



SNOW 101

SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE SKI SEASON IS NEARLY UPON US. MAYBE YOU'VE NEVER SKIED BEFORE AND YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START. OR MAYBE YOU'RE AN OLD HAND BUT LOOKING FOR SOMEWHERE NEW. OUR TEAM OF SKI EXPERTS IS HERE TO HELP LUXURY TRAVELLERS DECIDE WHERE TO SKI IN AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND SOUTH AMERICA, AND WHERE TO STAY WHILE YOU'RE THERE. THIS IS *Luxury Travel* MAGAZINE'S COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO SKIING IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE.

BY *Craig Tansley, Bronwen Gora and Jim Darby.*





SKI / AUSTRALIA

MANY OF AUSTRALIA'S BEST SKI RESORTS ARE WITHIN DRIVING DISTANCE OF CAPITAL CITIES AND OFFER A MIX OF TERRAIN ALONG WITH A FUN VILLAGE ATMOSPHERE – THE ELEMENTS OF A TOP SKI WEEKEND.

MOUNT HOTHAM VICTORIA

WHERE TO SKI

Thanks to a quirk of history, Hotham's village sits above the slopes, rather than snug below like most mountain resorts. The upsides include amazing mountain views and easy access to the skiing and boarding; the downside can be exposure to the upper mountain weather, but even that has an upside if you're inside and the fire's crackling. This is an area known for its challenging terrain and it has a core of very good skiers and boarders hooked on that challenge. They can also party hard – get along to a night with DJ Eddy at the General Store and Hotham's underlying character is quickly revealed.

WHERE TO STAY

BLOWHARD

Luxury doesn't deny creativity, or the odd quirk. Blowhard must have driven its builders nuts, so far is it from conforming to an ordered frame or form, but therein lies the appeal of this architectural mille feuille of the mountains. Located on its many layers are a cinema, a rooftop bar, a smart kitchen/dining space and sun decks complete with barbecue. Blowhard will sleep 12, and the slopes of Hotham's Basin area are straight out the door. It



BLOWHARD

is part of the Hotham Heights Chalet development, the premier accommodation on the mountain. **RATES:** From A\$3,387 for two nights for up to 12 people. blowhardallyear.com

ABSOLLUT 1

As the only ski resort built above the ski slopes in Australasia, at Hotham you can ski down from your accommodation without riding any ski-lifts. And nowhere is closer to the ski slopes than Absolut 1, a huge open-plan two-bedroom self-contained apartment built just metres from the Basin ski run. You're only 100 metres from the Village chairlift and 150 metres from Hotham Central – home to Hotham's most

luxurious restaurant, the White Room. You'll enjoy unhindered views out across 320 hectares of skiable terrain and beyond to the Australian Alps. There are a number of high end self-contained apartments on the mountain suitable for couples, families or large groups and all can be booked through the official resort website.

RATES: From NZ\$2,058 for two nights in ski season for up to eight guests. mthotham.com.au

CHALET HOTHAM

What's best about Chalet Hotham is you can see out over the ski fields and the surrounding mountains from every point of these studio,

loft and one- and two-bedroom apartments. Built a few metres from the action at Hotham Central, these European-style chalets have been refurbished recently and now have all the mod-cons – from European hydronic heating throughout every room to huge, spacious lounge rooms with floor-to-ceiling windows to utilise the spectacular view, spa baths and gas log fires. You can ski right out to the slopes from your front door.

RATES: From A\$619 for two people for two nights. chaletthotham.com.au

MOOSE LODGE

Moose Lodge is at Dinner Plain, a small resort with just one poma lift and great cross-country trails, 10 kilometres from Hotham. If you detect a nod to North America at Moose Lodge, you're on target – both architect and owner are from Colorado and it comes complete with that symbol of US residential accomplishment, the "great room". And great it is, with a booming entertainment system, sofas enough to fill an airport lounge and a big open fireplace. Scoot around the other side of that fireplace and you're at the wood-fired oven, heart of a huge kitchen. Moose has four big bedrooms and will sleep eight, more or less. Cross-country ski trails are out the back door and the slopes of Hotham are about half an hour up the road.

RATES: From A\$3,200 per night during the ski season. mooselodge.au.com



FALLS CREEK



FRUEAUF VILLAGE



FALLS CREEK VICTORIA

WHERE TO SKI

This long-established and charming resort has gentle slopes with nary a scary pitch in sight. For this reason it is a firm family favourite as well as with beginners and intermediates who want to toddle around without being frightened of accidentally skiing onto an experts run. That said there are steeper slopes on which intermediates can improve their skills. With its snow-covered pedestrian village shrouded by snow gums where cars are forbidden to travel, Falls Creek is Australia's prettiest ski resort. The village is large and the mountainside setting high enough for almost every lodge to be ski in ski out. Walking here would keep you quite fit: the streets are steep. Cars remain in the village base car park for the duration of a guest's stay and lodges are accessed via snowcat.

