



# Views



## CATERING TO ALL TASTES

**Guests to Skyline Queenstown's newest café, the Market Kitchen, are the winners in the culinary stakes.**

With a brand-new oven for gourmet pizzas, a specialist tandoor to help recreate the taste of India, a crepe station delivering freshly-made savoury and sweet French delights, and an ice cream parlour for cool treats, there really is something for everyone.

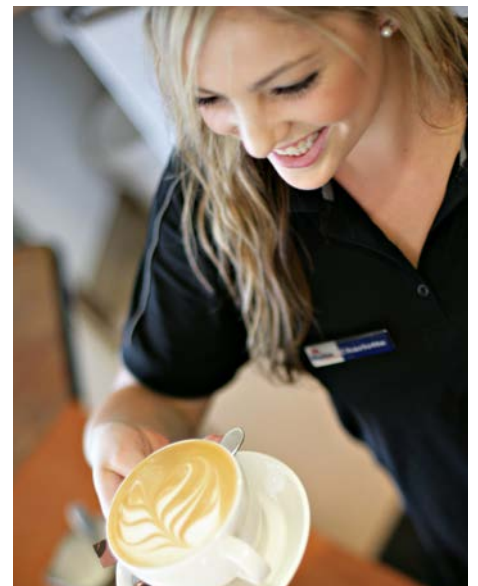
The 'pick and go' section offers simple and nourishing alternatives including home-made pies, sandwiches and a selection of pastries and cakes baked on-site by Skyline's famed pastry chefs.

Food and Beverage Manager Pierre Poyet says the dining options are a reflection of the talented international culinary team at the complex.

"Our chefs hail from all over the world, so it's great to be able to showcase their talents," says Pierre.

Perfectly complementing the great alpine outdoors, the interior is also a visual feast. Fresh decor with light tones and open cooking areas allows visitors to relax in comfort and initial signs are overwhelmingly positive.

"At our official launch we received excellent feedback about the layout and the amazing food from the Market Kitchen," says Pierre.



# Park and ride

**The only things that stand still at Skyline Queenstown are the cars at the base building, and now there's room for heaps more.**

After some exciting renovations which included the airborne removal of an old house, the new staff car park is complete.

Some 77 new spaces have been created for staff to use in the sealed facility.

General Manager Lyndon Thomas says it is a huge improvement on the previous site and staff members are enjoying the luxury of their own space.

"It makes the terminal area look tidy and improves access to the gondola. Car parking may not seem like the most exciting of developments but it's the little things that make a big difference," says Lyndon.



# On the up and up

**Season pass sales to Queenstown Bike Park are increasing yet again, for the third year running.**

Mountain bikers love the adrenaline rush of the trails in such scenic surroundings and they're voting with their pedals.

Work has already begun on an exciting new trail, offering riders an alternative descent to the gondola base station. General Manager Lyndon Thomas says the

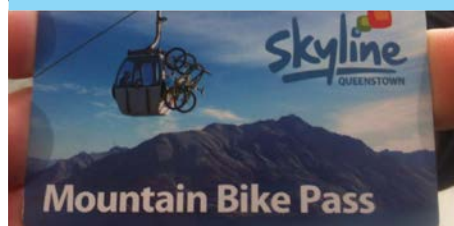
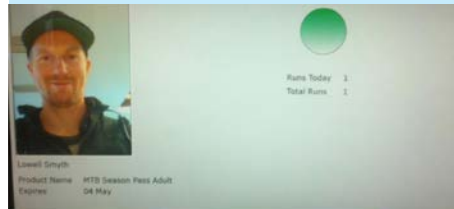
signs are all in place for a terrific mountain biking season, with sales of half-day passes currently up 168%, and gondolas have been fitted with a third bike hook to meet the demand.

"It's great to see so many people enjoying this wonderful environment in a variety of ways for all ability levels. We've got the altitude, bikers bring the attitude!" says Lyndon.

