



# Val d'Arviennes 1750

Discover a real Alpine resort

Holiday like a local

Uncover the secret gems of  
Val d'Arviennes 1750



Welcome to *The Big Local*



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### *the Big Local*

With nearly 300km of piste on your doorstep, a spread of sweeping, wide runs and treeline descents, Val d'Arviennes is the winter resort that's got it all. In this exclusive guide, we're going to show you the best bits:

- Hidden gems on the mountain where you can let your skis run
- Cosy restaurants with majestic vistas
- Tips for when to ride which part of the mountain
- Secret off-piste areas
- Night time hangouts where the locals go to get lively

So join us as we talk to Head Bar Tender and cocktail maestro **Camille**, ESF Instructor **Jean-Luc**, Restaurateur **Pierre**, and lifelong Val d'Arviennes local **Martine**.

**“The Moonlight Descent is special. Pure magic.”** Jean-Luc Carpentier, ESF Ski and Snowboard Instructor at Val d'Arviennes.



**ESF Instructor Jean-Luc  
Carpentier**

# Val d'Arviennes 1750: come and ski the endless mountain

Where better to start with your introduction to Val d'Arviennes than its 300km of marked pistes?

The resort begins at an altitude of 1750m and soars to 3250m so we have great snow conditions year in, year out.

(In fact it's possible to ski up on the glacier right through the summer).

You can explore a total of 98 marked runs including:

**18 Green**

**36 Blue**

**32 Red**

**12 Black**

And for more thrills you can ride four terrain parks catering to all levels and discover 3 cross country trails. Or for a more sedate workout, find adventure on 4 stunning, tree-lined walking tracks (we dare you to try the longest at almost 9km!)

“There's nowhere like it,” says ESF Instructor Jean-Luc. “I qualified here in Val d'Arviennes ten years ago, then travelled the French Alps teaching in most of the big, world-renowned resorts. But I always wanted to come back to The Big Local because it feels like home.”

# So what makes Val d'Arviennes special?

"For one thing, it's huge," Jean-Luc says. "I know it very well but there are still pistes that I rediscover from time to time and think, 'Oh wow, I'd forgotten this part of the mountain!' But it's not just about 300km of piste. There's expanse here. Take Blanchon for example: it's a sweeping, gently meandering blue run 15km long, but it's so wide!"

In fact whenever you visit Val d'Arviennes, you'll find room to **breathe**.

"Even in high season you have so much space to stretch your legs. Most of the resort is the same. It's accessible too, that's what I love about it as an instructor. I can take my students down a red, then easily branch off to a less challenging blue for the steepest bit, before rejoining the red further down for the return to the resort. The beauty is that if you're on a challenging run, you're never far from an easier blue or green. And of course vice-versa."



**Infinite sky. Endless snow.**



So where on the mountain does Jean-Luc like to take his students?

"It's a secret," he says. "I can't tell you. Oh okay then, just between us! In the morning I'll take them up the Chabrieres drag lift, which goes from the resort centre, then from there we catch the Peynieres gondola. It takes you up to 2600m and the start of Lascombes, one of my favourite blues. The trick is, most people take one of the chairs or a gondola straight from the resort as their first outing of the day - maybe they haven't woken up enough yet for a drag lift!"

*"It feels like the mountains are yours"*

"With only a minority taking our route to the top of Lascombes, which is more direct, we arrive before everyone else and you have this stunning, sweeping run pretty much to yourselves. It's a wonderful way to start the day. The sun glints at you through the trees, and to your left you have a breathtaking view of Pic du Rose at 3500m. It glows pink in the morning sun, which is how it got its name. When you're cruising down, it feels like the mountains are yours."

**[Click here for the Val d'Arviennes Piste Map](#)**

“But that’s only one of Val d’Arviennes hidden gems. There is so much to explore and discover and because it’s a ‘local’ kind of resort, not one of the world-famous tourist draws, you’ll never find heaving crowds or long queues. There are so many marked pistes that if you want space and a place to yourself, you’ll find it.”

But what about the unmarked ski areas?

## *"The thrill of untouched snow"*

“Well I would always say to begin with: book a guide. We can show you the best off-piste and we’ll ensure your safety. Val d’Arviennes has it all really: you can challenge yourself with steep descents and deep powder, or we can take you to gentler slopes where you still get the thrill of riding over untouched snow. There’s a great section high up on the west-facing slopes, near the top of the Chardons chairlift. You head down Escondus, a lovely wide red, and after a few hundred metres you come to a gap in the pine trees on your left. Dive in there and the forest opens out into the most unbelievable unmarked terrain. It’s like you’ve stepped through a portal into a magical world! The powder is always excellent, and it’s not rocky at all so even if you’re a beginner to off-piste you’re in a good place – you can afford to take a fall or two! There are more challenging areas but I keep coming back to this one, even if I’m out on my own.”





# Val d'Arviennes 1750: haut cuisine, hautes montagnes!

But let's take a little break before we point ourselves down the broad and inviting Escondus.

And what a perfect opportunity, because just at the start of the piste you'll find the **Refuge**

Restaurateur Pierre Dupont

**Chardons**, a cosy little restaurant with tables inside and out. Here you can sit in the sun and take in the soaring peaks of Saint Marc and Pic de Montmartre as they glow in the afternoon rays.

"I've owned Refuge Chardons for almost twenty years now," says Pierre Dupont, "and I think I may be the luckiest restaurateur in the world."

