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Johannes Badrutt junior (1819-1889): hotel pioneer and promoter of the winter season



*Portrait of Johannes
Badrutt junior; below,
his signature, 1852.*

Johannes Badrutt, pioneer of hotels and tourism, was born in Samedan on 2nd April 1819 as the fourth child of Johannes Badrutt and Anna Maria Badrutt-Donatsch. The house in which he was born was next to the Squeder family home. Johannes soon proved to be a cheerful boy with a love of nature. He helped his parents to slaughter their own livestock and,

as of 1830, assisted his mother with visitors who took guestrooms or came to dance. It was presumably also Johannes's hands-on approach that led his father to involve him in his business at a young age.

A passion for Italian art

Johannes's brothers pursued their studies in Munich and Paris, but their younger sibling was given a practical education. After attending elementary school in Samedan – in those days, tuition, in the winter months only, was optional and privately funded – Johannes was taught at home by his elder brother Christian. In 1833/34 he spent a few months in Chiavenna, Italy, in order to gain the necessary knowledge in the trading of goods. In this town, which was of strategic importance for Graubünden's transit trade, Johannes acquired a taste for Italian art, a passion that was to enthral him all his life. He subsequently went to Chur, where he attended confirmation classes and worked at an ironmonger's.

At the young age of 13, Johannes already had to help in his father's business, issuing invoices and writing letters – although according to his memoirs he had considerable difficulty with writing and arithmetic. In 1836, Johannes's father entrusted him at the age of 17 with the management of the workshops and warehouse for the building trade. While his elder brother, Christian, became a master builder and helped his father on con-

struction projects, Johannes was supposed to concentrate on the logistical side of the business. However, he was more interested in forms, music and religion than dealing with building materials and bookkeeping.

«Iron, flour and cheese»

In his memoirs, Johannes commented very critically on working in his father's business: «On 1st April 1836, my father opened our new business funded by the wealthy chief magistrate of the district, Rudolf von Planta – trading in iron, flour, lard, cheese, paints and glass, with locksmiths and a carpentry workshop in-house. No-one had any experience, and now I marvel and wonder who was more stupid – my father and his generous patron, to establish such a complicated business in the Engadine and entrust its management to a 17-year-old with neither an apprenticeship nor any professional knowledge – or me, to allow myself to be saddled with such a task, without any prospects of a salary.»

Partner and comrade-in-arms

On 1st October 1843, Johannes officially took over management of the «Werk- und Handelshaus für Bauwesen in Samedan» and was allowed to sign himself «Joh. Badrutt, Sohn». His promotion was probably due to the fact that Johannes Badrutt senior was in debt. The same year, Johannes junior married Maria Berry (1822–1877), daughter of Johannes Berry and Ursula Berry-Casal, in Samedan. Johannes Berry, who came from Schiers, was a merchant, innkeeper and later chief district magistrate. He lived with his family in Chur, where he was awarded citizenship in 1835. The Berry and Badrutt families probably also maintained business relations. Johannes Badrutt



had an ideal wife in Maria Berry, as his grandson Anton R. Badrutt reports: «Although at that time there were no equal rights and the concept of the working woman was then unknown, my grandmother was one of those women who had in those early days already proved themselves as partners and comrades-in-arms.»

Johannes Badrutt and Maria Badrutt-Berry, 1860s.

The Badrutts: a large family

The marriage of Johannes and Maria Badrutt was blessed with eleven children, although only the eight eldest reached adulthood. Maria was born just one year after the wedding, and their first son, Johannes, came into the world 17 months later. Two-and-a-half years on, in 1848, Caspar was born. His father Johannes wrote: «Stormy night due to the midwife; Franz Müller's baby daughter was born in the same half hour.» Eighteen months later, the third son, Peter Robert, was born on a «very stormy winter's night.» Just under two years after that, Paul Ivanhoe arrived on a



Letterhead of an invoice dated 12th June 1845 from Johannes Badrutt junior in Samedan to a client, Andrea B. Puontz.

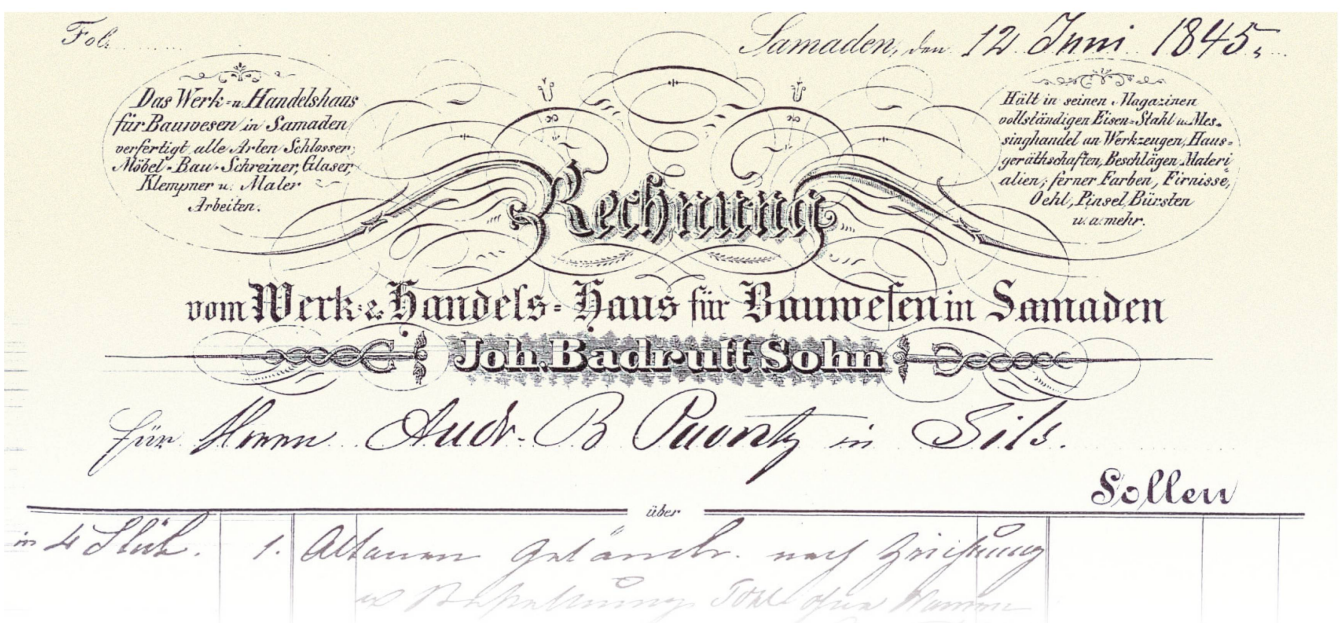
November night when the temperature was minus 20° Celsius. The Badrutts' sixth child, Ursula, was born in 1853. She was followed by Rosina in 1856 and the eighth child, Alfons, a year later. Johannes Badrutt remembered the «difficult time of the pregnancy, with much worry.» He also noted: «That strong, fat boy suckled for a year.»

