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› JANUARY 15, 2014

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FROM FAR AND WIDE

Plan your next ski vacation to

CANADA'S BIG 3:

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LAKE LOUISE LEGEND SANDY BEST



CANADIAN SKIER PAUL STUTZ

Keeping an eye on
PORTLAND, OREGON'S
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Despite testimonies from movie stars, rock legends, world-class athletes and billionaires, a commoner is dubious about **rejuvenating the body** using a steady diet of wheatgrass, bio-energy treatments and psychotherapy. So he seeks enlightenment at the Hippocrates Health Institute. BY ORION RAY-JONES

SKIING IS IN HIS BLOOD:
Paul Stutz at the Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel in Banff National Park



Excellence In the Canadian Rockies

With three spectacular resorts, **Banff National Park** offers dynamic skiing, yes — but also an unparalleled winter wonderland.

BY CRAI S. BOWER

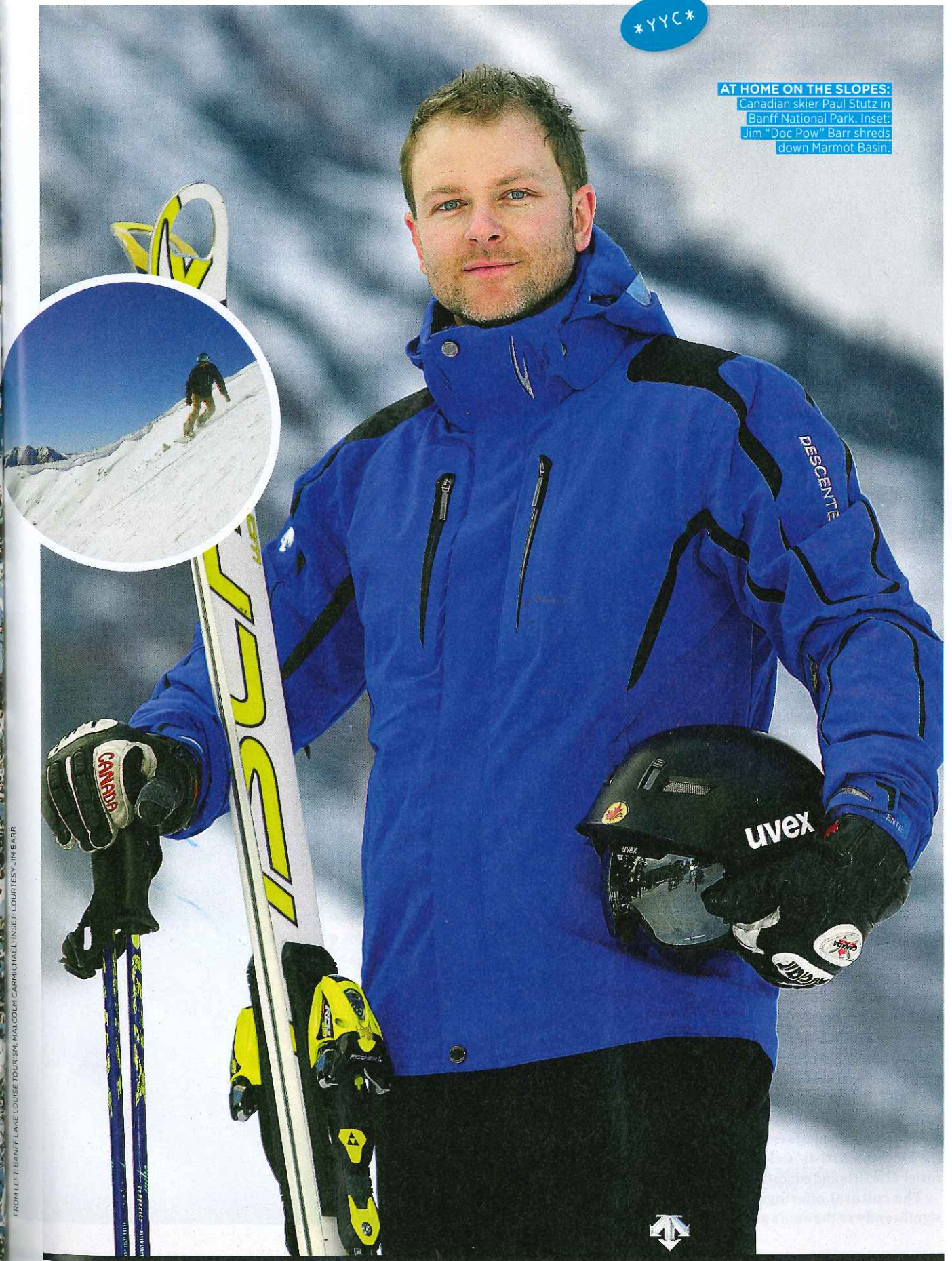
STUNNING VIEW: The majestic Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel, which is styled after a Scottish baronial castle.

