



Lift tickets are offered at par for guests at the ski-in, ski-out hotel, plus lodging at par for 50 per cent of your overnight bill. PHOTOS: BURKE MOUNTAIN HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER

GET MORE FOR YOUR LOONIE IN VERMONT

Canadian dollar deals featured at slopeside Burke Mountain Hotel & Conference Center



ROCHELLE LASH

Burke, Vt., truly is a winter wonderland.

The new slopeside Burke Mountain Hotel & Conference Center, tucked in the wooded peaks of the Northeast Kingdom, is an irresistible getaway with deluxe suites, flavourful cuisine and attractive Canadian dollar deals.

The hotel is in its first winter season, but Burke Mountain is marking its 61st year as a local landmark of winter sport in a snow belt that generated nearly 90 centimetres of powder three weeks ago.

You'll find virtually no lines at the lifts and lots of untouched terrain — and the lifts are about 20 metres from the hotel's mountainside door.

LOONIE LOVE

Burke is a loyal friend to Canadians, offering lift tickets at par for guests of the new ski-in, ski-out hotel, plus lodging at par for 50 per cent of your overnight bill.

As well, until March 12, a mid-week Burke Hotel stay with skiing for two people starts at about \$212 Cdn.

In addition, Canadians staying off-property can purchase single-day tickets at par and get two for one when paying cash. That means you can buy one US\$64 lift ticket and get one for free.

THE HOTEL

The new slopeside development is designed to be a self-contained mountain community. It is the ultimate in convenience, with everything on the second floor: outdoor pool and hot tub, video arcade, ski lockers, conference rooms, three restaurants and a boutique.

At the centre of the hotel is a day lodge, where you can suit up for skiing and riding, step out the door onto a heated stone pathway and board a chairlift to the summit.

Burke Hotel has 116 accommodations — spacious studios and one-to-three-bedroom suites — with fireplaces, handsome contemporary country decor and designer kitchens or kitchenettes.

The look is sturdy and natural, with blocky blond wood furniture hand-crafted in the neighbourhood by Lyndon Furniture and artworks by Vermont photographers and painters.

THE FOOD

The hotel offers three options for food and drink. The first is Edmund's Coffee Shop, a grab 'n' go café with baked goods, breakfast sandwiches, smoothies and organic coffee.

The second is Willoughby's, an appealing dining room, with modern rustic furnishings and clever artworks crafted from wooden palettes.

Chef Cole Hunter's modern American cuisine is an unexpected delight, and quite a fancy find up here in the woods. It's matched by top-shelf Vermont liquor and premium wines by the glass.

His favourites include foie gras with Asian pear compote and figs, cider-brined chicken with mushroom black-eyed pea cassoulet and rich crab bisque, which he perfected when he cooked at a Forbes-five-star restaurant in the state of Georgia.

Other top choices are butter-

poached halibut, seared salmon, steaks, chops and duck, as well as creative veggie mains such as Portobello Wellington and marinated tofu. Willoughby's is open on weekends for breakfast and dinner and offers special dinners on some holidays.

Finally, The View Pub is your mainstay for lunch and supper, serving cocktails and lots of Vermont brews on tap, including hard-to-find treasures like Hill Farmstead.

Hearty après-ski edibles include burgers, steak tacos, tuna or salmon burgers, zingy salads with goat or blue cheese, fish 'n' chips, wings, goulash and great soups.

The View is always hopping. It presents trivia nights on Thursdays, live music on Fridays and prizes with drinks specials on Saturdays.

THE MOUNTAIN

Burke has two personalities: The Lower Mountain is a great learning area, well known for its creative programs, easy glades and gentle slopes; the Upper Mountain is big, broad and challenging, with a front wall of consistent summit-to-base trails.

Burke Mountain Academy has launched more than 50 Olympians, including gold medallist and multiple world champion Mikaela Shiffrin. Burke is an official training site for the U.S. National Ski Team.

With a towering vertical drop of 2,011 feet (613 metres, about 30 metres shy of Tremblant's vertical), the Upper Mountain is carved with three terrain parks, narrow trails, wide slopes, glades, rugged black-diamond steeps and double-black moguls.

Rounding out the snow sports are the Dashney Nordic Center for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing, plus fat-bike fests with guided tours, demos and parties,



Guests can swim and soak in the outdoor pool and hot tub in an irresistible getaway at the Burke Mountain Hotel and Conference Center in Burke, Vt.

IF YOU GO:

Burke, Vt., is approximately 2 ½ hours from Montreal, via Highways 10 east and Highway 55 south to Vermont Highway 91 south and exit 24. Burke Mountain Hotel & Conference Center: 866-966-4820, 802-626-7400. 2559 Mountain Rd., East Burke, Vt. skiburke.com

Canadian deal: It's Canadian at par for lifts, paid in cash. For lodging, a 50-per-cent deposit is paid in U.S. funds with a credit card, and Canadians pay the balance at par at check-in, by cash, certified cheque or money order. Rates include lifts, heated outdoor pool/hot tub, Wi-Fi, housekeeping (on request), arcade, premium TV channels, fitness centre, ski lockers, bike storage, in-room coffee.

Extra: laundry machines. Ski 'n' Stay (with 50 per cent Canadian-at-par) starts at US\$189 per night for two in a studio with kitchenette), with lifts, or US\$261 for four in a deluxe studio with sofa. Bike 'n' stay package at Kingdom Trails starts at US\$149 per night for two in a studio.

Vermont Northeast Kingdom Tourism: 802-626-8511, travelthekingdom.com.

as well as alpine touring.

In summer, Hotel Burke offers bike-in, bike-out: You can travel through the woods directly to the renowned Kingdom Trails for mountain biking.

Rochelle@rochellelash.com
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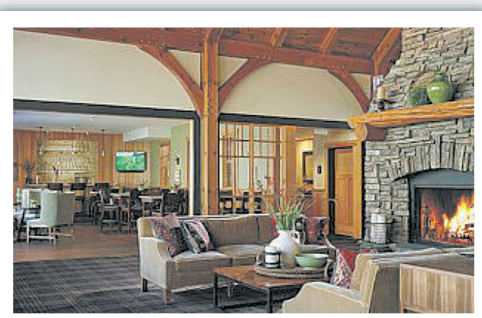
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