



BEST UK TOUR OPERATOR

PRESENTED BY
THE TELEGRAPH SKI AND SNOWBOARD

Interski

As a company, we are always looking to improve our product through innovation to the benefit of our customers. As a company who have been taking skiers to Italy's Aosta Valley for 35 years, we like to think we're doing something right! In the past 12 months, we created our Virtual Piste Maps, available at <http://virtual.interski.co.uk>. The concept was basically to create a video of each and every run, in the four Aosta Valley resorts to which we operate, and make them available online, enabling users a 'see before you ski' approach. Alternatively, this also provides a great resource to enable visitors to the Valley to show friends and family the area they have skied, when they return. We have received some very positive feedback from our customers and also featured in an article in 'In The Snow' magazine.

As a Tour Operator who focuses on school groups as well as the general market, we have also invested heavily in our ski hire buildings. We are already in a small minority of operators in being able to offer customers access to our own ski hire facilities, which provide a more positive experience for our clients. We have now also gone a step further by separating our two core products (Schools & Colleges and Snowsports Holidays) within the building. In our Courmayeur ski hire, from last season, we have created a separate part of our ski hire building to keep our School groups separate from our Snowsports Holidays groups, ensuring each has a better experience, more suited to their expectations. This has required some significant investment into the building to create the separation. We have also just agreed terms for extra space in our Aosta ski hire to offer the same service which we are hoping will be ready for the start of the 16/17 season.

We have just agreed a deal with Atomic to stock our ski hires with their latest skis and poles. This deal will see us purchase in excess of 1,800 pairs of brand new skis, including a prestige range. In a time when airlines are charging premiums for skiers to take their own equipment with them on holiday, this allows us to offer top of the range skis for hire, but at a fraction of the cost associated with ownership and transportation. For clients on our Schools & Colleges package, many of whom are first time skiers, this investment ensures they will get the best possible experience on snow, using top quality skis, boots and poles. We aim to introduce young people to the world of winter sports as we believe there is a wealth of experience that can be gained which, unfortunately, cannot be taught in a classroom environment.

As a tour operator who likes to take a holistic approach towards the industry, we have also seen our Gap Year Instructor Training Course, offered by our Training Academy, go from strength to strength. Whilst continuing to build on our exceptional pass rates, we have also seen numbers increase, meaning more BASI qualified instructors and an increased BASI membership. All successful gap students are also offered employment for our Snowsports School, giving them an immediate grounding in to the world of instructing.