

LEISURE MANAGEMENT

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JOE PINE & JIM GILMORE

The US strategists behind the Experience Economy philosophy

WINE
TOURISM
SPECIAL

NICK THISTLETON

& MARTHA LANE FOX

On taking karaoke upmarket

ON THE COVER

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THE CANADIAN DESIGN COLLECTIVE USING ART TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER

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MANAGING HEALTH CLUBS

There's never been a better time to be in the health and fitness industry.

Every day new research emerges to prove that exercise can help practically every known health problem, from depression to cancer – as well as being the most effective anti-ageing treatment.

People want to be healthy, they're learning they need to exercise to achieve this goal and want to do it in ways which are convenient, enjoyable and affordable – great news for health clubs with the right business model.

We could be at the dawn of a golden age, when operators grow their businesses more quickly than ever before and achieve record profits and market penetration – but only if we can crack one yawning weakness.

That weakness is bad management: one of the only things that will stop the industry becoming pivotal to the lives of the majority.

We've cracked pretty much all the other challenges – industry suppliers compete to keep a flow of well designed equipment coming to market, we're great at building clubs and staff are better trained and qualified with every passing year. But the management challenge is one mountain we haven't yet climbed.

Although people have the cash to afford memberships, the market penetration of health club stands stubbornly between 12 and 18 per cent (depending on how you work out the numbers), and industry growth has plateaued, but these numbers are deceptive and hide a huge level of churn – most health clubs leak members like a sieve.

Any service business that loses customers to this degree has to look to its people for solutions. It's time more business-owners in



We're great at building clubs and creating well-designed equipment, and staff are better trained and qualified than ever, but the management challenge is one mountain we haven't climbed yet

this sector recognised management is a discipline worth investing in, and that it's worth paying for upskill instead of simply promoting the most competent gym instructor.

In the UK, it's no coincidence that CIMSPA, the chartered institute that is meant to be leading the charge towards industry excellence, has failed to launch on three occasions and is now undergoing (another) 'root and branch' review.

My recommendation is that as part of this review, CIMSPA broadens its remit to include the entire wellness, fitness and sports sector and develops and launches a raft of training and qualifications designed to upskill managers in all these markets – especially health and fitness. There's a real need.

If this process can be accelerated and managers trained, exciting things can happen for the industry; if not, it will keep bumping along, losing members through bad management and seeing the public's enthusiasm for exercise being harnessed by a raft of competitors. In five years the people running the sector will look back and wonder what they missed.

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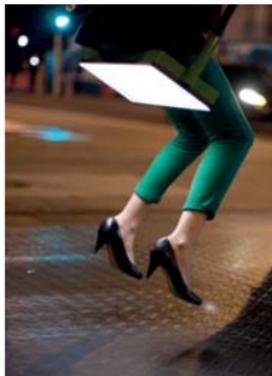
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BUYERS' GUIDE:

For suppliers of products and services in the leisure markets, turn to p80

PEOPLE



“Getting involved with sport gives you confidence and skills for life”

David Beckham, ambassador, Sky Sports

David Beckham has signed a long-term agreement with Sky Sports as an ambassador in an effort to get more people involved with sport at the grassroots level.

The global sports star will support Sky Sports Living for Sport – a free initiative for secondary schools that uses the stories and expertise of athlete mentors to inspire young people to learn new skills.

Around 30,000 young people from around Britain and Ireland participate in the programme each year.

Beckham says of his involvement: “I’ve always been passionate about the importance of sport in the lives of young people. It’s not all about winning; just

getting involved in sport gives you confidence and skills for life.

“I was lucky to have some amazing role models when I was younger, and I’m excited about the opportunity to work with Sky to pass on some of that knowledge to the next generation.”

The partnership was announced shortly before Beckham retired from professional football, playing his last game at a professional level for Paris St Germain on 19 May.

Other athletes who work with Sky on the Living for Sport initiative include Jessica Ennis, Dave Brailsford, Bradley Wiggins and Darren Campbell.

www.livingforsport.skysports.com



The Sky Sports initiative has been running for 10 years

“Our aim is to motivate people to make a positive impact”

Michel Smit



Michel Smit, inventor of a dance floor that converts people's dance moves into useable energy, is preparing to launch a new product designed to widen its appeal to the market.

“The Sustainable Energy Floor is especially designed for walking in high footfall areas,” says Smit. “This highly efficient and sustainable module is designed to be placed in public spaces and to convert the energy available in footsteps into usable electricity.”

The Sustainable Dance Floor was originally created by Smit for nightclubs, with the earliest model being launched in 2008 in Club Watt in Rotterdam in the Netherlands. Modules in the floor flex slightly when stepped on, which creates a movement that can be transformed into electric power by a small internal generator. The electricity created is used

to power the dance floor's LED lights, and can also be fed back to the grid or used for other energy applications.

Over the past few years, the floor has been used in a wide variety of projects, including permanent installations in Miami's Science Museum and the Franklin Institute Museum in Philadelphia and pop up events in Canada, China, Brazil and the United Arab Emirates. In 2012, the Rotterdam-based company changed its name from the Sustainable Dance Club to Energy Floors, with the aim of appealing to new markets.

“Our aim is to motivate and enable as many people as possible worldwide to make a positive impact,” says Smit. “By stepping or dancing on one of our floors, people create energy which we use to create unique experiences. These experiences lead to fun, awareness and efficiency around the use of energy.”

Energy Floors organises a wide variety of events designed to create awareness about energy pro-

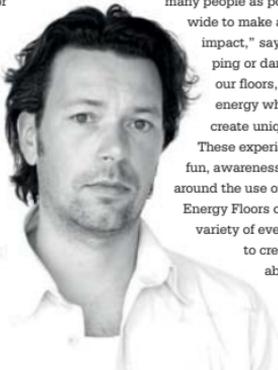
The company provides human-powered floor systems for events and venues

duction and consumption. Recent events have included a kick off event for Earth Week at Universal Studios Orlando and Universal Studios Hollywood, US, which included a battle between the two locations to see which one could create the most. “Those events generated a lot of attention and positive energy,” said Smit.

“More than three million people have stepped or danced on our floors and generated over 8 billion joules,” says Smit. “There's a lot more ground to cover, but we're moving in the right direction.”

Smit describes himself as a cultural developer. Smit and his business partner Denise Geerlings founded Cultural Developments BV in 2000. The company launched Rotterdam nightclub *Off_Corso* in 2001, and has organised music festivals. Cultural Developments launched Energy Floors in April 2007.

Details: www.energy-floors.com



“Time Out’s audience has its finger on the pulse when it comes to making the most of London”

Ray Jones, UK business development manager, Time Out



Time Out’s UK business development manager Ray Jones has launched the Time Out Card, offering a range of benefits, offers and discounts across London’s cultural and dining attractions.

Attractions and venues that partner with the Time Out Card will create exclusive benefits for cardholders and will provide discounts in line with other schemes that they operate. In turn, the card will give businesses access to “millions of socially engaged Londoners.” The card will cost £49 a year.

“Time Out’s audience has its finger on the pulse when it comes to the best places to eat, drink and make the most of their free time in London,” says Jones.

“By signing up to the Time Out Card, partners will benefit from the most socially active customer base in the country, and will reach a hugely relevant pool of Londoners who love to eat out and discover more about the capital.”

Businesses already signed up to the scheme include Merlin, Busaba Eathai, Paradise Wildlife Park, Battersea Park Children’s Zoo, the Houses of Parliament, The Ritz, Dollar Grill, Grand Union and Martinis. The card will also offer savings on West End shows and special offers at the Italian Cultural Institute (ICI) and British Film Institute (BFI).



“We’re bringing businesses closer to consumers, promoting them to Time Out’s five million strong audience through our targeted channels: emails, magazine, apps and website,” says Jones.

Time Out was founded in 1968 in London by publisher Tony Elliott and has since grown into a global media group that spans 37 cities across 25 countries. Time Out London relaunched as a free magazine in September 2012, and saw its distribution increase to just over 300,000 copies per week.

Jones says he is often described as ‘Mr London’ by friends and colleagues, after



Cardholders get up to 50 per cent off meals at selected London restaurants

a career spent promoting London as a destination. He has worked as head concierge for several London hotels including The Cadogan Hotel and The Mountbatten, and founded his own company, Centre Stage, in 1988, providing theatre and concert breaks to London in association with Radisson Edwardian Hotels.

Jones served as non executive director at Visit London for seven years, as well as executive director of West End Theatre Bookings, and joined Time Out as business development director in June 2012.

Details: www.timeout.com

“The tree tent is a distinctive, special, quirky place”

Helen Shaw and Adam Lloyd, founders, Sheepskin

Luxury holiday property rental company Sheepskin has launched what it describes as the UK's first ever tree tent.

The Red Kite Tree Tent, in Powys, Wales, is the latest addition to Helen Shaw and Adam Lloyd's collection of unique holiday properties. Shaw and Lloyd launched Sheepskin in 2009, with the aim of bridging the gap between a self catering holiday experience and a stay in a boutique hotel. The collection has been kept deliberately small, with just 25 properties on its books, all hand picked to meet the criteria of combining 'stunning and secluded locations with unique character and attention to detail.'

"Red Kite Tree Tent offers guests a unique experience in an amazing space," says Shaw. "Close to nature yet not quite camping as you know it, as the Tree Tent has some essential home comforts: a log burning stove, a cosy double sleeping bag and fantastic views from our secluded hideaway in the trees."

The Red Kite Tree Tent is set high among the trees in extensive woodlands and features a lightweight, hybrid aluminium and 'steam bent, green ash'



static airframe. The 3m diameter structure has been designed by UK design studio Luminair, and is wool insulated, meaning it can be used all year round.

The Red Kite Tree Tent is hidden in woodlands surrounding another Sheepskin property, the Red Kite Barn, but the two properties are completely independent from one another.

"We included the Tree Tent in our collec-

tion as it's a distinctive, special and quirky place that allows us to offer a glamping experience, which seems to be very much the trend of the moment," says Shaw.

The construction of the Tree Tent was featured on George Clarke's Amazing Spaces on Channel 4.

Lloyd and Shaw met while they were both working for Kraft's global research and development department, and created Sheepskin after being frustrated with their experience of holiday cottages.

"We are very much still at the early stages of putting our collection together, so 2013 is all about growing the collection," says Shaw. "We are maintaining strict selection criteria for all homes to be added to our collection, so growth is slow but sure, enabling us to preserve our personal, tailored service."

Details: www.sheepskinlife.com



The lightweight aluminium and green ash tent hangs between the trees using an ingenious rigging system

Trump Hotels launches Trump Wellness

Trump Hotel Collection – the US-based, family-run luxury hotel brand – announced the launch of its new Trump Wellness programmes last month (June).

‘Nourish’ looks to enhance in-room dining menus with a range of options, providing guests with vegan, gluten-free and organic selections with complete nutritional values. A Healthy Kids Menu by Trump is also available. Minibars will be overhauled to offer healthier snacks, and at least one-third of all choices at each hotel will be in a health food category.



The Clarins My Blend spa at the Majestic Barrière

Clarins opens My Blend spa in Cannes

Clarins has unveiled its first My Blend spa in Cannes, France at the renowned Hôtel Majestic Barrière on the Croisette.

Facing the famous steps of the Palais des Festivals, the Hôtel Majestic Barrière is a 5-star Leading Hotel of the World designed by interior designer Pascal Desprez.

The 4,844sq ft (450sq m) spa aims to offer guests a personalised approach to beauty and wellbeing using the latest Clarins and My Blend Treatments. Clients can use the facilities in the sensorial area, which features a sauna, hammam and showers.

Planners give Universal the thumbs up for LA park

Construction is scheduled to start this summer on an extension to the Universal Studios theme park in Los Angeles, US.

The US\$1.6bn (£1bn, €1.2bn) project is to add 391 acres at Universal City Plaza, which will comprise studio space, retail space, a 500-bed hotel and a new theme park attraction The Wizarding World of Harry Potter.

The company has agreed to invest US\$100m (£65m, €77m) in transportation and transit improvements to mitigate the project's impact on traffic. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=X9T9m>

Etnaland Themepark for Italy

Southern Italy's largest theme park has opened its doors in Belpasso. Adjacent to Etnaland Acquapark, the €50m (£42m, us\$65m) Etnaland Themepark has been created by local entrepreneur, Francesco Russello.

Divided into five areas, the park takes visitors on a historic voyage, including an old haunted school and high tech adventures in outer space. Highlights include the 60m (197ft) Etnaland Tower, which offers great views of the Mount Etna volcano and a rollercoaster through an olive grove. For children, there's the Castle of Ciclopino. There are also river rapid rides in the mix, a prehistoric park and a cable car ride.

The existing waterpark already welcomes 300,000 visitors a year. During the summer, the waterpark will open during the day and



The park is divided into five areas taking visitors on a historic voyage

the theme park from 7.30am until 1am. Rides have been provided by Zamperla, Gosetto, Mack Rides and Intamin. Etnaland said: ‘An amusement park needs to represent an experience which involves guests and helps them create a world of fantasy, passion and surprises.’ Details: <http://lei.sr?a=u0y1P>

Underwater hotel for the Maldives

The luxury, multi-million dollar underwater resort, which was originally planned for Dubai, has been given the green light to be built off the tropical island of Kuredhivaru in the Maldives.

Backed by Swiss investors, the US\$50m (£38m, €32m) project is the brainchild of Polish company Deep Ocean Technology. The Water Discus Hotel, which has the go-ahead from the National Ministry of Tourism, will feature 21 rooms in the heart of coral reefs. It will comprise two large disc-shaped lounges seven-meters above the water housing a restaurant and spa.

The lounges are connected to a glass tunnel 30 meters below the water, which leads to 21 bedrooms. The two parts of the structure



The ambitious project will be constructed in the middle of coral reefs

are connected by five legs and a vertical shaft containing a lift and stairway. Facilities will include a helicopter landing pad and rooftop swimming pool. A submarine, air-locked dive centre that leads divers straight into the ocean will also be a feature of the resort.

Ambitious Bollywood-style theme park for India

Bollywood-themed rides and special effect Hindu gods will all be part of the fun at India's latest theme park, Adlabs Imagica, between Mumbai and Pune. Aimed at the country's burgeoning middle class market, the park fills a gap in the Indian leisure market.

Attractions include a Wrath of the Gods show in which Hindu deities, furious with humans, cause the ultimate destruction amid temple ruins, as well as a Mr India motion simulation ride based on a 1987 film. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=F4C7u>

Flagship studio for Pure Yoga

Pure Yoga, part of the Pure Group in Asia, is set to open a new, 930sq m yoga studio in central Hong Kong in August – its sixth site in Hong Kong, and 12th for the group.

The new studio will offer yoga programmes in five main class categories: hot yoga, hatha and vinyasa, therapeutic and healing, stylistic and themed, and 'other', which includes yoga for special populations such as pre-natal.

It is the first Pure Yoga location to offer new feature classes: Wall Rope Yoga, using a yoga wall system with ropes, pelvic swings and bars to enhance extension in the various poses; and Yoga for Athletes, designed to enhance athletic performance, assist recovery, focus the mind and improve endurance. Private yoga classes using a pilates reformer will also be available.

The studio will also launch a new food concept, Nood Food, providing 100 per cent organic, ready-to-go nutrition: superfood smoothies and a raw food menu.

Martina Lee, Pure Yoga's country manager for Hong Kong, says: "This will be the first Pure Yoga location to offer a holistic programme



The Pure Yoga studio in Hong Kong will offer yoga practice, healthy food and meditation under one roof

that covers yoga practice, diet and meditation all under one roof."

The Pure Group encompasses five Pure Yoga studios, five Pure Fitness centres and two Pure Dining locations in Hong Kong. There are also Pure Yoga studios and Fitness centres in Singapore, Taipei and New York.

New urban centre planned for Cairo

Two new hubs have been created to the east and west of Egypt's capital Cairo and there are plans to develop these hubs with massive infrastructure projects.

Known simply as Westown and Eastown, the multi-use development is projected to cost EGP25bn (£2.73bn, €2.73bn, US\$3.57) and is being developed by Egyptian real estate company, Sodic and Lebanese developer, Solidere.

Westown will cover a 1.2m sq m (13m sq ft) site in S Sheikh Zayed/Sixth of October City, while Eastown will be built on 860,000 sq m (9.2m sq ft) of land in Kattameya/New Cairo.

The current masterplan for Westown sees the development of seven neighbourhoods



The multi-use project will include hotels, spa and retail facilities

with residential, commercial, retail and entertainment as well as hospitality components.

Westown will be home to seven hotels offering over 1,500 rooms and serviced flats. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=h5N7G>

Disney brings in age limit to its theme parks

Disney has introduced a policy whereby all children under the age of 14 visiting its theme parks must be accompanied by an adult.

If a staff member sees a guest who appears to be younger than 14, without someone who is older, they will engage in conversation to

establish whether the individual is there alone. The parent or guardian of any underage child will be contacted. The age of 14 was decided as organisations dealing with child welfare deemed this the appropriate age. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=h5N7G>

Problems still dominate Portuguese market

The total number of gym members in Portugal rose 15 per cent in the first quarter of 2013 compared to the same period last year, according to data from the third industry barometer conducted by local trade association AGAP.

However, 30 per cent of clubs reporting growth in customer numbers failed to report revenue growth. And across the country, 76 per cent of respondents observed a decline in gross turnover (including VAT) – an average drop of 23 per cent.

Nevertheless, the study suggests the sector as a whole may have recovered 60,000 lapsed customers in Q1 2013; around 100,000 are thought to have lapsed during 2011–2012.



The hotel has a castle play area and treasure hunt

Legoland hotel opens at California resort

Legoland has officially opened the new hotel at its resort in Carlsbad, California.

The 250-room, three-storey hotel has been developed in response to guest feedback that it takes more than one day to explore the resort.

Construction began in 2011 and the hotel opened in April ahead of its summer 2013 schedule. It caters for children aged two to 12 and their families, offering adventure and pirate room themes. There are more than 3,500 Lego models throughout the hotel. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=y8D9l>

Corporation Fitness launches VivaSlim

Corporation Fitness in Lisbon, Portugal, has launched the VivaSlim programme.

The 2,500sq m club, whose membership is typically aged 25 to 40 years, charges an average of €52 a month; VivaSlim will be charged as a premium add-on.

With personal training already accounting for 20 per cent of revenues, co-founder and director Sandra Caldeira believes there is an upsell opportunity among existing members, as well non-members through referrals and publicity.

Edinburgh bid for national centre gets MSPs' backing

Edinburgh's bid to host the proposed £25m National Performance Centre for Sport has secured the backing of 22 MSPs (members of Scottish parliament).

Previously, Olympic champion cyclist Sir Chris Hoy offered his support for the GO Edinburgh 2016 campaign, which is spearheaded by Heriot-Watt and the city council.

Plans for the new facility were first announced by sports minister Shona Robison in 2012. It will feature a multi-sports performance centre including a National Football Academy.



A number of sports have seen increased interest

15 million people play sport each week

New figures from Sport England reveal that 15.3m people now play sport at least once a week. According to the figures – for the first four months of 2013 – the number of young people aged between 16 and 25 playing sport regularly has reached 3.86m.

This is an increase of nearly 63,000 on the previous 12 months, with strong advances in sports such as basketball and swimming. Among women, boosts in boxing and netball have helped to drive a year-on-year increase of 89,900, further narrowing the gender gap in sport. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=6s4S3>*

Winter sports get increase in funding ahead of Sochi

Several winter sports will receive an additional investment of £443,200 to help with final preparations for the 2014 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Sochi.

The announcement was made by UK Sport following its annual review of its investment in winter sports. The funding is being used to help teams most likely to win medals at the 2014 games and has been targeted at those sports with the best chances of doing so. The sports to receive extra funding include bobsleigh, skiing, snowboarding, and para alpine skiing.

NGBs 'held back' from major bids

The hosting of major sporting events is becoming a global growth market, but UK national governing bodies of sport are thinking twice about bidding due to the financial risks attached to the process.

A report by the Sport and Recreation Alliance (SRA) shows that 67 per cent of the UK's NGBs see the risk of investing into the often costly bidding process as the main obstacle to launching a bid. Bidding for major events has become increasingly competitive, as hosting an event is often seen as providing three benefits; a financial boost for organisers, increasing a sport's profile and improving facility infrastructure.

For the report, SRA anonymously asked the chairs and chief executives of the biggest sport governing bodies in the UK about their experiences of bidding for major events.



The successful London 2012 bid took more than five years to prepare

Half of all respondents also said that the government – both at central and local level – was not doing enough to support bids.

Andy Reed, SRA chair, said: "Our research has shown that the financial risk of holding major events is holding some governing bodies back." *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=k7g9y>*

Women's Sport Trust launches

A new grant giving body dedicated to raising the profile and changing the perception of women's sport in the UK was launched on 2 July.

