

PEAK PROPERTY

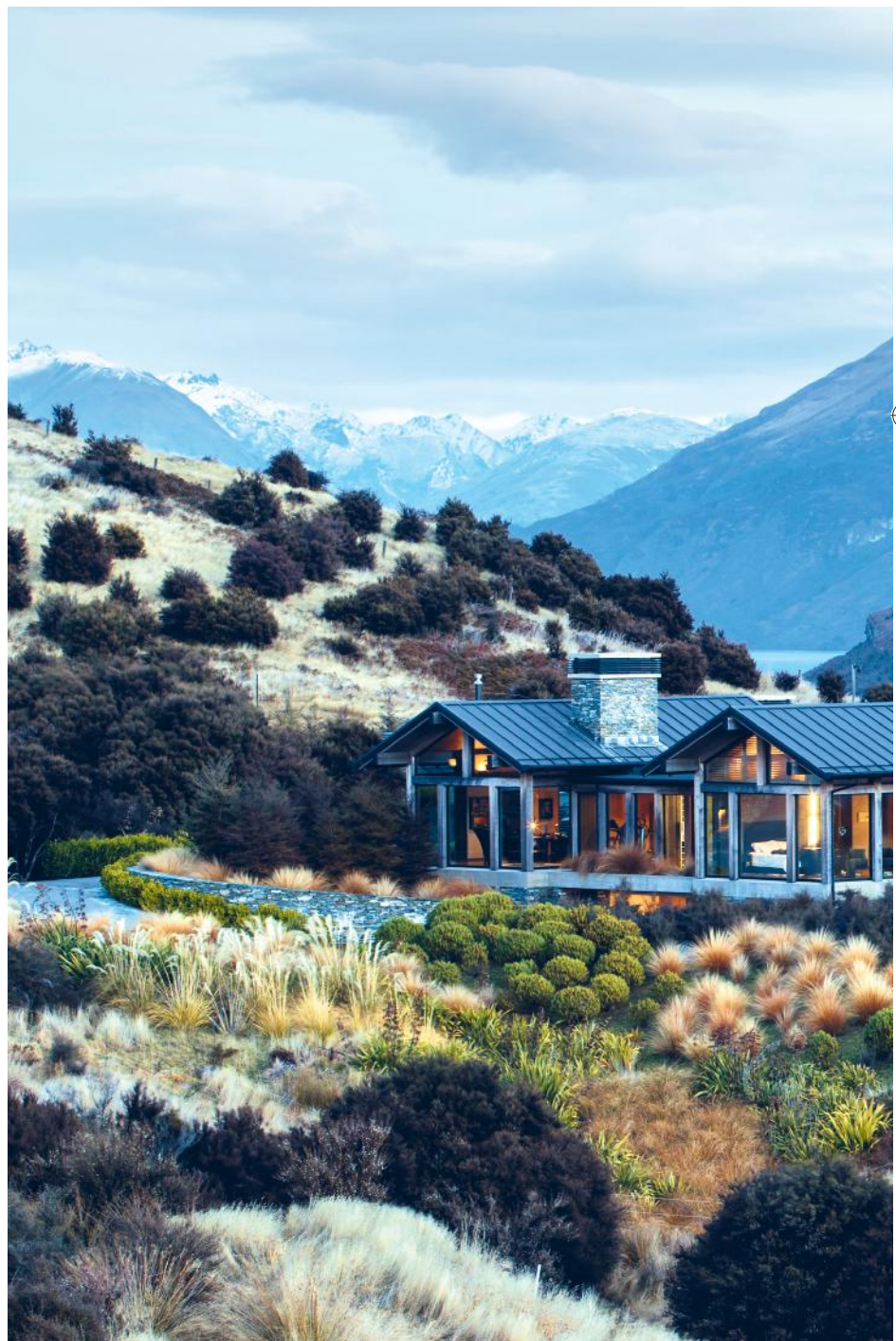
SWISS ALPS

At the heart of the Four Valleys, Verbier is a sophisticated sporting resort for those who ski hard and play hard. Just a 45-minute drive from Sion airport, it has a youthful vibe and easy access to 250 miles of high-altitude, snow-sure runs and off-piste magic. The town is more a private chalet than hotel destination, and CHALET SOLMAÏ (knightfrank.com) is typical of the traditional stone and timber houses for which the region is universally recognized. Available to foreign buyers and within walking distance of the resort's nightlife, the sumptuous Solmaï has unobstructed 300-degree mountain views from wraparound terraces and picture windows, plus sauna and hammam, south-facing living area, and ten bedrooms. Even closer to the action, steps away from Place Centrale, the four-bedroom RÉSIDENCE ALEX (savills.com) is the pick of 13 apartments in a new complex, opposite the Combins massif, with its own indoor swimming pool. A classic low-maintenance fly-in/fly-out proposition, it would work equally well for the summer music and e-bike festivals as for après-ski merriment.

➔ Sion Airport to Verbier: 34 miles

WHISTLER

Consistently voted the top ski resort in North America, Whistler has an average annual snowfall of nearly 35 feet. Under two-hours' drive north of Vancouver on Canada's Pacific



Traditional chalets, convenient condos, hotel private residences, and contemporary masterpieces: standout high-altitude homes for wintertime schussing or summer sojourns.

