

# PRESS RELEASE



## **Brands and innovations from SalzburgerLand**

*World leaders, trendsetters and entrepreneurial excellence*

**It's clear: wherever there's a demand for something new, innovative ideas come to life and transform into exciting concepts and products. In the heart of the Alps, where the most iconic ski slopes descend from the mountains into the valleys, groundbreaking materials and technologies are developed that not only meet demands but often anticipate them. This journey began with the invention of the steel edge for skis in 1929 and continues today with industry leaders like Atomic and Skidata, as well as the ski brand "VAN DEER" created by Marcel Hirscher. SalzburgerLand is home to visionary entrepreneurs, a vibrant spirit of innovation and expertise that reaches far beyond its borders, making a significant mark on the global stage.**

Today, just like in the past, SalzburgerLand is full of life: people here truly live and breathe winter sports, embracing the motto "We live for that." It's no wonder that many groundbreaking innovations across different industries have emerged from this vibrant region. Here are three standout success stories:

### **ATOMIC: a farmer's son creates a global brand**

Alois Rohmoser (1932-2005), the son of a farmer from the Grossarlal valley, was just 23 when he took a leap of faith by buying a carpentry shop in Wagrain. With a small team, he began crafting wooden skis. Back in the day, the first ski manufacturers all started in carpentry, which primarily made wooden wheels and farming tools. Slowly but surely, Rohmoser transformed his workshop into a thriving industrial ski production facility. The turning point came in 1968 when Austrian skier Olga Pall struck gold in Grenoble on Atomic skis. From that moment, the ski brand from SalzburgerLand established itself as a key player in the international skiing scene. Atomic's roster of brand ambassadors now includes top athletes like Mikaela Shiffrin, Aleksander Aamodt Kilde, Sofia Goggia, Lucas Braathen and Manuel Feller. Today, Atomic Austria GmbH is part of the Amer Sports Group and is based in Altenmarkt in the Pongau region.

### **SKIDATA: from handwritten ski passes to global leader**

The idea behind SKIDATA, based in Grödig near Salzburg, was as straightforward as it was ground-breaking. In 1977, Günther Walcher and Leopold Lutz recognised that handwritten ski passes were a thing of the past. Just two years later, they brought their idea to life with the first electronic ticketing system. Using an electromagnetic stamping device, they began printing tickets, and by the 1980s, SKIDATA had developed a solution that enabled billing across multiple ski resorts. Today, the company is the world leader in access control systems, boasting over 10,000 installations in ski resorts, stadiums, car parks, airports, shopping centres, cities and

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amusement parks. Since 2024, SKIDATA has been part of the Swedish firm Assa Abloy.

### **VAN DEER: top athlete Marcel Hirscher puts his expertise into new skis**

VAN DEER is the ski brand set to take skiing to new heights, both for elite competitors and recreational skiers alike. Founded by Marcel Hirscher and his long-time sponsor, Van Deer-Red Bull Sport Equipment GmbH, the brand also took over the ski production facility of the company Augment Ski in Stuhlfelden, all with a shared mission: “These skis are going to win World Cup races.” In the winter of 2022/23, VAN DEER made its World Cup debut with Norwegian skier Henrik Kristoffersen and British athlete Charlie Raposo. The following season saw the addition of Swedish newcomer Fabian Ax Swartz to the team. In 2024, Hirscher revealed his plans to return to the World Cup as a racer for the Netherlands while also setting up a new company base in the Lammertal valley (Tennengau region – SalzburgerLand).

Additionally, Marcel Hirscher is also behind the premium clothing brand “**The Mountain Studio**”. He launched the brand in winter 2020/21 alongside Stefan Engström and Peter Blom, offering durable jackets, trousers and gloves that embody his commitment to high-quality materials and craftsmanship.

### **More successful companies and brands from SalzburgerLand**

After returning home to Mittersill in 1945, wounded from World War II, Anton Arnsteiner started making skis in his workshop under the name **Blizzard**. It didn’t take long for these skis to become a hit in exports, leading to impressive growth for the company. Blizzard is known for several innovations in skiing, including the introduction of polyethylene ski bases. Today, the company Blizzard Sport GmbH still calls Mittersill home.

In the late 1950s, the seeds for **Martini Sportswear** were sown in Annaberg in the Tennengau region, with a bespoke tailoring shop for sports trousers. Now, this internationally successful outdoor clothing brand employs over 30 people and has consistently stayed true to its roots. Their products are celebrated for their outstanding functionality, trendy design and top-notch quality in both materials and craftsmanship.

**Original Plus** is a relatively young company founded by ski expert Sigi Rumpfhuber, who has a wealth of experience from his time in senior management at ski manufacturers Fischer and Kästle. With his own brand, he creates custom-made skis tailored to each individual’s size, weight, skiing style and skill level. This innovative approach earned him the ISPO Award in 2018.

On the other hand, **Apex-Snowboards**, based in Hollersbach in the Pinzgau region, is making waves in the world of snowboarding. While they started out primarily with freestyle boards, they quickly caught the attention of World Cup



snowboarders, leading to a strong presence in the competitive scene. Top athletes like US Snowboard World Champion Hagen Kearney and current Olympic snowboard cross champion Alessandro Hämmerle from Austria rely on the brand's custom boards.

Meanwhile, **Axess**, located in Anif near Salzburg, is an international leader and trendsetter in visitor management and B2B service solutions. Their systems are used worldwide in ski resorts, stadiums, exhibition centres, amusement parks, museums and tourist transport. Since its founding in 1998, Axess AG has expanded to include 21 subsidiaries, operating in 53 countries across the globe.

## **Expertise from SalzburgerLand — ski instructors and the ski lift industry**

### **Ski instructors in SalzburgerLand are regarded as some of the best in the world**

The training to become a professional ski instructor in Austria is extensive and thorough, starting with aspiring instructors and advancing through various levels, including provincial ski instructor I and II, diploma ski instructor and finally state-certified ski instructor. Plus, instructors are required to complete further training every three years, ensuring that winter sports enthusiasts in SalzburgerLand receive top-notch instruction from highly skilled teachers who are always up to date with the latest techniques.

### **The economic impact of SalzburgerLand's cable car industry**

For decades, "SalzburgerLand's Cable Car Industry" has been a shining example of innovation and vision, forming the backbone of the region's tourism sector. With annual investments in the millions, these companies they ensure not just comfort and safety but also adhere to high environmental standards for sustainability. SalzburgerLand's cable cars and lift systems are among the most advanced in the world.

As part of the preparations for the FIS Alpine World Ski Championships in Saalbach in 2025, the Saalbach Hinterglemm cable car operators are set to invest €24.5 million in summer 2024 to build a new twelve-person north lift, a ski bridge and additional snow-making facilities.

Here are some key figures highlighting SalzburgerLand's cable car industry:

- 0.65% of SalzburgerLand's land area is covered by ski slopes
- 85% of local slopes are equipped for artificial snow-making
- There are 467 cable cars and lifts in SalzburgerLand, including 86 cable cars, 148 chairlifts and 229 drag lifts
- SalzburgerLand's cable car companies employ 2,000 staff year-round, with an extra 2,500 seasonal workers during the winter month