

## TourNatur a tremendous success in the new exhibition hall

### Outdoor activities are booming

### Hiking fashion: trend towards both high-tech and traditional materials

### Ultralight equipment in demand for cycling tours

“Relocation of TourNatur to exhibition hall 6 proved to be a complete success”, Messe Düsseldorf Director Joachim Schäfer concludes. The only hiking and trekking trade fair in Germany that is open to the general public featured innovative fashion, equipment and outdoor activity trends between 2. and 4. September 2016. A total of more than 40,000 visitors took advantage of the trade fair in Düsseldorf to obtain information from the 260 exhibitors about almost 5,000 travel destinations or to buy directly from manufacturers and distributors. Schäfer: “We are very satisfied about the way the trade fair has developed in recent years. This 14th TourNatur confirmed that hiking and outdoor enthusiasts consider it to be a key event.”

TourNatur Director Stefan Koschke adds: “There is a special atmosphere at TourNatur. The many different hiking destinations presented at the trade fair inspire our guests to start planning their next outdoor holiday while they are still enjoying the exhibition.” Not only hiking regions in the Central Uplands of Germany like the Sauerland, the Bavarian Forest or the Black Forest but also such Alpine destinations as the Salzburg area, the Kitzbühel region, Tannheimer Tal Valley in Tyrol or Cortina d’Ampezzo and South Tyrol are extremely popular with visitors. People interested in more exotic alternatives also had the opportunity at TourNatur to inform themselves about trekking expeditions in Madagascar, Zambia or Botswana, hiking trips to Ladakh (the gateway to the Himalayas), cycling tours between the Andes and the Amazon in Ecuador and fabulous South Sea hiking trails on Maui and Kauai and to opt for one of the remotest regions in the world instead.

Guests are keen to visit not just such exotic travel destinations but also and above all the different parts of Germany. Thuringia, for example, which



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presented a wide range of alternatives at TourNatur and had a particular attraction for visitors. Slate roofer David comes directly from the slate highlands of Thuringia and used a hammer to make slate hearts for the visitors. His report about the region that is his home: “We have more than just sausages and dumplings to offer. With the Rennsteig, Thuringia has one of the most beautiful and varied hiking trails in Germany and our slate mountains provide unique rock material for wall cladding and roofs.”

Expert Ralf-Stefan Beppler explains: “The sector is experiencing a real boom at the moment. There are more varied outdoor activities than ever before and demand for them is greater than ever before.” This explains the crowds at the outdoor advice centre, where valuable tips and information were available about outdoor sports. The topics visitors were interested in ranged from state-of-the-art high-tech hiking fashion to such ultralight equipment as fold-up chairs and tables for several-day cycling tours or small objects like pocket knives or bottles.

Beppler: “It is very interesting to note that outdoor enthusiasts are in the meantime abandoning completely water-tight clothing to a greater and greater extent. What are in demand instead are jackets without a membrane or made from such classic materials as wool or cotton that repel water.” Companies like Steinkauz from Neuss on the Rhine or Hubertus from Lößnitz in Saxony responded to this trend by presenting eye-catching hiking fashion made from Loden material. Organic fashion specialist hessnatur is also focussing entirely on natural fibres and exhibited its outdoor range for children and adults at TourNatur for the second time now. Steinkauz owner Markus Holthausen explains: “Loden is a material that breathes, adapts to changes in temperature and is weather-resistant.” The Neuss resident likes to go mountain hiking in his spare time, so he knows what he is talking about from personal experience: only a few weeks ago, he crossed the Alps on the E5 trail with a Loden backpack. Expert Beppler adds: “The polyester revolution hit us in the 60s and 70s and we forgot the established materials that already provided our ancestors with excellent protection against the cold and rain. More and more companies are now rediscovering the idea of using natural fibres. Merino wool is in demand not only as a material for underwear; it is eminently suitable for the second or third layer of shirts or



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jackets too. While Loden jackets have dazzling, bright colours and are attractively cut nowadays.”



