

Snowmass 2016

4:30 am? You've got to be kidding....

There's nothing like two iPhones and an alarm clock going off at the same time to get you up and moving toward the shower, the coffee pot and the airport.

Yes, we had an early flight to Houston. But everything was on time and running smoothly. Our connection to Aspen went off without a hitch and before anyone was barely awake we were circling the Roaring Fork Valley and lining up for an on time arrival. No four-hour bus trip from Denver. YEAH!! And is that Katherine Zeta Jones over there waiting for someone to arrive? It was, but it wasn't Michael Douglas. Never the less our first star sighting of the trip.

We quickly made our way to Top of the Village, a terrific property with ski in ski out access and the first thing that occurred to all of us was that the air temp wasn't much different than Jacksonville. We had plenty of time for wings at Zane's and renting gear from our friends at Gene Taylors before our happy hour meeting at the condos. With everyone checked in, we made plans for the following morning.

Sunday morning was surprisingly good skiing. It was warm...so much so that the snow didn't harden overnight and the conditions were remarkably soft and skiable. But by Monday the temps started to drop and the bumps were road hard in the morning. Until lunch anyway. Then it started to snow. And it snowed all afternoon, and through the night. We had a great group dinner in the Lower Village and watched the snow pile up on the plaza. Monday was going to be a great day. And it was. The sun was out and 8-10 inches of fresh changed everything. We were the first down the Sheer Bliss lift and we stumbled and bumbled a bit until we got the feel for the heavier powder. Fred Cone told us: "You just have to bounce". And he was right. What fun. Wednesday was even better. Another 8 inches...this time lighter. We ventured all over the mountain that day, hiked to Long Shot, and had some of the best conditions of the year. Even our bus driver at TOV said it's the best he'd seen all season. The groomers were perfect and you could still find a stash or two if you explored.

Wednesday night was an optional night for people that wanted to go to the Pine Creek Cookhouse. The only way in is by horse drawn sleigh, snowshoe, or cross country ski. 10 of us skied, and we looked a little like the keystone cops. Downhill doesn't translate to cross-country and those skis are SO skinny!! By the time the skiers made it to the restaurant we had all fallen at least once. We were famished and our sleigh-riding group had the appetizers all set up for us. A terrific meal with a great group and a wonderful sleigh ride back. It was a magical scene with laser lights on the snow in the middle of the wilderness.

Thursday some of the group went to Ajax, some to the spa, some shopped, and most stayed and enjoyed spectacular conditions at Snowmass. A group went to the Woody Creek Tavern to enjoy one of the last vestiges of Old Aspen. Hunter S Thompson used to frequent here, occasionally throwing a smoke bomb through the front door while he stood

outside in the street roaring with laughter. Johnny Depp considered buying the place. We were much more subdued, hitting the hot tubs in the afternoon and trying to stay up later than 9pm without success. Friday was more of the same. After a group photo we headed to our favorite runs, many of us skiing for the 6th day in a row. The conditions were just too good to stop.