

LIKE A ROLLING STONE



LE KILIMANJARO

SLOPESIDE

SNOWBASIN VIEW

## VAL D'ISERE AND THE CHALET EXPERIENCE

The end of the ski season is the ideal time to begin planning next season's big ski trip to Europe. Skiing in Europe is different: the language, the distance, rent or bring your equipment, arrange for a guide, organize meals, hotel or condo. Here's a solution: an all-inclusive "Chalet Experience" in spectacular Val d'Isere, France at the 5-star Le Chardon Mountain Lodges. From planning to execution they take care of all the details and your worry-free ski holiday awaits.

Set in a ski-in ski-out private enclave high above the magical alpine playground of Val D'Isere, France, Le Chardon Mountain Chalets combines luxury accommodations, laid back comfort, discreet professional service, and all the amenities necessary for a perfect vacation for skiers and non-skiers alike. The Le Chardon team thinks of absolutely everything. Guests work with the team in advance so your vacation isn't about decisions, it's pure enjoyment.

Right from the airport your waiting transfer will whisk you directly up to the mountains or stop lakeside in the village of Annecy for a champagne picnic along the way.

Pre-arrival your chalet manager will have everything organized: ski rentals, lift passes, reservations, activities and ski guides, and

serves as your in-resort concierge for the entire stay. Your favorite wines, liquors and foods await your arrival. Cocktails, champagne and canapés are served by your chalet hostess in front of a roaring fire at afternoon tea time. Slippers replace shoes adding to the cozy comfort. At your chalet, each night your private chef will create a fabulous 5 course dinner that reflects your personal tastes and eliminates the hassle of restaurant hunting. I truly feel that a Michelin star is in the



LA FOLIE DOUCE VAL D'ISERE

future for our young chef.

After an exhilarating day of skiing, savor the views of the Manchet Valley while soaking in the outdoor hot tub or have a massage in the private spa and sauna.

Le Chardon is made up of 5 separate chalets accommodating 10 to 20 guests, all with en-suite bedrooms and common areas designed in a warm yet sophisticated alpine style. Other amenities include a ski room with boot warmers, wireless internet service, Sonos music systems, home cinema and an invaluable private on-call chauffeur service throughout the resort area. The hassle free, luxury "Chalet Experience" is perfect for intimate family vacations or corporate getaways.

*Le Chardon is booking for next season; for more info contact Claire Richards: [claire@lechardonvaldisere.com](mailto:claire@lechardonvaldisere.com) or +44 (0) 131 209 7969. [lechardonvaldisere.com](http://lechardonvaldisere.com)*

### **WHY VAL D'ISERE? THE SKIING, OF COURSE - AND IT IS NOTHING SHORT OF FABULOUS.**

Made famous by Olympian Jean-Claude Killy, the vast terrain and breathtaking scenery of the joint Val d'Isere-Tignes ski area includes 153 trails, 78 lifts and an astounding 24,000 skiable acres. It has one of the longest ski seasons in Europe—from the end of November until the beginning of May—with some of the most reliable snow conditions and extensive snowmaking. This season, storm after storm filled the slopes with knee deep powder. Spring skiing was superb due to the high altitude and the two glaciers that sit atop either end of the resort.

It's a wise decision to hire a guide to help navigate the vast terrain. In all my years on the slopes I've never had a better one than Raphael Evin from Oxygene, a family run ski school now in its 25th year. Equal parts tour guide, instructor and ski buddy, Raphael shows you how to breathe in the beauty of his Val d'Isere as he leads you on a thrilling adventure, swooping from trail to trail and village to village. Catching your breath from the skiing and the scenery,

Raphael introduces you to Genepi—the local herbal liqueur served at the mid-mountain cafe, La Peau de Vache.

On-mountain lunches are unforgettable at Val d'Isere. Soak up the sun and gorgeous views at L'Étincelle Restaurant at the base of Solaise with its interesting design and open wood grilling. Another day try the cozy Le Signal for traditional Savoie cuisine at the top of the cable car at Le Fornet. Each winter Val d'Isere's restaurants serve an estimated 300,000 fondues. The wildest spot however—which has to be seen to be believed—is La Folie Douce. Every afternoon it transforms from a mid-mountain lunch spot to a runway cabaret show and then a full blown, dancing-



on-the-tables apres ski spot. Fortunately, as the scene gets really crazy you can opt to take the gondola down instead of skiing down the famously steep La Face de Bellevard, a daring descent after an afternoon of partying.

Val d'Isere is also a great family place to learn to ski. There are three renowned ski schools, a mid-mountain learning area, and three lifts on the edge of the village that are free for beginners.

For rental equipment, THE place to go is one of the two Snowberry shops on the main street run by Scots, Jock and Susan Dun. I've never been more impressed with a custom boot fitting and ski rental operation anywhere in the world.

It's lovely to stroll through Val d'Isere village with its stone buildings and baroque 17th century church, do some shopping or stop at one of the delightful food shops and patisseries.

Free bus service connects the main town with the hamlets of Le Fornet and La Daille, where there's alternate slope access and additional lodging and dining choices, no car necessary.

The luxurious 5-star hotel and restaurant, Les Barmes de l'Ours, is where young chef Antoine Gras will dazzle you with his creativity. Another gem is L'Atelier d'Edmond in Le Fornet, with 2-star Michelin chef, Benoit Vidal, presiding over the fine dining upstairs and his cozy bistro down below.

Undoubtedly Val d'Isere will be an alpine holiday to remember.

*[valdisere.com](http://valdisere.com); [oxygeneski.com](http://oxygeneski.com); [hotellesbarme.com/en/snowberry-valdisere.com](http://hotellesbarme.com/en/snowberry-valdisere.com)*

– Rich Silver



### **MAKE THE BEAUTIFUL CITY OF GENEVA, SWITZERLAND YOUR GATEWAY TO THE ALPS.**

Walk around the old town, visit museums, or shop for a Swiss watch. Set on the lakefront, the Ritz-Carlton Hotel de la Paix, Geneva artfully combines old world luxury and charm with contemporary design. On the main level enjoy fine wine and artisanal chocolate pairings at the Philippe Pascoet Chocolate Shop. Then head to the Fiskebar, to enjoy Geneva's only Scandinavian-themed restaurant and a traditional Aquavit toast to cap your night. All rooms are beautifully appointed with the most heavenly beds for a restful night before heading home. This was Grace Kelly's go to spot in Geneva, now make it yours. [geneve.com](http://geneve.com); [ritzcarlton.com/geneva](http://ritzcarlton.com/geneva)



RITZ-CARLTON HOTEL DE LA PAIX, GENEVA