

By Sheila Collis

## HOTEL TIGAIGA - THE EARLY YEARS

# Green giants

PART I



The hotel has won more Holly prizes for their ecological and quality policies than any other hotel in Spain.

The Hotel Tugaiga is celebrating 50 years of their extended family of staff and clients



Every year since 1995 the tourism giant TUI have awarded the top 100 hotels in the world with a Holly prize.

The Hotel Tugaiga in Puerto de la Cruz is one of only two hotels in the world and the only one in Spain which has won an award every year since its inception - 14 in all, so far.

This jewel of a hotel welcomed its first clients in December of 1958 and was inaugurated the following year, this year they are celebrating their golden anniversary. As part of the celebrations they are hosting a special folklore concert with dancing on March 1st which is also open to non-residents but it would be advisable to book.

The history of the hotel is basically the history of the last three generations of the Talg family starting with Heinz 'Enrique' Talg Schulz,

the grandfather of the hotel's existing directors.

Heinz started his hotel career as an apprentice waiter at the Hotel Weisser Ross in Lüneburg near his native Horndorf. After the end of the Great War the young man felt the need for new challenges. He started in the Hotel Palace in Madrid, later taking over as manager and leaseholder of the restaurant in the Gran Hotel Peinador in Mondariz in Galicia. Mondariz was a spa town which attracted summer trade but was closed in winter, so he was delighted to accept the offer of leasing the Hotel Quisisiana in Santa Cruz de Tenerife, which at the time only opened in the winter season. During the summer season of 1924, his son, Enrique Talg Wyss was born in Vigo to his Swiss mother, Ida Wyss. Following the early death of his mother, the young boy returned to Switzerland to live with her

family, returning to Tenerife after the Civil War.

Spaniards had problems pronouncing Heinz, so he took the name Enrique. In 1934 he took over the running of the Hotel Taoro in Puerto de la Cruz, under the ownership of Gustavo Wildpret, taking over the lease after his death. He acquired some land in the Taoro Park which he used for growing plants and flowers, produce for the hotel and even raising pigs at one point, but his agricultural ventures were not a great success. In 1950 he took Spanish nationality and there is a street in Puerto de la Cruz named in his honour.

It was here that the ambition of the senior military governor of the Canaries intervened in his life. In the post Civil War military dictatorship, General Garcia Escamez had power over the civilians as well as

## ● THE HISTORY OF THE hotel

IS BASICALLY THE HISTORY OF THE LAST THREE generations of the Talg family

the soldiers in the Islands. He wanted to promote tourism in the Canaries and wanted to play host to General Francisco Franco, but there wasn't a suitable venue, so he decided to build one - The Hotel Mency in Santa Cruz.

Once it was built he needed someone to run it, he offered it to the leading Spanish hotel chain at the time, HUSA. They were interested, but worried about taking on something so far away from their base

so to make it worthwhile for them, they asked for two further hotels to be included in the deal, the Hotel Santa Catalina in Las Palmas and the Hotel Taoro in Puerto de la Cruz.

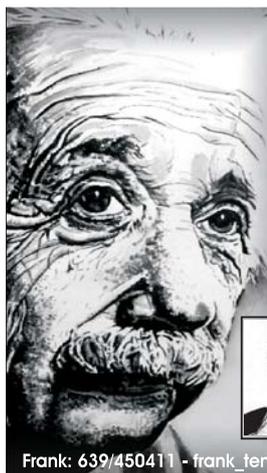
Enrique was not thrilled with the decision, which left him with a handsome payoff but without a job and with a lot of now useless hotel silver he had bought for the Taoro which was engraved 'HT'. He took over yet another landmark hotel in Puerto, the Hotel Martiánez.

His son, Enrique Talg Wyss had spent the intervening years learning his trade at the Hotel Taoro, Madrid's Hotel Palace and then in further establishments in Stockholm, London, Montreux, Saint Moritz and Algeciras before returning to the Hotel Martiánez in 1957 as assistant manager. His father decided it was time they built their own hotel and the young man

was given a free hand in it's planning and building on his father's agricultural site in the Taoro park. The father was to provide the funding, help locate scarce building supplies and lay the foundations for the stunningly beautiful gardens. Enrique Talg Schulz had been a botany enthusiast all his life, his special interest was in blossoming trees and under the Tinguaro Terrace, exactly as he planned it, is his particular favourite, a tulip tree.

The hotel was to be built on a wonderful site, like a balcony hanging over Puerto de la Cruz with views up to Teide, across the Orotava valley and down to the sea and the site inspired a wonderful hotel which started off with a modest 12 bedrooms with en suite baths.

They already had the hotel silverware of course, they just had to come up with a name and various were



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