THE EVOLUTION OF THE SKI MARKET

2019 AND BEYOND
THE FRENCH ALPS TOPS THE LIST FOR BEING THE BEST VALUE COUNTRY FOR A WINTER SPORTS HOLIDAY AND ONCE AGAIN PROVES TO BE THE MOST POPULAR DESTINATION
Club Med is pleased to share the seventh annual ski report examining the latest developments and trends which are set to influence the winter 2019 / 2020 season and beyond. This year, Club Med, together with futurologist Dr Ian Pearson have explored the future of skiing and snowboarding in an exclusive chapter for this report.

The Evolution of the Ski Market - 2019 and Beyond shows that Brits are wanting more from their winter sports holiday than ever before, and in particular, are looking to get the best value for their money. The French Alps tops the list for being the best value country for a winter sports holiday and once again proves to be the most popular destination with over a third of Brits booking a ski and snowboard holiday there this year. Findings from the report also explore how snow enthusiasts are willing to travel further afield in a bid to seek new snow adventures, including travelling to destinations such as Canada, China and even Antarctica.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the shifts in the global economy accelerated by the political uncertainty of the past twelve months, is having an impact in the way in which Brits are booking their holidays. Significantly the research shows that 61% of people said they are more likely to book an all-inclusive holiday in light of Brexit – an increase of 190% compared to this time last year. There has also been notable growth in people booking all-inclusive resorts, up by 70% in 2019 compared to last year, revealing it is now the most popular form of accommodation for Brits.

Research from the report also highlights the positive impacts of skiing and snowboarding on peoples’ mental health – with almost nine in ten (89%) of those polled agreeing with this statement. Here the report delves deeper into the rise of Brits looking for digital detox holidays and the increase in other non-ski led activities on traditional winter sports holidays to boost mood and overall relaxation.

Another trend explored by The Evolution of the Ski Market - 2019 and Beyond is the state of fashion on the slopes, with 45% of those surveyed asserting that looking stylish on the slopes is more important to them than being good at skiing or snowboarding. Almost 20% of people are spending up to £500 each year on their own winter sports wardrobe. While this part might be more style than substance, Brits are also eager to learn new skills on holidays, with more than two in five citing they learnt three or more new skills while on holiday in the past five years – with skiing ranking the highest.

Finally, we take a look at the future of the winter sports holiday and how this is set to transform over the next 30 years and beyond - based on expert insights from Dr Ian Pearson. In this chapter, Dr Pearson explores how the evolution of technology can be applied to the travel industry and what we can expect from our future winter sports holidays. Notably, Dr Pearson takes a look at how a combination of virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and blended, mixed reality (XR) will transform the way people experience skiing and snowboarding both on and off the slopes.
We are delighted to be sharing with you this year’s Club Med ski report, which is the seventh edition. The annual report this year looks at the shifts and developments in the ski and snowboard holiday sector, as well as working with renowned futurologist Dr Ian Pearson to explore the exciting developments within the ski industry in years to come.

Globally last year, Club Med had 1.44 million clients, an impressive 7% year on year increase. In the UK alone, winter sports holiday revenue was up by 8% and we have already seen an increase in 11% for the upcoming season compared to last year.

Between now and 2021, Club Med is opening five resorts across Europe, North America and Asia, including the £100 million rebuild of our Alpe d’Huez resort - already a bestseller for the upcoming season - and our latest addition to our Exclusive Collection, the Grand Massif Samoëns Morillon Chalets-Apartments, which combine an opulent French Chalet experience with the added benefits from the services provided by the neighboring Club Med Grand Massif Samoëns Morillon 4-Trident resort.

These will be followed by further three resort openings between 2020 and 2022 in La Rosière in France, Québec Charlevoix in Canada and Thaiwoo in the center of the Olympic village in China.

In the UK, Club Med has doubled its revenue within the past five years and we are encouraged to see this reinforced by the increase in popularity of the all-inclusive concept outlined by the findings in this report. We constantly strive to ensure Club Med offers the very best service and facilities to meet our customers’ needs.

