

& Ride SKI BIG-BEAR



Southern California's Premier Mountain Resorts

SKI BIG BEAR MOUNTAIN RESORTS...

For Once Polls are Right: Snow Summit Tops for Skiing, Snowboarding

The results of a 2010 poll of *Orange County Register* readers confirmed what skiers and snowboarders already knew: Snow Summit is Southern California's top spot for hot winter fun.

Perhaps it's the two high-speed quad chairlifts out of the base area that access virtually the entire mountain and obliterate lift lines. Maybe it's the two mountaintop restaurants including the View Haus with spectacular vistas stretching to the San Geronio Wilderness. It could even be the interconnected mountain with a layout that lets skiers and snowboarders enjoy the upper lifts without ever returning to the base area. Definitely it's the lack of lift lines on even the busiest days, thanks to its limited ticket sale policy.

Most likely it's all those things and many more.

Like the beautiful base area with heated brick pavers that melt snow

as fast as it falls, a la Deer Valley in Utah. Nostalgia-filled Bullwheel Bar in the Summit Inn, laden with history and memorabilia. And let's not forget the consistent excellent snow conditions, courtesy of snowmaking fueled by an unlimited water source in Big Bear Lake and meticulous grooming.

As the resort readies for its 60th anniversary season next year, Snow Summit continues to offer Southern California's premier winter resort experience and customers take notice. There's something for everyone, from the gentle learning experience afforded on the Bear Bottom beginner area to the steeps and deeps of the bowl runs, including signature favorite The Wall.

In between there's miles of blue square intermediate runs to enjoy, always freshly groomed into hero snow to provide the most consistent, excellent con-

ditions in the region, day in and day out. The resort founded by Tommi Tyndall in 1952 now gets a half-million visits a year, an amazing number for a regional ski area even if it is destination resort quality.

Snow Summit continues to regain some of the freestyle identity it had before it purchased neighboring Bear Mountain and turned it into the nation's first all-mountain terrain park. After a

stretch where it had nary a hit to be seen, Snow Summit, which hosted the inaugural ESPN Winter X Games in 1997 as a park powerhouse, continues to regain some of its freestyle fame.

Westridge run, for instance, practically snowboarding hallowed ground with all the competitions that it's held, again has features up and down its 1-1/3 mile length. Not the size of busses like back in the heyday, mind you, but enough for those who like to jib and jump. Zzyzx and Ego Trip are other runs where features are located.

"We kind of reinvigorated our snow park offerings at Snow Summit, and it was well received from riders who prefer the resort," says Chris Riddle of Big Bear Mountain Resorts. "Also at night, there were more park opportunities than in previous years. Features will not dominate runs like they used to so you'll still be able to ski or board without making moves to avoid features if you want to."

Plus Snow Summit will introduce this season Skill Builder Parks which were so popular at Bear a year ago. Look for gentle hits and signage on how to do them on Chair 9 runs like Cruiser, Sundown, Skyline Creek and Mainstream, where tame terrain features and itty bitty hitties serve as perfect introductions for skiers and boarders just getting into freestyle fun.

Still, if it's freestyle you're after, head to Bear Mountain—there's a free shuttle running every half-hour between the areas—and experience complete nirvana with over 200 jibs and jumps,



Wow! What pow there was in Big Bear last season.