



THE STORY OF THE SAN SALVATORE FUNICULAR





SOCIETÀ MONTE S. SALVATORE



THE STORY OF THE SAN SALVATORE FUNICULAR

San Salvatore is one of the best internationally known mountains. After the year 1200 it became famed for the pilgrims who walked to the top to pay homage to the Son of God who, according to ancient legend, rested there during his ascent to heaven.

But above all, it was the unsurpassable 360° view from the top of Lugano's mountain, in the past as well as presently, which drew visitors. The view takes in the wonderful Lugano Lake area, the Lombardy plains and the stupendous chain of the Swiss Alps and the Savoy Alps.

BOD-Presidents

Giacomo Blankart	1888-1925
Federico Zbinden	1926-1929
Carlo Pernsh sr.	1930-1943
Guido Petrolini	1943-1952
Silvio Veladini	1952-1961
Antonio Lory	1962-1967
Carlo Pernsch jr.	1968-1981
Gianfranco Antognini	1981-1991
Giorgio Ghiringhelli	1991-2011
Eugenio Brianti	in office

Managers

Rodolfo Schatzmann	1890-1934
Hans Schatzmann	1934-1965
Remo Bianchi	1965-1977
Sencler Moranzoni	1978-1997
Felice Pellegrini	in office

1870



It should therefore come as no surprise that at the end of the 19th century it was realised that the popularity of San Salvatore which hitherto had been accessible solely on foot or by mule, could be capitalised on. In **1870** an enterprising man from Florence, Stefano Siccoli, who had rented the small inn at the top of the mountain, launched the idea of building a road, funicular, and large hotel in addition to other facilities. It was a grandiose but unachievable project. Funding subscriptions did not give the desired results and the venture was abandoned.



1885-1886



Another initiative promoted by a Lugano lawyer, Antonio Battaglini was more fortunate, being supported by a determined group of fellow townsfolk. On **10 August 1885** he applied to the Federal Council for a building permit for a rack and pinion railway from Lugano all the way up to the top of San Salvatore. The original route called for a track from the Brentino railway tunnel in the direction of Pazzallo, Carabbia, Ciona and from there the final ascent towards the mountain. The line was to be 3866 m long. The route was later extended, with the departure station at Piazza del Grano (Lugano) instead of Paradiso.

On 24 November 1885, the Federal Council granted Mr Battaglini's application and forwarded it to the Federal assembly, which approved it on **12 December 1885**. Once the licence was obtained, studies were carried out into building the railway, whilst Mr Battaglini sought capital to finance the venture.



In order to complete the "San Salvatore Railway" it was necessary to have use of the land and buildings (including a chapel) at the top of the mountain; these belonged to the Arciconfraternita della Buona Morte ed Orazione under Santa Marta in Lugano. On **19 February 1886**, the lease was signed. The Arciconfraternita retained the right to keep *"the sanctuary for the Roman Catholic religion, with free access at any time of the year"*.



