

Engadin *Magazine*

Place of yearning *Anyone who has ever visited the Engadin is at home in the mountains*

SUMMER — 19



Engadin





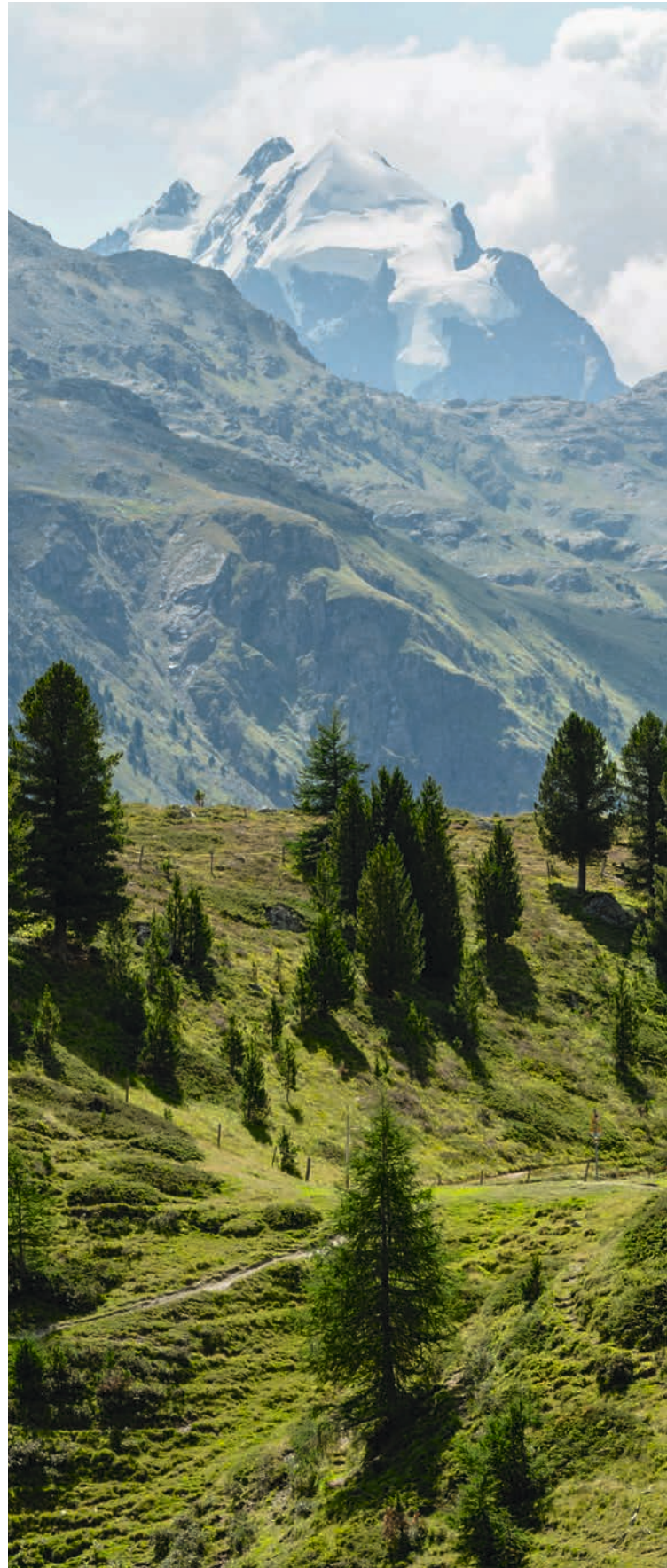
Engadin Summer—19



Autumn delights
The Engadin is just as impressive in the autumn and winter. **page 50**



Free as the wind
Feel the water and wind when you're kitesurfing – while body and mind float free. **page 20**





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Dear Readers,

I am delighted that you are holding the new Engadin Magazine in your hands. The quality of our services and products is maintained through continual development, and ensures they remain exciting. We here at Engadin St. Moritz Tourismus have recently realigned our two brands “Engadin” and “St. Moritz” – and in the future will be publishing two different magazines with different emphases.

At the heart of this magazine is an absolute place of yearning: the Engadin. For me personally, there is no other place that combines the variety and uniqueness of nature more impressively than here. Whether you choose to allow the region to work its magic on you from the back of a mountain bike (page 10), to refocus on the essential during a very special time-out in the mountains (page 16), or opt for close contact with the local peaks (page 26), our Engadin has what you are looking for. And there are constant treats and surprises in store – for instance, the glorious golden rays of autumn (page 50). But the countryside isn't all that shapes this region. The people that live here also make it so special. Authentic, creative and warm characters whose enthusiasm for their home and their hospitality is felt by everyone who comes to visit.

I hope you have a pleasantly relaxing time reading through this magazine, and perhaps find some inspiration.

Warmest wishes,
Gerhard Walter
CEO, Engadin St. Moritz Tourismus AG

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "G. Walter".



Engadin Top Events Summer 2019

The highlights
from culture,
sports and cuisine

June

13.6.–16.6.

20. Silser Hesse Days

Experience Hermann Hesse's works
www.engadin.stmoritz.ch/sils

28.6.–30.6.

Vaude Engadin Bike Giro

Mountain bike stage race for everyone
www.engadin-bike-giro.ch

29.6.–6.7.

20. Opera St. Moritz

Anniversary production of Giuseppe Verdi's "I due Foscari"
www.opera-stmoritz.ch

July

July–August

Origen Festival Cultural

Theatre festival at various venues in the Engadin
www.origen.ch

4.7.–4.8.

Festival Da Jazz

Jazz concerts in a fabulous atmosphere
www.festivaldajazz.ch

5.7.–6.7.

Engadin St. Moritz Ultraks

Trail-running against a spectacular backdrop
engadin.ultraks.com

5.7.–7.7.

26. British Classic Car Meeting St. Moritz

Deluxe British classic cars
www.bccm-stmoritz.ch

6.7.–7.7.

Ötillö Swimrun Engadin

Swimming and running competition
www.otilloswimrun.com/races/engadin

8.7.–18.8.

Engadiner Ferienspass

Holiday activities for children between the ages of five and 16
www.ferienspass-engadin.ch

20./26.7.–28.7.

Swissalpine Irontrail

Various races and side events for trail runners, mountain runners and fun runners
www.swissalpine.ch

26.7.–28.7.

Tavolata St. Moritz

Food festival with an epic table that's 400 metres long
www.tavolatastmoritz.ch

August

8.8.–11.8.

50. Concours Hippique Zuoz

Horse show with every category
www.zuoz-concours.ch

23.8.–25.8.

Passione Engadina

Classic car rally
www.passione-engadina.ch

September

15.9.–21.9.

Resonanzen Sils

International culture festival
www.waldhaus-sils.ch

20.9.–22.9.

Bernina Gran Turismo

Car race on the Bernina Pass
www.bernina-granturismo.com

26.9.–29.9.

Silser Nietzsche-Kolloquium

Discussions on the topic of "Constructions of masculinity"
www.nietzschehaus.ch

Over hill and dale

The Engadin is a veritable paradise for cyclists and mountain bikers. An extensive network of cycling paths includes wonderful natural roads and trails.

Text ROBERTO RIVOLA *Picture* MADLAINA WALTHER



Christoph Schäfli with son Luca, 11, and daughter Selina, 5, on the Pumptrack.

From Pontresina it's up to lovely Lej da Staz (below).

We've already cycled from the Engadin to Innsbruck," announced 11-year-old Luca with pride. "And I did it all by myself, but Selina had a FollowMe Tandem Coupling." The five-year-old has a wide grin on her face. "I help when we're going up, and when we come down I do tricks on the pedals." The year before last, the Schäfli family took their bikes from Sils to Scuol, with night stops in Pontresina and Zernez. Last summer they did the second section along the Inn- Radweg route from Zernez to Innsbruck. By comparison, today's tour is nothing. We meet the active family on the Pumptrack in Pontresina before they set off through the Stazerwald and to Lake Staz. The siblings love the up and down of the Pumptrack, the bends, dips and waves, so much so that they don't want to leave. The route is suitable for cyclists of all ages; it's a playground that's a total of 350 metres long. You'll learn to control your bike around tight bends and over waves. Keen amateurs and top athletes congregate on the concrete surface between May and October. Christoph Schäfli and his children have come here to have some fun on their bikes. Occasionally, in the evenings, Christoph also sets off without the children. Then he'll cycle, for instance, from Pontresina to the Bernina Pass and back via Morteratsch. "It's a great route for blowing away the cobwebs. If I have a bit more time, I cross the

"There is such a wide choice of sporting activities here in the Engadin, it's impossible to try them all in one summer."

CHRISTOPH SCHÄFLI
Carpenter and cross-country ski instructor

Val da Fain to Livigno and back through the Bernina Pass or via Lago Bianco."

What equipment do you need for cycling? "A helmet to protect your head," replies Luca without a moment's hesitation. "Absolutely – it's better to be safe than sorry," adds his father. What else do you need to keep the risk of injury at a minimum? Luca lists the items: "Gloves to protect your hands if you fall. And sunglasses, of course, so you don't get any insects or bits of grit in your eyes. And you need the right shoes for the clipless pedals." Selina interjects with some advice of her own: "And trousers in a colour that matches your T-shirt, ideally in pink." The little girl has already survived her first (minor) accident. "I was too close to the pavement and I fell off, but I didn't have to go to hospital. I didn't even need a lot of plasters," she recalls wistfully.

So far, Christoph has only ridden the flow trails in the Engadin by himself. "We haven't yet managed it with the children. There is such a wide choice of sporting activities here in the Engadin, it's impossible to try them all in one summer. But we have to go there soon. You'll love it, Luca – it's a bit like a bobsleigh run," Christoph tells his son. Young Luca loves sporting challenges, whether it's a biathlon, football, floorball, skiing, snowboarding or ice hockey. The list of his sporting activities is long. He also enjoys a spot of friendly family competition with his father: "My father and I recently climbed Piz Languard in less than two hours – and at first I was even faster than my dad." Lack of motivation is rarely a problem, says Christoph. "It's only difficult to motivate the children if they already have plans. But if you've got a destination, as with the Inn-Radweg, there's no big discussion. It was easy today, too, with the views of the blueberries in the Stazerwald and lovely Lake Staz as our destination." The only thing they can't do today is go swimming, as the water is just too cold. But that doesn't matter; there are always sandcastles to build.



Mountain biking for everyone – interview with bike guides Gian Andrea and Tanja Seibert

You're both often out on the flow trails on Corviglia for the Bike School Engadin and the Pacific Bike Club.

Who are these trails suitable for, and what makes them so special?

Tanja: Thanks to the special design with minimal technical difficulties, the flow trails are accessible for many bikers. You should bring some experience with you, but even with children you can venture onto the flow trails.

What will children learn on them?

Gian: Children learn lots about balancing and cornering on the flow trails, and also how to ride over hills. As well as basic techniques such as braking before a bend. It's a great way to start before going on to ride proper trails.

What else do you do to encourage youngsters?

Tanja: Bike School Engadin offers "Kids on Bikes", which are special courses for children. Through play, they teach children various basic techniques, such as braking, cornering, the right basic position, trail positions, and how to ride over obstacles, so that they have access to the trails. The Pacific Bike Club is a bike club that teaches children the basics of cycling and explores the trails around St. Moritz.

And what offers are there for adults?

Gian: The Bike School also has special courses for adults to teach

Do you speak mountain bike?

Single Trail

A very narrow trail for only one person

Flow Trail

A special kind of route for mountain bikers

Pumptrack

Special course, usually made of earth or concrete

Mountain bike

Most all-terrain bikes come in two different styles

Full suspension bike

Both wheels have suspension

Hardtail bike

Only the front wheel has suspension



them the techniques, touring or a combination of the two. We often get whole families on a bike course together. The children's courses are for children aged between eight and 14, and we tailor them individually, using lots of play.

