



**FRENCH  
MOUNTAINS  
HIT THE HEIGHTS!**



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# WELCOME

The British market is the most important foreign market for French mountain tourism and all of the key players in the French mountain tourism industry are united in their desire to reinforce and develop this long-established relationship.

## **The Alps, Pyrenees, Massif Central, Jura, Vosges...**

France is home to five mountain ranges where characterful villages blend seamlessly with modern ski resorts. The mountains of France are synonymous with snow-sports and are brimming with outstanding high-tech ski areas that cement its position as a leading international destination. French resorts work constantly to add strings to their bow, improving their ski areas to make them more accessible to all, and pioneering new and exciting activities. In the realm of accommodation, everything from a palace to a yurt is available. Regardless of which end of the budget spectrum, French resorts constantly endeavour to upgrade the quality of that accommodation, whether in terms of size, comfort, style or fittings, to ensure that they meet and exceed the expectations of an international clientele.

**France- the world's best and most varied ski destination.** The scale and variety of France's ski areas is unparalleled, but improvements are nonetheless incessant. With fast, modern lifts, France boasts several huge interlinked ski areas with up to 650km of pistes skiable under one lift pass. Within these, zones are put in place dedicated to particular levels and disciplines to enable everyone to get the most out the terrain for kids, beginners, freestylers, freeriders and more. The vast majority are ski-in-ski-out resorts, meaning almost everything is located within reach with minimum hassle. Most resorts are open from December to mid-April, and the highest have seasons running from November through to May. The 20,000 instructors at the Ecole du Ski Française are some of the most highly qualified in the world and employ the most up-to-date teaching methods to ensure guests enjoy the spectacular scenery as much as possible.

**The French Mountain experience is in keeping with the French way of life.** From a youth hostel to a Michelin-starred restaurant, French mountain gastronomy is prepared by people eager to show off local produce and French culinary know-how, in a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Mountain bars and restaurants have undergone something of an après-ski revolution- in some cases the whole place becomes a dance-floor once lunch is finished. Likewise, keen shoppers will find plenty of charming boutiques bursting with character for some holiday retail therapy!

**Easy Access.** French resorts have rapid rail, air and road links putting them within easy reach of the UK, while the airports have regular bus services bringing visitors to the heart of the ski areas. In addition, many resorts have developed great apps that display road conditions in real time and live support systems in place online.

**Good times for all the family.** French resorts have infrastructure designed to accommodate for even the very youngest children and put on a raft of entertainment, events and special offers to ensure that children of all ages are well catered for, and at a reasonable price. 45 French resorts carry the "Famille Plus" label: the national family-friendly benchmark.

Whatever your level and preference, whether you're looking to ski from first lift to sunset or take it easy and relax, you're guaranteed to have a great time in France's mountain resorts.

We hope to see you all in our back yard- the mountains of France- very soon!

**Jean-Marc Silva**  
Director

**Matt Carr**  
UK Press Officer





VIVRE ENSEMBLE  
DE BELLES EXPÉRIENCES

FAMILLE PLUS



## 45 FRENCH MOUNTAIN RESORTS HAVE THE FAMILLE PLUS LABEL

Famille Plus is a label that was created to help identify the most family-friendly holiday destinations in France, and allow the whole family to get the very most of their holidays when there. It is awarded only to the villages and resorts of France which meet the needs of families with children from the age of 18 months and up. This pioneering initiative is endorsed by the French Ministry of Tourism. To qualify for this label, mountain resorts must meet 110 criteria regarding:

- infrastructure and information
- resort entertainment
- activities
- the discovery of the environment and mountain heritage
- accommodation and restaurant facilities
- amenities, transport and safety

For the mountain resorts, being awarded the Famille Plus label is evidence of their strong commitment to ensure the highest level of quality in terms of infrastructure and the holiday experience they offer for families and children.

### The resorts' commitments:

In the Famille Plus mountain resorts you will receive a very warm welcome. Seven commitments that the resorts must adhere to in order to play host to both children and adults:

1. A tailor-made infrastructure for families
2. Entertainment and activities to suit all ages
3. A price to suit everyone: from the youngest to the oldest
4. Activities for adults and children to enjoy, together or separately
5. Professionals that are trained to take great care of children
6. The highest level of care by professionals
7. A commitment to take your suggestions on board as they strive always to improve their services.

