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Mountain high Les Gets village; Ferme de Montagne; the chalet bar with log fire



# Les Alps of luxury

Fall in love with skiing at a five-star restored farmhouse

I THOUGHT I WAS through with snow holidays. When first trying to master snowboarding, I concluded there was little joy in paying to fall over repeatedly. A few years later, on an alpine spa break, my husband spent hours trying to teach me. We agreed to shelve it.

And yet, I really did want to master the slopes. So in a make-or-break holiday – and our first away from our one-year-old – I decided to try again. After a reassuring email from Ferme de Montagne, a ski-in, ski-out boutique hotel in a beautifully restored Savoyard farmhouse in Les Gets in the French Alps (‘How firm do you like your pillows? What factor sunscreen do you use?’) we hopped on an 8am flight, were picked up at Geneva, and hit the beautifully groomed slopes by 2pm.

While my ski instructor, Emmanuel, taught me to parallel turn and – cru-

cially – how to get on and off a ski lift elegantly, my husband was guided around some of the area’s 400 miles of pistes by the hotel’s ski concierge, Luke, who had just finished a master’s in biology and was an excellent skier.

Later, reluctantly, I rejoined the boys, who’d been bombing down black runs as fast as they could, for an afternoon of skiing together. I say ‘together’, but the huge advantage of Les Gets is that many of the lifts take you to points with several different-coloured routes back down. So while Luke would ski with me on a leisurely blue, he’d point out a red for my husband and we’d all meet at the bottom.

By 3pm, with tired legs and mounting hunger, we skied back to a cake-and-scone-laden afternoon tea served by a log fire, followed by a dip in the hot tub as the sun set over the village. The only thing more perfect? An-hour-and-a-half Guinot Alpine Hydralift Facial to soothe a wind-battered face.

But among the luxury touches – be it the Hypnos bed or Jo Malone bath products – it was the food that stood out. Breakfast specials included poached eggs on home-made pitta topped with seeds, or full English for hungrier types; and ever-evolving four-course tasting menus each evening with dishes ranging from a beet-root-cured salmon appetiser to delicately seared beef fillet, all finished with a flourish.

## FERME DE MONTAGNE, LES GETS, FRANCE

A three-day stay for two sharing a luxury double room including dinner, breakfast, afternoon tea, one complimentary treatment and full ski concierge services and transfers costs £1,990. Or a luxury double room with dinner, breakfast and afternoon tea as well as a complimentary glass of champagne on arrival costs from £550 a night for two (fermedemontagne.com; +33 (0)4 50 75 36 79)



After a year of the micro-managing that comes with a newborn baby, the greatest luxury was to have highly trained staff anticipate our every whim: why yes, I would like a chilled thermos of milk in my room for my morning tea, and OK, I will have a glass of champagne.

It turns out, I’ve fallen in love with skiing. It just took a bit of unbridled luxury to seduce me.