What kind of a bike and how much experience do you need to ride the flow trails?

Gian: A mountain bike with good suspension (140–150 mm spring deflection) is ideal for coping with hills and riding the bends. Cycling downhill calls for a certain level of experience in braking and cornering, because 90° bends can be quite difficult to ride.

Tanja: Children don't necessarily need to have a full mountain bike; a hardtail can be enough. Good brakes and a slightly wider tyre are important. But absolutely no city bikes!

Flow trails only go downhill – so do they make you fit?

Gian: Riding flow trails is tiring for the upper body. You'll notice that when you've cycled down the path two or three times. It requires a strong trunk, arms and legs, because you're usually standing on a flow trail, and your body is tense. It's most definitely a workout.

What trails would you particularly recommend for a first-time visitor to the Engadin, and why?

Tanja: Guests who have some cycling experience and are physically fit will enjoy the route up from Morteratsch



Plus, of course, you need to take the occasional break. After all, you wouldn't want to miss the view of the mountains (above).

Having the right cornering technique is key in mountain biking.



Engadin Bike School
www.bikeschool-engadin.ch
 T +41 76 471 47 53

Pachific Bike
 Private Guiding
www.pachificbike.ch
 T +41 79 506 75 09

towards the Bernina Pass, around the Lago Bianco and then the lovely flow trails down to the Morteratsch. Physically, it's a moderate challenge, and the surrounding landscape is very pretty. It's one of the loveliest trails you can ride. If you want to stay on the Corviglia, the Suvretta Loop is also a great trail. You can cycle up from Celerina, then around Piz Nair, around to Lej Suvretta and then back through the lovely Val Bever. And if you want to make things a little easier for yourself, take the train up Piz Nair and then down to Lej Suvretta – a little more challenging technically, but the final section through the Val Bever also takes you through very pretty countryside. If you want to stay on the flow trails, the Olympia Flow Trail has the prettiest landscapes, and the Foppettas Flow Trail is fun because it's a bit tighter and in the woods.

What's your favourite place to stop between rides?

Tanja: If we're out on Corviglia and the flow trails, I like the Alto Bar very much, which has a cool atmosphere. You'll meet lots of other cyclists and kindred spirits. And if you ride the trail from Ospizio Bernina back to Pontresina, the Morteratsch open-air dairy with its platter of fine cheeses is a delicious reward.

Gian: My secret tip: coming from Marguns, cycle under the Piz Padella and you'll come to the Alp Muntatsch. It has the best Kaiserschmarren! Then it's downhill all the way.

Which trail would you suggest for a family?

Gian: One lovely and exciting trail that is also suitable for children is from the Pumptrack in Pontresina to the Stazerwald. From there you ride to Lake Staz, where you can go for a dip and enjoy a rest after your exertions.

Tanja: Something else that's fun with children is the Bernina Express. Take the train up to to the Diavolezza valley station or the Ospizio, if the children are a little older. Then ride the newly constructed trail back down to Morteratsch.

Retreat in the mountains

Catherine Lippuner's retreats combine horse-riding and yoga. It's a blend that encourages slowing down, allowing practitioners to forget everyday life – and it is perfect for the Engadin.

Right at the end, on Sunday evenings, when Catherine Lippuner says goodbye to the guests who attended her Riding & Yoga retreat in the Engadin, she is always sorry to see them go. They haven't known each other for very long – three days, to be precise. But, says Catherine, "When the participants leave, they're almost like friends. Riding certainly brings people together." And it's not only the riding; the long chats (serious ones and relaxed ones), the memorable impressions of nature, the yoga practised together, and the Engadin hospitality quickly encourage complete strangers to become firm friends. "You're collected on arrival, and you feel a part of the group from the very first second," says Luisa Neugebauer, who has attended two of Catherine's retreats, and regularly goes to her yoga classes in Zurich.

The programme of winding down begins on Friday, at lunchtime. The participants – there are ten in total – meet for the first time in Madulain, on the River Ranch, a farm that belongs to friends of Catherine. First up, it's a matter of, "Arrive, settle in, enjoy the scenery." Then it's time for lunch, and after that the horses are allocated to their riders. The participants ride in a small circle outside to make sure that the chemistry between rider and animal is right. The first yoga session is before the evening meal. And by the time everyone is relaxing in the Hot Pot jacuzzi with views of the starry sky, the stresses and strains of daily life, with its abundance of appointments, arrangements, meetings and to-dos, are put aside, banished to somewhere they can be forgotten for the next few days. "In the Hot Pot we can even hear the stags roaring – such a fabulous experience of nature," reminisces Andrea Binkert. These retreats in the Engadin have become something of a tradition for her, since she has been coming to them every autumn since 2014.

After spending the first night in a hotel, the Engadin retreat continues on the Saturday with a ride along the Via Engiadina. A wonderful trek through larch forests, the scent of the pine in the air, mountains and meadows all around, nothing but unspoilt nature. "All along the route we frequently have fabulous views," says Andrea. And if your head hasn't already cleared by now, then this is the stage where you'll most likely experience a lightness of being. "The energy of the Engadin is perfect for the programme, because it's strong, clear and fortifying. A place of spiritual power," explains Catherine. For another guest, Luisa, the journey to the Engadin is itself a highlight. "Just travelling here is impressive and meditative – the perfect way to start the retreat."

Text LISA BIERBAUER
Picture MADLAINA WALTHER







**“Arrive, settle
in, enjoy
the scenery.”**

**Being able to ride safely
at any pace is essential
on this retreat. However,
no prior experience is
necessary for the yoga.**

Catherine has been offering these retreats for six years, not only in various parts of the Engadin, but also abroad, in Ibiza. “This part of the Engadin is special because it is a high plain. In other mountain regions you have the mountain in front of you, but here there’s a lovely, open, vast expanse. Perfect for riding and being outside,” adds the yoga instructor. Other special highlights are the winter retreats, with fabulous gallops through the snow. Only riders who are confident in the saddle are permitted on the upper part of the Engadin; beginners and less experienced riders stay in the

lower part. Guests spend an extended weekend on their first experiences with horses and yoga, and many of them become regulars. There is another reason why horse-riding and yoga go together so well. “Mindfulness and presence are important both in yoga and when riding,” says Catherine. Yoga helps us to release physical and energy blockages, and to connect with ourselves again. This in turn is beneficial when riding. “Horses are very sensitive, and can instantly tell if you’re off balance. The animals are willing to co-operate when you’re mindful and not tense.”

The group gets to its next destination, the Chesa Spuondas, in the afternoon and spends the second night there. Everyone arrives at an easy pace, and then it’s time for some yoga. None of the participants feels the yoga session is a challenge after the ride; quite the opposite, in fact. “The yoga classes were easier in the evenings than in the mornings, when they are refreshing and wake you up, and included lots of stretches, so none of us ached the next morning,” reports Anna Hartmann, who has already attended three of Catherine’s retreats. Another image also remains permanently etched in her

about CATHERINE LIPPUNER

Catherine Lippuner took up yoga during the first semesters of her biology degree course. Today, it is an attitude to life in addition to something she practises. As a qualified yoga instructor and shiatsu therapist, she divides her time between La Punt and Zurich. She has been running retreats for six years, including in the Engadin. As much as she loves running her groups, regular breaks are also important to her. For these, Catherine spends lots of time on her own. At the end of each year, she also spends a few weeks in India. "If you spend all your time rushing from one thing to the next, just letting your day run its course, then it's hard to catch up." Her favourite places in the Engadin for mindful switching-off: Piz Mezsaun, a hike to the Bovalhütte or up Muottas Muragl.



www.reitenundyoga.ch



memory: "In the morning, we did the sun salutation just as the sun was rising above the mountain – a very special moment."

There's a morning yoga session before the – mostly female – participants get back on their horses. Is there a more peaceful way to start the day? Probably not. Then everyone rides back to Madulain. The final destination of the weekend is the ranch where the journey of relaxation began. What the participants now have behind them are days of mindful calm. Of reflection. "Laughing with others as we gallop

along and enjoying the snorting of the horses brings you all together, and it certainly brought me back to the magic of the 'here and now'," explains Luisa. A little bit of this magic, which she always experiences when riding, also remains with Andrea – "And the knowledge that I want to refresh this memory again next year". The participants are more relaxed after the retreat. But that's not all. Everyone feels a little livelier, more resolute. It's an escape from daily life, and immersion in a "wonderful fairy-tale world that brings you back to yourself," sums up Anna. "You're full of energy

again, grounded, strengthened, even though at the same time you're also sad that it's already over." Decisions that you might have chosen to ignore before your visit now seem easier. Sometimes participants contact Catherine after a retreat and tell her that they have quit their job or are about to move home. "People are clearer in their minds about what they want," she says.

A three-day break in the Engadin may not work miracles, but surrounded by the unspoilt nature, fabulous mountains and crystal-blue lakes, it becomes absolutely clear what really matters.

Sport El Dorado

Everyone will find their own idea of paradise in the Engadin. Five athletes tell us where they found theirs.

Text **FRANCO FURGER**

Picture **ROMANO SALIS**

Mountain biking with Laura Breitenmoser **Endurance, adrenaline and flow**

Laura Breitenmoser enjoys standing on Piz Nair and gazing into the distance. But more than that, she loves riding down Piz Nair on her mountain bike: “Being able to cycle in on this stony high-alpine terrain is pretty special. The trails are technically challenging, but good to ride and tremendous fun.” As a guide at the Bike School Engadin and director of the Bikezentrum Pontresina, she knows the trails in the Engadin like the back of her hand. Most of all, she likes the relaxed atmosphere of taking out mixed groups of cyclists.

What she particularly appreciates about the Engadin is its variety. “The mix of natural and developed trails is unique.” However, the landscape is just as varied as the trails are. “On a single descent, you’ll ride through rock formations, shrubberies, meadows and forests. That’s pretty intensive.”

Laura, 34, grew up in Bonaduz near Chur. She got to know and love the Engadin while windsurfing and kitesurfing. “I had always dreamt of living in the Engadin one day,” she says. Eight years ago, she made her dream come true – and mountain biking became her new passion. What she particularly likes about it is the combination of endurance, adrenaline and flow.

Laura Breitenmoser loves the vastness of the Engadin. She began with wind- and kitesurfing. Today, the athlete is found more and more often on trails, less so on water.





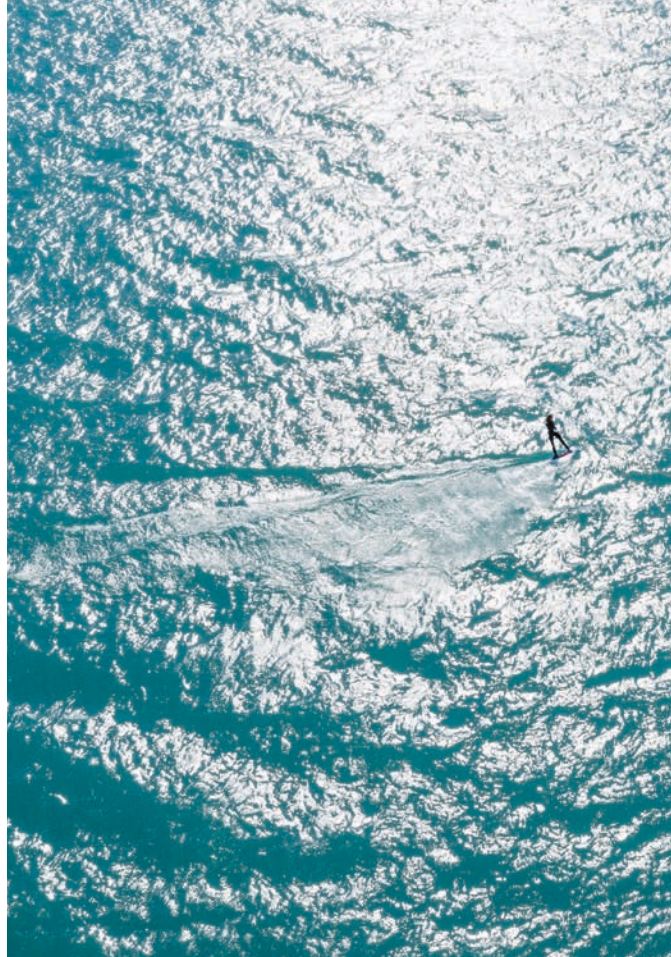
Gabi Egli loves running more than almost anything else. For a long time she focused on city marathons, but today mountain and trail running are her passions. “Running outside in unspoilt nature is far more varied, and is simply more fun,” says the 40-year-old endurance athlete.

