

# Spa Services and Wellness Activities within the Surf Tourism Experience; the case study of Jersey, Channel Islands.

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## Abstract

This paper explores the feasibility of developing spa and wellness activities within the surf tourism experience in Jersey (Channel Islands) from the surf traveller's perspective. Using this worldview we evaluate a surf tourism offer in Jersey. Through an analysis of the lifestyle and attitudes of today's surf traveller we offer preliminary suggestions to marketers and surf lodge owners to capitalise on this unique target market. The conceptual position, that we term *Swellness*, refers to the perceived wellness dimensions and benefits of surfing. We identify that spa and wellness elements are feasible add-ons for surf product development. The study has also revealed an openness towards other wellness-related concepts, such as Surf Set Fitness or man-made wave surfing parks. Furthermore, the research has shown that wellness and personal responsibility for wellbeing are part of a surf subculture.

*Keywords:* Surfing, Adventure Tourism, Spa, Wellness, Surf Tourism Product Development, Lifestyle Sport

Adventure tourism has expanded fast in the last decades of the twentieth century as outdoor recreation has become more and more popular. Surfing, as an adventure tourism niche, started blossoming in the early twentieth century to the multi-billion dollar industry that is today (Dolnicar and Fluker, 2003). Ancillary services and goods include the production and selling of soft as well as hard goods, such as clothing and equipment, media publications, surf lodge accommodation, surf schools and rentals, surf camps competitions and surf parks (Murphy and Bernal, 2008). Surf tourism is a global phenomenon, however research has only been carried out in a few countries and there are many areas yet to be explored. Martin and Assenov (2012) estimated a total of at least 161 countries in which surfing is practiced, nonetheless, research in surf tourism has been conducted in less than 20 of them and almost all has been focused in the period 1997-2011.

Over the past decade few attempts have been made to assess the total number of surfers globally as most governments have not kept records of surf visitors' tourist spending or the duration of their stay. Buckley (2002a) estimated the surfers' population to around 10 million, whereas Aguerre (2009) thought that it

was approximately 25 million surfers. O'Brien and Eddie (2013) estimated a market of 35 million surfers and predicted an expansion of the global surfing market to 55 million surfers by 2023 based on a 5% annual growth rate.

As the number of people taking up surfing seems to be growing every year, surf tourism is also increasing in economic significance worldwide. To the best of our knowledge this is the first study exploring the connection between wellness and adrenaline-fuelled sports. In this case, surfing and the feasibility of spa facilities and wellness activities within the surf tourist experience, from the consumer's point of view. The chosen location for this study is Jersey (Channel Islands), recognized as the birthplace of surfing in Europe (Mansfield, 2009).

Nowadays, the surf traveller image is no longer that of a young male adrenaline-seeker with a lot of free time, travelling with a backpack. Surf travellers are actually wealthier and rely more and more on tour operators to help them coordinate their surf break (Pitt, 2009). As Buckley (2002a, p. 408) stated: surf travellers nowadays have become sufficiently wealthy to pay for surf charters and surf lodges and can prefer packaged product to independent travel." As surfers become wealthier, surf lodge owners and tour operators must take into consideration that tourists might be looking for a more "cushioned" adventure touristic experience. Dolnicar and Fluker (2003) have even talked about a new market segment of luxury surfers.

It seems that the trend of adrenaline-fuelled activities paired with relaxing or pampering experiences is growing in popularity as the world's stress ratchets up. People are seeking more voluntary stress relief and more intense physical and mental challenges-followed by doses of spa relaxation. Spas, hotels and resorts are responding by pioneering and packaging rush and relaxation, adrenaline and spa, thrills and chilling, in unprecedented ways." (Spa Finder, 2016, p.47). Thus, understanding the lifestyle, attitudes and entertainment choices of today's surf tourist can help marketers in designing better-fitted messages and can help entrepreneurs create services tailored to this specific demographic.

