Chapter 5 - The Role of Village Hoteliers

Sympathetic village innkeepers are frequently mentioned in some of the earliest texts on artists’ colonies, but almost as figures of fun or condescension. However, the importance of such proprietors has been much underrated, for they contributed more than merely providing cheap lodgings. What is noticeable, almost immediately, from any comparative analysis of rural artists’ communities, is that without a welcoming village inn these artists, almost invariably, either moved on or remained detached from events in the villages. The rise of artists’ groups in places such as Skagen, Laren and Volendam had much to do with the understanding character of the hoteliers, while the peculiar nature of the groups that initially formed at Worpswede, Dangast, Fanø and Domburg were due to the lack of interest from innkeepers. These artists’ hotels were usually family businesses and so painters easily formed part of the extended family. In most cases, these hoteliers grew up alongside the settlement of painters, with whom, it can be shown, they had values in common. Some hoteliers were amongst the leading businessmen in their villages, as opposed to the fishermen, and were the first to feel the benefits of the new commerce and modernisation. Much detail about their lives and contributions has remained neglected in the traditional discourse, despite the considerable international renown, in their life-times, given to proprietors such as François Ganne, Mademoiselle Julia Guillot, Leendert Spaander, Jan Hamdorff and Degn Brøndum.

Running an hotel is a commercial enterprise. Running an artists’ hotel in a village was still a business, but with peculiar demands and consequences. The innkeepers needed to be tolerant and flexible with so many bachelors confined for intense periods, yet enjoying the liberation from city life. The social structure of artists’ colonies was more like a family, as opposed to the formal hierarchies found in art academies and studio systems. The role of the proprietresses, in particular, provided a significant matriarchal element in what was otherwise a male-dominated cultural formation. Village inns were multi-functional businesses and the vital contributions of the women-folk cannot be stressed enough. The dining rooms, for example, and by implication the organisation of the kitchens, were crucial to the smooth running of what came to be large establishments or substantial numbers of lodgers. These families were often the first villagers the artists met and genuine friendships grew up, not least seen by the relatively high incidence of marriages to innkeeper’s daughters. In a more general spirit of mutual appreciation, the artists often showed their appreciation by giving pictures and decorative designs, adding greatly to the buildings as valued community centres, yet also, in effect, marking out a new territory.

Ganne’s Inn provides such a good early model of an artists’ colony hotels that it is difficult to imagine other hostels as anything but imitations, yet most other guest-houses started without any knowledge of this ‘Mecca.’ The circumstances surrounding its early foundation and

652 Robert Louis Stevenson wrote a series of magazine articles on French village artists’ hoteliers, see Stevenson, 1884, not naming the proprietors directly, but emphasising their low status, with a curious condescension that one cannot imagine the likes of Jan Hamdorff Leendert Spaander and Degn Brøndum accepting gladly.
development were unusual, but not unique. In the first half of the eighteenth century there was little or no reason for people to go to this distant but not remote hamlet; therefore, it had no formal lodgings and an economy so low that it could not support even a tavern or shop. It can be said with some certainty that Ganne’s Inn grew up because of visiting artists, not tourists (2:5). Evidence for this may be seen in its official guest-book, although this only started in 1848653, at least one, if not two, decades after they first took in artists. Typically, each page has a printed column entitled ‘Profession’, under which was usually written, by hand, either ‘artiste’ or ‘peintre.’

Three other major, artists’ hotel guest-books have survived from the nineteenth century, from Brøndum’s Hotel in Skagen (1875), Hotel Baudy in Giverny (1887) and Hotel Spaander (1888) in Volendam. They all show the main early occupancy came from visiting artists not tourists. Some of the earliest colonising artists in the study area may well have known of Auberge Ganne by the 1880s, but few, if any, had lodged there. There is no evidence to suppose that any proprietors, especially outside of France, knew of Auberge Ganne when establishing their own businesses. After the 1860s and certainly by the late 1870s, word spread about these French village artists’ inns as they began to feature in the new art magazines and even in novels, such as the Goncourt brothers’ Manette Salomon. Besides Barbizon, there were many artists’ inns near Fontainebleau, at Chailly-en-Bière, Moret, Montigny, Grez-sur-Loing, Marlotte and Cernay-la-ville. On the coast, artists’ inns flourished at Douarnenez, Quimperlé, St. Malo, Trouville, Honfleur, Concarneau and Pont-Aven, by the 1880s. Around the North Sea there were no artists’ hotels at this time, but that is not to say that there were not many artists working along its coasts who lodged in the available guest-houses. The sandy coast of Holland, for example, had a long tradition of visitors, including artists, and therefore had hotels and guest-houses at Scheveningen and Katwijk-aan-Zee. After c.1880, this situation changed enormously, partly because of greatly improved accessibility, partly because of more artistic mobility, but also as there was general agreement that the coast offered many healthy qualities that were physically and mentally improving.

There were special factors which lead to the development of an artists’ hotel, as opposed to a tourist hotel. Much of the early literature on the subject, in France, points only to their cheapness as the primary attraction, yet, elsewhere, and certainly in the study area, there is little suggestion that low cost of lodging was evident. The cooperation they got from the innkeeper seems of more importance. The villages along the sandy coast of the North Sea provide many good examples of such proprietors, at Laren, Skagen and Volendam, yet there are also villages long experienced with travellers and artists, such as at Scheveningen and Katwijk. The study region also offers examples as to why other inns and villages were rejected by roaming artists, on the islands of Sylt, Amrum and Föhr, for example.

For the wandering artist wishing to spend a working period in the countryside, the choice of lodgings was a practical necessity. Thus, prior knowledge of the presence of a cheap, village inn was a positive bonus for any area, although, in some cases, the earliest pioneers often arrived before such licensed amenities existed, such as at Barbizon, Newlyn, Volendam and Skagen. In

653 The earliest official guest-books of Auberge Ganne are now in the collection of the Barbizon Municipal Museum.
these places they found beds as best they could, which in the case of Giverney meant persuading a reluctant café owner to allow them to sleep on the floor.\footnote{Sellin, 1982, p. 97. There are several different stories about the origin of Giverny’s artists’ colony, but the unplanned arrival of a group of Americans, by train, is common to all. Mrs. Angéline Baudy ran a café where they initially lodged. It grew into a huge hotel complex, mostly patronised by American artists and students.} These largely urban-based painters often had little experience of rural life and their peculiar social customs. Similarly, many suspicious peasants had limited contact with the outside world, let alone knowledge of artistic endeavour and creativity. Both worlds collided after mid-century, in almost every western European country and countryside. Contemporary French commentators illustrated this ‘culture-clash’ in such early satirical magazines as 
\textit{Le Charivari} and \textit{L’Illustration}. One such popular, 1875, journal already typifies the image on its front cover, entitled “\textit{Une Recepción à L’Auberge des Peintres de Marlotte}.”\footnote{The under title is “Une Reception a L’Auberge des Peintres de Marlotte, Chez La Mère Antony” in \textit{Le Journal Amusant, Journal illustré, journal d’images, journal comique, satirique, etc.}, 18.9. 1875.} It shows the odd and provocative image of the village inns around the Forest of Fontainebleau, where many artists collected to work and enjoy themselves, including dressing like the peasants and being unshaven. A \textit{plein-air} artist is seen arriving with his knapsack bulging with equipment and a young woman is pictured enticingly inside the inn, identifiable as \textit{Mère Anthony}’s, (3:5). This ‘image’ sat well with the late Romantic notions of exploration, free-association, self-determination and sympathies with traditional peasant culture. This area, easily accessible from Paris by then, had a high concentration of rural artists’ inns, but soon these ‘bohemians’ were seen across most of northern France, particularly around the peninsular of Brittany, along the Normandy coast, through Belgium, Holland, Germany and into Scandinavia, usually sporting beards, straw hats and smocks.

The habit of summer migration out from the crowded cities became particularly well-established in Paris, which is situated in a seasonally-hot geographical basin. From mid-century, the city also suffered increasingly from noise, dirt and dust pollution generated from massive rebuilding work, combined with the construction of boulevards, embankments, railways, huge new department stores and shopping arcades, and high-density housing. All art academies traditionally closed during the height of summer, so that most cities across Europe witnessed a similar exodus. One typical example of an artist involved in this migration was the Anglo-American John Singer Sargent. He attended the Carolus-Duran studio in Paris in 1874, but spent all the three summer months on vacation, until 19th October, when it re-opened again. He chose to paint along the northern French coast, at Rouen, then Caen and Benzeval. In 1877, he again worked along the coast, from June to August, but further afield, at the fashionable resort of Cancale, North Brittany, although he found his hosts unfriendly and expensive.\footnote{Ormond, 1998.} Consequently, he never returned again.

More conveniently, for hesitant artists, was the knowledge that their existed regular coaching inns, found at intervals all along the main roads. Two good separate examples of this type of lodgings, used by artists, include the \textit{Auberge du Cheval Blanc}, at Chaillly-en-Bière\footnote{Bouret, 1973, p. 42. Monet, Sisley, Renoir and Manet lodged here. It was also in its walled garden that much of \textit{Le Déjeuner sur l’Herbe} is said to have been painted, in 1863.} (4:5) and the \textit{Hôtel Margat}, at Cernez-la-Ville. The former lies on the highroad to Fontainebleau

\section*{References}
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and the latter was situated midway along the road to Chartres from Paris. However, old coaching inns were not necessarily so ideal, for were constantly busy, had a guaranteed clientele already and therefore were more expensive. The *Cheval Blanc* charged three francs a night in 1851, which was 25% more than the average village inn. Prudent artists, such as the young Corot and Rousseau used the more competitively priced and smaller *Pension Mère Lemoine*, in Chaillly, before they found Barbizon’s *Auberge Ganne*. Interestingly, no hotel, coaching inn or pension of any kind is ever mentioned, by roaming artists, in the town of Fontainebleau, itself, which, nevertheless, had a long history of hosting travellers and also visitors to its royal palace. There were no hotels in the Forest of Fontainebleau itself, nor any habitation allowed in the royal park, apart from the central town. The physical detachment of the town combined with its royal connection increased its self-conscious atmosphere, an air that is often found in obviously picturesque, self-consciously important and historic villages, which, while attracting a certain type of topographical artist, seem to discouraged adventurous painters, especially of the sort that found inspiration in Barbizon.

One of the earliest painters to wander into the insignificant hamlet of Barbizon, two kilometres south of Chaillly on the forest perimeter, was Pièrre Luche in 1810. He found no official lodgings, so he charmed his way into one of its few homes, eventually renting a room for only four sous a day. Not all artists were so bold. However, it would be another decade before a young, bespoke tailor called François Ganne, and his wife, Esnée, took any significant action to accommodate this new demand for lodgings.\(^{658}\) The actual date is of minor importance compared to the recognition of its long gestation period into an hotel, for even by 1848, only twenty-eight artists registered there over that whole year. For enterprising peasants, this was useful additional income, but not nearly enough to sustain major investments in refurbishment and comfortable interiors. Ganne’s Inn was never luxurious or even spacious, but it was certainly cheap. The second characteristic of the budding artists’ hotelier would appear to be patience.

The pioneering painters were not tourists in any normal sense of holiday-makers. They came to work not to rest. They stayed for weeks or months at a time and, in a few cases, for example, Michael Ancher at Brøndum’s guesthouse, they stayed on for years, before they could afford a permanent studio or cottage. In Laren, one woman artist, Arina Hugenholtz (1848-1934), the ‘Grande Dame’ of the colony,\(^{659}\) was resident in Hotel Hamdorff for almost five decades.

The low demand for lodgings in remote villages limited the provision of accommodation to private houses, which happened at Newlyn, for example, whose religious and superstitious fishing community also barred the establishment of taverns and inns. This naturally puts some constraints on the development of any artists’ community. When Stanhope Forbes first arrived there, to his “English Concarneau”, Newlyn was “a village which seemed the very object of my search”;\(^{660}\) although he lodged in cramped conditions at the home of a Mrs. Maddens, along with

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\(^{658}\) Accounts vary as to the nature of the earliest lodgings, from a barn to a spare room and even a farmhouse annexe.

\(^{659}\) Blokland, 2000, p. 8.

\(^{660}\) Fox, 1993, p. 17 - cites this letter written in the Union Hotel, Penzance, Januray 1884.

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several other artists. Although her cooking was much admired and welcomed, alternative accommodation and space was constantly searched for, to develop their own studios. The nature of cheap lodgings means there has to be sacrifices, particularly space and personal comfort, not conditions always sympathetic to the development of artistic behaviour. The cramped conditions necessitated a certain amount of communality, a social conditions that younger artists were more willing to tolerate. The dining room and parlour were the places they crowded into and these became the centres for discussion, debate and fun.

Cheap inns imply a lack of investment or growth, as the proprietors saw little reason for improving the facilities, beyond the bare minimum. Enterprising innkeepers did not need to invest financially so much, but they did need to recognise, early on, this new cultural capital and make allowances. It was social attitude rather than a profit motive which really made a difference. The Gannes in Barbizon and the Feutrays in Pont-Aven did not enlarge their buildings, but simply gave over more space to the visitors. In these two cases, they merely retreated, in fact, into alcoves, fitted with bedding, and seemingly allowed the artists to take over the whole building, with the exception of the kitchen. General tolerance seems to be high on the list of attitudes the innkeepers required. Those less-fussy innkeepers who had not invested much in furnishing their interiors, such as the Gannes, actually offered a good signal for visiting artists. Seeing the simple interiors and bare walls indicated the likelihood of the owners relaxed attitudes, one where the artists might more easily mould their surrounding to their wants; a blank canvas on which the painters could layer their wishes.

Adventurous artists expanded into the territory that was available to them and so did the new generation of innkeepers. In villages where the lodgings developed in parallel with visiting artists there was a shared understanding of this new development. Sympathetic innkeepers were often the same age as the artists, sharing the same attitudes, using innovators to establish themselves. Tourism had historical precedence but not concentrations of artists in villages. Having no set rules to go by it meant the sides were free to socialise, to explore the possibilities without normal class prejudices and preconceived notions of how to conduct themselves. The relationship between the innkeepers and artists was not the same as that with tourists. Artists offered something that was more than just monetary exchange. This also separates the new enterprising resort hotels from the more-relaxed family hostels frequented by artists.

Open-mindedness and tolerance were required of this new type of ‘hybrid’ hotelier. Some writers, most recently Nina Lübbren in 2001, see rural artists’ colonies as merely a manifestation of general tourism, but there is sufficient evidence to point toward a more complex dynamic relationship that built up special values and goodwill over time. Tourism can be a tremendous force for social change and certainly financed much needed modern utilities in these villages. The artists brought with them extra skills, not just in painting but in observing and high-lighting human behaviour. They also shared the temperaments, humours and frustrations of the self-employed.

Coastal hotels and accessibility

Around the mid-nineteenth century, the distribution pattern, density and style of village hotel accommodation along the sandy North Sea coast changed rapidly. Prior to this date, the demographic situation was uneven and thin. Historic and political factors affected the investment in modern transport. Many economies were in a poor state after the Napoleonic wars and even a

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661 Fox, 1993, p. 18 - fellow guests included Blandford-Fletcher, Taylor and Bourdillon.
strategically important point, such as Skagen at the tip of Jutland, still had no permanent roads and no official lodgings. Access to this village was difficult, dangerous and frightening enough to deter most visitors. Skagen simply had no need of an hotel, a coaching inn or even a guest-house. Road transport along and to the coast was often poor because of physical constraints, such as swamps, salt-marshes, rough heath-lands and, especially, vast areas of shifting sands. In some cases the sandy beach was preferable to road development. Exner was “horrified” by the forty kilometer coach-ride along the wreck-strewn beach from the nearest town of Fredrikshavn. He lodged at Skagen’s only official guest-house, run by Eric Brøndum, which remained uninvitingly primitive for at least another decade or two.

There was not even a harbour at Skagen, which is surprisingly for the population was relatively large in the 1870s, c.1,600 residents, but then neither did Scheveningen, Katwijk nor Egmond have a harbour. Holland had a wealth of inland waterways but the coast had few ports or naturally-deep harbours. The general lack of capital investment on this sandy coast was common to all the countries but was seen particularly in Jutland, which had no major west port until the coming of one railway line to Esbjerg in 1864. This was in complete contrast with Jutland’s eastern seaboard, which also had the main trunk road with regular coaching inns. The preferred transport along the west coast was not by land but sea, where the only hotels to be found were in the old inland ports of Husum, Ribe, Varde and Ringkjøbing, usually at the end of barely navigable creeks. Few visitors had reasons to come and there was little economic development.

Then, soon after 1860 a new phenomenon occurred that no-one had predicted, but whose consequences touched almost every village near a beach, although it did not really reach Skagen until 1890 because of its, still-poor, transport situation. Tourism acted as a spur to investment in communications and especially the building of hotels or the improvement of existing inns. Health resorts sprang up wherever there was easy access to clean waters and sand beaches. This was not a problem for Holland as its cities were adjacent to the coast, but impossible for a country such as Denmark, whose only metropolis was at a great distance and divided from the North Sea by two great stretches of water. Resorts arose quickly along the French, Belgian and Dutch sandy coasts. The image of these resorts was made socially acceptable, in France, by a

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5:5 - Eugène Boudin, The Empress Eugénie at Trouville, 1863; 34 x 58 cm. Glasgow Art Museum.

One of a series by the artist of this resort. He was from Honfleur, west of Trouville and already an accomplished atmospheric plein-airist. He was an early friend of Monet, himself from Le Havre. Trouville continued to attract painters thereafter, such as Courbet and Whistler. The Hôtel de la Mare, right, sits directly on the seafront, where promenading was not only fashionable, but encouraged and catered for.

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662 The artist J.J. Exner had just enough time to write one letter to his wife, Sophia, from Skagen. This note, dated 7th August, 1867, now in the Kongelige Biblioteket, Copenhagen, (KB.3862.II.2.40), describes the atrocious weather conditions and his abject gloom at seeing so much wreckage along the beach-track.

663 Svandholm, 2001, p. 13. The population and economy fluctuated over the centuries, yet in the 1870 the census put Skagen’s population at a sizable 1,615, and slightly less in 1875.
series of fine pictures of the Normandy and Piccardy coast, typified by Boudin’s *The Empress Eugenie at Trouville*, 1863, (5:5). The notion of such recreation appealed to the middle-classes and soon crowds flocked to the coast and wished to stay longer and longer.

For an hotel to exist there must be sufficient and regular customers. One question arises as to why certain small villages had hotels in the first place. It is easy to understand why a quiet village of no particular character, not on a road, such as Barbizon or Skagen, had no lodgings, for there was simply no client-base to warrant such a development. More difficult to explain is the situation found by the artist-pioneers when they first arrived at the small Breton coastal village of Pont-Aven in 1866. These ‘seven sinners’ curiously had a choice of not one but three small hotels, in competition for their patronage. There is no easy explanation for this abundance except the recognition of early tourism, for Pont-Aven was not a busy port or passenger ferry, although the smartest lodging house was called the *Hôtel des Voyageurs*. It was neither on a trunk road nor near any new railway junction. Brittany had only just begun to attract visitors keen to experience its Celtic charms, yet Robert Wylie, the group’s leader, had collected some guide-books and histories of this coast prior to their visit, although unfortunately his colleague, Howard Roberts, forgot to bring all these publications when they caught the train.

Along the Dutch coast, both Scheveningen and Katwijk had historic waterways connecting them easily to the hinterland and major cities. Katwijk stands next to a canalised branch of the River Rhine where there was a famous lock. Scheveningen lay at one end of a busy canal that connected it with The Hague and Delft. Both these coastal villages had a long history of servicing visiting artists. The sea-front *Hotel de Zwann* was owned by the barons van Wassenaar and had been in business since 1602. Dating from at least that period, famous landscape painters began to arrive, such as Jacob van Ruysdael (1629/30-81). He made what was to become the stereotypical sandy-beach composition, which combined beached sail-boats; the fishermen with their work-horses; and, characteristic buildings, namely Katwijk’s church; all set close under the sand-dunes. Other artists known to have painted here at that time include Jan van Goyen (1596-1656), who made *Gezicht op Katwijk*, 1641; and Jan Peeters (1624-77) completed “Het strand te Katwijk, c.1650.” However, this degree of early artistic attention at a specific coastal village was uncommon, but, nevertheless, set a major pictorial precedent.

The *De Zwan* is also a fine example of an old coastal hotel that received a boost to its fortunes in the 1840s, when Dr. Herman Polijn Büchner arrived, a medical man who was an early advocate of the benefits to human health of sea air and outdoor recreation. In 1845, another purpose-built hotel was built, on the high dunes just to the north of the fishing village, the *Groot Badhotel*, which had a wooden stairway leading down to the water’s edge. Wherever there was a good sandy beach, with good communications, resorts arose and were readily invested in. In Germany almost all the Frisian islands had health-resorts. Demand by the rising German urban population, especially in the industrial heartlands, was felt from Oostende to Domburg, on Walcheren, and from Scheveningen to Westerland, on Sylt. With the completion of national and international railway networks, it enabled these resorts to attract clientele from all across Europe.

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664 Jacobs, 1985, p. 47, makes an excellent description of life in various Breton artists’ colonies. He names the original Pont-Aven group of painters as Robert Wylie, Charles Way, Earl Shinn, Howard Roberts, Benjamin Champney, Fredrick Bridgeman and Moses Wight, all Bostonians or from Philadelphia, plus two “obscure English artists” Martin Lewis and Geogre Hervey Garraway. He also writes that there were probably twelve artists that summer of 1866 in Pont-Aven.

665 Sellin, 1982, p. 16.


667 Ibidem.
on an unprecedented scale. New paddle-steamers also meant quick and regular scheduled ferriage, to the islands, along waterways and the countryside generally.

Countries with intricate coast-lines, such as Denmark and The Netherlands, developed widespread water transport systems, often superior to overland networks. The painter Martinus Rørbye, on his first visit to Jutland, in June, 1830, went onboard the steamship *Dania*, that sailed from Copenhagen to Aarhus. Here, he met the writer Hans Christian Andersen, who had also been invited to the same country estate, at Tjele. Not for three more decades could the same trip could be done by train and ferry. The Netherlands lagged behind most of Europe in adopting a state railway system, not completing its integrated mainline network until 1864. By way of contrast, Germany took eagerly to this new means of transport and marginal coastal areas were soon accessed and so their economies grew rapidly. As a result, Husum to the North and Emden at the extreme West, of its North Sea coast, both had good early rail links nation-wide. Although their hotels naturally expanded as a result, in size and number, but this was as nothing compared to the huge changes seen on the sandy Frisian Islands. They were not haphazard resorts, as elsewhere, but show high-levels of organisation with distinct patterns of services. A typical German ‘sanatorium’ included one large, stylish, cultural and entertainment centre, or *Kurhaus*, near at least one, equally-grand, fashionable, palace-hotel, or *Kurhotel*. Surrounding these were many other hotels of various sizes, guest-houses and villas, together with ferry terminals, roads, trams, shops, hospitals, churches, paved promenades, parks and pavilions. Some artists were indeed attracted to the comforts of such developments but not the *plein-air*, nature-loving painters that normally started artists’ colonies. These high-density coastal developments were colonised, not by artists but businessmen, entrepreneurs and mass-tourism.

By concentrating attention on these huge organised resorts other villages often remained untouched by modernisation and it was these villages, paradoxically, with their inns, which artists sought out. The traditional lodgings may be grouped into three convenient types. First, there were old coaching inns, similar to the ones in Chailly and Cernay, around Fontainebleau. Such an example on this North Sea coast is *Emmerlev Kro*, a stop-over near the German-Danish border. This hamlet stands proud, on the only slight highland, or *geest*, above the marshes, and huddles close to the manor, its farm and a church. It was on the highroad but a long way from the railroad. In spite of having a few itinerant painters from the 1860s, it failed to attract a settled group through offering too little in the way of inspirational character. There were no ancient forests, no cliffs, no rivers or picturesque architecture to lure the artists. Second, there were old, Baroque hotels servicing the historic ports and market-towns, which occur at regular intervals all along this coast. For example, further north of Emmerlev, stands the old Danish city of Ribe, which has two fine hostels: *Weiss’ Stue* and *Hotel Dagmar*. Both have tried hard not to change their appearance since the Middle Ages, not unlike the atmosphere in the rest of the town. This type of town was too self-conscious and aware of its own-importance culturally to allow the settlement of avant-garde artists, at that time. Historical painters came here regularly, as did early cultural tourists, but none of Ribe’s innkeepers cared for the new wave of adventurous artists.

