

ISSUE 17 - SUMMER 21

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MAGAZINE

MORZINE, LES GETS & AVORIAZ



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LE DAHU

hôtel & spa

★★★★★



As a silk merchant after the second world war, my Grandfather François would travel across France and Europe selling his wares. He first visited Morzine as a child in 1933 and returned regularly from his home in Paris for family holidays. He'd stay at the Grand Hôtel (today it is of course named l'Hauturière) and became very passionate for the village alongside skating and skiing. But then he fell ill with tuberculosis and spent a whole year in hospital in Passy. Motivated by a healthier life in the mountains, surrounded by the sports that he loved upon his recovery, my Grandfather left Paris for Morzine. He put down his suitcase in 1952 and decided to transform one of Morzine's chalets into one of the very first catered chalets.

This is where my family's Morzine story begins.

We're three generations now and hospitality runs in our blood. Having operated his chalet at the bottom of Morzine's Pléney lift for two years, François bought a piece of land on the sunniest side of the valley where at the time there was almost no construction. My Grandmother Catherine joined him the following year and they opened Hôtel Le Dahu on 17th December, 1955. The hotel was rated two stars, with 18 bedrooms, a restaurant, a games room and dormitories, which allowed

all of the guests' children to sleep together. They also created a vegetable garden for local produce, purchased fresh food from local producers and organised activities in the natural environment to teach guests about rural and mountain life. Of course Morzine in 1955 was very different to Morzine in 2021. The village was considered a 'station climatique' and so was popular with those looking to improve their health,

benefit from the fresh air and take some clean oxygen into their lungs. Tourists arrived by train and bus during the winter season, as often the village was difficult to access by car. They'd enjoy pursuits such as snowshoeing and skating during short trips and in the summer season, François and Catherine welcomed guests seeking cooler temperatures for longer periods. Clean air was taken for granted in those days, tourism operated in a sustainable way without even realising it.

In 1985 my father Benoît and my mother Anne took over our family hotel and they faced some major changes from the very beginning. The Portes du Soleil was growing quickly, mountain restaurants were opening and skiing growing in popularity. My mother and father made some important decisions to develop the hotel, including building an outdoor swimming pool for the summer season and adding new services such as ski guides and private ski instructors for our winter guests. As a family business, it was obvious to add family-friendly facilities too. In 1990 they embarked upon a huge expansion and renovation project, giving us the large, beautiful chalet overlooking Morzine that we know today, with 37 bedrooms and four stars. Over the years Hôtel Le Dahu has welcomed thousands of holiday makers to Morzine, but in 2004, faced with the obvious signs of climate change in our mountains, Benoît decided to take stock. He placed the needs of our environment at the centre of our operations, ensuring there's an ecological approach to everything we do. Having grown up in the hotel, it's now my turn to join my father in our family business and of course we face a new set of challenges these

days for this third generation of Hôtel Le Dahu. The concepts of conviviality, authenticity, quality and a genuine passion for service are now the top priorities for our guests and sustainability is paramount. Operating quite a large hotel in the mountains in the most ecological way takes time, careful thought and, of course, money. To share our vision and our procedures with others, we've developed our own website to chart our progress. On www.franca-nature.com you'll discover our own sustainability policy, social responsibilities and more. There's an English version coming soon! As we enrich this website with our own experiences, we hope it will prove a useful resource to others beginning their sustainability journey. Each year we implement one or two new sustainability projects and we're proud to be founding members of Montagne Verte Morzine.

My family has a long history of planning for sustainable tourism, and perhaps its for this reason that I'm often asked about the future. What does the future look like for ski resorts? I hope that the winter sports resorts of the future will offer several ways to enjoy the mountains, rather than simply skiing. As mountain professionals, it's the responsibility of all in our valley to make the mountain known for its different activities. This is important not just for the environment,

but also our economy. The 'white gold' on which we've all traded for generations will become rare in medium altitude resorts. If we wish to continue to appreciate the mountains, we must renew ourselves.

We can all do something to reduce our impact on the environment - we can all lessen the load on our planet. It's not too late, but we must act now. We must commit our resort to a path that is both economically sensible and environmentally virtuous. Buying local products to help our local producers and artisans, turning off our lights at night, recycling our waste, creating awareness amongst our our guests, showing them why our mountains are important and helping them to appreciate them in a different way. Not one person can ignore this responsibility.

The last 12 months have been difficult for all, but they've given us an opportunity to reflect on our priorities and renew our sustainability objectives here at Hôtel Le Dahu. We're looking forward to welcoming our guests back, allowing them to reconnect with family and friends and of course, rediscover the natural environment that we all know and love.

Sophie



Hôtel Le Dahu**** is located on the slopes above Morzine and offers stunning valley views to guests. Open during the summer and winter seasons, facilities are available to both hotel guests and non-residents alike. They include an indoor and outdoor swimming pool, a restaurant and terrace overlooking the rooftops of Morzine, plus a luxury spa with treatment rooms and wellness area.

Discover more at www.dahu.com