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# FINSTER WIRT

HISTORIC RESTAURANT

**13<sup>th</sup> century:** The "Finsterwirt" is located in one of the oldest houses in Brixen, whose origins can be traced back to the 13th century. The long, two-storey building with a facade bay window had always been owned by the cathedral chapter and was actually the residence of the canons.

Since **1743**, however, the canons no longer used the house as a residence, but rather served the so-called "tithe wine" there, which had to be given to them as an interest payment. In order to ensure peace at night for the parish residence and the cathedral provostry, the bar had to be closed by nightfall and no light was allowed to be lit. However, as this regulation was not too strictly adhered to and people continued to drink in the dark, the "Kapitelschenke" or chapter bar came to be popularly called "Finsterwirt" (dark inn).

**1770** The cathedral chapter sold the building for 1,000 gulden. Over the following years, the building changed hands several times.

**1881** Anton Mayr senior acquired the "Finsterwirt". He continued to run the inn and set up a carpentry workshop in the stables on the ground floor.

**1904** Art-loving Anton Mayr junior, son of Anton Mayr senior and great-uncle of the present host Hermann, took over the "Domherrenhaus". As founder of the Brixen Museum, he was as committed to his artistic sensibilities as he was to good taste, leading him to set up the artists' room. Soon, the Brixen "Finsterwirt" was a household name amongst the entire monarchy of that time, as the guest book shows. Among others, Archduke Eugen, the heir to the throne Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Countess Sophie von Hohenberg, Archduchess Maria Josepha, the mother of future Emperor Charles, but also artists such as Franz v. Defregger, Köster, and Riss, as well as scholars, scientists, and researchers have their names in the book. The "Finsterwirt" became an "institution".

Since **1970**, Hermann Mayr has been running the "Finsterwirt". He and his family have always been concerned with developing the Finsterwirt for locals and guests alike and keeping it alive as a business. For this reason, the family ...

... reopened the former carpentry workshop on the ground floor in **1986** as "Kapitelschenke Finsterwirt". In the idyllic inner courtyard under the wine pergola, special types of beer as well as South Tyrolean and Italian wine labels are offered with small delicacies in summer.

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The Mayr family is committed to the tradition of the building, passionately preserving the treasures of the past and carrying them into the future. The panelling, original paintings, historical weapons, and valuable stained-glass windows in the artists' room remain untouched.

**2008** The terrace in the inner courtyard was added in keeping with the spirit of the times. The modern extension blends harmoniously with the historical structure, the transition is smooth and enhances the building and especially the courtyard.

**2020** Junior manager Christoph Mayr took over management of Finsterwirt in the sixth generation. On the ground floor of the historic building, he and his team also run Vinothek Vitis.

Not only because of its history, but also thanks to its excellent and multi-award-winning cuisine, famous personalities like former Italian presidents Oscar Luigi Scalfaro and Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, His Holiness the Dalai Lama with his mountain friends Reinhold Messner and Hans Kammerlander, Pope Joseph Ratzinger when he was still Cardinal and spent his annual summer holidays in Brixen, Otto von Habsburg, German Prime Minister Roland Koch, notorious Italian restaurant critic Guido Raspelli, Ministers Frattini and La Loggia, the South-Tyrolean-born and now German star chef Heinz Winkler, and many others still love the "Finsterwirt".