



CHAMONIX-MONT-BLANC

VALLORCINE

ARGENTIÈRE

Press Kit
SUMMER 2026

CHAMONIX-MONT-BLANC

LES HOUCHES

SERVOZ

Open the way

In the mountains, you cannot fake it. Especially not in front of Mont Blanc. As the birthplace of mountaineering and a legendary land at the foot of Europe's highest peak, the Chamonix-Mont-Blanc Valley confronts environmental and social change head-on. We move forward with the lucidity and grit of those who witness, day after day, a wilderness in transition.

In a region where tourism accounts for nearly 70% of local employment, the mountains are everyone's business. Choosing a mindful and sustainable approach to tourism is not a retreat from our appeal; it is a commitment to passing on an untouched legacy to future generations. It means embracing our role as custodians of a unique natural and cultural heritage one that must be deeply understood to be better preserved. It is the courage to uphold an authentic, expert vision of the mountains, refusing to compromise our identity for mass appeal.

This press kit, with its refreshed and summery design, does more than just list new features or promote a region whose renown is already well-established. It unveils the new Musée du Mont-Blanc, showcasing the massif's history from its sporting conquests to its future transformations; a new edition of Gaston Rébuffat's classic, *The Mont Blanc Massif: The 100 Finest Routes*, rewritten as a collaborative effort by the Compagnie des Guides; the renovated Chalet du Col des Montets, now a premier educational hub for biodiversity; the portrait of a young mountain hut keeper who thoughtfully passes on mountain culture and ethics to newcomers; and the inspiring story of a tourist site planning a 'fallow year,' allowing nature the time and space to reclaim its rights.

EDITORIAL

Chamonix-Mont-Blanc Vibrant alpine capital

As an iconic destination attuned to the modern world, where alpine history and urban culture intertwine and recently elected to the presidency of the Best of the Alps network, the Chamonix-Mont-Blanc Valley chooses to defend and share a clear vision. It is that of a vibrant capital, proud of its heritage and resolutely focused on the future. Have a wonderful summer!



Nicolas Durochat
General Manager of the Chamonix-Mont-Blanc Valley Tourist Office
President of Best of the Alps

* Best of the Alps is an association of 9 historic European resorts that embody alpine excellence : Chamonix-Mont-Blanc, Cortina d'Ampezzo, Courmayeur, Crans-Montana, Davos, Kitzbühel, Lech/Zürs, Megève, St. Anton/ Arlberg.



Total area Chamonix valley:
245 km²

Population density: **63.22 inh./km²** in 2022



14,288 INHABITANTS

Servoz: 1,200
Les Houches: 3,603
Chamonix: 9,023
Vallorcine: 462

HIGHEST POINT
MONT BLANC 4,805 m

Highest village :

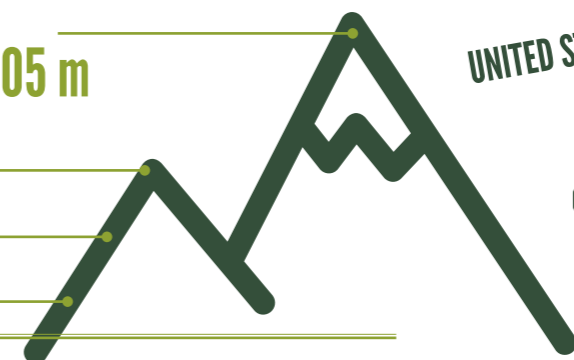
Le Tour 1,462 m

Chamonix

city center: 1,035 m

Lowest village:

Les Houches 796 m



8.5 MIO ANNUAL
tourist nights
(49.6% french visitors
and 50.4% international
visitors)

Approx.
82 500 tourist beds



KEY FIGURES



91,4% OF THE CHAMONIX VALLEY
is under **OFFICIAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

- > **2 Classified Sites:** The Mont Blanc Massif and the Mont Blanc Balcony (25,825 ha) ;
- > **3 National Nature Reserves:** Aiguilles Rouges, Carlaveyron, and Vallon de Bérard (6,186 ha) ;
- > **8,987 ha** of Natura 2000 Zones ;
- > **2 Sites of Regional Interest:** The hamlet of Tré-le-Champ and the Diosaz Gorges.
- > **7 Glaciers:** Including the **Mer de Glace**, France's largest glacier (7 km long, 40 km² area, and 200 m thick).

Explore the Valley with the Guest Card

Issued by Chamonix-Mont-Blanc Valley accommodation providers, the Guest Card offers free train travel between Servoz and Vallorcine, a 50% discount on bus fares, and preferential rates for parking, as well as sports and cultural facilities. ||





EMBARK THROUGH A MYTHICAL VALLEY

There is, of course, the vibrant energy of a mountain town that hums with life all year round with cable cars whisking you up to the Aiguille du Midi or Le Brévent, and a cogwheel train climbing toward the Mer de Glace. But the Chamonix-Mont-Blanc Valley is so much more. It is a destination in its own right, home to 16 villages and hamlets accessible from tiny stations dotted along a century-old railway line.

Mont-Blanc Express: A Century of Legend

Perfect for minimizing one's carbon footprint, rail travel is an invitation to slow down time. Born during the Belle Époque and linking France to Switzerland, the Mont-Blanc Express meanders through the Chamonix-Mont-Blanc Valley from Servoz to Vallorcine, revealing breathtaking scenery: glacier-clad mountains, waterfalls cascading down ravines, and endless forests. Built starting in 1899 and completed in 1908, this century-old route is dotted with remarkable engineering feats, such as the 52-meter-high Sainte-Marie viaduct and the 1,882-meter-long Montets tunnel. It has captivated generations of mountain enthusiasts, nature-loving hikers, and travelers simply seeking authenticity. The magic of the Mont-Blanc Express lies not only in the landscapes it traverses but also in the charm of its 17 'pocket-sized' stations each offering a chance to slip into the hidden corners of a valley brimming with secret gems. ||

THE LINE AT A GLANCE

Departure: Servoz
Arrival: Vallorcine
Distance: 27 km
Time: 1h20
Stops:

- > Servoz
- > Vaudagne
- > Viaduc-Sainte-Marie
- > Les Houches
- > Taconnaz
- > Les Bossons
- > Les Pélerins
- > Les Moussoux
- > Chamonix-Aiguille-du-Midi
- > Chamonix-Mont-Blanc
- > Les Praz
- > Les Tines
- > La Joux
- > Argentière
- > Montroc-Le Planet
- > Le Buet
- > Vallorcine

Frequency: 18 trains/day summer
Free with Guest Card



ARRIVING BY TRAIN

From Paris (via Bellegarde-sur-Valserine): 6h30
 From Genève: 2h40
 From Annecy: 2h40
 From Lyon: 5h

A SUMMER AT THE MUSEUM



A treasure trove of natural and cultural beauty, the rich museum ecosystem of the Chamonix Mont-Blanc valley is gaining a new crown jewel crafted to the scale of its surroundings. Opening in July 2026, the new Mont-Blanc Museum, France's leading mountain museum, firmly establishes the destination as a preeminent Alpine capital.



