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# VERBIER

Beneath the swirling snowflakes, a vibrant resort sits contentedly at the heart of one of the most beautiful freeride areas in the world.



WINTER 2025-2026



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ICE CUBE



JENNIFER LAWRENCE



LONGINES PRIMALUNA

*Elegance is an attitude*  
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#

# Editorial

Seventy-five years... A well-earned retirement? The age of maturity? As Téléverbier celebrates this anniversary, it is also initiating a whirlwind of major projects, including the inauguration of the first phase of the Esserts-Savoleyres “télémixte” lift. What a journey and story to tell! Born of too many uphill climbs on climbing skins that led to comparatively short downhill runs, the ski lifts changed everything, and, after the war, made the mountains accessible to all. A few pioneers paved the way for this grand adventure, starting with Rodolphe Tissières – colonel, ski instructor, pilot, attorney-notary, politician and co-creator of the iconic Patrouille des Glaciers ski-mountaineering race, which returns this spring for its 41<sup>st</sup> edition.

The heroic spirit and roped-together ethos that define this legendary race are inseparable from the rise of the ski resort itself. As the idea of the 4 Vallées took shape, the Bagnes locals rallied behind the area’s standard-bearers: Raymond Fellay, downhill racers Roland Collombin and William Besse, Philippe Roux, Justin Murisier, and ski-mountaineering champions Florent and Marie Troillet – athletes who, in each of their disciplines, carved Verbier’s name into the firmament of the Olympic Games, World Cup or World Championships.

Is the mountain humanity’s most beautiful conquest? Beyond the groomed pistes lies another dimension, one dominated by the dizzying steepness of untouched slopes and vast open space: a mountain that’s remained exceptionally pristine and wild, where every track writes a new adventure. These generous, untamed snows gave birth to a legend: the Xtreme de Verbier. Two minutes of pure adrenaline on the face of the Bec des Rosses, embodying the life-force of an entire generation – and then another. That was exactly thirty years ago. Thirty years of daring, insane lines, moves that became cult classics, and the starting point of a global legend: the Freeride World Tour.

This is just one of the many reasons why Verbier was once again awarded the coveted title of *Switzerland’s Best Ski Resort* at the World Ski Awards for the 7<sup>th</sup> time!

Christian Bugnon

*Publisher & Editor-in-chief*



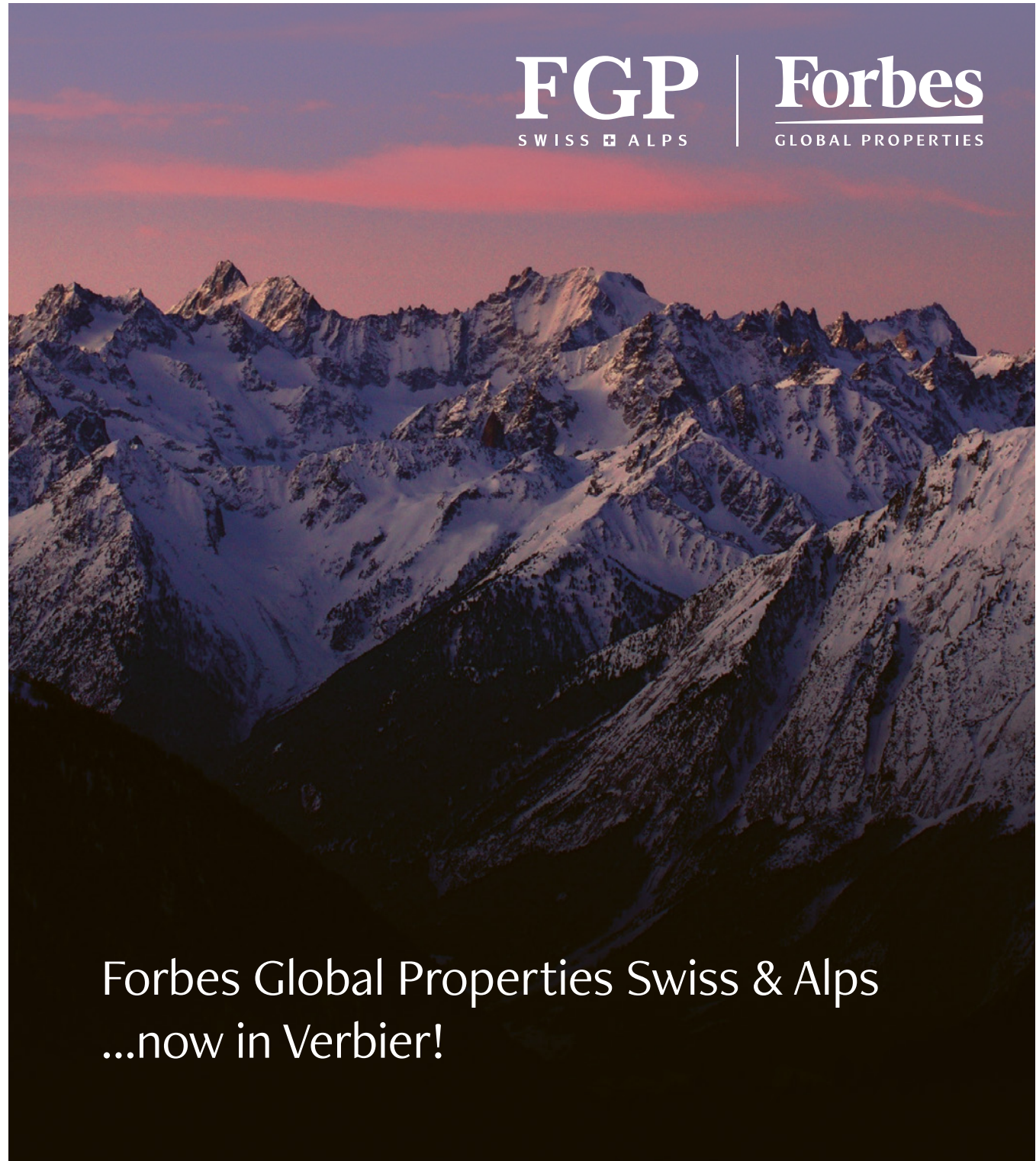
LA MONTRE PREMIÈRE  
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GROUPE COMPTOIR IMMOBILIER

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COMMEMORATION

**MONT FORT CABANE 100<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

You may recall our article about the Mont Fort Cabane in our Winter 2023-2024 edition. Renovated and under new guardianship, the legendary cabin is celebrating its centenary in 2025. Perched on the Alpine knoll of La Chaux, at 2,457 m, it has a spectacular panoramic view of the Combins Massif. The last commemoration of this pivotal anniversary will take place on the afternoon of December 13th, with a traditional mass led by the canons of the Great St. Bernard Hospice, accompanied by 100 mountain guides in uniform. To close, a torchlit descent will illuminate the mountain with 100 candles.

[cabanemontfort.com](http://cabanemontfort.com)

ECOLOGY

**LEAVE THE CAR BEHIND**

Green mobility has long been a priority for Verbier, and it shows in the ski resort's latest initiatives! Take, for example, the two direct trains that allow passengers to get to Le Châble on winter weekends: the Verbier Express from Geneva Airport and the VosAlpes Express from Fribourg. What then? Simply hop in the Le Châble-Verbier gondola lift. As part of the local public transportation network, it runs every day, all season long from 5:10-23:55. It's a truly original and rather elegant way to get to the ski resort! Up there, the TVB buses are free and the four main lines all pass by Place Central and Médran.

[tmrsa.ch](http://tmrsa.ch)

GASTRONOMY

**CHALET BRUNCH**

Over time, Sunday mornings have become a sort of ritual in Verbier, attracting regulars to the terrace of the very chic Chalet d'Adrien (Relais & Châteaux) for brunch. It's an ideal way to start your day in a relaxed atmosphere, complete with a magnificent view of the snow-covered summits that spreads from the XXL Combins Massif all the way to Mont Blanc. The buffet tables feature their own mountains of eats. Sushi, oysters and salmon, an array of desserts and hot stations featuring raclette, fresh pasta or grilled meats. It's hard to resist. Brunch is offered every Sunday from mid-December to mid-April.

