Lake Tahoe ski report, Feb. 11



Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe, says to wear yellow-bronze or rose tinted goggles today. Here is his ski report.

Small plates pack big flavor at Elements in Whistler



By Kathryn Reed

WHISTLER, British Columbia – Small plates with big flavor are what Elements restaurant is all about.

Even though Elements and the Summit Lodge & Spa at Whistler are not owned by the same people, the two are definitely connected. The restaurant has entrances from the street as well as inside the boutique hotel.

Tapas are what Elements is all about. Chef Erin Stone has been running the kitchen since October 2006.

LTN: What is your culinary background?

Stone: My passion for food and cooking began at a young age. I

grew up on a farm in New Zealand, so fresh food was always readily available. It was a case of picking fruit and vegetables from the garden for dinner each day. We raised our own animals for meat, too. I then went to a well renowned culinary school in my hometown of Wanganui from 2000-01. I began working in kitchens immediately and this became a part of my training too. In 2003, I left New Zealand to travel and learn different culinary techniques. I lived in England and Scotland from 2003-05 and also spent a lot of my time traveling and eating my way around Europe. I then moved to Canada in 2006. Ontario was my first stop where I spent a few months before moving to Whistler, BC. I have lived and worked here since.

LTN: I understand your tapas and breakfast are incredible. What makes each so special?

Stone: We make really flavorful food. Both our menus are extensive and there is something on there for everyone. At breakfast it varies from a traditional eggs Benedict, five varieties to choose from, to a stuffed ham and Brie French toast. Dinner is the same from a braised lentil, avocado and pickled beet dish to our salmon tartar. I use local quality ingredients to create my dishes and that really shows in the final product.

LTN: Are you preparing to do anything special for the Olympics?

Stone: We are not. We are open for business as usual with extended dinner hours. We open for breakfast at 8am and this is served until 2pm each day. Lunch is served weekdays from 11am-2pm and dinner is from 5pm until 12.30am each day.

LTN: What is your signature dish?

Stone: Wild BC Sockeye Salmon Tartar with Sundried Olives, Basil, Marinated Tomatoes, and a warm potato salad. I created this dish at the Whistler Chefs Challenge where I came in

second place.

With a vegetarian at the table and tapas being all about shared dishes, *Lake Tahoe News* did not try the following recipe while at Elements last month. More on what was devoured by *LTN* will be forthcoming in a future article.

Salmon Tartar

250gm salmon

1 T basil

1 T chopped sundried olives

1/2 lime, juiced

2 slow roasted roma tomatoes marinated in garlic, olive oil and basil

6 baby potatoes

Fresh sliced bread

Dice the potatoes and fry until crispy in olive oil, toss with the marinated tomatoes, salt and pepper. In another bowl combine the finely diced salmon, basil, olives, lime juice, a little salt and black pepper. Lay the salmon tartar on a plate and top with the potato salad, serve with the fresh bread.

STHS to initiate sports medicine discipline



By Kathryn Reed

To complement the world-class athletes and medical professionals who live and work in South Lake Tahoe, a sports medicine training facility is going to be built at South Tahoe High School.

Word came last week that Lake Tahoe Unified School District has locked in a nearly $2.5 million grant to build the facility. (The most that could be requested was $3 million.) Matching funds are needed. Those will come from the $64.5 million bond (aka Measure G) approved by voters in 2008.

This brings the total in matching funds from the state to $31 million.

Of the 220 grants submitted to the state to share the $250 million, LTUSD had the fourth highest score.

It will be at least next year before the actual check arrives, but notification means the district and its architects can go ahead with drawings.

Superintendent James Tarwater acknowledged at Tuesday's board meeting the work of Angela Swanson and Ivone Larson to make this a reality.

"Angela always smells out a nickel," Tarwater said of the former board member who is a consultant for LPA architects.

Larson is four-for-four in writing career technical education grants.

"No longer is there a separation of vocational education and college prep. We are putting them together and (students) are

getting hands-on experience," Larson said when interviewed at her office Wednesday afternoon. "Basically, everyone here will be in a career pathway."

