

# ST. MORITZ

PEOPLE AND STORIES FROM THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAINS

Issue Winter 2016/2017

## SPORTS-LOVING

*Box seats for sports enthusiasts: Alpine panoramas, first-class pistes and thrilling competitions set hearts racing this winter*



St. Moritz





## ANINA RETHER

Swiss writer Anina Rether is a new addition to the St. Moritz Magazin team. With her in-depth cultural knowledge, the trained musician and former head of culture and travel for the Schweizer Illustrierte is perfect for topics in the “culture” section. In this issue, she writes about the Schlitteda and acts as a location scout in the Engadin. And when she’s not out and about in the mountains for us, she is a book author and journalist in Zurich.

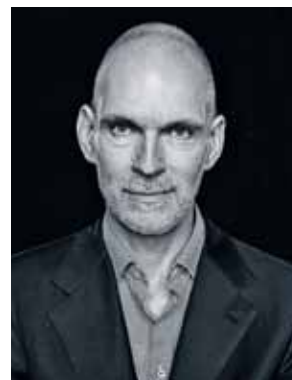
## MAX GALLI

Max Galli was born in Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany, in 1952. After training as a photographer, he studied at the Bundesfachschule für Photographie in Hamburg, qualifying with his master’s certificate. He has been working as a freelance photographer and photo journalist since 1982. Max Galli lives in St. Moritz. His specialties are travel, architectural and landscape photography and cultural themes. For this magazine, he photographed the ice sculptor Reto Grond at work.



## FILIP ZUAN

“I have always focused on capturing the special moments in life. It’s like the feeling you get after a day on black ice or a powder day on a snowboard ... that feeling of complete satisfaction,” Filip Zuan describes his passion for photography. A native of the Engadin, his work has already appeared in renowned publications around the globe. He photographed a number of stories for the St. Moritz Magazin, from snow polo to the Rhaetian Railway.



## MARK VAN HUISSSELING

Mark van Huisseling is a columnist, magazine producer and writer. His articles are published in Weltwoche, the magazine of the Tages-Anzeiger and other magazines in Switzerland and abroad. He lives in Zurich and has travelled frequently to St. Moritz in the last 15 years. For this visit, rather than going to his favourite hut, Alp Clavadatsch, he watched up-and-coming freestylers perform their tricks and interviewed the visionary Otto Steiner.



## GINA MÜLLER

Illustrator Gina Müller of Vienna addressed the subject “What if St. Moritz were a work of art?” for us (page 64). “The illustrations for the St. Moritz Magazin left me wanting to see the mountains and to ski, although I’m really more of a ‘seaside person,’” she told us. Gina has worked for print media, such as Brand Eins and NZZ, and for fashion and jewellery labels.

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# *SPORTS- LOVING*





Beat Feuz from Switzerland at the Audi Free Fall during the finals of the 2016 Ski World Cup in St. Moritz. In just a few moments, he will accelerate to a mind-blowing 140 kilometres per hour. And as the adrenaline surges through his veins, spectators on the sides of the run will be holding their breath. These and similar scenarios await visitors and locals when the starting shot for the FIS Alpine World Ski Championships will be fired in St. Moritz in February.

Share these special experiences with us and be inspired!





## *ARIANE EH RAT IN CONVERSATION WITH WENDY HOLDENER*

**S**kiing experts among themselves: Director of Tourism, Ariane Ehrat, met Swiss slalom specialist Wendy Holdener. The two talked about St. Moritz, the passion for sports and the 2017 World Ski Championships.

**Ariane Ehrat:** Wendy, you have a fantastic season behind you, and you won the Combined in the overall World Cup. What does ski racing mean to you? Wendy Holdener: Skiing has always

been my hobby, and I decided at an early age that I also wanted it to be my profession. Although as a child it was a distant dream, it became more realistic when I went to sports school. Today it's simply my passion. Ski racing may be my job, but it doesn't feel like one!

**Ariane Ehrat:** Next February sees the World Championships at home in St. Moritz. Do you have any specific goals for them yet? Wendy Holdener: I know I have the potential to make it onto the



Wendy Holdener won the small crystal ball in the Super Combination in 2015/16.

podium, and that is without a doubt what I want to achieve. I realised for the first time that the World Ski Championships would soon be taking place in St. Moritz when we completed a fitness training here, in the summer of 2015. That gave me a lovely warm feeling! I'm certainly looking forward to them.

**Ariane Ehrat: Does it mean something different to you for the World Championships to take place in Switzerland compared to somewhere else in the world?** Wendy Holdener: I've never experienced a World Championship at home yet, but I imagine that it will certainly be something special. The friends who come along to watch you, and the spectators who are there to support you and carry you through... I hope we will benefit from the home advantage. I love being in St. Moritz, and I have taken part in lots of races here. I like it here.

**Ariane Ehrat: What do you particularly like about St. Moritz?**

Wendy Holdener: Watching the sun rise while warming up before skiing. These early hours of the morning, up in the mountains, really are a bonus. Of course, there are days when I find it hard to get up and put on those ski boots, but once you're up there, you look forward to training and you realise that you really are living your dream.

#### ABOUT WENDY HOLDENER

*Wendy Holdener was three years old when she first put on a pair of skis, and only 16 when she joined the Swiss-Ski "C" Squad. The athlete, who was born in Unteriberg in the Canton of Schwyz, won the Combination Disciplines in the overall World Cup in the 2015/16 season. Just 23 old, she is currently the best slalom skier in Switzerland.*

#### ABOUT ARIANE EHRAAT

*Ariane Ehrat was born in Schaffhausen in 1961. As a ski racer, she came fourth at the Olympic Games in Sarajevo, and won the silver medal in downhill at the 1985 World Championships. Since 2008, the communication scientist has been the Director of Tourism of Engadin St. Moritz and publisher of the St. Moritz Magazin.*

**"IN THE MOUNTAINS, YOU REALISE YOU ARE LIVING YOUR DREAM."**

Wendy Holdener, ski racer

**Ariane Ehrat: What does "sports-loving" make you think with regard to St. Moritz?** Wendy Holdener: We athletes can see how much passion the Engadin invests in us. Every year, there are World Cup and junior races in St. Moritz, and they are a lot of work to organise. The helpers' passion is so clearly evident, and that's worth gold to us athletes.

**Ariane Ehrat: One of our slogans for the World Ski Championships is "Live the Future". How important do you think these major sporting events are for youngsters?** Wendy Holdener: My uncle and my two older brothers were among the spectators at the 2003 World Championships. It was quite an occasion for the three of them. I think it is just as exciting for the youths who support us and share in the excitement as it is for the skiers.

**Ariane Ehrat: Thank you very much, Wendy, and all the best, both for your training and for the World Championships!**





# *SPORT & ADVENTURE*

Whether professional athlete or spectator, up in the mountains or down in the valley, local or visitor, the passion for all kinds of sports is something that can be felt and experienced in St. Moritz. Some explore the Engadin on skis, others cheer the polo players on Lake St. Moritz when it is frozen over. And some put all their passion and commitment into making the 2017 World Ski Championships a unique and unforgettable experience.







2017 WORLD SKI CHAMPIONSHIPS

# HIDDEN CHAMPIONS

In February, the international skiing world once again will gather in St. Moritz for the FIS Alpine World Ski Championships. To ensure that the sporting event is a complete success for athletes and spectators alike, thousands of helpers and experts work behind the scenes, giving their very best. We met up with four of them.

PHOTOS: FILIP ZUAN

**T**hey are the reason why the World Ski Championships in St. Moritz run so smoothly, why spectators feel at home and why professionals find perfect conditions: volunteers, helpers and experts who dedicate their commitment and knowledge to the preparations, quietly and outside the spotlight. 1,900 volunteers have registered with the “Voluntari Engiadina” since October 2015 to help at the 2017 World Ski Championships – to say nothing of the countless people working on the Organisation Committee (OC), in hotels and restaurants, on the pistes and for the teams of athletes. Allow us to present four people without whom the World Ski Championships would not be the same.

## THE RACE DIRECTOR: WIM ROSSEL

If you move from Belgium to the Engadin, swap the lowlands for mountains and waffles for nut cake, then it has to be love. For Wim

Rossel, Belgian-born organiser at St. Moritz Sports & Events, that was indeed the case. In 1999, on finishing university, he planned to spend a season working as a ski instructor at Club Med in St. Moritz. On day two, he met the woman who is now his wife – and one winter season became a whole lifetime.

The 39-year-old started out as a ski and sailing instructor – “two dream jobs,” as he says himself – and got his first taste of racing at the 2003 World Ski Championships in St. Moritz. As a member of the team that prepared the slopes, he experienced first-hand the unique atmosphere among the helpers. “Everyone was totally committed to what they were doing, working towards the same aim, namely, showing the world a fabulous world championships,” says Rossel.

Which, of course, is also the goal for 2017. Rossel and 450 to 600 helpers are responsible for “everything above the finish line.” Under Martin Berthod, chief race organiser, race director Rossel’s responsibilities include preparing the women’s slopes and safety on and off the pistes. He is responsible for ensuring that the pistes are in the best condition and prepared for the races during the World Championships. He has been doing the job since 2008







*“I LOOK FORWARD TO  
THE MOMENT  
WHEN WE CAN SAY,  
‘WE ARE READY.’”*

Wim Rossel, ladies race director

which, by his own admission, he “loves – the days are often long, and sometimes stressful, but never boring.” The many helpers that Rossel organises are almost all volunteers with “Voluntari Engiadina”. Many of them are young, new to the team, and need to learn the ropes of the racing organisation. “They invest a lot of their free time and are 200% committed to what is often very hard work,” says Rossel. “They are extremely important for our

Snow-making, gate flags, markings – Wim Rossel (left) and his team are responsible for preparing all of the pistes for the World Ski Championships.



future. St. Moritz has a great tradition of ski racing, and in order to continue this tradition in the next ten or 20 years, we need a new generation with a passion for it,” he firmly believes. “After all, I don’t want to be standing here on my own in 2018!”

Not that that is likely to happen. The volunteers are enthusiastic and already proved at the World Cup Finals in March 2016 that they are ready for the World Championships.



Janine Jung Perlati (left) advises recreational and top athletes on the optimum diet.

Rossel was also pleased with the general rehearsal. “Everything went really well. Of course, there is always room for improvement – access controls around the pistes, for example, or making sure that the training runs smoothly. However, the FIS is already extremely happy with us.” Most important to him is that he and his team are prepared for any situation. “We need to plan for every scenario and yet stay flexible so that races can take place on time and are perfectly adapted to conditions.” Only then can the race organiser sit back and relax – at least for a moment. Rossel says: “I’m already looking forward to the moment when all the preparations are over and we can say, ‘we’re ready!’”

