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SWITZERLAND'S PICTURE POSTCARD VILLAGE OF GRIMENTZ WHERE FINE DINING IS FIRMLY ON THE MENU. OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM CENTRE LEFT: CHALET KILIMANJARO'S VAULTED BEDROOMS ARE THE PERFECT PLACE TO RELAX AFTER ENJOYING DINNER WITH SWEEPING MOUNTAIN VIEWS, WHILE THE PROPERTY'S HOT TUB IS ALWAYS POPULAR AFTER A DAY ON THE SLOPES. PENULTIMATE ROW, LEFT: YELLOWSTONE'S OPEN FIRE AND CHIC DINING ROOM

**With extensive off-piste terrain and uncrowded, largely intermediate pistes, Grimentz is an ideal spot for families and skiers looking to avoid the queues**

### CHALET KILIMANJARO VAL D'ISERE

Chalet Kilimanjaro is one of five chalets in the exclusive Le Chardon Mountain Lodges collection in Val d'Isère. The cluster of chalets is secreted away in the peaceful area of La Legettaz, located almost on the slopes. While the properties vary in size from eight to 20-person chalets, the emphasis on discreet, efficient service is uniform. And, despite the luxury trappings (outdoor hot tubs, private chauffeur service, fresh flowers, daily international newspapers, champagne on tap), the atmosphere in the chalets is unpretentious and always welcoming.

Chalet Kilimanjaro is an elegant, cosy chalet that sleeps eight people. The large, open-plan living area dominates the second floor and comes complete with an open fire, a high, vaulted ceiling and sweeping views of the mountains. You can relax here after a day on the slopes in the hot tub or on the terrace while the chef prepares a sumptuous five-course dinner.

Le Chardon's chef, Oliver James, who has worked with Gordon Ramsay, Gary Rhodes and Philip Howard, has created an imaginative menu for this winter, with dishes including roast sea bass with celeriac truffle and ratte potatoes, assiette of suckling pig with smoked garlic mash, pea mousse and tarragon jelly and milk chocolate with black olive and popping candy.

**Details** Le Chardon Mountain Lodges (0845 092 0350; lechardonvaldisere.com) offers fully catered accommodation at the eight-person Chalet Kilimanjaro from £995 per person per week, excluding flights.

### YELLOWSTONE SKI LODGE SAINTE-FOY EN TARENNAISE

Fans of Sainte-Foy, located just 20 minutes' drive from Val d'Isère, Tignes and Les Arcs, have been trying to keep the little village's charm and deserted, world-class off-piste terrain a secret for years. However, the truth will out and, while the budding resort can't be expected to compete with its better-known neighbour in terms of quantity of ski terrain or luxury ski chalets, it's becoming a serious contender in terms of quality of both.

The contemporarily styled Yellowstone Ski Lodge sits in the heart of Sainte-Foy and boasts plenty of mod-cons (flat-screen TV, iPod docking stations), as well as a large outdoor hot tub and sauna. This winter it has opened as a boutique, six-bedroom hotel, enabling guests to enjoy the comfort and cuisine of the property without the hassle of forming a group of people and committing to a week-long stay (although it is still possible to book the chalet exclusively).

Yellowstone's private chef will kick-start your day however you wish – with a hearty English breakfast, light pastries or muesli, fresh fruit. By mid afternoon, freshly baked cakes and the hot tub await before champagne and canapés are served. Dinner is a pleasantly drawn-out affair, featuring hearty soups, locally sourced meats sizzling straight from the BBQ, informal cheese and fondues and modern twists on old favourites such as fish pie.

**Details** Yellowstone Lodge (07885 282384; yellowstoneskilodge.co.uk) is available from £216 per person per night (breakfast, dinner) excluding flights when booked as a chalet-hotel. Fully catered accommodation is available from £1,500 per person per week based on full occupancy of the chalet (12 people).

### CHALET COLE RIDGE GRIMENTZ

Tucked away in Switzerland's breathtakingly beautiful Val d'Anniviers, Grimentz is one of five villages that provides direct access to the slopes of this little-known ski area. With unspoilt villages, extensive off-piste terrain and uncrowded, largely intermediate pistes, the village is an ideal spot for families and skiers looking to avoid lift queues.

Although it accesses a smaller local ski area than its neighbour Zinal, Grimentz itself is slightly larger and its slopes are more friendly. Free ski buses link all five villages, facilitating travel between them and making Grimentz an idyllic spot from which to explore the region. Dating back to the 15th century, the village is dotted with ancient chalets and sun-blackened raccards (wheat storage barns) and the odd new chalet, of which Cole Ridge is one. Located right on the edge of the piste, the chalet sleeps eight to 10 and boasts a south-facing hot tub with mountain views, a sauna and a large living room with a double-sided fireplace shared with the dining area.

The family who operate Cole Ridge believe the quality of cooking should be of equal importance as the skiing experience, and allocate an unusually generous proportion of their budget for the purchase of high quality food and wine. Three-course dinners might include beef bourguignon with mustard and chive mash followed by lemon semifreddo or cherry cheesecake, and the chalet will happily provide high tea for children if required.

**Details** Cole Ridge (0151 625 1921; cole-ridge.co.uk) offers fully catered accommodation including ski hostings on two days from £629 per person per week, excluding flights.

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