



OFFER OF ACTIVITIES IN THE MOUNTAIN RESORTS

Grandvalira expects 130,000 visitors to arrive during the summer

Management points out that turnover between June and October is good, but «can be improved»

The new proposals revolve around the recreational and gastronomic innovation of the areas

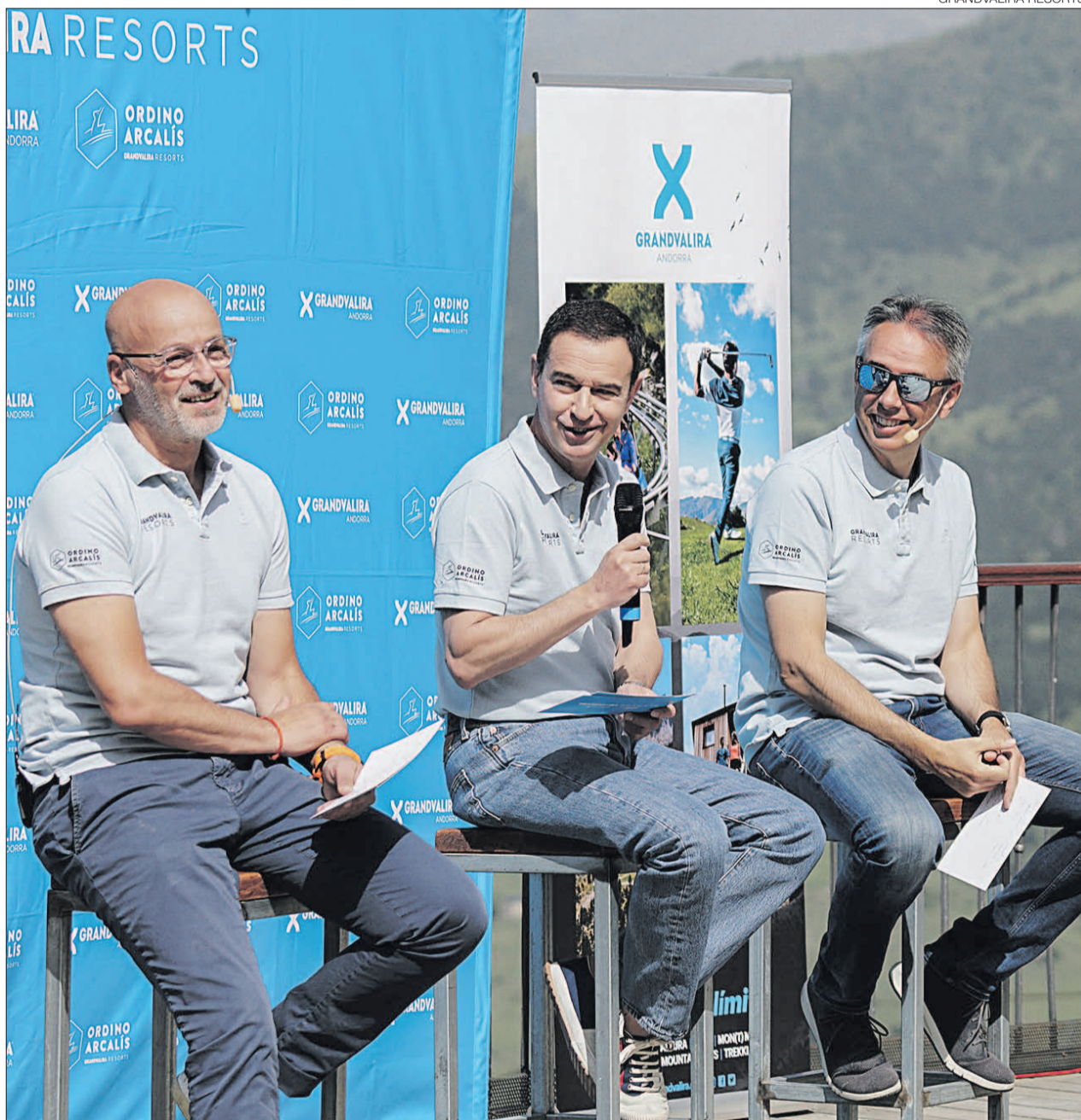
EL PERIÒDIC
CANILLO

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Grandvalira expects a 5% increase in visitors during the summer season, which would mean a total of 130,000 users between June and October, just before welcoming the winter season. This was highlighted by the directors of the mountain resorts during the presentation of this year's summer season in order to kick off the news in the activities of the domains, both Grandvalira and Ordino Arcalís. In this sense, the general manager of Grandvalira Resorts, Juan Ramón Moreno, pointed out that the expansion of the offer «is the most complete set of proposals that the summer season has seen in Andorra».

