

## 2 Jaggi Drugstore

Three stories high and three rooms wide, this residential and commercial building was built in 1693 by master blacksmiths Hans and Melchior Strehl. It features numerous carvings and paintings and a multi-line inscription with information about the builders and the master carpenter. The ground floor served as a blacksmith and armourer shop, general store, hat shop and carriage maker. In 1932 a drug store was installed. The magic number square on the bottom of the canopy, which was painted there to protect the house from such dangers as fire and water, is unique in Saanenland.

## 3 “Ds Gross Hus”, National Councilor Johannes Bach

Four-story wooden structure with rounded gable and brick ground floor from 1845. First multi-family house in Saanenland with at least four apartment units, including 20 heated rooms. Co-constructor and the sole owner since 1846 was the notary Johannes Bach (1808–1866), who served in several government districts as governor. He was a longstanding member of the legislative council and from 1852 to 1857 he was a member of the national council as the representative of the “Radikalen” (Freisinnigen) in the constituency Emmental. He managed a large farm on the Giebel above Saanen and was also active in the timber trade. The first secondary school was located in the “Grossen Haus” from 1867 to 1872.

## 4 “Alte Post”, post, telegraph and telephone offi

Built in 1850 by coppersmith Christian Mühlener, his children, and carpenter Abraham Sumi. From approximately 1883–1907 it served as the post and telegraph office. 1675: Fischersche Post as private Bernese enterprise. 1764: first mention of a Saanen postilion or post runner. 1832: foundation of the Bernese cantonal post. 1840: first post vehicular traffic on the new road between Saanen and Zweisimmen. 1843: postal service between Saanen and Bulle. 1849: foundation of the Swiss federal post. 1868: implementation of the first telegraph. 1902: implementation of the first telephone.

## 5 “Ds Rot Hus”, old tannery on Hindergässli

Residential and commercial building with gable facing onto Hindergässli, built in 1581. 1689 rebuilding. In 1775 there was a larger renovation by captain and tanner Isaak Russi. He processed large animal skins to leather for soles, shoes, saddles and harnesses in his tannery on Hindergässli. Due to the awful stench of tanneries, tanners were also called “Stänkerer” (stinkers). From 1890 to 1904 the ground floor housed a wheelwright and the first floor the Café Wirtschaft Reinhardt. In 1904 a bakery was established with a shop. Today it is a residential and commercial building.

## 6 Rieder Architects

Residential house with post office built by Emil Hauswirth-Schwizgebel in 1906–07. Building with a cross-shaped saddleback roof and the main gable facing the then new Bahnhofstrasse. Two entrances reached by a common staircase compose a symmetrical elevation facing the street. An alcove ornamented with decorative elements sits above the opening towards the residential areas. From 1907 to 1977 the ground floor was used as a post office. Emil and Esther Hauswirth-Schwizgebel were the parents of Dr Hermann Hauswirth (1905–1989), who grew up in Saanen and was the director of the Basel fair from 1955 to 1971.

## 7 Train station, and Montreux-Oberland-Bahn (MOB)

Train station building with gable facing the railway tracks and the Bahnhofstrasse, with stationmaster’s apartment on the upper floors, and train station infrastructure on the large ground floor. Covered waiting area. The idea of a railway connection between Lake of Geneva and the Bernese Oberland goes back to the 1870s. 1898/1899: concession for the electric railway Montreux–Montbovon–Château-d’Œx–Saanen–Gstaad–Zweisimmen (MOB). 1900: start of construction. 1904: opening of the tracks to Gstaad and in 1905 until Zweisimmen. The development of the MOB provided the foundation for modern tourism in Saanenland.

## 8 Hotel Saanerhof

Theodor von Grünigen-Kernen built this hotel with restaurant and banquet halls on the then new Bahnhofstrasse in a very short construction period in 1905. Numerous renovations have since taken place, most notably in 1978–79 with north-facing extension and the creation of the cosy “Saane Stube”, as well as the addition of terraces on the south and east sides. During the Second World War, as part of General Guisan’s national protection plan known as the Reduit strategy, 700,000 war documents (life insurance policies) of Basler Insurance were temporarily stored here.