DID YOU KNOW?

Sold at auction, exchanged, hidden, briefly reappeared, forgotten ... The historic "alpenstock" used by Jacques Balmat during the first ascent of Mont Blanc on August 8, 1786, disappeared for 2 centuries. It was found by chance—complete with its certificate of authenticity—by Denis Pivot, a mountain guide passionate about the history of mountaineering equipment. Measuring 2.71 meters long and weighing 1.7 kg, this priceless ancestor of the modern ice axe is now on display in the "Exploits" gallery.

The Mont Blanc Museum, a culture path to the mountains

On 11 July, at 89 Avenue Michel-Croz in the centre of Chamonix, the new Mont-Blanc Museum will be opened, the perfect prelude to a stay in the valley. Housed in one of the town's three former palaces, on the site of the old Alpine Museum which closed in 2021, it boasts a completely redesigned setting and scenography. The project involved restoring the exterior façade by rebuilding the original rotunda, moving the entrance to the Arve side and redesigning the museum's surroundings to clarify access points. The interior revives the grandeur of the Belle Époque palace, revealing a doubled exhibition area of 1,200 m² on two levels, a new reception area, a future shop and three themed tours on the thematic of the relationship between man and the mountains in the Mont Blanc region. 'Adaptations', recounting the transformation of a pastoral valley into a tourist capital; "Exploits", which immerses visitors

musée
du mont
blanc
blanc museum
museo del
monte bianco
museo del
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in the story of the conquest of high mountains; and 'Landscapes', which offers an artistic perspective on Alpine scenery, featuring majestic paintings by Gabriel Loppé (1825–1913) the first painter to work at high altitudes. Reflecting its cultural vision, the museum's temporary exhibitions will invite visitors to discover the landscape through a new lens. 'Metamorphoses of the Gaze: The Alps Magnified', running from July 3, 2026, to April 30, 2027, will feature an exquisite collection of Alpine prints from the 18th to the early 20th century. A 1930s bobsleigh, the original "alpenstock" of Jacques Balmat (author of the first ascent of Mont Blanc), and the wooden turret from the Janssen Observatory built in 1893 at the summit of Mont Blanc alongside a collection of ice axes that stand as powerful symbols of the valley's heritage... These tours will allow visitors to discover or rediscover some 15,000 major pieces from the collections, as well as contemporary mountain equipment collected specifically for the museum's reopening, objects related to the first Winter Olympics in 1924, and an anamorphosis based on the Cabane des Périades mountain hut. 'Above all, we have completely reimagined the scenography by integrating modern digital and multimedia features, explains Gabrielle Michaux, Director of the Museum network. We also wanted this educational museum to look to the future, with a prospective section giving a voice to scientists working in the area and a time-lapse video covering the history of the valley from the last ice age through to the year 2100.' This extensive renovation aims to attract 30,000 to 40,000 visitors annually. To ensure the museum's long-term vitality, the Tourist Office and the Chamonix-Mont-Blanc Valley Community of Communes have launched a dedicated fund: 'Vallée à Énergies Positives.'



The goal is to raise an additional €1 million through corporate and private sponsorship over the next three years. *Total Cost: €8.6 million, funded by the DRAC (Regional Department of Cultural Affairs), the Departmental Council, the European Union, the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region, and the City of Chamonix-Mont-Blanc. ||

ONE PASS, SIX MUSEUMS

The Musée du Mont-Blanc is the flagship for a network of six museums accessible with a single Pass. Together, they offer a multifaceted perspective of the region: mineralogy at the Musée des Cristaux (Chamonix-Mont-Blanc); local history at the Maison de la Mémoire et du Patrimoine (Chamonix-Mont-Blanc, currently closed); ethnography at the Musée Montagnard (Les Houches); and rural heritage at the Maison de Barberine (Vallorcine). Pass: €25/year. Available at the Musée des Cristaux, the Musée du Mont-Blanc, and the Musée Montagnard.



The Crystal Hunters' Garden of Dreams

As one of the most important in France spanning 1,800 square feet and featuring over 2,000 specimens of quartz, gneiss, fluorite, and siderite the Musée des Cristaux presents a new space called «The Garden.» This area highlights around forty monumental rock specimens. Discover the world of crystal hunters of the Mont Blanc massif on a guided tour with Christophe Epinat, crystal hunter and museum curator (Thursdays at 2:15 PM and 4:15 PM during school holidays). ||



KEY DATES

- 1898:** Creation of the Musée Alpin et du Mont-Blanc by collector Joseph Cusin-Berlincourt.
- 1920:** Donation of collections to the Municipality of Chamonix.
- July 1926:** Inauguration of the Musée Alpin within the Hôtel de Ville (Town Hall).
- 1969:** Reopening of the museum in the former Chamonix Palace by the Association des Amis du Vieux Chamonix.
- February 1, 2003:** Obtaining the official "Musée de France" designation.
- September 20, 2021:** Closing of The Musée Alpin for extensive renovation.
- July 11, 2026:** Opening of the Musée du Mont-Blanc.

THE MOUNTAIN AS A LEGACY



Here, every street, every summit, every piece of granite contains a fragment of mountaineering history. Since the birth of Alpine tourism, the Chamonix-Mont-Blanc Valley has been the dedicated guardian of this invaluable heritage, maintaining a unique bond with the high mountains world.



A summer in good company

A gathering place for all mountain lovers, the Maison de la Montagne located in the former priory houses the world's oldest high-mountain guide company. Founded in 1821, it dates back to an era when mountaineering had yet to become a codified sport.

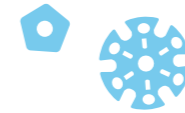
Two centuries later, the values of solidarity, shared expertise, and respect for the mountain passed down from generation to generation remain at the heart of the practice for its 180 members. They are driven by the same passion and standards of excellence as their predecessors in the early 19th century. True to its founding values and committed to a vision that protects the land and promotes a vibrant mountain culture, the Compagnie des Guides de Chamonix has successfully evolved facing climate change by adapting both climbing routes and schedules.

Honoring its history, the Compagnie des Guides will celebrate the anniversary of the first winter ascent of Mont Blanc completed in 1876 by Isabella Straton and her guide Jean Charlet during the traditional Fête des Guides on August 15th. Looking towards the future, the Company is releasing a new collective edition of Gaston Rébuffat's 1973 classic book, *Le massif du Mont-Blanc – Les 100 plus belles courses* (*The Mont Blanc Massif: The 100 finest routes*). This new version will be published this summer by Éditions du Mont-Blanc. chamonix-guides.com ||

DID YOU KNOW?

