



**Pirchner Hof**  
ALPBACHTAL TIROL



PRESS KIT



# THE PIRCHNER HOF –

## the world's first dedicated *Hildegard von Bingen* hotel

'Nurture life wherever you find it' – these words probably best sum up St *Hildegard von Bingen*'s teachings and how things are done at the Pirschner Hof in Tyrol's Alpbach Valley.

Her maxim is reflected in the kitchen – most of the ingredients for the special *Hildegard* dishes and the hotel's standard menu come from their own farm or are supplied by local producers. The Health & Spa facilities provide sweet chestnut baths, copper bristle brush massages and herbal packs. The same philosophy applies to the guided walks offered in the surrounding mountains and forests, as well as the *Hildegard*-themed walks, in which guests are introduced to the region's medicinal herbs.

The approach of *Hildegard von Bingen*, saint, visionary, and herbalist, is a holistic one. It encompasses all spheres of life, is conducive to good health, life-affirming, practical, and more relevant than ever.

That is why even now, *Hildegard von Bingen*'s teachings are both highly interesting and remarkably contemporary too. With these elements combined, a stay at the Pirschner Hof – the world's first dedicated *Hildegard von Bingen* hotel – is a mindful and healthful experience, one that will stay with guests for a long time.

## Set in a unique location in Tyrol

The Pirschner Hof is located on the outskirts of the Alpbach Valley village of Reith, one of Europe's 'most beautiful villages in bloom'. Situated at 640m above sea level amidst the spectacular natural setting of the Kitzbühel and Zillertal Alps, the choice of things to do up here is virtually limitless:

In summer, the region is a paradise for hikers, cyclists and golfers. Plus, the five gorgeous bathing lakes in the Alpbachtal Seenland guarantee family fun and a place to beat the heat. Added to the mix, there are adventurous outdoor activities such as rafting, tubing or kayaking on the Brandenberger Ache. Those feeling very brave can take the lift to the summit for a tandem paragliding flight. During the summer months, the region is also host to numerous traditional festivals and outdoor cultural events.

In winter, the region is widely considered a snow-sure destination and the Ski Juwel Alpbachtal Wildschönau resort has everything you could wish for. What's more, the Alpbach Valley has also gained a reputation for its wide range of gentle winter sport activities such as cross-country skiing and hiking on cleared trails, as well as snowshoeing, tobogganing, ice-skating and horse-drawn sleigh rides. It is also a particularly family-friendly holiday destination.

In the nearby cities of Innsbruck and Kufstein, year-round enjoyment awaits with their great range of shops and cultural activities.

## A FAMILY BUSINESS, run with expert knowledge and love

The Pirschner Hof opened in 1977 as a small guest house that ran on the side of the farm that still exists today. In the years and decades that followed, the hotel underwent several refurbishments and extensions.

Christa and Wolfgang Peer are the second generation of the family to run the Pirschner Hof, and they took over the reins in 2003. Under their management, the transition to a 4-star rated hotel with 76 rooms and suites was finally achieved.



In 2011, the dedicated husband and wife team undertook their next big step: launching the Pirschner Hof as the world's first '*Hildegard von Bingen* hotel'. The hotel has gained international acclaim for its compelling concept as well as consistently high standard of delivery. The prestigious Condé Nast Traveller magazine declared that the Pirschner Hof was amongst the world's best spas for sustainable weight loss, fixing issues and detoxing in their 2013 Spa Guide.

In 2017, the Pirschner Hof will be celebrating its 40th anniversary. Much has changed in the last four decades. However, the very special intimate atmosphere and the hosts' unswerving dedication to their dream turned reality remain the same. Even the farm from those early days still exists, supplying fresh eggs, top quality beef and all the other sustainably produced foods that are dished up every day at the Pirschner Hof.

# GENUINE HOSPITALITY

## the *Hildegard von Bingen* way

### **Hildegard's life:**

Born in 1098, *Hildegard von Bingen* was only a child when she entered a convent. She later became the abbess, founded two new convents and wrote several books on the healing power of nature, the causes and treatment of illnesses, the work of God, and the responsibility of human beings for their own lives. She also composed numerous pieces of music, corresponded with the most important people of her time and went on pilgrimage well into her old age. Her broad knowledge of religious matters, medicine, music, ethics and cosmology, made *Hildegard von Bingen* one of the first ever female, universal scholars. She was canonised in 2012.