## 9 Old Saanen Bank

Two-story masonry building with angled hipped roof and dormers. Ground floor with semi-rounded porch and elaborate window grilles. Originally created in 1874 with the establishment of the “Ersparniskasse Saanen”, part of the plan to see poverty in Saanenland combatted through the saving of money. Since 1977 the new Saanen Bank has been situated across the street at Bahnhofstrasse No. 2. Between 1970 and 1992, new branches of the bank were opened in Gstaad, Schönried, Saanenmöser, Lauenen and Gsteig. In 1980 the “Spar- and Leihkasse Saanen” was converted into Saanen Bank. By 2012 the bank had achieved capital of CHF 1 billion.

## 10 Kleines Landhaus

Three-story linear building with four bays and pilasters. Inscription above the rounded arch entrance with limestone border: “Kleines Landhaus, built in 1581, seat of the provincial governor of Saanen until 1665”. Previous buildings to the “Kleines Landhaus” and the adjoining buildings to the east were powerful and representative stone buildings of medieval origin, possibly former residences of the Count of Greyerz or the Monastery of Rougemont. The building was purchased in 1665 by Saanen and an inn was established that was operated until the early 20th century. Privately owned since 1905.

## 11 Grosses Landhaus

Hotel and restaurant in the traditional style dating from 1908. The previous building – the old Landhaus or town hall dating back to 1577 – was already used as town hall, court, guesthouse and inn. The prison of Saanen was located in narrow and gloomy cells in the basement until 1597. In the large public hall on the first floor remarkable large-scale mural paintings can be found. Today it is used for municipal assemblies and numerous events, and is an important public and cultural centre of the municipality of Saanen and the region.

## 12 Residential and commercial building, Dr Johannes von Grünigen

Residential and commercial building built in 1636, built out of wood with a masonry ground level, gable facing the Dorfstrasse. Prominent location to the west of the “Grosses Landhaus”. Simply decorated building with little ornamentation, unusual for its time. Double-sided front stairs with entrances to the later-enclosed side arcades. The doctor, farmer and initiator of the cheese cooperative of Saanen, Johannes von Grünigen (1779–1862), lived in the eastern part of the house. He set up a pharmacy and looked after patients in one room.

## 13 “Marktmattenhaus”

Built by Peter Krapfen in an impressive gothic style shortly after 1581 on the site of the burned-down former bailiff building. In the past a double-sided staircase lead past the cellar to the house entrance on the first floor. Facade decoration: carved mouldings, wooden panels and window sills. It was called “Marktmattenhaus” because of its location and its use for the big market from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was partly used as a school where the father of national councilor Johannes Bach (see No. 3) worked as a schoolmaster in the early part of the century. Since the 20th century it has been a residential, commercial and office building.

## 14 Bern-Haus

Built around 1840, No. 14 features gables, five bays of windows, rounded overhangs, and a forecourt with terrace onto the public Menuhin square which formerly served as the town square. The Allmendbuch of Saanen refers to it as the “Bern Haus”. It was used as a general store, a commercial building and a weighing house where certified “Waagmeister” weighed cattle and goods. The village of Saanen was the collection and distribution centre for the export of the famous Saanen cheese westwards. As early as in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, significant amounts of cheese were transferred from here to Vevey and from there exported via waterway to Lyon and the world beyond.

## 15 Haus Sanona

Three stories high residential building from 1583, simply decorated, with gable facing the Mittelgässli. The inscription with text, year and abbreviation of a name is the oldest one on a residential building facade in Saanenland. The writing is engraved in Roman capitals and reads: “CHRIST IS MY LIFE AND DEATH MY GAIN. PHILIP.I.M.D.LXXXIII. PD. (Philippians 1.21)”. The Mittelgässli is an old, narrow alley flanked by closely-built buildings and gardens. Small general stores and traditional trade were located on the ground floor. The ambience of this former village-scape has survived to the present day.

