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Caspar Badrutt (1848-1904): far-sighted strategist and founder of the Palace



Photograph and
signature of Caspar
Badrutt.

Caspar Badrutt, founder of the Palace Hotel, was born in Samedan on 21st July 1848 as the third child of Johannes and Maria Badrutt-Berry. Of Johannes's five sons, Caspar was probably most like his father.

Turbulent times

Not only the night when Caspar was born was turbulent – the midwife had to supervise another birth at the same time – but also the political situation: in 1848, the whole of Europe was caught up in a wave of revolutions. Under the rallying cries of unity and freedom, the liberals rose against the traditional political order. These were also unsettled times for the Badrutt family: Caspar's grandfather had gone bankrupt, his uncles Peter and Caspar

had emigrated to the United States (Caspar had died on the way), and his parents were about to embark on a new career.

Caspar's godparents were his uncle by marriage, Johann Denz, and his mother's brother, who was later to become the spa physician in St. Moritz, Dr Peter Robert Berry. Caspar was impetuous and headstrong at an early age. In a letter to her father-in-law written in 1849, his mother described him as follows: «Caspar is still the same wicked little fidget, full of life and agitation; he stands out amongst all of us with his handsome locks.»

Caspar's temperament was just as his father could have wished. Besides attending the village school in Samedan, and later in St. Moritz, Caspar was expected to help in the hotel from an early age. From 1859, Caspar attended the grammar school in Trogen. According to the Samedan priest and editor of the *Engadin Express*, J.P. Guidon, he would have liked to have studied medicine as he possessed «a special talent for diagnostics and particularly the genealogy of the families in the Engadine.» A letter from the young Caspar to his sister Maria in which he precisely described a death in the neighbourhood also documents his keen powers of observation.

In the service of the family

Johannes Badrutt, however, had different plans for his son: having bought the Pension Faller, he needed



ster Palace Hotel. In a letter dated 25th February, he wrote to his family: «In the Albencastle Hotel, they're going to try to give me a post for two or three weeks – without a salary – with only kind words.» At the same time, Caspar improved his knowledge of English and visited the British Museum as often as he could; he was particularly fascinated by the «copper engravings and woodcuts of all the outstanding masters.» He liked London more and more every day. Except he found the smog rather depressing. «I've seen the sun here on a cheerful Sunday two or three times and even stars in the evening! Otherwise it's always the same grey, smoky horizon, about 50 to 100 metres away. The air is seldom without a flavour of smoke.»

Caspar Badrutt (1848–1904) at the age of about ten.

all hands on deck in order to be able to pay back his loans. So, Caspar also had to devote himself entirely to the service of the family. On educational trips to Paris and London, he expanded his professional knowledge, at the same time satisfying his curiosity for art and history. During his stay in London in 1873, the 25-year-old completed internships at various elegant establishments, such as the Westmin-

A love match

Having returned from the metropolis to the world of the Alps, in 1874, Caspar married Ursulina Cadisch (1852–1905), four years his junior and daughter of the farmer Caspar Cadisch of Celerina.

It was a love match that came as something of a surprise to the Badrutts, but as his father wrote, Cas-



Letter by Caspar Badrutt from London, 1873.



Ursulina Badrutt-Cadisich (1852–1905) with her four children: Johann Eduard Leon (Hans), Johann Caspar, Victorina and Martina.

par was wilful and had a «very clear judgement.» Caspar's father saw the main reason for his son's choice in the «open devotion and childlike, feminine character of his beloved.» The wedding reception was held at the Hotel Kulm and turned out to be «quite a jolly affair.» One year after the wedding, the couple's son Caspar was born, followed by Johann Eduard Leon, known as Hans, in 1876. Their first daughter, Victorina, was born in 1878, and the last child, Martina, in 1881.

In the 1870s, when the Hotel Kulm was extended and completely renovated, Caspar became his father's right-hand man. He supported him in architectural and artistic matters, and helped with enthusiasm to equip the hotel with electric lighting, and by doing so, joined the proud building tradition established by his grandfather. At the end of 1878,

thanks to the collaboration between father and son, Johannes was able to announce with pride: «My anxious gaze brightened at the sight of the beautiful ball and concert dinner, and we had the satisfaction of seeing the wicked rumours and envious prophecies proven wrong.»

Nominated as successor

Initially, Caspar's family lived in the Hotel Kulm. Johannes was certain that his son would one day occupy a leading position in the family business. For this reason, in 1880 he took the necessary precautions in his will. He stipulated that his sons Caspar and Peter Robert should take over the management of the hotel with an annual salary of 3,000 Swiss francs each and free lodging, initially for three years. Caspar was also supposed to act as chairman of the family company, while his younger brother Alfons was to be responsible for taking the minutes at meetings and writing invoices.

Withdrawal from the family company

Although Johannes Badrutt granted his sons and daughters participatory rights in all important entrepreneurial matters and appealed to their sense of family solidarity, tensions arose, culminating in Caspar's refusal to comply with his father's wishes and his branching out to follow his own path as a hotelier.

What was the reason for Caspar's withdrawal from the family business? On the one hand, the siblings disagreed about the management position at the Hotel Kulm, which could well have led to a conflict between the two self-confident and innovative brothers Caspar and Peter Robert. Their father had intended both of them to occupy a managerial post at



the Kulm, and each would later establish himself as a renowned hotelier.

On the other hand, Caspar wanted to create something of his own in St. Moritz, and not merely remain in the family nest. With a very dynamic personality, he needed more freedom. To start his own business was courageous and, in retrospect, also wise. By doing so, Caspar not only stimulated competition among the St. Moritz hoteliers, but also strengthened the position of the entire Badrutt family.

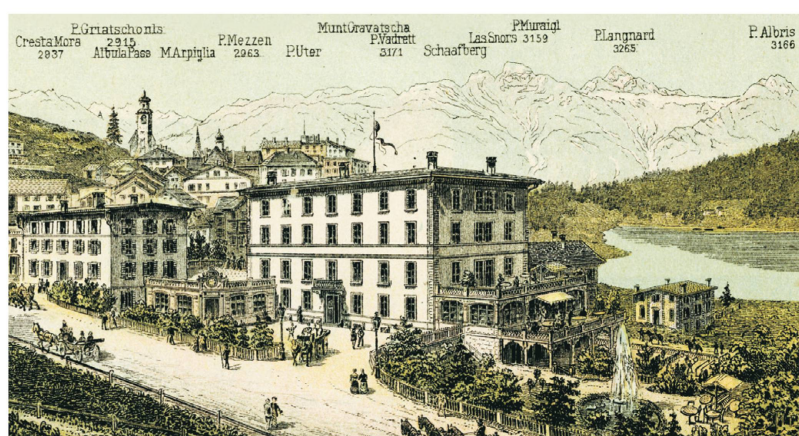
Johannes Badrutt wrote: «However, the year 1883 cast long shadows over our family; my dear son Caspar left the business. I am not claiming that the driving force behind his decision was his urge to work without restrictions and the supremacy he had attained in his business transactions with the tourists – it is difficult to fathom the human heart and I do my dear Caspar justice for his diligence and honest aspirations – but I do believe that a little more consideration for my position as a father and concern for his brothers could easily have

resolved the differences.» This quotation shows that Johannes, although disappointed over his son's decision, could to a certain extent understand him in entrepreneurial terms.

