
THE ITALIAN THERMAL SYSTEM : ANCIENT ROOTS, SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, TRAINING, INVESTMENT

Costanzo JANNOTTI PECCI¹

There are 380 companies in the Italian thermal system (177 in the north or 46.7 %, 56 in the centre with 14.8 % and 146 in the south and islands, 38.5 %). They are distributed in 170 municipalities in 20 regions and employ 16,000 directly and 60,000 indirectly, with differing characteristics, markets and services : small, medium and large companies with a differing mix of activities, between cures and wellness (data from April 2009).

A model for innovative welfare

The Italian thermal system represents an important resource for the health (prevention, treatment and rehabilitation) and for the wellness of the citizens, but also for thermal tourism and for the economy of the territory. Having planted its foundation in thermal scientific research, it also represents an innovative and significant welfare model on an European level. It brings together protection of the general health and quality service for the client, who can choose – assisted by a trusted doctor – the thermal structure in which to seek treatment.

The Italian thermal sector is going through an ongoing process of change, both of supply and also of demand, with growing interest from new clients who see thermal baths as both a quality health establishment and as an attractive new experience for all round wellness.

The entrepreneurs in the thermal wellness industry are aware of the ongoing changes in life styles and have modified their offering to satisfy an effervescent demand from clients of all ages, though the young make up an increasing share. They are seeking not only thermal preventative, curative and rehabilitative treatment, but also esthetics, fitness, cultural goods and services, but also artisan products, food and wine, expressions of the characteristics, diversity, creativity and entrepreneurship of the territories.

Open Thermal baths for the 90th anniversary of Federterme

Listening to the clients' needs and offering the appropriate thermal and wellness services is the permanent commitment of thermal entrepreneurs and of Federterme itself, which has decided to celebrate its 90 years of history (1919-2009) with a serie of initiatives

¹.President of Federterme Confindustria, Federterme Via Po 22, 00198 Rome, Italy
www.federterme.it Courriel : segreteria@federterme.it

which will be carried out primarily in the thermal establishments themselves with the objective of allowing the public to get to know the resources and the thermal structures spread over the country.

This is the philosophy behind the “Open Spas” Project which started on March 1st and is continuing as other thermal establishments decide to join the initiative. After the first act at Grotta Giusti other “Open Spas” events were held at the Thermal Baths of Agnano, the Thermal Baths of the Popes, the Thermal Baths of Salsomaggiore and Tabiano, the Thermal Baths of Rome, the Thermal baths of Margherita of Savoia, the Thermal Baths of Rivanazzano, the Thermal Baths of Darfo Boario, the Thermal Baths of Chianciano, the Thermal Baths of Montepulciano, the Thermal Baths of Pompeo, The Thermal Baths of Telesse Terme, the Thermal Baths of Versilia, the Thermal Baths of Abano, the Thermal Baths of Montegrotto, the Thermal Baths of Punta Marina and others continue to join, week after week.

“Open Spas” is not only a promotion of thermal baths and wellness, it is a concrete “operation of transparency” because it is to show the public the single structures, better and directly, with guided tours, to valorize the contribution of the scientifically validated activity of thermal baths for preventative, curative and rehabilitative medicine and to the wellness of people, through the thermal baths offer of nature and culture to the territory.

Research, training, quality service

Federterme is proud and satisfied to find that also the “Open Spas” operation shows that entrepreneurs continue to demonstrate their faith in thermal activities, investing both in their existing plant, raising their standards of energy and environmental quality and also in new initiatives, founded on the virtues of the curative properties of thermal waters.

Ancient traditions and roots, but also thermal scientific research by the Foundation for Thermal Scientific Research (www.fondazioneforst.it) founded in 2003, are the distinctive and characterizing elements of the Italian system of thermal baths and now we can add a further step forward for thermal service quality thanks to the approval of the national training plan for the thermal sector named “Terme advance”. This is an initiative financed by Fondimpresa (inter-professional fund for ongoing training), founded in together with Espansione srl and Federterme and a partnership with EBITERME, Bilateral National Agency for Thermal Baths, (set up by the social partners), with the objective of guaranteeing the best possible continuous updating of the personnel working at the thermal baths. This will also include seasonal workers, who represent an important component of the workforce at thermal baths.