

WEISSE ARENA GRUPPE

# Press Kit 2023/24



# Weisse Arena Group.

## The company and its subsidiaries.

The Weisse Arena Group is an integrated service company in the tourism and leisure sector in the Canton of Graubünden in Switzerland. The company, based in Laax, is responsible for the operation of the LAAX winter sports resort as well as various year-round leisure activities and businesses.

The business model of the Weisse Arena Group, with six wholly owned subsidiary companies and numerous brands, is unique in the Alpine region. The group of companies includes a lift company, various hotels and restaurants, sports and rental shops, a ski, snowboarding and bike school as well as a management and construction company. The Weisse Arena Group thus offers its guests everything they need for their holidays from a single source. →



# The six subsidiaries.

## **Weisse Arena Bergbahnen AG**

Construction and operation of lift facilities, 28 lifts, 214 kilometres of pistes, five snowparks, two halfpipes, up to 270 employees

## **Weisse Arena Hospitality AG**

32 restaurants and bars, six accommodations, reservation, up to 500 employees

## **Weisse Arena Leisure AG**

Sales and rental of sports equipment, seven sports and rental shops, up to 40 employees

## **Mountain Adventures AG**

LAAX School, Freestyle Academy, snowparks, skateparks, Ami Sabi Wonderland, up to 500 employees

## **Mountain Vision AG**

Management company of the group: Finance, HR, marketing and communication, events, sales, guest care, up to 65 employees

## **Startgels AG**

Restaurant Grandis in Laax-Murschetg and Restaurant Startgels in Startgels in Flims, up to 30 employees