To find out which resorts have been awarded the Famille Plus label, please see:

[www.france-montagnes.com](http://www.france-montagnes.com)

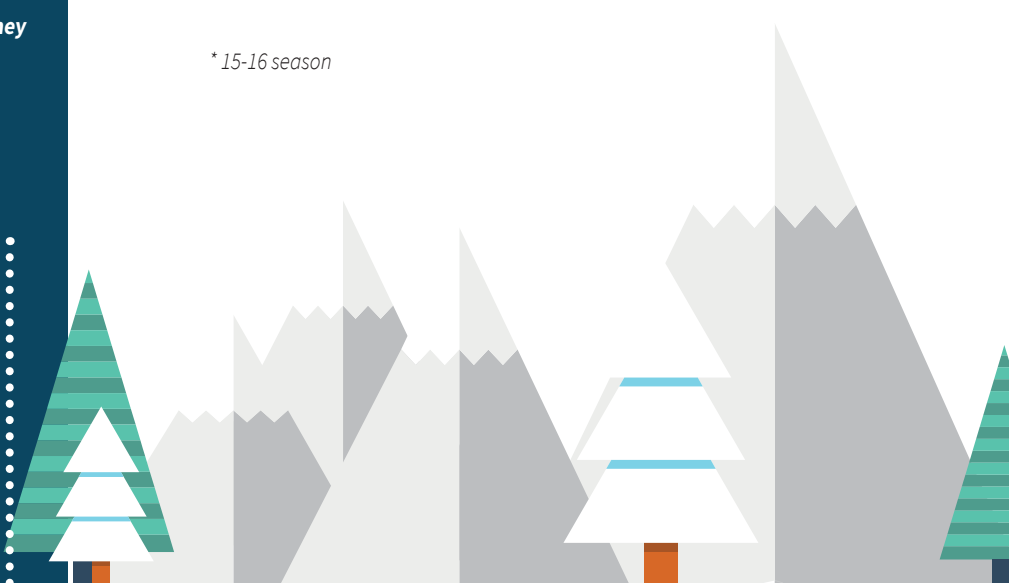


## THE FRENCH MOUNTAINS IN FIGURES

<b>350</b> ski areas	<b>3 391</b> ski lifts (the most in the world)
<b>45</b> Famille Plus labelled resorts	<b>26,581 hectares</b> of groomed ski slopes
<b>1.3 billion €</b> combined turnover of French lift companies*	<b>52 million</b> skier days*
<b>9 billion €</b> estimated total revenue from winter tourism	<b>25.20 €</b> average cost of 1-day lift-pass*

**124,000 km<sup>2</sup>**  
of mountainous territory  
(23% of mainland France)

\* 15-16 season





# MAKING THE WORLD'S BIGGEST AND BEST SKI AREAS MORE FUN

Every year France's ski areas invest huge sums in modernising their ski areas with the latest cutting-edge developments to make them more efficient and more comfortable. This year sees a focus on increasing accessibility to beginners and turning up the fun factor.

## EVER MORE PLAYFUL AND INVENTIVE

The mountains of France are unmatched in terms of variety and sheer breath-taking beauty. France's resorts do everything they can to show these mountains off to the maximum! Les 2 Alpes will open the "Skywalk"- a panoramic footbridge at 3400m altitude giving unrivalled views of Mont Blanc to the north, the Ecrins National Park to the South, La Meije to the east and Vercors massif to the west! Peyragudes in the Pyrenees (filming location for Tomorrow Never Dies) has built a new panoramic piste called, fittingly, "La 007". The "Selfie Tour" in Châtel allows the snap-happy neo-narcissist to discover the ten best selfie spots across the ski area!

Many resorts are adding a variety of obstacles, mascots and surprising additions to turn their runs into veritable adventures, particularly for youngsters. Among the latest for the 2016-2017 season are two new pistes in Valloire featuring giant bells and xylophones to bash with your pole, thus composing an extended skiing symphony on the way down! In Mont Dore in the Auvergne, skiers can test themselves against a range of challenges on the new "Entrainement de Gaulois" piste, while Combloux has a new run featuring live replays from a sequence of webcams.

Watching kids ski, it quickly becomes clear that they're mad about doing jumps and catching air- big kids and grown-ups too! New and improved boardercross runs- pistes with added contours such as banked corners, waves (a.k.a "woops"), jumps and more are springing up all over the place. The "Pirate

Adventures" fun zone in Valmorel is the latest (and the resort's 3rd boardercross).

Once the stomping grounds reserved for highly skilled expert skiers and snowboarders doing unfathomable tricks over huge jumps, snow parks have been radically democratized so that now they are accessible to all, from superhero to nervous novice. La Clusaz' "Family Run" will be the perfect environment for young and old to try their hand at freestyle. In the Pyrenees, Font Romeu will open "Fun Run", "Run 66" and "Skicross Zone"- all with the beginner freestyler in mind. Meribel, whose "Moonpark" is one of the best-known snow parks in the Alps, is launching a brand new family concept for winter 16-17... Stay tuned!

Sauze in the Southern Alps has comprehensively redeveloped its various fun zones, while Avoriaz's "Stash" run (a piste featuring all manner of wooden obstacles to jump, slide and tap), named by CNN as the best run in the world in 2014, has been extended into the forest in the direction of Morzine, making it an even better bad-weather option.

