



Home Abroad

Snow clad magic

The owners of this bright, welcoming home on the slopes overlooking Verbier love to ski from the top of the resort straight to their 'muddy room', in time for tea and cakes in front of the fire

BY JUDITH MILLER PHOTOGRAPHS, SIMON UPTON



In summer, these cold slopes
turn into warmly fragrant wild
flower meadows



AMONGST LOVELY SNOW COVERED pines, this welcoming little Verbier chalet provides a second home for the London based family who asked designer Emily Todhunter to create a haven that has a real feeling of solidity and spacious comfort for two adults and four children. The rooms are full of mountain light and shadows, rich colours and the delicious smell of beeswax, which, combined with wonderful textured fabrics and a roaring >

The richly carved balcony makes a stunning place for breakfast and lunch, and after a hard day's ski, crumpets and cake in front of the huge sitting room fire are a must. Find similar Old French country furniture at I & J L Brown, 020-7736 4141

The house is filled with scented wood smoke



A dining area in one corner of the kitchen opens onto the vast balcony, allowing the bright sunlight to flood in



◀ fire make it the sort of place you'd love to make your first home.

There's nothing of the impermanence of the traditional ski cabin here. But then, this is a home visited at least a dozen times a year, a place for living in and entertaining, as well as skiing. It even includes a library for après ski reading, and, of course, homework.

Emily says: 'When I first saw the site it was just a patch of grass and the

challenge to local architect Raymond Bruchez and myself was to create something from scratch which looked as though it had always been there.

'I worked out the entire decorating and furnishing scheme with the owner's wife in London, using floor plans and a model of the building which showed every room from above. Adam Calkin, who does a lot of work with me, went out with a team of specialist painters

from England to do the interiors, then I flew out to arrange the furniture. The heart stopping moment was watching this huge lorry make its way down the icy roads.'

Raymond Bruchez based his building on the 200 year old traditional chalet styles of neighbouring Val d'Illicz. So there is plenty of carved wood, low ceilings and small, solidly shuttered windows. Chalet houses always had ▶



The natural wood of the kitchen is brightened with a cooker splashback of Mexican tiles and colourful plates on the walls. Paris Ceramics make tiles to order, 020-7371 7778.

LEFT: old French ticking was used to make the cushions in the main bedroom; find similar at Mulberry (01749) 340500

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Traditionally handpainted, Bohemian box beds piled high with cheerful checked duvets and antique French quilts keep the bitter cold out of the bedrooms. Dragons, 020-7589 3795, will make the box beds of your dreams to measure



◀ a ground floor for the animals, a first floor for humans and a top floor for hay. This new home retains that three-storey construction, but its ground floor, built from local stone, is the childrens' bedrooms and bathrooms. In winter the family uses an entrance on this level to the concrete floored 'muddy room' where boots and skis are left. In summer you step off the flower studded mountain into an entrance on the first storey, leading to a brick floored kitchen, library, a large sitting cum dining room and the grand balcony, which wraps itself around half the house. The

main bedroom, with another balcony, and two guest rooms are above.

The family brought favourite pieces collected in Provence, some old Bohemian country furniture and antiques from London. Emily says there were more heart stopping moments when they realised the windows and doors were too small to get the furniture in. 'We hauled it onto the balcony, a door was removed and we got it in.' ♣

Taken from Great Escapes by Judith Miller, photographs by Simon Upton, published by Ryland Peters & Small, £30

*In the master bedroom the bed,
covered with an antique quilt nestles
under traditionally wide eaves*

