

ST. MORITZ

PEOPLE AND STORIES FROM THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAINS

Issue Winter 2015/2016

HIGH-ALPINE

*A declaration of love to the mountains: happiness
in winter lies at least 1,850 metres above sea level*

St. Moritz



CHRISTIAN KRABICHLER

Once again, the food writer (L.) whets our appetite for St. Moritz. He visits Hans Wiedemann at La Coupole and hears about the concept of el paradiso from the Zingg family. He chats to Marc Andreae and Marlène Züsli-Spahr about the Sinfonia Engiadina, and interviews top chef Reto Mathis.



ROMANO SALIS

This is the second time that this young photographer from the Engadine is participating in the creation of the St. Moritz magazine. For this issue he took photos of Matsuhisa, the el paradiso, children on the ski slopes, Marc Andreae and Marlene Züsli-Spahr, and of the up-and-coming hoteliers. We'll learn a little more about him in our short interview "On the hunt".

ROBERT KITTEL

Writer and photographer Robert Kittel's contributions in this issue are sporting and exciting: he gazes into the depths at the "Free Fall", experiences the "Night Turf" and the "Chalandamarz", interviews photographer Alessandro Della Bella, and drifts through the night-life of St. Moritz.



BARBARA SCHELLENBERG

The media and communication scientist has lived with her husband, two daughters and beagle Jara in Samedan since 1989. What she particularly likes about St. Moritz is the juxtaposition of "high society" and the people of the Engadin who are so firmly rooted in their homeland. In this issue, Barbara Schellenberg writes about the Suvretta Snowsports School for children.

VALENTINA KNAPP-VOITH

St. Moritz is virtually a second home for this Munich-based writer. She spends a large part of the year in the Engadin so it gives her particular pleasure to interview young hoteliers Myriam Bolt, Nina Hauser, Daniela Märky, Sandro Bernasconi and Christoph Schlatter for the St. Moritz Magazin.



Photos: Romano Salis (4), Giancarlo Cattaneo, Alessandro Della Bella, Robert Kittel



WINTER 2015/2016

02 CONTRIBUTORS & IMPRINT

04 HIGH-ALPINE

06 EDITORIAL: ARIANE EHRAT IN CONVERSATION WITH HUGO WETZEL

08 SPORT & ADVENTURE

10 FROM ZERO TO 140

The steepest start slope in the world, the Free Fall is where skiers hold their breath

14 MOONLIGHT PREMIÈRE

We accompany Dennis Schiergen to a spectacular horserace – that takes place at night

20 SPARKLING FAIRYTALE LANDSCAPES

Why winter is often the best time of year for children

24 CUISINE

26 A HAPPY PLACE

The Matsuhisa at La Coupole welcomes visitors with excellent food and elegant décor

28 THE PERFECT HUT FOR ...

From romantics to gourmets: best mountain huts to suit every taste

34 CHRISTIAN KRABICHLER SITS DOWN WITH ...

ANJA AND HANS-JÖRG ZINGG

The Zingg family introduces the unique concept of the el paradiso bar

36 WELCOME TO JAPANESE CUISINE

Taste tomorrow's global culinary trends today, at the Gourmet Festival of St. Moritz

38 SPARKLING PLEASURE

We enjoy a "Cuvée St. Moritz" Champagne with Sabine Schurr and Didier Gimonnet

40 NATURAL BEAUTY

42 GONE HUNTING

For Alessandro Della Bella and other photographers, the Engadin is a favourite motif

46 AMAZING NATURAL DISPLAY

Amateur meteorologist Alfred Riederer explains a unique weather phenomenon

48 CULTURE

50 MUSICAL NEW YEAR'S EVE

Seeing out the old year in St. Moritz accompanied by the Sinfonia Engiadina orchestra

53 BAR CULTURE AND PULSATING BASS SOUNDS

Bars, clubs and a music festival: drifting through the nightlife of St. Moritz

56 ARTS & CRAFTS

58 HELLO, SPRING!

At the Chalandamarz, children drive away the winter with bells, whips and songs

61 NEXT GENERATION

Five young hoteliers are bringing new ideas to the St. Moritz hotel industry

64 WHAT IF ... ?

We interview Christoph Hoffmann, CEO of 25hours Hotels, about the future of St. Moritz

66 PREVIEW: THE NEXT ISSUE

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An aerial photograph of a vast, snow-covered mountain landscape. In the center-left, a small yellow and white building sits on a snowy plateau. A long, dark cable car line extends from the building down a steep, snow-covered slope towards the bottom of the frame. The foreground is filled with dense, dark evergreen trees. The background shows more snow-covered mountain ridges and valleys under a clear sky.

HIGH-ALPINE

In St. Moritz in winter, the snow, the sun and the mountain backdrop become a scintillating work of art just waiting to be explored. The amazing variety of the high-alpine region ranges from sporting activities in the mountains and valleys, to cultural and culinary highlights, to the wonders of the Engadin's landscape. Whether you discover your favourite mountain hut or hold your breath as you "free fall" – take inspiration from the people and stories from the top of the mountains!

Photo: Alessandro Della Bella



Hugo Wetzel,
President of the
Tourism Organisation
Engadin St. Moritz,
with Director of
Tourism Ariane Ehrat

ARIANE EHRAAT IN CONVERSATION WITH HUGO WETZEL

Ariane Ehrat (AE): Hugo, we've met today to mark the publication of the second issue of the St. Moritz Magazin, and to discuss the theme of "high-alpine". What does it mean to you? Hugo Wetzel (HW): To me, "high-alpine" is the origin of St. Moritz: we have this amazing tradition of winter tourism here because 150 years ago pioneers recognised the role that altitude can play.

AE: What makes the high-alpine aspect of St. Moritz so special? HW: Its charm, combined with something very ancient. There are other places in the Alps that are almost as high up as we are, but their mountains are craggy and rather forbidding. The landscape here is inviting because of the width of the valley and the lake landscape. We also get a lot of sun, which

gives the place a very special light. Many artists and writers find it fascinating.

AE: We spend a lot of time in wonderful skiing regions but we both think that St. Moritz has the best powder snow in the world ... Apart from the snow, what's your insider's tip for St. Moritz? HW: When you're organising championship races, you're often out on the runs at 6.30 in the morning, when it's still pitch dark. But then day breaks and the valley's bathed in soft light – it never fails to take my breath away. And the Corviglia doesn't only offer magnificent views: it's also become a culinary temple! When I was a little boy, learning to ski, there was a sausage stand up there. Then along came Hartly Mathis, the famous chef from the Hotel Suvretta House. He was the first person to open a top-class

Photos: Max Weiss, swiss-image.ch

establishment at this altitude, and he showed how you can create something excellent out of nothing. Now, of course, you can eat incredible food on any mountain in the Engadin – the quality of the restaurants is quite unique.

AE: We're also presenting the variety of our wonderful mountain huts in this magazine. This is the last winter before the 2017 Alpine World Ski Championship in St. Moritz, and as a former professional skier, of course I'm really looking forward to it. It's the second time that you've been involved in organising this event – some people even call you "Mr. Ski Championship"! How do you feel about that? HW: I don't like it. An event like this is a

huge occasion that a very large number of people organise together. I'm just the president – the engine that it needs to drive it.

AE: When did the organisation of the 2017 World Championship begin? HW: It began at the centenary of the Swiss-Ski Association in Basel in 2004.

It was there that we decided to

stand as a candidate to host the event, after the 2003 World Championship in St. Moritz. We wanted to continue using the existing infrastructure and the skills and experience we had acquired. Race director Martin Berthod and I bring with us our experience from 2003 – everyone else on the team is a bit younger.

AE: Which brings us to the message of the 2017 World Championship: "Live the future". I think this is a very bold and farsighted message, because, as you always say, this championship is for the coming generations. HW: Correct. I'm always being asked what's new or different about this particular event. It's the communication and it's the way it's perceived. Today, it's possible to emotionalise an event in advance, using social media and other new options. That's the future.



High-alpine paradise: the sun-drenched Engadin

ABOUT ARIANE EHRAAT

Ariane Ehrat was born in Schaffhausen in 1961. She was a successful ski racer and competed for the Swiss national team. She placed fourth at the Olympic Games in Sarajevo, and won silver in the downhill at the 1985 World Championship. Since 2008, the communication scientist has been the Director of Tourism of Engadin St. Moritz.

ABOUT HUGO WETZEL

Hugo Wetzel was born and grew up in St. Moritz. A printer, he ran the family firm until 2005, and since 2006 has been President of the Tourism Organisation Engadin St. Moritz. As Chairman of the Organising Committee, FIS Alpine World Ski Championships St. Moritz 2017, this is the second time he has organised this event locally, the first time being in 2003.

www.stmoritz2017.ch/en



SPORT & ADVENTURE

The ski runs are as varied and diverse as their visitors, whether it's the 100 percent incline of the "Free Fall" that makes even ski racers swallow hard or the gentle pistes that encourage children to discover their passion for snow. And if you prefer to stay in the valley, in winter you will find a top-quality selection of sporting events, such as the spectacular Night Turf horse race.

Photo: swiss-image.ch / Christof Sonderegger

THE STEEPEST START SLOPE IN THE WORLD

FROM ZERO TO 140

Stand at the top and your knees will shake. The “Free Fall” is an attraction on Corviglia: with a gradient of 100 percent, this is the steepest start slope in the world. Top racers can accelerate to 140 km/h in just six seconds. We visit the fabulous start that opened to the public as part of the celebrations to mark “100 Years of Winter Tourism”.



187 steps lead from the last Piz Nair cable car support to the “Free Fall” start house.

ABOUT FRANCO GIOVANOLI



Born in St. Moritz, Franco Giovanoli, 47, is the Director of the FIS Alpine World Ski Championships St. Moritz 2017, which makes him in a way responsible for the Free Fall. Before that, Giovanoli was head of the snowboard division at Swiss-Ski.

ABOUT BERNHARD RUSSI



The former downhill racer (two World Championship gold medals, one Olympic gold) has been named Swiss Sports Person of the Year several times. He designs new competition slopes for the International Ski Federation, including the St. Moritz Free Fall for the 2003 World Ski Championship.

Even the ascent to the world's steepest start slope is a unique experience: the Piz Nair gondola stops halfway up, at the last cable car support. You get out onto a platform and have to climb 187 steep steps, angled like the turns in a maze, up the snow-covered rock; the wind hits you from the side, straight into your ears, and a slightly feeling of dizziness stops you from looking down. Every step reminds you that you are in a different world, the high-alpine world, at an altitude of more than 2,800 metres, with less oxygen and icy temperatures.

Even Franco Giovanoli, who grew up in the mountain world of St. Moritz, admits that he really feels the last few metres of the ascent. “Everyone struggles with the altitude,” says the Director of the Alpine World Ski Champion-

ship St. Moritz 2017. But that is the good thing about this visit: guests should experience for themselves what it will feel like when the professional skiers “fall out” of the start house in 2017, hitting a speed of 140 km/h after just six seconds at an inclination of 45°.

Today, visitors to the so-called “Free Fall” are held in a harness; gripping their ski sticks, they stand in the position of the racing skier – an incredible experience for anyone who loves skiing. “You have to wonder if they’re mad,” says Reto, who has made the ascent with his wife to experience the legendary Free Fall for himself. Of course, he watched the 2003 World Championship Race, when the downhill specialists shot down like rockets. Austrian Hannes Trinkl, downhill world champion in 2001 and Olympic bronze medallist in 1998,

Photos: Giancarlo Cattaneo (2), Robert Kittel, 13 Photo/Lukas Maeder

“A DESCENT NEEDS TO START WITH A REAL BANG.”

Bernhard Russi, skiing legend and piste builder

took a sporting approach to the world's steepest start slope: “Great, now you don't have to push to get going,” whereas others, such as Didier Cuche, silver medallist in 1998 and Super-G world champion, were quite open about their feelings: “I had to swallow hard the first time. You need a lot of courage for the start slope in St. Moritz.” Thankfully, Reto doesn't have to ski down the slope today; he is just here to enjoy the breathtaking view and will receive a photo to take home as a souvenir.