Estelle Giraudeau,
Managing Director, Club Med
United Kingdom and Northern Europe
When exploring where people are booking a ski holiday for the 19/20 winter season, the French Alps are still the most popular destination for Brits, with over a third (33%) booking a holiday in France this year, showing an increase of 18% year on year. With over 10,163 kilometres of slopes and quick flight times from the UK, it’s a perennial favourite for Brits and this season is no exception. Research has shown that Les Deux Alpes was the favourite resort for Brits visiting the French Alps this ski season, closely followed by Alpe d’Huez and Val D’Isère.

According to search data, results have shown that there has been a 50% increase in Brits searching for ‘French Alps’ on Google in the past 12 months. The research also reveals other popular destinations that Brits are booking this year were Switzerland (28%), Austria (20%), Italy (14%), Canada (12%), USA (10%) and Japan (6%).

In terms of destinations that people want to visit in the next five years, Switzerland (40%) comes out on top for the most popular destination to visit next for a winter sports holiday closely followed by Canada (34%) and France (25%).

Brits are now considering travelling further afield for a winter sports holiday, and an increasingly popular destination on the list for snow enthusiasts is Canada, with 12% of Brits booking a holiday there for the forthcoming season, a 33% percentage increase year on year.
“WITH BRITS BEING PREPARED TO TRAVEL FURTHER AFIELD WE ARE EXCITED TO BE OPENING OUR BRAND-NEW CLUB MED RESORT IN THE CANADIAN REGION OF QUÉBEC.”

Estelle Giraudeau, Managing Director
UK & Northern Europe at Club Med
Estelle Giraudeau, Managing Director UK & Northern Europe at Club Med comments: ‘With Brits being prepared to travel further afield we are excited to be opening our brand-new Club Med resort in the Canadian region of Québec. With one of the most consistent rates of high snowfall and a wide variety of slopes catering for all abilities, we are encouraged to see that so many Brits say they would like to go to Canada in the next five years.’

When looking at developments within the ski industry to try and encourage Brits to visit the more undiscovered destinations, the announcement that Club Med in partnership with École de Ski Français (ESF) are bringing the first ESF ski school to the Chinese slopes, has led to an increase in revenue of 19% versus last year. The new ESF academy will offer ski and snowboard lessons to the increasing number of keen Chinese skiers and snowboarders and Club Med’s partnership with ESF marks a pivotal moment in the development of China’s winter sports market. Club Med’s Beidahu resort in the north east of China is positioned perfectly for guests to experience the new ESF ski school offering as well as those who will visit Club Med’s new resort opening in Thaiwoo (set to open in 2021 / 2022 season), located at the centre of the 2022 Winter Olympic Village.

6% of British holidaymakers even said that the Antarctica is a destination they’d like to try out – though ski slopes are still only a distant hope for the world’s wildest continent.

Value for money is the overall most important factor when choosing a destination and resort, with this being the greatest concern for those aged between 45-54. With ski holidays traditionally being quite expensive, people are looking to maximise their value for money. France came out on top in the research for being the best value country for skiing. The resort where holidaymakers spent the least outside of accommodation was Morzine in France (£452 per person) with St Moritz in Switzerland proving to be the destination where people spent the most outside of the accommodation at £770 per person. When looking at Italy and specifically the picturesque resort of Cervinia a fifth of people (23%) spent only £200 outside of their accommodation, and only 5% of people said they spent over £800. When looking at overall spent, holidaymakers on average spent £665 per person outside of their accommodation.

The resorts with the lowest spends outside of accommodation after Morzine, were Pragelato in Italy (£510), Zell am See in Austria (£513), Les Gets in France (£541), Obergurgl in Austria (£546) and Les Arcs in France (£567).
When it comes to spending habits on winter sports holidays, on average for a week holiday, people spend the most amount of money on food and drinks (£577), followed by ski equipment (£283), transport (£271) and après-ski (£267). One in ten people from London said they spent more than £400 outside of their accommodation on après-ski. A fifth of people (21%) spent £200 on lift passes over the course of a one-week holiday.

Despite being perceived to be one of the cheapest places to ski, only one in ten (10%) people perceive Bulgaria to be one of the best value places to ski, perhaps highlighting that the area still has a lot of catching up to do in terms of the quality of slopes, facilities and the social scene.

