

# Taos Ski Valley Closes for the season

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Sunday April 6th marked the close of a nearly perfect ski season at Taos Ski Valley. Alpine skiers, telemarkers and snowboarders (yes, snowboarders!) turned out in force to celebrate the finale. The pilgrimage to the top of 12,500 ft. Kachina Peak on closing day is a local tradition. The hike takes about an hour and the ski down about 3 minutes but anyone will tell you, it's usually not about the skiing. This year the roughly 200 hikers (nobody's really counting) to reach the summit ranged in age from 8 to 78 and all were rewarded with the magnificent views that extend north into Colorado and south to the Rio Grande Gorge (the second largest rift valley in the world!) and of the surrounding Sangre de Cristo Mountains including 13,161 ft. Wheeler Peak, New Mexico's highest.

However, the skiers and boarders weren't the only ones taking in the view from the summit on Sunday. Three full-curl Rocky Mountain Bighorn rams were lounging on the ridge between Kachina and Lake Fork Peaks soaking up the sun, a testament to the success of the bighorn sheep transplant program begun in these mountains several years ago. Now on any given day hikers may thrill at a sighting of these noble beasts. This day was made extra special because of their presence and everyone witnessing it seemed to know that. After lingering long and basking in the sun and splendor, hunger will begin to over take even the hardest hiker and knowledge that the Bavarian Restaurant is a mere 3,000 vertical feet away compels one to mount up and point 'em down. The snow is firm, but not too firm to get an edge to hold, and the coverage is excellent. These turns were earned so each one is savored, soaring gracefully toward the valley floor.

The deck of the Bavarian is the obvious next stop. It's crowded with familiar faces and warm with the afternoon sun. What better place to rest and re-fuel? Then on to the annual pond skinning championship where contestants dress in the most bizarre outfits they can muster and attempt to ski or ride across a 150 foot man made "pond" filled with water direct from the Rio Hondo. The most impressive athletes will not only make it all the way across the pond but will throw in a 360 degree turn before touching solid snow on the opposite side. Several participants never make it to the other side and end up getting fished out of the 38 degree water. Fortunately, "Wolfgang Spa Works" is kind enough to set up a hot tub at the finish line for the less than successful, soaked and freezing contestants.

The addition of snowboarders to the mountain has proved to be a welcome one. Even the die hard ski elite seem to be embracing the change. The youthful exuberance and enthusiasm is palpable and certainly the increased revenue is welcome in the community. New life is being breathed into an old establishment and there is more than enough room for everyone!

No doubt we will see another snowstorm in the mountains of Taos before spring really settles in and certainly there will be good back-country skiing well into May, but the "official" 2007/2008 Taos ski season has come to a close. This year's phenomenal snow pack will soon melt into run-off to fill rivers and acequias that nourish the valley below and winter white will give way to the lush green of summer.

Although the mountain is closed for skiing, there is still time to take advantage of the fabulous deals on Taos Ski Valley condos. Our agents can find you a condo to fit your price range. Or, if you prefer a home in Taos or a bit of Taos land to call your own, just give us your requirements

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