

TATLER[®]

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**GREATER
THAN GATSBY**
WHO IS BUILDING
THE NEW COUNTRY
PALACES?

**INSIDE THE
WESTMINSTER
WHIRLWIND**

**UNBRIDLED
GLAMOUR**
SADDLE UP FOR
THIS SEASON'S
EQUESTRIAN CHIC

ELIZA DOOLITTLE IS BACK IN TOWN

HATS OFF TO THE NEW MY FAIR LADY

BYSTANDER SPECIAL REPORT

THE RETURN OF THE JET SET

After two years in enforced social Siberia, St Moritz has come in from the cold. The great and the good of society are back and the parties are more glamorous than ever

By SACHA FORBES

Photographs by MELISSA MICHEL

Artist Conor
McCreedy's bench is
airlifted into position

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Lord Dalmeny en route
to ride in the Johannes
Badrutt Memorial Trophy

THE SLOPES IN THE Engadine valley were heaving this season with European princes, American heiresses and speed-seeking lords. Following a two-year hiatus, when the pandemic put a stop to the Alpine parties and pursuits, it was official: the socialites were back in their bindings and ready to conquer St Moritz. But only in the right places. Anyone who's anyone was seen at the Cresta Run, the Corviglia Ski Club, White Turf for the horse racing or dancing until dawn at the Dracula Club or Badrutt's Palace Hotel.

Since January 1885, skilled riders have braved the death-defying Cresta Run, where thrillseekers plunge headfirst on a toboggan down an ice chute of 1.21 kilometres at speeds of up to 80mph while trying to avoid injury. The president of the St Moritz Tobogganing Club, James Sunley, described it as 'the oldest and most exciting ice speed sport in the world'.

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Princess Olympia of Greece



Isobel Hobbs



Conor (centre) makes it to the mountaintop



Alexander Mallinckrodt



Lady Brabazon of Tara at the Brabazon Trophy prize-giving



Milli Bennett and Max Gelber at Badrutt's for the Corviglia Ski Club dinner



Astrid Harbord at the Shuttlecock Club party at Badrutt's Palace Hotel

INTO THE BLUE

The hottest artist in the Alps, Conor McCreedy, reflects on a busy season. By Harriet Kean

On the frozen lake in the centre of St Moritz, a blue bench towers five metres above the ice. Crafted from the wood of fallen Engadine pine trees, it bears an inscription, which reads, in white paint: 'The sky is not the limit beyond the universe is.'

In the distance is the effervescent Badrutt's Palace Hotel, with the majestic Swiss mountains all around. It is a glamorous setting, but one would expect nothing less from Conor McCreedy, St Moritz's artist du jour and the man responsible for the bench, in place for the winter season. 'The fact that you're sitting on a frozen lake is so surreal. Whether you're sitting there drunk on champagne or dead sober, it's still surreal,' he says of the artwork. 'From an artistic point of view, it's really beautiful and intense.'

This bench, which occupies a spot where a Damien Hirst sculpture once stood, is just one of many dotted around St Moritz. There's also one outside the Hotel Waldhaus am See – which has the world's biggest whisky bar – with an inscription reading: 'I love

whisky because after a double I start feeling single again.' And another, transported by helicopter, sits at the top of the Paradiso mountain club.

When it comes to St Moritz, Conor, 35, who is from South Africa, really is the artist about town: the Cresta family were early supporters of his bench project and he's in talks about designing a suite at Cresta Palace; Dracula Club's Rolf Sachs is a close friend ('I painted his portrait,' says Conor); and he's a regular at Badrutt's Palace, which he calls 'the most glamorous hotel in the world'. He spent his birthday there in the restaurant Chesa Veglia, then his glittering gang took the helicopter to the Paradiso club. 'We didn't have enough champagne,' says Conor, 'so we had to acquire it from Badrutt's, then we flew it up to the top of the piste. It was a lot of fun.'

Conor is about to make an even bolder mark on St Moritz: he's setting up a large studio in the Engadine region (he has one in Zürich), but it's all hush-hush for now. 'Only a few very important collectors know about it,' he says. And there's another secret: come spring, he says, he's moving one of the big benches to a different location. 'Can you imagine the bench in a field of thousands of blue Alpine flowers? You're kidding me? It's going to be beautiful.'



*The Hon
Marina Primrose
and Zain Mahmood*



*Timothy
Albers-Schönberg*

*Conor McCreedy
on one of his
'Mccbenches'*