## Literature Review

### Understanding Surf Tourism through the Lenses of Adventure Tourism

As part of adventure tourism, surf tourism has not received too much attention either. Martin and Assenov (2012) note that the first research papers related to this field began in the 1990s, although the term, "surf tourism" did not even appear in the literature until 1999. In an examination of the existing surf tourism literature, Martin and Assenov (2012) found that the sustainability of surf sites was one of the most discussed themes in the surf literature. The potential of surf tourism has not yet been explored, as most studies target environmental sustainability concerns as well as the economic implications of surfing and surf tourism (Martin and Assenov, 2012; Buckley, 2002a, 2002b; O'Brien and Eddie, 2013). According to Martin and Assenov (2012) only ten percent of countries in the world coastal surfing resources have been studied, indicating a potential for new areas of research. Given this reality, there is a great potential in studying ways of growing the surf tourism industry. As Barbieri and Sotomayor (2013, p. 112) would argue, surf tourism is, "*generating sufficient*

*economic, social and environmental significance to justify academic attention".* Moreover, there are some preliminary investigations on surfers' behaviour, motivations and lifestyle (Reynolds and Hritz, 2012; Barbieri and Sotomayor 2013; Farmer, 1992; Schneider, 2010). Lazarow et al. (2008) investigated the economic value of recreational surfing, while Taylor (2007) conducted an interesting study on the connection between surfing and spirituality. Wheaton (2016) and McWaters (2008) started to research on motivations of middle aged and older surfers. Last but not least, there is an increasing number of studies concerning women surfers (Comer, 2010; Roy, 2011; Roy and Caudwell, 2014; Olive, McCuaig and Phillips, 2015).

Yet, to the best of the researchers' knowledge there are few studies regarding surf tourism product development. Research could not keep up with growth and changes in the industry (Buckley, 2002a). This study comes to fill a gap in research , exploring the feasibility of wellness and spa add-on in surfing locations, as the Swellness, as we will term spa and wellness, trend seems to grow quite popular (Spa Finder , 2016). Spa and wellness add-ons can be beneficial for the healthy development of surf tourism, as they would cater for the needs of other neglected categories of surfers: women, surfers with disabilities, middle-aged or senior surfers as well as non-surfers that might accompany the tourists who travel for surf purposes primarily. These facilities could invigorate Jersey (Channel Islands) as a surfing destination, especially in the days without sufficient surfing swells.

According to Tourism New South Wales (2009) surf tourism refers to surfing or attending a surfing vent as the main purpose for travel. O'Brien and Eddie (2013) suggested in their conference that surf tourism includes travelling for the purposes of surfing, learning to surf or participating in surf-related events. However, this definition does not include spin-offs such as paddle-boarding, kite-surfing, wind-surfing or even artificial-waves surfing, which are essentially acts of riding waves. Tourism New South Wales (2009) comes with the specification that this type of tourism takes place forty kilometres or more from the person's place of residence and that surf tourists would have at least one night accommodation. Dolnicar and Fluker (2003, p. 4) also added that 'surf tourism does not necessarily only include active surfing participants, but also spectators and non-surfing travel companions." Surf destinations can be improved by adding spa and wellness facilities, as they would provide leisure activities to non-surfers companions as well, especially in the under-developed surf destinations. Furthermore, for surfers, a spa can be a healthy leisure activity in the days without swells.

A broad definition of surf tourism is therefore adopted. Surf tourism is the activity of travelling away from home, for at least one night, primarily for surf purposes, whether it is recreational (including surf camps that teach people how to surf) or competitive, and refers to the act of riding waves whether it is through the traditional surf board or through other spin-offs such as paddle-boarding , kitesurfing , body-boarding etc. However, it is important to mention that a certain category of surfers might not agree with this definition as they do not consider body-boarders as real surfers for instance. Also, they might not consider paddle-boarding as a surfing spin-off, as this sport does not involve that much risk and adrenaline.

