'18 SKI CHALETS

LUXURY IS JUST THE STARTING POINT AT EUROPE'S MOST EXCLUSIVE RESORTS. FROM HIGH-CONCEPT ARCHITECTURE TO BREATHTAKING SCENERY AND OFF-PISTE CHALLENGES, NICK DALTON INTRODUCES A NEW BREED OF CHALET

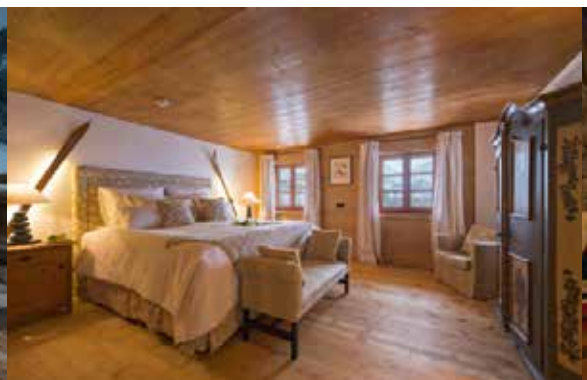
AUSTRIA

Chalet 1597, Lech

A chalet that has true historic elegance – it was built in 1597 – in one of the country's most upmarket resorts. Set over three floors, the ancient wood backdrop to country club chic makes you feel like royalty – well, Diana, Princess of Wales used to ski here. Aperitifs are taken in the stone wine cave and tasting room before dinner at the grand dining table. Lech's skiing is part of the 305km Ski Arlberg circuit, taking in St Anton, and you can ski straight to the door, too. There are five rooms (one with four singles) and a spa with a bio sauna and a sun terrace.

SLEEPS 12

DETAILS Seven nights from £32,350 (£2,695pp), fully catered. 00 41 225 349 774, brambleski.com



Willy Bogner-Chalet, Leogang

Created with the upmarket Bogner skiwear brand, you'll find film-star-worthy luxury with a 14m stainless steel infinity pool (you feel like you're floating above the valley), and hot tub on the deck, plus a 3D cinema. The chalet is part of the Bergdorf Priesteregg complex, set 1,100m up on a plateau that used to be a retreat for Salzburg priests but is now on the Skicircus Saalbach Hinterglemm Leogang Fieberbrunn, a 270km paradise of slopes. While breakfast is delivered, most choose to dine at nearby Huwi's Alm, the rustic restaurant where you can 'eat your hat'. The 'Hut Essen' consists of a starter followed by a top hat-like iron cooker filled with rich stock in which you cook hunks of Galloway beef.

SLEEPS 2

DETAILS Willy Bogner-Chalet from £1,100 per night (£550pp), B&B, with mountain transport; other chalets from £390 per night for two. 00 43 658 382 550, priesteregg.at

Chalet Artemis, St Anton

Fabulously futuristic on the outside – a four-floor steel- and pine-clad hexagonal structure – and comfortably cool and modern inside (think faux fur and designer sofas), Chalet Artemis is set in Nasserein, a calm suburb of the famously hard-partying town. Statues of the eponymous Greek goddess set the tone (each of the six bedrooms are named after a Greek god), and appear both inside and on the roof terrace, with views across the picturesque resort. The superb wellness area, with its 8m indoor pool, sauna, steam room and indoor/outdoor hot tub, is a highlight and sure to soothe aching limbs. Or bunker down in the retro 12-seater cinema with a glass of champagne. Once revived, a private 4x4 car will drop you at the nearby ski lift, which will take you into the Arlberg circuit, famed for its 180km of off-piste skiing, steep slopes and powder meadows, or head to St Anton and enjoy some après-ski – private nannies can be provided for those with kids.

