



Press Release, 22 January 2021

## **Aua Grava and wellnessHostel<sup>3000</sup>: The world's second wellness hostel celebrates successful opening in Laax**

**Laax now features yet another attraction: the Aua Grava indoor pool, including its new wellness and fitness area, and the new wellnessHostel<sup>3000</sup> opened their doors to overnight guests on 18 December 2020. The team at the second wellness hostel in the Swiss Youth Hostels network passed its baptism of fire over the end-of-the-year holidays with flying colours. This new and innovative accommodation and leisure facility is an asset to both the community of Laax and the entire holiday region. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the indoor pool, including the wellness and fitness area, and the restaurant are expected to be open to external guests from March 2021.**

Eagerly anticipated for quite some time, the day had finally come on 18 December 2020: around 21 months after the start of construction, the Aua Grava and wellnessHostel<sup>3000</sup> in Laax has opened its doors. The newest member of the Swiss Youth Hostels is already the second wellness hostel in the non-profit organisation's network and the second wellness hostel worldwide. The new hostel icon in the Grison Alps stands for an authentic and uncomplicated atmosphere, as well as affordable prices combined with modern wellness and fitness facilities.

### **Relax, sleep and dine right on Lake Laax**

In terms of location, the Aua Grava and wellnessHostel<sup>3000</sup> is hard to beat. Right on Lake Laax, it offers a magnificent view of the water and the surrounding Grison mountains. The indoor pool and the wellness and fitness areas of the Aua Grava are accessible for overnight guests from within the wellnessHostel<sup>3000</sup>. The Aua Grava is expected to open to external guests from March 2021. Massage and beauty treatments are available before then. The 1835 m<sup>2</sup> swimming and spa area includes the completely renovated indoor pool with a 25-metre swimming pool and a kiddie pool with water slide. New additions include a spacious wellness area and an excellently equipped gym. Relaxation is guaranteed thanks to a Finnish sauna and an herbal sauna, a steam bath, a hot bath, various feature showers as well as an inner courtyard flooded with daylight and a relaxation room with panoramic windows. In the gym, guests will find the latest generation of equipment as well as an attractive range of classes and massages.

The wellnessHostel<sup>3000</sup> offers its guests a total of 158 beds in 51 rooms, including rooms with six beds and a shower on the floor, rooms with four beds and family rooms with their own shower/WC, and double rooms with a shower/WC. Designed for accessibility, the building offers 16 barrier-free rooms. As is typical of Swiss Youth Hostels, various structural as well as decorative elements are tailored to the destination. The design concept of the wellnessHostel<sup>3000</sup> reflects its new hometown of Laax in many ways: From the menu names in the restaurant to the decorations in the public areas and the iconic Sutga Rumantscha, an armchair designed for the Swiss Youth Hostels that is dedicated entirely to the Rhaeto-Romanic language and culture in an interactive way.

The hub between the wellnessHostel<sup>3000</sup> and the Aua Grava is the new restaurant Biblau (Rhaeto-Romanic for "beautiful blue"), which will also be open to external guests from March. The Swiss Youth Hostels' dedication to sustainability from day one is also mirrored in the menu at the Biblau. This is why the menu features numerous traditional dishes with regional ingredients – from aperitif platters with cheese and sausage from the surrounding area to various dishes with influences from the Grisons. Vegetarian and vegan options are also available for many dishes.

### **Supported by the people of Laax**

The green light for the Aua Grava and wellnessHostel<sup>3000</sup> project was given in June 2017, when the Laax municipal assembly approved the loan for a project competition, which was won by SSA Architekten from Basel. “The connection of the new wellness hostel to the completely renovated indoor pool represents added value for both locals and guests. The range of accommodation and leisure activities will thus be expanded and crucial synergies can be harnessed efficiently and economically. Unwavering support from local residents clearly shows that the project has been met with great acceptance and that everyone in the community is pulling in the same direction,” says a pleased Franz Gschwend, mayor of Laax. Ultimately, the destination will also benefit from the new facilities: The wellness hostel, which will be open all year round, is expected to generate around 27,000 overnight stays per year and add tourism value of around CHF 5.2 million for the destination.

With the Laax wellnessHostel<sup>3000</sup>, the Swiss Youth Hostels are continuing their success story of the innovative combination of hostel and spa that was launched in Saas-Fee in 2014. “We are proud of our newest member and are delighted with the new facilities in Laax, which were able to be realised so smoothly thanks to the support of the municipality of Laax and its residents. By expanding our network with a second wellness hostel, we are continuing to diversify what we offer and can thus help this attractive destination to draw new guests and additional overnight stays,” says Janine Bunte, CEO of Swiss Youth Hostels.

### **Opening during special times**

Following the opening of Burgdorf Castle Youth Hostel in spring, wellnessHostel<sup>3000</sup> in Laax is the second building opened by Swiss Youth Hostels in 2020, the year of the coronavirus pandemic. Due to the generally applicable safety regulations of the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH), the official opening ceremony was postponed to a later date. However, the “silent” opening before Christmas was anything but silent, as operations manager Reto Denneberg explains: “The Christmas and New Year holidays saw excellent booking rates – we were very busy and had practically no free beds left. Of course, this makes us very happy, but it is also extremely challenging for the entire team so soon after the opening.” Now, lessons learned during the first few days are being incorporated and Denneberg and his 25-member team are getting ready for the sports holidays. “Especially with regard to implementing protective measures, this is certainly another big challenge. But we are well prepared and will do everything necessary to make our guests feel comfortable and safe.”

The Swiss Youth Hostels Association operates a network of 50 hostels, consisting of 45 of its own establishments and 5 franchise businesses, ranging from romantic castles to metropolitan designer locations and wellness hostels. The focus of the non-profit organisation, which has approximately 73,000 members, is on quality-conscious, sustainable and affordable youth and family tourism. In 2019, its operations generated a total of 736,511 overnight stays. [www.youthhostel.ch](http://www.youthhostel.ch)

For further information: [www.youthhostel.ch/en/laax](http://www.youthhostel.ch/en/laax) | [www.auagrava.ch](http://www.auagrava.ch) | [www.biblau.ch](http://www.biblau.ch)

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