

SPORTS SCORES

Wie is wobbly in wind

15-year-old golfer battles conditions for a 75 vs. men in Sony's first round

■ 8C



By Matt York, AP

Michelle Wie: Had 72 in first round last year.

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Newsline



■ News ■ Money ■ Sports ■ Life

■ Stocks slip on rising oil prices

Index	Close	Change
Dow Jones industrial average	10,505.83	↓ 111.95
Nasdaq composite	2070.56	↓ 21.97
Treasury note, 10-year yield	4.17%	↓ 0.07
USA TODAY Internet 50	116.77	↓ 1.53%

Sources: USA TODAY research, MarketWatch.com

Storms hit heartland



New resort aims high

Exclusive Tamarack in Idaho seeks year-round tourism niche ■ 1D

Tamarack Resort

FBI might pull plug on computer program



Life

SECTION D

Monday, January 14, 2005

Off the wall

Can you hang with funkier décor? 9D



By Quentin Bacon, © Country Home

Destinations

& Diversions

birthday cake: \$30
 birthday presents: \$120
 birthday cards: \$12

being celebrated: priceless



there are some things money can't buy.
 for everything else there's MasterCard.



Wilderness Hotel & Golf Resort

Activity: Wisconsin Dells' Wilderness Resort
 down its Great Tsunami sign today.

Water rides reconsider names after tsunami

When the Wilderness Resort in Wisconsin Dells, launched its Great Tsunami outdoor wave pool, many patrons had to ask what the name meant. Now, the park's chagrined owners — along with operators of several other tsunami-themed water attractions — are changing the names after last month's South Asian disaster.

"Who could have guessed when we opened (the ride) that we'd be dealing with this worldwide catastrophe?" says Wilderness Resort spokeswoman Heidi Fendos. The resort decided today to come up with a new name and will be donating a portion of January revenue to a UNICEF fund.

Dover Lake Waterpark in suburban Cleveland has dropped the word "tsunami" from its at-

Exclusivity in the clouds



New Idaho resort promises plush amenities and uncrowded runs

By Gene Sloan
 USA TODAY

DONNELLY, Idaho — Even for a jaded globe-trotter like Phil Doerr, 23, of Arcata, Calif., the view from the top of Tamarack Resort is a stunner.

The budding ski area overlooks Lake Cascade, a sparkling, 22-mile-wide reservoir deep in the Idaho Rockies. And in every direction you turn, there are soaring, snow-covered mountains.

"It reminds me a lot of skiing at Lake Tahoe. Except for the crowds," Doerr says, pausing between knee-jolting runs from the 7,700-foot summit. "I feel like I have the place to myself."

Indeed, even on opening weekend last month, there wasn't a single line to get onto a lift. And that's not by accident. With ticket sales limited to 1,500

Cover story

...y to come up with a new name and will be g a portion of January revenue to a UNICEF nd.

...over Lake Waterpark in suburban Cleveland 'dropped the word "tsunami" from its at, which is now the Whitecap Wave Pool. But gh's Sandcastle water park is still undecided. he ride opened in 1999, "most of us thought ami as part of a Grade B disaster movie," woman Mary Lou Rosemeyer says. "But g the name doesn't do anything (for the vic- d that's what we need to think about."

— Laura Bly

VINE

akes on sparkling reputation

...as always been among the subtlest — some ay sneaky — of alcoholic beverages, but now a few producers in Japan are sending over a version that is positively ef-fervescent.

Sweet, low-alcohol sparkling sake, which tastes like cream soda, made a splash at the hip Sushisamba restaurants in New York, Chicago and Miami over the holidays. It was so well received that it's now poised to spread to retail stores and more bars and restau-rants, says Sushisamba's Paul Tanguay. "In Japan, producers are seeing their sales go down every year, so they're coming up with new products.

...y sake is in that vein," Tanguay says. amba offers two brands: Poochi Poochi, for tle, and Harushika "Tokimeki" (translation: ving feeling of being in love"), for \$9 a glass a bottle.

