



- Skyline Gondola Restaurant & Luge Queenstown
- Blue Peaks Lodge Queenstown
- Blue Peaks Apartments Queenstown
- Mercure Leisure Lodge Dunedin

- Sentosa Luge
- Skyline Skyrides Rotorua
- North Sky Luge (Tremblant) Ltd
- Sky City Queenstown Casino
- Christchurch Casino

SkylineViews²⁹

Newsletter of the Skyline Group of Companies



PM is firmly in the driving seat!

Politicians don't usually like being seen cutting corners but Prime Minister John Key clearly had a ball taking racing lines down the Skyrides luge track.

Swapping his prime minister's hat for a safety helmet Mr Key was in Rotorua for the formal opening of the new second chairlift, and he couldn't turn down the chance to put a cart through its paces!

The new chairlift doubles the capacity to return riders to the starting gates to a mind-boggling 1,800 people per hour, but Mr Key had his mind on other records as he carved up the course.

Skyline Enterprises chairman Barry Thomas may well have given the PM a few tips during the pinstriped pair's trip to the top, but he certainly made short work of his high-speed trip down the hill.

At the ribbon-cutting Mr Key recognised Skyline's long standing in the sector and the commitment to the future of New Zealand tourism that the \$20million Skyrides redevelopment represents.

He also acknowledged the export impact the company is making with luge rides in Canada, Singapore and more yet to come.

A so-far unconfirmed report from the Beehive says Mr Key has since been overheard telling fellow MPs that once was never enough, though it's thought he might have been referring his first term as prime minister!

SKYRIDES 10 ARE NATIONAL TOPS

Skyrides boasts the largest amount of apprentices carrying out their Modern Apprenticeship in Tourism and Travel in any one workplace in the country!

This year Skyrides has a group of 10 talented team players working through the programme, having completed ATTO's computer based training.

From now on the trainees will all be spending time in various departments over the winter.

Management on the move

Management trainee Kylie Simpson swaps her Rotorua hotspot for a winter in the South Island as part of her rotation.

Meanwhile fellow trainee Brad Rowe moves in the opposite direction to join the Skyrides restaurant team.

HANDS-DOWN WIN FOR CHARITY AT POKER NATIONALS



Christchurch Casino well and truly earned its reputation as the home of New Zealand poker when more than 100 competitors anted up for this year's national championships.

The poker-faced enthusiasts made the journey from around the country to battle it out at the casino's tables for a pot worth a staggering \$700,000.

After nine days of riveting bets and bluffs the field was whittled down to a face-off between Danish-born Soren Erickson and ice-cool David Borg.

The \$100,000 prize money finally found its way back to Soren's Blenheim home in a thrilling afternoon that held an appreciative crowd spellbound.

But it wasn't just the big names in cards who pulled the crowds.

The Media Cup for Charity tournament pitted household names against each other over the green baize, while raising money for good causes across Canterbury.

More than 30 members of the media took part in the shoot-out against charity representatives, eventually focusing the action on 10 pairings gambling over the \$10,000 charity pot.

Leading the charge, TV3's Natasha Utting had a whirlwind contest and beat the other nine media finalists to win \$5,000 for Christchurch Children's Holiday Camps Trust.

Second and third placing went to freelance writer Kim Triegaardt who won \$3,000 for Autlink Foundation, and Peter Hampton of The Star newspaper who earned \$2,000 for Cholmondeley Children's Home.

TV3's Natasha Utting makes a splash in the cash during her 'once in a lifetime experience' getting up close and personal with the \$700,000 cash prize pool at the New Zealand Poker Tournament.



Soren Erikson counts his winnings

CASINO FRONTS THE BIG GAMES

Once again premier Canterbury sportsmen and women have Christchurch Casino on their side as the winter tournament season gets underway.

The Canterbury Crusaders are making their presence felt in the Super 14 rugby competition while Mercury Energy Tactix players are leaving their mark in the Trans-Tasman Netball contest.

Christchurch Casino Players Club members have the opportunity to get up close and personal with the teams

on and off their respective pitches and courts.

A series of exclusive events and promotions mark the teams' process for members of the Fanatical Fan Club of more than 150 members.

The Casino's behind the wheel too with sponsorship for Matt and Paul Jansen's campaign on the New Zealand Rally Car circuit.

With an impressive fifth place on debut converting into a ranking of fourth in the Group 'N' competition, the car has been



turning heads across the country as one of the contenders to watch.