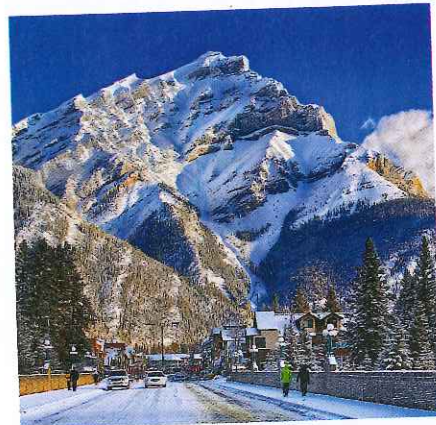


FROM LEFT: BANFF LAKE LOUISE TOURISM; MARGOLIN; CARR/MICHAEL; INSET: COURTESY JIM BARR

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AT HOME ON THE SLOPES: Canadian skier Paul Stutz in Banff National Park. Inset: Jim "Doc Pow" Barr shreds down Marmot Basin.





T

HE CANADIAN ROCKIES resemble a queue of teenage boys in gym class — squat, awkward-looking

monoliths hunched among tall, skinny pinnacles. Combine this morphology with a significant vertical rise from the base of the valley to the mountains' crests, and a first-time visitor might expect to see a dozen ski areas scattered across the landscape. Except this is the village of Banff in southern Alberta, where Canada's first national park — all 2,564 square miles of it — encompasses three spectacular resorts, each boasting terrain as diverse as the surrounding peaks.

The vibrant village of approximately 7,500 residents curls up beneath Mount Rundle like a grizzly cub sleeping upon a bed of native whitebark pine needles. Established as a tourist destination after three railroad men discovered hot springs there in 1883, Banff has more street cred than a prefab ski village. The Banff Centre is North America's most dynamic alpine cultural campus and offers scores of aesthetic and intellectual activities, including film presentations, literary readings and gallery exhibitions every month. Many premieres emerge from within the Leighton Artists' Colony's celebrated roster of artists and educators.

The cultural offerings no doubt add significantly to the area's allure, but Banff

National Park is about world-class skiing. Banff native Paul Stutz was still in preschool when, as a 4-year-old, he first trundled down Mount Norquay's "Lone Pine," a 1,300-foot-long, 40-degree slope that stood as North America's steepest inbound run for decades. "I cried the first time," says the Canadian Olympic Team hopeful, now 30. "But my tears turned to laughter on my second run, and I couldn't wait to go down the bumps again and again after that."

What the modest Stutz doesn't reveal is that he already was quite familiar with Lone Pine, among the first ski runs designated a "double-black diamond," because his parents let him loose upon a less-intimidating run when he was 18 months old. Twenty-eight years later, the dual American-Canadian citizen is the 2013 North American slalom ski champion.

"Every weekend growing up was spent on Norquay, and I still train there whenever possible," says Stutz, who won four of six gold medals in the Canadian Junior Championships when he was 14. "But I'm certain the versatility of the three mountains combined with the quality of the snow and weather is why I'm successful today."

I first learned about Paul's triumphs a few years ago when, after picking my own way down Lone Pine, I proudly entered the Cascade Lodge to celebrate, brag a little and



Canada Calling!

Enter the Ski Banff-Lake Louise-Sunshine Sweepstakes and you and a guest could win five nights' luxury accommodations at Sunshine Mountain Lodge and The Post Hotel and Spa, five daily lift tickets for you and a friend, 50,000 AA Advantage miles and an opportunity to ski with Lake Louise's own Sandy Best. Go to aa.com/americanway for details and entry forms.



rest. However, a local celebrity, the Banff mayor, already was holding court while watching the World Cup ski races on the televisions that hang above the bar. Nursing a rum and Coke, the mayor exuded local pride as Paul kicked through the gates in Gstaad, Switzerland, for the FIS World Cup downhill event.

