

CHILLED OUT *THRILLS*

Combined waterparks and spas offer year-long recreation and the ultimate playground for the whole family. Helen Patenall, editor of *Attractions Management Handbook*, rounds up some of the most inspired ventures from around the globe

Alpamare Scarborough has brought a new lease of life to the seaside town with its cutting-edge waterpark and spa

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Guests can kick back and relax in the iodine infinity pool after a Snow Storm water ride

ALPAMARE SCARBOROUGH, UK

The seaside town of Scarborough on England's north-east coast is being transformed into a year-round destination with this summer's opening of the five-acre (two-hectare) Alpamare Scarborough.

The £14m (€16.4m, US\$18.3m) alpine-inspired facility operated by Alpamare and supplied by ProSlide aims to attract around half a million visitors a year. Alpamare already operates four attractions in Europe, including Splash&Spa Tamaro (shown opposite).

Black Hole is the steepest and fastest slide on the waterpark with an 11-metre plunge, while Cresta Run offers mat

racing. The double-float 116-metre Olympic Run and the four-person gravity-defying Snow Storm ride with its sudden 14-metre drop and 'weightless' effect are ideal shared experiences.

The indoor waterpark boasts a 480sq m (5,170sq ft) wave pool and an AquaPlay area for younger children featuring spray jets, tipping cones, water guns, a dual slide and a giant overhead tipping bucket. Outside is a 200sq m (2,150sq ft) garden pool heated to 35°C, with bubble recliners and whirlpools and a 170sq m (1,830sq ft) iodine infinity pool with massage jets and bubble benches overlooking the town's North Bay.

Next January, a 900sq m (9,690sq ft) wellness spa opening on the second floor will offer more relaxing elements. It will be divided into two zones: a Turkish-inspired Haman zone and an alpine-inspired zone.

The Turkish Haman zone will feature a 65°C steam bath called a 'Sogukluk', a purifying Turkish bath known as a 'Binguil', a 'Rhassoul' mud bath, and a very hot pool complete with underwater music called a 'Sicalick'.

The alpine spa zone will have a 65°C Himalayan rock salt sauna, an 85°C pine sauna and a 75°C clay sauna, as well as an ice fountain and aromatic chroma-aromatherapy showers. ■

SPLASH&SPA TAMARO, SWITZERLAND

Designed by architect Marco Giussani, the Splash&Spa Tamaro waterpark come wellness centre at the foot of Mount Tamaro in Ticino cleverly combines recreational fun with hydrothermal experiences.

"We've achieved our goal of creating one of the most unique indoor facilities in Europe with Splash&SPA Tamaro," says Anton Hoefter, owner of Alpamare and MD of the facility.

"We are proud to say that Splash&SPA Tamaro is today the only venue able to offer thrilling fun, leisure and wellness for the whole family in one complex."

Accommodating adrenalin-pumping waterslides supplied by ProSlide Technologies, Dome of Fun does what it says on the tin, with its five thrilling waterslides. There's the two-person Mania dark ride with explosions; the high-speed, pitch-dark Black Night mat ride; the maze-like Tunnel of Horror full of twists and turns; the super-fast Wash Machine slide ending in a swirling water bowl; and if you can still stand upright, the four-person Gravity Killer.



The Dome of Wellness is split into three themed zones: hot, warm and relax



The complex offers thrilling fun, leisure and wellness for the whole family in one place

Sitting at the heart of the 14,000sq m (15,694sq ft) waterpark complex, Dome of Leisure offers slightly calmer activities with its 400sq m (4,305sq ft) wave pool and 18-metre (60-foot) wide beach; a waterplay zone with sprinklers and water spouts; and an outdoor area with a swimming pool, a sun terrace and a 34°C panoramic pool.

After all that exertion, the 3,000sq m (32,290sq ft) Schletterer-designed Dome of Wellness is likely welcomed by visitors aged 14+ looking to chill out for the rest of their stay. Split into three themed zones (hot, warm and relax), Sauna World houses 'hot' indoor and outdoor saunas, such as the 85°C chestnut wood sauna, 65°C Himalayan rock salt sauna, 75°C clay sauna and 95°C outdoor garden sauna, as well as a 34°C iodine saltwater outdoor pool to rejuvenate the body.

The 'warm' Hammam Ritual Zone offers steamrooms with a traditional hammam ceremony of steam and heat treatments, body scrub massages, detoxification and cooling pools to balance body and soul.

