

RENOVATING THE PALAIS KELLER RESTAURANT – A PROJECT BY INTERIOR DESIGNER, ART COLLECTOR AND ANTIQUES DEALER AXEL VERVOORDT

The Hotel Bayerischer Hof's latest building project

Hotel owner Innegrit Volkhardt first thought about renovating the Palais Keller Restaurant in the Hotel Bayerischer Hof's Palais Montgelas three years ago, in autumn 2016. It took only six months to renovate the Palais Keller, from April to October 2019, with the sum invested amounting to 2.4 million euros.

The Palais Keller in the Palais Montgelas was first opened as a Bavarian restaurant in the Hotel Bayerischer Hof by Falk Volkhardt, Innegrit's father, in 1972. The Palais Keller has now been restored in 2019, 47 years after it was launched. This is the sixth building project undertaken by the internationally renowned Belgian interior designer, art collector and antiques dealer Axel Verwoordt for the Hotel Bayerischer Hof, following the Garden and Atelier restaurants, the Cinema Lounge and the Palaishalle, as well as the entire south and north wings with 28 rooms and the luxurious 350-square-metre Penthouse Garden Suite. In the Palais Keller, Axel Verwoordt's sensitivity for historical structures and his intuition for the shapes, colours and materials of the medieval vaults have imparted new energy and created new proportions, enabling us to serve Bavarian cuisine with a modern twist in a quiet, unostentatious setting.

The history of the Palais Keller in the Palais Montgelas

The Palais Keller was listed in the Munich *Urbarium* (register of fief ownership) of 1443 as the municipal salt warehouse. Built in 1406 on the corner of Promenadeplatz 2, and is found time and again in deeds and land registers. Between 1753 and 1770 it is listed as the Häring warehouse. In 1778, the two main salt warehouses were demolished but the Häring warehouse remained standing. It later became the property of Karl Felix Bertrand, the Imperial Count of Perusa and Privy Councillor to the Prince Elector. The entire complex at Promenadeplatz 2 was acquired in 1806 by the Minister of Montgelas, who converted it, then sold it to the state of Bavaria in 1817.

When the Palais Montgelas was under construction, between 1806 and 1813, masterminded by the Portuguese architect Emanuel Joseph von Herigoyen, it was built on the cellar vaults of the former salt warehouse, whose walls were too thick and strong to be demolished. This is how the Keller has survived to this day. The walls of the Palais Montgelas have formed the backdrop for many historic moments over the last two hundred years. Maximilian III was crowned here, secularisation was confirmed here, the Bavarian Council Republic was governed from here and journalist Kurt Eisner was murdered in front of the walls.

In 1969, the complex was given a new role and with it, a lavish restoration. After long negotiations, Falk Volkhardt bought the dilapidated Palais Montgelas from the Free State of Bavaria, thus expanding the premises of the Hotel Bayerischer Hof. The Palais Montgelas was seamlessly incorporated into the existing structure and, over almost three years, was magnificently developed and renovated by the architect Siegwald Graf Pilati. A few days before the Olympic Torch was lit in Munich's Olympic Stadium in August 1972, Volkhardt welcomed the first guests to the Palais Montgelas and also opened the Palais Keller as a Bavarian restaurant within the Hotel Bayerischer Hof, a treasure-trove of Bavarian traditions known across the city. The Palais Keller has now been restored in 2019, 47 years after it was launched.

Choosing the interior designer: Axel Vervoordt

From the outset, Innegrit Volkhardt had no need to think twice about who would manage another building project: After our very successful collaborations with Verwoordt over the past twelve years, we did not need an architect competition or any further research. His sensitivity for historical structures, his intuitions about colours and materials and the professional way in which he tackles projects and brings them to fruition were all just some of the reasons that led to another collaboration.

Axel Vervoordt is known first and foremost as a passionate art and antiques dealer who has developed an unparalleled approach to living with art. His architectural projects usually only include private residential houses but he is happy to make an exception for Innegrit Volkhardt. The Palais Keller in the Palais Montgelas completes the list of his rare public projects, which also covers completed work on the Atelier and Garden restaurants, the Cinema Lounge, the Palaishalle and the south and north wings, and later, the Tribeca Penthouse Suite project in Robert De Niro's Greenwich Hotel in Manhattan. Moreover, it is also worth mentioning his art dealing activities; alongside being variously involved in international art fairs, he has curated several globally-acclaimed exhibitions at the Palazzo Fortuny in Venice.

