## Somewhere Down

the Crazy River

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They say it is the Powder Highways that draw us to the *Kicking Horse Mountain Resort*, but it's really the special hydrological cycle that keeps us coming back year after year. For those who seek the snow, its trademark as the 'Champagne Powder Capital of Canada' lives up to its promise. A remnant of ancient glaciers, the *Kicking Horse River* that flows in the valley below, has not only carved its way through the mountains, but actually transformed the meteorological and hydrological patterns of the landscape. This mountain range receives incredible amounts of snow, extremely dry snow. Patterns of suspended snow crystals float weightlessly in the air, enjoying their dance in the mountain breeze.

From the peak of *Whitewall*, with its 8000-foot vertical drop, you can catch a glimpse of the rivers: frozen, liquid or gaseous, formed as the snow, clouds and fresh water horse around together. Only after coming upon such a sight do you begin to marvel at the uniqueness of this landscape, recognizing the superior quality of the snow only available in this very special place.



The adventure begins as soon as you step off the *Golden Eagle Express Gondola*. Once atop the Eagle's Eye summit, the expert skier has access to over 75 different black and double-black trails, while the novice or



intermediate skier can trek down the 1260-metre vertical slope, on ever-flowing runs that are as wide as they are smooth. A journey down the mountain can take you up to one hour, depending on how overcome you are – physically and emotionally, by your alpine crossing. It is not uncommon to complete only five or six runs in an entire day, and nevertheless rack up to seven thousand vertical metres in this towering, white-toothed paradise.



To fully grasp the sheer magnitude of this place, an adventurer must journey to the four lifts and bowls to fully appreciate all that this ridge has to offer. My own two-day trek in this alpine wonderland produced RSA snow ratings of 98% and 99%. All mountain trails and ranges are kept in pristine condition, with the continuous replenishing of fresh, dry British-Columbia powder throughout the winter months. From the prickly *Porcupine* to the perfectly smooth *Race Place* or the undulating *Wiley Coyote*, skiers of all levels will be charmed by the soft, velvety snow. With your arms outstretched, embrace true freedom!



For the daring expert, this is the mountain ridge that will test your mettle. If you are a true powder hound, the best efforts always yield the greatest rewards. The ridgelines and slopes offer you endless reminders of the relentless force of gravity. Smooth, groomed passages provide easy access and with a little hiking, you could venture down most of the mountain slopes mere minutes after you have reached the summit. The steeps here are the real deal, genuinely testing you. One way or another, they will earn your respect.

Allow me to suggest a little break, even if after only a run or two, it is now time to enjoy a quick coffee at the *Eagle's Eye Restaurant*. The welcoming staff is always ready to make you feel valued with their water-first policy; daily specials of soups and sandwiches come highly recommended. So make your reservations and bon appétit!



Whether your journey to Kicking Horse is an annual pilgrimage or you're a firsttime explorer, this bucking bronco will always surprise you with an unexpected kick in the teeth. So hold on to your reins and ride responsibly!

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