

# THE MAGAZINE

A STYLE TO REMEMBER



No.13

THE MAGAZINE TARGETS INTERNATIONAL READERS WHO ARE INTENT ON FULFILLING THEIR DREAMS.



## THE CHEDI

ANDERMATT, SWITZERLAND

The Andermatt 18-hole, par-72 championship golf course, designed by Kurt Rossknecht to PGA and environmental standards, will open on a pay-and-play basis to Andermatt Swiss Alps property owners and hotel guests in 2014 and to the general public in 2016.

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**A**s editor of the GHM Magazine, I have always shied away from fanfare and headlines. However, this 13th edition will see me making a rare exception to this particular rule. Throughout its over 20-year history, GHM's ambition has always been to stand out from the crowd and be the 'best of the best'. The Chedi Andermatt in the ever-snowy Swiss mountains represents the realisation of this goal and is a shining example of



what GHM has to offer: never before has a luxury hotel in Europe welcomed over 3,000 enthusiastic visitors and almost 500 journalists from all over the world both pre- and post-opening, and in so doing attracted such international acclaim and worldwide headlines.

Rarely, too, has a luxury hotel made it straight into the upper echelons of hotel society by being featured in Leading Hotels of the World (LHW) - the coveted list of the world's top luxury hotels and spas, established in 1928 - right

from the time of opening. GHM has created a unique hotel in Europe which has sparked fascination worldwide and has even won over Switzerland's toughest hotel critic, Karl Wild.

Following on from the latest addition to its portfolio in Andermatt, GHM, a long-standing fixture on the LHW list and the leading hotel group in Asia, has a host of exciting new projects in the pipeline for its many regular visitors. Work is already under way on hotels in a number of other destinations including Indonesia, India, Japan, Morocco, the United Arab Emirates, the Maldives and Taiwan.

James Graf, a truly cosmopolitan man with Swiss roots, earned an enviable reputation as an international researching journalist, author and photographer for media and television companies. As a consulting expert for gambling, he has also advised governmental bodies such as Gaming Boards in the U.S., in Canada and Switzerland, where he played a signal, pioneering role in securing the 1991 admission for casinos at the State Exhibition. He has mentored PhD students at the universities of Zurich and Basel, among others, and the Hotel Management School in Lucerne, drawing on his long years of experience in the hotel business. For many years now he has been living in top international hotels, where he compiles studies on people in hotels and has become acquainted with some of the world's premier establishments. It was through this work that he became good friends with GHM President Hans R. Jenni in Asia, with whom he developed the idea behind THE MAGAZINE. James Graf, among other accomplishments a true visionary, is passionate about what he does and always strives for perfection. THE MAGAZINE is his personal attempt to produce a publication whose original concept brings the GHM slogan to life: A Style to Remember...

JAMES GRAF, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

TOP OF THE TOP

## 'THE CHEDI ANDERMATT IS LIKE A MAGNET'

'The idea of a Chedi in Andermatt initially seemed as unlikely to me as late-1960s Brigitte Bardot choosing to live in a Salvation Army hostel. Anyone familiar with Chedi hotels knows that these are no ordinary hotels, but rather works of art that cultivate an incomparable lifestyle, not to mention their approach to service.

In my almost twenty years as a professional hotel critic, I have visited many beautiful and not-so-beautiful hotels on all five continents. It has been a long time since I let myself be impressed by grandiose palaces flaunting their brash luxury that threatens to smother visitors. The global hotel industry is full of these dull peacocks where the price-quality ratio has completely gone off the rails. Other top hotels, even the famous ones, are just boring, although everything is available in abundance. It is usually these hotels that try too hard to make guests 'feel at home' - an aim that is not particularly original.



And then there are the hotels that take your breath away as soon as you step inside, only letting you utter an awe-struck 'wow'; hotels that embrace their guests and transport them to a different, more beautiful world from the moment they arrive. The Chedi Andermatt is one such hotel - this much is clear. Its rooms could not be more stunning or sophisticated.

