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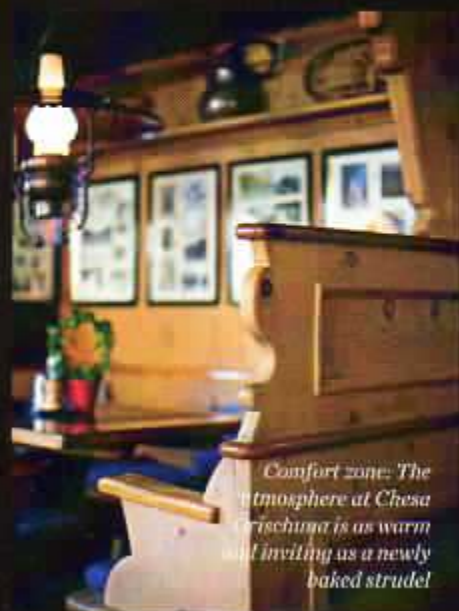
Rich pickings

no. 12/01

◆ Time has not diminished Chesa Grischuna's beauty nor fame. Guests have always felt at home at this exceptional little hotel in the Swiss resort of Klosters.



Turning the page: Barbara Rios-Guler is carrying on a proud tradition



Comfort zone: The atmosphere at Chesa Grischuna is as warm and inviting as a newly baked strudel

Swiss bliss

HOTELS In the late 1930s, Hans and Doris Guler loaned money from friends to build the lovely Chesa Grischuna in Klosters, Switzerland. Hans lived to 85, Doris to 85. They devoted their lives to the hotel. Now their daughter, Barbara Rios-Guler, is carrying on their legacy with her business partner, Marianne Hunziker. "My parents never wanted a palace, just a home where everyone felt welcome," she says.

It may have been a small-scale operation, but the Guler family always had plenty of heart. Hans was the great entertainer and host. During World War II, Chesa Grischuna put up American troops. When they went home, they spread the word about the wonderful little hotel up in the mountains.

"From 1948 to roughly 1960, it was a real little Hollywood on the rocks here," Barbara Rios-Guler says. We are sitting in the living room, browsing old photo albums, guest books and files of clippings.

"To Hans, in whose hotel I have spent more time than I should," writes the author and playwright Irwin Shaw in the guest book.

Greta Garbo also appears frequently. "She was a very good friend of the family," Rios-Guler says. "We called her Gretli. I remember her taking me to buy pants once. I liked a beige pair, but she suggested some black ones, which I bought.

"I had my hand kissed for the first time by Gene Kelly. I was five years old."

Rios-Guler flicks through the pages, remembers, smiles and tells anecdotes. This was where Deborah Kerr of *From Here to Eternity* fame married the author Peter Viertel. The war photographer Robert Capa was here in 1954 just before setting off for Indochina, where he died after stepping on a land mine.

They could be forgiven for living on past glories, but Rios-Guler and Marianne Hunziker continue to move with the times. Chesa Grischuna lives with its history rather than on it.

We simply love it here.

The traditional chalet architecture has hints of the modernism and functionalism that took hold during the 1930s. There is intricate carpentry, palinated wood, incredible murals by Alois Carigiet, Mimmo Rotella and *Paris Match* illustrator Jacques Chamez both inside and out that evoke an immediate fairytale world. Narrow stairways lead to rooms on several floors, with old photographs, maps, artworks and original features such as the fantastic 1950s tiles and porcelain in the toilets between the floors.

The food is great, traditional with an edge. People come here just to eat or to sit down with a newspaper, have a beer or a smoke in the bar.

Right down to the smallest detail, Chesa Grischuna is as delightful and warm as a newly baked strudel – a rare find.

Rios-Guler sends out more than 1,000 Christmas cards to her guests every year, many to families that have been regulars for generations.

It is good to know that there are so many of us who have found love in Klosters.

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www.chesagrischuna.ch

Rooms from £140



Hotel Chesa Grischuna

hot
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*Hollywood on the rocks:
Greta Garbo and Gene
Kelly have been friends
of the Güler – and Chesa
Grischuna – family*