Women's Sport Trust (WST) will be the only grant provider focused solely on female sport and is backed by a diverse range of elite female athletes along with representatives from business and the media. Anna Watkins MBE, Olympic gold medal rower and patron of the WST, said: "We see ourselves as much as a movement as a grant giving body – focused on attracting new funding and profile for women's sport. We've been amazed and delighted by the response we've already had to the Trust. People are clearly thrilled to have an opportunity to make a difference."



The trust will be the first to offer grants exclusively for female sport

The WST will look to attract new funding into women's sport – providing multiple routes for corporate partners and individuals to donate. The organisation's grants panel will be chaired by Team GB hockey captain Kate Walsh. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=l8p8g>*

UK Sport signs MOU with Japan Sport Council

UK Sport and the Japan Sport Council have signed an agreement of collaboration to reinforce their commitment to work together in an effort to enhance high performance sport in their respective countries. With a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) it

creates further opportunities to exchange ideas and co-operate on a wide range of projects – including the funding of major events, managing elite training centres, high performance evaluation and coaching. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=ps1sd>*

MAKING LEISURE CENTRES BETTER FOR 20 YEARS...



The leisure sector has seen huge growth over the last 20 years. In that time, many of our competitors have come and gone. But this July, GLL, the first of the new breed of leisure trusts in the UK, is 20 years old.

Unlike many private companies, GLL is a staff led charitable social enterprise, dedicated to making leisure centres and libraries better for everyone. We're an ethical business that trades with a social purpose and our staff invest time, energy and effort (along with any financial surplus generated), into helping make life better for our customers through the services we offer.

GLL is as excited about the future today, as we were back in 1993. We recently moved beyond leisure centres and also run libraries, adventure playgrounds, arts, day spas and parks services. But that's not all. We'll be operating two flagship Olympic venues; the Copper Box Arena and London Aquatic Centre on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park after the successful London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. So, for all our customers, partners and supporters, there are even more exciting times ahead.

To everyone that's played a part in our journey to date, thank you. We look forward to the next 20 years...

To find out more about GLL, please visit www.gll.org

To become a member of your local leisure centre (or library), visit www.better.org.uk

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SLM secures Cotswold leisure and culture contract

Sports Leisure Management (SLM) has won the contract to run leisure and cultural services owned by Cotswold District Council. The 10-year deal includes leisure centres at Cirencester, Chipping Campden and Bourton on the Water, plus cultural services at the Corinium Museum in Cirencester and a resource centre in Northleach.

To be operated under SLM's Everyone Active brand, the new additions bring the number of venues managed by SLM to 81. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=9L4r4>



The new health club at University of Exeter

Life Fitness to supply Exeter uni with new gym

Fitness equipment supplier Life Fitness and the University of Exeter have announced a new partnership for their planned fitness centre.

The new centre, which will be located on the Streatham campus, will offer students and the local community new cardiovascular and strength equipment from Life Fitness. Life Fitness will provide its swipe-screen Discover consoles, Lifecycle exercise bikes and Synrgy360XL hub as part of the new agreement.

2013 Flame Awards winners announced

The winners of the Flame Awards have been announced during an event at the annual Flame Conference in Telford.

Recognising excellence and best practice in the health and fitness sector, the awards are based on an independent business assessment to help benchmark facilities and the staff who work within them.

This year, winners were announced in 11 different categories. Spirit Health Clubs was given the health club operator of the year award. For a full list of winners, see: <http://lei.sr?a=14k6W>

Xercise4less secures Tesco deal

Independent budget gym chain Xercise4Less has secured a deal with supermarket giant Tesco to open a club at the Tesco Extra store in Stockton-on-Tees.

The 31,910sq ft (2,964sq m) club will have more than 300 exercise stations supplied by Matrix and is the first of a string of Xercise4Less clubs planned for Tesco stores.

Equipment at the Stockton club will be 'zoned' for different activities such as cardio, weights, a combat zone, a large ladies only gym with a wide selection of female friendly weights, and a dedicated personal training zone.

Monthly memberships will be offered from £9.99 and members will have 40 free classes to choose from each week, ranging from Boxercise and TRX to Circuits, Pilates and Zumba. An indoor cycling studio will



The Durham club will be the first of a number of sites at Tesco stores

incorporate the virtual cycling system MyRide, which allows participants to experience cycling tracks from around the world.

Earlier this year Xercise4Less announced an ambitious target of opening another 100 clubs in the UK over the next three years. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=W1V8E>

UK health and fitness sector worth £2.9bn

The market value of the UK's fitness sector has been estimated at £3.92bn – an increase of 1.5 per cent from the year before.

According to the 2013 State of the Fitness Industry Report from The Leisure Database Company (TLDC), the industry has experienced improved growth in the last 12 months with increases of two per cent in the number of fitness facilities and a 4.5 per cent rise in the number of members.

The sector is expanding despite the economic slowdown. Since 2009, the fitness industry has grown its market value by four per cent, the member base by 8.3 per cent and the number of fitness facilities by 3.9 per cent. David Minton, director of TLDC, said:



The sector has experienced improved growth in the past 12 months

"Despite another year of economic slowdown the fitness industry is continuing to stand strong with both private and public fitness sectors." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=613A4>

£14.2m health and leisure centre for West Norwood

Lambeth Council has announced a new £14.2m health and leisure centre, which will be the third complex to gain a new swimming pool in the London Borough of Lambeth.

Scheduled to be completed by spring next year, Lambeth council is aiming to deliver

three pools in the space of two years. One opened in Clapham last year while another is part of the Streatham Hub development, which will see the opening of a new ice rink, 250 homes and a supermarket in November. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=v507s>

HEALTH & FITNESS

easyGym opens on Oxford Street

Budget fitness chain easyGym has opened a new flagship club on Oxford Street in the heart of London.

The 26,000sq ft (2,415sq m) club is the company's eighth and the largest yet.

Facilities include more than 200 exercise stations, a large functional training zone, an extensive free weights area and group exercise studios.

Equipment has been supplied by Precor and Escape Fitness, including 113 units from Precor's Networked 880 Line as well as a wide range of Carrian strength equipment.

The club's functional training space - entitled Freedom Zone - has a selection of core bags, ViPR, TRX and kettle bells among others.

Monthly memberships at the club will start at £19.99. easyGym CEO Paul Lorimer-Wing said: "We're challenging the conventions of



The new flagship club is located in the heart of London's shopping district

both the budget and the premium gyms in the same radical way that its sister brand easyJet transformed air travel.

"Our secret is giving freedom to do more at prices that just knock people out, they're so reasonable." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=17J8G>

CIMSPA announces business review

The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) has announced new plans for a business review of the institute, in preparation for its new governance structure as required by its new charter.

CIMSPA, the professional development body for the UK's sport and physical activity sector, has been looking at ways of sustaining the institute financially, originally looking at a tender to procure an organisation capable of delivering an aspect of the institute's operations.

The tender plans were later scrapped after the trustees of CIMSPA decided that the long-term interests of the institute would be best served by launching an internal review.



CIMSPA is currently based at SportPark, Loughborough University

CIMSPA trustee David Stalker will conduct a review of CIMSPA's function and ambition, aiming to build a sustainable three-year business plan. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Pw6Z>

Story-telling platform Gymtopia launches

The altruistic capacity of the fitness industry is being harnessed to help the wider community with the launch of Gymtopia.

The digital story-telling platform is designed to capture the social impact of projects powered by gyms and gym-goers world-wide. Gymtopia

encourages health clubs to collaborate with their members in fundraising, collecting food, donating shoes and clothing, and many other projects that create a positive social impact. It is the brainchild of health club industry consultant, Ray Algar. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Ys6Y>



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Welsh tourism wants more spas to boost numbers

Tourism chiefs in Wales want more luxury, spa and heritage hotels as part of a strategy to boost earnings and bring in another €1bn (US\$1.55bn, £1.16bn) a year by targeting the US, Germany and Ireland.

About €4.5bn (US\$7bn, £5.2bn) a year is generated in revenue through tourism in Wales every year. Partnership for Growth, the Welsh government strategy for tourism up to 2020, called for more focus to be put on luxury and branded hotels as well as more wellbeing facilities such as spas.



The Jetty Spa offers complete privacy

New Jetty Spa for Gilpin Hotel in the Lake District

Gilpin Hotel & Lake House in the Lake District is set to unveil its new Jetty Spa at Gilpin Lake House this August.

The new spa will feature two treatment rooms with roaring fires and floor to ceiling windows overlooking the private lake. The treatment rooms also combine to become a romantic couples' suite.

The 'Jetty Spa Trail' is at the heart of the spa, with the trail booked for each couple in complete privacy. Each journey begins with an aromatherapy consultation to create personalised blended spa products.

Hotel spa launched in Newquay, Cornwall

A new hotel spa has opened in Cornwall. The Headland Spa at the Headland Hotel in Newquay will open in two phases.

The initial phase, which opened in July, includes a pool with jet stream and bubble seats, a Rasul, steamroom, Swedish sauna and aromatherapy showers.

Also included will be a gym, manicure and pedicure area, relaxation room and a spa dining lounge. The second phase, due to be completed in autumn 2013, will see the addition of a couples' VIP suite featuring a hydrotherapy bath.

Skin Health Spa opens new clinic

Skin Health Spa, which has its head office in Cheshire, has launched its new flagship clinic at St. James Square in Manchester.

Located in the centre of the Financial District and near Albert Square, the new 1,500sq ft (139sq m) Skin Health Spa offers advanced skin care and non-invasive laser treatments.

The spa specialises in permanent hair removal and hair reduction, laser treatment for acne and acne scarring, skin rejuvenation, muscle relaxation injections and dermal fillers and rollers.

Maxine Chambers, managing director, said: "Our main focus is on helping people feel better about what nature has given them through the improvement of their appearance and by taking better care of their health." The facility is staffed with doctors, nurses



The spa specialises in a number of hair and dermatological procedures

and aestheticians offers injectable and aesthetic procedures along with a range of beauty treatments.

Skincare products include Aromatherapy Associates, Cosmeceuticals, DermaQuest, Jan Marini, Neo Strata, Obagi and Sun Protection. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=e9R7E>

Country house-style spa for Newmarket

A new luxury spa, influenced by its historic country house surroundings, has opened its doors in Newmarket, UK.

Designed by Trevillion Interiors, the spa is themed around the fragrance of traditional English lavender and every aspect of the spa experience from the herbal tea before treatments to the macarons served in the spa lounge uses the herb.

The design embraces the natural surroundings to create a stylish yet relaxed feel to the country house.

Large amounts of natural light are used, with floor to ceiling windows occupying the building. The spa is open to both hotel guests and non-guests and has 10 treatment rooms. Facilities



The new luxury spa is located next to the historic boutique hotel

include a beauty room for manicures and pedicures and a therapy room for cosmetic doctors offering non-invasive procedures. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=v9a4M>

Spa Strategy launches SpaVI for businesses

A new financial model for spas, created by Spa Strategy, has been launched with the aim of making it easier to monitor both good performances and identify any areas requiring attention. SpaVI is designed to assist operators, owners and financiers of spas.

For operators, the SpaVI model is said to help improve the performance of their spas and increase revenues.

For owners, it can help to assess the value of their spas and to help configure the best format in any new build projects.

30,000 new jobs in hospitality

The British Hospitality Association (BHA) has announced that the UK's hospitality and tourism industries are set to generate more than 30,000 job opportunities for young people by 2015.

Pledges were made at a series of nine Big Hospitality Conversation events which took place over the past year across the UK with more than 1,200 representatives from the industry present.

More than 14,800 permanent roles will be created, with 11,103 apprenticeships and 5,157 paid university work placements also on offer. The hospitality sector currently employs 10 per cent of the national workforce.

Simon Vincent, EMEA president for Hilton Worldwide said: "Increasing the competitiveness of the UK's hospitality and tourism industry is key to sustained recovery. With



10 per cent of the UK's workforce is employed by the hospitality sector

relatively low barriers to entry, we are ideally placed to help tackle youth unemployment, provide lifelong careers and ultimately stimulate and support growth for the sector."

The BHA will operate and manage the campaign in partnership with Business in the Community and Springboard.

Ian Schrager to open Edition London hotel

The latest Edition hotel is set to open in London, under the management of renowned hotelier Ian Schrager.

The London Edition, conceived in partnership with Marriott International, looks to preserve the historic features of the former Berners Hotel – a historic Georgian building made up of five town houses in Westminster, Central London.

The hotel's ethos is to combine the historical aspects of the building with contemporary touches.

The 173-room hotel will feature a late night club, two bars, a 24-hour fitness facility and a fully restored atrium.

Created by Schrager himself, the hotel's design will look to span and combine three



The hotel will blend historic features with modern design

centuries of design influences. Described by Schrager as "a different reality", The London Edition is set to be launched this autumn. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=e703l>

Friends Reunited pair acquire boutique hotel

Friends Reunited founders Stephen and Julie Pankhurst are set to embark on a multi-million pound refurbishment of Seckford Hall hotel in Suffolk after buying the property for an undisclosed sum last year. The 15th Century, 32-bedroom hotel will undergo a refurbishment

of the ground floor including a new bar, new spa facilities and the addition of 24 bedrooms.

Further investment will continue over the next 18 months, which will see additional treatment rooms, a new steam room, sauna and spa area as well as a new restaurant added.

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Historic Scotland invests £1m in Iona Abbey

Historic Scotland has completed a £1m redevelopment project to enhance the visitor experience at Iona Abbey on the island of Iona.

The investment included the creation of new interpretation and permanent exhibitions, including a museum devoted to the most important collection of early Christian sculptures in Britain and Ireland.

There is also an audio tour, which takes visitors on a journey through Iona Abbey from the 6th century to the present day. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=S8T4D>



The rides would nearly treble the size of the park

Adventure Island planning Southend's largest rides

Southend's Adventure Island could be about to get two new rides, much larger than anything else in the park.

A 196ft Starflyer carousel and a 147ft tall Ferris wheel are the two proposed rides for the theme park. If approved, the two rides would almost treble the size of the pleasure park's existing tall rides with the current highest ride, Skydrop, coming in at 68ft tall. A planning application has been submitted by Phillip Miller's Stockvale Group alongside SK Architects of Leigh. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=X7C3X>

Winehouse exhibition opens at Jewish Museum

An exhibition on the life of the singer Amy Winehouse has opened close by to the street where she died.

The Jewish Museum in Camden Town, London, has worked alongside the singer's family to gather her clothes, record and photograph collection for the exhibition.

Abigail Morris, chief executive of the museum said: "Everyone thinks they know who Amy Winehouse is and they've seen the pictures, but actually she is somebody's little sister. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=d8D8v>

'Mini Titanic' opens as museum

Over the past seven years, around £9m has been spent renovating and restoring the SS Nomadic to how it looked in 1912 when it ferried passengers to the Titanic on their doomed voyage.

The ship, which is exactly a quarter of the size of the Titanic, is also the last remaining White Star Line vessel – a shipping company that operated until 1934 before merging with Cunard Line.

A campaign was set up in 2005 to save the SS Nomadic. The ship was bought in 2006 at auction by the Northern Ireland Department for Social Development for the sum of £213,423.

Tourism minister, Arlene Foster, said: The Nomadic is another important dimension to the huge Titanic success story and it provides a real opportunity for tourists to



The historic auxiliary ship is exactly a quarter of the size of the Titanic

stay longer and explore more of Belfast."

The Nomadic is now docked in Belfast's new Titanic quarter, near to the Titanic visitor's centre, which has had more than 650,000 people come through its doors since it opened nine months ago. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=53g2a>

Work begins on £27m Stonehenge project

A £27m project, part financed by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), has started with the closure of the road running alongside Stonehenge.

A section of the A344, which is directly next to the stones, will now be dug up and grassed over. Once the landscaping work is completed in June 2014, visitors will be able to approach and view the monument from the Avenue, which was the intended approach by Stonehenge's prehistoric builders according to experts.

The new Stonehenge visitor centre, located 1.5m (2.4km) away from Stonehenge, is set to open in December. The remaining section of road between Airman's Corner and Byway 12 will become the route of a new shuttle service



The work is part of efforts to improve access to the ancient monument

to and from the Stones. The HLF has contributed £10m towards the project with the remainder of funding coming from commercial income as well as private donations. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=K7K8j>

Emirates opens visitor attraction in London

Dubai-based airline Emirates has announced plans to open an aviation-themed visitor attraction in central London, UK. The indoor Emirates Aviation Experience is due to open in July and will be located close to the existing Emirates Air Line – a cable car service across

the River Thames. It will provide an insight into the operations and modern achievements of commercial air travel. Spread over 300sq m (3,200sq ft), the attraction will feature a number of interactive exhibits and the first public-facing commercial flight simulators.



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Tourism Ireland launches new app for visitors

Tourism Ireland has launched a new app for iPhones and android devices called Gathering Gestures, which aims to boost the international visitor experience.

The app offers a wide variety of 'gestures' to ensure visitors to Ireland get more from their holiday. It has gone live - on the international app store - and is free for people around the world to download before they arrive. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=R418Z>*



The campaign is attracting more people to the UK

VisitBritain campaign brings in £200m of spend

Latest figures from VisitBritain show that Britain's global appeal as a tourist destination is benefiting from its £25m image campaign, resulting in a potential £200m of additional visitor spending in the UK over the next two years. VisitBritain found that the Great Image tourism campaign - which targeted 14 major cities in nine countries - is performing well on the international stage, especially when benchmarked against competitor tourist boards. Great tourism activity aimed to achieve high levels of 'reach and recall' - 72 per cent of the audience in target cities recall seeing the Great campaign. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=k4E3U>*

Yearly tourism spend reaches £19bn

Tourism spend in the last 12 months has reached a record-high, figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) have revealed. In the year to the end of March 2013, tourism spend reached £19.01bn; a 5 per cent increase year-on-year and the first time the £19bn mark has been broken.

This data is part of the ONS International Passenger Survey which collects information on passengers entering and leaving the UK and reports monthly. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=7doWz>*

Staycation trend still strong

Despite the improving economy, more than a third of Britons are still opting to stay in the UK for the holidays as a way of saving money.

The figure comes from a consumer survey commissioned by marketing group Webloyalty and undertaken by research specialists Conlumino.

The survey found that 35 per cent of people will not be taking a summer holiday abroad this year, with 20 per cent of people cutting down on the overall number of holidays taken throughout the year.

Of those who still plan on taking breaks, over half will be changing their holiday habits in order to save money.

In total, some 44 per cent of consumers have taken action to save money on their leisure activities, as economic pressures have put



Most Britons see a domestic break as offering good value for money

constraints on household budgets. However, even in the present economic climate, figures indicate that people still consider taking holidays to be an important part of life.

Guy Chiswick, managing director of Webloyalty UK and Ireland said: "It is clear that the recession has made us more cautious about spending on holidays."

Britain's gardens bring in £7.8bn revenue

New research released this month has revealed that £7.8bn is spent by tourists enjoying parks and gardens in the UK each year.

The study, conducted by VisitBritain, identified that of the 31 million visitors that come to Britain every year, around a third (11.1m) visit a park or garden.

More than 40 per cent of those under-35 are likely to visit a park or garden, compared to 33 per cent of visits coming from those aged over 35. People are much more likely to visit gardens, unsurprisingly, during the summer months, with four million of the annual tally coming between the months of July and September.

Recent post-2012 Olympic Games research also shows that 75 per cent of respondents



More than 40 per cent of visitors under-35 are likely to visit a park

across the world said that the Games coverage meant they wanted to venture out to visit other parts of the country.

In a separate question, 70 per cent of people said that following the Olympics, they agreed that Britain had a 'lovely countryside'. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=0rV4M>*

Inbound tourism figures still on the increase

The number of foreign tourists arriving to the UK has increased during 2013 - with analysts attributing the growth to increased interest in Britain as a destination following the 2012 Olympic Games. A report from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows that visits to

the UK from countries outside of Europe and North America continue to rise in line with the pattern seen in 2011 and 2012.

To date there has been a nine per cent increase in visits from these countries. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=q8B4a>*

DCMS spares tourism from cuts

The Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) has announced details of funding for all its bodies - including a five percent cut to international tourism, with no cut to domestic tourism.

The zero per cent cut to VisitEngland's core grant-in-aid has been met with great positivity by the organisation, which said that it was "reassured" by the government's commitment to tourism in England.

In a statement, a spokesperson for VisitEngland said: "We recognise the public purse is under ever increasing pressure so we are delighted that tourism's significant contribution to the economy has been recognised by the Secretary of State, Maria Miller and Tourism Minister, Hugh Robertson, in securing this settlement."



