



TRAVEL

Whistler has busy off-season; book your trips now

What's new in Whistler!

It has been a busy off season up in the Canadian Coastal Mountains. Not only has Whistler Blackcomb added to its immense acreage with the addition of the Piccolo Express and the acquisition of Whistler Heliskiing, but they have added many early booking offers for all skiers and boarders.

Piccolo Express: Whistler Blackcomb has unveiled plans to build a new high speed detachable quad in the high alpine for the 2006-2007 winter season.

The new Piccolo Express Lift on Whistler Mountain will run to the Piccolo peak from the bottom of the Flute Bowl and will provide access to more than 1,000 acres of the most spectacular high alpine terrain available in North America.

"The new Piccolo Express Lift will open up a brand new era in high alpine access for our intermediate skiers and snowboarders as well as the experts," says Dave Brownlie, Chief Operating Officer at Whistler Blackcomb.

"For the first time, our guests will have high speed lift access to this spectacular terrain, with its legendary vast bowls, deep snow and exciting gladed sub-alpine skiing.

"The new Piccolo Express Lift will provide access to a range of gentle and challenging terrain including the wide open upper bowl area, a new high-intermediate gladed area, and two new trails for low intermediates."

Whistler Heli-Skiing

An additional 494,000 acres of terrain was joined with the mountain through the acquisition of Whistler Heliskiing by Whistler Blackcomb.

There are very few places in the world where a world class ski resort can provide its guests with a heli-ski experience on glaciers within a five minute flight from the village.

The many benefits of day heliskiing from a world class ski resort include the fact that you can bring your whole family and you don't have to be severed from your work as there are many business centers (and your cell phone and blackberry will work in the resort).

One of the biggest benefits is that you can have a warm up ski days inbounds before venturing into the backcountry and you can eliminate no skiing days since the days that you wouldn't be able to fly (i.e. snow storms) you would still be able to ski inbounds.

There are various methods to book your Whistler holiday and heliskiing experience.

If you are looking for a one stop shop that will get you the best of all worlds, then we recommend booking with VIP

Mountain Holidays (www.vipmountainholidays.com, or phone (888) 246-7003).

They provide full service holidays to Whistler and will be able to put together a package that includes the accommodation, airport transfers, lift passes, lessons and of course your heliskiing.

Book by Specials

Whistler is in the process of making themselves more attainable by offering some great book by specials.

Most of the offers consist of a free night combined with discounts on lift passes and lessons for bookings made before Nov. 15.

There are various specials to be had, so there is likely one offer that would work for you.

Contact VIP Mountain Holidays to get them to go over the specials and find the one that is right for you.

Visit VIP Mountain Holidays at www.vipmountainholidays.com, or call (888) 246-7003.

Las Vegas gets Snow Dome

LAS VEGAS, Nev. - Who says you can't ski in Las Vegas?

A Nevada company begs to differ.

A group of former Disney and Universal Studios executives, designers, architects and engineers have retained Thinkwell Design and Production to create a unique destination resort to be built in Las Vegas.

The resort is slated to include the largest indoor waterpark in North America, a snow dome, two hotels, a casino, an events arena, and many nationally recognized retail and food chains.

Steven Dooner, co-founder of the project, and Disney and Universal theme park veteran stated, "We spent about a year analyzing the needs of Las Vegas from both a tourist aspect as well as local needs. We were privy to what Wet 'N Wild (a now-closed Vegas water park) used to draw, and realized that while this would be an attraction for out-of-towners, that the people of the Las Vegas Valley deserved a facility that they could call their own. That is why we chose a location somewhat away from the heart of the Strip, but close to the 215."

It is clear when looking at the roster of principals on this project that this venue will be anything but ordinary.

The creative pedigree is impressive, with many of the principals having 25 years or more experience in the theme park industry. They are not just building another theme park, they are out to build a landmark.

The waterpark itself will consume roughly 30 acres, with 250,000 square feet of that



An artist's rendering of the Las Vegas Snow Dome indoor ski/snowboard facility.

indoors, allowing the park to operate 365 days a year. The snow dome (indoor skiing and snow play area) and Swiss-chalet themed hotel encompass another 40 acres. The attractions and entertainment components alone will exceed the size of Disneyland.

