

REVELSTOKE ROMP

Spring Riding at B.C.'s
Glacier House Resort



Our host, Alex Szirmai, is a formidable mountain rider too!

Like the view from an airplane, we looked down from the heights of Frisby Ridge on the Columbia River, cutting through its valley between the Monashee and Selkirk ranges near Revelstoke, B.C. Was it my imagination or could I actually spot the tiny red dot that was the roof of the rental shop at Glacier House Resort, far, far below?

We'd completed another exhilarating day of mountain riding. Now it was late afternoon and time to head back. My weary bones were looking forward to a leisurely descent on the groomed access trail that switchbacked down the mountainside. Fat chance!

I should have known by now that no self-respecting mountain rider could resist a straight beeline home. Why do all that meandering back and forth on a civilized

trail when, from our perch in the sky, Frisby Ridge dropped off in a direct line of sight, toboggan run to our destination? Without a second's hesitation, our guide, Glacier House owner, Alex Szirmai, pointed his sled at the distant red dot and rocketed down that long 5,000-foot incline as if shot along a laser beam. *What the hell, I thought, I can ride a trail any time* — and I steered my 2008 Summit REV-XP to follow...

Talk about lickety-split! Pump brake-steer — trail crossing ahead...look both ways...zoom — powder burst! Focus on Alex's track. Stay in control. Fly through tree gaps & terrain breaks. Glance & flash across next trail switchback. Shins & knees tucked tight to REV-XP cowling. Pump brake-steer...deep snow, floating! Woosh — switchback again! Traction...adrenalin rush — pump brake-steer - zoom. Massive dam near Glacier House looming — now

that red roof too...trail, descent, powder, trail, descent. Pump brake-steer, zoom — much closer now. Burst through more snow & trees! Suddenly out of slope & out of breath...roll into the staging area. Glacier House just ahead. Whew! Back safe...no brown streaks on the snow!

Ride From Your Doorstep

That morning, I'd awakened to a plentiful buffet breakfast, claimed my sledding outfit from the special dry room where it had aired overnight, and then headed off to my room to gear up. I'd taken the elevator down to the lobby and picked up my pre-ordered trail lunch, featuring a sandwich as thick as my fist. Then I'd walked out the front door with my riding companions, hopped on that REV-XP and started our day's ride up the freshly groomed Frisby access trail.

That afternoon, we'd scooted back down fast as rabbits to see who could be first into the hot tub, drink in hand. And you know what? Nothing beats being able to ride to and from your doorstep. Although direct mountain access from your lodgings is rare in British Columbia, staying at Revelstoke's Glacier House Resort means not having to load and trailer every day and that's just one of its many advantages...

This four star complex is dedicated to snowmobiling and strategically located just north of town at the base of Frisby Ridge, within sight of the main trailhead. What's more, a connecting trail, dubbed "Streeter Street", also provides snowmobile access to Boulder Mountain. Frisby and Boulder are Revelstoke's premier and most popular



Riding REV-XP over Revelstoke!



Story by Craig Nicholson



Photos by Bob Island

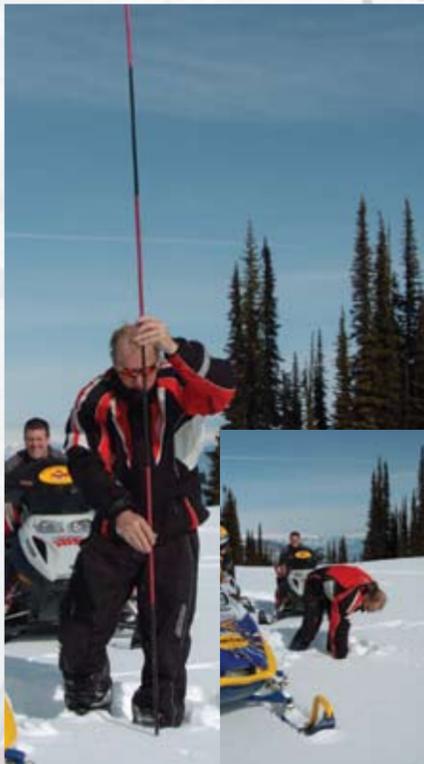
Protect Your Vehicles

Too many snowmobilers still naively leave their trucks, trailers and sleds unattended and unprotected — easy targets for thieves and joy riders. While little can deter professional criminals, these actions will help reduce your risk and keep your insurance affordable:

