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RESEARCH

LUXURY

Alpine luxury and opulence

Austria's distinguished luxury hotels

There are several hundred luxury hotels throughout Austria. Palaces, castles, mansions and monasteries provide luxurious sanctuary for guests. Swimming pools and spa treatments are an important part of a luxurious property. The Relax Guide and Granderwasser symbolise the highest degree of rejuvenation and relaxation. Many restaurants located within luxury hotels are awarded Falstaff Gabeln. Family ownership and management ensure guests experience impeccable facilities, excellent service and ambience in the luxurious properties between the Bodensee in the western province of Vorarlberg to Neusiedlersee in the eastern province of Burgenland. Four magnificent five star luxury hotels will provide an understanding of Austrian luxury.

Swimming pools and spa treatments are an important characteristic of a luxury holiday. Mag. Christian Werner created the *Relax Guide* in 1997 to assess the quality of spa treatments. The *Relax Guide* awarded lilies to Austrian hotels in 1999 and to German hotels in 2001. A lily is awarded to a spa achieving 13/20. The result is described as sehr gute Leistungen (very good achievement). Two lilies are awarded for a spa achieving 15/20 or außergewöhnlich (exceptional). Three lilies are awarded for achieving 17/20. The achievement is considered hervorragend (excellent). A spa receives four lilies for achieving 19/20 worthy of Spitzenbetrieb (leading result). The perfect result is considered Höchstnote (highest result). The Relax Guide awarded 1057 Austrian hotels lilies in 2014.

Granderwasser is used by many Austrian luxury hotels and resorts. Johann Grander, an Austrian naturalist from the distinguished village of Jochberg in the Kitzbühel Alps was a pioneer of revitalised water. Revitalised water acknowledges water contains information within water molecules. The order of water molecules tends to be disrupted by external factors. Granderwasser restores water molecules to their highly ordered stable state by information transfer. It allows water to rejuvenate and regain its vitality. Hotel Kaiserhof in Ellmau, Tirol and Kempinski Hotel Das Tirol in Jochberg, both five star superior luxury hotels use Granderwasser in swimming pools and spa treatments.

Excellent cuisine and impeccable restaurants are prominent in luxurious properties. *Falstaff*, a distinguished Viennese wine and gourmet magazine awards Falstaff Gabeln (Forks) to restaurants providing gastronomic excellence. Restaurants are assessed in four categories.

The categories are: cuisine; service; ambience and wine. A Gabel is awarded for restaurants achieving a result of 80/100 and four Gabeln are awarded to restaurants achieving 95/100. Many of the distinguished restaurants can be found in luxury hotels. The Paznaunerstube, an eminent restaurant found within Hotel Trofana Royal, a five star superior luxury hotel in the luxurious resort of Ischgl, Tirol received 97/100 and awarded 4 Falstaff Gabeln in the *2014 Falstaff Restaurantguide*.

Family ownership and management are important characteristics of Austrian luxury hotels. The intimate relationship between ownership and management reflects exceptional quality, impeccable service, care and dedication guests receive from the moment they arrive at the property and enjoy during the course of their visit. A hotel management corporation separates ownership and management. The hotel management corporation receives management fees for providing the infrastructure to a corporation responsible for recruiting hotel personnel. The objective is extracting profit rather than providing guests with impeccable service, ambience and facilities to enjoy.

The Wirtschaftskammer Österreich (Austrian Federal Economic Chamber) is responsible for assessing and awarding stars to Austrian hotels. Austrian hotel classification is part of Hotelstars Union, an organisation consisting of several European hotel associations. Austrian luxury hotels are awarded five star or five star superior. A five star luxury hotel provides guests with 24 hour reception; concierge; impeccable rooms and suites containing exquisite furniture; 24 hour room service; personal greeting; multilingual staff and a mystery guest from an external inspector to ensure the property maintains exceptional quality. A five star superior luxury hotel possesses the qualities necessary for a five star luxury hotel and an intensive mystery guest inspection is conducted to ensure it satisfies the superior status by providing additional service or higher quality service.

