

Ski Travel: Chalets with a view

From a Norwegian lodge with summit-to-sea skiing to a Shinto-Buddhist escape in the Alps... Here are 15 amazing owner-run snow retreats

Sam Haddad
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One of the chalets at More Mountain, Morzine, where owners Sam and John Dredge promise luxury in the heart of town.

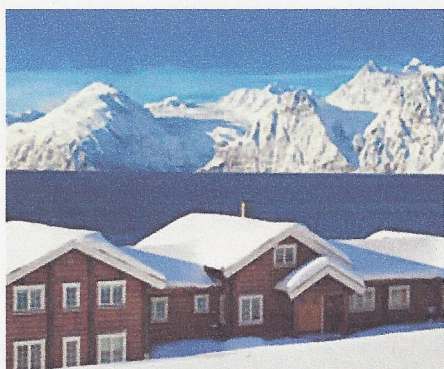
1. More Mountain, Morzine, France

Thanks to its proximity to Geneva airport, snowboard-friendly pistes and parks, and less obscene drink pricing than many other resorts, Morzine has more independent chalets than most resorts. One such offering is More Mountain, run by husband-and-wife team Sam and John Dredge, who promise "luxury but not pretentious" sleek-looking chalets in the heart of town. Each is furnished with iPods, flatscreen TVs and Garmin GPS devices so you can plot where you've skied and, more crucially, see how fast you've gone. They make toffee vodka and provide hip flasks to take up the mountain, as well as serving bacon and eggs for breakfast, for when you've overdone it the night before.

Book it From £449 per person, per week; moremountain.com

Get there EasyJet (easyjet.com) flies from London Gatwick to Geneva from £37.98 return; the one-hour transfer from Geneva is included in the price of your stay.

2. Lyngen Lodge, Tromsø, Norway



Lyngen Lodge sits in a natural forest clearing above a fjord with a striking mountain backdrop. High in the Arctic Circle, it's as remote a ski spot as you could hope to find, in Europe at least. Co-owner Graham Austick, who grew up in the north of England before defecting to St Anton to become a ski instructor and mountain guide, spotted the site when hiking through a nearby forest. He wanted to create a place which complemented rather than offended the nature around it, so he used a traditional Norwegian "lafting" pine timber frame with a thick grass roof, which also insulates the property. Fast boats transport you direct to the snow, where you can ski down from spectacular summits to snow-covered beaches – potentially basking in the midnight sun if you're there in May. Or if you're there in January or February, you can gasp at the northern lights.

Book it 23,500kr (£2,458) per person for a week; lyngenlodge.com

Get there Norwegian Airlines (norwegian.no) flies from London Gatwick to Tromsø from £53.10 return. Private transfers to the lodge are included.

3. Ferme de Moudon, Les Gets, France



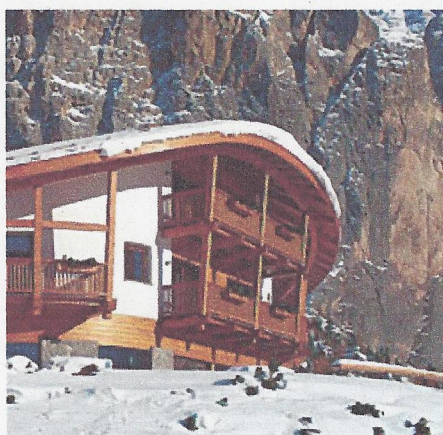
Those blessed with an excellent memory, or who've been watching the repeats on *More4*, will remember Nicky Dobree chivvying on French workmen during the conversion of a 17th-century farmhouse to a luxury chalet in a 2004 episode of *Grand Designs*. The show's presenter Kevin McCloud likened the finished product to "something from a James Bond set" and he wasn't far off the mark. The Ferme du Moudon combines a traditional chocolate-box exterior with a high-concept Scandi

interior; the kitchen alone cost £32,000. Lying in the shadow of Mont Blanc, it has its own private grounds in a hamlet just three minutes drive (chauffeured, of course) from the slopes of Les Gets, an untapped gem of a ski area if ever there was one.

