



Val Gardena • The holiday valley of the Dolomites



DOLOMITES
UNESCO WORLD
HERITAGE

2017

**DOLOMITI
SUPERSKI**
wonderful times 



Sas Rigais
3.025 m

Gran Fermeda
2.873 m

Puez

Stevia
2.759 m

Cir
2.592 m



Sella Group

Piz Boé
3.152 m

Sassolungo
3.181 m

Sassopiatto
2.956 m

Marmolada
3.342 m





Isolde von Mersi was brought up in Val Pusteria. She has been writing about her love for the South Tyrolean mountains in her books and articles in newspapers and magazines since she completed her Media Studies in Vienna. Her work features in German, Austrian and, of course, South Tyrolean media, depicting the inexhaustible wealth of topics represented by the alpine culture and nature.

„Bënni te Gherdëina „ – Welcome to Val Gardena

South Tyroleans have a name for the red geranium: ‘burning love’ (Brennende Liab). The flower has been a symbol of the province since time immemorial, and it gives a warm welcome to everyone visiting the area from the countless balconies and windows, lighting up the way into the Ladin valley of Val Gardena. You can almost hear it whisper ‘bënni’ - welcome. You may catch a glimpse of it worn with pride as a piece of jewellery, representing the land and one’s love for this unique home we’re lucky enough to live in. The amazing landscape of the Dolomites is so unique that the UNESCO declared it a World Heritage Site in 2009. The burning love of the denizens of Val Gardena for their valley also makes up their sense of duty to protect local nature and culture. This also includes their will to show the treasures and beauties of Val Gardena to their guests, ensuring they experience as much as possible during their winter and summer stay. Many people from Val Gardena will recount their stories about the valley in the Gherdëina magazine with passion and from different angles, taking you on a journey of discovery across the most beautiful mountains in the world.

Isolde v. Mersi

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Explore interactive content/videos on Val Gardena

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Columnist Isolde von Mersi on Dolomite legends



The legendary Dolomites

How did the 'pale mountains' first receive their name? Legend has it that two inhabitants from the moon returned from the dark, rocky fiefdom on Earth to the silver satellite with a Prince who was fascinated with their homeland. There, the prince fell madly in love with the Moon Princess, yet the blinding light on the Moon would have robbed him of his sight had he stayed there for too long. So the prince and princess travelled back to Earth, yet she soon fell ill, destined to perish among those dark, inhospitable rocks, longing for her home. The dwarf tribe of the Salvans helped the unfortunate couple. In one single night, they wove shiny moonlight threads, covering every single spire of the dark mountains. From that moment onwards, they would always shine, bathing the realm in a pale light.

This poetic Ladin myth was written by author Karl Felix Wolff in 1905 in the first collection of the Dolomite legends. However, it was French geologist, Déodat de Dolomieu, who started the scientific research of these unique mountains. The 'pale mountains' were named 'Dolomites' in the 18th century in his

honour. In 2009, UNESCO declared the southernmost mountains of the Alps a World Heritage Site.

Limestone ocean giants

It's a well-known fact that it wasn't moonlight that bestowed the pale hue of the Dolomites, rather actual rocks such as plaster, sandstone, marl, and corallian limestone. Moreover, their geological formation is unique: the mountains rested at the bottom of the primordial ocean around 250 million years ago, during the Mesozoic era. Volcano eruptions, earthquakes, and the shift of the continent formed the Dolomites. Wind, rain, and glaciers moulded the summits that had emerged from the oceans over centuries. The miracle of this amazing creation of nature is demonstrated by the geological-palaeontological sections in the Museum Gherdëina in Ortisei and its collection of petrified plants and sea life.

The Sella Massif is the heart of the Dolomites, an imposing rocky giant with bizarre towers and steep walls. Val Gardena is one of the two Ladin South Tyrolean valleys which, like a beating

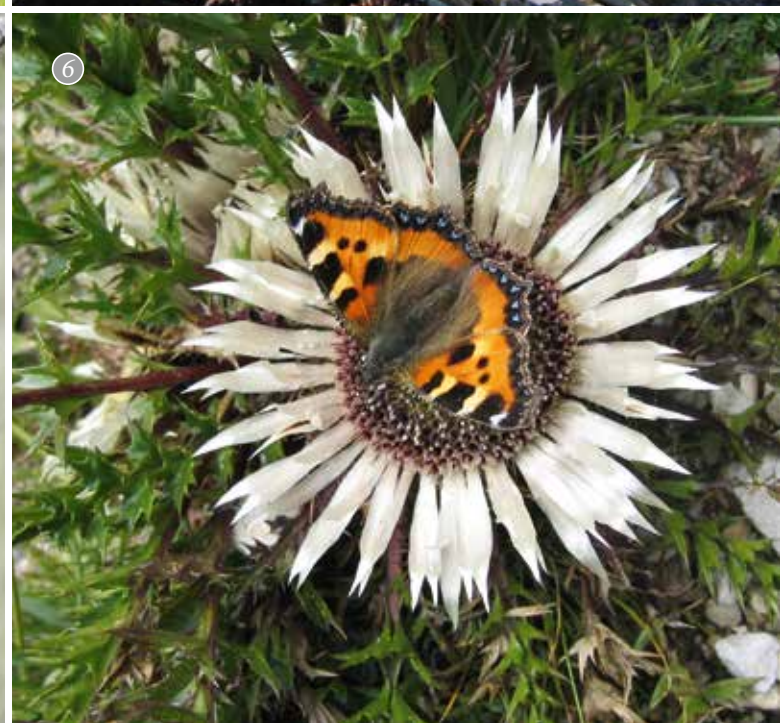


artery, lead to the aforementioned heart. It also connects a network of other Ladin Dolomite valleys: Passo Gardena grants access to the South Tyrolean Val Badia, Passo Sella to Trentino, and Val di Fassa.

The heart of the Ladin culture

The Dolomite landscapes in Val Gardena are unique. The Sella rises in the east, the majestic Sassolungo in the south, the filigree summits of the Puez and Odle group to the north, and the valley opens up to the west with a view over the Sciliar, another mythical Dolomite mountain.

The locals are just as unique as their mountains. They're Ladin, speak the oldest language in South Tyrol, which was basically passed down orally and partially in written form up to the 20th century, and is still alive and kicking with all its legends, fables, or songs. The Dolomites are bursting with magic thanks to their stunning nature and the Rhaeto-Romanic lifestyle and culture which have put the whole world under a spell.



Beautiful nature

Small and colourful is what Val Gardena looks like in its full bloom spring, with swathes of crocuses, violets, snowbells covering the land. A couple of weeks later, dense blankets of rhododendrons brighten the feet of the 'pale mountains'. White and green Alpine poppies reach for the sunshine, rising out of gravel and rubble piles. The summer floral variety is

of a touching beauty, with 30 different bellflowers, orchids, tiger and martagon lilies peppering the landscape. A true and rare beauty in the mountains is the rampion, the queen of flowers. No queen would be complete without its very own royal court, decked in colourful king-of-the-Alps, white dryads, and cinquefoils.

The mountains awash in a sea of flowers

The mild climate, the variety of soil, and the diversity in layers of vegetation from one metre to the next means that five different types of forests grow between 1,000 and 2,300 m altitude: high plateaus, gravel piles and even rocks reign above the treetops, providing plenty of space for the sensational Dolomite flora. The large Swiss stone pine forests, like the ones in the City of Rocks on Passo Sella, are unique in Val Gardena.

Life

The nutcrackers live in this rocky labyrinth. They obtain their food, the Swiss stone pine seeds, by cracking them open on blocks of rock. They provide for a sustainable forest growth and maintenance. Val Gardena is also extremely proud of its pair of golden eagles in Vallunga and some ibexes on the Sella Massif. One rare sight is the mouflon: these wild sheep, imported from Sardinia, have made the Col Rodella their new home from the very first moment they set their hooves here 40 years ago. Chamois, groundhogs, red deer, ptarmigan, and grouses can also be seen quite often in Val Gardena.



Val Gardena's water is an indispensable resource for everyone, even humans. You may not see it sometimes, as it flows underground in Vallunga; however, it flows abundantly from its source, in burbling brooks, or cascading down waterfalls. The quality of the water is outstanding thanks to the abundance of minerals due to the soil's diversity. Val Gardena is part of the Puez-Odle Nature Park, which ensures that the existing natural treasures are maintained and taken care of and, water, being the primordial element that it is, also counts.



Roman Runggaldier is a wood carver, hunter, and an experienced wildlife observer. He's been showing guests the treasures of the local flora and fauna on snowshoe excursions and summer hikes for over 17 years.

His recommendation:

'You'll never get closer to nature and wilderness than on a Dolomite tour at dawn, a hike on fresh snow under the full moon, clearly tracing the tracks left by foxes, weasels, rabbits, and ermines. Silence is what is needed if you want to truly listen and hear... the sounds of startled animals and the burbling water. Do not fear silence: embrace it. Silence brings peace, joy, and can heal.'

