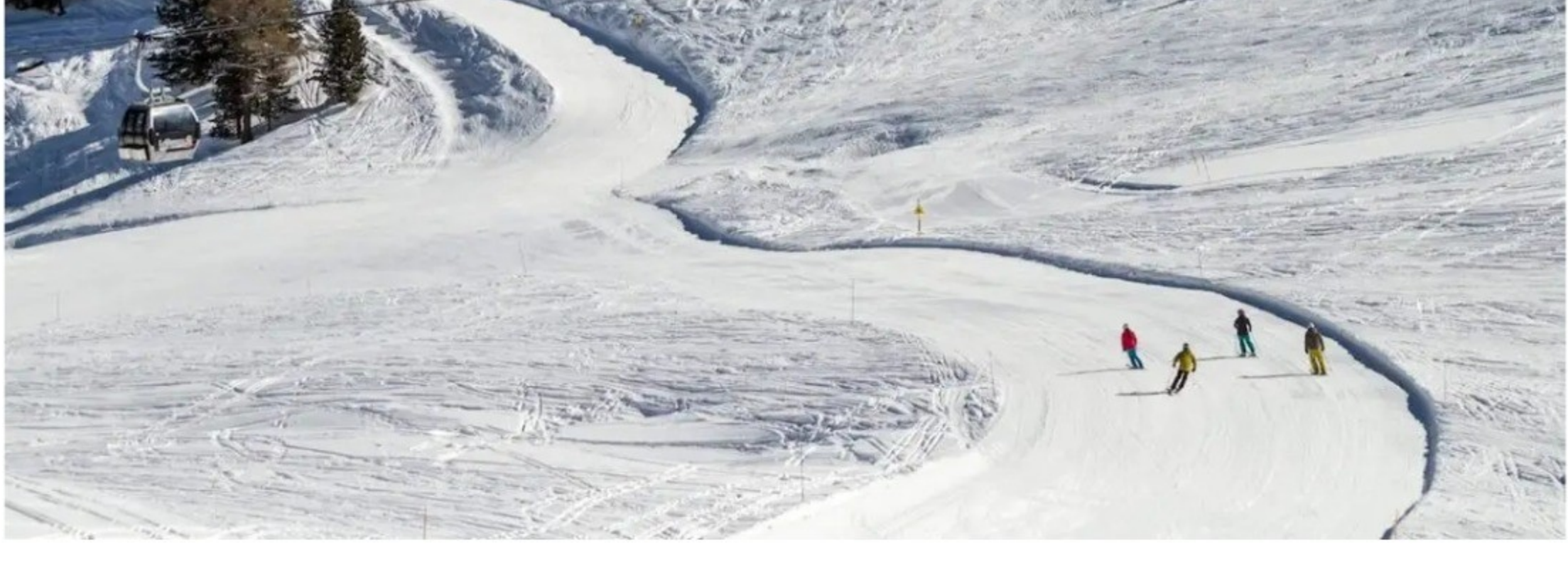


Home > Winter > Resorts > 9 superb and sustainable reasons to visit Verbier, Switzerland

Resorts

9 superb and sustainable reasons to visit Verbier, Switzerland

By Mike Cranmer | January 24, 2024



Verbier by Train

It's at my favourite station, the utterly magnificent St Pancras, built 125 years ago with 60 million red bricks supplied by Edward Goppert's Nottingham Patent Brick Company, to board the 30.09 Eurostar to Paris, thence to Verbier to test if it's possible to go skiing sustainably. What could be more delightful? Not for me the red-eye cattle-class of SqueezJet. What's the rush? My smiling cabin steward Oubiera ('Call me Kitty') lays out my breakfast as the train builds speed. The ugly Kent landscape of wrecked cars and the odd knackered horse blurring past.



