

## SEASON2SEASON

HAVE THE ULTIMATE GAP YEAR WITH NATIVES.CO.UK AND SURFING SPECIALISTS TICKET TO RIDE

Torn between doing a winter season and learning to surf on your gap year? Fret no more as our brand new venture Season2Season allows you to have your cake and eat it. We've joined forces with the surfer dudes at Ticket to Ride to bring you the gnarliest eight months of your life. In a nutshell, you complete one of our chalet cookery courses – pass it and we guarantee you a job working in a ski resort. In the meantime, you join Ticket to Ride on its 10-week surf instructor course in South Africa, learning to surf and doing some charity work along the way. Then, return to Europe and walk straight into the plum job we've arranged for you in the Alps. Ski, board and party to your heart's content while gaining valuable life skills working, and hey presto, you've just had the mother of all gap years. And if that's not enough, if you surfed your way past the instructor qualifications, the boys from Ticket to Ride could have a teaching job waiting for you on your return to the UK. Linley Lewis, co-founder of Ticket to Ride said, "What better answer could you give to the question, 'What did you do on your gap year?'" None better than Season2Season, we say!

[www.natives.co.uk/season2season](http://www.natives.co.uk/season2season)



## In the bar with... GRAHAM BELL



Presenter of *Ski Sunday*, ex-Olympian, Natives team triathlete and original party animal, Graham Bell knows a thing or two about getting the party started. Here's his advice for kicking the night off

As Tom Cruise said in his bar speech from the '80s classic *Cocktail*, "America's devoted to everything I got, but if you want to get loaded just order a shot." And the same goes for Alpine drinking games – forget about games of Ibble Dibble or Cardinal Puff with un-drinkable chalet wine. If you want to have some fun, it's about how you drink them, not whether you get them in. Here's my personal favourite, but a word of warning: it's guaranteed to cause trouble.

## Tequila Body Shots

### Ingredients

A round of Tequila shots  
Salt  
Lime

**Method** Take the slice of lime and place it in the mouth of someone you fancy in the bar – chalet girl, ski instructor, mountain goat (whatever takes your fancy). Lick a body part of the person holding lime in their mouth. Poor salt on to the moist area, then lick off. Down your shot and suck the lime out of their mouth.

Remember to drink responsibly, and don't pick wives or girlfriends of jealous looking bouncer types, unless you can run, sledge, ski, or snowboard away very quickly.

## Up, up, up and away in Whistler

Things will never be the same again in Whistler from December 2008. With the opening of the Peak 2 Peak gondola, you'll never need to schlep all the way down Blackcomb mountain and up Whistler mountain if your mates call to say they're playing in 7th Heaven and you're on the other mountain in Symphony. Instead, just hop on the 11-minute gondola ride between the two peaks and you'll be joining them for the next run.

Construction is breaking records left right and centre. It's set to be the world's longest unsupported span at 3024 metres, and it will reach a height of 436 metres above Fitzsimmons Creek. So scrap getting to 7th Heaven, just ride the gondola for your adrenalin kicks instead.

A gondola in need of some cables  
Below: The planned route



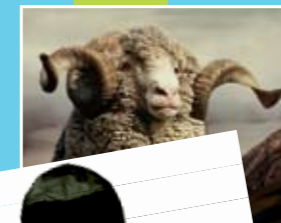
photograph: matt walker

## HOT OR NOT

GOING UP

### TARTIFLETTE

Still our number one dinner. And for a cheese snack, grab a bag of Croustilles crisps.



### ICEBREAKER BAACODE

Find out where your merino wool base layer came from thanks to Icebreaker's Baacode system. Type in its barcode at [www.icebreaker.com](http://www.icebreaker.com) and trace the fibres back to the New Zealand sheep station they were shorn in. Bleating marvellous.

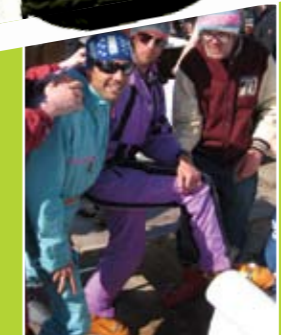
### PURPLE

This winter you're nothing if you're not in purple.



### FAISE

The new home-grown snowsports brand (left). Technical but stylish, the Natives team will be wearing it this winter.



### ALL-IN-ONES

They might look steezy but really, if you're a girl, how are you supposed to go to the loo? Hot for boys, not for girls.

### SMOKING BAN

It's a nightmare for fag butts littering the doorsteps of bars across the Alps. Use a recyclable Boodi ashtray instead of the floor.

### THE RISING EURO

Avoid getting stung by hikes in the Euro with an all-inclusive holiday with Action Outdoors – a seven day lift pass, worth at least €200, is included in the price.

### BAGGAGE CHARGES

How can hoiking six months of kit to the Alps cost so much when the flight itself is 50p? We love flying with SWISS – they're understanding about the needs of a season worker.