**Reto Gurtner.**

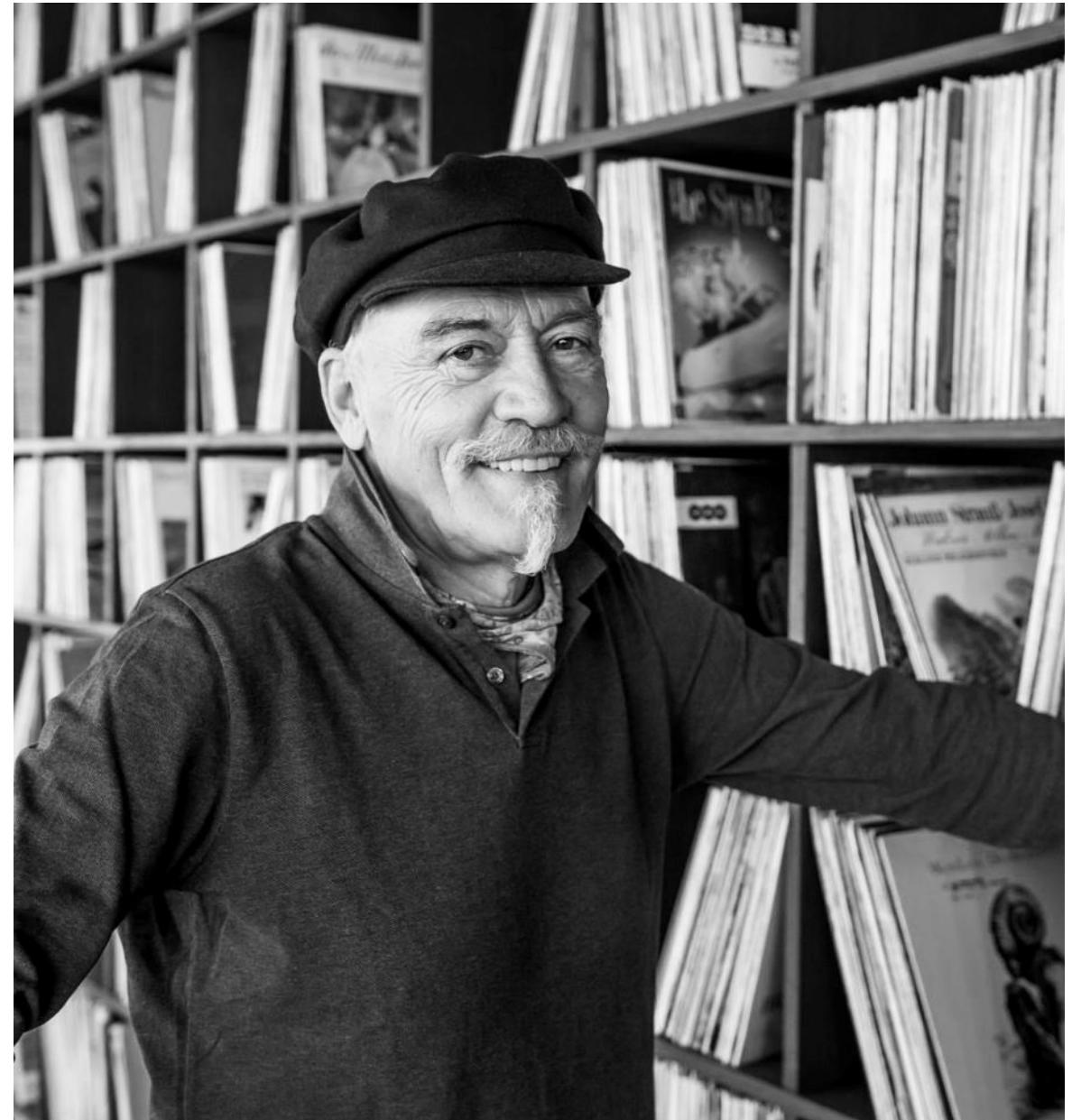
**The man behind the vision.**



# Architect. Visionary. Future thinker.

Reto Gurtner is the visionary and architect of the Weisse Arena Group and acts as its President and Delegate of the Board of Directors. He has always been fascinated by the Californian surf scene, the laid-back lifestyle in sunny Venice Beach and the freedom of surfing. When he took over the Crap Sogn Gion ski lift company at a young age, he dreamed of bringing this lifestyle to the mountains as well. No sooner said than done! Reto Gurtner has introduced the “surfers of the snow”, the snowboarders, to the Swiss Alps and made LAAX the undisputed number 1 in the European freestyle scene.

LAAX is a resort that is radically and originally true to itself, just like Reto Gurtner is true to his ideas and his vision. He has already been honoured several times for this: in 1998, he received the "Entrepreneur of the Year" award from Ernst & Young. 20 years later, in 2018, he was honoured with the Milestone Award, the most important Swiss tourism prize.



# Success does not happen overnight.

Reto Gurtner actually wanted to become a business lawyer. He studied economics in St. Gallen and law in Bern. When the owner of the Crap Sogn Gion ski lift company in Laax and father of the then 27-year-old died in 1983, Reto Gurtner took over the family business.

In 1996 he merged his ski lift company with the Flims ski lift company. It was the birth of the Weisse Arena Group. Since then, he has completely transformed winter sports in the region. Today, LAAX is the Venice Beach of the mountains – just as Gurtner once imagined it. And not only in winter, but also in summer. Every year, the summer offer is also improved and expanded; among other things, with bike trails and skateparks.

The success of the destination is due in no small part to Reto Gurtner's entrepreneurial thinking: LAAX is home to Europe's first indoor freestyle hall, the world's largest halfpipe and a holistic modern-urban mountain concept. Over the years, this pioneering spirit and a constant stream of innovative projects have made LAAX a first mover in the Alpine tourism and leisure industry.



**History & milestones.**

# Milestones at a glance.

1995

2000

2005

2010

2011

2012

1996

## Founding of the Weisse Arena Group

The Weisse Arena Group is formed by the merger of the Crap Sogn Gion mountain railways with the Flims mountain railways. This is the beginning of the development from a mountain railway company to a successful integrated provider of alpine winter experiences.



1997

The Arena Express (Flims-Plaun-Nagens) gondola lift goes into operation

1999

First bookable offers on the laax.com website

2001

## Opening of the Riders Palace

The new hotel in the immediate vicinity of the LAAX valley station is aimed at young sports and adventure-oriented winter sports enthusiasts. It has the latest multimedia technology in the rooms and a nightclub in the basement.



2005

Switzerland's first heatable 6-seater chairlift goes into operation on the route from Scansinas to Mutta Rodunda.

2008/2009

## Opening of the rocksresort

Seven buildings with a wide range of restaurants, shops, an underground car park with 700 parking spaces and comfortable holiday apartments directly at the LAAX valley station are opened.



2010

## Opening of the Freestyle Academy

Europe's first indoor freestyle hall that allows beginners and advanced riders to train tricks and jumps regardless of the weather and season opens in LAAX.



## The development of „Greenstyle“

Weisse Arena Group develops its own environmental concept called "Greenstyle". The sustainable use of natural resources are at the centre of the concept. The goal: to protect nature, animals and the climate.

## Expansion of the rocksresort

The eighth building of the rocksresort is completed. This means that 122 apartments with a total of 587 beds are now available.