### **Hildegard's principles and how they are put into practice at the Pirschner Hof:**

Although virtually impossible to summarise the breadth of Hildegard's knowledge in a few sentences, her research and work is based on six simple principles that also play a significant role at the Pirschner Hof:

#### **1. Nature & the elements**

Nature is an inexhaustible source of strength that gives us innumerable opportunities for harmonising body, soul and spirit. A key factor of this is to live in harmony with the seasons and the four elements: that is why, for example, there are fasting weeks in the spring programme. For a year-round experience, there is the Life Energy Garden with its fire pit, barefoot path, Kneipp circuit, and relaxation areas to chill out in.

#### **2. Naturopathy & herbs**

*Hildegard von Bingen* recorded the effects of a wide variety of herbs in her writings; knowledge that is put to good use at the Pirschner Hof. From horse-heal to hyssop, Hildegard's herbs can be found throughout the hotel; from herb butter at breakfast to herbal wraps in the Spa, there is a herb for everything at the Pirschner Hof.

#### **3. Nutrition & teachings**

Healthy really can equal tasty: Hildegard's dietetics forbid only a tiny number of foods, and instead advocate 'finding the right measure' as the most important aspect of a balanced diet. And that is also the approach of the Pirschner Hof.

#### **4. Fasting**

According to Hildegard, fasting sharpens our perception and creates space to focus on the essentials in life. At the Pirschner Hof, fasting is not regarded as 'self-imposed starvation' but rather as a conscious process of reduction wholly in line with Hildegard's philosophy. Their fasting menu includes delicious fasting soups and a moderate spelt-based reduction diet.



## 5. Exercise & regeneration

Exercise is good for the body and soul and stimulates the regenerative process. That is why the Pirchner Hof offers a comprehensive exercise programme: one inspired by Hildegard, and yet ambitious and imaginatively contemporary in design.

## 6. Cleansing the soul

Pause, feel the moment, and become aware of yourself again: being in good health is a never ending process for Hildegard, and this process includes finding our centre and living in harmony with nature and other people. The Pirchner Hof offers guests the perfect environment for their health retreat; one in which mental stimulation and activities are as appropriate as peace and solitude.

# Hildegard von Bingen EXPERTS

**CHRISTA PEER:** The hotel owner is not only the hotel's 'heart and soul', but also a *Hildegard von Bingen* expert. Christa shares her extensive knowledge of Hildegard's teachings on nutrition, medicine and fasting during lectures held regularly at the Pirchner Hof and special Hildegard walks.



Christa Peer

### **Christa Peer on...**

**...Hildegard at the hotel:** 'My wish is to give as many people as possible an understanding of *Hildegard von Bingen*'s teachings. And to do this in a lovely, relaxed holiday atmosphere devoid of dogma. Where better than here with us in the magnificent Tyrolean mountains?'

**... her path to becoming a Hildegard expert:** 'Here in Reith, there has been a Hildegard society for many years. That is where I first learned of *Hildegard von Bingen* and was immediately inspired by her holistic approach. I was then able to deepen and expand my knowledge at the Hildegard Academy run by Brigitte Pregonzer.'

**... the modern relevance of Hildegard's teachings:** 'I never cease to be amazed at how relevant to contemporary life *Hildegard von Bingen* continues to be. Her teachings contain few 'don'ts', and focus instead on achieving the 'right measure in all things'. Hildegard's ideas are easy to integrate in our day-to-day lives, even long after your stay at the Pirchner Hof.'

**DR. HELGA-MARIA GRÖMER:** The GP is available to guests of the Pirchner Hof for medical consultations at her nearby surgery in Brixlegg. She also comes to the hotel to provide cupping and *Hildegard von Bingen* bloodletting therapies.



