



**F**OR SIX MONTHS each year I work from an office on Dame Street in Dublin. Then, in mid-November, I move to the French Alps.

The first guests start arriving in early December, and from then until the end of April I divide my time between Morzine, where I live, and the other ski resorts of Val d'Isère and Méribel.

During the season I go home to Dublin for breaks, but I usually can't wait to get back here. Maybe it's because we have real weather here, crisp and snowy rather than grey and rainy.

I started working with Highlife three years ago. Prior to that I had worked in cruise ships and hotels around the world, so I'm used to living abroad.

I get up at 7am, and my first task of the day is always to go say hello to the guests and make sure they're enjoying themselves.

Then I meet the chalet teams, check how they're getting on and inspect the chalets.

The three resorts are a couple of hours' drive apart, so I'm on the road a lot. At some stage in the day I'll try to ski. Very often it'll be with guests, because we offer guided ski trails, and that's good fun.

There are around 600km of pistes here, so it's a huge ski area. For guests, what makes a good ski holiday is that plus a good chef and a good host.

Skiing gives you a huge appetite, so we have to offer restaurant-quality food. The host's job is to run the chalet, look after housekeeping and run the food and beverage service.

We have a team of 42 staff, and most of them take career breaks to do it. We have law students, teachers and recent graduates, all just looking to do something different for a while.

In the summer I spend a lot

of my time recruiting, and before we come out here we have a team induction period in the Wicklow Mountains, hiking and staying in Knockree youth hostel, so we get to know each other really well.

During the season I work six days a week. The job changes from minute to minute, which is what I like about it.

The customers are the easy part; possibly the hardest thing is that it's so physically demanding. You're on the go all the time, and you need to be "up" all the time, too. I'm also the person everyone looks to when they've a question, which can be tiring.

On the plus side, being so busy means I sleep really well. You do when you're in the Alps anyway; I'm not sure why. I'm usually asleep before my head hits the pillow – literally. I don't even remember getting into bed.

Guess that means it's not a stressful job!

■ In conversation with Sandra O'Connell

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**Mountain high: Seamus Shaughnessy in the French Alps, where he lives six months a year**