



SNOWED IN

REGARDLESS OF THE WEATHER, YOU'LL BE HAPPY TO PUT YOUR FEET UP AT ONE OF THESE LUXURIOUS SKI LODGES. **HEATHER BARTON** TAKES A TOUR OF FOUR LODGES WITH A DIFFERENCE.



HUSKI, FALLS CREEK, VICTORIA

Designed by architects Elenberg Fraser, with Callum Fraser as principal architect and fitted out by wife Zahava Elenberg, Huski has an aesthetic quality that saw it recently listed as one of the world's 50 best hotels by style portal *The Cool Hunter*.

Inspired by the delicate, crystalline qualities of a snowflake, the radial 14-apartment design features a series of stacked eucalyptus boxes to provide each apartment with magnificent views over the breathtaking Kiwina Valley and beyond.

With Melbourne standards in food as well as design, Huski also includes a podium-level restaurant and an external terrace with large, open brazier fireplace.

The restaurant and facilities, including a day spa, open to the street, while the apartments above offer privacy.

Each apartment features luxury furniture custom-designed by Melbourne-based Move-in interiors studio. Cowhides, hand-knitted throws and elegant earthen homewares add an alpine feel to the clean, modern lines of the interiors.

Artwork by renowned Melbourne photographer Peter Bennetts adorns the walls. Bennetts also happens to be one of the masterminds behind the annual Artists' Camp, which is held in Falls Creek every Labour Day long weekend.

:: Huski apartments, 3 Sitzmark Street, Falls Creek. Call 1300 652 260 (in Australia) or visit www.huski.com.au.



SASTRUGI LODGE, THREDBO, NEW SOUTH WALES

Sastrugi, an evocative Austrian term which means 'sand dune-like snow formations', serves as the title for this glamorous Dawson Brown-designed, award-winning addition to Thredbo's landscape. Featured in international design guides, the 2001 addition complements the clever innovation of abstract modernists Eric Nichols and Otto Ernegg, whose original 1958 lodge was part of the earliest phase of development at Thredbo.

It echoes the curved plan of Nichols and Ernegg's structure, which fans out towards the mountain, by counter-curving in a song of stone, zinc, timber and metal, thus distinguishing it from the weatherboard original. These curves are the key to capturing the stunning views over the mountains, particularly from the upstairs rooms.

The privately owned lodge sleeps 10 people, all in double rooms. Downstairs, open fires warm a bright, light-filled uncluttered interior in pale blonde Scandinavian tones that those lucky enough to get through the front door will admire.

Furnished with an embarrassment of riches from design aficionados outlet Anibou in Sydney, it features a Caroline Casey-designed rug, Artek armchairs, coffee tables and a Gina Law console.

The kitchen has retained its original location, with the addition of open-plan areas to either side, and is fitted out with an eye to entertaining. A large curved deck added out back, also for entertaining, overlooks bushland and the snowfields beyond.

Located on a steep, north-facing slope within Thredbo village and set into the hill, Sastrugi is an ideal way to experience the best of Australian design, spanning two different eras in the one property, enhancing the exhilarating experience and splendour of the Snowy Mountains. ▶

PHOTOGRAPHY :: PETER BENNETTS, ROSS DUNSTAN, TONY MILLER



Facing page: Huski's design was inspired by the radial shape of a snowflake. This image: Sastrugi Lodge's unusual curves offer great views of the mountains.



TIMBUKTU, MT BULLER, VICTORIA

The log wall in the intimate basement bar at Timbuktu in Mt Buller conjures up nostalgia for traditional woodpiles and blazing log fires.

But there is nothing traditional about this boutique development. Comprising only three penthouse apartments, the aforementioned Snow Pony bar and a heated underground car park, Timbuktu is the work of one of Australia's most cutting-edge alpine architecture specialist firms, Salter Architects.

It has approached the building in what principal Charles Salter calls, "a very 'un-alpine' way, using a flat roof and raw concrete." Working with interior designers Hecker, Phelan and Guthrie, who were also responsible for the interiors of Sydney's Ivy bar, the designers have succeeded in making Snow Pony the hottest spot on the slopes for lunch or a nightcap.

Snow Pony is an extension of the private spaces upstairs – residents can use it for dining and entertaining – but it's also a refuge for skiers coming in off the mountain. Because it is small in scale, the recycled ironbark timbers, log walls and dark marble bar, along with antler lighting fixtures and animal hides all contribute to the wow factor that the designers were aiming to achieve.

"A chalet can be more theatrical than a house," explains designer Hamish Guthrie. "People are only here intermittently and want fantasy. To achieve that, we used dramatic lighting and embraced the clichéd elements of Swiss chalet decor, re-interpreting them in order to give them a modern twist."

In a wall-to-wall approach that blends minimalism with theatricality, re-inventing Swiss kitsch along the way, Timbuktu is anything but clichéd.

:: Timbuktu, 231 Summit Rd, Mt Buller. For details on Snow Pony, call +61 3 5777 6010. ▷



Timbuktu's Snow Pony bar embraces Swiss kitsch and nostalgia.



You've got mail – rest your snow boots at the lovingly restored Pender Lea Post Office.

PENDER LEA POST OFFICE, CRACKENBACK, NEW SOUTH WALES

A 1905 photograph, stumbled upon by chance at the hairdressers, inspired the owners of this once-dilapidated ruin to restore the historic Pender Lea Post Office to its former glory. Now the Post Office thrives as a ski lodge to accommodate visitors to the neighbouring Perisher and Thredbo resorts.

The current owners are the Schatzle family. When Christine Schatzle met a third-generation member of the pioneering Pendergast family – the original owners of the Post Office – at the salon, he convinced her, and later her husband Rudi and their daughter Sonja, of the property's great potential.

Sonja says, "At first, all we could see was a wreck with decaying chimneys and a roof like a colander. The only guests who liked it back then were two wombats who had set up home under the veranda."

Local identities and pioneers of the ski industry in Australia for 45 years, the Schatzles searched the state's countryside to find 100-year-old timber beams, stones hand-cut from stable floors, convict-made brick, and hand-hewn mountain ash slabs. Then they got to work restoring the property.

Ten years later, the result is a rustic but luxurious homestead, boasting three spacious bedrooms, a modern, fully-equipped European kitchen and two bathrooms, one with a spa bath.

From this perfect setting guests can take advantage of some of the ski runs that Rudi helped hand-cut when Thredbo was first developed, or join the now-famous Saturday night flare run to Thredbo, which he initiated with a group of Austrian ski instructors.

:: Pender Lea Post Office, Alpine Way, Crackenback.
Visit www.penderlea.com.au for details. 📍