IT'S A SAFE BET, THE PINOTS ARE VINTAGE STUFF

One thing that's never a gamble is New Zealand's world-beating Pinot Noir and the nation's experts converged on Christchurch Casino to pick the finest.

Wine judges Terry Copeland, Jim Harre and Sarah Burton added their noses and palates to those of the wine-loving public to identify the People's Choice and Industry Awards and to select the 2009 Champion Pinot Noir.

The whole process allowed enthusiasts to learn from experts who shared their tasting experiences and tasting notes at the event.

All 40 pinots in the competition were on sale at The Grand Café and Diamond Bar throughout May, offering anybody the chance to sample them matched with food or separately, before adding their votes to the People's Choice ballot.

At the time of going to press the deliberations were still continuing before the all-important announcements at the June awards dinner featuring a selection of the finalist wines among the company of their makers.



Who says you can't Cleese all the people all the time?

You get all sorts of people coming through the doors at SkyCity Queenstown Casino and June features some of the strangest to date!

Nobody will be complaining too loudly as Basil, Sybil and Manuel take time out from their Torquay hotel to bring the Faulty Towers experience to Queenstown.

Actors Doug Kamo, Danny Still and Victoria Grey hit the casino as part of a 20-venue New Zealand tour

featuring two hours of nostalgic madness from 70s BBC TV smash *Fawlty Towers*.

"We have been presenting this show for more than 10 years mostly to the corporate market and felt the time was right to take it out on the road so the public can experience its success" says Kamo.

"It has been performed more than 500 times in the period and because the show hinges strongly on the improvisational skills of the actors – never have two shows been the same."

The night out includes the show and three-course dinner, not to mention huge servings of hilarity and voluntary participation in the feast of slapstick, all followed by live entertainment from SkyCity regular Brett Strachan.



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Spick and span, inside and out

Nothing stays still for long at Blue Peaks and the lodge's ongoing upgrade programme has moved on another step.

With balcony modernisation well underway the focus has swung onto the reception area.

First impressions last so the colour palette has been revisited with a sharp paint job featuring lighter shades that noticeably brighten up the interior.

As for the elderly 'air-conditioning' and central illuminations, co-manager Michael McMillan will only comment; "They've been relegated to ancient fan and light systems heaven."

The lodge gardens are also being steadily modernised under the careful eye of Michael and wife Anne.

"A more formal lavender garden replaces the raised lawn; the camellia and rhododendron garden has been opened up and the photinia hedges are disappearing," explains Anne.

"Replacing them are presentations of bay trees and English lavender rows. Some japonica will adorn the stairways as well. In time the beautiful roses will have more cream colours added for effect," she adds.



Michael McMillan and Gordon Elliot get all green fingered in the Blue Peaks Garden

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IT'S SAMBA TIME!

In the middle of Queenstown Winter Festival the town turns Latin American, and this year's Mardi Gras samba centre is at SkyCity.

Organisers are well used to seeing shoulder to shoulder crowds thronging the streets as the free party pulses to the Latin beat. Stilt-walkers look down on the thousands of party-goers all moving to the irresistible beat as street-corner stages pump up the volume throughout the resort and countless food stalls keep the revellers' energy operating at full speed.

Once the street party dies down the whole event moves into SkyCity, Festival's preferred late night venue and the venue for the Mardi Gras after-party.

Party-goers are encouraged to come in their masks and let their hair down to the sound of the fabulous Jason Schmidt and the Rockers from 10pm until late.

Naturally SkyCity's Festival entertainment doesn't stop there and the complete line-up starts with the Oystermen on June 29, followed by Groova, Jason Schmidt, Brett Strachan, Little Green Men and Lipstick on consecutive nights.



LOVING LIFE AT LEISURE LODGE!

Love's been in the air over the last five years for two Leisure Lodgers who finally tied the knot this autumn.

Their jobs as restaurant manager and receptionist meant David Maharjan and Bonnie Liu's eyes met across numerous crowded rooms at the busy hotel!

So it was only fitting that once they'd been through the official ceremony their photographs should be taken in Leisure

Lodge's renowned flower garden.

By the time this edition of Skyline Views goes to press the pair (left) will have travelled to China to live.

First on the agenda there will be a traditional Chinese wedding with all its attendant formality, though the jury's out on whether they'll be able to improve on their picture settings...



Kitchen staff take a breather

Red meat skills earn major award for restaurant

Head chef Paul McArthur and his team are celebrating some great recognition of their combined skills.

