



HOTEL SINCE 1907

BELVEDERE

GRINDELWALD SWITZERLAND

HOLIDAY NEWS

News to make your
holiday in Grindelwald even better

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Editorial

Dear Belvedere guests,

The Hauser family and all our staff are very grateful that we were able to welcome so many guests from all countries and continents over the past summer. The successful season now allows us to continue with our renovations ahead of the winter season. As an exception, therefore, the hotel remains closed for six weeks from the end of October to enable this work to be carried out. We look forward to welcoming lots of visitors once we have re-opened on Friday, 15 December 2017.

On a beautiful summer evening in August, I explained to guests on the Belvedere terrace how nature has been changing in Grindelwald due to global warming. Afterwards, a guest from the USA who had been listening attentively recommended the book «Thank you for being late» by Thomas Friedmann, adding that I would gain a much better understanding of today's world thanks to the highly interesting background information. I followed his advice and was so impressed by the book that I strongly recommend it to you all.

It explains why the digital evolution is advancing at such an incredible speed and still accelerating; it tells you what the civil war in Syria has to do with global warming and why, for the same reason, millions of refugees are coming to Europe from Africa. You can discover how and where the world's population is set to change, read about what is happening right now and where, and learn how the situation will evolve and why. All this is in the book (which is not only available in English), and I recommend it not only as a good read but also as an ideal Christmas present.

The season closed with the regular guest week in October. Blessed with spectacular weather ideal for walking, guests thoroughly enjoyed their stay and the amicable get-together.

The Hauser family will certainly organise another week like this, but during a different season. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you and all our guests for spending their holiday in Grindelwald at the Belvedere, and hope to see you back with us in the future. Your custom is the only way we can keep the hotel attractive and invest in its future. Some Swiss hotels have patrons who inject large volumes of cash even if the hotel is not generating a profit, and some alpine regions enjoy financial support from the government. We, however, can only invest what is left over from our revenue at the end of the year.

We are looking forward to the winter season and hope we can count on the same volume of guests as we had over the summer. To this end, we have come up with special offers which we present in this News and also on our website. In this issue we also present new members of the hotel staff and the latest additions to the family of our former Reception managers.

Starting in June 2018, we will be celebrating 111 years of the Hotel Belvedere. Not so long ago - it seems like only yesterday - we celebrated the hotel's 100th anniversary. Now, 11 years later, we will be putting together attractive offers in connection with this special occasion.

You will no doubt remember the offer to send you a voucher worth CHF 1'000 if your total spend over 5 years amounted to CHF 10'000 (with the exception of long-term regular guests to whom we still offer an appropriate discount). Although the special offer has not run for long, we have already been able to issue several of these vouchers.

At present everything is going according to plan with the Hauser family and the Belvedere. During the 2017 summer season, our son Philip gained more experience at the Hotel

Margna in Sils, and at the beginning of November he takes up a new job in Norway, where he will remain until Easter while he gains a valuable insight into the control system for hotel chains in Norway. For him this is particularly important, given the fact that Norway has to contend with costs on a par with those here in Switzerland. At the same time, he will be able to further improve his Norwegian.

Our daughter Carole, who was responsible for reception and reservations over the past summer season, has handed on this challenging task and will now focus more on accounting, event organisation and plans for further renovations.

It will be an honour to welcome you, dear guests, again to the Belvedere. We look forward to your visit.

*Warmest regards,
Urs-B. Hauser, family
and co-hosts*

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Not all objections have been resolved,
but almost all

V-Rail project: next steps?

Urs Kessler, the CEO of Jungfrau Railways, is optimistic

Although more than 70% of residents of the Grindelwald and Lauterbrunnen valleys voted in a secret ballot in favour of the V-Rail construction, a few remain firmly opposed to the project. The remaining objectors were and are still of the opinion that the majority of residents view the project too optimistically and have made the wrong decision.

After the construction of the Jungfrau railway more than 100 years ago, at a cost of around CHF 400 million, the V-Rail project is the largest rail project ever planned in the Jungfrau region. You can find interesting information and details on the Jungfrau Railways website at www.jungfrau.ch/en-gb/v-cableway.