Auction purchase of the Pension Bernet

In the 1880s, the focus of tourism in St. Moritz still lay in the spa district. In the village, by contrast, several smaller hotels and guesthouses that had been built in the 1860s during the first hotel boom fell upon hard times. This was also the case with the Pension Bernet which, according to the

Hotel Bernet in the centre, Hotel Beau Rivage with tower on the right, Revd. Strettell's house at upper left.



Cover of the Hotel und Pension Caspar Badrutt brochure, with the Hotel Beau Rivage, – second half of the 1880s.

purchase contract of 14th June 1883, was bought at auction, together with the garden and land, by Caspar Badrutt from the bankruptcy assets of J. Bernet. The price – 200,500 Swiss francs – was several times higher than the sum Caspar's father Johannes had paid about 25 years earlier for the Pension Faller. Built in 1870, the Pension Bernet was located a little way from the centre of the village on the road leading to the large spa hotels in St. Moritz-Bad.

Following the purchase, the new hotelier Caspar Badrutt immediately began extending and modernising his property. He benefited from the practical experience gained during the conversion of the Kulm. With self-assurance, he renamed the former guesthouse the «Hotel Caspar Badrutt». The neoclassical, cube-shaped building ultimately had 65 rooms and offered its mainly British guests sophisticated hospitality and service, with reading and billiards rooms, a library, ladies' drawing room and orchestra. In the 1890s, a single room cost between three and eight Swiss francs per person per day in the summer season, and between five and eighteen francs for a double room. Meals were charged separately.

Hotel Beau Rivage, foundation stone of the Palace

However, the purchase of the Pension Bernet did not satisfy Caspar's urge for independence. Only seven months later, on 26th January 1884, he bought a second property in the village from Christoffel Rungger-Walt, the Hotel Beau Rivage, with the surrounding land, for the price of 142,000 Swiss francs. According to the purchase contract, Caspar paid seven francs per square metre and had to take on the following mortgages: 60,000 francs from the Graubünden Cantonal Bank,



30,000 francs from J. Töndury und Cie., 9,000 francs from Thomas Fanconi, and 30,000 francs from Peter and Jacob Rungger.

It would appear that the Beau Rivage came into Caspar's ownership by coincidence. According to Hansjürg Badrutt, Caspar was supposed to buy the hotel on behalf of his brother-in-law, Johann-Baptista Rocco. When the latter returned to St. Moritz, however, he changed his mind and ceded it to Caspar. The Beau Rivage was a rather formidable granite edifice dating from 1872 with a hexagonal tower and was situated on steeply-sloping ground below St. Moritz-Dorf on the road leading eastwards out of the village. It bordered on pockets of land belonging to Johannes Badrutt and Anna Stoppani. Johannes Badrutt observed the purchase of this property with great concern, for his son was taking a considerable financial risk. According to Caspar's tax bill of September 1882, he had assets of 20,000 Swiss francs and an income of 3,300 francs. Johannes wrote in his memoirs: «Out of an urge to speculate, my

Left: illustration from a brochure advertising the Hotel und Pension Caspar Badrutt, 1880s.

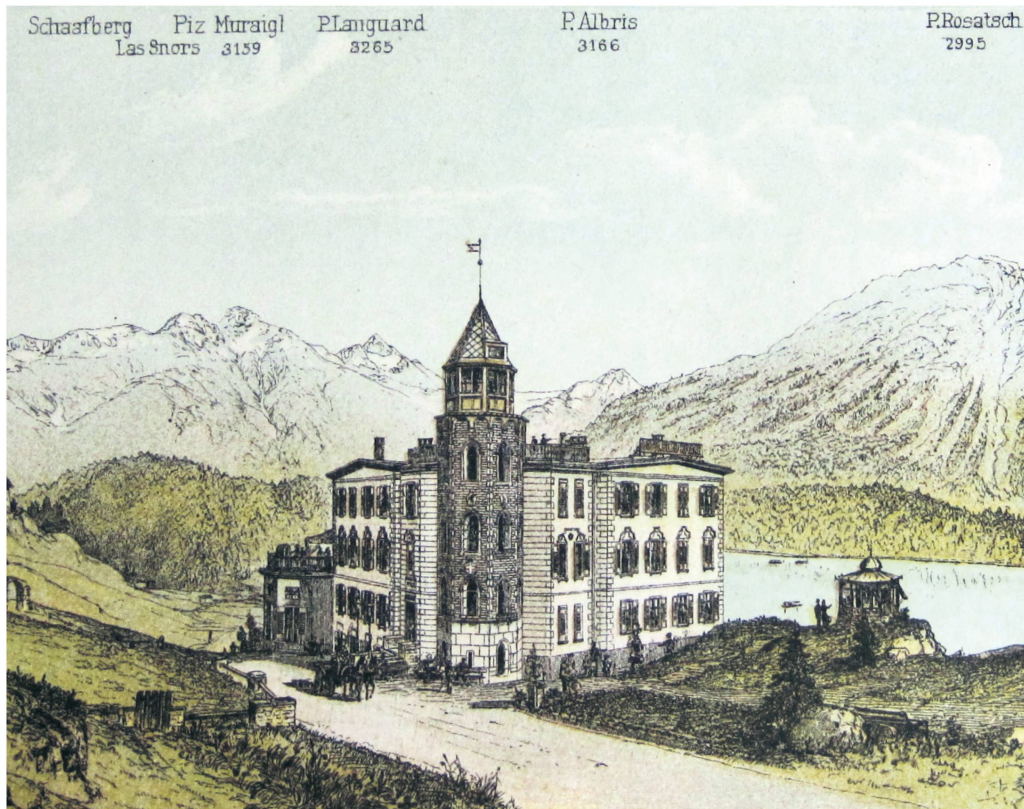


Illustration from the Hotel Beau Rivage brochure, second half of the 1880s.

dear Caspar has rather rashly bought the Hotel Beau Rivage, which affects our position at the Kulm more than I would wish. I am also worried about his enterprises because, if he alone acquires the house and everything that belongs to it, he will be taking on a risky responsibility. He is after all my child and I wouldn't want him to sink beneath such heavy burdens and debts at his young age.» However, the father's fears were to be proved unfounded.

The eve of the tourist boom

Caspar's own hotel plans proved to be advanced, as the spa town of St. Moritz, which now had about 700 inhabitants, was soon to enjoy an unprecedented tourist and hotel boom. Whereas in about 1850 there had been only 75 beds in the guesthouses of St. Moritz, that number rose to more than 2,000 during the four following decades. And there was no end in sight. The conditions for tourism at the time were excellent. After the Great Depression of 1873, an eco-

nomie recovery began in the 1890s. Britain was at the peak of its colonial and maritime power. Germany had become the leading industrial nation on the continent. Electrical technology and the chemical industry were advancing victoriously, and railway networks were becoming denser throughout Europe. These were all important factors benefiting tourism.