#### THE NUTRITIONIST: JANINE JUNG PERLATI

“My favourite food? Popcorn!” Janine Jung Perlati doesn’t even have to think about her answer – although admittedly it is not exactly what we would have expected from a nutritionist who advises athletes. “I’d happily eat it every day,” she continues, “but common sense usually prevails in the end.”

Cheerful Jung Perlati was born in Rapperswil in 1971, and today is one of Switzerland’s best known experts in sports nutrition. After culinary training at the 5-star Bürgenstock Resort in Lucerne, she qualified as a diet chef and went to the School of Nutritional Advice in Zurich. So what made her decide to become a nutri-



## *“DIET IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR INDIVIDUAL ATHLETES.”*

Janine Jung Perlati, nutritionist



tionist? “I like food!” she says with a grin. “And I have always been interested in how food can also be a pleasure for athletes.”

After her training, Jung Perlati worked at the University Hospital Zurich, and has worked at the clinical rehabilitation centre in Davos for the past 14 years, where she advises clients on how to optimise their athletic performance with the right diet. “I see mainly recreational athletes who are busy preparing for competitions or just want to know how to improve their diet. I also advise professional athletes with food intolerances or who generally have problems with food,” she adds.

Nutrition is especially important for indi-

vidual athletes such as ski racers. “In alpine skiing, the athletes go through various nutritional stages during preparation, the competition and in regeneration. When top athletes are in training, they need to make sure they get enough protein, fruits, vegetables and carbohydrates,” explains Jung Perlati. “And plenty of liquids, of course.” However, carbo-loading, as practiced by cross-country skiers and other endurance athletes is not necessary. In alpine skiing, the pros have the additional challenge of eating at different times on competition days than on training days. Sometimes they have to wait a long time at the top of the mountain before they start, and have to be careful not to cool down during this time. “So the athletes should always have hot drinks and light snacks with them,” advises Jung Perlati. And although it is never good to eat or drink too much before a competition, it is essential that the athletes are able to concentrate, so they most definitely should not be hungry when they start.

And what is her advice for non-professional skiers? “A balanced breakfast to get them fit for a day on the slopes. Bread or muesli, dairy products, seasonal fruits and plenty of liquids. But never too much, and never too little.”

Jung Perlati understands that lots of people tend to have their lunch at a mountain hut, and will often choose the classics, such as spaghetti bolognese or a sausage with fries. “While hearty mountain lodge food isn’t necessarily the healthiest food, it’s alright to have it on one day. Perhaps it is possible to have a small helping of that, and then opt for fish or lean meat and vegetables in the evening.”

So our final question for the expert is – what does she think of so-called superfoods such as chia seeds and green smoothies? “Well, of course they’re healthy, but overall they are overrated. Superfoods are a good supplement, but by no means a substitute for a generally healthy diet.”

#### ORGANISING NEW TALENT: ANDRI MEYER

Andri Meyer is undeniably a man with a cheerful disposition. There is always a broad smile on his face, and he is always in good humour. Which makes him perfect for the Youth Organisation Committee (YOC) that was established for the 2017 World Ski Championships. The YOC is St. Moritz’s commitment to its own future – which is underscored by the slogan “Live the Future”. The idea of setting up a YOC to work in tandem with the established OC arose back in 2011, when the destination first applied to host the World Ski Championships. The idea was to create a mix of experienced personalities and younger, up-and-coming individuals – a generation change to ensure that top class events would continue to take place in the future.

The YOC is made up of 20 young people aged between 17 and 28, half of them women and half men. Like the OC, it has various departments, such as Finance, Media & PR, Volunteers and Buildings. Meyer is responsible for Sponsoring & Events. The 24-year-old from Bever was trained as a chef at the Hotel Giardino Mountain and is currently a student at the School of Hotel Management in Lucerne. He applied to join the YOC in response to an advertisement he spotted in a newspaper. “It is a unique opportunity to take

part in an event of this calibre while still at a young age. After all, it’s not something that comes along every year. You learn a lot, and being behind the scenes is a brilliant experience,” he enthuses. “You realise just how much work goes into it!”

The work started three months after his application. Initially, he put in about two hours a week, but now it is considerably more. A lot of hours of precious spare time, which Meyer and his colleagues dedicate to the YOC voluntarily and with tremendous commitment. In order to learn more about the work, the YOC provides support for events ahead of the World Championships, such as the FIS World Snow Day, a day of snow sports for children, or the Finale of the Grand Prix Migros, Europe’s biggest ski race for children. Their activities are supported by mentors from the OC, who are happy to pass on their knowledge to the members of the YOC.

“The youngsters of St. Moritz are given an opportunity to contribute to the World Ski Championships, which I think is great. We all identify strongly with our home,” says Meyer. “If you grow up in the mountains, they will always call you back.”

Meyer believes that the World Ski Championships is extremely important for the destination. “We want to show the world that there is so much more to St. Moritz than just luxury. It’s not a town just for the rich and beautiful; it’s for everyone. Skiing is a popular sport, and in that respect the World Ski Championships is an opportunity for us to show the world just how indescribably beautiful it is here.”

And St. Moritz considers itself lucky to have such committed youngsters with a genuine passion for sports as the face of the 2017 World Ski Championships.







*“WE WANT  
EVERYONE TO SEE  
HOW LOVELY  
IT IS HERE.”*

Andri Meyer, member of the YOC

Andri Meyer is responsible  
for Sponsoring & Events  
on the YOC of the World  
Ski Championships.



## VOLUNTARI ENGIADINA

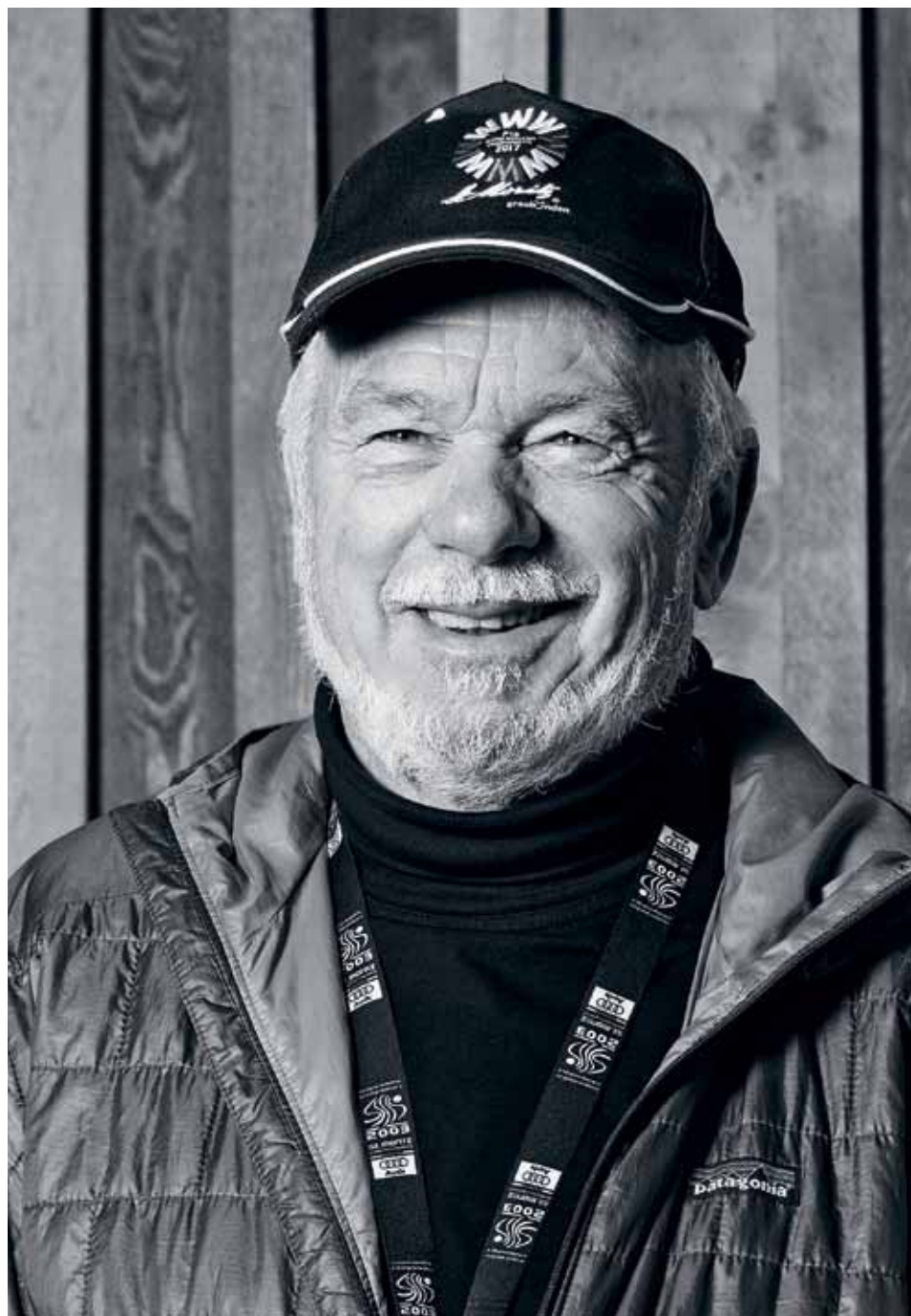
*The volunteer organisation “Voluntari Engiadina” was established for the 2003 World Ski Championships. Since then, it has developed into an effective platform of helpers that unites over 3,700 men and women from many different countries. Be it racing organisation, logistics, construction, social events, racing office, media, marketing or administration – it is impossible to imagine Ski World Cup and Championships races in the Engadin without the Voluntari.*

[www.voluntari.ch](http://www.voluntari.ch)

### MASTER OF EQUIPMENT: KONI BERWEGER

Konrad Berweger's career as equipment manager at the Salastrains finish house began with a burglary. After the last World Ski Championships in 2003, he had a phone call from Sigi Asprion, today's mayor: “Koni, we're looking for someone to keep an eye on things up there.” The doors had been open and equipment taken. Sigi Asprion knew that Berweger was just the man for the job.

Konrad Berweger, known to all as Koni, now aged 75, is the “guy Friday” at the Salastrains finish house. From topping up the soap dispensers and replacing toilet paper to emptying the bins and carrying out regular technical checks, Berweger oversees it all. He makes sure that everything is kept clean and in working order, that there are always plenty of batteries, cables, bulbs, buckets and adhesive tape to hand and that everything is in its place. “People always say if you need something or can't find something or want to know something, then look for the man in the green



75 years old and not the least bit tired: Koni Berweger has been keeping an eye on things at the Salastrains finish house since 2003.

**“THIS SPORT  
UNITES THE MOST  
DIVERSE PEOPLE.”**

Koni Berweger, equipment manager at the Salastrains finish house





jacket,” says Berweger. The green jacket is his trademark, and even though he no longer knows the names of all the thousands of helpers, they all know who he is. For 12 years, Berweger has known every single corner and item in the finish house. His most important tool is his huge bunch of keys. With justified pride, he shows visitors and new helpers around his realm, opening a door here, closing one there.

