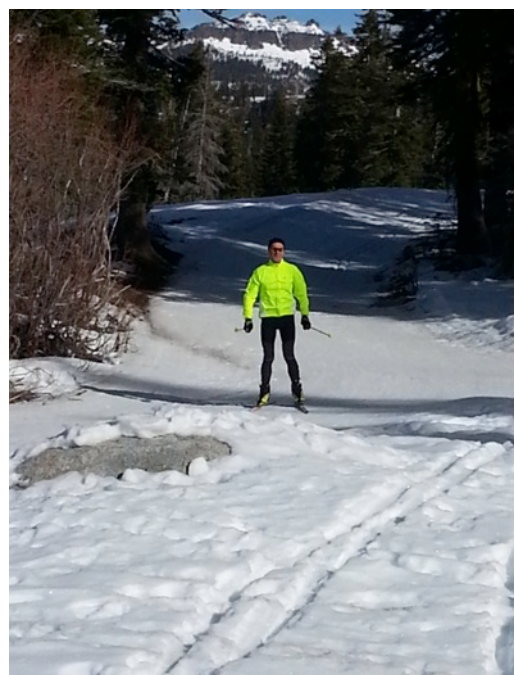


Mike Freeman & Heather Clay are both Merino Muster Skiers and Snow Farm skiers. This is the story of their recent trip to the USA doesn't it just make you want to go.

Mike and I just thought we should share some recent snaps with you of our 3 week trip to the USA with 18 yr old Francis.



We went to Royal Gorge at Lake Tahoe for a week, the snow wasn't great but the weather and the potential was certainly there for some great skiing both Nordic and Downhill. We then went to the East Coast to New Hampshire where Mike has relatives and experienced cold like we hadn't before. A polar storm that shut New York and Boston down arrived but we got up to Berlin New Hampshire just ahead of it. Minus 31 degrees C one night, heaps of new light snow the next day so skied at Bretton Woods and Glen trails in the White Mountains just under Mt Washington. A very different experience to the Sierra's in California and to Colorado. We then had a week at Breckenridge in Colorado and skied in great weather and plenty of snow with altitude being at 9 and half thousand feet. Francis got off a lift at 12 thousand feet and hiked up to a summit at 13 thousand feet and skied down to the ski area. I was interested in Breckenridge because it has a big disability ski programme based originally around the Vietnam war vets and that presence is still there.



I had an interesting encounter with a coyote, not used to wildlife, and had experienced this stress once before rock climbing at Yosemite. Over all great snow, great weather even the snow storms. Of course Francis loved Manhattan, San Francisco and Boston. We went to one ice hockey match (Francis plays ice hockey in Canterbury) and the skill level there was impressive to watch as was the selection of gear. Only down side was the food, especially the very poor coffee and cake except at 'Clint's' in Breckenridge though still all served in disposable cups and plates!

Anna was fine in our absence being cared for at home, she didn't ask after us but was happy to see us when we arrived back so I guess that was a good outcome for her and peace of mind for us!



Looking forward to the winter here when it arrives.  
Heather.