2011

The 6-seater chairlift Alp Dado goes into operation

2012

Two new 6-seater chairlifts Treis Palas-Crap Masegn und Lavadinas-Fuorcla Sura (designed by Porsche Design Studios) go into operation

## Launch of LAAX+

LAAX+ is the predecessor of today's INSIDE LAAX app and the beginning of dynamic lift ticket prices. The prices are constantly updated according to criteria such as demand, time period or weather. At plus.laax.com guests always get the best offer for day lift tickets. (online only).



# Milestones at a glance.

2013

**2013**

## Opening of the Pro Kicker Line at Curnius snowpark

In summer, ground shiftings at the snowpark took place and thus the basis for the Pro Line, consisting of four kickers, was laid. As a result of these ground shifts, a large amount of water and snow groomer hours can be saved, which has a direct impact on the winter resort's carbon footprint.



## Launch of the „INSIDE LAAX“ web app

Among other things, this web app offers guests unlimited Wi-Fi access throughout the entire ski area, provides information about daily frequencies, and reveals information about open lifts and the weather.

2014



**2014/15**

## Opening of the world's largest halfpipe on Crap Sogn Gion

With the opening of the new superpipe, LAAX now has the world's largest halfpipe in permanent operation. The 200-metre-long halfpipe exceeds the Olympic standard by 50 metres. With its height of 6.90 metres and width of 22 metres, it is unique worldwide.

2015

**2015**

## The 10-seater gondola La Siala goes into operation

The 30-year-old La Siala chairlift is replaced by a modern 10-seater gondola. The Weisse Arena Group sold the old chairs and donated the proceeds to "Energy without Borders", an aid project for earthquake victims in Nepal.



2016

**2016**

## Founding of the Greenstyle Foundation

The foundation is a non-profit organisation of the Weisse Arena Group as well as committed companies and people of the Flims Laax Falera region and as such acts outside of the Weisse Arena Group as well (in contrast to Greenstyle).



## Relaunch of the INSIDE LAAX app



The destination app INSIDE LAAX offers up-to-date information, tickets for lifts and parking, activity suggestions and the "MyStory" function, which rewards kilometres driven on the slopes with bonuses.

2017



**2017**

## Opening of the GALAAXY

The 50-year-old mountain lift station Crap Sogn Gion at 2,252 metres gets an urban styling and expands the gastronomic offer. It also includes a new Co-Working space.

## Riders Palace becomes Riders Hotel

The former party hotel becomes a newly designed lifestyle hotel for urban freestylers and families.





# Milestones at a glance.

2018

**2018**

## **LAAX goes 5G**

Sunrise launches the world's first standardised 5G network in a ski resort.



2019



**2019**

## **Upgrade of the Freestyle Academy**

With the upgrade, the Freestyle Academy offers its visitors a new parkour, Fivesquare freestyle trampolines, several skate ramps and a Vert Ramp.

## **Opening of the GALAAXY Park**

On Crap Sogn Gion at 2,252m above sea level a new outdoor freestyle park is opened to expand the already extensive winter freestyle offer.

2020

**2020**

## **Expansion of the mobile ordering feature with delivery service**

In response to the lockdown due to COVID-19, food from selected restaurants can now be ordered home via the INSIDE LAAX app.



## **WAG implements its own Covid-19 testing concept for all employees.**

The concept is subsequently also adopted by the canton of Graubünden and sets a good example of how the operation of a ski resort can function during the pandemic.

2021

**2021**

## **Expansion of the rocksresort**

The tenth and eleventh cube of the rocksresort are completed. In addition, a new underground car park with around 179 parking spaces, spread over three floors, is opened.

## **Expansion of the mobile ordering feature with „Ghost Kitchen“**

LAAX now has its own delivery service called "Ghost Kitchen". Pizza, Burger, Specialties of Graubünden and crispy chicken are delivered directly at home. It's available on the INSIDE LAAX app.



2022

**2022**

## **Freestyle Academy goes to the circus**

After almost 12 successful years, the Freestyle Academy in Laax Murschetg is closing its doors. It's demolished and will be completely rebuilt by spring 2024. As a temporary solution, all the freestyle infrastructure is set up in a circus tent at the Prau la Selva sports centre in Flims.



## **New „Free60“ natural snowpark**

LAAX opens a new, fifth snowpark; the "Free60" Natural Snowpark. The special feature of the park, located between Crap Sogn Gion and Plaun, is that the elements are placed in unprepared terrain, made of wood and covered with snow.

