

GLACIER
3000



ALPES VAUDOISES

**VILLARS-GRYON
LES DIABLERETS
BEX**

INFO MEDIA CULTURE

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DESCRIPTION

Villars and Gryon

The resorts of Villars and Gryon are located in the heart of the Vaud Alps on a natural balcony with southern exposure at an altitude of 1300 meters. The resorts offer sports, relaxation and cultural activities for families and visitors of all ages, far from pollution and noise. Every holiday awaits you in an idyllic setting with a breathtaking panorama extending from Lake Geneva to Mont-Blanc.

The Villars-Gryon resort area has carefully protected its village ambience, despite strong tourism development, thanks largely to building codes and policies intended to maintain architectural unity. Old ancestral chalets sit alongside recent constructions in wood, all of which preserves a harmony that blends perfectly into the natural setting. The presence of numerous protected zones also allows nature to remain intact. Guests therefore find a typical mountain atmosphere, that lends itself to relaxation and renewal with a superb view.

The international schools in Villars and Gryon enjoy an excellent reputation which dates back a hundred years to the beginning of the 20th century, which has made the resort a privileged hub for quality education for countless students from many cultures. From the 37 schools that existed prior to the second World War, five top class, French and English medium schools remain, hosting more than 700 students annually from 3 to 18 years old, who either live in the hostels or visit temporarily for various courses (summer camps).

Les Diablerets

Nestled at 1200m in the heart of the Vaudois Alps, Les Diablerets is an authentic mountain village located at the foot of an imposing mountain range and topped with a majestic glacier. Consisting entirely of chalets, the charming village has managed to maintain its heritage while developing. During the winter and summer seasons alike, the main road is entirely blocked off for pedestrians, making it possible to enjoy this typical atmosphere in total peace. Walkers can enjoy exceptional moments strolling along the river.

The facilities offered by Les Diablerets are especially suited to conferences. A Conference Centre located in the middle of the village is ideal for hosting large events, such as the Alpine Film Festival, and offers an ideal infrastructure for hosting groups and conferences.

Glacier des Diablerets - Glacier 3000

The proximity of the Diablerets Glacier (Glacier 3000) allows visitors to combine activities on the glacier with other activities offered in the resort, throughout the year. Skiing is guaranteed from November to May and thrill seekers will be delighted with the famous black run – the “Combe d’Audon” or the Snow Park. During the summer season, the glacier offers the Alpine Coaster, the highest bob sled run on rails in Europe as well as other activities such as trips in the snow bus, excursions with dog sleds or various routes on the Via Ferrata.

The glacier is home to the Peak Walk, the first high altitude bridge in the world linking two peaks. More than 100 metres span, and with stunning views of more than 24 summits that exceed 4000 metres, it is freely accessible to all glacier visitors all year round.

Bex

With the third largest territory in the state of Vaud, Bex municipality stretches from the banks of the Rhône to the summit of Les Diablerets and is characterised by a wide variety of landscapes and a particularly rich range of colours.

Nestled at the foot of Montet Hill and sheltered from the wind, Bex village is located at the meeting point of the two valleys of Avançon de Nant and Avançon d’Anzeindaz. Higher up, Pont-de-Nant and the Solalex

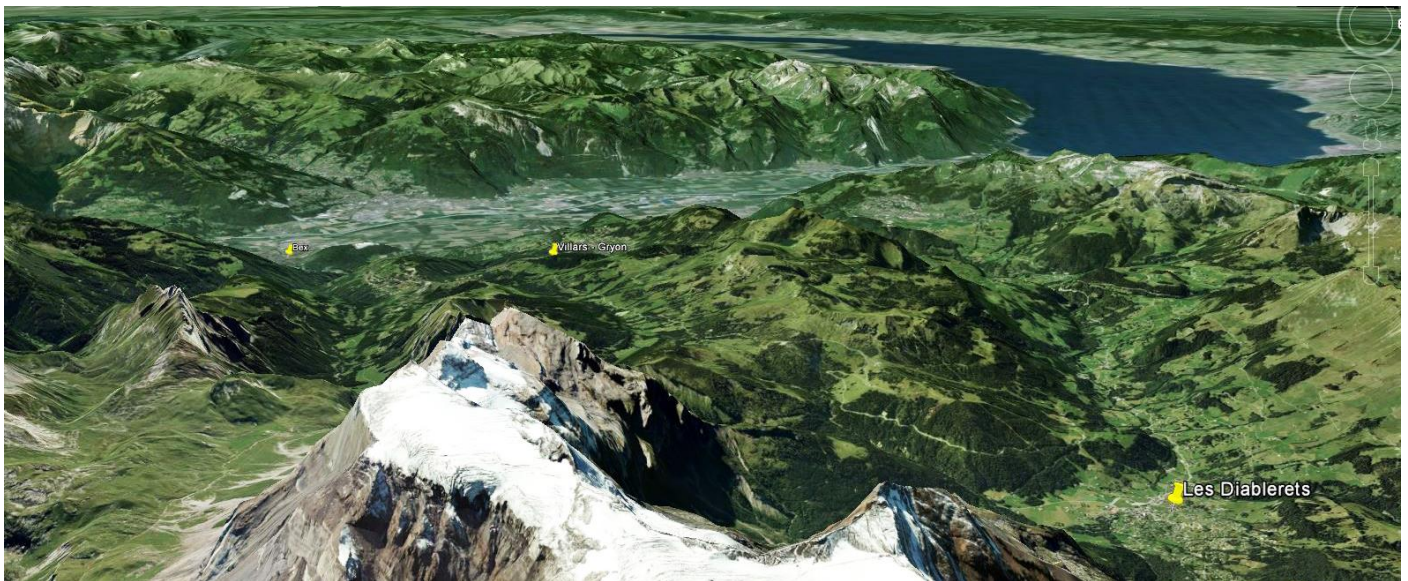
pasture make for wonderful excursions, in an abundant, welcoming natural environment, forming a haven of peace and healing for many visitors. With more than 3000 mountain plants classified by region, “La Thomasia” Alpine garden at Pont-de-Nant is the entrance to the Vallon de Nant Natural Reserve.

Crisscrossing clay-like soil, the vineyards of Bex produce a characteristic wine whose fame goes way beyond the canton’s borders. A large number of other natural sources feed the network with exceptional quality drinking water while a salt mine supplies the entire population in the Canton. The Salt Mines are also a not-to-be-missed attraction to visit while in the area.

A large number of events are organised in Bex regularly, such as the Air Show or the tri-annual “Bex & Art” – an exhibition of huge contemporary sculptures of national importance in a fantastic natural setting.

SITUATION

Our region extends from low altitude vineyards to the high altitude glacial environment. Linked by rail to Geneva and Milan, the villages of Ollon and Bex are in the valley, whereas the resorts of Villars-Gryon and Les Diablerets are high in the mountains at around 1200m altitude. These separate resorts, joined by the same mountain range, combine during the winter into one extended ski area.



- Villars-Diablerets by road in the winter : around 45 minutes via Aigle
- Villars – Diablerets by road in the summer : around 25 minutes via the Col de la Croix

ACCESS

Located in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, near Lake Geneva, Villars-Gryon and Les Diablerets are amongst the three Swiss mountain resorts nearest to Geneva.