- ① The blossoming Teufelskralle ② The groundhogs' stomping ground ③ A herd of chamois ④ The Edelweiss, our flower ⑤ Jays in the boughs ⑥ The butterflies' silver thistles

In Val Gardena

Curiosity trumps everything else. Our curiosity has led us to finding many noteworthy things. We've always been a curious bunch, really. Even back in the 14th century we had a knack for finding stuff. Back then, the field's yield was pretty low, every farm in the valley was located well above 1,200 m. In that dire situation, farmers had to look for another source of income during winter... and lo and behold, they found one: they made keys and carved wooden toys. They were easy enough to sell, to travelling traders at first, and then to the rest of the world.

In Val Gardena we are Ladin: literature was a foreign concept to us, and so our Rhaeto-Romance language was only transmitted orally. We may have lacked books, but we did find our very own creative genre: wood carving. We travelled far and wide and the trade slowly blossomed into other forms of art. Sculpting is one prime example, perfected in the 16th century by the Trebinger and Vinzter families and their beautiful sculptures and altars.

Today, next to the numerous ateliers, there are five or six artists who fully express their thoughts and perceptions around Val Gardena. While this may be

our own point of view, it goes without saying that we were, of course, influenced by the daily art in our life as we grew up: cribs, altars, holy and secular sculptures all featured in local workshops and ateliers.

However, it's also true that we Val Gardena artists experience our village and valley from our own perspective. It's good that we know where we come from. We can't live without our history. Love, life, death, faith, justice – the themes of our paintings are the themes of humanity and will always be so. Only our tools change: we have brushes and easels as well as computers and videos. Even the creative work with robots has already begun.



Aron Demetz is 'a self-proclaimed classical sculptor with his own ideas.' He's been featured internationally, lives in Val Gardena. Here he works with the material of his home, wood and tree resin. He paints, or applies a silver or golden lacquer to some of his sculptures, while others are stubbornly subjected to a rite of fire.





A doorway to other cultures

'Tyrol' is a word of Ladin origin. Its root derives from the word 'troi', meaning 'path'. It's an ancient language, and the whole Ladin culture in the Dolomites is just as ancient: a good 2,000 years old, to be precise. Religious rituals, rural festivities and processions, music and songs changed more than once over the course of the centuries. Even storytelling, mainly of Dolomite legends, and art aren't the same as they once were, constantly adapting to the periods they were in.

Today, three institutions research and maintain the ancient Ladin cultural heritage: the 'Union di Ladins' in Val Gardena, the 'Micurà de Rù', South Tyrol's Ladin Institute, and the transversal 'Union Generela di Ladins dla Dolomites' for all Ladins in the Dolomites.

Identity shift across time

The Romans influenced the Ladin language and the soon-to-follow Christian period moulded local religious traditions. Over the course of the centuries, the Ladins were also influenced by the German and Italian culture. Yet they've always remained true to their spirit. And the best thing is they're proud to share their cultural heritage with their guests.

Rural traditions are still at the heart of the community life throughout the year, and all those traditional festivities wouldn't be the same without music. In fact, songs or melodies accompany the processions for health, good weather, a fruitful yield, as well as lifting the spirits during the celebration of the yearly transhumance of the cattle. Christian mountain rituals are still alive and kicking: St. Nicholas knocks from door to door, accompanied by a horde of masked devils, the "Krampus".

Carnival is when the unmistakable Val Gardena humour takes centre stage... and it makes a cheeky appearance during weddings, too. The 'Sief' are typical road blocks mounted along the wedding procession route. Here, friends of the lovers accompany the newly-wedded couple and their families with cries of laughter, pantomime, and some good old banter. The young single rascals also receive a symbolic compensation, as they won't have another opportunity to steal a night or two of amorous dalliance with the now unavailable wife.

① The mountain parish of S. Giacomo ② Village fountain with a Ladin saying ③ Typical Val Gardena woodcarved dolls ④ The Val Gardena Krampus group ⑤ Always protected with your tuft of chamois hair ⑥ Val Gardena damsels in traditional clothing ⑦ The fair sex crowns the 'Gherlanda spiza'



Val Gardena dresses up

Single or married? Farmer or entrepreneur? In times past, one could identify the profession and availability of men and women alike by their clothing alone. Today certain things aren't that important anymore. However, what hasn't changed is the refined cut and beauty of the Val Gardena clothes, which still bedazzle the whole Alpine area with their laces, braids, and golden glow.

Every August, the three villages take turns in hosting the 'Gröden in Tracht', a procession showing off their exquisite traditional clothing. It's quite a spectacular event: all bands, choirs, and folklore dance groups meet to host concerts and dance. The highlight has to be the massive procession which is a siren call for all locals to show off their traditional clothing.



The proof is in the Strudel

Helga Mussner is the chef of the Chalet Gerard before the Passo Gardena. Over the course of the decades, together with her family, she's transformed the humble mountain hut into an exclusive, small mountain hotel with a restaurant. She was practically brought up in a Val Gardena bakery and patisserie, where she learnt the most important and sweetest arts of temptation.

Discover Val Gardena's
best recipes



'Learn how to cook: then we'll talk marriage!' instructed Helga Mussner's parents to their daughters. The host and chef of the Chalet Gerard learnt how to bake perfect, delectable cakes and strudel in the home bakery and patisserie, to the point that today she still bakes the legendary apple strudel herself. Starters, main dishes, and all other delicacies you find on the menu have been developed over the course of her adult-

hood, always experimenting with new recipes and preparations. Nut spatzle. Arctic char from Passiria with mashed potato, porcini and parsley pesto. Golden delicious apple cream with baked potato straw. These are the creative and refined dishes whipped up by Helga Mussner. 'I cook Tyrolean food with a Mediterranean twist', is how she succinctly describes her unmistakable style.

"Cooking is a passion"

Her signature dishes and style were only developed after her wedding and over the course of decades. 'I simply went to the stove in the small mountain hut of my husband and started with a few traditional dishes. Soon enough, I simply couldn't continue doing Knödel, the demands in the kitchen grew, and even the old tradition of using a lot of butter and cream was replaced by a new lightness. I actually went to a lot of courses, and experimented a lot, too', she recalls.

She remained in her domain, the kitchen, even after the conversion from hut to a modern hotel-cum-chalet. 'Cooking is a passion. You either have it, or you don't. If you do, you want to express it!', she tells us, her eyes twinkling with delight. The second secret to her success is typical of Val Gardena, 'It's very important to stick to what your guests want.'

And that's why the experimental chef does contain herself. 'I can't simply change the menu every time it takes my whim. Our restaurant guests would be disappointed. Most of them come here for our classics such as our barley risotto, polenta dumplings or venison stew.'

① Sun-kissed feast ② Get creative with some South Tyrolean Speck ③ The 'Crafuncins': stuffed ravioli ④ Alpine and Mediterranean cuisine ⑤ A welcoming and cozy 'Stube' ⑥ Kaiserschmarrn: the menu's cherry on the cake

Barley risotto

Ingredients (serves 4)

70 g onion
2 tbs oil
100 g barley
100 g spelt
100 g short grain rice
50 ml white wine
1 l vegetable consommé
salt
ground pepper
rosemary, thyme, marjoram, sage,
basil and chives to your heart's desire
Parmesan
Butter
4 thin slices of South Tyrolean Speck,
finely chopped and grilled



Dice the onions and slightly sauté them in oil. Add barley, spelt, and rice. Let every grain become translucent one after the other, on a medium flame and by continually stirring. Reduce with white wine. Add hot vegetable consommé from time to time and continue stirring until the grains are cooked al dente. Add salt, pepper, the finely diced herbs. Take the risotto off the stove. Mix in butter and parmesan. Add the grilled speck on the risotto for a final finish.



Val Gardena – the Christmas Valley

During the Christmas period, Ortisei, S. Cristina, and Selva Val Gardena are steeped in a magical atmosphere lending itself to the romantic setting of the valley and, believe it or not, making it even more romantic than usual. The mountain summits, meadows, and villages bask in the glowing Christmas spirit which settles upon them. The white snow blanket and the endless chain of twinkling Christmas lights conjure a scene plucked directly from a fairy tale. The best time of the year descends upon the valley when you start noticing hints of sweet, mulled wine, tasty cinnamon buns, and your ears prick up to the sound of Christmas carols ringing across the valley. We're looking forward to seeing you for an enchanting Christmas in Val Gardena.

