

Editorial

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Verbier and the Val de Bagnes enjoy the privilege of experiencing major economic development. This is largely due to tourism and is of benefit to the entire region. Verbier is also part of a dynamic Municipality headed by Christophe Dumoulin, who has succeeded in sharing his youthful enthusiasm with his colleagues. We are looking forward to pursuing fruitful cooperation with the municipal administration and its various departments. We are particularly delighted to see certain projects being reactivated, and especially those aimed at providing solutions to the problems relating to traffic in the resort. Within this context, we are pleased to salute the construction of the new Attelas chair lift (see below).

As an equally important player, the Tourist Office is developing its role as a platform in the heart of the resort. Information (both external or internal) is thus becoming an increasingly important task, which is why we are offering a new series of articles to provide a clearer picture of how our organisation operates (see below). At the time of going to press, autumn is gently settling in. This is the period when everyone studies the premonitory signs of winter. I simply hope it will be filled with snow and sunshine, so that everyone can make the most of it.

Happy reading and an excellent season to all of you!

NEW 6-SEATER BUBBLE CHAIR LIFT

Téléverbier is pursuing its policy of renovating its installations. After La Chaux Express, which debuted last winter, a new 6-seater removable bubble chair lift is being inaugurated in early December.



The new "Les Attelas" chair lift leaves from just above Les Ruinettes, in the place called La Combe located at an altitude of 2,223 metres, and climbs to reach les Attelas, near where the "Attelas 2" gondola arrives, at 2,722 metres. The latter has been dismantled, as has the "Attelas 3" chair lift.

The new chair lift can handle an initial hourly passenger flow of 2,400, which may subsequently be increased to 2,800. The journey takes 5 minutes 33 seconds and passenger comfort is guaranteed by the folding plexiglass bubble that may be used in unfavourable weather. This new chair lift should take some of the load off the Funispace by welcoming all fans of the Attelas pistes who do not wish to remove their skis each time they go up. It will also provide organisers of competitions on the FIS-approved La Combe piste with an efficient means of taking participants up to the start of the race.

TOMORROW: FROM LES ESSERTS TO LES ATTELAS IN TWO INSTALLATIONS

In the medium term, "Les Attelas" chairlift will be the terminal link in a chain of ski lifts that will start from La Béarde in Les Esserts district and take people up to Les Attelas. The first element in this connection should be a chairlift with an intermediate station in the area near Le Mayen restaurant and an arrival station just above the start of the new "Les Attelas", just at the arrival of the current "Combe 1". This new transport line will enable guests staying near the upper part of the resort to have to travel via Médran. In other words, this represents the

implementation of the new Téléverbier philosophy which is seeking to spread users out more evenly over the entire skiing area.

PRIORITY TO PEDESTRIANS

The municipal authorities of Bagnes have decided to tackle the traffic issue in the resort. The first priorities have been firmly established: building a car park and setting up a meeting area at the centre of the resort. Other more long-term projects are also being examined.



The problem of traffic in Verbier is becoming a serious issue. Despite the town administration's clearly expressed determination to take the bull by the horns, actually solving it will take time. The President of the Municipal Council, Christophe Dumoulin, is quite open about the fact that "this is a difficult matter that will take several decades to resolve. Nonetheless, we must now lay the foundations and take the first concrete steps."

To achieve this, the municipality can rely on an effective tool in the form of a global mobility concept for the resort, drawn up by a specialised research consultancy firm. In Christophe Dumoulin's words: "This is a working document on which we will base our short, medium and long-term options for determining Verbier's transport infrastructures".

The report from the Transportplan consultancy provides for new "crab-pincer" type access routes to the resort: in other words, by a westward loop line between Creta Côté and Savoleyres, and another via the South-East between Verbier Village and Médran. Traffic should thus be considerably reduced. Other stages will be added to complement these steps, such as a car park on the Place Orny (behind the post office), two-way traffic on the Rue de Ransou and the Rue de Verbier-Station, as well as the modification of several crossroads.

THE ABSOLUTE PRIORITY:
A CENTRAL CAR PARK.

