



PRESS RELEASE SALEWA Group

New Bolzano climbing hall opens

SALEWA Cube: Highlight for the Bolzano climbing scene

Bolzano, May 2011. Bolzano has always been a climbing town. In fact, the world's first climbing hall was opened here on Trieste Street in 1974. At that time, there was an artificial outdoor climbing structure in Paris but when the Bolzano indoor climbing garden was established 40 years ago, it was an absolute first. Now, local climbers have another exciting novelty to look forward to when the SALEWA Cube is inaugurated on 13th May. The new climbing hall will be a true highlight for mountaineering fans in the valley because it's like climbing outdoors: indoor climbing with the outdoor feeling.

SALEWA is a mountain sports company that addresses the concerns of alpinists and climbers as a top priority. So when its new corporate headquarters in the south of Bolzano was at the design stage, it was obvious that a climbing hall would have to be part of the master plan. Now, after only 15 months of construction since the laying of the foundation stone, the climbing hall will be fit for purpose.

"With this climbing hall we want to give something back to the climbers," says Heiner Oberrauch, SALEWA-Group President. "The climbing hall is a space for the climbing community where all mountain sports fans – be they from South Tyrol, from the surrounding region or indeed from abroad - can feel at home. Above all we are delighted and proud to give young people the chance to spend their free time in a constructive way."

Climbing as if outdoors

With the construction of the climbing hall, architectural aspirations were particularly important so the SALEWA Cube fulfils all desires. The most sensational aspect of Italy's largest built environment for climbers is the enormous entrance that remains open on good days, giving the climbers the feeling of being out in the wilds. As South Tyrol can boast 300 days of sunshine every year and a mild Mediterranean climate, it is safe to assume that for most of the time, visitors will be climbing with the gate open. Thus there will be a lot of natural light and very little dust due to the use of magnesium carbonate. So the hall will be run with relatively little technology and a low environmental impact.

Fans of the vertical sport will find plenty of challenges in over 2,000 square metres of climbing space and on 180 different routes graded between 4 and 8c. The climbing walls are 13.5 and 18 metres high. As well as a 9.5-metre overhang, there are three speed routes indoors and outdoors that are 15 metres high.

In recent years, bouldering has experienced a worldwide surge in popularity. Here too, the SALEWA Cube will set new standards with a total of 420 square metres (220 indoor and 200 outdoor). The boulders are graded from A to E. The climbing area also contains a "via ferrata" to make it easier for beginners to get a taste for the sport. In total, 250 climbers can use the different routes at the same time.



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A big talking point among the mountaineers is the dry-tooling wall on the outside where you can train with ice picks. This is also where SALEWA product engineers will put equipment and materials to the test.

The climbing hall in the Bolzano industrial zone is surrounded by green public space that was planned and will be maintained by SALEWA. The park is available for use by all those working in the surrounding companies when they feel like taking a relaxing break outdoors.

Not just an ideal training ground but also a venue for international competitions

Climbing has moved on so much in recent years that today climbers can cover routes in a matter of hours where their predecessors would have taken days. These sporting achievements are possible because top climbers now train all year round. The climbing hall has become one such place where alpinists and climbers can prepare for the toughest challenges when weather conditions make it impossible to train outside.

The SALEWA Cube is not simply an ideal training ground. The facilities have been designed to cater for international competitions both inside and outside the hall. The focus, however, will be placed on the public. School classes are very welcome, as are seniors who can pull themselves up the climbing walls. There is even a therapeutic climbing wall!

With the new climbing wall, Bolzano underscores its role as Europe's mountain capital

When 40 years ago the world's first climbing hall opened in Bolzano, military trucks were used to transport real sections of dolomite rock from Sellajoch to Bolzano until two walls were built, one 20 metres and the other seven metres high. This gave alpinists and climbers the chance to climb throughout the winter.

"The Bolzano alpinist, Erich Abram, played a significant part in the construction of that climbing hall," says Heiner Oberrauch. "He did it in the face of great scepticism among the mountaineers. He was the powerhouse behind it – a visionary ahead of his time. That's why we are dedicating the SALEWA Cube to him."

Most of the investment for the climbing hall – two-thirds – was provided by SALEWA, with the remaining one-third coming from public funding from the South Tyrol Region and the Bolzano City Council. The climbing hall will be managed by Martin Knapp, who is also Chairperson of AVS Bozen (Bolzano Alpine Club).

Facts about the SALEWA Cube:

Architects:
CZA Cino Zucchi Architetti – Park Associati

Engineering Consultant:
Dr. Ing. Ulrich Kauer – Kauer Ingenieure

Climbing Hall:
Dr. Ing. Ralf Preindl – Ingenieurbüro Ralf Preindl

- The climbing panels are made of artificial resin-coated birch plywood on a steel structure.



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- The east side of the climbing wall is made of artificial resin reinforced with glass fibre; this is a rebuild of an existing rock face
- It took 1,000 hours to mount the 11,000 climbing grips in 35 colours from 13 manufacturers
- Climbing space indoors: 1,855 square metres
- Climbing space outdoor: 200 square metres
- Height of the climbing walls: 18 meter (Challenge area), 13.5 metres (Lead area)
- Three speed routes (15 metres high)
- Overhang: 9.5 metres
- Bouldering space indoors: 250 square metres
- Bouldering space outdoors: 200 square metres
- Via ferrata on the southern side (14 metres high, 25 metres long)
- Climbing route grading: from 4 to 8c
- Bouldering route grading: from A to E

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