GOING DOWN

## MUST-SEE EVENT! Kendal Mountain Film Festival



For anyone who prefers to spend their time outdoors rather than in, the Kendal Mountain Film Festival is an essential date in your diary.

Internationally recognised as one of the world's most prestigious mountain festivals, it attracts top adventurers, climbers, writers, film-makers and premieres from around the world, and there'll be specialist programmes for skiers and boarders. It's one huge tribal gathering, the main social event for outdoor enthusiasts in the UK, and runs from 20 to 23 November.

[www.mountainfilm.co.uk](http://www.mountainfilm.co.uk)

## 100% PROOF



The numbers speak for themselves at the Warren Smith Ski Academy, where the GAP 2008 students on the ski instructor and performance coaching course achieved an outstanding 100 per cent pass rate in their BASI Level 2 exams. All of the 30 students passed and, as part of the deal on completing a Warren Smith Ski Academy gap course, were offered positions with the local Ecole Suisse de Ski in Verbier (above).

With ages ranging from 16 to 55, for some this was a first step into the snowsports industry, for others it was a chance to improve their skiing on a career break. Darren Murphy, a 28-year-old IT manager from London, joined the course because he was bored of IT and wanted a new challenge - "Training to be a ski instructor seemed like the perfect solution."

[www.warrensmith-skiacademy.com](http://www.warrensmith-skiacademy.com)

we

OUR FAVOURITE RUNS, RESTAURANTS, BARS AND RESORT TIPS. AGREE? DISAGREE? HEAD TO THE CHAT ROOM AT [www.natives.co.uk](http://www.natives.co.uk) AND TELL US

THE BELUGA snack bar, Chamonix - not healthy, but so very tasty \* BAR CUBA, St Anton - deadly drinks, table football and live music \* THE HIDDEN VALLEY, Val d'Isère - well, we could tell you about it but then it wouldn't be hidden anymore! \* AIGUILLE ROUGE to Villaroger, Les Arcs - Fabulously long 2000m vertical descent. A proper blast to base

## WHAT'S IT LIKE TO...LEARN TO SKI

**Having never set foot on snow in the mountains, the closest Charlotte Armstrong had come to sliding down a hill was as a toddler, sitting on a blanket down the stairs. So she set off to the Alps with apprehension**



Arriving at a ski resort having never skied before is like waiting your turn for the big dipper when you've just had three pints and a kebab. You know it will be exhilarating, but you also know that bad things might happen. The first thing to negotiate was the kit. Having dressed myself beyond recognition in thermals, jumpers, coat and goggles, I struggled to get the boots on. It's not an easy feat when you're so wrapped up you can't bend, and I recreated

the dance from *The Office* in my efforts. On the slopes, I watched in amazement as a line of orange-helmeted snow ducklings whizzed past. I was focused on thinking about hanging on to the button lift, but next thing I knew there was a hand helping me up and I was fighting my way back on to my four-foot long, thin slippy feet.

Run number one, my first run. I have learnt to snow plough, to point my toes in the same direction and lean in when I want to stop. Now all I needed to do was start. From the top of the nursery slope I convinced myself I had altitude sickness and there was great danger that I may somehow cascade off the edge. I bent my knees, I hoped for the best, and I was skiing! Or moving down the slope, at least. A few goes at this and I was able to turn, to weave a little, and would you believe it, do it at speed and with a huge grin. I wanted to shout "Weee! Look at meeee!"

A few days on and I was making parallel turns. My joints were tired, but I was thrilled. My skin was clear, my eyes were sparkling, and I was like a dog on a Boxing Day walk. I had tantrums, my legs burnt with frustration, but I could ski. I was bending and turning and holding my own as the colours of the runs changed from green to blue to red (I fell down this one the first time) and, on the last but one day, the black. The Daddy of the runs. I knew I could do it, as long as I negotiated it and enjoyed it in equal measures. And I did. And so with the end of that momentous day, it was off to a celebratory dinner, a few beers, and some far less skilled dancing.

## STRUGGLING WITH THE AMERICAN DREAM

**Increased restrictions on North America's H-2B visas, the one you need if you want seasonal work, are putting a dampener on many people's dreams of doing a season stateside.**

**In previous years there has been a set amount of H-2B visas for new people, while returners were exempt from the quota. This exemption expired in September 2007, Congress hasn't extended it despite lobbying from resorts and, because it's a presidential election year, it's considered a low priority issue that has been caught up in the bigger picture of immigration reform.**

**Of the 33,000 H-2B visas that are issued bi-annually, many have been snapped up by instructors at ski schools, but if you're looking for more menial work, Vicky Higgs, recruitment manager at Natives.co.uk, says, "It's fair to say you'll struggle to get a visa. Look at doing a season in Europe instead, and get your application in very early for next year."**