



LET IT SNOW

Felix Milns and Gabriella le Breton find gorgeous getaways for safe skiing – restrictions allowing

NEW NORMALS

1 Get the App Resort apps are the new essentials for lift passes, avoiding queues, collecting keys and pre-ordering lunch on the slopes.

2 Après-Ski Lite Forget packed bars and table-top dancing, après will focus on outdoor activities, quiet aperitifs and evenings en famille.

3 Ski School Pre-book lessons and ski guiding in the Alps with SkiBro (skibro.com).

It's safe to say winter 2020/21 is impossible to predict. Nonetheless, resorts in Switzerland, the Spanish Pyrenees and North America are (currently) open and enjoying superb early season conditions, and the snow is primed and ready as and when the other Alpine nations (and the UK) relax their restrictions. We've rounded up the best of the luxury ski news so you can dare to dream of snowy days back in the mountains.

First to Val d'Isère, where the ingenious Capezzone family are launching the opulent Le K2 Chogori on 28 December, in a fantastic location on the site of the old Moris Pub at the base of pistes (lek2chogori.com). Having created a trio of ultra-luxury boutique hotels in Courchevel, this marks a return to their home town for the Capezzones. The Chogori's 21 suites and apartments promise plenty of K2 flourishes such as lavish contemporary interiors, the Goji by Valmont spa and an innovative, Peruvian-inspired restaurant.

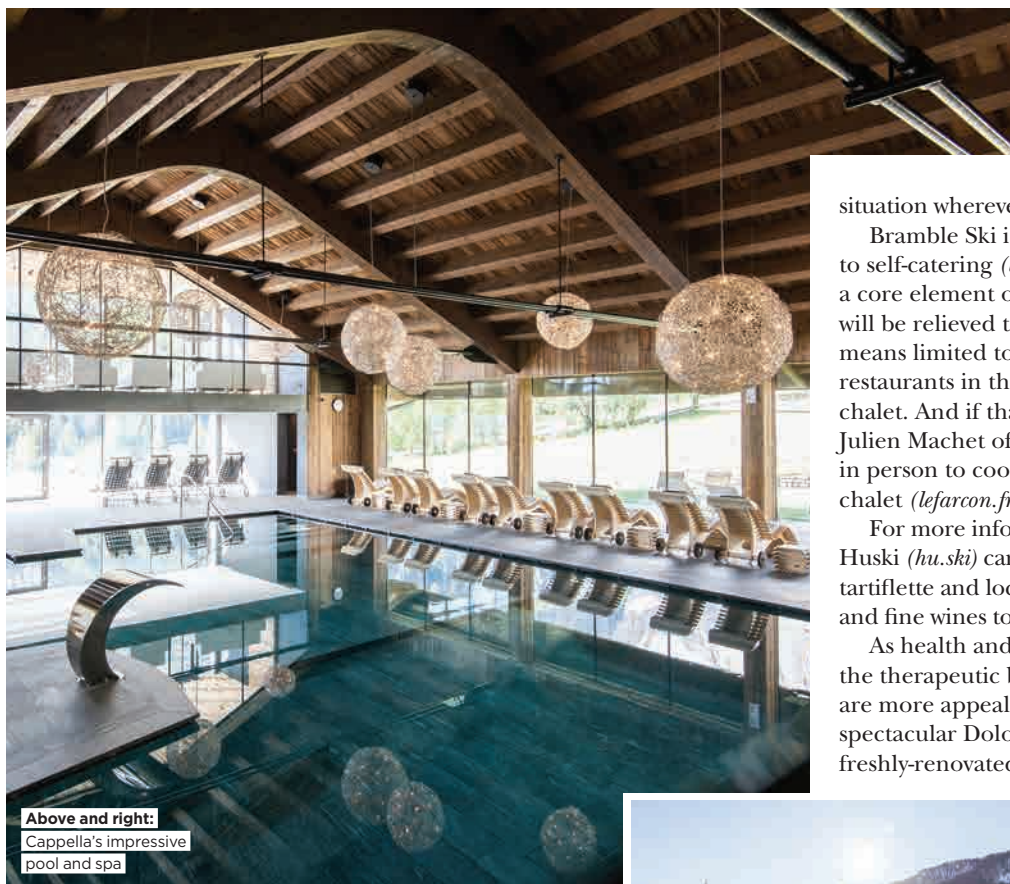
In the sophisticated resort



Fermes de Marie's concierge-run chalets



Le K2 Chogori hotel in Val d'Isère



Above and right:
Cappella's impressive
pool and spa

of Megève, another French family hotel empire, Maisons et Hôtels Sibuet, has responded to demand for blissful isolation by launching a collection of ten chalets, available on a catered or self-catered basis (fermesdemarie.com). Each of these new Chalets de Fermes boasts signature Sibuet rustic chic interiors and enviable locations, either in the heart of Megève or on the pistes, plus concierge 'chalet service', with delicious meals delivered straight from the celebrated kitchens of the Fermes de Marie hotel.

The Swiss brand Ultima Collection is also poised to blend chalet seclusion with hotel facilities, bringing its suave style and all-frills service to Courchevel. Launching on the slopes of Moriond, Ultima Courchevel is a clutch of ski-in/ski-out chalets that effectively create a mini village, with its own restaurant, two spas and a private ski school (ultimacourchevel.com).

So despite the news that operators like Crystal have axed their chalet operations this winter, chalet fans need not despair. Ultra-luxury chalet operators such as Leo Trippi are well placed to weather the Covid storm: they're already accustomed to offering 'invisible' or contactless service (whereby staff keep properties pristine, lay out meals and tidy them away without being seen by guests) and arranging private jet flights and exclusive transfers to ensure clients enjoy a door-to-chalet travel bubble (leotrippi.com).

As Oliver Corkhill, CEO of Leo Trippi explains: 'We've seen a marked increase in the number of guests requesting private jet transfers and contactless service as well as long-term chalet bookings of several months, even entire seasons. Ultimately, we're striving to remain fluid, providing a "flexible cancellation chalet collection" and adapting our booking policies to the ever-changing

situation wherever possible.'

Bramble Ski is another operator seeing a major switch to self-catering (brambleski.com). As this looks set to be a core element of this winter's 'new normal' sybarites will be relieved to hear that luxury take-aways are by no means limited to London, with several Michelin-star restaurants in the Trois Vallées delivering direct to your chalet. And if that's not enough, Michelin-star chefs like Julien Machet of Courchevel's Le Farçon will pop round in person to cook dinner for you in the privacy of your chalet (lefarcon.fr).

For more informal evenings, the food delivery service Huski (hu.ski) can provide everything from authentic tartiflette and local craft beers to vegan Thai curry and fine wines to resorts across the French Alps.

As health and wellbeing top our travel essentials list, the therapeutic benefits of quality time in the mountains are more appealing than ever. Merely being among the spectacular Dolomites is a tonic and this December three freshly-renovated hotels in the South Tyrolean ski area of

Alta Badia are emerging with expansive wellness facilities and bedrooms: the Marmolada and Kolfuschgerhof hotels in Corvara and Hotel Cappella in Colfosco (marmolada.org; kolfuschgerhof.com; hotelcappella.com).

Or hop across the Austrian border and stay at Forsthofgut, a healthy-living spa hotel in Leogang where you can request a 'green room': a verdant oasis packed with plants working hard to boost oxygen levels and help you battle colds and ease nasal congestion (forsthofgut.at). ■



Hotel Kolfuschgerhof