

APCAV 50th anniversary
Address Brigitte Borel, President

Ladies and Gentlemen, Members and guests,

It is a great honor, and a great pleasure, to welcome you, on behalf of the APCAV Committee, to our 50th anniversary AGM.

And thank you to our guests for being here:

- Eloi Rossier, President of the Communes of Bagnes
- Bertrand Deslarzes, head of Culture for the Commune of Bagnes
- François Corthay, conseiller communal
- Vincent Michellod, conseiller communal
- Florian Michellod, President of Verbier Development
- Joël Sciboz, head of the Tourist Office
- Pierre-André Gremaud, head of Verbier Promotions SA
- Laurent Vaucher, CEO of Téléverbier SA
- Eric Balet, administrateur délégué of Téléverbier SA

The members of the Valaisan Federation of Secondary Residences are also with us today. They held their General Assembly this morning here and elected a new President, our own APCAV Vice President, Nicolas Leuba.

Nicolas, in addition to his duties as a counselor for town planning and the environment at the beautiful Commune of Pully near Lausanne, is also the managing director of a property company, he is a consultant and member of various boards of directors, and he also has a very busy community service life. Despite all these activities, he still finds time to regularly visit Verbier with his wife Elisabeth and their two daughters. His status as an owner of a second Residence in Valais for many years and a business leader will undoubtedly be an asset for his new role as President of the FVRS2, and we applaud his appointment. He succeeds André Gossauer, who has been President of FVRS2 since 2013.

I would like to thank the following for their support and for making this day possible:

- Our main sponsor Garage Hédiger de Sion. Mr. Hédiger, owner and director of the company, is with us today.
- The Commune of Bagnes.
- The Verbier Development Company.
- My employer, UBS, which supports APCAV in more than one way. First of all, by allowing me to use part of my working time to exercise my position as President. Secondly, UBS has made a generous donation to APCAV for our 50th anniversary.

If I have omitted to mention other supporters, I apologize and thank them also, there are many of you.

To celebrate this jubilee, the 50th anniversary of APCAV, we wanted to return to the history of Verbier, its development since the resort was a quiet village surrounded by pastures, to its evolution into a place of international renown. Verbier is now popular with skiers, nature lovers and night owls. A consequence of this success has been the increase in real estate prices.

We are fortunate to have with us the head of culture at the Commune of Bagnes, Bertrand Deslarzes. He will present to us with photos, the history of Verbier and the people who had a significant impact on its development.

Our Honorary APCAV President, Jean-Daniel Martin, who was President of APCAV from 1994 to 2007, for 13 years, will then talk about the history of our association since its creation in 1968. APCAV is one of the oldest owners' associations in Switzerland. It is also one of the largest associations of its kind with more than 800 members.

For the third part of this meeting, Eloi Rossier, President of the Commune of Bagnes, will give us his vision for the future development of Verbier. He will look at the challenges of our time, how our region is concerned by these challenges, how we can meet the challenges of tomorrow and what role can we play? We will look at the role of APCAV in this context.

I have often heard from owners who have decided to buy in Verbier that they made this choice because Verbier is a wonderful resort to raise children. When their children become adults, owning a property in Verbier allows them to continue enjoying their family with their children and grandchildren. It still works for many, especially in winter.

However, we also hear from some of you that future generations are not as interested in continuing the tradition of keeping properties in Verbier. Indeed, younger generations are more versatile, more spontaneous. They travel more frequently, but for shorter periods. Alpine resorts such as Verbier, as a holiday destination, are now in competition with alternative leisure and holiday offers, such as city breaks or expensive far-flung journeys. In addition, uncertainties of snow conditions create reluctance for some to plan winter holidays in the mountains, especially during the Christmas period.

On the other hand, some megatrends have a direct influence on the future of Alpine resorts like Verbier and on mountain tourism. Urbanization or digitalization for example. Cities are becoming more and more spaces of life and experience - they are now competing with us - and new technologies are creating new areas of activity.

Digitization can be an evolutionary jolt. Not only does it contribute to the sharing of human knowledge but it also influences the way people consume, more and more through the internet, especially when it comes to their holidays. In this context, no tourist resort - even Verbier - can rest on its laurels.

All the partners of the resort, be it the Development Company, the Tourist Office, Téléréverbier, the business community, even the Verbier Festival, must adapt to these mega trends. They are an opportunity for resorts like Verbier to reinvent themselves to attract new visitors and retain their existing clientele, while maintaining the mountain village character of the beautiful resort.

As an example, Téléréverbier, despite the recurring lack of snow managed to maintain year after year a high attendance on the slopes. Why? Because Téléréverbier is continuing to invest in, and modernize, its facilities by guaranteeing high performance snowmaking machines, and in addition by developing activities for the summer, such as via-ferrata, mountain bike trails and the activities offered by the VIP Pass partner.

The VIP Pass has been implemented successfully, thanks in part to us the property owners, who are the main contributors. It is interesting to know that the VIP Pass was a decision-making factor by a quarter of visitors last summer who chose to come to Verbier. It helps to promote our region as a leisure and holiday destination outside winter periods, which is a factor of longevity for alpine resorts.

In addition to maintaining an intense tourist activity, one of the great opportunities for Verbier is to take advantage of the potential of its many second home owners. How do we do this? In many ways, but especially by encouraging generations over 50 to move to Verbier with so encourage their families to the mountains. The "best agers" (or over fifties) as they are called are very active and fit for longer and longer and they are our best ambassadors for their families and therefore best able to promote intergenerational vacations.

We need to improve our offers and infrastructure allowing the best agers to envisage their future in Verbier with peace of mind. The assurance of 24-hour medical service all year round is a major factor which can make the difference when it comes to taking the decision to live in Verbier.

In this context, APCAV wishes to help by communicating the needs, concerns and expectations of owners and by participating, with our authorities, in strategic discussions to address these needs.

Our work with the Commune is productive and healthy. Our conversations and proposals are taken seriously and lead to concrete measures, as in the case of the nuisances caused by helicopters between seasons. A new, more restrictive regulation was put in place following our intervention, and we received positive feedback on its application.

In conclusion, I have only mentioned some of the challenges of our time which is characterized by ever faster and deeper changes. I have no doubt that Verbier is well positioned to meet them, not only by its beautiful qualities, but also with various projects already underway to cover the needs mentioned above. We will learn more by listening to Eloi Rossier. Finally, as Coluche said: "The doors of the future are open to those who know how to push them".

Before giving the floor to Bertrand Deslarzes, I would like to wish a happy birthday to the Verbier Festival, which contributes to the influence of Verbier within the world of music thanks to its unique style and the quality of its musicians and concerts. Our links as associations are very close, many owners welcome musicians into their homes during the festival and APCAV has been supporting the academy for years by offering a prize to deserving young musicians.

Happy birthday to the Verbier Festival on its 25th anniversary and wishing you a successful future.

Finally, I would like to thank the artist, Noel Hemon, who has graced this room with his works, to the pleasure of us all. Thank you Noel, please stand up so we can thank you. Noel Hemon will be available during the apéritif to present his work.

Brigitte Borel

Verbier, July 26th 2018