

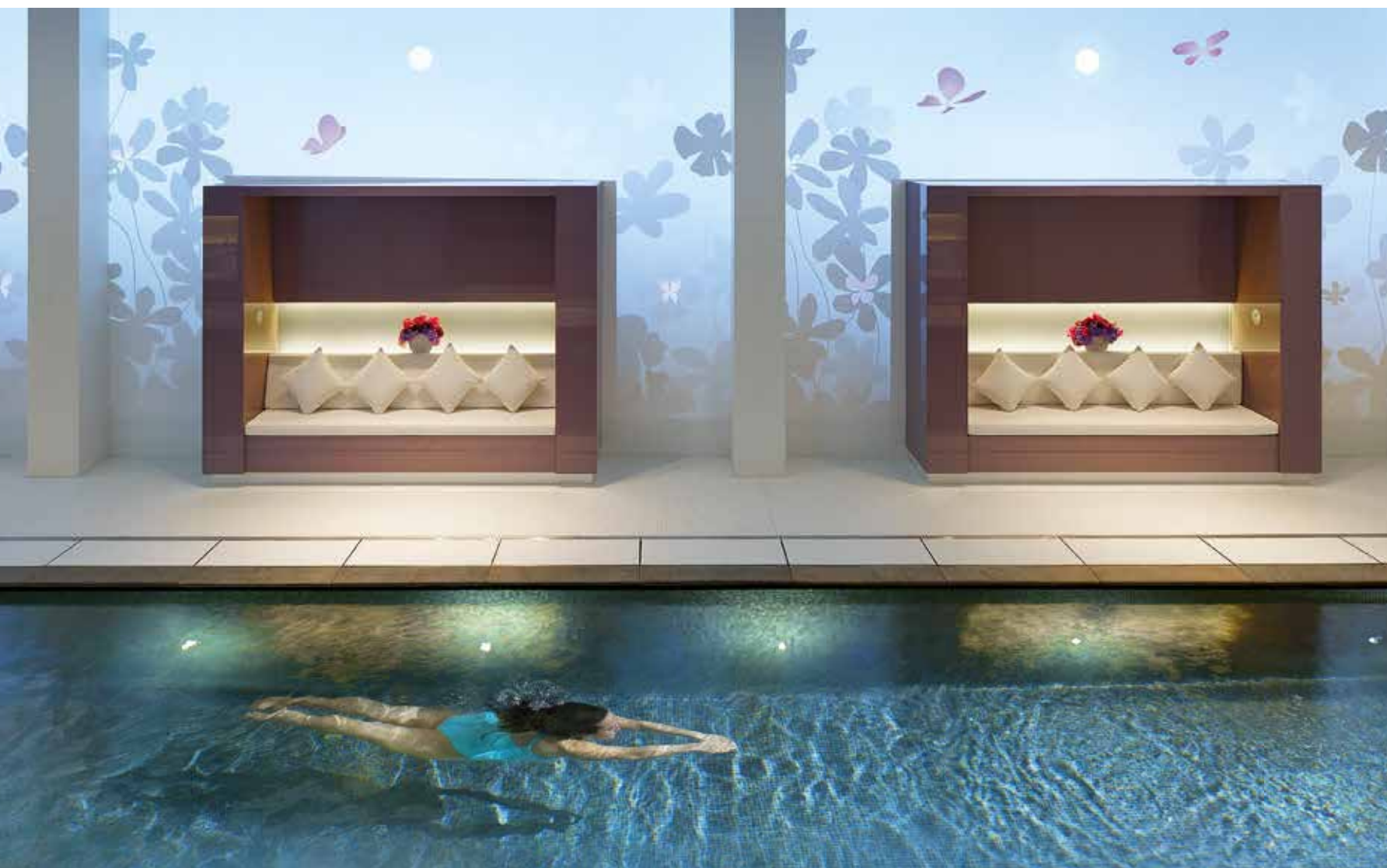
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Reports from Global Wellness Summit, Spa Life and SpaFest

‘Living A Well Life’

The 11th Global Wellness Summit, held in Palm Beach, Florida, US, examined how the broad spectrum of wellness businesses will operate in the future

REPORT BY IAN PARKES & SARAH CAMILLERI

A record number of more than 600 delegates from 43 countries attended the 11th annual Global Wellness Summit (GWS) in October. Against the captivating backdrop of Florida’s Atlantic coast, one of America’s leading hotels, The Breakers in Palm Beach, played host to a gathering of key decision makers from the worlds of spa, wellness, medicine, fitness, health, beauty, technology and the arts.