## FOCUS ON BEGINNERS

Anyone can learn to ski, at any age. Thousands of new skiers young and old strap on skis for the first time every year. The major common denominator is that like Arnie, they vow they'll be back! For these skiers, and anyone not comfortable skiing on steep or busy slopes, resorts have built special "zen", "calm" and "tranquil" areas. The names speak for themselves- these are safe and controlled areas for people that are just starting out and want to take their time.

Two new developments catch the eye this year, among others. Le Grand Bornand has spent 1,460,000€ on redeveloping its Plateau de Rosay sector to optimise its beginner ski experience, while Tignes has introduced a pass giving free and unlimited access to its green slopes.

ESF (French Ski School) has developed a range of courses designed to appeal to new skiers to the game, either with friends or as a family, with a wide variety of disciplines and ways to learn. Groups taught by girls exclusively for girls, introduction to ski-touring, off-piste or freestyle, cross country skiing, to name but a few.

## SNOWMAKING

Widespread investment to ensure optimum snow conditions.

In order to ensure that visitors can ski safe in the knowledge that the quantity and quality of snow is up to par, resorts are constantly upgrading their snowmaking facilities.

Morzine, Saint Gervais, Courchevel, Peisey-Vallandry, Valmorel, Villard de Lans/Corrençon, Les Menuires and Praz de Lys Sommand are among the resorts to invest this year in new and improved equipment that ensures that as much of the ski area can be opened in excellent condition every day.

Les Gets has installed cutting-edge GPS and radar technology on its grooming machine, enabling them to pinpoint the exact snow depth at any given point and concentrate their efforts with pinpoint precision.



# NEW AND IMPROVED ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS

The HQ is a crucial part of the holiday experience, as a base camp from which to plot your next mountain mission or to recuperate from a hard day on the hill. All manner of new and improved accommodation options are opening this winter, run by families that have honed their mountain hospitality for generations and dynamic new arrivals, raring to go. The common denominator is that they are all passionate about the mountains, know what skiers need, and are prepared to go the extra mile in order to ensure that the time spent off the mountain is every bit as good as the moments on it.

## CHALETS

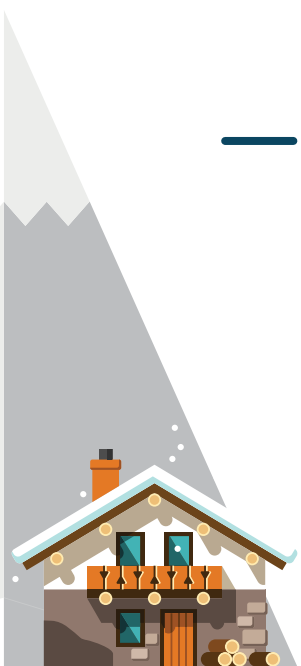
Classically styled buildings in stone and wood, the chalet is the quintessential picture-postcard French mountain experience.

Spotlight on three new chalet concepts.

- The 5\* **Chalet Skadi by Village Montana** in **Val d'Isère** opens December 17th 2016 and promises to democratize the chalet experience, with all the bells and whistles you'd expect from a high-end chalet, but with options sleeping 4, 6, 8 and 10.
- The **Chalet des Amis** in **Peisey Vallandry** is a comprehensively renovated and repurposed building steeped in history. Formerly known as the "Maison de la Montagne", it was the meeting point for high-mountain guides setting off into the Vanoise National Park, it now features six spacious 110-170m<sup>2</sup> chalet apartments for 8-14 people.
- After the success of his ultra-hi-tech Chalet Quezac, which opened in 2014, 4x freeride world champion and decorated rally-driver **Guerlain Chicherit** is opening a second chalet in **Tignes** Les Brevieres. More details to follow, but we should expect it to be even more cutting-edge than the original!

## HOTELS

- The building formerly housing the Hotel Mercure in **Val Thorens** has been totally refurbished and will reopen as the edgy 4\* boutique hotel **Fahrenheit Seven**. Simultaneously modern, vintage and cozy it promises to be the latest great addition to Val Thorens' emerging upmarket hotel game! Open November 25th 2016.
- **Les Arcs** opens its first 5\* hotel this year, the 48-room **Taj-I-Mah**. The architecture is designed to invite a maximum of natural light inside. Michelin-starred chef Eric Samson will welcome guests in a choice of two restaurants, while a 400m<sup>2</sup> spa and wellness area awaits those partial to pampering. Opens December 16th 2016.
- Two new additions further cement **Courchevel's** place at the top of the tree as far as luxury hotels are concerned. The 5\* **Barriere les Neiges** of the Barriere, Leading Hotels of the World group features 42 contemporary designed rooms and suites. The 5\* **Hotel K2 Altitude** (formerly Hotel Kilimandjaro) is decked out in a Himalayan theme.
- René and Maxime Meilleur, owners of the 3 Michelin-starred **La Bouitte** in **Saint Martin de Belleville** have spent 1m€ on a partial refurbishment of the property's boutique hotel rooms, taking its famed farmhouse luxe to the next level.







