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At Toskana Therme in Bad Sulza, the Liquid Sound method is used at pools filled with the spas saline waters.



Ortwin Klipp/Toskana Therme

## Lights, Sound, Thermal Therapy!

By GISELA WILLIAMS

STOP by several of Europe's thermal spa clinics, and you'll think you've dropped into a waiting room in purgatory. Sterile and dull hospital-like interiors are usually scattered with pale, slipper-clad clientele who look like they haven't had much fun since celebrating the end of World War II.

*guests travel far and wide for the full-moon underwater live D.J. sets*

At the Toskana Therme (Wunderwaldstrasse 2a; +49-36461-92000; www.toskanatherme.de), however, in the tiny little eastern German town of Bad Sulza near Weimar, trance dance workshops are in full swing, and guests of all ages travel far and wide monthly for the full-moon underwater live D.J. sets.

The program attracts thousands of visitors a year, and now spas as far away as Miami are beginning to take notice.

Under a recent full moon, the seven pools that make up the main spa building, a futuristic dome of white wood and glass, were filled with floating couples and friends, young and old. Positioned over her controls on a mezzanine-like stage above the largest pool was D.J. That Girl, a.k.a. Elena Montesinos, a 35-year-old Swiss artist. It was past 11 p.m. and laser lights were flashing on the walls, the moon was

rising over distant hills and electro-acoustic music was pulsing quietly through the dome. (The sounds were louder underwater). Anywhere else it might have been called a rave, but in Bad Sulza it's called Liquid Sound.

The inventor of Liquid Sound, 55-year-old Micky Remann, was lounging in a black bathrobe near the D.J. station. "Tonight's theme is time travel," he said. "I asked Elena to play music that might be heard 200 years from now." Mr. Remann's inspiration comes from the American "interspecies" musician Jim Nollman, who in his search for natural music has recorded monkeys, buffaloes and whales. "It was a fascinating thing to be on this boat with hydrophones in the water playing music and sounds to the whales," Mr. Remann said, recalling an expedition he once took with Mr. Nollman off British Columbia.

Eventually Mr. Remann started researching hydro-acoustics and pool design. In 1993 he, along with the operators of Toskana Therme, Marion Schneider and her husband, Klaus-Dieter Böhm, who had recently modernized an old spa clinic in Bad Sulza, held the first permanent Liquid Sound event in the clinic's therapy pools.

"It was the first time you had natural salt waters, music and light in combination with healing," Mr. Remann said. He gestured to the modern dome around him and explained that the space had come later. "This design centered around the idea of floating in music. We knew it had to be a more organic and sensual space."

Ms. Schneider said that the combination of light and sound, added to the spa's natural-

healing saline waters, pulls participants into deeper relaxation faster than normal.

As bones and muscles work like a huge eardrum when floating in water, Mr. Remann said, underwater sound travels through the whole body.

"Even many deaf and hard-of-hearing people can 'hear' the music underwater," Ms. Schneider added. While Liquid Sound has yet to be used to treat a specific disease or symptom, the clinic has found it to be helpful in treating sleep disorders.

*a futuristic dome of white wood and glass, floating couples and friends, young and old*

Ms. Schneider, her husband and Mr. Remann have been approached by other spas. In 2004, they were asked to take over the spa at Bad Schandau, a 30-minute drive from Dresden. They have introduced Liquid Sound at a day spa in Berlin. And now, they have a project under way in Schleswig in northern Germany.

"We are also in the planning and conceptual phases with other spas and projects like theme parks and underwater hotels worldwide," Mr. Remann said. Not long ago, Jason Harler, the general manager and director of the spa at the Standard Miami, experienced Liquid Sound and was so inspired that soon, he said, the resort's main pool will feature underwater speakers.

**SURFACING** BAD SULZA, GERMANY