Ever since it was developed for the 2003 World Championship, the Free Fall has been one of St. Moritz's main attractions. The men's start was built at an altitude of 2,840 metres on a rock above the Corviglia, and cost four million Swiss francs. About 30 metres long, the Free Fall is not dangerous but it is very impressive. “A descent needs to start with a real bang. After all, the story of the run is almost as important as the result of the race,” says Bernhard Russi, who played a big part in the creation of this sensational start. The two-time downhill world champion and 1972 Olympic winner is now one of the world's most important course designers, and he planned the Free Fall. Russi himself still finds it amazing to stand at the top: “Don't forget that in this sort of race the piste is icy, so the acceleration is enormous,” he says, obviously proud of his work. However, what makes the Free Fall so special is not only the gradient but its naturalness: the construction was completed without using any dynamite. In St. Moritz, Russi achieved something he had been dreaming of for years: “I just had to say: let it snow!”

Author: Robert Kittel



Visitors to the Free Fall wear a safety harness and then stand in the position of a racing skier.

ALPINE WORLD SKI CHAMPIONSHIPS ST. MORITZ 2017



St. Moritz will host the FIS Alpine World Ski Championship for the fifth time in 2017. Together with the town's inhabitants, the organisation committee is planning an enjoyable, authentic, memorable and future-orientated event.

As a “dress rehearsal”, the Audi FIS Ski World Cup finals will be held in St. Moritz from 16 to 20 March 2016.

www.stmoritz2017.ch/en

Photos: Giancarlo Cattaneo, Arnaud Delalande

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ANNIVERSARY WINTER “150 YEARS OF WINTER TOURISM”

St. Moritz celebrated the 150th anniversary of winter tourism with many different projects and events.

In 2014/2015, St. Moritz celebrated the birth of holidays in the snow. It all began in 1864, when St. Moritz hotelier Johannes Badrutt suggested to his English summer visitors that they return to experience the beauty of the Engadin in the winter. If they didn't like it, he would not charge them for their stay – in fact, he even offered to pay their travel expenses. Needless to say, when it was time to go home the English visitors were only too happy to pay for their holiday themselves –

and they stayed from Christmas to Easter. In the years that followed, the number of visitors increased, and so it was that winter tourism in the mountains became the success that it remains to this day.

The visit to the Free Fall was one of 32 projects and events that took place in the anniversary year “150 Years of Winter Tourism” in St. Moritz. We take a look back at the highlights that not only recall those pioneering days but offer a glimpse into the future.



* ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS AND CITY RACE

An early highlight of the anniversary winter was the official celebration to mark 150 years of winter tourism, held in St. Moritz on 5 and 6 December 2014. It included a parallel slalom race between celebrity skiers and visitors, for which the course was moved into the village. Willy Bogner presented a large fashion show, while Xavier Naidoo and Trauffer made the event quite a party for the 5,000 visitors.



* SKI RACE TO ST. MORITZ DORF

In March, as part of an “ideas competition” with the local newspaper, the Engadiner Post, the people of St. Moritz came up with something very special: a couples' ski race from the Corviglia ski area down to St. Moritz Dorf. The couples were joined together by a rope and had to ski the piste, which included a number of tricky tests, from the mountain station Munt da San Murezzan.



* SKI PATROL RACE DAVOS-ST. MORITZ

Diehard sports lovers met at the end of March for the Ski Patrol Race from Davos to St. Moritz. In sunny conditions, the racers set off from Davos in teams of three, bound for Salastrains, St. Moritz, in two stages over two days with an interim destination in Zuoz. The 96 participants in the Ski Patrol Race covered 56.9 kilometres, with an elevation gain of 5,110 metres.



* OMEGA MONOBOB WORLD SERIES FINAL

Not only were 150 years of winter tourism being celebrated but also 125 years of bobsleigh. In the winter of 1890, Christian Mathis of St. Moritz invented the bobsleigh that is still the basic shape behind today's sleighs. To mark the occasion, in February 2015 the final of the first Omega Monobob World Series was held on the traditional Olympic bobsleigh course at St. Moritz Celerina, with international athletes taking part.



NIGHT TURF ST. MORITZ

MOONLIGHT PREMIÈRE

Frozen Lake St. Moritz becomes a race course: for the first time in the history of equestrian sport, a race has taken place at night and in the snow: the Night Turf. We accompany the youngest participant, jockey Dennis Schiergen, to this unusual première.

Scintillating
ambience: the
Night Turf takes
place on frozen
Lake St. Moritz.



Dennis Schiergen, 20, is one of the best
of the new generation of jockeys in the world.



B

efore Dennis Schiergen goes to work, he packs a pair of silk tights and a whip in his bag. He does it on this freezing Friday night in February, too, with an air temperature of minus 12 and clear skies above Lake St. Moritz. Dennis Schiergen is a jockey, one of the best of the new generation of jockeys in the world. The 20-year-old has equestrian sport in his genes: his father, Peter, was a successful jockey, becoming German champion five times. His son is participating this evening in the Night Turf, a spectacular event that is celebrating its world première today. Not only is the race taking place in the high-alpine climate of frozen Lake St. Moritz, but for the first time at night. "I've no idea what it's going to feel like but I'm sure it's going to be cold," says Dennis Schiergen.

It is 6.40pm. Although it is only 20 minutes to the start, the jockey is relaxed. He is sitting in a white tent while guests congregate outside, enjoying the sponsors' supporting pro-

gramme. Schiergen pulls his tights over his pale legs. Silk tights are light, which makes them perfect for jockeys. "They provide a bit of warmth – and they look great," he says, grinning. At a height of 1.74 metres and weighing 57 kilos, Dennis is a cheerful fellow with the young sportsperson's positive naivety. He pulls a red-and-yellow helmet out of his backpack – ultra light, of course. With the carbon fibre saddle, a mere 1.5 kilos is added to his own weight. Every gram counts in a night race, too. He still has not seen the horse that he is riding in a few minutes' time. In fact, he has never seen it but Dennis Schiergen finds this quite normal. "We're not tied to a team the way you are in Formula 1," he explains. The horse's trainer will tell him about any quirks the animal may have. "And then we'll have ten minutes to make friends," he adds.

You can tell that the excitement is slowly building in the young jockey – after all, there are over 5,000 spectators waiting to cheer the



Ready for the race: Dennis Schiergen puts on his jacket and heads for the start with his horse Future Security.



Photos: Alessandro Della Bella

riders on at this première. St. Moritz has a long tradition of horse racing: the first events were held in 1907. Since then, the White Turf has been a fixed annual meeting place for riders. No wonder: the races in the snow are without parallel, 1,850 metres above sea level and set in the incomparable mountain landscape. Silvio Martin Staub, president of the White Turf, sits in the referee's tower behind the terraces and looks down with satisfaction. The atmosphere is good, the seats in the grandstand are occupied by locals, equestrian sport fans and winter holiday-makers, all excited about this world première. All the VIP tickets have been sold and there are celebrities in the audience. "That's important for the prestige of the competition," says Staub.

Outside, it feels like the Arctic. The brightly clad jockeys mount their horses. The trainer of Dennis Schiergen's horse, Future Security, walks him up to the tent. The little man swings himself into the saddle, whip in hand, and disappears into the darkness with the other riders, heading for the starting point. The white plain of the race course glows against the shimmering skyline of St. Moritz and the surrounding mountain peaks. At 7pm, the starting signal sounds. Horses' hooves make a muffled, dull noise, snow swirls like dust, and the ground starts to shake as the riders approach: the first night-time sprint race in the snow! This is really a very special experience. The commentator explains the field to the audience, the ranking changes by the second – over 800 metres, it is an exciting



Skijöring is a traditional race where skiers are pulled on skis by horses.

race. The horses reach a speed of over 60 kilometres an hour over distances like these; you can feel their energy. It is a close race: Philippe Schärer's horse Boccilino wins, Future Security is tired and crosses the line second to last. Dennis Schiergen is sporting – his horse is better suited to longer courses, he says when he comes back. His most extraordinary experience at today's race? The 50 metres after the finish. "It wasn't lit up so it was like riding through a solid wall of darkness – unbelievable," he says.

The night is not over yet: the spectators are waiting for the skijöring. This particular sport has had a long tradition in the Engadin ever since 1906, when 13 skiers were pulled by riderless horses from St. Moritz to neighbouring Champfèr and back. Silvio Martin Staub has persuaded some world-class athletes to take part tonight: gymnast Ariella Kaeslin, triathlete Nicola Spirig, alpine ski racer Bruno Kernin and mountain biker Thomas

Frischknecht are roped to racehorses and pulled on skis over the snow. After a short break in the warm-up tent, Dennis Schiergen is back in the saddle, this time on American Life, with Thomas Frischknecht behind him. The crowd's excitement grows as the commentator announces the names of the celebrities. Schiergen and Frischknecht battle valiantly, but on this evening the skijöring is won by Ariella Kaeslin on gelding Sano di Pietro.

Dennis Schiergen says that his hands have never been so cold. Indeed, everyone is suffering: the spectator stands are freezing, too. Mulled wine and "Jägertee" help a bit against the cold, at least for the spectators. As for Dennis Schiergen, he is not going to have a late night tonight. He has a big day the day after tomorrow, at the White Turf daytime race. "New horse, new opportunity," he laughs as he disappears into the tent to exchange his silk tights for jeans.

Author: Robert Kittel

INFO

Night Turf
5.2.2016
White Turf
7., 14., 21.2.2016
Lake St. Moritz
www.whiteturf.ch

Photos: Giancarlo Cattaneo, Arnaud Delalande



Martin Staub, President of the White Turf

"HORSE RACING IS A BIT LIKE A VIRUS: YOU CAN NEVER QUITE GET RID OF IT."

Silvio Martin Staub has been President of the White Turf in St. Moritz since 2010. As a former participant and enthusiast of equestrian sports, he is dedicated to organising these spectacular events. He started the Night Turf, the first race to take place in the night-time on snow, in 2015.

Silvio Martin Staub, what was it that first drew you to equestrian sports? We're an old, established St. Moritz family, and mine is the third generation of the family to be actively involved in equestrian sports. We still own many racehorses. When I was a little boy, I

used to go to the races with my father. I actually first sat on a horse at the age of four, and I was instantly smitten. I grew up with this sport.

Were you active in the sport yourself? Yes, we had our own stables. I was the first Swiss owner of a horse in the Grand National, the world's most famous steeplechase. Horse racing is a bit like a virus: it's highly contagious, and you can never quite get rid of it!

What is your opinion – was the first Night Turf a success? The response was amazing, with a crowd of over 5,000. Of course, the Night Turf is something new and innovative, but it's by no means a given that guests will enjoy it. So I was really pleased with all the congratulations and good wishes we had for the première, and also with the number of enquiries about the second Night Turf in 2016.

How important is the supporting programme at such an event? Very important indeed, both for the sponsors and for the guests. You have to see it like this: you have a world exclusive event, but it takes place outside, at night, in winter, and at 1,850 metres above sea level – so it's very cold. Top-quality catering with champagne and a party with live acts and a DJ plus drinks is almost as important as an exciting race. The mood was fabulous on the night: the sponsors and guests couldn't have been happier. And you can already see the success: this year, Credit Suisse is supporting the White Turf for the 40th time, and BMW has been supporting us for decades. Where else do you find such loyal sponsors? It's sensational, as regards a lasting partnership.

What is your favourite White Turf anecdote? When Credit Suisse introduced the title "King of the Engadin" in skijöring in 1990. My father was the first person to win the trophy, and eight years later, at the tender age of just 22, I was the youngest ever winner of it.



A highlight of the St. Moritz winter: White Turf

SPARKLING FAIRYTALE LANDSCAPES

Children love being outdoors. Even – or especially – in winter. The snow is a playground, joy and challenge all in one. At the Suvretta Snowsports School, the little heroes of the ski run are in their element.



Photos: Romano Salis

Fan club: children are cheered on by friends and ski instructors for their final race.



What a to-do: children are being cheered on with “Zampuongs”, “Talacs” and “Schellas” (typical bells of the Engadin), and parents are motivating their offspring in every conceivable language. Filippo, whose ski boots are almost bigger than he is, wants the start number 100 (he gets 38), and Alexander decides at the last minute that he isn’t going to take part but would rather build a snowman. There is a colourful hustle and bustle in the white snow, because today is the day of the weekly ski race on the slope right behind the impressive Hotel Suvretta House in St. Moritz. A cold wind is blowing on this February morning but that does not bother these budding skiers.

“WE WANT CHILDREN TO ENJOY BEING IN THE SNOW.”

