

LEISURE MANAGEMENT

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Antonio Citterio

The architect of the new Technogym Village on turning a dream into reality

Forest Holidays

The top team on their investment announcement and plans to scale

Simon Morton

UK Sport's director of Major Sporting Events talks about building on the legacy of 2012

PURE GROUP'S Colin Grant

A passion for yoga inspired the visionary behind the Asian yoga, fitness and restaurant group

GRUPO HABITA'S CARLOS COUTURIER

His insights into the creation of inspiring boutique hotels in Mexico and the US

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NEW STYLE & SUBSTANCE

Happy New Year and welcome to the edition of *Leisure Management* for 2013.

This issue marks the beginning of a new chapter in the magazine's development as it enters its 31st year and we hope you enjoy our new format, which will be more focused on the amazing people who make things happen in our industry.

We'll still be covering the same new openings, great research and debating the major issues of the day, but our focus from now on will be to tell these stories far more through the eyes of the people who are doing the work, dreaming the dreams and making things happen, rather than reporting in our more traditional business style, as has been the case up to this point.

It's become increasingly clear to me in recent years that this industry is blessed with incredible individuals who bring energy, pride and passion to their work and in many cases have devoted their lives to creating operations which enhance the quality of life of others. Indeed that seems to be the purpose which draws many people to want to build careers and businesses in these markets.

So our aim is to tell their stories and to give them the opportunity to share their experiences and advice with other professionals.

We'll continue to examine all aspects of the industry, from sport to health and fitness, from theme parks and attractions to arts and culture and from spa and wellness to hospitality and tourism, with special additional attention being paid to architecture, design, property, technology and innovation.

We'll also ensure you're kept up to date with the latest legislation.



"Leisure Management is the only business to business publication in the world to be documenting and analysing this market and we're finding our international readership is growing steadily"

Leisure Management is the only business to business publication in the world to be documenting and analysing this market and we're finding our international readership is growing steadily. This gives us the opportunity to look widely for examples of best practice and to interview the industry innovators we meet throughout the year.

The Leisure Media team travels extensively these days, on the hunt for new business, stories and content. Our mission is to scour the globe for the best content and ideas to bring to you wherever they are.

We embraced the web early and have been online 20 years now. Our passion for technology has continued unabated since and our content is now available via seven different channels – print, PDF, digital turning pages, web, ezine, social media and RSS, so you can decide where and how you consume it.

We hope you enjoy our new look and new focus on the people who make our industry great and that you'll let us know if you're working on anything exciting or ground-breaking – we'd love to hear from you.

Liz Terry, Editor Twitter @elizterry

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The issue of energy connectivity may not be a glamorous one, but it's vital for leisure operators to get it right. The Energy Desk's Noach Andrie talks us through the secrets of hooking up to the right power supply and warns of a few mistakes to avoid

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Charles Eugster

Eugster is a bodybuilder who has appeared in a music video, spoken at TED and acts as an ambassador for fitness. He is also 93 years old and only started training four years ago. Tom Walker hears his views

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

PEOPLE

"We need to change the food and drink industry"

Jaimie Grainger-Smith,
founder, Acorn House



Jaimie Grainger-Smith, co-founder of Jamie Oliver's Fifteen restaurant and founder of eco-friendly training restaurant Acorn House and sister restaurant Waterhouse – all in London, UK – has launched the Think.Eat.Drink (T.E.D.) membership scheme.

The scheme provides 'forward-thinking solutions to all businesses working within the hospitality industry that want to be green, responsible and successful.' It is aimed at hotels, restaurants, bars and food service providers. Each member is vetted, and once they have passed the vetting process, they become part of the T.E.D. ethical network and community, with a supply chain that will provide everything from eggs to electricity.

"The idea for the Think.Eat.Drink Membership Scheme came about from the success of Acorn House Restaurant," says Grainger-Smith. "After I created the concept, I saw a major shift towards green thinking and a want for change. These aspirations proved the viability of a luxury restaurant with well-developed ethical policies that could be extended to other hospitality and catering businesses while helping supply chains to incorporate the same thinking and embrace the same ethos and ideology.

"We want and need to change the food and drink industry, we believe



Grainger-Smith launched Acorn House (above) with Arthur Potts Dawson in 2006

that it can become more responsible and we're aiming to inspire operators and the public to make that change. Our experience has demonstrated that these aims can be achieved without compromising style, quality or profit."

The aim of T.E.D. is to establish a set of 'ethical and responsibility' standards for the hospitality industry, including environmental policies, animal welfare, nutritional value and 'green' education. "At present there

are few forms of certification in these areas, much less a blanket 'ethical food' standard," says Grainger-Smith. "In light of the wasteful use of energy, processes and procurement I've seen in my work, I believe that ethical thinking and dining should not exist in a niche. It should be a movement that affects the way in which British people think a little bit more about their eating and drinking experience."

Grainger-Smith is also currently working on the Hub at Kings Cross in London, a private members' club which acts as a co-working space for social entrepreneurs.

Details: www.thinkeatdrink.co.uk

"The spa industry is notoriously bad at catering for anyone with cancer"

Abi Wright, director and co-founder, Spabreaks.com

Abi Wright, the director and co-founder of spa booking website Spabreaks.com, has launched Spa for All, an umbrella initiative designed to open up the spa industry.

The initiative encompasses Recovery Retreats, spa breaks specifically designed for anyone who is being treated for cancer, or has had cancer within the past two years, and Accessible Spas, which lists accessible facilities and spa packages which allow carers to go along to spas for free to use the facilities.

"We receive on average 12 enquiries a day asking about special requirements, whether that be accessible facilities or particular health concerns that make organising a break a little trickier," says Wright. "Spa for All is about providing the information and packages to give customers who may have historically felt marginalised

from the industry the ability to choose a spa break with as much independence as possible, safe in the knowledge that treatments are safe and discretion is paramount, so when they arrive they can enjoy their break just like anybody else.

"The spa industry is notoriously bad at catering for anyone with cancer, which is absurd given that one in three people are affected by it at some stage. Invariably customers will be turned away from spas and refused treatment, so we created Recovery Retreats, offering consultations over the phone before guests arrive so their concerns don't have to be discussed at the spa reception desk."

Plans are underway to expand Spa for All in 2013 with the further pro-



gression of Recovery Retreats and the addition of Teen Skin Clinics; Friendship Spas, for those wanting a solo spa break but nervous of going by themselves; and Spa for Me for new mothers, combining postnatal depression counselling and treatments in venues with crèche facilities.

Wright initially trained as a journalist, before working at Donnington Valley and The Vineyard at Stockcross, then launching her own PR and marketing agency. She launched Spabreaks.com in June 2008.

"I want to make spas accessible for everybody," she says. "The spa industry has been traditionally closed to huge groups of people predominantly out of fear or a lack of knowledge, but the facilities are there – I want to tell everyone about the amazing opportunities that are available."

Details: www.spabreaks.com

The spabreaks.com website features spa reviews by customers with disabilities



"There are 10 million lapsed gym members in the UK"

Neil Harmsworth & Jamie Ward, founders, payasUgym

Neil Harmsworth and Jamie Ward, the founders of pay as you go fitness company, payasUgym, have secured a partnership with Tesco which could see the online company provide gym passes to up to 16 million Clubcard customers.

The deal will allow Clubcard customers to use their Clubcard points to purchase gym passes for health clubs and leisure centres across the UK.

"Gyms and health clubs are always looking for innovative ways to promote to new customers and we wanted to find a national partner to help us get more people using the gyms that are listed at payasUgym.com," says Harmsworth. "With over 16 million Clubcard customers, there is no company better placed to support this than Tesco, and with over 600 participating gyms and health clubs nationwide, payasUgym.com is the only gym network in the UK with the scale to support such a large initiative – so the deal made perfect sense



for all parties. On a personal level it is extremely satisfying as it proves that payasUgym.com is now recognised as the first place that customers go when they are looking for a new gym."

PayasUgym was launched in February 2011. The service uses smartphone technology to allow

customers to find a gym and pay for a visit without paying membership fees. The biggest challenge, says Harmsworth, has been educating the fitness industry about what PayasUgym actually offers.

"Many people in the industry assume that they know what we do based simply on our brand name," he says. "There are 10 million lapsed gym members in the UK and we do a huge amount of work to get these people back into health and fitness. We spent over £1m on marketing to these customers in 2012 alone.

"Our business model only works if it generates new customers and new members for the gyms that we work with and I think we need to be a lot more vocal in educating the industry

Details: www.payasugym.com



Customers buy an ePass from the payasUgym website which they redeem at the reception of their chosen gym



"We wanted to explore ways of hooking the imagination of the public"

KP Kofler, founder, Pret a Diner

KP Kofler, CEO of Kofler & Kompanie, the company behind pop up restaurant company Pret a Diner, is planning a range of events for 2013.

Pret a Diner offers pop up dining experiences that combine food by Michelin-starred chefs, a club lounge, music, a social club and art galleries. The last event was a pop up members' club called The Burlington Social Club, held in the Senate Rooms at The Royal Academy, London. The event offered cocktails, dinner, music and an exhibition showcasing works by current Royal Academicians.

"It was a *mélange* of surprising cuisine, masterly mixology, contemporary arts and music – for bohemians, culture vultures and art aficionados, urban explorers, lifestyle savants, food fanatics, business people and revelers," said Kofler.

For 2013, Kofler says Pret a Diner is going to travel the world "making history one city at a time."

"In January 2013 we will go to an amazing unexpected location in Berlin. In March we go to sunny Rio de Janeiro for the Fashion week. LeBlon and Ipanema won't be the

The Burlington Social Club (right) ran from September to November 2012

same after us! June is the month when we dive into the arts – Pret a Diner will open the Biennale in Venice and will be in Basel for Art Basel. Both locations are mind blowing. In late July and August we will rock Ibiza with a proper concept. In September we will come back to London, where we are scouting a location."

KP Kofler's family business, Kofler & Kompanie, is one of the most traditional names in the German catering business, dating back to the opening of the Kofler town bakery in Bad Homburg in 1823. The first Pret a Diner pop up restaurant launched in Berlin in January 2011.

"I wanted to create something awe-inspiring and consuming, tasty and surprising that would turn heads and leave a legacy," says Kofler. "Together



with the creative co-founder Olivia Steele and a handful of extremely creative people, we embarked on a journey to design the most avant-garde dining concept, but a temporary one. We wanted to explore ways of hooking the imagination of the public on food culture beyond the typical restaurant experience."

"We travelled to Asia to look for inspiration"

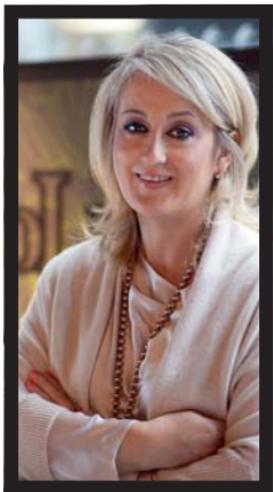
Jillian MacLean, founder, Drake & Morgan

Jillian MacLean, the founder and managing director of London bar and restaurant business Drake & Morgan, is preparing to open two further venues over the next year, bringing the portfolio to seven.

The 8,000sq ft, 230-cover Happenstance bar and restaurant is due to open in St Paul's, London in autumn 2013, offering views of St Paul's Cathedral, a bar, a deli, a private dining room, an open kitchen, a florist and a mixology table.

The second, as yet unnamed venue, will cover 10,000sq ft, and will offer 478 covers over three floors. It will be located at the Sixty London office development in Holborn and will feature a kitchen and bar, a deli, a florist and a cheese and wine room. It's due to open by the start of 2014.

They are both being designed by Fusion Design & Architecture.



"We've travelled to Asia, in particular Hong Kong and Shanghai, to look for inspiration for the design and offering," says MacLean. "We'll be launching our cookery school at our venue at Sixty London and our flower and deli shop, Bottle and Blooms. Hopefully we'll give customers some delightful surprises in terms of design, food and drink."

MacLean launched Drake & Morgan in February 2008, with the first venue The Refinery, opening in Southwark, London. The company now has five venues, all in the City of London. The aim, says MacLean, is to make each venue individual, and to offer customers a personalised experience – these range from art exhibitions to mixology sessions and butchery classes.

MacLean was previously operations director for Novus Leisure, and before that worked for the Spirit Group, Tattershall Castle and Mitchells & Butlers Plc. In 2001, she was short-listed for Veuve Cliquot Woman of the Year, and won the Outstanding Entrepreneur Award at the Women 1st Shine Awards.

"There was a gap in the market for a fresh, independent, neighbourhood all-day bar and restaurant with great design and good attention to detail," says MacLean of her decision to launch the company.

The biggest challenge, according to MacLean, was "finding the right sites. That continues to be a challenge for us as we like fairly large units in commercial districts."

Details: www.drakeandmorgan.co.uk



The most recent venue, The Drift (left) opened in June 2011 in Heron's Tower in Bishopsgate, London



“I want to raise the profile of sport as the gym is not for everyone”

John Oxley, managing director, Active Nation

In an effort to support the Olympic legacy and encourage more people to take up sport, John Oxley, the managing director of Active Nation, has committed to doing 50 sports before turning 50 in April 2013.

Active Nation is a national sport and exercise charity aiming to encourage the UK to become more active. The idea for Oxley's '50 Shades of Play' initiative was born when Active Nation was reviewing its campaign activity post-Olympics, he says. "We were struck by the excitement that had been created but also wondered

how we might encourage people to participate and not just spectate," says Oxley. "I was conscious that I could do my bit to help. We have always been aware that people's lack of self esteem is used as a reason for not taking part in physical activity. I believe that if you have the desire and belief, then you can learn to play any sport in no time at all."

The challenge kicked off at Woodmill Activities Centre in Southampton on 17 October with archery and kayaking.

Oxley hopes to raise more than £5,000 to support two charities – The

Rising Stars programme, which provides funding for talented athletes for Rio 2016 and beyond, and the Sporting Chance initiative, which supports activities for people with physical and mental disabilities.

"I also hope to raise the profile of sport as a means of increasing the level of physical activity in our communities as the gym or a class is not for everyone," says Oxley. "I want to get out to the venues and be visible – inspiring the public, staff, clubs and supporters along the way."

Details: www.sportinnotime.com

Plans move forward for US\$300m MLS stadium

Major League Soccer (MLS) moves ahead with plans for a US\$300m (231m euro, £186m) soccer stadium in Queens, New York. Flushing Meadows-Corona Park in Queens has been selected by MLS as the potential site for the new development.

The plans call for a 25,000-seat stadium (expandable to 35,000 seats) to be constructed on the current site of the park's Industry Pond. League president Mark Abbott said that preliminary plans have construction starting in 2014 and the team launching in 2016.



The park opened the Shambhala ride in 2012

Investindustrial becomes sole owner of PortAventura

Italian private investment company Investindustrial has become the sole owner of PortAventura theme park in Salou, Catalonia, Spain.

Investindustrial, which already held a 50 per cent stake in the park, secured the remaining 50 per cent from Spanish bank Criteria CaixaHolding in a deal worth 105m euro (US\$133m, £84m).

Following the transaction, Investindustrial will have invested approximately 200m euro in acquiring PortAventura. It initially bought a stake in the park in December 2009.

Tourism still robust despite uncertain global economy

Growth in the global tourism industry in 2012 will be broadly in line with expectations set at the beginning of the year.

Announcing its final forecast for 2012 during the World Travel Market (WTM) event held in London this week, the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) predicted that global tourism will grow 2.7 per cent during the year. Earlier this year, WTTC released a report predicting a 2.8 per cent growth in the sector.

Louvre opens satellite site in Lens

Paris' famous The Louvre museum and gallery has opened a satellite gallery in Lens, Northern France. The Louvre-Lens exhibits more than 200 artworks by masters including Botticelli, Raphael, Poussin, Rembrandt, Goya, Ingres and Delacroix at its 50-acre site, situated in a small mining town near Lille.

Artworks are displayed chronologically with different cultures and civilizations juxtaposed – classical Greek works might sit next to pieces from the Persian empire or from Pharaonic Egypt, for example.

Unlike traditional museums, storerooms and restoration rooms are visible and open to the public. Built in the heart of Lens on an old mining site, the museum cost €150m (US\$196.02m, £121.80m) and was designed by American and Japanese architects and a French landscape



The satellite site in the northern city of Lens opened on 11 December

designer. It emulates the layout of the Louvre Paris with a main glass pavilion surrounded by four rectangular buildings.

Digital visitor guides and a museum app will be part of the visitor experience with communications company Orange collaborating with the Louvre and the Nord-Pas-de-Calais Regional Council to develop an interface for the public.

Revenue up for US fitness industry

Revenue and membership figures for the past year indicate health and fitness clubs in the US are successfully weathering the new economic environment, according to an industry survey. The International Health, Racquet, and Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) surveyed 99 US companies representing 3,256 facilities in its annual Industry Data Survey.

The new figures show growth of 3.6 per cent in revenue and 3.1 per cent in membership amongst survey participants.

Member retention of 71.9 per cent was up modestly, compared with 70 per cent in 2011, with fitness-only clubs showing the highest retention rate of 82 per cent.

Across all clubs the median number of visits was 59, up from 54 the previous year.