It is essential to begin with a definition and a differentiation between the well-being and wellness concepts. Cohen and Bodeker (2008, p. 6) define wellness as something that "can be equated to health but it can also extend to sexual, spiritual, emotional, financial, environmental, occupational dimension." Wellness is a wide concept, as it can mean different things to different people. On the other hand, wellbeing is a growing area of research, yet the concept is not yet clearly delimited (Dodge et al., 2012). However, even though the two concepts are often used interchangeably, "wellness can be thought of as the active and intentional process that leads to a state of wellbeing" (Dalton and Lagomarsino, 2014, p.45) . After exploring previous attempts to define this complex concept and taking elements from past definitions, Dodge et al. (2012, p. 230) define wellbeing as the balance point "when individuals have the psychological, social and physical resources they need to meet psychological, social and physical challenge". The challenges faced point to the well-being between an individual's resources and the challenges faced.

At first glance, the construction of the surfing tourist space would not have anything to do with wellness. Surfing is widely perceived as a sport of hedonism and risk, but Anderson (2013) suggests that surfing a wave can also be seen as a way to experience the transcendent, to live the present characterizing the surf zone as a transformative experience. Taylor (2007) even compares a surfed wave to a cathedral for surfers', defining surfing as a new 'aquatic nature religion'. From this perspective, the beach and surf scene can be seen as places of liberation from society. Marine biologist Wallace (2014), talks about the concept of "blue mind", which he defines as a meditative state of mind - characterized by feelings of calm, peacefulness, harmony, the satisfaction of living the present moment -that are triggered when in or near the sea. However, in a survey conducted by Farmer (1992), only nine percent of participants surfed primarily for "catharsis", which describes this transformative dimension of surfing, including motivations such as stress reduction, religious experience, escapism or transcendence. It is also important to mention this feeling of well-being given by water can be obtained through other water sports, such as free-diving for instance.

Price (1996) also stated that many activities that imply contact with nature can provide a sense of wholeness, transcendence, harmony, and solitude. Wellness aspires to achieve same desiderates, whether through therapies, yoga, or spending time in nature. If surfing has a certain spiritual dimension, wellness does also imply evolution of consciousness and can be seen as a "form of secular spirituality that transcends formal religion" (Cohen and Bodeker, 2008, p.8).

Both wellness and surfing help the individual to live the present moment whether through the rush of adrenaline or through a peaceful meditation. However, this might apply only for a certain category of surfers, known as soul surfers, as they see the connection with nature through surfing as healing, transformative and sacred (Taylor, 2007). Povey (2017, p. 56) talks about this connection between wellness and surfing in Wavelength Magazine:

*"I do think that we are onto something a little deeper with all this surfing, yoga and life; that they are connected in ways we easily overlook and our lessons learnt in the ocean can be used in our lives. For example, when we are surrounded by a large base of support, whether that's colleagues, friends, or family and the closer you are to this base of support, the easier it is to find balance "just as in surfing "if your body (centre of mass) is in alignment over your board (base of support), then you*

*are balanced."*

This living is a kind of mind-set typical to soul surfers which might have fuelled the surf spa retreats trend. Forecast by SPA Finder (2016) as one of the major wellness trends for the future - surf, -'the new wave of wellness"- gets increasingly linked to activities such as yoga, massages organic food fitness or even paddle-board yoga.

Furthermore , in research comparing the psychological well-being and physical self-perception of health club members, hockey players, runners, soccer players and surfers with a control group of students, surfers had the highest physical self-awareness scores (Edwards and Edwards, 2011). Thus, healthy eating, exercising, taking care of one's own wellbeing seem to be part of this subculture and should be reflected in the surf tourist experience. This study will help outlining to what extent wellness elements can be integrated within the surfer's tourist experiences.

