GLOBAL WELLNESS
SUMMIT

8 Wellness Trends for 2017 – and Beyond

As identified at the Global Wellness Summit

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PREFACE

8 Wellness Trends for 2017 – and Beyond

Global Wellness Summit experts identify future directions for the $3.7 trillion wellness industry: from a new focus on "silence" at hotels, retreats and spas - to the bold reinvention of sauna-going - to wellness rewriting both the architecture and beauty industries

When 500+ wellness experts from 46+ nations gather to debate the future of wellness, you have one uniquely authoritative and global view of the trends set to unfold. And that's what happened at the recent tenth-anniversary Global Wellness Summit in Kitzbühel, Austria, which (with its specifically future-focused theme for 2016, "Back to the Future") brought together leaders from the travel, spa, beauty, fitness, nutrition, technology, medical, economics and architecture worlds, to identify not only what the top wellness trends in 2017 (and beyond) will be – but why.

With a wave of annual wellness trends reports, the future shifts that Summit experts identified have a distinct "get real" quality: from architects finally designing buildings for human health to many new directions ahead in mental wellness to the wellness industry reaching beyond its (narrowing) association with wealthy elites. And much innovation lies ahead: from a new focus on both "silent" and creativity and arts programming (whether at hotels, spas or fitness studios) to the 2,000-year-old sauna tradition getting a 21st-century reimagining.

"No other forecast is based on the perspectives of so many wellness experts, from renowned economists, academics or futurists to the heads of global hospitality, spa and beauty brands," said Susie Ellis, GWS Chairman & CEO. "And it makes for a powerfully collective, global and informed set of predictions."

After the trends were identified, Global Wellness Summit researchers expanded on the global angles and examples to illustrate the ways they're already taking shape in our world.

TREND #1
Sauna Reinvented

From theatrical Sauna Aufguss events to jaw-dropping amphitheater saunas...sweating will get more spectacular and social in years ahead

The Past:
In Northern, Central and Eastern Europe, sauna has been a culture and an art for centuries, with often spectacular rituals and facilities. But the sauna experience elsewhere can frankly be rather "meh": an uninspired, lonely experience in a hot "box."

The Future:
Europeans are now boldly reinventing the sauna experience, with everything from "Sauna Aufguss," or sauna as a truly theatrical event, to more extraordinary and social sauna design. Sauna is getting reinvented, and the new directions look to spread globally.

Helsinki's hip, high-design new public sauna complex, Löyly, shows the new social directions. Image Source: Avanto Architects by kuvio.com

A hot topic at the Summit was not only how the world needs to learn from European bathing/sauna culture, but how the Europeans themselves are now busy reimagining the sauna experience. For instance, a Summit showcase, "Sauna Aufguss: Hot Doesn't Get Any Cooler Than This" (led by Lasse Eriksen, Development Manager, Nordic Hotels & Resorts, Farris Bad, Norway), vividly illustrated how sauna in Europe is evolving into a true event, called Sauna Aufguss (which means "infusion") led by sauna-meisters serving up some serious entertainment to sweaty, happy audiences. Or a panel led by Anna Bjurstam (VP, Spas & Wellness, Six Senses; Owner, Raison D'Etre) called the "Naked Truth about European Spa and Wellness Traditions", with European spa experts discussing their unique spa/wellness experiences (whether Sauna Aufguss or little-known experiences like the Latvian "pirt" sauna or ancient "black smoke saunas.)" And how what's been hot in Europe is poised for global discovery.

THE TREND

Saunas, spaces built for intense dry or wet heat sessions, are standard fare at hotels, spas and gyms worldwide. But when it comes to how sauna "gets done" there has been a serious disconnect between Northern, Central and Eastern Europe, where sauna-going is a way of life...and the rest of the world. In countries like Finland (where saunas were born 2,000 years ago), Italy, Austria, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Hungary, Poland, etc., the rituals and facilities are often creative, deeply social and fabulous. But the sauna experience outside Europe can frankly be rather "meh": an uninspired, lonely experience in a spa or condo basement "box." And while non-Europeans often jump in and out, Europeans know how to push this sweat experience, and that contrast therapy (taking a cold/snow plunge after, and repeating and repeating) is key to the health benefits, and to getting those endorphins pumping.

"Classic" Sauna Aufguss involves trained sauna-meisters using elaborate towel rituals to circulate an orchestra of infusions. Image Source: Lasse Eriksen, PowerPoint, Global Wellness Summit 2016

And while the medical evidence for sauna isn't vast ("Big Sauna" doesn't have big bucks for clinical trials), it's positive for things like pain and cardiovascular impact. For instance, a large, 20-year-long University of Eastern Finland study (2015) revealed that frequent time spent in saunas was associated with a longer life and less cardiac-related deaths: people who visited a sauna 2-3 times a week had a 24% lower risk of death; those who sweated it out 4-7 times weekly were associated with a 40% mortality reduction.

And now Europeans themselves are dramatically reinventing the experience. For instance, for a few years in Northern/Central Europe sauna has evolved into a true event (called "Sauna Aufguss"), whose first chapter, "Classic Aufguss" involves "sauna-meisters" administering dozens of targeted aromatherapy infusions using complex towel rituals to circulate heat, humidity and infusions. All played to large, lively sauna "audiences" in spas across Austria, Germany, Italy, Finland and Norway.

But the newest chapter in Sauna Aufguss: how quickly it's becoming even more profoundly performative. The sauna-masters' towel rituals are evolving into full-blown dance routines; they wear costumes and lead singing or chanting; they act out scenes from plays or movies; there are even light, music, laser and smoke shows. A far cry from "meh," the new sauna theater is packing in younger generations, is spreading further across Europe, and is poised to move out into the world.

And the sauna reinvention trend is taking many other forms: from huge, hip, new sauna amphitheaters where 50-300 people sweat communally – to architects reimagining saunas as cool community spaces (with music, food, bars, and talks on art and culture) – to more saunas deep in nature (floating on lakes, etc.) – to trendy "urban sweat lodges" using infrared saunas in places like LA and New York. The trend: far more creative, social, fun and glorious sauna design and experiences, which look to be exported beyond Europe. View Sauna Aufguss performances here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NseditMtDmQ

MORE ON SAUNA AUFGUSS THEATER

Sauna Aufguss, a star at so many spas across Northern/Central Europe, is very much a theater culture. Spas post "what's playing" in each sauna daily (from specific infusions to performances). Special schools train Aufgussmasters on the techniques of infusing the sauna with the most impactful series of volatile essential oils (lemon, mint, cedar, juniper, sage, etc.), which are then complexly circulated with towels, flags or birch branches. Sauna-masters become spa-celebs known for their special performances...whether acting out scenes from Shakespeare or Top Gun. And it's all now so competitive that there are annual Aufguss World Championships. (World Champion, Rob Keijzer, and professional, Lay Pang Ong, showed how it's done at the Summit).

Lasse Eriksen (the leader of the Sauna Aufguss session) explained how American or Asian tourists are simply blown away when they experience their first "Show Aufguss" (they're soon singing, clapping or drumming along). And he detailed the trend's many positives: from bringing millennials into the healthy sauna scene to helping people extend this detoxing experience to its being a very affordable form of wellness, but one that helps drive new revenues for spas (where the staff-to-guest ratio can be 1 to over 50).

Summit delegates experienced Sauna Aufguss events at **A-ROSA** and **Stanglwirt** in Kitzbühel, Austria (where the latter even uses singing bowls) and at Austria's **Aquadome**, a watery kingdom of pools and saunas, including a three-tiered sauna stadium. This fast-moving trend is happening at too many European spas to list: from the first to launch in Italy, Tuscany's **Asmana Wellness World** to Oslo's chic **The Thief Spa's** "Thief Guss", a unique Aufguss spin revolving around Kneipp methods of cold-hot-cold-hot. And it's even landed at North America's largest spa, **Nordik Spa-Nature** (outside Ottawa, Canada), where team members traveled to Germany to get trained as authentic sauna-meisters.

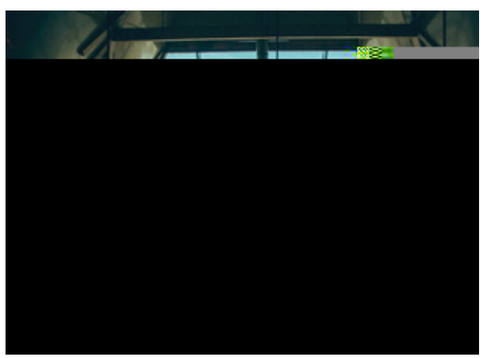
CREATIVE DIRECTIONS IN SAUNA DESIGN

A current London Design Festival exhibition (through late January), called Soak, Steam, Dream, reveals how a new generation of architects are rewriting sauna design. The powerful trend: sauna as the new social, community-creating "hangout" (and a healthy and hot alternative to

Lasse Eriksen, Nordic Hotels & Resorts (Farris Bad, Norway), presents "Sauna Aufguss: Hot Doesn't Get Any Cooler Than This." Image Source: Global Wellness Summit by Michelle Hirnsberger

bars and restaurants). You see it in **Gothenberg**, **Sweden's** new design-forward, port-side, public sauna, made of recycled, rusted steel, and built for "cultural debate, hedonism and business" or in Prague-based **H3T Architekti's** quirky, sauna-is-for-everyone, mobile/pop-up concepts: from floating saunas in lakes or saunas hanging from bridges to saunas on wheels.

- Helsinki, Finland's stunning new public waterfront sauna complex, **Löyly**, a suave, eco-friendly pyramid composed of wooden slats, with the saunas (including an ancient, antioxidant Finnish smoke sauna), vast terraces, and restaurant all open to the sea. And where after a social steam you can jump in the harbor or through a hole in the ice in winter.
- **The Well** (near Oslo, Norway), the Nordic region's largest bathhouse. A new, sprawling, three-level fantasia of 15 saunas (from a jungle sauna to a cinema sauna to an Austrian loft sauna where Aufguss events are performed) – with 11 pools and 100 showers set to attract 100,000 daycationers a year.
- The Norwegian cultural project **SALT's** Arctic amphitheater sauna, the largest (and certainly one of the coolest) public saunas in the world, where 100 people gather for "group sweat-ins" on tiered benches facing the Norwegian Sea (looking out through a wall of glass) – all while experiencing theater, readings and art exhibits (or having a cocktail at the bar while grooving to Norwegian electronica.) A portable project, the vast SALT sauna is set to move to northern cities in places like Iceland, Ireland, Scotland, Alaska and Russia after 2016.
- The brand-new **Hot Box Sauna**, the first set on a Scottish loch (Loch Tay), with panoramic lake views, and an evening DJ area and bar.
- You can see the importation of Finnish sauna culture at **Löyly locations in Portland, Oregon**, a hybrid between an American spa and a sauna hangout center. And global wellness retreats are putting their own indigenous spin on sauna, like Peru's **Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel**, with their "Andean Sauna" staged pond-side in a candlelit eucalyptus hut.
- Trendy urban "sweathouses" using infrared sauna technology (that get bodies sweating at lower temperatures, to extend and deepen the therapy), have gotten much ink, but only seem to be trending hotter. You can chill out in infrared sauna heat wraps (with the likes of Selena Gomez and the Kardashians) at Los Angeles' three **Shape House** locations (and they have ambitious expansion plans) or at NYC's **Higher Dose** infrared sauna spas (two locations now, three coming), where you sweat to house music while basking in chakra light therapy.



SALT's Arctic amphitheater sauna, the largest public sauna in the world, where 100 people gather for "group sweat-ins" (and music, art and cocktails). Image Source: salted.no via traveller.com.au

The new Sauna Aufguss sees sauna-meisters staging true "events" - from singing to dance routines. Pictured above is recent World Champion Rob Keijzer. Image Source: AUFGUSS-WM/Satama Sauna Park

THE FUTURE

Every culture has its ancient sweat tradition: the Arabic hamman, Japanese onsen, Russian banya, Native American sweat lodge, the Mesoamerican temezcal – and, of course, the most globally ubiquitous...the European sauna. All will continue to undergo a renaissance (and reinvention) as the world aches most for stress-reducing, detoxifying therapies. And if the sauna has seemed the most tepid experience outside of Europe, that's set to change. Because the sauna reinventions now underway, from Sauna Aufguss events to eye-popping, high-design saunas aimed at becoming that communal "third place", live right at the intersection of so many important, future trends in wellness and spa. The need for social and fun experiences in our Age of Loneliness - wellness experiences that are affordable for far more than the "one-percent" - the interweaving of spa experiences with art, culture, music and performance – and ingenious new wellness architecture.

