

Apres ski

The land of the rising fun

A cosmopolitan change is sweeping the snowfields, **Rachael Oakes-Ash** writes.

HOT TODDIES and marshmallows are sooo last season. The new apres-ski scene is all about getting the drinks mix right. Whether it's oriental, urban cocktails, liquored tea or champagne and oysters, there is no doubt that mulled wine is officially on the backburner.

Falls Creek snow village in the Victorian Alps is leading the pack.

This funky ski town already has 28 bars, including the Man Hotel (with its earthy jugs of beer) and Astra Lodge (with its 70 blends of vodka).

Now there's a new kid on the block with the launch of Oishii Go!, a Japanese-inspired lounge bar in the revamped Silverski Lodge.

Cashing in on the Australian ski community's obsession with all things Japanese (since ski resort Niseko came on the scene), Oishii Go's decor and menu is all about the land of the rising sun.

Think complimentary bowls of Japanese rice with dashi stock and green tea daily at 5pm during Oishii Go! hour. Add hot and cold sake, Sapporo canned beer, Asahi and



SEVENTY HEAVEN: (above and right) The Astra Bar, which has 70 types of vodka.

Tiger beer in bottles and Kirin beer on tap and you'd be forgiven for thinking you were in a pub in Tokyo.

Designed by Melbourne company Zacamoco (the developers of *Wallpaper* magazine's Falls Creek favourite, the Huski apartments), Oishii Go! screams streamlined style.

In keeping with the Japanese theme the design is linear, with exposed, polished wooden ceiling beams directing focus to the bar.

Barmen dressed in samurai-inspired bandannas and robes take command of a fridge stocked with



rice-based alcohol. The cocktail list is reasonably priced (\$14) and named after Japan's arrival and departure points with the Hiroshima Airport, Osaka Aircity Terminal and Miyagi Airport blends of green tea, sake, lychees, ginger and white spirits.

It's all good fun with mood lighting provided by a plethora of multicoloured paper lanterns suspended from the ceiling. A feature wall, draped in olive green velvet with tangerine chandelier lighting, runs from the bar to the terrace entrance.

An orange-quilted, leather, high-backed banquette along the wall provides seating at tables, with Philippe Starck-designed transparent Kartell chairs and bar stools.

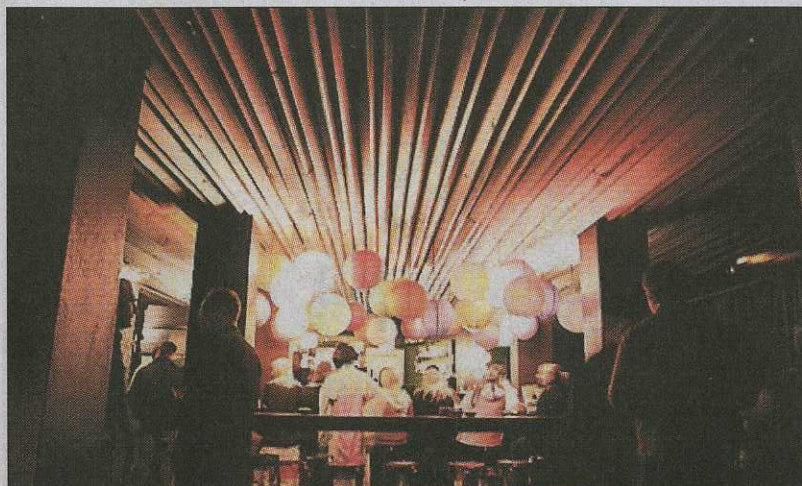
The bar food is, as you would expect, peppered with Japanese horseradish including wasabi peas, golden shoestring chips with wasabi mayo, miso soup and Nagasaki saganaki grilled cheese.

For something more substantial there's a yakitori menu with chicken and teriyaki beef, prawns with

ginger and garlic and some fukiyaki sweet potato with sake and shiro miso paste. Thursday night is "big steak night", so think mammoth slabs of meat with chips for \$30.

Callum Fraser, the developer of Silverski Lodge and Oishii Go! describes the setting as a "one-star boutique hotel".

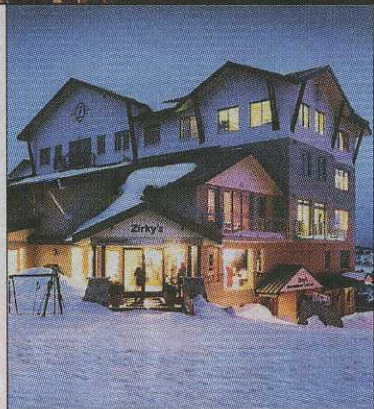
He believes you don't have to scrimp on style when on a budget. Lodge rooms are spartan with velvet drapings, charcoal walls and a New York balcony and start from \$124 for a double room in the low season.



STYLISH: (above) Oishii Go! in Falls Creek and (right) Zirky's in Mount Hotham.

The new apres ski establishments, such as Oishii Go! in Falls Creek, the Denman Hotel's apres high tea in Thredbo and Mo's Restaurant's bubbles and shucked oysters also in Falls Creek means urbanites need not go cold turkey on their favourite cocktails or exotic tastes whenever they step on the snow.

The writer was a guest of Oishii Go!



COMPLETE PACKAGE: The apres ski is now almost as enticing as the on-piste action.

> THE NEW APRES

■ **Becks, bubbles and oysters** at Mo's Restaurant at Feathertop Lodge, Falls Creek. The crew at Mo's serves up a choice of Becks beer or champagne with a dozen freshly shucked oysters daily from 4.30pm to 5.30pm. See www.featherlodge.com.au.

■ **Urban cocktails and apres high tea** at happy hour at the Denman Hotel, Thredbo. It's all about the mixologist at the stylish Denman from 4pm to 6pm daily, where there's an impressive cocktail list. See www.thedenman.com.au.

■ **Happy Harvey hour** at the Falls Creek Hotel. Take your wits with you at 3.30pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays for on-tap harvey wallbangers, a lethal mix of vodka, Galliano and orange juice. See www.fallscreekhotel.com.au.

■ **Tapas and schnapps** at Zirky's Bar, Mount Hotham. It's all about Spain from 4pm to 8pm at Hotham's ski-in, ski-out Zirky's Bar. On Sundays DJ Chill appears on the turntable for some seriously laid-back tunes. See www.zirkys.com.au.