

## I HEART SNOW!

SQUAW VALLEY & ALPINE MEADOWS

Much like people used to toss toddlers in a pool to teach them to swim, I learned to ski in Squaw Valley by taking a chairlift to the top of the mountain and skiing down. I did not learn in a little tykes school. I was 14 when Santa brought me skis, poles, boots, and a puffy blue and white chevron-striped jacket. My father carted me to the top of a fairly difficult run and told me to ski down. I still laugh when I see the photos of my wide metal-mouth smile with a bowl cut and a Tahoe 1980 rainbow T-shirt in those old photos.

A lot has changed since then. Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows have invested nearly \$8 million in capital improvements for the 2013-14 winter season that is part of year three of the resorts' five-year, \$70 million renaissance designed to improve all facets of the resort experience. The first two years' \$38 million investment brought new chairlifts, expanded kids activities, opened new restaurants, redesigned terrain parks, and put in the world's first ski-in/ski-out Starbucks. The improvements continue this winter with a new Wanderlust yoga studio (Squaw Valley was the birthplace of the Wanderlust Festival, now the world's largest and fastest-growing music and yoga festival), \$1.2 million in lodging improvements, electric car chargers, Mtn Roots food trucks, and a mid-mountain beer garden at Alpine Meadows.

The slope-side condominium suites at The Village at Squaw Valley received \$1.2 million in renovations this past summer to complete the spacious residences in one-, two- and three-bedroom options

with a full kitchen, fireplace, balcony, and bathroom for every bedroom in the unit – perfect for families.

But much at the 3,600-acre Squaw Valley resort remains the same. California weather, with a myriad of activities nearby, as well as accessibility (spend a few days in San Francisco and head over to Tahoe for a long weekend or week of mountain fun), combine to make these resorts world-class destinations. And the view never changes. There is something exquisite about looking down from the frosty white mountain, dotted with emerald snow-dusted trees, and seeing Lake Tahoe in all its glory below. Visit between December 26-31 to ski or snowboard with Jonny Moseley, the Olympic gold medalist. He has demo events and tours planned on both mountains that week.

Squaw's sister mountain, Alpine Meadows, founded in 1961 by a group of avid San Francisco skiers, has 2,400 skiable acres, 75 percent of which are rated intermediate or advanced. I love the Saturday afternoon music festivals on the sundeck that continue throughout spring. Alpine Meadows offers skiers and riders access to more than 100 trails across 2,400 skiable acres serviced by 13 lifts. With its high annual snowfall, the resort boasts one of Tahoe's longest skiing and boarding seasons. Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows joined forces in November 2011, bringing the two ski resorts under common ownership. Skiers and riders can now access 6,000 skiable acres, 43 lifts and 270-plus trails at Squaw and Alpine Meadows on one lift ticket or season pass. – SUZETTE LIPSCOMB



### Ski Free

Guests just off the airplane can ski or ride the afternoon and evening for free. Present a same-day commercial airline boarding pass with a matching photo ID at Squaw Valley's new Tickets, Passes and Snowsports building and receive a complimentary lift ticket good for the rest of the afternoon as well as night skiing, when night skiing is in effect.

#### GO THERE

- [squaw.com](http://squaw.com)
- [skialpine.com](http://skialpine.com)