Patrik Wiederkehr, director of the Suvretta Snowsports School

For many children, this race is the end of a skiing holiday, while for others it is just one more step on their way to reaching the advanced level – but for all of them, it’s pure fun. Winter, snow and children are a tried-and-tested combination. By the time the first snowflakes start to fall in late autumn, the children’s eyes have started to shine. It’s hard for them to resist the snow – Patrik Wiederkehr, director of the Suvretta Snowsports School, can confirm it. Of course, it’s about the children learning to become responsible snow enthusiasts, growing beyond themselves, learning their own limits, achieving new goals. “But we also want them to simply enjoy the exercise and the snow.” Simply that – and especially in this environment. “This wonderfully fluffy, bright, shimmering whiteness that transforms our mountains into sparkling fairytale landscapes is something you have to experience,” says Patrik Wiederkehr.

For many children, this race is the end of a skiing holiday, while for others it is just one more step on their way to reaching the advanced level – but for all of them, it’s pure fun. Winter, snow and children are a tried-and-tested combination. By the time the first snowflakes start to fall in late autumn, the children’s eyes have started to shine. It’s hard for them to resist the snow – Patrik Wiederkehr, director of the Suvretta Snowsports School, can confirm it. Of course, it’s about the children learning to become responsible snow enthusiasts, growing beyond themselves, learning their own limits, achieving new goals. “But we also want them to simply enjoy the exercise and the snow.” Simply that – and especially in this environment. “This wonderfully fluffy, bright, shimmering whiteness that transforms our mountains into sparkling fairytale landscapes is something you have to experience,” says Patrik Wiederkehr.

The ski course is all about sharing the experience.



Mascot Snowli accompanies the children to the ski school, and is happy when the children receive their medals after the race.

John has come to the Engadin all the way from California so his son can learn to ski here. "I've heard that the teaching given by Swiss ski instructors is the best in the world," says the American. And why give children this experience anywhere else if they can have it in the most wonderful region in the world? Another family from the Zurich area is spending four weeks in the snow. The father is sure that not only will his offspring's health benefit, but that being on the slopes with other children is good for them. A feeling that is shared by ski instructor Jessica Pünchera. The former top athlete (she was highly successful on the international slalom scene) firmly believes that being together, lining up and sharing are a great opportunity for the children. The ski instructors focus on the child

and its requirements, expectations and individual prerequisites. Swiss Snowsports, the umbrella association of the snowsports schools, has published its own educational materials for snowsports lessons for children, using its mascot, "Snowli". It is important for them, say those responsible at the Suvretta Snowsports School, that their instructors are educated and trained according to the latest teaching principles.

Incidentally, Mascot Snowli is right up close to the budding racing skiers: at the skiing and snowboarding race on the Suvretta slope, he is busy encouraging the youngest ones. Even Filippo, who completes his first ski race with the number 38 and, almost bursting with pride, happily accepts his medal.

Author: Barbara Schellenberg



THE SWISS SKI SCHOOLS:

Suvretta Snowsports
Via Chasellas 1
7500 St. Moritz
T +41 81 836 61 61
www.suvretta-sports.ch/en

Swiss Ski School St. Moritz
Via Stredas 14
7500 St. Moritz
T +41 81 830 01 01
www.skischool.ch/en

THE MOST WONDERFUL WINTER ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN



* WINTER WALKS ON THE SCHELLENURSLIWEG

The Schellenursliweg with pictures and wooden sculptures telling the story of the Schellenursli runs from the Salastrains to the Heidi hut and on to St. Moritz Dorf. This gentle walk takes about 45 minutes. The snow is cleared from the path but the appropriate equipment is recommended for pushchairs. To get to the Schellenursliweg, either take the St. Moritz to Chantarella funicular or the Signal cable car.



* ICE SKATING

In St. Moritz, the ice rink at Via Ludains 5 is perfect for ice skating, hockey and curling. A good reason to venture out onto the ice.



* COACH RIDES IN ST. MORITZ

A ride over the frozen lake in a horse-drawn coach, through the snow-covered Stazerwald or through St. Moritz is a really special experience for children. Wrap up in rugs and furs and admire the scenery over the horses' backs.

www.engadin.stmoritz.ch/winter/en

* SKI AND SNOWBOARD COURSES

At the Swiss Snow League, children learn the basics of skiing. As beginners, they cover the principles of snowsports in the Blue League, then move on to the Red League to consolidate them, before finally becoming experts in the Swiss Snow Academy. The children and youngsters are taught by professional ski instructors who record their progress in personalised booklets.

www.skischool.ch/en/ski-school-st-moritz

* SLEDGING

As well as a number of smaller routes, there are three official sledging runs in the valley:

- **Muottas Muragl:** Over four kilometres long and with 20 curves, this leads from Muottas Muragl to Punt Muragl. Sledges can be hired at the valley station Muottas Muragl daily between 9.30 and 4.00 pm. The descent is suitable for children aged four upwards.
- **La Punt:** closed to cars in winter, the Albulastrasse offers 2.5 kilometres of sledging fun. But you have to earn it first: the only way to get to the start is on foot.
- **Zernez:** specially drawn sledges and a jeep pull guests up the mountain so they can sledge down the Munt Baselgia run.

* MUOTTAS MURAGL PLAY AREA

The playground at 2,456 metres above sea level offers budding mountaineers lots of fun. From the slide, to the climbing frame castle, to swings for toddlers – even in winter, there is everything that children love. And afterwards, the whole family can enjoy children's menus in the warm restaurant.



* FAMILY TICKET

Families always save with the Engadin St. Moritz Mountain Pools – in fact, the more children they have, the more they save. With a 5- to 14-day subscription, parents pay the official rate; the oldest child to 17 pays the children's or adolescent's rate, the second child to age 17 receives a 30 percent discount on the children's or adolescent's rate, and every other child up to age 17 goes free.

www.engadin.stmoritz.ch/winter/en/activities/sports/skiing-snowboarding/tickets



CUISINE

In winter, top chefs in St. Moritz and in the Engadin treat guests and locals to special delights, with dishes ranging from the rustic to the exclusive. We search out the best restaurants to suit all tastes, and discover culinary delights on the mountains and in the valley.

Photo: Romano Salis

Once an indoor tennis court, now a gourmet temple: "La Coupole" is notable for its exceptional interior architecture and the finest cuisine.

LA COUPOLE/MATSUHISA

A HAPPY PLACE

In the winter season, the Matsuhisa in "La Coupole", a branch of Nobu Matsuhisa's world-famous establishment, opens again in Badrutt's Palace Hotel.

We talk about the gourmet project with managing director Hans Wiedemann.



Matsuhisa's chefs transform products of the very best quality into Japanese-Peruvian delights.



ABOUT HANS WIEDEMANN

Hans Wiedemann took over Badrutt's Palace Hotel in 2004. Born in Basel, he is one of the most highly regarded hotel managers in Switzerland. He and his wife live in Badrutt's Palace so they can be there for their guests at all times.

ABOUT NOBUYUKI MATSUHISA

Nobu Matsuhisa's fusion cuisine, which combines Japan and South America, has made him world famous. He operates restaurants in the "Nobu" and "Matsuhisa" brands in metropolises around the globe, with the latter being reserved for only the most luxurious locations.

Launching a restaurant is easy. Find the location, then spend a million dollars to make it beautiful." Nobuyuki "Nobu" Matsuhisa's oft-cited words were not intended to provoke. Because the man from Saitama near Tokyo, now world famous for his Japanese-Peruvian fusion cuisine, also added: "But after the door is open, who makes it a happy place?" That is the question we want to ask Hans Wiedemann. Last year, the managing director of Badrutt's Palace Hotel opened "La Coupole", one of only a handful of restaurants in the world under the culinary patronage of the "Matsuhisa" brand. "Money is undoubtedly a part of it," replies Wiedemann, laughing.

English designers created the interior architecture of "La Coupole" out of the original tennis court, which dates from 1913. The old glass dome was made transparent and a separate kitchen installed. More than four years of planning went into the restaurant before Nobu Matsuhisa sent the first dishes out of the kitchen. For good luck, Wiedemann and Matsuhisa carried out all the necessary Japanese rituals, such as smashing barrels of salt.

And then the hard work began. Matsuhisa's cuisine requires top-quality products to be delivered fresh every day – so as to reach the brain as well as the palate, as head chef Boris D. Di Santo puts it. This is achieved with dishes such as sashimi with yuzu-soy vinaigrette, olive and sesame oil and a hint of garlic. "The guest should say 'Wow' and then they should just be speechless," says the chef, who spends the summers working on Mykonos, only returning when "La Coupole" opens again for the winter.

Hans Wiedemann has added an additional level of comfort to the establishment by setting the dress code as "smart casual". "Happiness just means having time," he says. "That's the greatest luxury of all." And that is what you find in "La Coupole", relaxing in a comfortable pair of jeans.

Author: Christian Krabichler

Photos: Romano Salis(3), ITP Images/ Verko Igrjatovic

F

or generations, refreshments at a bar or restaurant have been a welcome part of a day's skiing – and it is no different in St. Moritz. This region probably has the highest density of cosy restaurants, all with a few important things in common: excellent food, attentive service and idyllic views. So what distinguishes the establishments from each other and how can you tell which one is right for you? We have compiled a list of options so that everyone can find their favourite mountain hut. But as with all tips, the usual rule applies: the best place is the one where you feel most comfortable!



... SPORTS ENTHUSIASTS

Work first, then pleasure: these mountain huts are perfect for snow sports enthusiasts who like to earn their breaks.

FUORCLA SURLEJ

From early February until the middle of April, this cosy mountain hut is one of the most popular stopping-off places for skiers and ski tourers. It is not directly in the ski area but a little to the east of the Corvatsch middle station, 2,755 metres above sea level, easy to reach from the mountain station on skis or by snowboard. With breathtaking views of the famous ice giant Piz Bernina and the slightly smaller Piz Roseg, the hut offers an attractive menu that is perfect for weary sportspeople.

T +41 81 842 63 03

www.corvatsch.ch/en/gastronomy



JENATSCH HÜTTE

The Jenatsch Hütte is the highest mountain hut in the Swiss Alpine Club (Schweizer Alpen Club - SAC) in the Graubünden, far from the developed ski area. From the peak of the Piz Nair to the hut, it takes about three hours on skis, with an elevation gain of up to 600 metres. Although supplies have to be delivered by helicopter, hosts Claudia Drilling and Fridolin Vögeli offer fine cuisine at sensible prices. Guests often choose to stay overnight – there are two double rooms and three dormitories. A total of 75 people can spend the night here.

T +41 81 833 29 29

www.chamannajenatsch.ch

Photos: Robert Küttel, Marco Volken; Illustration: Arthur Bodenstein

MOUNTAIN RESTAURANTS

THE PERFECT HUT FOR ...

Bright blue skies, sparkling white mountain panorama, a glass of red wine with a cold platter “Grisson style”, a happy host and pleasant company: can there be anything better? Probably not, if you are skiing around St. Moritz. We present the loveliest mountain huts.





... GOURMETS

In winter, many of the mountain huts employ professional chefs who have received Gault & Millau points in previous years. Just the thing for pampered palates!

MATHIS FOOD AFFAIRS

Reto Mathis is the star among St. Moritz's celebrity chefs. His restaurant empire keeps growing, especially at the Corviglia mountain station, where his operations include the La Marmite gourmet establishment, at 2,486 metres the highest in this category. His specialities: truffle burgers, wasabi mashed potatoes and Corviglia snow (caviar on creamed potatoes). At the Lounge-Restaurant De Fät Moonk, Reto Mathis serves gourmet dishes in mini taster portions. Guests can choose their favourites from more than 20 Alpine dishes. Brand new: the futuristic "quattro BAR", developed in conjunction with Audi for the 2017 World Ski Championship. Linked to the Corviglia rack railway, the area is also very easy for non-skiers to reach.

T +41 81 833 63 55

www.mathisfood.ch/1/corviglia/la-marmite



Only the most elegant dishes are served in the gourmet restaurant La Marmite on Corviglia.

