

Switzerland.
get natural.

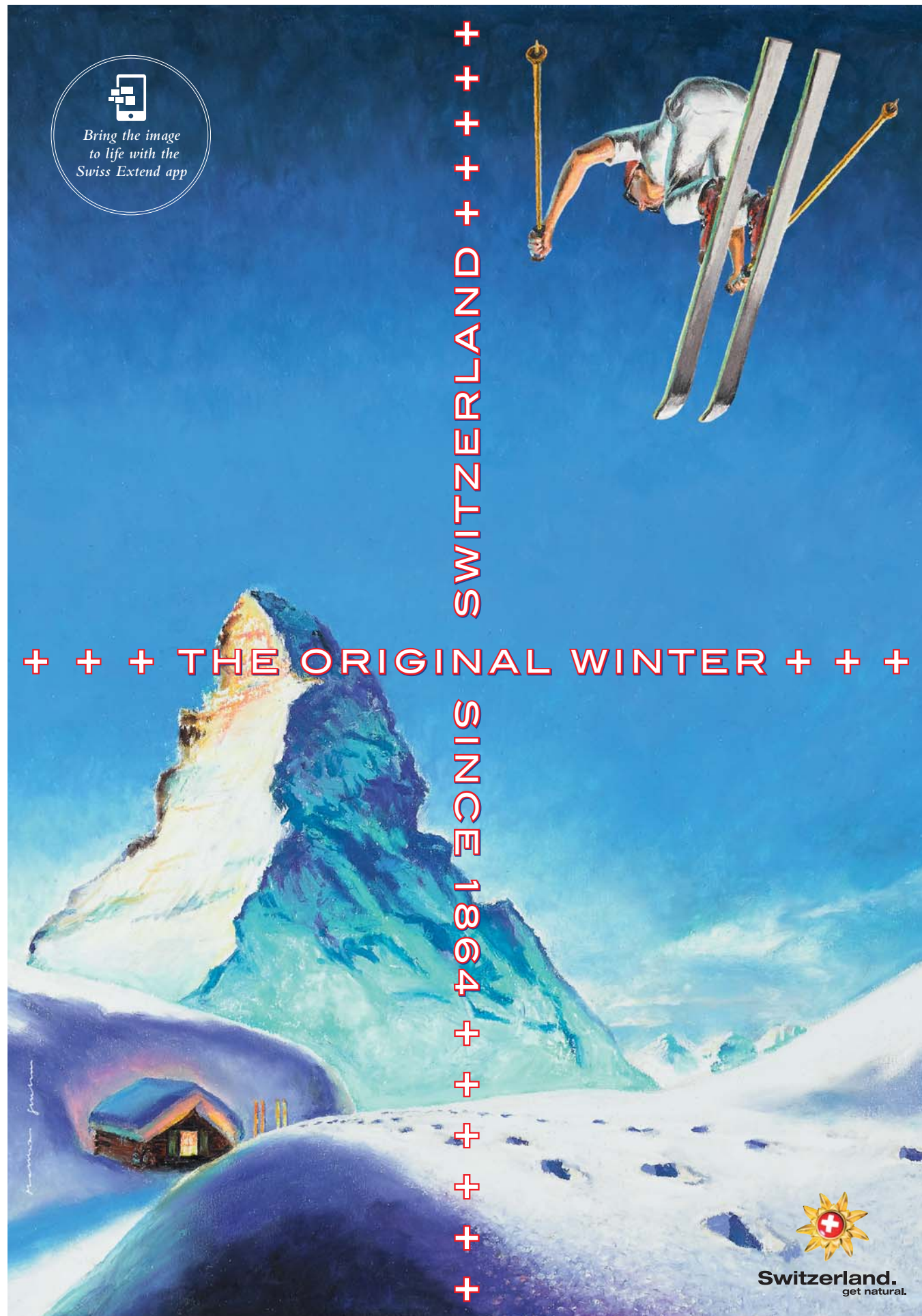


mySwitzerland

The Swiss holiday magazine . Winter 2014/2015



150 years of winter tourism.
Switzerland – the original winter.



To celebrate "150 years of winter tourism in Switzerland", Switzerland Tourism revived the custom of holding a competition to design a new poster, a tradition dating back more than a century. The winner: the Zürich illustrator Matthias Gnehm.



Grüezi

In Munich, the composer Richard Strauss was born; in the United States, the people elected Abraham Lincoln as their president; and in Switzerland – more precisely, in St. Moritz – the hotelier Johannes Badrutt laid the foundations for winter tourism, as the story goes. The year: 1864.

Since the first British winter tourists came to Switzerland and spent their holidays tobogganing, skating and curling, a lot of snow has fallen from Swiss skies. The winter sports resorts have evolved greatly, along with the activities and facilities on offer. Today, holiday visitors from all over the world enjoy an unlimited range of snowy attractions.

The elements that make the Swiss winter special by nature haven't changed at all: incomparable mountain scenery, valleys blanketed in snow and romantic villages that took form centuries ago. Together, they provide an unrivalled setting that promises pure relaxation for mind and body.

Welcome to the Swiss winter – the original winter for 150 years!

Jürg Schmid
Director, Switzerland Tourism





6



12



14



33



36



38



41



42



44

Extra content with the free Swiss Extend app.

Swiss Extend brings you extra information on selected subjects and offers. Simply download the free app on your smartphone or tablet, and then scan pages bearing the Swiss Extend icon to discover more.



[MySwitzerland.com/mobile](https://www.myswitzerland.com/mobile)



Win a weekend at the Lauberhorn ski races:

Win a long weekend in Wengen for two people during the Alpine Ski World Cup races including half-board accommodation, entry tickets and free use of mountain railways, cable cars and ski lifts. To enter, launch the app, scan this page and click the button with the correct answer.

In which year was winter tourism invented in Switzerland?

1291

1864

Switzerland – the original winter

- 6 Cradle of winter tourism *150 years of Swiss winter*
- 12 Cool tips, presented by Sebi and Paul *Top winter attractions*

SPECIAL

14 Under winter's spell

Portrait of a season

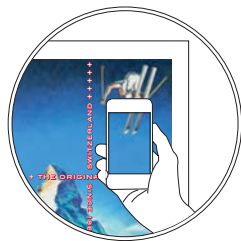
- 30 A perfect winter day in St. Gallen *Winter city breaks*
- 33 The art of advertising *Swiss tourism posters*
- 36 Low light, high adventure *Sledging under the stars*
- 38 Cross-country heaven *The Goms valley*
- 41 Beyond the ultimate summit *First ascent of the Matterhorn*
- 42 Prix Bienvenu *Switzerland's most welcoming hotels*
- 44 For champions like you and me *Legendary ski runs*

SPECIAL

48 Fresh air, perfect powder

Fun in the snow

- 56 Winter's wackier side
- 58 Swiss parks in winter
- 60 Swiss Historic Hotels
- 63 Swiss made
- 67 Switzerland at a glance



More info and fun features in three easy steps

1. Download app

Download the Swiss Extend app from the App Store or Google Play Store.

2. Choose image

When you come across the Swiss Extend icon on the following pages, hold the camera so that the whole double-page spread is visible on the screen.

3. Tap screen

Touch the screen to start the scan for the digital feature and enjoy more of Switzerland – with Swiss Extend.

Try it out now with page 2.

Johannes Badrutt, hotelier in St. Moritz, challenges British guests to a wager in 1864.



1864

Cradle of winter tourism

Text: Christoph Zurfluh

In autumn 1864, the hotelier Johannes Badrutt in St. Moritz made a daring wager with some British summer guests: he promised them heaven on earth – in winter. Ever since, Graubünden has been regarded as the birthplace of winter tourism, and Switzerland as the ultimate winter destination.



Watch the video with the Swiss Extend app



1892 British holiday guests in Davos found the Belvédère Curling Club.



1904 The St. Moritz-Celerina bob run opens. In this photograph, four riders tackle one of the corners of the Schatzalp bob run in Davos.



1906 The first White Turf race takes place in St. Moritz – at the time, the world's only horse race on a frozen lake.



1929 Switzerland's first ski schools open in St. Moritz and Zermatt; there is as yet no specific qualification for ski instructors.

Summer tourism in Switzerland was already booming when the Engadin hotelier Johannes Badrutt, sitting with four regular guests from England around an open fire late one evening in September 1864, began talking enthusiastically about the local winter. It was the evening before the guests' departure, the whisky was flowing, and Badrutt invited them to experience the season themselves. They would find it so mild and sunny, he said, that on fine days they would sit outdoors in their shirtsleeves. If he was wrong, he would repay their travel costs.

The Englishmen, who loved the mountains and enjoyed a good bet, did not wait to be asked twice. They returned in December, travelling in a horse-drawn carriage from Chur over the Julier Pass in glorious sunshine – and only went home again at Easter, tanned, relaxed and happy. They could not know that they had started a revolutionary new development: winter holidays in the Alps.

St. Moritz and Davos set the trends

So the story goes, anyway – even if it is uncertain whether it was actually Badrutt who invented winter tourism in Switzerland 150 years ago. But it was certainly around this time that people began to discover the tourist potential of winter in the Swiss Alps. In this respect, St. Moritz proved to be particularly inventive. The little holiday resort in the Upper Engadin, which was only just beginning to become fashionable, laid out ice rinks, constructed toboggan runs and undertook every effort to make itself as pretty and attractive as possible. It was in St. Moritz, soon after, that the first curling match on the European continent took place (1880). This was also the venue for the first European ice skating championships in 1882; and a mere six years later, burly young men in the Engadin donned skates to compete in Switzerland's very first ice hockey match.

Even before skiing became widely popular, British travellers accustomed to winter destinations such as the Riviera or Egypt established a fashion for visiting Graubünden instead. As far back as 1870, British guests founded Switzerland's first ice skating club in Davos and began building Europe's biggest ice rink, which opened in 1877. As a result, the resort became the European capital of ice skating.

The Swiss winter: very British

On the whole it was the British who helped launch Swiss tourism, also in winter. They brought not only a passionate interest in the pristine mountain world and the customs they encountered but also endless crazy ideas on how best they could enjoy themselves on the snow and ice. Among the most eccentric games on ice at the time were rolling wooden hoops, ice-tobogganing, snow-shovel sliding, banana-catching, egg-blowing, skating on stilts and skjoring, whereby an enthusiast would ride across frozen lakes on skis, pulled by a horse. Today, of course, visitors still have offbeat ways of enjoying themselves in the snow during the Swiss winter (see page 56). Back then, winter thrill number one for a long time was tobogganing, which first became fashionable in Davos. After the first international toboggan race in 1883 from Davos to neighbouring Klosters, the resort of Davos and the legendary "Davos" toboggan became the measure of all things in the sport of sledging.

