

groomed, natural and mogul terrain.

Take a break in two beautiful base lodges or on Bear Bottom deck, or head to the top of the mountain for spectacular vistas and great food at the 8,000 foot View Haus and Summit Haus. The Bullwheel Bar, filled with photos, memorabilia and nostalgia from Snow Summit's first half-century of operation, serves up apres appetizers and beverages to make a fitting end for a great day on the slopes.

In addition to being a terrain park pioneer, Snow Summit is also the innovator when it comes to limiting ticket sales. The resort strictly sells to a preset number, unlike other places that sell out only after the machines run out of paper.



It also was one of the first areas to offer night skiing, an inspiring experience in itself under the stars Fridays, Saturdays and holidays with the lights of Big Bear twinkling down below. Westridge is groomed before night sessions, held 3-9:30 p.m.

Dual mountain lift tickets good at Snow Summit and Bear Mountain are just \$56 for adults regular season, \$69 peak weekends and holidays. Call Snow Summit at (909) 866-5766

Park for the People at Bear Mountain

Experts love the longest, steepest run in Southern California, Geronimo with 1,100 vertical feet of double black diamond challenge. But there's also the region's largest beginner area with long gentle runs.

Huge gap jumps, competition-quality Superpipe and every imaginable jib make it a favorite hangout for pro riders. Yet there are also hits just inches off the ground with signage that shows neophytes how to do them. Along with mini and standard pipes for those who aren't ready to go Super yet.

It may be a cliché but there really is something for everyone at Bear Mountain, which is why the nation's first and only all-mountain terrain park is rebranding itself as "The People's Park" for 2011-12. Yes, there's

park a plenty when it's built out with over a hundred snow features and dozens of manmade ones, but if you choose to carve there's plenty of room to do that, on blue diamond Exhibition and Rip Cord on Silver Mountain to Showtime, as steep as Geronimo, just not as long.

"People say Bear has great parks and that's where the pros go, but it has a larger beginner area than Snow Summit," the resort's Chris Riddle said. "We want people to know that if you're a pro we've got it, an intermediate we've got it, or a raw beginner, we've got that too."

That beginner area makes Bear the ideal place to learn. Newbies are far removed from the hustle and bustle of the resort—in fact they're shuttled away from ski and snowboard traffic—and get their legs under them by riding their own Magic Carpet lifts, moving conveyor belts they just step on and off. When it's time to head to the lifts, first there's slow-moving Clementine and then a detachable quad accessing three gentle low intermediate trails that allow learners to feel their way.

Those who have already got game on the other hand find Bear a great place to play. By the numbers it's the Southland's most impressive resort: four mountain peaks, 200 developed acres. Another 550 acres off piste in undeveloped canyons serving up challenging natural skiing and riding as good as anything this side of Colorado when there's snow...which there has been, three years running!

Those peaks each serve up their own brand of distinctive riding. Showdown Mountain is mostly natural ungroomed terrain; Goldmine Mountain in contrast sports The Park Run, a mile-and-a-third long line of jibs and jumps. On Silver Mountain it's Exhibition, Rip Cord and super steep, twisting The Wedge (formerly Quicksilver). Lastly there's Bear Peak, sixth high ski peak in the state and tops in the Southland at 8,805 feet, with Geronimo plus prime canyon access. The run starts steep, continues with a flatter transition cruiser, then suddenly drops away into 35° pitch of double black diamond.

The Park meanwhile has earned national acclaim. Number One freestyle park in the country and number two overall, behind only Whistler-Blackcomb. Best vibe in the nation. Third best pipe in California, and ninth overall. Top honors in the state for value, and fifth in the nation. All awards bestowed on Bear Mountain in a *Transworld Snowboarding Magazine* reader poll...plus Critic's Choice honors in 2010 from *Orange County Register* readers.

