



Skiers at Verbier.
Inset: The Lodge.

BEST SKATING RINK
How very bling to have a private 60-square-metre skating rink. But The Lodge in Verbier, owned by Richard Branson, is the ultimate Alpine playzone: the basement party room has a daybed for ten, dancefloor, pool table and bar. That's for when you're not in the gym, swimming pool, home cinema or hot tub (indoor and outdoor), playing with rubber ducks in Branson's bathroom, whizzing to the CoCo Club via 24/7 chauffeur service or enjoying the superb library. Merry young staff have an informality disguising the professionalism required to deal with petulant rock stars and depressed ex-bankers. Bring your skates: the chalet provides only children's sizes.
TAKING YOU THERE Virgin Limited Edition (0800 716 919; www.virgin.com/limitededition and www.thelodge.virgin.com). From £43,500 per week for the whole chalet, catered (and you can go home for lunch). Sleeps 18.

The 2009
BEST LIST
CHALETS *By Felice Hardy*

BEST INDOOR SLIDE
Snowboard from the dining room down the slippery slide to the children's play area. Many grown-up guests at Chalet Serena in Chamonix have tried it—perfect for getting screaming kids out of the way.
TAKING YOU THERE: Pollen-Brooks Leisure (01344 849135; www.pollenbrooks.com). Prices from €20,900 per week for the whole chalet, catered, including transfers. Sleeps 14.



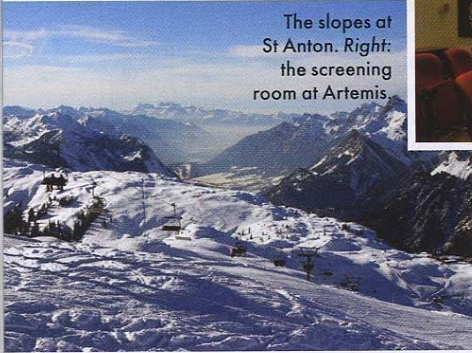
Left: Chalet Serena, Chamonix. Right: Chalet Jessica, Saas Fee.

BEST WINE LIST
Fretwork and fondue rule in stuffy Saas Fee, but Chalet Jessica bucks the trend. It's a sleek duplex perched atop the main street, and comes with an ex-Scott Dunn chef, gizmos galore, one of the finest panoramas in the

Alps and a knock-out wine list drawn from the 40,000-bottle cellar of Michelin-starred restaurant The Fletschhorn. Sir would care for the Château Mouton Rothschild 1989 Pauillac premier grand cru classé (pictured), at CHF790; about £390? Or a magnum of red Valais—perhaps the Jean-René



Germanier Syrah Cayas 2003 (CHF220)? Mais bien sûr. Chalet Jessica could be a bit closer to the lifts, but the owners have an arrangement with a ski shop where you can stash gear overnight.
TAKING YOU THERE: Alpine Life (07801 982645; www.alpinelife.org). From £5,400 per week, catered. Sleeps eight.



The slopes at St Anton. Right: the screening room at Artemis.



BEST CINEMA
Pure theatrical flair in a retro screening room with 12 plush velvet seats. Perfect for keeping awake (with stimulating champagne) between skiing and dinner. Artemis in St Anton is a funky hexagonal box on four floors, including a swimming pool and a seven-foot statue of the Greek goddess of gentle hills and virginity—neither available in St Anton, which has the steepest mountains and most Bacchanalian nightlife in Europe. So you may not remember the movies: the chalet's Tyrolean Stubli has a floor-to-ceiling wall of wine.
TAKING YOU THERE: Scott Dunn (020 8682 5050; www.scottdunn.com). From £1,875 per person, per week, catered (lunches too), including BA club class flights, private transfers and Laurent-Perrier champagne. Sleeps 12.

PHOTOGRAPHS: S. MELLISH/SKISHOOT (MAIN PICTURE); F. MILNS/SKISHOOT (ST ANTON); COURTESY OF BERRY BROS & RUDD (WINE BOTTLE)