

Gäste-Information Val Müstair

**Tourismus Engadin Scuol Samnaun
Val Müstair AG (TESSVM)**
Chasa cumünala, CH-7532 Tschier
MwSt-Nr. CHE-115.911.767

Tel. +41 81 861 88 40
Fax +41 81 850 36 90
info@val-muestair.ch
val-muestair.ch

Val Müstair - naturally original

(Storylines | As of December 2020)

NATURE

Nature - all year round

On the road in the «Wild East» of Switzerland: Mystical Val Mora

If you are looking for barren, untouched nature and lonely expanses far from civilisation, you don't have to travel all the way to Canada: The Val Mora offers all this and much more. The L-shaped, wild hanging valley borders the Swiss National Park and stretches from the Döss Radond watershed (2234 m above sea level) to the Italian border near the Livigno reservoir (1890 m above sea level). Whether on horseback, on a bike, on a skiing or hiking tour, an excursion to the unspoilt Val Mora is one of the highlights of a stay in Val Müstair. Landscapes characterised by mountain pines and stone pines - the tree line is at 2300 m above sea level -, the high moor at La Stretta and the rugged mountain world offer a natural experience with rarity value. Here you can meet chamois, red deer, bearded vultures or snow hares, but rarely people - apart from the valley's stone patron saint, the «Mumma Veglia». Since 1979, the 10-kilometre-long Val Mora has been a protected landscape zone, and tourist buildings are not permitted. Thus, in the deserted wilderness of the Val Mora, one will continue to find a piece of natural paradise that was thought lost.

Contact: Madeleine Papst, Head of Media, Brand and Content Tourism Engadin Scuol Samnaun Val Müstair AG (TESSVM)
E-mail: m.papst@engadin.com | phone.: +41 81 861 88 15

Weitere Informationen

Short rides and horse treks lasting several days in Val Müstair and Val Mora with the «San Jon» riding stable and saloon in Scuol:

<https://www.sanjon.ch/home-230.html>

Rides, coaching and trekking with the Iris Hauschild Riding School: <https://www.iris-hauschild.ch/>; <https://val-muestair.engadin.com/de/regionen-entdecken/santa-maria/reitschule-iris-hauschild-fokus-mensch-pferd>

Ausritte: <https://val-muestair.engadin.com/de/regionen-entdecken/santa-maria/paclarahof-reiterhof-pferdezucht-agrotourismus-0>

Example of a ski tour in Val Mora: <https://www.hikr.org/tour/post1259.html> Website of Chasa La Stretta with information about

Val Mora: <https://www.lastretta.ch/umgebung/>

Article in the «Schweizer Familie» about a trekking tour with «San Jon» in Val Mora:

<https://www.sanjon.ch/files/inhalte/pdf/schweizerfamilie.pdf>

Discover the Val Mora by bike: https://www.parks.swiss/en/discover_the_parks/summer_activities.php?offer=829

Jausestation Alp Mora: <https://val-muestair.engadin.com/en/explore-regions/mustair/jausestation-alp-mora>

Feature on the Val Mora in the SRF programme «SRF bi de Lüt»: <https://www.srf.ch/play/tv/srf-bi-de-luet---wunderland/video/srf-bi-de-luet-wunderland-val-muestair-gr?id=70ebf717-4888-4fc4-b5ab-091a236e33a7>

Nature - Winter

Tracks in the snow - winter hiking with Severin Hohenegger

Always ready, that is Severin Hohenegger's motto. Whether on foot in summer, as a hunter in autumn, or on a hiking, snowshoe or ski tour in winter, the trained carpenter feels at home in the mountains at any time of year. So, it is not surprising that after many years in the family carpenter's workshop, Severin seized the opportunity to pursue a new activity in the then newly created Biosfera Val Müstair Nature Park. Today he not only leads excursions in the nature park and carries out work assignments with young people, but since his training as a hiking guide he has also accompanied guests on hikes and snowshoe tours through the unspoiled natural landscape. «Tracks in the Snow» takes beginners, panorama-hungry and wildlife lovers on snowshoe hikes along gentle slopes or up to easy 3000-metre peaks. In the solitude of the deep snow-covered larch and stone pine forests, the winter magic unfolds its full power and ibexes, deer and chamois can also be discovered particularly well in the white winter panorama. Every track in the snow tells its very own story - and thanks to Severin Hohenegger, even the layman can understand it.