Christmas markets:

Ortisei: 01.12.2016 – 08.01.2017

S. Cristina: 02.12.2016 – 08.01.2017

Selva Val Gardena: 02.12.2016 – 08.01.2017

Living is easy

Water and wine aren't the only ones to flow. 'The lifestyle of the guests has changed. When I started working in the 70s, the guests often remained for the whole summer in Val Gardena. Today, most of them stay just a couple of days, but more frequently than before', recounts Franz Lageder. The trained barman observed another phenomenon over the course of the years, 'The night life has changed. There is more partying in the mountain and ski lodges.'

Lageder says that younger generations flock to the mountain and ski huts to chill with their friends. It's not only become quieter: 'All guests appreciate the peace and quiet in Val Gardena, the discreet atmosphere, the happy-go-lucky and relaxed South Tyrolean hospitality.' And the lifestyle of the local revolves around morning skis on the slopes or grabbing a quick espresso at the cafe before going on a Dolomite excursion, a glass of white wine for a lunch aperitif, and a cocktail at the hotel as they return from their excursions. An Aperol Spritz or the cult drink, Hugo, in local watering holes in the village with friends or other guests is a must.

Timetable for a casual holiday life

'Professional hoteliers in South Tyrol and Val Gardena made a qualitative leap in the 90s, investing in their hotels and a better training of young hoteliers', reports Lageder. He's changed, too, going from barman to sommelier. And it's been quite a successful change: he's been an award-winning wine specialist at the Hotel Gardena for the last 13 years, one of the leading hotels of the valley.

He's a purist at heart. 'Yes, everyone is going on about the Hugo, another one of those lifestyle aperitifs. They come and go, but a true timeless aperitif will always be a glass of champagne or Prosecco', he grins. Despite that, he hands over his Hugo recipe and, with it, a surprising revelation.

'I haven't touched one drop of wine ever since becoming sommelier. I only taste it in line with our rules. This ensures I maintain unbiased taste buds.' It's only in this soberness that he can correctly carry out his role. 'To understand the guests and their wine wishes right away. And that's where psychology also comes into play.'

1 Aperitif on the meadow 2 A toast to the valley 3 High street of Ortisei 4 Wine festival in S. Cristina 5 'Mountain Christmas' in Selva Val Gardena



Franz Lageder is the go-to man when it comes to lifestyle advice and tips in Val Gardena, what with his 40 years' culinary experience in bars, clubs, and restaurants. The 2014 South Tyrolean Sommelier of the year manages the beverage supply in the traditional Hotel Gardena, looks after the wine cellar, with other 1,000 labels, in the starred Annastuben restaurant, and expertly advises his guests during the selection of their drinks.



Hugo

1.5 cl Elderberry syrup
10 cl Prosecco
Sparkling water
Peppermint leaves
Ice cubes

Pour 1.5 cl elderberry syrup into a white wine glass. Fill with prosecco. Add a dash of sparkling water for that extra boost in flavour. Add ice cubes and a couple of peppermint leaves.



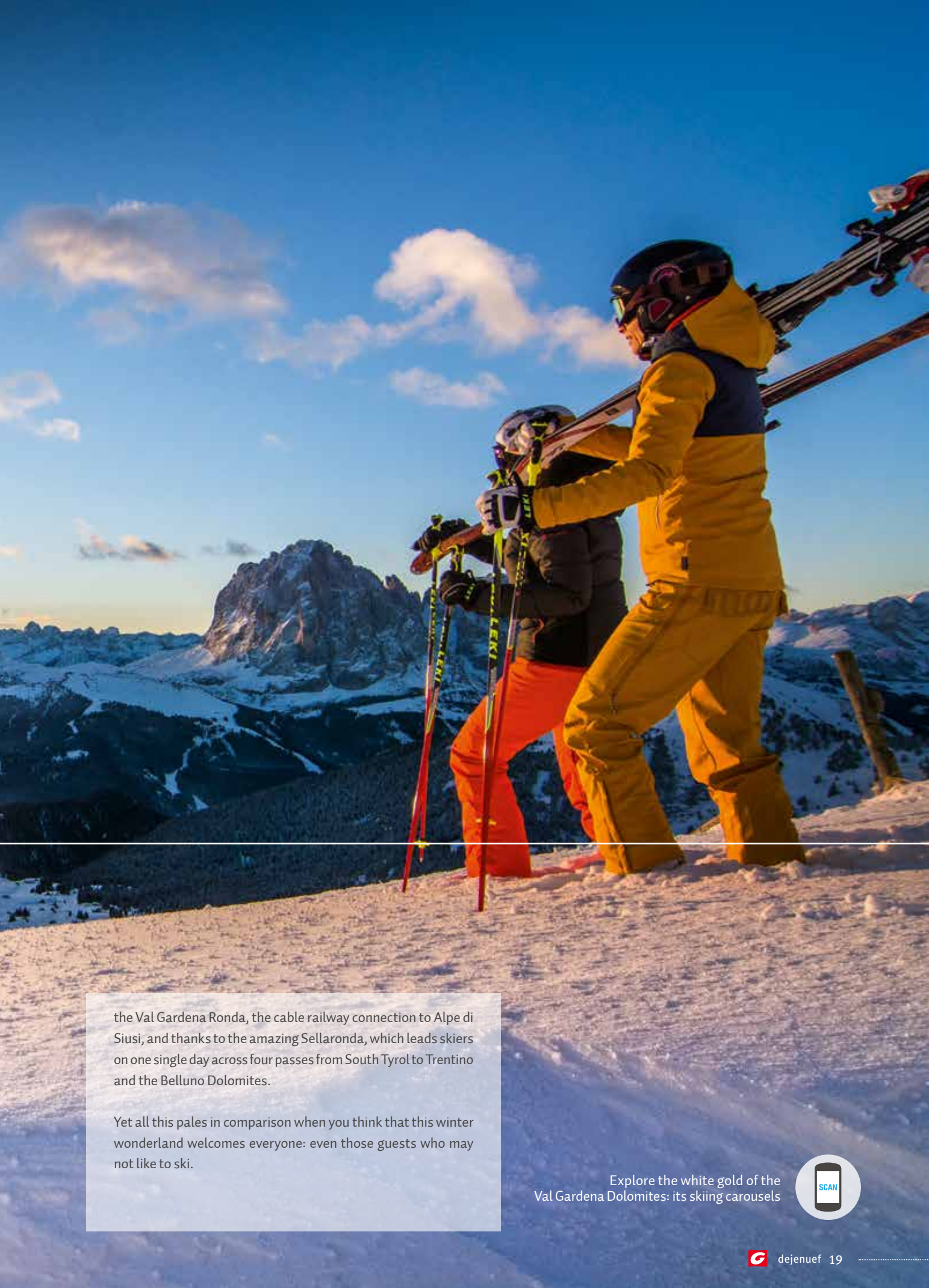
Snow-capped summits

The mountains and forests are covered in a light dusting of snow; passes and furrows, meadows and fields, even the slopes are covered in white. Picture a dark blue sky draped over this white landscape and a sun which seems brighter here, on the southern hang of the Alps, than anywhere else. Welcome to the 'pale mountains' and Val Gardena, a winter wonderland.

This magical ambience is what attracted winter sports pioneers so early to the valley. Emil Terschak, from Vienna, co-founder of the Munich Ski Association, moved to Ortisei at the

end of the 19th century and awoke local enthusiasm for this new sport discipline. A love which hasn't waned one bit, as proved by the 21st FIS Alpine World Ski Championship taking place in Val Gardena back in 1970. And since then it has become a recurring location for the FIS Alpine Ski World Cup.

Its prime location in the heart of the Dolomites means that out of all the South Tyrolean winter sport venues, Val Gardena is the best connected. It's the best overall, really, thanks to its guarantee of snow, the lift facilities in the valley rounded up in



the Val Gardena Ronda, the cable railway connection to Alpe di Siusi, and thanks to the amazing Sellaronda, which leads skiers on one single day across four passes from South Tyrol to Trentino and the Belluno Dolomites.

Yet all this pales in comparison when you think that this winter wonderland welcomes everyone: even those guests who may not like to ski.