To begin with, the municipality has decided to focus its efforts on the centre of the resort, making an absolute priority of building a central car park. "The idea is to build a four-storey 480-space underground car park", explains Christophe Dumoulin. "This will need to be so user-friendly that it will encourage drivers to stop there spontaneously and to walk on in to the town centre. The roof of the car park will serve as the authentic meeting area that is currently lacking and will become a venue for events as well as housing the tourist office."

In addition to this initial project, the municipality aims to give priority to pedestrians in town centre, while not completely banishing automobile traffic, as Christophe Dumoulin points out: "We are examining how to rearrange the Place Centrale into a meeting area where pedestrians will have priority over cars. A link between the Place Centrale and the central car park will also need to be integrated within the project."

CALENDAR

In concrete terms, an architectural competition for a preliminary central car park project and the redevelopment of the Place Centrale has been launched and the results should be made known by early 2007. The feasibility study of the project will be conducted during 2007 and work will ideally begin in the spring of 2008.

As far as the other issues are concerned, they will take a little longer to deal with, since the new access routes must be created in cooperation with the Canton of Valais and are thus long-term projects. The essential thing is to maintain a determination to move ahead in this field.

NEW BUS TIMETABLES

Various improvements funded by the municipal authorities have been made to the bus lines this winter.

Daily from December 15th and April 15th, two runs are added between Le Châble and Verbier: one departing from Le Châble at 19:05 and the other from Verbier at 19:25. On Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays, another bus leaves Verbier at 20:15 and one from Le Châble at 20:45.

Within the resort itself, shuttle buses run every day until 20:00 and number of buses on line 2 are increased at a time between 8:45 and 9:15.

HOTEL NEWS

The Chalet d'Adrien (5*) is pursuing its development. After opening its spa and pool last winter, the five-star hotel will be offering three new rooms as of this winter, including two suites – taking its total capacity to 28 rooms. The hotel's gourmet restaurant "L'Appartement", will be acquiring a distinctly Italian feel under the guidance of the new chef Nicolas Isnard.



The 4 Vallées (4*) hotel continues its renovation programme. Two new rooms are to be entirely remodelled in the same way as the four already renovated two years ago. The establishment thus now has six rooms in the "comfort" category.

The Mirabeau has decided to withdraw from the Swiss Hotel Association (SSH) and thus no longer carries any stars awarded by this body.

Since the Hôtel de Verbier has already regained status as a member of the SSH, it is once again entitled to display its three stars.

Having decided to rejoin the Swiss Hotel Association, the Phénix hotel should soon be regaining its stars.

BUSINESS MOVES

Rue de la Poste

The King's Café is opening in the hotel's former breakfast room, adjacent to the lounge and next to the bar and restaurant. Open from 8 am to 8 pm, it offers sandwiches, pastries, salads as well as a broad range of coffee, team or fruit juices. All products may be either savoured on the spot or taken away.

The Chalets&Vidéo Club agency is changing name to become Chalets&Verbier. It will nonetheless still be located at Rue de la Poste 21. Its e-mail address is now chaletsverbier@verbier.ch. Other contact details remain identical.

Jean-Luc Burtin opens Délices, a shop specialising in regional and delicatessen products in the shopping gallery of the "Valentine et Victoria" buildings.

In the same buildings, Biosport Verbier is diversifying its activities with two new sectors: a therapeutic department with soundproofed treatment rooms and a fitness area with changing room and shower.

The Philippe Bruchez architects' bureau has moved to set up in "Le Slot" building.

In the same building, Elodie Grech has opened the Verbier Art Gallery, which is both a jeweller's and an art gallery

Rue de Verbier Station

"Le Sport" building has been given a major facelift. The entrance of the building, of the Chez Martin restaurant and the Bar Jo are now entirely covered. Access to the Eugster Immobilier real estate agency has been entirely redesigned. And finally, the ground floor beneath the restaurant welcomes a new Camel Active Wear store.

Georges-André Lathion and Johann Michaud are opening a leisure electronics store called B&O Net Audio SA in the "Square Poste" building.

Place Centrale

Le Vivier delicatessen ceased trading on August 26th 2006.

Swiss Mountain Spirit and Heli Alps have set up on the ground floor of the "Hôtel de Verbier".

