

## SKI AUSTRALIA

## Pit stops at Perisher

Fiona Carruthers finds out where to refuel off piste.

**Perisher is hitting some serious milestones.** Last year, the Perisher Ski Patrol celebrated 50 years of service, while Sundeck – Australia’s highest hotel at 1769 metres above sea level – turns 60 next year. Another grand old dame, The Man From Snowy River Hotel on the edge of Front Valley, will celebrate six decades in 2020.

The largest ski resort in the southern hemisphere also recently announced a \$4.2 million new quad chairlift to be ready for 2019, replacing the old Leichhardt T-bar. The new chairlift will increase lifting capacity in the area by 75 per cent, opening up more access to runs like The Cleft, Powder Ridge, Snowy Trails and Leichhardt Terrain Park.

All this demands the very best in terms of refuelling options. Here are some of Perisher’s favourite pit stops to take you from early morning caffeine shot through to sundowners and dinner in style.



From top: The Man From Snowy River Hotel; The Marritz Hotel's heated swimming pool.

## ITALIANS DO IT BETTER

Located in a cosy corner of the bustling Perisher Centre on Front Valley, Brunelli's Cafe opened in 1983. It's run by Bruno and his wife, Roberta. Warm and bright, this spacious open-plan cafe is easy to access, especially when you clunk in and out in unbuckled ski boots.

Bruno's sense of humour is as strong as his coffee – including his renowned blends, the Mother in Law (strong and bitter) and the Rollercoaster (a smoother easy-drinking variety).

## CIRCUIT BREAKER

Alpine Eyre is an old-style favourite at the bottom of the Eyre T-bar (just off Kosciuszko Road near Perisher Gap). With outside tables, it's the perfect mid-morning pit stop to wolf down a tasty Eyre burger for that all-important second breakfast.

## POWERLUNCH

With its distinctive grey stone bunker-like appearance, Perisher Valley Hotel is a ski in/ski out landmark once owned by the late Kerry Packer. If you stay here, you can virtually roll out of bed and on to the Village 8 Express chairlift, less than 100 metres away. There are those who say the hotel's signature restaurant, Snow Gums, is not as good as it was in Packer's day. But *Life & Leisure* loved the three-course lunch menu, with great healthy options (soup, fresh salads, fish) mixed in among the deep-fried choices. The views, the ambience and central fireplace all add up to a lovely place for a special extended

lunch. A word of warning: it's hard to hit the slopes again if you opt for the paired wines.

## NO MOVEMENT AT THE STATION

A roaring fire, goblets of shiraz and sweeping mountain views through the floor-to-ceiling windows are just the ticket after a hectic day on the slopes. The Man From Snowy River Hotel is among Perisher's best spots to relax as the sun goes down. Play it as the mood takes you, opting for the chorizo, garlic prawn, smoked paprika aioli and manchego burger with a Carlton Dry in the Pub Bar, or the pulled pork tacos with pinot in the Lounge.

## FANCY PANTS

OK, it's not The Chedi in Andermatt, but Perisher's Marritz Hotel nevertheless positions itself as a "European-style hotel". The Marritz has an immediate advantage in the luxe stakes in that it houses Perisher's only heated swimming pool. (There's also a sauna and relaxation room.)

You can enjoy breakfast, lunch or dinner by the pool overlooking Front Valley, or eat in the Marritz Restaurant – also blessed with stunning views – which prides itself on healthy "cooked to order" breakfasts. Dinners are slightly more indulgent. Feast on chicken liver and blueberry pâté, followed by Hungarian beef goulash and curly chips, finished off with date fig pudding. **L&L**

The writer was a guest of The Man From Snowy River Hotel and Perisher.