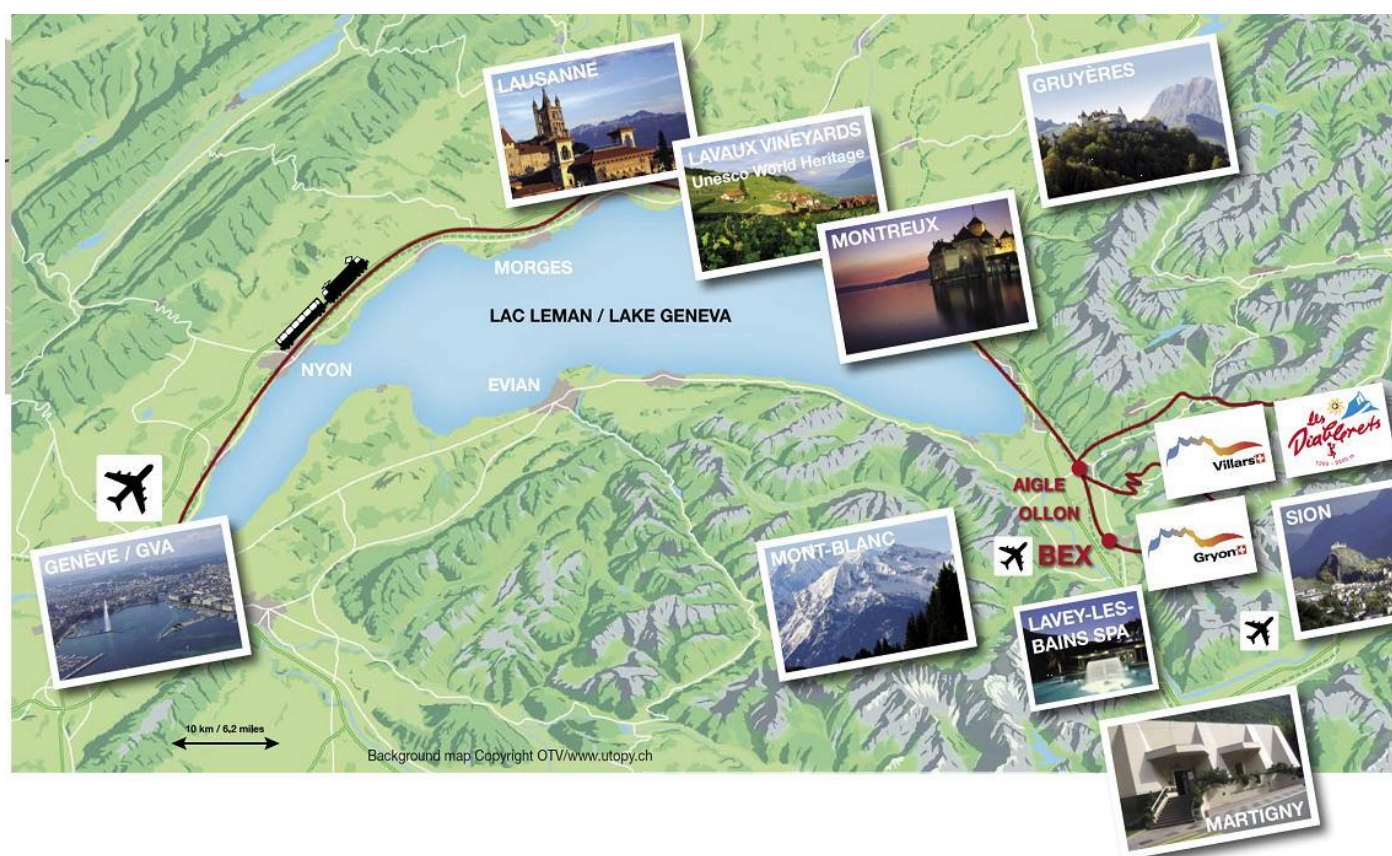
Airports, train stations:

- Genève Aéroport - Villars/Les Diablerets: 120km
- Zurich Aéroport-Villars/Les Diablerets : 220km
- Lausanne : 70km
- Aigle : 15km
- Bex : 15km

Access by public transportation is nearly direct :



- Paris-Lausanne (TGV) : 3h40, in winter Paris-Aigle direct (TGV des Neiges)
- Geneva-Villars : via Aigle : 2h, via Bex : 2h20
- Geneva-Les Diablerets : via Aigle : 2h40
- Lausanne-Villars : via Aigle : 1h15, via Bex : 1h40
- Lausanne-les Diablerets : via Aigle : 1h30
- Aigle-Villars (bus) or Bex-Villars (cogtrain) : 35 min
- Aigle-Les Diablerets (train) : 50 min



Other destinations :

- Montreux : 40km
- Paris : 590km
- Brussels : 780km
- London : 940km

IN THE WINTER...

Villars-Gryon-Diablerets ski area is well suited to all ski levels. From 1200m to 3000m, there is variety for all : snow creches for toddlers, beginners slopes, snowparks, marked un-pisted slopes, and numerous off-piste routes. It is indeed a winter playground for all ski levels.

Non-skiers are also well catered for : cross country routes, snowshoeing or walking, sledging and ice rinks, amongst other activities, are all available. Diablerets boasts a 7.2km long sledge run guaranteeing fun and adventure for all. The **Liberty Pass** is the perfect solution for all non-skiers, that represent about 30% of winter clients.



The **Free Pass** is the best deal for all regular customers of our ski area, and provides up to 30% discount on daily skipasses during the week (Monday to Friday) and 15% Saturdays and Sundays.

IN THE SUMMER...

There are many summer activities available, made all the more unusual by the unique landscape of our region. Close to Lac Leman, yet only a short journey from glacial landscapes providing many varied activities throughout the year, be it at low or high altitude.



Our **Free Access Card** provides free and unlimited access to mountain transport, and access to over 35 sports and leisure activities throughout your stay. It is available to all guests staying in hotels, chalets, or apartments from the start of June until the end of October. Anyone not staying in our resorts can access this offer for 12 swiss francs for the day, or 65 swiss francs for the summer season, and it is free for all children under 9 years old.

The card gives access to :

- Golf (18 holes at 1500m altitude)
- Tennis
- Indoor and outdoor pools
- Mountain bike trails
- Mountain lakes : fishing, paddling, swimming.
- Paragliding
- Cycle pump track.
- Indian Forest adventure park
- Large wheel mountain scooters
- Mini golf
- Covered ice rink, and so on...

Many of our hotels will also allow children under 9 to stay with their parents in their hotel room for free.

Our region has many protected areas of outstanding natural beauty, allowing adventure and discovery of the natural environment through a variety of different appropriate activities.

With more than 500km of marked trails, mountain hiking is one of our key summer activities.

Since the resort's situation is particularly interesting from a geological and natural point of view, numerous theme hikes are offered all summer long to discover true natural treasures, such as marine fossils or the very diverse Alpine fauna.

In the area of Villars-Gryon-Bex

Since the resort's situation is particularly interesting from a geological and natural point of view, numerous theme hikes are offered all summer long to discover true natural treasures, such as marine fossils or the very diverse Alpine fauna. Some of these trails were created in collaboration with various departments of the University of Lausanne, which visit them regularly within the framework of their research. Others were set up in association with internationally renowned wildlife specialists and scientists.

The beauty of the landscape will never cease to amaze you and arouse very diverse emotions. To help you learn while having fun, educational trails on various themes have been created, such as the *Sentier de la Pierre (the Rock Trail)*, the *Sentier du Sel (the Salt Road)*, the *Chemin de l'Eau (the Water Trail)*.

The long history of the villages of Gryon and Ollon, which dates back to the 12th century for Gryon, also allows culture aficionados to learn about old villages and their history thanks to *History Walks*.

Walks in the numerous vineyards of our towns can also enhance your stay with tastings of fine wines typical of our region.

Salt Trail: A specially designed trail allows walkers to discover the fabulous odyssey of salt, following in the footsteps of the ancient *saumoduc* (salt water aqueduct) made of larch wood! The walk leaves from Salins sur Ollon, legendary location of the very first salt source discovered in Switzerland, up to the Bex salt mine, source of salt grains. An introductory trail is an opportunity to discover the amazing challenges connected to the salt crystals bequeathed by a sea that evaporated some several millions of years ago. Here, one runs into kings and smugglers, explorers and mercenaries, miners and wise men, ogres, dwarves and phantoms through richly illustrated educational boards. www.sentierdusel.ch

Stone Path: Located in a place with unique geological specificities, this themed walk on the history and formation of the Alps was developed with the collaboration of the Geology Department at the University of Lausanne. Walkers can transform themselves into landscape detectives and enjoy a fun, stimulating way of getting to know the history of the formation of the Alpine countryside through 6 educational boards.

History of the Earth path: This path was created in collaboration with Professor André Maeder, former Director of the Geneva Observatory. It covers nine eras of the history of our planet and creates awareness of the long history that precedes the arrival of man, in geological times. Magnificent metal sculptures decorate each stage.