WHERE TO STAY

QUAY WEST RESORT & SPA FALLS CREEK

Located at the base of Falls Creek ski resort, Quay West Resort & Spa is Australia's most ambitious new on-snow resort. Quay West allows you to sit in your own hot tub on the balcony of your

apartment or penthouse suite and look out across the village and ski runs, and down over Kiewa Valley. There's also a restaurant, bar, café, gym and luxurious day spa within the resort. You can choose from one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments.

RATES: From A\$225 per night. mirvachotels.com/quay-west-resort-spa-falls-creek

MT BAW BAW VICTORIA

Mount Baw Baw is the closest ski resort to Melbourne, a two and a half hour drive from the capital. The resort is only small (around 30 hectares) and the slopes are mostly suited for beginners. Luxury accommodation options are limited as Baw Baw can be comfortably skied in a day trip from Melbourne.

HALLS RETREAT

There are a number of self-contained lodges in the village of varying quality and the pick of the bunch is Halls Retreat, a luxury

one-bedroom apartment in the Tanji Creek Lodge. It's a romantic retreat for couples, so no children allowed, but the apartment is sleek and stylish, and close to the base of the t-bar.

RATES: From A\$175 per night. mtbawbaw.com.au

COORA VALLEY CHALET

If you're skiing with the family try the Coora Valley Chalet. It sleeps up to six people and has a full kitchen, Wi-Fi and a mini pool table. 2013 rates are yet to be released. mtbawbaw.com.au

FJALL

The name gives a nudge to the design influences, and there's nothing wrong with that – the Scandinavians are no slouches when it comes to life and style in the snow. Fjall has a brilliant location – close to the access road on one side and to the ski trails on the other. The three-bedroom apartments can sleep up to eight and have either a balcony or an outdoor terrace. Fjall was previously a commercial lodge and its very thorough remake as apartments is only a couple of years old, so there's no rough to the edges. **RATES:** Three-bedroom apartments from A\$1,395 for two nights. fjall.com.au

ASTRA ALPINE LODGE

This large luxury lodge has something for everyone – plush double rooms, bunk beds for the kids, stylish penthouses and a huge range of communal areas like lounge bars, a swimming pool, sauna, spa, restaurant, dining room and lots of cosy spots to relax in front of the fire. If you're after a break from skiing the property runs yoga



classes or there's a vodka bar with more than 70 varieties on offer.

RATES: Rooms from A\$260 per night and penthouse suites from A\$1,900 per night during the ski season.

astralodge.com.au

FRUEAUF VILLAGE

This is a clever collection of apartments named after Ore Frueauf, a Falls Creek pioneer. The apartments come in various shapes and sizes, some of which can be joined to make large chalets that sleep as many as 12. They're generally well-appointed and nearly all have the highlight of a hot tub on the balcony (for some it's on the rooftop); just the thing after a day's skiing. There's a bar and cafe at the heart of it all and you can ski from here down the village's snow-covered roads to the lifts.

RATES: Studios from A\$561 for two nights during the ski season. fvfalls.com.au

HUSKI

This impressive snowflake-shaped building is a nest of 14 apartments with sleek New York-style interiors. Think heated marble floors dotted with cow skin rugs, full kitchens and balconies with Jacuzzis overlooking the Kiewa Valley. Common areas feature all black walls punctuated with chic artwork. There are studios, one- to three-bedroom apartments and a four-bedroom split level penthouse. Hungry? Several top Sydney chefs have taken over the Three Blue Ducks café/restaurant on the ground floor.

RATES: Studio apartments from A\$744 for two nights during the ski season.

huski.com.au

MT BULLER VICTORIA

WHERE TO SKI

Mt Buller is to Victoria what Thredbo is to NSW: its state's most well-established ski village with much on offer including more than 30 bars and restaurants. Treat yourself in the impressive Breathaker spa and at the other end of the spectrum enjoy a schnapps at traditional Austrian lodge Pension Grimus. The skiing is terrific for every level – gentle learner slopes to gnarly steeps – and most lodging is ski-in ski-out. While the slopes are satisfying Mt Buller can be plagued by a lack of snow on the lower slopes. It has 22 lifts, the most of any resort in Victoria.

WHERE TO STAY

PENSION GRIMUS

A lot about the character of desirable mountain shelter has to do with the characters they belong to. Pension Grimus has the delightfully mischevious Hans Grimus at the helm (although it's Lotte Grimus that can be thanked for its calm and order) and it comes complete with handshakes from

Hans and a tune on the squeezebox after dinner. Pension Grimus has tributes to the Tyrol region of the European Alps in its design and make-up, the rooms are smart, the bar is lively, the restaurant makes the best schnitzel this side of, well, probably Vienna and there's a ski lift 50 metres away.

RATES: Rooms from A\$275 per night and apartment from A\$395 per night during the ski season. pensiongrimus.com.au



HUSKI



PENSION GRIMUS

**BREATHAKER ALL SUITE HOTEL**

Built just 200 metres from the six-seater Holden Chairlift – Mt Buller's largest and fastest chairlift – and a further 200 metres from Mt Buller's bustling alpine village, Breathaker offers skiers the best location on the mountain. Built on a ridge overlooking the surrounding national park, Breathaker has luxurious and romantic suites with one of Australia's best alpine day spas. Mt Buller's restaurants and cafés are all close to hand while you can almost ski into your accommodation from the Bourke Street ski run.