Contact: Madeleine Papst, Head of Media, Brand and Content Tourism Engadin Scuol Samnaun Val Müstair AG (TESSVM)
E-mail: m.papst@engadin.com | phone.: +41 81 861 88 15

Further information

Winter tours with winter hiking guide and hunter Severin Hohenegger: <https://www.severinhohenegger.ch/wintertouren.html>;
<https://val-muestair.engadin.com/de/guide/severin-hohenegger>

He is the boss here - with organic farmer Daniel Pitsch on a ski tour

It is small, but fine, the winter sports area of Minschuns not far from the Ofen Pass. But one person knows that Minschuns is also an ideal starting point for ski tours in the surrounding area: farm manager and organic farmer Daniel Pitsch. For almost 25 years, the head of the snow sports area has been helping everywhere, whether as a machine operator, patroller or lift worker. From Minschuns he can ski directly to his farm in Tschier; like 80 per cent of the farmers in the valley, Pitsch also runs a purely organic farm. But his real passion is ski touring. Whenever he has time, it is: on your skins, get set, go! The Val Müstair is made for ski touring: mountains over 3,000 metres high but with a flat slope and good snow until May make practically every peak climbable on skis. As farm manager in Minschuns, farmer and hunter, Daniel Pitsch knows the area like no other. But at over 60 years of age, the passionate ski tourer has by no means had enough of the powder snow in the Nature Park - in the meantime, daughter Braida and son Jachen Armon also accompany him. And after all these years, there are still tours that even Daniel Pitsch has never done ...

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E-mail: m.papst@engadin.com | phone.: +41 81 861 88 15

Further information

Ski tours from Minschuns with Daniel Pitsch, passionate ski tourer, farmer and farm manager Minschuns: <https://val-muestair.engadin.com/en/ski-touring-daniel-pitsch>

Nature - Summer / Autumn

A wild autumn - on the trail with gamekeeper Jon Gross

When the stone pine and larch forests of Val Müstair slowly come to life at dawn, that's when Jon Gross likes to be out and about. The Val Müstair gamekeeper knows the places where owl, deer and fox say good night and good day like the back of his hand. From September to November, Jon is busy coordinating the hunting of big, small and stone game. In winter, when hunger and snow force ibex and co. to descend to lower altitudes, Jon Gross brings locals and guests closer to the wild animals of Val Müstair on guided «game observation hikes» not only with binoculars. On the instructive forays, the behaviour of the game in winter can be experienced at first hand - the gamekeeper also sensitises the guests for a careful handling of the animals and their resting areas. The sturdy Tschierver also has a lot to tell: For example, the story of when he encountered a bear on the alp of the monastery in the summer of 2005 - the first to re-enter Switzerland in 101 years. There are many more where this anecdote came from - you just must ask Jon.

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E-mail: m.papst@engadin.com | phone.: +41 81 861 88 15

Further information

Contribution to Jon Gross and Bear in the Val Müstair: <https://www.srf.ch/news/regional/graubuenden/einmalige-bilder-vom-baer-im-muenstertal>; Information and articles on tours with Jon Gross in winter: <https://www.suedostschweiz.ch/zeitung/ein-wildhueter-sensibilisiert-die-feriengaeste>; <https://www.smeetz.com/product/wildbeobachtung-activpass>; <https://www.annabelle.ch/reisen/val-m%C3%BCstair-wo-sterne-besonders-hell-leuchten-44965>; <https://www.mittelbayerische.de/themenwelten/freizeit/berg-ski-nachrichten/auf-tuchfuehlung-mit-steinbock-hirsch-und-gemse-24156-art510638.html>

CULTURE

Culture - Borders and History

Borderline experiences - from Val Müstair to «Machu Picchu»