The three-day agenda provided many forward-looking presentations, inspiring speeches and thought-provoking round-table sessions on the Summit’s theme of ‘Living A Well Life’. These focused on innovation in the wellness arena, most notably in the workplace, as well as the rise of wellness communities and resorts, and the increasing desire, more generally, to live healthier, fulfilling and longer lives.

It is three years since the Summit removed the word ‘spa’ from its title, but the spa industry was very much in the spotlight as delegates discussed the disruptive forces, primarily technology and experiential-seeking millennials, in what has become a fast-moving marketplace.

As at the 2016 event, Louie Schwartzberg, founder of the US-based Moving Art, set the agenda on the opening day with a moving piece of cinematography entitled ‘Living a Well Life: Nature as Guide’ that drew a standing ovation.

1. Mandarin Oriental’s group director of spa & wellness Jeremy McCarthy
2. Dr Richard Carmona and Dr Dean Ornish help launch the Moonshot initiative
3. Susie Ellis, chairman and CEO of the Global Wellness Institute and GWS
4. The Breakers Hotel in Palm Beach, Florida, was the iconic venue for the Summit
5. Accor Hotels Group’s Andrew Gibson (far right) leads the judging panel on the Shark Tank of Wellness Award
6. Sharon Kolkka of Gwinganna Lifestyle Retreat, Australia (left); Sallie Fraenkel from Mind Body Spirit Network, US; and Jennifer Hawkins of Hawkins International PR, US
7. Belgian Aksoy Berkin launches Global Wellness Day 2018
8. Dr Mehmet Oz, host of the Dr Oz Show, and professor of surgery at Columbia University

In pointing out the power of healing art, Schwartzberg said: “80% of the information we receive comes through our eyes. We need to promote a shift in consciousness to give people healing images and content.”

Susie Ellis, chairman and CEO of the Global Wellness Institute and GWS, pointed out in her welcoming remarks how the DNA of the Summit has altered since its inception in 2007. “GWS is about a commitment to a global conversation, and learning from people globally; an emphasis on building relationships, on research, science and quantitative measures, and with a focus on the future,” she said.

The power of people

In the opening keynote, in front of a packed ‘Ideas Stage’, Dr Richard Carmona, the 17th surgeon general of the United States, and the chief of health innovation at Canyon Ranch, one of the world’s vanguard destination spa resorts, declared that “75% of chronic disease is preventable”. Emphasising the power of his audience, Carmona added: “GWS represents the spa industry, and provides a prescription for a well life... We are the world’s wellness leaders, and leaders are responsible for others.”

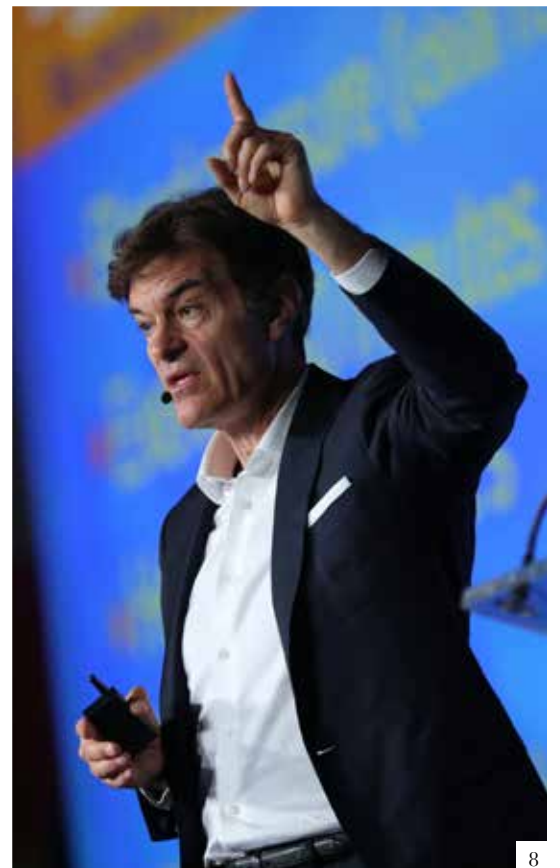
Given the digital, fast-paced world in which we currently reside, Frits van Paaschen, former Starwood Hotels CEO and author of *The Disruptors’ Feast*, suggested that “the age of disruption is having a huge impact on wellness”.

