

CLASSIC DRIVER

Bringing the Winter Games back to St. Moritz with style Sherpa Silvano Vitalini

Lead

St. Moritz was the birthplace of Alpine winter sports and the perfect basecamp for countless snow sport disciplines. With that in mind, we've organised a little Winter Games of our own — featuring the new Porsche Panamera Sport Turismo and local tailor and sportsman Silvano Vitalini at the wheel...



A little over 150 years ago, resourceful St. Moritz hotelier Johannes Badrutt persuaded his English summer guests not to spend the winter in cold and wet London but in the sunny Engadin instead. And if they weren't satisfied, Badrutt would cover the travel expenses. Fortunately, the Brits embraced the opportunity and returned year after year, infecting the whole Upper Engadin with their sportsmanship. From curling and skating on the lake to bobsledding and the legendary [Cresta Run](#) — everywhere you looked, you'd see smartly dressed ladies and gentlemen sliding over snow and ice at a considerable pace. The Olympic Winter Games of 1928 and 1948, as well as the later ski and snowboard boom in St. Moritz, would hardly have been possible without these English pioneers. So, what better place to take Porsche's new all-wheel-drive transporter during a sunny weekend in February?



"As a wide, open valley, the Engadin not only has the advantage of the sun shining often, but it's also possible to go from the slopes to the centre of St. Moritz in five minutes," explains [Silvano Vitalini](#), a tailor with his own studio in the old village centre of St. Moritz, who spends his every free minute in the snow. "The variety of ski resorts is also very special — you can start in Sils Maria and then drive to Samedan. For me, the Engadin is so appealing, with St. Moritz as the cosmopolitan centre and — similar to the Côte d'Azur — countless small villages with their own flair surrounding it."





Silvano's jackets and blazers, which are designed in St. Moritz and crafted in Parma, reflect the international character of the region, with English elegance, Italian *sprezzatura*, and Engadin durability. His trademark piece is an unlined jacket made of Trumsertuch that is simpler, yet at the same time more modern, than the Janker jacket that is so famous in the German and Austrian Alps. "It's a very simple and sturdy jacket that was made to be used. You can flip up the collar and button it the whole way up. I wear them for hunting, shopping, or ice skating," says Silvano as he closes his shop, puts his skates in the Porsche's spacious boot, and drives down to the lake with great gusto before turning some pirouettes on the ice in front of the wonderful mountain panorama.



After some spins on the ice, we go and warm our feet in the [Kulm Country Club](#), which has been newly redesigned by renowned architect and honorary 'Engadiner' Lord Norman Foster. "In the winter, I ski a lot and ride the Cresta," explains Silvano, with historical sports photos on the walls behind him. "In the spring, I go swimming as soon as the lakes are no longer frozen. In the summer, I play golf in Samedan, Zuoz, or here, at the Kulm Hotel — sometimes even during my lunch break." Whoever said life in the mountains was full of hardship and poverty? "The hat trick for me is when there's some snow in the autumn, because then, I can go skiing in the morning, swim in the lake at midday, and play a round of golf in the evening. That all this is possible not only in a single day but within a 10-minute drive of each other makes the Engadin unique."



With this, our Sherpa says farewell for the night, as he must prepare for his moonlighting gig — Silvano runs the [QN bar in the centre of St. Moritz](#) with a friend. So we give our winter sports shuttle a break and get some R&R at the [Kempinski Grand Hotel des Bains St. Moritz](#), a venerable five-star hotel upon which winter guests have descended for over 150 years, and where, in its expansive hallways and glamorous suites, the spirit of the Belle Époque is very much still alive. This weekend, it's the supporters and international competitors of the Snow Polo Cup who romp around the lobby. Compared to St. Moritz in January and February, the Winter Olympic Games is a bit of a mild affair.





Although Silvano's bar didn't close until dawn, we have a very early start the next morning, as he does not want to miss out on being the first on the slopes on a beautiful Sunday. But first, our Porsche gets an opportunity to flex its muscles on the snow-covered twists of the Bernina Pass. The first four-wheel-drive sports car in Porsche's history, the Sport Turismo showed that it not only *looks* better than the fastback Panamera, but it's also a real serpentine sprinter, even while fully laden with skis, boots, and sports equipment. Silvano has switched into sports mode as well and traded his classic Engadin jacket for a more functional version made of a waterproof military fabric, which is also worn by the motorcycle division of the Italian Carabinieri.



After a stint up to the [Diavolezza station](#), sitting at an altitude of almost 3,000 meters, and then back down the notorious and quite devilish descent to the valley station, we took some very sporty curves and turns, and, in less than 10 minutes, we were standing in the middle of [the famous ski resort of Corviglia](#) in the morning sun, looking down on the snow-white valley of St. Moritz and back up at the mighty peaks of the mountains, where Silvano carved down the slopes one more time before calling it a day. "My Cresta sled, golf clubs, and swim trunks would have probably fit," laughs Silvano, as he looks at the smorgasbord of sports equipment in the rear of the Porsche. Considering its cosmopolitan spirit and versatility, one can be sure that the members of the haute volée will happily overlook the fact that the Porsche Panamera Sports Turismo was not brought up at a British boarding school but in the industrial suburbs of Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen.

Photos: Tom Shaxson for Classic Driver © 2018

Gallery

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