

Challenges of hospitality in the High Alps

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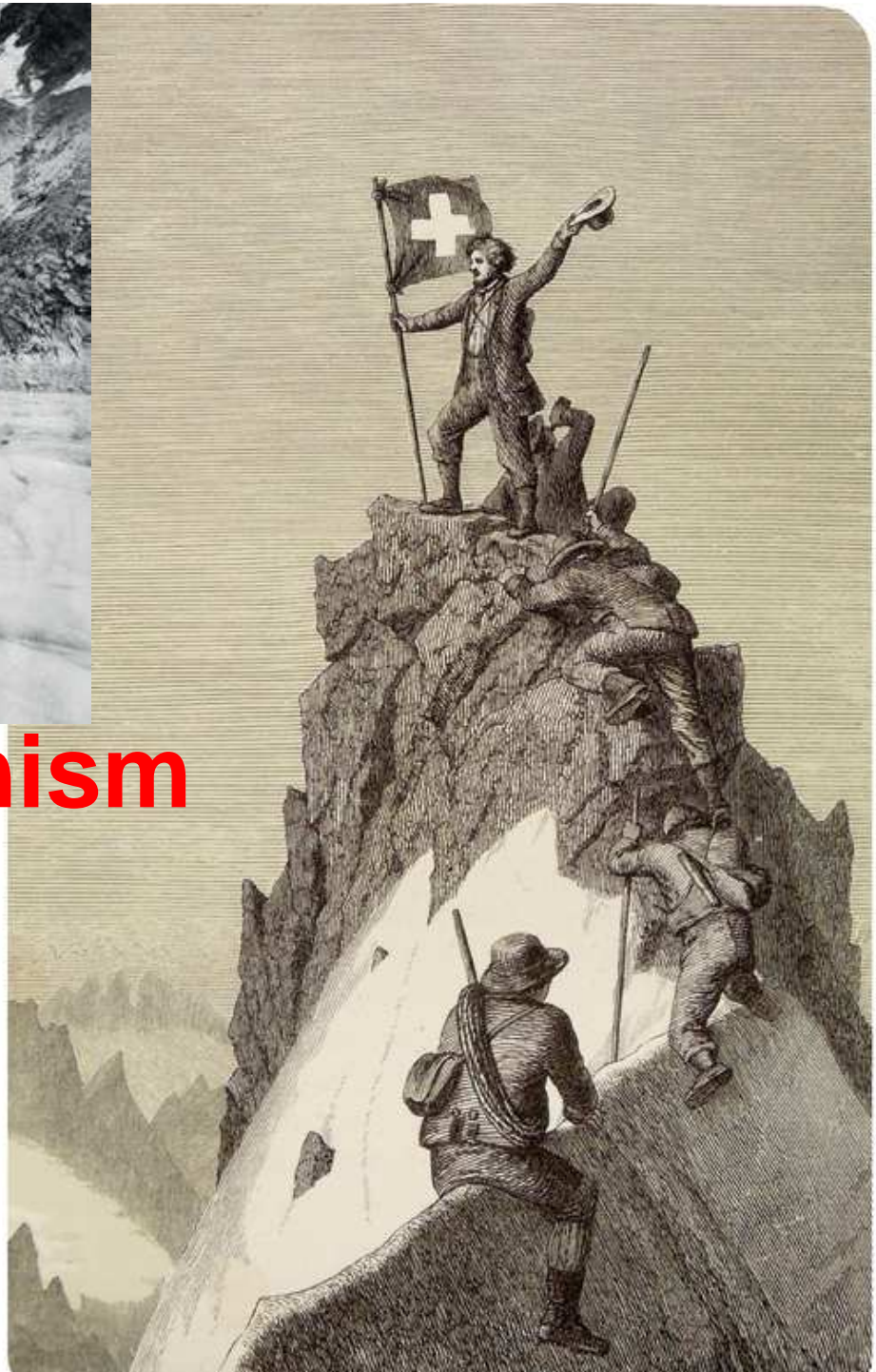