The STHS principal said students and the community have expressed interest in sports medicine disciplines.

In many ways, the new facility will function as the lab component for existing classes offered at the high school. Sports medicine will be incorporated into freshmen seminar, health science, anatomy, physiology and biology, as well as the dental program.

Students will learn about being a physical therapist, could have enough education to be a certified personal trainer upon graduation, or be on their way to pre-med.

"We are redesigning what we are doing for the future of kids," Larson said. "We are placing kids in jobs right out of high school."

This type of secondary education could also get them into a prestigious four-year university.

A remodel of the gym was already written into the bond language, so the sports med facility is being incorporated into that along with a separate 7,800-square-foot building adjacent to the Blue and Gold gyms.

Although definitive architectural drawings have not been done, in the grant application is a description of what the district would like to build. The building is likely to include a classroom, physical therapy-conditioning area that will have devices similar to a PT office, whirlpool therapy, therapy pool, rooms with massage tables, a hand therapy room and all the appropriate equipment.

"There's a lot of expertise in our community with exercise and sports medicine that can be tapped into," said Steve Bannar,

one of the orthopedic surgeons from Barton Health who gave input before the grant was written. “I think there is a lot of potential.”

Bannar would like for it to become a training facility that athletes throughout the world would use. He touched on how the 1968 Olympic track athletes trained on the South Shore because of the elevation in preparation for the Mexico City Olympics.

Publisher’s note: ***On Friday, read about the options LTUSD has when it comes to the next round of bond sales regarding Measure G.***

Summit Lodge – the Zen of lodging at Whistler

By Susan Wood

WHISTLER, British Columbia – It’s hard to imagine a hotel steps away from one of North America’s most vibrant ski villages would find its guests sleeping like babies.

But that’s the Summit Lodge & Spa in Whistler – tranquil, serene, relaxing and quiet in a big way. It’s warm, inviting and comfortable, like the staff – with gas fireplaces in the lobby and rooms, local art hanging on the walls, Asian furnishings and some of the plushest robes ever.



Lobby at the Summit Lodge. Photos/Kathryn Reed

For an 11-year-old boutique hotel located in an area about to experience its busiest time by hosting the 2010 Winter Olympics, the staff and even the nature of the place seem to approach the prospect of being on a world stage with a reserved excitement and self-assuredness. It's not meant to be a Fairmont, Westin or Hilton with small villages inside. Instead, the Summit has comfort, style and character of its own. A Malaysian family, who also just opened Whistler's Aava Whistler Hotel near the base of the slopes, owns the Summit.

"Sometimes we compete with great difficulty. But the playing field can be very level when you're quiet," General Manager Rosemary Cook told *Lake Tahoe News* of competing with so many large hoteliers in a well-known luxury resort market.

A typical day at the Summit may start with rolling out of a comfortable king bed. From there, it's a flick of a switch for a gas fire and a glance out the two-story balcony at the outdoor heated swimming pool and hot tub. The plush robe competes with the slopes that are within walking distance or a short bus ride away.

Morning continues with coffee in the fully equipped kitchenette. It's as if a cook furnished the room. But breakfast today consists of a banana to make room for on-the-slopes French fries at noon. Then, it's save-yourself-for tapas at the Elements restaurant next door later that evening

before retiring for the evening in front of the movie “Downhill Racer” starring Robert Redford, which aired a few weeks before the Winter Olympics.

Nice touches make the morning pleasurable, with toiletries like seaweed soap from the Taman Sari Spa, which is located down the hall from the lobby. And yes, it’s nice knowing the thoughtfully placed clothesline across the bathtub shower can dry out a swimsuit in a few hours.

A quick check of emails sitting on the soft sofa was comfy for a limited time. With needing to plug into the free high speed



A room at the Summit.

Internet and not having it automatic, meant not being able to type at the table in a more comfortable business-like setting.

If playing tunes is the thing to do, the room comes with 40 digital music channels. Yoga kits, books and games are also available. Those with a bigger staff will find 866 square feet of meeting space to accommodate 80 people.

