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READY TO GO GLOBAL

Top trends for 2017 from the
inaugural GWS forecast

VIVE LE VINOThÉRAPIE

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the essence of French beauty

NAIL AREA DESIGN

What goes into providing the
perfect mani-pedi experience

Going global

Following last year's Global Wellness Summit in Austria, we highlight some of the key predictions from the inaugural GWS Wellness Trends forecast

— REPORT BY SUSIE ELLIS & BETH MCGROARTY —

Bringing together top-tier experts from across the international spa, travel, beauty, fitness, technology, medical and architectural industries, the annual Global Wellness Summit (GWS) provides a uniquely authoritative, global view of a wide variety of spa and wellness topics. Capitalising on the knowledge and vision of more than 500 delegates from 46 countries at the 2016 event in Austria, this year sees the release of the first GWS Wellness Trends forecast, highlighting eight major directions in which the \$3.7 trillion global wellness industry is predicted to be heading.

"No other trends report is based on the perspectives of so many wellness experts, whether they're leading economists, futurists or the heads of hospitality, spa and beauty brands. This makes for a powerfully collective, global and informed set of predictions," says GWS chairman and CEO Susie Ellis.

The forecast includes details of a new focus on silence within spas as well as a bold reinvention of sauna-going. In addition, it examines how the concept of wellness is reconfiguring realms from beauty to architecture, while also encouraging a more inclusive perspective at even the most elite spas and resorts. An increased emphasis on mental wellness is also outlined, as well as the pioneering work of organisations such as Wellness for Cancer in delivering healing practices to cancer patients. Furthermore, the emerging role of art and creativity is seen as increasingly vital to achieving wellbeing.

So take a look into the future with our highlights of some of the most on-trend topics currently blossoming in the worlds of spa and wellness.

GWS 2017 will be held at The Breakers, Palm Beach, Florida, October 9-11. www.globalwellnesssummit.com

1 Silence is golden

Disconnecting from 'digital noise' to reconnect with peace

Unveiled less than a decade ago, smartphone technology has exploded faster than any other advancement in history. Those sleek, harmless-looking pocket computers now connect us to our work, the internet, the media and social media at every waking hour. Our work-life divide has dissolved, sleeping patterns have been interrupted and free time invaded, reducing our ability to attain a sense of peace due to constant 'digital noise'.

In response, many people are seeking to leave the noisy world behind in favour of quiet contemplation, and wellness resorts and spas (even salons, restaurants, gyms, and airports) are answering their call.

Silent Spas are offering noiseless bathing, treatments and therapists, and peacefulness, mindfulness and time in wild nature are now core offerings at resorts, as opposed to blingy, hyper-luxurious amenities.

This desire is finding perfect expression in spas currently being developed in former

monasteries, abbeys and convents, as well as retreats such as crypts, caves and former bank vaults.

The trend isn't simply about forced 'digital detoxes', where devices are confiscated but little else transformative is on offer. It's about a change in tone for everything from property and room design to treatments and experiences.

The medical evidence for silence

Our 'always-on' connections are deleterious to physical and mental health, with recent studies confirming that 'digital noise' affects our focus and sleep, increasing stress, anxiety and depression.

But how does silence affect the brain? In 2013, researchers at Duke University, North Carolina, US, found that two hours of silence per day incited significant cell development in the hippocampus – the brain region related to the formation of memory.

Also, in silence the brain is able to evaluate internal and external information, creating 'a conscious workspace' and establishing how we fit into the world. So, if depression and dementia are associated with decreased hippocampus neurogenesis, silence would seem to be a promising therapy.



The brand-new 'silent spa' at Therme Laa Hotel, Austria, is constructed to be a modern interpretation of ancient sacred architecture
Image courtesy of Varned Vitality Resorts





Image courtesy of Lars Krückeberg, Graft

Currently under construction, Six Senses Gammarth in Tunisia uses ancient North African architectural philosophies to create a healthy-for-humans retreat.