## ONWARDS AND UPWARDS

Alongside the new, there is no shortage of improved properties that have renovated, restored or embellished their offerings. In **Peyragudes** in the Pyrenees, the **Résidence Privilage** (Lagrange Vacances) re-opens after two years and 3.5m€ of refurbishments. Also in the Pyrenees, the **Hotel Mir in Saint Lary** has been awarded its 4th star. The **Hotel Crychar in Les Gets** has its eyes on a 4th star too, having created six new luxurious rooms and suites, as well as a new roof-terrace for guest to enjoy an aperitif beneath the stars. **Hotel Les Escondus in Vars** has been awarded a 3rd star, as have three hotels in **Saint-Gervais Mont Blanc**.

## NEW TOURISM RESIDENCES

Self-catered apartments in “Residences de Tourisme” remain the staple for the vast majority of skiers in France. Winter 2016-2017 sees the opening of a host of new properties to suit every budget:

- **La Clusaz:** 5\* Residence Les Cimes (Groupe PVG) and 4\* Residence Le MendiAlde (half residence, half 4\* hotel)
- **La Plagne:** 4\* Front de Neige (Odalys)
- **La Rosière:** 4\* Chalet les Marmottes and 4\* Résidence Roc Noir
- **Les Menuires:** 4\* Le Cœur des Loges (MMV)
- **Le Grand Bornand:** 4\* Le Roc des Tours (MGM)
- **Les Saisies:** Prestige Village Les Armaillis
- **Valloire:** 3\* Etoile des Neiges



## ECO AND QUIRKY

A breath of fresh air and a complete change of scenery in which to escape.

*What could be more refreshing than getting away from it all and staying as close to nature in the mountains as the winter will allow?*

- *Les Nids Des Vosges in Gerardmer in the Vosges mountains have added a new treehouse cabin complete with panoramic sauna and bubble ceiling to observe the stars, making it the ultimate mountain treehouse!*
- *The tiny resort of Saint Pierre de Chartreuse near Grenoble is opening two new piste-side treehouses designed to blend in perfectly with their surroundings. Both these and Les Nids are of course comprehensively insulated to ensure complete comfort all year round.*
- *Go back to basics at the Chevrerie du Chatelard and stay in the brand new eco-friendly gypsy caravans in Meaudre in the Vercors massif.*
- *In Morillon and Praz de Lys Sommand, Eco-Gites Leyeatay is offering new independent chalets featuring fully ecologically-responsible construction.*
- *Val Thorens welcomes its first eco-luxe B&B La Datcha, which features a wide variety of stylistic influences, to reflect the cosmopolitan tastes of its multi-lingual owners.*
- *Just up the hill from Besse in the Auvergne is the completely refurbished and dreamy Gîte L'Estivadoux. In the heart of Saint Nectaire (cheese) country, it is has the mountains and lakes of the Auvergne on its doorstep.*





# ALTERNATIVE STORY IDEAS

A few outside-the-box story ideas that caught our eye. These are mostly one-off snapshots- feel free to contact us for further info or similar examples.

-1-

## Mountain Art and Culture

The mountains make a fabulous studios for artists. Several painters and photographers base themselves in and draw inspiration from the mountains for their work. Exhibitions and wide-ranging artistic events are put on throughout the seasons, with the mountains as spectacular frames. In Mont Dore in the Auvergne, the completely rehabilitated Joseph Foret cultural centre will host a Dali exhibition. Val Thorens opens a new zen and culture centre with a 200m<sup>2</sup> area dedicated to art. French resorts often have a strong artistic drive. Les Menuires is working on a project in collaboration with “light architect” Laurent Fachard. In many cases, the design and architecture of new buildings in resort fits right into the art category, with the current trend being for buildings that blend seamlessly into the surrounding environment- the Mille 8 complex in Les Arcs and the Aquamotion centre in Courchevel being excellent examples

-2-

## VIP service

All visitors to France’s mountain resorts are VIPs, so the resorts are constantly innovating and adapting to provide services that facilitate guests’ holidays. Concierge services are the major new trend, either included in new self-catering residences (e.g. Village Les Armaillis in Les Saisies) or external that anyone can use (e.g. La Conciergerie in Val d’Isere which offers a private lounge and salon as well as a wide range of services available throughout the holiday). In Grand Tourmalet in the Pyrenees, the conciergerie is virtual- on Twitter. “Do I need to put chains on to get up to the resort?”, “how do I check the kids into the daycare centre?”, “where do I meet the instructor for ski school?” Advisors are on hand to provide the answers via Twitter in real time. More and more resorts now offer live chat in several languages on their websites with the same service in mind.

