

PRESS PACK SUMMER 2019.

AT THE HEART OF SUMMER:
VALAIS IN SIX STAGES.



ENGRAVED ON MY HEART.

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How to use this press pack

This document was designed so that you can find out more about subjects covered by means of hyperlinks.

These can be followed in different ways. :



Direct link

Direct link

Valais At the heart of summer.

An exceptionally sunny climate (nearly 300 days a year), majestic peaks more than 4,000 metres high, pristine natural landscapes and a wealth of mouth-watering local produce for an innovative cuisine: Valais promises an unforgettable summer. Valais is an unrivalled playground for outdoor activity enthusiasts, foodies, families and culture lovers alike.

Land of tradition and innovation, Valais boasts many contrasting facets and is a delight to explore on foot or by bike, with friends, family or solo. Discover unforgettable experiences, unmissable events and all that's new: summer 2019 is your next destination. Welcome to Valais!



How to get to Valais.

Wherever you are travelling from, Valais is easy to reach by public transport, private vehicle or plane.

By private car

The A9 motorway is the principal route leading to Valais. From the north, motorists can reach Valais via the Swiss capital, Bern, and transit the Lötschberg railway tunnel using the car shuttle service. Access from the south is via the Simplon Pass or the Simplon railway tunnel (car shuttle). From the west, motorists drive via Lausanne; from the east, via the Furka Pass or the Furka railway tunnel (car shuttle).

By public transport

There are direct trains to Valais from major Swiss cities including Basel, Bern, Zurich and Geneva, with guaranteed connections every 30 or 60 minutes. The Glacier Express links St. Moritz and Zermatt. Various transport companies in Valais, such as the Matterhorn Gotthard Bahn, RegionAlps and CarPostal Valais, allow travellers to reach the different resorts easily.

By plane

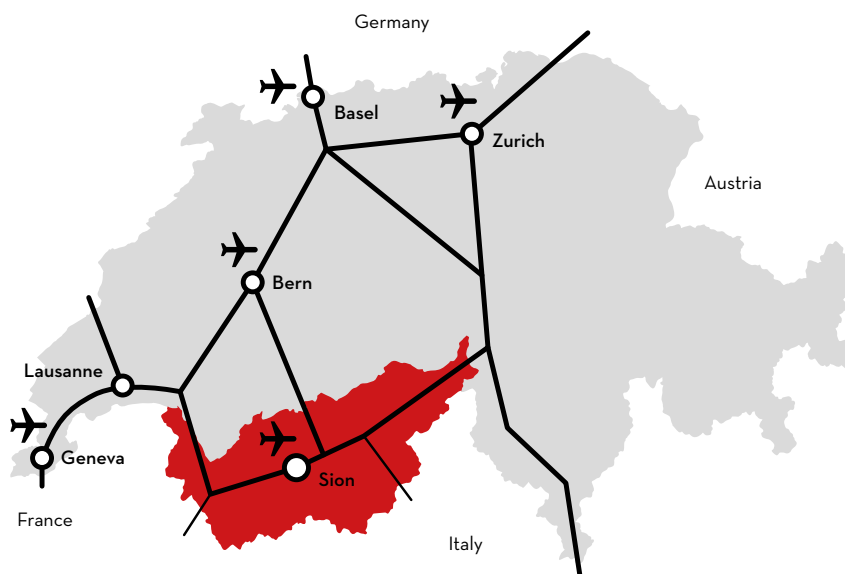
International flights to the airports of Geneva, Zurich, Basel and Bern. Public transport links to these airports are excellent. Find information on current traffic conditions in Valais [here](#).

Easy Card

The Easy Card is ideal for exploring Valais: it gives free access to public transport from Lake Geneva to the Lötschental valley. The card is available for validities of 2, 3 or 5 days. In all, visitors can travel on more than 1,100 km of routes without additional cost. The Easy Card also gives holders big discounts: 50% off cable cars run by the canton of Valais throughout the year, 50% off certain chairlifts and cable cars during summer and 50% off more than 50 activities and attractions – along with free travel on public transport from St-Gingolph to Blatten and Fafleralp. [To the Easy Card](#)

Erlebniscard

The ErlebnisCard, also known as the Adventure Card, offers a convenient and inexpensive way of exploring Upper Valais as well as neighbouring regions. The card is valid for durations of 2, 3 or 5 days, and grants free travel on public transport as well as discounts on many excursions and cultural attractions. It is available from railway stations and from the drivers of PostBuses. [To the Erlebniscard](#)



Picture library.

Intersectoral picture library

Visit our digital photo library, where you will find top-quality pictures relating to tourism, agriculture, industry and culture, which you may use free of charge. The images are accessible to all, but must be used exclusively to illustrate activities linked to the promotion of the image of Valais. [To the intersectoral picture library](#)
Do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to obtain additional pictures.

Contact.

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Valais in figures.

Fragrant forests, sparkling glaciers, flower-filled meadows, cascading streams: nature has been generous to Valais. Cycle routes, footpaths and mountain bike trails criss-cross the sun-blessed landscape. Visitors can explore wherever their heart takes them, creating their own personal map of summer holiday memories among the most spectacular summits of the Alps.

45

summits above 4,000 metres

40'000

hectares of natural parks

1

UNESCO World Heritage Site

8000

kilometres of hiking trails

countless

mountain lakes

100

working "bisses" (irrigation channels)

1600

kilometres of cycle / mountain bike trails

more than 50

Swiss Alpine Club (SAC) huts

4000

species of wild animals

8

resorts with the "Family Destination" label

6

thermal spa resorts

50

grape varieties cultivated between altitudes of 400 and 1,100 metres

75

restaurants listed by Gault&Millau

10

restaurants with Michelin stars

8

AOP/IGP products

1600

kilometres of dry-stone walls

25 top experiences in Valais.

- 1. Meet the St Bernard dogs, emblems of the region**
You can visit them at [Barryland](#) in Martigny or at their summer quarters at the [Great St Bernard Pass](#). Take advantage of the trip to explore the hospice and to walk in the footsteps of Napoleon, the troops of the Roman Empire - and perhaps even Hannibal and his elephants (according to legend).
- 2. Visit the castles and historical buildings of Valais**
The [Castle of St-Maurice](#) stages exhibitions dedicated to press cartoons, comics or graphic novels. The [Fortress and tower of La Bâtiaz](#) in Martigny promise panoramic views of the Rhône valley along with reconstructions of historical machines of war and a medieval restaurant. The [hills of Valère and Tourbillon](#) in Sion are topped by a medieval basilica, home to the world's oldest playable organ, and the ruins of an ancient castle. The [Stockalper Castle](#) in Brig opens its arcades and garden to visitors. The [military fort of Champex](#) offers a visit into the depths of the mountain to experience Switzerland's celebrated strategy of the "National Redoubt" during the 2nd World War. Sion's cathedral is the most recent medieval cathedral in Switzerland, with a combination of Gothic and Romanesque styles.
- 3. Explore the Abbey of St Maurice**
Founded in AD 515, the abbey guards the relics of the martyrs of St Maurice. Its basilica and treasury of artefacts given by kings, merchants, pilgrims and travellers bound for Rome are well worth a visit.
- 4. See any of more than 250 shows at the theatres of Valais**
The [Crochetan](#) in Monthey, the [Théâtre du Martolet](#) in St-Maurice, the [Alambic](#) in Martigny, the [Théâtre de Valère](#) in Sion, the [TLH](#) in Sierre, the [La Poste](#) theatre in Viège, the [Zeughaus](#) in Brig.
- 5. Relax and enjoy the soothing effects of thermal spring water at a spa**
In [Ovronnaz](#), [Leukerbad](#), [Brigerbad](#), [Saillon](#) or [Val d'Illiez](#).
- 6. Gaze at the glaciers and see the dramatic way they sculpt the valleys**
These gargantuan rivers of ice have shaped the topography of Valais. Visitors can see them close-up at various sites listed as UNESCO World Heritage. The Great Aletsch Glacier is the most famous of all.

7. **Admire the crystal-clear waters of a mountain lake**
The lakes of [Moiry](#), [Champex](#), [Derborence](#), [Blauseeli](#), [Schwarzsee](#), [Salanfe](#), [Taney](#), [Riffelsee](#) and many more each have their own colours and special atmosphere. Perfect for a refreshing dip after a hike in the sunshine on a hot summer's day.



8. **Tackle a via ferrata**
Equipped with fixed safety cables, via ferratas allow adventure-seekers to push their physical and mental limits as they climb to locations offering fabulous views. 15 different via ferratas are listed in Valais, classified from easy to difficult.

9. **Go for a walk along a historical “bisse” irrigation channel**
Characteristic of the mountain regions of Valais, the historical “bisses” were built over the centuries to bring precious water to the fields, orchards and vineyards. Footpaths follow many of them: from strolls over shallow slopes to spectacular walks across vertiginous cliffs.

10. **Marvel at the region’s geological curiosities**
Explore the twisting [Grotte aux fées](#) (“Fairies’ grotto”) and try to spot one of its shy residents. Marvel at the [Euseigne pyramids](#), strange rock formations topped with “hats” of stone, which frame the road up into the Val d’Hérens. Compare your footprints with the [fossilised dinosaur footprints at Emosson](#). Descend to the [underground lake of St-Leonard](#): guided visits by boat offer the chance to glide across the crystal-clear waters to reach the depths of the cave. Set off in search of the [source of the Rhône, close to the glacier](#). Or for a novelty, contemplate the waterfall of [Pissevache](#), an impressive 116 metres high.

11. **Have fun with the kids**
Climb aboard one of the scale-model steam trains at [Swiss Vapeur Parc](#). Hurtle down one of the many giant slides at the [Aquaparc](#) water park. Lose yourself among the mazes of [Labyrinthe Aventure](#). See native alpine animals in an authentic natural environment at the [Zoo des Marécottes](#).

12. **Marvel at the [Matterhorn](#), our iconic pyramid-shaped mountain, famous worldwide**

13. **Feel tiny at one of the mighty dams**
The hydroelectric dams of Valais are notable for their impressive size. It is possible to visit the [Grande-Dixence dam](#), the world’s tallest gravity dam, the [Mauvoisin dam](#), located at the end of the Val de Bagnes in a nature reserve, the [Emosson dam](#), near the Trient Glacier, the [Moiry dam](#) and its turquoise reservoir and the [Mattmark dam](#), Europe’s largest natural-earth dam.

14. **Follow one of the many historical routes that cross Valais**
The [Via Francigena](#), one of the most famous, leads from Canterbury to Rome. The [Via Stockalper](#) links Gondo and Brig via the Simplon Pass. The [Via Dala](#) showcases the old paths, equipped with ladders, that travellers to Leukerbad and its thermal baths once braved. The [ViaCook](#) follows the route of the first group tour across Switzerland, created by Thomas Cook, pioneer of organised travel.

15. **Taste some of the delicious Valais specialities**
A [Raclette](#) is a must on any visit to Valais. The multiple servings of melted cheese with garnish make for the most convivial of meals. The [Assiette valaisanne](#) (Valais platter) is composed of the finest Valais produce: Valais dried meat IGP, Valais cured ham IGP, Valais cured bacon IGP, Valais cured sausage, Valais rye bread AOP and [Raclette du Valais AOP](#) cheese. It has pride of place at any drinks gathering along with fine [Valais wine](#). [Apricots](#) and [asparagus](#) are also local delicacies. Dishes prepared with [saffron from Mund](#) are a treat not to be missed. And to finish this feast, what better than a [Valais pear brandy AOP](#) or [Abricotine AOP](#) (Valais apricot brandy)?

16. **Visit a winemaker at a vineyard or cellar and taste some wines**
The sunny climate of Valais is ideal for growing grapes. Many of the lower slopes are covered with vineyards that it is possible to visit or which offer magnificent walks. The winemakers also welcome visitors to their cellars. Not to be missed: the [vineyards of Visperterminen](#), the highest in Europe, which extend up to an altitude of more than 1,150 metres.



17. Attend any of more than 150 concerts

The Caves du Manoir in Martigny have hosted many international and regional artists under their historical stone vaults since 1977. The Pont Rouge in Monthey, devoted to contemporary music, also offers a highly varied programme. In Sion, the Port-Franc stages more than 30 concerts every season, showcasing world-renowned artists as well as young groups. The programme of the Ferme-Asile includes jazz concerts as well as more eclectic evenings.

18. Stroll around one of the Valais museums

The Fondation Gianadda in Martigny stages two major exhibitions a year. The collection of 20th-century sculptures in the gardens along with the automobile museum and the Gallo-Roman museum located within the site are also well worth visiting. The Musée d'art du Valais (Valais Art Museum) presents a collection of work by artists from Valais. The Pénitencier in Sion stages temporary exhibitions by the cantonal museums in an unusual setting: a former prison. The Musée des Bisses in Ayent reveals the secrets of the "bisses", the historical irrigation channels characteristic of the Valais landscape.

19. Walk in the footsteps of the ancient Romans

From 800 BC, Roman settlements were established in Valais. It is still possible to see Gallo-Roman remains at many locations. In St-Maurice, the Abbey complex includes a church dating from the 4th Century. In Martigny, the amphitheatre, the remains of the domus and the forum, the mithraeum and the tepidarium bear witness to the importance of the town at the time.



20. Attend a classical music festival in the uplifting setting of a mountain resort

The Musikdorf Ernen from June to September, the Verbier Festival and Saas-Fee's Talis Festival in July, the Festival Classique des Haudères, the Crans-Montana Classics, the Rencontres musicales de Champéry, the Festival d'Anniviers and Saas-Fee's Musica Romantica in August, and finally the Zermatt Music Festival in September: the whole season offers numerous opportunities to hear exquisite music in exceptional settings.

21. Visit a picture-postcard village with its wooden chalets and barns

Several villages in Valais have retained a traditional heart where you can see many typical traditional buildings. These include Plan-Cerisier, which overlooks the Rhône valley near Martigny; Lourtier and Fionnay in the Val de Bagnes; Iséables, a suspended village where they say everything is on a slope, even the football pitch; Grimentz, in the Val d'Anniviers; and Ernen, voted one of "Switzerland's most beautiful villages". In Upper Valais, the villages of Albinen, Mund, Münster, Blatten and Kippel are real gems with many traditional wooden buildings.



