

November 24-30, 2009

GSA

TRAVEL MAGAZINE

Vol.15

ISSUE 355

PM40052485

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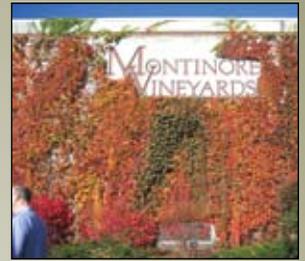
The Big Island sent a contingent of representatives to Victoria to drum up business.

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Israel presented our correspondent Ricky Goldman with a myriad of sites and sounds.

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Nothing but good things GSA co-publisher Sandra Cumming had to say about her fam trip to Portland.

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Sandals details luxury resorts

Sunquest, Holiday House and Fun Sun have collaborated on a 42-page brochure dedicated to Sandals and Beaches' resorts.

It includes details on Sandals' free destination weddings and honeymoons at 12 Sandals' properties in the Caribbean, available to those staying six or more days in a Concierge level or higher category.

Also featured is an enticing description of Sandals' famous Red Lane spas and its international cuisine.

The brochure also provides details and photos of the properties.

Sandals Whitehouse European Village and Spa in Jamaica features 360 rooms, two

miles of beach, four pools, a billiards room, and seven restaurants. Sandals Grande Ocho Rios offers three resorts in one: the Ciboney Villa Suites, the Ochi Beach Club and the Great House. Together they provide seven pools, 10 bars, and 11 restaurants.

Sandals Montego Bay offers a vibrant resort with four pools, seven restaurants, a wedding chapel and 10 additional restaurants at nearby Sandals' properties. Sandals Negril Beach Resort & Spa offers a more relaxing ambiance, with swim-up river suites, and loft suites, as well as three pools and racquetball and squash courts.

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Contiki looks at Europe 2010

Contiki Holidays has produced a 2010/11 Europe brochure, offering a range of new itineraries and cheaper pricing.

Designed for 18 to 35-year-olds, the brochure is easy to navigate and breaks down each itinerary to show inclusions.

To launch the new Summer Europe Program, Contiki is offering EBBs of up to \$400 pp.

Among the new itineraries is a four-day Corfu Explorer where guests are invited to

participate in a poolside toga party, visit Ancient Greek ruins and take an island boat cruise.

There is also a new 13-day Scotland & Ireland tour and new four-day New Years Eve packages in Paris and Amsterdam as well as more multi-country itineraries and modulated itineraries.

Agents will also find pricing is up to 20% lower than last year for many tours.

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Air Canada will launch new non-stops to Hawaii from Calgary Dec 5, through to the end of April. Calgary to Maui will be offered once per week until Dec 21 when they will increase to three times per week. Calgary to Honolulu flights will begin Dec 6 with a weekly flight and increase to two flights a week on Dec 24.

Scenic Tours is offering EBBs for those booking European cruises next year by Dec 31. Couples can save \$880 on the new Jewels of Europe departure on April 26, a 15-day cruise sailing Budapest to Amsterdam. They can also save \$220 per couple pm select 11-day Gems of the Danube tours between Budapest and Nuremberg.
www.scenictours.com

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Utah packages powder in paradise

By Mark Sissons

Utah is only a two-hour flight time from Vancouver, and less from Calgary.

Its world-class ski resorts, most located within an hour's drive of Salt Lake City, offer Olympic-caliber terrain, superb amenities and lodging, and perfect powder.

Utah's audacious advertising slogan, 'The Greatest snow on Earth,' isn't just marketing hype.

When winter storms suck up moisture as they pass over the heavily salinated Great Salt Lake, they dump over 1200 centimetres of fluffy, light, super dry powder every season on the nearby Wasatch Mountains, creating some of the best skiing and snowboarding conditions in the world.

Pristine powder and convenient access aside, Utah's resorts share another intangible vital to transforming a good ski vacation into a great one - variety. Take the following three resorts, for instance, all within 60 minutes of each other, but each a world apart in terms of ambience.