[chalet-adrien.com](http://chalet-adrien.com)

INFRASTRUCTURE

**PROGRESS FOR NEW TÉLÉMIXTE LIFT**

Part of the ski area's development master plan for more than a decade, the télémixte lift will allow passengers to connect directly between Verbier and Savoleyres-La Tzoumaz with their skis strapped to their feet. Construction began late 2024 and continued all summer, enabling the inauguration of the télémixte (cable car/chairlift) lift – from the intermediary station of Les Planards (1,943 m) to Savoleyres (2,344 m) – as of winter 2025-2026. The project should be completed next year with the addition of the (panoramic) cable car connection between Les Esserts and Les Planards, and a new ski run that will allow access to the initial departure station. A ski area for beginners will also be built at Les Planards and the old Savoleyres gondola lift will be demolished.

[verbier4vallees.ch](http://verbier4vallees.ch)

[tmx-savoleyres.ch](http://tmx-savoleyres.ch)

EVENTS

**THE EUROPA CUP RETURNS TO VERBIER**

It's been since 2024, but the biggest players in skiing are finally set to return to Verbier for the 55<sup>th</sup> edition of the men's FIS Alpine Ski Europa Cup on 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> January 2026. On the programme: two days of downhill training followed by two days of downhill racing (on Wednesday and Thursday), and the super G race on Friday.

[fis-ski.com](http://fis-ski.com)

EVENTS

**A NEW FREERIDE ERA**

Thirty years ago, already... It was, in fact, on 24<sup>th</sup> March 1996 when the secretive first edition of the Xtreme de Verbier took place. The Freeride World Tour, launched a good decade later in its wake, transformed this spectacular discipline into an icon of modern-day skiing, attracting large crowds of spectators. Like every year, the FWT will finish its annual circuit on the Bec des Rosses (28<sup>th</sup> March to 5<sup>th</sup> April 2026), Verbier's freeride headquarters and where it all really began. The competition will make earlier stops, beginning mid-January, in Baqueira Beret (Spain), Val Thorens (France), Georgia, Fieberbrunn (Austria) and Alaska – a welcome return to action after an eight-year hiatus.

[freerideworldtour.com](http://freerideworldtour.com)

INFRASTRUCTURE

**THE SPORTS CENTRE MAKES HEADWAY**

Following its partial destruction by a fire in 2017, before it was even fully built, the Verbier sports centre has been the focus of a large redevelopment project. The existing multi-sport room will soon welcome a new, three-storey “relaxation” building made of Salvan Stone, locally sourced wood and recycled concrete. It will be home to swimming and relaxation pools, a children's space with slides and water games, a gym, spa (saunas, hammams, etc.) and a restaurant – without forgetting the outdoor summer area. It will be a welcome addition to the region's four-season tourism development. The first stone was laid late summer 2025 and the inauguration is planned for 2028.

[verbier.ch](http://verbier.ch)







HORLOGERIE  
**WATCHES  
AND WONDERS**

For one week each year, Geneva becomes the beating heart of global watchmaking. Taking place 14<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> April 2026, the next edition of Watches and Wonders will welcome some 66 watchmakers, a dozen of whom are participating for the first time – including the legendary Audemars Piguet. As in previous years, the first four days of the trade show are reserved for industry professionals, while the last three days are open to the public. Two spaces are reserved for independent creators, including the Lab, which facilitates connections between industry innovators and startups. Like last year, there will also be related activities throughout the city.

[watchesandwonders.com](https://watchesandwonders.com)

INFRASTRUCTURE  
**NEW MOMENTUM  
IN BRUSON**

Bit by bit, little acorns lead to mighty oaks. In Bruson, after replacing the La Pasay chairlift in 2022 with a new model that's twice as fast and much more comfortable, it was time to develop alternative solutions for reaching the sector's upper heights. This ultimately led to the approval of a construction project for a new detachable 6-seater chairlift, which, beginning in 2026-2027, should link the bottom of the Pissevache ski run to the top of Le Grand Tsai. It will be able to transport up to 1,600 people an hour.

[verbier4vallees.ch](https://verbier4vallees.ch)



HOSPITALITY  
**CABANE TORTIN,  
ENHANCED AT 3,000 M**

Members of the Nendaz ski club remember the Cabane Tortin in its original condition, glacial drafts included! No more. The new luxury version, powered by solar panels and a pellet burner, was designed by Norwegian architecture firm Snorre Stinessen in collaboration with local architects. Its forward-thinking construction features very modern, long picture windows that seem to float in thin air – but, more precisely, hover over the drop of the Tortin Glacier. Booked on a bespoke and personal basis, it has four rooms that boast 4-star-level comfort, a large panoramic living room with a fireplace, and a sauna. It even offers private chef services, ski guides and staff. A truly unique experience.

[cabanetortin.com](https://cabanetortin.com)

CULTURE  
**EXCEPTIONAL INTAGLIO**

Born of one man's passion almost half a century ago, the Martigny Giannadda Foundation unites a museum and sculpture garden that regularly play host to concerts by international artists. Yet it's their exhibitions that tend to draw the largest number of visitors. After a summer dedicated to works from the collection of American businessman Armand Hammer, which included several works by Rembrandt and Van Gogh, this winter welcomes a new exhibition entitled "De Manet à Kelly, l'art de l'empreinte". Based on a collection of 178 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century intaglio prints from the French National Institute for Art History in Paris, the exhibition runs from 12<sup>th</sup> December 2025 to 14<sup>th</sup> June 2026.

[gianadda.ch](https://gianadda.ch)

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GASTRONOMY

**TO L'ÉCURIE WE GO!**

L'Écurie is a truly unique Verbier restaurant, recently added to the prestigious 2026 Gault&Millau guide with 13 points, and it couldn't be more centrally located – n°18 Place Centrale, to be exact. At the ready near his stoves, Chef Nicolas Philponet shines a spotlight on French cooking with a light twist; nothing overly complicated or excessive, but rather a simple and joyous focus on the (very) exceptionally good local ingredients (particularly the cheeses and meats). The wine cellar mirrors the same spirit, with over 400 crus from Valais, Switzerland, France and Italy on the menu.

[restaurantecurie.ch](http://restaurantecurie.ch)



ECOLOGY

**VERBIER: LEADING SWISSTAINABLE**

Few ski resorts in Switzerland can proudly claim to have performed as well. Last April, Verbier achieved the “leading” level III Swisstainable certification ranking – the highest tier possible, signalling that the ski resort is very serious about the development of responsible and sustainable local tourism. The label, which was created by the Swiss Confedreation in collaboration with Switerland Tourism, encourages visitors to consume locally and to stay for longer periods. Time to get everyone on board!

[stv-fst.ch](http://stv-fst.ch)

BUSINESS

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[lombardodier.com](http://lombardodier.com)

CULTURE

**UPCYCLING EXPERIENCES**

Skibroa? It stands for Ski & Bike Recycling in Objects & Arts, and it all started in 2018, when Fredi Meyer used some old skis as support stakes for his raspberry bushes. Why not recycle old sporting equipment that's no longer being used? The team, which now includes two interior designers, proposes a variety of original objects like snowboard benches, bottle racks, coat racks and ski coffee tables. They even make flowerpots!

[skibroa.org](http://skibroa.org)

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# Euphoria in the 4Vallées

Unlimited ski & freeride

Text Daniel Bauchervéz  
Photos Verbier Tourism

*In sheets of ice and immaculate snow crust, the Grand Combin's glaciers unfold into the valley nooks below.*







*Over 410 km of groomed slopes await in the 4Vallées ski domain, which also boasts an incredibly wild backcountry that is adored by freeriders.*



Verbier 4Vallées is the largest 100%-Swiss ski area, boasting a network of 73 runs that are spread over 410 kilometres, interlinking no fewer than six ski resorts. As such, it's a highly favoured destination for European skiers, which is only further enhanced by a stunning backdrop and one of the most beautiful freeride ski areas on earth.

*Verbier's remote backcountry is perfect for cross-country skiing and freeriding alike, nestled amongst a medley of immaculate summits.*







While Verbier's name is almost always in the limelight, its skiable area is actually far bigger than the resort itself. The appropriately named 4Vallées ski area stretches all the way across the Val de Bagnes (in the west) to the Val d'Hérémence (in the east), passing through both the untamed Vallon d'Arbi and the Val de Nendaz. Together, these four valleys collectively contain so many summits that it's difficult to even count them...