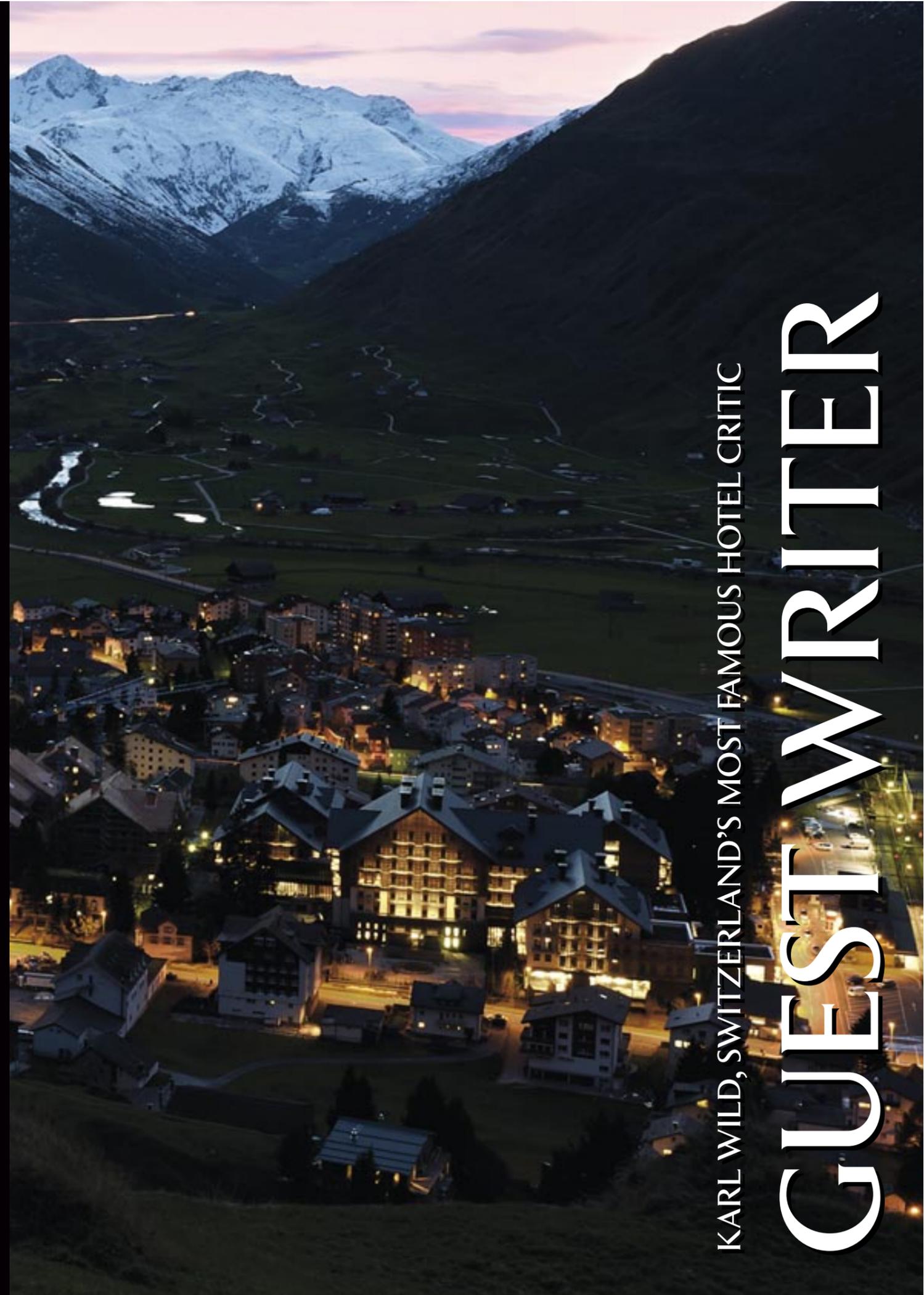
The beating heart of The Chedi Andermatt is The Lobby, from which point visitors can make their way to The Restaurant, The Bar, The Pool Area, The Spa, The Wine & Cigar Library or a huge display cabinet with giant cheese wheels from the Canton of Uri. The Lobby, with its two wood-burning fireplaces, has a virtually mystical aura, not least thanks to the phenomenal lighting. Then there is the crowning glory, The Lounge, which offers a direct view of the 35-metre pool.

The 2,400-square-metre spa is so sumptuous that it would delight even the Romans. You will not find any white tablecloths or silver cutlery in this hotel's atmospheric, uncomplicated restaurant. Instead, diners can take a rare firstclass culinary trip around the world. If Michelin Stars were awarded for breakfast, The Chedi would have three. What the chefs prepare every morning is simply unequalled in terms of selection, quality and presentation. The famous breakfast buffet at Kempinski St. Moritz, which has long been considered the best in Europe, needs to watch its back. Now let's turn to architectural ingenuity: if a hotel has anything resembling a soul, this ultimately depends on the quality and commitment of its employees. The same applies to a Chedi worth CHF 300 million. The young, 140-strong team is a breath of fresh air and is almost heart-warmingly committed to guests' wellbeing. They all have one thing in common - they all came to Andermatt because they wanted to work in a Chedi. The name is like a magnet, attracting employees as well as connoisseurs, pleasure-seekers and hotel fans from around the world.

The Chedi Andermatt has no problems when it comes to signs of quality. However, the star system is currently causing quite a controversy internationally. Italy, for example, is still not allowed to take part in the Europe-wide standardisation of the classification, as it awards stars haphazardly, or hotels simply buy them. Even the Swiss SGS S.A. is not blameless here after blithely pulling seven stars out of its hat for the Town House Galleria hotel in Milan.

Others, like the Burj-al-Arab hotel in Dubai or the Emirates Palace in Abu Dhabi, make it even easier and simply award themselves seven stars. Anyone familiar with these three hotels knows that they are dazzlingly luxurious five-star plus hotels. Stars six and seven are as foolish as Karl-Theodor von und zu Guttenberg's plagiarised thesis.'