If there is one region that knows all about borders, it is the Val Müstair. The valley not only connects three parks, but it also lies in the border triangle between Switzerland, Austria and Italy. This circumstance gave Switzerland a war front in the middle of the high mountains during the First World War. After Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary in May 1915, soldiers fought a war of position at an altitude of over 3,000 metres on the front that ran across the Southern Alps. Swiss soldiers took up positions on the nearby Umbrail Pass to secure the border and observe the fighting on Monte Scorluzzo. 105 years later, those interested in history can go in search of traces with Henri Duvoisin and Chantal Lörtscher: In the «14/18» museum in Sta. Maria or directly «behind enemy lines» on the military history hiking trail between Stilfserjoch (2757 m above sea level) and Umbrailpass (2501 m above sea level). The tour along the ruins of the former fortifications leads over Monte Scorluzzo (3094 m a.s.l.) and the well-preserved Alpini village on Filone del Mot (2899 m a.s.l.), also called the «Italian Machu Picchu» because of its layout. High up in the mountains, a piece of history becomes tangible and tangible. The spectacular mountain landscape near today's «Dreipärke» corner comes free of charge with the cultural experience.

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E-mail: m.papst@engadin.com | phone.: +41 81 861 88 15

Further information

Information on Henri Duvoisin, the historic mountain tours and the museum 14/18: <https://val-muestair.engadin.com/de/unterwegs/henri-duvoisin>

Further information on the «Scorluzzo» Military History Trail: <https://maps.engadin.com/en/tour/mountain-hike/militaerhistorischer-wanderweg-scorluzzo/10866921/>

Cultur - Culinary

The culinary heritage of Val Müstair: organic and slow food with nature park label

Good food has a long tradition in Val Müstair. The fact that it is also produced regionally and sustainably is evidenced by the nature park's product label. Only products that consist of at least 80 percent local and sustainably sourced ingredients and that have undergone two-thirds of the value creation process in the valley deserve the «regio.garantie» seal of quality. The abundance of such «excellent» products on the shelves of the grocery shops also testifies beyond the cantonal borders to the careful treatment of nature by the valley inhabitants. In addition, some of the valley's regional specialities are also included in the inventory of Switzerland's culinary heritage: The «Chascharia Val Müstair» in Müstair, for example, is represented by Grisons mountain cheese. The «Antica Distilleria Beretta» in Tschier, the world's highest official distillery at 1700 metres above sea level, produces regional distillates and liqueurs from 100% untreated ingredients from the nature park, with «Flurina da Fuldera» and «Röteli Valchava». The third company listed is Meier-beck from Sta. Maria, known throughout Switzerland, with its mountain rye products: In addition to the «Slow Food» mountain rye bread, this also includes the chips, croutons and breadcrumbs produced in the spirit of ecological waste bread recycling. In this way, the culinary heritage in Val Müstair is also managed sustainably.

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E-mail: m.papst@engadin.com | phone.: +41 81 861 88 15

Further information

Requirements for certified products from the Biosfera Val Müstair Nature Park: <https://www.biosfera.ch/de/produkte-partner/zertifizierte-produkte>

<https://www.salz-pfeffer.ch/themen/zu-helvetisch/altes-brot-neues-glueck/>

Article on the recycling of old bread at Meier-Beck in Sta. Maria in «Salt and Pepper»: <https://www.salz-pfeffer.ch/themen/zu-helvetisch/altes-brot-neues-glueck/>

Information on the Culinary Heritage of Switzerland «Association and Inventory»: <https://www.patrimoineculinaire.ch/Uber-uns>

Information on the certified regional products of «alpinavera» and the products from Val Müstair that are part of Switzerland's culinary heritage: <https://www.alpinavera.ch/de/produzenten/>

Culture - Traditional arts and crafts

Modern fabrics in the old tradition: hand weaver Martina Marcona and the Tessanda

They are called Vreni, Perla or Grischun and have been at home in Val Müstair for over 90 years. We are not talking about aged dairy cows, but about three of the 22 looms of the «Manufatura Tessanda» foundation in Sta. Maria. As one of the last three hand weaving mills in Switzerland, the Tessanda skilfully combines traditional craftsmanship with the modern desire for ecologically and sustainably produced textiles. The hand weaving mill was founded in Sta. Maria in 1928 to offer women living in the valley a chance at a recognised education and an income of their own. To this day, Tessanda brings apprenticeships and workers to the valley and thus also contributes to the preservation of the smallest vocational school in Switzerland. 15 weavers produce tea towels, tablecloths and other accessories on wooden looms, some of which are over 100 years old - often for an urban clientele. After all, sustainability and handmade

quality goods are also in vogue in the cities. Martina Marcona is one of the weavers who chases the threads in the Tessanda under the most strenuous physical conditions - the clamping of the thousands of threads alone can take two to four days. The Münstertal native wanted to study piano in Winterthur, but homesickness drew her back to the valley: in the 1980s she completed her training as a hand weaver at Tessanda. But Marcona doesn't just press the pedal at the loom: whether as a substitute organist in church or as a pianist in the rock band «Diabolics», music still sets the pace in her free time. The Tessanda manages the balancing act between traditional handicrafts and modern design; and anyone who visits the weavers at work, in the shop or showroom quickly realises that handicraft is also an attitude.