Surveying the white peaks and blue skies of Val d'Arviennes from Pierre's sun-soaked terrace, you have to agree. But the success of Refuge Chardons is down to more than just luck.

"It was an old barn when I bought the place. I fell in love with it immediately, gaps in the roof and all! It took two summers to restore it and convert it into the restaurant you see today, but every minute of work was worth it. Now we welcome skiers and snowboarders in the winter season from 9am to 4.30pm, and in the summer till 11pm - and there's never a dull moment! Every year we change the menu so that the favourites remain, and the rest we experiment with. It keeps our range both fresh and familiar at the same time."

Al fresco diners and drinkers are treated to some of the best scenery in Val d'Arviene, but that doesn't mean eating inside is any less spectacular.

“Yes, we've followed the theme of Val d'Arviene: the Big Local. That's why there are cosy corners but the general layout is open plan, and bright. The big skylights in the roof let the light in, and the mountain sun comes in through the full-length windows that run the entire length of the south and west sides of the restaurant.”

*“The perfect location to get back to the resort centre”*

Refuge Chardons is beautifully situated for an afternoon drink or bite to eat in the sun, but its position is also one of convenience.

“Even a beginner can get down to the nearest lift in two minutes,” Pierre says. “So we don't rush people if they want to have one more drink or maybe an extra bowl of fries – which we cook fresh by the way, very moreish! We have the perfect location to get back to the resort centre. A quick run to the bottom of the Essynia drag lift, five minutes to the top of the Essynia piste, and then a lovely, easy ski all the way back to the resort.”





When it comes to your return to the centre, Val d'Arviene has countless sweeping routes to choose from, including black moguls for the adrenaline seekers; wide, challenging reds; gentle sweeping blues, and several tree-lined greens for a relaxing cruise back to your hotel or chalet.

But there's one way of getting down the mountain which locals and visitors alike consider very special, and if you want to experience the heart of Val d'Arviene (and perhaps make a few friends too) it's a must-try.



Life-long local, Martine Besson

"The Moonlight Descent!" enthuses Martine, who is 71 years old and has lived (and skied) in Val d'Arviene for more than 40 years. "Each full moon - and for three or four nights either side of it depending on cloud cover - you can enjoy the mountain at night. It's the most spectacular event, magical really."

The Moonlight Descent is designed for beginners right through to seasoned racers. The slopes are subtly but safely lit, so that skiers and snowboarders feel like they're soaring under the light of the moon.

"At 19:30 the racers set off," Martine says. "They go from the top of Solonge at 2600m, then onto Chatelet, and from there back to the resort. The record is 3.34, and at my age I'm proud to say I can still make it in less than 4.5 minutes - not bad for 71!"

After the serious business is contested, tourists and locals make their way down the same lit runs, starting at 20:00.

"It's more my scene nowadays," says Martine. "The Café St. Marc stays open, so exactly half way down you can stop for something to eat or a drink. But what makes it really special is the little tables that pop up every so often along the edge of the pistes."

*"People stop for a vin chaud and a chat."*



"People stop for a vin chaud and a chat, before skiing the rest of the way. **Everybody is on the mountain - one big family.** And you're sure to make some new friends because socialising on the way down is a characteristic of the event. And then, when you get to the centre, it's very lively in the bars and restaurants. There's music and a festive spirit that soon rubs off on you."



Evening drinks at Claude's

## Cocktail classics with a local twist

"The Moonlight Descent nights are our busiest," says Camille, Head of Bar at **Claude's** - and the most revered cocktail mixologist in Val d'Arviene. "And my favourite times! Everybody is so happy and even though I'm doing my job, it doesn't feel like working at all. We're lucky that the locals know of our reputation for

cocktails, so there's always a good crowd in. But it's a friendly atmosphere and even if you're a visitor from out of town, you're part of the Claude's family as soon as you step through the door."

So what can you expect inside?

"We make all the classics of course - mojitos, old fashioned, margheritas, cosmopolitans, you name it - but everything has a Val d'Arviene twist. It's like our terroir. And in addition to all the old favourites, we have some completely unique drinks, which we change every season. Of course there's a full range of non-alcoholic mocktails too which we're very proud of."

Inside Claude's the atmosphere is inviting, and everyone is welcome.



Camille Mabileau: Head of Bar at **Claude's**

“I’m not as youthful as some of them,” says Martine, “but Claude’s is a regular of mine. It’s that kind of place that suits young and old. It’s lively without being boisterous. Even after the Moonlight Descent! Although every time someone sets a personal best, you can be sure of a party at the bar.”

And it seems only fitting that we leave Martine to have the last word on Val d’Arviene, and why it’s the perfect alpine retreat for couples, friends, and families alike.

“Because it’s a small town with a big mountain. There’s more space here than most people can explore in a week – even two – but go for a stroll to the boulangerie in the morning, or the restaurants and bars in the evening, and you’ll experience something we’re very proud of: l’ambiance.”

*“It’s a small town with a big mountain”*

Sounds enticing?

Consider yourself invited! Explore **The Big Local** for real at [val-darviene.com](http://val-darviene.com) and book the winter holiday that has it all: huge ski area, cosy bars, majestic views, beautiful hotels and chalets, friendly people and of course: l’ambiance

[Take me to Val d'Arviene!](#)



#TheBigLocal