22. Ride some of the many special forms of transport

Valais has the traditional cable cars, chairlifts, gondolas and funiculars (at Emosson, St-Luc, Saas-Fee and Crans-Montana, for example) to take you up towards the alpine summits. But did you know it is also possible to ride steam trains at the Furka Pass or to put your car on the train in order to pass through the Simplon tunnel, the Lötschberg or the Furka?



23. Tackle a mountain pass

Accessible by bike, on foot or by car, the mountain passes are atmospheric spots that have seen countless travellers over the centuries. The [Great St Bernard Pass](#) and its dogs still welcome many pilgrims. The [Simplon Pass](#), with its historical hospice, has given rise to many legends as a key crossing between Valais and Italy. The [Furka Pass](#) links the upper Goms valley with the canton of Uri. The new road was inaugurated in 1866; history buffs and railway enthusiasts can still tackle the pass in an authentic period steam train, just like travellers long ago. For cyclists, many [iconic passes](#) offer a thrilling and satisfying challenge.

24. Seek a blast of adrenalin

Fly over the alpine peaks on a tandem [paraglider](#) or [hang-glider flight](#). Explore gorges or mountain torrents on a [canyoning](#) or rafting trip. Hurtle down the mountainsides on a [summer bobsleigh run](#).



25. Enjoy an Indian summer with autumn in Valais

In autumn, nature puts on a magnificent show of colours, and the people of Valais enjoy making the most of the season's delicacies. The [brisolée](#), a meal of roasted chestnuts served with fine cheeses, is one of the highlights. Many restaurants serve [game](#) - venison, wild boar and hare - with all the trimmings. The annual [Foire du Valais](#) in Martigny is one of the canton's most popular social gatherings, with a uniquely festive atmosphere. The [Combats de Reines](#) match cows of the Herens breed who naturally lock horns to establish a hierarchy in the herd; the annual contest to crown the "queen of the year" should not be missed. Likewise the [désalpes](#) - festivities in the different valleys to celebrate the descent of cattle from the alpine pastures - are a must, at least once in a lifetime!





Ready for some outdoor action? Valais is certainly ready to welcome all adventure-seekers, offering an outdoor playground in a class of its own. Mountain bikers, road cycling enthusiasts, trail runners and hikers alike can enjoy sensational

terrain and superb conditions. Over the following pages you will find all kinds of experiences, new attractions and events not to be missed, along with tips from the experts.

Mountain biking.

Interview

The specialist - the mountain biking stage : Christian Bénét

This summer, the Valais mountain biker Christian Bénét competes in his 30th Grand Raid BCVS

The name of Christian Bénét may not mean anything to you, but this Valais mountain biker is a star of the Grand Raid BCVS. Aged 55, he has taken part in every edition of the race since its launch in 1990. Only five other riders have been so faithful. This summer, Christian Bénét competes in his 30th Grand Raid. His last, perhaps?

Some figures: Christian Bénét has competed twice on the full course setting off from Verbier, three times on the short course starting in Evolène and 24 times over the medium distance from Hérémence. The 2019 edition is therefore his 30th. In all, he has already ridden 1,993 kilometres on the trails and roads of the Grand Raid. He has also scaled the fearsome Pas de Lona 29 times, carrying his bike on his back. Ask him if he enjoys suffering, he says: "Not

at all! If you've trained, it's all right. Every year I do 3,000 kilometres in preparation."

It's a real love affair between Christian Bénét and the Grand Raid, which has lasted since the first edition in 1990. His memories of the occasion, however, are not rosy. "It was hell. 125 kilometres is a long way. My bike was heavy. It didn't have a suspension fork, so on the downhill I felt my arm muscles were detaching from the bones and my eyes were coming out of their sockets. I had cramp everywhere. I didn't manage to reach the finish line in the designated time." That didn't stop him from competing along the same distance in the 2nd edition in 1991. That time, he reached the finish line after 11 hours and 45 minutes of hard slog. From 1992 to 2018, Christian Bénét preferred to tackle shorter distances,

more manageable for him. This summer, he isn't going crazy: he is starting in Hérémence.

But what drives him to re-enter the same race every year? "The scenery, the route and the atmosphere," he tells us. "And for the 30th edition, this summer, my goal is the same as for previous years: reach the finish line, in the designated time, and make the most of the ride in the sunshine." Will this 30th edition be his last? "I say I'll stop after this one, but actually I know I'll enrol for the year after, and if I'm still here and in shape, I'll be at the starting line... but maybe with an electric mountain bike," he says.



Special experiences for visitors

New mountain bike routes in the Lötschental



Enjoy exploring by mountain bike? Two new itineraries have officially opened in the Lötschental: the Bietschhorn Trail and the Breithorn Trail. An original and active way of discovering one of the most beautiful valleys in Valais.

New mountain bike downhill run in La Tzoumaz



A new mountain bike trail has been created in La Tzoumaz. Part of the run was already open to riders last summer, but the full trail (4.3 km long, 680 m vertical drop) will be officially operational this summer. Named Chôtatai (which means "Sit down!" in local dialect), it is classed easy (blue) with several more challenging sections (red). The trail begins below the gondola summit station at La Tzoumaz and finishes at the Etablons junction in the resort. With Chôtatai, the Verbier Bikepark now boasts 8 trails.



Explore new trails with a mountain bike guide



One way to discover new routes in Valais is with the help of a guide from one of the mountain bike schools in Valais.

Selection of e-bike routes

E-bikes are becoming highly popular, with ever more enthusiasts in Valais riding electric mountain bikes. Here is a selection of suitable routes:

Top 5 e-bike routes in Valais

1. Stoneman Glaciara, 127 km
2. Albinen-Leuk-Albinen, 19 km
3. Val d'Anniviers Bike Planet Tour, 25 km
4. Crans-Montana Bike Marathon, 50 km
5. Cleuson Dam Bike Tour, 31 km



Innovation of the stage

Altis recharging stations

The Valais company Altis, based in Le Châble in the Val de Bagnes, has developed public recharging stations that are compatible with all types of electric bike. During summer 2018, 11 stations were set up at various sites in the municipalities of Bagnes and Vollèges. The same locations have been confirmed for 2019, and others may be added. These recharging stations are simple to use: riders simply have to place their e-bike in the rack and plug it in. Solidly built and designed to withstand the tough weather conditions high in the mountains, the stations can be installed anywhere. In future, Altis hopes to extend its network beyond the limits of the Val de Bagnes.

www.altis.swiss



Did you know?



Valais has launched a reservation system that allows riders to ensure they have a place for their bike when they travel by PostBus into the side valleys. The project, developed by HES-SO Valais-Wallis in partnership with the transport companies, is called Resabike. www.resabike.ch



The very first Swiss enduro championships title will be awarded at the Val d'Anniviers stage of the Helveti'cup, Rock the Besso, which takes place on 20 July 2019. www.rockthebesso.ch



Women were not admitted to compete along the full length of the Grand Raid between Verbier and Grimentz at the first four editions (1990, 91, 92 and 93). It was only in 1994 that women were able to enrol. That year, the race was won by the German rider Susi Dahlmeier.

Events not to be missed.

Mountain bike marathon

2019 UCI Mountain Bike Marathon World Championships in Grächen
20-22 September 2019

In 2019, Valais hosts the UCI Mountain Bike Marathon World Championships for the first time – in the Grächen region. 300 riders of more than 35 nationalities will battle for the world.
www.graechen.ch

30th edition of the Grand Raid BCVS
23-24 August 2019

The Grand Raid BCVS celebrates its 30th edition in 2019. To mark the event, the organisation has created a new route open to all: an e-bike itinerary from Evolène to Grimenz, skirting the Pas de Lona. More than a race, it's a scenic adventure!
www.grand-raid-bcvs.ch

Raid Evolénard
16 June 2019

The Raid Evolénard is the second-biggest mountain bike cross-country event in Valais after the Grand Raid BCVS. It has been a key gathering for many years, and in 2021 – for its 25th edition – it hosts the European mountain bike championships.
www.raidevolenard.ch

Mountain bike enduro

Enduro Helveti'cup
20 July and 24 August 2019

Two races of the Enduro Helveti'cup (the Swiss enduro mountain bike championships) take place in Valais in 2019: Rock the Besso in the Val d'Anniviers on 20 July and Enduro du Val d'Illicz in Champéry on 24 August.
www.helvetiucup.com

Mountain bike downhill

Swiss Downhill Cup à Bellwald
4-6 October 2019

All the stars of Switzerland's downhill mountain bike scene gather every year in Bellwald in Upper Valais for the finals of the IXS Swiss Downhill Cup, staged at the resort's bike park.
www.ixsdownhillcup.com

Mountain bike festivals

Traillove Festival
18-24 September 2019

The 2nd edition of the Traillove mountain bike festival takes place in Zermatt this summer. The event features a round of the Enduro World Series as well as the Enduro Helveti'cup. A summit workshop on building mountain bike trails will be held on 22 and 24 September.
www.traillove.bike/traillove

Bike and Sound Festival
23-25 August 2019

At Champéry, the Bike & Sound Festival brings together two worlds: mountain biking and music. By day, focus is on the bikes with races – including the Enduro du Val d'Illicz – as well as demos, activities and entertainment. In the evenings, bikes are parked and the artists step into the spotlight for the gigs.
www.bikeandsoundfestival.ch

Verbier E-bike Festival
14-18 August 2019

The organisers of the Freeride World Tour are launching a new event focusing on electric bikes: the Verbier E-bike Festival. The resort in the Val de Bagnes will stage the world's largest e-bike exhibition and test zone.
www.verbier-ebikefestival.ch

Cycling.

Interview

The specialist - the cycling stage : Simon Ruff

“Valais offers all I need for a full life.”

Simon Ruff, resident of Törbel in Valais and world UltraCycling champion in 2011 and 2018, would not leave Valais for anything in the world. The region offers him superb opportunities to balance family life, work and his sport.

Simon Ruff's discipline is UltraCycling, which involves endurance races of more than 300 kilometres. “My longest race was 2,200 kilometres,” the world champion says. “It's perfectly possible to cycle for two days without sleep. Setting off from the starting line of a race, putting in all you can without knowing how things will play out and then, after more than 30 hours of slog, crossing the finish line – these are incredible feelings!” Only a few dozen other cyclists can rival him. In terms of performance, he is one of the top five cyclists worldwide in his discipline. In May 2018, at the Glocknerman UltraCycling race in Austria, he became world champion for the second time after winning over a distance of 1,000 kilometres, with 16,000 metres of elevation gain. In August 2018, Simon Ruff was one of 30 athletes to compete in the Tortour UltraCycling race, which takes place in Switzerland – coming second overall and winning the title of Swiss champion.

In order to deliver such performances, Simon Ruff sets himself objectives every autumn before starting his training – and then concentrates on achieving them. “My training and hours depend on the season. In winter, I train for about 10 to 15 hours a week. Most of the time in the gym, strengthening my leg muscles and focusing on my core stability. I enjoy other sports, too, so I also train through doing cross-country skiing or ski touring.”

At a training camp at the beginning of the year, he clocks up the necessary kilometres. Starting in spring, he trains nearly two hours a day. “For training in the mountains, I recommend the climbs up to Moosalp, above Törbel, and up to Giw, above Visperterminen. During the two climbs, you can really enjoy the tranquillity and the views. The Saas and Matter valleys are ideal for working on strength and endurance. At the weekend, I head over to some of our canton's most beautiful valleys, such as the

“Valais already gives me training possibilities the moment I cross my doorstep!”

Turtmantal, the Lötschental, the Val d'Anniviers and the Val d'Hérens to do some long training sessions. In the spring, I often ride along the floor of the Rhône valley as far as Conthey, and for the way back, follow the sunny and varied northern side of the valley all the way to Visp. In summer, I prefer the valleys leading south from the main Rhône valley, and appreciate the cooler temperatures in the morning. The Goms valley and the Nufenen, Grimsel and Furka passes are also ideal training routes for me.” Just before the start of the competition season, he trains for about 25 hours a week alongside his professional work. What with sports and his job, he doesn't have a lot of free time left over.



Alongside his sporting career, the rider has a full-time professional career. Now in his mid-thirties, he runs the support group at one of the production factories at Lonza AG in Visp. His daily routine begins with work, and only afterwards does he start training. Despite the short travel distance to work and the availability of training options close to home, he finds that reconciling family, career and training is a challenge. Simon Ruff has not yet fixed his next sporting objectives; at the moment, he wants to spend more time with his family. “As soon as I'm out of the house, I'm in peaceful nature – perfect for escaping daily routine or spending a nice day out with the family. I feel at home in Valais and I like the mentality of people here. This place offers all I need for a full life. Where the sun shines, you can't help but feel great!”

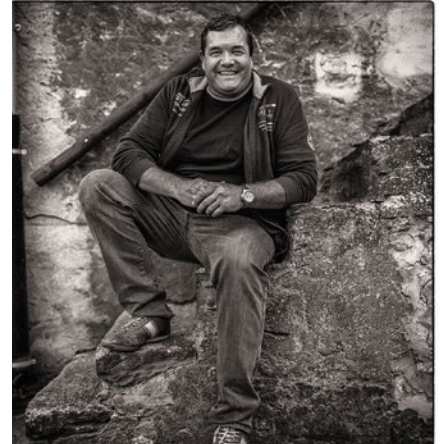
More on Simon Ruff
www.ruffsimon.com

Special experiences for visitors

One of Europe's largest collections of historical bicycles is in Chippis

Marc-André Elsig is passionate about bicycles. This native of Valais started collecting historical bicycles 33 years ago, and now has one of the largest collections in Europe. With the help of several friends, he has put about 600 cycles on display in a spacious converted barn (220 sq. m) in Chippis. Everything that has anything to do with bikes finds a place in this collection, which is open to visitors on request. Marc-André, owner and veteran collector, offers a guided tour – well worth the visit. You leave with dozens of fascinating anecdotes, and learn all kinds of facts about the history of cycles and cycling. It was a childhood dream for Marc-André to create a museum; 33 years after he began collecting, his dream is to put on

show his incredible collection in a real museum, bigger still. And this dream is about to come true: in partnership with R&D Cycling, the company that organises the Tour des Stations, the “Musée international du vélo” will soon open. The idea is to exhibit not only Marc-André’s collection but also the amazing bikes created by Didi Senft – a German cycling enthusiast and inventor known as El Diablo, who appears at major cycling races dressed as the Devil. The museum should open in Valais at the latest for the 2020 road cycling world championships, to be held in Martigny and Aigle.