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E-mail: m.papst@engadin.com | phone.: +41 81 861 88 15

Further information

Website of the traditional hand weaving mill «Tessanda»: www.tessanda.ch

Already published articles on the weavers and the traditional craft of hand weaving: https://tessanda.ch/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/migros-magazin_28_tessanda_20190708.pdf,

<https://val-muestair.engadin.com/de/regionen-entdecken/santa-maria/manufactura-tessanda-val-muestair>

Information on the Tessanda and its weavers: https://tessanda.ch/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/migros-magazin_28_tessanda_20190708.pdf; https://tessanda.ch/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/tft-159_3_18_tessanda.pdf

Informationen zu Martina Marcona: <https://val-muestair.engadin.com/de/martina-marcona-herrin-1000-faeden-und-tasten>

Culture - Experiences

Not «just» nature, but also pure culture: witty experiences in Val Müstair

The nature, tranquillity and hospitality in Val Müstair are unique (main reasons for travelling according to Tourismus Monitor Schweiz 2017). But those who also want to delight their spirit in addition to ski tours and hiking have numerous options in the high valley. With literary, musical and film events, a historical museum and contemporary art, the cultural forum «Chasa Jaura» in Valchava has been setting surprising accents since 1973. In the «Chastè da Cultura» in Fuldera, artists, guests and locals meet at theatre, concerts and art at eye level, and the traditional Christmas exhibition shows the diversity of artistic creation in the valley. Military history on the traces of the First World War on the Umbrail Pass can be found in the «14/18» museum; or you can use the holiday period to lose yourself in the melodies of Romansh at an intensive Romansh course in Sta. Maria. After all, language is the key to the Jauer culture - and in the valley it is evidence of an engaging liveliness and openness.

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E-mail: m.papst@engadin.com | phone.: +41 81 861 88 15

Further information

Museums and cultural institutions at a glance: <https://www.cdvm.ch/de/natur-kultur/kunst-und-kultur/museen-und-kulturelle-einrichtungen/>

Insights into the cultural diversity of Val Müstair: <https://www.biosfera.ch/de/themen-projekte/cultura-jaura>

History of the valley, discussions, art and culture in the «Chasa Jaura» in Valchava: <http://www.chasajaura.ch/de/>; <http://www.chasajaura.ch/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/KULTURPROGRAMM-2020.pdf>

The diversity of artistic creation in Val Müstair is shown in the Christmas exhibition at the «Chastè da Cultura» in Fuldera:

<https://www.chastedacultura.ch/>; https://chastedacultura.ch/pdf/17_12_BerichtExposiziun.pdf

Report on the intensive Romansh course in Sta. Maria in «Südschweiz»: <https://www.suedostschweiz.ch/zeitung/romanisch-lernen-ist-beliebt>

Hiking the history of the First World War in the «14/18» museum: <https://www.stelvio-umbrail.ch/>

A large collection of farming implements from the 16th to the 20th century can be seen in the Farmers' Museum: <https://val-muestair.engadin.com/de/veranstaltung/ausstellung-scheune>

More than praying and working: Time out at the UNESCO World Heritage Monastery of St. Johann

It is the landmark of Müstair: the monastery of St. Johann. According to legend, it was founded in 775 by the Frankish king Charlemagne after he barely survived a snowstorm on the Umbrail Pass. The Benedictine monastery of St. Johann, which gave the Val Müstair its name (Latin: «monasterium»), was added to UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites in 1983. In addition to Carolingian frescoes, the oldest residential and defensive tower in the Alpine region - the 10th-century Plantaturm - and the oldest dated wooden beam ceiling in Europe from 788, the secluded monastery also offers the ideal setting for a break from the hustle and bustle of the big city. The Benedictine guesthouse or the monastery's own Ruinatscha Maiensäss at 1600 metres above sea level are also open to non-Catholics. In the peaceful atmosphere of the soon to be 1250-year-old St. Johann monastery, professionally led fasting and retreat courses, herbal workshops or helper weeks can also be completed.

