



PRESS RELEASE

European Ski Resorts To Get Year-Round Snow Cover

Online map applications which utilise satellite images are a great tool for travellers, giving holiday-makers a bird's-eye view of their chosen destinations, but so far skiers & snowboarders have had to make do with viewing images of ski resorts which are mostly devoid of snow.

Now, one creative ski-guide author has found a way to change that, rendering such maps in a way that is more pertinent and useful to winter-sports enthusiasts.

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Zoom in on any ski resort whilst using any of the existing online satellite-image map applications and you should be able to make out most of the streets and buildings, sometimes even the shadows of ski lift towers & cables on the surrounding mountainsides. Whereas it's usually fairly easy to locate the centre of a resort village on a street map or satellite image, it's often much more difficult to discern where the pistes should be, and it's not easy to identify specific properties in order to see whether or not they are as close to the action as they may claim to be.

That challenge prompted the ski-specialist author Francis Johnston to develop a new mapping application which aims to give skiers & snowboarders an enhanced visualisation of the layouts of popular ski resorts. By designing his own detailed maps and then accurately overlaying them on top of existing street maps and satellite images, he has created an interactive snow-cover effect, illustrating the positions of ski lifts and routes of access pistes; he has also plotted the precise positions of all hotels, apartment buildings and resort amenities, together with the locations of shops, cafes, restaurants, bars & clubs, and soon will be highlighting individual ski chalets too.

Accurate information about the location of a given hotel, apartment or chalet, in relation to proximity to the ski lifts and the slopes, is of prime importance to snowsports enthusiasts; with ski-in/ski-out locations definitely preferred.

Johnston states: "Many ski resorts tend to look a bit barren and unappealing in the off-season periods between their winter and summer seasons. Unfortunately, that appears to be the points in time when most published satellite images of them were recorded. That may make it easier for viewers to discern the roads and the rooftops, but I believe it's better to be able to visualise ski resorts in a way that relates to the season when most people visit: indicating the routes of ski pistes plus the exact location of ski lifts, accommodation and après-ski venues, so that visitors can be better informed and best prepared to get the most out of their stay. This new mapping application clearly delivers that experience and functionality".

Each of the buildings marked on the maps can be given an interactive marker which can be linked to any URL and/or booking system, so the application should be of great interest to online travel businesses that specialise in ski holidays, and/or to those that wish to target that market. The application's publisher, Ski-Ride Media, is seeking investors to help develop the project, and will supply the maps under license to selected partners.

The first of the maps to be published covers the popular resort of Les Deux Alpes in the French Alps; it can be viewed online at <http://ski-ride.co.uk/guides/les-deux-alpes/street-map>

Further maps currently in production will cover most of the major resorts in the French and Italian Alps, plus all of the resorts in the Principality of Andorra in the Pyrenees; maps of Austrian and Swiss resorts will then follow.

Further Information:

About Francis Johnston

Francis Johnston is the founder of the ski resort information website ski-ride.co.uk, his background is in overseas resort operations and sales & marketing management with some of the UK/Eire's leading Ski, Lakes & Mountains tour operators. Previously resident in Andorra, he has worked in and/or visited most of the leading French, Austrian, Italian and Eastern European ski resorts, where he personally guided well over four thousand holidaymakers and travel industry professionals during his career. He created the *SkiSpots* guidebook series, published by Thomas Cook, and is a contributing author to the *Ski Atlas Of The World* published by New Holland.

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