



Ski Gourmet

Height of good taste

Rachael Oakes-Ash reveals the best places to wine and dine in the snowfields.

YOU DON'T have to sacrifice a penchant for quality produce, crisp flavours and matching wines when you head for the mountains this winter. While there are still plenty of mass-market establishments offering cups of hot chips and overboiled hot dogs, the overall standard of fare on the slopes is impressive.

Australian ski-fields know how to serve quality produce on the mountain and in the village and we're fortunate enough to have a number of on-mountain options during the average ski day.

Skiers and boarders can traverse from one great dining establishment to the next at all of the country's premium resorts.

When the last lift closes, attention turns to the ski villages where most restaurants are within walking distance from the lodgings, meaning no designated drivers.

That's not the only good news: snow sports are one of the best forms of exercise and burn an average of 500 calories an hour – so chow down to your heart's content and ski it off in the morning.

Sommeliers' paradise

The Credo Restaurant, Thredbo, phone (02) 6457 6844, see www.credo.com.au.

Wine lovers go directly to Credo Restaurant in Thredbo village for an impressive list of Australian, New Zealand and imported wines. This modern wooden cabin overlooks the Snowy River and its glass frontage and romantic lighting are best viewed from the outside, so walking there is recommended. The menu doesn't disappoint with local produce and a modern Australian style.

Style: Prada apres wear mixed with denim.

Style arrival

White Room, Mount Hotham, phone (03) 5759 3456, see www.hotham.com.au.

Two years ago, Mount Hotham's White Room injected some much-needed style into Hotham ski village. Since then the resort has been given a facelift and property developers Zacamoco have invested heavily. The White Room's sleek contemporary interiors – created by Italian designer



Giovanni D'Ambrosio – in shades of black with splashes of colour, came at a cost of \$350,000. The menu is as modern as the interior with a cocktail list to match.

Style: Scrub behind the ears and wear black to match the decor.

Serious grub

Summit Ridge Restaurant, Falls Creek, phone (03) 5758 3800, see www.summitridge.com.au.

Summit Ridge in Falls Creek wins

awards for a reason. Two words: Michael Newby. Head chef Newby combines a local menu of pasture-fed, high-country beef, chai-tea-roasted duck, mountain fresh trout and Waterfall Creek venison and mixes it with the likes of truffled foam, alpine mint and mountain pepper. Finish off your meal with a dessert such as apple and date pudding served with toffee sauce, double cream and Gundowring ginger ice-cream.

Style: Polo necks in solid dark colours.

Be seen

Huski, Falls Creek, phone (03) 5758 3863, see www.huski.com.au.

Names mean something at Huski in Falls Creek. Lonely Planet founder Tony Wheeler owns a penthouse apartment, Peter Bennett's photographs line the foyer's walls and Melanie Bourne's Endota have set up a day spa on street level. But that's not all: the Produce Store eatery on the ground floor is where the uber cool come to sup morning espresso and quaff evening wine, name-dropping as they go.

Style: Aviator glasses and Nudie jeans.

Mid-schuss schnapping

Kareela Hutte, Thredbo, phone (02) 6457 6099.

Forget standing in line for a preheated pizza under the bain-marie, ski straight to Kareela Hutte at mid-mountain Thredbo for white linen service, three-course menu and full sundeck filled with socialites downing schnapps.

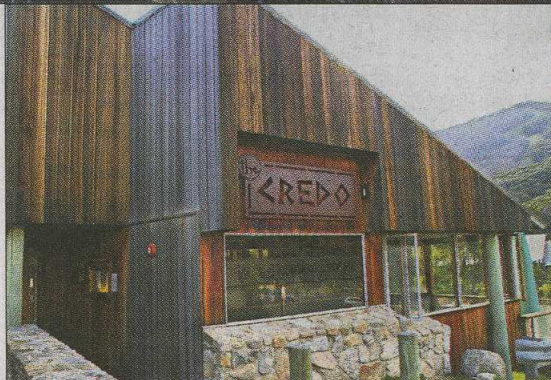
Style: Steamed-up Smith ski goggles and Nordica boots.

Best Austrian

Grimus Restaurant, Mount Buller, phone (03) 5777 6396, see www.pensiongrimus.com.au.

Wherever there's a chairlift, T-bar and snow, there's something Austrian. In Mount Buller, that something is Pension Grimus, where you'd be forgiven for thinking you were in the Tyrol. Hans Grimus lays on the hospitality. If you're lucky he'll pull out his accordion and shout you a schnapps. Word of warning, the chocolate Salzburger nockerl is designed to feed the thighs.

Style: Lederhosen.



Family value

The Pub Family Food Court, Perisher, phone (02) 6457 5291, see www.perishermanor.com.au.

The Pub Family Food Court caters for all family members with a kids' dining club and a sundeck for family lunch barbecues. The kids' menu serves up child-friendly fare to the toddlers and tweens, with hearty pub-grub-style food for the adults. Open from 10am and considered Perisher's perfect ski meeting point.

Style: Anything goes.

➤ STILL HUNGRY?

Let's not forget:

■ Snow Gums on Perisher's Front Valley - enticing menu with funniest home video-style views of the beginners on snow. See

www.perisherblue.com.au.

■ Astra Lodge in Falls Creek - more than 300 vodkas and a giant stone hearth in the restaurant. See

www.astralodge.com.au.

■ The Denman Terrace restaurant in Thredbo for loved-up couples staying in-house. See

www.thedenman.com.au.

■ Black Cockatoo Restaurant at Mercure Grand Chalet for fireside fine dining in Mount Buller. See

www.mtbullerchalet.com.au.

■ The General Store at Mount Hotham, an institution with pizza and dancing. See

www.thegeneral.com.au.
 ■ Trackers Mountain Lodge for seven course degustation dining at Falls Creek. See

www.trackers.com.au.
 ■ Mo's at Feathertop in Falls Creek - apres ski bites, "Becks, bubbles and oysters" from 4.30pm to 5.30pm. See www.feathertoplodge.com.au.

SPOILT FOR CHOICE: (clockwise from top left) The White Room's sleek interior; lunch mid-ski at Kareela Hutte; Huski's Produce Store eatery; and the exterior of Credo Restaurant.