



**Gender Studies**  
Ford designers are focusing on women **D11**

# OFF DUTY

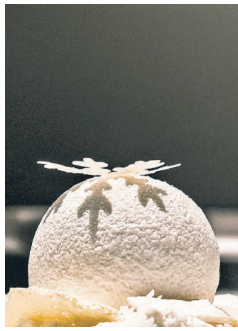
**Some Pig!**  
The beauty of handmade holiday ornaments **D7**



FASHION | FOOD | DESIGN | TRAVEL

CREATIVITY

Saturday/Sunday



## Why Ski When You Can Eat?

Courmayeur, in the Italian Alps, draws as many Epicureans as skiers come winter. We find at least eight delicious reasons to work up an appetite



FRANCESCO LERESCHI FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



**CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF TAGLIATELLE** Clockwise from top: Visitors at the Skyway Monte Bianco viewing platform in Courmayeur, a ski town in Italy; appetizers at the Michelin-star Petit Royal restaurant; Super G hotel, home to two restaurants overseen by Milan chef Andrea Berton; spaghetti alla carbonara at Rifugio Maison Vieille, perched at the top of a chairlift; a 'snowball dessert.'

By JAY CHESHES



**O**N MY FIRST day skiing in Courmayeur, in the Italian Alps, freezing rain turned the slopes into a vertical ice rink. After a few slippery, harrowing runs, I tucked into Rifugio Maison Vieille, a cozy chalet restaurant at the top of a chairlift, whose outdoor deck offers sweeping views in clear weather. Inside its wood-beamed dining room, fellow skiers taking refuge from the elements dug into bowls of creamy polenta and fresh tagliatelle topped with wild boar ragout. The forecast predicted similar washout conditions all week. Luckily, there was plenty more eating to do.

Courmayeur, both a town and a ski resort, boasts nearly as many ambitious, full-service restaurants as it does lifts on the slopes. Even on bright sunny days with powdery trails, the big question tends to be, "What's for

lunch?" The village, nestled in a snug valley on the south slope (the Italian side) of Mont Blanc, Europe's highest peak, is a typically sleepy mountain town for much of the year with around 3,000 full-time residents. But when the ski season kicks into high gear, its restaurants, bars and cafes all come roaring to life. It's a favorite winter escape for residents of Italy's fashion capital, Milan, a straight two-hour shot up the highway. As the new ski season began last December, an outpost of Langosteria, one of that city's top raw bars, opened up for its second year on the slopes at the Super G boutique hotel. This winter, the chilled seafood will come from a new team, under top Milan chef Andrea Berton, who's making his debut in Courmayeur.

As I slurped down a few oysters outside under a heat lamp one afternoon, ski instructors in bright red Emporio Armani parkas led groups of kids down a nearby bunny slope. Meanwhile, posters in town were promoting a public appearance from another star chef, Davide Oldani, of restaurant D'O just outside Milan, taking advantage of Courmayeur's captive audience to promote a new book he'd written on women in contemporary cooking. "This is Milano, winter Milano," he said, when we met up later that week.

For the urbane crowds in from the city on winter weekends, Courmayeur

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## Inside



**A PENDANT FULL OF SCENT**  
A fragrant bag. A perfumed pin. The new 'wearable fragrance' accessories **D3**



**GLASS ENTIRELY FULL**  
Nine holiday cocktail recipes to leave you feeling optimistic **D10**



**SPACE PROGRAMS**  
Turn unused areas into bars, nurseries and more with these design schemes **D8**

**PLAID NEWS TRAVELS FAST**  
The latest word on tartan pants—and how to style them **D4**



ADVENTURE & TRAVEL



**WINTER MILANO** Clockwise from top: A well-earned midday repast at Rifugio Maison Vieille; overlooking the summit of Mont Blanc from inside the Skyway cable car station; Mont Blanc Chocolates handmade by the family who runs Gourmandises, a gourmet-food emporium; Panizzi, the town's 51-year-old cheese shop.

