

JEWEL of the SIERRAS

Tahoe remains one of the pristine skiing destinations for Silicon Valley

Rising over the mountains that surround the lake, the sun melts the ice from the night before and shines on the soft, white snow; the beautiful landscape is almost otherworldly. Each winter, Silicon Valley residents flock to Lake Tahoe—ski season has begun.

Tahoe has been a haven for many for decades and has attracted Palo Altans due to its year-round accommodations. In the winter, skiing and enjoying the snow are the main attractions.

Since his childhood, junior Will Rowell and his family have visited Tahoe every winter to take advantage of the great snow. “It’s an escape from the hustle and bustle of Silicon Valley,” Rowell said.

Palo Alto residents can often be found at one of the 15 ski resorts in the Lake Tahoe area; Northstar, Palisades, Heavenly and Kirkwood, to name a few.

“In a three hour and fifteen-minute drive to Kirkwood, I got world-class skiing on a normal Monday,” PALY alumnus and avid skier Charles Mitz said. Another thing that attracts so many Palo Altans is the consistency of the resorts. “Across all the resorts, you’re going to get good skiing,” senior Sebastian Bonnard said. “Tahoe is such a vast domain.”

Palo Alto residents are drawn to Tahoe not just for the spectacular skiing experience but also for the people. “Skiing is exponentially more fun with friends,” Bonnard said. “It’s as much a sport as it is a social activity.”

There are two kinds of ski resorts in Tahoe: larger, more popular resorts packed with shops, hotels and luxury accommodations, and the resorts centered on skiing only. “You can [just] ski, where you go ski and just that, or you can also go ski, then drink hot chocolate and whatnot,” Mitz said.

Silicon Valley families are also drawn to Tahoe as an escape from the competitive and toxic culture in the Bay Area. “It’s a great place to be, away from the hustle and bustle of Silicon Valley,” Rowell said. “It’s fantastic year-round, but in the winter, it’s unbeatable.”

Conversely, the mass amounts of Palo Alto families who visit can often result in Tahoe becoming an extension

of the Bay Area.

As a lifetime skier of Palisades—formerly known as Squaw Valley—Mitz isn’t surprised when he notices many people clearly from the Bay Area. “Big resorts like North Star and Palisades pretty much have the same culture to Silicon Valley,” Mitz said. “The people you will see there usually aren’t from Tahoe; they are from Silicon Valley.”

Sophomore Meredith Glasson has spent every winter since she could recall driving northeast to Lake Tahoe and enjoying her time skiing the snow alongside her family. Glasson and her family even decided to move to Tahoe during the pandem-

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Meredith Glasson, 10

ic, where she spent every day on the slopes and spent the remaining warmer months swimming in the lake.

Glasson, alongside many Bay Area families, enjoys Tahoe because of the more laid-back lifestyle. Whenever Glasson has a free weekend, she enjoys getting out of Palo Alto because of the escape from reality it provides her.

“Going to Tahoe and skiing is something that bonds my family, creating new memories,” Glasson said. “Skiing is the perfect mix of exercise, fun, freedom and adventure.”

Palisades, a resort embedded in Olympic Valley, northwest of Tahoe City, has been a highly popular ski destination for numerous years because of its vast terrain and wide selection of ski runs for skiers of all levels.

One particular chairlift that many skiers and snowboarders, like Glasson, wait seconds for is named Siberia. An added bonus of riding the lift and skiing the run is the unforgettable view of the lake when you get to the top.

“Siberia has a steep bowl, and it always gets my adrenaline rushing, which is what I love most,” Glasson said.

Hardcore skiers, like Glasson, occasionally find themselves branching out of California to explore new terrain and larger resorts with more snow than Tahoe. Glasson recounts her experience visiting Alta Utah, where the resort’s strict policy prevents snowboarders from entering.

“[The resort policy] was amazing since it is strictly only skiers allowed, and Tahoe does not have something like that,” Glasson said.

As for senior William Dike, the escape that Lake Tahoe provides him and his family is unbeatable. “It gives me the opportunity to ski and have a blast away from Palo Alto,” Dike said. Being that the

commute is only about four hours from Palo Alto to Tahoe, it never feels like too much of a hassle to head up, even if it’s for the day.

“It is easy and convenient to go up [to Tahoe] with little planning, and it’s fun being spontaneous,” Dike said. On average, Dike skis at least 25 days per year at Alpine Meadows, a connecting resort that borders Palisades. “[I prefer] hard blues because I prefer speed over steepness... Alpine has lots of fun groomers,” Dike said. (Groomers are runs that are paved every night for a smoother and easier ride down the mountain).

No matter what draws Palo Altans to Tahoe, there is always adventure awaiting for them in the mountains. “I have been going up almost every weekend,” Dike said. “It’s starting to become my second home, and summer is right around the corner.”



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Sebastian Bonnard, 12