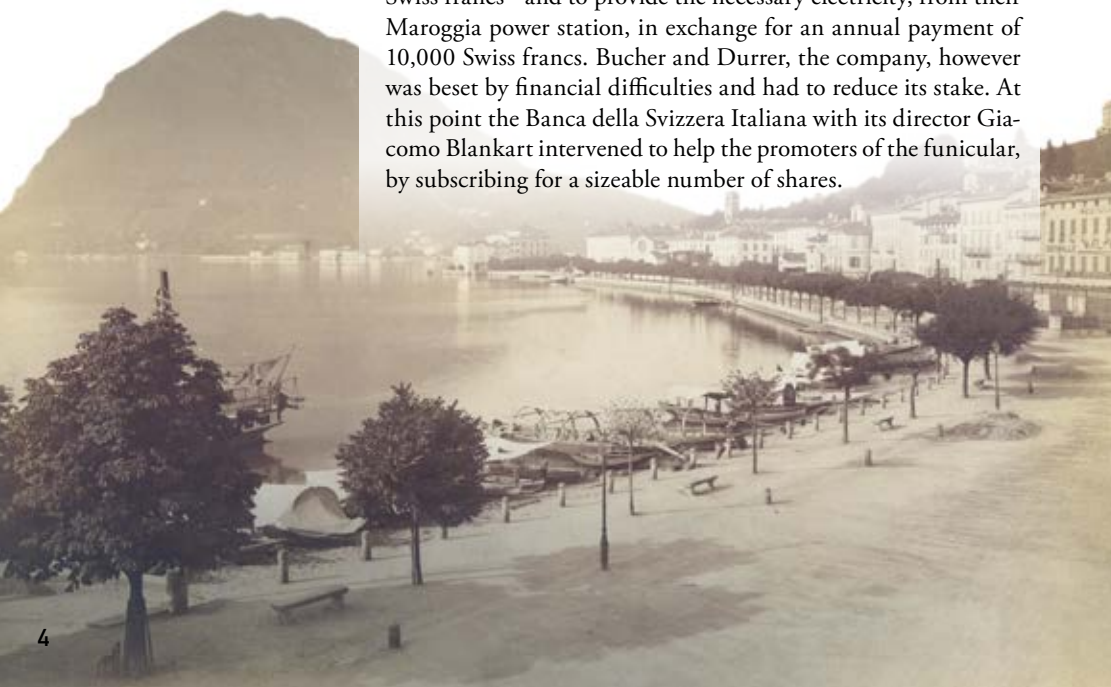
1887



On **29 April 1887**, the Federal Council granted the promoters of the San Salvador railway a modification to the 12 December 1885 licence. In fact they were allowed to increase the fares from the amount initially established and the request to extend the route from Paradiso to Lugano's central landing stage was also approved. From Lugano to the slopes of San Salvatore a normal railway had to be built which was to be transformed into a rack and pinion system in order to ascend the steep slope at the final section.

On **15 July 1887**, the committee of promoters opened the public subscription "to incorporate a joint stock company, in order to build and operate a railway between Lugano and the San Salvatore mountain, on the basis of the licence granted on 12 December 1885". The promoters however encountered many difficulties. Two Swiss entrepreneurs, Bucher and Durrer, who owned a company specialising in the construction of funiculars, railways and hotels in Kägiswil, intervened. They bought the licence from Mr Battaglini and immediately transferred it to the Società della Ferrovia Lugano-Monte San Salvatore which was being incorporated.

Bucher and Durrer undertook to build a funicular, starting from Paradiso and reaching the top, for the sum of 550,000 Swiss francs - and to provide the necessary electricity, from their Maroggia power station, in exchange for an annual payment of 10,000 Swiss francs. Bucher and Durrer, the company, however was beset by financial difficulties and had to reduce its stake. At this point the Banca della Svizzera Italiana with its director Giacomo Blankart intervened to help the promoters of the funicular, by subscribing for a sizeable number of shares.



1888-1890



By 7 June 1888 funding for the funicular was in place and on **12 June 1888** a meeting to incorporate the Società della Ferrovia Lugano-Monte San Salvatore was finally held. The presence of a director of the Banca della Svizzera italiana to head the board of directors became a tradition, which is still very much alive.

Building work commenced on **24 July 1888** and ought to have been completed by 1 August 1889. But constant rain during the summer delayed the works which in order to make up for lost time, as of 19 September 1889 were also carried out at night, by torchlight. The poor condition of the land in the Calprino Valley meant that the builders had to replace the planned dam wall with an iron viaduct 103 m long.