"Think of it, you can throw on ski gear and practice your downhill technique on real, ok, man-made, snow, then change clothes and surf at the waterpark, all in the same day at the same place," said Dooner.

The design team is focusing on making the project as environmentally friendly as possible. "We plan on using solar panels wherever possible to generate electricity, and microturbines to heat and cool the buildings and the water. We will be the first project in Nevada to use fuel cells to generate electricity," said Dooner.

The plans also include landscaping that uses as many native plants as possible, in order to reduce the need for water consumption.

With Wall Street backing of \$1.1 billion, this group has the

financing and the experience to create one heck of a playground for locals, visitors, and families alike.

The water and ski/snowboard park is expected to be open by the Spring of 2009.

For further information on the facility, visit www.lasvegaswet.com.

Visit SSN on the Internet at: SierraSkiNews.com

Hard day on the slopes?



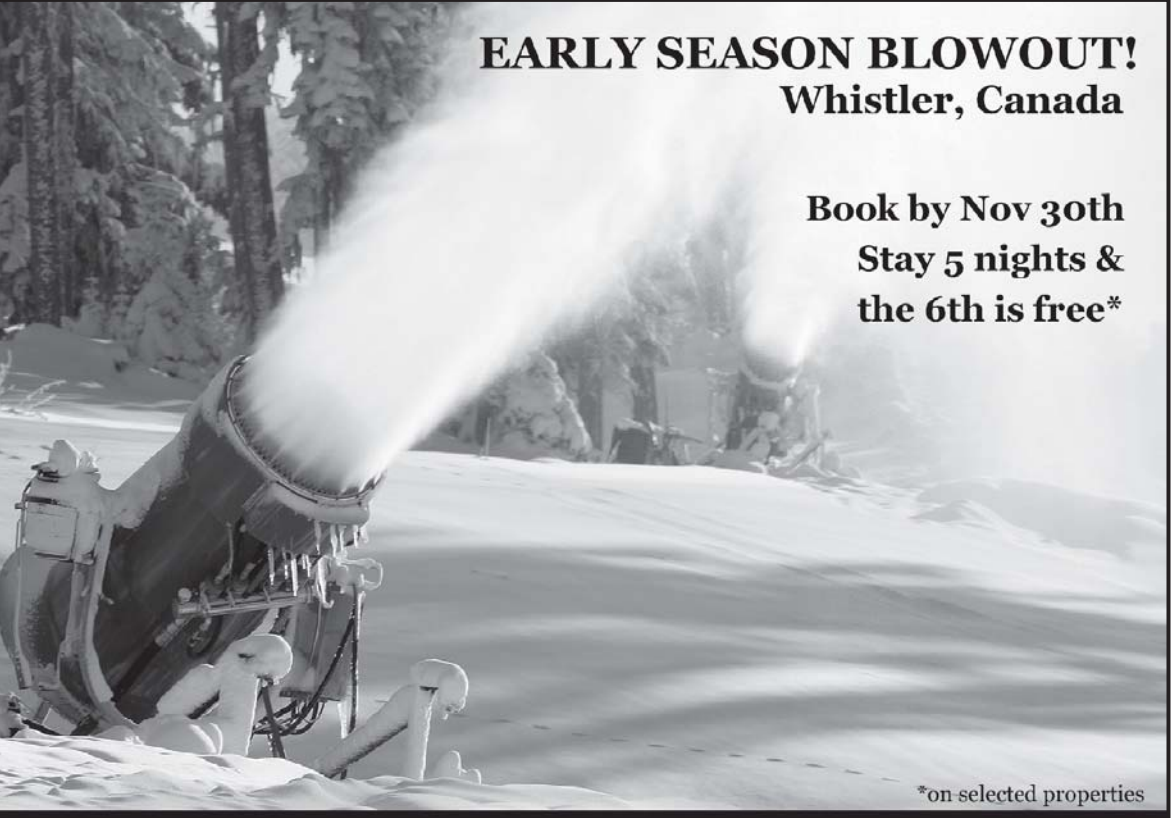
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