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winter 2007

AT
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FOODS

A dramatic photograph of a surfer riding a massive barrel wave. The surfer is silhouetted against the bright, white foam of the wave's interior. The water is a deep, vibrant teal color, and the sky above is a clear, bright blue. The overall mood is one of intense action and natural beauty.

SURF'S UP

10 WAYS TO HAVE FUN IN THE SUN THIS WINTER
GORGEOUS GIFT GUIDE SIMON CARTER ON RAGS
AND RICHES GREEN SUPERCARS FOOD FADS
LUXURY SKI CHALET'S PROTECTING THE BEST OF
BRITISH GRUB CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

SIX OF THE BEST LUXURY SKI HOLIDAYS

1) Chalet Merlo, Miroir, France

If the name of this tiny village isn't all that familiar, the stellar names of the resorts you can easily visit from this recently built chalet read like ski resort royalty. Val D'Isere, Tignes and Les Arcs are all under 20 minutes away (less if you make use of the chalet's friendly helicopter pilot).

But the beauty of this place is the peace and quiet. The only noise to disturb your stay will be the noise you make yourself. Chalet manager Lucy Robertson serves up food and wine as good as that in a swanky restaurant. Indeed, thanks to the use of fresh ingredients and the home-cooked nature of the food, it's better than many restaurants. And a partnership with wine merchants Wine Mark France, means the food and wine matching is second to none.

Although it feels like the middle of nowhere, Chalet Merlo is only a 30-minute helicopter flight from Geneva airport, which is well served by Air France's CityJet service from London City Airport. The efficient service costs just £80, and it's possible to get from the City to the slopes in a few hours. This brand new chalet sleeps 12 people in six rooms and along with

luxurious beds, each room is equipped with an iPod dock and Caudalie Vinotherapie cosmetics. There's also an outdoor hot-tub, with spectacular views of the Val D'Isere and Tignes glaciers. Ask nicely and they may send down a chilled beer or a glass of champagne via the tub-side winch. There is also a sauna and treatment room, with therapists available on demand.

Run by a team expert in the local area, guests are offered a wide choice of activities, notably all-day off-piste skiing adventures. It's also easy to arrange trips into Italy (including Heli-skiing for those up to the challenge). As the chalet's bus will pick you up at any of the resorts, there's no need to worry about skiing back to where you started or clambering across the resort to get back to the chalet. Should you wish to enjoy the noisier nightlife in one of the bigger resorts, the bus will be there to wait for you until you are ready to head back to Miroir.

Prices start from £10,000 a week for the whole chalet, including half board and all drinks and airport transfers (helicopter transfers cost an extra £200 per person). Weekend and other bookings are also available subject to availability. www.chaletmerlo.eu