Berweger used to be a driver with PostBus Switzerland Ltd. After that, he spent 20 years running a garage in St. Moritz. He has known Albert Eugster, a colleague of many years’ standing and a former mechanic who is now responsible for the warehouse, since those days and knows he can rely on him absolutely. But the boss won’t hear a word against any of the other members of his team of six volunteers,

either. “That’s what’s so great about working here: the mix of people of all ages, from handyman to teachers and bankers. All with a common interest: sports,” says Berweger. He continues, “nothing would get done without the volunteers and the military.” He is convinced that the many helpers are the backbone of every major event. Of course, the volunteers also benefit. “We offer them plenty: coffee and sandwiches in the morning, the kind of lunch you’d get in a hotel and after work we get together over a beer or two and enjoy ourselves. That, to me, is being on top of the world!”

Berweger’s workshop, the finish house in Salastrain, is also on top of the world. It was refurbished and extended in the autumn of 2015. From the dining room with seating for 280, the doping control room, media cabins for commentators and reporters, bathrooms, stores, kitchen, offices to a quiet room, volunteers and athletes now benefit from a functional, modern infrastructure. “It has been made ready for the future” Berweger confirms, “and not just for the next two years.” When asked if he will still be there after the World Ski Championships, Berweger heaves a semi-serious sigh. “I’ve often thought about quitting, but someone always seems to come along to stop me.” Most recently, Hugo Wetzel, President of the Engadin St. Moritz Tourism Organisation and of the World Ski Championships OC. “He said, ‘You can’t do that!’”

On the other hand, he admits with a wink, life would probably be rather boring without this in his life. Berweger watches the races on TV, even though he works right next to the finish area. “Of course I go outside from time to time, but we’re usually far too busy. Everything has to be kept running, even if no one happens to be looking at the time.”

Author: Yasmine Sailer

#### INFO

FIS Alpine World Ski  
Championships 2017  
6.–19. February 2017  
St. Moritz  
[www.stmoritz2017.ch/en](http://www.stmoritz2017.ch/en)

## FREESTYLE

# FUN ON THE MOUNTAIN

Snow parks don't only appeal to experienced freestylers. Anyone feeling a little bored with the flat pistes is welcome to amuse themselves here. In the Engadin, there are several such parks to choose from.

As soon as you get to the Corvatsch middle station and leave the gondola, the best feature of the “Corvatsch Park”, one of the biggest snow parks in the Alps, is immediately evident: it is just a few metres away. In other words, there's no need for a long hike – you can practically ride the gondola right into the park.

“What our guests want, is to have fun on the mountain,” says Stefan Plattner. The 37-year-old Austrian heads the Corvatsch Snowpark team, and has been involved with snow parks for 16 years. He learnt his trade at Mayrhofen in Tyrol, and is considered one of the best snow park and half-pipe designers in Europe. “Today's skiers and snowboarders want variety on the mountain, and snow parks offer them just that,” he adds. Freestyle, the type of skiing or snowboarding that is practised in snow parks – with jumps over ditches,

carving across steep walls or sliding down metal bars – also appeals to lots of observers who are perhaps not yet bold enough themselves to venture into a snow park. From the Mandra chairlift, you have front-row seats with the best views of the park. What's more, the four-seat chairlift has snow park users back at the top again and ready for another exciting freestyle descent in only five minutes – conditions that aren't that easy to beat.



Photos: Engadin St. Moritz / Alessandro Belluscio, Andrea Badrutt







*“NORMAL SKIING  
IS BORING.”*

Gian-Andri Bollinger, freestyler

Young talent:  
Gian-Andri  
Bollinger, 11 years  
old, has already  
mastered lots of  
freestyle tricks.



Stefan Plattner (left) is responsible for the Corvatsch Snowpark, Paolo La Fata for the Corviglia park on the opposite side.



What Plattner, who has lived and worked in the Engadin since 2015, enjoys most is meeting beginners and less-experienced freestylers in his snow park as well as the pros and experienced riders. “I want to be able to offer something to every guest,” he says. “Riding in a snow park isn’t just about jumping and crazy tricks. The main focus is on fun and creativity. And there’s no age limit to having fun. Which is what I want to get across. Traditional piste users are a little hesitant to use parks, but once they’ve tried it they are likely to come back.”

Paolo La Fata is responsible for ensuring that freestyling in a snow park is a pleasant, and above all, safe experience. The 40-year-old, who was born in the Engadin, not only shares responsibility for the Corviglia Snowpark on the opposite side of the valley, but also trains the next freestyle generation, that is juniors under the age of 15, for the Bündner ski association. “Parents often worry about the dangers in freestyling, and that’s their job,” says La Fata. But if you do it properly, freestyling is no riskier than any other type of sport. In the past six years, there has only been one minor accident involving his protégés – “and that wasn’t even in the snow park, but trampolining

in the hall”. The freestyle movement and associated snow parks are not just a playground for a minority, but an important part of a successful winter sports region.

The parks on the Corvatsch and Corviglia are a fixed part of the overall offer, which is easy enough to see. Even when there is little snow on the ground or in moderate weather, there are people in the snow parks. It doesn’t take much to make a freestyler happy. A little snow, an obstacle – and he (or she) is happy for hours. The same also applies on days with snow and gusty winds, which obviously affect freestylers less.

Amongst the youngest, and the best, that enjoy themselves in the Corvatsch Snowpark are Nicola and Gian-Andri Bollinger. 13-year-old Nicola from Zuoz and his brother, who is two years younger, are both on the Swiss Ski U15 team trained by La Fata – and could quite possibly develop to be world champions of tomorrow. Nicola and Gian-Andri are representatives of the up-and-coming freestyle generation that snow park designer Plattner is waiting for. “Normal skiing is boring,” according to Gian-Andri, who is already ahead of his older brother – at least where giving inter-

#### INFO

Corvatsch Snowpark  
Middle station Murtèl  
[www.corvatsch.ch/en](http://www.corvatsch.ch/en)

Corviglia Snowpark  
Summit station Corviglia  
[www.engadin.stmoritz.ch/en/corviglia-snowpark](http://www.engadin.stmoritz.ch/en/corviglia-snowpark)





Gian-Andri Bollinger (top and right) and his older brother Nicola are two extremely promising freestylers. Both are on the U15 team of the Swiss skiing association, Swiss Ski.



views is concerned. "First I was able to do the one-eighty, and then the three-sixty," 11-year-old Gian-Andri sums up the milestones in his freestyler career to date – by which he means the half and whole spin in the air. At the moment, he and his brother are both learning somersault jumps, he adds quickly before the two rush back to their freestyle skis and the snow park. "It's all well and good, but it's important to me that the children learn the basics first, so they're safe out there and not just spectacular," says trainer La Fata.

Providing the spectacular part is better left to the pros in the World Cup competitions, for which the Corvatsch Snowpark is constantly being upgraded. "We're well equipped to provide a great freestyle offer for everyone, pros and amateurs alike," he adds. And he's right. And should the freestylers ever get bored in the snow park, then the mountain awaits with all its natural shapes. Plattner agrees: "The high art of freestyling is all about using the whole mountain like a huge fun park. Then you'll never get bored."

Author: Mark van Huisseling



Not only skiers, but lots of snowboarders also use the snow park.

Photos: Rapha Bauer (2), Ruedi Flück (2), Fabian Gattlen (1)



Nothing for the faint-hearted: helmets must be worn for this exciting sport event.



**T**he Snow Polo World Cup St. Moritz is the world's most important snow polo tournament. Since 1985, the international elite of this dynamic sport has been meeting here to play for the highly coveted Cartier Trophy on frozen Lake St. Moritz against the magnificent backdrop of the mountains.

Snow polo originated in St. Moritz. In January 1985, Reto Gaudenzi and Hans Peter Danuser of the Engadin held the first snow polo tournament. Reto Gaudenzi, General Manager of Swiss International Hotels at that time, was inspired by the White Turf Horse Race, which has been taking place in St. Moritz since the early 20th century. Why not use the frozen lake for another type of sport – why not for polo? Derided by many at the time, Gaudenzi wanted to liven up the period between New Year and February – and did so with complete success. Today, 15,000 visitors and 150 journalists come to St. Moritz to follow the three-day event.

The preparations alone are a major organisational challenge. Around 100 horses are brought to the Engadin; snow groomers prepare the snow on the frozen lake, and a comprehensive infrastructure with stables, stands and a tent city is erected. The weather, especially, is monitored very closely. "Safety is our primary concern," says CEO Gaudenzi. The polo tournament can only take place when the conditions are right. The ice on the lake must be at least 20 cm thick in order to support the approximately 2,000 tonnes required. So far, it always worked; the only time the tournament had to be cancelled was in 2012, when too much snow made it impossible to prepare the terrain on the frozen lake. "You can't control nature; you can only come to an agreement with it," explains Gaudenzi.

But who would even think about having horses and polo players compete against each other for victory and honour on snow and ice instead of grass? In order to answer the ques-





POLO ON ICE

# *CHASING GLORY ON HORSEBACK*

The Snow Polo World Cup St. Moritz is a unique event; there is nothing else like it. Every year, world-class players congregate here to compete against each other. But instead of doing so on a luscious green field, they head for frozen Lake St. Moritz. Founder and CEO Reto Gaudenzi on the fascination of this equine sport on snow and ice.

PHOTOS: FILIP ZUAN



Specially-bred polo ponies are used in snow polo. They are just as fleet on snow and ice as they are on grass.

*POLO IS ALSO KNOWN  
AS THE  
“SPORT OF KINGS”.*



Polo players on horseback use their mallets (above) to try to get the ball into the opposing team's goal.



tion, one has to go back a bit. Polo was first played about 2,600 years ago, in ancient Persia. The name is derived from the Tibetan word “pulu”, which means “ball”. What makes the sport elitist above all are the demands placed on athletes as well as horses. There are only about 10,000 polo players in the world, and they include the Princes William and Harry. Polo, therefore, is also known as the “Sport of Kings”. The game was brought to St. Moritz in 1899, when English soldiers set up the first polo field on what is today the “Polowiese” in St. Moritz Bad. After initial excitement, however, enthusiasm for polo in Europe waned. A state of affairs also changed by Gaudenzi, who founded Switzerland’s first polo team in 1978, was a member of the Swiss national team for 15 years, and finally reignited the sport’s popularity with the Snow Polo World Cup in St. Moritz.

Snow polo follows the same rules as the version played on grass. Four teams of four players compete for the Cartier Trophy. As soon as the ball is in play, the teams use their mallets to try and hit it into the opposing team’s goal. A large inflatable ball is used on snow. What does it mean for the horses to play on snow instead of grass? “Polo ponies are extremely versatile athletes. They get used to the different surface, the cold and the thin mountain air very quickly,” says Gaudenzi.