Increasingly professional banking system

At the same time, the banking and credit system also became more professional in Graubünden. Whereas in former times money had been lent by family members, transport companies and trading houses, the creation of two large institutions – the «Bank für Graubünden» (1862) and the state-owned «Graubündner Kantonalbank» (1869) – was a reaction to the increasing demand for loans due to the economic upturn. The new banks profited from funds that Graubünden emigrants had once invested abroad and

were now transferring back to their home country.

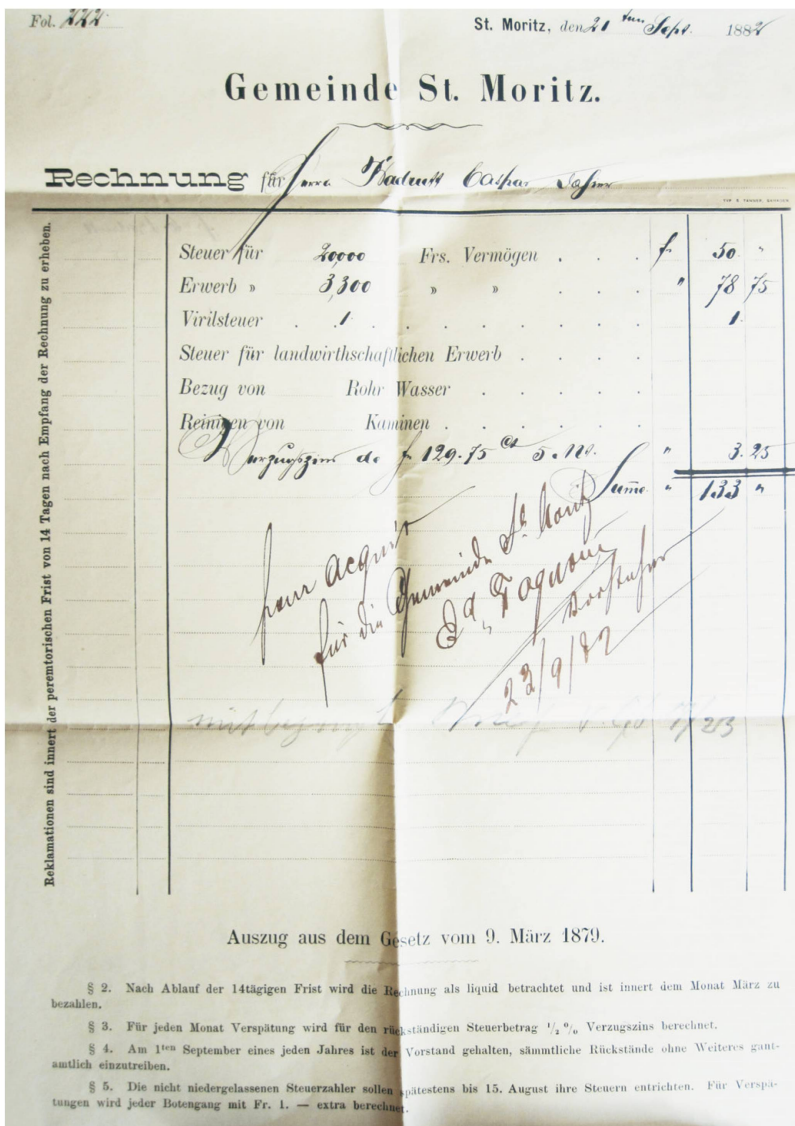
The opening of the Gotthard railway in 1882 had badly affected the previously lively traffic through Graubünden from Chur to Italy, causing several transport companies and trading houses to go bankrupt. For this reason, the Graubünden banks increasingly focused their business activities on rail projects and tourism. Such investments also enabled young entrepreneurs like Caspar Badrutt to raise large amounts of money for hotel projects and to expand. This was most certainly another factor in the conflict between father and son: Johannes, who had experienced very closely and suffered from his own father's bankruptcy, was very careful in

financial matters all his life. Furthermore, in his day it had been much more difficult to obtain credit.

Personal blow

Just as Caspar was beginning to establish himself as a hotelier, he was struck by a personal blow. His beloved wife Ursulina fell ill after the birth of their fourth child and from then on was forced to spend lengthy periods of her life in clinics. She was frequently capable only of maintaining a written correspondence with her husband and children. In his letters, Caspar often inquired after his wife's health, encouraged her, reported about the children's everyday life at school or his father's passion for art. Ursulina herself maintained a lively correspondence with her husband and the children.

St. Moritz tax invoice for Caspar Badrutt, 1882.