Loss of three children

The next to be born were three sickly infants who did not survive their first years: in 1859 Annetta was born, but lived only six weeks. Eighteen months later the second Annetta was born, but died at the age of two from meningitis. The Badrutts' last daughter, Sidonia, was the only child born in St. Moritz, in 1862, but she died of scarlet fever at the age of three, «in the evening in the little sitting room, as the sun was setting behind the larch forest.»

Hard times

Although Johannes Badrutt worked hard as manager of the workshops and warehouse, «it wasn't a brilliant success; everybody lost money.» The company ceased trading when his father went bankrupt in 1847. The Badrutts' house was sold for 5,550 guilders to Balthasar Müller, and the contents of the workshops and the warehouse, belonging to the von Planta family, went later to a Mr J. Weber in Chur. This family disgrace was etched deeply on Johannes junior's memory, as he was professionally ruined. «The father's side of my family was liquidated and penniless!





Kaspar
Annetta
Maria Cognoni-Badrutt
Johannes Badrutt-Berry
Johannes
Peter Robert
Alfons
Rosina Kocco-Badrutt/Sidogna
Maria Badrutt-Berry
Paul
Ursula Cognoni-Badrutt

Of my brothers, one was in America and one had died. I had my children and good wife in addition to my furniture (of little value) worth 6,000 Swiss francs, which I had accumulated since April 1836, but my assets consisted of my will to work; I was used to managing on little.» This situation was surely also hard for his wife; as the daughter of a bourgeois family she had grown up accustomed to a certain standard of living.

However, the young couple did not give up during this difficult period. As Johannes, then just under 30, wrote, the sad circumstances had reinforced his knowledge of merchandising and human nature, giving rise to new en-

ergy. There was no longer any future for Johannes in the construction business. However, he did see opportunities in the catering and hotel trade. Johannes now intended to continue doing what his parents had done as a sideline and to make it his main profession. In his memoirs, he recorded that «With the help of my dear wife we have come to the decision that we shall open a café for tourists. I sensed there was a future in this sector.»

A brilliant idea

Whereas many natives of the Engadine emigrated over generations, Johannes Badrutt took the opposite professional path. He wanted to cater for

Family photograph, circa 1863.

visitors in his hometown of Samedan. This was both an obvious and a brilliant idea in view of the fact that the numbers of tourists to the Upper Engadine was growing from summer to summer. Andreas Rudolf von Planta, son of the late chief magistrate of the district, Rudolf von Planta, took a sceptical view of his friend's plans: «It may be that your manner will be appreciated by the tourists. You have something that makes you suited to the trade, but I wash my hands of this involvement and don't want to be blamed if you fail in this enterprise as well.»

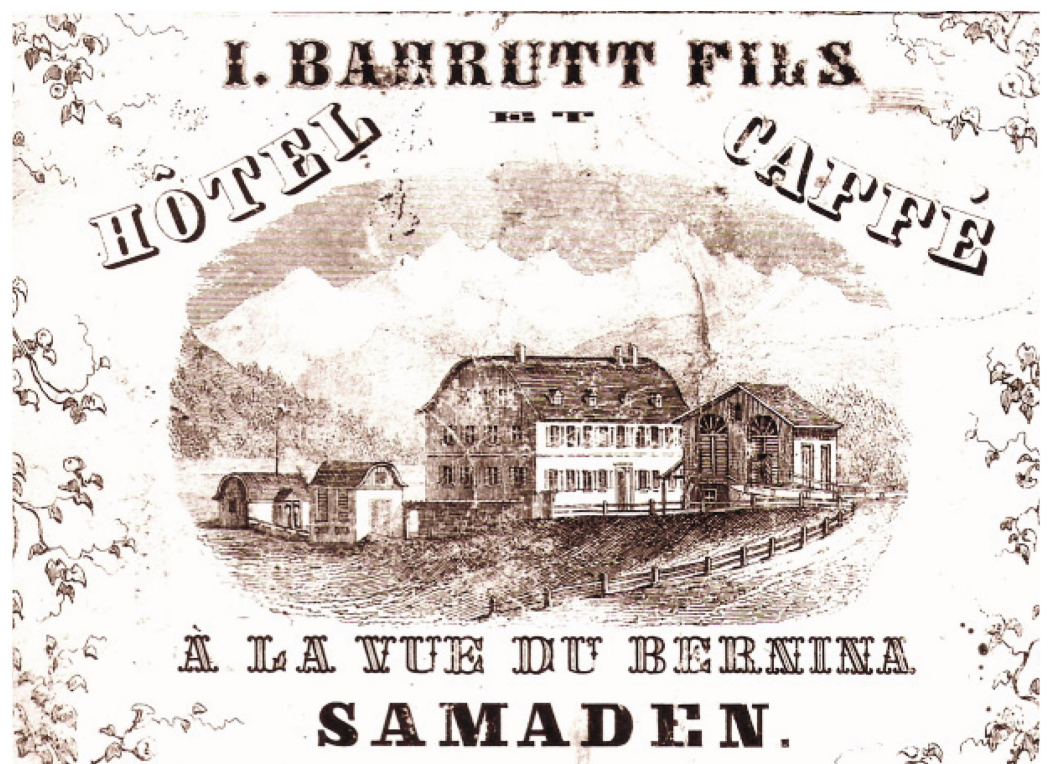
Learning through comparison

Johannes worked day and night, he learnt and travelled to Zurich as well as Paris in order to rapidly acquire the knowledge needed to run a guesthouse and to gain self-confidence. «My mind was open, and my urge to become independent left me no peace.» His wife Maria supported him wherever she could, even if she was often plagued by worry. In 1850 she wrote in a Christmas letter to her fa-

ther-in-law, «Moreover, it's no trifling matter to establish such a business if you have four small children. I would never have agreed to go ahead with the idea if my dear Johannes hadn't felt he was doing the right thing and I know that his clear mind is always a help to him.» In good spirits, the Badrutts opened a café and guesthouse in Samedan in about 1850. As the view from the building was towards the Bernina mountain range, they chose the cosmopolitan-sounding name «A la Vue du Bernina». The hotel premises were the former Badrutt senior's workshops and warehouse, which Johannes had apparently been able to lease. Whereas it had been customary in the Engadine to serve guests until they were full and then to charge a modest fee, Johannes Badrutt's guesthouse was the first to offer food in portions at fixed prices.

Father's house bought back

With diligence and determination, good housekeeping practices and luck on their side, the Badrutts quickly succeeded in starting up their café.



Hotel A la Vue du Bernina, Samedan, circa 1850.