## 16 Old Bell Foundry

Residential building with restaurant, garden terrace, and gable facing Mittelgässli. Originally a wooden residential building with a stone basement and attached barn from 1731. 1846 saw the installation of the bell foundry, leading to the production of the world-famous “Schopferglocken”. Karl Schopfer (1851–1922) left his mark in village history as a true character. His grandfather Samuel Schopfer (1782–1839) from Schönried founded the art of bell-making in Saanenland. The last bell founder was Alfred von Siebenthal (1899–1964). Animal bells can disclose the location and the behaviour of cattle and are the pride of many farmers.

## 17 Old Amthaus

Johann von Grünigen, notary and district court clerk, built this three-story building of stone and wood in 1846. It has five bays of windows and curled gables, carved corner stones and originally featured a roof with small wooden shingles. In 1875 it was purchased by the state and established as the seat of government and the court. In 1932 the administration moved to its new office building (see No. 23). Since then the Amthaus has been owned by the municipality and used as a residential building.

## 18 Amiet-Haus

Built around 1555, it is the oldest, mostly original wooden residential building of Saanen. Built with a simple, clear and functional design, this late gothic building features a low wall foundation with wooden post and beam construction on the ground floor, and log construction on the upper floor. In 1984 it underwent a thorough renovation. Interior design and carvings from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century suggest former use as a mule-freight haulers' hostel. By 1787 it was owned by Saanen and used as a hospital for the poor, ill and frail. In 1813 the building was sold to a private person and was already referred to as “the old hospital”.

## 19 Water supply

The village of Saanen has had a communal water supply since the middle ages. Since 1470 a court order has bound the villagers to protect the village and its fountains against floods of the Saane. In 1693 the fountain cooperative “untenfür dem Dorf” was founded. After the catastrophic fire in Gstaad in the summer of 1898, the town built the first public fire protection facility with fire hydrants and a water supply, which was put into operation in 1902. By 2014 approximately 3 million cubic metres of water per year were being consumed via a main pipe network of 128 km.

## 20 Vicarage

Three-story residential building made out of stone and timber from 1736 with 6 on 7 bays and hipped roof by the Bernese architect Wild. The medieval core of the vicarage building dates back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It acted as a “Sust”, a place to rest, store, trade, and change horses. In 1452 the vicar had to store weapons in the vicarage for his protection and to defend the country. Agricultural properties and the former oven and laundry house (Dorfstrasse 102a) were also part of the vicarage. The wife of vicar Albert von Rütte, Cécile von Rütte-Bitzius, lived here from 1855–1862.

## 21 Mauritius Church

The Mauritius Church with its Romanesque tower and its octagonal spire is the most visible landmark of Saanen. It is located on a rocky brow of the Mauritius Hill to the northwest of the village. It was first officially mentioned in 1228. Today’s church dates back to an enlargement of 1444–1447. The choir and nave exhibit notable murals from the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries that depict the martyrdom of the church patron Mauritius. The renaissance pulpit features inlays from 1628, and there is a gothic baptism font dating from the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The church’s organ case dates from around 1740–46 and contains an organ installed in 1984. The St. Anna chapel next to the church dates from 1511.

## 22 Old schoolhouse

Two-storey timber construction from 1882 built on solid foundation with staircase and originally partly open arcades on the north side. Gable roof with sawed-out adornment. The scribes were educated in the episcopal office in Lausanne before the reformation. It is known that one person from Saanen studied at the University of Köln in the 1500s. The primary school was founded in the building in 1644. By 1788 the municipality had 11 schools. Despite challenging space conditions with more than 100 children per class, the construction of the new schoolhouse was delayed, before being finally completed in 1882. The first secondary school was located in the “Grosses Haus” from 1867 to 1872 (see No 3).

## 23 Tower and Saanen courthouse

Tower from 1596. Previously used as a prison, currently residential use. In 1730 a prisoner illegally climbed up to the attic in order to smoke. The gunpowder stored there ignited and several occupants died in the huge explosion that ensued. In 1734 the tower was restored with a reduced height of 4 meters. In 1932 the courthouse was attached to the tower. With its traditional, local style, and hipped roof, today it is the seat of the district governor of Obersimmental-Saanen, a district created in 2010, as well as the location of the Oberland collections office.

