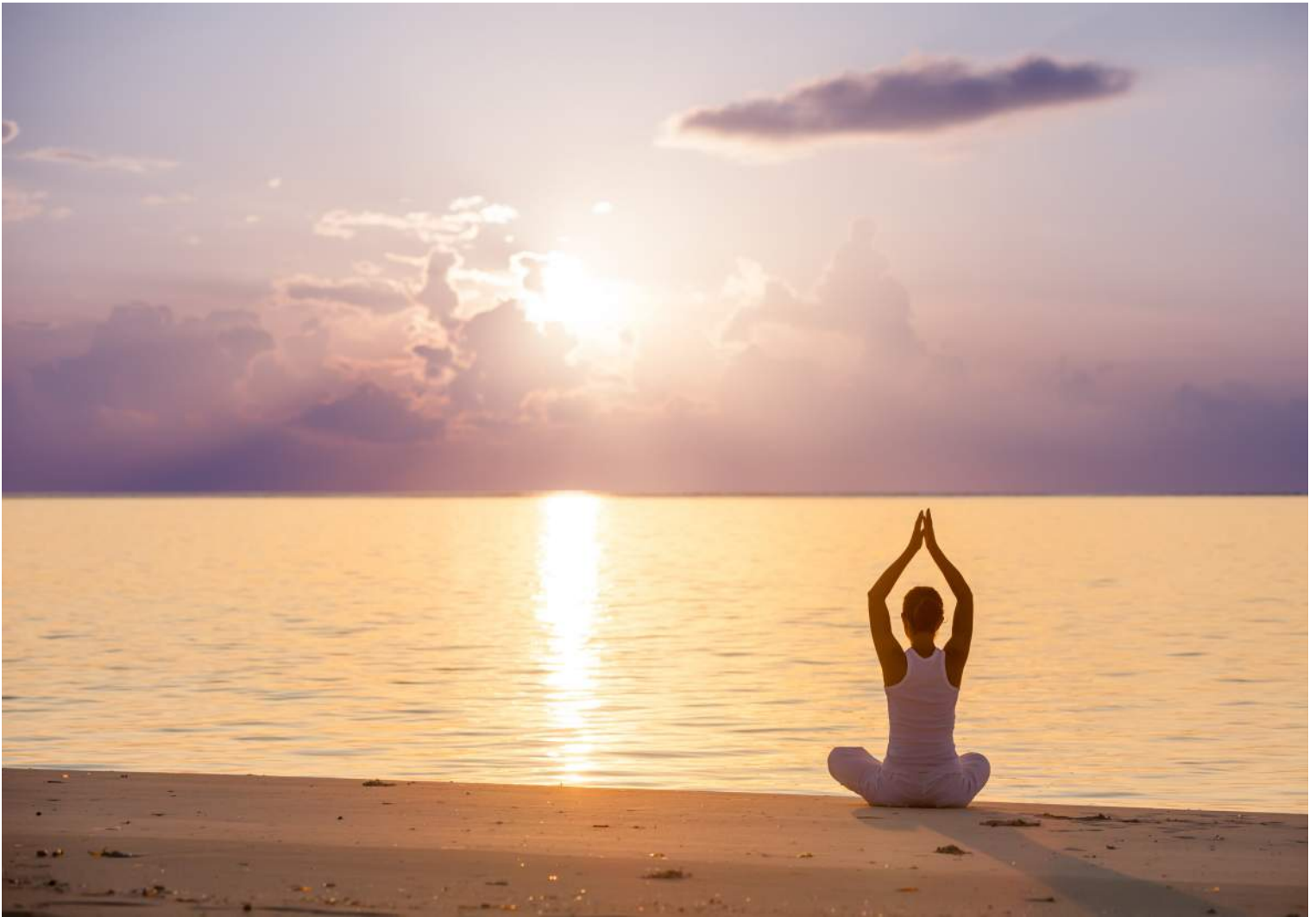


# RESORT WELLNESS

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*BEYOND THE SPA*





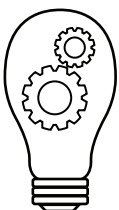
# INTRODUCTION

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**A**s the world's population becomes increasingly conscious of their physical health and mental wellbeing, the global wellness industry is growing at a tremendous pace. This increasing self-awareness, when combined with a burgeoning international travel market and the establishment of the 'experience economy', has caused wellness tourism to shift from niche to mainstream. Today, it is one of the fastest growing sub-sectors of the travel industry.

