

# SNOW, SUN AND

WHILST THE SUN WAS SHINING, THE SNOW WAS GLISTENING AND THE COMPETITORS SLOGGED IT OUT ON THE HILL, NATIVES REPORTER EMMA MORRIS ASKS... WHY HAD NO-ONE THOUGHT OF THIS BEFORE?

It was a day like many others, early and clear but still dark, I yawned, stretched and reluctantly released myself from the folds of my duvet. I didn't know it at 5am that fateful Thursday morning...but it was to be a very special day, a day that would in fact change my life forever.

Ok, I may be over dramatising slightly, but it was a day that was only over shadowed by the subsequent following days of that weekend. I was looking forward to it; we had been planning the finer details for months, and the excitement had been building as each day drew us a little closer to 26

July, the weekend that Natives hosted the first ever 'UK Snowsports Summer Weekender'.

The Weekender was such a success that as this article goes to press we're not only still reminiscing about last year, but we're already discussing tactics for this years event, 24-27 July 2008.

But why was it so special? I asked myself the same thing as I stood clutching my snowboard bag at Clapham Junction, at 6am, shivering in the early morning "summer" conditions. The surprisingly energetic banter and initial gathering in the lounge at Gatwick soon

sparked into the amazing atmosphere that was to remain during the next few days.

At Geneva we embarked on the first race of the weekend; the race to Tignes. What followed can only be described aptly as a tortoise and hare style sprint to resort. Some unusual route choices meant that Tignes was a mere 6hours away for some, and my car was the first to arrive to resort in a leisurely three hours, including lunch in Moutiers.

The Jam Bar, Tignes, played host for 'Welcome Drinks', and as we all basked in the late afternoon sun the Natives team welcomed all the participants (except those still to arrive from their European rally) to the Weekend. After settling in to our stunning Skiworld chalet, in the new Montana development in Le Lac, and enjoying some initial beers on the balcony we all headed out for a compulsory cheese dinner (cheese was a big feature of our weekend) of four cheese pizzas and Tartiflette. This quiet beginning led onto a return to the Jam Bar until 1am, as we greeted the final arrivals...

Early starts abounded; go long and go hard seemed to be our unspoken motto, or maybe that was the problem! So, bleary eyed and barely focusing on each other we enjoyed our chalet style breakfast, included in the bargain cost of the weekend of just £99. Luckily ▶



Summer weekender competitors give Natives MD a bit of 'support'!



Main pic: Bet and Fi Respect the Mountain in style; Right from top: Spectators bask in sunshine at the lake; Jam Bar's Jamie racks them up; Morgan jams on the pedal; Metrosnow's Lucy and James are all smiles





From above left: Natives welcomes the teams; Ski Club of Great Britain team mates; James is impressed with the talent on display; Metrosnow.co.uk team mates;

Tim takes the water jump like...a duck to a freezing cold lake!; Take it to the beach; A snap shot of a night out in Tignes; Bad hair, bad dancing and pointing ensue!

most teams were separated by their chalets so there were no antlers locking over baguette Bonne Maman.

By Bam, we were ready to head up the mountain for the start of the games, the Metrosnow.co.uk Dual Slalom. Finally the banter melted away and the competitive element came to the fore as the teams raced head to head for much hoped for glory. Skiworld Allstars took this particular trophy, helped by the advantage of a team full of skiers. The grudge match between Metrosnow and Ski Club, saw a close race, marred by a nasty looking fall (but fortunately not too serious) from Ski Club of Great Britain team member Betsy Garner.

Nothing could have prepared us for the afternoon's activities as, after a hasty lunch, we relocated to the water jump. As famous in Tignes as 'the legend of the lake', our most daring sports fans ventured onto the high-speed launch pad, fully kitted out in wet suits, helmets and life-jackets, and flew quite literally into Le Lac.