Breakfast Wine and CO2

"No? Coffee?" asks Kitty. "Not for me," I say, lowering my voice. "but is there any chance of a bottle of wine?" She glances at the bulkhead clock and smiles. "Well, it's five o'clock somewhere in the world. I'll see what I can do." Back she comes with a chilled Domaine de Tholomies. Most acceptable. As I sip my breakfast wine, I compare the amount of CO2 emitted per person per journey. Train 2.4. Plane 66.0. No contest. At Paris, Gare du Nord to Gare de Lyon is a struggle on the Metro. Only two stops but the escalators are out of order and the signage is terrible. Attention Paris! You've got the Olympics in July.

Dream Machine

Reclining in my leather seat, stage 2, the SNCF journey to Lausanne, goes by in a 300mph dream, interspersed with regional and sustainable choices from chef Michel Robins menu, then more green dreams. Train 2.2g of CO2 per passenger kilometre. EasyJet, 70.36 grams of CO2 per passenger kilometre. My home-to-Verbier travel is all pre-booked through Go Verbier in one click, showing various sustainable options.



Platform changes are Swiss-perfect efficient. Martigny, Le Châble and then gondola into the very heart of Verbier and a short walk to my 4-star superior Hôtel de Verbier.

Swissustainable

The hotel is part of the Switzerland Tourism programme 'Swissustainable'. Solar panels paired with the town's pellet-fuelled system heat the hotel and restaurant; triple-glazed windows are fitted; rainwater collection is filtered and reused; no air conditioning; no shuttle service; guests are encouraged to take public transport or walk; spa facilities are only switched on between 3pm and 6pm to reduce waste.



None of the above is apparent, but what is apparent is the gorgeous wraparound Scandi mysighet, iciness created by Eid and Ebba Leijonhufvud, the Swedish owners. "Hels back office," I do the cosy bit, laughs Ebba. From sheepskin armchairs to king or emperor-size beds furnished with the finest pillows I've ever experienced, this is eco-paradise.

Hire and Higher

Many skiers rent boots and skis, so why not clothing? Hey Presto! There, laid out my bed, are ski clothes pre-ordered at home. Taking hire to the next level, Cirvel of Verbier specialise in premium skiwear rental, offering skiers and snowboarders another way to reduce the impact of their sport by renting premium outerwear, mid-layers and gloves online.



I have chosen a top-of-the-range Ortovox Deep Shell jacket and pants, and a Piz Bova jacket. The branch of Anna Smoothy (former World Tour Freerider and a living example of normative determinism), Cirvel's rentals emit 75% less CO2 than equivalent shop sales, boosted even more by delivery and collection to users in their accommodation. To complete my kit requirements, I rent skis, boots and a helmet directly across the road from the hotel, at Xtreme Sports. Removing the need to lug a huge bag of kit on and off trains is a joy, and all the equipment is tip-top and socky-boo.

World's Best

Verbier is twice the winner of World's Best Ski Resort, attracting 35,000 visitors at peak times but ski lifts here generate very little CO2. How? Laurent Vaucher, director of Téléverbier tells me: "This is because we use electricity from low-carbon sources such as hydroelectric power. The biggest carbon footprint comes from the movement of customers from their place of residence to Verbier. We've reduced the speed of lifts to conserve over 20% of energy and extend the lifespan of machinery. While we still produce carbon emissions from our snow-grooming vehicles, the technology for replacing internal combustion engines is not yet perfected. However, projects based on electric batteries or hydrogen fuel cells are well advanced and we expect a solution in the mid-term. By then, Verbier will have reached zero emissions."



The Drain Game

Every New Year's Day in Verbier at 15 minutes past midnight, 60,000 people flush toilets into a sewage system designed for 30,000. That's part of the water sustainability dilemma faced by this Commune. They aren't taking it sitting down. Five years ago residents, who pay all water fees locally, started to mitigate and adapt. Now all sewage is recycled, rain and snow are conserved.



