

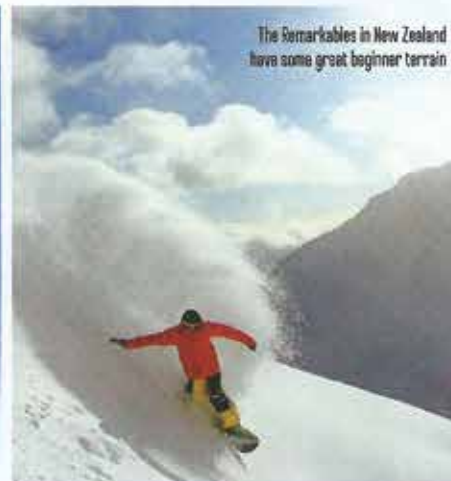
THE BEST RESORT FOR YOU



There's at least 20 ski resorts in Australia and New Zealand in which you can enjoy this winter's snow – we pick the best ones for you.



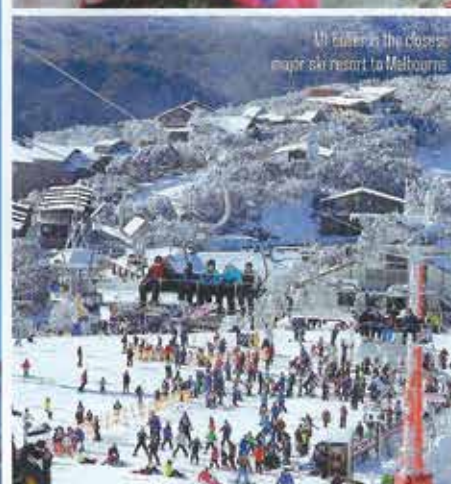
Perisher Blue is the perfect all-round ski resort, catering for virtually all types of skiers



The Remarkables in New Zealand have some great beginner terrain



Mt Buller has great facilities for kids



Mt Buller is the closest major ski resort to Melbourne



Coronet Peak is perfect for Queenstown's partygoers

Whether you are a snow novice or expert, looking for a family holiday, or want to strut your stuff, there's a resort to suit your needs. Depending on which side of the Australian Alps you live usually determines what resorts you're most likely to visit. But if distance is no barrier, there is a huge range of diverse mountain terrain just waiting to be explored locally and in New Zealand.

The more adventurous and those with more time on their hands may want to make the journey across the Tasman to explore New Zealand's rich offerings. Unlike in most parts of the world, including Australia, on-mountain accommodation is rare in New Zealand, with most found in towns such as Queenstown, Wanaka, Methven, Lake Tekapo, Ohakune and National Park. The wonderful thing about skiing in New Zealand is that you're not confined to one resort and will be more inclined to try other ski fields, which can open up an array of possibilities.

So dust off your gear or shop for new kit and get ready for a bumper season on the white stuff.

Newbies

Beginners can find a ski school at almost any resort, since 99.9 percent of resorts cater for all levels. However, if all of your party are first-timers you may want to check out resorts that offer a greater amount of beginner terrain.

► **Falls Creek** (VIC, Aus) – With accommodation available on the mountain to minimise travel time, newbies will also appreciate not having to lug equipment too far. There's also a staggering choice of 27 beginner runs so you won't have to learn or practice always on the same slope. falls creek.com.au

► **The Remarkables** (South Island, NZ) – Boasting some of NZ's best beginner terrain and learning facilities, the resort features a network of progressive terrain parks with wide, gentle slopes for beginners of all ages. All kids under 10 years ski for free, so it's a great place for kids to learn. nzski.com/remarkables

Families

Many mountain resorts have turned their focus to families, which has resulted in an outbreak of quality ski schools, crèches for children and alternative snow activities for those who don't ski, such as tubing and



Heli-skiing on Mt Cook is one of the great New Zealand adventures



Treble Cone – superb advanced skiing in New Zealand



The Remarkables are also close to Queenstown



Perisher Blue is perfect for families

tobogganing. Look for package holidays that offer deals where kids ski, and sometimes get to stay and eat for free.

