



## Excerpts from the Hotel Dreesen's History

There have been Dreesens in Rüngsdorf on the Rhine since **1770**; in those days, a time when barges were still a common feature on Germany's most important waterway, the family ran a comparatively small riverside hostelry.

Theodor Dreesen was officially recorded as the landlord of the (now no longer existent) Pavilion in Bad Godesberg in **1821**.

Since **1858**, all Dreesens have been christened Fritz, right up until today, into what is now the 5th generation of hoteliers.

From **1877** onwards, the 'Haus Dreesen' was well-known as a Rhine riverside bathing facility with veranda.

Grand opening of the new hotel, designed in the Wilhelmine style, on **3 Mai 1894**.

The Hotel Dreesen, the best hotel in town ever since, benefited from Bad Godesberg's development into a spa town for what was a wealthy clientele back then, and contributed greatly to promoting early tourism.

In those days, a menu featuring over 80 meals ranging from 2 to 6 Reichsmark was nothing unusual, as were a 6-day working week, a 16-hour working day with one hour's break, and 3 days notice ( as historically proven by the still existent employment records of the time ).

In 1940, the stock take stated that the hotel's cellar boasted 84,000 bottles of the finest wines. Once occupied by the American forces, though, only a fraction of this. VIP guests from politics, business, sports, the arts and culture, as well as the 'moneyed nobility' from the Ruhr industrial region have always frequented the hotel, here a short selection:

### European aristocracy and statesmen:

The family of the German Kaiser, Paul von Hindenburg, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, Silvia Queen of Sweden, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Bruno Kreisky, Giscard d'Estaing, Francois Mitterrand, Pérez de Cuéllar, Andreas Papandreou, Gustav Stresemann, Friedrich Ebert, Mikhail Gorbachev, Henry Kissinger, Joseph Luns, Theodor Heuss, Heinrich Lübke and every President of the Federal Republic of Germany ever since, Konrad Adenauer and every chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany ever since, and a great number of German Cabinet ministers.



...and artists and other celebrities:

Greta Garbo, Charlie Chaplin, Rudolf Caracciola, Gustav Gründgens, Martin Held, Francis Durbridge, Elisabeth Flickenschildt, Will Quadflieg, Marcel Marceau, Jean Marais, Bernhard Grzimek, Danny Kaye, O.E. Hasse, Lil Dagover, Paul Bocuse, Herbert von Karajan, Mario del Monaco, Rudolf Augstein, Yehudi Menuhin, Aldo Moro, Caterina Valente, Amintore Fanfani, Robert Kempner.

### **1926**

Adolf Hitler stayed at the Dreesen for the first time, still a stateless writer in those days, at the instigation of his later deputy, Rudolf Hess, who was then a student at a close-by boarding school in Bad Godesberg as his parents lived in Alexandria.

Hess and his parents knew and valued the Dreesen as a top-class hotel, making it their preferred place to stay along the Rhine.

A particularly special date was 22 September 1938, when Adolf Hitler and Neville Chamberlain held preliminary talks on the 'Munich Pact' in order to avert the 'Sudeten Crisis'.

**1934** saw the construction of the movable glass roof ( size almost 2,000 m<sup>2</sup> ) over the 'Kastaniengarten', a masterpiece of advanced technical engineering at the time of its construction, and still in use to this day.

During the Second World War, the hotel served as an internment camp for 100 diplomats.

On the eve of **7 March 1945**, the German General Schimpf and his staff moved into the Dreesen, handing Bad Godesberg to the Americans the next day without a fight.

In consequence, Dwight D. Eisenhower, the then Supreme Commander of the Allied forces and later President of the United States, stayed at the Dreesen for a week.

On **15 July 1949**, the Dreesen was requisitioned to become the seat of the French High Commissioner Francois-Poncet.

The hotel continued to be requisitioned until **1952**, and was finally 'released from occupation' on **26 September 1952**. Following a complete refurbishment at great cost, both in terms of capital and strength, the Dreesen was reopened as a hotel on **17 November 1952**.

Since the government of the German Federal Republic, formerly based in Bonn, has relocated to Berlin, we have lost 100 % of our guests - and won another 105%, a solid basis for the hotel's future in terms of economic viability.