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The origin of alpinism

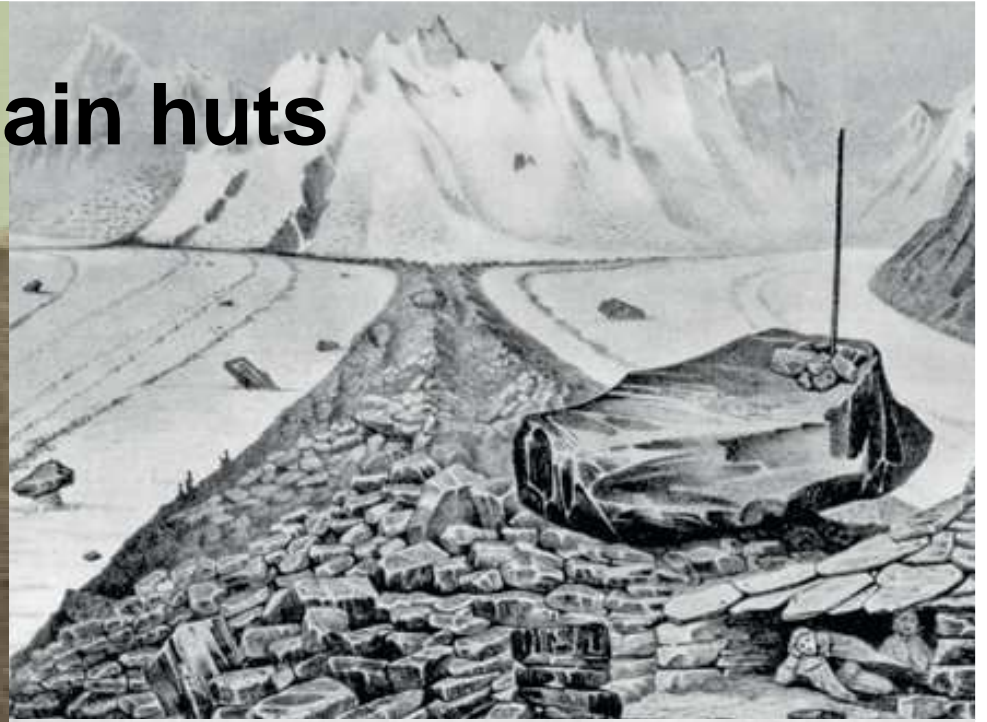
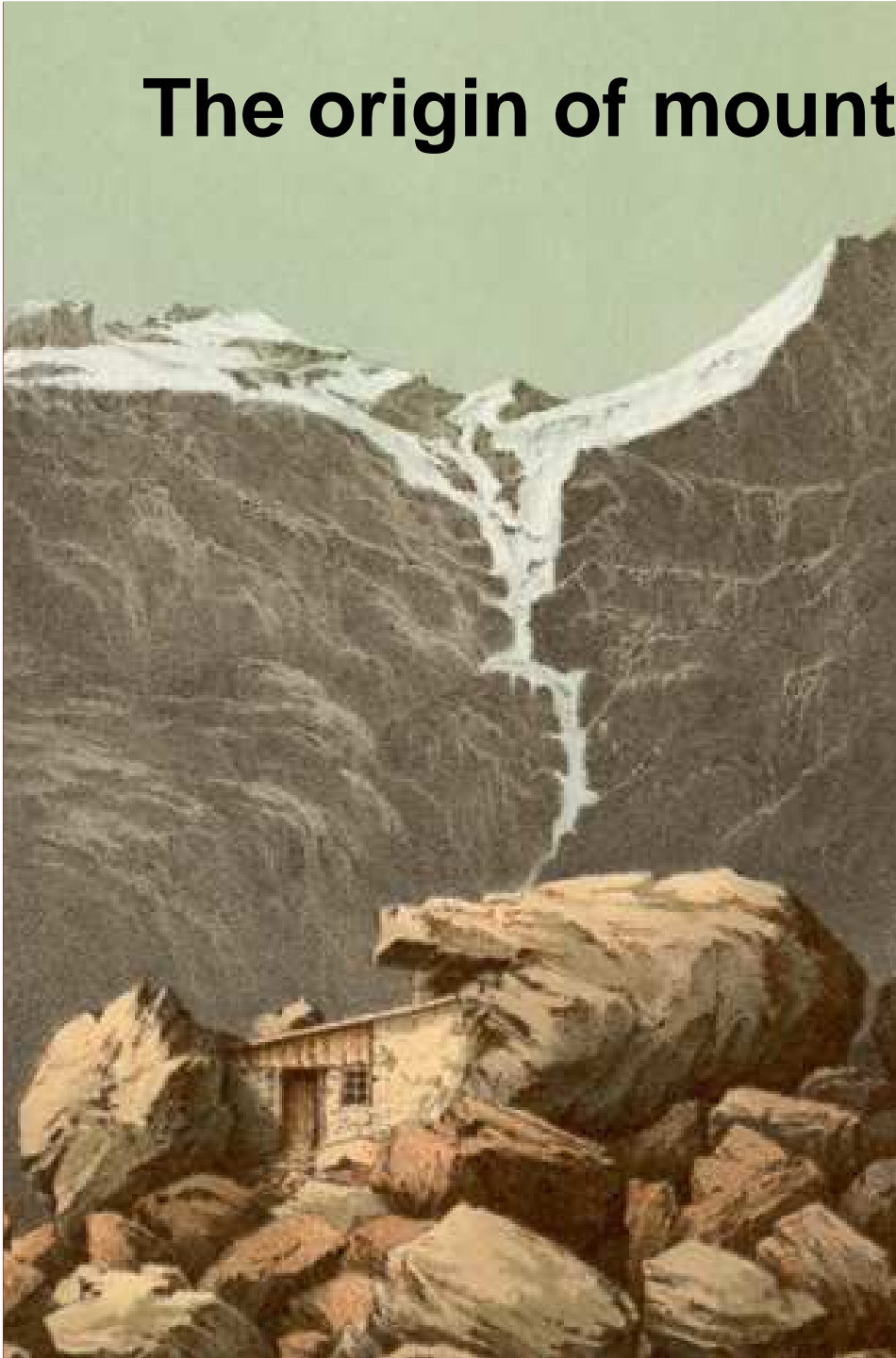




