

The Power Of Pow

Making The Most Of The SIA On-Snow Demo + Ski-Ride Fest

By Jamie Magyar

After all of the deals have been done, sales have been sold, meetings have been met, and it feels like no amount of Dr. Scholl's is ample enough to ease the pains in those aching feet, we understand how it's tempting to fly the proverbial coop as SIA comes to a close. After all, we're all busy, industry professionals who, once we make it to all of our appointments, need to jump right back into the daily grind, right? Wrong.

“Demos allow us to tweak the product lineup and make the decisions on those companies that we are on the fence with. Just because something looks good and has a great story behind it, the most important factor is ensuring that the consumer will be on a board in knowing that the product's performance is comparable to what they are getting for their dollar.”
Joe Palaia, Buckman's Snowboard Clothing and Equipment Buyer.



Ben Berberich staying Winter Park's Rail Yard, as all of Colorado's Fraser Valley bears witness. PHOTO: WELLHAUSEN

While the official dates of this year's SIA Snow Show are January 31 to February 3, 2013, the On-Snow Demo + Ski-Ride Fest will be going down after the show on February 4–5 at Winter Park Resort. And after four days of talking, thinking, buying, and selling all things snow-product related, we can't think of a better way to wrap up the show than by getting up on the hill and doing what we all love most: riding. We're all unbelievably fortunate to be able to do business in an industry that revolves around the sports that we love, and the On-Snow Demo provides those of us who work in the industry the opportunity to practice what we preach and test drive all that new gear. Oh, and maybe do a little business on the side.

Buckman's Snowboard Clothing and Equipment Buyer Joe Palaia, who makes the trek from Pennsylvania out to Colorado for SIA every year, sees the On-Snow Demo as a valuable way to stay caught up with industry.

“As buyers, we have an idea of the direction of the industry based on the demand for certain brands,” Palaia explains. “However, there are those brands and models that keep things interesting. Demos often highlight the ‘what's in/cool’ technology about our sport, and demos keep the industry technology evolving because of our feedback.”

The On-Snow Demo + Ski-Ride Fest embodies the saying, “Work Hard, Play Hard,” encouraging SIA attendees to leave room in their travel itineraries to head to the hills and engage in a little play after a few jam-packed days of work. The ease of Winter Park lying just 90 minutes west of Denver marks a convenience that Palaia says keeps him returning every year.

“For me, it's silly to pass-up the On-Snow when I'm already out there for the trade show anyway, especially when SIA pays for the transportation up to Winter Park,” Palaia says. “It's too cheap to pass up.”

In addition to paying for transportation from Denver to Winter Park, the 10-dollar On-Snow registration fee covers lift tickets for two days, breakfast and lunches, Monday's Après Ski-Ride Happy Hour, and equipment rentals.

“With the support of Winter Park, the manufacturers and the retailers, SIA and WWSRA are able to offer a level of hospitality that rarely occurs at an on-snow demo, starting with affordable rooms, free transportation, free lunch, and free lift tickets all provided by SIA and Winter Park and ending with dinners, parties, and drinks provided by the manufacturers,” Western Winter Sports Representatives Association (WWSRA) Director Cami Garrison says.

While much of this year's On-Snow Demo's itin-

Winter Park At A Glance

CITY ELEVATION: 9,100 FEET

PEAK RESORT ELEVATION: 12,060 FEET

AVERAGE ANNUAL SNOWFALL: 350 INCHES

TOTAL SKIABLE ACRES: 3,081

YEAR-ROUND POPULATION: 865



Brandt Wisenbaker, coowner of Denver's Emage snow and skate shop, gears up to put another kit to the test at the 2012 SIA On-Snow. PHOTO: LEWIS

erary will be consistent with years past, there are a few changes in store for this year's event.

Whereas in previous years, all of the boot companies were spread out in two locations, this year they will be centered in one location.

Another major change in store for this year's event is the format of Monday evening's activities. In the past, SIA has held a barbeque atop Winter Park at the Sunspot Lodge that required an additional fee. This year however, the fee is our favorite: FREE.

“This year we are changing Monday night up and making it more of a ‘party’ instead of a dinner,” SIA Director of Trade Show Debbie Des Roches says. “One of the SIA Board Members, Billy Treacy from Giro, will be performing with his band, The Willbillys and of course, free beer will be served. Last year, Billy, did an impromptu set at the dinner and it was definitely enjoyed by all attendees.”

