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Toskanaworld: A Little Known Secret the Rest of the World Doesn't Know about in East Germany

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A Little Known Secret the Rest of the World Doesn't Know about in East Germany

-- Toskanaworld's CEO, Marion Schneider and Creator of Liquid Sound, Micky Remann offer life's jewels for all to enjoy

by WT Global Writer Josée-Ann Cloutier

Thuringia, the East German state has the most natural springs in all of Germany. With a long history of curative towns and medical clinics, Germany is rooted in holistic health and healing methods. The untapped potential for medical spas is an opportunity that Germany can delve into and develop further, says Marion Schneider, CEO of Toskanaworld, the umbrella holding 8 business operations, which include 3 Toskana Thermes (bath and sauna spa resorts) located in Bad Sulza, Bad Schandau and Bad Orb with its unique Liquid Sound.

A rehabilitation spa clinic, Klinikzentrum Bad Sulza is for people suffering with chronic joint, skin and respiratory conditions. The Wellness Park, in each location, offers beauty and other day spa treatments with massages for every taste including hot stone, Thai yoga, and ayurveda. Facials, fango mud baths, and more are popular here.

Il Ristorante Toskana offer local cuisine from fine dining to standard healthy options such as fish, a salad bar, soups, wholesome breads, and other special treats unique to Germany!

For long distance travelers, the guest houses and hotels offer a range of comfortable accommodations from simple to luxurious. The outstanding view of the surrounding lush green landscape is a breathtaking highlight.



The local surroundings can be explored by biking, walking or motorized tours. Nordic walking is a popular sport and fitness training offered daily along with yoga and aqua fitness classes. There are various fascinating historical museums to be seen including the saline museum in Bad Sulza where natural salts coming from the groundwater were excavated and produced.

For those interested in renown historical figures in art, music, theatre and literature, the Grimm Brothers museum near Bad Orb is worth a visit, also the famous Bauhaus museum and Goethe museum in nearby Weimar are a short train ride away from Bad Sulza.

There is an Art to Bathing at the Toskana Thermes

The art of bathing takes place in healing warm salt springs, in various sized pools including a smaller one, specially designed for children. The hot whirlpools, cold pools, and event showers with colored lights and

fragrances will get your blood circulating, leaving a refreshing feeling.



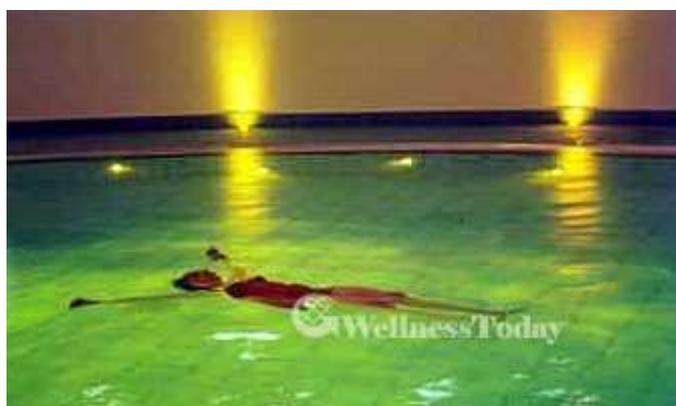
Adjoining to the indoor pool is the outdoor area where one can swim to an open sky of blue or if in the evening, to a vast view of the stars and moon. The spiral and circular design is ornamented with water fountains and jets to smooth over knotted and tight muscles.

Sauna World offers modern, high quality "saunas of the future", the lektarium, a sauna where one can read the daily newspaper or a favorite novel is nice and relaxing. A sauna bar around the corner will satisfy any thirst or hunger craving with fresh smoothies and traditional German pretzels. Every hour an Aufguss also known as the Sauna Master pours water on the sauna rocks with an aromatic essence such as birch.

Once the steam rises, the Aufguss swirls a towel around the sauna from side to side, up and down guiding the waves of hot air to seep into the pores of the crowded sauna dwellers more directly. Warning – it gets hot in the 90 degree Celsius sauna! It is better to start with a soft sauna and build your way up to the hot experience.

Liquid Sound

Internationally acclaimed Liquid Sound® is a contemporary bathing experience for relaxation, wellness and inspiration using an innovative multimedia system which allows people to immerse in a symphony of light, sound and video above and below the surface of natural salt spring water. It is also an official trademark belonging to its inventor Micky Remann.



