



Andrew Goldsworthy

- > Sledworthy Editor in Chief
- > Thrill-Seeker
- > Learned to ride in Port Rexton

On Tour: Robinsons, Newfoundland - A Snowmobiling Haven



My first encounter with Paul and Ruth Gale was at the 10 year anniversary of the Newfoundland and Labrador Snowmobile Federation (NLSF) annual Rendezvous event in Stephenville (NL). This annual event sees folks from all Newfoundland snowmobile clubs come together to help raise funds for local charities, rekindle old and spark new friendships. Paul and Ruth Gale happened to be sitting near our table at the social part of the event. One of our guys happened to be doing some card tricks and Paul took a liking to the entertainment. Before the night was concluded, Paul had mentioned to me about getting down to the Codroy Valley, specifically Robinson's to enjoy



his area. If I had a dollar for every time someone said this to me, I'd have a few dollars. However, I really appreciate it when folks suggest we tour their area. This just demonstrates that they're proud of their riding area and passionate about snowmobiling. Four years later, I finally got down there to check out what Paul was so proud of. I was curious as to how

this area would hold up as compared to the other areas I have rode.

This visit to the Codroy Valley was actually the third stop of the major nine day tour that Mark Shave and I did last winter...it was the "ultimate sled tour!" Thank goodness for understanding wives...Shannon and Shirley, you both are so awesome and understanding.

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We arrived in Robinson's (Codroy Valley) just before the sun was about to set (March 6th, 2012), this gave us plenty of time to park the truck and trailer and get our gear into the Chalet. This was our first opportunity to get a real look at Paul and Ruth's piece of paradise, or as they call it, the Pirate's Haven Chalets & Adventures (www.PiratesHavenAdventures.com). If you're traveling from Port-aux-Basque (Marine Atlantic Ferry), you'll travel east on the TCH for about 115 KM, exit on route 404 to Robinson's and McKay's. If you're traveling west from Deer Lake, you'll drive 167 KM to the exit for route 404. The drive into Robinson's will bring you approximately five KM to the turn off to the Pirate's Haven.

The Chalets are perfectly perched looking over the Robinson's River, giving you an incredible vantage point for viewing the primary NL Snowmobile Federation trail below. For folks visiting Newfoundland (driving via Port-aux-Basque), the Pirate's Haven would be an ideal staging area to kick off your trip and head east from there. Paul and Ruth have built four beautiful cabins. You'll be super comfortable with these well appointed chalets and the hot tub and sauna will help any tired snowmobiler post ride.

That first evening, Mark and I had a great opportunity to get to know Paul and Ruth even better. Plus, we met three guys visiting from Nova Scotia who would be joining us for the next day's tour. The guys from Nova Scotia were quite the characters. That evening,



my ribs hurt from laughing so much. Harry Barry, local resident and friend of Paul and Ruth dropped by too. Harry would be joining us for the next day's run. After a few more great laughs, we decided to hit the bunk and kick off the next day nice and early.

With a hearty breakfast in our bellies, we set off from the Chalets to kick off our tour. Paul was on the lead and he wanted to take a quick detour to bring the group to the top of Robinson's Hill. This 360 degree

personal cabin/retreat called "Dog House Cabin". I meant to ask Ruth about the origins of the naming of the cabin, but I'm assuming it's somewhat self explanatory.

From there, we headed further into the country towards the higher ground. Stopping at Stoney Beach and Butts Pond before reaching the Pinnacle. The terrain in this part of Newfoundland is vast and rugged. You'll experience tucks of trees, large bodies of water, lots of hills for potential fun areas and

"This 360 degree lookout gave us a perfect view of the land and also coastline."

lookout gave us a perfect view of the land and also coastline. Paul told us tales as to why pirates from years gone by took a liking to the area and this lookout was certainly one of the reasons, a Pirate's Haven indeed.

From here, we had to take the trail system within the community to start the ride. This trail leads back to the TCH where our ride plan was to cross the TCH and head inland towards a local attraction known as the "Pinnacle". Once we crossed the TCH and accessed Pasture Road, the snow levels quickly got back to a normal level. Traveling on this road (winter trail) reminded me of the trails in New Brunswick. The wide and straight trail was a pleasure to ride over and the fact that we made first tracks was that much better again. Our first stop was Paul's

the possibility to keep riding until you run out of gas. Trust me; you'd have no trouble exhausting your fuel supplies in this part of the province. Along the way, our group would stop for the occasional break, allowing Paul the opportunity to give us another awesome tidbit of information about the region. Another reason I always like to ride a new area with a guide, not only do you get to see the region, you get the interpretation too.

From here, we dropped over to Ben Abbey. This is a backcountry camp owned by a few friends of Paul's. While there, we had a great lunch and shared a few great laughs. After leaving Ben Abbey we headed towards Butt's Pond and finally started the loop back towards Pasture Road. By this time we



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were getting into the late afternoon and the weather had continued to be awesome. The ride back out of the country was enjoyable as we zipped through big valleys, cruised on straight stretches and when we finally reached the Chalets, everyone was super pleased with the ride.

Earlier that day, my ride buddy Mark had taken a small spill and some soreness was starting to set in. As I was parking the sled back in the trailer, I noticed he was stopped up by the Pirate's Haven Hot Tub. I think Mark was looking to soak the soreness out of his body. Along with the Hot Tub, Paul and Ruth have a wood fired sauna, which will certainly make any stay that much more enjoyable again.

That evening, we got to break bread with our riding group and chat about the day's adventure. Mark, our tech genius piped the day's pictures into the big screen in

the chalet for all to watch. We had a great evening enjoying pictures and chatting about past adventures and even planning future rides.

For those of you thinking about visiting Paul and Ruth, I highly recommend it. When snow conditions permit, you can access their Chalets right from the primary snowmobile trail. If you're coming from out of province, the Pirate's Haven is ideally suited as a key staging area to kick off your snowmobile adventure. I can easily see what some of those legendary pirates saw in the place, it was certainly a haven and in the wintertime, it's definitely a snowmobiling haven.

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