

Vermont ski inns offer big deals for Canadians

ROCHELLE LASH
MONTREAL GAZETTE

The snow-sports season has had a difficult start, but dollar-wise lodging deals for Canadians make it easier for skiers and snowboarders to tackle mountains in northern Vermont.

SKI-RIDE SUGARBUSH REGION

The welcoming West Hill House B&B is enticing Canadians with a great offer: a 25-per-cent discount if you stay three nights or more. The B&B is a quaint farmhouse dating to the 1850s. You'll find après-ski treats in the dining room; a pool table, books and puzzles in the library; a stone fireplace in the living room, along with the Quaiich Single Malt Scotch Bar; and a large-screen TV in the solarium.

West Hill House has modern eco-features including electric car charging stations and solar-powered hot water and electricity. The nine guest rooms have been updated with king or queen beds, flat-screen TVs, gas fireplaces and bathrooms with whirlpool tubs or steam showers. One big perk is free telephone calls throughout U.S. and Canada.

Most lodges in the Warren-Waitsfield area package rooms with the well-priced Ski-and-Ride-the-Valley tickets. They include access to Mad River Valley's downhill areas, Sugarbush and Mad River Glen, plus Ole's Cross-Country Ski Centre, and attractions like the outdoor Skatium, cookies at the Warren Store and movies at the Big Picture Cinema.

At West Hill House B&B, the rate for Canadians starts at US\$690 for two on a three-night stay during the week, (or \$115 p.p., per night) including lodging, breakfast and ski passport. West Hill provides shuttle service to Sugarbush ski resort, less than two kilometres away.

Sugarbush is a comprehensive mountain village with top-notch skiing and riding on a two-peak total of 111 trails, three terrain parks and

glades through the Vermont woods.

Ski purists also love Mad River Glen, owned by a co-operative of locals who maintain a traditional environment based on natural snow and a no-snowboard policy. SKI magazine has called it one of the most challenging areas in the east.

AND IN STOWE ...

Several Stowe properties are offering Canadian visitors discounts of 10 to 30 per cent, but ask carefully about requirements. Some hotels require three-night stays, and other ask for advance bookings of anywhere from 15 to 60 days.

The lodgings include a variety of B&Bs, country inns and resorts with spas: Commodore Inn, Timberholm Inn, Brass Lantern Inn, Stoweflake Mountain Resort & Spa, Mountainside Resort, Mountaineer Inn, Snowdrift Inn, Fiddlers Green Inn, Golden Eagle Resort, Stowe Motel and Green Mountain Inn.

Owned by Montrealers Simon and David Gameroff, the Green Mountain Inn also has a Winter White special that features a discounted room rate, valid Sunday-Thursday, non-holiday, through March 19.

The popular Whip, the inn's handsome upscale bistro, specializes in Vermont micro-brews, crab cakes, flatbreads, the Whip burger, dill-crusted salmon, Black Angus steaks and dreamy desserts. Stowe's free shuttle bus stops at several hotels and riding at the dual-area Stowe Mountain Resort. Mt. Mansfield's rugged trails, freewheeling terrain parks and gnarly glades are the stuff of snow-sports legends. But there is a mellow side to Stowe at Spruce Peak, which has novice and intermediate terrain. The only ski-in-ski-out hotel at the base of the main lifts, the luxurious Stowe Mountain Lodge, has an exceptional ski-and-stay deal for Canadians that starts at about US\$176, p.p., double occupancy, in a top-drawer hotel room with two lift tickets per day that normally cost US\$72 to \$115.

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