Although not all objections have been resolved, the Jungfrau Railways were able to come to an agreement with their most vehement opponent, the owner of the Scheidegg Hotels. In return, the Jungfrau Railways had to



New Eiger Express gondola to the Eiger glacier

Photo: Jungfrau Railways

agree to discontinue the popular «SnowpenAir» festival after 2020 and make various changes to the Kleine Scheidegg railway area.

The Board of Directors of Jungfrau Railways is optimistic that the last objections will be settled by the end of this year, and that construction of the railways can begin in the spring of 2018. This being the case, the new 10-man gondola lift on Männlichen could go into operation in the winter of 2019/20, followed by the new Eiger Express to the Eiger glacier one year later.

It makes little sense to book rooms over a large international internet platform

It's cheaper to book directly online via the hotel's website

The Swiss parliament has banned adhesion contracts

Again and again, the Belvedere's reservations team has noticed that even regular guests as well as many Swiss and European guests book their rooms at the Belvedere via websites like booking.com, Expedia, Trivago etc. Up to now, hotels could be obliged to offer the cheapest prices on these platforms. Thanks to the Swiss parliament, this has now changed.

Everyone knows that it's easy to book holidays anywhere in the world if you use one of the established online platforms. There are plenty of advertisements on TV that make this claim. So it's not surprising that the Belvedere is also seeing an increase in bookings via these platforms.



Even Swiss guests and guests who have visited the hotel several times choose this option. This is disadvantageous for the hotel in the sense that these platforms charge high commissions. Yet booking rooms in this way offers guests no advantages. It's much better to book directly on the hotel's own website.

The advantages for guests are as follows:

- Greater choice of rooms
- Daily rates are a little cheaper
- You can book package deals and special offers which are not available on third-party platforms
- Only if you book directly with the hotel, you will be eligible for a CHF 1'000 voucher if your total spend reaches CHF 10'000 over a 5-year period

The Hauser family also recommends using the Belvedere website www.belvedere-grindelwald.ch/en/restaurant to reserve a table in their restaurant.

The www.belvedere-grindelwald.ch/webcam webcam link provides a real-time view of the Grindelwald valley, and under bit.ly/belvedere_drone you will find a very attractive new video taken from a drone.

Willem and Renate Scheepers from Duisburg and William and Helen Ferrie from Neilston

Long-term regular guests from Germany and Scotland

Both couples are loyal winter and summer guests

Willem and Renate Scheepers from Duisburg have been coming to the Belvedere regularly for almost 40 years, and William and Hellen Ferrie from Neilston, near Glasgow, for more than 30 years. Both couples visit the Hauser family and Grindelwald in the summer and winter seasons.

Both men not only share the same first name, they have something else in common: both are very sporty! At more than 75 years of age, Willem Scheepers still regularly runs marathons, and William Ferrie is an excellent golfer and curler. Another common denominator: both couples always ask for the same room on the 5th floor.

The following stories were provided by the Scheepers and Ferries.

Willem and Renate Scheepers write:

«We first came to the Belvedere in the summer of 1978 and felt so at home that we spent our first ski vacation with the kids at Easter of 1979. Very soon we got to know lots of nice guests, and we are still friends to this day with some of them. Grindelwald's mountains, and especially the Eiger with its spectacular North Face, still inspire awe in us, both in summer and in winter. Willi has successfully run the Jungfrau Marathon on several occasions and hopes to continue taking part in it for several more years.»



Renate and Willem Scheepers



Helen and William Ferrie

William and Helen Ferrie write:

«We first came to the Hotel Belvedere at Easter of 1986, for a skiing holiday. We had been planning on going to Wengen but the hotel there let us down and we then chose the Belvedere because we liked the idea of it being family run. It turned out to be one of the best decisions we have made.

Helen is not a good traveller and can't eat on planes or trains and was not feeling good when we got to the hotel, for the first time. However, one of the first people we met was Urs Hauser who was welcoming and kindly made her a cup of tea and a toasted sandwich. We sat on the terrace and looked at the amazing view and felt at peace.

After a few skiing holidays we started coming to Grindelwald, in the summer, for walking in the mountains and for about 25 years have come to the Belvedere twice a year. We think of it as our second home. We have become good friends with Annlo from the restaurant and she and her husband, Bruno, came to Scotland to help us celebrate our Ruby Wedding.