From the beating heart of *Verbier* climbs a collection of modern, comfortable and speedy ski lifts (82 of them at the last count) towards Savoleyres, La Croix-de-Cœur, Les Ruinettes, and La Chaux, which take riders across the resort's southern-facing crests, with views of the Combins and Mont Blanc massifs. To say it's panoramic is an understatement. And who can forget the vast array of blue and red runs for intermediate skiers, with guaranteed snow – should the weather fail to deliver – thanks to a battery of snow cannons.

To the east we find the peaks of Les Attelas (2,727 m), Mont Gelé (3,023 m), the Col des Gentianes (2,950 m), and Mont Fort (3,330 m), the ski area's culminating peak that's surrounded by gorgeous panoramic views of the Pennine Alps. Anything is possible from here, provided you have the skills. Your choices? The 1.7 km black run that drops from the summit with long mogul sections, or the yellow runs, which are marked but not groomed, offering a taste of the freeride life. For a pick-me-up, just visit one of the many high-altitude bars and restaurants.

On the northern side, we dip into the forest and *La Tzoumaz*, a tranquil family resort with a magic carpet lift that's ideal for beginners. Here, blue and red runs also abound.

Just to the north of Mont Fort, *Nendaz* is famed for its snow cover and proud of its "families welcome" slogan, with two snow gardens, day-care centres, a wooden snowpark, a snow tubing park, an excellent toboggan run, and an outdoor ice rink. On the opposite side of the valley, the authentically unassuming *Veysonnaz* is home to just eight runs. Among them is the celebrated Piste de l'Ours, which has played host to several World Cup events.

On the western flank of the Val d'Hérémence, *Thyon* boasts three terraces that range from 1,600 m to 2,000 m, offering copious amounts of sunshine, facilities for children (including a snow garden), a beginners-only area (which is free!), and the excellent "Centralpark" snowpark.

And let's not forget the smallest of them all: *Bruson*. To get there, take the Le Châble cable car down from Verbier and then go up the opposite side of the Val de Bagnes. There you'll find a fistful of runs (most of them red), good snow cover, and some superb semi-wild runs through the forest for those who like to go off the marked track.

[4vallees.ch](http://4vallees.ch)

[verbier4vallees.ch](http://verbier4vallees.ch)



# The ski area's architects

Téléverbier celebrates 75 years of history

Text Claude Hervé-Bazin

Photos Max-Francis Chiffelle — Médiathèque Valais Martigny | Téléverbier







Let's travel back through time. The roaring twenties were in full effect when the first skiers launched themselves down Verbier's snowy slopes. Was it 1925, or was it even earlier? No matter... What really counts is the way in which it was done: a long trek uphill with climbing skins from Sembrancher, just above the mayens, followed by a single descent (which is never long enough) along the sun-drenched hillsides.

#### **95% SWEAT, 5% DOWNHILL**

The sport was still a well-kept secret when Marcel Michel-lod (aka "the Yeti of Les Ruinettes") founded the Verbier Ski School (ESS) with a few friends in 1933. To warm up in the mornings, he did a calisthenic routine before climbing the slopes in switchbacks to pack down the snow and "groom" the slopes... It was a lot of effort for a very short-lived reward.

After the war, a general sense of optimism returned, complimented by modern advances, and the idea to build a ski lift was born. It was a funiluge, which worked with a cable attached to a hand-started engine that would pull a large sled, carrying 12 passengers, up the slope. In 1947, the funiluge was replaced by a ski tow that had plat-shaped seats – a first!

#### **THE ORIGINS OF TÉLÉVERBIER**

Was it a crazy idea or a way to secure the future? No one could say, but two days before Christmas, in 1950, the Médran "chairlift" opened and it was revolutionary: Switzerland's first detachable monocable device – which soon spread throughout the country. It was a strange machine, with its openwork metallic booth, but it was a first step, soon followed by others: a drag lift at Tête des Ruinettes (1952), a single-seater lift (1955) and a drag lift (1956) in Savoleyres, Red, Blue and Green drag lifts financed by the Verbier Ski School in 1957, and, the same year, the inauguration of the Attelas cable car. In the years that followed, the Vaux basin and the Médran valley were also equipped with lifts.

#### **SUMMIT EUPHORIA**

Skiing exploded in popularity in the 1960s-1970s, encouraging new investments in the area. Ski lifts began to run down from Le Châble and up towards Tortin and Mont Gelé (3,030 m). Then in 1967, the "Verbier Skilift Public Limited Company" officially became Téléverbier and bought back the Verbier Ski School's lifts. Thus began a new era of increasingly ambitious projects, and, in 1983, the cable car reached Mont Fort, solidifying the ski area's initial architecture.

Today, there are some 82 drag lifts, chairlifts, gondolas and cable cars that interlink the 4 Vallées' six ski resorts over 410 km of slopes – the second largest ski area in Switzerland and one of the biggest in Europe. Far from resting on their laurels, Téléverbier continues to maintain, change, innovate and imagine. Médran IV in 2021. A new chairlift for La Pasay (Bruson) in 2022. A panoramic viewing platform on Mont Fort. And the upcoming télémixte project that will link Esserts – Planards – Savoleyres, allowing passengers to travel from Verbier to Savoleyres-La Tzoumaz with their skis strapped on.

[verbier4vallees.ch](http://verbier4vallees.ch)



# 30 years of Xtreme

From circuit to cinema

Text Claude Hervé Bazin  
Photos Levy Loye | Salle Correntin

In Verbier, everything lives and breathes freeriding. Hailing from Bruson, brothers Simon and Loïc Perraudin (23 and 20 years old, respectively) are both Scott Switzerland team athletes and have raced in the Freeride World Tour. Now, they’re taking their love of skiing to new heights with a feature film.

In early spring 1996, Nicolas Hale-Woods gathered a group of friends on the face of the Bec des Rosses with a wild idea: a competition with no gates and no timing. The challenge? To see who could ride the most beautiful line. The skier-entrepreneur brought Red Bull onboard, which was just launching in Switzerland, and riders who would later become legends – American snowboarder Steve Klassen, Gilles Voirol, Stéphane Dan and Bruno Compagnet.

Twelve years later, this now-iconic event became the final stop of the world’s first freeride championship: the Freeride World Tour (FWT). Footage from the event circled the globe, putting the high mountains on full display and inspiring a new generation of youth with its message: up here, freedom reigns.

**YOU WIN OR YOU LEARN**

Fast forward to 2016. Then just a 14-year-old kid from the Chablais region, Simon Perraudin answered the call of the



*The Bec des Rosses was a childhood dream for both Simon (left) and Loïc (right), until they found themselves together at the start gate... “I didn’t do a ‘face check’ and fell in the second section from going too big”, Simon recalled, without resentment.*





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Let yourself get swept away in powder with Nova, the first film by the Perraudin brothers.

FWT, arriving in Bruson ready to ski. He finished 87<sup>th</sup>. The rookie's hunger to race consumed him, "but I clearly wasn't up to par", he recalled.

Driven by sheer determination, Simon returned to compete on the junior circuit, progressing quickly and even earning a few podiums in home races. It was enough to join the Freeride Qualifier Circuit in 2021. "I was pretty intimidated because I didn't think I had the level, but I got some very good results that allowed me to qualify for the Challenger." And then – disaster struck. "At the first event I lost both skis! But after that, I had nothing left to lose". Having taken the pressure off himself, Simon (who is remarkably tall – 2 meters!) won the next stop, in Jasna, and soon secured his spot in the FWT.

## LEVITATION, 360°, IMPACT

It was his first season racing with "the big boys", alongside local athletes like Maxime Chabloz, who was, incidentally, a kitesurf world champion and a phenomenal rookie that had taken the crown just the year before. Tough competition. And it was tricky juggling between the acronyms: from FWT to EPFL, where Simon was in his first year of studies. Fortunately, the pace was less intense than in the Qualifier or Challenger circuits, and riders were given more time to survey the mountain faces. Simon made the cut but, unfortunately, bad weather cancelled the finals on the Bec des Rosses that year.

The 2024 season started badly: Simon injured himself and withdrew. He was granted a wildcard entry in 2025 but fin-

ished 18<sup>th</sup> overall. Still no Bec des Rosses. So back to the Challenger circuit he went, to try climbing the ladder again...

## FREERIDE = SKI + FREEDOM

Loïc, the younger brother, also has a few tricks up his sleeve. Just for fun, he entered the Bruson Freeride Week in 2025... and won a second place! But he's mostly interested in other projects, and he's taking his brother along for the ride. The two agree that "competition isn't the only thing that matters in freeriding. In fact, today's best riders aren't even on the circuit – they're out filming their own projects." So, that's exactly what the brothers decided to do.