— Jerry Shriver

hat don't come out in the wash



By Sherri Harkin, Tamarack Resort

It's refreshingly lonely at the top: A snowboarder goes down a slope at Tamarack Resort, the first year-round mountain resort to open in the USA in more than 20 years. The high-tech, low-density "boutique" resort has big plans to stay small.

...myself." Indeed, even on opening weekend last month, there wasn't a single line to get onto a lift. And that's not by accident. With ticket sales limited to 1,500 a day, the private investors who are building the ski area say there never will be.

Tamarack, the first year-round mountain resort to open in the USA in more than two decades, represents a bold bet that skiers are willing to pay up for exclusivity, both on and off the slopes.

"A lot of the wealthy have shied away because (other resorts) have become too crowded," says Jean-Pierre Boespflug, the French-born entrepreneur leading the development. "We're re-creating the densities of the 1970s, before resorts began adding high-speed lifts and (crowds) exploded."

Boespflug, behind the wheel of one of the resort's white SUVs, grows animated as he talks about the 15-year, \$1.5 billion master plan for Tamarack, which he promises will be one of the toniest mountain escapes in the West. Bouncing up a snowy mountain road at the edge of the slopes, he waves excitedly in the direction of some of the hundreds of sites for million-dollar homes, a few already well under way.

The resort has sold more than 160 slopeside properties at starting prices

Please see COVER STORY next page ▶



USA TODAY

Nearby town gets boost, too

Continued from 1D

of \$469,000 for the smallest, two-bedroom cottage. And more than 300 people are signed up to bid on 85 bigger sites coming up for sale later this month. At the last release of home sites, frenzied bidders snapped up 64 properties in less than eight hours. The ski industry has struggled over the past two decades as baby boomers turned to less demanding vacations such as cruising. More than 200 U.S. resorts have closed since 1985. But Boespflug says boomers can be lured back with the right mix of intimacy and comfort.

Like Utah's Deer Valley and Colorado's Beaver Creek, the last two major resorts built in the USA (both opened in 1981), Tamarack is aiming high. At the slopeside Canoe Grill, in addition to burgers and other traditional resort fare, chefs dish up gourmet paninis, wood-fired pizzas and mesclun salads. Next door at the Sports Center, customers store their boots on personal heated drying racks.

