

**Sonnenalp Resort  
of Vail**

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**Johannes Fässler**

**Owner & General Manager**

**Sonnenalp Resort of Vail, Swiss Hotel and Spa & Austria Haus Club and Hotel**

A fourth generation hotelier from Bavaria, Johannes Fässler is carrying on his family's long-standing tradition of commitment to excellence at the Sonnenalp Resort of Vail. The family's philosophy of "gemütlichkeit," a German expression for warmth and contentment, influences all facets of resort operations, from the guest suites and on-site services to the world-class spa and golf course.

The Sonnenalp concept dates back to 1919, when Fässler's great grandparents, Eleanor and Adolf, opened a simple ranch house in Bavaria. Over the next 50 years, two more generations continued to build the Sonnenalp into a first-class European vacation resort. In 1979, Fässler's parents, Karl and Gretl, purchased the Wedel Inn Motel in Vail, Colorado and following a major renovation, opened as the Sonnenalp Hotel in Vail with 38 rooms on the site that is now the Austria Haus Club and Hotel.

Fässler graduated from the University of Denver in 1984 with a bachelor's degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management, and while he grew up in the hotel business, his formal training took place off-site at such properties as the Hotel Europe in Killarney, Ireland, and the Kapalua Bay Hotel in Maui, Hawaii. Fässler moved to Vail in 19\_\_\_ and took over as general manager and vice president of the Sonnenalp's Vail operations. A self-proclaimed "Jack of all trades," Fässler assumed a "hands-on approach" to running the Sonnenalp, working in all areas of operation including banquets, parking cars and housekeeping

The Sonnenalp was soon after accepted as a member of the prestigious Relais and Chateau guide, which helped the Faessler's build a solid base of return clientele from around the world. This was a significant factor in the Fässlers' decision to expand the property. In 1986, they acquired the Talisman and Kiandra Lodges in Vail (a total of 150 rooms) and embarked on a \$4 million renovation over seven months, creating the three distinct properties under the Sonnenalp umbrella: The Austria Haus, The Swiss Haus and The Bavaria Haus. In 1987, the

Fässlers purchased the Singletree Golf Course, located 13 miles west of Vail in Edwards, Colo., and re-named it the Sonnenalp Golf Club. The only hotel-owned golf course in the Vail Valley, the Sonnenalp Golf Club has been acclaimed by golf organizations and publications around the world as one of the best public resort courses in the country. Today the Sonnenalp Golf Club is open to the public, hotel guests and a private membership.

Having achieved the desired size in terms of rooms and facilities, Fässler spent the next several years building a high-performance administrative team and began the planning process to convert the remodeled, but still old buildings into truly first-class facilities. This process became a reality in 1991, when the Bavaria Haus was completely demolished and over the next two summers rebuilt as the Sonnenalp Resort of Vail, a 90-suite, first-class hotel property at a cost of \$20 million. In 199\_, Fässler, teamed with the Austria Haus Development Group on a \$15 million renovation of the Austria Haus into the Austria Haus Club and Hotel, the first private residence club in Vail. In 2003, The Swiss Haus (then the Swiss Hotel and Spa) was sold and will open in late 2005 with whole and fractional ownership condominiums.

Since 1980, the Sonnenalp properties in Vail have grown from total annual revenues of less than \$1 million to over \$17 million, still building on an international reputation as one of the finest mountain resort complexes in the U.S. Fässler continues to focus on and enhance the resort's facilities and services. In 2003, the Faessler initiated the first phase of his "Refining Excellence" master plan with the expansion and renovation of the Sonnenalp Spa in the spring of 2004.

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