



## Conversation

Andrea Scherz, general manager  
of Gstaad Palace

## Business

**“We build bridges between research  
and practical application”**

Empa Thun develops practical solutions  
for and with industry

## Research & Development

**Avalanche dispersion by smartphone**

Avalanche protection with Wyssen Avalanche  
Control AG goes digital

## Living

**“Tradition meets top performance  
in a unique ski festival atmosphere”**

FIS Ski World Cup in Wengen and Adelboden



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Dear reader,

Sports featured strongly in the Canton of Bern this summer. Swiss gymnast Giulia Steingruber won double gold at the European Artistic Gymnastics Championships in Bern. This was followed by the European Beach Volleyball Championships in Biel/Bienne and the outstanding climax: the Tour de France passing through our Canton. The city of Bern and the surrounding area were well and truly in the grips of bicycle fever!

On top of this, our canton boasts numerous events for top athletes and amateurs alike every year, from running to golf to swimming and everything in between. Athletes on skis, on bicycles, in bobsleighs or on their own two feet put heart and soul into their sports.

When the Tour de France stopped in Bern, I was asked about the impact of major sporting events. Skeptics complain that such events cost the public purse a lot of money but do not deliver much in the way of added value in return.

With regard to the Tour de France, I can identify three factors:

- Short-term added value amounting to many millions of francs: fully booked hotels and tens of thousands of spectators along the route, many of whom traveled here from abroad.
- Substantial longer-term added value: Euro 2008 generated CHF 68 million in added value, for example.
- The impact of the images on TV on which it is impossible to put a value. After all, images of the historic old city of Bern and the Bernese Alps were transmitted to 190 countries. In Europe alone, 12 million people watched the live Tour broadcasts.

The Canton of Bern offers a unique backdrop for international sporting events. Read more about it in this edition – for example, in our interviews with the presidents of the Organizing Committees of the Ski World Cup races in Adelboden and Wengen, who wholeheartedly agree: world-class sporting events are magnets for tourism in the Canton of Bern.

Yours truly,

Christoph Ammann  
Member of the Government of the Canton of Bern  
and Minister of Economic Affairs of the Canton of Bern



# “Home away from home in Gstaad”

An interview with Andrea Scherz

What qualities does the general manager of a 5-star hotel need? When did the Gstaad Palace rock to the sounds of Nile Rodgers and his band Chic? And what does the future hold for this hotel steeped in tradition? Owner and general manager Andrea Scherz explains.

**Your career path was more or less mapped out for you when you were still a babe in arms. As you were growing up, did you ever think about not continuing the family tradition?**

“When I graduated from hotel school, I did actually consider going to work for Cartier Schweiz as a marketing professional. But my passion for the hotel business prevailed and I have never regretted that decision for a moment.”

**What qualities does the general manager of a 5-star hotel need?**

“You must be passionate about people, and you also need to be a perfectionist, resilient, creative and have a good eye for detail. I was able to learn a lot of what goes into managing a hotel from my father when I was young.”

**What do your guests expect when they stay at your hotel?**

“It may sound trite, but what brings our guests here is primarily a yearning for a home away from home. Countless hotels the world over offer first-class service, luxury, and quality, but, if I may say so myself, we combine traditional grand hotel glamour with Alpine coziness and a very special personal charm.”

## About the hotel

The Gstaad Palace opened in 1913 and is one of the most popular leisure hotels in Switzerland today. The 5-star hotel is run by the third generation of the Scherz family and has more than 100 stylishly furnished, luxury rooms, junior suites and suites, and five banqueting halls. The 1,800m<sup>2</sup> Palace Spa features eight treatment rooms, a private spa suite, saunas and steam baths, relaxation rooms with a spectacular view, an indoor swimming pool and an outdoor pool with a large Jacuzzi, a modern fitness room, a pilates studio, and a unique hammam experience with seven stations, as well as an Olympic outdoor swimming pool in summer.

**Gstaad is a legendary tourist destination and your hotel has had a reputation as a luxury grand hotel for more than 100 years. How do you tread the tightrope between tradition and innovation so that you remain attractive for your guests?**

“As a long-established family hotel, we have many guests who have been coming here for years or even decades. Ensuring any modernizations we introduce stay perfectly in keeping with our traditional ambience is a continual balancing act. For example, despite our traditional roots we were the first 5-star hotel in Switzerland to introduce Wi-Fi and we developed an ultra-modern television system which is now routinely used by many luxury hotels all over the world. Every year we renovate a number of our hotel rooms, investing up to CHF 180,000 per room.”

**Can you tell us about an unusual request you and your team fulfilled for a guest?**

“Once a guest rang me spontaneously and asked me to organize the ‘party of the year’ at the Palace for his wife’s birthday, including a private performance by Nile Rodgers and his band Chic from New York – in just three days. And we did it! By the way, it wasn’t only our guest and his wife who were endlessly impressed: so were Nile Rodgers and our bartenders who danced the night away on the bar counter.”

**How important is it for you to undertake joint marketing with tourism partners like BE! Tourism Ltd., Gstaad Saanenland Tourism and Switzerland Tourism?**

“For a smallish hotel like our Palace, it is extremely important to work closely with strong regional and nationwide tourism partners and to have an excellent tourism infrastructure locally. The outstanding hotel and hospitality schools in Switzerland, like the nearby hotel management school in Lausanne which many of the younger members of our team have graduated from, play a key role in our hotel’s success. Positioned as we are in such an attractive and central location in

**“Maybe my children will even manage the Palace together one day.”**

Switzerland and Europe – right on the border between the German- and French-speaking parts of Switzerland, we attract international staff and guests alike.”

**Have you been able to tap into new markets in recent years?**

“We have seen visitor numbers from India and China increase over the past four, five years. But Swiss nationals still make up our largest clientele.”

**Do either of your children want to follow in your footsteps and continue the family tradition one day?**

“Quite possibly. Sabrina and Alexandre are 15 and 16 now and can both see themselves working in the hotel industry. Alexandre is about to start at the Lausanne hotel management school. Who knows, maybe my children will even manage the Palace together one day.”

