

From top: Landing on the Serratus Glacier. Bear family watching tourists on Whistler. Hands-free ziplining



HIGH-END, HIGH UP

There's more to Whistler than boarders and bunny hills — the year-round resort is a place for once-in-a-lifetime adventures

BY SHERI RADFORD

PICNIC ON A GLACIER

Smitten suitors couldn't hope for a more memorable way to propose. After boarding a helicopter in nearby Squamish, lovebirds get a bird's-eye view of the Squamish Valley, then land on the Serratus Glacier to frolic in the snow, enjoy treats from the picnic basket, bask in the sunshine, take in the view of the Tantalus Mountain Range and (perhaps) pop the question. Even if you're not in love when you start this tour, you're bound to be smitten — at least with the scenery.

May to Sep. Glacier Air, 604-898-9016 or toll-free 1-800-265-0088. www.glacierair.com

SEE BEARS UP CLOSE

If zoos seem artificial and a jungle safari isn't on the agenda this year, then Michael Allen has the wildlife tour for you. After researching black bears (*Ursus americanus*) for almost a quarter of a century, Allen is Whistler's undisputed expert on the animal. The self-taught researcher knows each of the area's bears by name and can rattle off their habits and hang-outs. Throughout the summer, he takes small groups to view and photograph the furry celebrities in their natural habitat, while the bears seem indifferent toward their awestruck paparazzi.

May 15 to Oct. 31. Toll-free 1-800-766-0449. www.whistlerblackcomb.com/todo/summer/bears

FLY THROUGH THE AIR

Ziplines allow everyone, from adventurous kids to free-spirited octogenarians and daredevils in wheelchairs, to experience the exhilaration of flying along, 55 m (180 ft) in the air, at 80 kph (50 mph). Though this may sound terrifying, it's less risky than dangling from a tire swing because each ziptrekker is outfitted with a helmet and climbing harness before being attached to virtually indestructible stainless-steel ziplines. Adrenalin junkies seeking to increase the thrill factor can choose to take the plunge backwards.

Year-round. Ziptrek Ecotours, 604-935-0001 or toll-free 1-866-935-0001. www.ziptrek.com



PHOTOS (RIGHT) GREG EYMUNDSON, COURTESY TOURISM WHISTLER; (CENTRE) MICHAEL ALLEN, COURTESY TOURISM WHISTLER; (ABOVE) KK LAW