



SNOW PATROL

HIT THE SLOPES OR MIX IT UP WITH THE PARTY PEOPLE IN LIVELY THREDBO, WRITES RACHAEL OAKES-ASH.

The air is thinner at Thredbo ski resort. The mountain peak sits at 2,037 metres above sea level, and some blame the lack of oxygen for the legendary tales of party antics over the resort's 50-year history. This alpine resort town in Kosciuszko National Park – two-and-a-half hours' drive south of Canberra – has a reputation for big terrain and even bigger parties.

Yet it hasn't always been snow ploughs, schnapps and skiing. The Thredbo area was originally utilised by graziers, whose cattle fed off the lush flora. Then along came Tony Sponar, a savvy Czechoslovakian and former ski instructor in Austria, who was working for the Snowy Mountains Hydro Electric Authority in the 1950s, and was clearly missing the Alps of St Anton.

Sponar saw the region's potential as a ski resort and, with Charles Anton, Eric Nicholls and Geoffrey Hughes, he petitioned the state government for a lease. The rest, as they say, is history. Lend Lease eventually bought in, before selling

to Amalgamated Holdings in 1987. Amalgamated Holdings still holds the Thredbo reins, and has invested more than \$160 million into developing the village.

Thredbo boasts one of Australia's largest ski areas, with over 480 hectares of skiable terrain serviced by 14 lifts, and what is reputed to be the largest snow-making system in the southern hemisphere. The ski area incorporates Australia's longest vertical run of 672 metres, and the country's longest single ski run of 5.9 kilometres, stretching from Karel's T-Bar at the peak to Friday Flat at the base.

Many of Australia's finest athletes call Thredbo their mountain including Russ Henshaw, who took silver in the Austrian Freeski Open in January this year, whereas 11-time Winter Paralympian medallist and the world's fastest skier with a disability, Michael Milton learnt to ski at Thredbo from the age of three. Australian ski World Cup competitor Jono Brauer can also be found on Thredbo's slopes come

the Queen's Birthday long weekend in June, when the Australian ski season traditionally begins.

On a dumping day, the best powder stashes can be found skiing right off the Ramshead Chairlift in the tree-lined Golf Course bowl – but keep it to yourself. For insider tips on where to ski, newcomers to Thredbo can join a complimentary guided ski tour with 'mountain hosts', who meet at the top of Gunbarrel Express at 10am and 1pm daily.

Skiing and snowboarding have long been family sports and Thredbo has invested serious time, money and effort creating a diverse ski school program for children and adults. The Friday Flats is a dedicated ski learning area for beginners with magic carpets (moving conveyor belts that transport beginners between points) and a chairlift.

With all this mountain fun, it's easy to forget Thredbo's sad history. In a landslide on 30 July in 1997, the Alpine Way collapsed and the Carinya and Bimbadeen Lodges

Opposite: Thredbo's terrain provides the ideal ground for testing one's athleticism. Above: Exploring the picturesque region on foot is just as rewarding as taking to the slopes.

PHOTOGRAPHY :: THE DENMAN HOTEL THREDBO, WWW.THREDBO.COM.AU



“ The alpine resort town of Thredbo has a reputation for big terrain and even bigger parties. ”

were demolished, killing 18 people. The site now serves as a memorial, and the 10-year anniversary of the tragedy was marked with a world record-breaking flare ski run with over 1,200 skiers in single formation.

Thredbo is always breaking records and the start of its 2007 season was no different when the area noted the highest snowfall since the bumper year of 2000. And it's no wonder Thredbo is pumped for the 2008 winter. After all, they do things bigger in Thredbo.

SLEEP OVER

The village has more than 4,000 beds, so there's something for all tastes and budgets.

Boutique retreat

:: The Denman Hotel Thredbo
Diggings Terrace, Thredbo Village,
+61 2 6457 6222

www.thedenman.com.au

An intimate hotel in the heart of Thredbo village, the Denman is home to Thredbo's finest dining restaurant, The Terrace. It also has a day spa to soothe tired bodies, and

its famous Après Bar serves mid-afternoon high tea, and cocktails at sundown. Rooms vary in size from singles to family-sized and most have mountain views.

Check yourself in from \$338 per person for two nights, including a meal at The Terrace.

Ski to the door

:: Ski In, Ski Out Chalets

Crackenback Drive, Crackenback Ridge, Thredbo, +61 2 6457 7031
www.skiinskiout.com.au

Luxury chalets and apartments are available for weekend or weekly rental in Thredbo's prime area. Step out of your lush digs straight onto the Supertrail and ski back in when you're done. Accommodation ranges from one-bedroom loft chalets to rock-star-style five-bedroom homes with open fireplaces.

