



Sunset over Lake St Moritz

The island-green 14th on the Zuoz-Madulain course

# AN ALPINE ADVENTURE

Jeremy Ellwood journeys to the Swiss Alps by air and rail to play Engadin's two courses near the resort town of St Moritz

**O**n most press trips, it's taxi, flight, transfer, hotel, and that's fine. This one, to play Engadin Golf Club's two courses near St Moritz, was a little more involved and all the better for it.

After flying to Zurich, I hopped on a train and headed south-east towards the Italian border past increasingly steep-sided valleys, glorious lakes and textbook Swiss villages with wonderful names like Ziegelbrücke. Then, after changing at Chur, came the pièce de résistance – a two-hour stint via even more stunning scenery to the world-famous St Moritz.

How would you describe this mind-blowing railway? Twisty, spectacular and at times precariously high above valley floors, via tunnels and viaducts

and past pine-clad slopes and fast-flowing waterfalls. The helical routing of this extraordinary UNESCO railway frequently takes your breath away and you marvel at how it was ever built.

Eventually we pulled into St Moritz and after a quick sunset photo over the lake, it was up to the grand Kulm Hotel for the first of three nights while we played Engadin Golf Club's Zuoz-

Water is often in play on the Samedan course



Madulain and Samedan courses set a few miles apart.

First up was the younger Zuoz-Madulain, which opened in 2003. From the road you think it's on the valley floor and therefore pretty flat, but appearances can be deceptive. You're already at 5,500ft before you start!

### Contrasting challenges

The front nine serves up several sharp doglegs – not making the corner on the 3rd will leave you blocked out, for example. The back nine's most memorable hole is then the island-green par-3 14th, where you climb many steps to tee off towards the most glorious mountain backdrop.

I read the yardage wrong and had to cleverly manufacture something with a 7-iron when



Photography: Jeremy Ellwood, Cyrus Saedi, swiss-image.ch/Andrea Badrutt

wedge would have been comfortably enough!

By contrast, the Samedan course, which is 110 years older, is almost entirely flat and poses a different test as it plays past ponds, lakes and streams full to the brim with an unusual, powdery-white water from the recent glacial melt.

The 4th plays between two pines on the right and a bank on the left, with the fairway quite narrow by the second pine. The 6th is a strong test too, curving round a forest and past several strategically located standalone pines. On the 13th you play

The extraordinary railway journey is one to savour

towards a wonderful backdrop of distant, snow-capped peaks, with the 16th also dominated by the mountains behind.

Kulm Hotel has its own delightful nine-hole par-3 course just up the road too, playing up, down and along the slopes in the pines. It really is like a miniature Woburn, providing an hour or so of pure golfing fun. The five-star hotel is something else too, gazing out across the lake to the mountains beyond. It's a very grand affair that blends the ambience of a bygone era with more modern-feeling rooms and

one of the finest pools and spas I've frequented.

We also got to dine at two other fine five-star hotels nearby – the Waldhaus and the Kempinski – enjoying an amazing Chef's Table in the former right in the heart of the kitchen, with chefs and waiting staff

bustling past. The Kempinski Grand Hotel des Bains is then a magnificent building that looks exactly how a hotel should look with its twin-towered façade. It lives up to its exterior inside too.

Over a fine dinner here, I asked Christoph, our host, if he played golf. "I do," he replied.

"Are you any good?" I enquired. "I'm okay," he smiled. "I played in the British Amateur twice, and the Irish Amateur at Royal Dublin with Shane Lowry the week before he won the Irish Open."

I didn't bother mentioning I played off 6, and shuffled off to find the excellent dessert trolley!

## ESSENTIALS

### WHERE TO STAY

■ **Kulm Hotel, St Moritz**  
W: kulm.com

■ **Waldhaus Sils, Sils-Maria**  
W: waldhaus-sils.ch

■ **Kempinski Grand Hotel des Bains, St Moritz**  
W: kempinski.com/en/st-moritz/grand-hotel-des-bains/

### WHERE TO PLAY

■ **Engadin Golf Club**  
W: engadin-golf.ch

■ **Zuoz-Madulain Course**  
Course stats: par 72, 6,017 metres  
GF: approx £63-£87 per round  
T: 0041 81 851 35 80

■ **Samedan Course**  
Course stats: par 72, 6,239 metres  
GF: approx £71-£95 per round  
T: 0041 81 851 04 66

### HOW TO GET THERE

■ Swiss International Air Lines flies from Heathrow, London City, Birmingham & Manchester to Zurich.  
W: swiss.com

■ Trains for the spectacular journey from Zurich to St Moritz can be booked via the Switzerland Travel Centre.  
W: swisstravelsystem.co.uk  
T: 00800 100 200 30

For more information on travel to, and within, Switzerland visit **MySwitzerland.com**



Kulm Hotel, St Moritz