St. Moritz: from mineral spring to cosmopolitan spa

The name St. Moritz is derived from Saint Mauritius. The village with the Church of St. Mauritius, situated at 1,856 metres above sea level, had been known since the Middle Ages for its iron-rich, acidic mineral spring in the Inn Valley by Lake St. Moritz, which was first recorded by the famous physician Paracelsus. However, the mineral spring was scarcely developed until the early 19th century. Some leading citizens of St. Moritz aimed to correct this state of affairs by erecting a spa building. This was constructed by Johannes Badrutt senior in 1831/32. Simultaneously, the first «Mineral Spring Society» was established. These steps hardly resulted in any increase in momentum, because the guesthouse owners of St. Moritz-Dorf (village) prevented any accommodation being provided near the spa building. For this reason, visitors to the spa had to take a half-hour walk from the spring to their lodgings in the village, which deterred many.

Only from the early 1850s was the mineral spring successfully exploited commercially. On the initiative of the spa physician, Dr Georg Brügger, a new mineral spring was tapped in 1852, further baths were installed and the

road from the spa building to the village was improved. The year 1853 marks the birth of the international spa town of St. Moritz: The new «Mineral Spring Corporation of St. Moritz» was established on 25th January, under the management of Conradin von Flugi. This group took a fifty-year lease on the mineral spring and its infrastructure from the St. Moritz town council.

In 1854, the «Mineral Spring Corporation» erected a new spa building, which opened in 1856 and offered accommodation for 50 people, with two dining rooms, ladies' and reading rooms as well as coffee and billiards rooms. From then on, the area around the St. Moritz spa developed rapidly. In 1865, the spa buildings were extended once again, so that the «Mineral Spring Corporation» then offered 229 guestrooms and 84 baths. Thomas Fanconi of Samedan opened the Victoria Hotel with 200 beds in 1875. The same year, a limited company opened the Hotel Du Lac with 240 beds. Finally, in 1892 the Neues Stahlbad hotel opened with 320 beds near the newly discovered Surpunt Spring as further competition for the existing hotels.



View of St. Moritz-Bad and St. Moritz-Dorf, circa 1880.

Pension Faller in St. Moritz, 1842 (from the brochure «Engadiner Kulm, St. Moritz, Schweiz, Badrutt & Cie. Propriétaires»), ca. 1900.



Maria's father assisted them with deliveries of flour and probably financial support.

Return from exile

In May 1852, Maria Badrutt was able to report that she had a group of guests visiting, who consumed «1½ barrels of beer, 50 cups of coffee and 3 litres of wine at 43 Swiss francs.» According to Dolf Kaiser, at that time an engagement party for 60 people at the A la Vue du Bernina would have cost 400 Swiss francs, including coffee with cream, plus decorations, but excluding wine. In 1853/54, Johannes was able to restore the Badrutt family's honour by buying back his father's house and watermill, which had been lost in the forced sale of 1848. He used his first earnings but had to take a loan under «insecure and inadequate» conditions. Johannes' father also returned to the Engadine at a later date. For the old master-builder, this return from exile was a great satisfaction.

By opening the guesthouse in Samedan, Johannes Badrutt had laid the foundation stone for his meteoric rise to a universally-renowned hotelier. However, the pioneer's beginnings were extremely modest, as he recorded with hindsight: «In those

days times were hard, we were often missing 20 Swiss francs at home and our reserves were the children's baptism money.» Johannes Badrutt's motto as he wrote in his memoirs, was: «Fear God! Work and be sensible or moderate in all things.»

As a balance to his daily work, Johannes developed a strong passion for collecting all kinds of antiques, acquiring them whenever he could and amassing them in his house. As early as 1849, the rooms were overflowing with innumerable copper and steel engravings, oil paintings, pieces of furniture, weapons and musical instruments. «It's a real show room for him,» Maria wrote to her father-in-law in 1850, «only it's clear that no money can be made from it in an emergency.» Yet on this point she was to be mistaken: over the years, dealing with collectors' items became increasingly profitable for Johannes. He sold them to his guests and others, in order to finance his trips to Italy or France, on which he also collected ideas for the continuous modernisation of his hotel.

Seizing the right moment

Although the survival of the guesthouse in Samedan was by no means assured, Johannes Badrutt intended

to expand as early as the 1850s. His plans were aimed at nearby St. Moritz, which had about 250 inhabitants. In 1855, he decided to rent the Faller guesthouse in St. Moritz-Dorf, which had been closed throughout the year 1854. The conditions were favourable as the first large-scale investments were being made in St. Moritz-Bad and the new spa building was just about to open. «Here I must add,» wrote Johannes in his memoirs, «that I really had faith in the village of St. Moritz; everything there was still primitive. The Denz and the Bavier were the best guesthouses. [...] Conscious that, if I made an effort and served the best possible food and beverages, I could compete with them, I seized the right moment.»

The Faller guesthouse was situated at the highest point of the village, below the old church of St. Mauritius on the sunny side of the valley. From there could be seen magnificent mountain ranges and forests, Lake St. Moritz and the valley. The guesthouse originally belonged to the established von Flugi family and provided accommodation for visitors to the mineral springs. Since 1834 it had belonged to the Faller family, whose origins were in Davos. From 1851, Jakob Faller was the owner. His cousin was Emilia Chattrigna Badrutt-Faller, the wife of Johannes's brother, Christian. It can be assumed that these family connections ensured that Johannes Badrutt was able to rent the guesthouse in 1855.

Loan from brother-in-law

According to Diane Conrad's research, Johannes Badrutt took out a loan of 4,000 Swiss francs from his brother-in-law Gian-Baptista Klainguti and his brother Giorgio as early as November 1854. He probably used this money to pay for maintenance work and for the

first year's rent of the guesthouse. Renovations were urgently needed. Before Johannes took over, the composer Richard Wagner had been a guest from 16th July 1853. From there he wrote angrily to his wife that he had to «make do with the most primitive accommodation.» Moreover, Wagner was the only one who opened his mouth; «no Swiss would dare to do such a thing.»

During the renovation work, Johannes Badrutt benefited from the knowledge he had acquired in his father's construction business. Shortly after the guesthouse reopened, Johannes senior died, although he had at last been able to watch his son start building an existence as a hotelier.

Scepticism concerning the outsider

When Johannes Badrutt decided to buy the guesthouse, he encountered resistance: According to his grandson, Anton R. Badrutt, there was scepticism in the village regarding the outsider from Samedan. Both Johannes's father-in-law and his friends, the von Plantas, advised him strongly against the purchase. Johannes's wife Maria was the only one who supported him in his plans. He indeed bought the guesthouse on 20th February 1858: «I took a risk and won.»

Because Jakob Faller, the owner of the property, had disappeared without trace on a trip to Italy, Johannes conducted negotiations with the St. Moritz Guardianship Authority for the purchase of the guesthouse. Chief district magistrate Beeli of Davos was also involved and had apparently received other bids. Ultimately, Johannes Badrutt acquired the guesthouse at a public auction for 28,500 Swiss francs, a comparatively low price. The sums being invested in hotel projects in St. Moritz-Bad at the time were much higher.

Menu for English guests, from Maria Badrutt-Berry's notebook in Samedan, 1856.

