



# The Sitzmarke

SPACE CITY SKI CLUB

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## AN ALPINE ADVENTURE AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD

By David Eickhoff, ATC

Tucked into the side of a mountain, high above the Engadine Valley in southeast Switzerland, St. Moritz is probably Europe's most famous ski resort. Often mentioned as the favorite site of the jet set and royalty, the resort has a long history and tradition for its winter sports activities. The SCSC recently sent fifty-five members to this posh setting for a week of skiing, touring and beautiful scenery.

After an overnight flight to Zurich, club members boarded a double-decker bus for a four-hour ride with spectacular scenery and Christmas card views of the Alps. Arriving in St. Moritz, the group checked into the four-star La Margna Hotel and was treated to a welcome party by the hotel staff. The accommodations at the hotel were excellent as nightly five-course dinners and daily full breakfasts gave club members time to mingle and plan the day's activities.

St. Moritz averages 320 sunny days a year but the sun was hard to find



the first couple of days. Foggy conditions with snow flurries resulted in low visibility and some interesting adventures. On the first day, Diane Baker and Ron Rodriguez led a group of skiers to the top of Piz Nair but were in rare form when both of them performed face-plants due to the poor visibility. Dale Albritton was following Alice down one run when he suddenly fell into a hole and had to be rescued. Later in the week, while skiing with Alice again, he took a wrong turn and (refusing to ask for directions) ended up in the wrong town. Fortunately, they were able to catch a train back to St. Moritz. Roger Holzman, while skiing with Jill Nanney and Marsha Lutz, came down one run, did a cartwheel and tail spin and landed on his face in some deep powder. Tor Lileng was the first skier on the mountain one morning but was disappointed to find out a six-pack was the name given to a six-person chair lift. Leslie and Andy Cashio, along with Jim Newton found themselves stuck on a chair lift for twenty minutes during a power failure while the loudspeakers blared 'there is no danger' in four languages. New club member Sheldon Tuffias dazzled the women in the club with his excellent ski style. Angela Martinez and Stephen Gallagher tried some snowboarding but a nasty fall landed Stephen in the clinic with a broken elbow. For Carmen Mikhail and David George, it was déjà vu all over again as they repeated last years performance in Chamonix and ended up in the clinic.

Mother nature saved the best skiing for the end of the week as blue skies and a bright sun were in order. Jill and Roger struck up conversation with a British Ski Club member and he treated them, along with Carmen, Jose Araujo, Bruce Baird and Pilar Gonzalez to two fabulous days of mountain guide service. On Thursday, the group went by rail to Diavolezza Bernina, famous for its six-mile glacier descent, which ends literally at the train station. "Ski in, ski out" took on a new meaning here.

Another group consisting of Dennis Newell, Jim Hodges, Pilar, Bob Knupp, Carter Ness, Cheryl Harland and David Eickhoff took a bus to Corvatsch and spent the day navigating the strange mountain. The

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'Magnificent Seven' found the most exciting run of the day to be a terrifying T-bar ride which took you up and down some steep black diamond slopes as you hung on for dear life. At lunchtime, the group stopped in at a restaurant high atop the mountain but was turned away for not having reservations!

Non-skiers had plenty of activity around town to keep them busy. Shopping was popular as boutiques bearing the names Versace, Gucci and Armani could be found. Joe Kulpinsky, Pat McKechnie, Lee and Sandra Williams could be found strolling around town window shopping, visiting museums or enjoying some of the sinfully delectable chocolate at Hanselmann's pastry shop.

Thursday brought the Cartier Polo World Cup to St. Moritz and SCSC had a large group enjoy watching it. The event consisted of horse polo matches played on a snow-covered frozen lake next to our hotel. Cathey and Brett Littell, Russ Collison, Gloria Lopez and Dawn Rodriguez enjoyed the event, some of them watching from a hotel room.

We were fortunate to have the train station right next to the hotel and club members took advantage of it. Jim and Carmen Newton rode the spectacular Bernina Express through the Alps to Tirano, Italy. Lisa Robinson celebrated her birthday on the trip by taking the train to Chur and had lunch. Joining her were Marsha Kilgore, Lynn Burch, Ray Villarreal, Clara Tuffias, Sara and Charlie Moore, Gloria Lopez and Penny Chancey. Sara and Charlie Moore were also celebrating their recent wedding and used the trip as their honeymoon. They commemorated by taking a horse-drawn sled to the nearby town of Pontresina. David George rode the Glacier Express train to Zermatt, home of the awe-inspiring Matterhorn, before flying home.

Skiers were treated to some great nightlife during the week. Most of the bars reside in the basement of large hotels so it took some effort to find the action. Tor (who always seemed to be able to find a good time) and Jose went barhopping one night and found themselves being followed by some stunning Latvian women. The two thought their dreams were about to come true when at 3 am; the clubs had all closed; yet the women were still with them. Their dreams were quickly dashed when the Latvians asked for contracts and wanted to 'negotiate' for further service.

Tor led another group out on the town later in the week to a bar named the Kava which translates to Cave. The group which included Charles Albright, Jose, David, Jim, Carter and Dennis was treated to a wild time at the Coyote Ugly party. Carter enjoyed the 'deep throat' competition as rowdy barmaids walked around with long bottles of liqueur which they literally poured down your throat. Not to be outdone, Charles found his niche with a hammer as he participated in a contest where the goal was to be quickest at pounding a nail into a piece of wood. He was later boasting of his knack for nailing women. To top the evening off, the

group was treated to a table dance by three of the scantily-clad sirens.

Club members were treated to two different excursions during the week. On Monday, a group, which included Ross Baker, Gai Lynn Marshall, Jean Franks, Melanie Palasi, Mary Ann Harrell and Lynn Messer, toured the Upper Engadin Mountains and lakes. They viewed the luxurious winter playgrounds of the rich and famous, such as the Shah of Iran, saw homes of famous philosophers such as Nietzsche and Hesse, and sampled the famous, reputedly beneficial (but odd-tasting) mineral water from a spa. After lunch, the group witnessed a Cresta Run race. This unique sport involves a headfirst, on the stomach, white-knuckle ride in an ice chute while grasping an iron skeleton (toboggan).

On Friday, a large group toured the famous Val Mustair monastery near the Swiss-Italian border. Donna Berglund, Mark Monroe, Sean O'Brien and Brett Henderson all enjoyed this historic building, which was built by Charlemagne in the 13th century and is still used today by Benedictine nuns. The group also stopped in the picturesque village of Ardez on the return and viewed some of the best-preserved frescoes in the world.

Twenty-one club members went on to Milan, Italy for a four-day post-trip extension. The group was able to experience the fashionable shopping and retail of the 'golden triangle' portion of the city including the very first Galleria. Most of the club members took a half-day city tour and viewed the extraordinary Il Duomo gothic cathedral, which included a close-up look at da Vinci's Last Supper. Our guide was most informative in explaining the significance of many aspects of the painting and intricate restoration work done over the years. Many from our group took the train to Lake Como and enjoyed long walks around the lake and scenic cruises from a boat. Venice was preparing for Carnevale, a Mardi Gras type festival held before Easter. A few traveled there and saw souvenir shops stocked with the fancy masks and revelers strolling around town in their extravagant costumes.

The St. Moritz trip was a great success as the skiing, touring and scenery were all simply spectacular. The club looks forward to a return to the 'Top of the World'.



St. Moritz bobsled on run



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Corvatsch Ski Group