A portrait of actor Leo Woodall. He is wearing a thick, white, ribbed turtleneck sweater. He has short, styled brown hair and a light beard. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile, resting his chin on his right hand. A gold ring is visible on his ring finger. The background is a plain, light grey color.

Leo Woodall on  
sex scenes,  
self-confidence,  
and seducing  
Bridget Jones  
‘The phrase  
toyboy doesn’t  
bother me’

Travel > Ski

# As I turn 40, I plan to make midlife my ‘adventure era’

After years of family holidays, our writer and her husband are prioritising ‘us time’ and pushing boundaries in their next chapter

Gift this article free



Writer Kari and her husband headed on a ski break to St Moritz for their first child-free break

**Kari Colmans**  
Travel Writer  
20 February 2025 12:00pm GMT

We were going to be the most adventurous [family globetrotters](#) the world had ever seen... before we actually had kids.

For a little while after the birth of our first, we managed to cling to these aspirations. With just one toddler, my husband and I managed to briefly continue our pre-childbearing escapades: a term-time jolly to [Turks and Caicos](#); a 12-hour night flight to a safari in [Botswana](#) – the jerky, rutting off-roader even lulling our adventurous firstborn to sleep, we boasted.

But then one became two, and two became three – and suddenly, safaris and scuba diving, carnival-chasing and jungle caving, became a thing of the distant past, replaced by [family-friendly all-inclusives](#) that we could just about swing around school holidays.



As both Kari and her husband had never been skiing, their St Moritz trip was the perfect bonding opportunity

And yes, many waved the holiday trump card at us while we debated having child number three (the others were five and seven when he was born two years ago). But my husband and I reconciled this fact by promising each other that, once we were through the glorious – if all-consuming – baby years one last time, we would come together to rediscover, and reconnect, over our shared wanderlust.

With milestone fortieth birthdays looming – his last month, mine next year – and our youngest now a walking, talking toddler, we decided it was finally time to make good on that deal. Less a midlife crisis, more a “let’s-do-this”.

We agreed that the best way to really kick-start what we were now affectionately calling our “adventure era” was to do something neither of us had ever tried, but always wanted to experience. After much deliberation, we arrived at a seemingly perfect option: skiing. We booked a weekend away, just the two of us, to Switzerland’s picturesque St Moritz.



