

TFWA WE kicks off with beach cocktail and inspiring conferences

Tax Free World Association (TFWA) World Exhibition and Conference 2022 kicked off in Cannes, France on October 2 with a welcome cocktail 'Get Together' at the Carlton Beach. This marks the second annual return of the in-person event since the pandemic.

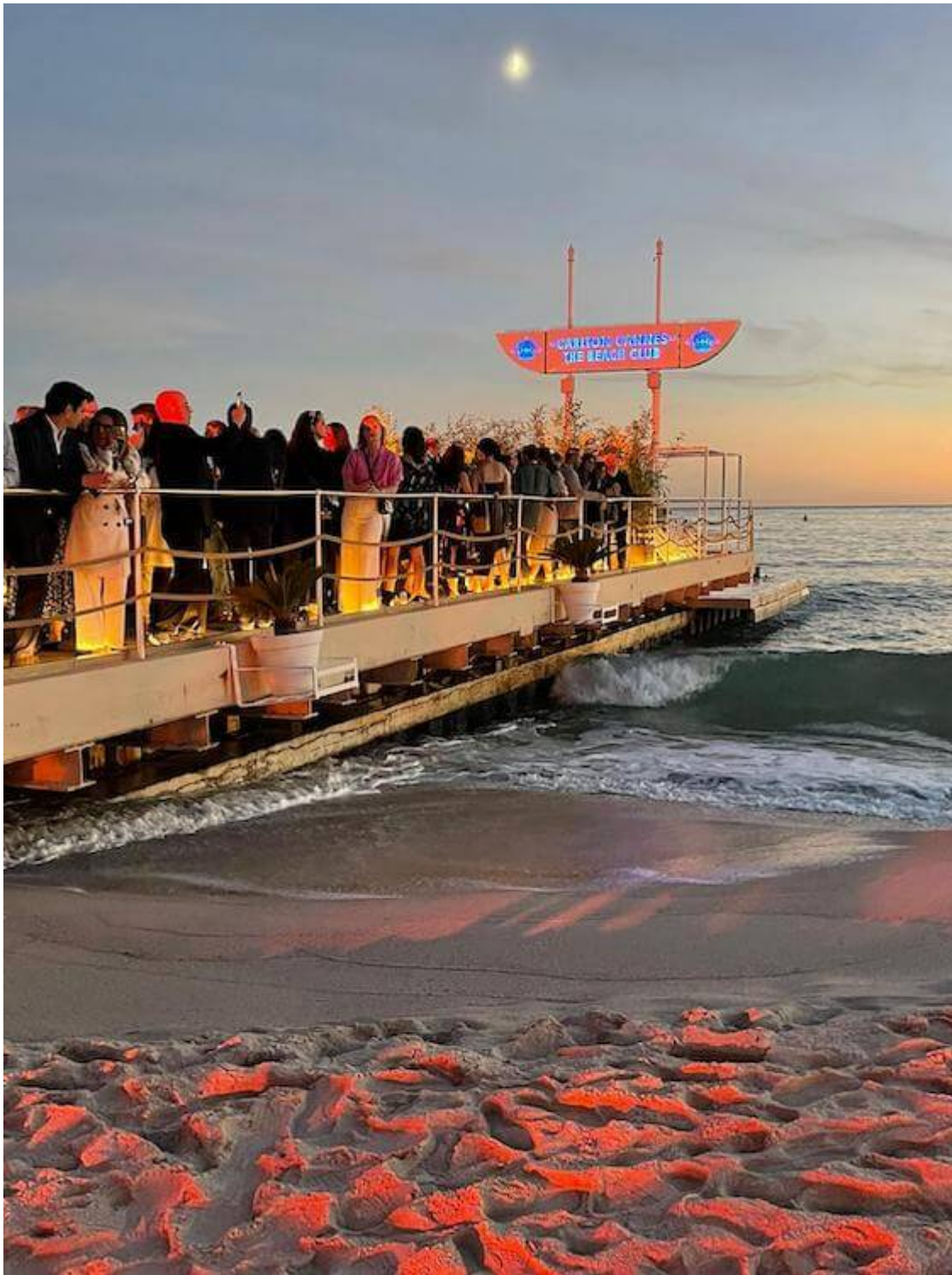
The sun was setting over the water as the industry gathered to reconnect, without masks or social distancing restrictions.

Here are some snapshots from *Global Travel Retail Magazine's* coverage of the evening:



Colleagues and friends celebrated with a reunion at Carlton Beach











Global Travel Retail Editor Laura Shirk (left) and Managing Editor Jane Hobson at the event

Conference at Palais Des Festivals

The next morning, the Conference segment of the event took place at the Grand Auditorium of the Palais Des Festivals, starting with opening words from TFWA Present Erik Juul-Mortensen and moderated by journalist Julie Mann.



TFWA Present Erik Juul-Mortensen

Juul-Mortensen discussed the changes the market is undergoing, the current state of the GTR industry and the shifts caused by COVID-19. But with more than 40 years' experience in the DF and TR industry, he closed with a positive outlook.

"I hope you enjoy the Conference and have a pleasurable, stimulated and productive week here in Cannes. All of us at TFWA are delighted to see you and grateful for your presence. The team is here to help you make the most of this event. For my part, I look forward to meeting you around the festival, or in the TFWA lounge," he says.

After this, Economic, author and broadcaster David McWilliams took the stage to share his insights on

the pressures facing the global economy – and how they will impact business in the post-COVID world. McWilliam’s gave an engaging look back at significant historical events and eras to see how they can help inform the present.



Economic, author and broadcaster David McWilliams

Albeit comedic and enthusiastic, McWilliams shared an important message on perseverance and the resilience of the industry as its leaders, stakeholders, creators and companies continue to pivot and innovate for the new world.

Raymond Cloosterman, Founder of Rituals, also took the audience on a voyage back in history looking back at what inspired the start of the wellbeing concept all the way through to its successes today. He spoke about brand-building and the importance of brands expanding their comfort zone to adapt to new customer expectations.

“In today’s hectic world, calm is the ultimate luxury,” said the Rituals video.



Raymond Cloosterman, Founder of Rituals

Then, futurist Swan Sit, discussed the technology evolution.

“During the pandemic we were scared. What’s unique about voice, is its intimacy. The intimacy of voice is exactly what we needed during the pandemic,” she explains, discussing voice-only app Clubhouse.

“The future is here. It’s about understanding people and how they use technology,” she explains. “Now I get to create content for a living.”

Sit discussed how technology kept people connected through the pandemic – and how understanding technological change and the metaverse can help businesses progress.



Swan Sit

Sit explains, Web 3 is a new internet built on a decentralized block chain. The metaverse is a virtual world that either mimics or enhances an experience. It has to be persistent even when accessing it – it still exists. Web 3 blockchain and metaverse combined create a virtual world that is not owned by a company, it is owned the people who build it and access it. The users become their own companies and stakeholders.

“Talk about disruption,” Sit says. Eventually, the world will adjust to the metaverse and its non-physical realities. This brings a whole new meaning to companies and brands understanding everything about their customers, and to customers feeling connected and important to these companies and brands.

“You have to be curious now,” Sit says.

To close the Conference, City of Cannes and TFWA officials cut the ceremonial ribbon to officially start the Global Summit.

The TFWA Exhibition Hall opens at 12noon (CET) and runs until October 6.