

English

Schilthorn
Piz Gloria



James Bond 007 photo exhibition

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007 film location

Schilthorn – Piz Gloria: James Bond 007 photo exhibition

Forty years after the première of the James Bond 007 movie "On Her Majesty's Secret Service" the Schilthorn Cableway Ltd. honours the secret agent with a photo exhibition on the 2970-m-high summit. Discover how the film was shot and how James Bond and the film crew fascinated the inhabitants of the whole valley.



Tracy (Diana Rigg) and James Bond (George Lazenby)

What brought James Bond to the Schilthorn?

The search for the main location of the new James Bond film „On Her Majesty's Secret Service“ began in 1968. Bond producers Albert R. Broccoli and Harry Saltzman gave production manager Hubert Fröhlich the task of finding the ideal location for the Piz Gloria.

Ian Fleming's original novel describes the Piz Gloria in precise detail. The story demanded a mountain with an aerial cableway and a free-standing summit station. And of course it also had to have the necessary infrastructure to allow filming.

The search in the eastern Alps led from Corvara and Cortina d'Ampezzo to Chamonix in France, but to no avail. In Grindelwald, Hubert Fröhlich's attention was finally caught by the Schilthorn aerial cableway, which had been built only one year before. The summit station was still unfinished.

A visit was paid to the Schilthorn the very next day. After discussions with the then director of the Schilthorn aerial cableway, Paul Eggenberg, and the chairman of the executive board, Ernst Feuz, it was clear: the ideal location had been found at last!



A unique setting with icy north walls, imposing 4000-metre peaks, a modern aerial cableway, the revolving restaurant – all assets that persuaded those responsible at United Artists to choose the Schilthorn as the film location.

SCHILTHORN 2970 m – the ideal location

The 1960s and '70s saw major aerial cableway systems built in Switzerland, to the Schilthorn, Corvatsch and Titlis peaks. These were both a sign and an expression of modern technology and progress. With a length of 7 km, the Schilthorn aerial cableway was at that time the most modern and longest in the world. This naturally attracted a fitting amount of attention.



Top: Spring 1967. The revolving restaurant still under construction. Finances were only enough to complete the shell.

Left: Shooting the Piz Gloria just two years after completion of building work.

Construction work had begun on the summit in summer 1965 under extremely tough conditions. As the entire installation had ultimately cost 30 million Swiss francs instead of the original 8.5 million, it had only been possible to construct the shell and exterior of the summit station. The added sensation of a revolving restaurant at almost 3000 metres altitude had to be shelved for an unlimited period.

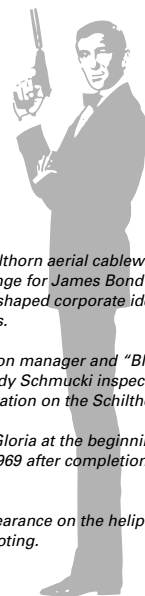


And then came James Bond! The deal between the Schilthorn aerial cableway and Eon Productions was based on a straightforward contract: the aerial cableway would make the location available and the film producers would finance the construction of a permanent summit building as well as the aerial cableway's transport, operating and personnel costs for the film.

From April to October 1968, an army of experts transformed the summit building on the Schilthorn into the Piz Gloria from Ian Fleming's novel. A combination of villa, sanatorium, laboratory and fortress, where the villain and bogus Count Blofeld was to plan the downfall of the human race.



Sketch of a design for Blofeld's Alpine fortress, the Piz Gloria. The heliport was specially built for the film – although written building permission actually arrived 8 months later!



1: The Schilthorn aerial cableway turned orange for James Bond and the colour shaped corporate identity for 25 years.

2: Production manager and "Blick" editor Freddy Schmucki inspecting the film location on the Schilthorn.

3: The Piz Gloria at the beginning of February 1969 after completion of shooting.

4: Snow-clearance on the heliport during shooting.



Piz Gloria

Director Peter Hunt arrived in Mürren a few days after Hubert Fröhlich had described conditions on the Schilthorn. The film producers were able to work with Bern architect Konrad Wolf and design the restaurant to suit their requirements. However, everyone involved faced a massive amount of work before the first clapper board could snap shut on 21 October 1968.

The original grey station building on Birg was painted blue, all cabins of the Schilthorn aerial cableway were sprayed orange and decorated with the Blofeld coat of arms. The heliport was constructed in around 12 weeks at a cost of 500 000 Swiss francs, with an ice tunnel as a direct link to the lower levels of the Alpine Clinic.