Further information:

www.museeduvelo.ch

Explore Valais with the Valais Cycling Tour



The Valais Cycling Tour was designed by the professional Valais cyclist Steve Morabito. The 10-stage route includes 29 major ascents (20 mountain passes and 9 dams) over a total of 740 kilometres and 18,500 metres of elevation gain. The itinerary, which typically takes between 7 and 14 days, takes cyclists along the most beautiful roads of Valais. Various packages are on offer to enthusiasts who wish to book a complete holiday.

Discover all our bike offers for Valais: 



Spectacular signposted routes for pure cycling pleasure.

Tseuzier dam



This signposted route brings cyclists from Sion up to the Tseuzier dam. A flat section to start off between Sion and St-Léonard, and then things get serious with the start of the climb: beautiful twisting roads through the vineyards and then through forest. After 1,400 vertical metres of ascent and several tunnels, cyclists reach the Tseuzier dam and magnificent views of the lake and the surrounding peaks.



“Tour de France” signage: Martigny to Finhaut-Emosson via the Col de la Forclaz



Last year, the Finhaut-Emosson stage was awarded the prestigious Tour de France label “Route du Tour”, the first foreign stage of the race to win this honour. Signage in the colours of the Tour de France has been set up along the whole route from Martigny to Emosson, via the Col de la Forclaz and the village of Finhaut. Like to try the climb in race conditions? Enrol for the Désalpe Reichenbach, open to all, on 15 September 2019.

Did you know?



Seven road cycling races in Valais have teamed up to create the Challenge Vélo Valais/Wallis. The aim of this challenge, set up in 2018 by the Valais Cycling Federation, is to promote cycling in Valais among the general public. www.fcvs.ch



One of Europe’s largest collections of historical bicycles is located in Chippis.

(see interview above).



The 2020 road cycling world championships will take place next year partly in Valais. Martigny, along with Aigle, will welcome the world’s top cyclists. www.cmc-aigle.ch

Events not to be missed.

For cyclists

Tour des Stations 10 August 2019

The second edition of the Tour des Stations (“Tour of the Resorts”) takes place on 10 August 2019. This cyclo-sportive, part of the Marmotte Series, offers the chance to compete over various distances. New for 2019: an alpine cycling festival organised over four days, to promote cycling in the region.
www.tourdesstations.ch

Cyclo sportive des Vins du Valais 1 August 2019

Every year on 1 August – Swiss National Day – the Cyclo sportive des Vins du Valais leads cyclists through the vineyards of Valais. Enthusiasts can choose between three timed races and three non-timed rides.
www.lacyclo sportivevalaisanne.ch

For seeing professional cyclists

Torgon is the finish for the mountain stage of the Tour de Romandie 2019 4 May 2019

The Tour de Romandie has not come to Torgon since 1979. Forty years later, professional cyclists will once again battle for victory and glory at the Valais mountain resort. Arrival at Torgon is scheduled for 4 May 2019.
www.tourderomandie.ch

Champéry hosts the final stage of the Criterium du Dauphiné 2019 16 June 2019

Champéry features once again on the Criterium du Dauphiné in June 2019. Six years ago, Champéry staged the first stage of the race; in 2019, the resort hosts the final stage.
www.criterium-du-dauphine.fr

The Tour de Suisse 2019 finishes in Upper Valais 22-23 June 2019

The Tour de Suisse 2019 finishes on 23 June in the Goms (upper Rhône) valley. A time trial is planned at Ulrichen on Saturday 22 June. On Sunday 23 June, racers compete on a mountain stage.
www.tourdesuisse.ch

Hiking.

Interview

The specialist - the hiking stage : Pascale Haegler

“15 to 20% of hikers have a fear of heights, but it can be treated.”

Pascale Haegler is a mountain hiking guide and founder of Swiss Alpine Emotion. The courses she offers include one to tackle acrophobia, defined as an “extreme or irrational fear of heights”. Her goal is to help everyone “tame their fear of heights.” We asked her for tips.

How can fear of heights be treated?

By hypnosis, for example. Or by confronting the fear itself – which is the method we use on our courses. We try to reprogramme the “hard drive” – the brain, in other words. The more you expose yourself to heights, the more your brain adapts. Our courses last 3 days; we progress gently, using simple techniques.

How many people are susceptible to vertigo?

We all have a fear of heights, at least a little bit. It’s normal; it’s a survival mechanism. Acrophobia, however, is an irrational fear. I think around 15 to 20% of hikers suffer from it. That’s my perception, at least, when I guide groups on different tours in the mountains.

What kind of person comes on this sort of course?

Any hiker aged from 20 to 80 who realises their experience is being spoilt by a fear of heights.

Can anyone conquer a fear of heights?

Yes, just about everyone. With the exception of people who suffer from vertigo as a result of a problem in the inner ear, which accounts for 20% of cases. So for 80% of people who are afraid of heights, yes, we can do something. However, it’s like giving up smoking – you have to be motivated!



Does the same go even for people who feel afraid simply standing on a chair?

The majority of people who do the course feel scared just standing on a chair. But at the end of the course, after three days, they are able to walk across suspension footbridges – for example at Randa or along the “Bisse du Torrent Neuf” irrigation channel near Savièse.

In Valais, it’s a real disadvantage if you suffer from vertigo but want to go hiking.

Exactly. But you can still go hiking without being exposed to big drops, as you would along the Bisse du Tsitorret or the Bisse de Varone. But the problem is that there isn’t necessarily any warning that a path has exposed sections.

For those interested, what are the dates of your courses in 2019?

From 24 to 26 May, from 8 to 9 June for a booster shot, and from 13 to 15 September – or privately on request

Further information:

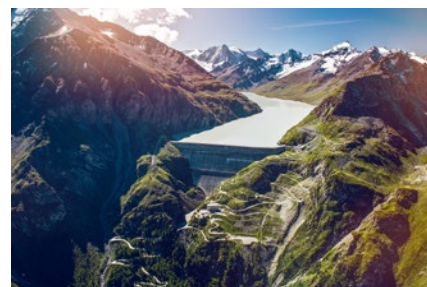
www.swissalpineemotion.com/offres-emotions/les-insolites

Special experiences for visitors.

Multi-day hikes with overnight accommodation in mountain huts

Probably the best way to make the most of the magnificent natural landscapes of Valais is to go on a multi-day hiking trip in the mountains. The many options include the Matterhorn Tour, the Monte Rosa Tour, the Combins Tour, the Tour des Grands Barrages (Tour of the big dams), the Mont-Blanc Tour and the St-Bernard Tour. Overnight accommodation is in mountain cabins: a unique and authentic experience.

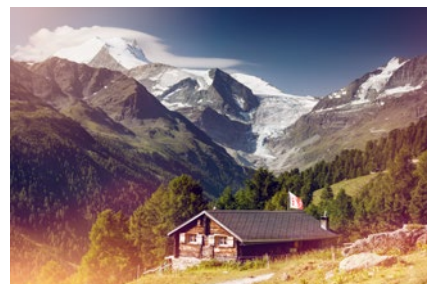
- [Matterhorn Tour](#)
- [Monte Rosa Tour](#)
- [Combins Tour](#)
- [Tour des Grands Barrages](#)
- [Mont-Blanc Tour](#) (bookable)
- [St-Bernard Tour](#) (bookable)



Guided hikes

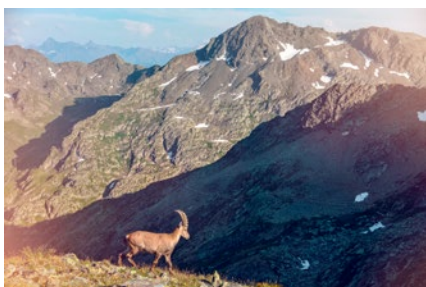


Valrando, the Valais hiking association, offers guided walks accessible to all throughout the summer. The choice is wide, from gentle walks along historical “bisse” irrigation channels to challenging ascents of mountain summits. These guided hikes are an excellent chance to discover new routes, enjoy breathtaking views, observe local flora and fauna, benefit from the guide’s expertise and meet other walkers in a relaxed and convivial atmosphere. Enrol by phone (+ 41 27 327 35 80) or e-mail admin@valrando.ch.



Wildlife-watching walks

Many walks offer excellent opportunities to observe the native wildlife of Valais. Here is a selection of strolls and hikes on which it is possible to spot mouflon wild sheep, deer, marmots, squirrels and even ibex.



- **Torgon:** Theme trail on the mouflon wild sheep, the resort’s emblem.
- **Vercorin:** Excursions to witness the belling of the stags.
- **Arolla:** Marmot Trail.
- **Crans-Montana:** Squirrel Trail, marmot Trail
- **Nendaz:** Awakening of the marmots.
- **Aletsch:** Stalking chamois and deer. Wildlife watching by the Great Aletsch Glacier
- **Grande-Dixence:** The Ibex Trail.
- **Grächen:** Wildlife watching with a ranger, including breakfast

The suspension footbridges of Valais



Suspension footbridges are narrow walkways, suspended by cables, that span obstacles such as a ravine, river, valley or glacier. Valais has more than 15 such structures of all kinds. Some provide the goal and dramatic climax for a hike; others provide an extra highlight along a trail.

- **The longest.** The Charles Kuonen pedestrian footbridge near Randa, the world's longest, measures 495 metres.
- **The highest.** The "Pont de l'Araignée" ("Spider's Bridge") at Niouc, Europe's highest suspension footbridge, passes 190 metres above the ground.
- **The most numerous.** The trail along the "Bisse du Torrent Neuf" irrigation channel near Savièse features a sequence of 4 footbridges each of 90 metres.
- **La plus accessible.** The Jorette footbridge at Torgon, accessible by road at either end.
- **The most exotic.** The Bhutanese bridge at Pfyf/Finges.
- **Footbridges across gorges.** The Furi footbridge near Zermatt, 100 metres long, across the Gorner gorge. The Farinet footbridge, 92 metres long, across the gorges of La Salentze. The footbridge across the gorges of La Vièze near Monthey: 90 metres.
- **Footbridge across a glacier.** The Corbassière footbridge in the Val de Bagnes, 190 metres long, spans the glacier of the same name.

Others :

- **The La Monta footbridge in Arolla:** 75 metres.
- **The Osona footbridge in Saint-Martin:** 130 metres.
- **The Belle-Etoile footbridge in Champéry:** 55 metres.
- **The Tzina de Vio footbridge in Zinal:** 45 metres.
- **The Aletsch footbridge in Belalp-Riederalp:** 124 metres.
- **The Aspi-Titter footbridge in Bellwald:** 120 metres.
- **The "Goms Bridge" in Ernen:** 280 metres.

Did you know?



Nature lovers can join "mountain clean-up" walks. Nendaz Tourisme, for example, organises a "zero waste" mission on which participants, equipped with a bag and gloves, set off on a two-hour walk to collect litter.



"Bisses" are historical irrigation channels that have been built in Valais for more than 700 years. They trace twisting routes across the dry mountainsides, carrying precious water from the glaciers to the fields, vineyards and orchards. Today, about a hundred are still in operation. The word "bisse" means "canal" in the dialect of central Valais.



Inaugurated in 2017, the Charles Kuonen suspension footbridge near Randa, located on the Europaweg hiking trail between Grächen and Zermatt, is the world's longest at 495 metres.

Trail running.

Interview

The specialist - the trail running stage :
Jules-Henri Gabioud

“Valais is heaven for trail running”

31-year-old Jules-Henri Gabioud from La Fouly in Valais fell in love with trail running in 2003; he has since turned his hobby into a profession. He has taken part in many competitions and has won several including the Trail Verbier-St-Bernard, the Tor des Géants and the Ultra Trail Atlas Toubkal in Morocco. We met up with Jules-Henri Gabioud to talk about his sport, his passion and his profession.

How did you end up in the world of trail running?

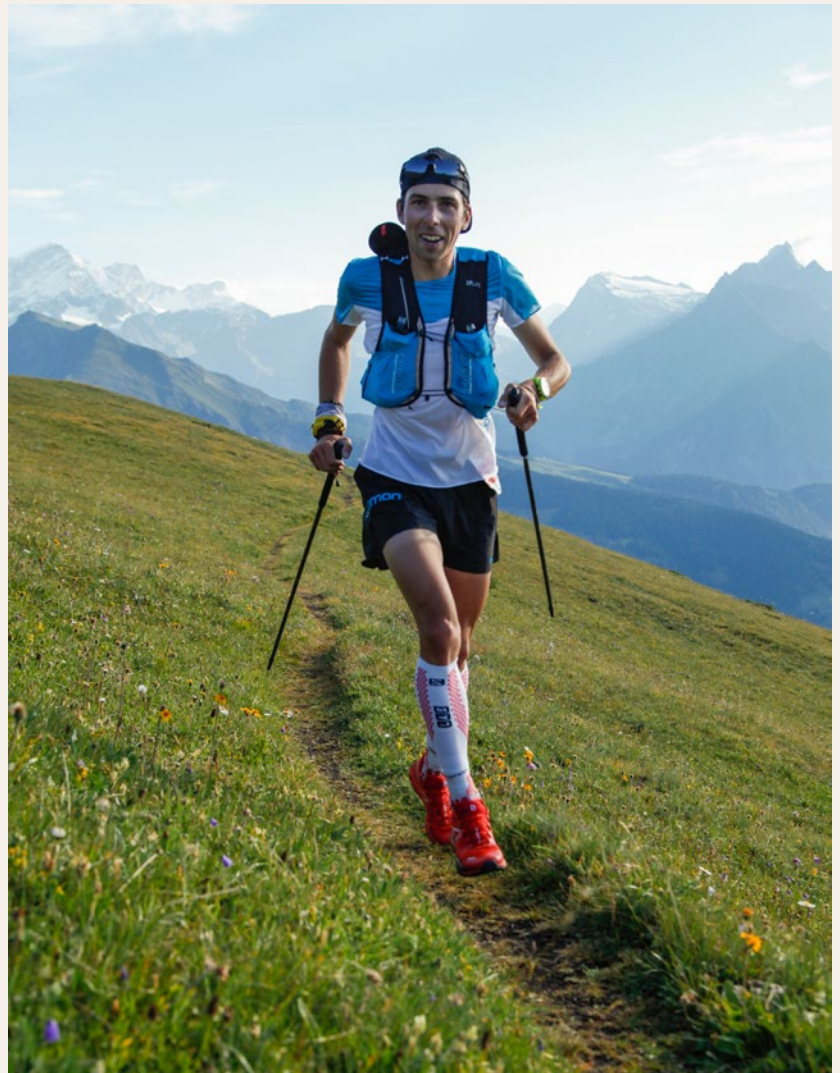
Thanks to the UTMB (Ultra-Trail du Mont-Blanc). In 2003, the race passed through La Fouly and Champex. I went with my mum and my brother to have a look. We saw a competitor pass every 3 hours, and the runners were old. We thought they were crazy. Afterwards, my brother signed up for the race. As I was too young to take part, I helped as a volunteer and followed him. And seeing him in action, I said to myself: I want to do that!