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668 Lambert, 1985, pp. 203-05. From 1626, the Dutch canal system was organised for passengers and goods. By 1665, around 600 kms of canal served the North and the West, making it possible to travel from Emden to Bruges in under four days.

669 In 1845 Germany had c. 2,000 km. of railway track, by 1855 this had grown to 8,000 km. The first international railway line was completed as early as 1843, which ran from Cologne to Antwerp.

The third type of traditional lodgings available along the coast was more of a general store than an hotel. They survived because of the poor state of communications in remote areas and the lack of competition. Villages generally supported only one such dominant entrepreneur, who, rather than growing or catching food, made a living from bringing goods into the community and gambling on the consequences. In this way, they were relatively more open to innovation and new ideas, well-aware of the changing nature of society in the cities, where they bought the goods wholesale, and in the countryside, where they retailed it. J.J. Exner’s pictures of the interior of Sønderho Kro, made over thirty years, indicate the variety of services on offer in such an isolated and remote village inn: a general merchant, a grocery, a bakery, a wine and spirit seller. Add to this a little subsistence farming, keeping a cow and a sheep on the communal pastures in the dunes, and some inshore fishing amongst the reed beds and one sees a composite character common to villages from Walcheren to Vendsyssel. One of the very best examples of all, of this open entrepreneurial attitude, that also inspired an artists’ colony, was a painting done on the first visit to Skagen by P.S. Krøyer in 1882. He also lodged above the shop-store, shown in his picture, In the Grocer’s Shop (6:5). The artist boarded at this hotel for many years and was one of many to set up studio in its garden-house. Crucially, he soon befriended the proprietor, Degn Brøndum, a moody character but a key component in the future development of this artists’ community, and subsequently the art museum.

It was practically impossible to build up a business relying totally on the custom of artists, who for the most part were young and on restricted budgets. Pragmatic proprietors recognised the need to derive their income from a broad-based set of sources, keeping the steady custom of villagers and yet welcoming the boost tourist revenue offered. Only a select few innkeepers realised, early on, what potential the artists held, uniquely so, and revelled in those special qualities these cultural ambassadors offered freely, in return, to all their hosts.

Hamdorff, Spaander and other Dutch hotels:

The Dutch hotel situation had a number of advantages peculiar to its history and geography, for it offered a wide variety of hostelries experienced with cultural tourists and visitors from all income ranges. Near the coast, there were comfortable hotels in the traditional historic centres, in towns such as Haarlem, Leiden and The Hague, which all had good connections to the sand-dune fishing villages, namely Zandvoort, Katwijk and Scheveningen. Conveniently, these towns also contained major art collections of Old Masters to which the new enthusiasts referred as models for their new topographical pictures. For the most part these coastal villages had changed little in decades but gradually guest-houses appeared on their sea-fronts, most of which were used by artists, not only for the fine views they afforded but because the rooms were light and airy, ideal for temporary studios. At the cheaper end of the scale, there were also many logement and
possibilities to lodge in private houses and farms. There were, in fact, almost too many choices in some villages, Scheveningen and especially Katwijk-aan-zee, the result of which, for the artists, was to disperse the painters’ community geographically around the area, even into outlying villages, thus weakening the bonds of fellowship and benefits of group interaction.

Scheveningen was always the largest resort in Holland. It nestled in and behind the sand-dunes, just a few kilometres from The Hague, and is a classic example of a fishing village that attracted artists and offered a variety of lodgings, all long before the onrush of a rail link and mass tourism. It possessed a characteristic sailing fleet of ‘pinks’ or bomschuit. These massive boats were hauled up on the sands right in front of the hotels and promenade, providing a fascinating if somewhat smelly vista. The country’s first badhuis, servicing holiday-makers on the sands, was built in Scheveningen in 1818, with the resort being officially recognised the following year by the Haagse gemeenteraad, the area’s regional council.  

Attention also grew steadily from the school of painters that was based in The Hague, whose pictures thus advertised its charms. By mid-century the seafront had changing noticeably. The old simple Herrenlogement was bought by a local entrepreneur, in 1844, and converted into the grander Hotel Zeerust. Often such trends require just one visionary and, here, the pivotal moderniser was an entrepreneur in both the fishing and the tourist industries. A.E. Maas was a ship-builder, “nettenhandelaar” and early hotelier, or “hotelexploitant”, who rose to become a leading town councillor. He made his reputation by introducing innovative fishing technologies, the most successful of which was the improved cotton nets, in 1854, and the first new luggers in 1866. The Zeerust could not satisfy this new demand by tourists for more guest-houses and so at regular intervals, for the rest of the century, hotels were build out along the seafront, south of the village, for example: the Hotel Garni, later the Grand Hotel, in 1858; the Oranje Hotel, 1874; the Hotel Continentaal, 1875; the Hotel des Galeries, 1876; and, a grand Kurhaus in 1885, which burnt down almost immediately but was rebuilt the following year. Examination of the many paintings by The Hague School of Scheveningen at this time shows little of the excavation, construction or crowds along the promenade. Artists did lodge here but as the cities were so conveniently close and increasingly easy to reach, few artists lived in the village. One of the last well-recorded visits was by Johannes Bosboom (1817-91), in 1873, although there were health reasons. He spent three weeks at the Villa Erica, but had often lodged before at Maas’ Hotel Zeerust. In a letter, he hints at the busy nature of such a stay, both in his work and at the lodging house: “Once at Scheveningen, I drew all that the village and the beach had to offer me; so much that I worked almost too hard and thought it just as well that our time was up and other people’s baggage stood waiting to take the place of ours.”

In many ways Katwijk-aan-zee was a smaller version of old Scheveningen, as it had similar fishing boats, no harbour and nestled in the same range of sand dunes. It only boasted one grand hotel, Het Groot Badhotel, built in 1845, yet by the 1880s it offered a modest variety of lodgings to interested artists. The wave of artistic interest in Katwijk partly resulted from the

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671 Lambert, 1985, p. 143.
673 Ibidem.
674 Bosboom is mostly noted for his church interiors. He was often seriously ill throughout his life and landscape painting became a useful therapy. In 1873 he stayed with the van Tienhoven family at their Villa Erica on Scheveningseweg. Interestingly, in 1876 he visited Groningen and Zuidlaren, painting the churches, and, in 1878, he spent three weeks in Domburg.
675 Leeuw et al., 1983, p. 176, cites a passage describing the painting The Beach at Scheveningen by J. Bosboom, dated by H.F.W. Jeltes as probably October, 1873.
changes brought about by mass-tourism and commercial developments to neighbouring Scheveningen. Katwijk’s relative underdevelopment was its attractiveness. One of the earliest major artists to frequent Katwijk was D.A.C. Artz (1837-90), from the early 1870s, after his return from studio life in Paris.676 However, artists did not seem to favour any one particular inn or guest-house, as J.P. van Brakel’s thorough study of their lodging pattern clearly shows.677 During the 1880s, several new hotels were erected, all on the seafront, such as the Zeerust, Du Rhin (7:5) and Van Tellingen, all used by this new wave of artists. Each offered a slightly different atmosphere, for example, the Badhotel De Zwaan offered billiards, a very popular pastime at the period, especially amongst male painters. Acknowledging the artists’ demands, the owners of the new Hotel du Rhin built spacious suites, balconies and advertised en suite atelier. This building boom also coincided with the use of a new iron prefabrication technique that was not only quick to build and cheap, but, for the artists, they provided ideal large and airy rooms and balconies, which adapted easily for studio space. One of the best examples of this architectural structure, in Katwijk, was with the newly built Pension Kruijt (8:5). This successful hotel had started as a small family lodging-house, a huijslegger. The owner was Cornelius (Cees) Leendertszoon Kruijt (1840-1917) whose house was right on the seafront, at Wassenaerstraat nr.9, later called the Boulevard and it was perfectly placed to view the beach, to service the passing promenaders and had the tram-line running passed it front door. It attracted many artists from seven different countries. One of its most prominent customers was Jan Toorop (1858-1928), who was one of the leaders of the busy artists’ community and who eventually bought a neighbouring wooden house.

Living on the coast was often precarious. In Scheveningen, two sudden events occurred which altered the foreshore forever and finally dispersed its internationally famous, artists’ community. First, early in the 1890s, major building work was planned to excavate a harbour, at last, to provide modern docking facilities and fish-processing factories. The shoreline was divided into zones for tourism and industry. The relationship of the village, now town-sized, to its beach changed irrevocably. Secondly, in the winter of 1894, a particularly severe westerly storm devastated almost all the traditional sailing boats overnight, littering the entire foreshore with huge piles of wreckage.678 “The picturesque sight of the boats on the beach, the subject of masterly portrayals by Jacob Maris and Weissenbruch as well as by Mesdag, became a part of the past.”679

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677 Brakel, 1995² - Katwijk artists lodged in all twelve hotels and approximately 93 different private logement in all.
678 The storm took place on the 23rd December, 1894.
679 Leeuw et al., 1983, p. 258.
The old atmosphere had gone and with it left the Hague School painters. One of the last to leave was Bernard Blommers (1845-1914), who had married a Scheveningen woman and settled down there. He eventually retreated up the coast to the more sedate village of Katwijk, lodging in 1898 and again the following year, at the Hotel Du Rhin, while his villa was being finished, the Villa Thérèse. It was at the far end of the seafront, next to the abandoned church. By about 1905 the seafront was either hotels used by artists or a variety of their studio-homes, villas or ateliers.

Much modernisation came to village life simply because of improved access. For Scheveningen, there was an old but direct canal link to The Hague, inland, then faster coach services, horse-drawn trams, succeeded by electric- and steam-powered locomotives and finally main-line railway connections to Rotterdam, Delft, Leiden, Utrecht, etc. As early as 1865 the tram company registered an overwhelming 33,949 visitors, just for the month of July. In 1879 a ‘badhuis-station’ was opened, on the seafront, just a short walk from grand hotels, cafés, etc. This kind of commercialism was a threat to the traditional notions of quiet, picturesque, sandy beaches. It also illustrates how quickly capital investment took over. If tourism repelled the first generation of Hague School artists, by the time of the second generation, of Isaac Israëls as opposed to Jozef Israëls, they were coming to terms with leisure and recreation in a different way and embracing the joys of this human activity. They did not paint the grand hotels but one sees many pictures of the lodgers and especially their children playing on the sands.

To a certain extent the Scheveningen experience mirrors the pattern found elsewhere around the North sea, whenever there was a sandy beach. Oostende, just down the same sandy-dune coastline from Scheveningen, was a thriving, prosperous town for fashionable holiday-makers. High demand made it an expensive destination, including all but the most commercially-minded artists. The 1897 Baedeker guide calls it “one of the most fashionable and cosmopolitan watering-places in Europe.” “Even at the beginning or the close of the season a room cannot be obtained under 3-5 fr. a day or 15-30 fr. per week.” One alternative was to move along to the next resort or fishing village. Blankenberghe had just a few grand hotels along its Digue or sea-front promenade. This was in size and character comparable with Scheveningen. Smaller still and positioned on the edge of Belgians sandy coast, next to the marshes, is Knokke, where from the 1880s, a small artists’ community assembled. However, such was the pressure of tourism that even in this rather neglected corner of the land, the coastal dunes were quickly smothered by art nouveau hotels, guest-houses and many private villas, as well as parks, promenades and ornamental gardens, so that all traditional elements of the village were quickly overwhelmed.

The Netherlands possessed an abundance of attractive, unspoilt, waterside villages, especially along the Rhine estuaries and around the shores of the Zuiderzee, most of which possessed an inn or hotel. Saskia de Bodt has described, recently, over sixteen such schildersdorpen, while Annette Stott also recognises sixteen artists’ villages alone that American artists frequented. In all, this shows how concentrated was the artistic attention in the Dutch countryside, yet, as the physical nature of the landscape was not that extreme, the implication is that the important variable factor in the choice of a location was more to do with the hosts, the attitudes of the villagers and the sympathy of the innkeepers in particular.

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681 Baedeker, 1897, p. 4.
682 Baedeker, 1897, p. 2.
683 Bodt, 2004, names sixteen villages from this period, mostly near the water’s edge, but there were at least the same number again, which are not described in the book, that yet attracted plein-air painters.
The pattern of artists’ villages across the whole country is, surprisingly, not uniform and not necessarily linked to easy accessibility. Most ports around the Zuiderzee, including Hoorn, Urk, Laren and Spakenburg, attracted artists but not all had welcoming innkeepers, and, in the cases of Marken and Volendam, prior to 1880, had no hostels at all. All the west coast villages, set in the dunes, had inns and hotels, and long histories of artist visitors. However, when one examines the northern coast, its polderlands and especially the beautiful unspoilt Frisian islands there is a noticeable and surprising absence of artists, which cannot be explained satisfactorily through a lack of transport, inns or guest-houses. Received opinion points to poor transport limited development, but this notion, in fact, is not entirely borne out by the evidence. By the 1880s many of these islands had hotels, or at least guest-houses, yet few painters ever visited. Texel, the largest island, had a regular paddle-steamer service from the mainland and a variety of lodging houses spread, mostly, around its shore. One of the smallest Frisian islands, Schiermonnikoog, had one inn and boasted, from 1890, a typical smart new Noordzeebadhotel, which, enterprisingly enough, advertised in a newspaper as far away as Leiden, South Holland. The 1897 Baedeker travel guide offers much useful practical information about hotels, trams, steamboat ferries and provisioning for any island holiday to Schiermonnikoog or Rottum, from Groningen, the main north rail-terminal. Accessibility and accommodation do not, therefore, seem to be a major issue here, as far as practicalities are concerned, yet few painters explored the wealth of subjects on offer, even after 1900. For example, Anthon van Rappard (1858-92) was one of the very few to paint on the island of Terschelling, accessed from the well-appointed port of Harlingen. Terschelling is one of the most attractive of all the Frisian islands with unspoilt nature, sands, indigenous architecture, a fascinating and busy harbour, characteristic folk-costumes and lodgings, yet this was not enough to sustain him more than once.

Historically, Holland had one additional advantage by comparison with other countries within the main study area. Some hotels had gained considerable experience of foreign visitors, including eccentric artists, as the region formed one leg of the Grand Tour. This eighteenth and nineteenth century cultural circuit for the rich and privileged took in the splendours of cities such as Amsterdam, Haarlem, Leiden and The Hague. A few coastal areas were also toured in the locality, including coastal villages, such as Zaandvoort and Scheveningen. It was common practice for certain nationalities to congregate in specific hotels, for example, the British, patronised a number of “English Inns” including the ‘King’s Head’ in Middleburg, the ‘Queen of Hungary’ in The Hague and the ‘Golden Ball’ in Leiden. Once the Napoleonic wars were over artists started visiting again. As early as 1817 J.M.W. Turner travelled through Holland on one of his continental tours, painting the dramatic and the picturesque. He set the pattern for many topographical painters, making detailed watercolour studies with great attention to atmospheric light. It is not recorded where he lodged but this visit included Leiden and then down-stream to Katwijk-aan-zee, where he made several sketches of the River Rhine and the famous sluice or locks.

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685 Texel is not recognised as Frisian culturally, but geographically it lies at the southernmost end of the archipelago.
686 Baedeker, 1897, p. 350. Three hotels are named in Helder. Three steamboats served Texel daily, taking only 45 minutes for the passage. An omnibus is mentioned and several villages, although the accommodation is called “primitive.”
687 Leidsch Dagblad, 14.7.1890, carried an advert for the Noordzeebadhotel on Schiermonnikoog and one could meet the proprietor, Director J.E. Vlaanderen, at the Oud-Bad-Hotel-Houten in Katwijk.
688 Baedeker, 1897, p. 359.
690 Brakel, 1995¹.
Rumours were rife amongst these chattering classes, for although they might note, for example, that the village of Katwijk had a fifty-room hotel, the Groot Badhotel, on the clean sand-dunes, travellers were also well-aware of health scares, such as its typhoid outbreaks and the deadly, mid-century, pandemic of cholera that swept through all European ports. Cholera had even reached the more isolated maritime locations, such as Skagen, which had no harbour or hotel.\(^{691}\) One local Leiden newspaper happily noted that, by 1884, the visitor numbers had risen steadily since water supplies had been updated in Katwijk, averaging between 6- 700 annually, of which twenty-seven were summer-long resident artists.\(^{692}\)

Between 1885-1914 Katwijk alone hosted at least 879 named artists, from a total of eighteen different countries, according to a recent study by J.P. van Brakel.\(^{693}\) His thorough research of the lodgings used by artists provides invaluable data, but few later authors seem to have analysed this information deeply enough before commenting on the development of this artists’ colony. Half of these were foreigners, for whom the knowledge of suitable lodgings was of prime interest, when compared with their Dutch colleagues. The Hotel Levedag (later the Zeerust) and the Pension van Tellingen opened in 1882, and the Du Rhin, one of the most popular with visiting foreign artists) opened soon after in 1885. However, the most popular hotel was not, curiously, the cheapest. The old, yet well-appointed, Groot Badhotel was used by the largest number of British, German and American artists. These three nationalities predominate, as in Volendam, and together match the number of Dutch artists lodging in hotels. The Katwijk data indicates a number of trends, including a general dispersal of this artists’ community in over ten hotels and a poor frequency of artists returning. The vast majority of the artists, although impressively high in number, did not really settle enough to make a satisfactory core group.

The Dutch contingent appears somewhat divided. They formed the majority of the resident artists, of course, buying and building their own house-studios. They were, also, easily the most likely artists to use the smallest lodging-houses and those were scattered in outlying villages, such as Katwijk-aan-de Rijn, Noordwijk and Oegstgeest. These were also used by German artists, which numbered twice as many as any other foreign group, which may well reflect language skills, or the lack of them amongst the English-speakers. English-speakers were often said to collect together into social groups in many of the French artists’ colonies but the evidence at Katwijk shows no such pattern. There seems to be a marked rise in artist-lodgers through the second half of the 1880s and another peak around 1900, but as yet there is no specific explanation for these rises, for example magazine articles or exhibitions. However, the specific problem with Katwijk’s predominantly peripatetic artists was the lack of any one, easily identifiable, central inn or hotel to act as its community centre, club-house or home-from-home.

This problem also existed from the start, with the first Dutch artists’ colony, at Oosterbeek, ‘Holland’s Barbizon’. It was a quiet village situated on a wooded escarpment overlooking the broad floodplain of River Rhine, just outside the city of Arnhem. Although it first attracted painters as early as the 1840s,\(^{694}\) such as J.W. Bilders (1811-90), a rural artists’ community seems to have formed around his son Gerard (1838-65). This select group of painter-

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\(^{691}\) Bonderup, 1994. The third European wave of cholera continued as late as 1892, in Hamburg. It had ended in Copenhagen in 1853 and in Skagen at about the same time. Holger Drachmann’s father, a doctor, was an early promoter of environmental health, which may have influenced him to go to the North Sea coast for recuperation purposes. The last of Katwijk’s typhoid epidemics had cleared only by 1873, due largely to a new clean water policy promoted by its progressive mayor T.A.O. Ridder.

\(^{692}\) Leidsch Dagblad, October, 1884, cited in Brakel, 1995, p. 16.

\(^{693}\) Brakel, 1995\(^2\).

\(^{694}\) Hefting, 1981.
friends solved the problem of minimum-cost housing by residing, not so much in the village inn, but with friends and acquaintances, in some of the large leafy mansions scattered throughout the woodlands. The Weisner family mansion, for example, was already host to two artist-guests, Johannes de Haas (1832-1908) and Kruseman van Elten (1829-1904) when Paul Gabriël (1828-1903) arrived to stay in 1853. No matter how philanthropic the hosts, this situation was not conducive to fostering a permanent community. After mid-century, the village of Oosterbeek was more of a leafy suburb for the rich of Arnhem, with its own railway station down in the valley, its tramways and its selection of hotel-restaurants. Neither the comfortable *Schoonord Hotel* nor the *Hotel De Doornenkamp* were closely associated with the painters and neither one was really adopted as the artists’ club-house, as in Volendam or Laren.

From the 1880s, topographical artists became more adventurous and spread out inland from the sand-dunes, yet collected, most commonly, in villages on the southern floodplains and around the Zuiderzee. Of the many picturesque artists’ villages, *schildersdorpen*, across this region, including Bunschoten, Kortenhoef, Hattem, Marken, Monnikendam, Noorden, Nunspeet, Rijsoord, Spakenburg and Staphorst, only two developed significant artists’ colonies and they both had inns that rose through special and long associations with visiting painters, over decades. The two artists’ hotels, at Laren and Volendam, offer contrasting histories, yet both their owners, Hamdorff and Spaander, had much in common with their cultured clientele.

Volendam was an isolated fishing village on the shore of the Zuiderzee, east of Edam. Its position was truly on the edge for it lay along a narrow strip of land just behind the protecting dyke. The hotel, initially, was on wooden piles, outside this dyke and had a small bridge over to its entyrance. Permission for a café here was granted as early as 1854 to skipper Pieter Steur who built the small wooden building on what was unwanted land outside the dyke-road, *De Palenbuurt* (9:5). It was this business that his young friend Leendert Spaander (1855-1955) bought in 1881, after securing a loan and in consultation with his wife, Aaltje (1856-1921). Her participation was crucial, for she was, in reality, the one who ran the business, as he returned to sailing, in order to provide the main family income. There was no hotel in Volendam, for its devout catholic citizens did not want strangers lodging in their community. The tiny picturesque island of Marken, nearby, had similar rules. The Spaanders grew up in Volendam but were detached somewhat by their religion, for they were Protestants. There was no animosity, yet it contributed to a sense of isolation and detachment, feelings they were to recognise in

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696 Stott, 1998, includes most of these villages as they were the particular focus of American summer schools. Volendam and Marken offered particularly distinctive folk costumes, although most Dutch regions, or even villages, had characteristic, decorative clothing and accessories.
697 Bodt, 2004. Few of the villages identified had any permanent population of artists. They either attracted artists steadily over decades, such as Staphorst, who continued the wearing of their folk costume, or just a few painters came for short intensive periods, such as at Kortenhoef, “the land of Gabriël and Nescio.”
the visiting artists, who were themselves innovating and pioneering new territory. The Spaanders were allowed to accommodate this new wave of artists, at first converting rooms upstairs and then building on gradual additions to the old premises, but always outside the dyke.

The artistic discoverer of Volendam is said to be the French illustrator, Henry Havard (1838-1921), who was purposefully sailing around the Zuiderzee looking for ‘lost’ villages, in 1873. Boats were the only means of transport to Volendam, either by sea or canal, as there was no road until the early 1880s. This finally connected it with Edam, which was an old cultural and tourist centre, and, importantly, had the new railway. With the completion of a tramway to Volendam, in 1888, the fate of the village was sealed for it now enabled Amsterdammers to flock to this old, peculiar and attractive village, just twenty kilometres away. The Spaanders’ business thrived, yet it never forgot the role played by its artist customers, from the first, a special relationship that gave the hotel character and helped advertise the village’s unique charms.

Curiously, the Spaanders were granted the sole hotel license in the village until 1907 and there was little competition, even though it was obvious by then that Volendam was firmly on the tourist map and the number of artists arriving was steadily increasing. Spaander’s rise has been described as “meteoric,” but this kind of comment, all too typical in the discourse, owes more to verbal rhetoric than to objective analysis. In reality, the hotel did not become really sizeable for almost two decades, and this was in spite of holding the monopoly. Examination of the hotel register reveals only about one dozen artists lodging there annually, before 1894. This rises to two dozen, by 1897, which after fifteen years in the business is demonstrably slow. Of course, the business also included a café, a restaurant and a bar. If one uses 1897 as a benchmark year in the growth of the colony, the trend found in Katwijk is reaffirmed, in that, the nationalities: German, British and American represent the largest contingents, with approximately thirty-two artists lodging from each country, in total. Belgian painters follow, numerically, with eleven representatives; then the Dutch, ten; and French, seven. There are at least ten different artists’ nationalities present in the register, in those early years. A working knowledge of different languages would also seem to be a useful practical asset in this trade, which Leendert Spaander was noted for, a facility, it may be assumed, he urged on his growing family. They had nine children in all, three of their seven daughters married artists: one Frenchman, Augustin Hanicotte (1870-1957) with Trinette; and one German, Georg Hering (1884-1936), with Pauline; and, lastly, Conny with a Dutchman, Wim Wouters (1887-1957).

