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TRAVEL

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

Stowe, Vermont

Reporters **Candace Jackson** and **Conor Dougherty** on what to do, where to eat and where to stay in this Vermont ski destination.

■ **What to do:** Stowe is a classic New England town, with a covered walking bridge, colonial-style inns and antique shops. It is also a popular weekend destination in the winter for alpine skiers and snowboarders. The ski area, Stowe Mountain Resort, recently received an upscale makeover with a new base area, luxury hotel and houses on the mountain. For cross-country skiers, there are numerous backwoods areas and a large groomed network of trails that are also good for snow shoeing (5781 Mountain Rd., Tel. 800-253-4754, stowe.com). Umiak Outdoor Outfitters rents snowshoe gear and runs guided tours of additional trails in town (849 S. Main St., Tel. 802-253-2317, umiak.com). A 15-minute drive from Stowe is Waterbury, Vt., home of Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream. For \$3, you can take a short tour of the factory and sample the flavor of the day. (Kids under 12 are free.) There's also a \$15 tour that includes a quick snowshoe trek in the woods (Tel. 866-BJ-TOURS, benjerry.com). After a day spent outside or eating sweets, a relaxing option is the spa at Stoweflake Mountain Resort & Spa. You can buy a day pass to the large spa for \$40, which includes steam rooms, saunas and a co-ed Aqua Solarium with a mineral pool and massaging waterfalls (Fee is \$20 if you're a guest at the hotel. Entrance is free with any spa treatment.) (1746 Mountain Rd., Tel. 802-760-1083, www.spaat-stoweflake.com).

■ **Where to stay:** The newly opened Stowe Mountain Lodge is a luxury, ski in/ski



Stowe's ski area recently underwent a makeover.

out resort with bamboo bed linens, marble bathrooms and flat screen TVs. Rooms start at \$350 (7412 Mountain Rd., Tel. 802-253-3560, stowemountainlodge.com). A good budget option is the friendly, family-owned Stowe Motel & Snowdrift, a 10-minute drive from the slopes and a short walk to many restaurants and shops in town. The hotel is very basic, but there's a hot tub, and daily breakfast and WiFi are included. Winter room rates start at around \$100 a night (2043 Mountain Rd., Tel. 800-829-7629, stowemotel.com).

■ **Where to eat:** Stowe is a great town for foodies. One of the newest options is Solstice at the Stowe Mountain Lodge, which overlooks the ski slopes and sources most of its ingredients from nearby farms and dairies. Dishes can include maple braised pork shanks and maple crème brûlée. For a more casual meal, try the Shed Restaurant & Brewery, one of Stowe's favorite after-ski stops and evening hangouts for locals and tourists (eat in the bar area for a cozier vibe) (1859 Mountain Rd., Tel. 802-253-4364). A few doors down is Picasso, one of many punning names in town and a family-friendly option that serves excellent pizza, salads and sandwiches (1899 Mountain Road, Tel. 802-253-4411, picasso.com).