Dr. CAROLINE VON KRETSCHMANN



Managing Director of the Europäischer Hof in Heidelberg
Expert in Servant Leadership, Family Businesses and Succession Planning

Caroline von Kretschmann is the managing partner of the Europäischer Hof in Heidelberg. She embodies a leadership philosophy that begins with the staff. Four generations into the ownership of her family, she now runs the five-star superior hotel. In doing so, she combines strategic and systemic thinking with her day-to-day responsibility for this long-established family business.

Her professional career began with a banking apprenticeship at Deutsche Bank. After studying business administration and completing a PhD at the University of St Gallen, she worked in strategy and organisational consultancy for over 15 years. Dr Caroline Kretschmann was the founder and managing partner of the Metropolitan Consulting Group in Berlin, as well as managing director at BSL Management Consultants. In 2010, she co-founded Due Consultants and became head of marketing and sales at the Europäischer Hof in Heidelberg. Opened in 1865, the grand hotel has been owned by the Kretschmann family since 1906. In 2013, she took over the management from her father and has been developing the hotel ever since, guided by a clear vision of how hospitality, corporate culture and economic success are interlinked.

Her approach to leadership centres on trust, empathy and appreciation. She follows the principle of servant leadership: leaders create the conditions under which staff can develop their skills and take on responsibility .

Alongside her business activities, Caroline von Kretschmann serves as Vice-President of the association Die Familienunternehmer. She has been an Honorary Senator at the University of Heidelberg since 2018. In 2020, she received the Economic Medal of the State of Baden-Württemberg and was named Hotelier of the Year in 2022. In 2023, she was awarded the 66th Brillat-Savarin Plaque. In 2024, Beyond Gender Agenda honoured her as Woman of the Year.

Topics (Selection):

- Empathetic and value-driven leadership amidst digital transformation
- Hospitality as a skill for the future: Empowering staff, delighting customers
- Resilience and courage in turbulent times
- Succession in family businesses: The art of transition