The Hotel Hamdorff, Laren, had a longer and slower development, but its proprietor was more of a risk-taker, expanding the business astutely, as circumstances presented themselves. For example, a fire next-door, in 1898, allowed Jan Hamdorff (1860-1931) to buy the land and double the size of his pension (10:5). Unlike the Spaanders, he had plenty of room to expand the facilities, even profiting from reselling some plots of land. Laren was initially a farming community, with a connecting waterway out into the Zuiderzee. This village was situated on the nodal point of the bay, on a drovers’ route from Hessen, Germany, which is where Jan’s grandfather originated. The Hamdorffs were also a Protestant family in a Catholic community. This combination of ancestral and religious differences seems important, for it allowed them to operate outside any restrictive village traditions, which, may also be seen in other artists’ hotelier, as with the Spaanders in Volendam. Yet, these villagers were open-minded enough to welcome the artists into their cottages and farms, for a fee, overcoming the traditional cautiousness of rural folk.

699 Lübbren, 2001, p. 70.
700 Post, 1984, p. 52: “the sole means of transport was either the coach or barge”
In Laren, the first guest house was primitive, *De Hessenkar*, a simple wagon stop for German drovers. By 1860 it was run Joachim C. Hamdorff, who expanded it and named it, *De Vergulde Postwagon*. It remained rather primitive, yet cosy, with alcove beds, for the next two decades. His wife, Gerritje, and daughter, Neeltje, were vital to its success. When he died in 1878 the eldest son, Wout, took charge, but he also died, prematurely, that same year. This left Jan, aged eighteen, as head of the family, although the artist Wally Moes (1856-1918) remembers him at this time as disinterested in the business, indifferent to the guests, moody and juvenile, “tall, thin and shy” but “like a clown.” He was rough, quick to anger, cursed too much, but, according to another biographer, shrewd and “a quick learner.” These new proprietors valued their friendships with the artists and inevitably discussed improvements to their premises accordingly, seeing the importance of their art work to the village in general and especially to the hotel’s own cultured image. One slight difference was that Hamdorff’s Hotel was more closely associated with Dutch artists exclusively, while Volendam’s was always much more international.

What is overlooked, or under-emphasized, in the literature, was that Jan Hamdorff was born in 1860 and consequently was still a lad when many of Laren’s earliest and most prestigious painters were most active in the village, and lodging at his family’s guesthouse. It was his parents and particularly his mother who played host to the first artists, such as Jozef Israëls, who first came in 1870, along with Albert Neuhuys and Anton Mauve, from 1872. Jan actually befriended the second or third generation of artists to settle in the village, such as Evert Pieters, Willy Sluiter and Ferdinand Hart-Nibbrig (1:5), a young set called *de rommel*, after 1900, although he seems initially to have profited more from the sale of works from the ‘old school.’

The completion of the tramway between Amsterdam and Amersfoort, through Laren, transformed the Hamdorff business. It was the only modern development in the village and the tram stopped right in front of his hotel, on the village green, from 1882. One loose group to come regularly were Gooische artists, from the surrounding region, but soon visitors came in from Amsterdam and The Hague. Israëls advised his German friend Max Lieberman to visit, which he did in 1884, on his honeymoon, and lodged at Hamdorff’s, but it mostly served Dutch clientele. On the advice of Anton Mauve, one of his woman students, Arina Hugenholtz became a resident in Laren from 1885, in the hotel, where a permanent studio was organised in its back garden. She became the grande dame of the colony and confident of Hamdorff and the next generation of artists. After 1896 a small pension opened, run by Mrs. Kam and her daughter, who seemed to attract more foreign artists, for she spoke English. It was here, for example, that Laura Knight lodged several times. This was also the year that Jan Hamdorff was recognised by the local community for his business acumen, for he was asked to join the *Larense Raad* and thereafter his hotel was a meeting place for councillors and officials, affording him every advantage for his business and to modernise the expanding village.

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701 Moes, 1961, p. 190.
702 Koenraads, 1985, p. 11.
703 Pol, 1984, p. 63.
In all the general expansion of the business, Hamdorff, importantly, did not forget the artists or the villagers, it is said, for he kept the original billiard room and bar untouched, called Het Kroegje. He acquired an art collection for the hotel, some of which was later given to the village council, but he also began to take an increasing commercial interest trading in paintings, an activity the Spaanders did not take up. When the new hotel was finally opened in 1901 (11:5) amongst the first guests were William and Anna Singer, son and heir to an American industrialist. They would eventually build their own mansion, The Wild Swans, in 1911 which eventually housed an art museum that included the colonists’ work. The aspirational side to artists’ hotels is writ large with Hamdorff, who went furthest to make a grand hotel, or more correctly a hotel complex, and tried hard to appeal to high society by hosting a series of galas, balls, musical soirees, annual art exhibitions and a permanent gallery. In this way, the art legacy of Jan Hamdorff is not unlike that of other famous hoteliers turned benefactors, such as Leendert Spaander and Degn Brøndum. They all saw something in this artistic migration to advantage their own enterprises and yet bring modernism to their villages.

Self-employed entrepreneurs work on probabilities, but it is necessary to take calculated risks on occasions, even in a trade whose general image is grounded in passivity rather than vitality. These two Dutch innkeepers, Hamdorff and Spaander, tried a number of different strategies to increase their business visibility. Leendert Spaander went to London, in 1897, to advertise his hotel in an international trade exhibition. Jan Hamdorff, typically, later travelled there, in 1900, to take a painting for auction. That painting was by Johannes Neuhuys, a painter he was personally acquainted with since youth, and whose 60th birthday was celebrated with a huge party in his hotel, in 1904. The painting sold for a price ten times he was expecting.705 This confirmed a new course of action for Jan Hamdorff, hotelier as art dealer, and after involving his artist friends (1:5) they organised the galleries and annual art exhibitions.

It is not recorded whether these two hoteliers ever met, although they must have known of each other’s establishments from the press and also as they had in common at least one artist friend, Willy Sluiter. Sluiter was an amiable talent who made a habit of befriending innkeepers and their visiting artists. The first appears to be in Katwijk with Arie de Leeuwan, owner of the new Hotel du Rhin and fellow committee-member in the local tourist bureau. Sluiter lodged in the hotel from 1895, while his own studio-house, Villa Honk, was completed in 1901. They, Sluiter and de Leeuwan, agreed a complex commercial arrangement whereby he exhibited works in the hotel and sold them on commission.706 Sluiter was gregarious and frequently made crayon sketches of his friends and colleagues, including the three hoteliers: van Leeuwan, Hamdorff and Spaander. He moved to Laren in 1904 and naturally became close with Jan Hamdorff. Sluiter was a member of the hotel’s exhibition committee and designed its posters, yet, at the exact same time, seems also to have enjoyed the company of the Spaanders in Volendam (12:5). Many signed and dated caricatures survive from both Katwijk and Volendam, of these proprietors, their clientele and villagers.

706 Marijnissen, 1999, p. 64.
Much early publicity concerning Laren focused on its Hague School masters, Israëls, Neuhuys and Mauve, and only later did this image shift to Hamdorff’s glamorous expanding hotel empire. This was not quite the same as in Volendam, whose artist-clients were less well-known, more international, yet who clearly enjoyed the Hotel Spaander. Many of the painters who lodged here were artist-illustrators on commissioned tours. This served to publicise their hosts further afield. The guest-book shows that few French artists ventured this far north, failing to follow Henry Havard’s early ventures. It was also rare for them to work along the German coast or go as far as Skagen. Spaander’s hotel register also shows that few French artists returned before 1915, and only one came more than twice, Auguste Hanicotte (16:5). This may have had something to do with his courting Trinette Spaander, whom he finally married in 1914.

Lübren claims the number of artists in Volendam to be 136, from twelve countries, but here that kind of figure can only be an estimate, for a number of reasons. It cannot take into account the many day-trippers from Amsterdam. The hotel’s registers actually show 951 artist visitors, from 26 different countries, but, as the earliest register extends to the 1930s, this is also statistically misleading. However, it is possible to break-down the general pattern of the increase to examine the important early growth. Before 1900 (from 1887-1900) the register shows 237 artists lodging at the village’s only hotel. There were no resident artists, unusually, and there were few or no rooms to rent in the village, making the hotel’s data more definitive. The average number of artists staying in Hotel Spaander annually barely exceeded thirty, before 1900. It peaked in 1910 at 52, dropped to twenty-one in 1914 and seven in 1915, and, understandably, it took years for the number to increase again after the war. Around 1900, the hotel had approximately forty rooms, so that there were always enough vacancies for tourists and artists. Tourists, by then, provided the sound financial basis for the hotel’s future. With the exception of Laren’s Hotel Hamdorff, the Dutch artists’ hotels all typically show a strong international blend, dominated equally by Germans, British and Americans, with only half as many French and Belgians.

A sense of community spirit amongst the artists, here, was greatly helped by the frequent presence of the genial Willy Sluiter, yet the reputation of the hotel spread amongst artist friends and colleagues in many interesting ways. For example, the Belgian artist Henri Cassies (1858-1944) visited five times from 1896, though he also frequented other colonies, namely Katwijk, at the same time. His friend and compatriot Frantz Charlet (1862-1928) also lodged at Spaander’s Hotel, seven times in all, the first in 1888, but the second time only in 1897. One of the friends he brought here specifically is said to have been the roving American J.M. Whistler. They were fellow exhibitors of the Les XX art society in Brussels, before 1900, and may well have encouraged other members to come to Volendam, for the avant-garde artists Nuncques Degouve and Theo van Rijsselberghe also lodged at the hotel. They were close friends of Jan Toorop and

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707 An article in Pall Mall magazine (London: 1907) mentions c.40 rooms and an un-specified number of ateliers in 1900 offered by the hotel.
708 Hotel Spaander’s guest-book, before 1900, shows the following major division of artists: 15 Dutch, 16 Belgians, 21 French, 40 Americans, 41 Germans and 53 British. Additional material support this study comes from unpublished work by Richard Büning and Jannik Kwakmann, conservator of the hotel’s art collection.
709 Mus. Cat. Antwerp, 1977, p. 94.
reappear, therefore, at Katwijk and Domburg. Toorop was also responsible for inviting Paul Signac to Holland, who also visited Volendam in 1894 and painted at least one colourful landscape and give it as a present to the Spaander family.

Statistically more German artists returned to work in Volendam and lodged at Spaander’s Hotel, before 1900. They include: Paul Riess (1857-1933) in 1887, 1892 and 1894; Carl Windels (1869-1954) in 1894 and 1896 (he painted the hotel’s famous sign “Artist Kom Binnen”, 13:5); and, Max Obermeyer, who lodged there seven times from 1892. Also of note is Paula Monjé (1849-1919), who lodged here three consecutive years from 1898. She represents the fast growing number of women artists, of all nationalities, before 1900, and who now felt comfortable to travel, work and, equally as important, were accepted in these artists’ hotels. Most women artists came from the U.S.A., including Letta Crapo-Smith (1890 and 1893); Elizabeth Nourse (1892 and 1895); and, six times from 1901, May Auduban Post, encouraged by winning travel scholarships from the highly influential Academy of Fine Art, Philadelphia.

Another notable wave of artists in Volendam came from in the 1890s, as a result of a growing number of English-language articles and books, by the likes of G.H. Boughton (1835-1905) and E.A. Abbey (1852-1911), whose much serialised, popular, mass-circulated and illustrated articles first appeared in Harper’s Monthly Magazine, from 1883. Soon, many of the main illustrated periodicals were sending artists to Volendam, including Punch, Illustrated London News, Elsevier’s Monthly, The Studio, The Graphic and The Magazine of Art. Proof that they thoroughly enjoyed the hospitality of Hotel Spaander is seen in the many presents they made to the family, the paintings, the illustrations and many amusing caricatures (14:5). The dedications, on the front and the back of these pictures confirm their loyalty to the proprietors. Popular British artist-illustrators, especially Tom Browne (1872-1910) and Phil May (1864-1903), who both worked for Punch magazine, came and, significantly, were also fellow members of the London Sketching Club, many of whose members subsequently lodged at the hotel.

One early commentator in 1916, Otto van Tussenbroek, wrote: “...during this time there was an artists’ circle formed in which the Hotel Spaander was the centre. They brought with them, those male and female painters, a spirit of ‘volleven’ [a zest for life], making so much fun the walls resounded with their jokes and laughter, that transported the atmosphere of Parisian ateliers and academies, re-uniting them back here, those students of studio Julian and Calarossie, from ‘The London Sketch Club’ and American ‘Art Clubs’ and [German] ‘Societies of Art’...” Something of the esteem the place held for all these professional artists may be judged by its truly huge art collection, much of it still in situ on the walls in the old part of the hotel, which clearly shows the sincere gratitude they felt for their hosts.

Interestingly, Baedeker’s international travel guide to Holland for 1897 names Laren’s Hôtel Hamdorf, but omits any mention of a lodging house in Volendam. It offers rail, tram and

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710 Boughton, 1883-4, pp. 165-70, 387-404, 500-39, 683-705. The articles were mainly illustrated by E. A. Abbey, amongst others. Harper’s also published Boughton & Abbey, Rambles through Holland, in 1885.

711 Exh. Cat. Volendam, 2005, p. 8. and Veurman, 1979, p. 98, repeat this opinion, emphasising the importance of Parisian art circles in his list of reasons for Volendam’s attractiveness abroad. However, each country developed its own method of disseminating such acquired knowledge of useful locations – from exhibitions, in studios, clubs, societies, newsletters and increasingly through published articles.
hotel information for nearby Edam, with its old Heerenlogement and Dam Hotel. Here, Aatje Spaander’s brother ran a café, De Eenhoorn, where she gained first-hand knowledge of tourist demands and how to organise a large professional kitchen. In Monnikendam, there was the Hotel Posthoorn and paddle-steamer connections to the unspoilt island of Marken, just off Volendam, but which did not allow overnight lodgers. The Zuiderzee coast attracted much artistic interest, but the far bank of this huge bay was then predominantly Protestant. The Veluwe region was decidedly Calvinist or Reformed-church, zwarte kousen kerk, which seems to have discouraged ‘fun’ and bohemian lifestyles. Religion was not an issue for most artists but they did seek freedom to work and socialise, which could cause embarrassment and had to be treated with some diplomacy by village innkeepers. An example of the muddle artists could get into concerned one of Spaander’s artist lodgers, the Anglo-Dutch artist George Clausen (1852-1944). His painting, High Mass at a Fishing Village, was shown in 1876, to much critical acclaim, in London’s Royal Academy, until it was pointed out to him that he had pictured Catholic Volendam women, identified by their characteristic costume, on their knees entering the magnificent church at Monnikendam, a Protestant church. It is the kind of mistake, ‘artistic license’, easily avoided by close consultation with local innkeepers, yet an inherent problem for painters working up a composition from many sketches later in their city studios rather than painting en plein-air.  

Knowledge that a ‘sketching ground’, the period’s English expression for an artistically interesting locality, possessed a sympathetic hotel proprietor was enough to give it an advantage over other competing villages. There is no indication here, or elsewhere in Holland, that these lodgings were especially cheap, nor did they offer credit, as in France. Volendam’s only hotel remained relatively small before 1900, initially built of wood, then with brick additions, before the large balconied construction that stood three stories high, soon after. The Spaanders cleverly combine tradition with modernity. They were quick to invest in modern technology, such as electrification, piped water, new kitchens, post and telegraph facilities and touring-club offices. They were early travel agents for Thomas Cooke after 1887, and in time, they had their own garage for early motorists.  

“Spaander is not an ordinary hotel; it never advertises; it never has done so...” However, Leendert Spaander did promote his business, most notably in 1897, when he went to a large international tourism exhibition in London’s Earls Court (15:5). He took two of his daughters along, dressed in full Volendam folk costume,

712 Clausen had been visiting Volendam since c. 1875 and gave at least one picture as a present to Hotel Spaander, inventory nr. 8501, a portrait of a man, dated 1905. By this time Clausen was a well-established painter, a teacher in the Royal Academy School, an A.R.A. and was later elevated to a professor.


714 Morning Post, 16.11.1906, mentioned in an article on the death, in the hotel, of the Norwegian artist Fritz Thaulow.
and accompanied by an artist friend, Nico Jungman, to give weight to the artistic appeal of the village. He also produced his own postcards, a not-unusual activity by 1900, common to every resort, tourist attraction and major hotel.

Folk costumes feature in so much Volendam art that to speed up the process of finding models Spaander brought the facility ‘in-house.’ The Spaanders set aside several rooms to act as period studios. ‘Old room number one’ was kept as a traditional parlour, models were arranged on request, so that women in costume would sit there or in the old, preserved, front dining-room. Delft porcelain, characteristic furniture, Makkum tiles and traditional bric-a-brac were kept to provide sufficient period flavour, enough for most busy illustrators. The snug bar was also preserved, in order to keep attracting the ‘old salts.’ Taken, altogether, these antiques, costumes and interiors provide as good an ‘authentic’ atmosphere as might be expected and were certainly an improvement on artists’ studio collections. The Spaanders went to great lengths to satisfy their artist customers and as they were certainly close friends with them, so it seems reasonable to assume consultations were made at every step of these developments, seen with the building of large, well-lighted studios, c.1895, situated between the hotel and the shore (16-18:5).

Some Dutch artists’ villages may be better regarded literally as ‘Summer schools.’ They began to appear towards the end of the century and coincided with the new wave of organised art student groups. Some German, but mostly American, art students began to adopt certain country hotels that were large enough to accommodate the whole group at one time. They had to be large enough to offer sufficient space for working indoors, given the inclemency of Holland’s temperate maritime climate. This scenario posed practical problems, for why would a village possess a large hotel and yet be available for most the summer, be cheap, quiet, roomy and tolerant of demanding art students? The answer had much to do with much improved accessibility, from the major cities and also the logistics of transporting building materials cheaply by canal. Just as Katwijk had the new prefabricated iron-framed Hotel du Rhin, then a small inland village, such as Rijsoord, was now able to consider and erect a new large wing in the same ‘colonial’ style structure. Its Hotel Warendorp (19:5) was then host to several summer schools for art students. This old koffiehuis by a canal bridge was mid-way between Dordrecht and Rotterdam, on the delta island of Ijsselmonde, a low leafy and quiet landscape that offered just enough subjects to tempt the art enthusiasts. The new balconied construction was fortuitous
for it held ample space for many art students to make studios, hold group meetings and also provided a useful ground floor boat-house, for recreation and aquatic field-trips. The proprietress was sympathetic enough to these groups, exemplified by one incident when she allowed the art students to use her mangle as a printing press, for monotypes.\textsuperscript{715}

Professor Johan Vandepoel of the Art Institute of Chicago lodged here for many summers but there was no resident painter until another American, Wilhelmina Douglas Hawley (1860-1958), who first came in 1892, settled in Rijsoord from 1901. She, in turn, attracted a number of women painters, especially watercolourists, but touring American art students did not hold a monopoly in the hotel, for they were also joined by German groups from the Art Academy of Karlsruhe.\textsuperscript{714} Interestingly, this was another family hotel run by a widow, who was fondly remembered, not for extending credit, but for her helpfulness and kindnesses, particularly to these foreign art students.\textsuperscript{717} Elsewhere, summer-schools were organised by William Merritt Chase, from 1896, particularly along the sandy coast from Scheveningen to Zandvoort, where there was ample accommodation. Arletta Lothrop of the Art Student League of Buffalo led similar groups to Volendam from 1902. These seasonal touring groups were nevertheless advantageous, filling the hotels, advertising the villages and helped spread the practical realities of working in the Dutch countryside.

The 1888 Baedeker guide to Holland barely mentions Volendam although it does offer information on the new ‘steam-tramway’ from Amsterdam to Edam, nearby. By way of contrast, it prints a sizeable, quarter-page on the much smaller resort of Domburg, on the distant, delta island of Walcheren, in the extreme south-west of the country. The guide already observes that it was “cheaper than Scheveningen” and yet it offered two ‘grand’ hotels and several pensions. The guide also describes other services that visiting artists might have found useful including the hiring of wagons and describes the picturesque places to visit in the neighbourhood, namely Veere and Westkapelle. It notes the easy accessibility of Domburg “by omnibus” from the historic city of Middelburg, where the mainline railway station was to be found. This degree of practical information published in pocket-sized editions was common and useful to all first-time travellers. However, it can be seen that personal recommendation was still the best advertisement amongst the artistic fraternity, especially when backed up by articles in the new art magazines and exhibition works. Domburg, in fact, had already been attracting painters for decades,\textsuperscript{718} but not in any significant numbers until the arrival of Jan Toorop in 1898,\textsuperscript{719} who was approaching the peak of his fame as one of The Netherlands leading avant-garde artists.

The relationship between Domburg’s hotels and its artists’ colony offers a number of interesting anomalies. It was not, on the whole, very encouraging. It was perhaps the most

\textsuperscript{715} Stott, 1998, pp. 70-74.  
\textsuperscript{716} Stott, 1998, p. 68.  
\textsuperscript{718} Exh. Cat. Antwerp, 1873. This salon exhibition included paintings by F.W. Meyer, Souvenir de Domburg, nr. 718; and F.A. Lamoriniere, Domburg, nr. 609.  
\textsuperscript{719} Vloten, 1994, p. 15. When Toorop arrived in 1898 he first lodged at the Badhotel. He soon made friends with a retired general, Johan Drabbe (1836-1916) and his family, who had lived on Weststraat since 1895.
unlikely artists’ village along the entire coastline, having little in the way of outstanding physical features, neither was it architecturally outstanding nor did it offer cheap lodgings. The sole business of Domburg was tourism. It was not a farming or fishing village and possessed no harbour or jetty. The resort’s charms lay with its peaceful, leisured gentility, set in a cluster of small-scale natural, but not excessively wild, physical attractions, with rolling sand-dunes and safe sea-bathing. Toorop’s initial visit may have had more to do with his health, as was many of the resort’s clientele, but his immediate friendship with a retired resident, General Johan Drabbe, and his artistic daughter, Mies, soon generated a broader interest in the whole area of Walcheren. Toorop and his wife usually lodged at the grander hotels.\footnote{Domburgsch Badnieuws recorded the arrivals of the more prominent guests, including Toorop and his wife Annie Hall, who usually lodged at the Badhotel or the Strand Hotel.} He could afford to, as he was a well-established artist and married into a relatively wealthy family. He fits in with the charismatic central figure so often associated with artists’ colonies in the minds of the general public and under normal conditions his home would have been the magnet for others. When he lived at Katwijk, his studio was one of the collecting places for art students and enthusiasts. However, in Domburg he had neither villa nor studio, although it did not stop him inviting friends to this coast. One of these early arrivals was the American James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), who passed by in 1900 and lodged at the Pension Duinoord, which, as the name implies, lay right in amongst the sand-dunes.\footnote{Toorop and Whistler were friends, having met in London and, possibly, Brussels where both exhibited under the organisation of the group Les Vingt. Other members, who also came or exhibited at Domburg include Thèodore van Rijsselberge, William Degouve de Nuncques and the Le Fauconniers.} Another old friend was the Belgian Theo van Rijsselbergh, who chose instead to lodge in the nearby, picturesque, harbour-village of Veere, in 1906, 1907 and during the war years.

Domburg was a modest yet well-organised little resort, which had existed since 1834, the year the first bathing wagons appeared. By 1900, typically, it printed its own newspaper, the Dombursch Badnieuws, which recorded the comings and goings of its more important clientele. No hotelier seems to have been interested enough to offer sustained help to local artists, to visiting artists or the more glamorous friends of Toorop. As a consequence the artists were dispersed across many neighbouring villages, such as Veere, Zoutelande and in the historic town of Middelburg, not far away. This indicates that artists’ colonies did form without the assistance of village innkeepers, but only in special circumstances where there is continued enthusiasm and there are alternative lodging possibilities.

