

The big pow cat is calling



Doc POW

Whistler-Blackcomb is a Mecca for ski & snowboarders. Being one of the world's most popular resorts can mean its going to be busy on powder days. This season there have been many; January was the snowiest on record with over 15.5 feet delivered over the 31 days.

On a Saturday up to 10,000-15,000 people can be attacking the slopes. Powder madness is on, it's a mad dash to find it

and shred it.

With Powder Mountain Catskiing, located just outside Whistler village, there are no worries as there is no one ahead of you or behind you - the mountain is yours. Operating for 15 years just 20 minutes from the famed resort, Powder Mountain offers a true mountain experience, one you won't soon forget.

"Just after moving to Whistler we had a house fire, it destroyed everything. Shortly after someone gave me an old snowmobile and we took it up into the backcountry here," explains one of Powder's founders Alberto Corso, on how they got started.

"One day this guy approached me and asked if he could pay me for a ride in to go skiing. No one was doing it at the time, the next day the guy came back and paid me more money to take him again, it turned out the guy worked with Warren Miller."

History in the making

"He went back and told all his friends about it and the phone started ringing, we started shooting ski videos, including Warren Miller and a ton of other stuff."

In total Powder Mountain Catskiing has been involved in over 60 ski and snowboard films and is busy working on an average of four commercial or feature films a year.

"I love to show off the backcountry. I get letters all the time from people who come back after a day with us with a new outlook on life," says Corso. A day with Powder Mountain Catskiing can change your perspective on life - we don't live to work, we work to live.

"A day with us will be in people's memories forever," says Corso.

Travelling in groups of 8-12, Powder Mountain's fleet of three cats, take shredders to powder stashes

featured within their 4,300 acres of backcountry. Through our day last Saturday, we hit incredible glades, run after run of untracked powder and one extremely impressive alpine run entitled 'The Big Kahuna.'

"You could ski resorts 50 days out of the year for 20 years and never get a run in like that," says shredder Dave Leone after we finish this epic run. It started with a couloir at the top, leading us out into an open powder bowl all ours for the taking.

Face full of powder

"The quality of the snow is unbelievable," exclaimed Leone. "It's about being good to your guides, if you listen to them, they will treat you to something just like that. That was awesome."

All Powder Mountain guides are fully trained to the highest of standards, continually studying the conditions, putting safety first and powder at a priority.

"The best time to visit us is on a weekend, to avoid the line ups and get yourself a face full of powder," says Corso.

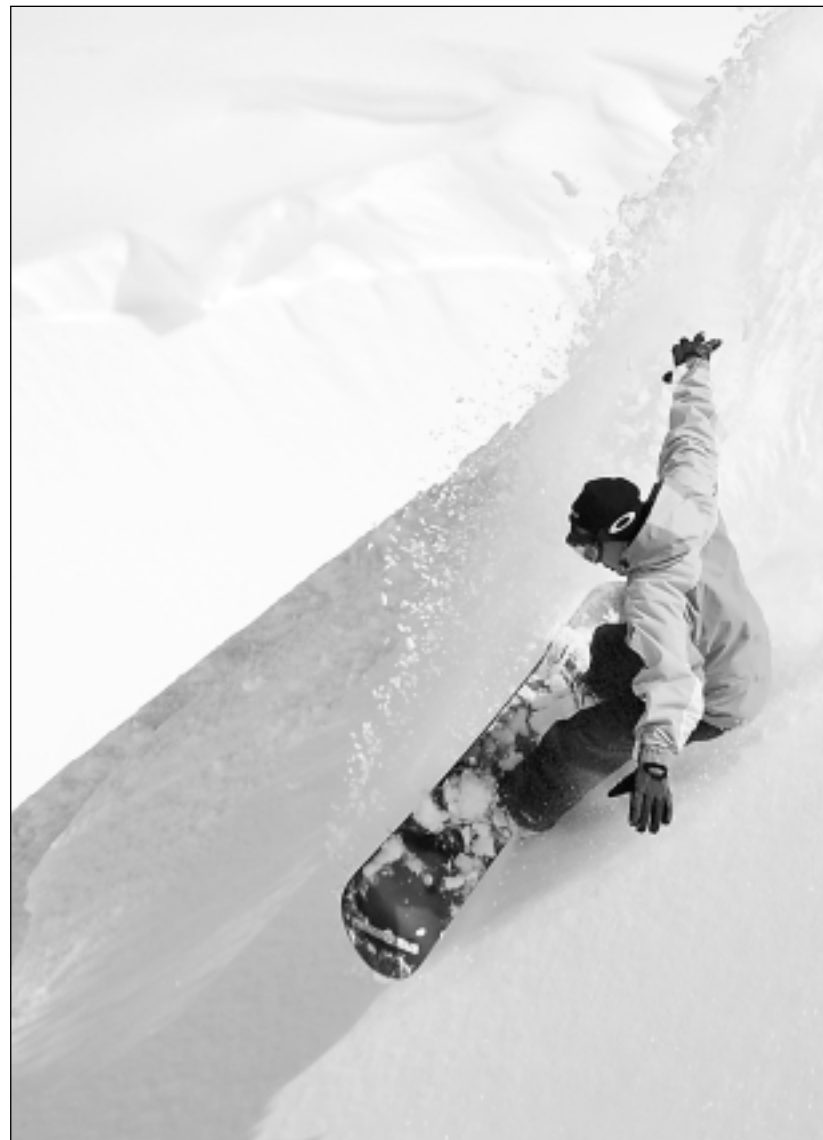
The day starts at Powder Mountain by enjoying a fantastic breakfast from the Southside Deli, one of the best restaurants in town. After a quick drive up to their tenure and a safety meeting on how to use your transceiver, the day is yours to carve up the powder with a great crew and awesome guides.

Don't think you have to be an expert to experience ecstasy - Powder Mountain welcomes green to black diamond shredders, setting you up in a group you'll be comfortable in.

With over three weeks in their season left, there is still time for a powder fix. Bookings have already started for 2006/07. Skip the line ups and have the mountain to yourself, by checking into www.powdermountaincatskiing.com or call them at 1-877-7349.

While staying in Whistler, why not sleep right next to the powder? The Westin Resort & Spa Whistler has one of the best locations in the village, directly next door to the Whistler Mountain Gondola. With an easy commute, you can be first in line on powder days and enjoy all the amenities, including an outdoor pool, hot tubs and their signature 'dream sleeper beds,' allowing you to live the dream of powder filled slopes. Check out www.westinwhistler.com for the low down.

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- Photo by KEN ACHENBACH, Special to the Sun

Donald Del Carmen enjoys some spectacular snow at Powder Mountain Catskiing near Whistler, BC earlier this month.