The Swiss Alpine Club SAC

- Founded in 1863
- 111 sections
- 5000 volunteer officials
- 142,000 members
- 26 full-time jobs at central office
- Budget of CHF 13 million

The origin of mountain huts





Grünhorn Hut, 1863



Grünhorn Hut, 2013





The SAC huts today

- 152 huts and bivouacs
- 9200 sleeping places
- 322,000 overnight stays in 2013
- Accommodation revenue 2013: CHF 6.5 million
- Food and beverage revenue 2013: CHF 19.5 million
- Around 1 million day visitors



**Types of
huts today**



Kesch Hut (2000)

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The purpose of mountain huts today

- Protection and emergency shelter for mountaineers
- Starting point for tours



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The purpose of mountain huts today

- Excursion and overnight destinations
- One-of-a-kind offer in Swiss tourism
- Cultural assets



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Cristallina Hut (2003)

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Mountain huts are not hotels!

They remain simple mountain accommodation!



Stringent state requirements

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What mountain huts expect of their guests



Tracuit Hut (2013)

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USPs of mountain huts

- Nature experience in stunning locations
- Slow pace of life far away from the daily grind
- Fantastic views and a clear and starry night sky
- Exemplary forms of sustainable tourism
- Tradition and modern spirit united



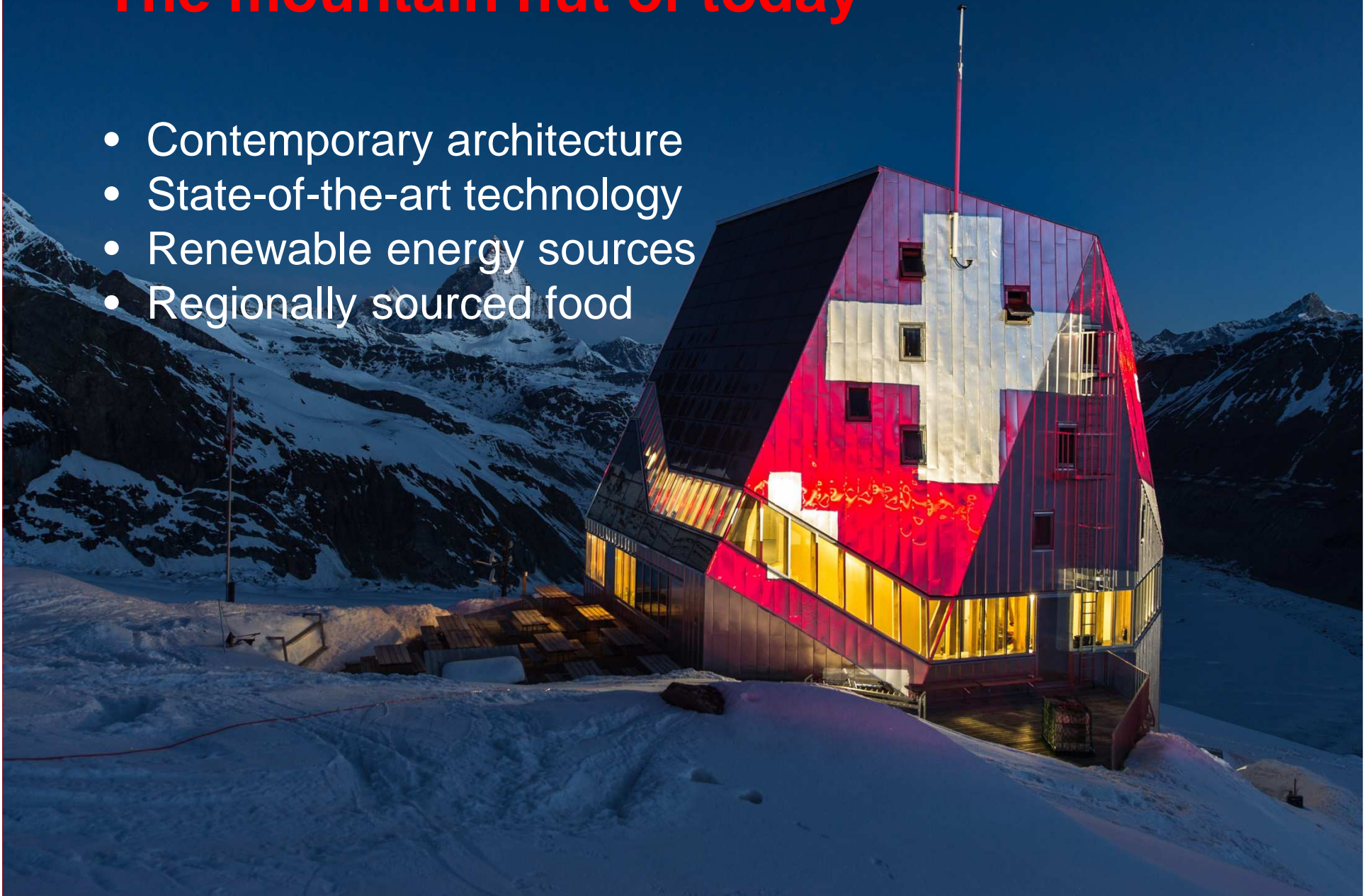
Monte Rosa Hut (2009)

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The mountain hut of today

- Contemporary architecture
- State-of-the-art technology
- Renewable energy sources
- Regionally sourced food





Hut guests of today

- 70% are between 31 and 60 years old
- 60% are members of an alpine club
- 60% are mountain hikers
- 50% book less than three days in advance
- 75% spend one night at a hut
- 60% would be prepared to pay higher prices for more comfort (e.g. smaller rooms)



Changing guest requirements

Past

- Water supply close to hut
- Own cooking
- Separate ladies' bedrooms
- Large dormitories
- Woollen blankets