2 The new architects of wellness

Creating healthy buildings can be hi-tech or naturally simple

Architecture has for too long been preoccupied with surface aesthetics, with so-called 'starchitect' heroes conceiving designs to wow, shock, or lay claim to the cutting-edge. There has been much ego and beauty, but comparatively little attention paid to using materials and creating designs that improve the health and happiness of the humans who actually live and work in new buildings.

"I've never met an architect or real estate developer with any formal training in human health," said Whitney Austin Gray, PhD, of Delos Living, who is responsible for overseeing health research and the development of innovative design strategies and products. However, with the emergence of new standards and technologies, a new era of 'wellness architecture' is set to have a huge impact on people's quality of life.

From air purity to indoor acoustics, everything in the built environment is set to be re-evaluated and re-engineered. Strategies will span everything from 'living' buildings with walls made of algae biofuel cells that grow their own energy, to new smartphone apps that alert you when you're entering a 'sick' building.

Architects and builders will tackle the indoor air quality crisis with the creation of 'red lists' of known toxic building materials. Formaldehyde-free wood and glues free from off-gasses will increase in use, along with products such as Air Renew, a gypsum board installed in HVAC systems that permanently traps dust,

bacteria, fungus, mould, pollen and volatile organic compounds.

Natural solutions will be increasingly adopted, such as deploying plants that are proven to absorb chemicals (like mould spores, carbon monoxide and formaldehyde), including bamboo palm, spider plant, areca palm, golden pothos and spathiphyllum.

The great statesman Winston Churchill once said: "We shape our buildings, and afterwards, they shape us." The wellness architecture trend has been a long time coming and while the first step will be to ensure that our homes, workplaces, schools, hospitals and hotels are simply 'not sick', the future will be buildings designed from scratch to make us healthier and happier.

Innovation in all directions

This trend takes many forms, from new 'living' buildings' which have algae embedded in their walls and can 'grow' their own energy, to the 'designing in' of increased movement for inhabitants to combat potentially deadly sedentary lives.

Radically 'wired' buildings are also being created with responsive architecture that can tailor health experiences for their inhabitants. For example, Deloitte's smart, green workspace in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, known as The Edge, has 28,000 environment-tracking sensors hooked up to workers' smartphone apps. These can find staff the best place to work based on that day's tasks, adjust their personal preferences for light and temperature in real-time and also manage their fitness routines.

3 The arts take centre stage

Refocusing on the connection between self-expression and wellness



Image courtesy of Schloss Elmau

The 2016 GWS theme of 'Back to the Future' explored how the history of spa and wellness can provide informed blueprints for the future, and it was noted that between the late 18th and mid-20th centuries, European spa destinations reached a level of popularity and prestige unparalleled before or since.

Attracting aristocrats, politicians and the rising middle-class in droves, a powerful connection was made between the taking of 'spa cures' and high levels of creativity. Geniuses like Beethoven, Chopin, Freud, Goethe, Kafka, Liszt, Mozart, Tolstoy and Turgenev spent weeks or months at spas creating great works; they gave performances there and created a real spa buzz. Music, theatre and art exhibitions were as central to the spa experience as taking the waters.

Today, Germany's Schloss Elmau is an example of a wellness retreat magnificently merged with musical and cultural programming. Physical wellness is nurtured at its five spas while the brain and creative soul are engaged by some 220 performances each year at its 300-seat concert hall. A 'play to stay' model sees musicians, writers and thinkers perform in exchange for stress-reducing downtime with their families.

Around the world, creativity and the arts are once again taking centre stage at wellness retreats and spas. This will continue to be the case as guests enjoy a greater understanding of how crucial creative pursuits are to optimal mental wellness, as well as wider awareness that meditation, exercise, time-in-nature, and all forms of stress-reduction, including massage can be potent paths to achieving creative insight.

