

# Great things in Stowe

## Vermont mountain undergoing world-class growth

As those who love Stowe know, the mountain is near legendary, and not just for its famed "Front Four" steeps on which skiers earn bragging rights. Stowe, or Mount Mansfield as it is also known, has five-star runs for every skier.

There's the meandering Toll Road with its famed stone chapel, so lovely to cruise that even experts are drawn to it. There's the thigh-burning Chin Clip and the wide-cruis-



### POWDER SHOTS

Moira McCarthy

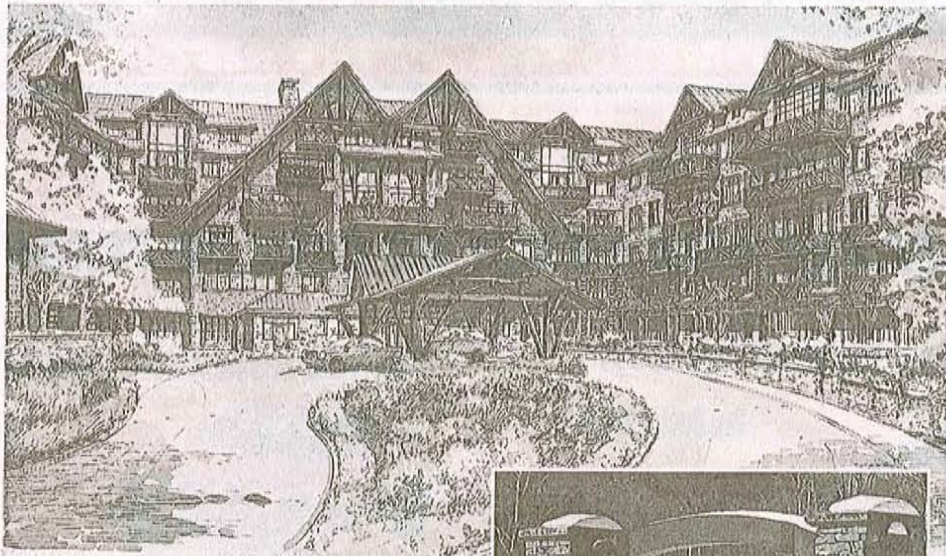
ing heaven under the gondy. There's more tree skiing than you can take on, and, of course, plenty of crazy steeps. There's the rustic town, quintessential New England charm from end to end.

And there's the history. Stowe began its reign as a tourist town in 1857 when the Summit House was built atop Mount Mansfield. Skiing came a bit later, with the first trails blazed in 1934.

Still, in all those years, and with all that pizzazz, Stowe has always lacked one thing — a vibrant base area and village to make the mountain experience complete.

Stowe lovers, your time has come. This winter, the first phase of what by next year will be a world-class base area is debuting. Called Spruce Peak at Stowe, the village will be, Stowe officials hope, the push the mountain needs to become a top world destination. Think they're kidding or dreaming? Think again.

"The Spruce Peak at Stowe initiative realizes a long-held dream of uniting legendary Mount Mansfield, Vermont's tallest peak, with family-friendly Spruce Peak via an enclosed transfer-lift at base lodge level," said Stowe spokesman Jeff Wise. "This is a crucial development, one that underscores that Stowe



Mountain Resort is diversifying its ski experience."

This year skiers can see that in the new lift that whisks them from Spruce Peak to Mount Mansfield, ending the need to take a shuttle back and forth and therefore giving skiers easier access to their many trails. Next year, with the project nearly completed, the base area will be anchored by the Stowe Mountain Resort, a four season hotel designed with every indulgence in mind. A massive spa, large rooms, 24-hour room service and even a ski concierge and ski sherpas to make your day easy.

Let's you worry that the hotel will have the feel of somewhere other than quaint Vermont, think again. The man at the helm of this hotel's creation may have traveled the world creating renowned hotels, but he's a Vermont native through and through.

