

# sn•wfa11

**2013**





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## Editors' note

First of all, we would like to thank our beautiful country of Canada for its incomparable alpine landscape. We would also like to thank Canada's weather for providing us with the means to participate in a multitude of exhilarating alpine activities, no matter the time of year.

As Canadians, we have an obligation to make the best of this snowy season. Winter conditions tend to consume the majority of the year, so rather than shutting the blinds and turning up the heat, this ski supplement will provide you with some entertaining alternatives. We are lucky to live in a city that is just a hop, skip and a jump away from such a beautiful mountain range, and skiing is

one of the best ways to enjoy it. You would have to be crazy not to take advantage of this incredible opportunity!

So whether you choose to pizza ski down the bunny hill, drop down a snow-swept cliff, or traverse the backcountry, this is your guide to alpine entertainment.

We wish you fresh powder, good driving conditions, blue skies and plenty of breaks from assignments this winter season, so that you can truly make the most out of what the Rockies have to offer.

– Adrienne Shumlich and Morgan Shandro  
Ski Supplement Editors

## Contributors

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# KICKING HORSE

Story by Adrienne Shumlich  
Photo by Lorraine Shumlich

**K**icking Horse ski resort has always been a family favourite. When the opportunity to review this hill was presented, I grabbed my freshly waxed snowboard and headed out as soon as I could. This incredible resort is nestled in the valley where the Purcells meet the Rockies. Kicking Horse is well worth the three-hour drive from Calgary, even for just a day trip. With 11 kilometres of lift-served terrain and 106 defined runs, Kicking Horse is the kind of ski resort that makes you feel small. Its sheer grandeur and immense altitude caused my mother, who is afraid of heights, to cover her eyes on the way up the gondola.

When we reached the resort, it hadn't snowed for a few days, but the hill is so vast that we still managed to find some untouched powder. While mostly catering to advanced skiers or snowboarders, there is a bunny hill and a family-friendly "slow skiing" portion of the hill.

Unfortunately, if you are a beginner you are confined to the bottom half of the hill. But, due to the enormous size of the hill, beginner skiers and boarders still have a variety of runs to choose from. For more skilled skiers, there are plenty of bowls and peaks at the top of the gondola. Once you step off the gondola, there is only one green run that will take you down at a slower pace. However, this run will test your endurance, as it is 10 kilometres long.

Regardless of whether you feel brave enough to strap yourself into skis or a snowboard at the top, it's worth taking the trip up the gondola to snap some photos and take in the breathtaking view. The Eagle's Eye restaurant is located 7,700 feet above sea level. The restaurant provides a picturesque view for those with individuals with elevated taste and is the highest fine dining experience in all of Canada.

Not surprisingly, we witnessed a wedding take place adjacent to the restaurant.

Kicking Horse is known for its long, diverse runs. One moment you could be dropping into one of its many bowls, the next you could be carving through moguls, stuck in powder in the trees or shredding down a freshly groomed run. One of my favourite things about Kicking Horse is that on many of the runs, you have the option to tread down moguls or, if you are 'moguled-out,' you can stick to the groomed side of the run.

While I was mid-hike up to the Terminator peak, I had a binding snap off. I was extremely disappointed, thinking I'd have to cut my day short. I took the gondola down and headed

to the demo shop where I was helped immediately. For just \$10, I had a new piece on my binding and was able to get back on the hill in fewer than 10 minutes. This definitely boosted my rating of Kicking Horse.

Our trip to Kicking Horse was incredibly enjoyable. I highly recommend heading to this resort. It's perfect for both skiers and snowboarders. From spectacular views to spectacular wipeouts, there is no shortage of things to look or laugh at. Kicking Horse really kicks ass.