Brigitte Pregonzer

**BRIGITTE PREGONZER:** The renowned Hildegard expert, best-selling author and radio presenter is a firm favourite at the Pirchner Hof. The Brigitte Pregonzer Hildegard Academy, established by Ms Pregonzer in her home town Vorarlberg, has an excellent reputation both at home and abroad. Brigitte Pregonzer visits the hotel several times a year to run courses and oversee fasting weeks.



Dr Helga-Maria  
Grömer



## Hildegard von Bingen

# ON HEALTHY NUTRITION

*Hildegard von Bingen* recognised the healing power of food. Convinced that we derive energy from food, she made conscious use of herbs and other ingredients. She categorised foods as 'warming', 'cooling', 'drying', moistening' or 'cheering', resulting in dietary recommendations for a whole host of scenarios. There are interesting parallels between these simple yet effective recommendations and Traditional Chinese Medicine, and both remain as relevant as ever. Another important component of the Hildegard diet is spelt, an ancient grain which we now know can offset the damaging effects of food-related health issues when eaten as part of our regular diet. Spelt contains vital growth and cell nutrients, as well as all the elements that are essential to a healthy organism – including protein, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, trace elements and minerals. In addition emphasis is placed on Hildegard's teachings on herbs. In the hotel's very own herb garden, guests can learn about the individual plants and their uses.

### **Taking pleasure in the four seasons**

When employing Hildegard's dietetics in the kitchen, the seasonality of the products comes first and foremost. The hotel's programme is dictated by the cycle of the seasons:

#### **Spring – the fasting season**

Reduction not starvation is key. After all, *Hildegard von Bingen* was convinced that cutting out food entirely was harmful, not only to the body but also to the soul. To allow the body to be gently cleansed and detoxified, the spring menu features herbal spreads, wholegrain spelt bread, fish, fennel dishes, and vegetable soups.

#### **Summer – the season of herbs**

The natural ingredients found on the doorstep of the Pirchner Hof are in peak season during the summer months. Light dishes are served that don't put a strain on our system. It goes without saying that fresh herbs, salads, vegetables and fruits form part of every meal.

#### **Autumn – the season of preserves**

Harvested fruit and vegetables are now preserved and frozen, extending their shelf life and retaining their vitamins. Herbs are added to oils and Hildegard fruits are made into compotes or jams.

#### **Winter – the season of rest**

Warming Christmas cookies baked with Hildegard's spices get your taste buds tingling. Now is also the time for richer foods to appear on the menu, enjoyed in moderation, and seasoned with herbs, they too have a wholesome benefit.

### **Finding the 'right measure'**

Nutrition according to *Hildegard von Bingen* is about pleasure, not denial. For instance, moderate amounts of beef, chicken, venison and game with small amounts of alcohol, are considered part of a balanced Hildegard-style diet. 'Find the right measure with attention to quality', as the saying goes. This is the approach you'll find at the Pirchner Hof.

**Dusko Petrovic:** Chef Dusko Petrovic has been cooking at the Pirchner Hof for many years.

During this time, he has dedicated himself to giving a contemporary slant to Hildegard's dietetics, proving time and time again that healthy food can also be mouth-wateringly delicious.



**Dusko Petrovic on...**

... **Hildegard in the kitchen:** For *Hildegard von Bingen*, many foods also have medicinal qualities. Beside herbs, spelt, the most nutritious of all grains, plays a pivotal role in the Hildegard kitchen.'

...**the concept of subtlety:** 'Food has subtle effects on us. Subtlety cannot be measured but it can be tasted and it can be felt. The better the quality of an ingredient, the more energetic and balanced we are.'

... **locally produced and seasonal:** At the Pirchner Hof, these are not just buzzwords but the cornerstone of everyday kitchen life. All ingredients are sourced from either their own Hildegard garden, the family farm, or from local suppliers. And, in preparation for the colder times of year, the fruits and vegetables harvested in summer and autumn, are frozen and preserved, or turned into healthy and delicious oils.'