As customers seek more specialised and 'out of the ordinary' wellness experiences, developers and operators need to offer more innovative services and facilities.

For this paper, WATG has interviewed a cross-section of wellness operators and experts. By combining these market insights with our experience, we have assembled an overview of wellness trends and design characteristics.



*This piece was compiled by WATG Strategy. We offer clients market research-led pre-development advice, programming and financial feasibility to help simplify the complexities of resort development. We work seamlessly with our design studios to create award winning destinations that maximise economic performance.*

# WELLNESS TOURISM

## THE WELLNESS ECONOMY

Wellbeing has become a global movement. According to the Global Wellness Institute (GWI), the wellness industry, in terms of revenues, grew by 10.6 percent from 2013 to 2015. While the global economy has experienced slow growth, the wellness industry has been resistant to external shocks and keeps on rising.



Global **HEALTH CLUB** members stand at **145 million**, more than **double the members in 2000**.

Source: IHRSA

There is an increase in overall health awareness from the global growing middle class who look to limit the effects of ageing, chronic diseases, obesity and stress. Wellness has become a status symbol among consumers, who prioritise maintaining their physical and mental health.

Growing global health awareness is influencing numerous industry sectors including technology, entertainment, hospitality, food and fashion. For example, 'free-from' food sales have boomed over the past years as consumers are reading labels more carefully than ever.



**165,000 HEALTH APPS** exist today, and the **TOP 10** generate **4 million** free downloads **EACH DAY**

Source: IMS Health

## WELLNESS TOURISM

As people aspire to higher levels of wellness and health, it is no surprise that more people are opting for the wellness option when booking a holiday. Even business travellers are adding wellness activities to busy itineraries.

"Hotels and resorts recognise this growing demand and are increasingly incorporating wellness into their operating philosophy", says WATG's Andrea Lindgren, who conducted the research for this paper. Some hotels offer concierge services specialised in wellness; on-demand yoga classes; weights and yoga mats in the guest rooms; and brochures with sleep tips and jet-lag solutions.

## Wellness Tourism Expenditure



Source: Global Wellness Institute

Global wellness tourism expenditure is expected to grow by more than 50 percent from 2015 to 2020. Most wellness tourism is domestic, driven by short-haul and weekend trips. However, international wellness tourism growth has outpaced domestic wellness tourism growth from 2013-2015, a trend that is expected to continue.

International **wellness** tourists **spend 61% more** than the **average** international tourist.

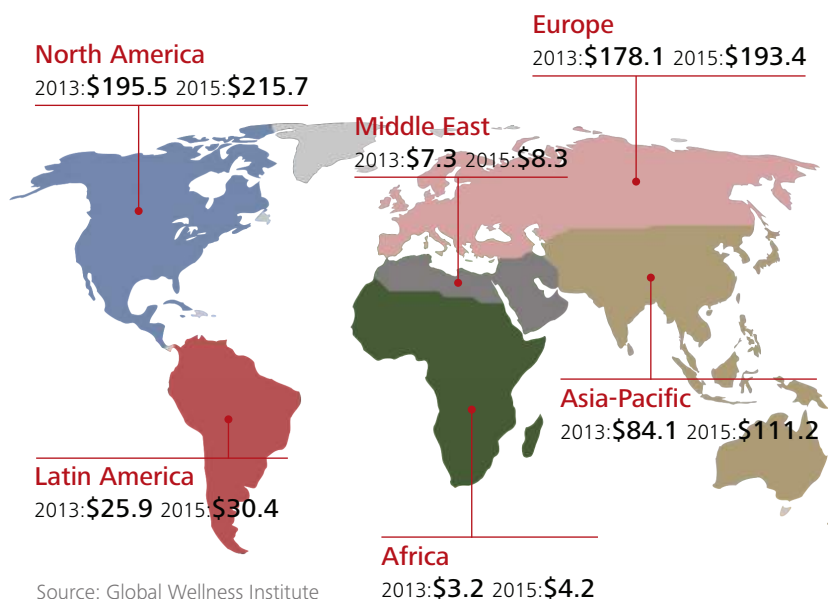


Source: Global Wellness Institute

## GEOGRAPHICAL MARKETS

Whether it is yoga in India, meditation in Bali or detox in Thailand, Asia-Pacific has all the prerequisites for wellness travel. However, many emerging markets outside of Asia have increased their wellness market share, including Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Argentina and South Africa.

