



Switzerland is spectacular in any season! In the Winter it reveals it's majestic snow covered mountains full of ski trails, frozen lakes ready for dynamic horse races and snow polo games, fabulous fur coats, cinnamon mulled hot wine, thick rich cheese fondue and of course the best chocolate in the world.

I've skied many of the slopes in Switzerland, but not **St. Moritz**, a top jet-set destination. This year I finally checked it off my list. Been there, done that now. Here's my Swiss tales to tell.

ST. MORITZ Snow Polo



I was headed to **St. Moritz** the end of January for the annual **Snow Polo** weekend founded in 1985 by **Reto Gaudenzi** who also coincidentally brought beach polo to South Beach. Ready, set, go...but then Mother Nature threw a curve ball. Tons of snow fell, avalanches occurred, trains stopped and mountain passes closed...so I stayed grounded in sunny, safe South Beach for a bit longer.

Snow Polo Winning Video:

<https://www.facebook.com/stmoritz/videos/10155953148912674/>

SWOOSHING THRU SWITZERLAND



But the **St. Moritz** ski bug had hit me so I was determined to go. I discovered that another super cool equestrian event happens every February on the frozen lake of St. Moritz called **White Turf** that started in 1906. I rummaged through my storage unit in Miami to find furs and ski stuff to head to Switzerland. I flew to **Zurich**, met a friend and then took a train to St. Moritz. We sat in the dining car and soon met a Swiss guy wearing a "Hope" hat...hopefully a sign of good things to come.

White Turf Highlights Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=li5ieSffym0>



Suvretta House

Suvretta House, an elegant old world heritage hotel, standing castle-like for more than 100 years, was our fairy tale “home” in the Upper Engadin alpine area of St. Moritz. It was founded by hotel pioneer, Anton Sebastian Bon as a tranquil retreat set apart from the buzz of St. Moritz. It sits above the town overlooking the lake below and the mountains surrounding it with direct access to the ski slopes. A forest green vintage vehicle is on hand for shuttling guests down the mountainside for exploring the village full of designer shops and gourmet restaurants as well as attending the marquis events on the lake.



My Suvretta guest suite was super spacious with enough closets should I decide to move in permanently which certainly was tempting. Here one is truly treated like a “Princess”. Over the years, royalty and celebrities have visited Suvretta House and now was my turn. A recent refurbishment of the century old hotel has given it a fresh face lift done by U.K. designer, **Sue Freeman**.



A friendly husband /wife team serve as dual GM’s for the resort. The staff and service is first rate at Suvretta House with every little detail attended to. The hotel has perfected the culture of sleeping with exclusive bedding and dream pillow choices. **Grand Hotel Suvretta** maintains traditions like tea-time with piano music in the lobby plus men wearing dark suits and ties required for dinner at the **Grand Restaurant**. There is also the more relaxed **Suvretta Stuba** and **Anton’s bar** for an aperitif or after-dinner drink. Or if gin is your libation of choice, then Suvretta House’ **Gin’ius Club** is waiting with 39 gins including 2 signature varieties; **Suvretta House Lady’s** and **Gentleman’s gin**. For the under agers, there is the **Teddy Club** where kids can wine and dine away from their elders. **Suvretta Sports & Pleasure Club** keeps guests of all ages healthy and happy throughout their stay.



White Turf

Sunday was **White Turf** day so we headed to the frozen lake decked out in our furs, ready for the races. And what a variety of races there are from gallop and trotting races to the main attraction of **skijoring** where drivers on skis are pulled by thoroughbreds. There are plenty of hospitality tents for toasting with bubbles or fine wine and indulging in gourmet goodies. It is truly a merging of sport, gastronomy, art and entertainment in an incredible outdoor setting surrounded by the Swiss Alps. This year was the **111th anniversary** having started in 1907 as a visionary concept of races on the frozen lake.

