



MOUNTAIN HIGH

Aideen and Trevor married on New Year's Day and kept the party going by heading off on a teach-yourself-to-ski honeymoon at the end of January

Aideen Mangan and Trevor Healy really rang in the New Year in style. They married on New Year's Day and kept the party going by heading off for a skiing honeymoon at the end of January. Aideen, an Offaly native who works as a radiographer in the Galway Clinic, says that "we both like adventure, and a sun honeymoon destination didn't appeal to us". And Trevor, a Mayo man and a vehicle body repairer for the Bus Eireann garage in Galway, had always wanted to give skiing a go. Following a recommendation from a friend, the couple con-

tacted Highlife, an Irish ski holiday company, and booked a week-long chalet break in Morzine in France.

"The chalet was a typical alpine style lodge cabin, consisting of a beautiful lounge with an adjoining reading room and cosy log fire. It sleeps 11 people, so we were sharing with nine others, all Irish, four from Waterford and five from Dublin," says Aideen.

Despite the full house, all the bedrooms were very private and they had an en suite bathroom complete with Jacuzzi. The couple also loved



the addition of the hot tub on the sun deck, where they could just relax and enjoy stunning panoramic views. They needed to after their days on the slopes...

"The highlight of our trip was the amount of fun and laughs we had on the ski slopes together. It was very romantic, catching the ski lifts to-



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gether and appreciating the peacefulness and beauty all around us. We spent a lot of time laughing at one another as we stumbled and fell, as we learned how to ski ‘properly!’”

Pampering was the order of the day on the honeymoon, something that this hard-working couple really appreciated.

“We flew Dublin to Geneva and were collected by the Highlife team and taken by private transfer to Morzine. When we arrived at our chalet, we were given a guided tour and the first thing we noticed when we entered our allocated room was the bottle of champagne awaiting us. This was courtesy of Highlife, with a lovely note attached congratulating us on our wedding and wishing us an unforgettable honeymoon.

All our meals during the week were cooked for us by our personal chalet chef, Ellie, and we had two hosts, Francis and Rachel, who served us our meals and tidied up after us daily. They also arranged for us to not only have private skiing lessons but also for the instructor to meet us when we got off the lift. We were spoiled for the entire week!”

“It cost approx €3,000/£2,000 in total. This price included everything from ski gear, les-

sons, flights, taxes, insurance, accommodation and our own personal chalet chef.”

Aideen says that they did bring some books with them to read in the evenings but ended up never opening them. Their romantic days on the slopes were counterbalanced by the fun they had with others in the chalet: “There was a full-size pool table in the chalet and every night the entertainment centered around crazy pool competitions.”

But it wasn’t just a Little Ireland scenario. The couple met a lot of different nationalities during the après ski portion of the day and also headed out for dinner to a local French restaurant on one of the nights, where they had great craic trying to figure out the all-French menu.

The best piece of advice the pair say they can give other couples is to decide what type of honeymoon you want and where you want to go, and then find a travel company which will plan and organise everything for you.

“It means you delegate the task to the experts who will consult you on the details, but they organise everything, leaving the both of you stress-free so that you can enjoy the build up to the wedding, and the day itself.”

Useful information

Where is it?

Morzine is situated in the Northern Alps close to Mont Blanc and on the border with Switzerland. The town is at the heart of the Portes du Soleil, the world's largest linked ski area, which offers 650km of skiing. The area around Morzine itself is especially suitable for beginners and less experienced skiers; however, if you are an expert, more challenging slopes can be found at nearby Avoriaz.

Why go there?

It's an opportunity to see a traditional French market town "as is". Locals love to talk about the town's history and traditions, and resist changes to its picturesque looks; the buildings still have wooden facades, carved balconies and slate-covered roofs. Plenty of bars and restaurants, as well as cinemas, nightclubs and even an ice-skating arena, will keep you occupied when you are not swooshing down the slopes.

What should you pack?

Naturally, pack ski-suits, thermal underwear, gloves and hats for the slopes but don't forget your swimsuit for the hot tub as well as sunscreen and ski sunglasses.

Language barrier?

Morzine attracts an English-speaking crowd, so basic English is widely spoken. But don't forget your phrasebook to score points with the locals.

Getting there?

Book with a travel company or fly to Geneva and drive yourself – it's about 65km away. Aer Lingus have daily flights – check out www.aerlingus.com. Highlife organizes chalet skiing trips in three of France's top ski resorts – Morzine, Val d'Isère and Méribel. Find out more at www.highlife.ie.