At first, the region of Graubünden maintained a clear lead in winter tourism. For example, it was only twenty years later that the Hotel Baer in Grindelwald became the first in the Bernese Oberland to open in winter (1888/89). In 1904, as the first bobsleighs hurtled down the world's first bob run from St. Moritz to Celerina, the English travel guide book "Two seasons in Switzerland" promoted the pleasures of winter in Switzerland and proved in black and white that the winter season was now firmly established. By the outbreak of the First World War, Switzerland had three key centres of winter tourism: the Bernese Oberland, the Valais Alps and Graubünden.

The Olympics pave the way

Until the 1920s, winter sports remained the domain of the elite. Skiing changed all that, helped by the 1928 Winter Olympic Games in St. Moritz, the first to feature ski racing. But it was in the years after the Second World War, when tourism reached new heights, that winter became the main season in the Alps. Winter sports resorts such as Gstaad, Zermatt, St. Moritz and Davos evolved into internationally familiar brands – a development that St. Moritz, especially, drove



1931 The first section of the Parsenn funicular begins operation in Davos; a year later, the second section up to the Weissfluhjoch opens. About 61,000 skiers use the new railway in the first winter alone.

We grew up skiing. Flying we had to perfect.

Once upon a time, 150 years ago, beautiful winter holidays began in the Swiss Alps. Today, your holidays start the moment you board your direct flight to Switzerland with us. And of course, as the winter holiday specialist we always include free transportation of your ski and snowboard equipment.



Our sign is a promise.



A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER



1934 Switzerland's first ski lift, the Bolgen lift in Davos, opens ceremoniously on 24 December. It is 270 metres long.

consistently and successfully to a point that Switzerland began to be perceived abroad as that “cosy little country around St. Moritz”. Naturally, neighbouring countries had long set their sights on similar success and developed their winter facilities at great speed, but no country did this with such efficiency and imagination as little Switzerland. Railway lines were built to winter sports resorts to make travel as easy as possible for guests. The line from Chur to Davos was completed in 1890, the Rhaetian Railway to St. Moritz, now part of UNESCO World Heritage, opened in 1904, and exactly 100 years ago the Arosa line was inaugurated ceremoniously. But it soon became clear that winter guests wanted not only to admire the spectacular landscapes but to experience them actively. Resorts began to develop the mountains for winter sports. The first funiculars built for the purpose opened in 1912: to carry visitors from Mürren up the Allmendhubel and from St. Moritz to Chantarella. The world's first T-bar, meanwhile, saw the light of day on the Bolgen slopes above Davos. Invented by two Swiss men – the engineer Ernst Constam and the ski instructor Jack Ettinger – the tow lift began operation in 1934 as a J-bar, doubling its capacity the following season as a T-bar.

Setting sights high

Today, Switzerland has nearly 1,800 cable cars, gondolas, chairlifts and drag lifts in operation. Cableway companies across the country employ more than 9,000 people in transport activities alone, generating turnover of nearly one billion francs. Peripheral regions benefit in particular: here, the cable cars are often the factor driving tourism. In major resorts, too, it is often the cable car companies that provide the stimulus for important new developments.

In the past 12 years, for example, Zermatt has invested more than 300 million francs to make access to its spectacular mountain landscapes as comfortable and hindrance-free as possible, so that everyone may enjoy them – up to an altitude of nearly 4,000 metres. Over in Flims-Laax, the Weisse Arena group has invested more than 80 million francs in its own vision of the future of winter tourism, building a pioneering holiday complex called the rocksresort. And in the heart of Switzerland, in Andermatt, a top-class resort costing more than a billion francs is taking shape, conceived to meet all the needs of ever more discerning winter visitors.

But creating facilities that guarantee top-quality winter holidays is not all. Whoever wants to be leader must continue to innovate. New ideas are needed, the kind Johannes Badrutt had when he made his wager. So it's satisfying that Switzerland continues to set new trends in winter sports. In 2001, for example, Joe Steiner launched the airboard – like an inflatable bodyboard that enthusiasts ride head-first down special pistes. In 2011, the Graubünden village of Tenna in the Safien valley opened the world's first solar-powered ski lift. And in 2012, Laax launched another world first: a chairlift, created by Porsche Design Studio, whose six-seater units rotate 45 degrees to make the most of the glorious views (see page 13).

Switzerland's greatest asset, however, remains its pristine natural landscapes: the mountains with their 4,000-metre peaks, the forests and rivers, glaciers and lakes. In this respect, nothing has changed since Johannes Badrutt's revolutionary idea 150 years ago. *

Nostalgic winter experiences.

- Arosa, Graubünden: *traditional horse races on snow promise atmospheric thrills*
- Kandersteg, Bern-Bernese Oberland: *the Belle Epoque weeks evoke the glamour of a golden age*
- Aletsch Arena, Valais: *local legends along a moonlit walk on old-fashioned snowshoes*
- Davos Klosters, Graubünden: *marvel at the pioneers' equipment at the winter sports museum*
- Amden, Eastern Switzerland / Liechtenstein: *race on “skis” made of staves from wooden barrels*

 MySwitzerland.com, Webcode: **A70928** /  Swiss Extend

Cool tips, presented by Sebi and Paul

Winter walking

1



Grindelwald-First, Bern-Bernese Oberland

Along this winter walking trail, it is not the climbs that take your breath away but the glorious views: the north face of the Eiger and its neighbouring peaks form a spectacular backdrop.

MySwitzerland.com, Webcode: **144342** /

2



Les Paccots, Fribourg Region

Pretty wooden chalets, silent pine forests, snow-covered pastures: this easy and relaxing winter walking trail offers not only an experience of an enchanting landscape but also a path to inner peace.

MySwitzerland.com, Webcode: **144477** /

3



Aletsch Arena, Valais

At 23 kilometres, the Aletsch glacier is the longest in the Alps and a magnificent spectacle. The panoramic winter trail in the Aletsch Arena offers walkers unforgettable views of this UNESCO World Heritage Site in total tranquillity.

MySwitzerland.com, Webcode: **41088** /



Sebi und Paul are a pair of real characters from the mountains of central Switzerland who have become familiar faces of the tourism scene. As they know Switzerland inside-out, they make authentic ambassadors for the country. True mountain men, they are especially happy in winter: the more snow, the better. Sebi and Paul have visited the country's tourist regions and asked locals their top tips for winter fans of all ages. Here are ten suggestions for winter activities you shouldn't miss. Have fun trying them out!

Ice skating

Adelboden, Engstligenalp, Bern-Bernese Oberland

How about ice skating in an enchanting snow grotto? In three interconnecting igloos with atmospheric lighting and cool music, skaters can glide through the passageways and pirouette to their hearts' content.

MySwitzerland.com,
Webcode: **199574** /

4



5



Scuol, Graubünden

Snow and low temperatures turn the region around Scuol into a winter landscape of fairy-tale charm. Here, the Engadine ice path, three kilometres long and as smooth as glass, offers a unique thrill for confident skaters with a little courage: helmets are recommended!

MySwitzerland.com,
Webcode: **202876** /

Perfect pistes

Engelberg, Lucerne-Lake Lucerne Region

12 kilometres of piste, 2,000 metres of vertical drop and no end of fun: the Titlis run is one of the longest and finest in the Alps. Steep and demanding at first, it levels out lower down to offer a wonderfully leisurely glide.

MySwitzerland.com,
Webcode: **181956** /



6



7

Veysonnaz, Valais

The Piste de l'Ours (piste of the bear) has been called the most beautiful run in the world. These forested slopes were once home to wild bears; today, the north-facing piste promises skiers perfect conditions and an adrenalin-filled ride, top to bottom.

MySwitzerland.com,
Webcode: **182079** /

8



Leysin, Lake Geneva Region

Despite its name, the Tobogganing Park in Leysin is actually for snowtubing. Ex-bobsleigh racer Silvio Giobellina creates new runs every winter, with tight corners, steep banks and a 360-degree curve guaranteeing high thrills.

MySwitzerland.com,
Webcode: **41106** /

Innovations

9



Laax, Graubünden

Innovative, unique worldwide – and created by Porsche Design Studios. With a speed of six metres a second, this chairlift is certainly faster than other lifts. But the real novelty is the way the six-seater units rotate 45-degrees at the start of the ride, revealing great views of Laax's mountain scenery.

MySwitzerland.com,
Webcode: **28394** /

10



Tobogganing

Jakobsbad, Eastern Switzerland / Liechtenstein

The longest toboggan run in Eastern Switzerland leads from the top of the Kronberg down to Jakobsbad, about seven kilometres in all – enough for a good hour of pure fun. The views of the mighty Säntis and Lake Constance are the icing on the cake.

MySwitzerland.com, Webcode: **132360** /

Portrait of a season

Under winter's spell

Pristine snow, crisp air, pure tranquillity: winter in Switzerland is a time of enchanting beauty. Join us on a journey across our country, from remote villages and peaceful mountaintops to city centres, to discover the joys of a season many Swiss consider the finest of all.



Jura & Three-Lakes. Fresh snow and the colours of dawn on a clear February morning above Herbetswil in the Thal Nature Park, in the Jura mountains of the Region of Solothurn.
Photograph: Lorenz Andreas Fischer



Graubünden. The wild and unspoilt Val Roseg extends about ten kilometres south-west from Pontresina. The peaks in the background are (from left) the Piz Roseg, Piz Sela and Piz Glüschaint. Photograph: Stephan Schacher



Basel Region. An early-morning view across the Rhine in Basel, seen from the Kleinbasel side of the city. St. Martin's church and the illuminated Mittlere Brücke (middle bridge) create a Christmas mood. Photograph: Andreas Gerth



Lake Geneva Region. The snow-covered Col du Marchairuz, 1,446 metres above sea level. The pass lies between the Vallée de Joux and Lake Geneva, within the Jura Vaudois Nature Park. Photograph: Marcus Gyger



Ticino. Heavy snowfalls occur even in southern Switzerland. The picturesque Walser village of Bosco Gurin in the Val di Bosco is the highest village in the Ticino region, at an altitude of 1,503 metres. Photograph: Roland Gerth





Geneva. On some winter days, the harbour causeways, piers and yachts on Lake Geneva are coated in a thick layer of ice. The changing colours of the sky at dawn create a magical atmosphere.