Fox Cub trail : Situated above Villars, this learning trail, aided by helpful information posts, guides children to discover the forest.

The Animal trail : Situated in the wooded area of the Chavasses path above Chesieres, this trail enables the visitor to discover specific lifestyle aspects of the many animals that live in our forest.

Treasure Hunt : We have many themed treasure hunts for you, both in winter and summer.

Around the Diablerets area

Ice and Water: The theme of this walk is water, the indispensable element for all life forms. All along the walk, water provides a spectacular sight with waterfalls and mountain rivers. Walkers will also benefit from

a few peaceful moments along the banks of mountain lakes and rivers. The walk provides an opportunity to observe and think about the importance of water in the mountain environment.

For the fitter amongst us: Ascent to Pierredar: This walk overlooks the Creux de Champs arena where chamois deer can sometimes be seen. Pierredar hut is located on the plateau, dominated by the Scex Rouge and Diablerets peaks. The refuge is manned by a warder from mid-June to the end of September.

A walk around La Palette, an exceptional experience! The starting point of this walk offers a magnificent view over the Vallée des Ormonts. The panorama opens up as the walk progresses and the Tours d'Aï and Mayen become visible. The pastures ring with the sound of cow bells and bleating sheep which graze on the slopes at the foot of Cape-au-Moine.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The organisers of events and shows are proud to offer their guests quality programmes in which partying and entertainment are combined to keep everyone happy. Fans of tradition will find their heart's desire in anyone of a number of folk events, while the more sports minded can take part in ski races, freestyle or golf competitions.



A certain number of national events are organised regularly throughout the year. Here are some examples:

In the 3 resorts



Ski & Snow Fiesta, end March-April

Villars and Les Diablerets end-of-winter-season festival ! Spring skiing, sunny apres-ski terraces, entertainment, DJ's, and many other crazy sporting activities and entertainment at reduced prices - this is your opportunity to make the most of the end of the season !

www.skisnowfiesta.ch

Open doors resorts, July

For their opening promotional weekend, and to launch their Free Access summer season, Villars, Gryon, and Les Diablerets are offering their Free Access card free of charge to all visitors.



In Villars-Gryon



Villars Rando-Festival, June

Fans of hiking and nature can enjoy the **Villars Rando-Festival** (weekend entirely devoted to the mountains). The fair is open to all and offers a large selection of themed hikes with mountain guides, films and a book fair of mountain-related publications. Visitors will also have a chance to test various items of technical equipment. www.villarsrando.ch.

Fisherman's Friend StrongmanRun winter edition, January

Villars was chosen as host for the first winter version of the legendary and unique Strongmanrun. Competitors followed a snow covered 14km course, climbing over and under a variety of obstacles, helped, and occasionally hindered, by eye-catching costumes and disguises. This first editions saw over 1000 participants, cheered on by a large number of fascinated spectators. The third edition is already planned for January 2018.

<http://strongmanrun.ch/fr/winter-edition/>



Villars' Classical Week, February

The 21th edition of Villars' classical music festival took place in February 2017. A diverse programme of quality combined concerts with storytelling for younger enthusiasts, jazz concerts, and a varied classical music programme, helping to further enhance the reputation of this event. www.classiques.ch

Climbing World Cup – Villars, July

For the second time Villars hosts a "speed and difficulty" stage of the Climbing World Cup from 7th to the 9th of July 2017. On Friday the "difficulty" qualifications take place with speed finals in the evening. On Saturday evening the semi final and the final of the "difficulty" challenge will take place.

On Sunday the U16 Swiss Difficulty Championships CAS for climbers aged 10-15 takes place, (categories M12, M14, and M16) within the framework of the "Mammut Youth Climbing Cup". www.lfsc-climbing.org



In Les Diablerets



Les Diables en Fête, July

Les Diables en Fête is summer's main event with a guest of honour and a different theme every year. Families and friends of the village and surrounds meet here for a festive moment. Live music concerts, entertainment for children, a market, food stands and a procession by the "Corso Fleuri" with a competition for the best float provide endless entertainment during this great event.

Les Diablerets film festival, August

Les Diablerets Film Festival is one of the not-to-be-missed events in the mountains! Screening of brand new films on the mountains, exploits and the environment are offered every evening. Freeride is also on the programme during the opening weekend. In addition to its tented bar, a giant screen and two climbing walls, exhibitions and a bookshop with more than 300 works also contribute to the Festival's soul. www.fifad.ch



Diablerets 3D, March

Ski mountaineering divided into 3 disciplines:

- "La Verticale", a 550-800 metre nocturnal ascent from Les Diablerets to Meilleret
- "La Diabolique", a 3000m trial from Les Diablerets to the top of the Diablerets range
- "Le Super-Relais" which runs around the bottom of Meilleret

Diablerets 3D also comprises a 3 day exhibition of ski mountaineering equipment with film screenings, conferences and debates at Les Diablerets Maison des Congrès. www.diablerets3d.ch

ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA (LESS THAN 45 MINUTES AWAY)

The area of Villars, Gryon, Les Diablerets, Bex is fortunate to have an extensive historical heritage and to be surrounded by cultural sites and interesting leisure activity facilities, such as archaeological sites, castles and specialised activity centres. To mention but a few:

- The **Tower of St-Triphon**: The St-Triphon hill has been inhabited since the bronze age. Beautiful objects found on this site also attest to a period of Roman occupation. The medieval tower, the remains of a former castle, was once surrounded by a polygonal wall that served as a protective boundary.
- The **Salt Mines of Bex** will allow you to discover various techniques for mining salt that have been in use since 1684. www.mines.ch
- **Chaplin's World** : Chaplin's World is an entertaining museum that shows the private and artistic life of Charlie Chaplin. Open to the public, the museum offers 1850m2 of thematic exhibition through his house and a reproduction of his studios. www.chaplinsworld.com
- The **Château d'Aigle (Aigle Castle)**, with its famous Vine and Wine Museum. www.chateauaigle.ch
- The **Abbey of St-Maurice d'Agaune** and its treasure. Founded in 515 by Sigismond in honour of martyred saints, the Abbey houses treasures donated by generations of pilgrims. www.st-maurice.ch
- The **Château de Chillon (Chillon Castle)**: One of the most beautiful monuments in Switzerland. This medieval castle is perched on a rocky islet on the edge of Lake Geneva. www.chillon.ch
- The **Pierre Gianadda Foundation Gallo-Roman Museum**. Around the vestiges of a temple dating back to the Gallic period, the museum displays the major discoveries found in Martigny, including the Great Bronzes of Octodurus. The Foundation continuously presents temporary major exhibitions of works of great artists (Giacometti, Schiele, Van Gogh, Picasso...). www.gianadda.ch

- **Alimentarium, Vevey:** All you want to know about nutrition www.alimentarium.ch
- **Pyromin Museum, Corbeyrier:** The first European museum devoted to pyrotechnology, fireworks and explosives www.pyromin.ch
- **Aquaparc, Le Bouveret:** a water park, “The Caribbean on Lake Geneva” www.aquaparc.ch
- The **Lavey Spa & Resort**, a thermal centre with several swimming pools (indoor and outdoor) and numerous special pavilions. www.lavey-les-bains.ch
- **Parc Aventure, Aigle:** Located in the middle of a forest bordering a river, the Parc Aventure forest adventure park offers a variety of routes featuring varying degrees of difficulty for all ages and guaranteeing an exceptional experience. www.parc-aventure.ch
- **Grotte aux Fées, St-Maurice:**
Perched high above St-Maurice, for more than a century, an enchanting cave, called the Grotte aux Fées (Fairies’ Grotto), has put on a wonderful, natural show starring stones and water. www.grotte.ch/fee/
- **Labyrinthe Aventure, Evionnaz:**
Labyrinthe Aventure is the world’s largest permanent labyrinth. Alongside countless dead-ends encountered on the way, a dozen or so bases are waiting to be found, along with many games for all ages. www.labyrinthe.ch
- **Suisse Vapeur Parc, Le Bouveret:** Discover Switzerland in miniature trains. www.swissvapeur.ch

The region offers a broad spectrum of other activities and cultural sites. www.villars.ch, www.diablerets.ch and www.chablais.ch

Other castles, recreation parks, museums, thermal baths – all close to Lake Geneva and town such as Montreux add to the other diverse activities available.

CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

Heritage and tradition: traditional cheese making for more than 500 years!

For more than a century and like mountain farmers for generations, from June to August, the Mottier family watches over cow herds belonging to a dozen other farmers on top of the Col de la Croix at 1800m. The flora and climate at this altitude result in superior quality milk. The altitude of the pastures is one of a number of very strict criteria of the “Etivaz” controlled designation of origin. The traditional production method of this famous cheese, made over a wood fire, without any use of machinery, and using utensils already employed in the Middle Ages, allows this well-known dairy to produce several different kinds of cheese.

These days, during summer, one can visit the farm with its typical chalets, as well as partaking in delicious breakfasts with homemade products, as well as experiencing the traditional production of this famous cheese. The Col de la Croix provides a magnificent panorama over the Alps and Glacier 3000, and is located on the road which connects Villars to Les Diablerets. This pass was also the scene of a great battle in 1798 between the Swiss and Napoleon’s French soldiers. This battle was an important part of the history of Vaud and its independence.

Chalets with shingle roofs

The protected hamlet of Taveyanne, located in the Gryon municipality and built on the western slope of the Diablerets range constitutes one of the region's architectural heritage sites, with some 20 traditional chalets with shingle roofs, some of which were built more than 400 years ago. The very name "Taveyanne" stems from "Tavillon" (shingle) – a little piece of rectangular wood traditionally used to cover the façades and roofs of certain chalets. Taveyanne is part of several hiking trails in the region and is easily accessible by car.

More info about shingle roofs with Mr. Olivier Veuve, please see "Zoom on..." chapter

The paradox of Les Diablerets

Les Diablerets is a mountain village with typical, well-preserved architecture, and traditional chalets. Its 17th century architecture marks the golden age of wood work in the Ormonts region. One of the decorative characteristics of Les Diablerets chalets is the bearing of two Bern bears. These bears mark the era when the village of Les Diablerets was ruled by Bern, until the end of the 18th century. Other decorations, such as chiselled friezes decorating the chalet eaves also represent this passion for sculpted wood. However, this village also houses a unique, modern building – the arrival station of Les Diablerets cableway at an altitude of 3000m. This building was built in 1999 by famous Swiss architect, Mario Botta, who has earned an international reputation thanks to his unique achievements, including the famous Seoul and San Francisco museums.

According to many legends from Les Diablerets, for a long time the glacier was the home of Devils and was an inhospitable place which frightened the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages. These legends inspired

Mario Botta who gave the building the shape of the Devil's fork. www.glacier3000.ch

HISTORY

Villars-Ollon



In the Roman era, the region was called "civitas vallensium", and was under the authority of the Emperor Claudius who had a road constructed from Milan to Mayence, which passed through the Grand-St-Bernard, Martigny, Saint-Maurice, Massongex, St-Triphon, Aigle, Yverne and along the lake. In the 5th century the Burgundians, who came from France, settled between Lyon and Martigny and intermingled with a Gallo-Roman population that had already been decimated by invasions. A Burgundian king, Saint-Sigismond, founded the Abbey of St-Maurice in 515 and granted it a large territory between the Valais and the lake.

The name Chablais appeared for the first time in 814, under the reign of Louis the Debonair, successor to Charlemagne. Between 888 and 1032 the County of Chablais extended from the lake to Thonon and Vevey and as far as the Trient River on the Valais side.

During this period the Abbey of St-Maurice had total control of the Grand-St-Bernard mountain pass, and owned numerous lands on the plain in the mountains. Gryon, Ollon, their lands and their high mountain pastures were all part of these territories. As of 1032 there were continuous conflicts between the realm of the Bishop of Sion and the Counts of Savoy, who seized the entire territory and extended it farther into Vaud.

During these very unstable periods, a number of communities little by little gained their independence and obtained various rights. The Bernese conquest began in 1475 and was supported as of spring 1476 by

allies from the Upper Valais. The Roche castle in Ollon and the St-Triphon castle were burned. In spite of this offensive, the Abbey of St-Maurice retained ownership of its lands and some of its rights until the 18th century. The town of Ollon purchased its rights from the Abbey in 1636 for the sum of 16,500 florins. It remained governed by the lords of the region, only the governor of Aigle was Bernese.

As for Villars, the first traces of activity go back to the 12th and 13th centuries. An intense demographic upsurge motivated the monks from the Abbey of Saint-Maurice to help the peasants who had undertaken a systematic conquest of the mountain pastures. It was precisely at that time that they had considerably expanded the high alpine grass lands. Every mountain pasture conquered and cleared in this manner turned into a real treasure that the peasants passionately defended against the encroachments of their neighbours.

Legend has it that the peasants of Ollon were as fierce in defending their mountain pastures in the courts of justice as they were in eradicating invasive alder trees on the pastures.

In 1750, the mountain "dixains" (Villars, Chesières, Huémoz) requested to form a separate town, this idea was opposed by the Bernese lords. In 1889, the municipality claimed the archives of the "dixains" in order to add them to those of Ollon; the town became henceforth one indivisible entity.

The skiing years...

Long ago, the mountain dwellers considered the snow, to be sad, cold, dismal and hostile, which is why the hotels in Villars-Chesières, which had opened as early as 1870 welcomed tourists only in the summer and kept their shutters closed when it snowed. It was in 1905 that the owner of the Villars Palace introduced the winter season in Villars. To accomplish this, he developed a winter leisure activity infrastructure around the hotel. In 1907, he constructed a large ice-skating rink, installed curling lanes and an ice hockey area and built a sledge and bob run in 1908.

When did skiing begin in Switzerland?

It is known that in 1873, a physician from Davos, Dr Spengler, received a pair of Lapp skis from one of his Norwegian relatives. The first attempt was a disaster and there was no next time. Other precursors made attempts but were quickly discouraged by the difficulties encountered, until a book was published in Berlin by the explorer Nansen, who recounted how he had crossed Greenland on skis and provided much information on the techniques of the sport. Immediately, in various parts of Switzerland, enterprising young people set about making skis based on the indications given by Nansen and rushed to the slopes.



The beginning of skiing in Villars... The slopes of the Bretaye region were quickly perceived as ideal for exercising this activity. In Villars, as of 1906, horse-drawn sleds transported the most seasoned skiers to Bretaye each day for 13 francs, but the area had to wait until the inauguration of the Bouquetins train in 1913 for skiing to develop seriously. The skiers then had to walk up to Bretaye (approximately 600 metres).

In 1936, the first ski lift was built in the combe at Chaux Ronde. A Swiss first, this was a ski lift onto which the skiers were obliged to fasten themselves with a large leather belt in order to be pulled back up the mountain. On 13 December 1936, the Orient Express made a special stop in Aigle for the monster slalom called "Kingdom of the great joys of winter skiing" organised at Bretaye.

That same year, a ski lift was built in the form of a sledge that could accommodate 12 people for transporting tourists to the peak of the Grand Chamossaire. These sledges were in use until 1953. The stone ramp that formed the path of this ski lift is still partially visible today, just above the Col de Bretaye restaurant.

Ski lessons were given behind the Palace Hotel, on the old golf course. There were over 50 persons per class. Half-day group lessons cost CHF 5 and private lessons were offered at CHF 7. Sometimes, by the time the last student managed to get his skis on, the lesson was already over!

It was only in 1937 that the train line was extended to the Bretaye plateau. In 1938, Villars was classified as one of the top resorts in Europe. Given its advanced conditions, many Swiss ski clubs came to practice in our resort. Villars became number one among winter sport resorts... unfortunately nine months later, war broke out and had as its immediate consequence a catastrophic number of empty rooms in the grand hotels of the region.

