



Fahrenheit Seven VAL THORENS

Let's be honest: Val Thorens in France's Three Valleys isn't going to win too many prizes in the 'cute mountain village' beauty pageant. But, for once, this brutalist kind of architecture works. Sitting at 2,300m, it is well above the tree line and promises a snow-sure experience and an elongated season.

The hotel, adorned with evocative black-and-white photos of the ski resort's nascent days in the Seventies, reflects the retro-chic appeal of Fahrenheit. It was previously a rather run down Mercure but a wholesale refurbishment in 2016 by new owners – think bold colours and bright, spacious bedrooms – plus friendly staff are a winning combination in this love-it-or-hate-it resort. Its success has encouraged the owners to launch the vintage/modern concept in Courchevel 1650, too. With over 100 rooms this is not a small hotel

but the clever layouts make it feel much more intimate and give it a modish air, but in an inclusive way. It also benefits from being a genuine ski-in, ski-out hotel with a wide terrace which overlooks the main bowl, where the bulk of the resort's lifts spread out like spiders' legs taking skiers to different parts of the mountain – perfect for a post-piste beer or two.

Menus in the main restaurant, La Rôtisserie, are deliberately brief, offering a range of European and Asian dishes with an emphasis on grills and roasts. The hotel's second restaurant, dinner-only Le Zinc, attracts a good number of outside guests, so booking is advised. Overall the hotel represents very good value, even more so when you compare it to other offerings in Val. *GR. Doubles from £188. fahrenheitseven.com*



Places

This issue, we ski in and ski out in Val Thorens, Bajan luxury, lose ourselves in a fairy tale of



Anantara The Palm Resort DUBAI



Where do you stay in a place that puts up five-star hotels at the rate most cities put up parking restrictions? Somewhere where you can recline on a sun lounger and watch the frenetic pace of it all from afar, as you enjoy the serenity of your own, quiet patch of sand. That place is Anantara The Palm, from the Thai hotel group that makes good on eastern promise and delivers faultless service, luxury dining and a calmer, peaceful alternative to the buzz of downtown. Located on the furthest tip of the Palm Jumeirah, a lazy river runs through the resort (complete with its own paddle-boarding barman dispensing

mojitos). Its private beach is flanked by two sets of luxury overwater villas – the first in the UAE – although 'slumming it' in a lagoon-view room isn't exactly a hardship, come as they do with sun-trap balcony, Elemis toiletries and a pillow menu. The culinary offering ranges from high-end pan-Asian at Mekong to excellent cuts at Bushman's steakhouse. Booking in for high tea at The Lotus Lounge would add a flourish to any break, but in all honesty, drinking coconut water straight from the flesh while watching the sun set over the city is every bit as gratifying. *AG. Doubles from £158. anantara.com*

Words by Stephanie Dobrijevic; Blossom Green; Amy Grier; Gregor Rankin; Mark Sansom. Photos by Fahrenheit Seven; Paul Thuytsbaert; Jack Hardy; Anthony Cottarel; ClickPhotography