

# VIA's new train park

❖ Jasper and Marmot Basin après ski (and avant ski) will soon have something no other ski area can offer. New winter weekend train service between Edmonton and Jasper will turn a mostly tedious, sometimes strenuous roadtrip into a luxurious cruise. Convenient Friday and Sunday evening departures aboard VIA's Snow Train Express "The Canadian," complete with panoramic dome cars, begin rolling out of the station January 12 and continue every weekend throughout ski season. With the bar car open and the children playing games down in the lounge, Edmonton weekend warriors will be the envy of ski country. [www.viarail.ca](http://www.viarail.ca), [www.skimarmot.com](http://www.skimarmot.com)



## Toughening up Whistler

❖ Move over Kitzbühel—the 2010 Olympic women's downhill course in Whistler is rumoured to be among the world's most demanding. Rob Boyd, National Women's Speed Coach, said the course is guaranteed to make racers quake with fear.

"This is hands down going to be one of the toughest courses out there—it's challenging from top to bottom. I would like to see it become a classic like Kitzbühel in Austria," Boyd said.

Otherwise known as Franz's Run, construction of the women's downhill course is finished, despite finding a vulnerable tail frog species near the alpine site and so portions of the ski course were diverted. Temporary structures for the Games will be set up in August 2009, but until then

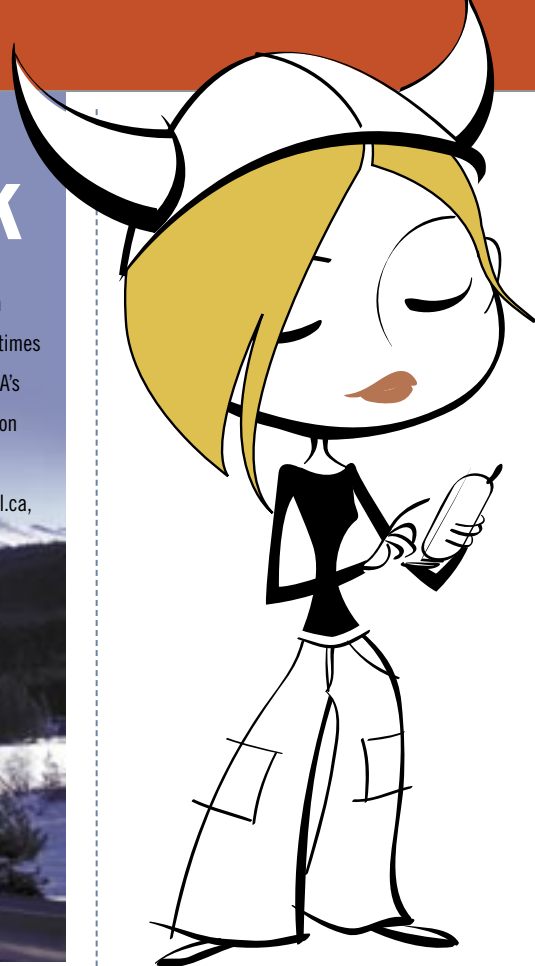
Canadian racers have access to the infamous course.

"The training we can have on this course is unparalleled," Boyd said. "This course will be an Olympic legacy and I hope it becomes infamous on the World Cup circuit."

Improvements at Whistler Creekside are expected to cost \$26.3 million and include upgrading to the men's and women's downhill courses, additions to the existing snowmaking system and an enhanced reservoir for snowmaking. The men's events in 2010 will take place on the Dave Murray Downhill, which is already a well-respected and challenging course.

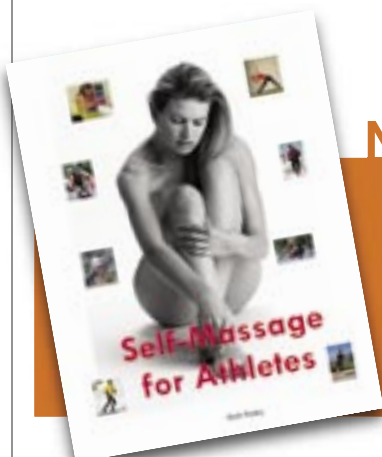
In the meantime, mild-mannered skiers can test their skills on both courses. So imagine the crowds, get down and feel the fury of one of the roughest Olympic venues in existence.

—Kim Thompson



## MY NAME IS URRL

❖ Whistler Blackcomb's "If Ullr Was A Girl" contest offers a prize purse of \$25,000 for a female skier or snowboarder who's crowned Ullr Girl. The contest addresses the Scandinavian myth of Ullr, god of justice and duelling, but best known for invoking snowfall. Although Ullr is cast as a male in ancient myth, Ullr Girl is a search of the ultimate mountain girl—someone with a passion for skiing and snowboarding who can rip it up on and off the slopes. Women are invited to enter in two categories—an Open category that includes all pro athletes, and an Amateur category. The contest will culminate at Whistler's 2007 TELUS World Ski & Snowboard Festival April 13-22, 2007. Voting on [www.ifullrwasagirl.com](http://www.ifullrwasagirl.com).