We never get bored of coming to Grindelwald. In the past Billy climbed the Eiger, Mönch, Wetterhorn and Jungfrau. Now we are not quite so adventurous, we still go walking but also like golfing in Interlaken and going to the lakes.

We hope to be able to keep coming to the Hotel Belvedere for many more years.»

The Belvedere team looks forward to hearing from its guests

Stories from guests for the 111-year anniversary

Holidays at the Hotel Belvedere: do you have any special memories or tales worth telling?

As part of the 111-year celebrations to be held from June 2018, Urs Hauser would like to compile a special Newsletter and write it for once from the standpoint of the guests. What can you tell Holiday News readers about your stays at the Belvedere in Grindelwald?

Did you perhaps meet each other at the Belvedere and later marry and start a family? Have you had any other special experience that can be published in the Holiday

News? For example, do you have any tales of skiing adventures or mishaps, or perhaps while at the Belvedere you had a fantastic business idea which subsequently proved a hit? Or maybe you had an unexpected experience on your way here or your journey home. The possibilities are endless...

The Hauser family hopes to receive lots of interesting and exciting tales from you. Please write to 111years@belvedere-grindelwald.ch. If you want to contribute but wish to remain anonymous, i.e. the story can be published but under another name, please mention this when you write to the Belvedere. The Hauser family looks forward to your contributions and is eager to read about your experiences and special memories.

The smokers' room is rarely used now

Salon Louis Philippe now with pool table

The hotel lobby is now looking even more roomy and attractive

A few years ago, the small Salon Louis Philippe was turned into a smokers' room but now it is rarely used. This «dead» room off the lobby, behind closed doors that hide a splendid view and restrict the lobby space, triggered a rethink.

The lobby and bar are to be redesigned and renovated. Had everything gone to plan, the rebuild would have been finished by this autumn 2017. However, since the new large window frontage will weigh several tons more than envisaged and will not stand on solid walls, the engineer could not give the go-ahead. The project has therefore been postponed until the late autumn of 2018, in the hope that a solution will be found by then.

Carole and Philip Hauser were involved in the planning for this project and found that the smokers' room was dead space and that the lobby had lost much of its attractiveness due to the closed doors. During a meeting they opened the doors wide, and it was like a breath of fresh air: the lobby immediately looked more spacious. Philip came up with the idea of putting a large pool table in the room. This was immediately given the thumbs-up, and the table was duly installed. Since then the room has undergone a new lease of life, and the pool table is proving extremely popular. If the lobby can be renovated as planned, the pool table will be moved to the existing bar from the winter of 2019 on.



The Salon Louis Philippe with a new pool table

In any case, during the summer months guests smoke on the terrace or at the wooden bench in front of the hotel entrance. A suitable solution with radiant heaters is being sought for the hotel terrace for the winter months.





In summer the lack of an air conditioning system was by far the most common complaint

The first hotel in Grindelwald and one of the first in the Alps to have air cooling in all rooms

The Belvedere uses available cold water instead of expensive energy

Even as early in the year as March some guests used to complain about the lack of air conditioning in their room. The warmer the outside temperature became, the louder and more frequent the complaints would be. So back in 2015 the Hauser family decided to plan the necessary investments.

The generators for an air conditioning system consume a vast amount of electricity. The Hauser family found this out a few years ago when they had air conditioning installed for the restaurant. The sheer size of the two huge machines in the basement is astonishing, and energy bills have shot up as a result of the electricity these machines consume. So installing air conditioning in all rooms besides just the restaurant was never a consideration due to concerns about the resultant energy costs.

But then inspiration hit. Heat pumps have been used since 2006 to heat the outside pool. The water which is drawn from below ground at 9° is cooled down to 4° by the pumps, generating sufficient energy to heat not only the outside salt-water pool but also the indoor pool and all the premises on that level. The warm water is also pre-heated to 45°C for the hotel, and the cold water is then pumped back into the ground.



The highly popular salt water Jacuzzi in the garden



A newly renovated room with air cooling system

So why not use this cold water to cool the air? Urs Hauser approached the Welatec engineering bureau in Interlaken with his idea and asked them to look into it. Imagine his delight when the engineers came back with a positive assessment. The system was carefully planned, and in the autumn of 2016 and spring of 2017 the first rooms were fitted with air cooling units. The central unit was added in summer 2017, and since the end of summer the system has been operating in all 4th-floor rooms.

