

## Kempinski Hotels

A success story for more than a century

*Berlin, March 2011;* Kempinski Hotels is Europe's oldest luxury hotel group with a history of more than 110 years. The history of this traditional company with its head office in Geneva began in 1897 with the foundation of the 'Hotelbetriebs-Aktiengesellschaft' in Berlin. This was the time when the first comfortable hotels were already appearing in the biggest German city, and included some belonging to the 'Hotelbetriebs-Aktiengesellschaft'. A parallel development was that of M. Kempinski & Co, founded by Berthold Kempinski, which was acquired by the 'Hotelbetriebs-Aktiengesellschaft' in 1953.

Berthold Kempinski was born on 10 October 1843 in Posen (then a German province, and now Poland). The Kempinski family was already successfully active in the wine trade from 1862. In 1872 it extended its company to Berlin, where Berthold Kempinski opened a wine-merchant's business under his name in the Friedrichstrasse. This proved to have excellent prospects for the future, and became the parent firm of the group, which ultimately made the name Kempinski world-famous. Very soon it was possible to extend the Berlin business by adding a restaurant with several rooms. The ambitious entrepreneur Kempinski continued to pursue his plans for expansion with determination. In 1889 he opened a restaurant in the Leipziger Strasse which was the biggest in the whole of Berlin.

Since Berthold Kempinski and his wife Helena had no male children, they invited their son-in-law Richard Unger to join the business. Unger, who made a considerable contribution to the success and development of the firm, very soon took over its running. Berthold Kempinski finally transferred the firm to his son-in-law on condition that he kept the name Kempinski. Berthold Kempinski died on 14 March 1910.

Alongside his wine and restaurant activities, Richard Unger constructed an immense property business up to the start of World War I. After a short period of stagnation during the War, he sold products of his own manufacture under the brand name Kempinski. The business in Berlin flourished, so that in 1918 an impressive Kempinski hotel dependency was established at 27 Kurfürstendamm, where the Kempinski Hotel Bristol now stands. Ten years later, M. Kempinski & Co. took over the legendary 'Haus Vaterland' on the Potsdamer Platz, where the firm exploited a concept that was unique in Berlin for a long time and is still known as 'event gastronomy' ('Erlebnisgastronomie').

But success was followed by disenchantment. To escape the events of World War II, Richard Unger and his family emigrated to the USA and the firm M. Kempinski & Co became part of Aschinger AG.

The Restaurant at 27 Kurfürstendamm was destroyed by fire shortly before the end of the War, and the other properties fell victim to bombing raids. Nevertheless, the name Kempinski survived. After the end of the conflict, Richard Unger's son and Berthold Kempinski's grandson, Dr Friedrich Unger, returned to Germany. In 1951 building started on a hotel on the site of the ruined restaurant at 27 Kurfürstendamm, and it opened a year later under the name Hotel Kempinski. For 20 years the modern, progressive five-star hotel enjoyed the undisputed status of the sole luxury hotel in Berlin.

In 1953 Dr Friedrich Unger sold his shares and the name Kempinski to the 'Hotelbetriebs-Aktiengesellschaft', which already ran hotels such as the Baltic, the Bristol and the Kaiserhof. The name Bristol was adopted and still graces the Kempinski Hotel at 27 Kurfürstendamm. In subsequent years, the 'Hotelbetriebs-Aktiengesellschaft' took over the management of several famous hotels. In 1957 it acquired the luxurious Hotel Atlantic in Hamburg. This elegant hotel, known as the 'Weisses Schloss' (or White Castle), was opened in 1909 and was a recognized Hamburg institution even then.

In 1970 the General Assembly of the 'Hotelbetriebs-Aktiengesellschaft' voted to change its name to 'Kempinski Hotelbetriebs-Aktiengesellschaft'. In the same year a long-lasting partnership was established with Lufthansa in the form of a 50-percent participation in the Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten in Munich, in which Lufthansa already had a holding. In 1977 the hotel company received its present name as 'Kempinski Aktiengesellschaft(AG)'. At the same time, the Kempinski Hotel Gravenbruch in Frankfurt was added to the group's portfolio as its fourth German hotel.

In 1985, Lufthansa acquired shares in Kempinski AG and thereby enabled the hotel company to operate Kempinski hotels abroad too. A year later, Kempinski AG, Lufthansa and the finance company Rolaco S.A. founded Kempinski Hotels S.A., with its head office in Geneva. In 1993 Kempinski AG acquired all the shares in Kempinski S.A.

Since 2004, the Thailand Crown Property Bureau has had a majority holding in Kempinski AG. The Crown Property Bureau is a Royal Thailand authority responsible for administering the property of the Royal House of Thailand and at the same time possesses holdings in numerous companies in Thailand and abroad. The new proprietors enable Kempinski AG to extend its portfolio even further by means of a global expansion strategy and to develop new markets.

With the exception of the Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten Kempinski in Munich, which belongs to the group, and two hotels with leasing contracts (the Hotel Adlon Kempinski in Berlin and the Kempinski Grand Hotel des Bains in St Moritz), Kempinski Hotels is currently targeted mainly at the management of luxury hotels. The goal of the group was and remains to make Kempinski a name synonymous with individual luxury. Kempinski achieves this aim by means of a portfolio of internationally distinctive, historically unique and modern hotels, which are either market leaders in their locality, or landmark enterprises of their particular area. In this respect, Kempinski Hotels is permanently concerned to maintain a geographically balanced portfolio — consisting of urban and leisure hotel locations — with unique service at an individual level.

Kempinski Hotels currently operates a total of 66 five-star hotels in 29 countries. This range is continually extended by the addition of new hotels in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia, without losing sight of Kempinski's claim to exclusivity and individuality, thus demonstrating the group's capacity for expansion. The portfolio includes historic grand hotels, superb city hotels, outstanding resorts and superior residences. As well as famous names, such as the Hotel Adlon Kempinski in Berlin, the Emirates Palace in Abu Dhabi, the Hotel Taschenbergpalais Kempinski in Dresden, or the Çiragan Palace Kempinski in Istanbul. Kempinski is also a founder member of the hotel network Global Hotel Alliance (GHA), which is active worldwide.

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