

STREET SCENE

Inside **S**²

Downhill run

From the Canadian Rockies to the Swiss, Austrian and Italian Alps, skiers still take to the slopes for a week's worth of downhill. But the difference between North American and European ski vacations may not be as big as you think. See Page 6B.

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DAN DEAN/staff photographer

Renee Honeycut of Rochester takes her time traversing the slopes, while skiing under the lights at Pine Knob in Clarkston.

By Bill Parker
staff writer

Ski vacations to Vail, Colo., or Lake Placid, N.Y., are great, if you have the time and money. But let's face it, ski vacations aren't cheap. They usually require months of saving. So what does the avid skier do in the meantime? How about night skiing at one of the local resorts?

Since most skiers work or go to school during the day, the only alternative is skiing at night. Most area resorts are booming with nighttime business.

So what if the vertical drop doesn't exceed 400 feet? So what if you have to stand in line for a few minutes? So what if there isn't a foot of powder?

The bottom line is, the opportunity to ski exists, so why not take advantage of it?

"People seem to want to stay and ski longer at night," said Simone Prince, a manager at Pine Knob in Clarkston. "Maybe they stay longer because it relaxes them after a long day at work or school."

Mary Gabriel has been skiing for better than 15 years. The Farmington Hills resident learned to ski at Mount Holly, but since then has skied on some of the finer mountains in Colorado and Montana.

DESPITE HER exposure to western skiing, Gabriel still enjoys a night on the slopes at one of the smaller ski resorts in southeastern Michigan.

"I guess the main reason I go is the proximity," said Gabriel, who usually skis at Pine Knob, Alpine Valley in Milford or Mount Holly. "You can go with a group of friends and really have a good time."

Downhill enthusiasts enjoy NIGHT SKIING

5 resorts attractive for skiers

By Bill Parker
staff writer

There are more than 50 downhill ski resorts in Michigan, some offering more than 30 runs and others limited to just one trail.

Southeastern: Michigan - features five downhill resorts, all of which are open during the week and on weekends. Each resort also is equipped with snow making equipment and a full line of rental equipment.

Alpine Valley is at 6775 E. 7th St., Brighton is the closest resort to Observerland, at 4141 Bauer Road, Brighton. It has a vertical drop of 234 feet and features seven chair lifts and 10 rope tows to transport skiers to 35 runs.

The resort is open daily and evenings and includes two cafeterias and two lounges. A daytime lift ticket costs \$18.50, while evening lift tickets go for \$13.50.

For more information, call 229-8592. For snow conditions, call 227-1451.

Alpine Valley is at 6775 E. 7th St., Brighton is the closest resort to Observerland, at 4141

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"It's a good way to get out during the week without going to the bar. It's also a good way to enjoy the winter."

KIM KIMBALL of Rochester has been skiing for seven years and enjoys the atmosphere of night skiing.

"It seems to be more exciting at night," Kimball said. "The trails stand out more from the artificial light. It's also fun to socialize in the lounges, since some resorts have entertainment at night."

"Another reason I like to ski at night is that night skiing is cheaper at some resorts."

Most local resorts offer group rates on weeknights, which help boost skiing activity. Schools, church groups, community organizations and Scouting organizations account for the majority of the groups.

"Weekday evenings seem to attract bigger crowds than during the day," said Mary Gillespie, manager of Mount Brighton. "With schools, churches and other groups coming in, we have much more business at night."

Mount Brighton and Alpine Valley also offer midnight skiing on Saturday nights. Midnight hours are 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. at Brighton and 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. at Alpine Valley.

"The midnight skiing is really exciting," Gillespie said. "We usually have a decent amount of people come out. It offers them something different than going to the bar on Saturday night."

Midnight skiing is a new feature this year at Alpine, but so far the results are impressive.

R.U. Syrius

Carlos Barney



"Hey, c'mon guys — what are you waiting for? This is a break-out, don't just stand there!"

Clubs' vacations on the slopes cost less than a king's ransom

Editor's note: The Metro Detroit Ski Council is an umbrella organization for ski clubs throughout the metropolitan area. The Livonia Ski Club and Ski Skule are just two of its members and illustrate the services available with such memberships. For information on area ski club trips call the ski council's hotline at 593-1188.

By Chris Ryzk
special writer

The ski season is in full swing, and you've been meaning to hit the slopes.

But finding an uncrowded resort or a ski companion, when you finally have the time, can prove to be an uphill climb.

That is unless you're a member of a ski club.

When members of the Livonia Ski Skule and the Livonia Ski Club want

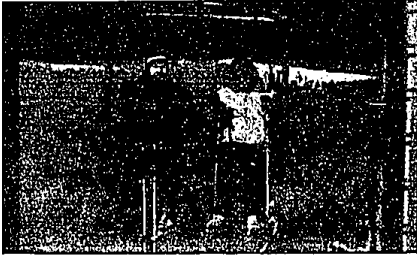
'Let's face it, Michigan's got little hills; Europe's got mountains.'

— Norbert Kopekin
Livonia Ski Skule

to try the slopes they head en masse for the more popular areas — Pine Knob, Mount Brighton or Boyne Mountain.

When they want to test their skill and endurance, however, they head for Colorado, Vermont, Europe or Canada.

In either case, sometimes it pays to be a member of a group all headed in the same direction.



One amenity skiers consider a must is a way up the slopes. The preferred method is by chairlift, but rope tows do in a pinch.

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