There was no cut in the budget for tourism agency VisitEngland

Tourism in the UK is worth an estimated £97bn and growth in the sector has been robust across the country recently - a trend attributed to campaigns promoting Britain overseas combined with the success of international events such as the London 2012 Games.

11 UK parks to share £23m of HLF funding

Eleven parks across the UK are set to receive a combined £23m in funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Big Lottery Fund (BLF).

The HLF has recently commissioned a new report looking into the challenge faced by the parks sector, which has been struggling in the current economic climate.

One notable project that has received funding is Fleetwood's Memorial Park, which has secured a £2.4m investment to carry out a comprehensive restoration of the Grade II listed park and create a five-year programme of community activities.

Ipswich Borough Council has received a grant of £2.8m for its Holywells 'Parks for People' project, which will see its orangery



The grants will look to inject much needed funding for the parks sector

restored and a new open-air theatre installed.

Saughton Park in Edinburgh, Scotland, has received development funding of £392,000 as Edinburgh Council progress plans to completely renovate the park.

MGS launches National Development Body

Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) has launched a new National Development Body aiming to expand the services it offers.

MGS - a not-for-profit, independent charitable trust - works with more than 400 museums and galleries throughout Scotland.

Last year MGS produced a national strategy for Scotland's museums and galleries and has followed it up with its new plan 'From Strategy to Action,' which outlines priority areas for development and provides a structured approach to achieve the strategy targets.

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Battle of budget chains heats up

Low cost fitness chain The Gym Group has secured £50m of venture capital to expand its club portfolio – less than a month after rival operator Pure Gym announced it too would be spending £50m on new sites.

The Gym Group now has the backing of two private equity investors – Bridges Ventures and Phoenix Equity Partners. While it is the first time Phoenix has invested in the company, Bridges Ventures has supported the chain since its inception in 2007. It is the latest sign that competition between the UK's low-cost gym operators is heating up.

In May, Pure Gym announced it would spend £50m on new sites following its takeover by US private equity firm CCMP Capital Advisors. Pure Gym currently has 45



The Gym Group plans to open up to 30 new health clubs each year

locations in the UK and has plans to add 40 new sites over the next 12 months, including 15 gyms in London alone.

The Gym Group operates 36 sites and has announced plans to open 20 to 30 new gyms each year. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=p3Q8h>*

Mayor approves Earls Court demolition

The proposed £8m redevelopment of Earls Court in London has been given the go ahead by Mayor of London Boris Johnson.

The Earls Court Exhibition Centre is set to be demolished as part of new plans to create a 77-acre redevelopment site in Earls Court and West Kensington.

The ambitious proposals, drawn up by Sir Terry Farrell for Capital & Counties Properties, include new leisure facilities, a hotel and retail space, a new primary school, a library, an integrated health centre and a five-acre public park.

The 10m sq ft (929,000sq m) development will span the two boroughs of Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham and is



The scheme will see Earls Court being replaced by a modern venue

expected to provide 7,500 new homes.

Boris Johnson said of the scheme: "I'm in no doubt that the development will provide a massive boost not just to this part of the capital, but to London's wider community as well."

Whitbread launches The Hub by Premier Inn brand

Whitbread Group has launched a new hotel brand – The Hub by Premier Inn.

It will be the first hotel where the entire room can be controlled using a smart phone app. Guests will have the ability to check in online and control their rooms' lighting and

temperature as well as what is on the radio or TV when they arrive.

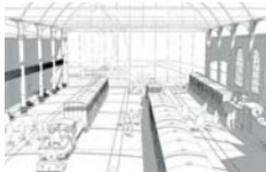
The new brand will first open in London's West End next summer and will continue to target major UK city centres. Whitbread has plans for five new 'hub by Premier Inn' hotels.

Cinema-led development planned for Yate

Plans for a £12m cinema-led development for the Yate Shopping Centre in South Gloucestershire have been revealed to the public. Dominion Corporate Trustees (DCT), which owns the property, wants to develop a six-screen cinema, as well as six restaurants and six retail units.

Marks & Spencer Simply Foods, Sports Direct and Costa Coffee have already been secured for the development.

DCT said that a new cinema topped the public's wishlist when it consulted with the community seven years ago, shortly after acquiring the centre.



The historic structure will be rebuilt in Wales

London Bridge station roof moving to Aberystwyth

Part of the 177-year-old London Bridge station roof is set to be rebuilt in Aberystwyth, Wales as part of a proposed £10m narrow gauge railway museum.

Opened in 1902, the Vale of Rheidol Railway has been given sections of London Bridge station's roof, which it plans to use to house its new locomotive museum.

Elements have been saved from the roof including 16 columns and 14 beams in a deal that sees about a third of London Bridge's old barrel arch move to its new home in Wales. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=z86Y>*

Uncertain future for Liverpool's Central Village

Liverpool's £160 Central Village project has been put on hold after the building firm overseeing the final phase of the project, Merepark Construction, is set to go into liquidation. The scheme was running 15 per cent over budget when the project funder decided to cease payments to Merepark Construction's subcontractors, despite the project being 85 per cent complete.

The Village, in the city centre, comprises a 6-screen Odeon cinema, 442 hotel rooms and 160,000sq ft (14,864sq m) of retail and leisure space. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=x4t6B>*

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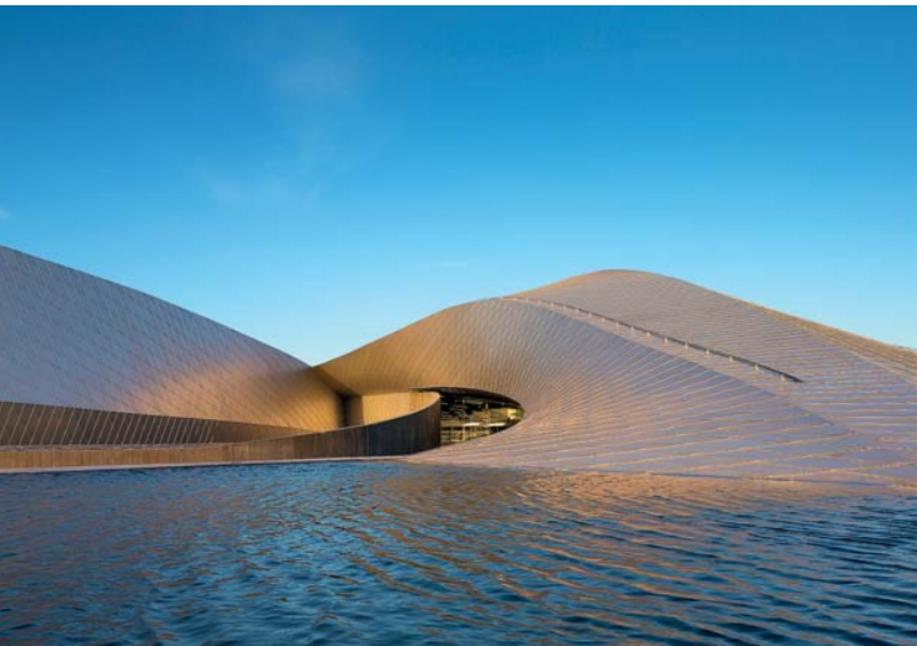
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DESIGN NEWS

From the opening of the Mary Rose Museum to Denmark's new national aquarium



• The building's façade is covered with diamond-shaped aluminium shingles, which reflect the sky and surroundings

Project: **Den Blå Planet**

Design: **3XN**

Location: **Copenhagen, Denmark**

Danish national aquarium launches

Denmark's new national aquarium, Den Blå Planet, has opened in Kastrup, a suburb of Copenhagen.

Created by 3XN, the aquarium is shaped like a giant whirlpool, designed to 'pull people into the world beneath the surface of the sea'. The attraction is home to more than 20,000 sea animals, including hammerhead sharks, sea lions, manta rays and piranhas. Visitors start in the circular foyer at the centre of the building, and can then choose which river, lake or ocean to explore.



• The building has been designed in the shape of a whirlpool



Project: **SeaGlass**

Design: **WXY**

Location: **New York, US**

Carousel ride opens in New York park

A new aquatic-themed carousel experience has opened in New York's Battery Park in Lower Manhattan. The SeaGlass ride has been designed by WXY and was inspired by the New York Aquarium. It features a turntable design and a spiral shell structure with SmartGlass panels that turn from transparent to cobalt blue to represent the ocean. Riders mount iridescent glass fish, which are lit with fibre optic and LED lights. Images of marine life are projected inside the pavilion while the figures spin.





Sculpture unveiled at St Pancras

Project: **Cloud: Meteoros**

Design: **Lucy and Jorge Orta**

Location: **London, UK**

A giant art installation has been unveiled at St Pancras international station in London, designed by Lucy and Jorge Orta.

Cloud: Meteoros features a 15m-wide cloud suspended above the station's Grand Terrace with

figures gently resting on top, intended to echo the passengers waiting for trains below. The sculpture follows on the success of the Olympic Rings which were suspended in the space leading up to and during London 2012.

PHOTO: ©PORTSMOUTH HISTORIC DOCKYARD



PHOTO: ©MARY ROSE TRUST

Project: **Mary Rose Museum**

Design: **Wilkinson Eyre**

Location: **Portsmouth, UK**

Mary Rose Museum launches in Portsmouth Dock

The Mary Rose Museum opened to the public on 31 May, at the same Portsmouth dockyard where the Tudor warship was built more than 500 years ago.

The £27m (US\$42m, E32m) museum was originally scheduled to open in autumn 2012 but a final fit out of interiors took longer than expected.

The museum design was led by Wilkinson Eyre, who worked with interior design fit out architects Pringle Brandon Perkins+Will on the project.

In addition to the restored ship, which sank in 1545 in the Battle of Solent, the boat-shaped museum showcases 19,000 artefacts, which include wooden eating bowls, leather shoes, musical instruments, longbows, nit combs complete with 500 year old lice and two tonne guns.



- The hotel has won awards for its sustainable practices to promote energy and water efficiency

Project: **Parkroyal**

Design: **Woha**

Location: **Little India, Singapore**

Singapore eco hotel unveils its spa

The amazing-looking Parkroyal hotel in Singapore has unveiled its spa and wellness facilities.

The 16-storey eco-inspired hotel features a vertical park and has an entire floor dedicated to wellness.

A large proportion of the floor has been set aside for green outdoor space and features a two-storey descent waterfall, a 300m garden walk and an infinity pool that flows along the edge of the hotel.

Woha architects were responsible for the design.



- The St Gregory Spa has four treatment rooms



- The castle has been painstakingly restored

Project: **Castell Son Claret**

Design: **Linares Arquitectos**

Location: **Calvia, Mallorca**

Mallorca castle hotel opens

A restored 18th century Mallorquin castle has opened as a luxury hotel, after several years of restoration work.

The Castell Son Claret, in Calvia, Mallorca, has 38 rooms and suites, a Michelin-starred restaurant and a Bellesa de Claret Spa. It is situated on a 325 acre private estate.

Linares Arquitectos were responsible for the design. ●

MARC L'ITALIEN

The Exploratorium in San Francisco has relaunched in its new home, with the aim of being the largest net zero energy museum in the US. EHDD principal Marc L'Italien tells us more

How did you get involved with the Exploratorium?

My first run in with the Exploratorium was as a young architect in 1991 when they sponsored a design charrette with three teams made up of artists, landscape architects and architects. I was on a team with Joseph Esherick, the founder of my firm, and landscape architect George Hargreaves among others. The lively discussions during those few days gave me great insight into this wonderful institution.

Why did the museum need to move?

I don't think Frank Oppenheimer, the Exploratorium's founder, ever saw the

Palace of Fine Arts as a permanent home. They had long since outgrown their space and were no longer able to adequately serve their visitors. They also train teachers who teach science in elementary schools and had to turn away two out of three applicants due to the inadequacies of their former home.

What was your vision for the museum?

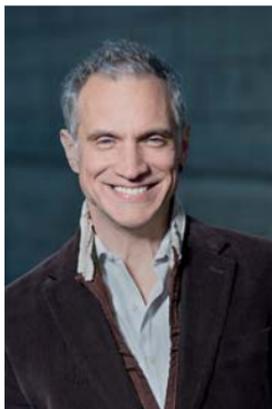
To create a transformative place along the San Francisco waterfront that furthers the mission of the Exploratorium, the world's leading institution of science, art and perception.

We wanted to celebrate a much more public and dynamic site for the museum, and to place architecture, landscape and exhibits on equal footing, creating a holistic environment that fosters inquiry and that sustains the environment.

Can you briefly describe the design of the new Exploratorium?

The Exploratorium's new home is the renovation of an ageing pier, where architecture, art, science and site converge. It elevates the museum's mission as both a destination for experiential exhibits and a research and development facility that creates innovative ways to teach and learn.

Visibility, public access and flexibility drove the planning and design. Situated midway between Ferry Plaza and Pier 39, the new Exploratorium brings to life a previously dormant



■ Marc L'Italien

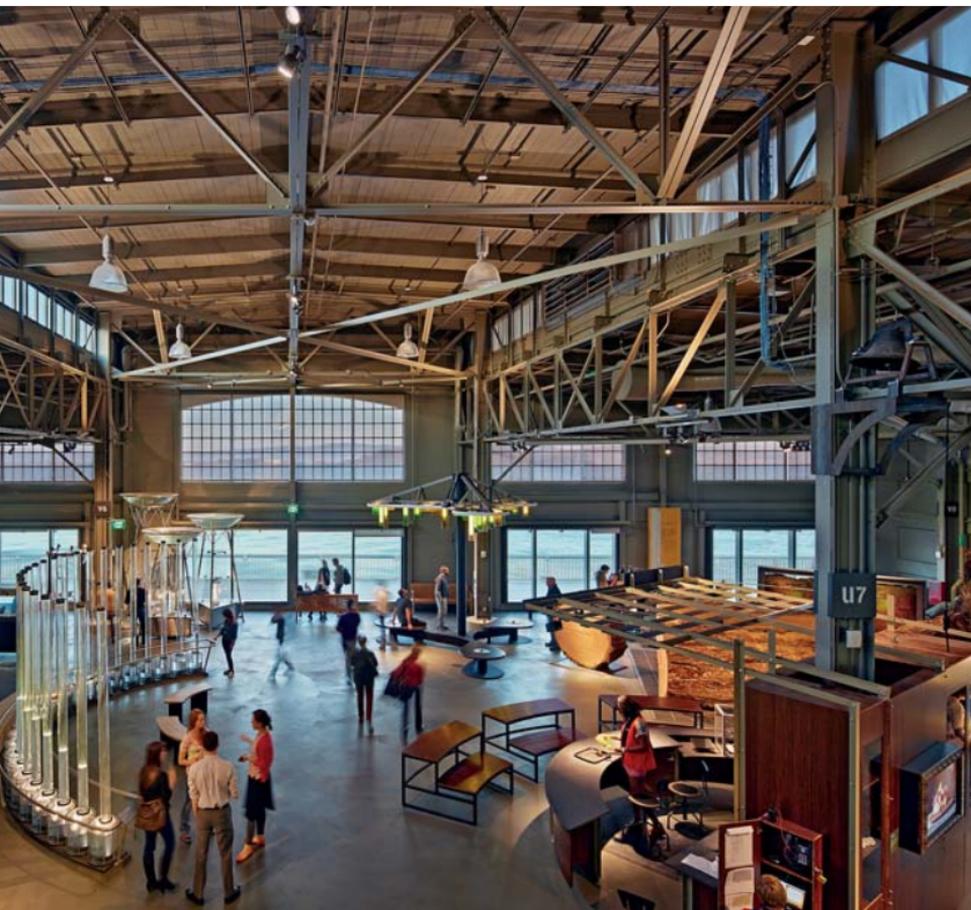
ALL PHOTOS: WWW.BRUCEANDMONTE.COM



■ The Living Systems gallery frames the view of the Bay as the exhibits investigate the world it looks out on

stretch of San Francisco's historic Embarcadero waterfront, the city's front porch. Almost three times larger than its previous site, the new campus uses bay water as a basis for many new outdoor exhibits as well as to control the temperature of the museum.

The complexity of the brief – to design an ultra-flexible building to support an ever-changing array of exhibits in keeping with the Exploratorium's culture of inquiry – was matched by the challenge of rehabilitating an existing historic structure in the most energy-efficient manner possible. Pier 15 was renovated to maintain its own historic character and the tinkering studio atmosphere of the old Exploratorium.



More like an artist's studio or an experimental laboratory than a place of display, the building takes advantage of the original pier building's daylight and the water of the bay for cooling, and uses materials that are both sustainable and durable enough to withstand a harsh maritime climate. The goal is for the Exploratorium to be the USA's largest net zero energy museum. This, combined with the Exploratorium's reputation as a hub of innovation, will make the building an industry model for what's possible in energy efficiency.

A promenade encircling Pier 15 and an outdoor plaza between the piers enables free interactive outdoor exhibits, Exploratorium explainers,

captivating the general public and passers-by with the direct experience of the surrounding bay and the city. This experience begins at the water's edge to a point 820 feet off-shore. (Pier 15 is the length of a New York City block, avenue to avenue) The plaza and the hum of activity is the new marquee – no signage required.

Can you give some more details about the sustainability of the building?

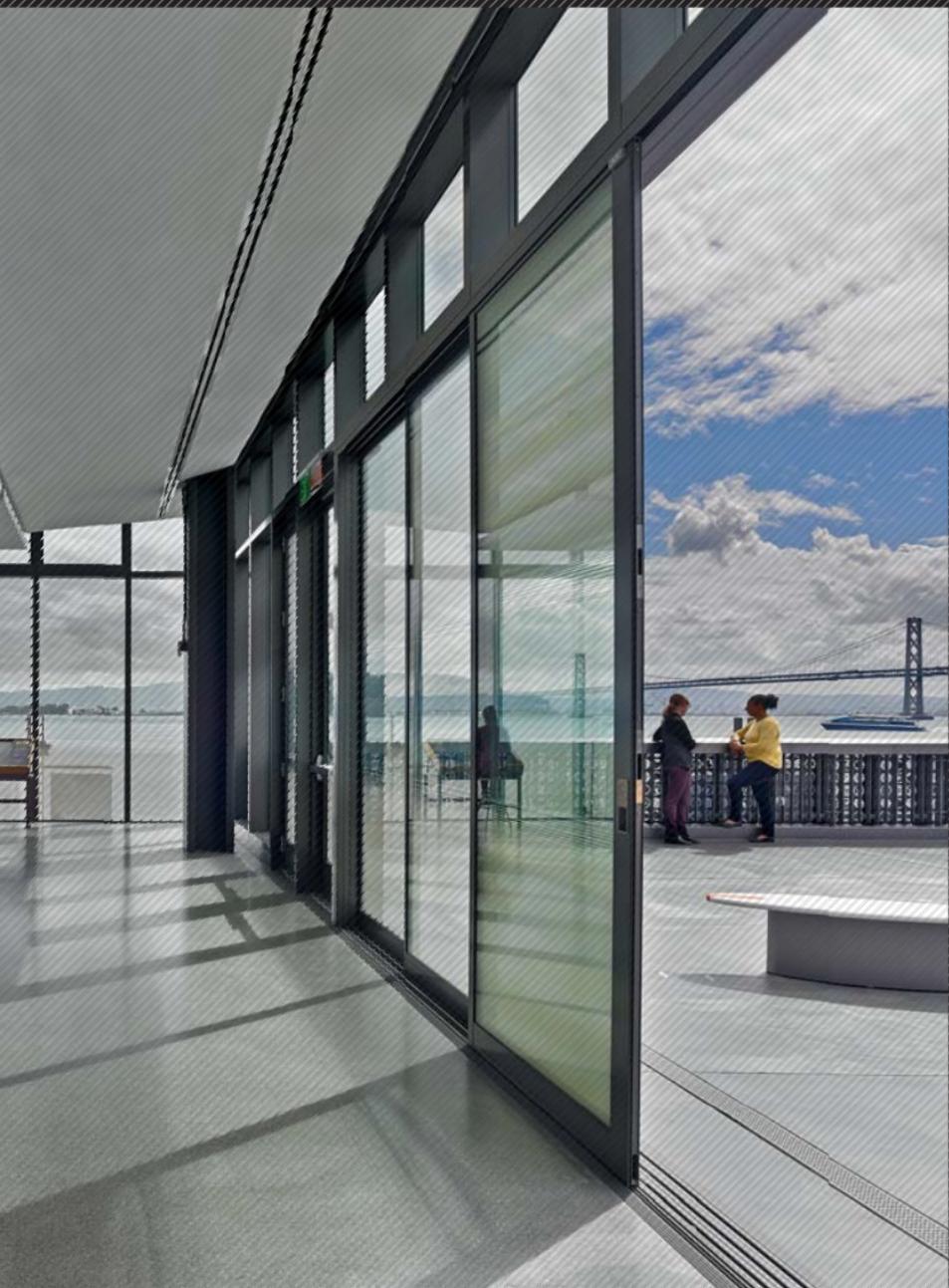
We designed a building that incorporates many energy-efficient elements aimed at producing all of its energy needs on site. For example, the 1.3-megawatt photovoltaic array on the

roof is equivalent to powering 1,000 average American homes over the course of a year, or removing 5,900 automobiles from our highways. Bay water is brought in and run through a heat exchanger to affect the temperature of a separate closed freshwater loop running through the floor. This second loop contains 40 miles of plastic pipe moving over 73,000 gallons per hour to change the temperature of the space. Less overhead ducts were required as a result.