As a lifestyle sport, surfing comes with a distinctive subculture, which means that there are certain lifestyles, specific values, norms and beliefs (Workman and Freeburg, 2000) that gravitate around this activity. These collective forms of expression, fashion styles as well as practical knowledge provide participants with a unique leisure identity (Wheaton, 2013). Devoted participants created sub-cultural communities, where they meet people with similar values, interests and lifestyles (Gilchrist and Wheaton, 2011). Nonetheless, Farmer (1992) does not see surfing as a subculture but more as a "scene" where individuals share values and beliefs different from the mainstream society. Reynolds and Hritz (2012) studied surfers' motivations and lifestyles as adventure travellers. Their study revealed the fact that women were practicing surfing as an outlet for socialization, whereas men wanted to show off more. This is another reason why surf spa retreats such as Surf with Amigas (2017) or Surf divas (no date) in South America seem to be so appealing and so popular among women surfers.

The surf traveller is not merely the young male travelling with a backpack or sleeping in a van, seeking adventurous experiences. Although surf tourism was perceived as a self-guided adventure fuelled by the quality of the various surfing elements such as wave height and period, swell direction, tide, nowadays , the majority of surf tourists are no longer "cash poor-time rich" backpackers , but travellers that entrust surf tour operators to help them organize their travel arrangements (Ponting, 2008).The current surf traveller can also be a senior, woman or a disabled person (Sung, 2004; Reynolds and Hritz, 2012) and can still be either 'cash-rich, time poor' or '...cash poor time-rich' (Buckley, 2002a). As more and more women and seniors start surfing, surf lodge owners could start taking these consumers into consideration and create facilities that would cater to their needs providing a more "cushioned" touristic experience.

Buckley (2002a) outlines his categories of surfers. The first category is made up of independent recreational surfers, who plan their own trips use their own transport and stay in local accommodations or in their own tents. The second category comprises commercial surf tourists, who rely on tour operators to plan all the logistic aspects of their trip including transportation, accommodation and food. However, his study would need further research in regards to the implications of these two categories for marketers, managers and academics. Other authors have concentrated on marketing themes such as segment on of the surf tourism market

(Dolnicar and Fluker, 2003). Their study provides a more in-depth investigation into the behavioural travel patterns of surf tourists as well as a division of this market into different segments according to demographic, psychographic characteristics and past destination choice.

The increasing popularity of surfing has led "cash-poor, time-rich" younger generations to practice this sport more and more, to the point that "cash-rich, time-poor" surfers have started to express their willingness to pay more for uncrowded conditions during their short holidays (Buckley, 2002a). These are probably the type of surfers who would invest in an all-inclusive surf and spa resort experience. They are not necessarily old, they can be in their twenties or thirties, and are often successful in business and in life (Buckley, 2002a).

