

# POWDERHOUNDS

POWDERHOUNDS		POWDERHOUND RANKING																	
Name	Type of operation	Country	Skiing															Value for Money	Overall Rating
			Avalanche Mitigation Strategies	Safety Briefing	Powder / Snow	Alpine Terrain	Tree Skiing	Strong Intermediate Terrain	Advanced Terrain	Expert and extreme terrain	Overall Terrain	Guiding	Cat/Heli	Frills	Accom				
Big Red Cats	Cat	Canada	5	5	3	4	4.5	4	5	4.5	4	4	3.5	4	*	4	4.5		
Revelstoke Cat Skiing	Cat	Canada	4.5	4	3	1.5	3.5	1.5	4	*	2.5	3	5	5	*	4	3.5		
Selkirk Wilderness Skiing	Cat	Canada	5	5	5	4.5	5	3	5	4.5	5	5	5	5	3.5	3.5	5		
White Grizzly	Cat	Canada	5	5	5	2.5	4.5	0.5	3	4.5	4	4.5	4.5	5	4.5	5	5		
Wildhorse Catskiing	Cat	Canada	3	3.5	4	3	4	2.5	5	3	4	4.5	2.5	3.5	3.5	5	4		
Valhalla Powdercats	Cat	Canada	4	3	4.5	3	5	1	5	4	4	2.5	4.5	3.5	*	3	4		
Island Lake Cat Skiing	Cat	Canada	5	4.5	3.5	4	5	*	4	*	3.5	5	3	4.5	*	3	4.5		
Fernie Wilderness Lodge	Cat	Canada	3.5	3.5	3	1.5	4	*	3.5	3.5	3	4	3.5	4	2.5	3	3.75		
Retallack Catskiing	Cat	Canada	5	4	4	3.5	4	0.5	4	4	4	4	4	4	3.5	4	4.25		
Powder Mountain Catskiing	Cat	Canada	4	4	3	3	3.5	5	3	2	2.5	5	4	4	*	2.5	4		
Coast Range Heli Skiing	Heli	Canada	3	3.5	3	4.5	2.5	3	4.5	2	3.5	3	4.5	4.5	*	3	4		
Whistler Heli-Skiing	Heli	Canada	3	4	3	4	3	4	4	*	4	3	3	4	*	2.5	4		
RK Heli-Ski	Heli	Canada	3	4	3	4.5	2.5	4.5	3.5	*	4	3	3	4	*	4.5	4		
Eagle Pass	Heli	Canada	5	4.5	4	4	4.5	2	4	5	4	3	5	4	*	3	4.5		
Selkirk Tangiers	Heli	Canada	4.5	4.5	4.5	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	3	3.5	4.5	5	4.5		

Company Name	Type of operation	Country	Skiing & Snowboarding Skills															Overall Rating
			Avalanche Mitigation Strategies	Safety Briefing	Powder / Snow	Alpine Terrain	Tree Skiing	Strong Intermediate Terrain	Advanced Terrain	Expert and extreme terrain	Overall Terrain	Guiding	Cat/Heli	Frills	Accom	Value for Money		
San Juan Snowcat	Cat	USA	2.5	*	*	4	2.5	4	3.5	3.5	3	*	3	3.5	*	4.5	3.25	
San Juan Ski Co.	Cat	USA	3	2.5	3	*	3.5	4.5	3	*	4.5	2.5	3	2.5	*	5	4	
Silverton Powdercats	Cat	USA	2.5	*	2.5	3	2.5	4.5	3	*	3	*	3	3.5	*	4	3.5	
Keystone Adventure Tours	Cat	USA	2.5	2	2	3.5	1.5	*	4	*	1.5	3	4.5	4	*	4.5	3.5	
Steamboat Powdercats	Cat	USA	3	3	4.5	2.5	4.5	4	4.5	3.5	4	5	4.5	5	*	4	4.5	
Aspen Powder Guides	Cat	USA	2.5	2	3	3	3	5	3	1.5	2.5	3.5	5	4.5	*	3.5	3.5	
Great Northern Powder Guides	Cat	USA	3	2.5	3.5	2	4	3	4.5	4.5	3	4	4.5	5	4.5	4	4	
Selkirk Powder Company	Cat	USA	3.5	4	3.5	2.5	4	4	4.5	3	3.5	4.5	4	3	*	4	4	
Wasatch Powderbird Guides	Heli	USA	3.5	3.5	5	4	4	4	4	*	4.5	4.5	4.5	4	*	3	4.5	
Helitrax	Heli	USA	4.5	4.5	3.5	4	1	4.5	3.5	*	4	5	4	5	*	4	4.5	
Silverton Heli	Heli	USA	3.5	1.5	3.5	3	2	1	3	*	2.5	2.5	5	1	*	3	3	