Contact: Madeleine Papst, Head of Media, Brand and Content Tourism Engadin Scuol Samnaun Val Müstair AG (TESSVM)
E-mail: m.papst@engadin.com | phone.: +41 81 861 88 15

Further information

Information on the St. Johann Monastery on the Val Müstair municipal website: <https://www.cdvm.ch/de/natur-kultur/kunst-und-kultur/kloster-st-johann/>

Information on the inscription of St. John's Monastery on the UNESCO World Heritage List: <https://www.muestair.ch/en/unesco-world-heritage/milestones-in-our-history/1983-unesco-world-heritage-site/>

Time out in the guest house of the St. Johann Monastery: <https://www.muestair.ch/en/plan-a-visit/guesthouse/>

Stay in the monastery's own Ruinatscha Maiensäss: <https://www.muestair.ch/en/plan-a-visit/maensaess/>

PERSONALITIES

Personality - Organic/Agriculture

Monastery farmer Johannes Fallet: An organic mountain farmer in the lowlands

The organic paradise of Graubünden lies in Val Müstair. In the sunny high valley, a full 80 percent of local farmers produce purely organically. Johannes Fallet is one of them. Since 1996, the 55-year-old has been running the farm he took over from his father as an organic farm with his wife Petra. The cultivation land is around the St. Johann monastery, the landlord of the farm. Fallet is one of 12 dairy farmers in the valley: for example, the monastery cheese that matures in the monastery cellar is made with milk from his monastery cows. But Fallet also grows grain. In 2009, he was the first in Val Müstair to cultivate naked oats again. The original variety is processed, among other things, by Meier-beck in Sta. Maria, which is known throughout Switzerland, into the honey-sweet, multi-award-winning valley speciality «Schaibiettas». Wheat, barley and mountain rye also thrive on the monastery fields. The latter is also processed by the Meier-beck, among other things into the coveted «Slow Food» mountain rye bread, which is also part of Switzerland's culinary heritage and bears the product label of the Biosfera Val Müstair Nature Park. The barley has long been used as an ingredient in the popular Tschlin beer in the lowlands. The grain is distributed by the Graubünden organic organisation Gran Alpin, among others - multi-talent Fallet is also a member of the board.

Contact: Madeleine Papst, Head of Media, Brand and Content Tourism Engadin Scuol Samnaun Val Müstair AG (TESSVM)
E-mail: m.papst@engadin.com | phone.: +41 81 861 88 15

Further information

Online shop of the monastery (the monastery cheese will be available here):

<https://www.muestair.ch/en/shop/translate-to-en-sprach-test/>

Article on organic farmer Johannes Fallet in the «Schweizer Bauer» of 4 September 2019:

https://www.muestair.ch/fileadmin/autoren/pdf/Medienecho/2019-09-04_SchweizerBauer_JohannesFallet.pdf

Speech by Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis, monastery cheese:

<https://www.admin.ch/gov/en/start/documentation/media-releases.msg-id-71512.html>

Shop of the Val Müstair monastery shop (will have monastery cheese on offer in future):

<https://www.muestair.ch/en/shop/translate-to-en-sprach-test/>

Blog post by Alfred Preisig, blogger for Locher Brewery (Quöllfrisch) on the field tour with head of the monastery operation Johannes Fallet:

<https://quoellfrisch.blog/ich-anfaenger-im-roeggen-im-hanf-mit-rauschwirkung-von-kopfsalat/>

Contribution on the topic of «Old traditions, new perspectives» in Val Müstair with mention of Johannes Fallet:

https://www.campingmuglin.ch/images/site/presse/via_-_Neue_Perspektiven_-_Oktober_2017.pdf

Official website of the organic organisation Gran Alpin: <https://www.granalpin.ch/>

Portrait of the Fallet family: <http://www.biofarm.ch/unsere-bauern/familie-johannes-und-petra-fallet>

