

# Sheep and snow, an **NZ**ROADIE



**S**END IN THE A-TEAM WAS OUR PLAN-A, LENSMAN DAN POWER PLUS SKI TALENT INCLUDING LOCAL FREESKI LEGEND PETE OSWALD, ADOPTED ‘LOCAL’ NAT SEGAL, & THE MAN BEHIND EUROPE’S #1 GERMAN LANGUAGE FREERIDE BLOG, LUKAS ZOGERNITZ, FOR A CLASSIC ROADIE THAT WOULD SURELY DELIVER KILLER RESULTS FROM THE EPIC CONDITIONS TO BE EXPECTED EN ROUTE.

A GOOD PLAN. IT ONLY LACKED ONE THING.

“I WAS THERE FOR 25 DAYS, NOT A SINGLE FLAKE FELL IN THAT TIME” SAYS DAN.

THEM’S THE BREAKS. SO PLAN B KICKED IN: MAKE THE MOST OF IT. WHICH, AS THESE PAGES WILL SHOW, WAS NOT TOO SHABBY CONSIDERING, NEVER MIND THE FRONT PAGE HEADLINE COVERAGE FOR PETE’S SELFLESS SHEEP RESCUE.

main story **PETE OSWALD**  
‘Europinions’ **LUKAS ZÖGERNITZ**



Spread: With Aoraki/Mt Cook dominating in the distance you get that big mountain feeling out back of Ohau. Helps if you can hike, and of course ski, like Nat Segal to make the most of it.  
Inset: Pete Oswald’s sheep rescue (while out heliskiing with Southern Lakes Heliski, see following) made front page news  
© [www.danpowerphotography.com.au](http://www.danpowerphotography.com.au)





## EUROPINION Luke Zögernitz [www.powderguide.com](http://www.powderguide.com)

Skiing in huge and crowded ski resorts in Europe for most of your life a place like Ohau makes you realize that it's just a few simple things that make up a perfect ski resort.

A mountain with lots of good terrain, a lift and a good crew to share the fun with. And at Ohau you also get one of the most beautiful lodges you can think of on the shore of a beautiful lake with a view of Mount Cook. It's one of the places you shouldn't miss on your NZ ski trip.

## Sheep and snow #1 OHAU KNOWHOW

The little known hidden gem that is Ohau breaks all the stereotypes of a great resort. It has some of the most stunning views of any resort in the world but very few visitors to share the beauty. It has epic freeride terrain yet the locals are not hostile or protective but eager to show you every awesome secret spot. The accommodation, the food, the service is world class but there is no air of pretentiousness. It lies in Mt Cooks front yard but has none of New Zealand's greatest mountain's intimidation. When we arrived at the base of the resort there were 7 cars in the car park at 9.30 am, not many more arrived

during the day. We collected our passes and were promptly engaged in friendly conversation with staff and locals. We reluctantly peeled ourselves away from the funny yet friendly banter to finally go skiing, but not without some volunteered info from staff about where the good snow was. Straight off our first lift ride we spotted a sweet wind lip that we sessioned for a few hits. A short hike up the north ridge brought us to a whole new zone of cliffs, chutes and steep open faces, all with a stunning back drop on to Mt Cook and the surrounding burly peaks of the massive Southern Alps.

That night, over a hearty farm style dinner, we met the owners of the Ohau Ski Resort and Lodge, Mike & Louise Neilson. We swapped yarns over great New Zealand wine and beer. Mike humbly informs us that we have not yet scratched the surface of Ohau freeriding.

The next day Mike's son Jock Neilson, a super enthusiastic local shredder, showed us the 'real good stuff' - fun cliffs, jumps, chutes and some unbelievable freeride zones that rival any resort in the world. As we high fived and thanked Jock at the bottom of our last run in a state of ecstasy we looked up to see a family of wild mountain goats looking

down on us from a cliff top above in a majestic pose silhouetted against the late afternoon sky.

We celebrated our amazing time at Ohau with more great food, a hot spa and a beach fire party at the edge of the spectacular Lake Ohau.

I am already planning this years trip back to the hidden little rule breaker.

MORE AT [WWW.OHAU.CO.NZ](http://WWW.OHAU.CO.NZ)

Powder Rule One, be first, working for Nat Segal for the groomers too, though with 7 cars in the car park competition wasn't exactly fierce.  
© Dan Power



*Sheep and snow #2*

# TREBLECONE ALWAYS CLASSIC

TC, pretty one day, drop dead gorgeous the next. Pete Oswald goes the slash.

