

Heiko and Linda Socher

Heiko and Linda Socher are the foundational builders of Fernie Alpine Resort and of the ski culture that defines the Elk Valley. Over 25 years beginning in 1973, Heiko led the transformation of a 30,000-visit community hill into a 220,000-visit globally recognized powder destination constructing three chairlifts, engaging international planners, and creating the "Griz" mascot that became the official symbol of the City of Fernie. Linda simultaneously built the entire commercial and instructional infrastructure: founding Fernie's first ski shop (The Ski Base, 1968), establishing the first ski school, certifying as a CSIA instructor, running 30 years of elementary school lessons, and serving as an official Alpine Canada retailer. Their combined work raised a son to the 1994 Canadian Olympic team and double national downhill title. Post-sale, Heiko, in his 70s personally constructed Heiko's Trail, a 25-km alpine route that is now a landmark of the Fernie backcountry. Linda, at 88, still skis 100 days per year. The Mayor of Fernie, a BC Sports Hall of Fame member, and a former Alpine Canada Chairperson all offer unequivocal endorsement. Together, Heiko and Linda Socher built a world-class ski destination from the ground up, leading to the rise of an iconic Canadian mountain community.