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OCTOBER 2017

# LUXURY

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## TRAVEL ADVISOR

### JEFF WILLNER

Travel Edge owner is  
all about simplifying  
the travel advisor  
experience.

#### DESTINATIONS

French Alps High Life  
All New in Paris

#### HOTELS

Just Back: Nihi Sumba  
A Fort Stay in Jaipur

#### CRUISE

Global Cruises  
Aboard *Queen Mary 2*





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*On the cover, Jeff Willner, Owner/CEO of Travel Edge*

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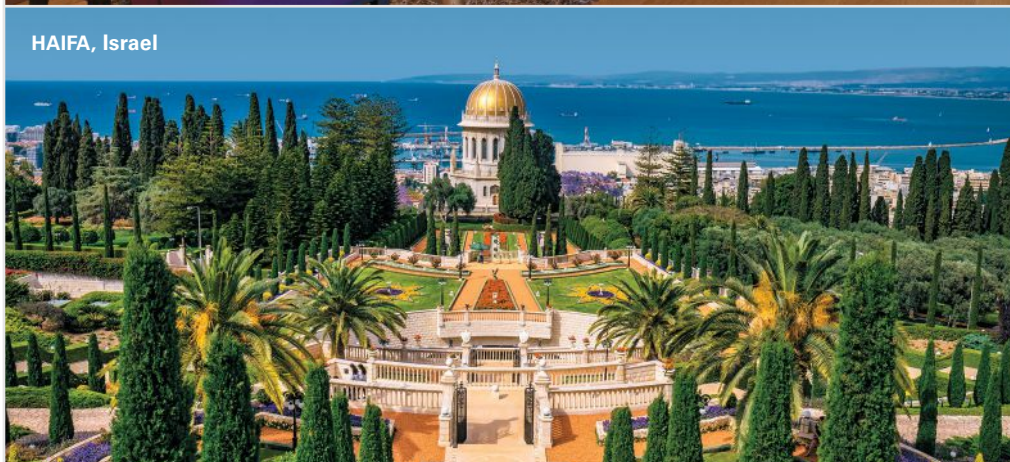
## TRAVEL ADVISOR

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LE STRATO, Courchevel



HAIFA, Israel



HÔTEL DE CRILLON, Paris



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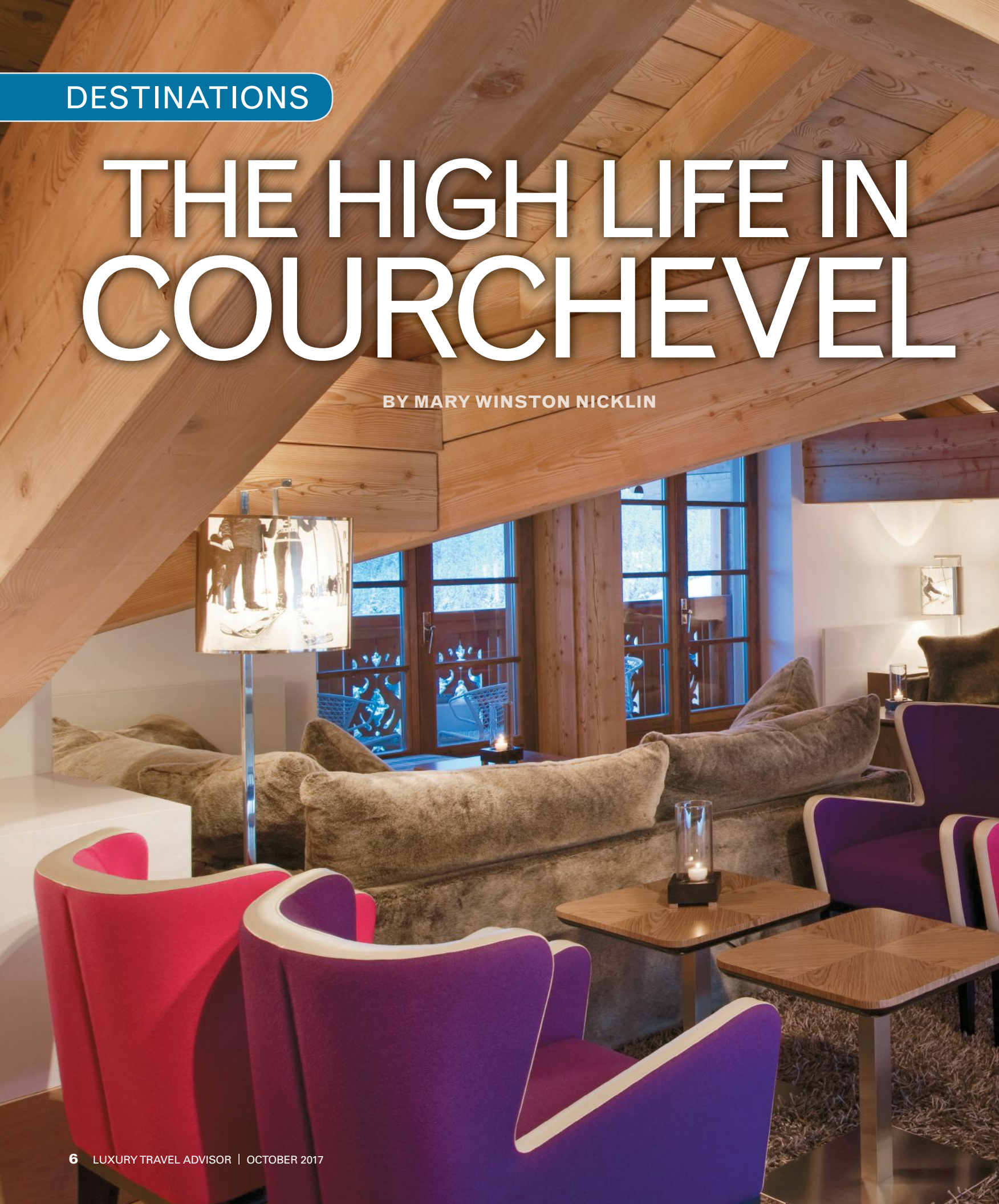