© [www.danpowerphotography.com.au](http://www.danpowerphotography.com.au)





Put in the hard yards and you get even more out of TC, like Her Excellency TC Ambassador Nat Segal, who got out when conditions were great with the crew from Niseko Photography © Darren Teasdale [www.nisekophotography.com](http://www.nisekophotography.com)



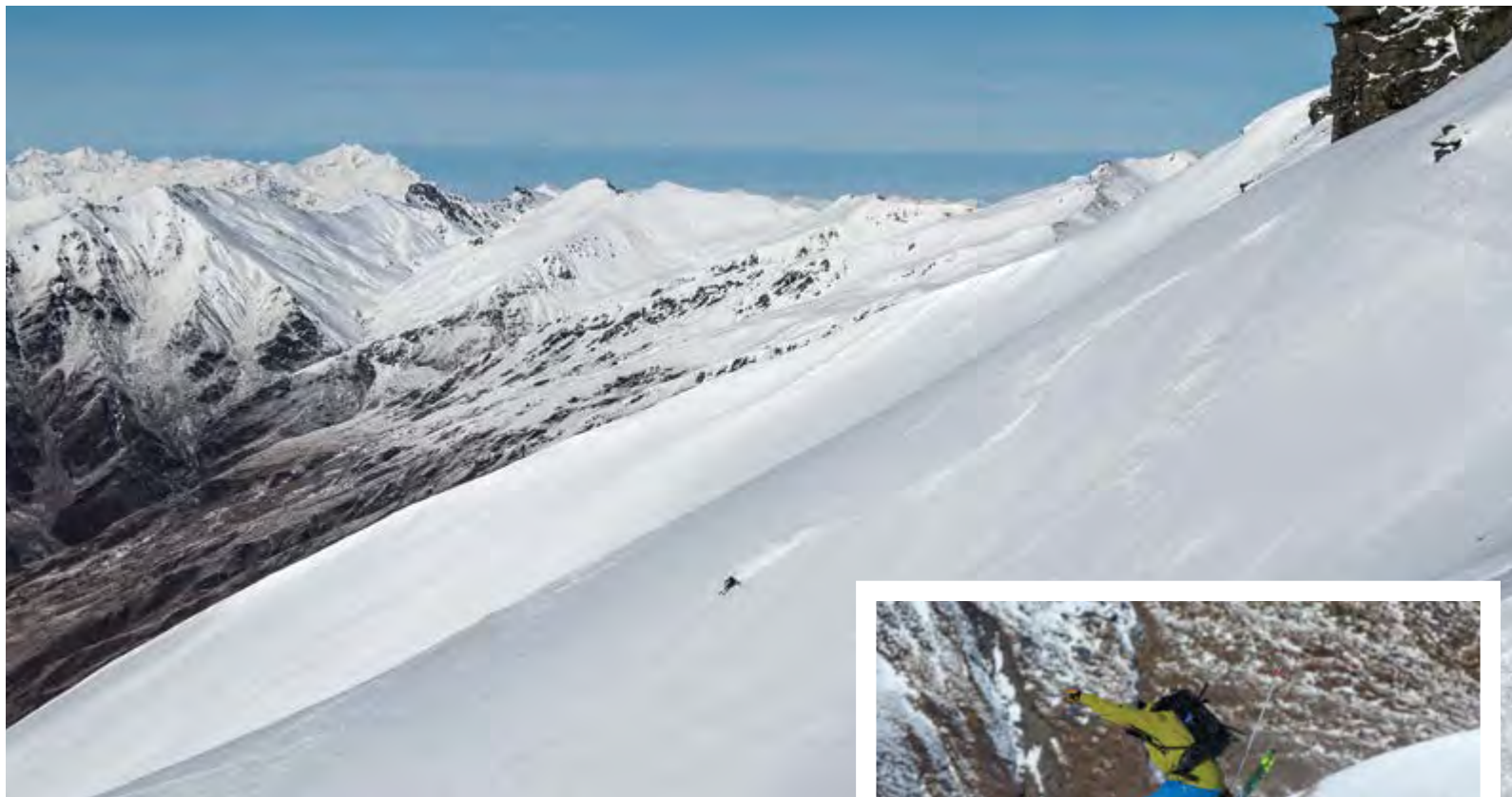
*Sheep and snow #2*  
**TC** ALWAYS CLASSIC

**EURO**PINION **Luke Zögernitz** [www.powderguide.com](http://www.powderguide.com)

If a European can name one New Zealand ski resort it's probably Treble Cone. And that's for a reason - TC has got such good terrain suitable for every level of freeriding. On a good powder day you can choose between mellow runs on the open fields under the chair or gnarly lines in the famous chutes. And not that the famous view of Lake Wanaka is what makes TC special, but it's something you shouldn't miss!