Gabi is from Richterswil on Lake Zurich, but she had always wanted to live in the mountains. That is why the qualified optician decided to continue her education, and went to the School of Tourism in Samedan. She remained in the Engadin after graduation “because I have the loveliest running trails right outside my front door. It’s the perfect place for endurance sports.”

Gabi enjoys testing her physical and mental limits. In the summer of 2018, she completed her first long-distance run, the challenging Transalpine. Together with a partner, she spent seven days in a row covering distances of between 30 and 50 km, crossing the Alps as she did so. “It is essential to be prepared in your mind as much as in your body, then you can achieve almost anything,” she explains. This is just as true for competitive athletes as it is for amateurs who perhaps want to tackle the Bernina Tour.

Another of Gabi’s ambitions is to complete an Ironman Triathlon. This discipline is her second big passion, and she has the perfect training conditions in the Engadin, be they racing a bike over the surrounding alpine passes or swimming at the OVAVERVA pool, spa and sports centre. And Gabi is also well acquainted with the St. Moritz indoor pool and spa – she’s not just a frequent swimmer, but she is also in charge of the administration department.

Trail running with Gabi Egli **Running is also a mental thing**



Gabi Egli loves living in the mountains. In the Engadin her favourite running tracks are right on her doorstep.

What fascinates Juliane Pucker about kitesurfing is the interplay between the elements of wind and water.

Kitesurfing with Juliane Pucker Playing with the elements

Kitesurfing and mountains. A brilliant combination for Juliane Pucker. She first encountered this sport while a student in Canada; now the Engadin is her home, and Silvaplana her “home spot”. She always has her board, kite and neoprene suit in the car so she can quickly get out on the water after work.

For two and a half years, the 33-year-old has been working as a PR and marketing manager at the Grand Hotel des Bains Kempinski. “When I first saw the job advertised, I didn’t have to think about it for long. I do a lot of sports, love being outdoors and really enjoy the mountains,” says Juliane, who grew up in Bonn in Germany. “Being able to live here is a dream come true. The Engadin simply never stops being beautiful, wherever you are.”

Juliane plays multiple sports and also likes to go hiking or mountain biking, although her absolute passion is kitesurfing. “That feeling, when you feel the full power in the kite, fly across the water and are in control of it all – there’s nothing like it.”

Juliane also enjoys kitesurfing over the sea, and has already seen many first-class spots. Lake Silvaplana can certainly hold its own against any of them, she says. “The water may be on the fresh side, but the constant wind conditions and the excellent infrastructure with showers, sports facilities, restaurants and a campsite beside the lake more than make up for that.” Plus the people are very helpful and friendly.

What Juliane is most impressed by on Lake Silvaplana are the views of the surrounding mountains: “You can really feel the influence of the larger elements.”

“Being able to live here is like a dream come true. The Engadin simply never stops being beautiful.”



Climbing with Bettina Leimgruber

The summit is not the most important thing

The first time Bettina Leimgruber stood on Piz Bernina, she was just 20 years old. Friends took her along the difficult Biancograt route. It was only her second alpine tour. “My fascination for mountaineering and climbing really kicked off with this trip,” she says. Today, 42-year-old Bettina takes guests onto Piz Bernina and the surrounding peaks, after recently qualifying as one of the few female official Swiss mountain guides.

To her, mountaineering is not about getting to the top of a mountain at all costs, but more about the overall experience and being out and about. “I love the first rays of light in the early morning, the different landscapes, the lovely views when walking.”

Bettina lives in Davos, where she also grew up. She trained as a confectioner, and spent every spare moment in the mountains. So she started working as a ski instructor. And because she likes being off-piste more than anything else, after much deliberation she finally also completed the tough training to qualify as a mountain guide.

“I have tremendous respect for the climbing exams.” Bettina had to spend a lot of time training, and for that often went to the Engadin and Bergell. Above all, she enjoys the Lagalb climbing garden on the Bernina Pass because it is so varied, and because there is always a gentle breeze blowing, even at the height of summer. “No matter how good you are, everyone will find a suitable route in the climbing garden and enjoy being there with others.” Another favourite is the climbing garden above Plaun da Lej. “It’s a delightful spot, and the views of Lake Sils are simply fabulous.”



One reason the mountain guide likes sports climbing is because of the opportunity to socialise with friends and guests.



Hiking with Christine Salis Stories while you walk

Christine Salis loves telling stories. Such as how the ibex came to Pontresina. “There were once two ibex who came from the national park via Livigno, but the young goatherds thought they were just ordinary goats!” Or how Johann Wilhelm Coaz first climbed the Piz Bernina: “No one believed him when he talked about it – until he showed them the Swiss flag on the summit through a telescope.”

The official Swiss hiking guide is often out and about in Pontresina, where she tells her guests about the mountains and glaciers of the Bernina massif and tracks marmots and ibex. Her tip: “Pontresina Tourismus offers free guided tours on Fridays.” Christine also knows the Swiss National Park extremely well, and regularly runs excursions. She has already hiked the multi-day Bernina Tour a number of times. “It’s a terrific experience, because every leg is through a different landscape.”

Christine is now 60, and acquired her extensive specialist knowledge herself. On her hikes, she likes to take the time to tell her guests all the special features of the nature. At home, too, almost everything is about the mountains, wild animals and nature experiences. Her husband, Marco, is a mountain guide and rescue director of the SAC Section Bernina. Their two sons are also always in the mountains: Romano is a mountain guide and nature photographer, while Giancarlo is an aspiring mountain guide and ski instructor.

Christine grew up on Lake Thun, but has lived in the Engadin for 40 years. She has many interests, runs guided tours of Pontresina, and has co-written a travel guide. All because she loves telling people stories.



Hiking guide Christine Salis has many stories to tell, for instance of her excursions in the Swiss National Park.

Reaching for the sky

The rock face up to the peak is one of the few places where we can find our true selves, explains mountain guide Pierino Giuliani.

Text **FRANCO FURGER** *Picture* **PIERINO GIULIANI**



You have climbed Mount Everest, conquered the 8,201 metres of Cho-Oyu, and have stood on Piz Palü over 250 times. What fascinates you and motivates you to keep climbing mountains?

It used to be sheer ambition. I wanted to learn what my physical and mental limits were.

Today, it's all about experiencing nature, with guests or friends. It's wonderful to share the pleasure and pride of achieving a goal. What still fascinates me as much today are the movement sequences when climbing – even if I can no longer manage all the routes.

How dangerous is climbing?

If you stay completely focused, then climbing is no more dangerous than any other type of sport. It starts with the planning, when you pack your rucksack, approach the climbing wall, check out the terrain, put on your climbing belt and tie the knots. Everything has to be done carefully, and checked again and again. Both climbing partners need to be focused: the person who is climbing and the person who is belaying.

What do you need to consider when climbing with children?

Pierino Giuliani's favourite climbing spots in the Engadin

The Engadin has plenty of climbing spots, both for beginners and for experienced climbers. Pierino Giuliani shares a few of them with us.

Piz Alv/Lagalb – the varied climbing garden

The biggest climbing garden in the Engadin, on the south side between the valley stations of the Diavolezza and Lagalb ski lifts, has routes for every ability. Thanks to the altitude (2,200 m), the temperatures are pleasant even at the height of summer.

Morteratsch – the place for families

The climbing garden at Morteratsch is easily accessible, and with lots of basic and secure routes is perfect for families. However, professionals will also find plenty to challenge them.

Pontresina – the prettiest climbing route

This is probably the easiest climbing route of all to get to. From the centre of Pontresina (post office), it's just a 20-minute walk to the start. The La Resgia climbing route is beautifully laid out, and requires a little arm strength at the key point.

Albigna – wonderful multi-rope routes

The climbing opportunities here are virtually unlimited, from well-laid-out sport climbing routes to alpine tours for self-belaying. The rock needle "La Fiamma" is world famous.



Small children are not yet scared of heights, and will simply scramble off. So it's important to explain to even the very youngest that they could fall. This doesn't mean always having the children secured in the tight rope, but consciously climbing up, and letting them fall a couple of centimetres into the rope.

What makes the Engadin such a spectacular climbing region?

The variety, and the beautiful landscape. There are first-class routes in the Engadin and the neighbouring valleys for all alpine disciplines and levels, from indoor climbing halls to family-friendly climbing gardens to challenging climbs up rocks and ice. Which is why I love living here.

You've said that we become truly ourselves on a rock face. What do you mean?

On the mountain, individuals are pared down only to the essentials. Reputation, money, status or success are completely irrelevant. If you've got cold hands, you've got cold hands. If you're in pain, you're in pain. There's no fooling yourself; you have to face reality: there's me, and there's the rock.



About PIERINO GIULIANI

Pierino Giuliani (61) grew up in Cavaglia, and completed the challenging training as a mountain guide impressively early, when he was only in his mid-20s. He and his wife opened a specialist shop for mountain sports in Poschiavo, followed later by the shop in Pontresina. He also spent many years as the president of his local mountain guide association, and of the cantonal organisation. He has now retired from his official activities to focus on his "Mountain Shop" in Pontresina. In addition to all his activities, he also spends time every year discovering new climbing routes.

www.mountainshop.ch

Welcome!

The Engadin is famous for its hospitality – which ensures that people want to stay.

Text **CAROLIN GEIST**

Illustration **CLAUDIA MEITERT**

More than anything else, many people associate St. Moritz and the surrounding area with exclusivity and luxury hotels. But the Engadin is equally legendary for its hospitality. Anybody can feel at home here, and be assured of a warm welcome from the locals. Whether sporty, nature-lovers or family people, the Engadin makes everyone feel at home.



Hosts in the Engadin: Cindy Conrad, Kathrin Käch, Roman Kling and Ladina Tarnuzzer (clockwise from top).

**The Lyceum Alpinum Zuoz:
comfort for students**

***Ladina Tarnuzzer, gastronomy,
hotel industry for students***

Ladina Tarnuzzer invested her many years of experience in the hotel industry in a business that you wouldn't necessarily compare with a hotel. To her, she explains with a twinkle, the boarding school is "the 'hotel' with the best occupancy in the Engadin – full all year round". The Lyceum Alpinum Zuoz is indeed not only a school, but also a second home, for 365 days of the year. For residents to have the feeling of being in a proper home, you have to give them more than a hotel for a few nights. You need people who are not only teachers for the youngsters, but with whom they can also form a bond. As the students come from 32 different nations, this is quite a challenge. To Ladina Tarnuzzer, hospitality not only means giving every single one of them the feeling of being in their geographic home, but also that the Lyceum Alpinum Zuoz is their second family.