DESTINATIONS

# THE HIGH LIFE IN COURCHEVEL

BY MARY WINSTON NICKLIN







Courchevel is known as the most glamorous destination in the French Alps. With three “palaces” and 18 five-star hotels, you’d be hard-pressed to find a greater concentration of luxury hotels and Michelin stars anywhere else in the world. But it also has superb skiing — without the lines. With views of iconic Mont Blanc, Courchevel is connected to the Trois Vallées, the largest ski domain on earth.

The well-groomed, high-altitude pistes at Courchevel 1850 are particularly adored by adrenaline hounds. Today it’s the winter destination of choice for the international jetsetter. In fact, those who summer in Saint-Tropez are apt to winter in Courchevel.

LE STRATO’s bar offers a warm, relaxed atmosphere to enjoy an aperitif or a night cap.



Just in time for the 2017-2018 ski season, *Luxury Travel Advisor* has the skinny on what's new.

Add this lovely hotel to your rolodex: **Le Strato**, a member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World, is an intimate five-star hideaway right on the slopes. Here, traditional room keys are provided instead of plastic key cards, encouraging guests to have an interaction with staff as they come and go. Guests are recognized by name; staff even remember your exact breakfast choices.

Set at the base of the Cospillot piste, Le Strato has a killer location with sweeping views of the snow-capped peaks. There are just 25 guestrooms, of which four are duplex suites. We particularly like the Suites de Luxe equipped with private terraces. In-room treats include Nespresso machines, wine bars, and — in the white marble bathrooms — Toto toilets and a selection of Sothys amenities.

For VIPs seeking extra privacy, the Chalet Timeless has three floors and lots of luxury. Think fireplace, kitchen and outdoor terrace from where you can directly hit the slopes. Booking Tips: Like most hotels in Courchevel, Le Strato has an annual closure from

## ACCESS:

Geneva is the preferred international airport, with Lyon also being a two-hour drive away. There is also a small airport at Chambéry (1 hour and 15 minutes by car from the resort). TGV access from Paris and London is via the Moutiers station. There's a heliport in Courchevel for helicopter arrivals, and also a 500-meter runway called the Altiport, infamous because of its short length and perilous cliffside setting — not for the faint of heart! Pilots taking off and landing on this runway must have a special permit.



LE STRATO has 25 suites and rooms, all of which have a balcony or a terrace. Seen here is an Executive Suite.

April to early December. Note that Le Strato is a family-friendly hotel with a dedicated children's room. Half-board stays can be arranged, as can prearranged ski packages, complete with lessons by top instructors. For VIP bookings, luxury travel advisors can reach out to General Manager Mathieu Petit ([mathieupetit@hotelstrato.com](mailto:mathieupetit@hotelstrato.com); 011-330-479-415-160). Other arrangements can be made via Head Concierge Richard Vocanson ([concierge@hotelstrato.com](mailto:concierge@hotelstrato.com)).

Regardless of your level, the hotel makes it easy to explore the pristine pistes with a top-notch ski room and direct ski-in/ski-out access. Over a cup of coffee and pastries in the morning, get expert advice from the professional team while you get fit for heated gloves and boots. (Forgot your gear? They'll outfit you from head to toe — for rent or purchase.) Le Strato has a partnership with the Maison Bernard Orsel — which is not just a luxury store, but a multi-brand fashion universe and a 40-year-old tradition in Courchevel. What this means is that you'll find all the latest chic fashions in the Bernard Orsel-branded onsite boutique. You'll also notice Strato by Rossignol skis that are customized by celebrated street artist JonOne, and — outside on the terrace — a white bear sculpture by Richard

Orlinski. (Le Strato showcases artwork in much the same way that the ski resort stages monumental exhibitions. Even Courchevel's cable cars are painted by renowned contemporary artists.)

