Wellness industry sees double-digit growth to US$3.72tr

New research from the Global Wellness Institute (GWI) has shown double-digit growth in the past two years for the wellness industry worldwide, from US$3.336tr (£3.02tr, €3.60tr) in 2013 to US$3.717tr (£3.36tr, €3.93tr) in 2015 – a 10.6 per cent jump.

The global spa economy – including spa facility revenues (US$37.6bn, €30bn, £26.6bn) as well as education, consulting, associations, media and event sectors that enable spa businesses (US$2.1bn, €1.9bn, £1.7bn) grew to US$58.6bn (€48.9bn, £47.3bn) in 2015.

“Recent years have been marked by global economic contraction and disruptive geopolitical events, but a ‘wellness economy’ just keeps rising, with an upward trajectory that seems unstoppable,” said Ophelia Yeung, senior research fellow for the GWI. Yeung pointed to ‘megatrends’ of an emerging global middle class, an ageing population, increase in chronic disease and stress, the failure of the “sick-care” medical model, and a growing subset of more affluent, educated consumers seeking experiences rooted in meaning, purpose, authenticity and nature,” as fueling the growth.

Wellness tourism grew 14 per cent in the same two-year period – more than twice as fast as overall tourism expenditures. World travellers made 691 million wellness trips in 2015, and wellness tourism now accounts for 15.6 per cent of total tourism revenues.

Wellness real estate was one of the fastest-growing wellness sectors, up 19 per cent from 2013 to 2015 to US$11.8bn (€50bn, £46bn).

“A profound shift in the way people consume wellness is underway: once a luxury or ‘add-on,’ it’s now being infused into every aspect of daily life,” said Katherine Johnston, senior research fellow at the Global Wellness Institute.

Details: http://let.srla=ae8fblm_S

GWS heads to Palm Beach, Florida in 2017

The 2017 dates and location have been announced, and next year, the Global Wellness Summit (GWS) will move to The Breakers hotel in Palm Beach, Florida. Susie Ellis, chair of the GWS, made the announcement at the end of this year’s Summit in Tyrol, Austria.

The Summit will take place from 9-11 October. Three co-chairs were also announced: Maggie Hsu, advisor for online platform Zappos; Professor Gerry Bodker, clinical psychologist and public health academic; and Claire Martorana, formerly of Web MD, who’s just started a new role at the White House.

Details: http://let.srla=2z3gS

Ali Raivi wins ‘Shark Tank of Wellness’

The first-ever Shark Tank of Wellness Student Competition took place at last month’s Global Wellness Summit in Kitzbuehel, Austria, awarding a top prize of US$5,000 (£4,822, €4,033) to Shahrin Ali Raivi from North South University in Bangladesh.

Ali Raivi won for her concept to make sustainable sanitary napkins accessible to the 80 per cent of women throughout Bangladesh who currently rely on unsanitary and ineffective options like sand, leaves, mud and unsterilised rags. Her Muktco Sanitary Napkin concept makes use of materials left over from the country’s cotton industry, and promises to reduce the health and social problems associated with this issue. Ali Raivi accepted the award via Skype from Bangladesh.

A panel that included judges from across the wellness industry interviewed three student finalists live on stage before choosing a winner.

The two runner-ups received US$2,500 each and were Regina Tarany and Svejetana Radakovic, both from the IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems in Austria.

Details: http://let.srla=d5kgZ

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Panel examines wellness architecture

Wellness in architecture was a key topic at the Global Wellness Summit in Austria last month, as a panel featuring two health and wellbeing specialists from global architecture and engineering firm Arup took the stage to discuss the ways in which building design affects everything from health to mood - and how quickly the space is changing.

Spa Business and Spa Opportunities editorial director Liz Terry moderated the panel, which featured Anne Marie Aguilar, who is associate director at Arup and also works in international relations for the International WELL Building Institute; and Vicki Lockhart, a senior specialist in health and wellbeing at Arup. Terry opened the session by detailing the importance of the subject matter for the spa industry.

