



«Font-Romeu Pyrénées 2000 investment plan is around 30 million €»

ALAIN LUNEAU The mayor of Font-Romeu

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The town of Font-Romeu is located in the Languedoc-Roussillon region of the Eastern Pyrenees (Pyrénées-Orientales) on the Cerdagne plateau, about 80 km from Andorra, 90 km from Perpignan (France) and 180 km from Barcelona (Spain, Catalonia). The city is “the heart of the Catalan Pyrenees” with panoramic views, clean air, and bright light. It is located at an altitude of 1800 m above sea level.

In 1920-1930, Font-Romeu was called the “Winter Sports Palace”, where the world elite loved to come, as it was here that one of the first and most prestigious ski resorts in France appeared. Font Romeu is famous for the fact that outstanding athletes lived and trained here: Martin Fourcade, a French biathlete, five-time Olympic champion, a thirteen-time World Champion and a seven-time winner of the Overall World Cup as well as Kilian Jornet, who is known as a “heaven rider”, a professional mountaineer and athlete, a long distance runner who made history thanks to the fastest ascent and descent of the Matterhorn, Mont Blanc, Denali, and Everest.

As for the architectural style of the city, in recent years there has been a tendency for wooden chalets to be built in the town, including many log houses brought in from Finland and Canada, as well as an aged tree.

The mayor of Font-Romeu, Alain Luneau, told us how the town was dealing with the energy crisis and shared the plans to improve the infrastructure of the ski resort.

–What is the tourism development strategy in Font Romeu?

–The community’s projects are to create a top-of-the-range hotel with a performance hall, conference hall, and modern thermal center. Next to the future hotel, we plan to create luxury hotel residences with sufficient parking spaces.

Four-season tourism is in the spotlight. Our small town in the mountains has one big advantage - it is practically unaffected by seasonality. Winters here are sunny and snowy, while summers are not so hot due to the altitude.

–As the former general manager of Font-Romeu Pyrénées 2000 ski resort, could you tell us how the global energy crisis has affected the 2022-2023 season?

–Font-Romeu Pyrénées 2000 is not the largest ski area in the Pyrénées Orientales. However, it is the first one in terms of attendance and turnover. This year it could



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be number one of all the French Pyrenees ski areas.

At present, we have 103 km of cross-country skiing tracks (22 runs: 7 “green”, 10 “blue” and 5 “red”), 41 downhill ski slopes (15 “green”, 10 “blue”, 7 “red” and 9 “black”). It is about 50 km in total. The slopes are maintained by 500 snow cannons, and the resort has one snow park and four ski schools.

The resort also has three separate slopes for slalom skiers and a stadium for biathlon.

The resort also provides the opportunity to go night skiing – both for amateurs and for competitors with the participation of, as a rule, the Northern European countries.

The energy crisis has affected the operation of the ski area by significantly increasing the lines relating to energy (electricity for the ski lifts and the production of artificial snow). The ski lifts operated until March 26, and this early closure enabled the operator to respond to government requests for a 10% reduction in energy consumption as part of an energy sobriety plan.

The reduction in the speed of the devices is adapted to the influx of customers. This practice is not new

and has been in place for several years now.

In any case, there was no negative impact on the quality of skiing. The record figures achieved again this year in attendance and turnover are proof of this.

–Who owns the ski resort today? What is the profitability of the station under current conditions?

–The ski area extends over two municipalities in the following proportion: one-third on the municipal land of Bolquère and two-thirds on the municipality of Font-Romeu. All the facilities belong to the Syndicat Intercommunal de Font-Romeu Pyrénées 2000, at least until the end of the contract in 2047 (Public Service Concession). Attached to the new contract, which began on May 1, 2022, is a multi-year investment plan for around 30 million euros. These investments concern ski lifts, the development of land and trails, as well as facilities likely to be operated in 4 seasons.

–Your predecessor, Mr. Jean-Louis Demelin, told me once that the town was looking for investors to connect the town with the ski resort. Did you succeed?

–If we talk about a mechanical connection, the gondola will be in service in December 2023

–Do you have any cooperation plans with neighboring ski resorts in Catalonia, Andorra, Spain or other ski resorts in the French Pyrenees? Do you plan to issue a single ski pass, for example?

–For this question, you should contact the operator of the ski area, which is implementing a partnership policy.

–How much does it cost today to produce a cubic meter of snow in France? In Andorra, for example, it is about 2 euros for m3.

–There are several ways to calculate the cost of a cubic meter of snow. Its production price is very variable depending on humidity and temperature conditions. Given the increase in the price of electrical energy, I would say that the price of the m3 of snow produced fluctuates between 1.5 euros and 4 euros, depending on the production conditions.

–How have electricity and heating prices increased this year?

–Electricity prices have increased according to various conditions

(energy supplier, tariff negotiations, contract conditions and prices already negotiated over a certain period) and, therefore, vary. For our community, the energy budget is doubled.

–Near the town, there is the Odeillo solar furnace. What is its share in the city’s energy balance?

–The Odeillo solar furnace does not contribute in any way to the energy balance of the city. It is an establishment that only does experimental research: concentrated energy is used to work on the fusion of materials.

Some residents of Font Romeu install solar panels. But they are expensive and require town planning approbation that may not be granted.

–How does the town adapt to the new conditions? Are there any grants for families in need?