## REVOLVING TECHNOLOGY

**This season, Skyline Queenstown has introduced a new way for mountain bike riders to stay on track.**

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) cards contain individual information for the holder, such as the number of rides they have taken on that day and their total to date.



Also featuring the rider's photo, the handy wallet-sized cards offer extra security and guard against fraud.

With hands-free operation like a barcode scan, the new technology makes life easier for staff and users, and that means more time for riding!



## The Dream Team

**The secret to Skyline Queenstown's success is no mystery.**

General Manager, Lyndon Thomas puts the smooth running of the business down to the expertise and commitment of all the staff, and with the number of long servers growing it seems the appreciation's mutual!

"Long-serving staff members bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to our operations and help create the fabulous working environment we have in Queenstown," he says.

This year the Queenstown team has celebrated 21 staff service awards ranging from two to 25 years.

That special silver milestone, only the second in Queenstown, was clocked up by Marilyn Smillie in the Souvenirs department.

Marilyn is followed closely by her daughter Charlene, who is set to receive an award for 20 years of service in November.

Marilyn is particularly proud of her daughter, who went on to become her boss!

"It may be a bit of a role reversal, but we're keeping it all in the family," she laughs.

Lyndon agrees that Skyline has a strong family-friendly focus. He adds, "We value the dedication of all our staff and congratulate them on all their hard work over the years".

**Long-serving team members include:**

Richard Hughes (Chief Engineer)	15 years
Malcolm Officer (Gondola)	10 years
Haeyon Yoon (Souvenirs)	10 years
Seori Sakamoto (Food and Beverage)	10 years

# THRILLS ON FILM

**If a picture's worth a thousand words, what value would you place on a mini-movie?**

Photographic souvenirs are nothing new at Skyline Rotorua and now they take their memories into a whole new dimension, creating personalised home entertainment.

Making use of new and exciting technology, luge rides are brought to life for the ultimate holiday memento.

Helmet-mounted cameras film the action as riders power down Mount Ngongotaha, recording all the thrills of the track.

The footage is captured on a mini SD card so visitors can simply take it home and enjoy the journey again and again.

Rotorua Sales and Marketing Manager, David Blackmore, says the system is a reaction to customer demand.

"Luge riders wanted video to be able to share with their friends and family so we decided to trial the latest release GoPro cameras to meet this need," he says.

"The footage is remarkably clear, which allows our visitors to make their own luge videos and easily share the fun," adds David.



## OFFICIAL FAVOURITE

**The results are in and Skyline Rotorua is thrilled to be top of the polls.**

The complex received top honours as it was voted the 'Favourite North Island Attraction' at the Grand Pacific Tours (GPT) Supplier of the Year Awards.

General Manager, Bruce Thomasen, says the greatest honour is that the awards are voted on by GPT travellers who visit hotels and attractions throughout the country.

GPT coach holidays offer a range of New Zealand tour options for Australian visitors.

Bruce explains that while the GPT guests are at Skyline Rotorua they enjoy a scenic gondola ride, a champagne buffet breakfast and a luge ride, which clearly makes them very happy travellers.

"We are pleased to have been able to contribute to the creation of such positive memories for these international visitors," says Bruce.

"This award is a tribute to our staff who work incredibly hard to deliver great products and services," he adds.



# SILVER SERVICE

**After 25 years at Skyline Rotorua Shirley Adams has seen many developments, but she insists the fundamentals of the operation are unaltered.**

"The menus and the décor may have changed, but the business is still as friendly and as family-orientated as the day I started," says Shirley.

She has had a variety of duties during her time but says her favourite is her current role as pastry chef.

From positive staff and visitor feedback it sounds like she's not the only one who's pleased she's in the job.

"She produces some of the best bakery and dessert items in the country!" says General Manager and pastry fan Bruce Thomasen.

Shirley was formally recognised for her sterling service at an awards ceremony where she received a travel voucher and a bonus from Bruce.

"Shirley is a valued member of the team and brings fun and passion to the work place," says Bruce. "The company is really proud of her and her milestone achievement."

