

Class lessons in the unique training area Maran 1977.



Style study Werner Geeser 1973

Reto Geeser

Cross-country skiing in Arosa

The brothers Werner (deceased) and Reto Geeser and Peter Schmid founded the Geeser Cross-Country Ski School in Arosa in December 1972. At the time, it was a visionary project that took courage. In the early 1970s, for example, there were only a handful of cross-country ski schools in Switzerland. The Scandinavians found it inconceivable anyway that anyone should have to take lessons in cross-country skiing and scoffed at the idea of the Swiss. Cross-country skiing is easy. You do not have to learn it. That is easy to say for the Nordic nations, where people are literally born with skis on their feet. But Werner Geeser's national and international successes (greatest successes: 1970 victory in the Engadin Ski-marathon and 6th place in the 50 km race at the Sapporo Winter Olympics) and other Swiss athletes gave cross-country skiing a boost in Switzerland and triggered a veritable cross-country skiing boom. Since then, similar growth rates among cross-country skiers have only been recorded thanks to the successes of Dario Cologna and the change in travel behaviour brought about by Covid-19.

The three Arosa pioneers found an "ally" in resort director Rammstein, who strongly supported them. As a result, the first cross-country ski trails were created

in Isla (still without the waterfall loop), on Alp Maran and towards Alp Prättsch (without Ochsenalp). Initially, the trail work was done very painstakingly using only ski-dogs and by hand. Nowadays, trails are prepared almost exclusively with special trail vehicles equipped with rollers and track cutters. Despite the use of machines, the alpine environment with its challenging topography still requires a good understanding of the terrain, the snow and the needs of winter sports enthusiasts using thin skis.

The Geeser brothers have experienced a lot over the many years with their cross-country ski school. In the beginning, only wooden skis were used. The development of plastic skis with scales or skin inserts was an enormous step forward, and the demanding waxing on the climbing zone with adhesive or climbing wax in the classic technique became obsolete. Nevertheless, one thing is still true today for the athletic skier and the professional athlete: when you want to go fast, you cannot do without waxing. Temperature, snow conditions and moisture must be taken into account in order to achieve the optimum balance between the grip and the perfect gliding properties of the ski. It is interesting that in recent years people have returned to the "comfortable" skin skis.

In the early 1980s, the skating technique was introduced, which, in turn, had a major impact on the preparation of cross-country ski trails. The skating technique could not be used on the groomed trails, and so plane trails had to be groomed in addition to the tracks.

The Geesers once again demonstrated a flair for trends around the same time. They first experienced real snowshoes (so-called "beaver tails") during a successful expedition to Denali in 1977, which was called Mount McKinley until 2015 and sits 6,190 metres above sea level). Subsequently, the brothers imported snowshoes through a colleague in Geneva and organised snowshoe tours for groups for decades. Snowshoeing has now become a popular winter sport as an alternative to the more demanding and elaborate ski touring or winter hiking on groomed trails. In the area of Alp Maran and on Alp Prättsch, there are now many signposted routes for all kinds of abilities.

Reto Geeser still runs his "Langlaufzentrümli", or cross-country ski centre, which is celebrating 50 years this winter. With his continued commitment, he has clearly proven what it takes to be a good "Nordic": modesty, toughness and closeness to nature.

THE "NORDICS" MODEST, TOUGH AND CLOSE TO NATURE.



f.l.t.r. Reto Geeser, Herbert Geeser, Werner Geeser – Picture from 1970 on Maran.



Where not only
children
sleep soundly

THE ALPINE MOUNTAIN SUITE

Our Alpine Mountain Suite boasts the heavenly scent of SWISS PINE. The use of natural materials like granite and wood gives the room a HOMELY WARMTH. The Suite is very spacious, with a bedroom and separate living and sleeping areas. Have a blissful sleep and sweet dreams with our BOX-SPRING BEDS. A RAIN SHOWER adds the freshness you need in the morning, and the FLOOR-TO-CEILING WINDOWS give you an unobstructed view of the Maran cross-country ski trail, the Walser settlement of Medergen and surrounding mountain forests.