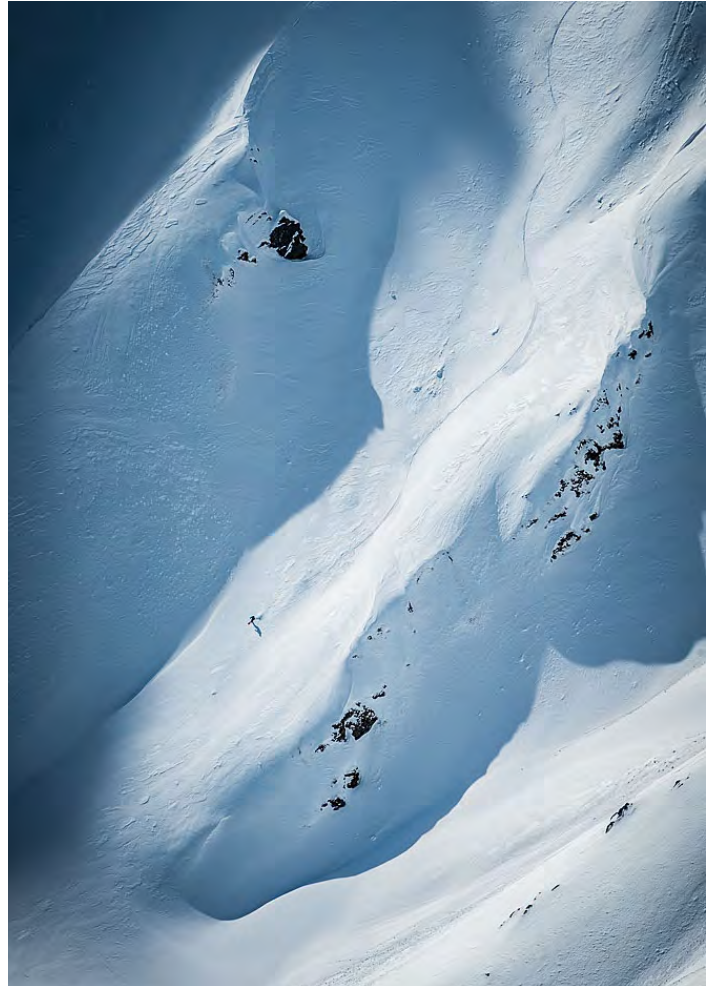


TEEPEE TIME

CELEBRATORY GLAMPING



While much of our population consider that the appropriate method to celebrate ones 30th is to get tanked in down-town bars, some of us take a slightly more intrepid approach to getting sideways in acknowledgement of this coming of age occasion. One day last August I got a message out of the blue from Pete Oswald. He had a unique mission proposal: taking a helicopter from Glenorchy into the surrounding peaks to camp and ski tour around for three days. I needed to commit or bail immediately so I dug for more details. The first of two clinchers was that there would be four of us in total on the trip; Myself and Pete, Hamish Smith (who knew the farmer) and Nick Kingston. "And it's going to be Kingston's 30th while we're in there!" Pete proclaimed. Little did he know, but Kingston and I used to go tit for tat back in the day on the ski racing courses and we probably hadn't seen each other for a good decade. So when Pete also told me that we'd be taking a teepee for all four of us to sleep in, giggling excitedly I couldn't say no!

We met in Glenorchy bright and early one morning, banter in full flow; mostly fretting over whether we had enough boxes of beer. I called shotgun and was rewarded with stunning views as we began the climb into the sky and out to the mountains. An epic looking face revealed itself as we got closer to the

basin that we were to call home for the next three days. After a couple of loops of the basin, looking for a flat camp site away from possible slide zones, we set down and began to unload. It wasn't long before everything was out and we hunkered down on top of copious bags of chips spilling from the shopping bags. The pilot pulled away and disappeared down the valley, leaving us in complete silence, a tranquil contrast from the noise and hustle of the last half hour.

In the calmness of the mountains, under a perfect blue sky, we methodically organised the gear. The essentials were looked after first: a bottle of baileys, a bottle of rum, half a bottle of whiskey, 24 beers, and a delicious array of snacks and treats. Slowly, more and more elaborate items began to be uncovered: a .22 rifle, the log burner for the teepee and enough fire wood for about a week. We really were glamping.

After erecting the teepee in the increasingly stiff winds, we were finally ready to get out and actually ski. We toured to get a better look from above into that magnificent face that greeted us on our way in and each skied something slightly different. We all hit some pretty variable snow conditions, to put it mildly, and it was a far cry from the untouched pow we were looking for. We decided the best idea from here would be to head back to camp and crack into those beers.



“...EVENTUALLY DECIDING ON A SCRUM-BASED LAUNCH WITH ALL FOUR OF US SIDE BY SIDE ACROSS THE LENGTH OF OUR CRAFT.”

I'm not sure exactly what happened, we must have been thirsty from the hike, but before long we were all several beers deep as the tunes roared around the basin and we lounged in the spring sunshine. With the rest of the beers getting smashed as dinner was cooked over the log burner, we then turned to the whiskey. Then the spiced rum. My hopes of getting some shots of the milky way above the teepee were well and truly as out as I was by the time I landed on my sleeping bag.

The next morning was a predictably slow start. After a lacklustre campsite clean-up, we booted up and dragged ourselves out onto the mountain. Already fairly warm by the time we were ready to ski, we ripped down the slope below our camp terrace, wearing tees and grins all the way into the valley below, it was one hell of a hangover cure! We lapped up every last bit of real estate we could before the light dipped behind the peak above us. We climbed back up to camp, and into the warm rays of the sun. Boots were kicked off, along with shirts, as we lined up the chairs towards 'The Face' and soaked it all in, utterly beerless.

Over breakfast the next day we discussed plans and lines, with little agreeance on what could be skied. An alternative idea was thrown around that we ditch skiing altogether and ride the double Lilo down the wide open face at the head of the valley. Plan. With Lilo in tow, we set forth. Skis were

sent down the slope as line testers, and we began to figure out how this was going to work, eventually deciding on a scrum-based launch with all four of us side by side across the length of our craft. In his thickest southern accent, Hamish chanted the words, "TOUCH. PAUSE. ENGAGE!" and we were off, head first down the hill at a surprising and ever-increasing pace.

Elated from the rush of bouncing around on an inflatable mattress, skis were recovered and we retraced our traverse tracks back to the teepee to pack up just in enough time for our late afternoon pickup. When the helicopter got closer, we could tell it wasn't the same one that had brought us in two days earlier. As it landed and the props slowed, we all looked at each other, wondering how we'd fit all of our gear, and us, into the significantly smaller machine.

Two trips later we were all back at the cars and had set one heck of a bench-mark for my own 30th, which was to coincide with closing weekend at Mount Olympus, where Rum Rock would have her way with me, twice. Involving some hilarious skiing efforts, fully clothed hot tub dives - complete with ski boots - and much, much more, but that's another story entirely... If nothing else, our mountain glamping trip of shenanigans had reinforced that if you only turn 30 once, you may as well do it where your heart is.