

winter sports

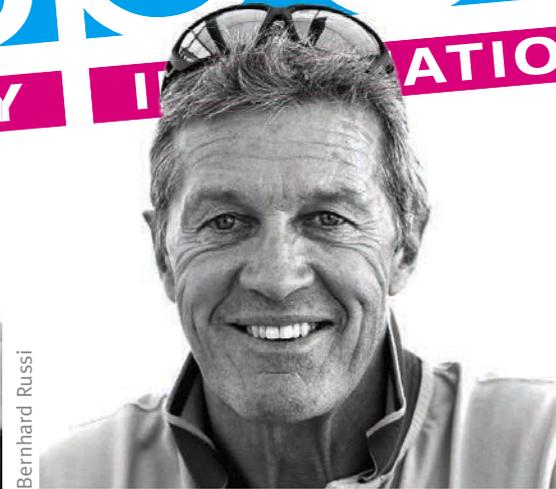
TECHNOLOGY

INTERNATIONAL

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2015 VISIONS

The world's most respected ski area experts gaze into the future of the mountain resort industry



Paul Mathews



Roger McCarthy



Roland Zegg



Beat von Allmen

Beginners' luck

The best converters in the business share their trade secrets



Essential selection

Innovations to enhance the guest experience, improve resort operations and increase revenue

Power of six

Behind the scenes of Breckenridge's 543-acre Peak 6 expansion



BIG SPENDERS: HOW AUSTRIA'S SKI AREAS ALWAYS COME OUT ON TOP

2050



ROLAND ZEGG
GRISCHCONSULTA

“If we’re to create new generations of winter sports enthusiasts, the right programmes have to be put into place to overcome the relatively high barriers to getting started in the first place,” insists Dr Roland Zegg, owner and managing director of grischconsulta. These include the high cost involved, the often complicated and expensive journeys and equipment, as well as the fear and reluctance to try out something new. “The first day for first timers should be free of charge and every aspect of the day should be positive,” Zegg explains. “The journey should be easy. There should be protected indoor and outdoor facilities in convenient locations, and all the equipment should be provided.”

The Swiss resort designer also thinks groups of a specific demographic will need more attention to prevent them losing interest. “Beginners (after phase one) and young seniors are of particular importance,” he suggests. “Also, in the past, skiing was very closely associated with competition and achievement and many of today’s young people don’t quite get that.

Their priority is to have a good time – the freestyle scene therefore has a central role to play in getting young people interested in snowsports.”

Influence and adaptation

Zegg believes the growing Asian market will have a positive impact on traditional ski regions. “The Asiatic ski areas aren’t taking guests away from the established ski areas,” he feels. “On the contrary, a new potential clientele for the existing market is developing in these new resorts.



Photograph courtesy of Vail Resorts

ON GOING GREEN

“Self-energy generation has great potential in terms of revenue and reputation. Large areas in particular could meet their energy requirements by investing in hydroelectric power stations for snowmaking systems, wind farms and PV systems in station buildings. Extracting heat from the water used for snowmaking could also be another source of energy.”

“A changing customer base and the requirements that go with that will impose extra demands on the industry,” he continues. “Guests will eventually become more demanding and will expect services to match their specific requirements. As resorts work to position themselves more distinctly, the on-site environment will have to adapt to take account of the values of the target groups. In addition to new skiers from Asia, we’ll need to focus on beginners, guests aged 50+ and freestylers.”

And to cater to this increasing variety of requirements, there will be a constant need for capital investment. “As such, the pressure towards consolidation (cooperations/mergers) is likely to continue,” predicts Zegg.

As far as ski area design goes, Zegg anticipates the mountain resorts of 2050 to look very similar to those of today, albeit more user-friendly. “There will be a much greater emphasis on the unspoiled landscape, infrastructure will be better integrated into the natural scenery and the design of individual areas will be more uniform and stylish,” he concludes. >>

ON CLIMATE CHANGE

“If current forecasts are accurate, climate change will have a major impact on the lower-lying ski areas. The major reduction in snowfall means that capital investment in artificial snow will be of great significance. Yet that will only have a small impact on the higher-lying areas.”



Photograph courtesy of Avertaz

(Above) **Breckenridge’s terrain parks are popular among young freestylers** (Left) **The Village des Enfants at Avoriaz resort is the ideal place for children to learn winter sports**

“The freestyle scene has a central role to play in getting young people interested in snow sports”