► **Perisher Blue** (NSW, Aus) – The perfect all-rounder catering for all skill levels and interests. The seven mountain peaks – including the villages of Perisher Valley, Smiggin Holes, Guthega and Blue Cow Terminal – offer a range of terrain including a super pipe, mini pipe, four terrain parks for freestyle skiing, a snow tube park and night skiing. perisherblue.com.au

► **Mt Buller Alpine Resort** (VIC, Aus) – The closest big ski resort to Melbourne has the state's largest network of trails, as well as a snow tube park, tobogganing and a half pipe and rail park to keep bigger kids happy. The snow sport facilities for children 3-5yrs (skiers only) and 6-14yrs (skiers and boarders) are excellent. mtbuller.com.au

► **Cardrona** (South Island, NZ) – A friendly atmosphere coupled with wide open groomed runs make this arguably the best resort in the country for kids, with a ski area reserved just for children. There's a crèche for babies from three months of age, a separate purpose-built area for those aged 3-5yrs and another area for 5-12yrs. cardrona.com

The Experts

Advanced skiers and boarders are spoiled for choice with several resorts offering challenging terrain for those who love to test their skills.

► **Thredbo** (NSW, Aus) – Renowned for having Australia's longest and steepest ski runs, Thredbo is a firm favourite of the skilled. The swift lifts and excellent snowmaking facilities ensure that the trails are kept well groomed and the top to bottom skiing available longer. thredbo.com.au

► **Mt Hotham** (VIC, Aus) – Offering more intermediate and advanced skiing than the

other Victorian mountain resorts, Mt Hotham has crazy double black diamond extreme terrain and everything in between if you need a breather. mthotham.com.au

► **Treble Cone** (South Island, NZ) – Treble Cone boasts some of the best advanced skiing in New Zealand and is suitable for all members of the family who have mastered the skills. treblecone.co.nz

► **Turoa** (North Island, NZ) – Enjoy natural half pipes and chutes and the wide sweeping terrain of the Triangle and the Glacier backcountry area. With 25 black diamond runs and lots of back country access, experts are sure to be impressed. mtruapehu.com/winter/Turoa

► **Mt Cook Heli Ski Region** (South Island, NZ) – Heli-skiing/heli-boarding is an essential element of a ski trip to NZ. Find fresh tracks, leap off cliffs, negotiate gnarly chutes, and basically only share the place with your fellow heli-skiers. It doesn't come cheap but who doesn't want to ski/board in the shadow of Mt Cook? wildernessheli.co.nz

Fashionistas

If having the most fashionable gear and the latest ski/snowboard kit that screams "look at me" is important, then you'll want a trendy resort to match. These vibrant ski hubs offer cool digs, have a choice of excellent restaurants and have access to a lively après ski scene and a happening nightlife.

► **Thredbo** (NSW, Aus) – Whether it's a quiet ski drink or a big night out, vibrant Thredbo Village has a variety of pubs, cocktail bars and nightclubs for those who like to get out and be seen. The Alpine-style ski village that wouldn't be out of place in Europe, offers a range of eateries from fine dining to pub meals. For the quintessential Thredbo dining experience, take a moonlight Gondola ride up to The Eagles Nest restaurant at 600 metres above the village thredbo.com.au

► **Coronet Peak** (South Island, NZ) – The road up to The Remarkables is far too windy to cope with after a big night out in Queenstown. Better is the easy 20 minute drive to Coronet Peak, which also doubles as a "non-time waster" when it comes to getting off the pistes and back to Queenstown in time for après ski. Queenstown doubles as adventure capital and party town, and if you can't find a restaurant, café, bar or nightclub to suit your taste or budget, you're not trying. nzski.com