As illustrated below, North America had the highest wellness tourism expenditures in 2015 followed by Europe. However, Asia-Pacific experienced the most significant growth from 2013 to 2015.



Source: Global Wellness Institute

# WELLNESS TRAVEL TRENDS

## HEALTHY MIND, HEALTHY BODY

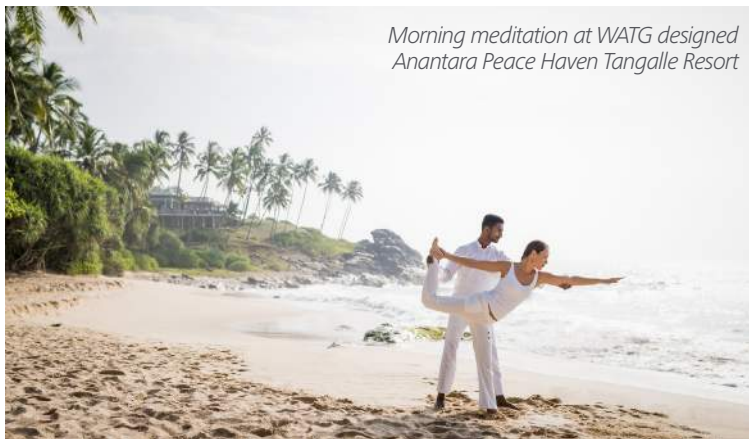
The World Health Organization (WHO) predicts that mental depression will be the world's most prevalent health issue by 2030. With the growing realisation that a healthy life is a balance between mind and body, hotels and resorts are repositioning their wellness offerings. The new era of resorts and spas will be less of a place for pampering, and more a place for mental healing and prevention.

**“Mindfulness** has been the **buzz word** for a long time. However, now it's all about **Breathwork.**”

- Linden Schaffer, Founder/Director, Pravassa

One of the biggest fears of growing older is the brain's declining functionality. Mental wellness is about what we can do, beyond mindfulness, in order to keep our brains healthy for longer. Breathwork is a term for various practices in which the conscious control of breathing influences the mental, emotional and physical state. It is all about releasing negative thoughts and stress and increasing cognitive performance and efficiency.

The 'De-stress Programme' at Marbella Club is designed to allow guests to pause the pressure of their daily life and rebalance their mind. The program includes spa treatments and thalassotherapy combined with coaching and exercise support, which together builds resistance to stress.



Morning meditation at WATG designed Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort

## FAMILY AFFAIR

Spas and wellness retreats have traditionally been adult-focused with single travellers and couples dominating the market. However, now there is increasing demand for parents, or even grandparents, to bring children along on wellness trips. Hotels and resorts have started to recognise that wellness is increasingly becoming a family activity, and are adapting by enhancing their wellness offerings to children.

**“As parents remain fitter for longer and increasingly aware, they want to include their children** in wellness experiences.”

- Andrew Barnard, Managing Director, BodyHoliday

Soft programming can include children's yoga sessions, cooking classes, spa treatments and educational activities focused on local culture and the environment. By drawing children away from video games and iPads, kid's clubs encourage children to experience new sports and promote a greater awareness of the role of healthy eating and exercise.

