

Schweitzer Mountain Resort, Idaho

MOUNTAINLIFE • MARKET REPORT



Schweitzer, Idaho

• In this northern Idaho ski hamlet, your second home may indeed be your castle. By Ken Castle

These days, it seems like everyone owns a second home in the mountains. But why settle for a simple, same-as-the-next-guy's ski chalet when, for not much more, you could rule your own ski-in/ski-out castle at one of snow country's most underrated resorts? If you're in the market for something truly unique, consider a ridge-top palace at Schweitzer, Idaho.

For a mere \$2.5 million, you'll get 300 tons of stone complete with towers, balconies and 3,600 square feet of living space—all surrounded by two-foot-thick walls. There's even an iron gate to discourage the uninvited, because pouring hot oil over the walls is so, well, untidy. Built by Roger DeClements, Castle Kataryna adds a quirky diversity to the mountainside real estate market in Schweitzer, but if medieval isn't your style, more traditional, contemporary options are plentiful. Whatever you're looking for in the way of a vacation getaway—fortress or fractional—you can find it here, served up with spectacular views near uncrowded slopes.

• SNAPSHOT

POPULATION 8,206

MEDIAN SINGLE FAMILY HOME PRICE (2006) \$413,515 in Schweitzer; \$323,028 in Sandpoint

ANNUAL TAXES ON MEDIAN SINGLE FAMILY HOME 1 percent of sale price for nonresidents

NUMBER OF PROPERTIES SOLD IN 2006 227

LISTINGS AT PRESS TIME 321

Propelled by the launch of two new chairlifts—a high-speed detachable quad and a fixed-grip triple—property values have been on the rise at this northern Idaho ski area. Perched 11 miles above the town of Sandpoint and 86 miles from Spokane, Wash., with a sweeping vista of Lake Pend Oreille (pronounced “ponder-ray”), the resort this year is getting \$50 million in infrastructure upgrades to serve future residential development, plus \$10 million for new on-mountain and resort amenities. Management is also talking with potential partners about expanding the village.

Plans for new condos and single-family homes are taking shape around the 4,700-foot base. In the secluded neighborhoods on the mountain's lower flanks, there's an eclectic mix of cabins, concrete condos and European-flavored mini-mansions. If your taste runs to contemporary city lofts with flat-panel TVs and Asian-inspired furniture, check out The Evolution condominiums. Or if you want something woodsy, there's Hemlock Hamlet, a four-bedroom, 3,500-square-foot home made of rectangular beams imported from Finland.

Slopeside devotees can also find recently built condos, complete with underground parking, elevators and stunning views of the ski runs and the valley below at the evolving mountain village. For Paul and Jane Pimentel of Spokane, Wash., a modest two-bedroom condo in White Pine offered the perfect combination of comfort and convenience. “We call it ‘stumble-in and

SELKIRK SECRET Unassuming and uncrowded, Schweitzer averages 100 more annual inches of snow than Sun Valley.



BIGGER AND BETTER Two new lifts this season—the Basin Express high-speed quad and the Lakeview Triple—carry skiers up the scenic South Ridge, with views of the lake and Sandpoint.

"THERE ARE NO LIFTLINES, THE REAL ESTATE PRICES ARE VERY AFFORDABLE, AND THE VIEW OF LAKE PEND OREILLE IS TAHOE-ESQUE. THERE'S NO REASON NOT TO BUY HERE."

stumble-out," says Paul, 49, an executive with a Spokane-based technology company. "When we're ready to take a break from skiing, it's easier to reach our condo than the daylodge."

Even though it's only a 90-minute drive from Spokane International Airport, Schweitzer remains largely undiscovered by the fly-in crowd. Most skiers drive up from Seattle (six hours) or other points in the Pacific Northwest. But the resort is getting

more attention these days as an alternative to established—and more expensive—destination ski areas. And, the lure of Sandpoint, which has lakeside marinas, golf courses, annual music festivals and quaint downtown restaurants, has made the region a clear two-season attraction.

Brad and Jodi Bodenman of Seattle recently invested—with four other families—in a 3,800-square-foot home within a short stroll of the lifts. "We looked at a lot of resorts, but there was nothing like Schweitzer," says Brad, a seafood company executive in his mid-40s. "You have 2,900 acres of skiing, plus another 4,000 acres on the backside, and all of the land is privately owned. There are no liftlines, the real estate prices are the most affordable I've seen, and the view of Lake Pend Oreille is Tahoe-esque. Honestly, I couldn't find a reason not to buy here." ●

• SAMPLE LISTINGS

• UNDER \$500,000

Highland Village: \$499,950



Ski-in/ski-out, 3-bed, 3-bath with partial lake views **FEATURES** Furnished, four-plex building; shared hot tub, 2-car garage, short walk to village **CONTACT** Jennifer Fortune, Schweitzer Land & Timber Co., 888-255-7301

• OVER \$500,000

Mountain Log Home: \$549,000



Single-family, 3-bed, 2.5-bath **FEATURES** Gourmet kitchen, lake views, open floor plan, stone fireplace, large deck with hot tub **CONTACT** Patrick Werry, Coldwell Banker Resort Realty, 208-263-6802

• \$1 MILLION-PLUS

The Enchantment Ski Chalet: \$1.4 million



Ski-in/ski-out, 3-bed, 3-bath **FEATURES** Vintage-style stone, timbers and masonry; lake and village views, 3 fireplaces, heated floors **CONTACT** Jennifer Fortune, Schweitzer Land and Timber Co., 888-255-7301

• NEW DEVELOPMENTS

TRAPPERS CREEK Ski-in/ski-out multi-family home sites located steps away from Schweitzer Village **Details** Neighborhood served by new high-speed quad (Basin Express), 180-degree views of Lake Pend Oreille, heated roads, all utilities and membership to a private club included. Duplex lots start at \$600,000. **Info** Tom or Jennifer Fortune, Schweitzer Land and Timber Co., 888-255-7301, schweitzerland.com

THE SPIRES AT SCHWEITZER Ski-in/ski-out single-family lots on an 80-acre site, extending from the end of the ski area's South Ridge Trail to the road network above two existing housing subdivisions **Details** Phase I has 20 home sites with full utilities and access to the slopes and a network of biking trails, with prices ranging from \$330,000 to \$2 million. **Info** Clay Hutchison, 208-263-9806, thespiresatschweitzer.com

GREYHAWK 40 single-family 2- to 4-acre lots approved for 3,500- to 12,000-square-foot homes **Details** Neighborhood will have heated roads and driveways, lift access to the slopes and walk-to access to 35 kilometers of cross-country skiing and hiking trails. Tentative release date of this winter. Prices expected to start around \$1 million. **Info** Tom or Jennifer Fortune, 888-255-7301, schweitzerland.com