Explore the white gold of the
Val Gardena Dolomites: its skiing carousels



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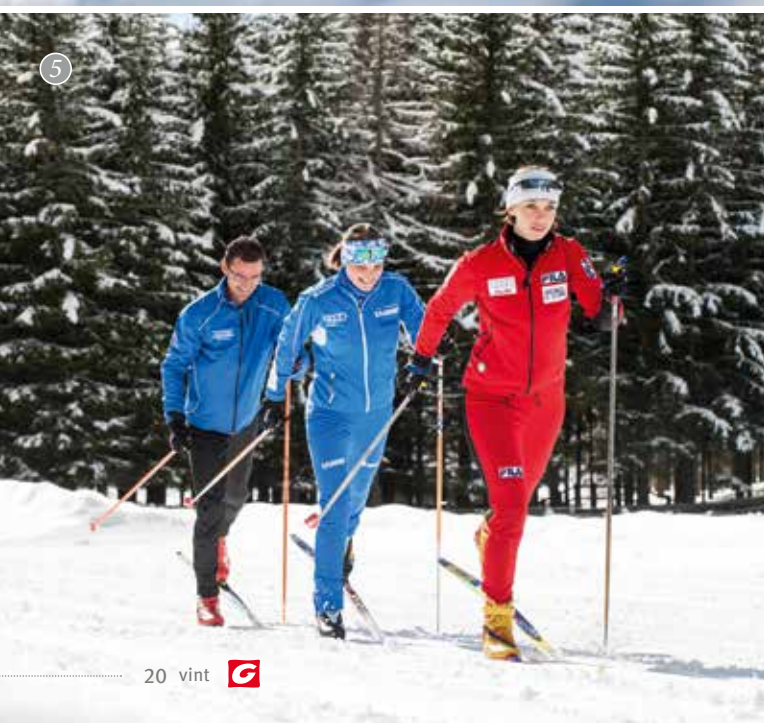
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4



5



6





Have a blast this winter even off the slopes



The skiing experience of a lifetime

Val Gardena: skiing to your heart's content, 500 km of slopes across local and cross-regional networks in the Dolomites. The Sellaronda, one of the ten best skiing carousels in the Alps; the Saslong World Cup slope in S. Cristina where, once a year, champions compete to win World Cup points in the downhill and Super-G disciplines. How can you beat that?

Oh, but you can. Val Gardena offers an incomparable offer for winter lovers. Excursionists heading into uncharted territory are always in the safe hands of the experienced mountain guides of the Alpine Schools in Selva Val Gardena and Ortisei. Ski teachers will teach guests the nostalgic telemark as well as freestyle, snowboarding, or cross-country skiing.

Footsteps in the snow

More than 50 km of slopes crisscross their way through Val Gardena: across the picturesque Vallunga in Selva Val Gardena, over Monte Pana in S. Cristina, and running through the high plateau of Alpe di Siusi. The eternally sun-kissed plateau can be easily reached by cable car and chair lift from Ortisei, and is connected to another 80 km of slopes.

Nature lovers leave their footsteps in the wild, unspoiled wintry territory during their snowshoes excursions. The Val Gardena winter excursion maps can be obtained for free at the Tourism Offices and will show the way across pristine snow-covered paths. They also include the many hiking trails and footpaths which are always cleared and accessible during winter.

A great excursion on foot set against the backdrop of a stunning panorama is the one coasting the old rail tracks. 'La ferata' runs between Ortisei and Selva Val Gardena at a medium altitude across the whole valley.

Winter nights in Val Gardena

Even if sport and adventure aren't your cup of tea, we know what is: while the hours away with music, Speck, and South Tyrolean wine in one of the countless Val Gardena mountain huts, which can be easily reached by cable car. And nobody notices whether you've just come off a stroll on the high street or a hard day on the slopes when entering the bars in the village for an Après-Ski.

Sleighbing, horse-drawn carriages or ice skating: in Val Gardena it's not all fun in the sun, as you can continue living this magical adventure well into the night. One new night event, however, is offered by the mountain night programme of Val Gardena Active, the varied event calendar of the three valley's villages. Absolutely romantic: torch-lit walk and dinner at traditional mountain huts, cross-country skiing under the moonlight or night-time sleigh rides on the Resciesa and Alpe di Siusi allow you to explore nature at night.

- 1 Freestyling on Piz Sella 2 Ski excursions on Resciesa 3 Cozy winter excursion 4 Snowshoe excursions under the moonlight
5 Tracking on the slope 6 Ski gondolas are fun 7 Slope blast on Seceda



Snow angels!

I'm sure you all know what happens when the first snow falls: you run outside, twirl once, twice, and let yourself fall, back first and with your arms stretched out against your hips or legs, onto the soft white cover. Close your eyes, and sweep your arms, in a wide, slow, upward arc until they meet atop your head; bring them back down, and repeat a couple of times. Open your eyes, carefully stand up and turn around: there it is, in all its beauty. Your very own snow angel.

Gifted with the patience and love of an angel

Angels come in all sizes and shapes, yet you may not recognise these right away: they have no wings. They're covered head to toe in helmets, anoraks, gloves, ski pants, and ski boots. Oh, and they just happen to spend most of their day on a pair of skis. To be fair, they're actually people, but there's nothing regular about them. They'll always greet you with a smile and have the infinite patience of an angel. They're always there for you, taking care of you in the Val Gardena ski school, ski nurseries, and crèches.

Learning how to ski well has never been easier with these ski instructors. Children taking their very first steps on a pair of skis can practice on training grounds or the children's park, fitted with bales, obstacles, and other fun tools to help them practise. The somewhat older children sway all the way to the top with their instructors on the gondola lifts to the slopes ideal for them, while advanced teenagers can actually learn a technique or two used by pros during races. A vital and compulsory stop for all children is the Safety Park: this is where you'll learn slope etiquette to ensure you're always safe on the slopes. Roads have their own rules and regulations, so why shouldn't slopes have their own?

Skiers just want to have fun

The children ski schools are always ready to accommodate your child's needs depending on whether you want to spend half-a-day or a full day, a couple of days or the whole week on the mountains during winter. Whatever the choice, you know it's going to be a blast! Skiing isn't the only activity at the schools, as your children will play, draw, walk across the beautiful landscape in Val Gardena and eat with all the other children at the school. After all, these angelic instructors aren't only the best around for ski lessons, they also know exactly what your child needs and likes.

Families with children can also do so much more on the slopes besides skiing in the valley: sleigh, take a snowy ride

You may not know this, but Val Gardena, the valley of wood carvers, seems to attract more angels than anywhere else in the world. Beautiful woodcarved guardian angels or angels protecting Baby Jesus as he sleeps sweet dreams in his crib. They're all on display in the wood workshops and shops in Ortisei, S. Cristina, and Selva Val Gardena, as well as in the Museum Gherdëina, churches and chapels. A lovely and somewhat different visit for families with children.



Flavio Prinoth runs the Selva Val Gardena ski school. It was founded in 1937 and is thus the oldest and largest school in the valley, employing a good 131 ski instructors. On top of that, the school is an award-winning facility. All professional, trained ski instructors also attend a further training programme which enables them to teach children and teenagers.

His insider tip:

'Dear parents, skiing is indeed one of the most beautiful sports that ever existed. When approaching the sport, don't subject them to the pressure of outperforming everyone else, rather show them how fun and exciting the sport can be. Show them the beauty of nature, and as such, respect for it. The Val Gardena local ski instructors will always stand by your side as guides, and are willing to lend an ear or a word of advice when needed. We'd be happy to do so if it means that you can get to know different skiing techniques and other winter sports in absolute safety while having fun, all against the unique backdrop of these incredible mountains. Learn how to ski, improve your skills but, above all, learn to have fun.'

on a horse-drawn sleigh, go on a winter hike, or ice skate. The Dolomites are also perfect for a summer adventure if your family wants to explore the beautiful summits and their lush, green meadows and forests, blooming flowers, and animals. Perfect for kids as plenty of trails are equipped with playing grounds and thematic trails. Just read our tip ahead to find out more.

- ❶ Making snow angels
- ❷ Oh what fun it is to ride on a sleigh!
- ❸ Let the snowball fight begin!
- ❹ Always first

October

November

December

January



CHRISTMAS IN VAL GARDENA:
01.12.2016 - 08.01.2017
Christmas markets in a contemplative atmosphere in all three Val Gardena Villages

NEW YEAR'S EVE IN VAL GARDENA:
31.12.2016 - 02.01.2017
Numerous New Year's Eve events



WEEKLY TORCHLIT RUNS AND SKI SHOWS
with the ski schools of Val Gardena throughout winter

50. SERIES OF CONCERTS JÈUNI DE MUJIGA:
OCTOBER 2016-APRIL 2017
Classical music concerts with musical virtuosos



FIS SKI WORLD CUP:
16.-17.12.2016
Two races on the famous Saslong slope with its 'camel humps'



January

February

March

April



**VERTICAL UP
VAL GARDENA / GRÖDEN**
21.01.2017
One hell of a run



ROCK THE DOLOMITES
12.03. - 19.03.2017
Winter music festival
in the Dolomites



**SELLARONDA
SKIMARATHON:**
24.03.2017
Ski touring marathon
on the four passes



SÜDTIROL GARDENISSIMA:
01.04.2017
The world's longest
giant slalom with
650 participants

**SÜDTIROL
GARDENISSIMA KIDS:**
02.04.2017
A fun parallel
slalom for kids

**CARNIVAL IN
VAL GARDENA:**
23.-28.02.2017
Carnival bonanza with
local traditions



SPRING RACE PARTY
18.03.2017
Fun ski race from Seceda
to the centre of
Ortisei village



Winter Highlights

All events in the updated
Val Gardena calendar





SKI AND TORCH RELAYS

The ski schools of Val Gardena organise weekly ski relays and shows.

