



## From the slopes to the screen

**M**ERELY a couple of ski lifts apart in physical terms, in character Klosters and Davos are as different as a well-bred hibernating hedgehog and a pit bull looking for a fight. If that sounds harsh on the latter, we were there just before the start of the World Economic Forum, and witnessed soldiers in combat fatigues assembling the high-wire fencing to keep out the protestors. All we wanted was a plate of meatballs and a beer.

In the interests of balanced reporting, it has to be said that, for the rest of the year, Davos is home to no fewer than seven Swiss heritage sites and even has an observatory and its own avalanche training-centre. This was reassuring to know as we spent a morning off-piste in a quest to reach Arosa down the valley, guided by a man who knows a thing or two about actions in a crisis—he used to go out with Carol Thatcher.

After years of unspoken rivalry, which included cutting off bus services and making combined lift passes awkward, the two resorts are now officially best friends, and have announced that they're marketing themselves as a joint package, henceforth to be known as Davos-Klosters. In Klosters, which, like the Royal Windsor Horse Show, is discreetly grand, but desperate not to appear pretentious or flash, we had drinks and enough canapés to fill a bobsleigh at one chalet preparing to welcome Prince Andrew and his entourage. At dinner in another, the staff related their mounting fascination last year, when the president of the Philippines was booked in to spend the night with a man. Her husband, as it turned out. One of the chalet owners has the near perfect name of Christel. Not even the marketing department of the new joint resort could have bettered that. One of her claims to fame is that, after her

guide failed to live up to his job description, she had to spend the night in a ravine with the King of Sweden's daughter.

But you don't need to be related to European royalty to stay in Klosters. Owners of some of the nicest chalets and apartments, such as Lord Daresbury, are now renting them for part of the year to help pay the bills. Red-shuttered Chalet Bear is particularly charming, and the owners only managed to buy it four years ago because the vendor, a carpenter, was impressed that they didn't want to knock it down and start again, like so many developers in the area (it's very hard to build on new sites in Klosters). They have restored the old wooden building, keeping the character, but installing modern bathrooms and a superb chef.

**O**n returning home, it was good to be hunting again, although a break since New Year

was probably wise. The dust has settled on my inadvertent appearance on *Channel 4 News* on Boxing Day. Filming one of the few hunts mounted that day, they followed a piece to camera by reluctant-looking Cabinet Minister Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for Defra, who expounded his views of hunting's 'barbarism', by a shot of me enthusiastically knocking back a glass of port. Whether I was intended to represent the *ancien régime* or not, I maintain you can't linger over the activity like you might sip a fine vintage after dinner. The lot of the rider on a hunter raring to go is to get it down quickly. Family honour was restored by the final camera shot of a young daughter with tinsel in her hat on a pretty grey Welsh pony.

The annual Charlton Hunt dinner, held last week, is a reminder that our country is where fox-hunting started in the late 17th century. One of the first people to hunt hounds here was

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the Duke of Monmouth, who is still the only master to have been hanged, drawn and quartered. Not for his failure to catch foxes, but for attempting to overthrow the monarchy. This incentive to produce good sport is not necessary for our huntsman, Sage. A more cheery, positive man you will not meet. He's even nice to children.

Our hunt magazine, *Horn and Hound* (published every quarter and distributed at local meets) has the production qualities of a national glossy and a line-up of A-list writers, such as Clarissa Dickson Wright, Rupert Everett and Otis Ferry, and featured 'need for speed' merchant Richard Hammond's account of his day with the Ledbury. It's the equivalent of having Prince Charles write in your parish magazine about the local planning application or Bill Bryson doing a piece on the village litter problem. How come our publication is able to punch above its weight? Because the joint-master responsible has taste, vision, style... and works for *Vogue*.

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Next week Kit Hesketh-Harvey