In the UN's latest World Happiness Report seven of the ten happiest nations on Earth are in Northern Europe (Denmark, Switzerland, Iceland, Norway, Finland, Netherlands and Sweden). Places where a "wellness culture" is natural and everyday (rather than a hysterical, consumerist stressor)...and where sauna is a way of life. In a world getting hotter and crazier, more people will travel to these countries for their cool, serene nature, and to try their hot sauna innovations at the source. And their breeds of more social, more entertaining, and high-design sauna concepts will continue to spread across the world.

The brand-new, completely "Silent Spa" at Therme Laa Hotel, Austria - a modern interpretation of "sacred architecture." Image Source: Vamed Vitality Resorts

TREND #3

Silence

From silent spas - to wellness monasteries and "down-time abbeys" - to silent eating

A new focus on silence at wellness destinations and spas came through loud and clear in Summit presentations: from Dr. Franz Linser's keynote (2016 Summit co-chair; founder, Linser Hospitality), "Wellness As It Was Meant to Be" – to Tom Bauer's talk (COO, Vamed Vitality Resorts) on future, silent directions in wellness resorts – to the Wellness Tourism Roundtable exploring what will constitute "Wellness Tourism 2.0". Linser argued that wellness programming at hotels/retreats today can sometimes feel like nothing more than an "operational line-item" (some fitness classes or spas to "check off"), while future destinations will need to put a deeper, more comprehensive focus on the true "art of living" - from helping people "do" to helping them "be" - and that will include a much more powerful focus on silence and nature. Bauer's talk argued that time, space and silence will be the most precious future luxuries, and that retreats (like his just-opened "Silent Spa" – more below) will need to help people restore inner silence, make contemplation possible, and will specifically explore "how much spiritual buildings and spas have in common".

THE TREND

Noise: *from the Latin, nausia (or "sickness", "nausea"); or noxia ("pain" or "hurt")*

It's hard to believe that the first smartphone was unveiled less than a decade ago (2007) – a technology has exploded faster than any other in human history. Those sleek, harmless-looking, little weapons that have since shackled humans to the Internet, media/social media, and work, every waking hour. This eternal (infernal) connection quickly decimated the work-life divide, sleep, and any sense of "free time" or true peace. And along

with that other great recent force, urbanization, it now means that humans are suffering unthinkable stress and… in a word, NOISE.

This has given rise to sharp new desires: for actual silence, quiet contemplation, to leave the shrieking world totally behind, and to be near, and hear, the "silence" of nature. And wellness resorts and spas (and even salons, restaurants, gyms, stores and airports) are answering the desperate cry for silence.

If wellness retreats and spas have always sought to deliver peace (not always successfully), now we're seeing true "silent spas" launch (with silent bathing, treatments, therapists…everything). And if quiet, mindfulness and time-in-wild-nature are becoming the core offerings (as opposed to the old bling-y, hyper-luxury amenities) at more spa resorts, that trend is finding its perfect expression in more properties being developed in (and infused with the quiet, mindful values of) former monasteries, abbeys and nunneries. In addition to more spas appearing in more retreat-from-the-retreat-from-the-world spaces like crypts, caves, former bank vaults, etc. Silent restaurants and silent meals at hotels or wellness retreats are also on the rise.

And this isn't simply the old, sometimes awkwardly forced "digital detox," where devices get confiscated, say, at some noisy urban hotel, with little else transformative on offer. While the "wellness monastery" is a neat encapsulation of the silence trend, it's about everything – from property design and "vibe" to room design and treatments and experiences – shifting to more uncompromising quiet, authenticity and nature.

The Medical Evidence for Silence: Given that always-on digital connection is such a new phenomenon, the medical establishment is just beginning to grasp how it's destroying our health and sanity. But recent studies confirm that both noise – and digital "noise" – hurt our focus and sleep, and increase stress hormones, anxiety and depression. But what is the impact of periods of silence on the brain? A Duke University study (2013) found that two hours of silence daily incited significant cell development in the hippocampus, the brain region related to the formation of memory. And "the brain on silence" is a brain evaluating internal and external info into "a conscious workspace"…establishing how we fit into the world. So, if depression and dementia are both associated with decreased hippocampus neurogenesis, silence looks to be a promising therapy.

The Knottnkino "Nature Cinema" - example of the silent nature over "noise" trend in South Tyrol, Italy
Image Source: Alto Adige Marketing by Clemens Zahn

Schloss Mondsee (Austria) - example of the new quiet, contemplative "wellness monasteries." Image Source: Schlosshotel Mondsee

EXAMPLES - THE NEW "SILENCE"

Silent Spa: Vamed Vitality World (operating nine thermal/spa resorts across Austria and Hungary) announced at the Summit that it would open a **"Silent Spa"** at **Therme Laa Hotel & Spa** (north of Vienna), the first comprehensively silent bathing/spa experience (with the exception of check-in and the restaurant), complete with silent assistants and coaches. And while brand-new, the spectacular property was designed explicitly on the principles of "sacred architecture": with spa areas modeled (and named) after "choir stalls," "cloisters," "monastery gardens" and a "baptismal font" (cascading waterfalls), etc. Reimagining sacred church design to create a modern "world of contemplation." (It opened on 12.6.16.)

The New "Wellness Monasteries":

Eremito (Umbria, Italy) is a soulful, stunning example of the new "wellness monasteries": housed in an ancient monastery on 7,000+ acres of unspoiled nature, with a focus on meditation, yoga, hiking, reading, etc. And complete disconnection: no WiFi or phone signal, and at 8PM the gong announces it's time for the silent, mindful dinner held in a candlelit dining room. Self-described as a "secular monastery", Eremito's DNA is peace, contemplation and re-finding oneself…no wonder it was *Conde Nast Traveler's* 2016 winner for "Best Mental Recovery."

Le Monastère des Augustines (Quebec, Canada) A hotel and spa/wellness center set in a 17th-century monastery and hospital, with a focus on quiet and mindfulness, and offering personalized meditation, yoga, sleep therapy, massage, and so many other wellness classes. Organic food from the monastery garden; breakfast is taken in contemplative silence; and guests head to the chapel at dusk to hear the nuns sing Vespers.

Hotel Monastero Santa Rosa (Amalfi Coast, Tuscany) is about high-luxury mindfulness set in a 17th-century monastery (with an infinity pool perched on a dramatic ocean-side cliff). The vast, cavernous spa, set in a space where nuns once performed silent meditation, includes vaulted Roman baths and a sauna carved out of rock, with treatments also performed in nature and private gardens.

At Hotel Klosterbräu (Tirol, Austria), the huge "Spiritual Spa" is inspired by its ancient monastery setting, and revolves around the former monks' "10 pillars of contemplation".

Austria's Therme Laa Hotel & Spa's "Silent Spa" - the first comprehensively silent bathing/spa experience Image Source: Vamed Vitality Resorts

Actual Monasteries: Stays at the hundreds of actual monasteries worldwide are a rising form of hyper-authentic wellness travel. Monasteries have a long tradition of welcoming guests at incredibly affordable prices: from the silent **Shunkoin Temple** complex in Kyoto, offering Zen meditation with the temple's abbot – or at **Tassajara Zen Mountain Center** in Carmel, California, where monks offer retreats on mindfulness, spirituality and creativity. For hard-core silence-seekers, there are 300 **Buddhist Vipassana centers** globally, for an intensive, spartan ten days of "noble silence" and self-purification.

Ancient & Hidden Spa Settings: Spas set in hidden, silent (often ancient) places are on the rise, from natural caves to crypts. For example, the new **Atrium** (spa/sauna center) in Mâcon, France is set in a medieval stone crypt, while the new **Away Spa at the W Amsterdam** is set in vast, historic bank vaults and safes.

Other Silent Moves:

On (12/14), all **Mandarin Oriental** properties will hold their next "Silent Night" spa retreat: no music, no talking, silent therapists, for "noise-free contemplation and human touch." Mandarin Oriental hotels also just launched a brand-wide "digital wellness" initiative: surrender your phone and follow a regime developed by the Mayo Clinic, including everything from calming teas and oils and therapeutic coloring books. At checkout, reclaim your cleaned device, now repackaged in a protective gold shield.

L'Apothecary Spa at **L'Auberge de Sedona** (Arizona) features a "Quiet Mind" treatment: a silent massage with breathing techniques and facial acupressure. **Scandinave Spa at Whistler** (British Columbia) has long believed that silence is key to their Scandinavian bath circuit experience.

A Digital "Kill Switch": Dr. Harry Konig, Head of Medical Care, **Brenner's Park Hotel & Spa** (Germany), explained their "digital silence" solution for their new, award-winning **Villa Stephanie:** at great expense and a technical challenge, they installed unique copper plates in guests' walls, so all you have to do is hit a bedside "kill switch" to completely disconnect your room from WiFi, mobile reception and even electricity... aiding profound sleep.

Silent Eating:

Revered destination spa, **Rancho La Puerta** (Mexico), holds "Silent Dinners", meditative meals set to soft music. And at German and Austrian **Viva Mayr** spa-clinics – that pioneered trendy "gut health" a century ago – taking all meals in silence is an absolute pillar of their dietary retraining program (along with learning to chew each bite 30-50 mindful times). Experience the FX Mayr cure (and silent eating) at the new, state-of-the-art **VIVAMAYR Altaussee** or at **Lanserhof Lans** (Austria, completely redone this month) or at the gorgeous new **Lanserhof Tegernsee** (Germany).

A silent restaurant making loud headlines: **Ichiran** ramen shops (60 locations Japan, Hong Kong) that just opened its first U.S. restaurant in Brooklyn, where solo diners sit in booths facing the wall, and speak to nobody: not to be seated or to order (lights show available booths and diners fill out their order on a menu which is scanned by an electronic reader at each table). Disembodied hands appear with your noodle bowl. No faces, no words...a Zen, meditative, silent approach to eating.

Silent Salons: Even hair salons are offering silent experiences, as not everyone wants to talk (and talk) getting their hair done. **BLO/OUT Blow Dry Bar** (Philadelphia) has launched a silent "Zen experience", after you explain what you want, total quiet. Similarly, **Bauhaus Salon** (Cardiff, South Wales) now has "Quiet Chair" options.

"Silent" Airports: Airports like London City, Bristol, Barcelona, Warsaw and Helsinki are no longer blaring "Please come to a white courtesy telephone", they're going silent: announcements are only made at boarding gates (except in true emergencies), with flight communications instead relayed at silent kiosks and displays, and via text and mobile apps. One of the loudest, most stressful places on Earth is set to quiet down.

Even Silent Gyms & Stores: Gyms (those ear-shattering places) are starting to experiment with silent sessions. For instance, **Trinity Sports & Leisure** (Somerset, UK) just launched special hours where there is no music or announcements. Retail stores are also launching silent hours: **Asda Living** (Manchester, UK) hits the "off" switch on escalators, TV displays and music for more peaceful shopping.

THE FUTURE

This world will only become noisier, more urban and more digitally connected. For instance, David Bosshart (CEO of leading European think-tank, Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute) gave a heady Summit keynote on the many complex ways that evermore interconnected data is our human future: from screens disappearing because we will be invisibly connected everywhere and always to "reality" itself becoming a mesh of biochemical and electronic algorithms. He noted that, "technology will never be as slow as it is today," and it poses some soul-searching questions for future wellness-focused businesses.

While the wellness industry will embrace new technologies – whether virtual reality or ingestible trackers monitoring bodies and minds, 24/7 – it's becoming clear that in a world where there is no escape from noisy digital connection, that wellness retreats and spas have the opportunity to become one of the lone cultural (and therefore sacred) spaces of silence, digital silence, unplugged human thought and nature. As technology escalates, their identity (or "brand proposition") as unique places where timeouts from noise and hysteria can take place, also only escalates.

