

Little sister big on fun

BOYD ENGLAND
Special to Sun Media

KIMBERLEY, B.C. — We all have distant family that we neglect to take the time to visit because we deem them to be too far away.

Well, in the Resorts of the Canadian Rockies (RCR) family of ski hills, Kimberley is the “not so distant” cousin of Lake Louise, as well as other well-known high calibre ski hills. If you haven’t

thought of making a visit before, this ski hill is definitely one relative that should be visited more often. Think of her as that rich aunt that might have otherwise written you out of her will.

If you are a family that plays together, you will be glad to know that Kimberley has virtually no lineups in January and February. And if you are anything like me, you detest standing in the massive lineups. At some

places, especially during any holiday, to get from your car to the lift within an hour is a feat. If you do the math you would realize that you could have driven (or flown) a little further to a quaint little, old Bavarian ski resort town to be with 2,500 of your closest snow friends.

At Kimberley, skiers and riders are evenly dispersed among 80 runs. With terrain that will satisfy any taste from newbies to hard core

riders. If you like taking a week off at Christmas, or are a student who should otherwise be studying over Reading Week, you want to get the most for your money (i.e. Student Loan). That means maximum runs in the least amount of time.

Local resort host and native Kimberley resident, (though he did call himself an Edmontonian for a while), Gord Jenkins was our guide for the day. Jenkins’s passion for the sport and the community provided us with a fantastic overview of what Kimberley has to offer.

Boasting a high speed quad, over a mile long, (that is over 1.6 km for those of you under 25) called the North Star Express, Kimberley offers night skiing three days a week until closure. This is where parents staying in the on hill accommodations can get their money’s worth, in more ways than one. Wink, wink, nudge, nudge – say no more.

Christmas break is the busiest weekend, said Jenkins, as is the Family Day weekend in February. Since

it is an Albertan-only holiday, there will be even more room to flex your abilities. But, be aware that accommodations sell out fast for this well-kept secret.

Local skier and real estate agent Stephen Shill has the right idea in mind: working a half day he can leave work and go from, “my house to top of the hill in 20 minutes. Kimberley has 90+ ski days a year and NO wind. The hill has a country club feel and is very underrated. With fall-line skiing off every chair there is terrain for everyone.”

Speaking of secrets, do you miss those romantic rides with your significant other on the old Larch chair at Louise? Well, we found out that the Larch chair has now become the Tamarack chair at Kimberley.

It’s funny because I had a flashback going down the Dean Left run (real cruiser for a speed demon like me), leading to the Tamarack chair, felt surprisingly similar to Louise’s Bobcat.

With a front side that is primarily blue, the backside slopes offer some exciting

expert runs that are guaranteed to get your heart pounding. Here you can find some of the best glade runs you have ever ridden.

And, you will like the fact that there are very few flat spots for those that prefer riding over skiing. I was looking to try out the new rail park, but it wasn’t quite finished. Jenkins did say that they’ve (RCR) attracted a very good designer for the park and it should open very soon.

For a community that held its breath for the first few years when Cominco shut the doors in 2001, they have certainly rebounded as a premier resort town.

Definitely a place a person could see as a regular destination for years to come. Maybe even a place to work or retire. You should also know that the trip just got a lot shorter since Air Canada’s Jazz started flying into Cranbrook’s airport, which is only a short 20 to 30-minute drive away. For more, visit www.skikimberley.com or www.skircr.com.

boyd.english@gmail.com



HENRY GEORGI/Resorts of the Canadian Rockies

B.C.’s Kimberley Alpine Resort offers something for the whole family, including night skiing three nights a week for those who just can’t get enough of a good thing.