RATES: From A\$250 per night. breathaker.com.au

MT BULLER CHALET

If you are looking for the ultimate in comfort just steps away from a ski lift network here is your answer. This hotel has 61 gorgeous king rooms and suites plus a house sized penthouse featuring exotic stuffed animals collected by the property developer and owner Bruno Grollo. The dining room and cocktail bar have lovely views over the thickly wooded Victorian alps.

RATES: Rooms from A\$324 per night and suites from A\$500 per night during the ski season. mtbullerchalet.com.au

BURNTHUT

This luxury house sleeps up to 10 people across four bedrooms and a loft. The first floor is one large, open-plan living and dining space with a huge stone fireplace and a kitchen with a commercial espresso machine, five burner Smeg oven and double door fridge. There's a sauna on the top floor,



THREDBO

along with the master suite with ensuite and spa, and a drying room and laundry on the ground floor. Ski straight out the door and onto the Shaky Knees run.

RATES: From A\$2,000 per night with a five-night minimum stay. burnthut.com

**THREDBO
NEW SOUTH WALES****WHERE TO SKI**

This ski destination is renowned as the most sophisticated village in New South Wales – the best bars and restaurant scene, as well as the longest runs and highest lifted point in Australia. As such it is the choice of celebrities and captains of industry. That said much work has been done to appeal to beginners and intermediates and as a result there are excellent facilities and runs for both including the Thredboland building for children. Thredbo offers over 1,100 acres of

skiable terrain and a little ski-in ski-out lodging but most guests reach the lifts with the help of the village shuttle buses as the streets can be rather steep. Vast improvements in snowmaking mean it is almost always possible now to ski right to the bottom of the main runs.

WHERE TO STAY**THE DENMAN HOTEL & SPA**

Set in the heart of Thredbo Village, just a few hundred metres from the chairlift, The Denman Hotel & Spa is one of the country's best boutique alpine hotels. Boasting 36 rooms with mountain views, it combines the old world charm of Europe with ultra-modern furnishings. It also has the only full day spa in Thredbo, one of the region's best restaurants (with floor-to-ceiling windows offering every table views over the slopes) and a cocktail bar that's as chic as any metropolitan bar. **RATES:** From A\$215 per night. thedenman.com.au

THE PEAK

This multi-storey apartment building makes great use of glass, making the apartments light and bright with unmatched views. All apartments have stone flooring, marble bathrooms, gourmet kitchens, heated drying rooms and ski lockers. The building is one street back from the mountain, facing the High Noon run.

RATES: One-bedroom apartments from A\$579 for two nights and two-bedroom apartments from A\$1,245 for two nights. thepeakthredbo.com.au

ON THE RUN

This luxury apartment is atop the crown of Thredbo's five star accommodation. Located at the bottom of the Supertrail, skiers whizz straight by your double glazed windows as you sip champagne from the oversized lounge. Then again you could be availing yourself of the steam room, spa bath, king size beds or simply padding about in bare feet on the heated floors. It's managed by Thredbo's leading chalet leasing group Ski In Ski Out that has self-contained apartments available with one to four bedrooms.

RATES: From A\$1,214 for two nights. skiinskiout.com.au

ELEVATION

These apartments are so good songstress Delta Goodrem stayed here when she was engaged to Brian McFadden. The two- and three-bedroom apartments also include two penthouses, all housed in a seven-storey complex. The



main difference between this style of accommodation and On The Run is that it is slap bang in the middle of the village and offers 180-degree views of the ski slopes and Thredbo. Privacy is assured as the apartments can be accessed from the garages via a secure lobby. **RATES:** Apartments from A\$980 for two nights. thredboelevation.com

PURE CHALET

This was once a private house which has been renovated into a luxe lodge with five bedrooms all with king beds and ensuites. Floors are heated and the lounge features a granite and wood fireplace surround sound and enormous plasma TV. The boot dryer is not only heated but deodorising, too. **RATES:** From A\$1,000 per night. visitsnowymountains.com.au

SEQUOIA THREDBO

Sequoia is right in the middle of the village and home to Thredbo's largest penthouse. The three-bedroom penthouse spans the entire top floor and has five balconies, a natural stone fireplace and a dining table that seats 10. If you only need something smaller choose one-bedroom unit two for the private outdoor Jacuzzi. **RATES:** Apartments from A\$600 for two nights. sequoiathredbo.com.au

ROCKPOOL

This two-bedroom lodge is one of Thredbo's finest. It's spacious and stylish and perfect for families with a separate loft area as well as a five person spa and sauna, tucked away in bushland near the Merritt

River (and close to the rockpool that gives it its name). **RATES:** From A\$6,015 per week during the ski season. rockpoolodge.com.au

PERISHER**NEW SOUTH WALES****WHERE TO SKI**

This is a vast ski field by any measure – 47 ski lifts, seven mountain peaks and four base areas. Most of the terrain (60 per cent) is intermediate and so are most Australian skiers and boarders, so it isn't surprising that Perisher, on the numbers, is Australia's most popular resort. However the extent of its slopes and the snow quality underpinned by its altitude mean those numbers are generally well-spread. There are some gems amongst it all, like lunch on a sunny day at the Guthega Hotel or a morning coffee at Brunelli's in the Perisher Centre. Australia's highest ski resort, Charlotte Pass, is just eight kilometres past Perisher. In winter an oversnow vehicle takes skiers

from the Perisher Skitube station up to the resort. It's great for families with small children and is rarely crowded, so lift lines are never a problem.