There's jumps galore, from itty bitty hitties along the flats of Amusement Park perfect for snowboarders and skiers just learning to get a little air to Superpark-sized triple jump lines down The Park Run with consecutive 30-, 40- and 50-foot jumps that only the best riders go after. Spines, hips, transfers, cheese wedges, rollers and bumps are but a few of the jumps Bear is famous for.

Bringing The Park to the People are Skill Builder Parks, found on Amusement Park and Learning Curve. Sharpen your skills in a laid back learning environment on features that start off basic, then

graduate to larger rollers where riders test themselves. Further down there's small step-up jumps, boxes and rails just 8-10 inches off the ground. Master those and you're ready to explore the rest of The People's Park.

Not all the hits at Bear are metal either. Several natural log features are introduced into The Scene and Amusement Park for riders to jib off. Each year The Park gets better as staff scopes out trees where hips can be built and breakovers ideal for take offs. And the Junkyard on Cascade is

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Steal a Deal to Save in Big Bear

Attention Costco shoppers: Big Bear Mountain Resorts has an absolutely smoking bargain for you.

Get two lift tickets for just \$79.99—that's 40 bucks apiece—that are valid Monday through Friday (nonholiday), or anytime before December 16, 2011 or after March 12, 2012. The ticket package is only found at 35 Southern California Costcos and represents a savings of \$32.

The cheapest ski and snowboard packages around offered by participating Big Bear Lake Resort Association member lodges are back and now include weekends as well as midweek. Choose from full-service resort hotels to cozy cabins with in-room spas and quaint cottages featuring wood-burning fireplaces, and save big bucks while you're at it. Packages start at just \$69 midweek or \$89 weekends (two night minimum stay). Prices are per person, double occupancy.

Tickets are good at both Snow Summit and Bear Mountain—with a free shuttle running between the two—making Big Bear an affordable alternative to destination resorts, what with gas as four bucks a gallon a press time. Combined there's four high-speed quads among a total of 26 lifts, nearly 500 developed acres, plus plenty of lodging, eating and recreation options away from the slopes that includes snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, bald eagle watching and more. Contact the Big Bear Lake Resort Association for participating lodges or peruse the ads in this magazine; you're sure to find one that fits your taste and budget. Call (800) 4 BIG-BEAR.

There are other ways to save a buck in Big Bear besides packages. *Ski (& Ride) Big Bear* snooped around and came up with a few...

- The easiest is to celebrate your birthday on the slopes, because the Big Bear resorts give you a free lift ticket for a gift.
- Snow Summit and Bear Mountain are offering special senior saver tickets for guests 62 and over—an average discount of 20% per ticket at \$46 or \$59 peak periods.
- Sign up for CORE, fill out a quick survey, and get a voucher for ten bucks off that day's ticket (onetime).
- On peak weekends in January and February, ski or ride both Saturday and Sunday and get a ticket for less than \$60 per day. Adult two-day passes cost \$118, \$99 for seniors/young adults and \$49 ages 7-12. It takes two days to explore all that Snow Summit and Bear Mountain have to offer.
- Half-day getaways are popular. Ski in the morning and beat the traffic home in the afternoon and get a voucher for up to \$15 off your next lift ticket (\$19 holidays and peak weekends). Just turn your ticket in by 1 p.m. Or, show up for the afternoon session on days there's night skiing (Fridays, Saturdays, holidays) and play till 6 p.m., almost a full day for half-day price.
- Steal a deal by attending the annual Ski Dazzle show in Los Angeles December 1-4. Besides getting in on great equipment deals—over \$6 million in gear with savings up to 70%—and seeing what's new on the slopes, you'll get a voucher good for Big Bear savings with four options to choose from:

Receive a free anytime interchangeable lift ticket to Big Bear Mountain Resorts, valid through Dec. 16; 2-for-1 midweek tickets valid Jan. 2 till the end of the season; free night session ticket; or \$30 off any \$100 or more season pass, right at the show. Just present your Ski Dazzle admission ticket for a voucher that can be used at Snow Summit or Bear Mountain. ■