VAL GARDENA SKI EXPRESS - SKIBUS

Val Gardena Mobil Card grants you unlimited access to skibuses in each individual location and between Selva Val Gardena and Ortisei.

DOLOMITI SUPERSKI

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SUPERSKI**
wonderful times 

www.DolomitiSuperski.com



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www.scuolasci-selva.it



SKI AND SNOWBOARD SCHOOL SASLONG

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**Your Val Gardena ski schools
helping you and your family
learn to ski and snowboard.**

Ski pass | Val Gardena-Alpe di Siusi

78 LIFTS, 175 KILOMETRES OF SLOPES | WINTER SEASON 2016/2017 | 03.12.2016 - 02.04.2017

VAL GARDENA SUPERPREMIÈRE 4=3 03.12.2016 - 24.12.2016				SEASON: 08.01.2017 - 04.02.2017 19.03.2017 - 02.04.2017				PEAK SEASON: 25.12.2016 - 07.01.2017 05.02.2017 - 18.03.2017			
Days	Adults	Juniors born after 26.11.2000	Seniors born before 26.11.1951	Days	Adults	Juniors born after 26.11.2000	Seniors born before 26.11.1951	Days	Adults	Juniors born after 26.11.2000	Seniors born before 26.11.1951
1	€ 42,00	€ 29,00	€ 38,00	1	€ 47,00	€ 33,00	€ 42,00	1	€ 52,00	€ 36,00	€ 47,00
2	€ 83,00	€ 58,00	€ 74,00	2	€ 93,00	€ 65,00	€ 84,00	2	€ 103,00	€ 72,00	€ 93,00
3	€ 120,00	€ 84,00	€ 108,00	3	€ 135,00	€ 95,00	€ 122,00	3	€ 150,00	€ 105,00	€ 135,00
4	€ 154,00	€ 108,00	€ 138,00	4	€ 173,00	€ 121,00	€ 156,00	4	€ 192,00	€ 134,00	€ 173,00
5	€ 184,00	€ 129,00	€ 166,00	5	€ 207,00	€ 145,00	€ 186,00	5	€ 230,00	€ 161,00	€ 207,00
6	€ 211,00	€ 148,00	€ 190,00	6	€ 238,00	€ 167,00	€ 214,00	6	€ 264,00	€ 185,00	€ 238,00

Ski pass | Dolomiti Superski

450 LIFTS, 1.200 KILOMETRES OF SLOPES | WINTER SEASON 2016/2017 | 26.11.2016 - END OF SEASON

DOLOMITI SUPERPREMIÈRE 4=3 26.11.2016 - 24.12.2016				SEASON: 08.01.2017 - 04.02.2017 19.03.2017 - END OF SEASON:				PEAK SEASON: 25.12.2016 - 07.01.2017 05.02.2017 - 18.03.2017			
Days	Adults	Juniors born after 26.11.2000	Seniors born before 26.11.1951	Days	Adults	Juniors born after 26.11.2000	Seniors born before 26.11.1951	Days	Adults	Juniors born after 26.11.2000	Seniors born before 26.11.1951
1	€ 46,00	€ 32,00	€ 41,00	1	€ 51,00	€ 36,00	€ 46,00	1	€ 57,00	€ 40,00	€ 51,00
2	€ 90,00	€ 63,00	€ 81,00	2	€ 101,00	€ 71,00	€ 91,00	2	€ 112,00	€ 78,00	€ 101,00
3	€ 130,00	€ 91,00	€ 117,00	3	€ 147,00	€ 103,00	€ 132,00	3	€ 163,00	€ 114,00	€ 147,00
4	€ 167,00	€ 117,00	€ 150,00	4	€ 188,00	€ 131,00	€ 169,00	4	€ 208,00	€ 146,00	€ 188,00
5	€ 200,00	€ 140,00	€ 180,00	5	€ 225,00	€ 157,00	€ 202,00	5	€ 250,00	€ 175,00	€ 225,00
6	€ 229,00	€ 161,00	€ 206,00	6	€ 258,00	€ 181,00	€ 232,00	6	€ 287,00	€ 201,00	€ 258,00

In addition: season tickets | choice ticket: 10 day ski pass spread over 14 days' holiday or 5 day ski pass spread over 6 days' holiday | Dolomiti Superski choice season ticket: 8 day ski pass throughout the whole season | transferable ski pass valid for several days for families with children below the age of 3 | prepaid ticket | single tickets/multi journey tickets | children up to the age of 8 (born after 26.11.2008) get a free ski pass (except season passes), if the accompanying person buys a ski pass for the same period. | Where can you buy your ski pass? In the branches of the Cassa di Risparmio in all three villages of Val Gardena and at the valley station of the Val Gardena Ronda Express. Further info and reduction at www.valgardena.it

Skiing cannot be guaranteed on all facilities from beginning to end of season.

The prices of ski passes can be subject to alteration due to exceptional changes in taxation, exchange rates or social provisions.

TER

Follow the white line



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**skischools
VAL GARDENA**



Gherdëina

Metropolitan Ortisei

The main village resting at the entrance of the valley has made local woodcarving an international phenomenon. Ortisei has been a holiday destination since the 19th century and the village can boast about its role in starting the tourist fascination with Val Gardena. Traditional hotels and many homes from the turn of the century are a nostalgic nod to the pioneering times of mountaineering. Mountain cable cars and footpaths provide an easy way to hike and ski as much as you want. The high street winding its way between the alleys and squares from the parish church of Sant'Ulrico to the San Antonio Church sings its siren call for tourists wanting to explore the cafes and shops. The Museum Gherdëina is packed with unique treasures from the Ladin culture and nature, and guests can also visit the permanent exhibition of contemporary Val Gardena woodcarving pieces.



Laid-back S. Cristina

Located in the middle of the valley, Val Gardena's smallest village allows its visitors to commute between two completely different worlds. A timeless and peaceful life on the farm can still be enjoyed at the top of the village, peppered with farmsteads and its church and graveyard; head down below to experience the buzz of the hotels, cafes, and shops along the main street. Tank up in beautiful views on the path running along the old Val Gardena rail track. The legendary Sassolungo rises into the sky, cutting an imposing silhouette across the horizon: an impressive sight when conquering the heights using one of the cable cars from the village, during winter and summer. Run across the meadows of Cisles and Mastlé stretching out between Seceda, the summits of the Odle and Stevia, and revel in some of the wonderful mountain lakes such as Lech Sant at 2,096 m.



Sporty Selva Val Gardena

What a tremendous sight, this mountain arena at the foot of the Sella Massif, right at the centre of Val Gardena's highest village. Outdoorsy people and fitness buffs will fulfil their dreams at this location with a blast on the slopes during winter and a hiking paradise during summer. It also serves as a direct gateway to the Sellaronda, the most spectacular Dolomite circuit with stunning views for both skiers and mountain bikers. The second-largest village is a sightseeing experience to behold thanks to the vicinity to the Puez-Odle Nature Park. However, if you're not physically inclined, don't worry too much, as the area also offers relaxing farming experiences on the mountain farmsteads, in this protected rocky enclave where you'll discover the beauty of nature. Monuments such as the medieval castle ruins of Wolkenstein, perched on its scraggy outpost, and the picturesque Ciastel de Gherdëina between Selva Val Gardena and S. Cristina are also well worth a visit.



DIRECT BOOKING PAYS

www.valgardena.it



Val Gardena
Dolomites

 **directBooking**
on the accommodation website





The call of the mountains

Breathtaking rocky outcrops, summits, and towers rise against the canopy of a blue sky. A brilliant sun, a spotlight aimed at the rocky formations on the warm southern side of the Alps, with their green unfurling meadows and forests, bathing them in a bright and long-lasting light. The 'Enrosadira' is a majestic spectacle of nature if there ever was on: the word describes the magical pink-hued glow of the Dolomites lighting up at dawn and dusk. 'The most beautiful mountains in the world', according to South Tyrol's mountain climbing legend, Reinhold Messner.

The spires of the Gruppo delle Odle, on the northern side of Val Gardena, were Messner's childhood stomping ground. Val Gardena's very own cult mountain climber was Luis Tren-

ker himself, from Ortisei. During his long-lived life, Trenker worked as a film maker and author, waxing lyrical about the beauty of his mountains. His absolute favourite was the Sassolungo, on the southern side of the valley, which he had climbed many times during his early years as a mountain guide.

The two mountaineers, independently and at different points in time, contributed to making the mountains in Val Gardena an international destination thanks to their stories, pictures, and words. Today, the Dolomites are officially a World Heritage Site, which means we have to do our best to protect them: how else can we ensure that the passion and love for our mountains of both locals and guests can continue shining eternally like the glow of the 'Enrosadira'?