There was, frustratingly, no sympathetic proprietor, guest-house owner, bar-keeper or hotel management to act as host, club-house, art gallery or social centre.\footnote{The grand Badhotel, founded 1866, seems to have had at least one exhibition of local paintings before the group was establishment with its own building, and in 1908, it had a small show of work by Mies Elout-Drabbe (1875-1956), who was by then married to Paul Elout (1873-1956), resort director since 1903.} When Piet Mondriaan, the fast-rising star of the avant-garde, first visited Domburg, in 1908, together with his colleague Kees Spoor, they were both near poverty and found the cheapest accommodation in an un-named farmhouse outside the village,\footnote{Seuphor, 1956, p. 76.} yet they most often lodged at the old guest-house, the Pension Schuttershof. In other years, he is also known to have lodged elsewhere, at the Strand Hotel, Pension Klein Duinoord and the even smaller Pension Wisse, on Oosterstraat. However, when the Great War broke out in 1914 and all accommodation was at a premium in the village, because of the flood of refugees and injured, he, Mondriaan, stayed with resident artist
friends, Mies Elout-Drabbe and her husband Paul. Unlike regular coastal fishing villages, namely St. Ives, Newlyn and eventually Skagen, there was little or no studio space available in Domburg.

Mies Elout-Drabbe, being a resident and wife of the resort’s manager, had the time and opportunity to find a studio. It acted as a sort of meeting place for the artists, for a while at least, but it was too small and inconvenient for long term use. The main Domburg resident to make a difference to the artists’ community was the heiress Marie Tak van Poortvliet (1871-1936). When she first arrived, she stayed at the largest hotel, the Badpaviljoen, the first of which was constructed in 1837 but after 1889 it was greatly enlarged to include elegantly lounges, concert rooms, glassed terraces, a billiard hall and restaurants. Von Poortvliet lodged here while her own villa, Loverendale, was being built. She and her companion, the painter Jacoba van Heemskerck, constructed a studio in its grounds, which, for a while at least, acted as another meeting place for their circle of modern artists. Overall, this general lack of suitable lodgings hampered the group’s firm foundation. Examination of the Domburg artists’ exhibition catalogues, over the ten year period, reveals the artists’ were scattered locally, including: Middleburg (W.J. Schütz and Jan Heyse); Zoutelande (G. Bergsma and Ferdinand Hart Nibbrig) and Veere, to the east (Vaarzon Morel and Lucie van Dam van Isselt).

Veere, just nine kilometres away from Domburg around the coast, could have served as another interesting rival village artists’ colony, for it had long attracted painters because of its unusual architectural compilation. Visitors mostly lodged in private houses, before 1900, but soon a small hotel opened, which was set into the medieval, stone, bastion ramparts. It was called Schotsche Huis and began to receive much artistic attention because of its peculiar atmosphere, including mentions in art magazines, one of which, in 1905, called it “een Eldorado voor schilders.” Veere’s stone and brick architecture is dominated by a beautiful Gothic church and medieval stadhuis, in what by 1897 is called “an ancient and decayed town.” Although artists are known to have returned and a few gave paintings as decoration, and even a few artist-refugees stayed here for the duration of World War I, such as Rijsselberghe and the Le Fauconniers, no close affinity developed between the painters and the proprietors, possibly because tourism was guaranteed to such picturesque places. The main contribution hotels made

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724 Joosten & Welsh, 1998, p. 106, quotes from Mies Elout-Drabbes memoirs “he was so engrossed in his work that he was completely unaware of the Belgian refugees who flooded the isle of Walcheren and caused a shortage of accommodation.”

725 The 1911 Domburg Catalogus was subtitled: Tentoonstelling van Schilderijen en Teekeningen van Walcheren Schilders. The Catalogus for 1912 names 15 artists, 6 of whom lodged in outlying villages. The 1917 Catalogus shows only 4 of the 20 painters living in Domburg.


727 Several small guests’ books from Schotsche Huis, Veere, dating from 1902, are in the Zeeuws Documentatiecentrum and already show the names of many foreign artists from across Europe and as far away as North America.

728 Visser, 1905, pp. 25-34. mentions English, German and Belgian artist visitors, incuding two from as far away as Australia, but none are named.

729 Baedeker, 1897, p. 251.
to the artists’ colony at Domburg was not, therefore, primarily for lodging painters or showing their works but in providing potential cultured and rich patrons. Lists of visitors were published in the resort’s local newspaper, the *Domburgsch Badnieuws*, which testifies to the tourists’ international provenance, from the Americas, Asia and Africa. The lack of any sustained interest by Walcheren hoteliers, from Zoutelande to Veere, forced Toorop, Poortvliet and the local artists to organise their own venue, for meeting and exhibitions, which collectively resulted in their own fashionable building.

**Americans abroad**

The large number of American art students in Europe, even before the turn of the century, ensured that the dollar was an influence wherever and whenever they gathered, including artists’ colony hotels. They were youthful, adventurous and enthusiastic. In the early 1860s there were relatively few Americans in Paris, but, by 1910, Montparnasse alone is said to have housed 5,000 American painters. French villages seem to have attracted them early on: Barbizon in the 1850s and 1860s, then, in the 1880s, they were amongst the pioneers of Pont-Aven and Concarneau. This situation seems to have peaked at Giverny, where the artists’ community was overwhelmingly American. The main hotel, which grew up because of their presence, persistence and insistence, registered almost 700 Americans in its first twelve years, to the exclusion, especially after the first few years, of almost all other nationalities. This major transatlantic migration has only now begun to attract the proper attention it deserves by art historians, such as David Sellin and Annette Stott, yet these artists contributed much to the healthy social atmosphere in these villages and to the development of favourite hotels.

Where nineteenth century American art students began to focus their attention north of the Alps, away from the Mediterranean lands, they did so in cities with extensive and historic art collections, such as Munich, Paris, London and Amsterdam. Language was one deciding factor in their choice of academic training, often related to their own family ancestry. Therefore, English speakers tended to move to London and then explored the British rural artists’ communities. German-Americans aimed for Munich and Düsseldorf, at least before 1870s. However, the overall shift in modern art education was undoubtedly to Paris. American art students are useful indicators of the overall changing tastes, partly as they viewed Europe in their own detached manner, partly as they were used to mobility, including lodging in hotels, and they tended to be wealthier than

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731 Sellin, 1982, p. 69. Angeline Baudy was reluctant to take in the first group of art students in her café, tradition has it, but the five Americans stayed. They were Theodore Robinson, amongst the first names in the hotel register; Theodore Wendel, Willard Metcalf and Dawson Watson; and Theodore Butlin, who married Monet’s step-daughter, Suzanne Hochedé, in 1892 and lived on in the village for the rest of his life. The Baudy Hotel guest-book starts in June 1877 and continues until June 1899. The last entry, nr. 696 André Meril, was a journalist.
most of their European counterparts. J.M. Whistler is not untypical, for he was an inveterate traveller. He was painting along the Breton coast as early as 1861,\textsuperscript{733} at Trouville in 1865, with Courbet and Boudin, wintered in St.Ives, 1884-5, and visited Toorop in Domburg in 1900. He was frequently in villages long before the main artistic colonisations.\textsuperscript{734}

Language was an official barrier for some foreign art students. For example, restrictive laws were passed concerning French art education, from 1863, which, in effect, banned attendance at the \textit{L'Ecole des Beaux-Arts} to non-French speakers, and also students over the age of 25. As a direct consequence of this legislation, many American art enthusiasts were forced to find alternatives. The American painter Robert Wylie\textsuperscript{735} was one of many who found himself excluded from the academy, so, with his colleagues, went to Brittany, in order to find suitably cheap accommodation rather than return disappointed to Philadelphia. The group started the permanent artists’ colony at Pont-Aven, from 1866, encouraged by their experiences at the \textit{Hôtel des Voyageurs}, including, typically, its generous cuisine. The figure of 37\%, of all artists, has been forwarded as the overall proportion of American artists working in Pont-Aven,\textsuperscript{736} but, the true figures are difficult to assess, even at this initial stage of development. The Philadelphia painter Earl Shinn called that first Anglo-American group the ‘seven original sinners’, but the village boasted at least one more serious rival, as an artists’ hotel, just across down and across the main square, \textit{Pension Gloanec}. It was popular, smaller, cheaper and just as international. By way of contrast, just along the coast, was another early artists’ village, Douarnenez, that started at about the same time, but it prided itself on being exclusively French, and remained so.

The friendship between the Americans and Madame Feutray, the owner of the \textit{Hôtel des Voyageurs}, and subsequently Julia Guillot, the maid who eventually took over that hotel, became legendary and something to emulate elsewhere. The success of the hotel and the pension created a shortage of accommodation in the village and lodgers were often boarded out in private homes, for neither guest-house was large. One friend of Madame Feutray’s was a neighbour, the notary Tanguy, who also took in overspill lodgers. His own friendship with the American lodgers and, in particular, Earl Shinn lead directly to them finding a more-permanent set of buildings for the artists’ colony, in an abandoned manor-house, \textit{Lezaven}, on the edge of the village. Here the colony had its central studios and neutral meeting place. It remained in use by artists for at least another twenty years, for Paul Gauguin, who lodged at the Pension Gloanec, used \textit{Lezaven}, as he and his chums became increasingly dissatisfied with the ever-crowded guest-house, before they found the \textit{Buvette de la Plage}, at Le Pouldu, with its sympathetic proprietress Marie Henry.

A parallel to this development may be drawn with some events in Holland, at Egmond-aan-zee, where an artists’ colony started in 1883-4, with the arrival of two Americans, George Hitchcock (1850-1913) and Garibaldi Melchers (1860-1932). They had come to the coast after training in Düsseldorf and after experiencing several French artists’ colonies. Egmond was a quiet, small, traditional, fishing village set in a gap of the long range of sand-dunes that stretches

\textsuperscript{733} Whistler’s 1861 Breton beach painting first brought him artistic attention. It had a number of titles, including \textit{Seule} (Paris Salon), \textit{Alone in the tide} (London) and \textit{On the coast of Brittany}.

\textsuperscript{734} John Singer Sargent also toured the same coast in the 1870s and went as far as St. Malo, but found the inhabitants unfriendly and the hotels too expensive. Alexander Stanhope Forbes followed Sargent’s example by lodging at the Hotel Métayer in Cancale but also found the village unappealing. Forbes complained of playing too much billiards inside because of the inclement weather. Neither of them returned.

\textsuperscript{735} Robert Wylie (1839-1877) was born on the Isle of Wight, England. His family moved to the USA, c.1850.

\textsuperscript{736} Lübbren, 2001, p. 172.
the entire length of the North Sea coast of Holland, North and South (22:5). It was a little further away from the cities than Scheveningen and Katwijk, and consequently slower to develop an economic strategy to counter the steady decline of its fishing economy. It had one hotel, the Zeerust. There must have been some regular holiday-makers, for a VVV office was opened in 1895, two years before Katwijk’s own tourist agency. By 1903 there were four small hotels, including the Hotel Zeezicht and another owned by a local entrepreneur J. Kraakman, both of which offered their artist lodgers extra studio space.\(^\text{737}\)

Egmond held much potential for the *plein-air* painters and a wave of approximately twenty more artists arrived, mostly Americans, who clustered around the young talent Melchers, as he already had a degree of success, with an honourable mention, at the Paris Salon of 1886. The *Zeerust Hotel* seems to have been particularly friendly and became the social centre for the painters, who gave a few pictures and decorated a pair of its doors, now in Egmond’s municipal museum. The village was split into three parts, each in a slightly different geographical setting, Egmond-aan-zee, -aan Hoef and –Binnen. After another minor success with his painting, *In Holland*, again at the Paris Salon, in 1887, they decided to move inland and acquired a house, Schuylenburg, at Egmond-aan-Hoef and opened an art school. Another American artist, Corinne Mackall also bought a house there. In fact, almost half of this artists’ community were women, mostly American art students, including Letta Crapo-Smith, who also lodged in Hotel Spaander, in the 1890s. Hitchcock and Melchers opened an art school in Schuylenburg. This attracted mostly young, enthusiastic, American, women art students, with the inevitable result. It lead to the break-up of his marriage and, simultaneously, to him leaving with one of these female students, back to America. The presence of so many American female art students was a feature of many artists’ colonies around 1900, at least in France and Holland, but the pioneers, including other Americans, often found them disruptive. In Giverny, for example, Theodore Butler wrote to his friend, Philip Hale, back in Boston, “Don’t send me no fool bête girl pupils.”\(^\text{738}\) He is both right and wrong to complain, but from a Dutch hotelier’s point of view, these women were certainly welcome. Thirty of the eighty Americans that boarded at Spaander’s Hotel were women, the majority unmarried. One should add another ten women to this figure, to account for wives, chaperones, friends and mothers, such as the W.W. Gilchrists, of Maine, in 1903; Mr and Mrs. Alexander Morgan, in 1899; and the F.R. Greens from Chicago; then the real overall figure for women is closer to 50%, of all the American-Volendam contingent. Interestingly, when one adds this proportion of women artist customers to Mrs Spaander and her seven daughters, plus maids, cooks, etc. it is easy to imagine this hotel, in reality, flowing with femininity, in total contrast to the image of many other artists’ inns, such as Auberge Ganne, which had an atmosphere of cramped, smelly masculinity.

One may see that Americans, as a whole, contributed both directly and indirectly to the healthy conditions under which some artists’ communities grew. It is difficult to image an establishment such as Hotel Baudy without them (21:5). They brought a new enthusiasm, a commercial awareness and a working knowledge of the latest New World advertising methods,

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\(^{737}\) Lannoy & Denneboon, 1964, pp. 141-171.

seen by the number of artist-illustrators amongst their number. Travel writers for many new international culture magazines have already been mentioned, yet other notable American image makers, for Volendam, include New York illustrator Edward Penfield (1866-1925). It was he who coined the phrase ‘Magenta Village’ for Volendam, in his 1907 book *Holland Sketches*, and in many light-hearted, finely illustrated articles for Scribner’s publishing house.739

What is extraordinary, in the study area, is the presence of an invisible yet distinct line, or barrier, north of which American artists seem very reluctant to go. It was not because there was a lack of good accommodation in villages, transport, fascinating genre subjects, customs or landscapes. Yet, this edge ran from Egmond-aan-zee, across North Holland to Enkhuizen and then onto the far bank of the Zuiderzee, at Hattem. Few, if any, American artists are recorded in Friesland, Groningen, or East or North Friesland and on into Denmark. The line is distinct, for just five kilometres north along the sands from Egmond was another artists’ colony, larger and later, but more international. Bergen-aan-zee looked similar to Egmond, offered a wide variety of lodgings, but fewer artists reached there before 1900. It developed as a distinctive, post-impressionist, artists’ ‘school’, largely after World War I. There were approximately eighty painters based here, but not one American.740

Americans formed approximately half of Egmond’s small artists’ community. In Katwijk, 102 Americans are recorded as lodging overnight, out of a total figure 440 foreign artists.741 Lübbren estimates c.40 % of Laren’s artists’ colony was Americans, although some doubt about this arises when studying its early development. However, her estimate of c.30 % of Volendam’s artists’ colony rings true before 1900. It is not difficult to see how important they were for these communities, including the healthy state of all their lodging-houses and hotels. While some conform to the stereotype of penurious art students, others were far from poor, many coming from rich New England families, or, as with Singer Sargent, from a new international and cultured class all of its own, for he was “an American born in Italy [Florence], educated in France, who looks like a German, speaks like an Englishman, and paints like a Spaniard.”742

Examining the situation at Katwijk further one may see a clearer picture of their early contributions. Sixty Americans lodged there before 1900. They are spread fairly evenly amongst the hotels. The largest contingent of them stayed at the old, smart, *Groot Badhotel*, up on the hillside. It was not the cheapest lodging house in the village, but it does reflect the general popularity it had with the other prominent foreign nationalities. There were twenty Americans, twenty-one Germans and thirty-two British artists lodging there. However, of the approximately one hundred Americans, only ten came a second time and only three for a third time.743 Only one seems to have contributed in a major way to the colony, from 1898, and he, Charles Paul Gruppe (1860-1940) was Canadian, becoming an American citizen after 1902. He initially favoured the

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739 Penfield also wrote and illustrated ‘A Christmas at Café Spaander’ in *Scribner’s Magazine*, December, 1902.
740 Klomp, 1943, and Spijk, 1997, lists sixty-three Dutch artists and twenty foreign painters working here, to a greater or lesser extent, but no Americans are listed.
741 Brakel, 1995¹, suggests the number of artists working at Katwijk as 439 Dutch plus 440 foreign painters of whom 104 were American, while Lübbren gives a total of only 517 artists of whom 19% were American. Both are useful indicators. Although the figures should be reduced considerably, for purposes of understanding the early development, so the percentages may be considered indicative rather than accurate. If one accepts Lübbren’s suggestion that the artists’ colony’s heyday existed between 1880-1910 then her calculations show that of 15 nationalities four dominate, almost equally: Americans, British, Germans and Dutch.
742 Starweather, 1924.
743 The year 1900 was chosen as the end of the first stage of what might be called the Katwijk first artists’ colony. Of the sixty or so American artist visitors who worked here prior to 1900 twenty-five came just at the end of this period, 1898-99, judging by their ages they do not appear to be art students in a school grouping.
Hotel du Rhin, then a few stays at a small guest-house owned by Bastiaan Verdoes, before he finally bought a house on Katwijk’s seafront, Villa Nellie, from 1905-09.

American artists did not seem to be interested in the cheapest end of the market, the family logement, but, with the exception of Gruppe, neither did any American settle in Katwijk’s artists’ colony. In Volendam, by contrast, their contribution was more concentrated. Approximately eighty Americans came before 1910 but only eight before 1900. Yet, in that year thirteen lodged at Spaander’s Hotel. Apart from direct financing, there is enough evidence to show that they contributed to much of the social side of the community’s life. They also donated generously to the hotel’s art collection, giving the same amount of art works as, for example, the German artists and three times more than the French lodgers. Generosity towards the proprietors and their families was not the sole prerogative of American artists, but their early and permanent contributions helped broaden and deepen the collective and cumulative cultural atmosphere of these hotels, added to the economy and helped create the right mood of mutuality.

Missed opportunities in Germany:

No outstanding example of a village artists’ hotel may be found along the German North Sea coast, in spite of a few künstlerorte evolving, both on the islands and the mainland. This situation may be regarded as a series of missed opportunities, for the proprietors, the villagers and the artists. Yet, there are examples of artists’ village inns developing elsewhere right across the nation, such as the Pension St. Lukas at Ahrenshoop on the sandy Baltic coast; the Gastwirtes Haase in Willinghausen, Thuringen and perhaps the most famous of all, Hotel Linde on the lake-island of Frauenchiemsee in Upper Bavaria.

Considering the large number of topographical painters active across the entire German countryside, at this time, it is curious that so few recognised the potential of the North Sea coast. In the race to build up holiday and health resorts from around mid-century the natural balance and pace of life changed completely in villages all along the coast. It upset a region that otherwise was unaffected by the huge industrial and socio-economic changes that befell the rest of the nation, for it had remained predominantly a farming economy with a small fisheries element serving the local region.

There seems to have been no significant, long-term, association between painters and particular hoteliers or innkeepers, even though there was a wave of interest by artists. The island of Sylt has one of the longest and largest links with visiting artists. It attracted regional topographical painters from the mainland, such as Han Peter Feddersen, the Younger (1848-1941) from Niebull and Hinrich Wrage (1843-1912) from Bramstadt, and at least one talented,

744 Analysis of Hotel Spaander’s huge art collection, well in excess of 1,000 pictures, shows that only approximately 400 of these have a known provenance and donor’s name today, unfortunately.
modern genre portraitist, Jacob Alberts (1860-1941).\textsuperscript{745} Typically, they all had to leave the region to advance their training and all chose the progressive Düsseldorf Art Academy, yet they all continued to draw upon their childhood homeland. In his recent book on the painters of Sylt, Ulrich Schulte-Wülwer begins by highlighting certain major visiting artists.\textsuperscript{746} He includes the well-travelled Eugen Dücker (1841-1916), who is associated with both Ekensund and Rügen-Hiddensee artists’ colonies on the Baltic coast. He was most influential for teaching \textit{plein-air} painting at Düsseldorf Academy, where he was a professor from 1872. He and his students swelled visitor numbers across a broad swathe of coastal villages from Katwijk to Sylt, along the North Sea coast, and from Nidden and Ahrenshoop, on the Baltic Sea. Another influential professor was Eugen Bracht (1842-1921), who was born in Switzerland, partly-trained in Düsseldorf and taught at Karlsruhe Art Academy, before becoming a professor in Berlin. His association with the island lasted from 1880 to c.1910, and he was responsible for enticing many other Berlin artists to Sylt.\textsuperscript{747} They show how accessible this far corner of the country was and how it sustained their interest, but they did not come to lodge in its new resorts on the sands, Westerland and Wenningstadt. They took advantage of what tourism brought to the island, such as improved transport, but when they came they wanted a quiet retreat.

Nowhere is the link between resort development and the building of the national railway network so clear as in Germany. The hotel boom of the island of Sylt is a good example of this development. It attracted the greatest number of artists, but it also had the largest crowds of tourists.\textsuperscript{748} The western or outer beach of Sylt is a straight 15 kilometres of sand, bordered by dunes and high sandy cliffs. Occasional tourists came to North Friesland before 1858, but accessibility was poor to the islands. One ferry left from a small sluice-harbour on the mainland, Höyer, but the market-town of Husum, further to the south, lay at the end of a deep tidal channel and this location became more important as a consequence of its main-line railway terminal, completed from Hamburg in 1854.\textsuperscript{749} By 1880, the Baedeker travel guide required pages of information on Sylt and its new central resort, Westerland, officially opened in 1857. There were seven named hotels and a long list of ancillary guest-houses and services, such as doctors, post and telegraph offices, life-guards, many boardwalks through the dunes and even a \textit{"conversations-haus"}, built in 1878.\textsuperscript{750} Westerland is located midway along the west coast of the island, but for many decades it must have resembled a huge building-site, typically showing little or no sensitivity to indigenous regional architecture. As with many Prussian resorts it had an air of regimentation and formally-structured recreation, not qualities conducive to free-thinking artists. Wrage and Feddersen, both of whom visited Sylt many times from the early 1870s, never painted near Westerland. One hardly sees a painting of it prior to 1920. They focused instead on

\textsuperscript{745} Professor Jacob Alberts taught portrait painting to Paula Becker in Berlin and may well have promoted the North Friesland islands as a sketching ground, for she and her husband had one memorable holiday on Amrum. She also became friends with Émile Nolde in Paris in 1900, who was born just a few kilometers inland from Höyer and settled near Niebüll.

\textsuperscript{746} Shulte-Wülwer, 1996, p. 5

\textsuperscript{747} Shulte-Wülwer, 1996, p. 80, cites over a dozen Berlin-based painters, including Hans Hartig, Richard Kaiser and Ernst Kolbe.

\textsuperscript{748} Shulte-Wülwer, 1996, p. 8. Based on the ‘\textit{kurlisten von Westerland}’, or resort register, an estimated figure of 800 painters prior to the turn of the century seems likely, although the period definition includes drawing teachers and ‘\textit{dekorationsmaler}’, a broad term that can include house painters, sign painters and other workers in the applied arts.

\textsuperscript{749} The King Friedrich VII rail line was connected to Husum in 1854. The architect for Husum’s ‘\textit{Englische Bahnhof}’ was the Dane Gottlieb Bindesbøll. Cf. Hansen’s \textit{Danish Artists in Rome}, 1837, and Hotel Brøndum.

