

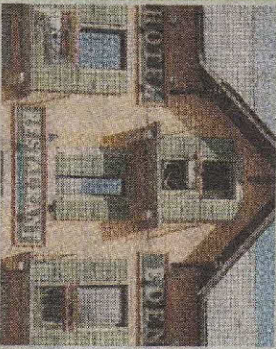
# METRO travel escapes

Wednesday, January 4, 2012 **METRO** 49

## EAT

Eden, Hotel Eden, 35 Route des Gaudenays, Les Pratz (Tel: +33 450 53 18 43; [www.hoteleden-chamonix.com](http://www.hoteleden-chamonix.com))

There's more to alpine cuisine than fondue and tartiflette. Eden, 2km from the centre of Chamonix in Les Pratz, is the latest restaurant in the region to receive high Michelin praise. Head chef Charlotte Stocks brings fine French food bang up to date with dishes including mussels and chorizo cream, and seabass with pickled fennel, all served under the watchful eye of Mont Blanc. 'Eden is known for its excellent cuisine and friendly service,' says Claire Burnet of Chamonix.com. Philippe, the maitre d'hotel, has been welcoming guests for nearly 30 years and takes particular pride in his wine cellar.



## Drink in the splendour of a mountain retreat

**N**estled in the fir-lined cleavage of the Chamonix Valley is one of France's best mountain resorts. Host to the first Winter Olympics in 1924 – and now the Ultra-Trail du Mont Blanc, a mega-marathon covering 166km and three countries – Chamonix is a magnet for extreme-sports fiends. Along with the Mer de Glace,

France's largest glacier, and Mont Blanc, Europe's highest peak, this pretty alpine town is renowned for its miles of glorious off-piste skiing and a wild après. Whether you come to conquer mountains or beat your Jägerbomb personal best, there's no better place in the Alps.

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## DRINK

Micro Brasserie de Chamonix (aka MBC), 350 Route de Bouchet, (Tel: +33 450 53 61 59; [www.mbcfx.com](http://www.mbcfx.com))

Despite its quaintness, Chamonix is a wolf in sheep's clothing for nightlife. For an alternative to the dance-on-the-table après-ski bars, try the equally lively MBC bar for great beer and live music. The first microbrewery in the Mont Blanc region, MBC is the idea of four Canadians with a taste for good beer. Offering six home brews, live music and hearty booze-soaking food, it's an essential night out.

## SHOP

Galerie Mario Colonel, 19 Rue Whympfer (Tel: +33 450 91 40 20; [www.mario-colonel.com](http://www.mario-colonel.com))

There's more to ski resort shopping than picking up a new bobble hat. New to the holiday destination is a gallery and shop run by French photographer Mario Colonel, who has lived in Chamonix for more than 20 years. A trained mountain guide, Colonel captures unseen angles of the magnificent peaks then sells them as prints and posters, alongside beautiful black-and-white limited-edition images.

## SEE

Aiguille du Midi: Place de l'Aiguille du Midi ([www.compagniedumontblanc.fr](http://www.compagniedumontblanc.fr))

For the best view of Mont Blanc, take the highest cable car in Europe up a terrifying vertical slope to the Aiguille du Midi. At 3,842m above sea level, this is the nearest you can get to the summit without crampons and an ice pick. Teeter out on to one of four vertiginous viewing platforms and witness the dramatic sweep of the French, Swiss and Italian Alps.



## SLEEP

Hotel Foucigny, 118 Place de l'Église (Tel: +33 450 53 01 17; [www.hotelvoucigny-chamonix.com](http://www.hotelvoucigny-chamonix.com); doubles from €110, £92)

This reasonable and très-chic boutique hotel in the heart of town reopened this month after renovation. With 28 rooms (many sleeping four) decked out in cool greys and a swathe of natural wood, plus a new slate-walled spa, it's great for warming up after a day (and night) on the piste.

**GETTING THERE:** From London Heathrow to Geneva; Swiss Air (Tel: 0845 601 0956; [www.swiss.com](http://www.swiss.com); from £107 return)