Stay from \$848 for two nights in a one-bedroom room in low season.

Best value

:: House of Ullr

Corner of Mowamba Place and Bobuck Lane, Thredbo Village, +61 2 6457 6210
www.houseofullr.com.au

One-, two- and three-roomed lodge-style guest rooms are ideal for families, couples and groups. There's also a hearty restaurant with good home-style food, and the famous party hot spot Bar Ullr.

Settle in from \$230 per night, per person (five- or six-share) for a minimum two-night stay.

Contemporary chic

:: Elevation Thredbo

Bobuck Lane, Thredbo, +61 2 6457 7132
www.thredboelevation.com

These stylish architect-designed apartments offer spectacular views. Choose from a two-bedroom apartment with a study or a three-bedroom apartment with a loft.

Make yourself comfortable from \$890 for two nights in low season.

Retro madness

:: Seidler Lodge

Diggings Terrace
1300 020 589 (in Australia)
www.visitsnowymountains.com.au

Built by designer Harry Seidler, the lodge boasts four bedrooms and five bathrooms, a 1960s-style rock fireplace, sauna and a dining >

*Top left: Be one of the first on the powder with an early morning ski.
Top right: The Denham Hotel's cosy and inviting cocktail bar is the spot to get into the party spirit.*

THREDBO

DESTINATION



“Thredbo boasts one of Australia’s largest ski areas, with over 480 hectares of skiable terrain.”

After a full day on the snowfield (top), the centrally located Denman Hotel (top right) has everything you need for a restful sleep.

table for 12. It’s a superb place for throwing parties.

Get cosy from \$2,070 for two nights in low season to \$14,475 for seven nights during peak season.

CHOW DOWN

Thredbo has a plethora of dining options including everything from a bakery to degustation dining.

Fine dining

:: Terrace Restaurant

The Denman Hotel, Diggings Terrace, Thredbo, +61 2 6457 6222
www.thedenman.com.au

Sourcing and utilising fresh local produce, the Terrace serves up innovative Modern Australian cuisine with a twist. Ask for a table by the window on Saturday night for views of the flare run.

:: The Credo Restaurant

Riverside Cabins, Thredbo Alpine Village, +61 2 6457 6844
www.credo.com.au

The Credo offers award-winning cuisine, an extensive wine list that features many international drops and river views.

:: Segreto

Thredbo Alpine Hotel
+61 2 6459 4200
It’s all about Italian passion here. Winemakers Dinners are held throughout the season, with guest winemakers and matching courses.

Casual gourmet

:: Santé Restaurant

Squatter’s Run, Thredbo Village
+61 2 6457 6083
www.sante.net.au
Mediterranean flavours meet the Middle East in this lively restaurant.

:: Bernti’s Mountain Inn

4 Mowamba Place, Thredbo
+61 2 6457 6332
www.berntis.com.au
Whether it’s tapas at the bar or steak from the grill, Bernti’s is the place to fuel up and make some new friends in the process.

DRINK UP

If you can’t find a drink in Thredbo, you’re not looking hard enough. Get in the mix at Thredbo Alpine Hotel’s Lounge Bar (1800 026 333 (in Australia)) for live tunes or head to

the institution that is the Keller Bar (+61 2 6459 4200). The venue stays open late, and the DJ will have you grooving to the latest tunes.

TOP TIPS

You might think you know the mountain, but here’s a few tips to make the holiday extra special.

:: Can’t get enough?

Thredbo resort offers free night skiing and boarding on Thursday and Saturday nights.

:: Bada Bing

Kids have their own fibre-optic flare run every Thursday night, and the Saturday night flare run and fireworks are a Thredbo tradition.

:: Special occasion?

Eagle’s Nest Restaurant (+61 2 6457 6019), Australia’s highest, perched on the mountain peak, opens for dinner on Thursday and Saturday nights during the ski season. Catch the Kosciuszko chairlift up for a stunning bird’s-eye view of Thredbo’s nightlife.

For more information on the area, visit www.thredbo.com.au.

BOOK YOUR FLIGHT :: Virgin Blue offers several convenient flights to Canberra, the main transit point for Thredbo. To book flights, visit www.virginblue.com.au or call 13 6789 (in Australia) or 0800 67 00 00 (in New Zealand). For your travel insurance needs, from as little as \$5 per day, visit www.virginblue.com.au or call 1800 010 457 (in Australia).

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