The luxury alpine resort and celebrity hotspot Saint Moritz in Switzerland proves to be the resort where people spend the most money outside of their accommodation. The average spend is £770 per person with more than a third (33%) spending more than £1,000 per person.

VALUE FOR MONEY IS THE OVERALL MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR WHEN CHOOSING A DESTINATION AND RESORT
BOOKING BEHAVIOURS

With shifts in the global economy and growing trends for a range of different holiday experiences, the way in which Brits are booking winter sports holidays and what they are actually reserving, has changed in the past 12 months.

People are continuing to book winter sports holidays with 59% of skiers and snowboarders booking two or more trips in the past year alone, despite doubt on travel decisions cast by the current socio-economic situation. However, holidays are increasingly being planned and locked in further in advance to protect against any unwanted surprises like currency fluctuations. 41% of those polled booked their winter sports holiday between six and 12 months in advance, with a further 38% booking over a year before departing. In 2018, just 11% said they would book their accommodation over six months in advance.

In 2018, 17% of Brits surveyed said that they stayed in an all-inclusive resort and in 2019 that figure has risen to 29% - a 70% year on year increase and a whopping 190% increase based on the findings of Club Med's ski report commissioned for the 2014 / 2015 season. The all-inclusive model has now become the most popular accommodation type for ski and snowboard holidays. Half board and full board fall into second and third place respectively, while catered chalets represent just 8% of people’s accommodation according to the research. This is a 53% decrease in the past five years based on the findings from Club Med’s 2014-2015 ski report, where catered chalets were the preferred accommodation type of 17% of Brits polled in 2014.

The 2018 / 2019 season saw a number of Britain’s leading chalet operators reducing the number of catered chalet nights offered in

1 https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/ski/news/ski-chalet-holidays-are-becoming-more-expensive/; 6 November 2018
standard holiday packages across Europe from six to five as part of the more widely enforced labour laws and risings costs to staff this type of accommodation. Club Med’s research shows that almost half (44%) of people choose a resort based on value for money, 22% want to have all their amenities on site and almost one in five (18%) opt for luxurious accommodation. Club Med is capitalising on this opportunity by offering the best of both worlds and new for December 2019 will be the luxury Grand Massif Samoëns Morillon Chalets-Apartments, the latest addition to the brand’s Exclusive Collection. The new chalets-apartments will offer holidaymakers and ski and snowboard enthusiasts an opulent French Chalet experience, each with their very own Chalet Master, concierge service and a dedicated Exclusive Collection ski room. Guests will also benefit from the services provided by the neighboring Club Med Grand Massif Samoëns Morillon 4-Trident resort, including kids’ clubs from four months to 17 years old, Carita® spa facilities and an excellent and varied food offering, featuring the Skyline Gourmet Lounge.

Significantly, 61% of people said they are more likely to book an all-inclusive holiday in light of Brexit – an increase of 190% compared to this time last year. Those aged between 25 and 34 are the most likely to book this type of holiday, and based on regions, residents of Nottingham are the most likely to book an all-inclusive holiday (73%), followed by those of Cardiff (66%) and London (63%). While on average half of those polled still spend more than £2,000 per person on a winter sports holiday, 28% of Brits claim to now being more money conscious as a result of Brexit, with those aged between 55 and 64 being the most concerned about their spending habits.

Estelle Giraudet, Managing Director UK & Northern Europe at Club Med comments:

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GUARANTEED SNOW CONDITIONS ARE AT THE FOREFRONT OF HOLIDAYMAKERS’ MINDS WHEN LOOKING TO BOOK A WINTER SPORTS HOLIDAY
Asia, including Alpe d’Huez, Grand Massif Samoëns Morillon Chalets-Apartments and La Rosière in France, Québec Charlevoix in Canada and Thaïwoo in China at the heart of the Olympic Village. We strive to offer our guests the very best of the premium all-inclusive holiday.'

According to the research, the most popular month to depart for a winter sports holiday is February. While this time of year includes the incredibly popular family getaway week of February half-term, this month often also experiences some of the best snowfall across the Alps. While February and December represent the busiest months for Club Med winters sports getaways, the brand has also witnessed a 26% increase in year-on-year bookings for Brits looking to travel to the mountains in March for springtime skiing and snowboarding.

