

Engage the change

The Indonesian island of Bali hosted the 2011 Global Spa Summit. *European Spa* reports back on the highlights and hottest topics delivered to spa leaders at the sizzling event...
 [Report by Sarah Ward / Photography by Dulcy Gregory]

There was a real sense of 'coming of age' at the 2011 Global Spa Summit (GSS). This, the fifth GSS, sold out to a record audience of 275 invitation-only, industry leaders – representing 35 countries – who travelled to Bali to participate in this premier industry event. It's high-calibre guestlist of top-level executives from the spa, hospitality/hotel, wellness, product, fitness and medical sectors came together to share territorial intelligence and the latest trends influencing spa and wellness services, preventative health developments and health tourism.

The Summit's core mission to 'join together and shape the future of spa and wellness' was self-evident throughout three action-packed days. Bali, known as the 'Spa Capital' of the Indonesian archipelago, also proved to be an inspirational backdrop, giving delegates the opportunity to appreciate this island's unique spa heritage.

Action-packed agenda

The Bali International Convention Center at the Laguna Resort & Spa at Nusa Dua Bali was an excellent venue for three intensive days of business hothousing, namely: back-to-back seminars, keynote addresses, interactive networking sessions and concurrent breakout sessions – across a myriad of topics. For delegates, it was a challenge to keep pace with the blistering daily schedule, which presented countless opportunities to engage, share and exchange vital business information.

Aptly entitled 'Engage the Change: The Customer. The Money. The Future'; the 2011 agenda was the result of a year of intensive preparation by the GSS Board. The formula was also spiced up with new topics to reflect shifts in the global economic landscape, changes in consumer spending, and, of course, the effects of more recent world events such as the Middle Eastern uprisings and the ongoing crisis at Japan's Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant.

Special mention should be given here to this year's GSS's expert co-chairs, who honed the finer details, namely: Anne McCall Wilson,

Vice President Spas, Fairmont Raffles Hotels International, Canada; Jeff Matthews, President & COO, Mandara Spas, Indonesia and Susie Ellis, President, SpaFinder Inc., US.

Day 1: The Customer

Highlights for the first day, which focused on 'The Customer', were numerous. However, an insightful keynote address by Kate Ancketill, of the UK-based trends analysis and forecasting company GDR Creative Intelligence, set the bar. Her entertaining presentation revealed a host of trends and technological developments set to change the buying behaviour of health-conscious consumers.

At one end of the spectrum, she homed in on a growing consumer 'need state' for brands and services that deliver self-actualisation to counter the pressures of modern life. At the other end of the spectrum, Ancketill outlined an explosion in revolutionary Nanotechnology and smart mobile technology, including health monitoring apps to improve sleep, monitor heart rates and even check for STDs – all at the touch of a smart phone screen!

Ancketill's key 'takeaway' was to ask delegates to consider reaching out to new customers through the power of video streaming as a key element of their future marketing strategy. She impressed upon the audience to look for new ways to incorporate powerful, expert video content on their websites.

Day 2: The Money

Day 2 focused on 'The Money', offering a wealth of financial advice to help delegates navigate uncharted economic waters. Speakers threw light on wellness and leisure opportunities in emerging markets such as India, China and Indonesia.



Opposite page clockwise from left: The GSS Board toasts delegates attending GSS 2011; Dave McCaughan and Susie Ellis; Sammy Gharleni and Frank Pitsikalis; a treatment room at COMO Shambhala Estate, host of the GSS Pre-Summit Retreat; David Browning, David Stoup and James Kaplan; HE Jero Wacik, SE Minister of Culture & Tourism, Republic of Indonesia

What is the Global Spa Summit?

Now in its fifth year, the Global Spa Summit (GSS) is an international organization that brings together leaders and visionaries to positively impact and shape the future of the global spa and wellness industry.

Modelled on the not-for-profit World Economic Forum, where leaders gather to solve problems and identify shared opportunities, GSS hosts an annual invitation-only event where top industry executives gather to exchange ideas and advance industry goals.

In the spirit of its inclusive, global aspirations, the Summit moves its location every year and has previously been held in the USA, Switzerland and Turkey, before coming to Bali this year.

It has now been announced that 2012 will see the Summit's annual event held at The Aspen Institute, in Aspen Colorado, USA June 4-6, 2012 (see Global Spa Summit 2012). For more on the work of GSS and to share GSS' vast resource of spa research and data, visit: www.globalspasummit.org



Global vision

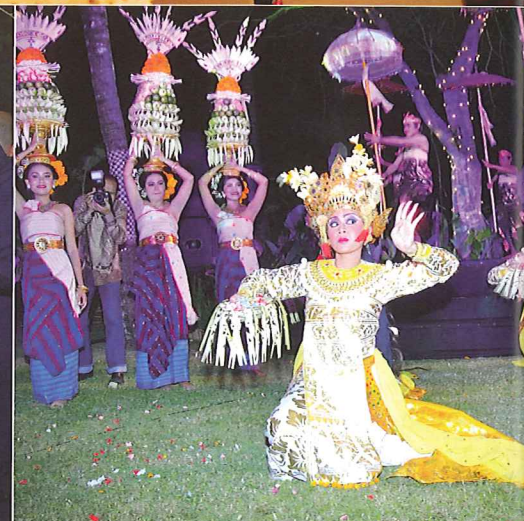
Susie Ellis, co-Chair GSS 2011

"This year's Summit was very rich in content, here are some of my key 'takeaways':"

- **Change is everywhere** – and it is accelerating. Some changes are political such as the Arab uprisings and skyrocketing healthcare costs all around the world. Some changes are regional, like the huge growth in the Asian spa industry, especially China and India. There is rapid change due to technology with social media, group buying and online health measurement technology growing by leaps and bounds; and specifically, for our industry, there are new business models such as franchising, low-cost discount businesses and new competitors entering the arena.

