



Schweitzer rings in as a top wedding destination spot

A couple and their wedding party get their picture taken at Schweitzer Mountain Resort. The resort was recently pictured by a Birmingham, England, newspaper as one of the top five spots in the world for a destination wedding. (Photo courtesy SCHWEITZER MT. RESORT)

By CAMERON RASMUSSEN Staff writer | Posted: Friday, July 26, 2013 10:00 am

SANDPOINT — Even the Atlantic Ocean isn't enough to halt the spread of Sandpoint's reputation.

An article published July 2 by the Birmingham Mail, a paper serving the second-most-populous city of the United Kingdom, included Schweitzer Mountain Resort in its list of the five most perfect destinations for a wedding. The ski resort joined locations in Portugal, South Africa, the Czech Republic and Kenya.

"I think it's fabulous," said Kate McAlister, president of the Greater Sandpoint Chamber of Commerce. "What an honor to be listed among such beautiful locations."

According to the article written by Cheryl Mullin, Schweitzer is a worldwide contender thanks to the gorgeous view of Canada and three states as well as the memorable experience of riding a ski lift to the wedding site.

"Whether you're looking to explore the terrain or simply relax and take in the magnificent views of Lake Pend Oreille, the surrounding mountain ranges and the town of Sandpoint, this is a real summer hotspot," Mullin writes.

The real question at this point is how the Birmingham Mail staff identified small-town Sandpoint as a globally-desirable destination for nuptials. According to Schweitzer marketing manager Sean Briggs, the inclusion has baffled Schweitzer's entire staff — although everyone is understandably thrilled to be included on a list of such scale.

"We've kind of been trying to figure this whole thing out for ourselves," he said. "It's a bit of a mystery to us."

Speculation abounds as to possible connections. Briggs said the resort recently played host for the marriage of an Australian couple, and McAlister confirmed Australian tourism has lately been on the rise. However, there haven't been any Schweitzer weddings with British connections in recent years that Briggs knows about.

According to McAlister, overseas tourism has been on the rise lately. It's a well-known fact that Sandpoint receives major international traffic from Canada, but McAlister has also noted increased interest from European and Asian residents. In fact, she said the chamber office just had a family from France come to visit.

"The appeal for them is that they've heard about Sandpoint being named the most beautiful small town in America, so they know it's a place they want to check out," McAlister said.

No matter how word of Sandpoint spread to the U.K., Briggs said Schweitzer officials are excited to see the resort promoted as a prime wedding destination. Schweitzer usually hosts a few weddings in the winter and 12 to 15 weddings per summer, making them a major source of income during the off-season. Between the facility rentals, use of resort restaurants, hotel stays and more, it usually adds up to solid revenue.

"It certainly is a great place to have a wedding," Briggs said. "It's really set up so it looks like you're standing on the edge of the world."