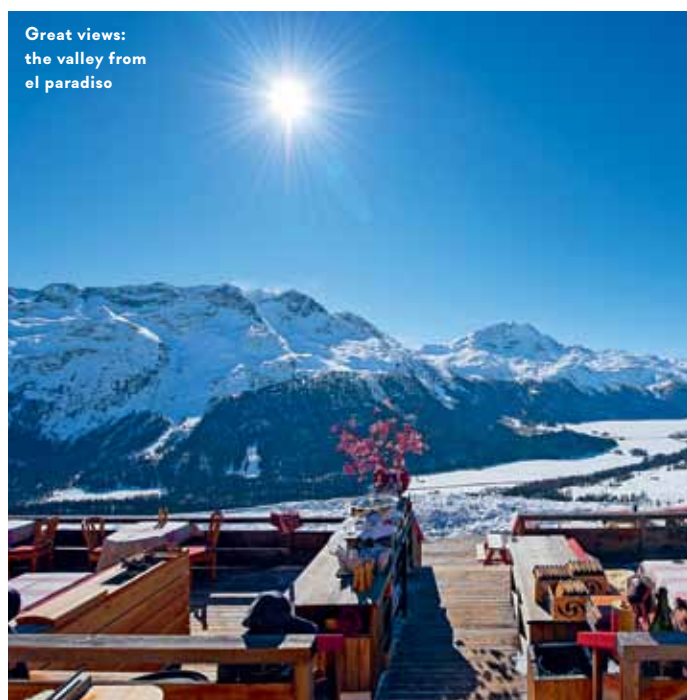


EL PARADISO

The el paradiso bar is situated by the Suvretta in the Corviglia ski area. In winter, the area run by host Hans-Jörg Zingg is like a village. The upper terrace is relaxed, while the Members Only area is exclusive. Head chef Markus Tuth combines the finest Engadin cuisine with Italian and French elements. In good weather, el paradiso becomes a club: a DJ plays music while guests enjoy their drinks and sun themselves in original Sylt wicker beach chairs. Unique: the fabulous views of the Engadin mountains and lakes.

T +41 81 833 40 02

www.el-paradiso.ch/english-home.396.0.html



Great views: the valley from el paradiso

Photos: PR (7), Robert Kittel (2); Illustrations: Artur Bodenstein



KUHSTALL

The name, which means "cowshed", says it all: in summer, the hut performs its duty as a cowshed, while in winter Freddie Zwimpfer leases the area from the town of Sils to cater for up to 100 guests. At lunchtime, there's elegant dining either inside or out on the sun terrace; in the evening the hut is transformed into an event location with fine Engadin specialities and

buzzing parties. Freddie's "Gifttischli" with 20 different varieties of grappa is legendary. At weekends, the chef himself is the DJ. As the hut is in the Furtschellas ski area, after their meal guests either walk back down into the valley by lantern light or take a sledge.

T +41 81 838 73 73

www.corvatsch.ch/en/gastronomy

... ROMANTICS

Lovebirds and people who simply like cosy spots and romantic views will find plenty of choice for huts in and around St. Moritz.



ALPETTA

Almost everyone in the Engadin knows the host of the Alpetta Hut: Dorigo Ritz à Porta is a legend. Together with his wife Silvia, Dorigo runs this comfortable establishment on the Corvatsch like a second home for his guests. Most of those who come to dine and enjoy some time out know the couple anyway, so they sit together enjoying the wonderful views, the sun and Dorigo's specialities, some of which are prepared outside in the old stone oven. Dorigo's cuisine is a combination of Italian and Romansh; there's polenta from a copper pot, fondue, raclette and venison from his own hunt. The Alpetta is also open on Friday evenings during Snow Night.

T +41 81 828 86 30,

www.alpetta.ch



SALASTRAINS

The hotel and restaurant Salatrains lies above St. Moritz Dorf, in the Corviglia ski area. This is a place with a history: the founder of the first Swiss ski school, Giovanni Testa, had a block house built here where he could look after his pupils. Today it is run by the Kleger family. The two terraces with the afternoon sun and views of Piz Roseg and Piz Corvatsch are among the most romantic places in St. Moritz. Specialities include ibex sausage, saddle of chamois and venison, caught on the hotel's own hunts.

T +41 81 830 07 07

new.salastrains.ch/?lang=en



... FAMILIES

Two things matter to families visiting a mountain hut: a relaxed atmosphere and food that appeals to all ages.

PIZZERIA CHADAFÖ

This cosy pizzeria is situated at 2,278 metres in Marguns, above Celerina. All kinds of pizzas are served in the friendly restaurant and on the terrace – from a wood-fired oven, of course. In addition to all the classics, it also serves Engadin creations such as “Pizza Alp Marguns”, with the finest Alpine cheese. There are also “Lady Size” pizzas, which are 3 francs cheaper. Children will love the large play area with its giant swing, trampoline and bouncy castle.

T +41 81 839 80 20

www.marguns.ch/en

LA CHÜDERA

The mountain restaurant La Chüdera is situated in the Furtshellas ski area and is divided into three parts: an à la carte restaurant, a self-service area and a coffee lounge. All three offer wonderful views over the Engadin's lake landscape. The pasta dishes are all highly recommended – the pasta is freshly made here every day. The end of February sees the “mussels weeks” at the La Chüdera, when it serves all types of fresh mussels.

T +41 81 838 73 55

www.corvatsch.ch/en/gastronomy

BERGRESTAURANT TRUTZ

The Trutz at the Suvretta-Randolins mountain station is a classic St. Moritz mountain hut. Austrian chef Röbi serves up excellent home cooking in the self-service area and in the restaurant with service. The self-service area and large terrace are particularly good for hungry children.

T +41 81 833 70 30

<http://www.suvrettahouse.ch/en/80/default.aspx>



Pizzas from the wood-fired oven taste even better in the cosy atmosphere of the Chadafö.



Diners of all ages love the fresh pasta dishes served at La Chüdera.



The Trutz mountain hut delights guests with schnitzels and other good, plain dishes.

Photos: Gian Giovannoli/kma-fotografie.ch, Robert Kittel (2), 13 Photo/Salvatore Vinci; Illustrations: Artur Bodenstein



... RUSTICITY

Many mountain hut visitors appreciate the simplicity and tradition of these mountain restaurants. These guests will also find their personal favourites here.

LEJ DA LA PËSCH

This little stop-off point is on the back of the Piz Nair, which makes it ideal for a rest when skiing from the Piz Nair mountain station to the Fuorcla Grischia piste. It has a pretty terrace and a comfortable parlour inside, which is particularly pleasant and cosy on cold winter days. The rustic menu includes barley soup, rösti, veal sausage with onion gravy and chips.

T +41 79 610 50 19

www.piznair.ch/en/gastronomy



GLÜNETTA

This cosy mountain hut is in Marguns, at the foot of the Glüna chair lift. It offers Engadin speciality dishes such as rösti and raclette, and has a popular sun terrace.

T +41 81 839 80 30

www.engadin.stmoritz.ch/winter/en/gastronomie/glunetta

MURTEL

This large, self-service restaurant at the Corvatsch middle station is the hub of the ski area. It serves pizza from a wood-fired oven, fast-food classics, a large salad buffet and much more.

T +41 81 838 73 83

www.corvatsch.ch/en/gastronomy

CHAMANNA

The Chamanna is a mountain station with a terrace that is protected from the wind, and a rustic restaurant. It is situated on the Corviglia near the Munt da San Murezzan lift, and offers all the traditional mountain hut classics. Rösti Chamanna with cheese, bacon, cervelat, ham and fried egg is hugely popular. Guests particularly appreciate the lovely location and excellent value for money.

T +41 79 682 50 80

www.suvrettahouse.ch/en



SIGNAL STÜBLI

The authentic Signal Stübli is a classic for a quick bite. It is situated near the cable car mountain station on the Corviglia. Winter sports enthusiasts appreciate the plain regional dishes that offer excellent quality at good prices. The impressive views from the sun terrace are free.

T +41 81 833 11 38

www.engadin.stmoritz.ch/winter/en/gastronomie/signal-stuebli



PANORAMA RESTAURANT CORVATSCH

This panorama restaurant at the top of the Corvatsch is 3,303 metres above sea level, making it the highest restaurant in the Eastern Alps. Guests are pampered with good, plain food, regional classics, home-made cakes and unique views.

T +41 81 838 73 60

www.corvatsch.ch/en/gastronomy

CHRISTIAN KRABICHLER SITS DOWN WITH

ANJA AND HANS-JÖRG ZINGG

The sun terrace of
el paradiso is perfect
for relaxing and offers
fabulous views
of the valley.

“El paradiso” serves everything, from sausages to a Burgundy that is sought after the world over – because, after all, paradise is for everyone. The Zingg family has been serving up a piece of heaven in one of the prettiest mountain huts in St. Moritz for 17 years.

If you want to go to paradise, you can actually find it down here on earth because it is at 2,181 metres, completely surrounded by snow, and not far from the valley station of the Randolins four-seater chair lift. When people see it for the first time, they usually take off their goggles and rub their eyes: there is a tiny bridge, a reception desk, wicker beach chairs, charmingly decorated terraces with views of snow-covered forests and sparkling ski slopes running down to the valley and back to the Piz Corvatsch. What Anja and Hans-Jörg Zingg

have created up here on the Corviglia is their vision of the “top of the mountains”. “If you say St. Moritz, then it has to be St. Moritz,” says Hans-Jörg Zingg. “But that’s not to say that everything has to be about luxury. Merely that even ‘just’ a pizza in St. Moritz simply has to be the best available.” And offering the best is what motivates the restaurateur and his wife Anja.

Having said that, the “best” up here on the mountain is relative: the skiing enthusiast wants somewhere to restore energy levels and get back onto the runs as quickly as possible,

while the holiday-maker wants to sit at a table in the sun and forget about the rest of the world. That is why the Zinggs have realised a very special concept at the “el paradiso” that ensures all its guests find what they want. “It’s a bit like an aeroplane. The trip – that is, the product – is the same for everyone. It’s the setting that’s always different,” explains Hans-Jörg Zingg. Which means that guests who are in a hurry opt for the “SkiIn” – snacks such as sausages, soup, sandwiches or the popular cream slice that can be enjoyed at the bar or in one of the 20 original Sylt wicker beach chairs to the accompaniment of sounds from the hut’s own DJ.

In fine weather, good, plain food is also served on the top deck – the restaurant terrace – or when it is not so pleasant, in the cosy “El Establo” restaurant under the roof by the open fire. In peak season, “el paradiso” offers three service times. The first starts at 11.00am, the second at 12.15pm and the third and last at 13.45pm. Early birds who choose the first service until 12.15pm will receive a 20% discount on the entire offer.

More discerning travellers will opt for the “Club” on the lower deck. This is probably the most sophisticated sun terrace in the whole of Switzerland, where guests can wrap themselves in cosy blankets and enjoy exquisite cuisine along with the fabulous views of the valley. The menu includes an excellent choice of dishes that combine the traditions of the Engadin with influences from international cuisine. “From the beginning, we wanted to offer classic, down-to-earth cooking, but also an ambitious one with fresh products that are appropriate to our unique position,” says Hans-Jörg Zingg. That includes a wine list with almost 700 selections that has received numerous awards from international experts. Anja Zingg provides expert information on the offer. “Our guests can choose from our extensive range of everything, from carefully selected, undemanding wines to absolute rarities,” she says.

To stay with the aeroplane analogy, the Club and its terraces would be First Class. Members of the establishment’s “St. Tropitz

Mountain Circle” have priority when making a reservation but non-members can book one of two service times (11.30am until 13.45pm and 14.00pm until sunset), if there is capacity. Depending on the season, guests pay a club fee of 15 to 25 francs per person and service time. And, again depending on availability, those who wish to enjoy the Club’s facilities for the whole day can purchase a day’s membership.

For private events such as weddings, company celebrations or simply for a “tête-à-tête”, “el paradiso” will open in the evenings exclusively for anything from two to 300 guests. And in whichever of the sun-kissed terraces or cosy rooms you decide to spend your time at “el paradiso”, the restaurant’s 12 chefs and the rest of the dedicated 50-strong crew will ensure that you feel as if you were in First Class throughout. “Our claim is quality time for the guest,” emphasises Hans-Jörg Zingg. This is evident in every fibre of “el paradiso”, from the modern wooden architecture, uncomplicated atmosphere and friendly service, to the exclusive cuisine. It is important to the Zingg family to remain grounded even when in paradise, and that is why they take themselves and their little son off for a holiday in their caravan in the spring, when “el paradiso” takes a break before the summer season. They then return to the mountain to serve their guests a daily piece of heaven, up high in the paradise of St. Moritz.

Author: Christian Krabichler



Anja (centre) and Hans-Jörg Zingg (right) with Food writer Christian Krabichler in the wine cellar of the “el paradiso”

Photos: Romano Salis

INFO

Bergrestaurant
el paradiso
Via Engiadina/
Randolins
T +41 81 833 4002
www.el-paradiso.ch

ST. MORITZ GOURMET FESTIVAL

WELCOME TO JAPANESE CUISINE

Taste tomorrow's global culinary trends today, at the Gourmet Festival in St. Moritz. In 2016, organiser Reto Mathis will bring Japanese cuisine to the Engadin, celebrated by top international chefs.

