



The new Snow Queen



Cheryl Markosky discovers smart slope-to-taupe homes at the latest and coolest ski destination in the Swiss Alps

uxury travel and high-end property make amicable bedfellows. Voyagers discover and fall for a locale; and then eagerly seek out dwellings for sale, with as much gusto as they'd dedicate to ferreting out museums, restaurants and boutique shops recommended by guidebooks.

Which is why A&K International Estates, specialist real estate division of upper-end travel firm Abercrombie & Kent, is proving popular for house-hunters searching for all property types, from apartments, villas and fincas, to ranches, chalets and chateaux around the world.

Being accepted as part of A&K International Estate's residential portfolio is no mean feat. But it's not difficult to see why A&K recently added Andermatt Swiss Alps, the newest kid on the Alpine block, to its books. A rare exemption of the Lex Koller law (that restricts the amount or size of properties non-Swiss residents can acquire) means foreigners purchasing at



Andermatt Village



Luxury villa exterior

the resort will be able to buy, transfer and sell property without restrictions until at least 2030.

“Switzerland looks set for a significant rise (over 20%) in its High Net Wealth Individual population between 2012 and 2022. Strict planning regulations, combined with the cap on second-home ownership (20% per commune) will restrict further development elsewhere, making Andermatt an exceptional opportunity,” explains Robert Green, general manager of A&K International Estates.

He predicts early pioneers investing in the regenerating resort at Andermatt, used by the Swiss army as its training base until just over a decade ago, will benefit “from a place that in five to 10 years time will be one of Europe’s leading winter ski destinations”.

Property options are wide, with 490 apartments over 42 buildings and about 25 chalets, starting from £335,000 for a one-bedroom apartment and rising to £10 million for a sumptuous chalet. Unlike a number of resorts with brutalist Soviet-style edifices, 30 architects from around the globe have been invited to design the Andermatt Swiss Alps’ residences.

“All the homes will have genuine Alpine elements, but they come with a modern touch,” comments Markus Berger, Andermatt Swiss Alps’ head of communications. He points out that different ownership models appeal to purchasers wanting anything from a bespoke chalet, through to a pre-built and furnished property that can go straight into the rentals pool.

Another big plus is accessibility, with Zurich airport 90 minutes from Andermatt and Milan about two hours. And, for those keen to avoid driving along twisting mountain roads, a good train

connection will run straight into the heart of the village.

Over £92 million is being invested to upgrade and expand the two ski regions of Andermatt and Sedrun, delivering more than 120 kilometres of pistes. The rejuvenated ski area will offer 24 lifts, a combi-lift, four gondola cableways, 11 chairlifts and six ski lifts. Once completed, it will be the largest ski region in central Switzerland.

Other attractions include six hotels (a five-star Chedi has just opened), an 18-hole golf course (that will be one of the top courses in Switzerland when it opens to the public in 2016), and wellness, sports, leisure and conference facilities.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Who are A&K International Estates?

Specialist real estate section of upper-end travel company Abercrombie & Kent.

What does the company do?

Utilising Abercrombie & Kent’s reputation, global network and extensive database, A&K International Estates markets and sells high-end, luxury homes around the world.

What does it sell?

Luxury residential property, from new-build and re-sale to off-plan developments and five-star branded resort residences. www.akinternationalestates.com