

VANITY FAIR

ON TRAVEL

*"If you can't find it here,
it doesn't exist"*
—IRIS APFEL

CUBA

NICHOLAS SHAKESPEARE *is*
OUR MAN *in* HAVANA

SRI LANKA

GONE FISHING *and* OTHER STORIES

By ALICE B-B

HAUTE CUISINE

Sloping off for lunch? These mountain restaurants are top of the range. By GABRIELLA LE BRETON

L'ALPETTE, MEGÈVE

L'Alpette is another jewel in Jocelyne Sibuet's crown. This is comfort-food central, reached by its own chairlift, or a punishing walk from the Rochebrune cable car for non-skiers. Tartiflette, charcuterie, Beaufort cheese, poulet grand-mère and fluffy omelettes made with organic eggs. There's nothing wrong with the perfect omelette and frites on this terrace, with its red-and-white shutters, tables and chairs: rustic pizzazz resurrected from Megève's pre-war heyday. A fromagerie upstairs has gooey fondues. Beware the homemade génépi, a mountain liquor like Drano. alpette-megeve.com



LE MONTAGNARD, ST MARTIN DE BELLEVILLE

Over the centuries, several generations of the Suchet family have farmed the lush pastures above St Martin de Belleville, the quaintest village in the sprawling Three Valleys ski area. Today, the three Suchet brothers—Eric, Bruno and Thierry—still make cheeses according to family tradition, but care for skiers rather than livestock in the old hayloft. The food is hearty, uncomplicated and pure Savoyard. le-montagnard.com



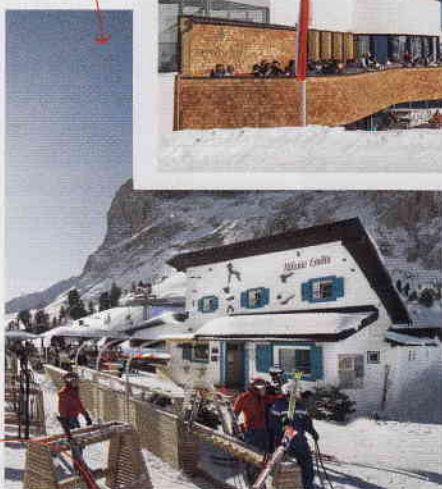
VERWALLSTUBE, ST ANTON

Perched near the top of the Galzig cable car in a strikingly modern building, the interiors are classic Austrian "stube", with wood panelling, embroidered cushions and old ski photos. The service is old-school attentive, but the menu is bang up-to-date—Bianchetti and Périgord truffle pasta (shaved in front of you and billed by weight), scallop tartare and green curry with crispy prawns. arlbergerbergbahnen.com



RIFUGIO EMILIO COMICI, SAN CRISTINA

The mountain "refuge" Emilio Comici exudes *la dolce vita*. The rifugio lies at the feet of the towering limestone peak of Sassolungo, which claimed the life of the mountaineer after whom the restaurant is named. The walls are lined with photographs of Comici, his climbing pals, and more current visitors. Prince Albert of Monaco, George Clooney and Fernando Alonso have all enjoyed the legendary apéro hour(s) and feasted on lobster here. rifugiocomici.com



CHEZ MÉRIE, LE MIROIR

A candlelit den of gnarled wood and sheepskins in a large Savoyard farmhouse dating back to 1652. Run by sisters Marie and Élisabeth Mérie for over 20 years, the restaurant sits in the sleepy hamlet of Le Miroir. Swap your boots for slippers and sink a kir by the open fire. Succulent côte de boeuf and lamb are cooked over the fire, and foie gras, delicately herbed by the sisters, is served in great slabs on homebaked bread. (+33 479 069016)



CHEZ VRONY, ZERMATT

Nestling in a cluster of ancient, sun-blackened wooden farmhouses and framed by the Matterhorn, Chez Vrony is every inch the Heidi chalet. Step inside to find loins of air-dried beef hanging from the rafters; breathe deeply for a hint of cheese maturing downstairs. However, this bastion of fine mountain dining is anything but Alpine kitsch: the recycled-copper-piping chandeliers and furnishings strewn with cow hides reflect the designer influence of Alpine-hip Heinz Julen, the brother of Vrony's husband, Max Julen. chezvrony.ch