It reads like a *Who's Who?* of global top cuisine: the list of top chefs who have attended the St. Moritz Gourmet Festival. Since 1994, the stars of the best hotels have shone especially brightly in the winter, when top chefs from New York, Tokyo, London and Paris arrive at St. Moritz to conjure up their latest dishes. The food festival is far more than a gala of good taste: the European barometer for global gastronomy trends is set here, at dinners, cookery parties and tastings. The elite of the world's best-known restaurants do the cooking themselves – chefs such as Wolfgang Puck from “Spago”, Hollywood's favourite meeting place, or Massimo Bottura, the great innovator from Modena, or Dieter Müller, who was awarded the third Michelin star for the Schlosshotel Lerbach near Cologne.

Heading the organisation of the event is Reto Mathis, a top chef and, as the owner of “La Marmite” on Corviglia, the inventor of “Fine Mountain Dining”. Mathis is a fan of Japan, which is why “Yokoso Nippon” (“Welcome, Japan”) will be the watchword



Members of the British cookery elite (above) were special guests at the 2015 St. Moritz Gourmet Festival, while the motto for 2016 is “Yokoso Nippon”.



One of Reto Mathis's specialities is “Reto's Truffle Pizza”, a *tarte flambée* with truffles.

Photos: Swiss-image.ch (2), Mathis Food Affairs (1)

INFO

St. Moritz Gourmet Festival
25–29.1.2016
www.stmoritz-gourmetfestival.ch/en

WINTER 2015/2016 ST. MORITZ



ABOUT RETO MATHIS

Reto Mathis is one of the founders of the St. Moritz Gourmet Festival and the culinary mentor and president of the organisation that is supported by leading hotels. He has been running various gastronomic establishments at Corviglia for 22 years, including the gourmet restaurant “La Marmite”. He also sells his own line of products and runs a catering company:

www.mathisfood.ch

between 25 and 29 January 2016 in the Engadin. “A fascinating nation,” says Mathis, “totally committed to quality. Most people know sushi and sashimi but Japanese cuisine has far more to offer. There's an amazing variety.” Mathis has engaged the best chefs from Munich, Paris, Nice, Barcelona and, of course, Japan for the St. Moritz Gourmet Festival 2016. What they all share, says Mathis, is that at this, the 23rd festival, they will be demonstrating where Japanese cuisine is now and where it is going. “These chefs are creative and innovative. The accuracy and precision with which they work is breathtaking.”

The Gourmet Festival has always been a signpost to cookery trends of the future. “It's where you come when you want to learn something,” chuckles Mathis. In 2015 he gave international gourmets an amazing experience by inviting the most interesting representatives of British cuisine – convincing even die-hard sceptics with this “British Edition”. What is important for the quality of the festival is the network that Mathis and his helpers have

created over the past 23 years, and which should come into its own in the “Nippon” version of the event. “What really connects us to the Japanese in St. Moritz is our dedication to quality,” says Mathis – the refusal to compromise when it comes to standards of service and quality. And there is plenty of both at the Gourmet Festival. As the chefs either bring their suppliers and sources with them, or benefit from the existing network of top local gastronomy, the matter of logistics for fresh ingredients is perfectly straightforward. “The world has shrunk,” says Mathis. “Everything we need can be flown in within 24 hours.”

While preparations for the 2016 Festival are well under way, Reto Mathis is already thinking about next year: the 2017 Gourmet Festival will take place just before the Alpine World Ski Championship in St. Moritz in February. And if Reto Mathis has his way, the meeting of the ski sports elite will be preceded by another world-class event: the 24th meeting of top cookery athletes.

Author: Christian Krabichler

Champagne (with a capital 'C') comes from the Champagne, a wine-growing region north-east of Paris.



CUVÉE ST. MORITZ

SPARKLING PLEASURE

Champagne and St. Moritz were practically made for each other. But you have to serve a very special cuvée here, at the top of the world.

Blanc de Blancs, by Pierre Gimonnet & Fils, became the new Champagne for St. Moritz on 1 September 2015. We talk to vintner Didier Gimonnet and Sabine Schurr of Champagner House Switzerland about this fine wine.

Sabine Schurr, you are the licenced partner for the distribution of the official St. Moritz Champagne. Why was Pierre Gimonnet & Fils chosen?

Sabine Schurr (SS): We felt it was important to find a vintner who differentiates himself from the mass of perfectly pleasant, well-known houses that are listed on the stock market. There are certain independent family companies such as Pierre Gimonnet & Fils in the Champagne that produce fabulous cuvées. "Cuvée St. Moritz" is a fruity-fresh Blanc de Blancs made 100 percent from the Chardonnay grape. It's suitable for almost any occasion,



Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Pinot Meunier are the most important grape varieties for champagne.



Available at:
Terra Vino St. Moritz
Via Serlas 20
7500 St. Moritz
www.terra-vino.ch



"Cuvée St. Moritz" is a fruity-fresh Blanc de Blancs.

Photos: Pierre Gimonnet & Fils, Fridolin Speich, Burda Atelier

CUISINE

from aperitifs at the hotel bar, to starters, fish or poultry, to dessert. At the first tasting, we also found that the Champagne develops its full flavour in high-alpine country at 1,850 metres above sea level. That was important, because altitude greatly influences the sense of taste.

What do you think makes a good Champagne?

Didier Gimonnet (DG): Harmony takes priority over intensity.

SS: A good Champagne is cleanly pressed, has its own signature, a fine perlage and "doesn't die in the glass". In other words, it develops over time, releasing aromas that weren't in the foreground at the beginning. Not unlike a good perfume with its top and middle notes.

What's the best way to enjoy Champagne?

DG: The right glass is very important – it can influence both the flavour and our sense of taste. Champagne flutes are often used. That's absolutely fine: they show the bubbles at their best. More and more often, though, I prefer to taste Champagne in wine glasses. The temperature is also very important. The Champagne mustn't be ice cold as that spoils the flavour. A temperature of nine to ten degrees is best.

SS: Champagne should be stored cool, flat and, most importantly, away from the light. The cork should glide out smoothly when you open it. It doesn't need to pop – that's not how it's done, it wastes far too much of the precious Champagne!

Why do St. Moritz and Champagne go so well together? DG: Pierre Gimonnet & Fils radiates exclusivity, like St. Moritz. It's not an international brand but rather a Champagne for select connoisseurs. I am very proud to say we make genuine "haute couture". Something else that St. Moritz and our Champagne have in common is the association with soil and land. I see the partnership as a specific expression of our expertise and of our desire to excel. At the same time, it's a major challenge, one that encourages us to always give our best.

Interview: Yasmine Sailer



ABOUT SABINE SCHURR

Sabine Schurr's enthusiasm for Champagne began with her first taste from her mother's glass. Before she turned her passion into her profession, she studied at the University of St. Gallen and then worked in private banking. With Champagner House Switzerland, she wants to share the fascination of vintner Champagnes with consumers in Switzerland.

www.champagnerhouse.ch



ABOUT DIDIER UND OLIVIER GIMONNET

The Gimonnet brothers cultivate 28 hectares of vineyards owned by the family for generations. They inherited their passion for first-class Champagne from their father Pierre, as well as the vineyards, some of which are over 100 years old. "We believe our growing area is a natural masterpiece," says Didier Gimonnet. With its strong, unmistakable identity, their Champagne reflects this masterpiece.



NATURAL BEAUTY

“According to Plato, beauty is a reflection of ideas. In other words, open your eyes and study nature,” said the Swiss artist Ferdinand Hodler, who often took inspiration from the mountain world of the Engadin. We follow his advice, and set off to explore the winter landscape of St. Moritz.

Photo: Alessandro Della Bella

Cats like to hunt their prey in the dark. Even in the dead of night, they can see things that we cannot. Photographer Alessandro Della Bella often feels like a cat when he moves through the night, through nature, with his digital camera, always on the hunt – although what he is looking for is the perfect motif, rather than animals. One of the most ambitious landscape photographers in Switzerland, Della Bella is a fan of the Engadin. His current project is called “Helvetia by Night”, which has produced not only a book but also several short films, some of which have been seen by over a million people. Alessandro Della Bella knows Switzerland like the back of his hand: over the past twelve years, he has photographed almost the entire country, as well as athletes, politicians and CEOs. First for the daily Schweizer Tages-Anzeiger newspaper, then for eight years with Keystone, the country’s biggest picture agency. He is now a freelance photographer and captures the beauty of the Swiss mountain world at night. He shot the Night Turf St. Moritz for the St. Moritz Magazin.

His images require a great deal of time and strength: when the 37-year-old photographer sets off to work, it is like going on a mission. On his back he carries tripods, numerous lenses and four to six cameras, all stored in padded thermal bags, then a whole load of batteries, and in his head a rough plan of what should happen over the next few hours. So why the fascination? What drives a person to spend up to ten solid hours capturing the stars passing through the sky and then

editing the results for hours to produce a film? “At first, it’s quite stressful, of course, getting everything organised and finding the right settings. But at some point it also becomes something meditative,” says Della Bella. He sits beside his camera and experiences a tremendous feeling of gratitude for what he has on his memory cards. “The most fascinating thing is, of course, the interplay between nature and light, the contrast between the clear night sky, and then suddenly clouds and mist appear,” he adds. He is a fan of time-lapse techniques. A whole night can be reduced to a 60-second film. You see the moon rise and watch it slowly passing across the sky, while trains, cars and piste caterpillars shoot through the night, perceived only as lights.

Della Bella loves Switzerland. “I’ve been to many places in the world, but for me there’s nowhere better to live or take photographs,” he says. The Engadin and its impressive mountain world are especially important to him. The photographer tells us how he took the last cable railway up Muottas Muragl and spent the whole night filming and taking photos. He believes that there is something magical about the mountains, especially those of the Engadin. The photos of the Piz Corvatsch and the Bernina massif with the Piz Roseg can be admired in his book “Helvetia by Night”. They are magical pictures with a tremendous energy that shows us one thing above all else: the breathtaking landscape and an architecture that is shaped by nature and will always be stronger than anything created by man.

Author: Robert Kittel

Photo: Alessandro Della Bella

LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

GONE HUNTING

The Engadin is not only popular with sports people, lovers of the outdoors and of nature, but this high-alpine region is also the perfect hunting ground for photographers. Mountains, lakes and the magical light blend here to create motifs that professional photographers capture in breathtaking images.

Alessandro Della Bella's photograph shows the view from Piz Nair over St. Moritz Bad.



WINTER 2015/2016 ST. MORITZ

Della Bella's favourite motif: the beauty of the Engadin mountain world by night



"FOR ME, THERE IS NO LOVELIER COUNTRY THAN SWITZERLAND."

Alessandro Della Bella, photographer



ALESSANDRO'S TIPS FOR PHOTOGRAPHING STARS

- ★ The requirements are a stable tripod, a fast lens and a clear night with no moon.
- ★ Use the live-view function to focus in the dark.
- ★ Manual exposure: for dot-shaped stars set ISO 3200, f2.8 and 20 seconds exposure, for stellar paths ISO 100, f8 and 60 minutes exposure.
- ★ Make sure your batteries are fully charged before you start.
- ★ Warm, functional clothing is essential for a photo safari in the mountains.
- ★ If you want to take photographs in the countryside, you must respect the habitats of hares, ibex and other wild animals.

The mountain panorama in Della Bella's photography looks almost out of this world.



Alessandro Della Bella is not the only person who loves the Engadin for nature photography. Several other professional and amateur photographers also live in and around St. Moritz. We present three of them in a short interview.

Renzo Papini (45)

Renzo Papini is actually an electrical planner, but takes photos at least twice a week in his spare time. He was born in Samedan, grew up in Celerina, and has lived in St. Moritz with his family since 1996.

Why is photography your passion? I've always been fascinated by photography, ever since I first started using a compact camera as a teenager.



Renzo Papini focuses on landscape photography.

I bought a digital reflex camera in 2008 and I've been doing more photography. My main subjects are landscape and macro photography.

Your favourite spot in the Engadin? There are so many but if I had to choose, then it would be the Val Morteratsch. In spring because of the pretty pioneer plants

that grow in the glacier forefield, in autumn for the golden larch trees and the lovely colours. The mountain stream Ova da Morteratsch and the Morteratsch glacier with the Bernina Group in the background are rewarding motifs at any time of the year.