Karl Wild is a journalist and author, and lives near Zurich. During his time working as a journalist for Switzerland's now defunct Sport magazine, he attended virtually every major sporting event in the world. He later worked for the business magazine Bilanz, covering the hotel and tourism industry, and in 1997 published Switzerland's first hotel-rating guide. He went freelance in 2002, running his own business specialising in ghostwriting, and since then has been travelling around incognito as a mystery guest for a global alliance of luxury hotels. His three biographies have each made the non-fiction bestseller list, and in 2008 he was voted Swiss Journalist of the Year.



KARL WILD, SWITZERLAND'S MOST FAMOUS HOTEL CRITIC

GUEST WRITER



GHM sets new standard: The Chedi Andermatt is the first hotel in Switzerland to offer beds with mattresses from iconic luxury bed company Hästens. According to research by American scientists, anyone making it to 80 will have spent 22 years in bed. So sleep is incredibly important and mattress quality is vital.

The mattress can be traced back to the 12th century and the term itself originates from the Arabic word matrah. In 1852 a Scandinavian saddler named Pehr Adölf Janson became an unrivalled pioneer of the modern mattress, which he marketed under the brand name Hästens (meaning "of the horse" in Swedish, since the mattresses were made of horsehair).

Today, the fifth generation of the Janson family still runs the business, which ranks as the world's champion mattress-maker and is represented in over 40 countries. Since the end of the 1980s, sales of these top-quality beds, which are entirely hand-made down to the last nail, has skyrocketed by 30,000%, and between 1994 and 2005 alone the number of beds sold by Hästens outside Sweden soared by 71%. In recognition of this achievement, Hästens was awarded the Swedish Great Export Prize. All Hästens beds are lovingly fashioned by hand with a real feel for the

exquisite natural materials used. "In our opinion, no machine can replace the expertise of our craftsmen. Bed manufacturing requires tremendous ingenuity and skill as well as nature's finest ingredients", explained the company's CEO, Jan Ryde.

For over 160 years, Hästens has been the leader in its sector in terms of quality, naturalness and design. And today, just as in the early days, the company persists in using horsehair, cotton, wool, linen, Swedish pine wood from north of the Arctic Circle and steel, to produce total comfort, optimal support, quality and durability. It also displays exemplary commitment to the environment.

Each bed is tailor-made to meet the wishes and requirements of the customer, delivered within 6 months and guaranteed for 25 years. Since 1952 Hästens has been an official supplier of beds to Sweden's royal family. Indeed, King Carl Gustaf and Queen Silvia sleep on a bed from Hästens' Vividus collection costing €88,300, making it the most expensive bed in the world. GHM has chosen to underscore the importance of quality for its guests by asking the world's best bed manufacturer to fit out the new Chedi Andermatt!

THE LEADING MATTRESS MANUFACTURER COMES FROM SWEDEN

GHM WITH HÄSTENS

Falling prices and the lightning speed of technological progress are making electric cars an increasingly attractive option. Anyway, everyone knows that the days of the combustion engine are numbered. Supposedly electric vehicles will already command a worldwide market share of 5% by 2015, and by 2018 hybrid cars are expected to be old hat.

Hybrid solutions like the new LaFerrari, McLaren P1 or Porsche 918 are slated to be mere way stations along the road to purely electric powered sports cars. The market will be so irresistible that it is expected to lure in brand new car makers not yet on anyone's radar. For instance, it is entirely possible that Samsung might suddenly roar into the mobility market. For although the giant Korean conglomerate has little or no expertise regarding complex combustion engines, it has ample know-how where electronics and batteries are concerned. And for now battery technology is the single biggest factor limiting the appeal of electric vehicles.

Even car-friendly Germany - the only country in Europe without a speed limit on its motorways - has woken up, with Chancellor Angela Merkel steadfastly insisting that there must be 1 million electric cars on Germany's roads by 2020. But the somewhat unlikely company making a splash in this segment is none

other than Mercedes, with its SLS AMG Coupé Electric Drive, the fastest and most expensive electric car of all. Mercedes pulled off this coup by drawing on know-how amassed from decades of involvement in motor sport. The low-slung SLS is just 1.252 m high and it has not one electric motor, but four individually controllable synchronous ones, one driving each wheel. As a result, this supercar combines all the advantages of a conventional 4-wheel drive vehicle with the incredible liberation of torque vectoring, whereby the combined rating of 552 kW/741 bhp and the tremendous torque of 1,000 Nm transfers power to whichever wheel or wheels have the most traction. This gives the vehicle truly superb driving dynamics, handling, driving safety and comfort.