The median revenue brought in by each individual health club member was \$867.50 (662.79 euro, £538.44) and this rose to more than \$1,000 (764.01 euro, £620.67) at independent and large clubs.



Average revenue at US clubs grew by 3.6 per cent

About 5 per cent of revenue was derived from spa services at multipurpose clubs.

IHRSA executive vice president of global products Jay Abbondi said increased profitability may have favourably affected capital

US\$50m Jewish museum opens in Moscow

A US\$50m (39m euro, £31m) Jewish museum has been launched in Moscow, Russia.

The 90,000sq ft (8,361sq m) Jewish Museum and Tolerance Centre was funded by private donations including a donation from Russian President Vladimir Putin. Architects Ralph

Appelbaum Associates and The Hettema Group have created an interactive museum using the latest technology and education concepts.

The museum's 12 pavilions take visitors on a journey through history from the beginning of Judaism up to the present day.

SpaFinder reveals 2013 spa trends

Healthy hotels, spa-related genomics, inclusive wellness and 'earthing' are among the top spa themes for 2013, according to the 10th annual trends forecast by global spa and wellness resource SpaFinder Wellness.

Compiled by SpaFinder's president and industry expert Susie Ellis, the *SpaFinder Wellness Trend Report* also predicts that there will be a revival of authentic ayurveda and other ancient therapies and an increase in men looking to have "serious work" done at medical spas and salons.

In a preview to the full report, Ellis revealed the top 10 spa trends for 2013 as being:

- Healthy Hotels
- The Mindfulness Massage
- Earthing
- Spa-genomics (telomeres and beyond)
- Authentic ayurveda
- Color Self-Expression
- Inclusive Wellness
- Label Conscious Fitness
- Men: From Barbers to 'Brottox'
- Where the Jobs Are



Susie Ellis has set out the top spa trends for 2013

The full 60-page report, which includes an analysis of factors influencing each trend and examples of early trend adopters, will be released on 15 January 2013. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=13j4p>



Facilities at the hotel will include a Talise Spa

Jumeirah plans spa hotel for Mumbai; opening in 2017

Dubai-based hotel operator Jumeirah Group is set to open a luxury hotel in central Mumbai, India in 2017. The hotel will form part of a development in the Lower Parel district of the city. It is expected to feature 470 rooms, suites and serviced apartments as well as a Talise Spa.

A range of restaurants and bars will be on offer while other facilities include conference, wedding and meeting spaces.

Gerald Lawless, CEO of Jumeirah Group, said: "The demand for luxury hotels in the Indian market has been robust and we are delighted to have initiated the first phase of our expansion into India with this landmark project in Mumbai."

Jumeirah Group currently operates 20 luxury hotels and serviced apartments including 10 in the UAE, seven in Europe, two in the Maldives and one in China. A further 15 hotels are now under development. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=e1R7T>

New Dubai city to feature 100 hotels

Ambitious plans have been revealed for a new city to be built in Dubai, featuring the world's largest mall, a theme park complex and 100 hotels.

Plans for the new Mohammed bin Rashid city were announced by prime minister and ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum. As well as the gigantic Mall of the World, the plans also include the construction of 100 luxury hotels, a number of spas and wellness resorts, a 455-acre park and an international Universal Studios-branded family attraction.

Located between Emirates Road, Al Khail Road and Sheikh Zayed Road, the development will be overseen by Dubai Holding, a global investment company owned by the



The giant project will be one of the largest ever undertaken in the UAE

sheikh, and Emaar Properties, the developer of the Burj Khalifa. Real estate company Meraas Holding is to develop the project with the first stage expected to be completed in 2014. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=k7h6D>

Four Seasons opens safari resort in Serengeti

Four Seasons has launched a new luxury hotel and spa - Four Seasons Safari Lodge Serengeti - in the Serengeti National Park, Tanzania.

The property features 77 guest rooms, including 12 suites with plunge pools and five freestanding villas with private swimming

pools. The resort spa has been built around an outdoor infinity pool overlooking an active watering hole, where guests can watch elephants gather to drink.

There are six freestanding spa pavilions offering Serengeti-inspired treatments.

French brand Sofitel makes China its biggest market

French luxury hotel brand Sofitel has 15 hotels currently under construction worldwide and 20 projects pending signature.

China is now the brand's primary market, with 18 hotels in preparation, and a pipeline of 10 further sites to open by 2015, including three for 2013.

Three new properties are planned for Asia by 2015, two of which will be under the Sofitel So label.

Further to this, there are launches planned next year for Morocco and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and two more for Dubai, joining its existing property at Jumeirah Beach. The company has now completed its repositioning strategy started in 2007. Almost all the hotels are being upgraded and two new labels: Sofitel Legend and Sofitel So have been introduced. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=FoE4l>

Leisure trust takes over former Fitness First club

Kirklees Active Leisure (KAL) has taken over the former Fitness First club at Lockwood Park, Huddersfield.

The club, which has been rebranded as Lockwood Park Health & Fitness Club, was handed over to the trust on 1 December and all staff have been retained.

Existing Fitness First members will be transferred across to a KAL membership in stages, giving them access to gyms, pools and classes across all 12 KAL-operated sites.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=hj6C>



Facilities include a 25m pool with a leisure flume

Fraserburgh leisure centre ahead of schedule

Fraserburgh residents are to be given the chance to have their say in the running of a new £6m leisure centre, which is currently ahead of schedule and will be ready to open in February. A public open day will give members of the community the opportunity to express their views on the facilities and how the amenities can be used to help as many residents as possible.

Created as part of Aberdeenshire Council's Education, Learning and Leisure Plan, the new centre will replace an existing pool and community centre.

Broxbourne leisure centre gets £4m revamp

Facilities at Grundy Park leisure centre in Broxbourne, Hertfordshire are undergoing a £4m revamp. Construction firm Morgan Sindal is carrying out the development, funded by Broxbourne Council.

Improvements will include a new health suite featuring a sauna, steamroom and spa pools, an extended Fit&Well gym, a group cycling studio, a dance studio, wetside changing rooms and a new café.

Construction is currently underway and the council estimates that the project will be completed in late 2013.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=7g6t8>

Budget brands join forces

Low-cost fitness operator The Gym Group is to partner budget hotel chain Travelodge as part of plans to find 10 new co-location sites in London and the south east.

The two companies will invest a total of £70m in the venture. As part of its expansion plans in London, The Gym Group has set itself the target of 20 new gyms in the capital by 2013.

Meanwhile, Travelodge is seeking to secure deals for an additional 50 hotels (5,030 rooms) by 2020. The deal is an extension of an existing partnership between the two companies - Gym Group currently operates four clubs at Travelodge hotels; in Plymouth, Guildford, Waterloo and Wembley. Travelodge's managing director for development, Paul Harvey, said: "The four co-locations have worked well for both parties so



Gym Group and Travelodge will look to find development sites together

it makes sense for us to look for sites together. This really helps us with our growth plans for London and the south east.

"Given the space requirements of both companies, as well as our compatible business models, it really is the perfect fit."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=5l4d7>

DLL opens new club Worcester

David Lloyd Leisure (DLL) has launched an £8m club in Worcester.

Located beside Worcester Warriors' Sixways Stadium, the club features three indoor and five outdoor tennis courts.

The 5,600sq m (60,278sq ft) complex also includes a 25m indoor pool, a children's pool and a 20m outdoor pool.

Two physiotherapy rooms and a wet spa area, including a spa pool, two saunas, a steamroom, heated beds and an ice machine are also on offer.

The club's 900sq m (9,688sq ft) fitness space includes three exercise studios.

Gym equipment includes Power Plate machines, free weight stations, ViPR equipment and aerobic studios.

The club also offers Gravity personal and small group training, featuring Total Gym equipment.

The studios host a range of group fitness classes including dance-fitness Bokwa.



The 5,600sq m complex includes a 900sq m gym

DL Kids club offers a dedicated activity programme that is synchronised with adult programmes. Other facilities include a Delicious cafe/bar lounge, an outdoor play area and a crèche. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=y0j4n>

Soho Gyms opens third club in Manchester

Independently-owned health club chain Soho Gyms has opened its third club in as many months. Opened in December 2012, the new Soho Gym Manchester is the company's ninth in the UK and is located in a space previously housing a Fitness First club.

The opening is part of London-based Soho Gyms' investment strategy, which has not only seen the opening of new clubs but will also see several gyms getting new kit and cafés as well as upgrades to their changing facilities. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=07Z4D>

Guerlain Spa to open in Scotland

The Caledonian, A Waldorf Astoria Hotel in Edinburgh, Scotland is set to launch the UK's first Guerlain Spa on 1 January, following a major £24m (US\$38m, €30m) redevelopment of the property.

Managed by Hilton Worldwide, the hotel's spa will be operated as a beauty spa and will be open to both hotel guests and the public.

Facilities at the spa include three large treatment rooms, a swimming pool, steam-room, sauna, spa pool and a relaxation space. The new facility will also feature a 24-hour health and fitness suite.

Other Waldorf hotels to open a Guerlain Spa include Waldorf Astoria Berlin, which launched in November 2012 and the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City which opened in 2008. In a statement, a spokesperson for the French perfume house said treatments would mirror the company's core values: "The treatment menu at the Guerlain spa will reflect luxury, emotion and refinement with a collection of indulgent treatments created using Guerlain products and respecting the origins



The spa is open to hotel guests and day spa guests

of the signature massage from 1939 when the brand opened its first 'Institut de Beauté' in Paris. Combining pressure point massage and muscular exercise techniques, movements are specifically designed to provide relaxation, as well as a radiant appearance."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=ToA6g>

Mottram Hall set for £5.5m luxury makeover

A £5.5m refurbishment is designed to elevate Cheshire's Mottram Hall to become one of the leading resorts in the north of England. All the bedrooms are being refurbished and January will see the introduction of lake-view bedrooms with private patios and an optional butler service.

The spa opened in November, with a gym, spinning and dance studio, seven Espa treatment rooms, relaxation area, whirlpool, sauna and steamroom and 17m swimming pool. An outdoor thermal village will open in early 2013 and include a Brechelbath from Haslauer. Originating from Alpine farming communities, the Haslauer stonebath is a theatrical wet heat experience where mineral stones are heated in an oven and then the basket containing them is dropped into a basin of cold water, releasing minerals into the steam.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=J8Y7N>

Boringdon Hall Hotel's spa plans approved

Boringdon Hall Hotel, on the edge of Dartmoor National Park in Devon, has been given the go ahead for its three storey spa development.

Set into the hillside to minimise the impact on the landscape, the 1,610sq m (17,300sq ft) spa will have 12 treatment rooms, a swimming pool, whirlpools, a fitness suite, relaxation lounges and a 'spatisserie' café. The spa will be open to both guests and non-residents.

Hotel director James Nettleton said: "I'm happy with the plans for the new spa and looking forward to building work commencing in 2013. It will be an asset to Plymouth and will help to attract people to the area. It is hoped the new luxury spa will bring year-round tourism and year-round business to Plympton and Plymouth." Building work is scheduled to start at the end of 2013.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Q5JoH>

Y Spa opens at Wyboston Lakes resort

Just over £3m has been invested in a new 11,000sq ft (1,022sq m) full-service spa at Wyboston Lakes, an independently-owned leisure destination in Bedfordshire.

Located within an onsite hotel, Y Spa claims to be one of the most significant UK spa openings in 2012 and has been put together by some of the best-known names in the UK spa industry.

Ray Payne, previously a long-standing general manager at Champneys Tring destination spa, worked on the feasibility and pre-opening stages of the spa with his new R Spa consultancy. Emma-Jane North, who led operations at the award-winning Ragdale Hall spa for many years, has been appointed spa director.

The neutral design of the spa has been overseen by The Syntax Group, which has

previously helped to create leading venues worldwide including the Chiva-Som destination spa in Thailand.

A signature feature of Y Spa is one of the UK's first authentic Finnish kelo saunas (made using traditional timber), a standalone outdoor cabin which has been constructed using 100-year-old imported kelo logs.

This overlooks a hydrotherapy pool which connects inside to a thermal area supplied by GeoSpa which boasts a salt cabin, a steam-room, a gentle-heat sauna and an innovative frost wall with a build up of ice that can be rubbed onto the body.

Other facilities include a spa café, 11 treatment rooms, one of which is a double suite. Elemis, Murad and OPI are the chosen product houses. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=U4woE>



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Land deal for Visions of China

The Visions of China theme park, planned for a former opencast coal mine in the Rother Valley Country Park, is one step closer to development with a lease agreement signed between the local council and developers.

The proposed 120-acre attraction is projected to cost more than £100m and would showcase Chinese architecture, garden design and culture and customs.

A Rotherham Borough Council spokesperson confirmed the authority has entered agreements for the leasing of 153 acres of land, meaning developer Mid City Developments (MCD) and leisure operator China Vision Ltd can move ahead with plans for the project.

Rotherham Borough Council picked Visions of China as the preferred development for the former Pithouse West colliery site in August



The entire development will be themed according to Chinese culture

2011, stating the attraction would increase visitor numbers to Yorkshire.

China Vision expects 1.5 million people will visit the park each year where they will see Oriental lakes and gardens, a Chinatown retail street, a Shaolin temple, theatre, children's "fantasy land", restaurants and an Oriental-themed spa. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=14c7n>*

Bewilderwood posed to go global

Bewilderwood, the children's outdoor play concept involving jungle bridges, treehouses and zip wires, could go global say its founders.

The first site was opened by a Norfolk farmer in 2007 as a farm diversification project. Now Bure Valley Adventures, the company formed to run it, is awaiting a decision by planners regarding opening a second site at the National Trust property, Tatton Hall, in Cheshire. Talks are also under way regarding land in Windsor and development director Simon Egan said they are talking to companies in Singapore and Canada, as well as Center Parcs in Europe.

What gives Bewilderwood its extra edge is the story around it. Tom Blofeld, who owns the



Tom Blofeld, inventor of the quirky Bewilderwood characters

Norfolk estate, wrote a story about the characters who live there: the tree-inhabiting twiggles and marsh-dwelling boggles. New characters are being developed for Tatton Hall. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=03R3U>*

Edinburgh Zoo celebrates pandaversary

Visiting pandas, Tian Tian and Yang Guang, have now completed the first year of their 10 year stay at Edinburgh Zoo, which has been deemed a great success in terms of research and visits. The arrival of the pandas a year ago has boosted ticket sales by around 50 per

cent. Around 500,000 people have visited the zoo to see the pandas, which have won an honorary Scottish Thistle Award for their services to tourism. The pandas have also inspired panda tartan and panda milk. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=0gwg9B>*

Merlin recognised by national awards

Merlin Entertainments has become one of the first visitor attractions companies to appear on *Management Today's* list of Britain's Most Admired Companies.

Merlin went straight into the Top 100, appearing at number 64 in the list of 254 of the UK's most iconic and prestigious companies. In the Capacity to Innovate sector, Merlin fared even better, coming in at 27 out of the 254 UK businesses assessed.

It also came a very close third to Intercontinental Hotels and Virgin Atlantic in the leisure and hotels category.



The attraction has had a dramatic impact

Titanic Belfast could offset fall in Irish tourism revenue

Tourism Ireland is confident about prospects for 2013, despite recent findings from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency pointing to a dip in overseas visitors to Northern Ireland.

Launching Tourism Ireland's marketing plans for next year, Tourism Minister Arlene Foster said Londonderry's reign as the UK's City of Culture would be a key feature in selling the destination to the overseas market in 2013. Key markets to be targeted are the US, mainland Europe and Australia. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=f7f19t>*

Electrosonic acquires Global Immersion

AV specialist Electrosonic has acquired Global Immersion, a designer of high performance digital immersive theatre attractions. The deal, completed on 10 December, will allow Electrosonic to offer digital immersive solutions across the theme park, museum, giant screen cinema and planetarium markets.

Jim Bowie, president of Electrosonic Group, said the deal was a significant strategic move for both companies. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=u0ic>*

London playing fields 'under threat'

The London Assembly has called on the government to better protect the capital's playing fields. In a letter to culture secretary Hugh Robertson, the Assembly cites its concerns over "potentially serious gaps in information and strategies" that are designed to monitor and protect fields.

Local authorities are responsible for protecting playing fields under threat. According to Sport England guidelines, each authority should have an up-to-date strategy setting out local need and site provision. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=X7rom>*



The museum was designed by Mather & Co

Wolves launches new stadium museum

Wolverhampton Wanderers FC has opened a £1m interactive museum in the new Stan Cullis Stand at Molineux Stadium. Wolves Museum features 25,000 pieces of memorabilia, including shirts, medals, old programmes and trophies collected over the club's 135-year history.

The museum is split into different zones; history, stadium, sport science and games. Twenty-two touch screens, one of them called 'Glory of Wolves', are placed around the museum. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=t7a45>*

North Lanarkshire Leisure facing cuts in services

Spending cuts are forcing leisure trust North Lanarkshire Leisure (NLL) to make some difficult choices with its leisure provision. It is proposing to close the Iain Nicolson Recreation Centre and reduce the opening hours at three other swimming pools. It has also been proposed that the Aquatic Leisure Pool and Health Suite be converted into a soft play facility. Other cost savings include a review of overtime payments and swimming teachers' contracts. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=9w999>*

London 2012 a 'financial success'

A public spending watchdog has declared this year's London Olympics and Paralympics a success, stating the total public sector spend is likely to come in under budget. The National Audit Office's post-Games review, presented to parliament on 12 December, revealed there is likely to be a £377m underspend in the £9.3bn Public Sector Funding Package, set in 2007.

