

A Hawaiian Surfer in the Alps

Yes, its hard to believe that a guy who grew up most of his life on the white sandy beaches of Hawaii, enjoying the warmth of the sun all year long would find his way to the Alps in the middle of winter!

Although my work is based in the USA I keep a residence in Germany, and with the help of my best friends Stephan and Andi Rohe who themselves are avid skiers got me interested in Back Country Skiing as we call it in the USA or Ski Touring in Europe and all the wonders that it had to offer. Now, I have skied many times in the past but it has always been at the typical Ski Resort where the grounds have been prepared and are in “Pristine” condition, with the Ski Patrol, Medical Stations, nice warm gourmet restaurants and Ski Lift to take me to the top of the mountain and all are easily accessible to anyone with the cash to burn.

So the idea of breaking away from this style of corporate skiing and winter vacationing was very interesting to me. The very idea of being away from all the crowds of people waiting in line for their lift up to the top of the mountain, the noise of the machines turning to keep the artificial world running for the long line of vacationers. This sounded like a dream.

But like all dreams I did have some concerns like safety, proper gear, training, being with people I could trust with my life and did I mention SAFETY.

Andi sent me a link to Ski Club Bad Neustadt (<http://www.skiklub-nes.de/>) and ensured me that the members of the club were the right kind of people that I could trust. Shortly after joining the club I received an email from Mr. Roland Zschorn, Instructor Ski Tour (DSV/BSV), who was organizing a 4-day ski tour to Tuxer, Austria utilizing the Lizumer Hutte (www.lizumerhuetten.at) for our nightly accommodations. Our plan was to meet at the base of the mountain in the village of Wattenberg. Upon our arrival I would meet the other half of our team, having driven down from Sennfeld, Germany with Stephan and Andi I finally had the chance to meet the other 4 members of our team.

Team leader and Instructor Mr. Roland Zschorn, who I found to be a very impressive man both in stature and character, and one that easily gained the respect and trust of those around him including myself. Next I met Sascha a tall slender man that I found to be very intellectual and would listen very intently to a conversation before offering his opinion, he too was a Ski Instructor and one who’s knowledge and patience I would greatly rely on for the next few days. Thomas was a man that I found to be very warm, open, and easy to talk too and he had a very good command of the English language; he was fully trained in Rescue techniques from ground recovery to helicopter extractions. The last and youngest member of our team was Robert at 19 years old but already a trained Rescue team member and currently waiting to attend the Alpine Tour Guiding course. And of course knowing for many years, Andi a tour guide in the Rhon (www.rhontrail.de) and who will also attend the Alpine Tour Guiding course in February and his brother Stephan,

a Physical Therapist and Private Trainer (www.stephanrohe.de) and the most physically fit person that I know and me Clarence Cazimero, the surfer from Hawaii.

With the expertise and qualifications of this team I felt very comfortable about the next few days. Which would be more than just a guided tour in the Alps. We spent a lot of time planning our route for every trip, analyzing the terrain, snowfall and the amount of snow accumulation, any risk of avalanches in the area that could affect our route, the direction of the wind and its effects. All of this information was then plotted onto a single form (which was designed by Roland) to analyze the risk level and make any changes to our route if the risk was too high. This level of detailed planning was completed every day and briefed to everyone on the team with a weather update in the morning before we departed on our journey. Over the next few days we would climb and ski Torspitze (2663 m), Mölsberg (2479 m), Graue Wand (2594 m), Eiskarspitze (2611 m), and Geier (2857 m)

I also learned how to use my LVS and avalanche equipment a first for me. We even conducted avalanche training and snow stability test out on our route in which Roland talked in detail about what to look for, proper spacing between members when in an avalanche risk zone.

At the end of my 4-day journey into the Alps, I felt a sense of accomplishment both physically and mentally but more than that I got the opportunity to make some great new friends, gained a wealth of knowledge and saw some of the most fantastic views of the Alps. Unlike my pervious types of winter resort ski vacations, here you earn the right to see mother natures beauty and the reward for making it to the summit the soft white snowy powder awaits you.

For anyone that may read about my latest adventure, I highly recommend leaving the noise, and long lines of people waiting for the ski lift and get out and experience Ski Touring and to do this safely look up some of the most talented people I know at Ski Club Bad Neustadt (<http://www.skiklub-nes.de/>) and Mr. Roland Zschorn. And who knows maybe I'll get to meet you on my next Ski Tour with the club, just look for the guy with a nice tan and a big smile on his face.

Clarence Cazimero
The newest member of Ski Club Bad Neustadt
DAV-SW member