



The joys and practicality of helicopter transportation aren't just for skiers anymore.

Marketing Idea of the Month

Copter-golf takes off in Pacific Northwest

By PETER BLAIS

BRITISH COLUMBIA, Canada — Transporting skiers from city to slope by helicopter has been a very successful marketing tool for the ski industry. Now golf courses are trying the same strategy in Western Canada.

Canadian Pacific Hotels & Resorts has begun offering a four-night, five-day package that helicopters golfers to several of British Columbia's top layouts.

Approximately 125 people have plopped down \$960 U.S. apiece on the package since it was first introduced this spring.

"It's going very well," said Colin Yorath, coordinator of inbound golf with Golf Holidays/West. "Maybe not as well as we'd initially hoped for, but we expect it to pick up next year and the year after that."

The *Heli-Golf Adventure of a Lifetime*, as it is billed, starts in

Vancouver with a night in either the historic Hotel Vancouver or Waterfront Centre Hotel.

Regularly scheduled helicopter service aboard Helijet Airways transports the golfer the half-hour trip (two hours by car) to Whistler and the Chateau Whistler Resort, where Arnold Palmer-designed Whistler Golf Club and the new Robert Trent Jones Jr.-designed Chateau Whistler Golf Club await.

The Jones' layout opened in May. It is a mountain track with elevation changes of more than 300 feet. "It's an unbelievably beautiful course," Yorath said. "We tried to get permission to land on the 18th fairway. But the municipal officials said 'no'."

Victoria and a pair of Robinson-designed layouts are next on the agenda. A night at the Empress Hotel is sandwiched between rounds at Ted Robinson's Olympic View Golf Club and Bill Robinson's Cordova Bay Golf Club. "We may add private limousine service to and from the hotel in Vancouver next year," Yorath said. "We could add another golf course, Gorge Vale Golf Club, too. The price will be about \$100 more in 1994."

Most golfers have come from the United States, Yorath said. The package has been popular as a corporate incentive bonus for top salespeople — groups have ranged from eight to 32 people.

That's created a few problems on the Vancouver-to-Whistler leg since helicopters carry only 12 people and make just three regular runs per day.

"But Helijet has been very good about reworking its schedules," Yorath said.

Rates are per person, double occupancy and include hotel accommodations, greens fees, pull carts, hotel/course return transfers, Helijet transfers and taxes. An extra night's stay in Victoria is available for \$99.

The golf package will not be offered after Oct. 15 since snow will have closed the Whistler courses by then. The program will resume next May 15.

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CMAA sponsors holiday campaign

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The Club Managers Association of America (CMAA) is sponsoring the two-tiered "Clubs Collecting for Communities" to aid local communities across the country during the holiday season.

Phase I, the food and clothing drive, is scheduled to start this month and run through November. The "Toys for Tots" drive, or Phase II, is scheduled to start at the beginning of December.

For more information, contact the CMAA at 703-739-9500.

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