TC always delivers  
dept: clean lines for  
Nat Segal above  
© Darren Teasdale  
Huckability for Lewis  
Moore © Dan Power

Sheep and snow #2  
**TC**ALWAYSCCLASSIC

People coming from Australia and abroad to ski and snowboard in New Zealand have mostly heard the name of the world renowned resort, Treble Cone. Reputations are generally deserved for one reason or another, and in the case of Treble Cone it is born from the thrilling freeriding terrain.

By the time you have reached the first switch-back of the gnarly mountain road you know the place is burly. One wrong turn on the barrier-less gravel road and your car will fall hundreds of meters back down towards the Matukituki valley. The best of the Kiwi freeriders and freeriders from abroad flock to the resort in search of this challenging terrain. And for good reason. TC, as the locals of the small resort town of Wanaka call it, has some of the steepest inbound terrain in New Zealand. The slopes are not only littered with huckable cliffs, but also TC's trademark multiple winding gulleys where your line possibilities are only limited by your own creativity. While riding the high speed six man chairlift from the resort base you may be lucky enough to witness a 'Rat Pack' – scores of super talented freeride skiers racing tight together down the fall-line under the chairlift, airing off the cat tracks sending massive flips and spins as they go. Truly a sight to behold.

If you are lucky enough to experience Treble Cone after a fresh dump of snow then be prepared for a hectic morning. Whether it is a Sunday or a Monday does not determine the number of powder fiends as most Wanaka locals have a 'powder clause' in their day job contracts. As the *Front Face* is slowly tracked out a mob forms as the powder hungry gather and wait for the next phase of a TC pow day to be unleashed. Once the Ski Patrol have finished bombing and determined the slopes are safe a thin red rope drops and the stampede to get more fresh lines erupts in a frenzy. This is a fearsome spectacle to witness and a crazy race to partake in. But if you win you are rewarded with some of the best fresh powder resort skiing New Zealand has to offer – TC's *Saddle Basin* with fresh snow.



Once the Saddle is smashed and the fresh is cashed the fit and keen take to hiking up to the *Summit Rocks* above the main slopes. Special memories of the Summit Rocks still linger in my mind as it is where my first published magazine photo was taken.

However there is more to Treble Cone that is not so obvious. If you traverse skier's left from the top of the six pack chair around a small ridge to the northern reaches of the resort boundary you will find the *Matukituki Basin*, a nice, mellow, undulating fun zone that is skied by relatively few and holds the last light of the afternoon sun. If you traverse south from the top of the Saddle chairlift you come across a tall boundary fence, along this fence is a small gate. Through that gate is the old venue of the NZ Free Ski Open Big Mountain Championships, and some of the gnarliest terrain found within a ski area boundary anywhere in the world, the *Mototapu Basin*.

Treble Cone is reputed as being an expert skier's mountain but in truth this is still a family resort catering to every level of skier with one of the best ski schools in New Zealand. Extensive new developments this year mean more intermediate terrain has been opened up and an open air café has been built at the top meaning the less expert "coffee culture" skiers and snowboarders can more easily enjoy the whole mountain.

MORE AT [WWW.TREBLECONE.COM](http://WWW.TREBLECONE.COM)

# Powder Piste Parks...



## 2 ski areas 1 flexi pass



LakeWanaka<sup>NZ</sup>  
Lifestyle Reserve

.....  
**FlexiPass**  
TREBLE CONE & CARDRONA  
.....

FIND OUT MORE...  
GOOGLE SKI WANAKA

**CARDRONA**  
ALPINE RESORT • NEW ZEALAND

**TREBLECONE**  
WANAKA NEW ZEALAND





**EUROPINION** Luke Zögernitz [www.powderguide.com](http://www.powderguide.com)

Cardies is probably one of the most complete resorts you can find in NZ. In addition to its wide variety of pistes it offers a park well known in Europe not only because it's the successor of the legendary Snowpark NZ, but also because footage coming from it gets most of the skiers and snowboarders pumped for the upcoming winter in Europe. And even if Cardona is not as famous for its freeriding options you should have a good look: there are some goodies out there!

