

EUROPE: HUNGARY

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

The sector is constantly growing, and the government has plans to invest in the health industry. We have almost finished the modernization of our traditional thermal baths, and Hungary has many well designed new indoor spas. Budapest has been rediscovered by European spa tourists.

2. With the buzz about wellness technologies, how do you see spa and wellness establishments using wellness technologies in your country in the future?

There is growing emphasis on the importance of medical aspects of spa treatments, and an evidence-based medicine approach has begun to evolve. Combining this with local traditions will deeply influence the future of the spa industry in Central-Eastern Europe. Currently our hotels use more and more international spa products, but domestic product developments also exist.

3. When it comes to wellness tourism, what is happening in your country?

We have fewer German tourists these days, but the number of tourists from Great Britain, Poland and neighboring countries is increasing. Most wellness hotels have more domestic costumers than foreigners.

4. Please provide one sentence that best describes the latest developments in your country for each of these categories:

Hotel spas: Eger has a magnificent hotel spa, and the hotels of Budapest are increasingly offering splendid spas as part of their overall packages.

Destination spas: Demjén is a magnificent thermal bath and spa built in caves under a hill, very close to the fantastic, Pamukkale-like salt hill thermal bath in Egerszalok and Eger, with its turkish bath and two types of thermal waters.

Hot springs spas: Almost every traditional hot spring now has a new indoor spa building. Wellness living communities: Not yet widespread, but there are rumblings in Budapest about this groundbreaking notion.

Corporate or employee wellness programs: Apart from international companies this is not yet widespread phenomenon, but there is a strong wellness program for workers within the national health insurance system.

5. Fast-forward five years and tell us what you think the spa and wellness industry in your country will look like.

Based on the last 10 years of intensive developments and Hungary's deep-rooted spa traditions, it is not unrealistic to predict a doubling of revenue for the spa and wellness sector in Hungary. It will likely consist of three main parts: an increase in the number of main-stream wellness treatments for domestic costumers; the development of medical wellness packages for foreigners, and developing new approaches that combine our traditional treatments with modern medical knowledge. Hungary will ever again regain the preeminent position it held in the first half of the twentieth century as one of the market leaders in spa, though it can still become a respected and important modern spa destination.

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