Rue du Centre Sportif

The Guinnard Immobilier et Tourisme agency has finished revamping its offices and show windows, which are now topped by traditional-style eaves.

The Abati SA real estate agency offers a panoramic tour of all the premises for rent or for sale on its website at www.abati.ch.

Rue de Médran

La Fantastique offers adult group classes from January 8th to February 10th and from March 12th to 31st. Two different levels are available: beginners (a maximum of 4 people per class) or intermediate (maximum of 6 people per class).

Dupuis Informatique has set up in the Centre Etoile and now specialises in computer consumables and accessories, as well as in renting laptop computers.

Miscellaneous

From now on, the Post Office demands the use of the exact street name and building number for all correspondence. In order to avoid letters or parcels being returned to sender and thus miss out on some important information, be sure to inform as many people as possible of your full address.

The European Snowsport ski and snowboard school in Verbier offers a chance to view and comment on ski or snowboard lessons, in the company of an instructor, in its brand-new Video Room based in Les Ruinettes restaurant.

Le Châble/Val de Bagnes

The Bed and Breakfast run by Claudy and Elizabeth Michellod-Dutheil is now presented in detail on the www.maaevalais.ch website.

CLAMBIN: THE RESTAURANT STAYS!



Following the announcement of the sale of the "Chez Dany" restaurant at Clambin, Téléverbier and a group of private investors moved swiftly to buy it up in order to ensure it continued to operate as a restaurant. Their clearly avowed aim is to make this establishment, already a well-loved address under the Michaud family, into a top-level reference in terms of altitude restaurants.

This is why they have decided to entrust it to the capable hands of Claude-Alain Besse. The chef of the Le Sonalon restaurant has surrounded himself with a team including Michel Arthaud in the kitchen and Carine Petre in charge of service. Renamed "Restaurant de Clambin, chez Dany", the establishment will continue to focus on traditional dishes, with the touch of originality and freshness that has earned both chefs their reputation. In terms of service, the new concept implemented keeps pace with clients' daily rhythm: during the day, the focus is on speed in order to meet demand from passing skiers, while a slower cadence in the evenings will provide an opportunity to offer more refined

catering. Meanwhile, quality will be the object of constant attention.

“CHALET CARLSBERG”: A NEW START

After a first “test” year, the “Chalet Carlsberg” is off to a new start under the guidance of Gérard Jutier, who was the much-appreciated longtime boss of the “Borsalino” restaurant. His task will also be to develop the quality and the speed of the service – an essential point for a restaurant located on busy slopes. He has hired an entirely new team. While the terraces proved their worth last winter, the interior decoration of the restaurant is being revamped to give it a warmer, friendlier atmosphere.

“SAVOLEYRES”: CREATING THE ITALIAN MOOD

As manager of the “Savoleyres” restaurant since last summer, Daniel Santos is developing a new concept exuding a taste of Italy and focusing on two dishes that provide scope for endless variations on a theme: pizzas and spaghetti. Rearranged on a single floor, the kitchen will also offer a daily special and a skier’s plate. Here too, the goal is to improve service as well as quality and speed. Téléverbier has adopted a strategy of specialisation in order to give all of its establishments their own distinctive style.

“POWDER SPIRIT BAR”

To conclude this overview of what’s new in the altitude restaurants, one should also mention the arrival of a permanent DJ in the “Powder Spirit Bar”. In terms of catering, the offer has been extended to include grilled meat and crêpes.

www.televerbier.ch

VERBIER SPORT+ INTRODUCES ITSELF

Verbier Sport+ encompasses Téléverbier, the Ecole Suisse de Ski, the Mountain and Trekking Guide Bureau, the Swiss Snowboard School and the paragliding centre, meaning over 300 professionals under one roof.

Since November 1st 2005, the five above-mentioned partners have joined forces under a single banner, Verbier Sport+. By grouping the lift company and the partners of the former Maison du Sport (an organisation now dissolved), Verbier Sport+ wishes to provide a more direct response to guests’ expectations. From this winter onward, many new features will thus be available.

