

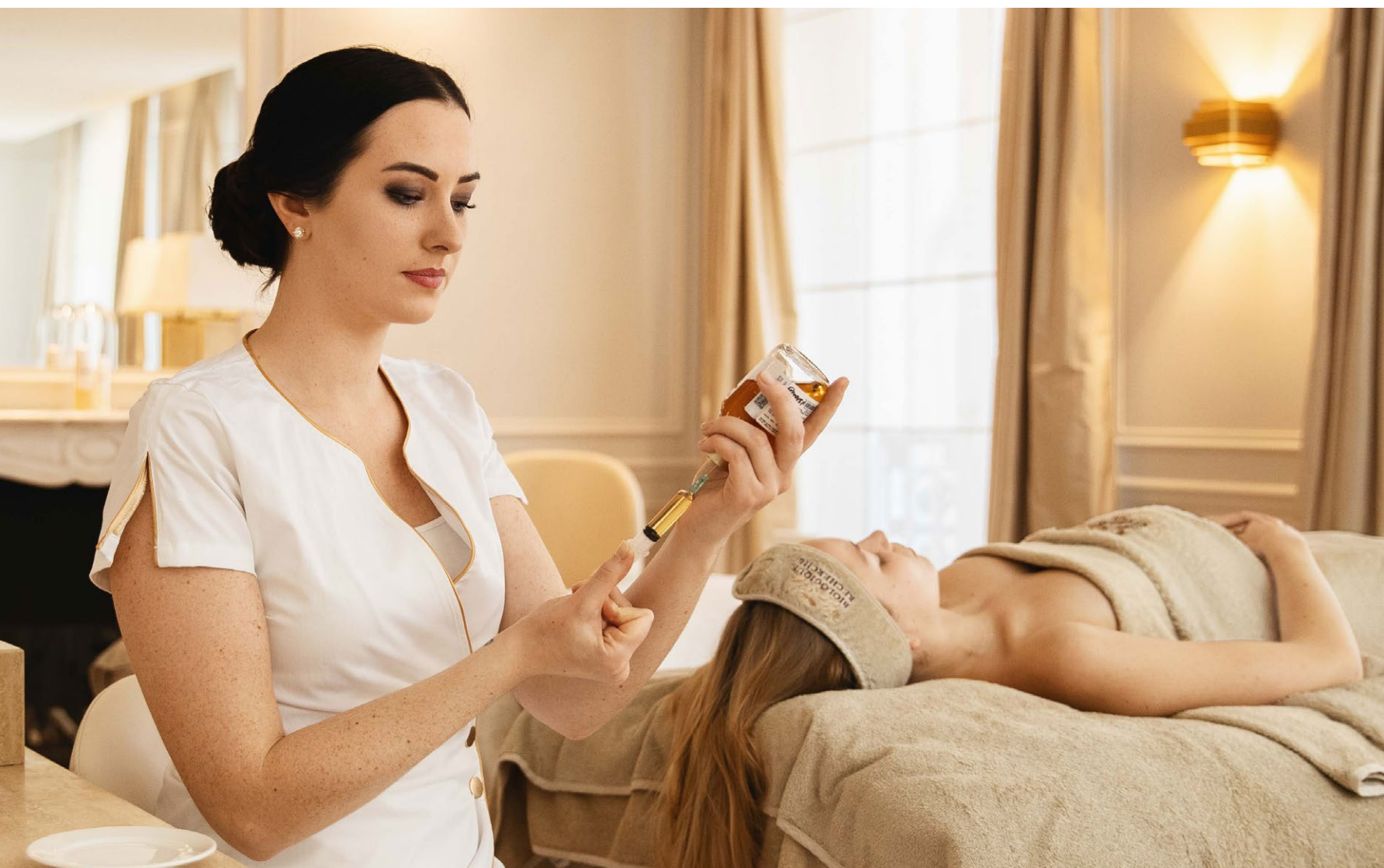
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PARISIAN SPECIAL

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EXPERT SOFTWARE

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SPARKLING TIMES

Royal Champagne Hotel & Spa, France is in a bubble of its own

THE THREE GRACES

An elite spa and fitness offering at Grantley Hall, UK

Singapore swing

Delegates at the Global Wellness Summit in Singapore learned of the possibilities for a vibrant spa industry now that wellness has moved into the mainstream

REPORT BY LISA STARR

For the first time since 2013, international wellness leaders gathered in Asia for the annual Global Wellness Summit (GWS), with executives from the hospitality and spa sectors joined by economists, academics, scientists, architects, retailers and real-estate developers for the event's 13th edition at Grand Hyatt Singapore.