## Information

[www.palace.ch](http://www.palace.ch)

## About the person

Andrea Scherz has been general manager of the Gstaad Palace since April 2001. After graduating from the Institut La Gruyère and the Lausanne hotel management school followed by stints at the Savoy in London, the InterContinental Geneva, and luxury hotels on the Costa Smeralda, he started his first job as front office manager in the family hotel in 1996 at the age of 27. In his leisure time the father of two children likes to pursue his hobbies of photography, e-mountain biking, walking, and vintage car rallies. Besides his home town Gstaad, Scherz’s favorite places in the Canton of Bern are the capital city Bern and Lake Biel.



The landmark of Gstaad has been enchanting guests with luxury, comfort, and romantic architecture since 1913. On the roof terrace of the Palace pent-house, Andrea Scherz enjoys the 360 degree panoramic view of Gstaad and the magnificent mountain scenery of the Bernese Oberland.



## “Our Swiss factory is going smart”

FISCHER Spindle Group Ltd is switching to smart manufacturing

FISCHER Spindle Group Ltd COO Dr Tobias Moser explains how the company is meeting the challenges and opportunities presented by Industry 4.0 and why its pioneering spirit and innovative strength and its roots in Herzogenbuchsee in the Canton of Bern are helping make them a world technology leader.



The precision spindle works like a drill but is faster, more precise and more powerful. It can be combined with various attachments to produce molds and dies for all kinds of consumer goods such as smartphones, headphones and tooth-brushes.

Back in 1939, Ernst Fischer was looking for spindles for his machine tools but couldn't get hold of any. So he made some himself. With his invention, the founder of the grinding spindle factory in Inkwil near Herzogenbuchsee and father of the current owner, Roland Fischer, laid the foundation stone for the business that would go on to become the global market leader in precision spindles. FISCHER Spindle Group Ltd has been headquartered in Herzogenbuchsee since 1953 and services companies the world over in industries as diverse as aviation, machine-tool and mold construction, medical, dental, and microtechnology, and the jewelry and watchmaking sectors.

### From one-man band to smart factory

Seventy-seven years after it was founded, the company remains loyal to its geographic roots – and to the pioneering spirit and innovative strength that still enable it to respond effectively to the wants and needs of the day. “We make the bulk of our products in Switzerland, and we are building on this strategic commitment to transform our manufacturing facilities into a smart factory. As long as ten years ago we started offering smart solutions with the focus on spindle monitoring, such as our own monitoring systems, inverters, and evaluation tools,” COO Dr. Tobias Moser explains. “As there was nothing like this on the market at the time, we developed these innovative

### About the company

**FISCHER Spindle Group Ltd** is the global leader in engineering, development, manufacturing, distribution, and servicing of precision spindles. Having started out in 1939 as a family company based in Herzogenbuchsee in the Oberaargau region, in the 1990s it became a holding company with employing 400 people in Switzerland and at branches in China, Germany, Russia and the USA. FISCHER Spindle Group Ltd has an annual turnover of around CHF 75 million, of which CHF 50 million is generated at its headquarters in Switzerland.





"We supply the world with top technology from the Canton of Bern – with the added bonus of contributing to the local economy and creating jobs in the region as well." Managing director and COO Dr Tobias Moser

#### About the person

**Dr. Tobias Moser** joined FISCHER group company FISCHER Ltd Precision Spindles as head of development in 2008 and has been managing director of FISCHER AG since 2011. He was also appointed COO of FISCHER Spindle Group Ltd in 2016. Having studied physics at university, Moser completed a PhD in laser physics at the University of Bern and took the Senior Management Program at the University of Sankt Gallen. Moser was born in Bern and lives with his wife and four children in Bremgarten near Bern.

products ourselves." To begin with, they only appealed to highly specialized industries such as aviation. "But Industry 4.0 is a much more widely accepted concept these days," Moser says.

FISCHER Spindle Group Ltd has been gearing up for the "Internet of Things" for many years. These days it applies lean manufacturing principles to all its production planning and control activities, with the SAP ERP system handling the most important tasks and its own proprietary Cockpit helping to make digital communications easy for all its staff to understand. One of the company's innovative and fully digital communication systems is the PLM/CAX environment, which integrates everything in one system – from the concept in CAD to machine programming in CAM to quality testing on the 3-D measuring machine with CMM. "For Industry 4.0, you need reliable data and the right sensor technology," Moser explains. So FISCHER Spindle Group Ltd has set up its own sensor development department, where expertise is acquired and sensor technology validated and industrialized. "And five years ago we also took a strategic decision to invest in building our own test bench."

**"For Industry 4.0, you need reliable data and the right sensor technology."**

#### Global success, local roots

Since the 1950s, the headquarters of the current global market leader in precision spindle construction have undergone seven phases of expansion with ever larger and more modern buildings, most recently resulting in a doubling of the manufacturing space with a two-story building in 2014. This factory features state-of-the-art technology that keeps the inside temperature at a constant  $21^{\circ}\text{C} \pm 0.5^{\circ}\text{C}$  – a crucial factor, since temperature impacts on the dimensions of the materials being processed. "Our headquarters in Herzogenbuchsee play a key role in our success," Bern-born Moser firmly believes. "In this region we can count on a highly motivated and skilled workforce, many of whom have been with the company for many years. The Oberrhein region is a hub for the mechanical engineering industry, offering excellent training opportunities and therefore a ready pool of specialists for the future. What's more, the Canton of Bern is extremely business friendly and offers plenty of support – as amply demonstrated by the support we received for our new building project and investment in our manufacturing capacity."

#### Information

[www.fischerspindle.com](http://www.fischerspindle.com)

## "We build bridges between research and practical application"

### Empa Thun develops practical solutions for and with industry

Empa Thun boosts the competitiveness of the regional economy. Dr. Pierangelo Gröning, head of the Advanced Materials and Surfaces Department and president of the Empa Research Commission, explains how and tells us why being based in Thun benefits Empa's research projects.

#### What opportunities can collaboration with Empa open up for businesses, research institutions, industrial companies and public bodies in the Canton of Bern?