Personality - Culture

Rebel behind convent walls: Sister Domenica Dethomas

She is one of 9 Benedictine nuns in the UNESCO World Heritage Monastery of St. Johann in Müstair, but she is a real one-off: Sister Domenica Dethomas. Having grown up only 100 metres from the monastery, the only native of Müstair in the community has lived in the St. Johann monastery for 50 years. Before and after entering the convent, she worked as a kindergarten teacher, among other things: «Sour Domenica» also taught the two cross-country skiing stars Dario and Gianluca Cologna. She led the convent as prioress for seven years until 2019. But the strictly regulated convent life was not all easy for the «convent rebel» at first: the cosmopolitan young woman loved dancing, cinema and the freedoms of the city. She had to get used to the early rising and the silence in the convent. In the early days, the novice secretly sang German pop songs in her chamber. Today, the 75-year-old enjoys the peace and quiet and the community behind the convent walls. But there is still no trace of unworldliness: sociable, talkative, humorous and open, the nun is also not averse to earthly pleasures: be it an ice hockey match of the «Kloten Flyers» or a fresh brown trout from the Lai da Rims. Sister Domenica Dethomas: a nun with all her heart - and yet a woman of the world.

Contact: Madeleine Papst, Head of Media, Brand and Content Tourism Engadin Scuol Samnaun Val Müstair AG (TESSVM)

E-mail: m.papst@engadin.com | phone.: +41 81 861 88 15

Further information

Various articles on Sister Domenica Dethomas in print and TV:

<https://val-muestair.engadin.com/en/val-mustair/prioress-domenica>

<https://www.engadinerpost.ch/2019/10/02/Neue-Priorin-am-Kloster-in-Muestair>

<https://www.suedostschweiz.ch/zeitung/dethomas-wir-verschliessen-uns-nicht-vor-der-welt>

<https://www.muestair.ch/aktuelles/news/detail/artikel/neue-priorin-im-kloster-st-johann-in-muestair/>

<https://www.kleineweltwunder.ch/detail/30230/schweizer-illustrierte-guelshas-kloster-tagebuch>

<https://www.srf.ch/news/regional/graubuenden/eine-begegnung-im-kloster-zwei-ungleiche-rebellinnen>

<https://www.srf.ch/play/tv/srf-bi-de-luet---wunderland/video/srf-bi-de-luet-wunderland-val-muestair-gr?id=70ebf717-4888-4fc4-b5ab-091a236e33a7>

Personality - Hotel industry

The perfect host: Jon Fasser, storyteller with a passion

According to Tourismus Monitor Schweiz, the hospitality in Val Müstair is one of the main reasons that brings Swiss tourists to the mountain region. One person who contributes a lot to this welcoming feeling is Jon Fasser. He took over the hotel «Chasa Chalavaina» in Müstair from his parents in 1973. When the house was awarded the title of historic hotel of the year by Icomos and Hotelleriesuisse in 2007, the personal way in which the Fasser family runs this rare architectural monument as a hotel also received a «special award». Fasser knows returning guests by name and personally greets and bids them farewell in front of the house. Regional specialities are served for dinner, while Fasser, a master of storytelling, entertains guests with stories: of his adventures hunting ibex or of the Chasa itself, steeped in history. In January 2020, it was announced that Fasser, soon to be 80, would like to retire from the hotel business - whoever succeeds him will have big shoes to fill.

Contact: Madeleine Papst, Head of Media, Brand and Content Tourism Engadin Scuol Samnaun Val Müstair AG (TESSVM)
E-mail: m.papst@engadin.com | phone.: +41 81 861 88 15

Further information

Website of the «Chasa Chalavaina»: <https://chalavaina.ch/>

Article in «Salt and Pepper» on Jon Fasser: <https://www.salz-pfeffer.ch/themen/hotel-gastro/gelebte-geschichte/>

Further information on Jon Fasser and the «Chasa Chalavaina»: <https://www.graubuenden.ch/de/regionen-entdecken/engadin-samnaun-val-muestair/hotel-chasa-chalavaina>; <https://pensar.ch/>

See separate storyline on «Chasa Chalavaina» below (section «Villages and houses»).

