



Trentino: VRS-T® socket pressure pipes ensure reliable snow cover

Expansion of the snowmaking facilities in Folgaria

The “Trento table-lands” in the south east of Trentino mainly comprise large terraces separated by deep gorges and dominated by peaks of over 2000 metres. Geographically, the “table-lands” lie approx. 25 kilometres north of the northernmost edge of Lake Garda. The magical landscape is marked by woods and meadows as well as fortifications dating from World War I. One of these is the “Forte Dosso delle Somme” near Folgaria, which today gives its name to a ski resort.

The plateau is a magnet for tourists. The ski resorts of Folgaria, Lavarone and Luserna with the Skitour dei Forti ski circuit and the three cross-country skiing centres of Passo Coe, Forte Cherle and Millegrobe are some of the most internationally well-known and popular resorts in Trentino. Since the snow, the key to the economy, sometimes does not fall as desired even in the table-lands, a great deal of artificial snow is made here.

TRM has been very successful in this area since 2005 and supplies ductile pressure pipes for the snowmaking pipelines. The ease of laying the VRS-T® socket pressure pipes makes them ideal, especially in the, in places, coarse rock of the Dolomites because they can be laid without separate foundations for the pressure pipes and hence easily. This allows great construction progress to be achieved in a short time. Even unevenness in the ground can be absorbed easily because of the deflectability of the pipes.

Nevertheless, more than 10,000 metres of pressure pipes were installed for snowmaking facilities in the Trento table-lands – a success story that continued in 2008 with the extension of the facilities by 1500 metres in Forte Dosso delle Somme and still is not finished, since further substantial building work will follow in 2009. Since the deliveries of the pipes are handled directly with the operating company, optimum information about future years’ building plans is assured.



Why is snow made on glaciers?

Proper snowmaking on retreating glaciers will probably be one of the greatest challenges of the future for snowmakers and lift operators. If the glaciers should continue to retreat in future, there will be a need to consider „reliable snow” for this guaranteed source of tourism revenue. An investment boom is the logical consequence.

Visible melting

The current situation of the glaciers in the Alps is causing much concern. Lack of precipitation in past winters and extremely high temperatures over the summer periods have caused the glaciers and the operators of glacier ski resorts to “sweat”.

Around two years ago, the operators of the Schnalstal glacier noticed that the glacier tongues were receding massively. For this reason, the snowmaking system was extended by 1500 metres in length to an altitude of 3200 m above sea level in 2008. The snowsure, year-round ski resort operated by the Schnalstaler Gletscherbahnen is new Merano in the South Tyrol and has 13 lifts and a total of 35 kilometres of pisted ski runs.

Ecological components in snowmaking

The purpose of this expansion is partly to be able to utilise the full area of the ski resort and extend the ski season and partly to protect nature. The glacier is being restored, so to speak, by “fusing” the natural snow cover with artificial snow.

The Mölltal glacier in Carinthia, Austria, for example, has been extended by 600 metres again with proper snowmaking.

The more snow that can be applied, the better the ice is protected in the summer. This is an important aspect in respect of the valuable mountain environment.