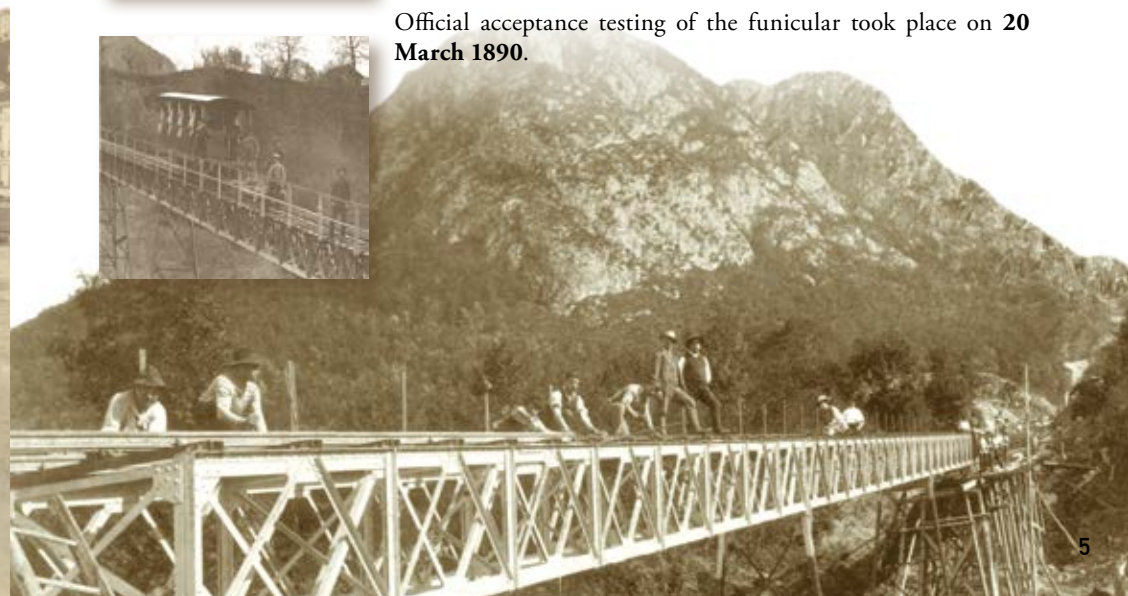


On **20 January 1890**, the first drive trial using electricity from the generator set in Maroggia was used. The experiment gave the best results and the cars covered the entire line, 1600 m, in 26 minutes.

On **9 March 1890**, a group of members of the Ticino Society of Engineers and Architects, at the invitation of Bucher and Durrer, travelled from Paradiso to Monte San Salvatore.

The plan had been to inaugurate the funicular on **19 March 1890** and to open it officially the following day. The invitations had been sent, but at the last minute, everything had to be postponed as federal authorisation had not yet been obtained.

Official acceptance testing of the funicular took place on **20 March 1890**.



1890



A festive inauguration took place on **26 March 1890**, in the presence of around 80 guests at the official banquet.

On the morning of **27 March 1890** the San Salvatore funicular began operating regular public services in order to coincide with the boat service. The Paradiso-San Salvatore return fare was 4 Swiss francs.



The Società della Ferrovia Lugano-Monte San Salvatore shareholders held their first meeting on **28 March 1890**, the day after the funicular was opened. The Board of Directors, chaired by Giacomo Blankart, submitted its first report to the shareholders for the year ending 31 December 1889. In order to offer visitors to San Salvatore a convenient restaurant (the building in existence at that time could not be repaired or refurbished on account of its condition) the Board of Directors decided to construct a building with a large dining room and terrace near to the station.

On **2 April 1890**, a report was drawn up on nine, large format pages in dense, difficult-to-read handwriting on the handover of the funicular from Bucher and Durrer to the Board of Directors of the Lugano-Monte San Salvatore railway company. The inspection was extremely meticulous and many comments were placed on record, regarding works which had not been performed or which did not comply with plans.

Again in **1890**, the Lugano-Monte San Salvatore Railway Company waived its right to build a tram line from Lugano's central landing stage to the San Salvatore railway station.



1896-1938



In **1896**, it became necessary to extend the mountaintop restaurant, which had another storey added and which was equipped with rooms to cater to the requirements of tourists wishing to watch the sunrise and sunset from the top of San Salvatore.



The outbreak of the First World War had a negative impact on the funicular, as foreigners stayed away. In **1918**, the last year of the war, which was no longer just a European, but a world war, all financial data was negative. Fortunately, starting in 1919, there was a heartening recovery in revenue.