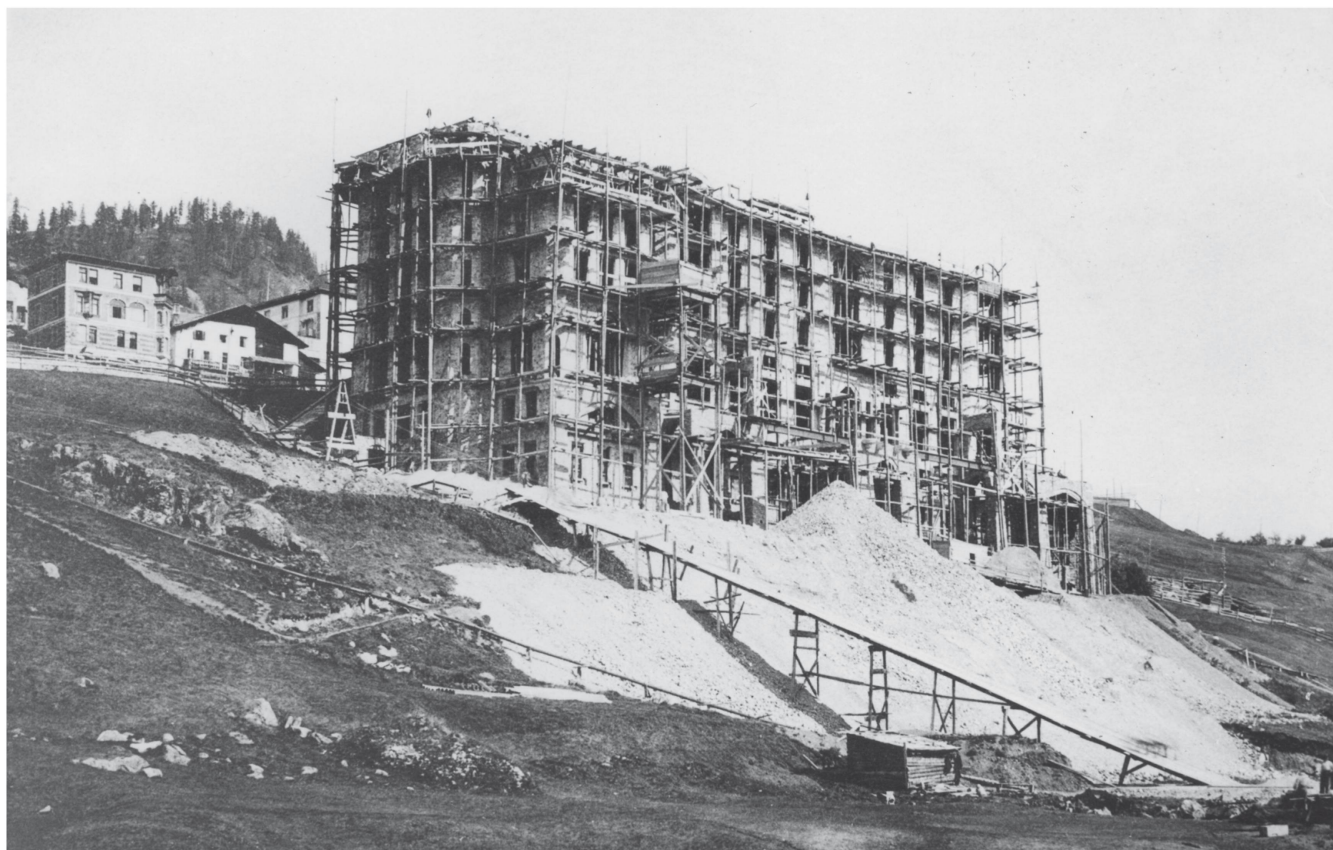


«Palace» – a stage

After his father's death in 1889, Caspar Badrutt took the decision to enlarge his Hotel Beau Rivage into a splendid, palace-like hotel. He intended this to be an alternative to the Kulm in the village and at the same time an effective counterbalance to St. Moritz-Bad. There was a fourth large hotel, the «Neues Stahlbad», already being built after the discovery of a new mineral spring in 1886. Caspar's hotel was to bear the name «Palace», was intended to be exceptional throughout the Alps for its elegance and exclusiveness, and should measure up to the luxury hotels in London, Paris and on the Riviera. Also, Caspar's highest objective when building the Palace was to offer his guests the most beautiful and complete view of the mountains and the lake.

Renowned architects

Caspar Badrutt awarded the contract for building the Palace Hotel to two



distinguished architects from outside Graubünden – Alfred Chiodera (1850–1916) and Theophil Tschudy (1847–1911), who ran an office in Zurich. Their best-known buildings include Zurich’s Schauspielhaus theatre on Heimplatz, the synagogues in St. Gallen and Zurich, and the Villa Patumbah, also in Zurich. Between 1892 and 1898 they built two large hotels in St. Moritz – the Palace and the Schweizerhof – as well as the tower of the Reformed church, which would later become a St. Moritz landmark.

A cross between fortress and palace

Thanks to his technical affinity and art knowledge, Caspar Badrutt was able to play an active role in planning the Palace Hotel. He instructed the architects to build a cross between a fortress and a baroque palace, with arches and an imposing tower. In 1892, 10,000 cubic metres of material were blasted for the construction of the ice rink; and thereafter, the founda-

tion walls of the hotel were erected. According to the invoices, materials such as cement, iron and bricks were supplied by various Swiss factories, such as the «Basler Cement-Fabrik», the «Eisenwarenhandlung C.F. Ulrich» in Zurich, or the «Mechanische Ziegelei Conters». The architects’ invoice for building work between 1894 and 1896 still exists: the duo asked for a total of 16,566 Swiss francs, including expenses. As a comparison, a chef de cuisine in a first-class hotel earned about 4,200 francs a year at the time.

In order to refine the architecture of the hotel, while nonetheless emphasising the fortress-like character of the building, three different sections were erected: to the east, the existing Beau Rivage hotel of 1872; in the middle, the broad, five-floor core; and to the west, the wing with the tower and its pointed spire. The broad plinth built of quarry stone and the façade with its walls of undressed blocks, the arches, crenellations and corner turrets are reminiscent of a mediaeval fortress.

The Palace Hotel under construction, circa 1895.



*The Palace Hotel
after completion,
circa 1900.*

The best craftsmen proved their artistic skills with this structure. On the ground floor, the great hall was fitted with wooden ceilings, carvings and fine marble. A centrally positioned, very large pointed arch window flooded the room with light and rendered the mountain panorama almost an integral artistic component of the hall. Parquet floors were supplied by «Parquet-Fabrik C. Turnheer-Rohn» in Baden and «Heinrich Hefti und Cie.» in Altdorf. There was also a dressing room for the ladies, a smoking saloon for the gentlemen, a library and a billiards room. The wallpapers were supplied by «A. Ballié» in Basel and «Nänny & Sohn» in St. Gallen.

The hydraulic lifts were built by the Chur machine factory «J. Willi & Sohn» according to the «Otis system», while the sanitary installations came from London and were fitted by British craftsmen. There were fireplaces everywhere, and the entire building was heated with hot water; the steam heating systems were supplied by the

Winterthur company «Gebrüder Sulzer». The furniture was made in Berlin and transported to Switzerland with the imposition of very high customs charges.

Setting standards for hotel architecture

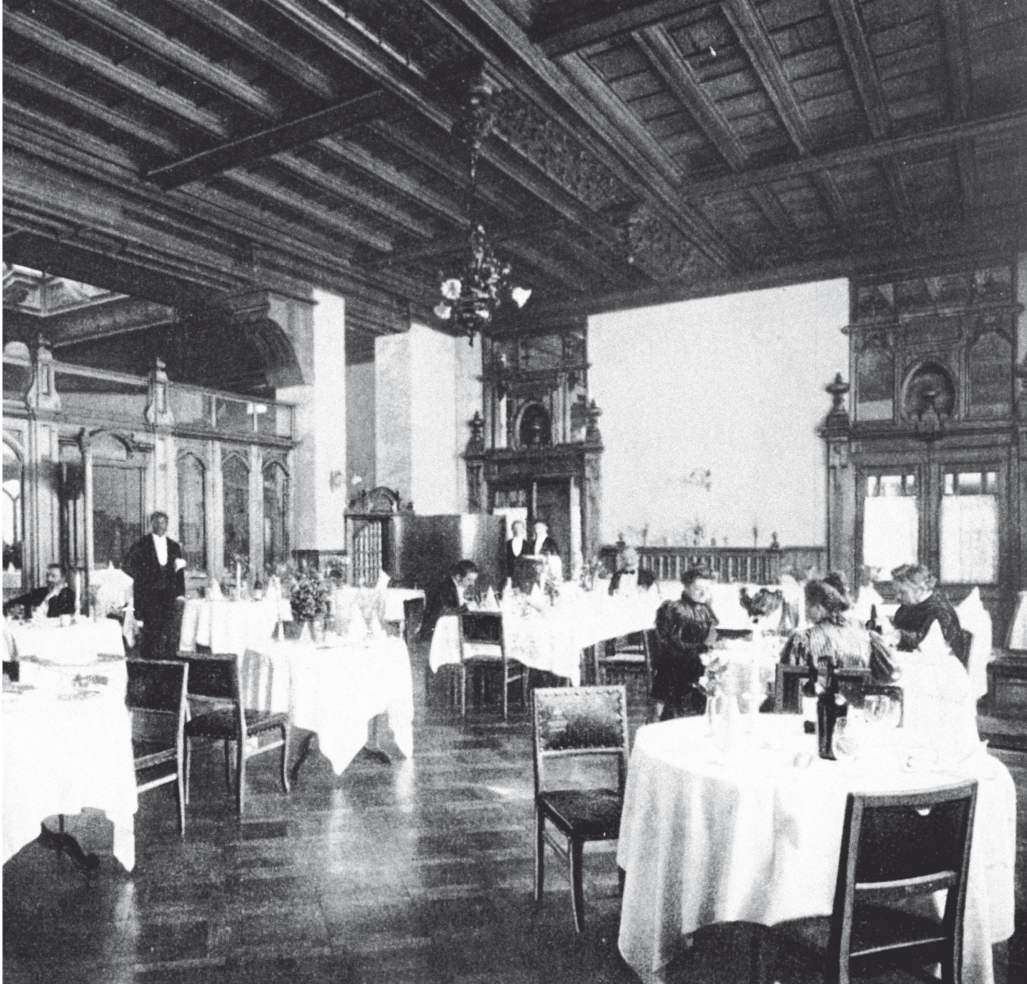
The architecture and the comfortable, English-inspired interior decoration of the Palace set standards in Engadine hotel architecture and the luxury hotel industry at that time. A major innovation was the position and design of the dining room opened in 1897: as an extension built on the north side of the hotel, it was conceived as an independent part of the building. Together with the wing consisting of the former «Beau Rivage», it thus enclosed the sheltered courtyard entrance of the hotel, which faced the village.

