



THE WINTER GUIDE

**OUR PICKS OF 50 AWESOME
ADVENTURES, TRIPS AND TOYS
FOR A VERY COOL SEASON**

BY RYAN STUART



20 SKI THE GASPÉ IN STYLE

La Grande Traversée de la Gaspésie is unique as organized ski trips go. For a week, more than 250 skiers spend their days touring the best cross-country terrain in the Gaspé, and then spend their nights in comfortable auberges and B&Bs. Buses carry the participants to a new ski area every day. This year's traverse begins at Gîte du Mont-Albert in the Chic-Chocs before continuing eastward to end at the town of Gaspé. (FROM \$1,400, FEBRUARY 20 TO 27; TDLG.QC.CA)



21 HELLY HANSEN HHONE

(FROM \$45; HELLYHANSEN.COM)

As their name suggests, base layers usually reside under something—which is good, because most are not worthy of public display. But Helly Hansen's newest LIFA-generation not only works well, it looks good too, with seven funky print options. HHONE uses hollow fibres next to the skin to trap heat for optimal temperature control, while a light polyester exterior grabs moisture and moves it away from the skin. The perfect combo for sweaty work in the cold.

WHILE AT THE OLYMPICS...

CHECK OUT MORE FUN WHEN YOU'RE IN THE HOOD



22 PADDLE FALSE CREEK

Throughout the winter, some of Canada's fastest flatwater paddlers train in False Creek, a picturesque inlet next to downtown Vancouver. See if you can keep up by renting a sea kayak from Ecomarine Ocean Kayak Centre on Granville Island. Even if you can't, it's a nice place to paddle. (ECOMARINE.COM)

23 GO SCANDINAVIAN IN WHISTLER

Après-ski just got hotter—and colder—in Whistler with the opening of Scandinave, a Finnish-style spa. The experience starts with a steam, sauna or hot tub to sweat out toxins. Next it's time for a dip in one of the cold pools, to release the lactic acid in your ski-weary legs. Then you warm up again and relax in a solarium. For optimum effect, the hot, cold, relax cycle is repeated three times. (\$55; SCANDINAVEWHISTLER.COM)

24 TOUR WHISTLER'S BACKCOUNTRY

If you ski past the boundary of either Whistler or Blackcomb, you'll find yourself in a crowdless backcountry that offers the possibility of long tours, glacier runs, chutes and glades. Take a wrong turn, though, and you could be out there for a few days. So get a guided tour with the Whistler Alpine Guides Bureau. On their Beyond the Lifts one-day outing, you'll ride the lifts

to the backcountry and then bag up to 5,000 feet of earned turns. (\$215; WHISTLERGUIDES.COM)

25 SEE THE BALD EAGLES

From mid-November to mid-February, the trees along the Squamish



River, from Brackendale to the Squamish harbour, are heavy with bald eagles. It's one of the largest concentrations of the birds in the world (in 1994, the count totalled 4,000). Most years see about 3,000 eagles feeding on the seasonal abundance of dead and dying chum salmon in the river. Spot the birds from one of the riverside walking paths or hop in a raft for a float with Canadian Outback Adventures. (\$100; CANADIANOUTBACK.COM)

26 SKI 24 HOURS A DAY

Grouse Mountain is not a venue for the Olympics, which means the ski hill above Vancouver's North Shore can do what it wants, such as stay up all night. The ski lifts, restaurants and other attractions will all be open 24 hours a day for the entire 17 days of the Olympics. (GROUSEMOUNTAIN.COM)

27 HIT THE BOULDERS

The West Coast's mild climate means that as long as it's sunny, the rock is usually ready for climbing. The best bet for winter is to go bouldering at the Stawamus Chief, the iconic chunk of granite rising above Squamish. There are hundreds of boulders with established routes in the woods at the base of the Apron and Grand Wall. Difficulty ranges from V-easy to V-ridiculous. You'll want to bring a spotter and a crash pad for some of the rougher landing zones. (SQUAMISHCLIMBING.COM)



28 RIDE THE SHORE

You don't *have* to strap on the padding and the full-face helmet to go mountain biking in the woods of Vancouver's infamous North Shore. There are plenty of trails that don't involve skinnies, ramps and jumps. Rent a six-inch-travel, full-suspension bike from Different Bikes' North Shore location, the closest shop to the trails, and head to the Seymour Demonstration Forest, where you can get a taste—X-C style—of what the Shore is about. (\$60; DIFFERENTBIKES.CA)