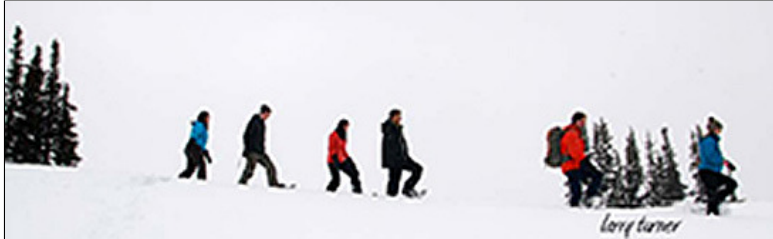




Purcell Mountain Lodge, BC, Canada
 Story and photos by www.larryturnerphotography.com
 High on Adventure, March 2016

Entire
 home/apt,
 1 bed, 2
 guests



\$95

airbnb.com

When I read the brochure and it said “Accessible only by helicopter. The finest remote mountain chalet in North America” and “See you at your home in the mountains”, I was immediately hooked. I took the bait when the opportunity presented itself and flew into Purcell Mountain Lodge, located in the wilds of BC Canada's Purcell Mountains on the eastern border of Glacier National Park. The affable owner, Sunny Sun, and operations manager, Jackie Mah, accompanied me. No greater hosts could you find with their happy, friendly, ebullient demeanor.

The 15 minute helicopter ride alone from Golden, BC's heliport was worth the entire experience. The metal bird lifted off like a feather in the wind. We were whisked away into the magic of the mountains and the potential of the day. Rising above the clouds we were treated to an enchanting winter snow world of mountain peaks as far as the eyes could collect. The mystery of the mountains were shown all around us. The generous morning sun revealed a world almost too beautiful to absorb. I was entranced by this beauty, this ruggedness and the allure of the winter white, and precise, revealing light. The helicopter landed near the lodge as gently as gossamer. We quickly exited and gathered at the lodge's steps. Supplies were unloaded and in a flash the whirlybird was off and away.

“Welcome to my personal paradise,” gushed Sunny. “Of all of my business pursuits, this has been my personal favorite. I never tire coming to this mountain Shangri-La.”



PREMIERE MOUNTAIN LODGE in B.C.

Built in 1989 (by helicopter), this is the finest luxury mountain lodge in BC (if not all of Canada). Former lodge manager Doug Latimer, who had accompanied us on this trip, said, “There is nothing like this lodge anywhere. It is still the standard in Canada. We call it the Island in the Sky.” Latimer would later lead us on a snowshoe trek. He often leads alpine and telemark powder ski tours from the lodge in winter and hiking/mountaineering tours in the summer. Cross-country skiing and tobogganing are other winter activities at the lodge.

The friendly and inquisitive Sun (he left China in 1994 with a medical degree but eventually switched to business enterprises in his new country of Canada) adds, “This lodge is unique. This is a lodge for everyone. I want people to experience this beautiful back country. A lot of families come here. It is a place to connect and to reconnect with your family and friends. It is a place of deep quietness; a place to get away from social media and such. And in the winter you do not have to be an extreme skier or mountaineer to enjoy this lodge and land.” There is no Wi-Fi at the lodge, which I found to be wonderful.

The three-story lodge is surrounded by balconies, has 10 private bedrooms and a deluxe honeymoon suite. It can accommodate up to 30 guests and the dining is family style. The winter season is January through April; the summer season July through September (hiking, mountaineering, mountain biking, ridge walking, wildflower viewing, nature studies, photography, painting, a resident artist program, and quiet contemplation are among activities). I took note when Latimer said that September is the best month of all. For skiing, March is the best month. The lodge is located on the largest alpine meadow

in North America, surrounded by mountains that would inspire awe even for the greatest mountain critics. Pricing and a full plethora of information can be found at www.purcellmountainlodge.com. Also, check out www.blbc.com.