Images of surfers in the media tend to reflect consumer culture's fascination with youthfulness, while also depicting the idea that surf participants are mainly male thrill-seekers. This image, however, is being challenged, as older enthusiasts, both men and women, are taking the waves (Wheaton, 2016). On one side, current surfers are getting older and they continue to surf, but, on the other hand, surfing started to become a tempting activity for older beginners (McWaters, 2008). Earnest (2001), co-producer of documentary 'Surfing for Life' which is a documentary about healthy ageing that honours many of the pioneers of the surfing world, believes that this trend is a reflection of how our society is struggle to redefine what it means to grow old. The Surfing for Life (Earnest, 2001) programme is set within the broader wellness movement in the USA, promoting an integrated approach to ageing. Staying well physically spiritually and emotionally becomes more important than staying young. Older surfers (both men and women) are therefore challenging misconceptions about the ageing body, proving that one can stay active and defy the attributes of getting older, such the fear of engaging into adrenaline fuelled activities, attributes that are generally associated with youthfulness. This demographic of refuse-to-age Baby Boomers is growing fast, as according to the Adventure Travel Trade Association (2015), the average adventure traveller is now aged 48, with 18% being over 61. This category of surfers is most likely to enjoy travelling for surf purposes while also engaging in wellness activities and therapies, as they would also have more spending power as well as a healthy lifestyle to keep themselves so physically active. In her study about the benefits of surfing in the cold water of Norway , Elmahdy (2015) found that surfing provided participants with multiple benefits: from having fun, while exercising and keeping fit, to admitting that surf had played an important role in helping them regain mental wellbeing and overcoming depression , to having g improved their self-esteem, confidence and self-worth. Female surfers is another unexploited but potentially lucrative niche market (Comer, 2010). Women's surfing became increasingly popular in the 60' because of Hollywood's movies such as "Gidget Goes Hawaiian" (Bresler and Wendkos, 1961) and "Ride the Wild Surf (Napoleon and Taylor, 1964). It is estimated that around 20% of the British surfing population is female (Barkham, 200). Projects such as Surf Diva Surf School (no date), Surf with Amigas (2017), Surf Goddess Retreats (no date), Swellwomen (no date) are becoming increasingly popular among women. They organize surf and yoga retreats around the world, with a focus on wellness elements such as yoga classes, healthy eating, mindfulness, meditation. Another category that is not yet explored is people with disabilities who practice surfing. There is an increasing number of associations that work to make this

sport accessible to people with disabilities. For instance, Surfability UK CIC is a Community Interest Company that provides surfing lessons and experiences for people with disabilities and learning difficulties including Down syndrome, dyslexia, autistic spectrum conditions, hemiplegia etc. (Surfability UK CIC, 2017). Another example is Healing waves (no date), a charity association, based in Jersey (Channel Islands) which aims to enable individuals, regardless of their disabilities, to participate in a few hours of surfing and provide them the opportunity to have their own unique and valuable experience in the water. Again, wellness elements could be injected into these programmes, as they could enhance the healing process and improve the quality of life for people with disabilities.

Surfing can be seen a therapeutic experience. There are several surf programs offered to people with disabilities around the world. To mention just a few of them: Surfers Healing (2015), organizes surf camps for children with autism, Ride-a-Wave (no date) focuses on children with special needs and the Disabled Surfers Association of Australia (2017), which was originally focused on injured surfers, but has now expanded to people with different disabilities who want to challenge themselves. This market segment would benefit from facilities such as indoor artificial waves pools, which are safer for people with disabilities as there are no tides, rocks or other natural dangers. This category would also benefit from therapies such as chiropractic or cranio-sacral therapy, psychotherapy to help them recover or improve their condition. An article in Wavelength Magazine commented on this issue: "Operation surf, is one company based in California that takes physically and mentally wounded veterans (many from Iraq and Afghanistan) on week-long surf programmes, its founders support studies on the effects of surfing on ex-soldiers, claiming that those who enter their surfing program can result in a decrease of post-traumatic stress by 36 per cent (Bremner, 2017).

A broader classification of adventure tourists, which can be adapted for surf tourists is the one made by Sung (2004, pp. 352-354). She outlined six different adventure traveller subgroups as: (1) general enthusiasts (27.2% of all respondents), mainly male hard-adventure travellers, (2) budget youngsters (21.6%), earning a lower income and most likely organizing their trip independently, (3) soft moderates (9.4%) of which 54.8% were women and 56% of respondents were middle-aged, (4) upper high naturalists (14.3%), seeking mostly to engage in outdoors activities, preferably in exotic locations which almost 63% were middle-aged and married and 71.1% likely to earn a high income, (5) family vacationers (13.3%) and (6) active soloists (14%), most likely to opt for all-inclusive (57.6%) or partially inclusive (37.6%) travel arrangements by adventure tour operators. Concepts such as surf spa retreats might be appealing for all the above mentioned categories, maybe except for the first one.

