

First tracks

CROWD PLEASERS

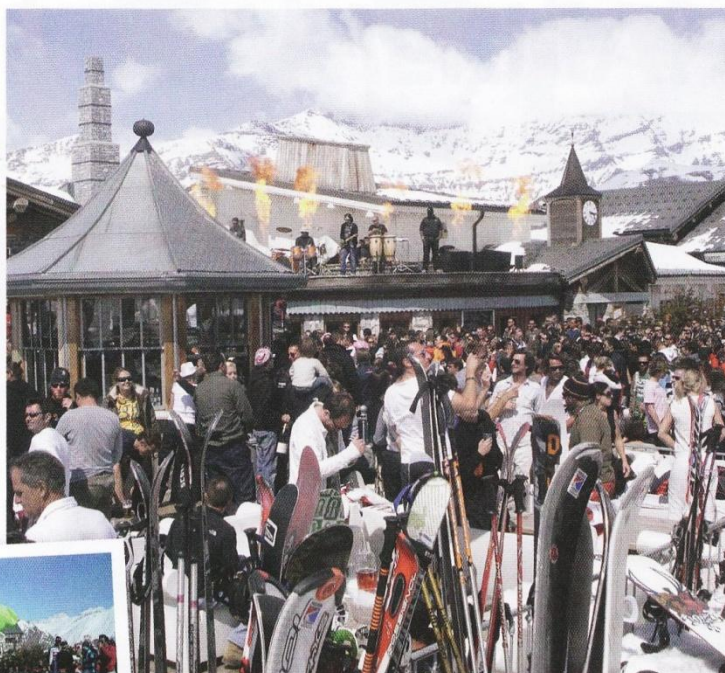
Austrian-style frolics find success on the French après scene

Like your après to kick off early? If so, France may not be your country of choice – this is, after all, the preserve of Austria, no? Well, not necessarily, as fans of La Folie Douce in Val d'Isère – mountain restaurant and self-styled “highest club in Europe” – will testify.

Behind the concept is the outrageous Kely Starlight (pictured below), who first sang here in 2000 with no more than a table and DJ set for company. Today, Kely's internationally acclaimed Folie Douce team enjoy celebrity status in Val d'Isère and beyond with their own brand of live house music, dished up daily.

The fun starts soon after lunch as the terraces are cleared and the DJ cranks up the tunes. The atmosphere builds, and by 3pm Kely is strutting his stuff on stage and working a crowd that is always up for it, whatever the weather.

Austrophiles beware, however. There's no oompah or euro pop



here. Instead, think mini-ibiza in the snow, but with

professional musicians and live vocals. Things reach fever pitch at the now infamous end of season closing party where a thronging crowd (over 3000 in 2009) spill out on to the slopes. The party ends at

5pm but reignites later in resort at Café Face – same team, same format.

Buoyed by their success, the team has extended the concept to other resorts including, for 2010, the Plein Sud restaurant in Val Thorens, where a new team is working the crowds. Other countries may also soon be in the frame – watch this space...