# REVELSTOKE

Story by Erin Shumlich  
Photo by Colin Snyder

I'm outside dressed for a blizzard on a balmy February day, sweating and waiting for my ride to pick me up for a weekend of fun and skiing in Revelstoke, British Columbia. Four and a half hours away, Revelstoke — or Revy, as those familiar with the hill know it — is not a hill you can travel to in a day. I had never been to Revelstoke, and I have to admit that I was a bit nervous — I was traveling with three skiing and snowboarding whizzes who informed me that Revy was an expert hill with the highest vertical in North America at 1,713 metres. I had just switched from snowboarding to skiing, and hadn't retained much from when I skied as a kid.

In retrospect, I should have been shaking in my way-too-stiff boots. The hill does have many runs for beginners and there were many adorable baby skiers tearing up the hill, but I found myself going through proclaimed "extreme terrain," almost falling off cliffs and actually falling off cliffs. The mild weather didn't help much, as the snow was extremely sticky making it difficult to turn with ease and avoid trees. The visibility around the base of the Stoke

chairlift was so bad that it was difficult to tell which way was up. Despite all this, my day in Revelstoke was the best skiing day I've had so far this season — people make the trek out to the small, idyllic town for a reason.

We spent most of the day off the Ripper chairlift, which was above the cloud line and gave us an incredible view of the 3,121 acres of Revelstoke resort and the surrounding area.

Even though I have lived in Calgary for most of my life, I still get shivers looking out at the vast landscape of the Rockies.

The town of Revelstoke cowers under the ski hill. My friend joked that you could throw a snowball from the ski lift into the nearest liquor store. With plenty of hotels that are walking distance to the main street, Revelstoke's charm is uncontested.

We left the hotel at 9:20 a.m. and made it for the hill's opening at 9:30 a.m. Revelstoke is the only resort world-

wide with the options of lift, cat, heli and backcountry offered from one base. Even though it hadn't snowed in a few days when we went, there was fresh powder on many of the runs and very few icy areas.

The hill was very busy — we went the same weekend as the University of Calgary Ski Club — but there was plenty of room to move around the hill without having to worry about knocking someone down. The only difficulty the busyness caused us was a little extra wait for the Stoke chair. However, the two gondolas we took to get to the second lodge by the Stoke chair were easy and the wait was nowhere as long as Lake Louise's gondola might have been on an equally busy day.

Revelstoke has only two ski lifts and we skied eight runs in total all day. These

lifts are more than enough — each run took us substantial time, which is way better than spending most of the day on a lift, and there are plenty of options to ski down. At the time of print, Revelstoke had a 197-centimetre base and 805 cm of snow since the beginning of the year — plenty of fresh pow. After a day of skiing — and a rowdy night — we were all exhausted and my body ached so much that I could only make robotic movements.

We hit the road back to Calgary, listened to the *Hunger Games* audio book the whole way, and I already can't wait to make another trip out to what has become one of my favourite hills.



# URBAN SKIING

Story and photo by Brady Fullerton

Jackson Taylor is a freeskier who has been skiing since he was 13, but, more importantly, Jackson is also broke. Because of this, he and I considered urban skiing — a sport still new, but gaining popularity among Calgarians. I loved the idea of skiing as an urban sport, and he loved the challenge and the fact that it costs nothing. Eventually we decided to plan and shoot an urban skiing session — we just had to wait for the damned snow.

When there is finally a dump of snow, Jackson meets me at 10 a.m. with a canvas bag. He pulls out a bungee cord with a rope leader and a handle, with which, he explains, is how to get momentum without a hill. We walk out into the parking lot, attach the leader to a light post and struggle to pull the bungee to double its length across the parking lot. I let go of the handle and Jackson slides across the ice in his sneakers. He's laughing his ass off and

beaming — he's going skiing tonight. We pack up the bungee and load a truck with four 1,000-watt halogen work lights, a generator, a couple hundred feet of extension cords, ropes, shovels and various clips and carabineers, and take a drive out to a couple spots we're hoping might work. There's a popular stairwell off Charleswood Drive with a flat approach but a difficult landing that involves a couple lanes of traffic. We decide this is a little risky for his first attempt so we move on to a school ground near Northmount Drive with a series of entrances and complex railings that lead out to a residential street. This is a lot more promising, but it's also pretty likely to attract too much attention and end the night quickly with a run in with the cops. Urban skiing is not illegal, but depending on where you go, you may get charged for trespassing. Just as we're leaving, we notice a 10-metre stairwell with a long approach and an asphalt landing. The snow isn't too thick but Jackson figures

we can pack it in the landing area and at the approach to make it work.