4 The future is 'mental wellness'

A new category and culture to deal with modern ailments

Mental disorders are on the rise all over the world; since 1990 there has been around a 50% increase in cases of depression or anxiety, with over 600 million people now affected, according to the World Health Organisation. Antidepressant use has exploded as depression, anxiety disorders, PTSD, OCD and phobias continue to manifest themselves.

New forces shaping this rise include global economic inequality and the effects of social media, which serves to keep us 'alone together'; a recent NHS study in the UK revealed that more than one in four young women aged 16-24 – the core 'selfie' generation – now has a mental health condition.

During the 2016 GWS, Dr. Gerry Bodeker from Oxford University, UK argued that the wellness industry has been too passive in communicating the medical evidence for the positive impact of wellness modalities on mental health. A recent meta-analysis of past studies (data on 1.1 million people) reconfirmed the powerful connection between regular exercise and mental health: people in the lowest third for aerobic fitness levels were 75% more likely to have received a depression diagnosis than those in the top third.

Just as wellness tourism developed alongside, yet distinct from, medical tourism, so will mental wellness develop alongside mental health, uncovering new paths to emotional wellbeing and happiness. Wellness retreats, spas and fitness studios – as well as workplaces, governments, schools and hospitals – will necessarily place far more emphasis on helping desperate people get less anxious and happier.

It's a powerful opportunity and a moral imperative – wellness for the mind will be one of the most meaningful, powerful trends for decades to come.

An emerging new mentality

- New, integrative mental wellness approaches include hotels, wellness retreats and spas bringing in psychotherapists and neuroscientists
- Meditation is exploding into the mainstream: from dedicated 'drop-in' studios to far more mindfulness programming at hotels, retreats, spas, cruises, schools, hospitals, and even within governments
- Sleep programmes are at a tipping point: whether it's wellness destinations bringing in doctors to design rooms or sleep-inducing programmes, or retreats offering guests a dedicated Sleep Ambassador
- So many new directions are set to emerge, from a dedicated focus on breathing work and breathing classes in order to control stress response and brain waves function to 'bibliotherapy' – the prescription of specific literary works as a wellness cultivating measure, in response to evidence that readers of literature have lower rates of depression and stress.





Image courtesy of Mandarin Oriental

The power of performance

Expect to see more art and performances at wellness retreats and spas.

Mystical sound baths and multi-sensory experiences and 'ceremonies' are seeing star practitioners wielding Himalayan and crystal singing bowls, chimes, gongs, bells and tuning forks to create stress-melting concerts to accompany meditation, yoga, massages and therapeutic bathing.

A broader art and performance agenda will become more central to wellness destinations, such as Mandarin Oriental's new brand-wide Digital Wellness programme, which uses colouring books and notepads in its spas (above).