## 24 Samuel-Würsten-Haus

Four stories high and one room wide, this residential and commercial building featuring a multi-line inscription in gothic print was built in 1784 by schoolmaster and notary Samuel Würsten, his wife Magdalena Wehren and their children. The ground floor was used as general store, bakery, cobbler and shoe shop. In 1985 former American president Jimmy Carter was a guest at the Palace Hotel in Gstaad and when his shoes needed repair, he and his wife visited the “shoemaker of the Palace”. The 78 year-old shoemaker Ernst Studer immediately recognized his customer and was very happy to offer his services.

## 25 The “Salzhüsi” – tourist office nd Menuhin Center

Built by sergeant Ulrich Zingre in 1757, this building features a facade with rich, colour-trimmed carvings, flowers and animal paintings, and the face-to-face coat of arms of the Canton of Bern and Saanen. The Menuhin Center presents the life’s work of Lord Yehudi Menuhin (1916–1999), the founder and mentor of the Menuhin Festival and an honorary citizen of Saanen. Cheese production and livestock breeding were especially reliant on the safe and sufficient supply of salt. Open salt was sold in Salzhüsi until the end of the 1950s.

## 26 Alpenrösli

In 1842 Anton Hauswirth built this three-story residential wooden building with brick ground floor and its gable facing the Dorfstrasse. The building features generously curved block consoles, horizontal decorative bands with flat carvings, and windowsill trims that run along the entire facade. Below the roof overhang, there are very finely crafted decorative consoles. Around 1866, Christian Oesch started a bookbinding and stationary business and ran the post office as well as the first telegraph office of the municipality. Since 1892 there has been a restaurant on the west side, later expanded to take up the entire ground floor.

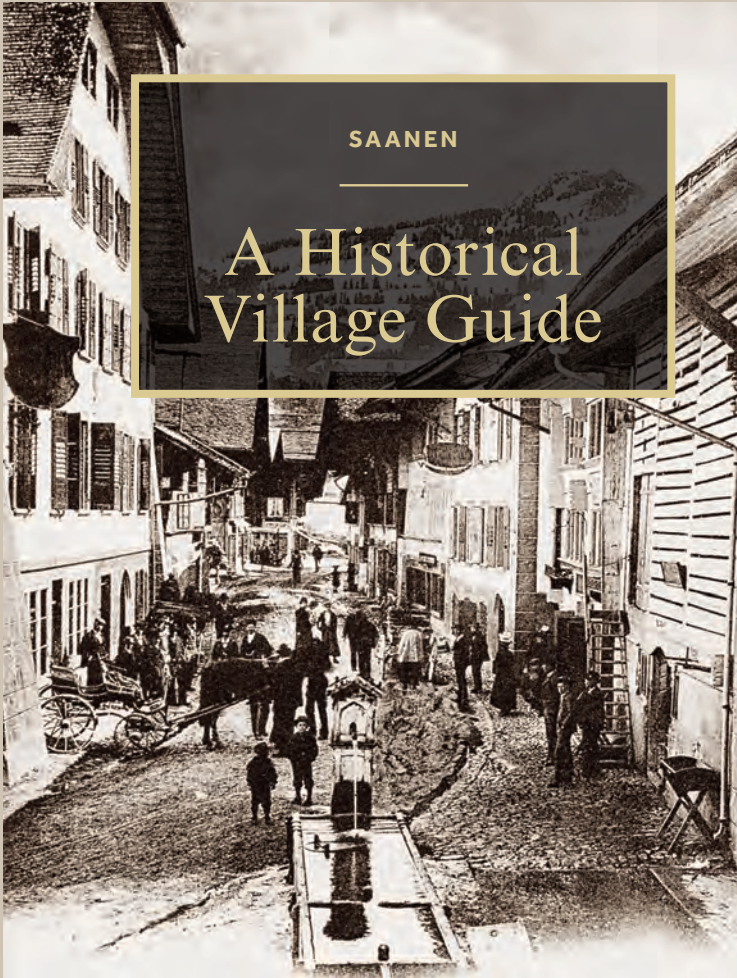
## 27 Dairy

As early as 1312, the Vanel tax register referred to cheese production and tax payments in Saanenland. In 1548, Johannes Stumpf praised Saanen cheese as the best that could be found in Helvetia. The cheese factory in Saanen was founded in 1828. In 1832 a milk adulterator had to be excluded from milk deliveries because he had watered down his milk. The newly founded “Milchverwertungsgenossenschaft” (milk transformation cooperative) took over the cheese factory in 1931 and built a new building with modern milk-processing facilities, shop and apartments in 1947.