Jackson spends the afternoon packing snow and building a small jump at the top of the stairwell. I bring the loaded truck over just after the sun has set. We unload the generator and pack it into a pile of snow. We set up the lights at the top and bottom of the stairwell and Jackson takes a couple walks up it and says, "I'm just going to clear it first." He's more nervous than he's letting on.

The two of us pull the bungee back from the stairwell about 20 metres and let him go. He tucks his legs in close and clears the railings, but comes down past his landing onto the hard asphalt. He gets up, smiles and laughs. On his second attempt, he tries to land sooner and ends up catching a ski on the railing and comes down hard on the stairs, ripping his skis off. He gets up again and laughs, "Fuck, that kind of hurt."

Next time, he pulls back 15 metres or so on the bungee and lands on the

railing. He makes it down a full section but jumps off at the transfer each time. After a couple more runs, he has the feel for the transfer and he's making it every time and ending with a 180 spin and a backwards landing. The whole night he keeps giving me a stupid grin.

The next Monday at work, he tells me that he had thought he broke his collarbone during the first two failed landings, but didn't care because he wanted to make the rail.

Urban skiing offers a number of benefits which you won't find on the hills: it's free, provided you can beg, borrow or steal whatever you might need, and it allows nearly unlimited possibilities for freeskiers to find and create new and challenging courses. Additionally, it offers an opportunity for skiers to take part in the urban sport environment that has always been the traditional realm of sports like skateboarding. It offers the chance to reappropriate urban environments and to redefine what a space is for.

# BEAUTIFUL BACKCOUNTRY

Story by Dylann Golbeck  
Photo by Colin Snyder

Living in Calgary, we are constantly reminded of the mountains, which can be seen across the city. Many Calgarians, however, have not had the opportunity to enjoy the mountains to their full extent. Downhill equipment and lift tickets are expensive, making downhill skiing unfeasible for many students. There are many alpine sports available to Calgarians only a short drive away and downhill skiing is only one of them. While it certainly has its hazards, backcountry skiing can provide an incredible experience for the seasoned downhill or cross-country skier looking for more variety. There are many ways that beginners can ease into backcountry skiing.

Snow pack and avalanche dangers are monitored in patrolled areas but not in backcountry locations. You must be knowledgeable about snow conditions and what signs indicate snow pack and avalanche hazards as you venture

into the backcountry. You can take courses on avalanche safety through the Outdoor Centre at the University of Calgary, the Canadian Avalanche Centre with workshops held at Mountain Equipment Co-op locations, through Mountain Skills Academy or through the Alpine Club of Canada. It is important to take safety courses so you can be prepared to deal with certain risks associated with skiing in often very isolated and undeveloped areas.

There is often much more equipment used in backcountry skiing than in downhill skiing. A beacon-avalanche transceiver is an absolute necessity. It will allow your location to be easily found if you are buried by an avalanche. Skiers should practice how to use their beacon — this will often be covered in avalanche safety courses. You will also need an avalanche probe and a shovel. You may want to invest in a split board if you intend on snowboarding in the back country — it will allow you to traverse on skis. You will need metal-edged skis if you are cross-country skiing in the back-country as you will be break-

ing trails yourself. Skiers may want to look into getting wider skies and potentially into telemark or alpine-touring bindings. Some individuals may use snowshoes to hike up to the location they plan on skiing, however, you may also use skins over your telemark or alpine touring skies. Skins create traction allowing skiers to climb up slopes without sliding backwards. You can get skins that either stick to the bottom of your skies or are held on by clips. It is also advised that you wear gaiters and dress appropriately. There are also several items you must pack, including a map, compass or GPS, equipment repair tools, food, water, a whistle, space blanket and first aid supplies. The backpack you use is also important — it must be comfortable and have the capacity to carry all your supplies while still being sturdy and light. Equipment can often be rented at affordable prices.

