

Telemarking in the Dolomites (17-24 January 2026) – Ros Brown Grant

After two weeks of teaching track skiing in Austria and Italy to club members from London and Manchester, which were great fun but also quite full-on, I was ready for a holiday which would be a week's telemark skiing in the Dolomites with some friends from the Tyneside Loipers ski club. The same group of us had met up the year before in Ortisei, a resort just outside the Sellaronda circuit in the Dolomiti Superski area, and had a great time.



However, this year we wanted to be directly on the Sellaronda circuit which consists of about 40+ km of skiing around the magnificent Sella massif, and so booked our accommodation in the little town of Corvara in the Alta Badia ski area. This turned out to be an excellent choice, but not necessarily for the reasons we had thought it would. Not least, we didn't actually ski the Sellaronda circuit again as we wanted to explore some other high-level parts of the region, in particular the Marmolada which, at 3265m, is the highest peak in the area.

Compared to the previous year when the snow on the pistes had been fantastic but at times sparse on the hillsides, we had even less snow on the fields and hills of Corvara which were distinctly green and rocky in parts, but nonetheless the pistes were still in excellent condition.



The Dolomiti Superski area has clearly invested massively in snow-making in the past few years and guarantees that pistes will be skiable for months on end, which makes it a really safe bet for a decent holiday in this era of erratic snowfall and unpredictable temperatures. Their lift system has also been brilliantly maintained, and enables you to scale the Marmolada via three cable car systems up to a panoramic terrace at the top and then to do a continuous 5km ski down to a high-level pass on a very pleasant red run with superb

views of the mountains and crags all the way. We were particularly lucky that the weather all week was very stable: sunshine all day, very light to negligible winds and yet cold enough temperatures for the snow to remain unchanged.

The actual pistes in the Corvara resort are very varied: a mass of short blues to get the legs going on the first morning and then some lovely long cruisy reds and testing blacks including



the championship slope known as the Gran Risa. When we wanted to concentrate on practising our telemarking rather than moving from place to place around the area, we headed for some quieter spots off the main Sellaronda route. Particular favourites were Colfosco and La Villa, each of which has some great wide blues and reds on which there was hardly anyone else and so we knew our telemark turns wouldn't get us in the way of others doing just parallels.

As has been the case in all the places I've skied at in recent years, including Norway, we hardly saw any other telemarkers, though when we did a friendly thumb's up or a 'Bravo!' was the usual response from the ones we spotted.

Corvara itself is a very pleasant place with some nice bars for après-ski but not much life after about 10pm at night (which suits me fine, I have to say!). We stayed at a BnB but had our evening meals at a hotel about 100m further down the road, which seems to be a popular formula in this area. The restaurants on the pistes, which usually call themselves huts or refuges, are almost all very good and affordable, with one or two much pricier places featuring posh waiter service and customers clearly not dressed for the slopes but who have come up by snowcat to enjoy a lobster and oyster lunch with fine wines. Needless to say, we ordered the cheapest thing we could see on the menu (grilled mixed veg – delicious!) but were still treated very well by the waiting staff who could have looked down their noses at us as a bunch of scruffs but were unfailingly polite and courteous. The main criterion for choosing where to have lunch soon became not so much the food or the price as the music being played: Austrian oompah music mixed with football songs in German was a real turnoff whilst cool jazz floating out of the speakers was often enough to entice us in...

All in all, I can thoroughly recommend the Dolomiti Superski area to other club members who like to telemark: the pistes are plentiful, the food is great, you can get by speaking either German or Italian if you want to practise your language skills and the magnificent rocky scenery to be found in all directions is unsurpassed. It would be good to hear from other telemarkers in the club where they have been skiing this winter, as I know various people have talked about places like Hintertux and Porte La Vanoise, so do please think about sharing your experiences via the club newsletter to those members who aren't necessarily familiar with these resorts and who would doubtless be interested to know more about them!