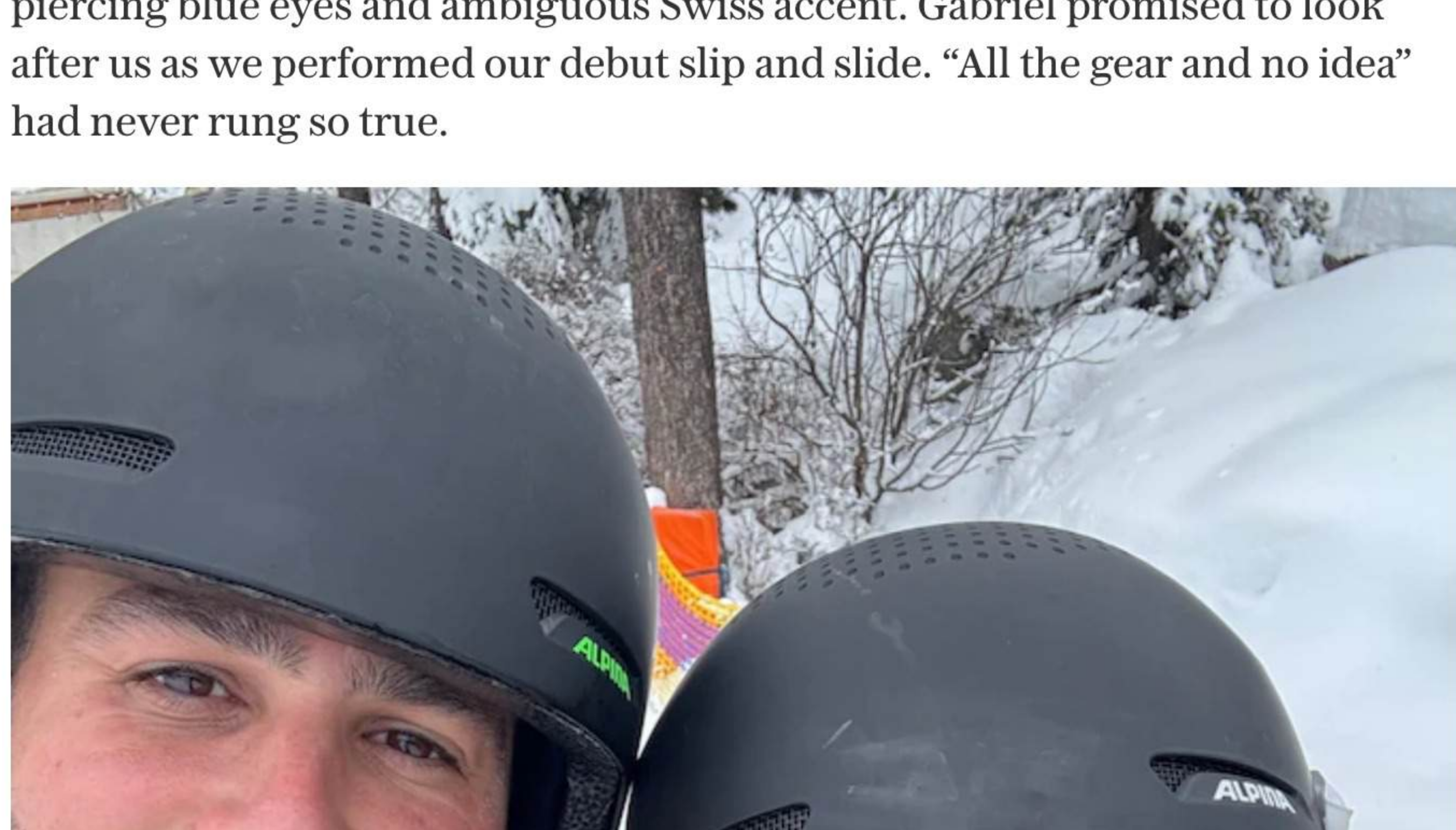
The couple stayed at Hotel Giardino

I had my reservations: my husband has always been sports mad, excelling on every pitch he’s cared to kick, putt or throw a ball across, while I’ve used the classic, catch-all “lady problems” to excuse myself from most physical activities since the age of 11. Was 40 too late to teach an old(ish) dog new tricks?

Firstly, as non-skiers, we had no idea what to pack. After several hours of deliberation around two empty suitcases, I panicked and called ski rental outfitters EcoSki, where a helpful concierge asked a few questions and then selected a “bundle” for each of us. So far, so good.

The short flight and three-hour, postcard-worthy train ride from Zurich felt like a sensational breath of fresh air, and we both agreed that, should all else fail, the trip had probably been worth it for the journey alone. Arriving exhausted, we settled in for the night at a charming little hotel, bellies full of cheese and wine, excited for the following morning’s first lesson.

Taking to the slopes bright and early, we were thrilled to find our instructor was a glorious mishmash of every cliché we’d ever heard, all tanned skin, piercing blue eyes and ambiguous Swiss accent. Gabriel promised to look after us as we performed our debut slip and slide. “All the gear and no idea” had never rung so true.



‘As we glide into our forties, we’ve resolved to dive head first into unknown terrain once more.’ Credit: Kari Colmans

My husband went first, hands on his knees, gliding down the first teeny-weeny trail with bravura. His confidence swelling, he went again, now smirking like a child on Christmas morning. Nothing could dent his new-found bravado: even after skidding head first into a fence, accidentally switching off the “magic carpet” snow escalator with his forehead, he kept going. I couldn’t remember the last time I’d seen him so focused, so energised.