**Ski In, Pig Out**

*Continued from page D1*  
is as much an epicurean as snow-sports destination, known for its mountain cheeses, wild game and cured meats, and for its increasingly serious restaurants. Top tables on and off the slopes can book up weeks in advance. The region's minerally white and earthy red wines come from some of the highest altitude vineyards in Europe. The sparkling Cuvée des Guides is made 7,000 feet above sea level on the slopes of Mont Blanc, with a tasting room atop one of the state-of-the-art Skyway Monte Bianco cable car stations.

One evening, down in the valley, I wandered along Courmayeur's main pedestrian thoroughfare eyeing all the treats arrayed in food shop windows: apple cakes and Alpine chocolates, wheels of fontina, haunches of local speck. The Milanese peacock, draped in designer fur. By sunset, they were all clamoring for seats in the aperitivo bars lining the main strip. The best people watching was at the Caffè Della Posta, where icy Aperol Spritzes served in big bowl glasses came with enough complimentary snacks to make a meal, the tiny tables all crammed with mini sandwiches, savory tarts and fat green olives. The cocktail nibbles were even more copious in the lobby bar of the five-star Grand

Hotel Royal e Golf just up the street, where a server stationed in a corner doled out free bowls of boar stew. I had dinner plans that night, however, at the hotel's flagship restaurant, the Petit Royal, an intimate showcase for wildly inventive tasting menus that highlight local ingredients, from 28-year-old chef Paolo Griffa, a recent transplant from Piedmont. This spring, with the ski season still booming, he'll be cooking alongside two buzzy British chefs, Tom Kerridge of two-Michelin-star the Hand & Flowers Pub and Claude Bosi of London's Bibendum, as part of Courmayeur's annual Mountain Gourmet Ski Experience, a four-day event beginning March 12.

Launched six years ago by bespoke tour operator Amin Momen of Momentum Ski and London chef Heston Blumenthal, the food festival features collaborative meals and cooking demonstrations. It grew out of a week the two men spent together eating and drinking through Courmayeur. My own indulgent week, following a few of Mr. Momen's tips, ended with a dizzying ride up to the top of Mont Blanc, ferried up in the Skyway cable car, which rotates 360 degrees as it speeds up the mountain. From inside that glass bubble, I spied tiny specks kicking up powder below, extreme skiers cutting across the face of Mont Blanc—presumably working off a rich Courmayeur lunch.

**America's Ski-Grub Revolution**  
*Goodbye heat-lamp pizza. Hello, artisanal flatbread*

On U.S. slopes ski food has been, historically, mostly fuel to get you through the rest of the day. But artisanal ingredients and thoughtful presentations have begun to challenge the generic calorie-bomb lunch scarfed down in a chow-line cafeteria.

**Then** Three-bean chili in a cardboard cup.

**Now** Elk chorizo tacos from Taco Beast in Steamboat, Colo., a ski-in food truck (actually a Sno-Cat). [steamboat.com/things-to-do/dining/taco-beast](http://steamboat.com/things-to-do/dining/taco-beast)

**Then** Gray burger with frozen French fries.

**Now** Pulled pork, honey-buttered cornbread, and housemade Carolina mustard sauce from the slope-side Tombstone Barbecue in Park City, Utah. [parkcity-mountain.com/explore-the-resort/during-your-stay/restaurants/tombstone-grill.aspx](http://parkcity-mountain.com/explore-the-resort/during-your-stay/restaurants/tombstone-grill.aspx)

**Then** Flabby heat-lamp pizza

**Now** Prosciutto, fig jam and blue cheese flatbread at the new RPK3 kitchen and bar at the base of the Aerial Tram in Jackson Hole, Wyo. [jacksonhole.com/rpk3.html](http://jacksonhole.com/rpk3.html)

**BEYOND THE DUNES AND ALL IMAGINATION**

FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS, IMPRESARIO GIACOMO CALOSI HAS PRESIDED OVER THIS COURMAYEUR INSTITUTION. THE SIMPLE RESTORATIVE FOOD INCLUDES BIG PORTIONS OF CARBONADE (THE LOCAL BEEF STEW) AND A PASTA TRIO FOR TWO. MR. CALOSI OPENS FOR DINNER WHEN ENOUGH PEOPLE BOOK, FERRYING DINERS UP FROM THE CABLE CAR STATION WITH HIS SNOWMOBILE FLEET. [mansionvieille.com](http://mansionvieille.com).