While the Compagnie des Guides de Chamonix is a world-renowned benchmark, the valley is home to a wealth of other expertise! The Bureau des Guides d'Argentière, Evolution 2, and Kailash Parapente offer year-round access to the mountains. During the winter season, Sensations Chamonix further enhances this diverse range of services. Adventure, mountaineering, paragliding... there is something for everyone! chamonix.com

New model for "les bâtons d'Alain"



Adopted by the valley's guides, the ENSA (National School of Skiing and Mountaineering), and even French famous cellist Gautier Capuçon for the filming of his latest album Gaïa, 'Les Bâtons d'Alain' named after their designer, Alain Desez are the true modern heirs to the original "alpenstock" used by Jacques Balmat. Crafted as a single-piece pole without a strap recalling the traditional alpenstocks these versatile and brightly colored models won the Concours Lépine invention award in 2011. They stand out for their innovative design, featuring ultra-resistant aluminum and a signature 70 cm foam grip. The catalog now boasts 36 models, including the refreshing new 'Mojito' (129 €). lesbatonsdalain.com ||

Simond : the museum is expanding

Located at the entrance of the Simond factory headquarters a stunning 40,000-square-foot glass and steel 'vessel' that won the architectural Grand Prix SIMI upon its inauguration in 2020 the Heritage space (2,150 sq. ft.) traces the journey of this mountaineering and climbing brand. Now part of the Decathlon Group, Simond's story reveals how its equipment has conquered the world's highest peaks. Through a collection of over 300 objects ranging from archival documents, hallmarks, and logos to ice axes, crampons, pitons, and carabiners, as well as Rébuffat's sweater and the boots worn by Lachenal after his Annapurna ascent and a masterfully executed scenography by Thierry Berguerand and Denis Pivot (who discovered Balmat's alpenstock), visitors follow the enthralling journey of a family of visionary blacksmiths who, over the centuries, forged their way to the highest summits. Today, as Simond ice axes and crampons continue to equip the most prolific mountaineers of our time such as Benjamin Védrières and Nicolas Jean, the first to conquer the summit of Jannu East (7,468 m) in late 2025 the exhibition space is expanding to carve a new path between Alpine heritage and sustainable performance. *Self-guided tours (Free admission): Every Wednesday from 2:00 PM to 5:30 PM.* ||



MAY 1816

Exactly 210 years ago, Mary Shelley discovered the Mer de Glace at Montanvers. This haunting landscape inspired her the creation of Doctor Frankenstein's monster. In her gothic masterpiece, *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, published two years later, the creature confronts its creator amidst the towering seracs of the glacier.



SUMMIT RECEPTION



Reassuring sanctuaries in a world of stone, high mountain refuges or mid-altitude “buvettes” are iconic symbols of mountaineering. Suspended at several altitudes, they cater to both pre-dawn rope-teams in search of feats and hikers seeking a refreshing stop with a view of flowering meadows.

Vincent Coulon, next-gen hutkeeper



At 30, Vincent is a man at home in the heights. After a decade spent working the seasons in mountain huts, this Chamonix native has taken the helm of the Refuge de Bellachat. Perched at 2,152 meters on the edge of the Aiguilles Rouges and Carlaveyron Nature Reserves, the hut overlooks one of the most breathtaking panoramas in the Mont-Blanc massif.

A man of quiet kindness, he loves sharing his deep-rooted connection to the valley and its mountains with every guest who steps through the door of his dark-wood chalet. From families enjoying a scenic lunch after a 1 hour walk from the Brévent cable car, to long-distance hikers on the Tour du Mont-Blanc or the GR®5, visitors are invariably captivated by the authentic, old-world charm of this little refuge. *‘It’s a rustic, intimate chalet with no showers and one dormitory for 8 and another for 10, both fully renovated this spring. It’s a true bubble of serenity. Here, I feel like I’m getting back to the essentials’,* says the young hut keeper.

Open exclusively during the summer (from June 20 to September 27, 2026), the Bellachat refuge offers a selection of homemade lunch options including röstis,



omelets, salads, quiches, cakes, and crêpes... In the evening, the hut provides generous, 100% vegetarian cuisine, reflecting the evolving expectations of today’s mountain visitors. *‘Our guests are younger now, often visiting in pairs or with friends, and many are new to the mountain environment. It’s our role to teach them the right reflexes, from waste management to conserving water, which is a vital resource up here. To meet growing demand, we also opened 10 bivouac spots last summer.’* Vincent sees himself as an ambassador for the area, working hand-in-hand with local experts. All summer long, the refuge hosts educational evenings dedicated to raising awareness of wildlife conservation and mountain preservation.

These sessions are led by rangers from the Aiguilles Rouges Nature Reserve and scientists from CREA Mont-Blanc (the Research Center for Alpine Ecosystems). ||

New Crews

Starting May 23, 2026, hikers stopping at the Plan de l’Aiguille refuge (2,207 m) for an overnight stay or a snack will be welcomed by Céline and Eddy. This experienced duo previously worked alongside the former hut keeper of this red-shuttered haven of peace, which is easily accessible from the Plan de l’Aiguille cable car station. High in the mountains, perched on the left bank of the Tacul glacier with views over the Mer de Glace, the Requin refuge (2,516 m) will celebrate its 100th anniversary on July 11, 2026, under the leadership of its new keeper, Mathilde. It remains the ideal base camp for some of the finest mountaineering routes in the Chamonix Needles. refugeplandelaiguille.com and refugedurequin.fr ||

Summer Insider Tip

Alpine kiosks and traditional dairies (known as buvettes and crèmeries) are to the mountain pastures what mountain huts are to the high peaks. These charming wooden cabins, with their flower-decked terraces inviting contemplation, first appeared in the 19th century along the old mule tracks. They were built to offer “monchus” (the local term for gentlemen) and elegant ladies in Belle-Époque attire a place to refresh and dine while gazing at the fascinating glaciers and spires. As guardians of an era when the valley’s heart balanced between farming and tourism, these alpine kiosks (buvettes) and dairies (crèmeries) now offer light meals and local specialties such as farçon, bougnettes, croûtes, and tarts and



sometimes even lodging, without losing any of their historic charm. Whether it’s La Floria, Les Mottets, Cascade du Dard, Le Chapeau, Chalet des Bossons... these spots are accessible only on foot. Offering breathtaking viewpoints, they provide the perfect excuse for a summer stroll. ||

64 871

The number of overnight stays in mountain huts across the Mont Blanc massif in 2025 (+15% vs 2024). *2025 Annual Report, Refuges sentinelles*



MOUNTAIN NIGHTS IN ONE CLICK

The Tour du Mont-Blanc (TMB) spans 170 km across France, Italy, and Switzerland, offering a wealth of unforgettable nights at high altitude. To streamline the experience for long-distance hikers, the Association Gîtes et Refuges du Tour du Mont-Blanc has revamped its online booking platform as of October 2025. Whether you are looking for rustic mountain huts or cozy lodges, shared dorms or private rooms, the site now features 43 establishments along the trail. Your adventure around the “Roof of Europe” begins here: montourdumontblanc.com

DID YOU KNOW?

