

THE TIMES

# LUX X

MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

PURE FASHION





## A fresh dusting

Three fabulous new Alpine hotels for last-minute skiing

### Hôtel Le Coucou, Méribel, France

This ski hotel by Maisons Pariente, which opened Hôtel Crillon Le Brave and Hôtel Lou Pinet in the south of France last year, is not, as you might expect from a family who made its fortune in fashion, overtly fashionable. Méribel's second five-star hotel is, though, designed by Paris's interior designer of the moment, Pierre Yovanovitch. The hotel is full of Yovanovitch touches, from his signature Papa Bear chairs and Seventies ceramics to graphic carpets.

The 55 rooms and two chalets are as comfy as they are distinctive, each with art from the owners' collection, a terrace and a stone-clad bathroom, as well as extras from Coucou rosé to Le Labo body creams. Most spoiling of all is the hotel's position, at 1,640m, beside the Marmotte ski-run. After you have had ski boots fitted, which are warmed and laid out beside waxed skis every morning, all you have to do is whizz off across the snow. Return for a decadent lunch at Beefbar: Kobe beef kebabs, seabass ceviche, creamy mashed potato ("half potato, half butter," says Kimberley Cohen, the artistic director), kale and avocado salads and truffle pizza. For whiteout days there is a gym and heated indoor-outdoor pool, and Tata Harper treatments.

At night there's a cosy bar and hearty Italian food in the main restaurant, from truffle risotto to a mini-brick of featherlight brioche with "milk-froth honey ice cream"; a sort of posh Mr Whippy. *Doubles from €490 B&B, lecoucoumeribel.com* Lisa Grainger



### SLOPE OFF

From top: Chalech; Les Chalets du Mont d'Arbois; Hôtel Le Coucou

### Chalech, Lech, Austria

Skiing is hard work – until you encounter a Bramble Ski experience. I had to turn up in person to be fitted for my ski boots, but if they could have done it for me they would have.

Opened in January, the Chalech group of chalets in Lech is the latest addition to Bramble's Alpine portfolio. Like most buildings in the resort town, Chalech is an iceberg. While each of the chalets sit above ground and have private saunas, they are joined underground by a warren of corridors that links a gym, pool and tepidarium. The vast array of dishes – from rib-eye steak and fresh oysters to tropical fruit that would rival that in a Thal beach resort – is cooked underground and then finished in a chalet's kitchen by its in-house chef. Above ground, the living area and six bedrooms of Chalech S, where I stayed, are impeccably finished in velvet and traditional timber, while its master suite has a dressing room large enough to house a full annual wardrobe, let alone a holiday wardrobe.

Rent one of the chalets on a catered basis and you get two full days of ski instruction with a Bramble Ski professional, who is not only your guide to the 305km of pistes in the Arlberg area, but also your concierge. They will take care of everything from restaurant bookings to in-chalet personal shopping. All that's left for you to do is master that snowplough. *Chalech S costs from €25,100 self-catered and €41,460 fully-catered; brambleski.com.* Prue White

### Les Chalets du Mont d'Arbois, Megève, France

In 1920 Noémie de Rothschild decided not to return to her favoured winter haunt of St Moritz – and so the skiing town of Megève was born. The Rothschilds have built not only infrastructure but the Four Seasons Hotel Megève (which reopened in December after a fire) and the Chalets du Mont d'Arbois hotel. Constructed of three traditional wooden chalets, the family's former mountain home oozes old wealth and, after its €10 million refit, flashes of contemporary style. The designers Pierre-Yves Rochon and Thierry Curty, with Ariane de Rothschild, have created three distinctive spaces.

The eight-bedroom Chalet Alice has a bohemian feel; Chalet Noémie has traditional farmhouse décor; and the mountain-style 25-bedroom Chalet Eve has the Michelin-starred Nicolas Hensinger's Prima restaurant in the basement. It also has an indoor-outdoor pool and Bamford spa. What makes it stand out are the old-school vibes, with many antiques on display and roaring fires. It's also the little touches: the down-liners on the beds, the man by the front door offering pancakes and vin chaud, the concierge who can arrange balloon flights or snowshoeing expeditions. The ski lift is a five-minute shuttle from the hotel. For recluses there is Ideal, a seven-bedroom penthouse atop the mountain where guests can feast on the fare of a two Michelin-star chef and soak in a bath with views of Mont Blanc. *Doubles from €580, fourseasons.com/megèvechalets* LG