Areas of uncertainty, such as the final cost of converting the Athletes' Village and settling outstanding contracts with suppliers, mean the exact public expenditure will not be known until 2014.

Head of the National Audit Office, Amyas Morse, said the Games were a success by any reasonable measure. "The construction programme was completed on time and within budget, 11 million tickets were sold and our



Team GB's triumphs at 2012 have been followed by financial success

athletes excelled. Crucially, the Games passed off without major transport disruption or security incident," he said.

The report noted £500m for venue security was not factored into the original budget, but the total spend was still less than expected. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=m6cu>*

UK Sport and Sport England merger 'off'

The planned merger of UK Sport and Sport England is "likely to be scrapped" according to the *Guardian*.

Following on from a previous report in the newspaper in January, the *Guardian* claims that the plans have now been cancelled in the wake of Team GB's Olympic success in the summer. Both UK Sport and Sport England declined to comment.

When contacted by *Leisure Management*, a spokesperson for the Department for Culture Media and Sport said the matter was as yet undecided.

"No final decision has been made," he said. "But we're looking to ensure the strongest approach to community and elite sport on the back of a successful London 2012."



Team GB's success at London 2012 might see merger plans shelved

UK Sport is the country's elite sport funding body while Sport England distributes public and lottery money to NGBs as well as invests in grassroots sports infrastructure. *See UK Sport interview on p50*

Wellness watchdog to be set up in Derbyshire

A new health and social care watchdog is being set up to improve the quality of services in Derbyshire. Healthwatch Derbyshire will operate as an independent organisation and is set to launch before April 2013. It will replace the existing Local Involvement Network (LINKS)

and will gather views, information, concerns and experiences and feed them into the development and delivery of local health services.

The scheme aims to ensure that feedback on topics such as GP referrals is collected and relayed back. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=0377a>*

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DC Leisure operates more than 100 centres

Places for People acquires DC Leisure

Property management and development group Places for People has acquired management contractor DC Leisure.

According to a spokesperson, the deal will see both companies grow their leisure and facilities management services, alongside other housing and development activity in communities across the UK.

As part of the acquisition DC Leisure will keep its existing identity, board, and governance structures, but operate as a subsidiary of Places for People.

Places for People currently works in 230 local authorities, owning or managing 82,000 properties. DC Leisure manages more than 100 leisure facilities on behalf of 28 local authorities.

Steve Philpott, CEO of DC Leisure, said: "This will be a pioneering partnership - the first time a housing provider has joined forces with a leisure provider.

"It's going to be an exciting and unique adventure for us all which will create many new opportunities to improve the communities we serve. We attract 25 million visits each year, have built 10 new leisure centres over the last six years and, most importantly, we are improving the health and wellbeing of the communities we serve by getting them physically active." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=toV6j>

£40m campus to open in east Manchester

Plans are underway to build a £40m community campus in east Manchester.

The 16-acre development project is led by Manchester City Council (MCC) and supported by Manchester City Football Club.

The Beswick Community Hub Masterplan sets out a blueprint for four key initiatives - a new leisure centre; the Manchester Institute of Sports Science; the Manchester House of Sport (a proposed home for national and international sports bodies) and Sport Medicine; and a sixth form college. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=L9Vgk>

Outdoor adventure resort for Northumberland

A planning application for a new £50m outdoor adventure resort on a former open cast mine was submitted to Northumberland County Council in December.

The brainchild of entrepreneur Chris Davies, the scheme has been some eight years in the making and involves ski slopes, gorges, canyons, mountain bike trails, an off road vehicle course and a lake. Indoor facilities include climbing walls, a fitness centre, a water park, restaurants and coffee shops, as well as camping pods and eco lodges for overnight stays.

Following a public consultation at the beginning of December, Davies told local press: "The vast majority of people who attended the consultation were really enthusiastic about



Facilities at the centre are set to include a number of climbing walls

the plans and particularly the hundreds of jobs the resort will create."

A planning application for the initial phase is due to be submitted in the near future, with a full application to follow in the spring. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=J2t2z>

Barr secures Witham centre contract

Barr Construction will begin work on a new £9.5m leisure centre in Witham, Essex in spring 2013.

The building contract was awarded by Braintree District Council (BDC) which is funding the Witham Leisure Centre. Designed by Scott Brownrigg Architects, the centre will replace the Bramston Sports Centre and is set to open in summer 2014.

Located adjacent to Bramston Sports Centre, the new facilities will include a six-lane swimming pool and a wet area with a sauna and steamroom.

Two treatment rooms will be on offer for beauty treatments and physiotherapy.

There will also be a 75-station fitness suite as well as two dance studios, two squash courts and four tennis courts. Barclay Chalmers, managing director of Barr Construction, said:



Designed by Scott Brownrigg Architects, the centre is set to open in 2014

"We are extremely proud to be playing such a significant role in delivering a first-class sporting facility which will be warmly welcomed by the local community in Witham as well as athletes from across the Essex area.

"We look forward to starting work on site in early 2013." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Q4Y8N>

West Ham named preferred tenant for Olympic Stadium

West Ham United has been named as the preferred bidder to become the permanent tenant at the London Olympic Stadium.

The London Legacy Corporation board agreed unanimously on 3 December that the football club's bid ranked top of all

four received. Bids were also received from University College of Football and Business (UCFB), Leyton Orient FC and Intelligent Transport Services - which proposed holding a Formula One race around Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=g4y7H>

Boutique hotel for Knightsbridge

A new luxury townhouse hotel opened in Knightsbridge, London on 14 December.

The Wellesley Hotel has been restored by London-based designers Fox Linton with the aim of mixing its 1920s background with contemporary design.

The property is owned by a family-run private investment fund. The fund also owns City and Country Hotels, which will operate the property.

Spanning seven floors, the hotel will feature 29 suites and seven guestrooms as well as a four-bedroom Penthouse Suite.

Dining options include The Oval Restaurant serving authentic Italian cuisine while the Crystal Bar displays a specialist whisky and cognac wall. The Wellesley will house the Cigar Lounge featuring a heated cigar terrace offering a collection of cigars from around the



The Wellesley Hotel has been designed by London-based Fox Linton

world. Other facilities will include a dedicated Jazz Room showcasing both established and up-and-coming jazz acts.

The Wellesley will join City and Country Hotels' two other properties; Ten Manchester Street in Marylebone and Wyck Hill House in the Cotswolds. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=09j9H>*

IHG launches hotel in Westminster

InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) has opened a new hotel in Westminster, London.

Located in the former Queen Anne's Chambers government building, InterContinental London Westminster features 256 guestrooms including a penthouse, 14

one-bedroom suites and 30 studio suites.

IHG has secured a 20-year management deal with Splendid Hotel Group to operate the property, which will join the company's Park Lane property as the second InterContinental property in the capital.

Bespoke Hotels acquires Oxford Hotels

UK-based boutique hotel operator Bespoke Hotels has taken over Oxford Hotels and Inns, expanding its portfolio to 97 properties worldwide.

Bespoke Hotels will now manage 34 additional hotels across the UK, which include luxury and mid-market properties. Flagship hotels that will join the group include Carnoustie Golf Hotel and Elemis Spa and The Lugger Hotel in Portloe, Cornwall. The new properties will join Bespoke's sub-brand Beloved.



The Lugger hotel in Portloe - one of the properties included in the deal

Haydn Fentum, chief executive of Bespoke Hotels, said: "We are delighted to welcome Oxford Hotels and Inns' fine collection of properties to the Bespoke Hotel Group in the UK. From beautiful country pubs and inns to luxury hotels and character properties

throughout England and Scotland, each has its own story to tell and we will build on their individuality to deliver great value for money and service for our guests."

Bespoke Hotels now operates 85 hotels across the UK. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Y5f5T>*

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NOT ALL CHEESE IS EQUAL



While cheese is often an essential element in virtually every course, the sheer variety of tastes, textures and applications of its different forms means that this versatile ingredient is overlooked and underused as a way to upgrade menus in fine-dining establishments and banqueting style operations.

We spoke to the General Catering Manager of Wolverhampton Wanderers FC Corporate Hospitality, Fidel Ebanks, to see how he and his team have added value to their matchday menus and onsite restaurant offering by using an assortment of high quality cheese from Lactalis McLelland.

DINING AT MOLINEUX STADIUM

Molineux Stadium has an array of hospitality outlets that cater for various clientele. Sir Jack's Restaurant, open from Thursday evenings through to

Sunday lunch, serves up to 120 covers while the matchday hospitality suites – of which there are many – cater for up to 1,200 people.

Diners visiting Sir Jack's Restaurant can expect a menu teaming with English classics that have been enhanced with innovative European twists. Football fans opting to watch a match in style can also look forward to a fine-dining offering. The average price point at Sir Jack's Restaurant ranges from £5-£7.50 for starters, mains are £14-£18.50 and £5.25

for desserts. Corporate Hospitality varies depending on the package but prices range from £95-£200 inclusive of catering.

ENGLISH ORIGINS AND EUROPEAN INFLUENCES

Fidel Ebanks – who has over 34 years of experience in the hospitality industry in various outlets including hotels and sport grounds including rugby, cricket and football clubs – explains how he and his team put together menus for such a varied offering:



"The blue cheese dishes have proven to be extremely popular with consumers and the team back of house"

"Within our team there is a vast amount of experience to be drawn upon and as a result, we tend to do mostly bespoke menus for the hospitality suites and develop quarterly menus for Sir Jack's Restaurant. Inspiration comes from a variety of channels including travelling, trends and modern influences which is why many of our dishes tend to be English in origin but with the addition of European ingredients or cooking techniques.

"The range of Lactalis McLelland continental cheeses allowed us to be innovative in our recipe development and due to its functionality in helping to produce fine-flavoured dishes, they work extremely well within a fine-dining operation."

THE FLAVOUR FACTOR

"The blue cheese dishes have proven to be extremely popular with consumers and with the team back of house. Flavour is of course the all-important factor when catering for discerning diners and ingredients such as Galbani®

Gorgonzola and Dolcelatte® have helped us turn traditional dishes into more of a flavour experience.

"The Twice Baked Capricorn® Goat's Cheese Soufflé also proved to be an instant hit on the matchday menu. Goat's cheese has such a distinctive taste and when using an unconventional cheese in this traditional dish, it really adds the element of surprise that we look for in our corporate hospitality offering and that diners have come to expect from our fine-dining restaurant menu."

"We have always used cheese as an ingredient for dishes such as fondues and croquettes but the sheer quality, selection and proven provenance of Lactalis McLelland cheeses has meant that developing dishes with cheese has now become a fundamental part of how we prepare our menus.

"With a fine-dining establishment and corporate hospitality menus to match, it is important that the ingredients we use justify a premium price point and meet the consumer demand for quality food – this

range has helped us to do just that."

OVERCOME MENU FATIGUE

Warren MacFarlane, marketing manager for Lactalis McLelland, comments: "At Lactalis, we offer customers unrivalled access to some of the finest cheeses, many with a unique and protected heritage. With consumers' perceptions of quality vs. value for money being higher than ever, our brands help chefs upgrade their menus and create their point of difference. As we've seen here, "cheese" isn't simply a generic ingredient, but rather an opportunity to introduce a range of flavours and textures that effectively overcome menu fatigue. Also, by citing renowned brand names on menus and specials boards, operators are able to capitalise on the recognition of quality and positive associations their customers already have with brands such as Galbani®, Président®, Capricorn® and Seriously® Strong. This in turn can greatly improve the appeal of a menu offering, increase sales margins and justify relatively premium pricing."

COLIN GRANT

When Colin Grant launched his first Pure studio in 2002, the market for yoga in Hong Kong was so small people told him he was crazy. Today the company runs yoga studios, gyms and restaurants in four countries, with plans for more

What is your career background?

I used to be a bit of a tennis player, and that was my main career for a few years [Grant played semi professional tennis, taking part in international tournaments including Junior Wimbledon and the Davis Cup]. I also dabbled in other businesses – I started my first business aged 12 – a racket stringing business, then I was the sole agent for a brand of tennis rackets when I was 14. I started a movie rental business when I was 18, then a coffee business when I was 24. I stopped playing tennis in 1995, looked around for something to do with the next stage in my life, and stumbled across yoga.

How did you enjoy your time as a tennis player?

I thoroughly enjoyed it – I travelled and met a lot of amazing people.

The tennis has had a big influence on how I approach business. In tennis you have to practice hard and work hard, just like in business. Every time you go out on a tennis court you could win or lose, which means that you're not afraid of losing. If you lose you just practice some more.

Playing tennis gave me the confidence not to be afraid of failing in business. If I had been scared of failing, I would never have started Pure Yoga. People told me it was a crazy idea and that it would never work.

When did you become interested in yoga?

It was on a golf holiday in Whistler, Canada in 2001. One day we couldn't play golf, so someone suggested a yoga class. The idea of stretching in a room didn't really appeal to me, but I decided to give it a go. I remember coming out of that class and thinking 'wow!' It felt so different to coming out of a gym, not just physically, but emotionally. I thought it was amazing.

I returned to Hong Kong and really missed the yoga. I went back to Whistler in September 2001, did a week's yoga and decided that I was going to open my own yoga studio. I was on holiday with a friend of mine,



Colin Grant started his career as a semi professional tennis player, before launching the Pure Group in 2002



We started with three staff and I used to hand out towels at the counter. Today we've got 1,100 staff so I can step back and focus on other parts of the business

Bruce Rockowitz, who also used to be a tennis player and who'd had a lot of success in business [Rockowitz is group president and CEO of global sourcing company Li & Fung]. I talked to him about my idea and he said "let's do it together".

We shook hands in September 2001, looked for a site in October, found it in November, got the keys in December, and designed and built and opened our studio in January 2002.

How was your idea received?

Everyone thought we were crazy because back then there were only a handful of yoga studios in Hong Kong, and probably only about 100 to 200 people practicing yoga. People thought there was no market, but I trusted yoga and I went for it.

We spent US\$1m, and opened a 6,000sq ft yoga studio. We wanted a large studio so we could teach up to 110 people in one class.

It was a very different way of offering yoga. Up until then yoga studios

tended to be owned and run by yoga teachers, who were great at teaching, but didn't necessarily have the money, the business ideas or the connections to do something bigger.

How quickly did business pick up?

Within three months of opening, we had rented the rest of the floor, taking us up to 10,000sq ft.

The largest studio we've opened to date is 35,000sq ft, with 55 showers in the ladies' changing rooms. That does about 1,000 students a day.

Can you sum up the Pure Yoga offer?

We offer a choice of up to 60 types of yoga taught by passionate teachers in facilities that allow people to work out, to sweat, or to get deep into meditation and different kinds of yoga. It's not religious and it's not like a gym – it's somewhere in the middle; a sanctuary of strength and spirit. We have opened the door to yoga for a lot of people.

We also provide towels and mats, attractive studios, pleasant changing rooms and a nice lounge afterwards. That all creates a better experience.

What were the biggest challenges of the first few years?

Being so busy and trying to manage the quality. We started with three staff and I used to hand out towels at the counter; when you are a small company you don't have time to step back and focus on quality. You're so involved in the business on a day-to-day basis. Now it's different. Today we've got 1,200 staff and a great team, so I can step back and focus on other parts of the business.

You also have Pure Fitness, Pure Dining and Pure Retail. How did these evolve?

It was a natural extension to the yoga business. When you have 700 people doing yoga, a lot of them have partners who prefer to go to a gym. We

also had people who wanted to do both yoga classes and go to a gym, so it made sense to add fitness facilities.

For many people, working out is a special thing, somewhere they can meet people, which is why we decided to add a restaurant. Our restaurant is not a health farm – you can have champagne, a gin and tonic, a chocolate pudding. It's a full service restaurant.

People come in, they do some yoga, or a core workout, they can go and relax in our restaurant. It's all about a balanced lifestyle.

Also we're trying to build a community, and this ties in with that. We hold a lot of member events, parties and corporate events at the restaurant.

Does the restaurant incorporate the Pure Yoga philosophy in any way?

No, not really. If you walked into the restaurant, you wouldn't think it was connected to the gym or yoga studio. It's a place for people to go for a beer or a meal after their classes.

You linked up with Equinox to launch Pure Yoga in New York in 2008. How did this partnership come about?

About five years ago the Equinox management team came here and looked at our studios. They loved the yoga – it was something they wanted to get into, and they could see we were years ahead of what they wanted to do. They expressed an interest in doing something with us in North America.

From our point of view, our focus is on Asia; we have enough to do here. We thought that we weren't going to open in North America for many years, if at all, so it made sense to team up with Equinox. They're great operators, they run amazing clubs and they know what they're doing. They have two studios, and are looking to grow and expand as well. It was great for our brand. They do all the heavy lifting so it's not a distraction for us.