The 300,000 tons of snow cleared from roads are cleaned to drinking water quality and recycled. I meet the man in charge of the water in Verbier, Laurent Horvath, deputy director of Eauverbier. He's tall, inspirational, and optimistic. "We're in time. We can do something. Some people don't believe it, I don't care. I care if the climate is changing, we need to live with it. With the steps the people of Verbier are taking now, I hope that in 50 years our kids will say, 'you were smart'."

Eyes Right

On the main drag in Verbier, cheek by jowl with Moncier, Boutique Bogner, and Agence ABC Verbier, who will sell you bjuou properties for £12 million plus, is another important link in Verbier's sustainability chain. They make carbon-neutral goggles and sunglasses for all types of sport, using sustainable materials. Customers choose size, design, lens, frame and logo colour, and products come with a lifetime guarantee: break, and they will fix them free.



Broken pairs are completely recycled. They make lenses for prescriptions. I'm now the proud owner of Vanguard goggles which I wear over spectacles and Renegade sunglasses with prescription lenses. If they're good enough for me they're good enough for the likes of the Ineos Grenadiers Cycling team, and Ariana Tricomi 3x World Freeride Champion.

Grasp the Nettle

What could be more sustainable than local produce? Dairy farmers making the famous Raclette du Valais AOP and other numerous cheese specialities have united under the Grand Entremont brand with livestock breeders, beekeepers, aromatic and medicinal plant growers, cereal crop farmers and wine and fruit cultivators.



Their exceptional products are offered in Verbier shops, hotels and restaurants, like the newly renovated La Patsay at the top of the brand new La Patsay chairlift. My nettle soup served with Valais AOP Raclette cheese and rye bread paired with a bio Johannisberg 2022 produced by Daniel Magliocco & Fils down in the valley 283m below is outstanding. Now that really is local.

Ski Royale

The name Verbier is synonymous in most people's minds with 'slabs and royals', but you're unlikely to strap hang next to a Beck's on the free shuttle bus to the lift station, more likely to jump out of the way of a speeding bus of bladdied-out Guinness Range Rover SUVs carrying the likes of Jude Law, Richard Branson, James Blunt, Prince Harry, Jamie Oliver, Ronan Keating, Barack Obama, or Leonardo di Caprio in the back.




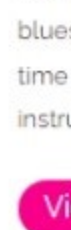
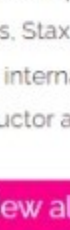
You won't share a chairlift with Prince Andrew who finally managed to sell his little chalet for around £3 million. No branch of Woking Plaza Express here. It is a resort for the few privileged but also for thousands of ordinary passionate skiers, and definitely the place to head to if you want to enjoy some of the best runs in the world and leave as small a carbon footprint as possible.

Reasons to visit Verbier:

- World's Best Ski Resort
- Single point low carbon travel options
- Easy train connections
- All clothing and equipment are pre-ordered saving luggage
- Local produce in hotels, shops, and restaurants
- Low carbon infrastructure
- Top quality hotels using low energy
- Lifts extremely low carbon
- High local sustainability awareness

Hotel de Verbier from £1,300pp based on two sharing with breakfast. A return standard class train from London St Pancras to Verbier is £300pp and an adult seven-day pass 4-valais is £405.

Author

 **Mike Cranmer**
 @  
 Michael is passionate about many things; skiing, music, anything that moves him, but especially the blues, Stax, Motown, and gospel. Dirty Dry Vodka Martinis, good pals, and living in the moment. One-time international photographer turned Picture Editor, he eventually saw the light and became a ski-instructor and travel writer. His stories are 'about the extraordinary people I meet along the way'.

[View all posts](#)

- ALPS COCKTAILS COUPLES ECO FAMILIES SINGLES SKI SUSTAINABLE VALAIS VERBIER WEEKEND BREAK WINE






RELATED POSTS



SEARCH

Type and hit enter.

