

Life&Style travel

Warm welcome for revamped winter resorts

From a billion-pound resort to 190km of newly linked runs, *Fraser Wilkin* finds five winter openings to get excited about

The Chedi comes to Andermatt

With its formidable expert terrain and a big reputation for powder, Andermatt is Switzerland's original steep and deep destination. The village had remained virtually unchanged since its inauguration as a winter resort more than a century ago.

Enter Egyptian businessman Samih Sawiris, with a billion-pound vision to transform this sleepy Swiss

backwater into an exclusive international resort.

His new five-star hotel and apartment development, The Chedi Andermatt, may be vast in scale (there are 106 suites) but combines traditional Swiss elegance with trademark Asian influences intended to create a zen-like haven of tranquillity. There is also an indoor and outdoor pool and spa offering every

conceivable form of relaxation. The completion of the Chedi, due to open on December 20, is only the first phase in an ambitious project that will eventually see six new luxury hotels, 490 apartments and a gradual expansion of the ski area towards Sedrun in the neighbouring valley.

Doubles from £560 per night including breakfast. www.thechedi-andermatt.com



Swiss luxury: A Chedi Andermatt apartment

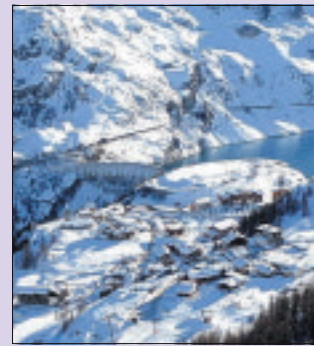
Warth-Schröcken links to Lech-Zürs

After years of legal wrangling (41 to be precise) little-known Warth-Schröcken resort in the Austrian Vorarlberg will finally link to world-famous Lech-Zürs. Skiing between the two has

always been possible off-piste but, until now, Warth-Schröcken has been cut off from its more glamorous Arlberg neighbours by the seasonal closure of an avalanche-prone road. The

opening of the £10million gondola will almost treble the size of Warth's ski area, bringing the total length of runs to 190km; 340km if you count nearby St Anton, accessible by bus from Lech and included on the Arlberg lift-pass. Then there's the snow. Despite its modest altitude, Warth-Schröcken is the snowiest resort in the Alps, with an average of nearly 11m a season.

UK tour operator Snow-Wise offers seven-night packages at the four-star Hotel Lechtaler Hof from £1,095pp. www.snow-wise.com



Facelift for Tignes Les Boisses

This winter sees the completion of the first phase in a massive redevelopment programme for Tignes 1800 (previously known as Tignes Les Boisses) just above France's famous dam. The centrepiece of the £120million project is the Kalinda Village, a brand new ski-in, ski-out complex of luxury apartments complete with shops, bars, restaurants and a spa.

The project marks a radical change in fortunes for Tignes 1800, which, unlike its purpose-built neighbour (Tignes-Le-Lac), has felt rather neglected. The new resort should be complete by 2015 and claims to be France's first 'eco mountain village' with an emphasis on sustainability. Peak Retreats offers seven nights in the Kalinda Village from £1,322 based on a one-bedroom apartment (sleeps four) including Eurotunnel. www.peakretreats.co.uk

Breckenridge opens new mountain

Breckenridge, one of Colorado's highest and best-known ski resorts, is opening an entirely new mountain this season. In what has been described as the largest expansion of a North American ski resort in the last decade, Peak 6 will include 400 acres of lift-served terrain and more than 140 acres of 'hike-to terrain'. More significantly, though, the expansion includes lots of high intermediate bowl skiing, reaching more than 3,600m. This is unusual for North America, where only experts are normally privy to such lofty terrain.

Inghams offers seven-night packages at the Beaver Run Resort from £1,035pp. www.ingham.co.uk



Val Thorens gains another five-star hotel

Not content with being the highest resort in the Alps and part of its largest ski area, Val Thorens has made a conspicuous attempt to move upmarket in recent years with a string of luxury openings. This season's big news is the launch of the Koh-I Nor, the resort's third five-star hotel and the highest five-star spot in Europe.

The name may be extravagant (Koh-I Nor is the 105.6 carat diamond in the Queen's crown) but its philosophy is one of understated luxury, with an

emphasis on clean lines and natural light. Taking control of its two restaurants is chef Yoann Conte, who has two Michelin stars and promises

one of the finest gourmet experiences in the French Alps.

Erna Low offers seven-night packages at the Koh-I Nor from £1,350pp. www.ernalow.co.uk