The silent, peaceful wellness retreat or spa will trump "high-tech" varieties because the need for disconnection is at triage levels. Silence increasingly sells: from expensive noise-cancelling headphones to Finland's brilliant tourism campaign "Silence, Please" – promoting a place simply for its magnificent silent forests and nature. And no, "silence is not the new kale", or some hysterical, fleeting, power-sold wellness trend. It's one of the most meaningful trends in wellness that will only deepen and evolve in years ahead.

Travelers won't want to take all their vacations at a quiet monastery-style wellness retreat, but they will want to take more of them. And if the idea of taking a few days at a place where you can't compulsively text and check your social media "likes" seems scary...then you really need to ask yourself, how badly do I need this?

Image Source: Pexels

TREND #4

Art & Creativity Take Center Stage

Yes, adult coloring books - but well beyond: from classical concerts to intensive painting classes at hotels, wellness retreats, spas and studios

An insistent refrain at the 2016 Summit, running like the notes of Mozart's "Requiem" (which opened neuroscientist Dr. Claudia Aguirre's keynote on how experiencing works of art positively impacts the brain) was the need for more creativity (art, music, literature, dance, etc.) at wellness retreats/spas - both for guests to experience and to "do."

Historian David Clay Large's fascinating keynote revealed that the connection between the "spa cure" and creativity (and famous artists) was historically incredibly strong: artists and thinkers, from Beethoven and Mozart to Twain and Marx, flocked to the grand spas of the late-18th to early-20th centuries - great works were composed there - and musical performance and art were always the heartbeat of spa culture. Dietmar Mueller-Elmau's talk (owner, Schloss Elmau, famed German wellness retreat that has kept the creativity-spa connection incredibly alive with 220 concerts a year) argued that "wellness culture" has become narrowly obsessed with ego and "self-optimization", and needs to focus more on music, art and literature to take guests beyond the "cage of self". (And Louie Schwartzberg's extraordinary nature films, and multimedia artist SHA's collective art piece painted by conference delegates, illustrated the many ways that art can be creatively connected to wellness.

If the arts have historically been in spas' DNA (genetic material that's been lost), the future is restoring a very different looking "mind-body" connection, with more creativity/arts programming a crucial future wellness trend. Because the medical evidence shows that de-stressing is the path to creativity, and that creative pursuits are key to mental wellness. So, it's "back to the future" - with arts and creativity programming again taking their proper place on wellness' center stage.

THE TREND

The Summit's theme, "Back to the Future", was designed to explore how the history of wellness/spa can provide informed blueprints for the future. Consider this historical reality: from the late 18th century until WW2, European spa destinations – from Bath in the UK to Baden-Baden and Bad Ems in Germany to Bad Gastein and Bad Ischl in Austria to Marienbad in Czechoslovakia - reached a level of popularity and prestige unknown in "spa history" before or since. These hot (water) spots attracted aristocrats, politicians and the rising middle-class in droves. And most strikingly, the connection between take the "spa cure" and creativity was powerful: geniuses like Beethoven, Chopin, Dostoevsky, Freud, Goethe, Kafka, Liszt, Marx, Mozart, Nietzsche, Proust, Twain, Tolstoy and Turgenev flocked to spas for weeks (and months) – they composed books and operas there - gave performances - these celebrity artists created spa buzz – and musical performance, theater and art exhibitions were as central to the spa experience as taking the waters.

These oft-tortured artists certainly went for physical and mental health problems, and to hobnob with potential patrons, but they seemed to intuitively know what the medical evidence now tells us: stress is the creativity killer, and stress-reduction (thermal bathing, massage, time in nature) helps creative thinking flow. Just as spa "audiences" then seemed to know what the evidence also now tells us: experiencing music, art and literature has a proven, positive impact on mental health, and should be a much bigger component of any true "wellness cure."

Professor David Clay Large's talk showed that historically, spa culture was a creative/artistic culture (from his important new book, *The Grand Spas of Central Europe: A History of Intrigue, Politics, Art, and Healing*). And one might ask, what happened? How did "wellness" become all about chasing physical fitness and beauty at the expense of creative, artistic and intellectual pursuits and programs? A complex answer to be sure.

Well today, decades later, you can feel the boomerang just starting to curve back. With creativity and the arts (both as experienced and practiced) becoming once again central to wellness concepts – and at hotels, wellness retreats, spas and studios – in years ahead.

Schloss Elmau (Germany) allows thousands of musicians and writers to "play to stay" every year. Image Source: Schloss Elmau via eightyfourrooms.com

Dietmar Mueller-Elmau (Schloss Elmau) explained the deep creativity programming at his famed German spa retreat, with 220 concerts/performances a year. Image Source: Global Wellness Summit by Michelle Hirnsberger

WE WILL SEE MORE...

- Classes and programming that get people painting, drawing, writing, journaling, learning photography, singing, dancing (as creative expression, not just as workout) and music-making, etc. at hotels, wellness retreats, spas, and fitness studios. And without debating the line between "arts" and "crafts," much more therapeutic making with one's hands, used intentionally as meditative stress-reducer, like the rage for ceramics, knitting or weaving classes. Who-would-have-predicted trends like the surge in adult coloring books or "adult summer camps" show people's desperate need to re-find that lost, creative ("crafty") child. Accessible, (because simple) creative approaches like the coloring book will trend on, but the creativity programs will also head in more sophisticated directions.

- Art and live performance (music, readings, etc.) at hotels, wellness retreats, spas and fitness studios. Why have we, for instance, suffered so much banal spa "music" when we have thousands of years of sublime music to draw on? The trend toward "more performance" at wellness destinations currently finds its most powerful expression in the rage for mystical sound baths and new breeds of sonic, multi-sensory experiences and "ceremonies" at studios, retreats and spas – with star practitioners wielding Himalayan and crystal singing bowls, chimes, gongs, bells and tuning forks to create mind- and stress-melting concerts that accompany meditation, yoga, massages and bathing. But other types of art and performance will become more central to wellness destinations and experiences – whether classical violin or multimedia art.

- Artists, writers, musicians and creative professionals turning to every form of stress-reduction – whether meditation, yoga, breathwork, exercise, thermal bathing, massage, time in nature – to kick-start the creative process. And turning to wellness retreats/spas/studios that package them handily as places where creative insights can best get accomplished. (This programming is becoming more standard at writers' and artists' retreats). And because "creativity" spans far more than composing "Requiem" or penning a great novel (it's the application of imaginative solutions to all human endeavors), more "regular people" will seek these wellness approaches and destinations to spur creative breakthroughs about any challenge they face, whether in relationships or at work.

At Aire Ancient Baths (NYC) you can float in the magical underground thermal pools serenaded by live flamenco guitar. Image Source: Aire Ancient Baths

MEDICAL EVIDENCE:
Stress is Creativity's Enemy – And a Creative Life Is a Healthier Life

A raft of medical and neuroscience research show that stress is the biggest obstacle to creative thinking - and that stress-and cortisol-reducing, and serotonin, dopamine and alpha-brain-wave-generating - approaches (whether meditation, massage, yoga, exercise) are clear paths to unlocking creativity. When we're stressed, the brain channels resources to the primitive "survival mode" areas, away from brain regions associated with creativity and abstract thought. While it's too complex to explain how many parts/processes of the brain play their part in creativity here, neuroscience shows that communication between the two lobes of the brain is key (i.e., whole brain activation, while stress builds "walls") – and that creative breakthroughs come from a wandering mind that moves away from a problem we're obsessing on, to different, undemanding tasks. Alpha brain waves – which happen when your brain is an idling state, whether daydreaming, practicing meditation, or doing aerobic exercise - help creative thinking. And a potent creativity cocktail is boosting serotonin (you're operating from sense of calm, not anxiety) and dopamine, again all boosted by yoga, meditation, massage and exercise. Various studies also show REM sleep is crucial to creative thinking, and that it's also increased when we disconnect from technology, are in a happy mood, and spend time in nature. So, a wellness retreat is a natural, evidence-backed creativity retreat.

A whole other raft of studies show the wide-ranging impact that creative pursuits and "art therapies" (whether music, writing, dance, painting, ceramics, etc.) have on both physical and mental health: from significantly reducing depression and anxiety to findings that creative lives are longer lives. One review of 100 studies on how artistic/creative pursuits impact health can be found here: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2804629/

EXAMPLES:
Creativity & Wellness Connections at Hotels, Wellness Retreats, Spas & Studios

Schloss Elmau: This "Luxury Spa Retreat and Cultural Hideaway" in a castle in Germany's Bavarian Alps is the unrivaled example of a wellness retreat magnificently merged with musical and cultural programming. Creativity is in its 100-year-old soul: it opened in 1916 as a refuge for artists and writers (and as a concert hall), and since 2007 (when it opened as a spa resort, with a new retreat facility added in 2015) it has been feeding both mind and body in entirely unique and equal ways: bodies are nurtured at its five spas, one of the world's largest hammams, their refreshing "Yoga Without Dogma" program, and a dizzying profusion of pools. The brain and creative soul are engaged by 220 concerts and performances each year (from world-class classical and jazz musicians, poets, writers) in its 300-seat concert hall. Not to mention two incredible libraries and the largest bookshop in any hotel, anywhere. And Schloss Elmau offers a model that other resorts might pay attention to (if not on such a grand scale!): it allows thousands of top musicians, writers and thinkers (and their families) to "play to stay" every year: they perform for stress-reducing downtime. (A heady, high-cultural destination...no wonder it was chosen as the site of the G7 in 2015.)

Few wellness retreats will build full-blown concert halls, and Schloss Elmau's owner cautions that the music and art must be first class, and properties must have an authentic passion for what they're undertaking. But now more are adding simpler, but still stirring, musical performances. The new **Gainsborough Bath Spa Hotel** (UK), in a famed 18th-19th century destination where "taking the waters" was always combined with a rich culture of theater and concerts, not only offers wellness seekers everything from ice grottos, salt rooms and Malay massage, its Roman bath circuit is experienced with classical music curated by Pump Room violinist, Robert Hyman. At **Aire Ancient Baths (NYC)** you can float in the magical, candlelit underground thermal pools serenaded by live flamenco guitar and Sufi flute.

Le Monastère des Augustins, "a historic haven of culture and wellness" (Quebec) marries comprehensive wellness programs (yoga, meditation, Pilates, spa) with a museum, creative workshops on everything from painting to embroidery, and ongoing concerts.

Revered destination spas, like **Canyon Ranch** (Tucson, U.S.) or **Rancho La Puerta** (Mexico), have long offered classes in creative arts: from sculpting, mandala drawing or Japanese Kumihimo braiding at the former, to the latter's workshops on everything from painting to writing. But you can feel the creative menus inch towards equal billing with physical wellness: like at **The Lodge at Woodloch** (Poconos, Pennsylvania), using watercolor painting, drawing classes and intensive journaling workshops as paths to self-discovery. Or at **Spa Village Tembok** (Bali), where it's all about immersion in indigenous arts, from traditional Lontar drawing to Balinese dance, even using guided meditation techniques to spark creativity.

Coloring Books...and Beyond: Adult – or "mindful" - coloring books have more than trended: 12 million were sold last year in the U.S. alone, and they're becoming a fixture at hotels, wellness retreats and spas. They may seem like creativity "baby steps" but they're helping many people break the creative ice. And there are so many examples: from the **Costa Rica Marriott's** (San Jose) "Art Therapy" classes using coloring therapy to the **Gladstone Hotel's** (Toronto) "TGIF Adult Coloring" workshops with cocktails and

At the new Gainsborough Bath Spa Hotel (UK) the Roman bath circuit is experienced with classical music curated by Pump Room violinist, Robert Hyman. Image Source: Gainsborough Bath Spa Hotel

Mandarin Oriental's new, brand-wide "Digital Wellness" program, using coloring books and journaling in its spas. Image Source: Mandarin Oriental

music to **Mandarin Oriental's** new, brand-wide "Digital Wellness" program, which uses coloring books, journaling and notecard writing in its spas.