Before a day of skiing, the best treat for muscles is a hot tub â€“ with coffee in hand because one never wants to become too docile before facing a mega-mountain like Whistler Blackcomb.

The Summit provides ski lockers downstairs for an easy out to the city bus or to the hotel’s part-time shuttle service.

A five-minute walk from the Summit Lodge through the

invigorating Whistler Village provides access to the largest ski resort in North America with more than 8,000 acres and a 5,000-foot-plus vertical drop.

Only one ski resort comes close – Zermatt in Switzerland. In scenery and magnitude Whistler looks like a distant cousin from Europe.



The Summit is on the edge of Whistler Village.

Providing a desirable environment while helping the environment is a part of the plan. The Summit has implemented a recycling program throughout the hotel, including the reuse of soap, shampoo and lotion and composting food waste from Elements. High efficiency light bulbs have also been put in fixtures and lamps.

The Summit's general manager knows the feeling of falling in love with the place. The England native arrived from Bermuda 16 years ago and hasn't looked back.

"People will go on holiday and want to walk in and be impressed,"Coo k said. She keeps that in mind every day.

Cook advocates making improvements – whether they involve the property she manages or at the ski resort her guests come to play on. Albeit skeptical at first with its hefty $52 million price tag, she admits to now being a big supporter of Whistler Blackcomb's most notable mountain enhancement – its Peak-2-

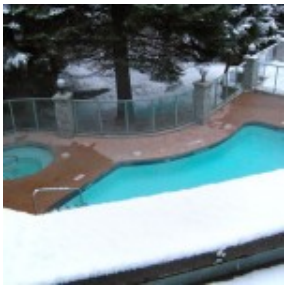
Peak Gondola. In 11 minutes, the largest unsupported gondola in the world can whisk skiers and boarders from one mountain to another.

After all, Cook came to Whistler with the sole purpose of learning to ski.

“I couldn’t imagine living anywhere else,” she said.

The sentiment may well be taken from her guests, who may not imagine spending a winter vacation anywhere else – especially for such a grand occasion as the Games. It may also apply to her vendors wanting to be a part of an event intended to instill peace and goodwill among nations.

Among its artwork, the Summit is displaying the acrylic paintings of Lynn Pocklington. Whistler will feature its ArtWalks during the Feb. 12-28 Olympics, and Pocklington]s bears and wolf installed at the Summit are on the route.



The hot tub and pool invite weary skiers.

“I am very excited to be a part of the ArtWalk during the Olympics. The Summit is the perfect place to be displayed being so close to everything in the village” Pocklington told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The local government commissioned artwork of black bears to represent the natural spirit of the mountain town. Prints will

be gifted to visiting delegates and VIPs of the Olympic Games.

Where to Go:

The Summit Lodge and Spa is located on Main Street steps away from the Whistler Village off the Sea to Sky Highway about 90 miles north of Vancouver. Rooms – which include 81 suites and studios – start at $169, with romance packages involving dinner, spa treatments and chocolate.

For more information, call 888.913.8811 or (604) 932.2778 or go to www.summitlodge.com.

Caltrans seeks comments on Hwy. 89 project

Comments are being taken until Feb. 26 regarding a water quality project Caltrans wants to do on Highway 89 on the South Shore on land owned by the U.S. Forest Service.

The project requires a highway easement of 40 feet on either side of the center line.

“The proposed highway easement is not expected to adversely affect the activities, features and attributes of the U.S. Forest Service Pope-Baldwin Recreation Area,” Caltrans documents state.

Click here to read the document.Â Then click on the El Dorado County icon.

North Lake Tahoe SnowFest

North Lake Tahoe celebrates its long winter season with SnowFest, a 10-day carnival and one of the regionâ€™s most popular annual family celebrations. SnowFest is scheduled for March 5-14 and will be at a variety of venues throughout North Lake Tahoe.

In its 29th year, SnowFest is expected to draw thousands of attendees, with the majority of events free to spectators.

