



# Taking a quantum leap

European Spa attended the Healing Summit 2019 in Portugal to explore how taking a more holistic approach to business can catalyse change

REPORT BY SARAH CAMILLERI

**M**oving from the bustling heart of Berlin to the serene, ocean-side location of Pine Cliffs, a Luxury Collection Resort & Spa in Portugal's Algarve, the sixth Healing Summit set out to explore a more spiritual approach to business and life. Inviting 138 delegates from 25 countries to 'Take a Quantum Leap', the event explored the healing potential of wellness travel and encouraged attendees to share their aspirations for conscious business practices.

According to the Summit's co-founders, Anne Biging and Dr. Elisabeth Ixmeier, the current mainstream labelling of 'spa' and 'wellness' does not accurately express the immersive approach to transformative hospitality that all Healing Hotels of the World member properties work hard to achieve. Therefore, a broader bandwidth of speakers was scheduled to fully stimulate the international delegation of hoteliers, retreat leaders, charity founders, philanthropists, shamen and travel specialists.

## Global inspiration

Opening the Summit, travel representatives and hoteliers joined in a workshop to discuss the rise in health and spiritual tourism and the value of gaining Healing Hotels of the World accreditation. This year's host, US radio producer Valerie Smaldone, invited delegates to shake off their business personas and bring their authentic selves to all aspects of the programme for maximum participation.

The next two days were given to storytelling from the stage by a mix of international speakers who shared the 'quantum shifts' they had made in their personal and business lives.

Notably, this year's Summit featured a number of US speakers, including philanthropist and philosopher Adam Rockefeller Growald and investor and entrepreneur Stephen Kennedy Smith, who shared their views on conscious capitalism and impact investment, as well as Catherine Parrish, founder of NextLevel Leadership Consulting and chair of Pachamama



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**Anne Biging** Pictured above left with fellow Healing Summit co-founder Elisabeth Ixmeier

Alliance, who highlighted the devastating effects of deforestation in the Amazon Basin.

Barry Scherr, author of *Enlightened Real Estate*, focused on the prevalence of loneliness in modern society and the importance of re-imagining social spaces and city planning to encourage human connections.

## Wellness leadership

The aspiration to achieve a higher level of ethics and originality was another thread throughout the Summit. Notably, Marina Efraimoglou, CEO and founder of Euphoria Retreat in Greece, and Diana Stobo, award-winning author and founder of The Retreat, Costa Rica and Truth Bar emphasised the levels of self-belief required to build successful retreat destinations.

Going barefoot on the Summit stage, Sarah Livia Brightwood, president of Mexico's Rancho La Puerta destination spa, shared the journey

taken by her father and mother to create a sanctuary that has become a global icon. She explained how their legacy lives on through her 450-strong team's environmental work and sustainable business practices.

A notable panel presentation, entitled 'New Wave of Healing' was given by Dr Marian I. Alonzo, medical chief at The Farm resort, San Benito, in the Philippines. She was joined by Indian energy healer and founder of Bliss Body, Nimisha Rattan, and Julie Bach, director of charity Wellness for Cancer, and together they discussed the importance of spiritual health and making space for those who need it most.

Harald Schopf, general manager of Austria's Kurhaus Schärding medical spa, shared his team's vision to help guests live longer, healthier lives by using a unique personality profiling approach for every guest, to provide a high degree of personalisation and service to their wellness programming.

## Philanthropic inspiration

Highlighting hope over adversity, the delegation listened intently to actress Arta Dobroschi, who shared her experience as a refugee from war-torn Kosovo and her subsequent film work to promote world peace, human rights and understanding of the plight of refugees.

Continuing this theme, Heidi Thomas Kühn, founder and CEO of Roots of Peace, took to the stage with her daughter Kyleigh to share the work they have done to remove landmines and replace them with grape vines and fruit trees. Having raised millions of dollars in funding and support, Kühn revealed how her dedication had positively impacted more than one million farmers in seven countries.

1. Summit host radio producer Valerie Smaldone
2. Healing Summit's co-founder Anne Biging and Sarah Collins, CEO of Wonderbag
3. Marina Efraimoglou, founder of Euphoria Retreat
4. Sunrise yoga to energise the delegation before breakfast
5. US investor and philanthropist Adam Rockefeller Growald
6. The path to the beach at Pine Cliffs
7. A panel discussion on 'quantum investment'



▶ Entrepreneur Sarah Collins, creator of Wonderbag, then shared her journey to develop a heavily insulated container that allows the slow-cooking of food without the use of electricity. These offer a simple but potentially life-changing innovation for many lower-income African families and Collins' mission to create a conscious global enterprise has resulted in her gaining recognition as one of *Fortune* magazine's Top 10 Most Powerful Women Entrepreneurs.