But what makes the unobtrusive, yet unmistakable, style of an Axel Vervoordt so sought-after? One of the key terms is: authenticity. "I love everything that is very real," confided Vervoordt several years ago to the international edition of the AD Architectural Digest magazine. Axel Vervoordt's magic and flair comes from conviction. In a setting that he has created, he is himself the best advertisement for his concept of style. Both in his Renaissance seat at Gravenwezel Castle and in his workshops at Kanaal in Antwerp, which are housed in 19th-century industrial buildings with adjacent silos, the character and furnishing of the rooms display the intensity, sophistication and comfort that make his interiors unmistakable.

Celebrities such as Kanye West, Rudolf Nureyev, Calvin Klein, Sting and the above-mentioned Robert De Niro all appreciated his quiet, comfortable and above all inspiring *mises-en-scène*.

Axel Vervoordt describes the current Palais Keller project at the Hotel Bayerischer Hof in his own words: "I loved the universal power of the exceptional 15th-century vaulted cellar. During the restoration, we attempted to unveil the essence of the fascinating existing architecture. We wanted to create a pure, warm place where it is nice to meet friends and family in a cosy atmosphere."

The new Palais Keller and its rooms

Vervoordt's signature style exudes immense tranquillity. This tranquil feeling captivated Innegrit Volkhardt when the Atelier and Garden restaurants, as well as the Cinema Lounge, Palaishalle and the south and north wings, were completed. Axel Vervoordt knew at first glance how to endow the warm-hearted, unobtrusive tradition of hospitality at the Hotel Bayerischer Hof with exciting, contemporary accents.

In the Palais Keller, Axel Vervoordt's sensitivity for historical structures and his intuition for the shapes, colours and materials of the medieval vaults have imparted new energy and created new proportions. His designs also focus on sustainability: materials such as stone and regenerated wood were carefully selected and deployed thoughtfully in every part of the Palais Keller.

With a total seating capacity for 196 people over several areas and a total area of 682 square metres the space radiates unbelievable peace and comfort and encourages guests to linger. To some extent, the design incorporates the philosophy of Wabi-Sabi: beauty is found in imperfection and authenticity, and of Artempo – where time becomes art, and natural materials that are rich in spirit.

The Palais Keller and Palais Schwemme Bar

The massive historical vaults were restored with their old masonry in its original condition, with doors and passageways in ideal proportions. An antique, 18th-century wooden ceiling from Italy was mounted in the entrance hall.

Many items of furniture such as tables, chairs and service stations have been carefully restored and utilised. The doors, some of them antique, are all made from waste wood. The antique, patinated industrial window in the Hof Bakery was adapted to the vaults on site before being fitted.

Whitewash was used to treat and paint the walls in the guest areas. The old flooring, antique natural patinated Luserna stone, was supplemented with natural stone. Tiles are also set in the open-plan kitchen and bar: the surfaces and extractor fan hood have a black powder coating, the work surfaces are made from Nero Assoluto natural stone and the front panelling of the kitchen cupboards and the bar counter is made of waste wood from Axel Vervoordt's workshop in Belgium.

The Palais Keller can seat 51 people in the main restaurant, and another 27 in the bar area, the Palais Schwemme. Our tableware, designed by the Japanese ceramic artist Kosi Hidama, consists of unique pieces, which were produced in Vervoordt's workshop in Gravenwezel near Antwerp.

The Refectory

In the Refectory, the massive vaults and ancient masonry were restored to their original conditions and now provide space for up to 52 people. Two antique patinated industrial windows were installed beside the massive wooden door which serves as the entrance. The space features a long oak wooden table and a work of art by the Mexican artist Bosco Sodi, who is known for his richly-textured, large-format painting.

The Tyrolean Parlour

The Tyrolean Parlour is an original inn parlour from the Paznaun Valley in Austria. It dates from 1823 and seats 18, providing a rustic, authentic Bavarian ambience. The room remained untouched due to its uniqueness.