What do you like about the sport?

The freedom of being in the mountains, exploring, adventure and pushing your limits. Trail running is a race against yourself. You need to be in a bubble, do your race and above all feel humility with regards to your efforts and the mountains.

How do you explain the current craze for the sport?

People are fed up with running on roads. They want to run in the mountains and enjoy a sense of freedom. Trail running is also very accessible, if you stick to shorter distances. It's more like hiking than conventional running races. Everybody can have a go.



Trail running in Valais is...?

Heaven. We have everything here: an incredible natural playground, magnificent mountains, a variety of landscapes, lots of trails, an extensive public transport network and the chance to run in all four seasons.

Are foreign trail runners familiar with Valais?

They know La Fouly and Champex because we are lucky enough to have the UTMB, which passes that way. That race has really put Valais on the world trail running map. Now we hope that other races, like the SwissPeaks, succeed in promoting the whole canton.

You offer training courses, you've founded your own outfit, AlpsXperience... Is it important to you to pass on your enthusiasm?

Yes, it's a real pleasure to share my experience. My aim is to help advise people, to encourage them to train, to enjoy themselves and raise the bar in steps. You start with short distances and increase them progressively. I try to teach them some humility. I emphasise the values of trail running and the fact that the important thing is to finish, not to win.

And to finish our interview – what are your next objectives?

I have a few professional challenges in mind, like a tour of Valais. I want to have adventures, stay healthy, still be running at the age of 60 and continue to enjoy it as much as I do now.

Special experiences for visitors

Training courses for trail running



Beginners and enthusiasts alike can join training courses run by professionals – as an introduction to the sport, to discover the top trails or to improve skills and endurance. Jules-Henri Gabioud offers several courses: beginner, women-only, preparation for the Trail Verbier St-Bernard or the Ultra-Trail du Mont-Blanc (UTMB), and tailor-made courses. Another expert in mountain trail running, Tarcis Ançay, also organises courses including training along the Sierre-Zinal race route and workshops with equipment test.

Trail parks

More and more Valais resorts offer signposted trail-running routes: a boon for enthusiasts, who need only follow the waymarkings to enjoy the carefully designed itineraries to the full.



- **Crans-Montana**

Crans-Montana has a network of 15 signposted routes, which cover the whole region and total about 200 km. There is plenty to suit all runners, with itineraries of 2 to 55 km and elevation gains of 300 to 4,200 metres. Enthusiasts who like challenging climbs will enjoy the network's four vertical trails.

- **Val d'Anniviers**

The Val d'Anniviers has five routes of which the longest measures 22 km with 1,200 metres of elevation gain: the Trail du Gypaète ("Trail of the bearded vulture"). For those who enjoy vertical races, the Double KV de Chando ("Double vertical km of Chando") has 1,876 metres of elevation gain over a distance of just 8.44 km.

- **Les Portes du Soleil**

The Portes du Soleil has 400 kilometres of marked routes for trail running. The region as a whole has 54 itineraries in all, as well as five variants. These are labelled by colour according to their level, from easy (green) to difficult (black).



- **Val d'Hérens**

The Val d'Hérens offers a total of 490 km of marked trails for running. Evolène has previously set up nine marked trails; for summer 2019, 10 new routes will be signposted.

Did you know?



Definition of trail running according to ITRA, the International Trail Running Association: pedestrian race open to all, in a natural environment with minimal possible paved or asphalt road. The terrain can vary and the route must be properly marked. The race is run ideally in self-sufficiency or semi self-sufficiency.



"KV" or "Kilomètre Vertical" ("Vertical kilometre") are uphill races with a positive elevation gain of 1,000 m. The topography of Valais provides fine possibilities for such races.

Events not to be missed

European Mountain Running Championships – Zermatt Marathon.
6-7 July 2019

The European Mountain Running Championships 2019 take place in Zermatt on Sunday 7 July 2019. The event is reserved exclusively for runners selected by the federations. A race open to all, the Gornergrat Zermatt Marathon, will be held the day before, on 6 July 2019. www.emrch2019-zermatt.ch

Swiss Trail Running Championships
6-7 July 2019

The Trail Verbier St-Bernard is hosting the Swiss Trail Running Championships in 2019 for the first time. These take place along the route of the X-Traversée (73 km and 4,900 m of elevation gain). All Swiss runners who take part in the X-Traversée are automatically entered in the championships. But the race is open to all trail runners, Swiss and foreign, of all levels. www.trailvsb.com

Top 10 trail running races

Gornergrat Zermatt Marathon
45/24km
6 July 2019

Trail Verbier-St-Bernard
111/73/43/29km
6-7 July 2019

Gondo Marathon, 84/28km
10-11 August 2019

Sierre-Zinal, 31km
11 August 2019

Swiss Alps 100, 160/100/50km
Münster
16 August 2019

Matthhorn Ultraks, 49/32/19km
23-24 August 2019

Ultra Trail du Mont-Blanc OCC
55 km starting in Orsières
26 August to 1 September 2019

Trail de Nendaz, 70/30/16km
31 August 2019

Swiss Peaks, Obergoms – Bouveret
360/170/90/60/40km
1-8 September 2019

Trail des Patrouilleurs
Crans-Montana,
55/40/25/15km
28 September 2019

Vertical races

Saillon-Ovronnaz
27 April 2019

Monthey d'Illiez
Monthey-Val d'Illiez,
18 May 2019

Trophée du Scex Carro, Dorénaz
9 June 2019

Täschalplauf, Täsch
28 July 2019

Hohsaas Berglauf, Saas-Grund
31 August 2019

Km Vertical de Chandolin
21 September 2019

Fully-Sorniot
22 September 2019

Verticalp, Orsières
28 September 2019

La Dérupe Gingolaise, St-Gingolph
12 October 2019

Le km vertical de Fully
19 October 2019

Jeizibärg Lauf, Gampel-Jeizinen
20 October 2019

La Dérupe, Chalais-Vercorin
3 November 2019



THE GOURMET STAGE.

Generosity and conviviality: two words that could characterise the pleasures of the table in Valais. This is a land as generous as the rays of sunshine that caress its vineyards, allowing it to produce sublime wines. Conviviality, meanwhile, is the essence of a gastronomic tradition that

places great value on sharing. Local produce benefits from expertise and passion that unite all who craft exquisite flavours. The desire to create and enjoy fine food and wine is never far away, and summer is the ideal season for making the most of the mouth-watering variety of treats that Valais has to offer.

The gourmet stage.

Interview

The specialist - the gourmet stage : Sarah Besse

Dry-stone walls, tradition at the heart of the vineyards.

Passionate about her region and the quest for the perfect vintage, Sarah Besse is taking over the reins of the family winemaking estate of Gérald Besse in Martigny-Croix. An interesting challenge for the young wine expert with infectious enthusiasm, who has already been managing the winegrowing and winemaking at the estate since 2013. She is also president of the association for the maintenance of the terraced vineyards of the municipalities of Martigny and Martigny-Combe as well as an authority on dry-stone walls. We met her to discuss these traditional structures, the Gérald Besse estate and the place of women in the world of winemaking.

“Without the women, there wouldn't have been any vines.”

Tell us about your estate.

Our estate covers 20 hectares, which allows us to cultivate several different grape varieties. We are on granitic soils here so we have more acidity than elsewhere in Valais. For me, it's a piece of luck because I like wines that are taut, more acidic, fresh. In years such as 2018 which are extremely sunny and produce very rich wines, you get an acidity that balances the wine and prevents it from being too heavy. We are lucky to have traditional grape varieties such as Arvine, Heida, Cornalin... we have also planted some Humagne. My great-grandfather planted some Hermitage vine stocks in 1945. These are our oldest vines.

What are the benefits of dry-stone walls?

Dry-stone walls have lots of benefits. As water can pass through the wall between the stones, there's a natural drainage and the walls can stand for centuries. In terms of wildlife, the dry-stone walls

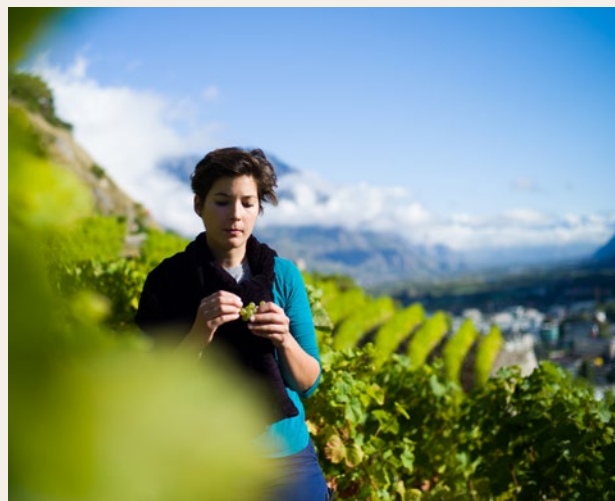
get very hot in summer and animals that love the warmth, such as lizards and snakes, make their home there. That makes for real biodiversity within the vineyard. In terms of flora, you find stonecrops

and houseleeks, succulent plants that flourish on the walls. They also stop other invasive plants from taking hold in the vineyard. For the vine itself, the walls absorb and store heat and then release it

again, helping the grapes to ripen. All this makes for an attractive environment. When you drink wine, you also like to imagine the beautiful setting in which it was made. That forms part of the experience of drinking the wine. I want to make wines in order to convey an emotion.

What eco-friendly initiatives have you taken?

For two years now I have been treating the 20 hectares of vines with organic products, without artificial chemicals. That represents four mornings of work, each of six hours, for eight people. We have also bought a drone for treating the vines and we are currently carrying out tests. I have just over 7 hectares where the grass is managed mechanically. We cool the wine by running water over the sides of the vats in a closed circuit. That represents a saving of thousands of cubic metres of water every year, and has reduced our water consumption by a factor of 15. We compost the grape skins, seeds and stalks, and we return the prunings to the vine.



People used to talk about how rare female winemakers were, but now there are more and more.

Yes, there are lots of women winemakers. In Marie-Thérèse Chappaz's generation it wasn't so much the case, but today, women winemakers are no longer a rarity.

In the end, is this really a man's job?

Women have always been there in the vineyards. In the cellars, it was less common 50 years ago. But among the vines, women often did the heavy work. They climbed through the vineyards carrying their grape baskets; it was very physical with more than 20 kg on your back. Many tough jobs were the work of women, not necessarily men. Without the women, there wouldn't have been any vines.

Projects for the future?

In 2019, we're celebrating the 40th anniversary of the vineyards and the 35th anniversary of the cellar. We're organising a walk on 18 May, which visitors can book to join. The walk will be guided, with groups of 15 people. We'll have four or five stops, with two wines and two food pairings to discover at each one. In the medium term, I'd also like to develop a programme of visits among the vines throughout the year.

Further information on the Gérald Besse estate: www.besse.ch

Special experiences for visitors

Chemin du vignoble



The Vineyard Trail between Martigny and Leuk is the best way to explore the vineyards of Valais. There are three different versions: for motorists, for cyclists and for walkers. The routes lead for more than 82 km along the south-facing slopes overlooking the Rhône valley, passing through historical villages and ancient vineyards. The gentle itinerary follows the contours of the hillsides and reveals magnificent alpine views, with opportunities for tastings en route. Visitors can book packages that include accommodation, luggage transport, tastings and a Valais picnic basket.



Dry-stone walls



Many visitors unfamiliar with the vineyards of Valais pay little attention to the walls within them. Yet these dry-stone walls form a key element of the Valais landscape, and bear witness to ancient skills, handed down over generations, that UNESCO has declared part of humanity's Intangible Cultural Heritage. Many towns and villages offer walks that showcase these walls, such as the [vineyard circuit](#) in Conthey and the [Amigne wine path](#) in Vétroz. In the Binntal region, many walls are visible in the [Landscape Park](#); in Martigny, the [Terraced vineyards trail](#) leads along several, as does [Le sentier du Cep à la Cime](#) ("From vineyard to summit") in Chamoson. Over towards Crans-Montana, options include the [Vineyard trail](#), the [Wine press trail](#), a walk entitled [Crans-Montana, Terre de foi](#) ("Crans-Montana, land of faith"), and the path along the [Bisse de Clavau](#) irrigation channel between Icoigne and Sion. Many other wine-related activities appear on the platform [Vinum Montis](#).

Ancient grape variety



The Diolle is a variety of grape that had been lost for more than a century before two enthusiasts – the biologist José Vouillamoz and the winemaker Didier Joris – managed to bring it back to life. After finding and identifying this white grape variety on two stocks of an ancient vine, the experts have been successfully planting further vines since 2013. The first grapes were harvested and their wine bottled in autumn 2018. A new discovery to savour in 2019?

Vinum Montis



A new wine tourism platform has been created in Valais. Launched by Sierre Tourisme, the project brings together 68 wine cellars and more than 1,500 wines across the canton. Enthusiasts can find out about the winemakers, grape varieties and events, buy tasting vouchers, and organise visits to the vineyards and cellars in just a few clicks. For anyone who loves wine or would like to discover the fascinating world of wine, this useful platform gathers a mouth-watering variety of attractive offers.

New varieties of apricots



Lisa and Mia are the names of the two new varieties of the Luizet apricot of Valais. Fruit of more than 15 years of selection by the Agroscope research institute in Changins, these varieties with an attractive orangey colouration are hardier, less sensitive to transport and keep better, while retaining the superb flavour of the Luizet. Find all the places where you can taste Valais apricots in all their different incarnations on our [website](#).

Alpine cheese dairies open to visitors



What could be tastier than a cheese from the alpine pastures? These are made only in summer, as the milk used is provided exclusively by cows that spend the summer months grazing on the high meadows. The fresh grasses and plants that the cows feed on in the open air give a distinctive, delicious flavour to these cheeses full of character. In Valais, it is possible to visit a large number of alpine cheese dairies, each of which has its own speciality.

