

a day in the life of a

# Powder Betty

it's all about seizing  
the moment by Bridget Chait



Does spending every day on the mountain seem like a dream? Many skiers and riders experience sitting at a desk at work counting down the days until it's time to load up the car and head out. Once there, though, the dream becomes a reality that we all share, regardless of where we travel from or how long our stay is. The trails are a stone's throw away, the to-do list is pushed aside, and the fun begins.

This morning starts out with me on my snowboard, screaming toward the takeoff of the biggest jump Smuggs has built in years with no intentions of slowing down. A minor speed check, a little toe pressure, and I'm airborne. Time slows to nearly a stop. One rotation, check. Two rotations, check. What's that noise? Never mind, I'm going for three rotations. Holy cow, I made it! I'm back on the ground speeding down the landing headed for the bottom of the T Bar! I just landed my first 1080, but all I can focus on is that irritating sound.

That irritating sound ... It's 6:30 am and I have just been woken up by a snowplow. Guess it's time to start my day and leave my wonderful dream. There are some perks, however, to having a ten-ton snowplow as an alarm clock. For one, it serves as a reminder that I live on the Mountain Road and can walk to the chairlift. Two, I can look out the window at the road with its one sided plow-job and really get a gauge on how much snow has fallen overnight. But most importantly, hearing that plow puts happy thoughts into my head to start the day off right. Thoughts of snow.

Time to shower, pick out a fresh hoodie-and-hat combo, make my tea, and check the weather on any of the thirteen bookmarked weather sites on the computer. 7:30 am. Better start my morning commute. Down the stairs and around the corner to the front door of the shop. Check my watch. A fifteen second commute and I didn't spill a single drop of my tea; I'm a rockstar!

Living above the shop has its benefits. Being able to head out the door and walk a short distance to the lift is the next best thing to staying right at the resort, and a short, carbon neutral commute is great. But it can also be a bummer; seeing all my friends speeding up the road with their gear on the roofs of their cars honking as they drive by on their way to catch first chair. I've got to move past it. I will have my chance to shred later.

The time is 7:59 am, one minute until opening. Last night's snow has been plowed over to the enormous piles that surround the parking lot, just in time for the morning's first customers to arrive, eager to pick up their freshly tuned equipment and head to the hill.

The next few hours in the shop are busy, and noon comes before I can say the words "slash turn." This is a welcomed time, as it means I can break for some long-awaited turns on the hill. As I pass the first few lift towers on Sterling, I hear my name being called several times from Lower Exhibition. Without thinking about who could be calling me, I respond and let them know I will wait for them at the top.

There I can receive the conditions updates and get a line on where the best snow is for the day.

Now the real fun begins. Over the next hour all I do is shred. Bonk. Hit. Spin. Huck. Slash. Rip. It is times like these that I can't help but cherish the opportunities I do have to get out of work, to leave all work thoughts behind, and reflect on my connection with the mountain here. I love these moments.

Buzz kill. The time is 1:00 pm and I'm late getting back to the shop. Running through the door, I have no time to remove my snowpants and boots. I instantly return to my shopgirl alter-ego. The sun is setting over the ridge now, which means off-mountain traffic will start to roll down the Mountain Road. Rental customers are returning their equipment and folks are swapping stories about epic cliff drops and sweet rail slides like it's their job. Two hours until closing. Better start working on some of those tunes. I can tell it was a powder day by the lack of basegrind orders. Waxing skis and boards it is. No problem. I might even get out of work on time today! Sure enough, 6:00 pm rolls around and I'm ready to leave. Rounding the corner of the building on my way back upstairs I hear the uproar from my husband and some of his instructor buddies as

someone lands a trick on the rail in the backyard. I get out the phone and order some pizzas, because this day is not over yet. I grab my deck and join them for a few hours. All the while, I can tell we're not the only ones celebrating the great day on the mountain. As we look across the river, the roads at the resort are busy with shuttle buses and cars, and we can hear the bumping of a dance party in the *FunZone*.

My legs can no longer hold me up and I am not the only one who is tired. Everyone starts taking down the flood lights to pack up and head out. Check my watch. Wow, 10:00 pm! Time to head upstairs to hang my gear next to the heater for tomorrow. Another great day has passed, and I am grateful for every moment. I had fun and can end it with a smile that only an environment like this one can give me. Today, sales were made, I got to meet new people, turns were slashed, and I am still in one piece to write about it. It is days like this that keep me coming back for more. Day after day and year after year.

*Bridget Chait, a Smuggs rider for 17 years, is the manager of No School Snowboard Shop, located right outside the entrance to Smugglers' on Route 108. In the Summer, she can be found riding her Harley through the Notch and hiking all over the Sterling range dreaming of snow with her husband Mike and dog Holden.*