The batteries can be fully charged in three hours and the electric drive recovers so efficiently (the car's top speed is limited to 250 kph) that in road traffic lucky SLS drivers will merely have to take their foot off the gas pedal to slow the vehicle down. The car's acceleration is awesome, taking the 2.1-tonne vehicle from 0 to 100 kph in an almost quite literally breathtaking 3.9 seconds. And the vehicle's price tag, at less than €500,000, is doable for its target group, but of course very, very few SLS AMG Coupé Electric Drives will ever roll off the production line.



THE WORLD'S MOST EXPENSIVE ELECTRIC CAR

THE DEAREST E-CAR



The Urner Boden is the largest alp in Switzerland, an 8-km-long upland valley of lush pasture land hemmed in by mountains almost 3,000 m high. Until 1877 it was illegal to stay there over the winter. In 1935 there were still 250 people living there; today there are just 40 or so, and no local school or post office any more. In 2002, a small cable car was installed to carry up to six passengers at a time to an altitude of 2,036 m from the Urner Boden to the Fiesten Pass, which is a starting point for a number of hikes leading to the Gemsfärenstock, Klausen Pass and Clariden Hut respectively. Most of the locals make a living out of alpine farming and agriculture. Up to 1,200 cattle spend the summer in this upland valley, so during that part of the year the pasture land is put to good use. It is from this unique corner of Switzerland (see photo) that The Chedi Andermatt procures its famous genuine Alpkäse, cheese from the Swiss Alps that is only made during the summer months. The cattle graze freely there, choosing what to eat from the abundant selection of plants growing in the valley's meadows. The fresh and healthy aromatic herbs that grow there make for very tasty raw milk, which is taken still warm from the cows and delivered to local producers who are passionate about their cheese making. It is the special qualities of the raw milk and the authentic centuries-old production method that make the end product so unique, and set it apart from the mountain cheese manufactured down in the valley. That mountain cheese is produced all year round in commercial village cheese dairies in the valley using standardised techniques. There, cheese production continues during the winter, when the cattle are kept in barns and fed with hay. Some of the milk going into the mountain cheese is also pasteurised.

Alpkäse, by contrast, is a seasonal product, and the limited time available for its manufacture and varying storage times mean that it is not always available everywhere. This makes it a genuine local speciality ready to be enjoyed by guests at The Chedi Andermatt, which takes pride in sourcing most of its culinary ingredients locally.

Plans to centralise the production of Alpkäse were hatched back in 2007, since when steady progress has been made. As a result, starting in summer 2014 as many as 1.2 million litres of Alpine milk will be lovingly crafted into cheese at what will be Switzerland's largest mountain cheese dairy.

URNER CHEESE FROM THE WORLD'S HIGHEST MOUNTAIN PASTURE

SWISS CHEESE



Of the 85 types of crocus, saffron (from the Arabic/Persian za'faran) is the most expensive spice in the world. It takes up to 250,000 flowers to produce one kilogram of saffron and these flowers are painstakingly harvested by hand, with pickers only collecting up to 80 grams per day. Add to this the fact that saffron only blooms for around two weeks in autumn each year and you can see why it fetches such a high price, which can range between €20,000 and €25,000 per kilo.

Saffron is cultivated in Afghanistan, Iran, Kashmir and in Europe, predominantly in the Mediterranean countries and on 18,000 m<sup>2</sup> of land in the hamlet of Mund, Switzerland. Approximately 200 tons of saffron are produced every year, 180 tons of which come from Iran (91% of the market share). The most coveted saffron has long been that from Spain, where exporters earn around €400 million per year. However, in 2011 only 1.5 tons were harvested in Spain, although 90 tons of processed goods were exported under the label 'Product of Spain'. This caused a huge scandal. Since then, Spain's most famous saffron-growing region, La Mancha, has been facing dubious competitors. Although at one time some 20,000 families were involved in saffron farming, their number has now fallen to 400. Counterfeit saffron is widespread, as are mixtures with curcuma. Quality criteria have been established, such as the international standard ISO 3632 and national standards, to curtail counterfeits and substitutes and to improve consumer security.

Saffron must be stored in tightly closed metal or glass containers kept in a dark, dry place, as the spice quickly fades when it comes into contact with the light and the essential oil evaporates relatively easily. To maintain its fragrant aroma, saffron should not be cooked for too long.

THE WORLD'S MOST EXPENSIVE SPICE

SAFFRON



Polo probably originated in Persia 2700 years ago but is now played worldwide. By the 16th and 17th centuries even the central square of the country's capital Isfahan served as a polo ground. In the modern era, the Shah of Iran watched polo matches from the balcony of the huge Ali Qapu Palace there. The sport is referred to way back in Persian mythology, when the game was supposedly very popular amongst both men and women. In Afghanistan a sport somewhat similar to polo, called Buzkashi, was played. The spread of Islam into Arabia and India established an ever wider following for polo. Then, in the 19th century, British cavalry officers stationed in India brought the game back home, prompting the establishment of the first British polo club in 1859. True polo – a number of variants of this elite sport are not internationally recognised – is a ball game and team sport. As in football, two teams compete against each other to score more goals than their opponents. However, a polo team only has 4 players, who have to function as a tight-knit unit. Players form a close relationship with their mounts – which are commonly referred to as polo ponies – and the game requires tremendous spirit, unwavering concentration, real passion and split-second decision-making.

