

Buzz Aldrin's skiing memories

'Aged 50, I realised I didn't have to be outstanding - so humbled myself by skiing'

Interview By Tim Johnson
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First skiing memory?

When I was at West Point, a number of classmates got involved in skiing, and even before that, some of my high-school friends in New Jersey did, but it just didn't appeal to me until after I left NASA and the Air Force.

I missed the social interaction of the après-ski events. Aged 50, I realised I no longer had to be an outstanding participant in every event, so I decided to humble myself by trying to learn how to ski.

Best skiing holiday?

I think I'll continue to be loyal to the wonderful skiing investments that have been made in Sun Valley, in central Idaho.

Favourite place to ski?

It runs the gamut from the good friends that we have in Sun Valley to the aggressive social activities of Aspen, and our perhaps more cultural experiences in Gstaad and St Moritz.

What have you gained from skiing?

The camaraderie of the gatherings, whether it's a sponsored ski event or competitive skiing with celebrities. They get together in Canadian, or American ski locations, and there's always a competition between national champions and people who are just learning how to ski.

Ideal skiing companion?

Five years after I first learnt to ski, I met my present wife, and she was an avid skier. So we sort of had a pre-nuptial understanding: I would improve my skiing and she would get certified in scuba diving. We've continued that agreement for almost 20 years.

Not only have I visited the moon, but I've been down to see the Titanic in a submarine. I also visited the North Pole in an icebreaker.

Greens, reds, blacks, or cross-country?

It's all downhill. I don't particularly care for cross-country. They have some interesting skiing experiences in Dubai, and I look forward to skiing there at some time. It probably isn't too steep...

Worst skiing experience?

I've been pretty lucky in avoiding falls. I have a little shoulder injury that prevents me from sleeping comfortably on one side.

Dream ski trip?

Maybe an all-expenses-paid skiing trip in New Zealand. I've never done that. I've been to New Zealand and that's where a number of Olympic teams train in the northern summer. I'm interested in being present at the 2008 Olympics, but I don't think they're going to be skiing in August in Beijing.

Future skiing plans?

I'm looking forward to an event in the snow, driving a Hummer to the South Pole.

Buzz Aldrin was on the 1969 Apollo XI lunar mission, and the second man on the moon. In 1999 he founded the ShareSpace Foundation (www.sharespace.org), to promote space travel.

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