**Conrad's Mountain Lodge: when sports
equipment suppliers become hoteliers**

Cindy Conrad, hotel manager

The Conrads were already busy with sports guests in the Engadin before they started the Lodge. Cindy's parents own "Ski-Service", a sports equipment business with 13 branches in and around St. Moritz. As experts in the sports industry, they wanted to achieve a complete blend between the hotel business and equipment. "If a guest books a room with us, they get their skis free from the shop. So everything is available in the same place, the latest materials are always provided, and there's always good advice," explains hotel manager Cindy

Conrad. A bike is included in the room price in summer. The Conrads have even matched the gastronomic offer to the needs of the active guest: they have teamed up with a restaurant owner from Veneto and created a light-and-airy pizza.

Gianottis: between traditional confectionery and modern feel-good home

Roman Kling, managing director

Ever since the Middle Ages, the confectioners of the Engadin have gone out into the big, wide world – and proven themselves and their skills. When they returned to the Engadin from Venice, Genoa or France, they brought with them foreign, up-to-date knowledge. Roman Kling is a fifth-generation confectioner. His great-great-grandfather was a confectioner who invited guests to "afternoon tea". This gradually developed over the generations, and is now a modern grill restaurant. Roman Kling sits in the old parlour where he spent his childhood, and which was renovated three years ago: "People used to come to see and be seen, to drink tea and listen to music. But people are more active today." His ambition is to combine the traditional, crafts, and the modern, and to give guests an unpretentious and authentic feel-good experience.

Camping Morteratsch:

When guests become hosts

Kathrin Käch, leaseholder

The Käch couple has been running a campsite at the foot of the Morteratsch Glacier, the largest-volume glacier in the Eastern Alps, for seven years now. Anyone who has ever had any reservations about camping in the past will find they completely disappear at Camping Morteratsch. The only

conventional thing about it is that it's more affordable than a hotel room in the middle of St. Moritz. But there are luxuries unexpected: a refuge not unlike a witch's hut that turns out to be a modern sauna, bookable in person, and with unspoilt views of the mountains. And would you like some wine, or perhaps a steak to go with it? For those who wish to share their idyllic stay on social media, the available Wi-Fi should make sharing photos to Instagram a snap. And right in the middle of the forest there is a small but very well-stocked supermarket, where the bread is fresh every day. For many years, the Kächs came here on holiday with their family. When the leaseholder at the time decided to retire, they applied to continue running their favourite holiday destination themselves, and to develop and modernise it. Hospitality that is born out of their own passion – from happy guests to busy hosts.



Lyceum Alpinum Zuoz
www.lyceum-alpinum.ch
T +41 81 851 30 00

Conrad's Mountain Lodge
www.cm-lodge.com
T +41 81 828 83 83

Gianottis
www.gianottis.ch
T +41 81 842 70 90

Camping Morteratsch
www.camping-morteratsch.ch
T +41 81 842 62 85



In summer 2018, Gero Porstein took over as chef de cuisine at the Waldhaus Sils. He grows the chard for the capuns himself, in the garden outside (above).

The dishes are all arranged with love – and fresh herbs, such as home-grown rosemary or sage.

Natural and delicious

One of the attractions at the Waldhaus Sils is the excellent food that is served there. Whenever possible, it is prepared with regional products.

Text **MICHAEL LÜTSCHER** *Picture* **ROMANO SALIS**

The Waldhaus Sils is situated in the midst of the countryside, in a larch forest. The rooms have views of meadows, mountain slopes and the blue of Lake Sils. This is the perfect location to fulfil one of life's most important requirements – namely, to eat and to drink – close to nature. And the hotel cuisine of the Waldhaus fulfils this yearning to perfection. “Our focus is regional ingredients, but not necessarily regional cuisine,” says Claudio Dietrich, thereby setting out the 5-star hotel's culinary principles. He and his brother Patrick are the fifth generation to be running the hotel. The principle formulated by Claudio Dietrich has applied here for many years. For Gero Porstein, chef de cuisine here since last summer (2018), and before that holder of the same position at the Carlton Hotel St. Moritz, this is “a tough but exciting challenge”.

From the kitchen, large windows open out onto the surrounding countryside, which is breathtakingly lovely as far as the eye can see. Rosemary, sage and thyme grow in small boxes just under the kitchen windows. Outside are wooden troughs of flowers and vegetables tended by Gero Porstein – including leafy Swiss chard. This fresh

ingredient is essential for capuns, the region's famous vegetable parcels. He chops off a few of the red-stalked, deep-green leaves with a large kitchen knife and takes them into the kitchen. “Twenty years ago, when I started my first job in the Graubünden mountains, my first task was to make 800 capuns,” recalls Gero, who is 38 years old and originally from near Dortmund in Germany.

“Our focus is regional ingredients, but not necessarily regional cuisine”

Capuns is a classic mountain-dweller's dish, and there are as many recipes for them in Graubünden as there are households. It is an ordinary, nutritious dish. Less ordinary is for it to be served at a 5-star hotel. But that, by the same token, is typical of the Waldhaus. Gero Porstein has his own recipe for capuns – a particularly fine one (recipe on the next page).

The parcels are filled with a mixture that Gero prepares from flour, eggs, Landjäger (spicy sausages), chanterelles and a few other ingredients. He simmers the parcels in

The importance of regionally sourced ingredients is illustrated by the mountain potatoes served at the Hotel Waldhaus. They are particularly delicious because they grow more slowly and stay smaller at the altitude of 1,000 metres, which further intensifies their aroma.



Hotel Waldhaus Sils
Via da Fex 3
7514 Sils
T +41 81 838 51 00
www.waldhaus-sils.ch

The Arvenstube (evenings)
and the terrace (lunchtime)
are open to non-residents.

stock, then covers them in a light sauce and puts them in the oven. The sauce he also prepared earlier from ingredients including cream, white wine and shallots. He also adds grated mountain cheese, he explains, “because it gives the capuns a certain piquancy”. The mountain cheese – Bergkäse – was made at the alpine dairy Sennerei Pontresina from milk and cream from a farmer in the Val Fex, beyond the hotel. Gero Porstein obtains the eggs from Surses on the other side of the Julier Pass. And the poussins that, on the previous menu, he served truffled and with the capuns, once lived on a farm on the Splügen Pass, which he discovered one day riding his motorbike. “Quite by chance. It’s not always easy to find products up here in the mountains,” he says. The list of regional products grows longer: the goat’s cheese comes from Isola on Lake Sils, which also sometimes provides fish, caught by Gero’s deputy. He himself occasionally goes foraging for mushrooms.

The importance of regionally sourced ingredients is illustrated by the mountain potatoes that are served at the Hotel Waldhaus. They thrive in Filisur on the other side of the Albula Pass, and are particularly delicious because they grow more slowly and stay smaller at the altitude of 1,000 metres than when grown lower down, which further intensifies their aroma. The same principle applies to the berries and also to the meat provided by the cattle and lambs that graze on the alpine meadows. The kitchen of the Waldhaus traditionally purchases halves of animal carcasses, which are then jointed by the kitchen team. “This teaches the trainees just how much work goes into a lovely piece of meat, which in turn encourages them to treat it more carefully,” explains

Gero Porstein. Every part of the animal is used at the hotel: for roasts, boiling, sauces, and also as steaks served to the 230-bed hotel’s tables. The bones are roasted and then used as the base for the stock that is prepared fresh every day.

Of course, not all of the products are available in the Engadin or its neighbouring valleys. Vegetables and salads come from the rest of Switzerland. “And a luxury hotel is also expected to serve seafood,” says Gero Porstein. Finally, the regional products can also be found in the hotel’s wine cellar, where there is an impressive selection of red and white wines from Graubünden, Valtellina and the Southern Tirol.



Poussin “en demi deuil”

Poussin from the Valle Spluga with summer truffles, chanterelle capuns in a creamy cheese sauce, and a cream made with baby turnips. Serves two people.

Ingredients for poussin

1 poussin (approx. 450g), 50g truffles,
10g truffle butter, olive oil, salt, pepper

Method

Prepare the poussin for cooking and thinly slice the truffles. Warm the truffle butter, then spread under the skin on the breast. Place the truffle slices under the poussin's skin, and press the skin down firmly. Rub the poussin with olive oil and season lightly with salt and pepper. The poussin will take 25 minutes in a convection oven preheated to 205°C.

Ingredients for creamed carrots

200g carrots, 20g shallots, 10g butter, 30g cream, salt, sugar, vegetable stock, bay leaf, butter, white wine

Method

Peel and thinly slice the shallots. Peel and roughly chop the carrots. Sweat the shallots in the butter until glassy. Add the carrots, and season with salt, sugar and the bay leaf. Simmer until all the water has evaporated. Pour over the vegetable stock before the sweating becomes frying. Repeat this process until the carrots are soft. Finally, pour in the cream and bring to the boil. Season, then purée in a blender until smooth. Check the seasoning and pass through a sieve.

Ingredients for chanterelle capuns

365g flour, 100g Landjäger spicy sausage, 200g chanterelles, 3 eggs, 7g salt, 10g parsley, 100ml milk, 50g mascarpone, 20g butter, 350g Swiss chard

Method

Chop the parsley and dice the spicy sausage. Sauté and roughly chop the chanterelles. Whisk the eggs and combine with the salt. Warm the milk, mascarpone and butter in a small saucepan and whisk until smooth. Combine all the liquid ingredients. Put the flour, spicy sausage, parsley and mushrooms in a bowl. Add the liquid ingredients and knead to a dough. Leave to rest for at least three hours, or ideally overnight. Blanche the chard, then plunge into iced water. Cut off the leaves and arrange the leaves individually on a table. Put a tablespoon of the filling in the middle of each leaf. Turn over the corners, then roll up and secure to make parcels. Place the capuns side by side in a pan. Pour over enough beef stock to just cover them. Simmer at just below boiling point for 15 minutes.

Ingredients for creamy cheese sauce

100g chanterelles, 10g shallots, 100ml white wine, 200ml beef stock, 30g cream, 30g mountain cheese

Method

Peel and finely dice the shallots. Wash the chanterelles. Grate the cheese. Sweat the shallots until clear, then deglaze with white wine. Simmer until the white wine has evaporated, then add the chanterelles. The chanterelles may take on a little colour. Add the beef stock and bring to the boil. Add the cream and simmer to reduce until the sauce has a little consistency. Season with nutmeg and perhaps a little salt. Remove the sauce from the heat and stir in the cheese (be careful not to let the sauce boil again). Put the capuns and the sauce in a heatproof dish and finish in a hot oven at 250°C (top heat) for between five and seven minutes.