All new windows use high performance triple element glazing to better insulate the building and admit copious amounts of natural light, further reducing reliance on electricity. Sixteen



■ The Fisher Bay Observatory and Terrace look east towards the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge





Balancing the environmental needs and historical stewardship of the building was a challenge. The more you err towards the historic, the more you sacrifice energy-efficiency. Our design strikes a balance



per cent of roof run-off is captured in cisterns and sterilised prior to flushing toilets. What isn't stored is filtered and returned to the bay.

What was the state of the original pier structure?

The substructure of the pier was heavily damaged in the Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989. Our design combined repairs to existing pilings with insertion of new mega piles at the four corners of the pier. These large piles were connected by a new structural slab poured over the existing floor that knits it all together, creating a stiff platform that can withstand major tremors. This allowed us to repair just over a third of the existing 15,000 piles supporting the pier.

A large service lot that had been built in the 1950s to conjoin the piers was removed to create the new open plaza. Pilings were left to mark the tide movement and serve as anchorage for temporary exhibit installations.

Seismic bracing was inserted as required in the renovated transit shed. The structure is painted a uniform color to maximize light reflectance and minimize glare, but also to allow it to recede from view. The new structure is fabricated using round pipe to differentiate it from the older structure. Structure is celebrated but never steals the show.

What is your favourite part of the new building?

The Fisher Bay Observatory building, the only new structure, is an elegant two-story steel pavilion at the east end of Pier 15 that contains an open plaza designed in collaboration with landscape architect Gary Strang. The Observatory stands out with its taut façade. The building uses fritted glass to mitigate heat gain and reduce bird strikes, and houses the Seaglass Restaurant and the ticketed Fisher Bay Observatory Gallery, which offers views of the open water, maritime traffic,

Treasure Island and the Bay Bridge, as well as the surrounding landscape.

What were the biggest challenges of this project?

Balancing the environmental needs and historic stewardship was a particular challenge. The more you err toward the historic, the more you sacrifice energy-efficiency, whereas the most energy-efficient designs lose the history and uniqueness of a place. Our design strikes a balance.

What drew you to a career in architecture?

I drew voraciously and liked making things when I was a child. I could lose myself for hours and my mother had to pry me away from my creations.

How did you start your career?

My first degree in architecture was at the University of Michigan. From there I worked for four years in Dallas, Austin and New York City prior to pursuing my



■ The renovated pier was once occupied by the San Francisco Port of Embarkation



■ Frank Oppenheimer



■ Outside, changing exhibits interface with the water to interpret the Bay

THE EXPLORATORIUM

The Exploratorium science and arts museum was founded in the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco in 1969 by physicist and educator Frank Oppenheimer.

Oppenheimer believed that visitors would learn about science and technology by manipulating laboratory apparatus, and the Exploratorium was one of the first American museums

to use hands-on, interactive exhibits.

Oppenheimer served as the museum's director until just before his death in 1985. Today it is led by science education and policy expert Dr Dennis Bartels.

The museum began to outgrow its home in the Palace of Fine Arts, and closed in January 2013, reopening in April 2013 in its new home at Pier 15

on San Francisco's Embarcadero. The new building was designed by EHDD architects, and is triple the size of the museum's old home. As well as the exhibition space, it features a restaurant, café, a museum store and an event space called The Forum.

It was designed to be energy efficient, and features the city's largest building-mounted photovoltaic array.

graduate degree at Yale University. My early mentors in New York were Alan Buchsbaum and Frederic Schwartz. Fred remains a trusted friend, confidant and collaborator.

How would you describe your philosophy when it comes to architecture?

I believe in a powerful architecture that moves people beyond the building itself. I'm drawn to how humans engage with architecture and make it their own, after the architect's work is done. I believe in a timeless, elegant architecture that responds directly to specific needs that can easily adapt to changing times.

Where do you get your inspiration from?

My inspirations come from my fascination with history and my love of popular culture, and what seems relevant to my time. Most of my projects have real clients with whom I work closely throughout the process. I get my inspiration from drawing out the

essence of their mission and project and developing ideas from that.

I'm most proud when my design ideas come directly from the organisations that commission me.

I am moved when my clients take ownership of something we've developed jointly. I'm moved by craft, quality, developments in modeling and fabrication technologies, lasting materials and most of all, the nuance of a design.

Who do you admire in architecture?

I admire my mentors, who have influenced in me. One of my heroes is Louis Kahn, whose buildings continue to inspire me 40 years after his death.

Where is your favourite place on earth?

In the passenger car compartment of a speeding train, glass of wine in hand, seeing the scenery pass by and hearing the locomotive's whistle call to far away places. This could be in any country, at any time of year, and I will never tire of it.

What do you love most about your job?

All of the fabulous people I have met over the years doing my work.

I have a large staff of incredibly talented and passionate individuals who have taught me a great deal over the years and helped me develop ideas and realise the work.

I also love the variety in our projects and clients and how that has allowed me to travel to new places.

And the least?

The administrative duties of running a practice and needing to get the work that feeds the machine. I also hate deadlines, yet my life is ruled by them.

Is EHDD currently working on any other leisure projects?

We're involved in a project to house the decommissioned Space Shuttle Endeavour at the California Science Center in Los Angeles.

We are also currently renovating the historic Toledo Zoo Aquarium in Ohio [due to reopen in 2015]. ●

JOE PINE & JIM GILMORE

They wrote the manual on themed experiences, and 15 years later Joe Pine and Jim Gilmore are still creating inspiration for businesses looking for authentic ways to attract consumers. They talk to Julie Cramer

It's been almost 15 years since authors and business partners Joe Pine and Jim Gilmore penned the title *The Experience Economy – Work is Theatre and Every Business a Stage* – and defined a new economic phenomenon.

At that time in the late 1990s, themed restaurants and giant amusement parks might have been the most popular 'experiences' being sold to the public. However, Pine and Gilmore were able to cut through the layers to identify and articulate a trend that has today become embedded across many sectors – from computer companies like Apple to individual entrepreneurs.

Pine says: "When we wrote the book in 1999, we talked about it as the nascent experience economy – we couldn't quite say it was actually here but you could see all the elements.

"It was growing faster than the agrarian, industrial and service economies and was going to overshadow them. Now it's here, it's the predominant source of GDP growth and job creation and the primary economic offering."

Pine and Gilmore's first collaborative work has since been translated into 16 different languages. In 2011, the edition was updated to reflect the new influences from technology and social media, and draw on many more exam-

ples of what customers now consider an 'experience' and how businesses go about creating them.

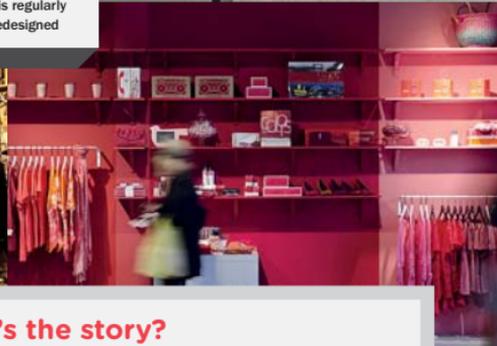
The main premise of the Pine and Gilmore philosophy is that "goods and services are no longer enough," and all businesses must learn to "orchestrate memorable events for their customers that engage each one of them in an inherently personal way."

Gilmore adds: "Services are delivered on demand and are transactional, while experiences are staged over a duration of time. With services, people want to spend less time with you – they want to get out of the dry cleaners, the car wash or the grocery store





■ Story in New York turns shopping into an experience. It is regularly themed and redesigned



as fast as they can. But for experiences, time is really the currency – it's all about how customers can spend more time with you."

A hotel, for example, can either be an experience or just a service, depending on how it's offered to customers, as well as how they perceive it. Are guests paying for the time they spend in the hotel, or merely for a bundle of activities to be performed?

THOUGHT-PROVOKING

Pine and Gilmore are far from being academic theorists – they've spent the past 15 years of their business partnership working with companies across North America and increasingly across the world – advising them how to apply a range of principles to stage engaging experiences.

Under their consultancy brand, Strategic Horizons LLP, they undertake speaking engagements, offer workshops, run a global certification programme, create 'learning excursions' for individual companies and lecture at colleges and universities.

Their flagship product is the annual thinkAbout event, which takes place in

what's the story?

Pine and Gilmore say the big buzz they get from their jobs is seeing their clients "get it", changing their mindset, and doing things differently as a result. One past participant of their exclusive thinkAbout event is former brand consultant Rachel Shechtman, who recently opened the highly innovative retail space Story on New York's

10th Avenue. Described as "a retail space that has the point of view of a magazine, changes like a gallery and sells things like a store," the 2,000sq ft site is like one imaginative, revolving pop-up shop. Every four to eight weeks, Story changes all its merchandise, design, fixtures and reinvents the store around a different theme.

a different city each year and is personally designed by Pine and Gilmore to bring delegates a highly interactive, immersive and thought-provoking two-day tour around the 'Experience Economy' of a chosen city.

Since its inaugural event in Gilmore's hometown of Cleveland, Ohio in 1998, thinkAbout has taken followers of the experience economy to such places as Hollywood, Las Vegas, Baltimore and Nashville. Last year the event – which also names the top 10 experiences of the year and gives the top one the 'Experience Stager of

the Year' (EXPY) award – was in San Francisco and in September 2013 delegates will be exploring the streets of Washington DC in pursuit of experiences par excellence.

The partnership between Pine and Gilmore has stood the test of time and renews itself with new ideas and vigour each year. The pair first communicated when Pine published his book, *Mass Customization*, in 1992 and Gilmore wrote him a letter about it. "My first thought was, oh shoot someone has gone and written the book!" says Gilmore. When Pine left his job



In an increasingly
unreal world, consumers
are choosing to buy or
not to buy based on how
real they perceive an
offering to be



at IBM six months later he ended up being engaged as a consultant by Gilmore – who has a background in logistics consulting. By 1996, the pair had formed a partnership and were writing *The Experience Economy*.

SUPREME THEMING

The pair maintain that theming is still a key part of staging an experience today, but it now has to be much more subtle, even subliminal. As Gilmore says: “What’s lacking in many of today’s environments is an organising principle. The theme is the essence of an experience – and if you have to tell people what it is then it’s not a very sophisticated theme.

“Every time Francis Ford Coppola shot a movie he always had a single word he’d refer to – whether it was deciding on what kind of raincoat or wine to use in a scene – he’d go back to that single word, which represented the essence of the film.”

To show this perfectly applied in a business setting, Pine and Gilmore use the example of Joie de Vivre Hotels and the company’s founder Chip Conley – who is a past recipient of a Strategic Horizons’ EXPY award.

In the late 1980s, Conley bought a rundown motel called the Phoenix in San Francisco’s Tenderloin district, and decided to theme it around *Rolling Stone* magazine. But instead of being an overt homage to what many considered a bible of rock music, Conley went through past



▲ Hotel Avante is themed around *Wired* magazine

magazines and extracted five principles that he believed summed up the essence of the publication.

Pine says: “They were: adventurous, hip, funky, irreverent and young-at-heart. Conley thought that if he could capture the sense of the magazine in this way then everyone who loved it would naturally love his hotel. And it worked. Without having to put an oversized rock guitar in the lobby, the Phoenix became the place for rock bands to stay when they played San Francisco.”

Conley went on to create other venues, such as the Hotel Rex, themed around *New Yorker* magazine, and the Hotel Carlton, themed around *National Geographic*, and now has a large portfolio of chic boutique hotels, restaurants and spas around the US.

Pine and Gilmore’s formula for creating memorable experiences revolves around their own THEME acronym:

- Theme the experience – design around a dominant organising principle.
- Harmonise impressions with positive cues – intentionally create memories with signals from the space (set) or the staff (ensemble).
- Eliminate negative cues – remove whatever runs counter to the theme or desired impressions.

- Mix memorabilia – let guests attach memories to physical objects they actually use in the experience.

- Engage all five senses – richly stage all sensory phenomena.

Out of these, says Gilmore, eliminating negative cues is the most simple to address and yet is often the most overlooked. “Anything that doesn’t contribute to the theme is a negative cue. It might be something as simple as an overflowing waste paper basket, or a staff member who doesn’t smile.”

As a model of good practice, Gilmore cites the example of the John Robert’s chain of hair salons in Ohio, which from its start in the 1990s was focused on creating a very personal guest experience.

Gilmore says new customers are always given a white gown to wear, while regulars are given black ones, enabling staff to tailor their handling and greeting of a client without that client ever knowing they’ve been signposted. Similarly, instead of the receptionist having to tell a stylist their next client has arrived within earshot of a current client – potentially creating the negative cue of making them feel rushed – the stylist is buzzed via a device hidden in their pocket.



■ In order to raise funds and promote themselves, 826 National centres feature innovative stores



spelling and superheroes

Each year at their thinkAbout event, Pine and Gilmore choose one standout business as the recipient of their annual EXPY award to honour their exceptional contribution to the client experience. Last year it was awarded for the first time to a non-profit organisation called 826 National. The business is a network of eight writing and tutoring centres that help under-resourced students aged 6 to 18 explore their creativity and improve their literacy.

Pine says: "What's interesting is the planners stopped them opening up their first tutoring business in a retail zone, so their answer was to put up a fun little store in front of it. Their first was a Pirate Supply store selling hooks and eye patches and wooden legs. Every place they go now they open up a store. In Brooklyn, there's a Superheroes store. It also helps take away some of the stigma of kids having to walk in for extra tutoring."



BRAVE NEW WORLD

Of course, the world has moved on rapidly since the original publication of *The Experience Economy*, and now social media is responsible for creating a whole other layer of consumer experience. Pine explains: "You learn about a place much more readily from other people now. Your first impression may not come from discovering it yourself, but from friends or strangers."

"Online ratings can flavour your experience before you even get there. Social media can really be used to improve the experience but companies have to pay attention and respond to it."

Pine cites the now-celebrated example of musician and plane passenger Dave Carroll, who had no offer of compensation from United Airlines when luggage handlers broke his guitar. So instead he took to YouTube with a song of complaint entitled *United Breaks Guitars*.

"The song went viral within hours and attracted over 12 million hits on YouTube. It's estimated that United's stock price dropped 15 per cent as a result. That's the power of social media" says Pine.

Interestingly, while Pine is clearly passionate about new technologies (he more recently co-authored a book with Kim Korn entitled *Infinite Possibility - Creating Customer Value on the Digital Frontier*), Gilmore confesses



▲ Pine and Gilmore have been working together since 1992

to being averse to such "anti-social" pursuits as Twitter and doesn't even own a mobile phone.

Perhaps like many successful business partnerships, Pine and Gilmore's personalities and skill sets appear to be complementary rather than similar. "He likes cigars, I don't. He would spend leisure time at Disney, I wouldn't," jokes Gilmore.

Of the two, Pine is the one who naturally keeps abreast of what's happening in the marketplace, with "a keen set of antennae to spot things of significance," as Gilmore puts it. He, on the other hand, is the more inventive, creative type, coming up with fresh ideas for business exercises and workshops and facilitating group dynamics. "I'm more playful and highly

strung, he's calmer and more academic," Gilmore adds.

Despite Gilmore's light-hearted protestations over the proliferation of technology (he takes note of how many people today live "three screens deep", little noticing their immediate surroundings) – the pair know only too well that the experience economy must contend with digital realities.

QUEST FOR AUTHENTICITY

Pine says: "It's increasingly difficult to get people's attention as they spend more time online or in virtual worlds. In the future we'll see more of the fusing of the real and virtual or we could lose customers to technology altogether."

Conversely, as the push into virtuality marches on, Pine and Gilmore also recognise that customers still want to feel they are experiencing authenticity. In *Authenticity - What Consumers Really Want* they wrote: "In an increasingly unreal world, consumers choose to buy or not to buy based on how real they perceive an offering. Business today is all about being real, original, genuine, sincere and authentic."

According to Pine, this brings us to the "final offering" of the progression of economic value, which is when experiences start guiding life transformations. "Places like fitness clubs are one step ahead in that they're already in the business of transformation – people don't go for the workout, they go for the transformation it will bring."

"I remind leisure businesses, you used to own the experience economy – until everyone else started getting into your business. Operators must find ways of enhancing their experiences if they are to continue to compete." ●

get real - get virtual

In his most recent book, *Infinite Possibility - Creating Customer Value on the Digital Frontier*, Pine identifies the problem of "the migration of virtuality".

He says: "People bring all this technology with them and they're just a click away from leaving your experience. How do you get them to engage with their technology so they are more fully immersed in your experience?"

He cites the Kim Possible World Showcase Adventure

that played at Disney's Epcot centre last year. "For teens and tweens, Epcot is the most boring part, but this exhibit used digital technology to allow them to go on an adventure within Epcot that had nothing to do with the park."

Kids were given special mobile phones and used the technology to find clues around the park as if they were in an episode with the Kim Possible tv character, leading to a special area where they got to save the day from Dr Evil.





The easy, affordable way to better asset management

When Avalon Leisure were looking around for a new asset management system for their five centres in Somerset, it was the price of WAM that attracted them. Now, they say, they can't put a figure on the savings it's brought the organisation (in time, efficiency and more) and it has paid for itself and some

WAM was introduced onto the market in 2005 by Halo Leisure Enterprises and was taken up by organisations across the country who, like Avalon Leisure, have seen huge efficiencies for their business or organisation. Now an updated version is being relaunched as one of the easiest and most efficient asset management systems and the best value for money on the market.

Halo knows that your asset list may cover thousands of individual items – everything from plant and equipment to fixtures and fittings – and is likely to represent a large business capital investment. As organisations are being required to produce evidence that maintenance targets are being achieved and the value of assets maximised, Halo is seeing them finally let go of paper-based procedures in favour of a system that combines Asset Inventory, Defect Reporting and Planned Preventative Maintenance Tools. WAM has been designed to meet these needs, with its tools interacting and supporting a streamlined management program.

"This programme was created for

our own leisure group in Herefordshire and worked so well we decided to take it to others," says Kris Price, who leads Halo Leisure Enterprises.

"One of the many advantages is it is so easy to use. Staff simply access prioritised work schedules and then hit a button, type in update (fault

WAM is web-based so there is no new software to download, no user manual and it requires minimum knowledge of computers

reported, part ordered, work done etc), hit a button and the system updates. Managers and supervisors can see at a glance faults reported, the progress of repairs, depreciation values of their assets, contractor servicing and planned preventative maintenance tasks being undertaken.

"WAM is web-based so there is no new software to download, no user manual and it requires minimum knowledge of computers," he says.

"With the new version you are also able to distinguish between your statutory and desirable commitments."

What makes WAM so affordable?

WAM is not charged per user but is accessible for all staff on site for a one-off set up cost per organisation inclusive of training and helpline support. There is no minimum contract term and the cost is comparable with an average monthly gym membership.

"We had five sites and they were increasingly difficult to manage because of the level of staff and maintenance.

We were completely paper-based," explains Malcolm Baker, Avalon Leisure's technical manager. "There were, inevitably, challenges with

this. Staff would go to one site to do a repair to find parts had not arrived. Or they'd find another fault had been reported but they were without the equipment they needed to sort it out. Now we can all look at our WAM page anytime, our worksheets are organised for us and everyone is bang up to date. The cost of some asset management programmes was prohibitive, but this wasn't, it works, and it's easily paid for itself by improving efficiency." ●

■ To find out more go to the new WAM website at www.maxyourassets.com

NICK THISTLETON

When Martha Lane Fox asked Nick Thistleton to help her launch a private karaoke experience, he had his doubts. Now he's MD of Lucky Voice, with deals in Australia the UK and Ireland, as well as plans for further international expansion



Thistleton went from playing piano with Lionel Richie to launching Lucky Voice

What is your career background?

I graduated from Oxford University with a degree in French and Russian in 1992, then decided to play the piano for a living. It was great, but I had to subsidise my life with being a freelance strategy consultant for a few years.

I played piano principally in London West End Musicals. I also once appeared on *Top of the Pops* with Lionel Richie – I was part of his backing band on the UK leg of his tour.