"My sense of pride at his amazing accomplishments overrides a father's fear about his son's safety," says John Stutz, the former mayor and Paul's father. "From the time he was 4 to his first World Cup race when he was 18 at Kitzbühel [Austria] — the Super Bowl of professional ski racing — to his position today as six-time Canadian alpine champion and Sochi [2014 Winter Olympics] medal favorite, Paul has worked his tail off to achieve success."

John Stutz also credits Paul's childhood environment, specifically the opportunity to ski three world-class areas on any given day depending on conditions and training goals. The rest of us, even if we only whip the Kitzbühel downhill in our dreams, can plot exactly the same course.

"The three ski areas each have specific attributes, and you can ski them all with just one pass," John Stutz explains. "Lake Louise offers big and long runs down, Sunshine combines altitude with all that natural snow, and Norquay [Banff] tosses in steeps and deeps just minutes from town."

I awake early, having made the easy, 90-minute drive from Calgary International Airport the night before, check the previous

FROM OPPOSITE PAGE: Banff Avenue in the town of Banff; a gondola over Sunshine Village; exquisite Moraine Lake; local legend and ski guide (and cover model pretty boy) Sandy Best



DIVERSE ACTION: Traversing Johnston Canyon, the aptly named Sunshine Village Ski & Snowboard Resort; Whiskyjack Lodge

night's snowfall (nine inches) and depart Buffalo Mountain Lodge for Sunshine Village, about 30 minutes north of Banff on Highway 1. Morning breaks in the Canadian Rockies like time-lapse photography, and today is no different. The sun lays siege upon Castle Mountain, doggedly creeping up this series of 9,000-foot peaks from the Bow River Valley.

The privilege of time on the slopes never escapes me, this opportunity where, as snow crystals come into focus, daily concerns disappear into a hazy memory. And although I believe every alpine trek transforms us a little, few sojourns compare with the passage to Sunshine Village, an 18-minute gondola ride that arrives not at the resort's summit but at the base village itself.

"One minute, you're departing the parking lot, then 20 minutes later you enter a snow globe," exudes "Doc Pow," aka Jim Barr, a Winnipeg, Manitoba, transplant who is the founder of Snowseekers.ca, an insider's website that celebrates all things fluffy in Western Canada's winter culture. An accomplished snowboarder, Doc Pow's first time on skis occurred in Banff as part of a

high-school spring-break trip. Smitten with the mountains, he soon left Manitoba for British Columbia, then settled in Alberta.

"I experienced, frankly, an emotional catharsis that changed my life forever the first time I skied in Banff," he says. "I felt called to share this experience with as many people as possible. I founded Snowseekers.ca to inspire others to get outside and test their limits."

Based in Edmonton, Alberta's capital, Doc Pow spends the winter on his snowboard mount traversing the Trans-Canada Highway 1 with an enthusiasm that makes Dudley Do-Right appear stoic and stern. Though I've never skied with Doc down a mountain that he didn't love, Sunshine Village definitely giddies up his gait. "The perspective is so different here," Doc gushes. "I love how removed you are from it all."

Legend has it that the Canadian Rockies provide habitat for a panoply of hermits; mountain men who've decided they'd rather build shelters than websites and for whom a well-maintained operating system equals survival. The Sunshine Mountain Lodge invites the less-ambitious mountain people among us to isolate ourselves, too, albeit



within a four-star lodge surrounded by more than 3,300 skiable acres.

Sunshine Mountain Lodge perches at the top of the gondola lift, the only ski-in/ski-out accommodation in Banff National Park. The newly constructed West Wing features "loft rooms," ideal for families or a gathering of friends. I can't help but think I'm playing out my "Jack and the Beanstalk" fantasy here, having ascended to 7,200 feet above sea level without a road in sight. Fortunately, the five restaurants, pool and spa relieve any anxiety over developing cabin fever.

I set my own traps the next morning, determined to exploit back-to-back evening snowfall in "Delirium Dive," one of several "inside the ropes" backcountry experiences that set Sunshine Village apart from almost every other North American ski area. The "Dive" requires an avalanche beacon, shovel and probes, all available to rent at the Sunshine Village Ski & Snowboard School. I also recommend taking a mountain guide or ski-school instructor along the first time.