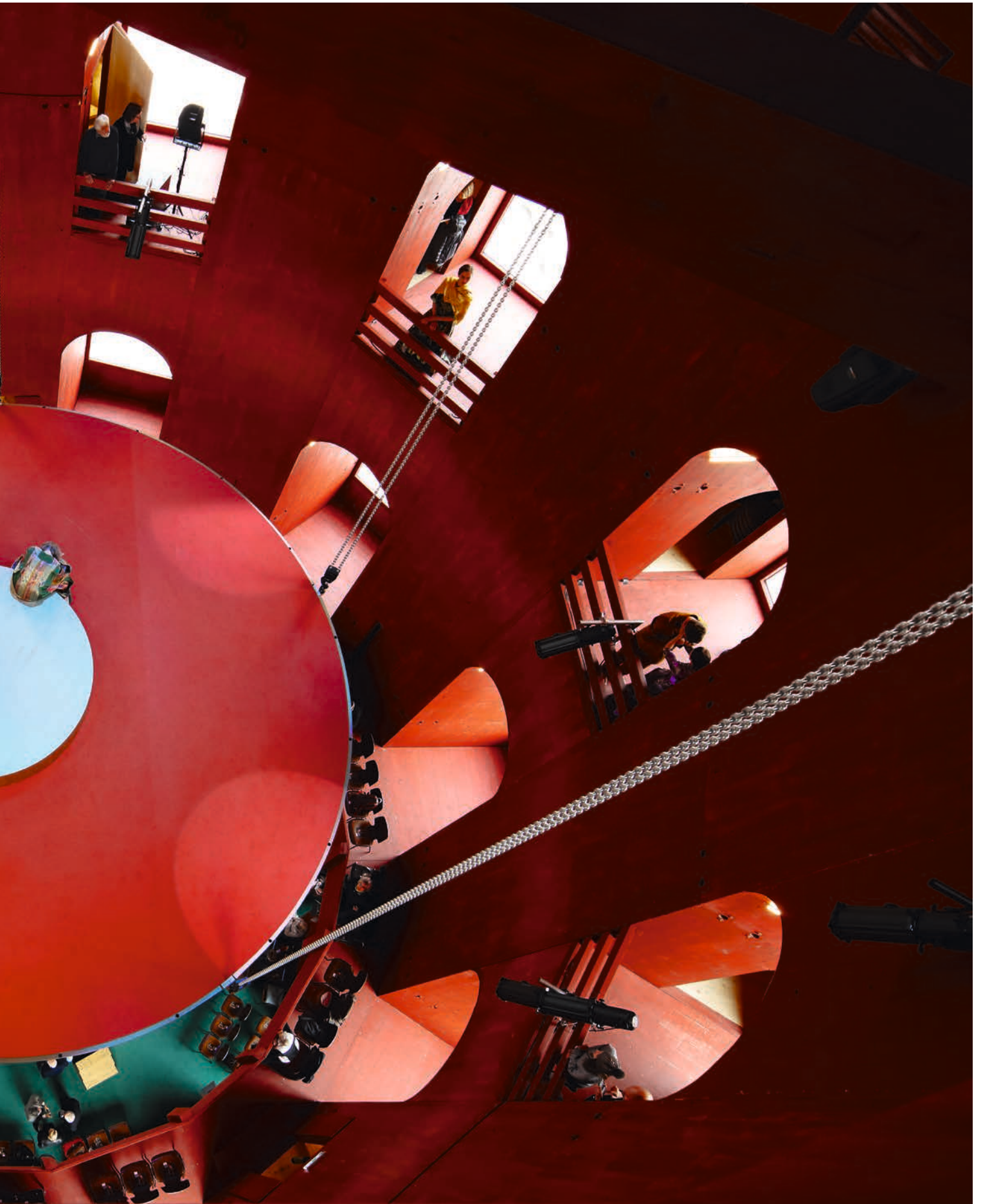
With a little practice and a good recipe, special culinary delights can also be prepared at home.

All the world's a stage

The Julierturm on the Julierpass brings world-class theatre to the Engadin. Director Giovanni Netzer provides a tour.

Text CAROLIN GEIST
Picture CHRISTIAN BRANDSTAETTER,
JUERGEN POLLAK





Mr Netzer, you were born and grew up in Savognin, went abroad to study, and then came home again. Did you dream of the stage when you were a child?

I've always loved performing. I wrote my first play when I was nine. I also come from a large family with lots of cousins – they were my first protagonists. Later on I went to study in Munich, theology first and then drama. When I got back, we actually just carried on doing what we had always done. Just more professionally. When we started the Origen Festival, it was important to us to focus on the local roots: language, myths, legends, customs, the landscape and nature.

What came first, the place or the tower?

It's always been the place. When I'm working, I think in rooms. Man has always built rooms and developed out of them. It was the same with the tower. Our stage sets developed out of a lot of paper models. In the case of the Julier Tower, it took about 80 of them before everything was in the right shape. I took the model to Walter Bieler, an extremely experienced engineer in wood constructions and who also thinks aesthetically. Then it was a matter of reproducing this paper model on the Julier Pass.

Why is the tower on the Julier Pass, of all places?

From today's perspective, the place looks pretty isolated, but if you consider it geographically, it's in the middle of Europe. The rivers flow from here into all three of the world's oceans. It's a place from which you can set off into the most diverse directions. That's one of the meanings. Plus the windows open out in

“The tower is also rooted in history – and ultimately was made precisely for the Julier Pass.”

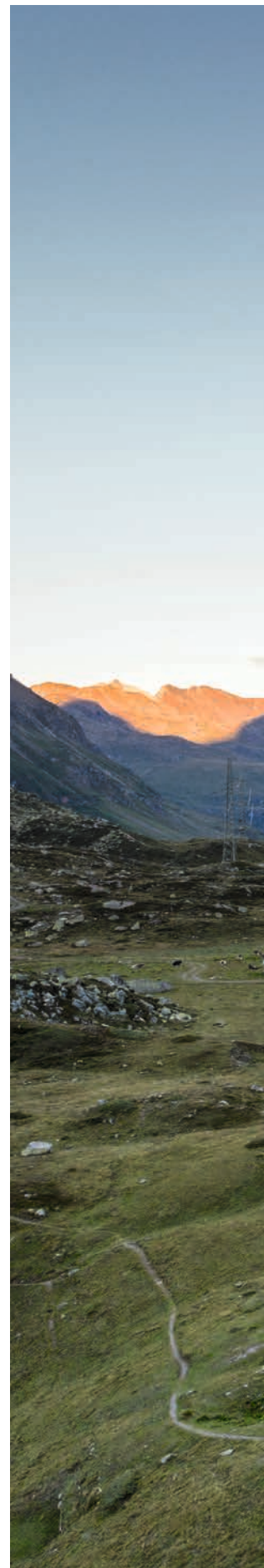
every direction that the locals once emigrated to. Then there's the tradition, thousands of years old, of building at important crossing points. Even the Romans built a temple on the Julier, but all that remains of that today are the stumps of two columns. Later on, there was a chapel to St. Sebastian there, but only written traces remain of that.

Why does the tower remind us of the Tower of Babel?

We've incorporated the Tower of Babel because of its significance. It stands for the diversity of languages, or perhaps the confusion of them. Today, historic research has shown us that the Tower of Babel was actually a square structure and had no windows. However, in the history of art there are many representations that depict the Tower of Babel as a tall circular construction. That gave rise to the idea of realising the circular and the openness in every direction. The history of theatre-building led us on to the reference to nature. This was particularly important to the Greeks. That was lost later on, though, and theatre became increasingly hermetic and closed in on itself. This building method reached its highlight with the “Guckkasten” – the peep-show-type theatre. We wanted to go in the opposite direction, and brought the power of nature into the room. Which, of course, is tremendous on the Julier Pass. So this roots the tower in history, but ultimately it was made for this place.

Why is the tower red?

The first instructions came from the Tower of Babel, which is often depicted in the art scene as having been constructed from terracotta





**“The windows
open out in every
direction that
the people of
Graubünden once
emigrated to.”**



Origen director Giovanni Netzer outside the temporary and highly impressive theatre on the Julier Pass.



tiles. We experimented at great length, painted bits of wood and positioned them in the landscape – and looked to see what the effects were at the different times of year. Then we remembered that the artist Giovanni Segantini primed all his paintings in this “ox blood” colour.

How many people does the tower hold?

If there’s a play that everyone wants to be able to see, it can seat 200. For a concert, it could be 300. But usually there’s somewhere between 150 and 160 visitors.

How long will this theatre tower be there?

Until the end of October 2020.

We’re at a height of 2,284 metres. Do the singers and dancers face any particular challenges?

They all, dancers and singers alike, soon realise that they have to breathe more in order to receive enough oxygen. But it’s like with altitude training: you’re fit when you go home again. On one occasion, the ballet director of Amsterdam actually asked me what I did to his people. He has two groups of dancers. The ones who spent the summer on the beach took

an inordinate length of time to get back in shape afterwards. The others, the ones who had been performing in the mountains, were top fit when they came back again.

Does it make you feel proud to see that culture can bring new perspectives to a village?

It’s lovely to see that a village that originally had a population of only 180 people has acquired another 20 as staff. Generally, they’re two generations younger than the rest of the population. It has often been observed that there is a dimension in Graubünden that we don’t give enough thought to. Graubünden is more than an idyllic, touristic, rural mountain landscape with cows and meadows. In order to understand the canton properly, there is a further dimension that is just as important. It’s the one of all the people who emigrated over the centuries. Who were unable to stay here because the countryside didn’t sustain them. What does me good is to see that the cultural core, at least in this valley, has the strength to substantially influence the situation.



More on the Julier project:
www.origen.ch
 T +41 81 637 16 81

**The Stalla
Madulain blends
art and nature, the
traditional and the
modern (right).**

**Both young and
established artists
are given a
platform to
display their
works (below
right).**

Art in the stable

**The Galeria Stalla
Madulain is housed
in a historic Engadin
stable, and it's an
exceptional place to
find inspiration.**

**Text VALENTINA KNAPP VOITH
Picture ROMANO SALIS**

In the middle of the tiny village of Madulain (pop. 200) between La Punt and Zuoz is a stable that dates back to the 15th century. However, don't expect to find any animals there – today, it's a place for people to meet and admire art. It was the unaltered charm of the stable (*stalla* in Rhaeto-Romanic language), which dates back to 1488, that instantly captivated the cousins Gian Tumasch Appenzeller, 34, and Chasper Linard Schmidlin, 38, who had their roots in the Engadin. They happened upon the stable quite by chance; at the time it was covered in posters and was used as storage. A shocking waste of this wonderfully historic building, the two considered. And thus the idea to change the stable into a gallery was born.

Architect Chaspar Schmidlin describes the moment when they first entered the stable: "You couldn't even see the floor under the layer of dirt that covered it. And everything had been covered over in wooden structures." The renovations took three months. The original stone walls are still plastered in white lime, while the floor slabs came from the Inn. "We wanted to retain as much of the original building as possible," says Gian Appenzeller. And for their achievement, the two men were presented with the international award

"Constructive Alps" for sustainable building and refurbishment in the alpine region. The Stalla consists of three storeys. "Everything used to be under the same roof in the old houses of the Engadin – the animals, the hay, the home and the cellar," explains Gian Appenzeller. The Stalla used to have a residential part beside it, but this no longer exists. The top floor was where the hay was dried, and to this day is still has no windows. This is now used as an exhibition room.

**"There's a dialogue
between the
art and the room."**

"In this place, there's a dialogue between the art and the room. The rooms in themselves are like a work of art. There is also something like a museum about them, which has a positive effect on the art," enthuses Gian Appenzeller. "The artists know that the gallery is not insured against the winter, which means that in winter some of the sculptures are exposed to



snow storms.” As, indeed, are the customers and visitors. When the Stalla Madulain invited visitors to the Grand Opening of the latest art location in the Engadin in 2014, the founders noted in the invitation that “the winter rooms are not heated”. So guests were aware that they should wear thick coats to the exhibition.

For Appenzeller and Schmidlin, access to the art scene has also meant that, in addition to their professional lives, the two are now artists. However, originally they hadn’t the slightest idea of what it meant to run a gallery. “As ‘greenhorns’, we simply did it how we had imagined it,” says Gian Appenzeller. But the momentum behind their plan grew, thanks in no small part to the fabulous support of the Leimer family, art collectors themselves as well as landlords of the Stalla, and also advice from well-known art and culture creators in the Canton of Graubünden. “In the beginning, the Stalla was our biggest hobby. Today, we are running it as a professional gallery, and are receiving recognition and resonance.” One important step in this was the exhibition with Not Vital in the winter before last, from which the mirrored chrome and steel staircase in the Stalla remains in situ as a permanent sculpture. “We don’t just want to hang up and sell art, we also want to curate it. And we want to tell stories. Our concept is art from Graubünden, or art with a reference to the Engadin. Anyone who exhibits their art here has to fulfil these conditions,” Schmidlin explains. The cousins report that artists are usually quickly enamoured by the Stalla, and that every single one who has walked into it wants to display his or her work there.