-3-

## Total Zen



Yoga is a growing trend in the mountains, which represent an outstanding setting in which to practice the discipline. Faced with magnificent landscapes, it’s easier to unplug and meditate. Yoga & Ski breaks are available in Arêches Beaufort while Les Gets offer yoga lessons to kids from 4 and up. Morillon and Val Thorens offer yoga as part of a mountain walk in snow shoes. In Valmorel, Nordic walking, a gentle and healthy activity is blended with yoga and learning breathing techniques. Last year saw the installation of France’s first dedicated yoga-on-skis piste. Yoga poses, it turns out, are widely achievable with skis on, which helps prepare the body for all sliding sports! ESF Morzine has beginner sessions. On the pistes themselves, “Zen” areas are popping up all over the place, for those that prefer to ski at a more sedate, contemplative pace.





-4-

## Ski outfit Rental

La Bresse Hohneck in the Vosges mountains was France's first resort to rent technical clothing to first-timers, to remove the cost of buying ski clothing for those who fancied trying their hand. But Alpe d'Huez takes it further and with a different target market in mind. Two ski shops in the resort have a range of vintage flouro ski suits available to rent, perfect for those that love to dress up on the slopes and evoke the sartorial glory(!) days of yesteryear!

-7-

## Stuff with weird names...

Horse-boards, Sled Dogs, Fat'Trott, Ski-hok, Snooc, Yooner. What on earth are we talking about? Good question! These are fun new quirky family-friendly activities that offer new sensations and ways to approach the simple pleasure of sliding on snow. "Fat'Trott" is a large scooter with fat wheels that can be ridden down the pistes once they close in several resorts, including Saint Gervais. Fat Bikes are their pedalled cousins, offered by dozens of resorts in each of France's 5 mountain ranges. Sled dogs, a Norwegian concept, are offered in Les Gets. For those keen on being the first to try new sports, Ski Hok is a new-born discipline offered in the Isere region, mixing elements of snow-blades and touring skis. Similarly the Snooc, a brand new invention from an inventor and entrepreneur from Chambéry, combines ski-touring tech on the up and sledging on the down. The activity remains exclusive to France and is available in Le Grand Bornand. Without forgetting the Bun-J ride in Tignes- part ski jumping, part bungee jumping, part zip wire, or husky sleighs, offered by dozens of resorts and a huge hit with kids.

-5-

## Craft beer from the mountains



The mountains are awash with craft beer. Hooray! Brewed with water direct from glaciers, flavoured with the taste of the mountains and enjoyed beneath splendidly peaked panoramas, there is no better place to enjoy quality beers. Brasserie du Mont Blanc has multiple world-champion beers at the World Beer Awards. The Brasserie Galibier in Valloire is France's highest craft brewery. Arrivissante from the Aravis region (La Clusaz & Le Grand Bornand), Lombarde from the Haute Maurienne, 21 (as in the 21 hairpins climb) to Alpe d'Huez, La Sorcière from Orcières are all artisanally made to the highest standards and are wonderful ambassadors to their respective home resorts! Brasserie Alphanand near Puy Saint Vincent is the brainchild of former French team elite downhill racer Luc Alphanand. The Bec Jaune Brewery in Morzine is run by a former brewer from "Bermondsey's finest" Kernel brewery (and is one of Morzine's hottest new addresses to eat and drink). No sign of the craft beer trend slowing down in the mountains in other words!

-8-

## Digital detox

Even on holiday people find it hard to disconnect, turn off the smartphone... and be on holiday! The mountains are the ideal environment to step away from the office, properly. Certain hotels are on board with this approach and offer to lock the phone in a safe upon your arrival! In the Vercors massif, digital detox stays are available with the express purpose of disconnecting.

-6-

## Man vs Wild

Certain resorts offer veritable survival courses for those looking to push their limits. La Clusaz's Survival Techniques Academy is approved by Bear Grylls, and encourages participants to exit and expand their comfort zone with full courses or initiations, accessible to anyone, including adventurous families. Orientation in the wild, constructing a shelter, management of stress and cold, clever survival tricks. New ways to approach and understand the mountain environment. In Gerardmer in the Vosges, adventure courses teach you how to make drinking water and offer fun "commando" courses.

-9-

## Easy access

Both Chambéry and Grenoble boast international airports on a human scale, with regular flights from the UK. Both are within touching distance of a multitude of major resorts, served by direct and inexpensive bus transfers. France's top snow-sportsmen and women know this better than most-athletes like Brice Roger (ski racer), Ben Valentin (halfpipe skier), Marion Haerty (freeride snowboarder) and Clemence Grimal (halfpipe snowboarder) are working with Chambéry airport this winter on a special campaign.





# EVENT CALENDAR 2016-2017

## LA GRANDE PREMIERE

**VAL THORENS, 26TH-27TH NOVEMBER 2016.**

Along with Val d'Isere and Tignes, Val Thorens is the first resort of the season to fire up its lifts, on November 26th. 2016 sees a new opening weekend fiesta celebrating all things snow with parties, gear testing of everything from ski touring to snowboard equipment, the Rock On Snowboard tour and plenty more across the weekend.