Offering the third theme of 'relax' is the Beauty Zone with six treatment rooms including a consultation lounge. A large domed relaxation lounge has panoramic views of the nearby mountain range.

Dome of Wellness has a special light, sound and aromatherapy concept, and all spa equipment is supplied by Inviion – sister company to Schletterer.

Alpamare's MD, Stefan Anselm, who helped bring the project to life, says "We have this architecture, which is magical. Inside, you feel like a king when you arrive. You think, 'Oh, wow, look how big this place is – it's crazy'. We have the best water slides, excellent attractions, and 250 different jets and massage attractions in the pools, some invented ourselves, because we wanted to give people a very special feeling".

At night all three domes are illuminated by a Cirque du Soleil lighting designer. "It's like a Disney parade at night – it's phenomenal. It's like a fireworks show. The cupolas and the water slides are our best billboard," adds Anselm. ■

FEATURE

HAKONE KOWAKIEN YUNNESSUN, JAPAN

The Hakone Kowakien Yunessun thermal spa facility on Kanagawa Prefecture, just south of Tokyo, is split into two zones.

Guests can choose to relax au naturel in thermal waters within the traditional hot spring zone – known as Mori No Yu – or they can experience the more quirky Yunessun spa zone, where an element of fun has been injected into the hot springs. This zone requires guests to wear swimsuits, further upping its appeal to families and mixed-sex groups.

“Both a hot spring spa resort and a water amusement park, we’re proud

to offer a unique blend of traditional Japanese onsen (hot springs) and water activities at Hakone Kowakien Yunessun.

“Hakone (a mountainous town known for its hot springs) is considered to be the most popular onsen resort area in Japan, known for its stunning views of Mt Fuji and natural beauty. Our spa takes full advantage of the abundance of high-quality local hot springs to give our guests an unforgettably relaxing experience,” says Kiyoshi Sakamoto, general manager of the Yunessun spa zone.

Fun outdoor elements in the Yunessun zone include Rodeo Mountain’s three waterslides featuring the extra thrill

of heated water, complimented by the steaming hot Dragon Waterfall and Cave Bath. Inside, the zone’s largest pool, called God’s Aegean Sea, features three islands and water massaging devices. Other pools offer off-the-wall elements such as the rather unique Japanese Sake Spa with its huge cask constantly dripping Japanese sake (beneficial for the skin) into the spa pool, while the Green Tea Spa has a large teapot as its centrepiece and is rich in the powerful anti-oxidant properties of catechin. Or you can luxuriate in red wine at the Wine Spa, decorated with a huge wine bottle and regular pouring performances!

Yunessun has a unique blend of relaxation and water recreation for people of all ages

“We provide a wide variety of spa resort services and water attractions for the entire family within the Yunessun zone. From spa facilities reminiscent of ancient Roman baths, traditional Japanese baths made entirely of cypress, baths filled with sake, tea, and coffee, to fun and wild themed pools and water attractions, Yunessun has a unique blend of relaxation and water recreation for people of all ages,” adds Sakamoto.

For a more traditional Japanese hot spring experience, the neighbouring Mori No Yu hot springs zone is sectioned into private areas for women and men so guests can enjoy the more traditional practice of relaxing in the nude. ■



The Coffee Spa contains real coffee made with hot spring water for recovery of fatigue, with an aroma that wakes up the senses, and the added drama of regular pouring coffee performances



Tekapo Springs is true to the New Zealand ethos of combining a relaxing soak in a thermal pool with a wild outdoor activity

TEKAPO SPRINGS, NEW ZEALAND

Tekapo Springs Glacial Spa sits on the shores of Lake Tekapo, tucked under Mount John, on the country’s Southern Island. It’s USP? A combination of year-long recreational and relaxation facilities promising “the ultimate experience for the whole family”.

Shaped in the form of the region’s Ohau, Pukaki and Tekapo lakes, three tiered, 40sq m (430sq ft) thermal pools featuring massage jets and fountains are heated from 33-39°C in the summer to 36-40°C in the winter. The resort’s 80°C sauna and steamroom sit alongside an 8-12°C plunge pool, while a day spa offers massages, facials, manicures and pedicures in its four treatment rooms.

Local greywacke rock and native alpine plants complete the natural ambiance of

the landscaped spa zone, complementing the breathtaking scenery, while private thermal pools are soon to follow as part of the resort’s development plan.