"As the interdisciplinary research institute for materials science and technology within the ETH domain, we create a bridge between research and practical application. Our researchers focus on generating innovative solutions to major challenges faced by industry and society in the areas of nanostructured, smart materials and surfaces, environmental, energy, and sustainable building technologies, as well as biotechnology and medical technology. Each Empa site also acts as a bridge to

the competencies of other Empa and ETH domain sites. We have around 200 highly talented international scientists at our Advanced Materials and Surfaces Department, which is spread between our Thun and Dübendorf campuses. I am convinced that our work also helps to build bridges between cultures and that these synergies can give us a technological edge."

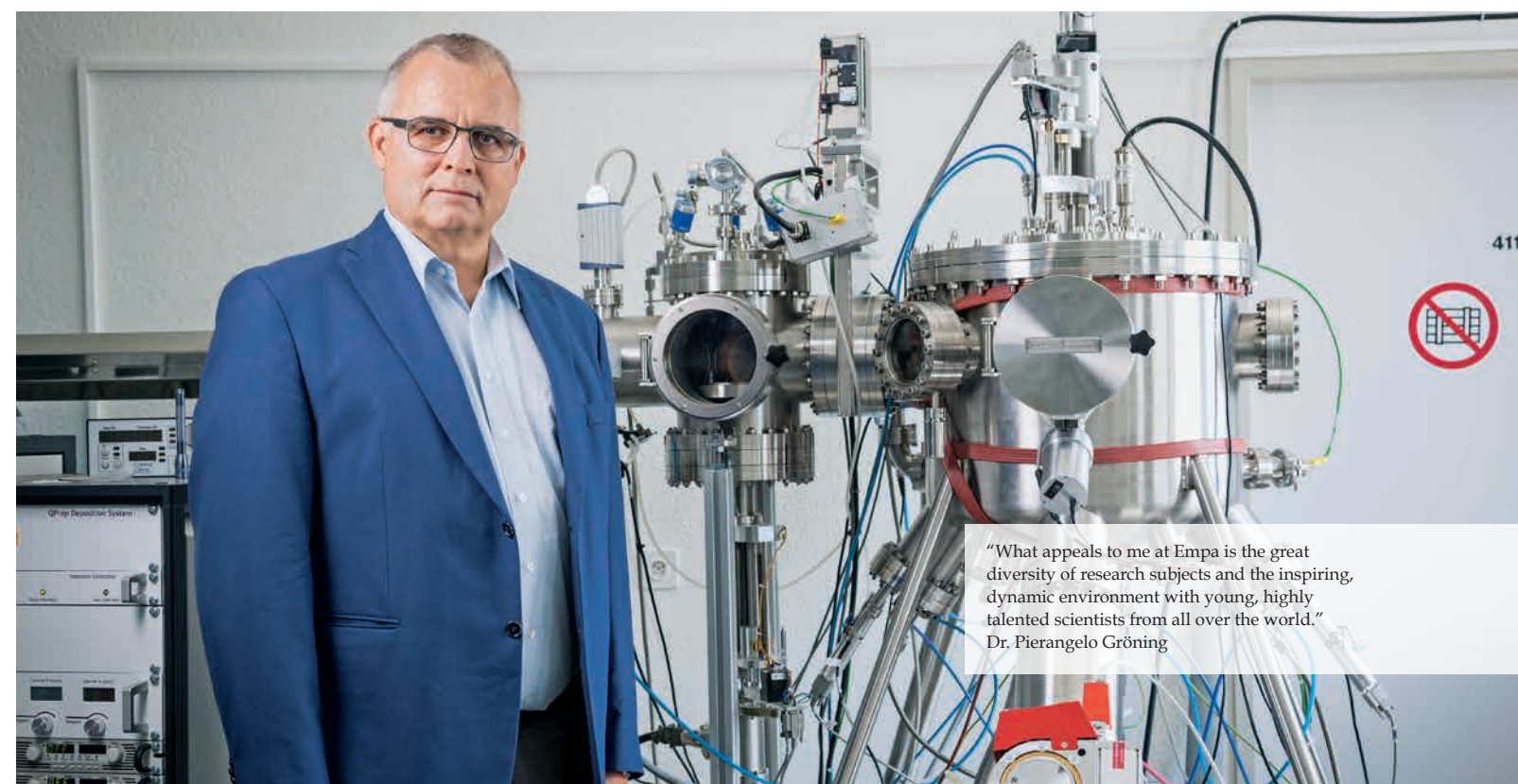
**"We develop marketable innovations in tandem with our industrial partners."**

#### What areas does your work at the Empa campus in Thun focus on?

"At Thun we focus on process technology and materials synthesis using chemical and electrochemical methods and various vacuum-based thin-film processes, combined with lithography

