

The world's best ski festivals for music, comedy and food

A season of high jinks, mellow beats and gourmet treats

As ski resorts across the world embrace the winning combination of winter sports and festivals of music, comedy or food, the choice of events has become quite bewildering. The action kicks off in London with the fourth Relentless Freeze Festival at Battersea Power Station today. Complete with a 32-metre-high ski jump and four stages for live music, it promises to get the winter festival season off to a fitting start (www.relentlessfreeze.com).

Chef's Cup, Alta Badia, Italy January 22-27

The Chef's Cup is a high-altitude celebration of haute cuisine in the heart of the Dolomites. The brainchild of twin-Michelin-starred local chef Norbert Niederkofler, it sees 400 of the world's finest chefs discuss culinary trends, showcase local produce and compete amicably on the snow. Visitors can feast on the results, join cookery courses at Alta Badia's trio of Michelin-starred restaurants and enjoy events on the slopes (www.chefscup.it).

● **Hotel Rosa Alpina** (0039 0471 849500; www.rosalpina.it), home to Niederkofler's St. Hubertus restaurant, offers a six-night half-board "Chef's Cup 2012" package from Jan 22-28 from £1,650 pp, inc. all Chef's Cup dinners, ski and snowshoe outings and after-dinner parties.

Winter TEVA Mountain Games, Vail, USA February 10-12

This year will herald Vail's inaugural Winter TEVA Mountain Games, with professional and amateur athletes flocking to the resort in pursuit of adventure, music - and the \$60,000 purse. Competitions in everything from ice climbing and Telemark skiing to snowshoe racing and mountain cyclocross, plus free concerts, films, snow sculpture contests and plenty of parties (www.tevamountaingames.com/winter).

● **Ski Independence** (0131 243 8097; www.ski-i.com) offers seven nights' b&b at Evergreen Lodge from £1,198 pp, inc. flights and transfers, departing Feb 7.

Momentum Ski Festival, Crans Montana, Switzerland March 16-18

Expanding on the City Ski Championships, historically held in Courmayeur, the Momentum Ski Festival will take place in



Attitude - moving from Méribel to Mayrhofen this winter

Crans Montana, adding a buzzing après-ski scene to its ski racing programme. With pro-skier Warren Smith and his team on hand for pre-race coaching and Marcus Brigstocke arranging the off-mountain activities (www.momentumski.com).

● **Momentum Ski** (020 7371 9111; www.momentumski.com) offers a three-night festival package from £665 pp, inc. b&b, flights, transfers, festival pass, prize-giving reception and dinner, lunches and racing programme.

Méribel Live, France March 19-23

Méribel Live has blossomed from humble beginnings as a free gig played by The Feeling on the pistes of Méribel in 2008, to a week-long celebration of French and British music. Last year saw the then little-known Ben Howard wow an audience of no more than 50 and Sophie Ellis-Bextor rock the auditorium - see www.meribel.net for news on the 2012 line-up.

● **Fish & Pips** (0845 474 1054; www.fishandpips.com) offers seven nights' catered accommodation at the eight-person, ski-in Chalet Aurigny from £725 pp, from Mar 17.

Attitude, Mayrhofen, Austria March 26-31

The hills of Mayrhofen will be alive with peals of laughter next March, when some of the biggest names in comedy take over the vibrant Austrian resort. Having built up an impressive cast of regular artists in its former home of Méribel, Attitude will celebrate its fifth birthday in the company of comedians including Jimmy Carr, Frankie

Boyle, Ed Byrne, Marcus Brigstocke and Al Murray (www.attitudefestival.com).

● **Crystal Ski** (0871 231 2254; www.crystalski.co.uk) offers seven nights' b&b from £299 in the three-star Hotel Obermaier, inc. flights and transfers, departing Mar 24.

Jazz Up, Avoriaz, France March 31 - April 6

The annual Jazz Up festival, which takes place in Avoriaz in the Portes du Soleil ski area, has developed into an international gathering. The 2012 festival will feature seven headline concerts and 40 "dinner" concerts held in local restaurants and bars, with artists including Biréli Lagrène, Pura Fé and Naturally 7.

● **Alpine Answers** (020 7801 1080; www.alpineanswers.co.uk) offers seven nights' full board at the Chalet Hotel Club Med from £1,225 pp, inc. flights, transfers, six days' tuition, Avoriaz lift pass.

TELUS, Whistler, Canada April 13-22

The 17th annual TELUS festival promises to be the biggest ever version of this celebrated end-of-season party, with professional freestyle ski and snowboard competitions, free concerts, fashion shows, comedy, art installations, a dance competition and an extreme sports film-making event (www.wslf.com).

● **Ski Bespoke** (01243 200204; www.skibespoke.com) offers seven nights' room only at the Delta Whistler Village Suites from £1,272 pp, inc. Delta Air Lines flights and transfers.

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