In the Val Ferret, visitors have the chance to milk the cows at the [Alpage des Ars](#). In Torgon, the [Alpage d'Eusin](#) is open for visits on request. Above Conthey, there are [alpine cheese dairies](#) at Einzon, Flore, Larzey and Pointet. In the Binntal valley, organised excursions include transport, visit to an [alpine cheese dairy](#) and tasting. Over in the village of Simplon, the [cheese dairy](#) recently won the Raclette du Valais AOP gold medal, and is open to visits on request. Further options include the [Alpage de Chemeuille](#) above Evolène, the [Alpage de Loutze](#) above Chamoson, the [Alpage de Mandelon](#) near Hérémente, the [Apnet](#) alpine pastures above Grächen and the [Alpage de Thyon](#) above Veysonnaz.

Gourmet walks and outings

In Evolène, the [Balade gourmande des mayens](#) offers the chance to explore the farming hamlets along the banks of the Borgne d'Arolla, followed by a fondue at the Restaurant Aiguille de la Tza. In Martigny, the [Baladeur Vins & Gastronomie](#) is a “tourist train” that takes guests on a gourmet tour including breakfast, vineyard and cellar visits, wine tastings, an introduction to different grape varieties and the work of the winemaker, and a delicious lunch. In Anzère, every year on the last Saturday in August, the [Goût des Alpagnes](#) offers a gastronomic walk of about a dozen kilometres across the different mountain pastures. At Aletsch, the [Mountain Lunch Package](#) combines a hike with lunch. In the Val d'Hérens, the [Dixence et terroir](#) deal includes a guided visit of the Grande Dixence dam, a night at the Hotel du Barrage below the dam, a meal showcasing local produce, and a picnic the following day. In autumn, during the hunting season, La Fouly offers a [gastronomic walk focusing on game](#).

Microbreweries

Microbreweries are booming – especially in Valais, where enthusiasts can discover a great variety of local craft beers. In Orsières, the [Ademus](#) “Beer of the Alps” brewery produces a golden ale, a white IPA and a red ale. In Morgins, [7Peaks](#) brewery pays homage to the 7 summits of the nearby Dents du Midi and so brews 7 different beers. In Ernen, enthusiasts can enjoy the craft beer brewed by the [Chäserstatt restaurant](#). In Martigny, [White Frontier](#) creates an imaginative variety of brews, while Crans-Montana is home to the [La Marmotte](#) brewery. In Grächen, the [Sunnegg](#) brewery supplies the region with fine beers. The [Bierwerkstatt – Turtmann](#) produces a range of seasonal and other craft beers. If you find it hard to choose, follow the suggestions of [Fabian Albrecht](#) in Fiesch. He is the first and so far only beer sommelier in Valais.



Vineyard adventure game

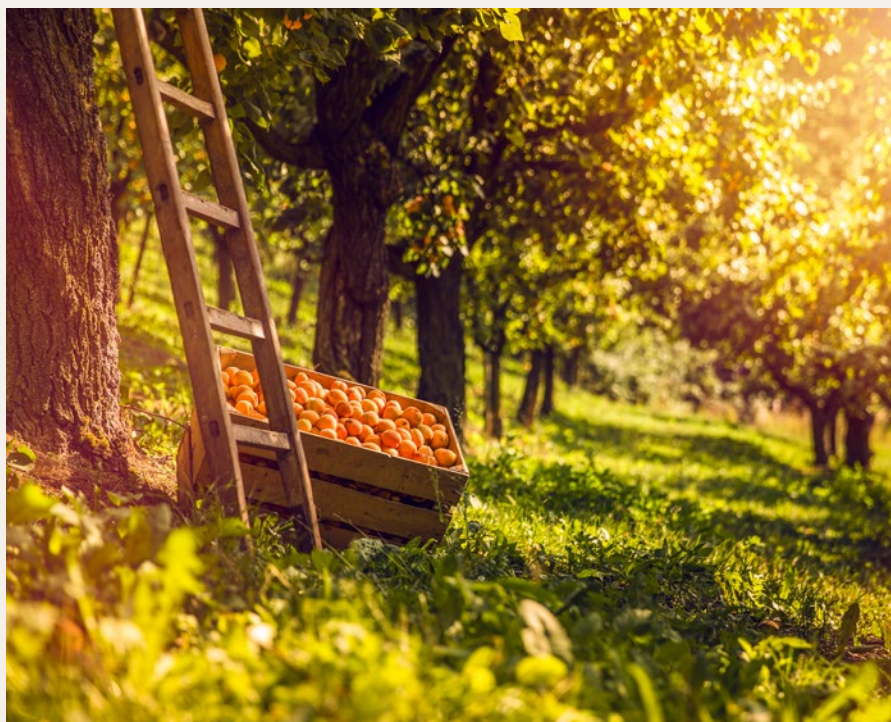


“Les Aventuriers du cep de vigne” (“The adventurers of the vine stock”) is a fun challenge set in the historical terraced vineyards above Sion. According to legend, ancestors of today’s winemakers hid a wine stock that would produce a wine in a class of its own. Participants in the game have to solve a sequence of puzzles and follow clues in order to find the vine stock. The outdoor adventure provides a fun and original way of exploring the scenic vineyards and the region’s winemaking heritage.

Innovation of the stage



A healthy and balanced diet is now a priority for consumers, who increasingly insist on buying super-fresh produce that is locally sourced. To meet demand, many Valais producers now sell direct to the consumer, without intermediaries. Every foodie in Valais has their own suppliers where they can purchase fresh local fruit and veg, meat or milk for which they know where the animals have grazed, free-range eggs and other produce hand-made by local people with a passion for their craft. Some consumers prefer to buy online, others direct from the producer or from specific sales outlets; whichever way you choose, the finest produce of Valais is never far from your table.



Did you know?



8 kg of Luizet apricots go into making just one bottle (70 cl) of Abricotine AOP.



100 g of apricots (or about 3 apricots) supply 30% of the recommended daily requirement of vitamin A, 13% of vitamin C and 12% of potassium.



The Swiss consume an average of 1.5 kg of apricots per person, per year.



The world’s oldest “living” cheese is preserved at Grimetz: 144 years old! We know the name of the cheesemaker who produced it in 1875, Pierre Solioz, but we do not know why he never ate it.



The apricot is a member of the family Rosaceae – in other words, it is a cousin of the roses in your garden.



Switzerland has the greatest number of microbreweries, in proportion to population, of any country in the world! In 2018, there were nearly 1,000 producers and 4,000 varieties of local beer.

Events not to be missed

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Au cœur des vendanges 21 September 2019</p> <p>“At the heart of the harvest” offers visitors the chance to become winemakers for the day as they help harvest the fruit of a year’s labour. They learn about work on the vines, experience the excitement of the harvest and discover a secret or two from the professionals. www.aucoeurdesvendanges.ch</p> | <p>Salon de la bière à Conthey 20 April 2019</p> <p>The inaugural Salon de la Bière in Conthey represents the largest gathering of Swiss microbreweries to date. Visitors can taste craft beers from 35 microbreweries. www.salondelabiere.ch</p> | <p>Valais day at the Fête des Vignerons in Vevey 26 July 2019</p> <p>On the invitation of the Confrérie des Vignerons (organisers of the Fête des Vignerons, the Winegrowers’ Festival), the Valais is bringing its mountains to the heart of Vevey. Storytellers and circus acrobats, a procession of more than 200 people from Valais in costume, modern and traditional music, not forgetting the region’s fine produce: through its gastronomy, its winemaking traditions and its art, Valais will showcase all its diversity, joie de vivre and unique character. www.fetedesvignerons.ch</p> |
| <p>Caves ouvertes 30 May to 1 June 2019</p> <p>Every year, more than 230 cellars (known as “caves” in French) open their doors to welcome visitors, who enjoy an opportunity to discover local grape varieties, taste different wines and meet the winemakers. www.lesvinsduvalais.ch</p> | <p>Taste of Zermatt Various dates throughout the year</p> <p>“Taste of Zermatt” groups a variety of gastronomic events in the resort of Zermatt. Fondue or breakfast in a cable car, gourmet walk, kitchen party – the choice of experiences on offer is mouth-watering. www.tasteofzermatt.ch</p> | |
| <p>Vinea in Sierre 6-7 September 2019</p> <p>The Vinea wine fair is the key gathering for wine lovers. For a weekend, the heart of Sierre becomes an open-air wine salon, offering the chance to discover wines from all over Switzerland. The event includes talks, tastings and guided visits. www.vinea.ch</p> | <p>Marathon des saveurs 19 October 2019</p> <p>The “Marathon of flavours” is a race combining gastronomic discovery and a half-marathon. The route of 21 km is punctuated by stands where participants can enjoy typical products from Valais – a treat for gourmets and fitness enthusiasts alike. www.marathon-des-saveurs.ch</p> | <p>Bagnes, capitale de la raclette September 2019</p> <p>The traditional way to serve Raclette is to heat one surface of the cheese until it melts and scrape a portion onto a plate (“racler” means “to scrape”). Raclette is a real institution in Valais, and the question of how and when to serve it is an ancient skill. For two days, Bagnes becomes the capital of Raclette and gathers lovers of the cheese and other fine local produce in a convivial atmosphere. www.bagnesraclette.ch</p> |
| <p>Marche des cépages 14 September 2019</p> <p>The annual “Grape variety walk” takes place along the wine trail between Sierre and Salgesch. All along the 8-kilometre route, some 40 winemakers offer tastings of wines and small servings of food. Fine wines, Raclette, Valais cuisine, music and other mouth-watering discoveries await! www.marchedescepages.ch</p> | <p>Chestnut festival in Fully 12-13 October 2019</p> <p>15 tons of chestnuts were eaten in just two days at the 2018 edition of Fully’s chestnut festival. The 25th edition once again pays homage to the brisolée, the popular Valais meal of roasted chestnuts served with cold cheeses and meat. A large number of food stands plus fun activities and entertainment promise a festive autumnal atmosphere. www.fetedelachataigne.ch</p> | |



Valais is an ideal destination for families. Countless activities, offers and facilities are designed so that children and adults can enjoy relaxing together. There are walks and bike rides of all levels, from treasure hunts to mountain hikes with a night at a mountain refuge. Youngsters adore this vast outdoor playground, which encourages them

to burn off energy in the open air and discover the world around them. Parents (and grandparents) appreciate the enchanting landscapes, the tranquillity and the chance to commune with nature all around. In short, Valais is the ideal place to bring the whole family together.

The family stage.

Interview

The specialist - the family stage : Paul-Marc Julen

At the Julens', farming and hotel-keeping make the perfect match.

At Tradition Julen hotels in Zermatt, guests sleep on wool from Valais Blacknose sheep, visit the herds up on the alpine pastures or in the sheepfold and can buy sheepskins or other souvenirs there. The lamb served in the Julen restaurants comes from the same flock. For decades, farming has gone hand-in-hand with hotel-keeping in the family. Today, the seven properties in the Tradition Julen group are run by Paul-Marc and his wife Cindy, the third generation of the family. Paul-Marc's father, Paul, still looks after the farm with more than 300 Valais Blacknose sheep, 12 cows, 50 hectares of pasture and a biogas plant.

We asked the views of Paul-Marc Julen, Director of Tradition Julen:

How is it possible that a family of hoteliers owns the world's largest flock of Valais Blacknose sheep?

It was never planned.

My father, Paul Julen, started in 1972 with eight sheep. The flock grew steadily and his hobby became a passion. Ever since, the farming and hotel-keeping sides of the business have stimulated one another: over the same period, guests have become more and more interested in the origin of the meat that they eat and the welfare of the animals that provide it. Our respect for the animals makes a noticeable difference to the quality of the meat.

Why did the Valais Blacknose sheep specially appeal to you?

This breed comes from our region, the Mattertal valley. We operate extensive farming, which means the sheep graze

on the alpine pastures during the summer months, the young lambs stay with their mothers and the milk is not used to make cheese. On top of their amusing appearance, Valais Blacknose sheep develop excellent social skills and so are very friendly. Almost like pets, which you can stroke.

Your guests eat lamb, sleep on sheep's wool and can buy sheepskins...

It's true, it's true. The reason we do that is out of respect for the animal. If you have to take the animal's life, it's important to make use of everything that it gives you. In our restaurants, we don't just have rack of lamb but also lamb burgers and

lamb bratwurst sausages. We shear the sheep twice a year, and use the wool to fill the duvets, pillows and mattresses in our hotels. Our guests sleep on homemade wool. We also have sheepskins and other souvenirs that our guests can buy. We use the sheep's horns to make decorations. All that is quite complicated, but we want to send a clear message in a society focused on disposable goods – and also show our respect for the animals.

What are guests looking for when they come to you on holiday in summer?

Certainly the alpine natural landscapes, which you can access very easily with



the Gornergrat Bahn cog railway and the Klein Matterhorn and other cable cars. We also have a superb network of footpaths and bike trails suitable for families. The proximity of the Matterhorn, queen of the mountains, is an attraction in itself. And even in summer, Zermatt is a living, well-preserved village with more than 5,000 residents. There's as much going on as in winter. Zermatt Tourism also organises special weeks for families, and there are lots of events, big and small, taking place throughout the year.

Which of your hotels do you recommend in particular for families?

The Hotel Daniela is the most affordable and has several family and connecting rooms. The big advantage is that guests can also make use of the wellness facilities and the restaurants of the Romantik Hotel Julen and the Hotel Alpenhof.

How do you involve your guests in the Julen tradition?

In summer, once a week, we invite our guests to visit our sheep flock up on the mountain pastures. We walk together for about an hour to reach the sheep grazing on the northern slopes of the Matterhorn, and we talk a little bit about the animals. In winter, we visit the sheepfolds. These visits to the alpine pastures and to the sheepfolds are also offered to guests who aren't staying at Tradition Julen hotels.