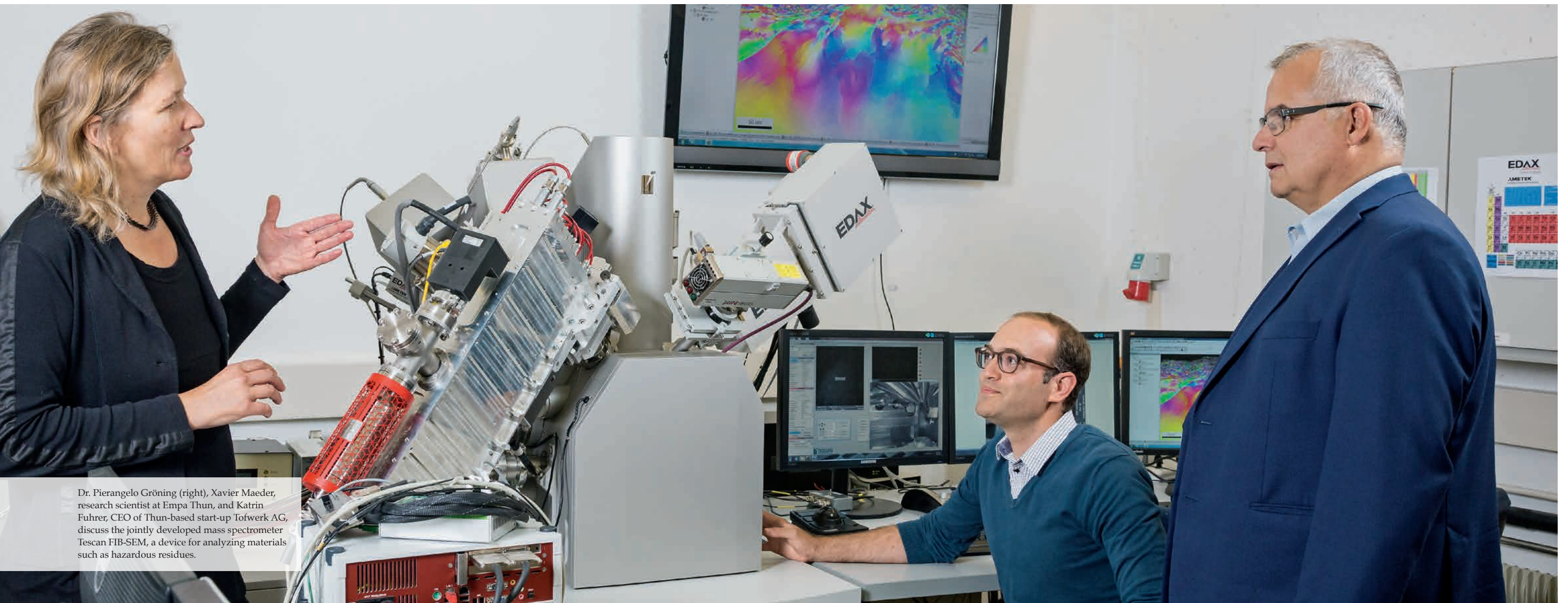
#### About the person

**Dr. Pierangelo Gröning** is head of the Advanced Materials and Surfaces Department, head of the Nanostructured Materials research focus area, and president of the Empa Research Commission. After an apprenticeship as an electrician, Gröning studied electronic engineering at the Technical College in Biel/Bienne and physics at the University of Fribourg. He started his career as a development engineer working on power converters for rolling stock at Brown Boveri & Cie. (BBC). The father of two grown-up sons lives with his wife near Solothurn, roughly halfway between his two offices at Empa Thun and Dübendorf.



"What appeals to me at Empa is the great diversity of research subjects and the inspiring, dynamic environment with young, highly talented scientists from all over the world." Dr. Pierangelo Gröning





Dr. Pierangelo Gröning (right), Xavier Maeder, research scientist at Empa Thun, and Katrin Fuhrer, CEO of Thun-based start-up Tofwerk AG, discuss the jointly developed mass spectrometer Tescan FIB-SEM, a device for analyzing materials such as hazardous residues.

### About Empa in Thun

**Empa** is an interdisciplinary research institute within the ETH domain. At the Thun campus, Empa focuses on nanostructured materials and laser machining. The three Empa campuses in Thun, Dübendorf and Sankt Gallen employ more than 1,000 people from over 50 nations, who published more than 600 scientific papers and registered 20 patents in 2015. The 21 Empa spin-offs and the start-ups at the two Empa Business Incubators together employ a further 350 people. Empa has been working closely with the industrial, business, scientific and public sectors on application-oriented projects for many decades.

methods based on ion, laser, and electron beams for coating and structuring surfaces. In addition, we use material analysis methods to determine the chemical composition, internal structure, and mechanical properties of materials and surfaces.”

### How can Empa Thun boost the competitiveness of the regional economy and help industrial companies in the Canton of Bern to further improve their innovative strength in the future?

“We can transform the results of research carried out in our labs into marketable innovations by working with industrial partners in an efficient, direct transfer of technology. In each case, we gear the form of the collaboration towards the specific situation, the ultimate goal, and the needs of our partners in industry, business, science, and the public sector. In doing so we play a key part in further boosting the innovative strength and competitiveness of businesses in the Canton of Bern and across the whole of Switzerland in what is an increasingly competitive global environment.

Together with our partners we launch more than 100 new projects every year. In addition to research projects and services, Empa also supports the establishment of start-ups: over the past 20 years, 11 start-ups have been set up at Empa Thun alone.”

### Can you give us an example of a project that illustrates this multidisciplinary collaboration and direct technology transfer?

“In 2002 a company called Tofwerk AG was set up at the Empa technology park in Thun. This company develops time-of-flight mass spectrometers – detectors that can be used to carry out chemical analyses of materials and gases inside industrial equipment. In various joint EU and CTI projects, a team of physicists, chemists, materials scientists, and mechanical engineers built an entire series of these detectors for a whole new range of applications. These are now widely used at research institutions and in industry.”

### How does being based in Thun benefit Empa?

“More than three quarters of the partners with whom we work on our research projects in Thun are based in the Mittelland and French-speaking regions of Switzerland. There are also large numbers of major watch manufacturers and medical technology companies as well as SMEs in coating technology and mechanical and equipment engineering here. Being in such close proximity to our partners makes it much easier for us to work closely with them and plays a big part in ensuring the success of our joint projects.”

**Information**  
[www.empa.ch](http://www.empa.ch)



# Avalanche dispersion by smartphone

## Avalanche protection with Wyssen Avalanche Control AG goes digital

Wyssen Avalanche Control AG has launched a digital, web-based avalanche monitoring and detection tool, transforming this family-run company into international market leaders in this technology in next to no time. Founder and CEO Samuel Wyssen explains how being based in the Bernese Oberland has helped them get where they are today.

### What opportunities does digitization offer your company in terms of expanding your position as market leader in temporary avalanche protection measures?

“With the constant improvement in networking of digital devices and the expansion of mobile phone networks and the Internet, we are able to offer our customers in the Alpine region simpler, more reliable, and more powerful systems that improve protection against avalanches on transport axes and in skiing areas. To enable us to exploit the benefits of digitization and create real added value for our customers, we constantly invest in developing new products. And that has put us in a strong position in the market. Over the past few years, exports have accounted for around 50 percent of our sales on average. With our innovative system solutions and by targeting new markets, we expect this to rise to 75 percent this year for the first time.”

### How has your new digitization solution helped you so far?

“Since last winter, we have been controlling our remote-controlled blasting systems with an innovative control unit which we developed in-house. At the

same time, our experts programmed a new web-based user interface which keeps the blasting systems connected to our servers 24/7, enabling them to be monitored round the clock. So if a control parameter no longer meets the requirements – for example, if a battery is running low – we automatically receive an alert and can take preventive action. The intuitive user interface makes the system much easier to use and can be operated on the move by smartphone or tablet via the web link. The feedback we are receiving from our customers is extremely positive.”

