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A MAGAZINE FOR THE GET-UP-AND-GO GENERATION

TRAVELLER

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Best bar nun

INSIDE THE SECRETIVE
CONVENT MAKING SPAIN'S
SWEETEST TREATS





The Edit

WHERE TO SLEEP, EAT AND SHOP WHEN YOU'RE IN THE KNOW

STAY HERE

GABRIELLA LE BRETON
ENJOYS SOME PEAK TIME IN
A FUNKY FRENCH REFUGE

TERMINAL NEIGE –
REFUGE DU MONTENVERS
CHAMONIX, FRANCE
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AS I LOWER my ski-weary body into the sumptuous claw-foot bath by the giant window of my suite, I sense I'm being watched. OK, so the 3,754m-high face of the Aiguille du Dru has no discernible peepers, but really, that giant hunky mountain is most certainly eyeing me up.

A sharp crack of melting glacier disturbs my reverie and, startled, I draw the chunky edelweiss-print curtains and consider the cosy nature of my suite: larch-panelled walls, woolly hot-water bottle, cheery red teapot. I could almost forget I'm 1,913m up Mont Blanc.

Way above Chamonix, the Refuge de Montenvers has offered sanctuary to Alpine

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Not going to any of these destinations?

No worries. There are plenty more ski-break hotels at hotels.easyJet.com



travellers since 1880, who come to gawp at the Mer de Glace ('Sea of Ice') which cascades down from the highest peak in Europe. Wordsworth, Shelley and Dickens, no less, schlepped up on foot, while today's wits can breeze in aboard a toy-like cog railway. I fancy myself as an adventurer, so skied here along the legendary Vallée Blanche – off-piste mind – 20 hair-raising kilometres down the glacier. Après-ski beer has scarcely tasted better than the one I gulped at

the hotel's pewter-topped bar; ski boots by the fire, toothbrush and knickers stashed in my backpack.

Renovated in 2017 by the Sibuet group, famed for plush spots in Megève and St Barts, the Refuge is part of its Terminal Neige brand; hip, relatively affordable mountain digs. They also run Le Panoramique restaurant, a few paces away, which overlooks the Mer de Glace.

My suite is one of only 17 bedrooms, alongside more modest doubles, family rooms with bunk beds and even a 10-person dorm. It's all très mountaineer chic: chandeliers fashioned from climbing rope and bulkhead lights, leather-and-tweed headboards.

In true Alpine style, staff don't bat an eyelid when I rock up for supper in my thermals. The three-course meal is pure regional Savoyard: cheese and girolles on toast, hearty chicken casserole, and blackberry tart washed down with local vino.

Weaving back to my room full, merry and emboldened, I yank open the curtains and happily let hulking Dru watch while I sleep.

FEELING PEAKY

Previous page: The view of the Mer de Glace from Le Panoramique. Left and bottom: the outside and inside of the hotel. Below: Le Panoramique's lamb cocotte



NEED A BREAK? THREE OTHER COOL SKI HOTELS

DAS MOOSER HOTEL FLY TO INNSBRUCK

Barrelling downhill is all very well, but we'll probably just catch you later in the heated infinity pool, carved from the stone of an ancient local gorge.

LE GRAND BELLEVUE FLY TO GENEVA

High-end luxury with a relaxed vibe means you can flit between the very respectable sushi bar and the dark floral, DJ-cum-cocktail lounge, Bouquet.

BÜRGENSTOCK FLY TO ZURICH

Punters at this well-heeled resort can enjoy a thorough medical checkup – heart, skin, bones, teeth, tummies – at the highest location for a physical, like, ever.

