

Fireplaces increase ambiance in ski country

Publisher's note: *This is an excerpt from a longer story about fireplaces in Western ski towns.*

At California's North Lake Tahoe is a historic fireplace handcrafted in the 1940s by Wayne Poulsen, who founded the Squaw Valley USA ski resort after World War II.

"Wayne and his wife built the European-style fireplace by hand for what originally was their house. They did it with individual rocks they collected from the hills around the valley. Now it's a major floor-to-ceiling attraction in the lobby of my Graham's Restaurant," said owner Graham Rock (www.dinewine.com).

"The restaurant is only a half-mile from Squaw Valley's base lifts and site of the 1960 Winter Olympic Games," he adds. "Our main dining room has an even bigger wood-burning fireplace where diners strive to reserve a table that faces the hearth."

A Swiss-born family owns Tahoe House Bakery just south of Tahoe City, where skiers gather morning and afternoon to feast on European-style pastries such as apple strudel. On cold days, they move closer to the bakery's 40-year-old, double-sided rock fireplace to get warm while also consuming gourmet delights and brewed-to-order coffee.

Read the whole story