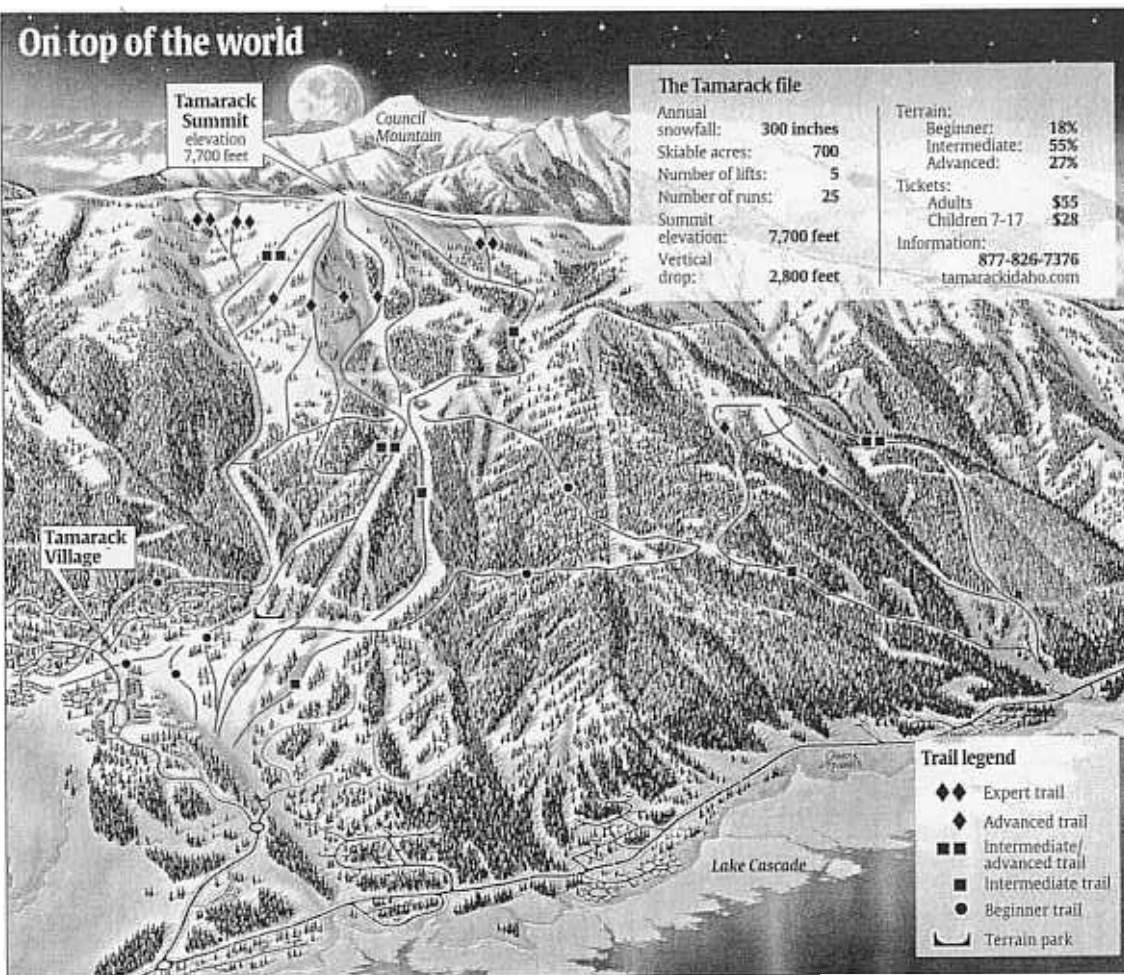
Still, with the 1,500-a-day limit on ticket sales, Tamarack is taking the upscale formula to the next level. Deer Valley, often billed as the most exclusive ski resort open to the public, sells 5,000 to 6,000 tickets a day.

"We're a cross between Deer Valley and the Yellowstone Club," Boespflug says, referring to the private ski area in Montana that limits access to a few hundred multimillionaires who buy memberships.

Tamarack, too, is selling memberships. For \$45,000 plus annual dues, vacationers who buy into The Club at Tamarack will get first crack at the 1,500 daily ticket slots, early access to the slopes, access to a private clubhouse and restaurant, concierge service and guaranteed tee times at a Robert Trent Jones II golf course opening next summer.

Unlike at the Yellowstone Club, however, non-members aren't shut out, although their access to exclusivity comes at a price. The least expensive lodging available is a two-bedroom cottage starting at \$436 per night for a family of four, including lift tickets.

This for a resort that's still in its infancy. While lots of development is planned in coming years, for now the base area has just a handful of eateries, bars and shops housed in



Sources: Tamarack Resort

James Niehues illustration provided by Tamarack; graphic by USA TODAY

temporary yellow domes. And with just five lifts serving 700 skiable acres, the overall size of the resort remains relatively small, compared with top ski resorts in the West.

Even when the resort is fully built, it will offer just 1,100 acres of skiable terrain, which is half the size of major resorts such as Breckenridge in Colorado.

Still, Tamarack isn't designed to be another Breckenridge or Vail. Executives use the word "boutique" to describe it.

And while Tamarack's overall acreage is modest, its top-to-bottom vertical drop of 2,800 feet is comparable to Breckenridge, with a vertical drop of 3,077 feet. Ditto for snowfall, which is about 300 inches a year.

Moreover, with visits this year projected to remain under 100,000 because of the ticket limit, the skier density will be a fraction of that at major resorts: Breckenridge, the most-visited U.S. resort, draws around 1.4 million a year.



