

HEDONISM AT ITS

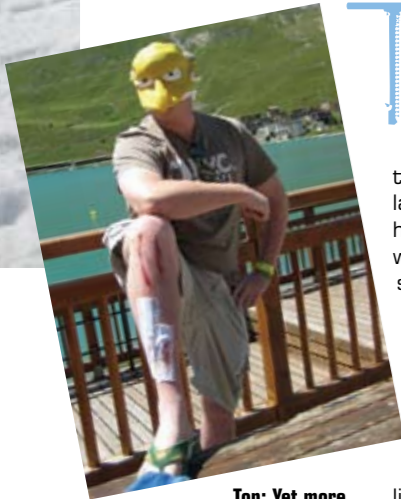
HIGHEST

RACING ON THE GLACIER, LEAPING FROM THE WATER JUMP INTO THE LAKE, PARTYING LIKE IT WAS 1999 ALL OVER AGAIN, IT CAN BE ONLY ONE THING – THE NATIVES SUMMER WEEKENDER IN TIGNES. EMMA MORRIS REPORTS FROM THE HEART OF THE ACTION

Take 40 industry snowsports enthusiasts, send them to Tignes for the weekend, add a spoonful of competition on the snow, a splash of water jump and a few drops of rosé and give it a shake, and what have you got? Among the happy faces as we prepared for the Greeneye Dual Slalom, a confused Northern lad, that's what; merrily oblivious to the fact he was rubbing deep brown foundation in for what, in his confused state, he'd taken to be sunscreen. But at least he had a healthy glow. Or was that just blushes from the aftermath of the previous evening, when he'd arrived in resort a full five hours after everyone else, having missed his flight because he'd forgotten his passport? After buying a new flight, hiring a car and getting stopped for speeding en route, he arrived in resort £375 lighter and just as the rest of us were polishing off copious amounts of tartiflette. Now if that's a measure of how much people want to come

on the Summer Weekender then we must be doing something right.

His blushes were a thing of the past once the heated competition of the Greeneye Dual Slalom got underway. Eight teams battled it out, and Team Natives held its own into the semis (well, as the organisers we couldn't win could we?), only to be slighted from victory by last year's winners – Team Travelplan. With some of the fastest skiers in the whole comp on their side, including Tris Lamb who was the overall winner of the Respect the Mountain GS Slalom the following day with an amazingly quick time of 30.09 seconds, we couldn't blame them. However, even that wasn't enough to hold off a bunch of girls and the T4 nannies walked away with this year's Greeneye Dual Slalom title. The rest of us were compensated with Greeneye hoodys, given to every competitor, and we became a proud sea of green and blue jumpers. ▶



Top: Yet more competition – belly sliding Above: The Gash



Well that's one way to cool down Right, from top: Winning T4 Nannies; Natives' Emma leading MetroSnow's James; The fast man Tris Lamb; Ski Club's Carrie and Lizzie





Far left: A short respite from competing
Left: Settling scores on the volleyball court

THE WEEKEND FLEW BY IN MINUTES, BUT THAT WAS LARGELY DUE TO THE FANTASTIC HOSPITALITY OF THE LOOP BAR BOYS

The sun came out again on the Saturday morning so we all slapped on more foundation, sorry – sunscreen, in preparation for the second day of racing, seamlessly organised by Ski Focus, the Respect the Mountain GS Slalom. Competitive spirits were on display and it was every man for himself (or herself) as we competed against the clock. The Summer Weekender is presented by Natives.co.uk and the Ski Club of Great Britain, and those girls can certainly ski – brand manager Carrie Hainge closely took second over Natives' own Becs Miles in the ladies ski race, with outsider and resort local Tessa Pershke taking the trophy, or in this case the Thunder Toffee Vodka.

The snow was perfect for us in Tignes, but we couldn't spend all our time on the glacier with so much else to do. In the balmy afternoon heat, the glacial lake was the ideal place to cool down as the Metrosnow.co.uk Water Jump made a huge splash on our weekend. While some of us simply enjoyed the sunshine and the entertainment, others got more and more adventurous. And as the afternoon went on the jumps got bigger and better with Natives' MD Iain Martin putting in a spectacular effort on a pair of skis.

First prize of the Metrosnow.co.uk Water Jump eventually went to Jon Byrne, who also romped home with the male snowboarder title in the GS, as well as being part of the winning volleyball team. Some might say that the Ski Club rep cleaned up the weekend, but it was the local hospital that should really take that title, after washing and bandaging his nasty leg wound sustained from drunkenly falling down a rusty grate. The injury didn't seem to hinder his performance too much though and Team Gash, named in his honour, was presented with a bottle of champagne for winning the Courchevel Enquirer Volleyball

tournament. Thank goodness we could return to our luxury Skiworld accommodation to recover from the daily events.

It seemed that the weekend flew by in minutes, but that was largely due to the fantastic hospitality shown to us by the Loop bar boys Jamie, Morgan and Christian, who catered to our every need. One day blended into another as we chatted into the early evening about the day's events on the sun-soaked Loop bar terrace over a glass or two of rosé. There was much talk of the unique style of Gaby Williams from Metrosnow.co.uk, who put in a truly spectacular performance on the snow, involving some impressive sliding 360s through the gates of the slalom course.

The finale of the weekend was the Snow+Rock BBQ on our last night in resort, which accompanied the prize-giving and resulted in some particularly sore heads on Sunday morning. Or perhaps that was more due to the Thunder Toffee Vodka consumed rather than the BBQ? The competition winners received some amazing prizes including skis and snowboards from Rossignol, goody bags from Ski Club of Great Britain, helmets from SH+ helmets, copies of *Cham* by Jonathan Trigell, Greeneye hoodys and bottles of Thunder Toffee Vodka.

After a can or two of Extreme Energy there were still plenty of energetic bikers, walkers, golfers and horse riders on our final morning in resort. We didn't get a chance to do everything but it's always good to leave wanting more. We'll just have to come back next year, if Tignes will have us.

With thanks to our event partners, Ski Club of Great Britain, Tignes, Skiworld, Ski Focus and Tignes Development Centre and our sponsors, Rossignol, Snow+Rock, Respect the Mountain, Metrosnow.co.uk, Greeneye, Extreme Energy and Thunder Toffee Vodka.

Bargain boards t/c