As for the main reason for her continued enjoyment at Skyline, Shirley credits the rest of the team. "My colleagues are fantastic and I especially enjoy working with the younger staff as they keep me young too."



Skyline Rotorua's pastry chef Shirley Adams

# IN AT THE BEGINNING

Mike Gagnon's a man who's been at the top ever since he started – at the top of Mt Tremblant that is!

Mike's has been a member of the Luge team since it started in 2003.

As Maintenance Manager for the last decade, he's been living the dream of lugging in the Canadian mountains.

A special ceremony early in the season saw Mike presented with his 10-year service award, and he's not about to stop now.

"I've loved every minute of the last 10 years. It's always a pleasure to contribute to the luge experience of visitors of all ages and abilities," says Mike.



Mont Tremblant Maintenance Manager Mike Gagon

## Busy times ahead and behind

As the Mont Tremblant Luge closed for the end of the season the team basked in the success of a sensational summer.

With more than 234,500 rides, plenty of visitors shared their enthusiasm.

General Manager Mat Carson said it's one of the highest ride counts on record and the most since 2005.

"This is the 11th luge season for Mont Tremblant and it's proved to be a very busy one," he says.

While the luge is tucked up for the Canadian winter season, the staff will recuperate before returning for more fun in 2014.

"We can't wait for the fall and winter seasons to pass, so we can come back in spring and challenge the record all over again!" says Mat.



## Painting party

Mont Tremblant staff are always sad to say farewell at the end of the season, but they know how to brighten things up with a legendary party.

As they signed off in time for Canadian Thanksgiving, the luge team faced off against the management team with an afternoon of paintball.

General Manager Mat Carson says team spirits were high as always, and with this

being the luge, there was plenty of friendly sledging at the fixture.

"It's fair to say the management team came well equipped (with an extra supply of paintballs and upgraded weapons)!" he jokes.

The luge team also brought their joie de vivre to the party with a few tricks of their own. After all, all's fair in love and paintball!

# ROOM TO MOVE

**Upgrades and improvements have put Skyline Luge Sentosa visitors and staff into space!**

The recently renovated top ticket and photo sales buildings are open and welcoming guests with ease. Sleek and sophisticated, the area's designed for comfort and efficiency and visitors truly appreciate the streamlined booths and cooled waiting areas.

Meanwhile, team members are enjoying the addition of the staff pantry; a cool, comfortable environment for mealtimes and relaxation.

The relocated workshop is another bonus, this time for the maintenance team, complete with a tailored design for specific needs and essential work.

Not to be left out, the administration crew's newly finished base combines extra room with stylish interiors.

General Manager Danny Luke is thrilled with all the renovations. "The entire team is excited about their new work places," he says.

"It's great to be able to reward them with a comfortable and practical environment, and it's also an excellent place to build team camaraderie," adds Danny.

## Pictures perfected!

Travellers the world over know about 'taking only photos and leaving only footprints' and the message is in full focus at Sentosa thanks to a fabulous upgrade to the photo display system.

The team welcomes a new partnership with Pictureworks, the innovative specialists in digital imagery and multimedia.

"The new system is robust and reliable. With this local leading-edge technology, people's memories of fun times will be better recorded and preserved than ever," says General Manager Danny Luke.

## August figures in record month

**These are peak sales times at Skyline Luge Sentosa. August saw yet another one for the record books with visitors enjoying close to 135,000 rides.**

And in more good news, Sentosa's also hosted more than 600,000 luge rides so far this year, putting the attraction six per cent ahead of budget already.

General Manager Danny Luke is particularly proud of the team's success considering they had building upgrades to contend with.

"We're working hard to improve our site with a variety of projects.

These renovations could cause unwelcome disruptions but the team has taken it all in their stride and continues to deliver excellent service to our visitors," says Danny.

"It's all reflected in the numbers and I'm very proud of their hard work and commitment," he adds.