The Palais Parlour

In the Palais Parlour vestibule, antique wooden panels were mounted on the walls and ceiling. The finishing touch is a work of art by Tsuyoshi Maekawa, whose paintings should not be interpreted as direct representations, but have no reference to anything other than their own creation. The abstract images created by Maekawa can be associated with the beauty of true nature. The work of art already indicates the color scheme in the Palais Parlour.

In the Palais Parlour itself, the existing wood and ceiling panelling was restored and given a new coat of green paint, done in tempera. More wooden panelling and banquettes were added. To improve the parlour's proportions, it was reduced in size a little and now provides seating for up to 48 people within its fine carved walls and ceilings. Work of art by Ida Barbarigo as well as work of art by Sadaharu Horio, Tsuyoshi Maekawa and Yuko Nasaka gives the Palais Parlour a special atmosphere.

The Palais Keller and its rooms are open every weekday, lunchtime and evening, in line with the Hotel Bayerischer Hof's long-standing tradition of hospitality, where Bavarian specialities with a modern twist are served from an open kitchen and the Hof Bakery in the historical cellar vaults; a peaceful, unostentatious place.

Chef de cuisine Tobias Heinze: "In the restaurant, we give Bavarian cuisine a contemporary twist. Most of the produce we use is farmed locally and we transform it into contemporary, yet typically expressive dishes, full of Bavarian flavour. We use seasonal produce so that the menu has a current, fresh appeal. Dishes such as Bavarian-style tarte flambée with raw ham, red onion marmalade, leeks, mountain cheese and cress; frothy horseradish soup with boiled fillet of beef, apple, mashed potato and chives or mini apple strudel with vanilla crème anglaise, raisin gelée and almond cream form a link between traditional and modern cuisine."

The renovation – a local project

The brief for project management and local planning was given to Munich interior designer Gregor Baur, who has already worked on many of the Hotel Bayerischer Hof's renovation projects, such as the Blue Spa, the Atelier and Garden restaurants, the Cinema Lounge and the transformation of the new rooms and corridors, the creation of the roof garden on the sixth floor, the redesign of the Palaishalle and the refurbishment of the south and north wings in 2018. Gregor Baur has worked from his own office as a freelancer since 2005.

Together with Axel Vervoordt and Innegrit Volkhardt, Gregor Baur made the idea of the new restaurants and the architectural shells for the new interior design a reality. In doing so, Baur created concepts that can easily be implemented within the existing structures.

As in the past, the challenge of ensuring that building and safety regulations were all complied with and blended harmoniously into the design had to be tackled. Thanks to his many years of experience supplemented by his creative ideas, Gregor Baur enhanced the vision of Axel Vervoordt and the owner.

Special emphasis was placed on many things, including the materials. "We primarily used materials with a local connection. Where antique materials could not be used for structural reasons, we deployed special processing methods," emphasises Gregor Baur. Everything should look as if it had been in the hotel for decades. Particularly interesting here is the interaction between time and the exquisite materials. "We favoured materials and working methods that can age," Gregor Baur says, who also values the immanent effect created by this approach. "This is how Vervoordt creates a process that is not completed, but rather ongoing, that integrates the use of the space into its natural development and makes the guests aware of the intervention of time." All surfaces feature unique craftsmanship and thus display their own history. This creates a special haptic that goes well with the sensuous quality of culinary enjoyment.

The graphic design

For the graphic design (lettering, menus, the wine list, bar menus) Innegrit Volkhardt once again recruited Friederike Straub. The designer, typographer and artist Friederike Straub is already in charge of the corporate design for Volkhardts Wein and also created a work in chalk writing for the walls of the wine shop in Pasing. Most recently, she was responsible for the graphic design for both Atelier and the Garden restaurants. Friederike Straub's design maxim "simple, coherent, clear" continues Axel Vervoordt's love of the simple and exceptional.

What the staff wear

Continuing with tradition, the desire to preserve it was even important regarding what the staff wear – traditional dress. Thanks to the friendly business relationship between Innegrit Volkhardt and the Chrocziel Family, the Palais Keller Restaurant came up trumps with yet another ingenious detail. The staff do not wear a uniform, but traditional costumes by the designer CLARA DOROTHEA. Continuing the long tradition of the Bayerischer Hof, as well as the history of the Palais Keller, the costumes are inspired by classic cuts and given a modern twist with simple lines and a quiet, understated colour scheme.