Their first creation? *Nova* – a 13-minute ode to freeriding with a psychological approach that "explores the cyclical nature of life and its events, where skiing represents rehabilitation. We drew inspiration from the world of music and its visually striking aesthetics. We both love music. We're currently premiering the film but can't wait for *Nova* to be released on YouTube (by the end of the year)". Their first screening was at the High Five Festival in Annecy, where *Nova* was well received and selected by the judges. The next is on 19 December at Verbier's cinema. "It's truly incredible to see your work come to life on the big screen," exclaimed Loïc. "Loïc did all the work behind-the-scenes. He's extremely meticulous and fine-tuned every aspect of the sound and visuals", Simon explained. As for what's next, the brothers have plenty of ideas. They're already working on a new project, skis included, of course.





# W

A hotel that's a cut above

Text Claude Hervé-Bazin  
Photos W Verbier

The growing awards list for the W Hotel in Verbier shows no signs of slowing. It has (once again) been named Switzerland's Best Ski Hotel by the World Ski Awards – for the 10<sup>th</sup> time in a row! This winter, the hotel debuts a brand-new restaurant: Brasserie 1519.





At W Verbier, relax in your private bubble, soaking in the mountain panoramas, before heading to Off-Piste's terrace for happy hour.



Now accustomed to being on the world's best podiums, the W Verbier claimed nine additional awards this fall... notably winning gold in two categories at the World Travel Awards, *Switzerland's Leading Resort* and *Switzerland's Leading Hotel Residences*, and then winning the award for *Switzerland's Best Ski Hotel* for the 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive time at the World Ski Awards! What's the secret to this success, which has never dipped since the hotel opened in 2013? It's the W's ability to unite the highest international standards with local flavour: it's urban *and* alpine, chic *and* dynamic, very ski *and* trendy.

## WARM

Its patina wood exterior is visually in harmony with nature, yet once inside, another universe emerges that exudes glamorous, big-city energy, pulsating in sounds, colours, spirit and desires. The W is not a hotel for the timid. Before even reaching your room, there may likely be a detour via the Living Room for an expertly mixed *St. Bernard* (cognac, sherry, Bénédictine, Angostura) or a *Heidi* (Pisco, Campari, génépi, sherry, lemon, milk). Beyond the drinks, a new Asian-Alpine fusion menu awaits to brighten your winter as you dine near the fireplace. After-ski, after-work, after-dinner, any occasion is a good one to stop in... or lounge on the terrace of Off Piste, lit up by DJs on the weekend. This year, the Amundsen brand collaboration brings Norwegian "rugged luxury" to the party, with fresh waffles paired with mulled wine or hot chocolate.

The tempo slows down naturally in the Spa W. After the popularity of ski-in, ski-out, now there's swim-in, swim-out. Split by large windows, you can swim between the indoor pool and the outdoor pool with ease. There's nothing like the snow falling on your shoulders while you gently float in





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warm water. To further eliminate stress or treat sore muscles (you did come here to ski, after all!), the spa's 1'300 m<sup>2</sup> host all kinds of delights: Jacuzzi, saunas, hammams, treatment rooms, cryotherapy, dynamic or skier yoga, sound meditation (new) or even a personal fitness coach. You can book the entire spa for a fully private moment, sweet treats and champagne included! Now there's no excuse for not being in shape or finding inner peace.

In an instant, you can retreat to the generous space of your room. A flickering fire in the fireplace and an Alpine panorama from the balcony await, as does the delightfully cosy bed, complete with a down duvet and a pillow menu.

#### W-INE AND DINE

*A mountain escape, reinvented*, goes the slogan. The same also applies here for the dining, where there are no eternal raclettes or fondues. Instead, you can enjoy sushi at U-Yama ("the mountain"), surrounded by traditional Japanese aesthetics – and don't skip the wagyu tataki, with a cinnamon-orange glaze, or the omakase evenings (reserved for 6 people), where the chef sets the pace.

This winter, the restaurant Bô! is being reinvented by starred Chef Sergi Arola, the W's faithful matchmaker for years, to become Brasserie 1519 led by Jean-Philippe Dupas. The concept? Where the soul of the Swiss Alps meets the boldness of the Mediterranean in a generous interpretation of brasserie-style dining. The opening is set for 4 December, with a contemporary feel shaped by raw, natural materials and an iridescent ceiling, Mediterranean-blue chairs, walnut tables and olive trees. Those who loved the ex-Eat-Hola will be delighted to find some of the signature tapas back on the menu augmented by fire, a nod to the new arrival of Dupas' tartares and charcoal grilling. The cherry on the cake: musical projections every Tuesday in winter, as part of *1519 Circle-Nights*. Still to come: the announcement of exclusive collabs with special guest chefs.

[wverbier.com](http://wverbier.com)

[wverbier-restaurants.com](http://wverbier-restaurants.com)

[spa-wverbier.com](http://spa-wverbier.com)



*A bar, an après-ski, and restaurants that embrace the Middle East, Mediterranean and ingredients from Valais: a wide choice of evening options.*



# Portfolio

Loïc Froidevaux  
A fully immersed photographer

Text Daniel Bauchervéz  
Photos Loïc Froidevaux

*After the storm, the Becca de Sery takes on Himalayan airs despite its relatively modest altitude (2,862 m).*







*Setting out from Cabane Brunet, a group of skiers begins the climb up toward the summit of the iconic Mont Rognieux (3,084 m).*



*Almost hidden by the clouds, the summit of Grand Laget (3,132 m) offers spectacular skiing, far from the crowds.*



*Seen from Les Ruinettes, the Funispace emerges from a dense cloud layer like a call to seek higher altitudes.*







*The last of the setting sun's golden light drapes the summits over Val Ferret, which is already in the shadows.*









Loïc Froidevaux is an engineer and a photographer, both rational and creative. And while that may seem contradictory, both fuel his ongoing quest to be witness to truth... whether in the mountains or the sea. As Swiss talent scouts, the team at helvet happily dove into his world.

At 30, Loïc has already spent half his life with his camera at his side (having used his parents' camera before that). Today that's a Sony A7iv, completed by a collection of lenses ranging from 16 mm to 400 mm. He loves the wide-angle lens, "which gives the impression of being more an actor than a spectator," and using black and white to "reinforce a photo's spectacular atmosphere, intensity and required effort."

Born in La Chaux-de-Fonds, as a young man Loïc found the mountains to be a natural subject of choice. "I love how graphic the mountains are and how they constantly change depending on the light and the season. I've had some incredible moments up there," he affirms. It's a reflection of both his adaptability and his need to merge his experiences with the reality of confronting the elements.

Today, Loïc often finds himself in Valais; a photographer drawn to the wild summits that crown the valley below. They're beautiful from down there, but it's even better to see them from on high. After mastering the drone, which gives "an element of majesty to a scene", Loïc went on to achieve his helicopter pilot's license in collaboration with Héli-Alpes in Sion last year. The experience left lasting memories, like the time they dropped him off on the summit of Le Pleureur at 3,700 m, in shorts and a t-shirt, just long enough for him to capture the helicopter skid landing over the void, with the Grand Combin in the background.

"Photography is a pathway to unimaginable adventures. It opens doors to discovery, meeting new people, and allows you to explore new lives, even if just for an instant" explains Loïc.

#### **CAPTURED EXPERIENCES**

If anything underlines Loïc's passion for photography, it's the idea of immersion: being a participant and not just a spectator. Living the instant being photographed, which usually comes to fruition with minimal planning and maximum spontaneity. That philosophy applies on the trail, between the runners, just as it does on corporate jobs. No gadgets, no spotlights, no staging. "I think that's one of the things my brand clients really appreciate: my photos are immersive. Whether that's for Swiza knives or Bach Equipment bags, I take their products on an adventure. I use them with the spirit of documenting their utility authentically, which is so much more sincere than a simple photo shoot. I let the journey dictate the direction we go and when I see that moment, that right light, I start shooting. In short, I live what I shoot. I always try to be sincere in that regard", added Loïc. "And if things don't go to plan, you adapt. Obstacles force you to get creative".