Nevertheless, the horses’ safety and protection take priority in the rulebook of snow polo. A horse may not play in two consecutive chukkas (a polo match is divided into periods of play called chukkas, each one lasting seven-and-a-half minutes). In St. Moritz, the chukkas are sometimes shorter because the altitude of 1,822 metres above sea level and the snow make it more challenging for the horses. The field, too, is a little smaller. The horses are specially bred polo ponies that originally came from Argentina. They are a cross between English thoroughbreds and South American



**Reto Gaudenzi is CEO of Evviva Polo St. Moritz AG, which organises the Snow Polo World Cup and holds the rights to the copyrighted brand.**

Criollos. Their small size and strong back make them very fast, easy to manoeuvre and able to cope with high loads. Endurance and strong nerves make them the perfect partners for the tough game that is polo. Horses start arriving in St. Moritz from all over the world a week before the event, giving them enough time to acclimatise.

The polo teams perform in St. Moritz for sponsors such as Cartier, Maserati, Perrier Jouët or Badrutt’s Palace Hotel. Every year, numerous renowned companies offer their customers the opportunity to follow the games played out on the frozen ice and enjoy the culinary delights in the comfortably furnished tents. The sport event is of tremendous importance to the resort. “We wanted to create something that would also benefit St. Moritz,” says Gaudenzi, speaking for himself and Hans Peter Danuser. Something they undoubtedly managed to achieve with the Snow Polo World Cup St. Moritz.

**Author: Valentina Knapp-Voith**



**Snow Polo World Cup  
St. Moritz 2017  
27.–29. January 2017  
[www.snowpolo-stmoritz.com](http://www.snowpolo-stmoritz.com)**



# *CUISINE*

A day in the snow gives you a terrific appetite. Whether you want to try local specialities such as the famous Swiss cheese or prefer international delights, there's plenty to suit all tastes in St. Moritz. Matching ingredients – a train ride in the buffet car and an Engadin chef with British flair.





Photo: Shutterstock

CHRISTIAN KRABICHLER IN THE KITCHEN WITH ...

# FABRIZIO ZANETTI

Fabrizio Zanetti, a young local, is shaping the culinary world at one of the most traditional hotels in St. Moritz. At Suvretta House, the much-travelled chef serves uncomplicated dishes that shine with simple perfection.

PHOTOS: ROMANO SALIS

**I**t took Fabrizio Zanetti, who grew up in St. Moritz, 19 years to make the two kilometre journey up to the Hotel Suvretta House. Why? Because he travelled via London and China to get there. That is the short version of the history of the young chef who is now in charge of the kitchens at Suvretta House. What makes it all the more special is that the highly traditional and still decidedly British hotel with the two eye-catching towers has put its trust in a real local. A rare exception considering the cosmopolitan choices usually made in St. Moritz. Which leaves no doubt that the rösti served in the “Stube” at Suvretta House are more authentic than anywhere else in St. Moritz – but that would be understating the chef’s achievements.

Fabrizio Zanetti, now 35, acquired his merits all over the world. He started out at 16 as an apprentice at Badrutt’s Palace Hotel,

went to Zurich and Ascona, then became sous-chef at Gordon Ramsay’s famous Savoy Grill in London, where he had 30 chefs working under him. This was followed by two years with the Kempinski Group in China – which is where he received the phone call that finally brought him back home after 19 years.

However, rather than bringing with him a blend of different world cuisines, the young chef held firm his conviction that nothing should ever be too complicated. Sea bass à la Zanetti is a fitting example: “Sea bass, vegetables, olive oil and olives – done. Not too many components; better to use less, and ensure that the ones you do use are the best. Simplicity is often hardest to perfect,” explains Zanetti. Which is why in the “Stube” of the Suvretta House, which is committed to regional cuisine, great attention to detail is given even to simple dishes such as Engadin sausage with







*“MY WIFE COOKS  
AT HOME. WE’RE A  
GOOD TEAM.”*

Fabrizio Zanetti, chef at the Hotel Suvretta House







#### ABOUT FABRIZIO ZANETTI

*Fabrizio Zanetti, 35, was born in Poschiavo in Grisons and grew up in St. Moritz. He has been cooking at the Hotel Sucretta House since last May. The chef's stations (currently 14 GaultMillau Points) so far have included Badrutt's Palace Hotel in St. Moritz, "Baur au Lac" in Zurich and "Castello del Sole" in Ascona. In London, Fabrizio Zanetti worked with star chef Gordon Ramsay, then went to Taiyuan in Northern China for the Kempinski Group, where as Executive Head Chef he managed a team of 100 chefs and 30 stewards. Fabrizio Zanetti is married and has a son. The chef's own favourite dish: spaghetti with tomato sauce.*



**Fabrizio Zanetti (left)** gave food writer **Christian Krabichler** some exclusive insights into his kitchen.





**Less is more:** Fabrizio Zanetti prefers to use a few perfect components for his dishes. **Above:** sea bass with vegetables.

rösti. The menu for the Grand Restaurant, which one day is to reflect his experiences in China with items such as “Peking pigeon”, is still a work in progress.

What predestined the young man for Suvretta House apart from his cosmopolitan skills at the cooker, according to management couple Esther and Peter Egli, was his time in London, from where he brought his “feeling for upcoming trends and a British flair”. After all, Zanetti works in an establishment that has been based on English traditions ever since it first opened its doors in 1912. Guests still gather in the hotel lobby for its legendary Afternoon Tea, or start the evening before dinner with a gin aperitif at the bar. As always, the dress code in the Grand Restaurant is “Dark lounge suit with tie or dinner jacket” – just as it used to be, when British gentlemen would sit by the fire and chat a little about

their day in the snow. The black-and-white photos in “Anton’s Bar”, named after founder and hotel pioneer Anton Bon, still bring to life the time when the unforgotten Hollywood adventurer Douglas Fairbanks opened Switzerland’s first ski lift, which ran up the Corviglia directly behind the hotel.

Soon, top-class sport will be the main topic of discussion at Suvretta House: February sees the Alpine World Ski Championships in St. Moritz. For the fifth time, international skiing pros will meet in the Engadin. After all, Suvretta House has its own mountain with world-famous slopes. Chef Zanetti is one of the few people who will not see much of the major event taking place just outside his own front door: “In winter, I rarely leave the kitchen for almost four months.” But then again, it is his favourite spot anyway.

**Author:** Christian Krabichler

#### INFO

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Via Chasellas 1  
7500 St. Moritz  
T +41 81 836 36 36  
[www.suvrettahouse.ch/en](http://www.suvrettahouse.ch/en)



DINING CAR TO ST. MORITZ

# *RAILWAY DELIGHTS*

In the Gourmino restaurant aboard the Rhaetian Railway, travellers dine in style as they admire the peaks of the Grisons. However, those of a nostalgic bent are by no means the only ones who will enjoy the alpine backdrop and gourmet cuisine.

PHOTOS: FILIP ZUAN





The dining car with its nostalgic interior (left) traverses the spectacular Landwasser viaduct (below) on its way to the Engadin.



**H**ead waitress Viera Tkacova adopts a special technique to brace herself against the centrifugal forces. “You just have to walk with your legs slightly apart,” she says, as she serves guests in the dining car a tomato soup made from Valais tomatoes. The train is just coming out of the Albula Tunnel, and immediately leans into a tight left curve. “Although it often gets wobbly,” she continues, “in the five years since I started working here, I’ve only dropped something twice, maybe three times.” Today, 34 guests in the fully-booked Gourmino dining car are enjoying the well-balanced service provided by the Rhaetian Railway – along with the views of the 3,339-metre Piz Ela to the left.

Tatyana and Ariel Sergio Goekmen-Davidoff from Zurich are also impressed by the alpine backdrop. There are two glasses of Roter Veltliner in front of the couple, who are also enjoying their pork fillet with mustard sauce. “The journey to St. Moritz was already the perfect way to start our weekend,” says the 49-year-old banker, who with his wife and son has been to the Snow Polo World Cup on Lake St. Moritz. Now the family is on the way home – and tucking into Engadin nut cake. Responsible for the culinary delights is a chef who creates such delicacies as saddle of veal with rosemary jus and chicken breast with curried fruit sauce in the five square metres of the galley. Suresh Thambiyah, originally from Sri Lanka, fled

the Civil War to Switzerland in 1991. He has been a chef with the Rhaetian Railway for eight years, along with 12 other chefs. The 41-year-old loves his job. “Cooking on a train is both a challenge and a delight.”

Almost all ingredients used in the Gourmino restaurant are regional, and loaded in Chur in the morning before the train sets off for the terminal station at St. Moritz. The menu changes frequently so that regular travellers can always discover new delights. And there are quite a few regulars. Like the four members of the English family at the front of the carriage. “We’ve been coming to St. Moritz for our winter holidays every year for the last 25 years,” says George Oliver, who is travelling with his mother, wife and sister. Apart from the culinary offer, the family also appreciates the nostalgic ambience on the train. Lampshades and luggage racks are made of brass, the panelling is cherry wood and the fabric covers are floral – all very 1930s. Which is when the carriage first rolled through Switzerland. Since then, it has undergone numerous refurbishments, but each one has retained the charm of bygone days.

When the Gourmino is attached, the train never exceeds a speed of 90 km/h. This means that the viaducts that the train crosses along its route – some of which are up to 65 metres high – can all be regarded without haste. The highlights along the way include spectacular stone bridges, medieval castles, churches and stately homes in the Domleschg Valley. Where should one definitely look out the window so as not to miss out? Train chef Luca Zanolari is the best person to answer that question. He has worked for the Rhaetian Railway for 44 years, and is happy to tell his guests where, for

instance, they might be lucky enough to spot an eagle (at Bergün). Luca Zanolari can easily be recognised by his spiky haircut and long moustache. Like his colleagues in the dining car, he makes sure the two-hour ride is an experience that no one will ever want to forget.

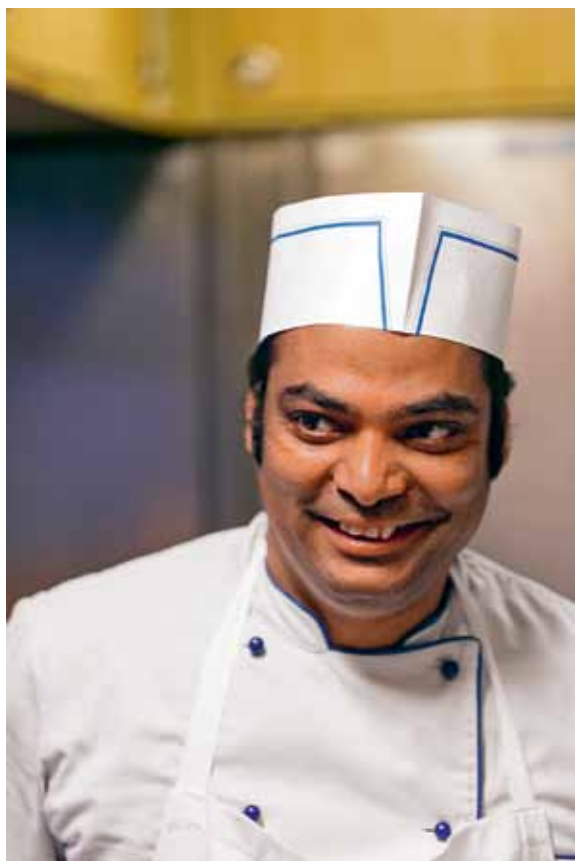
Author: Stefan Skiera



The Gourmino travels daily between Chur and St. Moritz along a route with the most delightful scenery. The journey takes two hours.

