



SWISS STYLE

Juliet Kinsman slopes off for a long weekend in Verbier

Sophisticated without being showy and sporty yet stylish, this Swiss Alps resort town is rather unique. Sunny, with a villagey feel, Verbier is especially lovely in January when it's quieter, cheaper, and there's usually great snow. Geneva airport is a little under two hours away by car; our favourite airline to get there is Swiss. Or take Flybe or a private jet to Sion, and you'll only be 40 minutes away from Verbier, making it ideal for shorter ski sojourns.

SNOW...

The must-ski slope is the celebrated-but-challenging Mont Fort: it's worth tackling just for the soul-stirring Matterhorn view. Skis cost just over £50 for a three-day hire from **MOUNTAINAIR** (mountainairverbier.com). Don't just get your kicks from the fast-paced downhill action either: head to **LES ONALON** restaurant (00 41 27 771 72 71), the highest point reachable

by car in Verbier, strap on some raquettes de neige and head up the path for hour-long hike. When you reach **BUVETTE DE LA MARLENAZ** (00 41 27 771 54 41) pause for a chocolat-chaud, then breeze back down.

STAY...

Trad on the outside, rad on the inside **CHALET SAGITTAIRE** (left) is comprised of three stylish apartments and a swimming pool and spa. Located just below the main Médran hub, the interior design is magazine-shoot worthy and the level of service impeccable. Les Esserts is the ground-floor apartment ideal for 4-6. Les Gentianes is the penthouse for 12, split across the top two floors. The Fontanet, the most



ON LOCATION
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spacious pad, sleeps 12-13. (From about £885 a head a week in the smallest apartment in low season up to £46,730 for exclusive use, sleeping up to 31.) Or take over chalet-fit-for-a-billionaire, five-bedroomed **BELLA COOLA**, which sleeps 11 (left), where the décor is laced with a taste of the Far East. (From £11,600 to £45,500 a week.) Both properties are a world away from the standard-issue chalet – here a fine-dining-trained chef whips up breakfast, tea and dinner, served with first-class wines by discreet hosts.

Most conceivable luxuries are included in the rates, including in-resort 4x4 chauffeuring, unlimited use of a well-stocked bar, and Jo Malone products. To book either, go to mrandmrsmith.com/verbier or call 0845 034 0700.

SUP...

If classic grilled meat or fish dishes on a piste-side terrace grabs you, head to **LE CRISTAL AT LES RUINETTES** (00 41 27 771 42 44). Hit chic-but-cosy **CHEZ DANY** (00 41 27 771 25 24) and sledge back down after your meal. For more low-key mulled wine at the wood-paneled pizzeria **LE FER À CHEVAL** (00 41 27 771 26 69). If fancy cocktails and booming party music are your wont, **COCO CLUB** (00 41 27 771 66 66) and **COUP D'ETAT** (00 41 27 78 652 97 60) are hottest see-and-be seen spots.

SPA...

No need even to venture outside – let an experienced therapist come to you. **BEAUTY AND THE PISTE** (00 41 79 838 93 14) offers grooming-to-go. Rosie from the Pilates experts **CHILALI** (00 41 79 621 14 99) reaches parts other masseuses can't reach; one-hour from about £94.

SOUVENIRS...

Cheese lovers will thrill at the gruyères and roqueforts at **LA CHAUMIÈRE** (00 41 27 771 25 30); oenophiles earmark **VINABAGNES** wine merchants. If you want bling or designer labels, go to Courcheval!