1. Barry Scherr author of *Enlightened Real Estate*
2. Psychologist Dr. Ellie Cobb
3. The children's panel share their views on the future
4. Diane Stobo, founder of The Retreat, Costa Rica
5. Stephen Kennedy Smith, investor, entrepreneur and co-author of *JFK - A Vision for America*

Healer and educationist Dr Shruti Nada Poddar shared details of her own calling to return to India to create Vedaaranya Haveli at Ramgarh Shekhawati in Rajasthan. This ambitious Integrated Heritage and Eco-tourism Zone is now welcoming guests, artists and travelers to experience the region's proud heritage and she hopes this will develop into a sustainable tourism economy for the future.

**Return on intuition**

Psychologist Dr. Ellie Cobb explored brain plasticity and evidence that through the daily practice of breathing exercises, meditation, gratitude and mindfulness we can effectively override the fight, flight, freeze and threat responses of the brain to 'rewire' for success.

Dr. Cobb asked the delegation to consider engaging in a new conversation about mental health. "We talk about fixing problems, not about finding joy; not how to thrive, how to do well," she observed. "Wanting to be seen, heard, loved – make real connections. This is the basis of what we all need to thrive as human beings."

The theme of personal alignment was given a star turn by Adam Rockefeller Growald. Decked in an impressive frock coat his 'Path to the Heart' talk focused on the untapped potential we are all capable of expressing if we actively practice self-alignment. Turning back to business, he asked delegates to consider "a future where ROI could be considered as 'return on intuition' rather than a 'return on investment'."

He continued: "I want to live in a world where more people make decisions not dependent on the return they expect financially, but on the experience they have deploying their energy to make things happen."

Continuing Rockefeller's theme, Brian Brazeau, general manager at beauty company [comfort zone], shared how identifying true purpose has helped his team achieve B Corporation status. "We got rid of having a company 'mission' and 'vision' and worked as a team to come up with our company 'purpose'," he stated. "Our collective 'purpose' is much stronger than any company vision. This approach is not only profitable but, importantly,





6. Claudia Roth of Soul Luxury, Fit Reisen's Claudia Wagner and Jane Kitchen of Wellness-Sing  
 7. Sarah Livia Brightwood, president, Rancho La Puerta  
 8. Nimisha Rattan, founder of Bliss Body  
 9. Harald Schopf, director of medical spa Kurhaus Schärding

makes a change for the better that benefits employees, customers and the environment.”

Dr. Binod Chaudhary, chairman of CG Corp Global and owner of The Farm, also urged delegates to consider how they could bring a stronger sense of appreciation to their daily work routines and objectives. “If you bring in a strong element of healing to your work, undoubtedly you will make a much larger impact,” he said. “Let your own emotional connection with your business grow. Don’t restrict yourself purely to the bottom line.”

#### New consumers, new expectations

The emergence of the ‘spiritualised consumer’, was the focus of a panel lead by Claudia Roth, founder and managing director of Soul Luxury, who was joined by Claudia Wagner, CEO of Fit Reisen and Jane Kitchen, co-founder of Wellness-Sing. They discussed how the desire for emotional fulfilment and connection lies behind affluent consumers looking to define themselves by their experiences rather than by the goods they own. “The transformed consumer expects their suppliers to be sincere and benevolent, standing by world-changing values, including: environmental, organic, natural, ethical and equitable,” stated Roth.

Last but not least, a panel of children joined the Summit to tell their stories through film and share their thoughts on the realities of global inequality and injustice. Holly Carter, founder and executive director of BYkids, led the youngsters in talking about their hopes for the future, with key themes including wanting to see adults come home less stressed and how to keep the oceans and the environment clean.

Refreshingly unconference-like, the Healing Summit also delivered many memorable pause points, including early morning swimming in the Atlantic, sun-rise yoga, guided meditation and chanting. Interesting outdoor networking breaks also contributed to an approach that really helped delegates to stay energised.

Co-founder Anne Biging told *European Spa*: “The feedback we received from many delegates was that this year’s Summit was not only a ‘quantum leap’ but also life-changing. I am happy we could take the delegates on a journey where they learned how to align with the ‘true source’ and experienced the enthusiasm of a passionate life dedicated to doing good.”

[www.healingsummit.org](http://www.healingsummit.org)