Zurich Region. Snow and frost coat the Albis observation tower in the Wildnispark Zurich Sihlwald. On clear days, the views extend from the Alpstein massif to the Bernese Alps and the Jura mountains. Photograph: Renato Bagattini



Lucerne-Lake Lucerne Region. Snow and cloud in a palette of winter colours frame the historic city of Lucerne and its shimmering lake, as seen from the summit of the Pilatus.
Photograph: Armin Grässl

A perfect winter day in St. Gallen

Text: Rebecca Krausse

A piercing blue sky and a frosty chill in the air: ideal conditions for exploring one of Switzerland's historic cities. One of the most charming is St. Gallen, famous for its tradition of fine textiles and for its beautiful abbey district, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Before setting off on my journey of discovery, I need a little energy. I head for the newly opened Blumenmarkt café right by the flower market, and opt for an Italian coffee, home-made cakes and a vitamin-rich organic smoothie as the start to my "perfect day" in St. Gallen. The sight of the flower market coming to life tempts me to linger, but I want to give the rest of the city plenty of time to reveal all its attractions.

Which it does, in grand style. The abbey district, which became a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site in 1983, is home to the oldest monastic archive in the western world as well as one of its most impressive libraries (1).

The Old Town extends around the abbey district and is car-free (2). This is just as well, I soon discover. As I stroll through the beautiful alleys, I often find myself standing in the middle of the street, admiring the historic houses with their brightly painted facades. Behind many of them are the celebrated Erststockbeizli, "first-floor restaurants", serving mouth-watering local cuisine.

The traditional dishes look rather filling, so instead I hunt down another speciality: the St. Gallen bratwurst. The sausage-maker Gemperle sells them from its shop on Schmiedgasse: hot off the grill and without mustard, as they are already bursting with flavour.

I then ride the Mühlegg funicular (3) up to a popular vantage point and recreation area above the city. The Drei

Weieren ("Three Ponds") (4) are enchanting in winter: when the ice is thick enough, one of the frozen pools opens to the public and fills with young skaters performing graceful pirouettes. Nearby, at the Beckenhalde ski lift, 750 metres above sea level, many locals mastered their first snowplough turns. The lift is open around 30 days each year, depending on snowfall; today, unfortunately, it's closed. I content myself with the fabulous panoramic views of the city before heading back downtown.

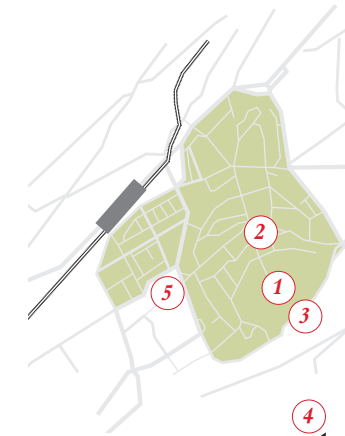
I still have enough time for a visit to the textile museum (5). For many years, the local textile industry was one of the most important worldwide, and accounted for a large share of exports. While the heyday of embroidery has long passed, "St. Gallen lace" is still prized across the globe.

Although it is starting to get dark, I don't want to head home just yet. So I call in at the Lokremise, originally a circular locomotive shed built around a railway turntable and now a lively cultural centre combining theatre, film, art and gastronomy.

Before turning in, I take a night-time stroll, recall the highlights of my visit – and find myself under a sea of stars. The sparkling lights of AllerStern – "AllStars", St. Gallen's much-loved winter decorations – beautifully round off a perfect day in an enchanting city. *



Highlights of St. Gallen include its fascinating textile museum and the historic abbey district with its precious library, whose breathtaking rococo hall attracts visitors from all over the world.



Winter treats in Swiss cities.

- **Basel, Basel Region:** *sauna and relaxation yurts on the banks of the Rhine*
- **Thun, Bern-Bernese Oberland:** *delicious fondue dinner at Schadau Castle*
- **Chur, Graubünden:** *atmospheric guided tour by lantern through Switzerland's oldest city*
- **Biel / Bienne, Jura & Three-Lakes:** *treasure hunt followed by a chocolate fondue*
- **Geneva, Geneva:** *thrills and spills on the ice rink of La Réserve*
- **Zurich, Zurich Region:** *visit to the Masoala indoor rainforest (35°C) or the lake (1°C)*

 MySwitzerland.com, Webcode: **AO25100** /  Swiss Extend

Visit the home
of the most popular
Swiss chocolate.

Discover our new visitor center in Buchs.
More at www.chocolatfrey.ch



With
attractions,
tastings, play
areas, etc.

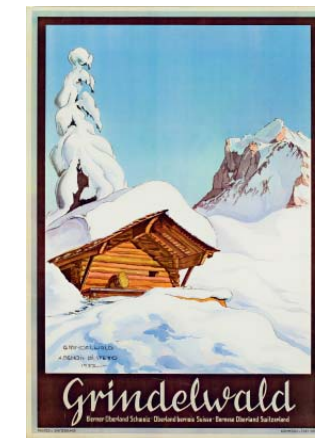


Since 1887 on everyone's lips.

Frey is available in your Migros.

LEO BURNETT SCHWEIZ

Swiss tourism posters



The art of advertising

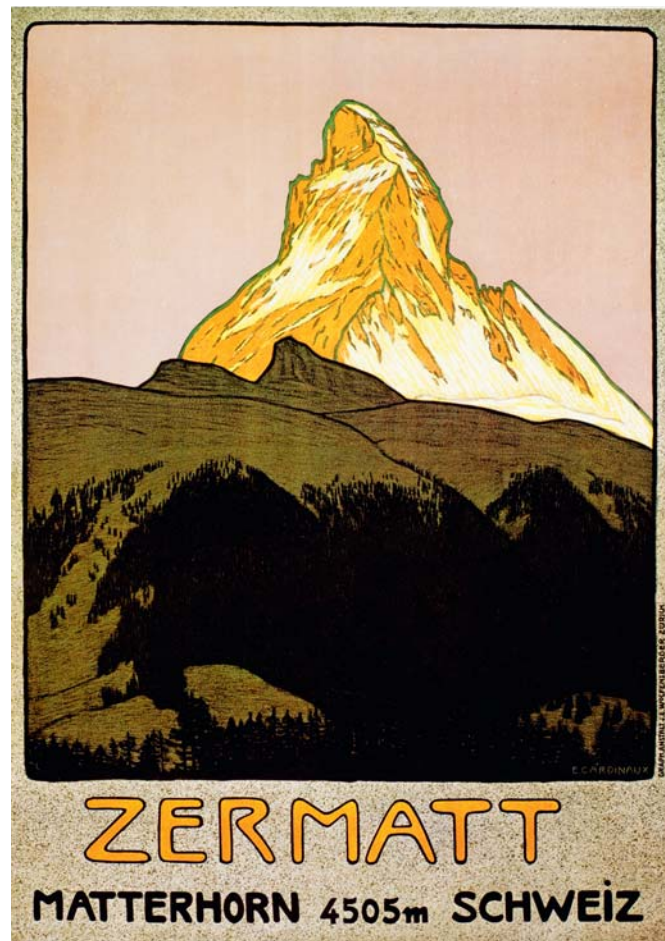
Text: Lucas Roos

As tourism infrastructure grew in the 19th century, Switzerland turned to advertising to attract visitors from abroad. The poster was the perfect medium. Initially, designers focused on factual information, but Swiss artists soon discovered that arousing emotions was the key to success.

In the second half of the 19th century, countless pioneering projects transformed the map of Switzerland: railway lines deep into remote mountain regions, cog railways and funiculars, alpine pass roads and also many luxurious hotels. Alpine areas subsequently experienced a rapid growth in tourism. However, the great cost of developing the infrastructure and facilities required that the tourism regions be marketed in a targeted way from then on. Competition from abroad was also growing. Holiday resorts in the French Alps, especially, tried to tempt holidaymakers away from Swiss destinations – which realised they needed to take action.

From 1880, entrepreneurs in the Swiss tourism sector began to produce posters intended to spotlight the attractions and facilities of the holiday resorts and encourage visitors. These posters often included several pictures, timetables for trains and boats and also maps. They were informative, but not especially inspiring. In European capitals such as Paris and Berlin, by contrast, sophisticated posters in art nouveau style were already attracting a great deal of attention. Swiss design, however, still had a long way to go in terms of being able to awake emotions – and stimulate a desire to travel.

All was to change in 1903, when the newly founded Swiss Federal Railways announced a competition for the design of



The tourism posters captured perfectly the essence of winter holidays in Switzerland, then as now: a combination of superb winter sports and enjoyable relaxation. The Matterhorn poster (left) by the Bernese artist Emil Cardinaux is regarded as a milestone in Swiss tourism advertising.

the company's first advertising posters with the following words: "Competition open to Swiss artists and artists resident in Switzerland to create original designs for six illustrated colour posters, to be displayed primarily in railway stations, hotels and steamships abroad." The country's artists rose to the challenge and sent in 257 original paintings, of which 18 made it through to the final selection. The pictures showed snow-covered mountains, picturesque lakes and idyllic mountain villages: Switzerland's clear attractions. The foundation had been laid for the development of the classic Swiss tourism poster.

Among the competition winners were Jules Courvoisier (1884–1936) and Edmond Bille (1878–1959), both from French-speaking Switzerland, and Plinio Colombi (1873–1951) from Ticino. In each case, the focal point of their work was the beauty of a location, which they expressed through a striking symbolic image. The posters had no room for additional information such as timetables and lists of hotels, and rightly so: as with good advertising today, the designers concentrated on one subject and a single message. The posters depicted different Swiss sights, chosen to arouse a desire to travel.

In 1908 the Bernese painter Emil Cardinaux used the famous form of the Matterhorn as the subject of a ground-breaking poster that was to open a new chapter in Swiss tourism advertising and which is regarded as the first modern Swiss poster. The poster grabs attention through its striking design and its focus on essentials in both image and text. Large monochrome expanses, clear outlines and a subtle play of colours mark the beginning of the typical Swiss poster style, a link between the monumental and sober German tradition and the colourful, flowing forms of French composition.

After the end of the First World War, the National Association for the Promotion of Tourism (*now Switzerland Tourism*) regularly held competitions for tourism posters; resorts and local tourism organisations also increasingly used posters as a form of advertising. As part of the "150 years of winter tourism in Switzerland" celebrations, Switzerland Tourism revived the tradition of holding a competition for a new poster. The winner was Matthias Gnehm from Zürich: he explains his inspiration on the page opposite. *

The poster-maker

Interview: Lucas Roos

The illustrator Matthias Gnehm created the poster to celebrate 150 years of Swiss winter tourism, commissioned by Switzerland Tourism. MySwitzerland asked him where he found inspiration for his design.

Matthias Gnehm, what was your basic idea for the anniversary poster?

I wanted to tap into the visual language of traditional Swiss tourism posters, and use this not only for the printed poster but also for an animation that you can now see online.

Isn't the Matterhorn something of a cliché in advertising?

For us Swiss, maybe. But this is also about the global perspective, and here the Matterhorn pretty much stands for Switzerland.

