

Crested Butte

By Barry Schofield

Crested Butte might not be the largest ski area in North America, but there is an abundance of skiing terrain on the mountain. With a Summit of over 12,000 feet (3,700 meters) and a base area at 9,375 feet (2,856 meters) it is high enough to offer some outstanding powder. Sporting 121 trails and 14 lifts there was plenty of ski area for us average skiers and experts alike.

Unfortunately being a smaller area flying into the Gunnison International Airport was a challenge. Being that the airport has all of 3 gates we should have expected some SNAFUs (situation normal all fouled up) at our arrival. The airport did not disappoint. Everyone's bags were left in Dallas, but being Fall Liners we pressed on to our destination. We split into 2 groups in each of the small shuttle vans to the ski area. If you were lucky enough to be in the first van you had the privilege of having the mayor of Crested Butte, Jim Schmidt be your driver. Mayor Schmidt gave us the nickel tour of the town of Crested Butte. Check in went without trouble and almost all bags were of course, delivered to the hotel after midnight.

Saturday night was our wine and cheese orientation presented by a resort representative. The gentleman was knowledgeable and friendly.

Skiing started on Sunday with sunny skies and wonderful terrain. No complaints at the Butte 66 sports bar for Eagles watching except of course the Eagles lost against the Saints in their Divisional game. That was a bummer, but we were still on vacation.

The staff at the Butte 66 was exceptionally gracious by staying open on Tuesday for our official Fall Line happy hour. We were fortunate that it seemed that most of the staff was South Jersey natives. Our waitress and the bar tender were both originally from Williamstown. Good company, good food and beer. What more can you ask for.

Midweek the snow Gods came to add 20 inches to the already significant base and the conditions were close to perfect.

Of course our skiing did not pass without challenges. Tom, Mary Ellen, Al, Bob, Barry, Kathy, & Sandy accidentally skied on a trail to the double black diamonds trying to get to the Paradise Express lift. Unfortunately we proceeded onto a poorly marked trail. The group was not so sure this was a safe idea. But we kept going for fear of turning back wasn't a good plan either. As it turned out Barry lead the way past the very serious tails though the trees. Barry found a trail we could all attack. Happily we arrived at the bottom of the trail smiling.



Our Friday leftover party was a success. Thank you to Jeff Thomas and Sally Godman for setting it up and thanks to all 17 Fall Liners who left the Taylor room clean and pristine after we were done.

Of course Saturday came along and all good things have to come to an end. We all made the airport with one of our fall liners being picked up at the hospital. He was fine and an uneventful flight back to Philadelphia where all was good except of course for the luggage. Half of our travelers did not get their skis. It took forever filling out the paperwork and eventually we all made it out of the airport. There is a silver lining in every cloud, most of us filed complaints against American Airlines and had our baggage fees returned.