Before heading out, you can check snow conditions for different locations. The closest places to backcountry ski include Spray Lakes and Kananaskis. If you are willing to drive further, Banff National Park or Yoho National Park also have great backcountry options. Ski with your friends and always tell someone where you are going and when you should be back.

# TIPS FOR BEGINNERS

Story by Matthew Tom  
Photo by Adrienne Shumlich

You gaze out the window to see snow coming down hard — winter's icy siege has confined you to your house for yet another weekend.

With a grimace you think of

the people who rejoice when winter comes, the Calgarians who have conquered the harshest of the seasons: skiers.

Even if you wanted to go skiing, you couldn't — you have no idea of where to go, what to wear or what to do. Then, you see it: the crumpled, inky pages

protruding from your backpack. Perhaps prompted by some subliminal desire, you had taken a copy of the *Gauntlet* while hurrying through MacHall. You rip open the pages searching desperately for the ski supplement, determined to make the best of Calgary's tumultuous weather.

First, you must decide on a mountain. Luckily, there are several ski hills near Calgary, including Lake Louise, Sunshine, Mt. Norquay and Nakiska. For transportation, several alternatives exist to driving by yourself in a blizzard: many ski hills offer affordable bus rides and, for longer excursions, the University of Calgary Ski Club hosts several trips during the year.

"We have awesome events, ski trips and deals," says U of C Ski Club vice-president internal Cory Stephens.

Next, check the weather report and make sure you are dressed appropriately. Layers are recommended, as the temperatures can fluctuate over the day. Make sure that the outer layer of clothing is waterproof, since you will inevitably fall. Don't be worried though — landing in a soft bed of snow can be an unexpectedly pleasant experience. When discouraged, remember this proverb: "Fall seven times, get up eight."

Don't forget to bring a helmet, gloves and either sunglasses or ski goggles. Wear sunscreen even on a cloudy day, as UV rays can reach the top of the mountain and may lead to painful sunburns.

Although ski or snowboard equipment can be rented at the hill, John Janssen, the rental equipment manager for the U of C's Outdoor Centre, says renting equipment on campus is more convenient and affordable.

"Students can pick it up and try everything on here so they're set to go and don't have to wait in line at the rental shop," says Janssen. "We're significantly less expensive than renting on the hill, and we give the students a discount as well."

All students were given a \$25 credit that can be used towards a rental. You can cash in on this deal at the U of C's Outdoor Centre, located in the Kinesiology

building beside the entrance to the Olympic Oval.

Before actually skiing, you must also buy a lift ticket, which are offered at a discount for U of C Ski Club members.

Once you arrive at a hill, practice on the beginner hills before getting on a chairlift. The first technique any aspiring skier should learn is the 'pizza.' By placing your feet wide apart, bending your knees inward and pointing your skis toward each other, while making sure not to cross the tips, you will hopefully be able to control your speed and prevent yourself from barreling into either a tree or a fellow skiing novice. By varying the pressure applied to the inside edge of the skis, you can control your acceleration. By applying more pressure to the edge of one ski than the other, you can also turn. To go faster, use the 'French fries' technique by pointing your skis straight down the hill.

As an alternative to learning by yourself you can also take a skiing lesson from an instructor.

"Take a lesson," says Dr. Vivian Mozol, a chemistry professor at the U of C and a skiing enthusiast. "I started two years ago and now I'm thinking of doing Delirium Drive. I attribute it all to having taken a lesson."

Even if you choose not to take lessons, Dr. Mozol says that the best advice is to try your hardest.

"Push yourself and have a passion and a goal," says Dr. Mozol. "That's the way to progress in anything."

At the end of the day you can return to the ski lodge to rest. While munching on something that is hopefully healthier than pizza and fries, reflect on your day. You've done it — by conquering winter, you have accomplished quite an achievement. Hopefully you have gained an appreciation for Calgary's fickle weather, and next time there's a big snowfall you know where to go.



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