**La Chaumière**  
This ski-in, ski-out chalet features a casual pizza joint on the top floor and gourmet restaurant with wrap-around windows below. The more ambitious half, serving both lunch and dinner, is home to a serious wine list, much of it sourced directly from small producers. Chef Claudio Brigati serves upmarket spins on iconic regional dishes like chestnut gnocchi with fontina foam. [lachaumiere.it](http://lachaumiere.it).

**Petit Royal**  
Paolo Griffa arrived in Courmayeur two years ago to take over the jewel-box restaurant inside the town's grandest hotel. His ambitious tasting menus earned the restaurant a star in the latest Michelin guide. Dinner is a leap of faith, with multi-course options listed under abstract themes ("leaves," "underground," "I love Aosta") with no other details provided. A seven-course meal last winter kicked off with a welcome drink made of wild foraged herbs and ended with sweet meringue snowballs. [hotelroyalegolf.com](http://hotelroyalegolf.com).

**La Terrazza**  
This mainstay at the entrance to town offers an expansive menu of Valle d'Aostan specialties, heavy on the butter, cheese, potatoes and meat. Wash down a shared platter of local cheese and salami with a micro-brewed Birra Courmayeur, produced by the family that owns the restaurant. [ristorantelatterazza.com](http://ristorantelatterazza.com).

**Panizzi**  
The aged cheeses and creamy yogurts produced by this Courmayeur dairy, a regional landmark celebrating its 51st birthday this year, are sold in fine food shops in Milan, and in its own pungent boutique here. Their own sharp Tomme de Mont Blanc and blue-veined Bleu d'Aoste make great picnic provisions. [panizzicourmayeur.com](http://panizzicourmayeur.com)

**Gourmandises**  
Courmayeur's pre-eminent gourmet-food emporium is a one-stop shop for sweet, savory and boozy gifts. This third-generation family business packs a lot into a tight space, its shelves stocked with local wine, herbal liqueurs, jarred bonbons, jams and mountain teas. [gourmandises-montblanc.com](http://gourmandises-montblanc.com).

**Pastificio Gabriella**  
Dried pasta in every shape imaginable—120 types in spinach, tomato and egg pasta hues—are sold under the Pastificio Gabriella label, a mom-and-pop producer with two shops on Courmayeur's main drag. Gabriella Noris, who started the business with her husband nearly 40 years ago, still works at the original alleyway location. Both outposts sell the couple's most prized winter specialty, their apple honey cakes. 39 0165-843399

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**Where to Carbo-Load in Courmayeur**

**Rifugio Maison Vieille**  
For more than 30 years, impresario Giacomo Calosi has presided over this Courmayeur institution. The simple restorative food includes big portions of carbonade (the local beef stew) and a pasta trio for two. Mr. Calosi opens for dinner when enough people book, ferrying diners up from the cable car station with his snowmobile fleet. [mansionvieille.com](http://mansionvieille.com).

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**Super G**  
This winter, Milan-based chef Andrea Ber-



**GET IN SHAPES** Gabriella Noris opened Pastificio Gabriella in Courmayeur nearly 40 years ago. The shop sells 120 types of dried pasta.

ton, who runs Michelin-starred restaurants in Milan and Lake Como, will offer salads and sandwiches from a quick-serve counter and more languid meals served, on sunny days, on the outdoor deck, warmed by heat lamps and fur blankets. Expect a mix of light luxuries (a raw bar, for one) and rich comfort food like seafood lasagna. [ovesuper.com](http://ovesuper.com).

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