### Has the fact that you are based in the Bernese Oberland helped you profile yourselves as the international

### technology leader in avalanche detection systems?

“It is certainly a big advantage to be able to recruit excellent staff who fit perfectly into our ‘company family’ from almost right outside our front door. Everyone in our team naturally has a very strong affinity with the mountains. Of course, our proximity to avalanche terrain is also a logistical advantage. For example, we were able to test-run a new system very close to home, thanks to a pilot project co-financed by the Canton of Bern. This system detects avalanches via their soundwaves, and sensors record infrasonic noises made by avalanches up to several kilometers away that are inaudible to the human ear, and records them in the web application.”

### What is your vision for future innovative services and products that will help protect people against avalanches?

“At present we are concentrating on further developing our web-based user interface. Our aim is to be able to offer a comprehensive working platform for avalanche services that not only controls and monitors our blasting systems but also provides all the information they need for assessing hazards. We want data from weather forecasting services, meteorological and snow measurement stations, and so on to be displayed as clearly as possible, because ultimately it is these data that form the basis for decisions

**“The proximity to the mountains is a definite locational advantage for us.”**



Innovative avalanche protection from the Kandertal: with the focus on controlled avalanche release and avalanche detection, Wyssen Avalanche Control AG has become the market leader in Switzerland, Norway, and Austria after just five years of trading (Benjamin Meier und Samuel Wyssen).

on protective measures such as road closures or avalanche blasting. We want this to result in a comprehensive and extremely useful tool that not only reduces the workload on avalanche services but also puts them on a legally sound footing. We are working on this task with an interdisciplinary team of risk management scientists from the Institute for Avalanche Research (SLF) in Davos, practitioners and web programmers from the Bern University of Applied Sciences, and the relevant federal and cantonal authorities.”

### Information

[www.wyssenavalanche.com](http://www.wyssenavalanche.com)

### About the person

**Samuel Wyssen** is the founder and CEO of Wyssen Avalanche Control AG. A mechanical engineering and MBA graduate, Wyssen has been a keen mountain climber and skier all his life. He lives with his family in Frutigen amidst the mountains he is so passionate about and which play a key role for him both professionally and in his private life.

### About the company

The Wyssen Avalanche Control AG is a subsidiary of Wyssen Seilbahnen AG, established in 1926 by Jakob Wyssen Sr in Reichenbach im Kandertal. Launched in 2000 by Jakob's grandson Samuel, the company is the market leader in Switzerland, Norway, and Austria and also has branches in Chile and Canada. It offers a wide range of avalanche blasting systems, weather stations, and innovative detection systems such as radar and infrasound measurement systems. Popular tourist destinations such as Zermatt and Sankt Moritz protect their main road and rail access routes with Wyssen Avalanche Control AG systems and services.



# Top-level research at the Top of Europe

University of Bern at the Jungfrauoch High Altitude Research Station

“Top of Europe” not only applies to the Jungfrauoch as a tourist destination but also to the science that has been going on at the Jungfrauoch High Altitude Research Station for the past 85 years. Director Markus Leuenberger explains what the University of Bern is researching up there.

“The Jungfrauoch’s high central position in the Alps offers the perfect conditions for climate change and environmental research, as the air here is extremely dry and clean and can arrive here from different parts of Europe within just a few days,” says Markus Leuenberger, director of the International Foundation High Altitude Research Stations Jungfrauoch and Gornergrat since 2010. Research into astronomy and medicine was being

carried out on the Jungfrauoch as early as the 1930s, and over the decades the center developed into one of Europe’s leading environmental and climate change research centers. Among the oldest institutes represented on the Jungfrauoch is MeteoSwiss, which has operated its highest altitude station here since 1922 and follows climate trends and the intensity of UV radiation with great precision using the long data series collected there. The Sphinx Observatory hosts numerous Swiss and foreign institutes and universities such as the Paul Scherrer Institute (PSI), Empa, the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), the University of Liege and the University of Bern.

## Observing, measuring and documenting climate change

Since late 2004, the University of Bern’s Oeschger Centre for Climate Change Research (OCCR) has had access to continuously and fully automatically recorded CO<sub>2</sub> and O<sub>2</sub> measurements at an extremely high temporal resolution, transmitted via a powerful Internet connection. The world’s first ever device for providing continuous isotopic composition measurements of CO<sub>2</sub> was put into operation at the research station in 2008. “Developed by Empa Dübendorf, the quantum cascade laser

spectrometer, as it is known, helps us establish the geographic origin of carbon dioxide molecules and research how much of the world’s CO<sub>2</sub> is of fossil origin or enters the atmosphere purely as a result of biological processes,” Leuenberger

**“Our research is relevant to the whole of humanity.”**

explains. “We want to find out exactly how and to what extent carbon is exchanged between its biggest reservoirs – the atmosphere, the biosphere and the oceans.”

This will enable scientists to produce new findings on air quality, climate change and the sources of foreign matter in the air. “What is more, by analyzing past wind and weather conditions we can calculate the path the air masses have taken. If we supplement the carbon dioxide isotope measurements with measurements of other pollutants and combine

## About the research station

**The Jungfrau High Altitude Research Station**, which is located 3,500 m above sea level, was opened in 1931. With its very special position in the Alps, the Jungfrauoch plays a key role in numerous national and international research and measurement programs, particularly in the field of environmental and climate sciences. Scientists working in more than 25 research groups clock up around 1,000 working days per year on the Jungfrauoch. For their long-term research work they use more than 20 automatic measuring devices that continuously collect weather, radiation and atmospheric data. Around 100 scientific papers based on research work carried out on the Jungfrauoch are published every year.



“The measuring station at the Jungfrauoch is connected to Swiss and international networks, supplying data to organizations such as the National Air Pollution Monitoring Network (NABEL) and the World Meteorological Organization’s Global Atmosphere Watch (GAW) program.” Professor Markus Leuenberger.





Professor Markus Leuenberger discusses the use of precision flow-rate controllers for precise data calibration with Ghislain Motos (left), aerosol researcher and experimental physicist from the Paul Scherrer Institute (PSI) at the Jungfrauoch research station.

them with weather models, we can produce an extremely informative sequence of images. By playing these backwards we can identify the origin of the carbon dioxide.”

