

# HER FAMILY / HIS

## Reviewing Family Entertainment



by Suzanne & Chris Shoemaker

## I Can Fly...I Can Fly...I Can Fly

HERS

When I was a little girl, I would strap on my roller skates and take off through the park at a break-neck speed. At some magic moment my feet would leave the ground and I would fly. No one ever saw me. I always imagined that at the moment of lift off I became invisible until I slowed myself down enough to land at my mother's feet.

Until recently, I had not felt the freedom of flight since my youthful days of roller-skating. Several weeks ago we packed up the family and took off bright and early for the Bear Mountain Resort. Our primary objective was to introduce our sixteen-year-old to skiing and/or snowboarding but, just as he would have to take a lesson, Mom would have to take a lesson, too.

Unseasonably for this time of year, there was no snow in sight until we hit the 7000-foot elevation mark. It was exhilarating to be standing next to the lifts of Bear Mountain breathing in clean air, enjoying the outdoors and joining the celebration that is the world of winter sports.

I could visualize myself flying down the Bunny Hill, so I quickly opted for the snowboard class and joined my sixteen-year-old as we stuffed our feet into the unfamiliar chasm of a snowboarding boots and headed for the "Lesson Location". Snowboarding was a breeze on the flat, dry, AstroTurf rug.

Then we hit the snow. Both feet locked onto one board sliding perpendicularly down the slope, controlled by the pivoting motion of feet and ankles-I lasted thirty minutes. I decided that my time was better invested standing at the bottom of the run with camera in hand, cheering my son as he challenged the Bunny Hill for the first time in his life.

My feet may not have left the ground this time, but I am excited about discovering the magic of movement and snow.

We saved the best for last- dinner at a legendary Big Bear restaurant - The Captain's Anchorage. The Captain's Anchorage is one of those Southern California gems that still have the authentic leaded-glass windows from 1947, the original timber beams, and the intrigue of resident ghost stories along with great food. You know you are eating in the right restaurant when it starts filling up by 5:30 PM, with locals who make it a regular weekend event to meet friends and eat where they know the manager and all the servers like family. And then the food came: original, fresh, plentiful and fabulous. Don't miss out on a meal at this one-of-a-kind place. What a way to end a great day!

Filled with the call of the wild, I'll be back to Big Bear Lake and to The Bear Mountain Resort. The next time, I'll try skiing and leave the snowboarding to my sixteen-year-old!

HIS

If you're like me and somewhat of a part-time weekend athlete, you might fear you're in for some serious trouble when you zip down a steep incline on skis - trouble like felling a few trees or moving some immovable objects along your path. Fear no more. Get over it!

We recently took a Sunday off to visit Bear Mountain Resort, tucked away in the pristine San Bernardino National Forest. I hadn't skied in over 10 years and wondered whether I still had the mojo for the sport. Rest assured, like riding a bicycle, the necessary coordination to avoid killing yourself quickly returns.

Assuming you're a beginner (or part time enthusiast) and not lusting for yards of deep snow and super competitive slopes, Bear Mountain blows its own snow daily, giving you plenty of slick surfaces to ski on. With 12 total mountain lifts and potentially 17+ rideable miles of ski runs, there is something for almost everyone. Upon arriving, we noticed our bodies taking a few beats to adjust to the thinner air quality at the elevation of 7,140 feet. It doesn't stop you, but you definitely realize you aren't in flat Kansas anymore.

Like any sport, skiing exudes and embodies its own particular culture. The Bear Mountain Resort culture is laid back, unpretentious, youthful, safe-minded and kind. I never ran into a crabby skier the entire day. In fact, people came to help me up when I took a nasty fall. We started out skiing as a family, but I soon decided to tackle some steeper terrain and rejoin my clan later in the afternoon. As I graduated from the Bunny Hill and moved my way along the steeper runs, the scenery from the chair lifts grew more spectacular, and the gentle and quiet ride up the slopes proved extremely meditative.

The Bear Mountain Resort offers tidy and efficient facilities, close parking to the hills, great skiing, plenty of fast food and tasty snacks along with a knowledgeable and courteous staff. After 6 hours of non-stop skiing activity, the family was tucked out. We felt we definitely got our money's worth and more.

Unless you're a season pass holder and know the resort's routine, it's best to visit [www.bearmountain.com](http://www.bearmountain.com) for all the variations of hours, times and ski prices. Be advised that there are numerous cost factors to consider (equipment rental, lessons (if needed), lift tickets, food, locker fees, etc.) but never mind, whatever the ski trip costs, the outrageously high fun factor makes whatever you spend seem worth it. The three of us had a blast.

For a small townie turned urbanite turned suburbanite like me, the rugged yet charming beauty of Bear Mountain yanked my breath away. I believe it'll do the same to you.

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