

travel by kimberly lochhead



PHOTOS: LAKE PLACID TOURISM BUREAU

## An Adirondack Olympic Experience

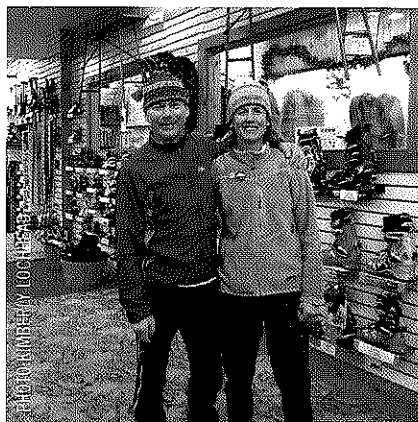
Imagine the blades of a bullet-shaped sled twisting through narrow, icy turns as gravity pulls you down a mountain at speeds of up to 50 mph. Crossing the finish line, you hear your name announced over a PA system, you pose for a photograph with your driver and brakeman. OK, so you may not have won an Olympic gold medal, but in Lake Placid, you can have a taste of what it would be like. And it is one exhilarating way to start a weekend of Adirondack adventures.

Olympic history seems to flow through the veins of many locals and is present in many of Main Street's businesses. Athletes from across the globe have come here twice in pursuit of gold, once in 1932 and again in 1980.

Our home for the weekend was the newly renovated High Peaks Resort in the heart of Lake Placid. Surrounded by the Adirondack Mountains, America's largest protected wilderness, and in walking distance from downtown boutiques, High Peaks Resort is just a short three-hour drive from Ottawa on beautiful backcountry highways. It is the ideal hotel for families with both indoor and outdoor pools and a pet-friendly policy. With spacious suites and elegant décor, it also makes a

perfect romantic getaway. Our room overlooked Mirror Lake, framed by the Adirondack Mountains, with a luxurious European-style bathroom including a natural stone tile shower and rainfall showerheads.

After our bobsled experience, we headed back to town and walked down Main St. for the annual Lake Placid Holiday Village Stroll, a local favourite — for very good reason. A magical event for the whole family, there are complimentary activities and treats at every storefront. Main St. parallels Mirror Lake and provides a beautiful wintery scene. Santa was even on hand for photos. Free wine tasting, happy hours, live music, cookies, hot cocoa and apple cider were all part of the event.



PHOTOS: KIMBERLY LOCHHEAD

Also on Main Street is High Peaks Cyclery. We dropped in to plan the next day's outdoor excursion on Whiteface Mountain. Friendly owners Brian and Karen Delaney greeted us. As Nordic specialists with over 23 years of experience, they have expansive knowledge of the local ski trails and a large array of rental equipment.

We ventured to Caffè Rustica for a gourmet dinner. Known for wood-fired pizzas, it is also a European-style restaurant with Mediterranean cuisine with menu choices such as sautéed shrimp with garlic, shallots, white wine and lemon over herbed risotto and tuna steak with asparagus salsa. The Lake Placid Centre for the Arts provided the evening's entertainment where we caught the Nutcracker Ballet.

The next day we met Brian and Karen at Whiteface Mountain,

Nordic ski specialists Brian and Karen at High Peaks Cyclery have all the professional gear and apparel to suit your skill level. Whether you're out for the latest high-tech telemark skis or practicing yoga at the Studio, they will ensure you have the best outdoor Adirondack experience. [www.highpeakscyclery.com](http://www.highpeakscyclery.com)



THE GOLDEN GOAL, 24" x 30"



POINT ST. CHARLES, 24" x 36"

on the ice. "When I was younger, my motivation was my family," he said. I have five kids and I just worked my ass off. I still do."

While Tomalty's work ethic has not changed, he says he has grown as an artist during the span of his 50 year career and claims he is painting better than ever. His work is exhibited in galleries across the country and in both major corporate and private collections. To many, he is a national treasure who has captured the true spirit of our nation's infatuation with the beloved game played on ice. Recently, Tomalty depicted Sidney Crosby as he scored "The Golden Goal" at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics. The painting expresses the hysteria from the sea of red cheering in the stands, personifying Canadian pride at its fullest.

Tomalty is also successful at illustrating another important aspect of Canadian hockey culture — the bond between father and son — the passing down of skill and knowledge of the sport. He achieves this by sometimes painting his father in the stands, applauding the Canadiens to victory. "I paint my dad sometimes because he loved hockey and the stories he told about life, I think he passed this love on to me," said Tomalty. ■

Visit [www.TerryTomalty.com](http://www.TerryTomalty.com) for additional information.

which has the greatest vertical drop east of the Rockies. (There are ski runs for every level.) The highest skiable terrain stands at 4,650 ft. We were geared up with brand new ski equipment from Scarpa and Black Diamond to trek up the hill. Ideal for backcountry skiing, climbing skins are stuck to the bottom of the skis for grip and an alpine trekker binding is attached to the boot, giving the heel lift and leverage. Once you reach the top of the hill, you can adjust the binding to ski down. This is called "earning your turns" and makes for a great workout. After this lesson, we tried telemark skiing, which is also known as "free heel skiing" because the binding only connects the boot to the skis at the toe allowing you to completely flex your knee and fully bend the turning leg. Named after the Telemark region of Norway this technique was first brought to public

attention around 1868. Our excursion with Brian and Karen was a highlight of our trip.

That night, we ate in High Peaks' Dancing Bears Restaurant. American food fare is served up in a bistro-style. A variety of sandwiches, pizza, nachos and burgers are offered as well as homemade soups and salads.

Our final day in Lake Placid was spent skiing and snowboarding at Whiteface Mountain. The gondola ride with views of the surrounding Adirondacks was breathtaking. Lake Placid is a gold medal vacation destination for residents of the National Capital Region. With a variety of outdoor activities to suit any ability, gourmet restaurants and boutique shopping, this friendly and quaint town has no shortage of things to do. ■



ABOVE: The entrance to the High Peaks Resort, its lobby and Dancing Bears Restaurant.

## When You Go

**WHITEFACE MOUNTAIN** — Grab an Olympic Passport and try the bobsled or skeleton experience, visit the Ski jump complex or the Olympic Museum. Whiteface Mountain is also the #1 ski resort in the Eastern United States and provides excellent conditions for skiers of all abilities with 86 trails. 5021 Rt. 86, Wilmington. 1-877-SKIFACE. [www.whiteface.com](http://www.whiteface.com).

**DANCING BEARS RESTAURANT** — Where past Olympians celebrated their victories on the slopes and ice is a welcoming family-style atmosphere perfect for street watching and enjoying American fare. 2384 Saranac Ave. (518) 523-1120. [www.highpeaksresort.com](http://www.highpeaksresort.com)

**SUGAR SHACK DESSERT CO.** — Red velvet cupcakes, white chocolate macadamia nut cookies and brownies all made from scratch. 2567 Main St. (518) 523-7540.

**CAFFE RUSTICA** — Gourmet Mediterranean style food in a warm, rustic restaurant with an impressive wine list. 1936 Saranac Ave. (518) 523-7511. [www.cafferustica.com](http://www.cafferustica.com).

**HIGH PEAKS MOUNTAIN GUIDES HOUSE (AND LODGING)** — Everything you need to plan an exciting adventure with rental equipment, a resource library including maps, books and expertly-trained guides in rock climbing, hiking, backpacking, kayaking, mountain biking and more. 2733 Main St. (518) 523-2368.

[www.hpmountainguides.com](http://www.hpmountainguides.com)