

AMERICAN WAY

March 2015



OUR SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN

The 13th Annual Road Warrior Contest winners
enjoy Beaver Creek, Colorado

Witness the Rebirth of Dallas • A Rum Adventure in Puerto Rico





EDITOR'S NOTE

By Adam Pitluk

BEGINNINGS

Adam (center) with the Road Warriors' guests (from left): Denise Villa-Dorsey, Brian Machovina, Abena Krow-Rodney and Courtney Schrieve. Not pictured: Michel Benarrosh



MORNING BROKE EARLY for those guests in Beaver Creek, Colorado, who were geared up and anxiously awaiting the 8:30 a.m. clock-strike. That's when the chairlifts opened. True skiers and snowboarders can't wait for that magic moment: the time when they are rewarded for their early-morning wake-up, having forgone any late-night festivities, cashing in after dinner for an early-to-bed/early-to-rise, first-tracks-of-the-day experience.

They gawked at the lift workers as they finalized the preparatory maintenance operation. As 8:30 a.m. ticked closer, they inched toward the roped-off areas where their lift tickets would be scanned, and where the chair would whisk them to the top of the mountain. Then they'd have free reign before the late-night sect awoke and donned their own gear.

But two skiers and one snowboarder didn't have to wait. They were up even earlier than their eager contemporaries, and they were already on the mountain at 7:45 a.m. for the very first tracks.

As guests of our 2014 Road Warrior Contest winners, Courtney Schrieve, Brian Machovina and Denise Villa-Dorsey enjoyed the benefits of the White Glove Fast Tracks program, and thus were treated to sunrise from atop the very mountains they prepared to ride down. The other two guests, Michel Benarrosh and Abena Krow-Rodney, were equally happy in their

JACK AFLECK

own right: Michel was sitting by a fire, enjoying his breakfast, and Abena was longingly looking out the window, taking in the mountainscape while considering a return to Beaver Creek once her firstborn child, due in May, arrives.

Courtney hadn't skied in five years. For Brian, it had been nearly a decade. Denise had been recently, but she was still knocking off the rust. As the early-morning calm turned to midmorning crowds, and as those slowly dwindled to late-afternoon die-hards, the first three people on the mountain were also the last three people on the mountain.

Ski resorts exist so that folks can come to a special place devoid of earthly, sea-level trivialities. Beaver Creek, a cut above most ski resorts, had a rather enchanting effect on our five winners and their guests, much like it has on all who pass under the covered bridge that heralds its name.

For 13 years, the *American Way* Road Warrior Contest has been about bringing our best and brightest passengers together. Factor in a storybook setting like Beaver Creek, and what you have is a recipe for new beginnings personified. For some, like winner Shaka Rodney, it was a chance to ski for the very first time. "I love it!" he would later exclaim. "I'm totally hooked." For others, like Brian and Courtney, it was a chance to renew their love of the winter alpine lifestyle. And for all of us, it was a chance to travel from various parts of the country and come together on a neutral if not altogether uncommon ground: the snowcapped Colorado Rocky Mountains.

As the sun sets on this year's Road Warrior photo shoot, please take a moment to study the faces of our winners. Those smiles are genuine; no one had to ask them to show some teeth. Take another moment to watch an extended video of their photo shoot at aa.com/americanway, or you can view it in your seatback entertainment device on select flights.

There are two certainties that emerged from this year's photo shoot: 1) Our winners and their guests want to return to Beaver Creek in the not-so-distant future and 2) This shoot was the beginning of many beautiful friendships.



Adam Pitluk
Editor

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