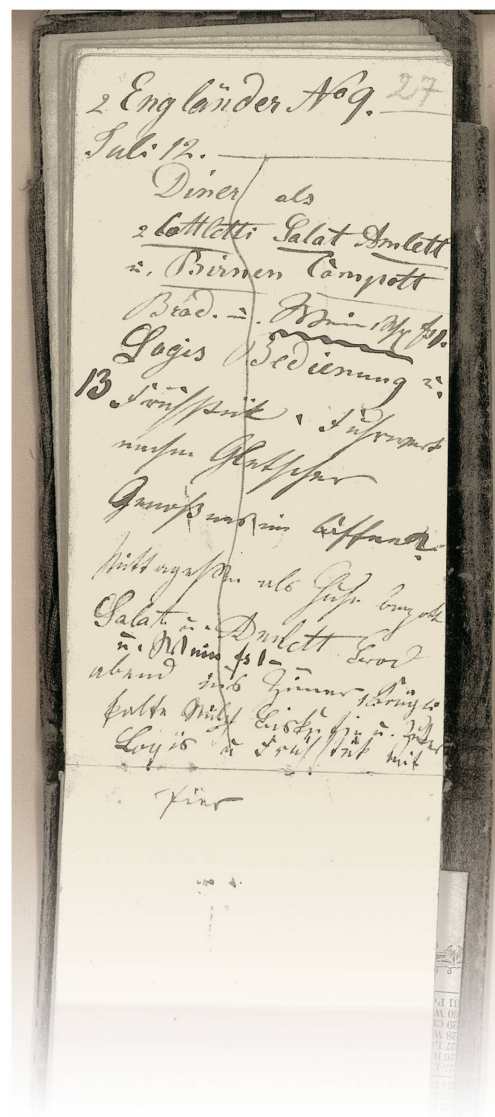
Support from private investors

Johannes Badrutt financed his transactions with the help of private investors: the purchase of the Faller guesthouse was backed by, among others, a Mr Zellweger with at least 2,200 Swiss francs. In all probability, this gentleman was the Parisian banker and free trade pioneer Ulrich Zellweger from Appenzell-Ausserrhoden (cf. Volume 87 of the Pioneer series) as, according to the visitors' book, he stayed at the guesthouse with his family and servants in the years 1855 to 1857. He sought relief for his gout in St. Moritz. According to Diane Conrad's research, Johannes Badrutt was granted a mortgage of 7,000 Tuscan lire by Giacomo A. Faller. Johannes Töndury also played a key role in financing the purchase of the Faller property. At the time, Johannes Töndury and his son, also called Johannes, were the most influential financiers of the hotel business in the Upper Engadine. In 1856, the family established the J. Töndury & Cie. bank in S-Chanf, and moved its head office to Samedan as of 1888. The establishment was later known as the Engadiner Bank, and existed until 1932.

Involving the whole family

Having bought the Faller guesthouse, the Badrutts now ran two small hotels – one in Samedan and one in St. Moritz. Johannes commuted in his horse and cart between the two villages every day. His wife, Maria, and several employees were fully occupied with both enterprises. The children also had to rise at 6 a.m. and do their part.

Maria recorded in little leather notebooks precise information concerning the wishes of her guests as well as keeping lists of cutlery, linen and groceries. The tireless efforts of



the Badrutts paid off: both hotels were so well booked that Johannes was soon able to envisage further steps towards expansion.

A hint of castle-like romance

When Johannes Badrutt took over the Faller guesthouse in its elevated position, he soon renamed it «Engadiner Kulm». The name «Kulm» means the highest point with the farthest-reaching views. Its increasing use in the second half of the 19th century shows that awareness of the beauty of nature and its commercial exploitation were gradually developing.

Initially, the guesthouse only had twelve rooms and was far from being a spacious hotel, but Johannes Badrutt had the building raised by two



storeys and added a gabled roof as early as 1860. «The crenellations and turrets lent the whole place a hint of castle-like romance,» is how a publication for the 150th anniversary of the Kulm Hotel described it.

Around 1860, the burden of running two businesses finally proved too great. Consequently, the von Planta heirs leased the building to Jakob Fancioni of Samedan. However, the round-gabled house proved to have no further room for expansion. For this reason, a new Hotel Bernina, which still exists today, was constructed nearby in 1865.

Sheep, silver and running water

In the three decades from 1860 until his death, Johannes Badrutt gradually extended the Engadiner Kulm, creating the dominant hotel complex in St. Moritz-Dorf. The original Faller guesthouse was integrated into the new building, forming what is today the

administration section of the hotel, approached by steps to the right of the main entrance. Eventually, 290 rooms were created, a large foyer, various salons, a bakery, a laundry, saddlery and painter's workshop, as well as a farm with cows, sheep, pigs and chickens. Bathrooms with running water were installed, silver was ordered from London. The foyer was decorated with antique furniture and Italian paintings that Johannes brought back in large quantities from his travels.

At that time, the increasing exclusiveness of the Engadiner Kulm was still in stark contrast to the village of St. Moritz. The steep, winding little streets were frequently blocked by carts or horses, and were dirty and unlit, so that hotel guests were advised not to go out after dark.

Owner of Lake Sils

In 1869, Johannes Badrutt had bought another land on the lakeshore thanks

The Hotel Engadiner Kulm with a view of St. Moritz-Bad, 1874.

to J. Töndury's intervention. This was the house of Johann Josty in Sils, which had been built in 1817. Johannes intended to spend his old age there with his wife. At the same time, the house was supposed to serve as a financial reserve for their children. Together with the house and land, bought for 63,000 Swiss francs, Johannes acquired most of Lake Sils and its fishing rights. Owing to the dramatic rise in fish prices, Johannes wanted to ensure an inexpensive supply of trout for the Engadiner Kulm.

In the late 1870s, the property on Lake Sils became a subsidiary of the Kulm, the Villa Beau Séjour au Lac, and was managed by Johannes's eldest son, also Johannes (1846–1883) whose son Peter Anton Badrutt-Lardelli (1878–1934) later took possession. The house was rebuilt and

renamed the Hotel Margna in 1905/06. However, in various court cases, ownership of the property on Lake Sils was denied the Badrutt family and awarded to the village of Stampa. Peter Robert Badrutt (1850–1907), wrote and published a critical paper on the subject in 1903.

Undisputed king of hoteliers

Although Johannes Badrutt's rapid expansion frequently caused envy, he had become the village's most important employer. Thanks to clever acquisitions of land around the Kulm, towards the lake and as far away as Celerina and Sils, he became one of the region's largest landowners. The hotel's park alone covered an area of 400,000 square metres. Through these purchases of enormous tracts of land, Johannes not only acquired the potential to expand, but could also initially prevent competition. After all, he could look every day down to St. Moritz-Bad, where rapid building developments were taking place. Yet up in the village, he was the undisputed king of hoteliers until the end of his life. Johannes Badrutt was not involved in local politics – as an outsider who was not a citizen of St. Moritz he would not have been permitted to take part until the law governing residence of Swiss citizens was passed in 1874. Nevertheless, he was involved in establishing the «St. Moritzer Curverein» (St. Moritz Spa Association, today's tourist office) and served as its secretary.