Though I just spent a day at the lodge, it was totally relaxing and fulfilling, and downright cozy. The living room with the surround couch, fireplace and robust library was almost too comfortable to leave. The lunch, prepared by talented young chef Alex Barton, of unique seasoned pulled-pork, cole slaw (excellent!), soda buns and a variety of home-baked desserts (yummy!) was superb, as was the Township 7 2010 Canadian Syrah. Outside, on the dining room balcony, we were treated to a visual of a group of lodge guests who had trekked up Ptarmigan mountain and made fresh powder tracks back down. Doug told us stories about the gentle local grizzly bear Bella and her cubs, mountain goats, pikas and pine martins. I had visions of the fecundity of summer wildflowers, mountain brooks, meadow birds and regal mountain peaks (I must plan!).



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTOTYPE

Purcell Mountain Lodge has set the standard in this industry for being environmentally friendly. "We are as off the grid as you can get," says Latimer. "This lodge is its own grid! We are like a little working city. He gives us a tour of the lodge's micro hydro system (the first in Canada) as they generate their own power (without batteries; propane is utilized with all spare power going to baseboard heaters), utilize a 5-stage sewer treatment plan (with aerobiotic breakdown) and recycle water which they pump from a nearby creek. "Our water treatment is as good as anywhere in North American," says 53-year-old Latimer, proudly.

Entire
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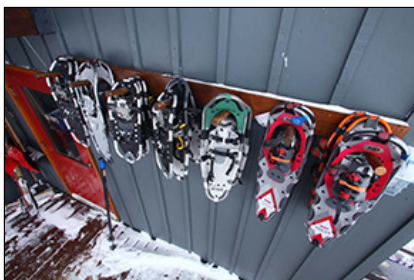
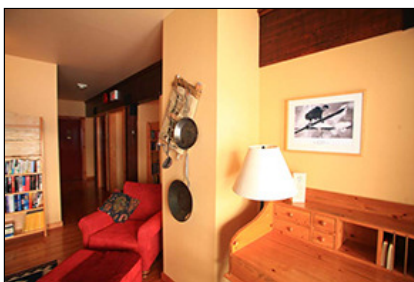
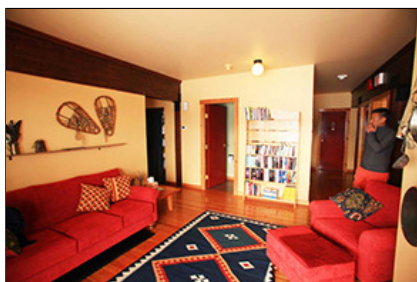
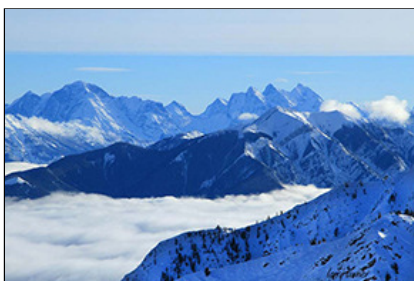
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Tommy
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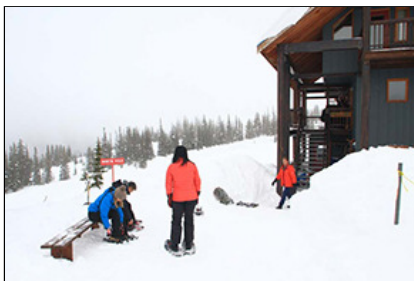


A LODGE OF DREAMS

The bird came and picked us up later in the day. After lunch, we took an invigorating snowshoe hike. An overcast had set in and the deep view of the rugged mountains was taken away, but the lodge was visible and it was a lodge of dreams because I knew that in all seasons, it has a deep charm. When the helicopter set down and regional media director Heidi Korven drove my friend David Sartwell and I back to our motel, I immediately noted the following:

Purcell Mountain Lodge is a diamond in the wilderness. It is a crown jewel faceted to a hauntingly beautiful, rugged landscape, ensconced like a hidden gem in a sea of mountain dreams. Accessed only by helicopter, it is no less than a heavenly journey on this earth.

I don't think that I need to say more. You just need to go and experience it.





IMPORTANT INFORMATION: www.purcellmountainlodge.com www.tourismgolden.com

Larry Turner is a freelance photographer/writer from Malin, Oregon. His work has appeared in publications throughout the world. You can see his daily postings—wherever he is traveling—on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/larry.turnerphotography.3>.

