

Alp grum oranges grow at altitude of 6,858 feet

Autor(en): **Meakin, Derek**

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DO NOT MISS THE FÊTE SUISSE NEXT THURSDAY, CENTRAL HALL



ALP GRUM ORANGES GROW AT ALTITUDE OF 6,858 FEET.

By Derek Meakin.

The photograph reproduced here depicts one of the most impressive examples I have ever seen of the remarkable power of sunshine in the high alps.

This orange tree, loaded with ripe fruit, is growing at a height of 6,858 feet above the sea. It is one of the sights of Alp Grüm, the little halt between Pontresina and Poschiavo, on Europe's highest adhesion railway.

The man who has defied nature by growing oranges above the tree-line — and who has just had the

pleasure of being able to pick some of these golden fruit right in the middle of winter — is the proprietor of the noted Alp Grüm mountain hotel and station restaurant.

For a long time he has tended them with loving care. Now he has been able to reap the reward of his patience and devotion. And visitors to this little corner of the Grisons have been able to see something which they never would have believed possible.

So yet another remarkable attraction is added to this tiny mountain resort, which already is noted for offering one of the world's most beautiful panoramas — the view that takes in peaks such as Dosso di Giumello and Pizzo Verona, which is linked by the elegant sweep of the Palü glacier with the 12,855 feet high giant Piz Palü itself.

The success of this unique attempt to cultivate exotic fruit at such an altitude is due to a large degree to the warm climate of this particular region, which is also responsible for the many other examples of luxuriant vegetation that is the wonder of visitors.

The extraordinary dryness of the air must also prove a factor of considerable importance. The low degree of humidity — without which the Grisons would be unable to provide us with that marvellous delicacy, *Bündnesfleisch* — is such that at the height of Alp Grüm (even during rain) the air contains only half the moisture it has in the lowlands under similar conditions.

And then, finally, a most vital part must be played by that intense ultra-violet radiation which has proved so beneficial to sick visitors to Swiss high-altitude resorts.

Alp Grüm, which might one day well become famous as "the place where the Swiss oranges come from", is a favourite excursion point for St. Moritz holidaymakers. First stop is Pontresina, whose main claim to fame in the old days was an ideal resting-place for the heavily-laden mule trains which used to make their laborious way over the Alps from Italy. From here the Bernina railway, speeding southwards, travels a route that constantly unfolds new and impressive views of white peaks, tiny blue lakes, and delicately-tinted glaciers.

But it is the panorama from Alp Grüm that always excites the greatest attention. On one side is the mighty Palü glacier. On the other the eye feasts on a magnificent sweep of scenery that takes in the southern valley of Poschiavo and on to Le Prese and its lovely lake.