

FRONTIERS

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L.A.

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INSIDE

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Escape from L.A.



Do It on the

SLOPES

PHOTO: LANDIS SMITHERS

Whitman's Elevation Ski Weeks Return

By Mike Ciriaco

"With the human rights stuff that's going on, there's a potential for it to be an incredibly negatively overshadowed Olympics," speculated two-time gold medalist for snowboarding Seth Wescott on the upcoming Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia. Undoubtedly, the international sporting event has taken a back seat to Russia's government-supported discrimination against its LGBT community. With a ban on what the government calls gay "propaganda" and the sharp increase in violence against gays and lesbians, perhaps we should simply boycott this year's Winter Olympics and leave gay skiing and snowboarding in the capable hands of Tom Whitman.

Nightlife impresario Whitman returns this winter with more rounds of Elevation, the hottest gay ski events in North America, some of which are located at former Olympic sites. These snowy extended weekends promise adrenaline-fueled days on the slopes followed by steamy nighttime parties featuring some of the country's most talented DJs. This year, Elevation: Mammoth and Elevation: Utah attempt a devil's three-way with their newest partner, Elevation: Tahoe, assuring that 2014 will be the hottest winter yet.

As the newest member of the family, **Elevation: Tahoe** offers the thrill of the unexpected, as well as a cozier social circle.

"Go to Elevation: Tahoe if you want to be a part of our very first year," encourages Whitman. "It will be a more intimate experience, approximately 300-500 guys instead of thousands, and you'll be part of making a new Elevation tradition."

The former Winter Olympics locale offers skiers and snowboarders myriad options when it comes to crushing powder.

"Squaw Valley is an amazing resort and an amazing mountain. But what's also great about North Lake Tahoe is the ability to ski multiple resorts during the same week. Ski Squaw one day, Northstar the next day and Alpine Meadows or Diamond Peak the following day. There are 11 downhill resorts in the North Lake Tahoe area. For alumni of Elevation, The Village at Squaw Valley will remind you very much of the Village at Mammoth, and we plan to take over the town in exactly the same way."

Once the slopes have been conquered during the day, the dance floor awaits conquering after sundown. The four-day

weekend offers multiple parties, each featuring a bevy of adept musical masters, including Whitman event alumni such as DJs Pornstar, Blacklow and Casey Alva.

"I'm looking forward to Casey Alva's sets," admits Whitman. "In working with DJs for almost 15 years, I think Casey is so consistently fun that I always look forward to seeing what surprises he is going to bring. And DJ Blacklow, also known as Jeremy Blacklow, is an up-and-comer who spins a great combination of '90s classics and contemporary dance floor."

Another former Olympics host city, Park City reopens its doors for its fourth **Elevation: Utah** weekend. The location is ideal on several levels.

"Park City, Utah, was the site of the Olympics for a reason," explains Whitman. "It's what a ski town should be—world-renowned restaurants, great nightlife and the driest powder in the world. There's a reason why Utah says it has the "greatest snow on Earth"—because it does. Plus, Salt Lake City has a vibrant gay community."

In contrast to little brother Tahoe and its intimate circle of attendees, Utah boasts a far broader demographic.

"Go to Park City for the most diverse crowd geographically. We get attendees from all over the country and all over the world. There is no epicenter for Elevation: Utah attendees. It's everyone from California to New York, Texas to Australia. And go to Elevation: Utah if you've never skied Park City. It's pretty incredible."

Even if you have skied Park City, this year's Elevation: Utah promises something the event has never had before—Brett Henrichsen at the turntables.

ELEVATION: TAHOE

Feb. 6-9

DJ Casey Alva
DJ Pornstar
DJ Blacklow

tahoegayski.com

ELEVATION: UTAH

Feb. 20-23

DJ Brett Henrichsen
DJ Josh Peace
DJ Chris B
DJ Blacklow
DJ Lishus

utahgayski.com

ELEVATION: MAMMOTH

March 12-16

DJ Manny Lehman
DJ Casey Alva
DJ Dawna Montell
DJ Derek Monteiro
DJ Drew G

mammothgayski.com

"I'm excited about Brett Henrichsen's set. It will be Brett's first time spinning at an Elevation event, though he has attended many times. Brett has the great ability to work a room with vocals and anthems, which is why he is still traveling all the time and spinning the biggest events in the world. Plus he's a great friend, and it's just plain fun to work with friends."

The whole season leads to the premier ski weekend, **Elevation: Mammoth**.

"Mammoth is the original Elevation and still the largest. Elevation: Mammoth is one of the largest gay ski weeks in the world now, drawing more than 2,500 people to the High Sierras. It is also one of my favorite mountains in the world to ski. If you're a snowboarder, it just doesn't get any better. The mountain is huge, so you can literally ski all day, non-stop, and never touch the same run."

Just as the slopes are bigger in Mammoth, so is the afterhours action, thanks in part to the return of DJ Manny Lehman.

"Lehman does big gay rooms better than anyone. He can somehow make a sound system bassier, bigger and gayner than anyone else. It's Dawna Montell's first time at an Elevation as well, and I think she will be a great addition, spinning the new stuff as well as classics."

We'll see you on the slopes!