# Milestones at a glance.

Read more about the history of WAG [→](#)

2023

2024

## 2023

### Publication of the "Greenstyle Book"

WAG publishes the "Greenstyle Book". The book summarises projects, goals and visions on the topic of sustainability for the first time and is intended to serve as a guide for more sustainability.

### Opening of the KIDS Freestyle Academy

The new KIDS Freestyle Academy for children aged 0 - 8 years opens at the STENNA Flims on around 1,000 square metres in a child-friendly ambience.



### FlemXpress: Opening of sections 1-2

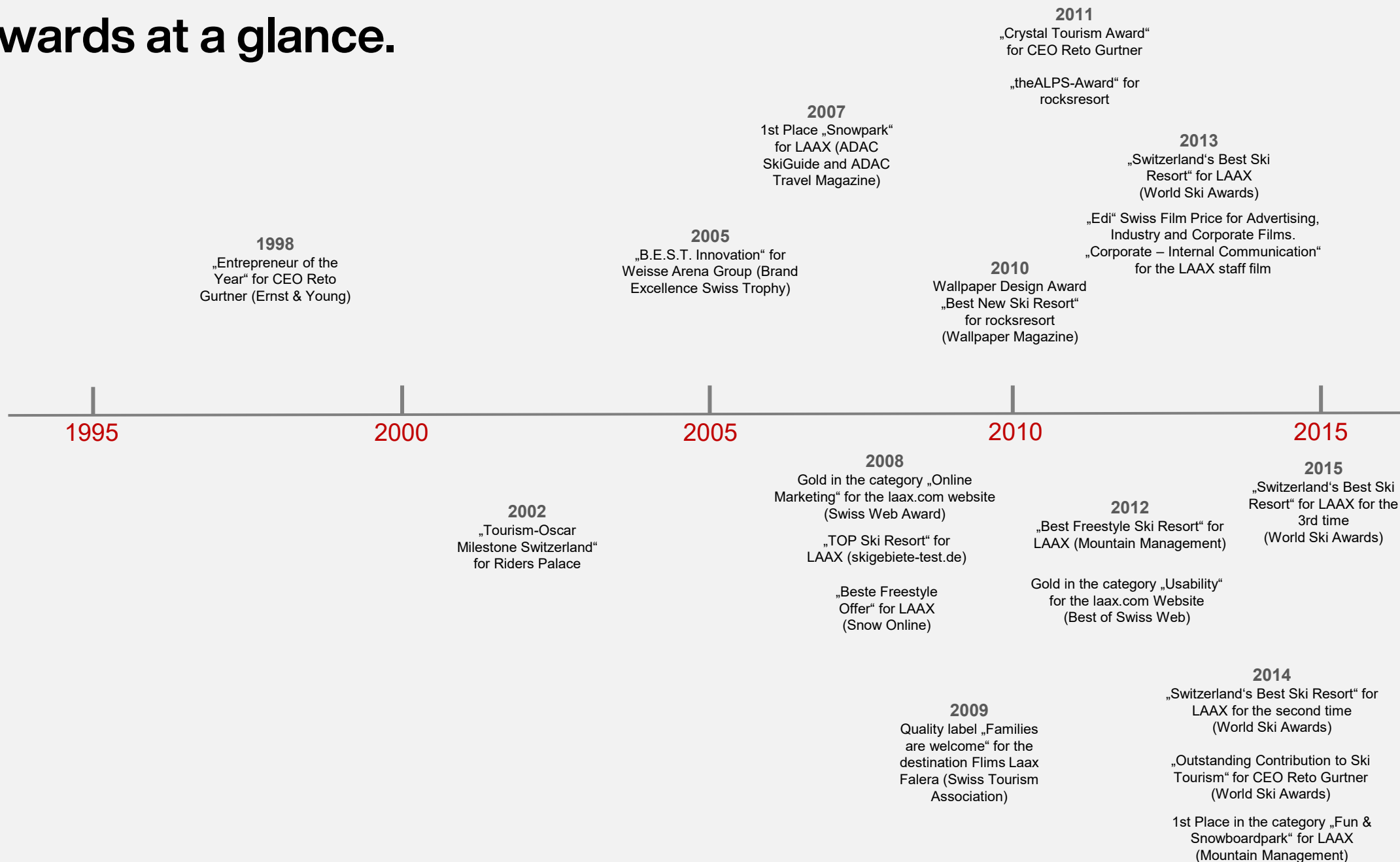
The first two sections of the new gondola lift in Flims with worldwide unique technology called "Ropetaxi" is put into operation in December.

