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A.W. Lake launches Center for Wellness Strategies and resilience camp in the Rocky Mountain wilderness

BY KIM MEGSON

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The monolithic steel building, called the Center for Wellness Strategies, stands 2,000m (6,800ft) above sea level on a 40 acre (16 hectares) site

photo: A.W. Lake

Wellness design firm A.W. Lake has opened its new headquarters in Northern Colorado, with the building set to become a hotbed of wellness research in the wilderness of the Rocky Mountains.

The monolithic steel building, called the Center for Wellness Strategies, stands 2,000m (6,800ft) above sea level on a 40 acre (16 hectares) site bordering a vast swathe of national forest land.

The building will serve as a hub for individuals and companies to come together and share ideas for the development of disruptive technologies, products and services "that boost our health, happiness and humanity."

It will also serve as a base for A.W.Lake's Resilience Training and Wilderness Camps, which expose participants to unfamiliar and unpredictable conditions and new sensations, "because evolution favours adaptation, rather than prevention or avoidance."

Facilities include a maker's studio and gallery, a demo kitchen and cooking school, an outdoor wood-fired sauna and steam cabins and ice baths. There is also access to more than 350 miles (563km) of hiking trails, white water rafting, canoeing, skiing, snowboarding, swimming, rock climbing, fishing, forest foraging and wildlife tracking.

Designed and built by architect MAAD design, the HQ's frontage features two sets of 8m (26.2ft) long panoramic windows to take in the mountain views. A sloped roofline allows high wind to glide over the building and sends melted snow into a 5,000-litre underground concrete cistern. To protect the building from wildfires, the entire structure is covered in raw steel that will corrode over time, forming a warm, rusty patina.

"We had to contend with wind factor exceeding 150 miles per hour, massive snow loads, extreme danger of wildfires, water shortage, a dry climate and intense year-round sun exposure," said MAAD principal architect Marc Gerritsen.

"We designed and engineered the main building to withstand these extreme conditions, so nature had plenty to say in regards to the location, form, orientation, and cladding of the massive structure. Although we have 16 hectares of land to work with, much of it is too steep, exposed, or impenetrable to build on.

"The building stands on the only location where we could carve out a large enough area without inflicting too much damage on the land. As it happens, it is also the best location we could hope for. We have a Southwest orientation that gives the building the optimum amount of sun exposure in the winter, protection from the strong easterly wind, access to water, and vast, uninterrupted views of the bright city lights, vast plains and the majestic snow-capped mountains".

A.W Lake founder Adria Lake added: "Our HQ embodies the philosophy of Resilience-based Wellness. It is built to last and thrive in any condition, not by force or concessions, but through an ongoing conversation and collaboration with nature."

The new 'Future Proof H3' wellness conference will take place at the site in February 2019.

Launched by Lake, it will provide an open platform for individuals, companies and organisations from unrelated fields of interests or industries to discuss, debate and examine contrasting ideas and form strategic alliances.

"As we enter a future where changes, disruptions, major transformations will happen faster, more abruptly and unpredictably than at any other time in the past, we must embrace progress, celebrate innovation, encourage exploration while ensuring that humanity will continue to thrive," said Lake.

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