But hotels and spas are heading well beyond the coloring book. **Casa Madrona** (Sausalito, California) interweaves creativity, culture and spa with its "Art of the Sea" package, including private art/painting lessons, tickets to museums, and spa treatments. And **Kimpton Hotels** are getting people painting: **Hotel Monaco** (Portland, Oregon) provides easels, brushes and paint at their evening wine hours, and **Tideline Ocean Resort & Spa** (Palm Beach, Florida) offers nights of painting under the stars.

Sound Baths & Multisensory Experiences: As noted, the uber-trendiest example of "more performance" in wellness is the profusion of sound baths and "aural ceremonies" at so many studios and spas – with practitioners orchestrating complex sonic and sensory "journeys" using everything from singing bowls to tuning forks. Examples include **Miraval's** (Tucson, Arizona) therapists playing Himalayan singing bowls in pools as guests float blissfully to **Woom Center's** (NYC) multi-sensory "yoga concerts" which combine visual projections, diffused scents, and trippy sound experiences (from rain sticks to class members' own vocal vibrations). Humans today certainly want their stressed-out minds blown. And an early (1990s) pioneer of more literal multisensory "sound baths" was the "Liquid Sound" experiences at **Toscana Therme Spas** (Germany, Austria): a multimedia-artist-designed experience where one floats in warm salt water, gently manipulated by therapists, with over-water light shows and underwater music turning the pool into a mind-melting concert hall.

A welcome twist on the trend is more actual artists designing multi-sensory wellness experiences, like Viennese artist **Sha's** experiential "pods" (the **AlphaSphere** and **Wolke 7 Cloud 9**) that cradle people in warm, alpha-wave-driving cocoons of light, color, sound, music and vibration for outrageously relaxing art-wellness experiences (now at 100+ global spa and design hotels). Summit presenter and renowned futurist, Edie Weiner (CEO, president, The Future Hunters), argued that brain imaging shows that humans have far more than five senses, they have thousands - and wellness centers/spas haven't even scratched the surface of impacting that sensory panorama. But they will, with virtual reality and haptic technologies (which deploy thousands of sensors that can deliver vibrations, touch, temperature and motion) on the march.

The Art Hotel: We've had wellness-branded hotels, and now more hotel concepts are putting art and creativity at their core. **21c Museum Hotels'** brand (7 Southeastern U.S. hotels, and more coming) is all about putting contemporary art into everyday life, and they're packed with art, and offer performances, poetry readings, art tours and video lounges where they screen films and new media work. **W Hotels** is re-angling its brand squarely at the global creative set. For instance, the **W Bali-Seminyak** just unveiled "W Sound Suites", with a private music studio and writer's room so professional and amateur recording artists can lay down their tracks on the road (expected at W Hollywood, Barcelona and Seattle soon). The brand new, art-themed **Renwick Hotel** (NYC) has design elements like TV stands that look like easels, rooms filled with origami kits and drawing supplies, and special suites with easels, paint and canvases.

New models: Concepts are getting interesting. The new **Augeo Art Gallery & Spa** (Rimini, Italy) is a high-design wonder that combines an art gallery and spa in a unified concept (specifically to bring "creativity" and the "body" together). The gorgeous gallery space is on the first floor, while the gorgeous spa occupies the basement.

Augeo Art Gallery & Spa (Rimini, Italy) is a high-design wonder that combines an art gallery and spa. Image Source: Augeo Art Gallery & Spa

THE FUTURE

Creativity, art therapy and live performance have essentially been a "nice diversion" at wellness centers and spas. But creative programming will continue to take a more starring role. The intention has changed, as more people grasp how crucial creative pursuits are to true mental wellness – and as more people grasp the medical evidence indicating that so many wellness approaches (meditation, exercise, time-in-nature, and all forms of stress-reduction, like massage) are potent paths to creative insight. A stronger connection between creativity and wellness is the future, but it's also an uncanny return...to the long history when artists and thinkers flocked to spas, and spas had culture at the heart of their experience.

The Past:
For centuries, the beauty industry has focused squarely on enhancing outward appearances, delivering "hope in a jar" through cosmetics and topical products.

The Future:
Wellness has disrupted the world of beauty almost beyond recognition. In order to look good, you have to feel good. No longer is the focus only on external measures to enhance beauty, instead there is a shift to a holistic approach; a movement from artificial to organic; from cosmetic repair to on-going prevention; from topicals to ingestibles – along with scientific validation that beauty changes everything.

Kerstin Florian, founder of Kerstin Florian Skincare, holds up the "Beauty Ball" - which, at $999 billion, represents the largest segments of the $3.7 billion Wellness Economy - during GWS 2016. Image Source: Global Wellness Summit by Michelle Hirnsberger

TREND #5
Wellness Remakes Beauty

Borders between beauty and wellness blur: the $999 billion beauty sector gets a shake up thanks to seismic shifts in the way we aspire to and perceive true beauty

The Summit opened with a "beauty bang" – award-winning director and cinematographer Louie Schwartzberg shared breathtaking imagery of nature in motion, explaining that "beauty is nature's tool for survival – you protect what you love." The science behind beauty was explained by neuroscientist Dr. Claudia Aguirre who showed how our brains actually perceive beauty, persuasively arguing that we need beauty in our lives: it brings hope, connectedness and, ultimately, wellness.

Research was presented on the staggering size of the nearly $1 trillion "Beauty and Anti-aging" sector which is truly at the center of the $3.7 trillion global wellness economy. Something that was reinforced by BABOR Cosmetics USA President and COO, Mark Wuttke, and explored deeply in a breakout session that focused on the intersection between beauty and wellness.

THE TREND

Intuitively, we all know beauty and wellness go hand in hand – and that 'aspiring to beauty' can be one of the key motivators we have for keeping physically, spiritually and mentally fit. This year's Summit reflected the blurring borders between beauty and wellness. Of the many takeaways from the main stage was the staggering size of the nearly $1 trillion "Beauty and Anti-aging" sector at the center of the now $3.7 trillion global wellness economy. Neuroscientist Dr. Claudia Aguirre helped delegates connect the dots about how our brains perceive beauty, making it clear that beauty and attractiveness is way more than skin deep and it affects all of our senses: we don't just see beauty, but we can also feel, hear, smell and taste it – and, because "beauty" stimulates our brains in so many ways, Aguirre argued that we need beauty in our lives: it brings hope, connectedness and, ultimately, wellness.

But it's how we are achieving and thinking about beauty that has evolved so dramatically in recent years. There is a new aesthetic in town and it's health and wellness – no matter your shape or size. (Think Unilever's Dove Real Beauty campaign vs. traditional fashion spreads in Vogue.)

The "beauty industry" has been slowly shape shifting – with social media (Instagram stars, Facebook feeds) leading the way and influencing what we think is beautiful and the best ways to achieve it. A phenomenon that has given rise to new tribes and trends as individuals gravitate to the things that turn them on – whether it's the latest punishing workout, mindful meditation, ingesting superfoods, eating organic/clean foods, or seeking the latest (miracle) non-invasive anti-aging treatment – there's a virtual cornucopia of ways wellness is remaking the beauty industry.

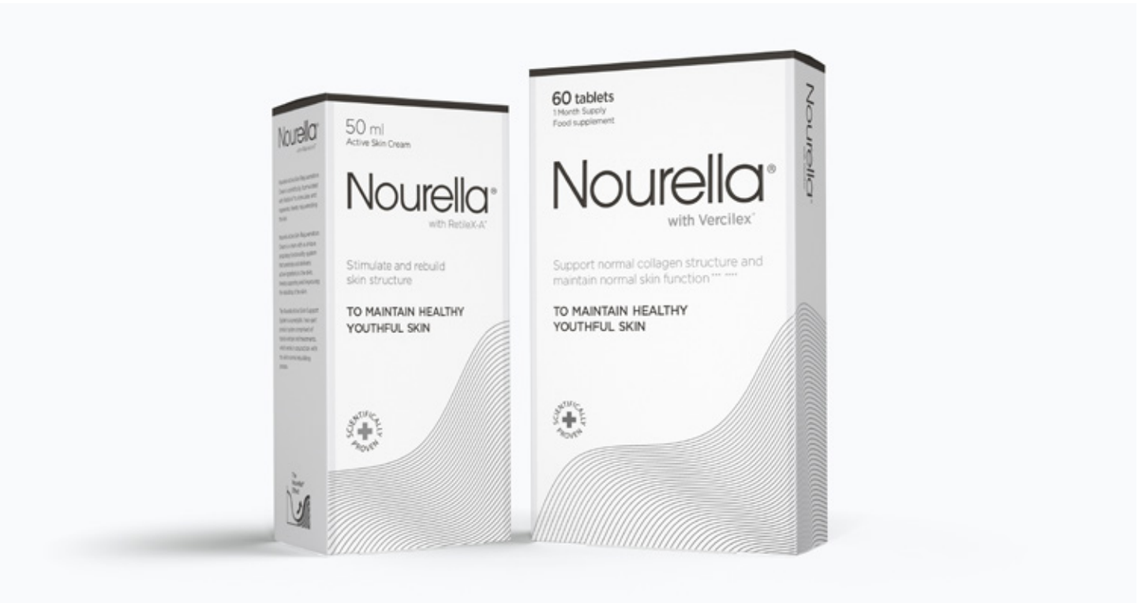
And the scientific and medical evidence for the merging of wellness and beauty really stacks up: there's overwhelming evidence of the positive effects that diet, exercise, sleep and stress reduction, to name just a few, can have on our outward appearance. Exercise alone is a beautifier – oxygenating the blood to give skin a healthful 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 healthier, and, of course, there are extensive studies on the connection between gut health and glowing skin, prompting the explosion of probiotics down almost every aisle of the grocery store.

And, perhaps most importantly, self-esteem and mental wellbeing soar when we are at our most attractive and fit – and wellness practices and treatments (be they effective age defying facials, fillers or Botox, daily yoga sessions or regular massages) help us achieve this – ultimately, making us more attractive to one another.

AUTHENTIC, CLEAN BEAUTY

The consumer revolution goes beyond just looking for organic or natural topical skincare products: looking good, feeling good and even doing good is all part of today's beauty aesthetic. That means embracing products that are ethically sourced – without hurting anyone (animal or human) in the process – and that are natural without being boring or ineffectual.

Nourella, pills that actively rebuild collagen in the skin. Image Source: Nourella



Just as big food brands have been made to pivot towards today's "new" conscious consumer, big beauty brands are beginning to wake up to the fact that they need to catch up with consumers that care deeply about the ingredients and ethos of the products they choose to put on or in their bodies – or slowly fade into obsolescence. L'Oréal, the world's largest beauty company, is already addressing this with its "Sharing Beauty with All" program, which promises to embed more sustainable business practices into every aspect of their value chain by 2020, committing to ensure that 100% of their products show environmental or social improvement.

Because today's consumer not only knows "you are what you eat," but also what you do and even what you think, there has been a rise in independent, clean/organic brands – with real stories - like RMS Beauty (from make up artist Rose-Marie Swift), 100% Pure, Guy Morgan Apothecary, and ILA-Spa, a skin care line that touts itself as "beyond organic". Already, the global organic personal care market is projected to reach nearly $16 billion by 2020.

We expect big beauty brands to continue acquiring niche brands – like L'Oréal's $1.2 billion acquisition of IT cosmetics, and Unilever's purchase of premium, clinical brand Murad and the trendy natural Brit brand REN in 2015 - to help shore up revenues and growth and connect to today's consumers.

INSIDE-OUT BEAUTY REMEDIES

The "new beauty" aesthetic has recast yoga, mediation and exercise as a path to beauty, while also giving rise to functional approaches that promise to heal and nurture from the inside out. There's been an explosion of trendily packaged beauty drinks, superfoods, pills, and supplements that deliver old-world wisdom of ancient wellness practices; and food-inspired beauty remedies – from the likes of kale, kombucha, chia, nuts, turmeric, seaweed, blueberry, bearberry, and probiotics – are also making it into our skincare lines as we seek news ways to benefit from their

Nutricosmetics, like Bottled Science's Skinade, a drinkable collagen, are part of the inside-out beauty trend helping to re-shape the beauty industry with wellness at its core. Image Source: Skinaid

Along with the natural "beauty foods," has come a rise in nutraceuticals (pills and supplements that aid health) and "nutricosmetics" (ingestible supplements specifically designed for beauty) that promise – and, in some cases, clinically proven – to provide miracles with your hormones, immune system, skin and hair. Traditionally, ingesting foods and supplements for health and beauty has been a mainstay of Asian culture – and that's where they originate from – but they're starting to make an impact globally.