There are two or three exhibitions a year. The Stalla is mainly open at peak season – five weeks in summer, two to three months in winter. Works by known and less well-known artists are displayed; the main thing is there has to be the reference to the Engadin. Their most recent exhibitions have included works by the father-and-son artist team of Robert and Robertson



“We don’t just want to hang up and sell art, we also want to curate it.”

Käppeli, Sara Masüger, Chrissy Angliker, and Not Vital. Schmidlin: “The artists themselves decide what art to bring to us. We’re always happy to be surprised. And we give our artists a freedom that they might not find in the same way elsewhere. We have a certain say in things, and the art has to touch and appeal to us. Of course, we won’t hang any pictures that we don’t like.” Price-wise, the works are all in various categories.

Gian Tumasch Appenzeller and Chasper Linard Schmidlin opened a new exhibition room just a few steps from the Stalla Madulain in February 2019. Known as the Staletta, a small stable from the 17th century, it is available for curators and galleries to use to present their artists. The gallery Philipp Zollinger kicked off with a one-man show by Pedro Wirz.



There is something about the rooms resembling a museum. The floor slabs are from the Inn (far left).

Gian Tumasch Appenzeller and Chasper Linard Schmidlin have breathed new life into the traditional stable (left).



About GIAN TUMASCH APPENZELLER and CHASPER LINARD SCHMIDLIN

The two owners of the Stalla Madulain gallery live in Zurich, but their roots are in the Engadin. When they're not presenting art in the Stalla, Schmidlin is an architect, and Appenzeller also runs the La Gondla Bar in St. Moritz. They hail from the Könz family of artists of the Engadin, as does Selina Chönz, author of the well-known Graubünden-based children's story "Schellen-Ursli", and Constant Könz, the 90-year-old artist from Zuoz.



Stalla Madulain
Via Principela 15
7523 Madulain
T +41 78 640 65 66

Opening hours usually
Friday – Sunday and
by appointment.

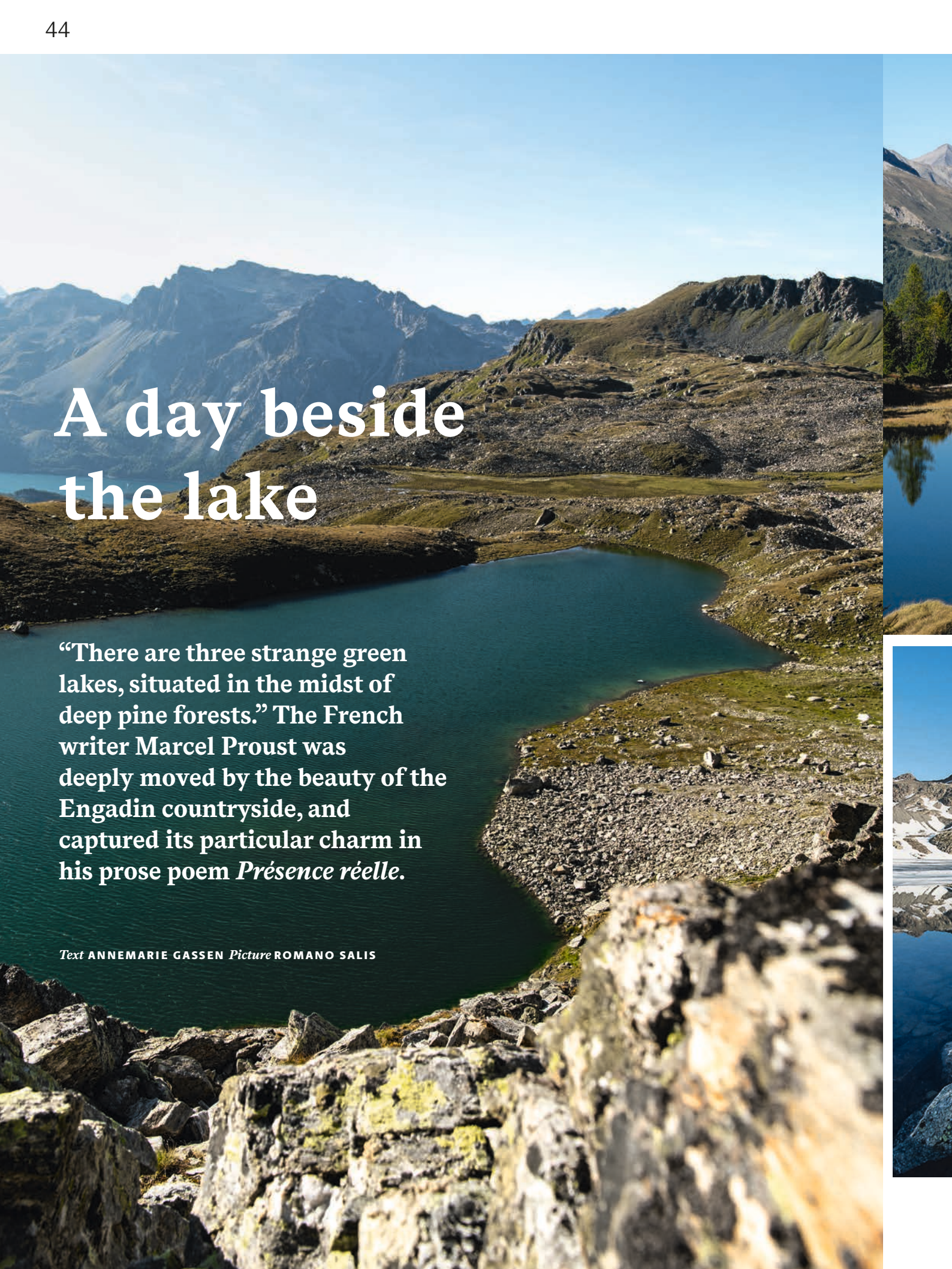
www.stallamadulain.ch

Culture guide
Starting this summer, a new culture guide gives an overview of the cultural offers in the valley. The guide is available at tourist information points and from select partners.

A day beside the lake

“There are three strange green lakes, situated in the midst of deep pine forests.” The French writer Marcel Proust was deeply moved by the beauty of the Engadin countryside, and captured its particular charm in his prose poem *Présence réelle*.

Text ANNEMARIE GASSEN Picture ROMANO SALIS





Destination lakes

Destination for the whole family – Lej Sgrischus

Lej Sgrischus lies high above the Val Fex, at 2,618 metres. From Sils, the mountain lake is an easy three-hour walk away, but that time is halved from the Furtschellas mountain station. Although “Lej Sgrischus” loosely translates as “horrible lake”, it is in fact a peaceful mountain lake that is embedded in the middle of a protected hollow on a mountain terrace. Walkers particularly like to stop here and watch the anglers fishing for trout. With a little luck, you might even spot a chamois goat-antelope on the slopes of gravel-sized scree. You can walk from the lake to the summit of Piz Chüern and enjoy its fabulous all-round views before embarking on the steep descent back to Val Fex and Sils. A lovely alternative for the last leg of the route: a horse-drawn carriage back to Sils from Hotel Fex or Hotel Sonne.



Brave hikers jump into Lej Sgrischus to cool down in summer (far left).

Surrounded by tall larches: the Hahnensee and its surroundings are protected (above).

The steep zigzag ascent to the Lej da la Tscheppa is tough, but always worth the effort (left).

Hike for connoisseurs – the Hahnensee

The journey is the reward: a walk to the Hahnensee takes you past the St. Moritz ski jump and small mountain lakes, through fragrant pine forests and the moorland. It's about two hours to the moor lake from Surlej (Silvaplana), from St. Moritz or from the Corvatsch middle station Murtèl down. It's situated at around 2,153 metres on a high plateau, in the middle of a larch forest. A delightful walk is followed by the picturesque blue of the water surrounded by the mountains. Both the lake and the surrounding area are protected. There are lovely views over the entire Engadin from the mountain restaurant that bears the same name. There are also walks to the Hahnensee from Lej Marsch and Lej da Champfèr.

Steep ascent – Lej da la Tscheppa

This mountain lake is situated at 2,617 metres above Sils. The ascent is challenging and calls for stamina, but for confident mountain climbers it's worth the effort. The route starts in Sils opposite the Beach Club restaurant, and takes you from the forest over alpine meadows and past romantic mountain lakes. After about 11 km and a really steep climb, you arrive at the Lej da la Tscheppa. The lake, which is fed

by surrounding mountain streams, is situated in a basin that is encircled by the Crutscharöl gorge in the south-west, the Crasta Tscheppa ridge to the north-west, Piz Polaschin to the north and Chavagl dal Polaschin in the north-east. If you're lucky, you might spot a chamois or a snow grouse in the scree of Piz Polaschin. And the really bold can dip a toe into the chilly water.

Impressive panorama – Lej dal Lunghin

From the Maloja Palace it's a three-hour walk along a hiking trail to Lej dal Lunghin. The ascent from Maloja alongside a waterfall is most impressive. As you walk, let your gaze roam over the Engadin lake plateau and the peaks of the Engadin and Bergell. Lej dal Lunghin is considered the source of the River Inn, which flows from there down into Lake Sils. Friends of the vertical sport will also find their every wish fulfilled here, as the lake is surrounded by a wonderful climbing region. The mountain lake is situated at an altitude of 2,485 metres. If you follow the trail along the lake, it will take you up to Pass Lunghin, where you will find the only triple divide in Europe. Water flows from here into three of the world's major oceans.

Lake Staz, Europe's highest beach, is in a vast, open clearing in the Staz forest.



The Lej dal Lunghin is the source of the River Inn in Lake Sils, and flows into the Danube at Passau.



Bathing lakes

Natural beach – Lej da Staz

Europe's highest lido is situated on a vast, open clearing in the Staz forest. It is said that Lake Staz is one of the loveliest bathing lakes between St. Moritz and Celerina. You can get to the water along a narrow sandy beach or various jetties. A sunbathing lawn, barbecue area, children's playground and the Hotel Restaurant Lej da Staz complete the offer. Reaching the lake on foot or by bike is easy, starting from Pontresina, Celerina and St. Moritz. For a special treat, why not take the coach? The absolute highlight is alpine yoga in the early hours of the morning.
www.alpineyoga.com



Lake Staz is easy to access via two jetties. Yoga is practised here early in the morning (top).

The water of the Lej Nair is coloured black by the moor, which is why it heats up to 20 degrees in summer (above).

Warm moor water – Lej Nair

The “Black Lake” is a not-so-secret tip amongst the bathing lakes. But despite that, it's not as busy as it could be; the only way to get there is on foot. The dark moor lake is about a half-hour walk from Lake Staz and a short distance from Lej Marsch. Despite the altitude of 1,864 metres, the lake is lovely and warm in summer. As the name implies, the shallow waters are almost black in colour, which is one of the reasons why the sun warms the Lej Nair so efficiently in summer. Piz Corvatsch is reflected on the surface.

SILS LAKE WALK

The best way to explore the fascinating area around the Maloja Pass is on the walk around Lake Sils. It starts and ends at the Sils-Maria Post stop. From here, you'll walk along flat paths, down narrow streets and through airy larch forests towards Maloja. After about an hour, you'll come to the tiny village of Isola. The peninsula is in the middle of a large meadow. Walk along the shore to the fork that goes to Maloja. Continue straight on, still following the shore path, and you'll come to Maloja at the southern end of the lake. From there, the walk goes along the Via Engiadina back to Sils. Whether you do it in stages or as a circular hike, it'll take you about five hours in all. The highest point is at 2,036 metres.



The walk around Lake Sils takes about five hours, and there is plenty of variety in the landscape (above).

Family-friendly – Lej Marsch

Lej Marsch is around 500 metres to the north and a little lower than Lej Nair. Thanks to the good infrastructure, it's an excellent lake for families. It's easy to bring a pram or buggy, and it has a beach and barbecue facilities. The charcoal for the barbecue is provided by the municipality. The lake is in a wonderful location on the edge of the forest of St. Moritz, sheltered from the wind and yet pampered by the sun. You have to keep your fingers crossed if you hope to find somewhere to park at the Olympic ski jump at the weekend. Some parts of the shore are protected, and therefore not accessible.

