

SPECIAL
ISSUE

skiing

magazine's annual

RESORT GUIDE

2011

SECRETS
OF NORTH
AMERICA'S
TOP MOUNTAINS

PLUS THE BEST
GUMBO, DOUGHNUTS,
AND HOT TUBS IN
SKI COUNTRY

SKIING'S ROOTS

3 FAMILY-RUN
SKI AREAS

WINTER 2010/2011

\$6.99



STOWE, VERMONT

Forgive Stowe regulars for being a bit haughty. Theirs is one of the original American ski areas, built on Vermont's highest peak, Mount Mansfield. The FourRunner quad ascends the same lift line cleared for the single in 1940. It's hard to think of an Eastern lift that beats it for efficient access, sustained vertical, and breadth of terrain. The only problem is trying to compete on a powder day with the locals, many of them race-bred rippers. They're in line at first light and can track out the Front Four and Lookout in less than an hour. When the gondola opens, they swarm like locusts through Angel Food's glades, stripping it bare, then hike to the Chin and plunder that too. New slopeside amenities add a layer of glitz to this quaint Vermont town already brimming with dining, lodging, and après options. That's nice, but Stowe has always been, and remains, about the skiing.

► **WHAT'S NEW** The 420-seat Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center opens in December. Meanwhile, completion of the posh Stowe Mountain Lodge brings its total of slopeside rooms to 312.

► **INSIDE LINE** The Bruce Trail (don't look for it on the trail map) descends all the way to Stowe's best après bar, the Matterhorn.

"Logan tower, we are currently above Stowe, beginning our descent."
Skier: Ian Forgays.

BEST OF THE NORTHEAST

► **BEST LIFT-ACCESSED CAR-SHUTTLE SKIING** Starting mild and ending wild, The Dip at Jay Peak is a wide swath of just-out-of-bounds tree terrain. Access by the Jet Triple and return by hitching back to the base, which is easy.

► **BEST GUIDE SERVICE IN THE HEART OF EASTERN SKI HISTORY** Spend a day with Keene Valley's Cloudsplitter Mountain Guides in upstate New York and be prepared to have your notion of Eastern skiing turned inside out. After a tour of the Slides, you might be an East Coast convert.

► **BEST SKIING WHEN CONDITIONS ARE LESS THAN OPTIMAL** Sure, every resort (OK, not Mad River Glen) claims to have world-class snowmaking capabilities. But when every other Eastern hill is sporting a sheen of ice, Maine's Sunday River has perfectly dialed surfaces.

► **BEST-KEPT SECRET IN THE NORTHEAST** Maybe it's that Saddleback is hard to find. Or that it's a farther drive than the 'Loaf or the River. Or perhaps it's simply the dearth of any sort of "scene." Whatever the reason, Saddleback remains something of a local's stash despite double diamonds like Muleskinner and Casablanca Glade.

LOCAL SECRET

Bolton Valley's got a rep for being a family hill with mostly mellow terrain (and great beer-league racing). But it's also a hit with the earn-your-turns set. You'll need a local to show you, but backcountry options abound, including one jaunt that connects BV to Stowe's Trapp Family Lodge trail network.