“This matters to every one of you,” she said. “All of you rely on there being a building of some kind in order to do your business. We spend millions creating these facilities, and we need to be sure that they’re not only fit for purpose now, but also for tomorrow and the lifetime of the building.”

Terry painted a picture of the not-so-distant future, when people carrying personal pollution sensors will refuse to enter buildings if they’re toxic, rendering the real estate valueless.

“Indoor air is even more toxic than outdoor air - and for people who run spa and wellness facilities, that’s a huge issue,” said Terry.

Aguilar detailed how indoor air quality is ranked as one of the world’s greatest public health risks, with off-gassing from furniture, sealants, paints and fabric adding invisible pollution to the spaces we live and work. She advised owners and operators to get together a list of toxic materials that they refuse to put in their buildings.

“If you want a healing environment, you need to provide that for your guests all the way through,” she said.

Lockhart then looked at the ways technology is helping to build a new generation of buildings - by establishing accurately how they affect the people who use them.

Arup has developed a Sound Lab that can create the acoustic performance of a building before it’s built, so clients can experience what it will sound like - a huge boon for architects designing things like retreats, where sound is of the utmost importance, and also useful in the wider world for the likes of large-scale retail, residential or rail projects, where noise pollution is a potential disruptor.

Arup is also using virtual reality (VR) to find out how people react to spaces before they’re built, by wire people up with biometric sensors and then immersing them in different environments. Details: http://lei.sr/a=rZzN_S

Delos reveals cruise ship expansion

Wellness real estate firm Delos is expanding its Stay Well programme with a new Stay Well at Sea cruise ship programme and is also soon to launch its first airport lounge in partnership with skincare brand Comfort Zone.

The Stay Well at Sea programme has been developed in partnership with several leading cruise operators and is being created with Steiner Leisure, The Cleveland Clinic and Deepak Chopra’s new wellness platform, Jyio.

Mindfulness and meditation will play a big part in The Stay Well at Sea programme, which will also include access to classes and apps, so that guests can book things like active excursions with a set amount of healthy steps.

“The (cruise) industry is understanding that they have to start selling wellness, and they have to put it up front,” Alfredo Carvajal, president of Delos International & Signature Program, told an audience at the Global Wellness Summit.

Guests will also have access to three months of self-guided programming and eCoaches from the Cleveland Clinic after they disembark the cruise ship, which will address topics such as nutrition, sleep and stress reduction.

“So it’s not just what happens on board, it’s what you’re going to learn - and what you’re going to take with you after you disembark,” said Carvajal. Details: http://lei.sr/a=Vz6N_S
Focus on mental wellness at GWS

Mental wellness was an underlying focus for this year’s Global Wellness Summit, with several speakers looking at what the spa industry can do to address the issue.

Jan-Emmanuel De Neve, associate professor of economics and strategy at Oxford University’s Said Business School, outlined how governments and financial bodies are waking up to the value of people’s happiness and mental wellbeing. This was echoed by economist Thierry Mallaret, who foresees a time when “wellness will become mandatory” for countries and policy makers.

Based on the UN-endorsed 2016 World Happiness Report, of which De Neve is the co-editor, delegates heard how happy employees are 7-12 per cent more productive, and that people who are the happiest at age 16, 18 and 22 will earn about US$3,000 more per year than the national average when they reach 30.

The happiest countries in the world are Denmark and Switzerland, said De Neve, but we should be mindful of the countries that are not so content or have experienced losses in growth, such as Greece.

“It’s in times of crisis and losses that the wellness industry has the most to do and ought to be most active, as that’s when people can benefit from it the most,” he explained.

Psychologist and public health academic Dr Gerry Bodeker said that with the World Health Organization flagging up mental health as one of its top priorities in the next decade, now is the time for spas to get in on the act, as the many mental, nutritional and physical modalities they offer are already proven to have physiological and neurological benefits.

“They [the modalities] really make the case for a mental wellness category pathway that’s distinct from what’s been seen as the world of mental health in the past,” explained Bodeker. “It’s time to stick a flag in the ground and say not only do we care about this, but that we’re already doing something about it.”

Spas that will really succeed in this arena, he added, will prioritise regular visits, research, and post-visit follow ups and consultations.