Illustration: Regina Fichtner





*“COOKING ON A  
TRAIN IS BOTH  
A CHALLENGE AND  
A DELIGHT.”*

Suresh Thambiyah, chef



“Festina Lente”, the motto in the dining car shield, roughly translates to “more haste, less speed”.



INFO

Gourmino, the Rhaetian Railway's train restaurant

Reservations:  
T +41 81 300 15 15  
railservice@rhb.ch

Information and timetable:  
[www.rhb.ch/en/leisure-travel-and-excursions/relaxation-enjoyment/gourmino](http://www.rhb.ch/en/leisure-travel-and-excursions/relaxation-enjoyment/gourmino)



Head waitress Viera Tkacova (left) ensures that the ride in the Gourmino is an unforgettable experience for passengers such as the Goekmen-Davidoff family (above).



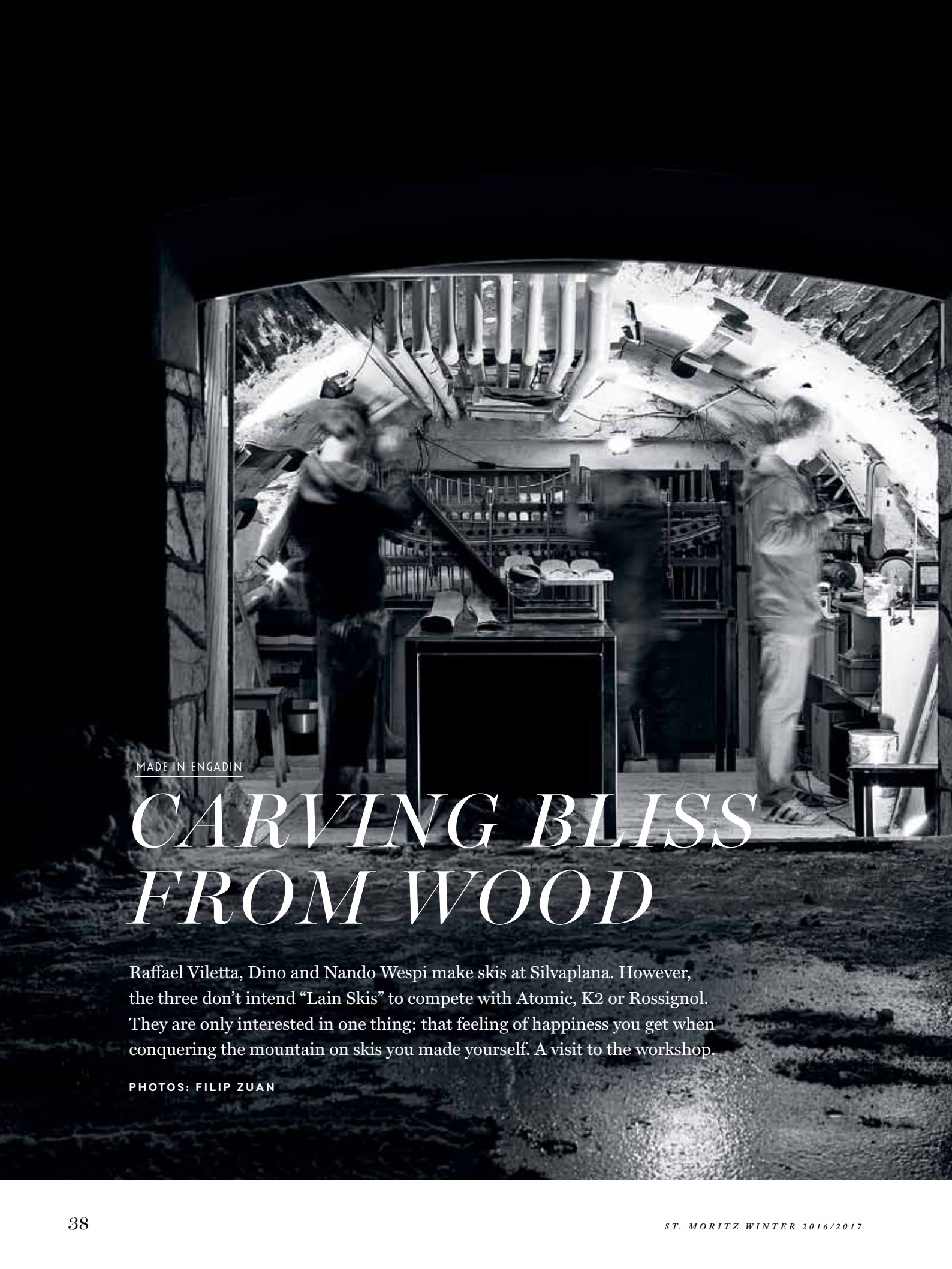
# *ARTS & CRAFTS*

From wood to ice – any material is transformed into something entirely unique in the hands of our protagonists. With a passion for detail and appreciation of traditional craftsmanship, they create works of art and everyday objects that are second to none, reflecting the character of the Engadin in their own inimitable way.

Photo: Filip Zuan







MADE IN ENGADIN

# *CARVING BLISS FROM WOOD*

Raffael Viletta, Dino and Nando Wespi make skis at Silvaplana. However, the three don't intend "Lain Skis" to compete with Atomic, K2 or Rossignol. They are only interested in one thing: that feeling of happiness you get when conquering the mountain on skis you made yourself. A visit to the workshop.

PHOTOS: FILIP ZUAN





Precision required: Dino works the walnut veneer into the right shape.

**A** January morning in Silvaplana. The winter air is refreshingly clear, the sun is slowly rising behind the Corvatsch. The steel-blue sky and sparkling snow promise a wonderful day. As the snow sports enthusiasts take the first cable car up to the peaks from Surlej, workshop noises emanate from a typical Engadin house. Raffael Viletta and Dino Wespi are hard at work making a pair of skis. And not just any old skis – they are making the perfect skis.

It all began, as is so often the case, in a bar. Raffael Viletta and brothers Dino and Nando Wespi were sitting together and talking about the perfect skis, the ones that would enhance to the maximum that feeling of happiness you get when you are skiing. “Let’s make our own,” suggested Raffael. So in the summer of 2012, the three friends set up a small workshop in the empty basement of the Engadin house in Silvaplana that is home to Raffael Viletta. In

the place where cows used to make sure that the residents upstairs were nice and warm, the heads of Raffael, Dino and Nando are more or less doing the same. Having said that, the three friends’ ideas are much more than just hot air. The skis, made here by hand in about 40 hours, are their own personal idea of how skis should be. “The products by the big commercial manufacturers are terrific, but the feeling you get when you’re on top of the mountain on skis you made yourself is something completely different. It’s not about doing it better, but about doing it yourself,” explains Raffael, 32, as their motivation.

The pair of skis that are lying on the workbench today is half finished. While Dino stirs the epoxy that will later hold everything together, Raffael planes the wooden core to the right thickness. Then the two glue the layers together: the covering, several glass-fibre mats, the wooden core, more glass-fibre, and

finally the veneer. This construction is what inspired the three friends to come up with the name “Lain Skis”, “Lain” being the Rhaeto-Romanic word for “wood”. The name is based both on the core and the cover, which are made from walnut or ash veneer and are responsible for the plain but special appearance of the skis.

Now the skis go in the press for 24 hours. Where did they learn how to make skis? “We did research and then experimented a lot – materials, shapes and designs,” explains Dino. “Some things worked, some didn’t.” Such as the aluminium tips that simply did not want to be glued on. “So we just decided to leave them off.” 24-year-old Dino is a trained polytechnician, while his brother Nando, who is two years older, is studying product design in Bern and is a trained carpenter. He is the inventor who comes up with the ideas that Dino and Raffael then turn into reality. The two live in Silvaplana, and often meet up on the spur of the moment to work on new models.

Five months after they started, the first pair of skis was ready for testing and worked so well that they immediately sold them. However, their aim was never to go for “the big bucks”, as Raffael explains. Of the 25 pairs they have made so far, they have sold five – above all, they want this particular activity to remain a hobby. Which is why they never accept commissions, and only make products that they can assess themselves. Raffael, Dino and Nando are passionate off-piste skiers, which is why their models are powder skis. And they have to withstand quite a lot: “‘Go big or go home’ is our motto” says Raffael, making clear that Lain Skis are not for the timid, but for snow sports enthusiasts for whom no powder snow slope is too steep. Their product portfolio does not include snowboards or carving skis – because they don’t use them themselves. And that may well be their key to success. Instead of trying to please everyone, they are focused on getting one thing

right. “We enjoy making skis that we enjoy using ourselves. And if someone else wants to use them too, so much the better,” says Dino. Which is why he doesn’t want to give a set price. As long as the connection feels right, the customer may pay what he likes – and is given an invitation to help in the workshop.

Next morning, the skis are taken out of the press. Dino cuts along the edges with a jigsaw, then the ski is shaped and the tip planed, all by hand. Right at the end, the Lain Skis logo is screen printed on. The friends can hardly wait to try out the skis. Raffael, who works for a property management company in St. Moritz, and Dino, who works for the emergency services, spend as much time as possible on the mountain – ideally the Diavolezza or Corvatsch. “Enjoying the mountains together, feeling the adrenaline – that’s the best thing in the world,” enthuses Dino. And Nando, travels to the Engadin from Bern as often as possible. As far as Raffael, who grew up in La Punt, is concerned, the Engadin is the best place on the planet. “What I like most of all? The landscape, without doubt. The lakes, the steep mountains, the wide valley ... the nature here is unique. And for sports it’s simply a paradise! From climbing and windsurfing, cycling to ice hockey, there’s so much on offer here all year round.”

The only question that remains to be asked is whether Raffael’s brother, professional skier Sandro Viletta, has tried the Lain Skis yet? “Not yet, no. He travels so much, and I don’t see a lot of him,” he replies with a wink: “As a pro, he tends to train on the hard piste – and leaves the deep snow to us and our Lain Skis.”

