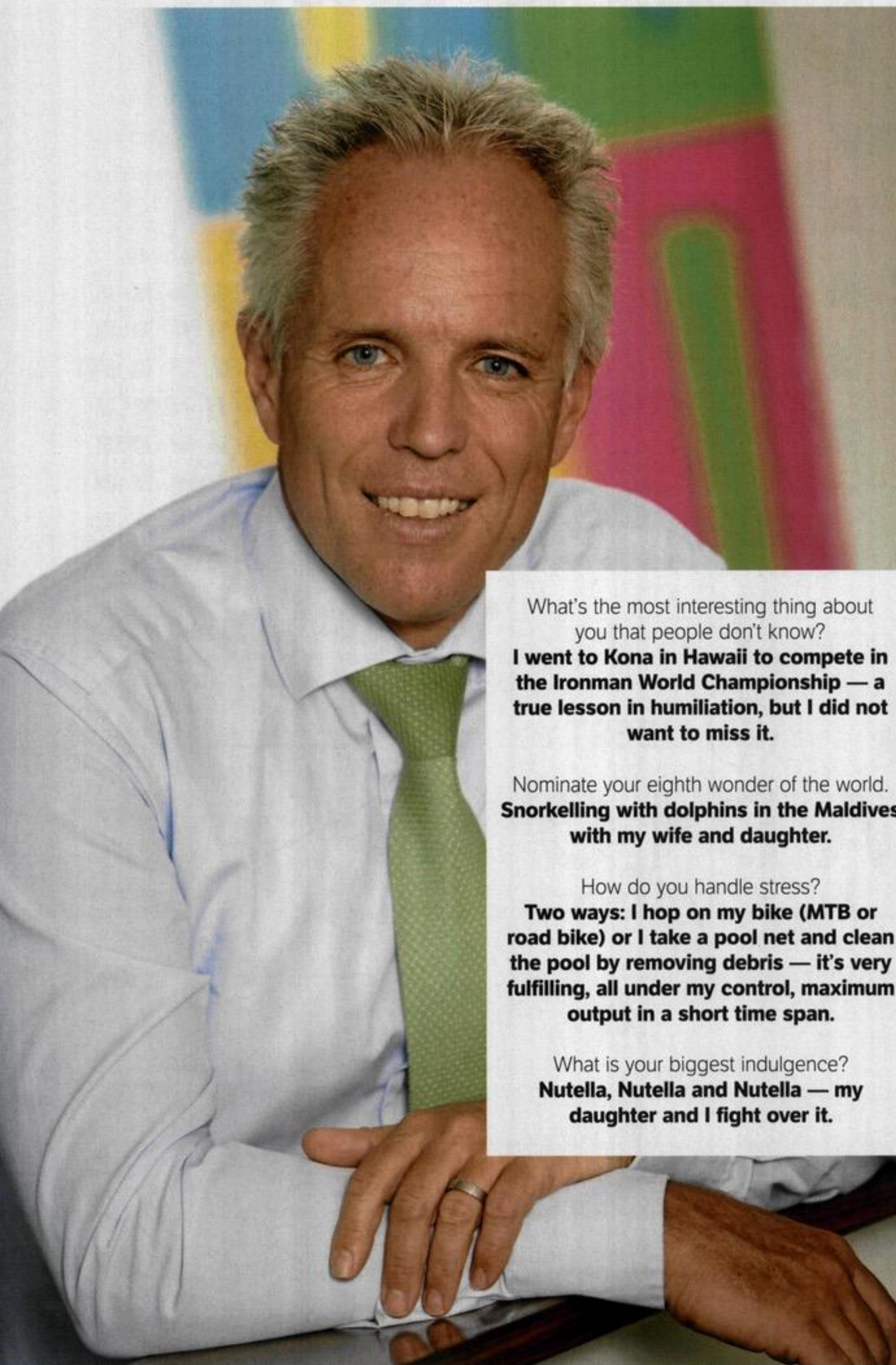


backstory

DR KARSTEN WELLNER

CEO, ASCENDIS HEALTH



What's the most interesting thing about you that people don't know?

I went to Kona in Hawaii to compete in the Ironman World Championship — a true lesson in humiliation, but I did not want to miss it.

Nominate your eighth wonder of the world.
Snorkelling with dolphins in the Maldives with my wife and daughter.

How do you handle stress?

Two ways: I hop on my bike (MTB or road bike) or I take a pool net and clean the pool by removing debris — it's very fulfilling, all under my control, maximum output in a short time span.

What is your biggest indulgence?

Nutella, Nutella and Nutella — my daughter and I fight over it.

What was your first job?

Working for a furniture chain delivering furniture while in high school (I hated it and made money) and working as a ski instructor while in university (I loved it but made no money).

Which phrase or word do you most overuse?

"Passion". As I believe very strongly in it, I probably use it too much.

What's your one top tip for doing a deal?

Be honest and walk the talk.

What is your biggest regret?

Not having any musical talent and never having learnt to play the piano.

Where were you when Nelson Mandela was released from prison?

I was working as assistant to the board of the Frankfurt- and New York-listed health-care company Fresenius in Germany.

What's the worst airport you've been in?

London City Airport on a Friday afternoon — the subway in Tokyo is less stressful.

Who is your favourite hero of fiction?

Captain Kirk from *Star Trek's Starship Enterprise*.

Tell us about a hidden gem in SA that not many people know about.

In Johannesburg: drivers training on Kyalami race track. In the Cape: a sundowner in the lounge of the Marine Hotel in Hermanus.

What's the one book everyone should read before they die?

Besides all the clever books, a very smart comic book from American cartoonist Gary Larson called *The Far Side*.

When and where are or were you happiest?

I am probably now the happiest I have ever been in my life — I have a wonderful family and lead a balanced lifestyle; those are the most important things.