In the winter of **1925/1926**, the drive unit was completely overhauled with new stock and thus there was an increase in speed to 1.8 m per second. Travel time fell from 26 to 18 minutes. The old cars were replaced with two new cars seating 65 people against the previous ones which seated 32 people.



In **1938** Bell & Ci. in Kriens, Maschinenfabrik in Oerlikon and Kabelwerke in Brugg provided drive machinery ensuring greater levels of safety during operation; however this entailed changing the cable, the pinion, the drive wheels, the break pulleys and connected systems. Thanks to these modifications the driving speed increased from 1.8 m per second to 2.5 m per second, thereby reducing travel time to 14 minutes.



1939-1960



The Second World War years (**1939-1945**) were marked by anxiety and uncertainty for the Swiss people. All areas of public life were affected. In view of the serious international political situation, no celebrations were held to mark the funicular's first half-century. In May 1945 the terrible world war finally drew to a close, borders were once more open and the flow of tourists finally resumed.



In **1943**, at the initiative of the High Tension Research Commission of the Swiss Association of Electrotechnicians and at the initiative of the Swiss Power Station Association, a centre, directed by Prof. h.c. Karl Berger from Zurich Federal University, was set up at the top of San Salvatore to study lightning. A 70 m tall wooden antenna with 10 m steel tip, was erected near the chapel. The centre was equipped with the most sophisticated equipment to measuring lightning. Another antenna, at the same height, made entirely of steel, was set up on the "Dosso San Carlo" in 1950. The centre was dismantled in June/July 1982.



In **February 1957** new cars seating 65 people were installed; these represented a breakthrough in ropeway technology.



In **1960** the funicular had to adapt to new voltage rules adopted by the Lugano Electrical Workshop, requiring significant alterations to the machines: Speed reducer, car position indicator, motor rewinding. The installation of a Ward Leonard DC unit made it possible to increase speed from 2.5 m/s to the current 3.5 m/s.

1965-1985



In **1965** an application was filed for renewal of the Federal licence for another 50 years.

In **1973/1974** the new PTT/Swisscom broadcasting station was built on top of San Salvatore.



During the **1978/1979** winter, the company workers carried out a series of works to renew and improve the funicular. The car interiors were completely refurbished using synthetic material (formica) and the parts in wood were repainted. The Paradiso departure station was embellished in chalet style.



During the winter of **1982-1983** important, costly works were carried out. The company funicular staff carried out works involving consolidation along the line (sleepers and retaining walls) while the companies Kündig and Garaventa proceeded to replace the control devices and the devices for regulating the electrical drive system with a new modern electronic system. The mechanical brake control was replaced with a new hydraulic one.



Starting in **1984/1985**, the Board of Directors provided a sizeable loan for refurbishing the restaurant. Amongst the various works we can mention complete resurfacing of the south side of the terrace/veranda with a view over the Melide bridge/dam. The Paradiso waiting room was also renewed and a new office/cash desk was built.



1990-1998



In **1990** the funicular celebrated its centenary, thereby demonstrating the farsightedness shown by those who always believed in the attraction of the funicular as well as the economic potential of their initiative notwithstanding technical hitches and financial difficulties.



A further important investment amounting to 1.5 million francs was made in **1997** when the upstairs at the restaurant was transformed into modern, multipurpose, technologically advanced rooms capable of accommodating up to 100 people in modular spaces.



In **1998** the company demonstrated sensitivity to the needs of the disadvantaged, by making the entire structure accessible to the disabled. In order to facilitate entrance to the departure station at the bottom, to the cars, to the Monte Rosa terrace, to the Vetta restaurant and to the new conference facilities, modern solutions were adopted to guarantee easier access to persons with reduced mobility. Modifications were also made to facilitate mobility for the partially sighted.

1999-2002



In **1999** the mountaintop enriched its cultural attractions by restoring the old 17th-century hospice and turning it into a San Salvatore Museum. The ground floor houses examples of religious art relating to the Arciconfraternita della Buona Morte e Orazione. In the year 2000 a new area was set up which was dedicated to the area's rocks, minerals and fossils, veritable jewels which have been created and hidden underground.