Guaranteed snow conditions are at the forefront of holidaymakers’ minds when looking to book a winter sports holiday with 80% taking into consideration average snowfall and a further 30% looking at the variety of slopes, 27% the size of the ski domain and nearly one in five (19%) factoring in the altitude of the resort. All European Club Med mountain resorts are located in a ski domain which offers skiing and snowboarding over 2,000 meters altitude, with some of their most popular resorts including Alpe d’Huez, Les Arcs Panorama and Val Thorens Sensations. Almost three in five (59%) also ensure they book a resort which offers glacier skiing.

Brits also take into consideration celebrity hotspots when booking ski and snowboard holidays, with the royals leading the way when it comes to booking a ski resort. More than one in ten (11%) Brits are influenced by where the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge choose to holiday, just ahead of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex at 9%
HEALTH & WELLBEING

In addition to the physical benefits, it is undeniable that winter sports holidays help with a balanced state of mind. In a 2018 study commissioned by Deloitte, findings uncovered that 46% of smartphone users feel like they constantly need to check their phone, so it is no wonder that the draws of a digital detox and spending less time on social media also makes this type of holiday attractive to many Brits.

As well as feeling rested and relaxed, snow sports can play a huge role in cognitive skills and thinking, as the very nature of being on the slopes forces constant decision making – from choosing a route to being aware of those around you. Spending time in the great outdoors can also play an important part in a person’s state of mind, as fresh air coupled with being surrounded by nature are thought to be important in keeping the mind alert and stimulated. Almost nine in ten (89%) people cite that skiing and snowboarding has a positive impact on their mental health, with nearly half (46%) mentioning being outdoors makes them feel more relaxed followed by taking in the scenery (39%), increase in exercise (38%) and being out in vast open spaces (35%).

Over half (55%) of Brits claim the purpose of their holiday is to relax and 50% of those polled state that they feel calmer on a winter sports holiday.

Estelle Giraudeau, Managing Director
UK & Northern Europe at Club Med comments:

“We want to ensure our guests have an enjoyable stay and feel rejuvenated whilst staying at our resorts. From this winter in Alpe d’Huez and Les Arcs Panorama, we are going to be offering guests a new ski and wellness experience.”

Winter sports holidays are not exclusively for those who want to take to the slopes and Brits are increasingly exploring other activities while on holiday. Walking tops the list as the most popular additional activity with 44% of those polled taking part in this gentle exercise, while a further 34% go swimming and almost a quarter (24%) take to the gym while

1 http://www.deloitte.co.uk/mobileuk/charts/uk-effects-of-excessive-smartphone-usage/; June 2018

BRITS ARE INCREASINGLY EXPLORING OTHER NON-SKI ACTIVITIES WHILE ON HOLIDAY, INCLUDING

1. Walking (44%)
2. Swimming (34%)
3. Going to the gym (24%)
on a snow sports holiday. Those aged 65 and over partake in the most non-skiing and snowboarding activities on a winter sports holiday compared to any other age group.

Estelle Giraudeau, Managing Director UK & Northern Europe at Club Med comments, ‘We want to ensure our guests have an enjoyable stay and feel rejuvenated whilst staying at our resorts. From this winter in Alpe d’Huez and Les Arcs Panorama, we are going to be offering guests a new ski and wellness experience. The experience will allow guests to change between half days on the slopes and half days of relaxation with activities such as yoga, fitness, swimming and Spa. We will also be offering a whole host of additional activities from a meditation programme through to Nordic walking and rail sledding so our guests can maximise a range of non-ski and snowboard occupations while on holiday.’

At the very heart of a winter sports holiday is physical exercise with skiing and snowboarding being an aerobic endurance activity, which activates a number of muscles in the body. 56% of those polled do more exercise on a winter sports holiday than a beach holiday, with almost three quarters (73%) skiing and snowboarding (on average) for four hours or more a day while on holiday. Exercise is not just for adults, and on average, half of children exercise for three hours or more per day on a winter sports holiday – easily beating the NHS guideline of at least 60 minutes of daily physical activity for those aged between five and 18.