Sundance – rustic by design

Synonymous with its famous creator, Robert Redford, this 2500-hectare private nature reserve tucked under the base of Utah's 3700-metre-high Mt. Timpanogos offers both day and night skiing, snowboarding and cross country skiing on 26 km of groomed cross-country trails. Intimate and rustic by design, Sundance differs from other resorts as much in atmosphere and attitude as it does in size.

"Sundance, through Redford's direction, has decided to not compete with a lot of the other big ski areas, in terms of number of lifts, buildings, high rises, and that type of development," says Director of Mountain Operations Jerry Warren. A native of the valley, he has known Redford since he originally purchased the land back in 1969, naming it after the character he played in the film, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.

"Sundance doesn't try to compete with what people are trying to get away from - the busy-ness of their lives," adds Warren. Instead, the emphasis is on a low-key resort experience, with 650 vertical metres of largely expert terrain spread over 42 trails serviced by only three chairlifts and a beginners' handle tow at the base. Rustic yet elegant mountain cottages, award

winning dining, a Native American inspired spa that blends ancient traditions and 100% organic products, and an Art Shack offering classes in painting, pottery and jewellery making, form an experience that is unique among North American resorts.

There's also the Redford draw. Photos of Bob (as everyone calls him here) and his famous friends adorn the walls of the award winning Tea Room restaurant and the restored 1890's Owl Bar, transported from Wyoming, where it was once frequented by Butch Cassidy's Hole-in-the-Wall Gang.

Deer Valley – service oriented

Everyone's a VIP at this ultra posh destination offering 900 metres of vertical and 700 skiable hectares spread over four mountains just 60 km from the Salt Lake International Airport. Recently named the Number One ski resort in North America by the readers of SKI Magazine for a third year in a row, Deer Valley promises five-star treatment with unparalleled customer service, luxury accommodation and gourmet cuisine.

Attention to detail has been Deer Valley's hallmark since it began operations in 1981. Guests enjoy free valet parking and equipment shuttle services, immaculately groomed runs, and the services of a squad of green-jacketed mountain hosts, including three time US Olympian Heidi Voelker.

Ten on-mountain restaurants serve everything from burgers to gourmet wild game and seafood specialties.

Site of the 2002 Winter Olympics freestyle moguls, aerial and alpine slalom events, Deer Valley recently added a new chairlift and expert ski runs on over 80 additional hectares, increasing its already abundant cruising room (daily restrictions limit the

number of skiers allowed on its slopes). These improvements, along with a continuing snowboarding ban, create a relatively mellow mountain experience compared to its larger neighbours.

Snowbasin – powder to the people

One of the oldest ski resorts in the U.S. is also one of its least known. Opened in 1939, Snowbasin has never had the name recognition enjoyed by Vail or Aspen, for example, even after hosting the 2002 Olympics Downhill, Super-G and Combined races. This relative anonymity might have something to do with Snowbasin's lack of on-mountain accommodation.

What Snowbasin is known for are abundant fresh powder fields days after a storm, and over 900 vertical metres of high alpine bowls, steep chutes, perfectly groomed cruisers and deep-powder glades. Plus two of the world's most challenging downhill race courses - the Grizzly and Wildflower Downhill runs made famous at the 2002 Olympics.

"Our three distinct mountains offer three different exposures and differing terrain, including wide open cruisers that offer a length and a pitch that you may not experience elsewhere," explains snow sports manager Stew Marsh.

"And because Snowbasin is set apart from any of the other Utah ski areas, it's the hidden gem that people have heard about but never experienced," he adds.

Owner Earl Holding has complemented Snowbasin's terrain and powder with four luxurious day lodges and amenities including rentals, repair and retail shops, day care and kids' programs, as well as a Learning Center.

With the greatest vertical rise in Utah, it's little wonder that Snowbasin also boasts one of the finest First Tracks experiences found anywhere in North America. "It makes me smile", says Marsh. "Every time I go out and take a run I'm gleeful because it's not crowded. You can disappear to places where you won't see people and really lose yourself. That's the uniqueness of Snowbasin."

Check them out

For more information, check out the websites of each resort, or visit skiutah.com. Check Delta airlines for service from Western Canada.



The Empire Canyon Lodge at Deer Valley welcomes skiers of all abilities.