

# Vermont ski resorts are on the rise

## Great slopes and cool surf draw Canadians across the border

BY ROCHELLE LASH, SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE NOVEMBER 16, 2012



Snow boarding "au naturel" at Stowe Mountain Resort

**Photograph by:** Stowe Mountain Resort

The resorts of Vermont are rife with news this season, none more than the unstoppable dynamo Jay Peak and its new sister acquisition, Burke Mountain, both in the wild 'n' woolly Northeast Kingdom, about two hours away. You can ski and ride both with the new Judge Pass, a dual-mountain season ticket that's particularly good for families because it has no date restrictions.

Jay Peak, where 50 per cent of clients are Canadian, made a resounding splash last season with its truly amazing indoor water park, the Pump House, a big part of its evolution into a year-round destination. Along with the new Jay Provisions & General Store, the deluxe Hotel Jay, the Tram Haus Lodge and the indoor Ice Haus Arena, it's safe to say the principle Tram Side of the resort is a nearly done deal.

But Jay's roots are its downhill action, especially distinctive for its crazy cliffs, chutes and tree runs snaking through the snowy northern woods.

This year, Jay's more laid-back Stateside face will power up with a \$30-million investment for a new chairlift, a Mountain Learning Centre where you can tweak your style, a magic-carpet surface lift for newbies and a Sky Haus summit restaurant for great panoramas and juicy burgers. As always, Jay

accepts Canadian dollars at par for lifts and dining.

Burke is another super-friendly neighbour, especially with its buy-one-get-one-free ticket if you have a Quebec driver's licence. Now in the second stage of a three-year, \$110-million modernization, Burke has added a high-speed quad chair and five glades, and over the next three seasons will build four deluxe hotels.

Stowe Mountain Resort, the largest tourism development in the northeast, has invested a whopping \$500 million in sophisticated, world-class ventures such as the luxurious Stowe Mountain Lodge, the Spruce Peak Base Camp, which redefines skiers' chalets, and the modernization of lifts and trails on both Mount Mansfield and Spruce Peak.

The après-sports panorama at Stowe Mountain Resort is virtually limitless, from the simplicity of snowshoeing to Zen-style holistic rituals at The Spa, or from a homespun Christmas pageant to the dazzling new Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center, which showcases such luminaries as Itzhak Perlman and Broadway hits like *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

The new chef at The Lodge's posh dining room, Solstice, is cooking up the best of modern Americana with artisanal dishes like truffled beef pot roast, lobster pie and wild mushroom confit.

But beyond deluxe accommodations, gastronomy and shiatsu massages, Stowe is gearing up for a major slide season. Home to Jake Burton Carpenter of Burton Snowboards, this 75-year-old landmark mountain has major street cred. Shredders and freestylers can preview the latest gear at Stowe Toys and demo their new rides on the tricks at the North Slope Terrain Park.

Progressive technology will keep it all moving smoothly. Stowe has the new Evolution Card, a radio-frequency identification (RFID) pass that skiers keep in their pockets. You can glide through lift gates hands-free and charge purchases with a wave. Youngsters can buy lunch or replace lost mittens on their own. And Stowe's evolutionary "smart" snow-making system features energy-saving measures and a single computer that manipulates hundreds of snow guns and eight kilometres of pipes, all to improve snow quality.

On the other side of Spruce Peak, there's nothing that Smugglers' Notch won't do for its guests, whatever their age. Freestylers will get stoked on a new natural terrain park with log slides, bank turns and rock wall jumps.

Teens can break trail on a guided mountain tour that also includes backcountry snowshoeing or ice canyon climbing or a rope course through the forest. Smugglers' Snow Sport University now offers a women's clinic to enhance skiing and riding skills with female body bio-mechanics in mind.

After dark, the new Sweets & Snowshoes outings on Wednesday nights merge a moonlit night in the woods with divine dessert at the Nordic Centre.

## **IF YOU GO**

Vermont Ski Areas Association: 802-223-2439, [www.skivermont.com](http://www.skivermont.com); info on 18 Alpine and 30 Nordic areas. Jay Peak: 800-451-4449, [www.jaypeakresort.com](http://www.jaypeakresort.com). Burke Mountain: 802- 626-7300, [www.skiburke.com](http://www.skiburke.com). Stowe Mountain Resort: 800-253-4754, [www.stowe.com](http://www.stowe.com); Lodge: 888-478-6938, [www.stowemountainlodge.com](http://www.stowemountainlodge.com). Smugglers' Notch: 800- 419-4615, [www.smuggs.com](http://www.smuggs.com).

© Copyright (c) The Montreal Gazette

[Previous](#)

[Next](#)



Snow boarding "au naturel" at Stowe Mountain Resort

**Photograph by:** Stowe Mountain Resort

