Spa specialist Hildegard Dorn-Petersen FCSI explains how she got involved in an extraordinary spa project in Bavaria, and the unique challenges it presented.

“Since wellness is a holistic concept, the design concept does not end at the door of the Spa”

To be successful a spa needs a coherent approach and, above all, a unique selling point. As the Hotel Eisvogel is located right in the heart of “Hallertau” – a renowned hop-growing area – the central theme was found quickly, especially since the hops are not only used for brewing beer, but also offer excellent health benefits. Special treatments, baths, massages and soft packs have been created, in which hop oil or dried hops are used. This taps into current trends – “going local” is on the rise, as in “from farm to fork”. Since good ideas are often picked up and copied by the competition, “HopfenWell” has been listed as a registered trademark.

Quality is everything

Providing quality is central to everything at the Eisvogel – quality of food, service and facilities. These high standards apply to the spa as well. The team of owners, interior designers and I found a way to bring together innovative products with a regional touch, creating spaces with a warm atmosphere – a touch of shabby chic means the furniture reflects this too – but at the same time integrating specially built working units that are easy to use, and some high-functioning massage tables.

Since wellness is a holistic concept, the design concept does not end at the door of the Spa. For example, fresh hops are bright green so this colour continues as a recurring theme in the hotel rooms.

What so both owners and consultant learned? The main thing is to keep a close eye on interior design, even the small details. This avoids problems such as missing hand showers for cleaning bathtub in treatment rooms or non-removable, non-washable cushion covers, especially in the Spa.

The collaboration between client and consultant has proved so satisfactory on this occasion that the relationship will continue for some time to come.

The boom in the German spa hotel sector

A special highlight of the Eisvogel spa is the gastronomic all-inclusive concept. In addition to the hotel’s breakfast buffet, a hotel and day spa guest can help themselves from a delicious buffet any time between 9am and 5pm. This is the perfect way to enjoy a relaxing spa day, because there is no rush at all, and no pressure due to restaurant opening hours. People can have a snack, light lunch, cup of coffee or tea or a piece of homemade cake whenever they like. This brings extra sales for Day Spa packages, which range in price from €139 to €599. It’s certainly proved popular within the region: the first sold-out weekend confirmed the capacity of the spa, which was full of happy people moving around in a relaxed manner.

It has been three years since the German government reduced VAT on hotel accommodation from 19% to 7%. This significant reduction has created improved market conditions and tax equity in comparison to other European countries, and resulted in investments of nearly €2bn in the German hotel market for renovation and expansion. Let us hope the current political negotiations in Germany will not bring a change of mind.