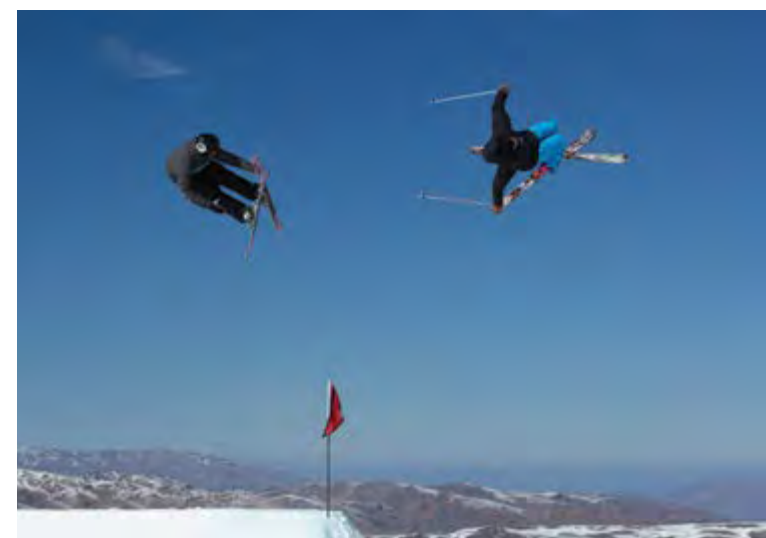
*Sheep and snow #3*  
**CARDRONA'S WILDSIDE**

Cardrona is one of New Zealand's best known and best loved family resorts, also with a strong freestyle focus, but just quietly the commercial beast has some hidden assets.

With the sad demise of Snow Park NZ a few years back Cardrona has become a Southern Hemisphere mecca for freestyle skiing and snowboarding. It boasts world class parks and halfpipes, hosts dozens of freestyle events with the world's best athletes, and holds an elite freestyle camp after the official closure of their season to train New Zealand's best competitors.

Myself and 'Europinions' Lukas Zögernitz did a day in the park there. The expert park lies directly under one of the main chairs so spectator pressure feels high. Lukas, a less experienced freestyler, but with a strong freeride background, soon found himself comfortable on the medium features tucked a little further from the expectant eyes on the chairlift. He progressed fast in just one day on the user friendly features which are designed to allow riders to try new things but with a minimised risk.

I was a bit of a knuckle dragging park monkey back in the day, and even used to work in the Cardrona park as a shaper. It is great to see that this big park is still expanding and progressing. I attacked the expert line, the intimidation level was high, but the new design of the jumps and the progressive increase in size made it easy to shake the rust and get back in the groove on the biggest kickers.



Spread: Pete drops the Arcadia Chutes;  
Above: Nic Stevens and Alec Savery hit the A-line jumps.  
© [www.danpowerphotography.com.au](http://www.danpowerphotography.com.au)





## SHEEP AND SNOW #3 CARDRONA'S WILDSIDE

A short hike out along a cat track and you can access lonely freeride terrain like this as Pete & Lukas did at Cardrona  
© Dan Power

Cardrona's pistes are cruisy and there are plenty of runs to explore between the *Main Basin* and *Captain's Basin* with the ever famous Captain's Café Pizzeria.

But what you can't see from the lift are zones that few know about and even less people ride. Between the two main bowls are the Arcadia Chutes – a big, bad, no fall zone terrain with many lines of big mountain goodness to challenge any freerider.

The relatively big family resort has some other

hidden freeride zones within its boundaries and also hosts the New Zealand Junior Big Mountain Champs. But if you are willing to go for a day tour via snow shoes, split board or touring skis great lines can be accessed “over the back” for all abilities with little effort, no crowds and high reward, like the line Lukas and I hit here, a short hike along a cat track to access.

No doubt about it, Cardrona is a one stop winter fun shop for any and all levels and styles.