The 568-strong delegation from 44 countries, over half of whom were first-time attendees, was welcomed by GWS founder and CEO Susie Ellis along with Hyatt APAC group president David Udell and a parade of dancing Chinese dragons.

Ellis' opening keynote, 'Wellness is a global force, what's next?', detailed business transactions in the wellness space over the last year, from Goop's \$250 million (£193 million/€226 million) to Peloton's \$8.1 billion.

The word 'wellness' is on everyone's lips, but with that has come increased scrutiny from watchdogs and 'wellness bashers'. Ellis advised that spa businesses should ensure they are providing services targeted at all economic groups, to become more informed about the science and technology behind what they are offering, and to provide wellness for workers as well as clients.

Entertaining the audience, Asia-based Summit co-hosts Cathy Feliciano-Chon, founder of CatchOn, and Yoriko Soma, CEO of Conceptasia then extended the host's welcome to the 'Asian century'.

Diversity of content

As the growth in all things wellness continues and diversifies, the topic has moved well beyond spa and is now attracting the attention of a variety of industry silos, resulting in a broad range of Summit content, some of which was less directly related to spa and hospitality.

As well as presenters from traditional



"Spas have moved from being a small part of a hotel or resort's thinking and revenue to becoming, in many cases, the most important element."

Susie Ellis Founder and CEO, Global Wellness Summit

wellness industries, many this year were from the worlds of healthcare, technology, finance, philanthropy and fashion, with each day also offering breakout sessions, enabling attendees to focus on topics that were of most use to the development of their businesses.

One of the most eagerly awaited components of the Summit is always the unveiling of data from the Global Wellness Institute (GWI), and this year did not disappoint. A team led by senior research fellows Ophelia Yeung and Katherine Johnston discussed 'Move To Be Well,' a report examining the \$828 billion global physical activity sector – a six-segment market, including fitness; sports and active

recreation; mindful movement; apparel and footwear; and fitness technology. This expanded category from the fitness and mind-body market, formerly valued at \$595 billion by the GWI, is part of the current \$4.5 trillion wellness economy, which is still in growth mode.

Johnston and Yeung noted that around the world plenty of people live long, healthy lives without using gym facilities. Emphasising that exercise does not have to be taken in an organised way that requires financial investment, they recognised that walking, cycling to work, casual sports, gardening and even routine tasks at home all qualify as physical activity. Therefore, the researchers replaced the title of the fitness bubble with that of 'physical activity.'

Yeung pointed out that the World Health Organisation's definition of physical activity doesn't even contain the word 'exercise'. However, a very broad range of action does fall under that banner and as people in developed countries are provided with more ways to avoid leaving their houses, so the need to bring awareness to all forms of activity grows.

Enabling activity

The GWI researchers further reported that 30% of the world's population is not physically active, with many adults citing limiting physical or health conditions rather than a lack of funds.

However, technology can act as an aid to motivation and an enabler connecting like-minded communities. Also, urban planning

1. A gathering of the 2019 Summit's sponsors
2. Hyatt's Mia Kyricos receives the Woman in Wellness award from ResortSuite's Frank Pitsikalis
3. Finn Partners' Tom Jones takes part in a panel on wellness in the media
4. Professor Gerry Bodeker receives an award for his work in improving mental wellness
5. Panel moderator Patricia Dwyer
6. Revellers dance the night away at an evening event
7. Wellness pioneer Susan Harmsworth, MBE discusses beauty, science and technology



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▷ improvements such as bike lanes and walking paths open up further routes to activity. The notion of ‘silver fitness’ was also highlighted as options are becoming more welcoming and inclusive for seniors.

The opportunity to be physically active should be treated as a basic right for everyone, and this may provide an opportunity for spas to expand on what they are already offering.

Fitness is moving beyond weight-lifting and aerobic classes into different group activities that can be incorporated regardless of a spa’s specific facilities. From mindful movement and group gatherings to expanded opportunities for the retail of both apparel and equipment, spas can adjust their offers to take advantage of this burgeoning market.

