

Press release



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Opening in May: New Dachstein Mountain Station Becomes an "Energy Crystal" and Adds a "Stairway to Heaven"

- ▲ **The month of May brings a fresh start: The completely remodeled Dachstein mountain station celebrates its grand reopening on May 23rd, transformed into an "Energy Crystal." Thanks to photovoltaic cladding on three sides of the facade, up to 80 percent of the energy required to operate the mountain station will be generated on-site. New highlights include the restaurant with a 280-degree panoramic view plus a bar, and a brand-new viewing attraction, the "Dachstein Stairway to Heaven." From May 24th, the day after the official opening, guests can once again enjoy the full Dachstein experience.**

Mountain Station Generates Up to 80 Percent of Energy Needs with Photovoltaic Cladding

In September 2023, construction began at 2700 meters above sea level on Austria's highest-elevation construction site, right here in the heart of our very own Schladming-Dachstein region. The old mountain station was completely gutted down to the steel frame, only to be rebuilt in a matter of months. "A visit to the Dachstein Glacier is undoubtedly a highlight of any vacation in the Schladming-Dachstein region. The renovation of the mountain station, built in 1969, marks an important step in bringing it up to current standards – with a clear focus on sustainability and modern conveniences. New attractions like the 'Dachstein Stairway to Heaven' offer unforgettable experiences for our guests," says Dir. Georg Bliem, CEO of Planai-Hochwurzen-Bahnen GmbH.

When the mountain station is given its grand reopening in May – glacier crossings, incidentally, have already been possible again since February 22nd – several remarkable innovations will be introduced. The first pertains to energy sourcing: Photovoltaic cladding has been installed on the east, west, and south sides of the building. 338 modules, covering an area of 633 square meters, transform the building into an "Energy Crystal." With an expected annual output of roughly 100,000 kWh, up to 80 percent of the energy required to operate the mountain station will be generated on-site.

New Restaurant and Bar with Outdoor Terrace and Magical View

Indoors and out, the new restaurant facilities at the Dachstein mountain station will be a real eyecatcher in their own right. The main restaurant seats around 230 guests and offers a 280-degree view of the impressive mountain landscape. A separate, partitionable buffet area with show kitchen is being created to host sunrise breakfasts and sunset fondues. A new bar is moving into the top floor of the station, also offering small snacks along with drinks, overlooking the majestic southern walls of the Dachstein. Guests can enjoy the view from the cozy interior or out on the open-air terrace. Additionally, there will be a room for seminars and special events, likely to be the highest event location in all of Styria and Upper Austria.

New Attraction at the Dachstein: Climbing Towards the Clouds on the "Dachstein Stairway to Heaven"

The Dachstein is already replete with spectacular attractions: One of them is the "Sky Walk" viewing platform, located on a 250-meter vertical cliff near the mountain station. This is complemented by Austria's highest suspension footbridge, known as the "Stairway to Nothingness", and the Dachstein Ice Palace. The newest attraction will be on the outdoor terrace, right there on the roof of the new mountain station, and is aptly named the "Dachstein Stairway to Heaven." Yet another breathtakingly impressive lookout point.





Summer Highlights in the Schladming-Dachstein Region: Hiking to 100 Waterfalls and Exciting Family Adventures

- ▲ **Summertime in the Schladming-Dachstein region is full of opportunities for unforgettable holiday experiences. In summer, the region's ski mountains transform into a world of beautiful hiking paths, thrilling bike trails, and real-life adventure playgrounds for both young and old. One recommendation for food lovers is "Alpine Cuisine by Richard Rauch"**

Hikers Take Over the Ski Mountains in Summer

When the snow disappears from the ski mountains, visitors to the Schladming-Dachstein region are greeted by a lush, colorful mountain world. 1,000 kilometers of hiking paths, 1,000 kilometers of mountain bike routes, and 30 via ferratas attract nature lovers to Styria. At the same time, 90 mountain huts amid the alpine pastures provide a welcome opportunity to relax and reenergize.

Hikers will discover tours of all difficulty levels, always set against a magnificent backdrop: be that the limestone walls of the glaciated Dachstein, the countless peaks, or any one of the 300 mountain lakes in the Schladminger Tauern range. Ramsau am Dachstein and Schladming are proud members of Austria Hiking Villages and have been awarded the Austrian Hiking Seal of Quality. Those who prefer hiking in a group can join up with a guided tour. Experienced guides lead classic hikes, via ferrata climbs, mine tours, and even treks with llamas.