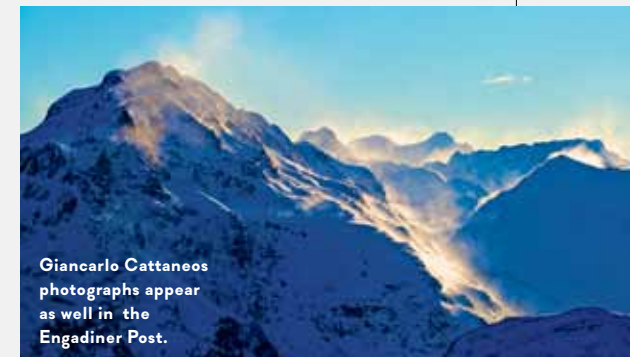
Giancarlo Cattaneo (66)

Giancarlo Cattaneo is a freelance photographer and picture correspondent for the Engadiner Post newspaper. He has spent almost his entire life in St. Moritz.

What do you like most about the Engadin? The aura, the harmony and the light.

Your best photographic experience? Surprisingly, it was not in the Engadin, but a medical mission in West Nepal with Dr. Katrin Hagen in 2013.

Why did you become a photographer? I want to share the best I can do with other people.



Giancarlo Cattaneo's photographs appear as well in the Engadiner Post.

Romano Salis (24)

The photographer and aspiring mountain guide in the Engadin was born in Pontresina, and lives in Maloja. He takes the photos for many of the stories in this magazine.

Why did you become a photographer? Photography allows me to be creative. It is highly varied work where you can make all the decisions yourself.

Your favourite place to take photos in the Engadin? All of the Engadin is photogenic, so I don't really have a favourite place. I like the variety of nature, particularly peaks and steep terrain.

Your best photographic experience? Sadly, I haven't been able to capture the best moments with my camera. They are encounters with animals where you are so surprised that you only have time to stand and admire them.



Romano Salis usually takes photos in his home, the Engadin.

Photos: Alessandro Della Bella (2), Robert Kittel, Giancarlo Cattaneo, Renzo Papini, Romano Salis

UNIQUE IN THE WORLD

AMAZING NATURAL DISPLAY

It glides, majestically and slowly – a snake of fog, a band of cloud that crawls through the Engadin to Muottas Muragl. Seeing the “Maloja snake” is a remarkable experience in the natural world. Alfred Riederer, Bürgermeister of St. Moritz and keen amateur meteorologist, explains this weather phenomenon.

The Maloja snake is an elongated band of cloud on the south side of the Engadin.

Alfred Riederer, how did the Maloja snake get its name? Maloja is a village 20 kilometres west of St. Moritz, between the Engadin and the next valley Bergell. The weather phenomenon develops in this village and then returns to it. It's called a “snake” because the extremely long, narrow band of cloud looks like the reptile.

How does this natural wonder occur? Several factors have to happen simultaneously. First, the valley wind in Bergell has to blow moist, warm air towards the Maloja Pass. Due to the topography there, this warm air rises and, at about 2,200 metres, meets cooler air that absorbs less moisture. This constellation then creates a cloud. And if a west wind is blowing

at the same time, the cloud is driven down to the valley. It then crawls along the west side of the Engadin, getting longer, like a snake. And when the “snake's head” reaches the face of Muottas Muragl, the band of cloud stays still for almost exactly 20 minutes. Then the mountain wind very slowly moves the clouds back again, dissolving them at the Maloja Pass.

So it takes a combination of differences in temperature, moisture and west wind. How often does it happen? It's extremely unusual to have the right combination. The last time I saw it was a few years ago. And when the snake does appear, the challenge is to identify it – it's often mistaken for the so-called “Südstau” on the Corviglia side. The clouds look very similar but there is one main difference: whereas the “Südstau” is a bad weather phenomenon, the Maloja snake doesn't bring rain. So there's no truth in the Engadin saying, “La serp de Malögia porta plövgia” (“The Maloja snake brings rain”)!

Why does this natural spectacle only occur in the Engadin? The reason is the particular direction of the Engadin valley, which is unique in the world: a valley that runs from north-east to south-west, in which the river runs in the opposite direction. Then there is the height, between 1,700 and 2,000 metres above sea level. These weather phenomena can only develop because of this geography.

What do you think is the loveliest place to observe these natural spectacles? The best place to observe the phenomenon is at the village of Grevasalvas above Lake Maloja, from the Julier Pass or from the Corviglia/Piz Nair. Wonderful!



ABOUT ALFRED RIEDERER

Alfred Riederer was born and grew up in St. Moritz. His hobbies are meteorology and flying, which is when he has often encountered the Maloja snake. Alfred Riederer became Bürgermeister of St. Moritz on 1 January 2015.

How did you come to study meteorology? Through flying. I trained to be a pilot in 1978, and one of the seven subjects I was tested in was meteorology. I failed the test! So then I studied the subject in depth – it fascinated me, and so I stayed with it.

Would you tell us what your favourite places are in the countryside around St. Moritz? When I have the time, you'll find me in the ski area, even in summer. On Munt da San Murezzan, Piz Nair, Corviglia. Or in the Brattas forest, where I live, north of St. Moritz.

Interview: Yasmine Sailer

THE FASCINATION OF THE MALOJA SNAKE

The Maloja snake is one of the natural wonders of the Engadin. Not only meteorologists are fascinated by it: poets and thinkers, too, like Friedrich Nietzsche and Hermann Hesse, were inspired by the phenomenon. In 1924, the German Alpinist and mountain film pioneer Arnold Fanck documented the natural spectacle with his camera, and the mysterious band of cloud also plays a starring role in the 2014 film “Die Wolken von Sils Maria” (“The Clouds of Sils Maria”) by Olivier Assayas.

Photo: Kurt Schibler



Photo: 13 Photo/Edgar Herbst

CULTURE

Engadin-lover Friedrich Nietzsche knew it: “Without music, life would be a mistake.” Life in St. Moritz is full of music – whether it is classical at the New Year’s concerts given by the Sinfonia Engiadina orchestra, or popular at the clubs and bars of the resort’s lively nightclub scene, or pulsating basses at the electro festival St. Moritz Music Summit.

SINFONIA ENGIADINA

MUSICAL NEW YEAR'S EVE

The old year is ushered out by classical accompaniment in St. Moritz: Schubert, Weber, Haydn – and Marc Andreae. We talk to the renowned conductor and viola player Marlène Züsli-Spahr about the Sinfonia Engiadina orchestra, concerts in a high-alpine setting, and about the kind of music that goes with Champagne on New Year's Eve.



A well-established team (left): Marlène Züsli-Spahr and Marc Andreae



The members of the orchestra meet only once a year for the four concerts in the Engadin.



Photos: Stefan Sieber (2), Romano Salis (1)

Every type of music has its special place – and when we ask what St. Moritz sounds like at the end of the year, Marc Andreae answers without hesitation: “We’re playing the overture to the ‘Freischütz’, the opera by Carl Maria von Weber. It’s about things that are relevant to us in the Engadin – forest scenes, the infamous ‘Wolfsschlucht’ gorge, hunters, a storm, magical events in a romantic area.” By “we”, Andreae means the Sinfonia Engiadina orchestra, which was founded 30 years ago by organiser and concert master Markus Strasser. The orchestra only meets once a year for rehearsals and concerts in St. Moritz and the surrounding area; the musicians are like a family scattered around the globe, connected by friendships and other commitments in the world’s most famous concert halls. Soloists so far have included big names in the world of classical music: Russian violinist Boris Belkin, his German colleagues Isabelle Faust and Viviane Hagner, pianists Elisabeth Leonskaja and Gerhard Oppitz, cellist Antonio Meneses – and Marc Andreae, the internationally renowned conductor. “We’re all friends, and we look forward to meeting up in the Engadin all year,” says the maestro.

This is Marc Andreae’s 26th year of leading the Sinfonia Engiadina. Coming from a Swiss family of musicians, he is the orchestra’s musical spiritus rector and conductor; he has for years been the principal conductor of the Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana and is regularly found on the podium in Milan, Leipzig or London. His grandfather Volkmar Andreae was a composer and for 43 years director of the

Zürich Tonhalle. Now his orchestral works have been rediscovered, conducted and recorded on three CDs by his grandson. Marc Andreae has owned an apartment in Sils-Maria for decades, and is very much at home in the Engadin. Are we likely to meet the maestro himself on the ski slopes between rehearsals and concerts? “Oh yes, I love it. And cross-country skiing over the frozen lakes is a fabulous sport. But I’d love to learn to skate,” he adds.

Viola player Marlène Züsli-Spahr is someone else who would not want to miss the end of the year in the Engadin. “Audiences are always thrilled by the world-class soloists and

“WE LOOK FORWARD ALL YEAR TO THE CONCERTS IN THE ENGADIN.”

Marc Andreae, conductor of the Sinfonia Engiadina

the orchestra’s high standards. I came to the Sinfonia for the first time in 1991 after studying the viola at the Zürich Conservatory of Music, and I haven’t missed a year since. We all hold Marc Andreae in very high regard – he knows exactly how it should sound and he also allows his musicians plenty of space and freedom. We only have four rehearsals but Andreae can shape a wonderful sound in this short time.” This winter is the first that the orchestra will also include the world-famous



Marc Andrae has been conducting concerts by the Sinfonia Engiadina for over 25 years.

trumpeter Reinhold Friedrich as a soloist, according to Marc Andrae, “to play Joseph Haydn’s brilliant and festive Concert for Trumpet and Orchestra. And the main work this year will be Franz Schubert’s Symphony in C Major, a great favourite of us all.” The special skill of the Sinfonia is to give vigour and passion to the music even when they are playing in locations that are not officially concert halls. The conductor sees this as a challenge: “The halls where orchestras performed at the time of our major composers from the Classical and Romantic eras were also small and not always ideal.” And this is more than compensated for by the emotions that music never fails to stir, especially on New Year’s Eve, says Andrae. “What a special time! In the Engadin, one of the loveliest places in the world, between Christmas and New Year, one’s thoughts turn to the end of a full, busy year and to one’s hopes for the new one.”

All that remains is to ask what music we should listen to on New Year’s Eve, if we are not able to enjoy the delights of the Sinfonia

ABOUT MARC ANDRAE

Born in Zurich to parents who were pianists, Marc Andrae, 75, studied the piano and conducting. The grandson of the well-known Swiss composer Volkmart Andrae has worked with many of the world’s most renowned orchestras. He has a particular passion for premières by modern composers and for discovering and performing unknown works by the great masters. Maestro Andrae has been closely associated with the Sinfonia Engiadina since 1989.

Engiadina concerts. Andrae’s reply: “The Champagne aria from Mozart’s ‘Don Giovanni’. Or the Champagne Gallop by Johann Strauss, the Elder.” And, of course, the Engadin’s New Year’s greeting: “Bun di bun an!”

Author: Christian Krabichler

Photo: Stefan Sieber



NIGHTLIFE

BAR CULTURE AND PULSATING BASS SOUNDS

Nightlife in St. Moritz gained cult status in the Sixties and Seventies. So what is it like today? And how does it feel to go to a party at 1,850 metres above sea level? We drift through the night, meeting people with new ideas who breathe life into the old myth.

Photo: Badrut's Palace PR

Stories from the past always sound legendary, maybe also because we like to cast a veil of nostalgia over our memories. But the nightlife of St. Moritz truly was legendary. In the Sixties and Seventies it attained a status that could only be matched by places like St. Tropez, Marbella and New York. Gunter Sachs, in particular, was responsible for creating the myth around St. Moritz's nightlife that remains to this day – his parties were amazing and his friends included people like Brigitte Bardot, Fiat head Gianni Agnelli and art superstar Andy Warhol. The milestone of those days is still the same: the Dracula Club, opened by Gunter Sachs in 1974 and today run by his son Rolf. Although it is still a Members Only club, there is a good chance that even as a non-member, you will still be admitted on a normal Friday evening. At least so says Mauro de Pedrini – and he should know, as an expert in the nightlife of the Engadin. At the tender age of 17, St. Moritz-born Mauro was already helping out in the cloakroom of the Vivai, then he managed the door, and today he is the managing director of the nightclub. He is also the founder of the St. Moritz Music Summit, an electronic music festival.