Book it £10,000 per week for the entire chalet, which sleeps 10; fermedemoudon.com

Get there EasyJet (easyjet.com) flies from London Gatwick to Geneva from £37.98 return. The one-hour transfer can be organised at an extra cost.

4. Chalet Gerard, Dolomites, Italy



Once a lowly wooden ski hut, Chalet Gérard was transformed into a chalet in the late-1970s by former Italian Olympic skier Gérard Mussner. It's been in the family ever since and recently had a stylish, curvy refit, which saw the addition of a relaxation lounge, complete with fireplace and knockout mountain vistas, and the upgrading of the restaurant and bar area. Mamma Helga (Gérard's wife) still lovingly presides over the popular kitchen that serves up all manner of South Tyrolean delights, including handmade venison ravioli, speck ham and walnuts. At 2,000m, the chalet also offers rapid access to the ever-scenic slopes of Val Gardena in the northern Dolomites.

Book it From €98 per person per night; chalet-gerard.com

Get there EasyJet (easyjet.com) flies from London Gatwick to Innsbruck from £42.98 return. Transfers take around two hours and can be organised through Viaggi Gardena (viaggigardena.com).

5. Hidden Dragon, Veysonnaz, Switzerland



Finding a chalet that employs Shinto-Buddhist principles might not be a crucial factor for everyone booking a winter break, but it's the ethos that underpins the new, super-

exclusive Hidden Dragon lodge. But, as is often the way, such spirituality comes at a price – it's one of the most expensive chalets in the Alps, though that could also be due to its idyllic setting, nestled discreetly among conifer trees with uninterrupted panoramic views of the Rhône valley. It could also be the restaurant-level gastro-cookery, fine-wine selection, private cinema, holistic therapies and ski-in/ski-out access to some of the best slopes in Europe. Veysonnaz is part of Les 4 Vallées, which also includes Verbier, Nendaz and Thyon, and though it isn't especially well known in its own right, it has been the training ground for Swiss World Cup races for decades.

Book it From 30,000 Swiss Francs (£19,000) for the whole chalet per week, which sleeps 12; hidden-dragon.com

Get there EasyJet (easyjet.com) flies from London Gatwick to Geneva from £37.98 return. The one-and-a-half-hour transfer can be organised at an extra cost.

6. La Source, Samoens, France



Many chalets proudly tout their eco-credentials, but it can be hard to separate those who actually make a difference from those who simply say they do. La Source appears to be the former. Along with discounts for arriving by train or by shared car, they encourage ski-touring, cross-country skiing and snow-shoeing – activities that "outwit" the lift system, as they put it. However, for those happy to harness its power, they are only five minutes from the Samoens lifts. The chalet, in a converted farmhouse, is well insulated, they recycle and compost heavily and their food is 80% vegetarian, organic and local. Their guides, who are paid full rates with no mark-up, are encouraged to expound on the local culture, flora and fauna.

Book it From €680 per person, per week; greenalpinechalet.com

Get there EasyJet (easyjet.com) flies from London Gatwick to Geneva from £37.98 return; gather in the Airport Jazz Café at 3pm on Sunday for a free group transfer (one hour). Or take the train from London St Pancras to Cluses from £117 return, followed by a bus for €8 (snowcarbon.co.uk).

7. Mountain Bug, Bareges, France



Tourmalet is perhaps best known for providing epic climbs during the Tour de France, but it's also the largest ski resort in the French Pyrénées. Unlike much of the Alps, it's relatively crowd-free and more popular with the French than the English. It is great for beginners, intermediates and ski-tourers, and what it lacks in steep faces it makes up for in sunshine and snow. Robert and Emma Mason, who run Mountain Bug, are both qualified International Mountain Leaders, with a passion for the Pyrénées. They have one of the few chalets in the region, situated in a converted 18th-century house in the heart of Barèges.

Book it From £440 per person per week; mountainbug.com

Get there Ryanair (ryanair.com) flies to Pau from £16 return. Transfers from the airport can be arranged at €40 each.