● **The Evidenced Based Medicine Portal for Spa and Wellness Modalities** has the potential to be the 'game changer' we envisioned. I was really struck by the emotional reaction to the presentation of the EBM portal. After having unveiled this new portal with the help of Dr Ken Pelletier, Dr Daniel Friedland, Nader Vasseghi and Dr Marc Cohen, it was very touching to see it receive a standing ovation. This project has a great deal of meaning for us as an industry going forward. Access to the new portal can be made on the GSS website and will soon be accessible via www.spaevidence.com

● **There has been huge progress in the education of students in spa management.** Watching the four teams of students compete in the 'Profitable Spa Concept of the Future' competition this year was another highlight. I was very impressed with several of the student teams who presented very creative concepts and were able to answer the judges challenging questions with great confidence."



Tomorrow's health seekers

Anne McCall Wilson, GSS 2011 co-Chair

"What I enjoyed most at GSS 2011 was the level of engagement from the entire delegation. All of the speakers stayed and participated in ongoing conversations, panel members brought data to share about their businesses, all delegates brought great questions and the breaks were loud and lively. The connections seemed stronger and even more collaborative than in past years. There was an increased depth to the sessions and many important lessons that I will take back to my business."



Global Spa Summit 2012 announced

Richard Dusseau, 2012 co-Chair

"On behalf of the GSS board I am delighted to announce that the Global Spa Summit and the Aspen Institute will collaborate for the 2012 Global Spa Summit, which is scheduled to be held at The Aspen Institute, in Aspen Colorado, USA June 4-6, 2012. While a theme for the 2012 Summit is still being finalized, this unique and timely partnership promises to attract key senior executives, industry leaders and policy makers in a dynamic exchange of ideas on tangible solutions, opportunities and initiatives that will impact on global health, spa and wellness industries."

Highlights included 'Where has all the money gone?' expertly chaired by Mary Tabacchi, PhD, Professor, Cornell University. Billed as a session to explore the complexities of international growth from a financial perspective, keynote speaker James Kaplan, SVP Development Asia/Pacific & India, Fairmont Raffles Hotels International, Singapore, was joined by panellists: David Browning, CEO, Somasigns, Philips Consumer Lifestyle and David Stoup, Chairperson of Trilogy Ventures, U.S.

They discussed varying investment strategies worldwide and how developments in the spa and wellness industry can embrace to attract investors and support long-term growth.

Kaplan's personable style and wealth of global development experience humanized this complex subject. Reeling out an impressive list of statistics and influencing drivers impacting on emerging markets, he demystified fundraising routes and

stressed the importance of building lasting relationships. He reminded us that, as an industry, "We do not do a good job of converting the hotel guest to a spa guest. We really need to focus on this as a small percentage in conversion that will make a significant difference".

Day 3: The Future

The third day presented the unveiling of two of the most significant research projects undertaken by GSS, heralded as "game changers" for the spa industry. A rousing introduction by GSS co-chair Susie Ellis, President, SpaFinder, Inc, set the stage for the unveiling of *The 2011 Global Spa Summit Research Report: Wellness Tourism and Medical Tourism: Where Do Spas Fit?*. Followed by the much-anticipated launch of the first ever *Evidence Based Medicine Portal for Spa and Wellness Modalities*, presented by the charismatic Dr Daniel

Friedland, Medical Director, Barney & Barney and Founder, SuperSmartHealth, U.S, which received a standing ovation from GSS delegates.

The biggest 'takeaway' from this year's event was the engagement between the delegates themselves. GSS 2012 provided fresh ideas and cemented new industry friendships – all of which will undoubtedly have a positive impact on shaping the future.

Eat, Pray, Love

My personal highlights? Time to relax on the memorable pre-GSS retreat with spa friends in the beautiful surroundings of chilled out COMO Shambhala (a spa health retreat that deserves its world class reputation). Time to share ideas (thank you Sharon Kolkka of Gwinganna Lifestyle Retreat for hosting a memorable lunchtime discussion on making that all-important emotional connection with spa guests). Time to celebrate at

Above clockwise from left: Delegates gathered for three days of keynote addresses; Anne McCall Wilson, co-Chair GSS 2011; Nancy Nemer, Sharon Kolkka, Tony Nemer, Sue Harmsworth and Steve Okuley; Dan Shackleton-Jones, Dr Marc Cohen, Jeff Matthews and Mariana Palmeiro; Balinese dancers at the GSS Gala Night; Steve Courso, Mattias Volt and Kate Anckell

the unforgettable Indonesian Gala Night (kindly hosted by The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia, represented by Minister H.E. Jero Wacik, SE). Time to play 'Hey Jude' as part of the impromptu GSS Balinese Orchestra (thank you to CG Funk of Massage Envy and Georgie Yam of Dragonfly).

Finally, time to be reminded to return one day to the spa capital of Indonesia, as Minister H.E. Jero Wacik, SE, told GSS delegates, in the famous words of novelist Elizabeth Gilbert, "Eat, Pray and be sure to return to Bali to strengthen your Love".