Drop-in chutes line the ridge, but I choose the less-intense path: a set of access stairs that lead to a gap in the cliff band. The Dive requires quick turns, but the steep terrain of reliably soft snow shouldn't intimidate an experienced skier. This off-piste bonanza proved so popular, Sunshine Village opened additional terrain called the "Wild West" in 2003. Soaring to 9,200 feet, Goat's Eye Express reveals terrain containing more diamonds than a Tiffany & Co. showroom, progressively steeper runs that wash into glades reminiscent of the best heli-skiing and snowcat habitat.

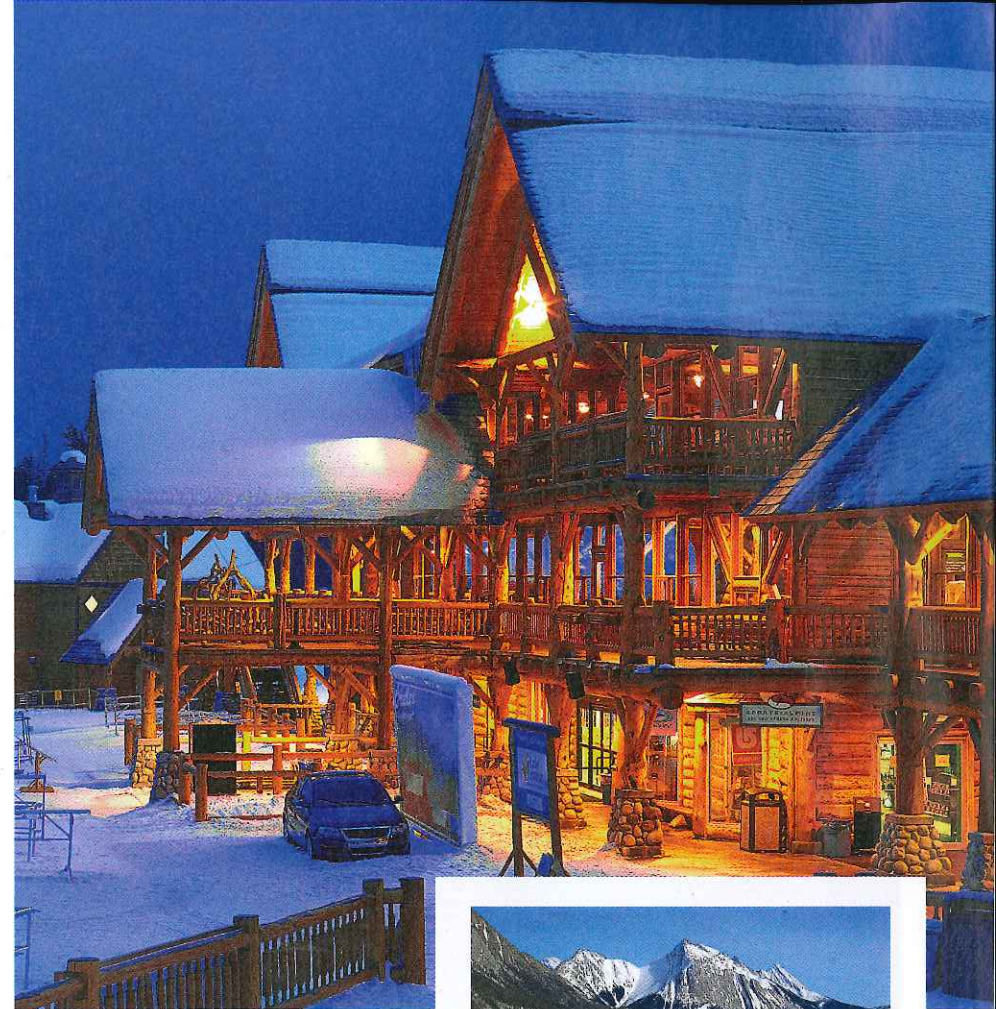
Sunshine Village is known for its expert terrain, but intermediate and beginner skiers will wallow in the WaWa Bowl, Little Bunkers

and Creek Run; long and wide routes that provide perfect pathways for improving turns. Like the best family areas, several sets of parallel green, blue and black runs allow a mixed-ability group to ski in close proximity but separately on customized slopes.

If Sunshine Village provides the equivalent of a hermit's hideaway, Lake Louise proffers a "come one, come all" playground, whether you've never clicked into a binding before or you soar over the infamous "Coaches' Corner" jump during the annual Alpine Skiing World Cup events in November.

"Lake Louise is all about choice," says local legend and ski guide Sandy Best. "Show me a skier or snowboarder, and I'll lead him or her to the perfect terrain on this mountain."