Other speakers shared their different perspectives on how to achieve mental wellness.

Dieter Mueller-Elmau, owner of Germany’s Schloss Elmau Luxury Spa & Cultural Hideaway, talked about creating mental wellness by converging music, literature, poetry and spa. Olympic ski champion Stephan Eberhart motived delegates with his vision of mental toughness – based on ‘the fun factor’, setting goals and passion – before accompanying them for an afternoon of mountain outdoor activities.

Leisure Media at the 2016 Summit

Spa Business and Spa Opportunities editorial director Liz Terry, along with Spa Business editor Katie Barnes and Spa Opportunities news editor Jane Kitchen attended this year’s Global Wellness Summit to report on proceedings.

Delegates were given copies of Spa Opportunities and Spa Business, along with the Spa Business Handbook 2016 and CLAD, Leisure Media’s newest title.

Terry, who is also editor of CLAD, moderated a panel on wellness in architecture (see story, opposite page), and Kitchen and Terry reported and tweeted live from the sessions to keep readers up-to-date.

Amazon subsidiary reveals interest in wellness hotels

In a talk at the Global Wellness Summit, Maggie Hsu, advisor to online clothing company Zappos, hinted that the firm – which is owned by online giant Amazon – is eyeing up the wellness hospitality space.

The e-commerce company is already looking at customer service in hospitals as part of its Downtown Project in Las Vegas, where it’s headquartered.

A portion of its US$50m (£46m, £41m) investment in the redevelopment scheme is funding Turntable Health – a primary care clinic that will run on a membership model, similar to a gym. As part of a monthly fee of around US$100 (£91, €82), patients will have unlimited access to physicians, who will therefore be financially incentivised to keep patients or ‘customers’ healthy.

Hsu says hotels could be the next step for Zappos

Hsu said hotels would be a natural follow on from this.

Details: http://lei.srta=A6K7p_S

Show of support at GWS for 2017 Global Wellness Day

Belgin Aksoy, founder of Global Wellness Day, gave an update on the annual event, saying it is now celebrated in more than 90 countries thanks to its ambassadors around the world.

Global Wellness Day ambassadors joined Aksoy on stage at an upbeat show of support that included a video with highlights from the 2016 event. Next year’s GWD is set for 10 June, 2017.

Details: http://lei.srta=MzP3x_S
Investors need ‘scalable wellness’

Investors are looking for an “institutionalised system” when it comes to spas, according to Omer Isvan, president of international investment consultancy Servotel.

Isvan spoke at a session at the Global Wellness Summit and said while many hotel operators don’t understand wellness well enough, they recognise that it is a trend—and an element they should have in their properties.

“Spas have brought a new segmentation into the hotel, changed the average length of stay and spend of a person, and secured repeat customers,” said Isvan. “I've seen hotels very often carried by a loss-making spa, and if I took that spa out of the hotel, the hotel would collapse.”

Isvan said investors are looking for “more than just a spa that delivers the feel-good factor” – they’ve recognised the growing consumer need for integrative wellness/medicine and transformational experiences, and are ready and waiting to put money into integrative wellness destinations.

“There’s a depth of knowledge [about wellness operations] in this room but no one has packaged this up into a pill that an investor can swallow,” he continued. “In the hospitality industry, you can buy a ‘hotel management package’ from the likes of Hilton. There’s a huge supermarket where you can buy brands, management, distribution, marketing and sales, recognition and PR. But this has not happened with integrative medicine and wellness and that’s where the big gap is today.”

Continued growth for wellness communities

This year, a key emphasis at the Global Wellness Summit was on the Wellness Communities Initiative, spearheaded by Mia Kyricos, who is also founder of strategic advisory firm Kyricos & Associates.

The GWI estimated wellness real estate to be a US$18.6bn (€10.7bn, £9.5bn) sector in 2015, a 19 per cent growth since 2013, and communities are cropping up worldwide – from the 10 Healthy New Towns proposed in the UK, to Serenbe in the US, Worldcare Wellness Village in Dubai and Avira Living in Wellness in Malaysia.