SLEEPS 12

DETAILS Seven nights from £24,000 (£2,000pp), fully catered. 01933 899 420, oxfordski.com

Trattlers Hof, Bad Kleinkirchheim

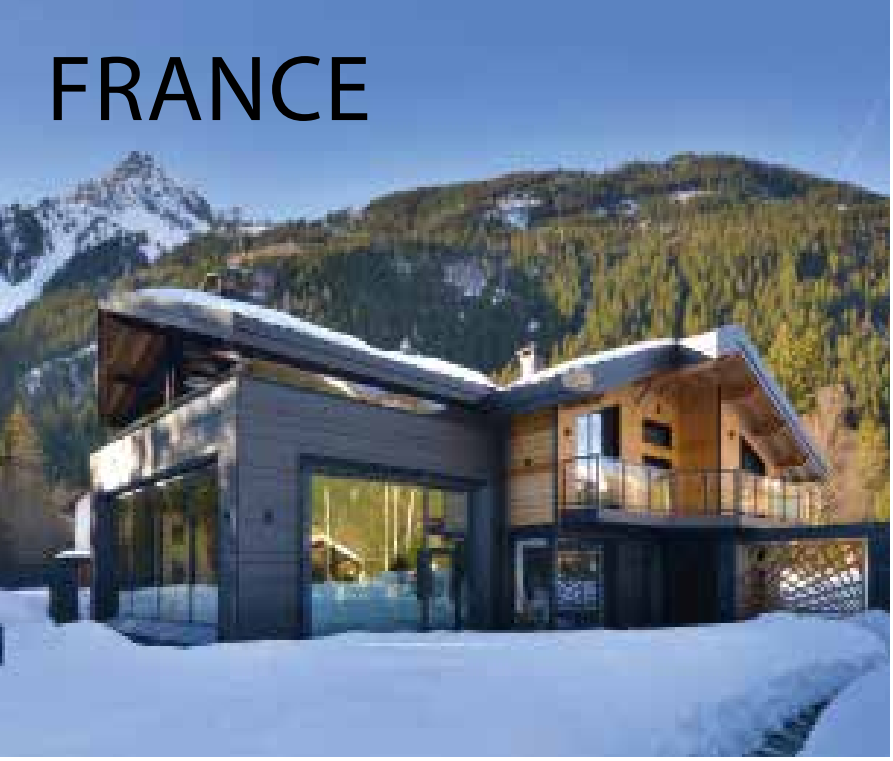
A new boutique commune of 14 self-catering chalets with a charming farm restaurant next door. Perched on the slopes of this southern resort (boyhood resort of ski champ Franz Klammer), you'll find your fridge filled with farm butter, local milk and traditional pastries. The Einkehr restaurant is part of the GenussWirt initiative, and attracts diners from far and wide with its traditional Carinthian plates made from the very best local produce – try a glass of Trattlers Hofwein, produced at the nearby boutique SAX winery.

SLEEPS 2-8

DETAILS Seven nights for two at the Classic Romantic from £1,425 (£712pp), self-catered. 00 43 4240 8172, trattlers-hof-chalets.at

Photos by Yves Garneau; Günter Standl; Rich Roberts/*altVisual.com*

FRANCE



Chalet Dalmore, Chamonix

This sleek, modern chalet brings the rugged Chamonix Valley through the glass walls of the huge lounge area, while the roof terrace has views of Mont Blanc. Five double bedrooms have floor-to-ceiling windows and balconies, there's a pool and hot tub, and a cinema room ideal for family entertaining. On the menu is a stylish mix of traditional and nouvelle cuisine that this small, British-run Chamonix ski specialist, is known for. It's close to the Flégère cable car, too, which takes you to Brevent-Flegere, the main skiing area

SLEEPS 10

DETAILS. Seven nights from £12,600 (£1,260pp) including transfers and some meals. 01865 475 104, amazoncreek.co.uk

'WITH UNINTERRUPTED VIEWS OF THE ALPS, THIS IS THE PLACE FOR THOSE WHO SIMPLY WANT TO HIT THE SLOPES... IF YOU'RE IN SEARCH OF POWDER SNOW AND QUIET SLOPES – BOTH ON- PISTE AND OFF – CHALET MERLO MAKES AN IDEAL BASE'

Chalet Merlo, Sainte Foy

With uninterrupted views over the Tarentaise Valley, La Rosière, Tignes Val D'Isère, and Les Arcs, this is the place for those who want to hit the slopes, rather than indulge in après-ski. Situated in the hamlet of Le Miroir on the edge of charming Sainte Foy, Chalet Merlo comes complete with a private chef, sauna, gym, outdoor hot tub (with champagne hoist) plus, there are two drivers on hand to take you between the resorts (all within half an hour). The six bedrooms come with epic views, exposed wooden beams and comfy leather chairs. If you're in search of powder snow and quiet slopes, helicopter transfers are available to almost anywhere. And do check out top local restaurant, Chez Mérie.

