

Mt. High

Canada Ski Safari -- Dec. 2 - 6, 2006.

- by George Yun -

Boy-oh-boy am I glad I went on the Canadian Ski Safari.

The first day at **Mt. Baker** was the preview of what was to come. Not only did Baker receive tons of snow for days leading up to our visit, the sun decided to come out and show case the Mount Baker and

Shuksan's majestic peaks. Fresh/cold powder and sunshine is a rare combination at Baker but that's what we got on that first day of our ski trip. What a way to start!

Sun Peaks the next day followed through with an encore performance. Sun Peaks is the second largest ski resort in Canada after W/B and 100% of the mountain was open! ...and it's only December 3 - yo! Sun Peaks had variety of nice cruising runs off Sundance and Mt. Morrisey peaks to warm up your legs. Now you are ready to head on over to Sunburst and Crystal peaks that are littered with steps and mogul runs with trees nicely sprinkled in here and there. Sun Peaks is a big enough resort to ski for multiple days but I think we managed to sample little of everything to crave for some more. I was stoked!

Sun Peaks



Kurt

Terry

Now how can you top Baker and Sun Peaks? Well, I think snow gods smiled upon us once more and the next day at **Silver Star** turned out to be the highlight of the trip, for me at least. Reading the stat sheet did not impress but what a kicka\$\$ little mountain the Silver is! We managed to hit it on powder day and on a day when Silver opened 100% of their mountain - just for us good folks from Mt. High - YO! The backside of Silver is littered with steep chutes and challenging terrains that would not be skiable, at least

not desirable to ski, on days when conditions are sketchy. However, the day at Silver turned out to be an epic powder day and totally skiable. I was grinning ear to ear at the end of that day.

I've been hearing whispers that **Big White** is called Big WhiteOut for a reason. ...Oh, well, I thought, at least I had three wonderful days of skiing to fall back on.

Big White:

Kurt, George, Bob, Terry, Kay.



... Hello Big White and Big Blue sky! Man, can you believe our luck on this trip? Ok, we find out that only half of the mountain was open but by this time my legs were telling me that half was plenty. Big White is a family resort with lots of cruising runs. From what I can tell, the B/W has one of the best tree and glade skiing, and I got to sample a tiny bit. Terrains that were open were moderate but there were enough rolls, bumps, and obstacles to keep things interesting and fun. Another good day, eh?

For most of us the fifth day at **Apex** was the last stop, and by that time I believe we've shifted our gear down a notch and we were ready to come home. Only half the mountain was open and that was just enough for half-day and weary legs ready to come home. You can tell Apex has steep runs very similar to Silver and it is a place that I'd definitely like to come back to when it's all open.

What a trip! Thanks, Emilio, for organizing this. I will definitely keep my eyes open for the next year's version.

Tom, Bob and Kay at Silver Star



Canada Safari - by Terry Swan



I was surprised at how much fun mountain hopping would be. I tend to like to stay in one place and spend more time on a single mountain - but this trip was fantastic.

George was right - the snow gods really smiled on us. I can only hope we will ever see so much great snow and blue skies that many days in a row again. I can't complain about the company either. What a fun group to ski with. I appreciate your patience and ski tips. What a way to start the season!!

Canada Safari - by Rosie Weber



Emilio did a great job in putting the itinerary together and packing it so full of all the useful information. It made the trip run so smooth. We were able to better predict how long the drive would be from one point to the next. It made it easier to decide where to put up for the night and what time to get started in the morning.

Doing the trip as a foursome, sharing a single car, and staying in nearby towns instead of on the mountain certainly has its advantages. The four in our group paid only \$168 each. That was for the lodging, gas and highway toll. The skiing was mostly free (in Canada), and we paid approximately an additional \$99 for two days of skiing in Washington (at Crystal Mt. and Mt. Baker).

