

## Veggie Tour - Under The Sorcerer's Spell

Contributed by Conor Hurley  
Sunday, 04 March 2007

The alarm screamed out in the still of the pre-dawn night, a harsh awakening from my short lived and not so great sleep. It was 3:30 a.m. and time was already running short. It's 160 km from Revelstoke to Golden; however, the crux, Roger's Pass, lies between the two towns. This winter the pass has been a backcountry skier's dream come true, but for the wayward traveler with a deadline to make, it can be a harrowing venture.

The Veggie Road

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Dispatch 11

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Colin with Mt. Begbie in the background.

True to my style I was pushing the envelope a little. I really didn't have any good excuse except for a radical of ski touring the day before, which rendered me incapable of driving the arduous road leading to the Sorcerer Lodge staging area. With the car nearly packed, I crossed my fingers and cycled the glow plugs. The indicator light went off and I hesitantly turned the key further to start the engine. After cranking for a few moments the Benz roared to life, shattering the Saturday morning silence.

While backing out of the parking space and pulling out onto one of Revelstoke's snow packed streets, my thoughts drifted back to the previous day's adventure. Following suit with the rest of the trip, it started out with a late night rally to meet up with someone I'd never met before. Rob was Mike's roommate, who happened to have worked with Shauna; however, Mike was out of town so he hooked us up with Rob for a ski date. To add some more new faces, there happened to be a car with a Vermont license plate parked at the hostel in Revelstoke. Curiosity got the better of me, so I milled about the parking lot to see who they were. Finally, Colin and Genevieve and their dog Happy emerged from the hostel. Before long we were talking about the green hills and dirt roads that make Vermont such a great place. Eventually, we all decided it would be a great idea to spend the day skiing together.

Not more than 10 minutes outside of town lies Mt. McPhearson, which hosts staple runs such as the Five Fingers and The Womb—all north aspect lines clearly visible from downtown Revelstoke. Under blue skies we made our way up to the top of the ridge, where we found unfettered views of the town and all the peaks surrounding it. With visibility and stability on our side, we decided to venture further up the mountain towards the summit. Any thoughts of skiing of the summit were squashed as we neared the entrance of The Womb, where the winds were hammering the alpine above. Quickly we tore hide and started our descent into the steep, rock walled bowl, which kicks off a line of gargantuan proportions.

The horn of a freight train tore me out of my daydream, kicking off a new blast of adrenaline. The clock was ticking it was a little after 4 a.m. and I was still in Revelstoke. All the excitement of getting back on skis was having drastic effects on my organization, and some of the minor details had slipped by the wayside. Somewhere and sometime that morning, I was supposed to hop on a helicopter destined for Sorcerer Lodge.

Luck was on my side as I came tearing into the parking lot of the staging area. It took a little early morning internet research at one of the hotels along the way and bit of bleary eyed driving, but I managed to make it with a bit of time to spare. Little did I know I had already earned one of Sorcerer's coveted awards, Gertrude the stuffed duck. For those who have been to Sorcerer or those who might be thinking of going there, beware, for there are plenty of spying eyes ready to record any mistake that might merit a duck nomination. Being late, a good wipe out, or forgetting a backpack all could end up in a day spent carrying a stuffed duck over the glaciated terrain of Sorcerer Lodge. Needless to say, Gertrude and I became good friends by the end of the week.

All in all, there were 18 of us flying in that morning. We came from California, Colorado, Minnesota, New Mexico, and Golden. Even though we came from different corners of the world we were all brought together by the quest for adventure in the mountains. Our fearless leaders for the trip would be Bruno and Brian, two people with different styles, but equally gifted in their talents. Bruno has penchant for traveling on glaciers, booting up anything and taking his guests on tours and traverses of epic proportions. Brian, on the other hand, has one of the keenest senses of smell for powder I have ever seen; in a week that yielded 12-20 cm of snow, he managed to find a stash yielding gratuitous face shots everyday.

Each morning the guides were faced with tough conditions and each morning they were able to come up with a plan that satisfied all tastes. Between the two of them, they demonstrated over and over again the professionalism required to safely guide clients over any sort of terrain. Lunches and breaks were filled with their gift of gab, and nary a dull moment was had. Tirelessly they broke trail up and down the mountains and glaciers, enabling everyone to enjoy seven days of wicked touring.

While the time at Sorcerer all stands out, there was one day when the stars were aligned and we woke up to clear skies. The route was set and so were we, so off we headed towards a perfect day. Skinning, skiing and booting, we made our way across glaciers, notches and cols. At every turn of the head, there was a new view worthy of a postcard. The smile on Pete's face left no room for words as he skinned by me in the afternoon sun. We were out there and for the time being, nothing else mattered.

Isaac breaking trail.

Genevieve heading towards the womb.

Isaac in the Selkirks.

Day 1 at Sorcerer.

Bruno and Tanya.

Conor going retro.

Little Matterhorn.

Booting up Bruno's Notch

Conor on Perfect Glacier

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