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Harris Mountains Heli-Ski	Heli	NZ	3	3	3	4.5	0	4.5	5	4.5	4.5	4	4.5	3.5	*	5	4.5
Southern Lakes Heliski	Heli	NZ	3.5	3	2.5	4	0	3	4	2.5	3.5	3	4	3.5	*	5	3.5
Alpine Heliski	Heli	NZ	3	3	3	4	0	4	4	3.5	4	3	4.5	3.5	*	5	4
Methven Heliski	Heli	NZ	3	3	3.5	4.5	0	2.5	5	4.5	4	4	4.5	3	*	5	4
Wilderness Heliski	Heli	NZ	2.5	*	3.5	4.5	0	2.5	5	3	4	4.5	4	3.5	*	5	4
Helipark	Heli	NZ	2.5	2.5	2	3.5	0	4	4	4	2.5	2	3.5	2.5	*	5	3.5
Arpa Cat Skiing	Cat	Chile	2.5	1	2	4	0	1	5	4.5	3.5	3	1.5	0.5	*	5	3

\* information not available, not applicable or not able to be reviewed

## NOTES REGARDING REVIEWS

Ratings are out of 5. As a guide to the ratings below, a 5/5 equates to absolutely phenomenal, 4/5 is excellent, whilst 3/5 is still a very good score.

Below are some of the factors considered in each of the categories.

### Avalanche Mitigation Strategies & Management

- ~ active use of local avalanche forecasting
- ~ use of blasting or other control work
- ~ slope testing on site
- ~ presence of snow safety team to aid in risk evaluation
- ~ multiple safety packs carried by guides and guests
- ~ qualifications of guides
- ~ above is evident to all guests (e.g. guide discussions, information available on website)

## **Safety Briefing**

- ~ comprehensive briefing regarding mechanized vehicles (ie cat or heli) and risks involved
- ~ overview of skiing in the backcountry and risks involved: examples include tree wells, getting lost and not skiing with straps in situ
- ~ what to do in an avalanche if either caught in one or one is witnessed
- ~ tuition of the use of beacons, searching practice and practice with probe and shovel

## **Powder / Snow**

- ~ annual snowfall
- ~ frequency of snowfall
- ~ quality of snow e.g. moisture content, crustiness
- ~ range of terrain and various aspects to find quality snow if it hasn't snowed for a while
- ~ likelihood of finding freshies e.g. size of terrain relative to the number of guests

## **Alpine Terrain**

- ~ amount, quality and variety of alpine terrain available
- ~ likelihood of snowpack allowing riding in the alpine, particularly on steep slopes

## **Tree Skiing**

- ~ amount, quality and variety of gladed terrain available
- ~ adequately spaced trees to allow the linking of turns but tight enough to make it challenging and protect snow quality

## **Strong Intermediate Terrain**

- ~ amount, quality and variety of terrain available for strong intermediates

## **Advanced Terrain**

- ~ amount, quality and variety of terrain available for advanced skiers and riders

## **Expert and Extreme Terrain**

- ~ amount, quality and variety of terrain available for strong expert skiers and riders
- ~ amount, quality and variety of steep chutes, cliffs and drop-offs
- ~ snowpack stability and likelihood of being able to ride this terrain

## **Guiding**

- ~ clear instructions regarding safety issues in the field including tree buddies (where required)
- ~ appropriate re-grouping
- ~ providing direction regarding guests taking it in turns for first tracks (if required)
- ~ qualifications and experience of guides
- ~ fun personality to add to the enjoyment
- ~ tail guide backup and instructions
- ~ low guest to guide ratio

## **Overall Terrain**

- ~ amount of quality skiing possible in a day
- ~ size of terrain
- ~ variety of terrain
- ~ variety of different aspects to ski
- ~ ability to cater to a range of ability levels within the one day

## **Cat / Heli**

- ~ guest comfort which includes the ease and safety of getting in and out
- ~ speed and power (applicable for cats)
- ~ reliability and back up plans in case of mechanical failure for cat skiing (e.g. backup cats)

## **Frills**

- ~ quality of lunch, snacks and drinks provided throughout the day (does not include morning or evening meals if associated with accommodation)
- ~ apres ski session
- ~ information regarding what to expect and the itinerary for the day
- ~ photography or video service which is shown at the end of the day
- ~ range and quality of skis and boards provided

## **Value for Money**

- ~ Cat and heli operations are considered separately ie the rating is for value for money for heli-skiing or cat-skiing. The two are not compared.
- ~ Inclusions such as powder skis

## **Accommodation**

- ~ quality of accommodation
- ~ lodging facilities
- ~ quality of morning and evening meals

## **Overall Rating**

- ~ All rated factors included

NB The reviews are largely based on our experience, but also on discussions with staff, other guests (especially repeat customers), and information available on their website. Our reviews have some limitations as it's not possible to ski every run available or in all snow and weather conditions, and every guide is somewhat different. We acknowledge that everyone's experience will be slightly different and the ratings are from our perspective only. Most importantly, every cat ski and heli ski operation provides a fantastic experience, and it sure beats a day of resort skiing or boarding hands-down!