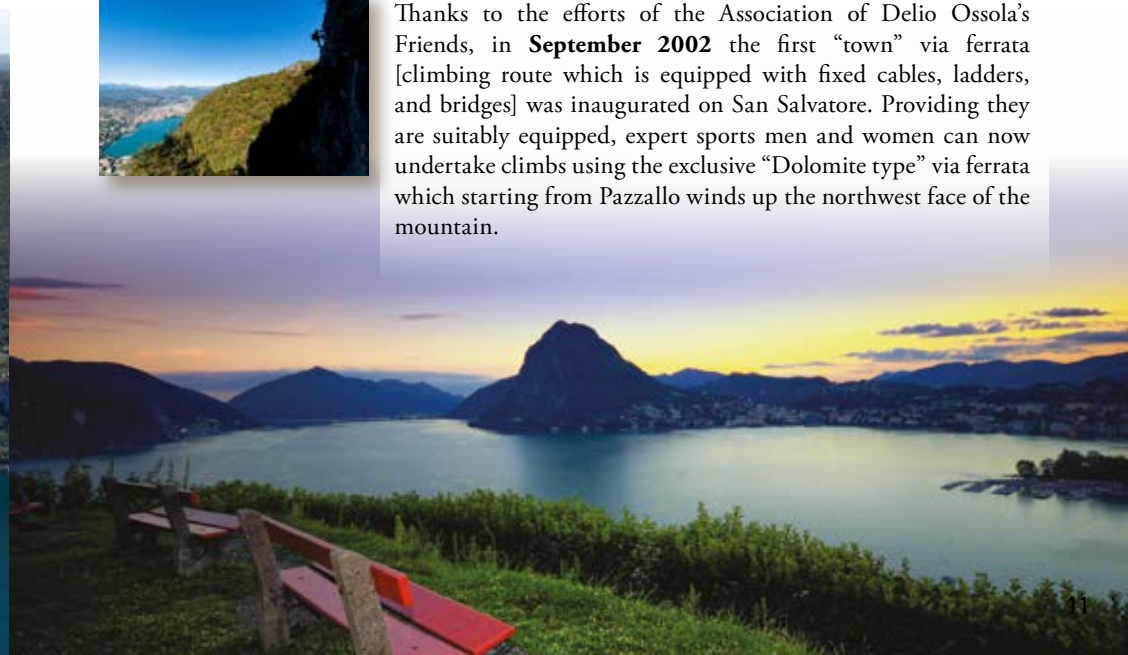
But it was in **2001** that the company faced up to its greatest challenge: renewing the equipment and the rolling stock in order to allow it to continue to meet the requirements of the Federal Transport Office and thereby to renew the authorization it needed to operate. Works which were carried out in record time during the winter break in 2000/2001. With a huge investment of 3.5 million Swiss francs it was possible to install new motors in the machine room, completely renovate the two funiculars which now have comfortable panoramic cars and install an electronic system using cutting edge technology.



The concept of quality adopted by the Vetta Restaurant company required suitable structures and rooms. the reason why in **2002** it became necessary to install new kitchens, to extend the food preparation room, to renew the washing and back office equipment, and to modernise the restaurant's facilities.



Thanks to the efforts of the Association of Delio Ossola's Friends, in **September 2002** the first "town" via ferrata [climbing route which is equipped with fixed cables, ladders, and bridges] was inaugurated on San Salvatore. Providing they are suitably equipped, expert sports men and women can now undertake climbs using the exclusive "Dolomite type" via ferrata which starting from Pazzallo winds up the northwest face of the mountain.



2003-2009



To render the magnificent views from the top truly unforgettable, steps were taken in **2003** to improve several viewpoints. Important works were carried out involving cleaning, tidying and implementing safety measures. A colour code system was adopted along the path up the mountain and seven coloured benches were installed, which together with useful information boards completed the task of enhancing the top of the mountain and the surrounding area.



