Vail Resorts Newsroom

Whistler Blackcomb opens for the 2018-19 season

$66 Million in upgrades bring new Blackcomb Gondola, Emerald 6 Express & Catskinner chairlifts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WHISTLER, BC, Nov. 20, 2018 – Whistler Blackcomb will unveil the first of its three new lifts this Thursday, Nov. 22 as it opens both mountains for the 2018-19 ski season.

The Emerald 6 Express Chairlift will take six people and move 3600 people per hour through the busy Family Zone, a corridor skiers and snowboarders use to move between Harmony and Symphony bowls, and a central point heavily used by beginners, the Snow School and families.

“Our company invested $66 million in on-hill upgrades this year, so we could move people up the mountain and around the mountain faster. Ultimately, when you ski or snowboard at Whistler Blackcomb this year, you’re going to get more runs in your day,” said Pete Sonntag, Whistler Blackcomb COO.

Last December, Vail Resorts announced it would make what was then the largest one-time capital investment in a ski hill at Whistler Blackcomb, adding a new gondola for Blackcomb Mountain, two lift upgrades and several year-round focal projects. The mountain has subsequently opened the Roundhouse Umbrella Bar, with a 60-seat patio addition, the Cloudraker Skybridge and Raven’s Eye Viewing Platform and expanded Creekside’s bike park trails.

Following the Emerald 6 opening, a second ceremony will be held for Catskinner Chairlift on Blackcomb, as soon as weather permits. Upgraded from a three-person to a four-person, high-speed lift, Catskinner can now carry 2800 people per hour.

“We believe this will open up the Catskinner Glades as this area was really underutilized before. The idea is to change how many people spend their day on the hill. We want our existing guests to make full use of the terrain, spend less time in line and maximize their laps,” said Sonntag.

With minimal snowfall, the mountain has provided runs on both Blackcomb and Whistler, but warns conditions are still marginal. There will be no backcountry skiing and no beginner skiing for opening day.

Whistler will have the Village Gondola, Emerald 6 Express and Franz’s Chair open to ski Ego Bowl and Upper Whiskey Jack. The Jersey Cream Express, Excelerator and Excalibur chairlifts will be open on Blackcomb, though guests are asked to download via the PEAK 2 PEAK and Village Gondola.

“Early season conditions are never predictive of the season’s overall outcome, but we do want people to know we’re ready for when Mother Nature sends winter our way. Whistler Blackcomb is known for its consistency of snow, we have strong snowmaking capabilities and an army of people working to prep the hill. So we ask our guests to be patient, book their Christmas holidays and get ready for a great season,” said Marc Riddell, Director of Communications.

The average annual snowfall for Whistler Blackcomb is 1056 cm, with a 10-year average of 1,181cm.

While the deadline to buy a season’s pass has technically passed, the mountain is offering an extension until Dec. 2. Guests are encouraged to purchase their pass before Dec. 2 as season’s passes will not be available after this date. Anyticket purchases should be made online, in advance, for the best price.

A grand opening ceremony for Blackcomb Gondola will be held Dec. 15, although the lift itself is scheduled to open for public use Dec. 14. The new lift completes a continuous lift system of 13.5 km, allowing guests to enjoy a fully-enclosed trip up

Whistler, across the PEAK 2 PEAK and down Blackcomb. This state-of-the art gondola will transport 4000 people per hour in 10-person cabins from the base of Blackcomb to the Rendezvous Lodge, steps from the PEAK 2 PEAK.

Important note for skiers and snowboarders:

- There is a **Mandatory Download** in effect. Downloading on Excelerator Express and Excalibur Gondola will be limited. Skiers and riders on Blackcomb Mountain are encouraged to ride the Peak2Peak Gondola to Whistler Mountain and download via the Whistler Village Gondola.
- There is **NO Backcountry Access**. Skiers and riders are not permitted to skin up on Whistler Blackcomb property to access the backcountry. Backcountry tickets will not be available for purchase.
- **Shuttles** will be available from the Blackcomb Base and Lots 4 & 5 to the Village Base. Creekside parking will be closed on Thursday & Friday.

Photos >> Whistler Blackcomb Action Shots

***BRoll and photo packages of the Emerald 6 Express opening and opening day will be available at 3 pm opening day*

About Vail Resorts, Inc. (NYSE: MTN)

Vail Resorts, Inc., through its subsidiaries, is the leading global mountain resort operator. Vail Resorts' subsidiaries operate 15 world-class mountain resorts and three urban ski areas, including Vail, Beaver Creek, Breckenridge, Keystone and Crested Butte in Colorado; Park City in Utah; Heavenly, Northstar and Kirkwood in the Lake Tahoe area of California and Nevada; Whistler Blackcomb in British Columbia, Canada; Perisher in Australia; Stowe and Okemo in Vermont; Mt. Sunapee in New Hampshire; Stevens Pass in Washington; Wilmot Mountain in Wisconsin; Afton Alps in Minnesota and Mt. Brighton in Michigan. Vail Resorts owns and/or manages a collection of casually elegant hotels under the RockResorts brand, as well as the Grand Teton Lodge Company in Jackson Hole, Wyo. Vail Resorts Development Company is the real estate planning and development subsidiary of Vail Resorts, Inc. Vail Resorts is a publicly held company traded on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE: MTN). The Vail Resorts company website is www.vailresorts.com and consumer website is www.snow.com.

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