

News & Research Ideas





A Warm Welcome to You



Whether you want to research a specific topic in Graubünden or are still looking for the right story – we are happy to be at your service.



Nadja Cantieni
+41 81 254 24 68
nadja.cantieni@graubuenden.ch



Cornelia Schnell
+41 81 254 24 57
cornelia.schnell@graubuenden.ch



Thalia Wünsche
+41 81 254 24 32
thalia.wuensche@graubuenden.ch



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New Experiences & Offers

Graubünden: The World's First Mountain Air Sommelier



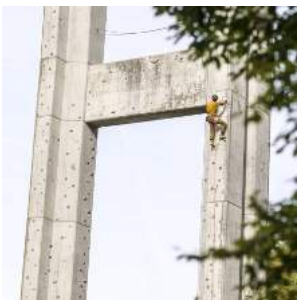
Not all wine is the same, and this is also true of mountain air. To enable guests to discover the region with their nose in a new and different way, the Graubünden tourist region has hired the world's first mountain air sommelier. His name is Patrick Stebler, he is a perfumer and chemist from Chur. His task: to create mountain air experiences in eight mountain villages that guests can experience individually and with guidance from summer 2023. <https://www.graubuenden.ch/bergluft> (in German)

Mulegns: White Tower of Origen



The cultural institution Origen is building a 29-metre-high digitally printed white tower in the village of Mulegns on the Julier Pass in 2023. The building will tell of literary celestial journeys, the homesickness of Graubünden emigrants, the bold taste of the Mulegns sugar barons and offer space for art installations, radio play tours and theatre performances. The building is to remain standing for five years. <http://www.origen.ch>

Klosters: Climbing on the Sunniberg Bridge



The 526-metre-long Sunniberg Bridge has been the architectural landmark of Klosters since its opening in 2005. In autumn 2022, it gained an additional function: a climbing garden was opened on its pillars. With over 600 metres of climbing on 22 routes – the longest is 55 metres long – the new climbing facility entices visitors to embark on spectacular explorations of the imposing structure. <https://www.davos.ch/en/activities/outdoor-adventure/climbing>

Tectonic Arena Sardona: "Segnes Trek" with 6 Day Stages



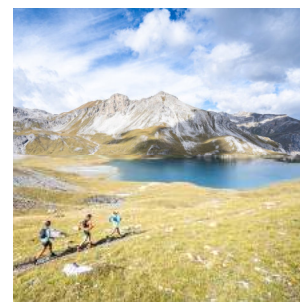
The new "Segnes Trek" leads through the UNESCO World Heritage Site Tectonic Arena Sardona and past three of the most beautiful natural sites in the region: the Segnesböden, the Tschingelhörner and the Strudeltöpfe on Alp Mora. From Reichenau the tour goes via the Ringelspitz mountain hut to Bargis, continues over the Segnes Pass to the Martinsmad mountain hut and back via the Segnes mountain hut to Flims. <https://www.flimslaax.com/wandern-schweiz/segnes-trek> (in German)

Parc Ela: "Parc Ela Trek" with 17 Day Stages



The new "Parc Ela Trek" leads along existing hiking trails and mostly at an altitude of over 2000 m above sea level from Tiefencastel via Juf, Bergün, Sertig, Stuls to Lenzerheide. The nights are spent in hotels, mountain huts and agrotourism accommodation. Some of the overnight lodgings, for example the one on the Septimer Pass, were newly created for the long-distance hike. <https://www.parc-ela.ch/de/parc-ela-trek> (in German)

Val Müstair: 5-Day Biosfera Trail for Trail Runners



Five days exploring the Val Müstair on the most beautiful trails – this will be possible from June 2023 on the new Biosfera Trail. The offer includes overnight stays in Nature Park partner hotels and luggage transport. The Biosfera Trail is available in two variants: "il dür" (the hard one) comprises 88 kilometres and 5740 metres of ascent and descent, "il sportiv" (the sporty one) 54 kilometres, 2770 metres of ascent as well as 3000 metres of descent. <https://www.val-muestair.ch/de/biosfera-trail> (in German)