The kitchen brigade can now boast the Hallmark Award for Excellence in Beef and Lamb for 2009, as judged over a period of time at McGavin's Restaurant.

"It's all about consistency in quality delivery," says Paul, who's proud of "a great team effort throughout the kitchen and restaurant."

Only spirits dampened as roof replaced in the rain

Damp Februaries and re-roofing programmes aren't the best combination but that didn't stop Leisure Lodge's latest renovation project.

As the top came off the rain started to come down and for a short while the west wing became the 'wet wing'.

Tarps and swift action stopped any major damage but persistent precipitation in Dunedin's wettest February on record left staff mopping up a few mildly moist carpets and learning quickly how to deactivate a confused fire alarm system!

Guests are now enjoying their rooms again in complete warmth and comfort, blissfully unaware of how much extra work went into the project... unless they read this that is!

Hotel is New Zealand rugby's base camp

Dunedin being the great southern capital it is means rugby's never far from anybody's mind, especially if you work at Mercure Leisure Lodge.

A blistering Super 14 season saw high-octane action on the pitch and high standards of service for the teams at Leisure Lodge, the New Zealand Rugby Union's premier Dunedin choice for accommodation.

The staff are well versed in dealing with the man-mountains who inhabit the competition and this year started with a five-day stay for the Brumbies, in preparation for the season opener.

The property's certainly big enough to have hosted the Highlanders and the Crusaders as they arrived for their South Island derby face-off, but professional preparation meant the Cantabrians won

the toss for best digs in the end.

Next on the agenda were the Stormers who blew into town from South Africa and also enjoyed a great welcome from staff and fellow guests alike.

The international touring season is ready to kick off too and Leisure Lodge will become the home of the baguette and the cockerel as France arrives in force in June.

Hard to believe but Les Bleux have never beaten a New Zealand side in Dunedin, or lost to one either – they've simply never travelled that far south!

With the announcement of several pool games in Dunedin come World Cup time, the French making their base at the property this year will go a long way towards refining the Leisure Lodge service for 2011.

Mercure Leisure Lodge

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Skyline Gondola Restaurant & Luge, Queenstown

GONDOLA GOES UP ANOTHER NOTCH!

There's always some enhancement or improvement going on at Skyline Queenstown and 2009 is no exception.

After upgrades to the luge tracks in 2006 and 2007, the addition of a luge photography system and the restaurant and bar remodelling in June 2008, this year has seen a total refurbishment and upgrade to the gondola system.

Despite this being a major undertaking, long experience and careful planning meant the complex was scheduled to be closed for just five weeks while the upgrade took place during May and June.

The project also allowed for a refurbishment of the bottom terminal with its new contemporary design including more sales points, priority queuing facility and a popular information desk.

Manager Blair Deasy is delighted with the changes.

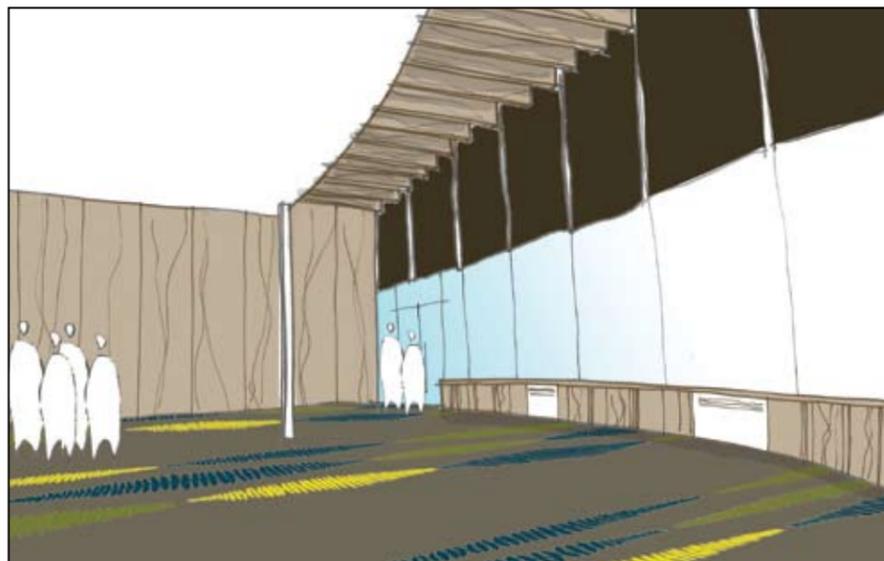
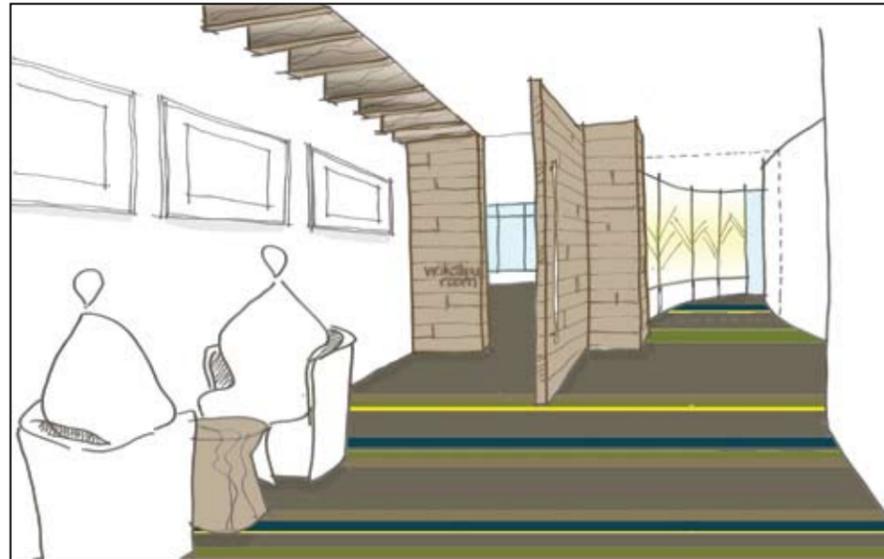
"I'm thrilled with the upgrade and improvements to the customer experience at the entry point to our business, first impressions really are important.

