



WHERE ON EARTH

STANGLWIRT *Resort & Spa* by ELYSE GLICKMAN



The cozy decor is inspired by the hotel's Austrian location and cultivation over several generations of family ownership since it was founded as an inn around 1722. Despite the traditional rustic decor, the surroundings never feel stodgy, dated or kitschy. The goal is to make guests with varying tastes, backgrounds, interests and athletic aptitudes feel welcome in a setting that is familiar yet far from the frenetic trappings of twenty-first century living. It is no surprise that Stanglwirt draws in regular visitors for day trips and weekends to celebrate milestone events, frequent the equestrian and tennis schools, unwind at its famously extensive multi-level spa, purchase artisanal foods at its Farmer's Shop, or dine at marquee restaurant Gasthof Stangl.

While many properties appeal to modern travellers through well publicized sustainability practices, Stanglwirt was sustainable long before it became fashionable. It's a vision that current patriarch Balthazar Hauser has held since age seventeen and continues through his children 50 years later. Being 100 percent powered by green electricity is a point of pride for the Hauser family, whose involvement with the hotel and original gasthaus dates back 11 generations. A popular activity for guests is a tour around Stanglwirt's Biomass Power Plant, with a guide explaining how nature-based technology is used to gather and process natural resources accessed mostly from the immediate area.

The Auf der Tenne lounge/hotel bar, just beyond the check-in desk, is a cozy country living room with several overstuffed chairs and sofas, a fireplace, wood-beam ceilings and a small stage for nightly performances. It's a welcoming sight after check-in, especially with champagne in hand. Throughout the day, it's a gathering place for resort guests and faithful local customers resting up from skiing, biking, fishing, 18 holes of golf, sightseeing activities, apres-spa, or classes at its Golf Sport Academy and renowned Peter Burwash International tennis or boxing schools.

When you take your seat in the lounge or at the bar, there are a few unexpected surprises in store. A picture window takes up nearly the entire length of the room, facing out to an indoor riding hall where everyone can see the resort's gorgeous fleet of Lipizzaner horses and students of Stanglwirt's internationally famous equestrian school master riding techniques. Beer and local wine are in

FIVE-STAR EUROPEAN destination spa resorts are known worldwide for their prestige brand names, luxury skincare and wellness products, sleek modern aesthetics, celebrity clientele, and innovative or technologically advanced face and body treatments. In this arena, Stanglwirt Resort & Spa in Going am Wilden Kaiser, a 90-minute drive from Munich, is an outlier on many levels.

Arnold Schwarzenegger and other celebrities have embraced everything the 130,000 square metre spa, equestrian centre, ski school, farm-inspired kids club (complete with ponies, chickens and bunnies), and other outdoor activities the property offers. Its 'wall of fame,' positioned discreetly in the hallway leading up to the spa, includes Barak Obama, Jane Goodall, Sacha Baron-Cohen, Hilary Clinton and Jessica Alba. The real feat accomplished by its owners and staff, however, is how they put guests in touch with nature in a relatable way.

abundant supply and the beverage menu and chalkboards reveal there's serious mixology going on behind the bar.

Updates on classics like the Espresso Martini and the Old Fashioned or original creations such as the 'Pink Baby' (Aperol-strawberry infusion, Gardener Gin, fresh lemon juice and Almdudler Original, known for its unique flavour from a blend of 32 herbs) and 'Almsmash' (Tanqueray No⁹ 10, lemon juice, grapefruit juice, basil syrup and fresh basil) do not disappoint. To accompany the 'Arolla Pine' cocktail you nibble on air-dried bacon and alpine cheese from the Stangl Alm pasture. The 'Edelweiss' is served on a stone maze, while the 'Haybath' — a glass of foaming buttermilk — comes on a bed of straw from the Stangl Alm.

The twice-weekly buffet in the Hotel Restaurant impressively balances stick-to-your-ribs traditional and regional Austrian dishes, meats, sweets and freshly baked bread (just try to resist the pretzels, especially with a dollop of artisanal mustard!) with a selection of salads, greens and vegetables covering about half of the serving space. It is a fresh and colourful visual reminder of the eating habits allowing many Europeans to maintain their weight and fitness levels — particularly for sporting activities the property is known for.