The Blair Hospital at Montanvers is the oldest mountain refuge in the Alps. Its story began in 1779, thanks to a donation from a generous British lord, Charles Blair, which funded the construction of the “Blair Hut” at an altitude of 1,913 m. Built to shelter travelers coming to admire the Mer de Glace, it soon proved too small and fell into disrepair. In 1795, a more permanent stone structure was erected nearby, initiated by Marc-Théodore Bourrit, a Genevan mountaineer and artist. This octagonal building, named the “Temple of Nature”, has been renovated many times and now serves as a historical site dedicated to the memory of early mountaineering.





A TERRITORY TO PRESERVE

Long before its glaciers and peaks captured the world's attention, the Chamonix Mont-Blanc Valley lived to the rhythm of herding and haymaking. A time long overshadowed by the rise of tourism, this pastoral heritage was ultimately preserved by the consorts (traditional land-ownership collectives). Today, these flowering alpine pastures contribute just as much as the mountains to the appeal of a destination dedicated to protecting its land.

A new chapter for Le Chalet du Col des Montets

As the gateway to the Aiguilles Rouges massif, the Chalet du Col des Montets (1,452m) is set to reopen in June 2026 following an extensive transformation. Originally inaugurated in 1976 just two years after the nature reserve was created, this chalet and its botanical trail have embodied the educational mission of this exceptional landscape for half a century.

Spanning 3,279 hectares and ranging from 1,200 to 2,965 meters in altitude, the Aiguilles Rouges Nature Reserve is home to remarkable biodiversity which the renovated chalet is now fully equipped to showcase. Funded through the Haute-Savoie Nature Departmental Contract, the project has completely reimagined the site, from its interiors and exteriors to its landscaped surroundings.

In the basement, an immersive exhibition retraces the history and biodiversity of the reserve. Outside, an accessible footbridge (PRM) and a viewpoint offer a brand-new perspective on the little lake and



DID YOU KNOW?

The United Nations has proclaimed 2026 as the International Year of pastoralism and pastures. The goal is to establish pastoralism as a pillar of sustainable development, support livestock keepers, and ensure the resilience of grazing ecosystems.



the Aiguilles de Chamonix. The site's amenities are completed by updated educational signage and an electric vehicle charging station.

The chalet is becoming the anchor point for the Climate Adventure Area, one of five new interactive discovery trails launched throughout the valley to educate the public on climate shifts and their impact on Alpine ecosystems.

Science is part of Chamonix's DNA, rooted in the historic 1786 first ascent of Mont Blanc. Equipped with just a thermometer, barometer, and compass, Dr. Paccard, and Jacques Balmat, reached the summit to conduct pioneering research. *Free admission.* ||



Merlet: a resting pasture

At an altitude of 1,534 meters, facing the Bossons and Tacconnaz glaciers, the Merlet pasture is a vast, 25-hectare clearing surrounded by forests, featuring a small hamlet and a charming chapel. Owned by the Cachat family since 1947, this "Eden on earth" was transformed into an wildlife park in 1968 by René Cachat and his son Philippe.

Home to some sixty mountain animals roaming in semi-liberty not counting the marmots and open from May to September, Merlet Park quickly rose to the top 10 most popular sites in the department, welcoming up to 80,000 visitors a year.

To streamline attendance and preserve the quality of the visitor experience, Claire Cachat, René's granddaughter and current manager, introduced a reservation system in 2020, along with discounted rates for those arriving on foot or via the free shuttles from Les Houches station.

Today, nearly 60 years after its opening, the mountain pasture depleted by continuous grazing needs to be regenerated. Claire has therefore decided to close the park from 30 September 2026, to 1 May 2028. This closure will allow time to replant species better adapted to climate change and restore floral diversity, which is essential for feeding the animals. *'This gap year is a way to slow down and preserve this family treasure,'* Claire explains. ||

The Consorts: guardians of the mountains.

Once a land of traditional agro-pastoralism, the Chamonix-Mont-Blanc valley is home to seven "alpine grazing mountains", covering approximately 11% of its total area. During the era of the Benedictine Priory of Chamonix, these lands were divided among local communities, who became the collective owners of their assigned territories. To this day, these communal pastures remain private properties managed by the "consorts" groups of rightsholders who, through successive inheritance, share a common legacy and a way of life unchanged since the Middle Ages. In the Chamonix Valley, some 370 families holding one or more shares, known as "fonds de vache", ensure the farming and maintenance of these seven "mountains", thereby contributing to the conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity.

At Balme, the consorts have restored the stables and chavannes (traditional mountain huts) to host a herd of 160 cattle each summer. The milk is processed on-site into mountain tomme and raclette cheese, sold directly at the pasture during July and August. At Blaitière, the 58 consorts are running a refreshment stall and a sheepfold fully renovated in 2021, which now provides a home for around sixty ewes. To discover these ancestral land-based "commons", which remain remarkably modern and resilient, the Chamonix Valley Pastures Association is organizing an awareness day on 20 June at the Majestic (see page 18). ||

BEST PRACTICES

As grazing grounds for herbivores, a place of life and work for shepherds, and a recreational area for summer visitors, mountain pastures are also private property. When visiting these summer, please remember to greet the shepherd, stay on the marked trails, keep your dog on a lead, keep a safe distance from livestock guardian dogs (Patous), and always close the gates behind you. *Find out more :*



URBAN CULTURE



Dining, fashion, treats, sounds, magazines, festivals, exhibitions, events, cinema, and meetups... Discover our handpicked selection of the latest hotspots and summer highlights.