He further outlined why wellness communities such as Serenbe, near Atlanta, Georgia, which describes itself as ‘a progressive community connected to nature’ and ‘a neighbourhood full of fresh food, fresh air and focused on wellbeing’, could become the norm in the years ahead.

Founded by former restaurateur Steve Nygren and cited as an example of ‘new urbanism’, Serenbe contains four hamlets focused on the elements of a well-lived life – arts for inspiration; agriculture for nourishment; health for wellbeing; and education for awareness.

The opening focus on wellness was a cue







▷ for the launch of a special GWS initiative entitled 'Wellness Moonshot – A World Free of Preventable Disease', introduced by a variety of figures, including Dr Carmona and Dr Mehmet Oz, professor of surgery at Columbia University and host of The Dr. Oz Show.

Following footage of the first moon landing, Susie Ellis said: "The time has come to pool our resources – knowledge, access, funding – and use our collective megaphone on the world stage to work towards achieving a world free of preventable disease."

1. Jared Weiner, executive vice-president and chief strategy officer of The Future Hunters, chairs a panel
2. Louie Schwartzberg, founder of US-based company Moving Art and award-winning cinematographer
3. Delegates enjoy a workout with Chris Jordan from the Johnson & Johnson Human Performance Institute
4. *European Spa* editor Sarah Camilleri with John Stewart, co-founder of Kamalaya Koh Sumi, Thailand
5. David Bosshart PhD, CEO of the Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute, Switzerland
6. Susie Ellis and delegates present the 'Wellness Moonshot' initiative

Spa insights

The spa world remains a key part of the overall wellness marketplace, so a notable international panel of spa leaders came together for a lively round-table session, chaired by Sallie Fraenkel, president of Mind Body Spirit Network.

Two distinct themes emerged; the first, unsurprisingly, being the shift in expectations of millennial guests and staff; the second being the emerging disruptors set to redefine spa businesses, including staffing, design, technology and new competition.

Chief executive and general manager of Mexico's Rancho La Puerta, Roberto Arjona, recognised the new demands from millennial wellness seekers. "For us, the future is rewinding to our origins and moving forward," he said. "We are looking at how we can offer the same origins, but different parallel experiences, to appeal to millennials."

Todd Walter, CEO of Red Door Spa Holdings, which operates 28 branded day spa businesses across the US delivering 4 million treatments each year, highlighted growing competition

from specialist single-service categories, including dry bars, Massage Envy and waxing.

He also cited how technology will continue to impact on spa treatment sales by bringing services straight to the consumer via new apps.

Walters' key message was the importance of building a strong spa culture, recognising performance and promoting from within. "What drives profitability and sustainability are our people," he reminded listeners. "Our guests are more loyal to their service providers than brands; we need to take care of our teams so they, in turn, keep guests coming back."

Nicola Roche, global spa and wellness director of Aman Resorts', which operates 31 resorts, hotels and private residences worldwide, stressed the importance of differentiation in an increasingly competitive market.

"We are taking wellness to a much deeper level, delivering total immersion and personalisation," she said. "The disruptor for us is navigating a lot of red tape and license issues depending on where you are in the world."

Sharon Kolkka, general manager and wellness



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director of Australia's renowned Gwinganna Lifestyle Retreat, raised the challenge of finding therapists who are totally committed to delivering fully immersive wellness experiences.

"We focus a lot on holistic, emotional wellbeing so we work hard to recruit therapists who are deeply connected with healing," she said. "In Australia, we are seeing big disruption from a new generation of medi-spas. The beauty industry is really impacting on our workforce by upskilling and offering higher pay."

A new generation

Lanserhof Group's chief managing officer, Nils Behrens, pointed out the difficulty of retaining a loyal team and affording flexibility for younger team members.

"Our biggest challenge is to find employees in their mid-20s prepared to give their time and commitment," said Behrens. "This generation wants to work less and enjoy more variety in their work, which is a challenge and also an opportunity needing a new approach."

