





Promoting the Massif Central on a European scale through the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

# The tourist diversification of the thermal towns

## The review in 1998:

- A necessary diversification, supplementing thermal activity
- Tourism: a good alternative
- Thermal Spa: image associated too heavily with medical thermal cures

### Specific actions since:

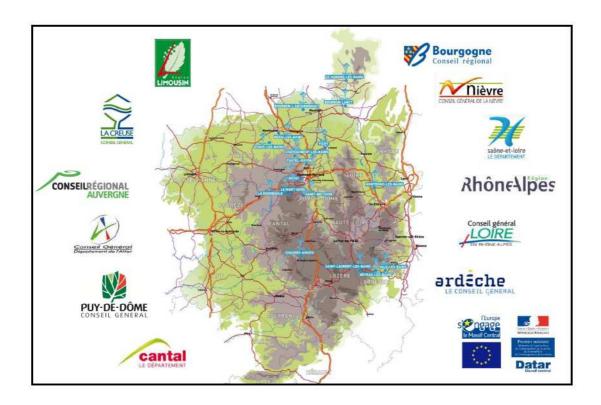
- Development of a genuine network of Well-Being through activities based on water as a central element (fitness/thermo-recreation)
- Promotion of thermal heritage
- Structuration of the tourist product for Travel Agencies and National TOs
- The utilisation of these activities and this structured product to communicate and change the image of thermal spas

# **A Willingness**

- Since 1995, discussion has been led by the DATAR, AFIT and Thermauvergne.
- In 1998, aware of the issue of networking, the mayors of the thermal spas of the Massif Central created the Association of:

"The Route of Spa Towns in the Massif Central"

# THE MASSIF CENTRAL • 6 régions - 22 départements - 4072 communes • 85.000 km² (15 % of the nation) • 42 % of the French mountain zone Population • 3.7 million inhabitants, 60% urban • density of 44 inhabitants / km² compared with 108 nationally The Route of Spa Towns in the Massif Central • 5 régions and 9 départements involved • 17 visitor centres - 13 Casinos - 22 thermal-fitness establishments • Close to 55 000 beds for tourists





# **Added-value Massif Central**

- A network on a **coherent tourist region** (geographical, cultural, identity, image) for clients and tourism professionals
- A tourist critical mass large enough to allow for this network of 18 Spa Towns to be credible internally, in the eyes of socio-professionals, and externally, vis-à-vis Travel Agencies and National TOs (quantity and quality of product, diversity of proposals)
- A network encouraging the **exchange of experiences** with similar problems linked to the status as Water Towns, and their presence in a **common region**.



# Strategy of the Route of Spa Towns in the Massif Central

To create a genuine tourist network across the Massif Central for:

- The development of **innovative products** specific to "**Well-being**" and "**Heritage**"
- Structuring the tourist product to encourage marketing
- Working as network in order to federate skills and assets



# **Positioning**

Utilising the singularities of the Spa Towns in order to position them as tourist "well-being" destinations

Accentuating the tourist image of the Spa Towns, basing them on the two peculiarities that make them different to other tourist destinations:

- 1 **Well-being** services linked to thermal water
- 2 Thermal Heritage



# **Targets**

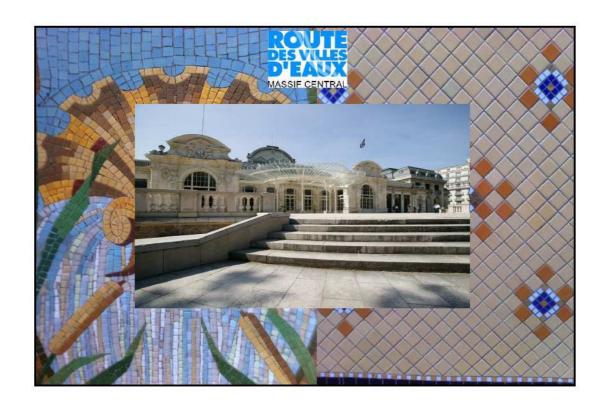
Gaining recognition of the tourist positioning of the Spa Towns by opinion leaders, who are the prescribers of our network:

- The TOs and Travel Agencies by setting up products
- Journalists via Press Relations
- Tourism Institutions (CRTs, CDTs, SLAs etc.) through partnerships

# Heritage promotion actions

Animating the internal network of human resources (**technical days...**), sharing and exchange of experiences:

- Knowing and making known this heritage (**inventory** of the architectural heritage of each town and analysis of this heritage on a network-wide scale, produced in 2009...)
- Encouraging the marketing of tourist products on the theme of heritage
- Creating **circuits** and making the **Route of Spa Towns in the Massif Central** tangible at ground level: signposting (town entrances, heritage **signposts**), the route of thermal parks, mobile tourism (**QR codes**)...
- Promoting the specific cultural identity of the Spa Towns in the Massif Central: Publishing, Press Relations, participation in the European Heritage Days, the summer programme of thermal heritage discovery and its promotion on France Bleu Grand Centre, associate of the EHTTA (European Historic Thermal Towns Association)









# **Synergies between Routes**

- The **Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Ways**, of which Puy-en-Velay is one of the most important points of departure
- The Route of Cluniac Sites with Cluny in Saône-et-Loire and Souvigny in Allier
- The Sites of the Casadéens with La Chaise-Dieu
- The Ways of Saint Michael with Aiguilhe,
- The Stevenson Trail
- The Route of Saint Martin
- Transromanica
- The Ceramic Route



# **Synergies between routes traversing the Massif Central**

The Route of Spa Towns in the Massif Central, in collaboration with the Massif Central DATAR, proposes:

- Creating bridges between all these cultural routes
- Finding similar examples of regional or inter-regional cooperation in Europe
- Developing a common methodological approach
- Publishing and diffusing a collection of good practices









