Darmstadt, November 23rd, 2017 *** In respect to environmental friendliness, skiing does not enjoy a good reputation. For decades, mountain forests were cleared to make room for slopes, ski lifts and wellness resorts. Snow cannons sometimes dry up whole rivers and damage the vegetation below the snow surface. However, tourism boards, hotel industry and travellers are beginning to rethink their attitudes and strategies. For example, skiers prefer floor-independent and thereby environmentally friendly chairlifts; meanwhile, even solar-powered ski lifts are in use, for instance in the Swiss village Tenna. Other options for a more sustainable winter vacation are travelling by train and choosing a green accommodation. Still, there are numerous alternatives to the classic downhill ski runs that have less impact on nature or even none at all.
On snowshoes through the winter landscape

Probably one of the most popular alternatives to skiing is snowshoe hiking. Equipped with the particular broad footwear that prevents sinking into the snow, hikers can explore the winter landscape far away from crowded slopes. As they walk directly on the untouched snow, they do not leave other traces in nature than the harmless footprints of their shoes. Guided tours guarantee that hikers get to interesting places and at the same time do not intrude on the habitats of wild animals. Snow hiking is a similar alternative that is physically less demanding. The hotel Leithof offers five guided tours – ranging from an easy snow hike to a snowshoe hike in alpine terrain. Winter sports friends can also contribute to the protection of the environment by staying at the Leithof. For, the hotel is completely climate neutral due to numerous measures such as the production of green energy in its own wood-fired power plant.
Back to the roots of skiing

Ski tours are currently enjoying great popularity as well. During those tours, the participants climb a mountain by their own efforts and descend it on unprepared terrain. This way, harmful interferences with nature such as ski slopes or ski lifts are not necessary. Yet, if ski tourers want their sport to be truly sustainable, they need to prepare well and respect some rules on the protection of nature. This includes adhering to markings and signs – indicating for example protection zones for animals and plants – and to existing routes. Besides, ski tourers ought to obtain information about the habitats of animals and try to evade them. Noise and night tours represent by all means a burden to wild animals and ought to be avoided completely.

By the way, ski tours date back to the origin of skiing. In the 19th century, when skiing was gradually growing in popularity, ski slopes or lift systems did not
exist yet. Those who wanted to enjoy a descent had to climb the mountain first. One of the most popular areas for this sport since the beginning of alpinism has been the valley Schnalstal with the Ötztal Alps in South Tyrol. Here, the hotel Josephus offers an accommodation that is likewise traditional and sustainable. In the carefully renovated building that is closely linked to the beginnings of the Alpine tourism in this area sustainable values are lived consistently. Once a week, among other tours, there is a guided ski tour to the place where “Ötzi” was discovered.

Cross-country skiing to protect the countryside

The Refugium Lindenwirt in the Bavarian Forest is one of the few wellness hotels in skiing areas, which did not cause the clearing of forests. Just as for the
Josephus, an existing historical building was used for this hotel too. Originally, the grandfather Alois Geiger managed the farm. After having it registered as a hospitality enterprise more than 60 years ago, the farm gradually evolved into a popular accommodation for hikers and winter sportsmen. Meanwhile, the grandson Christian Geiger took on the management of the hotel and rebuilt it into a modern and sustainable wellness and family hotel. The Geiger family also describes the Refugium Lindenwirt as a cross-country skiing hotel, which goes well with their sustainable principles. Since for cross-country skiing slopes or ski lifts are not needed as well and thus it goes easy on nature. By the way, the cross-country skiing trails close to Bodenmais at Bretterschachten near the Refugium Lindenwirt rate among the highest and consequently most snow-guaranteed cross-country skiing areas in Bavaria.

A natural toboggan experience
A kind of winter sport that maybe does not come to mind at first is sledging on a natural toboggan run. For this, icy forest roads or pathways are used that are not iced by man – in contrast to artificial runs – which makes it an environmentally friendly pleasure for adults and children. The Berghotel Rehlegg recommends the Naturrodelbahn Hirscheckblitz, whose route profile has been developed in cooperation with the tobogganing legend Schorsch Hackl. Those who are looking for an environmentally friendly accommodation close to it will find it in the Berghotel Rehlegg. Originally having been a farm too, it is the first climate positive hotel in Upper Bavaria.

An old popular sport: Eisstockschießen

“Eisstockschießen” is roughly similar to curling. This old popular sport is traditionally played on frozen lakes, ponds or creeks. At first, a so-called
“Daube”, a wooden object of approximately 10 x 10 cm, is placed on the ice. Then, two teams try to get their ice stocks as near as possible to the Daube by sliding it across the surface. Eisstockschießen is one of many activities that the Naturhotel Lamm Mitteltal recommends its guests. For visitors who prefer more classic sports, the Hotel Lamm is a perfect starting point for snowshoe and winter hiking or cross-country skiing – there are plenty of green possibilities for doing sports in winter.

The German Green Pearls GmbH with place of business in Darmstadt, Germany unifies international tourism companies that support environmental protection and demonstrate social commitment. Thereby, Green Pearls is the first holding company worldwide that consolidates sustainable hotels, destinations and restaurants in a global data source.

Among the criteria of admission to Green Pearls® Unique Places, are a sustainability plan on management level, sustainable architecture, comprehensive water, energy saving and waste recovery measures, the use of seasonal and regional ingredients in the kitchen, as well as a large commitment for the social balance in each of the vacation regions.

Please click here for matching images in high resolution. All usage rights for images and photographies belong, unless otherwise noted, to the hotels concerned and must be quoted. For more information on Green Pearls® visit www.greenpearls.com, Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest or the Green Pearls Blog.

Press Contact:
Green Pearls GmbH
Dieburgerstrasse 203
64287 Darmstadt
T: +49 (0) 6151-273 669 11
F: +49 (0) 6151-273 669 19
E: press@greenpearls.com
W: www.greenpearls.com

Unsuscribe from receiving the newsletter