WHERE TO STAY**PERISHER VALLEY HOTEL**

If location counts, then count this one in. Slopeside at Perisher's Front Valley, the PVH is true ski-in ski-out accommodation. It has a spa, sauna and in-house massage service, a kids' games room and Snow Gums, a bar and restaurant with some buzz. The rooms look over the slopes and are up to date with their technology and entertainment options. The PVH is part of the Perisher Centre so the resort's kids' centre, ski school and facilities are within easy reach. **RATES:** Rooms from A\$298 per night and suites from A\$796 per night during the ski season. perisher.com.au/perisher-valley-hotel

SALZBURG APARTMENTS

This complex of 10 luxury apartments is just 200 metres from Perisher Village and the

Skitube station. All apartments have a private spa and most have a private sauna along with full kitchens and open fireplaces. **RATES:** From A\$2,000 for three nights. salzburg.com.au

THE STABLES

These apartments have all the benefits of self-contained, like a full kitchen and laundry, as well as the best qualities of a hotel, like room service and a wine list. The apartments sleep from two to eight people and many have private spa baths and gas flame fires. **RATES:** Studios from A\$659 for two nights. deanes.com.au

HEIDI'S CHALET

Sitting across from the chairlift at Smiggins Hole, one of the smaller resorts that make up Perisher, Heidi's is one of the newest properties on the mountain. All apartments are two-bedroom with private balconies and views over the ski fields. **RATES:** Apartments from A\$1,800 for three nights. heidis.com.au

KOSCIUSZKO CHALET HOTEL

Charlotte Pass' only full service hotel, the Kosciuszko Chalet was built in 1930. It has ski-in ski-out access, four bars and restaurants, and a kids' club that runs a separate children's dinner time so parents can relax. **RATES:** Rooms from A\$769 and suites from A\$1,093 per person for two nights including meals, lift ticket and oversnow transport. charlottepass.com.au/chalethotel



PERISHER VALLEY



SKI / NEW ZEALAND

ARGUABLY THE BEST SKIING IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE IS JUST A HOP ACROSS THE TASMAN. SKIERS IN NEW ZEALAND CAN EXPECT GREAT SNOW COVER, A LONG SKI SEASON AND SUPER LUXE LODGES BUT SKI-IN SKI-OUT IS LIMITED.

WANAKA / OTAGO

SOUTH ISLAND

WHERE TO SKI

TREBLE CONE

There is some scope here for developing skiers and boarders, but when you get right down to it, this is a mountain chock-full of adventure, along its groomed trails, in amongst long natural gullies where you can scoot from side-to-side as if you're on an endless wave, or high above it all, hiking beyond the lifts to the high alpine terrain. TC comes into its own after a storm, where you'll find local skiers and boarders bucking like goats at a gate waiting for ski patrol to give the all clear so they can get out there amongst it. And then there are the views, of Lake Wanaka beyond and of the Matukituki Valley below, its braided glacial river shining like ribbons of mercury.

CARDRONA

Wanaka's other main resort is popular with families and beginners for its wide, forgiving runs. It has one of New Zealand's best kids' clubs with a nursery, multi-day lesson programs and lots of terrain that's perfect for first timers. There are a few runs that will entertain more experienced skiers and some fun off piste areas to discover, so it's a great all round resort for the family. The mountain faces south so snow retention is generally good, though the powder can be quite dry.



WHERE TO STAY

WHARE KEA LODGE & CHALET

Whare Kea Lodge offers up some of New Zealand's best alpine views nestled in amongst the Southern Alps – just above Lake Wanaka. Built on 75 acres of private farmland just a 10 minute drive from the stunning ski village of Wanaka, the lodge takes a maximum of 12 guests. Helicopters can land on your private back lawn to take you heli-skiing, or one of NZ's most under-rated ski resorts – Treble Cone – is half an hour up the road. Whare Kea also offers a private chalet in the Mt Aspiring National Park, 50 kilometres from the nearest home and reachable only by helicopter. **RATES:** From NZ\$1,400 (about A\$1,135) per night plus taxes including dinner and breakfast. wharekealodge.com

WANAKA LUXURY APARTMENTS

These self-contained one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments are close to the centre of Wanaka town. 26 apartments are spread around the grounds in a quiet residential area, but its still close to cafes, restaurants and shops. All have underfloor heating, stone fireplaces and plenty of storage for your gear. **RATES:** Apartments from NZ\$169 (about A\$137) per night. wla.co.nz