Free beer, live music, and cheap lift tickets are not the only draws of heading up to Winter Park

den in secret stashes need look no further than Mary Jane. Although Mary Jane falls under the umbrella of Winter Park, in a way, she is her own separate entity, composed entirely of intermediate, advanced, and expert runs, few of which are groomed. Mary Jane also provides a variety of tree riding, from narrow gaps in the trees to open, gladed meadows, allowing for serious speed and freedom while shredding.

With this much terrain and gear available, time is of the essence for making the most of the two days at Winter Park. “Get there early, and if you are packing your personal equipment, take one run with your own setup first—this will warm you up and get the cobwebs out of the legs before you get on unfamiliar equipment,” Never Summer Sales Manager Mike Gagliardi advises on getting the most out of the On-Snow. “It also helps set a baseline from which you can evaluate the other products you try. Getting to the hill at 10 or 11 just clips into your testing time, and coming in cold can make that first



Local Pro, Winter Park Team Rider, and Cover Boy Pat Milbery's Favorite Runs: Forever Eva, Perry's, and Outhouse are all great tree glades that offer steep, challenging terrain that is more “big-mountain style.”

For all-around board testing, Cramner and Hughes are both great because they are mellow, wide open, and have a variety of different types of terrain packed into one run including rollers, banked sections, and awesome faces that are super fun to shred.

to attend the On-Snow Demo. A favorite resort of Colorado natives, Winter Park has a variety of terrain for attendees to demo next year's product on. The mountain itself is one aspect that Garrison says makes it a perfect fit for the On-Snow demo. “From my perspective, what makes Winter Park successful is the size and scope of it.”

Indeed, Winter Park is lacking neither in size nor scope. With more than 3,000 acres of terrain ranging from groomers to some of the state's best tree riding, the resort has a little something for everyone. While Winter Park has an abundance of groomers, its glade riding is where the resort truly shines.

Off-piste terrain comprises more than one third of Winter Park's scope, and as such, it is simply too abundant to pass up. Those looking to demo next season's goods on pillows of powder hid-

den ride like crap even if it is the new hotness.”

C3 Worldwide Sales Manager Johan Malkoski suggests you start your pre-game routine even earlier than the day of and plan your On-Snow strategy throughout the trade show. “Make a list before the demo of the decks you want to ride. Buy yourself some DDC Field Notes and carry that with you to take notes about what you liked and didn't like about the ride. Make notes on who this deck would be best suited for.”

Strong shops understand the importance of demos to truly put products through their paces, and while strategies vary, the fact that they come prepared does not (see more shop demo tips on page 18).

“It is really important that you ride the product you are selling,” Satellite Boardshop Co-owner Raul Pinto sums up. “If you don't ride it, you are lying and shortchanging the customer based on your lack

of personal knowledge of the product and how certain products ride together. Winter Park has less of a scene so there are less distractions. There are still plenty of bros at Winter Park, but when you look back off the lift you can really see how tight the industry is and who is really participating and riding—it's what separates the real riders from all the fakers.”

Although it'd be easy to write an onslaught of pages on the benefits of attending the On-Snow Demo + Ski-Ride Fest, Palaia succinctly sums it up in five words that we'll leave you with:

“Convenience, savings, and great snow!”

We'll see you on the hill.

BARS + RESTAURANTS

FOR A HEARTY PRE- OR POST-RIDING MEAL:

Look no further than the Back Bowl Soup Company. Located in the village of the resort, the Back Bowl Soup Company is a local's favorite that features delicious homemade soup, sandwiches, and cheap beer to feed post-shred appetites. A bright-yellow cabin with white trim, Back Bowl is open from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and offers an array of breakfast foods in addition to their menu of soups and sandwiches.

FOR A MIDDAY BREW OR TWO:

Feeling like a midday cocktail or beer? Winter Park's own Derailer Bar sits at the base of Winter Park near the Gemini Express Lift. A two-level bar that offers pub-style food in addition to a variety of drink specials, the Derailer Bar overlooks a groomer that is notorious for end-of-the-day spills, providing ample entertainment from first chair 'til 6:00 p.m.

FOR A NIGHT OUT:

The Winter Park Pub, or simply “The Pub” as it is better known, sits on the town of Winter Park's main street and offers good food and good beer from 3:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. on weekdays. Frequented by locals and tourists alike, The Pub is the perfect place to visit for a night on the town, offering occasional live music and an always laid-back atmosphere.

Freestyles Sports Bar, located beneath The Sushi Bar in downtown Winter Park, is much more than its name leads on. A strictly 21-and-over bar, Freestyles doesn't offer any food, but rather a plethora of drink specials and games, from shuffleboard to foosball, to play while you indulge and reminisce about your days on the slopes 'til last call around 2:00 a.m.