**“Today's children are also seeking mindfulness. It takes just as long for children to de-stress as adults on holiday.”**

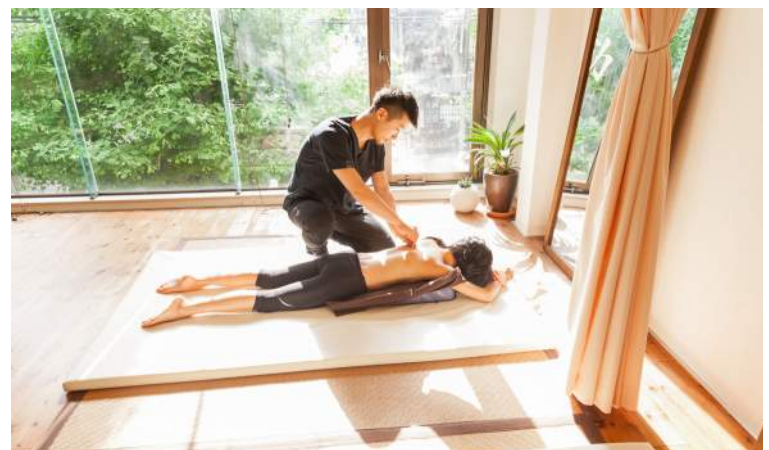
- Anna Bjurstam, Vice President, Six Senses Spas

At the Six Senses Laamu, Maldives, younger guests are offered specially designed wellness classes, interactive sessions, games and family consultations on how to live a healthier life. The resort also offers spa treatments for children including massages, facials, mini-manicures, pedicures and hair braiding. The head chef has created a children's wellness menu, which features some favourites prepared with healthy ingredients, such as vegetable burgers and gluten-free pasta and pizza.



## SUN, SEA AND PREVENTION

For years, resorts have offered spas and fitness amenities that promote relaxation and wellness, but now resorts and spas are entering into 'soft' medical tourism by offering programs developed and executed by doctors and health professionals.



These can range from spa packages that include a doctor's visit, to very extensive body scans and medical examinations. In general, medical services at resorts focus on preventive care, diet and exercise rather than treatment.

**“More than 50 percent of our customers travel with the aim of prevention, to make sure that their bodies are in good shape.”**

*- Claudia Wagner, Managing Director, SpaDreams, a brand of Fit Reisen*

Mayo Clinic has partnered with Mandarin Oriental Bodrum to create a Healthy Living Program. Canyon Ranch Lennox and Tucson have overnight sleep labs in typical guest rooms. Amatara Wellness Resort in Phuket has a neurological enhancement programme, suggesting ways to enhance and preserve brain health and prevent the decline of function over time.

At Six Senses Douro Valley, a number of methods are used to measure a person's biomarkers - body composition, metabolism, heart function and circulation, as well as stress parameters. Guests can, in one hour, get a very good understanding of their health and receive guidance on areas for improvement such as nutrition and lifestyle factors.



*Six Senses Douro Valley*

## **COME TO YOUR SENSES**

Wellness today is more than just yoga and meditation - it is a sensory experience. The more senses involved, the more memorable and beneficial the experience will be. Travellers are opting for activities that touch on several senses, such as sound bathing, yoga concerts and infrared saunas. The Japanese activity of 'forest bathing' is proven to lower heart rate and blood pressure, reduce stress, boost the immune system, and improve overall wellbeing.

INSCAPE is a meditation studio in New York providing an immersive multi-sensory experience by combining light, sound, scent and inner reflection.

Traditionally, one may associate essential oils and aromatherapy with spa treatments, however, with proven health benefits, resorts are using them outside of the spa, in gardens, hotel rooms and restaurants.



**“Essential oils are taking a new turn, they are not only included in the spa treatments but throughout the whole resort experience.”**

*- Linden Schaffer, Founder/Director, Pravassa*

## **SENSE OF COMMUNITY**

Loneliness is a global epidemic. Social media and technology have made it easier to avoid creating real-life relationships and people spend more time sending emails and texts than interacting with each other face-to-face. Furthermore, hot desking and homeworking are increasing, which causes people to have less human interaction in the workspace.

**“Loneliness is one of the biggest issues we are facing today. Addressing loneliness in hotels will be key in the future.”**

*- Anna Bjurstam, Vice President, Six Senses Spas*

Wellness travel has become more about bringing people together to create a community where people interact, talk to each other and make new friends.

Operating and designing for wellness involves a careful consideration of social areas. Restaurants and hotels are increasingly encouraging guests to meet new people through communal tables, and evening workshops and discussions.