**The LAAX app** (formerly known as INSIDE LAAX app) reaches 435'000 users



**Awards.**

# Awards at a glance.



## 2016

Swiss Solar Award for Weisse Arena Group

„European Solar Awards“ in the category „Transport and Mobility“ for Weisse Arena Group

1st Place in the category „Fun & Snowboardpark“ for LAAX for the 4th time (Mountain Management)

Marketing Award of the Swiss Marketing Association (GFM) for Weisse Arena Group

„World's Best Freestyle Resort“ and for the 4th time „Switzerland's Best Ski Resort“ for LAAX (World Ski Awards)

2016

## 2018

Milestone Award vby „htr hotel revue“ and „hotelleriesuisse“ for Reto Gunter

„World's Best Freestyle Resort“ for LAAX and „World's Best Green Ski Hotel“ for rocksresort (World Ski Awards)

1st Place in the categories „Fun & Snowboardpark“ for LAAX for the 5th time and „Ski School“ for LAAX School and 2nd Place in the category „Rental“ (Mountain Management)

2018

## 2020

„World's Best Freestyle Resort“ and „Switzerland's Best Ski Resort“ (World Ski Awards)

1st Place in the categories „Fun & Snowboardpark“ for LAAX for the 6th time and 2nd Place „Ski School“ for LAAX School (Mountain Management)

„Best Place to Ski“ for LAAX (SnowTrex)

2020

## 2022

„Best Sustainable Ski Destination“ for LAAX (Marie Claire UK)

Test winner in the category „5-Star Ski Resort“ (Skiresort.de)

„World's Best Freestyle Resort“ for LAAX for the 7th time and „World's Best Green Ski Hotel“ for rocksresort for the 4th time (World Ski Awards)

SnowTrex recognizes LAAX as Best Place to Ski.

2022

## 2024

Double victory for LAAX at the Blick Winter Awards 2024: LAAX wins in the "Action & Snowparks" category and is also honoured as "Best Ski Resort in Switzerland".

2024

## 2017

Gold in the category „Business and Design“ for the INSIDE LAAX App (Best of Swiss App Awards)

„World's Best Freestyle Resort“ for the 2nd time and „Switzerland's Best Ski Resort“ for the 5th time for LAAX (World Ski Awards)

„World's Best Green Ski Hotel for rocksresort (World Ski Awards)

## 2017

## 2019

„Swiss Mountain Award“ for INSIDE LAAX App

National environmental prize „Prix Metallrecycling“ for LAAX's recycling stations on the mountain

„World's Best Freestyle Resort“ for LAAX for the 4th time (World Ski Awards)

## 2021

„World's Best Freestyle Resort“ and „Switzerland's Best Ski Resort“ (World Ski Awards)

Test winner in the category „5-Star Ski Resort“ (Skiresort.de)

Bronze in the „Brand Design“ category at the international New York Festival Advertising Awards and Gold in the „Best Use of Direct Marketing“ category at the national Montreux Awards for the „Last Day Pass“ campaign

## 2023

WAG is awarded the Bündner Innovationspreis 2023 by the Bündner Gewerbeverband for its innovative spirit.

LAAX is once again named test winner in the "5-star ski resort" categories by Skiresort.de.

The LAAX Snowpark wins the Fun and Snowboard Park category in the Best Ski Resort study for the sixth time in a row.

## 2023





**Greenstyle.  
For the sake of our nature.**

# Background:

## Climate change in the Alps.

Anyone understandably concerned with climate change in Europe inevitably looks at the Alpine region. There, temperatures have risen twice as much as the global average over the last 100 years. According to a forecast by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the snow season will shorten by one to two days every two years. This development can already be observed: whereas only a few years ago, guests could rely on an early start to the season at the end of October, today the snow often doesn't fall until November.

This is also noticeable in LAAX: the snow line has risen, and the snow comes later. For regions known for their winter sports tourism, the changing climate conditions are a challenge.



# Greenstyle.

## Reduce. Reuse. Recycle.

As a company, WAG is aware of its responsibility towards the environment, the local population and future generations. We therefore have the clear objective of no longer using fossil fuels and supplying the entire company with 100% renewable energy; "from consumer to producer".

