

Clear the ground for Upcycling: Hochoetz adopts Top Mountain Gondola from Sölden

The Bergbahnen Oetz Lift Company will invest some six million Euros in new ski area infrastructures for the coming winter season. The masterpiece and showcase project is the new Ochsengarten Mountain Gondola. What's best: it's the former, 18-year young Giggijoch Gondola from Sölden! This superb example of upcycling in the real sense of the word, makes one of the best practice projects when it comes to sustainability and synergies within the entire Ötztal Valley.

A unique collaboration in the field of tourism development by conserving resources and protecting the environment at the same time: this winter the Bergbahnen Sölden Lift Company opens the brand-new Giggijoch Mountain Gondola, one of the world's most efficient mono-cable gondolas with 10-person cabins. The former mono-rope gondola with 8-person cabins, built in 1998, will be erected again as the new Ochsengarten Gondola going into operation on 16 December 2016 - an important feeder lift towards the family-friendly Hochoetz Ski Region. There is a really long list of advantages for Bergbahnen Oetz. The test operation is already in progress.

Sustainability for many years

From now on there are two Doppelmayr mountain gondolas of exactly the same make: both Acherkogel Gondola and Ochsengarten Gondola offer spacious, smoothly running 8-person cabins with barrier-free access areas, a maximum of wind stability and considerable speed. Mathias Speckle, operating manager of Bergbahnen Oetz, explains the improvement from a

technological point of view: "Both feeder gondolas also have the same spare parts, which means that we can still repair them many more years without worrying about replacement parts."

More power, more space

A new dimension in capacity: the new Ochsengarten Gondola has a total hourly capacity of 2520 persons – the old one had only 1420 – featuring 60 top modern cabins. Mathias Speckle: "This increase in capacity plus the spacious 8-person cabins are made to measure for families with small children and larger ski school groups."

As new from a technical point of view

The gondola transfer from Sölden to Oetz was a logistical master stroke. At the end of the last season in April 2016, the expert staff of Bergbahnen Oetz started the removal works. Speckle gives an insight into the difficult operation: "It was one of the most important mountain gondolas in a top-notch Alpine ski area. The former Giggijoch Gondola was as new thanks to permanent maintenance works and technical upgrades." During the summer months a number of expert companies and Doppelmayr specialists re-erected the gondola on the already existing track in record time. 85 percent of all lift towers were used again, only the rest is new. Gear units, hydraulic pressure pumps, roller bearings and electric engines saw - if necessary - a complete overhaul. Only the cable and its splicing is entirely new: a real milestone in the history of mountain lifts! Thanks to some tuning works the Ochsengarten Gondola is as new. "The good thing is," Mathias Speckle adds, "that we don't need any further mountain gondola permit because we just altered the already existing mountain lift."

Terminal buildings offer much more comfort

The two new and extended terminal buildings represent a real quality boost in the whole ski area. The base station at 1507 m in Haiming's hamlet of Ochsen Garten offers an elevator with absolute barrier-free access and sanitary facilities suitable for disabled persons. Through the much larger cash desk hall skiers reach the covered access area of the new mountain gondola. Once on top at 2022 m, the terminal was extended towards the valley by adding also a quieter in-ground engine. The cabins' technical station can be found at the base and top station, divided into two equal sections.

Further investments

The Hochoetz Ski Region is equipped with an increased number of top modern, technical snow-making systems for the coming 2016/17 winter season. "Generally, the snow conditions are good. Just in case we need some support, 100 percent of our ski slopes offer absolute snow guarantee due to 89 snow guns and other snow-making devices," enthuses Andreas Perberschlager, managing director of Bergbahnen Oetz. An improvement in quality is also a wonderful advantage for the wintry WIDIVERSUM Kids Land close to the Acherkogel top station as a Bistro for families and children was built there. Perberschlager says: "We start the coming winter season with a superb feeling: our guests can enjoy the new Ochsen Garten Mountain Gondola plus many more comfortable amenities of top quality. We strongly benefit from the successful cooperation with our partner Bergbahnen Sölden providing us with knowhow and offering us investment incentives. Therefore we very much appreciate this immense upgrade by opening the new mountain gondola."

Technical details of the New Ochsen Garten Mountain Gondola

First built in: 1999



Altitude, base station: 1507 m
Altitude, top station: 2022 m
Difference in altitude: 509.90 m
Transverse length: 1682.94 m
Cable length: 3437 m
Cable diameter: 47 mm
Cabins: 8 persons each
Number of cabins: 60 (former Giggijoch gondola: 98)
Construction time & test operation: April – November 2016
Official opening: 16 December 2016

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