



ATOMIC Vantage Pole, £30; BURTON Pyro Glove, £45, both from ellis-brigham.com

“Verbier is the best spot for adrenaline junkies, with challenging runs and off-piste areas to explore”
 – Chemmy Alcott

Branson's digs, The Lodge. Found only 250m from the main lift station, here you can luxuriate in this stunning nine-bedroom chalet, which boasts an indoor heated pool, outdoor Jacuzzis, in-house chefs and a private ice rink, from £2,700 per person per week. Just mind how much of the house champagne you imbibe before giving your Dancing on Ice impression.

summitretreats.com

BEST FOR A FAR-FLUNG ESCAPE

Niseko, Japan

Travelling a few hundred miles and still feeling at home is nice. Travelling 6,000 miles to ski in a tiny Japanese hot spring town, though, is an altogether different beast. Niseko, Hokkaido, has a population of just 5,000 – perfect if you're all-too-familiar with bustling European and North American resorts, and the tiny Green Leaf Niseko Village is the jewel in its crown. This gorgeous hotel is kitted out with natural onsen (hot spring) facilities and a spa, but this is still authentic Japan – the hotel features art and design straight from the town community, and the restaurant serves local Hokkaido produce. Inside Japan offers seven nights (including one in Tokyo) bed and breakfast, return flights with Virgin, transfers and a six-day mountain pass for £1,928 per person (based on two sharing).

insidejapantours.com

BEST FOR ROMANTICS

Sainte Foy, France

If your idea of a ski break is spending a day on uncongested slopes before curling up in front of a log fire, then Sainte Foy is for you. The uncrowded slopes cater for all skill



FROM TOP: Le Chardon in Val d'Isère has two outside hot tubs; skiing in South Korea? You'd better believe it, and Yongpyong resort is a winner, Sainte Foy may not be one of the best known resorts in the Alps, but that equals quiet pistes and great bang for your Euro



BACK TO PLANK

Going skiing but haven't ever been up a mountain let alone tried to hurl yourself down one? Don't politely decline and hang around the bar all day, strap on a pair (of skis) and learn. Check yourself into Oxygene Ski & Snowboard School and you'll soon be carving up the pistes with the best of them. Classes are tailored specifically to your skill level so everyone from total beginners to good skiers looking to dust off the cobwebs are catered for. Sign up and you'll be a mogul mogul in no time... oxygene-ski.com



LEFT TO RIGHT: SALOMON X Pro 80 W, £230; ATOMIC Waymaker Carbon, £320; ATOMIC Live 130, £290; SALOMON X Pro 100, £290, all available from ellis-brigham.com



A HEADCASE FOR HEIGHTS

Once you've had a couple of lessons on the nursery slopes and tested out your skills on some cruisey blues, you'll be ready to hurl yourself off the side of a mountain and carve down near vertical, avalanche-prone rock faces*. Here's Spiro Razis doing just that during the Red Bull Powder Escape in Santiago, Chile in August. Thinking about it, he might have had more than a couple of lessons...
*No you won't



GRAHAM BELL ON HELI-SKIING

"The search for helicopter access off-piste drives skiers to the far ends of the world, but one of the best heli-drops is close to home. Champoluc in Italy's Aosta Valley accesses the Monte Rosa, with some incredible big mountain terrain at over 4000m. Those with a brave heart and strong legs can ski the massive Corner glacier down to Zermatt in Switzerland." *Graham Bell is the presenter of BBC Ski Sunday.* graham-bell.com

levels so you can stick to the wide open courses while your partner hurtles down the notorious Crystal Dark black run, or visa versa. When it comes to kicking back and warming those chilled bones, the luxury Premiere Neige catered chalets (from £745 per person per week) are a welcome place to switch off. And you'll be getting much better value for money than at resorts like Val d'Isère and Tignes, with none of the side-show; Sainte Foy is an unabashed slider's resort, and all the better for it. premiereneige.com

BEST FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

Yongpyong, South Korea

South Korea: famous for its food and long-time spat with neighbour North Korea. Ski? Not so much, at least not yet. Around 70% of the Korean peninsula is covered in mountains, and the country's hosting the 2018 Winter Olympics. The Yongpyong resort is only a three-hour drive away from Seoul and provides some decent powder for skiers looking to escape the usual suspects. The 28 slopes here – all pitched at different levels – offer plenty of variety and challenges; the mountains aren't known as the 'Alps of Korea' for nothing. Get there by flying direct to Seoul from London with Korean Air, with prices from £630. koreanair.com

SOUTH KOREA IS HOSTING THE 2018 WINTER OLYMPICS

BEST FOR SNOWBOARDERS

Hemsedal, Norway

There's no reason why snowboarders and skiers can't just, like, get along, but some resorts are undeniably better than others if you prefer one plank to two. Hemsedal's world-class freestyle park and epic backcountry make it a snowboarder's dream, with the added bonus of a long season and a laid-back Nordic vibe. From December to April you can ski under floodlight four nights a week. The Hemsedal Cafe Lodge currently has fully equipped two-bed apartments from £62 per night. dvg.no

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