The understated colours and the washed, coarse quality of the linen were coordinated with Axel Vervoordt's office and dovetail nicely with the overall image of the new Palais Keller. The ladies' dirndls and the gentlemen's Bavarian jackets and waistcoats in olive and muted shades of grey are set off by crisp white blouses and shirts creating sharp contrast.

For the ladies, a high-necked dirndl bodice was designed to be worn with a plain linen skirt and linen aprons. The dirndl is inspired by traditional Munich waitress costume, but reduced to the basics, so that it appears

modern and simple. Instead of a waiter's wallet, the ladies carry a small bag made of tanned chamois leather at their waists. CLARA DOROTHEA found inspiration for this in images and drawings of waitresses in Munich beer gardens in the 19th century.

The gentlemen wear simple cotton dress shirts that appear modern and simple with their classic men's button plackets and are worn with olive-coloured waistcoats. For the head waiters, a close-fitting jacket was designed; it is made of the same coarse linen and combines the lines of a modern blazer with elements of a classic Bavarian jacket.

The costumes were manufactured entirely in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg; the belt pouches were made in Italy. The linen and cotton for all designs comes from Europe.

The amounts invested

The hotel has been run by the four generations of the Volkhardt family since 1897, who also celebrated 120 years of ownership in 2017. Since 1992, when Innegrit Volkhardt took over, until today, over 175 million euros have been invested in various architectural projects and renovations, to give the hotel the atmosphere it has today.

The prospect

Just like the opening of the Blue Spa, designed by Andrée Putman, in 2005, and the relaunch of the Garden and Atelier restaurants in 2009, the Cinema Lounge in 2011, the roof garden in 2014, the Palaishalle in 2016 and the south and north wings in 2018, the new Palais Keller will be another high point in the history of a hotel which astonishes its guests with ever newer, more luxurious additions.

For Innegrit Volkhardt, it was clear from the outset: "For me, no other architect was worth considering, because for Axel Vervoordt and for me, the present is a mixture of the past and the future. Conserving it was far more than just a duty. Axel Vervoordt's talent is his ability to unite the two so skilfully, and that is what he has done here, on this historic site; he has combined the old with the new. We are very happy that we can re-open this beautiful cellar – a monument to bygone times – for you. His style is unmistakable and will in future be extended throughout the entire Palais Montgelas."

Facts about the Palais Keller

Interior design: Axel Vervoordt

Construction management: Gregor Baur

Chef: Tobias Heinze

Culinary team: 11 persons and two bakers

Menu: Changing menu four times a year and a weekly menu every two weeks including lunch menu

Wine list: around 35 items, in addition the whole selection of wines of the hotel is available

Restaurant manager: Patrick Reisenauer

Service team: 13 persons

Capacity: 78 persons plus 26 persons in the Refektorium (max. 52 persons), 18 persons in the Tiroler Stube and 48 persons in the Palais Stube

Opening hours: 11.00 a.m. - 01.00 a.m. on Sundays until midnight

Restaurant: 12.00 p.m. – 03.00 p.m. and 06.00 p.m. - 11.00 p.m.

Kitchen times: 12.00 p.m. - 02.30 p.m. and 06.00 p.m. - 10.00 p.m.

Schwemme: 11.00 a.m. – 01.00 a.m.

Kitchen times: 11.00 a.m. – 11.00 p.m. (Snacks until 00.30 a.m.)

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Education

08/2006 – 06/2009 Apprenticeship in Seehotel Überfahrt, Rottach-Egern, to become a chef

