



# Taking on the SLOPES

Kimberly Horg

**S**peeding down a snow-topped mountain on a piece, or couple pieces, of wood in the cold, wet, slippery snow can be intimidating, so a pleasant first-time experience can make all the difference down the road. Luckily for us, there are many family-friendly ski resorts conveniently located outside of Sacramento; each has beginner programs that teach important skills to successfully conquer the slopes.

## Tahoe Donner

Just about an hour-and-a-half drive from Sacramento is Tahoe Donner. Donner has wide-open bowls, uncrowded slopes, excellent grooming and courteous staff. Children are important guests at Donner, and the programs cater toward the overall learning and skiing experience.

Snowflakes Kids Ski School is for youngsters ages 3 to 6. On weekends, Tahoe Donner offers four two-hour sessions to teach five levels of

little ones, from "never-ers" to "little rippers." The Snowflakes Ski School has dedicated instructors, its own meeting room filled with kids stuff, a low student-to-instructor ratio and kids ski equipment. Children must be at least 3 years of age, potty-trained and willing to ski.

Tahoe Donner Tykes is a midweek program for children ages 3 to 6 looking to spend time on the slopes every week.

"Our mission for this program is to focus on the fundamentals of skiing in a fun and exciting way," says Jill Cisowski, Snowflakes Supervisor. "Tahoe Donner Tykes is an extremely popular program with limited availability."

Donner Tykes sessions are two-and-a-half hours, offered in the morning or afternoon on Wednesdays or Thursdays; the sessions begin the second week in January and continue through the last week

in March.

## Northstar-at-Tahoe Resort

"Northstar-at-Tahoe Resort offers a variety of programs designed to help families get out on the mountain and have some fun skiing and riding," says Northstar and Sierra Resorts public relations representative Jessica VanPernis. "From Burton's Learn-to-Ride program to free 'Mommy, Daddy & Me' lessons, the Parent Predicament and discounted multiday lift tickets, Northstar Resort makes it easy for everyone to get out on the slopes and have fun learning how to ski or ride in a safe, non-intimidating environment."

The "Mommy, Daddy & Me" program couples parents with one of Northstar Resort's experienced instructors to give them tips on teaching their 3- to 4-year-olds how to ski.

The Parent Predicament lift ticket

**continued on page 22**

### NORTHSTAR RESORT:

Lesson package pricing information: [www.northstaratahoh.com/info/ski/lessons-rentals/lessons-rental-kids-groups.asp](http://www.northstaratahoh.com/info/ski/lessons-rentals/lessons-rental-kids-groups.asp).

### NORTHSTAR:

Stars 4-Pak includes four days of all-day lift tickets, lessons, equipment rental and lunch.

Free "Mommy, Daddy & Me" program, which is a 45-minute lesson offered at 1:30 p.m. Sunday through Friday, excluding peak periods.

### TAHOE DONNER:

Kids Learn Free: Every Tuesday, during non-holiday periods only; children ages 7 to 12 receive a free 90-minute group lesson with the purchase of an all-day lift ticket. The cost of a child's lift ticket is \$13.

Kids Ski Free: Every day, children ages 6 and under ski for free.

Snowflakes Ski School program cost \$45. Call 530-587-9444 for reservations.

For more information on the children's ski programs, call 530-587-9493 or go to [www.tahoedonner.com](http://www.tahoedonner.com).

### SIERRA-AT-TAHOE SNOWSPORT RESORT:

[http://sierraatahoh.com/info/winter/family\\_services.asp](http://sierraatahoh.com/info/winter/family_services.asp) : Information on parent predicament ticket, value meals, friendly mountain layout, preferred parking, child ticketing that cater to families.

[http://sierraatahoh.com/info/winter/lessons.asp#good\\_things](http://sierraatahoh.com/info/winter/lessons.asp#good_things): Provides parents with "Everything they need to know" to make it easy for them once they arrive.

For information on Sierra-at-Tahoe Snowsport Resort, call 530-659-7453 or go to [www.SierraAtTahoe.com](http://www.SierraAtTahoe.com).

### SODA SPRINGS:

For more information on winter play and sports, visit [www.skisodasprings.com](http://www.skisodasprings.com).

Soda Springs operates daily from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

### KIRKWOOD RESORT:

For more information, call 209-258-7754 or email [kidsschool@kirkwood.com](mailto:kidsschool@kirkwood.com).

## Slopes

continued from page 22

is the same price as a regular full-day adult lift ticket. The interchangeable Parent Predicament lift ticket allows parents to share a lift ticket for the day. As one parent skis or snowboards, the other parent stays with the child until ready to trade off.

Northstar Resort offers Burton Snowboards' Learn-to-Ride program; the program uses beginner-specific equipment and is designed to help newcomers learn how to snowboard. The Burton Progression Park introduces riders to freestyle terrain with rails and fun boxes just inches off the snow, allowing riders to get the feeling of air for the first time in a comfortable setting.

### Sierra-at-Tahoe Snowsport Resort

Sierra-at-Tahoe Snowsport Resort is conveniently located on Highway 50, 12 miles west of South Lake Tahoe and offers complimentary shuttle service daily.