LAKESIDE APARTMENTS

As the name suggests, these luxury apartments are right on the edge of Lake Wanaka but still close to the centre of town. The apartments are spacious and all have a full kitchen, dining table and laundry facilities, and a communal drying room. **RATES:** Apartments from NZ\$295 (about A\$239) per night. lakesidewanaka.co.nz

TIRITIRI LODGE

This sleek and modern lodge sits on the eastern edge of Lake Wanaka. It was designed by renowned New Zealand architect Virginia Russell and is filled with original art and furniture from contemporary New Zealand artists and designers. There's lots of glass to make the most of the amazing views of the Southern Alps and a large cedar hot tub to soak in after a long day on the mountain. **RATES:** From NZ\$450 (about A\$365) per night. tiritirilodge.com

QUEENSTOWN / OTAGO

SOUTH ISLAND

WHERE TO SKI

CORONET PEAK & THE REMARKABLES

These two main resorts right by Queenstown are completely different and each well worth visiting. Views from both are just spectacular and enormous, across the patchwork fields and surrounding mountains. Coronet is slightly closer, about 30 minutes' drive away, and the slopes are rolling, super fun, and mostly intermediate. The near-new base lodge is lovely with such touches as heated concrete floors on the outdoor deck to avoid slipping on ice. There is a separate lounge and food service area for VIP clients who also receive parking privileges right near the lodge. The



Remarkables, 45 minutes from Queenstown, has excellent learner slopes, a huge five-star Burton-designed terrain park and on one side some of the steepest chutes in New Zealand's ski fields.

WHERE TO STAY

MATAKAURI LODGE

With staggering views over the Remarkables and perched just metres above Lake Wakatipu (and surrounded by pine forest), sleeping at Matakauri Lodge will make you feel completely isolated from the world. But the truth is you're just a five minute drive from Queenstown, and just a further 25 minutes from the ski resorts of Coronet Peak and the Remarkables. With only 11 private suites (each suite offers mountain views from everywhere inside, even the bath), Matakauri is one of the southern hemisphere's most exclusive ski lodges, complete with day spa. The property was re-opened in 2010 after an extensive refurbishment by interior designer Virginia Fisher. **RATES:** From NZ\$595 (about A\$483) per person per night plus taxes including dinner and breakfast. matakauri.co.nz

THE SPIRE HOTEL

The most remarkable aspect about this property is that it's located right in the middle of Queenstown. From the moment you step inside this ultra-modern boutique hotel you'll be transferred into a private oasis, with every whim catered for. The Spire Hotel offers 10 private suites – all with multi-media

systems, stone fireplaces and private balconies...even a pillow menu. Meals are served in the hotel's sophisticated restaurant downstairs, with a full a la carte breakfast offered as part of your tariff. Queenstown – the southern hemisphere's most exciting ski town – is just outside, with buses departing regularly to the Remarkables and Coronet Peak ski areas. **RATES:** From NZ\$1,035 (about A\$839) per night. thespirehotel.com

AZUR LODGE

Firmly at the highest end of the scale, this lodge counts Ralph Lauren as a past customers. Azur comprises nine 75 square metre villas tucked away amid gardens in a tranquil Queenstown hillside setting overlooking the sweeping

panorama of Lake Wakatipu and The Remarkables mountain range. Enjoy the view while snuggled under a doona and 300-thread count Egyptian cotton sheets in the king-size bed, or from the bath tub set right under the window while listening to the surround sound system. Dine out or in, choosing from a local restaurant menu and having it delivered and served in your room on fine bone china. Just deluxe. **RATES:** From NZ\$1,050 (about A\$852) per night plus taxes. azur.co.nz

EICHARDT'S PRIVATE HOTEL

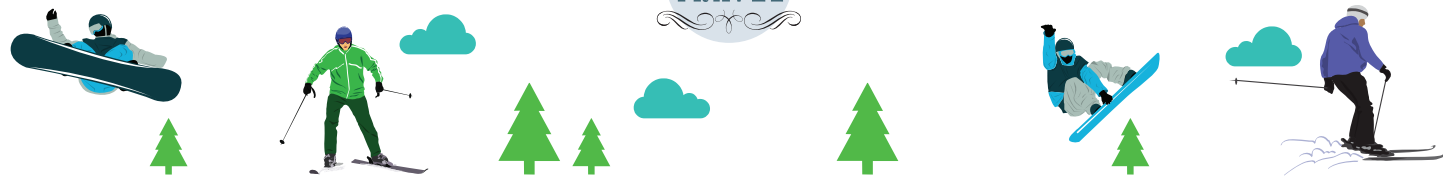
Queenstown is unquestionably the ski world's prettiest village, and nowhere is better located to appreciate its aesthetic beauty than Eichardt's. A New Zealand institution, Eichardt's has occupied