8. Apartment Sony, Jasna, Slovakia



Paul Wilson snapped up Apartment Sony in Jasna when he was just 22, and created Slovakia's first chalet to target the UK market. Working under the name Propaganda Snowboards, which must amuse the English-speaking village elders, they are now heading into their sixth winter, yet are still more than happy to host you up the mountain on a daily basis at no extra cost. Jasna has a good snowpark and designated free-ride zones, and a recently modernised lift system. It also represents some of the best-value snow time you're likely to find anywhere this winter, with three-hour group lessons from €25, decent three-course meals from €6 and beer from €0.70 a pint.

Book it From £179 per person per week; propagandasnowboards.com

Get there Ryanair (ryanair.com) flies to Bratislava from £27.58 return. Transfers from the airport can be arranged at £20 per car.

9. Chalet Rozov, Bansko, Bulgaria



It isn't often you look out of your chalet window to see goats and cows being herded under the nearest ski lift, but as Bankso is still a working mountain town, it's a genuine possibility. At Chalet Rozov, mod cons such as Wiis and docking stations sit alongside a traditional mehana-style dining room, which has an open log fire that the chef uses for cooking. The hosts are on hand to offer tips. They'll also guide you to the finest bars and clubs and take you on at the retro bowling alley.

Book it From £265 per person per week; pisteandpeaks.com

Get there EasyJet (easyjet.com) flies from London Gatwick to Sofia from £80.98 return; Bansko Express (banskoexpress.com) run transfers from £25 return.

10. Morino Lodge, Hakuba, Japan



From Whistler to Chamonix, via New Zealand's Southern Alps, the men behind Morino Lodge have visited the key spots on everyone's snow wishlist. Hakuba made the strongest impression and Scottish snowboarder Matt Dunn and his Canadian business partner moved there four years ago to set up the lodge in the picturesque village, dwarfed by 3,000m peaks. Thanks to a kindly Siberian weather system, Hakuba boasts an average of 12m of top-quality powder a season, a stat European resorts can only dream of. There are plenty of tree runs and great terrain, so you can make the most of those soft fluffy landings. Morino Lodge is five minutes from the lift and has a mix of western and Japanese tatami mat rooms and weekly "Nabe" parties, where they serve

noodle broth with sake.

Book it From 4,000 yen (£30) per person per night; morinolodge.com

Get there British Airways (ba.com) flies from London Heathrow to Tokyo Narita from £720.10 return; private transfers can be arranged to the lodge for 13,000 yen (£97) per person.

11. Custard Mountain, Meribel, France

Having lessons is often one of the most expensive components of a snow holiday, especially in France, so many of us don't bother, soldiering on with bad technique in the hope that no one will laugh at us from the chairlift. But at Custard Mountain you don't have to worry as on-tap snowboard lessons, tailored to your level, are included in your holiday price. Or if you don't fancy lessons you can opt to be guided around all that Les Trois Vallées has to offer. This family-run business has a commanding three-storey chalet in Mussillon, the newly revamped quarter near the centre of Meribel, with high-vaulted ceilings in the main living space, a balcony with stunning views of Mont Vallon and Saulire, and spacious en suite bedrooms throughout.

Book it From £340 per person per week; custardmountain.co.uk

Get there EasyJet (easyjet.com) flies from London Gatwick to Geneva from £37.98 return; Ben's Bus runs transfers from Geneva from £69 return (bensbus.co.uk). Or take the train from London St Pancras to Moûtiers from £99 return followed by a bus for €10 (snowcarbon.co.uk).

12. Chill Chalet, Les Arcs, France

Bonus-laden bankers might seem a more potentially fruitful target market than teachers, yet it's the latter that Chill Chalet are keen to help out. Co-owner Chris Cracknell says, "We're not teachers, but do believe they do an amazing job. And even if they don't have children themselves they're tied to travelling during expensive periods." So they offer a teachers' discount during the Easter holidays. Other thoughtful touches include discounts for those who travel by train and an in-house nanny, who for €15 an hour will build snowmen and igloos with your kids while you tear up the 568km of piste on your doorstep (Les Arcs being part of Paradiski, the largest ski area on the planet).

Book it £65 per person per night; chillchalet.com

Get there EasyJet (easyjet.com) flies from London Gatwick to Geneva from £37.98 return; Ben's Bus runs transfers from Geneva from £69 return (bensbus.co.uk). Or take the train from London St Pancras to Bourg-St-Maurice from £99 return (snowcarbon.co.uk).