Hotel foyer as meeting point

The foyer was the heart of the hotel and a public space that served no immediate purpose. Even more than the



*Palace Hotel foyer,
circa 1900.*



*Palace Hotel
breakfast room,
circa 1900.*

dining room, the hotel foyer was a kind of mirror image of the aristocratic society that was gradually being suffused with bourgeois values and the bourgeois lifestyle. The foyer was the central place «where the different classes, aristocrats and politicians, and women and men could meet without distinctions being made, at first glance at least,» to quote Isabelle Rucki, the expert on hotel architecture. The design of this space was meant to exude an air of grandeur, be reminiscent of a knights' hall and through its decoration of religious elements, was to radiate an atmosphere of mysticism.

The Palace was an imposing, three-floor building with 150 rooms and 180 beds, one bathroom for communal use on each floor, and one suite on each floor with its own bathroom. At that time, running water and bathrooms in all rooms were not standard, even in luxury hotels. The building

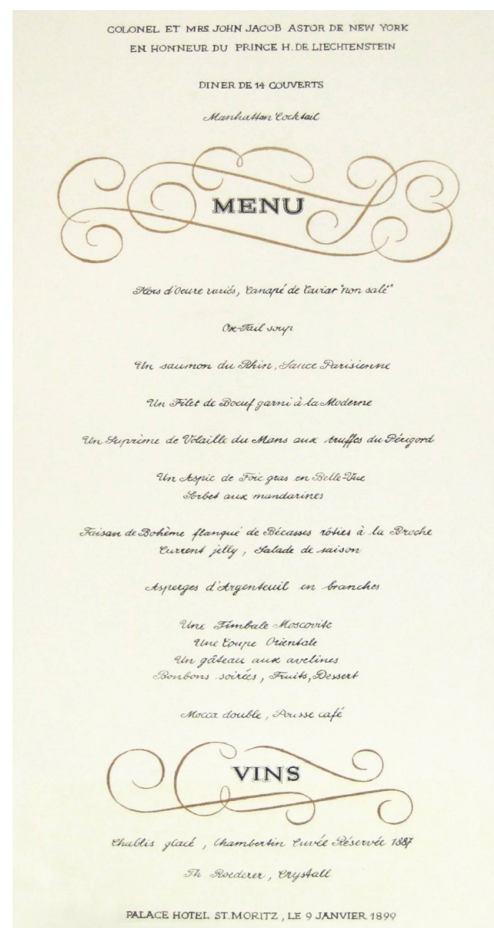
cost millions, and was financed by a Graubünden banking syndicate in which the «Bank für Graubünden», whose St. Moritz branch was managed by Caspar Badrutt, played a major role.

Opened by a future Queen of England

On 29th July 1896, the 48-year-old Caspar Badrutt opened the doors to his Palace. Because the summer had been rainy in St. Moritz that year, the guests of the other hotels were more than happy to marvel at the striking new building in the village, which was visible from a great distance. At the beginning of August the official opening ball was given, opened by the 29-year-old Princess Mary of Teck, wife of the future King George V of England. With such regal splendour around him, it must have pained Caspar especially that his beloved wife Ursulina was unable to attend the celebrations. As her letters to the family reveal, her state of health was too fragile for her to take part.

Glamorous pleasures rather than sports

With the Palace, Caspar Badrutt had created a hotel building that not only dominated the silhouette of St. Moritz-Dorf, but also differed from the other first-class hotels. Predominantly German guests stayed in St. Moritz-Bad for summer spa treatments and the Kulm was considered the smartest address for British sporting enthusiasts and the birthplace of winter tourism. While at the Palace the French and Italians felt at home, as well as the regular guests from the Anglo-Saxon world. These visitors did not come predominantly to take spa treatments or exercise. Although tennis, golf and ice-skating were also on offer at the Palace, such activities had

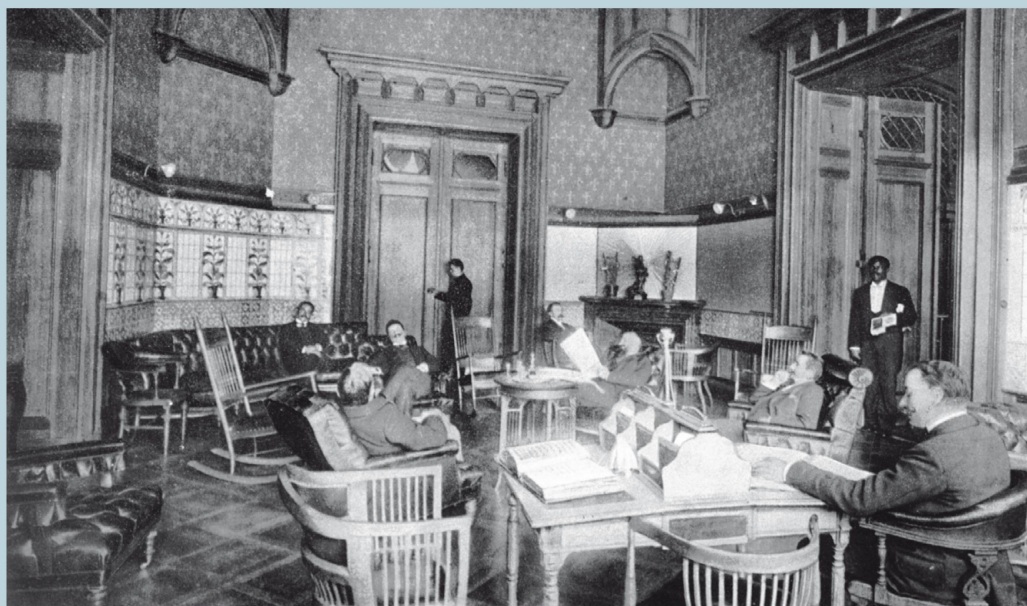


Palace Hotel, menu from 9th January 1899.

little influence on the hotel's reputation. Instead, the Palace stood for extravagant balls and glamorous entertainment. Its first guests included large, wealthy families, who arrived with governesses, maids and valets. Such families usually had twenty to forty pieces of luggage. Unloading and storing it would take almost an entire day. Their staff lived and ate at the hotel, using the «Kurierzimmer», a large hall, as a dining room.

