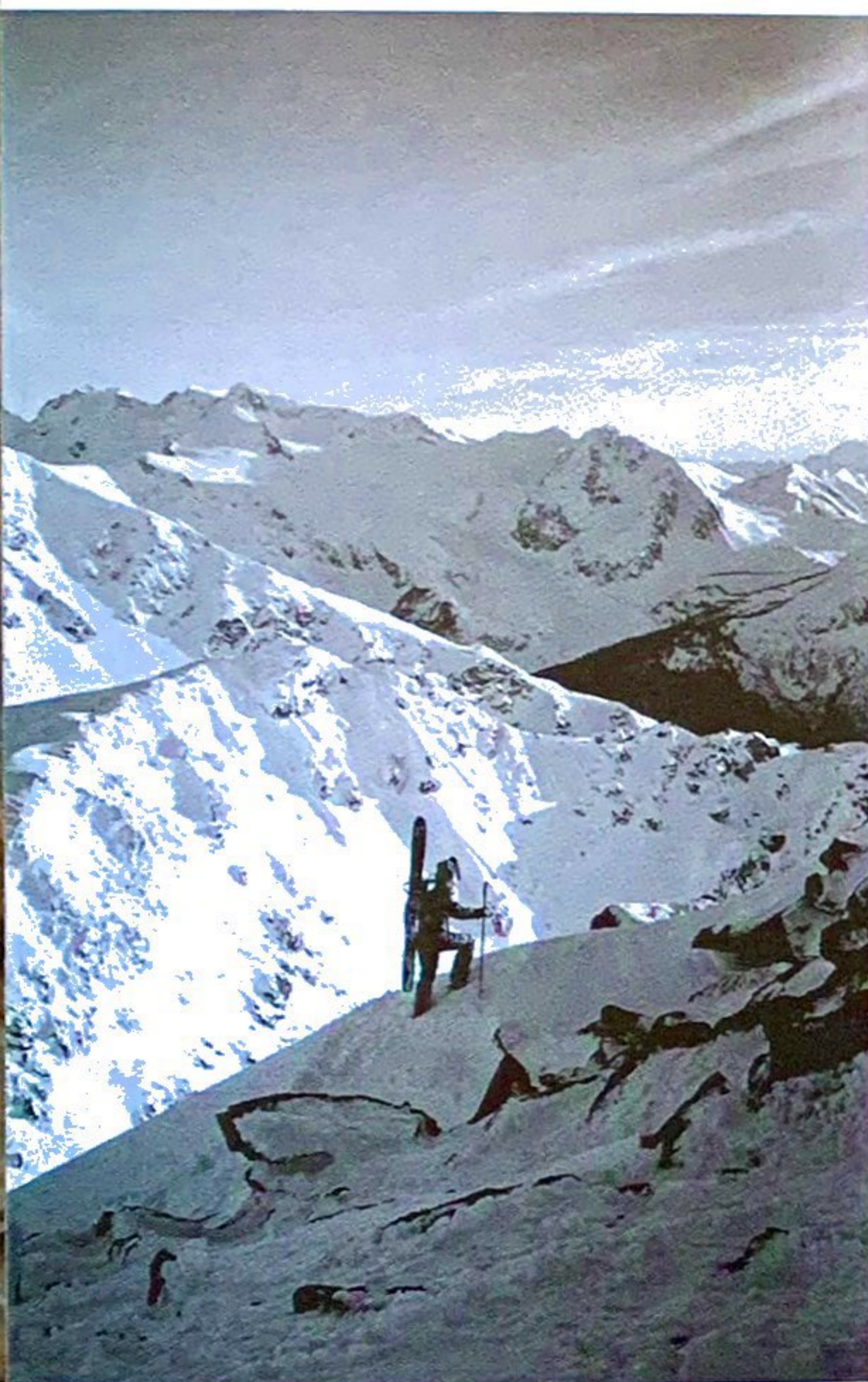


# SOLID GOLDIE

Michelle Parker's Photo Book

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It all started back when Michelle Parker was a teenager. Her high school in Tahoe City, CA, had a darkroom and she took photography classes as often as she could. Her aunt, Lindsay Horton, with whom Parker was close, had a photography habit, too. Just before Lindsay died a decade ago, she gifted Parker rolls of unused film.

Parker has been pro skier since she was 16 years old and she's now in the midst of filming "Originate," a web series she's producing with her sponsor, Red Bull. In the winter of 2018, while filming for "Originate," she started bringing along a Contax T2 35mm camera gifted to her by her boyfriend, Aaron Blatt. As she went to Japan, Canada, Alaska, Argentina, and France, it was small enough to stash in her pocket on the go.

"I'd go on these trips into the mountains and I'd give myself a photo assignment: 'My goal is to take a portrait of everyone on the trip,'" Parker says. "Every time I clicked the camera, each photo was precious and well thought out. It was a very different way of capturing the moment. I only took the camera out when I really wanted to, like to capture people on the trip who I was inspired by."

She snapped photos of the moments in between—like a bald eagle, shot in black and white, in a wildlife refuge in Alaska while she was there filming a ski movie, or a portrait of a young girl in Japan, whose parents operate a ski lodge there.

"Sometimes you take a photo and you have no idea how it's going to come out," Parker says. "That's the beauty of film. You forget about it. Then you get the roll developed and the image is epic. That's always a nice surprise."

The result of her work? An 84-page photo book that debuted this fall, which is being sold by Protect Our Winters—the climate advocacy organization will also receive all proceeds. The book is called *Goldie* after the name Parker gave her Contax. "The camera itself is gold, so I called it Goldie. It became my most prized possession, next to my ukulele," Parker says.

Parker isn't planning to give up pro skiing just yet. She has a lot left to offer in front of the lens. But, she plans to continue to develop her passion behind the lens. "I'm not quite ready to be the photographer on a ski trip," she says. "But it's a creative expression and an artistic side that I'm really enjoying."

As for Goldie, sadly, the camera broke not long ago, as old cameras tend to do. Finding replacement parts is nearly impossible and the same 30-year-old camera now sells for \$800 in used markets. Parker's plan? Display Goldie on her fireplace mantle at home, alongside her collection of other old cameras she still loves. ❧

## TOP TO BOTTOM

On a down day near Alyeska, we visited the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center, a nonprofit dedicated to education, conservation and research. Since 2003, the AWCC has partnered with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to reintroduce native wood bison back into Alaska after a 100-year absence. When I got the film developed, this photo was an amazing surprise. It might be one of my favorite frames I've ever shot.

Forrest Coots in the Whistler, BC backcountry—one of those moments when I was really happy to have my camera on me. I took it into the elements and despite it being one of my favorite items that I own, at the end of the year, the camera broke. It's expensive to fix these old cameras, but one day Goldie will be back in action.

In the small village of Myoko, Japan they measure snowfall in inches per hour rather than per day. When it starts to snow, it doesn't stop. For me, Japan is very healing—skiing super-deep pow, multiple onsen sessions a day and amazing food. The cultural experience combined with skiing has yet to be matched in my travels. Mark Abma and I had an amazing trip when we visited Seki Onsen, the oldest ski resort in all of Japan. At more than 100 years old, I am convinced it is where the soul of skiing lives.