

Curious about the freeride options in Les Deux Alpes? Ski School Director Jeremy Edwards reveals some of the best descents in *Where to Ski And Snowboard 2009*.

European Ski & Snowboard School  
LES DEUX ALPES, 38860 France  
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### **Off-piste challenges for everyone from novice to expert**

The off-piste routes in Les Deux Alpes are numerous and varied in difficulty, the easiest permitting skiers even of an intermediate level to enjoy their first 'freeride experience'. We've asked Jeremy Edwards of the European Ski and Snowboard School to share some of his favourites.

For something slightly technical, both sides off the Bellecombes piste – 2800m-2300m – (9,190ft-7,550ft) – offer a wide range of varying terrain; it's important to take care here – there are several small cliff faces. For those keen to tackle couloirs – steep, narrow slopes between rocks – this descent offers small ones that are ideal for your first attempts; they can be avoided though.

Traversing across the top of the black Grand Couloir piste leads to the North Rochas area, with off-piste faces that offer cold snow conditions all winter. The first large valley leads to three couloirs – one fairly broad and easy, the others much narrower and steeper, and certainly not for the timid. Traversing further leads to a much wider descent that avoids the three couloirs.

For tree skiing it's best to head to the Vallée Blanche area, reached via the lifts on Pied Moutet. The north-east face, towards the chairlift at Bons, offers great routes over generally deserted wooded terrain with excellent snow conditions.

Strong skiers will enjoy the famous Chalance run, which starts just below the glacier and descends 1000m (3,280ft) vertical to the Gours run; there are several variations, mixing wide open slopes and rocky pitches. These faces are subject to quite a high avalanche risk because of wind slab.

Traversing above the north face of the Chalance leads to the couloir Pylone Electrique – a steep, narrow 200m (660ft) long couloir with the reward below it of an excellent wide powder field of moderate gradient. A rest on the Thuit chairlift is a must after this adrenalin-charged descent.

These routes and many more play a large part in the off-piste freeride courses offered by the European Ski and Snowboard School.