

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## Bomb down and Grenadier back up at the Cresta Run

### Lead

The St Moritz Tobogganing Club is an institution like few others. Since 1885, men of courage have dared to plunge head-first on a toboggan down the ice canal at the famous Cresta Run. Now the club has chosen a rather adequate shuttle for its riders with the Ineos Grenadier.



Invented by British aristocrats and militarymen spending their winters in the Swiss Alps, the Cresta Run is British-run to this day, but it has always attracted the cream of the international jet set, prepared to risk broken bones – or worse. This delightful insanity began in the winter of 1884/85, when British visitors to St Moritz turned the lighthearted pastime of tobogganing into a serious sport. W. H. Bulpetts, an English Major, worked with an Australian enthusiast to design an ice channel, three quarters of a mile long, between St Moritz and Celerina. With a total drop of 514 feet through 10 banked turns, and a gradient of up to 1 in 2.8, gaining speed was the least of the riders' problems. Riding 'skeleton' toboggans, heavily ballasted with lead, the officers, gentlemen and aristocrats launched themselves into the abyss without brakes. Until this day, Cresta riders follow the club's unique rules and customs, with traditional clothing favoured. There is a noticeably military ethos; no bad thing in such a dangerous sport. Although it's a playground for the rich, the famous and the titled, the Cresta Run is not a snobbish clique. Anyone with the courage, the manners and a pure sporting spirit is welcome, regardless of class. It just helps if you like a sip of gin and tonic with your adrenaline.



Once you have overcome your fear of death, getting to the end of the run is relatively easy. But if you haven't prematurely left the canal with flying flags at the infamous Shuttlecock curve, how do you get back to the top for another try? The SMTC has now solved this problem in style by picking one of the most adequate contemporary cars as the club's official shuttle – the Ineos Grenadier. Built by British billionaire Sir Jim Ratcliffe as a replacement for the classic, sturdy and modest Land Rover Defender after it was discontinued, the car was named after its maker's favourite pub in Belgravia, London. For the St Moritz Tobogganing Club, the military name, offroad capacities, and rugged, slightly nostalgic appearance must have ticked all boxes. Looking at the beautiful images taken by Classic Driver house photographer and fellow Cresta rider Andrea Kiainguti, we can only imagine that the sight of taking the wheel of the Grenadier on the way will encourage the gentlemen on their toboggan to shoot down the ice canal even faster this season.

**Gallery**













































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