

# TRAVEL TALES

HELPFUL HINTS FOR THE JEWISH TRAVELLER

By MIKE COHEN

VERMONT'S SMUGGLER'S NOTCH: The Jewish-owned Smuggler's Notch Resort in Vermont (<http://www.smuggs.com>) is one amazing place to vacation at any time of the year on your own property. Located 30 miles east of the Burlington International Airport, it is only two hours from Montreal and about seven from Toronto. We actually came via Toronto, crossing the bridge to Ogdensburg, New York from Highway 401 and enjoying a picturesque drive through different country roads.

Smugglers' Notch offers a complete Mountain Village with convenient restaurants, lounges, entertainment, sport shop, 10 tennis courts, a driving range, multiple and mag-

nificent pools, Rum Runners' Hideaway reservoir, playgrounds, woodland miniature and disc golf courses, a full service conference and banquet center, a U.S. Post Office, a real estate office, a country store, TREASURES child care center, a welcome and reservation center, and two teen centers. There are amazing camp programs for kids of all ages so whether you have toddlers or teens, make sure you ask about these packages.

Summer programs go from June through September. If you are like me and plan ahead, then pencil this place in for next summer and don't be shy to book your choice dates in the winter. There are excellent deals available for the fall and of course Smuggler's Notch is noted for absolutely fabulous ski and snowboard facilities from late November until mid-April. Three interconnected mountains comprise northern Vermont's biggest vertical drop at 2,610 feet. Skiers and snowboarders are welcome on all trails. Morse Mountain, the beginners' haven, rises directly out of the Resort Village. Sterling Mountain's terrain appeals especially to intermediates, while Madonna Mountain is the expert skiers' mountain.

All accommodations are mountainside condominiums ranging from studios to five bedroom townhouses with fully-equipped living spaces and kitchens.

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(Continued from page 9)

Lodgings and facilities are all located in the walkabout Village. A free on-demand shuttle service also runs daily throughout the Village. We stayed in a beautiful two bedroom slopeside condominium. Homes are prepared for your arrival with bath towels, linens, blankets and pillows. Your condominium will also have hotel size bars of bath soap, toilet paper, paper towels, dish towels, dish soap, sponges and trash bags. The kitchen in your village home includes pots, pans, plates, glasses, silverware, cooking utensils,

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a toaster and an auto-drip coffee maker. All homes have a stove, refrigerator, a stacking washer and dryer or access to a washer and dryer in the building. This is all very convenient for a family who wishes to keep kosher while on the premises. Private rooms do not have a kitchen.

Smugglers' Notch currently has 660 units,

with a new phase of 35 on the way. There are presently more than 7,000 owners, ranging from time-shares of two weeks a year to those who are permanent owners and share in the profits when their units are rented during the year.

Indeed, Smuggler's Notch place offers a total escape from anyone's day to day stress. I strongly recommend an extended stay.

**JEWISH OWNERSHIP:** This piece of paradise has actually been under Jewish ownership for decades. Current boss Bill Stritzler first discovered Smugglers' as a property owner in 1977. He was hired as the managing director in 1987. Nine years later he bought the resort from another Jewish businessman, Stanley Snider. His daughter, Lisa Howe, came on board in 2002 as vice president of new marketing opportunities, information technology and full owner contracts

Smugglers' hosts a lot of Jewish groups and schools, particularly for winter ski trips. There have even been Jewish weddings on the premises, complete with all of the kosher trimmings. The fully equipped condos enable kosher guests to stock and cook their own food. "Staff at our country store on the grounds know that if someone comes into the store on Shabbat and indicates they cannot exchange money because of the Sabbath we are to accept the honour system and allow them to come back after sundown and pay," Stritzler says. "We have also had Jewish groups and families who have offered Shabbat services in their units and invited anyone who wishes to join them."

no kosher restaurants in the area. Smuggs has a number of eateries on the grounds, but I would recommend the Three Mountain Lodge ([www.threemountainlodge.com](http://www.threemountainlodge.com)). It is located on scenic and historic Smugglers' Notch Road (Route 108) in Jeffersonville, just a five minute drive from the resort. Originally built in 1966 by the University of Vermont for their Outing Club, the lodge has a 30 year tradition of hosting good times. It later housed the UVM & Johnson State College ski teams, as well as a state-run alternative school. In the late seventies, Smugglers' Notch Resort purchased the property, gave it the name Three Mountain Lodge, and returned it to use as a ski dorm. In 1983, Steve and Colleen Blood came to Jeffersonville and began their operation, at first continuing the ski lodging tradition business in winter and a restaurant the rest of the year. In 1984 they purchased the property. With the restaurant's continued growth, it became hard to accommodate ski groups. To the disappointment of many loyal guests and friends, lodging had to be phased out. This is a popular spot to dine. They are open six days a week and closed on Mondays. Steve or Colleen usually greet you at the door and bring a large whiteboard to your table containing all of the specials. There are plenty of meat and seafood selections. The prime rib is one of their specialties, charcoal broiled in 10 and 16 ounce servings. It comes with two sides. I opted for the mashed potatoes and baked macaroni. The steaks, broiled trout, slow

cooked ribs and rack of lamb also looked great. Make sure not to leave without trying their homemade ice cream. We sampled the blueberry and vanilla flavors. You can call 802-644-

5736 or email [threemt@together.net](mailto:threemt@together.net).

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