New Accommodation

Zernez: New Exhibition at the National Park Visitor Centre



On 3 June 2023, the Swiss National Park will open a brand new exhibition at its visitor centre. Fascinating experience rooms allow visual and acoustic immersion in the mysterious world of untouched nature at the oldest national park in the Alps. For over 100 years, man has largely left the wilderness area between the Lower Engadine and Val Müstair to develop naturally.
<https://www.nationalpark.ch/en>

Klosters: Stars Suite on the Madrisa



Lie in a cosy warm bed at almost 1900 m above sea level and look up at the starry sky: the new, exclusive stars suite on the Madrisa makes it possible. Thanks to its roof, a transparent dome, guests can, with a bit of luck, enjoy a falling star shower at night like they have never experienced before. The overnight offer includes the ascent and descent to Madrisa as well as breakfast.
<https://www.madrisa.ch/en/stars-suite>

Flims: Flem Mountain Lodge



The new Flem Mountain Lodge in the middle of Flims is the perfect accommodation for bikers. This is due to its central location and its hosts: the lodge is run by former professional bikers Caro and Anita Gehrig. The lodge has 23 rooms, a holiday apartment and a public café restaurant. With bike camps, small concerts and film screenings, the Gehrig twins create spaces for encounters.
<https://flemlodge.ch> (in German)

Valposchiavo: Casa Alpina Belvédère



In summer 2022, two young restaurateurs, Lea Hürlimann and Aurelia Stirnimann, took over the Casa Alpina Belvédère on Alp Grüm. Their philosophy: to create an oasis for visitors to be in the here and now and recharge. The offer is simple, but very deliberately designed. Local specialities are served up using regional ingredients. The ten rooms of the Berghaus are cosy and charmingly rustic. <https://www.belvedere-alpgruem.ch>

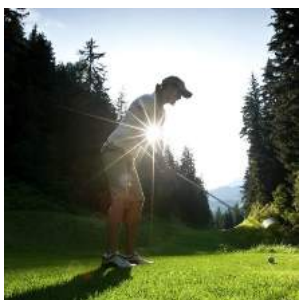
Anniversary

Viamala: 200 Years of Commercialstrasse



After 5 years of construction, the first vehicles travelled on the Commercialstrasse from Chur over the San Bernardino Pass to Bellinzona and over the Splügen Pass to Chiavenna in 1823. The new north-south connections permanently changed the destination of Viamala and had a significant influence on the tourist development of the region: many lodgings that still exist today were opened at that time. <http://www.commercialstrasse.ch> (in German)

Vulpera: 100 Years of Vulpera Golf Club



Built in 1923, the Vulpera golf course is the third oldest in Switzerland. The golf course's appearance has changed somewhat since then but, even today, you can sense that the course was embedded into nature at that time without removing large amounts of earth. This has resulted in a varied terrain with a variety of hole designs. The 9-hole course is situated at 1270 m above sea level and offers a view of the Engadine Dolomites.

<https://www.vulperagolf.ch> (in German)

Rhaetian Railway: 50 Years of the Bernina Express



On 3 June 1973, the Bernina Express ran for the first time on the legendary Albula and Bernina line, which is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Since then, around ten million guests have travelled from Graubünden to Tirano in Italy in the comfortable panoramic cars on the highest railway line in the Alps. Trains from Chur pass through 55 tunnels and 196 bridges – including the Landwasser Viaduct and the Brusio Circular Viaduct.

<https://www.berninaexpress.ch>

Heidiland: 25 Years of the Heidi Village



For decades, the story of Heidi has thrilled children all over the world; be it as a musical, animated series, film or book. But nowhere is Heidi's aura and personality more palpable than in the Heidi village with the original Heidi house, the alpine hut, the school room in the town hall, the petting zoo with goats and the museum. The Heidi Village is located close to the village of Maienfeld, which is considered the home of the literary character Heidi.

<https://www.heididorf.ch/en>

Valposchiavo: 25 Years of the Cavaglia Glacier Garden



The glacial mills of Cavaglia – also called "Giants' Pots" – are an impressive natural phenomenon. They were formed over thousands of years, during which glacial water, debris and gravel shaped the hard rock. Admission to the Glacier Garden with its mills up to 15 metres deep is free. Since 2021, the Cavaglia Gorge has also been accessible via footbridges and bridges designed by the well-known Graubünden engineer Jürg Conzett.