"The Lake's" 4,200 skiable acres are second only to Whistler-Blackcomb in Canada. Intermediate runs comprise 45 percent of the mountain; expert and beginning runs divvy up the remainder. Best of all, novices won't find themselves sequestered on bunny hills within a ski pole's length of the Whiskyjack Lodge, the timber-framed day lodge that houses the region's best après-ski ambience. Green runs depart from the Glacier Express and Top of the World Express chairs, as well



IF YOU GO:

Travel Alberta (Alberta Tourism & Visitor Information)
www.travelalberta.com

The Banff Centre (Leighton Artists' Colony)
107 Tunnel Mountain Drive, Banff
www.banffcentre.ca

Banff National Park and Lake Louise Tourism
224 Banff Ave., Banff
www.banfflakelouise.com

Buffalo Mountain Lodge
700 Tunnel Mountain Road, Banff
www.crmr.com/buffalo

The Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise
111 Lake Louise Drive, Lake Louise
www.fairmont.com/lake-louise

The Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge
Old Lodge Road, Jasper
www.fairmont.com/jasper

Jasper Brewing Company Brew Pub & Eatery
624 Connaught Drive, Jasper
www.jasperbrewingco.ca

Johnston Canyon Icewalk
215 Banff Ave., Banff
www.banfficewalk.com

Lake Louise Ski Resort
1 Whitehorn Road, Lake Louise
www.skilouise.com

Marmot Basin ski resort
Marmot Basin Road, off Highway 93A, Jasper, Alberta
www.skimarmot.com

Mount Norquay
2 Mount Norquay Road, Banff
www.banffnorquay.com

Post Hotel & Spa Lake Louise
200 Pipestone Road, Lake Louise
www.posthotel.com



Rose & Crown Restaurant and Pub
202 Banff Ave., Banff
www.roseandcrown.ca

Ski Banff, Lake Louise and Sunshine
Banff Ski Hub
119 Banff Ave., Banff
www.skibig3.com

Skoki Lodge
The Lake Louise Ski Area
1 Whitehorn Road, Lake Louise
www.skoki.com

SnowSeekers
7302 158 St., Edmonton
www.snowseekers.ca

Sunshine Mountain Lodge
1 Sunshine Access Road, Banff
www.sunshinemountainlodge.com

Sunshine Village Ski & Snowboard Resort
1 Sunshine Access Road, Banff
www.skibanff.com

Willow Stream Spa at The Fairmont Banff Springs
405 Spray Ave., Banff
www.fairmont.com/banff-springs/willow-stream

THE 4TH OF THE BIG 3

JASPER NATIONAL PARK may not be as old as its southern neighbor, but the 4,335-square-mile wilderness is bigger. Jasper is home to **Marmot Basin ski resort**, which features 1,675 skiable acres and a 3,000-foot vertical that will have you catching your breath. Located 180 miles north of Banff along the scenic Icefields Parkway, the town of Jasper retains its western roots and presents a more mellow après-ski experience more akin to Crested Butte, Colo., than Banff.

The Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge offers historic cabins with vistas on Lac Beauvert, a natural ice surface in winter. Refueling inside the lodge's **Moose's Nook Northern Grill** or in town at the **Jasper Brewing Company Brew Pub & Eatery** is highly recommended.

as the Grizzly Express Gondola. Every kid, whether on her first day on the snow or while prepping for weekend junior races, likes to ride in the gondola.

I never tire of a gondola ride either, especially when it leads to the backside Powder Bowls, among the best stack of porcelain vessels on the planet. From Boomerang to

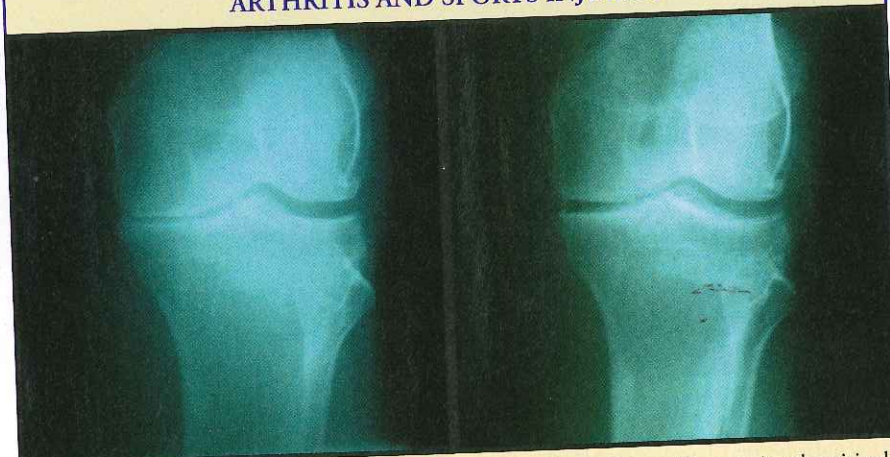
Paradise, so many runs spill into these bowls that I expect to see one or two saber-toothed tigers, historic residents of the valley, lapping up the cream. Running laps through the trees in the Larch Area, an excellent intermediate section, also will turn legs rubbery after a few cycles around the six-minute Larch Express.