First of all, the possibility of online ski-pass reservations. Setting up a system of loading the ski passes by computer avoids any need to queue up at the cash desks. To do this, all you need is to have a chipcard (which sell for SFr 5.- at the cash desks) or a Swatch Access watch and load it in the morning or the previous day via . As soon as you pass the access point, the chipcard is activated and confirms the selected pass.

Verbier Sport+ also offers online booking for several different products: accommodation, long-term passes, skiing days, days with a mountain guide. This is all done via the website. The passes or lesson tickets may be picked up either upon arriving at the hotel, from the partner sports shops, or from the ski lift cash desks.

www.verbiersportplus.ch

ACCIDENT PREVENTION COURSE

Evaluating the risk of an avalanche, using the avalanche victim detector (AVD) and learning how to react in case of mountain accidents are all essential concepts with which one should become familiar before venturing off-piste... The Verbier Sport+ mountain and trekking guide office offers a pre-season prevention course! This course is open to all and the aim is to become better acquainted with the mountain environment and to know how to operate the main devices that should be standard equipment if skiing off-piste (AVD, shovel, snow probe). Classes will be held on December 9th, 16th, 20th, 23rd and 27th, as well as on January 13th and 20th. The total cost is SFr 90.- per person, including equipment, for groups of 4 to 8 people.

www.verbiersportplus.ch

LA CHAUX: GUARANTEED SNOW COVER



In addition to its ideal exposition to the sun, the La Chaux area will now also boast a guaranteed snow cover. Téléverbier has decided to invest 2.3 million francs in a complete mechanical snowmaking facility.

This project is part of a long-term plan to ensure snow cover of the Les Gentianes-La Chaux area. Initially, it aims to broaden the range of altitude options for beginners, to guarantee access on skis to Mont-Fort and to ensure the future of the snowpark. In other words, to set the magnificent La Chaux area off to maximum advantage.

As of this winter, 2 booster pumps, 3 fan guns and 16 snow towers will produce snow for 2,400 metres of ski runs, meaning almost the entire La Chaux area.

The slopes actually concerned by this new installation are as follows:

- the blue run beneath the Chaux 2 chair lift
- the junction between this run and the Col de Brunet
- the starting area of the runs around the La Chaux Express intermediate station
- the upper part of the snowpark: almost two-thirds of the snowpark will thus enjoy guaranteed snow cover

SNOWSHOE TRAILS: CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT



Snowshoe trekking is increasingly popular. To meet this demand, the three Bagnes municipal Sociétés de Développement have joined forces in order to provide a rich offering in this field.

The Bagnes valley will now offer nine snowshoe itineraries, representing 45 kilometres in all. These treks, featuring various levels of difficulty but accessible to all, are signposted according to the official Swiss system instated by the Swiss Snowshoe Federation. Each trail starts with an information panel and the entire network is also presented in a leaflet comprising the description of each trail, its profile and useful tips. This information will also in due course appear on the www.sentier-raquettes.com website.

The nine itineraries are spread between three regions. Three are in the vicinity of Verbier: Le Château, Saint-Christophe and La Dent. Two form a loop between Le Châble and Bruson via the Mayens de Bruson. Three others are located between Champsec and Lourtier, while the last is a circuit on the heights above Sarreyer.

These nine snowshoe trails are thus an excellent means of discovering the beauties of the villages and the scenery of the Bagnes Valley. Succumb to this temptation!

www.verbier.ch

A NEW FORMULA FOR THE VERBIER RIDE

Verbier Ride has taken an important new turn by focusing exclusively on freestyle. This new formula has now been adopted after witnessing constant evolution during the six past editions

combining freestyle and freeride. Within this discipline, Verbier Ride confirmed its international status by becoming the first Swiss event to host a round of the ISFA Tour in 2006. In order to guarantee the future of the event, its initiator Warren Smith and the resort authorities have agreed to give it a new boost. The decision to concentrate on freestyle corresponds to both parties’ wish to make better use of the infrastructure provided by the La Chaux snowpark. The “1936 Neipark” will enjoy mechanical snow coverage over two-thirds of its entire length, thereby guaranteeing maximum use of its potential throughout the season. Warren Smith’s aim is quite clear: “Within three years, we want to be one of the finest European competitions in this sport and to attract the world’s best riders.” The first real-life test for the “1936 Neipark” in La Chaux will come early next year when La Chaux hosts a slope style and skier cross event on February 18th and 19th 2007.



