

Swiss to inaugurate high-tech, green mountain hut

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This undated picture released by Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich shows the new Monte Rosa refuge that will be inaugurated on September 26, 2009 in the Swiss Alps. The futuristic alpine hut has been planned for the Swiss Alpine Club (SAC) by the Department of Architecture of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH Zurich).

Switzerland will inaugurate on Saturday a new mountain refuge in the Alps that looks more like a futuristic space station than the no-frills stonewall huts that alpinists are more familiar with.

The new refuge, at an altitude of 2,883 metres (9,349 feet) near Zermatt in the south-west, resembles a gigantic crystal, with metallic-looking cladding on the exterior, and an interior that is completely built with wood, said the Swiss Alpine Club in a statement.

Conceptualised and built with the help of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, the shed, which can house up to 120 alpinists, is designed to obtain 90 percent of power needs from the sun.

The remaining 10 percent would be mainly gas used for cooking and would be delivered by helicopter regularly.

Water will also be completely sourced from the surroundings. In the summer, water from melting glaciers will be collected and stored in a reservoir, and heated mainly by [solar energy](#).

A computerised system will manage the building's energy resources and total [carbon emissions](#) from the shed are expected to be three times lower than those of the current mountain [refuge](#) located 80 metres further downhill.

For the Swiss Alpine Club, the building is "not just an attractive lodging for the alpinists but also a point of attraction for architecture and technology enthusiasts worldwide."

It will also have a spectacular view over the Gorner, Grenz and Mount Rose glaciers.

Built by 35 workers over two summers, the hut was constructed at a cost of 6.5 million Swiss francs (4.3 million euros, 6.3 million dollars) with some 3,000 helicopter trips required to ferry workers and materials up to the alpine location.

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