

# Head for Crozet and leave the crowds behind

## THE PERFECT BREAK

*Why bother with the Alps when a hamlet nestling in the Jura Mountains offers better value and has heaps of snow, asks Aaron Clements-Hunt*

### Why go?

Snow was falling heavily across the Alps last weekend, to the delight of British skiers who feared that the best start to a season for years had passed them by. Those lucky enough to ski over Christmas and New Year enjoyed clear skies and low temperatures that kept the base solid, but over the past fortnight it had started to look patchy in places. Not now though, and for those short of time (and cash) but desperate to take to the slopes, the Jura Mountains, rather than the busy and costly Alps, are a good option.

The Jura have also benefited from abundant snow and Crozet, a quiet hamlet nestling at the bottom of the wooded foothills, is just 20 minutes from Geneva Airport.

Within two hours of leaving home you could be enjoying 50km of lift-served runs, 140km of cross-country trails of the Lelex-Crozet ski stations and savouring one of the world's most spectacular views across the Bassin de Lemman valley to Lake Geneva and beyond to the Mont Blanc Massif with its 250-300km of peaks and ridges. On a clear day, and viewed from the right place, you can even see the Matterhorn.

The ski stations of Mijoux and La Faucille are a short drive away and

together these village resorts are perfect for a weekend ski for novices, intermediates and families with young

children. A day pass for Lelex-Crozet is 23 euros, and a ski pass for two consecutive days is around 40 euros.

### Travel by...

Plane: BA (ba.com; 0870 850 9850), Swiss (swiss.com; 0845 601 0956) and easyJet (easyjet.co.uk; 0905 821 0905) all fly direct to Geneva. A taxi from the airport costs around 45 to 50 euros. Or you can rent a car from easyCar (easycar.com) or Auto Europe (autoeurope.co.uk; 0800 358 1229).

### Stay at...

The luxurious Jiva Hill Park Hotel (jivahill.com; +33 (0) 450 28 48 48) if money is no object. A "Zen" haven of neutral interiors, orchids and flickering fires, deluxe doubles start from 153 euros per person (based on two adults sharing). The hotel, which

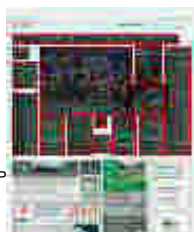
opened a year ago, has eschewed chalet chic and its design has more in common with an African game lodge - Africa being a particular passion of the owner. In the grounds there are six private lodges (each with a double bed and a double sofa

bed) which boast an extra TV screen in the bathrooms and a jacuzzi on the deck where you can sip champagne and marvel at *that* view. A mini-bus service operates from the airport. (If you can wait until next month, the hotel is offering a Valentine's package including accommodation in a deluxe room on a bed and breakfast basis for two people, champagne cocktails, special Valentine menu in the hotel's excellent restaurant, a half bottle of champagne and a box of chocolates.)

For those on a tighter budget the perfect place to stay is the cosy Bois

‘Savour the view across the valley to Lake Geneva’

Joly Hotel (boisjoly.com; + 33 (0) 450 41 01 96; prices start from 52 euros for two people sharing). The accommodation is simple but comfortable and it is a two-minute walk from the telecabine. The Hotel



Relais Crozatai (+33 (0) 450 42 00 00; prices from 55 euros for a family room) is even closer to the slopes, with generous rooms that are ideal for families.

**Hire ski equipment at...**

Looping Sport at the Crozet telecabine or the local Intersport outlet ([interlocation.com](http://interlocation.com)) from 16 euros a day.

**Have lunch at...**

The Panoramic Restaurant for a lavish feast of Jurassian cuisine or snack on hot dogs, hamburgers and chips. The more

rustic Catheline is the place to stop mid-morning or afternoon for a *vin chaud* or a hot chocolate.

**Enjoy tea at...**

With no chalet girl on hand to provide afternoon tea, try La Baguette Magique in Crozet which is the next best thing. It is the only shop in the village - but its cakes, pastries and hot chocolate are no less delicious for that.

**If you fancy an adventure...**

Jiva Hill Park offers a heli-ski service (it has its own heli-pad) to various alpine resorts, accompanied by the hotel's resident guide. Prices start at 1,050 euros one way or 2,100 euros for a return trip for two people to Flaine.

**Buy...**

Local honey and wine - *vin jaune* is the best known and really not bad if you like authenticity!

**Have dinner at...**

The Restaurant Shamwari at Jiva Hill Park Hotel. Try one of the four set menus (Menu du Marché - €30; Menu Saveur - €45; Menu Découverte - €60 or Menu Degustation - €75), or order *a la carte* from a range of exquisite French dishes supervised by Chef Sullivan Breton. Starters include cream of cepe mushroom soup with walnut oil whipped cream and toast with smoked duck breast; a popular fish dish is *ferme* from Lake Geneva, or try pan-fried beef sirloin *picatta* and polenta with Beaufort cheese. The desserts are

not to be missed and a favourite is the fondant with semi-bitter chocolate, vanilla flavoured cream and pistachio ice-cream.

The Bois Joly Hotel (details above) has its own cosy restaurant and the meat fondue, local trout and amazing *omelette au jambon* are recommended.

Alternatively, the fixed menus start at 32 euros per person.

If you are looking for something special, make for the town of Gex and up, via the historic mountain pass road towards Paris and Dijon, to the Refuge du

Florimont, an unpretentious and traditionally decorated restaurant that is popular with European royalty - check out the photographs on the wall - who come to pay homage to its proprietor, a famous mountain guide ([refugedufleurimont.com](http://refugedufleurimont.com); +33 (0) 450 41 88 59; closed Mondays and Tuesdays). The nearby Auberge des Chasseurs ([aubergedeschasseurs.com](http://aubergedeschasseurs.com); +33 (0) 450 41 54 07) is an altogether grander, three-star Provencal village hotel with a highly rated restaurant.

**Recover with...**

A massage, facial or reflexology session at the Jiva Hill's Wellness Centre, an oasis of peace and calm. Visit [jivahill.com](http://jivahill.com) or call +33 (0) 450 28 48 48 for reservations, prices and a list of treatments.



**Blue sky jinking:  
Crozet offers easy  
access to 50km of  
lift-served runs and  
is also a favourite  
with families**

