

IN-DEPTH: Sugarloaf U.S.A. Tackling the Jewel of the East



By Luke Peterson

Nestled away amidst the scenic Maine woods lies a resort renowned both for its commitment to amazing skiing and top-notch customer service. The jewel of the Longfellow range, Sugarloaf mountain stands as the state's highest skiable peak at a towering 4,237 feet. Sugarloaf U.S.A.'s 101 alpine trails offer something for skiers of all abilities.

Experts can cut their teeth above the tree-line on the Snowfields and Front Face, which are accessible only by a four-person gondola. Meanwhile, those looking for a less harrowing experience can opt for any number of Sugarloaf's beginner and intermediate trails, which comprise a full two-thirds of the mountain's terrain. If setting your skis on cruise control is a vacation priority, then you should head for The Tote Road. This intermediate run stretches for almost five kilometres and offers an unparalleled view of Sugarloaf village and the surrounding region.

In addition to its varied terrain, Sugarloaf also boasts snow conditions that are second to none. An average annual snowfall of a whopping four and a half metres, coupled with snow-making on nearly every trail ensures grass-free slopes well into the Spring season. The best news of all, is that a mere 5 hour drive from your home will place you on the front doorstep of this skier's paradise. After a hard-day's carving, you'll understand why the readers of *Snow Country Magazine* rated The Loaf the number one overall resort in the East.

WHERE TO STAY

Aside from the natural beauty of the region, one of the resort's most attractive characteristics is its commitment to pleasing its guests. Routinely hailed as an industry leader in customer service, Sugarloaf's "Peak Satisfaction" program provides each and every employee with professional hospitality training. From the friendly lift attendants to the helpful folks at the base-lodge information centre, one need not look far to see that service is more than just a mere word at Sugarloaf. One phone call to 1-800-The Loaf, will solve the problem of where to stay.

With a total of 8500 beds available for on-mountain accommodations, it is quite likely that you can find one with your name on it and at a price that is conducive to worry-free slumber. The ideal time to hit Sugarloaf U.S.A. is during the March Break, when you and your friends could use a well-deserved vacation and condi-

tions are at their peak. Because the Spring breaks in Canada and America do not coincide, the last thing you will need to worry about is crowded slopes and lift-lines. In addition to the lack of crowding, students will be happy to know that a Sugarloaf ski vacation does not necessarily entail applying for another student loan.

Lift and lodging packages at the Sugarloaf Inn cost eighty-five dollars per evening, and come complete with slope-side lodging, all-day lift tickets, daily group ski lessons and privileges to use the Sugarloaf Sports and Fitness Club. If you

it has opened is May 20) offering the perfect post-examinations destination. Spring skiing at the Loaf offers a unique way to embark on your summer vacation by skiing and partying with students from all over Canada and the United States.

THE SLOPES

Even with the addition of a new high-speed super-quad lift, which whisks skiers up the hill in a mere six minutes, Sugarloaf can still never be conquered in a day.

Early risers can make first tracks at 8:30, while their friends are still recovering from the previous evening's festivities. Sugarloaf's own television station -WSKI

ing the eastern King Pine Bowl rarely have more than a handful of skiers queued up, however, a good deal of the mountain's advanced terrain can be accessed from these two lifts. The King Pine quad affords one a bird's eye view of the fearless few who try their luck on the monster moguls of the Haulback trail that runs directly beneath the lift.

If the King Pine Bowl fails to sate your appetite for a challenge, the Snowfields may be next on your skiing menu. With plenty of powder and nerve-wracking steep, the eight trails comprising this section, are not for the faint of heart. To thrive

to tackle the Snowfields. Opting for the lesser of eight evils, we chose the infamous White Nitro run, which looked to be the most navigable on this day. Mindful of the "I conquered White Nitro" t-shirts which we could finally purchase in good conscience, we threatened no land-speed records in our careful traverse of this treacherous trail. As luck would have it, upon reaching the base, the aforementioned t-shirts were sold out. No doubt purchased by someone who never set a ski on the Snowfields.

Snowboarders are also welcome on the slopes and can cruise through a new snowboard park complete with old cars, oil drums and thirty-foot jumps. The Loaf also is home to two half-pipes, one of which stretches for over 110 metres and meets International Snowboarding Federations competition specs.

WHERE TO PIG OUT

During the day, both Bullwinkle's (located on the hill at the top of the Buck-saw Double Quad) and the base lodge cafeteria offer typical lunchtime fare at reasonable prices. The base lodge also offers Mexican cuisine at Gringo's restaurant, located upstairs in the Widomaker lounge.