As confidence grew so did the stakes, word went round that a pair of Rossignol Ghetto skis were up for grabs for the most impressive and stylish flight. The participants pulled some sick moves out the bag, including James Nathan's Superman impressions, Tom and Tim's (or was it

Tim and Tom's?) 360's. Accomplished writer and skier, Jonathan Trigell was only marginally less scary than his character in his latest book, face planting with panache into the lake. Ultimately only the truly intrepid final qualifiers were allowed to try the full downhill launch into the lake, and the prize skis were snapped up by Metrosnow's Tom Miklausic for his massive 360.

Everyone enjoyed the warm sunshine, but sunbathing in the mountains can present the risk of lobster exposure, and rosy cheeks became rosier later that evening as the Tignes Tourist Office treated us all to another very welcome drink of sangria. The high spirits were further lifted by the promise of more cheese, and a fondue which seemed the only sensible way forwards. After several rounds of Chicago the whole team crashed into the Jam Bar for more late night revelry, including early morning hot tub shenanigans...

The mood the next morning was sombre, if not sober, as we psyched ourselves up for the Respect the Mountain Giant Slalom. As we headed to the start, we were joined by several locals who'd heard about the event. Maybe we should ban them next year, as snowboarder instructor Donnie Mcleod leapt onto the gold medal

podium by a staggering 10 seconds! Lucy Bennett from Metrosnow.co.uk snagged first place in the female snowboarder category, while Skiworld Allstars dominated in the skiing. Alex Moore, doing it for the girls, beat her competitors by over seven seconds. And while Natives.co.uk's Iain Martin took the fastest time in the male skiers category, the booty could not go to an organiser and was therefore awarded to Skiworld's James Gambrill, who won by a split second from Liberty Skis' Jon White.

That afternoon the presence of Eric Cantona, who was in town for the European Beach Soccer Championships, was a highlight of the trip. Weekenders divided that afternoon into those who wanted to watch the footie (for free) and those who wanted to play beach volleyball. The volleyball turned into a marathon affair, supported by those of us who decided discretion is the better part of valour and retired in deck chairs, winding down in preparation for the final evening's frivolities.

Others took advantage of the many other activities that are on offer in Tignes, which include horse riding, golf, hiking and cycling. So much to do and so little time...but always time for another cheese related snack, croque monsieurs for lunch - to tide us over until the evening's prize-giving BBQ.

SUNBATHING IN THE MOUNTAINS CAN CAUSE LOBSTER EXPOSURE, AND ROSY CHEEKS BECAME ROSIER LATER THAT EVENING THANKS TO ANOTHER VERY WELCOME DRINK OF SANGRIA



Metrosnow's Tom Miklausic is a favourite with housewives on and off the volleyball court!

Located in a superb spot right by the lake, the evening BBQ was provided courtesy of Snow & Rock, and prepared by Zeb from Couloir Café. We enjoyed a mix of lamb haunches, Merguez sausages and tasty salads - the perfect combination for refuelling, all washed down with generous servings of Extreme Energy and Coors Fine Light.

The final night in The Crowded House was a celebration of a fantastic time. We swapped drinking games, danced to the tunes (for some of us, to the tunes in our own heads), and made more new friends...the hangovers lasted for a week, but the friendships lasted the distance, we're all going to be there next year...will you? 🍷

The UK Snowsports Summer Weekender was presented by Natives.co.uk and The Ski Club of Great Britain, and was sponsored by Snow+Rock, Respect The Mountain, Rossignol, Metrosnow.co.uk, Coors Fine Light and Extreme Drinks. Thanks must also go to our event partners Tignes (Simi and Cathy), Ski Focus (Stuart and Donna), Team Comp (Alex) and Skiworld (Naomi, Alex and Jamie), as well as our MC for weekend, Mr Jonathan Trigell.

You can check out our video from the event by taking the link below, and why not join our Facebook group (tinylink.com/?vaR0hTOK7N).

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=go6f5Yz-z1U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=go6f5Yz-z1U)