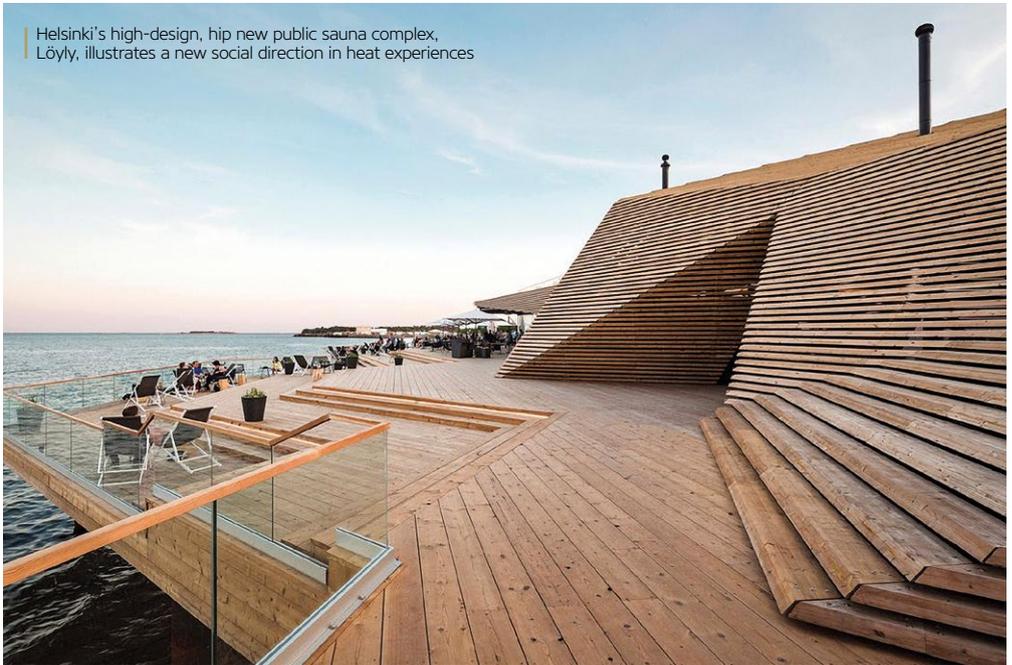


Companies such as Dream Reality Cinema, in Beverly Hills, US, offer to clean out the subconscious and tackle everything from traumatic stress to sleep disorders through a process of dream meditation

Image courtesy of Dream Reality Cinema

5 Sauna reinvented

Tracking the evolution of a traditional spa activity



Helsinki's high-design, hip new public sauna complex, Löyly, illustrates a new social direction in heat experiences

Image courtesy of Avento Architects by kuwio.com

One hot topic at the 2016 GWS was how the rest of the world could learn from historic European cultures of bathing and sauna, with thought-leaders also highlighting how Europeans themselves are now busy re-imagining the sauna experience.

While saunas are standard fare at hotels, spas and gyms around the globe, when it comes to how sauna 'gets done', there has been a disconnect between Europe, where sauna-going is a way of life, and the rest of the world. The sauna experience on other continents can be an uninspiring, lonely experience that takes place in box-like isolation at a spa or in a condo basement. However, northern, central and eastern European countries like Finland (where saunas were born 2,000 years ago), Austria, Germany, Sweden and Poland, often offer creative and deeply social rituals and facilities.

While non-Europeans often jump quickly in and out of saunas, Europeans know how to expand this experience, with contrast therapy – taking a cold/snow plunge after a sauna and repeating the routine – offering key health benefits and getting those endorphins pumping.

In northern/central Europe, sauna has taken a theatrical turn to evolve into Sauna Aufguss, in which *sauna meisters* administer dozens of targeted aromatherapy infusions using complex towel rituals to circulate heat, humidity and scents. This performance is played out before large, lively sauna audiences in spas across Austria, Germany, Italy, Finland and Norway.

The sauna re-invention trend is taking many other forms, including hip, social amphitheatre or 'hangout' saunas such as Helsinki's new, high-design, Löyly sauna complex that holds up to 300 people, and a new 'Hot Box' on the shores of Scotland's Loch Tay, which offers a DJ and a bar. Elsewhere, quirky pop-up saunas can be found floating on lakes or hanging from bridges, while 'urban sweat lodges', using infrared saunas, are taking off in places like LA and New York.

This trend is multi-faceted, unpredictable and fascinating. No longer a solitary experience, the spread of new, spectacular, social saunas are literally offering 'outside-the-box' thinking.

The hottest property

Every culture has its ancient sweat tradition: the Arabic hammam, Japanese onsen, Russian banya, Native American sweat lodge, the Mesoamerican temazcal, and, most globally ubiquitous, the European sauna. All will continue to undergo a renaissance (and re-invention) as the world aches for stress-reducing, detoxifying therapies.

In a world getting hotter and crazier, more people will travel in search of both authenticity and innovation, looking to gain the benefits of these experiences at the source. The new breed of more social, entertaining, and high-design sauna concepts will guarantee a healthy future for those who invest in them.