The game's governing body is the Federation of International Polo (FIP). So far polo has featured as a sport at 5 Olympic Games, in Paris (1900), London (1908), Antwerp (1920), Paris again (1924) and Berlin (1936). Today's prominent polo players include Great Britain's Prince Charles, who has a handicap of +2 and was introduced to the sport by his uncle, Louis Mountbatten, 1st Earl Mountbatten of Burma. Under the pseudonym "Marco", Mountbatten even wrote a book on polo, which for a long time became the standard work on the sport. Prince William, who has a handicap of +1, and Prince Harry are both keen players, as is Genesis guitarist Mike Rutherford, who plays the game to tournament level. The most prestigious tournaments – dubbed the Triple Corona – are all played in Argentina. The first World Polo Championship took place in 1987, and today the competition takes place every 3 years. So far the most successful nations competing have been Brazil and Argentina, each having notched up a tally of 6 medals.

THE WORLD'S OLDEST TEAM GAME

POLO



GHM is an art patron to One East Asia. We have already worked together on a range of art projects in our shared mission to promote and boost the worldwide appeal of Asian art, especially art from Southeast Asia. Here are just a few of the projects we have been involved in: Songs of Ubud, Bali, 19 June - 11 July 2010 in the Agung Rai Museum of Art (ARMA), Bali, Indonesia; GHM Art Forum, 12 May 2011, a presentation by distinguished collectors, Singapore; A GHM-sponsored art lecture on the Romancing Indonesia exhibition (1 - 10 November 2012), in the Royal Opera Arcade Gallery, Mayfair, London; A GHM-sponsored art lecture entitled Unity & Diversity in Contemporary Southeast Asian Art, 30 October - 16 November 2013, in Gallery 8, St. James's, London.

Krijono, whose father had already been one of Java's most influential gallerists, enrolled at the Academy of Art in Yogyakarta in 1970. After experimenting with a wide variety of media, including batik, oils and acrylics, he went on to study traditional techniques in Tokyo, namely kimono painting and batik. He applied colour to his canvases without diluting or mixing it, often opting for characteristically stark contrasts. One of his best-known quotations is: 'I'm a painter, not a mixer of colours!' - fitting words indeed for such a colourful, larger-than-life character! Krijono made his breakthrough in the early 1900s, right after his very first solo exhibition in the Bamboo Gallery, Ubud (Bali), officiated by Indonesian master Professor Srihadi Soedarsono. His unique expressive works were frequently exhibited around the world, including in Italy, where Gianni Versace was one of Krijono's biggest fans, acquiring many of his works. Some of Krijono's paintings also figure in the collection of the Palace of the Republic of Indonesia. Later on in life, Krijono moved to Ubud in Bali, where he died at the age of 60 in 2011, almost three years ago.

Today, his works are actively traded in auctions and the prices have leapt from a mere US \$3,000-\$4,000 before his death to between \$6,000 and \$10,000 now. And they still have some ground to make up, too, because despite their steady increase, prices for works by Krijono have yet to reach the level they deserve.

The true value of the painting entitled My Power, reproduced on this page, and based on its size and quality should be around \$12,000. Measuring 140 by 140 cm and painted in acrylic on canvas, it is considered one of the finest works in his animal series.