Fortunately, brighter years followed this difficult period. Villars, through its ski club founded in 1920, saw the blossoming of champions as early as the 1930s. Local skiers Olivia Ausoni and Roger Gysin were champions in the years between 1940 and 1955, Jean-Daniel and Michel Dätwyler (between 1965 and 1973), Céline Dätwyler and Anick Bonzon in the 1990s to 2000s. **Fanny Smith**, Junior World Champion in ski cross in 2010, placed 7th in the Olympic Games in Vancouver and **World Champion in Skicross during Winter 2012/2013 !**

More infos on Fanny Smith available at page 27, « Zoom on.. » chapter



Gryon



The town of Gryon was born in 1189 and belonged to the Abbey of St-Maurice, while neighbouring territories remained attached to the Bishopric of Sion. Before that date, Gryon was a dependency of Bex, serving as pasture land for the Burgundian leaders. Remaining subordinated to the Abbey, which was the territorial lord, Gryon passed into the hands of several sovereign lords, among them the Counts of Savoy and as of 1475 the Bernese, who held it until its liberation in 1798.

The people of Gryon lived frugally and worked hard in their steep fields and forests. They experienced difficult times, having to pay heavy tithes and property taxes to the noblemen, and suffering several recurrences of the plague. In addition to these hardships, an enormous fire on 19 July 1719 destroyed 36 chalets on the alp of Taveyanne and 68 buildings in the village of Gryon on the same day.

As of the middle of the 19th century, the life of the inhabitants of Gryon changed definitively when the essentially agricultural economy became a tourism economy with all its implications. The Bex-Gryon road, suitable for horses and carriages, was constructed around 1857 and the Peuffeyre electrical plant in 1895. The Bex-Gryon electric railway came into existence at the dawn of the 20th century. These new transportation facilities brought the first urban guests to Gryon. Families from Lausanne, Geneva and from abroad were coming to spend their holidays in the numerous guesthouses in the village. The first holiday chalets were built. The most famous of these holidaymakers was certainly the poet Juste Olivier who settled in Gryon in 1871 after having spent several holidays at Cergnement. The enthusiasm of some Gryon inhabitants even became dangerous in the eyes of their co-citizens. Development projects for the Anzeinde plateau appeared, along with plans for a railway to the top of Les Diablerets. An opposition committee, and then the outbreak of the First World War, led to the disappearance of these ideas.

Although recent years have seen rapid evolution in terms of construction alongside further development of our tourism infrastructure, the long term offer on the plateau has remained relatively stable. Gryon is proud to provide a wonderful quality of life to its' inhabitants and hosts. The village worked to maintain a warm human welcome to its' tourist activities, wrapped up in a comfortable and welcoming family package.

Bex

Despite the fact that traces of cavemen have been found here, it would appear that the area around Bex was only inhabited with any regularity very late. For a long time, the big plain on which Bex would later be situated was a huge swamp, bisected by arms of the Rhône that changed course depending on the currents.

It was only in 574 that Bex was mentioned for the first time in history, on the occasion of an important battle between the Franks who inhabited Bex, and the Lombards who had invaded what is Valais today. Bex was then a border region and the entire later Middle Ages must have been particularly troubled. While the village belonged to the Count of Savoy, a château was built on Chiètres Hill in 1150, which overlooked the entrance to the valley of the lower Rhône. Built by Girold of Bex, lord of the region, it was soon accompanied by two other buildings which completed this defence network. A tower surrounded by ramparts was soon erected to overlook the exit of the Avançon Valley and protected access to the village of Belmont which today has completely disappeared. It also appears that at this time Belmont was bigger than Bex, because the inhabitants had sought the peace of the hills due to the battles raging in the more accessible areas. Finally, the last tower located above the meeting of the Avançons of Anzeindaz and Nant, at the end of the valley, served to shoot back at invaders coming from Pas de Cheville pass.

An important route from France to Italy crossed the region and had important traffic at the time, which brought both advantages as well as unfortunately the disadvantages of the problems of war and pillaging. Due to its location, the region served as a border and was of considerable importance for the Count of Savoy, justifying the defences that he built there.

Later, Bex became an integral part of the Republic of Bern. All this began with a punitive expedition by Bern on the village in 1464. A group of Bernese soldiers hurtled down the mountain, stripped an abandoned property and left with their loot. Twelve years later, the Republic of Bern took the entire Chablais Vaudois region (including Bern) and took command under the name of the Aigle Government. Bern reformed both the religion and the life of the citizens, improving the culture and developing salt mining to the great benefit of the community's economy. The Rhône was then dammed, thus improving the cultivation surfaces.

The arrival of tourism resulted in a giant step forward on the economic front. The reconversion turned out to be extremely hard and could only take place thanks to industries which since the beginning of the century had begun to spring up. Bex's luck at the time lay underground and stemmed from salt mining, from its gypsum or plaster and its water which powered its electrical plants.

Industrious Bex continued its trajectory and recent years have seen new activities develop, without in any way neglecting the fundamental assets provided by its natural environment, cultures and vineyards, the fame of which has grown exponentially.



The salt mines: In ancient times, in the Middle Ages and up until quite recently, salt was a product that was both indispensable and an important source of revenue. The discovery of salt deposits in Vaud goes back to the 15th century. According to the legend, a shepherd taking his goats to graze in Panex, above Ollon, and to Fondement near Bex, noticed that his goats demonstrated a preference for the water from two sources. Having tasted it, he found it salty – which was confirmed after he boiled it after which he noticed that when it evaporated it left a fine salt deposit at the bottom of the pot. The salt mines are a vast network of galleries and shafts, staircases and rooms stretching for more than 50km with a constant temperature of 17 degrees, and access through the gate at Bouillet, above Les Dévens hamlet. www.mines.ch

More infos on the Salt Mines, with the interview of Alain Flaux, available at page 27, « Zoom on.. » chapter

Les Diablerets

Les Diablerets: from the Middle Ages to today... During the Middle Ages, in 515, the Ormonts Valley was mentioned for the first time in an act in which the King of Burgundy, Saint Sigismond, gave up the Ormonts Valley and other lands to St-Maurice Abbey. In 1034, following the death of Rodolphe III, the last Burgundian king, the Ormonts Valley fell under the domination of the House of Savoy. Then, in 1231, the Count of Savoy exchanged the lands and the people of Les Ormonts against the lands and people of Saillon. Finally in 1277, Jacques IV of Saillon, the Lord of Aigle, liberated his men from Ormont-Dessus. The first freedom charter on February 2, 1279 confirmed this gesture. The first traces of two villages go back to this time: Les Diablerets and Vers l'Eglise.



In 1464, during the wars of Burgundy, the Bernese conquered the Ormonts Valley, Aigle, Bex and Ollon. In 1475, Les Ormonts became part of Bern which lasted for longer than did the Savoyard regime. During the same year, the Council of Bern confirmed the customs and privileges of the Ormonts Valley. In 1798, the Vaudois and French military troops seized the Ormonts Valley during the Battle of Trébadèze. From that time onwards, Ormont-Dessus became part of the future state of Vaud. The acquisition took place by force because the Ormonans, who were used to living under the benevolent Bernese regime, defended their heritage when the franco-vaudoises bullied them

In 1839, the stretch of road from Aigle to Le Sépey was opened to traffic, which allowed relations to be strengthened between Ormont-Dessus and the valley due to wood and cattle trading, but also due to the flow of foreign visitors in summer. As a result of this, the Hôtel des Diablerets, the name given to the view over the Diablerets range was opened in 1856. It was one of the first hotels in the Vaudois Alps. The resort took off. The opening of this road also allowed for the establishment of the postal service which began seriously in 1839. In 1855, the second stretch of the Sépey – Les Diablerets road was completed, and then in 1882, the road to Gstaad opened, crossing the Col du Pilon. The village which consisted of hamlets, then saw the construction of hostels and holiday chalets and little by little transformed itself into a veritable tourist linked named Les Diablerets in 1905. The construction and opening of the Aigle-Sépey-Les Diablerets railway in 1914 helped to cement the tourism fate of Les Ormonts. In winter 1909-1910, for the first time the hotels in the valley welcomed new guests – fans of winter sports. The first teleski at Vioz (in the Meilleret area) was built in 1942 and was followed by the Isenau gondola in 1953. In 1964, they built the Glacier des Diablerets cableway. Winter tourism grew little by little in relation to the economy in the Ormonts Valley. Today, the population has not fluctuated much in the past few years and totals around 1400 inhabitants hosting nearly 8000 people during the high season. For its part, tourism largely depends on the life of the pastures, the magnificent landscapes and local produce in summer. On the other hand, winter tourism is more demanding in terms of infrastructure. www.diablerets.ch/fr/culture-patrimoine/histoire

The Musée des Ormonts, in the village of Vers-l'Eglise (near Les Diablerets) hosts various temporary exhibitions on themes linked to the history and culture of les Diablerets. The current exhibition proposes a crossed perspective on Mongolia and Les Ormonts (valley of les Diablerets), through a wide range of photographs made by professionnals of les Diablerets, passionate on these regions. The exhibition will last until the end of October 2017. www.museeormonts.ch

LEGENDS

Legends around Villars-Gryon



A mysterious monster has been hiding in Lake Chavonnes from time immemorial.... Here are two versions of this magical story.....

