

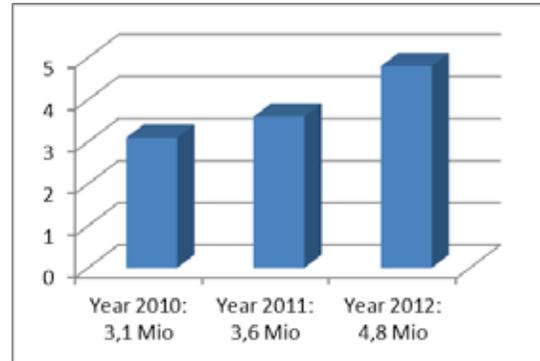


EUROPE: GERMANY

What is making news in your country when it comes to spa and wellness?

Spa & Wellness travel still on the rise

Travelers seeking Wellness continue to develop significantly in the holiday market. This was confirmed by GfK TravelScope in March 2013. From a total population of 74 million Germans, more than 50 million have taken a leisure trip, regardless of motivation and type of travel. As far as market researchers from GfK could determine, about 4 million sought Wellness (including beauty, vital and health). The share in the total holiday market has risen above average when it comes to Spa and Wellness: from 2.6% in 2010 to 3.6% in 2012. Operators of Spa resorts and hotels should be happy about loyal guests, because 71% of Wellness trips took place in their own country.



Wellness goes budget

A new trend lately arrived in Germany: “Wellness goes budget”. In spring 2013, the pilot location of A-Ja-Hotels has opened in Warnemünde, a seaside resort on the Baltic. With the new brand the inventor of AIDA and A-Rosa, Horst Rahe, wants to address new clients with his new slogan “Just like an expensive hotel, but cheap.” The entrepreneur is optimistic: “I’m sure we will be well over 80% occupancy during the first year.” Another interesting concept is the Beach Motel in St. Peter-Ording, also located on the northern coast of Germany. The slogan of the property is worth noting: “We are all not just a simple hotel - you can find that everywhere! We offer a platform for casual atmosphere and chic rooms at surf-style.” Regarding the Spa at Beach hotel, the owners can be proud to be the first hotel worldwide with a DOVE SPA.

What is happening in your country when it comes to wellness tourism and/or medical tourism?

Germany has a long tradition when it comes to cures and healing springs, tracing back to the 16th century. By 1900, Wiesbaden was already a world spa with around 136,000 visitors a year, followed by Baden-Baden with about 72,000. Today, many spa destinations mourn those glorious days, but they can be proud of their sources and effective remedies. Reinterpreted, they definitely have high potential to attract a new and younger clientele.

The move from mere pampering to a holistic Wellness understanding has been growing faster within the last decade. “Wellness as an alternative to Doctors, Drugs and Diseases,” as Wellness-Pioneer Don Ardell expressed it 35 years ago. What he is calling REAL Wellness is a concept to promote healthier, more enjoyable lifestyles. The option is not “Yes, we can” but: “We will do something for ourselves, now or never!”

Please give us one sentence to describe the latest developments in your country for each of these spa categories:

What is happening with hotel spas?

The trend now is “Go local”. Regional USP’s can easily be communicated and go along with the increasing demand on domestic spa travel. Whether it be wild herbs, goat’s milk or wine, Germany offers a treasure trove of spa treatments.

Successful providers make it clear: a core competence should be the focus, to convince and to provide a clear profile. Hop is a new regional best-seller for spa treatments in Germany. It not only has a medical effect but is suitable for many different treatments. Although Germany is known for its hops, especially in the beer world, there is a whole new usage and benefit here.

What is happening with destination spas?

Adults-only spa resorts are still not very common in German-speaking countries. But the interest of families is rising. Therefore, there is a strong need for separate spa areas to ensure perfect tranquility for adults as well as space for families with their children.

What is happening with hot springs spas?

Healing springs have a strong tradition in Germany. But cures paid by public health care have been rapidly declining over the last 20 years. Therefore, hot spring spa destinations are looking for new guests, who want to recharge batteries or do something for their health.

What has been the general attitude about investing in the spa/wellness arena in 2013?

The position of the German hospitality industry has been strengthened in European markets through the reduction of VAT for hotel accommodation since 2010 (in 23 of the 27 EU member states a reduced VAT rates for hotels and restaurants applies). More than 2 billion Euros have been invested in the industry since then, partly in Spas.

There are no official figures on how many Wellness hotels and Spa resorts there are in Germany, but they can be estimated at about 750-850. Pioneers who positioned themselves more than 20 years ago as spa hotels have focused on the weak points in their spa facilities and invested in significant improvements.

Looking back at the past four decades of spa and wellness, what would you consider “a defining moment?”

Wellness remains a megatrend, but we are at a turning point. On the one hand there is the question of sustainability and effectiveness of treatments. On the other is the issue of costs and efficiency, which has great significance for the future. Hoteliers in Germany are still very reluctant when it comes to benchmarking. We still have work ahead of us in this matter.

A very special defining moment for me was been to meet Don Ardell again on the 20th anniversary of the German Wellness Association. He impressed the audience and me with his charismatic speech. “You are never too old to learn” – we should remember that well.

SUBMITTED BY:

Hildegard Dorn-Petersen

Freelance Journalist

Editorial Team AHGZ Wellness Summit

+49.8624.4806

hdp@hotel-consult.de

www.spa-hotel-consult.de