



## MAGIC CARPET RIDE

*Kent Bry is floating the white wave on SoCal's snowless slope*

By Kade Krichko

**K**ent Bry was a man with a plan. Fresh out of college, at 23, the skier packed everything he owned, pointed his van toward adventure, and headed west. But the New Jersey native, who grew up skiing Killington and Mad River Glen, didn't land in Jackson Hole, Ketchum, or Truckee. Instead, he washed up in the land of bikinis, surfers, burritos, and palm trees—Encinitas, in San Diego County. Yet, rather than swap his sticks for a surfboard, the PSIA-certified ski instructor decided to bring skiing with him. Bry is the owner, ski school director, and head of training at Adventure Ski and Snowboard School, a 30-by-20-foot ski simulator in the back parking lot of Hansen's Surfboards, a quarter mile from the Pacific. For 35 years, the 62-year-old has introduced 25,000 Southern Californians to sliding downhill (and the occasional rug burn) using short skis that, according to the longtime instructor, help mimic the forces of sliding on actual snow. Surf Country USA may be an unorthodox locale for a ski bum, but one thing is for certain: Snow or not, Bry is one guy getting more turns than you.

PHOTOS: David Reddick

**KADE:** How were you introduced to the ski simulator?

**KENT:** I had just moved from New England, and as a young guy I was fascinated by this moving carpet that had just been installed outside a ski shop in Southern California. The owner wouldn't let me on for free. I suggested that I hand out brochures and run the stop and start button for a few hours in exchange for skiing. That's how I worked my way onto the carpet.

**And the rest is history?**

Well, a few seasons later I moved up to Mammoth for a winter after the simulator's operator couldn't afford to pay me anymore. I saw Don Hansen, the owner of Hansen's, getting off Chair 5 and he told me the operator had left and that people were lining up for lessons. I told him I'd like to come back and run the school for myself—not in conjunction with Hansen's—and he ended up selling the business to me.

**So you left the snow to work on a carpet?**

Yes, you could say that. I loved living in the mountains, but I always knew I was going to come back to the beach.

**Why?**

I've always felt I'd rather live at the beach and go to the mountains. It's only three hours to Big Bear, seven to Mammoth, and 20 to Colorado.

**How does the simulator prep people for the slopes?**

The skills that PSIA teaches—balance, pressure control, edge control, and steering—those four skills are almost exactly the same on the simulator. The thing that we don't have is movement and high speed. I liken it to a treadmill for skis.

**How many days do you spend on snow?**

Between 10 to 25 days a year. I pretty much work straight through March and then take a few ski trips to Mammoth and Colorado.

**How many days do you spend skiing a year?**

That's probably around 200.

**What's it like to have your own private ski run in Southern California?**

It's fun. It's five minutes from my home. I especially love it when a couple of friends will be sitting around in the evening and I'll ask if anyone feels like skiing and we go down and start up the machine for a few turns.

**At the end of the day, why do you keep going back to the snow?**

That's the reason the simulator exists—to help us prepare for the mountain. The reason we enjoy skiing is that feeling of freedom and speed and the wind in your face—those elements we love about going downhill. That's what keeps me going back.