Then it was my turn. How could I follow that? More importantly, what was I thinking? Who would choreograph the school karate club rota if I ended up with two broken knees?

“Pizza plough...” I mumbled, a catchy slogan skier-friends had texted, without elaboration. As Gabriel tentatively released his hold – reminding me to look out, not down – I instantly became the galumphing hippo from *Fantasia*. Hands to thighs, ankles out, crouched in what can only be described as a stubborn squat, I managed the first mound at glacial speed, with Gabriel as a safety net. Up and down we trudged then slithered for an hour – to me, to you – as, gradually, I gained momentum. My husband – more assured in his abilities, less concerned about acquiring an injury that would prevent him from navigating school runs or supervising soft plays – headed for the next slope over.



Hotel Giardino feels contemporary but is deeply rooted in the Engadine tradition of the Swiss Alps

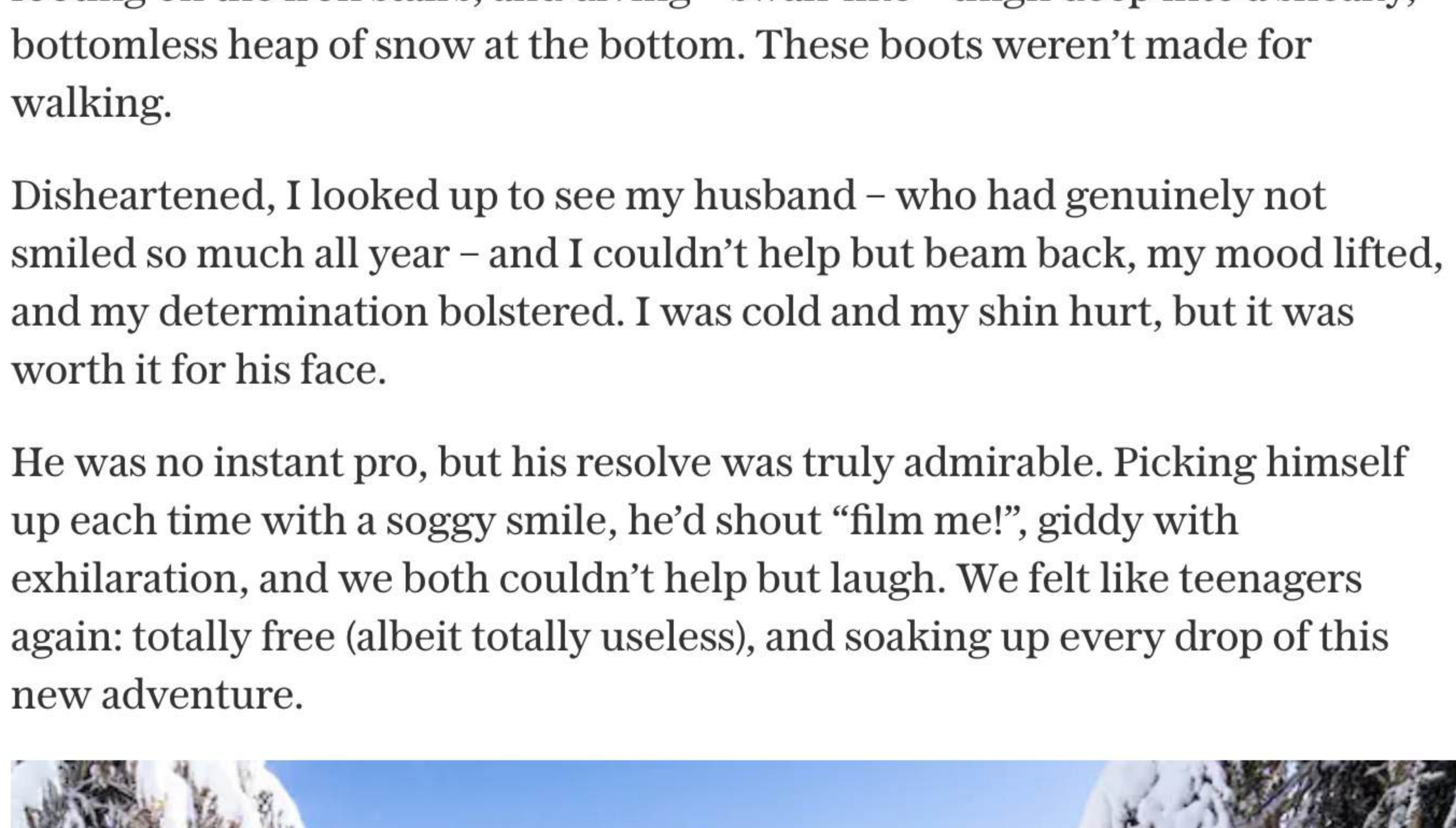
Up he chugged on the pulley ski lift – sun on his face, smiling broadly – then off he fell, face down into the snow. Hiding my snort of amusement behind a heartening thumbs up from the bottom of the slope, I made sure to capture the moment on camera. Sent to the family group, the picture was immediately reappropriated into a meme – a lasting snapshot that’s still doing the rounds – by his younger snow-bunny siblings.