There didn't seem to be a lot of breakfast choices in the village at **Sun Peaks**. When we stopped for lunch at the little lodge up on the mountain I found out they serve a well rounded breakfast in that same little lodge for a real reasonable price. I'll be sure to keep that in mind for the next time! *(Emilio's note: The Paradise Camp cabin on the back side of **Silver Star** also serves a full breakfast, we found out on this trip.)*

I had a great time! It's one of the most inexpensive trips I've been on. I'm hoping the free skiing is offered again in the future..... I want to do the trip again! I'm looking forward to it!!!

Canada Safari - by Kay Kinyon



The trip was the best season start I have ever had. Mt Baker was a bluebird day with plenty of fresh snow. My top three stops were **Silver Star**, **Mt. Baker** and **Sun Peaks** in that order.

I enjoyed the loose organization of the trip that allowed me to leave a little early most days (about 3:30 PM) so that I arrive fairly early (about 5:30 PM or so) at the next resort so that I could make lodging arrangements without reservations!

Emilio, Kay, Terry, Kurt, Bob, Alex, Sandra, Rob, Tom, and John (on snowboard)



Cost of the Ski Safari

Shared among 4 people, it was only \$168 per person.

With 3 people in a car, and a mix of lodgings, including some on mountain and some in town, it was \$206 pp.

With only 2 people per car, and staying in the mountain villages every time, the cost was abt. \$350 - \$370 p.p.

That's a great price for 5 days of skiing! Most normal ski trips cost over \$100 per person per day.

How to make it better next time

Tom: Go for quality, not quantity. Visit only areas that have the most snow. Min. 2 night per resort, assuming one free day from W. Miller and a 2-for-1 from the hotel.

A rental van might speed things up, and make the trip more fun, with different conversations while driving.

Sandra: Maybe do the trip a bit later in December, for more snow. Flying to Kelowna and renting a car there might be a good option to eliminate the long drive. But, driving is more cost effective.

Extended 8-day Safari - by Emilio Trampuz



The extra 3 days of the Canada Ski Safari were full of pleasant surprises.

The main lift at **Red Mt.** did not open until the day after we left, which was a huge disappointment, but we found that the often neglected smaller hill at Red Mt. is actually bigger than expected, with 1,300' vertical, amazing views, powder & glades.

By contrast, both **49° North** and **Mt. Spokane** were completely open, with great snow. We had great fun. If only our legs could have kept up with our hearts and minds!!! See separate article on the [Washington areas](#).



Red Mountain provides a bench to enjoy the view!

Ski Washington Challenge



Bob at 49° North

There are about 100 ski areas within a day's drive from Portland. If you visit only one of them per year, it would take you 100 years to visit them all. You will never see them all that way!

But, you can drive and visit 2 of them each weekend. Start with your own State. Or a neighboring State.

Bob Voss and **Emilio** already visited 3 Washington ski areas, and found that both **49° North** and **Mt. Spokane** are much larger than you'd expect. We rang the Norse god's bell at **49° North** and ducked into the trees at **Mt. Spokane**. See more at:

www.mthigh.org/Articles/Ski-Washington-Challenge-diary.pdf

But **David Schor** has us all beat. He skied at 5 Washington ski areas over two weekends in November, and then added 2 or 3 more early in December. He is already close to the goal of skiing at least 10 of Washington's ski areas. Read David's blog at:

<http://skiwashington.blogspot.com>.

Next Canada Ski Safari



December 2007 or January 2008.



After doing the basic 5-day safari to Canada for 4 years in a row, it's time to try something new. How about this:

Instead of driving up I-5 and returning down Hwy 97, let's go up Hwy 97, visiting **Silver Star** and **Big White**, and then move further east and come back down Hwy 95, visiting **Kicking Horse**, **Panorama**, **Kimberley**, maybe **Fernie**, and **Schweitzer Mountain**. That's 7 resorts. Maybe too many. The difficulty will be selecting just a few, and deciding if we want to spend 2 days at any one of them.

Rosie says: "I was talking to a girl in the coffee shop at Silver Star, and she mentioned skiing **Kicking Horse** and **Fernie**. She said she's skied there on weekdays and was surprised she only saw 5 - 10 other skiers on the slopes all day. She said they are great ski areas. So, that would be a great option for a future ski trip! Looking forward to it!"