"I'm extremely passionate about the continuous upgrade of the Skyline complex and very eager to maintain our world class facilities," adds Blair.



Manager Blair Deasy pauses for breath before renovation work begins

For technical fans this table shows every fact you need to know about gondola transport to Skyline Queenstown, so you're completely armed and ready for dinner party conversation...



Top, above and top right, Architect's impression of the finished work at Queenstown's gondola system

GONDOLA UPGRADE FACTS

Gondola manufacturer:
Doppelmayr, Austria

Base station:
340m above sea level

Top station:
790m above sea level

Vertical rise:
450m

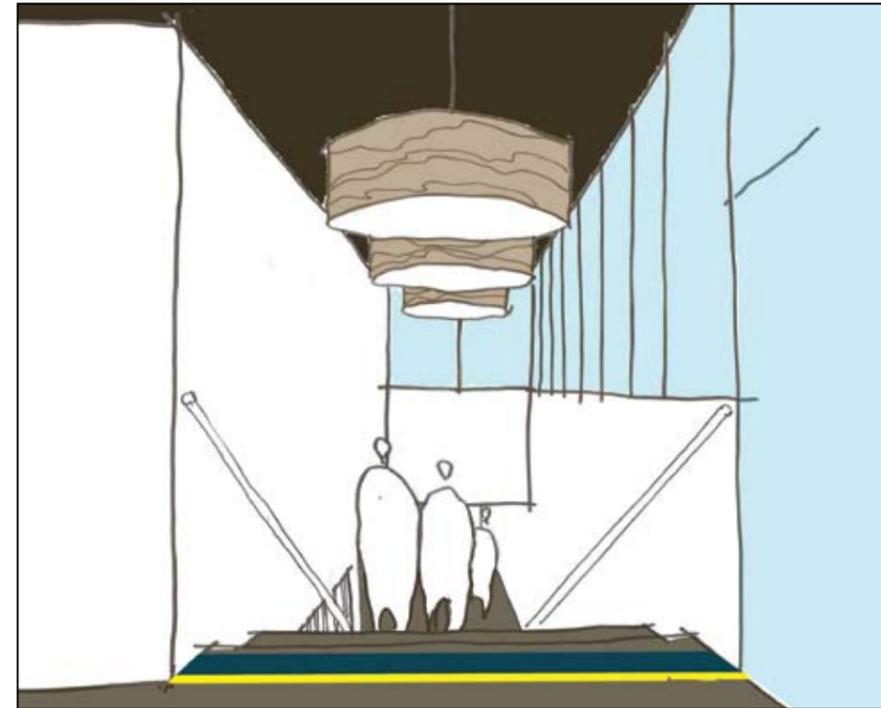
Distance between terminals:
730m

Travelling speed:
Variable to 3.5m per second
1000 passengers per hour

Drive motor:
ASEA (Sweden) 149 kilowatt
D/C Variable draw

Angle of incline:
37.1 degrees average

...so now you know!