Opulent meals at long tables

In the late 19th century, most guests would have dined together at a long table, the so-called «table d'hôte». Punctuality was mandatory. The «table d'hôte» consisted of a row of very long tables at which guests were seated opposite each other and dined for one to two hours. New arrivals had to sit at the bottom end of the table, and then gradually moved further up.



Palace hotels as a platform for old and new elites

In the last third of the 19th century, the terms «hotel palace» or «palace» were used commonly in the language of the luxury hotel industry. They referred to hotels of the highest standing, situated in exclusive locations in cities and health resorts. Such palace hotels are also characterised by their dimensions and special architectural design, infrastructure and service. The heyday of their construction was during the two decades before the First World War. Several of them actually even used the word «palace» in their names. This is where aristocrats

and ambitious members of the middle-class would meet. This rapprochement between old and new elites became possible because the aristocracy had lost most of its privileges and no longer resided exclusively in private palaces, but also in public hotels. In this period of social transformation, palace hotels served as a great stage, on which status, wealth and savoir vivre could be celebrated. The spectators were the readers of the published guest lists, and of reports in newspapers and magazines – then as now.

Palace Hotel, gentlemen's reading room, circa 1900.



Well-to-do families arrived with huge quantities of luggage for the duration of the summer season. Late 19th century.

A luncheon at the Palace consisted of six courses: hors d'oeuvres, fish, meat, poultry, dessert and cheese. In the evenings, eight or nine courses were served, and sometimes even more. Throughout the season, single rooms cost between five and fifteen Swiss francs per person per day, while a two-bed room cost eight to twenty-five francs. Lighting, service and heating were included in the price. A private salon cost between 20 and 50 francs, and domestics six francs. Children up to the age of 11 enjoyed a discount of 30 to 50 percent.

Continuously rising numbers of guests

There have only been reliable statistics on hotel guests in St. Moritz since the early 20th century. Between 1880 and 1914, however, the number of guests rose continuously, despite some setbacks. For the summer season of 1888, for example, an estimated 4,000 guests stayed in the village. The hoteliers in St. Moritz had no difficulties in occupying their beds. The opening of the Albula railway in 1903 gave tourism in St. Moritz another boost and attracted up to 12,000 guests and visitors during the summer season of 1909. The number of hotel guests during the winter also increased constantly. However, faster rail travel also shortened the average length of their stay from at least one month to eight to fourteen days.

Suitcase sticker with a print designed by Wilhelm Friedrich Burger (1882–1964), probably early 1930s.



Tourism boom thanks to the railways

Towards the end of the 19th century there were heated debates about

building a railway to St. Moritz. As late as 1896, guests from the northern regions arrived in St. Moritz by coach or sleigh from Chur over the Julier Pass, a journey of about 13 hours. Travellers making the trip in winter were advised to wear woollen underclothes, warm shoes and gloves as well as a lined coat with a thick collar. Opponents of the railways feared the advent of mass tourism and fought against the destruction of the landscape, but the material interests of the operators of horse-drawn carriages also played their part. Although Caspar Badrutt was enthusiastic about modern technology and a pioneer in this area, as Revd. Guidon writes, he was not unreservedly in favour of the idea of a railway. He believed that it might bring about the loss of «a good part of the Engadine's poetry.»

Nevertheless, St. Moritz was joined to the railway network. By building a ten-metre-wide access road to the station, the Palace was now also directly linked to the new mode of transport. Guests travelling from Berlin to St. Moritz covered the route in about 20 hours, while the rail journey from Chur to St. Moritz took only three hours and 40 minutes. The reduction

in travel times not only continued to encourage tourism, but also fuelled land speculation in St. Moritz-Dorf. However, Caspar Badrutt died before the opening of the last stage of the Albulina line between Celerina and St. Moritz. On July 10th, 1904, the people celebrated this historic event.

Extension of electrical lighting

Caspar Badrutt was not merely a hotelier, but also a pioneer of electric power in St. Moritz, thus continuing his father's groundbreaking work. In 1891, he established the «Aktiengesellschaft für elektrische Beleuchtung von St. Moritz» (joint-stock company for electric lighting of St. Moritz) together with the Mayor, Alfred Robbi. Caspar was Chairman of the Board. The company acquired the licence from the municipalities of St. Moritz and Celerina to exploit the hydro power of the River Inn from the outflow of Lake St. Moritz to Celerina. The purpose of this was to supply the two villages with electricity, at first mostly for electric lighting. In 1892 the entire main street was illuminated by a total of 24 arc lamps, and all hotels and many private houses were also lit by electricity.



Guest room in the Palace Hotel, circa 1900.

*Veranda of the Palace
Hotel, circa 1900.*



Bridge-builder between St. Moritz-Bad and St. Moritz-Dorf

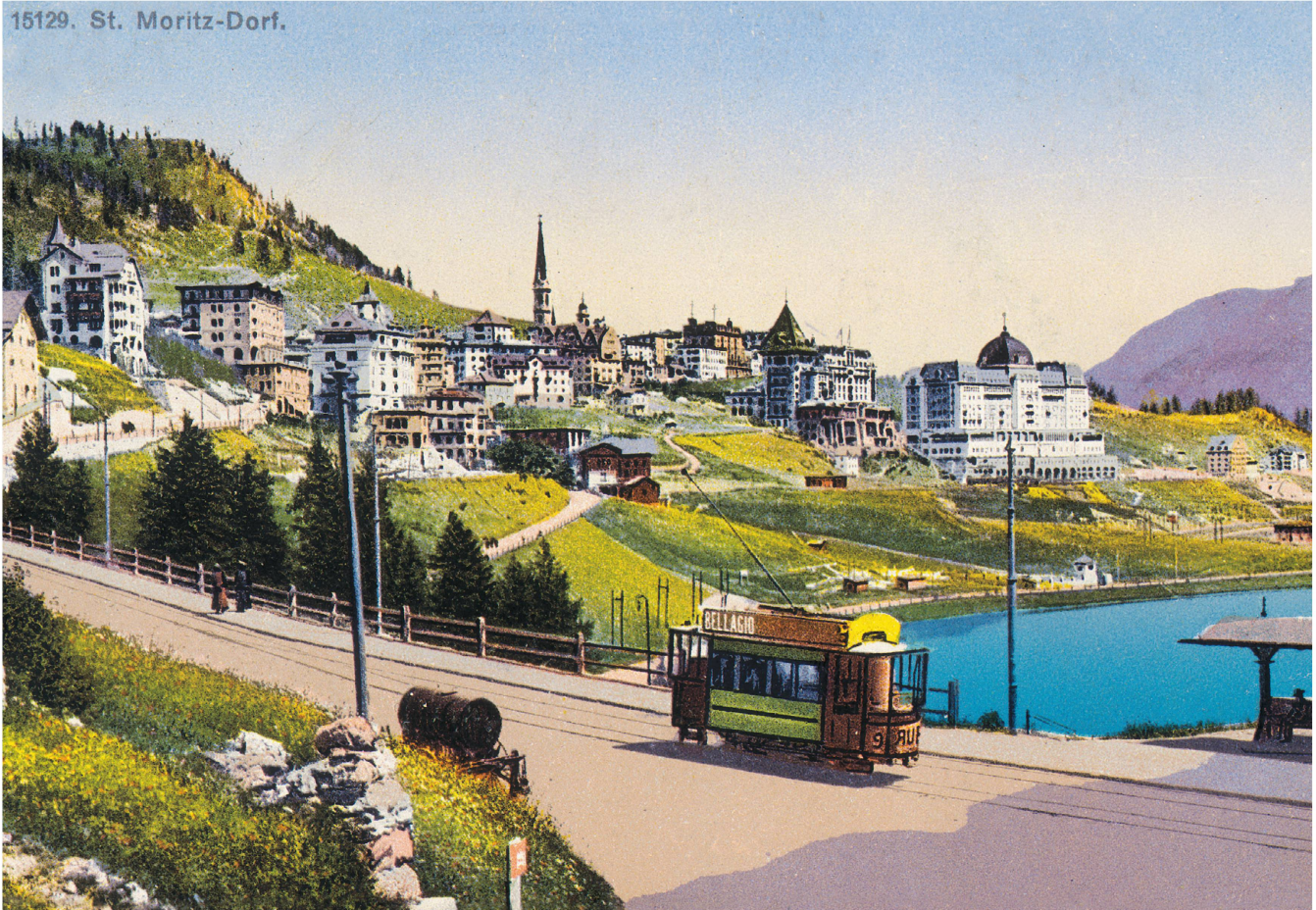
On 22nd December 1892, the Swiss Confederation had granted St. Moritz a licence to build and operate a tram. On 8th February 1894, the constituent general assembly of the joint-stock company «Elektrische Strassenbahn St. Moritz» was held, at which Caspar Badrutt was elected chairman. Previously he had been one of the 16 members of the initiative committee, as were his younger brother Alfons and his brother-in-law Eduard Tognoni.