Building for James Bond! Second from left: Syd Cain, one of the two production designers from London, followed by director Peter Hunt and art director Bob Laing. In the foreground: Annelies Stähli-von Allmen from Mürren.



1: Mock-up of the Alpine Room, which allowed camera positions to be tested on a dry run.



2: Michael Reed, director of photography, adjusting the camera position.



Left: Director Peter Hunt, George Lazenby and Bond girls during filming.

Below: The ice tunnel is finished, the heliport prepared for shooting.



The revolving restaurant was completely fitted out with an orange carpet and a removable wooden ceiling added. At the request of the production designers, a fireplace was incorporated and a James Bond bar created. The grating on the stairway was manufactured and installed at great effort. The lifts were lined with anodized fixtures.

To complete the impression of luxury, leather furniture and Chesterfield chairs were obtained from luxury Swiss manufacturer de Sede. Lamps, a huge flokati rug and green plants were obtained and also transported to the summit. The crowning special request was the removal of two load-bearing columns in the interior. A 50-cm-high iron girder was spanned in the roof space to replace the missing columns.



The heliport as a timber construction. A generator was installed inside to provide the team with essential electricity.



3: Reed giving directions to his film crew. In the background: filters stuck to the window panes to balance extremely difficult lighting conditions.



4: Building the ice tunnel in winter 1968.



The James Bond bar remained for only a few years before it had to make way for a flood of visitors and more tables.

Shooting around the Schilthorn & Piz Gloria

Director Peter Hunt wanted three identical helicopters on the Piz Gloria for the final fight scenes. At first this proved a problem as Heliswiss in Belp only had two identical Bell 204 helicopters. The Heliswiss manager eventually found a third in Halmstad north of Oslo, Norway. There was no shying away from the considerable transfer costs and so that the helicopters had the same visual appearance, each was given a coat of special paint that could be washed off.

During shooting, the first snow fell on 23 December 1968. No one could remember a time when the Schilthorn had had such little snow. So snow had to be brought in. With 1000 plastic sacks, shovels and numerous helpers, snow was brought down from the Petersgrat, flown to the Schilthorn and redistributed. All in all, Action Snow was a lot of hard work and not exactly a cheap solution.



Stuntman George Leech and George Lazenby on the Schilthorn.



Final scenes in the film: the attack on the Piz Gloria.



A perspective otherwise reserved for technicians of the Schilthorn aerial cableway. James Bond escapes with the aid of the moving cable car. 007 was played by his double George Leech, who really did hang on the icy cable.



Shooting in the aerial cableway's fictional machine room and on the heliport.



Storming the Alpine fortress. George Lazenby, Diana Rigg and Gabriele Ferzetti.



George Lazenby in the Piz Gloria waiting for his cue.



Shooting the fight scene in the Alpine Room.

There were several after-shoot parties in Mürren. Here you see a plain-clothes 007 with Bond girls on the dance floor of the Hotel Jungfrau and then at a wedding in the Hotel Eiger.



The Swiss flag goes off duty for a few months.



Aus über 400 Bewerbern wurde George Lazenby, der 29-jährige Australier, als Hauptdarsteller für den neuen James-Bond-Film «On Her Majesty's Secret Service» ausgewählt. Mit der Schiffsverhöhn geht es zu den Dreharbeiten auf das Schilthorn, James Bond einmal nicht in der Spurzone, sondern gelassen beim Lesen. (Foto DS)

Love of detail. Syd Cain, one of the production designers, himself fitted the platform of the Piz Gloria with a coat of arms. It remained in place until renovations in the mid-1990s.



Stuntmen and logistic assistants picnicking with their Bond girls, reading a newspaper or simply sunbathing.



James Bond gets his hair cut too – fairly often!



Im oberen Oberland, auf dem Gipfel des Schilthorns in fast 3000 m Höhe, wird die Dreharbeiten zum neuen James-Bond-Film ein Geheimnisamt Berns Stipendiat angelehnt. Da muss 1967-Starlet George Lazenby erlich mit der Terrasse der Bergstation Schilthorn, die auch als Halbkontrollpunkt dient, eine wunderschöne Terrasse, wie immer Bond folgt. (Cain)

Locations in addition to the Schilthorn: Mürren and Lauterbrunnen

Director Peter Hunt tried to shoot as many scenes as possible on location rather than at Pinewood Studios near London. He used the Lauterbrunnen Valley as an oversized studio.

