



BADRUTT'S PALACE HOTEL
IN ST. MORITZ IS A
FAVORITE DESTINATION OF
EUROPEAN ROYALS AND
AMERICAN CELEBRITIES.

WINTER *in Style*

The temperature may be rising, but it's never too early to start thinking about where you'll go when the mercury drops. These five resorts are among the world's most luxurious and exclusive destinations for winter fun.

BY MATT ALDERTON

Sam von Trapp was born with winter in his veins. Grandson of the late Maria and Georg von Trapp, of *The Sound of Music* fame, his limbs are veritable ski poles, his feet functioning snowshoes and his skin a nature-made parka.

It's no surprise then that the 35-year-old von Trapp, a ski instructor for more than 10 years, has spent most of his life amid snowdrifts, pursuing a string of winter adventures seeking the perfect snowfall. Last year, he returned to his childhood home in Stowe, Vt., to help run the family business, the Trapp Family Lodge. There, he makes certain that winter travel gets its share of seasonal glory.

"One of the best things about a winter vacation is that it's focused on activities," von Trapp says. "Whether you're ice-skating, sledding, skiing or snowboarding, with winter sports you are an object in motion."

Even for those who prefer more sedentary travel, a change in scenery can be the perfect cure for winter doldrums. "Go to a place where you can take advantage of this time of year," von Trapp suggests. "Instead of shoveling snow off your driveway, go slide on it somewhere. Go somewhere where winter is spectacular. Go to places that celebrate snow instead of struggling against it."

Summer is the perfect time to plan your winter escape. As luxurious as the season is cold, the best suites at the hottest winter destinations sell early and quickly, so whether your quintessential winter getaway is at the top of a snow-capped mountain or on a sandy beach somewhere far away from that mountain, the time to book is now. Here are five of the most extravagant places to go when the days get shorter, colder and darker.

DESTINATION: The Little Nell

LOCATION: Aspen, Colo.

ACCOMMODATIONS: 92 rooms

PRICE/NIGHT: \$750 – \$5,350

RESERVATIONS: www.thelittlenell.com

Few American resort towns are as synonymous with winter as Aspen, Colo., the centerpiece of which is Aspen Mountain, an 11,212-foot peak from which steep ski runs slope downward directly into town. At the base of Aspen Mountain is The Little Nell, one of Aspen's most exclusive hotels.

A five-star, five-diamond resort, The Little Nell is an intimate hotel that's both elegant and rustic. Its lounge, known as the Living Room, is a see-and-be-seen gathering place for guests and Aspen locals, which count among their ranks famous part-time residents such as Jack Nicholson, Kevin Costner and Michael Douglas.

The Little Nell features 92 residential rooms, including nine suites and six specialty suites, all with gas fireplaces. The most exclusive suite—the 2,000-square-foot Pfeifer Suite—has two bedrooms and two and a half bathrooms, not to mention a large living area with a full wet bar, a dining room and two large decks that face Aspen Mountain.

Even more impressive than the suites is the service, according to John Speers, the hotel's general manager. Among the hotel's offerings are its ski concierge, which assists guests with ski tickets, lessons, storage and equipment; its shuttle service, which includes a staff of five drivers in Cadillac Escalades that will chauffeur guests around town; and its "Petiquette" program, which includes a menu of luxury services and amenities for guests' pets.

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THE HÔTEL DE GLACE IN QUEBEC OFFERS VISITORS AN EXOTIC EXPERIENCE.

DESTINATION: Amangani
LOCATION: Jackson, Wyo.
ACCOMMODATIONS: 40 rooms
PRICE/NIGHT: \$700 – \$4,000
RESERVATIONS: www.amangani.com

Known worldwide for its discreet luxury, Aman Resorts has 18 properties in Europe, Asia and the Pacific. Its only U.S. resort, Amangani, is located in Jackson, Wyo., sometimes called the “anti-Aspen” for its remote wilderness, which stands in stark contrast to Aspen’s more cosmopolitan flavor.

Amangani, Shoshone for “peaceful home,” is perched atop a dramatic, private-access butte that overlooks the Rockies’ Teton Range. Designed by French architect Edward Tuttle, its stone-and-redwood design resembles a Chinese fortress that’s at once ancient and modern, blending into the mountainside, and features 40 contemporary suites that look out over the mountains along with 15 private homes, the largest of which is 12,000 square feet.

According to General Manager Stuart Campbell, the resort sports two to three times as many employees per guest as the typical hotel, allowing it to deliver unparalleled

service. “The word ‘no’ is not in our vocabulary,” he says. “If you want a helicopter to land on the roof at 3 a.m., we can get it done.”

