

As "the only water park of its kind in the French Alps," Aquariaz is having a significant impact, says Stéphane Lerendu, director of the Avoriaz tourist office that manages the attraction. A month after opening on July 1, Aquariaz had welcomed more than 30,000 visitors, surpassing initial expectations. "Visitors are saying it's amazing to swim among 1,500 tropical plants and trees," he says.

Lerendu estimates the water park, which took "a hard two years" to build, will draw 70,000 visitors in the resort's nine-week summer season. During the winter season, from Dec. 15 to the end of April, he hopes Aquariaz will attract 400,000 people.

At Avoriaz, Aquariaz has the advantage of being in a popular high-altitude resort, close to Geneva's airport. In turn, Lerendu explains how the water park is changing the resort's business.

Why is Aquariaz right for Avoriaz?

Before Aquariaz, Avoriaz suffered in the winter season

HIGH HOPES FOR *Aquariaz*

because we didn't have very strong après-ski activities, apart from music events. In the summer, we had outdoor activities, including mountain biking, hiking, climbing, and golf, but no indoor offerings for when it wasn't sunny. That's why we decided in 2004 to build Aquariaz.

It's good for the resort to have more people in the summer. Also, having a leisure attraction is good for the beginning of the winter season because you ski in the morning and have to stop early when night comes. Similarly, at the end of the season, you stop skiing at noon because the snow isn't very good.

This winter we will have new "Ski Aquariaz" passes, which will allow you to ski in the morning and go to Aquariaz in the afternoon. It will change the behavior of customers. We know that people don't want to ski all day, every day. Aquariaz offers them an opportunity to do other things and to spend time with their children, which is not always easy when their skiing levels are different. It's important that we offer this for families.

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