



OUT OF SIGHT

At an unassuming spot along British Columbia's famed powder highway, Jayme Moye uncovers one of Canada's best-kept secrets

As we skied down the north side of Granite Mountain at Red Mountain Resort last winter, my guide, Dave, skidded to a stop. “You’ve got to see this,” he called out, then took off toward an opening in the lodgepole pines. I followed. An old-timey log cabin materialized, seemingly out of nowhere, smoke curling up from the chimney. I caught a whiff of sausage. “Did we just ski through a time portal?” I asked. Dave laughed. The cabin, I learned, was built by a local ski club in the 1930s, a decade before the resort. There are eight others scattered about, some still owned by the original families. Over the next few days, I embarked on a sort of wintertime Easter-egg hunt while zipping down runs, yelling in delight whenever I glimpsed another cabin.

I don’t typically ski with a guide, or a Snow Host, as they’re called here, but Red Mountain Resort is a massive place, with varied terrain and bountiful local secrets. And Snow Hosts are complimentary. I live an hour away, in Nelson, British Columbia, about 150 miles north of Spokane, Washington, but that’s still not close enough to know this sacred corner of the Monashee Mountains the way Dave and his colleagues do. One of the largest ski resorts in North America, Red has 3,850 acres of skiable terrain and nearly 3,000 feet of vertical drop. There are five different peaks, each with multiple faces. Granite Mountain alone can be skied on all four sides; it has an extremely rare 360-degree descent.

Before moving to British Columbia, in 2017, I lived in Colorado for almost 20 years. I relish the look of disbelief on friends’ faces when they visit and I tell them that Red has cat-skiing inbounds—which is typical for a backcountry setting but not for

a resort with ski patrol and avalanche control like this one. And while cat skiing usually runs well into the hundreds of dollars, here it is only \$10 a run. So I’ll take my guest up the Grey Mountain chairlift to the summit, and we’ll ski over to where the snowcat is parked, pay the attendant, and enjoy the ride through the thick evergreen forest across the saddle to Mount Kirkup, where 200 acres and 2,000 vertical feet of freshies await. The snowcat turns around to retrieve the next batch of 12 giddy skiers.

Red has been around since 1947. It’s the oldest ski resort in Western Canada, decades older than Whistler Blackcomb and Revelstoke, the two places that have become synonymous with skiing in British Columbia. But despite its longevity, Red is far from set in its ways. In the five years I’ve lived in Canada, it has changed dramatically, adding a ski-in-ski-out boutique hotel, slope-side condos, and six modern backcountry-style cabins, located on the far side of Granite Mountain in Paradise Basin and accessible only by chairlift. In 2019, it opened an entire new section of Grey Mountain, dubbed Topping Creek, with a triple chairlift, six intermediate runs, and loads of gladed tree skiing. This upcoming season, Topping Creek will get its own base area, a hip cluster of shipping containers and a deck, with indoor and outdoor seating, a full-service food truck, and a bar.

Yet despite all this development, the ethos of the mountain hasn’t changed. You’ll still find the same unpretentious, welcoming atmosphere. And, in a sea of huge mountain alliances, Red remains independently owned. It calls itself “the last great unspoiled resort.” I’d have to agree.