

HOTEL

ENGADINERHOF

PONTRESINA

Pontresina, May 2020

Allegra, dear guests

I like to start our guest letter, this is the 39th edition, with the Romansh greeting "Allegra", which means something like: "be happy"! We have many reasons to be happy, because we live in a beautiful country with a high quality of life (this of course also applies to other countries). Even though the statistics tell us that this past winter was the warmest, that wasn't the reason why the Engadin ski marathon was cancelled (the ski slopes, cross-country ski runs and the marathon course were all in top condition), the reason was coronavirus. Nevertheless, some 1500 runners got together on Marathon Sunday to unofficially run the course (note from **Bertram**: just when I finally decided to run my first marathon after 22 years in the Engadin).

Until the end of February we were doing pretty well with an occupancy rate of 85% and, even though we were forced to cut the season short, we still achieved an occupancy rate of 81.2%. Anything over 80% is something to be happy about and reason to **sincerely thank you, dear guests**. In March, our turnover dropped by more than CHF 200,000 compared with the previous year. But thanks to the strong months prior to that, the drop in turnover is "only" CHF 51,150 in the hotel and CHF 45,600 in the pizzeria.

(Note from **Bertram**: **Nico** and I think my wife is a swot. She always does things too early, such as preparing this guest letter. Now **Corina** is sulking because she has to rewrite the letter, even though she has plenty of time during the lockdown 😊).

Corina: That would never happen to my two big boys. In the hope that problems will simply solve themselves, they do everything at the last minute (except buying football tickets)!



Lockdown at the Hissungs

Final dinner

This year, we were forced to hold our final dinner at the hotel. It was a great occasion (note from **Bertram**: and also correspondingly cheaper). Our staff loved it and thought that it should always take place in our hotel. They danced, laughed, played cards and drank a lot: one 5-litre bottle (called Jeroboam) of Sforzato 2010 and two 1.5-litre magnums of the same wine. The party continued in the canteen until three in the morning (note from **Bertram**: some of them looked a bit worse for wear the next morning).

Staff

Our head chef **Paolo Corona** (everyone wants to get rid of **corona**, but we don't want to get rid of "ours") is leaving us after 11½ years. **Paolo** made our kitchen what it is today. We are very grateful to him for his valuable services. He will be replaced by **Gianluca Lucchinetti**, who has been **Paolo's** deputy for eight years. **Renato Martino Bettegacci** from Italy will take over **Gianluca's** position. Chef **Fabrizio Carcer** is leaving us after 4½ years, and his position will be taken over by **Josip Primorac** from Croatia.

Igor Jelavic from Croatia is joining our service team. Yes, we are expanding our Croatian team.

Our chambermaids **Oksana Vener** and **Alexandra Veniciuc** are leaving us. We managed to commit **Mehliate Kryeziu** to take over during the winter season. She was our "first!" chambermaid 21 years ago. **Francisca Melo Lopes** from

Portugal will also join the team.

In the pizzeria our chef **Marco Ciccarino** is leaving us after 3½ years and our pizza baker **Danilo Piscen** after 5½ years. The new pizza chef is called **Ivano Vettovali** and our sole cook is called **Luca Basilico**. Two genuine pros from Italy.

Caroline Dwenger, our management assistant, is leaving us after just one year. She'd quite like to spend her evenings at home with her husband (note from **Bertram**: once she's been married for as long as I have, she'll think differently). It's a shame, because she was a real asset. We finally have a man at the reception; **Adis Ibric** from Croatia will join the team of women (note from **Bertram**: do I not count as a man then?).

We have hardly ever had so many people leave us before. But when I see how long most of them have been with us, I stop worrying.

Satellite system

We installed a new satellite system in the autumn. We invested CHF 25,000, so that you, dear **ENGADINERHOF** guest, can still enjoy your favourite programmes even on holiday. And you can do that with just one remote control. At home we have three of them, because the boys also subscribe to their football channels. That makes things difficult for me. Good thing I don't watch that much TV. (Note from **Nico**: it's only difficult for my parents).