1. Park your vehicles in a well-lit, active area where it's visible to you, the front desk and security personnel.
2. Lock everything together and use a tire boot lock and steering wheel device for your tow vehicle.
3. Disable your vehicles, especially in an isolated spot (disconnect a spark plug, coil, distributor cap or battery terminal). Install a satellite-tracking device on your tow vehicle and a motion sensor alarm on your sled.

riding areas, and that puts Glacier House smack dab in the middle of some of B.C.'s most exceptional mountain riding!

An entrepreneur and promoter with a vision and the guts to fulfill it, Alex built



Talk about deep snow!

his log lodge and chalets out of town to be closer to the real snowmobiling action. It's also the headquarters for his Great Canadian Snowmobile Tours, the fully licenced operation that provides professional guides, guided tours, rental sleds and gear to visitors who come to ride the mountains. Together, they're a one-stop shop with everything you need on site, including food, fuel, pub, pool, sauna, hot tub, massage, gift shop, coffee bar and sled repairs. Alex's goal is to make mountain sledding a full service, turnkey, hassle-free, and memorable experience — and that's exactly what he delivers. So whether you step off a plane in your street clothes or arrive with your own sleds and gear, count on warm hospitality, exceptional service, great value and topnotch adventure from Glacier House Resort!

Award Winning Destination

I'd met Alex at several of the many snowmobile shows he attends each year to promote Glacier House. His marketing materials and website are eye-catching and informative, so I suspected that the actual experience would be very rewarding. That's why Snow Goer Canada Editor, Bob Island, and I made the trek from Toronto last April to see for ourselves. We flew into Kelowna and made the scenic drive to Revelstoke in less than three hours.

Our six nights and five riding days impressed the hell out of us, because Alex and his wife, Lia, really take the whole mountain riding deal to the next level, with amazing attention to detail and anticipation of your every need. No wonder our companion guests included folks from places as diverse as the U.S., Alberta, Quebec, Sweden and even Italy! (see sidebar on next page)

When they arrive, Revelstoke seals the deal. Start with its massive annual snowfall of 15 to 21 metres. Factor in rideable temperatures between 0° and 10° Celsius and riding elevations between 1,600 and 2,300 metres. Now spread that over at least seven prime riding areas, mostly within 20 kilometres of town.

That's snowmobiling in Revelstoke... climb high, ride far, play hard. Countless bowls to track, challenging slopes to highmark and deep powder to break. Huge areas of alpine, meadow and forest to explore. Plus lots of groomed and ungroomed trails to ride when the peaks

are socked in. This variety — from family friendly to expert exciting, and everything in between — makes Revelstoke a great destination for every kind of rider, and an especially good choice for novices and families.

I remember way back to my first mountain ride, not wanting to get in over my head, wanting it to be safe, secure and enjoyable — and not sure how to make that happen. At Glacier House, Alex and his crew tailor the entire experience so every guest has an exciting ride within their own capabilities, returning home with fond memories and a burning desire to try it again.

Then there's the indescribable scenery. Words like breathtaking and awesome don't begin to do it justice. Photos can't possibly capture the spectacle. But everywhere your eye scans, another stunning view overwhelms your senses. This panoramic overload leaves you feeling like an insignificant speck on a boundless masterpiece from Mother Nature. Some things you just have to see for yourself and getting up into the mountains in winter is one of them. Believe me, no lifetime of snowmobiling is complete without at least one mountain riding adventure, and Glacier House Resort is as close as it comes to a guaranteed good time.