The restaurant offers changing dinner menus which guests can enjoy in any of the several uniquely decorated rooms surrounding the buffet area. I found the seasonal soups were so filling and delicious that finishing a main course could be challenging, even if the most perfectly executed schnitzel was ordered. The daily breakfast buffet follows the same *modus operandi*, with a special highlight of a no-nonsense chef who spun two eggs and choice of ingredients into the fluffiest omelet with surgical precision. While casual lunch spot Kamin-Bistro is open for quick bites and sandwiches during the day, the breakfast omelets, fruit, a few bites of house-made cheese, and hot pretzel bread kept us fuelled until dinner.

Following a long session at Stanglwirt's multi-level spa, and a short meet-and-greet with Balthasar Hauser, I met up with his daughter and Director of Marketing & PR Maria Hauser-Lederer, who wistfully recalls coming of age around this "house" with her siblings who, in turn, are laser focused on keeping the property relevant and quietly exciting for future generations. With brother Johannes Hauser, Stanglwirt's Food and Beverage Director, at the helm, guests from Europe and abroad know with absolute certainty that they are literally "eating like a local," as many of the ingredients for Gasthof Stangl, its adjoining fondue cafe, casual



PHOTOS FROM LEFT
Cows watch
over diners at
Stanglwirt Resort;
Fine dining in
Kamin-Bistro; The
spa solarium.

AUSTRIA

STANGLWIRT RESORT

lunch spot Kamin-Bistro, newly-opened Mediterranean restaurant Leni's, and the Hotel Restaurant are sourced directly from the family farm and dairy, an on-site butcher and fishmonger, and Käserei (cheesemaker) Anna Aichinger.

"My grandmother, who shaped the soul and the philosophy of what would drive Stanglwirt, ran the restaurant she inherited from her ancestors," Maria said, adding that the ultimate goal remains to bring people from all walks of life together through food. "At the time, it only had a gas stove and three tables. One day, Soraya Esfandiary-Bakhtiary (Queen Consort of Iran) came to the restaurant from one of the Grand Hotels of Europe with her entourage, based on word-of-mouth. My grandmother didn't have space because all the tables were taken. At one table, there were two workers from the village on their lunch break in their work clothes. Rather than make the workers leave, she asked Soraya if she minded sharing the table with the workers. The empress replied, saying dining with them would be an honour."»



STANGLWIRT RESORT

AUSTRIA



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THIS PHOTO The Hauser family.

STANGLWIRT RESORT

«Although some of the most esteemed hotels in the Alps are an outgrowth of an original farm, Maria’s father conceived of the resort while continuing his vocation as a farmer. The resort was built around the farm and designed specifically to honour the generations of farmers who came before him. Years before organic ingredients became trendy, he and his father constructed the now fine-dining Gasthof Stangl with windows into the cow shed to show guests where their milk comes from and that the cows were well-cared for.

“My father thinks of himself not as a hotel manager, but a farmer who wanted to create a home on his farm he wanted to share with others,” Maria said, beaming with pride. “This is why he and we always stick to the sustainable rules of his organic farms. Early on, he did not know that he would be a pioneer in the sustainable hotel industry. He just followed his heart, and I learned from him the importance of living and building something that has a soul and a specific identity.”

Beyond the happy cows, Gasthof Stangl’s chef Thomas Ritzer steers his kitchen team to prepare Tyrolean cuisine that is at once true to long-established traditions yet

appealing to modern sensibilities. Maria says the consistently booked restaurant is an achievement her grandmother would appreciate — even with stylish, up-to-date spins on the simplest dishes and a creative menu of cocktails and zero-proof drinks.

“While many of the dishes served at Gasthof Stangl have been served in Austrian homes for generations, prepared by mothers and grandmothers, a lot of time is required to prepare them,” says Stanglwirt General Manager Daniel Campbell. “What makes these dishes special, much like those prepared in homes during holidays and special occasions, goes beyond following a beloved recipe or cooking ingredients for hours. It’s also about bringing subtle added touches that make it unforgettable, such as a pickle or a piece of bacon you would not expect. While our aim is to provide the quality of a Michelin-star restaurant, it’s more important to be approachable and wow guests of all ages whether they are here for dinner or as part of a longer stay.”