PURE GROUP TIMELINE

FROM A SINGLE YOGA STUDIO IN HONG KONG WITH JUST TWO TEACHERS, THE PURE GROUP HAS GROWN TO 20 FACILITIES ACROSS FOUR COUNTRIES

January 2002	▶ Pure Yoga at The Centrium, Central, Hong Kong
August 2002	▶ Pure Yoga at Soundwill Plaza, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong
December 2003	▶ Pure Fitness at Kinwick Centre, SoHo, Hong Kong
August 2004	▶ Pure Fitness at Ifc Mall, Central, Hong Kong
September 2004	▶ RED Bar + Restaurant at Ifc Mall, Central, Hong Kong
March 2005	▶ Pure Yoga at The Peninsula Office Tower, Tsim Sha Tsui, Hong Kong
November 2005	▶ Pure Yoga at Ngee Ann City, Orchard Road, Singapore
April 2006	▶ Pure Yoga at Pure Tower, Taipei, Taiwan
August 2006	▶ Pure Yoga at Langham Place Office Tower, Mong Kok, Hong Kong
May 2007	▶ Pure Fitness at Langham Place Office Tower, Mong Kok, Hong Kong
September 2007	▶ Pure Yoga at Chevron House, Singapore
November 2007	▶ Pure Yoga at TaiKoo Place, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong
June 2008	▶ Pure Yoga in New York, a joint venture with Equinox
July 2009	▶ Pure Bar + Restaurant at Kinwick Centre, SoHo, Hong Kong
December 2009	▶ Pure Yoga second location in New York, a joint venture with Equinox
August 2010	▶ Pure Fitness at Knightsbridge, Orchard Road, Singapore
September 2010	▶ Pure Fitness at Fairmont House, Admiralty, Hong Kong
November 2010	▶ Pure Urban – Pure Yoga second location at Urban One, Taipei
February 2012	▶ Pure Fitness at Asia Square, Marina View, Singapore
September 2012	▶ Pure Fitness at Lee Theatre Plaza, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong

How do you find your yoga instructors?

When we first opened it was very difficult recruiting teachers – we were trying to persuade people to come over from America and other parts of the world. Now we run our own teacher training programme, so we can cherry pick the best students from that programme.

We have really put an emphasis on creating an environment where teachers can be constantly challenged and can grow. We have a comprehensive internal assessment and continuing education programme, we have monthly studio meetings and we have a scholarship programme where teachers can take two months off to learn yoga in the US or India, and we'll subsidise that. Because we have such a good programme there's quite a lot

of interest in any positions we have, and we have a very good retention rate among our teachers.

Can you describe the design of your studios?

Design is a big focus – it has to complement and enhance the experience. The fitness and yoga studios offer quite a different experience – for the yoga studios we use a warmer colour palette and the music is softer, while the fitness centres are brighter, the temperature is cooler and the music is louder. The fitness and yoga offers are completely separate, with separate entrances and changing rooms.

We do a lot of the design in-house, and we also bring in exterior designers from time to time.

When did you start offering Pure Retreats?

Around six or seven years ago. We have done Pure Retreats in Sri Lanka, Thailand, the Philippines, Bali, China, Taiwan, Bhutan and New Zealand. Next year we're doing Namibia. We have a community of students in Hong Kong who come to the studio on a regular

We have a scholarship programme where teachers can take two months off to study yoga in the US or India and we will subsidise that. We have a very good retention rate among our teachers

The Pure Group runs yoga retreats in a wide range of exotic locations



basis, and this is an opportunity to take that experience to some exotic or amazing place. It's good for our teachers as well – they come and teach around 15 classes a week, which is a manageable schedule, then they do retreats around the world, they can do workshops, teacher training, we bring in guest teachers they can learn from. It helps with teacher retention as well as member retention.

What are your plans for the next 12 months?

We are opening a studio in Shanghai this year – we've signed that deal and that will open in 2013. We recently announced that we are opening a

second yoga studio and another fitness centre in central Hong Kong. We're also looking at other sites in Singapore and Taiwan, and we're launching a yoga clothing line around the middle of the year.

That's enough for now. Slow and steady wins the race.

What have been your highest and lowest points since launching Pure Yoga?

Opening the first studio was both the highest and the lowest point. Having only taken five yoga classes, I opened a 6,000sq ft yoga studio.

I spent a couple of months building the studio, and was so happy when it

opened, but then it was so busy that I couldn't get everybody into a class.

How do you relax?

I like to walk the dogs and I play tennis with friends. I chill out at home and relax. When I do practice yoga, as much as I enjoy the yoga, I'm looking around and thinking 'that wall could do with a touch up'. It's hard to totally relax.

Where is your favourite place in the world?

The Masai Mara in Kenya.

What is your philosophy?

Live every day as though it was your last, because one day it will be. ●

DESIGN NEWS

From an underwater nightclub to a New York park, we check out what's new globally



Subsix offers views of manta rays, parrot fish and other marine life

Project: **Subsix and Edge, NIYAMA**

Design: **Per AQUUM**

Location: **The Maldives**

Underwater nightclub launched

An underwater nightclub and 'overwater restaurant' have launched as part of Per AQUUM's new resort NIYAMA, which is located 500m from the Dhaalu Atoll shore.

The restaurant, Edge, appears to float on the surface of the Indian Ocean, while the Subsix nightclub is 6m below sea level. Subsix features huge windows on three sides, providing views of the exotic marine life. The underwater structure of Subsix was constructed on land then submerged in place. The venues are only accessible by boat.



• Edge Bar is perched over the water, offering views of the sea



- Construction of the Galaxy Soho took 30 months

Project: Galaxy Soho

Design: Zaha Hadid Architects

Location: Beijing, China

Galaxy Soho unveiled in Beijing

Zaha Hadid Architects has completed the Galaxy Soho in Beijing, a mixed use office, retail and leisure development.

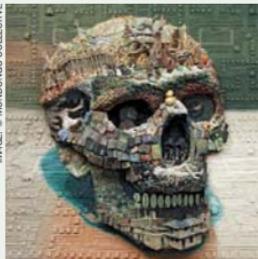
The Galaxy Soho is located in central Beijing, and comprises four domed buildings, connected via a series of bridges and balconies. The mixed use development spans 18 floors, with 16 floors of retail and offices, and restaurants, cafés and bars on the top two floors.

The design took into account 'sun path movements', allowing natural light to penetrate deep into the building.



The spiral staircase will form a focal point for the building

IMAGE: © MONDONGO COLLECTIVE



Wellcome Collection's winter exhibition is devoted to the iconography of death

Wellcome Collection unveils £17.5 expansion plans

Wellcome Collection in central London has unveiled a major £17.5m development project which will increase the attraction's available gallery space.

Stirling Prize-winning architects Wilkinson Eyre will transform the venue, bringing new areas into public use and adding a dramatic new spiral staircase and

Project: Wellcome Collection
 Design: Wilkinson Eyre
 Location: London, UK

interconnected galleries.

The works were commissioned by the collection's owner, Wellcome Trust, as it strives to meet the demands posed by an increase in visitor numbers at the attraction.

Due to open mid-2014, the new spaces will create an interdisciplinary and 'curiosity-driven' cultural destination.



The hotel mixes contemporary styles with original features

Project: Hôtel Verneuil
 Design: Patrick and Caroline Leghima
 Location: Paris, France

Boutique Parisien hotel revamped

The boutique, 26-room Hôtel Verneuil in Saint-Germain-des-Près, Paris, has undergone a major renovation.

Interior designers Patrick and Caroline Leghima have carefully renovated the 17th century townhouse, which features exposed beams and faded green doors to reference the surrounding antique district.

Other design features in the hotel include grouped vintage mirrors, bright turquoise and orange velvet armchairs, wooden headboards and roaring fires.



RHA worked with the Design Commission for Wales on the design

Project: Natural Retreats Llŷn Peninsula holiday homes

Design: Ray Hole Architects

Location: Llŷn Peninsula, North Wales, UK

Natural Retreats site wins planning

Ray Hole Architects (RHA) have won planning consent for the creation of 36 new Natural Retreats holiday homes on the Llŷn Peninsula in North Wales.

Natural Retreats has 15 sites – all in National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site is divided into two parts – a farm site, which has been extended to create a ‘village settlement’ and a former hotel, which is being remodelled into a terrace of holiday units. RHA also worked closely with landscape architects Ark.



LLŷN PENINSULA HOMES © OUR STUDIO LTD

- The buildings will achieve Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4



- The new footbridge was designed by WXY

Project: Transmitter Park

Design: AECOM, McLaren & WXY

Location: New York, US

Transmitter Park opens in New York

A new park, featuring 1.6 acres of open space, a nautical-themed playground, a bridge and an esplanade, has opened on the waterfront in Brooklyn’s Greenpoint neighbourhood in New York, on the former site of a pair of radio transmitter towers. WNYC Transmitter Park overlooks Manhattan and the East River, and was designed by AECOM, McLaren Engineering Group and WXY Studio.

The park will also feature a new pier, featuring ‘pods’ for relaxation, which is due to open at the end of 2012.

CARTWRIGHT PICKARD



■ James Pickard founded the practice with Peter Cartwright in 1997

James Pickard, co-founder of Cartwright Pickard, talks about the challenges of refurbishing the Grade II listed Golden Lane Leisure Centre in the City of London

What drew you to a career in architecture?

I started getting interested in architecture when I was five years old, when my father commissioned an architect to design a very modern house for us near Harrogate in Yorkshire. I went to see the architect's drawings and the model he made of the house. I also went to the building site every week

with my mum and saw the building taking shape. Watching the home I grew up in being designed and built inspired me to want to be an architect myself.

How did you start your career?

I studied architecture at the University of Nottingham – I did two degrees there. I have always worked in London, apart from a couple of years spent working in Stockholm.

I founded Cartwright Pickard in early 1997 with Peter Cartwright.

How would you describe your philosophy when it comes to architecture?

Primarily, it is about using our ideas to improve the quality of life for building users and occupiers.



■ A new dance studio was created between the swimming pool and the sports hall



It's also about the quality of life of people who have to move around buildings – if you are doing a large masterplan, the space between the buildings can become more important than the buildings themselves.

Where do you get your inspiration from?

When I visit beautiful places, I try and understand what makes those places successful. I've travelled lots and been to see buildings by some of the great modern architects of all time, which have inspired me.

I'm also driven by the idea that the wheel needs to be reinvented every now and again. I'm very interested in how new technologies and practical innovation can improve the performance of buildings. Architecture should evolve to reflect this innovation.

Generally, the construction industry is very conservative and slow to change. The majority of homes built in Britain today use technology we inherited from the Romans 2,000 years ago. Technology in house building has moved on very little in that time, yet the changes that have taken place in every other walk of life have been huge.

■ Double glazing was added, improving the energy efficiency of the centre

Sometimes you have to recognise that there are better ways of doing things.

How did you get involved with the Golden Lane Leisure Centre?

We were already working for the City of London Corporation [the municipal governing body of the City of London] on the Middlesex Street residential estate – doing some refurbishment work and new proposals including building a public library. We were invited to tender for the Golden Lane Leisure Centre refurbishment off the back of the success of that project.

Why did the centre need to be refurbished?

It had been around for a long time and all buildings need to be refurbished after 30 or 40 years of use. It needed a lot of upgrading to the fabric of the building, because of the running costs. It was all single-glazed, and very thermally inefficient. Also the City of London Corporation wanted to breathe new life into the existing complex.

What did the refurbishment project consist of?

We refurbished the existing swimming pool, sports hall and changing rooms and added in a new gym and dance studio. We also created a more spacious reception area, and improved the circulation throughout the building. The place feels like a high quality leisure development rather than the very dowdy, down-at-heel, grubby place that it was before. It has been transformed.

In order to make the buildings more thermally efficient, we introduced double glazing to the swimming pool, badminton courts and other big spaces. This reduces energy loss and lowers heating bills.

Because it's a Grade II listed building, we had to do that in a very sympathetic way. It took a lot of care to find manufacturers of glazing systems where the mullions [metal frames] were very similar in dimension to the old steel frames, for example. A lot of attention went into the detailing and selection of materials and getting approvals from the authorities with regard to the listed building consent.

We also improved the overall quality of the building, with high quality col-



■ The leisure centre is a listed building and forms an L shape around the courts, which are used for tennis, netball and children's five-a-side



ours and finishes, and have put in low energy lighting, which will contribute to its low energy performance.

Fusion Lifestyle has been appointed to manage the centre; the company is paying rent to the City of London Corporation, so it's getting income back in return for the capital that's been spent. More importantly, the residents of the Golden Lane Estate have got a fantastic new facility.

What is your favourite part of the refurbished leisure centre?

I think it's the way we've exposed and treated the existing pavement lights, and used them to let daylight in. They have enabled us to transform the vaulted areas of the building that weren't well used before. The new gym has been put into the vaulted club rooms, and it's a fantastic space now.

How was sustainability taken into account?

Introducing double glazing has dramatically reduced heat loss, and we've put in a lot of low energy lighting. We've also got photovoltaic panels generating electricity on the roof, which introduces quite a strong renewable energy component to the building.

GOLDEN LANE LEISURE CENTRE

The Golden Lane Leisure Centre is located at the heart of the Golden Lane Housing Estate, and was originally designed by Chamberlin, Powell and Bon (the practice responsible for the Barbican and the Golden Lane Estate) in 1963. The centre takes an 'L' shaped form around a quadrangle and is the conglomeration of two formerly separated buildings; the two storey swimming pool and badminton court and the single storey club rooms.

The centre is a Grade II listed building and is owned by the City of London Corporation. It reopened in January 2012 after a year-long refurbishment by Cartwright Pickard. The contractor for the works was Quinn London, and Fusion Lifestyle is managing the centre.

The leisure centre has a 20m swimming pool, a sports hall, a 38-station gym, a dance studio and outdoor courts for tennis, netball and children's five-a-side football.

What were the biggest challenges of this project?

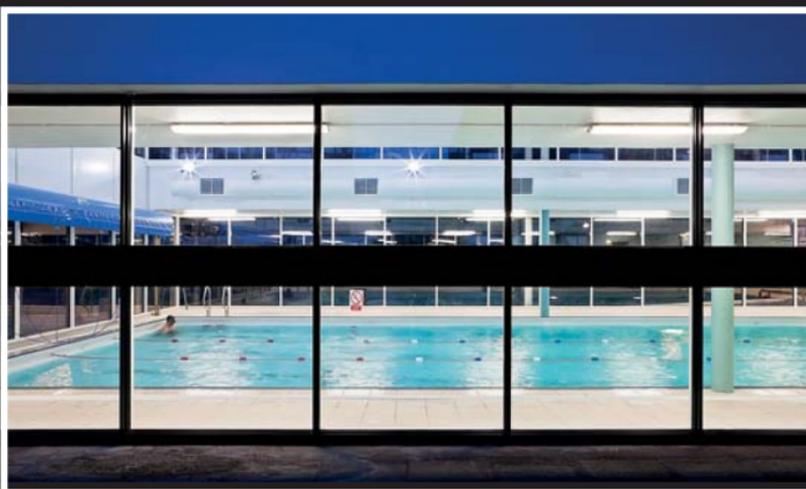
Working with a listed building. It's not like just getting planning permission, you have to get listed building consent and you have to go through a much higher level of scrutiny and approvals to get that consent.

There's probably 50 per cent more work involved in a listed building project than a non-listed one. You do these projects partly because they are quite high profile, and partly because it's in the interest of the practice to

experience working on different building types. If I was doing this purely for money, I would have turned this project away, but we enjoy having a variety of work in the office. It's an honour to be involved in the refurbishment of such an iconic project.

What reactions have you had?

Extremely good. We had an open evening and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Everyone raved about what a good job had been done. We've recently won the Architects'



■ The floor to ceiling windows fill the space with natural light and open up the centre to passers by



Journal Retrofit Award in the public building category, which was very nice.

Who do you admire?

I learned a lot from a very distinguished architect called Peter Foggo. I was lucky enough to work in his practice and he taught me a lot.

In my view, Renzo Piano is the greatest living architect. And the architects who have inspired me the most who are no longer alive are Alvar Alto and Louis Kahn, because of the simplicity and rigour of their approach to design. There's an incredible humanity in the way they understand how humans interact with buildings.

What do you love about your job?

Every single day is different. I started studying architecture more than 32 years ago, but you never get bored, because the days are never the same. Architecture is an art and a science, and there's a creative, innovative process in architecture which I really enjoy.

■ Residents of the Golden Lane Estate can use the leisure centre's facilities for a reduced rate

It is also very rewarding to train young people and see them grow into competent architects within our business. Some move on but keep in touch.

And what do you enjoy the least?

Fee negotiations. Many clients are exploiting the fact that there's a massive shortage of work to drive down fees to unsustainable levels which is damaging the profession.

The market has almost reached the point where architects are being asked to do the same amount of work we were doing pre-credit crunch for about half the fee. These are very tough times for architects.

Are you working on any other leisure projects?

We're working on quite a large, highly sustainable leisure resort in the South

of China. It's set around a lake and includes a five star hotel and spa, 1,000 villas, a golf course, an equestrian centre and a watersports centre. We're aiming to make it the most environmentally-friendly resort in China.

We've finished the initial masterplan, which I'll present in March.