“We have evolved our conversations from places we would like to visit, to places we may now work, play, heal, learn – and ultimately live,” said Kyricos.

The initiative has just published a white paper to address critical issues surrounding the fast-growing sector. And the industry should expect to hear much more about wellness communities in the year ahead, as it was revealed that the 2017 Summit’s main body of research, to be released at next year’s Global Wellness Summit, will delve deeper into the wellness real estate sector.

Bosshart: listening to data is key

David Bosshart, CEO of Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute in Switzerland, addressed the Global Wellness Summit attendees, speaking about how fast-changing technology will shape our world in the coming years. Bosshart said that the use of technology is moving us towards abundance and transcendence.

“With the rapid normalisation of the digital, we will become human beings again, as everything digital goes into the background,” he said. “We are going towards sort of a data Buddhism.”

Bosshart spoke of a new world where algorithms know better who we are than we do. We all know the importance of listening to our customers, he said, but “can you listen to your data?” he asked. “Listening to your data will be the key success factor over the coming years.”

And as data continues to grow in importance, we are faced with the ever-increasing problem of what to do with endless data.

“The only scarcity is the power of imagination,” said Bosshart. “Imagination is the ultimate survival kit.”

Bosshart also spoke about how augmented reality will create “personalised mass uniqueness,” and will open up possibilities for new realities for many, such as disabled people being able to have the feeling of swimming in a lake.

Details: http://lei sr ? a = G6Q7H _ S
Linser suggests move to ‘art of living’

Dr Franz Linser, CEO of Linser Hospitality, addressed the Global Wellness Summit, discussing ‘Wellness as it was meant to be’. Linser suggested that getting back to the idea of basic wellness, looking at things like using your mind constructively, expressing emotions and immersing yourself in daily activities.

“It’s active health promotion through lifestyle change,” said Linser.

The need for holistic wellness has increased, he said, at the same time that its use has declined. Linser pointed to a sedentary lifestyle, rising worldwide obesity rates, and the fact that birth rates are down in wealthy countries.

“We have big houses and big dinner tables, but nobody is eating there,” he said.

At the same time, depression rates are also rising, and are especially high among women aged 25 to 60 – a key spa and wellness demographic. While we’ve recently looked at wellness for the well, Linser hopes that in the future, we’ll begin looking at wellness for the unwell and even wellness for the sick.

Linsers suggested a movement from the art of healing to the art of living, and that future wellness locations will include more nature, and more authenticity of place.

“There is a movement from doing to being,” Linser said. He said he hopes the future includes creating ‘biotops’, “in which sensitive human beings can grow.”

“Wellness comes by listening to your inner voice,” Linser said. “It comes from nature and beauty.”

Details: http://leisr?a=KgF7h_S

McCarthy received the Debra Simon Award

Aksoy, McCarthy, Isaac all honoured with awards

Belgin Aksoy, Jeremy McCarthy and Dr Fikry Isaac were all honoured with awards at the Global Wellness Summit.

Isaac, former VP of global health services for Johnson & Johnson, was named Leader in Workplace Wellness for his pioneering work in the field of workplace health promotion and global health.

Aksoy was honoured as a Leading Woman in Wellness for her work in founding Global Wellness Day, a nonprofit grassroots movement that has now reached more than 90 countries.

Aksoy thanked Global Wellness Institute chair Susie Ellis and the GWS for the honour, and dedicated it to “all the hardworking, strong women in the world, especially to the loving memory of my soul-sister, Charlene Floriian.”

Florian, who worked for skincare brand Kerstin Florian, died earlier this year, and this year’s Global Wellness Day was dedicated to her memory. Aksoy also invited Jean-Guy de Gabriac, international coordinator of Global Wellness Day, on to the stage to help accept the award.

And McCarthy, group director of spa & wellness for Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group and author of The Psychology of Spas & Wellbeing, received the first-ever Debra Simon Award for Leader in Furthering Mental Wellness for his work in bringing the power of positive psychology to the spa industry.

The award was introduced by Simon’s daughter, Lauren Wright, in an emotional video that paid tribute to her mother’s legacy.

In a Facebook post, McCarthy said he was taken by surprise at the award.