The research work being undertaken on the Jungfrauoch is also of vital importance to the monitoring that takes place under the Montreal and Kyoto Protocols. “As carbon dioxide generated by burning natural gas and oil is the main cause of global warming, our research is relevant to the whole of humanity,” observes Markus Leuenberger, who very much appreciates the long-term

material and intangible support provided by numerous national and international institutions such as the University and the Canton of Bern and in the form of project contributions and substantial funding from the Swiss National Fund. “Also, it is primarily thanks to the Jungfrau Railways that we are able to carry out such efficient, long-term research up here,” the environmental physicist adds. Although the Jungfrauoch High Altitude Research Station is the highest in Europe, it is accessible by public transport. “Research and tourism benefit one another from being in such close proximity on the Jungfrauoch,” Leuenberger points out. “To mark the 75th anniversary of the Sphinx Observatory in 2012, we set up a small permanent exhibition in the Sphinx hall to explain our work to the thousands of day-trippers who come here.”

#### Information

[www.hfsjg.ch](http://www.hfsjg.ch)

[www.oeschger.unibe.ch](http://www.oeschger.unibe.ch)

#### About the person

**Markus Leuenberger** has been director of the International Foundation High Altitude Research Stations Jungfrauoch and Gornergrat (HFSJG) and professor of Climate and Environmental Physics at the Physics Institute of the University of Bern since 2010. Leuenberger obtained his doctorate in physics and mathematics at the University of Bern in 1992. After completing his PhD he worked on research projects in Australia and Greenland and was subsequently awarded a professorship at the University of Bern. The environmental physicist lives in Kaufdorf near Bern with his wife and three sons and enjoys walking in his free time, particularly in the Lake Thun region.

## “Tradition meets top performance in a unique ski festival atmosphere”

### FIS Ski World Cup in Wengen and Adelboden

Major sporting events have a long tradition in the Canton of Bern. The popular tourist destinations of Wengen and Adelboden, two of the most attractive skiing regions in the world, play host to the FIS Ski World Cup every January.

“Adelboden has been the home of the International Adelboden Ski Days for the past 60 years,” says Peter Willen, president of the Organizing Committee of the FIS Ski World Cup in Adelboden. This traditional skiing event has been held as part of the Ski World Cup since 1967. Today, it attracts more than 40,500 skiing fans and generates a good CHF 12 million in added value for the region. “The fact that we are able to stage a major world-class

finishing slope are extremely steep, and the piste falls away at an angle. “When the International Ski Federation (FIS) called for the old-style T-bar lift at the Chuenisbärgli to be replaced with a new chairlift in 2005, hundreds of volunteers helped to raise some of the money needed to pay for it,” the OC president recalls. “The undying enthusiasm of local residents is reflected in the fact that around 2,500 people volunteer to help at the races every year. The commitment to the event shown by local, regional, and supraregional businesses, politicians, and sports personalities is also second to none.”

commitment to the event shown by local, regional, and supraregional businesses, politicians, and sports personalities is also second to none.”

#### Committed partners

Since the launch of the World Cup in 1967, the Lauberhorn races in Wengen have also

**“It is wonderful to be able to spotlight our region on the national and international stage.”**

Peter Willen

#### About the FIS Ski World Cup in Adelboden

**The FIS Ski World Cup in Adelboden** has been held since 1967, having emerged from the International Adelboden Ski Days dating back to 1956. With around 40,500 spectators along the piste and on the grandstands around the finishing area, the Chuenisbärgli giant slalom and slalom races are among the best attended ski races in the world. As many as 2,500 people help out at the giant slalom on the Saturday and 1,400 at the slalom on the Sunday. The 2017 edition of this major sporting event is taking place on January 7 and 8. Peter Willen has been president of the OC and of SkiWeltcup Adelboden AG since 1995. He also runs the Bären Hotel in Adelboden together with his wife Christine.



The FIS Ski World Cup Giant Slalom at the Chuenisbärgli in Adelboden is one of the best attended and most challenging skiing races in the world. Starting at 1,730 m above sea level, the giant slalom piste is 1,430 m long.



Every January, the world's top skiers set off down the Lauberhorn downhill piste against the breathtaking backdrop of the Bernese Oberland mountains. This major FIS Ski World Cup event in Wengen is a magnet for thousands of tourists.



become a major international sporting event, attracting up to 62,000 spectators. The Men's Super Combination takes place on the Friday, followed by the Men's Downhill on the Saturday and the Men's Slalom on the Jungfrau/Männlichen piste on the Sunday. "At 4.4 kilometers, the Lauberhorn piste is easily the longest World Cup downhill piste

### "The Lauberhorn is the longest World Cup downhill course."

Urs Näpflin

"Set against the unique backdrop of the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau mountains, these nail-biting races are of immense pro-

in the world," OC president Urs Näpflin reports. "With its classic lines and spectacular key sections, it is hugely challenging for the athletes." Speeds as high as 160 km/h have been recorded on the Lauberhorn downhill piste.

motional value, since the event is broadcast live all over the world," Näpflin says. "Good cooperation between all the parties involved is essential for an event of this kind if it is to bring about a win-win situation for everyone. It is only thanks to the generous support of the entire region, the canton and the federal government that we can afford to put on this event at all." Both Peter Willen and Urs Näpflin have been closely involved in skiing all their lives. "As a junior, I was in

### About the FIS Ski World Cup in Wengen

The Lauberhorn Races were established in Wengen in 1930 by Ernst Gertsch. They consist of downhill, slalom and combination races, which in 2016 were supported by 1,800 helpers and cheered on by a live audience of 43,500 spectators. Since the launch of the FIS Ski World Cup in 1967, the Lauberhorn Races have become a permanent fixture of this competition. The 2017 edition takes place on January 13 to 15. Urs Näpflin was a successful skier in his youth, until a knee injury put an end to his career as an athlete in 1981. Since then, Näpflin has been actively involved in the organization of the Lauberhorn Races, taking over as OC president in 2015. He also runs a construction company in Bern.

the Swiss Ski A squad and competed in several World Cup races. Even then I volunteered regularly at the Lauberhorn race," OC president Näpflin recalls. "And today it fills me with joy and pride to be able to work with 1,800 like-minded people to put on an event to such international acclaim. And I should say that none of the helpers are paid for the work they do." There is no doubt that the FIS Ski World Cup also impacts positively on tourism in Adelboden and

Wengen. Both of these skiing regions are extremely popular with leisure skiers outside of the World Cup. In summer there are even mountain trails along the legendary FIS Ski World Cup pistes in Wengen and Adelboden with a series of interactive stations providing background information on the races. The two OC presidents agree that the FIS Ski World Cup in Wengen and Adelboden is not only a world-class sporting event but also a standard bearer for

tourism in the Canton of Bern: "The World Cup has an outstanding reputation with athletes, tourists and local residents for tradition, top sporting performance and a unique ski festival atmosphere in two of the most attractive skiing regions in the world."

