

February 4, 2020

Travel



THICKKICKIKT: Mike Stoner (inset)

Where to ski and snowboard this winter

With the holidays long over, we enter into that sweet spot of the winter season when the rush of vacationers subsides, prices lower and pistes become less crowded. Our short list of early 2020 powder picks promises to fulfill everyone's downhill dreams.

Easy drive: Monticello, NY

Located less than 100 miles from Manhattan, **Holiday Mountain's** biggest asset is its convenience; in two hours' time you're slaloming in the Catskills. The slopes may only be of the bunny variety — a great place to learn your "pizza" and "french fries" — but the après-ski options are varsity league. Put a fresh twist on the pub crawl and go brewery-to-brewery through the neighboring townships trying the latest draughts from **Roscoe Beer Co**, **Catskill Brewery** and **Shrewd Fox**. And while Holiday Mountain's proximity makes day-tripping a viable option, the stately **DeBruce**, only 30 minutes away, is primed to snag ski bums for a night or two. Rates at the 14-room manse include a generous breakfast and a legendary multi-course dinner involving flash cards, board games, innovative wine pairings and farm-to-table fare.

Long drive: Killington, Vt.

The largest ski and snowboard resort in the eastern US is in central Vermont; a five-hour drive from the Big Apple. Killington's vast spiderweb of almost 150 trails is almost as impressive as its elaborate snow-making system for when flurries thin. "Killington gets around 250 inches of snow each year and uses 1,400 snow guns to cover — if need be — more than 600 of the resort's 1,000 acres," explains Dan Sherman, the CMO of Ski.com. And although the verticality pales in comparison to the Rockies, the terrain is very diverse, offering groomed cruisers, steeps, moguls and over a dozen tree skiing areas.

Easy flight: Alta, Utah

If you're getting on an airplane to feed your skiing habit, a direct flight to Salt Lake City is your best bet; it's only a quick 45-minute drive from tarmac to T-bar at Alta. Scoring an average of almost 550 inches of snowfall each winter, Utah's premier peak is the down-to-earth, no-snowboarders-allowed antidote to some of the region's more uppity mountain towns. Stringent construction mandates have kept the village quaint, but a \$50M investment recently transformed the once-rickety **Snowpine Lodge** into a gleaming hotel complete with custom boot warmers in each locker and a steamy outdoor pool.

Long flight: Megève and Chamonix, France

The nonstop long-haul to Geneva, Switzerland, yields two compelling reasons to cross the pond: Megève and Chamonix are both around an hour's drive across the French border. Crowned by a curl of gracefully arcing slopes, Megève lures those wanting powder and pampering in equal measure.

The newly opened **Chalets du Mont d'Arbois**, a Four Seasons property, is the torchbearer of the legendary Rothschild family. Chamonix's culture in town is more squarely sports-focused, with high-performance gear shops lining the streets, but designer boutiques and a Michelin-anointed restaurant have crept in.

Longer flight: Valdez, Alaska

Willing to make the journey to a remote corner of the 50th state? You'll be swapping chairlifts for airlifts in no time. From **Tsaina Lodge** (inset), the birthplace of Alaskan heli-skiing, guests can land at the top of some of the world's steepest slopes with **Valdez Heli Ski Guides**. Intermediate skiers will find plenty of space to work on technique in an expanse of untrampled blue terrain that's larger than Vail, Aspen Snowmass and Beaver Creek combined.

— Brandon Presser