Author: Yasmine Sailer

## “WE NEVER INTENDED TO GET RICH WITH LAIN SKIS.”

Raffael Viletta



Lain Skis  
Via Chaunt Baselgia 7  
7513 Silvaplana  
[www.lainskis.ch](http://www.lainskis.ch)





Raffael Viletta (above centre), Dino (above left) and Nando Wespi set up their workshop in the basement of an Engadin house.



The three friends do everything themselves – from manufacturing (above) to testing the skis (above left). The skis are all in different shapes, but share the same look.



## FROZEN SCULPTURES

# “THE ICE IS READY!”

Reto Grond transforms large chunks of ice into impressive works of art. They adorn restaurants and boutiques and sparkle in the prettiest parts of St. Moritz. We met the Engadin-born sculptor in his studio.

PHOTOS: MAX GALLI

**H**ad it not been cold enough already? Only an hour ago, the four snow polo fans in their thick down outfits were cheering on the teams on Lake St. Moritz. The outdoor temperature there: zero degrees. Now they're close to freezing point again, because the bar they're sitting at on Via Traunter Plazzas in St. Moritz is made of pure ice. And the drinks in their glasses are almost as cold as the bar.

The sculptor of the seven-metre bar illuminated in purple is Reto Grond, who fashions highly artistic ice creations for jewellers, boutiques and hotels in the region. The first thing that amazes visitors to his studio is his collection of chainsaws. About half a dozen of them, all in different sizes, hang on the wall. As Reto Grond takes down one of the larger versions



Mills, drills and grinders (above) are as important to Reto Grond as his Bunsen burner.

and places it on his working platform, he announces today's project: "A penguin for a fish restaurant. One metre high." The client wants the sculpture to draw attention to his food stand on Lake St. Moritz during the White Turf horse race.

With a practised movement, the 43-year-old hauls a 120-kg ice cube from his cooling chamber and pushes it along a wooden track





onto the plinth. Then the chainsaw starts. In fine lines Grond first traces the outlines of the penguin in the transparent ice, white particles flying in all directions. Then, with elegant movements, he saws off the excess around the edges, letting them crash loudly onto the wooden platform. He uses mills, drills and grinders for the rest of the project. It takes him a good four hours to complete the penguin, but the sculptor already knows that he has to make one or two spares for the White Turf: "At temperatures above zero, the long, pointed beak melts too quickly."

In the winter months between December and March, the artist, whose studio is located in Sils-Maria, almost gets more commissions than he can handle. His clients include local companies as well as international sponsors of Engadin art and sports events. The sculptor, for instance, created metre-high ice versions of company logos for BMW, Prada and Bogner. In summer, his work takes on a different focus. Then he works with materials that can handle high temperatures, such as wood and stone. "The time dimensions are completely different then," says Grond. "I need several hours for an ice sculpture, several days for a wooden figure, and three to four weeks for one of stone."

When he works with ice, he cools the block to minus seven degrees, at this point it reaches the perfect degree of hardness, before placing it on his working platform. The texture of the water is also important. The less calcium it contains, the clearer the ice will be. "In that respect," says Grond, "Engadin water is perfect." At his studio, he simply runs it from the tap into four chiller containers. "The ice is ready for 'harvesting' after three-and-a-half days."

The sculptor finds inspiration for his work in the landscapes of the Engadin, its glaciers and frozen bodies of waters. He often takes his

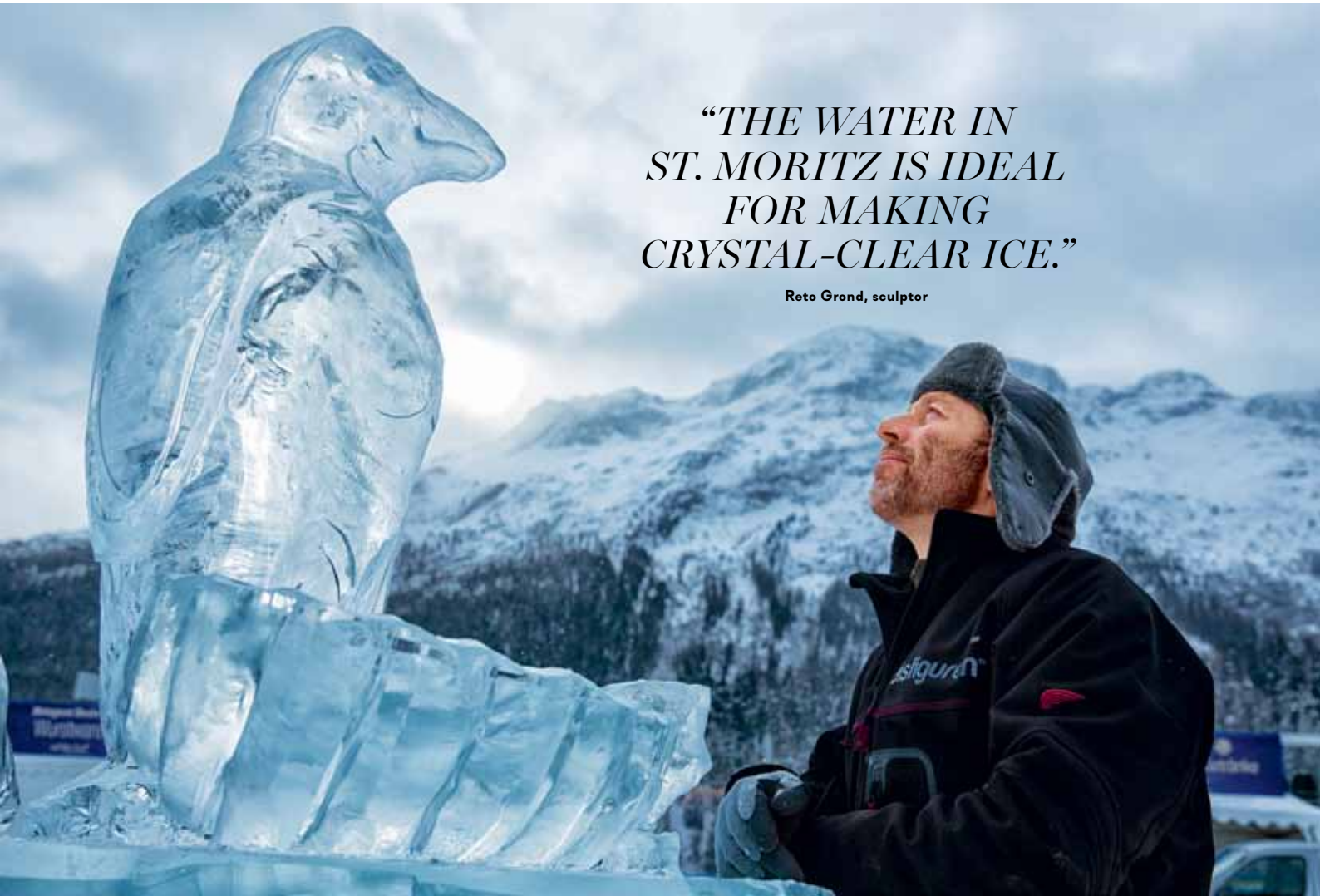


The ice block that the artist chills to the right temperature and ideal level of hardness weighs an impressive 120 kg.

two children ice skating on Lake Silvaplana. The ice layer there is often free of snow, thanks to the Maloja wind, so that it looks like a dark, transparent jewel – the so-called black ice. "There are fine lines all over the surface," says Grond. "They are the outlines of large fragments of ice that interlock like the tectonic plates of our planet." Time and again young locals who admire his sculptures in St. Moritz develop a fascination for the frozen element. Suddenly turning up at his studio they want to train as ice sculptors. "Unfortunately, I can't help because I am not a master craftsman." However, his 13-year-old son and 11-year-old daughter are secret apprentices. "Whenever there's a family event coming up, they both grab a chisel, and later on there's a pretty piece on the table."

Author: Stefan Skiera





*“THE WATER IN  
ST. MORITZ IS IDEAL  
FOR MAKING  
CRYSTAL-CLEAR ICE.”*

Reto Grond, sculptor

#### ABOUT RETO GROND

*Reto Grond was born in Samedan in 1973, where he also grew up. He trained as a wood sculptor in Brienz from 1993 until 1997. He then went to the US to specialise in ice sculpture. He often receives over 30 commissions in the winter months.*

*His biggest sculpture to date is a three-metre high perfume bottle weighing 2.5 tonnes. His studio is located in Sils-Maria and open to visitors by prior arrangement.*

**[www.eisfiguren.ch](http://www.eisfiguren.ch)**



In winter, Reto Grond makes a bar of pure ice at the centre of St. Moritz.







# *NATURAL BEAUTY*

Even Giovanni Segantini, innovator of Alpine painting, knew that nature's power is most evident in the mountains: "I was constantly striving to go higher and higher. (...)

This was where I studied nature in her liveliest forms and brightest colours."

These colours also make the special Engadin light glow in winter, when snow crystals and frost flowers try to out-sparkle each other ...



SNOW FASCINATION

# *ICY DIAMONDS*

They are the crown jewels of the Engadin: glittering, sparkling, shining snow crystals. To scientists like Felix Keller, they are “the hottest material in the world”, and to winter sports lovers, the most important requirement for winter sports.

PHOTOS: ALESSANDRO DELLA BELLA, ROMANO SALIS





The snow glistens magically in the light of the full moon in the Val Trupchun (left). Next morning, hoar frost flowers adorn the tree branches.

C

old, white, powdery and soft: snow is one of nature's most fascinating materials, and not just in a winter sports resort. And although every single snowflake starts its life in the same way, as a water droplet in the clouds, no two are the same. Temperature, humidity, sunshine and the way down from the sky to the ground decide what form a snow crystal will take. The results are thousands and thousands of different crystals, each one uniquely beautiful.

"Snow is the hottest material there is," according to Felix Keller. The trained geographer has been interested in snow ever since he was a child, and has been researching it professionally since 1989. "Snow is always only a few degrees away from the melting point, which means it is constantly fluctuating between a liquid, frozen and evaporating state – it's a very lively material," says the researcher. The snow in the Engadin is extremely dry and cold, which makes it ideal for winter sports.

"St. Moritz is known for its very cold temperatures, which is to say we are lucky in that the snow on the ground is never exposed to melting periods," explains the snow expert.

Apart from the cold ground temperatures, the cold, dry air also makes the snow in the Engadin particularly skier-friendly. The lack of moisture creates extremely compact snow that is grippy and light rather than wet and heavy. "This combination of dryness and cold is more common in the Engadin than anywhere else in the Alps," explains Keller. And also makes everything glitter and sparkle on the region's above-average number of sunny days – a delightful side benefit that additionally sweetens winter sports enthusiasts' pleasure in the snow.