Within the framework of a programme designed to promote **2003** as “The International Year of Water,” the meeting rooms in the Vetta restaurant showcase an exclusive exhibition of photos, by Maura and Mauro Bernasconi, of rivers, lakes and alpine ponds entitled “Riflessi di un Ticino sommerso” (Reflections on hidden Ticino).



In **2005** the San Salvatore Museum was enriched with an additional exhibition area dedicated to speleology in the region. An exhibition allowing one to take a journey through the magical world of Ticino's and San Salvatore's caves, testifying to the changes taking place in nature.



In **2008** a tourist poster exhibition was arranged with a permanent display extending all the way from the arrival station, along the path to the summit. The exhibition which was organised with evocative reproductions of period posters, focuses on the story of advertising by the tourist industry in the first half of the 20th century.



In **2009** the exhibition rooms in the San Salvatore Museum were completed with the organisation of an exhibition dedicated to the history of the Lightning Research Centre which operated between 1943 and 1982. “Tracking down lightning” dedicated to the historical significance of storms, a natural phenomenon which has always intrigued mankind.

2011-2013



On Tuesday **19 April 2011** after 121 years, the prestigious target of 17 million passengers taken to the summit by funicular was reached.



Thanks to our partnership with Professor Angelo Vasselcchi, a naturalist and an environmental campaigner, in **2012**, an easy 2 kilometre (round-trip) nature trail was created; located on the crest near the top of the hill, it enables us to realise just how much nature has to offer. There are simple, numbered panels along the path which highlight the various points mentioned and which are in keeping with the motto “Follow the leaves and discover nature's marvels”.



June 2013 saw the opening of the photographic exhibition “L'abito nella tradizione ticinese” (Traditional Ticino clothing), comprising some 30 splendid enlargements (by Aldo Morosoli with consultancy provided by Ebe de Gottardi and with the cooperation of the Ticino Costume Federation) illustrating - inside the Vetta restaurant - the shapes, colours and materials used to make the costumes which have written the story of Ticino villagers and townspeople in lowland and mountainous areas alike.



In **2013**, a prize was awarded, for the 20th time, to the top student in the Bellinzona Tourism branch of the Hotel and Tourism High School. This prize demonstrates the extent of the long-term support - since the SSAT was opened in 1993 - provided by Società Funicolare San Salvatore SA to train young professionals in the tourism sector in Ticino.

2015



On Sunday **29 March 2015**, the Monte San Salvatore funicular celebrated its 125th birthday; it is the oldest touristic funicular in Ticino.

Thanks to the foresight of a group of pioneering entrepreneurs, since 27 March 1890, the day of the joyful inauguration ceremony, many events related to the “red panoramic carriages” have been held; these carriages have been operating ceaselessly for over one century, transporting over 17.5 million passengers to the top of “Switzerland’s Sugarloaf Mountain”. Whilst the operator has always managed to innovate, year after year, dynamically and professionally. Up and down for 125 years, an endless thrill.



2015 saw the organisation of an exciting school outing: “Scuola Natura, Scuola Avventura” (Nature School, Adventure School). Guides/actors with great theatrical and teaching experience have been accompanying groups of schoolchildren along a botanical trail, entertaining them with nature games and enhancing knowledge of the local area.



In addition to the various pre-existing panoramic viewpoints, since **2015**, it’s possible to visit the “Terrazzino Capodoro”, an exclusive terrace located near to the Vetta restaurant; like the “point of a diamond” it looks south. This panoramic terrace has been renewed and thanks to the installation of educational panels with satellite maps, now serves as a meeting place and “tourist communications” point for visitors.



2015-2016



In **2015**, the “Curiosity Corner” was created; this exhibition area located at the arrival station houses an exclusive collection of various objects, interesting finds, prints, photos, gifts and other miscellaneous materials collected over the course of the years. It is a multifaceted concentration of curios providing tangible evidence of the historical evolution of Monte San Salvatore and its funicular.



