

VANCOUVER ISLAND'S UNTOUCHED POWDER AT MT CAIN

The Real Wild West



Island Adventures

By Don Daniels



In the beginning a group of dedicated skiers from the north island ventured out and looked for a ski area that would satisfy their needs and they found it near Schoen Lake Provincial Park.

The North Island Ski Club was formed in 1971 and 10 years later Mount Cain opened and is operated by the non-profit The Mount Cain Alpine Society. The appeal is untouched powder snow that can be enjoyed by skiers who like a rugged and unique skiing experience where there are no line-ups for lifts. The upper t-bar is left ungroomed for sheer powder encounter.

Mt Cain snow conditions are much like the interior with drier snow, which means plenty of powder that keeps skiers coming back for more each year. The 2010 ski season opened December 4 with a snow base of 110cm with 17 runs open.

Open weekends and select Mondays some skiers are first timers involved with school groups, and many of the expert skiers enjoy the unique powder snow conditions and the rugged terrain of the ski hill.

Backcountry touring is becoming popular and if mountaineering is your passion there are 3 peaks within a 5km radius to test your skill level. The Mt Cain lodge has a café that serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. The kitchen has been rebuilt and expanded, and hot meals are served to hungry guests during the day.

Kapitany Lodge and the ticket booth were built last year and will be in operation for the 2010 ski season. There are 2 hostel type buildings, a few rental cabins and privately owned cabins that are sometimes rented out. Skiers visit from all over the Island and the regulars are sometimes referred to as Outbacks, Throwbacks or Caindawgs who come to ski the powder and take in the rustic lifestyle the mountain has to offer.

On any given night you may find Rick Adams entertaining

with his acoustic blues one-man band or see him operating the grader clearing the road.

In the winter, travel time is dependent on the weather and heading north from Campbell River it's a good 2hrs drive on highway 19 and 8km south on the Woss turnoff but the snow waiting at Mt Cain will make you forget the journey.