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# Opening ovation

**Calgary Luge is only in its first season but early indications are encouraging for the future. The new attraction has rocketed into the top 10 Things To Do In Calgary according to TripAdvisor.**

With an overall rating of 'Excellent', Calgary Luge has received glowing reviews. Happy riders have posted comments ranging from 'definite thumbs up' and 'great for all ages' to 'heaps of fun' and 'what an unexpected joy!' The riders all agree that once is never enough!

Although flooding caused some complications, General Manager James Dudfield says staff have been inundated with praise since opening.

"The core management team did a great job to get the operation up and running, taking into account a number of setbacks that occurred. There are some things you can't control, such as the weather, but the team got everything else right, so we were all systems go throughout the summer," says James.



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# LOG IN, LOG OFF

Mercure Leisure Lodge hosted a very special guest when the Ranfurly Shield enjoyed a brief stay in September.

And having won the famous Log o' Wood from Otago the Hawkes Bay team weren't letting it out of their sight.

Manager Jan McDougall says she's disappointed the shield didn't have time for a longer stay in Dunedin.

"It was great to host this team and the shield and to have a little bit of history at the hotel. Shame it couldn't have hung around for a wee while longer!" she says.

After posing for photos, the trophy was awarded the same quality accommodation that guests have come to expect from Leisure Lodge. Reports say it slept like a log.



## Green thumbs up for Ivan

Spring sprung early in Dunedin and Leisure Lodge staff and visitors alike love waking up to smell the flowers.

"The hotel gardens are looking picture postcard perfect with daffodils, tulips and spring blossoms," says Manager Jan McDougall.

All credit for the the beautiful blooms goes to the hard work of gardener Ivan Geeves.

"He does a magnificent job with the grounds," says Jan.

"We are Dunedin's Garden Hotel, and those gardens play an integral part in the overall relaxing experience," she adds.

## The A & P Show!

Move over the Golden Girls – with sixty years of stellar service between them, long-serving Leisure Lodgers Pam Gourley and Anne Loader are real diamonds!

Supervisor Anne has 33 years of experience while Housekeeper Pam has been at her post for 28 years making sure those rooms are spotless!

Both Anne and Pam are Dunedin-born and bred, and love the fact they can share their city with others.

They credit great management and a friendly team as reasons they enjoy going to work every day and Hotel Manager Jan McDougall agrees.

"It's great to have such cheerful staff members who help the guests have a positive experience while staying with us," she says.

"It's a winning formula that ensures everyone's happy."



Mercure Leisure Lodge Ann Loader



Mercure Leisure Lodge Pam Gourley



## Nikhil takes the reins

The newest recruit to Mercure Leisure Lodge brings a wealth of experience with him.

Food and Beverage Manager, Nikhil Yadav previously worked at Skyline Queenstown honing his skills in a creative environment.

"I am passionate about food and drink and am delighted to join the team at the Leisure Lodge" Nikhil says.



Mercure Leisure Lodge Food and Beverage Manager Nikhil Yadav

# Basement chic

**Christchurch's new Russian underground is entirely on the level.**

Once a basement car park, the newest casino venue incorporates a bar, dance floor, stage, relaxing booths, and a presentation space.

Christened the Mashina Lounge, after the Russian word for car or machine, the venue embraces its industrial origins while celebrating the latest in urban chic with leading-edge lighting and sound design.

The sleek and stylish bar has a vodka focus enhanced by cocktails and an impressive selection of tap and craft beers.

State-of-the-art kitchens supply a range of food options from slow-cooked meat platters to metre-long pizzas.

Casino Food and Beverage Manager Blair McIntyre says the lounge will provide a variety of entertainment to discerning clients.

"Mashina is a funky interpretation on a Russian theme. It's a premium environment that will attract those searching for the allure of eastern promise," he says.

# All care and host responsibility

**Christchurch Casino has added yet another superlative to its glowing list of endorsements.**

Winning the 'Hospitality Award for Excellence in Host Responsibility' proves once again that the team is at the forefront of their industry.

They were honoured at a Queenstown ceremony where awards were presented to the very best of the country's hospitality businesses.

Casino chief executive Brett Anderson says he is proud to receive the award judged by a panel of independent industry professionals.