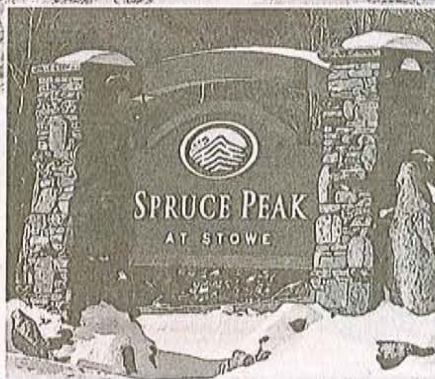
"I was born in Montpelier and even when my family moved away later in life, we spent every summer in Vermont," said Lodge Vice Presi-

COURTESY PHOTOS  
**BIG PLANS: Stowe officials hope the new base village, called Spruce Peak, will bring the resort to the next level.**

dent and Managing Director Jim Horsman. "This is the place that feels like home to me. I take saying that very personally. No matter where I go in the world, I'm always a Vermonter."

With that in mind, Horsman has gone to great lengths to make sure the Stowe Mountain Lodge experience is marinated in the Vermont vibe. The walls will be adorned with the works of local artists. The spa treatments will draw from the nature outside and the traditions of Vermont. Even the glassware — by Simon Pierce — will be Vermont originals. They'll all be presented, he said, in an elegant yet comfortable way, something the East has never seen.

"When we looked around while deciding what to do, we realized there isn't a true lux-



ury resort in New England," said Horsman. "Not to take away from the others — there are some great spots in New England — but our goal is to be everything a person expects in a five-star resort, just with a Vermont feel."

Under construction, the hotel should open to the public in the fall of 2007. That means that for the '07-08 ski season, you can drive up and have a sherpa grab your gear and take care of it — carrying it to the lift when you're ready to ski and back to storage when you're done. You won't

have to stress over ski school or daycare sign up because a resort concierge will call you days before your arrival to book all that. Your dinner reservations and other activities will also be taken care of. You'll be able to go dog sledding in the winter, or take part in a family fly fishing school or chef's wanna-be training package in the summer.

You'll be able to relax in your airy, Vermont-inspired room, or hang out by a crackling fire in the lobby. You can cruise back on your skis and hit the spa, or try a little skat-

ing on the village ice skating pond.

You'll see improvements up on the mountain as well. More automated snowmaking will ensure great coverage. The tweaking of some trails will make access easier. And as the construction continues, you'll find great shopping and dining right up in the village.

Of course, Horsman and his team know you'll still want to head down the road a few miles and explore the historic town of Stowe. Horsman said that while the first efforts at reaching out to the townspeople were a bit strained, all is well now, and the town is looking at the project as a magnet for even more tourists.

"There are a great number of families who want very much to be loyal to Stowe," said Horsman. "We are talking about the families who go to Aspen, Vail and Beaver Creek two or three times a season. Now, with this, we think they'll want to go to Stowe. They won't abandon the others; just take one trip a year to us. That's going to be good for everyone."

If after all this, next winter feels too long a time to have to wait, consider this: the project has been in development for more than 15 years. In fact, it all started as a way for the mountain to achieve better snowmaking. Because their environmental permit required them to deal with moving some streams, the resort management looked at what it would have to do and thought, "Why not think bigger?"

And better. If the dreams of Wise and Horsman come true, next winter one of the world's premier ski experiences will be just up the road a bit. Right here in our own New England.

And that, skiers, will be worth bragging about, even if you don't hit the Front Four.

Contact Moira McCarthy at [heraldskiing@yahoo.com](mailto:heraldskiing@yahoo.com).

## ATTENTION SKIERS & RIDERS

Take an Additional **20%** off  
CLEARANCE EQUIPMENT & APPAREL

SAVE UP TO **70%** Today

## SkiMarket

BOSTON • DANVERS • WOBURN  
FRAMINGHAM • SHREWSBURY  
PEMBROKE, MA

NASHUA & MANCHESTER, NH  
WARWICK, RI • [www.skimarket.com](http://www.skimarket.com)