

My Chamonix...

Former-7UBXJUB national skier, freeride-pro and the man behind development of the cool Rip'nWud ski brand - Kevan Beane knows Chamonix like the back of his hand. Here he shares his favourite high-altitude runs for extreme ski testing, plus the perfect lunch stop.

Kevan Beane

Voice: How long have you known Chamonix?

KB: I first came to Chamonix in 1981 with the Canadian nation ski team to race. Then I moved to Chamonix in 1993 and lived there for 15 years as a pro-rider, High Alpine Guide and ski developer for Salomon and then Scott Europe. This was at the turning point for the freeride ski industry.

Voice: What's your favourite Chamonix ski area - and why?

KB: The Grand Montets is one of the best spots in Chamonix for snow conditions because of its north facing exposure. It's also one of the best ski testing grounds because of the varied terrain and the changing snow conditions you can experience from 3,300m -1,200m decent. In fact we developed Rip'nWud skis to ride 'easy and comfortable' in these types of demanding areas.

Chamonix is extremely valuable for ski testing and designing as there are few places on earth that offer such easy access to high alpine skiing like the Grand Montets.

Voice: What can non-skiers do in the Chamonix valley?

KB: For non-skiers there is so much to do. All the cable cars are open to public to have a high Alpine experience. You can almost touch and feel the altitude! Shopping, bars and restaurants are also good in Chamonix.

Voice: And après-ski is always a good option. Best bars?

KB: The best bars are in the town centre - where the views are spectacular. From MOO you can see the Aiguille du Midi and the Brévent. For a more international and young-rider scene you would go across the street to Chambre Neuf, The Chambre Neuf has been in Chamonix since I can remember - and that's 30+ years!

Voice: Everyone loves a fondue ... Where would you recommend?

KB: For the best experience always go for a real mountain, home-cooked Haute Savoie menu. A place I love in winter is a wooden chalet restaurant called Le Crémier du Glacier d'Argentière. The food here is great and access is by foot - 10mins along the river trail on the piste at the bottom of the Grand Montets.

Voice: How to escape the crowds when Chamonix is busy?

KB: The professionals go to the Aiguille du Midi. It's at 3,800m with the Mont Blanc just above. Once you get through the crowds and get up to the top, you can find great terrain, un-tracked powder and very few people - because the terrain is so big and open. But this is not a tip for regular skiers, and anyone thinking of a skiing adventure like this should definitely go with a Guide.