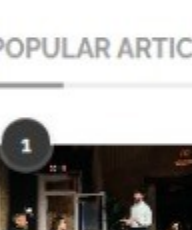
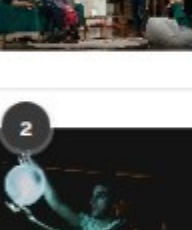
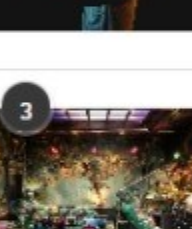
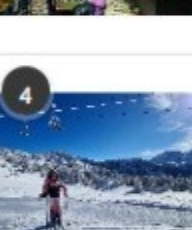

RECENT ARTICLES

-  **9 superb and sustainable reasons to visit Verbier, Switzerland**
By Mike Cranmer | January 24, 2024
-  **4 heartwarming reasons to glamping at Whispering Springs**
By Katarina Polonsky | January 22, 2024
-  **5 best at-home health and wellness brands**
By Lorna Oakley | January 19, 2024
-  **Pinzolo, the undiscovered top secret of Madonna di Campiglio**
By Adam Albre | January 16, 2024
-  **Sensational Singapore: 6 reasons to stay at the Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel**
By Christina Mitsa | January 15, 2024

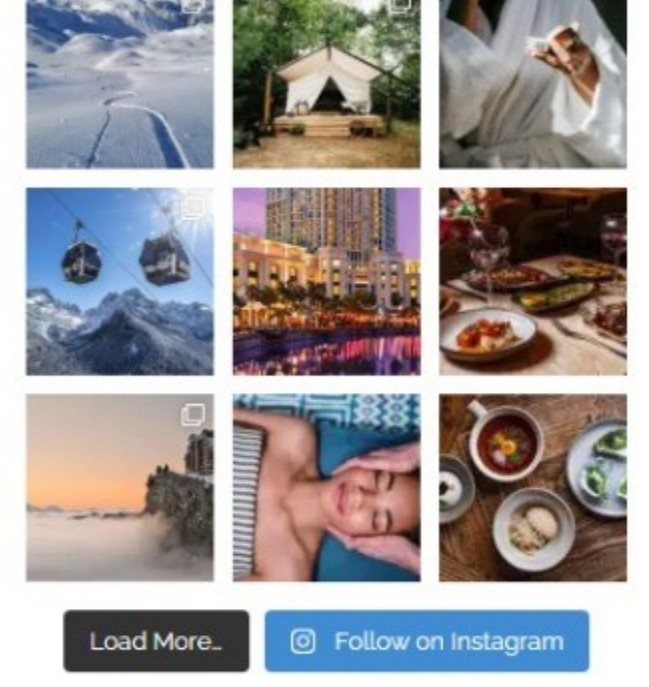
SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

SUBSCRIBE **23.5K**

POPULAR ARTICLES

-  **2:22 A Ghost Story**
By Emily Healey-Lyncham | December 27, 2023
-  **Interview with Alastair Michael**
By Emily Healey-Lyncham | September 15, 2023
-  **A surprising lunch at The Glade at Sketch London**
By Neil Dawley | April 30, 2019
-  **MONTEC Doom W a kickass Womens Ski Jacket**
By Lady Charlotte Lyncham | January 31, 2022
-  **LEXUS RX 450hL Takumi Seven-Seat Luxury SUV**
By Adam Albre | January 14, 2022

thebespokebook
Independent & unbiased online lifestyle magazine. Founded 2012 for us luxury is about the experience, not the price tag.
info@thebespokeblackbook.com



FOLLOW US

The Bespoke Black Book
12,017 followers
BESPOKE BLACK BOOK

The Bespoke Black Book
on Wednesday
Michael heads to much voted World's Best Ski Resort, Verbier in Switzerland, via train to show that you can ski in the Swiss Alps sustainably
https://www.thebespokeblackbook.com/news/

ELUXE MAGAZINE