



ESCAPE

ABSOLUTE POWDER

Do your prep and find the right winter wonderland for you, says **Felix Milns**

TIVOLI LODGE, *Davos, Switzerland*

More boutique hotel than chic chalet, Tivoli is an Alpine heavyweight, and not just during the world economic Forum. With over 700sq/m of living space for 12 guests, it's coolly capacious yet intensely discreet, despite being ski-in ski-out and only a two-minute chauffeured drive from the town centre. Behind the traditional exterior and monastically rounded front door lies a grand, sweeping staircase and majestic drawing room with a two-tiered stone mantelpiece. Greyed-off wood panelling abounds and continues down the steps to the glamorous dining room. With playfully ornate low-slung chandelier, silver curtains and purple and silver Louis XIV chairs, it's the ideal setting to enjoy Tivoli's rather epic dinners and the Berry Bros curated wines. The icing on the cake is the indoor pool and spa. Converted from an adjoining barn, you follow the labyrinth of corridors past the indoor cinema to find a 10m-long indoor pool, waterfall, jetstream, Jacuzzi and sauna, surrounded on two sides by glass overlooking the Engadine peaks. All you need now is a glass of Bollinger which, happily, comes on tap.

BOOK IT: Seven nights chalet board from £2,800pp (12 guests). tivolilodge.co.uk



HARD ROCK HOTEL, Davos, Switzerland

The Hard Rock Hotel has long been a good idea waiting to happen. Dress your hotel with vintage rock memorabilia, iconic neon signage and a Hard Rock Café menu, and you have an instant recipe for success. The Davos outpost is the first in continental Europe, and all the featured artists on the walls have a connection with Switzerland. Led Zepellin's Misty Mountains lyrics adorn the reception wall, and hanging over you while you eat are Madonna's sequin hot pants and a flamboyant turquoise silver-studded silk shirt worn by Elvis. In the spacious rooms clever little touches reinforce the vibe. A record player and choice box of records awaits, and you can hire a fender guitar at any time. Tune in to Hard Rock TV for video guitar lessons and yoga 'rock om' sessions. The final piece of the jigsaw opens this winter, a separate spa building connected by an underground passage. Very rock'n'spa. Embracing all things musical, check out the baroque evenings with Louis XIV-inspired menus and live music by traditional Swiss musicians in full regalia.

BOOK IT: Seven nights room-only from £682.50pp. hardrockhoteldavos.com



ROCK ON THE PISTE



OFF-PISTE ADVENTURE

LE BESSO, Zinal, Switzerland

Hidden away a valley down from Verbier lies the tiny mountain village of Zinal. Off radar to most British skiers, and spoken of in hushed tones by those in the know, Zinal and neighbouring Grimentz are quietly garnering a reputation as a base for extreme skiing and off-piste adventure. The renowned Backcountry Adventures ski guiding outfit decamped here a few years ago, followed by a steady stream of intrepid skiers looking to escape the backcountry crowds. At the head of the pint-sized town of Zinal is the Hotel Besso, backlit by the afternoon sun and its dual-pointed eponymous mountain. Built in 1893 and refurbished in 2016, a set of wonderfully worn stone steps lead up to its pared-back but warm and welcoming ten rooms.

BOOK IT: Seven nights half board from CHF 630pp (le-besso.ch). One day's guiding from CHF 575 (backcountryadventures.co.uk)



FAMILY FLING

TSCHUGGEN GRAND, Arosa, Switzerland

The place to stay in Arosa, the Tschuggen has the feel of a classic grand dame, albeit one with extremely colourful interiors, studded Hermès armchairs and a private ski lift. The real masterstroke, however, is the 5,000sq/m spa designed by Mario Botto. Carved out of the rock and linked to the hotel by a suspended glass walkway, nine 'light trees' protrude from the roof and one entire undulating internal wall is hewn from the mountain cliff face. The sheer scale and variety of the indoor and outdoor pools, waterfalls and jets make it a real pleasure for kids and adults alike. No wonder then that family specialists Powder Bryne have made it their principal hub in resort.

