

SKI SHOTS

Geysers of powder, glaring light, deep shadows, dazzling speed.

The Equipment

CAMERA. To prepare for extreme cold, some people recommend taking the camera to a dealer and having the oil on its moving parts replaced with a graphite solution (to avoid freezing). Ryan doesn't do this. "I've never had it done, and I've never experienced any serious problems," he says. However, if you do it, the graphite solution should be changed back to oil when you return to normal temperatures as the graphite will not lubricate moving parts as long or as well as oil.

The one potential danger area that should be checked is the camera's shutter speeds, to see if they are accurate. Since you will be shooting at 500ths of a second and up to freeze the action, shutter speeds are important. As a camera gets older, shutter speeds will frequently go out of whack, if, for

example, you are shooting at 1,000th of a second, but in reality your camera is shooting at 500th of a second you'll end up with black spots on the picture. Shutter speeds are critical," says Ryan, "especially at faster speeds. It's the first place you'll have problems."

LENSES. Normally a good combination of lenses for any photographer to carry would be a 28 mm, 50 mm, and a 105 mm. When it comes to ski photos, however, Ryan suggests leaving the 50 mm at home. You'll probably want another, more powerful lens, such as a 200 mm. (If you are really adventurous, a 500 mm can be even better.) Zoom lenses are ideal for skiing. They tend to be slower lenses, but the bright sunlight will make up for that. Plus, they will eliminate the need to carry too many extra lenses.

A UV filter is a necessity to keep



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out ultraviolet light, otherwise the photos will have a bluish tinge. The filters will also protect the lens surface. A word of warning: when using filters in cold weather, be aware that the trapped air between the actual lens and the filter can fog up. It pays to check the lens occasionally, or, better yet, use some type of anti-fogging solution.

When you take to the slopes with your camera, bits of snow and gunk

will fly up onto the lens. So be sure to pack along lens cleaner and lens paper.

FILM. Since you will be shooting in bright sunlight with high-reflective surfaces, film with a low film speed is the order of the day. Ryan usually uses Kodachrome 64 film. If it is extremely bright, Kodachrome 25 film is the way to go. Shooting black-white? Use Kodak Plus-X pan film with its 125 ASA rating. For color prints, Kodacolor II film with ISO 100 is recommended.

CAMERA BAGS. While you are skiing, a camera bag is both bulky and impractical, so you have two alternatives here: use either a backpack or a camera caddy. Backpacks specifically designed for carrying cameras and equipment are sold in the better mountaineering stores. Basically, they have many compartments that are lined with a heavy sponge padding.

A camera caddy is similar except that it rests in front of you with a strap to hold the camera in place, so the camera won't flop around and bang you in the chest while you are skiing. It will also protect the camera if you take a spill.

OTHER EQUIPMENT. Special shooting gloves are sold which cover the hands but leave the fingertips exposed for easier focusing and shooting. The shooting gloves are usually worn inside regular ski gloves. Another option to consider when tackling the great outdoors is an automatic advance. They are relatively inexpensive and are great for action shots; plus, you won't have to pull the camera away from your face to advance the film.

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