

Skiers unwrap gifts at Sierra – short lines, plenty of snow

By Kathryn Reed

TWIN BRIDGES – Sometimes the best celebrations are spent with thousands of other people. Such was the case for the skiers and boarders schussing down the slopes of Sierra-at-Tahoe on Christmas.

One rider started taking her clothes off in the early afternoon at West Bowl saying how hot she was after starting the day at 9am. Another woman was in spaghetti straps. It was warm to start with, but the wind began to cool things down as the sun disappeared behind the clouds when the storm started to blow into the region.

Karina Kauffman, 13, didn't mind the bulk of her gifts were not going to be opened until Christmas night.



Sierra-at-Tahoe employees in the Christmas spirit.
Photos/Kathryn Reed

"This is the best time ever," the Placerville teen said. Fewer people on the runs made her feel safer than a typical Saturday

on the slopes.

Kauffman was on the mountain with her brother, dad and grandpa.

Tons of families spent the day at Sierra. Plenty of people were milling about the base lodge – seeming to be there to watch their loved ones enjoy the snow. Holiday tunes echoed through the sound system. Several people with Santa hats whizzed down the slopes, while at least one fully dressed Santa flew down on skis.

Plenty of snow covers all the slopes in and around Lake Tahoe. Sierra as of Christmas Day had received 71 inches in the last week and 240 inches since Thanksgiving.

Crews are still working on what will be the South Shore's only super pipe.

With snow in the forecast for the better part of the week, powder days will be the norm.

Jaideep Neboori, 25, found a stash of powder under the West Bowl lift on Saturday. So much so that he got stuck for a bit, which meant his family kept on going.

He tries to get in a few days of boarding each season, but that's more difficult now that he lives in New Jersey instead of Pleasanton, where he grew up.

For Tom Matteson, 28, and his buddy they thought visiting friends in South Lake Tahoe would be the best bet for the holidays. His family is spread out across the country so the Santa Barbara resident decided to make a shorter road trip.

"It's always good to have fun on Christmas," Matteson said.

Yun Mou and her husband brought their 4-year-old daughter to Sierra for her first time on skis. The San Jose couple has not been on skis for years, but said they were having fun. With

limited time off from work, they said this time of year is when they can make it to the mountains.

Being from China, they said Christmas isn't that big of a deal so it was just another ski day.

Many would say the best present was it being a Saturday without the usual crowds.

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