Easy to get to – Lake Cavloc

Lake Cavloc is in the Val Forno, and easy to reach via an alpine road from Maloja. The bathing lake is easily accessible, both on foot and with a pram or buggy. A small but excellent restaurant awaits visitors on the shore. And if you'd like to fire up a barbecue, you are welcome to use one of the fireplaces. You can also get to the Forno glacier from here.

Lake Cavloc from above. Situated in Val Forno, it is easy to reach on foot (right).

A section of the beach at Lej Marsch is protected, but barbecues are still permitted (far right).







Golden autumn

**Every season, the countryside reveals
a different face. As autumn approaches,
the woods and forests turn golden –
and wait to be explored by walkers.**

Text LISA BIERBAUER *Picture* FABIAN GATTLEN

A very special time dawns as summer draws to a close in the Engadin. Golden rays dominate the landscape in autumn, partly due to the needles falling from the larch trees – some of which are over 1,000 years old. We spoke to recently retired District Forester Jon Andri Bisaz about this phenomenon, and about the trees that are typical to the region.

Mr Bisaz, what are the native tree species in the Engadin?

Swiss stone pine, larch, Scots pine and spruce.

What is special about them – what are their notable characteristics?

The Swiss stone pine only grows at the upper end of the timber line, so upwards of 1,500 or 1,600 metres. It's a very valuable tree that is often used to make furniture. The larch is the only conifer that sheds its needles in autumn, and that is what creates the optical effect of the golden autumn. The common or Norway spruce is an ordinary variety that is found all over Europe.

How do you work out the age of the Swiss stone pines?

As you do with other tree species: you count the rings. The cells are large in summer, and this creates a white ring. The darker ring is produced in autumn, when the cells are smaller. A black-and-white ring equates to one year. The trees are an average of 250 or 300 years old when they are felled.

What is Engadin wood used for?

The Swiss stone pine is really only suitable for indoor use, whereas the larch can be used for roofs or fences or in construction. They are stronger, more robust, than the spruce or Swiss stone pine.

“The larch is the only tree that sheds its needles in autumn, and that is what creates the optical effect of the golden autumn.”

What is it that makes “moon wood” so special?

Timber that is felled when the tree is in the right moon is known as moon wood. This knowledge is ancient, but the idea was unfashionable from the 1960s to the 1980s, when it was considered uninteresting and outdated. Now, though, people have again started to realise that wood which is felled at the right time has better properties than other timber. The best time to fell it is when the moon is new. The moon's force is then at its weakest, and the trunk contains the least amount of sap. If you want to work the wood, you first have to dry it. If the wood is felled at the time of a new moon, then the drying time is correspondingly shorter.

Does the Engadin have any tree species that don't grow anywhere else?

No, not really. The Swiss stone pine also grows in the Tirol and Southern Tirol.

Are there tree species that are very rare, or even threatened with extinction?

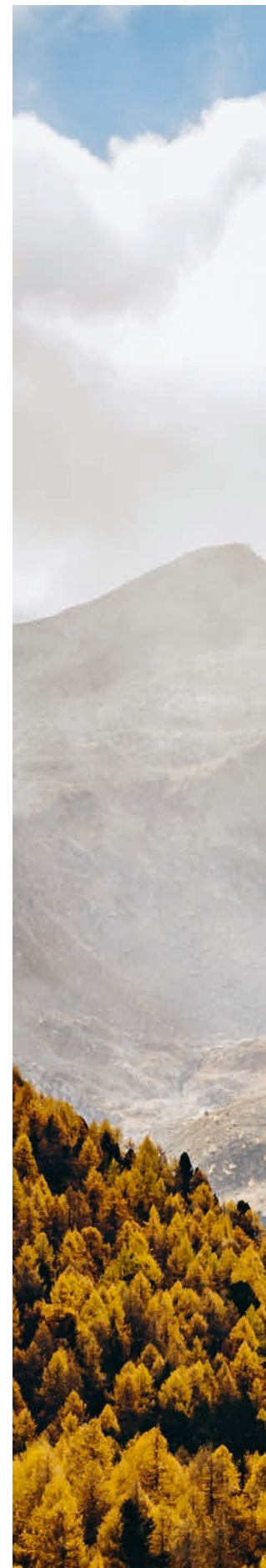
No; the occurrence of the species that grow here is not currently restricted. There is a subspecies of the Scotch pine that is very special, and really only grows here. But as I said, it's a subspecies rather than a species.

Is the nature protected here?

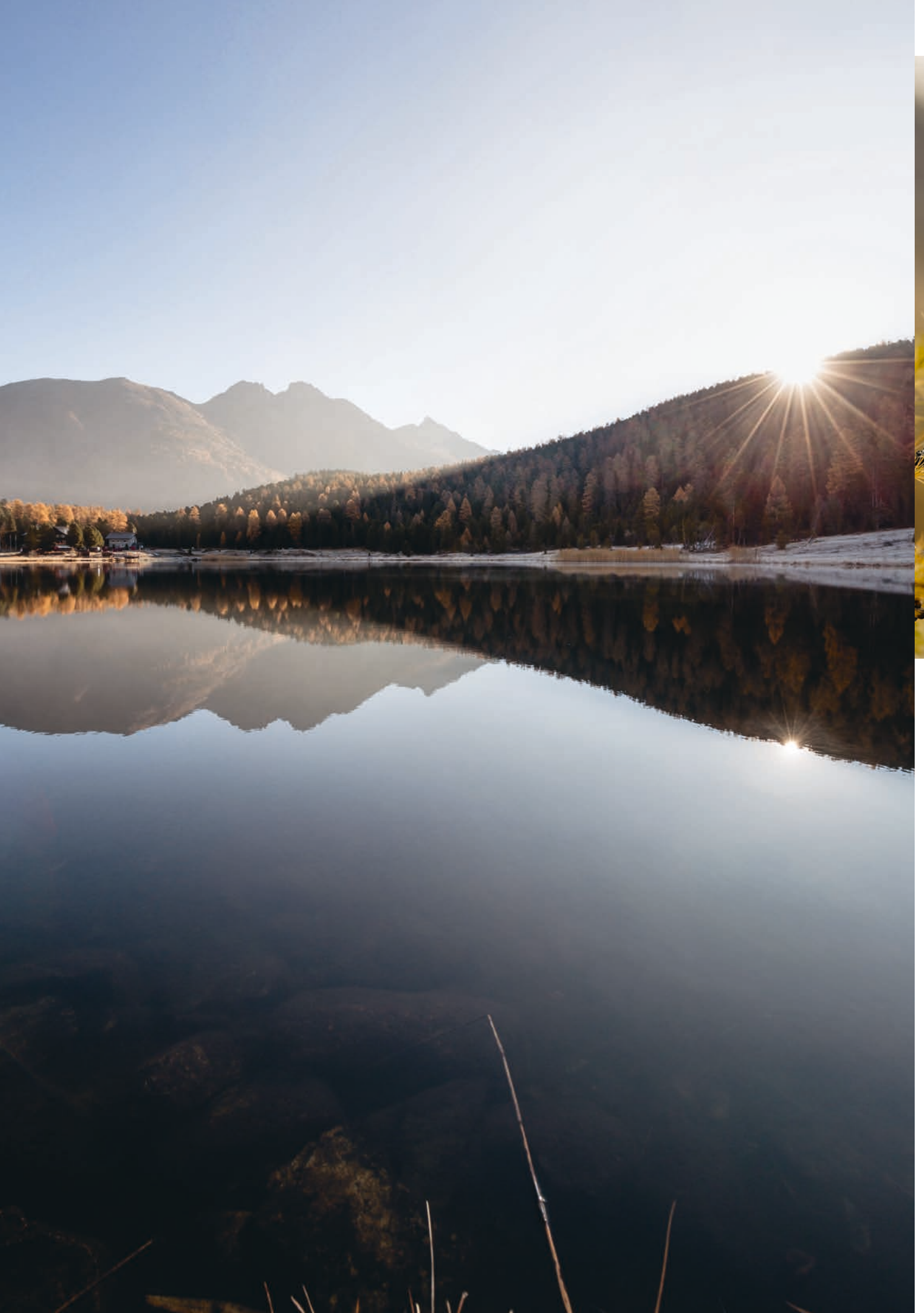
Yes, we have very strict legislation with regard to the protection of trees, plants and animals.

To what extent do trees change when autumn approaches?

First of all, the shoots lignify. This process starts fairly early, in August. Lignification makes the shoots









The golden needles of the larches are responsible for a very special natural spectacle (above).

The golden glow of the forests makes the lakes of the Engadin, such as Lake Staz, seen here, seem even more idyllic (left).



“You can set off out of any village and find yourself amidst its flora.”

stronger and more resilient for autumn and winter, and they don't break so easily. Then metabolism slows down. Trees are unable to evaporate water when the ground is frozen, so trees enter a state of hibernation in winter. Because larch trees don't have a layer of wax on the needles, they shed them in October. This is a strategy that otherwise really only affects deciduous trees. Then, at some point in April, the trees start to prepare for spring. This is determined by the temperatures and the position of the sun. They start to produce shoots for leaves.

What else is special about the flora in the Engadin, apart from the trees?

Flowers that like dry conditions are typical of this area. Plants that live at the higher vegetation line only have a short time to reproduce. The flower has to be fertilised quickly, and then mature before the onset of the frosty nights. This means that the flowers of the Engadin don't have the time to wait for rain. At the same time, though, they have to be able to survive above the forest line and cope with heavy rainfalls with absolutely no protection.

Which tours are best for observing the nature?

You can set off out of any village and find yourself amidst its flora. We don't engage in intensive agriculture, which is why our meadows are colourful and all the same green. Some of the prettiest valleys are Val Fex, Val Bever and Val Roseg. The Engadin also has wonderful lakes.

What do we need to remember as a tourist in the countryside?

Don't take any mementos with you, or rip anything up. Fortunately, people don't often come back from a walk with a little bunch of flowers. They are far more aware of things today.

Do you have a favourite tree or plant?

The Swiss stone pine is a very special tree.

Picture stories

The illustrator Pia Valär breathes life into old and new stories with humour and charm.

Text ANNEMARIE GASSEN

Illustration PIA VALÄR



My parents told me lots of stories, and my favourites were the ones that I could make up my own pictures for.” That is why Pia Valär became a storyteller herself – and today, she couldn’t imagine ever working as anything else. The illustrator sits on an office chair in her studio in Zurich, surrounded by everything she needs: paper, pens and her beloved books. “My favourite tool is a pencil, but I also use coloured felt pens and, not least, Risograph.” This is a printing system that turns her black-and-white drawings into colour prints. She has the studio all to herself, something that she is proud of.

Tall and slender, almost to the point of lankiness, the artist is not unlike one of her own creations. Her pencil is clamped between her index and middle fingers, one hand rests on the seat. She runs the other hand through her short hair, an impish grin on her face. Born in 1983, Pia lives and work in Zurich but grew up in Zuoz, and still has close ties to the Engadin of her youth. Which is why one of her favourite projects was the commission for the old Engadin fairy-tale, “Tredeschin”. Pia breathed new life into this traditional story with her amusing characters. Because of her origins, she greatly enjoys being involved with Rhaeto-Romanic projects. In 2016, the publishing company Edizioni Apart approached her with a view to her illustrating Benedetto Vigne’s haikus with her delicate, almost cartoon-like figures. “With a project like this, it’s helpful to understand the language,” Pia explains. She has spoken the Rhaeto-Romanic dialect Puter since her childhood. Pia has happy memories of long walks in the Engadin countryside, when her parents would entertain her with stories they made up themselves. “That what they did whenever I said I didn’t want to walk any more.” The artist is still fascinated by the colours of the Engadin spring today – “When everything is monochrome, greyish-brown and white, and ideally with a little bit of mist in the air, too. The whole atmosphere at this time of the year is unique.”