6 Wellness gives beauty a makeover

The search for visible perfection starts from the inside out



ila has been a pioneer in organic skincare and many independent brands are now following suit

Aspiring to beauty can be one of the key motivators for keeping physically, spiritually and mentally fit, and last year's GWS reflected the blurring borders between beauty and wellness, hearing that a beauty and anti-ageing sector worth nearly \$1 trillion is at the centre of the now \$3.7 trillion global wellness economy.

Neuroscientist Dr. Claudia Aguirre told the Summit that because 'beauty' stimulates our brains in so many ways, we need it in our lives as it brings hope, connectedness and, ultimately, wellness.

However, along with the massive influence of social media on the beauty industry in the shape of Instagram stars and Facebook feeds, the ways in which we are achieving and thinking about beauty have been evolving and the new aesthetic in town is health and wellness.

There is overwhelming scientific and medical evidence of the positive effects that diet, exercise, sleep and stress reduction can have on our appearance. Exercise alone is a beautifier – oxygenating the blood to give skin a healthy glow, and, because it reduces the stress hormone cortisol, exercise has been proven to support the production of collagen, reduce acne and even make your hair appear healthier.

Because today's consumer values the importance of pure, ethically produced products, more independent spa brands are following in the footsteps of the likes of British brand ila, which has for some time sold itself as 'beyond organic'. Perhaps most importantly, self-esteem and mental wellbeing soar when we are at our most attractive and fit, and wellness practices and treatments help us achieve this.

7 Beyond elite ghettos of wellness

Spa operators to lead the way in 'giving back' to communities

What is a ghetto of wellness? It is the five-star wellness retreat on a dreamy tropical island that is surrounded by slums. It is paying over \$200 for a 90-minute massage at a resort while your amazing local practitioner is actually being paid just a few dollars.

The list of things we can now purchase in the name of 'wellness' in our ever richer and gentrified global cities is set against the backdrop of ever-sharpening income inequality worldwide. As Nobel Prize-winning economist Bob Shiller argues, today's economic inequality becomes tomorrow's social and political catastrophe, and opening up the world of wellness to a wider demographic is crucial to avoiding this fate.

Such elite ghettos of wellness seem less and less acceptable and businesses are beginning to do more to open up what they do to people lower down the socio-economic ladder.

So, look for more wellness businesses beginning to 'give back' to the broader community. This is already happening with initiatives such as 'Yoga Gives Back', which helps poor women in India, and Newfoundland's Fogo Island Inn, where every dollar of profit goes back to its economically-challenged island community.

A 'Wellness Tourism 2.0' will also rise: a development model that goes beyond often elite properties to create whole towns, regions and even nations where a comprehensive wellness vision – from protected nature to a sustainable, healthy food supply – benefits both locals and tourists who visit.

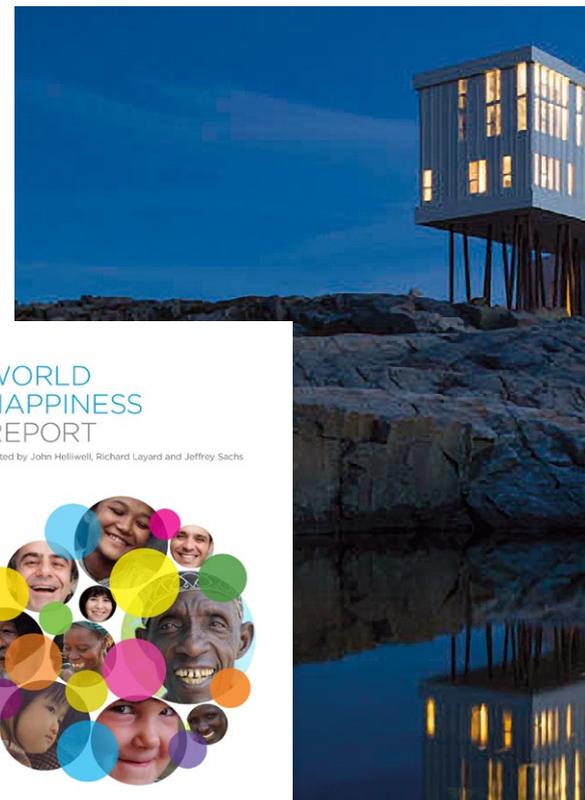
Spreading happiness

In the UN's latest *World Happiness Report*, seven of the world's ten happiest nations are said to be in northern Europe – Switzerland, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Finland, The Netherlands and Sweden – places where wellness culture is part of everyday life, rather than a consumerist stressor.