The four star superior category has become popular in Austria since its introduction in 2008. More than 230 Austrian luxury hotels possess the four star superior rating in October 2014. A four star superior hotel provides guests with 24 hour reception; superb rooms and suites containing exquisite furniture; additional facilities such as swimming pools, sauna or gymnasium and a mystery guest regularly inspects the hotel. A four star superior hotel is a five star luxury hotel without 24 hour room service.

A pig farmer's ambition created the Arlberg Hospiz. Heinrich was a pig farmer at Burg Arlen near Sankt Anton am Arlberg. He observed misery and starvation accompanied the animals roaming the Arlberg. Heinrich requested Duke Leopold III of Austria to grant him land at the Arlberg mountain pass. The Hospiz was built in 1386. Pope Boniface IX granted Heinrich the honour of establishing the Brotherhood of Sankt Christoph. The brotherhood provided food, drink and accommodation for those requiring refuge. The Hospiz remained a refuge until 1884. The construction of the Arlberg railway reduced the number of visitors to the Hospiz. Carl Ganahl the Governor of the province of Vorarlberg issued a monument protection for the building.

The Arlberg Hospiz became a luxury hotel in December 1959. The building was rebuilt after fire destroyed the building and church in 1957. Arnold Ganahl owned the luxury hotel and offered guests luxury accommodation, splendour and impeccable hospitality. Adolf and Gerda Werner assumed management of the luxury hotel in 1964. Gerda Werner was the daughter of Arnold Ganahl. Florian Werner has managed the Arlberg Hospiz since 1997. The Arlberg Hospiz consists of 87 luxurious rooms and suites. Accommodation is opulent, sophisticated and spacious. The skyfall suites are a recent addition. The four suites contain elegant furniture, wood and natural stone to create an enticing ambience. The suites provide guests with a splendid view of Sankt Christoph am Arlberg.

The Restaurant Skiclub Stube offers guests a culinary paradise. The restaurant provides superb Austrian specialties and international delicacies. Fresh fruit, vegetables and the finest ingredients are used to create culinary masterpieces. Restaurant Skiclub Stube received 91/100 and awarded 3 Falstaff Gabeln in the *2014 Falstaff Restaurantguide*. The wine cellar contains the world's largest collection of wine in special large bottles. The large bottles ensure the wine matures gently and slowly. The wines are more durable. The brotherhood's wine cellar contains Adi Werner's collection of distinguished Bordeaux and Burgundy wines. The cellar contains wine harvested from Château Clos de Sarpe Saint Emilion in 1941 and magnificent Tyrolean wines.

Romantik Hotel Krone von Lech is a magnificent five star luxury hotel located in the centre of the luxurious resort of Lech am Arlberg in the majesty of Vorarlberg. The luxury hotel was first mentioned in 1741 four years before Maria Theresia was crowned Austrian empress. It was transformed from a tavern and guesthouse into a luxurious and exclusive hideaway for wealthy guests. The Pfefferkorn family own and manage the luxury hotel for more than 140 years. Johannes Pfefferkorn is the fifth generation of the family to manage the property.

The Krone-Stuben is a magnificent crown in the luxury hotel's three restaurants. It provides guests exquisite cuisine and alpine ambience. Wood panels dominate the floor and the ceiling. Guests savour culinary masterpieces and fine wine on white linen enveloping heavy wooden tables. A seventeenth century cellar contains 25,000 bottles of extraordinary Austrian and French wine. Willi Hirsch and Johannes Pfefferkorn are the two certified sommeliers offering expert advice to guests considering the appropriate wine to accompany cuisine. The restaurant received 91/100 and 3 Falstaff Gabeln in the *2014 Falstaff Restaurantguide*.

The luxury hotel consists of 53 elegant rooms and suites. The Romantic suite is the largest suite at the property. It encompasses approximately 65 square metres of opulent space. The suite contains exquisite furniture, impeccable wood panels, a generous bedroom chamber, a marble fireplace and an elegant marble bathroom. A balcony provides an imperial view of Lech am Arlberg.