Sunshine Mountain Lodge's unique

position as Banff's only ski-in/ski-out lodge may surprise some alpine enthusiasts, but every dedicated Nordic skier longs to stay at Skoki Lodge. Located seven miles into the wilderness from Lake Louise via the Skoki Lodge Nordic Trail, this National Historic Site reveals more than 150 miles of Nordic trails. The rustic accommodations remain fit for a prince, as witnessed when the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge — Prince William and his wife Catherine — visited the lodge during their honeymoon.

I never feel guilty taking a cloudy ski day off during a visit to Banff because I know I'll still find plenty of reasons to go outdoors. The Johnston Canyon Icewalk follows a path beneath an array of frozen waterfalls (and the adventurers who climb them). In addition to sleigh rides, Chateau Mountain Sports at the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise rents ice

THE CENTER FOR REGENERATIVE MEDICINE A NON-SURGICAL TECHNIQUE TO FIGHT AGAINST ARTHRITIS AND SPORTS INJURIES



The Knee Diaries: SJ is a 60-year-old male with the chief complaint of knee pain who visited The Center for Regenerative Medicine over a year ago. He was diagnosed with bone-on-bone osteoarthritis of the left knee, causing much pain and discomfort; at that point he was told only a total knee replacement could help him. He is otherwise healthy. On exam he had point tenderness to the medial side of the left knee (medical lingo: inner side). An X-ray showed severe arthritis of the knee (X-ray on the left). Patient started receiving treatments at The Center for Regenerative Medicine. Today he is feeling better (X-ray on the right).

This is how it works: The physician introduces **Cell Therapy** into damaged, arthritic cells by means of a precise injection. This process is followed by several other modalities, including Collateral Artery Flow Exercises (C.A.F.E.), in order to accelerate the process. Depending on tissue damage, severity of the condition and the size of the joint that needs to be injected, people usually need a series of 1 to 6 treatments to improve. There is usually no downtime, and people can go back to their usual activities or work immediately. The treatments can help most musculoskeletal problems such as low back pain, neck pain, knee pain, shoulder pain, whiplash, sciatica, tendinitis, sprain, strains, torn ligaments and cartilage damage.

Located in Miami, Florida, The Center for Regenerative Medicine includes a team of professionals that are dedicated to improve your quality of life, paving the way to enhance the science of non-surgical orthopedic medicine. World champions, sports legends, professional and amateur athletes, dancers, and people with just plain pain and arthritis go to The Center for Regenerative Medicine for nonsurgical orthopedic care. Using the facility to improve their condition, thousands of successful cases have been treated over the past twelve years.

For more information and to read more on "The Knee Diaries", please visit www.arthritisusa.net or call (305) 866-8384.



skates and hockey sticks for play beneath the Victoria Glacier on Lake Louise, the most spectacular, natural ice rink in the world.

An evening fire draws us close after playing a casual game of shinny (pickup hockey) on the lake, one of several warming sites I recommend in the region. The Post Hotel & Spa features the area's deepest wine list, the baronial Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel's Willow Stream Spa offers a series of sublime pools, and the Rose & Crown restaurant and pub features live music 364 days a year to fend off any outdoor chill.

I've rafted the Bow River in spring, cycled Banff's trails in summer and played golf among rutting elk well into the fall. But to me, winter paints this park most brilliantly, especially when I gaze upon the Canadian Rockies vista, point my skis downward and dive, tips first, into the cream. ❄️

When not writing, photographing or broadcasting about travel for more than 30 outlets, **CRAIS BOWER** can usually be found outdoors skiing, gardening or participating in some other adventure. He reads, drinks tea and monitors the weather when inside.