“This is an honor I do not take lightly – my heart and soul are soaring from this acknowledgement by my peers,” he said in the post. “So amazing to work alongside this incredible wellness community and feel the focus shift from merely battling illness to fostering wellbeing and human flourishing.”

Details: http://leisr?a=p8s9z_S

Krückeberg, Jacobs talk architecture

During a panel at the Global Wellness Summit, Lars Krückeberg, founding partner of architecture firm GRAFT, and Neil Jacobs, CEO of Six Senses, detailed the way the two companies have worked together to incorporate wellness into the resort brand’s architecture during a panel moderated by Spa Opportunities editor Liz Terry.

GRAFT is working with Six Senses on the upcoming Six Senses Gammarth in Tunisia.

Especially after recent terrorist events in the country, Jacobs wanted to bring an element of healing to the Tunisian property.

“Part of the impetus of this design – the curvature of the buildings, the roundness of the landscape – we felt the form of the property was nurturing,” said Jacobs. “It’s dramatic and contemporary, but it still feels very comforting, and will provide a sanctuary for both locals and tourists.”

GRAFT focused on using local materials and craftsmanship, and transforming the space to fit in with the local vernacular.

“It was important to create something that was unique – that could only happen there,” said Krückeberg.

Jacobs also detailed how Six Senses used a consultant who specialises in sacred geometry to incorporate these elements into the building design.

Details: http://leisr?a=U39V_S

Krückeberg, left, and Jacobs discussed their work together
Panel tackles wellness destinations

A panel gathered for a break-out session at the Global Wellness Summit in Kitzbuhel, Austria, last month to discuss how to make a destination successful by incorporating wellness.

David Wickline, chair of investment group Alchemy Ventures Group, said he looks for resorts that can be transformative but also sustainable financially.

“I look at it as a subject where to do well, you have to invest and be invested both with the heart and the mind,” he said.

Wellness communities can be small villages, areas or even a country, said Dr Eleni Michopoulou, a senior lecturer in business management at the University of Derby in the UK. Some destination wellness communities can take everyday life activities and showcase them as wellness activities, she said, such as picking mushrooms in Finland.

Robert Ranzi, cluster manager for Standortagentur in Tirol, Austria, said nutrition, movement, body workouts, fitness, relaxation and and water therapy are all important in incorporating wellness.

Nature and natural activities were mentioned by many on the panel as being crucial to incorporating wellness.

Paul Limburg, medical director for Mayo Clinic Global Business Solutions, however, said that sometimes, an outside-in perspective can create a wellness destination, much like his company has done in its wellness community in Minnesota.

“Rochester is not a tourist destination and never will be,” said Limburg. “We had to look at how we can truly create something that is more integrative that puts the person at the centre. The needs of the person comes first – that is how we can create something that we can draw people in.”

Josh Luckow, executive director of Canyon Ranch in the US, said that the experience of the destination rather than the locality is what makes it work.

“Each area is going to have its own unique qualities, and you want to draw upon those,” he said, “but it’s more the passion, and the facilitation of the space where transformation can happen.”

Details: http://lei.isrta=w5c7N_S

Delegates take to the mountaintop

Delegates at this year’s Global Wellness Summit were treated to a different format, wherein after a keynote address by Olympic ski champion Stephan Eberharter, all 500 attendees put on their parkas and headed to the ski lift, which took them to the summit of nearby Hahnenkamm Mountain.

Eberharter’s keynote focused on how to “think like a winner” by cultivating mental toughness, why the “fun factor” needs to be a key element in professional motivation, and why resilience and openness to change is the path to success.

Hahnenkamm is home to the most challenging downhill slope on the circuit, where Eberharter flew to one of the most impressive victories in skiing history: destroying the course record in 2004, with a perfect 80mph-ride. At the top of the mountain, delegates enjoyed a traditional Austrian lunch with a view across the misty Alps, and were also able to experience Alpine wellness first-hand. Mountain biking, hiking, paragliding and Segway rides were all available, and guests had the opportunity to meet with and talk to Eberharter.