<https://ggc.swiss/en>

Records from Graubünden

Even in a small mountain region like Graubünden you can find record holders; some of them are even world-class. A selection:

Rhaetian Railway: World's Longest Passenger Train



In October 2022, the Rhaetian Railway set a new record for the world's longest passenger train. With a length of 1906 metres, the Graubünden narrow-gauge railway broke the previous record from Belgium by almost 200 metres. The record was set between Preda and Alvaneu, a section of the UNESCO World Heritage Albula-Bernina line. The world record train had to descend 789 metres and pass 48 bridges and 22 tunnels.

Corvatsch: World's Highest Whisky Distillery



In 2020, Rinaldo Willy and Pascal Mittner from ORMA opened a whisky distillery in the mountain station of the Corvatsch cable car. At 3303 m above sea level, it is the highest in the world. This is more than just a marketing stunt: the altitude has an influence on the distilling behaviour of the spirit and changes its aroma. Those interested can find out what the whisky tastes like during guided tours and tastings at the distillery.

<https://www.engadin.ch/en/orma-whisky>

LAAX: World's Longest Treetop Path



The world's longest treetop path, the Senda dil Dragun (Path of the Dragon), has been in LAAX since summer 2021. It is 1.56 kilometres long and leads through the forest at a height of up to 28 metres – always at eye level with the treetops. Visitors learn more about the local fauna and flora on four platforms with seating and information boards. <https://www.flimslaax.com/en/outdoor-activities/natural-phenomena/send-dil-dragun>

Engadine Samnaun Val Müstair: Oldest National Park in the Alps



Founded on 1st August 1914, the Swiss National Park between the Lower Engadine and Val Müstair is the oldest wilderness area in the Alps. Nature has been left to its own devices here for over a century, so that today visitors can experience it in its most pristine form. Guests can discover the national park on around 80 kilometres of hiking trails. There are also two places to stay in the park: the Cluozza hut and the Hotel Il Fuorn.

<https://www.nationalpark.ch/en>

Trun: Switzerland's Largest Walk-In Sculpture



Ogna, the largest walk-in sculpture in Switzerland, was designed by the Graubünden artist Matias Spescha and is located in Trun. The open-topped structure measures 48 metres in length, 30 metres in width and rises 5.5 metres in height. The interior of the sculpture is accessible at all times from the south via a wall opening. The walls in the inner courtyard are covered with paintings by the artist. Sculptures are placed at a few points in the room.

<https://www.ogna.ch> (in German)

Maienfeld: Oldest Winery in Europe



Wine has been cultivated at Salenegg Castle since 1068. Schloss Weingut Salenegg is therefore considered to be the oldest still-existing vineyard in Europe. Today, Helene v. Gugelberg manages the estate with foresight. Since 2020, she has started growing fungus-resistant varieties, Sauvignac and Cabernet blanc, in addition to the classics. She has also redesigned the vineyards so that, one day, they can be cultivated with autonomous vehicles.

<https://www.schloss-salenegg.ch> (in German)

Research Idea

50 Years of the Bernina Express

The 4.5-hour journey on the panoramic Bernina Express train is one of Europe's most beautiful railway experiences. The route on which the panoramic train travels is the highest year-round rail link across the Alps. It has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2008 – one of only three railway lines in the world.

The experience starts in the cantonal capital of Chur. A good hour after departure, shortly before Filisur, the first highlight for railway fans approaches: the crossing of the famous Landwasser Viaduct. One mountain village later, the train then begins to spiral up the Albula Pass through countless helical tunnels.

In Spinas, it reaches the Engadine. Now it's straight ahead for just under half an hour before the track to Pontresina starts to climb again towards the Bernina Pass. As the altitude increases, the landscape becomes rougher, the Morteratsch glacier and the lakes Lago Nero and Lago Bianco on the Bernina Pass pass by in the window. The next highlight is the stop at Alp Grüm. At 2091 m above sea level it is one of the highest railway stations in Graubünden. From here it's all downhill geographically, right across the Valposchiavo to Italy. Before the panoramic train reaches its destination, Tirano, it passes another masterpiece of railway architecture: the Brusio Circular Viaduct.