This evening, Mauro de Pedrini is sitting at the comfortable Piano Bar of the Hotel Crystal. Behind the counter is Christiana, 21. She is the next generation of St. Moritz partygoers. According to Christiana, the nightlife of St. Moritz is small but excellent. As all the venues are located in the heart of the village, bar and club-hopping on foot is easy. For stylish après ski, head for the Roo Bar at the Hotel Hauser, which serves home-made mulled wine, elderflower punch with vodka and regional beers. Another classic for the more sophisticated après ski drink: the Cascade. Only 100 metres from the legendary Talabfahrt Dorf piste, it is not unusual to spot celebrities at the historic zinc bar. If you want an apéritif, you will be well

looked after by Christiana at the Crystal. Afterwards, younger visitors often head for Mauro in the Vivai or to the Badrutt's Palace Hotel housing the famous King's Club, which is one of the oldest discos in Switzerland. The wildest parties happen here in the winter season – open end because there is no closing time. Those who prefer to enjoy an evening with slightly more sophistication are sure to find just the place among the legendary bars of St. Moritz: whisky-lovers head for the Devil's Place, the bar in the Hotel Waldhaus am See that has more than 2,500 different whiskies. The Schweizerhof is home to Switzerland's first "indoor bar mile" with the Stübli Bar, Piano Bar and Muli. This is where locals and guests meet for cocktails in a comfortable atmosphere with live music. Also legendary: the Sunny Bar, frequented by the bold pilots of the Cresta Run.

One particular highlight awaits the party people in mid-March, at the end of the season. This is when the St. Moritz Music Summit will take place for the fourth time, a four-day festival with well-known DJs and partying from noon until the following morning. It all started four years ago in Ibiza, when Mauro de Pedrini had the idea to stage an electronic musical festival at home. On his return, he spoke to his friend Reto Mathis, one of the most successful restaurateurs in the region. Mathis was all for it and so in 2013 the two friends invited a few DJs and set up an "Ibiza meets St. Moritz" with Radio Sonica. A year later, they extended the event to cover a week-end under the name "Music Summit", and in 2015 the major makers of the Ibiza Pacha club chain and the party label "Defected presents Glitterbox" joined as partners. Today the event's sponsors include famous names

"THE BEST THING IS THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN VIEWS, PARTY AND FRESH AIR."

Mauro de Pedrini, founder of the St. Moritz Music Summit

INFO

St. Moritz Music Summit & Audi FIS Ski World Cup Finals
16.-20.3.2016
www.musicsummit.ch
www.skiworldcup.stmoritz.ch



Highlights of St. Moritz nightlife (clockwise from top left): Cascade, barkeeper Christiana at the Crystal Piano Bar, St. Moritz Music Summit in St. Moritz Dorf, and the Dracula Club



Nightlife expert: Mauro de Pedrini at his Vivai Club



such as Tag Heuer and Heineken, illustrious St. Moritz mountain lodges are involved, and the local hotels put together inclusive packages of accommodation, admission and the guest's ski passes.

"I think the best thing about an event like this is the interplay between views, party and fresh air. You'll only get that here in the mountains," says de Pedrini. Many guests ski in the morning and then spend the afternoons dancing to the beats in a hut. The only thing that has shot up in recent years are the salaries for the DJs, says de Pedrini, which is why the Music Summit needs more sponsors who can get the occasional star to come to St. Moritz. "We want the Music Summit to bring an international audience here to St. Moritz," says de Pedrini. And if that happens, he is sure that St. Moritz will once again be a fixed event in the international party calendar.

Author: Robert Kittel

HOTSPOTS IN ST. MORITZ

Roo Bar

Via Traunter Plazzas 7
www.hotelhauser.ch

Crystal Piano Bar

Via Traunter Plazzas 1
www.crystalhotel.ch

Cascade Bar

Via Somplaz 6
www.cascade-stmoritz.ch

Stübli Bar, Piano Bar, Muli

Via dal Bagn 54
www.schweizerhofstmoritz.ch

Devil's Place

Via Dimlej 6
www.waldhaus-am-see.ch

Sunny Bar

Via Veglia 18
www.kulm.com

Mulo's Restaurant & Bar

Via dal Bagn 20
www.mulos-stmoritz.ch

Dracula Club

Via Veglia 18
www.kulm.com

King's Club

Via Serlas 27
www.badruttspalace.com

Vivai Club

Via Traunter Plazzas 6
www.vivai.ch

Diamond St. Moritz

Via Maistra 33
www.diamond-stmoritz.ch



ARTS & CRAFTS

In the Engadin, traditions are handed down from one generation to another. This is reflected in customs like the “Chalandamarz”, where schoolchildren ring bells and crack whips to welcome the spring, and it can be seen in the young hoteliers who are bringing new ideas to their parents’ businesses – tradition is part of modern culture.

Photo: dpa Picture-Alliance/Arno Balzarini

CHALANDAMARZ

HELLO, SPRING!

In the Engadin, schoolchildren greet the spring on 1 March dressed in colourful local costumes. Daniel and Madlaina Beck still remember the custom of the Chalandamarz from their own childhood. This year, they are accompanying their children Livio and Leandra as they banish the winter.

For Engadin children like Livio and Leandra Beck, the Chalandamarz is an exciting event.

ST. MORITZ WINTER 2015/2016

ARTS & CRAFTS



Between 300 and 400 children take part in the Chalandamarz in St. Moritz.

Photos: Robert Kittel

T

hese are the things that you still remember almost 40 years later. Daniel and Madlaina Beck both grew up and went to school in the Engadin, and they remember exactly how it feels when you take part in the “Chalandamarz” for the first time – Daniel in St. Moritz and Madlaina a few villages away, in the Lower Engadin. Today, the memories are coming back: Daniel and Madlaina are going with their children, Livio, seven, and Leandra, eleven, to take part in this year’s Chalandamarz celebrations. The parents find their children in the crowded car park at the Via Quadrellas in St. Moritz Dorf, preparing for the main procession. Daniel Beck says he feels very proud. The Chalandamarz has not changed much since his day, back in the mid-1970s; the delightful tradition is still the same. Except that the girls didn’t wear traditional Engadin costume back then. “We wore blue blouses,” says Madlaina.

The Chalandamarz is an old custom in the Engadin, a traditional, well-run event that always takes place on 1 March. The Romansh word “Chalanda” translates as the first day of the month, and “Marz” means March. The Romans are believed to have practised the custom in high-alpine regions to banish the cold season and welcome the warm spring, and the Chalandamarz has been celebrated throughout the Romansh-speaking part of the Grisons ever since. As St. Moritz is the largest municipality in the Engadin, in some years it has involved more than 400 children in Years 1 to 9. They take part in the procession and during the day ring at the doorbells of the houses to sing to the occupants. They are given little gifts, usually sweets but nowadays also sometimes a bit of money. “Traditions like this are very important for the people here,” says Daniel Beck.

The crowd of around 300 children sets off in small groups, each led by a “Senn”, an Alpine herdsman and dairyman, and his deputy, usually joined by two girls in local costume. They are followed by the younger children – it looks like something from a lavish stage production. They all run down to the town hall. Although it is still freezing cold, the sun is trying to increase the symbolism of the occasion: it fights its way through the clouds, shining on the girls’ baskets of flowers and reflecting in the boys’ bells. The children stand up straight, laughing and proud to be the centre of attention: their parents are at the side of the road and a lot of tourists and residents have also come to watch the colourful occasion.

This is the first time that Livio, the Becks’ son, has taken part in this event. He was already looking out of the window at six o’clock this morning, wondering what the weather was going to be like for his Chalandamarz première. His sister Leandra was more interested in her hair and the basket of flowers. “It’s a very special day for the children – perhaps

“IT’S A VERY SPECIAL DAY FOR THE CHILDREN.”

Madlaina Beck

not quite like Christmas, but still special,” says Madlaina. She has spent the whole week making intricate silk flowers for her daughter. “The Chalandamarz keeps the whole family busy!” The procession now heads through the town. Occasionally they stop and the “Senn” cracks his whip. According to custom, the cracking of



The children sing songs in Romansh on the town hall square, and demonstrate their skills with the whip.



The girls are dressed in Engadin traditional costume and carry baskets of hand-made silk flowers.



All dressed up for spring: Leandra Beck's mother Madlaina plaits her hair (above). Her basket is full of sweets at the end of the procession (below).

the whip and the constant ringing of the bells frightens the spirit of winter and awakens the fertility of spring.

At least today, it seems to be working perfectly. A delicate warmth has settled outside the town hall in St. Moritz Dorf while the sun filters through the houses onto the stone square. The spectators form a circle as the children stand together on the steps and start singing the songs they have been rehearsing in school. The songs are all in Romansh – Madlaina Beck says she sang some of them when she was a child. They are about the end of winter, when the cattle can graze again, and similar themes.

After an hour, the first, official part of the Chalandamarz is over. The children join their parents and go home to get warm: there is going to be another procession in the afternoon, down in St. Moritz Bad. Livio keeps reaching into his sister's basket, which is full of sweets. The procession was great, he says, but the chocolate – that's what he's been waiting for.

Author: Robert Kittel

Photos: Robert Kittel

ST. MORITZ HOTEL INDUSTRY

NEXT GENERATION



Good friends: left to right – Sandro Bernasconi, Daniela Märky, Nina Hauser, Myriam Bolt and Christoph Schlatter

Photo: Romano Salis

Generations are changing in today's hotel industry of St. Moritz. The new approach of five up-and-coming young hoteliers from the Hotel Laudinella, Hotel Reine Victoria, Hotel Waldhaus am See, Hotel Hauser and Hotel Steffani, is like a breath of fresh air. They told us how to make a name for yourself as a young person in the hotel industry, where they are planning to make changes, and what makes St. Moritz so special for them.

Myriam Bolt (30), Nina Hauser (29), Daniela Märky (30), Sandro Bernasconi (30) and Christoph Schlatter (32) are the next generation of St. Moritz's hotel industry.

With youthful enthusiasm, they want to promote the resort. There is no hint of competitiveness between them: they exchange ideas and are all good friends. The five spoke to us about their experiences, ideas and wishes.

In your opinion, what are the attributes of a good host? *Myriam Bolt:* To me, warmth and friendliness are the most important things. Plus you have to have a passion for the hotel industry and for dealing with guests.

Christoph Schlatter: We make a special effort to accommodate our regular guests. We remember their habits and preferences, such as the kind of pillows they like.

Daniela Märky: A good host has their own personality – age doesn't matter. But what's important is that you learn everything about the hotel, starting with the basics.

Sandro Bernasconi: You have to listen to the customer's needs. We've actually developed real friendships with some of our guests over the years.

How has your youthful influence affected the hotels and town so far? *Sandro Bernasconi:* You have to approach innovation sensitively – generally speaking, you shouldn't just go in and change everything. Faster internet connections or a new website can be done quickly, but most working processes have developed over decades. I try to introduce new ideas where they can actually improve something. For instance, we have special offers such as a week of fasting, holidays for dogs with dog trainers or whisky-tasting packages to increase our attraction during the low season.

Christoph Schlatter: Many people here want a new direction and innovative ideas. So we younger people are trying out different things. For instance, we started the St. Moritz Surprises, trying to make the resort more

attractive with initiatives such as the hotel manager dressing up as a butler and serving Champagne on the piste, or with videos on social media platforms.

Nina Hauser: What we're trying to do with St. Moritz Surprises is to see things with a sense of humour, to make the resort friendlier and more approachable for the public. Our aim is to pass on the values of the Engadin.

What changes are you planning or do you want for the future? *Daniela Märky:* I think you must always move with the times – guests change, so the product has to adapt. On the other hand, tradition is very important. It's part of our hotel's identity. I certainly don't want to turn the Steffani into something different, I just want to dust it a bit! I recently came back from New York with lots of new ideas. My aim is to get even more young people to visit St. Moritz – they are our guests of the future.

Christoph Schlatter: We've just leased the Hotel Reine Victoria so we can focus on the more price-sensitive guest. We're also planning to extend the Laudinella and want to further improve quality there. Our aim is to have suitable offers for budget and individual travellers.

Christoph Schlatter (left) and his father run the Hotel Laudinella; Nina Hauser (right) is responsible for projects and communication at the Hotel Hauser.



ABOUT THE PEOPLE

Sandro Bernasconi took over the management of the Hotel Waldhaus am See from his father. His hotel has the biggest whisky bar in the world, attracting illustrious guests. The graduate of the University of St. Gallen is proud of the warm, friendly atmosphere in his hotel.