Queenstown's prime real estate – just a few metres from Lake Wakatipu amongst the town's café and restaurant precinct – for 146 years. You can stay in one of five luxury suites in the hotel, in one of four two-bedroom lakefront apartments or in the three-bedroom apartment, The Residence, with its stunning views over Queenstown Bay and the Remarkables. Ski resorts are located close by, while nearby Queenstown airport offers heli-skiing adventures. **RATES:** Suites from NZ\$1,639 (about A\$1,329) per night and apartments from NZ\$1,190 (about A\$965) per night. eichardts.com

MILLBROOK RESORT

Located 25 minutes' drive out of Queenstown, Millbrook Resort sits on 500 acres within a huge green valley dwarfed by towering mountain ranges on all sides. On the site of an 1860s wheat farm, Millbrook Resort offers 175 rooms ranging from studios to luxurious four-bedroom cottages. There's also the region's best equipped day spa, a health and fitness centre, restaurants and café, and a 27 hole golf course (Millbrook Resort has won Best Golf Resort in Australasia in the World Travel Awards for the past three years). It's just a quick 25-minute drive along the back roads to Coronet Peak, while New Zealand's best heritage gold mining town, Arrowtown, is a stroll away. **RATES:** Studios from NZ\$225 (about A\$182) per night and cottages from NZ\$555 (about A\$450) per night. millbrook.co.nz



**THE MILLENNIUM HOTEL**

Boutique hotels are par for the course in this part of the world and The Millennium is one of the best and friendliest. Many of the rooms and suites have views easily surpassing the majority of those available from other lodges simply due to its proximity to the shoreline and aspect. Queenstown's best restaurants and bars aren't too far from the Millennium's front doors and should you wish to relax there is a full spa service menu.

RATES: Rooms from NZ\$191 (about A\$155) per night and suites from NZ\$230 (about A\$187) per night. millenniumhotels.co.nz/millenniumqueenstown/

PEPPERS BEACON

Sitting on the edge of Lake Wakatipu, most rooms have views over the lake to the Remarkables. Accommodations range from standard hotel rooms to one-, two- or three-bedroom apartments and right up to the lavish penthouses with up to five bedrooms, full kitchens, media rooms and outdoor spas. The Galley restaurant serves breakfast but you'll need to head into town for other meals.

RATES: Rooms from NZ\$179 (about A\$145) per night and apartments from NZ\$264 (about A\$214) per night. peppers.co.nz/beacon

SOFITEL QUEENSTOWN

If, after a day in the snow, you crave some urban sophistication, an elegant bathroom where you can watch the flat screen while you bathe away your mountain bruises and a big, comfortable bed with

some crisp linen to wrap you in, then beat a path to this door. Bars and restaurants are a stroll away, but if you want to stay in the hotel, the Nue Lounge is an intimate option and the bistro, Left Bank Cafe, will leave you well-fed.

RATES: Rooms from NZ\$239 (about A\$194) per night and suites from NZ\$539 (about A\$437) per night. sofitel.com

THE DAIRY

The Dairy is built around a 1920s corner store and the original building with its polished wooden floorboards remains the hub of the property. In winter the hosts serve up a home baked afternoon tea and

mulled wine by the open fire when you return from the slopes.

RATES: Rooms from NZ\$465 (about A\$377) per night. thedairy.co.nz

BLANKET BAY

One of New Zealand's best lodges, Blanket Bay is where Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie chose to stay, as did Bill Gates, Robin Williams and even Gandalf himself: Sir Ian McKellen. Located in the shadow of the spectacular, snow-capped Southern Alps, Blanket Bay offers absolute isolation to guests in one of 12 luxury rooms, surrounded by Lake Wakatipu and empty farmland, half an hour's drive from Queenstown and five minutes

drive from the sleepy village of Glenorchy. Skiers can ride a helicopter from the lodge's front lawn for heli-skiing expeditions in the mountains behind (the butler will even carry your skis or snowboard out), while Coronet Peak is an hour's drive away.

RATES: From NZ\$1,000 (about A\$811) per night plus taxes including dinner and breakfast. blanketbay.com

BRUNSWICK LODGE

Staying here is like having your own home in Queenstown. This luxury three-bedroom (all ensuite) apartment has a large kitchen, French oak dining table, log fire, underfloor heating for the Otago schist floors, antique furnishings, library and a spa house with Jacuzzi shared with only three other apartments in the complex.

RATES: From NZ\$725 (about A\$588) per night for two people and NZ\$75 (about A\$61) per night for each extra person. brunswick.co.nz

QUEENSTOWN PARK BOUTIQUE HOTEL

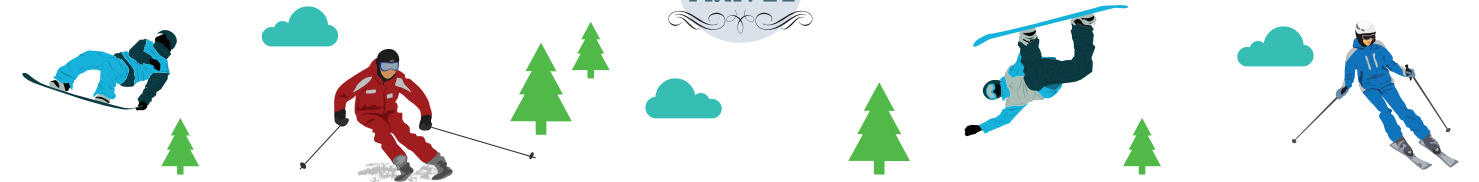
Queenstown's newest boutique hotel opened in 2007 and is surrounded by parkland close to the city centre. Each of the 19 rooms has underfloor heating, a small kitchen and glass walled bathrooms. The hotel has a range of Central Otago wines and hampers of local produce if you want to stay in for the night.