## RISE FESTIVAL

**LES 2 ALPES, 10TH-17TH DECEMBER 2016**

Now into its third year, this mountain music festival hosted by the organisers of Ibiza Rocks is one for the dance music fans. Last year's headliners included Sigma Live and Skream, the 2016 edition promises to be the biggest yet, with stages all over the resort, legendary day parties at apres ski bars across the ski area and all-night afterparties at the clubs in town.

## GRANDE ODYSSÉE SAVOIE MONT BLANC

**7TH-19TH JANUARY 2017**

The most spectacular dog-sledding race in the world, the 2017 edition spans two weeks, 10 stages and a dozen resorts, including Les Carroz, Les Gets, Megève, La Plagne, Val Cenis, Aussois and Bonneval sur Arc.

## « 6 STATIONS RUGBY TOURNAMENT »

**MID-FEBRUARY 2017**

An epic rugby sevens tournament on snow featuring legends of the sport, played in 6 resorts, including Valmorel, La Clusaz and Val Thorens. Past players include legends Shane Williams (WAL), Serge Betsen (FRA), Simon Shaw (ENG) and Iain Balshaw (ENG). The 2017 edition promises to be a big hit, full of big hits!

## SKICOLOR

**LES GETS, 11TH MARCH 2017**

Inspired by the Color Run event, Skicolor- now into its 3rd year- is an event which paints the mountains in technicolour. Participants ski down a run through explosions of coloured powder, the goal being to cross the line as colourfully as possible!

## « SKIING INTO SPRING » ROCK THE PISTES / SNOWBOXX FESTIVAL

**LES PORTES DU SOLEIL / AVORIAZ, 19TH-26TH MARCH 2017**

A free music festival with headliners playing on stages dotted about the vast Portes du Soleil ski area. The festival features an eclectic range of acts to reflect the breath-taking variety of locations. Former headliners include rave-rock band Klaxons, Pete Doherty's Babyshambles and Reggae/Dub pioneer Lee Scratch Perry. Snowboxx takes place in Avoriaz in parallel and is more targeted to dance music fans, although 2016's standout performer was Grime superstar Stormzy! Combined, the two festivals cover the whole spectrum and represent the ultimate mountain music festival combo!

## « SKIING INTO SPRING » SUBLI'CIMES

**LA PLAGNE, 5TH-18TH APRIL 2017**

One of the flagship Skiing Into Spring events, La Plagne decks out its 7 summits in a remarkable range of themes. 2017 details TBA, but expect bungee jumping, reindeer, saunas, jacuzzis and beach bars at the top of the mountains across La Plagne's vast ski area!

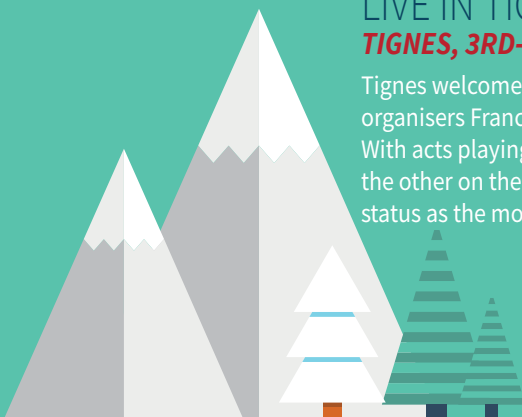
## « SKIING INTO SPRING » LIVE IN TIGNES BY FRANCO FOLIES

**TIGNES, 3RD-5TH APRIL**

Tignes welcomes one of France's biggest music festival organisers Franco'Folies back for a second year of Live in Tignes. With acts playing across 2 stages- one in the heart of the resort, the other on the ski area, the 2017 edition will confirm Tignes' status as the most rock n roll of all ski resorts!

More information:

**[www.france-montagnes.com](http://www.france-montagnes.com)**







« Vast & cutting-edge ski areas; game-changing high-altitude resorts; charming & authentic hidden gems; world-famous events; stunning views and service perfected over generations... Welcome to the mountains of France! »





# FIVE KEY TRENDS

Over-arching trends gathering pace in resorts across France for winter 2016-2017.

## 1. Authenticity

Back to basics. The main ingredient is the mountains. From the towering peaks to the lush forests of the Alps and Pyrenees to the volcanoes of the Auvergne and the splendid rolling hills of the Vosges and the Jura, the mountain-scapes of France are spectacular. The views are superb, the lifestyle and heritage are special and the personalities striking. Whether in the vast ski areas of Haute Savoie and Savoie, watching the sunrise in solitude from the roof of the Pyrenees, on the sweeping plateaux of the Vercors or in cosy and confidential corners of a village resort, one is guaranteed a fabulous change of scenery and an authentic experience in any of France's 5 mountain ranges (Alps, Pyrenees, Massif Central, Vosges, Jura). The resorts of Montgenèvre, Méribel, Villard de Lans/Corrençon, Peisey Vallandry, Le Grand Bornand and Val d'Allos are putting a particular focus on getting back to the roots and rejuvenation this winter.

