

Veggie Tour - The Entry

Contributed by Conor Hurley
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The Veggie Road

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The Entry

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SOL Mountain Touring.

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I was into the routine after my fourth day of skiing deep powder in the morning and working my ass off in the afternoon. Wake up, ski tour, come home, eat and work until bedtime. It seems as though I've been here for an eternity, the

timeless days blending into dark Monashee nights, leaving me in tune with my surroundings and a world away from anything else.

Ealu and Conor doing laps in the Monashees at Sol Mountain Lodge.

After scoring a tank of biodiesel from Gary and Lila of Agri-Green Bio-Diesel I drove from Bozeman to Fernie, the sucking up my last bit of vegetable oil, so I turned to next best option. I set out for Revelstoke with a tank of B-90 (90 percent biodiesel and 10 percent petroleum diesel).

I was slightly concerned about my fuel gelling up as the temperature was starting to drop. I topped the tank off with some diesel halfway through the trip to ensure that I would not run into any problems, as I had to catch up with Aaron early the next morning. Snow covered roads, elk grazing on both sides and deer dive-bombing me from all directions kept me on my toes as I tried to make my way from Fernie to Revelstoke.

I wrote my last dispatch while sitting in a Best Western parking lot at about 10 p.m. I had to get it done—I figured I wouldn't get to an Internet connection for some time. After sending it off, I hit the road heading west from Golden to Revelstoke passing through Rogers Pass, home to some of BC's fabled backcountry terrain.

Just when I thought I couldn't go any farther, I pulled into the 7-Eleven parking lot in Revelstoke at 1:30 a.m. It was all I could do to get a couple of hours of sleep. It may seem like a sleepy little town, but I was led to believe otherwise after that short night spent in the parking lot. Two fights and countless late-night parties later, I awoke at 4:50 a.m. to call Aaron. He had mentioned an early start to the day, so I wanted to be sure that I did not miss him.

After leaving a message on his phone, I took Ealu (my dog) for a walk around town. Apparently, the night was not quiet for a few souls. Standing next to a pay phone, I watched one guy slide his Toyota Corolla around the main streets and avenues. What can I say—it must have been fun.

At 5:30 a.m. I got a hold of Aaron, who was in the process of driving from hotel to motel trying to find my car. Oh, he knew the budget on which I am operating. If I were staying in hotels, this would be one short trip! Besides, I would miss all the good things that 7-Eleven parking lots have to offer.

Time was tight, as we had to stash my car at one of Aaron's friends house and then catch the 8 a.m. ferry from Shelter Bay to Galena. This fall, I contacted Aaron about coming to the lodge at some point. I told him the only catch was I couldn't come close to affording the cost of a week at his lodge. However, I was willing to work. So the deal was made. In exchange for doing some carpentry and helping out with pre-season preparations, I would be able to come up and do some skiing. That I was not the only one that had worked out a deal like that was pretty cool to me.

Aaron's truck was packed full of doors, food, building materials and other supplies which would all have to be brought up to the lodge. Little did I know what that would entail. With no helicopter available, it would all have to go by snow machine.

This brings me to an interesting point, something for all backcountry skiers who enjoy time at backcountry lodges about. How do all the materials get there? Helicopter, trucks, piston bullies and snow machines are the answer. I spent the better part of two days on a snow machine towing skiffs up and down the access road to the lodge. Unfortunately, snow machines are handy tools; they can get places where trucks can't and they are far less expensive than helicopters. A necessary evil I suppose, but still something to be aware of.

Finally, on Monday morning, we faced our last sled run to the truck. After two days of digging out stuck machines, I was ready to get some skiing in. Aaron and I suited up for the final trek down through the steep trees, gullies, canyons and cut-blocks to meet up with Dave, Kate and Tucson—the timber framing crew who was coming up to finish the exterior railings on the lodge. With meter-and-a-half banks lining the track from the lodge, the track was more like a bobsled run than a snow machine track. Like two characters from a Mad Max film, we strode out into the winter morning and saddled up the snow machines.

Hauling supplies.

Kate using the router.

Tucson hard at work.

Dave "the Cowboy" and Kate skinning up.

Mount Fosthall in the early morning light.

Sol Mountain and one of the twin peaks.

"The Crew" atop Mission Ridge looking East towards the Goat Range.

Kate making it look easy.

Peter cutting some tongue and groove.

The aftermath of a long night's work.

Conor enjoying some Monashee tree skiing.

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