporate the leverage of quality international networking between listeners and speakers, witnesses of market dynamics.

Tel +33 1 44 69 95 69

 Email bbp@itec-france.com
www.beyondbeautyparis.com
14 SEP 2010
Running 2010

Kettering Conference Centre, UK

Running 2010 is the foremost UK conference for healthcare and sports professionals interested in running injuries and performance. The 2010 conference will cover cumulative micro-trauma injuries and their treatment.

Tel +44 (0)1625 521 239

 Email karen@professionalevents.co.uk
www.professionalevents.co.uk
14 SEP 2010
Delivering Successful Public Events

ISPAL HQ, Reading, UK

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Contact Lucy Roper

Tel +44 (0)118 929 8356

Fax +44 (0)118 929 8001

 Email lucy.ropers@ispal.org.uk
www.ispalevents.org.uk
21-23 SEP 2010
Leisure Industry Week (LIW)

NEC, Birmingham, UK

LIW is the UK's leading trade show for out-of-home leisure businesses, with seven sectors each tailored to the specific needs of the communities we serve. LIW 2009 attracted more than 12,500 trade visitors.

Tel +44 (0)20 7921 5000

www.liw.co.uk
21 SEP 2010
LPF Seminar - when healthcare meets health & fitness

At the offices of DRA Associates, London, UK

The seminar will review the opportunities and prospects for co-operation between the two sectors, looking in particular at government health policies, medical treatment and social attitudes. Speakers include Garri Jones of Circle Health and Julian Evans, head of healthcare at Knight Frank.

Contact Michael Emmerson

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