## New on the bookshelf

❖ Self-massage is a touchy subject. Indeed, we were surprised that an e-mail with "self-massage" in the subject line could get through our spam filters here at *Ski Canada*—but the book arrived by mail and we agree, skiers will find a use for it. Whether you want to relieve sore muscles or reduce the chance of injury, *Self Massage for Athletes* has a ton of useful information, simple techniques and photos to cover body parts you never thought you could reach. As Boulder, Colorado, based author Rich Poley says, "A great massage will never be farther away than your fingertips." US\$20 plus shipping and customs, [www.selfmassageforathletes.com](http://www.selfmassageforathletes.com)

# Mistaken identity

❖ Gear-heads who know their ski cosmetics will already have noticed we mixed up the photo last issue in showing the Easy Cruising category results in the women's ski test. Here's the snappy little number again to refresh your memory.

## ATOMIC B 9:7 | \$899\*

LENGTHS AVAILABLE:  
141, 150\*, 159\*, 168

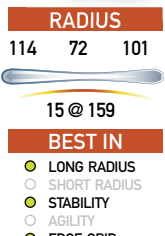
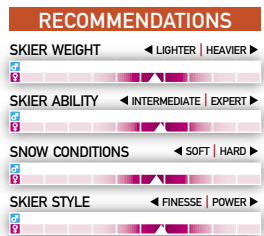


This ski ranked near the top in all criteria. It impressed testers with its ability to feel like a high-performance ski at civilized speeds. Wide performance range and trustworthy design inspired confidence, even at higher speeds.

🗨 Energetic, lively, incredible do-anything ski. Great personality and easy-to-find sweet spot. Comfortable in all turn shapes and easy to carve. — LAURALEE BOWIE

🗨 Stable and forgiving in low intermediate-type turns. When I added more performance, it reacted like a slalom ski—quick, snappy turns. — MELANIE KAMPHUIS

🗨 A ski to take the intermediate skier to the next level. It's a solid ski that you can push right through to high-speed carving. — HEIDI LEONARD



\*Suggested Retail (with bindings). Lengths tested: \*(women).



❖ The youngest member of the Ontario Ski Team, Erin Mielzynski of Caledon, Ontario, is the latest \$1,000 recipient from the BMO Mastercard Ski Canada Award. The 16-year-old rookie skis out of Georgian Peaks and is ranked nationally (by age) 2<sup>nd</sup> in GS, 7<sup>th</sup> in slalom, 8<sup>th</sup> in GS and 12<sup>th</sup> in downhill. A portion of purchases made using the skiers' Mastercard go toward several charities each year, including some of the fastest racers in the country. For more information, contact your provincial ski association—and to get the card, call 800/263-2263.

## 50+ Winter Games February 2-4th 2007 Mont Tremblant

❖ I once read on a T-shirt that older skiers don't die, they just go over the hill. If "Jackrabbit" Smith-Johannsen did it until the tender age of 112, then most of us can surely assume that skiing after pushing 50 is as safe as eating fibre.

To promote a healthy lifestyle and prove once and for all that many baby boomers and retirees are as active as ever, the seniors group FADOQ is organizing the first edition of the "50 and better" Winter Games, to be held at Mont Tremblant February 2-4.

The Games will include downhill skiing (with both a GS and dual slalom, sans pro jumps) with Masters co-ordinator and ex-national-teamer François Jodoin at the helm, cross-country skiing with sprints, classic or skate-style, and good old-fashioned shinny hockey. Competitive and recreational categories are open to all participants, estimated at 600 for the start-up year. "Our goal is to invite as many active seniors from all over the country and the U.S., even Europe, to join us in Mont Tremblant and make this event an annual phenomenon where the younger generations can cheer in amazement and athletes can lead by example," said Michael Leduc, the organizer behind this ambitious project. Reason number 1,087 to take your vitamins: no more clichés of Florida condos, Bengay and rocking chairs, this salt-and-pepper crowd is ready for some serious winter fun.

More info: 877/429-5858 ext. 450, [www.jeuxdhiver50plus.org](http://www.jeuxdhiver50plus.org).

—Marie-Piere Belisle Kennedy



## At what price paradise?

❖ It's a bittersweet moment when Banff residents get their annual tax bill increase. Although the town's population is just above 7,000, roads, water and sewer systems support more than 30,000 overnight visitors on an average summer day and millions each year. Its location in Canada's No. 1 national park means that Banff is a \$500-million cash cow for three levels of government, but it only receives infrastructure grants based on its permanent population. That's the biggest reason that skiing Mayor John Stutz (his son Paul races on the national alpine ski team) would like to see Banff granted "special resort municipality status." Similar to Whistler and 10 other B.C. towns, it would give more money back to Banff to maintain town services, without placing the entire burden on residents. On a bluebird day and looking up at the snowy ski slopes of Norquay, tax worries often fade. For some, it's well worth the price of paradise.

—Monica Andreef

## Custom Capital idea

❖ Take one part aspen, one part maple and a light walnut veneer, add some R&D and lots of hard work. Greg Funk, owner and shaper for Capital Custom Ski Co., hand makes one-of-a-kind skis in his Pemberton workshop. Choose from one of Funk's designs—he competes in freeskiing comps on them—or come up with your own. Fourteen hours later a pair of skis emerge. "That's a lot longer than most ski manufacturers," he says. "I think some big ski manufacturers pump out a pair every 15 minutes." Being one of the few custom skimmers and Funk's ski-bum priorities mean you better order now for next season. In 2006, Funk capped the number of orders he would take and sold out by mid-July. "I didn't get in enough skiing last year," he says. "I'm not much of a businessman, obviously." [www.capitalskis.com](http://www.capitalskis.com)

—Ryan Stuart



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