Dive in the summer holiday adventure
of a lifetime in the Dolomites





Dive into nature

Accept every challenge. Continue heading upward and beyond. Extreme athletes look for and find new adventures when climbing the Dolomites. Ambitious mountain climbers can experience their high-altitude climbs on countless safe climbing walls. But what about regular people who may like to get their hands dirty and move, but not want to overcome soul-breaking physical exercise? Many guests catch a glimpse of the mountains during their holidays and are overcome by the desire to explore new heights: literally, even by climbing walls, and they don't have to be the steepest...

That's where the Val Gardena mountain guides step in to help you fulfil your dream. They'll accompany experts on their excursions, too, as they've been doing since the pioneering days of mountain climbing in the 19th century. But they'll also help beginners tackle their first climbs, showing them the ropes of the activity. Moreover, all three Val Gardena villages are part of the Val Gardena Active programme offering climbing taster sessions.

When nature meets culture

Right in the heart of a UNESCO World Heritage Site, outdoor activities meet the lively culture of Val Gardena. A lovely mix of both is offered by the herbal excursion given by an expert on the matter, giving you a thorough introduction to the most important culinary and medicinal herbs. Try herbal juices, breads, and spreads on a farm inside the 13th century stube. A farmer will also teach you how to make Crafuncins (see picture 8), the Ladin 'ravioli', just like she does.

You can get to know the old and new farm lifestyle, the old mills of Ladin hamlet Bulla, the enchanting mountain chapel of S. Giacomo and many other cultural sights of the valley in countless excursions. Two excursions will take you deep into the world of Val Gardena wood carving: one deals with the story of the craft, while the other teaches you how to carve your very own souvenir.

A local palaeontologist will explain the details of all the variety of rocks and soil layers present in the Dolomites. Regardless of which aspect you want to capture during your holiday in Val Gardena, you know you'll be taking home some cherished memories thanks to the tips of a professional photographer. Take a snapshot of the unique landscapes in Val Gardena for an eternal memory of your trip to South Tyrol.

1 Climbing safely 2 Hiking with Val Gardena Active 3 The magical sunrise on Resciesa 4 Hiking on the Puez high plateau 5 Downhill with a view across the Sasslungo 6 The flora and fauna of the Dolomites 7 Climbing on the Cir summits



From the Sella to the Alpe di Siusi

Many people prefer to walk at the foot of these rocky walls, as close as possible to the bottom of the Sella or Sasslungo, the Cir or the Odle summits. Experienced staff from the Val Gardena Active programme invite you on weekly guided tours across the most beautiful landscapes of Ortisei, S. Cristina, and Selva Val Gardena. Special guides and excursions also include mountain bike highlights such as the Sellaronda trail or excursions across the Puez-Odle Nature Park. We also cater for e-bikers, should guests want to take a leisurely breakfast on-the-go. There's something even for all types of tourists, opportunities to explore the landscape unfurling between Sella and Alpe di Siusi on experiential and sensational trails on the Col de Flam. Modern treasure hunters will discover a variety of wonders accompanied by certified geocacher.





Let's go on an adventure!

Great offers for kids and teens for guaranteed fun



'Once upon a time...', that's how most stories start, right? Wrong. At least, in Val Gardena. You're steeped in a legendary and fairy-tale like land for all the summer in Val Gardena. And, as prince and princess of this magical real, you get to decide on a new adventure with your parents or other princelings every day!

But let's take one step at a time. Let's take a look at the fairy-tale world of the Dolomites and Val Gardena. There's always something going on in the three villages of the valley so that you and your parents won't feel bored even on a rainy day! It's a lot quieter in the nearby meadows and forests... but that doesn't mean you won't find many exciting adventures out there for you. And up high, in the wild, scraggy mountains rising from the lush meadows, that's where you get to be a hero of the mountains.

Plenty of fun

The nights in Val Gardena are quite the highlight for the eternally restless, that's for sure! Should you wish to become King or Queen of the Dolomites in August, then don't miss the Night of the Shooting Stars, a special event for children on the Col Raiser on 12 August. If you're lucky enough, you'll get to see a wave of shooting stars streaking across the sky, fading into the night. On 18 August, a mountain guide will take you across all villages for a sylvan adventure under the moonlight. He'll tell you of the nightlife in the forest and you'll hear the sounds of scattering animals and play fun games.

Did we forget something? Oh, of course we did. Silly us. Remember that in the Dolomites, flipflops and sandals can be worn in the villages and when going to the swimming pool. However, you need reliable footwear when heading into the mountains, as well as good equipment for every weather. If you're not too sure about what you need to bring with you, just ask the local Val Gardena Tourism Office for some insider tips, including more special treats for families with children.

Just read ahead if you want to discover some insider tips for children from one of our very own!

- ❶ Please, DO feed the goats! ❷ The water of Val Gardena: genuinely good! ❸ The mountain meadows: an outdoor sport facility
- ❹ The PanaRaida ❺ Adventure at the Ortisei high-rope facility
- ❻ Grab that fish! Angling at Lake 'Lech Sant'

Children can do everything

Moving on: time to explore summer! Nobody likes being alone, which is why Val Gardena surrounds you with a variety of sweet, fun, smart, and outdoorsy custodians. They have the right type of preparation for small royalty between the ages of 6 and 12.

Regardless if you're an only child who wants to find some new friends on your holidays, or if your siblings still manage to get on your nerves, or even if your parents want to go on their own, more adult activity; you can still explore the wonders of the Dolomites between mid-June and mid-September thanks to the animation program Val Gardena Kids Active in the villages of Ortisei, S. Cristina, and Selva Val Gardena. Become an athlete, a treasure hunter, on foot or by mountain bike or riding a horse. If you aren't tired after these exciting activities, you can still have fun twice a week (every Monday and Friday from the start of July to the end of August) at a special children night-time activity!



Ferdinand Demetz is a primary school student in Ortisei. Like so many other Val Gardena children, he learns three languages: Ladin, Italian and German. His favourite dishes are gnocchi alla romana and spinach spätzle. He loves spending his summer holidays outdoors playing football or hiking, or in the garden or forest behind his grandparent's home on the Alpe di Siusi.

His recommendation:

'Dear children, if you're spending your holidays here with us, then you simply have to visit the PanaRaida experience trail on Monte Pana with your parents! There are ten amazing stations you can play on: wood-carved horses and tree-houses you can climb on, a small wooden cable car, plenty of fun splashing about in the water, a labyrinth made with tree trunks, a huge swing and even a small lake. You can even go on a geo coaching treasure hunt! And of course, there's also somewhere you can picnic or lie on a wood-sun chair to relax. Maybe I'll even see you there!'

June

July

August



DOLOMITENSTADL:
30.06.2017
The big music
festival in Selva

**WEEKLY FARMER
AND CRAFTSMAN MARKET**
in July and August
in S. Cristina and
Selva Val Gardena



**LONG SUMMER
NIGHTS AND APERITIFS**
in July and August in
the traffic-free
area of Ortisei



**HERO SÜDTIROL
DOLOMITES
JUNE 2017**
MTB marathon in Europe,
with an elevation difference
of 4.500 metres

**SELLARONDA
BIKE DAY:**
18.06.2017
Car-free day around
the Sella Group,
only open to bikers



SĚIRA DL VIN
07.07.2017
Wine-tasting on
the red carpet
in S. Cristina

**VAL GARDENA
FOLKLORE FESTIVAL:**
06.08.2017
The biggest folklore festival
of the valley with a
procession of traditional
costumes



August

September

October

November



UNIKA:
31.08.-03.09.2017
Large exhibition of Val
Gardena's sculpture and art
IDEA UNIKA
throughout summer
in the traffic-free
area of Ortisei



SEPTEMBER 2017:
Ladin hiking weeks
in Selva Val Gardena
and Ladin culture weeks
in S. Cristina



"FERRAGOSTO"
IN VAL GARDENA:
13.-18.08.2017
Numerous events
during the mid August
Ferragosto holiday



SPARKASSE
ATP CHALLENGER
VAL GARDENA-SÜDTIROL
- 64.000 EURO:
04.11.-12.11.2017
International Men's
Tennis Championship



Summer Highlights

All events in the updated
Val Gardena calendar



As summer wanes

When nature slumbers in the Dolomites you know something magical is about to happen. The mountains and Val Gardena dip their toes into the bright rays of sunshine and wallow in the deep blue skies above the valley. The pale mountains sink into a deep, unmovable silence. Enter Autumn. It swirls through the quiet landscape, its brush leaving colourful streaks here and there: the green rhododendrons and juniper bushes alight the plateaus and meadows; bushes, berry-bearing bushes, grass, moss, and lichen are a resplendent array of every possible shade of red, rust, yellow, and grey-green; the bright red larches sway softly in the wind, akin to a flame dancing on the wick of a candle.