MORE AT [WWW.CARDRONA.COM](http://WWW.CARDRONA.COM)

# CARDRONA. FUN GUARANTEED.

**PRISTINE** groomed slopes, parks `n pipes & challenging chutes

**WHATEVER YOUR LEVEL** we've got the snow for you

**EASY** drive or bus ride from Queenstown or Wanaka



Cnr Shotover/ Rees Sts, **Queenstown** / 18 Dunmore St, **Wanaka**

**p:** 0800 440 800 **e:** [info@cardrona.com](mailto:info@cardrona.com)

[WWW.CARDRONA.COM](http://WWW.CARDRONA.COM)

**CARDRONA**  
ALPINE RESORT • NEW ZEALAND



*Sheep and snow #4*  
**BEST TILL LAST DEPARTMENT  
SOUTHERN LAKES HELISKI**

We had a weather and snow window of 4 weeks to go on a 6 run heli ski day with Southern Lakes Heliski, the local heli experts in the region. In the first week of this window local snow conditions around Queenstown and Wanaka were good, but not perfect, so we decided to be choosy and wait. After all, it had to snow sometime in the following 3 weeks, it just had to. We waited and waited, sunny day after sunny day with not a flake in the forecast! Rumors were heard of dry powder still getting found on the southern aspects on other SLH

heli trips, but we did not believe it. We wanted fresh deep pow. Had we been too greedy? Should we have gone in that first week? Are we really going to wait 4 weeks and have average skiing?

Through this whole waiting period Tarn Pilkington, the Chief Guide at Southern Lakes, was extremely patient and accommodating, providing us with the latest snow conditions from other trips, long range weather forecasts and making short work of any logistical issues if we decided to go on any given day.



Pete Oswald's stray sheep rescue even bumped the royal baby tour off the lead front page spot in The Press

© Dan Power/courtesy Fairfax NZ







Even after 3 weeks without a snowfall Southern Lakes Heliski found the goods for Pete & Lukas in the Hector Mountains south of Queenstown  
© Dan Power

**EUROPINION** Luke Zögernitz [www.powderguide.com](http://www.powderguide.com)

Even if you have been growing up in the European Alps you are impressed by the possibilities for freeriding the Southern Alps offer. But you soon realize that there is one major problem: access. You can get to spots out of resorts, and you can hike runs, but because of the rather limited infrastructure you won't get out as much of it as you probably like. But there is a way to get the most out the epic NZ backcountry: go heliskiing! You won't find many places in the world where using a heli pays off as much as in NZ.

So in the last week of our window we decided to just go for it, before we had bad weather as well as lack of fresh pow. On a perfect calm, bluebird southern lakes' spring morning we arrived in t-shirts at the helicopter staging area near Kingston on the southern the edge of Lake Wakatipu. Ian Wilkins, a man with 25 years heliski guiding experience, a long history guiding ski film productions, and survivor of two avalanche full burials, greeted us. From lift off our bird flew deep into the Hector Mountains. Ian immediately directed our pilot to a burly looking peak. The heli set down on a precarious knoll. Ian cracked open the door. Noise, wind and snow erupted in all my senses. Our photographer, Dan Power, exited the heli snapping shots of us as we followed. The heli lifted off exacerbating our sensory overload as we crouched down holding on to our skis.

Suddenly the bird was gone, all was silent and calm. For hundreds of kilometers in every direction all we could see were vast lakes and mountains peaks. Ian, a man of enormous mountain knowledge and confidence in his own snow safety judgment, pointed out a spot way down at the bottom of the valley, "Meet up down there, the heli will be waiting, drop wherever you like". He winked at me and said quietly "enjoy the pow". To our utter wonder and elation we shred light, dry, bottomless, rippable powder all the way to the valley floor. Then heli hopping to various different mountain peaks we rode 5 more unbelievable runs of it, when it hadn't snowed for 3 weeks! Never have I seen such experience and knowledge transferred into fun and freedom in such a way.

# WHY DREAM IT? WHEN YOU CAN LIVE IT!

INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED  
MORE VERTICAL  
MORE FUN

4 RUNS  
**CLASSIC** | \$**995**

6 RUNS  
**MAX VERT** | \$**1175**

8 RUNS  
**ULTIMATE** | \$**1350**

\*All prices quoted are guide prices only and will be confirmed at time of booking depending on exchange rates on the day of payment.

**heliskinz.com**

12 Helwick Street (Base 2), Wanaka. T: +64 27 667 8959  
20 Athol St (Torpedo7), Queenstown. T: +64 27 475 0525