The rooms on the first and third floor are currently being fitted, followed by the 5th floor in spring. Whether the second floor can be fitted in spring or only in autumn 2018 has yet to be decided. The restaurant will be also re-connected in spring 2018.

Thanks to you, dear valued guests, the quality of the hotel can be further enhanced

The renovations continue

The Hauser family is hoping for more good financial years

Twenty years ago, large Swiss banks used to provide generous support to the hotel industry in the form of mortgages, but now they have changed their business policy and are no longer interested in collaborating with hotels in alpine and lake regions. The only loans they offer in this sector nowadays are to businesses which already have sufficient funds thanks to patrons. No wonder, then, that more and more hotels in Swiss holiday regions are in need of modernisation, standing empty or have been turned into apartment blocks.

Thanks to good business performance and a change of bank made possible by this, the situation has eased for the Hauser family. Whereas not so long ago, virtually every franc earned went towards paying off the mortgage, this cash can now flow back into the business. This is essential in order to enable major projects like installing air cooling, renovating the rooms and replacing the heating and other systems to be carried out.

This autumn the depth of the water in the indoor pool will be reduced from 1.58 meters to 1.30 meters in compliance with the regulations for indoor pools with no permanent lifeguard, and the floor tiles round the pool are to be replaced. In the autumn of 2018, the roof-support and overhead heating will also be replaced.

Air cooling is being installed on two floors, as a result of which the following work needs to be carried out in each room on these floors. The ceiling in the entrance area will be removed in order to install additional insulation and an air cooling unit before fitting a new ceiling. The same goes for the corridors: remove ceiling, fit additional insulation and install pipes and connections. This opportunity is being taken to replace the carpets in the corridors, render and repaint the walls, fit new panels and locks on the entrance doors, and install a modern, more secure locking system. Some rooms will be renovated, and several will be equipped with new box-spring beds. All rooms should have these new beds by autumn 2018. It would have been more practical to change all the beds at the same time, but unfortunately this is not possible because it also entails changing the wall behind the beds and fitting new electrical connections.

This autumn new machines such as dishwashers, ice-making machines and expensive high-tech devices for the kitchen and restaurant will be acquired.

Celebrate Christmas and/or New Year at the Belvedere with the Hauser family

The traditional Christmas celebrations, plus a New Year's party on the theme «Time Travel»

Ring out the Old Year with the Hauser family and their motivated team

On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, guests will be pampered with the traditional Gala Dinners. There will be a visit from Father Christmas on the evening of 25 December 2017. Get into the mood on New Year's Eve with the live dance music, which has proved so popular with guests over the past two years. The theme of this year's New Year celebrations is «Time Travel» and sets the start to the 111 year anniversary celebrations.

On 24 December, Christmas Eve, the Belvedere team will be serving a superb Christmas dinner put together by executive chef Christian Schubert. Then the churches in Grindelwald will be holding a special Christmas service or Holy Mass.



The evening of 25 December sees the traditional pre-dinner visit of Father Christmas with his donkey Sam, to the delight of young and old. This cosy get-together traditionally takes place in the hotel garden, next to the pergola, accompanied by warming mulled wine and cakes. Everyone looks forward to hearing the children recite the verses they have learned or sing a song to Father Christmas. The event culminates with Father Christmas handing out presents to the kids. Don't miss this evening of festivities.

You'll find the prices on the internet or can enquire by telephone or e-mail.

Skiing in one of the world's most beautiful alpine settings

Book your room and enjoy a free ski, sledging or winter hiking pass

The Hotel Belvedere's special offer

This year the Jungfrau Railways are offering ski enthusiasts a ski pass for the entire winter season for only CHF 666, covering four ski regions in the Bernese Oberland. As very few Belvedere guests might be interested in taking advantage of this offer, the Belvedere team is offering guests a free 2-day ski pass.

Grindelwald is one of the 11 classic mountain resorts awarded the title «Best of the Alps», and richly deserves this honour thanks not only to its unique alpine panorama, but also to the wonderful excursions visitors can make to famous landmarks like the Jungfrauoch and Schilthorn; the splendid winter wonderland for skiing, snowboarding and hiking; the clearly-marked hiking trails; plus all the additional activities visitors can enjoy in the Grindelwald valley and surrounding region.