### Information

[www.weltcup-adelboden.ch](http://www.weltcup-adelboden.ch)

[www.lauberhorn.ch](http://www.lauberhorn.ch)



# The Delta of Well-being

Deltapark Vitalresort opens in Gwatt near Thun

Since March, guests at Deltapark Vitalresort on Lake Thun have been able to experience and enjoy 4-star superior-class comfort with modern seminar, health and leisure facilities in a picturesque setting.



Deltapark Vitalresort on the shores of Lake Thun opened in spring 2016, giving the Gwatt district of Thun a whole new boost.

“The stand-out features of our resort are its unique location, our comprehensive wellness and health facilities, and the wide range of restaurants and leisure activities we offer,” says Mirco Plozza, CEO and director. “Set in 90,000 m² of grounds on the shores of Lake Thun and surrounded by beautiful countryside, this is the

“Unwind,  
relax and  
rejuvenate.”

perfect place for guests to unwind, relax and rejuvenate.” The Deltapark brand represents the Kander River delta, the pyramid-shaped Niesen mountain, and the three tent-shaped buildings in the grounds. “But the delta of well-being – health, zest for life,

and vitality – is also a fundamental principle of our Deltapark. We offer everything you need for a healthier daily life in our three pillars: Relaxation, Exercise, and Enjoyment,” Mirco Plozza explains.

### Enjoyment and well-being with an individual touch

Every single window in the new main building, with the lobby, reception area, restaurants, seminar rooms and hotel bar, and in the three listed and completely renovated delta buildings gives guests a panoramic view of Lake Thun, the mountains or the forest. Two of the buildings house the Deltaspa, featuring an indoor brine bath, an outdoor Jacuzzi, saunas, steam baths, experience showers, relaxation room, various beauty and massage treatment

rooms, and three private spas, while the third Delta building contains seminar rooms and 19 additional 3-star bedrooms. “Our 13 seminar and plenary rooms are fully equipped with the latest infrastructure and are the perfect place for guests to hold their conferences, training sessions or meetings,” Plozza says. “Our team are always on hand to help with planning and provide support, and we can also organize exciting fringe activities and superb catering.”

### Information

[www.deltapark.ch](http://www.deltapark.ch)

### About the resort

Deltapark Vitalresort in Gwatt near Thun has 106 bedrooms and 600 m² of seminar space in the main building, with an additional 200 m² of seminar space in the Waldhaus building. The wide-ranging hotel infrastructure also features three restaurants, a bar, lounge, a library, and a luxurious 2,000 m² spa and fitness zone offering a holistic wellness concept. Deltapark Vitalresort, a Hauenstein Hotels & Restaurants resort, employs around 80 people.

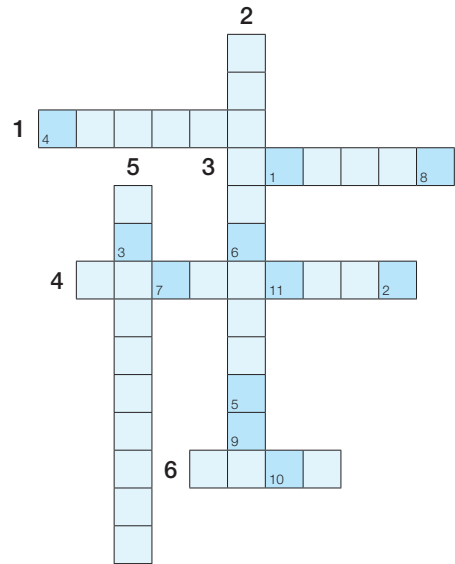
# Win a Wellness Weekend on Lake Thun

Welcome to the Deltapark Vitalresort: [www.deltapark.ch](http://www.deltapark.ch)

Take part in our prize draw and win a wonderful weekend break for two at the Deltapark Vitalresort (one night in a Comfort Superior class double room with balcony overlooking Lake Thun, including a sumptuous breakfast buffet, afternoon snack and four-course gourmet menu evening meal, plus free admission to the Deltapark spa and fitness zone).

The modern, 4-star superior-class resort is located in a tranquil, idyllic setting in a 90,000 m² park landscape on the shores of Lake Thun and features trendy designer bedrooms, fully equipped seminar rooms and three restaurants serving healthy seasonal cuisine. The holistic wellness services on offer are dedicated to individual well-being, and there is a 2,000 m² spa and fitness zone with high-tech infrastructure and an indoor pool for use by guests. Experience relaxation, exercise and pure enjoyment – welcome to the Deltapark Vitalresort on Lake Thun!

Taking part couldn’t be easier. Simply find the answers to the clues and enter them in the appropriate places in the grid to find the mystery word. Send the mystery word along with your completed entry form to the address below by January 31, 2017. You can also enter online at [www.berninvest.be.ch/chance](http://www.berninvest.be.ch/chance). Tip: every word relates to a subject covered in this issue of *berne-capitalarea*. Good luck!



- 1. Avalanche control measures are one of the main activities of ... Avalanche Control AG
- 2. Location of the Alpine Research Station
- 3. ... Palace
- 4. New spa resort on Lake Thun
- 5. First name of Dr. Gröning
- 6. Location of Empa in the Canton of Bern

### Answer

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

The winner will be drawn by lots and notified in writing. Employees of the Bern Economic Development Agency are excluded from entering the competition. The judges’ decision is final. There is no cash alternative to the prize.