But that's not all... the town of Revelstoke, with a resident population of 7,500, over 1,000 hotel rooms, and numerous other restaurants, services and amenities, has a well-deserved, snowmobile friendly, reputation. What's more, it's easy to reach on the Trans Canada Highway and accessible after flights into either Calgary, 400 kilometres east, or Kelowna, 190 kilometres southwest.

Upon arrival, we quickly discovered another major Revelstoke advantage — the Snowmobile Revelstoke Society. It maintains a user pay system at Boulder Mountain and Frisby Ridge that keeps these access trails in shape throughout the winter. As probably the most advanced and mature trail operation of its kind at any British Columbia mountain destination, the Snowmobile Revelstoke Society scores full points for making the journey to and from the play areas a real pleasure. Add in good mapping, published GPS coordinates, decent trail markings, snug warm up shelters, plus a good website, and it's no wonder that Revelstoke has won multiple awards as a premier mountain destination.



Before enjoying a mountain top BBQ, we had to dig our way in!

Plus it also boasts world-class downhill skiing at the new Revelstoke Mountain Resort on Mt. MacKenzie, which offers North America's highest vertical descent.

Even keeping my ear to the ground, I only heard two negative whispers about Revelstoke. One is that the most popular riding areas can get too crowded on prime winter weekends — easily rectified by choosing one of its other play grounds or by visiting during the week. Also, be sure to book ahead for peak season, and if your concern is overcrowded staging areas, your best bet is to stay at Glacier House Resort, where you can snowmobile directly from your lodgings and avoid parking (and unloading) hassles.

Negative number two is rumours of theft — which must be enough of a concern that the Snowmobile Revelstoke Society website offers a Snowmobile Theft Prevention button linking to RCMP reports. Don't let this deter you from going, but be sure to take the anti-theft measures in the preceding sidebar to reduce your risk of being victimized. Also, remember that Glacier House Resort is likely one of the most protected locations in the area, being contained in its own secure compound, and located away from prying eyes and transient traffic.

Choices and Options

One of our objectives was to explore as many Revelstoke play areas as possible during our stay, so we snowmobiled Hall Mountain and Wap Lake, as well as Frisby and Boulder, our personal favourites. Other nearby areas include Sale Mountain, Akolkolex & Mt. McCrae and Keystone Basin.

You have lots of options too. Great Canadian Snowmobile Tours offers a

multitude of tour choices and packages, from the 2-hour introductory, "The Sledder", to the 8-day "Sledding Fever", and I can attest that their gear, sleds and guides are top notch. They even have a ladies only tour!

To get a true feel for their tours, Bob and I tagged along on several, and I can highly recommend such unique experiences as the après sled visit to soak in Halcyon Hot Springs or the scrumptious mountain top BBQ at "Glacier Station", the resort's private cabin. If you're looking for hardcore mountain action and have the expertise, the professional and certified guides from Great Canadian Snowmobile Tours can also make your wildest dreams come true.

Yes, Bob and I agreed without a doubt, that if you want the best all round, all inclusive and added value mountain riding packages available, you won't do any better than to call Alex and Lia at Glacier House Resort and Great Canadian Snowmobile Tours!

Special thanks to Alex and Lia Szirmai, Myles Frazier and Bryce Campbell - Glacier House; Carla Mont - Tourism British Columbia; and Gerry Dusessoy - BRP.

Craig's tours are made possible with product courtesy of BRP, Triton Trailers, Fast-Trac Traction, Shell Advance Snow Ultra Oil and Globalstar Satellite Phones.

Craig Nicholson is the author of "Canada's Best Snowmobiling — Your Ultimate Ride Guide". (To order: www.snowgoercanada.com). His syndicated column "The Intrepid Snowmobiler" appears in newspapers throughout North America. He also hosts "The Intrepid Snowmobiler on Radio" and appears regularly on Snowmobiler Television. For more info, click www.intrepidssnowmobiler.com



"WOW! The mountains are spectacular and bigger than we could possibly imagine — so much going up and down! We loved the deep snow and really got our money's worth by staying at Glacier House and hiring their guides to show us the ropes and the safe places to ride."

