



HOTEL NAVARRA

B R U G G E

THE RICH HISTORY OF HOTEL NAVARRA BRUGES

1600 - 1715 *Don Juan de Peralta* (b 22nd June 1549), Consul of the Spanish Province of Navarra as well as Alderman of Bruges, built his official residence on the site of the present hotel. He lies buried next to his wife Maria Lauwers, in the adjoining St Jakobschurch, behind the main altar, under a white slab. They had three children: Jean, Anne and Marie. Marie continued to reside at the hotel and married Jean Pardo, the Mayor of Bruges. Their youngest daughter Alexandrine married Charles-Francois-Louis de Schoote, lord of Marckhove, Alderman of Finances in Bruges and member of the States General of Flanders. Consequently the building came into the possession of ***the Van Marckhove family***.

1715 The premises were bought by '***de Gilde der Makelaars***' (the State Agents' Guild), and became its headquarters.

1720 The name was changed into '***Hotel des Courtiers***', and the premises completely rebuilt in the style of Louis XV. The name was changed once more into '***Cour de Commerce***', under the rule of Maria-Theresia of Austria.

1781 *Emperor Jozef II of Austria* stayed at the hotel from the 13th to 15th June during an official visit to Bruges, when he participated in the Blessed Sacrament procession carrying a flaming torch. On the 29th August *Duke Albert Casimir*, Governor-General of the United Netherlands and his wife the Duchess Marie-Augustine of Austria, were also guests at the hotel.

1795 - 1802 After the battle of Fleurus, the 'Cour de Commerce', now under French rule, was sold and transformed into the '***Tribunal de Commerce***'. Only a part of the building was used for this purpose however. The remainder was used to house the '***Hotel du Commerce***', as well as a 'Cour de Commerce' (Commercial Court). The present triumphal staircase and the beautiful Bonaparte halls were especially built for an official visit by *Emperor Napoleon I* to Bruges when he was supposed to stay at the hotel. However, in the end Napoleon did not spend the night in Bruges. The halls in the hotel were regularly used for important meetings during the reign of William of Orange.

1802 The *Vanden Berghe-Dumortier* family became the new owners of the hotel and ran it for a full one hundred and eighteen years as a first class hotel.

1842 - 1914 'The Commercial Court' moved to the Palace of Justice and the 16th-century house in the inner courtyard was supplemented with a 19th-century moulded façade. The masterly wrought-iron entrance gate also dates from this period. From this time onwards, the premises were used only as a hotel and bore the name of '***Grand Hotel du Commerce***'.

The hotel had about 60 rooms and was especially popular amongst British visitors, who later on were also able to enjoy the comforts of electric lighting, central heating, a beautiful garden, car park, and a private shuttle service to and from the station. All this was quite unique for that time ! Many famous guests, including the poet *Longfellow* who is well-known for his poem entitled 'The Belfry of Bruges', stayed at the hotel.

1914 - 1918 During the first weeks of '***World War I***', the owner placed his hotel at the disposal of '***the Red Cross***'. After this, it was taken over by officers of the German army. After the Armistice, the

Grand Hotel was temporarily used as the **official headquarters of the Belgian Government** from the 31st October to 21st November 1918, following their return from exile.

1920 - 1950 The hotel was sold to **the Pauwels-D'Hondt family**. In 1924 the oldest part of the building dating from 1600 was raised with a mansard roof.

1950 - 1981 The hotel was sold to the City of Bruges, to be used as a residence for students of the newly founded '**Europacollege**'.

1981 The premises were in a pitiful state and in view of high renovation costs, the City decided to sell it to Mr. **Michel Maertens**, to be used once again as a hotel.

1982 Hotel Navarra opened its doors on the 1st January as a four star hotel with 64 rooms. Through the acquisition of adjacent premises, the hotel became one of the most famous hotels in Bruges with 87 rooms.

1996 Hotel Navarra was officially declared a **Historic Monument**.

2000 The premises have been in existence for precisely **400 years** and after years of restoration have once again been restored to their former magnificence.

2002 This is the year in which **Bruges** is the '**Cultural Capital of Europe**', together with the Spanish city of Salamanca. During this year, Hotel Navarra will also be celebrating its 20th anniversary.

2005 Through the acquisition of adjacent premises, the hotel has now 94 rooms.