Estimated to become a $7.4 billion global industry by 2020, many nutricosmetics, like Skinade from Bottled Science, a drinkable collagen, and Nourella, collagen in pill form, are popular with celebs and plebes alike and have already been shown to work in clinical trials published in the Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology and the Journal of Applied Cosmetology.

Also thanks to Asia and its heavily-polluted cities, a growing awareness of the harsh effects of pollution on our skin has created a need for "outside-in" protection, creating a physical barrier that protects skin from airborne particles.

Here are images of Fountain beauty supplements, with diverse active molecules easily absorbed in liquid form. Image Source: Fountain/DECIEM

Antioxidants play a big role and sunscreen is often part of the remedy too. Some pollution protectors include Dr. Andrew Weil for Origins Mega-Defense SPF 45 Advanced UV Defender and Elizabeth Arden Prevage City Smart.

PREVENTION, NOT REPAIR

So the traditional "cosmetic repair" model has given way to a beauty approach that revolves around prevention and the forestalling of aging by, yes, creating health and wellness from the inside, but (almost always) combining this with a little help in the form of preventative cosmetic augmentation (i.e., fillers/lasers/extreme facials/micro lifts). Making small preventative adjustments that offer steady and subtle results means not playing catch up in your 50s, 60s and 70s with a major plastic surgery procedure.

During the Summit, trend forecaster, David Bosshart identified "negotiable reality" as a super-trend pointing out that, because of smartphones and social media, more photos were taken last year than in the whole of the rest of the history of mankind. This, combined with a general lack of time, is driving some to go for the immediately gratifying result of cosmetic procedures that help us look more like our Instagram filters – casting us in the glow of "natural" beauty.

NEW NOTIONS OF BEAUTY

Finally, there has also been a fundamental cultural reconsideration of the concept of beauty itself. For example, Weight Watchers hosted a breakout during the Summit in which they shared how they are changing the conversation –no longer focusing on "weight-loss" as the end-goal, but, instead, embracing overall wellness – including mindfulness and adventure - which, in turn, brings out true beauty and real results for their members. The bottom line: if you're unhealthy or unhappy, you simply don't look or seem beautiful – no matter how much (or little) you weigh or how much make-up you apply.

Still, the pursuit of beauty is a natural one…as filmmaker Louie Schwartzberg made clear with his opening comment during the Summit: "Beauty is nature's tool for survival…you protect what you love." While Dr. Aguirre talked about the scientific proof behind the need for beauty in our lives – and how it affects our brains, asking: "Can beauty change our self-esteem? Absolutely. And can we then change our industry and the world around us? Absolutely."

THE FUTURE

More emphasis will be put on the brain/beauty connection with the study of neuroaesthetics, the science of how our brain responds to art, music and beauty, taking center stage. Anjan Chatterjee's book, The Aesthetic Brain: How We Evolved to Desire Beauty and Enjoy Art explains why we all are on a quest for beauty, whether it's the innate pleasure of watching the sunset over the sea, or being undeniably attracted to a mate, or choosing flowers for your home, beauty brings us pleasure.

As awareness builds that we are "wired" to desire things that are beautiful to us – there is scientific proof that the brain is flooded with pleasure-inducing neurotransmitter when taking in an object we deem beautiful – society as a whole will become less self-conscious in its quest for personal beauty. And there will be a better understanding – and acceptance - as to why the balance more often than not tips in favor of attractive people that exude self-confidence over those who are less so. Let's face it, scientific proof that personal and professional success is tethered to beauty is the biggest motivator there is for achieving wellness and, ultimately, looking and feeling the best we can.

Neuroscientist Dr. Claudia Aguirre at GWS 2016 explains how our brains perceive beauty, arguing that we need beauty in our lives: it brings hope, connectedness and, ultimately, wellness. Image Source: Global Wellness Summit by Michelle Hirnsberger

The Past:
A physical health focus has dominated in the wellness industry, over-shadowing mental wellbeing and happiness. If the term "mind/body" found a welcome audience within the spa and wellness community, "body/mind" would have been a truer representation. Yes, in the past decade yoga, meditation and mindfulness evolved into mainstream wellness approaches. And during the 2013 Summit in New Delhi, India, His Holiness the Dalai Lama made it very clear in his presentation, "a healthy mind is the key factor for a healthy body...wellness must include a happy mind."

The Future:
Due to increasing levels of stress as well as a greater understanding of brain science, the proper relationship between mind/body is getting clearer. With an alarming mental wellness crisis (spiking depression, anxiety, etc.), wellness retreats, spas, fitness studios, schools, workplaces and governments will step up "healthy mind" programming...in 2017 and beyond.

Image Source: Flickr by Spirit-Fire

TREND #6

The Future is Mental Wellness

Mental wellness will be the biggest future trend, period: from wellness destinations bringing in neuroscientists and psychotherapists - to meditation becoming seriously mainstream, while evolving into new breeds – to part-mind, part-body workout brands – to apps that track your mental state

A massively bigger focus on mental wellness – whether in new programming at hotels, wellness retreats and spas or schools and workplaces – was an uber-trend identified by Summit experts. The mounting crisis was laid out. Global economist, Thierry Malleret, explained how, despite our era of historic economic abundance, depression, anxiety disorders, loneliness, addiction and suicide is skyrocketing. So much so that the World Health Organization has forecast that by 2030 the largest health risk on earth will be depression (not obesity). Leading integrative medical experts, like Dr. Elke Benedetto-Reisch and Nils Behrens (Lanserhof Group); Drs. Harry and Imke Koenig (Brenner's Park Hotel & Spa); and Dr. Christine Stossier (VIVAMAYR Medical Clinic) outlined the serious new problems they're seeing: from "total burnout" to exploding disorders around stress and the "gut" - with agreement that traditional medicine tends not to see the whole (emotional) patient, or act on evidence that the mind influences every cell in the body. They argued that the wellness industry must zero in on teaching people "the discipline of living again": to restore day and night, work and rest, learn the connection between bad food and bad mood, and the (painful) discipline of digitally disconnecting. (Notably, the first Summit award for a leader in mental wellness (the Debra Simon Award) went to Jeremy McCarthy, director of spa & wellness for Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group and author of *The Psychology of Spas & Wellbeing*, for his work in bringing the power of positive psychology to the attention of the spa industry.)

Governments will recognize that a focus on mental wellbeing and happiness is an important key to turning around declining productivity and rising social instability. For instance, Jan-Emmanuel De Neve (economics professor, Oxford University; co-editor of the UN's World Happiness

Report) keynoted on how nations (like the UAE, with their new "Minister of Happiness"), which used to focus only on GDP, are now looking closely at new measures of (and new policies to drive more) national happiness, because "happiness" drives the economy: from studies showing that unhappy teens earn significantly less as adults, to ones showing happy workers are significantly more productive.

Gerry Bodeker, PhD (clinical psychologist; professor, Oxford and Columbia Universities) laid it on the line for the wellness industry, arguing, "It's time to put a stake in the ground and say… we care about this mental wellness crisis and we're already doing something about it. Because wellness approaches like meditation, exercise, yoga and healthy food already have strong medical evidence for transformative neurological effects, and make a powerful case for a 'mental wellness' pathway that's distinct from what's been long offered in the world of 'mental health'". The future: "mind" will finally matter as much as "body"– and so many new approaches to driving less stress and more happiness will be one of the biggest, future industry trends.

THE TREND

Mental disorders are skyrocketing globally: between 1990 and today, people suffering from depression or anxiety increased roughly 50% (to over 600 million people - WHO). Antidepressant use has exploded in OECD countries, but simultaneously depression, anxiety disorders, PTSD, OCD, phobias (and suicide) keep climbing. We all know the new forces conspiring to make us more miserable: from rising global economic inequality to constant digital/work/media connection.

Social media (keeping us "alone together") takes its terrible toll: consider a new NHS study revealing that more than one in four young women (aged 16-24 – the ultimate "selfie" generation) now have a mental health condition like depression or anxiety. And from "fake news" to our social media "bubbles", the very idea of an agreed-upon "reality" is fast disappearing. No wonder that Oxford English Dictionary named "post-truth" the 2016 word of the year, or that the Danish wellbeing concept of "hygge" – burying oneself into cozy, nest-like environments - was runner-up. People feel crazier, sadder and angrier…and need relief.

Gerry Bodeker, PhD (professor, Oxford and Columbia Universities) arguing "It's time for the wellness industry to stick a flag in the ground and say…we care about this mental wellness crisis…" Image Source: Global Wellness Summit by Michelle Hirnsberger

The Den in LA - one of the new, unintimidating "drop-in-and meditate" studios. Image Source: The Den Meditation in LA

ASPECTS OF TREND

- New "integrative" mental wellness approaches: including hotels, wellness retreats and spas bringing in psychotherapists and neuroscientists.
- Meditation exploding into the accessible mainstream: from dedicated "drop-in" meditation studios to far more mindfulness programming at hotels, retreats, spas, cruises, schools, hospitals, and even governments.
- Sleep programs are hitting THE tipping-point: whether wellness destinations bringing in doctors to design sleep-inducing programs/ rooms to retreats offering each guest a dedicated "Sleep Ambassador."
- So many new directions, from a dedicated focus on breath work and breathing classes (as proper breathing controls stress response and brain waves) to "bibliotherapy", the prescription of specific literary works as therapy, as readers of literature have lower rates of depression and stress.
- New "mind/body" fitness brands that marry physical workouts with all kinds of interwoven meditation and neuroplasticity approaches.
- Once "really out there", mystical, New Age-y mental solutions going mainstream: from shamans as mental coaches to trippy sound baths.
- Yes, the continued explosion of meditation apps, but also new "tracking" apps that measure your mental wellness (stress, breaths taken, etc.). Think "MindBit" not "FitBit".
- A new focus on creativity and the arts – and "silence" and digital disconnection.

WELLNESS APPROACHES ARE "MENTAL MEDICINE"

Dr. Gerry Bodeker argued that the wellness industry has been too passive in communicating the strong medical evidence for so many wellness modalities' impact on mental health. A big meta-analysis (this month) of past studies (data on 1.1 million people) re-confirmed 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. A 2016 Oxford University meta-analysis found that mindfulness-based therapy

ESPA Life at Corinthia Hotel London has just brought in a "Neuroscientist in Residence" - Dr. Tara Swart from MIT - for an "integrative" approach to mental wellness. Image Source: ESPA Life at Corinthia Hotel

was more effective at reducing depression relapses than antidepressant medication. A 2015 meta-review found that yoga improved symptom scores for anxiety and depression by about 40%. And a large, new Ghent University meta-review showed that happiness isn't just some "feeling", it improves focus, imagination and complex issues of mental flexibility - i.e., the very way your brain processes external and internal information.

NEW DIRECTIONS – EXAMPLES:

Integrative Mental Wellness at Retreats & Spas:

At **Hotel Café Royal's Akasha** spa (London) a cognitive therapist joins the packed roster of wellness specialists in nutrition, meditation, reiki, etc. At **Stanglwirt** (Kitzbuhel, Austria) a resident clinical psychologist offers everything from relaxation hypnosis to burnout prevention.

ESPA Life at Corinthia Hotel London has just brought in a "Neuroscientist in Residence" (Dr. Tara Swart from MIT) to create new programs tackling mental wellness, resilience and positivity.

The **Arrigo Program retreats** (first for women, now adding men), at hideaways in the UK, France, Italy, Spain and Sri Lanka, squarely focus on helping people find their mental footing. Led by famed psychotherapist, Fiona Arrigo, the team of therapists cover everything from neurotherapy to breath work to addiction counseling. And now **The Surrey Hotel (NYC)** is bringing in Arrigo for an intensive "Mind Cleanse" program.