But Mürren was no unknown mountain village. For decades it had been an internationally renowned resort, with experience of exclusive guests long before the shooting of the James Bond film. Nevertheless, the film marked a whole new experience. The official closing time in bars and restaurants was lifted to allow the film crew and their retinue to be served. At the request of the British, the range of drinks was enlarged to include certain brands of whisky and beer. A few hotels served oysters, lobster and langoustine. From October to December 1968, Mürren enjoyed a highly original type of third season.

Schoolchildren also succumbed to James Bond euphoria.



In Mürren itself, transport was either by horse-drawn carriage or an electric trolley.



Already back then, transport of people and goods was by aerial cableway or helicopter.



A mock 14-metre-high church tower was built in Mürren especially for the film. The railway scene in which Bond and Tracy meet again was also originally intended to be shot in Mürren. A large spectator stand was transported from Gstaad to Mürren and assembled for this but the lack of snow made shooting impossible.

However the bob run from Allmendhubel through the Blumental (Flower Valley) was put to use again, 31 years after being closed following a fatal accident. Here too, problems with a neglected water supply and the track had to be overcome. With three experts from St. Moritz and 15 helpers, the run was brought back into working order one last time for the exploits of James Bond.



- 1: Stuntman Heinz Leu driving the bob. Behind him Alex Barbey, 2nd unit cameraman. George Lazenby is getting the bob moving.
- 2: The double: Heinz Leu took the place of Lazenby in the scenes behind the steering wheel.
- 3: George Lazenby in front of a projection wall in Pinewood Studios.
- 4: Johnny Jordan in the foreground. The rotating camera made the scenes as realistic as possible.



Stock car racing in Lauterbrunnen.



2nd unit location work

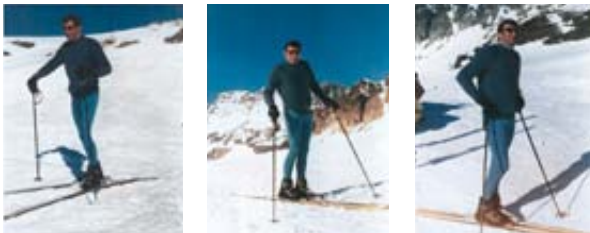
The 2nd unit was the second film team, responsible for the outside shots with impressive chases on skis, fight scenes, avalanche blasting on the Tschingelgrat and the pursuit and “collision” with the snow-cutter.

John Glen was responsible for direction. The original novel has a scene in which James Bond is chased on skis alongside a railway track. One of his pursuers is hit by the train’s snowplough and cut to pieces. It turned out that this scene was not actually feasible and so it was decided to use a 14-ton snow-cutter instead. A suitable machine was available on the Uri side of the Susten Pass, close to the Sustenbrückli (bridge).

Preparation took ten days, as the snow-cutter had first to hack through to the suitable shooting location. A lot of hard work was needed to create the 3 to 4-metre-deep gully into which stuntman Ruedi von Allmen fell. In a second take, at the last minute, two buckets of red paint were poured on the snow and a dead sheep added to make the scene more realistic.



- 1: The stunt men of the 2nd unit. Hubert Fröhlich, production manager of OHMSS in the front row.
- 2: The crew on the way to work.
- 3: Shooting on the Susten Pass; the snow-cutter has reached its goal.
- 4: The downhill runs were filmed by day. Only in the film does James Bond escape at night.



The “real” James Bond also appeared on skis during shooting.



Little consequence was at first paid to the extreme lack of snow on the Schilthorn. However, the situation changed when the 2nd unit was supposed to start work. The only area in the vicinity with a plentiful amount of snow was at the Mutthorn Hut and above it on the Tschingelhorn Glacier. This hut became the 2nd unit’s base for nearly five weeks.