White Turf 2018 Finals Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7oFQ3rv6JY>



The breakfast buffet is set in a pretty room with a vaulted ceiling and dainty lace curtains behind which the snow was falling. It provided a hardy start before hitting the slopes. I had my very own Italian ski instructor assigned to me so I was spoiled. The **Suvretta Ski School Center** fitted me into my equipment perfectly and then off we went. Their mountain dining options include **Restaurant Chasellas** and **Bergrestaurant Trutz** overlooking the ski slopes, but I preferred to keep swooshing down the slopes.

Winter activities at Suvretta House are endless with ice and curling rinks, bobsledding, tobogganing, snow yoga, snowshoe tours, telemark skiing, cross-country skiing as well as of course downhill skiing with ski-in, ski-out convenience right at the hotel doorstep. The spa is a year-round treat for the body and soul. Summer serves up tennis, golf, mountain biking, Nordic walking, hiking, hang-gliding, mountain climbing, paddle-boarding, wind surfing, river rafting, kite surfing and more.



Badrutt's, Kulm, Balthazar & Dracula Club

Afterwards we strolled through town window shopping and then made an obligatory stop at the **Badrutt's Palace Hotel**. **Rolls-Royces** lined the entrance to this iconic institution. We also checked out **Kulm**, another top hotel before landing at the new restaurant, **Balthazar** for dinner. Being a bit jetlagged we took a pass on the disco, **Dracula Club** created by Playboy **Gunter Sachs** in 1974. His son **Rolf** later took over the reins to this social society spot.



Suvretta House and St. Moritz in general have plenty of winter sports activities to partake in, but our time was limited... so next time, perhaps, some ice skating, cross-country skiing or trying out a bobsled run in preparation for Cresta Run, another big spectator sport here founded in 1888. I did take a daily swim in Suvretta's pool and relaxed fireside in the grand lobby while sipping some fine red wine.

Cresta Run 125 Year Anniversary Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cm6No1RMa8Q>

Swiss Hotel Group Investment Opportunity



I always mix a bit of business with pleasure. So I took the time to tour **4 boutique hotels** in the **Engadin St. Moritz** area owned by an entrepreneur. All include restaurants and are recently renovated properties. One was center city in St. Moritz, another was a convention hotel destination, the next one was near a popular train station, and the final one was situated in a beautiful valley with panoramic views. All are for sale as a package, turnkey with operators in place for each property along with long term leases til 2027. Thus, the new owner will have guaranteed rent revenue streams. Plus, when purchased as a business, the hotels provide a tax-free investment in Switzerland. With the transparency laws in place now in Switzerland, the new preferred mode of tax-free investing is in real estate. If interested, please contact me for details. The rent rolls are set and the new owner will have no expenses as the operators pay all the hotel operating costs. Thus, this is a pretty nifty investment option. And remember, Switzerland is a neutral country with political and economic stability and a peaceful society, making it an ideal environment for real estate investments



GLACIER EXPRESS



To travel from St. Moritz to my next ski destination, **Andermatt**, I chose the "Slowest Express Train in the World", the **Glacier Express**. Founded in 1889, the Glacier Express travels on one of the most beautiful railway lines in the world and links the famous holiday areas of **St. Moritz**, **Davos** and **Zermatt**. The panoramic train ride goes over 291 bridges and through 91 tunnels along the Swiss Alps winding past remote valleys, sheer rock faces, deep gorges, idyllic mountain villages reaching the highest point at **Oberalp Pass** at 2033 meters above sea level. The oversized train windows offer a clear view of all the sites including two **UNESCO World Heritage sites**. A three course gourmet menu is served along with a fine wine list to choose from. I chose the spinach spätzle with vegetables in a cream sauce along with a Swiss white wine. Both were divine feeding my stomach while the view overindulged my eyes.