## DIGITAL DETOX

The Digital Detox trend has emerged as a result of the realisation that constant distraction from multiple devices is negatively affecting people's wellbeing. With a constantly changing world, staying updated to the latest news has become an addiction for many.

**'No news, no shoes.'**

*- One of Soneva's philosophies*

Soneva has Wi-Fi switches in all their villas so guests can disconnect at the flick of a switch. The rooms are modern and hi-tech but there is no sign of the technology, even though it is there. BodyHoliday St Lucia restricts Wi-Fi access in many of their public areas. Pravassa hires professional photographers who capture holiday experiences, which travellers normally would have used their phone for - in this way, they can be completely disconnected.

Claudia Wagner, Managing Director at SpaDreams, says that "future customers will request resorts that provide reduced electric smog". Some hotels are already offering a complete digital detox - free from electricity and Wi-Fi. Copper plates in the walls and special paint finishes create a sanctuary entirely free of 'e-smog'.

However, some operators believe that with an evermore connected world, the step to become completely disconnected is too big for guests.

## GUT HEALTH

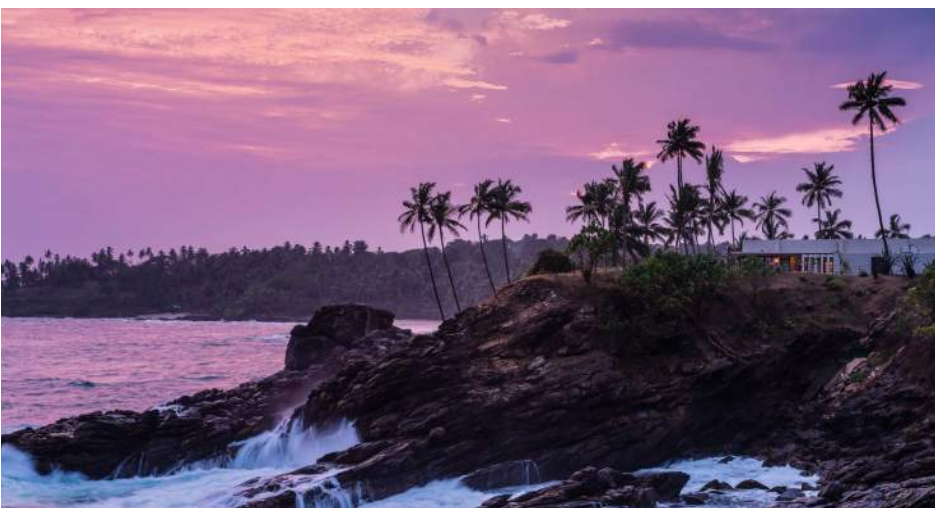
Growing awareness of the need to feed our friendly bacteria is leading to greater focus on probiotic food and nutrigenomics.

**"The concept of Gut Health is about eating what is good for your stomach and ultimately your whole body."**

*- Linden Schaffer, Founder/Director, Pravassa*

Nutrigenomics is the study of how genes and foods interact, and it allows people to see which foods they need more or less of for optimal health. Going forward, technology will be able to recognise individual's nutritional profile and provide dietary recommendations. Nutrigenomics ensure wellness retreats can offer truly personalised cuisine to each guest.

Six Senses' new programme, 'Eat with Six Senses', is a menu makeover across all their resorts and spas. The new menu will be based on natural, local and sustainable ingredients while keeping true to 'less is more' in terms of sugar, gluten, lectins, lactose, soy and monosodium glutamate. In addition to serving seasonal and sustainable food items, 90 to 100 percent of menu items will be organic.



Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort, designed by WATG

# WELLNESS DESIGN

## WELLNESS DESIGN

Wellness design targets the development of buildings that make occupants both healthier and happier. As the wellness revolution attracts increasing numbers of converts, demand for wellness designed properties is following suit. Hotels are at the cutting-edge of innovation in this regard.

Inducing comfort should be the hotel developer's mantra. Sensory management is a key component of wellness design. Consideration should be given to the careful control of light, temperature, air quality and noise.

