



Alpine & Ice Courses – Ski Guiding & Touring – Treks & Expeditions
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Haute Route ski tour success & final spaces

Last weekend was the first opening day for the huts on the Haute Route ski tour from Chamonix to Zermatt, and so this week was the first Haute Route group of the season. We are delighted to report that all of our group successfully completed the tour, and they had great weather throughout. The sunny conditions did make some sections a bit icy, but that's the pay off for the fantastic views they had. A big thank you to Filippo who guided the group, who did a superb job finding the best lines to ski. If you are keen on undertaking any of the classic ski tours, we have the remaining spaces this year; Intro Tour Weekend 4-5 April (2 spaces), Haute Route 5-11 April (1 space), Intro Tour Weekend 11-12 April (2 spaces), Haute Route 19-25 April (2 spaces), and the Monte Rosa ski tour 26 April – 2 May (3 spaces).



Alpine snowshoeing report

This has been (and still is) our busiest season ever for snowshoeing, and it's probably no surprise when you consider that it is the fastest growing winter sport. We offer everything from a half day to a weekend to a full week of snowshoeing, so there is something for everyone. The most popular courses have been the Italian Snowshoe Weekends where you stay a night in a luxury mountain hut (there is a final weekend with spaces on the 18-19 April), and the Chamonix Snowshoe Summits week. All our courses are led by fully qualified UIMLA guides, and this photo shows Heidi celebrating her arrival at the Bonatti Refuge in Italy guided by Mark. The conditions are still great for snowshoeing, and we are running trips through until early May for snowshoeing, so get in touch if you are planning a trip to the Alps this winter season.



Skiing equipment reviews

As a reaction to the massive growth in the numbers on our off piste and ski touring courses, we have given the ski section of the website a complete overhaul, and the most popular page on this part of the site is now the advice pages on ski equipment. The range of skis, boots and bindings, is sometimes bewildering, especially with the explosion of interest in ski touring, and the manufacturers have responded by producing a wider product range than ever before. The ski equipment pages are designed to steer you through the selection of the most suitable kit, and to help you avoid expensive mistakes. If you already have booked on a ski course, or are planning one, get in touch with our Chamonix resort team and they can give you the best advice and feedback on the latest models, designs and the new ski technology.



Winter mountaineering news

The widely reported heavy Alpine snowfall this year, led to good ice conditions, and all the classic routes formed well this season. In the Val de Cogne some routes formed for the first time in several years, and we had several groups enjoying them. As ever the old favorites such as EMHM, Deferlante, Cascade Lillaz, Nuit Blanche and Shiva Lingam saw many ascents from our clients. We also had several clients undertaking first ascents, and visiting rarely climbed icefalls, so congratulations to you all. The winter mountaineering and gullies season is still going strong, and for those interested in a late winter / early summer ascent of the Aiguille Verte by one of its famous lines, the conditions are looking good. Last week we had groups climbing Modica Noury, Gabarrou Albinoni and Voie Pelissier on the Pointe Lachenal.



Off Piste in Zermatt and Cervinia

The names of the highest off piste ski lifts in Zermatt are legendary; Gornergrat, Stockhorn, and of course the Klein Matterhorn. They give access to some of the most fantastic off piste in the region, and you can ski both on the Swiss side of the mountain, as well as across into the Italian Cervinia region. This gives you access to an unparalleled (excuse the ski pun) range of off piste runs on which to develop your ski skills on different types of terrain. We have one final course date for Zermatt this year, running 29 March - 4 April 2009. There are three remaining spaces, and we offer two options, either the standard course at £799 per person including half board in a town center hotel, or guiding only for just £499 per person. If you are interested in taking any of these final course spaces, get in touch as soon as possible to reserve.



Chamonix news update

This season the best new place for après ski has been the Rhododendrons Bar in Le Praz. Chamonix now has its first lap dancing venue, strategically and classily located behind MacDonalds, called 7th Heaven. Does that mean the golden arches are heaven? A new pizza restaurant called Paradiso Pizza has opened near the office in Cham Sud, which has become a popular haunt. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Mont Blanc tunnel fire, and also that of the Montroc avalanche. Happier news is that Icicle guide Christophe and his wife have had a baby girl - congratulations! Other guide news is that Stefano and Enrico (Team Italia) returned safely from Nepal, from climbing Lobuche peak, close to Mera Peak which we run trips to each year. Also keep an eye on the Icicle Blog for all the latest Alpine news.