The annual favorites are back, along with expanded special events, including the Opening Night Ceremonies, Laser Show, Torchlight Parade and Fireworks; Mamasake Extreme Food Challenge for those with a strong stomach; 20th Annual Gar Woods Polar Bear Swim in Tahoeâ€™s frigid waters; Tahoe City SnowFest Parade; Sunnyside Luau; the Great Ski Race, an annual cross country adventure; Kings Beach Ice Castle and Lighting Contest; Wacky Winter Human Bowling with snow saucers and inflatable pins; Tahoe City Golf Courseâ€™s â€œDog Pullâ€; Joe King Poker Tournament and the 2nd Annual Ta-Hoe Nalu Arctic Standup Paddleboard Race.

For more information about SnowFest and a complete list of events, visit www.tahoesnowfestival.com.

Haiti becomes a lesson in

giving and then some

By Kathryn Reed

Irene Kaelin couldnâ€™t control her students â€“ and that was a good thing.

The Tahoe Valley Elementary School fifth-grade teacher turned the tragedy of the Haiti earthquake into a lesson plan. But it started with her students. They wanted to raise money to help those in need.

â€œWhat an incredible experience,â€ Kaelin told the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board Tuesday night. â€œThe kids were so excited we had to run with it.â€

The goal was to raise $421 â€“ or $1 per student. A check was written this month for $1,265 to Doctors Without Borders.

Students Tianna Guerrero and Misty Parsh gave a short presentation to the board, too. They said talking in other classrooms and making announcements on the intercom were the hardest part of the project.

The students debated where to give the money. They did the research. They did the work.

Through it all, Kaelin was able to use the January tragedy in her reading, writing and social studies lessons.

Other schools in the district have also raised money for Haiti relief efforts, with a couple sites continuing to do so.

Ex-STHS coach Orlich honored for 700 wins

By Andy Boogaard, Fresno Bee

Jim McCall of Firebaugh and Tom Orlich of Clovis West are being recognized by their schools after each boys basketball coach reached a career milestone.

McCall coached his 900th game Friday night as Firebaugh remained unbeaten in the West Sierra League by winning 55-40 at home against Dos Palos. Former and present players, school officials, family and friends honored McCall for the milestone before the game.

Read the whole story

Cash stolen from SLT Wells Fargo

By Kathryn Reed

An undisclosed amount of cash was stolen Wednesday morning from the Wells Fargo Bank inside Raley's at the Y in South Lake Tahoe.

"He clearly walked in with purpose and knew where he was going," Detective Jeff Roberson, with the South Lake Tahoe Police Department said.

No weapon was seen, but the suspect did threaten to kill

someone if he didn’t get the money, Roberson said.

The suspect gave a handwritten note to a teller, who then handed over the cash. The suspect did not try to disguise his handwriting, Roberson said.

The FBI is involved, as agents are in all bank robberies. But it’s likely this will be handled by the city police because the amount of stolen cash does not meet the fed’s threshold for cases like this.

The suspect is described as being male, white, between 5-8 and 6-feet, 180-200 pounds, 35-45 years old, wearing black pants, white tennis shoes, a white ski parka with the hood on.

No one saw the suspect get in a vehicle. Officers are looking for the woman he passed on the way out of the store.

The bank is located to the far right of the grocery store near the produce section. People kept shopping while officers cordoned off the bank at 11:20am for a little more than an hour.

When reached by *Lake Tahoe News* on Wednesday, bank employees deferred comment to higher ups outside the branch. Those Wells Fargo officials did not call back.

NBC promising 1,000s of hours of Olympic coverage



The Olympics are the biggest media event in the world, with more than 10,000 accredited journalists and broadcasters following the action in Vancouver and Whistler.

NBC and its sister networks will be bringing hundreds of hours of coverage to the United States. The network says to expect more live coverage than ever. Coverage will be on TV and NBCOlympics.com.

Plus, Universal Sports TV and UniversalSports.com will be bringing daily news coverage live from Vancouver for the most in-depth overall coverage of any Olympics in history.

The USSA’s partner Yahoo will also be in Vancouver in force, and is expected to have one of the most heavily-trafficed Web sites in the world during the Games.