

# Woman's Observer

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# The house that Marie José built

THE formal opening this summer of Lainston House, near Winchester, marked the completion of over two years of intensive conversion and restoration work by the owners, Robin Oldland and his wife, Marie-José, a member of the famous Seiler Swiss hotel family.

At the opening Mr Michael Montague, chairman of the English Tourist Board, said: "This beautifully restored and elegant 17th century country house sets new standards for English country house hotels and is an outstanding example of the luxurious, discreet charm of England."

Marie-José Oldland has lived and worked in hotels most of her life. She was born in the famous King David Hotel in Jerusalem which her father had opened.

Since graduating she has had wide experience in Hamburg, Zermatt, Davos, Paris and London. And it was while working in Florence that she met her husband.

After a period in Venice, the couple returned to London where Robin held posts at the London Hilton and then at the Dorchester. While he was managing director of the Dorchester Marie-José was called upon by the board to take a co-ordinating role in the complete refurbishment of all bedrooms and suites.

Robin resigned when the hotel was sold in 1976, accepting a position as director and general manager of the Swiss Centre Restaurants.

When the couple decided to pool their knowledge, experience and resources in a project of their own Marie-José undertook single handed the complete interior design project of Lainston House and is responsible for every single aspect.

By carefully copying and replacing plaster cornices, matching wooden panels and even salvaging handsome ancient radiators from other buildings, the comfortable atmosphere of the mature family home has been kept.

The standard of the furnishing and the painstaking attention to detail of the Oldlands has now provided the Winchester area

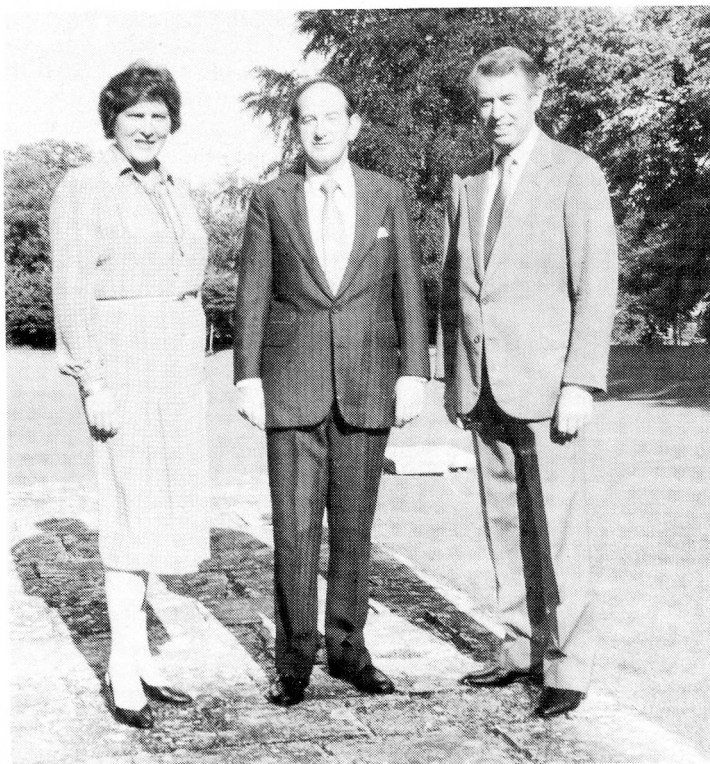


with one of the most attractive hotels in the country.

The restaurant with its emphasis on Swiss cooking is already a favourite local rendezvous, and the informal

atmosphere of the house owes more to the relaxed country home than the important international hotel.

The couple have two children – Caroline, 20, and Michele, 16.



Marie-José Oldland, Michael Montague, chairman of the English Tourist Board, and Robin Oldland pictured in front of the avenue of Lainston House on the day of the official opening.

## A royal soup

This month's recipe features Royalp, a mild, smooth cheese which is easy to cut, yet full of character. Royalp has only been made in Switzerland since the turn of the century but it is extremely popular.

This recipe would make an interesting first course for a dinner party.

### Bouillon Royalp

#### Ingredients:

4 slices of toast  
4 tablespoons grated Royalp Switzerland  
A little milk  
Pepper, paprika  
About ½ litre bouillon  
4 eggs  
Chives

#### Method:

Mix the grated Royalp Switzerland with milk, pepper and paprika to a paste and spread on slices of toast. Bake the slices in a hot oven and leave to cool a little, then cut into squares. In the meantime bring the bouillon to the boil and pour very hot into four soup cups. Break a raw egg into each cup and garnish with chives. A truly royal soup.



Picture: Bury Times

## Label to look for ...

FILM stars, hairdressers and American millionairesses may have their names written large across the back of fashionable jeans, but the label to look for in the next few months will bear the name Katharina Münzner.

And it will be discreetly sewn inside individually designed and made garments created by Swiss-born Katharina in the tiny Lancashire village of Ramsbottom.

Katharina first came to England from her home in Rhinefelden 12 years ago when her former employers, Ciba-Geigy, placed her on a two year secondment. While in England she met the man who was to become her husband, marketing lecturer Nick Morrison.

Now, Katharina's special talents for knitting and crochet and Nick's commercial expertise are to be combined. Add an artistic eye, a knitting machine for speed – it should all be a recipe for success.

*In our picture Katharina puts the finishing touches to one of her suits. Similar designs will be available from the knitting studio from this month onwards.*