Telephone system

We also digitised our telephone system. This

means that we threw away the old system, which, believe it or not, we paid CHF 90.000 for, and got a new system in. This happened last June for a "modest" CHF 35,000.

Fire alarm system

The facility is regularly inspected by the fire authorities and the house is also inspected by the building insurance company. They have now both decided that the system has to be replaced after 20 years - not because it doesn't work - but because there are no more spare parts for it! We have also been given new stipulations. (Note from **Bertram**: It's reassuring how much the authorities look after us, apart from the fact that the whole thing will cost us at least CHF 65.000 :)

What gender is "Virus"?

The coronavirus is making headlines and coverage of it is also causing linguistic confusion to some German-speaking newspaper readers and television viewers: Some say "der Virus", and some "das Virus". Which is correct, masculine or neuter? It looks as if the gender of "Virus" is as changeable as the surface structure of what it refers to. And yes: "Virus" is a quick-change artist not just linguistically. According to the Duden dictionary, both genders are correct in everyday speech.

If you use it in a technical context, however, then it has to be "das Virus". (Note from **Bertram**: What good is this knowledge when it comes to fighting "das Virus" or "der Virus", my little swot?)

Hotel statistics

Winter 2009/10 OS: 12'517	OC: 86.6 %	HB: 11'428 = 91.3%	T: 1'605'716.-- = 128.30 per day/guest
Winter 2010/11 OS: 10'840	OC: 82.8 %	HB: 9'876 = 91.1%	T: 1'485'235.-- = 137.00 per day/guest
Winter 2011/12 OS: 10'390	OC: 79.4 %	HB: 9'707 = 93.4%	T: 1'397'862.-- = 134.50 per day/guest
Winter 2012/13 OS: 10'324	OC: 80.5 %	HB: 9'469 = 91.7%	T: 1'408'588.-- = 136.40 per day/guest
Winter 2013/14 OS: 11'294	OC: 89.0 %	HB: 10'061 = 89.0%	T: 1'483'999.-- = 131.40 per day/guest
Winter 2014/15 OS: 10'614	OC: 84.0 %	HB: 9'524 = 89.5%	T: 1'433'374.-- = 135.00 per day/guest
Winter 2015/16 OS: 9'470	OC: 70.2 %	HB: 8'558 = 89.5%	T: 1'305'352.-- = 137.85 per day/guest
Winter 2016/17 OS: 9'727	OC: 80.0 %	HB: 8'544 = 87.8%	T: 1'336'292.-- = 137.40 per day/guest
Winter 2017/18 OS: 10'048	OC: 77.5 %	HB: 8'918 = 88.8%	T: 1'409'905.-- = 140.30 per day/guest
Winter 2018/19 OS: 10'444	OC: 81.4 %	HB: 9'166 = 87.8%	T: 1'450'531.-- = 138.85 per day/guest
Winter 2019/20 OS: 9'648	OC: 81.2 %	HB: 8'698 = 90.2%	T: 1'399'380.-- = 145.05 per day/guest

Legend: OS = Overnight stays, OC = OC Occupancy, HB = Halfboard, T = Turnover, p.d./guest = Turnover per day/guest

The occupancy rate does not run in parallel with overnight stays because we were open for different lengths of time.

