



DESTINATION

WAYPOINTS

WINTER SPORTS DESTINATION: THE FRENCH ALPS

This winter season is exceptional! Following a few years when snow was scarce, prompting holidaymakers to favour sunny destinations, the record amount of snow that fell on the European mountains just before Christmas and continued amassing early in the new year are encouraging winter-sports lovers to reignite their passion for 'la glisse'. Should this weather trend persist, skiers might well enjoy optimum skiing conditions well until Easter! In the French Alps region of Savoie, two ski resorts stand out. Courchevel, in the Three Valleys area is unique, appealing to sportsmen and hedonists from around the world. Megève, in the Mont Blanc area is more of a traditional winter resort, with its stunning natural setting and charming village centre.

BY SYLVIE PERON

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140 M de Megève Hotel, located in the centre of the village, is a stylish winter sanctuary.



LE M DE MEGÈVE

Sitting in the centre of the charming Alpine village of Megève, just 100 metres from the Chamois cable car, Le M de Megève Hotel is a stylish winter sanctuary. Curled up at the heart of an authentic and welcoming chalet, in a superb mix of Savoyard style and contemporary cool, the hotel offers 42 timber-clad rooms and suites, a brand new fondue restaurant, Les Grands Crus de Fondues, a bistro 'L'Avant comptoir des Neiges' and a bar. The hotel also boasts a Cinq Mondes Spa with a balneotherapy area and swimming pool.

DISCREET LUXURY

The hotel's architectural signature brilliantly mixes contemporary forms and local identity. Jean-Noël Picot, the architect from Megève, has taken on the challenge of the project: a successful gamble to propose a contemporary extension to the 1980's building by coordinating its renovation and refurbishing. ▶

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► Constructed in traditional wood and stone, Le M de Megève feels warm and inviting. An open fire in the bar, leather sofas and armchairs in exclusive fabrics, stag antlers and fur throws all sit comfortably with richly carpeted rooms and suites. Each room has a balcony with views of the village or overlooks the vast interior courtyard.

THE M'S WAY OF LIFE

Assigned to Alain Perrier, the interior decoration contributes to the spirit of the place. Mixing styles and materials, the Savoyard tradition is married with a contemporary style, present in each room or suite with light coloured wood, stone, all with luxurious amenities by Hermès, and fabric from Arpin. The manufacturer has created an original and exclusive cloth using its famous 'surjet point échelle' for curtains, rugs and hotel cushions, all in the same shades: pumpkin, charcoal grey and ash. The cloth is made in Savoie, from one hundred per cent wool from sheep reared in the Alpine pastures. It is used traditionally for blankets in the high-mountain refuges, treated here for the curtains. The hotel's cushions are made out of Muletère fabric, formerly used to make rugs for packsaddles.

DOWN-TO-EARTH PLEASURES

"Le M is luxurious without being pretentious", says General Manager Jérôme Garcia. "We aim for conviviality and comfort in a relaxed atmosphere."

Different dining areas allow for guests to settle in as they would in a family-owned chalet.

There is a silver birch forest, back-lit by mirrors,

creating the illusion of space; contrasting black and white colours; Bertoa chairs, ceilings in white fragmented wood and a vintage touch in the form of Venetian mirrors and weathered leather materials.

LE M BAR

With a direct access from the street, outside clients seem to rather enjoy pushing the doors of Le M for a drink and a bite among friends.

All day long, the Bar offers original hot and cold cocktails, including an award-winning recipe: a hot mojito! There is a large selection of wines, served by the glass, as well as rums, blends and malts for connoisseurs, and a selection of sweet or savoury tapas prepared by Chef Yves Camdeborde using seasonal, local products. For lovers of 'puros', the M Bar has a cigar cellar to be enjoyed on the outdoor heated terrace.

Tea-time turns out to be a gourmet moment with a wealth of sweet mouthfuls that makes it one of the most important moment of the day.

QUARTZ TREATMENT TABLE

Located in the heart of the hotel, the Balneo area offers a pool with counter-current swimming, a fitness area, a hot tub, a sauna and a hammam carved into the rocks. Inspired by the local architecture, it uses a subtle blend of wood and stone. M's Spa has chosen the brand Cinq Mondes, which associates the beneficial effects of the latest Phyto-Aromatics and cosmetics. A large choice of treatments, inspired by the beauty rituals of the world is available. Since its creation, the brand is a pioneer in elaborating formulae without petrochemicals, silicone or parabens, and one of the first to commit itself to a strict laboratory charter with the Natural Laboratory Guideline. Four massage rooms include a double one for couples.

A real treat, exclusively available at Le M, is the original experience of a treatment on hot sand: this remarkable new concept of using an alpha quartz sand treatment table heated to the desired temperature based on psammotherapy, a thousand year old technique which gives pain relief and brings total relaxation. The benefits of body and face treatments are greatly increased. Balinese rituals and after-skiing massages count among the signature treatments, relieving muscle tensions, using essential oils. ☺

RESTAURANT REVIEW

M de Megève. 'L'AVANT COMPTOIR DES NEIGES'

Chef Yves Camdeborde is known as one of the founding fathers of the famous French 'bistronomie' movement, exemplified by the menu at his hotel-restaurant in Paris, the award winning Relais Saint Germain.

"I love the mountains just as much during the summer as in the winter, and Megève is a place that I hold particularly dear. I am thrilled to have this opportunity to create an original tapas menu for the stunning M hotel.

Why tapas? Tapas, for me, are the cousins of French hors-d'oeuvre. They are smaller in terms of portions, but are just as gastronomic while being explosive, surprising, different and delicious!

Tapas remind us of a sharing culture, which automatically feels friendly. We picture ourselves choosing from a wide range of options, while sitting with friends and family around the fireplace."

We tried some of the vast selection

of specialties from the menu, including Melanosporum black truffle and Comté Croque-monsieur, lightly roasted veal Carpaccio, Parmesan vinaigrette, rocket, walnuts and lime, warm waffle, Eric Ospital's ibaiama cured ham and melting artichoke, soft-boiled egg, toast with caviar butter, Neuvic caviar, warm new potatoes, double thick cream, Cooked cow's milk, balsamic vinegar and finished with a sumptuous dessert of warm chocolate mousse with pear sorbet and cocoa crumble!

All we needed afterwards was a walk through the ancient village of Megève under the gently falling snow!

www.mdemegève.com

