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On top of the world

You can't beat the sight of snow-covered mountains. And when you are on a ski trip you can, weather permitting, enjoy them every day. Catherine Scott visited the French ski resort of Meribel.

MÉRIBEL is at the heart of the vast Les 3 Vallées ski area in the French Alps – the largest interconnected ski area in the world. With 600km of ski slopes across resorts including the neighbouring Courchevel as well as high-altitude Val Thorens, there is something for everyone.

Some people understandably are worried about the affect that climate change is having on ski resorts in particular those of lower altitude. But when we visited during a mild and sunny March, despite the temperatures, the pistes were holding up well especially the higher up you skied and with effective snow-making machines and easy access to Val Thorens, I'm not sure Méribel has anything to worry about yet.

Above Méribel, the highest point to ski from is Mont Vallon, reaching a starting point for skiers of 2,952 metres.

The summit provides truly spectacular views, access to challenging red and black runs, including Combe du Vallon – one of the longest skiable routes in the valley.

The Méribel Valley is one of the most popular destinations for British skiers – the resort was, in fact, founded by a Scottish Colonel, Peter Lindsay, in 1938. Consisting of picture-postcard chalets and chalet-style apartment buildings and hotels, Méribel has retained all the charm of a traditional mountain village with its wood and stone buildings. Surrounded by forests, valleys, and Alpine peaks, it offers stunning views of Mont Blanc.

Fast, modern ski lifts offer easy access to the Méribel ski area (150km of pistes from 1,450m up to 1,700m) and the 3 Vallées. Méribel Centre is the largest of several villages in the resort and is home to the main shopping area and the greatest selection of restaurants.

We were located in the picturesque Méribel Mussillon hamlet close to Méribel village, staying in a Ski France Premium chalet.

The chalet had everything you could want and more including a large hot tub in the garden and a sauna to help those aching muscles at the end of a long ski day. A roaring log fire – not that we needed it, and all decorated in the height of luxury.

Ski France Premium offer a wide range of elegant chalets with incredible views and ski-in, ski-out locations spread across the best French ski resorts: Val d'Isère, Meribel, Alpe d'Huez and La Rosiere.

Catered chalets, particularly popular with the Brits, had to adapt during Covid and many introduced a contactless catering model which proved so successful and popular that many have retained it.

All the supplies you'll need for breakfast every morning, afternoon snacks, pre-dinner nibbles and dinner for six evenings are included in the chalet so you can skip the hassle of meal planning and ingredient hunting and let the staff take care of everything.

All food is dropped off while you are skiing during the day with full instructions, in addition to the best stocked fridge I have ever seen – I can't think of one thing that was missing.

It also offers more flexibility than a traditional catered chalet – if you just want to eat the cheese course or have cereal for supper then you can. And the following day the empties are taken away and replaced with the next day's meals – and, of course, cake.

Wine and beer are also plentiful and if you run out you can contact Ski France. All orders are made with Savoyard delicatessens and supermarkets.

For those who would prefer to do their own thing then Ski France Premium offers a self-catering option.

Although our chalet was close to the ski bus stop we were provided with a private transfer to and from the slopes dropping us at the resort's central hub at La Chaudanne where a variety of speedy lifts take you to the slopes including the Faon blue and Combe Tougnète red runs and picking us up there when we were ready to go home.

You can choose to just ski the Meribel piste but we chose the four-day, Three Valleys lift

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pass which meant we could ski Courcheval and Val Thorens as well.

My husband wasn't skiing and so his plan was to walk in the stunning scenery and there are maps which include track and trails. There is also a pedestrian lift pass which meant he could meet us for lunch at a number of different pedestrian accessible locations. One day he walked to join us at Motteret another ski area a little further along the valley.

As we were on a catered basis we didn't get to check out the many restaurants in Meribel, but we did check out a few apres spots including the famous Folie Douce on the border with Courcheval – you can ski back to Meribel or get the last lift back.

Sat just above Meribel, the Rond Point – affectionately known as Ronnie's – is a legendary bar for live music and piste-side parties seven days a week. Here you can expect a huge ski-in, ski-out terrace, great food and an excellent offering of toffee vodka.

In Meribel village itself there is Jack's Bar at the bottom of the slopes just across from the Chaudanne ski lift, and so perfect for us to get a lift back to our chalet for an evening of tasty

food and wine to refresh ourselves after another day of skiing.

Catherine Scott was a guest of Ski France Premium. Prices for a seven-night stay at premium chalet in the 2025/26 ski season start from £7,499 total on a self-catered basis. skifrance-premium.co.uk. Private transfer from Geneva to Meribel was with Ski France's transfer company, MV Transport: mvtransport.fr/en. A four-day Meribel ski pass for 2025 costs from £222 per adult. A four-day Three-Valleys ski pass for 2025 costs from €316/£264.50 per adult.

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LET IT SNOW: Main picture, one of the popular ski slopes in the Les 3 Vallees ski area; above left, time to head back down; below, a Ski France Premium chalet.

