

Voices from Bratislava – Zuzana Timkova, Falkensteiner Hotel Bratislava

We had a long talk with Zuzana Timkova, the Head of Sales of Falkensteiner Hotel in Bratislava. The hotel has been serving its guests for over 60 years in business and leisure segment. Every year the hotel hosts over 10.000 congress guests.

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Photo credit: Personal archive

Q: What are the Falkensteiner hotel Congress capacities?

Our total conference area has the overall size of over 400 sqm. There are five independent conference rooms, that can host events for up to 300 participants. Our conference foyer is also an addition to this generous space and serves mainly as networking or standby reception area. The congress facilities at Falkensteiner Hotel Bratislava are modern in terms of the design, with sophisticated conference equipment and an excellent service. All five conference rooms have natural daylight and are located in a calm area of the hotel. Our conference rooms can be used for various occasions and their size can be adjusted accordingly.

Q: What kind of MICE options does the hotel offer?

We had the opportunity to host various types of events varying from standard conferences to unusual events with creative set-up using benefits of our open-air courtyard or rooftop lounge. We hosted events for business clientele and also official delegations. We had the honor to host the event of Slovak and Austrian Presidents during their visit to Slovakia. One of our most memorable events was the underground party organized in our garage where we hosted over 200 guests for the so-called Underground party.

Q: How important are events as a strategic tool for you?

Events and other MICE formats are one of the core segments for our hotel. Our main goal is to provide maximum comfort for our guests providing them with all that a business traveler could ask for. We constantly improve those areas that are crucial for this type of client: efficient and smooth check in, check out, high-speed internet connection, monthly special benefits, sufficient parking capacities with electro car charging stations are just a few of those examples. Should a guest wish to relax after a hard day, we gladly offer our Acquapura City SPA facilities or perfectly chilled prosecco or beer in our Rooftop lounge overlooking the roofs of Bratislava! What a stunning evening after a long day!

Q: What are the key challenges for Bratislava's event industry, in your opinion?

Bratislava has recently discovered and also opened its potential to the outer world. Numerous possibilities for how to enjoy time spent in our city is now more explored by the visitors on regular basis. On the other side, there is still a space to go in terms of hosting bigger events or congresses that would attract a larger crowd (either business or leisure-oriented). An absence of congress center plays also a key role. Should this change in the future, I'm sure Bratislava would blossom even more. Bratislava should also raise the awareness about its great accessibility and proximity to Vienna Airport and strategic central European location. It is a standing fact that Bratislava and Vienna are one of three closest capital cities in the world.

What is, in your opinion, a must-see for every visitor in Bratislava?

My top pick would definitely be the Danube river bank with its promenade, Castle with its beautiful views, main historical squares or just strolling in the city is a great way how to explore Bratislava. Visiting culinary spots with local breweries and wines would be my choice how to spend a day in the city enjoying its unique and cozy atmosphere.

Q: What is your hotel's marketing strategy for the congress activities?

We believe the best marketing is proving of quality on an everyday basis: from the pre-event stage, a personalized approach already at offering stage, through meeting clients expectations of each event organizer, through on-site assistance and after event settling. Active listening and proactive approach play a key role in our event planning.

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How many Congresses did you host in the past year at Falkensteiner?

Considering several events every day varying from small seminars or meetings to congresses for up to 200 guests, it is challenging to share exact number. In high season conference months, we host up to 5 different events of different conference format on daily basis.

What was the number of congress guests in the previous year?

Every year we are hosting over 10 000 congress guests from smaller formats like seminars or daily meetings to special events or conferences lasting over several days.

Q: Who is the typical guest in your hotel?

We are glad to have a well-balanced mix of guests. Our core segment would definitely be business clientele: either corporate travelers or MICE guests. On the other hand in seasons when business travel is slightly limited (e.g: summer vacation months), we welcome more individual travelers that book their city breaks or explore the new European destinations which Bratislava still definitely is.

Q: What is the Falkensteiner hotel management strategy?

Professionalism and the know-how of how to make each event a success. Treating each guest as an individual enabling him to spend quality time in our hotel.

Q: What are the developmental goals for your hotel in 2018?

Our main goal in 2018 is definitely to keep optimizing our business mix to efficiently and wisely use our capacities. Understanding the needs of the clients in each segment is definitely our long-term journey by which we are able to identify their expectations and enhance our understanding of their needs. Due to this constant development ambition, we have improved many technical features in the hotel, invested into refurbishment of our rooms and we are still on the track of further developments.

Q: How do you compete with other congress hotels in the city? What is your hotel's priority?

We, at Falkensteiner Hotel Bratislava, believe in **Welcome Home!**(our official slogan) attitude! Falkensteiner Hotels and Residences have a long leisure tradition. We have been serving our guests for over 60 years and we started our business in leisure segment. In our hotel in Bratislava, we are also implementing benefits and best practices from our leisure hotels (Spa treatments, „Falky“ corner for kids, dog-friendly features, extended breakfast selection, etc.). Our primary goal is to make our guests feel at home, to feel like they can feel themselves and enjoy their “home away from home”. Once they enter our hotel or park their car in the garage, our main goal is to host them like you are hosted when coming back home. All of this is combined with an individual approach, excellent infrastructure and modern and stylish equipment. Welcome home!

Can you please describe the most spectacular event that happened in the Falkensteiner Hotel?

Definitely, the underground party that we organized in September 2016. To make an event in the garage required a big portion of courage. We welcomed over 200 guests at the party and we were able to prove the boundaries of classical event setup are now being radically vanished! That is the event I will always remember!



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