First Swiss, then international guests

To begin with, most guests at the Engadiner Kulm were Swiss. Out of a total of 37 guests in the hotel's first year, 1855, there were 22 Swiss, including Paul Carl Eduard Ziegler – the Mayor

Menu from the Engadiner Kulm Hotel, 1875.



of Zurich and a member of both the cantonal and national parliaments, the Basel silk manufacturer Friedrich Freivogel, and the Aargau silk manufacturer and politician Carl Feer-Herzog. Seven people came from German states, five from France, one from Hungary, one from Italy and one from Scotland. In the early years, the hotel was visited primarily by the upper middle class – merchants, manufacturers, professors, teachers, priests, doctors, lawyers, and landowners with their families. However, the clientele changed, becoming increasingly international and illustrious. One of the first highlights at the Kulm was the visit of Queen Pauline of Württemberg, who stayed with her family, retinue and servants in 1863.

A bet on fine weather

From the second half of the 1860s, increasing numbers of English visitors arrived, most of them from London. They were also the leading characters in one of the most famous legends concerning St. Moritz. According to Johannes Badrutt's grandson, Anton R. Badrutt, the development of winter tourism in St. Moritz was based on a bet. According to the legend, some London guests were sitting around the fire with Johannes Badrutt on a rainy September evening in 1864. They were already dreading the foggy win-

ter in London. Johannes Badrutt told them that the winter in St. Moritz was so pleasant that on fine days one could even walk about without a jacket. He invited them to be his personal guests during the coming winter and to experience the mild climate for themselves.

Sunny arrival

The Englishmen were pleased to accept this offer and agreed to return to St. Moritz before Christmas. Johannes Badrutt would pay for their journey should his promise prove to be false. The English came back to St. Moritz in mid-December. Wrapped in furs, they had come to St. Moritz by sledge over the Julier Pass. They arrived bathed in sweat, in brilliant sunshine. Johannes was waiting for them in his shirt-sleeves in front of the Engadiner Kulm. It was clear that he had already won his bet. His guests stayed until March, when they returned, healthy and relaxed, to London. This was to mark the beginning of the «winter tourist season».

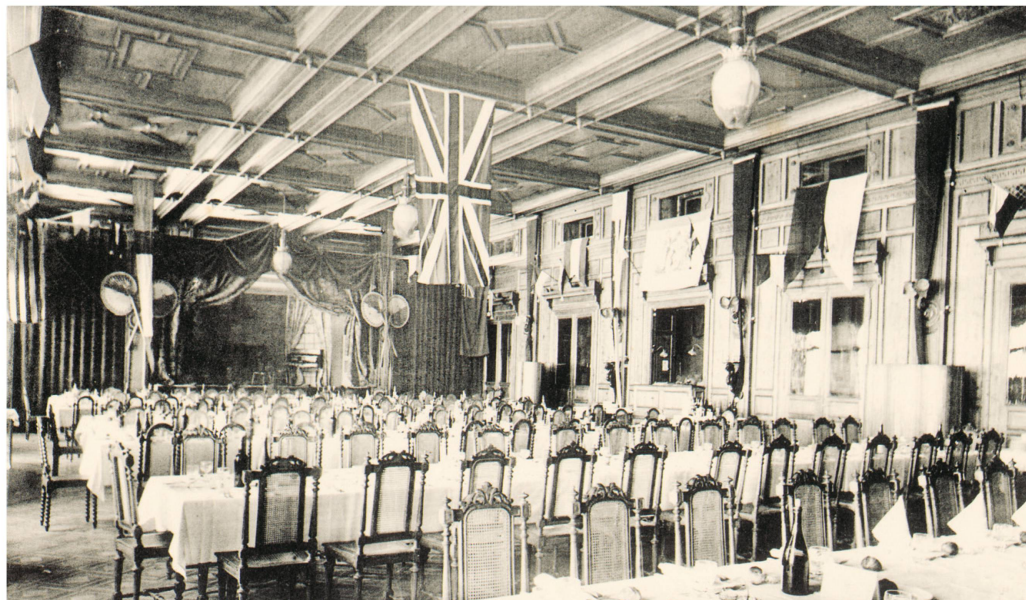
The path to becoming a famous tourist destination

It is a fact that, from the late 1860s, growing numbers of tourists from England spent their winters at the Engadiner Kulm. The first foreigner whose winter stay is documented in



Johannes Badrutt with his family and staff, circa 1862.

Dining room with stage in the Kulm Hotel, circa 1900 (from a brochure, «The Kulm Hotel, St. Moritz, Engadine»).



the hotel's visitors' book was Arthur Edward Vansittart Strettell, the son of an Anglican priest. His father, Alfred B. Strettell, served as chaplain to the English visitors during the summer months. Strettell junior, who suffered from tuberculosis, stayed from July 1866 until June 1867 at the Hotel Engadiner Kulm and was treated by the spa physician Dr Peter Robert Berry, brother of Maria, Johannes's wife.

Image of a health resort

St. Moritz-Dorf – and thus also Johannes Badrutt's hotel – had to battle with a considerable disadvantage in terms of location: it could be reached only with difficulty by the traditional spa tourists staying in St. Moritz-Bad. This negative aspect had been particularly relevant since the construction of the large, first-class hotels in St. Moritz-Bad, which were especially popular with German and Russian visitors. Johannes Badrutt turned this disadvantage into an advantage by attracting his mainly English guests to the high-altitude Engadine valley for other reasons.

Because the mineral springs and hotels in St. Moritz-Bad were visited only in summer, Johannes Badrutt in-

tended to develop St. Moritz-Dorf into a year-round health resort and to position his Kulm as an alternative to the spa hotels. This is apparent from his own words in the preface to the list of Kulm guests, which Johannes published in May 1880. He wrote that there was a significant difference between the climate of St. Moritz-Bad and that of St. Moritz-Dorf, which, situated on a south-facing slope, was «much sunnier, always drier and more protected than the valley floor, where the mineral water baths are located.»

The healing power of air and light

At the same time, Badrutt stressed the healing power of St. Moritz-Dorf: «Only someone who has spent part of the winter here himself can truly appreciate how dust-free, calm air and an abundance of light, sunshine and warmth can contribute towards strengthening a sick organism.» This statement was based on the specialist advice of his brother-in-law, Dr Peter Berry, who had been St. Moritz's second spa physician alongside Dr Brügger since 1863 and who also took care of the guests at the Kulm. Thanks to his service as a military doctor in the British-Swiss legion during the Crimean War, he was very familiar

The Reverend Alfred B. Strettell: a scarcely-known promoter of winter tourism

Up to now, the Anglican priest Alfred Baker Strettell has been an unrecognised promoter of winter tourism. He was a loyal friend of Johannes Badrutt, an important go-between and, in all probability, Badrutt's English teacher. According to Diane Conrad's research, he came to St. Moritz for the first time in 1860 from Genoa, where he served as chaplain at the British Consulate during the winter months. Mr. Strettell came to the Engadine mountain village every summer until 1900.