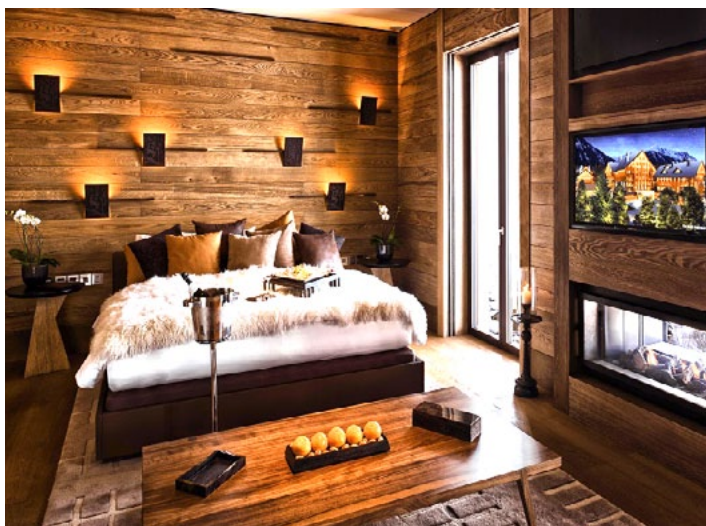
My ears also were occupied as headphones are provided at each seat with a selection of languages. A bell rings in the train car every time there is a point of interest to tell passengers about. Service is friendly and hospitable along this super scenic journey.

When we arrived at our stop, Andermatt, Carnivale was underway so the streets were full of colorful costumed characters. Thus, we were rerouted the long way through town giving us an impromptu tour. I had never even heard of Andermatt, but I was about to become a big fan.



ANDERMATT The Chedi Andermatt

Nestled within the **Urseren Valley**, **Andermatt**, once a Swiss military defense base, is now about to explode into an extraordinary \$1.9 billion resort destination in the center of Switzerland. Leading the way is **The Chedi Andermatt** which opened its doors in 2013. The Chedi, designed by **Jean-Michel Gathy** is a contemporary 5 star hotel and apartment development that seamlessly blends Alpine chic with Asian elements. It boasts 200 fireplaces, personal ski butlers, a cigar bar, cheese humidor, wine library, iPad controlled rooms, Hastens beds (the same mattress makers that the Kind & Queen of Sweden use), local limousine transportation, 2400 square meter spa and a **Michelin star chef** at the first class Japanese restaurant. All of this is attracting movers and shakers and models alike to this once sleepy village. I followed the pack and parked my suitcase at The Chedi Andermatt overnight.



Andermatt Swiss Alps Development

A visionary Egyptian entrepreneur, **Samih Sawaris** came to the rescue and now a Master Planned Community is in the works. **Orascom Development** is sparing no expense in the quaint Swiss village of Andermatt. In addition to upgrading the local ski lift system to include heated seats and connecting multiple ski areas, the company is developing a 345-acre parcel called **Andermatt Swiss Alps** that includes the Chedi. When completed it will include 490 apartments, two dozen chalets, a golf course, and five more hotels.



The Chedi Andermatt Residences

For now, **The Chedi Andermatt** is the hotspot to see and be seen and to buy a place. It has hotel residences, apartment residences and penthouses for sale. Swiss federal law prevents foreigners from buying residential property in Switzerland without a permit. But The Chedi Andermatt was granted an exemption allowing international buyers to buy without restrictions here. These special rules and the development growth of the Andermatt Swiss Alps project should translate to future capital appreciation. Contact me for details if interested in ownership at The Chedi Andermatt.



Swiss Fondue

While in Andermatt, I made sure to try the best fondue place in town, **Ochsen** recommended by an Italian friend. Even their Swiss German tagline says it: “*Fondue im Ochsen ein Muss!!!*” It definitely lived up to its reputation. Not only was the cheese fondue decadently delicious, but the owner was equally charming flirting with all the females in his quaint dining establishment. To work off the calories, I swam in the Chedi indoor lap pool while lobby lizards looked on. I also tried all the hydro therapy options in the spa....ahhhh.

