



BAD SULZA IN GERMANY HOSTED THE
SECOND BISA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
MOIRA PAULUSZ REPORTS

A world of experience

The British International Spa Association (BISA) hosted its second annual conference at the Toskana Therme Spa, in the historic spa town of Bad Sulza, in Thuringia, Germany.

With more than 90 participants from six continents, the two-day conference represented an international gathering of professionals, ranging from spa owners, educators and therapists to consultants, trade experts, designers and innovators.

On the two days before and after the conference, delegates discussed wellness trends and therapies in their differing contexts; examined spa marketing and design strategies; related their personal success stories and approaches; and presented their visions for the future.

The conference itself offered a variety of experiences with a different focus for each day.

● **DAY One** offered presentations and discussions, focusing on the broader origins, culture and future potential of spas, and on the specifics of spa business, design and marketing.

● **DAY Two** offered the opportunity to gain first-hand experience of wellness and therapy offerings, ranging from aqua wellness therapy to advice for services and healing remedies.

Global trends, local strategies

Under the motto Expanding Spa Horizons, the conference capitalised on its European location by inviting international experts to offer their perspectives on spas and wellness.

Contributions ranged from an overview of European trends in spa and wellness concepts, through an examination of the changing pattern of spa services and concepts in



Europe, to New York photographer Linda Troeller's visually stunning journey to spas around the world.

As a highlight, a double session on hydrotherapy drew upon the expertise of leading German specialists in the field, and examined hydrotherapy applications in modern medicine and their role in therapy and wellness in Europe.

The afternoon session examined their integration in the service menus of luxury resort spas based upon experience in the USA, before concentrating on two specific applications of hydrotherapy in helping recovery from cancer and a practical demonstration of hydrotherapy techniques for the rehabilitation of lower back pain.

Education and standards

As part of their ongoing commitment to improving standards within the industry, BISA and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) detailed the culmination of a three-year collaboration in the development of a new certificate, which employers, trainers and colleges can use to train staff to a high level of competence.

The Professional Development Award, accredited by the SQA, is intended to help establish clear training paths and targets for schools and therapists with a view to raising standards in the emerging UK spa industry.

Special celebration

The opening of the conference coincided with the sixth anniversary of the opening of the Toskana Therme and a special celebration – the screening of the 1917 silent movie *The Water Cure* by Charlie Chaplin.

To round off the conference, a gala dinner and party were held in the historic surroundings of nearby Auerstedt Castle. With fine cuisine, a fashion show by designer Anke Hammer, and music and song, the evening entertainment was outdone only by the enthusiastic dancing of the participants.

The conference weekend coincided with the Liquid Sound Festival, a yearly 48-hour, non-stop festival of music, light and sound. It demonstrated how the spa experience can be taken a step further as a water-bound venue.

Commenting on the conference, Finders International managing director Robert Cziki said: "The conference was of particular interest to me because of my interest in the floatation concept, and, at Toskana Therme, you can see and experience the liquid sound concept, which is an inspirational combination of art, music and mineral floatation." ■

Looking ahead

This year's BISA conference will be held from 1-3 December at the Fortina Spa in Valletta, Malta. Details: BISA, www.spaassociation.org.uk