RATES: Rooms from NZ\$400 (about A\$324) per night and suites from NZ\$695 (about A\$563) per night. queenstownparkhotel.com

SNOW PARK / OTAGO SOUTH ISLAND

Snow Park is a small freestyle terrain park just past Cardrona village. There is one chair lift and a rope tow that service the 40 plus rails, jumps and pipes for skiers and boarders. There are four luxury four-bedroom apartments at the base of the park, close enough to ski to the lifts, with four ensuites, full kitchen, open fire and large outdoor decks.

RATES: Apartments from NZ\$680 (about A\$551) per night. snowpark.com

**MANATA LODGE**

This lodge is made up of four suites ranging from studio to two-bedroom that can be booked individually or together for exclusive use. It is 10 minutes from central Queenstown in the Wakatipu Basin with views of the Remarkables, Coronet Peak and the Crown Range. Manata is self-catering, but the hosts can stock your fridge and pantry before you arrive.

RATES: Studios from NZ\$220 (about A\$178) per night. manatalodge.com

THE REES HOTEL

This stylish hotel is a mix of rooms and apartments with simple, contemporary interiors and custom New Zealand wool carpet. If you have a soft spot for Bordeaux then this is the property for you – there is a whole lounge dedicated to the French drop, an impressive collection of vintages and extensive tasting notes in the library.

RATES: Rooms from NZ\$325 (about A\$263) per night and apartments from NZ\$455 (about A\$369) per night. therees.co.nz

REMARKABLES LODGE

Sitting just past the entrance to the Remarkables ski resort, this lodge has seven individually designed rooms. For more privacy stay in the The Garden suite adjacent to the house – it was originally the shepherds cottage and has a private patio and spa bath.

RATES: From NZ\$745 (about A\$604) per night including dinner and breakfast. remarkables.co.nz

MT RUAPEHU / OHAKUNE NORTH ISLAND

This is New Zealand's largest skiing area, made up of the only two commercial resorts in the North Island, Whakapapa and Turoa, on the northwestern and southwestern sides of the mountain respectively. There's a colossal 4,400 acres of skiable terrain and New Zealand's highest lift access at more than

2,300 metres. The mountain is still an active volcano and emits rumbilings and ash at times, but it does add to the excitement.

RIVER BIRCHES

There are only three guestrooms at this luxury lodge on the banks of the Tongariro River, around an hour's drive from the

ski fields. The Admiral's Room is the pick of them with its own private cedar hot tub and mini bar stocked with New Zealand wines and micro-brewery beers. If you're in a larger group you can book the lodge out exclusively.

RATES: Rooms from NZ\$460 (about A\$373) per night. riverbirches.co.nz

**MT HUTT / CANTERBURY PLAINS SOUTH ISLAND**

This huge bowl-shaped resort with lovely views stretching back to Christchurch (and, on a clear day, the ocean) solved its main problem a few years ago by installing a six seater chairlift right to the top of the ski field, replacing two long, slow lifts. While the main bowl is mostly intermediate experts are kept busy on the South Face area around the back of the

bowl, and atop the ski field on skier's right in the The Pinnacles. One of Mt Hutt's most spectacular features is the drive there, a long winding road with a sheer drop on one side. Fortunately skiers can take the efficient shuttle service and enjoy the view.

WHERE TO STAY**TERRACE DOWNS**

This large resort complex is 20 minutes from Mt Hutt on the edge of the Rakaia Gorge.

Accommodation is in self-contained villa suites or fairway chalets – three- to four-bedroom homes spread around the golf course. There are three on-site restaurants and a full service spa. **RATES:** Villa suites from NZ\$540 (about A\$438) per night and fairway chalets from NZ\$1,200 (about A\$973) per night. terracedowns.co.nz

BELUGA LUXURY LODGE

Imagine walking into the most perfectly kept home of a dear friend with every creature comfort from a well stocked library to the plushest and most comfortable of cosy rooms and you have found Beluga. This lodge was the first high end lodge in Methven, the closest town to Mt Hutt, and remains as so with an inimitable air of history and old time hospitality. Beluga is in one of Methven's suburban streets, which adds to its charm and tranquility.

RATES: Rooms from NZ\$230 (about A\$186) per night and suites from NZ\$260 (about A\$211) per night. belugalodge.co.nz



IT'S NEVER BEEN EASIER TO GET TO SOUTH AMERICA WITH DAILY NON-STOP FLIGHTS, SO NOW IS THE TIME TO EXPLORE SOME OF CHILE AND ARGENTINA'S VAST RESORTS.