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Snowshoe hiking was a very popular subject at the outdoor advice centre alongside classic hiking and cycling tours. Visitors had an opportunity to test snowshoes on what was pretty much like snow – but without getting cold feet. Messe Düsseldorf Director Stefan Koschke: “We found a special kind of sand that resembles snow to walk on. No end of visitors of all ages were keen to try out the shoes for themselves.” A total of nine different snowshoe models were available for children and adults to test.

Complete national presentations were made at the 14th TourNatur by Portugal, which was exhibiting at the trade fair for the first time, and Greece, which took part for the second time. This demonstrates that even classic beach holiday countries are turning more and more into hiking destinations, because travellers are showing an increasing amount of interest in outdoor activities in Southern European countries too.



Portugal presented one of the most spectacular hiking trails in Europe: the Rota Vicentina is in actual fact among the ten most beautiful trails in the world. Starting at the westernmost point of Europe (Capo Sao Vicente), one can choose between the historical route or the fishermen’s route right along the coast to Santiago do Cacem. In addition to the destinations on the mainland, the Portuguese national exhibit highlighted Madeira and Azores at TourNatur 2016. Representatives of the Portuguese regions reported that visitors showed great interest in their destinations and submitted specific booking inquiries.

Maria Giakoumaki, Project Manager at the Greek Export and Trade Association: “A trade fair like TourNatur is an ideal presentation platform. It enables us to inform a very interested German public about our beautiful hiking trails highly effectively.” George Koulalis says about the Menalon Trail: “This is a perfect combination of cultural history in our villages, some of which were built as long ago as the 7th century, and hiking along a trail that extends 72.5 km at altitudes of between 420 and 1,550 metres.” The Menalon Trail is the first internationally certified hiking trail in Greece and is

signposted very well in English throughout. At TourNatur, Foivos Tsaravopoulos presented the hiking trail with an overall length of 100 kilometres on the Aegean island of Sifnos: “It is very important for us to take part in TourNatur every year. On our stand, visitors were able to inform themselves directly about the gorgeous trails on our ‘hidden’ island.”

TourNatur was a complete success again this year for “Wandermagazin” and the German Hiking Association, which are supporters of the trade fair.

Andrea Engel, editor-in-chief of “Wandermagazin”, explains: “It is becoming increasingly clear that hiking expertise is concentrated at TourNatur in Düsseldorf. Visitors come here with specific questions about and booking plans for the destinations. What was new this year was the fact that some travel destinations, such as the Lechtal-Reutte region of Tyrol in the Allgäuer Alps, focussed entirely on winter activities. As far as we are concerned, TourNatur is the most important meeting place for the industry.”

Ute Dicks, Director of the German Hiking Association, points out: “The trade fair reveals major trends to us. What is very noticeable is that visitors are more interested in quality. Exacting demands are being made not only on the trails themselves, but also with regard to all the other hiking infrastructure, ranging from the public transport system in a hiking region to sources of information and accommodation. Handicap-accessible facilities will be increasingly important for hiking destinations in future as well. The presentations given at our forum demonstrated this impressively”.

The next TourNatur is taking place in Düsseldorf from 1. to 3. September 2017.

### **Düsseldorf, hot spot for leisure enthusiasts**

Messe Düsseldorf GmbH is the leading leisure trade fair organiser in Germany, with the trade fairs CARAVAN SALON, TourNatur and boot Düsseldorf. CARAVAN SALON DÜSSELDORF is the biggest trade fair in the world for recreational vehicles and caravans, with more than 190,000 visitors every year. TourNatur, the only hiking and trekking trade fair in Germany that is open to the general public, has taken place at the same time as CARAVAN SALON since 2003 and attracts 40,000 visitors. boot Düsseldorf presents all the different aspects of water sports in January every year. With more than 1,800 exhibitors and about 247,000 visitors from all



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4. September 2016

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