After a day on the mountain, return to a glass of champagne at the ski room, then hit the Sothys spa. Situated on two levels, this bijou spa has a sublime pool lit by a murano chandelier facing a wall of glass framing the mountain vistas. There are also two saunas, a steam room, a Jacuzzi and four treatment rooms. Indulge in a facial, the "Secret de Sothys" treatment (a unique 11-step ritual), or the signature Strato massage. Private yoga classes and personal fitness trainers are also available.

Dining at Le Strato is an absolute highlight. Chef Jean-André Charial, who has two Michelin stars at his restaurant L'Oustau de Baumanière in Provence, oversees the kitchens at Baumanière 1850. Only open in the evenings, the Michelin-starred gourmet restaurant sends out artful dishes: Jerusalem artichoke covered in truffles; fish from Lake Geneva drizzled with a pumpkin jus. A more casual lunch — served in the bar or on the sunny terrace — is also delicious; don't miss the Baumanière salad, piled high with artichokes and pine nuts, followed by possibly the best molten lava cake we've tasted.

The winter season in Courchevel is packed with cultural events, championship ski races, polo tournaments on snow, and a February fireworks show. For people-watching, head to la Croisette, the storied street lined with luxury boutiques like Boucheron, the jewelry brand's best-selling franchise in all of Europe. Le Tremplin is a top après-ski spot. Some food-minded travelers come to Courchevel just to eat, skiing from restaurant to restaurant. There are a whopping 110 addresses, with some of the world's top chefs wintering in Courchevel. Le 1947, helmed by Chef Yannick Alléno, at the **Cheval Blanc** was the only new restaurant in France to receive a Michelin three-star rating in 2017. Le Kintessence at the **Hotel Le K2** nabbed two stars, as did the Montgomerie at the **Hotel Le K2 Altitude**.

New in 2017: Chef Mauro Colagreco — whose Michelin-starred Riviera restaurant, Mirazur, was named fourth in The World's 50 Best Restaurants 2017 — arrived in Courchevel 1850 with the opening of his BFire restaurant at the new **Barrière Les Neiges Courchevel**. This is the first mountain resort for Group Barrière (their portfolio includes the famous Fouquet's brasserie





**BARRIERE LES NEIGES' 3,300-square-foot penthouse, "Les Neiges" apartment, is the top accommodation that presents sweeping views of the mountains from the terrace (here). Shown below is Mauro Colagreco's BFire Restaurant, which serves Italian and Argentinian-inspired dishes.**

Photo by Fabrice Rambert

in Paris), which acquired the Hôtel des Neiges in July 2014 and reopened it last December. Barrière Les Neiges Courchevel promptly made a splash with celebrity sightings and film screenings (like Guillaume Canet's movie "Rock'n Roll").

There is a fun, happening vibe here, evident in the chic lobby. The 42 rooms and suites have an alpine chalet feel with fur throws and gorgeous wood paneling. Stand-out pieces include the "minibars" that are fashioned like travel trunks and covered with Hermès hides. **Booking Tips:** Thirty-six rooms have a balcony or terrace; 25 connecting rooms are good for groups and families; and six top suites come with butler service. The crème de la crème is the top-floor "Les Neiges" apartment, with more than 3,300 square feet of space. Luxury travel advisors may contact Véronique Beulz ([vbeulz@groupebarriere.com](mailto:vbeulz@groupebarriere.com)).

com; 011-330-675-158-062), sales manager. The sky's the limit for Head Concierge Alain Keyzers ([akeysers@groupebarriere.com](mailto:akeysers@groupebarriere.com)), who can arrange heli-skiing, night descents, slopeside lunches, dog sledding and more.

Facilities include the ski room, a private cinema, and an exceptional, movie-themed Kid's Club, complete with a hangout area for teenagers. Encompassing nearly 11,000 square feet, the Spa Diane Barrière is one of the largest in Courchevel. From anti-aging and slimming rituals to après-ski massages, the spa menu highlights products by cult brands Biologique Recherche and the Ligne St Barth. Pools, saunas, steam rooms, manicure station, scrubbing room... There's even a cryotherapy booth on the premises. For more information, reach out to Spa Manager Brigitte Bibard ([bbibard@groupebarriere.com](mailto:bbibard@groupebarriere.com)).



Photo by Fabrice Rambert

And that restaurant we were swooning over, BFire? Try sharing plates like steaks of Picanha beef or lamb à l'Asador, baked over embers, not forgetting churros with dulce de leche for dessert. Bien sûr, there's also Petrossian caviar, and black truffles can be shaved over any

dish (this is Courchevel we're talking about!). Dine by the fire on the terrace and you can watch the skiers swoosh by on the slopes. There's also a private chalet for traditional hearty fare like fondue, and an outpost of the Fouquet's brasserie (lobster ravioli, anyone?). ■