Regarding the turnover figures, the director of business development of Grandvalira Saetde, Xavier Salinas, indicated that, with the exception of the shutdown due to the coronavirus pandemic, the records in the summer «have been good and the last year we made a profit, but it can be improved. «That's why Grandvalira Ensisa CEO David Hidalgo said that investments in the good weather season «are increasingly based on results and make a lot of sense, because they translate into more visits.» However, management stressed that the turnover for the next four months is only 2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

«This is a new test of the desire to deseasonalize the tourist activity to encourage a continuity of talent and human resources that only intervene during the winter months,» said Salinas. However, Hidalgo called for a «firm collaboration» between the stations, the municipalities and the Government in order to reach figures that will definitely consolidate the potential of Andorra's attraction during the summer, emphasizing



► A moment of the presentation of the summer season of Grandvalira Resorts at the Mon (t) Magic Family Park in Canillo.

The economic impact of tourism activity in the summer is about 2% of GDP for the year

that «we are beginning to notice changes in customer preferences; they no longer want the beach exclusively.

Regarding the novelties in the two mountain resorts, the board highlighted, on the one hand, three new activities in the Mon (t) Ma-

gic Family Park in the Canillo sector. In this space, in addition to the existing activities, the QuickFlight will be launched, a jump from a seven-meter platform located right next to the BigAirBag jump boards. In fact, the facilities, which will be ready by the end of June, will be an

news

Mon(t) Magic Park

QuickFlight: an activity that consists of a jump from a platform seven meters high.

Red Shark: these are bicycles with a built-in paddle boarding table to pedal over the water.

Push Bikes: consist of different bicycle circuits without pedals for children from 3 to 5 years.

Ordino Arcalís

Bicicleta elèctrica: the station incorporates a route with these motor vehicles through the Coma area.

extension of the existing platform, and in this case, users will be equipped with a waist harness to perform the jump. On the other hand, Grandvalira will launch the Red Shark, a bicycle that is placed on a table similar to paddle surfing, so that users can experience the sensation of pedaling over water. The third novelty will be the Push Bikes, which consist of different bicycle circuits without pedals for children between 3 and 5 years old. In relation to Ordino Arcalís, the station incorporates the electric bicycle in its offer with a series of circuits around the Coma area.

Referring to the gastronomic innovation, the general manager of Ensisa positively highlighted the pace of bookings «of a large contingent of local tourists». In this sense, Hidalgo stated that «throughout this summer we hope to be able to repeat the success of the past; the reservations, for the time being, confirm this». Finally, Salinas said that Grandvalira «is a gastronomic destination during the summer» thanks to the offer of «first level», such as «the restaurant of Pessons lake, one of the most emblematic points of the season». ≡

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Interview



«Lleida spends 40 million euros on a new bus station to improve the connection with Andorra and Spain»

MIQUEL PUEYO PARIS Mayor of Lleida

IRINA RYBALCHENKO
ESCALDES-ENGORDANY
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Miquel Pueyo Paris has been the mayor of Lleida (from 2011 he is also a writer, professor at the University of Lleida and politician. We talked to Miquel about the biggest projects of the city of Lleida.

–Can you present your city, Lleida? What is the history of the origin of the city and its development? How many people live there?

–The origins of Lleida are lost in time. It was an Iberian city, then Roman, Visigoth, Muslim, Christian. Its strategic location as a crossroads, around a hill and with an important river Segre, has given it a very personal special. We are a resilient city, now that there is so much talk about this concept, to the point of turning it into a space for coexistence, as it is now. With a population of 140,000, we are an average city, an ideal place to live, strategically located in the interior of Catalonia, just one hour by train from the capital of Catalonia.

–What can you tell us about the economy of Lleida?

–Lleida is in a rural, agricultural and livestock environment, which means that the main companies in the city are linked to the agri-food sector. This is a powerful and growing industry that, at the same time, generates many jobs. This circumstance also means that unemployment levels are generally among the lowest in the state as a whole.

The city's tourism sector is a driving force linked to the enormous potential of the Pyrenees and the Ara Lleida brand, which depends on the Provincial Council.

