

LAST RUN

Kristen Lignell

Kristen Lignell, who appears in numerous magazines and in this year's Warren Miller movie, is not your typical movie star. She spends half the year as an action ski model based in Squaw Valley, Calif., and the other half as a nurse in the pediatric Intensive Care Unit at the University of California San Francisco Medical Center.

Born May 28, 1963 (age 34)

Prescription For Sanity "The ICU is such a harsh, stressful place to work that you need an outlet to escape from the anxiety—and skiing is my outlet. When I come back from a winter of skiing and traveling around the world, I feel rejuvenated."

Early Snow Daze "I grew up in Charlevoix, Mich. You had to do a winter sport because winter lasts eight months there."

The Start, Part I "My father, grandfather and two uncles are all doctors, so I had a lot of exposure to medicine. And I knew nursing would be a career that would allow me to work anywhere."

The Start, Part II "I began spending my winters at Squaw Valley to get a break from the ICU. In 1987, I picked up extreme skier Dan Egan hitchhiking to the hill. I skied with him and his brother John and they said, 'Wow, a girl that can ski!' They helped me get started with photographers and filmmakers."

"A" Is For Athlete "I hate the label 'ski model.' I've done shoots with real models and they don't even know how to buckle their boots. I think of myself more as a skier and an athlete."

Ups And Downs "The good side of what I do is traveling and skiing pristine powder before anyone else. But it's definitely not glamorous. You might have to hike 10 times to get one shot. And, 'one more time' really means at least three more times."

Yin And Yang "Because I see so many sick kids, I'm very appreciative of my health and what I'm able to do. I'm lucky that I can have a good balance in my life. I see the harsh realities of life at the hospital, but I also get to be on top of beautiful mountains at sunrise."

—Reade Bailey