This is the ideal time if you need to clear the cobwebs away and reflect in silence, for this is when you can truly feel nature's heartbeat at its clearest. Even the forest bursts into

song: it buzzes in the shape of a fly lazily swerving past your ear, or resounds in a repetitive drumming from the lofty branches, a woodpecker doing what it does best. Peck, peck, peck. Even the sound of off-tune or badly played violins screeches through the City of Stones as birds delight hikers from the top of the trees.

As summer wanes, so does the boisterous life in the villages. It grinds to a halt, allowing the gregarious locals to while the hours away in long and intensive chats with their friends or the last tourists in the valley. Yet just because the days get shorter doesn't mean the valley can't find excuses to celebrate. Quite the opposite: the October Leaf Market "Segra Sacun" temporarily wakens everyone up from their autumnal slumber and invites them along for a good time.









A panacea to the autumn Blues

It's a well-known fact that not only poets have a melancholic side to them. The feeling appears to be infectious when autumn breaks, yet this doesn't happen in Val Gardena. The spirits of the locals lift as the first leaves start spiralling to the ground. In fact, their most important tradition doesn't fall on Christmas or Easter; ancient traditions dictate that this day falls in October. The jolly ritual is called 'Marcia de Segra Sacun' in Ladin. What does it mean? 'Leaf market'. Why not find out more in our editor's recommendation!

In the past, autumn rung in the start of the farmer's second profession in Val Gardena: wood carving. Today, farmers offer a holiday experience on their farmstead all year round. In Val Gardena there are currently more than 20 farms offering an

authentic Ladin holiday in the countryside. The Valin mountain farm near Selva Val Gardena has to thank the Mussner Family for breathing new life into the old cheesemaking tradition. What a treat! You can catch a glimpse of unforgettable flavours on the farm in our culinary recommendation.

Happiness has no specific season, and you should feel free to go on holiday at any given time of the year. Val Gardena in autumn is therefore perfect for the 'lone wolfs' among you. Just head out into nature, on silent paths to the eternally quiet summits and heights, to the mountain farmers with their down-to-earth cuisine, across villages at your own pace. Don't forget to celebrate the most colourful season of the Dolomites with all your soul!

TIP: the Leaf Market

Celebrations are a matter of faith in the Dolomites. The traditional Leaf Market, or 'Segra Sacun', starts every year on the second Sunday of October with locals taking part in the ritual church procession from Ortisei and the Holy Mass in the picturesque mountain church of San Giacomo. However, the tables turn on the following Monday, and the event becomes as secular and festive as can be in and around Ortisei. The main village of Val Gardena transforms into a vibrating market place which attracts locals, other South Tyroleans and the valley guests, as is to be expected from a real folklore event. Bands fill the area with music, every kind of road stand attracts guests with their culinary treats and crafts. Restaurants serve the best local food, and onlookers may just stumble upon an ancient love tradition of the locals. Young boys with a crush buy a pear wrapped in a ribbon and give it to their sweetheart. The pear can be juicy and ephemeral or ornately carved, a timeless gift to one's heart. The lucky girl can repay the favour during Easter the following year with beautifully decorated Easter eggs. Yet all happens in secrecy, as that's what women prefer: Prince Charming has to visit the house of his beloved personally and pick up the present.



TIP: mountain farm and cheese farm Valin

Take a closer look as we zoom in at 1,650 m above the steep, but sunny hills above the village of Selva Val Gardena: welcome to the Valin mountain farm. The Mussner Family have been running the farm for generations. Its highlight is the Valin cheese farm run by Martin Mussner, expert in everything cheese.

'We treat the milk of our twelve cows every second day, all year round; that's 200 L milk every day', The result: yoghurt, mountain farm butter and raw milk cheese in the most refined and different variants. Mountain cheese, fresh cheese, light cheese, hard cheese or soft cheese with or without Val Gardena mountain herbs available. All year round in the farm shop, in summer also at the weekly farmer's market in S. Cristina or during farm visits with cheese tastings.

- ① The fruits of autumn: the rose hip ② Raw milk cheese snack ③ Love pears from the Leaf Market ④ Transhumance
⑤ Rocky autumnal impressions ⑥ The Col de Flam footpath



ÅRE - Europe



Leading Mountain Resorts of the World

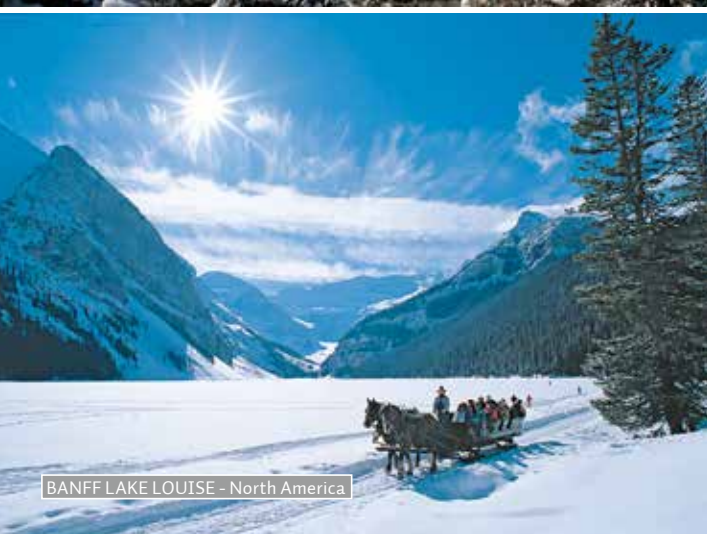


SAAS-FEE - Europe

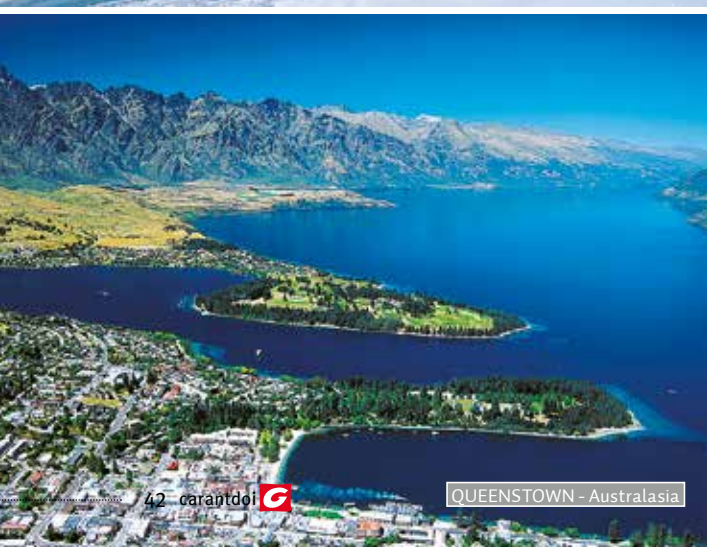
“Leading Mountain Resorts of the World” is a list of tourist resorts which offer first class quality mountain holidays at any time of the year. Val Gardena was awarded this title. The other resorts are: Queenstown (New Zealand-Australasia), Saas-Fee (Switzerland-Europe), Åre (Sweden-Europe) and Banff Lake Louise (Canada-North America).

We would like to suggest you to visit our other partner resorts should you ever be organizing a holiday in any of the above mentioned countries.

For further information: www.leadingmountainresorts.com



BANFF LAKE LOUISE - North America



QUEENSTOWN - Australasia



VAL GARDENA - Europe

Val Gardena on the web

REALTIME WEATHER WEBCAMS

Val Gardena has now 20 livecams and panocams, which are unique in the Alps and transmit weather conditions and panoramic views in real time.
www.valgardena.it/livecam

VALGARDENA.IT IS MOBILE

Now our responsive website can be easily viewed and used on all mobile devices.



FREE WIFI

Free wifi hotspots

Selva Val Gardena: hotspot in Nives Square and at the Tourism Association Office.

S. Cristina: hotspot in Town hall Square.

Ortisei: hotspots in S. Antonio Square, in the pedestrian area, in Church Square and on a stretch of the Luis Trenker walk.



BOOKING DIRECTLY OFFERS MANY ADVANTAGES



Val Gardena offers you an avantgarde room availability system. Booking directly your accommodation which is bookable online at valgardena.it, offers many advantages.



APP VAL GARDENA - GRÖDEN

The official Apple and Android APP to discover and experience Val Gardena, which you can use both in the valley and at home for your holiday planning.



