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Page: N/A
Reach: 5100
Value: 137

FATHER HITS THE PARK, SON HITS THE POWDER - Ross Young, Les2Alpes Monday April 9, 2018 -

FATHER HITS THE PARK, SON HITS THE POWDER - Ross Young, Les2Alpes Monday April 9, 2018 - : 45-year old Ross Young & his 12-year old son Fynn are in Les2Alpes to sample the other's skiing style. What could possibly go wrong?NEW

This idea was a simple one as I posted in my first blog.

Like father, like son

The only trouble was the weather intervened - big time.

The best laid plans

And then...

The weather didn't just improve.

It dumped a generous carpet of powdery snow and then gave us two solid days of sunshine, so Fynn and I finally got to see how we'd get on with each other's preferred side of skiing.

We tried mine - the off-piste - first.

Fynn's a pretty accomplished skier for his 12 years of age, but his off-piste experience only amounted to a few runs.

I was keen for him to sample the buzz that comes with tackling tougher terrain in relative solitude, but I was also concerned.

Would he like it?

What if he found the terrain intimidating rather than challenging?

Was there a danger I might be pushing him too far, too fast?

The thought stayed with me as Marco, our genial instructor from Bonsai Ski School, sized up our technique on a couple of warm-up runs.

It was there as we rode the T-bar to Lauze, the highest point in Les 2 Alpes at almost 3,600m.

Then it intensified when Marco announced that we were about to ski a vertical drop of 400m on the glacier.

It needn't have.

My concerns for Fynn vanished as soon as I saw the terrain.

It was just challenging enough to test technique, but nowhere near steep enough to endanger the fun factor.

As I watched Fynn launch himself into it and carve a trail into the fresh powder, I had to wonder what I'd been worried about.

The descent was so enjoyable it was over in what felt like no time at all, even with occasional pauses for Marco to cajole the pair of us into useful technical adjustments and outline the do's and don'ts of off-piste for Fynn.

Do: make sure you know how the snow you're skiing on is likely to behave; wear a transceiver and know how to use it; ski narrow lines through fresh powder so other skiers get a crack at virgin snow too.

Don't: assume a route is safe to ski just because there are tracks to follow - they may lead you into danger; ski solo if you're going far from the pistes; ignore danger signs or duck under warning ropes.

Fynn was buzzing after that first descent.

From there, things got better and better.

We hit steeper slopes, with bigger challenges.

We each took a tumble - Fynn kept his graceful despite losing a ski, whereas I went completely arse-over-tit in the traditional manner - and laughed like drains about them.

The two of us were having a ball.

After three hours and a few more descents of increasing pitch, Marco declared us ready for a final challenge - a narrow couloir with an initial gradient of around 40 degrees.

By now, my paternal concern for Fynn had been banished by a combination of his aptitude and my trust in Marco. Even so, I couldn't help but be nervous as we peered into the gully.



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'What do you think?', I asked Fynn. 'It looks awesome, but steep,' he replied - and then proceeded to negotiate the steep opening turns without missing a beat.

When I caught up with him at the bottom, his eyes were like saucers.

'Wow, we just did THAT!', he exclaimed, pointing to where we'd just come from.

'I can't believe it. That was amazing!'

Mission accomplished: the off-piste bug had claimed another victim and I now have a ski buddy for my itinerary jaunts for the foreseeable future.

To quote Fynn, that's pretty sick.

We both got our off piste skis from Intersport to handle the powder.

Pretty handy as you can swap and change your skis throughout the week depending on whether you want to ski powder, piste or park.

And now I have to head back to the shop to get some park skis - who'd have thought it?

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

A week's stay, at Hotel Ibiza, costs from £293 pp (two sharing) on a half-board basis. Private transfers, from Grenoble Airport, cost from £167 pp (return) with MV Transport, Ski France's own company.

A six-day lift pass, in Les Deux Alpes, costs €250 / £218 per adult (age 13+) and €200 / £174 per child (age 5-12).

Ski hire can be arranged through Hotel Ibiza, prices on request.

Return flights, with easyJet (London to Grenoble) cost from £75 pp.

Ski France (0203 475 4756, www.skifrance.co.uk)

BONSAI SKI SCHOOL Hotel Le Sherpa 80, Av. de LA Muzelle +33 633318527

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