Photo: Jungfrau Region Tourismus

Skiing in front of Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau

For all guests who can only manage a few days off in the winter months, the Hauser family recommends reserving rooms during the week. The slopes are relatively quiet from Monday to Friday, and queues are few and far between. A short stay can be just as beneficial as a longer stay. You can recharge your batteries skiing, sledging or hiking in the invigorating mountain air, and in no time you'll feel like new.



Photo: Jungfrau Region Tourismus

A cosy skiing break face to face with the Eiger

The Belvedere offers a 2-day ski, sledging or winter hiking pass for a 3-night stay during the week. You can also benefit from a 10% discount on the room rate, including breakfast, and 50% off dinner. Book online on the Belvedere website.

www.belvedere-grindelwald.ch/en/winter-holiday



Photo: Grindelwald Bus

Sledging fun on Bussalp

Welcome on board, Isabelle Mahler and Christian Schubert

New executive staff members in the kitchen and at the reception

Two departments under new management

Julia Hönig, who has managed the reception team for many years, now has a baby daughter, and Markus Berger has decided to take up a new challenge after 14 years working for the Belvedere. Isabelle Mahler from Dresden and Christian Schubert from Rostock have taken over the respective positions.

The Hauser family extends a warm welcome to both new members of staff. Both proved their skills during the recent summer season, and mastered their duties with bravura. Isabelle Mahler gained valuable experience working on the Canary Island Fuerteventura and at another top hotel in Grindelwald.

Christian Schubert worked for many years in a well-known hotel in the Glarus region of Switzerland and then in Zermatt. He was looking for a new challenge and was highly recommended to the Hauser family by hotelier colleagues, so in no time at all he was engaged.



Isabelle Mahler

Christian Schubert

Christian's family still lives by the beautiful Baltic, so he is very pleased that his job allows him to spend some extended time with them in the spring and autumn.

The Hauser family is delighted to have both young specialists on their team and looks forward to a long, highly successful collaboration.

Three young ladies are training to become hotel managers

Training future managers is extremely important

Aurore Bonvin, Jasmin Schlatter and Debora Brandenberger: the apprentices

The three young ladies will undergo their 3-year apprenticeship in hotel management at the Belvedere. While Debora has familiarised herself with work in the rooms and the hotel laundry during her first apprenticeship year, Jasmin - in her second year - has switched to restaurant service, and Aurore, who is in her third apprenticeship year, works at reception. All three apprentices are therefore learning different aspects of hotel management.

It is very important to train young people in order to mould hotel managers of the future. Not everyone is interested in working in hotels or restaurants, especially because these professions frequently have to work at week-ends and well into the evening. But there are advantages to these working hours: during the week you are free to go

shopping or skiing. If you have an afternoon break between shifts (normally 4 to 5 hours), you have time to go swimming in the lake, go mountain biking or, in winter, take to the slopes for a few hours.



Jasmin Schlatter, Debora Brandenberger and Aurore Bonvin

The Hausers are always delighted to meet young people interested in hotel management who want to undergo their training at the Belvedere.



Julia Hönig with Sophia Annabell

Additions to the family for Belvedere employees

Grindelwald is an ideal place to start a family

New mums Julia Hönig and Carina Pfeiffer

The head and assistant head of reception are now mothers: Julia has a daughter named Sophia, and Carina a son called Benny. Both gave up their positions to devote all their time to their babies: but not for very long, since Carina is now working part-time at reception and Julia will re-join the team in the winter.

Imagine the Hauser family's surprise when first Carina, then, about 5 month later, Julia announced they were pregnant. Both were responsible for reception and their extensive know-how and experience could not be passed on so quickly to someone else.

So first Philip and later Carole were thrown in at the deep end, but thank goodness both soon quickly learned

the ropes. Carole was very grateful for Carina's valuable support when she returned in spring for 2 days a week. And the Hauser family is happy to report that Julia also wants to return to the Belvedere for 2 days a week, starting at the beginning of 2018.

The Belvedere team wishes both young mums every satisfaction with bringing up their children and hope they will be able to juggle work and family successfully.



Carina Pfeiffer with Benny