PARTNER WEBSITES



www.dolomitesalpine.it



www.mtb-dolomites.com



www.sellarondabikeday.com



www.gardenissima.eu



www.valgardena-active.com



www.transfertovalgardena.com

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Language, the reflection of our soul

Column by Isolde von Mersi

Ladin is extraordinary. Sadly, I don't speak the oldest language in South Tyrol, even though it has always accompanied me, from my school years in Brunico to today, in the shape of friends from the Ladin valleys of Val Gardena and Val Badia. My youngest friend hasn't even finished primary school, would you believe that! Ferdinand from Ortisei never tires of telling me that in Val Gardena, 'l'ava' is Ladin for 'grandmother'. And here I was thinking that lava was a molten rock that volcanoes spurt into the sky when they erupt.

I marvel and, yes, even envy Ferdinand. I'm a language junkie, I can't help it. He learnt three languages in kindergarten alone: the Val Gardena variant of Ladin, Italian and German. I, on the other hand, as South Tyrolean, only learnt two languages when growing up.

But I won't make a scene, I promise. After all, my father introduced and instilled the love for the Dolomite legends in me long before I started school. To this very day, a very early edition of Karl Felix Wolff's stories is within arm's reach on the book shelf. The Dolomite legends will always be the most touching fairy tales in the world.

Oh, what I would get up to as a child, the adventures I got into with the kings and princesses in this rocky fiefdom; oh, how I loved my Ladin fairies, ghosts, and dwarfs, the Salvans and the Ganes.

Today, decades later, I'm proud to say I've become the go-to aunty when it comes to the legends of the Dolomites. I read stories to my nieces and students, and recite them from memory – they're not always accurate and never artfully told as the original ones, but it does not matter too much! I also regale every adult who becomes interested in the most magical mountains in the world with their legends.

I recently met a Ladin colleague of mine in Ortisei. David Lardschneider teaches Ladin and is the editor of the Ladin magazine 'La Usc di Ladins'. The more than 2,000-years-old history of the Ladin language in South Tyrol unfurled in front of my very own eyes. It came into being when the Romans conquered the Alps around 15 BC and the then locals, the Raetians, learnt the language used by Roman functionaries, traders, and soldiers. The Rhaetian language was then once again suppressed during the Migration Period. Today, only about 4.5 % of South Tyroleans are Ladin.

'The openness of all three South Tyrolean languages ensures the Ladin population is also open to a confluence of different cultural influences', according to my colleague David. He also, however, highlights the problems of only having two hours a week of Ladin in the South Tyrolean school system in the relevant villages and valleys.

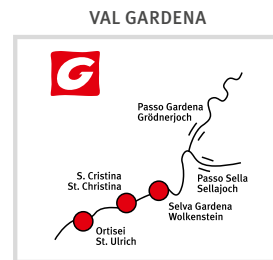
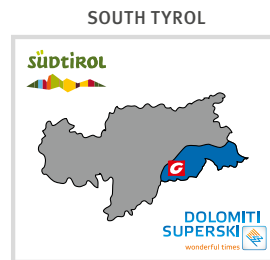
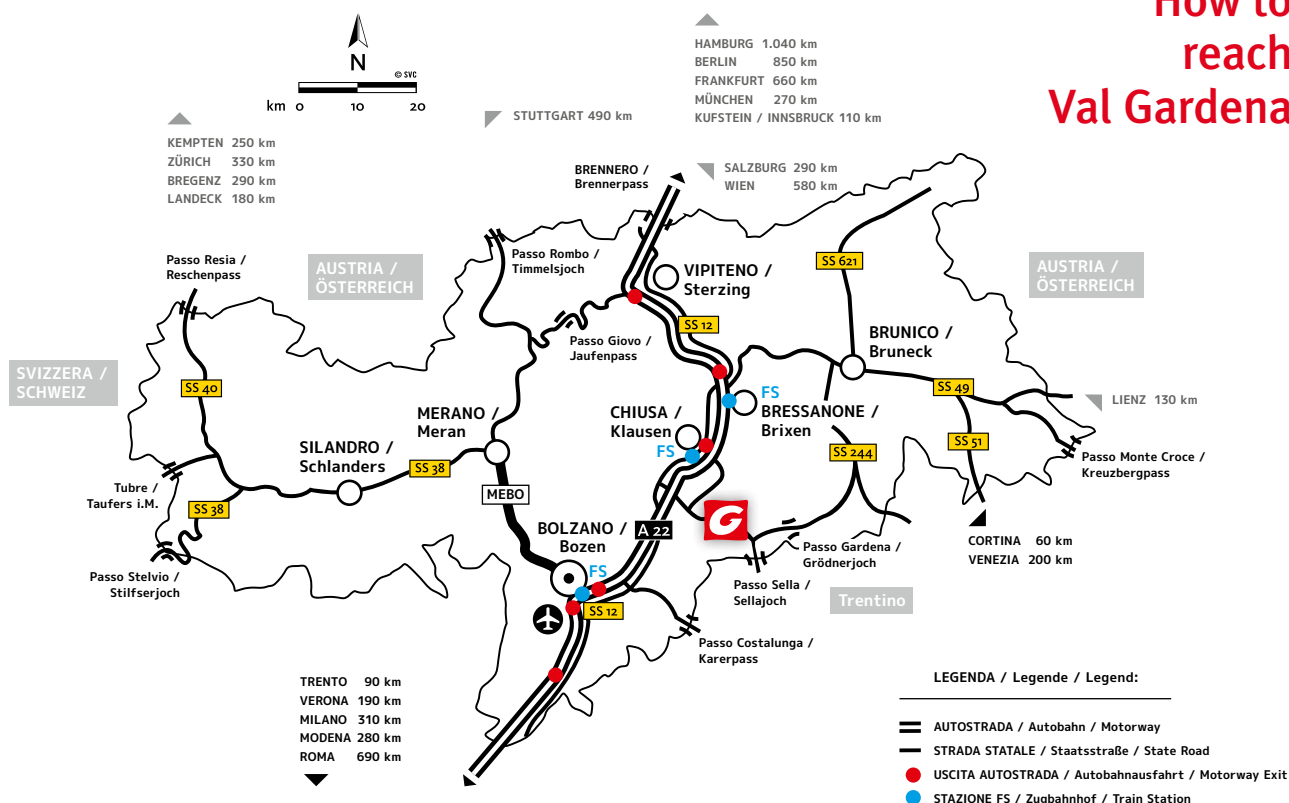
'Students face an identity crisis, and this becomes even more relevant with people living in Val Gardena, as we always feel torn between homesickness and wanderlust.'

However, even in today's South Tyrol, which despite its autonomy to preserve its languages and cultures still struggles with caring for and maintaining Ladin, David Lardschneider is confident. 'Our language is a living being and it's bursting with more than 2,000 years of culture.' As we say goodbye, we part with a reassuring and bolstering message, 'our language is and always will be the reflection of our soul.'



Picture by Annelies Frenes-Hitthaler, from the 'I CRËPS MAJAREI' book, published by the Ladin Cultural Institute Micurà de Rü, 1981

How to reach Val Gardena



CONNECTIONS

By car

The Val Gardena road network is directly connected to the motorway Autostrada del Brennero (A22). Arriving from the south drive past Verona, Trento, Bolzano to Chiusa and take the exit Chiusa/Val Gardena. Arriving from the north, drive past Innsbruck – Brennero – Bressanone to Chiusa and take the exit Chiusa/Val Gardena. Following the road signs you reach Ortisei in about 20 minutes and a few km further you find S. Cristina and Selva Val Gardena. The mountain passes at the end of the valley are only a few minutes drive away.

In Val Gardena, however, it is possible to do without a car for the whole period of your stay as the public transport connections are excellent in the high season and there are many lift facilities from each locality to the high altitude excursion and skiing areas. Many guests are happy to leave their car at home and reach Val Gardena by public transport.

By train

Val Gardena is connected to the rest of Italy and Europe by Intercity and Eurocity trains which all stop in Bolzano and Bressanone and some even in Chiusa. Deutsche Bahn runs 5 services a day from Bologna, Venice and Verona to Bolzano, starting from 9 Euro and 5 services a day from Germany, starting from 29 Euro. For information: www.valgardena.it/train

By bus

There are various buses which leave from Bolzano, Bressanone and Chiusa to Val Gardena (public bus service timetable available at www.sii.bz.it). Some hotels offer a shuttle bus service to and from the stations.

By airplane

The nearest airports are located in Bolzano, Verona, Innsbruck, Bergamo, Munich and Milan. The Bolzano airport has daily flights to and from Rome.

Transfer from the airport

Furthermore, transfers have been organized between the airports of Verona (Catullo), Bergamo (Orio al Serio), Milano Malpensa, Milano Linate, Innsbruck and Munich (at the main station also) and Val Gardena. For further information and ticket sale, please go to www.transfertovalgardena.com

For information regarding the taxi service to and from the stations and the airports, please contact our information offices or go to www.valgardena.it

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Room availability information

By phone: from Monday to Saturday
from 8am to 7pm

24-hour information system:

www.valgardena.it
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