

A Couple of Early Season Day Tours – Bernard Smith

We had arrived at “Le Ranch” near St. Gervais in freshly fallen snow, the first since Christmas. Accordingly the first couple of days on and off piste were excellent with a thick layer of fresh snow on a firm base. Then came the rain followed by a freeze. The result was frozen crud, akin to rutted concrete. The pistes were soon rock hard and groomed to a fine degree of boredom. What to do?

Whilst lunching above Megeve we spotted a skinning track in the distance. The plan for tomorrow was obvious. Leaving Dave & Cathy’s car in Praz sur Arly, we drove up past the Megeve altiport and parked at the Cote 2000 car park at 1498 m. From here we skinned up a summer track which criss-crossed the pistes and led us to the ridge at Pre Rosset at 1900m. Here we left the patrolled area and skied off the other side of the ridge. Taking advantage of a track which had been prepared for a dog sled race we made our way to the Chalet de Very, where we lazed in the sun over a leisurely lunch. Dragging ourselves away we followed the track, spotted yesterday, to a nameless col near pt. 2039m. An easy skin along the ridge led to the summit of Mont de Vores 2067m. Skiing off the south side we joined the Praz pistes, which led with one further skin to well deserved beer. It had been a very easy but entertaining link between Megeve and Praz sur Arly.

After a day on the iron hard pistes of Flaine we felt the need for another little tour. The guide book suggested several cols accessed from the Les Contamines system. We settled for the nearest, the Col de la Fenetre. We purchased a Randonneur ticket which gives a single ride up. There was some “confusion” as to whether we should be allowed to ride the top drag, but we eventually blagged our way up. (It is possible to pay for it). From the top of the Teleski de Rosselette we skied south under the Aiguille of the same name before donning skins and heading up to our col. It was an easy ascent except for a short steep little gully. Once on the col we lazed in the sun and admired the view, dominated by Mont Blanc to the east. We were joined by a couple of guides on their day off. They had come up by our intended descent route and strongly advised against going down that way. The steep upper descent was fine but the track out to Notre Dame de la Gorge was sheet ice, unskiable and dangerous. We took their advice and returned the way we had come. These things are sent to try us.