Details: http://lei.isrta=cy74C_S
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SUMMIT SNAPS

This year’s Global Wellness Summit welcomed 500 delegates to Kitzbühel, Austria, for three days of Alpine wellness and education.

Global Wellness Summit chair Susie Ellis raises a glass to toast next year’s Summit, set to take place in Palm Beach, Florida.

Clockwise from above: Julie Bach; Shark Tank of Wellness judges; Samantha Foster; Louis Schwartzberg; Spa Opportunities’ Liz Terry hosts wellness in architecture panel.
2017 GWS co-chairs and hosts; Irene Forte; Dr. Fikry Isaac is honoured; Edie Weiner; Dietmar Mueller-Elmau.

Mehmet Er enjoys mountain biking; art as wellness; Olympic ski champion Stephan Eberharter; and above, delegates enjoy the fresh Alpine air after lunch.
Delegates cheer the opening of the Summit, CG Funk, Interactive lunch Ask the Expert table topic discussions.

Below left: Balthasar Hauser and his wife sing traditional Austrian songs; below right: delegates mingle with Olympic skier Stephan Eberharter.
A glittering evening at Swarovski

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Requirements and Duties:
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• We are looking for a strong manager who is dedicated to achieving business results through management of people, KPIs, and demonstrating competency in all aspects of Spa Management from pre-opening through to daily operations.
• These will include performance management of the team, income generation, achievement of profit expectations, implementation of promotions and processes, cost management and maintaining high standards within the spa environment.
• In addition, you will be expected to deliver treatments within this role.
• A level of computer based competency will be required to operate and manage the spa booking and management system

The role will involve:
• Driving pre-opening sales & bookings to achieve a financial opening target in sales
• 1:2:1 meetings with the Spa team with consistent coaching and mentoring
• Rostering and managing columns on the booking system with correct deployment
• System Management (bookings and paying off correctly)
• Customer Service and dealing with complaints
• Stock Management
• Recruitment / Training needs of the team
• Upholding Standards in the Spa – Cleanliness/ Staff presentation
• Performance Management of the team
• Health and Safety Management of the Spa
• Budgeting of the Spa – Financial requirements for 2017
• Your performance is measured through objective KPIs measures such as profit retail performance, profit conversion and mystery shopping.
• Previous management of teams is essential

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Location: Isle of Arran, United Kingdom

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European traditions highlighted at GWS

With the GWS taking place in Austria this year, several sessions highlighted the long history of wellness traditions in Europe. Dr Franz Linser revealed how Tyrol was one of the first regions in the world to adopt wellness tourism on a wider scale by developing and promoting a cluster of sport and spa hotels 26 years ago.

In fact, Austria ranks 11th in the world for spa revenues – generating €1.45bn (US$1.6bn, £1.3bn) in 2015 – and seventh among European countries.

The wellness setting dovetailed neatly with the summit’s theme of “Back to the Future,” which looked at what the industry has achieved in the last decade while also predicting where it’s heading in the next 10 years. But it wasn’t all about Austria. A general session moderated by Six Senses’ vice president of spa and wellness Anna Bjurstam shone a spotlight on European bathing traditions including Thalassotherapy, Russian banjas, Latvian pirts and the Sauna Aufguss – the latter of which captured delegates’ imagination when details of its sauna-as-event tradition were described.

In the coming years, the panel foresees a bathing renaissance and sauna renaissance as relaxation and prevention become increasingly important to society.

In another nod to European spa prowess, Summit co-chair Susan Harmsworth, founder of ESPA International, drew attention to the region’s outstanding health practitioners and alternative medical practices – such as Lanserhof, Brenners Park Hotel & Spa; Schloss Elmau and Vivamayr medical spas – in a session she moderated.

Harmsworth said: “I have 600 spas in 60 countries and from a global perspective I don’t think you [spa operators] realise what you have here. You have amazing practitioners... And you’re so far ahead in your medical wellness with the Mayr principle that’s so prevalent, as well as in the holistic side in terms of personal training and nutrition.”

She said that as the global spa industry looks to get more into the ‘wellness business’ it has much to learn from Austria’s lead.

Details: http://lei.sr?u=Rk36b_S