With 45 million active social media users in the UK, Brits are using these platforms more than ever before, yet it would appear winter sports holidays provide the perfect opportunity to switch off. Three in five (61%) people spend less time on social media on a winter sports holiday compared to a summer holiday, with women spending even less time on social media platforms than men. A further 46% have been on or have considered going on a holiday for a digital detox. Those aged between 18-24 rank the highest for this style of holiday with over half (57%) having already been or contemplated a digital-free holiday, followed by those aged between 35-44 – an indication that people are becoming more conscious than ever about switching off from the hustle and bustle of the digital world.

THE FOLLOWING MAKE BRITS FEEL RELAXED ON HOLIDAY

1. Being outdoors (46%)
2. Scenery (39%)
3. Increase in exercise (38%)
4. Being in open spaces (35%)

89% OF PEOPLE CITE THAT SKIING AND SNOWBOARDING HAS A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THEIR MENTAL HEALTH

EXPERIENCE

Going on holiday provides people with the perfect opportunity to take up a new skill. 38% of those surveyed said that they had learnt to ski in the past five years. Snowboarding is catching up fast with 31% saying they learnt to snowboard. The research highlights that people are also increasingly keen to acquire other skills while on holiday with one in six (16%) having taken up a language and nearly one in five (17%) saying they have had cooking lessons on holiday in the past five years.

When looking at what ages people started to learn different sports or activities, only 43% learnt to ski or snowboard under the age of 15 despite the fact that 58% of people think the optimum age to try something new is under 15 with almost a third believing that the optimum age is under eight. 72% of people who have taken up cooking did so before the age of 15, compared to 79% of those who can ride horses and 72% who have learnt a water sport. Sports like swimming had a high number of early learners with 41% saying they learnt to swim and 45% having learnt to ride a bike by the age of five.

According to the results, one of the main drivers for going on holiday is to create new memories, almost half (44%) cited this and with Brits wanting so much more from a holiday nowadays, learning new skills provide the perfect opportunity to create those memories together. Over the course of the last five years, 41% of people claimed they learnt three or more new skills while on holiday including swimming (23%), cooking (17%) and rock climbing (14%).

Estelle Giraudieu, Managing Director UK & Northern Europe at Club Med comments, ‘The beauty of a winter sports holiday with Club Med is that it’s not just about the skiing or snowboarding, there’s plenty of things to do for those who do not want to ski or snowboard such as, Nordic walking, Yoga, meditation, and even wall climbing in our Val Thorens resort. We are constantly looking at our programme of activities to see how we can adapt and add to our offering, especially when building new resorts. Our clientele wants so much more from a holiday and that’s why with our skiing or snowboarding offering, we are proud to be able to offer our guests the opportunity to progress year after year thanks to our lessons and mountain guides for all levels included in our package’.

With a passion for providing guests with the perfect holiday experience, Club Med has launched a new initiative named The Masters of the Mountain week in its new Alpe d’Huez resort. On top of the all-inclusive package, holidaymakers will be able to enjoy a mix of additional activities.

IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS, NEW SKILLS LEARNT BY BRITS ON HOLIDAYS INCLUDE

- Skiing (38%)
- Snowboarding (31%)
- Cooking (17%)
- A new language (16%)

45% OF PEOPLE AGREE THAT LOOKING STYLISH ON THE SLOPES IS MORE IMPORTANT TO THEM THAN BEING GOOD AT SKIING OR SNOWBOARDING
Another important part of going on holiday is the preparation of what to wear, with fashion playing an important part in the lead up to a holiday. The survey has shown that 45% of people agree that looking stylish on the slopes is more important to them than being good at skiing or snowboarding. Over a third (36%) of people admitted to thinking about their winter holiday wardrobe three months in advance of their departure date, and 33% of those surveyed said they researched and followed winter sports clothing trends in advance of going on a winter sports holiday. This is in comparison to summer holiday fashion, with only 23% following wardrobe trends.