Bruno Scalabrini, Jacques McClish, Jean Yves Caron, Sylvain Lemieux, Quebec



"As a novice mountain rider, I'm in awe of the Revelstoke scenery. With its good variety of different riding levels, there's something here for everyone — and women don't need to be afraid to try it...so just do it, girls!"

Carmen Shaver, Oregon



"I've been mountain riding since 1964 and Revelstoke is one of the best I've found. I'm 71, and my wife and I are here with a multi-generational group that includes my grandkids, so the Glacier House chalets are ideal for us!"

Clinton Peterson, Oregon



"In Sweden, we ride between 1,000 and 2,000 kilometres each winter, but none of it compares to the breathtaking views and the mountain excitement we found in Revelstoke! This is unbelievable!"

Mats and Lars Sandstrom, Sweden

RIDING IN REVELSTOKE

WHO TO CONTACT

- **Glacier House Resort:** 250.837.9594; info@glacierhouse.com; www.glacierhouse.com
- **Great Canadian Snowmobile Tours:** 250.837.9594; infosnowmobiler Revelstoke.com; www.snowmobiler Revelstoke.com
- **Snowmobile Revelstoke Society:** www.sledrevelstoke.com
- **Tourism British Columbia:** 1-800-435-5622; www.HelloBC.com

OUR ITINERARY

Day One:

Fly to Kelowna. Drive about three hours to Revelstoke

Day Two:

8:30 AM to 2:30 PM - Trailer about 30 minutes south to ride Hall Mountain area (150 kilometres of trails and alpine area overlooking Arrow Lake). After, take ferry across the Columbia River to Halcyon Hot Springs for serious soaking of sore muscles!

Day Three:

12:30 PM to 7:30 PM - Ride Frisby Ridge (5 kilometre ridge with steep drop on both sides, plus 60 kilometres of trails and 144 sq/km of alpine) followed by BBQ at Glacier Station and twilight ride back.

Day Four:

9 AM to 4:30 PM - Trailer 20 minutes west to ride Wap Lake area (150 km of non-groomed, back country trails and lots of moose).

Day Five:

10:30 AM to 4:30 PM - Ride Boulder Mountain (50 kilometres of trails plus 150 sq/km of alpine bowls and meadows).

Day Six:

9 AM to 4 PM - Ride Frisby Ridge.

Day Seven:

Drive back to Kelowna and fly home.

Tested on Tour

by Craig Nicholson



Riding the Ski-doo REV-XP

We used our Revelstoke tour to test ride a new Summit REV-XP prototype, forerunner of the 2008 Ski-Doo mountain sleds smart snowmobilers will be riding this winter. I've always been impressed by the many advantages of the REV platform for mountain riding, but I'm here to tell you that REV-XP takes it to a whole new level...

My first impression was its incredible lightness of being. Summit Rev-XP simply did everything better, faster and easier than REV, thanks to its dramatic 44-pound weight loss program (compared to REV; more vs. competitors), even with its 154" track. The 151 hp 800R Rotax power plant gave REV-XP a 2.9 pounds per horsepower edge that's unbeatable by any production sled from other OEM's. So it effortlessly climbs higher, faster and smoother than anything else I've ridden.

Now I'm not that experienced a mountain rider. Yet even I could feel the considerable difference in handling and maneuverability resulting not only from weight loss, but also from the eight more inches of leg room that makes REV-XP easier to manipulate with less body English than before — standing is easier than ever and so is foot control.

If you're in the market for new mountain sled, a stock Summit REV-XP will likely out-perform your expectations. That's because out of the box, it performs as if you'd already spent oodles of extra after market cash — but instead, you can get the ride of your dreams for no more than the regular price of this exceptional new Ski-Doo sled! For more info and a dealer near you, click on www.ski-doo.com

Did You Know?

That OFSC (Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs) snowmobiling generates over \$1 Billion of economic impact annually for rural and northern communities during their most dormant time of year.



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