\textsuperscript{750} Baedeker, 1880, pp. 101-102. The hotel names often reflect the provenance of the guests and their political affiliations: Hotel Royal, Deutch Kaiser, Strand, Stadt Hamburg, Germania, Westerhalle and Christianshöhe.
the quiet parts of the island, with its remaining dune pastures, salt marshes and thatched settlements. Despite working in amongst the old villages of Rantum, Morsum, Kietum and List, both in summer and winter, Feddersen, developed no friendships with any innkeepers or hotel proprietors, nor is it documented, by his recent biographer Dorothee Bieske, that he did so anywhere on the mainland, where he lived for most of his life.\textsuperscript{751}

The rapid growth of mass-tourism was an anathema to the slow cultivation of mutual respect so essential between village innkeeper and painter. Anton von Werner, patriot, traditionalist and director of the Berlin Academy from 1875, visited Sylt’s resorts on a number of occasions from 1882. He made detailed sketches of the crowded beach-life, documenting the period’s formalities, even on holiday, but no serious paintings of the resort seems to have resulted from these ventures. The large-scale resort development at Westerland left the other villages relatively intact, but still subject to sight-seeing outings, which on Sylt meant that villages, such as Kietum and Kampen, found themselves catering to this demand, by creating ornamental parks, beer-gardens and even museums at this very early stage, which tended to taint the search, by artists, for unspoilt and authentic villages. Visiting painters tended to settle in these outlying villages, what Schulte-Wülwer calls “künstlertorf,”\textsuperscript{752} but these were largely retreats, refuges from the crowds rather than social centres. None of the artists seems to have cultivated this possibility in any of the proprietors and the hoteliers themselves had few famous German models nearby on which to draw. This was not for lack of experience of successful artists’ inns, for besides Ducker, Walter Leistikows (1865-1908), amongst others, had personal knowledge of their usefulness as social centres for artists.\textsuperscript{753}

Sylt is part of a group of three North Frisian Islands, with Amrum and Föhr. Each one has a different character, which can also be extended to include their hotels and inns, although they are usually placed together as an artists’ community.\textsuperscript{754} The smallest island, Amrum, was the least inhabited, least developed, most primitive and most difficult to get to. When Paula and Otto Modersohn-Becker, from Worpswede, came there in 1903, they found no settled artists’ community, no sympathetic innkeeper and so kept to themselves in their holiday cottage. Many more artists and tourists went to Föhr and in particular to Wyk, its main village and port. There was a genteel atmosphere to its seafront, with a long line of guest-houses, hotels, parks and bandstands, more resembling a suburb or a health spa than a fishing village. Its proprietors already had a steady and secure clientele in the bourgeoisie of Hamburg and seemed to have little interest in painters, although parts of Föhr that were more traditional than modern attracted attention from genre artists, such as C.C. Magnussen (1821-96) and O.H. Engel (1866-1949).

In contrast to countries such as Holland and Denmark, Germany is a large land-mass with a small coastline. Yet, away from the northern cities of Hamburg and Bremen, and to a lesser extent the new naval port of Wilhelmshaven, the coast was little visited for pleasure, in part because of poor communications. The opening up of a rail link to Husum changed the North Frisian Islands. However, west of the River Elbe, there were few pockets of artistic interest: at Cuxhaven, the busy port at the mouth of the Elbe, and at Emden, in the far west, but little in between. Again, no innkeepers seemed to have struck up sustained friendships with any of the visiting artists. Emden, in East Friesland, remained unspoilt in spite of its new rail terminal, with its massive medieval rathaus next to its historic delft, and its tall windmills above the tightly-
packed warehouses and shops of the town (24:5). Artists were attracted here from afar, such as Julian Klein von Diepold (1868-1947) from Dortmund, Friedrich Kallmorgen (1856-1924) from Altona-Hamburg and Ernst Petrich (1878-1964) from Gavenhorst-Westphalia. The vast majority of artists active across the region, during this period, remained local in origin and scope. Artists ventured to the islands, such as Borkum, Juist and especially Norderney, but no community gathered until after 1919, such as the one around Hans Trimborn (1891-1979), and no hotel or inn saw the cultural potential of encouraging their custom.

Before examining the artists’ colony at Worpswede, it is useful to describe here one unique coastal sea-dyke settlement peculiar to East Friesland, which often did incorporate a community lodging-house in its building plan. The siel are circular sluice-harbours around which a fishing village formed, such as Neuharlingersiel, Greetsiel and Carolinsiel. They eventually attracted artists, such as Ludwig Kittel (1869-1946) and Alfred Depser (1899-1975), who formed a broad community, but, they lacked the important single social centre of a village inn. One talented artists from this region, Georg Hering, is of note for he actively participate in an artists’ colony, from 1910, however, it was no in his homeland, but in Volendam. He was encouraged to travel by his friend, the Hamburg painter, Hans von Bartels (1856-1913), who had a long association with Katwijk, amongst other rural, Dutch, artists’ colonies.

Even in the case of Wilhelmine Germany’s supreme example of a village artists’ colony, at Worpswede, the innkeeper seems to have been typically ambivalent to the artistic pioneers. When artist Fritz Mackensen first arrived in Worpswede, in the summer of 1883, it was by invitation from an art student, Mimi Stolte, whose family home was in the village, but subsequently he and his colleagues lodged at the Stadt Bremen (25:5), a typical, solid, upright example of a proper Teutonic hotel. The proprietor must have shown a degree of sympathy for these art students from the far south, for he allowed them to share a room, and costs. Mackensen, Otto Modersohn and Hans am Ende, occasionally joined by Fritz Overbeck, lodged at the hotel sporadically for a decade, often squeezing into one bedroom to save money, a common response of poor artists. That seems to be as far as the landlord’s friendship developed with these men, for there is little mention of this inn in the extensive literature on the colony. There was no joyful painting collection given to the hotel, no celebrations and no light-hearted, painted decoration of its interior, common to most artists’ colonies at that time.

The Stadt Bremen held the hotel monopoly in this moorland-farming village and it is surprising that there was a guest-house at all, given that it was not really accessible, not on a main road and the local Bremenvorde eisenbahn railway did not reach the village until after the artists’ pioneering stage was over, c.1910.755 The village lays just above the peat-moors, snug under the only hill in the area, the 51 m. high Weyerberg. The railway ran north on the far side of the moor, so that any visitors from Bremen required a fairly lengthy wagon ride. Yet, there were pleasure-seekers attracted by this modest beauty-spot.

755 Interestingly, Vogeler helped design the railway stations on this line. K. Erling in Rödiger-Diruf, 1998, p. 93, states Worpswede had only one church, one grocer’s shop and one inn at the time of artistic discovery in the 1880s.
By the time Paula Becker arrived in 1897, the six pioneers were each in their own residences, each working separately in their own studios. It took another outside force to provide the colony with some sort of unifying force. When, in 1902, Heinrich Vogeler, gained a sizeable inheritance, he quickly designed and built the Villa Barkenhof, on the south side of the Weyerberg. This provided the group with a social centre the inn should have offered, for their dances and musical evenings. The Worpswede experience also indicates why such a centre is better on neutral territory and hosted by an ‘outsider’, for when a split inevitably occurred amongst the members of the group only those friends of Vogeler tended to gather and participate in events at the Barkenhoff, thus acting to further polarise opinions. This happened, memorably, over an incident concerning Paula posing nude for her husband. The Modersohn-Beckers, the Rilkes and the Vogelers formed one faction, while the opposition gathered around Mackensen, Vinnen and Am Ende, who became increasingly reactionary. Good innkeepers were required to settle such matters, as happened elsewhere, but these villagers remained scandalised and were never quite reconciled to the notion of what art was or what artists did.

German artists, by the 1890s, were prepared to cross the whole country to find the right village atmosphere. For example, most of the Worpswede colonists had been based in Düsseldorf and Munich. There were many artists’ communities or colonies formed around the edges of the country, such as Ahrenshoop, Nissen, Hiddensee, Rügen, Ekensund and Amrum-Föhr-Sylt. In the Summer of 1899, Vogeler and two artist friends from Worpswede went one further, one island further north than the Modersohn-Beckers on Amrum, by exploring the island of Rømø, then called Röm, as it was part of the territory gained after the 1864 war over Schleswig-Holstein. However, the conditions on this island were extremely primitive and there were no licensed hotels or guest-houses on the island. The next major island north of Rømø, the last of the Frisian archipelago, is Fanø and it had several old hotels. Hans Olde (1855-1917), who lead a group of Munich based artists to this island, was from nearby Süderau-Holstein. In the summer of 1884 the six arrived and easily found and settled in a hotel overlooking the bay-shore, Nordby Krogaard. Some of the group had experience of Dachau’s old and new artists’ colonies and knew the importance of a good guest-house. In addition, Fritz Stoltenberg (1855-1921) had been to the neighbouring island of Sylt as early as 1874 and took part in the Ekensund artists’ colony, on a fjord just north of his birth place at Kiel. The inn had been established in 1682 and held the monopoly until 1860. Its owner at the time of the arrival of the German artists was Jens Korsholm Borck, who had seen trade slowly rise, just as he could see, across the water, on the mainland, the new town of Esbjerg rise on the horizon. The landlord was welcoming but two

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756 Perry, 1979, p. 16.
757 The sculptor Clara Westhoff (1878-1954) and painter Maria Bock (1867-1956).
758 Arthur Langhammer (1854-1901) a friend of Hans Olde from Lützen, S.-Holstein, was one of the artists to found a revival artists’ colony just north of Munich called the ‘Neu-Dachauer’, in 1894, although he had also played a part in the Ekensund colony, from 1885.
factors inhibited the venture. The first was a lingering general unease on the island as a result of the Schleswig-Holstein war, in which it is known Fannik men fought and died. The second problem was the bad weather. After a fortnight of rain and no real opportunity to work outdoors, they tired of playing cards in the old hotel and one by one the group disbanded.

Lovis Corinth (1858-1925) was the first to leave and went to Paris, fatefully. But, when Fritz Stoltenberg left the hotel, he went north, to Skagen. Here, events unfolded more quickly, for he joined in the fun, was befriended by Kroyer, lodged in the Hotel Brøndum, became part of the family of artists, and photographed the celebrations of Anna and Michael Ancher’s move to their new home together, which, in time, was transformed, by Kroyer, into one of the most iconic paintings, not only of Skagen but, of any rural artists’ colony.

German inspiration and finance was responsible for another resort venture on the island of Fanø, one that seems to have both attracted and repelled artistic endeavour. It was ambitious and sat uneasily on the sands and in the dunes, away from the villages and in total contrast to their traditional atmospheres. Even the name of resort is somewhat controversial, for the developers used the title Fanø Nordseebad in their advertisements, while to the Danes it was the Vesterhavsbad (26:5). Few German artists ever came to this resort either, and the few Danish artists that did work here did so with strong financial motivations. The most prominent Danish artist to be associated with this enterprise, from the beginning, was Holger Drachmann (1846-1908). He is a superb, period example of a bohemian restless spirit, in terms of what he achieved in his works, in his social life and in his travels. He enjoyed both the new-found mobility of the age and staying in luxury hotels. He was regarded “as the national Danish poet par excellence, as he himself did.”

He started his career as a marine painter and was both an early and late pioneer of Skagen as an artists’ colony.

As with a number of other radical Nordic artists, such as the critic Georg Brandes and the painter Edvard Munch, there was a distinct tendency amongst its radicals to spend time in self-imposed exile further south, including stints in modern German cities. Drachmann abandoned his painting career for the even-more precarious one of a poet-writer, after poor sales in art exhibitions around 1874. He became practiced in combining sea travels, grand hotels and finding finances for them from publishers, especially the house of Gyldendahl. He was a skilled self-publicist and was employed by the resort’s management, the German Director Franz Beck and the Austrian banker Sigmund Weisz, to emphasise its attractions to the more Scandinavian, cosmopolitan audience, by enticing over many of his artist friends. For example, he duly wrote to
his old friend, the influential modernist and literary critic Georg Brandes. Brandes did not, in the end, visit the resort but other Copenhagen writers and journalists did. One artist-friend who came, Carl Locher, is interesting for another reason. He came one month after the Kurhotel’s official opening celebrations, in June 1892, and made a series of inconsequential watercolours of the building nestling in the sand-dunes. One of these studies is also of interest for the speed of its reproduction for mass-circulation. It was copied by the engraver, Knud Gamborg, and it appeared, astonishingly quickly, in the following month’s issue, July’s Illustreret Tidende, under the title “Det nye Kurhaus ved Fanøs Nordsobad.”

Drachmann had a reputation for working along the North Sea coast, in Denmark and Germany, and planned a book on the islands, so that it was natural for him to be invited to help publicise this Austro-German resort on Fanø. He first lodged in Nordby, in a captain’s house, but as the grand hotels, Kurhotel and Strandhotel, were both completed, 1892 and 1894, he moved into them, both to be seen and to write about their attractions. Drachmann is regarded as something of a poseur and, judging by the number of surviving sketchbooks, all signed and dated, seemed greatly concerned with his image of being a modern bohemian artiste. This kind of artifice attaches itself easily to painters, all along this coast, who were seduced by the new financial possibilities presented by the commercial resorts.

The last remaining example, of relevance, of a resort’s effect upon an artists’ community, along this German coast, also exemplifies a negative relationship. It was not on the sandy islands but situated in a small fishing village that sat on the edge of a low terminal moraine, on the western side of Jever Bucht, or bay. Some uncertainty rightly surrounds the inclusion of Dangast in any list of German artists’ colonies, with both Gerhard Wietek, as long ago as 1976, and Claus Pese, more recently in 2000, favouring the category ‘künstlerorte,’ as a more fitting definition. Yet, this minor resort did attract artists who were looking to make a more permanent settlement in a place that had meaning for them, and, or, they imbued it with meaning. However, they were already a group, Die Brücke, or part of a group that was beginning to split up. When they first arrived, in 1907, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff (1884-1976) and Erik Heckel (1883-1970) lodged near the railway stop, just three kilometres inland, but they subsequently moved to a guest-house in

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765 Borup, 1968/70, vol.IV, Letter nr.668. 9th. May 1894. Drachmann and Brandes were old school friends but it was a turbulent relationship, which at this time was at a low point, so the lucrative invitation to Brandes may have been timely. It included all expences paid, return, three-day rail trip to Fanø and its most luxurious hotel, “Sigmund Weisz, en Bekendt af mig i Hamborg, Direktør for Nordsøbad Fanø, beder mig indtrængende om at formå Dig at være hans Gæst i de tre Pinsedag fra Khbvs Banegaard og tilbage igen.” Drachmann’s relationship with Weisz was not smooth, with the Drachmann family today still retelling unflattering stories about the manager.

768 Borup, 1968/70, vol. III, May 1892, letter to writer Peter Nansen (1861-1918) and brev 637/NKS 4093.4, plus footnote. Weisz was born in Budapest. The word used was “spidserne” referring to the ‘gentlemen’ of the press in Copenhagen.

769 The Kurhotel opened in May 1892. Locher’s invitation was made for mid-June. Several different watercolours resulted, all in private collections, but photographed by the author. Transport continued to be improved, between Copenhagen and Esbjerg, revealed in many letters, from Locher’s first visit to Fanø in May-June 1882, see letter of 27th June to Jakob Hegel in Den Kongelige Bibliotek and a letter to Peter Nansen, from May 1892, in Sørensen, 1983, vol. II, p. 163.

the fishing village.\(^{771}\) The moors, the farms, a brick factory and the beach itself attracted them. It was not a dazzlingly attractive beach, compared to those on the islands, but it was safe for recreational activities, bathing and both the small, but elegant, *kurhaus* and *kurhotel* were conveniently situated just above the shore-line. Both these prominent buildings feature in works by these artists. The circumstances surrounding the failure of this ‘colony’ are not recorded in detail. There appears to have been no actual confrontation recorded between the hoteliers or managers and the painters, no ‘små skandaler’\(^{772}\) that seemed typically to surround an artist such as Drachmann, but the contrast between the extreme, avant-garde expressionists from Dresden and the small, parochial, conservative resort was never going to be easy. The situation required a go-between, ideally an innkeeper, but none came forward. Although Schmidt-Rottluff was enthusiastic and he managed to enlist the support of some local Oldenburgers, for example, the talented Emma Ritter (1878-1972) the initiative soon petered out through lack of interest on all sides (27:5).

Tourism can be an agent for positive change, but the rush to commercialism witnessed in German resorts corrupted the aspirations of many of the hotel proprietors. These examples well-illustrate the necessity of gentle growth in communities, which allows deeper understanding of what is developing. They show that without the catalyst of a sympathetic and neutral innkeeper the presence of a group of artists in the countryside is not enough to maintain the required social bonding, the continuity or the smoothing out the inevitable wrinkles in the relationship.

**Denmark - The Brøndums and their imitators:**

Undoubtedly, one of the best examples of an artists’ colony, anywhere, is that of Skagen and at the hub of its development, alongside the painters, writers and architects, was the family Brøndum, the first hoteliers in this truly remote village. It is important to emphasise that this village was indeed remote, not only in terms of distance from the nearest town, but also as there was no road to it and no harbour, despite the sea-lanes just off-shore being crowded and constantly busy. The hotel grew up alongside the artists from the very beginning, with whom the Brøndums identified culturally, shared many social aspirations and melded. The process took decades, even after the early arrival of Hans Christian Andersen in 1859, a significant moment in itself, and continued on to the marriage of Anna Brøndum to the resident painter Michael Ancher, in 1880, exactly twenty-one years later. She also provides one of the very few examples of a fine painter coming from a colony’s inn-keeping family. There are some peculiar elements in the rise and history of the Brøndums, yet they also fit the simple character-profile of a typical, if not quite ideal, host family.

There were no major historic precedence for a rural artists’ colony in Denmark and, it therefore follows, no guide-lines for artists’ village innkeepers, from which the Brøndums might model their behaviour or responses. However, a hint of what was to come may be found in a fishing village much closer to Copenhagen, on the north side of the main island of Zeeland. The

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\(^{771}\) Peukert, 1996, pp. 3-5

\(^{772}\) Mentze, 1980, p. 116. Drachmann had a problematic personal life; married three times to progressively younger women, the last, Sophie Elisabeth Lasson (1873-1917), he married in 1903 at Skagen, when she was just twenty-one and he was almost sixty.
village is called Hornbæk and painters began to gather there, from the 1870s. Initially, they were mostly marine painters in search of a new *mise en scene*, for example C.F. Sørensen, Carl Locher and Holger Drachmann, all of whom later went on to Skagen. The talented and gregarious painter Peder Severin Krøyer became curious.\(^773\) Characteristically, it was he, of all the many visiting painters, who befriended the village innkeeper, Mogens Petersen and his family.\(^774\) They do not seem to feature in any of his major compositions of Hornbæk fishermen, that he complete after 1873, but he is known to have made studies of the Petersen family, including sketches, and possibly paintings, of their children. His Hornbæk experiences predate his travels to France, where he learnt of the usefulness to artists of sympathetic village innkeepers. His friendship with the Petersens was, therefore, entirely natural and in character. In France, he then gained direct knowledge of at least three good innkeepers who hosted village artists’ colonies, at Cernay-la-ville, Grez-sur-Loing and Concarneau. None of the core-group of Skagen painters had this degree of cognizance of the varied yet vital role inns played in the social life of a happy and productive, artists’ colony.

There was already an irregular set of artists gathering at Skagen in the early 1880s. Central to this group was the ‘melancholy Bornholmer’ Michael Ancher, who was almost a permanent fixture at the Brøndum’s guest-house, but, it took the arrival of Krøyer, the ‘new Aladdin’, to raise the whole tone of community and bring about its remarkable transformation. He achieved this almost immediately on his first visit, from June 19\(^{th}\) 1882, by befriending the young innkeeper Degn Brøndum (1856-1932) and audaciously included him in a dazzling series of group paintings. To give a fuller account of the Brøndum family, and offer some explanation as to why Degn was in charge of the business while his father was still alive (6:5, 1:1, 31:5), it is necessary to describe some events in the early evolution of the hotel.

Skagen’s development as an artists’ colony has been written about since the first major version of its history by the, then, museum curator, Karl Madsen, in 1910. However, there is still much that has not been revealed fully, particularly the delicate relationships between the artists and villagers, and especially the position at the hub of all this of the Brøndum family. Lise Svandholm’s recent book goes a long way in this, by describing the sometimes strange nature of the many Brøndum women (30:5), including the mother’s religious fanaticism and why her children, with the single exception of Anna, all remained unmarried.\(^775\) Ane Hedvig Møller’s family were millers and proudly operated the first more-sophisticated ‘*hollandske vindmølle*’ in the region. In 1847 she married Eric Brøndum (1820-90), after he had been invited there, from Copenhagen, to run the shop end of the family business.\(^776\) It was more than a grocery shop and adapted to circumstances by offering rooms to the very few visitors to this outpost. It was the first *Gæstgiveri* in Skagen (29:5), but, as with any new successful enterprise, there were soon imitators and rivalries, namely with Lars Holst and *købmand* Winthers. The number of artist-

\(^{773}\) There are eleven paintings by Krøyer of Hornbæk in the Hirschsprung collection, including two purchased as early as 1875: *Little Girl from Hornbæk*, 1875, oil on carton (original number HCC.126) and the larger oil-painting 91 x 118.7 cm. *Smithy at Hornbæk*, 1875, and the remainder are of the village’s fishermen and women, including *Little Girl*, 1875, that may well be the innkeeper’s young daughter.

\(^{774}\) Metzer, 1980, p. 32.

\(^{775}\) Svandholm, 2001, p. 154.

\(^{776}\) The grocery had been started by Ane’s brother Christian Sørensen M. and it was the house where she grew up. The 1845 census registers Erik Brøndum as a ‘*forretningsdrivend*’ or shopkeeper, loosely a businessman.
lodgers grew slowly and there was growing competition for these small and ‘Spartan’ rooms. The next step came in 1858 when a license to organise a guest-house became possible. It was not granted to Eric Brøndum until the following year, 17\textsuperscript{th} March 1859, when his papers, borgerskab, were fully recognised. What followed is so extraordinary that it requires some elaboration, although its consequences were not the ones planned.\textsuperscript{777}

The exact sequence of events and some important details are usually omitted from the traditional discourse on Skagen and its painters.

Despite the absence of tourists to Skagen it suddenly managed to attract, on 17\textsuperscript{th} August 1859, the country’s most famous literary figure, Hans Christian Andersen, just few months after official permission for a guest-house was granted. He immediately championed the character of both the village and the innkeeper, in print. If one wanted to advertise a new business then such an occurrence was a superb promotional device, yet it is difficult to know if it was planned.

Although the story of H.C. Andersen coming to Skagen is mentioned in every account of the colony’s development, no one seems to have examined the family connections that existed between him and the Brøndums.\textsuperscript{778} Andersen lodged at Eric Brøndum’s guest-house despite the repeated efforts of the byfoged, or village official, Hr. Hoffmeyer, who thought the priest’s house much befitting such a celebrity. Prior arrangements had been made at the praestgaard, with Pastor Bruun, but no letter has emerged to explain how the mayor knew beforehand of Andersen’s imminent arrival. H.C. Andersen’s link to Skagen was twofold, through his friendship with the artist Martinus Rørbye, the first professional painter to come to the village, and directly through the family Brøndum.\textsuperscript{779}

Rørbye was the first artist to visit Skagen, in 1833, but only after practical assistance from his brother, who used his official position to help secure a room to lodge in, at a private house, as there was no guest-house of any kind in the village at that time. Subsequently, Rørbye’s Skagen paintings were shown in the Copenhagen Art Academy exhibitions which Andersen would undoubtedly have visited, not only because as the leading cultural figure of the day he was expected to, but also as he was keenly interested in art and produced some fascinating works himself. The connection between H.C. Andersen and the Rørbyes was further accentuated in 1851 as Ferdinand Rørbye married Hedevig Henne. Her mother, Johanne Henne

\textsuperscript{777} The delays and heightened excitement of H.C. Andersen’s visit affected Mrs Brøndum to such an extent that it brought forward the birth of their baby, Anna, during the night.

\textsuperscript{778} Andersen had tentatively planned to travel to Italy in 1859, but because of rumours of military unrest between Italy and Austria, he cancelled it. However, his correspondence with fellow-writer B.S. Ingemann, May 1\textsuperscript{st} and 30\textsuperscript{th} July, reveals he had already planned a visit to northern Jylland, its west coast and, specifically, to Skagen.

