

THE SNOW

The New York Times

Travel

Sunday, November 14, 2004

Section **5**

TRAILS LESS SKIED



WINTER IN THE SNOW

SUPERPIPES AND MINIPARKS

From Stowe to Vail, resorts add lifts, lights, trails and rails to lure more skiers to the slopes



By MEG LUKENS NOONAN

THE country's major mountain ski resorts are more determined than ever to be all things to all people this winter — whether they are fans of Lincoln Logs, Linkin Park or Lincoln Navigators. That means skiers will find new lifts and programs devoted to children and beginners, souped-up terrain parks for hot-shot Generation Y “freeriders” and a commitment to the kind of services — from spa treatments to ski caddies — that ease the ski experience for aging baby boomers.

What's New

For only the second time in two decades, a major new ski resort will open in the West. Tamarack, on the shores of Lake Cascade in west-central Idaho, is set to make its debut Dec. 15 with 5 lifts, 25 trails, a 10-acre terrain park, 19 miles of Nordic skiing and the hot feature of the moment: a 500-foot superpipe for snowboarders and skiers on twin-tip skis. Guests can stay in any of 62 two- and three-bedroom single-family well-appointed ski-in ski-out log cottages with concierge services. Moonlight Basin in Montana follows up its inaugural season with a

Hampshire, will cut the ribbon on their acquisition with a new chairlift to three fresh trails, more grooming machines, new terrain parks and pipes, and a marked shift in marketing focus away from the mountain's extreme slopes and toward its family-friendly terrain. And Alta, in Utah, gets a long-wished-for base-to-summit chair.

Bretton Woods, New Hampshire's largest resort, continues to grow this winter with a dozen new trails and glades in the Rosebrook Summit area. The resort has joined with the Mount Washington Cog Railway, which will operate in winter for the first time and bring skiers partway up the 6,288-foot peak. Two milelong groomed trails parallel to the train tracks will be negotiable by intermediates and beginners.

Gladed trails, cut through stands of trees, are increasingly popular among advanced skiers. Deer Valley, Utah, and Big Sky in Montana have new lifts to expand gladed terrain. Jackson Hole, Wyo., has opened 200 acres of bowls and tree skiing. In Vermont, there are new wooded trails at Okemo, Smugglers' Notch and Sugarbush. Novices can pick up tips in the new Wicked Venture Zones — simulated forests made out of flexible poles — in Waterville Valley, N.H., before trying the far-less-forgiving real thing.

Visitors to Vail will notice a handsome new stone-and-steel bridge across Gore



ABOVE Mount Washington Cog Railway sk



Grand Sierra Lodge, Mammoth Mountain

acre to five acres and begun a program in which novices start out on snow bikes — bicyclelike contraptions that have skis instead of wheels — to get the feel for gliding. Stratton Mountain in Vermont, among others, will offer women's and girl's Burton Learn-to-Ride clinics with snowboards designed to speed up learning — and reduce the number of falls.

Squaw Valley in California adds a double chairlift for beginners in its year-old base learning area, as well as a second moving-carpet surface lift at its children's center. Park City, Utah, and Mammoth Mountain

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Alta Ski Area (lift), Mount Washington Resort at Bretton Woods (train car)

ABOVE Mount Washington Cog Railway ski train. LEFT Alta's new lift. BELOW RIGHT Tamarack, in Idaho.



Dana Nichols (pool), Sheri Harkin/Tamarack Resort (skier)

Grand Sierra Lodge, Mammoth Mountain.

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Squaw Valley in California adds a double chairlift for beginners in its year-old base

snowboarding in an unthreatening setting.

Killington, Vt., has devoted nearly its entire Bear Mountain area to the free-ride movement with a peak full of jumps, rails and tables, and a new superpipe. Copper Mountain in Colorado has a new lighted terrain park that will open on certain Saturday nights and is free. New superpipes are in place at Sugarloaf in Maine and Snowbird, Utah. Buttermilk, host to the ESPN Winter X Games, Jan. 29 to Feb. 1, will leave the



TV's, high-speed Ethernet connection and DVD players.

The Grand Sierra Lodge, the biggest and the Village at Mammoth