Tear out this page and send it to this address by January 31, 2017. Bern Economic Development Agency, Münsterplatz 3, CH-3011 Bern, fax +41 31 633 40 88, or enter the competition via [www.berninvest.be.ch/chance](http://www.berninvest.be.ch/chance).

Congratulations to Dieter Baumann of Evilard, the winner of our competition in *berne-capitalarea* 1/2016.



# New arrivals in the Canton of Bern

## New companies in the region

The Bern Economic Development Agency helps innovative companies from all over the globe with their decisions to locate to the Canton of Bern – like AmerisourceBergen Global Manufacturer Services GmbH in Bern and ESPI Suisse Sàrl in Nidau.



**AmerisourceBergen** opened two subsidiaries in the federal capital in September 2014. From their Bern base, the Global Manufacturer Services Team generates commercialization strategies and product development insight for customers in the pharmaceutical sector, while the Global Data Services Team develops next-generation data strategies, analytics and system platforms that will help boost the success of their international partners. AmerisourceBergen Global Manufacturer Services GmbH currently employs 19 people at its Bogenschützenstrasse site and plans to take on more staff in 2017.

Headquartered in Chesterbrook, Pennsylvania, USA, AmerisourceBergen is a global supplier of medicines, over-the-counter drugs, healthcare products, and related products, servicing over 50,000 pharmacies, hospitals, and health clinics in North America alone. Established following a merger of Amerisource and Bergen in 2001, the US pharmaceutical sourcing and distribution services provider employs more than 18,000 people in over 50 countries across the globe. Key factors in the corporation's decision to open branches in Bern were the high quality of living in the city and the region, its convenient location at the heart of Switzerland and Europe with excellent infrastructural links, its high-skilled workforce and its proximity to the pharmaceutical industry in the Canton of Bern.

### Information

[www.amerisourcebergen.com](http://www.amerisourcebergen.com)



**ESPI Suisse Sàrl** opened a sales office at INNOCAMPUS AG at the Switzerland Innovation Park Biel/Bienne in September 2014. From this office, the subsidiary of the French company ESPI sells products such as the Scanflash, a flexible, high-precision and ultrafast measuring center for controlling machine tools. Every single mechanical component is produced with extreme precision and speed and with no scatter. INNOCAMPUS AG provides the company with support and creates synergies with business partners in applied research and development in industrial technology – one of the main reasons why ESPI chose to locate its sales office here.

ESPI (EQUIPEMENT ET SERVICES DE PROCESS INDUSTRIELS) is headquartered near Lyon in France and employs 11 people. Established in 1996, ESPI develops and produces innovative technical solutions for measuring mechanical components and controlling machine tools for customers in industries including watchmaking, medtech, aviation, automotive, aerospace, and connection technology.

### Information

[www.espi-suisse.ch](http://www.espi-suisse.ch)

# “Global presence thanks to S-GE and GGBa”

## An interview with Denis Grisel, director, Bern Economic Development Agency

### How does the Bern Economic Development Agency go about making contact with international companies?

“We work mainly with the Greater Geneva Bern area (GGBa). This economic development agency works on behalf of its member cantons to identify foreign investors and companies who may be interested in establishing a base here. In doing so it focuses mainly on the industries that are relevant to the member cantons: the precision industry, ICT, medtech, biotech, services and cleantech. As a member of the GGBa, we then compete for projects and make contact with the investor concerned.”

### How closely do you work with Switzerland Global Enterprise (S-GE)?

“S-GE handles location marketing for Switzerland in various countries abroad and runs Swiss Business Hubs in countries of interest to Switzerland. It maintains contacts on the ground with potential foreign investors and informs them about the particular strengths and benefits of Switzerland as a business location. Following an evaluation, it passes on those contacts to the various areas such as the GGBa, who process them and forward them to organizations such as our own.”

### What happens once you have made contact with an interested investor or company?

“We organize evaluation visits at which we attempt to convince the company of the benefits of establishing a base in Bern. Our main selling points are the skills and expertise available at the University of Bern, our universities of applied sciences, the university hospital and the Switzerland Innovation Park Biel/Bienne. If the company decides on the Canton of Bern, we advise them on finding a suitable location and premises, help them recruit competent staff, provide financial contributions and assist them in their dealings with the authorities. Once they arrive, we put them in touch with our networks and provide a range of useful services. We want companies locating here to become a permanent fixture of the Canton of Bern's business landscape – real Bernese companies.”

### What does that look like in numbers?

“We handle around 300 new contacts every year at the Bern Economic Development Agency. On average, this results in around 60 evaluation visits and about 10 to 15 companies locating here every year.”

### What are the most well-known foreign companies with bases here in Bern?

“We have a whole host of foreign companies here, such as eBay, PepsiCo, CSL Behring, 3M, Wallgreens, Schneider Electric, Pax-Vax, La Montre Hèrmes, Festo Microtechnology and Kimberly-Clark – to mention but a few.”





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**Switzerland Global Enterprise (S-GE)** was established in 1927 under the name of Office Suisse d'Expansion Commercial (Osec) and provides Swiss and Liechtenstein-based SMEs with support and advice for their international business ventures on behalf of the Swiss federal government. S-GE links companies, experts and private and public organizations around the world. Since 2008 this non-profit association has also been responsible for promoting Switzerland as a business location abroad as well as for promoting imports from selected developing and transition countries. Every year the association puts some 270 contacts in touch with areas such as the Greater Geneva Bern area. [www.s-ge.com](http://www.s-ge.com)



**The Greater Geneva Bern area (GGBa)** is an internationally active economic development agency established in 2010 by its member cantons, Bern, Fribourg, Geneva, Neuchâtel, Vaud and Valais. Its mission is to help foreign-based companies start operating in Switzerland as quickly and easily as possible. It has a network of representatives in eight countries: Germany, France, Italy, the USA, China, India, Russia and Brazil. Last year the GGBa accounted for 191 contact visits to member cantons through its own activities and those of the S-GE, involving 131 companies from 20 countries.  
[www.investwesternswitzerland.ch](http://www.investwesternswitzerland.ch)





# Innovative and committed for patients around the world

## High-quality medicines made in Bern and soon also in Lengnau

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In Lengnau, a new site is being built for the development and manufacture of lifesaving therapies for people with rare and serious diseases.

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