SLEEPS 12

DETAILS Seven nights from £8,525 (£710pp)half board. 0131 510 2525, premiere-neige.com

Chalet Rock 'n' Love, Tignes

It looks traditional enough until you step inside: in a riot of colour, there's a Mini Cooper turned into a pool table, a 100-album Wurlitzer jukebox, vintage guitars while three real car beds (including a Jeep) are found in a children's room. There's also an indoor pool, gym, sauna, steam room and outdoor Jacuzzi. Your chef will create gourmet dinners and afternoon teas, while your chauffeur does everything from ski school drop-offs to evening taxi runs to neighbouring Val d'Isère. On the 300km Espace Killy circuit, it's one of a handful of wild chalets created by Guerlain Chicherit, former freeride world champ and stunt driver.

SLEEPS 8 adults and 6 children

DETAILS Seven nights from £10,000 (£714pp), fully catered. 0203 291 2514, gc-kollection.com

The Views, Morzine

Contemporary yet traditional new build in this lively Alpine town for Alikats, the boutique endeavour of Brits Al and Kat Judge. With valley and mountain views from the deck and hot tub, it's on the 650km Portes du Soleil circuit which stretches into Switzerland (there's a shuttle to the lifts). The Indulgence Package includes a six-course tasting menu with fine wines, vintage champagne on arrival, and à la carte breakfast in bed.

SLEEPS 14

DETAILS Seven nights from £9,858 (£704pp) including unlimited drinks. 020 3514 6012, alikats.eu

Chalet Le Namaste, Courchevel

There's nothing conservative about this option, even though it used to be Margaret Thatcher's summer hideaway. Recently taken to a new level of grandeur (and new to rent this season) it has four double rooms (en suite or with Jacuzzi) with an additional area for kids in cabin bunk beds. There's an exquisite spa and pool area, and you can ski straight on to the Bellecôte piste, part of the sprawling Trois Vallées. Your chef will create menus to your liking – or you can pop out to one of the numerous swish Michelin-starred restaurants – try the reasonably priced Restaurant Azimut in Le Praz. And there's complimentary champagne poured at any time, too.

SLEEPS 8 adults and 4 children

DETAILS Seven nights from £18,700 (£1,550pp), fully catered. 020 3393 0833, consensiochalets.co.uk

Photos by Mark Junak; Andy Parant; Damian McArthur

SWITZERLAND

'FOOD IS GRANDLY LOCAL, SUCH AS KLOSTERS SMOKED BEEF AND CHEESE FROM THE BEST NEARBY DAIRIES, YET THE STAFF ARE AS HAPPY TO RUSTLE UP A FONDUE AS THEY ARE A BANQUET BEFITTING THE IMPRESSIVE DINING ROOM'

Tivoli Lodge, Klosters

Truly one of the world's ultimate ski-in, ski-out chalets, and in one of the smartest resorts – this is more like a stately home than an Alpine lodge. You'll melt away into the vast lounges, spa, with its stone swimming pool and waterfall, massage area, and other leisure spaces. Food is grandly local, such as Klosters smoked beef and cheeses from the best nearby dairies, yet the staff are just as happy to rustle up a fondue in the kitchen stübli as they are a banquet befitting the impressive dining room. And there's always champagne waiting. Traditional yet exclusive, the 300km ski area offers numerous excursions – the tree-lined route down to Kublis and Arosa is a must – alternatively, take one of the two chauffeur driven cars into sprightly Davos to explore the après-ski options on offer.

SLEEPS 12 adults and 6 children

DETAILS Seven nights from £40,000 (£2,200pp), fully catered. 0793 288 3254, tivolilodge.co.uk

Chalet Chouqui, Verbier

Strictly top of the range, these two connecting chalets have been kitted out by hip London designers – guests can dine on the terrace using the fire pit barbecue or enjoy views of Mont Blanc from the sunken hot tub. The nine rooms (one with four singles) have custom-made furniture, and there are two lounges, a games room, and a 15m pool. Fabulous dinners start at the well-stocked bar, with perhaps a dash to the wine cellar. It's Switzerland's trendiest resort with some of Europe's most challenging skiing – and a 24-hour chauffeur so you can enjoy the exuberant nightlife, too.
SLEEPS 20
DETAILS Seven nights from £57,200 for 16 people (£3,575pp), with each extra person £530, fully catered. 01608 674 011, skiverbierexclusive.com