Leni’s, which opened in November 2025, offers Italian and Mediterranean-inspired dishes with an approach directly shaped by the Hauser way of doing things, with everything


crafted from what's immediately available and in season. While one can order an entree, ordering and eating is "family style" with everybody in the party sharing the dishes. "We called it 'Leni's' after my grandmother, a very proud farmer's wife who brought everyone together with her food," said Maria. "She put bowls on the table, and everyone shared what she put out."

Like the rest of the resort, Leni's is a labour of love rather than a marketing idea grown out of a family's commitment to the land. "We don't have to disguise ourselves and become more 'international,'" Maria affirms. "Stanglwirt is founded on the soul of our family and intended to be a place where friends and family want to gather. That's why people from around the globe come here... because they are longing to get back in touch with nature and slow down, which is a luxury in its own right."

For over three decades, house cheesemaker Sepp Hechenberger has been crafting Stanglwirt's Stangl-Kas (mountain cheese) using organic raw milk from the property's resident cows as its foundation. Its complex nutty-earthy flavour and firm texture made it a mainstay in Stangl Alm's breakfast spread, an ingredient in a variety of dishes and cheese plates at other times of day, and a best seller in the property's Farm Shop.

In 2024 Anna Aichinger took the reins of in-house cheese production following an apprenticeship and a rigorous "Master Cheesemaker" exam issued by Austria's Academy of Cheese. She manages the cheese operation, and while she follows the traditional methods her predecessor adhered to, she has made her own mark with every expression of cheese she formulates. Aged in a stone-walled cellar, her cheeses range from the classic Stangl-Kas to a spicy variety, Emmental, spreadable soft cheeses, curd cheese, and limited-edition flavours that change throughout the year, including a popular truffle variation.

From May to September, while the cows are on the mountain pasture, Anna works at the Stangl-Alm (dairy farm) producing the alpine cheeses over an open fire. What the cows graze on adds to the cheeses' distinctive flavour profiles as the 52-hectare pasture is rich in herbs such as wild caraway, wild thyme, yarrow, arnica and clover. During the cooler months she keeps the production going in the property's high-tech dairy, where butter, ice cream and other dairy products are crafted for the hotel's restaurants.

While many five-star hotels around the world boast on-site herb and vegetable gardens, Stanglwirt has the distinction of being the only organic farm — with 85 hectares of arable land — to have its own luxury hotel. 

ELYSE GLICKMAN is a freelance writer based in Los Angeles.



Stanglwirt Hotel
www.stanglwirt.com/en/hotel



AUSTRIA

SERVES 1

Cherry Cake

STANGLWIRT'S CHERRY cake, based on a traditional recipe, is a timeless classic that will enchant any cake plate with its juicy fruitiness and buttery crumb. According to Magdalena Hauser, it tastes delicious with sweetened whipped cream.

Sugar
250 g

Egg Yolks
5

Water 2 Tbs

Rum
2 Tbs

Lemon Zest
from half a lemon

Cinnamon
a pinch

Egg Whites
6

Cornstarch
2 Tbs

All-Purpose Flour 100 g,
sifted

Baking Powder
1 tsp

Almond Flour
100 g

Pitted Cherries
600 g

Powdered Sugar
for sprinkling

- BUTTER** and flour a cake pan.
- PREHEAT** the oven to 350°F.
- BEAT** the sugar, egg yolks, water, rum, zest and cinnamon until very frothy.
- BEAT** the egg whites with the cornstarch until stiff.
- FOLD** the sifted flour, baking powder and almond flour into the yolk mixture, then fold in the beaten egg whites.
- POUR** half of the mixture into the cake pan, top with cherries and pour the remaining batter on top.
- BAKE** for 45–50 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean.
- ALLOW** to cool for a while before removing from the pan. Sprinkle with powdered sugar.
- SERVE** with sweetened whipped cream if desired.