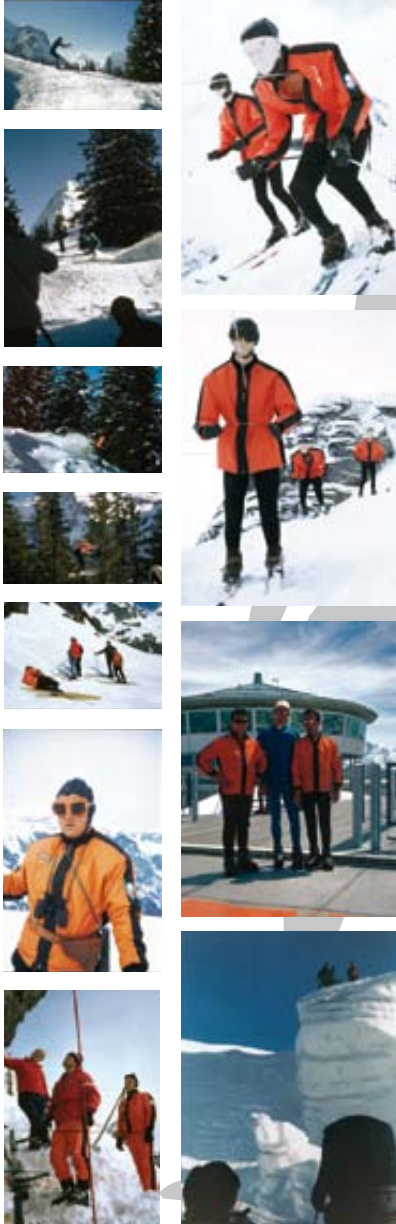


Top: Tons of film material and props were flown in for shooting. Cameraman Johnny Jordan, suspended beneath the helicopter in a specially designed mounting. This allowed the camera totally new freedom of movement.



2nd unit location work

Dummies in pursuit; the famous escape scene and the leap into the fir tree



Impressions taken between shooting in snow ...



Relaxing in a Bond ambiance.



Candid shots during filming.



The crew during a shoot and in the already opened Piz Gloria revolving restaurant at the beginning of 1969. It goes without saying that the restaurant has had the same name ever since.

The stars and girls

1: Yuri Borienko and George Lazenby

2: Sylvana Henriques

3: Ilse Steppat

4: Angela Scoular

5: Diana Rigg and George Lazenby

6: Helena Ronee

7: Telly Savalas and Yuri Borienko

8: George Lazenby



The Plot of „On her Majesty’s Secret Service“

On a secret mission in Portugal, James Bond (George Lazenby) saves the life of the beautiful Tracy (Diana Rigg). Later he meets the attractive girl again in the casino of the Palacio Hotel in Estoril. The next day, Bond is kidnapped by two strangers and taken to Marc Anjo Draco (Gabriele Ferzetti), a wealthy building contractor. Draco is also the head of the Union Corse, a Mafia-type crime syndicate – and Tracy’s father. He wants Bond to marry his headstrong daughter and offers him a dowry of one million pounds in gold to do so. Bond is not exactly averse to this idea but refuses the payment. He would prefer Draco to use his underground organization to help in his search for the head of Spectre, Ernst Stavro Blofeld (Telly Savalas).

After Draco’s birthday party, where it becomes plain that Tracy returns Bond’s affection, the Mafia boss gives Agent 007 a tip. Bond travels to Bern and while searching the offices of a Swiss lawyer, finds evidence that Blofeld is in Switzerland and endeavouring to claim the title of “Comte de Beauchamp”.

Through genealogist Sir Hilary Bray (George Baker), with whom Blofeld has been in contact, Bond attempts to gain access to the Spectre boss and travels to Switzerland posing as Sir Hilary. Here he is met by Blofeld’s agent Irma Bunt (Ilse Steppat) and taken by helicopter to the 3000-m-altitude Piz Gloria, where Blofeld has set up his headquarters. Blofeld intends to contaminate the world with bacteriological agents and hold the United Nations to ransom, aided by twelve attractive young women – with some of whom Bond naturally enjoys romantic encounters.



*Top: Curling on the terrace;
Christmas in the Alpine Room;
The escape from the summit.*

*Below: ice-skating scene shot in
Grindelwald and the only time
James Bond gets married.*



Top: Arrival on the Piz Gloria.

*Right: The leading characters in
Portugal; the team of the College
of Arms.*



Under the pretence of genealogical research, Bond alias Sir Hilary uncovers Blofeld’s plans. However, he is rumbled by Irma Bunt, his identity revealed and he is taken prisoner. Bond manages a daring escape helped by Tracy, who has suddenly appeared on the scene. Together they try to evade the relentless pursuit of Blofeld and his henchmen but Bond is finally buried by an avalanche while Tracy falls into the clutches of the villain.

Bond manages to free himself and returns to London. Here he learns from his superior, M (Bernhard Lee), that Blofeld is holding the UN to ransom, demanding amnesty for past crimes and recognition for his claim to the title of Comte de Beauchamp. As a result, the Secret Service has abandoned Operation Bedlam, its operation against Blofeld, and M is considering abandoning Tracy to her fate.

Bond and Draco decide to rescue Tracy using three helicopters and a special force from the Union Corse. A life and death battle takes place with the climax taking place on Blofeld’s Alpine fortress, the Piz Gloria. Nothing now stands in the way of Bond and Tracy getting married.



James Bond 007 (George Lazenby)

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