The white dragon in the lake

Lake Chavonnes appears to be a silent space lined with rocks and plantlife. Woe to the ducks, crows, nestlings and hawks who formerly ventured into this area! A majestic white dragon, who had chosen this clear-water lake as his home, incessantly attacked them.

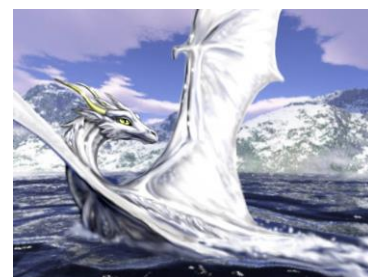
However, when beautiful girls from Les Ormonts walked on these barren shores, the white dragon swam gallantly up to them and accepted from their hands the food that they offered him. In return, he majestically spread his long wings, and glided gracefully, generating frenetic waves around himself or stirring the green water into arabesques of foam.

Then suddenly he turned, and with a mighty jump dove afar into the depths of the lake. Surprised, the girls regretfully left this place, which once again became solitary and tranquil.

The legend of Lake Chavonnes

In the 17th century under the threat of an invasion of the Valaisans, the shepherds of the Alpine pastures of Les Diablerets went to warn Lady Isabeau of the imminent risk of pillage...

Lady Isabeau was the daughter of the Lord of Pontverre, master of the castle located in the foothills of the Pic Chaussy, of which two walls are still visible today. She decided to flee in order to avoid the plundering, fires and other evils, common in that barbarous era. She took her prettiest dress, her jewellery box and left to take refuge, passing through Forclaz, through the Chavonnes forest, to the shores of its lake where she took up permanent residence. Lady Isabeau hid her jewellery box by throwing it into the middle of the lake.



Legend has it that due to her beauty and kindness, the forest sprites adopted her and turned her into a fairy. Once she had become a magical creature of the Alpine pastures, she became immortal and still watches over her treasure and her friends the elves and the other sprites. Her magical powers allowed her to bring to life a white monster, the monster of Lake Chavonnes, who ate bandits and anyone who tried to retrieve the treasure from the lake. One can see him on nights when the moon is full and delight in his bewitching song. Visitors can still see the diamonds dazzling at the bottom of the water depending on the light of the moon or the sun (in fact, what one sees is rock formations encrusted with pyrite, a shiny mineral).

To prove the truth of this story, and to thank the shepherds of Les Diablerets for having saved her from the barbarians of the time, Lady Isabeau still gives a symbolic square metre of Alpine land to each young person in the town of Ormont-Dessus when they reach their majority. The town perpetuates this tradition to immortalise her lovely story. (Really true).

The fairies of Bretaye

In bygone days, the shepherds could see them every evening dancing in the pastures of the Grand Chamossaire or, sometimes catch them sleeping under a rhododendron.

One day, a shepherd from the region got it into his head to marry a fairy. After looking for a long time, he found his fairy, gallantly courted her and married her. This could have been the most beautiful of love stories had he not, out of meanness, begun to strike her. He forbade her to ever go out and kept her from dancing in the pastures. Each time she seemed ready to protest, he got out his stick.

Angered, the community of fairies abducted the young fairy and freed her from the arms of her tyrant. They all left the region to find an area where men were more civilised. Ever since then, you can spend all the nights you want looking under the rhododendrons of the region, there is unfortunately not a fairy left in our countryside.

Legends from Bex

The legend of Plan-Névé : once upon a time in the place today known as the Plan-Névé Glacier – in other words north of the Grand Muveran – there was a magnificent pasture. The mountain was so beautiful and fertile, and the cow-herds so prosperous that they played puck with goat cheeses and bowled with heads of butter instead of bowls. One evening, when a violent storm threatened, a poor, wrinkled woman appeared at the door of the Plan-Névé chalet. In a piteous tone, she begged the cowherds to shelter her for the night and to give her “a crust” – in other words – a crust of bread with a bit of butter. Despite having plenty, the latter refused and told her to be gone as fast as possible. The poor old woman, as furious as she was wrinkled, left the inhospitable chalet in silence and then some way away, turned and looked at the pasture with a terrible, prophetic eye, muttering this curse: *Tf Balla pllanna: Plan-Névé: Jamé terreina te ne te revere: Beautiful Plan-Névé I will never see you again*). The next instant, a terrible snow, hail and wind storm descended upon this beautiful mountain and in a second, it was covered in a sheet of glass which for long years continued to thicken.

Today, the ice is receding, which gives weight to the opinion that formerly this place was a pasture. The arch of an old bridge, an iron chain used for attaching animals, beams and large logs have been discovered in landslides and avalanches, which proves beyond doubt that in the olden days there were houses or forests in these high regions.

Legends of Les Diablerets

The peak of Les Diablerets has always been considered to be a dangerous and cursed. Les Diablerets was a meeting point for the Sabbath for devils, the damned and all bad genies put together. The noise of their games with the rocks made the little people living in the valleys say that the devils were playing skittles which is where the name the “Quille du Diable” given to the tower shaped rock seen from the Tsanfleuron Glacier comes from.

La Quille du Diable (Devil's skittle): In the olden days, one of the peaks of the range that dominates the col de Cheville and borders the Tsanfleuron Glacier to the south was not called the Tour St-Martin, as our maps indicate today, but had a far more meaningful name that it was a mistake to change. It was called the Quille du Diable. This enormous rock shaped like a tower or a colossal bastion served as a target, a goal or a skittle in the various games of skill or strength in which the devils indulged. Additionally, when the rocks came down noisily from above this gigantic keep, when chunks were thrown a little too energetically by these infernal players onto the vast icy plain, they sent rocks and boulders bouncing all the way down to the pastures of Anzeindaz or to the banks of the little lake at Derborence, while the herdsmen looked upwards in fright, imagining the threats of these cursed beings. They feared for themselves and their herds and prayed to the Divine Grace: “may God help us and protect our heifers”.

During the night, people claimed to see these satanic spirits, armed with little lights or lanterns, straying alone or in groups through the woods, the pastures, in the stones or the high mountain passes. Several even said that they had often seen these poor souls that were damned or had committed suicide come down right up close to Ardon in Valais. One could hear them making terrible wails and their bodies, terrible to see, were so tired, so tired of straying and crawling for so long on these arid rocks in order to expiate their crimes, that several had arms worn right up to the elbows while others up to their shoulders. The wails were heard and the fires were seen to sparkle in a particularly sinister manner before and after the two terrible landslides in 1714 and 1740 which covered several acres of pastureland and killed several people, as well as a large number of cattle.

Scex Rouge or the ruby mountain: While searching for a lost ewe, Jeannette discovered a wonderful cave carved from amethyst and rubies – the home of the genie of the mountain. Promising not to reveal this secret to anyone, our herder was able to take three big rubies. She kept her word and left the valley. The entrance to the fabulous cave was never found again. As for the genie, he only gets cross if one comes too close to his home and then the entire mountain shakes!