EAGLE PAINTINGS BY KRIJONO

GHM ART



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GHM HOTELS

AROUND THE WORLD



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# THE NAM HAI

HOI AN, VIETNAM

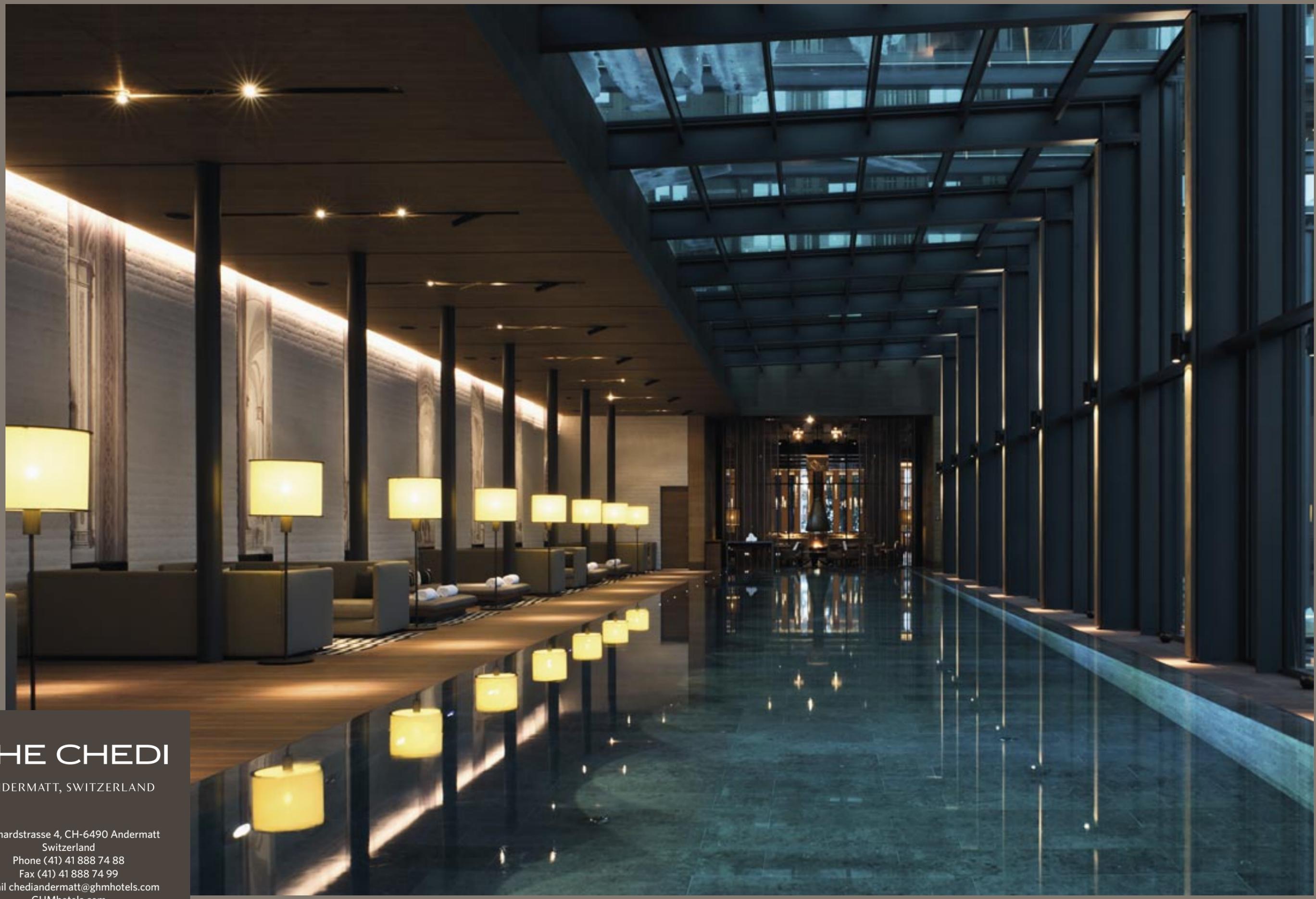
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THE TELEGRAPH (England): 'The ascent of Andermatt: The opening of the Chedi Andermatt has introduced a new level of sophistication to this often overlooked Swiss ski resort'.

TRAVELLER'S WORLD (Germany): 'Forget St. Moritz, forget Zermatt. The world has never seen a hotel like this'.

NZZ (Switzerland): 'Guests meet Alpine chic. At The Chedi, this is very skilfully staged, with a sense of the human touch and the right feel-good factor'.

WORLD'S LUXURY GUIDE (Germany): 'The Chedi: a new symbol of luxury in the Swiss mountains that fuses tradition with Asian culture'.

TRAVEL BOOK.DE (Germany): 'A five-star hotel that feels like six - The Chedi Andermatt, the most expensive hotel in the Alps, opens its doors'.

SCHWEIZER ILLUSTRIERTE (Switzerland): 'Perfectly matches the casual luxury lifestyle promoted by the GHM and Chedi Hotels of the world'.

THE SUNDAY TIMES (England): 'The Chedi Andermatt is the most magnificent hotel to open in the Alps for years'.

THE SUNDAY TIMES TRAVEL (England): 'Not just for winter: Andermatt is one of Home's golf resorts to buy in now'.

THE NEW YORK TIMES (USA): 'Opened in December 2013, the Chedi Andermatt is already on the list of 52 places to visit in 2014!'

HOTELS - THE MAGAZINE OF THE WORLD-WIDE HOTEL INDUSTRY: 'Hot Openings: Chedi Andermatt hits the slopes'.

