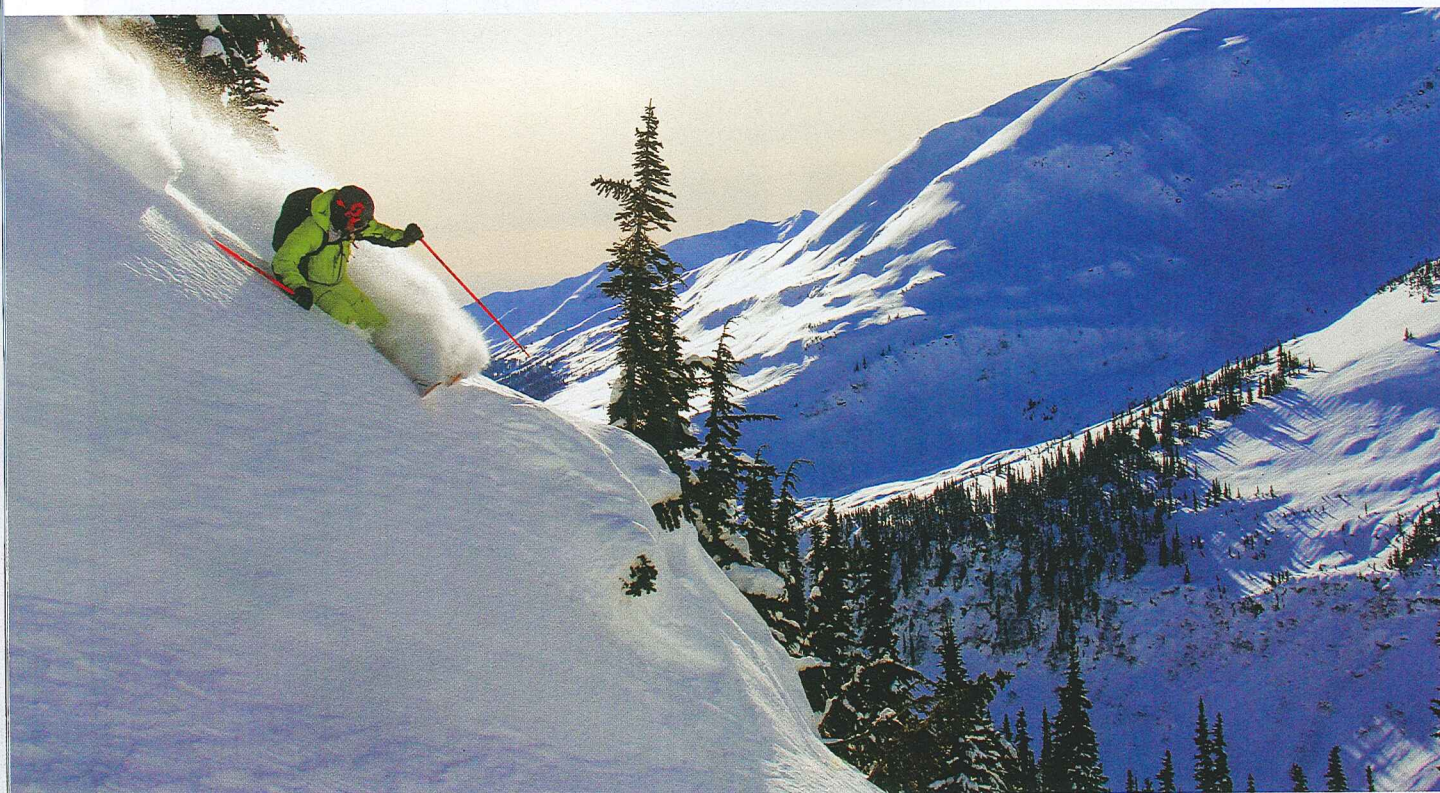


Ski In, Camp Out

Skeena Heliskiing's new Base Camp takes skiers deep into the wild.



IT IS ANOTHER bluebird day in British Columbia's Kuldo Valley as the Astar B2 helicopter soars over oceans of evergreens and glistening glaciers. I have come to this powdery Valhalla to explore the 3,677-square-mile domain of Skeena Heliskiing, an adventure outfitter with exclusive rights to the remote valley. Soon enough, I am swooshing down runs with adrenaline-inducing names like Eye of the Tiger, plunging off mountaintop ridges, cruising twisty rollers, and navigating tight tree lines. By day's end—when we retire to Skeena's new **Base Camp** (skeenaheliskiing.com)—my fellow skiers and I have completed no fewer than 20 runs in 8 hours of sunlight.

Accessible by a short chopper ride from Skeena's luxurious Bear Claw Lodge, Base Camp is a unique concept among Canadian heli-skiing operations. Composed of arctic-inspired tents, the camp is erected at the start of each ski season and dismantled when the snow melts. The temporary accommodation—which opens for the season in January—sits on a bank above the

Kuldo River, offering prime access to long glacier runs and steep chutes that promise to challenge even the most seasoned skiers.

"We wanted to provide something new to heli-skiing, a package that is truly a wilderness experience," says head guide and Skeena co-owner Giacomo "Jake" Frei. To that end, Base Camp forgoes the usual hot tub and spa treatments of other lodges in favor of an encompassing, yet comfortable, alpine immersion.

Still, Base Camp—which offers 6-night packages that include 100,000 feet of vertical time for about \$6,750 per person—promises plenty of respite after a long day of skiing. As the evening grows darker, our camp's geodesic dome glows like a giant snow globe. Inside, we dine on albacore-tuna *tataki* and magret duck before dispersing to our private heated tents to collapse onto log beds smothered with wool duvets. Just outside, the helicopter sits under the full moon, waiting to once again sweep us up into the great powder come morning.

—MARK SISSONS