The flute player: At the end of summer, our little Vaudois fairies return to their family caves (the salt flats in our Alps) or the old chalet burnt by time and the sun, up there near the peaks. Dressed as farmers, they sometimes come down to the village to help a few unfortunates and on party evenings, they like to join the dancers and waltz with them till dawn. A very long time ago, one of the beautiful girls from our “fayas” fell in love with a young herder and secretly married him, thus losing all claim to being a fairy. A few months later, she gave birth to three little horned devils. The first, with beautiful jet black hair, was the flute player that we all know. The other two ... well that is another story ...

The naughty imp from Lavanchy: *Servans* are not all good elves, always ready to help in return for a dollop of cream. The one from Lavanchy was such a joker that his master decided to get rid of him. But to do this he had to be caught: “Un *servan* is as black as night and in the daytime you never see them. One night, the *servan*’s” master hid in the attic and went to sleep. Around midnight, he woke up with a start, so frightened that his head stood straight up under his nightcap! There, in front of him, in the candlelight, a fix was knitting the hair on its tail making horrible faces. Our friend fled and left the valley. But be careful – the *servan*, joker that he is, still haunts our old chalets!

The monk’s cape: This good monk, now turned to stone, saved the life of two little herders being chased by a huge wolf, by hiding them under his cape. The monster didn’t dare attack the saintly man and waited and waited ... he waited for a long time because the children had fled through a passage that one always takes under the Monk’s Cape (Cape au Moine). Under the Tornettaz, on stormy nights, apparently one can still hear the howling of the last wolf in the valley, who has also been turned to stone.

www.diaablerets.ch/fr/culture-patrimoine/legendes

PROMOTING KNOWLEDGE

The international schools in Villars and Gryon enjoy a one hundred year old reputation dating back to the early 20th century, making the resort a major centre of high-quality education for innumerable students from all corners of the globe. Of the 37 schools that existed before the Second World War, 4 high-level schools remain and welcome annually nearly 700 students from 3 to 18 years of age, francophones and anglophones boarding students and students who come to perfect their skills (summer camps).



WELLNESS



Wellness facilities have greatly increased in the course of recent years.

The **Bains de Villars**, the Villars Spa and swimming pool complex opened in spring 2017. The pool is free to enter with your Free Access card from May to October, providing you with a 25 metre pool, an inside paddling pool and an outside area with a 100m water slide!

In the spa area there is an outdoor jacuzzi, with saunas, hammams, massage, and a relaxation area with beautiful Alpine panoramic views. A haven of wellness with an Alpine view www.cds-villars.ch

The **Centre Thermal de Lavey-les-Bains (Lavey Spa & Resort)**, 25km away, offers a wellness oasis with the warmest thermal water in Switzerland. Several outdoor pools, one of which is over 1,000 m², and an indoor pool with special pavilions await you throughout the year. www.lavey-les-bains.ch

The spas of a number of hotels are open to the public:

The five-star **Chalet Royalp & Spa** boasts 1,200 m² of spa space with an indoor swimming pool, sauna, jacuzzi, massage and fitness centre. www.royalp.ch

The four-star **Hôtel du Golf** inaugurated its new 300 m² spa in December 2009, with a fitness area, massages, indoor and outdoor jacuzzis, a sauna and a hammam. www.hoteldugolf.ch

GASTRONOMY, WINES AND SOIL

From a gastronomic point of view, Villars-Gryon is a region rich in local flavours and mountain specialities where gourmet tourists can satisfy their refined palates. Numerous restaurants offer varied menus, from typical cheese-based specialities to a creative cuisine featuring mountain herbs, plants and flowers. There is something to suit every taste. Several local restaurants are listed in the *Guide Gault et Millau* (a very prestigious hotel and restaurant guide).



The resort is most fortunate to be located between 2 **wine towns** with a unique climate and character, whose 200 hectares (494 acres) of entirely terraced vineyards benefit from a southern exposure in the foothills of the Prealps. The warm dry climate, influenced by the foehn and the rocky terrain with a high gypsum content, confers noble characteristics on the wine. The Chasselas, Pinot Noir and Gamay constitute the majority of the production, but there are also special varieties such as the Garanoir, Gamaret, Sylvaner and Viognier, as well as rosés and sparkling wines.

Some wines from these towns have been awarded medals in international competitions. Numerous cellars are open for the tasting of their wines. The *Sentier des vignes (Wine Road)* allows wine lovers to walk among these terraced vineyards under the sun and taste the wines along the way.

The **Salt Mines of Bex**, with over 50 km of galleries, wells, stairs, and rooms, have been in operation since 1684 and produce a large part of the salt consumed in Switzerland. Numerous derivative products (cosmetics, assorted cooking salts) are also made there. A tour of the mines is an interesting cultural experience during a stay in the region. www.mines.ch

More infos about the Salt Mines with the interview of Alain Fiaux, available in chapter « Zoom in... »



Several Alpine pasture **cheese makers** produce different high-quality specialities rigorously respecting centuries-old traditions and open their doors for typical Alpine farm breakfasts, with cheese making demonstrations and visits to the farm animals.

Diablerets Bitter: The Diablerets' emblematic drink, this bitter, brown coloured aperitif is made of gentian, orange zest and various plants and roots. Diablerets Bitter was created in 1876 and according to the legend, was invented as follows: "One day, the devil was testing his skill at stone throwing. Clumsy, he caused a landslide on the inhabitants of the village of Derborence in Valais. The dead were mourned. Below the rocks, the farmers survived the disaster. They sucked the roots of various plants which saved their lives". That was the birth of Diablerets Bitter.



"Salée ormonanche": The "salée ormonanche" is a sweet tart with a family tradition, often made in the valley for a special event such as a christening. The recipe is extremely easy. Take a roll of puff pastry and may holes in it with a fork. Sprinkle with powdered cinnamon and spread with a thick layer of crème fraîche. Finally, cover with half a centimetre of a mixture of half flour, half sugar and finish with a liberal sprinkling of butter shavings. Place the tart in an oven pre-heated to 200° and bake for 20 minutes.

QUALITY LABELS

Villars, Gryon, Les Diablerets and Bex have been awarded with a number of quality labels, in recompense for their consistent efforts to ensure and maintain their quality services.



ISO 9001 defines the requirements for **quality management systems** and is firmly established as the norm applied worldwide to ensure the capacity of responding to quality requirements and increasing customer satisfaction.



ISO 14001 (Villars and Bex) defines the requirements for **environmental management systems** and confirms its global relevance for enterprises and organisations concerned about their operations favouring sustainable development respectful of the environment..



The Quality Label Level **3 (Villars and Bex)**: The Swiss Tourism Quality Programme encourages the development of quality and quality assurance in tourism enterprises. It recognises enterprises that give constant attention to quality and do their very best for their customers, day after day. Level III is the highest level in the programme. **Gryon** has been awarded the Quality Label Level.



Les Diablerets resort was the first area in the Swiss Romand region to receive the **Pearl of the Alps** certificate. This label recognizes resorts that are working with the environment, especially in offering transport reductions that encourage use of local public transport fuelled by alternative energy sources. But also resorts that actively encourage the preservation of alpine architecture, and the sale of local produce.

ECOLOGY

Since obtaining the 14001 label in 2009, Villars Tourisme has been highly involved in sustainable development and raising awareness of this issue amongst its partners and guests. Here is a snapshot of the various actions that have been undertaken:

- Creation of an **environmental charter** which has enabled Villars Tourisme to position itself as a solid player in the world of tourism, a player that is responsible and fair, and aims to promote these values with its guests and partners.
- Creation of an **eco-partner label**, awarded to the various partners sensitive to the environment and active in this realm through their activities and their company policy.
- Creation of a **Table Verte** (Green Table), grouping various partners from the resort who are sensitive to the environment, and who represent various sectors of activity, as well as making it possible to move forward on joint projects, share experiences and motivate other partners to join.
- Publication of a map of the village indicating all **the waste collection and separation points in the resort**.
- Development of **fun activities** (educational trail, chairlift question-answer game, guided walks ...) serving to **raise awareness** amongst guests and **inform** them of the various ecological challenges in the region.
- Installation of **waste separation bins** across the ski area as well as **distribution of ashtrays** at the start of the skilifts, in collaboration with the skilift company.