## 2. Playful

Reflective doesn't necessarily mean inactive, nor does a mountain holiday necessarily have to be a ski holiday. There's something active for everyone, regardless of interests and budget. Sliding on the snow is course the quasi-constant, with a variety of equipment, snowy surfaces, activities and sensations being developed. Active folks can get out and about, uphill and down, on a whole host of skis, snow-shoes, bikes, sledges, on foot... Mountain spaces are enhanced by spectacular lighting, surprising soundscapes and every year the arrival of new activities gives rise to new ways to experience the mountains. Resorts particularly well suited to the diverse-of-interest include Les Gets, Orcières 1850, Val Thorens, Besse Super Besse, Le Mont Dore and Praz de Lys Sommand.

## 3. Nordic

There's no need to jet off to the Arctic if you want to immerse yourself in a natural Nordic experience. At Christmas in particular, one is inclined to wonder if Santa really does live in Lapland, or whether in fact he's been hiding in the mountains of France all along! Nordic activities too are in the grip of a sort of modernising revolution. Secured and dedicated ski-touring tracks accessible to all are becoming de rigueur in several resorts, while more and more ski schools are offering courses to get people out into the untouched backcountry with a guide. Also on hand in ever more resorts are teams of eager husky-dogs,

desperate to whip you off to pristine and wild places in a sled! The mountains of the Jura and the Vosges are excellent spots for husky adventures, as is the Vercors massif in the Isère region. For ski-touring, Arêches Beaufort, Sainte Foy Tarentaise and La Clusaz are excellent choices..

## 4. Heritage

Many French resorts were trailblazers at their inception and remain at the forefront of ski resort excellence today. Avoriaz turns 50 this year, which is an opportunity to celebrate its remarkable history as the first of its kind and a unique ski resort concept. Located atop a huge cliff, built in a striking and unique style- at once futuristic, avant-garde, retro. The resort was labelled one of the great architectural and heritage developments of the 20th century by the French Culture Ministry in 2003, and winning prizes more recently as the world's best family resort, most innovative in sustainability (World Ski Awards 2013 & 2014), world's best run- The Stash (CNN, 2014). Val Ceniz and Superdevoluy both celebrate their 50th birthdays this year too, while St Gervais Mont Blanc and Alpe d'Huez blow out 80 candles in 2017. Each will have special festivities to celebrate. Alpe d'Huez is marking the occasion by announcing an ambitious 350m€ project to refurbish the urban space to make the village more ergonomic and sustainable, modernise the lift network, and most excitingly, eventually link the ski area with Les 2 Alpes and Les Sybelles. Dizzying in scope, the project would make the ski area by far the biggest linked area in the world. One to follow for sure!

## 5. Digital

Social media is an increasingly crucial part of every facet of people's lives, including (or especially) on holiday. Resorts are pulling out all the stops to facilitate the taking of amazing photos. "Selfie Tours" in Châtel and Val Thorens and breathtaking man-made structures are two approaches to this end. In Val Ceniz and Aussois, by scanning one's ski pass, a machine takes a hi-res photo which is then emailed to the skier. Villard de Lans also has a free photo on the slopes system. A restaurant in Les 2 Alpes has a special box installed at 2600m for the same purpose. Video parks immortalise the exploits of skiers and snowboarders over the course of a whole run and can be found in Les Gets, Font Romeu, Peyragudes (both Pyrenees) and Vars, whose 7 snow parks make the resort one of Europe's best for freestylers.





# EASY ACCESS

Easier than ever for winter 2016-2017!

France is the most accessible mountain destination for British skiers. Flight routes from all over the UK service 15 access airports to France's 5 major mountain ranges: The Alps, Pyrenees, Massif Central, Jura and Vosges. Regular bus services are in place to connect those airports with their nearby resorts. Those that prefer to travel overland and maximise their time on the hill can choose from direct trains to the heart of the mountains, or go via Paris for a change of flavour en route!

Winter 2016-2017 sees the opening of 6 brand new routes and two existing routes being expanded to match demand. The Pyrenees are the big winners, with 3 new routes into Toulouse bringing 18 flights per week servicing the resorts of the Pyrenees which, clearly, are developing quite the following in the UK.

## NEW ROUTES

- **Birmingham-Toulouse**, Flybe. Daily flights launching October 30th 2016-March 25th 2017, from £24.99 each way.
- **Luton-Toulouse**, Easyjet. 4 flights per week launching September 2016, from £29.23 each way.
- **Stansted-Toulouse**, Ryanair. Daily flights launching November 2016, from £16.99 each way.
- **Stansted-Chambéry**, British Airways. 2 flights per week launching December 17th 2016, from £49 each way.
- **Norwich-Chambéry**, Flybe. One weekly flight (Saturday) launching December 17th 2016, from £50.99 each way.
- **Norwich-Geneva**, Flybe. Frequency, launch date and lead-in price TBA.