## 28 Saanen Museum and Heimatwerk

This important asymmetric three-story wooden building with brick ground floor and saddle roof, features a gable facing the Dorfstrasse. Its oldest-known construction period is late-medieval. In 1575 the building suffered considerable damage in the village fire. It underwent major renovation in 1615 and in 1753 was extended on the east side to give the building its current appearance. The glass floor room shows the exposed late medieval paving and fire debris. The Saanen Museum exhibits objects from local agriculture, commerce, history, art and tourism.

**Comprehensive information can be found in the book “Saanen – a historical village guide”, ISBN 978-3-907041-62-8**



**SAANEN**

**A Historical Village Guide**

SAANEN

# A Historical Village Guide



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## 1 Municipality and village of Saanen

The municipality of Saanen includes the sub-regions of Abländschen, Bissen, Ebnet, Gruben, Grund, Gstaad, Kalberhöni, Saanen, Saanenmöser, Schönried and Turbach.

The municipality has an area of 120 square km and a population of around 7'500. Tourism, services, agriculture and trade form the economic pillars. The official red coat-of-arms depicts a silver crane with golden beak and legs striding over a silver three-peak mountain. Here in the village square there is an ancient coat-of-arms of Saanen. It represents the current municipalities of Saanen, Gsteig, and Lauenen.

### CHRONOLOGY

**1228** First mention of "Gissinai". "Gessenay" is the French name for Saanen. There is no reliable interpretation for the meaning of this name.

**1312** May. The county of Gruyères, to which Saanenland belongs, creates a control register. The total population of Saanenland is around 1000 people. The agricultural activity comprises one-quarter cultivation and three-quarters livestock breeding.

**1312** October. Exemption of the Tallia, an arbitrary personal tax levied by the counts of Gruyères.

**1326** First mention of "Sanon" for Saanen. The river of the same name "Saane" has been documented as "Sanona" since the year 1000. A more recent attempt to interpret the name suggests the origin comes from "marshland, peat, or reed".

**1349** Large number of deaths due to the plague.

**1447** Consecration of the church (see No. 21).

**1448** Der grosse Freiheitsbrief ("The Freedom Letter"). Count Franz I sells all his remaining rights as a landlord of Saanen. Saanen gets its own seal and coat-of-arms known as "die Kryen (Kranich) uff dem Bergen" (the crane on the mountains).

**1554** Bankruptcy of the last Count of Gruyères.

**1555** Saanen becomes a Bernese bailiwick.

**1575** October 10. Village fire in Saanen. Within four hours 60 houses, 20 stores and 20 barns are reduced to smouldering ash. Only the church, the rectory and five houses remain intact.

**1715** Major damage by wolves and bears.

**1740** A flood sweeps away six houses from the Hindergässli to the Allmend.

**1798** March 5. Collapse of the city state of Berne. Ten citizens of Saanen lose their life in the battle of Laupen.

**1798-1803** Saanen becomes part of the canton Oberland.

**1804** More than 100 children die of smallpox.

**1868** First telegraph, 1902 first telephone installed (see No. 4).

**1895** First electric lighting in Saanen.

**1905** Opening of the MOB railway: tourism begins (see No. 7).

**1962** First chalet-style construction rules are implemented.

**2010** August 20. Opening of the northern bypass.

**2013** October 12. Opening underground parking in the village center.

**2015** Completion of village design.

### THE SAANEN GOAT

The Saanen goat originates from Saanenland. It is a pure white, short-haired, mostly hornless domestic goat. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century it has been bred as an excellent milk production goat and has been exported to many countries.