

Recharge

LIFE BEYOND WORK

Travel

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GUN Powder

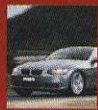
The thirst for extreme sports has opened up a whole new edgy world for skiers. Here are 10 of the best places to practise the white arts.





Fashion

Seam spirit in China ...page 62



Crave

The new home of consumer lust ...page 64



Film

Scorsese visits the departure lounge ...page 66



BLAME THE RISE AND RISE of extreme snow sports on the snowboarders. Snowboarding is now in the Winter Olympics and the skiers are trying to keep up - taking to the terrain park and challenging the boarders on the jumps, half-pipes and off-piste terrain. Any boarder will tell you that everything the skiers know, the snowboarders taught them.

Gone are the toothpick skis of last century, with their rear-entry boots replaced by fatter skis for off-piste to create a powder platform, carving skis for on-piste to give more turning, and all-mountain skis to cater for all terrain.

Then there's the "twin tip", a ski that has the same fat tips at the front as at the back. Why? So skiers can ride "switch" - in layman's terms, that's "backwards". With heathen top-sheet graphics and names like K2's "Seth Vicious" (named after extreme skier Seth Morrison and punk rocker Sid Vicious) for the boys and "Miss Demeanour" for the girls, twin tips are the new frontier.

Snow sports have always provided good boasting rights and with Japan, India, Russia and South America coming into their own as ski destinations, there is more kudos in skiing further afield. Take your camera to capture yourself on film, set it to some hard-core music and email the result to envious friends. There's no point in going if you don't talk it up.

TOP 10 BOASTING RIGHTS

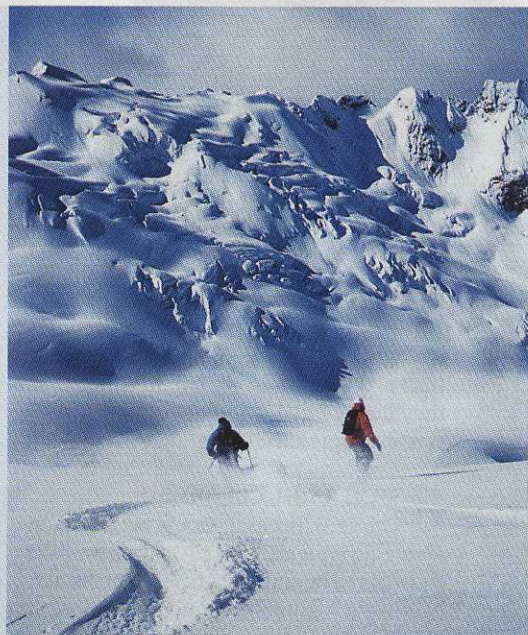
1 GULMARG, INDIA
Rebel-plagued Kashmir is the hotspot of the moment for keen skiers. Ungroomed powder accessed by a gondola, no crowds, inexpensive and remote. Take your avalanche beacon and a shovel and let people know where you're going. The ski patrols have been trained by our own Mt Hotham crew, so you'll be in good hands.
www.himalayanpowderdreams.com

2 SKI WITH A PRO IN CHILE
Extreme free-skier Chris Davenport is a two-time world champion and holds an annual Ski with the Superstars week in Portillo, Chile. Turn some tricks with Davenport, Chris Anthony, who has featured in extreme ski films, and Wendy Fisher, three-time world extreme champion. Add Portillo with its wine nights and you're in for serious action on- and off-piste.
www.skiportillo.com

3 VALLEE BLANCHE, CHAMONIX, FRANCE
A lift-accessible glacier run with risks. Ski too wide and find yourself free-falling into a crevasse. The run drops more than 2.7km vertically and is a whopping 22km long. To get to the top, prepare to cling to a rope on a narrow ice-step ridge with major drops. The rest is easy by comparison. It's best to take a guide, avalanche beacons and a camera.
www.chamonix.com

4 HELI SKI
Act like James Bond and chopper in to the ski destination of your guide's choosing. One day doesn't cut it for boasting rights, so book in for a five-days-or-more extravaganza with CMH Heli Ski in Canada. Five-star cuisine in remote lodges by night, waist-deep powder by day. And they'll take you to terrain to suit your level.
www.cmhski.com

5 CAT SKIING
Sometimes called the poor man's heli, cat skiing has big benefits. Unlike helicopters, these giant caterpillar vehicles can



THE WHITE STUFF Extreme world champion Chris Davenport, at Aspen, left, and carving in Canada, above

transport up to 14 people to remote terrain in all weather. It's one payment upfront so you get as many runs in a day as you want. The best for tree-skiing is at Powder Mountain outside Whistler in British Columbia. The closest is Mt Potts on NZ's South Island. Chopper up and let the cat take you up and down all day.
www.powdermountaincatskiing.com;
www.mtpotts.co.nz

6 HIGHLANDS BOWL, ASPEN
With skis strapped to your back, trek the 45 minutes beyond 3500m and ski down this back-country terrain. "The Bowl" is a patrolled off-piste area for experts only on Aspen's Highlands Mountain. If you can make it up in one piece, you're doing well - coming down is the easy part.
www.aspensnowmass.com

7 CRAIGIEBURN, CANTERBURY, NEW ZEALAND
This private club field, an hour-and-a-half from Christchurch, is steep and deep, with chutes, ridges, gullies and no grooming. First you must conquer the "nutcracker", a tool attached to the waist that flicks over a rope pulley powered by a tractor. Lodging is bunk-style and power is by generator, so



DRIFTER Getting stuck into it

it's lights out at 9 unless there are more than eight people in the bar, in which case they'll stay until you're finished.

www.craigieburn.co.nz

8 SILVERTON, COLORADO

This is skiing as it should be. Silverton Mountain is for experts only, so you won't be endangered by out-of-control beginners. Lift passes are limited so the mountain doesn't get overrun and the lift accesses some of North America's most exciting terrain, left natural as the ski gods intended.

www.silvertonmountain.com

9 INFERNO RACE, MURREN, SWITZERLAND

The oldest ski race in the world, founded by Sir Arnold Lunn in 1928, it is an annual event attracting more than 2000 skiers. Held in January, it's traditionally 15km of steep, narrow and uphill terrain. The Inferno has major kudos and is for amateurs. If Sir Arnold's 90-year-old son can complete it, then anyone who can handle a resort black run can, too. You may not win a medal, but you'll get down alive.

www.inferno-muerren.ch

10 SKI AND SURF IN THE ONE DAY

It can be done. Lebanon, Cyprus and Hawaii have accessible ski areas within driving distance of the sea. But beware, Hawaii's Mauna Kea isn't an official area so there are no lifts or snow reports, just one 4WD to the top and the same 4WD at the base for pick-up. Oh, and you'll be driving. Lebanon has more than six "lifted" resorts with accommodation. Cyprus has one, Mt Olympus, which sits just under 2000m with variable conditions.

www.hawaiisnowskiclub.com

www.skileb.com

www.skicyprus.com