

Die Reise- und Freizeitmesse.
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Press release

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More than 118,000 visitors—attendance at f.re.e 2015 is up

- **New record in visitor satisfaction**
- **97 percent of visitors intend to come again**
- **More than 3,000 visitors use canoe test course**
- **Partner Country 2016: The Seychelles**

Following an increase in attendance in 2014, the number of visitors at f.re.e, the Fair for Leisure and Travel, has increased once again. During the five-day fair, more than 118,000 people—five thousand more than the previous year, came to Bavaria's largest trade fair for travel and leisure to gather information. The fact that visitors were extremely satisfied was reflected in a survey conducted by marketing research institute tns-infratest. According to the survey, 94 percent of visitors gave f.re.e a rating of good, very good or excellent. In addition, 97 percent indicated that they wanted to attend f.re.e again next year. On the exhibitors' side, satisfaction in the sectors for Travel and Bicycles was especially high. The Bicycle Hall was very well received and exhibitors reported that sales there were high. All in all, more than 1,200 exhibitors from 60 countries presented their vacation offers and recreation products at this year's fair.

Reinhard Pfeiffer, Managing Director of Messe München International, was positive in his assessment of f.re.e: "High attendance as well as outstanding visitor satisfaction and the fact that so many visitors are planning to attend again prove that f.re.e has a permanent place in the trade-show calendar and that it focuses on the right vacation and recreation trends."

Munich Auto Days, which was held in conjunction with f.re.e again this year, also received positive ratings in the visitor survey. 90 percent of those who were asked gave the auto show a rating of good, very good or excellent. For organizer Hans-Georg Bechthold, this is proof of the synergy effects between

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these two events: "Vacations, recreation and automobiles go together very well. That was clearly noticeable based on the increased number of test drives and sales at this year's fair. Munich Auto Days has developed strongly and has been well received by visitors."

Travel

The fair revolved around this year's Partner Country Spain, which boasts a wealth of recreational activities along nearly 5,000 kilometers of coastland and on more than 50 islands. Alvaro Blanco Volmer, Director of the Spanish Foreign Tourism Office in Munich, was enthusiastic about the turnout: "Despite ideal ski and hiking weather, visitors are strolling through the halls in large numbers. Thanks to the advantageous location of our stand and some very effective advertising on the part of Messe München, the number of visitors at our stand has increased considerably." Besides Spain, other Mediterranean countries also reported significant increases. More than 50 percent of the visitors who gathered information about travel were primarily interested in this region. However, certain regions in Germany and Bavaria also remain very popular among visitors, as Regina Bremm, Managing Director of the "Romantic Franconia" Tourism Association reports: The fact that visitors in Munich were extremely interested in vacations in the tourism region of "Romantic Franconia" was definitely noticeable again at this year's fair. We had a number of inquiries about hiking and cycling vacations." The Theme Days have continued to develop and are now a permanent part of f.re.e. Visitors use them to find travel and recreation offers for singles and those traveling alone as well as recommendations for suitable cruises. Florian Liebl from TUI Cruises confirmed the large number of visitors who expressed an interest in cruise vacations: "Cruises are an absolute trend, a fact verified by the inquiries at our stand—which of course were particularly noticeable on Cruise Day. We will definitely be back for f.re.e in 2016."

Bicycles

The Bicycles sector occupied an entire hall again this year. A total of 90 exhibitors presented some 60 bicycle brands—an increase of nearly 20 percent. Visitors could test the various models such as trekking bikes, mountain bikes, e-

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bikes or transport bikes at three bicycle test courses. According to a survey by tns-infratest, visitor interest in bicycles has rebounded again. Thomas Pfrommer from Merida & Centurion Deutschland, shares that opinion: "This is our second year at f.re.e, and we noticed a strong increase in the number of visitors in the Bicycles sector. Our various models allowed us to deal with strong interest in e-bikes among all age groups. Besides the bicycles themselves and bicycle accessories, the topic of bicycle tourism continues to increase in importance from year to year. And the Bavarian Division of the German Bicycle Club received plenty of corresponding inquiries, as Managing Director Petra Husemann-Roew explains: "Riding bicycles is a trend, and in it's second year, that is reflected by the separate Bicycle Hall and the extensive range of exhibits at f.re.e. Demand for information about cycling routes, planning bicycle trips and our range of "Bett+Bike" accommodations was particularly high. The extensive range of exhibits in the Bicycles sector was rounded out by appearances by Scottish trials cyclist Danny MacAskill on Friday and Saturday.

Water sports

Now in its second year at f.re.e, the canoe test course has turned into a hugely popular attraction. Interest in canoeing down the 70-meter-long river run was uninterrupted on all five days of the fair, as Oliver Bungers, President of the Bavarian Canoe Association, explains: "All in all, we supervised more than three thousand test rides during f.re.e. Families and young visitors in particular approached us with inquiries about canoe schools and clubs."

The river run was not only extremely popular among canoe beginners, but also among the exhibitors. Bruno Maitre from Nautiraid Deutschland explains the benefits: "The canoe test course is an excellent chance for us to show interested visitors our boats in actual practice. The fair's visitors feel strongly about outdoor topics, which makes f.re.e the perfect place to present our products such as the smallest folding boat in the world."

Caravanning & Mobile Recreation

Approximately 50 brands were represented in the sector for Caravanning & Mobile Recreation at this year's fair. Visitor interest was up considerably this year. The reason is the extensive range of vehicles, from vans to caravans and luxury mobile homes. For the most part, buying patterns reflect the increase in interest, as Peter Köhler from Köhler Wohnmobile, explains: "We always enjoy coming to f.re.e because, compared to other trade fairs, more contracts are signed here on a regular basis. We also managed to surpass last year's results considerably." Besides vehicles, exhibitors in this sector also present camping equipment and accessories as well innovative tents, among other things. Martin Müller from Camppartner 24 was very satisfied with the results of his company's premiere at f.re.e: "The response at our stand was absolutely positive on all five days of the fair. Visitors were particularly interested in inflatable tents, which simplify camping vacations considerably."

Outdoor

90 percent of visitors gave the range of equipment and accessories in the Outdoor sector a rating of good, very good or excellent. Kilian Schwalbe from the Munich and Oberland Chapter of the German Alpine Club (DAV) was pleased that interest in the Outdoor sector is so high: "As in previous years, our activities have been very well received. Visitors approach us with so many different inquiries: In 2015, families in particular want to find out more about family mountain climbing and hiking with children." Other highlights included the finals of the CLIMB f.re.e climbing competitions including the Bavarian Championship and the Youth Boulder cup.

Health & Wellness

The Health & Wellness sector continues to enjoy great popularity among visitors. 92 percent gave this sector a rating of good, very good or excellent. The products and equipment that visitors can test at the fair free of charge have also been very well received. Dagmar Fraas, HSC, is positive in her assessment: "As

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a trade fair for the end consumer, f.re.e has proved itself a the perfect platform for our product again in 2015. Our presentations at the Health Stage and the BR Show Stage also attracted more visitors to our stand. Like last year, we expect post-fair business to be good."

The next f.re.e—the Fair for Leisure and Travel—takes place at the Messe München trade-fair center from February 10–14, 2016. Next year's Partner Country will be the Seychelles. According to the FUR (Forschungsgemeinschaft Urlaub und Reisen), Bavarians are particularly interested in travelling to other countries. Our choice for Partner Country 2016 takes this trend into account.