

# A Week in the Life of Ski 2 Freedom Foundation

**15 - 21 Avril 2019**

Adaptive skiing; blind Swiss skier; Courmayeur..... All in a week's work for me as the Founder and day-to-day operations director of Ski 2 Freedom Foundation

## **Blind Trust Ski Team Event on April 16th in Geneva**

Sadly I was unable to attend but we will be following their story and hope that Thibault and Manoelle achieve their dream of being at the 2022 Winter Paralympics!



Thibault Trancart (Blind skier) was at the RTS building in Geneva on 16th April with his ski guide Mano Pauli (I have known her for many years as she was providing adaptive and assisted skiing in Nendaz). *"The goal of the evening is to present our team to new people and our dream/goal to try to go to the next winter Paralympics games in Beijing 2022. How we will prepare to it, what we need and what it takes."*  
Mano Pauli

Le skieur genevois non-voyant Thibault Trancart et sa guide Manoelle Pauli ont pour objectif de participer aux Jeux Paralympiques d'hiver de Beijing 2022.

(Press release)

## **Adaptive Skiing and Winter Sports - Invitation to Courmayeur 19th April 2019**

Whilst I was attending the International Ski Travel Market 2019 (Brixental - Austria) it was a pleasure to accept an invitation by the Courmayeur Tourist Office to come on

a site-inspection and discuss further the possibilities for the inclusive, accessible, health and well-being benefits to be gained by our beneficiaries visiting the ski resort.

Ski 2 Freedom has known Courmayeur for a number of years and, had a few beneficiaries staying there (blind, paraplegic, and autism) but only now have we had the opportunity of officially visiting and discussing future plans for working together to promote adaptive, assisted skiing and snowboarding for our beneficiaries and help Courmayeur Tourism to enhance their existing adventures and experiences for a totally inclusive and accessible ski, winter and summer life-enhancing holiday.

A rather circuitous route on Good Friday (left Gstaad to go via the Mont Blanc Tunnel but discovered a 3 hour wait so returned to Switzerland and went via the Grand Saint Bernard Tunnel), meant that I arrived a little later than planned, but Alessandra Borre(Courmayeur Mont Blanc Tourist Office and my host for the day) had re-arranged the programme so that I did not miss out on any of the scheduled meetings.

First stop was at the Val Veny Gondola with a brief chat to Elena Garda (Ski Lift Operations) before heading up in an amazingly iconic cable-car to meet with Andrea Borney and his wife.



Andrea is director of Antenne Handicap (Valle d'Aosta ONLUS). [www.antenehandicap.it](http://www.antenehandicap.it) and has many years experience with all types of conditions, but especially physical and neurological. He has a vast array of GotoSki and GotoSnowboard along with an amazing support for a prosthetic, which has enabled a single-leg amputee to ski with confidence. He also has a couple of dual-skis for guiding those unable to ski-standing.

A charming man and his wife runs the ski rental shop. They both share our empathy and desire to see more people benefiting from being on the



mountain with family and friends. There is a restaurant just beside the ski shop and easy access from the Gondola. Although Snow-Blades would be required as there is about a 50 m traverse over to Antenne's office (he can come over and help if required). For those not skiing, or just wanting to enjoy the fabulous scenery, then walking sticks a good idea.

Ski 2 Freedom and Antenne Handicap will definitely be working together next winter to support adaptive skiing in Courmayeur!

@courmayeurmontblanc #skicourmayeur #skiitaly #aostaski #snowboardcourmayeur #montebianco #montblanc

### **Lunch and Courmayeur village**

I next visited a fabulous family-run hotel Lo Scoiattolo - 4\* hotel this is a well located and very friendly and welcoming place to stay. Fully wheelchair accessible (although the lift is of the minimum size to access the upper bedrooms - some are fully wheelchair accessible with shower). There is a slightly larger lift on the ground floor which goes down to the Wine Bar (Giorgia Perrod, the owner, is a Sommelier so delighted to help with a wine tasting or two.....).

@locoiattolo #wineitaly

Alessandra and I took a typical Italian lunch at La Padella - centrally located and wheelchair accessible - although no specific loo for a wheelchair user. @lapadella #italianfood #pizza #aostacooking

After this we walked through the village - all flat (although a few inclines away from the main street). But really this is a very accessible village for wheelchair users, those with walking sticks and with limited mobility. For blind and visually impaired it is not so bad either.

Three further hotel visits - although enroute I managed to pick up a few vegetables, fruit and cheese from Frutta e Verdura di Grosso (I gather the best place to go) which meant Easter Sunday Lunch was sorted! A quick step into a heaven of Grappa, wine, ..... With a quick tasting of a locally made G nepi made stopping off at Enoteca Goio a memorable experience!



**Grand Hotel Royal e Golf 5\*** and a superb place for all our beneficiaries. This historic and beautiful hotel is fully wheelchair accessible (again small lift sadly) but it is a simply wonderful hotel with an

amazingly warm and welcoming atmosphere. Certainly it is high on the list of special places to stay. Even if you are not staying, then go and enjoy a glass of Prosecco in the large but extremely comfortable bar - sitting room with magnificent views of the mountains. Two excellent restaurants can be found here and it just has to be a place to either stay or indulge one's passion for good food!

Le Massif Courmayeur can be found slightly further along the main street and again is fully wheelchair accessible. This time with a much larger lift! It is part of the Leading Hotels of Italy Group so has a slightly different feel about it but would be a perfect place to stay. They have 4 bedrooms adapted for wheelchair users and one has a fabulously large stone terrace - this leads up some steps to the nearby street. It prides itself on being a 'health and sport' hotel so it has a superb spa and wellness centre and a restaurant that endorses a healthy life-style.



Gran Baita 4\* - this was the final stop of, what had been a long but amazing visit, and it is a gem of a family owned hotel. The family also own several other hotels and I believe will be of the same high standard as this one. It is perfectly located - towards the Monte Bianco end of the village and just heaven! Warm, welcoming and superb adapted bedrooms for wheelchair users. We are lucky that Ski 2 Freedom as a couple of UK ski companies that our part of our Mountain Friends Membership who would also be able to help with arranging your trip here.

**Arrivederci e ci vediamo Courmayeur - mille grazie!!**

**For more information about adaptive skiing in Courmayeur and all the other adventures and experiences, along with more detailed information on the hotels, please contact Catherine Cosby at [catherine.cosby@ski2freedom.com](mailto:catherine.cosby@ski2freedom.com) or on 0041 76 466 1417**