

THERMAL BATH & WELLNESS - MERAN (ITALY)



A visual and physical continuum between indoors and outdoors, generating a perception that compounds an already complete wellness experience achieved by harnessing the spirit of place.

According to archaeological records, the springs in Meran have been in use for some 5.000 years. If those records are true, then the antecedents in the modern baths in this historical little town on the southern side of the Alps (which enjoys 300 days of sunshine every year) were already attracting users 1.000 years before the ancient Egyptians discovered the use of therapeutic baths were a staggering 3.000 years old when the Romans built their famous installation in Bath, in England. When the ancients took the plunge in the Meran springs, the view they could enjoy of the town's magnificent location, set like the jewel in a crown of mountains, was unfettered by any surrounding manmade structure. And when today's visitors to the town's new state-of-the-art thermal baths take their plunge, Matteo Thun's transparent design establishes a continuum between indoors and out, affording them a similar experience: the ultimate in the fitness is visual as well as physical. The huge glass cube is illuminated by a flood of natural light in the daytime and large globes at night. These globes cast light that reflects off freely rotating coloured discs, sending ripples over the walls and the waters, with refractions that have been compared to the effect of a sunset.



Bathers can swim directly through a water gate from the largest of the twelve indoor pools to its opposite number among the thirteen located outdoors. A fitness centre, eight saunas, a beauty centre, a café, a bistro and many other features contribute to make this public facility a showcase, set in a 50.000 square metre park. As in other designs of his, Matteo Thun focuses on the spirit of place, quality, environmentalism and technology used unobtrusively: all water not intended for human consumption is drawn from wells sunk deep into the gardens and is perceived as a function of its flowing motion, not as a result of the infrastructure that makes it flow. Natural stone and wood materials forge continuity between the facilities, the pools, the fitness features and the relaxation beds indoors and comparable outdoor facilities, continuing seamlessly into the park and the wider surroundings. Reviving the principle of the ancients' belief in *Mens sana in corpore sano* – a healthy mind in a healthy body – a visit to the Therme Meran is the complete wellness experience, catering not just for the body, but also for the soul.

FACTS

Client: Therme Meran AG

Location: Meran (IT)

Provided Services: Interior design, light design, styling and decoration, signage design