To find out more about the Julen tradition in Zermatt, visit www.julen.ch

Special experiences for visitors

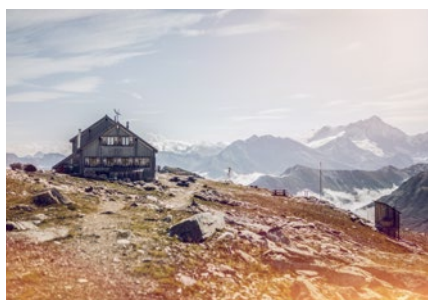
Walks suitable for pushchairs

Even the youngest children can make the most of the gorgeous Valais landscapes. Discover the most beautiful walks suitable for pushchairs, guaranteed obstacle-free:

In Torgon, the path [Forêt, source de vie](#) (“Forest, source of life”) offers a delightful one-hour stroll through the woods. Above St-Luc, the [Planets Trail](#) allows visitors to walk through the solar system, reproduced on a human scale. In the Binntal valley, the [Twingi gorges](#) provide a beautiful goal for a walk in a spectacular landscape. In Crans-Montana, [various walks](#) are possible around the lakes. In Arbaz, the [5 Ponds Tour](#) of 6.5 km is easily manageable with a pushchair. Nendaz offers [six walks](#) of different levels of difficulty; Veysonnaz has [four pushchair-accessible paths](#). The Aletsch region shows all its paths suitable for pushchairs on [this map](#). In Salquenen, the [Green lizard trail](#) winds through the vineyards, while the [Cultural trail](#) promises a journey through the village’s history. Visperterminen also has [routes](#) suitable for visitors of all ages.

A night in a mountain refuge with all the family

A night in a mountain hut – “cabane” in French or “Hütte” in German – is a special experience during which guests live as a community in an exceptional setting. After a day’s hiking, these cabins promise a welcome rest, a nourishing dinner and a fortifying breakfast. Several refuges are suitable for families, and offer children an exciting overnight adventure.



In the Pays du St-Bernard, the [Cabane d’Orny](#) is easily accessible from the La Brea chairlift. Over in the Val d’Anniviers, the [Cabane du Petit Mountet](#), the [Cabane de Moiry](#) near the Moiry Glacier and the [Cabane des Becs de Bosson](#) are all near to popular hikes. In the Binntal valley, the [Binntalhütte](#) can be reached after an hour’s hike. In the Simplon region, the [Bortelhütte](#) and the [Monte Leone Hütte](#) offer hikers a warm welcome. Near Crans-Montana, the [Cabane des Violettes](#) and the [Cabane de la Tièche](#) are accessible to children via gondola or on foot. Finally, in the Turtmanntal valley, the [Turtmannhütte](#) overlooking the Turtmann Glacier welcomes visitors of all ages in comfortable dormitories.

Zip wire at the Grande Dixence dam



Ready for a blast of adrenalin? The new zip wire at the Grande Dixence dam, inaugurated in 2018, guarantees giddy speeds and high thrills. The longest zip wire in French-speaking Switzerland (700 m) whisks riders along the towering dam wall, promising an unforgettable experience for anyone from the age of six.



Top indoor activities

Valais enjoys more than 2,000 hours of sunshine a year, but sometimes the sun proves shy and the weather uncertain. On such occasions, a wide choice of indoor activities offers visitors the chance to plan accordingly – and enjoy a new experience as a family.

In Chandolin, the [Ella Maillart Museum](#) explores the fascinating life of this pioneering woman traveller. The thermal spas of [Brigerbad](#) and the [Bains de Saillon](#) are open 365 days a year. In Martigny, a visit to the [Fondation Gianadda](#) is always rewarding. [Trapgame](#) offers various “escape room” games with different themes. In Crans-Montana, [Alaïa Chalet](#) is an action sports centre with indoor as well as outdoor facilities. In Ycoor, the [indoor ice rink](#) is open all summer. At [Bettmerhorn](#), a multimedia exhibition on the world of glaciers offers a fascinating insight into these mighty rivers of ice. In Visperterminen, [Chinderwält](#) is a complex of five renovated former barns that now offer five different indoor play areas. Grächen, meanwhile, has two original indoor play areas for children: [SiSu Wolkenland](#) and [Indoor Spielpark](#).

Treasure hunts



The original and imaginative new treasure hunts at seven family resorts and holiday destinations in Valais promise an entertaining adventure for visitors of all ages. Armed with a special map, explorers follow a scenic itinerary, solving puzzles and completing missions along the way to discover the hidden treasure. Aletsch Arena, Bellwald, Blatten-Belalp, Grächen, Nendaz, Saas-Fee and Zermatt each have a different trail with eight stages, accessible for all the family. Expect an exciting outdoor adventure that combines nature, a beautiful walk and fun for children – and for adults young at heart.



Mountain biking for families



Valais is one vast playground for mountain bike enthusiasts. Lanes, paths and tracks, trails through the forest, across mountainsides and through flower-filled meadows – the network of marked trails is vast and full of variety. This is also an ideal open-air activity to enjoy with children, along one of the many routes recommended for families. Designed also with young riders in mind, these child-friendly trails promise endless pleasure, a blast of endorphins, a real sense of satisfaction and a powerful feeling of communion with nature.

Did you know?



7 is the number of treasure hunts for families in Valais.



The Julen family from Zermatt owns the world's largest herd of Valais Blacknose sheep: more than 300 in all!



700 metres is the length of western Switzerland's longest zip wire, which runs along the wall of the Grande Dixence dam.

Events not to be missed

Les Iles aux Enfants à Sion July 2019

Shows, stories, workshops, concerts, circus, crafts, games... If you asked children to describe their perfect day, it would match the programme of this event. It takes place at the idyllic recreation area of Les Iles de Sion, which becomes a children's paradise for the weekend. www.lesilesauxenfants.ch

Shepherds' festival in Zermatt 8 September 2019

The best-looking Valais Blacknose sheep is crowned at this traditional gathering held at Schweigmatten/Furi. The event offers a chance to admire these iconic animals close up, and is great fun for all the family. www.zermatt.ch

Badadgia à Crans-Montana 25 May 2019

"Badadgia" means "mad" in the local dialect – and you do have to be a little crazy to take part in this race along an obstacle course. Two routes of 8 or 15 km welcome teams of children and adults for an adventure full of laughs. www.labadadgia.com

Meuh Day in Orsières 7 September 2019

The Meuh Day offers a completely crazy adventure with one of the most original obstacle courses ever. Mud, water, grass, slides, steep slopes, giant nets, ropes: a wide variety of obstacles and an exuberant atmosphere promise fun for all the family. www.themeuhday.ch

Festival Couleur Pavé in Sierre Mid-July to late-August 2019

Every Friday, from mid-July to the end of August, the Couleur Pavé festival takes over the square by the Town Hall in Sierre. Various workshops welcome children in a dedicated area. www.couleurpave.ch



Between the traditional and the modern, Valais boasts a fascinating cultural life and a thrilling calendar of events. From local folklore and customs to quirky guided tours and musical performances of every

kind, Valais offers treats to suit every taste. Original and unusual activities and attractions abound in a region that constantly reinvents itself without forgetting its rich cultural heritage.

The culture stage.

Interview – The specialist - the culture stage : Sébastien Olesen

Immersion in the Palp Festival

They mix rock or rap with Raclette; they have dedicated an “universal exhibition” and a guide to Raclette, raising this Valais gastronomic tradition to the level of an icon of pop culture; they have organised brunches on chairlifts and silent discos at some of the most beautiful spots in Valais; and they have drawn hundreds of people to the most unlikely settings to hear alternative music groups. And who are “they”? The organisers of PALP, who are bursting with innovative ideas for updating and transforming the tried-and-tested concept of the music festival. Far from simple concerts, the festival offers immersive experiences with an emphasis on sharing and discovery. We asked its founder, Sébastien Olesen, to tell us about the event.

Private apartments, town squares, alpine pastures, castles, chairlifts... you must have tried out pretty much all possible venues. Are there any unusual options left for you to explore?

Valais as a whole has many incredible places. We haven't yet worked with any of the lakes down in the Rhône valley or up in the mountains; we haven't yet made use of an entire alpine village, or any of the underground military forts or natural parks. These are options we will be developing in future projects between 2019 and 2020. We're also particularly interested in the mountain hotels, the glaciers and the charnel houses in upper Valais. The planned cable-car link between Sion and the Mayens de Sion creates a huge potential, too – for example, making use of the luxury wooden chalets built near the Piste de l'Ours.

What important values for you do you want to convey at your events?

We want above all to make connections – between locals, visitors, crafts people, those who create the region's wonderful

gourmet produce and the artists. We want to create encounters, dreams, memories and experiences for all the senses. We strive for proximity: bringing down barriers between the generations and between cultures, avoiding VIP enclosures and ensuring that audiences feel close to the artists.

For nearly 10 years now we have been championing a new approach to traditions including regional food and wine. The idea is to promote local tourism based on eco-friendly forms of travel and consumption, while providing an attractive and high-quality cultural programme. We want to surprise people and offer them new experiences – that's central to our approach.

What image of Valais do you wish show through PALP?

We want to convey an image of Valais as a place of cutting-edge cultural innovation, linked with tourism, local food and wine, and our alpine heritage. The image of a Valais that dreams up original projects, differentiating itself from others, and imagining a new kind of tourism. Not one for 2020 but for 2040 – to become a reference point for Switzerland and the rest of Europe.

What is the reaction of the artists when you get them to perform in unusual settings?

They love it. In advance it's hard to explain our concepts, sometimes they aren't easy to describe, but once the artists are here, they're won over. The welcome and the setting are the essence of our reputation. These are huge advantages that we work on endlessly.

What was the most amazing moment you've experienced at any of the editions?

Probably the Electroclette at Seoul in collaboration with [the government agency] Presence Switzerland. The Rocklette at the mountain refuge Cabane Brunet in 2017 and the first edition of “Sons aux Balcons” (“Sounds on the balconies”) on the main square in Martigny are also wonderful memories. I have to say that the brunch at the hilltop Château



Photo, Cyril Perregaux

de Tourbillon with dishes brought up on the back of camels was also pretty memorable.

What novelties do you have in store for us for 2019?

In 2019, we are developing PALP in three key areas. Upper Valais, so that this finally becomes a festival for the whole canton; Lower Valais, in particular with the creation of an event on Lake Geneva, around Le Bouveret; and finally, a big expansion of alpine events in the Val de Bagnes. This will include a PALP village in the form of a cultural and tourism laboratory in the mountains, a new formula for the Electroclette and an expansion of the Rocklette.

We are also steadily developing specific events such as the Carnötsets in Sierre, the Beauty & Rooms exhibition in the homes of Sion residents and the brunch on the chairlift in Champex. We are also particularly happy to work on a new idea in Venthône: a masked ball revisited, in a castle. The Universal Exhibition of Raclette Cheese will also have a new look with a longer programme, around the theme of photography. And of course there'll be lots of other surprises, too!

Further information on the PALP Festival: www.palpfestival.ch

Special experiences for visitors

Unusual festivals



Photo, Maud Chablais

Summer is the season par excellence for music festivals. Nothing beats spending an evening in the open air listening to your favourite groups or discovering new young talent or local artists. And for that, Valais can boast some festivals that are truly original.

First comes PALP, a decidedly off-beat festival that stages gigs at picturesque or unusual locations (see interview above). In a more traditional vein but unlike anything you will find anywhere else, the Valais Drink Pure Festival celebrates the alphorn: 150 players gather for three days to provide a truly breathtaking spectacle. Over in Sierre, the Week-end au bord de l'eau (“Waterside weekend”) on the shores of the Lac de Géronde promises a more modern and summery atmosphere against a delightful backdrop. In Sion, the Guinness Irish Festival stages a festive programme of Celtic music. Finally the Zikamart in Fully closes the summer season with a tight programme in the post-industrial setting of the Belle Usine.

Combat de reines



The Herens is an ancient and traditional breed of cow in Valais. With a feisty temper, the cows naturally lock horns to establish a hierarchy within the herd; the strongest cow, known as the “reine” (queen), leads the herd throughout the summer, up on the high pastures. This is the origin of the Valais tradition of organised “combats de reines”, which attract a large number of breeders and spectators. Fighting in pairs, the cows choose their opponents and stop fighting as soon as one turns tail. Injuries are very rare. At the end of the day, the unvanquished cow is crowned “reine des reines”.

National Festival of Popular Music in Crans-Montana



In September 2019, Crans-Montana hosts the National Festival of Popular Music. The last edition, staged in Aarau in 2015, attracted more than 100,000 visitors. Organised every four years, this is the country’s largest celebration of popular music. Valais is hosting the event for the second time, after the 1987 edition in Martigny. Firmly rooted in tradition yet open to innovation, Swiss popular or folk music has many different styles, depending especially on linguistic region. Originally, it evolved out of rural dance music. Various instruments appear regularly, including strings, brass, piano and accordion. The national festival in Crans-Montana offers visitors a chance to immerse themselves in the spirit of this music, so rich in tradition. Highlights include performances at sunrise on the Saturday and Sunday mornings; concerts up on the alpine pastures and in the vineyards offer the opportunity to combine musical and gastronomic traditions. A gala evening on the Saturday, an official ceremony with a member of the Federal Council and a procession on the Sunday also feature on the programme. More than 1,500 musicians are scheduled to take part in the event over the whole weekend; various radio and TV stations will broadcast direct from Crans-Montana. “The sound of the heart of Switzerland” is the slogan of the festival: the Valais Alps are sure to resound to the harmonious celebration in grand style.

Hunting for gold in Gondo



In the 19th century, Gondo was home to working gold mines. A guided visit offers the chance to walk in the footsteps of the gold-seekers; visitors can even arm themselves with a hammer and chisel and attempt to extract a few grams of the coveted metal.



Unusual town tours

Visitors' eyes may naturally be drawn to the alpine summits, but the towns down in the Rhône valley also boast many cultural treasures. Located at regular intervals along the valley floor, each has its own sites of interest that deserve a visit. Unusual and original guided tours make for an off-beat adventure. In Monthey, for example, visitors can join a tour of erratic blocks and feel tiny confronted by these giant boulders carried down the valley by long-gone glaciers. In Martigny, a historical tour called "From the Romans to today" led by a guide dressed in ancient Roman costume explores the town's history. In Sion, actors from the Teatro Comico stage the "Si on délire" tour, with a distinctly quirky and absurd feel. In Sierre, it is possible to visit the Technopole and find out about the world of innovation and start-ups in Valais. In Brig, the Little Simplon Express leads you through the streets of the town to discover its secrets.

Did you know?



The Abbey of St Maurice was founded in AD 515, just 20 years after the fall of the Roman Empire.



Sion is home to the world's oldest playable organ, dating from 1435. Nearly 600 years old and it still has all its keys!



The dialect of upper Valais is the oldest in Switzerland, believed to date from the Middle Ages.