–The town does not provide grants for families in need. City authorities may interfere with water and electricity suppliers, but the cases are rare.

Some municipal buildings, cinemas and casinos have undergone thermal insulation work. The budget exceeded 600,000 euros.

–What major sporting events are planned for the 2023 summer season?

–The Font-Romeu Nature Trail contest will be on June 24 and 25. You will meet some excellent world athletes who have chosen this most beautiful trail environment for more than half a century with the panoramas of the Cerdan high plateau to recharge their batteries. There will be 7 km, 15 km, 26 km trails and a 45 km marathon.

–Are there joint projects between Font-Romeu and Andorra?

–I am unaware of any joint project between Font-Romeu and Andorra regarding ski areas. Andorra is far ahead of Font-Romeu, which is working to fill the gap.

–How many Andorrans study at the STAPS university (Sciences of techniques, physical and sports activities)?

–I do not know the number of Andorran students in STAPS. Currently, between 600 and 700 students are in Font-Romeu. University housing is one of our priorities. In the next three years, work on mobility in the pre-Olympic town should be completed to make life easier for our students. In addition, there is a campus that allows some students to pursue non-STAPS studies. ≡

CULTURE

Jambo and ONCA come together to celebrate street music

The event will arrive in the historic center of the capital between June 15th and 17th and sixty artists will parade there

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The Jambo of Andorra la Vella celebrates ten years of life this year, a special event that it wanted to commemorate with a very special concert by the ONCA, also coinciding with the organization's thirtieth anniversary. In this way, the street music festival will enjoy a performance in which the orchestra and a modern combo will perform songs by 10 musicians from the country arranged by Albert Gumí. It is one of the novelties of the event that will arrive in the historic center of the capital between June 15th and 17th and that will have six stages on which sixty music groups from the country will parade, in addition to guest bands. Among the novelties will also be DJs who will entertain the different stages.

In the 10 years of history, the Jambo has not stopped growing, according to one of the organizers, Toni Colom, who remarked that «in the first edition of the Jambo there were only 12 music groups in the country and of these the 80% covered songs. Currently, there are 60 groups and 80% perform their own music». In fact, they like to think that they have helped in this process, since «when they started there was no music event in the country and the Jambo has put this bit, making music visible in the streets», he explained.

Colom also emphasized that some of the points that the organizers have taken into account when choosing which groups would perform at the festival were the recording of an album in the last year, having a new repertoire and that it be original.

As a novelty, this year the main stage will be in Plaça del Poble because it has larger dimensions. The rest of the stages will be distributed along Anna Maria Janer street, behind the Casa de la Vall, where the stage of Myandbank, one of the festival's collaborating entities, will be found; there will also be a stage in Plaça Guillemó; in Monjó square (Jazz Messengers stage); at the head of the street; and in Sant Esteve square, where the Cynthia Lim stage is located, in commemoration of



► Marta Bravo, Miquel Canturri, Enric Torres, Toni Colom and Oriol Vilella, during the Jambo presentation.

the artist who performed on that stage every year and unfortunately died last year.

The Jambo will start on Thursday 15th June with the performance of the Benjis Band, a cover band that will perform on the Myandbank stage at 8.30pm. Afterwards, there will be the session of DJ Helder Barroso. On Friday, the high school music group from the Andorran school of Santa Coloma Batoca'm will be in charge of opening the festival with itinerant performances and you can also enjoy the School Jambo. On the Myandbank stage, Espa-

cio Vacío will perform; Marta Knight, who hopes to attract a lot of people after the performance in the national auditorium; and Charlotte Fever. Al Toque, an Argentinian pop music group, and Waver, a recently created hard-rock group, will perform in Plaça Guillemó. In Plaça del Poble, you can listen to the Australian Steve Smyth and The Buttshakers, a band that «was supposed to come last year, but couldn't do it because of Covid», according to the festival's organization. On the Cynthia Lim stage, the jam sessions will be held, which due to the success start

earlier, and Old School will also perform. In Placeta Monjó, on the Jazz Messengers stage, there will be proposals related to jazz with the performances of Km 0 Trio (Kic Barroc's trio) and The Odd's Quintet.

As for Saturday 17th, the winner of the Fada Ignorant contest, Titu Martí, the Catalan artist Carlota Flâneur and the Mallorcan musician Maria Jaume will take to the Myandbank stage. In Plaça Guillemó you can listen to Rokyo and the group Un sábado cualquiera. Finally, in Plaça del Poble there will be Lali B Good's family show and one



Toni Colom

ORGANIZER OF THE JAMBO

«There was no music event in the country, the Jambo has put this part, making music visible in the streets»

Enric Torres

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«What interests us about this project is that it is attractive to tourists and that they can enjoy the Jambo»

of the highlights of the festival, ONCA's performance.

The director of products and new projects of Andorra Turisme, Enric Torres, remarked that it is necessary to inform that this street music festival exists in the Principality because «what interests us about this project is that it is attractive to tourists and that they can enjoy of Jambo». The manager of Myandbank, Marta Bravo, emphasized that «they share values with the festival such as being pioneers and revolutionaries». From the municipality of Andorra la Vella, the junior consul, Miquel Canturri, stated that they have been strengthening the festival for some time, because «we think it is a way to help people get to know the historic center». He also explained that this year's allocation is 60,000 euros, an amount 10,000 euros higher than in previous years. ≡

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