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COME HOME TO LAKE TAHOE: Homewood/Alpine Meadows/Squaw Valley/Granlibakken

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The day dawned with an amazing sunrise, alpenglow on the mountains across Lake Tahoe and a bluebird sky to beat any postcard. The view out our hotel window at Harvey's (www.harveyslaketahoe.com) showed a spectacular moon setting in a clear sky over the mountains across the lake. We were off to our next adventure across Lake Tahoe aboard The Bleu Wave.



Sunrise and moonset over Lake Tahoe



Bleu Wave nameplate

After schlepping ski gear (provided by the extremely great service-oriented Ski Butlers folks, www.skibutlers.com) and baggage out the South Shore pier to the yacht, we boarded The Bleu Wave Homewood Ski Shuttle Cruise, www.bleuwave.com. Friendly, patient crew members stowed our gear, boots and baggage aboard, while we climbed inside to first enjoy a continental breakfast and then, incredible views on this perfectly calm and blue sky day.



Luggage on deck



Ski boots in stateroom



Peeps aboard boat having breakfast



Smooth lake looking forward

Following the many days of bluebird skiing at Lake Tahoe South Shore ski areas, www.heavenly.com, we shifted into a West and North Shore jaunt to experience the elegance of a bit of a different kind of Lake Tahoe. More like the original Lake Tahoe. What was yesterday. It exposed an interesting mix of what was old Lake Tahoe or should we say we were easing our way into vintage Lake Tahoe aboard the Blue Wave of the future.



Looking back at Heavenly

This family-owned and operated cruise sports yesterday’s prices: \$99 per adult; \$40 kids 5-12; kids under 5 free. But better yet! This includes RT boat ride, breakfast on the trip over, full day ski pass at Homewood, apres ski cruise with appetizers and a fully stocked bar on the way back to the South Shore.
<http://www.tahoebleuwave.com/public-cruises.php>, TahoeBleuWave.com, [1-775-588-9283](tel:1-775-588-9283), [1-866-413-0985](tel:1-866-413-0985)

The hour-long voyage across the lake on this calm morning was spectacular—the water smooth, the sky blue, the sun beaming and the wind nil. Views of the Homewood ski resort loomed in the distance on the west shore across glassy waters.

Local lore has a couple of mantras that make local sense. On a powder day you want to get to uncrowded Homewood powder, but you can’t drive over highway 89 since it’s closed because of the snow dump. So—“It’s a boat day.” (Take the boat across the lake, dummy.)

And when it’s windy on the South Shore, “it’s a Homewood day” because Homewood is wind-protected. Homewood’s local lore is a secret worth a listen up.



Approaching the Homewood Ski Resort

Homewood Ski Area: Land at the dock of the West Shore Cafe and Inn, cross the street and you’re at the base of Homewood Ski area, a blast from the past with ticket prices you haven’t seen since the 60s.
www.WestShoreCafe.com, www.SkiHomewood.com

And the views from Homewood rival those anywhere on the lake.



View of Lake Tahoe from West Shore Lodge and Cafe

Homewood lift ticket price sign



Steve and Gracie on top of Homewood

Then off to Granlibakken, www.granlibakken.com, an elegant rustic collection of condos and cabins in the woods with a definite European flavor about six miles north of Homewood, just half a mile south of Tahoe City. Granlibakken has a corporate conference center focus but with a family-friendly ambience as well. There is a small but mighty spa on property, a swimming pool, hot tub and a totally fun 300 foot elevation ski hill with a sliding hill, poma lift and t-bar.



Granlibakken ski lodge



Inside the ski lodge



Old-fashioned sled



New-fashioned sleds

Sustained by hearty meals at The Cedar House Pub that evening and breakfast buffets in the main lodge the next morning, we shuttled off to ski Squaw Valley www.squawvalley.com, then Alpine Meadows www.alpinemeadows.com followed by a thrilling finish to the three-ski-areas-in-one-day-record at the mighty 300 vertical steps of Granlibakken.

Granlibakken’s history reaches back to the turn of the 20th century when commercially operated skiing and “snowplay” in the area gained popularity. Granlibakken’s ski jumping area then was called Olympic Hill, but most everyone came to slide. Famed jumpers Alf Engen and Lars Haugen sparked interest in the sport and for those less athletic, toboggans were de rigueur.

Although we didn’t jump the ski jump, we relished the gracious ambience of “the hillside sheltered by fir trees” (Norwegian translation for Granlibakken) and its history, as well as the nearby skiing at Homewood, Squaw and Alpine, just jumps away from our elegant, woodsy Granlibakken.

Herewith, links included in story:

- www.skibutlers.com
- www.bleuwave.com
- www.heavenly.com
- www.harveyslaketahoe.com
- www.SkiHomewood.com
- www.WestShoreCafe.com
- www.granlibakken.com
- www.squawvalley.com
- www.alpinemeadows.com



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