As early as 1861/62, Alfred Strettell held Anglican church services at the Grand Hotel des Bains in St. Moritz. He must have made contact with Johannes Badrutt at this time. Strettell is first mentioned as a guest at the Kulm Hotel in 1864. The same year, Johannes Badrutt promised to provide land on which an Anglican church could be built and he honoured this promise in 1867. However, it was not until 1871 that Strettell had collected enough donations to build St. John's church on Via dal Bagn.

The Revd. Alfred B. Strettell's son, who suffered from tuberculosis, was the first documented winter guest at the Kulm Hotel, in 1866/67. His stay had been recommended by his London doctor. In 1867, Strettell senior built a large house above St. Moritz, which also served to accommodate his friends and later became a guest-house.

At the same time, Strettell did a great deal for the school system in the village: through his friend Johannes Badrutt he submitted to the village council the idea of extending the school year, introducing French and



English language tuition and establishing a secondary school. Strettell also declared that he would be willing to provide financial support for the project. Furthermore, he subsidised the education of six poor pupils every year.

In parallel, Strettell helped to publicise his beloved St. Moritz in England, his home country. In 1868, an open letter from him was published in *The Times*, in which he reported that he «and a few others» had been aware for some years of St. Moritz's great potential as a tourist destination. This letter is an indication that Strettell and Badrutt specifically intended to attract English tourists. According to the visitors' book, some of the Kulm Hotel's winter guests in the first official winter season of 1869/70 came from Genoa – both Italians and English. For Diane Conrad, this suggests that Alfred Strettell used his connections. Names of people from Strettell's professional and personal circle can be found on the Kulm Hotel's guest lists in later years.

View of St. Moritz, 1871, Ad. Braun Photograph in Dornach, no. 6332: in the foreground the English Church, still without a tower, to the left the Pension Bernet, and further up, Alfred Strettell's house.

with the lifestyle and demands of the British upper class.

Promoting the winter season

In order to pay off the high cost of his investment in extending the hotel and realising his vision of a health resort, Johannes Badrutt had to keep the Kulm open all year round and, above all, promote the concept of the winter season. For a hotelier, this was in any case financially more attractive, because more was consumed per head during the winter.

One of the guests in the first winter season from 1869/70 was Jacob Siegmann from Bayreuth, with his daughter Rosa. He wrote gratefully in the visitors' book «St. Moritz seemed the only glimmer of hope in eliminating my daughter's rapidly progressing illness – we only came here to the spa at the end of August; but by mid-September it was already cool, windy and most unpleasant. Therefore, we moved into this hotel, whose elevated, sunny and protected location ensures such surprisingly favourable temperatures that we believed we had suddenly been transported to warmer climes.» He concluded: «To all those

for whom mountain air is beneficial, I would like to recommend this high-lying valley – and especially St. Moritz – as a veritable winter paradise.»

Limited infrastructure

Johannes Badrutt's initial vision, back then, was that his guests should recover from their illnesses thanks to the favourable climatic conditions, fully in accordance with the received wisdom of the time. This concept also applied to those suffering from lung diseases. However, in contrast to resorts such as Davos, the traditional spa town of St. Moritz offered no suitable medical infrastructure or buildings. Furthermore, the Kulm Hotel only had limited equipment for patients.

Compared with other spa towns – and this was another disadvantage of its location – St. Moritz was also relatively difficult for tourists to reach in winter. At the time, it was only possible to travel to the remote, high-lying valley by sleigh. In order to solve this problem, Johannes Badrutt once again took action, as described in the newspaper *Der Freie Rätler* of 26th November 1879:

Tennis court of the Kulm Hotel, circa 1900 (from the brochure «The Kulm Hotel, St. Moritz, Engadine»).





Curling rink, Kulm Hotel, circa 1900 (from the brochure «The Kulm Hotel, St. Moritz, Engadine»).

«The inventive Mr Badrutt senior has constructed, for the journey over the mountains in winter, a new, covered sleigh, which has met with much acclaim.»

Founder of the winter season

Increasing numbers of Johannes Badrutt's guests came in order to enjoy carefree holidays at any time of the year. Precisely because the village offered scarcely any infrastructure or opportunities for excursions and because the mineral springs, spa building and other hotels were not only too far away, but also closed during the winter, Johannes and active hotel guests provided their own entertainment.

Inspired by his British guests, Johannes Badrutt created ice rinks and had a toboggan run built, as well as organising curling tournaments and mountain tours. In the garden of the Kulm Hotel he had asphalted tennis courts laid, on which guests could still play even in November. In addition, he organised various cultural activities in the hotel.

There was also a strong sense of community, particularly among the British guests who grew together like a large family especially during the winter months. As early as 1888, the Kulm Hotel had 164 guests in the winter season, 135 of which were English. St. Moritz became a winter residence for sporting enthusiasts and sun-worshippers from the lowlands. The picture of St. Moritz as a traditional bathing spa and its associations with physical ailments was gradually giving way to the image of sporty lightheartedness, hospitality and comradeship from which the St. Moritz legend evolved.

Therefore Johannes Badrutt can justifiably be considered to be the founder of the winter tourist season since, as a clever and proactive businessman, he recognised the opportunities for his hotel and realised his vision with much energy. The legend of the bet puts this symbolically into a nice story.

Dining to orchestral music

Johannes Badrutt extended the menu at the Engadiner Kulm to include

delicacies and drinks from his guests' countries of origin. The long tables in the dining room were laid with crystal glasses and the finest porcelain. Johannes Badrutt managed his hotel in patriarchal style, dining at the head of a table, surrounded by his family and employees.

He engaged famous musicians; even the orchestra of the Scala, Milan, played in the Kulm. In order to meet the sophisticated demands of his guests in logistical terms, Johannes Badrutt acquired a villa in Chur in 1880. He regarded it on one hand as a subsidiary of the Engadiner Kulm and, on the other, as a stopover for his foreign guests on their long journey to St. Moritz. In addition, goods destined for the Kulm could be stored there.

Advertisement for St. Moritz, with the Kulm Hotel, from «The St. Moritz Post and Davos News» of 26th October 1889.

WINTER HEALTH RESORT
ST. MORITZ, Engadine

Grand Scenery; marvellous cures; every comfort; excellent skating; tobogganing; curling; concerts, theatricals, dances; Fancy Dress Balls.

5 Posts to and from the Engadine every day during the winter.

HOTEL KULM

Splendid situation, 300 feet above the Lake, with grand views of the Engadine, from the Maloja Alps to Mount Arpiglia near Sus.

The Hotel heated throughout; covered terrace; Baths in the Hotel. Lawn Tennis, Sleighs belonging to the Hotel; all the rooms, public and private, lighted by electric light. Hydraulic Lift. English Church Services and English physician in the Hotel.