But this is New Zealand, so what’s on offer to counterbalance all this tranquility. Visitors seeking a bit of storm before the calm, or perhaps families with active youngsters in tow, can still get their thrills hurtling down the three-lane Trippo inflatable waterslide during the summer months (December to February), or wait until winter when natural and manmade snow transform it into a tobogganing park. The colder months also lend themselves to the outdoor skating rink.

More recent active additions to Tekapo Springs include an 80sq m (860sq ft) children’s aqua play area with water jets, funnels and geysers as well as a 130sq m (1,400sq ft)

children’s beach-access pool, while the 80sq m (860sq ft) swimming pool offers an adults-only domain.

After a day of thrills, spills and lounging around in warm thermal waters, the Tekapo Springs Tahr Bar & Café meets year-round needs with al fresco dining during the warmer months and a cosy open fire in the winter.

“Integrating recreation and relaxation is one of our key elements at Tekapo Springs. Combining the excitement of the ice rink and snow tube park with the calming nature of the hot pools is a unique experience that we’ve created.

“There’s nothing better than rewarding yourself with a soak in the pools overlooking the lake after a day full of high-energy activities,” says Jennifer Heuett, Tekapo’s online media and marketing specialist. ■



Thermal water heated by an active volcano is combined with Costa Rica's largest waterpark

KALAMBU HOT SPRINGS WATER PARK, COSTA RICA

Kalambo Hot Springs Water Park in the Arenal region perfectly integrates the health benefits of ground-sourced thermal spring water heated by an active volcano into the infrastructure of Costa Rica's largest waterpark. The winning combination of thermal pools and water slides makes this hydrothermal attraction an ideal family destination.

Thrill-seekers can team up with three other riders for the largest slide – the 41-foot (12.5-metre) high and 374-foot long Mammoth water tunnel. Or they can climb to the top of the 35-foot (10.6-metre) high Triple Slide – launch pad for the smaller Cyclone, Tornado and Avalanche waterslides.

The multiple-levelled interactive water play zone is equipped with water cannons, slides and a giant tipping bucket, but offers more than the usual aquatic zone with the bonus of its thermal water.

After a full day of activity with the family, the majestic and cloud-wrapped Arenal Volcano offers a magical backdrop for a relaxing soak in the healing and curative waters of the thermal family pool, or there's always the adults-only thermal pool with its swim-up bar for those seeking a more grown up escape.

Next year will see more volcanic hot springs, a lazy river and a wave pool. ■

After a full day of activity with the family, the majestic and cloud-wrapped Arenal Volcano provides a magical backdrop



Sixteen waterslides and a 560sq m wave pool will keep the whole family entertained

THERME BUCURESTI, ROMANIA

Romania is the latest attraction on the recreational thermal map with the opening of its Therme Bucuresti tropical complex in January.

A colossal 4,000 guests to the new facility can simultaneously enjoy the mineral-rich thermal waters, spa facilities or waterslides housed inside a huge dome with a retractable roof while being surrounded by the country's largest botanical gardens.

The inside air temperature of the 30,000sq m (322,900sq ft) complex is heated to 30°C, while the thermal waters – extracted at 80°C – are treated and cooled to a constant 33°C. The heat of the thermal waters even generates enough energy for the complex to operate self-sufficiently for 320 days of the year.

Active elements aimed at the city's family sector include eight 33°C swimming pools, a 560sq m (6,028sq ft) wave pool, and 16 waterslides – seven slides for children and a Racer slide.

More chilled out options for guests looking for a more relaxed visit include three massage rooms, six themed saunas, and a steam sauna where rituals such as body wraps and peelings are offered. Each sauna has its own design,



The air temperature of Therme is heated to 30°C while the thermal waters are cooled to a constant 33°C for complete relaxation

aroma and sound system and overall can host up to 300 visitors at any one time.

"We are honoured and proud to open this complex, for which we employed the experience and imagination of a team of specialists from three countries: Romania, Austria and Germany," said Hubert Spegel, CEO of Vienna-based A-Heat Group AG, which owns Therme

Bucuresti in addition to three established thermal parks in Germany.

Stelian Iacob, manager of Therme Bucuresti, adds: "At Therme Bucuresti we wanted to offer great attractions in the same place throughout the year – a first for Romania. This summer, the indoor experience is complemented by beautiful sandy beaches, external

pools and open terraces to complete the vacation experience. The indoor experience also became exceptional when the huge folding roof opened above the palm tree zone in May.

"The concept of Therme is about fun and relaxation and it will be completed at the end of the year when an astronomical observatory opens nearby". ■