



# Top Stop

By Jennifer Waites

PHOTO  
COURTESY OF  
SCHWEITZER  
MOUNTAIN  
RESORT

## Idaho's only stop on the Empire Builder is one of the West's best playgrounds



It's winter in Idaho. The thermometer reads 26 degrees and there is plenty of snow covering the ground. It's time to head to Schweitzer Mountain Resort.

Schweitzer, with 85 ski trails, sits just a few minutes north of Sandpoint, Idaho, the Empire Builder's only stop in the state most famous for potatoes.

Whether you're a beginner trying out one of the three easier trails, or you yearn for adventure and take on an expert run with names like "Whiplash" or "Misfortune," Schweitzer has the terrain to test your skills. Once at the 6,389-foot mountaintop, skiers have the chance to look down on three states—Idaho, Montana and Washington. The nearby Canadian border offers potential international viewing as well.

With an average annual snowfall of 300 inches, Schweitzer has the mountain conditions skiers and boarders crave, ranging from smooth corduroy groomers to wide-open bowls and steep, fast runs. Schweitzer, located in the skinny Idaho panhandle, sits at an elevation of 4,400 feet and is nestled at the base of the Selkirk Mountains. The resort offers winter activities for all levels of enjoyment. Nordic trails, terrain parks, night skiing, racing, cat skiing and snowmobiling can all be found in the 2,900 acres of terrain.

And for those who want to cozy up next to a fireplace, shop for snowsports gear, or unwind with a glass of wine, there are nine dining establishments and five shops in the village at Schweitzer to keep shoppers and diners busy.

However, the resort is not just about fun for

adults. Schweitzer offers programs just for kids; Kinderkamp for those ages 4 to 6 and Ref-uge, a hideout for teens.

Schweitzer constructed two new chairlifts this past summer—the Basin Express and the Lakeview Triple—giving the resort eight chairlifts to increase uphill capacity and accessibility on the mountain. Riders on the Basin Express will have an easier route to the freestyle terrain park. This high-speed detachable quad travels 3,700 feet in about four minutes to reach a mid-mountain unloading spot. The new 60-chair Lakeview Triple will take folks to the summit and to expert terrain in the South Bowl.

Schweitzer is home to Idaho's only six-person, high-speed lift, which easily takes skiers and riders to the top of the mountain in just 5.5 minutes. The new lifts represent the largest on-mountain expansion in Schweitzer's history and are part of a recent \$10 million investment by a Seattle-based investment group.

Eleven miles from Schweitzer is the laid-back town of Sandpoint. This charming artistic and cultural community is nestled in the Selkirk and Cabinet Mountains. It sits on



WOODS WHEATCROFT PHOTO  
COURTESY OF SANDPOINT  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

### SCHWEITZER MOUNTAIN RESORT LIFT TICKET PRICES

FULL DAY: 9 A.M. TO CLOSE  
ADULT \$55  
JUNIOR (AGES 7-17) \$40  
SENIORS (AGE 65+) \$45  
BEGINNER'S CHAIR ONLY \$20

NIGHT SKIING AND MULTI-DAY TICKETS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE.

BUY YOUR TICKETS ONLINE AT [WWW.SCHWEITZER.COM](http://WWW.SCHWEITZER.COM)

## THE COAST STARLIGHT RAIL & SAIL TOUR

### This fun, 9 day adventure includes:

- ◆ Round-trip sleeping car on Amtrak's Coast Starlight from Seattle to Los Angeles
- ◆ 4 night cruise featuring San Diego, Catalina & Mexico
- ◆ All meals on train and ship
- ◆ 1 night aboard the Queen Mary with breakfast
- ◆ 1 night in Los Angeles
- ◆ Local sightseeing



Jan. 26, 2008/call for other dates

Starting at only \$1599 pp/do

For more info. or to reserve space call  
1-888-544-RAIL



[WWW.GREATTRAINESCAPES.COM](http://WWW.GREATTRAINESCAPES.COM)

Call for our FREE brochure filled with more great train journeys!



the northwest shore of Lake Pend Oreille, one of the largest freshwater lakes in the West. Bridges, a key element of travel in Sandpoint, have been part of life here since 1882, when the Northern Pacific Railroad made its way through the Idaho Panhandle.

Sandpoint has evolved from a logging town into a year-round outdoor recreation hot spot, in large part because of the opening of Schweitzer in 1963. Now, with a population of more than 6,800, winter tourism in Sandpoint relies heavily on the ski resort.

Outdoor lovers can still find a lot of adventure in the snowy Sandpoint area, ranging from ice fishing on Lake Pend Oreille or snowmobiling in the backcountry to ice skating or exploring forested trails on cross-country skis. 

From the ski hills of the Midwest to the ski hills of the West!



**Evergreen Realty**  
321 N. First Ave., Sandpoint, ID 83864

**Kevin & Diane Holmes  
Charlie Parrish**  
Your Schweitzer Specialists - Sandpoint, Idaho  
Licensed in Idaho, Montana, & Minnesota  
208-597-2800 ~ 800-829-6370  
[www.SchweitzerMountain.com](http://www.SchweitzerMountain.com)