I went into business in 2000 as a freelance consultant. I got involved in the dot-com gold rush, working for people who invested in dot-com businesses, reading business plans and commenting on them.

I worked for Spectrum Strategy Consultants on a freelance basis, which is where I met Martha Lane Fox [Lane Fox worked as an associate for Spectrum, together with her lastminute.com co-founder Brent Hoberman]. Martha and I became extremely good mates.

In 2003, Martha had some money to invest, and approached me with the idea she'd had for Lucky Voice, asking if I wanted to be involved.

MARTHA LANE FOX ON LUCKY VOICE

"The success of Lucky Voice is based on a very simple idea adapted from Asia, where they have private-room karaoke bars. It's not about standing in front of a crowd of strangers and mortifying them with a rendition of *I Will Survive*. It's about having a great time with your friends and the endorphin rush that you get from singing.

Since our launch in 2005 we've continued to grow and evolve in

response to our customer demands. We have embraced the internet by introducing the hugely popular luckyvoice.com which lets users sing from thousands of songs online.

And the company's own touch-screen karaoke software now extends to a wide range of leisure businesses including bars, clubs, restaurants, bowling alleys and entertainment parks both all over the world."





Customers typically hire the private rooms for two hours

Our best ever celebrity story was when we had Paul and Stella McCartney in a pod with Chris Martin and Gwyneth Paltrow. Chris Martin and Paul McCartney duetted on YMCA

How was the idea for Lucky Voice born?

During her days at Spectrum Strategy Consultants, Martha Lane Fox was posted out to places like South Korea and Japan. The standard after-work entertainment was karaoke in private rooms, which planted the idea in her head. A few years down the track she had some money to invest; she went out to a karaoke bar in London and was reminded of the idea.

What was your initial reaction when she suggested launching a private karaoke bar?

I was uncertain at first. I didn't quite get the connection between karaoke and fun – I guess I was guilty of thinking about the stigma attached to pub-style karaoke. Martha took me out for a night out at a karaoke bar, where it was just me and her in a room, and

it completely changed my opinion.

In my piano playing days, I would often get dragged to the piano at parties and made to play, with people gathering around for a drunken sing song. I realised that karaoke is the same concept, just with different technology – a karaoke machine, versus someone playing the piano.

I sat in that bar and thought, this is the same as people drunkenly singing around a piano – I know how much everyone loves that. It was an instant switch from being a bit uncertain to being very confident that this was worth investing a chunk of my life in.

Can you sum up what Lucky Voice offers?

We coined the term private karaoke to distinguish it from what tends to come into people's heads when they think about karaoke – basically,

not much more than a slightly embarrassing night at the pub.

Our first venue opened in Soho in June 2005. It had nine rooms, all kitted out with state-of-the-art technology. It has a touch screen system where customers can easily search and cue up the songs they want to sing, a big screen with the lyrics on it, a nice sound system and wireless microphones and a 'thirsty' button people press for a waitress drinks service.

Typically people book those rooms for two hours. They come along, order drinks and sing to their hearts' content. The smallest room is for four people and the biggest is for 12.

How difficult was it to get the business off the ground?

It was a bit of an instant success, really. There was quite a lot of buzz around the opening of the Soho bar.

HOTSEAT

We managed to generate quite a lot of press as we had good connections in the media, and the word of mouth was astonishing. Word of mouth has been our most successful marketing channel since day one.

What makes Lucky Voice so successful?

I think, fundamentally, people just love singing. It's quite a primal human activity. This is just singing, but we package it up in exactly the right way – it's you and your mates, we have great technology and everything you can think of that you want to sing and we'll bring you drinks whenever you want.

How quickly did the other sites follow?

Our second bar in Islington, London, opened around three years later, and then the third site, in Brighton, opened in the summer of 2009.

Novus Leisure approached us in 2006 and said they really liked what we were doing and were keen to do something similar, so we began to work with them on a franchise agreement. We opened a Lucky Voice Tiger Tiger Manchester in 2007. We now have five fully-fledged Lucky Voice

franchises within Tiger Tiger bars across the UK in Cardiff, Manchester, Newcastle, Leeds and Glasgow.

After that we thought, let's find lots more of these franchisees. We quickly realised that there weren't going to be too many operators who would be prepared to invest hundreds of thousands of pounds doing up their venue, so we decided to offer something a little further down the scale. We started licensing the karaoke software, which is very much the core of the experience. We started off organically gathering a few clients here and there, but it has really started taking off in the last 12 months.

How are your plans for international expansion going?

We signed a licensing agreement with Strike Bowling Australia in November 2012 to provide karaoke software to four of its venues in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. Strike Bowling is looking to grow its karaoke offer quite significantly.

In April, we entered into a licensing partnership with Irish entertainment complex Arena 7, in Donegal. A site at the complex is being converted into a private karaoke room with a

bar, featuring Lucky Voice software and we're also talking to people in Dubai, Paraguay, France and the Czech Republic. The aim is to be the world's de facto karaoke solution.

What does your software offer?

We've created a piece of software called Lucky Voice Enterprise, which is wholly developed and owned by us.

It's essentially the software that creates the experience. From the customer's point of view you have two screens: the touch screen where you search for and cue up songs, and the main screen where the lyrics appear.

It's also connected quite richly to our back-end, web-based, karaoke delivery platform. It updates itself all the time – it adds new songs, corrects spelling mistakes if there are any, and adjusts the visuals so that they tie in with special occasions such as Christmas, or with the venue.

We can control all of this through our administration panel via the internet. It also reports back all the data – who has sung what, and when – and we can analyse that and look at what's popular and what's working and then share the findings with our clients. It's a really good piece of kit.



The London nightclub Mahiki – frequented by Prince Harry and Kate Moss – has a Lucky Voice karaoke room



There are now Lucky Voice venues in 7 cities across the UK



Martha Lane Fox had a massive car accident shortly after we founded Lucky Voice, which made me much more independent than I might have been. I had to learn an enormous amount about things I didn't know



Now we're getting an increasing body of clients, we are going to create a feedback loop, so the clients will become instrumental in improving the software. We are building a client hub where they can come along and have a bit more interaction with each other. It also has promotional modules – when no-one is interacting with the touch screen it can run little adverts. You can also have bespoke messages popping up on the main screen – letting customers know they have 15 minutes left and they need to order more drinks, for example.

What is the most profitable part of your business?

There are three strands to the business: the owner-operated bars, the B2B licensing and franchising, and the online karaoke. In terms of profitability, there's not a huge amount of difference between the three, but we are putting a bit more emphasis on the B2B and online side of things because

they are more scaleable than the bars. However, we probably couldn't have done the other stuff without having built and operated our own venues.

We used our original venues to build a brand, and to show that we know how this works. We can and do share operational knowledge with our clients.

Who frequents your bars?

We've had Prince Harry in and Harry Styles, and quite recently Mel Chisholm and Emma Bunton came down for Mel C's birthday. Probably our best ever celebrity story was when we had Paul and Stella McCartney in a pod with Chris Martin and Gwyneth Paltrow. Paul McCartney and Chris Martin duetted on YMCA.

What is your role and what is Martha Lane Fox's role?

Martha Lane Fox is very much non-executive. She invested the initial money into the business, she's still the major shareholder and she's still

very much my business partner, but she's never had an executive role in Lucky Voice. She left me to set up the business pretty much single handedly, as she very unfortunately had a massive car accident shortly after we founded Lucky Voice.

That made me necessarily much more independent than I might otherwise have been. I had to learn an enormous amount about things I didn't know a lot about. I had Martha's support and investment throughout, but I had to get the job done.

She was in hospital for about a year after her accident. I went in to visit her every week, and showed her designs and plans for Lucky Voice. She came out of hospital and a few months afterwards we launched, so she was able to be there for that.

Martha and I have an incredibly positive, productive and supportive relationship, and I feel very lucky with that. She is my business partner, friend and mentor.



Educating people about what we do is a challenge. We're essentially creating a market. People have been doing karaoke for a while but we're trying to sell it in a different way



What's your long term ambition?

Initially our aim was to open a karaoke bar and see how it went. Now it's to try to be the power behind every high quality singing experience in the world.

Are you planning to build more bars?

We have no immediate plans, although I'd never say never. That's a part of the business that has been necessarily hit by the recession. Our original plan was for quite aggressive expansion, but that hit the skids when banks stopped lending money. We were fortunate that we were able to diversify.

We discovered other parts of the business that feel inherently more scaleable. Now we're interested in scale, not just from a business performance point of view, but also in terms of spreading the experience globally.

Our big focus is on the licensing side of things, because it's a fantastic way for operators to use space which is perhaps not generating much revenue. As a model, it works very well because you charge people to use the few square feet they are standing on, and you also charge them for their drinks, which they tend to drink rather faster than they might normally.

What are your plans for the next 12 months?

We're looking at all the territories around the world, trying to understand demand and looking potentially at distribution deals. If we find people in a



Customers get the use of wireless mics and can order drinks via the 'thirsty' button

territory who are better placed to sell and communicate the product than we are, we'd be open to that. One of the key things we want to achieve is enabling international distribution. We've got a string of clients in the pipeline.

We've also recently launched a dedicated B2B website.

We'll also be actively targeting different sectors – we're looking at holiday complexes and cruise ships. That could take us to a huge number of countries, even if we were just looking to service the UK market.

What's been the biggest challenge?

Educating people about what we do is an ongoing challenge. We're essentially creating a market – people have been doing karaoke for a while, but we're trying to sell it in a different way. It's not like we're servicing something that people perceive as an existing need. We're having to persuade our customers that they will enjoy it and our B2B clients that it will make a difference to their operation.

On top of that, trading through the recession has been pretty tough. We have got some real momentum at the moment, though.

How is the company performing?

We're still quite small. We turn over about £3m, and have profits of about half a million. Our profits are growing, and we anticipate getting quite a bit bigger. The online karaoke and B2B side are really growing, and that's where we're investing at the moment.

What's been your high point?

We take what we do very seriously, but I love the fact that we're dealing in fun. Our mission statement is spreading happiness through unforgettable singing experiences.

Our staff don't all join the company being nuts about karaoke – far from it – but they all get excited about what we're doing – which is inspiring people to sing more, because it makes them smile, and I think there's something really lovely about that. ●

Leadership is vital for a good health and safety culture

LONDON 2012: LESSON LEARNT SERIES

- 1 Leadership & Structure
- 2 Preparing for Work
- 3 Venue Operations

Failure to demonstrate effective leadership in health and safety these days is all too common. This wasn't the case when RDHS, led by Joe Ryan was awarded an 18-month contract by the London Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) to deliver H&S standards across the Olympic Park.

LOCOG's Leadership Team, in particular the Venues and Infrastructure Team demonstrated the foresight and skills needed to deliver LOCOG's vision of a 'Harm Free Environment'. The Leadership Team established clear Strategic Vision, to instil, at every level and in the contractor & supplier organisations that Health and Safety should be their "first consideration".



RDHS translated LOCOG's vision into a set of standards

Coordination of safety people is crucial

Wellbeing was emphasised rather than a narrow focus on safety. LOCOG believed a cared-for workforce would be an engaged one. The workforce felt that they could discuss health and safety issues without detriment. The ability to submit reports anonymously encouraged reporting, as did incentives to do so. Feedback on actions taken as a response to issues raised also emphasised that views were valued.

LOCOG's structure was supported by strong communications at all levels ensuring the commitment to safety was understood by all. Emphasis on communication translated into a variety of activities, which included visual standards, daily activity briefings, toolbox talks, and safety alerts.

An emphasis on learning, not blame, avoided knee-jerk reactions likely to damaged the safety culture.

Safety first

Supervisors lived the message of safety first. Safety was a motivator behind workforce induction, and managers acted as good role models.

Excellence on safety performance was seen as the ability to duplicate that peak performance consistently throughout the lead up to the Games, during the Games and into legacy.

Ironically, most organisations don't really have a safety strategy that directs and unites the various safety efforts into a coherent way.

One of the clearest and strongest elements was the role senior leaders played in articulating clear vision, priorities, and strategy. Broadening the vision beyond safety alone created a positive environment which would enhance both workforce commitment and engagement.

LOCOG's Vision was put into actions by creating the Baseline Health & Safety Management Systems and multi-communication channels. Park Operations used the services of RDHS

Wellbeing was emphasised, rather than a narrow focus on safety

to translate this vision into a set of standards. RDHS engaged the Venue Operations Managers and stakeholders to communicate those standards, encouraging ownership of them.

The commitment to safety was conveyed through the joint meetings such as the Safety, Health & Environmental Leadership Team (SHELT).

Health & Safety Risk Map

The Health and Safety Risk Map was developed as a key tool in the identification of high-level risks and controls. The risk map was used by LOCOG to prioritise its efforts and included all areas where LOCOG was responsible for delivery, including 'fit out' and Games operations.

The map defined a risk-based assurance inspection programme, identifying lower-level issues that could cause problems if not controlled.



RDHS provide Integrated Management Solutions to the Sport, Leisure & Event Industries. Joe Ryan, MD of RDHS spent 18 months contracted to LOCOG delivering the Baseline Health and Safety Management System for all London 2012 Olympic Park venues. For further information regarding services offered by RDHS, visit www.rdhealthandsafety.co.uk



FLOATING AWAY

Developed by an architect, an engineer and a footballer, the Floating Gardens will offer innovative spa treatments on a groundbreaking eco-friendly floating building in the middle of a lake in Amsterdam. Co-founder Michel Kreuger tells Magali Robathan all about it

A floating spa built out of recycled polystyrene and covered with vegetation, offering treatments that promise to help the brain adapt and heal itself – it's fair to say the Floating Gardens is not your average spa concept.

Developed by Michel Kreuger and ex-professional footballer Kizito Musampa, together with architect Anne Holtrop, the Floating Gardens spa is due to open in 2014.

The two-storey building will be located on a freshwater lake just outside Amsterdam's city centre. It will feature four pools, two restaurant/bars, five saunas and three treatment rooms and will be covered with a 'living wall' of plants designed by botanist Patrick Blanc. It will offer treatments based around concepts such as psychoneuroimmunology – which looks at how emotions and health are linked and how stress leads to disease – and neuroplasticity – a science that studies the brain's potential for change and ability to adapt and renew itself.

The concept has been presented at various exhibitions since 2010, and

has attracted high levels of interest. Here Michel Kreuger, founder of green technology company Studio Noach, explains how the idea was born.

When was Studio Noach founded?

I founded it in 2008 together with my business partner [ex Manchester City and Ajax Amsterdam player] Kizito 'Kiki' Musampa. The studio was based on our Green Floating concept, which uses recycled polystyrene to create floating buildings.

The original idea was to build houseboats, but when the housing market stalled we decided to move into wellness because it's a niche market. Even when the housing market dips, there's still a demand for spas.

What is the Green Floating concept?

It's all based on building on a foundation of recycled polystyrene, which is as strong as steel, but can flex by 17 per cent and is also very buoyant and provides excellent insulation. This structure is coated by fibreglass and covered with a layer of vegetation on

top of the building. We always knew that the carbon footprint of our buildings had to be neutral – we've actually gone one step further and made it carbon negative because the vegetation will convert CO₂ to oxygen.

How did you choose the location?

We're based in Amsterdam, and we have a freshwater lake right outside of the city centre. It's a place where you can relax and look over the horizon, while being very close to the city centre and the 17th century canals.

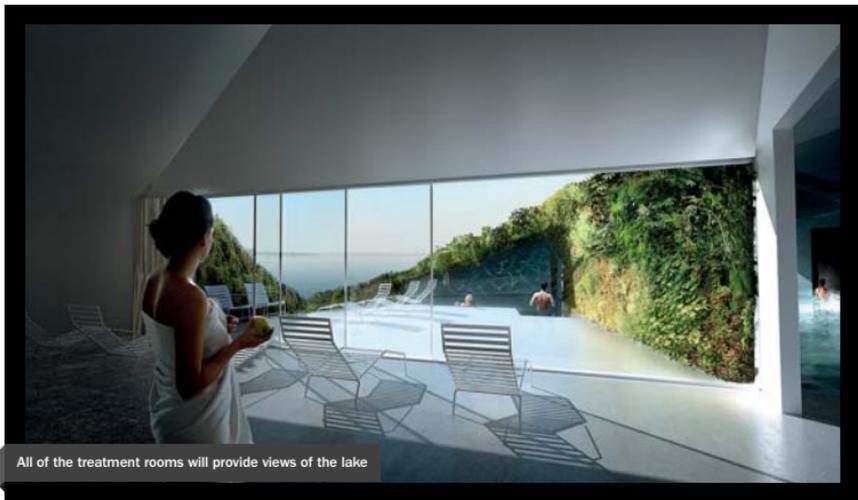
The Amsterdam local government is trying to move the city away from the image of the red light district and the coffee shops and encourage more visitors interested in Van Gogh, Rembrandt and the 17th century canals. That sort of audience would be keen to go on a boat trip and come and spend half a day in the spa.

What facilities will the spa have?

On the ground floor there will be four pools, including an outdoor infinity pool and a hot tub with views across the lake. There will also be two



Left to right: architect Anne Holtrop, Kizito Musampa, Michel Kreuger



All of the treatment rooms will provide views of the lake

restaurants/bars (one wet, one dry) and five saunas, including two with panoramic views of the lake.

The top floor will feature three treatment rooms and a large room for group therapy such as hot yoga. These rooms will all offer views over the lake.

How did the partnership with Patrick Blanc come about?

The idea of having vegetation on the walls and roof came from the floating gardens created in the 1970s and 1980s by the Dutch artist Robert

Jasper Grootveld. We wanted to create a structure similar to that and when we teamed up with architect Anne Holtrop he said there's a better way of doing this – a new technique developed by Patrick Blanc [see story opposite for more information].

Blanc's technique is based on the idea that you don't need soil to grow plants – all you need is sunlight, nutrients, minerals and water. He wraps a composite cloth material around buildings, which just needs to be sprinkled with water for a few minutes each day

– using this technique you can grow plants on the side of walls.

It wasn't easy to contact Patrick Blanc, but when we did get hold of him he got very enthusiastic about our idea because what we had created was an ecological loop – normally his vertical gardens use rainwater with added nutrients and minerals, but our concept building floats on fresh water so the plants can use that.

What will set the Floating Gardens apart from other spas?

We are competing with four and five star city centre hotels. In these hotels, the spa facilities tend to consist of a pool and a sauna – sometimes in the basement – where the view is of someone else's genitals! In our case you will have beautiful views across the lake and gardens. From the city centre, you could hop on a canal boat and be with us in 15 minutes.

How did Kizito Musampa get involved?

I live on the canal close to the red light district, and one day I saw a Lamborghini with a Spanish licence plate stopping. I thought, 'typical a €500,000 car by the canal, probably a guy working in the district'. I saw the car again and again, then I saw the owner walking from the car to the parking meter to pay. Parking meters in Amsterdam are some of the most



The layer of vegetation will provide insulation



Patrick Blanc (right) works for the French National Centre for Scientific Research

PATRICK BLANC

Patrick Blanc is a botanist and creator of the Vertical Garden (Mur Vegetal)

Blanc's vertical gardens allow plants to grow up walls without needing soil. Blanc has created more than 140 vertical gardens on buildings across the world, including the Quai Branly Museum in Paris, the Athenaeum Hotel in London, the Aquarium in Genoa and the CaixaForum art gallery in Madrid.

After visiting Malaysia and Thailand aged 19, Paris-born Blanc was inspired by the abundant greenery and by the way plants grew everywhere – on rocks, on walls, up trees. He decided he wanted to try to do the same at home, and spent years studying the way plants grow vertically in the wild.

The walls of the buildings are wrapped with a felt polyamide layer which is attached to a thin waterproof layer of PVC, which is in turn attached to a metal frame. The plants are fed with nutrient-enriched water which runs down into a trough. Any excess water is returned to the top of the wall to be used again.

Blanc blends shade-loving, moisture-loving plants at the bottom of his vertical walls with plants that need more light and are more hardy at the top. The plants don't damage the building – so long as they are given water and nutrients, they spread only superficially, and need minimal maintenance.

expensive in the world, so when I met the owner of the car a few weeks later in a restaurant, I offered him my spare parking permit. I was quite surprised when he turned out to be the professional footballer Kiki Musampa. Months later we got closer, he got enthusiastic about my plans and he said he'd like to get involved.

Kiki is originally from the Congo. His father is a professor of botanics, so he already had an interest.

How is the project being funded?

Kiki Musampa is mainly funding it. We are also currently in the process of negotiating a rollout of the concept to the rest of the world, although I can't

say too much about that yet. We need to get the first spa out, so that we have a flagship.

Who will the spa attract?

It will be quite high-end – it will attract four and five star visitors.

What kind of treatments will you offer?