BOOK IT: Seven nights half-board from £3,900pp, including flights, first-class train transfers, ski hire/passes, massage and full in-resort PB service. powderbryne.com



FOUR SEASONS MEGÈVE, France

Nine years in the making, the hotel channels the essence of Megève. Nemo, a St Bernard rescue dog, lies curled up outside the front door, and a horse and carriage await to take you across the Mont d'Arbois plateau to the pistes. Like much of Mont d'Arbois, the hotel is owned by the Rothschilds, and the current Baroness has had a major hand in curating the artwork, a fusion of classical and contemporary. The building itself has a modern aesthetic, clad in chestnut with Porta Romana faceted copper lights and lots of geometrical patterns referenced throughout. The all-white pool house has a classical feel, undercut only by the underwater music playing in both the indoor and outdoor pool. To help establish the new hotel the Rothschild-owned, two Michelin-starred restaurant 1947 has decamped here with great success, but just as appealing is Kaito, the resort's first Japanese restaurant... Be sure to take a tour of the two-storey wine cellar with its circular walls and 14,000 bottles from the Rothschild reserves, including an 1869 Château Lafite.

BOOK IT: Seven nights room only from £1,774pp. fourseasons.com/megève



CHEVAL BLANC, Courchevel, France

The marriage of haute couture and the high Alps celebrates its 10-year anniversary this season, and Bernard Arnault's unashamedly luxurious Cheval Blanc has aged impeccably. The Cheval Blanc sits at the top of the exclusive Alpine Garden, the surprisingly traditional mustard exterior belying its contemporary interior. Ski to the door where butlers remove your boots and supply tea and hot face towels. The generous rooms ooze elemental style; greyed-off oak panelling, brushed suede throws, ponyskin armchairs and flashes of purple, burnt orange or blood-red furs. The flagship restaurant Le 1947 won its third Michelin star last winter, and along with the eponymous Cheval Blanc vineyard, LVMH owns most of the champagne marques, so the wine list is epic. This white horse will run and run.

BOOK IT: Seven nights half board from £5,800pp. chevalblanc.com



LE FITZ ROY, Val Thorens, France

Val Thorens is the epitome of high altitude ski-in ski-out, and Le Fitz Roy is in piste-side position A, just above the top of the magic carpet at Place Caron. You really do not get more central – with perfect access to the pistes and the two main drags for après and shopping. The hotel's got a cool-kid-all-grown-up vibe, with dark timber cladding and natural stone walls inside and out. Part of the Les Hôtels d'en Haut collection, Le Fitz Roy is the more sophisticated sister to the neighbouring and equally cool Val Tho, so you can eat at any of the three restaurants across both hotels. Be sure to book a room with a sunset view over the Orelles mountain range, the late-night sunsets over the serrated peaks are legendary.

BOOK IT: Seven nights B&B from €945pp. hotelfitzroy.com/en

THE ARRABELLE AT VAIL SQUARE, Vail, Colorado, USA

This grand dame, despite attracting its fair share of celebrities, wears its status lightly, unlike the chichi Little Nell in nearby Aspen, for example. With a traditional Alpine look and central Rockies soul, all-inclusive extras, like warm cookies and hot chocolate served to weary skiers at teatime, are one of many thoughtful Arrabelle touches. A roaring log fire welcomes guests in the lobby and rooms cheer with marble bathrooms and kingsize beds. The laidback restaurant, Tavern on the Square, serves up tempting American tucker using Colorado-sourced ingredients, with the requisite vegan and gluten-free options. And the whopping spa is committed to eco-conscious luxury, featuring rooftop heated pools and hot tubs with views of the slopes, along with saunas, steams and Jacuzzis. The turquoise of the bubbling water offset by pretty gold mosaic tiling make for a serene sanctuary. And, note bene, Vail Resorts runs lift systems, with an unlimited Epic Pass that can be used across 64 mountain resorts around the world, including 30 in Europe.

BOOK IT: Deluxe king room from \$800 during the winter months. arrabelle.rockresorts.com



ONE SKI HILL PLACE, Breckenridge, Colorado, USA

This modern ski-in ski-out lodge of self-catering apartments is located in Breckenridge, an historic mountain town voted top resort among UK skiers by the Ski Club of Great Britain. 'Breck' (as it's affectionately known) offers big-mountain skiing and small-town charm. And while One Ski Hill Place is at the base of some seriously well-groomed slopes, the picture-postcard quaintness of Main Street, with its unmissable landmark restaurants, is just a short shuttle bus ride away. The apartments offer sumptuous beds with top-notch linen, great ambient lighting, plus a handy kitchen with all mod cons, marble breakfast bar and dining table. They're perfect for families or small groups of friends. You also have access to a first-class gym with spa, indoor swimming pools and outdoor hot tubs. And when you're ready to hit the lifts there's a valet waiting with your skis at the base of the slope. A smooth grab and go, then drop and après.

BOOK IT: Standard studio condo from \$700 during the winter months. oneskihill.rockresorts.com

PRICES WHERE NOT STATED ARE BASED ON TWO PEOPLE SHARING A DOUBLE ROOM; PHOTOS: VAIL RESORTS INC.