



Publication: Ski Magazine  
Section: Mountain Life

Date: January 2008  
Circulation: 450,193



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THEY'RE  
UNCROWDED.  
THEY'RE  
AFFORDABLE.  
THEY'RE READY  
TO GO BIG.  
THESE QUIET  
MOUNTAIN  
TOWNS ARE  
SKIDOM'S  
RISING STARS.

WHETHER  
YOU'RE LOOKING  
FOR YOUR NEXT  
VACATION—OR  
YOUR NEXT  
RELOCATION—  
NOW IS THE  
TIME TO GO.

**EARLY ADOPTER ALERT**  
Getting in on the ground  
floor of a ski resort takes  
work, a sense of adventure  
and some luck. Here's a head  
start, beginning with  
British Columbia's giant  
gem, Revelstoke.

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## Truckee, Calif.

Real people. Real skiing. The Sierras' working-class community grows into a starring role. By Susan Reifer

**Why Truckee** Founded in 1863, downtown Truckee maintains its historic brick-and-clapboard core and delivers the Victorian-meets-Wild-West appeal of more famous ski towns—but in a High Sierra style. Long home to the working (and skiing) locals of Lake Tahoe's west side, the unpretentious town is white-hot. The hook is the lifestyle, with great restaurants, gourmet wine shops, funky stores, golf courses, rambling pine forests and, of course, loads of easy-access skiing. Donner Lake is within town limits, and the Truckee River rolls through the core. "The mountains and the water are a great combination," says Marcy Dolan, owner of Sierra Shades and a hard-skiing mother of three. "The weather is nice. It's clean, it's wholesome, the schools are good and it's convenient in terms of being centrally located. When we think about moving, we can't think of another place we'd like better." Developers agree—so they're investing in Truckee and its constellation of ski resorts. With caps on growth and forthcoming amenities such as a 40,000-square-foot community center and 133

miles of bike trails, it's easy to see why Truckee is the Sierras' rising star.

**The Skiing** Eight ski resorts—including major destinations such as Squaw Valley and Northstar-at-Tahoe, as well as spacious gems like Alpine Meadows (under new ownership) and Sugar Bowl—deliver a whopping 11,550 skiable acres within 20 minutes of downtown Truckee. With 97 lifts, 560 trails and lift-ticket prices that start at \$25 (at tiny Soda Springs), it's hard not to find what you like—especially if that includes blue skies, Ponderosa pines, monolithic granite boulders, sweeping Sierra vistas and lots of snow.

**The Vibe** Truckee has always offered a laid-back mix of outdoorsy and functional, with '70s strip malls alongside a turn-of-the-century railroad-era core. Now it's also popular. Residency has swelled 15 percent since 2000, and home construction is booming. Joining Truckee's carpenters, nurses, patrollers, shop owners, realtors and laborers are entrepreneurs, Bay Area telecommuters and regular commuters (booming Reno is 40 minutes away). Truckee is also a haven for second-home owners, who hold 44 percent of the real estate. The resulting community is less gentrified than many

**OPTIONS** Truckee, Calif., residents are minutes away from a wide variety of resorts, including the sparkling new Village at Northstar.

ski towns, with part-time residents adding to, but not eclipsing, a vital community of workers, ski bums and families.

**The Life** Truckee satisfies a wide range of lifestyles, whether that means groceries from Safeway and dinner at the Sizzler or gourmet provisions from Florian's and sushi at Java. Elementary and middle schools rank well, as does the hospital, and Sierra College is expanding. But urban transplants are well advised to bring their careers—or think like entrepreneurs. While \$600,000 will buy a renovated '70s mountain home with three bedrooms on a half-acre, the median household income hovers near \$65,000. And if you've got your eye on that home on five acres for \$3 million, or even just a few nights at Northstar's new Ritz-Carlton (to open in 2009), then hammering nails between laps on Squaw's KT-22 just isn't going to cut it.

**The Visit** Join Bay Area throngs on the 200-mile drive east on I-80 from San Francisco, or fly into Reno and drive 35 miles west on I-80 instead. (Either way, a

**TRUCKEE POPULATION** 16,019 **MEDIAN AGE** 35.7 **MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME** \$65,100 **MEDIAN HOME PRICE** \$645,000  
**ELEVATION** 5,840 feet **ANNUAL SNOWFALL** 206 inches



winterized 4WD is advised.) Check into The Cedar House, one mile from Truckee's historic district, for an eco-friendly property with a boutique feel that merges industrial design with classic mountain lodge. For dinner, head downtown to Dragonfly for Asian fusion cuisine (reserve ahead) or to Cottonwood for California continental with Truckee's best view, then party at Bar of America with locals and visitors alike.

**Information** Squaw Valley: [squaw.com](http://squaw.com); 530-583-6985. Alpine Meadows: [skialpine.com](http://skialpine.com); 530-583-4232. Northstar-at-Tahoe: [northstarattahoe.com](http://northstarattahoe.com); 800-466-6784. Sugar Bowl: [sugarbowl.com](http://sugarbowl.com); 530-426-9000. Truckee Chamber of Commerce: [truckee.com](http://truckee.com); 530-587-8808