As for what's next, Loïc dreams of long-term assignments and marine horizons, meeting new people and the thrill of fresh emotions - "taking the time to take the time". Onboard a ship in the middle of a storm? "That would be amazing. The ocean is not that different from the mountains: accessible when sunny, hostile as soon as the weather shifts", explains the young photographer. "Photography is a way of seeing the beauty in everything around us, etching a place and an instant into history. But for me, it's also a way of honing my sight. The intention behind capturing a beautiful photo pushes me to look deeper, and, ultimately, see better."

*picfactory.ch*  
*@froidevaux\_loic*



#news

# WATCHES AND WONDERS GENEVA

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## WATCHMAKING

### OMEGA COMES TO VERBIER

In a first for Swatch Group, and a first for high-end watchmaking in general, Omega opened its own boutique in Verbier, inside the elegant Chalet de Flore (20 Rue de Médran), just a few steps from the lifts. The beautifully revamped chalet features a decorated chairlift outside, a stone fireplace inside and a balcony overlooking the Val de Bagnes, giving the Official Timekeeper of the Olympic and Paralympics Games a truly warm, Alpine style – embellished with Zebrano furniture, a lounge bar and... a 2-metre-tall golden astronaut statue by the front door! It's a nod to the brand's celestial history and the iconic Speedmaster timepiece, which astronauts wore when they set foot on the moon for the first time in human history.

[omegawatches.com](https://omegawatches.com)

## REAL ESTATE

### FORBES GLOBAL PROPERTIES REINFORCES ITS PRESENCE IN VERBIER

“Strength in unity”, goes the saying. Driven by this conviction, FGP Swiss & Alps – the founder and sole representative of Forbes Global Properties for Switzerland and the French Alps – has formed an exclusive partnership with real estate agency Eugster, which has been active in Verbier for over 50 years. A match made in heaven: on one side, an international network specialised in exceptional real estate and tailor-made services for buying and selling; on the other, strong local roots and fine-tuned regional knowledge. To reinforce their synergy, a local FGP Swiss & Alps office just opened in Verbier, represented by Laura Farrand, a well-known specialist in prestigious local real estate.

[fgp-swissandalps.com](https://fgp-swissandalps.com)

[agence-eugster.ch](https://agence-eugster.ch)



## SHOPPING

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[vinas-geneve.com](https://vinas-geneve.com)





# Giants of the Swiss Alps

Dams: heritage and the future of energy

Text Aurélie Michielin

Photos Alpiq | Valais-Wallis Promotion — Giovanni Castell

Switzerland: the land of chocolate, watches, banks... and dams. Few people know it, but this country has the highest density of dams in the world, which includes run-of-river structures and, above all, storage dams. For decades, this infrastructure has shaped both the Swiss landscape and the country’s energy identity.



The history behind the country’s hydraulic power really began to accelerate in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, when Switzerland, in a visionary and bold move, began to pursue unprecedented modernization. After the end of the Second World War, rising consumption and electrification meant that new means of production were required. Taking advantage of its unique topography and rich glacial reserves, Switzerland commissioned around a hundred large dams within just 20 years, mainly in the canton of Valais – which is home to Europe’s largest concentration of glaciers.

## THE “BLUE GOLD” RUSH

The long-isolated Alpine valleys suddenly found avenues for new prosperity. The work sites attracted vast numbers of labourers: thousands of Swiss and foreign workers came to contribute to building these monumental projects. For the Émosson Dam, which was commissioned in 1975, nine out

of ten workers were Italian. In parallel, infrastructure was expanding nationwide: roads, housing, cable cars, bridges – all of which contributed to the growth of Alpine tourism.

But there was a dark side to this growth. Entire villages were submerged, ecosystems were disrupted and many workers lost their lives. The worst accident occurred at the Mattmark Dam construction site in 1965, when a glacier tongue collapsed onto workers’ barracks, claiming the lives of 88 people.

## SWISS-MADE INNOVATION

Today, there are 222 large dams in Switzerland, which have evolved to become symbols of engineering excellence, innovation and national pride. These dams, along with the smaller infrastructure involved in the complete hydropower process, provide Switzerland with virtually emission-free

electricity. Until the early 1970s, hydropower supplied nearly 90% of Switzerland’s electricity. Although activating nuclear power plants brought that percentage down to around 60% today, hydropower remains the backbone of the country’s energy system, and Switzerland ranks sixth in Europe in terms of installed hydropower capacity.

From design and engineering to operation and maintenance, Switzerland masters the entire chain of expertise in this domain and exports its technical innovations globally to places like Norway, China and South America.

Because hydropower requires significant investment, its funding is based on a public or semi-public model, with the primary contracting authorities and developers being cantonal or municipal administrations, along with electric utility companies (which are often publicly owned). The success

of this model revolves around key hydropower concessions: companies are given the right – by a canton or municipality – to use a watercourse for electricity production for limited periods, generally 80 years. In exchange, the operator pays fees and transfers ownership of the dam to the public once the concession period comes to an end.

## AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Switzerland committed to gradually phasing out nuclear power and increasing renewable production in its 2050 Energy Strategy, which was approved by voters in 2017. In order to meet rising energy demands while also compensating for the closure of nuclear plants, a historic round-table discussion with cantons, operators, and environmental organizations began in 2020. It selected 16 hydropower projects – deemed “energetically promising and ecologically acceptable” – to benefit from new facilities, raised dam





## *The promise of a perfect night's sleep*



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*Tucked into the Val d'Anniviers, the Moiry arch dam was completed in 1958  
and holds 78 million cubic metres of water!*

walls, expanded reservoirs, and extended pump-storage systems for improved energy storage and grid balancing.

But the future of Swiss hydropower now faces new challenges. Suitable location sites have become scarce, approval procedures are lengthy, and profitability is uncertain in an electricity market where prices remain relatively low. Another serious concern is that the first concessions are approaching their end, which means the future governance of these concrete giants will need to be redefined. What company would invest hundreds of millions of Swiss Francs in a dam that has uncertain ownership rights and residual value?

Climate change has also become another increasingly important factor. Large dams are primarily fed by glacial meltwater and require hydrologic balance in order to regulate water flow, prevent floods and secure water reserves during (increasingly frequent) droughts. Scientists now predict that half of Switzerland's glaciers will disappear by 2100, risking the future utility of the dams... while, paradoxically, making them even more essential. The Gornerli reservoir project in Valais, a flagship of the round-table discussion, illustrates the challenge of

reconciling energy production, water management and protection of nature.

### REINVENTING THE BALANCE

Even though voters overwhelmingly approved a 2024 law aimed at boosting domestic renewable electricity production, administrative delays, local opposition, and environmental or landscape concerns still hinder many projects. However, in late September 2025, Parliament adopted a "law to accelerate procedures", designed to simplify planning and authorization for renewable energy projects of national interest. Whether these measures will be enough to convert political intent into tangible progress remains to be seen.

So, what does the future have in store? If the electricity agreement between Switzerland and the European Union enters into force, it could open new prospects – like integration into the European electricity market or greater value for pumped-storage power – but it could also lead to a potential loss of flexibility in managing and leveraging Switzerland's hydropower resources. Only time will tell whether the country can harmoniously combine energy independence, respect for nature and the legacy of its "water cathedrals" – these monuments of the past that continue to power the future.



# A Swiss education

The mountain as a classroom

Text Claude Hervé-Bazin  
Photos Verbier International School

Does increasing the altitude improve education? To learn better, should one study *and* ski? Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, elite private schools – inspired by British boarding schools – have proliferated in the Swiss mountains. Why are they such a success?

It likely all began with the creation of a boy’s boarding school by writer and educator Rodolphe Töpffer in the 1820s. He designed Rousseau-inspired course curriculums that integrated experiences in the area’s Alpine nature for his students, many of whom were foreigners. But it wasn’t until almost a half century later, in 1880, that the Institut Le Rosey was founded in Rolle (Vaud), becoming a model of its kind. This elite Swiss boarding school, located within a prestigious, medieval castle, is highly selective, offers bilingual education, emphasizes sport as an incentive for learning and provides a sense of community. It’s a well-defined model that will soon reach as far as the shores of Lake Geneva.

In 1915, spurred by the First World War, Le Rosey set course for Gstaad for the winter. A trial run that quickly became the norm, then a tradition, contributing to the resort’s booming growth, where several wealthy families settled. Why? Primarily because of the mountains’ powerful educational potential: sports like skiing, ice skating and mountaineering help forge character, instil discipline and encourage endurance, empowerment, maturity, resilience and team spirit... to name just a few of the benefits. And, of course, there’s the added bonus of the students’ parents being able to network.