According to the brochure of 1893, the objective of the enterprise was firstly «to save the public time and money with a safe, dust-free, noiseless and rapid electric tram link.» Additionally, the goal was «to unite the spa resort St. Moritz-Bad and St. Moritz-Dorf by means of the tram line and also with a pavement,

which has yet to be built.» And thirdly, the aim was «to create the beginning of an electric railway network in this part of our country which lacked modern forms of transport.» A return tram journey from St. Moritz-Dorf to St. Moritz-Bad was to cost 60 cents.

The first tram in the Alps

As of 5th July 1896 St. Moritz had an electrical tram, the first in the Swiss Alps. The route began in front of the Hotel Schweizerhof, followed what is now Badstrasse, crossed the River Inn and then went on to the Paracelsus pump room at the spa. The line was 1.7 km long, with a maximum gradient of 6.62 per cent. There was a maximum of eight stops, and the trip took eight minutes. The tram travelled at an average speed of 12 km per hour and offered space for 22 passengers. The first cars were



painted blue; on one side they bore the inscription «Elektrische Strassenbahn», on the other «Tramway électrique».

Until the First World War, the tram was used regularly, but during the war it was frequented much less, operating at such a loss that bankruptcy seemed inevitable. For this reason, on 5th February 1917 the municipality decided to take over its operation. The tram then ran for another 16 years, experiencing its zenith during the first Winter Olympics in 1928. However, as a consequence of the world economic crisis its revenue declined at the beginning of the 1930s and operations ceased in 1932. Two years later the structure was demolished. Ever since, buses have connected St. Moritz-Dorf with St. Moritz-Bad. Today, the only reminders of the St. Moritz tram are a covered bench by the English church and an original

tram bell mounted on a building at Via dal Bagn 2.

Involvement of Caspar's sons

Although Caspar was a highly innovative entrepreneur and had a pronounced sensibility for architecture and art, he was considered reserved in his dealings with his fellow human beings. In his Palace anniversary publication of 1946, Jules Robbi wrote: «Caspar Badrutt was not a character that everyone could see through; his imperturbable calm and rather quiet nature made him a mystery to many people. Although, whoever succeeded in cultivating more intimate relations with him was able to solve the mystery in the most amiable way.» Such characteristics did not in fact predestine Caspar as a successful hotelier.

As he was very busy with his many activities and his sick wife was not able to support him, to ease his burden he initially employed a director

Postcard of St. Moritz-Dorf with tram, 10th September 1913.

for the Palace. However, he soon delegated management responsibilities to his two sons. Caspar, the eldest, took on the Hotel Caspar Badrutt, and the 22-year-old Hans directed the Palace. The elder daughter, Victorina, was later to inherit the «Privathotel», which her father had acquired from his niece Maria Thoma-Badrutt in 1904. Caspar's youngest daughter Martina worked as a housekeeper in the Palace.

Burdensome last years

The years from 1900 until his death were very stressful for Caspar Badrutt. With the opening of the Palace and the tram in 1896, he had reached the peak of his professional life and fame. Now the pioneer became increasingly pressured by his competitors.

The investors of St. Moritz-Bad, such as Conradin von Flugi or the Töndury family, soon realised that they were being overtaken by the village. The Badrutts had meanwhile established a hotel empire there and developed a lucrative business segment with winter tourism. The construction of the «Schweizerhof» hotel in 1898, also by the architects Chiodera &

Tschudy, represented the first chink in the armour of the Badrutts' empire. However, Caspar Badrutt worried much more about the construction of the «Grand Hotel», which had begun in 1902, since it was built in the immediate vicinity of the Palace.

Robbed of its charisma

The Grand Hotel was organised as a joint-stock company under the direction of Gian Töndury. The building was an exaggerated version of the palace hotel type. However, the architect, Karl Koller from Bad Ragaz in the Canton of St. Gallen, designed a four-floor base surmounted by a five-floor building whose façade was devoid of any romanticism. At the time, the construction was the largest building in Switzerland, with 300 rooms. Its sheer size and impact robbed the Palace of its charisma, which it regained only when the Grand Hotel burnt down in 1944 and was demolished. Caspar's time was occupied not only with such competition, but also with family matters. «Badrutt & Cie.», which managed the Engadiner Kulm, was about to be converted into a joint-stock company. Caspar was initially a general partner



Postcard of the Palace Hotel together with the Grand Hotel, 19th July 1909.



and later a participator in the company. He was also politically active on the municipal council in favour of returning the mineral springs to the ownership of the municipality in order to make the spa district attractive for the hotels in St. Moritz-Dorf.

Death due to heart failure

Caspar Badrutt died of heart failure in the night of 27th to 28th June 1904. On the Monday he had taken part in a long meeting at the Kulm and in the evening had attended the municipal assembly, at which he campaigned for the municipality acquiring the spa building.

Caspar Badrutt's death caused strong reactions in the press. According to the *Basler Nachrichten*, he was one of Switzerland's greatest hoteliers. On 30th June a huge crowd gathered in front of the Hotel Caspar Badrutt to pay their last respects to the deceased. The coffin was followed by Caspar's children and large numbers

of mourners. The funeral oration was given by Parson Camill Hofmann, who was also chairman of the Winter Tourist Board. Caspar Badrutt had remained faithful to his sick wife Ursulina all his life. She was to follow him only six months later, having died on 14th January 1905.

