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# Fancy some climbing with a difference?

*Clair Southwell*

**On Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October, the unique climbing garden “Sunniberg Climbing” will be inaugurated on the Sunniberg Bridge on its 77-metre-high pillar No 2. This 526-meter-long, imposing Bridge, with its filigree pillars, designed by Christian Menn soon became the architectural landmark of Klosters when it opened in 2005 and is now set to cause a sensation in the climbing world.**

The new climbing facility attracts spectacular exploration tours of the imposing structure of the Sunniberg Bridge. There are a total of 20 climbing routes as well as two so-called multi-rope routes with the longest climbing 57 metres. The difficulty levels range from easy (climbing scale 4a) to very difficult (climbing scale 8a). The route builders have installed 2,300 handles using 24 glue cartridges (around 10 litres of glue) for the climbing system which was started in June this year and carried out in all wind and weather conditions – usually hanging on a rope! As an impressive size comparison: the new climbing park is about a quarter of the length of the conventional route used to climb the north face of the Eiger.

Many a good idea is initiated over a beer (Jock Marden founded Grisons Ski Club, before it was re-named Marden's Club in his honour, over a beer in the Fluela Hotel in 1927). Local mountain guide Marco Benz already had the daring idea of a climbing facility on the iconic bridge when it was opened in 2005. Sitting with other climbing colleagues and a beer round a campfire he and his friends fantasized about this idea, but no one dared

to believe that it could become a reality, the bridge was sacrosanct. Marco enthused about the unique lines and shapes that would captivate every climber. His first letter with the idea of a climbing garden was graciously declined but luckily, he did not give up hope of his enterprising idea. Some years later, as a mountain guide discussed it with a like-minded person,

Marc Bless then project manager of mountain sports for Prättigau Tourism, and a new attempt was started. The potential – also from a tourist point of view – of a climbing garden on such an imposing and well-known building was impressive. When the community looked for innovative project ideas in the preparations for the big anniversary year, the opportunity arose: Supported by Christoph Luzi, Project Manager 800 Years of Klosters, the Sunniberg Climbing project was included in the anniversary impulse programme.

Having successfully persevered through the rigmarole of red tape and permits, the signal to start the construction could be given. An experienced expert, Peter Keller and his Zurich based company «attactive», specializing in construction and development of climbing gardens were duly appointed for the job. Keller knew climbing routes at dam walls, but he thought this bridge was incomparable and with those involved managed to overcome all the hurdles and execute constructive exchange with municipal, cantonal, and federal offices and the accompanying engineering office. Respect for the building was paramount and all work was carried out in such a way that the effect and radiance of the bridge was not impaired. For example, only discreetly visible climbing handles in grey were



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mounted. Mountain sports have a long tradition in the rear Prättigau village of Klosters and mountain guides have always shaped the fate of the tourist resort and now this is a modern way of showing a new project "Sunniberg Climbing". The impulse programme, as part of the anniversary celebrations, specifically supports projects that contribute to an exciting future of what Klosters offers and will carry an impact beyond the anniversary year.

Do come along and join in the festivities on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October at 12.00 pm with the official opening at 1.00 pm. The easiest way to reach the site is to park your car at the Walki parking lot in

Serneus and from there it is about a 15-minute walk. There will be music from «DD and myself» to set the atmosphere and anyone who wants can test the new facility for themselves. A limited amount of rental equipment will be available on site. The climbing facility is free of charge and open to the public but is done at your own risk in terms of insurance.

[www.klosters800.ch](http://www.klosters800.ch)

#### Correction

Apologies for the misspelling of the name of the first violinist Assil Mahamid in the caption under the picture of Ben-Gurion University Camerata in the September 23<sup>rd</sup> issue of the Klosterser Zeitung.