Wellness design should optimise integration with the building's natural surroundings, enhancing connectivity to external spaces and bringing the outside in. Landscape strategies can include the creation of spaces that evoke calm, nature and wellbeing such as edible or aromatherapy gardens, nature gyms and zen areas. Wellness design is an important first step to creating an experience that evokes relaxation and rejuvenation.



Four Seasons Anguilla, designed by WATG

WATG's Director of Spa and Wellness Design, Jean Dusek Klueter says that "there is a certain style that people are aiming for, it is no longer the Asia themed spa design, it is more contemporary with clean lines and natural lighting used in the interior design".

For the past few years, both architecture and interior design for wellness resorts and spas has leaned towards the simple and uncomplicated, with regional influences.



Salamander Resort & Spa, designed by WATG

## NATURE AS INTENDED

The *biophilia hypothesis* explains a human being's innate desire to connect with nature. It explains why we love to go for a walk in the park, why we have pets in our homes and why we go to the beach to watch the waves. Direct and indirect exposure to nature have proven to have significant positive impacts on people's mental and physical health.

**"Direct exposure to nature is obviously the holy grail, but there is very interesting research done on the great benefits of indirect exposure."**

- Matt Morley, Founder, Biofit



Biofit - Indoor Nature Gym

Biophilic design is the resulting emerging style that aims to bring natural elements indoors and recreate nature. It is more than just bringing greenery and gardens inside, it is about mimicking nature with materials, textures and patterns to create indirect exposure. For example, a hotel lobby carpet with rough texture, earthy colour and irregular pattern can connect guests with nature.

**"Biophilic design is about making sure that the building doesn't act as a barrier to nature, but rather as a bridge."**

- Dr. Joseph Allen, Assistant Professor, Harvard University

Although nature can be mimicked within internal spaces, resorts must also develop seamless transitions between indoors and outdoors. For example, the new Soneva Jani in the Maldives offers villas with retractable roofs - why watch TV before sleep when you can watch the stars?

The holistic wellness experience created by the adoption of biophilic design has opportunities beyond basement spas and wellness hotels. WATG envisages the adoption of these basic design principles throughout the hotel sector as the positive benefits are increasingly understood and desired by guests.

## CLEAN CONSCIOUS, CLEAR MIND

"Wellness and sustainability are two sides of the same coin. We spend time taking care of ourselves, but to feel even better, we need to spend time taking care of our environment", says WATG's Jean Dusek Klueter. The wellness hotel experience is helpful for us to refocus our attention on the power of living a healthy lifestyle and giving back to our planet.

**"Wellness and sustainability are intertwined. It enlightens you in a better way than normal travel does."**

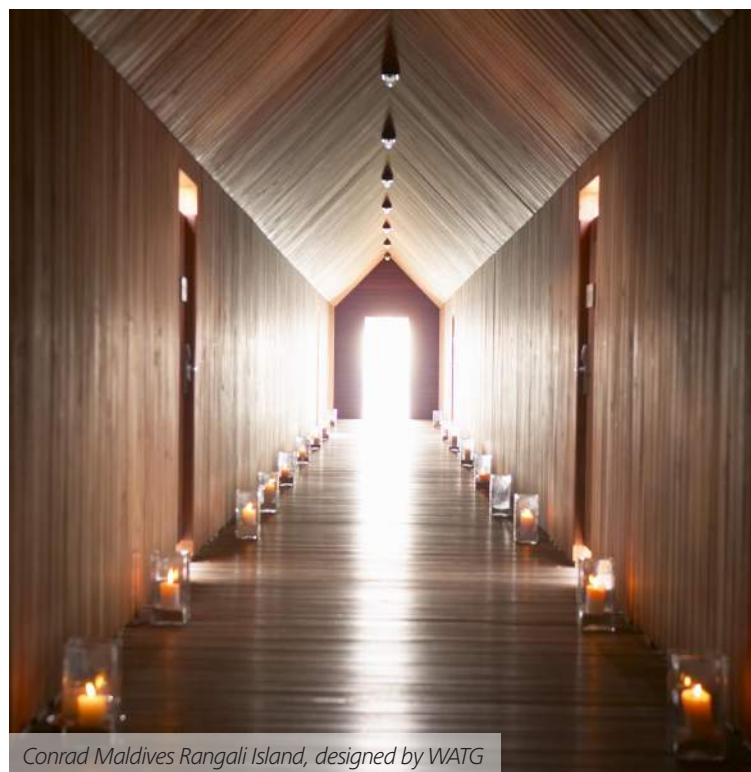
- Victoria Chiao, PR & Marketing, Soneva

