

Heating in hotels: Overcoming a lack of knowledge



Hotels are interested in solar thermal even in places where it is not required by law, like here in Turkey.

Photo: Eziñc

Solar thermal systems for hotels are considered a market with a future. *Sun & Wind Energy* conducted a survey of companies in this sector to see what their experience has been. It turns out that the high upfront costs scare off a lot of hotel operators even though the return on investment is quick.

In the Spanish town of Benasque, the shiny blue collectors on the roof of the four-star Aneto Hotel recently opened by the Valero hotel chain are quite elegant. Luis Salinas Maya and his team of installers assembled eight large roof-integrated collectors made by Austria's Tisun in the tile roof. The sun now covers 70 % of the energy needed for hot water and also provides heating for the pool so that the hotel can reduce its consumption of heating oil.

These days, solar thermal systems for hot water are mandatory for new buildings in Spain. But hotels are not only interested in solar thermal in places where it is required by law. After all, hot water can cost a pretty penny, and hotel operators can get back the money invested in solar thermal systems in only a few years. In November, *Sun & Wind Energy* took a worldwide survey of solar firms to see who has hotel projects. The 30 companies that took part in the survey have equipped a total of almost 3,000 hotels with solar thermal systems. Soletrol Indústria e Comércio of Brazil has handled more

than 1,000 of them alone. China's Himin Solar Energy Group came in second with almost 800 projects followed by Eziñc Metal of Turkey with 350 such systems. The table on page 96/97 features a project from each company. The projects cover a wide range from a small house with fewer than 20 beds to a large hotel with several thousand. Israel's Chromagen (ACS) Ltd. Solar Energy Solutions provided the collectors for the largest project in this overview. 2,800 m² of collector surface were installed on a hotel on Crete.

Wide range of system technology

Most of these solar thermal systems used for hotels have pumps. India's Orb Energy Private Limited is one of the few firms that has installed more thermosiphon systems than pump systems. This technology is especially good for small systems: "For smaller hotels with 20 to 30 rooms, thermosiphonic systems are used", says Orb En