



GRAND HOTEL  
NATIONAL  
LUZERN

HISTORY

# BREATHING HISTORY

**For almost 150 years**, anyone who has stayed in the Grand Hotel National has felt the breath of a dazzling era that has all but disappeared. Since the hotel opened its doors in 1870, visitors have been captivated by the princely, new baroque and neo-renaissance architecture of the frontage overlooking the lakeside promenade. The hotel's reflection merges with the iridescent play of colours on the water's surface to leave a lasting impression on every guest.

From the very outset, **the new hotel** was a jewel in Lucerne's crown and came into being at precisely the right moment. The mid-19<sup>th</sup> century saw the emergence of the tourist industry and the city of lights became an attractive travel destination, in particular for the French nobility, the Russian aristocracy and the British upper class.

**However, this urban clientele** brought with it a sudden increase in the demands made of the hotel sector. These keen travellers expected far more than they were used to at home, which resulted in building owners and master craftsmen creating an exclusive and discreet world – a microcosm of luxury.

The building owner, Colonel Maximilian Von Pfyffer von Altshofen, managed the Grand Hotel National from 1870 onwards. Having grown up in a castle, the renowned military commander was fully aware of what he owed his distinguished guests.

**Seven years later, César Ritz** took over the management of the hotel, laying the foundations of traditional and stylish hotel culture. Hailing from Niederwald im Goms, this gifted native of the canton of Valais would later make the first "Hotel Ritz" in Paris a triumphant success. Honoured by the Prince of Wales, the future King Edward VII of Britain, as the "king of hoteliers", the sovereign of style laid one of the most important cornerstones of perfectly elegant hotel culture here in Lucerne which still serves as a model today.

**In 1881, another master** joined the ranks of the Grand Hotel National. The great French chef **Auguste Escoffier** devotedly indulged the delicate palates of the aristocracy – from the heads of the imperial German family to Indian maharajas and including Sissy, Empress Elisabeth of Austria.

To their great pleasure, he often regaled guests with a selection of his very own world-famous dishes such as flambéed lobster, chicken à *la Derby* and *poire belle Hélène*.

“The perfection of the craft must be paired with simplicity”: that was the revolutionary motto of these two leading restaurateurs. For César Ritz, this meant dispensing with the bombastic draperies and overblown greetings which were replaced by light colours, flowers and attentive personalised service making guests feel like **“friends of the hotel”**.

**In 1976, almost one hundred years later**, the architect Umberto Erculiani acquired the Grand Hotel National. He completely renovated the luxury palace throughout the year, paying great attention to detail. Among other new developments, he created 22 exclusive residences in the west wing of the hotel intended for permanent guests.

**Today**, the Grand Hotel National is a modern, luxury 5-star hotel with 41 rooms and suites. The hotel also houses 22 residences, ultra-modern offices, 6 restaurants, 2 ballrooms, conference rooms and a pool floor with sauna. New, cosmopolitan guests invigorate the magnificent setting, bringing with them a renewed grandeur.

Once you have experienced this blend of legendary tradition and sophisticated modernity, you will surely want to come back for more.

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