The Bernina Express has been travelling with bright red carriages since its introduction in summer 1973; it received new rolling stock with panoramic windows and modern interior design in summer 2000. At the time, the press called these the "world's most modern narrow-gauge railway cars". Since 1992, it has been possible to extend the spectacular Alpine crossing during the summer months with the "Bernina Express Bus" from Tirano to Lugano. The Bernina Express has transported and delighted around 10 million people from all over the world over the past 50 years.

More information: <https://www.berninaexpress.ch>



Research Idea

100 % Valposchiavo

Only 25 kilometres as the crow flies separate the glaciers of the Bernina Massif at over 2,500 m above sea level from the palm trees at the end of the valley at approx. 450 m above sea level. This huge difference in altitude has always allowed local farms to grow a wide range of first-class agricultural products: from alpine farming at high altitudes, to fields of cereals, medicinal plants, tea and aromatic herbs on the valley floor, to berry, fruit and vegetable production in the lower part of the valley. A large proportion of this is organic: over 94 per cent of the agricultural land is cultivated and maintained by Bio Suisse-certified farms. Thanks to intact production chains, these raw materials are largely processed directly on site. The valley is home to six wine producers, four bakeries and butchers as well as two beer brewers and pasta manufacturers, among others.

Two labels distinguish the first-class local products: "100% Valposchiavo" for products made from local raw materials and "Fait sù in Valposchiavo" for products that are made in the valley but not from local raw materials. 13 restaurants have joined forces and signed the "100% Valposchiavo Charter". In doing so, they commit to giving local specialities a very special place on their menus: at least three dishes must consist exclusively of ingredients grown and processed in the valley.

"100% Valposchiavo" is a cooperation project between agriculture, food processing and gastronomy. Through locally closed value chains, from production and processing to consumption, the added value generated by tourism is increased and distributed to the various economic sectors in the valley. Tourism is thus becoming an essential driver for the long-term sustainable development of the entire region.

More information: <https://www.valposchiavo.ch/en/experience/100-valposchiavo/the-project>



Research Idea

FlemXpress, the First Fully Automatic Gondola Lift

FlemXpress – that's the name of the new lift for accessing the UNESCO World Heritage Site Tectonic Arena Sardona. It runs from Flims via Foppa, Startgels to the Segnes mountain hut and from there either to Nagens or Cassons. Construction work on this innovative lift project began in 2022. The two sections Flims–Foppa and Foppa–Startgels will be realised in spring and summer 2023 and put into operation in December 2023. In addition, the existing Flims–Foppa and Foppa–Naraus chairlifts will be dismantled in 2023.

What makes the project special: the lift is the world's first gondola lift to operate with the Ropetaxi system. As with ordinary gondola lifts, the journey still takes place along a cable. In the station, however, the cars move autonomously on tracks thanks to their own electric drive. If the gondolas are unoccupied, they wait in the station. Passengers also have the option of getting on or off at various stations, such as Foppa, Startgels, Segnes, Nagens Sura and Cassons. Passengers simply select their destination before starting their journey, which their gondola then heads for fully automatically.

The FlemXpress pays into the "Greenstyle" sustainability concept implemented by the Weisse Arena Group in 2010. The new lift is characterised by lower energy consumption and significantly reduced operating and maintenance costs, as the sustainable Ropetaxi only runs when needed and when passengers actually want to get on. This means that unnecessary empty runs can be avoided.

More information:

<https://www.weissearena.com/en/projects/flem-xpress>

<https://flemxpress.ch/?lang=en>



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The world-famous panoramic routes through Graubünden, such as the Glacier Express and the Bernina Express, are also included (excl. seat reservation fee) and are a part of the Grand Train Tour of Switzerland (www.mystsnet.com/grandtraintour). Furthermore, the Swiss Travel Pass offers free admission to more than 500 museums nationwide (of which 32 are in Graubünden) and 50 percent discount off most mountain railways.

+41 44 225 80 40

media@swisstravelsystem.com

www.mystsnet.com



Graubünden Ferien

Alexanderstrasse 24

7001 Chur

graubuenden.ch/medien

