

Rahľves proves Sugar Bowl is a young 70

By Susan Wood

It's expected to be one sweet year for Sugar Bowl Resort atop Donner Summit.

The skier's paradise known for deep snow, much character and a magical Disney history will join Squaw Valley USA in celebrating a milestone during the 2009-10 season by commemorating 70 years of bringing joy to skiers and boarders. There's nothing "mini" about it.

Sugar Bowl lovers will want to mark their calendars Jan. 25-31 for "Season 70," a weeklong celebration.



Daron
Rahľves

To kick off the season slated to start Nov. 25, the resort will co-host with Alpine Skills International a "Backcountry Ball" featuring an evening of dining, music and educational presentations from Sierra Avalanche Center on Nov. 21. Tickets are \$15. The event coincides with Sugar Bowl's opening of its Backcountry Adventure Center in the Village on the lower floor of the Ski and Sport Chalet building. Along with an array of backcountry rental equipment on hand, comprehensive survival training seminars and outings with certified guides will be on tap.

Backcountry skiing may be a growing trend for outdoor enthusiasts, but downhill or a version of it is still the name

of the game at Sugar Bowl.

The season will ramp up like no other with Sugar Bowl constructing a skier cross/boarder X track on the Tunnel 41 trail that emulates the one to be built at Cypress Mountain for the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver. The resort's own downhill racing great Daron Rahlves will train alongside Jayson Hale before going off to the Olympics in February to compete in the newly sanctioned sport.

Rahlves, the most decorated American downhill and Super G skier in history, came out of downhill retirement to make a splash in the skier cross scene. In 2008, the 36-year-old ski veteran took the top podium in the sport at the Winter X Games in a nail-biting win.

Rahlves calls the current evolution of his career a "transition" that harks back on his childhood on Tahoe's slopes.

"I used to have so much fun racing my buddies down the hill," he told *Lake Tahoe News*. "You can just go crazy with the sport, and it was time to do something new."

To get a closer glimpse of the sport, the resort will host more than 35 skier cross competitors March 27-29.

Also new in improvements this year, the Summit Chair can whisk 1,200 skiers and riders to the ridge top of the famed Judah Bowl at every hour. Upon the return to the chair, the newly remodeled Judah Lodge will be in full swing with full food service and bar offerings from the Sierra Vista Bar and Grill. Eat, drink, watch a game or just relax by the fire.

The lodge will host a free screening of selected films from the San Francisco Independent Film Festival on Feb. 27-28.

Hitting the slopes of Sugar Bowl will cost an adult skier and rider \$66, \$72 on the holidays. However, bargains can still be

had through programs such as "General Admission." Skiers and boarders ages 13 to 69 who buy any lift ticket Monday through Friday can receive daily bonuses on basic rentals or group lessons at any level.

To learn more, access Sugar Bowl at www.sugarbowl.com or (530) 426.9000. The ski resort is located off Interstate 80 at Donner Summit.