

## AWARENESS OF SPA HEALTH BENEFITS INCREASES

## BISA 2005

## International Perspectives for the British Spa Market

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Recent market trend analysis confirms that the UK spa market is undergoing a period of increasing buoyancy. Operators predict a continued sales increase of 15-20% in the next few years and consumer popularity of spa holidays is increasing rapidly as the awareness of health benefits of spas increases. Yet, in comparison to much of the rest of the world, the UK spa holiday market is still in its infancy. Research points to two indicators. Firstly, spa therapy and enjoyment is not anchored in the British culture in the same way as it is in other parts of the world. Secondly, there is a blurred understanding as to what constitutes spa therapy or a spa holiday – some consumers perceive spa as exclusive, others view spa therapy only as beauty treatment. As the spa market in the UK expands, so too does the variety of market services offered – and the quality of these services.

With this in mind, BISA, the British International Spa Association, was set up by professionals in the field as a non-profit association in order to establish minimum standards and quality of service to the Spa Industry and to promote awareness of the benefits of spa therapies. The association promotes standards in two ways: education and training to improve the skills of spa personnel, and an accreditation system for spa facilities. In less than five years BISA has established itself as an education platform for the industry with a Diploma in Spa Therapies programme validated by the Scottish Qualifications Authority and an accreditation system expressed as a simple system of wave gradings in which the number of waves indicate, at-a-glance, the range of services and facilities available. Although BISA is primarily aimed at the spa industry, spa therapists, spa training establishments and spa outlets, the results of BISA's training programme and accreditation also provide orientation for the consumer. The training programme and wave gradings provide an instantly recognisable symbol of quality for consumers.

After a successful inaugural conference in October 2004 in Glasgow and curation of the spa seminar programme at this year's Professional Beauty exhibition in London, BISA's next annual conference will focus on the international perspective and will take place from 25th-26th November 2005 at one of BISA's increasing number of international members, the Toskana Therme in Bad Sulza, Germany (5-wave graded). Catering for both mind and body, the conference will consist of a theoretical day with lectures and a practical day, giving participants the



opportunity not only to discuss new business ideas and strategies, but also to learn about and gain first-hand experience of wellness and therapy offerings. Speakers will examine not only new trends, developments and opportunities in spa marketing, spa design and spa business organisation but also reflect upon the origins, context and history of spa and their potential in today's cultural climate. The location of the conference, in a country which has a rich tradition of spa therapy, is an opportunity to reflect upon different approaches, cultures and political conditions for spa around the world and to examine synergies and relevance in home markets.



Bad Sulza is itself a spa town with natural spring saline waters once used for harvesting salt from, and much of the historic salt extraction machinery is still visible, some even still in operation today as an inhalatorium. A guided tour on Wednesday 23rd November will examine these and the use of salt in more detail. A further pre-conference event (24th November) examines the nature behind the buzzword "hydrotherapy", its history and context and its application in medicine and therapy, concluding with a provocative look at its role in therapy and wellness today. An excursion to hydrotherapy facilities nearby and the opportunity for hands-on application will also be available. Last but not least, the conference location itself is also the venue of a unique occurrence, the Liquid Sound Festival, which coincides with the BISA conference. Developed in Bad Sulza, Liquid Sound® is the experience of bathing in light and music and opens up new visiting opportunities and operating models for thermal baths. Spa owners and guests will be able to see for themselves how the Toskana Therme can also function as a water-bound venue for music.

The BISA 2nd Annual Conference and associated pre and post conference activities offers spa professionals and operators as well as all who are interested the opportunity to broaden their horizons, to exchange experiences and to learn from one another at several levels: informative, practical and with luck also inspirational!

BISA 2nd Annual Conference, Bad Sulza, Germany  
25th-26th November 2005 with pre and post conference activities from 23rd-27th November.  
[www.internationalspa.org](http://www.internationalspa.org) ■

*Marion Schneider, together with Klaus Dieter Böhm owns and manages the medical clinic Klinikzentrum Bad Sulza and also manages the neighbouring Toskana Therme Bad Sulza and Hotel an der Therme, the Toskana Therme in Bad Schandau and the Liquidrom Therme in Berlin. Together with Micky Remann she owns TTS Product & Service GmbH, which manufactures and sells medical equipment and cosmetics particularly for the chronically ill, as well as for Liquid Sound ([www.liquidsound.com](http://www.liquidsound.com))*

*Her personal goal is the promotion of preventative and rehabilitative therapy to a key role in medicine and politics, as this is not only socially but also economically meaningful and necessary. To this end she publishes articles, and lectures and contributes at conferences and congresses.*