

### Unrivalled luxury

Trinity resident Andy Turner owns a chalet business that reaches the very highest standards



**A Lawyer by trade, Andy Turner, who lives in Trinity with his wife, Nicky, and children, Amelia and Elliot, was a director of Abacus until the business was bought by Royal Bank of Canada in 2005. He now owns Chalet Spa, a collection of beautiful properties which includes two in the Swiss resort of Verbier. The flagship property, Chalet Spa Verbier, is his own and recently featured in Condé Nast Traveller magazine in a section listing some of the most luxurious chalets in the world.**

**What inspired you to develop a chalet business?**

I have always been passionate about the mountains and sea. After I moved to Jersey in 1996, my next goal was to create an opportunity to change direction after hitting 40, toward a business interest connected to lifestyle and

design and develop an exclusive brand. We have carefully designed the logos and website and marketed the business in key markets such as Switzerland, the EU and North America.

**How would you sell the joys of skiing to someone who only holidays on the beach?**

That depends, but at Chalet Spa Verbier we have purposefully developed a spa with indoor pool and gym with a view like no other in Verbier, two hot tubs, including a handmade Canadian cedar-wood hot tub, a therapy room, sauna, hamam, cinema and billiard room, so that guests who don't wish to ski have plenty to do. The mountain air is invigorating and for those that wish to be more active, there is skiing, snowboarding, sledging, paragliding and a range of other pursuits, such as walking, horse-riding, tennis and mountain-

**What was your vision for the business?**

To take it one step at a time – to develop and consolidate Chalet Spa Verbier as one of the most exclusive luxury chalets in the world, and at the same time to

biking throughout the year. The lift system is now open most of the year, and from June to October the lifts have racks for lifting bikes up the mountain. Once the lift system stops at around 4.30 pm, the centre of Verbier becomes inaccessible from other parts of the four valleys and its evening entertainment comes into its own.

**How does the company stay fresh and its chalets remain in the 'must-stay-in' category? Surely newer, bigger, swankier chalets are built each year.**

The interior design, art, sculptures and lighting incorporated in Chalet Spa Verbier have been carefully selected from among some of the world's leading designers, to a level not normally associated with rentable mountain chalets. The technology budget was substantial, running to many millions. In the spa, the indoor infinity pool benefits

from a system that regulates the water temperature, pool floor, air humidity, and ambient air temperature to achieve a comfortable balance at high altitude, where incumbent air pressures have an impact.

**What would be your ideal skiing experience?**

Skinning or ski touring off-piste in powder for a few hours up to a remote location at high altitude, with one or two of my close friends. Then a cold beer and a light lunch or early dinner at a mountain cabin before skiing down in off-piste powder or paragliding off the mountain down to the valley floor 2,000 metres below. It is liberating and uplifting to avoid the lifts and reach areas around Verbier that are away from the madding crowd.

**How would you end up in the Alps?**

Leaving St Helier Girls School at 16, I joined Barclays Bank as an office junior, working my way up to become a personal banker. There I met my closest friend Debbie Rantsch (now Jacques) and we embarked on our first ski holiday together. This turned out to be two weeks that would change my life forever as I met my husband, Julian, who was from Reading. We soon discovered that we had a lot in common: we were both active, sports minded people and we shared a passion for skiing.

**After a two year courtship traveling between the UK and Jersey, I transferred with Barclays to Reading, where we decided to set up home and start a family. We were married in 1986 at St Luke's Church, so are now approaching 25 years of marriage. Julian started his own building company and I soon became a full time-mum. As the family holidays came and went each year, we found that we really liked France and especially the ski holidays. Finally, one year, we decided that we enjoyed it so much that we wanted to stay – so we decided to move to France and start our own catered ski chalet.**

**What is life like in Samoens?**

Our life went from hectic, with Julian working all hours in the UK, to a much happier family life. Running the chalet is extremely hard and hands on but we do it together, from serving breakfast, cleaning the chalet, skiing with the clients, preparing and cooking the evening meal and socializing with our guests.

We love our life in the Alps; it has given us the opportunity to learn another language, spend more time as a family, ski most of the winter and enjoy what the Alps have to offer in the summer, when mostly friends and family stay.

Clients always ask us why we want to live here, but once they know us and sample what we do as a family in winter and summer, they soon understand that quality of life to us is far more important than continuing with the hectic life that we once had. The only downside is that we do miss our family and friends but, hey, we also become the most popular family to be with come winter.



**Tina Ralley**

**Where are you now?**

Now living in Samoens, France, with my husband Julian and children Justin (21) and Chloe (18).

**How do you earn a crust?**

We own and run two chalets.

**How did you end up in the Alps?**

Leaving St Helier Girls School at 16, I joined Barclays Bank as an office junior, working my way up to become a personal banker. There I met my closest friend Debbie Rantsch (now Jacques) and we embarked on our first ski holiday together. This turned out to be two weeks that would change my life forever as I met my husband, Julian, who was from Reading. We soon discovered that we had a lot in common: we were both active, sports minded people and we shared a passion for skiing.

**What is life like in Samoens?**

Our life went from hectic, with Julian working all hours in the UK, to a much happier family life. Running the chalet is extremely hard and hands on but we do it together, from serving breakfast, cleaning the chalet, skiing with the clients, preparing and cooking the evening meal and socializing with our guests.

We love our life in the Alps; it has given us the opportunity to learn another language, spend more time as a family, ski most of the winter and enjoy what the Alps have to offer in the summer, when mostly friends and family stay.

Clients always ask us why we want to live here, but once they know us and sample what we do as a family in winter and summer, they soon understand that quality of life to us is far more important than continuing with the hectic life that we once had. The only downside is that we do miss our family and friends but, hey, we also become the most popular family to be with come winter.

After much research and investigation, we came across the unspoilt village of Samoens. We found a remote piece of land on the mountainside and set about designing and building our very own ski chalet. Julian was hands-on while I concentrated on making the soft furnishings, furnishing the interior and practising various menus for our future guests. We eventually moved over 'lock, stock and barrel' and the children were enrolled in local schools.

Nine years on, we are well and truly settled and speaking the language. Our ski business is established and we are often frequented by family and friends from Jersey. I am always very proud and excited to welcome them. Although we feel we have become part of the community here in France, I still consider Jersey to be my home and we still make our annual pilgrimage each year. I am often asked where I am from and people assume it is the UK but I am always quick to correct them.

**What is life like in Samoens?**

Our life went from hectic, with Julian working all hours in the UK, to a much happier family life. Running the chalet is extremely hard and hands on but we do it together, from serving breakfast, cleaning the chalet, skiing with the clients, preparing and cooking the evening meal and socializing with our guests.

We love our life in the Alps; it has given us the opportunity to learn another language, spend more time as a family, ski most of the winter and enjoy what the Alps have to offer in the summer, when mostly friends and family stay.

Clients always ask us why we want to live here, but once they know us and sample what we do as a family in winter and summer, they soon understand that quality of life to us is far more important than continuing with the hectic life that we once had. The only downside is that we do miss our family and friends but, hey, we also become the most popular family to be with come winter.

[www.ski-massif.com](http://www.ski-massif.com)

[www.chaletspa.com](http://www.chaletspa.com)