Did the Matterhorn poster by the painter Emil Cardinaux inspire you?

Absolutely. Emil Cardinaux is an important point of reference, also for my other work. He was a total master at combining text and image. As a comic artist, I'm also fascinated by the interplay between art and applied illustration.

What was your idea behind the text layout in the shape of a cross?

On one level, the cross suggests a ribbon wrapped around a gift, as befits an anniversary. It is placed so that in every format it lies precisely in the middle, and so stands for Swiss precision. In a figurative sense, the motif also indicates that visitors are being offered perfect winter holidays.

What feelings do you want the poster to evoke?

I've deliberately allowed lots of room for the sky, and with this "empty space" want to convey a feeling of freedom, expansiveness and freshness. And of course, I want to stimulate a strong desire to visit this place. The skier is heading for a cosy mountain hut, a welcome stop for refreshments.

Talking of skiing, is this sport really still "in" these days?

Snowboarding has become very popular, but what with carving, freestyle and telemark, skiing is more in fashion once again. Also, skiers are quite simply the classic symbol for winter holidays and winter sports in Switzerland.

Where did you go for your last winter holidays?

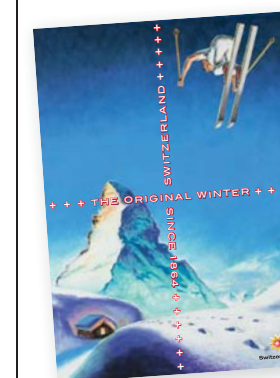
I went to Sedrun in Graubünden with my family. My three sons love skiing, and the youngest, who is only two, has already started ski school.

One final question: when did you last go to Zermatt?

That was a while ago – I was still a child. The Matterhorn seemed gigantic and unbelievable; the sight is firmly engraved in my memory. *



Matthias Gnehm, 44, is one of Switzerland's best-known illustrators and comic artists. His comics and graphic novels have won international acclaim. He was born in 1970 in Zurich and qualified as an architect at ETH Zurich. Today, Matthias Gnehm works as a freelance comic artist and lives with his family in Zurich. His poster design won first prize in Switzerland Tourism's competition. www.matthiasgnehm.ch



Turn to page 2 to see the anniversary design in large format; bring the image to life with the Swiss Extend app.

Low light, high adventure

Text: Olivia Haldemann Picture: Sébastien Staub



A magical winter landscape, a thrilling toboggan ride, a delicious fondue: the perfect combination, especially after dark. The adventure makes a fun night out in many resorts – such as the chalet village of Les Diablerets in the Lake Geneva Region.

Today we're trying an activity we've long heard others rave about: night-tobogganing. For our ride through the darkness we've chosen the sledge run at Les Diablerets, which begins near the Col de la Croix at an altitude of 1,717 metres and ends after a good seven kilometres down at the resort. Here, high in the Vaud Alps, the "fondue & luge" evenings every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday attract enthusiasts from far and wide.

After we've treated ourselves to a warming mulled wine at a bar, Chez Julie, at the foot of the pistes, we collect our toboggans and walk over to the chairlift from Les Vioz to Les Mazots. The ride through the dark, crystal-clear night is an adventure in itself: the soft moonlight casts mysterious shadows across the snow-covered pines, and we find ourselves floating through a fairy-tale world that enchants us. Only the glaring lights of the summit station with the Restaurant Les Mazots bring us back to reality.

A few moments later, shivering slightly, we leave our sledges on the terrace of the mountain restaurant and smell the mouth-watering aroma of melted cheese: a cosy dinner can't be far off! Franck Bré, the chef at Les Mazots, is holding a paddle-like ladle and stirring a big cauldron with more than



twenty kilos of cheese – half Vacherin and half Gruyère, the celebrated "fondue moitié-moitié". The leisurely part of the evening is ready to begin. Over the next couple of hours we tuck enthusiastically into our fondue, enjoy a glass or two of white wine, and get more and more excited at the prospect of our descent through the winter landscape in the thick of night.

Well-fortified, nicely warmed up and in great spirits, we listen to the safety rules, put on our head torches and get ready for the seven-kilometre run down to the valley. Just before we set off it starts snowing gently, the perfect finishing touch to our magical winter adventure. The scenery along the forest trail is enchanting, and we feel far, far removed from day-to-day reality. Our toboggans glide silently through the flurries of snow; our small head torches and the moon are our only sources of light. At the final curves, we enjoy another, totally unexpected, spectacle: the majestic form of "Glacier 3000" appears before us, its icy surface reflecting the pale moonlight.

After 45 minutes of tobogganing and an unforgettable adventure, we arrive at the end of the run, covered in snow and exhilarated. A hot tea awaits us: the perfect end to an all-round perfect evening. ✦

Top runs for night-time tobogganing.

- Grindelwald, Bern-Bernese Oberland: *pure adrenalin on the spectacular Eiger Run*
- Saas-Grund, Valais: *exhilarating sledge adventure with head torches*
- Preda-Bergün, Graubünden: *Europe's longest illuminated toboggan run*
- Nods/Chasseral, Jura & Three-Lakes: *full speed on a romantic forest trail*
- Engelberg, Lucerne-Lake Lucerne Region: *torchlit descent and fondue fun*
- Flumserberg, Eastern Switzerland/Liechtenstein: *scintillating ride under sparkling stars*
- Lenzerheide, Graubünden: *3.8 km of high thrills on an illuminated descent*

Cross-country heaven

Text and pictures: Lucas Roos

One of Switzerland's finest cross-country ski regions is the upper Goms, the valley of the young Rhone. Highlight is the twenty-kilometre stretch from Oberwald to Niederwald: options include the flattish riverside trail and a steeper, fun route across the lower slopes.

The big question at the start of the showpiece trails of the upper Goms, between Oberwald and Niederwald, is: which one? The "Rottenloipe", blue, easy, twenty kilometres, or the "Hangloipe", red, medium difficulty, and two kilometres longer? It's a Sunday in early March, and I have just arrived in this wide, wintry valley high up at the far end of Valais. I opt for the easier route along the river. There's always tomorrow, after all...

Here, in the valley of the young Rhone, the river is known as the "Rotten" – hence the name of the Rottenloipe ("Rhone Trail"). The perfectly prepared cross-country ski trail runs immediately alongside the river; the sparkling tracks are straight and slope gently downhill. Planting my poles rhythmically and gliding swiftly forwards, I pass the village of Obergesteln after just a few minutes. It soon becomes clear how practical it is to have three sets of tracks along the whole route. The cloudless skies have attracted numerous skiers, and many stop frequently along the trails to admire the magnificent winter landscape, the idyllic wooded riverbanks and the villages of closely huddled wooden chalets: the third track comes in handy for overtaking. The rhythmic movements put me in a meditative state of mind; the river provides a charming soundtrack. Just before the village of Münster, about halfway to Niederwald, I cross the Rhone via a wooden bridge. From here, the trail continues on alternate sides of the river, crossing at regular intervals.

I am now getting peckish, so after Münster I start looking out for somewhere to stop for a bite. In the next village, Reckingen, I ski up to the door of the Geissgädi, a somewhat improvised café – and all the more charming for it. Inside the tiny restaurant, diners at two tables are tucking into fondues; at the



Perfect trails for both classic- and skating-style skiing in the Goms. Top: after Obergesteln, the Hangloipe follows the night trail for a while, as the lamp on the barn shows.

three tables outside, guests are enjoying cold platters of meat and cheese and fine homemade cakes. After Reckingen, the trail continues more or less straight to Niederwald. A couple of hundred metres after the final wooden bridge, just before the finish, the trail climbs unexpectedly. It loops up to Niederwald station, where a crowd of tired but cheerful cross-country skiers is waiting for the train to Oberwald. Incidentally, anyone who does not wish to do the whole trail can stop at any of the eight stations en route and hop on to a train. These run every hour, and are included in the Goms cross-country ski pass.

Cross-country skiing and much more

Fans of cross-country skiing, both classic and skating-style, invariably love the upper Goms. Anyone wanting a gentle outing will enjoy the Rottenloipe or the Sonnenloipe ("Sun Trail") between Münster and Obergesteln. Skiers who appreciate the odd climb and fast descent will have fun on the Hangloipe ("Slope Trail"). Sporty types can opt for one of the black training trails or the FIS-Rennenloipe ("FIS Race Trail") in Ulrichen. There's also floodlit skiing, and a trail on which dogs are welcome to accompany their owners.

Here, in the Goms, cross-country skiing is a way of life – and not only because of the superb network of trails. Almost every village has its own cross-country ski school and specialist shop; the valley as a whole is pioneering new developments in Swiss winter sports. An innovative audio trail reveals intriguing facts about the climate, renewable energy, local history and culture as skiers explore the region's trails. The Fun Park at the Nordic Centre in Ulrichen boasts Switzerland's first cross-country ski lift. Here, experienced cross-country skiers can work on their downhill technique while youngsters test their skills on the obstacles – and discover a whole new dimension to cross-country skiing. *

Trails to happiness.

- Sörenberg / Salwideli, Lucerne-Lake Lucerne Region: *a taste of pristine, Nordic-style wilderness*
- Gstaad, Bern-Bernese Oberland: *heavenly trails between the rivers Simme and Saane*
- Val Müstair, Graubünden: *the triple Olympic gold medallist Dario Cologna grew up here*
- Leukerbad, Valais: *exhilarating skiing in the high-altitude Gemmi area*
- Le Sentier, Lake Geneva Region: *the Vallée de Joux offers 200 km of prepared trails*
- Toggenburg, Eastern Switzerland / Liechtenstein: *magnificent trails from Alt St. Johann to Wildhaus*
- St. Moritz, Graubünden: *the route of the legendary Engadin Skimarathon through spectacular scenery*



Swiss Pass –
the all-in-one ticket.



With the Swiss Pass you can tour Switzerland by public transport with (almost) no restrictions.
For the most memorable travel experiences by train, bus and boat – SwissTravelSystem.com

First ascent of the Matterhorn



Beyond the ultimate summit

Text: Marco Casile

17 years after the first ascent of the Matterhorn in summer 1865, the Italian mountaineer Vittorio Sella completed the first winter ascent of the mountain's south-west ridge. As soon as he reached the summit, he set his sights on a new goal: Zermatt.