We're looking to use an anaerobic digestion system to create biofuel from kitchen waste in order to generate heat and electricity for the resort. It will be one of the first of these types of systems in China.

There's a historic village in the area with 300-400 year old traditional Chinese homes – absolutely beautiful, timber-framed structures – which have been left to rot. We're also planning to renovate the whole village, get people back into the homes and turn it into a living tourist attraction.

It's very exciting and right up our street, because we're passionate about creating beautiful places that use sustainable ideas and innovation to make a difference to people's lives. ●

CARLOS COUTURIER



The co-founder of stylish Mexican boutique hotel company Grupo Habita tells Magali Robathan about his plans for the group and what drives him



ALL PHOTOS: © UNIDINE PRÖHL



How and when was the idea for launching Grupo Habita born?

We started the construction of our first hotel in 1996 and we opened Hotel Habita in Mexico City in 2000. At the time, my business partners Moises and Rafael Micha were investment bankers and I was exporting perishables. We didn't really want to be hoteliers, but we couldn't find anyone to manage the hotel, so we split up the responsibilities and became hoteliers in our spare time.

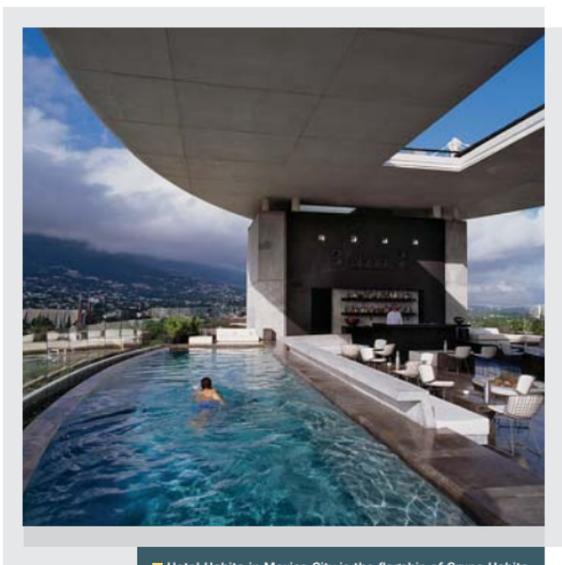
We soon realised that managing a hotel was a full time job. Within a few years we were all 100 per cent involved in the hotel operation.

What sets Grupo Habita hotels apart from other operations?

Our original sense of aesthetics. The smiles of our staff. Our choices of location and the communities that we have built around us.

What is the philosophy of Grupo Habita?

To be authentic, simple and ageless.



■ Hotel Habita in Mexico City is the flagship of Grupo Habita

What is your role?

I'm in charge of development. I get to do the fun part!

How difficult was it to get your first hotel open?

We were very naive and inexperienced back then. It all just seemed easy and fun – I guess we were young and full of drive. It seems so much more difficult now – we have become more demanding of ourselves.

How do you ensure that each of your hotels has its own personality?

By never repeating ourselves.

How do you choose the designers for your hotels?

By pure instinct. We choose talented and committed creative minds, who are not over-exposed.

What elements do you need to take into account when planning a new hotel?

We always like to surprise people, either through the location, the architecture, the food concept or the choices of contemporary art pieces displayed in the hotels.



What do you look for in a potential location?

An interesting community. Our neighbours always make us look good and are usually our main promoters.

Why do you think your hotels have been such a success?

Hard work and a great team.

What is your long-term plan?

We would like to stay focused on what we are already doing. We

don't like to open more than one hotel a year. We are currently working on a project in Tulum, Mexico.

Where do you get your influences from?

Nature.

How important is it to be environmentally-friendly?

It is very important for us to build sustainable hotels with energy-saving rooms. We use recycled materials and work with local artisans. To stay simple is to stay eco-friendly.

What have been your highest and lowest points since launching Grupo Habita?

The highest point was opening Hotel Americano in New York City in 2011. The lowest point has been taking forever to finish our Tulum project.

Who do you admire in business?

French entrepreneurs like [billionaire businessman] François Pinault and the performer Frederic Malle.

What do you do in your leisure time?

I travel, swim, ski, take naps and go jogging with my dogs.

Where are you happiest?

Spending time in the company of my two sons and my closest friends, sailing the Turkish Aegean sea.

What drives you?

My faith in God.



■ Mexico City's Distrito Capital has 17 rooms and 13 suites

■ Hotel Endemico in Mexico (below) has won an award for its unusual setting and pod rooms



"We always like to surprise people with our hotels, either through the location, the architecture, the food concept or the choice of contemporary art pieces"

GRUPO HABITA

Grupo Habita is a design-led, Mexican boutique hotel company, with 11 properties in Mexico and one in New York, USA. Its first property, Habita Hotel, opened in Mexico City in 2000 and its first outside Mexico, Hotel Americano, opened in New York's Chelsea district in 2011.

The hotels have won numerous awards for their design, including the 2010 *Wallpaper* Design Award for Hotel MTY in Monterrey, Mexico, and the 2012 Hospitality Design award for Most Unique Hospitality Setting for its mountainside bungalows at Endemico Resguardo Silvestre, Mexico (see main picture above).

Different teams of interior designers and architects are used for each hotel to ensure each one is completely unique – from the ultra modern



■ The latest hotel, Downtown Mexico, opened in Mexico City in June 2012

Distrto Capital in Mexico City to the former 19th century estate which has been transformed into the nine-room Maison Couturier in Veracruz, Mexico. Each is designed to complement the neighbourhood it sits in – while Grupo

Habita has a strong focus on art, New York's Hotel Americano doesn't feature any artwork on its walls because its owners say they didn't want to compete with the local galleries and artists that Chelsea is so famed for. ●



The 5,000sq m gym is free for staff and visitors to use

DESIGNED FOR WELLNESS

FOLLOWING THE LAUNCH OF TECHNOGYM'S NEW HEADQUARTERS
IN ITALY, WE SPEAK TO ARCHITECT ANTONIO CITTERIO ABOUT
DESIGNING A BUILDING 'AROUND THE HUMAN BEING'



Text around the building reinforces the healthy lifestyle message

Technogym's new headquarters were launched in September 2012 in Cesena, Italy, in a huge opening celebration attended by Bill Clinton and the president of Italy, Giorgio Napolitano.

Designed by Antonio Citterio Patricia Viel and Partners, the building houses Technogym's production facilities and administration, a research and innovation laboratory, product showrooms, warehousing, a staff restaurant and a large wellness centre dedicated to physical exercise and education.

The facility is the brainchild of Technogym's founder and president Nerio Alessandri, and brings together all of Technogym's operations in one place for the first time.

"We wanted to create a place that would inspire the industry about



Glass walls let in natural light and offer views of the surrounding landscape

PHOTO: © LEO TORR

ANTONIO CITTERIO

Architect, Antonio Citterio Patricia Viel & Partners

What inspired the design of the Technogym Village?

In order to stay in tune with the concept of 'wellness', the new Technogym Village was organised as a horizontal complex, extending into the landscape – more like a college campus than a corporate facility. We designed a place for teams of researchers, not somewhere that would look too institutional.

How would you sum up the design?

Due to its size and scope, the Technogym Village stands out like a territorial 'marker'. Our work was concentrated on the integration of the complex with the landscape, starting with the large factory.

In the office block, the indoor-outdoor relationship has been accentuated by the orientation towards the park and the internal subdivision of the spaces with transparent partitions. There is widespread use of natural

materials like lamellar wood for the roof of the factory and the office block, and for the entire load-bearing structure of the Wellness Forum.

What were the biggest challenges of the project?

When you design a production facility, the theme is that of the economics of the construction system. You need to come up with a competitive idea. For the production facility we have designed a prefabricated structure in wood and concrete, produced in a factory and assembled on the worksite. We have managed to achieve great quality of the architectural details, while staying competitive in terms of costs.

What is your favourite part of the building?

The Wellness Forum – this building has an elliptical footprint and is located facing the office block. The gym is not just a showroom for the



PHOTO: © WOLFGANG SCHNEPE

fitness machines and other gear, it is a true fitness club that can be used by the workers. We have designed a place where people might want to spend time outside of work hours, where the spaces

(including the outdoor zones) can be used by employees during their leisure time as well as their work time.

The park has been organised in the same spirit, with its paths and its contours.



In keeping with the emphasis on wellness, the restaurant serves healthy, locally-sourced food

“We wanted to create a destination where our customers, partners and industry stakeholders could come and understand our vision”

wellness,” says Alessandri. “Wellness is not a concrete product. It’s an experience, and in order to understand it, you need to live it. We wanted to create a destination where our customers, our partners and all the industry stakeholders could come and understand our vision by experiencing it for themselves – where we can both listen to and inspire people, and contribute to the future of our industry.”

The two-level, 2,700sq m Wellness Centre is at the heart of this vision. The centre features a 5,000sq m gym on the upper floor – which is free for staff and visitors to use – and a medical centre and spa on the ground floor. The spa features a sauna, steam-room, hydro-pool and relaxation area, and offers a range of treatments. The Wellness Centre has been entirely designed in lamellar wood with glass walls providing views over the park.

Other features designed to reinforce the wellness message throughout the village include Swiss balls instead of chairs at desks, vending machines offering healthy snacks, the staff restaurant which serves healthy, low-fat organic and locally-sourced food and Technogym equipment placed through-



Many of the desks are equipped with fabric wellness balls instead of chairs



PHOTO © LEO TORRES

The Wellness Center features a showroom of equipment (above) as well as a 5,000sq m gym for staff



PHOTO © LEO TORRES

The architects have designed a sleek, simple building with a distinctive curved roof

out the offices so staff can take short breaks to exercise during their working day. Staff are entitled to a personalised exercise and nutrition plan, and there's a wide range of activity choices available on the site, from Nordic walking to basketball and volleyball (there is a court on-site).

The location for the Technogym Village was chosen for its proximity to the A14 motorway, helping with transportation of products and also ensuring that the facilities are highly visible to the outside world.

Antonio Citterio Patricia Viel and Partners have designed a very simple

structure using a mixture of pre-fabricated elements in steel and reinforced concrete. The building features a curved, wooden roof, with a lamellar wood and glass façade. It has a range of environmentally-sustainable features including a building management system that automatically responds to the positioning of the sun, lowering blinds and opening windows in order to adjust light and temperature naturally as much as possible. Inside, the offices are organised on two sides, while the central area of the building houses the services, open plan work areas and meeting spaces. ●

SUPPLIERS

- Holzbau** – wooden glulam beams
- Iscom** – metal roofs
- Sermeca** – office building curtain wall
- Uniform** – wellness centre curtain wall
- Fiemme 3000 D.K.Z.** – wooden flooring
- Gemino** – glass partitions, office building
- Barth Innenausbau KG, d. Ivo Barth GmbH.** – millwork
- Vitra** – loose furniture, office building



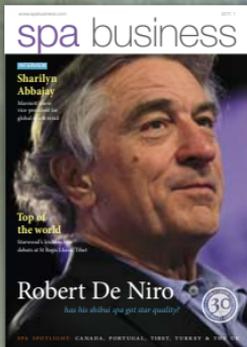
The site features a basketball and volleyball court for staff and visitors to use

The spa bus

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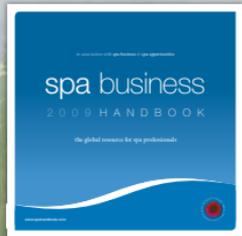
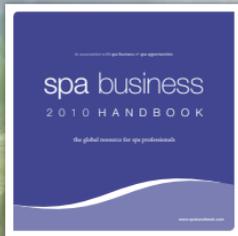
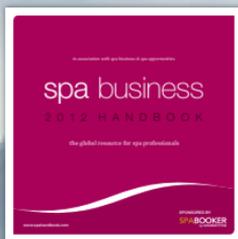
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MIKE KELLY

Director of the Centre of Public Health Excellence at NICE, Professor Mike Kelly, tells Julie Cramer why it's time to do whatever it takes to highlight the benefits of physical activity

“We’re not talking about a new virus or germ, it’s something within our grasp to do something about, in a fairly straightforward kind of way,” says Mike Kelly, director of the Centre of Public Health Excellence at NICE (the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence).

Kelly is not referring to some infectious disease requiring the attention of the medical community, but to the newly-defined set of lifestyle diseases (Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension) linked to obesity and physical inactivity, which now urgently require a wider approach.

“We’re facing an epidemic of non-communicable diseases related to the way we live our lives – the diets we consume, the physical activity we don’t do,” says Kelly. “It’s not that we [as leaders] don’t know what to do, it’s the fact that we haven’t so far taken a systematic approach across the whole of society.”

The grim predictions by government health officials are that by 2050, more than half the adult population in England will be obese. Current trends show that 26 per cent of adults and 16 per cent of children are now classed as obese – a condition that can have grave consequences for their health, and place a huge cost burden



It's important to identify the barriers to physical activity

on the NHS (currently over £5bn a year and rising rapidly).

In its role as health watchdog, NICE is there to offer independent, evidence-based guidance on ways to prevent and treat illness and poor health not only to the NHS, but also to local authorities and anyone with responsibilities in healthcare, public health and social care.

Kelly says that the kind of scientific evidence and data related to lifestyle diseases that NICE has been reviewing in recent years is now pointing to one very significant conclusion.

“The evidence about the benefits of physical activity and the disbenefits of

not being active are scientifically utterly compelling. The issue is now one of implementation.

“We can argue about exactly how much physical activity, plus there’s an ongoing debate about weight loss and physical activity [calories in or calories out] – but the problem is not a scientific one, it’s the will to make it happen”.

GP FRAMEWORK

NICE has recently taken the significant step of recommending that physical activity be included in the QOF (Quality and Outcomes Framework) indicators for GPs. GPs are currently incentivised financially to optimise and record treatment to patients for a range

of health issues – such as asthma, mental health, diabetes, coronary heart disease and hypertension.

Given what is known about its physical and mental benefits, offering exercise advice to patients would represent a major step forward, and a move that would be hailed by the greatest proponents of physical activity – the health and fitness industry.

Kelly says: “QOF is a complex system that doesn’t involve NICE directly. It involves the Department of Health in the four home countries and representatives from the medical profession.

“NICE lines up the sort of things that could go into the QOF and these bod-



WE'RE FACING AN EPIDEMIC OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES RELATED TO THE WAY WE LIVE OUR LIVES – THE DIETS WE CONSUME, THE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY WE DON'T DO



ies negotiate on them. But given the compelling evidence, physical activity is something that we continue to push to the foreground as a candidate for QOF.”

The changing political health landscape is another area where Kelly sees more opportunities. Health powers will become devolved with the advent of the Health and Social Care Act, and the establishment of the health and wellbeing boards within local authorities (LAs) on 1 April 2013 will present more ways to tackle the issue.

Kelly says: “The changes to their [LA’s] responsibilities represent the biggest change in public health since the 1970s and I believe there’s a really big appetite to do it well. Effectively, prevention of heart diseases and diabetes become the responsibility of the LAs.” In order to help the LAs, Kelly says NICE will be publishing a series of public health briefings to assist in identifying things that can be

done relatively quickly to improve the public health agenda.

Firstly, the institute has published a new pathway aimed at policy makers, commissioners, practitioners and other professionals, which sets out how communities can help prevent obesity. These include schemes to prevent harmful drinking, nutrition advice and the appointment of local ‘obesity champions’.

While targeted campaigns aimed at reducing salt in packaged foods and the traffic light food labelling system may be achieving traction, Kelly says much more needs to be done on a systematic basis to fully integrate changes into people’s lifestyles.

Kelly says: “People get the message about diet, although they find it difficult to follow a good diet, but the dangers of inactivity are not widely understood.”

To get people moving, there is a new set of guidelines on walking and

cycling, where NICE is advising people to make shorter journeys by foot or bicycle rather than by car. Whether it’s walking to school or work or to the corner shop, the message is that these small journeys can really have a positive and accumulative effect on health.

To encourage these changes, however, Kelly says it will be up to the local authorities to modify the built environment to make it more amenable to daily physical activity.

“Many things that make walking and cycling easier are within their grasp because they control traffic flow, planning regulations et cetera.”

Kelly insists he is not talking about expensive infrastructure changes, but simple things to remove barriers – for example, employers offering showers at work for employees who cycle, secure parking spaces for bicycles, and for pedestrians, safer pavements and better-lit streets.

WE'VE ALL GOT TO OWN THIS AND NOT ASSUME THAT OBESITY IS SOMEONE ELSE'S PROBLEM. IT'S NOT JUST FOR DOCTORS TO SORT OUT



He admits the UK is some way behind the Netherlands with its enthusiastic cycling habits, but offers as good examples cities like York and Oxford which are especially cycle-friendly, and central London's rent-a-bike scheme.

While some solutions may seem relatively easy, Kelly also points out that things will only work if all parties are on board. "We've all got to own this problem and not assume that obesity is someone else's problem – it's not just for doctors to sort out.

"It requires concerted efforts involving the medical profession, government, the food industry, the exercise industry, planners of transport systems, as well as all of us taking responsibility for our own health."

JOINING FORCES

The increasing dialogue between the medical and fitness industries is something that Kelly welcomes, and it's a rapprochement that he sees as vital to the future.

