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What Is The Best Location In Whistler?

By Henry Schlee

When you rent a vacation home in a resort you don't know, it is very important to find out as much

as possible about the pros and cons of different locations within the resort. Take Whistler, BC, as an example. Whistler is one of the top ski resorts in the world, repeatedly voted #1 in North America. Some of the rental homes in it are spectacular, extremely convenient and desirable in every way. Others are less so. Before you book, educate yourself about the features of each possible location.

VillageMany people want to be right in the Village in Whistler. This is understandable, since the Village is the center of shopping and restaurants, and the gondolas up both mountains leave from the top of the Village. It is also an attractive location, since it is car−free and nicely−designed., with colorful low−rise buildings and an array of cafes and shops. The downside is that the Village is predominantly one and two−bedroom apartments, built fairly cheaply and generally small. They are very convenient, but with a few exceptions they are not spacious or luxurious and will not give you the feeling of being in a mountain cabin or a ski lodge. The same applies to most of the developments in Village North: convenient, but very small and generally built to a low budget. The major exception is Montebello, which are 3 and 4−bedroom townhomes built and decorated to a high standard, all with large private hot tubs and many with nice views over the mountains. Try Montebello for a quality modern home within a few minutes walk of the Village. However, don't expect log construction and a mountain cabin feeling.

Upper VillageThe Upper Village is an area on the lower slopes of Blackcomb Mountain on the upper side of Blackcomb Way. Some of these properties are true ski−in, ski−out (look for the Aspens, Cedar Creek, Cedar Hollow, Cedar Ridge, Pinnacle Ridge, Woodrun Lodge and Snowy Creek; others involve a short or short−ish walk to the slopes. At the north end of the Upper Village are several developments where you can ski back but have to take the shuttle bus to get to the lifts in the morning. These include The Woods, Treeline and Forest Creek. If you want true ski−in, ski−out make sure you understand exactly how far it is to the slopes. If you want to be near the Village as well as having true ski−in, ski−out then Snowy Creek is almost your only option, but its popularity means that you will pay a hefty premium for one of the 3−5 bedroom townhomes in this sought−after development.

Blueberry HillThis is an area of many very exclusive multi−$m homes half−way between the Village and Creekside. Most of the homes have great views over both Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains. You can get good value here if you don't mind driving to both the Village and the lifts.

TaluswoodThis is an area on the lower slopes of Whistler Mountain, consisting of several different sub−developments, namely Taluswood Phase 1, The Ridge, The Bluffs, The Heights and The Lookout. These are all high−quality properties, with some of the best being the original Taluswood Phase 1, where the homes have peeled log interiors, custom−built doors and everything is comfortingly heavy−duty. Go for the Bluffs for the best views and the Ridge if you want to be right on the slopes. Try the Heights and the Lookout for larger homes, some of which have great views. The only drawback here is that the ski−out now involves taking your skis off to cross the road.

Whistler CreeksideAlthough the commercial area near the gondola is brand new, this is largely an older area for vacation properties, with a lot of cheap and fairly run−down units (avoid Gondola Village at all costs). However, there are some very upscale homes amid the dross, and some of the older

properties have been nicely renovated. Caution is the watchword here.

The bottom line, if you don't know the resort well, is to take advice from an expert. Try Holiday Whistler where you will get not only a great choice of

Whistler accommodation

, but also an

unvarnished and knowledgeable perspective on the advantages and disadvantages of each location.

Henry Schlee is a regular skier in Whistler and always consults the experts at Holiday Whistler for advice on great

Whistler rental accommodation

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Choosing vacation rental property in Whistler

By Henry Schlee

Whistler is perhaps North America's best ski resort; certainly there is nowhere close for vertical drop, acreage of groomed runs and variety of expert terrain. However there is also a tremendous variety of rental accommodation, and before you make a choice it would be as well to be educated about the options and their implications.

Whistler properties vary along 3 key dimensions: size, quality/style and location. We don't need to

say much about size; there are properties on the rental market ranging from shoeboxes of 350 sq. ft to imposing chalets of 6000 sq. ft. or more. Quality is another question altogether. Much of the Whistler rental inventory was built in the 80s and 90s when the profile of the resort was lower and cost was the name of the game. Most developments were built with indifferent design, cheap materials, poor quality fixtures and fittings and décor that is unimaginative at best. You do not want to spend your vacation in a condo with a blue carpet, magnolia walls, formica countertops, shiny brass bathroom fittings and garishly−coloured sofas. So you need to seek out either one of the more recent developments, such as Taluswood, that were built to a much higher specification, or you need to find a unit that has been recently renovated (or `Whistlerized', as the local term has it). `Whistlerization' typically involves installing slate floors, granite countertops, stone fireplaces, wooden cupboards, beams and trim, and painting in earthy autumnal tones of café−au−lait, caramel and burgundy. These units have a much more mountain−cabin feel. The top−of−the−line properties in Whistler go a stage or three beyond this, with spectacular designs and extremely high−end finishes, although only a few of these properties are on the rental market.

Location is perhaps the key issue in choosing your Whistler rental. Although only a small town, there are many different areas you can choose for your vacation, and each of them has advantages and disadvantages.

The Village is the place for proximity to bars and restaurants, and for being a relatively short walk to the lifts. However most of the inventory in the Village is small, with one or two−bedrooms units dominant in the mix, and it was all built to a cheap standard. It is critical to find a unit that has received a recent quality renovation. There are also one or two units that are larger, but you may have to search hard to find them.

The Upper Village is on the lower slopes of Blackcomb Mountain. This is the location for ski−in, ski−out units that are also reasonably accessible to the Village. However, if you want ski−in, ski−out make sure that you check what this means. Some properties are actually on the slopes; others, still styling themselves `ski−in, ski−out' may be up to 5 minutes walk away. Still others are ski−in, but not ski−out.

The second main location for ski−in, ski−out units is Taluswood on the lower slopes of Whistler Mountain. This is a very upscale area with a variety of accommodation, but all of a high quality standard using peeled logs, natural materials and quality décor. Access to the slopes is very easy, with no more than a 2 minute walk from most properties. However you need a vehicle to get to shops and restaurants, as this area is not served by either the free shuttle or by municipal buses.

The fourth location is Creekside, the original location of Whistler. This used to be a very downmarket area, but recent heavy investment has made it a decent alternative to the Village. The Creekside

gondola is always less crowded than the lifts in the Village, and there is now a great selection of shops and restaurants in town. The quality of accommodation is very mixed, with many unattractive older properties and a few newer, luxury chalets that are equal to any in Whistler. You can walk to the lifts from most locations in Creekside.

Finally, there is a selection of other locations, including Blueberry Hill, Nicklaus North and Alpine

Meadows. Here you will generally find larger homes, but they are not ski−in, ski−out and you will have to drive to the Village as well. However, you will get more for your money in terms of the quality and size of the property itself here.

As with most things, it pays to consult an expert. If you are looking for Whistler ski accommodation, give a call to the folks at Holiday Whistler. They will be able to help you out with sound advice.

Henry Schlee is the owner of Holiday Whistler. If you want a great

Whistler condo rental

or

somewhere to find a choice of

Whistler ski accommodation

, give them a call on 1 877 697 7776.

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