Andermatt Sites & Activities

My final morning, I strolled through town and checked out the historical church while the snowflakes started to fall making the place even more magical while my friend hopped on a horse drawn sleigh.

Winter sports in Andermatt include the slopes of the **Ski-Arena Andermatt-Sedrun** and cross country skiing as well as ice skating. Summer is also great in Andermatt. There’s an 18-hole championship golf course, cycling tours, hiking, horseback riding, fishing and tennis. Plus, it’s a special natural setting surrounded by mountain peaks of the Saint-Gotthard Massif, deep canyons, wild waterfalls and tranquil mountain lakes.

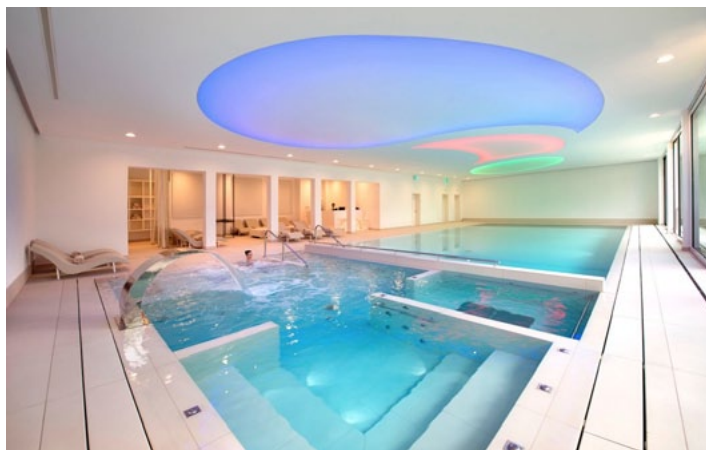


LUGANO

The View Lugano Hotel



It was train time again, back to civilization to lovely **Lugano**, a pretty city sitting lakeside surrounded by the Alps, where we truly got a room with a view. **The View Lugano Hotel** gets my stamp of approval. It sits on the hillside overlooking Paradiso, yes, the area is even officially called “paradise”. This small boutique hotel, a member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World is truly a gem. The Swiss service is impeccable. I absolutely loved my modern design room with a private terrace overlooking **Lake Lugano**.



To work up an appetite, I swam in the indoor pool with a cool sculptured ceiling with neon lighting. For some R&R, I headed to the spa which has a special salt room to unwind in as well as sauna, hamman and cromotherapy showers.



A unique amenity offered at The View Lugano is the electric smart car or bicycles which are both complimentary for hotel guests. But I decided to take a pass from navigating the hills on wheels. Instead, I took the convenient footpath down the slope, a seemingly safer scenic route for me as a foreigner.



Bellinzona Carnivale

We took the local **Paradiso** train playing tourist to check out the **Carnivale** in nearby **Bellinzona**. It was a fun way to spend a Sunday afternoon with many Instagrammable moments along the parade path. It was cute to see how parents and their children dressed in matching animal costumes; I guess a family carnival tradition.



Emerald Living Residences at The View Lugano

The **View Lugano** has a sister building called **Emerald Living** offering residences for sale with the same spectacular lake view, plus all the amenities of the hotel available to owners. If owning your own Lugano condo with a view is of interest, reach out to me for details.



Bellagio Lake Como Estate

One night while in Lugano, I had a dinner with the esteemed owner of a spectacular Bellagio Estate overlooking Lake Como and the Alps. It is a close side trip from Lugano. The estate's 360 panoramic view is amazing. It is perched above the village of Bellagio just opposite the Rockefeller Estate which is now a foundation. This gentleman's treasured estate which is for sale privately through me, has two primary houses, 4 secondary houses, a pool, tennis court, helipad, winding garden path with sculptures and the best views around. Why not become the neighbor of George Clooney, Richard Branson and Donatella Versace? Or you can transform this hilltop property into a one-of-a-kind resort that is just a quick heli ride from Milan.

Bellagio/Lake Como Estate Video

<https://vimeo.com/225571007>