13. Heinz Julen Loft, Zermatt, Switzerland

Entering this 300m² Manhattan-style loft, housed implausibly yet successfully in a wooden chalet, will involve a degree of picking your jaw up off the textured concrete floor. Lavish doesn't always equal tasteful when it comes to luxe residences but then this grandest of designs is the creation and former home of architect Heinz Julen. The blurb tells us he hosted many a rock star party here and it's easy to see why. Acres of glass, steel, stone and wood combine to give a sense of space and light, while the vast views of the valley below remind you of a deep proximity to nature. From the baby grand Steinway piano to the remote-control curtains, the interior is full of imaginative touches. Should you ever want to step out during your stay, the slopes of Zermatt are a mere six-minute walk away via the private Omnia Hotel lifts, for which you'll have a special key.

Book it £1,854 per person per week, based on six people sharing; mountainexposure.com

Get there EasyJet (easyjet.com) flies from London Gatwick to Zurich from £50.98. The train to Zermatt then takes three and a half hours (fahrplan.ch).

14. Snowpod, Tignes, France

Having visited ample ski resorts and experienced an excess of what she calls "Heidi-on-a-pine-rampage"-style lodgings, Yvonne Russill, the brain behind Snowpod, knew she wanted to do something different. The resulting pods, which are basically serviced apartments, have a strong design focus, with graffiti art, salvaged finds, shagpile carpets and mountain-view photo wallpaper, all incorporated into a look which saw them win an award at last year's Cardiff Design Festival. The pods, which are left to you for the week save a midweek tidy, are packed with all manner of kidult toys from Xbox and Wii to Scrabble and films on flat-screen TVs. Snowpod is based in Val Claret, which at 2,100m is the highest of the villages in Tignes, itself part of the vast Espace Killy that also includes Val d'Isère. This winter Tignes is hosting the second ever European X Games.

Book it From £199 per week B&B, £299 per week including dinner; snow-pod.com

Get there EasyJet (easyjet.com) flies from London Gatwick to Geneva from £37.98 return; Ben's Bus runs transfers from Geneva from £69 return (bensbus.co.uk). Or take the train from London St Pancras to Bourg-St-Maurice from £99 return, followed by a bus for €13 (snowcarbon.co.uk)

15. Fresh Traxxx, Chamonix, France

Back in 2000, Fresh Traxxx set up one of the first snowboarder-run chalets in Chamonix. It has brightly painted walls, themed rooms and timber triple bunks, all fashioned by the owner's friends, plus approachable, laid-back staff, providing a welcome antidote to the more uptight, traditional chalet experience. A decade on and

they've replaced the original chalet with the more swanky Chalet 715. It boasts a home cinema projector, two floors of balconies with stunning views of Mont Blanc, an eight-seat Jacuzzi and jumps and rails in the garden, should you wish to practise your freestyle skills of an evening. The staff and vibe remain as friendly as ever.

Book it From £495 per person per week; freshtraxxx.com

Get there EasyJet (easyjet.com) flies from London Gatwick to Geneva from £37.98 return. The one-hour transfer from Geneva is included in the price of your stay.

Sam Haddad is the editor of [Cooler](#), a boardsports magazine for women

Readers' tips

Tromso: Spotting the midnight sun in Tromso

Between mid-May and the end of July, you can take the cable car to the top of the mountain for stunning views all over Tromso and the midnight sun. There...

Posted by [maureen100](#) 20 Aug 2011

Tromso: Romantic Northern Lights Hurtigruten Cruise Short-Break

A short-break to Tromso in Northern Norway to see the northern lights is just the most romantic thing I have ever done.

Never mind you are wrapped...

Posted by [SkiNet](#) 18 Nov 2010

Tromso: Verdensteatret Cinema

Waiting for a ship to depart Tromso for a Norwegian cruise can be both tedious and expensive on a gloomy December evening. I was delighted to stumble

Posted by [CornishJay](#) 20 Mar 2010

Tromso: Cross-country Skiing under the Northern Lights

The best way to avoid disappointment is to combine hunting for the Northern Lights with something else that's fun and different. Tromsø, Norway, is a

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