"It is great for the team to be recognised in this area, it shows we are serious about our host responsibilities and looking after all our guests to make sure they have an enjoyable and safe time whenever they come to visit us!" he says.



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# No blues and heaps of peaks!

**Blue Peaks deals equally with all three extremes – extreme winter, extreme summer and extremely happy guests!**

July and August saw the the team handling full occupancy with its customary ease and earning themselves a new crop of advocates into the bargain.

"When people come for a winter holiday and find themselves surrounded by snow, naturally they're absolutely delighted!" says Co-Manager Michael McMillan.

"The temperatures never seem to bother anybody, they're all out making the most of it!" he adds.

And sure enough the great outdoors was the place to be in the first dramatic dump of the season.

"It was just a great atmosphere," says Co-Manager Anne McMillan.

"At any given time the place was home to a small army of snowmen and an arsenal

of snowballs, and that was just down to the adults!" she laughs.

With a good-looking summer in prospect the McMillans aren't expecting any drop in enthusiasm.

"Our visitors love the location as much as the property itself so whether they'll be

enjoying themselves at the lake, in the gardens or away on activities they always like to come back and treat Blue Peaks as they would their own home.

"And that's just the way we like it too!" says Anne.



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## Top feedback boosts bottom line

Figures have been flying as well as the aircraft for The Helicopter Line as word of mouth helps smash previous sales figures.

The company posted a record month in August despite some pretty rough weather conditions.

Happy passengers from around the world revelled in the stunning alpine scenery and adding the words 'amazing' and 'remarkable' to all manner of tourism networks.

A recent visitor from Australia commented; "It was the best ride of my life and it totally made my trip. I would definitely recommend the Helicopter Line to anyone."

## Website hits the thrill switch!

Queenstown Combos has a whole new look out there in cyber-space with the launch of a brand new website.

Combining rafting, jetboating, helicopter rides, bungee jumping, skydiving, canyon swinging and wine tasting tours, the site is one of the most comprehensive adventure catalogues around.

It's also one of the most exciting with spectacular photography, video and practical testimonials from mind-blown clients.

All options are clearly explained to make it easy to select an individual package of events tailor-made to every entertainment taste.

Clients love the fresh design and easy-to-use links which all make it much easier to fit in maximum thrills to their time in the region.



## Guides go globetrotting!

**As always, celebrations for another great season of heli-skiing were tinged with sadness as the crew headed off around the world.**

While the Harris Mountains Heli-Ski break-up stories were all about perfect heli-skiing days and treks, talk of separations were on the menu too.

As the summer months bring green pastures to the Southern Lakes, guides

head off to all manner of exotic destinations, many chasing the snow around the globe.

But clearly there's no place like (temporary) home as wherever they wander, not much gets in the way of them heading back next year... and the stories can all start again!

## High Achievers

Sales staff have always aimed high figuratively, but thanks to Helicopter Line, one lucky conference group made it right to the top!

As part of a weekend's activities in Queenstown, a group of 160 high achievers were choppered to the highest point of The Remarkables for some panoramic lake and mountain views.

Totally Tourism Sales Manager Brad Patterson says as a supplement to the breath-taking backdrop, Helicopter Line also flew up a bar for luxury refreshments.

"I've heard of a beer garden, but this was more like a champagne vista!" says Brad.

Without exception the guests were totally thrilled with the experience and their



conference manager is concerned they may have peaked.

"It was the highlight of the program and everyone will remember the mountain-top bar for years to come. I'm not sure how to beat it!" she laughs.

## FLYING VISIT FOR SHIELD

Queenstown's Helicopter Line team is used to flying VIPs to exclusive destinations, but even they were impressed with their latest guest.

Chauffeuring the Ranfurly Shield, proudly chaperoned by some Otago Rugby Team members, to a secret mountain-top location was a real highlight for the HLQ team.

Totally Tourism Sales Manager Brad Patterson says; "It was great to see the shield up close and meet some of the Otago players as they posed for scenic shots in the snow. For that brief moment we all felt on top of the world!"

