



PLAN OF THE BATHING AND SPA ESTABLISHMENT BAD RAGAZ

COLOURED PLAN, CIRCA 1900

Just one year after the purchase and concession agreement for the Hof Ragaz estate was signed, the imposing hotel building, the Quellenhof, was opened in 1839. The plan documents the wide range of facilities available to guests from around the world: from the swimming hall to hydrotherapy and therapeutic gymnastics, as well as the Kursaal, a Protestant and an Anglican church, and a funicular railway to the Wartenstein. The small goat stable may be a nod to Heidi, the heroine of the children's book published in 1880. The story's setting was placed by author Johanna Spyri in nearby Maienfeld.



SPA AND HEALTH RESORT RAGATZ-PFÄFERS

LITHOGRAPH, CIRCA 1900

For more than three decades, Bernhard Simon shaped the development and operation of the spa and hotel business in Bad Ragaz. Numerous affluent guests from across Europe came to visit – and felt exceptionally well cared for. Simon was a thoughtful host with a keen sense of his clientele's needs. With innovation and foresight, he continually expanded the enterprise. He recognized technical advancements early on and implemented them consistently. In a short time, a spacious spa complex emerged – nestled in a landscaped park. Simon and his family lived in one of the villas seen in the foreground of the image. The building he constructed was later demolished to make way for the park. In 1892, at the age of 76, the patron retired from active business and handed it over to his sons.

RUINS OF WARTENSTEIN CASTLE NEAR RAGAZ

COLOURED ENGRAVING, LATE 19TH CENTURY

The view stretches from the ruins of the medieval castle across the grounds of the Quellenhof with its surrounding buildings and park, down into the Rhine Valley – reaching as far as Sargans and the towering Gonzen mountain beyond. Here, the valley splits: to the left toward Lake Walen and Zurich, to the right following the Rhine toward Lake Constance and on into southern Germany. Between 1892 and 1964, guests could take a funicular railway from the Grand Hotel to this scenic viewpoint. The small train is depicted on the large panoramic view, visible in the forest on the left.



„MEDICO-MECHANICAL INSTITUTE – SYSTEM DR. ZANDER“

SPA AND HEALTH RESORT RAGATZ-PFÄFERS, BEFORE 1900

In the mid-19th century, Swedish physician and physiotherapist Gustav Zander (1835–1920) developed "medico-mechanical therapy" to promote the healing of specific organs, muscles, and joints. From the 1870s onward, his machines – precursors of modern fitness equipment – became standard in prestigious spa and hotel facilities. The distinguished clientele trained under professional supervision – naturally dressed appropriately: gentlemen in street suits, ladies in high-necked, ankle-length costumes.



„ASSEMBLY PLAN FOR THE TRANSMISSION SYSTEM OF THE ELECTRIC POWER STATION RAGATZ-PFÄFERS“

PLAN, CIRCA 1900

The grand hotels of Switzerland embraced technological innovation: Bernhard Simon was an early adopter of gas lighting in his hotel, and by 1892, his sons had already switched to electric lighting. Such advancements were expensive, maintenance-intensive, and required specialized staff. The energy generated by the hotel's own power station was also transmitted to operate other equipment used in hotel operations.



THERMAL BATHS AND GRAND HOTEL BAD RAGAZ

POSTER BY WILLY TANNER, 1928

The hotels in Bad Ragaz catered to a clientele accustomed to the sophisticated lifestyle of Europe's great spa towns. This interwar-period poster attempts to appeal to a wealthy audience with grand architectural imagery – though such architecture never actually existed in Bad Ragaz. It targeted a clientele that, following World War I, largely stayed away from Switzerland.



DRAFT OF A TOURISM BROCHURE

1920S



PROJECT PLAN FOR A GOLF COURSE IN RAGAZ

SCALE 1:4000, FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

English students at Swiss private schools introduced new sports like golf to Switzerland. They founded clubs and organized competitions.

Hoteliers in major tourist destinations quickly recognized the potential of golf facilities for their international guests. In 1891, Switzerland's first golf course was established in St. Moritz. In Bad Ragaz, a spacious course with a clubhouse was opened on April 1, 1905, directly adjacent to the Quellenhof. It significantly enhanced the hotel's prestige.



BERNHARD SIMON

*ANONYMOUS STUDIO PHOTOGRAPHY IN FRONT OF A PAINTED
BACKDROP, SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY*

When Bernhard Simon embarked on the adventure of becoming a hotelier in 1868, he could already look back on a successful career: as an architect in Russia and St. Gallen, and as operations director during the construction of the Appenzell Railway. In a remarkably short time, he transformed Bad Ragaz into a hotspot of the European spa and hotel scene. Simon was known as a strict but considerate patron who – always with his guests' well-being in mind – personally attended to even the smallest details of daily operations.



