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FAMILY FRIENDLY SKIING WITH VIP SKI, LA PLAGNE

by Rowena Carr-Allinson
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Freelance journalist, and travel obsessive Rowena Carr-Allinson took to the slopes with VIP Ski to see how family friendly a luxury catered chalet could really be. With over 10 years of journalism under her belt and having written for the likes of the Elle, CondeNast Traveller and Bazaar, Rowena certainly knows a thing or two about luxury travel.

A last minute invite from friends who had booked with VIP Ski, La Plagne somehow changed my perception of skiing with kids forever.

Having never been pampered in a catered chalet set up, I was soon smitten by the concept. Being cooked for and looked after was one thing to look forward to, but the nanny service was the real plus. Having imagined some 'tag team' ski time, minding our 2-year-old in shifts, we were actually able to hit the snow together, and take some much needed "me" and "us" time too. A fantastic bonus...



The chalet was ultra cosy, with beautiful timber-clad rooms in contemporary meets traditional style. It came with all the trimmings you'd expect, from a huge widescreen TV with UK Freeview to stylish bathrooms, but the real gems were the staff. The chalet host, Charles and his sidekick Chris were incredibly friendly, brimming with funny anecdotes and skiing tips and advice, and managed to do some impressive cake and cookie baking too.

Every evening the pair spoilt us with full blown three-course-meals, serving up the likes of 'chevre' and beetroot stack starters followed by sea bream with olives and tomato salsa, and a mountain of honey-roasted vegetables or fantastically cheesy Reblochon baked 'Crozet's' (mini local Savoyard buckwheat pasta) and Roast Lamb. Not to mention a full cooked breakfast every morning.

Another huge perk? The chalet is located at the foot of the pistes, right in the heart of the village. The living room and balcony offered great views of the summit, the slopes and the ski lifts – a never-ending hive of activity.

Pop down in the lift and you'll find the gallery of shops, a pharmacy, Oxygene ski hire store (who also provide English speaking instructors) and a couple of restaurants and cafes like La Grolle, for that all essential après-ski hot chocolate in a deck chair, glass of wine at the bar, or cheeky lunchtime pizza.

In addition to the two boys taking care of us, Tina, the resort manager popped in to check on us regularly, always offering to help arrange this and that, but our real saviours were Sarah and Caitlin, the nannies. Although I was nervous as to how my son would react to a new face, I shouldn't have worried. The girls took our kids under their wings and off they went, all smiles, taking trips on the bus, up the mountain, to the local pony club for a ride or simply making cookies, pizzas or whatnot at home.

The entire chalet was child-friendly, with all the kit you could think of, from high chair to potty, cot, baby-phone and best of all, buckets full of toys, making the stay hugely fun for the kids. The sledges were a huge success too, used at the lovely purpose-built sledge run downstairs. Surrounded by inflatable walls, it was ideal for high velocity toddler crashing.

What's more, VIP Ski's transfer days are on Sundays, whereas the rest of the resort pack up on Saturdays, leaving the pistes nice and empty for us, and the journey home less hectic...

The setting, the efficiency of the team and the freedom a ski nanny afforded us, means I'm a convert. So much so, that a few weeks later I booked another few days with them in Val d'Isere. Ski trips will never be the same again.

Need To Know:

- VIP SKI has 7 suites in La Plagne in the Summit View development. Prices start at £729 per person based on two sharing and include VIP SKI's chalet catering, return flights from Gatwick and resort transfers.
- Ski hire starts at £89 for adult skis and boots with children's hire being between £57 and £67.
- Paradiski area lift passes are £245/adults, £185/children (6-13 or seniors 65+). 4 person family passes are £730.
- Ski school lessons with Oxygene Ski www.oxygene-ski.com start at £155/adults for 5 days with morning ski school (2.5 hours/day) and £90/children for 5 afternoon group lessons (2 hours/day)

For more information on La Plagne and events visit www.la-plagne.com

For more information or to book visit www.vip-chalets.com or call 0844 557 311

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