

doing our bit for the government's 'no leave, no life' campaign we told our workaholic man in Victoria, Dave Windsor, that it was time to get out of the office for

48 HOURS AT BULLER



snowy dawn promises a great day
photo Buller

Friday, 3.29pm @buller twitter feed reports over half a metre of the driest fresh having fallen in the past 24 hours. Powder everywhere.

3.30pm Laptop closed, mobile off, leave pass secured – I kiss the wife and kids goodbye and hit the road with old mate and new Majesty Skis' rep John Wright for a spot of 'me time'.

5:05pm Water in Eildon at Bonnie Doon for the first time for years. What global warming?

5.37pm Quick stop at Mansfield for essentials – milk, juice, peach schnapps and some local reds. It always pays to remain hydrated.

6.02pm OMG - snow at 1,000 metres!

6.12pm Fresh tracks on the toboggan run.

6.18pm Check into the luxurious Peak Apartment overlooking Chamois. The tastefully appointed apartment, rooms and ambience will have to wait as we succumb to our hard earned thirst.

6.22pm Pre-dinner drinks at Après Bar at the Chalet. The joint was packed with instructors, Buller crew and the early weekend warriors. An abundance of atmosphere, jolly spirits and a couple of quiet ales got us off to a fine start.

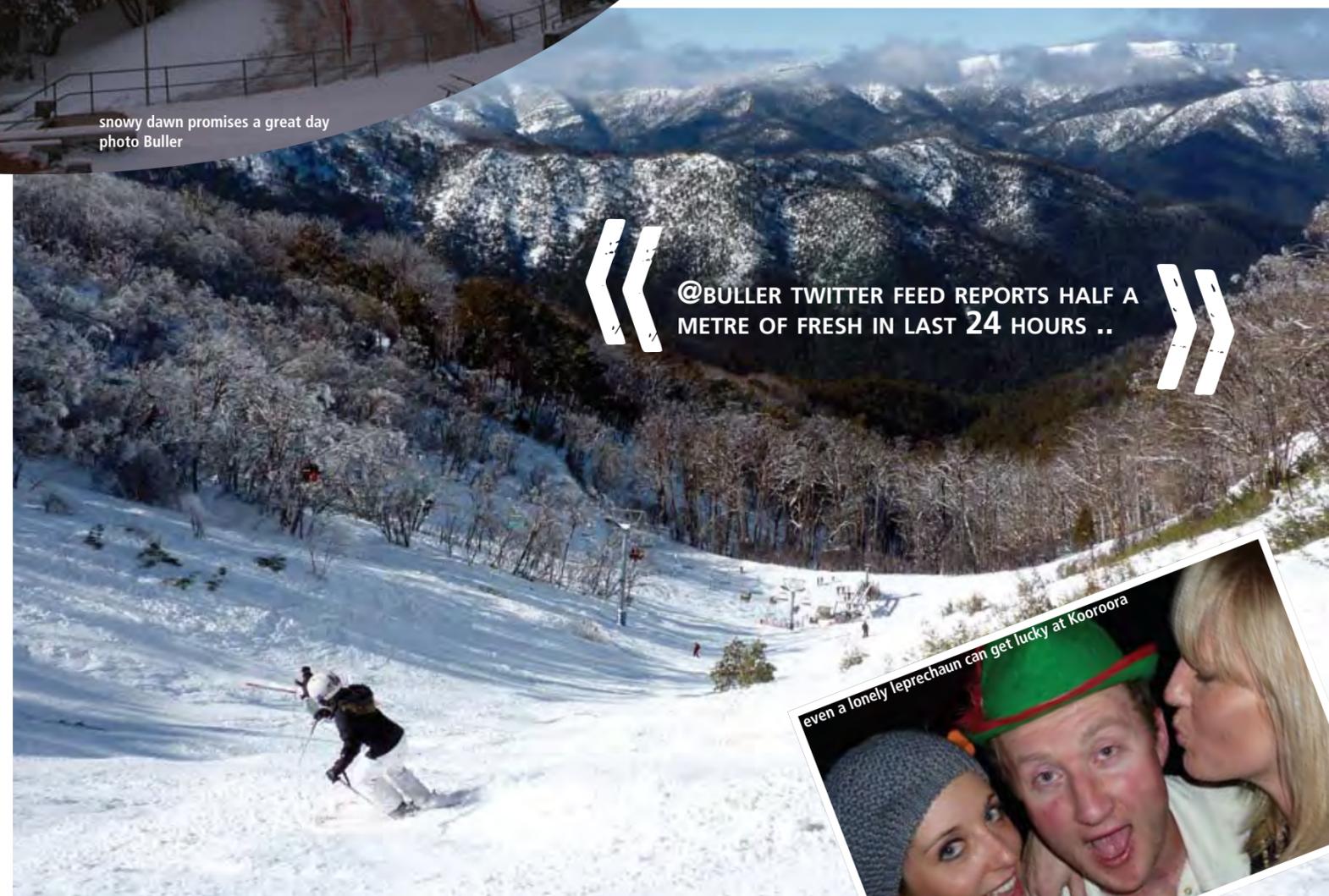
7:30pm Dinner at the award winning Black Cockatoo Restaurant at the Chalet is the next logical step. The warm ambience, subdued lighting and rich furnishings set the scene for a memorable feast, featuring a dozen fresh oysters, pork belly, lobster and prawn agnioletti, wagyu beef followed by strawberry soufflé and Spanish doughnuts. Accompanied by grand company and a couple of bottles of pinot and cabernet from the Black Cockatoo's award winning cellar, it's a sumptuous experience.