Career stages

07/2009 – 10/2009 Commis de Cuisine at Seehotel Überfahrt, Rottach-Egern
11/2009 – 11/2011 Commis de Cuisine at Ameron Hotel Flora, Luzern
12/2009 – 08/2011 Demi-Chef de Partie at Seehotel Überfahrt, Rottach-Egern
09/2011 – 03/2012 Chef de Partie at Seehotel Überfahrt, Rottach-Egern
04/2012 – 05/2013 Chef de Partie at Max on One Grillroom Jumeirah Frankfurt, Frankfurt am Main
06/2013 – 02/2014 Junior Sous Chef at Max on One Grillroom Jumeirah Frankfurt, Frankfurt am Main
03/2014 – 01/2015 Sous Chef Bankett at Max on One Grillroom Jumeirah Frankfurt, Frankfurt am Main
02/2014 – 05/2015 Assistant Head Chef at Max on One Grillroom Jumeirah Frankfurt, Frankfurt am Main
06/2015 – 11/2016 Junior Sous Chef at Garden Hotel Bayerischer Hof, Munich
12/2015 – 07/2018 Sous Chef at Garden Hotel Bayerischer Hof, Munich
08/2018 – 08/2019 Chef de Cuisine at Hotel Zur Tenne, Kitzbühel
since 09/2019 Chef de Cuisine at Palais Keller Hotel Bayerischer Hof, Munich

Menu Palais Keller

Starters

Bavarian-style tarte flambée with raw ham, red onion marmalade, leeks, mountain cheese and cress
Home-pickled brown trout with celeriac purée, marinated Chinese cabbage, walnuts and torn star anise cakes
Pickled Bavarian seasonal vegetables with parsley oil, curd cheese, chervil and frisée salad, plain bruschetta slices and roasted pumpkin seeds
Veal tartare with a fried quail's egg, radishes, Granny Smith apples and spicy black bread cubes

Soups

Beef consommé with diced vegetables, small pretzel dumplings, mushrooms and lovage
Frothy horseradish soup with boiled fillet of beef, apples, mashed potato and chives

Vegetarian

Home-made cheese spaetzle with spicy cheese, roast onions and a small side salad
Lukewarm forest mushroom tart with cottage cheese, chives and creamy cucumber salad

Mains

Pike-perch fillet with frothy bacon sauce, Beluga lentils and almond broccoli
Fried char fillet with mustard foam, pearl barley and savoy cabbage ragout, glazed beetroot and hazelnut pesto
Fried beef and onions with smoked jus, fried potato cubes, forest mushroom purée and pickled Hokkaido squash
Fried chicken breast supplied by Landhendl of Austria with tarragon jus, parsley root purée, scorzonera and a selection of savoury nuts

Classics

Three savoury pots – crackling fat, beer-cheese and chunky liver sausage
Mixed-leaf salad with mustard dressing, cherry tomatoes, mushrooms and roasted strips of turkey breast
Regensburg sausage salad with pickled gherkins and onion rings
Delicious light bites – raw ham, veal patties Landjäger (spicy smoked sausage), mountain cheese, gherkins pickled with mustard-seed, radishes, beer-cheese dip, horseradish and chive bread
Cheeseboard from the Tegernsee Naturkäserei (natural cheese company) with apple mustard

Beef consommé with diced vegetables and liver dumplings
Six Saure Zipfel (sausages in vinegar) with freshly-grated horseradish
Two Munich Weisswurst veal and pork sausages with sweet mustard
Grilled sausages with caraway jus, mashed potato, sauerkraut and plain bruschetta slices
Wiener schnitzel with fried potatoes or potato and cucumber salad
Crispy roast young pork shoulder with gravy and potato dumplings
Kettle goulash with beef with spaetzle, chives and sautéed wild mushrooms
Oven-fresh Bavarian meatloaf with potato salad and sweet and medium-hot mustard

Desserts

Crème bavaroise served in a bowl with quince, caramelised white chocolate, and hazelnut ice-cream
Mini apple strudel with vanilla crème anglaise, raisin gelée and almond cream
Kaiserschmarrn (shredded pancakes) with a choice of apple sauce, vanilla ice-cream or plum compote
Pear crumble tartelette with vanilla ice-cream
In addition, we offer fresh delicacies from our Hof bakery every day

Hotel Bayerischer Hof, a multiple award-winning traditional hotel, has been owned by the Volkhardt family for over 120 years. It is among the leading Germany hotels and has 337 rooms, including 74 suites. Hotel Bayerischer Hof is also among the “Leading Hotels of the World”. The corporate group also includes tradition-steeped *Hotel Zur Tenne* in Kitzbühel (Austria) and the wine store *Volkhardts Wein und Bistro* in Munich-Pasing.

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