Traditionally, adventure tourism involves a certain activity in an outdoor environment, whether it is hunting or wilderness survival courses. However, nowadays artificial adventure environments, whether they are created indoors or outdoors seem to be a major trend (Swarbrooke et al., 2003). One good example is Snowdonia, a surf park in North Wales which claims to be the "world's longest surfable wave lagoon" (Spa Finder, 2016, p.13), offering surf lessons, surf yoga and fitness classes. Outdoor as well as indoor wave simulators can be good alternatives for beginners, for those who want to practice surfing all year round or in locations where natural surfing conditions are not possible. Merton Hotel (2017) in Jersey offers enthusiasts an artificial wave simulator (The Flow Rider™), which enables participants to surf all

year long or in the days with no swells, without having to worry about the wind, currents tides, rocks etc.

One can witness a divergence of tourist tastes: the comfort based but still adventure orientated travel. This is what Ponting (2013) describes as "cushioned adventure" when referring to the construction of the ideal surfing tourist space, as surfers acknowledged the cushioning effect of the tourism industry. For instance, the adrenaline of conquering the big waves can be perfectly matched with spa therapies in order to relax the muscles after a surfing session. In his thesis, Ponting (2008) talks about the concept of 'nirvanification', in regards to the surfer's dream tourism space, which comprises four elements -perfect waves (Ponting, 2009), uncrowded conditions (Ponting et al., 2011; Buckley 2002b), cushioned adventure and pristine tropical environment. As the world population of surfers is growing, ageing and becoming wealthier (Buckley, 2006), surf resorts could become quite popular. This is due to the fact that these tourists would have access to a private beach which means that they would have good quality surfing and uncrowded conditions. Because surfing seems to be associated with a healthy lifestyle, these resorts can benefit by developing the range of facilities and services, such as spa treatments, yoga, meditation, detox programs, thus "cushioning" the surfing experience.

Set in the Atlantic Ocean, "the vibrant island of Jersey has played a huge part in the history of European wave-riding. It is home to Britain's oldest surfing community, and has produced some of the country's biggest stars"(Mansfield, 2009, p 30). Currently, surfing is still one of the Channel Islands most popular sports, boasting itself with a rich history and champions to match. The sport had been introduced on the island in 1958 by three South-Africans, who were hired as lifeguards because of the increasing number of people drowning (Mansfield 2009). One of the motivations behind choosing Jersey as the study area is because it is host to a variety of different nationalities, which would help to achieve reliability, meaning that the findings of this research can be applicable to other areas of the world and would ensure repeatability of findings (Veal and Darcy 2014). According to Jersey Census (2011), half (50%) of Jersey residents were born in Jersey in 2011, while nearly a third (31%) were born in the British Isles (including England, Scotland, Wales and other Channel Islands), 2% in Ireland about 7% of the residents were born in Portugal (including Madeira), 3% from Poland, other 3% were born in other European countries (Romania, France, Germany, Italy etc.) and 4% elsewhere in the world (Australia, China Thailand, India, Canada, USA etc.). It is also worth mentioning that the total population of the island was estimated to be 104,200 in 2016 (Statistic Unit, 2017). Also, Jersey is a touristic destination, attracting tourists from Europe but also from other continents. The total number of visitors in 2015 was 717,600 according to the Jersey Government (no date), however there are no estimates concerning the number of surfers on the island. The number of surfers and length of their stay and accommodation expenses should be recorded by authorities as currently, or many small islands surfing is no longer just an entertaining activities practiced by a number of locals and foreigners, but an important opportunity for economic growth (Buckley, 2002a). Other reasons to choose a small island as the place for developing surf tourism are underlined by Scheyvens and Momsen (2008), who outline five different strengths of small islands - good economic performers; high levels of cultural, social and natural capital; respect for traditional, holistic approaches to development; strong international linkages and political strength. These areas of

strengths enhance tourism development and are likely to attract socially and environmentally conscious tourists. That being said, during last years, tourism has decreased in Jersey, despite numerous tourism campaigns (Oxera, 2012).