\textsuperscript{779} Nygaard, 1930: M. Rørbye and H.C. Andersen first met onboard the steamship ‘Dania’ on June 1\textsuperscript{st} 1830 as it sailed from Copenhagen to Aarhus, both about to experience Jutland for the first time. They were both house-guests on the Tjele Estate, near Viborg, from where Rørbye left five days later to see his brother, Ferdinand, who was an official in Frederikshavn, the most northerly port in Jutland. Rørbye’s diary records that he climbed a mound-barrow near the shore in order to see Skagen in the distance, which was obscured by mist. Hartmann, 1949. (RkIV:12) also states that Rørbye saw a small two-masted fishing-boat, said to be from Skagen, which he sketched, as it sailed towards Frederikshavn. This sketch, therefore, is possibly the first artistic artifact of everyday life from Skagen.
née Hornemann was related to Henriette Collin née Hornemann, wife of Andersen’s mentor and adopted father, Jonas Collin. Andersen’s diary for August 1859 mentions this relationship, although he consistently mis-spells ‘Rørby.’ It also reveals a second connection to Skagen through the family name of Scavenius, itself a Latin form of Skagbo, Danish slang for a person from that village. There were two branches of the merchant-family Brøndum, though Andersen again consistently records it as ‘Brønnum’ in his diary and also in later publications. Innkeeper Eric Andersen Brøndum represents the family that stayed on in the village while Jacob Brøndum Scavenius left and became extremely rich through trade with the Far East. His son, of the same name, bought a huge estate at Basnæs, near Skelskør, south-west Sjælland, in 1838. Here, H.C. Andersen was a frequent visitor and house-guest of Jacob’s widow Henriette Scavenius. It was also here, at Basnæs, that Andersen spent the three weeks prior to his first visit to Skagen in 1859.

He also stayed there afterwards, when he wrote at least part of his diary entry and planned his play about Skagen, ‘A Story from the Dunes’, which mentions the inn and the innkeeper. By lodging with the Brøndums, Andersen therefore satisfied the sensitivities of many interested parties, though not of Skagen’s byfoged.

There is no direct evidence of any collusion to promote Brøndum’s Gæstgiveri in this manner, but Andersen quickly produced an unusual amount of material on the hotel, the family and the area, which seems apposite. This advertisement for Skagen also included his famous entreaty to artists to come to Skagen in his 1860 Folkekalender. Nowhere else in this survey is such an important contemporary figure, a national and international celebrity, so closely associated with promoting, from the start, a future artists’ village, the hotel and its owner. Dr. Metzger in Domburg had his own sanatorium interests to promote and Rainer Maria Rilke wrote one book about his male chums in Worpswede, but Andersen’s various works called for dramatic and direct action. In reality, Andersen’s promotion had little immediate effect on the numbers of painters visiting Skagen, yet this publicity did capture the mood of the times and went further than most to encourage the exploration to the edges of their own country. His Skagen writings include: a poem, ‘Jutland between two Seas’, that he completed within a few days; stories in Nye Eventyr og Historier and, naturally, Danmarks afkrog, or ‘Denmark’s out-of-the-way Places’. In this, he not only pre-dates much major artistic interest in the provinces and tourism generally in Denmark’s provinces, but also caught and then influenced the changing social attitudes of the period, just as Copenhagen was becoming over-crowded and turning into a sprawling metropolis, Store København.

Within Skagen’s isolated community, Andersen’s visit appears to have had considerably more influence on the fermenting social ambitions of the Brøndum family, particularly on the distaff side. To have rich relations was one thing, but to have one of the most celebrated national figures of the day pop by and stay in their house did much to raise the status of the Brøndums and further distance them from the local fishing community. This fame did not physically change the building or its early decoration, which seems always to have remained spartan. When the first

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780 H.C. Andersen visited Basnæs at least 37 times, lengthy stays, between 1855-72, although the first time was brief, in 1848. He found its minimum of social life and maximum of comfort highly conducive to his writing.
781 H.C. Andersen’s diary ends abruptly on the second day of his short visit to Skagen, and the following page is missing from his records, but his promotion of the hotel and Skagen in print was almost immediate, from his printed diaries and the equally popular Folkekalender, published by Lose & Delbancos, to a number of written pieces in Nye Eventyr og Historier, published on December 9th and one simply called ‘Skagen’ that was read out on the 12th November 1859 at his annual talk for the Studentforeningen in Copenhagen.
782 Andersen, 1980, p. 44, indicates that only Janus la Cour (1837-1900) and Peter Raadsig (1806-82), c.1862, followed H.C. Andesen’s calls to venture beyond Hornbæk for inspiration and visit Skagen.
wave of artists started to congregate at Skagen and lodged at *Brøndums Gaestgivergaard*, over a decade later, the family’s nurtured ambitions and cultural aspirations began to take on a new form. They strongly identified with and befriended these middle-class artists and the lodgings soon became a kind of Nordic cultural shrine, for there were as many Norwegians and Swedes as Danes. This progression eventually culminated in the whole building, complete with its art collection, including the decorated, wood-panelled dining-room, becoming a monumental art museum.

In the summer of 1874, Brøndum’s new, enlarged guesthouse, rebuilt after a major fire, welcomed someone who became be a more-permanent guest, albeit then an unknown young painter, Michael Ancher (1849-1927). Other established artists had preceded him, include Laurids Tuxen (1833-1927), Julius Exner and Holger Drachmann, and the popular writer of peasant life, Meir Aron Goldschmidt (1819-87) in 1865. At Skagen, Ancher found exactly what he was looking for, in terms of subject matter, working environment and lodgings. A simple, half-sunken, hut in the grounds of the hotel had been used as a studio before and now the ‘garden-house’ was to act as his home for almost a decade. He also slowly courted Anna Brøndum (1859-1935), the youngest daughter of the hoteliers, and, after their marriage in 1880, 18th August, this studio then served as their first home together. Anna had actually been born during H.C. Andersen’s historic visit, the excitement of which had brought on her premature birth. There are other instances of painters marrying innkeeper’s daughters, but Anna’s respected place in this artists’ colony was unique for she was both a huge social influence and a more than competent painter.

The Ancher-Brøndums were the foundation on which this artists’ colony developed. Anna Ancher’s special position in all camps, the villagers, the hotel and the artists, greatly assisted the processes of integration. Her father’s health and stature in the family deteriorated and consequently the eldest son, Degn (1856-1932), was recalled in 1877, somewhat reluctantly, as he had been enjoying the cosmopolitan life in Copenhagen. The father, Eric, did not die until 1890, but the Brøndum women appear to have come increasingly into their own, after the fateful fire of 1874. Anna’s mother, Ane, became staunchly religious, blaming her sins for the family’s woes, although it is unclear what these sins were. She was a member of the extreme, evangelical, Home Mission church and was a powerful influence on all her family, especially her four daughters. Michael Ancher’s sombre portrait of the three generations of Brøndum women, in 1903, is an extraordinary statement about their life-force, piety and work-ethics. Recently, Elisabeth Svanholm pointed out, that there is one daughter missing from this group-portrait.

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783 The fire started on January 11th 1874. Eric Brøndum received the substantial sum of 5,000 Rd. from the fire insurance company. An 1874 photograph of the newly rebuilt hotel shows it to be at least fifteen ‘fag’ long, a traditional Jutland architectural measurement loosely based around the number of structural segments that usually included one window each. Redesigned by the architect Plesner, it then gained an upper floor with six small rooms under a typical Skagen tiled roof. This offered better wind and weather protection than the usual Jutland thatch.

784 Goldschmidt, 1865.

785 Svandholm, 2001, p. 44. A letter from Anna Brøndum to her cousin Martha Johansen, 24th May 1878, mentions Degn as being upset at having to leave Copenhagen, where he had been learning the drapery business, just as his father had done.

786 There were six children in all: Agnes (1849-1909); Marie (1851-1945); Hulda (1853-1935); Degn (1856-1932); Anna (1859-1935) and John (1862-1918). The only one to marry was Anna. The Brøndum women portrait, taken from a photograph of the family, excluding all the men and the eldest daughter, took Michael Ancher three years to complete, rather typical of his vacillations.

the talented Agnes, who had been a school teacher but was, at that time, quietly going mad elsewhere in the building, until she finally died in 1909.

Surrounded by so such determined, dour and yet aspirational femininity, Degn Brøndum’s image is traditionally given as withdrawn. Comments, such as “He was not entirely a regular person”\(^{788}\) give weight to the image that he was coldly distant, yet he quietly got on with the responsibilities of running the sizeable and varied business. This family business included the hotel, a grocery, café, stables, wholesalers, a wind-mill and a farm, albeit with his mother, almost permanently ensconced in the kitchen and unmarried sisters permanently on hand. They were a tight-knit family, very ‘hands-on’ organisers, even though they employed maids and helpers, and all were aware of keeping up appearances. Anna’s comment seems redolent of the family social aspirations: “[it was] so agreeable to move away from ordinary fisher folk and to deal with civilised people.”\(^{789}\) There was a kind of “snobberi”\(^{790}\) and rivalry between the Brøndums and certain other clans in the fishing community, especially the entrepreneurs Holst and Winthers. The visiting artists, therefore, complemented the Brøndums’ social aspirations.

Degn genuinely enjoyed the company of the visitors and seems especially to have responded to the effervescent nature of P.S. Krøyer, who painted him several times and even photographed him, more often as the genial gentleman and sporting companion than an insular host.\(^{791}\) This innkeeper, in contrast to Hamdorff and Spaander, joined in most of the colony’s many festive occasions, yet there are no accounts of him helping to organise models, extending credit or selling paintings, as went on with other artists’ hoteliers. His sister Anna and his brother-in-law, Michael, were in the best position to offer the artists any professional advice. The contribution of Degn and all the Brøndum women functioned easily like an extended family, a group of maiden aunts, not entirely unaffected by the mother’s omnipresence in the kitchen, where she was an enthusiastic letter writer. Undaunted, the artists’ community became notorious for its partying and astonishingly, given its location, impressive amounts of champagne were consumed, supplied by the hotel.

With his youngest sister married to perhaps the most stable of the Danish painters and them remaining resident in the neighbourhood, Degn was not now compelled to travel far to enjoy cultured cosmopolitan company, and most of the artists were about the same age as him. Amongst the many Norwegian artist lodgers was the powerful figure of Christian Krohg, who had been visiting since 1879 and was the first to paint Degn’s portrait, in 1883 (28:5). An earlier and more-exotic guest included one young Greek marine painter, Jean Altamura, in 1876. The Austro-British couple, Adrian and Marianne Stokes made a memorable visit in 1885. Others include: an English family, the Gotches, in 1889, from Newlyn; one Frenchman, Emile Frau, in 1879; and, a few Germans, such as Julius Runge in 1879 and Fritz Stoltenberg in 1884, painters,\(^{788}\) Andersen, 1980, p. 41 “var ikke noget ganske almindelighed menneske.”

\(^{789}\) Voss, 1986, p. 114.

\(^{790}\) Andersen, 1980, p. 41.

\(^{791}\) Saabye, 1990, p. 148. Krøyer bought his first camera in 1885 and many of his earliest surviving photographs, until 1890, are of Degn and the Brøndum family.
but most of the artists were Nordic. The hotel register shows, from 1875-1929, approximately one hundred painters, eight sculptors, ten leading writers and, surprisingly, nineteen architects lodging there, along with actors, composers and even royalty, later on. Many artists returned, but the period prior to 1900 was particularly eventful for the artists’ colony and is generally regarded as its first mature stage. Even before the coming of the railway, in 1890, the hotel had been altered from its original spartan facilities, but it was never luxurious or anywhere near as large as the hotels Hamdorff and Spaander. Before the 1874 fire, there was only one main guest-room, plus three very small bedrooms for lodgers and no en suite facilities. Then, after Plesner’s plan, the number of rooms only increased to ten. There was a low, cosy, tap-room with long wooden benches for the fishermen, but now there was a parlour and it was in this room that events soon happened that helped develop the artists’ colony.

P.S. Krøyer’s crucial contributions to the hotel were all a resounding success, for, in all the celebrations that took place there, the dining-room itself became a significant social focal point and his decoration of it was a masterstroke. Nowhere else does the proprietor join in the social round as Degn Brøndum did with his artist guests and much of this has to do with his early friendship with Krøyer, in contrast with his, Degn’s, relationship with his brother-in-law, Michael Ancher. Krøyer’s contribution to the atmosphere of Brøndum’s hotel took three forms: the many celebrations and discussions that habitually took place in the parlour; one group painting of his fellow artist-pioneers, The Artists’ Luncheon, 1883, (31:5) that included Degn; and, the suggestion and decoration of the whole of the hotel’s dining-room (32:5).

Quite what the first arrangement of the dining-room paintings was like is unclear, for photographs of the room exist only after the formal panelling was made, following the design of architect Thorvald Bindesbøll, c.1891. Krøyer’s Artists’ Luncheon and about ten profile-portraits of his colleagues were finished by 1886, but this first depiction of Skagen’s artists was not truly representative, for the Stokeses, Stoltenberg and Julia Stromberg, for example, only ever lodged there one summer each. This kind of panelled display of a hotel’s painting collection is not unknown in other artists’ colonies, such as Hotel Julia in Pont Aven. However, it mostly happened much later, when the hotel art collection was conspicuously large and the proprietors were much more self-conscious of their new social status. Usually, this kind of change, from the haphazard or improvised, to the stylish or mannered, indicates the end of the first pioneering stage of an artists’ colony’s development. It is reasonable to imagine that a collection built up over years is hung up on the hotel walls randomly and in a jumble of pictorial styles and mediums. The art collection acquired by the Hotel Spaander, for example, is of this ‘jumble’ kind and packs the walls of the old building still in their
original positions, known by their use of a system of paired stencilled numbers, on the wall and reverse of each picture.

The arrangement in Brøndum’s dining-room, by contrast, is surprisingly ordered, mannered, neat and symmetrical. One assumes Krøyer approved of this final arrangement, but it is unclear if that format was his original intention, based as it was, on what he had seen in French artists’ hotels. He continued to produce more individual portraits for the uppermost or pelmet-panel. Sequenced profile portraits are also seen in other hotels, such as Spaander’s Hotel in Volendam. Pride of place in the symmetrical arrangement of profile-portraits of the artists went to Degn’s portrait by Krohg, below which is Kroyers Artists’ Luncheon (31:5). This masterpiece shows just the right atmosphere, for it was not only a record of what was, but also a statement about what an artists’ group should be. The handling of the light is refreshing and also promotes the new ‘French’ manner. The scene is set in that same hotel dining-room and Krøyer cleverly includes their host, Degn Brøndum, centrally, amongst the group of Scandinavian artists, who are all identified at the bottom of the canvas. The whole is a warm expression of inclusion, in total contrast, for example, to the patronising attitude to artists’ innkeepers offered by the famous Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson, two portraits of whom Kroyer made at Cernay-la-ville, in the Hôtel Margat.

Brøndum’s Hotel remained the artists’ central club-house, its partying venue and exhibition centre of the colony, even after its leaders settled into cottages. Few of the villagers complained about the guests’ behaviour, as they were often invited into the celebrations. Curiously, criticism arose first amongst other artists when the writer Hendrik Pontoppidan and artist Johan Rohde became scandalised at the degree of drunkenness amongst the artists. Pontoppidan cited one incident, when he went for “an early morning walk and found an open fishing boat with many champagne corks in it, much broken glass, spent matches and an artist’s sketchbook.”792 No-one has fully documented how Degn Brøndum imported so much champagne, their tipple of choice, which is mentioned in many stories and pictured in paintings such as Hip, Hip, Hurra, 1888 (1:1). Journalist Georg Brandes had another opinion: “a group of artists lived or congregated at Brøndums Hotel, a group in which one felt extremely at ease...The entire company sat from morn to evening around the table at Brøndums; constantly eating, drinking, debating, discussing, contradicting, damning. A couple of times a day they got up from the table and went for a swim...”793 In between the parties were more serious debates, organised again by Kroyer and called their aftens-akademi, with Anna Ancher née Brøndum as the patroness, whom he caricatured, also in characteristic profile, on the front of a special diploma or scroll he made and presented to her.

Later, there was another smaller and more quiet inn to the west of Skagen, at Høyen, also called Vesterby, and, in 1899, a large modern hotel, called the Hotel Grenen, was erected out near the sand-spit, built as a consequence of the steady rise of tourism after the rail link was completed. Down the west coast, about fifteen kilometres away, other competition followed, in

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the form of the grand Hotel Kokkholm, in the sandy hamlet of Kandestederne, from as early as 1877. It was a useful alternative for some artists to the busier and noisy Hotel Brøndum in the 80s and 90s. Anna Ancher’s Copenhagen art teacher, Vilhelm Khyn (1819-1903) lodged at Kokkholm’s as did the country’s foremost animal painter N.P. Mols (1859-1921), together with writers such as Henrik Pontoppidan, Johannes Jørgensen and Jakob Knudsen. These outlying hotels acted as useful adjuncts to the sometimes complex social life of the artists’ colony. Hotel Kokkholm, for example, acted as the immediate bolt-hole from Brøndum’s Hotel for Christian Krohg and Oda, his new wife, in a notable scandal concerning the imminent arrival of her vengeful ex-lover and his close friend. As with any large collection of youthful souls set free from urban constraints there were not a few affairs of the heart amongst the colonists. It is hard to imagine anything scandalous happening in the hotel itself, for the pious Ane Brøndum was almost a permanent feature of the kitchen, even receiving royalty there. So that, all in all, Brøndum’s Hotel had an unblemished record and soon became legendary as an establishment in close contact with all the leading Nordic artists of the day.

The well-publicised success of Brøndum’s Hotel and the artists at Skagen was so complete a winning image by the 1890s, that it is difficult to imagine other such artists’ inns, in Denmark, being considered anything more than copies. However, those few other initiatives do offer some interesting additional aspects of the nature of rural artists’ communities and their inns. Elsewhere, most noticeably in Germany and Belgium, mass-tourism destroyed the traditional balance and relationships in much coastal village life, but that degree of investment in resorts was largely absent in Denmark, at that time. The principal reasons for this state of affairs were a combination of a depressed national economy, a poor transport infrastructure and the large distance from the main metropolitan centres in Denmark. Jutland’s market towns primarily serviced local interests. The pattern of these towns is similar to that found along most of the Frisian coast, in that, at regular intervals of approximately 40-50 kilometres, there was a concentrated repetition of services, in what were traditional, old, ports at the head of just-navigable waterways, such as Heide, Husum, Tønder, Ribe, Varde, Ringkøbing, Lemvig and Thisted. Their businesses conformed well to the principles found in the Central-Place Theory, by not only being equidistant but offering a highly-similar package of services, including the number and type of hotel accommodation. Ribe is not untypical in that it has a long history of attracting visitors for trade, government and cultural recreation because of its position as an ecclesiastical, administrative, archival, political and legal headquarters. These market towns were traditionally conservative, markedly self-aware and slow to modernise. Only with the coming of the railways, from the late 1860s, did this situation change, a little. Ribe’s lodging houses found an easy trade in this revival of nostalgic tourism, that included artists, but no proprietor developed a sustained interest in the German and Danish painters that came there.

In between the provincial market-towns towns were villages that usually sported an inn or Kro, often acting as the only non-farming enterprise in the district. After the coming of the railway to western Jutland in 1864 one might have thought that the countryside welcomed the opportunities for a range of developments, which might also stimulate hotels and lodging-houses, but the necessary branch-lines created new conflicts amongst the taciturn farming communities.

794 N.P. Mols (1859-1921) eventually painted all along the coast from Skagen to Tønder. He painted the panel-portrait of Ulrik Pelsner for Hotel Brøndum’s dining-room and at least one landscape painting from nearby, Redningsbåden køres ud, Kandesterner, 1895.
795 Christaller, 1933, his hypothesis is now fully accepted as part of standard theory for modern spatial geography.
796 Ribe is regarded historically as Denmark’s oldest city.
For example, the railway that was planned to go north from the new ‘Klondike’ town of Esbjerg ran into many problems, not so much physical but political. The line missed out the towns of Ringkøbing and Lemvig altogether, for reasons of petty local politics. This line did not bring either economic development or tourism to this section of the coast. One line eventually terminated at a tiny village, Nymindegab, overlooking the exit channel from a lake, Ringkøbing Fjord. There was no harbour or jetty, but travellers wishing to cross the channel and continue along the coastal highway rested at the inn and waited for ferriage. Under-investment, typically, meant that a proper bridge was not completed until after 1900. The area was sparsely populated and had a combination of poor soils and sandy wastelands. Some seasonal attention came from a band of gypsies who arrived to exploit the cod-rich waters off Blåvands Huk. They did not patronise the village inn, Nymindegab Kro, but camped below it on the waterside. Their presence attracted one major artist, Laurits Tuxen, in 1879. He was an active figure in the modern movement in Copenhagen art circles and had already worked at Skagen in 1870, lodging in Brondum’s guest-house. Tuxen was in search of a Danish equivalent of his classic Italian experiences and the gypsy encampment seemed worthy, but no masterpieces resulted. Other roaming artists searching out unspoilt corners of the land followed him to Nymindegab, such as Erik Henningsen (1855-1930) and Frederik Gad Clement (1867-1933). There was no resort development anywhere near the village and the sea was several kilometres away, down-stream. Only after 1900 did a small artists’ community begin to settle, in and around the inn, all topographical painters, such as Oscar Mattieson (1861-1957) and Anna Marie Sandholdt (1872-1942). This situation held much potential for artists, for the landscape was varied, it was peaceful and the inn welcomed any customers. Most of the painters had cottages or huts dotted around the hills. They all seem content with modest achievements, a not untypical, traditional, understated Danish characteristic, so the Nymindegab Kro amassed the only extensive collection of their paintings, and the whole enterprise remained low-key.

A more-brash approach to the development of a village artists’ hotel may be seen to have occurred at the same time further north of Nymindegab. The inn on the cliff-tops at Bovbjerg was bought with the intention of enticing artists to settle and create a cultivated community. This category of hotel was more artificial in its creation and, in spite of great efforts to the contrary, remained rather provincial in character. The enterprise centred, precariously, on the efforts and skills of just one man, Kristen Bjerre (1869-1943). He was a regional painter who nevertheless had trained in the academy and at Tuxen and Krøyer’s new school, 1889-90. He was well aware of Skagen as a successful artists’ colony and wanted the same for his neighbourhood. He grew up in Lemvig, an inland port at the far western end of the long Limfjord, which cuts across the top of north Jutland. In 1891, he bought the old Fjerring Kro, which sat on top of one of the few high-cliffs along this entire coast, Bovbjerg, just ten kilometres away from his hometown, Lemvig. It was not a success, so in 1901 he gambled on building a new hotel, Bovbjerg Badhotel, whose image was to be bolstered by the presence of artists and writer-friends, who duly came from the cities and donated paintings, but who did not settle. The only lasting picture of their experiment in creative sociability is one group-portrait of a few of his friends sitting in a ‘char-à-banc’ in front of the hotel, c.1917. In part, the failure of the whole

797 Poulsen, 1981.
enterprise was due to a number of false pretexts, including poor accessibility and the nature of forced creativity, yet similar ventures were repeated elsewhere, usually by much wealthier businessmen yet equally keen to promote their regional art, such as happened at Faaborg, with Mads Rasmussen, and at Bergen-North Holland, with Piet Boendermaker. 

Apart from Skagen, the area that attracted the most significant and sustained artistic attention, Fanø, also had the greatest number and range of hotels along this coast. Mention has already been made of the modern Austro-German sanatorium-resort on the island’s sandy west coast, in the 1890s. It did not put them off visiting the island though, for the artist community continued to grow and to settle. Fanø’s artists’ community was drawn away from the resort to the two old villages, both of which had old hotels that painters’ frequented. The island was easily accessible by the 1880s, especially Nordby, in the north, by scheduled ferry from Esbjerg. Sønderho, in the south, had a different prospect, accessible only by arduous journeys, one alone the sandy-beach and the other over the mudflats and tidal wetlands, or Vadehavet. Unlike Sønderho, Nordby had a quay, warehouses, the post and telegraph office, shops, a wooden promenade and inns, after 1860, which catered to the growing leisure trade from the mainland, nearby. A steady stream of mostly marine painters found the waterfront irresistible, especially after C.F. Sørensen’s Nordby Harbour, 1848, was a success at the Copenhagen salon the following year. One painter-illustrator was Knud Gamborg (1828-1900) who worked for the new, popular, magazine Illustreret Tidende. One 1881 edition of which includes a full page spread showing seven of his pictures. These illustrated Fanø’s various attractions: traditional sailing boats, picturesque cottages and folk-costumes; and, some new developments: a wooden pavilion atop the sand-dunes, many horse-drawn bathing ‘machines’ and holiday-makers arriving, directly in front of Nordby’s two hotels. They advertise Nordby for all kinds of visitor, including more artists.