On two attempts to climb the Matterhorn in winter, Vittorio Sella had to turn back. He later wrote: "On 16 March 1882 I made a third attempt, which finally ought to succeed. I left Breuil at eleven in the evening with my guides Louis, Jean-Antoine and Baptiste Carrel. We needed to make our way by lantern as far as the starting point for the main climb, which we reached at sunrise." At half past nine, the group continued its ascent along the snow-covered south-west ridge, and at two o'clock – 15 hours after setting off from Breuil – the climbers reached the summit. "Our feelings were indescribable, almost of religious awe", wrote Sella. "Encouraged by our success, I wanted to attempt the descent to Zermatt, although the ridge with its steep and almost in-

surmountable passages between us and the hut on the Swiss side worried us." As by now it was already afternoon, the climbers immediately began their descent of the snow-covered Hörnligrat ridge which, with its yawning drops on either side, was as narrow as a knife blade. At half past seven in the evening, the foursome reached the old hut. They sat down on the frozen floor and spent the night there, closely huddled together, without sleeping. At six in the morning, they set off for Zermatt, where they arrived at two o'clock. "We met two mountain guides who had seen us the previous day as we put up our flag on the summit. In Zermatt we were welcomed by all the mountain guides with great enthusiasm." The climb by Vittorio Sella and his companions remains without doubt one of the great achievements of winter mountaineering. *

Prix Bienvenu

Interview: Lucas Roos

Every year, an award launched by Switzerland Tourism seeks out and rewards the country's most welcoming hotels. For Marc Eichenberger of the Grand Hotel Kronenhof in Pontresina, winner in the luxury hotels category, the secret is simple: every member of staff should enjoy playing the role of host.



Marc Eichenberger

has been general manager of the Grand Hotel Kronenhof since spring 2013. As host, he is supported by Tina Lepperhoff and the executive chef, Fabrizio Piantanida. Originally from the Seetal valley in canton Aargau, Marc Eichenberger graduated from the SHL hotel management school in Lucerne and gained experience at renowned hotels in Switzerland and abroad. For him, individual attention to guests and a warm welcome have always been priorities.

Mr Eichenberger, congratulations on winning the PRIX BIENVENU in the luxury hotels category. What does this award mean for you?

Thank you! This is a great honour for the whole Kronenhof team and recognition of the daily work that allows our guests to have an unforgettable stay. We are committed to offering first-class service, but don't forget the essentials: a warm smile, helpfulness and understanding towards our guests.

A welcome is also something very personal. At your hotel, what do you understand by a warm welcome?

At the Grand Hotel Kronenhof, a warm welcome means giving guests the feeling they have arrived at a place where they can enjoy a carefree stay. We try to offer an experience that combines personalised service, historic charm and the breathtaking natural beauty of the Engadin in a way that is natural and authentic. All members of staff should feel they are hosts and look after guests as if they were friends staying in their own home.

How important is it for a large hotel to be welcoming in order to stand out from the competition?

Reaching out to guests, adding the personal touch: this is what makes all the difference. It is people that bring a hotel

to life: the personal approach that all our employees bring with them and are able to develop through their work is what distinguishes us. Our long-standing staff members often have a very special relationship with guests.

How do you get your team to all pull together?

It is important that everyone – staff as well as guests – is treated with respect. I attach great importance to open and honest communication, and motivate team members to think creatively and identify possibilities for improvement.

Is a warm welcome all about attentiveness, or does it require an extra human touch?

Attentiveness can be learned and standardised. A passion for playing the role of host and a personal touch make all the difference – and this is recognised and valued.

Do you think you were born with the gift of always being friendly and accommodating to all guests?

My family was not involved in the hotel business, but we often had guests at home. Hospitality was a major virtue, and the welcome was always warm. This atmosphere at home definitely shaped my later development. *

PRIX BIENVENU for welcoming hotels

The decisive factor in choosing Switzerland's 100 most welcoming hotels is the judgement that guests deliver themselves. Ratings and comments from more than 250 review and booking websites in 25 languages are analysed and combined to form an overall score. The top-ranking candidates in five categories – luxury hotels, luxury city hotels, city hotels, larger leisure hotels and cosy leisure hotels – are finally validated by a jury. On this page we present the winning hotels in each category for 2014; you can find the full list of the 100 most welcoming hotels online:

www.MySwitzerland.com/bienvenu



Pictures from top to bottom

Luxury hotels:

Grand Hotel Kronenhof*****, Pontresina

The five-star-superior hotel in the heart of Pontresina combines the romance of bygone days with modern comforts. For guests, the hotel's unique charm and warm hospitality are always tangible.

www.kronenhof.com

Luxury city hotels: Mandarin Oriental*****, Geneva

At the Mandarin Oriental, located in the heart of Geneva on the banks of the Rhone, everything revolves around the guest. Service is highly attentive but never intrusive, so guests feel at home at all times.

www.mandarinoriental.com/geneva

City hotels:

Hotel-Restaurant Zunfthaus zu Wirthen***, Solothurn

For this gem among Solothurn's hotels, guest satisfaction is the key to success. The staff's pleasure at serving guests in a friendly and attentive manner is genuine and can be seen throughout the hotel.

www.wirthen.ch

Larger leisure hotels:

Parkhotel Schoenegg***, Grindelwald

A blend of tradition and modernity, a welcoming atmosphere and a cheerful team are the recipe for success of the host family, which has run this alpine hotel since 1892, making every stay a charming experience.

www.parkhotelschoenegg.ch

Cosy leisure hotels: Hotel Albris***, Pontresina

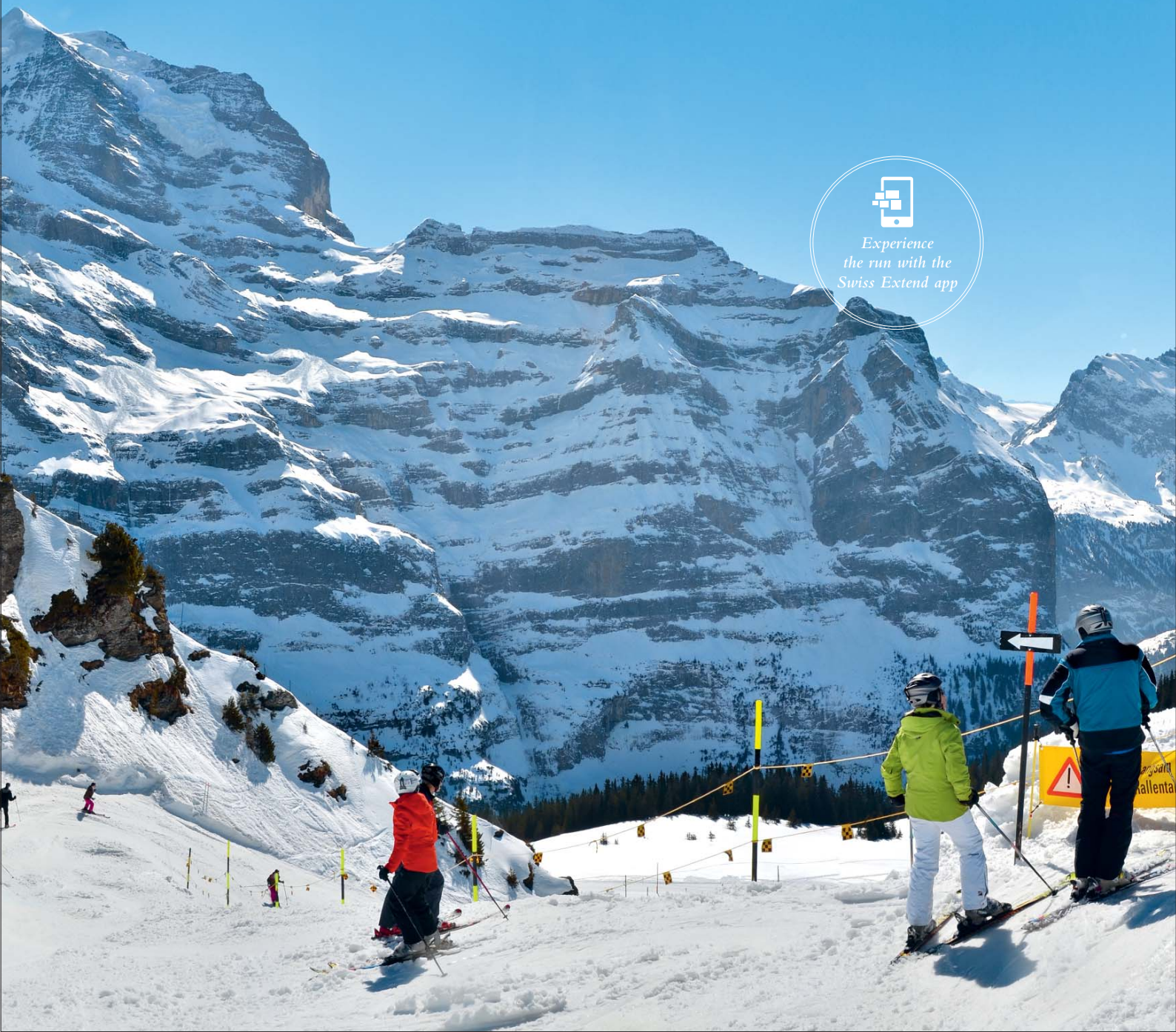
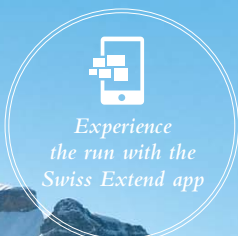
The Hotel Albris has a clear philosophy: the essence of the team's daily work is ensuring the wellbeing of guests. Pontresina hospitality and glorious mountain scenery promise a uniquely relaxing stay.

www.albris.ch



For champions like you and me

Text: Claudio Zemp **Picture:** Wengen Tourismus



The legendary Lauberhorn ski run is the setting for the longest and fastest downhill race in the World Cup circuit. It's also a fabulous piste for amateurs, with the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau forming a breathtaking backdrop: so beautiful, it's a shame to race down. ❶

The Lord God made this run, not us, says Fredy Fuchs (76), vice-president and race director of the Lauberhorn races for many years. People called him the Piste General. But it's the mountain that calls the shots on this run. The most spectacular stretch is at the top: the views from the start hut of the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau are breathtaking. Since 1930, the world's longest downhill ski race has taken place here. The course extends for nearly 4.5 kilometres, with a vertical drop of 1,028 metres. The Italian skier Christian Ghedina holds the record: 2 minutes 24.23 seconds, set in 1997. "You wouldn't be able to ski that fast these days," says Fuchs. "The equipment allows ever faster speeds, so the course has to be slowed down with extra corners."

When there is no race taking place on the Lauberhorn, anyone can ski the course. Absolutely anyone, I ask? The piste has an average gradient of 14.2 degrees and is graded black. Black means difficult. Will my daughter, aged six, manage it? "Of course, no problem", says Fredy Fuchs, who has been responsible for security at the race for 42 years. So Hanna comes along too, as a test skier.

