

THE FINEST HOMES, TRAVEL AND LIFESTYLE Vol 26 No 2

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A country for all SEASONS

Switzerland is renowned for its mountainous beauty, picturesque chalets and excellent skiing – but that's not all

WITH APPROXIMATELY 150 SKI RESORTS, more than 5,500km of cross-country ski trails and winter walking trails at over 2,800 metres, Switzerland is a veritable winter wonderland. However, the fun doesn't stop once the snow melts. Jonathan Epiney of Chestertons Alpine Homes in Switzerland says, "In the winter months skiing, cross-country skiing, ice skating, sledging, hiking and Nordic walking are the main activities. In the other three seasons, all sorts of outdoor activities are available in all resorts with an increasing interest on mountain biking, hiking and wellness."

Guaranteed snow

While for decades the main pole of buyers has been the UK and the EU, Mr Epiney reports that he has noticed an increase in the requests, and therefore transactions, from the domestic market. "At the moment, I would say that 40% of our sales are made to Swiss nationals and/or residents. Hardcore skiers will focus on the 'snow-guaranteed resorts' such as the Four Valleys, Portes du Soleil or Val d'Anniviers, while the lifestyle clientele aim for the sunnier side of the valley such as Anzère or Crans-Montana. Verbier and Zermatt remain top of the league when it comes to prime resorts."

"For years, most of the transactions were in the CHF 1.5million region. However, recently we had lots of transaction around CHF 1million or above CHF 2 million. With the Lex Weber, recent changes and Swiss laws, we anticipate an increase of prices in the forthcoming years as building off-plan properties is not permitted anymore. Therefore, existing properties will increase in value." (The Lex Weber has prevented any building permits being granted for second homes in any communes where second homes already make up 20% of the property stock.)

Small and exclusive

Tim Swannie, director of buying agency Home Hunts, comments, "We find apartments and chalets in Verbier are amongst the most sought after and most expensive in the entire Alps. The market is quite buoyant throughout the year, particularly with the Brits, Dutch and Scandinavians. This is because the resort is only small and very exclusive and the scenery is spectacular. The slopes do accommodate all levels, although they best suit confident and adventurous skiers and snowboarders."

"There is also a great selection of restaurants and nightlife, as well as resorts such as the W Hotel – all of which attract international clients, making the rental market really strong. Verbier is very much one of the 'must have' places in the Alps for wealthy property buyers."

Mark Lightfoot, owner and founder of SnowOnly.com, points out that there is no standardisation in the market for the sale or purchase of properties between the resorts. "Each resort offers something very different to visitors across the seasons," he explains, "and can therefore command a wide range of prices."

"The resorts seeing the highest sale prices include Verbier – not least as it has a reputation for some of the best skiing and more expensive holidays. Verbier also benefits from high summer visitor numbers thanks to an excellent range of non-snow activities in the warmer months for example, hiking, mountain biking, abseiling and paragliding. The same benefits are also seen in resorts such as St Moritz and Andermatt, where buyers of investment properties can expect their property to appreciate due to consistent demand for these locations. Having the potential to rent out a property for 365 days a year has enormous investment benefits for all resorts across Switzerland."



Verbier

This impressive chalet is on a 690m² plot and offers 325m² of living space. Its living and dining rooms are located right underneath the high wooden roof structure in the upper parts of the house, offering prime views over the surrounding mountains. The property also has five double bedrooms with their own bathrooms, as well as a master bedroom with its own dressing room. A relaxation area includes a sauna, jacuzzi, shower and gym space. Extra storage is also available on site as well as an underground garage with room for two vehicles.

£5.94m / €6.75m / \$7.67m Home Hunts ▶ www.home-hunts.com



Chalet Zermatt Peak, Zermatt

High above the village with magnificent views to the mountains and Matterhorn, this rental chalet is centrally located, yet private and secluded. Set over six levels, each with floor-to-ceiling windows, its modern, open-plan layout includes a large corner-seating sofa under a glass roof, a library area with open fire, dining area and open kitchen. The lounge balcony offers additional outdoor space.

The chalet's five individually designed bedroom suites have seating and dressing areas and further spectacular panoramic views. Guests enjoy a fully-inclusive package with a full complement of staff including a private chef, concierge and service staff.



Summer rates from £6,140 / €7,000 / \$8,000 per night

Chalet Zermatt Peak ▶ www.chaletzermattpeak.com



Paradiso, Ticino

Bordering Italy, Ticino is the southernmost canton of Switzerland. In this surprisingly temperate region, Italian is the official language and the waters of the Mediterranean Sea are within easy reach, as are the world-famous ski resorts of the Swiss Alps. This three-bedroom, four bathroom duplex penthouse has a superb view of Lake Lugano. It includes a rooftop terrace, swimming pool, three-car garage and the benefit of exclusive hotel services.

£5.65m / €6.4m / \$7.3m

Christie's International Real Estate

► www.christiesrealestate.com



Les Chalets d'Adelaide, Grimentz

Representing the last now-build development available in this hidden, off-piste resort, Les Chalets d'Adelaide comprises a mixture of large detached chalets and apartments. They are serviced by a new boutique hotel and include ski-in, ski-out facilities, a concierge and extensive spa and wellness facilities bringing a new level of quality to Grimentz.

From £698,775 / €792,800 / \$901,450

Alpine Property Finders

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Le Montagnier, Champéry

Situated in the world's largest ski area, Portes du Soleil, this hugely popular development includes 25 spacious apartments ranging from two to five bedrooms. It will also offer a spa, private dining club, exceptional concierge and hotel-style services.

From £678,575 / €792,900 / \$875,340

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