Water Hikes: Exciting Tours to 100 Waterfalls

The "Valley of a Thousand Springs and Lakes" – that's how the Schladming-Dachstein region is known by many. It is one of Austria's most water-rich areas: 300 mountain lakes, 1,000 springs, and 100 waterfalls just waiting to be discovered. Hardly any wonder, then, that hiking by the water promises genuine close-to-nature experiences. A prime example is the "Wild Waters" theme path from Schladming to Rohrmoos Untertal, also acclaimed as a "National Geographic Hiking Trail," leading past the Riesach Falls, Styria's highest, plummeting over 140 meters down into the valley below.

In Walchental outside Öblarn, a visit to the natural hazard simulation model known as "Wassererlebnis Öblarn" is immensely informative and rewarding. It accurately replicates the catchment area of the Walchenbach, the village of Öblarn, and the banks of the Enns River. It allows the simulation of potential natural catastrophes such as floods, inundations, log jams, or mudslides, while also demonstrating the effectiveness of protective structures.

Planai and Reiteralalm Become MTB Territory, new Singletrack Haus-Aich ensure biking experience for all ages

In summer, the famous Planai and Reiteralalm ski mountains are transformed into a cool destination for mountain bikers and downhillers. Trail fans – whether beginners or pros – find a broad range of options. Bikepark Schladming, easily accessible thanks to the Planai 10-person gondola – which, incidentally, will also transport your bike – is among Austria's top addresses. It offers 40 kilometers of pure trail-riding enjoyment, a bike area for beginners, a flow line for all skill levels, and a jump line with 99 jumps. For e-bikers, 30 charging stations are available. On the Reiteralalm, meanwhile, you are greeted by 17 kilometers of single tracks and a bike school, where you can pick up fantastic tips from the professionals. Last year, the new Singletrack Haus-Aich was opened: With different routes winding



through the trees, three different loops ensure great fun and a surreal biking experience for all age groups. However, those who prefer less rapid descents and something significantly more laid-back, might wish to set out on the Alpine Cuisine Culinary Tour instead.

Alpine Cuisine by Richard Rauch: Star Chef Brings Mountain Huts to a Simmer

The "Alpine Cuisine by Richard Rauch" project is a real treat for the taste buds. Together with cooks at mountain huts in the region, this Styrian top chef – awarded Four Toques and also famous as a judge on ZDF's "Küchenschlacht" show – has dedicated himself to the creative preparation of Alpine dishes integrating regional, mostly home-grown products. Dishes are complemented perfectly by Alpine Cuisine wines from Styria. All huts are readily accessible for hikers and cyclists, making them an ideal part of any leisurely tour of the Schladming-Dachstein countryside. For more information, visit: www.schladming-dachstein.at/almkulinarik

Family Action for Young and Old: Summer Alpine Slide, Flyline, and Downhill Disc Golf

The Schladming-Dachstein mountain world is one big adventure playground for families, with a huge selection of recreational activities to choose from. Better still: kids will have every bit as much fun as mom and dad. On the Rittisberg in Ramsau, for example, there's lots going on: The Rittisberg Coaster summer Alpine slide, the Flyline across the forest high-ropes course, archery, laser biathlon, and the swimming lake guarantee family fun galore. On the Hochwurzen, meanwhile, you can ride mountain go-karts down a seven-kilometer course from the summit to the valley station, while the little ones get to have the time of their lives in Hopsiland on the Planai. Along the 1.5-kilometer (stroller-friendly) walking loop, you will find swings, slides, climbing elements, a marble run, and a "Water World." New on the Riesneralm is the so-called "Kegelstadl" with a bowling lane. Other family highlights in the region include Downhill Disc Golf, Slalom Karting, treasure hunts for kids, the Kali via ferrata, the Fairytale Trail, and Escape Room Schladming. There is also no shortage of swimming lakes, swimming pools, mini-golf courses, and pony riding opportunities. As you can see, here, boredom is never a factor!

Enjoy Many Advantages with the Sommercard

When you stay as little as one night at a participating Sommercard host, you automatically receive the Schladming-Dachstein Sommercard – with a giant package of benefits thrown in. These include free use of public transportation and one round-trip ride daily on a gondola in the region. Many other holiday experiences are likewise included, either free or discounted, such as museums, swimming pools and swimming lakes, along with numerous family, recreational, and sporting special offers.