Hotel resorts are increasingly making true commitments to sustainability without compromising on comfort and luxury. As the first hotel in southern Europe to receive the prestigious Green Globe certification, Lefay Resort & Spa Lago di Garda in Italy offers a seamless design that blends with nature, uses technologies that reduce energy emissions, incorporates local community initiatives and raises environmental awareness among hotel guests. So, while enjoying wellness treatments and healthy nutrition, guests know that they are exercising eco-integrity.

Hotels and resorts are already embracing sustainability as a means to preserve the environment and improve human health, but also to optimise efficiency, cost savings and enhance guest satisfaction and brand image.

## LIGHTING FOR HEALTH

Access to natural light is an essential feature which allows us to rebalance our circadian rhythm – our internal body clock. According to the Harvard study 'Nine Foundations of a Healthy Building', light is a stimulant that can directly enhance alertness and performance, or, at the wrong time, disrupt sleep. This means that the more we can replicate natural lighting, the better.



Conrad Maldives Rangali Island, designed by WATG

**"We are living in a time where we can select and tune our lighting based on the time of the day and the desired effect. This means that a lot can be done to improve peoples' health."**

- Dr. Joseph Allen, Assistant Professor, Harvard University

Circadian lighting is a technique which controls the amount and type of light in a room. In the morning and during the day, high intensity blue-enriched lighting boosts energy levels, while in the evening, amber coloured lighting encourages relaxation. For as long as possible before sleep, light intensity should be reduced to enhance sleep.

The newly opened Six Senses Spa Zil Pasyon, Seychelles, uses such smart biological lighting at night to ensure that guests' sleep is optimal.



Grecotel Cape Sounio, designed by WATG

## ACTIVE DESIGN

**'Sitting is the new smoking.'**

Sedentary lifestyle is one of the leading cause of obesity, diabetes and heart diseases. According to the World Health Organization, one in four adults globally are inactive to the point that it is damaging to health.

Active design seeks to enhance human health and function through incorporating design elements that promote physical activity. These elements can encourage stair use, walking, active recreation and healthy eating. Below are a few active design techniques that can be used in hotel resorts:

- Increase stair use by providing centrally located staircases instead of centrally located elevators. Staircases should be lit-up and comfortable with attractive design features.
- Provide facilities that support exercise such as visible physical activity spaces and recreational areas.
- Design appealing, supportive walking routes inside the buildings as well as around the resort.



## MATERIALS, COLOURS & TEXTURES

Biophilia relates to the natural materials and their positive impact on the guest experience. Less stress, positive disposition and greater ability to focus are some of the benefits elicited from the use of wood in both exterior and interior spaces. Raw materials like concrete and terracotta create a feeling of comfort, while also evoking a pristine and healthy atmosphere. Additionally, colour can have an influence on whether a space feels appealing.

**“Soothing natural colours are inviting, yet many also prefer a mix of white shades to help support the perception of clean and crisp.”**

- Jean Dusek Klueter, Director of Spa and Wellness Design, WATG

If a resort is not perceived to be clean it can have a severe impact on its success, but it is important not to appear too clinical.

Pebbles of natural stone embedded into a footpath can add several dimensions to the wellness experience. Alongside being aesthetically pleasing, they can promote reflexology through manipulating the height and angle of the stones.

**“Our clients are looking for luxury settings with special materials sourced from the surrounding environments.”**

- Claudia Wagner, Managing Director, SpaDreams



Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort, designed by WATG

## ENERGY OF A PLACE

Some wellness travellers are demanding much more than wellness facilities and healthy environments. “They are even aware of the ‘energy’ of a location”, says Claudia Wagner, Managing Director of SpaDreams, the leading international wellness tour operator.

