

## **Amazed hotel guests and the studying gaze of astronomers**

# **Stargazing on the Gornergrat**

**The Gornergrat is one of the best places in the Alps for stargazing. Up here at 3,100 metres above sea level, the night sky is indescribably beautiful. Due to the dry air and the seclusion, even the Milky Way and planets are visible to the naked eye. A breathtaking experience for guests of the 3100 Kulmhotel Gornergrat, and a place that exerts a mythical pull on astronomers. The Gornergrat Stellarium now brings together experts with a thirst for knowledge and inquisitive hobby stargazers.**

Five years ago, the Gornergrat Stellarium project was launched. The creation of the new observatory in the southern tower of the Kulmhotel is an invitation from the scientific community to the public to come and discover the heavens together. The universities of Bern and Lausanne took the lead in this project in terms of the scientific aspects involved. In future, the observatory will make it possible to “reach for the stars” both in person and online.

### **Educational offers for schools, online stargazing for the general public**

Hobby astronomers can pay a visit to the observatory in the usual way, provided they register in advance. But for everyone who cannot be there in person, an Internet platform is being launched to bring the universe to you. Starting in summer 2016, online stargazing sessions can be booked at [stellarium-gornergrat.ch](http://stellarium-gornergrat.ch). The trial run for this new offer was successfully completed at the end of October 2015 as part of a teacher training programme. In future, private individuals will also be able to book a time slot on the observatory website and observe and photograph the constellation of their choice.

### **When the moon blots out the stars**

Thanks to the clear night skies, guests who stay at the Kulmhotel can experience how close one is to the stars and the planets on the Gornergrat – even without a telescope. When the moon is full, however, its radiant silver glow steals the show from the stars. On these nights, though, guests are treated to a fascinating natural phenomenon: the moonlight is reflected in the snowy peaks of the four-thousanders and glaciers, illuminating them unlike anything you have ever seen before. Since this tip is no longer much of a secret, we recommend that you take a look at the lunar calendar and then reserve your stay well ahead of time. In winter, those who do not have enough time to stay overnight can experience the “Moonlit fascination” evening package at the 3100 Kulmhotel Gornergrat.

### **Stars are truly something special**

We mean that both literally and figuratively. The five stars that the Grand Hotel Zermatterhof has been awarded promise that your stay will be simply heavenly. At the Grand Hotel Zermatterhof, guests are transported to a world where time takes on a whole new meaning. Here, time is seen as the last true luxury – to have the time to do nothing, produce no results and simply be. Forgetting time is why grand hotels were once built, and today you can still experience this at the Zermatterhof.

### **Historical moments that were written in the stars**

In 1853, the Riffelhaus became the second hotel in Zermatt and the first lodging located on the Riffelberg. The Riffelhaus opened even before the Gornergrat railway was built. Opposite the Matterhorn, this location was the site of milestones not only in

hotel history, but also in the history of mountaineering. In 1855, the first team of climbers to ascend the Dufourspitze (4,634 metres) spent the night in the Riffelhaus before setting off for and conquering the highest mountain in Switzerland.

**More information:**

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Preview of the new offer for astronomers: [www.stellarium-gornergrat.ch](http://www.stellarium-gornergrat.ch)

**For answers to individual questions and supplementary material:**

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