Countries playing catch-up in the league table of happiness will need to adopt a more inclusive approach to wellness. As well as spreading the benefits of their work to a broader section of society, luxury spa businesses will themselves benefit from allowing a trickle-down of their positive effects.

WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT

Edited by John Helliwell, Richard Layard and Jeffrey Sachs



8 Embracing the C-word

Treating those suffering or recovering from cancer



Image courtesy of Skinade

Inside-out beauty

Promising to nurture from the inside out, an explosion of trendy packaged beauty drinks, superfoods, pills, and supplements are delivering takes on ancient wellness practices. Food-inspired beauty remedies – from kale and kombucha to turmeric and bearberries – also offer the benefits of antioxidants, vitamins and minerals.

Nutraceuticals – pills and supplements that aid health – and nutricosmetics, edible supplements designed to enhance beauty, such as Bottled Science’s drinkable collagen, Skinade (above), further pledge improved hormone balance, immune systems, skin and hair.



Image courtesy of Julie Bach

Wellness for Cancer training taking place at Bedford Lodge Hotel & Spa, UK

The US National Cancer Institute believes 40% of us will suffer from cancer at some point during our lives. For a disease of such magnitude and impact, it’s notable that those suffering from its affects have been hitherto effectively shunned by the spa and wellness industry.

Much of the hesitation is due to misinformation – could massage spread the effects of a tumour, for example? However, it also has a lot to do with insurance policies in many countries that make working on guests with cancer prohibitively costly. Sadly, an industry that prides itself on prevention practices has often refused some of the very people that need its services most.

There is, however, now reason to cheer the spa and wellness world, for it has recently been embracing this critically important issue. During this year’s GWS, companies like Biologique Recherche, Spafinder Wellness and Voya announced their continued support of cancer research, and studies are emerging on the psychological effects cancer has on patients.

Of course, we have a long way to go before wellness modalities become central to cancer care, but all indications are that the mental and physical tolls cancer takes on a patient can be radically lessened by much of what spas have to offer.

We predict even more wellness businesses and spas will pursue cancer-focused education to train staff. Already, there are Wellness for Cancer trainers on virtually every continent and, in the UK, Beauty Despite Cancer is also offering accredited training programmes. While organisations like the Canadian-based Cancer Exercise Training Institute deliver online cancer-specific exercise training courses for professionals.

This more inclusive model of wellness will shape a world in which such pursuits are created equal for those who are well and those who have this disease. ●●●●●

Wellness for Cancer

Cancer sufferers, typically underserved when it comes to wellness options, made significant gains due to organisations like Wellness for Cancer, a pioneering educational platform that trains wellness companies on how to be better equipped to work with cancer patients.

“The industry’s mantra in the past was ‘we serve well people’ – a non-inclusive policy that is changing,” says Wellness for Cancer’s Julie Bach, who also heads up the Global Wellness Institute initiative of the same name. She acknowledges that spa operators are increasingly embracing cancer sufferers and doing what the wellness industry does best: helping them reduce stress, find inner peace and increase emotional resilience.

Some of the trailblazers embracing cancer clients include All4Spas, Biologique Recherche, ESPA, Sanitas Skincare, The Red Door, Two Bunch Palms, Voya and Weight Watchers. www.wellnessforcancer.com



Newfoundland’s Fogo Island Inn ploughs all its profits back into the local Canadian community

Image courtesy of Fogo Island