



Hotel Schlossgut Oberambach Between Heaven and Earth

Not only a hotel but also a truly cleansing experience for body and soul, the gorgeous Bio-hotel in Bavaria shows, with grand success, that luxury and nature can work hand in hand.

TEXT: MARILENA STRACKE | PHOTOS: PRESS PHOTOS

Well-hidden from the rest of the world lies this gem of a hotel right by the scenic lake Starnberger See. The beautiful Schlossgut Oberambach is full of history: it got its first mention as early as 1476 when it belonged to a monastery, and in 1870 it was turned into a manor house.

Today, it invites guests from all over the world to enjoy a holiday that goes beyond the usual hotel experience. Schlossgut Oberambach is a green hotel and since 2002

part of the Bio-hotel group. This means that from serving exclusively organic food to the biological heating systems and use of only natural cosmetics, everything in and around the hotel is entirely in line with nature. It took eight years of renovation until the hotel met the high biological standards set by its fond owner Andreas Schwabe.

"I'm not a hotelier, I took a new career path," says Schwabe, who was new to the hotel business but already had a back-

ground in naturology and homeopathy. The anthroposophy-oriented Schwabe family is one of the earlier producers of homeopathic medicines. Following the family's tradition, Schwabe became a healthcare practitioner before he discovered his passion for anything organic in the 1980s and pioneered in this field during the next ten years.

After opening one of the first health food stores in Munich, followed by another three

branches, Schwabe wanted to return to his roots and the countryside.

He came across the idyllic manor house surrounded by untouched nature, right by the lake, but also only 25 minutes away from Munich. The building itself has undeniable charms and seems to tell stories about past times, when artists, writers and philosophers strolled through the five picturesque alleys or studied the giant trees in the park. Even members of the famous artist group The Blue Rider are said to have met here.

Schwabe was won over in a heartbeat and remembers: "When I visited for the first time, I instantly felt that this place is truly special."

The green hotel opened its doors in 1999 and remains close to Schwabe's heart. The success of the concept, which combines 100% eco-friendliness with subtle luxury

and promotes gentle tourism in the region makes the owners deservedly proud. Receiving the certificate from eco hotels certified (ehc) was another step to reaching Schwabe's goal. The ehc-label makes environmentally friendly, sustainable trading and a future-oriented economy compatible and proves the outstanding CO2 balance the hotel draws.

"Our bio-hotel is holistic," Schwabe explains. He was the first in the region to install systems using rainwater for toilets and watering the garden. Wood Chip boilers and a block heating station deliver the hotel's heat and energy and make it self-sufficient.

Today the hotel boasts of 40 rooms: ten in the former manor house (including two

suites) with solid wood furniture, six rooms in the neighbouring guest house and 24 in the new building, which was originally the barn. The rooms have wooden floors and Schwabe has perfected the system to reduce electro-smog.

Instead of a chlorinated pool there is a lovely natural pond, and guests are encouraged to take a relaxing swim during the summer. Aside from the sauna and steam bath, guests can completely detox in the rest areas. They can go on walking-tours, guided herb tours and there are Trekking and E-bikes available, too. Why not ask for a picnic basket full of delicious treats?

Guests can also look forward to organic regional, vegetarian and Mediterranean cuisine and visit the hotel's new vitality centre, where trained therapists offer naturopathic services, like Ayurveda, Shiatsu, Hot Stone, gemstone massages, Yoga and regional treatments. The staff also specialises in treating patients with burn-out or Tinnitus.

"I wanted to offer something therapeutic again," explains Schwabe, whose wife Sabine is a trained Aura-Soma-Therapist and offers treatments at the centre.

Last but not least there is the Starnberger See with its enchanting alpine background and charismatic art nouveau villas and farmhouses. Take a towel and take the walk down the tree alley that Andreas Schwabe took so many years ago when he discovered the manor house. A charming lakeside property belongs to the hotel and is exclusively reserved for its guests.

And of course famous Munich is a hop, skip and a jump away, ready to be explored.

Whatever you desire, Schlossgut Oberambach is the ideal place to relax and indulge in a little luxury. And the best part? You know you are supporting a good cause because the bio-hotel contributes its share to preserving our planet's resources, without compromise.

www.schlossgut.de