People are prepared to spend more on their clothes too, with over a third (36%) spending between £150-£300 on a new winter sports holiday wardrobe every year. Almost 20% of people are spending up to £500 a year on their winter sports wardrobe showing that fashion also plays an important part in the overall holiday experience. With high street brands now offering people more choice and affordability for a stylish ski wardrobe, it’s no wonder people want to look more stylish than ever before on the slopes. Almost a third (32%) declared wearing the newest ski gear and a quarter (24%) spending on designer ski wear, perhaps inspired by Chanel’s ski-inspired collection at this year’s Paris Fashion Show which stole the show and has led to high-street retailers copying styles and trends for the slopes.
THE FUTURE OF SKIING

This chapter has been written in collaboration with futurologist, Dr Ian Pearson, to explore what the future of a winter sports holiday might entail.

All over the world, wealth is increasing, and far more people will be able to afford skiing and snowboarding holidays by mid-century when global average incomes will be around twice that of today. Increase in demand will mean that existing resorts will fill, and new ones will open and flourish. With improving snow-production technology, some resorts will be feasible even where too little natural snow falls, and seasons could be longer too.

By the 2030s, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and blended, mixed reality (XR) will be commonplace so the 2030s will likely see some convergence of computer game technology, virtual world design and fabrications, and shared VR Resorts, holodeck style.

Future resorts will therefore be a mixture of amazing natural scenery and the best of human and AI imagination. Any physical run could be enhanced by virtuality, using XR goggles or even active contact lenses to create fully immersive high-resolution 3D imagery. Simulators will be able to generate the same experiences as real runs, manipulating the ‘ground’ under the skier as they ski over the virtual terrain, and using active skin connections to the nervous system to create sensations directly, generating a convincing full sensory experience.

Groups of friends will be able to holiday and ski together, but each can still have a personalised experience, with what they see and feel customised to their preferences.
When thinking about developments within resorts, security and room entry and payments all over the resort will make use of biometrics such as fingerprint, voice or face recognition. Since 2017, Club Med introduced digital bracelets replacing the bracelet identifying clients, the room access key card and payment card. The wearable embedded with an encoded RFID chip combines the cashless experience and access control always at the guest’s wrist.

The survey shows varying degrees of optimism when it comes to accommodation developments. Biometric identification is expected to be used by 41% of people and a third expect beds with adjustable firmness, but less than a quarter expect augmented reality décor, dream linking or colour changing fabrics.

Thanks to augmented reality, guests could personalise interior décor, changing appearance of fabrics and walls, adding displays or artwork to any surface, changing wallpapers or fabric designs. Fully immersive 3D entertainment could be controlled by a mixture of gesture and voice recognition in the 2020s, even emotion and thought recognition by 2050.

Sleep could be enhanced too. Beds could have adjustable firmness and bedlinen with adjustable texture and warmth. Once asleep, electronic signals picked up by pillows could detect when dreams are happening and could add images or sounds to enhance or guide the dreams, even linking dreams with those of other guests.

Rooms or gyms could also include ski or snowboard simulators where guests can practice moves so that they can get the most of their experience on the actual slopes.

Estelle Giraudeau, Managing Director UK & Northern Europe at Club Med comments, “Human interaction remains a key part of the customer experience in the hospitality industry, however with developments of AI and VR and the role they might play for us in the future, coupled with the expansion plans we have as a business, we’ll be thinking about how we can better design our resorts to accommodate for these technological advancements alongside the work carried out by our G.Os.”

5G, AI, smart materials, robotics and drones, internet-of-things (IoT) and XR will all enhance holidays enormously during the 2020s, and by 2050, 5G will be ancient history and 10G may even include direct brain links, so that guests would be effectively superhuman by comparison to today, with AI making them super-smart. With thought-based access to all the knowledge connected to the net, telepathic, so they can communicate directly with others and even share consciousness, able to record

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and replay their entire subjective experiences, and linking to their equipment and resort AIs as if they were part of their extended body.

When it comes to experience skiing, in the 2020s, we should expect voice activation to spread so skis will unfasten or fasten, tighten, or adjust their friction by voice command. Some skis or boards may even be able to change shape.

A flock of drones may accompany each guest, videoing or photographing them all day, and relaying highlights automatically onto their social media. 2020s superpowers might include XR functions such as zooming vision or seeing UV or infrared, as well as seeing enhanced pictures of the environment and the people in it. Forgetful people might find it useful to see names and roles overlaid when looking at people. More techy guests might enjoy seeing a heads-up display to control their clothes and accessories, as well as monitoring every aspect of their progress in high detail.

