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Breadmag's Blog

Arctic Disco @ Snowbombing festival 09.

Posted by: breadmag on: April 8, 2009

Where else can you see the 4 teenage mutant ninja turtles dancing with papa smurf and the cast from fame 2000 foot up in the air surrounded by snow whilst drinking mulled wine and rolling 'doobies' around a fire? All around the sound of hard dance music blasts out from a man made igloo and mad party goers stomp their feet and shake their little arse's off in the middle of what can only be described as the surrealist party experience I have ever seen or been involved with.



The white lounge's arctic disco and hotel is open all season with party nights on every Tuesday but as a special treat they opened it 3 times in the week of the Snowbombing festival, I was one of the lucky 4 who got to go up for free, to work of course, for the 3 days.

The arctic hotel and disco took 12 men, 28 solid days to build using giant balloons and a snow sprayer. The balloons are inflated and placed in the correct spots to create tunnels and open spaces, they are then sprayed with snow and left to set, just like an inside out ice cube. A few days later the balloons are popped and its time to start carving. Bars are sculpted and artwork is carved into the walls. A DJ booth is made and the speakers are set into the ice walls. As the season goes on, the weight of the structure means that it sinks so, on a weekly basis, they have to re-carve the ceilings of each room. It does mean that during the week, before the next re-carve, the ceilings of the corridors do get lower and lower and not even a little 5 foot something women like me can fit through with out ducking.

The 4 of us took a 100-man gondolier 2000 foot up and arrived at our destination, Day 1 – Blizzard! It was so cold and visibility was terrible, you couldn't see 2 feet in front of your face, but day 2 was a totally different story!

Upon arrival on day 2, the 3 DJ's and ourselves were met by skidoo to take us up and over to the venue. Lucky for us on this particular day the sky was totally clear, not a cloud or snowflake in sight. I was informed that this was only one of 2 days since the start of this year's season that the weather had been so clear and pleasant. The sun was just setting over the mountains as chilled dance tunes permeated through the air. With no icy wind blowing in our faces the whole experience was uplifting, like a breath of fresh air!

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One by one the partygoers arrived beginning to turn this tranquil scene, slowly but surely, into a banging dance session.

The music got louder, the sun got lower and the bar got busier and before we knew it a full blow party had kicked off up on the mountain.

People sat around the roaring fire on deck chairs, chilling with friends, drinking Jagermister and rolling 'doobies' people danced on the bar and us stewards stood and watch in amazement at how drunk people get in just a few hours. There was around 250 people there, give or take, and the bar, on top of everything else, sold near on 800 shots of Jagermister ... that's a lot of drink to handle at such high altitude.

Looking at the clothes people were turning up in you would have thought they were heading to a beach party or something. Tiny skirts, leg warmers and fairy outfits for the girls and superman pants, slippers and glittery wigs for the boys. Danger mouse, Spongebob and the cast from Fame, among others, also made an appearance but their costumes didn't stay intact for long!

Around 10pm the crowd outside came to a stand still, cameras were whipped out and jaws dropped as a lunar rainbow appeared from nowhere. A perfect white rainbow with a jet-black shadow line following it.

Lunar rainbows are very rare but this one was especially. Lunar rainbows, or Moonbows as some people like to call them, are mostly seen when the moon is at its fullest and brightest. They are caused by the moon reflecting on the ice crystals in the air at high altitude. A crescent moon in particular cast this one, just slightly smaller than a quarter on the moon's surface was showing. It moved across the sky proudly waving to us. It was spectacular and totally beautiful. I am sure that by this time most people would have been totally shamed and considered that they were probably seeing things but I can assure you, if you were one of those people, you most certainly weren't!

The DJ's got mouthier with sayings such as 'get ya rat out' and 'you filthy dance heads' the punters got higher and the fire got hotter. The atmosphere never dropped, even on our decent down the mountain people broke out into a conga chain, swinging the gondolier as it travelled down its tiny wire.

The party travelled on into the night and I drifted away, on a natural high, to my next duty. The arctic disco wasn't like work at all. You could tell by the looks on people's faces they had one of the best nights of their lives. I'll always remember it and I hope that many more people to come get the same feeling from it as I did. A feeling of being lifted up above all the elements looking at things through different eyes, a feeling of being totally on top of the world in a hedonistic state of mind, peaceful, calm and totally breath taken by the views, the sculpture of the building, the atmosphere, the music, the sunset and most of all the people.

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