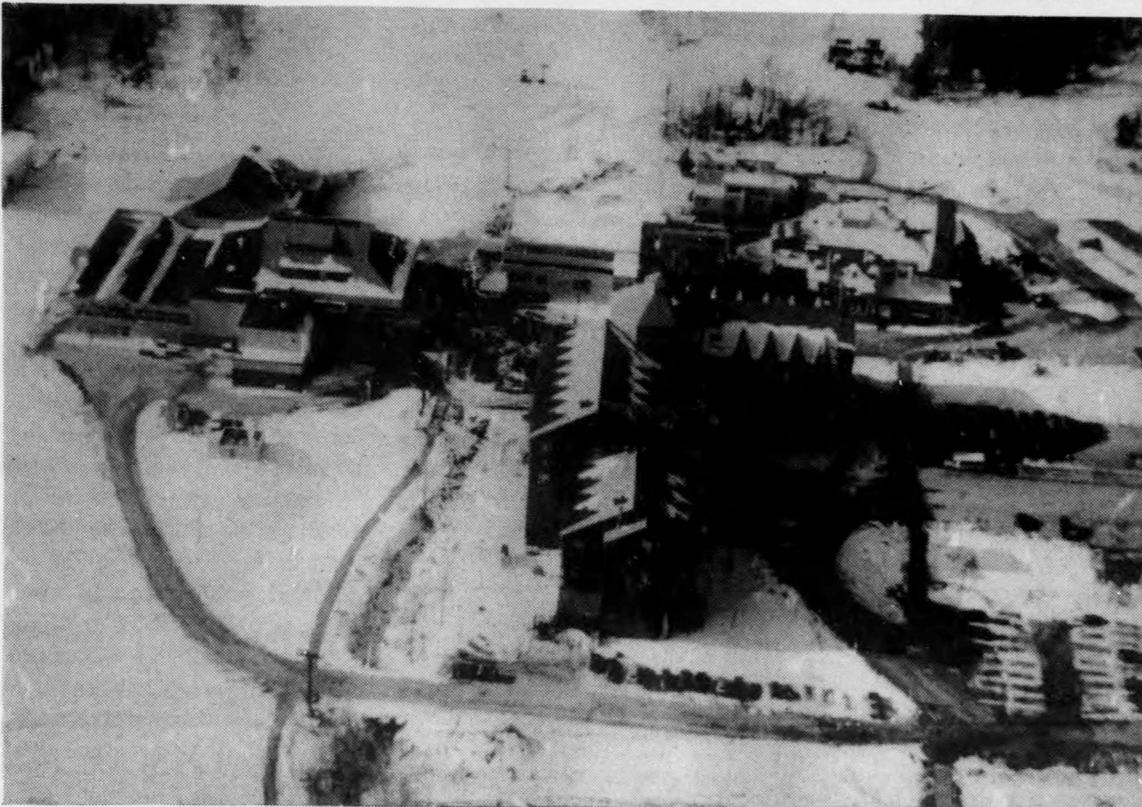
The Bag and Kettle is Sugarloaf's oldest restaurant and is centrally located on the mountain in Village Center. The rustic Bag uses an authentic wood-fired brick oven to bake their legendary pizzas and bread. While enjoying a burger or a sandwich, sports fans can keep one eye on the slopes and the other on one of several TV screens.

Gepetto's, located on the mountain in village center is a great restaurant for either families or friends. With a giant U-shaped bar for Apres ski and a large menu of steaks and seafood, Gepetto's serves up great food in a cozy atmosphere. Every Tuesday is Twofers night, when you can order two entrées, including Teriyaki sirloin, Prime Rib or Chicken stuffed with Pork, for only \$16.95.

HOW TO GET THERE

From Calais take Route 9 West to Bangor. 1-95 South to Newport, Route 2 West to Skowhegan. Route 201 North to Route 148 West through Madison to Route 201A North to North Anson then Route 16 West to Kingfield and Route 27 North to Sugarloaf U.S.A.

For more information about planning a ski vacation at Sugarloaf U.S.A. this year, phone 1-800-THE-LOAF, email info@sugarloaf.com, or come by the Brunswickan office (Room 35 in the SUB) and leave a message for me.



Sugarloaf's base area, home to eighteen restaurants and nightspots

can work out other accommodation arrangements (hotel lobbies are good for a couple hours of sleep) or you only want to ski for a day, Sugarloaf lift tickets are an absolute bargain at \$27 (with a Sugarloaf college card). Lift-tickets can also be bought at par from several Fredericton sporting goods shops. Dare to compare Sugarloaf's 101 trails with Crabbe Mountain's 14 trails which come at a similar ticket price.

If you value your studies over skiing and a January trip is not a reality, then take heart in the knowledge that Sugarloaf generally stays open into May (The latest

Channel 17- will give you the day's weather report and snow conditions at a glance. Two chair-lifts and a shuttle bus service run through the heart of the condominium area to ensure that skiers can get to the base of the mountain in no time flat.

Of the mountain's fifteen lifts, the two spillway chair-lifts in the middle of the hill, tend to be the most busy and should generally be avoided during peak times. The best bet to avoid congested lift lines is to start on the mountain's east side and follow the sun throughout the course of the day. The two high capacity quads servic-

ing the snowfields, both your technique and your ski edges should be well honed.

If you're into steep, trails like White Nitro, Pure Heat and Powder Keg should put a smile (or a grimace) on your face. Mogul lovers can test their mettle on the Bubble Cuffer, which is accessible from the Gondola. Should the bumps start to play havoc with your body, you can cross over onto the Gondola Line trail which, while formidable in its own right, offers relatively smooth carving.

Only on my second vacation to Sugarloaf, did myself and Bruns staffer Steve Mason muster the requisite courage