Diana F Mestre, founder of Mestre & Mestre

spa resort in Mexico, pointed out how wellness services are redefining luxury hospitality.

"At our resort, we deliver 400 massages a day and we are now selling wellness suites, as the whole resort is coming together through our wellness positioning," she revealed. "Our challenge is to ensure we are 'experience-driven' over being 'operationally driven' to really connect and make a difference to people's lives."

Andrew Gibson, global vice-president Wellbeing, Luxury Brands for Accor Hotels Group, also cited wellness is a key disruptor worldwide for spa and hospitality, but one that will positively impact on spa design and the delivery of spa services.

The millennials, those born between the early 1980s and mid-to-late 1990s, have a considerable role to play in setting the tone of spa and wellbeing services in the future.

Alexia Brue and Melisse Gelula, co-founders of forward-thinking website Well+Good, enlightened delegates as to what their millennial readers were seeking in terms of travel, treatments and experiences.

A world free of preventable disease



Global Wellness Summit founder and CEO Susie Ellis looks back on GWS 2017 and explains why spa professionals should get involved in the Wellness Moonshot.

What were your top takeaways from this year's event?

For me, everything about this year's GWS was special. We had a historic lineup of over 50 speakers analysing so many aspects of the future of wellness. Also, The Breakers provided a beautiful setting and showed our record 600+ delegates from 43 nations first-hand what it means to 'walk the walk' in creating a culture of wellness.

How can the spa world support and take part in the Wellness Moonshot?

The support of spa professionals is key to the success of the Wellness Moonshot.

There is a wealth of research on the benefits of massage, mindfulness, thermal baths and hot springs, good nutrition, fitness, and more, as practices that combat preventable disease.

The world can learn a lot from what spa and wellness professionals have long known; that taking charge of one's health is a giant leap towards creating a world free of preventable disease.

Why do you feel spa leaders should continue to attend GWS when there is now so much focus on the wellness aspect?

The simple fact is that spa is wellness and wellness is spa. Since the Roman era, spa has been a synonym for wellness and it doesn't make business or personal sense to separate or attempt to 'silo' the terms.

Perhaps most importantly, I do not believe that consumers think of wellness as separate from spa. Instead, the world of spa is a cornerstone of wellness.

▷ Gelula said established destination spa resorts such as Canyon Ranch, Miraval and Rancho La Puerta “don’t speak to millennials”. Instead, she said the focus of this group is on online influencers, such as model Karlie Kloss, skincare specialist Joanna Vargas and singer Carrie Underwood, as well as experiential retreats.

“There is a transfer of trust going on from these properties to local fitness gurus. It seems people trust those they practice with, who they know, more than properties,” said Gelula.

Their presentation highlighted a new generation of spa-goer interested in the burgeoning realm of experiences rather than the more traditional destination spa option.

“Our readers don’t want to hear about the size of a new spa or luxury thread counts. They want photos of Balinese yoga pavilions, where they could see themselves transported, and slideshows of stand-up hoverboard yoga,” said Gelula. “Because millennials have tool kits closer to home, there is a mentality out there that says ‘I don’t need a spa to fix me’.”

The science of beauty

Another compelling round-table centred on the impact of wellness on the beauty industry, notably given the rapid advancement of cosmetic science. This discussion looked at epigenetics – the study of biological mechanisms that either activate or deactivate genes, and influence, among other things, ageing – and ingestibles, a technology that tracks what a human body is doing from the inside.

Neal Kitchen, chief operating officer of peptide-based skincare brand HydroPeptide, cautioned: “I’ve had the research back on epigenetics, and I very much appreciate that’s going to be the future of skincare, but it’s certainly not going to be the only part.

“There’s technology that has to be part of that, whether it’s digital or other advances that will really make that manifest and become a true part of how we, as an industry, transform as a whole. And it’s not going to be just one brand, it’s going to be a collective number of brands.”

Rupert Schmid, co-president of Biologique Recherche, said his team was due to launch its first epigenetic cream in the US, using science as “the way to bridge wellness and beauty”.

Elemis’s senior vice-president of sales, Nicola Scott, said that through innovation, products and treatments the brand was “very much seeing ingestibles emerging, and for one of our biggest global partners, it’s in their top-five products”.