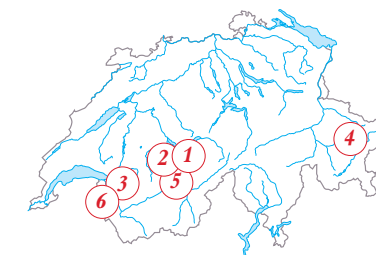
From Kleine Scheidegg we traverse to the Wixi chairlift, which takes us direct to the start at an altitude of 2,315 metres. Hanna goes first, I follow. To the sound of ringing cowbells from the loudspeaker, I launch myself from the start hut. The run immediately demands total concentration. Hanna glides stylishly over the Russisprung leap and masters the waves in the Traversenschuss expertly. At the first split time, I'm already a few seconds behind, distracted by the panoramic views. Then comes the notorious Hundschoepf. Incredible to think that racers actually jump off it: the gradient is 41 degrees, and skiers effectively leap into thin air. Just looking at it makes me feel queasy. Thankfully, you can bypass the leap altogether. Hanna proudly insists on skiing down, side-slipping the steepest section. She then attacks the Minschkante corner, compression and Kernens-S chicane with spirit and without falling. We're soon at the Water

Station: this tunnel under the cog railway seems unimaginably narrow for World Cup racers at breakneck speeds, but the two of us glide through comfortably.

Next is the flat Langetrejen section: thankless for athletes, but I find it just great. Poor waxing can lose a race here. We savour the leisurely speed and even decide to enjoy a little break, and sit down for a while on the snow. Perhaps this is the perfect line to take. We're not in any hurry, and anyway, the famous Haneggschuss offers the chance to catch up again. Top racers reach speeds here of more than 160 kilometres per hour. Leisure skiers brave enough can measure their own velocity too.

Hanna stem-turns over a series of cocktail-shaker bumps, but thankfully the treacherous "Austrians' hole", the undoing of many an Austrian racer, no longer exists. By now, racers' thigh muscles are usually burning. Voilà, another advantage of the leisurely approach: our energy levels are still intact. The steep Finish-S chicane demands full concentration again. And then it's over. There's a banner at the finish bearing our motto: "Langsam Slow Rallentare". With a time of 34 minutes and twenty seconds, we were 14 times slower than Christian Ghedina. But what a shame it would have been to rush past such spectacular scenery ... *

Discover other classic Swiss runs overleaf.



MySwitzerland.com, Webcode: AP25100 / Swiss Extend

We're something you can all enjoy. 450 times.



Listen to your good taste if you like being selective. There are around 450 varieties of cheese in Switzerland. From extra hard to soft and right through to cream cheese – plus goat's cheese and sheep's cheese too. There's something to keep all connoisseurs happy.



Switzerland. Naturally.

Cheeses from Switzerland.
www.switzerland-cheese.com

Legendary ski runs

Chuenisbärgli

Adelboden, Bern-Bernese Oberland

Every winter, the slopes of the Chuenisbärgli above Adelboden are the venue for the toughest giant slalom race in the Alpine Ski World Cup circuit. For the rest of the season, the legendary piste is open to all. However, the gradients are steep – up to 60 degrees – and to master them, challengers need to feel quite confident on skis.

2 MySwitzerland.com, Webcode: 128081



Oldenpiste

Glacier 3000, Les Diablerets, Lake Geneva Region

The piste through the Oldental valley is as beautiful as it is demanding, and suitable for experienced skiers. The descent begins at the summit of the Scex Rouge cable car at nearly 3,000 metres; initially, the run leads across the dazzling Tsanfleuron glacier before plunging into the wild Oldental, finishing 1,100 vertical metres lower at Oldenalp.

3 MySwitzerland.com, Webcode: 129336



Parsenn run

Davos, Graubünden

The Parsenn area above Davos is regarded as the cradle of Swiss competitive skiing, and remains the location of one of the world's legendary downhill races. The first Parsenn Derby took place here in 1924. Today, the 12-kilometre run begins as always at the summit of the Weisshorn (2,844 m), finishing 2,000 vertical metres lower in Küblis.

4 MySwitzerland.com, Webcode: 39198



Piste Nationale

Crans-Montana, Valais

The Swiss men's downhill ski team celebrated its greatest triumph on the Piste Nationale during the 1987 World Championships, winning all top four places. The scenic run along the edge of the Plaine Morte glacier is open to all and promises 12 kilometres of pure skiing pleasure. Improvements over recent years include construction of a new chairlift.

5 MySwitzerland.com, Webcode: 203850



Le Mur suisse

Champéry, Valais

The Portes du Soleil is Europe's largest winter sports area and promises boundless thrills for winter sports enthusiasts. As well as plenty of easy pistes, it boasts a descent respectfully dubbed the "Swiss wall". With a gradient of nearly 50 degrees, the run is extremely steep and often has moguls up to two metres high: a thrilling challenge for experts only.

6 MySwitzerland.com, Webcode: 39220



Fun in the snow

Fresh air, perfect powder

Spectacular mountain scenery, beautifully prepared pistes and cross-country ski trails, scenic winter walking paths and thrilling toboggan runs are just some of the ingredients for the ultimate winter sports playground. Take a deep breath and picture yourself here ...



Fribourg Region. Around Les Paccots in the Fribourg Pre-Alps, snowshoe hikers explore a landscape of snow-blanketed meadows, aromatic pine forests and pure tranquillity.
Photograph: Aurélie Felli



Bern-Bernese Oberland. Skiers find a tremendous variety of runs on the slopes around Kleine Scheidegg, with the famous mountain trio of the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau forming a spectacular backdrop.
Photograph: Rob Lewis





Eastern Switzerland / Liechtenstein. The Rosenboden panoramic trail high on the Chäserrugg (Churfirnen) takes about an hour to hike and offers glorious panoramic views of the Alps and the sparkling Walensee. Photograph: Dolores Rupa





Valais. Vercorin in the Val d'Anniviers counts three thrilling toboggan runs among its many winter attractions. And what better start to the day's adventures than an invigorating snowball fight in front of the Hotel Lodge Alpes et caetera?
Photograph: Stephan Schacher

Winter's wackier side. From the early days of winter tourism in Switzerland, British visitors enjoyed dreaming up quirky activities on the snow and ice. Today, as ever, holidaymakers who wish to try a new adventure are spoilt for choice. MySwitzerland presents seven winter attractions with a difference that promise fun for visitors of all ages.



Ice palaces
Schwarzsee
Fribourg Region

As the days shorten and temperatures fall, a magical world of ice and light appears near the ski resort of Schwarzsee. The ice artist Karl Neuhaus creates this enchanted realm anew every winter, as he has for nearly 30 years. Visitors can walk in and around the beautifully illuminated ice palaces, up to 15 metres high.

1 Webcode: 78679



Yoga piste
St. Moritz
Graubünden

What activity can a ski area dream up for guests when it already offers every winter sport under the sun? In St. Moritz's case: Yoga on Snow. At four locations on the Paradiso piste, visitors can follow exercises to bring body and mind into balance – either alone or with experienced yoga/ski instructors.

2 Webcode: 167273

Fairy-tale gondolas
Grächen
Valais

The Swiss winter is full of fairy-tale charm – and nowhere more so than on these gondolas. On the ride up to Hannigalp, passengers relive the story depicted on the outside of their gondola. Sleeping Beauty, Puss in Boots, Hansel and Gretel: the arrival at the summit station always means a happy ending.

3 Webcode: 186457

Picked for you



Winter walks with St Bernards
Champex-Lac
Valais

Children, please take your seats on the St Bernard shuttle! On a family walk with these good-natured dogs, children up to the age of ten can take turns at being pulled along on a sledge. The outing lasts about an hour and a half; children invariably wish it would never end.

4 Webcode: 37461

Ice-fishing
Melchsee-Frutt
Lucerne-Lake Lucerne Region

The Inuit in the Arctic may have made ice-fishing famous, but you can also try your hand at this meditative activity in the heart of Switzerland. Walk out onto the frozen Melchsee or Tannensee, drill a hole in the ice and fish for dinner – or simply enjoy the blissful tranquillity.

5 Webcode: 203837



Mongolian yurts
Rochers de Naye
Lake Geneva Region

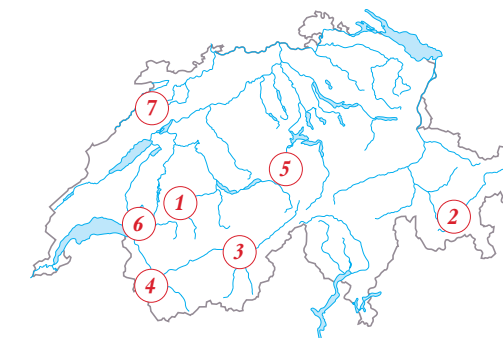
A night in the high mountains usually involves a stay in a chalet or refuge; but at Rochers-de-Naye, at an altitude of 2,000 metres, visitors sleep in Mongolian yurts. Each accommodates up to eight guests. The hand-painted furniture creates a cosy atmosphere, and the panoramic location promises an unforgettable night.

6 Webcode: 42182

Camel rides
Lamboing
Jura & Three-Lakes

Welcome aboard the ship of the desert: this sightseeing tour with a difference takes place in the Jura mountains of canton Bern, at the foot of the Chasseral. Here, modern-day explorers ride Mongolian camels, which feel completely at home in the cold. The exotic outing ends with a classic Swiss touch: a delicious fondue.

7 Webcode: 37502



Discover other off-beat adventures in the snow:
MySwitzerland.com, Webcode: A70927 / Swiss Extend

Bewitching by nature. In Switzerland's 19 regional nature parks and nature discovery parks, winter is especially charming and peaceful. Visit any of these natural gems to discover a world of rare beauty: our tips reveal some of the highlights.



Ice skating on the Lac de Joux
Jura Vaudois Nature Park
In winter, the largest lake in the Jura mountains turns into a vast playground of ice. The frozen Lac de Joux attracts ice skaters and ice sailing enthusiasts as well as walkers who come to enjoy the boundless white expanses, pure peace and magical winter atmosphere.

1 Webcode: 37662

Haunting tales on a trail into the night
Binntal Nature Park

Not only the cold temperatures send shivers down everyone's spine on the winter walk from Ernen to the Galgenhügel, "Gallows Hill", where many witches of the region left this world. A thought-provoking reading about wise women and a bite to eat warm body and soul.