"There are a number of medical and fitness leaders around the country who are working tirelessly to make this happen, and I'm optimistic that we are moving in the right direction," he says.

"It's very likely that in the next five to 10 years we'll see more of this work incorporated into the medical curriculum and the training of GPs."

Many experts have drawn a parallel between the detrimental effects of smoking and the dangers of a sedentary lifestyle. After the publication of the Doll and Hill study into the link between smoking and lung cancer in the early 1950s, Kelly says that most doctors changed their own smoking habits.

"Even today it's still very rare to see a doctor, in the UK at least, who is a smoker. They've been fantastic role models for us all.

"GPs have been one of the major ways we've achieved success in the cessation of smoking. It leads us to assume that if they can become as single-minded in their recommendation of physical activity, they could play a very important part in the process."

CARROTS AND STICKS

An added complication with treating the so-called lifestyle diseases is that they involve tackling the complex issue of human behaviour. To this end, Kelly says NICE is currently updating its 2007 guidelines on behaviour change. "It's one thing to resolve to change your behaviour and quite

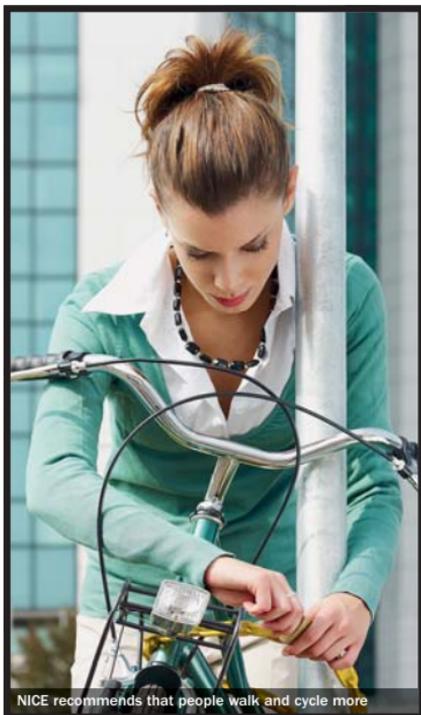
another to have continuing beneficial behaviour," he says.

Returning to the issue of smoking, Kelly says that across the decades there have been some very effective public education campaigns, a gradual "denormalising" of the act of smoking, increasingly hard-hitting advertising, the banning of adverts on cigarette packets and ultimately the ban on smoking in public places.

"All of these things have led to a remarkable improvement in people's health with regards to heart disease, cancer and chest illnesses," he says.

However, these changes took 60 years, and Kelly acknowledges that with the obesity and lifestyle disease "time-bomb" we cannot afford to spend quite as long forming a solution.

Kelly admits it may take a while for some GPs and other professionals to embrace the message of physical activity, but says: "The decisive change hasn't happened yet – it's been a rather slow burn, but I am optimistic that we're talking about the medicine of the future." ●



NICE recommends that people walk and cycle more

BRIEF BIO

Professor Kelly is director of the Centre of Public Health Excellence at NICE where he leads on the development of public health guidance. He is a public health practitioner, researcher and academic. He studied social science at the University of York, has a Masters degree in sociology from the University of Leicester, and undertook his PhD

in the Department of Psychiatry in the University of Dundee.

His interests include evidence-based approaches to health improvement, coronary heart disease prevention, chronic illness, disability, physical activity, health inequalities, behaviour change, social identity and community involvement in health promotion.



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SIMON MORTON

Following the launch of UK Sport's Gold Event Series, the director of Major Events and International Relations talks to Magali Robathan about the Olympics, attracting major events to the UK and the power of sport

“It was a full on few weeks,” says Simon Morton, director of Major Events and International Relations at UK Sport, when I ask him how the London 2012 Games were for him.

“They were incredible, weren't they? I have no doubt that internationally, the 2012 Games will be viewed as one of the most successful Games in history.”

For Morton and his team, the Olympic and Paralympic Games were part of a bigger picture. UK Sport – led by its Major Events team – is responsible for co-ordinating the bidding and staging of major international sporting events across the UK. So while Morton appreciated the Games for their own sake, he was also thinking about how their success would help in his team's bid to attract more major



events to the UK and how those future events could benefit from the lessons learned in staging the Olympics.

“I spent the Games rushing around the Olympic Park, trying to get around as many of the events as I could,” he says. “For a long time we have believed that the way the Games were delivered in each sport would become the blueprint for the delivery of a World Championships or a European Championships when we put those on in this country. To see how the Olympic events were being delivered will be incredibly useful when we come to guide national governing bodies in the delivery of big sporting events moving forward.”

UK Sport is the UK's high-performance sports agency, responsible for investing around £100m of public





▲ More than 1,200 Olympic and Paralympic athletes are funded by UK Sport

funds in elite sport. It is accountable to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), and works to support the UK's top athletes in maximising their chance of success internationally. The role of Morton and his team is both to help in the bidding and staging of major sporting events in the UK and to work on developing the UK's international sporting relationships.

A CAREER IN SPORT

Morton has worked for UK Sport for seven years. Before that he spent six years with the International Badminton Federation (now the Badminton World Federation) in a number of roles, finishing as head of marketing.

Despite having spent his entire career working in sports, Morton says he never set out to do so.

"I did a degree in Political and Ancient History at Keele University and then a Masters in International Relations at Warwick University, and really I just wanted an international-style job," he says. "I applied for internships at several organisations including the United Nations, then a friend, who was a director at the IBF, asked if I'd ever thought about working in international development through sport."

Morton joined UK Sport as a major events consultant, advising governing bodies about issues surrounding the



Record levels of investment helped Team GB win 65 Olympic medals

staging of major events. In June 2011 he was promoted to director of Major Events and International Relations. "Ever since I worked for the IBF, I've always had a passion for international sports politics," says Morton.

"To be formally looking after the UK's strategy to build international sporting relations is pretty special, and a good challenge."

THE GOLD EVENT SERIES

The latest challenge for Morton and his team comes in the shape of the Gold Event Series, a campaign unveiled in November 2012 by UK Sport and the DCMS. The Gold Event Series will see £27m of National Lottery money invested in bringing more than 70 international sporting events to the UK by 2018.

"For a long time, people have talked about the golden decade of sport in the UK, and the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, and all the other amazing events taking place across the UK," says Morton.

"We wanted to formalise this, and start to promote this incredible package of events. We now have these amazing assets – these iconic new venues – and we want to use and exploit them. We have a stable of world-class events taking place in the UK, and a public that wants to see more amazing sport after the Olympics. The Gold Event Series is acting as a vehicle to package these events, as well as a support programme for the national governing bodies bidding for and hosting them."



Although the campaign has only recently been announced, UK Sport has been working on it for a long time, explains Morton. "Around three years ago, we sat down with various national governing bodies and asked them which events they'd like to host. They gave us more than 200 nominations – we prioritised those, and developed a target list of 70 events."

Sixteen of these events have already been won, including the flagship 2017 World Athletics Championships – "the biggest event the UK has never hosted," as Morton puts it – which will take place in the Olympic Stadium. Morton describes winning this event as one of the highlights of his career with UK Sport. Other flagship events secured since the start of the process include the 2015 World Artistic Gymnastics Championships, the 2015 World Canoe Slalom Championships and the World Triathlon Championships Series Final 2013. "We have

also launched bids for the 2016 European Swimming Championships and the 2016 Track Cycling World Championships," adds Morton.

Although the campaign has now had major successes, things didn't look quite so rosy a year or two ago.

"At the start of our new bid cycle, around 12 to 18 months ago, we bid for a Hockey World Cup to be hosted in London in 2014, and for a World Netball Championships to take place in Manchester in 2015," says Morton. "Those were the first big world events that we bid for under the new programme, and we lost both of the bids."

If securing the 2017 World Athletics Championships was a highlight for Morton, this period was a bit of a low point, he admits.

"That was a challenging time, because the pressure starts to grow when you lose a few bids," he says. "People start to question whether you've got the right approach, whether

the UK will be a strong hosting nation post-Games. Happily, since then we've only lost one big event, which was the World Rowing Championships 2015."

The hosting of major sporting events is part of the government's long-term sporting strategy, which aims to use the success of London 2012 to attract events that will bring both economic and sporting benefits to the UK.

But while the economic benefits of hosting prestigious sporting events are important, Morton is also keen to stress the intangible benefits.

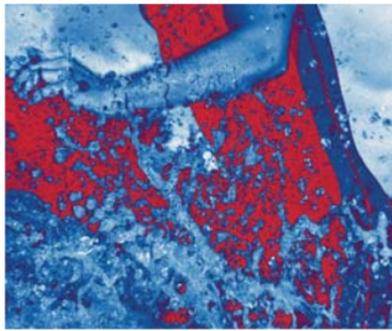
"As well as the tangible benefits, around things like economic impacts and a boost to visitor numbers and the promotion of the country, there are the inspirational benefits of these events, pumping interested and driven people towards some of the other structures which organisations like the governing bodies and Sport England offer," he says. "We saw in 2012 how sporting events can create these really unique



The Lee Valley White Water Centre will host the 2015 Championships

THE GOLD EVENT SERIES EVENTS WON SO FAR

- Track Cycling World Cup 2012
- Gymnastics World Cup 2012
- European Athletics Team Championship 2013
- BMX Supercross World Cup 2013
- Rowing World Cup 2013
- World Youth Netball Championships 2013
- Rugby League World Cup 2013
- World Triathlon Championships Series Final 2013
- Squash Men's World Open Championships 2013
- Wheelchair Tennis Singles Masters 2014
- IPC European Swimming Championships 2015
- European Eventing Championships 2015
- EuroHockey Championships 2015
- World Canoe Slalom Championships 2015
- World Artistic Gymnastics 2015
- World Athletics Championships 2017



"We saw in 2012 how sporting events can create these really unique moments of communal celebration. They bring people together, within local communities and as a nation, in a way that not many other things can"

moments of communal celebration. They bring people together, both within local communities and as a nation, in a way that not many other things can. "It's important that we invest into the country's soul as well as its body."

CONFIDENCE BOOST

The success of the Olympic and Paralympic Games has shifted perceptions of the UK hugely, says Morton, with international federations of sport very keen to return. Of course, it hasn't always been this way.

"If you cast your mind back to the mid- to late-1990s, in pretty much all components of international sport there was a feeling that GB was a bit lacking," he says. "If you think about where we were in performance terms after the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta with just one gold medal, where we were in major events terms with issues like Pickett's Lock [when London had to hand back the 2005 World Athletics Championships after government funding for the Pickett's Lock stadium was pulled] – internationally our stock was falling. That has picked up since the early 2000s. We were making good ground, but the Olympics has given us a massive push. The UK's global competitiveness is so high at the moment in terms of bidding for sporting events."

Attracting major events to the UK is a complex business. As part of the Gold Event Series, UK Sport and DCMS have identified 14 key areas in which they can help governing bodies – seven relate to bidding for major sporting events, and seven are about help in staging the events themselves.

"We tried to think about everything the governing bodies could need, in terms of support from the government," says Morton. "We support the feasibility studies of major sporting events, we do a lot of work around bid advice, either from within our team or by bringing in external consultants. We finance the bids and work closely with DCMS to ensure that there is good political support."

"In terms of support for the events themselves, the main one is that we will invest National Lottery funding into staging them. We have also just launched a centralised equipment programme, making generic pieces of big event staging equipment available to events being supported via UK sport."

"We also have programmes around knowledge transfer and we have a research programme to help research bodies to help measure the impact of events they put on. It's a holistic set of programmes we are wrapping around governing bodies to ensure they are exceptionally well supported."

KEEPING UP THE MOMENTUM

The next year looks like being another busy one for Morton and his team.

"We'll be working on the rollout of the Gold Event Series, getting the message out about this great package of events," he says. "That's a big task. We're also working on a number of live bids and we'll be doing some feasibility work on other world championships that might be launched this year."

They will also be working systematically with national governing bodies to build their influence within international sport. "We'll be working with them over the next six months on their four year strategies, which will set out how they want to present themselves internationally," says Morton.

According to reports, the government has scrapped plans to merge UK Sport and Sport England – Morton will only say that the DCMS is currently considering the options, and UK Sport is awaiting DCMS's conclusions. "It would be wrong for me to pre-empt that process," he says. "We're just focused on delivery."

It's clear that Morton genuinely believes in the power of sport. When I ask what drives him, he doesn't hesitate. "There are very few things that bring nations together like big sporting events do," he says. "It's incredibly motivating and I'm very privileged." ●

Forest Retreat

Forest Holidays has defied the recession, going from strength to strength since its 2006 launch. Now, following a management buyout and an injection of funds, it's ready to scale up. Kath Hudson reports



The seven sites all feature children's play areas



The Forest Holidays formula is very simple – a stunning forest location, combined with a cosy and luxurious cabin.

Sites are low density and uncommercial. There are currently seven sites across the UK on Forestry Commission land: Argyll and Strathyre in Scotland, Cropton Forest and Keldy in North Yorkshire, the Forest of Dean and Sherwood Forest, and Deerpark Forest in Cornwall. An eighth site is due to

open in Hampshire in May 2013.

In September, private equity firm LDC backed a management buyout of Forest Holidays. This deal enabled the Camping and Caravanning Club to exit the business, while the Forestry Commission retained a significant share. The investment will support a site rollout, with new cabins planned across key UK locations.

In the wake of the deal, we speak to those involved about what it means.





The most recent cabins, designed by Holder Mathias, opened in Sherwood Forest in March 2012



Gary Fletcher, CEO, Forest Holidays

What is your career background?

I did a sports degree and went into leisure management. I went into property development, fell on challenging times and came across a job with the Camping and Caravanning Club. I planned to be there for six months and stayed for six years. The Forestry Commission put the Forest Holidays tender out in December 2004 and I was charged to win it. We relaunched

Forest Holidays in May 2006, with a camping and cabin business.

What drove the recent MBO?

We did pretty well from 2006 to 2011, but to develop 70 cabins in virgin forest takes quite a bit of money. So the primary driver was to find the funding to allow a very popular business to grow and reach its full potential. We want to roll out the business model: ▶



► Sherwood Forest and the Forest of Dean have been launched in the last couple of years, we're now on site at Blackwood Forest in Hampshire and we want to do more of the same.

Why did you split from the Forest Camping business?

Camping is high volume and small ticket, and cabins are the opposite. Forest Holidays Camping is a mature business, which didn't need much more investment, whereas the cabin business needs a lot more investment to fulfil its potential. It's a rising star. The Camping and Caravanning Club are very experienced at running camp-sites, so it was a natural split.

How has the company performed over the last few years?

It's just incredible. We open sites to 95 per cent occupancy. Across all seven sites, we averaged 95 per cent occupancy in 2011/12, 365 days a year. We're actually looking to take it down to about 90 per cent occupancy, because of the pressure it puts on the cabins and the maintenance.

Of our customers, 97.1 per cent say they will come back. As part of the investment, we had an external company interview with 2,500 of our

▲ Forest Rangers run a range of activities, from outdoor survival courses to night-time excursions

customers. The company carrying out the interview couldn't find anyone who didn't like us, and had to add a category 'we absolutely love you'. They were amazed. We were two points behind Apple in our customer net service scores. We're proud of that and we work hard at it. We're small, personal and give a great service.

What trends have contributed to Forest Holidays' success?

The European challenges and exchange rate has boosted the staycation market. We're riding trends of web bookings, more short breaks (average stays are three to four days), interest in green issues and healthy lifestyles, slow-paced holidays and people wanting to spend time together as a couple or a family. Our customers enjoy autumn and winter as much as summer.

What activities are offered on site?

When we were setting up we were told that if you want a year-round business you need a swimming pool, a bar and restaurants. We've worked really

hard with the Forestry Commission to build a business model and product that works in today's market. It's the antithesis of big, crass developments. The sites only have 60 or 70 cabins and the Retreat grocery store, which sells a few groceries, hot and cold snacks and on tap beer and wine.

One of our unique offerings is our Ranger service, offering bat walks and forest explorations, and we also have partnerships with local companies, including rock climbing and canoeing companies. One of our strong points with planners is spend in the community. Local pubs and businesses benefit enormously from Forest Holidays.

We have started serving some food on a Friday evening, for people when they arrive late, which has been popular. Also, we've started spa treatments in cabins this year, using a national company with local people.

What's your vision for the next few years?

In the next three to five years we'll have another five sites, and, longer term, a further seven sites. There has been a lot of research on what the UK market can withstand, looking at our customers and their profiles. We're just scratching the surface. ●



The Forest of Dean site features 76 cabins, a shop, bar, restaurant and children's play area

Joanna Hoehenwarter & Peter Gamble, Architect & Senior Partner: Holder Mathias



Why were you chosen by Forest Holidays to design the cabins?

Gamble: We were chosen on the back of the work we did for Rank in the 90s, on their rival concept to Center Parcs.

What was the brief?

Gamble: To create a cabin which treads lightly on nature and embraces the forest. Forest Holidays wanted us to develop a concept which could be rolled out on a production line. This is an unusual position to be in for an architect, but has meant that we can continually refine the cabin design, which has created considerable cost savings. For instance, the sizes are such to minimise the amount of plasterboards and roof tiles which need to be cut. [Development director] Richard Palmer is stringent about cost and quality and, very rightly, has pushed us hard.