Personality - Sport OR Summer/Autumn

The return of the young wild one: Mountain biking multi-talent Sergio Tschenett

Sergio Tschenett was practically born with a love of biking: His grandfather was the first to sell a mountain bike in Val Müstair, and his father later opened his own bike shop in his metalworking shop in Müstair. So, Sergio and his two brothers grew up among MTB tyres and suspension forks. An excellent mountain biker himself, Sergio explored the 150 kilometres of biking in Val Müstair up- and downhill. Like many other young people in the valley, however, he was initially drawn to faraway places: as a downhill, he travelled to the best mountain bike regions in the world and competed in races himself. But after ten years, he began to long for the flat mountains of his homeland - the perfect topography for long and «flowy» single trails. Today, the trained metalworker, bicycle mechanic and mechanical engineer works in his parents' business. On the side, the man in his mid-thirty's tinkers in his workshop with optimisations for the bikes of his brand «Da Pilten». To do this, he sometimes knocks on the door of the local bakery to have his bike frame hardened in the oven at 180 degrees. International downhillers like the Frenchwoman Floriane Pugin or the Englishman Brendan Fairclough also rave about the sophisticated bike parts from Val Müstair. Sergio Tschenett is a man of many talents: for example, with the innovative «Build & Bike» project, he works together with the Mountainbike Val Müstair association to maintain the trails and hiking paths in the valley. With three friends, he also founded the «Ride La Val» trail school in 2018 - bringing new (bike) life to the valley.

Contact: Madeleine Papst, Head of Media, Brand and Content Tourism Engadin Scuol Samnaun Val Müstair AG (TESSVM)
E-mail: m.papst@engadin.com | phone.: +41 81 861 88 15

Further information

Interview with and further information on Sergio Tschenett: <https://val-muestair.engadin.com/en/multi-talented-sergio-tschenett>

Website of the trail school «Ride La Val» opened by Sergio Tschenett: <https://ridelaval.com/>

Website of Sergio Tschenett's own bike brand «Da Pilten»: <http://dapilten.com/de/>

Mountainbike trails in Val Müstair: <https://val-muestair.engadin.com/en/activities-experiences/mountain-biking>

More information about the Build & Bike project, where Sergio helps to maintain the trails and hiking paths in Val Müstair together with the Mountainbike Val Müstair Association: <https://www.valmuestair.bike/>; <https://val-muestair.engadin.com/de/aktivitaeten-erlebnisse/mountainbiken>

VILLAGES AND HOUSES

Villages and houses - Sta. Maria

Small village big: Sta. Maria - place of superlatives

Sta. Maria, at the easternmost tip of Switzerland, has only 340 inhabitants. But the small village is also a place of superlatives: in addition to the smallest hospital in Switzerland with its own rescue service, it is also home to Tessanda, one of the last hand weaving mills in Switzerland. Among other things, its apprenticeships ensure that the smallest vocational school in Switzerland (5 apprentices in 2018) can remain in the valley. And in the «Muglin Mall», the oldest functioning mill in Switzerland dating from 1676 and restored in 2004, the grain from the region is processed into flour; in summer, the mill's own wood-burning oven is available to guests once a month for making their own bread. And while the Benedictine nuns in the neighbouring village of Müstair focus on spirituality, in Sta. Maria they focus on spirits: since 2006, the smallest whisky bar in the world has been located here - entry in the Guinness Book of Records included. And it is not just any bar: In the «Smallest Whisky Bar on Earth», Lord Gunter Sommer serves 300 types of whisky from all over the world on 8.53 square metres. This also includes the world's first whisky that continues to mature in the bottle, a whisky museum, a shop and, since 2015, probably the highest «HighGlen Whisky Distillery» at 1400 metres above sea level - a record in any case.

Contact: Madeleine Papst, Head of Media, Brand and Content Tourism Engadin Scuol Samnaun Val Müstair AG (TESSVM)
E-mail: m.papst@engadin.com | phone.: +41 81 861 88 15

Further information

More information about the smallest hospital in Switzerland: <https://val-muestair.engadin.com/en/explore-regions/santa-maria/center-da-sanda-val-mustair>

More information about the oldest functioning mill in Switzerland: <http://muglin.ch/>; <https://www.biosfera.ch/de/erlebnisse-angebote/muglin-mall>

More information about the smallest whisky bar in the world: <https://val-muestair.engadin.com/de/regionen-entdecken/santa-maria/smallest-whisky-bar-earth-whiskybar-eintrag-im-guinness-buch-rekorde>; <http://www.swboe.com>