Early application for rooms for the winter is desirable, in order to obtain good accommodation.

Winter terms, including full pension, from Fr. 10.50 per day.

The Winter Season begins early in October and ends in April.

Reading material for the English visitors

In the 1880s, the numbers of English visitors in St. Moritz increased to such an extent that it became necessary in 1885 to publish a local newspaper in English. The first to appear, three times a week during the season, was the *Engadine Express & Alpine Post*, in which the hotels' guest lists appeared. As early as 1887, this newspaper faced competition in the form of the weekly *St. Moritz Post*, which was edited by Freddie de Beauchamp Strickland. He resided in the Kulm Hotel and could therefore spread news from the hotel directly to the capital cities and important holiday destinations of Europe. The newspaper was later renamed *The St. Moritz Post and Davos News* and finally became the *Alpine Post*. These newspapers extended the reputation of the Swiss Alps into the whole world.

«Misery and disgrace»: a grandson too soon

As the Kulm Hotel expanded, so did the Badrutt family. The children grew up and fell in love – their choices meeting with the greater or lesser approval of their parents. Johannes Badrutt was particularly annoyed by the behaviour of his eldest son, Johannes (1846–1883). On 20th October 1869, Johannes junior married his neighbour Natalina Pidermann, granddaughter of Peter Faller and therefore a relative of the Badrutts. The first grandson, also called Johannes, was born on 8th November – from his grandfather's perspective this was a «misery and disgrace for both our families.» Johannes Badrutt-Pidermann managed the Kulm Café and later the family's guesthouse in Sils, the Beau Séjour. He died in an accident in 1883.

Children active in the hotel business

The other Badrutt children behaved less conspicuously. Johannes's favourite daughter Maria, for example, married Florian Tognoni in 1870. Johannes Badrutt characterised his son-in-law as «quick-tempered, but hopefully quite honourable», and believed he would in due course prove himself to be an able businessman. Indeed, Tognoni initially ran a grocery shop, a St. Moritz branch of the Graubünden Cantonal Bank and, in 1884, opened the «Private Hotel» in the centre of the village, which originally consisted of two farmhouses and had been converted into a villa-like, flat-roofed building with 48 beds. Five years later, in 1875, Ursula also married into the Tognoni family – marrying Florian's cousin Eduard Tognoni, whose proposal was «completely unexpected», as her father put it. To begin with, the couple ran a grocery shop in St. Moritz with Eduard's cousin Florian Tognoni and later a guesthouse – the Villa Tognoni. In later years, Eduard Tognoni was Chairman of the Board of the Engadiner Kulm.

Caspar had already married Ursulina Cadisch in 1874 – again a surprising choice for his parents, who wished «that God would grant the necessary health to the rather weak Ursulina Cadisch whose upbringing had perhaps been too one-sided.» Caspar later founded the Palace Hotel.

Rosina: moved abroad for love

In 1877, the Badrutts' daughter Rosina chose Gian-Baptista Rocco as her spouse – a choice that initially caused her father some unease. Yet, on closer acquaintance, Johannes found his son-in-law «very pleasant, educated and full of feeling.» However, Rosina's parents regretted that their youngest



Johannes Badrutt's favourite daughter, Maria Badrutt (1844–1897).

daughter's marriage meant she would live outside Switzerland – the couple first lived in Germany, and later in Italy. In 1907 the marriage ended in divorce and from then on Rosina lived in the «Haus Ostende», an annex of the Kulm. In 1908, her son Giorgio bought what is now called the Hotel Waldhaus in St. Moritz.

Alfons Badrutt married Maria Joos from Schiers in 1879. He was in charge of administration at the Kulm and was later chairman of the family company. Moreover, he was a member of the local council and of the district court, as well as being a deputy member of the cantonal parliament. In 1880, Peter Robert Badrutt married Victoria Faller and later took over the management of the Kulm Hotel. His brother Paul Ivanhoe Badrutt married Luise Bertschinger in 1887. He was responsible for the kitchen, restaurants and purchasing at the Kulm. He later bought a guesthouse, the Villa Languard in St. Moritz-Dorf.

Death of Maria Badrutt-Berry

Johannes suffered two blows in the 1870s. First, his aged mother, who had

*Johannes Badrutt's
third son, Peter Robert
(1850–1907).*



later in life been cared for by maids at the Kulm Hotel, died on 27th May 1872. His wife Maria died five years later, on 11th September 1877. She had been feeling ill since January, had lost weight and suffered from «bouts of weakness and dizziness,» as Johannes Badrutt recorded in his memoirs. Nevertheless, her death came as a surprise, as she had the previous day been shopping and had walked around the hotel with her husband. After 34 years of marriage, Johannes was hard hit by her death.

According to Johannes Badrutt, 440 people came to her funeral and «never or rarely» had there been such a large funeral procession in the Engadine. Maria's gravestone in the St. Mauritius's churchyard is decorated with a butterfly and an inscription: «To the unforgettable mother from the Kulm, Maria Badrutt-Berry.»

A year later, suspicions were voiced, especially by Johannes's daughters, that their father had entered into a relationship with a young employee, Betti Salzgeber. In his memoirs, Johannes Badrutt indignantly rejected these accusations – as he wrote, his conscience was clear. In a cutting remark to his daughters, he criticised the fact that all of them had married and therefore did not take care of him in his old age.

Pioneer of electric power

Another of Johannes Badrutt's pioneering achievements was the introduction of electricity. Together with his son Caspar, Johannes had visited the World Exhibition in Paris in 1878. There he marvelled at the telephone, only recently invented by Graham Bell. Johannes was so fascinated by it

*The electric lamp in
front of the Kulm Ho-
tel which Johannes
Badrutt had installed
in 1879. Oil painting
belonging to the Con-
rad family, St. Moritz.*



that he had a telephone line installed between the Engadiner Kulm and his brother-in-law Dr Peter R. Berry's practice. With this direct line to the popular spa physician, he offered his guests a special service. At the World Exhibition, Johannes and his son Caspar also admired the newly-invented electric lighting. With no hesitation, Johannes Badrutt decided to install a lighting system in his hotel in St.

Moritz, which was to be the first in Switzerland. On his return, Johannes had a small generator built in the Kulm Hotel's carpentry workshop; it was driven by the water of the Brattas stream. In the hotel, Stirnemann & Cie. of Zurich installed electric lighting using the Jablochkoff system he had seen in Paris.

Johannes's commitment to electricity is indicative of how he had to de-



Johannes Badrutt, promoter of the Cresta Run

In the early days, the main outdoor pastimes of the winter visitors from England were skating and tobogganing. In 1872, Johannes Badrutt supported the idea of one of his guests, Franklin Adams, to build a special track for sledging. Adams had learnt about this sport in St. Petersburg. The first 200-yard toboggan chute ran from the Kulm Hotel down to the lake. The snow was stamped down to provide a hard surface. In 1884/5, in order to accommodate timed toboggan racing, a special track was needed. Peter

Robert, one of Johannes's sons, provided the workmen to build the now famous Cresta Run from above the hotel stables to Cresta (now part of Celerina), based on a plan by George Robertson and Digby Jones. It soon became clear that the simple sledges could not withstand the icy track, so a toboggan was designed which would go faster and be easier to steer by a rider lying on his chest. At the instigation of the Badrutt family, the St. Moritz Tobogganing Club was founded in 1887.