Visionary strategist

Although Caspar Badrutt broke away from his father, at the same time he continued and expanded his inheritance. As a self-made man, Johannes Badrutt laid the foundation stone for the family empire. He made many correct decisions, but often simply in reaction to certain situations. His son Caspar, on the other hand, planned purposefully and strategically. While the Hotel Engadiner Kulm grew more or less organically, Caspar dared to take a big gamble by building the new «Palace».

With the Palace Hotel, Caspar realised his vision of an exclusive meet-

Postcard of the Palace Hotel of 21st January 1908.

The ban on sanatoria – a fundamental decision

St. Moritz is considered the birthplace of winter tourism, and the Badrutt family made a decisive contribution towards this. However, this development was also possible thanks to a pioneering political decision: in the 1890s there were efforts to create a second Davos in St. Moritz by also building a tuberculosis sanatorium. A driving force behind this was the English physician, Dr Holland, who wanted to attract English guests suffering from lung disease to St. Moritz.

This idea met with determined resistance, not only from the hoteliers in St. Moritz-Bad, who feared losses for spa tourism in the summer, but also from the chairman of the town council, from Camill Hofmann – Protestant priest and president of the Kurverein – and from Dr Peter Robert Berry junior, son of the well-known spa physician. It is likely that Caspar Badrutt was also unhappy about the plans for a clinic. His brother Alfons, who was chairman of «Badrutt & Cie.» at the time and with whom he had a good relationship, was also a member of the municipal council. On 22nd De-

ember 1898, a decisive meeting was held at which the following resolution was formulated: «The Municipal Assembly protests against and rejects the plan for the construction of a clinic for sufferers of lung disease on the territory of the municipality of St. Moritz. The Assembly sees such a clinic as a threat to the interests of the summer and winter spa town St. Moritz. It will fight such an enterprise with all the means at its disposal.» The municipal council voted in favour of this resolution two days later.

Exceptionally, the representatives of St. Moritz-Dorf and St. Moritz-Bad were of one mind in this debate. At the same meeting, Alfons Badrutt stated: «The hoteliers of St. Moritz-Bad should avoid certain remarks in their advertising that may be damaging to business in the village, as only then will Christian cooperation be possible.»

The ban on building sanatoria was one of the most important decisions taken in the history of tourism in St. Moritz and enabled its further development into one of the world's leading winter destinations.



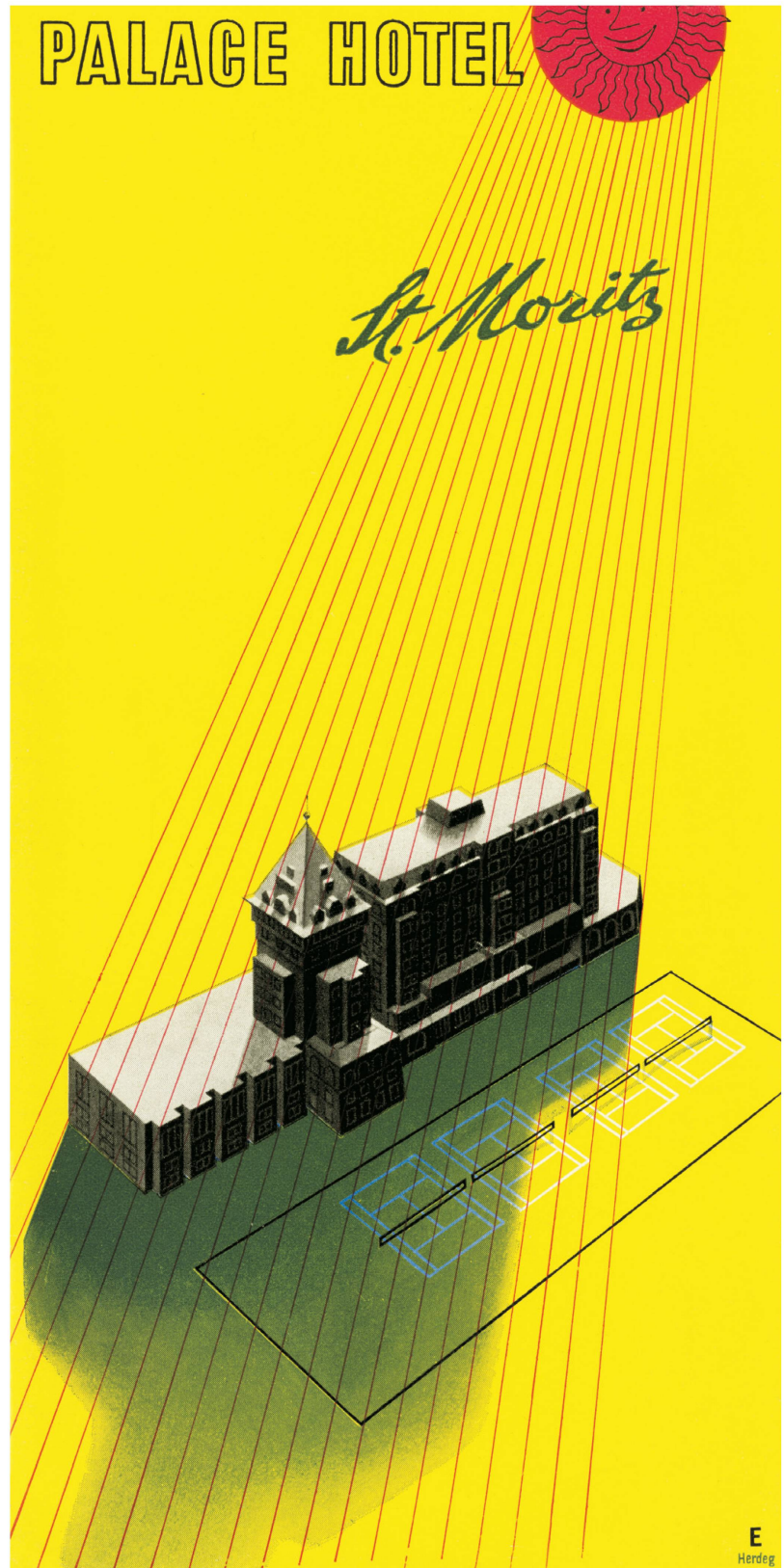
*Ice-skaters on
Lake St. Moritz.*

ing place for the international upper class and aristocracy. His hotel no longer focused on the idea of the spa or on sporting ambitions, but social encounters and representation.

Starting shot for the hotel construction boom

The construction of the Palace gave the starting shot for a hotel construction boom in St. Moritz, which would soon have what was probably the highest density of first-class hotels in the world. This was another important factor for the legend of St. Moritz.

At the same time, Caspar Badrutt continued the pioneering spirit and technical projects of his father and rendered outstanding services towards providing electricity and mobility in St. Moritz. More than his father, Caspar also thought of benefiting the community through his activities, even though he too was not a citizen of St. Moritz. As a hotelier and entrepreneur, however, he was aware that amicable co-operation with the municipality also served his own interests. In building the tram line, he also saw himself as a kind of bridge-builder between the two districts of St. Moritz, which had been rivals for so long.



Cover page of a Palace Hotel brochure, 1938.