Spas shouldn't just offer relaxation; change is what people are really looking for in order to obtain long-lasting peace of mind. Areas such as psychoneuroimmunology (PNI), which looks at how emotions and health are related, and the links between stress and disease, will be explored in the treatments we offer.

I have travelled around the world researching treatment ideas. I met many teachers around the world, but the Tibetan Lamas I met in India and Nepal really opened my eyes. I learned that it's possible to not only change the mind, but also the structure of the brain. Today, pioneering experiments in neuroplasticity, a new science studying the brain's potential for change, reveal that we are capable not only of altering its structure but also of generating new neurons. There is now clear evidence that the brain can adapt, heal and renew itself. Our spa will offer this wealth of knowledge to its customers.

When will the spa open?

Towards the middle of 2014. ●

LEISURE MANAGEMENT

2013

WINE TOURISM

SPECIAL

ON THE GRAPEVINE

From using star architects to incorporating art and music into their offer, operators of wine destinations are raising the bar.

Terry Stevens takes a look at the people behind some of the world's most innovative wine destinations

This year the world will witness one billion international tourism arrivals, with the UN World Tourism Organisation predicting that by 2020 this figure will have grown to 1.6bn.

The competition to attract and secure market share of this growing number of tourists is intense. As destinations around the world strive to become more competitive and achieve 'stand out' they have to be increasingly creative and innovative.

According to Claus Sendlinger, founder and CEO of Design Hotels, tourism needs to harness talent from the creative industries to succeed.

"The tourism industry needs hybrid thinkers and hybrid solutions, but this industry is not sufficiently innovative and creative to deliver," he says.

There is, however, one sector within tourism which exudes innovation and demonstrates the creative touch. The wine industry has embraced the chal-

lenge, with wine tourism destinations now setting new standards for the rest of the industry to follow.

This shouldn't come as a surprise, because viticulture and wine production is inherently a creative process. It's an industry that's embedded in lifestyle and it's all about terroir – about provenance – with the wines bearing the characteristics of their place of production.

This is an industry that has long recognised its symbiotic relationship with tourism. Wine tourism formed part of the 'Grand Tour' for Europe's aristocracy. Wine trails first became an official part of the tourism offer in Germany in the 1920s but it was not until the 1970s that wine tourism emerged as a special interest aspect of tourism development. Today wine tourism is a fast-growing, high value and value-added sector of tourism.

Today's wine destinations are increasingly recognising the need for high quality, experiential tourism experiences that combine the best

that the wine industry can offer with those from local agriculture, landscape, design and craftsmanship. The wine industry has also recognised the global drawing power of contemporary international architecture.

One of the most significant trends of the past 10 years in the development of wine tourism has been the involvement of internationally-renowned, star architects in the creation of new wineries, wine museums, wine cellars and wine hotels and spas. Some of the best known examples include the Marqués de Riscal winery hotel by Frank Gehry at Elciego in Spain's Basque Region; Norman Foster's Bodegas Portia in Ribera del Duero near Madrid; Zaha Hadid's involvement at the Lopez de Heredia Winery, also in Spain; and Herzog and de Meuron's work with the Dominus Winery in California.

Here we take a look at wine destinations putting a new twist on the traditional wine tourism offer.



There are currently two Loisium Wine & Spa Resorts in Austria, with plans for up to 10 more across Europe





The second Loisium wine resort opened in Austria in June 2012 with a hotel, wine bar, two restaurants and a spa

Loisium Wine & Spa Resorts & Loisium World of Wine

Langenlois & Styria, Austria

The highly respected Austrian tourism visionary, Susanne Kraus-Winkler, defines the Loisium project as “a kind of life experiment about creating emotional touristic products within low level tourism regions by using regional products, focusing on wine, and trying to create neighbourhood interaction in a very innovative form.”

Kraus-Winkler and her principal partners, the Nidetzky family, have curated a new hybrid lifestyle product that combines agriculture, tourism and culture, and that harnesses architecture and design as its driving force. This synthesis of wine and modern architecture is creating the platform for regional economic and tourism development.

Their concept has been successfully piloted in Langenlois

Kraus-Winkler (right) worked with the Nidetzky family

at the centre of Kamptal, Austria's leading wine growing region. Here, working with renowned American architect Steven Holl, the Loisium team have created a unique wine experience.

Loisium opened in 2003, consisting of a Holl-designed voinocheque located in vineyards sitting above 900-year-old wine cellars owned by local wine producers. The winery adopted a collaborative approach with these small producers, and the cellars are now open for guided tours and house art galleries, as well as the wine.

Above ground is a restaurant and shop, showcasing local crafts, food and wines; a place to meet local growers and a corporate meeting space. Today the Loisium World of Wine attracts 70,000 visitors a year.

Two years later, in 2005, the Loisium Wine & Spa Resort opened. Another Holl-designed building, this €14.9m project consists of a four star hotel and a wine spa with an

outdoor pool overlooking the village of Langenlois and the World of Wine.

The resort features avant-garde architecture, locally-crafted furniture, unique contemporary art and the Vineyard Restaurant, with products sourced mainly from within a 30km radius.

Buoyed by their success, the partners and investors aim to create seven to 10 projects in other leading wine regions across Europe.

The Loisium Wine & Spa Resort at Ehrenhausen in Steiermark (Southern Styria), Austria opened in June 2012 and development is underway on a third and a fourth project in Frankenland, Germany, and near Colmar in the Alsace region of France. Early discussions are underway for further Loisium schemes in Italy and Romania, as well as Switzerland, Hungary, Bulgaria and Spain.

“Wine growers are traditionally innovators, and the new generation of wine growers has realised the importance of connecting wine to contemporary lifestyle, architecture and design,” says Kraus-Winkler. “At Loisium we aim to harness these important trends.”



La Winery

Bordeaux, France

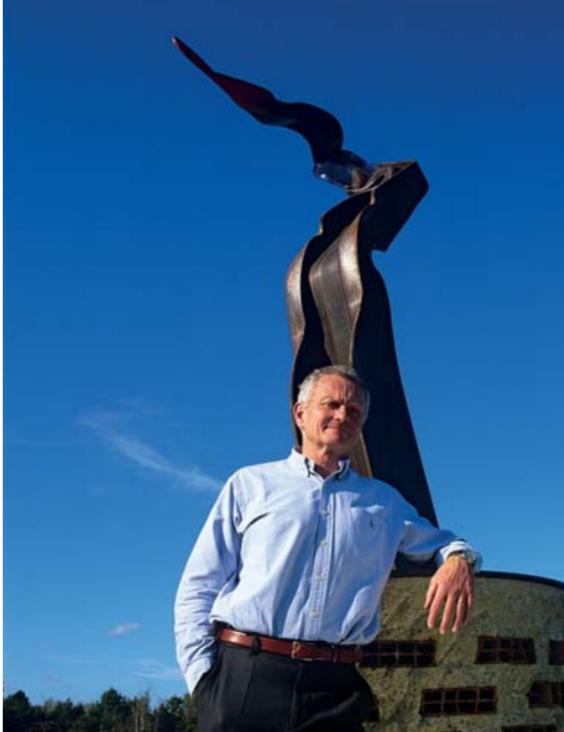
At the heart of one of the classic French wine regions 30 minutes north of Bordeaux lies La Winery, a contemporary, accessible and personalised approach to the world of wine. It's designed for both beginners and connoisseurs. There's no chateau or traditional wine cellar. This is a 12,000sq m 'transparent' space that melds into the environment and responds to the colours and lights of the changing seasons.

La Winery attracts 100,000 visitors a year and is, according to the creator and owner, Philippe Raoux, "about touching the very soul of wine; the shared knowledge and pleasure. La Winery is a meeting of cultures; of wine, of gastronomy, of art and music."

Raoux is heir to four generations of wine growers and merchants. Originally from Algeria, the family moved from Oran in Algeria to France in 1962, and Raoux now owns four vineyards including Château d'Arsac, famous for its Margaux wines and artworks. Having already succeeded in establishing a mail order wine trading venture, Raoux looked to projects taking place in the new world wine regions that were making wines accessible to new audiences.



Raoux bought the abandoned Châteaux D'Arsac in 1986 and completely renovated it



La Winery embodies a new approach that is challenging traditional business models throughout the Medoc and the wider Dordogne valley.

Opened in 2007 at a cost of €20m and now employing more than 30 people, La Winery was designed by local architect Patrick Hernandez.

Philippe Raoux (above) built La Winery as a place to welcome wine lovers, connoisseurs and newcomers to the world of wine

It's described as an 'upside down glasshouse,' with plants on the roof and people at the heart of the building, which houses a wine boutique, tasting rooms, galleries and restaurant.

The art of wine tasting is at the heart of the visitor experience, explains Philippe Raoux. "A wine tasting committee of five 'incorruptibles' tracks down the world's best wines, and 1001 are made available to our guests," he says. "We've invented a new tasting concept – The Wine Sign" – where our exclusive software allows us to devise a personalised wine list based on guests' taste, consumption choices and budget."

Raoux bought Château d'Arsac as a ruin in 1986; today this 112 hectare Haut-Medoc and Margaux estate is home to a collection of contemporary art of global significance. This collection flows into the grounds of La Winery, allowing Raoux to blend the cultures of wine, art and landscape.



Pedro Vivanco (centre) with sons Rafael (left) and Santiago Vivanco

Dinastia Vivanco Museum of Wine Culture

Briones, Rioja, Spain

Opened by King Carlos in 2004, the Dinastia Vivanco Museum of Wine Culture is located just south of the medieval village of Briones in the Rioja region, 80km south of Bilbao in Spain. It sits alongside the Vivanco Bodega in an expansive and especially created landscape overlooking the broad sweep of the Rio Oja Valley and countryside.

It's a modern complex, housing and interpreting all facets of wine making.

Outside is the Bacchus Garden, with one of the world's biggest collections of different grapes compiled by the Vivanco family, owners of one of Rioja's leading wine companies.

The Vivanco family established the not-for-profit foundation that owns and manages the museum as a "means to give back to wine what wine has given the family". The 9,000sq m museum was conceived by architect J Marino Pascual as an 'entire journey' through the story of wine.

Its five permanent exhibitions are spread over four floors, and include Birth, Growth and Maturity – The Vine; Keeping the Essence – Wine making; The Bodega – its organisation, processes and work; Wine: The Art and the Symbols; Open, Serve and Drink: The Protocols of Enjoying Good Wine.

The complex also includes a temporary exhibition gallery, conference rooms, an archive centre, a restaurant and café, a collection of wines of the Vivanco Winery, a shop and a themed children's play area. Visitors can also visit the main cellars of the Bodega.

The restaurant is a celebration of excellence in Rioja cuisine, and provides views of the Bodega and the Cantabrian Mountains.

This is a complex that works well in its setting, making the most of the landscape and complementing the village of Briones that it faces.

The ambiance both inside and outside is one that encourages visitors to slow down, to spend time savouring the place, its history and the spirit of good wine. Partly this is achieved by the volume of space, the use of spaces and partly through the clever movement of visitors through different styles of exhibitions and lighting.



The museum features interactive displays to help bring winemaking to life

LEISURE MANAGEMENT

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The Dinastia Vivanco museum and winery is completely surrounded by vineyards, which visitors can explore

Babylonstoren

Franschhoek Valley,
South Africa

Often described as "paradise found" by co-owners, designer Karen Roos and her media baron husband Koos Bekker (CEO of multinational media group Naspers), Babylonstoren is a visionary project.

Set on 590 acres in the Drakenstein Valley in South Africa, the gateway to Franschhoek, the property was initially destined to become a personal weekend retreat and with a manor house dating from 1777 and a well-preserved, complete farmyard in the Cape Dutch style, the couple believed they had a real opportunity to realise something special in terms of outdoor living.

However, soon – according to Roos – they decided they needed "to make it into a place people could share." They've gone on to create a 'farm hotel' (capacity 48), with guests staying in 14 five-star suites in restored farm workers' cottages with the exclusive use of the manor house. The Garden Spa provides tranquility overlooking the garden, while the restaurant – Babel – has a 'garden to plate' concept.

The core of the project is the garden, which is modeled on the historic 'Company of Gardens of the Cape' which the Dutch East India Company



established on the Cape in 1652 to grow all the produce needed to replenish trading ships en route between the Indian and Atlantic oceans.

Roos and Bekker hired Patrice Taravella, creator of the gardens at Prieuré Notre-Dame d'Orsan in the Loire Valley in France, to design the plantings. The orchards and gardens sit within 200 acres of vineyards

Designer Karen Roos (above) converted the 250-hectare fruit farm into a hotel and spa, with vineyards and extensive gardens

producing Chenin Blanc, Shiraz, and Viognier and the extraordinary tapestry of fruit, vegetables, herbs and horticulture is overseen by head gardener, Gundula Deutschlander.

In July 2012, *Forbes* magazine described Babylonstoren as "effortless chic," saying "Each of the soothing, all-white, minimalist rooms – designed by Roos, with a small library of books chosen by Bekker – has a kitchen and guests are permitted to pick and eat garden ingredients at will. Babel has become a Cape Town draw, with its sophisticated farm-to-table cuisine."

On this farm – one of the oldest Cape Dutch farms in the Western Cape – an intriguing visitor experience is emerging. This is defined by its creators as "a place where days are intentionally unscripted, leaving guests to do as they please." According to Roos and Bekker, "This is a place where we're not looking for different things but, simply looking at things differently."



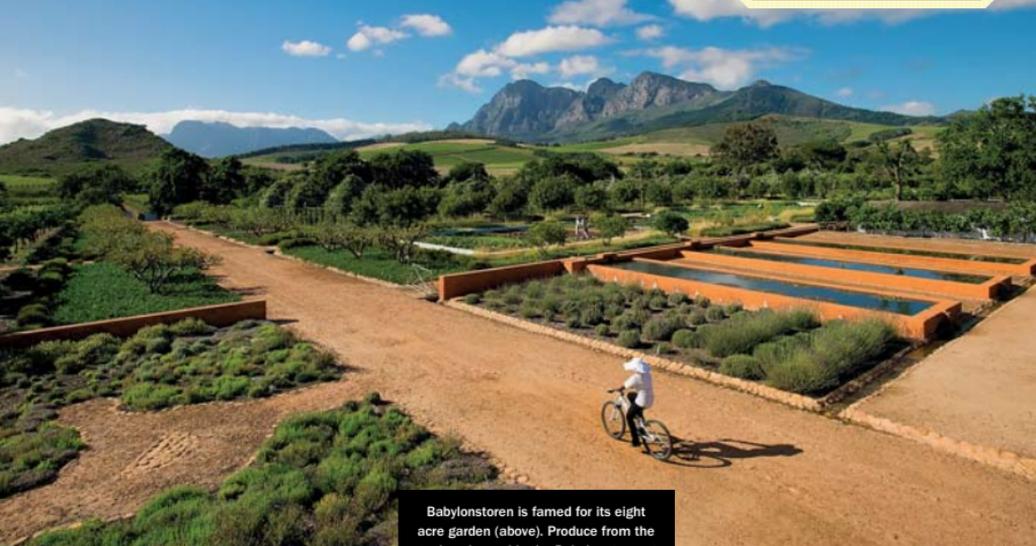
The design of the guest suites was influenced by the traditional Cape Dutch farm buildings

LEISURE MANAGEMENT

2013

WINE TOURISM

SPECIAL



Babylonstoren is famed for its eight acre garden (above). Produce from the gardens is used in the Babel restaurant (below left). Herbs are picked for use in the spa's daily rituals (below right)



La Motte

Franschhoek Valley,
South Africa

Viticulture was established at La Motte in 1752, with the planting of 4,000 vines by Huguenot descendant Gabriël du Toit. In 1970, La Motte was acquired by the late Dr Anton Rupert and transformed into a global wine producer and tourist destination. It's now owned by his daughter Hanneli Rupert-Koegelenberg – one of South Africa's leading mezzo sopranos – and managed by her husband Hein Koegelenberg.

Koegelenberg says that their approach is all about high standards. "Our credo is clear. It's to establish La Motte as a centre of excellence," he explains. "This approach is applied to all aspects of the estate, from the wines, to the facilities provided for our estate staff, through to being champions for the biodiversity and conservation of the landscape. It's also applied to our unique La Motte visitor experience, which launched in 2010."

If modern wine tourism is about 'attacking all the senses' then La Motte succeeds. Award-winning wines can be sampled among original works of art as part of the La Motte Jancoob Henrik Pierneef Collection. This theme is carried through into the Pierneef a La Motte restaurant, which presents Cape Winelands cuisine and wine matching delivered by chef Chris Erasmus.

Classical concerts are a regular feature of the restored historic cellar,



while the La Motte Museum showcases the area's and the family's French and Dutch Cape heritage.

Heritage walks, hiking and mountain biking trails, tours of the estate, a farm-style shop, the La Motte floriculture and the restored historic wine cellars complete the experience.

Approximately 25 hectares of the 174 hectare estate land have been allocated to the 'Aromes de La Motte' for ethereal oil operation, cultivating oil-producing plants whose oils are destined for a range of cosmetic products under the Aromes de La Motte brand. Not only does this contribute to the bio-diver-

Hein Koegelenberg is CEO of La Motte and Leopard's Leap Wines and a director of the Meridien wine distribution company

sity and brand diversification but it also offers scope for further development of the spa operation and product line.

"Our enormous investment beyond viticulture is all about brand stewardship, brand extension and brand management," says Koegelenberg. "We had to reposition the vineyard and relaunch the brand to generate stronger sales of higher value wines. Creating the visitor experience is a major strand of that exercise."

The experience is total. It's characterised by care and respect for the guest, the landscape and for all those involved, particularly illustrated by the creation of the Denneker Village for employees. This is complete with modern housing, a 50m swimming pool, sports pitches, art school and shop. Members of the Owners' Association are encouraged to develop market gardens and their produce is sold to the La Motte Restaurant, thus completing the virtuous circle. ●



The farm was bought by Dr Anton Rupert in 1970

LEISURE MANAGEMENT

2013

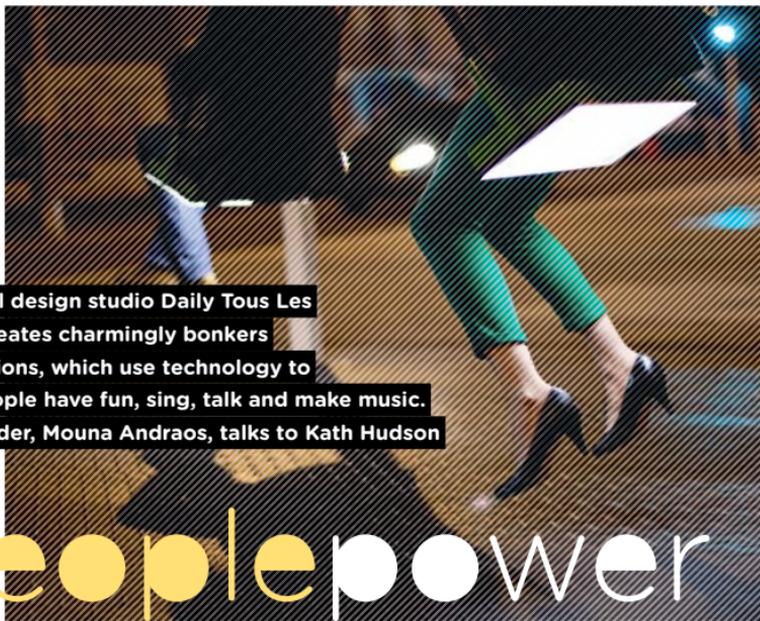
WINE TOURISM

SPECIAL



Visitors are greeted by the sight of a 13 foot bronze sculpture of a wine bearer (bottom left). The museum covers South African art, as well as the history of La Motte (bottom right)





Montreal design studio Daily Tous Les Jours creates charmingly bonkers installations, which use technology to help people have fun, sing, talk and make music. Co-founder, Mouna Andraos, talks to Kath Hudson

peoplepower

What is your career background?

Originally I studied film and liberal arts and then interactive on the web. It was quite exciting to engage the public with different types of narratives online. After doing that for a few years, I did a Masters degree at New York University, looking at new technologies in computing and touchpoint interfaces.

How did you and DTLJ co-founder Melissa Mongiat meet?

We met about three years ago. We had both come back to Montreal after a few years abroad – Melissa had been working in London – and were looking for collaborators. A mutual friend put us in touch with each other, as our backgrounds were complementary.

Pretty much the first time we sat down to talk we thought it would be interesting to work together.

So what is the aim of Daily Tous Les Jours?

Our aim is to create projects that inspire people to reinvent a little bit of their everyday world. We use the tools

of design and technology in order to engage with the public and to get them to expand their imaginations.

What was the biggest challenge in getting the company off the ground?

Everything! We were lucky to have good support and some clients lined up, but we didn't have an office or a name for the first six months.

