



PRESS RELEASE



UNMISSABLE NEW ZEALAND WINTER EVENTS FOR 2016

Freestyle Gold Medalist, James Woods gives the must dos on his New Zealand winter hit list



For further information and images please contact Paul Charles / Sarah Rigler / Frankie Matthews / Debra Fisher at Perowne Charles Communications

As New Zealand heads into the winter season, we talk to James Woods, British freestyle skier and gold medalist of the 2015 Freeski, avid New Zealand lover about his favourite winter kiwi activities. As well as the beautiful lifestyle, James loves the opportunities to experience the incredible mountains, deserted beaches and endless adventures when he's both on and off the slopes. He now lives in New Zealand six months of the year and we find out why.

TOP SKI AND SNOWBOARD DESTINATIONS

James' top-tip spot for the best skiing and snowboarding is Cardrona in Lake Wanaka, where he skis almost every day. This skiing hot spot is ideal for everyone from total beginners to pro skiers, proving why James thinks New Zealand is the place to be for the ultimate experience on the slopes. He also recommends Wanaka's Treble Cone and Mount Ruapehu in the North Island. Cardrona, only 35 minutes drive from Wanaka and 55 minutes from Queenstown has the longest scheduled snow season in the South Island, with a variety of adrenalin-pumping experiences such as New Zealand's highest bike park, mountain carting, walking adventures and 'Alpine by Night' experiences.

HOW: Cardrona Alpine Resort offers a Multi-Day Snowboard or Ski First Timer package from £100 per child and £133 per adult. For more information visit www.cardrona.com

TOP WINTER SURF DESTINATIONS

Whilst, unsurprisingly, skiing is James' number one activity, it's closely followed by surfing the waves of New Zealand's coast. Despite the winter months being considerably cooler, the North island still has plenty of waves to ride. Raglan, well known as a surfing mecca in New Zealand, is popular all year round, with Manu Bay offering some of the best rides, and was also the

+44 (0) 20 7792 8884
newzealand@verypcc.com

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setting in 1960s cult film Endless Summer. On Auckland's doorstep, Piha Beach, one of New Zealand's best beaches for surf and another top winter-surf location welcomes visitors from all over the world. Its great consistency in rips and currents cause the waves to peel giving surfers longer rides – perfect for those wanting to make the most of a day at the beach.

HOW: Raglan Surfing School offers a Winter Deal starting from £70 per person with two days surfing including a half-day beginner surf lesson, board & wetsuit hire, one night's accommodation, beach transport & daily saunas. For more information visit www.raglansurfschool.co.nz

TOP MOUNTAIN BIKING DESTINATION

Joint second in James' list of his best New Zealand adventure activities is mountain biking, which he grew to love when he started visiting New Zealand. Rotorua boasts some of the best mountain bike trails, with Whakarewarewa Forest topping the list with its tree-lined routes, panoramic views and thermal areas, it caters for all levels of rider. There is over 130km of trails which are continually evolving and range from gentle, scenic rides to extreme cross country trails. Winter months mean less crowds getting in the way of the lush green forests and the hot pools are a real treat after a day exploring.

HOW: Mountain Bike Rotorua offers bike hire from £17 per adult and from £10 per child. For more information visit www.redwoods.co.nz

For when a break is needed from surfing, skiing and mountain biking, here are some other great reasons to visit New Zealand this winter...

CELEBRATE MATARIKI, THE MĀORI NEW YEAR - FROM 6TH JUNE

Once purely a Māori event, Matariki, the Māori New Year, is now enjoyed by all New Zealanders, and visitors are welcome to join the celebrations. The rising of the star cluster Matariki has always been an important time for Māori, historically marking a time for remembrance and a time for planning the year ahead. It is now a nationwide celebration, with festivals and events held in towns and cities throughout New Zealand.

HOW: This year people in New Zealand can experience Matariki celebrations from its expected appearance on 6th June until late July, and the best time to see the Matariki is to look to the north from about 5am-6am when it's low on the horizon. For more information visit www.mch.govt.nz/nz-identity-heritage/matariki

WINTER F.A.W.C. - FROM 3RD JUNE

Following another successful summer F.A.W.C., Hawke's Bay's Food and Wine festival is returning for Winter F.A.W.C from 3rd – 26th June. The festival offers foodie lovers the opportunity to experience authentic food events featuring food and wine personalities, lashings of local lamb and venison, roaring fires and rich full bodied Hawke's Bay Syrah, in spectacular settings including vineyards and underground to cellars, to al fresco and

Art Deco delights.

HOW: F.A.W.C. events range from free of charge to up to £121.

For more information visit www.fawc.co.nz

**AMERICAN EXPRESS QUEENSTOWN WINTER FESTIVAL -
FROM 24TH JUNE**

Often referred to as the southern hemisphere's most legendary winter festival, American Express Queenstown Winter Festival comes to town from 24th June – 3rd July, bigger, better and more fun than ever before. This year's programme is set to include music, arts, comedy, good and wine and plenty of fireworks to light the snowy night sky. Enjoy stunning views of the city with the Skyline Queenstown Gondola, the steepest cable car lift in the Southern Hemisphere before heading to the festival's opening party. From the 'Winter Wonderland' Street Festival Parade in downtown Queenstown to skating at the Ice Rink Village and lots of laughs at the Comedy Debate, don't miss the wealth of top-notch events the American Express Queenstown Winter Festival has to offer.

HOW: Ticketed events start from £10 per person. For more information visit www.winterfestival.co.nz

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

www.newzealand.com