



Welcome to the new format quarterly newsletter. In this edition you will find the usual mixture of events, courses and equipment reviews.



WINTER 2006: We have seen a doubling of client numbers on our off piste & ski touring courses. This big increase is largely due to the range of activities, from ski safaris to heli-skiing, but feedback from clients indicates it is also due to our guiding team and the amount of information available on our award winning website. We are already planning new courses & improved itineraries for next winter season, and the website will be updated very soon.

GRIVEL: We have renewed our contract with Grivel to keep supplying us with client hire equipment for the next summer and winter seasons.



SNOW: This winter has had the best snow conditions for seven years in the Alps, & it is not over yet! We still have one Haute Route course to go. The snow means early summer route conditions will be great.

KILIMANJARO: There are a few last spaces on the trips 21-30 Sept, and 29 Sept - 8 Oct. A detailed itinerary is on the website expedition section. The price is only £995, for the 10 day trip. The mountain is 5895m (19340ft), so is over a kilometre taller than Mont Blanc. If you have only ever climbed in the Alps before, you should consider this expedition for your first taste of altitude climbing & trekking.



CHAMONIX: There are many building works going on before the summer, including a new park and space for the weekly market in Place Mont Blanc. Other changes that have been made are the sports Centre and school area, which is being totally modernised, and close to the Icicle Office, the bricolage shop is now closed and it is going to become a mountain bike hire centre. This will be ideal for all those on an accommodation only holiday, staying in one of our Cham Sud flats.

Latest News

We have had lots of great press coverage recently. The Mail on Sunday did an article on our use of technology, including free internet telephone Skype, to keep in touch with our expedition teams & to run our UK and French office. Icicle was recommended in the Guardian Travel & Holidays guide this year.

Look at the Holiday part of our website for our new paragliding courses & the experience flights. Prices start at £60 for a tandem flight with an instructor.

Several of our UK training weekend courses booked out within a day of being released. Extra dates are now up on the website.

Due to the political unrest in Georgia & Nepal, both the Elbrus and Mera Peak expeditions are cancelled. See website for details.

Chalet Icicle has just said bye to the last clients for its first full winter season. If you want to stay self-catering this summer, we still have a few weeks to choose from. For details: www.icicleUK.com/chalet

Many congratulations to Icicle guide Yan, and his wife Natalie, on the birth of their first child, Sandra. Yan has worked for Icicle since 2001, and is one of our key ski course guides.



UK TRAINING: To help you prepare for your first Alpine course, we have developed UK Alpine Preparation Weekends. See website for details. The aims of the weekends are to tackle the key concerns of people visiting the Alps for a first time: moving quickly on steep ground, mountain weather, equipment selection and micro navigation.



KIT REVIEW: La Sportiva Trango S Evo boots. Price in Chamonix: 198€ (£137.50). During the last summer season I tested a pair, and I even used them a few times ice climbing, and for a 4000m peak. They are light, comfortable, and excellent on rock. The only downsides are that the ankle support is not great, but what do you expect for a technical Alpine rock boot? Good.



STAFF: In January we gained a Investors in People award for our staff training programme, As the busy summer season, we are offering several Rep work placement opportunities in our Chamonix office. Full details are on the jobs pages of our website. There is a choice of a two or three week training course, and all your accommodation is provided. Between winter ending and summer starting (a three week gap this year) more works will be done in our Chamonix office to improve our training facilities, in terms of media projectors, and the bouldering wall being extended.



GALLERY: Visitors to our Chamonix office or chalet will see we have teamed up with artist Rowan Huntley, and we are selling prints and originals of her oil paintings of peaks in the Mont Blanc massif. The pictures will appeal to anyone who has climbed or skied in the region, and some of the peaks featured include Tacul, Dent du Requin, the Aiguilles du Chamonix, & Mont Blanc. Drop in to see these pictures!

Interview Corner

This month we interview a familiar face to all those previous clients. Sarah is a Icicle Rep in Chamonix.



Q: Climbs / aims in 2006?

A: The Couturier couloir on the Verte, & I still have not done the Matterhorn so I really want to climb it.

Q: Your favourite climb?

A: Cascade Lillaz in Val de Cogne (Italy), in terms of ambiance and the hot chocolate after doing the climb, in the Café Licone.

Q: Expeditions planned?

A: Yes, I am going out to Kilimanjaro in September and maybe to Nepal after that if the political issues are resolved soon, as I would like to climb Ama Dablam & some trekking peaks in the Everest area

Q: Best advice ever told?

A: There are two grades of climb: possible and not possible. Forget the rest, & enjoy what you can do.

Q: Favourite piece of kit?

A: Petzl Reverso as it is so good for handling twin ropes on belay stances.

Q: The top-tip for clients?

A: Keep moving, however slowly & avoid stop-starts.