INTERIOR VIEW OF A STAGED STAIRCASE

WATERCOLOR BY BERNHARD SIMON, UNDATED

Bernhard Simon, who grew up in Niederurnen in the canton of Glarus, learned the building trade in Lausanne and assumed responsibility for major construction projects at an early age. He acquired his architectural knowledge primarily through hands-on experience.

Between 1839 and 1854, Simon quickly gained a reputation in Saint Petersburg – the capital of Tsarist Russia – as an architect for high society. He mastered his craft. His architectural drawings reflect the tastes of the late 19th century. His legacy includes meticulously rendered views of villas and prestigious buildings – as well as of interiors and furnishings.



DESIGN OF AN INTERIOR WITH RICHLY DECORATED WALL AND FIREPLACE

WATERCOLOR BY BERNHARD SIMON, UNDATED



*DESIGN OF AN ELABORATELY DECORATED COMMUNE
WITH UPPER STRUCTURE*

WATERCOLOR BY BERNHARD SIMON, UNDATED



ELEVATION AND FLOOR PLAN OF A VILLA

WATERCOLOR BY BERNHARD SIMON, MID-19TH CENTURY, UNSIGNED



GRAND RESORT
BAD RAGAZ



ELDERLY MAN WITH TOBACCO PIPE

FREEHAND CHARCOAL DRAWING BY BERNHARD SIMON, UNDATED



ENTRANCE TO THE TAMINA GORGE – SPA AND HEALTH RESORT RAGATZ-PFÄFERS

PHOTOGRAPH, LATE 19TH CENTURY

The dissolution of Pfäfers Abbey in 1838 and the construction of the road into the Tamina Gorge in 1839 opened up new possibilities: the thermal water used for bathing and therapeutic purposes in the gorge near Bad Pfäfers could now be transported through wooden pipelines from the narrow valley to Ragaz. In 1840, the former abbey courtyard was converted into the first spa facility, the Ragazer Hof. The connection to the St. Gallen–Chur railway line in 1858 – and thus to the European rail network – was a key factor in the rapid success of Bernhard Simon's hotel project in Bad Ragaz.



VIEW FROM FREUDENBERG CASTLE

WATERCOLOR, SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY

The internationally oriented spa operation developed by Bernhard Simon around the Grand Hotel was founded on the healing spring of Bad Pfäfers, which had been renowned throughout Europe since the Middle Ages. This watercolor, composed from multiple perspectives, combines familiar imagery of Bad Pfäfers with views of the newly established spa and hotel facilities in Bad Ragaz.



"TRUE REPRESENTATION OF THE MARVELLOUS BATHS OF PFÄFERS, LOCATED IN EASTERN SWITZERLAND"

COPPER ENGRAVING BY MATTHAEUS MERIAN THE ELDER, CIRCA 1650

The origins of the healing spring trace back to a tale from around the year 1040: a hunter near the Pfäfers Monastery observed steam rising from the Tamina Gorge. In the centuries that followed, the monastery's monks established a bathing facility there, offering relief to those seeking healing. In 1535, a publication by the physician Paracelsus brought fame to Bad Pfäfers throughout Europe. Construction of the baroque bathhouse in the gorge, now known as Bad Pfäfers, began in 1716. Initially accessible only via a steep footpath, the bath became reachable by carriage road in 1839. From 1840 onward, some of the healing water was piped to the new hotels in Ragaz.



"LANDSCAPE AROUND THE WILD BATH PFÄFERS"

COPPER ENGRAVING BY MATTHAEUS MERIAN THE ELDER, CIRCA 1650

Before us stretches the Tamina Valley, whose river originates at Piz Sardona. At the center of the image lies the gorge with the Wildbad Pfäfers (30). On the hill to the left stands the Pfäfers Monastery (17), and on the edge of the slope, the ruins of Wartenstein Castle (12).

At the end of the gorge, just before the Tamina flows into the Rhine (4), lies the village of Ragaz (7), known as Bad Ragaz only since 1937. On the left, the Tardis Bridge (5) spans the Rhine, connecting the canton of St. Gallen with Maienfeld (1) in the territory of the Free State of the Three Leagues, which later became the canton of Graubünden.



***ENTRANCE OF THE GRAND HOTEL QUELLENHOF WITH A
VIEW OF THE PARK AND THE GRISONS MOUNTAINS***

WATERCOLOUR, FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY