

# APRESSKI

Issue 10 Spring 2015

Priceless

## AUSTRIA

the definitive guide for skiers  
& snowboarders on the piste

**ALTITUDE**  
**HIGH ON LAUGHTER**

**SNOWBOMBING**  
**PEAK OF PARTYING**

**SCHNAPPS**  
**LIQUID GOLD**

**MOUNTAINS**  
**THE MEN, THE MYTHS**

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Welcome / Wilkommen!

To the tenth winter of Après Ski Magazine. The free magazine with its inky finger on the powdery pulse of the piste!

In our Spring issue of 2015 we'll be exploring some of the most treasured resorts in the Austrian Alps.

Explore James Bond's favourite resort, Sölden, catch festival fever in Mayrhofen and find out why St Anton should be the patron saint of Spring!

To mark our tenth issue we'll delve into the World of schnapps and make some noise and give it up for mountains...without which there would be no ski, let alone après ski!

We believe that Austrian après ski is special and for many people is an integral part of their alpine holiday. So let's celebrate that end-of-afternoon feeling, with aching legs and rosy cheeks and tall tales told at the bar of wipeouts, white-outs and beautiful bluebird moments high above normality.

Here's to schnapps, songs, laughter and life!

Here's to Wahnsinn!

*David Hall.*



David Hall  
Publisher

A Big thanks to James and Lucie at Redhead Design and Kirk Field.

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**LIVE  
COMEDY**

*Starring*

**BILL BAILEY**



**SEAN LOCK**



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TAPE ON HIS FACE  
MARCUS BRIGSTOCKE**

**PLUS**

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# ALTITUDE

Comedy Festival

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# SNOW JOKE!

ALTITUDE FESTIVAL  
RETURNS TO  
MAYFHOFEN FOR

# 2015

Comical crashes, in-jokes, language misunderstandings, and moustaches everywhere you look; ski holidays and laughter have always gone hand in hand. So it was only a matter of time before a comedy festival sprang up. That festival is called 'Altitude'; the brain-child of comedians Marcus Brigstocke and Andrew Maxwell, as a way of combining work and their love of snow sports. They would do gigs in the evening after a day spent on the slopes in Meribel, France, where it remained for five years, before moving in 2012 to Mayrhofen. Things have ahem...snowballed somewhat, and Altitude now welcomes the biggest names in comedy; Eddie Izzard, Al Murray and Bill Bailey to name but three.

Altitude is unique on the comedy circuit and a great opportunity to see stars who normally sell out stadiums in intimate venues, whilst catching the rising stars of laughter before they hit your telly. One of the best things about Altitude is getting to share the slopes, chairlifts and bars with some of the funniest people on the planet.

This years Altitude Comedy Festival takes place from Monday 23rd-Friday 27th March once again in Mayrhofen, taking a cavalcade of clowns out on the piste. Featuring the world's top comedians and the most exciting new acts splitting sides worldwide, all up-close and personal, Altitude is a unique chance to catch the very biggest names in some of Europe's most charming and cosy venues.

## The Bill Please

Buffing the lederhosen for what is destined to be a vintage year, Altitude 2015 will be headlined by the amazing Bill Bailey. A musical absurdist with a fine line in gob-smacking surrealism, Bill is already approaching national treasure status, with his joyous flights of fancy endearing him to just about everybody. From his stint as team captain on 'Never Mind the Buzzcocks' and regular appearances on a host of





panel shows such as QI to Have I Got News For You and beyond, Bill is nothing short of a genius and his appearance at Altitude can only be described in one word; unmissable.

Stand up extraordinaire, erstwhile Bill Bailey comedy partner and 8 Out Of 10 Cats team captain, Sean Lock is coming too! Sublimely sardonic and razor sharp, Lock has dominated TV in the past decade. He's one of the finest comedians out there, and we can't wait to see him throwing it down against the picturesque Tyrolean backdrop.

But of course, that's not all. Altitude 2015 will present the cream of the comic scene to help puff up your strudels throughout the week, including an indescribably fantastic show from The Boy with Tape on his Face, who you may have seen on the Royal Variety Performance, or starring in BBC Three's Comedy at the Fringe Live. And we're excited to announce that Altitude's founders, Marcus Brigstocke (who couldn't join us last year after shattering his knee on Channel 4 Ski Show, 'The Jump') and Andrew Maxwell (will he lose the lederhosen even once this year?) are back together with us again!

### More Jokers Than Parliament

Sloping onto this year's line-up is returning German comedy hero Michael Mittermeier, and two Altitude virgins - Mock the Week regular and Bethnal Green's sassiest lady - Gina Yashere, and Live at the Apollo and Stand Up for the Week funny man Simon Evans. Plus we're jumping over the hills with joy to report that, after missing last year's festival, improv-rap black belts Abandonman are back on the bill.



There will be mountainous fun at the ultimate ski holiday come comedy festival fusion with Funny Woman Awards winner and Mock the Week panellist Zoe Lyons, Scottish ingénue Daniel Sloss, I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here NOW's Rob Beckett, part bear/part Canadian Craig Campbell, and parody perfectionist Andy Askins. Impractical Joker Joel Dommettis joining the fun, too, as is Chortle's 2014 Student Comedy Award Winner Jamali Maddix, Time Out One to Watch and Chortle Awards 2014 Best Newcomer Sofie Hagen, and Edinburgh Fringe regular and Josie Long's occasional sparring partner, Dan Nightingale. And if all that's not enough to knock your ski socks off, we're also joined by Great Canadian Laugh Off winner Paul Myrehaug, laconic Aussie Wayne Deakin and high-octane, happy-go-lucky Geordie Kai Humphries - and there are even more top peak comedians still to be announced.

### Piste Yourself Laughing

Covering all your ski holiday comedy needs, you can begin your evening with our Après-ski shows - featuring off the cuff action from The International Impro Allstars (starring Stephen Frost, Andy Smart, Ian Coppinger + a special guest every show), introducing up and coming comics with Altitude's Stars of the Future, and presenting a special Abandonman show. After giving in to the giggles at our daily, gargantuan comedy Gala, there's going to be plenty of buffoonery to take you into the small hours with the Late Late Show and Miss Behave's Game Show.

Altitude Curator Andrew Maxwell said: "Every year when we start putting our line-up together, I pull out my trusty little

black boot of clowns and maniacs and go straight to B for Bailey, and finally, after all these years, he's said yes! Bill Bailey at Altitude. COME ON! Add to that the genius of Sean Lock and you're already well on the way to a legendary year. I couldn't be more excited. But we've got loads more, like The Boy with Tape on his Face, Simon Evans, Miss Behave's Gameshow, plus after missing last year, Abandonman are definitely back this year, and of course our favourite German Michael Mittermeier. Not forgetting Gina Yashere, who, rumour has it, is one of the greatest boarders to ever have lived..."

So whether you're a group of friends hitting the slopes by day and looking for fun all night or a canoodling couple on a romantic break, Altitude has got all the entertainment you could ever need within one of Europe's most reasonably priced resorts.

This year Altitude has teamed up with the country's leading independent activity holiday company, Neilson. With more 37 years of holiday experience under their belts, Neilson is committed to providing the best choice of resorts and highest quality service! Head to [www.neilson.co.uk](http://www.neilson.co.uk) for more information.

If you like a delightful bit of bit of splendour when it comes to catching the world's best comedians in our Tyrolean haven, the grab yourself a VIP Altitude Ticket which not only gives you entrance to all Altitude shows, but also a free bottle of wine (or up to four beers) for the Gala shows, reserved seating, meet and greets with the comedians, a chance to compete in the clown hill race, and a splendid Altitude t-shirt. Full details can be found at [www.ticketline.co.uk](http://www.ticketline.co.uk)



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# THE BIG MMMMM! EATING AND DRINKING IN AND AROUND MAYRHOFEN

**ICE BAR (3pm-9pm)** next to Penkenbahn lift station.

Typical Austrian Apres ski at its most bawdy brash and bass-driven best. Shifts more bottles of Grolsch between Jan and April than any other bar on the Planet. You simply must visit - but you also must leave, which can be harder than it sounds...

**BRUCK 'n'STADL (3pm-4am)** afternoon it's a boozy, stompy Germanic jamboree at the foot of the Ahorn, which then blurs (and that's the right word) into a late night haunt of bass-lovin stay-awakes and alpine insomniacs. Stepping into the Schlusself's snowshoes as the resorts over-the-bridge, over-the-top venue of choice.

**HARA KIRI (all day...and most of the night)** - above Die Rotis Profis Ski school shop on high street.

Climb the stairs (or even better get the lift!) to the latest addition to Mayrhofen's après scene. This stylish lounge bar welcomes all wallets and boasts the best selection of vodka this side of Vladivostok. Hi-tech screens will hide your hedonism from the high street

**MO's (10am-1am)** on the high street at the crossroads, you'll find Mo's where flavours meet and cultures clash; the American south, Mediterranean cuisine and Caribbean flair are all found here. Great cocktail list and regular live music. Spare ribs a speciality!

**SPORTS LOUNGE (7pm-2am)**

Centrally -located and popular after-dinner hang-out for Brits in the snow who love the sing-a-long sessions with resident musicians and multi-screen footie action.

**THE ARENA (weekends, 11pm-late)**

on high street beneath Hotel Strass) State of the art contemporary discothèque featuring mood-changing lighting and a soundtrack of mood-altering dance & chart flavas. Great sound system and spacious stage.

**SCOTLAND YARD (8pm-2am)**

Turn off the main street at the fountain, and you'll stumble upon 'Scotti's ' on the left just before the crossroads. HQ for ski bums, hard partying pro-riders and Walkers crisps fans from across the continent.

**PICADILLY PUB (8pm-late)**

Opposite the Greenroom on the corner) Small intimate bar popular with locals with a pool table and Didi; a man who is said to possess the Worlds Strongest Schnapps and an imaginative interpretation of EU smoking in bars legislation...

**COUP & MORE (early 'til late)** Opposite Moreboards on the high street).

This stylish glass-fronted eaterie offers a tasty selection of bar snacks & selection of great salads and occasional free shots make this one bar definitely worth a visit. The sofa on the street offers a great opportunity to people watch.

**PANE E VINO de MICHELE** (next door to Moreboards on high street)

New and highly rated. The seafood risotto is out-of-this-world and the Beef Carpaccio as good as any we've tasted. Classy Italian cuisine in the centre of town... ci piace! (tel. 63418)

**CAFÉ & STEAKHOUSE TIROL (Hauptstrasse 448, tel 62320)**

Local Tyrolean cuisine with a contemporary twist. The organic steaks from Hintertux are to die for (well, to kill a cow for) and the Potato and truffle oil soup is only kept of the podium by gold, frankincense and myrrh (yes - it's that good).

**SPORT BAR & GRILL (Hotel Strass, Hauptstrasse 472)**

A treasure in that you can eat late (after midnight!!!). Everything from tasty Thai and Indian curries, to affordable burgers, steaks and pasta dishes. Informal and friendly vibe, perfect for groups and late diners.

**ON THE MOUNTAIN**

**GRILLALM**

(next to Penken park, Sunnalm chair)

Christian and Crista's crispy pizzas...a sun-drenched terrace...more baggy trousers than a Madness tribute band and an ever-present laidback vibe conspire to create THE place to hang and be seen.

**SCHNEEKARHUTTE** (aka The Pyramid, top of Red 7)

Eating on the mountain doesn't get any better. Fresh pasta and wine that suits the view conspire to make this place THE place for lunch. (tel 052822829)

Order: the fresh pasta or the local interpretation of the pizza...and one of Sep's homemade jagartees!

**PILZ BAR** (Mushroom bar opposite the new gondolier at the top of the Penken lift)

Martin Geisler runs a tight ship. He shifts more sausages than Walls and more chips than the casino in Monte Carlo. The Mushroom bar is the only place to be late afternoon, as the atmosphere is cranked up by Sigi and crew and a surprisingly powerful sound system.

**ELCHBAR** (restaurant nearest to the top Penken station)

Thomas and Margritte's split level restaurant and bar cater for all tastes - a quick pit-stop beer downstairs or some hearty local fayre upstairs...always welcoming (Watch out for the Meisturwurz, mind!)

**EISBERHUTTE**

(bottom of Red 7 on the right)

Huge sun-bathing terrace and easy to reach, the Eisberghutte serves traditional Tyrolean fayre and is both affordable and decent. Paul and his family are great hosts and service here is always super swift.



# LIFTED!

As Mayrhofen looks forward to the most advanced cable car concept in the World. Kirk Field previews the new Penkenbahn.

'The Big M' has got lots going for it; character, charm, lively après ski and pistes aplenty groomed to perfection. But as a valley settlement and lacks to-your-doorstep skiing, it's only as user-friendly as its lift system is efficient.

It's no secret that recent years have witnessed rush hour queues to get up and get back down the Penken beginning to affect visitor numbers and tarnish an otherwise excellent resort. So Mayrhofen has reacted. This winter sees the end of the current Penkenbahn and Spring brings the construction of a queue-busting mega lift; with a substantial increase in capacity, which will be fully integrated with buses and trains...so welcome to the future!

High wind stability, low energy consumption and an outstandingly smooth ride will be the benefits assured by the new 3S Bahn, which starts on 13th April. The building will begin at the bottom and top stations simultaneously, with massive support pillars and considerable ground excavations in preparation of the unveiling of the most modern ropeway system on the market.

Rumoured to have a overall cost of €80 million (including road building and transport infrastructure integration), the new Penkenbahn will provide passengers with a quick, comfortable, and quiet ride, plenty of room, and fantastic views of the surrounding peaks. Each of the 33 gondolas will have seats for 24 passengers and will be able to transport a maximum

of 2,880 passengers per hour up to the ski resort. During the evening peak hours, there will be room for an additional 8 standees, resulting in a downhill capacity of 3,840 passengers per hour (the current capacity of the Penken lift is 1500 people per hour).

Furthermore the journey time will be reduced from 12 minutes to just over 8. As a result, waiting times will no longer be an issue. Furthermore, the new Penkenbahn has been designed so that, in case the system comes to a standstill due to a technical problem, an emergency, or a power failure, for instance, the gondolas can be retrieved using two independent standby drives.

Doppelmayr, Austria's cable car maker from Vorarlberg, has developed a tailored solution for the Penkenbahn. The three cable orbit (3S Bahn) meets the highest standards of comfort and safety, promising unparalleled wind stability, low energy consumption and an almost silent and serene ride.

The lift station will be fully integrated with the ski buses, which we understand will deposit and collect passengers from inside the lift station. A new road network linking Ahorn and Penken lifts is the final piece of the jigsaw.

The new lift is scheduled to open this December following an industrious summer of extensive building work and Après Ski will be first in the queue (...not that there'll be one of course!)