Cresta riders: Gregory Peck (right), Fairchild MacCarthy, Secretary of the Cresta Run (far left), circa 1950.

velop virtually the entire infrastructure for his hotel himself. At the same time, however, he had great freedom, and hardly any restrictions were imposed on him by the municipality.

The hotel lit up

On the evening of 15th July 1879, the dining room of the Engadiner Kulm seemed to be immersed in a sea of lights; in addition to the conventional petroleum lamps several electrical arc lamps were also alight. Moreover, a streetlight with an electrical arc lamp was installed on the forecourt of the hotel. Although these extravagances cost Johannes Badrutt 11,000 Swiss francs, he also benefited from enormous advertising impact: At the end of 1888, his lighting system was still Switzerland's only permanent electrical installation operating all year round.

According to Anton R. Badrutt, his grandfather Johannes, during hotel renovations in the 1880s, had hidden in a pillar information about the family, a plan of his properties, price lists, hotel menus, descriptions of the village and hotel, newspapers, guest lists and photos dating from 1885. Anton found these documents later during renovation work, but returned them to their hiding place, where they presumably remain to this day.

In 1887, after the completion of a new wing at the Kulm Hotel, Johannes wanted to bring electric light to the entire building. In order to do so, a new turbine had to be built where water flowed down the Charnadüra gorge. It produced about 65 kilowatts of electricity and powered a generator. The new lighting system was inaugurated on New Year's Day 1888.

As early as the summer of 1888, Johannes supposedly intended to supply the entire village of St. Moritz with

electric power by installing a turbine in the gorge. However, this plan was opposed by some hoteliers from St. Moritz-Bad who did not wish to be dependent on Johannes. For this reason, they constructed their own turbine building in Silvaplana.

Final years and death

In the last years of his life, Johannes Badrutt's business was doing very well. He was at the height of his success around 1880. According to his own estimation, his assets amounted to 900,000 Swiss francs. The prospects for the coming years were promising. But hard work and the early death of his wife Maria had taken their toll. Johannes began to think about the continuation of his life's work and to take stock. He was soon weighed down by personal worries. There were tensions with his children. When disputes regarding inheritance threatened, Johannes recommended either the foundation of a joint stock company or the sale of the Hotel Engadiner Kulm. In his memoirs and in his will, he appealed passionately to his children's sense of solidarity.

Johannes Badrutt-Berry died at the age of 70 on the morning of 1st November 1889, after a long illness. In his last months he was plagued by a lung complaint, as his son Alfons reported to his elder brother Caspar in a letter of 17th April 1889. The death of Johannes Badrutt aroused great sympathy. Hundreds of mourners followed the wreath-covered coffin from the Kulm Hotel to the graveyard. Johannes's gravestone is decorated with a sun symbol and the following inscription: «In grateful memory of our unforgettable father Johann Badrutt, owner and founder of the Hotel Engadiner Kulm.»



Bust of Johannes Badrutt to mark his posthumous award of honorary citizenship, pictured with three of his great-grandchildren: Dora Willy, Hansjürg Badrutt and Paul-Marc Badrutt, 2008.

Belated honour

On 2nd April 2008, almost 200 years after the birth of Johannes, the Badrutt family donated a bust of the hotel pioneer to the village of St. Moritz, on the initiative of Diane Conrad. The bust was ceremoniously unveiled in the centre of the village by the Mayor of St. Moritz, Daniel Eichholzer. At the same time, he awarded posthumous honorary citizenship to Johannes Badrutt, which was accepted by Dora Willy-Badrutt, Hansjürg Badrutt and Paul-Marc Badrutt, on behalf of their great-grandfather.

At the time of Johannes's death, the names of St. Moritz and the Hotel Engadiner Kulm were already firmly established in the world of the elite. The Badrutt dynasty of hoteliers had been founded. Johannes had divided his legacy among his four surviving sons, three married daughters and the children of his deceased son, who received his share.

As of 1890, the Hotel Engadiner Kulm was managed by «Badrutt & Co.» and run by the third-eldest son, Peter Robert. However, his siblings soon forced him to resign. A hotel manager was employed. In April 1904, Johannes Badrutt's heirs drafted a deed of partition and in 1905 a joint stock company became owner of the hotel. From then on it was managed by various directors, until Anton-Robert Badrutt-Töndury, Peter Robert Badrutt's son, took over in 1935, running the Kulm successfully until 1965.

As already mentioned, apart from Rosina after her marriage, all of Johannes Badrutt's children were active in the hotel business, either working in the Kulm Hotel or managing and owning guesthouses and hotels. Several grandchildren of Johannes Badrutt built, bought or took over various hotels, but in St. Moritz itself, Caspar Badrutt was to become the future king of hoteliers.

The miracle of St. Moritz

After his father's bankruptcy, Johannes Badrutt had started again with nothing, transforming a small, modest guesthouse in St. Moritz into a luxury hotel within three decades. Yet his contribution towards creating the legend of St. Moritz was even greater than this entrepreneurial achievement: he was in fact the originator of the winter tourist season in Switzerland, probably even in Europe.

The fact that the remote mountain village of St. Moritz should have become an international success is very surprising. In order to become a successful hotelier, Johannes Badrutt had

Certificate of honorary citizenship, 2008.

to overcome three disadvantages of his location – the distance from the mineral springs in St. Moritz-Bad, the inadequate infrastructure in the health resort, and the isolated position of the Kulm. Yet, year after year, more and more guests came to enjoy the mild climate, the comforts and special atmosphere of the Hotel Engadiner Kulm – this can be described as the real «miracle of St. Moritz».

Johannes Badrutt was able to achieve this solely because he possessed a strong business sense, coupled with his extreme diligence and specialist knowledge. Having grown up in a business and catering milieu, he not only knew how to adapt to different categories of guests and so to continuously raise his standards, but was also capable of shaping new concepts of tourism. However, Johannes all his life kept his distance from the hotel guests: he saw and described himself as a member of the working class and had high moral principles in matters of business.

Fascination for fine art

There was another special aspect to Johannes Badrutt – his fascination for fine art and his passion for collecting, which he had no trouble in combining with a receptive attitude towards modern technology. He installed Switzerland's first power generator and first electric lighting system, as well as being a pioneer of telephony. He thus symbolically broke through the darkness and the isolation of St. Moritz in Winter.





*St. Moritz-Dorf, with
Lake St. Moritz. To the
left the Engadiner
Kulm and to the right
the Palace Hotel under
construction, 1895.*