CELEBRITIES

Many celebrities have stayed in the resort, now and in the past, here are just a few, without mentioning those whom we do not have the right to name to preserve their safety and privacy!

Princely Family of Monaco
 Grace Kelly and Prince Rainier
 Duchess of Westminster
 MR. Choi, Su-Jong & Mrs. Ha, Hee-Ra
 Rolling Stones Mick Jagger & Keith Richard
 HM Constantin, King of Greece
 Gary Cooper
 Murray Head
 Nana Mouskouri
 Jacques Brel
 Serge et Charlotte Gainsbourg
 Jacques Villeneuve
 Marie Lafôret
 Michela Figini
 Lio
 Phil Collins
 Véronique Sanson
 Pierre Palmade
 Roch Voisine
 Damon Hill
 Patrick Tambay

Mikka Salo
 David Coulthard
 Roch Voisine
 Richard Branson
 Craig Pollock
 Simply Red
 Michèle Laroque
 Eddy Barclay
 Fidel Castro
 Michel Leeb
 HM The Queen of Jordan
 The Royal Family of Belgium
 Roger Moore
 Guy Savoy
 Yves Piaget
 Sir Georg Solti
 Adolf Ogi
 Gérard Lenorman
 Gilbert Bécaud
 Sens Unik
 Philippe Roux

Maria Walliser
 Dominique Schibli
 Philippe Jeanneret
 France Gall
 Jean-Jacques Goldmann
 Sophia Loren
 Family Roussel
 Henri Dès
 Jacky Lagger
 Charles Aznavour
 Mike Oldfield
 Vincent Lagaff
 Jean-Marie Bigard
 Bernard Russi
 Michel Berger
 Hergé

Georges Simenon
 Ayrton Senna
 Gérard Depardieu
 Tolstoï
 Nietzsche
 Victor Hugo
 Impératrice Marie-Louise
 Alexandre Dumas
 Juste Olivier
 Fanny Smith
 Garou
 Gérald de Palmas
 Bastian Baker
 Frédéric Diefenthal
 Jean-Luc Barbezat
 And many more...

WEB SERVICES ; PHOTOS AND MULTIMEDIA

Social networks

Les Diablerets



Villars



Gryon



Photos and videos

There is a large selection of high quality photographs of our area available in the online multimedia areas of our Alpes Vaudoises Tourist Office websites.

Login details :

<http://medialibrary.alpesvaudoises.ch/>

user name : vgdben

password : medias

All forms of media (photos, videos, and other elements) are available to view and download. Regulations for media use and reproduction are available and must be respected.

All copyright restrictions are stated in the description of each photograph. Thank you for respecting these regulations.

Search tips :

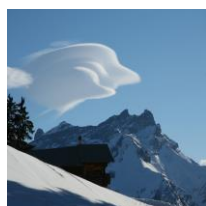
In the search box state the name of the resort you are interested in, or use key words such as "winter," "ski," or "family" etc.

THEMES FOR PRESSTRIPS

From the vineyards to the glaciers, several worlds at the tips of your fingers!

Located near the banks of Lake Geneva and 120km from Geneva Airport, the region stretches from valleys (with salt mines, a thermal centre and vineyards) to the Diablerets glacier, located at an altitude of 3000m. This privileged position makes a wide range of activities for all ages possible.

Here are just a few examples of the activities which can be enjoyed in the region, classified by theme. The activities on offer require an average of between three and five hours and can be combined according to personal taste. Given the location of the resorts, nights can be split between Les Diablerets and Villars-Gryon connected by a ski run in winter from one resort to the other. Luggage goes by taxi.



Winter

Discover an area offering skiing, snowboarding, telemarking, cross country skiing and skiing on Glacier 3000, with the legendary Combe d'Audon (9km downhill ski run), guided show shoe excursion, mountain evening with torchlight descent (ski or bobsled), paragliding, snow tubing, nocturnal or daytime ski bob descent to Les Diablerets (7.2 km), Avalanche Training Centre, ski cross, free-ride excursions, accompanying a mountain groomer on a snowcat (by night), skijöring, excursions with sled dogs ...



Summer

Guided themed hikes (fauna, flora, ...) guided mountain bike excursions, electric mountain bike excursions, introduction to golf, golf course, archery, fishing in mountain lakes, stand-up paddle, high ropes course and the 35 free activities and means of transport included in the Free Access card. www.free-access.ch



Families

Visits to private schools, educational paths, farm visits, breakfast in the pastures, Gryon steam park, mini golf, Tourist Office services for families, walks for kids, winter and summer treasure hunts, play parks, swimming pool, archery, free beginner ski and bobsled areas (winter), high ropes course



Wellness

Discovery of les Bains de Villars and Lavey-les-Bains thermal centre, free time in the hotel spa, massage, introduction to Tai-Chi or yoga.



Gastronomy

Walk through the vineyards, wine tasting with the wine makers, breakfast in the pastures, introduction to cheese-making, picking plants and herbs with a chef, preparing dishes with a chef, gastronomic restaurants (Michelin stars).



Adrenalin

Paragliding, Via Ferrata, For'Emotions monkey bridge course, mountain bike route, mud-biking, Alpine Coaster, grass scooter, Trekmines, hikes on the glacier, high ropes course.



Landscapes

Go up to Glacier 3000 (24 4000m peaks), excursion by snow bus, Grand-Chamossaire-Petit-Chamossaire hike, Sentier de la Pierre (Stone Path), walks around mountain lakes, walks in nature reserves (Taveyanne, Solalex).



Culture and traditions

Botanical gardens, Ormonts Diablerets Museum, *Sentier de la Pierre* (Lausanne University – Stone Path), *Sentier de l'histoire de la Terre* (Professor André Maeder, CERN – Path on the History of the Earth), introduction to gypsum pyramids, paper-cutting, guided historical walks.



Ecology and sustainable development

Visits to eco-responsible infrastructures, interviews with members of the *Table Verte*, information on the *Alpine Pearl* label and eco-partners.

ZOOM ON.... PORTRAITS, INTERVIEWS WITH PERSONALITIES

A series of interviews are available to you. This is a glance at some of the subjects – please don't hesitate to ask us for them.

The salt mines: history and how salt is mined

Bex salt mines are one of two salt mines that are still working today in Switzerland. Mined on and off since 1680, they represent more than 50 kilometres of galleries in the mountain and are the subject of guided visits during most of the year. Alain Fiaux, an employee and guide at the Bex salt mines since 1995 describes their history, from the time they were discovered to today as well as the various means used to mine salt.



Preparing the ski runs

The ski area offers 125km of ski runs, the preparation of which begins well before the beginning of the ski season. The runs must be constantly repaired and smoothed daily. Oscar Bonzon, who is head of grooming for the Télé-Villars-Gryon ski area provides technical information and describes how the work is organised.

Fanny Smith, ski cross world champion!

A child of the region, Fanny Smith became world ski cross champion in 2013 at Voss in Norway. She gives us a special interview so that we can learn more about this discipline which is a combination of freestyle and slalom, her life and her career.



Sven Mermod, professional freerider

Sven Mermod is Diablerets' own professional freerider. He made his name in the freeride world after participating in European level ski competitions. Sven is passionate about mountains, giving him many opportunities to participate in film projects. He is currently involved in developing freeride projects in India.

Michel Daetwyler

Former ski champion and his brother, was a key political figure in the Ollon municipality (Villars) and was the local mayor for a long time. He describes the development of Villars over the past 50 years.





The shingle roofs with Olivier Veuve

Olivier Veuve is one of only 10 Swiss craftsmen today who are maintaining wall and roof covering traditions that have been handed down through the generations.

Still coming:

- Gryon village, more than 900 years of history at an altitude of 1100 metres
- Taveyenne sandstone, a unique geological formation in the heights above Gryon
- Paper-cutting with Jean-Marc Amiguet, Gryon
- Skiing and outside activities with physically disabled people
- La Thomasia, botanical garden in Les Plans-sur-Bex
- Glacial pothole of les Caillettes in Bex
- The Stone path, fossils in the mountains
- Harald Cropt, swiss wrestling champion and winegrower
- And even more...



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