CHILE

WHERE TO SKI

VALLE NEVADO

This resort has South America's largest skiable area covering a vast 7,000 acres. Snow quality is reliably excellent because of the high altitude and there is a good mix of runs for skiers of all levels. The sun shines 80 per cent of the time at Valle Nevado and there are only three hotels and limits on day visitors, meaning it's never crowded.

WHERE TO STAY

HOTEL VALLE NEVADO

The premier hotel on the mountain, the Hotel Valle Nevado was completely renovated in 2010. It's right in the middle of the resort with direct ski-in ski-out access and houses Valle Nevado's best restaurant, La Forchette.

RATES: From US\$1,554 (about A\$1,512) per person for three nights including dinner, breakfast and lift pass. vallenevado.com

WHERE TO SKI

PORTILLO

Portillo is a ski resort stripped bare – just one large hotel and the slopes. Guests arrive on Saturdays and stay for a week, there are only a couple of dining options on the



HOTEL PORTILLO



VALLE NEVADO

mountain and a bar in the hotel for a quick drink before bed. The resort receives an average of seven metres of snow each season and more than half of the 35 runs are suited to advanced and expert skiers.

WHERE TO STAY

HOTEL PORTILLO

This large yellow and blue hotel is the centre of the resort and rooms are comfortable rather than luxurious. The luxury comes from the service (the staff to guest ratio is higher than one to one) and the location.

RATES: Rooms from US\$1,950 (about A\$1,897) per person for seven nights and suites from US\$2,750 (about A\$2,675) per person for seven nights including four meals a day and lift pass. skiportillo.com

ARGENTINA

WHERE TO SKI

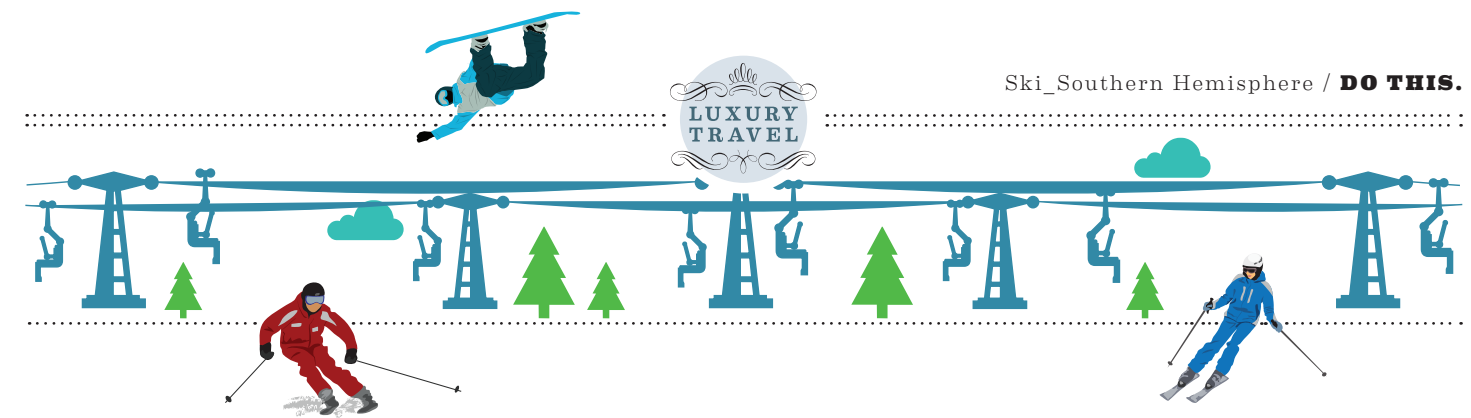
CERRO CASTOR

The southernmost ski resort in South America, Cerro Castor has a relatively low altitude (just under 1,000) metres but still receives plenty of snow. Its latitude means it has one of the longest ski seasons on the continent (often lasting well into October), but the resort is little known outside of Argentina.

WHERE TO STAY

LOS CAUQUENES RESORT & SPA

Los Cauquenes is in the town of Ushuaia, 26 kilometres from Cerro Castor and the world's southernmost city, and overlooks the Beagle Channel. Snow shoeing, dog



sled rides and helicopter tours landing on remote mountain peaks can be arranged.

RATES: Rooms from US\$250 (about A\$243) per night and suites from US\$369 (about A\$359) per night. loscauquenes.com

WHERE TO SKI

CERRO CATEDRAL

Cerro Catedral is one of South America's best developed ski resorts with an extensive lift system and a buzzing village at the base of the mountain. It's largely a beginners resort with only 25 per cent of the terrain for advanced skiers, though there are some off-piste and back country options for the more experienced. It can get extremely busy, especially compared to other South American resorts, and there are often long lift queues.

WHERE TO STAY

ESTANCIA PUEMA HUE

There are just eight rooms at this rustic luxury lodge around 40 minutes from Cerro Catedral. Rooms are spread across different houses surrounding the main lodge, sleeping from two to nine people. Ride horses through the snowy grounds or relax in front of the fire with a glass of Argentinian malbec.

RATES: Rooms from US\$281 (about A\$273) per night. peuma-hue.com