SALES RECORDS IN THE BAG AT SOUVENIR STORE AGAIN, AND AGAIN!

Skyline souvenir store staff are at risk of being made Queenstown's busiest front-liners around!

New Year's Day smashed all sales records, leaving the most recent best, on Christmas Day 2007, well and truly dead and buried.

Summer superstars and legends

Ade Kurnia and Kan Sanphatchaya took out the Frontline Superstar and Back-of-house legend titles for the summer quarter.

The hard-working pair were awarded with \$100 restaurant vouchers and well-deserved pats on the back for their efforts!



Marilyn Smillie celebrates in the Souvenir Shop

That's a story in itself but the team, renowned for their ability to find something for everybody, surpassed themselves yet again in February.

Once again they put history in the shade and beat both previous records.

Green gondoliers get glass going another round

Skyline Queenstown's green committee members are strong believers in making you think, so get your grey matter round this lot...

- Every week about 20 species of plants and animals become extinct.
- Rainforests are being cut down at the rate of 100 acres per minute.
- One-third of the water used in most homes is flushed down the toilet.
- A single quart of motor oil, disposed of improperly, contaminates up to two million gallons of fresh water.
- Energy-saving light bulbs last around 10 times longer than ordinary light bulbs – more than 10,000 hours.
- A laptop is more environmentally friendly than a desktop computer. It consumes five times less electricity.
- A discarded aluminium can will still be a can an estimated 500 years from now.
- Tissue paper is a major source of waste. It takes six million trees to make one year's worth of tissue paper.
- Every time we burn oil, coal or gas to generate electricity and power, we produce the heat-trapping gases that cause global warming.
- Plastic bags and other plastic garbage thrown into the ocean kill as many as a million sea creatures every year.
- A modern glass bottle takes an estimated 4,000 years or more to decompose – even longer in landfill.
- Recycling one glass bottle saves enough energy to light a 100-watt bulb for four hours.

SO...

Skyline Gondola, Queenstown is involved in the re-cycling of about 50,000 glass bottles every year! Thank you for your support.

Nobody moves the luge faster than Ryan!



Tracks are craned into position

Popularity can be a wonderful thing but trying to please all the people all the time brings its own challenges, as Sentosa staff have discovered over the last year.

Now thanks to engineer Ryan Williams, Sentosa Luge is leading local thinking on how to overcome the potential for long lift lines.

After 18 months of watching queues threatening to grow to unmanageable proportions Ryan nipped it in the bud with some straightforward Kiwi thinking.

“He said we should add a third cart to the chairlift, simple as that!” says manager Lyndon Thomas.

It all seemed a little too straightforward at first says Lyndon who admits; “Originally I thought he was nuts!” but after a conference call to seasoned luge veterans Neville Nicholson and Grant Hensman he soon realised the answer really was that obvious.

It’s taken 11 months of careful preparation but now the changes are well underway.

New conveyors, roller sections and chair backs are being installed as this edition of Skyline Views goes to press.

“A massive amount of effort has been put in internally and externally from design to manufacturing and I express personal thanks to everyone involved, especially a big thanks to Ryan for

thinking outside the box and giving us the solution and the ability to add 50 per cent capacity to the lift,” says Lyndon.

That ‘simple’ idea means the luge can now handle 1,197 rides per hour and with no shortage of eager riders, all front line staff have to do now is keep up with the demand.

If that wasn’t enough the company’s in the process of planning a new luge track, with August penned in as a date to start construction.

STAFF TO STAR IN SINGAPORE STRATEGY

The Singapore team has done it again with another record number of visitors and rides at Sentosa Luge and Skyrides.

By March more than 1.1million people had enjoyed the sedate trip through the treetops or thundered down the luge track in blistering temperatures.

It’s an encouraging sign for the future despite global economic conditions says manager Lyndon Thomas.

“We’re looking forward to the new financial year and are confident we can ride out the recession and still achieve significant ride growth,” he says.

Harnessing the ‘once is never enough’ philosophy staff will be doing their best to enhance visitors’ experience by marketing multi-ride ticket sales.

“Our strategy also includes concentrating on the domestic and emerging markets that represent people who will holiday closer to home,” says Lyndon who believes the key to continued growth lies with the people behind the attraction.

“Our awesome team of staff, our great product and a great location should do the rest for us,” he adds.



Three’s company on the Sentosa Chairlift



Ryan Williams - Sentosa’s ideas man