

# MIKE WIEGELE BIOGRAPHY



- 1938 Mike Wiegele is born in the Folg. Roit Haus in Feistritz, Austria and grew up on a farm in Lading Kärnten, Austria.
- 1959 Immigrates to Eastern Canada and works as a carpenter.
- His inherent love of skiing and the outdoors inspires him to explore the majestic mountains of Canada, eventually luring him farther west where the glaciers are larger and the snow more reliable.
- 1960/1961 Works with ski master Ernie McCulloch at Mont Tremblant.
- Mike has also worked at Sugar Bowl Ski School with Junior Bonous.
- 1964 Mike Wiegele becomes a Canadian citizen.
- He moves to Western Canada and earns his Canadian Ski Instruction Association Level 4.
- 1964-1968 Mike is surveying the Canadian Rockies, Bugaboos, Cariboos and Monashees to find the best snow.
- 1965 As helicopter skiing takes off in BC, Mike starts looking closely at the peaks surrounding the area of Blue River and Valemount. He researches the mountains, avalanche and snow conditions, as well as keeping his own record of weather patterns in the area.
- Mike begins to operate a ski school and pro shop in Lake Louise.
- He coached, as well, for the Lake Louise Ski Club for 4 years which produced six National Team athletes: Ken Read, Jim Read, Chris Kent, Bobby Allison, Mike Irwin and Bill Irwin.
- 1967 Mike and Bonnie get married, having met in Lake Louise.
- 1969 The first advertisements for helicopter skiing the Cariboo Mountains is published.
- 1970 Mike and Bonnie have a daughter; Michelle.



- 1970      During the 1970's, with the help of friends, Mike and Bonnie founded the Banff Alpine Races and the Bow Valley Quikies.
- Mike Wiegele officially opens his own Heli-skiing operation out of Valemount. On his first trip up, there are no guests.
- He starts taking guests up on day trips into the Cariboo Mountains.
- 1973      Around this time, Mike Wiegele meets "Grandma" Molly Nelson, an amateur meteorologist. She had kept meticulous records of the past 30 years charting precipitation, wind, sunshine and snowfall in the Blue River region.
- Mike sends out invitations to media people and movie producers.
- Warren Miller agrees to come and make the first film.
- 1974      Decides to move business to Blue River.
- After exploring the different mountain ranges and weather patterns, Mike decides to move the business to Blue River where there is much more snow and less wind creating the world's best powder snow conditions.
- 1980      The Powder 8 World Championships are held in Blue River for the first time.
- Mike Wiegele aims to develop the largest single heli-ski are in the world in the Cariboo and Monashee Mountains. He starts to buy land and develop a full service resort for a world-wide growing clientele.
- The first guest chalets are built next to Eleanor Lake in Blue River.
- 1988      Opens a new guest lodge witch contains the Powder Max Dining Room, the Silver Buckle Lounge, the fitness center and stretch room, as well as the massage therapy clinic.
- 1990      Founded and developed the Canadian Ski Guide Association (CSGA) to train young Canadians as ski guides.



- 1990 Received Bravery Award for the Governor General of Canada and the Marshall Award for Excellence from the Canada West Ski Areas Association for outstanding contribution.
- Initiated avalanche research with the University of Calgary – this is a co-operative with the Federal Government to gain knowledge and expertise. All operators now participate in it.
- 1992 Mike Wiegele Helicopter Skiing Resort starts summer activities such as heli-hiking, biking, fishing, Nordic ski and alpine/freestyle ski training.
- 1993 The Grizzly Hut, donated by Matthias Maresch, is built to support avalanche research and development. It is to be used as well as an emergency shelter and hut for the education and training of Canadian Ski Guide Association students and as a rescue storage cache and safe haven in the mountains for those who may need it.
- 1995 The Thunder Ridge Centre is built to accommodate the administration staff, the Reception, as well as a large meeting room.
- 1996 The Guides Haus is added to the resort to provide the guides with a better guiding service operation to prepare for skiing each day with the guests.
- 2000 Mike Wiegele is elected to the Canadian Ski Hall of Fame. Inducted into the Canadian Honor Roll of Canadian Skiing for outstanding contributions to the growth and development of skiing in Canada by the Canadian Ski Instructor Alliance (CSIA).
- Approval of Saddle Mountain Resort project.
- 2001 Memorandum of Understanding signed with the North Thompson Indian Band for the Albreda Lodge.
- Michelle Wiegele succeeded her father as President of Mike Wiegele Helicopter Skiing.
- Formation of Leisure Enterprises Limited.
- 2003 Approval of The 8 Peaks plan comprising 45,000 hectares of premium terrain that will provide safe and consistent skiing opportunities in close proximity to the Blue River base of Mike Wiegele Helicopter Skiing.



- 2003 Partnership created for the Albreda Lodge with the North Thompson Indian Band.  
Mike Wiegele awarded Austria's prestigious Gold Medal "Goldenes Verdienstzeichen"
- 2004 Grand opening of the Albreda Lodge.
- 2005 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of hosting the Powder 8 World Championships.  
35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of successfully operating MWHS celebrated with 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Warren Miller Films.
- 2006 Michelle Wiegele & Jonas Guinn announce the birth of their son, Mike & Bonnie Wiegele's first grandchild, on December 26<sup>th</sup> – Charlie Roy Guinn.  
Inducted into the Banff Sports Hall of Fame.
- 2007 Official signing of the Saddle Mountain Master Development agreement.
- 2010 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of successfully operating MWHS.
- 2015 Awarded by the Canadian Rockies Ski Racing Hall of Fame in the Honored Builder category.  
45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of successfully operating MWHS.