

Cable car collaboration as a global model: 1977 saw the birth of the SkiWelt

Collaboration in place of closed-minded thinking: 45 years of SkiWelt Wilder Kaiser – Brixental

An unprecedented success story began 45 years ago, when the cable cars of six villages between Brixental and the Wilder Kaiser linked up to form SkiWelt Wilder Kaiser – Brixental in 1977.

The SkiWelt was a project of the community. Founded by visionary and regional thinkers, it has continued to act as an engine for an entire region. Consequently, **more than half a billion Euro have been invested** sustainably in the region **since 1977 by the SkiWelt's cable car companies alone** and countless jobs have been created.

Behind the successful SkiWelt brand, however, the people and the teamwork among SkiWelt colleagues have always played an equal role. The personal commitment and foresight of many partners, collaboration with landowners, innkeepers, tourism experts and many dedicated people stood at the core. From the pioneers of the hard early years to the approximately 500 dedicated employees today, the SkiWelt is a collaborative project of success, firmly rooted in the region and an integral part of the entire region's identity. The economic success of this cooperation is what ultimately counts as well of course. However, without the trusty community within the SkiWelt family, the personal contact with one another and without putting the common interest above one's own, the SkiWelt would certainly not be as successful today as it is.

Nine resorts under one roof

Today, the SkiWelt is one of the largest and most sustainable ski resorts in the world; it is also one of the most successful ski destinations in the world. The merger of independent cable car companies was initially laughed at by some, but it has long since been regarded as a role model for the very much on-trend ski resort alliances. Nonetheless, the beginnings were rather modest. The area around the Hohe Salve, the Zinsberg, Hartkaser and Astberg were somewhat unknown as winter sports regions at that time. It was the construction of the first lift in 1947 that heralded the Brixental valley's entry into the world of skiing. Of course, it was a time when ground-breaking innovations were also required. Thus, in 1947, Europe's longest chairlift, boasting a length of 2,830 metres, was built in Hopfgarten. Then in 1948, Austria's largest ski lift was installed in Westendorf with 22,289 people having already been transported in 1948/49. Facilities in Söll, Scheffau, Brixen, Ellmau and Going followed in the coming years and decades. Pioneering cable car projects were being implemented in the SkiWelt time and again: Europe's longest funicular was constructed in Ellmau in 1770, for example, then Europe's first 8-seater chairlift came to Söll in 1988 and the world's first solar-powered lift was installed in Brixen im Thale in 2008.

1977: The first joint ticket for the entire ski area

The first collaborations emerged in the 1970s with the first joint ticket being introduced in 1973/74, before the amalgamation to form the giant ski area, known then as "Skigroßraum Wilder Kaiser – Brixental", took place in 1977. For the first time, winter sports enthusiasts could now access the entire ski region with a single ticket – from a one-day ticket to a season pass. And the "SkiWelt" (which replaced the old name "Skigroßraum" in 1990) became the largest interconnected ski resort in Austria and one of the largest in the world.

Continuous expansion, modernisation, and a comfort offensive

Year after year, the facilities were expanded and modernised. New slopes and an ever-increasing range of ski runs created even more convenient connections between the individual SkiWelt resorts and new experiences were offered. Following a few mild winters with little snow, the first snowmaking systems were installed in the 1990s and were expanded over the years. Meanwhile, 16 snowmaking reservoirs were built, always with consideration to nature and ecology. And, talking about sustainability, 100% of the electricity used in the running of the ski resort and snowmaking systems is in fact green energy produced by the local hydropower company, Tiroler Wasserkraft. In autumn 2017, the SkiWelt Wilder Kaiser-Brixental became the first ski resort to win the ecological resort category at the “Telegraph World Snow Awards”, impressing a judging panel of renowned international journalists, who honoured the SkiWelt Wilder Kaiser- Brixental for their long-term efforts.

In recent years, investment in comfort has been high on the SkiWelt’s agenda: old starter lifts have been replaced by modern cable cars and most of the tow lifts by comfortable chairlifts. Parking garages, ski depots, investment in Wi-Fi and a variety of experiences followed, as well as more and more technical commitment to providing reliable snow and perfect slope conditions. Likewise, ecological criteria have been moving increasingly to the fore: SkiWelt has been operating exclusively with 100% green electricity for many years. Snowmaking is powered using 100% green electricity and pure drinking water, which is returned to the natural cycle once the snow has melted. The GPS snow measurement system, which has been extensively used for many years, also facilitates snowmaking and slope preparation with significant conservation of resources (a saving of around 20%). For these and many other projects, since 2017 SkiWelt has been consistently recognised by various international media as the "ecological ski area of the year" and as the "most environmentally-friendly ski operation". All those involved at SkiWelt are, of course, very proud of these awards, which also provide an incentive to continue to pursue innovative developments.

One of the most modern ski regions in the world & top year-round destination

Did you know?

Investment volume:	More than 604 MILLION EUROS (over the past 45 years)
Employees:	In winter, approx. 500 / in summer, over 250 (predominantly local and permanent staff)
Ski days	2.6 MILLION in winter (November – April)
In summer	Austria’s largest “mountain experience” (May – November) 7 mountain theme parks 15 lifts 1 ticket (1 – 14 days + season ticket)

INFORMATION SkiWelt Wilder Kaiser - Brixental Marketing GmbH
A-6306 Söll | Tel.: +43 5333 - 400 | office@skiwelt.at | www.skiwelt.at

SkiWelt Wilder Kaiser – Brixental is one of the largest and most modern ski areas in the world with 87 modern lifts, 270 kilometres of perfectly groomed slopes, over 80 family-run huts and 9 different entry points. Only 20 minutes from the motorway and the border, it's amazing how quick and easy it is to get to SkiWelt. Due to the numerous ongoing developments in ecology and sustainability, SkiWelt has frequently received the award as the world's most ecological ski area. For many years, the whole of SkiWelt has been powered by 100% green electricity delivered by Tyrolean hydro-electric power. Visitors can look forward to enjoying remarkable panoramic views of the Wilder Kaiser and more than 70 three-thousand-metre mountains including the Grossglockner, as well as a unique variety of slopes and many more exceptional experiences at SkiWelt Wilder Kaiser – Brixental!

ENQUIRIES: SkiWelt Press Team (presse@skiwelt.at)
