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## **Will this recession finally kill the ski industry? Erna Low says: No!**

- How Erna Low fared last winter season
- Results of surveys on client base – why we lost and why we gained
- Study of notable trends
- Forecast for next season

With the recession deepening and a big question mark looming over how tour operators will fare next winter, [Erna Low](#) has conducted several studies on why our clients changed their holiday habits. Where did we lose bookers? Where did we gain? Will skiers ski next winter in the light of economic uncertainty? The results are released today in the [Erna Low Credit Crunch Report](#).

[The International Passenger Survey](#) predicts that 2009 is likely to see the biggest negative growth for a considerable time and only the second fall in overseas holidays in over a decade (after 2008). However, from the recent studies conducted, [Erna Low](#) is confident that skiers will still find a way to keep skiing for years to come.

Notable changes in habit include: choosing less expensive departure dates; opting for self catering packages rather than a catered chalet holiday; a preference to self drive; heading for less expensive resorts with good quality accommodation. Due to Erna Low's extensive portfolio of accommodation in over 80 resorts worldwide, we are well equipped to offer clients great alternatives when economising on their ski holiday.

Key highlights of our '08/09 season survey showed that while Erna Low interestingly lost marginally more clients than were gained, the value of the holiday booked increased, providing a more profitable yield. With 45% of lost bookers blaming the financial situation for not taking a ski holiday, nearly a quarter of new bookers opted for Erna Low purely for price and excellent value of product. Several responses to our survey stated a move away from the more expensive package operators to Erna Low as a means to keep quality skiing in the recession.

'The current economic climate did change our plans and we took a self catering rather than hotel option - surprisingly we did find that self drive was very convenient, especially with a family. It was also a last minute decision encouraged by great snow conditions which meant we felt that the deals available were not too expensive,' says one happy client who almost decided against taking a ski holiday last season.

Looking at the winter season ahead, Joanna Yellowlees-Bound, CEO of Erna Low states: "Skiers have enjoyed excellent prices this season and have scooped up some considerable bargains but next year is going to be different, and skiers need to be aware of this. Last year the major tour operators and chalet companies did not see the crunch coming, and were badly burnt. They took large bed guarantees and they had to sell, come what may. The only way to do this was to slash their prices. Next season will be very different - greater caution amongst operators and far fewer bed guarantees will result in reduced capacity all round. But this isn't death to the next ski season - it's a simple case of good housekeeping to ensure survival."





Erna Low has many great tips to help skiers, their friends and families to ski this winter – without breaking the bank! Full results and money saving tips for savvy skiers can be found in the Credit Crunch Report as a download from the press centre on our brand new ski holiday website [www.ernalow.co.uk/press-centre](http://www.ernalow.co.uk/press-centre) .

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**Note to Editors:**

About Erna Low - Erna Low is the oldest ski tour operator in the UK, sending clients on winter holidays since 1932. Specialising in self-catering holidays for the independent traveller, Erna Low offers ski holiday to suit every need and budget to over 80 top resorts around the world. In addition to the price match guarantee and great ski offers, Erna Low offers highly competitive rates on accommodation-only packages with the possibility of combining special rates for self drivers on the Eurotunnel. Erna Low was voted the 'Best Independent Ski Operator to France' by Maison de la France in the 2008 British Travel Trade Awards.

**1<sup>st</sup> June 2009:** Erna Low launches its brand-new [ski holiday website](http://www.ernalow.co.uk) with defining new features set to improve the usability of the site; it contains comprehensive search facilities, prominently displayed offers, more accessible pricing, geographical navigation of featured residences and resorts resulting in a site which is overall easier to navigate coupled with useful tools such the '[ski holiday calculator](#)' aimed at consumers to help establish when would be the best time to book their holiday. Due to high demand from our loyal clients who are constantly giving us feedback on their ski holidays, the website goes hand in hand with the launch of the Erna Low [blog](#). We are constantly striving to revise and modernize our product and keeping our look 'fresh' and up-to-date ensures we are ahead in the market in all areas as holiday searches move further online.

Holiday reservations and enquiries: [www.ernalow.co.uk](http://www.ernalow.co.uk) 0845 863 0525. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