▲ The cabins all have huge windows, allowing the forest surroundings to take centre stage

What were the challenges?

Hoehenwarter: The forest created the biggest challenge, because of the sensitive flora and fauna. Before masterplanning each site, we have to undertake ecological assessments, look at the habitats and study the forest in all seasons.

Gamble: Working closely with the contractor from an early stage led to innovations like minimising the number of vehicles on site. So the cabins are made off-site, stacked onto a lorry in the correct order and assembled with minimum fuss. Everything else is brought in by hand.

Describe the cabin design?

Hoehenwarter: They have two volumes, one houses the large living space at the front, which really

► embraces the forest, with the fully glazed frontage. The other, angled volume houses the service areas, like the bathrooms. There are two roofs, the one over the service area is lower, which makes construction more cost-effective. The two volumes are connected inside with a full height wall, either housing a wood burner, or a wall-mounted television.

What are the sustainable elements?

Gamble: They are made from FSC-sourced timber, locally-sourced, where possible. The foundations are special: we created a small bore mini supporting a subframe, with a cassette floor which fits on this, which the timber-framed superstructure can be built on. This means the cabins hardly touch the forest floor and there is no excavation needed.

They are code 4 level sustainable homes, but the latest ones at Hampshire are now reaching for code 5, since they will incorporate bio-mass heating, which will be fuelled by wood chips, sourced from the Forestry Commission coppicing programme.

The cabins use a stack ventilation system. Careful orientation and solar shading avoids overheating. They are extremely well insulated: the floors have 10 inches of insulation.

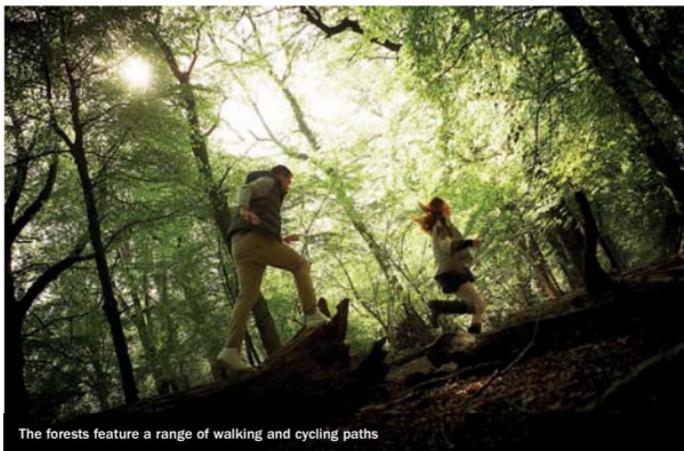
What are your favourite features?

Hoehenwarter: The windows from the living room, and the shape of the living room and kitchen. We managed to create a design with a character and ethos which can't easily be changed, with lots of charisma. They are much nicer in real life than I ever imagined.

Gamble: I like the way that when I walk in it feels immediately comfortable and warm. They embrace the forest and are cosy, yet dramatic. I love that we have designed something which makes me feel like that. ●

"The UK short breaks market is a large and growing market supported by a demand for easily-accessible holidays and authentic trip experiences"

Martin Draper



The forests feature a range of walking and cycling paths

Richard Palmer, Development Director, Forest Holidays

What is your career background?

I'm a chartered engineer by trade and started off working on power stations before spending 12 years in the Navy, after which I did an MBA at Warwick University. After that, I worked in various engineering and manufacturing positions across Europe before joining Forest Holidays in 2006.



What is your day to day role?

Obtaining the planning permissions and overseeing construction of the new sites. I am also the key liaison with the Forestry Commission.

What are the main challenges of your job?

The main challenge is that we build in sensitive locations. We take this very seriously, working closely with the Forestry Commission and other stakeholders to make sure that we deliver in an ecologically sensitive way. Not only are the cabins ecologically sustainable, but the forest thrives around the cabins thanks to the planting and other ecological work which we do.

Blackwood Forest, Hampshire is your current project. What will it offer?

Sixty cabins, roughly 70-80sq m in size. We have one, two, three and four-bed cabins, as well as copper, silver and gold specifications. Copper is the mar-

ket entry cabin and gold has the most goodies: a log burner, hot tub, more bathrooms and more luxury touches with the fixtures and fittings. We also have a central facility where you check in and out and get local information, and a Retreat grocery store.

How have the sites progressed?

We have a 'lessons learned' process from every site, which we take to the next, so each site is slightly different. But, on the whole, if you look at the original site in Yorkshire and the latest site in Hampshire, there isn't a huge difference. The main difference is that in Hampshire, we are looking to introduce a bio-mass heating system using wood pellets, which is more eco-friendly. This site is close to London and a shuttle bus will run from the local train station, so we believe this will be popular for people wanting to get out of London without a car. ●



Forest Holidays has seven sites across the UK, with a new site, Blackwood Forest in Hampshire, due to open open May 2013

Martin Draper, Managing Director, LDC

Why did LDC find Forest Holidays appealing to invest in?

There were a number of key attractions: the strength of the brand, a loyal, growing customer base and the genuine uniqueness of the proposition, emphasising luxury facilities and high-quality accommodation in hard to access, picturesque woodland locations. Forest Holidays is led by a high quality management team with a huge amount of knowledge and experience.

How much involvement will LDC have in the running of the company?

We see ourselves as active and interested, but not overly intrusive in terms of guiding the team in key areas, such as strategy and ongoing performance, while trusting the management team with the day to day operations.

We have two representatives on the board; myself and Andy Grove. We



have also appointed Peter Phillipson as non-executive chair. Previously chair of The Tussauds Group, his insight and experience of developing brands should help drive the business growth strategy.

Were there any

weaknesses you wanted ironed out?

Not weaknesses, but we were keen to work through future growth plans and understand the potential of the investment and how best to scale it.

What sort of performance are you hoping for going forward?

The focus will be on maintaining the excellent track record and replicating its success at new site locations.

How attractive does the sector currently look to investors?

The UK short breaks market is particularly attractive. It's a large and growing market supported by a number of

positive trends, including a growing consumer demand for convenient, easily accessible holidays and authentic trip experiences, along with a high degree of product innovation, driven by the likes of Forest Holidays.

At a macro level, the leisure industry has been challenged during the recovery from the recession, with increased pressure on household budgets, cautious corporate discretionary spending and subdued consumer sentiment, with low income growth relative to inflation. However, several companies have performed well and created growth opportunities despite this challenging environment: cinemas have used 3D to drive visits, pubs have broadened their offering with more food, and the health and fitness sector has championed the low cost model.

Businesses with a full appreciation of the impact of key trends, such as digital technology, the increasing polarisation between value and luxury segments and the importance of health and overall wellbeing will do well. ●

POWER HOUSE

Siemens' new flagship facility shows how eco-technologies can enhance the built environment – and offers a new type of green visitor attraction in London's Docklands

Located at the heart of London's first Green Enterprise District, the new £30m Siemens Centre for Urban Sustainability (otherwise known by its more user-friendly name of the Crystal) is the latest development to open as part of ambitious plans to regenerate the south-east London 'Olympic' Borough of Newham.

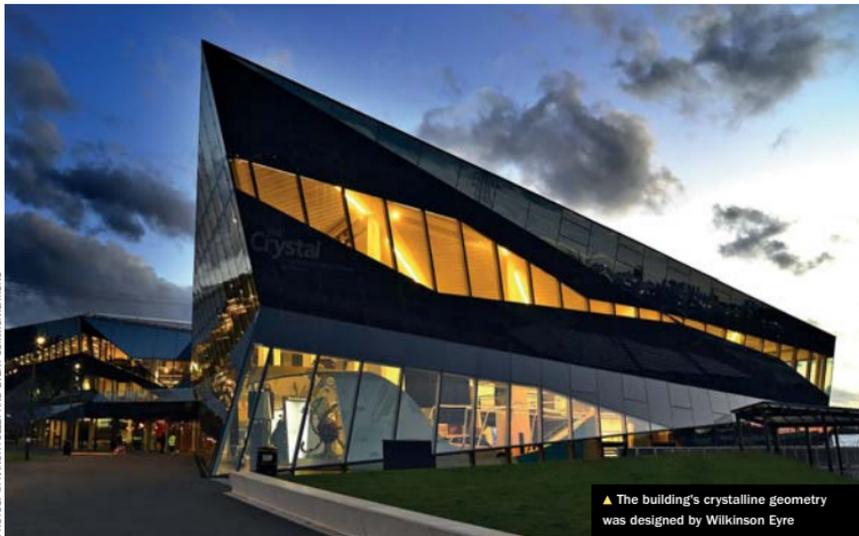
The building – designed by Wilkinson Eyre Architects, with interiors created by Pringle Brandon Perkins + Will and engineered by Arup – is a sleek and striking piece of geometric architecture, but it's the site's environmental

credentials that really make it shine. Conceived as one of the world's few all-electric public buildings, the Crystal is targeting top ratings in the world standards for green design and construction – 'Outstanding' in BREEAM and 'Platinum' in LEED.

Owner Siemens is one of the world's largest providers of environmental technologies, with around 40 per cent of its total revenue coming from green products and solutions. Stefan Denig, head of communications and marketing at the Siemens Center of Competence, Cities – the department now based at the Crystal – says: "The technologies

used in the building are cutting-edge but they're also existing technologies that can be employed by customers today. We hope the Crystal will be a recognised centre for thought leadership on sustainable cities."

The company says it conceived the 2,000sq m space as a global hub to promote environmental dialogue and research – and also as a multi-media visitor attraction (with an absence of Siemens branding) that shows the environmental challenges facing cities around the world. With 50 per cent of the world's population currently living in cities, and predictions that this will



▲ The building's crystalline geometry was designed by Wilkinson Eyre



▲ The Crystal is part of ambitious plans to regenerate the borough of Newham

grow to 75 per cent by 2050 – these are issues that are set to affect the majority of people in the future.

GREEN ZONE

There are other hopes being pinned on the new building. For the London Borough of Newham, which is already riding high on the inward investment of the London 2012 Games and the future redevelopment of the Olympic Park, the Crystal is expected to be a magnet to attract other green businesses to its Green Enterprise District.

This 50sq m area, with its centre point based around the Crystal's location in the Royal Docks near the Excel exhibition centre, is backed by the Greater London Authority, the District aims to put Newham at the heart of the capital's drive to become a leader in the low-carbon economy.

CONCEPT

Designed as two parallelograms linked by an atrium walkway, the Crystal is a building of two halves. One half is home to around 30 Siemens staff, with hot desks available for visiting experts, a large auditorium that can be hired out for green events, a ground floor café and soon-to-open waterfront restaurant, while the other half is dedicated to the public exhibition space at the heart of the visitor attraction.

The purpose is clearly not for Siemens to generate revenue from

GREEN RATINGS

The Building Research Establishment (BRE), seeks to provide advice on methods that support environmental protection and sustainable development. BREEAM stands for the BRE Environmental Assessment Method, and evaluates the performance of buildings in areas such as management, energy and water use, building materials, health and well-being, pollution and land use.

Buildings like the Crystal, which aim to achieve a score of over 85 per cent, are awarded a BREEAM rating of 'Outstanding'.

While BREEAM dominates the UK market, alternative

methods of environmental assessment include Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) in the USA, Greenstar in Australia, HQE in France and CASBEE in Japan

LEED is run by the US Green Building Council and currently covers projects in 135 countries. It aims to establish common standards of measurement for green buildings, recognise environmental leadership, stimulate green competition and raise consumer awareness of green building benefits.

To achieve a top LEED rating of Platinum, a project must score 80 points and above.

the attraction – it's currently free – although adults may be charged a nominal fee in the future. The building has, however, been attracting the public's attention. Six weeks after its official opening in late September 2012, the exhibition space had already seen 10,000 visitors through the door and was well on its way to achieving its target of 100,000 visitors annually. This may, of course, be partly down to its rather enviable location at

the foot of the new Emirates Air Line cable car across the Thames (also designed by Wilkinson Eyre) – which regularly deposits a wealth of curious visitors within a few metres of its door.

The Crystal may preach the environmental message to others loud and clear, but the building very much practices what it preaches, chalking up a long list of eco-efficient building materials and systems, some on show, some behind the scenes.

Externally, Wilkinson Eyre have created a façade that reflects the natural, angular forms of a crystal – and not something that needed to specifically stand out as a ‘sustainable building’.

Project architect Sebastien Ricard, director at Wilkinson Eyre, says the photovoltaic panels (created by Sanyo, with energy converted with Siemens inverters) covering two-thirds of the building’s roof have been totally integrated into the roof design so that people – especially those with a bird’s eye view from the cable car – won’t even know they are there.

“The panels are very high performance and able to function well under London’s grey skies and also on the shallow slant of the roof,” he says.



■ The building’s angular lines contrast with the curved O2 Arena beyond



▲ The energy performance of the building is constantly monitored

INNOVATIVE MATERIALS

Ricard admits the Crystal may be an expensive building per square metre, but the payback will come in terms of the knowledge and awareness of green systems that it can deliver both now and in the future.

He says: “We always like to push the boundaries in terms of the materials we use – we’re not saying it’s the most cost-effective building in terms of the payback period. This project is more of an exploration, a working laboratory, where everything can be monitored.

“Electricity is not currently the greenest type of energy, but with the introduction of renewable generation the grid is slowly decarbonising. This

building is designed for the future – in 20-25 years it will be the only way to produce clean energy. The building is also ready for connection to the smart grid, which may happen in five to 10 years time.”

Inside, Siemens’ state-of-the-art building management system (BMS) means that every part of the building can be adjusted for optimum heat, light and ventilation and minimum energy consumption – even from the other side of the world. Every kw of electricity used and every litre of water consumed or generated can be measured within the building and compared with buildings internationally – with results being displayed on a ‘green screen’ in the exhibition hall.

Because of the extensive glazing used in the building, there is little need for artificial light in the daytime. When needed, automatic lighting controls constantly adjust every lamp according to time of day and occupancy. To create a comfortable working environment, both the office and exhibition spaces are naturally ventilated where possible, using motorised opening vents in the façades and roof.

There are even more high tech systems going on underground. Around 17km of ground source heat pump provides 100 per of the heat and majority of air cooling for the building. Heat is pumped from the ground into the building on cold days – and on hot days the cooler water is pumped from the ground to help cool the interior. Ricard says the high specification of

SMART MOVES

Smart meters – the two-way communicating electric meters being installed in the UK both domestically and commercially – are seen as the first step in building a smart grid. The grid will be an electricity distribution system that uses information and communications technology to control energy usage, outages and power generation.

The benefits will include greater reliability (fault detection and self fixing), flexibility (two-way energy flows and distributed generation), efficiency (load adjustment and

flexible pricing), and sustainability (for instance, the intermittent nature of solar and wind will be better integrated).

As the Crystal’s architect Sebastien Ricard, says: “We wanted to explain to the public that the aim is not to be carbon neutral. Carbon neutral schemes may be more appropriate for isolated developments in, say, the countryside, but in dense urban environments there will be a need to rely far more on decentralised energy generation and distribution to manage supply and demand.”

DOCKLAND REGENERATION

Representing a prime stretch of waterfront land on London's Thames, the Royal Docks were once the largest of their kind in the world, attracting trade from every corner of the globe. With the changing structure of industry, the second half of the 20th century saw the area fall into decline.

While the Crystal is seen as a flagship for green investment in the area, the opening of the Emirates Air Line cable car may well provide a catalyst for leisure development in an otherwise business-based location. In July 2011, Newham Council resolved

to grant planning permission in principle, subject to certain criteria being met, to Studio Egret West for a floating village that would include restaurants, a boat bar, a boat café, swimming pool, wakeboard centre, boardwalk and garden.

Councillor Conor McAuley, executive member for regeneration at Newham Council, says: "The council is continuing to work with the land owners and other partners on best uses of the water and dock edges to make the Royal Docks a top destination for residents, businesses and tourists."



▲ The Emirates Air Line opened in time for the Olympics

the glazing (the building has achieved an excellent average of 1 U value) and insulated roof keep the interior at an optimum temperature. "Many people wrongly assume that glass is not a good insulating material," he says. "Actually it's usually the mechanisms used to join the panels of glass where most heat loss happens – and so this is something that we've worked on."

One area of the exhibition focuses on the importance of water as a precious and finite resource, and the ability to conserve it and recycle it is practically exhibited within the building itself. The Crystal is one of the few public buildings to recycle rainwater, treat it, and use it for drinking water.

The building also has an impressive blackwater recycling plant underground, where 100 per cent of the building's waste water is recycled for toilet flushing and irrigating the landscaping. A smart irrigation system can detect moisture levels in the soil and adjust watering levels as needed. According to Ricard, black water recycling is usually something that is undertaken on the scale of a borough, not commonly for a single building.

ECO ENTERTAINMENT

The exhibition space is a very extensive stroll through green issues. To begin with, visitors enter a cinema pod where they watch a series of three short films, which offer some stark statistics and striking imagery on the themes of demographic change, urbanisation and climate change.



