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GETAWAYS

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The Canyons is Park City's best-kept secret

By ANNE Z. COOKE AND STEVE HAGGERTY
COX NEWS SERVICE

PARK CITY, Utah -- For Dillon Cook, sitting across from us in the gondola, The Canyons was a whole new world peopled with kids who came from everywhere just to be in ski class with him.

"I liked the Tunnel of Fun," said the 9-year-old from Houston, describing the bumpy trail through the trees where the instructors take their classes to cut loose.

Sherri Williams from Atlanta, on the last day of her vacation, noticed The Canyons' people-friendly design -- a terraced layout that separates cars on the lower level from the Resort Village at midlevel, a pedestrian zone with the ticket office, rental shops, restaurants and the Grand Summit Hotel.

"The cabriolet saves a lot of walking," she said, referring to canlike baskets (nicknamed "the teacups") that carry skiers from the parking lot up to the village.

Then there was Brian Price, wiry and tan. Taking advantage of new snow, the Salt Lake City resident was steering friends around the The Canyons, one of Park City's three ski resorts. The others are Deer Valley and Park City Mountain Resort.

Strung in a ragged crescent above Park City, the resorts are part of the same range and even the same ridge, called the Wasatch Back.

The Canyons, its 3,700 acres open and uncrowded, is a bona fide best-kept secret. Spread over adjacent ridges, the resort's 152 trails flow and turn, challenging and entertaining in turn.

The heart of the resort is Red Pine Lodge, where the gondola unloads and ski school meets. A half-dozen lifts climb from here to near and distant peaks, each one connecting skiers with a new set of slopes.

Plenty of expert-only chutes, most rated double-black-diamond, plunge into Murdock Bowl and off Apex Ridge. But the Canyons really seems to be a bonanza for intermediate recreational skiers, people who are happiest carving turns on groomed trails.

Contact: thecanyons.com; 888-226-9667

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