



Happily 100

Centenarian hotels are not rare, but those that have been run by the same family for all that time are unusual. The Waldhaus Hotel in Sils-Maria, near St Moritz demonstrates that success is all relative!

There are many factors that lead to the success of a business but continuity has to be a major contribution. And there's certainly that to be found at the Waldhaus. Originally conceived, built and managed by hotelier Josef Giger and his wife Amalie and opened in June 1908, this grand hotel in the Swiss tradition is now owned and run by Giger's great granddaughter Maria Dietrich-Kienberger and her husband Felix, as well as Giger's great grandson, Urs Kienberger.

Survival tactics

In the intervening years, the hotel has survived the Depression, two World Wars and a major fire in 1927. This survival has been achieved by a family who shared both a dream for the future and the will to succeed, which has enabled the Waldhaus to bounce back from adversity time and again. Adaptability and flexibility are other factors and for a successful business to grow, it needs individuals with a vision for the future as well as recognition of

what worked in the past. And the family have this vision in abundance.

Thus there are original yet updated fittings in some bathrooms and guest rooms, combined with the modern touches that today's guests demand. Other guest rooms are decorated in more 21st century style, but adaptations to the common areas, such as the dining room, music room and reading room, have always had one eye on the past.

Spoilt for choice

Beyond choosing between original and new fittings and furniture, guests also have the choice between rooms with or without balconies, between baths or showers or both, or whether they wish to enjoy the feel of parquet flooring or carpet underfoot. And then there are the views! Those rooms facing east overlook Lake Silvaplana and Piz Corvatsch; to the north there are the meadows and Sils-Baselgia; south-facing rooms overlook the Fex valley and westward-facing windows enjoy a view of Lake Sils. In fact, even within



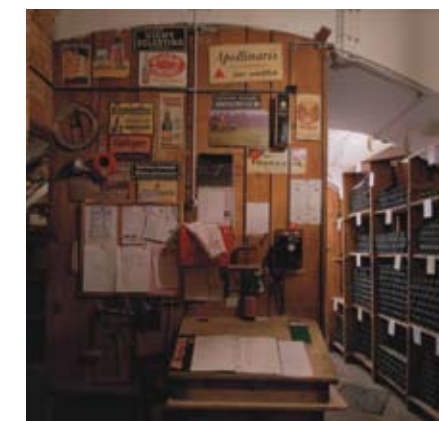
‘Repeat visits to the Waldhaus are definitely needed to try even a fraction of what there is on offer’

the ten room categories on offer, there are differences in size and appointment so repeat visits to the Waldhaus are definitely needed to try even a fraction of what there is on offer.

Celebrities and giants of the artistic world are no strangers to the appeal of the Waldhaus. Over the past 100 years, famous guests have included authors Hermann Hesse and Thomas Mann; film actors Michael Redgrave, Isabelle Huppert and Vivien Leigh; singing stars such as David Bowie and Rod Stewart and artists like Marc Chagall. However, there's little point in asking to stay in the same room as a celebrity did previously – the hotel staff's reputation for providing a personal service means that personal information also stays just that! You'll just have to be satisfied with the fact that you've breathed the same exhilarating mountain air and taken part in the same enjoyable facilities.

Time out

Despite historical events, the Waldhaus has not missed a summer season since the grand opening, and the winter



Waldhaus Hotel's guests are treated to the gastronomic delights that have been dreamed up and then painstakingly created by the expert team in the kitchens

season, started in 1924 in order to broaden the hotel's economic base, was only interrupted between 1939-55. A large part of this success is due to the appeal of the surroundings.

While this five-star hotel offers guests the use of its indoor pool - designed in the late 1960s by Switzerland's leading pool architect of the time - an indoor tennis court, game room, saunas and a steam bath, many other activities can be enjoyed out of doors.

During the summer months, there's trout fishing; swimming, windsurfing and sailing on Lake Sils; discovering the mountains by bike and day trips using the free regional bus passes issued by the Waldhaus that can take guests

as far afield as St Moritz and even into Italy. For keen hikers there are daily walks from Monday through Friday, and five evenings a week, a hiking guide is available to answer questions. Take a trip in a motorboat across the lake or rediscover a slower pace of life by riding on the public horse omnibus between Sils and the Fex Valley. Golfing enthusiasts will find two 18-hole courses within easy reach of the hotel and there's a 'Golf Academy'

with a driving range and six practice holes in the grounds of the Margna Hotel in Sils.

The winter season naturally revolves around the magnificent skiing opportunities, as well as exhilarating activities such as skating on the open-air rink in Sils-Maria itself and sledging in the forest behind the hotel.

Food for thought

And after a hard day skiing, sailing or hiking, the Waldhaus Hotel's guests are treated to the gastronomic delights that have been dreamed up and then painstakingly created by the expert team in the kitchens, led by head chef Kurt Röösli, and served in one of the hotel's two restaurants. If you've been tempted by the array of dishes, you can even purchase Kurt's cookbook that lovingly recreates his favourite recipes and is illustrated with photos taken by the hotel's house engineer and photographer extraordinaire.

Anniversary activities

While special events such as jazz concerts, wine tastings, literary readings and activities for children are arranged almost every day of the year at the Waldhaus, it's clear that such an auspicious occasion as the 100th anniversary won't be passing without major celebrations being planned. From June this year, there'll be performances of a special play written about the Waldhaus. Giuseppe Reichmuth, a well-known Swiss artist, is creating a display celebrating the past 100 years of the hotel and a children's book with CD is also planned. One of the highlights of the celebrations will be a glittering ball that will be held on 20 December 2008, which will recreate those held at the hotel in its infancy. At this ball and at many another occasions planned during the centenary year, we're sure a few glasses will be raised to the next 100 years at the Waldhaus! ■



For more information about staying at the Waldhaus Hotel, call +41 (0)81 838 51 00, email mail@waldhaus-sils.ch or visit www.waldhaus-sils.ch

