

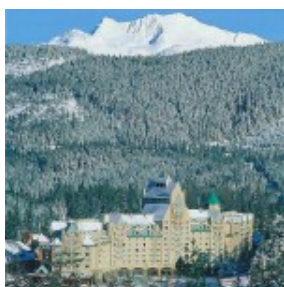
Fairmont Chateau Whistler – Luxurious mountain lodging

By Susan Wood

WHISTLER, British Columbia – On first impression, second impression and lasting impression, the majestic nature of the Fairmont Chateau Whistler comes across as striking.

Outside the slopeside window, in particular from the 10th floor, the views invigorate and excite.

Opening the small, standing-room-only balcony door offers mountain breezes off the Wizard Express chairlift runs, which is just steps away from the resort.



Chateau
Fairmont
Whistler
Photo/Provided

Directly below, a hot tub and drink at the Mallard Lounge fire pits beckon the weary. There are even poolside cocktails from the lounge if going for a longer soak in hot water. Expect a crowd in late afternoon.

The hotel comes with the grand distinction of being the first with ski-in, ski-out access to Whistler Blackcomb.

The hotel's grandeur complements the mountain whose base it sits at. It is practically a village unto itself. One never

needs to leave the premise – it's like an inclusive resort without one bill. This isn't a resort just for skiers and snowboarders. Non-hotel guests can also enjoy the restaurants, shops and spa.

The management and staff have thought of everything in the world of hospitality. And their enthusiasm to please guests is evident in every level of staff. Listening to them interact with customers proved the importance they put on guest relations.

And now, the biggest international sporting event will be staged in their backyard. They're booked for the occasion. The Olympics are Feb. 12-28.

"We are welcoming the world during the 2010 Winter Games to Whistler – this incredible year-round destination. We will be looking to maximize how we can benefit from the exposure of the 2010 Winter Olympic Games and being on the world stage," General Manager Roger Soane told *Lake Tahoe News*.

By most standards, the Fairmont Chateau Whistler is more than a hotel. It's an experience.

The lobby has that grand hotel, high-ceiling architectural style that gives the visitor a sense of arriving in luxury. Accents of art and antiques dot the common areas and deck the halls. One hallway leads to 28,000 square feet of conference- and meeting-room space – with a new 12,000-square-foot ballroom for events.

The hotel was last remodeled in 1997.

Being a four-season resort, the patio also features a lap pool with underwater music. Another swimming pool starts outside and spills indoors to the spa and workout area. Inclement weather and chilly Canadian temperatures have a way of bringing people in swimsuits inside to a balmy room where steam billows from the sauna and the inside hot tub. A full

fitness center and spa with a variety of treatments provide places to work the muscles then work out the kinks. (See more on that in a future *Lake Tahoe News* story.) Recommended: a hot stone massage can be just the answer for muscles wanting to succumb to heat and pressure.

Ideas abound for those who stay in for the day to eat, drink, be pampered, shop and wander to their heart's delight.

One hallway meanders past the Mallard Lounge and Terrace, with inside seating flanking a dual-sided wood fireplace with cushy chairs. Settling in by the fire on the cozy sofa is certainly an option if one is accustomed to eating at a coffee table. Recommended: the mountain burger with French fries and a razzle dazzle drink rarely mixed at home. (You won't be hungry the next morning until viewing the menus again.)

A full breakfast buffet including an omelet bar is set up in the Wildflower restaurant, which is transformed into a fine dining option for dinner. Fondue is served in the Wildflower entryway in mid-afternoon. Recommended: the seafood chowder is a perfect complement to the wild salmon with maple syrup glaze accompanied by local British Columbia wines.

Light meals can be picked up at the Portabello Market and Fresh Bakery downstairs.

On this level are also the ski valet, shops and galleries.

And aside from a comprehensive adults and kids in-room dining menu, even Fido can get food. The Fairmont is pet-friendly. All shapes, sizes and pedigrees can be found stepping in and out of elevators and rooms.

Along with a slew of amenities, views come standard in the 550 rooms at the Fairmont Chateau Whistler – of the Upper Whistler Village, valley and slopes.

The touches of creature comforts and convenience are important

here.

Spacious closets allow room for ski boots and extra clothing that comes with winter travel. A coffee and tea maker pulls out on a shelf from the television cabinet with a refreshment rack close by.

When lounging on the comfy bed or on the Internet at the work desk, use the fluffy bathrobe to live in and expect to be plenty warm.

Note: careful with the heating controls because you could be sweating by the time you wake up. The towels are a bit worn and should not be laundered with the standard hotel detergent that has a distinct chemical smell.

And bring your wallet. Rooms start at \$337 a night, and luxury goes up from there.

The Fairmont Chateau Whistler provides a la carte romance plans and multi-day skier packages. The resort can arrange activities designed to fill an outdoor enthusiast's day in winter and summer – including playing at the resort's 18-hole golf course and scheduling mountaintop barbecues and glacier picnics.

Other notables:

The hotel features a rooftop wedding chapel.

They grow herbs on-site.

Singer Seal gave an impromptu performance after his marriage proposal to model Heidi Klum.

The hotel was featured on the "The Bachelor".

Where to go:

The Fairmont Chateau Whistler is located on Chateau Boulevard at the base of Blackcomb Mountain in the Upper Village of

Whistler, about 90 miles north of Vancouver off the Sea to Sky Highway. The Chateau is part of the Fairmont's chain of luxury hotels situated on the beaches from Hawaii to Bermuda and the urban digs from New York to San Francisco.

Reservations:

Call 800.606.8244 or (604) 938.8000

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