"It's the unique light in the Engadin that lets the crystals shine in so many different shades of blue and makes the snow look so fabulous," he is convinced. A particularly fascinating light effect can be observed on clear

nights with a full moon in the Val Trupchun, 20 km north-east of St. Moritz. The snow crystals reflect so brightly in the moonlight that it is almost as bright as day. An enchanted sight made possible by the fact that the crystals can grow unhindered in this particularly cold, shady valley. To Keller, these phenomena are what make winters in St. Moritz so special. "I am always sad when the snow melts in spring. And by the middle of summer, I'm already looking forward to winter," he adds. Anyone who has ever experienced an Engadin winter at its loveliest will completely agree.

Author: Yasmine Sailer



No two snowflakes are the same – the crystal shapes are unique, and appear at their particular best when bathed in sun- or moonlight (like here, in the Val Trupchun).



#### ABOUT FELIX KELLER

*Felix Keller was born in the Engadin. He is a trained geographer, and researches glaciers, snow and permafrost regions. In his home town of Samedan, the glaciologist realises scientific projects at the Institute of the Higher Technical College for Tourism Grisons, and also lectures in environmental sciences at the ETH Zurich. Felix Keller has always been fascinated by snow, and has been researching it professionally for 27 years.*



## SNOW FASCINATION

## SNOW TO “SURF” ON

Viktoria Rebensburg, Tina Maze, Julia Mancuso are all successful ski racers. And they all trust in the service team of the Swiss ski manufacturer Stöckli, because they develop the perfect skis for them – for any kind of snow.



Chris Lödler (left) is a serviceman at Stöckli, Beni Matti used to be a professional skier and today is the racing director.

When Olympic medallist Viktoria Rebensburg holds her skis towards the camera after a successful race, it's not just advertising, but also a nod to the ten racing sports experts at Swiss ski manufacturer Stöckli. Because, winter and summer, they work to provide the professional athlete with the ideal skis, and always know which ones are the right ones for the particular conditions. Every successful race is the result of tests carried out on hundreds of skis, each one closer to the ideal than the others. The finishing touches in the material can decide whether a race will be won or not. We spoke to Beni Matti, racing director at Stöckli and serviceman Chris Lödler about the perfect skis and the optimum snow for skiers.

**A ski race is a huge challenge for athletes and service teams alike. What do you do at Stöckli?**

Matti: We spend the whole year developing new models for the professionals, subjecting them to extensive testing – on different types of snow and in different weathers. The more you wax and use a ski, the better it will be.

Lödler: As the serviceman, I am responsible for Viktoria Rebensburg's skis. I go to all the training sessions and competitions. Based on the slope, weather and snow, I choose the skis for her and decide how to prepare them, which wax to use and how to grind the edges. I prepare several pairs of skis the night before a race and after checking the slope the next morning, we select a pair, that is then given another coating and edge finish.

**It's important work – after all, the professionals rely on your advice ...**

Lödler: We work very closely with the athletes and know what they want from their skis. Every professional has their own skiing style and prefers different skis. The racers provide feedback on how the skis feel, and from that we draw conclusions with regard to the model and its preparation.



Austrian Chris Lödler has been with Stöckli for six years. He prepares Viktoria Rebensburg's skis with wax, using an iron.



**How do snow conditions influence the skiers' performance?** Matti: The snow determines the choice of material and how it is prepared. A ski that is fast on the glacier in summer may be the wrong one for artificial snow in winter. And the snow to the north of the Alps is different from, for instance, that in the Dolomites.

**You are familiar with skiing regions all over the world. What is so special about the snow in the Engadin?** Matti: The snow here is dry, cold and aggressive. Because the sun shines on Corviglia in the morning, the snow is often ten degrees colder than the air.

**And how are the skis prepared for these conditions?** Lödler: We need to influence the friction so that water forms quickly on the dull, dry snow.

**Is it easy to ski on the Engadin snow?** Matti: Yes. It's grippy, and you don't need sharp edges. The conditions are also ideal here for deep-snow skiers, because the powder snow really is feather-light. You can practically "surf" on it.

Interview: Yasmine Sailer

#### ABOUT STÖCKLI

*In the mid-1930s, Josef Stöckli was still making wooden skis for his own personal use. As demand increased, in 1935 he founded the ski works Stöckli AG, which today manufactures 50,000 pairs of skis a year. Vice Olympic medallist Urs Kälin was the first Swiss World Cup skier to use Stöckli; today, international professionals such as Tina Maze (Slovenia), Julia Mancuso (US) and Viktoria Rebensburg (Germany) put their trust in the Swiss manufacturer. Stöckli's customers also benefit from innovations successfully implemented in the World Cup as the professional skis are sold 1:1.*

[www.stoeckli.ch/inten](http://www.stoeckli.ch/inten)



NEW iLOUNGE

# MODERN RECEPTION

From tourist information office to iLounge: Guests from all over the world can now come to a multimedia centre at the heart of St. Moritz for information and advice.

**W**hen the starting shot for the FIS Alpine Ski World Championships is fired on 6. February 2017, many visitors will make their first trip to St. Moritz. The idea behind the new iLounge in the pedestrian zone, is to provide a contemporary welcome for them, as

well as the 20,000 or so other visitors to the information office who come here every year. The old information office has been refurbished, and now boasts a new, open-plan interior with modern furnishings, making it the perfect response to the digital age. The main objective: to receive guests effectively face to face. Those seeking information are given a friendly, uncomplicated welcome and are able to obtain advice in chats with trained staff and locals and from the various multimedia spots. Accordingly, the iLounge lives up to its name: the “i” stands for information, and “Lounge” for the relaxed atmosphere that invites and encourages exchanges and provides inspiration. Chats with the tour advisers and providers of insider tips should help guests in the iLounge to experience and learn about the Engadin in a way that is both surprising and entertaining. At the same time, the tourist organisation wants to play a part in revitalising the village centre of St. Moritz.

The redesign was conceived with the support of the production company Steiner Sarnen AG. The interior is based on the illustrations of St. Moritz by world-famous artist Christoph Niemann, created in recent years.



Modern and multimedia:  
the new iLounge of  
the Engadin St. Moritz  
Tourism Organisation.



St. Moritz Tourist Information  
Via Maistra 12  
7500 St. Moritz  
T +41 81 837 33 33  
[www.engadin.stmoritz.ch/en/stmoritz](http://www.engadin.stmoritz.ch/en/stmoritz)

The background of the page is a close-up photograph of a red garment, possibly a coat or dress, with a gold floral embroidery on a dark blue background. The embroidery features a delicate branch with leaves and a small red flower. The red fabric is textured and appears to be part of a larger piece of clothing.

# *CULTURE*

There are days when you don't feel like skiing or skating, shopping or visiting museums. For such occasions, St. Moritz offers horse-drawn sleigh rides through the high mountain valley or a visit to famous Hollywood movie locations. And if you're seeking justification for this sweet idleness, just remember Socrates' famous words: "Total leisure is the ultimate wealth."

*Photo: Romano Salis*







A kiss for your sweetheart: the Schlitteda has brought together lots of Engadin couples.

Anyone who has experienced the Engadin landscape in the snow will know just how easy it is to lose your heart here. To the magnificent mountains, the magical light, the sparkling snow. And the Schlitteda ensures that spring fever spreads despite the freezing January weather. This festival takes place during the first weeks of the year, and is one of the social highlights during the Engadin winter. Many an Engadin couple found each other on the romantic sleigh ride through the enchanted snowy valley.

The ladies of the Engiadina St. Moritz folk dance group have been looking forward to this particular Saturday morning for weeks. At the Hotel Laudinella in St. Moritz Bad, they give their lace-trimmed blouses a final check, smooth their lavishly embroidered silk aprons,

adjust an amber necklace or tuck an errant hair under the pretty little traditional hat called a Chapadüsli. "It's the most wonderful sense of pleasure," says Catti Moder, the longest-serving member of the group, who is attending the Schlitteda for the 41st time. "Especially when you have the good fortune to share the day with a man you like." Conny Rüdisüli, who is attending the event for the first time, is also looking forward to this. With her artistically plaited hair and the festive costume, the student from Rapperswil looks like a young farm girl in a painting by the Alpine artist Giovanni Segantini.

The Schlitteda is the festival of lovers. The custom arose around 200 years ago, when youngsters in the Engadin still lived on isolated farms scattered around the area. On the





CUSTOMS

# *SPRING FEVER AND WINTER MAGIC*

Forget the January slump! In the Engadin, a romantic folk custom heralds the start of the year. Locals dress in festive costumes and ride through the snowy winter landscape on horse-drawn sleighs in the “Schlitteda”.

PHOTOS: ROMANO SALIS







The festive procession wends its way through the winter landscape from St. Moritz to Pontresina.



The ladies' beautifully embroidered costumes are as much a part of the event as the men's top hats and tails.



Catti Moder (seen here with her partner Peter Leitz) has already participated in 41 Schlittedas.





Marco Murbach is the president of the Engiadina St. Moritz folk dance group.

sleigh ride from village to village, the young couples presented themselves to the community for the first time, which at the time meant as much as an official engagement. The custom was passed on from generation to generation, and is still extremely popular with the people of the Engadin, who are so deeply rooted in their traditions. Today, the Schlitteda is no longer the preserve of the young and in love. Couples who have been married for many years, as well as couples who are just good friends, enjoy sharing the ride across the magnificent mountain backdrop, which ends with a festive meal and dancing. While she was still a little girl, Bettina Lanfranchi of Silvaplana used to dream of being allowed to take part. "It's one of the few days I can wear my traditional costume. And if one day I am lucky enough to ride in front, I will be more than happy," says the 23-year-old. Leading the procession is still regarded as a great honour.

Outside the Hotel Laudinella, people are waiting impatiently for the ladies to arrive. Then they come and sit neatly on the narrow benches of the decorated sleighs, proudly pre-

sending themselves to the onlookers. "Just wonderful," says Stewart Bailey, who is currently on holiday in Samedan. For years, the Australian has been coming to spend a few weeks in the Engadin, although he only heard about the Schlitteda for the first time a few days ago. "There was no way I was going to miss it. I love old customs, and the marvellous costumes are just fabulous. We don't have anything like it at home." Music to the ears of Marco Murbach, president of the Engiadina St. Moritz folk dance group. This year, his association is holding the Schlitteda for the 41st time. He himself is dressed in a dinner jacket, which his mother once made for him with her own hands. And the stiff fabric used for his shirt used to be the linen in which he slept as a child. "Tradition and family history worn at the same time."

