

Head ^{for} the Slopes

Winter is Here!

continued from cover

Day Tripping

The two closest resorts to Washington, D.C., are Liberty Mountain (at 60 miles) and Ski Whitetail (at 90 miles). Liberty faces north. Whitetail faces south. Thus, on cold days, Whitetail is the best choice. On warmer days, Liberty works better. Liberty features 16 trails, a one-mile-long run, three terrain parks, a half-pipe, ten lifts, and a 600-foot vertical drop. Whitetail has 20 trails, including a new beginner trail — Sidewinder. There's a 935-foot vertical drop, a high-speed quad that serves most of the intermediate terrain, and a new chair lift for the terrain park. The best day trip for Baltimoreans may be Ski Roundtop, which is only an hour from Charm City. Roundtop is similar to Liberty in terrain and layout and includes 16 trails, a 600-foot vertical drop, and three terrain parks. Frequent skiers and riders should check out the Advantage Card. The card is good at all three of these resorts and knocks the price of lift tickets and rentals down by 40 percent all season long. And, every sixth lift ticket is free!

Southern Skiing

Virginia boasts four ski resorts — Bryce, Massanutten, Wintergreen, and The Homestead. For winter chills and a taste of endless summer, Massanutten is the place to be. The four-season resort boasts an 1,100-foot vertical drop with 14 trails and two terrain parks. After a cold, hard day on the slopes, cruise over to the heated 42,000-square-foot indoor water park, which includes water slides, a river ride, hot tubs, and a FlowRider surfing pool. Bryce Resort has eight trails and a 500-foot vertical drop. While not on the top of the list for hardcore snow junkies, its relatively small size and uncrowded slopes make it one of the best places to learn to ski and snowboard. Wintergreen, Virginia's largest resort, has upgraded its snowmaking capacity to increase production 44 percent for early season skiing on its 26 slopes. Situated next to the Blue Ridge Parkway at 4,000 feet of elevation, Wintergreen is renowned as an eco-friendly resort and offers the best view of any resort in the Mid-

Atlantic. There are ten scenic overlooks with views of snow-covered peaks extending eastward to rolling hills, valleys, and bucolic countryside and farmland. The Homestead features ten slopes and a 700-foot vertical drop. The best reason to visit isn't the skiing; it's the old world charm of the 200-year-old luxury resort and hotel. Enjoy fine dining, sumptuous suites, a full service spa, and the natural hot springs that were used by Thomas Jefferson,

Go West — West Virginia, That Is

There's no need to board a plane to the Rockies for Western-quality skiing. Enjoy fantastic natural powder in West Virginia. With elevations exceeding 4,000 feet, Timberline, Canaan Valley, and Snowshoe Mountain resorts receive more than 150 inches of snow each year. Timberline has a 1,000-foot vertical drop and 37 trails, including two terrain parks and two glades. Just next door, Canaan, with 37 slopes and a vertical drop of 850 feet, is home to two terrain parks and several glades. One of the Best Deals of the winter is the Ski the Valley Pass. This lift ticket allows skiing at Canaan and Timberline — all 74 trails! The area's largest resort, Snowshoe, has 60 trails and a 1,500-foot vertical drop. Snowshoe celebrates its 35th year of operation with special events all season and has added a mid-station lift in the Western Territory. This will give skiers and riders the option of only tackling the upper or lower sections of Snowshoe's signature expert slopes, Cupp Run and Shay's Revenge.

Maryland's Wisp

Maryland's only ski resort continues to be one of the best places for off-piste activities. In addition to 32 slopes, three terrain parks, and a 700-foot vertical drop, enjoy a wide variety of other winter activities in the Deep Creek Lake area: snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, dog sledding, sleigh rides, snowmobiling, ice fishing, and the exciting Mountain Coaster. Riders speed through the forest on individually controlled cars down a serpentine track on this cross between a roller coaster and Alpine slide. For maximum thrills, don't touch the brakes on the steep and sharp turns!

The Keystone of Skiing

In addition to Liberty, Whitetail, and Roundtop, there are almost two dozen ski resorts in the Keystone State. In central Pennsylvania, Seven Springs wins the hearts of area skiers and riders by being voted the number one resort in the Mid-Atlantic in *Ski Magazine*. The resort features 31 trails and a 750-foot vertical drop. One of the reasons Seven Springs is so well-loved is the variety of other activities — such as roller skating, indoor swimming, bowling, and live music every weekend. Next door at Hidden Valley, new owners are putting the heat on Seven Springs. Hidden Valley has upgraded its snowmaking over the last two years with the addition of 80 new snow making guns. And they've installed a new quad lift to speed service to the 28 slopes and trails. For truly difficult skiing, the toughest terrain is at Blue Knob. Forty percent of the mountain is for advanced skiers only. The 1,000-foot vertical drop resort includes the most challenging slope in the Mid-Atlantic — a steep, moguled-up beast called Extrovert. To try a variety of slopes, take a trip to Caesar's Pocono Resorts and be within an easy drive of numerous ski mountains, including Camelback, Jack Frost/Big Boulder, Shawnee, Blue Mountain, Sno Mountain, Big Bear, Bear Creek, Alpine Mountain, and the fabulous Elk Mountain, which is regularly voted as having the Best Grooming in Pennsylvania by *Ski Magazine*.

So check your bindings, wax up your skis and snowboards, and brace for the cold. Winter is here!

By Matthew Graham

Hidden Valley & Wisp Resorts Add Value

Season Pass Programs Offer Diverse Skiing

Pennsylvania's Hidden Valley Four Seasons Resort and Maryland's Wisp Resort upped the value of their season passes with a new exchange program. Skiers holding season passes at either resort now have the opportunity to ski at the other resort for one full day free. Season pass holders are eligible for a complimentary full-day non-holiday lift ticket as well as a 50-percent discount off regularly priced lift tickets for additional visits. The program is available Sun.-Fri. during the 2008-2009 season, excluding holidays periods.

The program gives Unlimited Season Pass holders from each resort the opportunity to ski more diverse terrain. "It's a great perk for our season pass holders who would like to experience another resort from time to time," said Tim Prather of Wisp Resort.

"We both want to provide our loyal season pass holders with an economical way to experience other resorts in our region," said Bill Doring of Hidden Valley Resort.

Hidden Valley Resort, in Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania, is located about 45 miles from Wisp Resort in McHenry, Maryland. The resorts say they are exploring other joint venture products and events.

To learn more about the season pass programs, visit www.hiddenvalleyresort.com or www.wispresort.com.

Penny Pincher Trip

Adventure Awaits



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