





Courchevel



Boasting the title of the ski resort with the most 5-star and "palace" hotels, and the most Michelin-starred restaurants, Courchevel is unsurprisingly the winter destination for the very fortunate with royalty and A-list stars only some of the VIP guests that visit the resort for a luxurious winter getaway every year.

Sweeping views of the French Alps and unrivalled comfort in service, including no queuing times at its ski lifts, even during peak times, give Courchevel a vantage that is sought after by its exigent clientele.

Created after World War II, Courchevel was the first ski resort to be constructed from nothing, unlike other resorts that were created around already existing villages. Today, the resort is encircled by charming chalets, both privately owned or part of the luxurious hotels that are designed to also resemble chalets, albeit much larger ones.

Here, holiday-makers look to ski, eat well, pamper themselves with spa treatments and shop, and the resort that was originally created to offer everyone, from all walks of life, an affordable skiing destination, has ironically become where almost only the wealthy holiday.

Courchevel is home to some of the most upmarket boutiques in the world, which open their posh doors during the skiing season only, which falls between mid-December

and early April of each year. Dior, Chanel, Chopard, Graff Diamonds, Zilli, Hermès, Boucheron and de Grisogono are only some of the houses with boutiques here, offering their clientele not only the current collections but some houses also offer limited edition pieces reserved only for their Courchevel clients.

A boutique worth visiting, and which has become a shopping institution here in Courchevel, is Bernard Orcel. The multi-brand boutique offers clients a wide range of high-end brands, including Brunello Cucinelli, Balmain and Corto Moltedo. Alongside sportswear collections, suitable for the slopes, including Toni Sailer, Bernard Orcel also stocks ready-to-wear collections, including Jimmy Choo heels. The boutique also has a second address, Bernard Orcel Lab, where the glamorous couture gowns by Lebanese designer Elie Saab are found, ready to be worn in the evenings when visitors dine at the finest restaurants before heading to La Mangeoire, the hottest restaurant-piano bar where everyone goes to be seen.

An ideal way of spending an afternoon after hitting the slopes all day, swishing and swooshing down the famous Alps and glimpsing the Mont Blanc while skiing or leisurely racket walking through the snow, is booking yourself in for a much-deserved massage. With luxurious hotels naturally come equally luxurious spas, with each hotel spa managed by a renowned skincare brand. A popular spa is the Sothys



Take a dip in the Les Neiges indoor pool (above) and hit the slopes in style with ski wear from Bernard Orcel (below)

Spa at Le Strato Hotel, where the signature massage, simply named Le Strato, uses a toning oil made with a blend of essential oils to help you relax. The highlight of the signature massage though is when the masseuse simultaneously massages one side of your shoulders and one ankle, leaving you in a relaxation coma.

Another equally intoxicating treatment is offered at Hôtel Barrière Les Neiges. The hotel's spa, which uses products by Biologique Recherche, promotes bespoke treatments, catering to every client's needs. One of the spa's signature treatments is the Well-Being Massage, which geniusly starts by working on your front before ending the treatment with a back massage, unlike most treatments at other spas that start a massage with the back.

For visitors who enjoy fine dining à la Française, Courchevel's prized Michelin-starred restaurants will leave you in complete appreciation of the finer things in life. One fine dining restaurant not to be missed is Baumannière 1850, the one-star Michelin restaurant at Le Strato Hotel. Chef Jean-André Chariol has put together a menu that recalls his Mediterranean cuisine from his restaurant in Provence while using local produce, creating dishes that are both hearty and refined.

For lunch in the sun between skiing up and down the beautiful Alps, BFire by Mauro Colagreco is perfect. Located in the Hôtel Barrière Les Neiges, the restaurant is easily accessed from the slopes, making it easy to walk right in from the snow to its outdoor dining area, and with warm blankets made available you can keep warm outside while soaking in the sun. The casual eatery sees chef Colagreco put together a menu of Italian and Argentinian-inspired cuisine, with generous portions cooked on a wood stove and served in large pots, making every dish ideal to share before heading out onto the slopes for a little more skiing fun.

WHERE TO STAY

LE STRATO HOTEL

The hotel owned by the family behind the iconic skiwear brand Rossignol, is a charming boutique hotel with a homelike feel with a contemporary take

in its design.

Vanoise National Park

Rue de Bellecôte, 73120 Courchevel 1850

04 79 41 51 60

HOTEL BARRIERE LES NEIGES

A Barrière establishment, Les Neiges is the latest hotel in a long list of luxury hotels to open up in the famous resort. With a chalet-like design, the hotel is very cosy with undeniable decor codes spilling over from the brand's other hotels that feature cinema-inspired details including famous Studio Harcourt portraits of international movie stars gracing the walls.

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