Villages and houses - «Chasa de Capol»

With style and etiquette: The Schweizer family and the «Chasa de Capol» manor house

«Here you can experience magic without having eaten magic mushrooms,» noted LSD discoverer Albert Hofmann in the guest book of the «Chasa de Capol» in Sta. Maria. Today's hotel, steeped in history, was first mentioned in a document in 1199, and the hotel's own wine cellar from Carolingian times stands on even older traces of settlement. After the former owner family, the Counts of Capol, died out in 1838, the Basel musician and later opera conductor Ernst T.A. Schweizer took over the run-down property in 1954 and restored the former knight's house with high medieval roots to its former glory as a hotel. Today, his son Ramun runs the house, while his father entertains guests with exciting anecdotes. After all, Emperor Maximilian already climbed the stairs here, and the list of other illustrious guests is long: Konrad Adenauer,

King Hussein of Jordan, Charlie Chaplin, Max Frisch, Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Micheline Calmy-Rey and many others have already stayed in the house. Authentic stone pine rooms, sgraffiti, tiled stoves or the 500-year-old kitchen - cooking and baking is still done in copper pans and wood-burning ovens - bring history back to life. The house theatre with orchestra pit and the stylish Davidoff Lounge are more recent. Today, the «Chasa de Capol» is not only one of Switzerland's art monuments, but has also been a "Swiss Historic Hotel" since 2006. As befits a traditional house, the hotel cannot be found on any booking platform; reservations are best made by phone: Old house, old school.

Contact: Madeleine Papst, Head of Media, Brand and Content Tourism Engadin Scuol Samnaun Val Müstair AG (TESSVM)
E-mail: m.papst@engadin.com | phone.: +41 81 861 88 15

Further information

Website of the «Chasa de Capol»: <https://www.chasa-capol.ch/>

Entry on the «Chasa de Capo» on the website of the «Swiss Historic Hotels»: <https://swiss-historic-hotels.ch/en/index.php>

NZZ article on the history of the «Chasa de Capol»: <https://www.nzz.ch/ein-ritterhaus-im-muenstertal-1.17973858>

Südschweiz article on the history of the «Chasa de Capol»: <https://www.suedostschweiz.ch/zeitung/aus-dem-raunen-der-alten-mauern-nehmen-wir-den-tagesbefehl-entgegen>

Villages and houses - "Chasa Chalavaina»

A House Older than the Swiss Confederation: The «Chasa Chalavaina»

Historic houses are not uncommon in the Val Müstair, but in one in particular time seems to have stood still: We are talking about the «Chasa Chalavaina» in Müstair. The site of today's hotel has already been inhabited by people for 1200 years - the foundation walls from Carolingian times, discovered a few years ago during a renovation, bear witness to this. Located opposite the St. Johann Monastery, a World Heritage Site, this remarkable piece of architectural history has been in operation as a hostel since 1254. The «Chasa Chalavaina» owes its name to the famous battle on the Calven: here the Graubünden captains under Benedikt Fontana held a council of war in 1499; two crossed swords in the inn sign still remind us of the battle today. In addition, halberd holes in the hallway, oxblood inscriptions, the oldest still-operating wood-burning oven in Europe and every single one of the 15 rooms bear witness to the house's eventful history. In 2007, the «Chasa Chalavaina» was awarded the title of historic hotel of the year by Icomos and Hotelleriesuisse, and the Swiss Heritage Society nominated it in its guide as one of the most exceptional hotels in Switzerland. The historic walls of the hotel hold many a story, just waiting to be brought to life by the soon to retire owner Jon Fasser.

Contact: Madeleine Papst, Head of Media, Brand and Content Tourism Engadin Scuol Samnaun Val Müstair AG (TESSVM)
E-mail: m.papst@engadin.com | phone.: +41 81 861 88 15

Further information

Website of the «Chasa Chalavaina»: <https://chalavaina.ch/>

Further information on Jon Fasser and the «Chasa Chalavaina»: <https://www.graubuenden.ch/de/regionen-entdecken/engadin-samnaun-val-muestair/hotel-chasa-chalavaina>; <https://pensar.ch/>

See separate storyline on Jon Fasser in the «Personalities» section earlier in the document.