Andy Bennet, copyright ridefreesport.com

VERBIER/BAGNES TOURISM

We have decided to launch a new series in order to enable everyone to become better acquainted with tourism operations in Verbier and the Val de Bagnes. In each edition of Verbier.Info, we will present a specific aspect of our activity. For this first episode, we have chosen the field of welcoming visitors and providing information. This was a logical choice, given that in most cases, this represents a visitor’s first contact with the resort.

Before dealing with this area in detail, it is important to place things in context. The umbrella organisation for tourism is the Société de Développement. There are three such bodies within the Bagnes municipal territory: Verbier, Châble-Bruson and Haut Val de Bagnes. Each of them is governed by “legislative” bodies in the shape of the General Assembly and the Committee. However, all three have a single “executive” body, which is Verbier/Bagnes Tourism.

In concrete terms, there are two offices: one in Le Châble, in the “Services Industriels” building and one in Verbier, on the Place Centrale. Their tasks include providing information to guests and to the local population, whether directly at the desk, over the phone or by e-mail. In order to provide more specific answers, our staff regularly gathers information about the resort, the valley and even the region in the broadest sense of the term in order to be aware of the full range of offerings in terms of sports, culture and gastronomy. Especially in summer, people often ask them for advice about hikes, VTT circuits or cultural excursions; in winter, they mainly inform people about the day’s weather, the best skiing pistes of the moment, or activities in case of bad weather. They naturally answer in several languages, the main ones being French, German and English. Overall, our team is also able to answer questions in Dutch, Italian, Swedish and Spanish.



Our information service deals with a large number of requests relating to accommodation. Those responding therefore need to be aware of the various possibilities in order to guide future clients as effectively as possible. According to requests, our personnel send lists of the hotels, chalets or available apartments. They also handle computerised management of this availability or direct booking.

The ladies responsible for our information service update and distribute several information lists – especially for the period between peak seasons – providing opening and closing times of stores, doctors on duty or public service schedules. This calls for a significant amount of work in gathering information which is then processed in order to be disseminated through various channels such as Dransinfo or the E-vision screens. All this vividly illustrates the fact that the Tourist Office is a genuine hub at the heart of the resort’s daily life.

In closing, we should mention the arrival of several new people in our information service: Stéphanie Genoud as head of department; Nathalie Humbert who has moved from Le Châble to Verbier; Patricia Schneider in Verbier; and Anne-Michèle Lack in Le Châble.

In our next edition, we will present our “events and animation” department.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

For any medical or accident-related emergencies, you can dial 144, the number of the canton’s rescue service (Organisation Cantonale Valaisanne des Secours).

In exceptional circumstances (avalanches, floods, roads cut off, etc.), the Bagnes municipal information service has a call centre providing information in four languages (French, English, German and Italian). The number is 0844 81 1936.

NOT TO BE MISSED

- 9 – 10.12.06
Jib Night
- 16 – 17.12.06
24 Heures Freeride de Verbier
- 5 – 9.02.07
Swiss Championship Juniors Men downhill and super-G
- 18 – 19.02.07
Verbier Ride
- 23 – 25.03.07
O’Neill Xtreme by Powerade
- 31.03.07
Verbier High Five by Carlsberg
- 14 – 22.04.07
XspeedSki / World Championship FIS KL (speed skiing)
- 28 – 29.04.07
Ultime Session

(Subject to change)

FOR YOUR DIARY

- 6 – 8.7.07
Verbier Beach Volley
- 13 – 15.7.07
Verbier Golf Pro Am Schroeder
- 13 – 20.7.07
Amateur Chamber Music Week
- 14.7.07
Verbier Ultra Run
- 20.7. – 5.8.07
Verbier Festival & Academy
- 4 – 12.8.07
Grand Concours Hippique
- 19.8.07
Grand Raid Cristalp Verbier – Grimentz
- 22 – 26.8.07
Salon du 4x4 de Verbier

(Subject to change)

More info about these events on

www.verbier.ch