



Ferme de Montagne

TATLER[®]

November 2018

Return of the
Social X-Rays
Who really
runs London?

Washington,
Westminster
& the terrifying
new alliance
of the far right

Radical Chic
39 pages of
first-rate fashion

'I've been in therapy so long I go
to the therapist the therapists go to'

DAKOTA



Ferme de Montagne

TRAVEL

◁ truffled potatoes), but there was always a lovely buffet surprise – a sushi extravaganza, say, or double-chocolate fountain. And despite the effortless elegance, it's brilliant for children too. There is a child-friendly buffet each night, and an ice-cream sundae station that became the perfect eat-your-veg bribe for the entire week.

And the childrens' facilities are outstanding: a kids' club, a games room, a cinema, and an easygoing attitude that made it fine for them to race around in their socks. The whole vibe was gloriously relaxed, but still exceptionally smart. There were only a few Britons there during our stay; most of the guests were very blond, thin, well-dressed German aristos, a few Swiss financiers and the odd Belgian minor royal.

And, unlike many ski-resort hotels, it was never deserted during the day. Perhaps fellow guests, too, were fair-weather skiers. Or perhaps, like us, they just found the indoor distractions too delightful to ignore.

Book it *Schlosshotel Fiss* (+43 5476 6397; schlosshotel-fiss.com) offers doubles from €225 per person, per night, full-board, including use of spa facilities and outdoor activities programme. Family suites from €230-€425 per person, per night.

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By GAVANNDR HODGE

Handsome and charming young men have many uses, especially when they are excellent at skiing, know sneaky routes to all the best restaurants in town and are really good at looking after children. So it was a moment of great joy when I discovered we had been assigned not one but two handsome and charming young men for the duration of our time at the Ferme de Montagne hotel in Les Gets. These 'ski companions', who shall henceforth be known as Luke and Tom, were available to us at



FIRST RESORT
The indoor infinity pool at Schlosshotel Fiss in Austria

all times, as is the practice at FDM.

We could choose exactly how we wished to deploy them. Tom could teach our daughters to ski while Luke guided us around the farthest reaches of the mountain (Les Gets is a 12th-century village nestled in the Portes du Soleil ski area with 650km of pistes). Luke could entertain the children while we gently simmered in the hot tub and Tom trudged to the ski-hire shop to swap our piste skis for fat powder skis. If we could have taken Luke and Tom home with us, we would have done so – they made our lives so much more seamless and delightful.

But they didn't want to run away with us. They were happy at Ferme de Montagne, a glamorous Savoyard farmhouse that has been delicately restored, with lovely weathered beams, thick stone walls on the ground floor and polished oak

floors. It is a small hotel, with only eight double bedrooms, so it feels more like staying in someone's gorgeous and refined chalet. The bedrooms are decorated with antiques, but the beds are Hypnos and devastatingly comfortable. The focus of the high-ceilinged dining room, with its views of pistes, pine forests and peaks, is a tall, slender wood-burning stove, besides which we lounged on club chairs drinking champagne, while Tom (or was it Luke?) looked after our children.

The other great pleasure of FDM is the extraordinary food. Now, I have eaten at many a grand ski hotel, and even the six-star establishments are outshone by the delicate and inventive cooking here. Every night there was a different tasting menu using ingredients from the local farms and dairies; dishes might be slow roasted pork belly with pickled pear and

black pudding crumbs or chocolate marquise with griottine cherries. The wine list includes rare bottles bought from the cellars of smart French restaurants such as Pont de La Tour; bread is baked on-site, as are the teatime cakes; most notably the still-warm scones with home-made jam. Cakes or massage in the bijoux spa? Why not do both?

On our very last day, after a night of non-stop fairy tale snowfall, Tom escorted us to Mont Chéry and led us down all his favourite off-piste routes. The sky was a dazzling blue, the branches of the trees heavily laden with light powder snow, and there was hardly anyone else there, not even our children, who were happily eating frites somewhere far away with Luke. □

Book it *Ferme de Montagne* (+33 (0)4 50 75 36 79; fermedemontagne.com) offers seven nights full-board accommodation including local transfers, a personal ski guide, use of spa facilities and a complimentary beauty treatment for £1995 per person, per night.

The guests were German aristocrats, Swiss financiers and the odd Belgian royal