To mark the 125th year of operations, in **2015** the fairy-tale “Il tesoro del Monte San Salvatore e la misteriosa grotta del Bafalòn” (The treasure of Monte San Salvatore and the mysterious cave of Bafalòn) was published in Italian. This venture was undertaken by Funicolare San Salvatore SA with texts revised by Paola Rovelli and Cristiano Iannitti and richly illustrated by Simona Meisser. The original story was written back in 1843 by the German author Franz Krug von Nidda.



In March **2016**, the Federal Transport Office confirmed that all legal requirements had been complied with and so a further 25 year extension of the federal concession - until 31 December 2040 - was granted to the San Salvatore Funicular. Over the next 10 years extra investments, amounting to millions of francs, have been planned; the aim is to ensure that additional works on the funicular and related facilities can be undertaken. Looking to the future, the completion of this indispensable project provides additional confirmation that the operator wishes to provide users with an impeccable structure - to the highest possible standards.



2017



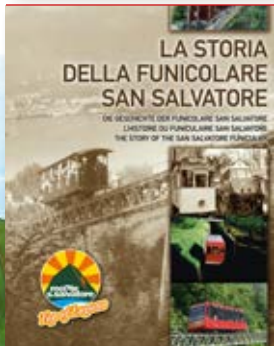
On Sunday **19 March 2017**, the exclusive photo exhibition, “The joyful fountains of Ticino” was inaugurated in the Vetta Restaurant. A colourful exhibition consisting of beautiful photographs by Aldo Morosoli from Cagiallo. The author put his immense knowledge of the area’s history to good use and sought out many of the most special fountains in Ticino. This permanent exhibition displays forty magnificent enlargements with captions in four languages.



After publication in 2015 of the fairy tale, “Il tesoro del Monte San Salvatore e la misteriosa grotta del Bafalòn” (The treasure of Monte San Salvatore and the mysterious cave of Bafalòn) on **29 June 2017** the first puppet show was held: “Fulmini e saette e la grotta del Bafalòn” (Thunder and lightning and the cave of Bafalòn), performed by Paola Rovelli and Cristiano Iannitti, written and directed by Dario Tognocchi, to recount the legendary stories that have been associated with the history of the mountain for centuries.



On **24 August 2017**, after 127 years of uninterrupted “ups and downs on the red panoramic carriages”, the prestigious goal of the 18 millionth passenger was reached. San Salvatore, historically one of the most popular tourist destinations in the region, reached a further significant milestone, celebrated with a joyful ceremony.



On **27 September 2017**, we celebrated the fifth tourism poster exhibition. The open-air exhibition on top of Monte San Salvatore, is dedicated to the important story of the San Salvatore Funicular. Around thirty modular panels with texts in four languages alternating with fascinating vintage posters, are displayed. The aim is to introduce visitors to the Funicular’s history and to provide the background to the vision that inspired a group of determined pioneers to build the ambitious project. San Salvatore Funicular is the oldest form of cable transport for tourists in Ticino.

2018



For the very first time, the **2018** addition of Michelin’s Green Guide saw Monte San Salvatore appearing as a three star *** tourist destination. The prestigious distinction was made on the basis of nine parameters which were discussed and assessed by the team of experts representing the French publishers and authors. Three stars means that an establishment is undoubtedly worth the trip. The Green Guide is part of a collection of tourist guides founded in 1926 by Michelin to highlight and help readers discover a region’s natural and cultural heritage.



The goal of educating young people has long been one of the cornerstones of the corporate strategy pursued by Società Funicolare San Salvatore. On **4 June 2018** the results of the educational project “Turismo... dolce turismo...” were published. This project brought together the Association of Master Bakers, Pastry Chefs and Confectioners (SMPPC), the Professional Technical Center of Trevano (CPT) and the Artistic Industries Scholastic Centre (CSIA). It involved apprentices in their third year of training as well as SPAI teachers. The aim of the scheme being promoted was to support young trainees and to create products that evoke “Switzerland’s Sugarloaf Mountain”.