Dr Lisa Ishii, associate professor and chief quality officer at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in the US, asserted, however, that



The Breakers: Wellness at work



Epitomising the agenda of GWS, The Breakers is a pioneering establishment in the US when it comes to employee wellness.

In 2016, it received the Platinum Achievement award from the American Heart Association for demonstrating its commitment to team member wellness. It also facilitates the Corporate Athlete programme to inspire its employees to confidently and capably pursue a path to wellbeing; a three-day experience that energises lives, both personally and professionally.

The Breakers' owner, Garrett Kirk Jr (above), told delegates that an effective wellness programme was "the most important thing" the corporate world can give its employees.

The 20-year-old hotel's commitment to its 2,000+ staff has resulted in an 82% retention rate, an unheard of figure in the US hospitality industry.

Denise Bober, vice-president of human resources at The Breakers, told *European Spa*: "GWS was an opportunity to share our story regarding workplace wellness. It's only when these great driving forces of thought leadership come together from all over the world that we can create positive change.

"If this group can be the force that brings happiness to people, and continues to push forward and help people to live healthier, happier lives, then we've done our job at the end of the day, and that's the ship I want to be on. I want to sail with that ship!"

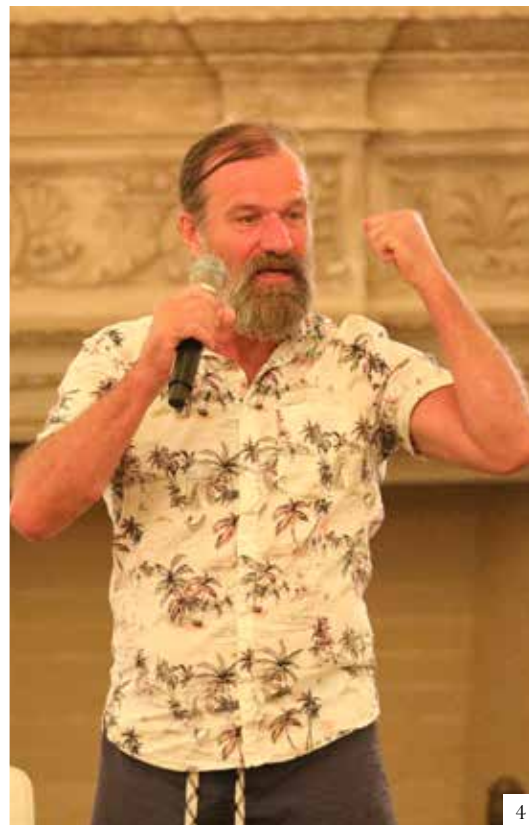
1. Melissa Gelula (left) and Alexia Brue, co-founders of website Well+Good
2. Delegates listen in on a round-table talk in the Collaboration Room
3. Daniel Friedland, CEO of SuperSmarterHealth, US
4. Dutch-born multiple world record holder Wim Hof gives an inspirational talk
5. Patrick Saussay (left) of evianSPA; Yasmin Cachemaille Grimm from Victoria-Jungfrau Grand Hotel & Spa, Switzerland; Johannes Mikenda of Schloss Elmau Luxury Spa Retreat & Cultural Hideaway, Germany
6. Delegates dress to impress ahead of the 'Celebration of the Elements' gala dinner
7. Agapi Stassinopoulos signs copies of her book, *Wake Up to the Joy of You*
8. Delegates enjoy stunning views of the Atlantic Ocean



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▷ Above from left: Mauro Nava, head of Technogym's global hospitality organisation; Jessica Jesse, CEO and creative director of BuDhaGirl; Susie Ellis flies the flag for Italy's hosting of GWS 2018

there was “no silver bullet” with regard to ageing. “Our appearance changes over time because a lot of different things are happening to our hair, skin, bone structure, the soft tissue beneath the skin, so we have to think about approaching the impact of those from multiple angles,” said Dr Ishii.

Jane Iredale, president and CEO of Iredale Mineral Cosmetics, was concerned with self-obsession within society's current “selfie phase”. “I've always believed makeup allowed women and men to be the best version of themselves. But now it's become so much more than that. It's taking beauty into another area we need to be watchful of,” she warned.

While the millennials may be a focal point for many in this booming digital era, Nicola Scott insisted Elemis recognised they are not the only target market. “The millennials are looking for experiential, something that is rooted in authenticity, but then we've also got the ageing population that is looking for health, wellbeing, and how to prolong those,” she said. “For us in beauty, it's meeting those two demands, and as a skincare brand you have to take ownership and drive them forward.”