3 Webcode: 37655

A ride on a solar-powered ski lift
Beverin Nature Park

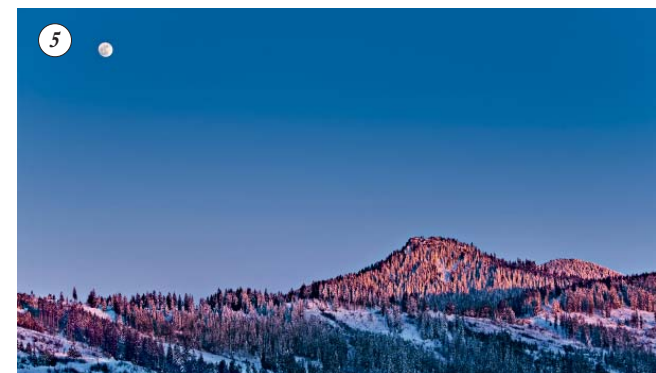
The ski lift in Tenna, opened in 2011, may be modest in size but it's the first in the world to run on solar energy – demonstrating Swiss innovation and setting a fine example for the whole winter tourism sector. The lift generates up to three times more electricity than it consumes.

2 Webcode: 37674

Winter walk on the Pouillere!
Doubs Nature Park

This easy, 4.6-kilometre snowshoe trail offers glorious views extending from the watchmaking city of La Chaux-de-Fonds to the French Alps on the horizon. A further attraction is the delicious country cuisine served at the traditional rural auberge in Le Maillard.

4 Webcode: 37675



Stargazing surrounded by nature
Gantrisch Nature Park

With its crisp, clear skies, winter is the best time of year for star-gazing. At the Uecht observatory, located on a hilltop far from light pollution, visitors marvel at the secrets of the universe. Guided tours take place every Wednesday.

5 Webcode: 37668

Cross-country skiing in the Diemtigtal valley
Diemtigtal Nature Park

Cross-country skiing can bring devotees deep into nature – and for that, the Diemtigtal Nature Park is ideal. On an 18-kilometre trail through forests and meadows, skiers enjoy an intimate experience of a pristine landscape – plus a wonderful workout.

6 Webcode: 37672



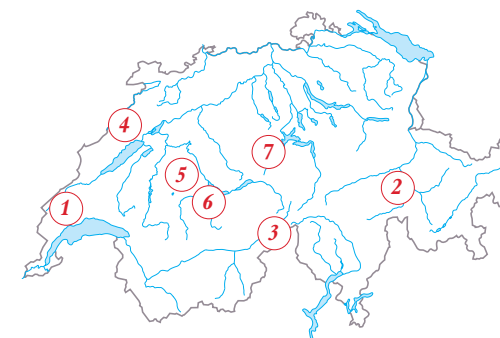
A snowshoe hike in Entlebuch
UNESCO Biosphere Entlebuch

The Blattenegg–Salwideli snowshoe trail extends for eight panoramic kilometres and offers nature lovers an enchanting experience of the pristine landscapes of the UNESCO Biosphere Entlebuch.

7 Webcode: 36514



Swiss Parks Network
www.paerke.ch



Discover other enchanting landscapes in Swiss parks:
MySwitzerland.com, Webcode: B27639 / Swiss Extend





A nostalgic trip in time

Text: Gabrielle Attinger Picture: Grand Hôtel Bella Tola & St-Luc

To experience the romance of the pioneering years of alpine tourism without forgoing modern comforts, connoisseurs head for the Valais village of St-Luc. Here, at the Grand Hôtel Bella Tola & St-Luc, guests enjoy a journey deep into the 19th century – along with the finest gourmet cuisine. ①

What could have made visitors in former days climb this high valley? I ask myself the question several times on the way into the Val d'Anniviers. The gorge is narrow and the road twists like a ribbon between cliffs and the abyss, before climbing in a hundred curves up the mountainside. The answer to my question lies high above the valley floor, at an altitude of 1,650 metres: St-Luc, a wonderfully unspoilt Valais village on a high terrace, framed by dramatic peaks and the majestic form of the Grand Hôtel Bella Tola & St-Luc. This hotel boasts a long history. English mountaineers were already staying at the Bella Tola when people in other parts of Switzerland did not even know what a tourist was. The hotel has been welcoming guests since 1859, and accommodating them in the current building for more than 130

years. As I approach, I look forward to a glimpse of Swiss hotel history. My expectations are exceeded: the hotel is like a museum, only a living, breathing one. I pass through the entrance doors, and instead of a lobby find a large living room. The walls are almost completely covered with pictures; sofas and easy chairs huddle around an open fire.

Anne-Françoise Buchs, the hotelier, enjoys showing guests around. She knows the name of every picture and painter. She did an apprenticeship here while she was a student at the hotel school in Lausanne, and saw how the hotel's owner at the time, Henri Pont, enthusiastically bought and collected art. "In the war years, some of the guests would pay for their stay with a painting they had made", she says, and points to works by some of the best-known artists. Raphael Ritz painted the ceiling of one of the lounges; Edouard Ravel, brother of the composer Maurice Ravel, is also represented, and there's a whole collection of drawings by Edouard Vallet.

Henri Pont was the third generation of his family to run the hotel, and he did so with all his heart. After his death, however, his son offered the hotel up for sale. Anne-Françoise Buchs and her husband, Claude, seized the opportunity to take over "a place with potential," as they say. "At first we used inexpensive fabrics to embellish the place", says Madame Buchs. Step by step, the couple renovated more and more of the hotel, staying as faithful as possible to the original; their motto: restore, not replace. Five years later, they received the first major reward for their efforts: the Bella Tola was crowned Historic Hotel of the Year 2001.

Since then, the Buchs family has undertaken many further renovations; the couple's three daughters also help out in the hotel at times. Otherwise, everything remains as it was: the furniture is still always freshly polished, but wonderfully old-fashioned. The staircases creak, just like the ornate parquet floors. The ceiling of the dining room, the hotel's showpiece, also shows the traces of the passing of time – and so forms the perfect contrast to the modern lamps and the elegantly laid tables. The gourmet dinner tastes divine, as does the wine from one of the many Valais cellars that feature on the wine list. And Monsieur Buchs goes from table to table, addressing each guest by name and in their own language.

The hotel has 30 rooms, plus two apartments in the neighbouring building. Each of the rooms is different, but all have wood panelling or wallpaper, old furniture and period touches in the bathrooms. Below my modern sink is a water jug from the early days, when guests enjoyed neither heating nor running water.

I savour the modern attractions in the spa too. There's a sauna and a hamam, and I treat myself to a soothing massage with essential oils of spruce and pine. Even here, there are

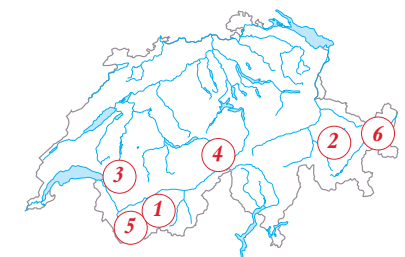


At the Grand Hôtel Bella Tola, historic interiors and period features create a wonderfully nostalgic atmosphere.

historical features to admire. Sit in the indoor whirlpool bath, and you are exactly at eye level with the wooden posts and flat stone slabs that support the neighbouring Valais barn – and so perfectly placed to contemplate traditional architecture. I could relax here for hours, gazing through the gap under the old wooden shed at the snow-capped mountains beyond – were it not for the waiting library with its ancient books. And the sun terrace. And the "Bel Etage" with its elegant salons and all the antiques in the hall.

For a trip in time, then, you need one thing above all: plenty of time. *

Discover other historic Swiss hotels on the next page.



Kurhaus Bergün
Bergün, Graubünden

The Kurhaus Bergün opened in 1906, soon after completion of the Albula railway line. Nearly 100 years later, this art nouveau gem was bought by a group of regular guests and restored to its former glory for the 21st century. The historic hotel kitchen regularly features cookery courses as well as gourmet table d'hôte dinners.



2 www.kurhausberguen.ch

Hôtel du Pillon***
Les Diablerets, Lake Geneva Region

Located above the village of Les Diablerets, this historic hotel was built in 1860 for British visitors seeking adventure among the glaciers. The sun terrace offers a spectacular view of the mountains and snowfields of the massif of Les Diablerets. On winter evenings, guests enjoy drinking mulled wine around the cosy wood-burning stove.



3 www.hoteldupillon.ch

Grimsel Hospiz – historic alpine hotel ****
Guttannen, Bernese Oberland

Switzerland's first guest house mentioned in historical records (from 1142) was up on the Grimsel. In 1932, this was Europe's first electrically heated hotel. In winter, the hospice looks out over a pristine snow-covered landscape; inside, open fires promise cosy relaxation. The journey up by cable car and through tunnels is an adventure in itself.



4 www.grimselwelt.ch

Grand Hôtel & Kurhaus***
Arolla, Valais

Opened in 1896, this mountain hideaway is ideal for romantics and all who love historic hotels. It stands in a forest of Swiss stone pine in the delightful Val d'Hérens, by the pistes. The Weatherill family has run the hotel for four generations, and every room has a tale to tell: such as the story of Christmas Eve 1968, when Josephine Baker performed for guests.



5 www.hotel-kurhaus.arolla.com

Hof Zuort
Ramosch, Graubünden

Hof Zuort is a mountain refuge from the Middle Ages located in a remote and idyllic forest clearing. Guests enjoy the use of three eco-friendly ski lifts that run on oats and hay and are called Akrobat, Nerz and Galante. Here, horses pull skiers and tobogganists up the slopes, and winter sports conjure up another era: an unforgettable experience for families.



6 www.zuort.ch

Shopping, Swiss style. Some are especially innovative, others are simply cool – but every product made in Switzerland is the genuine article, of top quality. MySwitzerland presents four of them – plus a shopping venue that promises all the hottest brands on cold winter days.