Meditation Mania:

Drop-In Studios: From **The Den** and **Unplug** in LA, to **MNDFL** in NYC, new, unintimidating "just-drop-in-and meditate" studios are making the practice a lunchtime possibility. The new **Inscape (NYC)** is the first "multi-platform meditation brand", operating classes at its Manhattan studio and with an app like Headspace.

On-demand meditation: At **The Benjamin (NYC)**, as part of their doctor-designed "Rest & Renew" sleep program, you just pick up the phone and select either mindfulness or mantra meditation. **Park Hyatt New York** just partnered with drop-in studio MNDFL for both in-room meditation and group classes in their vast **Spa Nalai**.

"Meditation" Goes Plural: You know a market is in high gear when varietals bloom. At more hospitality brands (like **Mandarin Oriental New York**) you can bask in beyond-trendy, sound bath meditation – at **Solage Calistoga (California)** you can take "floating meditation" classes, with visualization and breathing exercises played out on rafts in the geothermal pool.

Euromonitor recently flagged the trend of "mindfulness safaris" rising across Africa – and **Seabourn Cruises** will launch a fleet-wide mindful living program in 2017, born out of a partnership with Dr. Andrew Weil.

Sleep Is "It":

As Nils Behrens of Lanserhof Group put it at the Summit: "Sleep is the new black." The sleep and mental wellness connection is now being communicated everywhere, like at Arianna Huffington's new mental wellness media platform **Thrive Global**, whose mission is to "end the epidemic of stress and burnout", and with the main focus on sleep. (First product is "The Phone Bed," a charging station that puts a family's devices "to bed" outside their bedrooms.)

Champneys Tring's (UK) new sleep retreat includes everything from six sleep treatment sessions to sleep massages. **Rancho La Puerta** (Mexico) provides guests with "sleeping bags" for mobile phones. And **Six Senses Resorts** are rolling out a comprehensive program, designed by famous sleep doctor, Michael J. Breus, with rooms featuring handmade mattresses; organic pillows, sheets and duvets with cooling and breathing zones; circadian lighting and "total blackout." Or opt for a Sleep Ambassador who fine-tunes your room for your optimal sleep conditions and reviews your sleep-tracker app data to recommend a healthy new regime.

From Breathing Classes to Bibliotherapy:

More Breath Work: Studies show that breathing controls brain waves that can reduce symptoms of anxiety, insomnia, PTSD, depression and even ADD. Breathing training has been called practical meditation for people who can't meditate. **Andaman** (Langkawi Island, Malaysia) has a new detox program where meditation and the yogic art of breathing are the centerpieces. Breath training will even become central to the new "mindful" spa treatments, like "The Happiness Treatment" at **Neom Organics** (London) with guided meditation and breath work.

Book Therapy: When you consider the surge in unhappiness, one needs to ponder what modern culture has lost, and it's reading literature. Nearly a quarter of American adults have not read a single book in the last year, and in the UK, less than 1 in 5 bought a novel or a book of stories/ poetry in the last year. It's a problem, because studies show that reading puts our brains in a trance-like meditative state, and that regular readers have lower stress, depression, and sleep better than people who don't read.

At Solage Resort & Spa (Calistoga, California) you can experience "floating meditation." Image Source: Solage Resort & Spa by Briana Marie

An excellent *New Yorker* article (6/2016) on the subject, "Can Reading Make You Happier?", detailed the rise in "bibliotherapy" - or specialists (like the **School of Life Clinic**, with trained therapists around the world) prescribing expert-chosen literary fiction as mental therapy.

The Trippier, The Trendier: One of the most striking things about the wellness landscape today is how practices that would have been seen as "way out there," or overly mystical, five years ago, are now the hottest trends. A sign that desperately stressed people are seeking farther and wider for mental wellness.

Shamans are the new life and mind coaches, like at **Tierra Santa Healing House** (Miami Beach), a wellness center focused on indigenous South American healing, who's brought in a high-profile shaman for its Shaman Purification Rituals.

"Conscious" or "lucid" dreaming and dream meditation is rising, to clean out the subconscious and tackle everything from traumatic stress to sleep disorders. Like at **Dream Reality Cinema** (Beverly Hills) where you lie in zero gravity chairs in what's essentially a "wellness cinema", with virtual reality glasses and headphones taking you on a guided "movie" meditation.

Beyond Cannabis - Psychedelics: While cannabis has been a hot wellness topic for years, more intense (and also natural, plant-based) psychedelics like ayahuasca and magic mushrooms (psilocybin) are increasingly being used with therapeutic intention to tackle issues from chronic depression to phobias. Don't expect psychedelics in wellness establishments soon – but it's notable that it's the medical establishment that's leading investigations.

Meditative, Neuroscience-Inspired Workouts:

New fitness brands that work the mind AND body are appearing. Like **Headstrong** (Equinox gyms, NYC, California, Chicago and London) that uses neuroplasticity concepts to underpin a 4-step group workout (Focus, Adapt, Willpower and Reboot), that aids in memory and learning. Or **In-Trinity**, a brainy concept that melds meditation, yoga, Pilates and martial arts - all performed atop an ergonomic, slanted board - while listening to music that incites meditative brainwaves.

MIND TRACKERS (SLIDE OVER FITBIT)

The explosion of meditation apps – from Headspace to Buddhify – have democratized mindfulness, bringing it to anyone with a smartphone. But beyond the mindfulness apps, the new fitness trackers will trend "mental." In David Bosshart's Summit keynote (called "Data Buddhism") he outlined the incredibly complex ways that a future of ever-more connected data will change everything: from humans turning increasingly "inward" to an increased use of technology to quantify (not just how many steps you took) but your mental, emotional and spiritual states (in our endless quest for "an ever-better self"). For instance, apps like **Spire Mindfulness Tracker** (from Stanford University) analyze your stress by monitoring breathing patterns, and pinpoint what in your day stresses you out.

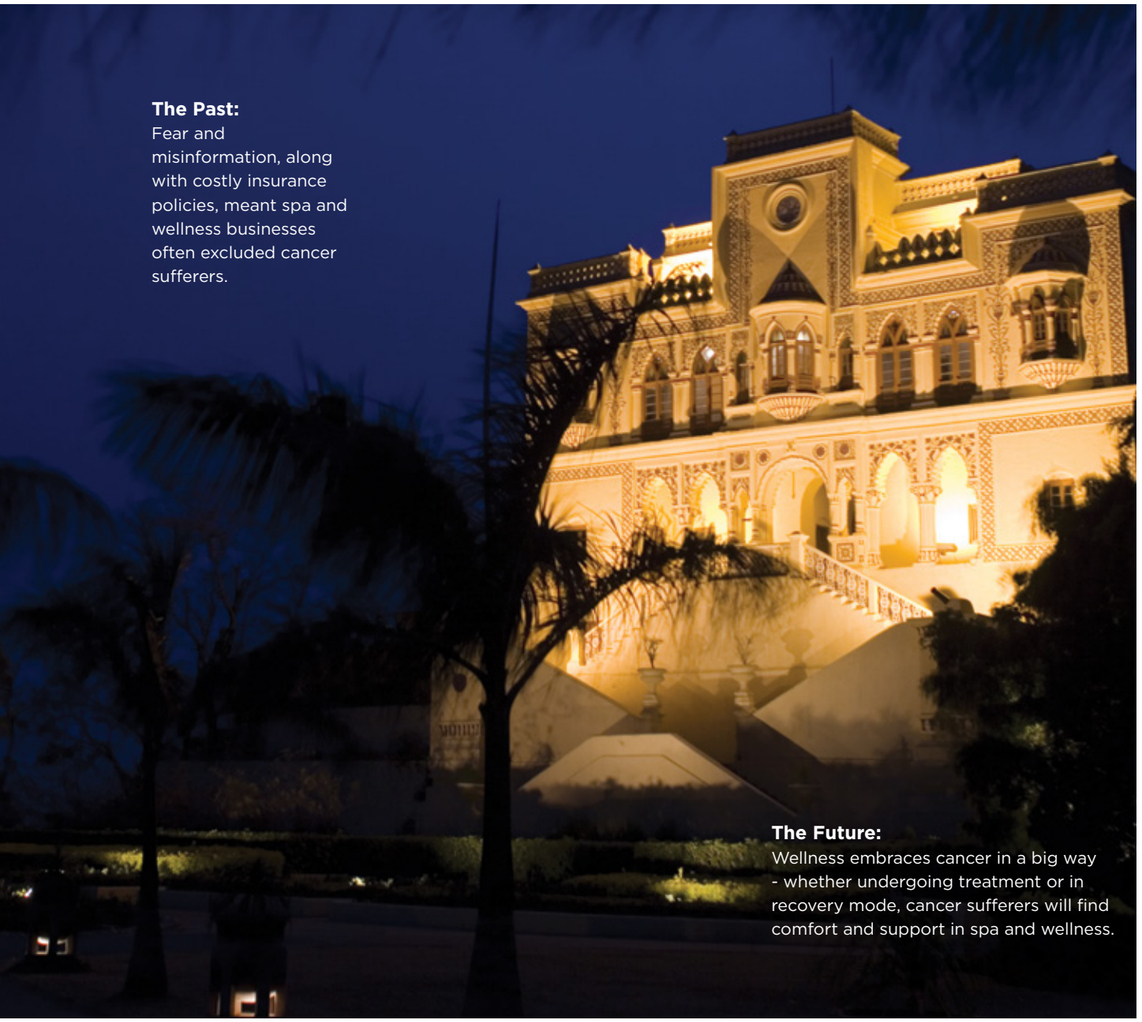
Dream meditation is rising, to clean out the subconscious and tackle everything from traumatic stress to sleep disorders - like at Dream Reality Cinema (Beverly Hills). Image Source: Dream Reality Cinema

THE FUTURE

In the past, the wellness world has tread lightly around asserting its role in tackling mental issues. Yes, they have (softly) broadcast that core approaches like meditation, yoga and exercise (if done regularly) have eye-opening impact. But now, as Dr. Gerry Bodeker argues, they will "stick a flag in the ground", put the mounting evidence more loudly on their side, and create new mental wellness programs and "paths" that are very, very different from what we've known as "mental health" approaches in the past – often a big pile of pills.

The world is only going to get more "mental": more stressful, with more relentless digital and media overload. And wellness retreats, spas and fitness studios - and workplaces, governments, schools and hospitals - will necessarily "shift mental," putting far more emphasis on (and creating important new approaches for) helping desperate people get less anxious and happier. The traditional medical world will shift, too, with the World Health Organization recently pronouncing that mental health is one of its top priorities in the next decade. It's a powerful opportunity and a moral imperative, and wellness for the mind will be one of the most meaningful, powerful trends for decades to come.

Just as wellness tourism developed alongside of, yet distinct from, medical tourism, look for mental wellness to develop alongside, and distinct from, mental health. The distinction is an important one, and mental wellness will be a new category and culture, with very new paths to emotional wellbeing and happiness.



Ananda in the Himalayas is a destination spa that is leading by example, creating a specially trained hospice team to take "wellness for cancer" to the local community. Image Source: Ananda in the Himalayas

TREND #7

Embracing the C-Word

Wellness industry stops turning away cancer sufferers and, instead, provides comfort, solace and positive recovery paths

Equality and fairness in wellness was a common theme at this year's Summit. Cancer sufferers, typically underserved when it comes to wellness options, made significant gains due to organizations like Wellness for Cancer. Julie Bach, who heads this educational platform that trains wellness companies on how to be better equipped to work with cancer patients, said: "The industry's mantra in the past was 'we serve well people' – a non-inclusive policy that is changing."

Bach, who also heads up the GWI Initiative of the same name – Wellness for Cancer – acknowledged companies that are embracing cancer sufferers, and doing what the wellness industry does best: helping them reduce stress, find inner peace and increase emotional resiliency. Some of the trailblazers embracing cancer clients include All4Spas, Biologique Recherche, ESPA, Sanitas Skincare, The Red Door, Two Bunch Palms, Voya and Weight Watchers.