"Sierra-at-Tahoe is committed to providing enjoyable experiences for families with programs such as our Parent Predicament lift ticket, award-winning Adventure Zones where children and families explore a little history on the mountain together, and our Wild Mountain Children's Center, offering top-



**Singing Classes for KIDS!**

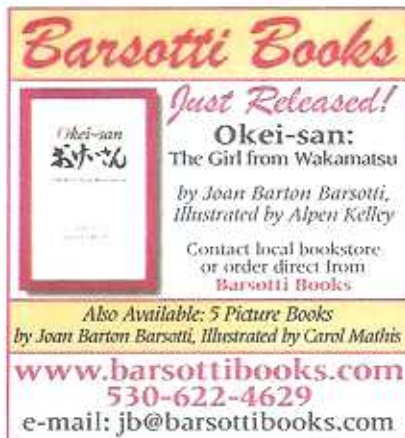
Maximize Their Vocal Potential! They will learn the vocal techniques of Legends. Our instructors are Speech Level Singing™ certified.

**We Offer:**  
Group Classes • Childrens Classes • Private Vocal Instruction  
• Workshops • Performance Opportunities

All private lessons are recorded to a CD

**\$25 OFF**  
Group Class Registration with the purchase of this ad.

**The Voice Training Studio**  
**916-473-8681**  
116 Douglas Boulevard, Roseville  
[www.voicetrainingstudio.com](http://www.voicetrainingstudio.com)



**Barsotti Books**

*Just Released!*  
**Okei-san:**  
The Girl from Wakamatsu  
by Joan Barton Barsotti, illustrated by Alpen Kelley

Contact local bookstore or order direct from Barsotti Books

Also Available: 5 Picture Books by Joan Barton Barsotti, illustrated by Carol Mathis

[www.barsottibooks.com](http://www.barsottibooks.com)  
530-622-4629  
e-mail: [jb@barsottibooks.com](mailto:jb@barsottibooks.com)



**Bouncetown**

**Sacramento's Premier Birthday Place!**

WEEKDAY PARTIES \$150 - \$219  
WEEKEND PARTIES \$249

Indoor Inflatable Parties & Play

PARENT'S NIGHT OUT:  
New Year's Eve!

**366-9999**

notch lessons for children in a safe and non-intimidating environment," says Mindi Befu, Sierra-at-Tahoe Marketing Director.

Befu says it has separate programs and the lessons are separated by age. She adds that it is a bit more comfortable for the little ones that way and "cooler" for the older children to hang out with kids their own age.

Last year was the first year it introduced educational fun parks for children; kids climb in and out of caves and tree houses while learning history and fun facts. It also offers Wild Mountain Ski and Snowboard School for children ages 3 to 12. This season, Sierra improved the Wild Mountain check-in process by dividing its ski school drop-offs into two separate areas for 3- to 6-year-olds and 7- to 12-year-olds.

Programs such as value pricing on children's lift tickets and the Parent Predicament lift ticket also makes it easy for families at the resort.

#### **Soda Springs Mountain Resort**

According to Rachael Woods, public relations manager for Alpine Meadows, Boreal and Soda Springs Winter Ski & Snowboard Resorts, visitors may not find many pro-skiers and riders at Soda Springs on a daily basis but instead will find some of the most "stoked" people to ever set foot on snow.

Soda Springs offers skiing and snowboarding for all ability levels, accessible via Lion's Head chair lift, an innertube carousel ride for small children and tubing lanes for all ages. Soda specializes in introducing kids and adults, some who have never been on snow, to winter sports.

#### **Kirkwood Resort**

A couple hours east of Sacramento, traveling on Route 16 to 49 South and then 88 East through Jackson, families can discover Kirkwood. Every member of the family can enjoy Kirkwood's new programs, equip-

ment and amenities.

Kids of all ages can find a terrain park to match their ability and desire at one of Kirkwood's three expanded terrain parks. AdventureLand, located in Timber Creek, is perfect for young children with its gentle rollers and ski-through tunnels.

The resort is set apart from the main mountain base area. The fall line runs create a natural way for learning and experienced instructors at the Learn to Ski & Ride Center teaching skills are guaranteed to make skiers and riders out of first-timers.

Burton Learn to Ride Center offers a snowboard learning program that provides new riders with a comfortable first-time experience. The Children's Ski & Board School, for ages 4 to 14, has several programs for young skiers and riders.

An interesting aspect of Kirkwood programs is that it teaches children

how to safely explore the backcountry through educational programs that teach how to navigate uncontrolled and unpatrolled terrain. Parents and children can practice for free using avalanche beacons in Beacon Basin.


Sam Mullens, Kirkwood Children's Program Director and Ski and Board School Manager, adds that Kirkwood has introduced a new angle to its beginner programs.

"New this year, all of our first-time ski and ride programs start inside," says Mullens. "The children play games, watch specially designed instructional videos and begin their experiences on familiar ground. The program has been specially designed at Kirkwood and signals a new exciting approach to teaching first-time skiers and snowboarders. The program helps accelerate the learning process and guarantees a fun and exciting experience for your child."

**Tahoe Donner downhill**

**Parents ski free on Thursdays!**  
(See our website for details)

11603 Slalom Way  
Truckee, CA 96161  
[www.skitahtoedonner.com](http://www.skitahtoedonner.com)  
**530.587.9444**



*The Best Place to Begin*