Say cheese! The town of Rheinfelden has been famous for its fine ceramics for more than 200 years. About twenty specialists design, shape, paint, glaze and fire the products by hand – such as this **fondue caquelon**. Cheese fondues taste even better when enjoyed from a hand-painted stoneware caquelon; this one depicts Schellenursli, the hero of the much-loved children's story by the Graubünden illustrator Alois Carigiet.

www.rheinfelder-keramik-shop.ch

Art on skis. In a small workshop in the Schanfigg valley near the resort of Arosa, the distinctive skis of the brand **Skizophren** are made painstakingly by hand. Each pair is different, beautifully worked and finished with a real wood veneer. The addition of hand-worked silver initials by the renowned artist Roger Dörig from Appenzell makes a pair of these skis a prized possession for any snow-loving individualist.

www.skizophren.com



Swiss made

Timeless quality. Victorinox, famous for its Swiss Army Knives, is celebrating the company's 130th anniversary with the innovative new **I.N.O.X.** watch. As with Victorinox's other products, the timepiece stands for authenticity, robustness and reliability. The I.N.O.X. has been subjected to 130 wide-ranging and punishing tests of toughness and survived them all thanks to its exceptionally rugged construction. The wristwatch comes with a removable cover of nylon and silicon that provides additional protection.

www.victorinoxwatches.com



The House of Brands. About 180 years ago, Gian-Pietro Jelmoli opened his first emporium in the Schipfe district of Zürich and became the first shop owner to introduce fixed prices. Today, **Jelmoli** is Switzerland's largest and most innovative department store, offering more than a thousand world-class brands. One of the highlights of this Zürich institution, located on the Bahnhofstrasse, is the mouth-watering food market.

www.jelmoli.ch



Warm and wonderful. The mountain sports brand of Mammut has been synonymous with innovative outdoor clothing for 150 years. The brand promise, "Absolute Alpine", combines stylishness and functionality to meet every alpine requirement. To celebrate 150 years of winter tourism in Switzerland, Mammut and Switzerland Tourism have teamed up to develop **Mammut Special Edition**. This exclusive clothing collection is aimed at men and women who value the finest Swiss quality – and wish to welcome the winter in original style.

www.mammut.ch

Switzerland Tourism recommends

Strategic Premium Partners



Swiss chocolate
chocolatfrey.com



The trade association of the Swiss hotel industry
swiss-hotels.com



Switzerland by train, bus and boat
SwissTravelSystem.com



The airline of Switzerland
SWISS.COM



Telecommunications
swisscom.com



Financial services
ubs.com



Publisher
Switzerland Tourism
Tödistrasse 7
Postfach
8027 Zurich
Switzerland

Editor
Olivia Haldemann, Switzerland Tourism

Design
Festland AG, St. Gallen / Zurich
Switzerland Tourism, Zurich

Photos
Cover:
Keystone/Photopress-Archiv / Str
Pages 6–11:
Keystone/Photopress-Archiv / Str
Pages 63–64:
by kind permission of the manufacturers
Other pictures:
by kind permission of our partners

Videos
Page 2:
Matthias Gnehm and Elefant Studios
Pages 6–7:
Switzerland Tourism
Page 44:
Wengen Tourismus

Printer
Schellenberg Druck AG, Pfäffikon

Print run
220,000 copies

Languages
The Swiss holiday magazine **mySwitzerland** is published twice a year in German, French, Italian, English, Dutch and Spanish.



printed in
switzerland



Strategic Partners



American Express in Switzerland
americanexpress.ch



Watches Jewelry Gems
bucherer.com



Car rental
europcar.ch



Gateway to the Alps
zurich-airport.com



Exquisite Swiss Biscuit Specialities
kamby.ch



Interest group for Swiss non-hotel accommodation
stnet.ch/parahotellerie



Swiss Herb Drops
ricola.com



Switzerland Cheese Marketing
switzerland-cheese.com



Official Partners



appenzellerbier.ch



axpo.com



flyer.ch



gastro-suisse.ch



swisstravelcenter.ch



intersportrent.ch



grimselstrom.ch



mammut.ch



marche-restaurants.com



snowsports.ch



swissinfo.ch



topevents.ch



visana.ch

www.MySwitzerland.com/strategicpartners

Get advice and book.

With our extensive knowledge of Switzerland, we can help you plan the best possible holiday.

Call: 00800 100 200 30 (international toll-free*)

* Local charges may apply.

Travel in comfort



Tips and information about travelling to Switzerland. Whether you plan to come by plane, train or car, **Switzerland has the best possible international connections.**

→ MySwitzerland.com, Webcode: 25321 /  Swiss Extend

Enjoy the ride



Travel in comfort and enjoy every moment of the journey. **A well-served public transport network** makes exploring Switzerland fun – and offers total flexibility.

→ MySwitzerland.com, Webcode: 25349 /  Swiss Extend

Find accommodation



From stylish spa hotels to authentic mountain inns and even snug igloos, **the choice of accommodation in Switzerland is vast.** Booking is quick and easy.

→ MySwitzerland.com, Webcode: 25384 /  Swiss Extend

Judge for yourself



Find out about a hotel quickly and easily from personal ratings. After your stay, post your own rating – and help maintain the high standard of Swiss hospitality.

→ MySwitzerland.com, Webcode: 9874 /  Swiss Extend

Stay informed



Interested in Swiss current affairs? Visit our news and info website for the latest on Swiss politics, society, culture, the economy and science – in ten languages.

→ www.swissinfo.ch



Winter is one click away:
MySwitzerland.com/winter



All on your tablet

With the Swiss Mag app and our free e-brochures, exploring your Swiss holiday options is an adventure in itself.



Swiss Mag app for iPad
Install to download brochures
→ MySwitzerland.com/ipad

Experience the magic of the Swiss winter!

From sensational ski runs to glorious walks through blissfully tranquil snow-covered landscapes – experience the fairy-tale beauty and endless variety of the Swiss winter. More at:
→ MySwitzerland.com/winter

Like us on Facebook
→ MySwitzerland.com/facebook

Sign up for our newsletter
→ MySwitzerland.com/newsletter

Mobile apps

Useful info, practical tips and inspiring ideas are always at your fingertips with our free mobile apps.
→ MySwitzerland.com/mobile



Swiss Snow



Swiss Winter Hike



Swiss Events



Swiss City Guide



Swiss Extend

Switzerland: small country, great diversity.

Switzerland: 220 km from north to south, 348 km from east to west, with tremendous cultural and scenic diversity in between. Eight million people live in an area of just 41,285 km², speaking four official languages (German, French, Italian, Romansh) and countless dialects. The largest city is world-famous Zürich, but the capital is Bern. Switzerland is home to more than 120 glaciers, 11 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, two UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and 48 mountains above 4,000 m. The Dufourspitze in Valais is the highest peak, at 4,634 m, while Lake Maggiore is the lowest point in the country, at 193 m above sea level.



The regions

- A** Basel Region
- B** Bern Region
- C** Bernese Oberland
- D** Fribourg Region
- E** Geneva
- F** Lake Geneva Region
- G** Graubünden
- H** Jura & Three-Lakes
- I** Lucerne-Lake Lucerne Region
- J** Eastern Switzerland/Liechtenstein
- K** Ticino
- L** Valais
- M** Zurich Region

Specials

Portrait of winter

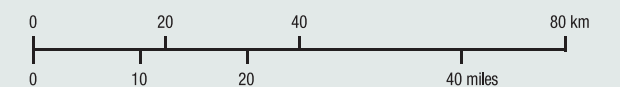
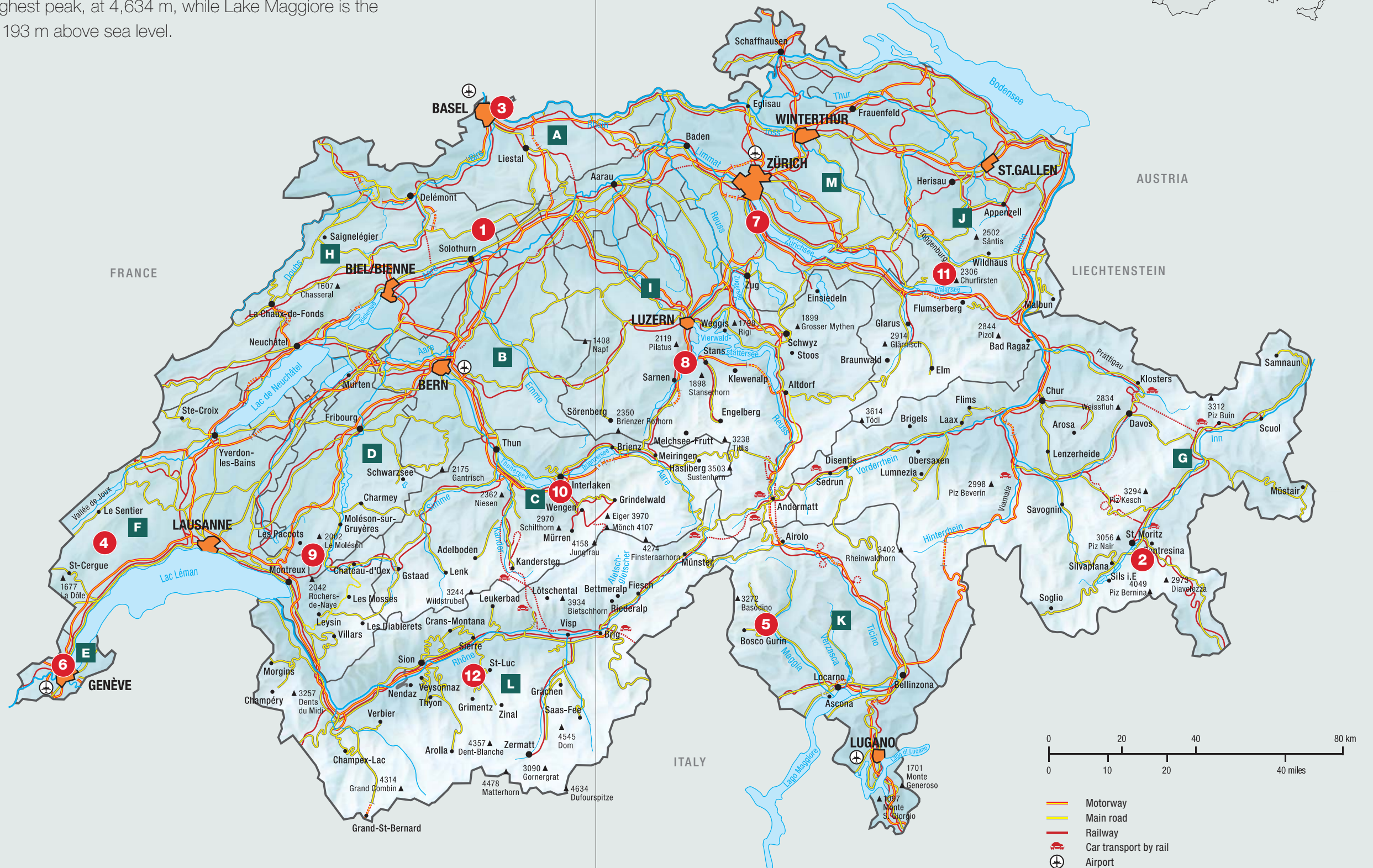
Pages 14–29

- 1** Thal Nature Park
- 2** Val Roseg
- 3** Basel
- 4** Col du Marchairuz
- 5** Bosco Gurin
- 6** Geneva
- 7** Wildnispark Zurich Sihlwald
- 8** Pilatus

Fun in the snow

Pages 48–55

- 9** Les Paccots
- 10** Kleine Scheidegg
- 11** Chäserrugg
- 12** Vercorin



- Motorway
- Main road
- Railway
- Car transport by rail
- Airport

Switzerland.
get natural.



Our partner regions



ENGRAVED ON MY HEART.