



The interior design at the Dolder Grand Hotel in the 60's

Zurich's shortage of hotel beds

A historical view
of the Dolder Resort:
the '50s and '60s.

The Dolder Grand Hotel came through the Second World War relatively well – despite its distance to the train station and the lack of fuel at the time. It celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1949 and by then had already become a key feature of the Zurich hotel landscape. The anniversary also ushered in the booming '50s and '60s, which was accompanied by a dramatic increase in tourism. The first major expansion of tourism extended into the mid-fifties and was led by the railways, which were the main means of transport for tourists. At the same time, the number of cars also exploded, with the call for motorways following close behind. Zurich Kloten Airport began operation at the end of the '40s and was continually expanded from then on. This was a key development for the Dolder Grand Hotel because, from as early as 1959, a large proportion of its guests were arriving in Zurich by plane.





Increasing number of overnight stays

Once the war had ended, the number of guests at the Dolder Grand Hotel started to increase. This was particularly true of those from other European countries – luxury was back in demand. The hotel flourished, especially in the summer months. Thomas Mann was among the guests in 1950. With good sales figures, the hotel invested more in refurbishments, renovations and furniture, and the last of the rooms and apartments were equipped with private bathrooms in 1959.

The Dolder Grand Hotel was regularly the scene of internationally important political

meetings and conferences during these years. The Swiss-South Africa Association (SSAA) was founded in its famous La Rotonde restaurant in 1956. In 1959, the talks between the premiers of Greece and Turkey on the Cyprus question were held at the Dolder. And in 1961, the Austrian Ambassador Dr Kurt Waldheim met his Italian counterpart Umberto Grazzi at the Grand Hotel, to find a solution to the conflict in South Tyrol.

While guests from the entertainment and film industry had previously come to the Dolder from Europe, the '60s saw an increase in guests from the show business industry in the USA.

Sir Henry

The Dolder Grand Hotel came to stand for Zurich society life. It owed its international reputation as one of the finest and most modern hotels to G. Henry Kraehenbuehl, who had been a director since 1925 and was known for his strong business skills and professional expertise. He also had a large circle of friends and was very well connected, both in Switzerland and internationally – particularly in the United States. In these circles, he was known to everyone as “Sir Henry”. At the Grand Hotel, he was a noble host and a perfect gentleman of international calibre.



1 The Dolder Grand Hotel with the new extension from the '60s

2 Weddings, banquets, celebrations – the Grand Hotel was a meeting place for Zurich society.

1925



HANS LANGENEGGER
ASSISTANT MANAGER
1934-1955



STEFFY AND G. HENRY KRAEHEBUEHL
MANAGING DIRECTOR

1955



E. LE SOLDAT
STAFF MANAGER
1934-1955



W. BALDEGGER
1^{er} MAITRE D'HOTEL
1920-1955



O. WEIDER
CHEF DE RÉCEPTION
1934-1955



HENRY LEOPOLD
NIGHT PORTER
1926-1955



R. PICHLER
1^{er} CONCIERGE
1920-1955



E. SCHIESS
1^{er} CHEF DE CUISINE
1949-1955



2

In 1952, under his watch, the new bar and dance floor at the Grand Hotel was inaugurated in the style of Louis XV. He had a first-class sound system installed, which was connected to the orchestra, a record player and a broadcast system. Another function room, the Hall of Mirrors, followed in the same style in 1954, as the hotel was hosting so many private events and wedding parties that a new venue had to be created. An entry ticket for the New Year's

Eve celebration and dinner cost 26 Swiss francs at the time. When G. Henry Kraehenbuehl died unexpectedly in early 1957 it was a great shock. With his death after 30 years of service, an important era for the Dolder Grand Hotel came to an end.

Modern extension

There was a significant shortage of hotel beds in Zurich in the early '60s. The increase in tourism during the summer months could

not be fully covered by the hospitality industry. In 1963, the Dolder Grand Hotel began work on its modern extension. As the labour market was very tight - workers were generally hard to find at the time - construction work was delayed.

The extension was carried out in stages from June 1964. The number of beds was increased by 50 per cent, so the Dolder Grand Hotel then had 200 rooms with 300 guest beds.



To begin with, the extension was only open during the summer months, but it was set up so that it could be used in winter at any time. For years, the extension hosted a special guest who, with his entourage, occupied an entire floor: the Shah of Persia.

The end of the '60s saw a significant change in the hotel industry: first-class hotels were increasingly housing business travellers who only stayed for a short time. The trend towards

shorter stays was also noted at the Dolder Grand Hotel, where guests had previously booked for four days or more on average. At that time, the largest group of guests at the Dolder came from the United States, at 25 per cent.

The hotel premises were frequently also used for social or business events and purposes. The Dolder Grand Hotel was a venue for glittering balls and weddings and a meeting place for Zurich society.

- 1 1955 Christmas card from Mr and Mrs Kraehenbuehl (directors) and management
- 2 The "new" bar boasted a state-of-the-art sound system.