The Full Moon Live Concerts occur monthly with a live performance by a local musician(s). Bathers float or dance in the salt brine absorbing the light rays of the moon and musical vibrations until 1am. These special events have drawn more than 100,000 visitors since 1999.

The Liquid Sound Club is a monthly gathering for the young at heart to enjoy live electronic music performed by local DJ's. However, anyone living anywhere in the world can connect to the event online via live stream visit www.liquidsoundclub.net. The evening is a mix between an upbeat and chilled out atmosphere that can be social or not, moving, dancing, floating to music surrounded by water and lights.

Experiencing both events felt extraordinary to be rippling with the water in a spacious dome radiating soft interchanging lights of purple, green, blue--unlike anything I've ever done in reality. Perhaps, the only time has been in dreams, experiencing this in my mind's eye. Liquid Sound for me is an ultimate antidote to stress, where I can let all mental and body tension go in the water.

The musician Ludwig Novak from Berlin played a fine mix of live piano that touched a feeling in my heart

– awakening it. A mix of electronic beats, meditative Tibetan chanting and other worldly rhythms offered a balanced, restful, and uplifting evening. The Liquid Sound Club gathered about 300 young bathers, and music enthusiasts at the Bad Orb location. I met the young DJ's at the Bad Sulza location, as they displayed their skill and hipness for all to enjoy-- an evening of full sensory sound and body waves.

Marion Schneider, CEO, Toskanaworld

I have the great privilege to spend some time with Marion Schneider during a six week internship at Toskanaworld, where I'm learning as much as I can about Toskanaworld, as an out of the ordinary world example in what is possible to create and operate in the wellbeing industry that is more readily accessible to the masses.

Mrs. Schneider is sincerely kind and generous, radiating great care and concern. I feel important and well cared for in her presence. It's not enough to write an article about this very engaged and active being— she certainly deserves a book as she has accomplished a great deal by benefitting many. Other titles she holds are President, Co-founder, Writer, Historian, Chairwoman, Advisory board member, Artist, mother, wife, and daughter. With 32 ongoing projects, she places her family and friends as a priority by ensuring that quality time is spent with them as it makes everyone, including herself happy.



iã CEO Marion Schneider

Here is a snap shot of her accomplishments

- President of the international children's aid organisation Ourchild (www.ourchild.de) which is supporting projects for children in five different countries.
- Supporter of the Jewish Heritage project that cares for historical sites such as synagogues and prisoner of war camps where families commemorate their lost loved ones. She also educates young people by visiting schools.
- Co-founder of the state-approved School for Physical and Massage Therapists in Bad Sulza (www.schulewfp.de)
- Chair of the British International Spa Association (www.spaassociation.org.uk) from 2007 to 2011
- Advisory board-member of the Corporate Health Improvement Program (CHIP), University of Arizona (<http://www.integrativemedicine.arizona.edu/chip/>), of The American Spa Therapy and Education Certification Council (ASTECC), Florida (www.astecc.com), as well as of the Vision Spa Retreat, Missouri (<http://www.visionsparetreat.com/advisors-vsr.html>) and the Hot Wells Institute, Texas.
- Together with the New York photographer Linda Troeller Marion published the book "The Erotic Lives of Women" in 1999 (Scalo, Basel/New York) – see www.eroticalivesofwomen.com – which is accompanied by an exhibition first shown in Salzburg, later in Amsterdam, Berlin and Weimar and a CD with the same name.
- Marion Schneider's biography is in the Marquis "Who is Who in the World" and the index of "2000 Outstanding Intellectuals of the 21st Century" at the International Biographical Centre in Cambridge. In recognition of her contribution and services to medium- sized business, Marion was appointed to the Hessian-Thuringian State Council for Economic Affairs www.bvmw.de

<http://www.marionschneider.net>

How does she accomplish all of this and maintain a sane, healthy lifestyle? Coming from a farming family, a strong work ethic was instilled at a very young age. She witnessed and experienced what it means to survive during a harsh and impoverished time period. Her secret she says is to always say yes by being open to whatever arises and to see where it can potentially lead to. This attitude is reflected in the atmosphere that Toskanaworld reflects in the physical spaciousness, accommodating staff and generous visual aesthetics.