a dozen oysters at Black Cockatoo will set up your big friday night



DJ Dan [top] may be the man in Tel Aviv, but DJ Eddy [above] still rules at Buller, along with our gracious queen and several mooses inset pics Dave Windsor



« @BULLER TWITTER FEED REPORTS HALF A METRE OF FRESH IN LAST 24 HOURS .. »

SATURDAY MORNING, PERFECT SNOW AND ALMOST NOBODY OUT YET PHOTO DAVE WINDSOR



even a lonely leprechaun can get lucky at Kooroora

8:19pm Carly, our waitress, announces she's won a week in Paris. Good onya Carly. Let's have another bottle of red to celebrate.

10:46pm Following dinner, and purely to aid our digestion, we venture to the legendary Kooroora Hotel. JD & coke seems worthy accompaniment to toast in the evening as Van Halen screams from the wicked sound system to the growing crowd of gen Y'ers, the occasional Z, and a couple of old timers all anticipating another pow day tomorrow.

11:38pm Chat with Melbourne lad Andy who claims "Today was the best snow in Australia, ever". Apparently Andy doesn't get excited about much but today was amazing. After checking bom.gov.au he made the impulse decision to chuck a sickie. The doc ordered fresh air, Buller was just the tonic.

Saturday 12:00am Happy birthday to me. John's shout.

12:03am DJ Guy Dahan from Tel Aviv starts pumpin' out Groove Armada as the joint starts filling with hotties, like Tamsyn and Julie. Although not skiing (due to knee reco's), the girls are up at Buller for a good time. Cheers to that ladies, your shout.

12:38am Bump into a friend of a friend, who faithfully reports that it's "Epic".

12:57am It's officially going off, DJ Guy is spinning some deep & delicious tunes putting a lot of smiles on dials. Tomorrow will be AWESOME.

8:30am Life support required – juice and vegemite toast. Blue skies, no wind, snow as far as the eye can see. Life is good. Time to get on the piste.

9:05am First runs down *Chamois*, then across to *Fall Line*. Bucket loads of white everywhere, awesome under foot, crispy cold air and plenty of sunshine to wake us up.

9:15am Share a chair on the Bull Run lift with Marty and Jamie from the Gold Coast, nursing hangovers from "600 beers last night" whilst reminiscing which one of them or their friends pushed the really fat chick. Secret men's business, what goes on tour stays etc (footy players excepted).

Hit *Hogg's Back*, *Sun Valley* and *Men's Downhill* as we take advantage of the perfect conditions on Buller's south side.

10:14am John rescues a 7 year old in an un-marked ditch at the intersection of *Bloody Hell* and *Federation*. For his efforts, John ends up with a wet boot. My hero.

Back to work on the near empty slopes of *Federation*, *Yurrelda* and *Rough Cut*. Something tells me that the half bottle of red we polished off before bed in front of the telly wasn't such a bright idea.

10:47am Head over to the Abom International Mogul Challenge alongside Summit Lift. 116 entrants from Vic, NSW, the US, Japan & China are competing for \$7,000 and Bolle gear across 4 age categories, from under 14s through to 'legends'. It's the longest running FIS sanctioned event in Australia and a highlight of the Buller season.

11:14am Wolf down a chili cheese kransky, swill a frosty hair of the dog and head back out for some more schussing in the glorious sun on the North Side.

11:30am Heaps of soft and deep along *McLaughlin's Shoulder*, *Hut* and *Rush Runs* down to Grimus Chair, followed by some high speed carvers on *Summit Slide* that give the old thighs a satisfying burn.

12:02pm Under a rope off *Ridge Run* for some untracked fun.

12:04pm Five turns later, we find ourselves in a labyrinth of trees. Fortunately the wombats have worn a tangled path for us back onto *Ridge Run*. Note to self, ropes are there for a reason.

12:18pm Back up to the Summit as the perspiration builds under our sun soaked gear and the JD starts dripping from my brow. A quick run down *Fanny's Finish*, which is covered in fresh from top to bottom all the way to the Howqua Quad.

12:45pm A quick pit stop at Koflers for a short black with some apple pie and peach mogul. We bump into Nick Reeves, a Buller maintenance veteran of 28 years, who swears "It's the best snow since '81!" His pick of the runs are *St Christophe*, *The Willy Butts* in the village area, and *Hangmans*.

1:07pm Head back over to the Moguls Challenge for some awesome bumps skiing, thrilling jumps and foot tapping Run DMC and Aerosmith. Keen spectators include Olympic gold medallist Lydia Lassila.



