

Now you can be a downhill champion!



All-comers: The world's longest amateur ski race at Murren

MURREN'S Inferno Race Week has arrived and they're burning the Devil on the ice rink. Of course they are. Cow bells are ringing, cocktails are flowing and the

by Roger Alton

party is in full swing as everyone gets in the mood for tomorrow's big Inferno downhill, the world's longest amateur ski race. It's

easy to enter and provided you can ski a bit, it should be on everyone's to-do list. It's long (up to ten miles in peak conditions), hugely exhilarating and even contains some uphill. But the lung-busting Inferno is only part of the Murren experience. This little car-free village high in Switzerland's Bernese Oberland has slopes for all abilities and a thrilling backdrop of the Eiger, Monch and Jungfrau.

What's more, the snow is reliably good until the end of April. There's some history, too. After falling in love with the village, Sir Henry Lunn, a Methodist minister who founded the travel company Lunn Poly, set up the Alpine Ski Club in 1908. His son Arnold then developed slalom racing, and the first Alpine Ski Challenge was staged in Murren in 1922.

The Kandahar club, the premier British ski racing club, is based here and was founded by Arnold Lunn in 1924. Its motto translates roughly as 'Don't turn unless you have to' and pretty soon, in 1928, the Inferno was born. As a recreational skier, it seems awkward trying not to turn too much, when you are taught that turning is the essence of skiing, but I manage to beat a few, even the guy from Dutch TV who was skiing backwards with a camera on his shoulder. It's that kind of race: just give your best and you'll get cheered all the way down. Then

there's the James Bond connection. On Her Majesty's Secret Service was filmed here in 1969 — the circular revolving glass restaurant at the top of the Schilthorn was the setting for much of the film.

As a result, you can't get away from Bond at the top of the mountain. Anyone for a surprisingly tasty 007 spaghetti? There's a terrific Bond museum full of good gags and on no account miss the loos.

In the Gents, a woman's voice chuckles, 'At last, it's good to have a real man...' and the phrase 'Shaken not stirred' makes an entry, as you would expect. I am told the Ladies is a riot as well, but my researches couldn't stretch that far.

It's the movie's 50th anniversary next year and the village will be going Bond-bonkers. What could be better than combining some James Bond partying with Bond-style racing?

TRAVEL FACTS

THE next Inferno Races take place on January 23-26, 2019. Registration (inferno-muerren.ch) opens in July. Double rooms at Hotel Eiger cost from £223 B&B through muerren.swiss. Flight and transfer information at myswitzerland.com (closest airports Bern and Zurich).




You know your Spaniel from your Poodle. But do you know your pension options?

Over 50 with a defined contribution (personal or workplace) pension? There's an easy way to get free impartial guidance on the options for your pension pot.

To book a free appointment call **0800 138 1585** or visit pensionwise.gov.uk



Pensionwise
Get to know your options



Step on to a Leger holiday, step off and...

Discover the best of **Europe**




- ✓ Luxury coaches with extra legroom
- ✓ Fully escorted touring holidays
- ✓ Free local joining points and regional airports
- ✓ £50pp low deposit

FREE Brochure Order Now!

Holidays from only **£249pp**

ABTA ATOL
ABTA No. 93582 ATOL No. 3880

01709 787 423 | www.leger.co.uk/NPD1