New Bakery: Maison Fattier

Maison Fattier is already home to two renowned tea rooms, pastry, and chocolate shops: "Aux Petits Gourmands" and "Chalet 4810", the latter named after the iconic 4810@ chocolate, whose silhouette mirrors Mont Blanc, the Aiguille du Midi, and the Bossons glacier. Starting in early June, the family business is expanding with a new bakery adjacent to "Aux Petits Gourmands." Designed with a charming "village bakery" feel, it will offer fifteen varieties of sourdough bread, all baked on-site. Jacqueline Fattier has entrusted the bakehouse to Pierre Rinkenbach, 2023 French Bakery Vice-Champion and 2025 world bronze medalist (team category). 168, rue Docteur Paccard, Chamonix-Mont-Blanc. boutique.petitsgourmands.fr ||

Mimosa

Mimosa: a powerful symbol chosen to celebrate the strength, courage, and creativity of women. The Egg: a star ingredient, simple, delicious, local, and expertly prepared. This charming concept was dreamed up by a trio of local women from the valley: if a plate, a chair, or a vintage trinket catches your eye, you can buy it and take it home. In short, it's a café-flea market with a feel-good vibe, offering Sunday brunches (€15 or €28 depending on the menu) and takeaway baskets for your summer picnics (€14). Opening Hours: 7 days a week; Sun–Thu: 8 am to 6:30 pm; Fri–Sat: 8 am to 9:30 pm. 221, avenue de l'Aiguille du Midi, Chamonix-Mont-Blanc. mimosachamonix.com ||



Altitude Gin

It all began with three friends, Tim, Kirstine and Pat, who, in 2017, borrowed a still to craft gin in a traditional mazot in Les Houches. Less than a decade later, Altitude Gin is moving to Avenue Michel-Croz in the heart of Chamonix. The highlight of this season? A new pink gin, "to blush with pleasure", infused with strawberries and wild woodland strawberries. This new boutique distillery features a stunning 200-liter copper and steel still and houses the entire "Made in Chamonix" collection. These multi-award-winning spirits are crafted using Alpine botanicals including blueberries, pine needles, elderflower, and juniper berries—blended with pure Alpine water. Altitude Gin is also a committed brand, donating a portion of its profits to CREA Mont-Blanc (Research Center for Alpine Ecosystems), which studies the impact of climate change on biodiversity. 59, avenue Michel-Croz, Chamonix-Mont-Blanc. altitudegin.com ||

A valley of brewers

The Chamonix-Mont-Blanc valley is buzzing with activity, having cultivated a vibrant craft beer scene. It all began in 2002 when four Canadians founded the **MBC (Micro Brasserie de Chamonix)** to brew beers using glacier water from the massif. Their beers are brewed on-site and served in their lively bar-restaurant, open daily from 4:00 PM. In Les Houches, **Le Solerey**, founded by one of the original MBC partners, offers three signature house brews alongside BBQ smoked meats, available from Wednesday to Sunday. Meanwhile, **Big Mountain Brewing Co.**, which started in a garage in Les Pratz in 2014, has become the go-to brewery for the outdoor community. To enjoy one of their 20 beers on tap with a view of Mont Blanc, head to the *Basecamp Bar*, open daily from 3:00 PM. mbchx.com, lesolereybrewpub.com, bigmtbrew.co ||



After

Giovanna expands her Chamonix footprint with After, a premium second-hand boutique located right next to After Ski. This intimate 49 m² space is a haven for luxury lovers, curated by Julie, a true "fashion antiquarian" with an unmatched eye for iconic pieces. The collection features a high-end selection of accessories and apparel, including Hermès scarves, designer handbags, and tailored jackets. Every item is a unique find, sourced with precision and care from across Europe, Brussels, Milan, Geneva, and Paris, to bring the best of international couture to the heart of Chamonix. 48 rue du Docteur Paccard, Chamonix-Mont-Blanc. ||

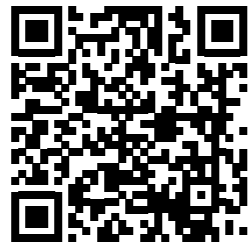


DID YOU KNOW?

Les Curiosités de Francis: A Naturalist's Legacy Step into a world where art meets lifestyle at Les Curiosités de Francis. Laetitia Bérille reimagines the work of her father, the renowned naturalist Francis Bérille, by featuring his detailed animal illustrations on premium textiles and decorative objects. A graduate of École Estienne and a Drouot-listed artist, Francis's work has long graced the pages of Larousse dictionary, Reader's Digest, and La Chasse magazine. It is a heritage with real bite, not to mention rabbits, marmots, stags, and squirrels. 156, avenue de l'Aiguille du Midi, Chamonix-Mont-Blanc. lescuriositesdefrancis.fr



NEWS



Maison de la presse

Opened in 1975, the *Chamonix Maison de la Presse* is a must-visit for anyone looking to learn more about the region. A veritable treasure trove, it stocks everything from national and regional newspapers to magazines and an extensive library of 28,000 titles. Visitors will also find IGN maps, climbing guides, games, souvenirs, and tech accessories. Whether stopping by for the morning paper or the latest bestseller, guests leave inspired by the vibrant, welcoming soul of this organized chaos now managed by Jérôme Marini, son of the original founder. 93, rue du Docteur-Paccard, Chamonix-Mont-Blanc. ||

Kraks: Glaciers songs

To understand the dynamics and melting of glaciers, Ugo Nanni, a young explorer and glaciologist, listens to them using seismological instruments. This work, a fusion of art and science, began on the Argentière glacier and is now being shared with the general public through the Kraks project. In collaboration with the Chamonix-Mont-Blanc Valley Community of Communes, ten listening stations have been installed throughout the valley. Equipped with headphones, visitors can listen to the murmurs, vibrations, cries, and “songs” of nearly a dozen glaciers, including those of Argentière and Kongsvegen in Svalbard. This fascinating project continues the momentum of 2025, the International Year of Glacier Preservation. ||



“4811” Fragrance

An exclusive creation by Parfumerie du Mont-Blanc, the “4811” fragrance makes its comeback this season. This unisex “glacier water” evokes a high-altitude trek, weaving together notes of pine from the forest undergrowth with the crisp freshness of a mountain stream and the minerality of granite. A true Proustian moment, triggering a wave of sensory nostalgia, capturing the very essence of the Chamonix-Mont-Blanc Valley in a bottle. Price: €78 per 100 ml. 30-36, rue des Moulins, Chamonix-Mont-Blanc. ||

High Life: The Culture of Altitude

Chamonix-Mont-Blanc is more than just a playground for athletic feats. It is a vibrant mountain town with a deep-rooted cultural identity. To showcase this, the valley is launching a new media outlet that treats the high mountains as a cultural heritage and the Chamonix-Mont-Blanc Valley as a leading-edge stage. highlife.chamonix.com ||



A SUMMER AT THE TABLE

Since Madame Couterand’s inn first opened its doors to travelers in 1770, the culinary landscape of the Chamonix-Mont-Blanc Valley has come a long way. From century-old institutions and rising star chefs to contemporary lodges and exotic flavors... here are our four “coup de cœur” picks for the season.