**BECOME THE BEST VERSION OF YOURSELF**

At the time, the Collège Alpin International Beau Soleil, which had been in Gstaad since 1910, had already moved to Villars-sur-Ollon’s sunny plateau at 1,300 m in altitude. After the Second World War, three more schools were founded within three years, all of which are still active today – La Garenne International School in 1947, Préfleuri International Alpine School in 1948, and Aiglon College in Chesières, in 1949.

All of them are still primarily based on the British boarding school model, emphasising their high standing, quest for excellence, small class sizes and high level of personalisation – for studies that often begin in early childhood. The schools are also often influenced by the Montessori method or Austrian Rudolf Steiner’s holistic education approach, which relies heavily on the integration of the arts and manual labour. While run at first by their essentially English and French founders, these elite Swiss boarding schools began little by little to attract candidates from all four corners of the globe, reinforcing socialization, language practice and a potentially powerful future network for their students.



Over time, the goals evolved: as the world globalised, it became more about preparing for international exams and increasing both mobility and adaptability on a global level. In contrast to the demagogic influences of the past few years, the schools have strongly emphasised humanist values and the central role of multilateralism. Education is bilingual or entirely in English, with options to obtain a French Baccalauréat, British A-Level, Swiss Maturité or an IB (International Baccalaureate) upon completion of studies.

**A (VERY) DYNAMIC EDUCATION**

The security and quality of life that Switzerland in general (and Valais’ ski resorts in particular) offers have been attracting increasing numbers of wealthy foreign residents. This new boom led to the 2011 founding of the Verbier International School, whose mantra is to “educate beyond the curriculum” and shape world citizens who are sharp, integrated, independent and creative. How exactly? Using a holistic approach that offers multiple sources of learning and experience, like debates, theatre, fine arts and even cooking classes, plus cultural visits, hikes and other sport activities that span dozens of other domains. Take for example the sport-study *Ski Race Academy* program or the *Freeride Academy*

program, which include glacier outings in Zermatt and Saas Fee. It was a success, which inspired the creation of the Copperfield International School, also in Verbier – until the two schools unified in summer 2025, under the aegis of Duke’s Education, and inaugurated the new Trois Cimes campus premises (with an adjoining sports centre).

On the other side of the valley, in the heart of Crans Montana, the Le Régent International School (the youngest of the Swiss international boarding schools, founded in 2015) adopted a similar philosophy, expressed through their unique educational model: learning with the head, heart, and hand (h³). All classes are in English with obligatory French classes. It offers “experiential learning” with orientation courses in a plethora of options from music to yoga, debating, eloquence, robotics, mountain biking or hockey. The goal is to enhance development to help children reach their full potential, build practical skills and strong character that will last a lifetime and shape responsible citizens, entrepreneurs and leaders who are conscious of their social (and even environmental) role, ultimately having a positive impact on the future of the world. A core mission and enormous ambition to prepare students to excel in all their pursuits.





# VALAIS. ENGRAVED ON MY HEART.

[visitvalais.ch](https://visitvalais.ch)



## Patrouille des Glaciers 2026

The heroes route

Text Daniel Bauchervéz

Photo Pascal Gertschen



The 25<sup>th</sup> edition of Switzerland's most famous (biennial) ski-mountaineering race, linking Zermatt (or Arolla) to Verbier, will take place 13-19 April 2026. We sit down with the new director from Swiss Romandy, Brigadier General Yves Charrière.

Three men (or women) roped together for 57.5 km at high altitudes, the equivalent of 110 km in terms of effort. Add 4,386 m of positive altitude change, with skis on, from one hill to another. The Patrouille des Glaciers is back with all of its sweat, tenacity, exhaustion, solidarity and emotions. The most serious competitors have their eyes on the current record time, established in 2018 by an Italian team, a prodigious 5 hours 35 minutes and 27 seconds.

**Brigadier General Charrière, this summer you succeeded Brigadier General Sieber to lead the Patrouille des Glaciers (PdG). What led to you taking on this role?** I had no idea who from the army had submitted my name for consideration to the Federal Council, and I was incredibly happy and honoured to learn that I had been selected to fulfil this role. My career path has seen me in several functions and commands over the past 35 years of service, notably within general military staff for large units and then, after being named General Officer in 2018, as the replacement Major of Territorial Division 1 (editor's note: the six French-speaking cantons plus Bern). I then directed and developed my own company and technical office with around 20 collaborators. I'm still Chairman, although these days I do not actively participate in operational functions. I was also elected Executive President of my municipality, Aubonne. In short,

I have a lot of military, economic and political experiences that contribute to my role with the PdG.

**What feelings does this nomination evoke for you?** Pride, honour, humility and respect.

**Are there any changes planned for the 2026 edition of the PdG?** My predecessor, Brigadier General Sieber, had already charted a perfect plan for PdG 2026, I simply continued his work. This edition will have a separate women's division for the first time and also embodies a stronger collaboration between the army and the Patrouille des Glaciers Foundation. Otherwise, there have been no major changes, but many small improvements in regard to route security, the services offered to participants and the relationships we have with the municipalities that honour us by welcoming us, including all of our vendors. And of course – above all, I should say – that the winning troop performs their service in a way that brings added value to military training. At the end of the day, that aspect of this competition means a lot to me personally. The PdG is a military race that's open to civilians; one of its goals is to contribute to the learnings of our general staff and our troops who work in high mountain environments.

[pdg.ch](https://pdg.ch)



# New age nomadism

Catch your breath, at 1,600 m in altitude

Text Samia Tawil  
Photos Verbier Tourism | Le Chalet d'Adrien

Some establishments have been leading the trend for several years already. The CERVO Mountain Resort, in Zermatt, pioneered a holistic high mountain offering with their ice bath experiences, which link breathwork and a Russian banya ritual where sauna participants are whisked with birch branches to improve blood circulation. Zermatt coach Sven Chanton, who has overseen several wellness treatments offered at the CERVO's Ātman Mountain Spa from 2023 to 2025, explains the theory behind it in more detail: “There are several benefits to ice baths that go far beyond the physical benefits. It’s really about learning how to relax in discomfort, which has the power to transform how we see our circumstances.”

As a former top-tier skier, Sven discovered breathwork during a recovery trip to Bali after he had injured his meniscus. The experience allowed him to free himself of several unexpected traumas, and he adopted certain practices moving forward to help alleviate psychosomatic blocks.

Today, while he is primarily sought out by athletes, he offers private retreats and has noticed an increasing number of digital nomad clients. “The freedom their lifestyle gives them is actually a double-edged sword, because it comes with a heavy mental load. Through these sessions, we work on creating the space they’re missing, which is as much spiritual as it is physical”. The Alpine silence offers its own remedy, a communal refuge for these digital travellers that are used to normally coping with stress alone.

## HIGH CLASS ZEN FESTIVALS

These observations led to the creation of holistic wellness festivals in the mountains, in the same vein as the Schloss’ Flow Weeks in Zermatt, organised each season – with the next one taking place 1-6 March 2026. The key words?

The days of nomad mountain living with extreme skiing in between two conference calls seem over. To shake the stress, the new trend leans towards finding inner balance: yoga, mediation... getting in touch with one’s inner self.





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Wood, stone, natural light and stunning views are a recipe for relaxation in of themselves and await you at the Chalet d'Adrien spa in Verbier.

Nature and mental reset. From guided walks through nature harvesting medicinal and anti-stress plants, to open air mountain drawing sessions, ecstatic dance and even good old-fashioned yoga... if your chakras aren't aligned after all that, the warm exchanges over lunch – surrounded by the absolutely breathtaking panoramic views – will surely do the trick. And that's one of the other key reasons participants sign up to attend.

In Verbier, too, conscious co-living is all the rage. Take for example Snomad Fest in Liddes, which hosts its second edition from 7-17 December, combining ski passes, conferences and debates around the challenges of nomad living. It's goal? To connect nomads to one another and evolve into an annual international gathering.

There's also Inspire Verbier, which organises weekends and micro-retreats in collaboration with several high-class hotels. The unbeatable Chalet d'Adrien (Relais & Châteaux) organises ski and yoga retreats for three to five nights, which include spa treatments and gourmet vegetarian meals by Michelin-starred Chef Sebastiano Lombardi – dishes that invite you to lean back and let your soul be nourished.