On Friday, **27 July 2018** there was a compelling opportunity to admire the century’s longest total eclipse of the moon from the top of San Salvatore. For this exceptional occasion, San Salvatore Funicular organised a very special evening which was open to the public. An expert from the Calina Observatory in Carona was on hand to provide information. This fantastic event was attended by over 800 people.



From 13 to 23 September 2018 Lugano became the “City of Taste”. Eleven days of pure pleasure to get to know a city and to enjoy it to the full. Lugano was packed with events and mouth-watering opportunities for everyone. On Monday, **17 September 2018** the promoters of “Lugano City of Taste” organised an exclusive evening on top of San Salvatore. As an official “Lugano Lover”, San Salvatore Funicular, an event partner, played host at the Vetta Restaurant to the chef Andrea Levratto, who created a fish-based menu, guaranteed to delight every single guest.



On Friday **12 April 2019** the exclusive photographic exhibition “Nudo&Crudo” was opened inside the Vetta Restaurant. The exhibition is part of an artistic-photographic project born from the collaboration between the food designer, Agnese Z'graggen, and the photographer, Paolo Tosi (Tosi-Photography). The images document the different varieties of vegetables that come from our region, and demonstrate their seasonality. In these unique works, nature is stripped bare, the vegetable gives its grace and is transformed into a model.



In **July 2019** the project “With Bafalòn hunting treasure on Monte San Salvatore” was launched. It is a recreational course accompanied by playful and interactive cartoon signs, with texts in four languages. An adventure suitable for both young and old that winds along the path of the nature trail, following a circular path, with very little elevation changes and completed by breathtaking views. Walking, you can closely observe the flight of birds, discover ancient rocks and come across trees, flowers, mushrooms, insects and animals that live only here.



Sunday **18 August 2019**, “A sunrise to experience and admire on San Salvatore”. A unique initiative proposed by the Swiss Italian Conservatory, with the support of the Municipality of Paradiso and the Società Funicolare San Salvatore. At 5.30 am the concert of the “The X Cellos” quartet starts. An exciting sensory journey with the famous cellist Claude Hauri accompanied by three young talents from the Conservatory, who delighted the audience for an hour in a fascinating musical journey of great intensity, from the dark night sky to the beautiful sunrise.



From **December 2019**, for the first time after almost 130 years of operation, you can climb the most beloved mountain of Lugano even during the winter season and reach the top using the funicular and of course enjoy the culinary delights of the Restaurant Vetta. The Società Funicolare San Salvatore thus intends to make the “Sugar Loaf Mountain of Switzerland” even more enjoyable and accessible all year round.

TECHNICAL DATA FUNICULAR SAN SALVATORE

COURSE

Length	1629 m
Minimum gradient	16% / 9.7°
Maximum gradient	61% / 31°
Track gauge	1 m
Bottom terminal height	282 m a.s.l.
Middle station height	491 m a.s.l.
Top terminal height	883 m a.s.l.
Vertical rise	601 m
Speed	3.5 m/s
Transport capacity max.	240 p. p. h.
Course length	12 minutes
Sections	2

ENGINE

Engine station	Lugano-Pazzallo
Engine	Alternate current motor
Power	200 kW with ACS multi drive module
Emergency motor	Diesel

CABLE AND SAFETY

Length	1737 m
Diameter	33 mm
Weight	7 t
Installation new pulling cable	March 2011
Brakes	Automatic hydraulic/electrical combination

CARRIAGES

Capacity max.	68 persons + 1
Entered service	March 2001

OTHER DATA

Start facilities construction	24 th July	1888
First time in service	27 th March	1890
Last renovation	16 th March	2001
Renewal of the federal concession up to 2040	March	2016
Transport on average (March-November)	160'000 / 180'000 passengers	



Funicolare Lugano - Paradiso

Monte San Salvatore SA

Via delle Scuole 7 / CP 442

CH-6902 Lugano-Paradiso

Tel. +41 (0)91 985 28 28

info@montesansalvatore.ch

www.montesansalvatore.ch