

CLASSIC DRIVER

The Waldhaus Sils is a mythical and idiosyncratic hotel

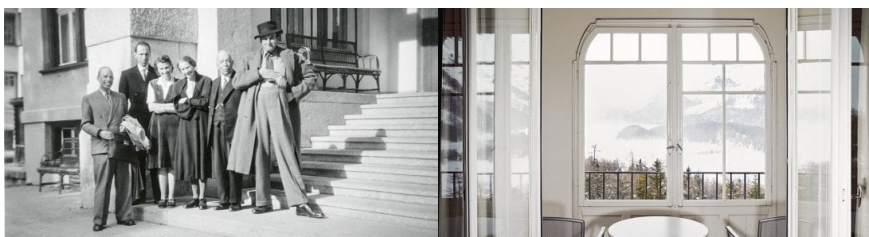
Lead

It wasn't just the director Wes Anderson who took inspiration from the Waldhaus Sils in the Engadine for his cult film *The Grand Budapest Hotel* – past guests include the cultural elite of the 20th century. This year, the legendary Grand Hotel celebrates its 111th birthday...



They still exist, those legendary Grand Hotels in the Alps whose salons, rooms and corridors keep the spirit of the *Belle Époque* alive. One of the most glamorous yet mysterious Grand Hotels in the world can be found in Sils Maria. Perched high above the village of Sils, the rooms look out over an almost unreal mountainous landscape of the Upper Engadine, which, depending on the season, is presented in lush green, deep orange or blinding white.

Owned by the same family since it opened in 1908, the Waldhaus Sils has always been one of the most charming, personal and beautiful hotels in Europe, if not the worldwide. While other star hotels have been equipped for modern luxury, the operating family of the Waldhaus Sils still relies on a unique mix of luxury goods and modesty, historical grandeur and tongue-in-cheek humour. To put that into an automotive context, here you'd drive an aged Bristol saloon or a dusty Mercedes estate, even if you could afford an entire fleet of Ferraris.



The picturesque southern tip of the Engadine, where only the hairpins of the Maloja Pass separate the traveller from the

southern side of the Alps and the north Italian lakes, has always lured artists and writers. Friedrich Nietzsche wrote *Zarathustra* there and other guests of the Waldhaus have included the great intellectuals from the 20th century from Thomas Mann and Kurt Tucholsky to Max Frisch and Friedrich Dürrenmatt, from Albert Einstein and Max Liebermann to Luchino Visconti and Joseph Boys. It's part of the myth of the hotel that you can nod to the poets and thinkers of your time with afternoon tea and an orchestral accompaniment or listen to Gerhard Richter and Alexander Kluge spontaneously devise a book project to combat the winter boredom.



It's in keeping with the unconventional spirit of the Waldhaus that its 111th birthday has been celebrated with a book of stories and photos. The elegant linen-bound tome titled [*111 Years Hotel Waldhaus Sils – History and Stories for an Unreasonable Family Dream*](#) was published by Urs Kienberger, great-grandson of the Waldhaus founders Amalie and Josef Giger-Nigg. The book was published by Scheidegger & Spiess and gathers historical milestones as well as insightful and amusing anecdotes from the hotel's history. And if you haven't already stayed at the Waldhaus, you won't be able to resist making a reservation after reading this one this Christmas.

Gallery