Ayent is home to a museum devoted to the "bisses" - the historical irrigation channels - of Valais. History, photos, films, reconstructions, hundreds of exhibits: the museum is open from April to November.



César Ritz, pioneer of the luxury hotel industry, was born in Valais - at Niederwald, in 1850.



The first cantonal "combat de reines" (cow fight, see above) took place in 1923. The gathering drew 2,000 spectators; a reporter from the "Daily News" in London came especially for the event.



Events not to be missed

Fêtes médiévales à Saillon 4-8 September 2019

In September 2019, Saillon stages the 9th edition of the “medieval festivities”. For five days, the ancient fortified village welcomes enthusiasts and guests to become an open-air theatre with 500 artists, falconers, knights in armour, blacksmiths, dancers and singers. An “escape game” through the village is also planned.
www.bayardine.ch

Finale Nationale de la Race d’Hérens à Sion 4-5 May 2019

“Combats de reines” (“Combats of the queens” – organised cow fights) are a much-loved tradition (see above). Many qualifying rounds take place through the year before the grand finals. This event is a key part of Valais heritage and draws a diverse audience of amateurs, experts, breeders and spectators who simply come to enjoy the unique and festive atmosphere.
www.finale nationale.ch

6th Swiss Theater Encounter 22-26 May 2019

For the first time, Valais is hosting the Swiss Theater Encounter in 2019. Over the course of five days, four theatres – the Crochetan in Monthey, the Théâtre de Valère in Sion, the TLH in Sierre and La Poste in Visp – are staging performances in the three national languages. The Swiss Theater Awards are awarded on this occasion.
www.rencontre-theatre-suisse.ch

National Festival of Popular Music in Crans-Montana 19-22 September 2019

For four days in September 2019, the Valais resort of Crans-Montana celebrates the joys of popular, folk and traditional music. This key festivity is expected to draw about 80,000 enthusiasts as well as more than 1,500 musicians. The programme features a wide range of public recitals and concerts, with top names from the scene performing alongside up-and-coming young talent.
www.cransmontana2019.ch

“Un autre Monde” festival in Massongex August-September 2019

The “Another world” festival takes place every September, organised by the foundation Terre des hommes Valais. Over the course of three days, more than 10,000 people come to see 16 concerts. Sharing and generosity are the key words for this event, held to raise funds for the humanitarian work of the foundation and its centre at Massongex.
www.tdh-valais.ch/festival

Verbier Festival 15 July to 3 August 2019

The Verbier Festival brings together top international names in classical music with some of the most talented up-and-coming young performers from all over the world. The event features a range of musical styles and performances, from symphonic concerts to intimate recitals. Music lovers can also attend masterclasses run by the Verbier Festival Academy alongside other events including workshops, talks and rehearsals.
www.verbierfestival.com



THE RELAXATION STAGE.

Valais is an ideal destination for relaxing, far from the stresses of everyday life. The region offers endless opportunities to escape the tyranny of time, switch off, re-centre oneself, find new energy in nature

and benefit from the tranquillity of the mountains. As well as its thermal spas, Valais offers a wide range of other experiences that work wonders for body and soul.

The relaxation stage.

Interview – The specialist - the relaxation stage : Guillaume Mayor

Essential oils made in Valais

Guillaume Mayor, resident of the municipality of Icogne, began cultivating medicinal plants a few years ago with his family. Together with his father and mother, he grows and harvests the plants and distils them to produce essential oils. The family business is called L'Essencier.

In Valais, the traditional focus has been on distilling fruit. Why did you get into distilling medicinal plants?

Out of passion. We are passionate about medicinal plants and about herbal medicine in general.

What kind of plants do you cultivate?

We mostly cultivate thermophilic plants, which thrive in sunny, dry climates. In all, we cultivate 18 varieties for our distillery.

Does the fact of cultivating medicinal plants at altitude (about 1,000 metres above sea level) have any influence?

Cultivating plants at altitude has an effect on the chemistry of the plants; they also contain more active ingredients.

Do you produce any essential oils that are 100% from Valais?

Our local essential oils are 100% pure and made from plants cultivated organically in Valais. Our entire production chain, from cultivation to the end product, is 100% Valais. However, we do use certain plants from elsewhere, too, for other products – from the south of France for aromatherapy, for example, because of their standard chemical composition.

Do people in Valais use certain oils more than others?

People in Valais use mainly oils from coniferous trees such as Arolla pine, silver fir or Scots pine, all typical of Valais. Otherwise, two key oils are popular, too: peppermint and lavender.

Is it possible to visit the site where the oils are made?

We organise visits to the plantations and distillery for groups on request. But people can also visit during opening hours.

Do you offer workshops or courses relating to the plants or the distillation process?

We offer themed workshops for children and adults – for example, on making a toothpaste or making massage candles containing essential oils.

Further information:

www.essencier.ch



Special experiences for visitors

Barefoot trails

Walking barefoot has many benefits for health. Feel for yourself the invigorating sensations experienced along a Kneipp trail, designed for walking barefoot with sections through water and over stones, sand or wood chippings.

- [Nendaz](#)
- [Kneipp facilities in Saas-Fee/Saas-Grund/Saas-Almagell](#)
- [Kneipp trail in Grächen](#)
- [Kneipp trail in Blizingen](#)
- [Sensory trail at Pas-de-Maimbré above Anzère](#)

New yoga trail in Veysonnaz



In spring 2019, Veysonnaz inaugurates a yoga trail surrounded by nature, unlike any other in French-speaking Switzerland. The route leads for 980 metres through the Magrappé forest. At seven stations, visitors are invited to develop concentration, strength and relaxation and encouraged to “re-centre” themselves in a peaceful and energising setting.

Conscious breathing hike, Bettmeralp–Riederalp–Bettmeralp



On this special outing led by a qualified breathing therapist, participants breathe deeply and with awareness as they walk through an inspiring landscape. At the same time they drink in the tranquility of the mountains and the beauty of nature – a blissfully relaxing experience. The start and finish point for the walk is at Bettmeralp.



Relax on the golf courses of Valais



A game of golf is a wonderful way to unwind, to relax with family or friends. The courses in Valais promise fresh air, a delightful experience of nature and, as a backdrop, enchanting landscapes. Unmissable venues include Riederalp golf course at an altitude of 2,000 metres, with magnificent views of the Valais Alps.

Did you know?



At Leukerbad, nearly 3.9 million litres of water bubble up every day out of 65 springs at temperatures reaching 51° C. This is the most important natural phenomenon of its kind in Europe.

Events not to be missed

Omega European Masters in Crans-Montana 29 August to 1 September 2019

One of Europe’s most prestigious golf tournaments takes place in Crans-Montana: the Omega European Masters, held this year from 29 August to 1 September. Top names in golf compete on a magnificent course which promises unforgettable views to golfers and spectators alike.

www.omegaeuropeanmasters.com



THE INNOVATION STAGE.

Valais is a place of age-old mountains, of landscapes sculpted over the millennia, of traditions rooted in a land that never forgets its roots. Yet it also has an extremely dynamic and innovative energy at its heart. Perhaps the idyllic landscapes of Valais inspire the researchers who come from all over the world

to put their talent at the service of science? If the answer remains a mystery, one thing is certain: innovation touches every aspect of life in Valais. Just take the driverless buses in Sion, for example, or the cable cars with panoramic floors thanks to cutting-edge technology. In Valais, the future is now!

The Ark: all the tools for creating the Valais of tomorrow.

If Valais has gained a reputation for innovation, it is thanks to the foundation The Ark, which has created fertile ground for countless companies to demonstrate their creativity. The technology park of Valais is composed of six sites across the canton, in order to host optimally the people who are dreaming up the world of tomorrow.

BioArk, located in Monthey, specialises in life sciences. Key areas of work include rapid diagnostic tests and the manufacture of so-called biological medicines.

IdeArk in Martigny focuses on multimodal interactions and the management of multimedia information. Projects include eye-tracking technology used by Internet giants and solutions for facial and voice recognition.

PhytoArk, based in Conthey, hosts companies that use natural ingredients such as those found in aromatic and medicinal plants, of which Valais supplies 60% of Swiss production. The beneficial effects of these active ingredients can be used in the cosmetics, food and plant-based pharmaceuticals industries.

TechnoArk develops solutions related to information and communication technology, and especially the Internet of things. For example, the start-up Adventures-Lab has developed connected play carpets that give a new dimension to children's experience of play.

BioArk Visp concentrates, like the site at Monthey, on biopharmaceuticals. It is a point of reference, for example, in technologies such as Fill-and-Finish (drug packaging).

Energypolis, whose campus is located in Sion, groups together specialists in the fields of energy, health and biotechnology. Researchers, entrepreneurs and students all rub shoulders here: fertile ground for innovation.

Aside from these, the HES-SO Valais-Wallis (part of the University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Western Switzerland) consists of four Schools (Engineering, Management, Health Sciences and Social Work). These offer nine degree programmes and accommodate more than 2,200 students. In addition, seven research institutes throughout the canton work on more than 1,000 research projects.



Some companies to follow

Soprod has created the entire precision quartz movement used for the W7, the new connected watch from the South Korean electronics manufacturer LG. The Valais-based company designed the movement with two hands, the electronic module and also the communication protocol for this watch, which combines physical hands with a digital screen. The two traditional hands work perfectly with the digital screen in the background. The LG Watch W7 is one of the only watches to combine a precision mechanical movement with a digital screen. The screen, located behind the hands, can display different functions and notifications, and also offers a wide choice of customisable watch faces. www.soprod.com

More on the W7 watch from LG :
www.lg.com/us/smart-watches

Aqua 4D has perfected a solution to a problem often encountered in agriculture: high salinity levels in soils. The Sierre-based company has developed a revolutionary technique that involves sending an electromagnetic signal through irrigation water before it is applied to crops. This changes the organisation of the water molecules and behaviour of minerals, so that plants can absorb what they need while harmful salts are dissolved and carried off below the root zone. Initial results are conclusive and Aqua 4D's technology, which offers both a short-term and long-term solution, is now used across the four corners of the globe. www.aqua4d-irrigation.com

Digitarena was recently selected to collaborate in the VIBBRE project, which aims to provide an integrated solution that will replace images of billboards during sports events with virtual-reality advertising banners in real time. This applies to the advertising banners around sports pitches, sponsors, and the display of scores and results. As a result, different target audiences following the event will each see different advertising, targeted according to their profiles. The system will also allow adapting data such as language or units of speed measurement used in that country. Cameras will use artificial intelligence technologies, and the solution will combine image processing techniques, geometric detection software and a Deep Learning algorithm. www.digitarena.tv

Pharmalp is an SME that makes use of the beneficial effects of medicinal plants. Specialised in the processing of alpine plants, it develops and sells natural products in the form of nutritional supplements and cosmetics, for example. These medicinal plants have been used for centuries to prevent illness, and their effectiveness has now been proven. The cultivation and use of these plants forms part of national heritage, and Swiss people often make use of them. Pharmalp has taken inspiration from traditional know-how to develop natural and innovative health solutions: the perfect marriage of tradition and science. www.pharmalp.ch

A scenic mountain landscape. In the background, a large, rugged mountain peak is covered in snow and partially shrouded in mist. The sky is a clear, pale blue. In the foreground, a grassy slope with some evergreen trees leads up to two cyclists standing on a path. The overall atmosphere is bright and clear, suggesting a sunny day.

NEW FOR
SUMMER 2019.

New for summer 2019.

Mountain biking

New mountain bike trails in the Lötschental

Two new itineraries have officially opened in the Lötschental: the Bietschhorn Trail and the Breithorn Trail.



New mountain bike downhill run at La Tzoumaz



From 2019, a new mountain bike trail welcomes enthusiasts at La Tzoumaz. Part of the run was already open to riders last summer, but the full trail will be officially operational this summer. Named Chôtatai (which means "Sit down!" in local dialect), the run is 4.3 km long with a vertical drop of 680 m; it is classed blue (easy), with several red sections (medium difficulty). The trail begins below the summit station of the La Tzoumaz gondola and finishes at the Etablons junction in La Tzoumaz. Chôtatai is the 8th run in the Verbier Bikepark.

Trail running

10 new trail-running routes in the Val d'Hérens



This summer, the Val d'Hérens is offering 10 new itineraries for trail runners. Two routes pass through all the municipalities of the Val d'Hérens; each takes several days to complete. The eight others can each be done in a day. The new routes plus the nine existing itineraries add up to a total of 490 km of signposted trails now available to enthusiasts.

Walks

Veysonnaz – Yoga trail



Opening in spring 2019, the new yoga trail in Veysonnaz invites visitors to experience the benefits of this ancient discipline along a path through the energising Magrappé forest. The trail focuses on the four elements of yoga at seven stations that combine different postures in communion with nature. The Petit Yogi trail allows children to join in the activity, too.

Visperterminen – sunset hike to the Gebidem Pass



Visperterminen is offering a new late-afternoon hike that includes watching sunset from the Gebidem Pass.

Treasure hunts



The original and imaginative new treasure hunts at seven family resorts and holiday destinations in Valais promise an entertaining adventure for visitors of all ages. Armed with a special map, explorers follow a scenic itinerary, solving puzzles and completing missions along the way to discover the hidden treasure. Aletsch Arena, Bellwald, Blatten-Belalp, Grächen, Nendaz, Saas-Fee and Zermatt each have a different trail with 8 stages, accessible for all the family. Expect an exciting outdoor adventure that combines nature, a beautiful walk and fun for children – and for adults young at heart.

Experiences.

First summer camps at Alaïa Chalet



Open since February, Alaïa Chalet is Switzerland's largest indoor and outdoor centre devoted to action sports. This year, the first summer camps for young people take place. The large venue (more than 5,000 sq. m) offers superb facilities (including trampolines) for trying out and training in a wide range of activities, from freeski and snowboard to BMX, roller-skates, kick scooter and gymnastics. The centre is open all year.

New guided hike for adventure-seekers at Crans-Montana



This summer, a new hike in Crans-Montana promises high thrills to adventure-loving families. The 3-hour hike takes you along the Raspille, a glacial river which rises at the Plaine Morte Glacier at an altitude of 3,000 m. Highlight of the hike is crossing the gorge via a zip wire, 40 m above the ground. To freshen up, hikers can enjoy a dip in natural pools along the river.

A new route created at the Fun Forest in Crans-Montana



Thrill-seekers can enjoy a new treetop adventure course this summer at the Fun Forest in Crans-Montana. Marked red, the route is aimed at adults and young people aged 12 and over, and consists of 22 modules more than 15 m above the ground. Opening is scheduled for 15 June 2019.