Chalet Candamo, Mürren

More like a pretty Swiss house than a ski chalet, Candamo champions Mürren's high-ranking pre-war status in the early days of ski racing. It's decked out with yellowing pictures and historic skis, and a cowhide rug in front of the fire. Stand in the small garden and marvel at views across the deep valley to the rock faces and glaciers of the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau. Mürren is a chocolate box, car-free mountainside village and the chalet, by the nursery slope and Allmendhubel funicular, is usually ski-in, ski-out. Slopes locally are good (including the Schilthorn run with over 1,300m of vertical) and connect to the big Wengen/Grindelwald area. While the chalet is self-catered, a chef can be organised to serve up Swiss delicacies.
SLEEPS 10
DETAILS Seven nights from £5,450 (£545pp), self-catered. Cook around £450 per night, chaletcandamo.com

Chalet Banja, Zermatt

The perfect setting in the heart of one of the most picture-perfect resorts in the Alps, and close to the Matterhorn Express gondola (you can ski 100m from your door to it). Chalet Banja is only a year old and is contemporary both outside (albeit with an Alpine twist) and in – an enormous airy lounge, spa area with a fabulous 10m pool and three understated rooms with two doubles and one with four bunks. Some days come with a private ski guide, which is ideal for exploring the Matterhorn, while evenings start with cocktails and moreish canapés, served in front of the panoramic views. Fine Swiss dining follows, while the popular Waldhaus Restaurant is just a stone's throw away.
SLEEPS 6-8
DETAILS Seven nights from £13,000 (£1,625pp), fully catered. 00 41 792 471 588, matterhornchalets.com ⟶

Photos by Alison Hammond; Lars Lange; Yves Gameau

ITALY

Chalet Perla, Cortina d'Ampezzo

Nestled in the valley of the river Boite and surrounded by the Dolomites in the southern part of the Alps, it's hard to beat the spectacular setting of this chalet. Seamlessly blending traditional and modern styles, it exudes luxury, while the heated pool, cinema, massage area and impressive wine cellar are sure to entertain. Just 200m from the lift station of Faloria, an on-call driver can also provide quick access to Tofana, Socrepes and Cinque Torri, where a flurry of challenging slopes await – there are also blue runs to keep beginners happy – or the local restaurants of Cortina.

SLEEPS 8

DETAILS Seven days from £35,736 (£4,467pp), including breakfast. 0203 004 8750, alpineguru.com

Pine Lodge, Selva

A luxurious bolthole in a dramatic valley setting, ideal for more experienced skiers. There's an in-house chef and butler to cater to guests' whims, while the glass-walled dining room has unrivalled views over the red rock glory of the Sella Massif – around which runs the 26km Sella Ronda circuit.

SLEEPS 8

DETAILS Seven nights from £11,845 (£1,480pp), fully catered, including flights. 0161 826 1383, carrier.co.uk

Baita 1697, Sestriere

This charming 17th-century Piedmontese farmhouse has been given a flamboyant makeover by its owner, globetrotting English interior designer Lucie McCullough. It sits 1,600m up on the slopes of the Milky Way, the 400km ski area that takes in resorts such as Sauze d'Oulx, Sansicario and Montgenevre, across the French border. Featuring copious amounts of wood, stone and white walls, the chalet sleeps 12 adults, plus six children in a dorm. While there is plenty of space to cook for yourself, catered dinners or a private chef for the week can be arranged upon request.

SLEEPS 12

DETAILS Seven nights from £9,500 (£525pp), self-catered, £16,200 (£900pp) catered. 00 1 978 505 4107, baita1697.com

Chalet Zeno, San Cassiano

Although technically an apartment and part of hotel San Cassiano, Chalet Zeno boasts all the amenities of a chalet. Inside, expect pale-wood panelling and elegant furnishings, warmed by glass-encased fires, while the outdoor hot tub offers unrivalled Dolomites views. Get some of Italy's best skiing on the slopes of the Sella Ronda circuit, with lifts just a short drive away.

SLEEPS 8

DETAILS Seven nights from £36,304 (£4,538pp), including breakfast. 00 39 0471 849 500, rosalpina.it

Photos by Alpine Guru and Alex Filz