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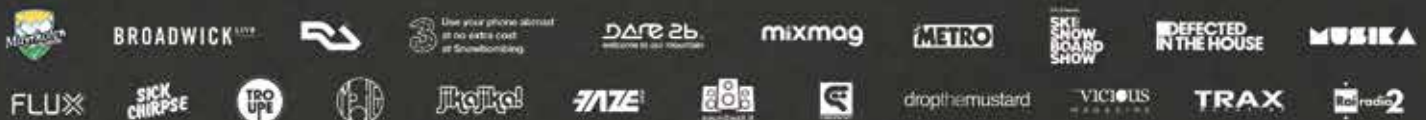
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# BECAUSE THEY'RE THERE...

## Kirk Field examines man's relationship with mountains

Dad joke – the kind only your Dad can get away with telling. It goes like this. “What’s wide at the bottom, narrow at the top and got ears?” After a dozen or so guesses, which included an ever-more imaginative selection of animals I gave up. So he told me, “A mountain! Wide at the bottom and narrow at the top” “But a mountain hasn’t got ears?” I protested. I later discovered that they do. But that night I lay in my bed contemplating how mountains could possibly hear things.

Mountains are where special stuff happens; William Blake said “Great things are done when men and mountains meet.” Moses retires to Mount Sinai, where God reveals to him the Ten Commandments; Jesus gives his sermon on a mount, and it is on top of a mountain when he ascends to heaven; and Muhammad meditates in a mountain cave when he receives his first revelation. Mountains are symbols of the ascent from the earthly plane to the spiritual in our attempt to know God. Mount Sinai corresponds to the Olympus of the Greeks and Mount Meru is the mythical mountain at the centre of the Buddhist universe.

The sublime majesty of mountains has inspired history’s best minds and challenged, proving fatally attractive to those who dared climb highest. George Mallory arguably the first man to reach the summit of Everest was famously asked why he was obsessed by climbing the World’s highest point. His answer is the title of this feature.

### ALTITUDE PROBLEM

Mountains are seductive and beguiling; the air is thinner at the higher you climb; meaning you can see further. This is all part of a mountain’s tools of seduction. They elevate us only to humble us. We climb high and are made to feel so small – and the bigger the view we gaze down on, the smaller we feel – tiny, insignificant (and whisper it softly), temporary. How ironic that in seeking immortality by reaching the summit instead we’re presented with our own fragile mortality.

We speak of conquering mountains, when really they conquer us...

Alfred Wainwright, chronicler of the Cumbrian Fells, perhaps sums it up best;

‘The fleeting hour of life of those who love

the hills is quickly spent, but the hills are eternal. Always there will be the lonely ridge, the dancing beck, the silent forest; always there will be the exhilaration of the summits. These are for the seeking, and those who seek and find while there is still time will be blessed both in mind and body.’

The blessing is a mixed one – as any close relative of a mountaineer will testify. There’s a saying that anyone in love with the mountains is also in love with themselves – and oblivion.

It may come as a surprise that we’ve only voluntarily ventured into the mountains. Up until the nineteenth century and the ‘World is my Oyster’ Victorians, humans only sought altitude as a last resort refuge or as a short cut when all other routes were fraught with danger or death.

We are in the mountains...but the mountains are also in us.

The next morning at breakfast, I indignantly rebuked my father. “Mountains have not got ears”. He paused from taking the top off his boiled egg. “Have you never heard of mountaineers?...”(Well I did warn you it was a Dad joke).

### NAMES: ALWAYS FIT THE BEST!

Although we know the mountain as “Everest,” Tibetan natives have always called the mountain by the ancient name “Chomolungma”, meaning “Goddess Mother of Mountains.” But that isn’t the only other name it goes by. The Nepalese people know it as “Sagarmatha,” meaning “Forehead in the Sky”. This identity crisis led to British surveyor Andrew Waugh failing to settle on a name, so he named the mountain after Indian Surveyor General George Everest, who led the British team that first surveyed the Himalayas. Colonel Everest objected to the honor, but the British officially changed their name for the mountain from “Peak XV” to “Mount Everest” in 1865. To this day, both the Tibetans and Nepalese are incredulous that something so sacred could be named after a mere man....



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# SCHNAPP TO IT!

THROUGHOUT THE TYROL,  
SCHNAPPS IS A RELIGION.  
KIRK FIELD IS A BELIEVER.  
LET US PRAY...

Schnapps is to Austria what malt Whisky is to Scotland, and vodka is to Russia. Forget the mega-marketed 'Johnny come lately' tipples like Jagermeister. Schnapps is the authentic taste of the alps; as old as the hills and just as dangerous!

For most visitors it's thought of as a shockingly stomach-scorching shot which mysteriously arrives uninvited when drinking with locals, is reluctantly thrown down 'in one' before inducing gasps, coughs and the kind of facial expressions usually reserved for stories of sewage spillage.

## 'ORRIBLE OBSTLER

Mind you schnapps' cause isn't helped by the prevalence of cheap and nasty "tourist schnapps" (if schnapps was wine this would be the £2.99 stuff on the bottom shelf in Asda). Coarse, unpalatable...but does what it says on the tin.

Obstler is a type of schnapps which is flavoured with at least two fruits. The quality of the blend is down to the quality of fruit used. Windfalls and inferior apples and pears are cheaper, but will not produce a refined taste.

This is the stuff you'll buy in the supermarkets to take home to your neighbours and which is consigned to spend eternity in the drinks cabinet, rubbing shoulders with a dust-gathering Grappa from Italy and the inevitable bottle of Ouzo.

But there's so much more to the culture of schnapps than 'orrible Obstler. There's

a schnapps for everything; from pre-meal appetitive to dessert tipples like Willi's and Apfelkorn to after-dinner digestive or revered medicinal schnapps like Meisturwurz. Schnapps can be flavoured with more than apples and pears (Obstler). Recent years have seen the rise in popularity of pine schnapps (Zichner), characterized by a brown colouration. If you really want to be at the forefront of schnapps culture, get your gums around some plum flavoured schnapps.

## TOP END TIPLING

Alexander Tiebel-Kroll is chef and sommelier at Restaurant /Steakhouse Tirol. In addition to some great vintage wines and award-winning bottles of Champagne, he has a collection of schnapps which in Mayrhofen are surely second to none.

The Rolls Royce of schnapps it appears is Rochelt, which can be identified by their beautifully exquisite and ornate traditional Tyrolean green bottles, each of which is crowned with a unique (real!) silver-plated top. Not only do these venerable vessels look like recovered treasure from King Solomon's Mines, they've got a price tag to match.

"It's very popular with Russian ladies. They like it so much their men often buy a bottle for them to take back home", Alex tells me before offering me a taster.

The bottle, it later transpires costs £400. In the name of research for AS, I can

report it's a zesty aromatic dew which tastes as good as it smells - melting into the tongue and infusing the mouth with a breathy breeze of freshly-peeled oranges (purists maintain that schnapps should be drunk for the aroma as much as the taste). When Alex points out that the alcohol content is staggering 50% its subtleties are even more impressive.

## WORLDS STRONGEST SCHNAPPS?

At the other end of the scale, down the road in the Piccadilly Pub, legendary landlord Didi has just taken delivery of something rather special he ordered back in the Autumn and which has arrived just in time for the Snowbombing festival (where it will be doubtlessly in great demand). They call it "The World's Strongest Schnapps" and at 60% no one is allowed to order more than one.

The distillation of schnapps is a proud family tradition, with techniques and recipes passed on down the generations. Although the techniques for burning may have changed with technology, the product is basically the same. There are so many different varieties and tastes which for the vast majority of visitors to the Austrian alps are largely left unexplored in favour of trendy tipples and sugared-to-the-hilt pale imitations ("Archers and lemonade, anyone?").

If you really want to imbibe the essence of the mountains, reach for a Meisturwurz or three...then you'll be at one with the mountains.

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# SAINT OF SPRING!

For some resorts April brings a warm and welcome wind-down; a mellow melting of alpine activity. Days grow longer, the sun grows stronger and the whiteness slowly but surely yields. But for St Anton spring brings a blossoming of eye-catching events which bring the winter season to a thrilling climax: snow volleyball at 2,000 metres above sea level, live blues and jazz on spectacular mountain top stages and a quite unique ski race Winter's last hurrah in Arlberg is lively loud and l-o-n-g!

## SNOW VOLLEYBALL TOUR (3RD TO 5TH APRIL)

Who said volleyball has to be played on sand? The playing field for the „Snow Volleyball Tour 2015“ can be found on unusually icy terrain. Beach volleyball professionals pull out the stops in a battle for the coveted „King of the Snow“ title; a sport which now enjoys official recognition. The contest is played out in the Snow Arena at 2,030 metres above sea level next to the top station of the Rendlbahn lifts – where palm trees, cheerleaders and hundreds of fans all add to the spectacular atmosphere.

For more information, please visit [www.snowvolleyball.at](http://www.snowvolleyball.at)

## NEW ORLEANS MEETS SNOW (10TH TO 12TH APRIL)

New Orleans will be moving from Mississippi to Arlberg in Tyrol for a second time this April. During the „New Orleans meets Snow“ festival, musicians and bands that have devoted themselves to African-American music will get the village streets and surrounding mountains of St. Anton „into the groove“. Dance along if you fancy – no matter if you still have your ski boots on, or normal shoes. A New-Orleans-Night with concert will be held at ARLBERG-well. com on Saturday night, before one or another „Hallelujah“ can be heard at the gospel brunch on Sunday.

## THE WHITE THRILL (SAT 18TH APRIL)

A ski race with a difference! The White Thrill has long enjoyed cult status with its mass start and 555 international participants. Late afternoon and in challenging conditions, they hurtle from the Vallugrat Ridge 1,300 altitude metres down to the valley on unprepared slopes. Many don't make the make-or-break 150 metre midway ascent. After nine kilometres in total, the competitors are confronted by yet another obstacle just before the end of the race. Like running a Marathon or eating a Belly Buster breakfast, it's all about finishing.

## SUN SKI WEEKS (11TH TO 18TH APRIL)

Spring skiing; pleasant temperatures, superb snow conditions and greatly reduced prices! What's not to like? From 11th to 18th April many hotels offer package deals with special conditions. Seven nights in a pleasant B&B including a 6 day lift pass cost from as little as £330 per person. The entire Arlberg ski area is accessible with just one ticket, encompassing an incredible 340 kilometres of marked runs, 200 kms of back country terrain and 97 state of the art cable car and lift systems.

## SNOW CRYSTAL WEEK (18TH TO 25TH APRIL)

„Letzte Talfahrt! Letzte Talfahrt!“ Runs down to the valley are possible right up to the 26th April. In celebration of the season finale, hotels and accommodation providers offer heavily reduced package offers in the week from 18th to 25th. April. Seven nights in a B&B with a 6 day lift pass cost from only £299 per person... and include a tan!

For more on awesome Arlberg visit [www.stantonamarlberg.com](http://www.stantonamarlberg.com)



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# SÖLDEN INSPECTRE

**IT'S THE SNOWY SETTING OF THE NEXT BOND FILM. BUT AWAY FROM THE LIGHTS AND CAMERA, WHAT'S THE ACTION LIKE? KIRK FIELD IS THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN RUN(S)!**



## PISTE AREA:

By comparison to other Austrian behemoths, Sölden's ski area aint huge at 144km, but what you'll find are plenty of long runs (these include 15km from the top of the glacier to the village; the other four runs listed, including from Gaislachkogel and Hainbachjoch are 8-10km with verticals., some serious underwear-threatening verticals of 1060m to 1690m.

There are two similar-sized areas above the town, linked by swift snowbound sextet-carrying cables straight outta Rettenbachtal. At the south end of town, a gondola leads up to an impressive three-cable gondola to Gaislachkogel. The terrain above the mid-station is served by a new superfast six-pack (and a rather older, slower double). There are links south towards Gaislachalm and north towards the Rettenbachtal. Another gondola from the north end of the resort goes to Giggijoch. Fast lifts from here serve wide, open slopes below Rotkogeljoch.

## QUEUE-BUSTING:

Giggijoch's not so giggly. Avoid the (high-season, weekend) morning queue by taking the bus to the other gondola.

## GRAVITY ABUSE:

Decidedly decent: Giggijoch terrain park is popular and regularly upgraded. As well as beginner, intermediate and pro kickers, there are rails and various types of boxes. There's also a chill-out zone. There's a small, Snowcross track and a timed slalom on blue 15.

## SNOW?

Kein problem! Sölden's slopes are high and generally east-facing; and there are two snowsafe glaciers remember. Snowmaking covers two thirds of the area, (including all of Giggijoch). Even in a generally poor season you can expect to slide and carve your way back to resort!

## SHOW OFFS:

We're talking awesome above-the-treeline action (though you return to resort via red and black runs through trees.

Some of the black pistes are 'proper black' - in particular the black World Cup race piste (31 at the bottom of the Rettenbach glacier). There are also extensive off-piste possibilities in Rettenbachtal.

## INTERMEDIATES:

Most of Sölden's runs are genuine red runs ideal for adventurous intermediates (but there are also several easy blacks, too for that post piste bar-room bragging!) Speed freaks will love the vertical sections and l-o-n-g runs (notably the one from Gaislachkogel)

The long, quiet blue run above Gaislachalm is ideal cruising terrain and below it a gentle blue through the trees offers the most user-friendly return to the resort. And the blues above Giggijoch offer gentle gradients; (as the crowds testify).

The glaciers are accessible to blue-run skiers, and are almost entirely of blue-run gradient - the red runs down the Seiterkar chair offer a bit of a challenge. But it's best to return via the linking gondola to the

Giggijoch slopes - the busy blue run down the Rettenbachtal is narrow (it's a road), and eventually turns into a tricky red (with an optional black variant).

## BEGINNERS

The baby slopes, served by a pair of parallel draglifts, are situated just above Innerwald hamlet and are accessed by a free lift. After a few days the wide and gentle blues at Giggijoch will call.

## BOARDERS

Sölden is quite popular with boarders as it offers rider friendly motorway pistes. Beware though - the nursery slope involves drags, but after that dreaded T-bars can be avoided and you'll enjoy the wide, open blue runs above Giggijoch. Intermediates will love the long runs, and there's great freeriding for experienced riders. Be aware that there are flat sections of piste in the Rettenbachtal and on the runs to the resort.

## CROSS-COUNTRY

Not great to be honest. Langlaufers will find a couple of benign loops alongside the river to Hof, a scenic 5km trail to Rechenau, and a 7km route at Zwieselstein, between Sölden and Obergurgl.

## FOR FAMILIES

Honestly speaking, not the most family-friendly resort. The fast, noisy main road traffic and lengthy walks aren't ideal for tired youngsters - but there are kindergartens at two schools and young children (aged four to seven) pay only a euro per day to use all the slopes.

WELCOME APRES SKI READERS! WE'RE HERE TODAY TO TELL YOU ABOUT A LITTLE SHINDIG IN THE ALPS THAT TAKES PLACE EACH APRIL. A BASH THAT INCLUDES A FAIR BIT OF SKIING, A LARGE DOLLOP OF INCREDIBLE MUSIC ACTS, A BARREL-LOAD OF LAUGHS AND MORE THAN A SMIDGEON OF DOWNRIGHT DAFTNESS. ITS NAME?