Present

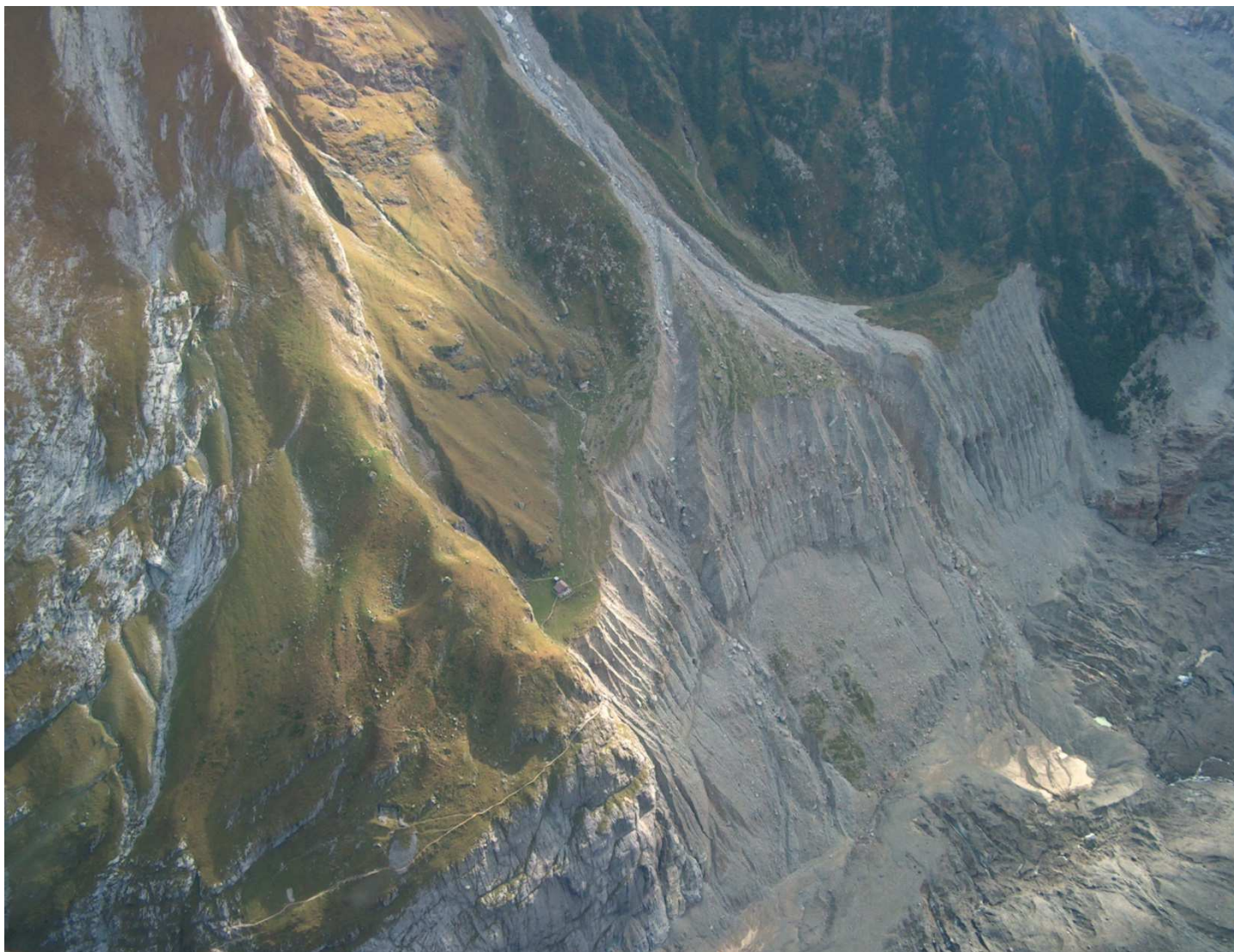
- Showers
- Half board
- Separate toilets
- Small bedrooms
- Duvets