Pia started training as an illustrator with a pre-course in Lucerne at the Farbmühle school of art and design. In 2009 she moved to Scotland, and started training as an illustrator at the Edinburgh College of Art in 2010. After graduating in 2013, she returned to Zurich to work as a freelance illustrator. Her characters on paper have strikingly long, thin arms and legs. “Despite that,” she says, “they all have their own balance.” She finds inspiration when sitting together with friends, in everyday encounters, and in stories. Capturing ideas is less interesting to her. “I wish I were one of those people who always had a sketch pad with them, but I’m not,” she admits. “The inspiration flows into me, and later on that’s where I am able to find it again.” This process is easier on



Pia Valär has breathed new life into the Engadin fairy-tale with her amusing drawings (above). The artist creates charming postcards for the Gasthaus Avrona in Scuol (below).



some days, not so on others. Generally, though, every step in her work has frustrating and happy moments. “It’s not unheard of for a pencil to go flying through the air if it won’t do what I want it to,” she laughs. “In the sketching stage, it can be frustrating if the idea won’t come at first, but then, when it does, it’s a very happy and liberating feeling. Working out the details is also an enjoyable part of the job. Colouring can be almost like meditating,” Pia sums up her working day. Her charming illustrations are also available to individuals. Pia regularly prints off posters that can be purchased. She will also take on private commissions. After the initial contact through her website, potential clients can visit the artist in her studio and discuss what exactly they would like. Finally, she tells us about a project that is something of a dream: “At the moment, I’ve got a great script in the studio that a friend sent me, which I’d love to make into a graphic novel.”



www.piavalaer.ch





On tour with goats

Nicole Buess saved the lives of five little kids with “Mini Geiss – Dini Geiss”, a project that is very close to her heart. She is now the first person in the Engadin to offer goat trekking and goat yoga: fabulous fun!

Text ANINA RETHER
Picture FABIAN GATTLEN

A black Jeep turns onto the car park of Engadin airport. A laughing Nicole Buess gets out of her car. “Ready for an adventure with animals?” I nod my head. After all, I have done my preparations: sturdy shoes with grip soles, hard-wearing clothing and a mind open to new experiences. Before we set off, she checks her rucksack again: five leads and bridles, emergency first-aid kits for man and beast, a little picnic – it’s all there. And off we go.

Gibo, Mürmel, Sämi, Buess and Zottel are placidly munching grass in a large meadow beside the runway. Curious, they stretch out their necks and approach the fence when they hear Nicole Buess’s cheerful voice: “Well, boys, get yourselves ready.” Boys? Well, indeed, the five billy goats that are about to take us on a trek are not unlike teenagers. While the bridles are put on, they brazenly nibble at my trousers, pull at my rucksack, and Zottel gives me a bit of a nudge with his horns in welcome. This will be fun, I think to myself, as I trot along behind the others with Sämi and Benni Buess on the trail ropes in the direction of Punt Muragl.

And I was right. Because goats are not only curious, picky and cheekier than you would ever imagine, they are also highly entertaining. No sooner have we let them off the leads in the forest, than they show their true characters: there isn’t a rock face beside the trail that they don’t have to climb, no shoot

**I love animals,
and it was
unthinkable
that my sweet
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should end up
on a plate.**

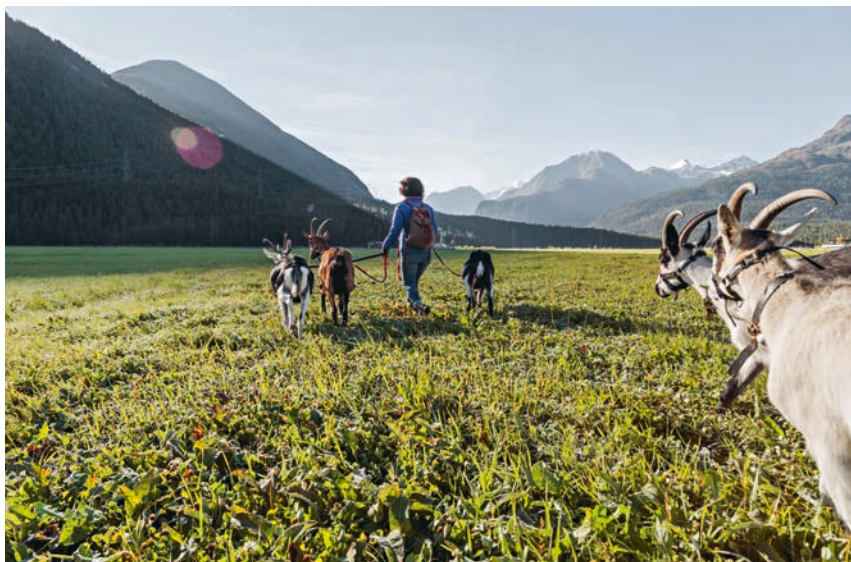
is too high for them to reach their necks up for, no occasion too small to rag one of the others or cross hither and thither in front of us. The aim is quite clearly to be the first to find the freshest greenery on the wayside. I ask whether Nicole Buess is ever worried about one of them suddenly running off. “I’ve always got binoculars with me in case that happens,” she says, smiling, “but it hardly ever does. Goats are herd animals, and are happiest living in groups.”

If anyone had told her three years ago that she would one day be the proud owner of five billy goats, the event manager from Champfèr wouldn’t have believed them for a moment. But she bought Sämi, Zottel and the others from a farmer friend in the autumn of 2017, saving “her boys” from a one-way visit to the abattoir. “I love animals, and it was unthinkable that ‘my’ sweet billies that I walked past every day with the dogs should end up on a plate.” A decision with far-reaching consequences. Nicole Buess spent the next few months looking for suitable pastures and a stable for the winter, learning all about her new protégés, and completing a taster course in pack goats in the Toggenburg. “Goats are unique animals. They love snuggling, and they have a calming effect on us people, and instantly lift the mood – what more could you want.”

Last summer, along with goat treks lasting several hours, Nicole Buess began offering goat yoga, a trend







“Goats are unique animals. They love snuggling, and they have a calming effect on us people, and instantly lift the mood.”

originally from America. The goats watch yoga positions such as the “Cat” or “Downward dog” with great interest, which often causes much mirth and hilarity during the courses.

After a leisurely picnic in the shade of the stone pines, we set off on the way back. Billy goats can certainly kid around, as I saw with my own eyes. But full of the many new impressions, and the delicate snacks along the wayside, the five now stroll happily back towards the valley in a single file behind Nicole Buess. No more bleating; all we can hear is the whistling of a kite and the tinkling of the bells. We encounter two pot-bellied pigs close to a farm. I ask what would have happened if Nicole Buess had saved these clumsy but no less lovable pigs instead of the goats. It’s quite likely that the happy ending could have worked out differently. Trekking with porkers? Doesn’t sound too appealing – to say nothing of yoga pigs. Nicole Buess chuckles at that. “Thankfully I don’t have to worry about them – they won’t be slaughtered. What’s that traditional saying about pigs being lucky...?”

Tips from Nicole Buess

Whether a team event or family day out, “Mini-Geiss – Dini-Geiss” is a very special experience in the Engadin.

Goat trekking

The trek crosses quiet alpine meadows, passes various lakes, continues through pine forests, past farmhouses and old-fashioned alpine cheese dairies. There is a choice of a cheese fondue or a picnic with local specialities along the way.

Goat yoga

Yoga experience with goats and a qualified yoga instructor in special “power spots” around St. Moritz. Learning certain exercises and breathing techniques can help practitioners to find peace and serenity in everyday life. Prior knowledge is an advantage, but not necessary.

Further information at
www.minigeiss-dinigeiss.ch

Eviva la Rumantschia

**“Here’s to the Romansh people!”
In a referendum on 20 February 1938, just before the outbreak of WWII, Romansh – Rhaeto-Romanic – was voted the fourth official language of Switzerland by a significant majority of around 92%.**

There are five different idioms (dialects) within the area where it’s spoken: Sursilvan, Sutsilvan, Surmiran, Puter and Vallader, plus a standard official form, Rumantsch Grischun.

“People in the Engadin with a strong awareness of tradition greet each other with ‘bun di’ before noon, and then with ‘buna saira’ after lunch,” explains Martina Shuler. She works for the Lia Rumantscha, the umbrella organisation for all Rhaeto-Romanic language associations. The charitable institution has worked since 1919 to preserve the language and culture of the Romansh. Martina Shuler is proud

of her work, because Rhaeto-Romanic belongs to this high valley and is part of its identity. The minority language contains some pre-Roman vocabulary, and, despite the close contact with Italian and German, has managed to retain its independence. In 1938 Romansh was recognised as the fourth official language of Switzerland. Puter, which is spoken throughout the Engadin, is still the first language in nursery schools and schools in some communities.

Visitors have ample opportunities to learn about the culture and language. Here’s a selection of expressions, events, literary and language courses.

Vocabulary/rumauntsch puter

Good morning / day! = *bun di!*
Good day / evening! = *buna saira!*
Greetings! = *allegra!* (all day)

Cheers / your health! / = *eviva / viva*
For heaven’s sake! = *per l’amur da Dieu!*
Goodness me! = *sapperlot!*
Excellent = *stupend / stupenda / grandius / grandiusa*
I (do not) agree = *Eau (nu) sun perinclet/perincletta*

The sun = *il sulagl*
The blue sky = *il tschêl blov*
Go for a walk = *ir a spass*
These mountains! = *che muntagnas!*
These lakes! = *che lejs!*
This light! = *che glüsch! / che splendur!*
What a wonderful day! = *ün di da bellezza!*



"If you want to find happiness, don't wait for it to come to you – go and find it." Painted slogan in Samedan, San Bastiaun 5.

Events:

In 2019 the Lia Rumantscha is celebrating its 100th anniversary. The anniversary celebrations will take place 1–18 August 2019 in Zuoz, with various themed days and a specially prepared theatre production.

Recommended reading:

Allegra Ladina: a little guide for guests to everyday life in Puter and Vallader

Engadiner Post/Posta Ladina: there is also a Rhaeto-Romanic section in the daily newspaper as well as a Rhaeto-Romanic vocabulary

Schellen-Ursli: famous children's book written by Selina Chönz

Online dictionary: <http://www.udg.ch/dicziunari/puter>

Chesin Manella: a Romansh bookshop in Celerina (limited opening times) sells a large selection of textbooks, novels and literature, for adults and children

Courses:

The Fundaziun de Planta in Samedan runs Romansh courses in Puter. These one- or two-week language and culture courses for beginners and advanced speakers are held in July (8–12 July and 15–19 July 2019).

www.chesaplanta.ch

Engadin Winter—19

Preview.

The second issue of the Magazine will be published in November



Ice fishing in Sils

How does this unusual sport work, and what needs to be considered?



Tracks in the snow

We answer questions on the fauna of winter.



Up, up and away

We accompany a potential member of the Club 8848 Lagalb.



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writers: Fabrizio D'Aloisio, Franco Furger, Carolin Geist,
Valentina Knapp-Voith, Michael Lütcher, Anina Rether ·
Senior art director: Charlotte Bourdeix · Picture editor:
Franziska Cruccolini, Elke Latinovic, Nicola van der Mee ·
Project manager: Sophia Ebrecht · Editorial: Bulent Yusuf,
Asa Tomash*

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**“All people will find that we can breathe
more freely up high in the mountains,
where the air is pure and clear, and we feel
lighter and spiritually more cheerful.”**

JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU, *writer*