A new alternate reality route launched this summer in Saint-Jean



Anniviers Tourism is launching a second alternate reality route this summer in Saint-Jean, following the success of the route opened in St-Luc in 2018. The new instalment of "The adventures of Besso" combines the real world and a virtual world to create an entertaining experience for all visitors. With the help of a smartphone app, you explore the resort in an original way: a delightful walk that is also great fun.

Yoga, meditation, retreats and seminars in Saas-Fee



From July, the Hotel Bristol in Saas-Fee is offering guests a new dimension in holiday relaxation – with yoga in a magnificent natural setting. The new yoga room, which can also be used for seminars, can accommodate about 30 people; guests can also practise yoga and meditation on the large terrace. The hotel places a special focus on wellbeing, also providing advice on doTERRA & Ethno Health; the restaurant serves a variety of vegetarian, vegan and Ayurvedic cuisine. Guests can use the resort's cableways free of charge (excluding the Metro Alpin funicular) as well as PostBuses in the Saas valley.

Second treasure hunt in Zermatt



For summer 2019, Zermatt is offering a new treasure hunt in the village, aimed at families with children from age five. A treasure map leads the young adventure-seekers to eight stations where they have to answer questions such as: What is the bridge you are standing on made of? With the answers, children obtain a code with which they can open the lock on the treasure chest in the tourist office. The route is 6 km long and takes about two hours. Zermatt's other treasure hunt, "Wolli's Treasure Hunt", remains open to families.

Aletsch Arena offers the chance to propose to your partner or get married in an exceptional setting



Imagine: proposing to your loved one in front of the Great Aletsch Glacier. Or getting married in a little chapel with views of the Matterhorn – or in the open air, on a flower-filled mountain meadow in the Fieschertal valley. The Aletsch Arena offers lovers a wide range of options covering everything from popping the question to enchanting marriages in heavenly settings.

Enjoy a new sensory experience at Aletsch Arena with stand-up paddle yoga on the Bettmersee lake



Experience the uplifting effect of yoga on a stand-up paddle board on the Bettmersee lake, guided by Karin Bittel – new this summer. The activity strengthens deep muscles and improves balance as you enjoy the gentle rocking of the waves, the fresh mountain air, the beauty of the surrounding landscape, and moments of pure tranquility.

New hiking trail with spectacular views of the Great Aletsch Glacier



The new Eggishorn trail invites walkers to explore four elements: wood, stone, water and ice. All along the route, it offers breathtaking views of the Great Aletsch Glacier, the largest in the Alps. The attractive and well-marked trail starts at the top station of the Eggishorn cable car; information panels provide fascinating details about the glacier and its history. Allow about an hour to complete the circuit.

New visitor centre in Niederwald



Niederwald railway station has a new role. From summer 2019, the station building will host a visitor centre with exhibitions on personalities from Niederwald – such as César Ritz, the world-renowned hotelier, and the painters Lorenz and Raphael Ritz. The venue will also host a bistro, a shop selling regional products and an info centre for visitors.

Blinnenhorn Tour



Launching this summer, the Blinnenhorn Tour is a seven-day circular hike around the Blinnenhorn, culminating in an ascent of the summit at 3,374 m. The route begins in the Obergoms (upper Rhône valley) and leads through the Binntal Landscape Park and up to the Albrun Pass. From here, it descends to the Val Formazza, known for its historical Walser settlements, before heading back over to the Obergoms. Several variants are also possible. If you do not wish to hike the entire route, you can also do certain sections by public transport.

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Events.

Zermatt – open-air theatre – “Matterhorn: No ladies please!”



For its 3rd summer open-air theatre production, Zermatt is staging a historical play. In 1871, six years after Edward Whymper’s first ascent of the Matterhorn, an experienced 35-year-old British mountaineer called Lucy Walker wants to become the first woman to scale the peak. However, the rebellious young woman’s plan is met with resistance from all sides: an amusing and exciting play in which prejudice and fear meet ambition and courage.

Zermatt hosts the Enduro World Series in 2019 and 2020



In 2019 and 2020, Zermatt will host a round of the Enduro World Series (the mountain bike enduro world championships). This year is the first that the competition is held in Switzerland. As the final round of the Enduro World Series, Zermatt is therefore the grand finale of the whole competition. In 2019, the event takes place during the Traillove festival from 18 to 22 September.

Swiss Trail Running Championships



The Trail Verbier St-Bernard is hosting the Swiss Trail Running Championships in 2019 for the first time. These take place along the route of the X-Traversée (73 km and 4,900 m of elevation gain). All Swiss runners who take part in the X-Traversée are automatically entered in the championships. But the race is open to all trail runners, Swiss and foreign, of all levels. 6–7 July 2019

30th anniversary of the Grand Raid BCVS



The Grand Raid BCVS celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2019. For its 30th edition, the organisation has created a new route open to all: an e-bike itinerary between Evolène and Grimentz. The good news: riders do not have to carry their e-bikes over the notorious Pas de Lona mountain pass. More than a race, it's a scenic adventure: no time pressure, just the pleasure of riding in superb scenery and enjoying gourmet treats at stands en route.

2019 Mountain Bike Marathon World Championships in Grächen



In 2019, Valais hosts the UCI Mountain Bike Marathon World Championships for the first time – in the Grächen region. 300 riders of more than 35 nationalities will battle for the world title. 20–22 September 2019

Verbier E-bike Festival



A new event for electric bikes launches in Valais this summer: the Verbier E-bike Festival, created by the organisers of the Freeride World Tour. The event, which runs from 14 to 18 August 2019, will include the world's largest e-bike exhibition and test zone. Visitors will be able to test the electric mountain bikes on different tours. Le Tour Gourmand: for gourmets, a trail of 30 km between Vollèges and Lourtier, with tastings of local produce and delicacies. Le Tour Découverte: a relaxed ride among family or friends, without time measurement. Le Tour du Val de Bagnes: for competitors, the Verbier E-bike Festival is staging three timed races of 33, 67 and 100 km. And for explorers, Le Tour des Combins et du Mont-Blanc: a 3-day ride of 300 km which passes through France and Italy as well as Switzerland.

Premier titre de champion suisse d'enduro



The very first Swiss enduro championships title will be awarded at the Val d'Anniviers stage of the Helveti'cup, Rock the Besso, which takes place on 13 July 2019.

UNESCO World Heritage Trophy



A new mountain-running trophy has been launched: the UNESCO World Heritage Trophy, which combines the Jungfrau Marathon and the Aletsch Half-Marathon. The goal: to make runners aware of the joy of being able to take advantage of a pristine and flourishing mountain landscape.

The first edition of the Am Stram Gram festival takes place this summer in Crans-Montana



This summer, Crans-Montana is launching a new festival dedicated to families. The Am Stram Gram festival offers all kinds of hands-on activities, games and adventures: a paradise for children up in the mountains. Over the course of three days, children can explore nine different worlds, take part in about 15 workshops and watch many different shows. From 19 to 21 July 2019.

Zurich–Zermatt cycle race



The Chasing Cancellara race series comes to Valais for the first time with an ultra-fondo of 290 km from Zurich to Zermatt on 19 September 2019. The idea behind Chasing Cancellara is to allow all cycling enthusiasts to team up with Fabian Cancellara and measure themselves against the Swiss double Olympic gold medalist on a national race.

New folklore event in Blatten



Blatten Belalp Tourism is launching a new folklore event in the heart of the pretty village of Blatten on 3 and 4 August 2019. On the Saturday, a local group will perform: the Sterntalers, promising a festive atmosphere. On the Sunday, about 30 different groups, members of the Swiss Association for Popular Music, will take part in a traditional “Stubete” gathering.

Facilities/accommodation.

Niederwald – César Ritz exhibition



If the name of César Ritz is known throughout the world, instantly evoking a world of hotel luxury, few people know that the great hotelier came from Niederwald in Valais. From summer 2019, his home village is devoting an exhibition space to him in the local railway station. Display panels will tell the fascinating story of this tourism pioneer.

Zermatt – New observation platform



The Kirchbrücke bridge in Zermatt is one of the best places for taking a photograph of the Matterhorn. The resort has enlarged the panoramic observation platform to offer a better viewpoint for visitors; from autumn 2019, a lift is replacing the existing staircase, facilitating access.

New cycle trail in Täsch



The municipality of Täsch has inaugurated a new cycle route of 4.3 km. The new sign-posted trail begins in the village of Täsch and follows the banks of the river Vispa to the Schalisee lake, where cyclists can enjoy a refreshing dip or enjoy a drink at the café. The return leg leads through the historical centre of the village of Täsch.

Turtmantal – new demonstration cheese dairy



At the beginning of summer 2019, a new alpine cheese dairy is opening in the valley, showing visitors the secrets of cheese-making up on the alpine pastures.

Renovation of the Hotel Wildstrubel



The new restaurant of the mountain hotel, located on the Gemmi Pass high above Leukerbad at an altitude of 2,350 m, opens its doors at the beginning of July. The old building, last renovated in the 1970s, has been completely demolished. The concrete required for construction was brought by helicopter and additional material by cable car. The restaurant, which previously welcomed 145,000 guests a year, is being enlarged to the south; the new design features an extensive dining area with large windows, sunny terrace and panoramic observation platform.

Exhibitions.

Zermatt – pop-up exhibition on the Gornergrat



From mid-July to the end of October 2019, a pop-up exhibition on the Gornergrat entitled “Rock Stars: Women on the Matterhorn” tells the story of the first women to climb the iconic peak: who they were and just how they reached the summit. The exhibition is open daily; admission is included in the price of tickets for the Gornergrat Bahn railway.

Musée de Bagnes



The Musée de Bagnes in Le Châble, Val de Bagnes, is staging two exhibitions in 2019. “True false stories” runs from 5 May to 1 September 2019; from 13 October 2019 to spring 2020, the venue is hosting an exhibition on Raclette cheese simply called “THE Raclette”.

Cantonal museums of Valais



On 19 May 2019, “Châteaux et musées en fête” marks the launch of the summer cultural season and celebrates International Museum Day at the sites of Valère and Tourbillon and at the Valais Art Museum, Valais History Museum and Valais Nature Museum, all in Sion. A venue housed in a former prison, the Pénitencier in Sion, is staging the exhibition “True false stories”, curated by Benoît Antille in collaboration with the artists Paolo Chiasera and Oystein Aasan, from 5 May to 15 September 2019.

Impressionist treasures



The Fondation Pierre Gianadda presents its exhibition “Impressionist Treasures” from 8 February to 16 June 2019. About 60 exceptional works, on loan from the Ordrupgård Museum in Denmark, bear the signature of the greatest French painters of the 19th and early-20th Centuries, including Degas, Gauguin, Sisley, Pissarro, Monet, Renoir, Manet, Cézanne, Corot, Courbet, Ingres and Delacroix. Landscapes, portraits, still lifes and imaginary gardens await your visit – every day from 10 am to 6 pm at the Fondation Pierre Gianadda.

PR-Bild Award 2018

The destination promotion organisation of Grächen & St. Niklaus Tourismus & Gewerbe won the PR-Bild Award 2018 for Switzerland with this photograph in the category “Alpine life”. The image is by Stefan Walter, who photographed daily life in the Mattertal valley for the destination.



KEY EVENTS.



Summer 2019

Various dates throughout the year [PALP Festival](#)

Various dates throughout the year [Taste of Zermatt](#)

April

20 April 2019 [Salon de la bière in Conthey](#)

May

4 May 2019 [Arrival of the Tour de Romandie in Torgon](#)

4-5 May 2019 [National Herens cow fighting finals in Sion](#)

22-26 May 2019 [6th Swiss Theater Encounter](#)

25 May 2019 [Badadgia in Crans-Montana](#)

30 May to 1 June 2019 [Caves ouvertes \("Open cellars of Valais"\)](#)

June

14-15 June 2019 [Festival des 5 Continents](#)

16 June 2019 [Final stage of the Criterium du Dauphiné in Champéry](#)

16 June 2019 [Raid Evolénard in Evolène](#)

22-23 June 2019 [Final stage of the Tour de Suisse in the Goms](#)

July

6-7 July 2019 [European Mountain Running Championships in Zermatt](#)

6-7 July 2019 [Swiss Trail Running Championships in Verbier](#)

11-14 July 2019 [Sion sous les Etoiles](#)

20 July 2019 [Enduro Helveti'cup: Rock the Besso in the Val d'Anniviers](#)

15 July to 3 August 2019 [Verbier Festival](#)

Mid-July to late-August 2019 [Couleur Pavé festival in Sierre](#)

19-21 July 2019 [Les Iles aux Enfants in Sion](#)

26 July 2019 [Valais day at the Fête des Vignerons in Vevey](#)

August

1 August 2019 [Cycloportive des Vins du Valais in Sion](#)

10 August 2019 [Tour des Stations in Martigny](#)

14-18 August 2019 [Verbier E-bike Festival](#)

15-18 August 2019 [Open Air Gampel](#)

23-24 August 2019 [30th edition of the Grand Raid BCVS in Verbier, Nendaz, Hérémece, Evolène and Grimentz](#)

23-25 August 2019 [Bike & Sound Festival and Enduro Helveti'cup in Champéry](#)

29 August to 1 September 2019 [Omega European Masters in Crans-Montana](#)

30 August to 1 September 2019 ["Un autre Monde" festival in Massongex](#)

September

- 4-8 September 2019 [Fêtes médiévales in Saillon](#)
- 6-7 September 2019 [Vinea in Sierre](#)
- 7 September 2019 [Meuh Day in Orsières](#)
- 8 September 2019 [Shepherds' festival in Zermatt](#)
- 14 September 2019 [Marche des cépages](#)
- 18-24 September 2019 [Traillove Festival and Enduro World Series in Zermat](#)
- 19-22 September 2019 [National Festival of Popular Music in Crans-Montana](#)
- 20-22 September 2019 [2019 UCI Mountain Bike Marathon World Championships in Grächen](#)
- 21 September 2019 [Au cœur des vendanges](#)
- 22-23 September 2019 2019 [Bagnes, capitale de la raclette](#)

October

- 4-6 October 2019 [Swiss Downhill Cup in Bellwald](#)
- 12-13 October 2019 [Chestnut festival in Fully](#)
- 19 October 2019 [Marathon des saveurs](#)



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