



## Sauna Aufguss – Hot Doesn't Get Any Cooler Than This!

*Breakout Showcase and Q&A*

### Moderator:

Lasse Eriksen, Development Manager, Nordic Hotels & Resorts - Farris Bad, Norway

### Participants:

Rob Keijzer, Sauna Aufguss World Champion, Netherlands

Lay Pang Ong, Sauna Aufguss Professional, Danish Sauna Association, Malaysia

The Session began with Lasse Eriksen explaining the passion of the sauna aufguss masters and the true goal of sharing the wonderful experiences we all feel in these rituals. Introducing Lay Pang Ong and Rob Keijzer as two of the worlds most renowned Sauna aufguss profiles to share their thoughts and knowledge with the GWS.

Here is the topics that the session was enlightening;

- History of the sauna aufguss and its connection to the traditional rituals
- Classic aufguss with performance
- Show aufguss with performance
- The numbers from the Aufguss spas
- The saunas and the future

### **History & development of the sauna aufguss.**

First Lasse introduced the history by understanding the sauna culture through its history, core purpose and wide historical and traditional use and ending with the new and entertaining show aufguss. By having a profound knowledge and respect to the Sauna and its many uses the explanation of the Sauna Aufguss being the most famous German word inside a sauna we immediately understand that this ritual is gratefully appreciated by millions of people using the sauna regularly in central and northern Europe.

By introducing the development from the beginning of the classic aufguss with silence and only water/steam we see the connection to the core elements of the earth, to todays rapidly evolving show aufguss with, beautiful scents, music, outfits, movements, stories and mesmerizing towel techniques.

In 2005 two Aufguss Masters in Italy performed for the first time in South Tyrol an aufguss as it is known today. Denmark and Italy where in forefront of the aufguss

development with music, scents, lights and costumes along with the beautiful towel techniques and soon after this the first world championships were held in Austria in 2009, where sauna guests and a special jury would vote for the best sauna aufguss performance.

However, while the aufguss is performed, the focus should remain on the guests' well-being and relaxation.

- Evolved from the Finnish sauna steaming Løyly in Germany around 1947 & Austria 1950.
- Show aufguss started 2005, Denmark & Italy
- First world championships 2009 with 200 guests 20 participants 3 countries
- 2015-16 with 5000 guests 70-90 participants from 20 nations and expanding rapidly

The Classic aufguss was shown by Rob Keijzer with the music, scents, calm breeze and hypnotizing towel movements to give the audience a sense of the authentic and pure sauna ritual performed by a professional.

Following the calm traditional aufguss Lay Pang Ong shared with the audience the show feeling with more intensity, story of the Olympics, outfit, smells and flags to grasp the audience and bring them into the story.

**What do the numbers say?**

By gathering information from the connected spas and hotels in who has Sauna aufguss as the core activity in the spas the all interesting numbers and figures are presented to enlighten the Sauna aufguss positive effects on many segments.

**Employee happiness:**

- Employee happiness increases as they get more contact with guests, personal connection to the guests and more attentive of the spa
- Younger employees shows significant interest of the aufguss as its new and fresh way of contributing to the total spa experience by performing. We see the younger generation of spa workers actually get more confidence and awareness by performing sauna rituals.
- Courses/schooling to understand sauna better and title as sauna master gives the employee better knowledge, pride and commitment to work.
- Promotes creativity and self-awareness by promoting the employee to create their own rituals, with theme, music, smells etc.
- More exiting work day with many possibilities. And more different tasks gives more positive challenges and excitement during a work day.
- By working inside sauna, the health benefits are also granted to the sauna masters, so sick spa employees has decreased by 15-35% (varies from country of effect)
- Widen the network and new connections around the globe of sauna masters makes them feel a part of an extra family and they get more connected and true to work. You can do aufguss everywhere there is a sauna....even Kenya

## Spa

By entertaining, teaching and lifting the spirit of the guests in the sauna we see along with all the physical and mental benefits that shorter rituals are much more likely for first timers to attend, rather than the longer traditional sauna rituals.

- Approx. 60% of spa hotel guest attend sauna aufguss at spas who has professional sauna aufgussmasters and the sauna aufguss is the core rituals in the spa. Dayspas has higher approx. 65-70%
- Amazingly 98% of the guests from loopon customer survey are promoters after attending sauna aufguss, 2% are neutral. 0 detractors
- Increase of membership to the spas (local guests) is also increasing exponentially with the amount of aufgusses offered as we see members get “addicted” to the sauna rituals and arrive at the spas in time for special rituals etc.
- Sauna aufguss is the spas opportunity to educate and inform the guest to spa etiquette and rules of the sauna and spa in a positive, attentive and informative way. Makes the spa cleaner, more quiet and respectful.
- Conference and spa combination has increased rapidly with the sauna aufguss as it’s a fantastic event to share as the sauna master can create a ritual relevant to the companies’ wishes/story and the positivity of sharing experiences strengthens the spas importance in the conference sector. Conference bookings has increased from approx. 5% to 15-20% at several hotels with aufguss as the main spa activity. This leading to higher NPS, revenue and re-bookings also privately.
- By having a professional sauna master hosting the ritual, we see guests feel safe and ask questions after the rituals. They dare to try it out and by good safety and training we see the guests and their well-being.
- Possibility to gather many guests inside the sauna in one session, for better area control for spas who are challenged with space and movements of guests while inside the spa.
- Makes the spa experience better for those not attending the rituals as the spa gets less crowded and more spacious. Win-win
- Increase sales of sauna related products, increasing total spa shop revenue with 10-20%
- By having shorter (time) rituals we see increase in sales of beverage revenue of approx. 10% (30% at some German spas), after aufguss sessions. Guests get thirsty.
- By show aufguss/events the average cost is 10Euro pr. Show pr. Guest. Packaged like 50 Euro – 5/6 tickets. Within a 20 ppl. Sauna that’s 200Euro in 15 min.
- Total time of sauna master is approx. 30-40 min prep, show, clean, shower. Other costs are very little as most use is ice, essential oils and water.

### **The event saunas and the future of sauna aufguss.**

Saunas built today for spas with aufguss as the main activities are booming in Europe at the moment. Saunas with optimal, lights, fire, special ovens, screens, sound

systems and perfect spacing for the aufguss master to swing their towels and perform their shows are opening rapidly.

The Event saunas today are approximately hosting 70 to 100 people, but event saunas of up to 200 people are already in use in Germany. 300 seater saunas are under construction in Poland and several grand size saunas will pop up with the sauna aufguss in mind.

The sauna aufguss is the perfect activity for conference groups and the expanding demand from companies to present team building/experiences the aufguss has a significant positive impact on the overall feedback from the companies. Hence the "Business should be pleasure". This marked is a big potential revenue and NPS enhancer.

As the future and the sauna aufguss constantly evolves and has evolved so rapidly in just the last 4 years, we predict a broader use of the saunas in spas and the creation of many more professional sauna masters as host of this profession. Almost all spas have several saunas, but few are using them to connect with their guest, educate the guest, improve the experience of the spa, having sauna professionals in the spa for the guests and/or even create something new.

Anything is possible and with the young generation developing the aufguss of tomorrow we feel confident that the old tradition of the sauna culture will use its roots to grow new branches of free spirited, fresh and youthful energy within the 1000`s of year old sauna tradition.. The Aufguss WM family are welcoming all new sauna friends with an open towel.

The session ended with the audience learning towel techniques by the world champion Rob Keijzer.

**Submitted by:**

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