Our one-hour lesson was over, all too soon it was time for my first solo attempt. I pulled up my big-girl salopettes and side-shuffled to the top, then down I skidded – straight into a fence, with an anticlimactic thud. As I lay, knees splayed, a five-year-old propelled by with the consummate grace and proficiency of a veteran.

I trudged off for a coffee, clippity clop in my awkward ski hooves, missing my footing on the iron stairs, and diving – swan-like – thigh deep into a sneaky, bottomless heap of snow at the bottom. These boots weren’t made for walking.

Disheartened, I looked up to see my husband – who had genuinely not smiled so much all year – and I couldn’t help but beam back, my mood lifted, and my determination bolstered. I was cold and my shin hurt, but it was worth it for his face.

He was no instant pro, but his resolve was truly admirable. Picking himself up each time with a soggy smile, he’d shout “film me!”, giddy with exhilaration, and we both couldn’t help but laugh. We felt like teenagers again: totally free (albeit totally useless), and soaking up every drop of this new adventure.



‘With only two days in St Moritz, we didn’t have time to progress much beyond beginners’

The rest of the day continued much in the same vein, as he sashayed with comparative ease, improving every time, while I ducked and dived down the most basic gradients, trying not to hit the expert toddlers who eyed me nervously as I passed. Eventually, after one too many run ins with my now-intimate friends, the barriers, I decided to call it a day, opting instead for a hot chocolate on an obliging terrace, from which I cheered on my husband until I got dark.

Then, aching, sweating – but most importantly, cackling – we headed back to the hotel for truffle croque monsieurs and large quantities of alcohol as we reflected on the highs and lows of the day. We relived every tumble, relieved we weren’t seriously injured, and agreed we’d probably got off lightly – bruised egos aside. With only two days in St Moritz, we didn’t have time to progress much beyond beginners, but this was enough to show us what we’d been missing, and remind us how many new experiences – and how much more of the world – we still have left to enjoy.

Aside from wanting to improve their own skills, I am now desperate to teach my children to ski while they’re still young and fearless. The freedom, the fun and the adventure of learning something new, has given us the push we need. A week by the pool in Spain may be wonderful (the sun, the sea, the kid’s club...), but it can never compare to experiencing something so uplifting and enriching.

As we glide into our forties, we’ve resolved to dive head first into unknown terrain once more, stepping back outside the nursery slopes when it comes to planning holidays. With our first ski trip just the tip of the iceberg, our adventure eras are off to a promising start – and this is only the beginning.

## Essentials

Kari Colmans was a guest of [Hotel Giardino](#), which has doubles from £533 per night.

For more information on Swiss public transport, visit [travelswitzerland.com](#); for ski clothing rental, visit [ecoski.co.uk](#)