Not everyone holidays with friends, and solo travellers may be able to create virtual companions to ski with them or to chat with them, appearing in XR. Those virtual companions could also act as the personality for any resort robots they encounter, and some resorts may have robots’ companions that can provide company but also offer physical assistance for disabled guests. Other travellers may want to link to friends who picked other resorts or are on different runs, linking to them with audio/video as if they were right next to them.

People may use VR to try out skiing on a new resort before they go. Some might be totally virtual using imaginary resorts, but some might link to real resorts and real runs, with real-time information recreating the same environment to make the experience as real as possible. With full links to the nervous system by the 2030s and into the brain by 2050, it will be almost indistinguishable from real life.
Conversing with guests in a resort bar might be an excellent way of deciding whether to go to that resort or another, perhaps from the comfort of the VR suite.

XR also offers the potential to be in multiple places at once. Physically present obviously in just one location, a person’s avatar could replicate them in as many other places as desired, with AI emulating their personality. A guest could therefore interact with many people, only a few of whom being physically present.

Food and catering will be a key differentiator. While some guests will always seek out local cuisine, others will prefer familiar foods, and some might even make use of robot chefs and butlers in the rooms instead of room and customer service.

Fashion on the slopes will also benefit from technology. By the 2020s and 2030s, clothing will include colour, texture and thermal change as options, all touch or voice controllable. Some will change shape to fit better. Clothes will need special zones for personal drone swarms to land on and recharge, maybe epaulettes. Solar power fabrics might also be used to power those zones and any other energy needs of the clothes or equipment. Some fabrics will act as batteries.

Future technologies could improve the skiing holiday in many ways, from viewing resorts virtually before you book, with augmented reality personalising the experience with enhanced views and information throughout. However, the research shows that there is still a big gap between technology potential and market expectation so if even some of these come to fruition, it could add unexpected value and help to increase future markets.

Estelle Giraudeau, Managing Director UK & Northern Europe at Club Med comments:

“Human interaction remains a key part of the customer experience in the hospitality industry, however with developments of AI and VR and the role they might play for us in the future, coupled with the expansion plans we have as a business, we’ll be thinking about how we can better design our resorts to accommodate for these technological advancements alongside the work carried out by our G.Os.”
Club Med, co-founded in 1950 by Gérard Blitz and Gilbert Trigano, is the pioneer of the all-inclusive concept, offering nearly 70 premium resorts in stunning locations around the world including North and South America, Caribbean, Asia, Africa, Europe and the Mediterranean.

Each Club Med resort features authentic local style and comfortably upscale accommodations, superior sports programming and activities, enriching children’s programs, gourmet dining, and warm and friendly service by its world-renown staff with legendary hospitality skills, an all-encompassing energy and diverse backgrounds.

Club Med operates in more than 30 countries and continues to maintain its authentic Club Med spirit with an international staff of more than 23,000 employees from more than 110 different nationalities. Led by its pioneering spirit, Club Med continues to grow and adapt to each market with more than 14 new resorts opening within the next three years.

Club Med is a subsidiary of Fosun International, which is listed in Hong-Kong. Its financial year will therefore now run from 1 January to 31 December. Report on business is made as part of the financial reports issued by the parent company.

For more information, visit http://www.clubmed.co.uk

For an inside look at Club Med, follow Club Med on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

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The research was conducted by Ginger Research: www.gingercomms.com

Ginger Research is a research agency that specialises in delivering quantitative consumer and B2B research for some of the UK’s biggest brands, marketing, PR, advertising, social and communications agencies. Our senior-level team of former journalists and researchers help bring stats to life. We provide full consultancy on questionnaire design, robust sample size numbers as well as providing a full ‘news’ executive summary at the end of the project. Ginger Research has access to specialist sector panels including health, business and finance. We have a large UK consumer panel of 100,000 UK respondents and our panel has capabilities across the world with thousands of respondents across five continents. Ginger Research’s sister company, GingerComms, works alongside consumer PR agencies and brands to deliver page-ready news copy with guaranteed KPIs. The research was conducted in August 2019 by Ginger Research surveying 1,000 UK adults who ski and snowboard.