In Crans Montana, the Six Senses luxury hotel proposes some of the most creative healing sessions year-round: from a fall yoga session that marks the International Day of Peace to a sound healing workshop featuring Nepalese gongs, timed perfectly for sunrise in the spring... here, any reason to connect with one's inner self is a good one. The

hotel also hosts the Alma Frequency festival in June, which is centred around wellbeing, longevity and mindfulness. This large-scale wellness retreat primarily attracts large swaths of digital nomads, who attend in hopes of a cleanse from their habitual routine of productivity and exhaustion, and a chance to meet with renowned personal development specialists. The Six Senses also offers premium wellness events throughout the winter season, making it a natural gathering place for digital nomads who want both luxury and health, with dedicated remote workspaces.

#### CREATING A SERENE FUTURE

It's worth noting that in Switzerland, “workactions” have become the norm. According to a Flex Work study, more and more employees request to work remotely for certain periods; more than 15% even consider remote work as a non-negotiable part of their employment contracts. But is the freedom touted by freelancers all that it's cracked up to be?

“Having no set work hours also means being available all the time, and that's the spiral we're trying to combat through these experiences. It offers people a chance to completely unplug and recharge”, explains Sven. There's no doubt that burnout also affect digital nomads. And although the door to freedom is half ajar for these world travellers, who had the courage to adopt a lifestyle many others never would, they also have to work twice as hard to find some semblance of peace and wellbeing. And the mountains offer a perfect contemplative setting, a welcome pause where it's easy to focus on simply “being”.



# A circular economy and coffee

The capsule's great ball

Text Hélène Dubraviez

Photo Nestlé Nespresso



Aluminium coffee pods? A Swiss invention that conquered the world. An icon, also, within the virtuous loop of recycling, which is highlighted through annual collaborations between Nespresso and other legendary brands.

Used, saved, collected, re-melted down and reshaped... aluminium coffee pods beautifully illustrate the magic characteristics of this material, which can be reborn multiple times and can take on multiple, unique forms. In light of this, just a few years after its founding in 1986, Nespresso launched its very own robust recycling system. Developed in partnership with Groupe Barec, it revolves today around a series of collection points and sorting centres located within the brand's stores, but also as a unique (free) service: post box collection by local mail carriers. What's even better is that in 2020, Nespresso cofounded (along with the Migros company Delica) the Swiss Aluminium Capsule Recycling Association, to focus on developing a consistent solution that could be applied industry wide.

## SURPRISING SECOND LIVES

Considering that over 70% of Nespresso capsules consumed by individuals are now recycled, the concept of a circular economy has truly become a concrete and dynamic reality. To educate naysayers and comfort everyone else, Nespresso has spent the past ten years working on collaborations with different Swiss and international brands under the moniker of their "Second Life" initiative. The idea? Making the recycling process more mainstream through the design and fabrication of iconic, utilitarian objects made from recycled materials.

The aluminium was thus reshaped into Victorinox Swiss Army knives, classic 849 Caran d'Ache ballpoint pens, Mammut vests, an e-bike by Swiss startup Miloo... even the used coffee grounds have been rehabilitated. Initially used to supplement the biogas plant in Henniez, these days

(after much research) they are used in certain fabrics and shoe soles, like Zèta sneakers, and some pencil leads. The Big Bang Unico Nespresso Origin, co-created with Hublot, even did double-time on the concept by incorporating aluminium elements and using coffee grounds as part of the watch bracelet fabrication! All of the projects embody Swiss know-how and innovation, and are brought to life in collaboration with other sustainability-forward brands. In a nod to their original form, all of the objects – which are made as limited editions – take on a colour inspired by the Nespresso capsules.

## “SCHUSS” RECYCLING

In their latest collaboration, Nespresso approached ski equipment fabricator Faction, which was founded by a group of freeriders in Verbier – widely seen as the discipline's Mecca. What could be more Swiss than an initiative uniting two of the country's most iconic companies, combining their common goals for precision, innovation, quality, know-how and sustainability, around one of the nation's greatest passions: skiing?

The collaboration led to the creation of three innovative, new products available this winter: Skis with a fine aluminium blade that uses the equivalent of 22 recycled capsules, ski poles (made of 100% recycled materials) that each contain 27% recycled capsules, and – even more surprising – ski boots each contain 15% recycled coffee grounds! It's a beautiful example of the circular nature of coffee pods.

[nespresso.com](https://www.nespresso.com)



# Stefan Engström

Serial skier and serial entrepreneur

Text Claude Hervé-Bazin

Photos The Mountain Studio

Back to a more discreet lifestyle, Stefan Engström rose to prominence in the 1970s and 1980s as one of Sweden's top – and first – freestyle skiers. A genius co-founder of Peak Performance and several other sportswear brands, he is now devoting himself to his latest venture: The Mountain Studio, based in Zermatt.



*With his hyper-fluid style and constant smile, Stefan Engström is still a tireless trailblazer on the slopes.*





Now 65 years old, Stefan Engström remains insatiable. His latest venture: The Mountain Studio, a brand that's 100% Zermatt.

There's a fairy-tale feel to this story. Once upon a time, on the outskirts of Stockholm, a boy hopped on his skis and hurtled down the neighbouring hills. Stefan Engström wasn't even ten yet. Commonplace? Maybe today, but not at the time. Stenmark hadn't come along yet, and very few people skied back then in Sweden.

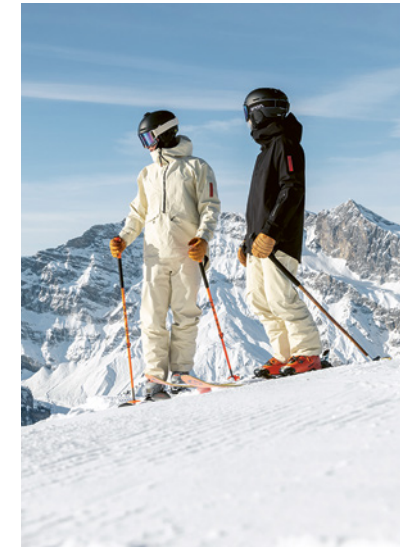
Way west, close to the Norwegian border, Sälen was just a few streets dotted with purple lupins in summer and snow-drifts in winter. It is in this discreet resort, made famous by the Vasaloppet cross-country ski race, that Stefan really made his first marks. Then, at age 15, a summer camp took him north of the Arctic Circle to meet his future. For him, skiing was to be moguls, freestyle, and parties in between every landing.

The energy of the seventies propelled him into the national team and towards several World Cup podiums – and even two victories. His ego was satisfied. But what next? Stefan's unbridled enthusiasm led him to SOS, the sportswear brand

that sponsored the Swedish freestyle team. At just 23, it wasn't about playing CEO, sitting in a fat chair and smoking cigars, but doing everything at once – “a crash course in learning.”

#### THE PEAK PERFORMANCE ADVENTURE

In 1986, then age 26, Stefan Engström decided to go his own way. In Åre, with his mates Peter Blom and curler Christer Mårtensson, he started his own business: first a clothing and ski equipment shop, then quickly their own line of sportswear. Quality, functionality, Scandinavian design – the three pillars of Peak Performance were planted. The brand was the first in the country to use Gore-Tex. Sales doubled every year, forcing the trio to come up with every kind of solution – from finding a factory in Portugal to avoiding cash-flow problems. A decade later, the brand was sold. Two decades later, Stefan Engström set sail, having made his fortune. But the man couldn't stay put for long... The following year, he was propelled to the head of J.Lindeberg, a Swedish sports and fashion clothing line that was struggling to keep up with success.







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[hestragloves.com](https://hestragloves.com)

Restructuring, reorganisation, and the addition of a new ski collection brought J.Lindeberg back on track, tripling its sales. Always eager to explore new business ideas and trends, Stefan still had one foot in the door when he hurtled down yet another new path, launching another company – this one based on a direct online sales model: Stellar Equipment. The catalogue featured all the technical equipment for skiing, hiking, and climbing, designed from innovative, high-quality materials.

## THE MOUNTAIN STUDIO: THE MADE IN ZERMATT BRAND

Although never one to take it easy – whether in life or on the slopes – at the dawn of the new millennium, Stefan finally eased back a little. He spent time in Verbier, then in Zermatt, ‘for its very long skiing season’... The entrepreneur decided to settle down here, built a house at the edge of the slopes, hit the runs almost every morning as soon as the lifts opened, and embraced the alpine resort lifestyle Zermatt is famed for.