To achieve this vision, we implemented our own sustainability concept called "Greenstyle" in 2010. The Weisse Arena Group is thus positioning itself as a company that is seeking answers to the global challenges of climate change and the promotion of biodiversity. Since then, numerous larger and smaller environmental protection measures have been implemented every year in line with the guiding principle of "reduce, reuse, recycle". Goals have been set in five different areas.

- 1. Energy**  
Maximum energy efficiency and optimization of energy supply
- 2. Water**  
More efficient use of water and conservation of water bodies
- 3. Zero Waste**  
Aiming for a circular economy
- 4. Food Waste**  
Sourcing local and seasonal products
- 5. Biodiversity**  
Protecting and promoting biodiversity



Projects.





### **FlemXpress: New gondola lift to the UNESCO**

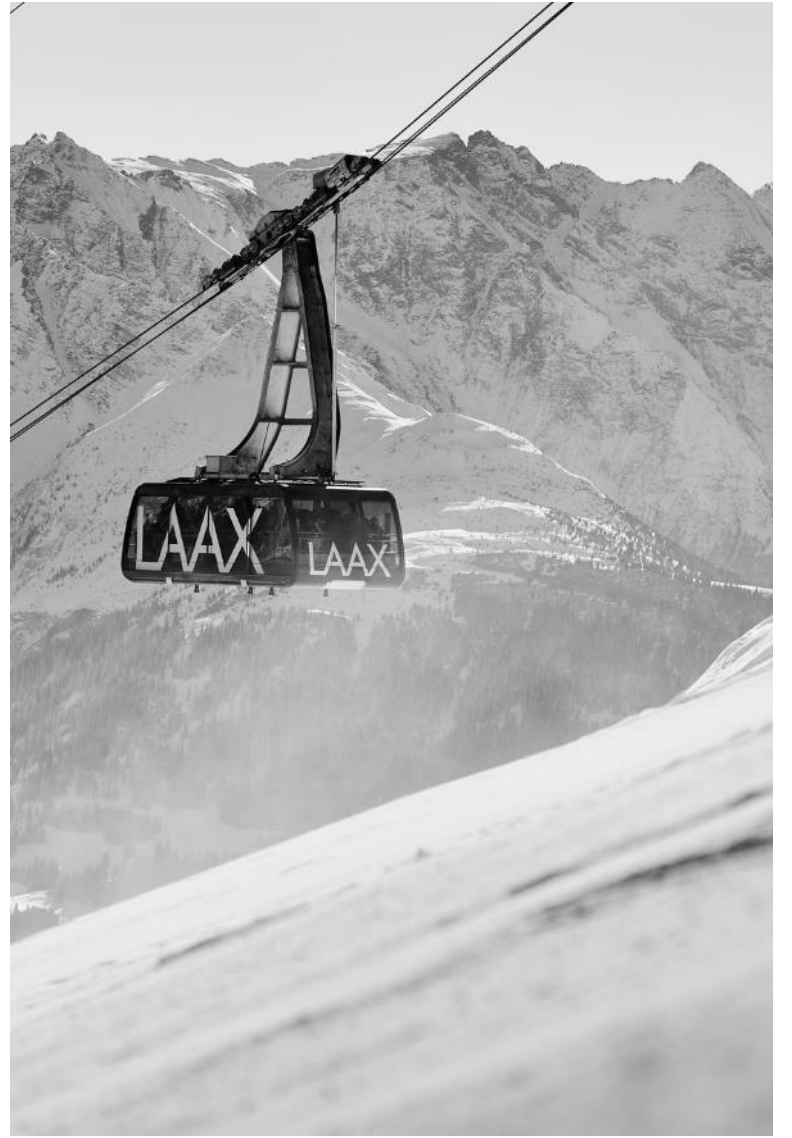
With the FlemXpress, the UNESCO World Heritage Site Tectonic Arena Sardona in an innovative and sustainable and sustainable way. The gondola lift connects Flims via Foppa, Startgels to the Segneshütte hut and from there optionally to Nagens or Cassons. The lift is a pioneering project: it is the world's first fully automatic and fully automatic and demand-responsive. The technology behind it was developed specifically for this developed specifically for this gondola lift project. →



### **Expansion of the rocksresort**

After the 10th and 11th cube of the rocksresort were opened in 2021, on the site of the former car park of the Freestyle Academy, two more houses will follow by 2025. To create space for the houses, the Freestyle Academy was demolished and will be relocated to the basement in the same place. In addition, new parking spaces will be created, distributed over two basement levels. →





**We look forward to  
assisting you with your  
research.**

Weisse Arena Group

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