The future of fitness

For the first time, GWS hosted a fitness panel, with the accent on trends to expect over the coming years. Tony de Leede, founder of the Gwinganna Lifestyle Retreat, suggested one

would be F45 Training, a concept born in his native Australia, that combines high-intensity interval, circuit and functional training over a 45-minute period. He also declared that virtual fitness, where people ‘attend’ a live exercise class at home while linked by technology, “will explode over the next few years”.

Peloton, which makes a connected indoor bike that provides access to live and on-demand group fitness classes, was noted as having made a mark in that arena as fitness moves into people's homes and away from gyms.

This was recognised by Technogym's global commercial director, Enrico Bracesco, who said: “There is a tangible demand for fitness at home.” Expanding on this point, Bracesco added: “If you take hospitality, when people go to a hotel and they don't want to bother going down to the health club, they want fitness in their room... a facility that helps them with a virtual coach. Instant, real-time fitness on-demand is something that's going mainstream now.”

However, Johannes Mikenda, director of spa and sports at Schlöss Elmau Luxury Spa Retreat & Cultural Hideaway in Germany, countered that there was still a need for people to escape the burgeoning digital world.

“As a destination spa we see that people want to be touched, they want digital detox, and they don't want to work out in an online class when they are in a magical place,” said Mikenda. “They want to go out and do something like hiking, yoga, swimming or skiing in our area. The growth in our outdoor wellness programme is very strong.

In terms of the future for fitness, and for

keeping people continually interested in staying fit, Accor Hotels' Andrew Gibson said: “There are three things that are going to make a massive impact on fitness. One is virtual reality; the second is technology tracking what you are doing, and the third is gaming.”

Jeremy McCarthy, group director of spa and wellness for the Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group, provided an enlightening talk on wellness in the age of technology.

In addressing mindfulness, in particular, McCarthy stated that although it is non-digital, advances in technology are giving people more access to learn how to bring it into their lives.

However, he also pointed out the downside of the progression of artificial intelligence, which could result in a shift away from employing humans. “There is a price that we pay when we replace wisdom with technology,” he warned. “This is the challenge of the age that we live in. The more we outsource our wellness to technology, the more we lose our ability to look after ourselves.”

Extraordinary people

In a heartfelt presentation, Jessica Jesse, CEO and creative director of BuDhaGirl, highlighted the importance of building rituals into everyday life to ensure we are more present and live well.

Among all the serious words of wellness, there were moments of levity, most notably from Wim Hof, known as ‘The Iceman’ and holder of numerous world records given his preternatural ability to withstand extreme cold.

Hof related his own experiences and reminded everyone they were naturally amazing



beings. To illustrate this, he taught those present how to comfortably hold their breath for two minutes.

Elsewhere, the intrinsic value of old and new perspectives was shown; first in an interview conducted by Susie Ellis with Deborah Szekely, the 95-year-old co-founder of Rancho La Puerta, who was presented with a 'Living A Well Life' award in recognition of her lifelong commitment to wellbeing and for inspiring others to learn from her example.

In contrast, the second 'Shark Tank of Wellness' student competition, overseen by a seven-strong expert panel of judges led by Andrew Gibson, this year saw 60 entries from 26 countries.

Of the three finalists, Florida State University's Jarrod Luca won the top prize of \$5,000 for developing a therapy, known as EMDR: Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing, which involves using a virtual reality headset to treat sufferers of PTSD and anxiety.

The Summit concluded with the announcement that the 12th GWS will take place in Italy, on October 6-8, at Technogym's base in Cesena, at the heart of an area known as 'Wellness Valley'.

Explaining the selection of the venue, Susie Ellis said: "Technogym is much more than a fitness company, it is a world leader specialising in technologies for fitness, wellness and health. It embodies the business of 'Living a Well Life' and I know the brand's creative approach to the business of wellness will inspire all who attend.

"Technogym Village is also nothing short of awe-inspiring and the surrounding countryside is spectacular. Amazing food, outstanding wines, and rare access to a company steeped in wellness. 2018 will truly be an outstanding Summit." ●●●●●

www.globalwellnesssummit.org

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