## EXPANDED ROUTES

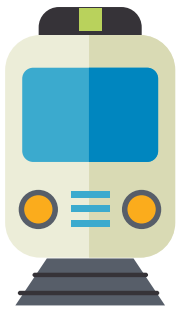
Monarch is increasing its Gatwick and Birmingham to Grenoble routes to 4 and 2 weekly flights respectively- great news for much of the French Alps!

## BUS TRANSFERS

[www.altibus.com](http://www.altibus.com) is the information portal and booking website grouping France's alpine bus transfer companies. Transfer can be booked from the airports of Geneva, Lyon and Chambéry, as well as from 20 major train stations, to over 80 resorts in the French Alps.

## TRAVELLING BY TRAIN

Passionate British skiers love the direct Snow Train or travelling by train via Paris. Both allow for a departure on a Friday evening, arriving at the crack of dawn on a Saturday, and leaving on the evening of the following Saturday, meaning 8 days skiing are possible compared to the tradition 6 afforded by travelling by air. A variety of French resorts are easily reached by train, none more so than Les Arcs- the Snow Train from St Pancras delivers skiers from the centre of London to Bourg St Maurice, where skiers hop on the short funicular into the heart of the resort. No airport transfer needed, at either end!



# SKIING INTO SPRING 2017



**SPRING IN THE MOUNTAINS IS A TIME OF RENEWAL AND REJUVENATION. THE DAYS LENGTHEN AND THE TEMPERATURES ARE WARMER, LEAVING MORE TIME TO REALLY ENJOY THE SNOW AND THE SUN.**

Dozens of resorts across France, in collaboration with France Montagnes, put on a **fabulous raft of events** from mid-March right through until early May under the banner of the Skiing Into Spring Initiative, making it a wonderful time to visit. Stay tuned for further events during this period to be confirmed in the near future!

## SUPERB SKIING CONDITIONS...

Snow conditions in the spring time are **ideal for all kinds of skier**, from nervous novice to superhero, with the last few seasons in particular saving the very best skiing until last. The pistes are in great shape having had all winter to accumulate a solid base. Adventurous types into skiing off-piste and ski-touring will have the choice between powder snow on north facing slopes and spring snow on east, south and westerly aspects throughout the day. Freestylers love the softer landing in the snowpark in springtime. Spring is a great time to take your skiing in a new direction.

After the middle of March, there's no need to be up at the crack of dawn! Better to enjoy a relaxed breakfast and then enjoy skiing on velvet snow warmed by the sun having frozen overnight. With fewer people on the mountain at this time of year, you can enjoy **magical conditions with nobody else about!**

## ...AND MUCH MORE BESIDES!

After putting your skis back in the locker, there is still plenty of time to **try another activity and experience a new sensation**. A multitude of activities are on offer at this time of year: snow-shoes, tobogganing, dog-sledding, snow

mountain-biking, ice-diving, walking, golf, tennis, polo, paragliding and much more. The whole range of traditional winter facilities in-resort like ice skating rinks and aqua-leisure centres are still very much alive and well in spring too.

And if relaxation is the name of the game, spring is the perfect time of year to go to the mountains. All kinds of indoor and outdoor wellness centres can be found in-resort, from hammams, jacuzzis and saunas to various kinds of pampering and treatments to make you forget the stresses of everyday life and feel completely rejuvenated.

### Chilling, Partying, Entertainment and Events

France's ski resorts have embraced and adapted to the opportunities spring brings, and lay on a host of **fun festive activities and open-air cultural attractions** throughout the period (concerts, festivals, themed spectacles).

**The mild temperatures** encourage you to take your time, relax in a deck chair on the terrace at lunch, and work on your sun tan all afternoon!

Anything is possible; it's up to you to let your day go wherever the mood dictates!

## THE NATURAL WORLD WAKES UP

With the strengthening of the sun's rays in the spring time, the natural world in the mountains comes to life. Marmottes- the original affable mountain mammals- emerge after their winter hibernation to play in the sun, while Ibex and Chamois tread the fine lines along the mountain cliff faces. Underfoot a field of blooming crocuses in the valley contrasts with a mountain peak blanketed by fresh snow at the summit. **Spring is the perfect blend of winter and summer!**



Find out more at:  
[www.skiingintospring.com](http://www.skiingintospring.com)





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# FURTHER INFORMATION

France Montagnes is the confederation of major players in French mountain tourism whose remit is to promote the mountains of France as a tourist destination.

*Your one-stop-shop for snow reports; webcams;  
practical info; interactive resort finder; maps; resort guides;  
regular webzine content featuring news, trends  
and article ideas...*

Visit [www.france-montagnes.com](http://www.france-montagnes.com)

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