THE TREND

Here's an unpleasant statistic: forty percent 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 shunned by the spa and wellness industry. Much of the hesitation is due to misinformation – could massage spread the effects of a tumor, for example? – but it also has a lot to do with insurance policies in many countries that made working on guests with cancer prohibitively costly due, in large part, to the aforementioned misinformation. Sadly, an industry that prides itself on prevention practices has often refused some of the very people that need their services most.

And, let's not forget, "well" people become "dis-eased" people all the time. Not working on a loyal client simply because he/she is suffering from an ailment like cancer is counter-intuitive to everything "wellness" stands for.

"PSYCHOSOCIAL" ONCOLOGY PUTS PATIENT'S WELL-BEING FIRST

There's reason to cheer the spa and wellness world embracing this critically important issue – during this year's Summit, 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. Dubbed "psychosocial oncology," this research focuses on the issues beyond traditional medical treatments for cancer patients – and, crucially, has slowly begun to create a much more patient-centric environment for cancer care. In fact, just last year in the U.S., the American College of Surgeons decreed that all cancer centers had to have an onsite psychosocial program to get stressed patients into appropriate care.

Of course, we have a long way to go before "wellness" becomes front and center of cancer care but all indications are that the mental toll cancer takes on a patient can be radically lessened by much of what spas have to offer. For example, the inevitable depression that comes with a cancer diagnosis can be abated by mindfulness meditation, while exercise can excite the endorphins; anxiety caused by body image issues can be lessened by touch; skin affected by chemotherapy burns can be soothed and improved with a myriad of treatments; while permanent make up can make a real difference for those suffering from facial hair loss.

Julie Bach, head of Wellness for Cancer, educates wellness companies on how to be better equipped to work with cancer patients. Image Source: Global Wellness Summit by Michelle Hirnsberger

LOOKING GOOD IS PART OF FEELING GOOD

In practical terms, doctors and drugs might save your life, but the desire - and need - to look good doesn't simply disappear with a cancer diagnosis. So, once radiology or chemotherapy is underway, there's a real need to fight the changes it makes to your skin tone and feel. Natura Bissé, a Spanish skin care company that works in collaboration with dermatologists, psychologists and oncologists to develop a program to train estheticians in "oncological aesthetics" who go so far as to visit hospitalized patients to help them feel well, beautiful and cared for, has long been ahead of this trend and conducted a workshop at the 2014 Summit in Mexico City.

Wellness for Cancer training taking place at Bedford Lodge Hotel & Spa, UK. Image Source: Julie Bach

MEDICAL EVIDENCE SUPPORTS WELLNESS IN CANCER CARE

It's worth noting that most of the positive evidence for wellness – from acupuncture to massage – has been done in the name of cancer care. The reason is simple: cancer funding can support such studies. Specific examples: Manual lymph drainage has been tied to preventing secondary lymphedema in women who've had surgery for breast cancer, while massage has been proven to reduce nausea in women with breast cancer undergoing chemotherapy, according to a University of Göteborg trial. A National Taiwan University review reported yoga has a "more positive impact" than supportive group therapy when it comes to reducing anxiety, depression, and stress in cancer patients. While mindfulness/meditation is known to be a huge disrupter of stress and anxiety - issues cancer patients deal with throughout their diagnosis, treatment and recovery.

WELLNESS DESTINATIONS LEADING BY EXAMPLE

This year's Summit co-chair, Sue Harmsworth, CEO of ESPA, helps lead this charge with the program she developed in conjunction with Wellness for Cancer, "ESPA Nurture & Support," specifically designed to help relax, nurture and

Puyssentut, in south-west France, is a haven for people with or recovering from cancer, allowing them to enjoy simple pleasures while being fully cared for and supported. Image Source: Puyssentut.

support guess dealing with cancer. The program was recently added to the ESPA's flagship spa, ESPA Life at the Corinthia in London, U.K.

Ananda in the Himalayas recently hosted Wellness for Cancer training followed by community outreach by a specially trained hospice team to spread cancer care throughout the local villages, a move that resonates with another common theme at this year's Summit: the call for universal wellness beyond property "walls" or or "Beyond the Elite Ghettos of Wellness."

California's Two Bunch Palms has added a Mindful Touch Massage by certified Cancer for Wellness therapists to its extensive menu that included energy healing. All five of the UK-based Center Parcs' Aqua Sana spa locations are also offering a range of treatments for those affected by cancer.

These examples join existing programs at Pennyhill Park, Bedford Lodge Hotel & Spa and Calcot Lodge in the UK, Voya in Ireland, and Estancia Hotel and Spa in California. As well as destination resorts like The Farm at San Benito in the Philippines, which offers natural and holistic 6-night integrative cancer care program; Puyssentut's week-long post-cancer retreats at its restored chateau in south-west France; and Grayshott Spa in the UK's special program to care for people after cancer treatment (with nurses, wellness practitioners, nutritionists, etc.)

THE FUTURE

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, including San Diego, CA-based Bellus Academy, a leading beauty school in the US which is the first beauty and wellness academy in the U.S. to offer the Wellness for Cancer curriculum. And, in the UK,

Beauty Despite Cancer is also offering accredited training programs. While organizations like the Canadian-based Cancer Exercise Training Institute delivers online cancer-specific exercise training courses for professionals.

This more "inclusive" model of wellness will shape a world where wellness pursuits are created equal for those who are well and those who have dis-ease.

The Farm at San Benito in the Philippines offers a natural and holistic 6-night integrative cancer care program. Image Source: The Farm at San Benito

The Past:
Rising income inequalities, and a new culture where wellness is the "ultimate aspiration", have led to a wellness industry perceived as too narrowly associated with wealthy elites

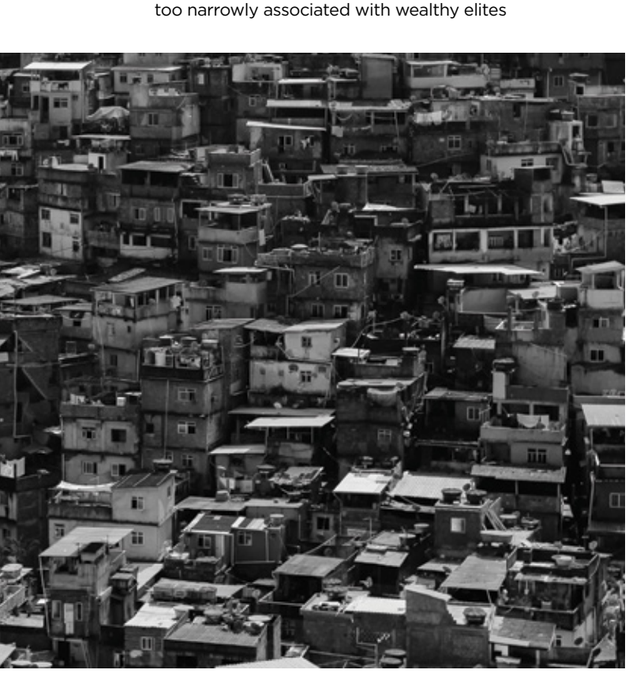


Image Sources: Pexels

The Future:
A heightened perception of "unfairness" in access to wellness makes industry change both a moral and market mandate. And changes will include more wellness businesses giving back and "doing something" to bring more services to more people - wellness tourism development that thinks beyond the property, to the whole community – and more wellness for the workers that actually deliver it

TREND #8

Beyond the Elite "Ghettos" of Wellness

In a world where rising inequality and a sense of "unfairness" is leading to a global, populist backlash – a wellness industry that's become narrowly associated with wealthy elites (...the $300 yoga pants and treatments) must, and will, change

One of the most insistent arguments, resounding through most sessions at the 2016 Summit, was the need for "wellness" to reach further beyond the rich elites. Leading economists painted the new (sudden) global picture: a world where a rising sense of "unfairness" is unleashing a global storm of populism. Economist Thierry Malleret's keynote (Founder, The Monthly Barometer) explored a crucial paradox: in a world where "global economic abundance" has never been higher, why is not only global unwellness (obesity, mental illness, etc.) rising – but why is a wave of populist conservatism underway (i.e, Brexit, Trump, strongmen from Russia to Turkey to the Philippines)? Malleret postulated that it's not as simple as how well nations or individuals are doing economically (a simple matter of "richer" or "poorer"), but the fact that humans are hardwired down to their DNA for "fairness." And a rising, global sense of "unfairness" is unleashing a whole lot of unhappiness.

Economist Jan-Emmanuel De Neve (professor, Oxford University) dove into the UN's latest World Happiness Report (he is co-editor) to explain all the factors beyond GDP/income that are major indicators of human wellbeing (from social connections to health to social freedom), and how the latest report shows that people's perceptions of "inequality of wellbeing" has grown in almost every country over the last few years. So, not only does the world need far more wellness (given skyrocketing chronic disease and mental illness rates), people's heightened sense of "unfairness" in total "wellbeing" is poised to wreak havoc on the world stage.

Andreas Braun, PhD (CEO, Destinations Wattens, Austria), whose talk "Beyond Ghettos of Wellness" inspired this trend's name, examined rising inequalities that have created a wellness industry too associated with the 1%. He mused on his own low-cost, daily health regime (a walk in

Lans, Austria) that takes him past a "...a luxurious destination where the 'burned out' winners of our society vacation", and where, on the other hand, you have a nearby fitness/recreation center for (regular) people paid for the social system. Braun's sharp philosophical insights about such glaring "wellness disconnects" challenged the industry to expand the ways in which they could create more inclusive "economies of social good" – or face a perceptual backlash.

Certainly no economist argued that the wellness industry (the vast majority of which are small businesses) was responsible for overwhelming facts like only 3% of the world population having both an education and regular work, or that the richest 65 people own half of the world's wealth. And the ways that the wellness industry works to be more inclusive was certainly on display: from more spas getting trained to help people with cancer (See Trend) to the student "Shark Tank of Wellness" winner, a young Bangladeshi woman whose concept is to make sustainable sanitary napkins available to 80% of women in her impoverished nation, by using leftover materials from the country's cotton industry. The collective point: governments AND wellness businesses need to bring more healthy services to more people. And the new realities (and perception) about "unfairness" make this both a moral and a market mandate. Because "wellness" businesses that only deliver $300 athleisure leggings or massages will seem increasingly inauthentic - part of the problem, not working towards the solution, which must be...more wellness for all.

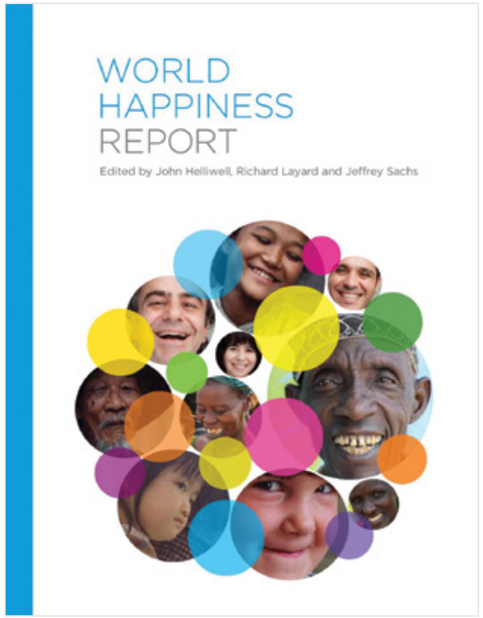
THE TREND

What are "ghettos of wellness"? You know them... people flying to that dreamy tropical island for a stay at a dreamy, 5-star wellness retreat and driving past slums as they enter the gates – or wondering if that amazing local practitioner is actually being paid just a few dollars while the resort is charging you over $200 for a 90-minute massage. All the things you can now purchase in the name of "wellness" in our ever-richer (gentrified) global cities - but against the backdrop of ever-sharpening income inequalities beyond that city...and worldwide.

The media has two distinct voices when it reports on wellness. One is the avalanche of stories and blogs on the latest trends that the "beautiful, young elites" are adopting. The second is a rising, smart mini-industry of "wellness bashing". That media argument: the pursuit of "wellness" is intrinsically a culture of narcissism, an inward-turned obsession with "self-optimization" at the expense of real socio-economic change.

An example of the latter, through a filter of wit and wisdom, is Ruth Whippman's recent book, *The Pursuit of Happiness: Why Are We Driving Ourselves Crazy and How Can We Stop?*.

