

February 1, 2007

## Louise gives up her secrets

By LAURA ENGLAND, Edmonton Sun

Remember when you were a kid sitting at the table enjoying your favourite cereal and thinking, "I gotta find that prize!"

So you start digging and digging until your big brother or sister comes along and lifts the bag right out of the box so you can see exactly where it is. You found your Cap'n Crunch action figure faster and if they let you keep it; bonus!

That's the sort of day I had at Lake Louise last weekend. I'd been boarding there for years and loved it, but wondered what secret runs it held.

### Smilin' guide

My husband, Boyd and I met with Grant Canning, director of marketing, who arranged our hidey hole day. Canning went on introduce us to Alex Dodson who was to be our guide and broke the news to him, very gently, that we wanted to board where he liked to board. Perhaps even places that weren't necessarily on the trail map.

A sly little grin appeared on our British boarder as he replied, "Well alright." On our way up the Larch quad Dodson surprised us with his willingness to share some of his out-of-the-way spots.

Of course, there was just not enough time to show us all his favourites – Lake Louise is just too big for that – but he did not seem to fear the wrath of his fellow instructors.

Our first run, while on the map, was one that was not used frequently; perhaps because of its name – Rock Garden. But really it wasn't as scary as it sounds.

The rocks are actually more like boulders and quite easy to maneuver around. It was one of the most scenic runs I'd ever taken so a stop or two was in order to admire it. Our next run was on the Ptarmigan quad just off the Pika run. Traverse right across Old Ptarmigan and you're into the trees on a run called 007.

With our shaken, not stirred martinis firmly in hand, (just kidding – it was actually Jagermeister, right Alex?) we wound our way through the trees down a tight little trail. But the most fun I had that day was on a little run called Playground, which Dodson and I are willing to share with all our loyal Snow Sceneraders.

Take the Top Of The World Express and head down Sunset Terrace, make your way to Upper Wiwaxy via Good Intentions and as you make your first turn on Wiwaxy, veer off slightly to the right just into the trees.

Here's where this run gets its name as you find a perfectly sculpted natural half pipe. We continued on down the Number Two run, Men's Downhill and ducked into the trees periodically to follow the cat tracks down to the base.

As Mother Nature was kind enough to supply a natural half pipe, Lake Louise did not construct one in its terrain park.

"After observing the park, we found that most people were riding rails and such rather than in the pipe, so that's were our focus was. We rather have many small features than one big one," said Canning.

The park is now fully open, and has three sections: beginner, intermediate and advanced. There's nine jumps up to 55 feet, wall rides, quarter pipes, hips, as well as a variety of rails and boxes, including the "Swamp Monster," a 58-foot S-Box.

### Little nervous

I was definitely out of my comfort zone in all those trees and moguls, but that was a good thing according to Dodson who said, "I like to scare myself at least once a day."

But before you go off the edge of a cliff, let me qualify Dodson's statement; scaring does not mean life threatening. Take small steps to broaden your ability. Check these runs out on your next trip – the rest of the secret passages are up to you to find.



**Even if you have been going for years and thought you knew of all the choice places to ski or ride at Lake Louise, it takes a willing local or friendly staffer to show you the real hidden gems. TRAVEL ALBERTA/photo**

There will be real treasures hidden on Lake Louise during their Family Day Scavenger Hunt on Feb. 19, plus tons of other upcoming activities all of which can be found on the website, [www.skilouise.com](http://www.skilouise.com).