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Ski hut makes magic in the Swiss Alps



Don't let the exterior throw you. It's a delight inside. (Michaela Urban, For Tribune Newspapers)

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Chicago Tribune

JANUARY 19, 2015, 11:03 AM

In the shadow of the Matterhorn is a magical ski hut that will leave an indelible memory of the Swiss Alps.

Many things make skiing the Alps amazing, not the least of which are great terrain and incredible vistas. But what makes me choose Euro skiing over the great resorts in the American West is the cultural experience; and nothing speaks more to my heart (and stomach) than a traditional mountain ski hut.

Over the years I've visited some awesome huts — the Bellevue Alm in Bad Gastein being one of my favorites. It's one of Austria's oldest, accessed by a creaky single chairlift, and you can sled down to the village after dining.

This year, however, during a ski tour of Switzerland, I added another classic ski hut to my list of favorites. Nestled in the tiny and quaint mountain village of Findeln, down the hill from an old chapel, the Matterhorn hovering over it like some mythical giant, the Findlerhof ski hut is right out of the pages of a fairy tale of Swiss mountain life.

But don't let the ancient exterior (and interior) fool you. The owners of this mountain gem serve up "uber" gourmet fare that blends old Swiss charm, local ingredients, and cutting-edge cuisine, making it very hard to head back out to the hill. I hit the Findlerhof in the early afternoon and almost missed the last lift out.

Most popular restaurants in the area, including Findlerhof, get pretty busy, so you might have to wait a bit for a table. But no worries, you can relax on the porch with a glass of prosecco, gaze at the magnificent Matterhorn, and remind yourself how wonderful life's moments can be.

Entrees run from about \$20 to \$47, but the experience is priceless.

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