

Harper's BAZAAR

JANUARY 2015 £4.30
www.harpersbazaar.co.uk

**WILD
AT
HEART**
REESE
WITHERSPOON

**FRESH
LOOKS**
NEW YEAR
NEW SEASON
NEW ELEGANCE

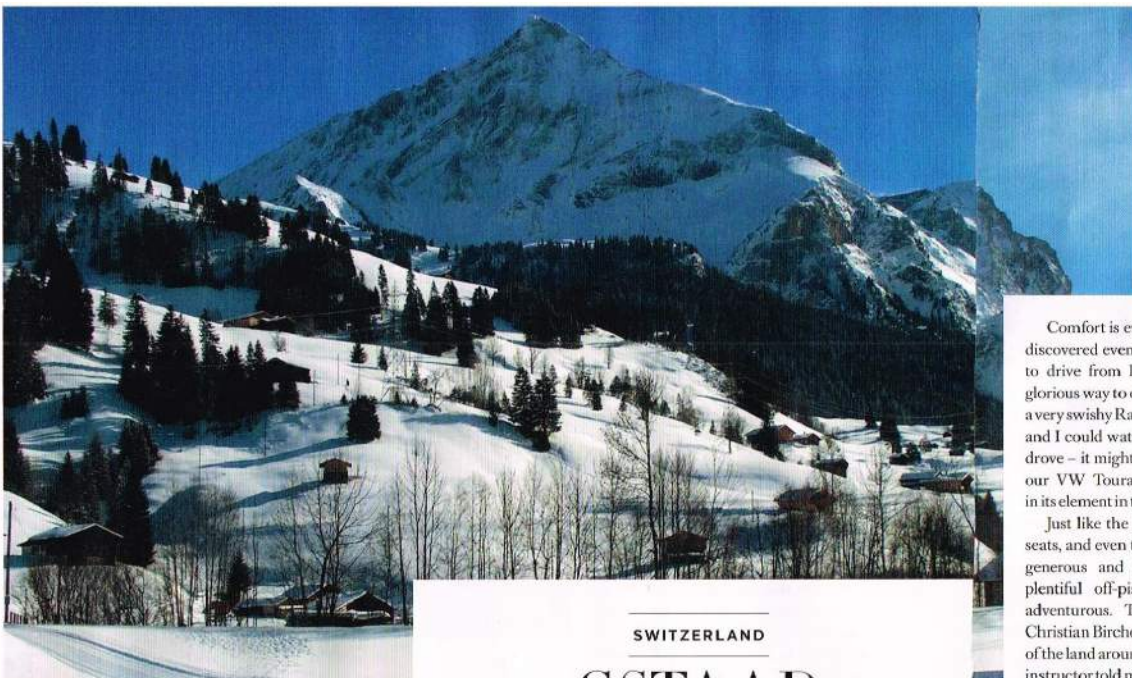
**WHO'S
AFRAID
OF
BOTOX?**
OUR EXPERT
INSIDER
SECRETS

**THE
LANGUAGE
OF
FASHION**
THE THINKING
WOMAN'S
GUIDE TO
2015

**AGELESS
BEAUTY**

YOUR BODY REVOLUTION 15 MINUTES TO FITNESS





From far left:
Le Grand Bellevue
by night. Snow play.
A suite at Le
Grand Bellevue



Comfort is everywhere in Gstaad. This was something we'd discovered even on the journey here. We were heartily advised to drive from London and, to our astonishment, found it a glorious way to escape to the mountains. Admittedly, we'd taken a very swishy Range Rover Autobiography, in which the children and I could watch films while my husband drove – it might not have been the same in our VW Touran. The Range Rover was in its element in the Swiss mountain scenery.

Just like the car, some lifts have heated seats, and even the slopes are exceptionally generous and manicured, while there's plentiful off-piste action for the more adventurous. Together with our guide, Christian Bircher, whose family owns some of the land around Gstaad and is, so another instructor told me almost with awe, the king of the mountains, we set off at a civilised 9.30am one sunny morning. The sky was deep, denim blue and the snow gleamed crisply. It was perfect weather and I expected excited crowds to be swooping down the slopes, but we were the only figures in an otherwise pristine alpine landscape. 'No one here starts until 10.30am at the earliest,' shrugged Bircher. 'We have the slopes to ourselves for a little while.'

Gradually the night owls populated the mountain, but in the most debonair way, with long breaks for lunch and a strict cut-off of 4pm, leaving plenty of time for spa treatments before dressing for cocktails and dinner.

The whole town
is glamorous
and exotic and
designed with one
thing in mind:
pleasure

look out of place on the Côte d'Azur, has giant chesterfield sofas, sumptuous teas and an enormous pinstriped wooden camel for children to clamber on in the lobby. Small guests are whisked off by Lovell Camps, which combines a ski school and kids' club. As a result, we could explore the absolutely enormous spa with its maze of exquisite treatment-rooms, saunas and steam baths and one of the most entertaining hydrotherapy pools I've swum in for a long time. We stayed in the Tower Suite, which was a symphony of creams and beiges with a bay window overlooking the glacier. Here we relaxed after our days on the slopes before sallying forth for fondue in Le Grand Bellevue's minute Swiss log-cabin restaurant, Le Petit Chalet, which has a glass-walled fireplace so you can see white snowflakes falling behind the warmth of the glowing flames.

While we relaxed, replete, by the hearth, one worry prevented me from falling into a state of somnolent bliss... is Gstaad pronounced with a silent G, a hard

G or even a K, as some suggest? No one we asked seemed to agree. I think we'll just stick to 'the Place'. *Le Grand Bellevue (+41 33 748 00 00), from about £405 a room a night half board. With thanks to Gstaad Saanenland Tourismus (www.gstaad.ch) and Land Rover (www.landrover.co.uk). Ski guide courtesy of Private Snowsports Team Gstaad (www.pst.ch). Ski school: Lovell Camps (+41 79 406 33 10).*

SWITZERLAND

GSTAAD

From slope to soirée,
this chic Swiss enclave is delightfully indulgent

By SASHA SLATER

A couple of the wide pistes on the outskirts of Gstaad were a creamy white, the colour of Karl Lagerfeld's Birman cat, Chouquette. This was, apparently, the result of a snowfall that, by some meteorological freak, had got mixed with Saharan sand. The subtle colour change could equally well have been at the whim of some Eastern potentate though, for Gstaad has been the playground of princes for over 100 years and is used to indulging its visitors' whims. Either way, the effect was both glamorous and exotic. In fact, the whole town of Gstaad is glamorous and exotic and designed with one thing in mind: pleasure. In the 1960s, *Time* magazine dubbed the little German-Swiss town 'the Place', thanks to the stary residents and visitors who have included, among many, many others, Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, Grace Kelly, Valentino Garavani and David Niven.

They all came for the comforts and splendours of the restaurants and hotels, rather than the skiing. The hotels here are justly famous and all have their own character. The Gstaad Palace hotel and the Grand Hotel Park vie for the accolade of most historic (the Grand is the oldest, the Palace the grandest), the Alpina Gstaad is the glitziest and Le Grand Bellevue is the cosiest as well as the most central. It was here that we chose to stay while dropping in on the others for suppers and drinks that were all spoiling and delicious.



Clockwise from left: the lobby of Le Grand Bellevue. Street life in Gstaad. Off-piste skiing in fresh powder. The spectacular mountain scenery. Gentle slopes through the trees

DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...

E345 Balenciaga at Matchesfashion.com

E390 Fendi

About E990 Salvatore Ferragamo at Mytheresa.com

E585 Emilio Pucci

E45 Ugg