

Tiers am Rosengarten

The Gateway to the Dolomites

Tiers played a significant role in the Alpine development of the South Tyrolean mountains, serving as the gateway to the Dolomites. The old road to Tiers was already built in 1811. Alpinism in the Dolomites began at the end of the 19th century. Although the Eggental road existed since 1860 and the Karer Pass road since 1896, there were only gravel roads and mule tracks at higher passes. The initiator of the construction of the Dolomite road was Dr. Theodor Christomannos, which marked the beginning of the tourist development of the Dolomite valleys. During this period, the first shelter huts were also built, such as the Grasleiten hut, the Vajolet hut, and the Kölner hut, which soon proved too small and were expanded to their current size before World War I. The first shelter built in the Rosengarten area in 1887 at the suggestion of Johann Santner by the section Leipzig of the German Alpine Club was the Grasleiten Hut. From there, the highest peak of Rosengarten, the 3,004-meter peak Kesselkogel, could be reached in two hours. In 1888/1889, Johann Santner, together with some mountaineers from Bolzano and abroad, founded the "Die Tschamintaler" society. Several experienced climbers from Tiers, including the brothers Johann and Alois Villgrattner, founded a mountain guide association at the turn of the century. Alois Villgrattner, along with Johann Santner, opened the Santner Pass hut on June 19, 1878, thus making the Rosengarten accessible from Tiers.



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Climbing Paradise Rosengarten



As it was mainly wealthy people from the middle classes of the cities who travelled to the mountains back then, the mountain guides and porters earned a fortune. For example, a tour from Tiers to the peak of Rosengarten costed 14-16 guilders - by comparison, a craftsman earned barely half a guilder a day. However, only the best, like Franz Schroffenegger and Franz Wenter, were able to make a living from guiding

alone. Franz Wenter was also a member of the alpine society "Bergler" founded in 1914, along with the legendary Otto Eisenstecken, a name that cannot be omitted when discussing climbing in the Dolomites. Schroffenegger and Wenter climbed numerous challenging routes in the Rosengarten area before World War I: first ascents on the northwest face of Delago Tower, the northwest face and east face of Sattelspitze, the east face of Rotwand, and the difficult north route of Laurinswand are credited to them. After the Second World War, it was Otto Eisenstecken who heralded a new era in mountaineering with his first ascents at the end of the 1940s on the Rotwand, Laurins west face, Vajolet main tower and many other walls. Both climbing societies, Tschamintaler and Bergler, are closely linked to the Rosengarten area and engage in active association activities that today extend far beyond the Rosengarten and South Tyrolean borders.

For the mountaineers from Bolzano, the Rosengarten was practically at their doorstep, while for the Tschamintaler, it is their local mountain, as the climbing guild today consists almost exclusively of Tiers residents. The "Bergler" used to take the train to Blumau and then cycle to Tiers, where they slept in haylofts to start their tours early in the morning. According to stories, they were once rather rudely chased away by a farmer, so they decided to build a hut at the foot of the Laurinswand while descending through the Wenterkamine. The construction of the "Bergler Hütte" lasted from 1921 to 1923 and it became the secret headquarters of the association during fascism, when German culture was banned in South Tyrol. There they escaped the harassment of fascism, sang German songs and remained undiscovered throughout the ban on the association, which lasted until 1943.

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“Tschamintaler”

With its high density of climbing routes, Tiers am Rosengarten has earned a reputation as a true climbing paradise. Once, international climbers would take the train to Blumau and then walk to the Rosengarten walls for climbing. The Rosengarten has always been a mecca for climbers. Nowhere else in South Tyrol there is such a dense network of routes as in Tiers. The village boasts a long climbing tradition and has the "Tschamintaler" climbing guild. The name of the guild comes from the beautiful high valley of the same name on the south side of the Rosengarten Schlern Nature Park. The guild consists of experienced mountaineers and currently has 23 members. To be accepted as a member, one must be at least 18 years old and provide the following evidence: 20 alpine tours of at least 6th grade, five of them in Tiers; five sport climbing routes of at least 7th grade in Tiers; five ice climbing routes WI4 and ten ski tours with at least 1,200 meters of elevation gain.

The purpose of the guild is to promote mountaineering, especially performance mountaineering, within the framework of the Alpine Club and its statutes. Numerous first ascents in the Rosengarten massif and Tschamin valley are credited to members of this guild. Currently, the guild includes a group of young members who, with great passion, continue to make new first ascents in grades 7 to 9. Since 2023, the long history of the guild includes its first female member, Hanna Raffener, and since 2018, another Tiers mountain guide, Egon Resch. Climbing is practically in the blood of Tiers residents. The passion for mountains and rock is passed down from generation to generation. The Alpine Club also plays a significant role in this enthusiasm; the Tiers section was founded in 1965 and, through its active association work, introduces many young Tiers residents to the joys of the mountains.



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Tiers - Past and Present



With the first ascent of the peak of Rosengarten in 1874 by two Englishmen, Tiers became the base for the world's best mountaineers. Soon, the Dolomites were made accessible to guests: hiking trails and accommodation facilities were developed, and tourism became one of the village's most important economic pillars. At the Dolomitenhotel Weißlahnbad and

the Rosenwirt, the noble clientele from all over Europe and even America stayed.

Today, as then, the mountaineering village holds great appeal for sports enthusiasts and nature lovers, who also enjoy excellent hospitality. In Tiers, numerous events take place every year under the synonym "Die Bergler." The focus is especially on the culinary aspect, in combination with the fascinating mountain world of the Rosengarten. It is about reinterpreting old recipes and products, creating unforgettable culinary moments in the heart of the World Natural Heritage site. For example, in July, you can participate in the legendary "Bergler Tafel" on the Proa, an alpine meadow above Weißlahnbad. With up to 200 people, you can admire the wonderful view while enjoying a 5-course open-air menu with selected wines. In June, you can take part in the "Bergler Harass" below the Tschafon walls, directly at Wuhnleger, on a picnic blanket with a view of the Rosengarten and Latemar, tasting local products such as Speck, cheese, butter, Kaminwurzen, wine, apple juice, and Krapfen - all from the region.



Even today, the fascination of the Rosengarten area is so great that many people from all over the world come to Tiers: for hiking, mountaineering, or climbing. Tiers am Rosengarten is thus the gateway to the Dolomites and the starting point for countless mountain and climbing tours.