Two Bunch Palms Resort in Palm Springs is located along a fault line and the therapists report that they can incorporate the energy into the wellness experience. WATG created a master plan and a light spa design for their expansion and the therapists were adamant about not moving the wellness areas because of the existing positive energy.

If the site does not benefit from this natural energy, Feng Shui and Vaastu Shastra are claimed to maximise positive energy. Both are ancient philosophies focusing on the connection between humans and the places they inhabit. According to Claudia Wagner, their clients are increasingly searching for resorts designed along Feng Shui and Vaastu Shastra guidelines.



Two Bunch Palms Resort

## BREATH IN, BREATH OUT

Increasingly, researchers are establishing a correlation between indoor air quality and health. Poor indoor air quality is ranked fourth on a list of the largest environmental threats in the US, by the country’s Environmental Protection Agency.

‘Living walls’ have been developed to draw on nature’s innate purification processes to address indoor air quality problems. Living walls or the incorporation of plants within a space are proven to reduce health issues. Simple decline of fatigue, headaches, sore throats, and even dry skin are improved with the inclusion of plants.

Having the ability to open up the space to the outside environment not only allows for better air flow and ventilation but helps control unwanted odours from chemicals.

Swissôtel has recently launched the ‘Vitality Room’. One of the room’s most impressive wellness features is the air purification system that filters in fresh Swiss air.



Conrad Maldives Rangali Island, designed by WATG



Living a healthy life is about creating and sharing experiences that improve mental and physical wellbeing. The world's population increasingly understands the importance of taking care of the human body and mind. This growing awareness of wellbeing has influenced a number of sectors, perhaps none more so than the hospitality industry.

Wellness offerings within hotel spaces are evolving fast to meet shifting and ever nuanced demands. Developers and operators are adapting through wellness-focused amenity, soft programming, food and beverage provision and design. In wellness oriented destinations, the spa is increasingly considered a single component of a larger, more holistic experience. In generic hotel spaces, including limited service and business hotels, wellness has also become far more significant to guests.

With the establishment of the 'experience economy', wellness travellers are demanding innovative and interesting ways of improving their health whilst on holiday. Today's trends focus on the prevention of diseases and the creation of out of the ordinary activities that promote healthier lives, capture the imagination and of course, are 'instagrammable'. As parents are increasingly conscious of their wellbeing, they are also influencing younger generations to engage in wellness pursuits.

The growth in health awareness has led to the application of wellness design in hotels and resorts. Wellness design targets the development of buildings and landscape that can improve people's mental health and wellbeing. There are numerous ways architecture and design can enhance the wellbeing of occupants, notably through materials, lighting, air quality and the incorporation of nature.

As guests increasingly strive for optimal health and longevity, hotels and resorts of the future will need to provide extraordinary wellness experiences that go far beyond the spa.

**SELECTION OF WELLNESS PROJECTS**



**SALAMANDER RESORT AND SPA**  
VIRGINIA, USA



**BARDESSONO NAPA VALLEY**  
CALIFORNIA, USA



**CONRAD MALDIVES RANGALI ISLAND**  
MALDIVES



**FOUR SEASONS HOTEL WESTLAKE VILLAGE & CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND LONGEVITY INSTITUTE**  
CALIFORNIA, USA



**ANANTARA PEACE HAVEN TANGALLE RESORT**  
TANGALLE, SRI LANKA



**ONE&ONLY LE SAINT GÉRAN**  
POSTE DE FLACQ, MAURITIUS



**ZARA SPA AT MÖVENPICK DEAD SEA RESORT**  
DEAD SEA, JORDAN



**APUANE SPA AT FOUR SEASONS RESORT PUNTA MITA**  
PUNTA MITA, MEXICO



**AYANA RESORT AND SPA BALI**  
BALI, INDONESIA



**ANARA SPA AT GRAND HYATT KAUAI RESORT AND SPA**  
HAWAII, USA



**RITZ-CARLTON BALI**  
BALI, INDONESIA



**DESERT SPRINGS JW MARRIOTT RESORT AND SPA**  
CALIFORNIA, USA

*With Thanks*