Wellness hotels

A panel led by Six Senses’ CEO Neil Jacobs explored the question ‘What’s the status of wellness in hotels?’ Taking part were Mia Kyricos, senior vice-president of wellbeing at Hyatt; Mike Fulkerson, brand and marketing vice-president at Marriott Asia; Lanserhof CEO Nils Behrens; Mori Trust CEO Miwako Date; Allen Law, CEO of Park Hotel Group; and Lefay Resort & SPA’s managing director, Alcide Leali.

Takeaways included that most hotel guests today want a wellness-orientated experience of some kind, whether it is through the availability of filtered water, fitness rooms, hypoallergenic sheets or healthy dining options. Larger companies can deliver such components across their brand, but smaller boutique locations often gain more success from offering individualised attention.

What was common among all participants was a renewed focus on workplace wellness thanks to the idea that cared-for team members will, in turn, take better care of guests. Kyricos discussed the new pillars she has created for Hyatt’s 700,000 associates – Feel, Fuel and Function – which form the basis for their personal activities.

Writing your destiny

‘Wellness in the media: facts, fads and the future’ provided a spirited discussion of how wellness is handled in the media today, with moderator Sean Fitzpatrick, managing director of *Tatler Asia*, and panelists including writer Elaine Glusac; Laurie Jennings, deputy editor of Hearst Magazines; Tom Jones, senior partner at Finn Partners; Sarah Miller, luxury brand ambassador of the *Wall Street Journal*; and Rina Raphael, a writer for *Fast Company*.

It was said that consumers are getting used to reading longer form online articles, making room for more detailed journalism, which is an advantage in telling your brand’s story.

Because wellness is currently such a popular topic, this provides an opportunity for spas to pitch stories to publications regarding all aspects of their





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offering, from treatments to products and education. A few simple rules for pitching your story were offered, including ‘tell people something they don’t already know’ and ‘be clear on your USPs’. Regular communication through press releases was advised and the panel judged that positive stories can benefit spa recruitment as potential staff members may be more attracted to a facility that is often in the news.

The power of trends

During the Summit, a press conference was conducted for journalists attending from almost 30 publications, in which Susie Ellis presented a selection of eight power trends relating to spa businesses, including that of ‘circadian travellers’. Ellis said that as consumers continue to work and travel nonstop, “getting enough sleep remains a cultural, and hospitality, obsession.” Therefore, treatments, experiences and products that result in more, or better, sleep, are set to grow in popularity.

Elsewhere, the desire not to spend time flying or driving to far-flung destinations was said to be leading to the creation of urban wellness resorts, such as the eagerly-awaited Six Senses in Manhattan’s Hudson Yards. Aman Resorts already has a property in Tokyo, and the Fivements brand has opened an urban day retreat in Hong Kong.

Spas located in populated areas can capitalise on this trend by offering weekend packages that may combine spa treatments, activities, meals or lodging, perhaps grouped by purpose, such as romantic getaways or wellness-oriented revitalisers.

A session on ‘Predictions and punditry: Trends in health and wellness’ was moderated by GWI vice-president of research and forecasting Beth McGroarty, who stated that “30m Instagram posts” last year contained the word ‘wellness’ making it difficult to separate the topics of wellness and trends.

Panelists including Cathy Chon, Sarah Miller, Rina Raphael, Melisse Gelula, co-founder of Well & Good and economist Thierry Malleret uncovered multiple trends that spas can capitalise on in the realms of workshops and communication.

For instance, attention on women’s issues, such as fertility health, as well as a predicted rise in “whispered about” issues such as the menopause and incontinence, provides a platform for spas to create related content. Food also factored largely in this discussion. From selling healthy cookbooks to

1. Panelists discuss wellness in the media
2. Susie Ellis introduces the 2019 ‘Wellness Moonshot’ of a world free from preventable disease
3. Davide Bollati, founder and chairman of Davines
4. Tel Aviv, Israel is announced as the location of GWS 2020
5. Peggy Chan of Grassroots Pantry delivers a keynote address
6. The GWI’s Katherine Johnston and Ophelia Yeung
7. Bill Bensley is commended for his leadership in sustainability
8. Noel Asmar of Noel Asmar Uniforms
9. Cathy Chon of CatchOn welcomes delegates to Singapore



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GWS Award winners...