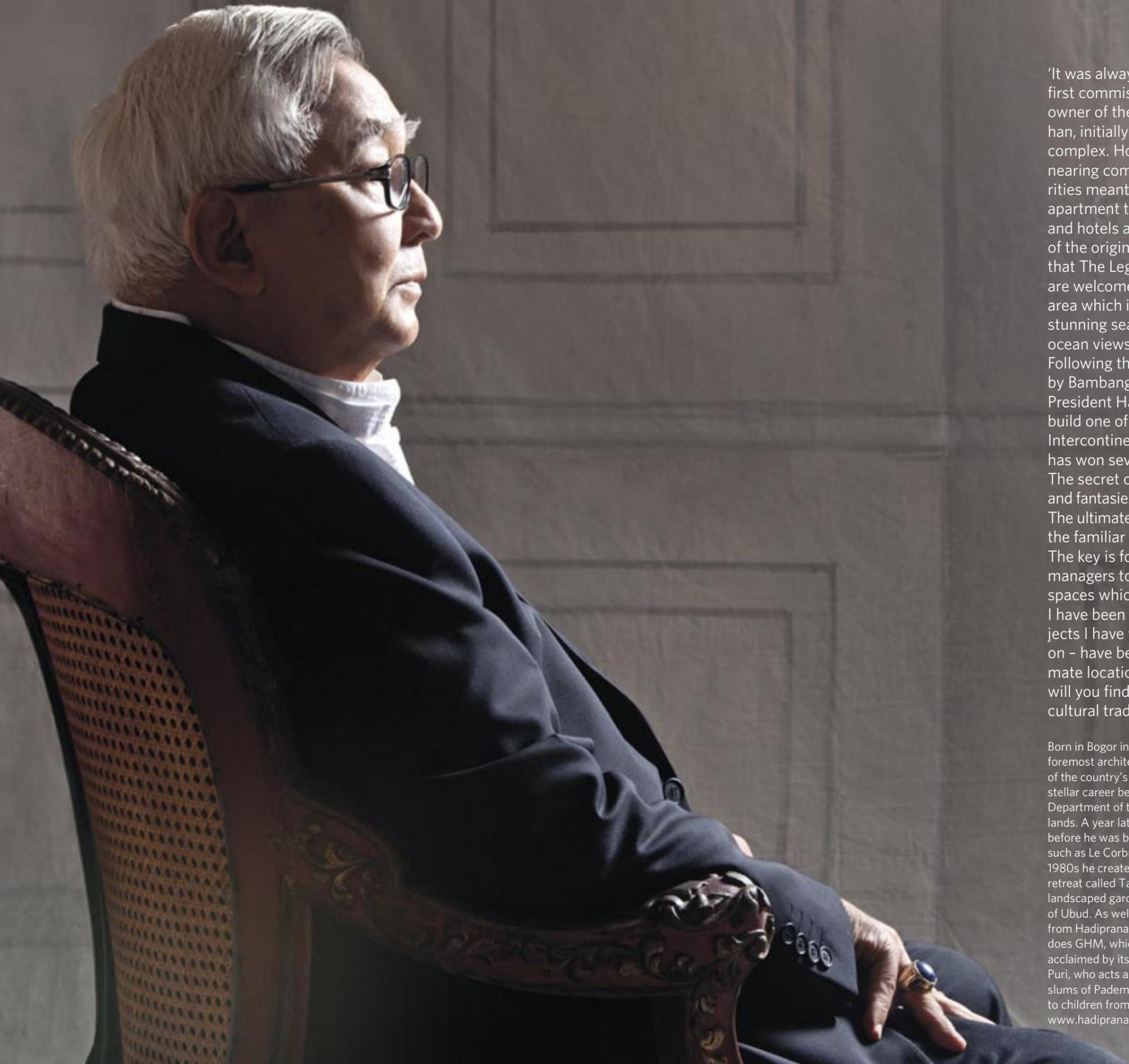
THE LONDON EVENING STANDARD (England): 'The Chedi is all about luxury. Not silly luxury, but the luxury that comes from calm, comfortable infinite spaces'.

LUZERNER ZEITUNG (Switzerland): 'The Chedi attracted amazed looks. 3,000 visitors came just to see the interior of this five-star luxury hotel'.



WHAT DOES THE MEDIA SAY...

# THE CHEDI ANDERMATT



'It was always my dream to build luxury hotels but my first commission came about rather by chance. The owner of the world-famous The Legian, Robby Djohan, initially approached me to build an apartment complex. However, just as the construction work was nearing completion, opposition from the local authorities meant that the design had to be changed from apartment to hotel – no easy task, since apartments and hotels are two completely different beasts! Part of the original design was retained, though, meaning that The Legian has no Lobby as such; instead guests are welcomed into a unique 'compartmentalised' area which is always a source of intrigue! The hotel's stunning seafront location also affords spectacular ocean views.

Following this flagship project, I was commissioned by Bambang Trihatmodjo, son of former Indonesian President Haji Muhammad Suharto, to design and build one of Bali's largest resort hotels – the Jimbaran Intercontinental, which boasts some 500 rooms and has won several awards for its architecture.

The secret of my success is to fuse my own dreams and fantasies with my clients' wishes and requirements. The ultimate challenge with such projects is to balance the familiar against the new, dream against reality. The key is for architects to work closely with hotel managers to enable them to translate their ideas into spaces which exude both comfort and grandeur.

I have been incredibly lucky that so many of the projects I have worked on – and indeed continue to work on – have been in Bali. To me, the island is the ultimate location for a hotel: nowhere else in the world will you find such natural beauty and such unique cultural traditions in music, dance and art.'