The biggest challenge came after about a year, when we were trying to figure out what we really do, what we are all about and how could we build that into a more sustainable company. This process is ongoing.

What are your roles?

Melissa and I are both creative directors of the company.

How big is the company now?

We have six people working full time in Montreal, and we go back and forth to the US. We also use lots of independent freelancers, with specialist expertise, on a project by project basis.

As your projects require people to interact, are they supervised, to get them involved?

Usually we leave people to do it on their own. I like to tell the story of the Giant Sing Along at the Minnesota State Fayre [a field of microphones was placed to encourage a giant karaoke style sing-song]. This is a fayre where everything has been the same for years, so it was difficult for a newcomer. At 8am we were all set up and no one was there. Fifteen minutes later one guy took a microphone and started singing, so I stood next to him and sang along to show there was room for more people. After about 15 minutes they got it and never stopped.

We try to make the interactions very clear and design different levels of engagement, from being a spectator to leading the troops.

Where do the ideas come from?

They are very simple ideas. Everything has been done before, it's just a case of treating the idea differently so it becomes something else. The ideas



Mouna Andraos (right)
with Daily Tous Les Jours
co-founder Melissa Mongiat



The '21 swings' make music when people swing together

Celebrating the ancient ritual of tea, children try to pour a cup using pulleys (right)

come from context; we try to understand where these projects are going to be, what kind of audience they are going to have, what resources are available and what state of mind people will be in when they encounter our projects.

Have you had any ideas which you haven't managed to pull off yet?

There's a big jar of them! We laugh, because we always think they are great when we put them in the jar and when you pull them back out, mostly they're not that great!

Do you and Melissa Mongiat have the skills yourselves to bring a project to fruition?

We like to bring in other people too, because it helps, even at the ideas stage. We try to have people who come from different fields. For example, we worked with a biology professor, Luc-Alain Giraldeau, for the 21 Balançoires project [which saw a set of special swings installed in a busy area of Montreal. As the swings move, they play different notes, and when sev-



The Kit Opérette project in Paris sees the public use props to create their own opera



On the Difficulty of Serving Tea took place at London's V&A

eral people swing together they create a piece of music]. His speciality was animal behaviour and sociability. We found there were lots of commonalities with what we wanted to do and his research. We were interested in patterns of co-operation and how to get humans to co-operate with each other. In this project, the music is the reward they get for co-operating.

Did you achieve your aim of getting people to interact?

Yes, people try to work with each other. Two people will be swinging and catch someone else who is walking by and get them to join in. It was amazing to see strangers have conversations.

You are working with the Montreal planetarium on a new project. Tell us more

The brief was to create an interactive projection on a façade which is not meant for interactive projection! We are going to invite people to produce patterns of movements of planets and stars, such as the earth spinning around the sun. People will move around on a series of platforms where their movement is captured; depending on how they move they will trigger different animations. We will then reproduce the effect of this through video projection, creating the images and visuals as little animations. It should open in the winter and will stay for a minimum of three years.

What do you love most about your job at DTLJ?

When it's done! It's great when you can engage with the public, get them to smile, and forget about the difficulties in getting there. It's always amazing to see how they find new ways to work and interact with the project. Also I like getting old and young to play together.

Are there any downsides?

We're always reinventing the wheel.

What are your short and long term ambitions for the company?

We want to continue to explore interaction between people and their surroundings, looking at what experiences bring people together and transform the way they live. We also want temporary experimental projects to become permanent interventions.

Long term, we are always fascinated by the 'future of' things, whether they are public places, technologies, schools, hospitals, restaurants, libraries... We hope we can explore a large variety of scenarios and locations in which we can engage the public.

What drives you?

The chance to ignite in people a sense of what is possible. The more the impact is transformative – it allows people to do something they wouldn't have done, to learn, to see things from a new perspective and feel empowered to do more – the more it drives us. ●



The Giant Sing Along will be returning to the Minnesota State Fayre this year

THE PROJECTS

21 Balançoires

21 Balançoires (21 Swings) is a giant collective instrument. The message behind it is that people can achieve more together than they can separately. Each swing is a different instrument – there are four instruments and the trajectory of the swing triggers different notes. Every few minutes the chords change and when people swing in synchronicity it triggers a new melody.

Melodies emerge only through co-operation, and the exercise of co-operation means more layers are unravelled. It's a game where people have to adjust to the actions of others.

Swings were chosen as the conduit because everyone has nostalgic childhood memories of them.

The swings were installed in Montreal in 2010 and are being reinstalled by popu-

lar demand. Daily Tous Les Jours is currently in talks about taking the swings to other cities.

Kit Opérette

This installation at La Gaité Lyrique museum in Paris allows people to become opera performers, each playing a different role, such as a tenor or soprano.

Visitors sing and dance in a dynamic setting reminiscent of a burlesque operetta. Props include a ping pong table, a pair of suspended wings, a chequered dance floor, a skirt, two umbrellas and six pom poms. People interact with the props to create the music; when it is their turn, the lights project onto them.

Each player adopts a different part in the performance, and the piece evolves along with their par-



▲ The Giant Sing Along is about the powerful nature of collective shared experiences

ticipation. The project was largely inspired by the tradition of the historical Théâtre de la Gaité in Paris.

The Giant Sing Along

Taking place at the 2011 and 2012 Minnesota State Fayres, this was a field full of microphones, inviting people to sing together,

karaoke-style, and enjoy a contagious, uplifting communal experience. A large screen displayed the lyrics of the songs, voted for by the public.

Discordant notes were avoided by a sound-processing system auto-toning the voices, adjusting the pitch and the reverb and ensuring everyone sounded good.

The songs were chosen by the public prior to the event via the website.

On The Difficulty of Serving Tea

Celebrating the ancient ritual of tea, this was presented at London's Victoria and Albert Museum in 2011. Visitors were invited to try and pour a cup of tea from a suspended teapot, via a complicated set of pulleys. Sugar was added via a small catapult.



THE YOUNG ONES

IKEA and Marriott have teamed up to create a new European hotel brand for the emerging millennial traveller. Moxy Hotels' vice president, Ramesh Jackson, tells us why he's so confident it will be a success

Never mind Baby Boomers or Gen X, it's all about the millennial generation, according to many travel professionals.

Recent research by the Boston Consultant Group (BCG) claims that the millennial generation (16 to 34-year olds) will be the core customers of airlines, hotels and travel companies in the next five to 10 years, making up almost 50 per cent of the total spending on business flights by 2020. Their leisure travel activity will have a major impact on the tourism industry, according to BCG, and travel companies need to be ready.

Hotel giant Marriott and furniture manufacturer Ikea certainly agree. They've teamed up to create Moxy Hotels, a new three star economy brand aimed at millennials (as well as a few Gen Xs), and they're so confident about their target audience that

they plan to open 150 of these hotels across Europe over the next 10 years.

"Millennial travellers are crying out for this," says Ramesh Jackson, vice president of Moxy Hotels. "We've done very extensive research – we've surveyed consumers all over Europe to find out what their priorities are."

The first Moxy hotel is due to open in Milan's Malpensa Airport in the first quarter of 2014, with hotels following in the same year in Frankfurt, Berlin, Oslo and Munich, as well as a hotel in the UK in either 2014 or 2015. Hotels will have between 150 and 300 rooms; prices will start from €60 per night. They will be located near airports, train stations and in office developments, rather than city centres – presumably to keep costs down as well as take advantage of the large footfall. The plan is to open 50 in the next five years and 150 in the next 10. So, what did the research highlight?

What do millennial travellers want?

"These are the kids who were born during the technology age," says Jackson. "They want technology, but they don't necessarily want to use someone else's technology. It's not that they want an iPad in their room – they'll bring their own – but they want a tv that will interface with their iPad. "They don't expect the full service that the Gen X expected. They are totally comfortable helping themselves – in fact it's their preferred approach. Price is also very important to them. They want the style, they want the technology, but they don't want to pay the price of full service hotel charges."

HOW THE IDEA WAS BORN

The idea for Moxy Hotels originally came from Nordic Hospitality, who approached Marriott and asked if the company was interested in getting into the economy sector. "We jumped at



The hotels will be located near train stations, airports and major office developments



“These are the kids who were born during the technology age. They want technology, but not necessarily to use someone else’s. Price is also very important to them”

the chance,” said Jackson. “In Europe, of about 1.7m rooms in the economy sector, only 28 per cent are branded. We felt there was a huge opportunity, and we found great partners in Inter Hospitality and Nordic Hospitality.”

Inter Hospitality, which will be the developer and owner of the hotel buildings, is part of the Property Division of the Inter Ikea Group, and was established in January 2012 to invest in and develop hotels across Europe. Nordic Hospitality will operate Moxy Hotels, and Marriott will own the brand.

Jackson, who’s worked for Marriott

for almost 25 years, came on board in January 2013. When he got the call asking if he wanted to help launch the new brand, he was managing two hotels in Hydrobad, India.

“I said, okay, let me just phone my wife and ask if she’s happy to move to Germany,” he says. “The decision was that quick. The idea of building a new brand from the ground up was really very interesting to me.”

Marriott’s involvement will instantly professionalise the brand, says Jackson. “We will bring our reservations systems, our marketing ability

and the global sales force we have, as well as the Marriott Reward scheme.”

THE ROOMS

One of the main selling points of the new hotels will be their price, and the partners have come up with a formula to help keep costs low.

Firstly, the hotel rooms will be small. All of the rooms will be 17 square metres, but crucially Jackson says that they will feel a lot bigger.

“We have designed prototype rooms, which we showcased at the International Hotel Investment Forum



The 17sq m guest rooms have been designed to look much bigger

in Berlin in March. One thing was clear from the feedback – the rooms don't feel 17 square metres, and nothing in the room feels budget, because of the quality of the product and the way it has been laid out."

The spacious feel has been achieved in several ways, says Jackson. "As part of our research, we asked our target audience what was important to them and what wasn't. One thing they said they didn't need was a closet – the average stay in our hotels will be 1.5 days, and people don't tend to unpack in that time. So we've got rid of the closet and put in hooks with hangers, with a feature wall behind them, which immediately gives us a lot of space."

The beds rest on a solid piece of wood, making them appear to be floating. "This means that you can put your suitcase underneath the bed, and it also gives you a lot of leg room and a sense of space," says Jackson.

They have also dispensed with traditional desks, choosing instead to build a glass work counter into the wall, and the bedside tables are also glass counters. "Everything is off the ground, which makes the room feel spacious," says Jackson. As for



▲ The lobbies will feature lots of different spaces for people to relax in. Free WiFi will be available throughout the hotel

the design of the rooms, it will be "Scandinavian, very sexy, very modern." They will all feature 43 inch tvs.

SELF SERVICE

Another way that costs are being reduced is by keeping staffing to a minimum. Food and drink will be available to guests 24 hours a day, but it

will all be self-service.

"We'll offer a continental breakfast, a range of options for lunch and dinner including soups, salads, meat courses and deserts," says Jackson. "You pick the food you want, go to the 'fix it station' with a set of microwaves to heat your food, help yourself to tea and coffee or alcoholic drinks."

THE LOBBY

The lobby will be a key space in the hotels. "From our research, we learned that millennial travellers are wildly self-sufficient, but still want a chance to connect with each other in inviting social spaces, in person or digitally. We want people to hang out in our lobbies – a 170 room hotel will feature around 120 seats in the lobby. It will have different spaces, including one with a fire where you can lounge."

The lobby will also feature a digital wall made up of six to nine screens, all showing different content. Guests will be able to listen to what's happening on a particular screen via Bluetooth on their mobile phones.

Jackson is convinced that Moxy will give millennials exactly what they're looking for. "We're extremely confident about this brand," he concludes. ●

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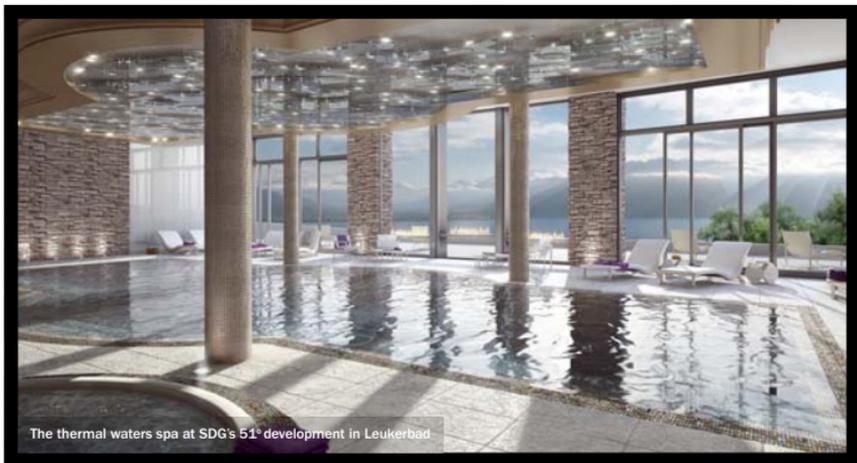


THE LIFE OF LUXURY

What attracts the über rich? Is it being able to fill their own baths with thermal waters? Helicopter transfers? Kath Hudson talks to the Swiss Development Group's CEO Jean-Francois Garneau to find out



SDG has acquired the Du Parc Kempinski between Geneva and Leukerbad



The thermal waters spa at SDG's 51° development in Leukerbad



Returning to Switzerland for the first time since I did a ski season many moons ago, I was reminded why I love it so much. The backdrop of lakes and mountains is almost ethereal in its beauty. The towns are immaculate. The people are super stylish. And they make two of my favourite things – wine and chocolate – incredibly well.

The Swiss attention to detail is what drives up the quality of the tourism offer and while as an 18-year-old hotel waitress this attitude seemed frustratingly picknicky, being on the receiving end of uncompromisingly good service and the finest ingredients is marvellous.

The Swiss Development Group (SDG), which is working on a portfolio of projects aimed at the high end market, is typically Swiss in its drive for quality and understands what this discerning demographic wants.

"We are not prêt-à-porter, we are couture," explains Jean-Francois Garneau, SDG's managing director and chief executive. "Each of our sites has a tailored approach. We are site-specific, location-specific, and we design all of our sites around the people who will be using them.

"Our products are about lifestyle as much as they are about bricks and mortar. We aim to connect with the environment, the locals, the community and try to understand the genius and the spirit of the place."

This philosophy is illustrated by a project which got underway last summer, in the Alpine town of Leukerbad, two hours from Geneva. Although a small skiing destination, this resort is popular all year round, as it also offers great hiking, mountain biking and parasailing. However, despite being renowned for its thermal waters, this potential had never been realised.

"We wanted to fully celebrate the town's long history with water," says Garneau. "It has 65 different sources of water, which come out at 51 degrees Celsius; it actually has to be cooled down to be used. We wanted to create a true, novelty spa experience."

The project, named 51°, is made up of a 90 room Kempinski hotel and 28 residences which will be sold privately. When SDG acquired the land, it secured the rights to use the water in the residences. This means people will be able to bathe in quasi-medicinal waters in their own homes.

For the 1,500sqm spa, SDG has worked with spa consultant Amy McDonald from consulting firm Under A Tree to create a 'traditional bathhouse meets Russian banya' experience.

"I had a bit of experience with the Japanese onsen, but also started to research the Russian banya experience," says Garneau. "The onsen experience is about purifying oneself and then going for a sushi dinner, while the banya experience is a very social experience about enjoying the



The Leukerbad Valley (this pic and below) where 51° is underway

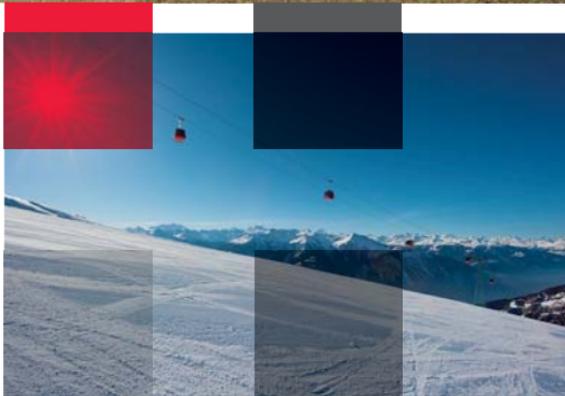
water and life with friends. We have taken those elements and mixed them with the traditional spa experience of sauna, hammam and hot tub, to create a new spa experience."

Groups will be able to reserve areas of the banya and enjoy food from caterers, with their own private changing rooms and relaxation areas.

As a further celebration of the waters, SDG has teamed up with Madonna's set designers, Canadian company Moment Factory, to develop a show in the plaza, telling the story of thermal waters. "It's not Las Vegas and it's not Disney; it's very authentic and down to earth; integrating art into the architecture," says Garneau.

Another SDG project is underway, half way between Leukerbad and Geneva, in the wine growing region at Chardonne. SDG made the opportunistic acquisition of a faded 1907 hotel, Du Parc Kempinski, and is restoring it to its former glory. Although it's being converted into 24 apartments, rather than being kept as a hotel, interestingly SDG is bringing hospitality into the private residences.

Residents will be able to order room service from the adjacent five star Le Mirador Kempinski hotel, enjoy discounts on hotel amenities and spa at the Givenchy spa. One of just three in the world, it has 12 treatment rooms, each with floor to ceiling windows overlooking the lake. The double treatment



suite has a massage area, double bath, relaxation area, hammam and sauna. Detox and stress management programmes are offered, including a seven day liver cleansing week, a five or seven day detox and cell renewal programme and a three or five day stress management programme.

Alternatively, owners will be able to have treatments at the 650sq m satellite spa which is being built at the apartments. Leisure facilities at Du Parc will include a 20-seat cinema, a wine cellar and tasting room, a gym and indoor and outdoor pools.

According to Garneau, the leisure facilities and the partnership with the Le Mirador Kempinski hotel are para-

mount to the success of the project. In fact, leisure is so important that SDG has created a company, Rockefellar Living, to co-ordinate clients' leisure time. People don't just buy a holiday home, they buy a curated lifestyle. "Here it will be important to get to and from the airport quickly, so there will be a helicopter and a Rolls Royce available for transfers," says Garneau.

"With Rockefellar Living we try to give owners access to the inaccessible. For example, if there's a restaurant in town that you need to book months in advance we will be able to use our contacts to get you a table at four hours notice."

Rockefellar Living has number-



The water display by the Moment Factory in Leukerbad



The planned Igloo hotel

ous partnerships to benefit owners. Owners become members of a local golf club. Trips to the region's vineyards and wine tasting can be co-ordinated, as well as to events in the area, such as the Montreaux Jazz Festival. Chardonne is also just one hour away from skiing, and a wide range of water sports take place on Lake Geneva in the summer.

SDG's attention to detail and passion for quality can be seen in the restoration of the Du Parc Kempinski private residences. The marble tiles used in the bathrooms are 19mm thick: three times the minimum. They have worked with Historic Monuments along the way to make sure that fin-

ishes and colours are authentic and original, and kept the original lobby, even though rebuilding it along the original lines would have been much easier. Local architects Brönniman & Gottreux, who designed Le Mirador Kempinski, were used for their local knowledge. Everything in the apartment – lights, televisions, taps – can be controlled by an iPad. Thankfully, they can still be used manually too.

More sites are in the pipeline. Igloo, in the Peak of Mont d'Arbois in France, is currently in the pre-development planning stages. An existing hotel, accessible only by cable car, snow crawler or helicopter, is being transformed into a luxury mountain retreat

“We try to give access to the inaccessible. If there's a restaurant you need to book months in advance we'll use our contacts to get a table at four hours notice

with 32 rooms and amenity spaces.

Away from ski resorts, a beach-front project in Porto Heli in Greece is being undertaken with Dolphin Capital Investors. This will transform a 1970s-style Nikki Beach hotel into something fabulous.

Even with a hefty starting price of £6m Fr (£4.2m, E4.9m, \$6.5m), 60 per cent of the apartments have already been sold off-plan. Proof that SDG knows its clientele.

Like the artisan chocolatier and the wine maker I also met on my visit to Switzerland, SDG uses only the best ingredients, has a passion for detail and an awareness of tradition. Plus, it also offers stunning views. ●

SPENDING WISELY



PHOTO: SIMON ANNAHO

▲ The performing arts, cinema, music concerts and spectator sports are likely to do well during 2013

Today, more prudent British consumers question their spending priorities and existing brand relationships. This opens up opportunities for agile and innovative companies and brands eager to capitalise on the new mood. Operators of cinemas and theatres, music venues and sports stadia could do well, as consumers look for affordable pleasures to replace the holidays and short breaks abroad they're cutting back on.

Many sectors within the leisure and entertainment market have seen little or no growth during the period of recession and economic weakness over the past five years.