This year's recipients of awards for their contributions to wellness on behalf of the Global Wellness Institute were:

Debra Simon Award for Leader in Furthering Mental Wellness: Professor Gerry Bodeker, chair of the GWI Mental Wellness Initiative; Public Health Academic & Clinical Psychologist, Green Templeton College, University of Oxford, UK & Malaysia
Leader in Innovation: Ronna Chao, chair, Novetex Textiles, Hong Kong

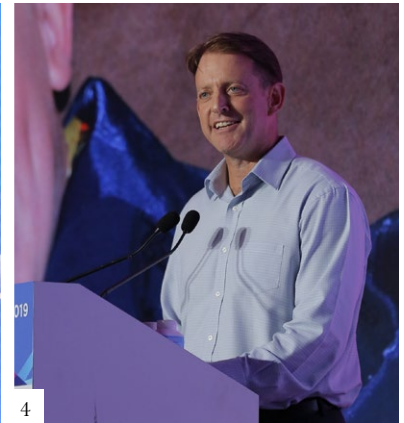
Leader in Sustainability: Bill Bensley, owner, Bensley Architecture, Interior Design and Landscape, Thailand
Leader in Social Impact: John Wood, founder, Room to Read, Hong Kong
Leading Woman in Wellness: Mia Kyricos, senior vice-president of wellbeing, Hyatt



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▷ learning how to make protein drinks, promoting family cooking, and even the new field of nutritional psychiatry, spas can play a role in this aspect of continuing health and wellness.

The panel also touched on 'wellness bashing', which is something spas obviously want to avoid. "When we started Well & Good 10 years ago, and we were writing about boutique fitness, smoothies, and superfoods, these topics were considered 'fluffy' largely because of how the media was covering them," said Gelula. "Journalists then started asking for more investigative approaches once it became clear that the wellness movement was not just a fad."

Malleret concluded the discussion by stating: "What wellness means may be redrawn. Wellness is not an asset class, it's a journey."

Wellness in retail and real estate

The impact of experiential wellness in retail and real estate was addressed in a panel led by Delos executive vice-president Alfredo Carvajal, and including Sue Thirlwall, CEO of Innovative Growth & Franchise Ventures; Ellie Tang, head of sustainability at New World Development; Cristiana Schiavolin, managing partner at Praxis; Francine Miley, head of health and wellness at Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield; Paul Jones, CEO of

The Lux Collective; Ocubis CEO Jon Hunt; and Louise Evins, CEO of Evins Communications.

Despite the impression that everyone is shopping on the internet, it was said that in the US only 10% of retail merchandise sales are online, and in China about 25%. Indeed, wellness retail may be a way to actually sell more because it can be experiential, such as Sur la Table's healthy cooking classes or LuLuLemon's yoga tutoring that raise donations.

Schiavolin noted that wellness provides a platform for developers who want to have products or services from the same sector in their buildings, providing an identity. As malls and retail spaces around the world struggle with their own occupancy issues, they are looking for new and creative ways to fill their spaces and attract foot traffic, providing potential new opportunities for spa and wellness entrepreneurs who can create wellness-related retail, hospitality and entertainment options.

Pointing to the future

Throughout the Summit, interactive lunch tables allowed guests to converse on almost 80 topics while early morning yoga and Tai Chi classes, as well as night-time meditative gong baths, courtesy of Martha Collard, provided

- 1. Jean-Guy de Gabriac of Tip-Touch International
- 2. A fashion presentation brightens up proceedings
- 3. Ronna Chao receives her Leader in Innovation award
- 4. Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group's Jeremy McCarthy

wellness breaks for delegates

In closing, Ellis announced that next year's event will be held in Tel Aviv, Israel and enthused about "how vibrant the spa space is now and what great opportunities are ahead."

"Spas have moved from being a small part of a hotel or resort's thinking and revenue, largely confined to the walls in which they were housed, to becoming, in many cases, the most important element of the conversation," she told attendees. "Wellness is recognised as a top priority for guests and every department is being called on to contribute, but it is the professionals with the spa background who are the ones to lead the way."

It is clear that 'spa' will continue to evolve. While the model of traditional spa treatments still has a place, the spa industry has the opportunity to move in a direction that is more broad, social and inclusive, as it ensures that when consumers want to learn about self-care and wellness, spas are at the front and centre of the conversation. ●●●●●

www.globalwellnesssummit.com