Challenges of building huts

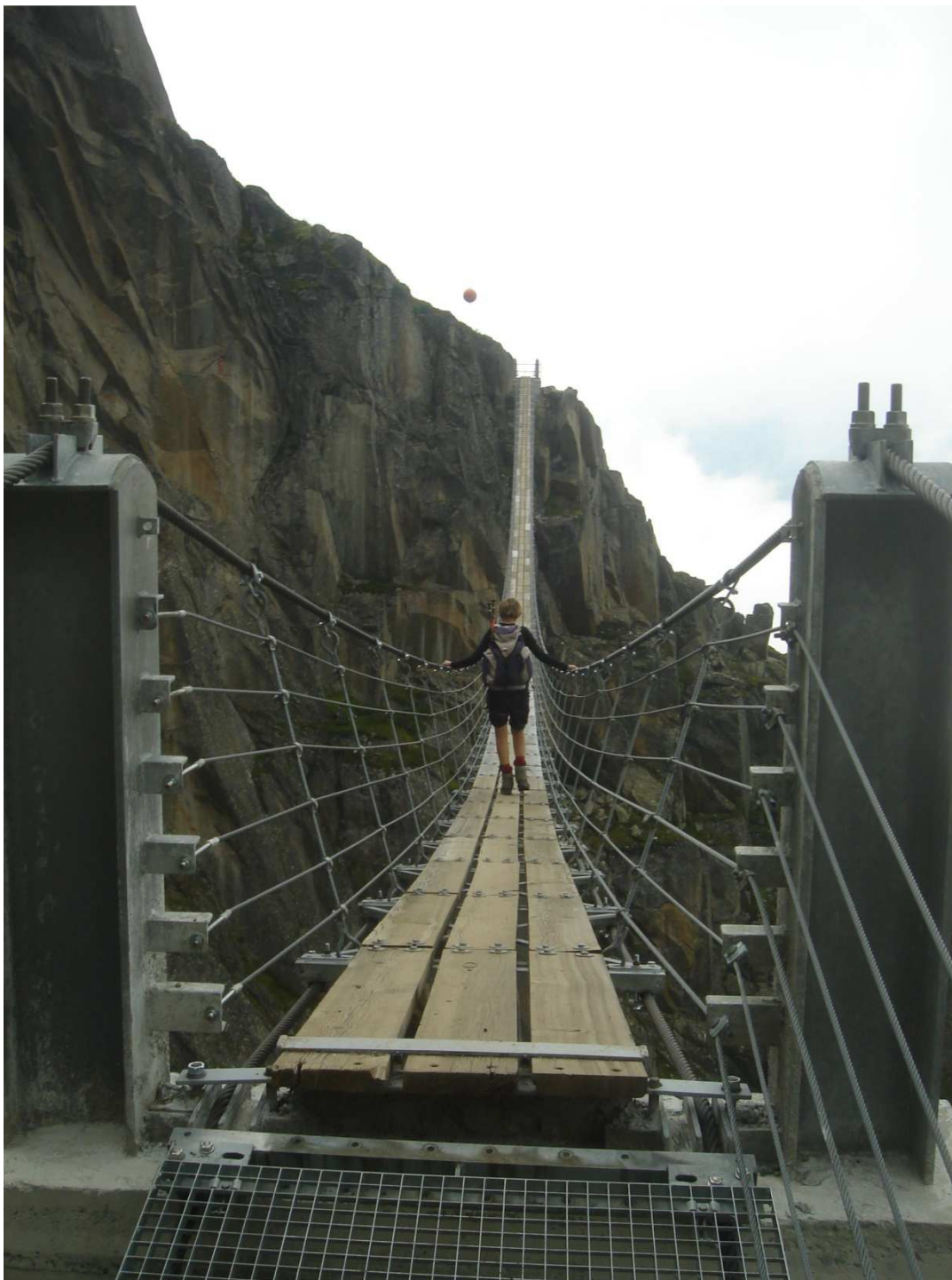
- Compliance with legislation
- Meeting increasing demands on convenience
- Adapting to the changing climate
- Ensuring a certain degree of profitability

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Challenges of running huts

- Adaptation to increasing guest expectations
- Dealing with the consequences of climate change
- Sufficient profitability for hut wardens