While reducing "wellness" to its richest (sometimes grotesque) varietals is increasingly understandable – it's, of course, not quite accurate. It's the growth of the global middle class that's most fueling growth for the vast $3.7 trillion wellness market (according to the Global Wellness Institute's new research on the seemingly unstoppable expansion for the healthy food, beauty, fitness, alternative medicine, spa, etc., markets). And a peek into any public gym or YMCA will reveal the packed yoga and Zumba classes. And throwing out the wellness and prevention concept with the elitist "bathwater" is a terrible idea, with stats like the number of obese/overweight people more than doubling since 1980 (to almost 2 billion adults, WHO data) and preventable diseases like heart disease and diabetes now the world's top killers.



The 2016 World Happiness Report shows that people's perceptions of "inequality of wellbeing" has grown in almost every country over the last few years. Image Source: World Happineess Report

increase in the last few years in people's perceptions that there is now more "inequality of wellbeing" – you can feel the criticism of a wellness industry overly-preoccupied with serving rich elites start to ratchet up. We live in an age of socio-economic wake-up calls, with new, world-shocking evidence of what perceived gaps between the "happy" and the "unhappy," the "elites" and those who revile them, can actually do.

Summit experts discussed several key ways that the wellness industry must - and will – change in this new world:

- **More giving back and "doing something" to bring more wellness services to more people.** And if many wellness businesses already have charitable initiatives, the future is a "giving back" and community-building model baked deep into the business model.

- **A new "Wellness Tourism 2.0",** where "wellness" is not merely the province of elites behind the resort's gated walls. The future is a shift from a property focus to developing and promoting towns, regions, and even nations, where more authentic, comprehensive wellness is "packaged": from positive environmental policies to access to sustainable, healthy food to broader social justice – benefiting tourists and locals.

- **A proliferation of lower-cost wellness products and services:** from a new spate of affordable healthy grocery stores to low-cost spa chains. But at the same time, a new focus on the wellbeing of the employees/practitioners that actually deliver all this "wellness." So, lower prices, but a conversation about "fair price" and the state of wellness labor.

WELLNESS BUSINESSES GIVING BACK MORE:

The future is every profitable wellness business giving more to communities, charities and those in need, and bringing more wellness services to people that can't afford them. As Dr. Gerry Bodeker (Professor, Columbia & Oxford Universities) said at the Summit, it can be as simple as spas figuring how many hours a week their therapists just sit there, and sending them out to eldercare facilities or women's shelters. Everyone, from massage therapists to yoga, meditation and fitness teachers, needs to take what they do OUT side of their narrow pasture.

Futurist Edie Weiner argued that more companies in the future will not only be "green", they will be "blue", meaning they will actually give back more (to the environment, the community, etc.) than they take. Image Source: Global Wellness Summit by Michelle Hirnsberger

For instance, the **"Beauty Becomes You Foundation"** sends spa and salon therapists (who donate their time) out into the senior community to deliver desperately needed touch and aesthetic services. The non-profit **"Yoga Gives Back"** has organized so that the yoga community gives back to the poorest mothers and children in yoga's home, India, whether through micro-loans or sending destitute children to school. **Miraval's** (Tucson, Arizona) "Give Back" program allows people to nominate someone going through hard times (and that needs wellness support but lacks the financial resources) to stay for free. And if "wellness culture" has been derided as essentially a-political, Deborah Szekely's (the 94-year-old founder of Mexico's Rancho La Puerta and the Golden Door) new **PolicyWell.com** refutes that charge: this new activist resource rates how each of the 535 members of the U.S. House and Senate vote around bills that affect the health of ALL Americans (whether food justice, public health, unregulated toxins or natural resources).

Renowned futurist, Edie Weiner (CEO, The Future Hunters), argued at the Summit that more companies in the future will not only be "green", they will be "blue", meaning they will actually give back (to the environment, the community, etc.) more than they take. And the future of wellness businesses is giving not only as an add-on, but as foundational to their very model. For instance, **The Golden Door** (California) gives every dime of net profits to charity, especially those with a women's focus. **Le Monastère des Augustins** (Quebec), a wellness hotel set in a 17th-century monastery and hospital, gives all profits to the care of patients and for complimentary hotel-spa stays for their caregivers. And the magnificent **Fogo Island** (off Newfoundland, Canada) proudly defies the "remote island property as wellness ghetto" stereotype: it was designed from the ground up (through its Shorefast Foundation) to restore the economic fortunes of the people there (one of Canada's oldest rural cultures), and every Canadian dollar goes back into that local community.

WELLNESS TOURISM 2.0:

"Holistically Well" Destinations (Not Just Properties)

Wellness travel development and promotion heretofore has been all about the property: that destination spa or yoga retreat and what transpires within their "walls." Which, of course, can sometimes lead to "ghettos of wellness", a lot of health and happiness inside, and jarringly little without. At the Wellness Tourism Roundtable, Dr. Franz Linser (CEO, Linser Hospitality) argued that in the future the wellness tourism focus will shift beyond properties to destinations (whether a town, region or a country) where more authentic, complete "wellness" can be developed and experienced (clean air, protected nature, access to healthy food/green markets, safer societies because of happier people). This is the sustainable, responsible model where tourism and social/community development are in synch – and these destinations will increasingly be the wellness tourism winners of the future.

Dr. Gerry Bodeker discussed this new paradigm of "well" economic and tourism development (in a video interview) with Jigme Thinley, Bhutan's recent prime Minister (2008-2013). Bhutan is famed for first establishing a "Gross National Happiness Index," and Mr. Thinley explained how Bhutan's government and development policies all revolved around creating more "individual happiness" for the people of Bhutan (their mental, physical, spiritual and environmental wellbeing).

Fogo Island (Canada) was designed from the ground up to restore the economic fortunes of the local people there. Image Source: Fogo Island

And how that has meant firmly rejecting unchecked development (whether in mining or wellness tourism) in favor of an incremental model (protecting nature as their #1 resource, limiting tourism entries, etc.). The appeal of Bhutan as a wellness destination is, then, truly holistic (from protecting its pristine nature and ancient Buddhist culture to working to create "the happiest people on earth" to mindfully developing wellness/hotel destinations. For instance, Six Senses will open a fascinating, 5-property concept there in 2017, a "circuit" where you journey from one eco-responsible, small destination to the next - each based around one of the five pillars of Bhutan's "national happiness" vision (from spiritual to physical health).

Interestingly, in the 2016 World Happiness Report, Bhutan ranked #1 as the most equal country when it came to its population's wellbeing, and it's this kind of holistic social and environmental "wellness" that will increasingly define the authentic, most desirable wellness destinations of the future. No one has ever mapped the countries that score highest for overall (or most "equal") happiness and wellbeing against tourism/wellness tourism growth...but it would be an interesting project. (And note, the Scandinavian countries like Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Finland dominate for overall happiness, as well as least "inequality in wellbeing"). But the point is that increasingly, it's not just amazing wellness properties, but the wider destination's "overall wellness" that casts the positive halo for world travelers. Whether it's Norway's silent, gorgeous forests and their recently becoming the first country to ban all deforestation – or Costa Rica now running on 100% renewable energy. And the Costa Rica Tourism Board recently announced that its 2017 campaign will promote that holistic "Pura Vida" wellness lifestyle: from its nation's sustainability values to its incredible wellness properties.

Iceland's runaway tourism growth (a whopping 264% in the last five years), has to do with things

like their volcano eruption in 2010 and new, cheap air layovers, but also their protection of their natural beauty, and that ineffable vibe that comes from being one of the happiest nations, as well as their incredible geothermal lagoons, like its #1 tourist destination, the hot springs development, **Blue Lagoon.**

So, wellness development will increasingly be a public-private collaboration, with an eye to both the wellness of the local community and tourists. Like the ambitious **Llanelli Wellness and Life Science Village** under development in socially-forward-thinking Wales, which combines life science research facilities, an education center to deliver health/wellbeing training, a neuro-village with living facilities for the cognitively impaired, a tourism-focused wellness hotel, spa and wellbeing center, and even a wellness primary school.

WELLNESS FOR WORKERS WHO DELIVER IT – AND THE "PRICE" OF SERVICES ISSUE

The elite ghettos of wellness will be broken down by a coming wave of wellness products and services at lower price-points: from the new, affordable healthy supermarkets and fast-food concepts to affordable spa chain brands and wellness hotels. We have mainstream, affordable hotel brands like **EVEN** (6 in the U.S., more in the pipeline) that are 100%-wellness focused (from healthy food to in-room fitness zones). Affordable healthy grocery stores are especially booming in the U.S., like **Whole Food's new "365" brand** (three on the West Coast and more coming in 2017), or **Sprouts Farmers Markets** (200 locations) or **Fresh Thyme Farmers Markets** (the Midwest). New healthy "fast-food" chains are exploding, like Leon (across London) or Sweetgreen or LYFE Kitchen in the U.S. And the social justice models are creative: for instance, the new, healthy chain, Everytable (Los Angeles), will have different prices based on the median income of residents in that neighborhood. And of course the low-priced spa chains, like **Massage Envy** (1,100 U.S locations, now on march internationally, with openings in Australia), have put massage and facials in the reach of the "other 99%".

It's an extraordinarily positive development that more people are aware of food justice issues: they care about cruelty-free farming and responsibly, sustainably produced, organic food. And they're willing to pay more for it. But there is an odd lack of awareness about "human justice" issues when it comes to the people that deliver all of these wellness experiences: whether massage therapists or fitness instructors – making the issue of wellness prices an increasingly complex one. $40 massages and cheap fitness classes are hailed as a "democraticization" of access to wellness (which they are), but with little moral awareness of the cost of the human labor/expertise that goes into that experience.

And this increasingly complex issue of a backlash against incredibly pricey wellness services and a lack of wellness for too many who work delivering it was a topic at the Summit's panel of heavy-hitting wellness media. One top editor (at a major UK daily) discussed how she (and other writers) simply will not cover "ridiculously-priced" treatments on principle. Another discussed how few "star" spa therapists are in the media: while we have celeb fitness/wellness gurus that garner endless ink, there seems to be a problem in the press with "naming" the equivalent spa therapist stars – disempowering them. (The panel agreed that in addition to low-cost wellness, the wellness of employees working in wellness needs to be a necessary future trend. Having a therapist do 14 treatments in a row is a real, not sustainable, problem. And consumers need to be educated about labor costs, realize that "cheap" is often not fair, and that businesses that want to attract and retain the best practitioners (their most serious business problem) will need to put a much stronger focus on their employees' own wellbeing.

Dr. Franz Linser argued that, in the future, the wellness tourism focus will shift beyond properties to destinations (whether a town, region or a country) where more authentic, complete "wellness" can be experienced. Image Source: Global Wellness Summit by Michelle Hirnsberger

The Llanelli Wellness and Life Science Village under development in South Wales – where an ambitious new wellness community is being designed for the region/locals as well as tourists. Image Source: Llanelli Wellness and Life Science Village

THE FUTURE

Income and wellbeing inequalities only look to widen, with so many big economic forces at work: from more people worldwide working in the new wage-stagnating "gig economy" or new "sharing economies", which economist Thierry Malleret called a "sharing the scraps" economy. Artificial intelligence and robotics are pushing people out of jobs. And globally there are not yet effective plans to deal with ever more severe inequality. As Nobel economist Bob Shiller argued, today's economic inequality becomes tomorrow's social and political catastrophe (by giving rise to an explosion in populism). A reality we keep watching unfold. And of course more income inequality means more inequality in the wellness space: people's access to healthy food, fitness, and all kinds of wellness services – when the "have less" need it more than ever.

We seem at a potential perceptual tipping-point, where the "elite ghettos" of wellness seem more unacceptable, unless these businesses give more back and work to bring what they do to more people lower down the socioeconomic ladder. It's really about authenticity in intention...a getting real about what true wellness is and should be. And the wellness businesses of the future that will be truly sustainable (and that people will increasingly feel good about) will adopt new models: whether wellness tourism development that thinks beyond the property, to the whole community to lower, but fair, prices for wellness products and services to more wellness for the workers in wellness.

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