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Whistler sweeps top spots in world's finest travel magazines

Whistler, B.C. - Whistler locals are excitedly counting down the days to ski season opening, and humbly counting up the accolades from some of the world's finest travel magazines.

Whistler hotels swept the top three spots in Condé Nast Traveler's November annual readers' choice awards for the top ten Canadian resorts. The Pan Pacific Mountainside, Four Seasons Resort Whistler and the Westin Resort Whistler nabbed first, second and third place respectively. The prestigious annual list also ranked the Fairmont Chateau Whistler at number six. Whistler hotels garnered more rankings than any other Canadian destination.

Luxury Spa Finder magazine handpicked The Spa at Four Seasons Resort Whistler as the third most loved spa in the world, capturing the natural serenity of the mountain wilderness.

For the second year in a row, Australia's Luxury Travel Magazine (Summer 2006) named Whistler the best overseas ski resort. Forbes Traveller Magazine canvassed a number of its leaders of the ski community, and the panel voted Whistler Blackcomb Mountains the number one resort in North America.

"We're honoured to be gaining so much attention from such prestigious publications," says Michele Comeau-Thompson, Director of Communications, Tourism Whistler. Comeau-Thompson credits the awards to Whistler's outstanding hotels, restaurateurs, activity providers and Whistler Blackcomb who everyday create world class holiday experiences for the resort's two million annual visitors.

The latest kudos round out top rankings from leading ski and snowboard magazines, including the unprecedented SKIING Magazine award, which ranked Whistler Blackcomb the #1 ski resort in North America for the tenth consecutive year in the November issue. Number one rankings are also detailed in

TransWorld Snowboarding Magazine (October 2006), and Freeskier Magazine (November 2006).

In SKI Magazine's annual "Top 50 Resort Guide" October issue, Whistler Blackcomb was named No. 1 for Terrain/Variety and No. 2 for Lodging and Apres.

"We are thrilled that Whistler continues to gain recognition for our unbeatable skiing, our fine hotels, restaurants and spas, and the amazing value we offer across all price categories," Comeau-Thompson said. "We'd like to thank the skiers and snowboarders, pro athletes, editors and nature lovers who have enjoyed our mountains and community, and rated us their favourite. We look forward to continuing to meet your high standards and to enjoying a fantastic winter season together."

As in recent years, Tourism Whistler's early package offers mean savings up to 35 per cent for skiers who book before November 15. A sample "Book Early & Save" five-night package includes five nights' accommodation, a four-day lift ticket, and free adult ski or snowboard lesson starting from \$416 CDN / \$371 USD per person. For more information or to book, call 1-800-WHISTLER or go to www.whistler.com.

Official opening day at Whistler Blackcomb is Thursday, November 23. Enough said!

Whistler is a year-round leisure and meeting destination located 120 kilometres (75 miles) north of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, and is site of the alpine, nordic, sliding and Paralympic venues for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. Whistler has a range of accommodations totalling 3,200 hotel rooms, and more than 5,000 other tourist accommodation units including condos, B&Bs and chalets. Whistler offers a wide selection of restaurants, bars, spas, boutiques, galleries and activities ranging from world-renowned skiing and snowboarding, mountain biking and golf, to hiking, rock climbing, and watersports. Whistler Blackcomb mountains feature 3,036 hectares (8,171 acres) of terrain and receives an average of 9.14 metres (30 feet) of snow per year. The Resort Municipality of Whistler is home to a diverse community of more than 10,000 permanent residents.

Tourism Whistler is the member-based marketing and sales organization representing Whistler, operating the TELUS Whistler Conference Centre, the Whistler Golf Club, in-resort Visitor Services centres, and tourismwhistler.com, as well as 1-800-WHISTLER and whistler.com - the official call to action for Whistler. As the convention and visitors bureau for the Resort Municipality of Whistler, Tourism Whistler represents more than 7,000 members who own, manage and operate properties or businesses on resort lands including hotels, restaurants, activity operators and retail shops.

Whistler publication-ready photographs can be downloaded at <http://mediaroom.tourismwhistler.com/>

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