

EN ROUTE

Six years ago, **Nimbus Independent** came together to make a different sort of ski film. Last March, *Skiing* joined Nimbus players **Eric Pollard, Andy Mahre, Pep Fujas, and Chris Benchetler** on a sled-ski mission to the Whistler backcountry. Here's a look inside that trip, which produced a webisode called "En Route Sled BC." Watch it at skiingmag.com/nimbus.
PHOTO ESSAY BY ALEX O'BRIEN

Quite literally, **Nimbus Independent** began with an *Idea*. That seminal ski film, released in 2007 with the help of Poor Boyz Productions and Eric Iberg, was the first for the crew, which consists of some of the best freeskiers in the business. With *Idea*'s mostly acoustic soundtrack and mellower pace, the movie felt like a drastic departure from the gangsta rap, Swedish pop, and Alaskan heli time that had become hallmarks of mid-2000s ski flicks. Freeskiing was picking up speed, and the quest for gnar seemed to have no end in sight. But Nimbus set out to show a more humanized version of pro skiing, an image of top-level athletes having a good time with friends on snow—something any skier could relate to—with a focus on the progression of style in the backcountry.

After *Idea*, Nimbus set out on its own, and two more releases, *Hunting Yeti* and *Contrast*, further showcased the crew's unique perspective. At the same time, Nimbus became one of the early experimenters with the short online film, or "webisode." Now in its fifth season, the *En Route* webisode series visits Austria's Arlberg, British Columbia, and Hokkaido, Japan.

"En Route Sled BC" is the third release in season five. It's the result of two solid weeks of exploration around Whistler as the crew discovered new features and returned to familiar zones they'd thought about for years. —KEVIN LUBY

» **Chris Benchetler** went fat-to-flat on this jump early in the trip and ended up cracking a rib. Nice shot, though.