

Gone for a Burton: Snowboarding's history re-written

Jimmy Pettersen



The hills around the village were gentle and covered by corn snow. Ali stood more or less in the middle of the board, and glided smoothly downward. He assured me, however, that one can ride a Lazboard in deep snow and on steep slopes as well, but you must adjust your weight further back. He was skilled and confident, and you knew by just watching him that he was in harmony with his board and the mountains around him.

"I'll keep boarding until I'm a hunched over old man..." Ali promised with a chuckle, and I felt a commonality with him. While the rain had prevented me from a final day of heliskiing, I was ultimately grateful for the opportunity to see and experience an extremely interesting chapter of local culture and history, and I came back down from Petran with new insight into my own life.

Mountain folk have always lived an isolated lifestyle. They are separated from large population centres by rugged peaks and valleys, and the snow makes their seclusion during the winter months that much more intense. The present-day Laz people have inherited their isolated environment from their forefathers, but they've inherited, as well, a wonderful pastime with which to enjoy the lonely winter months.

I had come searching for the solitude of virgin slopes, and here in the Kaçkar Mountains it had all come together. I had found common ground with the people of Petran.

Heliskiing could hardly be more of a contrast. As *Turkey Heliski* observed: "It was a truly unforgettable moment... We knew that snowboarding was born in these mountains in deepest Turkey a very long time ago." 🇹🇷

'It's one of the only forms of entertainment this poor mountain village has to offer, and it's been passed down from father to son for generations'



'It's snowboarding', says Jimmy – 'but not as we know it!'