By Sherri Harkin, Tamarack Resort

Chalet: Lodgings feature rough-hewn timbers, stone fireplaces.

Already, the evergreen-covered mountain offers an alluring mix of beginner, intermediate and expert terrain with long, looping cruisers that make it easy for groups of varying abilities to make it down the mountain together.

Tamarack also has an extensive cross-country trail network. And perhaps more than any other ski area, it was designed as a true year-round resort with mountain biking



Check out the best resorts and snow reports, and find out how record snowfall in California is affecting ski resorts at ski.usatoday.com.

and hiking trails, golf courses (at least two are planned) and facilities for boating on Lake Cascade.

Operations chief Jim Spentz says executives closely studied their competitors for ideas. For example, an espresso bar is placed where customers can grab coffee and food while getting outfitted, a time-saving idea first championed by Whistler-owner Intrawest. Gear Valley, the area with the heated boot warmers where customers can store equipment overnight, "comes straight out of Deer Valley," Spentz says.

Tamarack also is loaded with technology. Every chalet and cottage has free high-speed Internet access, and the resort plans to embed lift tickets with microchips that are scanned as customers board a

chairlift. The tickets also will serve as room keys and as a charge card.

Perhaps the biggest drawback this season is the limited lodging at the resort's base area. While one hotel is under construction and several more are planned, only 62 cottages and chalets that sleep four to eight currently are available. Most skiers are staying in McCall, a former lumber town that's morphed into a cozy-if-small tourist hub over the past two decades.

As a result, the few eateries and bars at the resort quickly clear out after the lifts shut down for the day. On a recent Saturday night, only three people were in the Tamarack Club bar — all employees.

"It's going to change quickly," promises Spentz, who was hired away from the fifth-most-visited U.S. ski resort, Colorado's Copper Mountain. "When I came here in April, none of this was here and look around at what's here now."

Development fever already has gripped the surrounding area.

If you go . . .

Getting there: Major airline including United, Delta and Southwest fly daily to Boise 90 miles south of the resort. Call ahead: shuttle pickup (\$53 per person each way; 877-826-7376), or car for the two-hour scenic drive.

Where to stay: Tamarack (877-826-7376; tamarackidaho.com) offers 24 two-bedroom cottages starting at \$109 per person per night and 38 three-bedroom chalets starting at \$129 per person; both include lift tickets and are based on 4-person occupancy. Or stay in McCall (pop. 2,500) miles north of the resort. The suite Whitetail Club (800-656-6464; whitetailclub.com) has elegant rooms starting at \$205 per season. The charming, century-old McCall Hotel (866-800-1183; mccallidchamber.org) offers a range of room sizes priced from \$60 for a shared bath to \$210 for a lake-view suite, breakfast and afternoon wine included.

Where to eat: Just steps from Tamarack's main lift is **Morels**, upscale eatery serving continental fare (entrees, \$18-\$24). The base area also offers the cafeteria-like Canoe Grill. In McCall, the elite Epicurean serves Pacific Rim influenced dishes (entrees, \$18-\$24). Favorites also include Steers Steak & Seafood (entree: \$18-\$30) and The Mill Steak and Spirits (entrees, \$18-\$30).

Information: 208-325-1000; tamarackidaho.com.

"We had 250 lots change 1 this year in my subdivision and marvels Dennis DeLaet, owner Granite Mountain Nature Gallery in McCall, which sells fossils, rocks and framed specimen butterflies and bugs. Sales a 30% from last year, he says.

Still, despite the gold-rush boom across the 40-mile-long valley, many locals are wary.

"It's a Catch-22," says Sue son, manager at It's All Idaho, shop on McCall's fast-expanding main boulevard. "We need to a living, but we hate to lose small-town charm."

As she stands behind the counter, a nearby shopper pipes up: "It's terrible here. The snow is awful, and there's no reason to come. We don't want more people to know about this place," says a middle-aged woman, who came from the store without giving a name. "It's our little secret."

Or it was. Now, the secret is out.