

Sutton celebrates 50 with a party

mountain will turn back the clock on prices; Mont Blanc, Mont Ste. Anne planning specials

BY ROCHELLE LASH, FREELANCE NOVEMBER 20, 2010

From Mont Kanasuta in Abitibi in the northwest to Mont Bechervaise in the Gaspé, Quebec is home to about 80 snow sports areas, large and small. Here's news from three favourites for Montrealers: Mont Sutton, Mont Blanc and Mont Ste. Anne.

Get set for a heartwarming tribute to the good old days with golden oldie prices. Mont Sutton, a pioneering mountain exceptional for its glade skiing, on-mountain warm-up lodges and mogul runs, will mark its 50th season with a three-day festival. On Dec. 17, skiers and riders will find that nostalgia pays when Sutton offers lift tickets at \$5, its 1960s' rate. The party will continue Dec. 18-19 with fireworks, live music and on-snow events for all ages.

Sutton, one of Quebec's major snow sports areas, has many unique features, notably that 40-per-cent of its skiable terrain is cut through birch and maple trees. The snow school's new All-Terrain Club is for those adventurous skiers and snowboarders who want to sharpen their skills through a race course, moguls, glades and a snow park.

Experts have a unique-in-Quebec challenge with a wall of steep, mogul-studded glade trails like Bou-Bou. Intermediates can navigate the Sous-Bois II (Glade II) and even children can cruise through the trees on Cendrillon and Starlet. The Forêt des Merveilles, a delightful family zone with teepees and carved wooden butterflies and birds in the trees, gets kids on their first glade. This year, a new learning park, Petits Wapitis, will coddle the littlest skiers and make learning fun.

Another user-friendly feature at Sutton is its mountain ambassadors, who give first-time visitors free guided tours. The area's three on-mountain chalets give the mountain a back-country feel. Yet, skiers and riders are never far from a fireplace, lunch and a hot chocolate.

Best deals: Sutton still is great value with a \$60 adult daily lift ticket. With a booklet of 25 purchased before Dec. 15, the price dips to \$45 a day. Ski-stay packages start at \$79 on weekdays with breakfast and one-and-a-half days' skiing. Discounted multi-day tickets don't have to be used consecutively, and there are reduced-rate daily tickets for the Family Zone and snow park. A new Family-Flex ticket gives children, parents and grandparents transferable tickets.

Mont Sutton info: 866-538-2545; www.montsutton.com.

Heading north to the Laurentians, Mont Blanc, a three-peak downhill resort, is so family-friendly that it has a \$29 apres-ski program for kids age 4 to 12 on Saturdays and holidays. While adults relax, have cocktails and dinner, or head to the spa from 4:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., the children are at play, fully supervised. The youngsters' apres-ski program will include sledding, soccer and football in the snow, a fireside supper, a movie or play time in Mont Blanc's exceptional indoor playground, the Jungle Magique.