Her father, a pioneer in Germany's sauna and solar equipment business, was one of the first to distribute saunas and solar machines to retailers. Being raised in the health industry and failed attempt in taking over the family business, the foundation for Toskanaworld to arise was set when she and husband, Klaus Dieter Boehm bought Klinikzentrum Bad Sulza and developed the rehabilitation clinic. It was not smooth sailing in building and developing Toskanaworld to where it is today. Many challenges arose, and storms weathered out including deals falling through, policy changes, industry and market changes, and two liquidity gaps. She says that she never considered giving up—her response, how could she?



When asked what drives her in an interview with Spa Business in 2010, she responded "to see people in pain is one of the worst things I can imagine. To help change that is one of the most satisfying experiences I know."

From where does she attest and draw her inspiration from? Seemingly pleased by this enquiry, there was a pause, and it was as if a flood gate had opened. As a historian she draws her inspiration from history. As a linguist she draws her inspiration from language. As an artist, she draws her inspiration from art and music. She used to play piano and sing, which she does not do so much anymore. Tchaikovsky, the Requiem of Mozart, Carmina Burana, and Mussorgsky are some of her favorites.

In literature, mythology, fairytales, classic Greece, writings by Tolstoy, Isabelle Allen de Chile's the House of Ghosts, and Dostoevsky, the Demons have inspired her work. The wisdom in fairytales she says offer pure, clear wisdom by pointing out what is right and wrong. She finds inspiration in beauty, where finding it and recognizing it is energizing, she says. As a human being, she draws inspiration from nature and the forest, other human beings and animals. When she's not working, she enjoys writing the most and walking but not alone so much but in company.

Toskanaworld Business Talk with CEO, Marion Schneider

1. What does Toskanaworld have to offer?
Toskanaworld offers health and happiness—with good service. It's a place to heal and relax.
2. What do you think is the biggest challenge in the wellness and spa industry today?
The biggest challenge is in finding qualified staff that are dedicated, and then retaining them. Another big challenge is ensuring everything is efficient and sustainable. Mrs. Schneider's main focus for Toskanaworld this year is to build a stronger more economically sustainable system.
3. Where is your favorite spa?
Toskana Terme Bad Sulza, because it brings together the old and young, rich and poor, east and west and the national and international.
4. What is most inspiring about your work as CEO of Toskanaworld?
Healing and making people feel better.
5. Any present or future developments you wish to share?
There are 3 Toskanaworld projects currently being developed in Germany.

6. What makes Toskanaworld a successful business?
Having a strong team of leaders who can work together is very important. We offer a variety of income streams to reduce the risk, even though it is expensive—it is better to have more security by diversifying.
- 7- What is your advice to someone coming into the spa industry?
Go for quality, and never stop learning!

Marion Schneider's Words of Wisdom

Change takes time, watch it grow.

It's a risk to not take a risk.

The most important ability as a business leader is to be able to motivate your staff. You do this by sharing with them who you are and being clear about what you want.

"I normally like everyone. Those who harm others like murderers, it is better to try to understand rather than judge them without knowing their story. Understanding teaches love, and one can forgive."

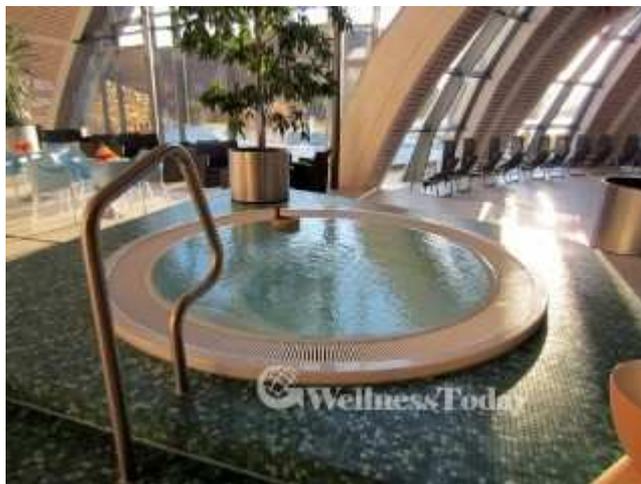
Advice to someone coming into the spa industry: Go for quality and never stop learning!

Toskanaworld Quick Facts

- 340 employees in total.
- 8 businesses within Toskanaworld.
- 40% of the guests in Bad Sulza are regulars.
- Survived two liquidity gaps

Toskanaworld Success Recipe

- Ingredients
- Diversify to reduce risk – even though it is more expensive, it has been the most economically sustainable.
- A strong team of leaders
- Never give up!



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