Nationality statistics winter 2019/20

Switzerland: 7174 OS = 74.4%, Germany: 1781 OS = 18.5%. Together they made up 92.8%. But now finally another three nations above 1 percent! Italy: 150 OS = 1.55%, Netherlands: 148 OS = 1.53% and Ireland 100 OS = 1.05%

Pizzeria statistics

Winter 2011/12: 371'476.50 = 3'044.90 per day
Winter 2012/13: 406'107.40 = 3'384.20 per day
Winter 2013/14: 450'476.50 = 3'044.90 per day
Winter 2014/15: 396'247.60 = 3'274.75 per day
Winter 2015/16: 382'931.10 = 3'245.20 per day
Winter 2016/17: 342'729.70 = 3'306.25 per day
Winter 2017/18: 383'230.00 = 3'220.40 per day
Winter 2018/19: 337'632.50 = 3'185.20 per day
Winter 2019/20: 292'102.80 = 2'950.55 per day

Summer 2011: 489'466.00 = 3'546.00 per day
Summer 2012: 481'641.00 = 3'515.00 per day
Summer 2013: 506'143.00 = 3'749.00 per day
Summer 2014: 442'754.10 = 3'329.00 per day
Summer 2015: 453'164.30 = 3'381.80 per day
Summer 2016: 412'214.30 = 3'220.40 per day
Summer 2017: 436'930.55 = 3'398.00 per day
Summer 2018: 493'215.30 = 3'736.45 per day
Summer 2019: 481'087.60 = 3'644.60 per day

Private matters

On the topic of holiday in November 2019: Our cruise from Dubai to Singapore was very interesting and eventful. India was a highlight thanks to our **ENGADINERHOF** regulars who were living in Mumbai at the time. They took us to a typical Indian restaurant for lunch and afterwards invited us into their home. A trip across the metropolis with lots of first-hand background information. Despite chauffeur, domestic help and a beautiful flat with a wonderful view of the sea, I would not have wanted to change places with them. India is too much of a "challenge" for me. This would have been different in Singapore. We thought it was a fantastic city.



On the topic of holiday in spring 2020: The coronavirus scuppered all our plans. The plan has been for **Bertram**, camper van and motorcycle to set off for Spain at the beginning of April. **Nico** and I had planned to visited him for a long weekend. On 23 April we would have visited Philadelphia for a few days and then on to New York (without **Nico**, who would have taken part in a preparatory week for the final exams at the end of May). We had booked a transatlantic journey from New York to Hamburg with "Mein Schiff". Before **Nico's** exams would have begun, or are beginning, we are or would have been back home to give him moral and culinary support (note from **Bertram**: culinary support is news to me) and any other support he needed (note **Bertram**: woulda, coulda, shoulda). But ... it all fell through: we all stayed at home and are working in the hotel (note from **Bertram**:

definitely the cheapest mid-season holidays for 21½ years!).

On the topic of Nico & apprenticeship: You may remember that in our last guest letter we talked about the cantonal authorities intervening because **Nico's** training plan did not meet the required standards. We therefore decided, in consultation with the cantonal authorities, to train **Nico** ourselves for the last 5 months. The director of the Cresta Palace Hotel kindly offered a helping hand. Now **Nico** is once again full of motivation and cheerful (note from **Bertram**: and gives me useful tips).

On the (favourite) topic of football: **Bertram** and **Nico** really did watch the FC Bayern/Werder Bremen match live in Munich. The Bavarians won 6:1! As you can imagine the boys came home in a great mood, and **Nico**

with a new jersey. They stayed in the same hotel again as the Bayern team. **Bertram** suggested to **Nico** that he asks Robert Lewandowski for a photo in Polish. It worked, but please don't ask how **Bertram** knew how to say this in Polish, because I would definitely not call my husband linguistically gifted (note from **Bertram**: Firstly, what are mobile phones for? Secondly, when I hear **Corina's** standard German, I am not sure about her language skills either).

Nico & Bertram had made such good plans. They would have watched no fewer than seven Bayern matches. When I objected because **Nico** has to study for his final exams, **Bertram** said that he can do that on the way to and from the matches. But you all know what happened next...**Nico** has plenty of time to revise ☺. (Note from **Nico**: this is only important for my mother, our little swot).



Nico with Coutinho and



Robert Lewandowski in Munich



...and back in confinement on bread and water!

**We wish you all a warm and colourful spring
and look forward to welcoming you again.
A revival, stay healthy and see you soon!**

Yours, the Hissung family and staff