

50 million euros will be invested until 2019

- Three cable car projects in preparation
- Development of a new common brand
- More year-round jobs

Bergbahnen AG Wagrain and its subsidiary, Bergbahnen Flachau GmbH, as well as the independent Alpendorf Bergbahnen AG will invest a record sum of 50 million euros across the ski resort over the next two years. One of the projects is the new cable car connecting Wagrain and Kleinarl. The Flying Mozart cable car section from the centre of Wagrain to the Griesenkar will be built and the cable car connecting St. Johann and Wagrain at the Sonntagskogel will be optimised. This was announced by the managers of the three companies in a press conference in Salzburg on Tuesday, 29 August.

Wagrain and Flachau started their merger in March 2017, establishing one of Austria's largest cable car groups which also incorporates the Eben ski resort and the majority of the Filzmoos ski resort. The joint Flachau, Wagrain and St. Johann ski resort will be managed under one brand, "Snow Space Salzburg", in cooperation with St. Johann for the first time with the start of the 2017/18 ski season. The three companies of Snow Space Salzburg currently achieve a turnover of 61.5 million euros, sell around two million tickets every year and transport 20 million guests. With the investment programme and by bundling resources, Snow Space Salzburg will not only expand significantly, guests will also experience a higher quality standard, according to Ernst Brandstätter, managing director of Bergbahnen Flachau.

On the way of becoming the biggest Ski amadé resort

The by far biggest project in the investment programme is the construction of the new Flying Mozart cable car section from the centre of Wagrain to the Griesenkar. The three-kilometres long key component of the facilities in Wagrain will be constructed for 25 million euros. This will not only increase the capacity from 2,400 to 3,500 persons per hour, comfort for the guests will also improve significantly.

The new connecting cable car leads from the Flying Mozart in direction Kleinarl to the Frauenalm Saddle and connects the Shuttleberg Flachauwinkel-Kleinarl ski resort with the Snow Space Salzburg. Thus, adding a further 40 kilometres of pistes to the already existing 120 kilometres in Flachau, Wagrain and St. Johann. However, this will also create a connection to the Zauchensee ski resort with a further 50 kilometres of pistes which can be reached via a short ski bus journey in Flachauwinkel. Boasting over 200 kilometres of pistes, this will become the biggest Ski amadé resort. This completely new cable car connection will have a length of three kilometres and will be built for a total of 12 million euros. Half of the costs will be carried by the Snow Space Salzburg cable car operators.

Last but not least, the current bottleneck between St. Johann and Wagrain will be eliminated. The Sonntagskogel 2 will be newly built and extended. Costs: 7 million euros. The remainder of the investment

will be used for the optimisation of the water reservoir facilities and other projects.

Focus on quality improvements

The realisation of these investments, which will improve quality without the need for further expansion, depends in part on administrative proceedings and contracts concluded with property owners under civil law. However, all cable cars and therefore the expansion of the ski resort are scheduled to be completed and available for the 2019/20 winter season. Part of the construction works will commence next year. "Starting key projects quickly indicates the pace at which we as top destination would like to proceed with: Maximum improvement for our guests on all levels as well as perfect connection between all cable cars and pistes throughout the ski resort. With this investment boost, Snow Space Salzburg aims to reach a new dimension of winter sport in the Pongau", emphasises Wolfgang Hettegger, chairman of the Alpendorf Bergbahnen AG.

New brand "Snow Space Salzburg"

For the first time in its 50-year history, the Flachau, Wagrain and St. Johann ski resort cooperates under a new constellation with a common brand. The new brand name is "Snow Space Salzburg", and the logo also features the names of the three villages Flachau, Wagrain and St. Johann. Thus, the entire ski resort will benefit from the strength of the "Snow Space" brand, which the mountain railways in Flachau have established – also by regularly staging ski world cup races – over the past 20 years. The additional reference "Salzburg" creates the perfect link to the location because Salzburg is – in every aspect – a world destination of tourism, so Ernst Brandstätter, managing director of Bergbahnen Flachau GmbH.

According to Ernst Brandstätter, the brand "Snow Space Salzburg" stands for premium quality claimed by a top ski resort in Austria's biggest network of ski resorts - Ski amadé. Snow is one of the core competences which is demonstrated by perfect pistes throughout the season. Beautiful natural surroundings, a wide range of culinary delights and perfect service are further strengths of the region, guaranteeing unforgettable winter and sports experiences. The new slogan - "Best of Mountains" – highlights the fact that Snow Space Salzburg provides everything what guests expect when it comes to mountains in winter as well as in summer. Coordinated, intensive marketing will ensure that Snow Space Salzburg features more prominently in the 2017/18 season already.

Bundled competences, increased efficiency

The employees in Flachau, Wagrain and St. Johann cooperate in the three areas technical, administration and marketing, explains Christoph Baumann, chairman of Bergbahnen AG Wagrain. This means that know-how and competences are bundled for the benefit of the project as a whole. All companies endeavour to consistently improve the qualification of their employees. The operation and revision of increasingly complex systems as well as the expansion of the summer operation requires highly qualified expert staff, and that must be guaranteed in the long run, so Christoph Baumann. For this, the training of currently ten apprentices, for example, will be improved. Mr Baumann also expects a growth in the number of personnel of currently 270 in over 20 different professions. To make the jobs more attractive, year-round employment will be expedited.

2017/18 winter season: Family tickets and uniform standards

Guests will experience the positive effects of the innovations already in winter 2017/18. New, discounted family tickets at the weekends in the Snow Space Salzburg, for example, have been agreed with the Fed-

eral Competition Authority which assessed the merger of Wagrain and Flachau. In addition, the entire ski resort will be operated on the basis of uniform standards by bundling know-how. This applies especially to the pistes where grooming is a crucial factor for the quality of the downhill runs. In addition, the entire piste guidance system will be rearranged and all employees at the lifts will provide top service. "Our teams at the cable cars are the main point of contact with the companies for our guests. And guests must be able to feel that", so Christoph Baumann.

A new era in the Snow Space Salzburg will begin shortly after the merger of Wagrain and Flachau, so the three managing directors. Having already developed the region successfully within the current owner structure, the continued improvement of quality with the bundled competence of three prolific cable car operators begins now, so Christoph Baumann.

About Snow Space Salzburg:

Snow Space Salzburg is a ski resort comprising of Flachau, Wagrain and St. Johann in the Pongau. Because of its premium quality, it is one of the top destinations in Austria's largest network of ski resorts - Ski amadé. The three cooperating companies of Snow Space Salzburg, with a total of 270 employees (average per year), achieve a turnover of 61.5 million euros, sell around two million tickets every year and transport 21 million guests. The ski resort boasts over 45 cable cars, which provide access to 61 pistes with a total length of 120 kilometres.

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