The Grandhotel Lienz is a spectacular property located in the East Tyrolean town of Lienz. Professor Heinz Simonitsch, a distinguished international hotelier created the property. He returned to Austria after almost four decades in the Caribbean. His expertise transformed

Half Moon resort in Montego Bay, Jamaica from a precarious retreat to a celebrated resort. Simonitsch utilised his hotel managerial and hospitality expertise to develop a luxury oasis between the Großglockner and the Dolomites.

Professor Simonitsch and the Westreicher family own and manage the property. Heinz Westreicher, Simonitsch's brother-in-law is the managing director. The alignment of hotel management and ownership provides impeccable service and an ambience for guests to enjoy a splendid holiday. Care and appreciation for the guest is apparent in the elegant and large suites furnished with stylish décor and grand furniture. The 72 junior suites and 4 Royal suites symbolise imperial flair, opulence and provide an intimate refuge.

The Grandhotel Lienz provides guests five dining salons. The Egger Lienz Stube; Orangerie; Salon de Fleur; Gewölbekeller and Dolomitenstube provide traditional Austrian, Mediterranean and Adriatic dishes. The diverse cuisine reflects Lienz's geography. It is located at the intersection of Austria and Italy. Alpine cuisine and Adriatic flavour are evident in the colour, aroma, culinary technique and style of the cuisine guests enjoy. The Grandhotel restaurant received 86/100 and awarded two Falstaff Gabeln in the *2014 Falstaff Restaurantguide*.

The swimming pool and spa provide rejuvenation in an extravagant environment. The private spa offers guests the opportunity to indulge themselves with a variety of spa treatments, massage therapy, steam baths and body treatments. Professor Simonitsch's Caribbean experience is evident with the two most exclusive spa treatments offering Caribbean massages and ingredients evoking the Caribbean lifestyle. The Grandhotel Lienz received 17/20 and awarded three lilies from the *2014 Relax Guide*. Professor Peter Lechleitner manages the medical centre. Qualified medical specialists offer guests advice concerning nutrition, exercise and relaxation techniques. The centre's strength is scientific expertise and medicine. Specialist care in medicine and complementary medicine are offered.

The Hotel Goldener Hirsch is an exquisite luxury hotel located on the distinguished Getreidegasse in the Altstadt district of Salzburg. The luxury hotel occupies a property established in 1407. The Guldener Hirsch was established in 1564. It was an inn and guesthouse. Count Emanuel Walderdorff and his wife purchased the property in 1939. The couple dedicated a decade to creating an opulent hotel. The countess collected rustic furniture and restored the property to its landhausstil (country house style) origins. The Hotel Goldener Hirsch welcomed the first guests in April 1948.

The five star luxury hotel provides opulent accommodation for discerning guests. The five suites and sixty-five rooms contain exquisite antiques, hand crafted textiles, fine decor and masterly crafted furniture. The suites use pink, blue, yellow, green or red to convey grandeur and demonstrate dedication to the heritage and appreciation of the property's magnificence. The Kupferschmiedhaus suite provides a splendid view of the renowned streets of the Altstadt.

Culinary excellence is a vital quality of the Goldener Hirsch. A blacksmith's shop preceded the distinguished restaurant. Rustic Austrian wooden chairs and tables are prominent in the elegant dining room. Guests observe wooden beams above them. The table near the fireplace is known as Grilltisch. Clemens Holzmeister, a renowned Austrian architect was selected to design the Großes Festspielhaus at the table. Engravings depicting hunting scenes decorate the white walls. Austrian green appears on the traditional uniforms worn by the waiters and the linen adorning the dining tables. The hirsch (deer) symbolising the splendour and grandeur of the luxury hotel is hand woven in white and green. The Restaurant Goldener Hirsch is an acclaimed restaurant. It received 85/100 and awarded 2 Falstaff Gabeln in the *2014 Falstaff Restaurantguide*.

Austrian luxury hotels provide guests an opulent property containing spacious suites, culinary excellence, swimming pools, spa treatments, concierge, 24 hour room service and a refuge to relax and enjoy the ambience. Family ownership and management is a vital factor in creating an impeccable property offering discerning guests excellent service and catering to their desires. Many luxury properties have a rich heritage and tradition providing guests an opportunity to explore and experience a property's history.