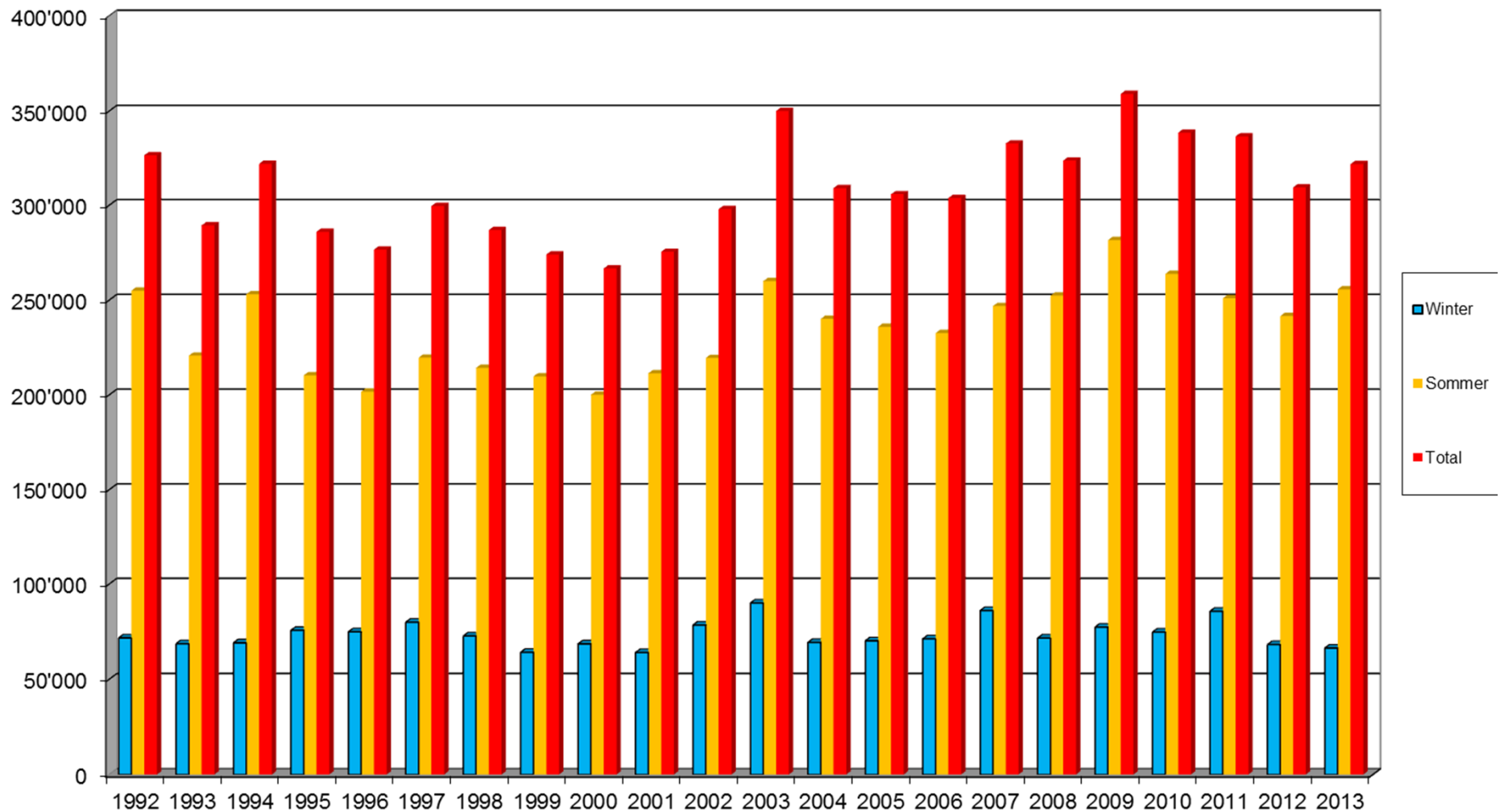


Marketing challenges

- Decline in overnight stays in the 1990s
- Decline in classical forms of alpinism
- Emergence of new outdoor activities
- Renaissance in hiking/nature-based activities
- New guest groups with changed requirements
- Heightened guest awareness regarding service and quality



Overnight stays 1992 – 2013





Marketing goals until 2020

- Maintain overnight stay and revenue figures
- Improve occupancy during off-season and weekdays
- Improve service quality and environmental awareness
- Strengthen the brand “SAC Hut”



Marketing strategy

- Approach new guest groups
- Clearly position huts in relation to target groups
- Promote huts as tour and hiking destinations
- Moderate adaptations to infrastructure, new communication technology
- Partner cooperations (tourism organisations, sponsors)
- Acquisition of funds through professional fundraising

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**I look for the soul
in a hut,
not convenience**

Paolo Rumiz, Italian travel writer

Thank you for your attention!