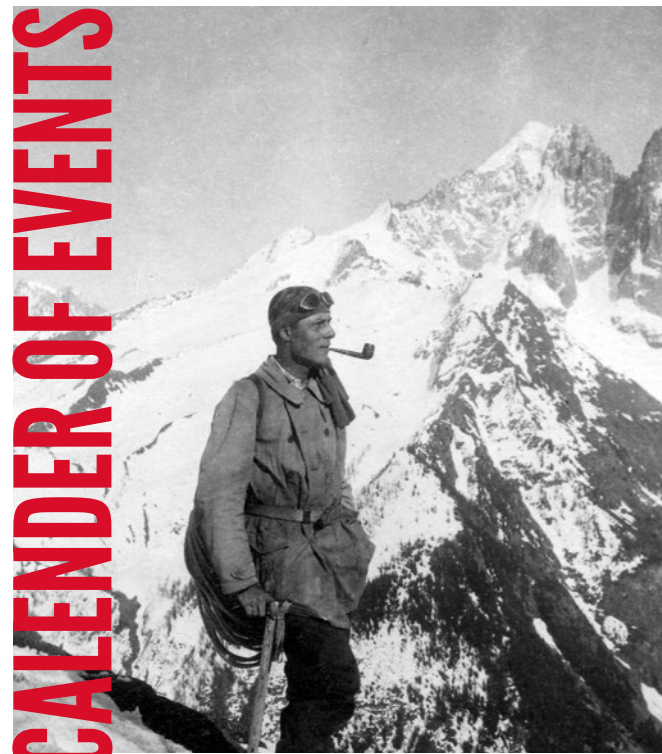
> Originally a modest family guesthouse built in 1903, the **Hameau Albert 1^{er}** has blossomed into a Michelin-starred institution in the heart of Chamonix. This 5-star estate features 37 rooms, suites, and chalets, and is home to two distinct dining experiences: the gastronomic **Restaurant Albert 1^{er}**, led by Chef Damien Leveau, and the rustic **Maison Carrier**, with a new leader: Grégoire Fracassetti. A familiar name to the house, he takes command after ten years as sous-chef. He remains committed to the restaurant’s soulful essence: traditional recipes, seasonal ingredients, and authentic terroir dishes reminiscent of mountain farmhouse cooking. The menu features regional treasures such as the Lake Geneva “Pochouse” (a freshwater fish stew) served with crayfish, steamed potatoes, and seasonal vegetables; spit-roasted rack of lamb accompanied by potato mille-feuille and truffled salsify; or his penne gratin with mushroom sauce. Reflets Alps Menu (Restaurant Albert 1^{er}): From €167, Three-course Menu (Maison Carrier): €39. 38, route du Bouchet, Chamonix-Mont-Blanc. hameaualbert.fr/en



> Sun-drenched and discreetly nestled in the heights of Chamonix-Mont-Blanc, with breathtaking views of the Aiguille du Midi and Mont Blanc, **Auberge du Bois Prin** cultivates the very best of Alpine hospitality, infused with a touch of contemporary freshness. Led since 2023 by Quentin Veyrat and Marie Ancel, under the guidance of three-Michelin-starred Chef Emmanuel Renaut, the property’s owner, the gourmet restaurant offers creative and refined regional cuisine inspired by the energy of the destination. Market menu from €75. 69, chemin de l’Hermine, Chamonix-Mont-Blanc. boisprin.com



> Following his success in Servoz and at the Auberge des Gorges, Hugo Lemerrier, head chef of **Ārūdha**, is setting the table in Chamonix at **Les Chalets de Philippe**. Starting April 24, guests can experience his bold “Indo-Alpine” gourmet cuisine in an intimate new setting (22 covers). Here, he will continue to blend local terroir, Indian spices, and contemporary techniques through two signature tasting menus of five or seven courses. Looking ahead to this summer, the chef will also launch a second dining concept, Le Jardin Alpin, dedicated to regional cheese specialties. Menus starting from €9. 718 Route du Chapeau, Chamonix. chaletsphilippe.com



Chamonix Film Festival

June 10–14, 2026

For its 6th edition, the festival presents a curated selection of some twenty of the year's finest mountain films. The program features screenings at the Vox Cinema, free open-air sessions at Parc Couffet, as well as workshops, debates, and meet-and-greets with renowned Alpinists and filmmakers. chamonixfilmfestival.fr

Tribute Evening: Roger Frison-Roche

June 17, 2026

Celebrating the 120th anniversary of the legendary French mountaineer and author Roger Frison-Roche. Organized by the Chamonix Valley Tourist Office in partnership with the Mont-Blanc Museum, this tribute evening at the Vox Cinema (6:00 PM) will feature screenings of *Trois vies et une corde* and the making-of *Premier de cordée*. Expert guest speaker Catherine Cuenot will lead the presentation. Free admission | Limited seating available.

“Chamonix’s Alpine Pastures: Heritage of the Past, Lands of the Future”

June 20, 2026

For the first time, the Association *Alpages de la Vallée de Chamonix-Mont-Blanc* (AAVC) is hosting a day of discovery and dialogue at Le Majestic on June 20, starting at 9:00 AM. This event offers a unique opportunity to meet the men and women who sustain the region’s agricultural and pastoral landscapes. The lineup features a diverse range of experts, including alpine farmers (*alpagistes*), land-use collectives (*consorts*), historians, glaciologists, mountain professionals, livestock breeders, and landscape engineers. Free admission.



Mont-Blanc Marathon

June 25–28, 2026

Major event in the world of trail running, the Mont-Blanc Marathon welcomes nearly 10,000 participants across eight distinct race formats : including the 92km, a highly technical course (6,300 of elevation gain), the 42km, a balanced challenge alternating between fast-paced sections and technical Alpine ridges (2,540 of elevation gain) and the 23km, a more accessible entry point into mountain racing. Organized by the Club des Sports de Chamonix, this event is a pioneer in sustainable mountain racing. To minimize its carbon footprint, the organization has implemented a proactive bib allocation policy: 50% of bibs are reserved for participants traveling by public transport and 10% of bibs are dedicated to local Chamonix Valley residents who commit to arriving by train, bus, foot, or bicycle. marathonmontblanc.fr/en

Arc’teryx Alpine Academy

July 2–5, 2026

Designed as a vibrant festival blending technical workshops, film screenings, keynote speakers, and live concerts, the 15th edition of the Arc’teryx Alpine Academy is set to gather thousands of mountain enthusiasts from across the globe. The heart of the action will be at Parc Couffet, the event’s official base camp, with additional activities taking place at various iconic sites throughout the Chamonix Valley. chamonix.arcteryxacademy.com

