

New Mexico Ski Hall of Fame

2008



Jean Mayer



Jean Mayer arrived at Taos Ski Valley on Christmas 1957. He had just finished a tour of duty with the U.S. Army in Garmish-Partenkirchen, Bavaria leading the Army ski patrol. Ernie Blake was looking for someone to run the ski school and Hondo Lodge, but cautioned Jean that Taos was just starting up and he would not get rich. This was just the challenge Jean was looking for and agreed to come to Taos. Ernie found that Jean had many abilities and gave him some land to build a restaurant and hotel. Jean started on the St. Bernard in 1958. His brother Dadou and parents Nicole and Charles joined him in 1958 to help with the building and finances. During the next several years several A frames and the Alpenhof were built. Dadou built the Edelweiss hotel next door and Mama and Papa Mayer started their own lodge in Red River. Ernie envisioned a superb ski school as one of the fundamental elements of Taos Ski Valley and he entrusted Jean to make it happen. At the time there were conflicting schools of thought on the teaching of proper techniques and Jean was able to put together his own way of teaching by taking the best parts of those. Ernie and Jean were able to attract some of the best European and American instructors to join the Taos Ski School and to continually adapt new and better methods of teaching through the years.

Jean and Ernie agreed that the ski school was one of the most important parts of developing TSV. Ernie was the consummate PR man and Jean completed the cycle by supplying the lodging and restaurant package combined with the ski school. This allowed them to institute the Learn to Ski Week with lessons, lodging and food combined to provide a cosmopolitan experience for guests from around the world.

Over the years, Jean working closely with Ernie Blake and sharing the same ideas for Taos Ski Valley has always been a mainstay in the valley. Jean developed the Ernie Blake Ski School and is still the Technical Director.

The Hotel St. Bernard with its European atmosphere, communal dining, and superb food always with Jean entertaining in the evenings after a day on the slopes is at the heart of Taos Ski Valley.



Jean passed away October 10, 2020.