Born in Bogor in West Java, Hendra Hadiprana is one of Indonesia's foremost architects and interior designers and at the same time one of the country's principal and most famous art collectors. Hadiprana's stellar career began in 1957 after graduating from the Architecture Department of the Minerva Art Academy in Groningen in the Netherlands. A year later, he set up his own company and it was not long before he was being rated in the same bracket as architectural greats such as Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright and Ieoh Ming Pei. In the early 1980s he created for his family and friends a secluded five-hectare retreat called Tanah Gajah ('land of the elephants'), featuring elegantly landscaped gardens and rolling paddy fields, near the Balinese town of Ubud. As well as 20 villas, more than 100 paintings and sculptures from Hadiprana's collection form part of this unique paradise – as does GHM, which in 2004 opened its Chedi Club there, a hotel highly acclaimed by its large number of returning guests. Hadiprana's daughter Puri, who acts as the owner's representative, does social work in the slums of Pademangan in North Jakarta, providing character education to children from disadvantaged families ([www.sindhuhadiprana.com](http://www.sindhuhadiprana.com), [www.hadiprana.co.id](http://www.hadiprana.co.id), [www.hadiprana-artcentre.com](http://www.hadiprana-artcentre.com)).

GHM'S FEATURED ARCHITECT

H. HADIPRANA



## THE CHEDI

TOMAKOMAI  
HOKKAIDO, JAPAN

### GHM PROJECTS

- The Chedi Dhapparu, Maldives
- The Aayu Mumbai, India
- The Chedi Tomakomai, Hokkaido, Japan
- The Chedi Tamouda Bay, Morocco
- Al Bait Sharjah, UAE
- The Chedi Khorfakkan, Sharjah, UAE
- The Serai Zhudong, Hsinchu, Taiwan
- The Chedi Zhudong, Hsinchu, Taiwan
- The Chedi Club Zhudong, Hsinchu, Taiwan



## THE CHEDI

KHORFAKKAN  
SHARJAH, UAE

GHM HOTELS  
**PROJECTS**



THE CHEDI

TAMOUDA BAY, MOROCCO



THE AAYU

MUMBAI, INDIA

GHM HOTELS

PROJECTS

Google Chrome recognises 27 writing systems and thereby covers more than 99% of texts published on the Web. The second most widely used writing system is Arabic, which has more users than the Cyrillic alphabet or Chinese. Arabic's intricate characters are puzzling to readers used to the Latin alphabet because Arabic is a writing system in which the characters only represent consonants. Most vowels either have to be learnt or guessed. So in Arabic a headline like "Managers fly to New York" would be written more like "Mngrs fl t Nw Yrk", which is just about comprehensible, whereby the written characters do not directly correspond to what is spoken. As Arabic developed, dots that could be placed above or below existing letters were introduced to distinguish consonants that were written the same way. In this way, the original number of characters was increased from 18 to 28, roughly the same number as in the Latin alphabet.

The Arabic script is far older than its Latin equivalent, but far younger than Chinese, and arose during the period between the development of these significant writing systems. Arabic's origins date back to roughly 400 B.C. and its characters can be deemed very distant descendants of Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs. Its writing system is not only used as a vehicle for Arabic, but also for other languages including Farsi, Kurdish, Malayan, Indonesian, Pashtu and many North African languages. The successful spread of Arabic as a writing system came about during the Islamic Expansion in the 7th century A.D. and continued with the rise of the Ottoman Empire, which twice advanced as far as Vienna and threatened to overrun all of Western culture, thanks to its superior weaponry. The powers that emerged victorious from World War I smashed the Ottoman Empire and broke it up between them. In 1926, Kemal Atatürk, the charismatic president of the Republic of Turkey, which arose out of what remained of the Ottoman Empire, decided to replace the Arabic writing system with the Latin alphabet, arguing that the latter is easier to learn and better suited to the vowel-rich Turkish language. Malayan, the East African language Swahili, Central West African Hausa and the Tatar languages followed suit.

The advent of the internet marks a turning point for languages and writing systems. So how many writing systems will a programmer like Google still have to take into account 100 years from now? Some 100 of the roughly 6,500 languages used around the world go extinct every year. And the same trend probably applies to writing systems. Arabic has nothing to fear of course, because it represents a strong culture and will probably succeed in retaining the second place ranking of which it can be justly proud.



WRITING SYSTEMS IN THE AGE OF THE INTERNET

# THE ARABIC SCRIPT

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### THE MAGAZINE –

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Rex Features, Rita M. Banholzer,  
Graziano Arici, Chameleons Eye,  
New Agency Eyevine, Richard Se,  
Wesley Loh, Neil Austen, David  
Pearson, Ben Pipe, Andre Seale,  
Reto Guntli, Ruth Hutter, Zoonar

### TRANSLATION

Tele.Translator.Network, Geneva,  
Martin Bächtold (www.ttn.ch)

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1 Orchard Spring Lane  
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Published and printed  
in Switzerland

# INFORMATION