By Peter Swain



SIMON DEVITT

Twin Peaks View, Otago, New Zealand.

The best ski homes work 12 months a year.

coastline, the town hosted several 2010 Winter Olympic events, so it has a vibrant hospitality and sporting scene, with an exchange rate Americans find to their advantage. The contemporary design of the newly built 2919 HERITAGE PEAKS (whistler.evrealstate.com) in the private Kadenwood development speaks to functionality and comfort, as well to as easy ski-in/ski-out access to the slopes. The seven bedrooms in the 6,200 sq. ft. layout are complemented by majestic mountain and lake views, a temperature-controlled wine cellar, gym, and media room. Buyers looking

for a fully managed option with some rental income on the side may prefer one of the three-bedroom FOUR SEASONS PRIVATE RESIDENCES (realestateinwhistler.com). Open-plan layouts and gourmet kitchens perfect for entertaining, plus a ski concierge, 24-hour room service, health club, and pool round out the high-spec, low-maintenance package.

➔ Vancouver Airport to Whistler: 84 miles

SOUTHERN ALPS

Queenstown in Otago on New Zealand's South Island has the best skiing in Australasia. The Remarkables mountain range, Coronet Peak and Peak, and Cardrona offer not only downhill and cross-country skiing but also heli-skiing, while in summer there are five impressive golf courses and the wineries of the Gibbston Valley to enjoy. TWIN PEAK VIEW (luxuryrealestate.co.nz) on Lake Wakatipu is a contemporary interpretation of a traditional mountain lodge set in spectacular scenery familiar to *Lord of the Rings* devotees. The recently completed four-bedroom-suite residence, built to the highest environmental standards, sits on 140 acres and is a 30-minute drive to the slopes and a dozen great restaurants. Right on Jack's Point, a fine 18-holer, the four-bedroom ONE HACKETT ROAD (realestate.co.nz) is a more modest affair but ideal holiday home. A three-minute drive to The Remarkables ski field, its vaulted ceilings and large windows make for an airy ambiance, the clubhouse is around the corner, and nearby white-water rafting and bungee jumping should keep guests entertained in the summer.

ASPEN

Led by Snowmass, this Colorado resort town actually has four main ski areas catering to downhillers of all abilities, making it a perfect family destination. It also has five-star cuisine, designer shopping, and several world-class spas, all within a short drive of Aspen airport. The sumptuous six-bedroom residence at 294 DRAW DRIVE (christiesrealestate.com) on Red Mountain has generous entertaining spaces on multiple outside terraces, each with a different mountainscape, as well as a home



From top: 294 Draw Drive, Aspen, U.S.; Résidence Alex, Verbier, France.



One of the Four Seasons Private Residences, Whistler, Canada.

theatre, wine enclave and large fireplace to warm the cockles after a day on the slopes—the Aspen Mountain Ski Resort is only a short drive away. On a smaller scale, but still substantial enough for a family holiday in winter or summer—when the walking, cycling and horse riding all come into their own—a three-bedroom condo like the one at 900 E DURANT AVENUE (knightfrank.com) in downtown Aspen is a low-stress option. High ceilings, open plan, and just a few blocks from the gondola, it would rent in a heartbeat.

✈ Aspen/Pitkin County Airport to town centre: 3 miles

DOLOMITES

This dazzling snowcapped region in northeast Italy combines fine food, effortless elegance and, in Val Gardena, Cortina and the Kronplatz, world-class skiing. With Milan to the southwest and Venice to the southeast, the most convenient small airport for South Tyrolean winter sports is Bolzano.

The vogue for hotel and spa facilities on tap is gathering pace, with the full-service LEFAY WELLNESS RESIDENCES (savills.com) in Pinzolo, part of the Madonna di Campiglio ski area, a good example. The 19 two- to four-bedroom apartments are separated from the hotel by a wellness center featuring thermal baths, indoor and outdoor heated pools, spa, and gym. A grander entity, a villa in SAN VIGILIO DI MAREBBE (engelvoelkers.com) is close to the Kronplatz, venue of the World Cup giant slalom last January. This seven-bedroom South Tyrolean Alpine affair divides into different apartments, so it could accommodate family and friends who in the summer can hike and cycle in the nearby Fanes-Sennes-Braies nature park—the best ski homes work 12 months a year.

✈ Bolzano Airport to Pinzolo: 71 miles; to Kronplatz: 64 miles

VERMONT

The Green Mountain State is famous as

the iconic setting of Bing Crosby's *White Christmas* and, not unrelated, skiing. The slopes may not compare with the Alps, but they're family-friendly. Ten miles from the Spruce Peak ski lifts, 506 NORTH HILL ROAD (realtor.com) in Stowe would suit the old crooner himself. He'd have loved the rustic-meets-modern country design, with acres of wood and stone on display in the palatial reception rooms, and 11 bedrooms in all—including, across a stainless steel and Ipe bridge, a separate guest house for the band. Two hours south, 40 MOUNTAINSIDE DRIVE (nathanmastroeni.fourseasonssir.com) is close to Killington and Snowdon peaks. Surrounded by classic New England woodland, the super-comfortable six-bedroom residence has its own micro resort with games room, sauna, gym, and slate hot tub room downstairs. It's almost impossible not to hear Bing sing: "May all your Christmases be white."

✈ Morrisville-Stowe State Airport to Stowe: 7 miles