## Discussion and conclusions

By drawing attention to business owners and surf tour operators on the preferences and market trends and demands this study helps to create a more tailored surfing experience, for local surfers as well as for surf tourists. Residents and tourists could benefit from wave simulators and the development of other surfing spin-offs such as kitesurfing, windsurfing on the island. Furthermore, surfers could see more wellness elements infused within surf events, surf festivals and surf accommodations, as a response to the market demand. On the other hand, if surf tourism exceeds the "recreational capacity" on the island, the surfing experience might become frustrating, putting people off. That is why authorities and surf lodge owners should take into consideration the concept of recreational capacity, as advised by Buckley (2002b) and by Ponting and O'Brien (2015).

When it comes to estimating the demand for spa services within a niche market, such as the "luxury surfers" (Dolnicar and Fluke, 2003), it becomes even more challenging. If the estimated number of surfers using or purchasing spa services is too low, the business will result in an unprofitable operation. The current research is focused on the openness of surfers to incorporate spa and wellness activities within surf trips. To further continue this study, surf lodge owners in Jersey, as well as luxury resorts in other surf destinations and must carefully evaluate the following market indicators:

- The size of the property: How many surfers come to Jersey each year? How many places should a camp have? How many rooms should a surf lodge have? What would be the size of the place designated for spa and/or for wellness services?
- Type of property: is it a luxury surf and spa resort? Is it affiliated with a certain brand? Or is it a family-run surf lodge?
- What is the average annual occupancy: this refers to the percent of time all keys are being occupied by property guests (Dusseau and Brennan, 2008)

In order to develop surf tourism and to enhance surf product development in Jersey, investors and hotel and spa managers could bring concepts such as Surf Set Fitness (2017), paddle-board fitness classes (which could be done within indoor pools as well) or even develop artificial surf parks. These facilities could invigorate surf tourism in Jersey.

This preliminary study has revealed new opportunities for surf tourism development. Surf tour operators can focus on creating offers and packages that include surf and yoga retreats, or surf holidays that offer discounted massage or yoga services at local hotels based in Jersey. Developing surf camps and retreats for women is another direction to explore. Last but not least, specific packages should be designed for senior surfers. As popular surf destinations such as California and Australia become overcrowded, surfers are in search of destinations that provide quality surfing. Despite its former popularity, Jersey's beaches are far from being crowded. Furthermore, surf tour operators can promote this destination to Scandinavian countries, as they are more likely to be eager to swim in colder waters. Thus, Jersey

could become a winter surf destination. Moreover, this study can be an important marketing tool for surf festival organizers and marketers in order to bring more wellness elements into future events, such as yoga and meditation classes in order to respond to this market's demands.

To sum up, the surf tourism industry is growing up and so is the surf tourist. Surfing is not anymore a "cash-poor, time-rich" young-male dominated scene, as more women, professionals and seniors are taking up this sport. The current surfing accommodation must change as well to respond to the new market segments. Surfing will increasingly be coupled with more wellness elements, yet still preserving the authentic, unpretentious experience. It is not about infusing more luxury, it is about an authentic form of wellness, which involves a deeper sense of community and belonging to a certain subculture. It is about making the surf travel experience tailored to all tastes and market segments. In a world where stress reaches skyrocketing levels, it seems likely that people want to find a way to escape from the everyday worries. Adventure tourism, surfing included, comes with an antidote, as it offers an immediate "tune-in-the-present moment" and a connection with nature. Paradoxically, as Spa Finder (2016) stated, people seek more voluntary stress to get de-stressed. Indeed, stress can be positive when a person chooses to engage in an adrenaline-rush experience such as surfing is, followed by deeper relaxation techniques such as yoga, breathing and meditation. It is no surprise that concepts such as spa sky resorts have been and still are very successful. Then, why would not this apply to surfing as well?

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