▲ Interactive exhibits help deliver the message to visitors

To follow are eight attraction zones, covering areas such as Smart Buildings, highlighting the inefficiency of most buildings and how that can be addressed; Safe and Sound, which examines security issues in cities; and Healthy Life, which looks at the strain a growing and ageing population is putting on healthcare systems.

The topics may be sobering, but the space has been made interactive and fun, with a Tesla coil in the 'Go Electric' area, where visitors can create a lightning streak of electricity by moving their bodies. Another exhibit in the 'Creating Cities' space (reportedly most favoured by London Mayor Boris Johnson when he visited) allows visitors to be the mayor of a city and work with other 'city experts' to make decisions on how an imaginary city works.

"One of the reasons for building this is to show people that it's possible to create a sustainable building that's also a pleasant place to be"

Denig says: "Visitors often compliment us on how interactive the exhibition is and say they find it thought-provoking, which is great."

A bespoke card system also means the exhibits can deliver information on two levels – one for general visitors and the other for visiting experts.

"One of the biggest challenges we had to overcome was making sure we successfully addressed a very broad, diverse range of audiences with the content of the exhibition.

"We hope we have achieved this with content that is fun and relevant for school children, linked to the national curriculum, but also more detailed case studies and research of interest to city experts."

For any operators looking to build a highly sustainable building, a fact-finding mission to the Crystal would be a very good start.

As Denig says: "One of the reasons for building this is to show people that it's possible to create a sustainable building with all the latest technology that is also a pleasant place to be." ●

DRIVING NEW CUSTOM

Set on 3.5km of coastline next to the Rio Formosa National Park, for 40 years Quinta do Lago golf resort has been the place to holiday on the Portuguese Algarve. But even the best have to adapt in a recession, as Kath Hudson reports



● The resort is next to the Formosa Estuary and the sea, in the Rio Formosa National Park

“Quinta previously had the luxury of running waiting lists for all its products, so it was ill-equipped when the market dropped,” says Quinta do Lago’s CEO John Dwyer. “With the average age of [residential villa] owners being 73, we needed to make sure we were appealing to the younger generation as well.”

Golf has traditionally been the anchor of the Quinta do Lago resort, situated on the Portuguese Algarve. However golf has been dealt a double whammy recently. On the back of the UK recession – Britain is the Algarve’s biggest market – the Portuguese government hiked VAT on golf from 6 per cent to 23 per cent.

As a result of all of this, Dwyer has been steadily implemented changes since he was drafted in in 2007. The events programme has been souped up and there’s been an investment in broadening the resort’s leisure base, with the addition of a gym and more investment in restaurants.

This year the resort’s fish restaurant Casa do Lago had a facelift, and two more restaurants will open in 2013: a French bistro and an American-style restaurant with beef as the focus.

BUILDING A COMMUNITY

A series of events are now regularly organised to create more of a community feel, including Party in the Park,

The recently-opened Conrad Algarve has an indoor and an outdoor pool



- The Conrad Algarve is Hilton's second resort on the Portuguese Algarve

when the immaculate driving range is transformed with bouncy castles, football games and music. Boat races on the lake and kitesurfing competitions are among this year's highlights.

A concierge service is being launched for 2013 to provide a one stop shop for bookings, advice and other guest requests. As well as providing great customer care, this will help drive demand for its products, such as tennis lessons, yoga sessions and personal training.

Another of Dwyer's priorities is to lengthen the season. "The whole game is driving up occupancy all year round. We make good money from food and beverage for seven months and then bleed for five months, so it's about neutralising that bleed," says



- The King Roof Garden Suite at the Conrad Algarve has an infinity pool with retractable roof

Dwyer. "A sales person has been taken on to chase down the MICE market and has generated €1.7m-worth of potential business for 2013. We're investing and working on new products all the time."

CONRAD ALGARVE

Another exciting development for Quinta in 2012 was the October launch of the Conrad Algarve, Hilton's six star brand. This hotel will be the first, and only hotel in the resort to stay open all year round.

Service and attention to detail are the watchwords for the hotel. Each element of the hotel experience has been studied and honed. To improve the guest experience, for example, check-in can be completed in the car on the way from the airport.

"We're offering a very high level of service, attention to detail and will know each of our guests personally. It's difficult, but achievable," says Antoine Couve, Conrad's cluster director of business development Algarve. "We want the Conrad Algarve to be a



- One of the resort's luxury residential properties – all have views of either the sea, the lake or the golf course

destination spa, destination hotel and destination restaurant.”

Facilities include an infinity pool, outside fires and double sunbeds. Restaurant Gustao offers a contemporary lifestyle dining experience from a three star Michelin chef. With a starting price of €4,234 per night, the rooftop garden suite definitely has the wow factor. It has an indoor swimming pool beneath a retractable roof, a bridge to a private 180sq m roof terrace, and a lift to the spa. Couve expects to sell it 60 days a year.

The breakdown of guests is expected to be 30 per cent from the UK, 15 per cent from Portugal, 15 per cent from Germany and the rest from France, Benelux, Italy and Scandinavia. Couve says that Conrad is keen to develop the niche markets of Russia, China, Brazil and previous Portuguese colonies such as Angola.

CONRAD SPA

The first in-house spa for Conrad, which will provide the blueprint for its spas going forward, the Conrad Spa Algarve continues the hotel's focus on individual service.

On arrival, each guest is offered either a warm or an iced hand towel, as well as a spa mixology tea.

QUINTA DO LAGO FACILITIES

- 3.5km beach
- Paul McGinley Golf Academy
- Portugal's only tailor made golf fitting service
- Four hotels (individually managed)
- Three golf courses, with access to two more
- Tennis courts and Jim Stewart Academy
- Watersports centre for waterskiing, jet-skiing and fishing, as well as sailing and pedalos
- Equestrian centre
- Mountain bike trails
- Life Fitness gym, offering personal training and yoga and pilates at the villas
- Seven restaurants

Intracutaneous and Aromatherapy Associates are the product lines being used and Aromatherapy Associates has been instrumental in the spa treatment menu, which is made up of five different categories.

The Conrad Algarve Signature Treatments, for example, are all luxurious and draw on local techniques, culture and surroundings.

The five treatment rooms each have a cabana, so guests can choose whether to have their treatment indoors or out. There's a sauna overlooking a garden, a chromotherapy steamroom with changing lights and scents, a sensory shower, an ice fountain, heated beds, a warm relaxation pool, a plunge pool and an infinity pool, as well as a relaxation room, gym and a hairdressing salon.

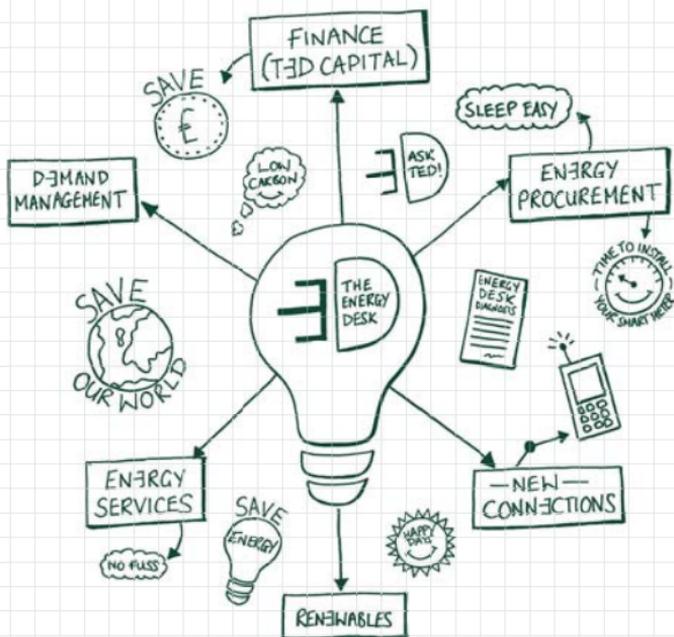
QUINTA DO LAGO REAL ESTATE

Property is an important element of Quinta do Lago's business model: there are 1,200 properties owned, predominantly, as holiday homes. Owners have the option of entering their properties into the rental pool and around 40 per cent do this. This is a growth area, with rentals up 75 per cent on last year's figures.

Maria Chapman, in charge of property and rentals, says owners can look at a minimum of 10 weeks rental a year, which is enough to cover property costs. Prices range from €1,800 a week for a two-bed apartment to €8,500 for a five-bed villa with pool.

The resort has also just launched the final tranche of 26 residential plots for sale, which overlook the San Lorenzo golf course. ●

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GET CONNECTED

The often overlooked issue of utility connections can cause major headaches for leisure operators. The Energy Desk's Noah Andrie talks us through the secrets of hooking up to the right power supply

The power socket is a vital commodity that the 21st century is at risk of failing to appreciate. When we plug in and switch on, we

take for granted that we have power in constant flow at our fingertips. This isn't our fault; we've had decades of uninterrupted power supplies – with the exception of the occasional blackout. However, there's a world of complexity behind the effortlessness of simply turning on a light switch.

The business end of all utility supplies is the point of connection. Any new development will of course require a power supply, and its type will vary depending on the size of the building and the amount of equipment in it. A small-scale development may be able to merely connect to the existing power network, which is quite a simple process. But if you're commissioning an epic new-build leisure complex, you're inevitably dealing with multiple connections, redesigned infrastructure, reinforced cabling, pipeline upgrades

BALEN/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



Don't take your power supply for granted – it's important to get the right supplier at the right cost

and complex legal agreements. Not quite such a simple process.

So why would we need to bother ourselves with such convoluted and complex details? That's a good question when you assume that the utility connections industry is on the ball. However, the reality is rather different. When a new leisure facility is being

built, for example, it will obviously come with a very time-sensitive build schedule. It is an unfortunate fact that the arrangement of utility connections ranks among the most common causes of delay in construction projects.

Last year, the National Federation of Builders (NFB) reported that 55 per cent of contractors reported problems with electricity connections. Though this is a slight improvement on the 64 per cent reported in 2008, there's a long way to go before the industry is at the top of its game.

Utilities regulator OFGEM has attempted to set this issue to rights by encouraging increased competition in the connections industry, while also imposing fines on companies that don't meet statutory timescales and standards. In spite of this, the industry in general is failing to keep up the pace. There remains a high level of dissatisfaction and, as a result, by December 2013 network operators will be answerable to a test of competence or face investigation.

CASE STUDY Client: Chardon Management Ltd Project: Holiday Inn Southend

In spring 2012 The Energy Desk was approached by Chardon Management Ltd, which was operating the new four-star Holiday Inn Southend.

The Energy Desk was introduced to Holiday Inn Southend at the later stages of the project and worked in partnership with Chardon Management

to secure new connections for the hotel.

In order to overcome these challenges, The Energy Desk was appointed to work alongside Chardon Management to oversee the sourcing and installation of utility meters as well as reviewing electricity and gas con-

tracts to get the best price going forwards.

This resulted in reducing delays and securing good sustainable energy prices. The Energy Desk also installed a web-based energy management tool at no extra cost, allowing Chardon to monitor, manage and minimise energy consumption.



The Holiday Inn Southend



Problems with the management of utility connections can result in costly delays for new projects

So what happens in the interim? Obviously the industry has some work to do until it can deliver point of connection services to a cost-effective standard, without throwing new-build development projects over budget and delaying them past scheduled completion. Nevertheless, there are solutions.

In order to ensure you're getting the best service, it's vital that you take advantage of the competition out there. Shopping around will pay off. It's also good to get yourself some protection; by enlisting the support of an Energy Service Company to manage the process for you, you have a safeguard should you run into trouble.

In 2010, one of our clients, the Crown Plaza in Westminster, required a high voltage power supply to feed a 1,000-bed hotel. Having taken the traditional route of applying to the Distribution Network Operator, the project met a few delays and threatened to go over budget. That's where The Energy Desk came in. Through our industry knowledge and by shopping around, we were able to save six months and approximately £100,000.

Finding the best option with the right supplier and at the right cost is achievable. Managing a new utility connection can be done smoothly and without obstacles – it's just a case of speaking to the right people. ●

UTILITY CONNECTIONS



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

If I need a new gas or electricity connection for a new building, who will arrange the connection?

There are various options here but builders and developers will still generally approach the local Distribution Network Operator (DNO), which is licensed to distribute the electricity or gas and can install the required equipment for a new connection. In this case the DNO is responsible for the connection but they can sub-contract some of the work, which incurs an additional charge.

Who installs my electric meter?

The assumption here is often that the DNO will supply and install the meter but this is not the case. The supplier will do this and this requires at least 28 days notice to ensure installation is

done on time. However, if you are dealing with tight time frames you can employ the industry knowledge of an energy services company and reduce this down to approximately 15 days.

How do I work out how big my connection supply should be?

A building will always have a maximum demand, which is the maximum amount of electricity being used at any one time. This is carefully calculated on the basis of the nature and size of the equipment you will be using. The supply will also allow for expansion should you start using more equipment later down the line.

How do I know who the best connections provider is?

There's an assumption that there's a lack of competition out there

and because of this the automatic port of call is the Distribution Network Operator. However, there are over 100 Lloyd's accredited Independent Connection Provider (ICPs) that are often 10 to 20 per cent cheaper than the local DNO. It's important to review your options and compare quotes to make sure you are getting the best deal.

What should I do if I already have a connection but need to increase my gas or electricity capacity?

The application for this is much the same as applying for a new connection. This can be managed on your behalf by an energy services company or you can apply directly to your Distribution Network Operator. You will need to know what size connection you need to upgrade to.

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CHARLES EUGSTER

Eugster is a bodybuilder who has spoken on wellness at TED, starred in a music video and who acts as an ambassador for fitness. He's also 93 years old and only started exercising four years ago, finds Tom Walker

You are 93 and remarkably fit. What's your secret?

The secret is work, diet, exercise, in that order of importance.

Have you always been into fitness?

No, I only started fitness training at the age of 89.

Is enough being done to promote active lifestyles among older people?

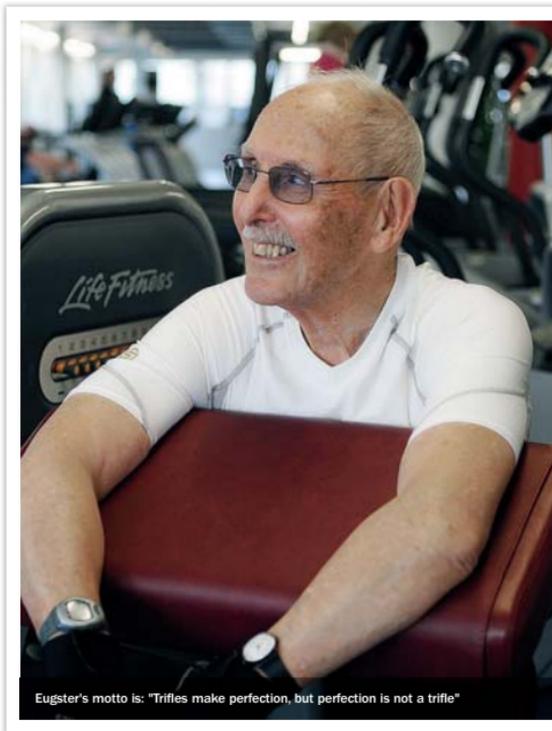
No. The main problem is the fact that too little is known. Research on physical activity, diet or even the effect of work on health in old age is practically non-existent above the age of 70. It's a shocking fact that there are too few healthy individuals above the age of 80 to be able to conduct meaningful research. Responsibility rests with research facilities and promotion by government, as well as health agencies.

Are private health clubs doing enough to attract older people as members?

Most private health clubs do little or nothing to attract older people as members, in spite of the fact that this group has the time and money to work out.

What should clubs do?

Older people prefer to train in groups of their own age, and ideally with coaches of the same age group. More importantly, older members should be tested, goals set and then re-tested at regular intervals, with the results sent to their physician. These results would become part of the patient's medical history.



Eugster's motto is: "Trifles make perfection, but perfection is not a trifle"

PHOTO: WWW.PHOTOZINA.COM

Club membership could, in certain cases – like in Japan – be restricted to those aged over 70, or there could be an off-peak membership for the elderly.

Treatment of disease by exercise is receiving more attention by the medical profession, but there's an extreme lack of co-operation between physicians and health clubs. This represents a huge missed opportunity. Almost all over-65s have one or more chronic diseases. Some clubs in Germany are already licensed to treat diabetes with exercise. Clubs could certainly offer more along these lines, perhaps setting up a food service together with supplements.

There's so much more that clubs could do to attract more older people.

How often do you exercise yourself?

It depends on my goals. At present I'm aiming for the World Masters Championship in athletics and rowing, and so I'm currently training three to four times a week.

If you were given free rein as health minister, what would you change?

We're facing medical costs that will be so dramatic that a new health system will have to be devised. If the health minister were a dictator, food rationing would be an option. I would drastically cut health insurance for the obese, and a belly tax could be considered.

What are your views on GP referrals?

GPs prescribing exercise to patients is the future, but the fitness industry isn't ready. Coaches must have the right training, and the exercise treatment must be covered by health insurance.

What is the number one weakness in the fitness industry?

The lack of a positive public profile.

And its greatest strength?

The greatest strength of the fitness industry is its huge potential. ● From *Health Club Management*, January, 2013



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