On a positive note, though, the state of the UK economy has deterred people from taking foreign holidays, which has boosted the domestic holidays sector and, with it, the days out attraction industry. The weakness of the pound has served to make the UK an

Mintel's latest British Lifestyles report shows that spending is down, but there are opportunities out there for canny leisure operators

attractive destination for overseas holidaymakers, however, and the UK's downgrade and the woes of the euro-zone mean that this will continue.

Growth in the ownership of technology products has helped boost the customer experience in many markets and introduced new users to sectors such as gambling. This will continue as more consumers acquire tablets and smartphones.

High youth unemployment has had an impact on leisure sectors such as nightclubs and, to a lesser degree,

tenpin bowling, which derive a large part of their customer base from the younger, less affluent consumers who have been so impacted by austerity measures. With unemployment set to stay at a high level for several more years, little respite is expected for operators in these markets.

According to Mintel's recently published *British Lifestyles* report, the largest proportion of consumers indicate their spending on

entertainment is unchanged when compared with a year ago, although more consumers are spending less than a year ago (39 per cent) when compared with those who are spending more (7 per cent). Those claiming to spend more are heavily weighted towards 16-24-year-olds, singles and students, underlining the fact that going to university or college often results in increased social activity (and spending).

Overall, the winners in the leisure industry during 2013 are likely to be those providing activities which offer



▲ Britons are cutting back on holidays abroad, but compensating with short breaks and day trips in the UK

a relatively affordable opportunity for consumers to escape from the daily grind of scrimping, such as the cinema, performing arts, music concerts, and spectator sports. Many of these activities are treats which people have rewarded themselves with in order to compensate for cutbacks in other areas, such as short breaks abroad.

The losers are likely to continue to be those sectors which are being impacted by longer-term demographic and lifestyle trends as well as the shorter-term impact of economic recession, such as nightclubs and bowling.

Health and fitness clubs and leisure centres and swimming pools seem certain to come under further pressure as a result of competition from a growing range of online tools and apps which allow consumers to monitor, measure, compare and share their fitness levels. The sports equipment market, meanwhile, looks set to feel the heat from a continuation of the trend back towards less expensive outdoor sports such as running.

Q+A

Michael Oliver
Senior leisure analyst, Mintel



How did you become interested in statistics and data?

I started off at Mintel, monitoring the newspapers and trade press, before being sent on a CAM Foundation training course to learn more about research and marketing. This gave me the opportunity to start working on Mintel reports and over the years I've built up a specialism in leisure.

What do you like most about your job?

It sounds corny but it's the people I work with. Mintel is such a friendly company and I think it's one of the reasons why employees stay for such a long time. I also like the fact that I'm able to write about a lot of the activities I enjoy in my leisure time.

Have any of the findings of the Mintel British Lifestyles report surprised you?

The response to the question about how Britons would spend a Lottery windfall of £1,000 surprised me.

“As a keen cyclist, it’s gratifying to see the participation rate in cycling jumping to 41 per cent of adults in the wake of the Olympics”

The most popular way to spend a financial windfall continues to be on a holiday (27 per cent), however the drop in the proportion of people who are willing to spend on home improvements is significant (20 per cent in 2008 to 11 per cent in 2013). This means people are still prioritising savings (23 per cent) over bigger outlays, especially big tickets items for the home, home extensions and other major home improvements.

Everyone, regardless of their incomes, has tightened their belts.

How is the recession affecting Britons’ holiday habits?

The main effect of the recession has been a decline in the number of overseas holidays taken by UK residents. While they are less keen to forego their annual holiday abroad, Britons have been taking fewer short breaks abroad and compensating by taking more UK short breaks and day trips.

How can leisure operators take advantage of this trend?

There are opportunities for attractions to link up with accommodation partners (if they don’t have their own accommodation on-site) and travel partners to offer special deals, particularly given the rising cost of fuel.

Our research has also shown that consumers like the idea of visiting a location where there is a cluster of attractions and entertainment in one place or close together. For family-orientated leisure, there remains pressure on budgets, so value-orientated promotions are likely to find favour, and vouchers are a popular tool being used by operators in order to maintain footfall.



▲ The Olympic effect has seen a rise in the number of Britons cycling

How are British consumers feeling right now?

Consumers are cautiously optimistic; we saw a slight upturn in their confidence in the beginning of this year.

However, the prolonged economic downturn and continued economic uncertainty means that many habits borne out of the recession are here to stay – for example, savvy shopping is very much ingrained in people’s psyche. A greater drive towards self-sufficiency (cooking from scratch) means that people are better aware of what goes into their meals and are perhaps also becoming more conscious of not wasting resources.

What impact is that likely to have on the leisure industry?

I think the biggest impact on the leisure industry will be the continued price-consciousness of consumers, particularly in those sectors that rely heavily on the family market.

Even though sentiment and confidence is improving, consumers are still finding themselves worse off in real terms every month, because prices continue to grow at a faster rate than earnings. This is going to continue to impact on the spending power of what politicians like to call ‘hard-working families’ for some time.

What do you think have been the most interesting findings from Mintel’s research this year?

As someone who has been a keen cyclist for the past 35 years, it’s gratifying to see the participation rate in cycling jumping to 41 per cent of adults in the wake of a brilliant year for the sport in 2012.

Aside from that, our research suggests there is tremendous potential for the expansion of the provision of fitness services outside of health clubs and leisure centres, which could offer a platform to develop memberships at a later stage.

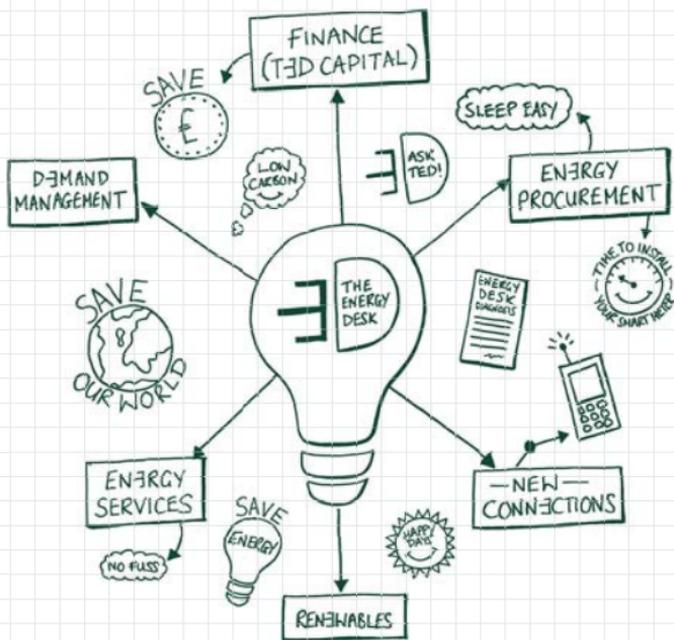
This move away from the ‘built environment’ is also being driven by increased access to and ownership of technology by the general public, driven by the strong growth in ownership of mobile devices like smartphones and tablets.

What are you working on now?

Right now I am writing the latest Mintel report on health and fitness clubs.

It is quite interesting because my counterpart in the US is writing the report for that country at the same time, so for the first time we have been able to co-operate a bit on research and it is interesting comparing the two markets. ●

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CHARGES

We're in a time when our demand for energy is getting ever closer to exceeding the supply available to us and suppliers' prices are escalating as a result.

Coal-generated electricity is becoming a precious commodity and we're all too used to the effect this is having on our wallets: power prices for commercial users have increased by a staggering 30 per cent since January 2011 and are set to increase by a further 20 per cent by 2015.

This rise will inevitably become a burden on businesses' operational costs, so gaining an understanding of exactly what you're paying for has never been more important and will give you the key to becoming a much more savvy energy buyer.

BREAKING DOWN THE CHARGES

Charges for electricity are split into three groups: first is the commodity charge – the base cost for the electricity. Next come the third party charges, which are essentially the network's administration fees for managing energy distribution. The final charges are the environmental taxes, the added levies imposed by the government such as the Climate Change Levy (CCL), the Feed in Tariff (FIT) and the Renewable Obligation (RO).

What is most shocking is that the commodity cost, which many of us innocently assume is our only cost,

Commodity costs make up less than 50 per cent of our energy bills – so what exactly are we paying for? Noah Andrie gives us advice on how to play energy providers at their own game

represents less than 50 per cent of the bill. Making up the other half are the additional charges and premiums that can sometimes be buried in the overall cost and these are increasing year on year. "Surely there are itemised bills available," I hear you cry. Sadly this is not always the case. Suppliers will often provide you with one unit rate, which includes all of the additional charges – so it's not always obvious what you're paying for.

The unfortunate part is that there aren't many ways to avoid these charges. The Climate Change Levy for example is a mandatory tax, which is charged per kWh. Alongside the Feed in Tariff and Renewable Obligation, CCL is the government's attempt to motivate you to reduce your energy consumption, which in turn will reduce your carbon emissions, contributing to the UK's target to cut CO2 levels by 50 per cent by 2020. These charges are a revenue stream for the government to fund the creation of renewable energy sources. The only way to evade them is to embrace the country's

move towards greener energy.

However, there are savings to be made by becoming smarter in the way you buy your energy – by comparing suppliers' commodity prices, reviewing all their extra charges and choosing the one that's best value for money. This is a relatively new concept and there's a great industry debate going on regarding the need for transparency in energy procurement.

It's the responsibility of the industry to ensure it helps customers find their way through the fog to get them on the best energy tariff, but we can't ignore the fact that energy providers are money-makers and their end game is ultimately to make a profit from their customers.

OTHER OPTIONS

There are some solutions emerging in the energy market to make the procurement process more transparent. Energy service companies now give advice as to whether you should sign up for a fixed rate or flexible energy contract, and this service is evolving.



It pays to choose your energy supplier and contract very carefully

ENERGY CONTRACTS

Ask TED, The Energy Desk's specialist help desk, answers your questions



How do I know if I'm on the right energy contract for my business?

There are varying tariffs available depending on how much energy you use and when. For example there are contracts available that split the rates between day and night, the latter being cheaper. If you are a leisure centre that uses electricity for 24 hours a day, then this would be the ideal contract for you. There are also Seasonal Time of Day (STOD) contracts where you can adjust your peak production times around the cheaper rates.

I've just entered a contract for three years. Can I get out of it if I want to?

This depends on the terms of the contract. Suppliers can often make it very difficult for you to get out of contracts so it's important to have someone looking over things who can read between the lines to ensure you're not trapped in a contract that isn't right for you.

How can suppliers justify all of the extra charges?

There are two factors at play here. Firstly, coal-powered electricity is on the decrease due to its widely publicised

environmental harm, therefore suppliers can charge a premium for what's becoming a precious commodity. Secondly, suppliers may also import energy from other countries and the logistics of this make it a much more expensive process – a cost they pass onto the consumer.

Can I get out of paying the government's environmental charges?

Not always. These are compulsory charges that are designed as an incentive to use less carbon-produced electricity. These are often charged per kWh used so if

you use less, it then follows that you pay less. However if you procure green energy from renewable sources, there are ways to eliminate the Climate Change Levy.

What's the difference between a fixed and flexible contract?

A fixed contract means that you're tied into paying the same cost per kWh for the duration of the contract. A flexible contract is much more flexible, whereby you get the chance to repurchase your energy at a reduced rate if the costs in the market go down.

Tendering for energy is also becoming more dynamic. The technology now available allows us to create a competitive pricing environment in which you can compare each supplier and establish all of their extra costs, working in much the same way as price comparison websites do. This 'Online Reverse Energy Auction' turns the system on its head and means that suppliers are forced to offer their best

rates to win your business.

Of course there are no quick fixes. Energy is an essential commodity and as such we are in danger of paying through the nose for something we know we can't function without. However, there are new ways to shop around for energy and as more businesses become wise to their buying options, they're finding ways of playing energy providers at their own game. ●



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Showbiz or real biz?

How to communicate effectively

Dramatic advertising campaigns might grab people's attention, but there's no substitute for a clear, logical strategy when it comes to long-term results, argues Grahame Senior

Having spent a lifetime in the business of marketing communications, I've come to realise that when it comes to the creative approach to communicating, there are two tribes. The showbiz persuasion loves dramatic, startling, even sometimes shocking headlines or images designed to grab attention and get your involvement. I myself veer more towards the real biz approach, which is fundamentally functional.

The principles of effective communication down this route involve four stages: contact; connection; content/communication; and function/fulfilment. It's a hardworking and functional route to effective communication that locks into the potential customer and delivers what they need to know. It may not be the most exciting, fun-filled, award-winning approach but it does deliver results.

SHOCK AND AWE OR COMMON SENSE?

If you favour the showbiz approach, you may well find this boring. After 40 years in the strategic advertising business, I have plenty of experience of those who get their kicks from ground-breaking slogans and campaigns. You could call them the FCUK tribe. The key to their approach is a shocking headline or image which grabs attention. Very often it works really well and gets talked about a lot to start with. It doesn't, however, always deliver the long-term brand value or the cost-effective communications required.

For some it may be sad, but it's a simple fact that logical, consistent work often pays better dividends than sky rockets of excitement and style.



If you're in the independent part of the hospitality business, you might do well to take note of the recent statement made by Andy Harrison, the chief executive of Whitbread. Whitbread no longer makes beer but has become a fantastic business by satisfying

the nation's need for quality coffee and fulfilling a mission to provide the traveller with economical quality accommodation without fuss. Costa Coffee and Premier Inns are the two leading practitioners in their fields.

Harrison stated in his annual report that Whitbread intends to increase its share of UK bed nights massively. Their communication is very simple, but they do connect with their markets both by their omnipresent units and also by clear, simple advertising messages. The consumer is left in little doubt that if you want quality accommodation at a sensible cost you'd be a fool to look further than Premier Inns. Fighting back against that means independent hotels need some very clear strategies to achieve a distinctive edge.

A CLEAR STRATEGY

Who do you want to talk to, what do they want to hear, what will make you special to them? If you want to stand out then you have to define your market and research what they're looking for.

Clearly the most important market for you is the market you already have. Analysing and defining the character of your market by geographic or socio-economic criteria is an easy thing to do

How to communicate with common sense

The first thing is to decide exactly what your key unique selling proposition is going to be and also precisely the market you're aiming for. You then go through a four-stage process.

- 1 Make contact. Put your message in the right place for the right market, whether it's on the web, through advertising or through media coverage.
- 2 Make a connection. Make it plain in your communication who you are talking to and that this message applies to them.
- 3 Deliver the right contents. Put across the message – whether it's

pricing, added value, special menus, exclusive room features, targeted activities – give the information that will make them sit up and take notice.

- 4 Finish with a clear action point to complete communication. Whether written response, a telephone call, a promotional action, a web registration – stimulate the right market to give the right reaction. If you follow this four-stage process, your message will be clear. Being consistent and putting across the same point via all communications routes will help you get the point across.

A modern practitioner who really understands the game

Côte – clean, clear professionalism

If Premier Inns is something of a threatening spectre to the independent hotel sector, Côte delivers the same professionalism in the restaurant sector. From website to telephone greeting, from first impressions on entering the restaurant to the way they deliver the menu choices, Côte follows a highly trained and detailed formula.

It looks simple but it's the result of a great deal of thorough professional work and a top class induction/staff training programme. Their message is really simple. They deliver affordable, accessible, quality food in a consistent and modern manner and the customer comes first.

Next time you're wandering down a



Côte has a consistent formula which is communicated clearly

high street, have a look at Côte and contrast it with that earlier incarnation of the bistro-brasserie – Café Rouge.

It stands out a mile – Côte is of today

and Café Rouge somehow seems a little yesterday. The difference between them, from website to outlet presentation to greeting, is great communication.

and it will tell you quite clearly who currently finds your offer attractive.

Having decided who your target market is, you have to work out where they are and how you can reach them. Current customers, of course, are best reached by mailing either physically or electronically. One group for whom electronic mailing does work is those people with whom you have a current relationship. In such circumstances, getting the data accurate and the message absolutely clear is vital.

If on the other hand you want to reach new markets, you have to find a way to stand out and be noticed.

What is it about your establishment or service offer that is distinctive or uniquely appealing? Trying to be all things to all people seldom works and is really hard to believe. Delivering a clear offer backed up by a unique selling proposition is much more effective.

BUILDING A UNIQUE PERSONALITY

Modern media communications deliver a much broader range of opportunities for reaching the market than used to be the case. It's also less expensive than it once was. The most effective communications campaigns are more 'costly' in terms of effort and brain-

Trying to be all things to all people seldom works. Delivering a clear offer backed up by a unique selling proposition is much more effective

work than they are in financial terms.

If you want to reach a particular market with a particular message, the single most effective and believable media route is through editorial media coverage; good old fashioned PR. Appearing in a feature in a national newspaper and then being covered in the relevant web pages will work wonders. It's also vital to merchandise your particular benefit. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are all effective ways to get the message across.

BE EASY TO GET TO KNOW

The single most important resource a property has after the establishment/service delivery itself is the website. If the website delivers the character you are trying to put across, is user friendly and completely up to date, it will work for you. If it isn't, it will work against you. If the atmosphere, benefits and service offering your establishment wants to become known for are not clearly evident on

the website itself you will not attract the potential visitors you want.

THE EXPERIENCE

A defining characteristic of the hospitality and leisure sector is that what we are actually selling is an experience. The written/electronic/visual communication is all designed to achieve a heightened sense of expectation. The final act takes place on site. It's therefore vital that the consistent character that underlines and emphasises your unique selling proposition is delivered at the point of experience.

Effective delivery needs people. The most important aspect of your communication to your market is the way your team behaves. It's vital that your communications message and your unique character is understood and believed by the team. If they don't stay on-message with every experience for every guest, your communications will fall short.

The proof of the pudding, as they always say, is in the eating. ●

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TRACY LEE

Luxury Puerto Rico eco resort Dorado Beach has been relaunched as a Ritz Carlton reserve, with the Spa Botánico at its heart. The spa's creator Tracy Lee tells us more

With therapists trained as local folk healers, an apothecary where fresh plants are mixed into products and 5 acres of 'purification gardens' featuring tropical pools and outdoor showers, it's not difficult to spot the standout features of Spa Botánico.

The nature-inspired spa, complete with 10 glass-walled treatment pavilions and two tree house therapy platforms, is a centrepiece of Dorado Beach, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve which opened in December 2012 on the Caribbean island of Puerto Rico.

The story of the 1,400-acre (567-hectare) development is rooted in the 1950s when Laurence S Rockefeller – a conservationist and one of the Rockefeller family billionaires – purchased a coconut and pineapple plantation close to the small coastal town of Dorado to build his second eco-retreat on. RockResort quickly attracted the rich and famous.

With many changes in ownership following its glory days (including two Hyatts) the property did not fare so well. But, now, thanks to a US\$342m (£264m, £227m) investment, it's set to reincarnate itself as one of the Caribbean's most exclusive getaways once more. Simultaneously, the opening marks the arrival of the second Ritz-Carlton Reserve – an ultra, yet understated, luxury brand which is targeting the affluent elite.

When and how did you become involved in Spa Botánico?

Starting in 2009, I spent four fulfilling years working on this project. Eric Christensen, the CEO of Dorado Beach Resort, was previously with Auberge Resorts and I'm the vice-president of spas for the group (as well as the owner of T Lee Spas). Eric and I created two spas together at



The Spa Botánico features two tree house therapy platforms

Auberge including the award-winning Solage Calistoga in California (see *Spa Business* 12/3 p76). We enjoyed that working relationship and were pleased to collaborate again.

What makes this spa unique?

Every aspect has been specifically designed for this project and there are many points of differentiation – from its immersion in local culture and the size of the site (5 acres) to the onsite apothecary and therapists who've been coached in Puerto Rican healing rituals and botanicals once used by the region's natural medicine doctors.

How does the Apothecary Portal work?

Every spa journey begins at the Apothecary Portal where an 80-year-old fig tree marks the entry to the building. We call it a 'museum for the senses' and, inside, the 32ft high walls are lined with bottles of local botanicals, natural oils and dried and fresh herbs picked from our own thriving garden. It's a befitting foyer for a great plantation estate.

The ingredients are used to help aid guests' health, in beauty treatments, for aromatic purposes and in the food and drink. There's also an interactive Apothecary Bar where guests can smell, touch and sample three blends.

What research went into creating it?

We looked for local experts to help in our research and found botanical guru Maria Benedetti, who created a reference guide detailing 70 medicinal plants for our spa.

What are you working on next?

I'll keep an eye on Spa Botánico. I'm also working on the spa at The Edition Miami Beach in Florida and will remain involved in Auberge spa developments.

One of my favourite spas in the pipeline is at Kohanaiki, a private community that's being developed on Hawaii's Big Island. The Big Island is a place that's deserving of authentic interpretations of cultural healing.

Excerpt from Spa Business, Q2 2013.

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