Climbing World Cup

July 10-12, 2026

A flagship event on the IFSC circuit, the World Cup brings together the world’s elite speed and lead climbers. This spectacular, free-to-attend competition sees athletes go head-to-head on outdoor artificial walls, set against the breathtaking backdrop of Mont Blanc. coupe-du-monde-escalade.com



Argentrail

July 19, 2026

Starting from the heart of Argentière with its cozy alpine village atmosphere, the Argentrail is an intimate 27km race (1,700m elevation gain). Whether tackled solo or as a relay, the course offers runners breathtaking panoramas of the Mont Blanc massif. argentrail.com

CosmoJazz

July 20 to 25, 2026

For its 16th edition, CosmoJazz, the visionary festival created by André Manoukian, returns to the peaks. The festival features daytime concerts hosted at breathtaking high-altitude sites including La Flégère, Planpraz, Loriaz, and Le Tour, all accessible via lifts or hiking trails. As the sun begins to set, the music moves down to the valley for late afternoon and evening performances at Parc Couffet in the center of Chamonix. It is a unique dialogue between world music and high-mountain landscapes—free of charge and open to all. cosmojazzfestival.com

Les Houches Village Festival

August 2, 2026

This convivial and festive day features a diverse program of entertainment, guided hikes, family-friendly performances, and a giant community feast shared by locals and visitors alike. It is the perfect opportunity to discover the authentic soul of this village, a proud recipient of the “Famille Plus” label for its commitment to family-friendly excellence.

Night of the Bears

August 5 to 12, 2026

An artistic and cultural immersion in the heart of nature. The Nuit des Ours festival in Vallorcine is a unique blend of live performance, music, theater, and intellectual debate, all set against a stunning natural backdrop. The week-long event culminates in a signature nocturnal procession, featuring unexpected performances under the stars. nuit-des-ours.com

Fête des Guides

August 12 to 15, 2026

Celebrating the spirit of the rope team and mountaineering history since 1924. The Fête des Guides de Chamonix is a valley-wide celebration of the deep-rooted bond between guides and the mountains. This year, the festivities will be highlighted by a special evening at Les Gaillands dedicated to women in mountaineering. To mark the anniversary of the first winter ascent of Mont Blanc, achieved on January 31, 1876, by Isabella Straton (1838–1918), the Compagnie des Guides will pay a special tribute to this intrepid British mountaineer and all the women who have followed in her footsteps. chamonix-guides.com



UTMB®

August 24 to 30, 2026

The world’s ultimate trail-running summit, featuring eight distinct races. The legendary “Main Event” covers 176 km with 10,000 meters of positive elevation gain, crossing through France, Italy, and Switzerland. montblanc.utmb.world

Trail des Aiguilles Rouges

September 27, 2026

As the final event of the season, the main course covers 50 km with 4,000 m of positive elevation gain through the heart of the Aiguilles Rouges massif. Two shorter formats are also available: the P’fit TAR (16 km, 1,350 m positiv elevation) and the Mini TAR (9 km, 640 m positiv elevation). To protect the fragile beauty of the Nature Reserve, the race is strictly limited to 650 runners. aiguillesrouges.fr/en

Servoz Sheep Fair

October 11, 2026

For over 30 years, every autumn, the village of Servoz has revived its agricultural roots with a festive day dedicated to the farming world. The event features a

sheep competition, traditional cider and “bougnettes” (savoyard fritters) making, an exhibition of vintage tractors, and live musical entertainment.

The Chamonix Crystal Fair

October 18, 2026

The 25th annual Bourse des Cristalliers will be held at the Majestic Center, bringing together expert crystal hunters to display and sell their finest discoveries. This prestigious fair features rare alpine minerals harvested directly from the Mont Blanc massif, including iconic red fluorites, smoky quartz, gwindels, and other unique geological treasures. mineralogie-chamonix.org/bourse-des-cristalliers

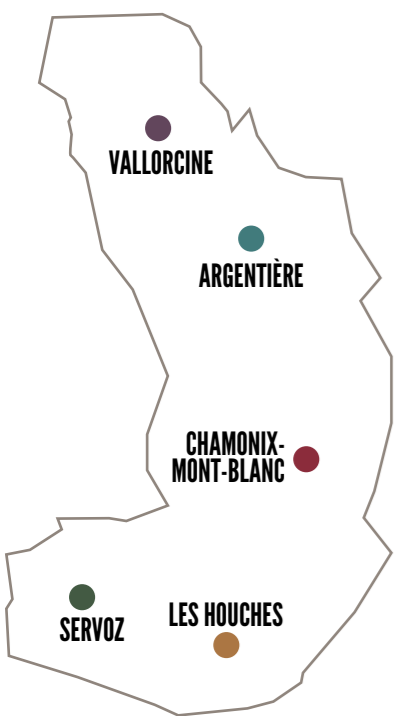


Chamonix Photo Festival

October 23 to 25, 2026

Wrap up the season in style with the Chamonix Photo Festival, an impact-driven event celebrating the beauty of the natural world. This festival features immersive exhibitions, film screenings, and meet-and-greets with renowned photographers. The program also includes professional masterclasses, children’s workshops, and a prestigious photography competition. chamonixphotofestival.com

THE VALLEY OF 5 VILLAGES



Formed by glaciers and dominated by Mont Blanc, Western Europe's highest peak at 4,805 m, the Chamonix-Mont-Blanc Valley stretches over 17 kilometers. It is home to five distinct villages: Servoz, Les Houches, Chamonix-Mont-Blanc, Argentière, and Vallorcine, each embodying a unique facet of the destination.



Servoz

The Ultimate "Slow-Village"



Location: As the gateway to the valley, Servoz has remained tucked away from major tourist crowds, cultivating a "slow" atmosphere and a deeply rooted rural character.

What to See: traditional farmhouses, stone oratories, communal bread ovens, and 19th-century fountains. Saint-Loup Church, a small Baroque gem built in 1537 and recently renovated. The Maison de l'Alpage (House of Mountain Pastures) and the Maison du Lieutenant.

What to Do: Servoz serves as the ideal trailhead for everything from gentle family hikes to technical, high-alpine routes beneath the towering Chaîne des Fiz.

The "Must-See": Les Gorges de la Diosaz, a breathtaking natural site and a classified monument since 1875. ||

Les Houches

The Most Family-Friendly

Location: Situated 6 km southwest of Chamonix-Mont-Blanc.

What to See: Over 50 km of slopes, including the legendary Kandahar, a World Cup downhill run that transforms into a premier playground for hikers and mountain bikers in the summer. Les Chavants Leisure Hub, a dedicated recreation area featuring a pumptrack, climbing walls, tennis courts, and expansive playgrounds.