At the extreme south of the island of Fanø, well away from the new, grand, formal resort, was the contrasting village of Sønderho. This isolated community became famous because of its unique character and that it continued its folk traditions longer than the rest of the country. Its old inn, next to the harbour, was built around 1722 and was an extensive enterprise, just like Brøndum’s, consisting of a group of buildings that included stables, barns, a dairy, a bakery and a brewery. It was almost inevitable that this self-contained, traditional, maritime community attracted major artistic attention. First and foremost of these was the genre painter Johan Julius Exner (1825-1910). For him, Sønderho had exactly the right combination of elements and in close proximity: distinctive folk costumes, customs and old interiors. These he found easily available on his first visit, in the summer of 1877, all, in fact, in its old inn, where he

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800 Spijk, 1997.
801 Illustreret Tidende, 28th August 1881, nr.1144, p. 598. Interestingly, on the front of the next issue, September 4th., there was a large portrait of P.S. Krøyer by Sigurd Müller, made one year before his first visit to Skagen.
lodged. He returned every summer for the next 30 years and was so closely identified with this hotel (33:5), where he and his family always lodged, that it also became known as ‘Exner’s Kro.’

He was one of the leading Danish genre painters of the age and already had at least six works in the royal collection. He had already visited Skagen, in 1867, long before its artistic colonisation and he had lodged at Brondum’s guest-house, which he sketched, but that journey had terrified him so much he never ventured there again.

Exner was responsible for advertising Sønderho’s pictorial charms, including the inn’s interior, from the outset, seen in his many salon paintings and then, even more widely, in print reproductions. He painted at least four portraits that first year, exhibiting two of them at the Copenhagen salon. In 1878, his main salon piece was a large interior scene set inside the inn, in the front, ground-floor room, the main ‘gæstestue’, which he regularly used as his studio (34:5). Again, a full-page engraving of this picture was made for Illustreret Tidende which appeared in January 1880, further promoting the village, its character and the hotel, to other artists. This situation, with all its many physical attractions and practical amenities to hand, should have started a wave of artistic interest, but he did not generate immediate interest at all, not even in his students at the art academy.

The family Christensen, who owned Sønderho Kro, 1866-1912, were in a poor position by 1900 to reject any new interest by visitors, for this period coincided with a decline in the village’s economy, which was otherwise bound closely with the fortunes of its merchant fleet. The promotional role of the painter Exner, in this instance, is peculiar, for on the one hand he was famous, honoured and entirely scandal-free, but, his reactionary position, on the other hand, was seen by the progressives as die-hard conservatism and, in truth, he was amongst the very last of the ‘old school’, having studied under C.W. Eckersberg in his youth. His close identification with this inn, his territory, may have acted to exclude further Danish inquiry. Many of the artists who arrived on Fanø, in his declining years, were much younger, more modern in their outlook and not National Romantics.

It must be remembered that access to this outpost, Sønderho, was as difficult as Skagen, for when Drachmann rode down the exposed North Sea beach, c.12 kilometres, from his luxury hotel in the north, it was in a wagon not dissimilar to the one Exner took to Skagen. It was every bit as exposed and

803 Barrett, 1993, pp. 45-49.
805 Exner’s Fanø villagers, in the absence of the artist, 1878, was exhibited along with two other Fanø works by him in the Paris World’s Fair that year.
806 Illustreret Tidende, January 4th., nr.1058, p. 159. Printed a major article on the North Sea island of Fanø with engraved-illustrations after works by J.J. Exner.
807 Miljøministeriet Fredningsstyrelsen, 1980, p. 111, from 1866-1898 Anna Catherine Christensen and her brother P. Christensen owned the inn, then from 1898-1912 Balthazar Christensen was the owner.
808 Analysis of one Drachmann sketchbook, now owned by Fanø Kunstmuseum (Tage Sørensen Bequest), shows he lodged in the kurhotel in October 1893 and went to “Sønderho” on the 21st October, probably in the same open wagon he sketched on the 13th October. His diary also mentions the discomfort and the inclement weather.
dangerous. Exner travelled over from Ribe to Sønderho, leeward of the island, across the tidal flats by open sailboat. Many of the other early risk-taking artists were searching north from Germany rather than west from Copenhagen, as exemplified by the group lead by Hans Olde, in 1884, who only got as far as Nordby Kroggaard; similarly, in the 1890s, the North Frisian painter Hans Peter Feddersen paid the first of his few visits; in turn he encouraged August Wilckens, from Haderslev, then part of North Schleswig, who then influenced the Flensburger, Jacob Nöbbe. The last two artists, typically, liked Sønderho so much they stopped lodging at the inn and bought cottages, the simple long-term solution Exner, curiously, avoided for decades. The small early artists’ community did meet but not especially at the inn, and, as with Worpswede, retreated into their own studios. It was not until 1939 that they managed to organise a group exhibition, not in Sonderho Kro, but the village hall. Again, despite possessing so many of the elements that make up an ideal village artists’ colony, the Sønderho painters lacked the will to unite. There was no artistic decoration of the inn, no gifts of paintings or sketches and no bar-room club-house to aid the overall social creativity.

**The attractiveness of inns which were multi-purpose**

The nature of the buildings themselves might offer certain comforts to satisfy the travelling artist, such as a shelter, warmth and prospect of wholesome food, but the personality of the innkeeper, and his family, was of paramount importance in the development of any long term relationship. The proprietors’ prospects were shaped by their own personalities, in the context of their own family histories and those of the village. The delicacy of the situation had to be recognised between the interests of the artists and those of the villagers. The proprietors were often a mixture of romantics and realists, much like the artists themselves, yet few, if any, had any vocational training. More surprisingly, perhaps, is that many of the artists’ hoteliers seemed to be reluctant for this career move, often inheriting the burden of command within the family hierarchy, as the eldest son, as were the cases with Degn Brøndum and Jan Hamdorff. Fewer still seem to have had any great interest in art. Viewed from the perspective of approaching or continued poverty, in the more remote villages, the prospect of managing an inn held many attractions. It was an indoor trade, neither labour-intensive nor life-threatening, in contrast to farming or commercial fishing. Village innkeepers were just as independently-minded, but their calculated risks were usually more sedentary, contemplative and socially observant.

Knowledge of the development of the earliest artists’ communities around rural Ile de France first circulated in the studios of Paris. The earliest written publicity came through articles in magazines and this focused first on the village inns themselves and especially the new phenomenon of their youthful decoration. In Barbizon, for example, the peasants Edmée and François Ganne had started their enterprise as a modest grocery-cum-hotel, in a village that previously offered no trades or services at all, neither a shop, a business, a school nor a chapel. Looking for any financial edge, Mrs. Ganne, having some little experience of a coaching-inn at Chailly, was clever enough to transpose this idea and adapt some room in their house for occasional lodgers. They did not invest much money, but they were patient and waited, over a

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810 Some branches of the Brøndum-Møllers were high-achievers, wealthy millers, farmers, builders, textile merchants, teachers and one member of the family became Denmark’s first political scientist, Johan H. Møller.
811 Fizelière, 1858. This article describes at three artists’ hotels around Fontainebleau, Barbizon, Marlotte and Chailly, but only mentions proprietor Ganne by name.
long decade, yet with growing assurance. Their ambivalence continued during the wave of interest shown in their establishment, as they seem to be relaxed about being hosts and made few rules for their guests, welcoming, no doubt, any change to their situation of grinding poverty. Judging by the amount of graffiti, pictures, trompe-l’œil and decorative friezes the young artists put about their ordinary building, they were also tolerant of high-spirits, noise and riotous assembly, for most of each year. One can add, for most of each day, here, as, not untypically, their bedroom was part of the shop-bar-kitchen-parlour, near the front door, just as Madame Feutray in Pont-Aven and Ane Brøndum in Skagen, squeezed into a downstairs alcove.

The earliest stages of all artists’ colonies consist predominantly of young bachelors. Food and drink were, consequently, in demand. The kitchen was highly important, not necessarily for the fine cuisine, but for their production of large quantities of hearty food, especially, along the coast, for the making of fish soup. Mothers, wives and daughters of the innkeepers, and eventually maids, come into their own here, as no male is ever mentioned in connection with this part of the hotel service. Ane Brøndum, Aaltje and her daughter Alida Spaander are fine examples of women who organised their kitchens well and on a grand scale. The proximity of innkeeper’s wives and, especially, unmarried daughters might be considered a delicate issue but, in reality, the situation resulted in few scandals and these women were so respected amongst the male artists that they were, arguably, more effective than landlords. It is clear that the role of the female side of the families made a highly important contribution to the smooth running of these establishments and assisted in creating a relaxed, home-from-home atmosphere. Examination of the huge art collection belonging to the Hotel Spaander, for example, reveals that the majority of dedications are not to Leendert Spaander but to his wife, and to their daughter, Alida (1881-1952), who finally took over the running of the hotel around 1919.

The nature of painting en plein air means that, in effect, the artists were out working all the day-light hours, often rising early, before day-break, for breakfast. This is well-illustrated in W.L. Metcalf’s 1887 painting “Petit Dejeuner à quatre sous.” It shows the situation at dawn in the Hotel Baudy, Giverny, where four painters are about to embark on a day’s work. The curtains are still drawn and the fug of sleep has not quite evaporated. Cheap it might be, but the hotelier puts on a respectable table, including an array of appropriate wine and drinking glasses, and each placing is accompanied by a rolled napkin. All the parties involved here, host and artists, seem to follow the accepted bourgeois conventions of the day. By contrast, the evening meals were more riotous and crowded. Care needed to be taken by good proprietors to keep order. The Hotel Baudy became known for at least two peculiarities: the high proportion of women artists; and, because of the American clientele, it served up foreign ‘delicacies’, such as marshmallows and Boston Baked Beans. Lodgers were usually provided with generous breakfasts and suppers, but as many were working in the field, en plein air, the inns organised packed lunches, which were again made in the early mornings. The ability to organise all kinds of cuisine, hot and cold, was therefore a necessity for the women of the family.

This ability to run a hotel and handle the social tensions is seen from the very first, for Madame Ganne ran the establishment for nineteen years after Monsieur Ganne died in 1861, during its busiest phase. Despite the lack of many freedoms elsewhere in society, women were allowed to run lodging houses in certain societies, even in what were the most parochial of regimes. Traditional taboo-ridden communities, such as those found in fishing villages around

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812 Caille, 1985, 1985, p. 43.
813 William Leroy Metcalf (1858-1925) This painting is also known as the “Ten cent breakfast.”
814 Sellin, 1982, pp. 3, 80-81. American marshmallows and maple syrup were also sold in Giverny’s village store.
Finistere, nevertheless allowed Marie-Jeanne Gloanec to continue to run her wine-shop as a pension after her husband died; similarly, the widow Feutray ran her Hôtel des Voyageurs, across the road; and, then allowed her maid Julia Guillou to take it over, in 1873. Aaltje Spaander, likewise, in another strict Catholic community, in effect, ran their Volendam guest-house in its formative years as her husband continued to go to sea, to support the family income. At Skagen, while Degn Brøndum was the nominal head of the business, and clan, it was his mother, who exerted a force for almost the last thirty years of her life, networking constantly through writing letters. Again, in Laren, it was not Jan Hamdorff but his mother, Gerritje, with the help of her daughter Neeltje, who established the enterprise and started the warm relationship with the artists at *De Vergulde Postwagen*. According to artist-lodger Wally Moes, it was Mrs. Hamdorff who cared for all the artists and was in charge, after the death of her husband in 1878.

In Pont-Aven, Madame Gloanec’s sensational reputation rested upon three factors: her bountiful fish soups, the cheapness of her rooms and her reputation for extending credit. The latter is a common yet contentious issue, for, on the one hand, it does not seem to have happened extensively outside of France, yet, on the other, it contributed much to the early build up of myths about these village hostels. Although hoteliers Ganne, at Barbizon, and Baudy, at Giverny, for example, also shared this particular financial reputation, the practice was not extensively attached to artists’ innkeepers in any British, German, Dutch or Danish artists’ colony within this study. This is not to suggest they were not generous hosts, but only that banking was not a priority. It is easy to imagine the over-enthusiasm for such stories, especially amongst the young and often penurious artists in the cities, when discussing the potential of each artists’ village. In fact, some form of tab, the running-up of an account or periodic credit, was common practice in daily life of that period, and continues in traditional, trustworthy communities today. If the debt became substantial then the butcher, baker or frame-maker would begin applying pressure, but it was expected that bills were paid periodically or cleared annually.

Millet, in Barbizon, was a notoriously poor payee amongst his tradesmen, who were so frustrated that they once ordered in the bailiffs. However, Millet does not seem to have received credit from his friend, and neighbour, the innkeeper Ganne, as others did. Jean Bouret names only two such debtors to the Gannes, Jacques Brascassat (1804-67) and Théodore Rousseau, which seems hardly excessive, proportionate to the total number of lodgers, yet enough to start the myth-making. Brascassat was not a regular customer at Gannes and the credit he had was paltry, in contrast to Rousseau’s. However, Rousseau was a long-time friend of the Gannes, a valued

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815 Joseph Gloanec died in 1855 leaving his widow the business, a wine shop based in their family home.
816 Jacobs, 1985, pp. 48-55. In her prime Mrs. Feutray ‘made pets of her transatlantic family’, the American painters, supplying large amounts of food, but also acted as a guide to local customs and even provided them with Breton costumes. However, with the death of her lazy husband she went into rapid decline, employed the maid, became jealous, got into debt and it was only the intervention of the maid Guillou again that saved her. In her ‘humiliation’ and sad state on rainy night she hung herself from a tree in the small garden.
817 Moes, 1905, pp. 190-191. She tells of the special affection that Mrs. Hamdorff had for painters; although the guest-house was cold and primitive, it was comfortable. Jan is described as a juvenile, “tall, thin, shy” and “acted like a clown”; although he was well into his twenties by that time, 1884.
818 Gauguin’s choice of Pont-Aven, and especially *Pension Gloanec*, is generally thought to have been a direct result of Felix Jobbé-Duval, who wrote to him “that it is cheap and they could live on credit.” See Sellin, 1982, p. 52; Sweetman, 1995, pp. 130-31, amongst others.
819 Sensier, 1968, p. 117, letter from Millet, 1.1.1856.
820 Bouret, 1973, p. 87. He quotes from a contemporary account byForge of Ganne loaning Brascassat 20 francs and Rousseau 1,000 francs, both for one year.
and regular customer; not a peripatetic painter, but a resident artist who lived just one hundred meters down the same street in the village.

A typical, if rather patronising, view of some artists’ innkeepers may be ascertained from a series of articles written by the Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson, already quoted, who had direct experience of many village inns around the Forest of Fontainebleau: “The innkeeper has to be taught, and he soon learns, the lesson of unlimited credit; he must … welcome as a favoured guest a young gentleman in a very greasy coat, and with little baggage beyond a box of colours and a canvas.” He continues, commenting on the detrimental affect that tourism made on this hotel facility: “the bourgeois and the tourist are knocking at the gate. This is the crucial moment for the colony. If these intruders gain a footing, they not only banish freedom and amenity; pretty soon, by means of their long purses, they will have undone the education of the innkeeper; prices will rise and credit shorten.” This description may fit early French artists’ innkeepers but is not so easily transposed elsewhere.

Ignorance of how to run a commercial tourist hotel seems to have been an advantage, in the sense that it was a learning process for all concerned, so that none of the participants were consistently superior to the others. The careful process of development, often from scratch, seems to generate more compassion in the hoteliers, who were more likely to keep an open mind and a flexible approach to the business. They seen to have been good listeners and often took up the suggestions of its artist-cientele and provided extra services to help those painters. The hotels that grew up with the artistic colonisation tended to offer more and receive more from the artists, for example the hotels in Laren, Skagen and Volendam. Hotel Spaander offered possibly the widest range of amenities and services for its painters, including: a row of spacious ateliers next to the sea-shore; useful contacts with fishermen and their sailing boats; language services; models in folk costumes and regional antiques; a shop-gallery; an old bar-room, a period dining-room, a period parlour or ‘Old Room Number One’, (35:5). The high demand for models, especially amongst the Volendam children, created problems over fees, notun-typically, so the Spaanders made suggestions as to what prices were suitable, a service particularly useful for first-timers, foreigners and the more-timid painters.

Visiting landscape artists required little local advice when it came to finding their subjects, but genre painters, usually the second grouping of artists to arrive, often needed more guidance with finding, hiring and selecting models. Experienced figure painters had few problems but the young, bashful or shy could have, especially, as with Langley at Volendam, if they did not speak the foreign language. Hoteliers and their families were in the ideal position to act as modelling agencies, not only arranging sitters but regulating the fees. Even an artist as self-confident as Stanhope Forbes was dogged by

821 Stevenson, 1884, p. 266.
822 Partridge, 1898, pp. 88-89. This humorous illustrated article describes a visit to Marken and Volendam by three artist-friends: the author, Pashley and Shirtliff. Commenting on the villagers: “All of them, Pashley disgustedly observes, ‘On the Make’, including a group of children ‘Sternly demanding five cents a head’ for a picture.
trouble with models, causing himself unnecessary expense and delays, whereas if he had taken the advice of a proprietor, much trouble may have been avoided. For example, in Quimperlè, Brittany, in 1881, he ignored proprietor Perdix of the Hotel Metayer and continued with a surly model, Desirée, who was known as a petty-thief. Forbes and his colleague La Thangue: “Consequently they all detest her...It took a good deal of persuasion to get her to sit for us in our room and I fear we have incurred the wrath of the family Perdix by doing so, but she is too good a model for us to mind that and I won’t believe half they say against her.” She remained a constant problem and they had to try all kinds of tricks to keep her once she had started, including withholding payment. Forbes’ problems continued on his return to England, where, once he had started Fish Sale on a Cornish Beach, the Newlyn fisherfolk kept adjusting the rates for themselves and the supply of fresh fish.824

For someone of Forbes’ background, rich, cosmopolitan and, in his case, having a French mother, languages were not necessarily a problem. However, for his Newlyn colleague, Walter Langley, an uneducated working-class man from Birmingham, the lack of such skills ruined his visits to Brittany and Holland. When he first lodged at Hotel Spaander he met Willy Sluiter, in August 1904, who was competently multilingual, and there was little problem hiring sitters. However, on his return the following spring, in May 1905, Langley was unable to communicate with either villagers or two Scandinavian artists, before the arrival of some American friends, commenting: “it is certainly difficult among a people alien in language and almost impossible to do any serious subject work, it makes one regret one’s own people are not so picturesque.” ...I shall never pick up the language and am at a great disadvantage.” The Spaanders developed excellent language skills, thus greatly helping their international clientele and their reputation, while in Laren, where Hamdorff was not so gifted, an exclusivity appeared, so that, according to Laura Knight, “all the foreigners stayed,” at the smaller Pension Kan. This was only after 1896 when the British woman and her daughter started the guest-house. Divisions along linguistic lines were indicative of a systems failure and points to an inevitable break-up of what was best in this, normally, international co-operative venture.

These new artists’ hotels often pioneered facilities and services in the village and area. They served as a model for modernity. Hotel Spaander, for example, was proud of its garage for motorcars, sea-plane jetty, state-of-the-art kitchens, gas-powered water-pumps, electric lighting, ‘art shop’ and being early travel agents for Thomas Cooke, American Express and other international touring agents, all before 1920.827 They invested in postcards and publicity material, and went so far as to make a prospectus for an in-house art school, not uncommon in artists’

823 Fox, 1993, pp. 13-14, quoting from Forbes’ diaries.
824 Fox, 1993, p. 25. A letter from February 1884 recorded “Fancy three skate for nine pence” but later he was charged twelve shilling (144 pence) for a turbot; the fish-wife, on seeing his shock, then offered it to him for four shillings (forty-eight pence) an hour.
826 Knight, 1936, vol.1, pp. 133-158.
828 Many village hotels in this period began to order their own postcards. In France: Concarneau and Pont-Aven had issued postcard series by at least 1890. The Hotel Julia (previously Hotel des Voyageurs) made a series by 1900 (see exhibition catalogue: Le Musée Departmental du Prieure, Symbolistes et Nabis, Saint-Germain-en-Laye). Scenic postcards advertised places such as the forest around Tervueren, Brussels, by the 1880s. In Germany: the Worpswede artist designed many posters, as early as 1895, and postcards appeared of Weyerberg, the central hill in Worpswede in 1900 (Worpswede Arkiv der Barkenhoff-Stiftung). In Holland: Katwijk produced many early postcard series, including one in 1906 entitled “Schilders aan het strand” which showed several painters at their easels painting on the beach (Katwijk Museum) and others including the new Hotel du Rhin.
colonies, again an innovation most probably resulting from consultation with artist friends, who were the ones to teach. In Holland, Willy Sluiter, had at least three promotional venture going, each with a different innkeeper, and he proved to be a consummate publicist, with a considerable working knowledge of modern art-circles across Europe, in Britain and North America.

The hotels grew in size because of general tourism yet they took pains to maintain strong links with the village. Keeping old bar-rooms satisfied the ‘old salts.’ They also preserved old games rooms, especially cards and billiards, such as *Het Kroegje* in Hotel Hamdorff (36:5). These hotels provided well-furnished venues for celebrations, dances, balls, shows, exhibitions and village meetings. Laren’s village council met in Hamdorff’s Hotel, for example, and the discussion for creating Skagens Museum took place in Brøndum’s Hotel. As sport often featured in any male society, these hotels hosted various games, hobbies and past-times, not necessarily formalised and often accompanied by a degree of alcoholic consumption. Boule, billiards, baseball, cricket, tennis, ice-skating, target shooting and game hunting are amongst the recorded sports, hosted by these innkeepers. Degn Brøndum was pictured many times out shooting wild-fowl, hare or deer near Skagen, an activity he did not seem to enjoy as much as his artist brother-in-law, Michael Ancher, but more than Krøyer, who nevertheless took the opportunity to sketch them all hunting and picnicking in the dunes. In addition, Degn was photographed shooting an air-pistol at targets in a garden during one of their many parties.

One area where the Brøndum’s seem to differ from the norms of other artists’ hotels is that, although they helped advertise and exhibit the paintings of their artist friends, they do not seem to have been involved in selling any pictures. By contrast, Jan Hamdorff enjoyed this process so much he regularly traded in paintings and, from 1913, his hotel hosted annual, grand, art exhibitions, accompanied by music and dancing. Degn Brøndum began collecting works from the artists’ colony, apart from the ones given to his hotel, which formed the basis for Skagens Museum. Their catalogue shows that most paintings were given, but it is entirely in character for him to have paid the less well-off artists for their contributions. His hotel was the least decorated of the three major artists’ hotel in this study, but he did contribute to its furnishing, by, for example, overseeing Bindesbøll’s alterations and allowing Marie Krøyer, to decorate furniture and add burnt-wood panelling, as she had done elsewhere in the village.

These new youthful ‘hybrid’ proprietors did not specialise, but embraced the varied and decorous world the artist epitomized, and acted accordingly. They were not just lodging-houses, but community centres, dance halls, function-rooms, groceries, stables, wholesalers, wine-merchants, travel agents, model-services, kitchens and exhibition venues, altogether. They were go-betweens and, at best, reforming entrepreneurs who yet took time to freely preserve these artistic treasures in their villages for future generations.