Resting, Stefan? Not for long. Skiing down the Klein Matterhorn or dining around Zermatt’s best restaurants, bonds were naturally formed. Between two schuss runs, Marcel Hirscher, the 2018 double Olympic champion (in giant slalom and combined), came aboard the Swede’s circle of friends. A perfectionist, hailed as the best alpine skier in history, with a total of 67 World Cup race wins, Hirscher was considering his next big move after his recent retirement. Should he go for his own brand of skis (he has: now Van Deer)? Or embark on Stefan’s latest idea? So he did. Both. The two had much to share: a love of skiing, the mountains, and good equipment. So why not launch a new brand? No sooner said than done. A company was set up as equal partners, investors followed, and a versatile collection was designed and personally tested in Zermatt and Engelberg. Hence, The Mountain Studio was born. ‘A small range of purpose-built, carefully curated garments for advanced skiing, outdoor activities, and mountain living – including hiking, biking, training, and everyday wear. High-quality, stylish products, designed in Switzerland and produced with environmental considerations in mind,’ explains Stefan Engström. The spirit? ‘Buy less, use more.’

‘Our main customers are primarily avid sports enthusiasts, but they also care about their appearance,’ explains the Swede. ‘Our icon products? Our Gore-Tex Z-2 jacket and our reversible double-duty down jackets – one side for the resort, the other for the city. We have also developed Alp-3, our own stretch fabric for ski jackets.’ On the team: nothing but snow sports professionals, including a few local big names.

[the-mountain-studio.com](https://the-mountain-studio.com)





#watches

**Chanel**  
*Première Chaîne Iconique Double Tour*

Sensual and chic, this watch reveals an octagonal (19.7 x 15.2 x 7.5 mm) steel case coated with 18K yellow gold – or steel, depending on the chosen variant – and a high-precision quartz movement. The deep, black-lacquered dial echoes the elegant chain bracelet that's interwoven with black leather strap, which wraps twice around the wrist. The cherry on the cake is the crown adorned with an onyx cabochon.

[chanel.com](https://www.chanel.com)



**Rolex**  
*Oyster Perpetual Land-Dweller*

Representing a new milestone in Rolex history, the Land-Dweller generated a lot of talk in early 2025. The result of seven long years of research and development (and a cascade of patents!), this watch is equipped with a revolutionary Dynapulse sequential distribution escapement, which transmits energy by rolling rather than sliding. Another notable evolution, in terms of aesthetics, is the newly designed, integrated bracelet.

[rolex.com](https://www.rolex.com)



**Longines**  
*Spirit Flyback*

With over a century of aviation heritage to their name, Longines revealed a new and highly seductive version of the Spirit Pilot Flyback for 2025. This revised chronograph flyback stays true to the aesthetic of the original collection, featuring a 39.5 mm stainless steel case with a bi-directional rotating bezel, a 30-minute counter at 3 o'clock and a small seconds sub-dial at 9 o'clock. It has a 68-hour power reserve and is COSC-certified.

[longines.com](https://www.longines.com)



**Chopard**  
*Alpine Eagle 41*

One of the things we immediately love, in this dial that has textures inspired by an eagle's iris, is its magnificent pine colour, which is obtained through a PVD treatment that makes the Roman numerals and rhodium-plated, luminescent indexes pop. It's both minimalist and exceptional at the same time, housed within a stainless-steel 41 mm case and powered by a manufacture COSC-certified calibre that boasts a 60-hour power reserve.

[chopard.com](https://www.chopard.com)





**Tudor**  
*Black Bay 68*

1968. That was the year that Tudor’s signature aesthetic took hold with its emblematic “Snowflake” hands. Now, they are found on this timepiece, part of the Black Bay collection, which regroups the brand’s visual codes within a 43 mm stainless steel case with polished and satin finishes and a unidirectional matte black aluminium bezel. Its manufacture calibre offers a 70-hour power reserve and is a METAS-certified “Master Chronometer”.

tudorwatch.com



**Hublot**  
*Big Bang King Gold Ceramic*  
*20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

This watch marries 18K 5N gold with the robustness of black ceramic, a key Hublot material. With its polished and satin-finished 44 mm case, ceramic bezel with 6 H-shaped screws, triple sub-dials and date at 04:30, this watch embodies the brand’s visual codes in a look that’s as bold as it is chic. The self-winding chronograph movement has a 42-hour power reserve, and it’s topped with a black structured rubber strap.

hublot.com



**Zenith**  
*Defy Skyline Chrono*

First, there’s the aesthetics of the 42 mm octagonal steel case, the multi-faceted dial and the brand’s iconic starry sky dial. Then, there’s the manufacture El Primero 3600 calibre that makes this chronograph precise to 1/10 of a second, with the central hand going full circle in... only 10 seconds... with a 60-hour power reserve! You can also choose between a steel bracelet or a patterned rubber strap, which are easily interchangeable.

zenith-watches.com



**Breitling**  
*Superocean Heritage B31 Automatic 42*

These hypnotically coloured diving watches cleverly combine heritage and modern performance. On one hand, the key elements of the collection: a clean dial, a date window at 6 o’clock and the signature Breitling spear-and-arrow hands. On the other: a steel 42 mm case and unidirectional bezel with a ceramic insert, powered by the self-winding, manufacture B31 calibre that has a 78-hour power reserve. Features a metal strap.

breitling.com



**Tag Heuer**  
*Carrera Chronograph Extreme Sport*

Faithful to the Carrera aesthetic, which came to life more than six decades ago, this timepiece marries sporty boldness with a special kind of chic, thanks to its 44 mm 18K 5N rose gold case. Its openwork dial, with Nano-Amorphous Carbon finishing and a grained black centre, offers captivating contrasts with rose gold touches – notably within the sub dials, hands and indexes. This gem of a watch also boasts an 80-hour power reserve.

tagheuer.com



**Norqain**  
*Independence Skeleton 40mm*

The 40 mm stainless steel case with diamond-like carbon coating, skeletonised dial, diamond-cut faceted hour and minute hands filled with white Super-LumiNova®, and its brushed, polished and sandblasted finishings give this watch its strong character – completed by its khaki or black “Milanaise” rubber strap. It’s powered by the automatic manufacture calibre NB08S, which is COSC-chronometer certified.

norqain.com



#trends



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5



4



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7



1. **Goldbergh Snowball ski suit** [goldbergh.com](http://goldbergh.com)
2. **Rolex Oyster Perpetual Lady-Datejust, 18 ct yellow gold** [rolex.com](http://rolex.com)
3. **Loewe Medium Flamenco purse in laminated lambskin** [loewe.com](http://loewe.com)
4. **Statement Ring Mini My Way, diamonds and yellow gold** [michaud.ch](http://michaud.ch)
5. **Louis Roederer Champagne Cristal 2016** [louis-roederer.com](http://louis-roederer.com)
6. **Aurezzi Toothpaste 24K gold particles** [aurezzi.com](http://aurezzi.com)
7. **La Prairie Pure Gold Radiance Cream** [laprairie.com](http://laprairie.com)



#trends



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1. The Mountain Studio Z-7 PRO Gore-Tex® Pro 3L shell vectran jacket [the-mountain-studio.com](http://the-mountain-studio.com)
2. Moncler Estagnous down gilet [moncler.com](http://moncler.com)
3. POC Obex Visor ski helmet, Uranium Black Matt [poc.com](http://poc.com)
4. Chanel Bleu de Chanel, l'Exclusif [chanel.com](http://chanel.com)
5. Yniq Model Four, Black All Gold, ski goggle [yniq.se](http://yniq.se)
6. Bang & Olufsen Beosound 2, high-end home speaker [bang-olufsen.com](http://bang-olufsen.com)
7. Moon Boot Icon low black rubber boots [moonboot.com](http://moonboot.com)



#trends

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1. **Transparent** Small speaker *transpa.rent*
2. **Audio Bottle Grinder**, salt and pepper mill *audocph.com*
3. **Gubi Multi-Lite**, portable lamp by Louis Weisdorf *gubi.com*
4. **Arflex Botolo** armchair, high version in fur *arflex.it*
5. **Rituals Scented candle**, Mystic Cedar *rituals.com*

#helvet



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