



Chalet LesANGES, Zermatt

The Peak of ALPINE PERFECTION

Chelsey Baker discovers the finest chalets in the Alps with Summit Retreats, the ski travel company with a real difference

If you have been feeling somewhat sluggish since the overindulgent festive period, then why not head to the Alps for some snow, sun and après-ski fun? The winter sports season is well underway and the Alps have seen record levels of snow so far – more snow fell in December than in the entirety of last winter.

No matter which ski resort you are considering, the choice of accommodation on offer can be somewhat overwhelming. Rather than scrolling through endless chalet websites and having to arrange, hire and fit all the excess trimmings that go hand in hand with skiing, there is a company which offers to spare you of any of these hassles, especially if you're looking for an unforgettable alpine holiday, arranged to the finest detail with a comprehensive concierge service. If so, Summit Retreats has the answer, offering a selection of stunning luxury ski properties that will leave you with the perfect ski solution.

CEO and director Robin Quarrelle, who has extensive experience of the Alps and first-hand knowledge of the resorts and properties featured on the company's portfolio, founded Summit Retreats because of a dedicated passion for alpine luxury and the necessity for attention to personal detail.

Robin has been a ski enthusiast since childhood, having clocked up an impressive 20 years experience on the slopes already, and first moved to the Alps in 2002 where he worked in many of the chalets that now feature in his portfolio. Robin comments; "I had such a passion for skiing that it was inevitable that I'd work in the Alps as soon as I'd finished university." He spent five years working in the best chalets in Switzerland and some of his formative years were spent managing safari camps in Zambia, working in a five star hotel in Cornwall, and even skiing 'down under' in New Zealand.

It was during Robin's time in the Alps that he gained a very thorough understanding not only of what clients expected but what they needed, so he developed an extensive list of contacts across the luxury ski market. Summit Retreats thus comprised a collection of fantastic chalets spread across some of the premier resorts in Europe, including Courchevel 1850, Meribel, Val d'Isere, Verbier and Zermatt.

Whether your search is driven by price or resort, or if you're after something different for a special occasion, Summit Retreats can find the perfect chalet with the best value for money. Robin has personally visited most of the chalets on the Summit Retreats portfolio and the company prides itself on delivering an unbiased and totally impartial service that leaves customers returning each season.

The chalets on offer range from the mid-market, like Chalet Altair in Meribel, to the very top end, like Chalet Ormello in Courchevel 1850. All are hand-picked to offer an excellent level of service along with some of the best facilities around, and prices start from around £1,000 per person per week. The company holds no allocation with one operator over another and has no bias to any of the operators it represents, so you can be guaranteed that they will only propose to you the chalets that match the needs and requirements of your group.

Happily, when making a booking, you pay no more than if you were to book directly with the chalet owner or operator. The company makes money by taking commission from the chalet, so with just one call you benefit from the knowledge that Summit Retreats has, saving you from having to trawl an endless number of websites. Due to the strong relationship that Robin has with many operators and owners, he often has access to better deals and cheaper rates that are not widely advertised to the general public.

The personal touch is extremely important to Summit Retreats and part of the service involves a comprehensive concierge service for clients, which incurs no additional charge. Your personal travel consultant can arrange anything from an almost infinite list of services, from arriving in style with a helicopter transfer to informing the chalet of your culinary tastes.

If you want to avoid the large queues and save valuable skiing time on your first morning, then they can arrange your lift passes ahead of time and have them waiting for you in your chalet. In many of the chalets, in-chalet ski and boot fitting can be arranged and, whether you are a beginner or seasoned veteran, Summit Retreats can organise ski lessons to suit your ability.

Heli-skiing, massage, beauty therapy, Champagne receptions, gourmet picnics in the snow, paragliding, husky sledging and even ice driving are all possible. What's even more impressive is that from the moment you first contact Summit Retreats, you will deal with the same person throughout, so that nothing will be forgotten or missed when planning the finer details of your trip.

Whether you're planning a romantic getaway, a week with the family or a corporate break, Summit Retreats can manage any requests, however large or small, with an impeccable service to match. ■

For more information, please visit www.summitretreats.com or call 020 8870 3339



Number 14, Verbier



Chalet Ormello, Courchevel 1850



Chalet Le Rocher, Val d'Isere