I also want to emphasize that we have a Science Park, the second most important in Catalonia. We are committed to technology as a creator of wealth and a source of talent.

–If you had to promote Lleida in terms of tourism, what would you recommend to tourists first?

–Few cities can boast of having an icon like the Seu Vella cathedral. This cathedral of Lleida is the most emblematic monument of the city. It was built in Romanesque style. It stands on the hill known as Turó de Lleida, which dominates the city and the Segrià region.

Visible from anywhere, it is a symbol for tourists and all the people of Lleida and has been recognized on several occasions as the Favorite Monument of Catalonia. We are immensely proud of it and will be even more so when we complete the process for it to be recognized as a World Heritage Site.



–What are the dynamics of tourism in the city, including international tourists?

–Tourism is growing everywhere and, of course, in Lleida. We have gone from being a city of passage between Barcelona and Madrid to being a stopping point. A lot of work has been done to promote the local events we treasure. The most well-known and most popular event, both national and international, is the Snail Gathering. This year, after two years without a pandemic, it is back even stronger than ever. We are talking about 200,000 visitors in one weekend, a spectacular figure.

I would also mention the festival Animac (International Animated Film Festival of Catalonia). This is an animated film festival that takes place the last week of February in the town of Lleida and brings together the best international animation productions. It was born in 1996

to promote and publicize audiovisual animation and being a meeting point for professionals in the sector.

Moreover, in May Lleida hosts the Puppet Fair, which is organized by the Lleida Puppet Center and the City Council. The fantastic world of puppets floods the streets, squares and theaters of the city. The fair brings together an average of twenty companies and more than 300 professionals.

The tourism promotion policy is not limited to the department of economic development. Other departments, such as the department of sport and department of culture, are also involved, with the promotion and organization of top-level events, which also help to strengthen the name of Lleida by consolidating it more and more on the tourist map. The cooperation between the different departments is part of our government roadmap. Altogether, we are making the brand of our city so that more tourists

come to visit us and discover us.

–Do you have any joint projects with neighboring Andorra and France, as well as other cities of Catalonia?

–Lleida is the capital of the hinterland of Catalonia and this leadership means that collaboration with the various territories is not only possible but necessary for the progress of Lleida and Catalonia. We would like to become a reference area for the agri-food sector and the capital of agri-biotechnology in Southern Europe.

If we talk about recent dates, I want to highlight our relationship with Tarragona and Barcelona. With both cities, we recently shared the Torre Blanca-Quatre Pilans project, a cargo station that should become an important dry port and improve the export and import of products in Lleida.

As for Andorra, we are neighboring territories of the Pyrenees and

a common tourist attraction of the plain. We have always had excellent relations - in the economy, in culture, and politics. A good example is the ex-mayor of Lleida, D. Àngel Ros Domingo, is the Ambassador of Spain in the Principality of Andorra for the last four years.

Finally, the University of Lleida is very popular among young Andorrans.

–What do you think about smart city technologies? Does Lleida want to be part of this trend?

–Technology is inseparable from progress. We are the second technological node in Catalonia with a Science and Technology Park, bringing together more than 160 companies and 2,000 professionals and the vocation of being a smart city and putting the green economy at the forefront. We are already working on it. The refurbishment projects for the old convent of Les Josefines, the Casino and Espai 3 of the old Convent of Santa Teresa include energy monitoring with smart buildings.

–What are the big future projects of the city of Lleida?

–One of the most important projects is the construction of the new Bus Station. A new building that will be located next to the current railway station will exponentially improve the quality of service and the intermodality of communications in the city. The new station will have 28 platforms. The budget of the project is about 40 million euros. It will be one of the best bus stations in Catalonia.

In terms of culture, the new Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Lleida is going to be an important element of the city's artistic and cultural attraction.

As I mentioned, we have presented the project to rehabilitate the old convent of Les Josefines, the Casino building and Espai 3 of the old Convent of Santa Teresa through the Program to Promote the Rehabilitation of Public Buildings of Local Entities (PIREP) of the Next Generation EU funds.

The budget of these projects (the first one will be built to hold the homeless) adds up to an investment of 13.2 million euros, of which 8.9 would correspond to EU funds.

We are working to make Lleida fairer, healthier and more entrepreneurial, in line with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. We want a friendly, diverse, competitive, supportive and feminist Lleida.

My project is to create a global city.≡