What to Do: Hike up to the Christ-Roi. Located at an altitude of 1,200 m in the heart of the Coupeau forest, this monumental statue stands 25 meters tall and offers a striking presence in the landscape.

The "Must-See": Merlet Animal Park, an exceptional wildlife park where you can encounter mountain species in their natural habitat. ||



THE VALLEY OF 5 VILLAGES



Argentière

The Most Legendary

Location: 8 km north of Chamonix-Mont-Blanc.

What to see: Famous for its namesake glacier, Argentière is a historic village of crystal hunters and mountain guides that has preserved its authentic alpine character. With its Baroque Saint-Pierre Church, featuring a distinctive steeple covered in tin-plate scales. This is the home of Jean Estérel Charlet, the legendary guide to Isabella Straton; the two famously married after completing the first-ever winter ascent of Mont Blanc.

What to Do: Les Grands Montets, a world-renowned destination for freeriding and high-altitude skiing; the gateway for epic treks into the Aiguilles Rouges Nature Reserve.

The "Must-See": Hike up to this iconic mountain hut Refuge Albert 1^{er}, inaugurated by the King of the Belgians in 1930, for an unparalleled panorama of the Le Tour Glacier and the entire Chamonix-Mont-Blanc Valley. ||



Chamonix-Mont-Blanc

The Vibrant Capital

Location: At the foot of Mont Blanc.

What to see: Connected by rail as early as 1901 and host to the first-ever Winter Olympic Games in 1924, Chamonix-Mont-Blanc has drawn global visitors since the mid-18th century. Travelers come to soak in its extraordinary heritage, forever linked to the legendary conquest of Mont Blanc.



What to do: Chamonix-Mont-Blanc seamlessly blends adrenaline with the art of living across all seasons. Trail running, climbing, mountain biking, paragliding, mountaineering, and whitewater sports. Fine dining, boutique shopping, museums, and luxury spas.

The "Must-Sees" : Aiguille du Midi Cable Car (rising to a spectacular altitude of 3,842 m), Montenvers Railway, leading to the iconic Mer de Glace glacier, Musée du Mont-Blanc, over 400 km of marked trails to explore. ||



Vallorcine

The Wildest

Location: The final village in the valley before the Swiss border. Long isolated, the "Valley of the Bears" is reached from Chamonix-Mont-Blanc via the Col des Montets pass.

What to see: Vallon de Bérard Nature Reserve, located within the Aiguilles Rouges massif, offering pristine wilderness. The Bérard Waterfall with its charming, colorful refreshment hut, or the Barberine Waterfall, which served as Vallorcine's very first tourist attraction in the 19th century.



What to Do: Challenge yourself by climbing Mont Buet (3,096 m), The "Ladies' Mont Blanc", a majestic peak with a storied history in early alpinism. Take the Vallorcine gondola up to the Balme meadows and enjoy a sweeping view of the valley from the mountain hut terrace.

The "Must-See": Maison de Barberine, located in the hamlet of the same name, this historic house-museum offers a fascinating glimpse into daily life in the 18th century. ||



CHAMONIX-MONT-BLANC






Press contacts

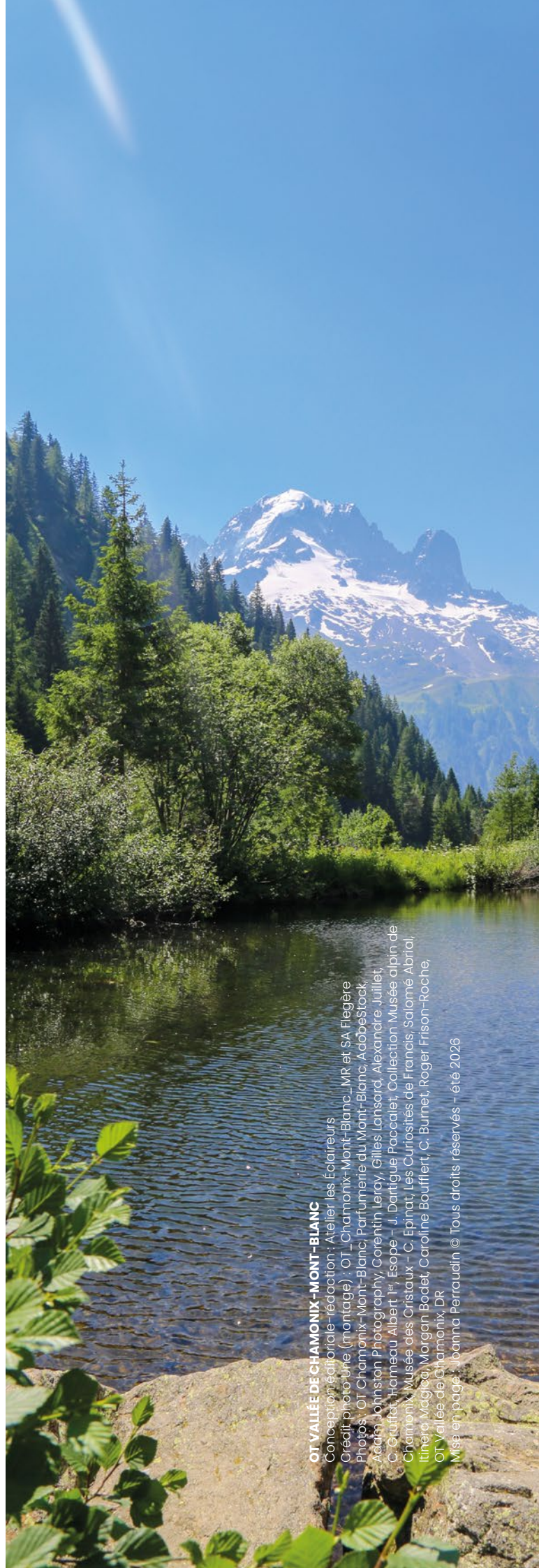
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OT VALLÉE DE CHAMONIX-MONT-BLANC
 Conception éditoriale - rédaction : Atelier les Éclairieurs
 Crédit photo Une (montage) : OT Chamonix-Mont-Blanc, MR et SA Flegère
 Photos : OT Chamonix-Mont-Blanc, Parfumerie du Mont-Blanc, AdobeStock,
 Adam Johnston Photography, Corentin Leray, Gilles Lansard, Alexandre Juillet,
 C. Gruffat, Hameau Albert 1^{er}, Esape - J. Dartigue Paccalet, Collection Musée alpin de
 Chamonix, Musée des Cristaux - C. Epinat, Les Curiosités de Francis, Salomé Abrial,
 Itinera Magica, Morgan Bodet, Caroline Bouffert, C. Burnet, Roger Frison-Roche,
 OT Vallée de Chamonix, DR
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