Hotel Waldhaus am See, Via Dimlej 6

Myriam Bolt was previously Vice-Director of the Hotel Schweizerhof and since 1 November 2015 has been Manager of the Hotel Reine Victoria. When she started to work in the Engadin hotel industry in 2010, it was the fulfilment of a childhood dream.

Hotel Reine Victoria, Via Rosatsch 18

Nina Hauser has been working at the Hotel Hauser, her family's hotel, for two years. Engadin-born Nina also manages the ViV Bistro at the Ocaverva pool, spa and sports centre. A pioneering spirit is important to her and her motto is "Stay busy, don't fall asleep".

Hotel Hauser, Via Traunter Plazzas 7

Daniela Märky has worked in the family business since 2014. Her last position was as one of 900 workers at the New York Hotel The Standard High Line; now she manages 80 people at the Hotel Steffani. Engadin-born Daniela describes this as a "terrific challenge".

Hotel Steffani, Via Traunter Plazzas 6

Christoph Schlatter learnt about the hotel industry in countries including Asia and America. Born in St. Moritz, he is now Director of the Hotel Laudinella. He loves challenges, and likes to cook at home with his father, who still takes an active role at the hotel.

Hotel Laudinella, Via Tegiatscha 17

Nina Hauser: I want the Hotel Hauser to be seen as a traditional, dynamic operation that can appeal to every type of guest, whether they're more interested in sport, or small groups of men, or families or older couples. We want all our guests to feel at home here.

Myriam Bolt: I want St. Moritz to position itself as more accessible for younger people and to show that it's not only exclusive and chic, but that everyone is welcome and can afford to come here.

Why should guests come to St. Moritz for their holiday? What do you think makes St. Moritz unbeatable? *Nina Hauser:* The wide, high



Daniela Märky manages the 80 employees of the Hotel Steffani.

valley, lots of sunny days, the fabulous pistes and, above all, the landscape.

Daniela Märky: St. Moritz offers specialties like the private Cresta, Corviglia and Dracula clubs, which attract interesting visitors.

Sandro Bernasconi: The offer here is varied, whatever the season. I think it's very rare. Combined with the wonderful environment, it makes the resort unique.

How do you spend your rare free time at the height of the season? What are your personal "hot spots"? *Nina Hauser:* I'm up on the piste early in the morning and like to have lunch at the Clavadatsch mountain hut.

Christoph Schlatter: You can get my favourite "Nussgipfeli" at the Glünetta hut – that's my personal secret tip.

If you weren't running a hotel in St. Moritz, where would you be?

Nina Hauser: I love being in St. Moritz but if I didn't have family roots here, I'd live in Melbourne. My mother is Australian. The people there are really friendly and everything's so relaxed.

Myriam Bolt: I don't have any family commitments here and could leave at any time. But after spending time abroad, I made the deliberate decision to come here and stay. I love it.

Interview: Valentina Knapp-Voith

REFRESHMENT WITH STYLE

What if you had the chance to open a hotel in St. Moritz?

Christoph Hoffmann, CEO of the 25Hours Hotel Company, describes for us what his dream hotel would be like. The establishments in his chain of hotels are notable for their individual design, innovative service and hint of adventure – and mid-range prices. How would this concept work?

Christoph Hoffmann, 25hours Hotels are customised for every location. How do you approach this? We want each hotel to tell a different story, in line with the motto “Know one, know none”. To discover this individual story, the hotel’s soul, we work with lots of people. We don’t just float in like a UFO – we involve the local community in what we’re doing. We might ask the local butcher to help develop a gastronomic concept, or a sports shop to come up with some leisure offers.

What makes St. Moritz an exciting destination? No other ski resort has a brand like this. St. Moritz radiates a very special identity because fabulous people like the Badrutts and Gunter Sachs helped to shape it. This is a wonderful tradition – but I think it’s time for a new approach in the hotel scene.

What kind of hotel would you open here? The great traditional hotels should be kept but we need to add something new that approaches quality and tradition with care and charm.

St. Moritz is not the place for a soulless “Sleeping Beauty castle”, nor does it need another luxury hotel. Our hotel is intended as a complement to the luxurious. It wouldn’t be a budget hotel but it should be affordable, perhaps 3-star. We’d be addressing a different target group from that of the luxury hotels.

What target group? Young people who want to have fun, who appreciate a relaxed atmosphere but still enjoy sophistication and the wonderful natural world of the area. And, of course, families.

How does a hotel accommodate the requirements of each member of a family? The question is, how do you ensure that children can enjoy themselves while their parents relax, and they can all still have a great time together. The answer is: hybrid hotels. Different facets under one roof, everything relaxed and natural. Family rooms with sliding connecting doors, bunk beds for the children and other playful elements. I also think it’s important that



Christoph Hoffmann's idea: a 3-star establishment for families and young people, right by the cable car

Photo: Heiko Prigge, Illustration: Eva Vasari

everyone can eat, drink and play together in the evenings. As well as the family zones, there should be public areas when you can withdraw – also for guests without children.

What exactly would a 25hours hotel look like in St. Moritz? It should have at least 100 rooms, and it should definitely be cosmopolitan. We’d need a contrasting design. The Alps cry out for natural materials: slate, beautiful leather, wood, a bit of nostalgia and folklore. We’d combine these with clear, urban elements – strong colours, neon signs, a cool bicycle workshop in the lobby, live bands from all over the world. The rooms would be relaxed, peaceful places whereas there should always be something going on in the public areas – the living room of the Engadin. A local interior architect working with international artists – it could work.

What would be the best location for this establishment? My first choice would be a connection between the “Signalbahn” and Corvatsch. That would be an important success factor for the resort. If we had this connection, we’d be ideally situated at the valley station. My second wish would be for pure,

untouched nature – in the Engadin, with easy links to St. Moritz. That would be a hideaway.

What do you especially like about St. Moritz?

I’ve always experienced this as a place with a cosmopolitan attitude. It’s where international tourism was invented and that calls for open-mindedness. And the landscape! I love cycling, walking, cross-country skiing, the Diavolezza, skiing down the Morteratsch glacier, going to my favourite restaurants and gathering chestnuts in the park around the Ofen Pass. I think it’s simply a perfect place.

Interview: Yasmine Sailer

ABOUT CHRISTOPH HOFFMANN

Christoph Hoffmann is responsible for developing and expanding the 25hours Hotel Company. He assesses locations and develops customised hotels with local partners. In 2005 Christoph Hoffmann, Kai Hollmann, Ardi Goldman and Stephan Gerhard founded the 25hours Hotel Company. Before that he was with the Kempinski Group, the Swiss hotel chain Bürgenstock and at the 5-star Louis C. Jacob Hotel in Hamburg. He lives in Berlin with his wife and daughter, and visits the Engadin several times a year.

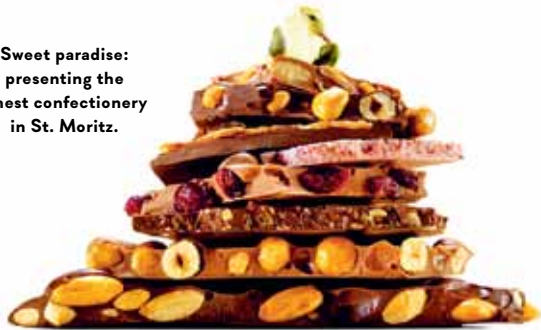


PREVIEW

The next issue of the St. Moritz Magazin will be published in May 2016.

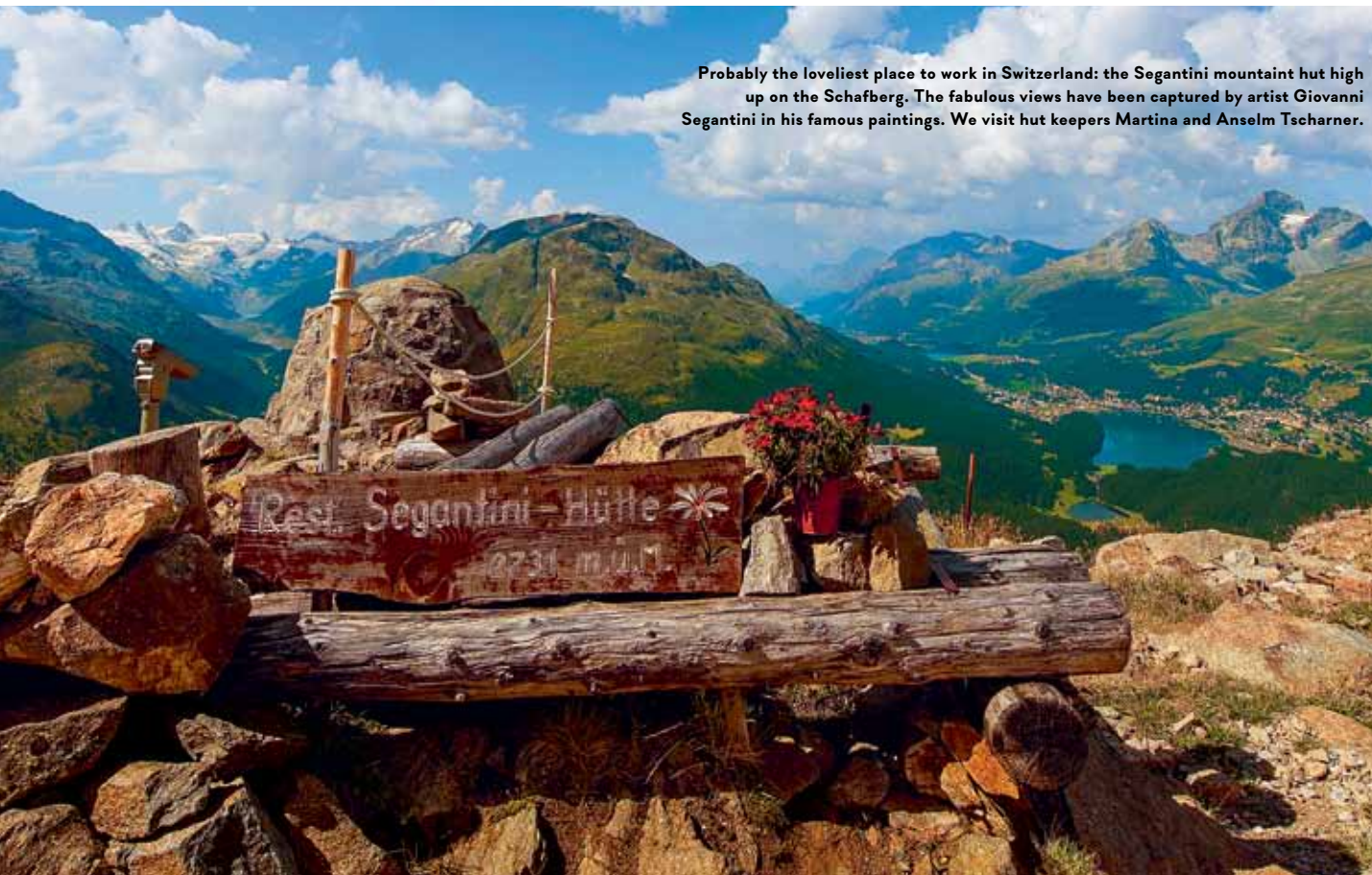
Discover the rich and sophisticated contrasts of St. Moritz in the summertime – from sporting activities, cultural downtimes, culinary highlights and old traditions, to the miracles of the Engadin landscape.

Sweet paradise:
presenting the
finest confectionery
in St. Moritz.



From May, the cry goes up
on Lake St. Moritz: cast off!
Sailing is only one of the
many types of water sport
that attract enthusiasts to
the Engadin in summer.

Probably the loveliest place to work in Switzerland: the Segantini mountaint hut high up on the Schafberg. The fabulous views have been captured by artist Giovanni Segantini in his famous paintings. We visit hut keepers Martina and Anselm Tschärner.



Photos: Original Frischschoggi from Ländlerach, Patrick Blarer, Romano Sdlis

*“THERE IS ONLY ONE ENGADIN IN THE
WORLD. WE ARE COMPLETELY
ENTHRALLED HERE AND SIP THE AIR
OF THE CHAMOIS LIKE FRENCH
CHAMPAGNE.”*

RICHARD STRAUSS, COMPOSER, 1864–1949



Engadin St. Moritz Tourism Organisation
Via San Gian 30
CH-7500 St. Moritz
www.engadin.stmoritz.ch