Cheerful traditional folk music fills the cold morning air, and the cavaliers, for their part dressed up in festive tails and top hats, climb up onto the sleighs behind the ladies. Led by a lady in a musketeer's uniform, and accompanied by much cheering and the ringing of countless bells, the festive parade wends its way through the winter forest from St. Moritz to Pontresina. A warming Glühwein or glass of Röteli, a spicy speciality liqueur, await the participants at the legendary Hotel Waldhaus am See above Lake St. Moritz. Such a special day has to be celebrated, after all. And of course, in keeping with the motto of "An der Schlitteda schnupft jeda" (very loosely translated as "Everyone snuffs at the Schlitteda"), the traditional pinch of snuff also has to be taken. Before the sleighs set off at a light trot to Pontresina, president Marco Murbach proudly shows the three wooden sleighs that he has lovingly and laboriously carved by hand to some passers-by. "This one even has the family crests of my wife's family and mine. It is the last thing I would ever give away."

This romantic winter custom is a nostalgic experience for guests. And for many of the locals, it is quite simply the loveliest day of the year. Eviva la Schlitteda!

Author: Anina Rether

INFO

Schlitteda  
21 January 2017  
St. Moritz-Pontresina

## PICTURE-PERFECT BACKDROP

# GREAT CINEMA

The Engadin is the Hollywood of the mountains. Over 200 films have been made here, and numerous advertisements, travel films and documentaries are constantly being added. So what is it that filmmakers love about the region? The breathtaking alpine panorama, majestic glaciers and unforgettable natural light.

**L**eo Blättler still remembers chasing after James Bond on skis like it was yesterday. Armed with a rubber Kalashnikov rifle, the icy wind in his face and the fleeing master spy in front of him, he virtually flew down a slope on Piz Palü. “According to the script, we were supposed to collapse in the snow,” he reminisces. “Which wasn’t a problem, because we were on an incredibly steep slope.” The mountain guide and entrepreneur from St. Moritz played one of the Russian soldiers who pursued 007 down the mountain. The breakneck chase on Piz Palü can be seen in 1977 film “The Spy Who Loved Me”, which made Roger Moore an icon of the Bond films.

The world of film loves drama. Hardly surprising, then, that the Engadin, with its breathtaking mountain panoramas, deep-blue lakes and crystal-clear air should not only appeal to holiday guests from all over the world, but also exert a magical attraction on international film crews and stars. The young Elizabeth Taylor cruised the summery Silvaplana in

her convertible (“Rhapsody”, 1954), Sean Connery fell in love on the icy heights of the Diavolezza (“Five Days One Summer”, 1982), and Juliette Binoche and Kristen Stewart became entangled in a tempestuous relationship on Lake Sils (“Clouds of Sils Maria”, 2014). And because it was so wonderful, James Bond (alias Roger Moore) returned to the Engadin in 1985: in “A View to a Kill”, he fought for England on Piz Scerscen.

For almost 40 years, Blättler has been the go-to man for film crews on the search for locations in the Engadin. He finds the right location, helps with obtaining the necessary permits and organises helicopters to remote areas. Above all, though, he feels responsible for the safety of the crews. Filming in the mountains is a particular challenge. Anyone who wants to shoot in the Bernina Massif needs complete concentration and experienced locals for support. Steep slopes look close enough to touch, icy abysses are often but a few steps away, and sudden changes in the weather have to be expected at all times. Most of the studios that shoot up here have little knowledge of mountains. Such as the Hamburg company that shot the drama “Gran Paradiso” (2000). Blättler remembers: “We had to explain to them exactly how to behave in high-alpine terrain.” Discipline and respect for the unpredictability of nature are essential. Which

Photos: Gallerystock (1), ddp-images (1)





As a Russian soldier, St. Moritz-born  
Leo Blättler pursued James Bond in  
"The Spy Who Loved Me" (1977).

**"Rhapsody", 1954, with  
Elizabeth Taylor**



**"The White Hell of  
Pitz Palu", 1929**



**"Gran Paradiso", 2000**



**"Clouds of Sils Maria", 2014, with  
Kristen Stewart and Juliette Binoche**



**"Five Days One Summer",  
1982, with Sean Connery**

is also what one of the best mountain film classics is about: "The White Hell of Pitz Palu", 1929. The drama about a man who climbs the mountain in search of his wife, who was lost on their honeymoon, was shot above Diavolezza. The gripping silent movie shows the most impressive nature shots as well as a number of scenes involving highly skilled climbing in a mountain crevice. At the end of the 19th century, Englishwoman Elizabeth Main shot the very first shorts about various types of winter sports, which are considered the oldest films of the South Grisons. The keen alpinist guided rope teams, skied, ice skated and tobogganed, and recorded everything with her camera. Her pictures, published in highly regarded journals and mountain books, contributed greatly to

spreading the appeal that St. Moritz continues to radiate to this day.

To Reto Lamm, it is clear why the Engadin is so popular with film directors: "The unique light and clear air give the shots a very special kind of magic." For many years, the former snowboard pro and vice world champion from Pontresina has worked with Willy Bogner, whose films shot on Piz Palü in the 1980s included the sports films in the "Fire And Ice" series. Back then, Lamm was employed as a stuntman; today he produces image films for





"The Spy Who Loved Me", 1977



"A View to a Kill", 1985

Bogner, and Olympic applications. Together with the Engadin St. Moritz Tourism Organisation he also makes films of the region. "There is nothing nicer than telling other people about your home region," says Lamm, 46. The leisure opportunities in the Engadin are varied, and his task as an image film director is to combine all these experience worlds and appeal to the diverse clientèle equally. Lamm's formula for success: taking everyday moments and turning them into something special. A good example is the anniversary film "150 Jahre Wintertourismus" ("150 Years of Winter Tourism"), which the filmmaker produced in 2014. It perfectly combines historic and current footage into an emotional whole. His latest project, "Ski-mythos St. Moritz" ("St. Moritz the Ski Myth") is due for release during the time of the upcoming highlight in the Engadin, the 2017 World Ski Championships. After all, the magic of the Engadin mountains unfolds on the big screen almost as well as in real life.

Author: Anina Rether



#### ABOUT LEO BLÄTTLER

*Leo Blättler, born in Hergiswil in 1943, is a mountain guide, entrepreneur and the go-to guy for anything to do with filming in the Engadin. For almost 40 years he has been helping international filmmakers on shoots in and around St. Moritz. As a stuntman, he pursued James Bond alias Roger Moore down Piz Palü in 1977.*



#### ABOUT RETO LAMM

*Reto Lamm was born in Samedan in 1970. He produces image films for Willy Bogner and the Engadin St. Moritz Tourism Organisation, among others. He was one of Switzerland's first professional snowboarders, vice world and vice European champion in the half-pipe, organiser of major snowboarding events, and a stuntman in a number of sports films.*

ST. MORITZ 2.0

# “WE HAVE TO PAINT THE ENGADIN IN A NEW LIGHT”

Otto Steiner, owner of the Steiner Sarnen Schweiz creative workshop, and his company have been developing tourist attractions, museums and brand worlds since 1997. How would he describe St. Moritz if it were a work of art?

**M**ister Steiner,

**if one were to consider St. Moritz as a work of art, what kind of piece would you describe it as, and who would be the artist?** It would be a painting of a landscape. Nature really highlights everything that is wonderful about the Engadin: the oscillating light, the lake district and the vastness of it all. The landscape was shaped by erosion and glaciers. There are luscious areas that are apparently completely untouched, or else are so well-tended by human hands that they look completely natural.

**If you were asked to reinterpret this work, in which direction would you take it?** With the greatest possible care, I would set clear signals in places where adjustments are possible. In order to give people in the Engadin an economic future. The potential lies in the design of the landscape. The focus on ski tourism

should also widen and move towards a broader range of offers.

**What kind of architecture would this require?**

Five to ten major cross-thematic investments. It's about adding strong focuses and painting the Engadin in a new light. To provide target groups who don't yet come to the Engadin a reason to do so. We need new guests – and we need to hold on to the ones we have.

**Where do you see St. Moritz the work in five, ten or twenty years?** The future must not be left to chance. We need at least two or three major new offers in order to increase the experience value. Our current galleries offer access to contemporary culture. However, art in the Engadin doesn't have a proper home – something along the lines of a Guggenheim Museum. Furthermore, we need a development plan in order to evaluate various ideas.

**What would this plan look like?** For me, it would include “touching snow” on the Bernina – tourists from hot, far-off countries should be able to have an initial contact with snow at any time of the year and with no great effort. This would also create a desire for safety, cleanliness and beauty. Access to the Engadin could be further-developed and made easier by ex-





A landscape painting – that's how Otto Steiner visualises St. Moritz.



#### ABOUT OTTO STEINER

*Otto Steiner, 61, designs and realises worlds of experience – exhibitions, visitor centres, urban leisure areas and garden landscapes – in the mountains, in museums and on company premises. His work focuses on the question, “What do we want to tell the visitors?”. In the past 20 years, he and his company, Steiner Sarnen Schweiz, have completed more than 250 projects all over Europe, including the Quattro Bar on Corviglia, which received the Red Dot Design Award for Interior Architecture in 2014. Otto Steiner, originally a photographer, is the father of three grown-up children.*

[www.steinersarnen.ch/en](http://www.steinersarnen.ch/en)

panding the airport at Samedan to include an instrument landing system. Furthermore, the Corviglia should be given an Olympic Museum and become a winter Olympus.

**What would you tell people who don't know St. Moritz about the town?** St. Moritz is cumbersome and needs to be conquered. As a provider, you need to use complex thinking, as otherwise there is a risk of St. Moritz losing ground. Investing in pool landscapes and a good medical centre would also attract additional guests. The first step has been taken with the indoor pool, spa and sports centre, but more need to follow.

**What projects have you already implemented in the Engadin?** The redesign of the stations on the St. Moritz-Chantarella-Corviglia funicular and the Quattro Bar on Corviglia. A further future-orientated project is planned in Celerina. The sewage treatment plant there is to be relocated in a few years' time, and this opens up the possibility of a vast building project.

Interview: Mark van Huisseling

# PREVIEW

The next issue will appear in May 2017. Discover the highly traditional yet future-oriented variety of St. Moritz – like regional delights with a modern twist, Switzerland's oldest golf course, and a British star architect working on converting a St. Moritz icon.



A kite surfer and a mountain biker talk to us about their favourite sports and explain why St. Moritz is the perfect place to indulge in them.



St. Moritz boasts a number of façades with elaborate "Sgraffito" artwork. We set out to find the loveliest examples.



Good morning, St. Moritz! Sunrise in the Engadin is best experienced on top of Piz Nair.

Photos: Andreas Kern/ [swiss-image.ch](http://swiss-image.ch), Swiss Sports Publishing GmbH, PR



*“I AM ONCE MORE IN THE ENGADIN.  
THIS IS MY THIRD VISIT TO THE  
PLACE AND, ONCE AGAIN, I FEEL THAT  
MY PROPER REFUGE AND HOME  
IS HERE AND NOWHERE ELSE.”*

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, 1844–1900



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*St. Moritz*®

TOP OF THE WORLD

1934

1948

1974

2003



FIS ALPINE  
WORLD SKI  
CHAMPIONSHIPS  
2017