829 Hotel Julia in Pont-Aven set up an art school and printed a prospectus.
830 In 1898, Sluiter sketched the billiard room in the Hotel du Rhin and proprietor de Leeuwan (Katwijk Museum).
831 Saabye, 1990, pp. 148, 150.
833 Saabye, 1990, p. 168. She designed furniture and made poker-work, decorated panels for Brøndum’s Hotel and Holger Drachmann’s house in Skagen.
The significance of hotel decorations

Gratuitous decoration of their bistros, bars, cafés, studios, lodgings and inns by artists was a common enough feature in cities, but when translated to their rural counterparts it blossomed, sometimes overwhelmingly, to newsworthy proportions, as seen in one French publication, L’Illustration, as early as 1853. There is more to this action than just the giving of presents to a host in gratitude. Some of the painted decorations, on walls, doors and panels, took a considerable amount of time, unlike the graffiti for example, and therefore must have had the proprietors’ consent. They act as a positive sign that the artists were staking out a territorial claim, marking out their bastion of cultural identity in the wilderness. These hotel decorations are also a fascinating and refreshing collaborative endeavour, one that resonates with social significance for they were enjoyed by all the parties concerned, the artists, the innkeepers and the villagers.

The huge range and variety of artists’ hotel decorations warrants a separate study in itself, yet this coastal area presents a few excellent examples of decorated hostels with more than enough material, much of it still in situ, that well-illustrate the role and value to the overall development of rural artists’ colonies. Hotel Spaander’s art collection, for example, has amassed over 1,000 works of art, from many hundreds of painters, graphic designers and illustrators from all around the world. This wealth of creative imagery is often the most lasting legacy of their collaboration, certainly in the villages themselves, and can show a simplicity and directness that are more sincere and authentic than the grand salon pieces that were made for status and money.

The practice of decorating an inn or hostel was so accepted that one cannot imagine an artist’s lodgings or club-house without their paintings, pictures, graffiti and frescoes, of some kind. For the most part they were given freely, but it is also possible that some works were offered in lieu of debts or part-payment of interest, for it was common practice for resident artists to give paintings to tradesmen to placate him, until the bill was finally paid. This voluntary refurbishment was exhibitionism combined with a desire to cover up drab plaster walls, both of which are self-evident early on in the Auberge Ganne, before 1850. The decoration of this inn gave full range to the artists’ creative urge and the cultivation of this ‘new-found-land’, the centre of the artists’ colony, which also, in its imagery, shows signs of being a kingdom, a state, a protectorate, a homeland, a dependency, a sphere of influence, a dominion, etc.

The regions and villages were regarded as ‘undiscovered territories’, but something of the same description may also be applied to these inns and guest-houses. Part of this neglect may be

834 Fizelière, 1853.
835 Spaander’s inventory of pictures was finally completed in 2002 by Jannik Kwaakmann. Of the legible names and dates, the following eighteen countries of origin are identified: Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Luxembourg, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Spain, France, South Africa, Norway, Hungary, Rumania, Russia, Denmark, Sweden, Great Britain, Germany and USA. Before 1900 the nationalities were only German, British, American, French, Belgian, Norwegian and Czech, besides the Dutch.
836 Barrett, 1995. This artist’s work may be found shared out amongst many of the village tradesmen, in this way, for example the plumber and smithy, the baker, carpenters and builders, although he often generously gave pictures as presents to these friends on the occasion of their birthdays, weddings, festivals, etc.
applied to their earliest appearance, for the words cheap, simple, primitive and spartan commonly appear in writings, about Ganne’s to Brøndum’s guest-house. Curator Marie-Thérèse Caille, in Barbizon, speculates that the Ganne’s may not have initially liked their walls painted, which high-lights the complicity necessary in this action. However, once it was started, a wave of creativity washed over these hostels, that included pictures in frames, paintings on wooden partitions, doors and furniture and on the walls in every room. It transformed the peasant home into a palace of the arts, for the pictorial styles and subject-matters varied from classical friezes, through baroque concoctions to simple realism. The oldest photographs of the bar at Buvette de la Plage, Le Pouldu, reveal that its artists covered entire walls, from floor to ceiling, with paintings soon after the arrival of Gauguin and his circle of friends, who also added ceramics, sculptures and wood carvings to the show. This exuberance typically appeared first in the communal dining rooms, eventually spreading to hallways, parlours and bars.

Much of Auberge Ganne’s decoration has survived. It is valuable because of its age, its variety and the state of its preservation, despite the loss of most of the pictures, most of which were transferred by their son-in-law to the new Hotel Siron. The first decorations in Ganne’s dining-room are said to be from 1832 and are attributed to Corot, but this data is not easily confirmed. What is of more interest is that, almost all the major early Barbizon artists contributed, from the gregarious Diaz de la Peña to the more insular and moody Theodore Rousseau, all before 1853, (37:5). One curious exception to this gesture of goodwill, seems to be Jean-François Millet. Diaz was especially enthusiastic about creating the right warm, artistic atmosphere for the hostel, even composing an epic, twenty-five verse, poem flattering their host, Pere Ganne and his hirsuit colleagues.

These decorations express a youthful joy and spontaneity, often not allowed or manifest in their studio work in the city academies. These were not private but public statements, enjoyed as a celebration of artistic life and not made for academy approval. They share the overall feelings of the colony at large and the creative frustrations that caused the movement, in the first place and that sustained it. Peculiarly, some of these decorations still make many references to the traditional history of art, the classicism and symbolism against which, it is usually agreed, these ‘revolutionary’ artists were meant to be rebelling. On Ganne’s plaster walls and panels, for example, there are ‘Sublime’ Alpine fantasies of dark ravines and waterfalls; climbers in Tyrolean hats; Neo-classical architectural elements; porcelaneous Meissen shepherdesses in

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38:5 - Caricature by Leo Cheney of an old Volendam fisherman, Hotel Spaander. A surprisingly high proportion of artists’ gifts were dedicated to the proprietesses.

39:5 - Piet van der Hem, L’amour est enfant de Bohéme - amusing caricature, with one of the oldest Volendam artists’ models, in her parlour.

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837 Caille, 1985, p. 49.
838 Fizelière, 1853. The article names over thirty painters in Barbizon and other Fontainebleau village inns, including Millet, but Caille, in Auberge Ganne, does not mention him as a provider any decorations.
be-ribboned hats; Greco-Roman gods and Louis XIV ornamental confections (15:3; 16:3; 37:5). These are not images normally associated with radical art students.

Along the North Sea coast the hotel decorations and collections show less artifice than in the French heartlands, yet they are equally celebratory. Here, there are fewer frescoes and painted panels. The pictures more commonly represent the nature of the village itself, its customs, its humours and its environment. In Volendam, Hotel Spaander’s art collection remains one the most complete examples of its kind, particularly useful as it has not been substantially moved or altered. Works are known to have been donated from the beginning, in the 1880s, of the café-guesthouse, mostly by the visiting international artist lodgers, who were, no doubt, more grateful to find a hostel in the village than homeland painters.

From Spaander’s collection one may also see a range of romantic subjects, often nostalgic, frequently sentimental, especially when dealing with children, yet all refreshingly honest in their humour. There is a higher proportion of graphic works on paper than in the hotel collections at Barbizon and Skagen, which points towards the presence in Volendam of many more artist-illustrators, at the turn of the century. There are, as a consequence, many more cartoons and caricatures in Spaander’s collection, which are also fine social indicators. Draughtsmen, such as Tom Browne and Phil May, both of whom worked for Punch and were close friends of the Spaanders, produced highly amusing pieces which poke fun at all concerned. They, typically, are more democratic than culturally elitist and acted as a useful social pressure-valve. At best, they pointed at the practical absurdities of being an artist, being an artist in their village and the culture-clash between tradition and modernity in generally. The Dutch humourist Piet van der Hem, for example, made typically charming observations on the village and the artistic process, in his “L’Amour est enfant de Bohéme” (39:5). What is also noticeable here, and from analysis of the collection as a whole, is the written dedication, which is to Alida Spaander, the daughter, who took over running the hotel during the First World War. These gifts confirm the gratitude guests had to all their hosts, easily as much to the women as to the proprietor.

There appears to be no easy correlation between the frequency of artists-lodgers and gift-pictures. Of the c.1,140 works in the Spaander collection, 878 works have a known provenance from 393 artist-lodgers. In the formative years, before 1900, 38 works are fully recorded, from the 199 artist-lodgers, all spread, fairly evenly, between eight nationalities. The category of artists who only stayed for one visit is seen to provide the majority of gift pictures, yet there many interesting exceptions. Stanhope Forbes and his wife Elizabeth, from Newlyn artists’ colony, lodged here once, and gave one picture each. Their compatriots, Adrian and Marianne Stokes, who drifted around many artists’ colonies in the 1880s and 1890s, from Skagen to St. Ives and Concarneau, seem to only to have given one painting between them both, despite writing, soon after, that they were so “warmly welcomed.” Yet, this is minor compared to the three artists who each gave over fifty paintings to the Spaanders.

Wim Wouters gave fifty-one paintings, including some compositions of considerable size, and Georg Hering donated fifty-three works in all, some of which are also large in size and similarly are colourist figure compositions. These contributions are easily explained, for they both married Spaander girls. The third son-in-law Hanicotte gave nine works. The final artist,

839 Stokes, 1900, Prefatory Note.
Willy Sluiter, who gave so generously, is of special interest and one that a good artists’ colony really needed. In part, this quantity, over fifty works, may be explained because he was more of an illustrator and his small caricatures on paper were quick, throw-away efforts, yet this should not be regarded as diminishing their qualities, either as gifts or usefulness to the social harmony of the situation. A colony needs someone who is friendly, gregarious, generous, talented, light-hearted, fun and a good observer amongst its leaders, as Sluiter was. Much attention is given, in the discourse, to charismatic leaders, such as Gauguin, but this kind of character can all too easily lead to conflict, as happened at Pont-Aven and Le Pouldhu, inevitably. The Spaanders, as did Jan Handorff and Arie van Leeuwen, all recognised Sluiter’s charms and, naturally, found a prominent place for his humorous sketches in their respective public parlours.

Caille also suggests that hotel decorations were done on days with bad weather, yet the profusion and the depth of work involved in some creations points to a multiplicity of occasions to paint such interior decor. Much more graffiti has survived in Ganne’s Hotel than elsewhere. This is, by it nature, done quickly, but the elaborate trompe-l’œil paintings on furniture, panels and doors probably required collaboration and planning. The more-permanent contributions had a usefulness beyond the amusing and decorative, for they documented the experiences and illustrated the character of the location to all hotel guests. The profusion and variety of images available in these hotel decorations, cartoons and collections counter the notion held by some theorists of a conspiracy to present the countryside in a certain way, promoting a stereotypical image. While a selection of representations do provide some ‘types’ and common situations, undoubtedly, the variety of pictures on display in Hotel Spaander’s collection alone shows a healthy reality, the mundane, the joys and the tragedies. Life along the coast was particularly brutal, all the more because they relied on the unpredictability of the sea. Many of the portraits of fishermen and their wives, in these hotel art collection, do not shy away from the hard truths of their grim daily lives, illness and death, even though they might be painted by colourists, such as Wouters, von Bartels and Hering, or for that matter, the Anchers, Krohg and Krøyer.

In 1882, when Krøyer first arrived at Skagen and lodged in the Hotel Brøndum, he instituted one activity, which in this instance was rather formalised but something of this was found in many other village artists’ inns. He started the ‘aften-academi’ whereby they discussed their work, their work-in-progress, exchanged professional opinions and commented on the new developments in art they each had encountered in their homeland’s art circles. This group included the basis of the artists’ colony, although it was, in reality, all those who were lodging there that season: the Anchers, Michael and Anna; Christian Krohg, Oscar Björck and Krøyer; plus the Swedish painter Johan Krouthén, the Norwegian Charles Lundh and the Danish writer Hendrik Pontoppidan; and, interestingly, they appear happy to include the proprietor Degn Brøndum. It was at these evening discussions in the hotel that Krøyer began sketching his colleagues, in what Elisabeth Fabritius has recently called “portrætkarikaturer.” They made some minor regulations about annoying behaviour, and Krøyer drew up a scroll of honour, but no formal manifesto or society rules were made. This kind of activity, particularly the drawing up of a diploma-scroll, is associated with the behaviour of students at many art academies and their new clubs, although the painting of colleagues in group pictures, Freundschaftsbilder, was common across most of Europe. When the Skagen artists regrouped the following summer, 1883, there seems to have been general agreement to carry this activity further, not only by having more evening meetings, in the hotel, but by making a portrait gallery of all their colleagues. The

840 Caille, 1985, p. 49.
841 Fabritius, 2003, p. 9.
Spaander Hotel also has a collective portrait panel, of smaller size and in one frame, of some of the Volendam artists.

Although Krøyer is credited with first promoting the idea of the dining-room decoration and in total contributed twenty of the approximately fifty paintings, there were many contributors. Most texts promote him over the others, yet, after examination of the chronology of all these profile-portraits, it reveals Krøyer completed only one, of Eilif Peterssen, in that first year, while Kohg not only did more, in terms of number, he painted the crucial and central one, of Degn Brøndum, their generous host.\(^{842}\) The Anchers seem surprisingly reticent about the project judging by the timing of their contributions. Considering this hotel was Anna Ancher’s family home, only two small portraits by her appear. Michael Ancher would eventually give eleven small portraits over thirty years: the first one, in 1884, was not of an artist but of his brother-in-law, John Brøndum, the sailor in the family. It was not until after 1888 that he gave two more portraits and then a few more around 1892, at the time when the formal panelling was being constructed; and, the last was in 1915, of critic Georg Brandes. Four small portraits by Krøyer were finished in 1884, including that of Anna Ancher, the German Fritz Stoltenberg and the Swede Oscar Björck, who, in turn, gave his portrait of Krøyer to the collection and a dazzling *plein-air* beach scene of a boat. A few self-portraits appear, including one by Laurids Tuxen, his only contribution. This is curious, bearing in mind that he was one of the founders of the community, and in all the literature, is invariably linked closely with the colony. These artists’ profile portraits, approximately 34 x 32 cm. in size, were later arranged all around the pelmet, just below the ceiling, but many other works were given at this early stage that were not portraits, but mostly offered views of Skagen life, including another two by Krohg.\(^{843}\) Yet another Norwegian artist, Peterssen, gave a landscape in 1883, *Moonrise over the Dunes*; Krothén gave another landscape, *Grenen*; the young Björck gave a large canvas, *Female model in an atelier*, 1882, although he added touches to it, several times until 1888.

The Brøndum art collection is far from a complete record of the colonists,\(^{844}\) less so than perhaps Spaander’s more comprehensive assembly of pictures. This is emphasised, particularly, as only paintings appear in the hotel’s dining-room collection. There are contributions by and of artists who came there only once, as elsewhere, but Krøyer’s enthusiasm for the project was also fashioned by outside influences, as he was particularly busy in the 1880s and 1890s, with his artwork, his teaching and marriage, and also his health began to break, sporadically. He was central to the early Skagen collection in contrast to, for instance, Willy Sluiter’s many caricatures at Volendam, where the random giving of gifts by artists had started long before Sluiter’s arrival.

Despite the self-conscious arrangement of the collection at Brøndum’s hotel it also shows some glaring absentees amongst the recognised ‘colonists.’ Holger Drachmann is not present in any form and Viggo Johansen did not contribute, although there is a profile portrait of both him and his wife, Martha. Karl Madsen is another founder who omitted to contribute. Earlier, in 1873, he had been the one to introduce Skredsvig, Ancher and Johansen to Skagen, attended various weddings and was married to a cousin of the Brøndums and was the first curator of the Skagen’s Museum.\(^{845}\) It can be seen, therefore, that even with the best of intentions, these artists’

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\(^{842}\) Degn Brøndum’s portrait is the only one in the row that looks directly out at the observer and is the only circular picture. (Skagens Museum inv. nr. 611)

\(^{843}\) Krohg also gave one still-life, *Opstilling med D.O.M. flaske*, 1883/ 88 (Skagens Mus. inv.nr. 653) and a figure study of a favourite Skagen model, *Fisherman Lars Gaihede’s Afternoon nap*, c.1882 (Skagens Mus. inv.nr. 1018).

\(^{844}\) Mus. Cat. Skagen, 2000, is a collection of the paintings from the hotel and works acquired by Degn Brøndum in order to form a permanent art museum in the 1920s.

\(^{845}\) A portrait of Karl Madsen was made by his son in 1935 and was inserted later into the dining-room arrangement.
hotel decorations have some complex social undercurrents. Gifts are unconditional and these decorations first represent the general gratitude to their hoteliers. Second, yet more interestingly, they are the best pictorial record of events in the village, at that time. Third, they can exhibit a startling immediacy and even intimacy with the mood of the village, not necessarily apparent in their salon pieces.

**Hoteliers as social referees**

“Equally important …, and perhaps more so, is the existence of a sympathetic and cheap pension or hotel: Siren at Barbizon, Chevillon at Grez, Baudy at Giverny, Gloanec and Julia at Pont Aven…They all extended credit, sometimes for years, the food was usually abundant and the guests were poor.”\(^{846}\) This summary over-simplifies the social services offered by artists’ hotels by limiting it to finance and food. By reiterating the stereotypical commercial requirements, Sellin misses the vitally important social roles these innkeepers performed, that served to improve a village working environment and calm down any indiscretions. Closer examination of the activities of the leading hoteliers actually indicates a multiplicity of skills, not least of which was patience and diplomacy. With so many nationalities involved, with contrasting temperaments to match, tact, tolerance and a high degree of language skills were required on a daily basis, by him, his family and his staff. Their attention was not only on the artists but the villagers. It could be a recipe for disaster, but good hoteliers were in the best neutral position to maintain the air of creativity and social cohesion.

The most visible exterior indication of an artists’ environment and lodging, should someone not see them actually painting or sketching out on the street or beach, was the inn sign itself. Friendly artists often made them for the proprietors, such as Spaander’s welcoming sign “Artists kom binnen” with a smiling man and an open hand. The hotel art collection started in the lobby. They illustrate what has happened and also act as a guide of what to expect. The pictures show their painting skills and serious intent, along with the humour. The nominal heads of these hotel families were usually men and so the bars were important social centres for all concerned. Many ideas sprang from their discussions and it is probable that extra services, studio space and the organisation of various exhibitions started from these rooms. The provision of permanent studio space took various forms, the conversion of a lean-to garden shed, the sunken ‘havehus’ in Brøndum’s garden, up to sets of purpose-built atelier at Hotel Spaander. However, for the proprietor it often opened a new set of problems, for studio space was in high-demand all the year round in most villages. Summer could be a particularly trying time. After the mid-1880s, proprietors had to come to terms with some new and scandalous habits among the artists. It was not recorded within the study area, but news of painting nudes *en plein-air* in the grounds of some French artists’ hotels spread rapidly amongst the more impressionable young male art students. At Giverny and Grez, the hotels had high-walled gardens and painting nudes became fashionable with both male and female artists, by 1910, lead by the Americans.\(^{847}\) This also included painting in the nude. This kind of extreme bohemian behaviour tested the tolerance of the proprietors and their skills at placating scandalised villagers.

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\(^{847}\) Sellin, 1982, p. 2.
Hotels did not always have a bar, as such, but a good deal of alcohol was drunk at all artists’ inns. In Siron’s Hotel, run by the son-in-law of the Gannes, guests helped themselves from a wine cabinet and were expected to write down their consumption. The host needed to balance the freedom of access to drinks with social skills to calm the inevitable high-spirits, pranks and festivities that resulted from over-consumption. When bourgeois inhibitions were relaxed at these distant inns the norms of behaviour were often compromised, and the host needed to keep his wits about him to ameliorate the injured parties. The writer and artist R.A.M. Stevenson commented that “any writer could tell you that they found those colonies more suited for the study of the human heart than for that of trees and rocks.” The close proximity of so many bachelors to females also had the inevitable results; marriages were many to the landlord’s daughters; hotel maids; and artists to cousins of the hoteliers. Marriages occurred among fellow artists: the Anchers, the Kroyers, the Gotches, the Knights and the Stanhope-Forbes, amongst amany. Passionate affairs happened with the increasing number of female art students attending summer schools. R.A.M. Stevenson knew well the complexities of this kind of situation at Grez, after witnessing the upsets caused by the arrival Fanny Osbourne and her daughter, Isobel. “Up until that time the colony had been an Eve-less Paradise.” Fanny soon started a stormy affair with ‘Bob’ Stevenson’s cousin Robert Louis, while Isobel had many suitors. The Hotel Chevillon at Grez witnessed decades of bohemian occupation, first by British and American artists and then the wave of, mostly, Scandinavians. The good hoteliers coralled them all as best they could, but when increasing eccentricity became fashionable, as with Gauguin at Le Pouldu, then even proprietesses sometimes had enough and, like Marie Poupée, they resorted to police and legal action to get financial settlements. No such behaviour is recorded in the North Sea colonies.

Conclusion

Village artists’ innkeepers recognised early on the importance of their situation and responded sympathetically. They recognised the new cultural currency as much as the financial opportunity. In most cases they were in a position to broaden their normal businesses, enlarging the shop or café, combining a generall store with a boarding house. They also combine pragmatism with romanticism and recognise certain shared feelings of being outsiders, detached from society. They were about the same age, were independently minded, flexible, took risks occasionally and yet had relaxed attitudes. They and their families had an eye for money, which included long-term investment but, as importantly, they also shared certain social aspirations. Rather than

848 Jacobs, 1985, p. 16.
849 Jacobs, 1985, pp. 31-32. Cites Will Hicock Low as quoting in this account of Grez, 1875. R.A.M. Stevenson soon noted in a letter to R.L. Stevenson, his cousin, that in Barbizon “everyone kept a woman now. I begin to see the intrusion of Latin Quarter life.”
relating to the norms of the fishing and farming communities these hotel families increasingly identified with their cosmopolitan visitors. The artists had the greatest impact in villages where there was no major tourism or travellers. The artists carried a special social status, most of whom were from the middle-classes, yet held a ready potential to connect with honoured celebrities, rich patrons, governments and royalty, through their familiarity with the biggest exhibitions in the country. The longer the artists stayed the more the mutual benefit. The bonds of friendships grew demonstrably, with the occasional inter-marriage and the improved facilities for painting, such as studios.

There have been attempts to force this relationship and make an artificial artists’ colony hotel, such as at Bovbjerg, Denmark, but their rise requires patience. In truly remote villages, such as Skagen, the novelty of any visitors generated sympathy and tolerance, in part because of the effort of getting there. In easily accessible locations, such as Scheveningen and Katwijk, a long relationship with all manner of visitors encouraged the establishment of many hotels, dispersing the artistic community. Where the pace of change was greatest, at the huge new resorts in Germany for example, then there was no time and space for hoteliers to focus on the special demands of artists. Just as the artists had to come to terms with commercialism in their profession so too did these proprietors mix the practical with the experimental; tourist revenue with painters’ credits; tradition with modernity.

This study area offers a number of examples of how women contributed crucially to the development of artists’ hotels and not only the daily running of the services. In Laren, Gerritje Hamdorff developed the business and recognised the qualities brought to her lodgings by the visiting painters, long before her son, Jan, inherited the position. Interestingly, here, the second boarding-house in the village was started by another widow, Mrs. Kan. In Volendam, it was Aaltje Spaander who first ran the café-guest house for artists, on a regular basis, as her husband continued to sail off regularly in order to support the family income. Finally, in Skagen, no matter which male was the nominal head of the family business, it was the formidable Ane Brøndum and her daughters who organised the hotel services.

The fundamental value of these lodgings was recognised by the artists from the outset, through the act of giving of pictures. The dining rooms were usually the first to be decorated, but soon every parlour was thus improved. The proprietors were complicit in this action. For a colony to develop it needed a central and neutral venue; the better to develop their group bonding, their celebrations and their intellectual sociability. There was a series of critical moments in the development of these rural artists’ communities and they can be mapped out most easily by observing their hotel decorations. Their painting collections both mark out the new found territory and signify the character of the whole community.

The artists’ colony spread out around the village yet the inn was the all-important centre, the club-house, meeting rooms, snack-bar, kitchen, restaurant, laundry, bakery, grocery, sports arena, dance-hall, exhibition centre, shop, gallery, library, post-office, workshop, youth hostel, school, travel agent, model agency, studio and home-from-home. Just as the building was multi-functional then the proprietors were required to be multi-talented and multi-lingual. They rode a fine line between the village community and the artists, which required authority, tact and humour. At best, it brought the proprietors something that money could not buy, something more than general tourism provided, for the successful combination of talents opened sound links to the past, the present and the future of their establishment.