# SNOWBOMBING.

Is it Apres Ski enough for me? Does it fuse the joy of skiing with the thrill of partying? Is it a blissful week long festival spectacular held in one of the world's most impressive beauty spots? We can hear the questions rattling through your brain right now. Well, read on and make up your own mind...

## Let's jump in the van and head for the mountains!

Snowbombing began life as an April getaway for a gaggle of like-minded ski enthusiasts who were also partial to a party to get away together for a week at the end of the European Ski Season. This mystical mission to the mountains changed shape and location in the first few years, growing from 500 to over two thousand and hopping around one or two alpine resorts before the village of Mayrhofen was discovered in 2004, nestling in the Zillertal Valley. Instantly the people of ze 'hoff took the madcap British 'bombers to their hearts, sharing similar enthusiasm for skiing, drinking and alpine antics! With the range of accommodation on offer, over 500km of piste available and a veritable smorgasbord of

cracking late night venues in which to host the music, the chocolate box resort of Mayrhofen was tailor made for Snowbombing. The event ballooned rapidly, swelling from 2000 customers to over 5000 in just a couple of years, taking over the entire resort for a week and firmly making itself at home.

## Becoming the Greatest Show on Snow

The event has continued to flourish and grow each year, grabbing the crown of the worlds biggest ski based music festival and keeping it throughout. The event may have burst out of its original form and become "The Greatest Show on Snow", but the original elements of the event are still clearly evident today. It still remains a big family get-together: 7,000 Brits and Europeans, with a handful of Americans and Australians, meeting together for one great week in the Alps... with a collection of world class DJs and bands alongside them! It's that unbeatable sense of adventure and fun and the conviviality of legions of like-minded souls coming together for a week of escapism in one of the

most beautiful settings possible. Perhaps its biggest success is that even at its current sizeable scale, it still feels cosy, more like an extended holiday camp than a faceless festival packed to the rafters. Bumping into familiar faces on the mountain the night after meeting at the back of the Racket Club, making new mates on a cable car and swapping bits of clothing before the Street Party are just experiences you can't have at other events.

The inherent sense of silliness and fun is in evidence across the festival, from the outrageous fancy dress themes that are observed religiously to the rather interesting ski suit ensembles (or lack thereof) that can be seen being sported on the mountain, Snowbombing seems to attract a very particular type of raver: adventurous, friendly, music-mad and eccentric in a very British way...

It's been mentioned many times that Snowbombing must have the hardest partygoers on the planet. Such is the awesome array of talent spread across our myriad venues each night that many 'bombers choose (or just simply find themselves) heading straight up



the mountain on the first lift. As any seasoned après-cainer knows, there's nothing a blast of mountain air and a couple of runs to send even the most brutal of hangovers packing, and Mayrhofen is blessed with an incredible piste selection that makes the piste up of the night before a distant memory...

### **"It's like bringing a rave from Fabric into the scenery of The Sound of Music!" -Example**

2015 sees the globe straddling Rudimental return to Mayrhofen with their incendiary live show, Skrillex and Basement Jaxx are getting ready to make their debut, Gorgon City, Fatboy Slim, Carl Cox and Wilkinson are on board and brilliantly, as is Idris Elba. Stinger Bell aka Luther aka Big 'driss is the special guest on a gigantic DJ lineup, that covers every angle of electronica and contains more trendy decksmiths than a Dalston hairdressers! There's a reason why we've won Best European Event at the Festival Awards twice...

Perhaps the thing that truly sets Snowbombing apart from every other festival on the market is its sheer abundance of world-beating rave locations, gig spots bursting with personality, character and general alpine awesomeness. Without doubt the coolest venue in the world has to be the Arctic Disco, our sub-zero sub-bass bash at 3000 feet! Located nestled into the ice-face up the Ahorn lift, ravers party away in a specially made igloo to some of the world's greatest DJs doing a special extra-curricular set, and each year they're queuing up for a slice of the ice action! 2013 saw the Arctic Disco series taken to a whole new dimension with the addition of a live set from Kasabian, who played to a select crowd of just 300 at dusk on the mountain... "it was a very spiritual experience", said Serge from Kasabian. "We can't wait for next year". Last April the must have ticket was Carl Cox's extremely rare Funk and Soul set upon the mountain. As Carl said himself, "That party was something else!"

During Snowbombing, a vast underground tennis centre is completely transformed to create a 2500 capacity festival super club. With a killer sound system and subterranean vibe which is unmatched across the mountains, going underground has never been as much fun (well not since the great Circle

Line party of 2008)! Handily located in the middle of town, our headline venue has witnessed some electrifying live sets over the last few years: Rudimental, Disclosure, DJ Shadow, Groove Armada, The Vaccines, Above and Beyond, Booka Shade, Sub Focus, Chase & Status, Example, DJ Yoda, Magnetic Man, Pendulum, Grandmaster Flash, DJ Shadow and Carl Cox to name a few. Production values at the Racket Club are second to none... Sound is crystal clear and lighting is state-of-the-art.

The Europahaus, a vast venue in the heart of town, is transformed into one all encompassing three floored spectacular with different themes in each room. Our Street Party creates an annual Road-block inside the 'hoff with what is officially Europe's biggest fancy dress bash, whilst Snowbombers can also be whisked off to a 200 year old shack in the middle of the Floiental valley, entitled The Backcountry Party. With hot gluwain, wood chopping and block-rocking beats, what's not to love? Not forgetting the main venues that make up the hubs for Snowbombing's DJ line-up, our Bruk N Stradl is a classic alpine hut forged from thousand year old oak that has seen the likes of Seth Troxler, Eats Everything, Julio Bashmore and Maceo Plex.

Each year the Forest Party forms the book-end of the week at Snowbombing, as the whole festival comes together in exhausted but elated fashion to see off the event in style with an almighty affair inside the Waldfestplatz forest, located just a hop, skip and jump from the Mayrhofen town centre. ... Everyone dons scarves and hats as we turn the surrounding traditional Austrian shacks into bars and sausage factories and turn the old wooden stage (usually reserved for lederhosen-slapping dance troops and local weddings) into a pine-cradled platform for what The forest has seen the likes of Kasabian, Disclosure, Rudimental, Example, Dizzee Rascal, Labrinth, Fatboy Slim, De la Soul, Krafty Kuts, Madness, 2ManyDJ's and The Prodigy, who loved it so much in 2011 that they decided to come back for another pop in 2014! And yes, it was even better the second time around...

### **White Hot Parties, Blue Skies and Black Runs...**

The town of Mayrhofen can be found nestling in the valleys of the Zillertal mountain region, a world heritage

beauty site and one of the most beautiful spots in Europe. With over 500km of piste on offer to explore, a host of awesome bars, clubs and pubs dotted around the piste and or signature daytime Snowbombing bashes taking place here and there, the atmosphere on the mountain is as lively and fresh as the gig venues at night. Such is the quality of skiing available that Snowbombing attracts those after a full on ski holiday alongside the partying and madcap buffoonery, and with an incredible skiable glacier available a bus ride away, it's easy to see why ze 'hoff is regarded so highly among ski and snowboard fanatics.

The jewel in our snowy crown comes in the form of the Penken Ski Park, an incredible sprawling mass of kickers, jumps and half pipes that attracts top boarders and skiers from across the globe each April. Do not miss our daily competitions and games, and there's often a world class DJ working the crowd just to ensure that the party stays on track, even if the boarders don't! Previous years has seen Norman Jay rock the crowd, whilst 2014 saw an exclusive disco back to back to back with Artwork, Skream and The Martinez Brothers...

### **From 5\* palaces to pocket friendly pensions, we've got pillows to suit every wallet...**

Snowbombing offers a way in for every wallet. We boast rooftop pools, over 80 spas, 5 star havens and penthouses on the piste to really spend your week with us in true style. However for those that are looking for a simpler experience there are plenty of options available. So if you want to act like Hugh Hefner in the 'hoff or just need a bed to crash in before slaloming on the slopes each morning, we've got the perfect pillow for you...

Prices start from just £234 for 5 nights' accommodation AND the full festival wristband, whilst the booking system means that adding extras onto your order is clear and easy to process. With ski passes and gear hire to Arctic Disco tickets and airport transfers, you can build your whole holiday on your own unique booking page whilst keeping easy track of the cost. It's a foolproof way to build your dream holiday!

There is also a handful of ways that you can tackle your mission to the mountains, as alongside the variety of excellently priced flights to local airports Munich, Innsbruck



and Salzburg, Snowbombing offers coach travel from locations around the UK which whisk off hundreds of eager 'bombers' for on the 16 hour party buses each year. The more adventurous and hardy of you may gravitate towards The Snowbombing Road Trip if you really want to accelerate your SB experience! It's not a race or a rally; it's more a leisurely European adventure all the way to the Hof... As any agony aunt will tell you, 'it's not about the winning, it's the taking part that counts!'... So think camaraderie rather than competition, we enjoyed the view out of all the windows, not just the front one... After all, you know what they say, 'half the fun is getting there!' Keep an eye out for Road Trip announcements coming in December 2014.

**SB15...  
Get it booked while you can!**

Now entering its 16th year, Snowbombing is showing no signs of losing its title as "The Greatest Show on Snow." Its magical mix of incredible music, superb piste, an unbeatable crowd and a fantastic spirit all wrapped up inside an idyllic chocolate box Alpine resort means that it's a festival that just can't be beaten. With 2015 seeing a heroes return from Rudimental Live and Fatboy Slim, debut appearances from Skrillex and Basement Jaxx Live, Carl Cox, Wilkinson, Sigma and Gorgon

City, Eats Everything and Henrik Schwarz to name just a few, plus two forest parties, an incredible Street bash on the horizon and more Ski-based shenanigans then you can shake a ski-pole at, Snowbombing is gearing up for the biggest, boldest and best event in its history.

As MTV said, "put yourself in training now, because you may think you're hard enough... But this party never stops!"



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