John drops in off the Cliffs, then shares the love with DJ Eddy



u14s get Bolle's and trophies from golden girl Lydia Lassila. Claudia Gueli (1st) centre, Jakara Anthony (2nd) left, Juliana Nix (3rd)



2010 winners are grinners: Charlie Comben, Jakara Anthony, Jackson Comben, Matt Graham + local redhead who also won something last year, 3 no ideers, & some of Buller's leading ladies inset pics Dave Windsor & John Wright

MATTHEW GRAHAM FROM THE NSW CENTRAL COAST MADE IT BACK-TO-BACK ABOM MOGUL CHALLENGE TITLES, NOT BAD FOR FIFTEEN YEARS OLD PHOTO ANDREW RAILTON

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The lure of free beer in the VIP tent makes the spectacle even more inspiring, and guest co-emcee DJ Eddy keeps the appreciative crowd in awesome spirits with a collection of cracking one liners.

4:23pm After half a dozen coldies we cruise on down to Après Bar for a cleansing ale with local identity Anthony 'Combo' Comben.

5:15pm Head over to Abom for official Mogul Challenge presentations, as Aussie 15 year olds Matt Graham (NSW Central Coast) and Britteny Cox (Falls Creek) take out the 2010 event.

I catch up with Combo's kids, 12 year old Jackson, who placed 3rd in the under 14s, and 11 year old Charlie, who took 1st in the same category.

Shy but stoked, Charlie declares, "I was happy with the course, it was real fun but hard, I was a bit nervous and got really good air after heaps of practicing 360s and sticking the landing." Not bad for the local Merrijig Primary school grade 6'er who is ranked #1 in Australia.

In the girls, 12 year old Jakara Anthony, who skis full time at Buller, is on a roll. She won the Division 4 Girls Moguls on friday at Interschools, then came 2nd in the Abom to Claudia Gueli. A prior winner and runner up, she's been practising her 360 jump for a year and a half. Jakara's 10 year old brother Matt from Mt Buller Primary placed 7th. All four kids have been skiing together at Buller for 7 years, the past 2 on the TBR (Team Buller Riders) program. A proud Combo loves having his kids in the ski comps and wants to see more events.

"I'll give more kids a chance for a podium finish, and there'd be less pressure having to rely on only a handful of events".

John buys a round of drinks (again) and we toast the achievements of our Aussie up and comers.

7:41pm Head over to Hooah for a spot of dinner; salt & pepper squid and a veggie lasagne.

9:33pm Next is the Mogul Challenge after party at Mooseheads Bar, with DJ Eddy kicking things off with the national anthem. Vodkas all round. Apart from the moose this fine subterranean fun parlour features a bison head, foxes, does, an impressive collection of cow bells, open fire and well stocked bar. Eddy spins some hardcore boot-scooting, deep funk, drum & bass and plenty of crowd pleasers from last century to the 200 strong revellers, all going off on a Saturday night after a brilliant day's skiing.

11:53pm It's a dance floor of sentimentality with *Total Eclipse of the Heart*.

11:54pm House remix kicks in for one last hoorah before closing.

Sunday, 12:10am En-masse the party heads down Bourke Street to the Koorroora, where the vodkas keep flowing and DJ Guy holds court with some serious house, techno, and the latest Euro beats.

3:00am Dean Martin crooning *Dats Amore* signals it's time to go home.

3:14am The fun doesn't stop as we watch dance weary legs falling up the Koorroora's shiny ice stairs. A couple of dimmies from Wok Joint satisfy the hungry beast inside, and hopefully absorb some of the night's liquid refreshment.

3:35am Some clever young men decide to toboggan down the Koorroora roof aboard bread crates.

4:09am John serves a couple of peach schnapps night caps, just for good measure, before hitting the sack.

10:30am Fall out of bed, rustle our gear together and pack the car before heading out for another ski.

11:10am Late start due to the little alley cats running round in our heads. Ski form ain't the best, so we head over to the North Side to ease into it.

11:55am A quick run down *Shaky Knees* didn't scare the cats away, so up to Tirol Bar & Restaurant for a strong ristretto, one more thing for the kidneys to contend with.

12:10pm Do a couple of laps around *Damn Run*, *Cow Camp*, and *Cattelman's Trail* down to Tirol T-Bar. Plenty of super snow up high and low in the shadows.

1:10pm Veggie and lentil soup and another coffee at Spurs hits the spot.

1:40pm Turn up the headphones, I desperately need something to make a difference in my head.

1:56pm Johnnie's wonderful better half, Naomi, extends his leave pass for two nights so he can join his mates for more Buller magic. Lucky bastard. With spirits lifted it's time to rock'n'roll the South Side from *Howqua* to *Fed* to *Women's Downhill* as we complete our circumnavigation of Buller.

4:30pm Time to hit the road for home, safe in the knowledge that my bed will have never felt better and wondering, 'is there life after leave?'

» Our thanks to Rhylla Morgan, Gillian Dobson & the media crew at Buller for their assistance «



more moose pic Dave Windsor

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