

Telegraph magazine

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HOT TO TRAVEL
The world's most beautiful places

FOOD & HOME
The oldest-looking newbuild in Devon
Rose Prince's recipes for July

Harry Potter and the studio of secrets

The backstage wizards who bring the books to life



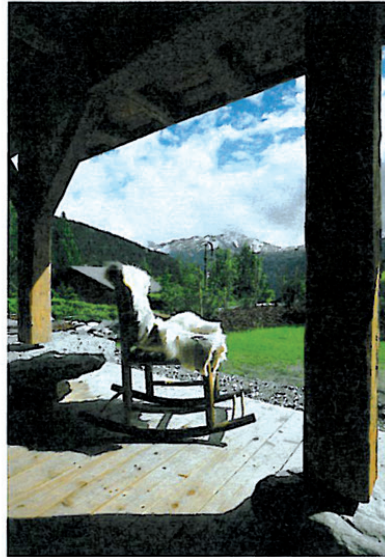
TRAVEL

Four of the best Alpine chalets for summer, by Francesca Syz

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CHALET SPA VERBIER SWITZERLAND

Forget quaint 'Heidi holes' – the alpine chalet has never been so hot, especially during the balmy summer months. Perennially hip Verbier has some seriously gorgeous chalets and when its white slopes are transformed into high-altitude meadows carpeted in wildflowers and criss-crossed by walking paths and mountain bike trails in the summer, it takes on a glorious new identity. While Sir Richard Branson's nine-bedroom The Lodge is very nice, we're taken with the rather more affordable but equally indulgent five-bedroom Chalet Spa Verbier. An exclusive-use timber chalet with all the trimmings of a five-star hotel, it combines traditional charm and cutting-edge contemporary design. There's a home cinema, Bose sound system, spa with hammam and sauna, an indoor pool, a billiard table and a Polaris Ranger dune buggy. It also comes with a concierge (dinner at La Table d'Adrien, anyone?), a chauffeur, dedicated chef, spacious barbecue terrace looking over at the Valais Alps and a jolly impressive wine cellar. We recommend soaking in the outdoor Jacuzzi, sipping vintage champagne. **The details** From £7,480 per week (07797-718201; chaletspa.com).



ALPNUM ST ANTON, AUSTRIA Built by a family who got fed up with staying at other people's slightly inadequate hotels and chalets, this bright, comfortable property, which sleeps 15, is their own vacation retreat so exudes the comfort of the well-loved home that it is. It comes with a facilities manager who will make sure that the place is stocked with all the things you need, from your favourite beer to baby food. You can be waited on hand and foot or provided with groceries and left to your own device. Either way, they appreciate precious holiday time and make sure things run smoothly. A highlight is the cave-like wellness area, which has a whirlpool for adults, a shallow water zone with a waterfall for infants and a secluded outdoor lounge where you can cool down. While away the days on a lovely, large sun deck overlooking St Anton or strike straight out from the back of the house past a tree house built by the local village children and into the forest, where a well-known hiking track – Jakob Way – begins. **The details** €750 per night (00 43 54 46 30 285; ferienhaus-alpinum.at).

LA FERME DE MOUDON LES GETS, FRANCE There's a touch of *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* about many of the chalets in Descent International's exclusive portfolio, and La Ferme de Moudon in Les Gets is no exception. Les Gets started life as a rural farming community (as opposed to being a purpose-built resort) so there's lots of local charm and jingling of cowbells as the farmer drives his cattle through the village. Once a 17th-century Savoyard farm building, the fully staffed five-room chalet has a chic, minimalist-but-comfortable open-plan living area and floor-to-ceiling windows. Ancient timber is offset by bespoke contemporary Italian furniture, and there's a huge outdoor hot tub, sauna, massage room, a TV room with a giant plasma screen and toys, games, books, DVDs and CDs galore. Summer in Les Gets is great for families as there is lots to do – from the two downhill mountain biking areas to mid-altitude donkey trekking. It also has quirky touches such as a Museum of Mechanical Music and regular live music performed on an outdoor stage during the summer. **The details** From £855pp per week based on 12 sharing (020-7384 3854; descent.co.uk).



PRALONGIA DOLOMITES, ITALY Built as a rustic mountain inn in 1932 by three brothers (Konrad, Siegfried and Peter Pescolderung) who would go on to be pioneers of tourism in the area, Pralongia has been handed down through the family and is now a lovely eight-room chalet with a restaurant attached that can be rented, like a hotel, by the room, by the night. In a fantastic location offering 360-degree views of the Dolomites, Pralongia offers a warm welcome, lovingly furnished rooms named after mountain peaks, and delicious, locally sourced food. There's even a pretty little chapel to explore, named after Konrad's late wife, Antonia. Pick up a Mountain Pass Alta Badia (mountainpass.it) and leave your car behind, whisking from one idyllic alpine pasture to the next aboard free buses and 12 ski lifts in the area. Indulge in everything from rock climbing and Nordic walking to more tranquil pony trekking. The local restaurants are fantastic – from rustic family-run trattorie to Michelin-star restaurants (there are four within 30km distance). **The details** Doubles from €54 pp pn (00 39 04 71 83 60 72; pralongia.it). **Next week: Cornish hideaways**