Sustainability in the Schladming-Dachstein Region: Plant-Oil Fuel, Solar Energy, and an “Energy Crystal”

- ^ **Sustainability is a central theme in the present and future of the Schladming-Dachstein region. Numerous effective measures have been, and continue to be implemented to provide an ecologically and economically sustainable foundation in areas such as energy, CO2 emissions, and public transportation. These efforts have been recognized with multiple awards.**

Use of Organic Fuel on Mountain Lifts

This year, the Planai-Hochwurzen Lifts have switched their entire fleet to an organic fuel known as "HVO100." Snow groomers, buses, and cars of the Planai Lifts are now fueled exclusively with this plant-oil fuel (palm oil-free). The positive effect: a 90-percent reduction in emissions. Planai CEO, Director Georg Bliem explains: “Last winter, for testing purposes, we focused on two identical vehicles in our snow-grooming fleet. One ran on conventional diesel and the other on palm oil-free HVO100. The results were sensational: Emissions, such as CO₂, were reduced by about 90% compared to the use of conventional diesel, without any loss in performance.” Another environmental goal: By 2030, half of all regional buses will be powered by means of renewable energy sources.

Clean Photovoltaic Energy and an “Energy Crystal”

Another important building block of sustainability in the Schladming-Dachstein region is electricity. Here, the Planai-Hochwurzen Lifts mainly rely on photovoltaic energy, such as on the roof of the main gondola station. Energie Steiermark installed 422 modules here, enabling the station to cover about one quarter of its electrical needs from solar energy it had generated itself. The new mountain station constructed on the Dachstein is being outfitted with cladding on the facade that incorporates solar modules on the east, west, and south sides. This “Energy Crystal” is expected to produce up to 80 percent of required energy autonomously.

Car-Free Arrival and Good Infrastructure for E-Mobility

As for traveling to and from the region, Schladming-Dachstein is in very good shape, able to offer its guests a journey that is both stress- and car-free. Euro- and Intercity trains operated by ÖBB run every two hours from all directions through the Ennstal valley, providing direct connections from and to many Austrian cities. The Schladming and Stainach-Irdning stations have excellent domestic and international connections, welcoming about 20 long-distance, night, and express trains. And whenever you are in the mood to take an excursion, you can reach your destination easily by means of one of the numerous bus lines or special bike & hike buses. The bus network (13 routes) can be used free of charge with the Schladming-Dachstein Sommercard. The region also boasts a good infrastructure when it comes to e-mobility. There are already more than 50 charging locations for electric vehicles with over 125 charging points, as well as 30 locations to recharge e-bikes.

Local Producers: Regional Foods guarantee Short Supply Routes

Thanks to the “Schladming-Dachstein Genusspartner” project, cooperation between direct marketers and gastronomy businesses has improved significantly, greatly increasing the use of regional foods. Not only does this bring top quality to the plates of foodies, it also results in short supply routes that barely impact the environment.



Eco-Label for 16 Businesses, Schladming Named “Best Tourism Village”

This significant commitment to sustainability has received the recognition it deserves: In the Schladming-Dachstein region, 16 businesses have already been awarded the Austrian Eco-Label. This even includes a campground, one of only 17 nationwide to receive such a distinction. Meanwhile, congress Schladming, likewise certified with the Austrian Eco-Label for Green Locations, is now authorized to host Green Meetings and Green Events. Since last year, Schladming has also been proud to call itself a “Best Tourism Village.” With this title, the UNWTO honors tourism communities that play a pioneering role in maintaining rural spaces and preserving landscapes, cultural diversity, local values, and culinary traditions.

Schladming-Dachstein Facts & Figures

Lodging Establishments	ca. 2,000	Guest Beds	ca. 31,000
	Overnights		
Winter Half-Year 2022/23	2,025,705		
Summer Half-Year 2023	1,888,898		
Hiking Paths:	ca. 1,000 km of marked hiking paths		
Long-Distance Hiking Paths:	Dachstein Rundwanderweg, Schladminger Tauern Höhenweg, Panoramaweg 100, “From Glacier to Wine”		
Bodies of Water:	300 mountain lakes, 1,000 springs, 100 waterfalls		
Huts:	ca. 90 mountain huts and alpine grazing areas		
Sommercard:	Your key to numerous exciting free experiences and bonus discounts! www.sommercard.info		
Biking:	65 km of bike trails, 2 bike parks and 1 trail park, 27 tours		
Highlights:	7 summer lifts, Dachstein Glacier with Sky Walk lookout platform, Ice Palace, suspension footbridge, “Stairway to Nothingness”, Starway to Heaven. Zipline on the Stoderzinken (the longest in Europe), summer Alpine Slide on the Rittisberg		
Nature Park:	Sölktäler Nature Park		
Climbing Tours:	30 fixed-cable (“via ferrata”) climbs in the Schladming-Dachstein region		
Golf Courses:	1 st eco-friendly golf course in Austria, “Bio Golfplatz” at the Kobaldhof; Schladming-Dachstein golf region with 4 courses: Schladming-Dachstein Golf & Country Club, Schloss Pichlarn Golf & Country Club, Radstadt Golf Club, Golf & Landclub Ennstal – Weissenbach		



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