Of course, staff isn’t all that’s abundant at Amangani. There’s also a large population of native winter wildlife that guests can experience courtesy of private snowshoeing tours. There’s even a national elk refuge nearby, where guests can see more than 8,000 elk via horse-drawn sleigh ride.

DESTINATION: Badrutt’s Palace Hotel
LOCATION: St. Moritz, Switzerland
ACCOMMODATIONS: 159 rooms
PRICE/NIGHT: \$460 – \$19,500
RESERVATIONS: www.badruttspalace.com

A favorite destination for European royals and American celebrities, including the likes of George Clooney, Claudia Schiffer and Ivana Trump, Badrutt’s Palace in St. Moritz, Switzerland is one of Europe’s most exclusive winter resorts.

A landmark property that occupies 4.53 acres of land in the Swiss Alps, Badrutt’s Palace features a large gothic tower and a stunning lobby known as Le Grand Hall, where guests can enjoy drinks, caviar, smoked salmon and gourmet pastries made with fine Swiss chocolate.

Like the lobby, the rooms at Badrutt’s Palace are palatial. According to Susi Cheshire, public relations manager, there are 112 standard guestrooms, as well as 47 suites and junior suites. The finest of those—the 3,013-square-foot Hans Badrutt Suite—rents for \$19,500 per night and features three full Italian marble bathrooms, three bedrooms, a state-of-the-art kitchenette, plasma TVs, custom-made Austrian furniture, a library and a private terrace that overlooks Lake St. Moritz.

While each floor of the hotel has its own butler, each suite also has its own private butler. Additionally, the

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hotel features a ski school, private sun decks, a health club with personal trainers, a solarium, a Turkish bath, a beauty spa, a natural ice rink, seven restaurants, four bars and two members-only clubs.

DESTINATION: Turtle Island Resort

LOCATION: Turtle Island, Fiji

ACCOMMODATIONS: 14 cottages

PRICE/NIGHT: \$1,885 – \$2,760

RESERVATIONS: www.turtlefiji.com

Travelers who prefer sand to snow should consider a winter excursion to Turtle Island Resort in the South Pacific nation of Fiji. A romantic, couples-only resort that's situated on a private, tourist-free island, it accommodates just 14 couples at any one time for an all-inclusive, six-night minimum stay.

For an average of \$14,400 per couple, that stay includes a seaplane ride from the airport to the island for honeymooners, where guests stay beachside in private thatched-roof cottages known as bures, which include an outdoor veranda and a four-poster bed. Each bure also includes a personal concierge in the form of a Fijian woman known as a "Bure Mama," who sees to her guests' every need.

Although there are no winter sports in Fiji, there are plenty of outdoor activities. In fact, Turtle Island Resort is home to the original and very famous Blue Lagoon, says Todd Heater, public relations manager. There, guests can enjoy deep-sea fishing, scuba diving, snorkeling and windsurfing—all in warm water—not to mention land activities such as horseback riding, bike riding, hiking and private picnics on the beach.

Guests who desire even more privacy and more luxury can rent the entire island—which features 14 beaches on 500 acres—for \$275,000 a week.

DESTINATION: Hôtel de Glace

LOCATION: Quebec, Canada

ACCOMMODATIONS: 36 rooms

PRICE: \$220 – \$1,550 (Canadian)

RESERVATIONS: www.icehotel-canada.com

Quebec's Hôtel de Glace is a must for winter travelers who crave something that's not just extravagant, but also exotic. Constructed from scratch each December, the hotel is made entirely from snow and ice. In fact, it's built using 15,000 tons of snow and 500 tons of ice, which are sculpted into ice walls, an ice slide and an ice chapel, as well as ice art, drinking glasses, chandeliers and furniture.

"It's like being in a high-class hotel, but with a crystal-clear appearance," says hotel CEO Jacques Desbois, who

describes the hotel as equal parts art and accommodations, like the Bellagio in Las Vegas.

Situated outside Quebec City on a country resort—where there's dogsledding, ice fishing, skating, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and also a second, heated hotel, the four-star Auberge Duchesnay, which won't melt in the sun—the Hôtel de Glace is open to the public for tours during the day. After 8 p.m., the hotel is only accessible to guests. There are about 36 rooms and theme suites, including a special suite that costs approximately \$900 per night and features a fireplace and private spa and sauna.

Scared of the chill? Not to worry: Although the temperature in the hotel naturally fluctuates between 23 and 28 degrees Fahrenheit, guests sleep in specially insulated sleeping bags and are greeted in the morning with a piping hot beverage. **YL**

Matt Alderton is a Chicago-based writer and editor specializing in media and small business.

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