*Dusko Petrovic*

## Hildegard von Bingen packages

From taster days to the spelt-based fasting weeks, the Pirchner Hof offers Hildegard-themed packages all year round. Special offers:

- **Hildegard taster days** (3 or 4 nights)
- **Hildegard von Bingen rejuvenation week** (7 nights)
- **Spelt-based fasting week** (7 nights)
- **Hildegard for health & fitness** (4 or 7 nights)

Guests enjoy their very own welcome talk, Hildegard encyclopaedia, daily Hildegard herbal elixirs, hot water bottle, and complimentary herbal teas – included in every experience as the Hildegard just for me newcomer's package.

## Health & wellbeing

After a long day's walking or skiing in the mountains, the spacious hotel Spa is a delightful place to relax and recharge: perfect for a thorough pampering and to simply relish the beauty of the moment.

**The following on site facilities are available for guests:**

- **12x6m indoor swimming pool**
- **14x7m year-round heated outdoor swimming pool**
- **Finnish sauna**
- **Bio sauna**
- **Infrared cabin**
- **Steam room**
- **Various relaxation areas**
- **Large garden with a natural bio pond, mature fruit trees, Kneipp pool, barefoot path, and the Life Energy Garden.**

Plus, free weekly lectures, workshops and seminars on exercise, herbalism, *Hildegard von Bingen's* nutritional teachings, spices, elixirs and healthy cooking, are held at the Pirchner Hof's Health House.



Wolfgang Peer

## Exercise & activity programme

From A for Aqua Fit to Z for Zen workout: guests are spoilt for choice at the Pirschner Hof. There are always suitable classes for guests of all ages and fitness levels. One area of interest is the use of 'smovey' rings in training sessions. First developed as a therapeutic aid for an athlete with Parkinson's disease, the 'swinging-rings' quickly caught on. The vibrations created when training with a 'smovey' is good for our joints, strengthens muscles, activates cell activity, promotes balance and coordination, kick-starts the circulation, activates reflex zones and leads to deep relaxation.

### **The Pirschner Hof exercise & activity programme at a glance:**

**Aqua fit, Nordic walking, Pilates, smovey, foot fitness, back exercises, Yoga, Zen workout**

**Depending on the time of year, the programme also includes numerous guided outdoor activities and health rituals, such as walks, herb forays, mountain biking, Kneipp treatments, snowshoeing, meditation, and barefoot walks.**

### **Train like a professional with WOLFGANG PEER**

With hotel manager Wolfgang Peer at the helm, the Pirschner Hof exercise & activity programme has a real professional fitness instructor in charge, with a career spanning more than 20 years as a youth coach for the Tyrolean Ski Association. Guests at the Pirschner Hof can benefit from his daily exercise and regeneration programme that focuses on the therapeutic principles for the improvement of health, wellbeing and vitality.

#### **Wolfgang Peer on...**

**...his Pirschner Hof training philosophy:** 'Exercise is meant to be fun and make you more aware of your own body. 'Push yourself but don't overdo it' is my motto, an approach very much appreciated by our guests.'

**...Exercise in the great outdoors:** 'No matter how nice our hotel is, if the weather is good, I like to head outdoors with my guests. The fresh air combined with the stunning mountain scenery boosts motivation and has a positive impact on the effect of the exercises.'

**...'smovey' rings and other fitness innovations** 'For me, being open to new developments is also important with regard to exercise and fitness. I am particularly impressed with 'smovey' rings as they can achieve marked and visible results in the shortest space of time. And that with a minimal amount of effort – need I say more!'



## AN OASIS for all seasons

Living in harmony with the seasons is taken very seriously at the Pirchner Hof – both in the hotel and in the great outdoors, where all year round a huge range of outdoor activities beckons:

In spring, summer and autumn, the region's more than 900km of walking trails, wide choice of mountain bike routes and cycleways, via ferratas and high rope courses await guests. The huge number of water sports on the Brandenberger Ache, such as rafting and kayaking, numerous bathing lakes, and seven golf courses within an hour's drive, turn holidays into sporting adventures.

Winter guests have access to 45 lifts and 145km of pistes in the Ski Juwel Alpbachtal Wildschönau resort, night skiing is available in the immediate vicinity of the hotel, and access to the 100km cross-country ski network is right in front of the hotel. Other options for enjoying the gentler side of winter include snowshoeing, winter hikes, tobogganing, horse-drawn sleigh rides and ice-skating.

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