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Historic mountain town of Stowe fun to visit year round

Travel Spotlight

MIKE COHEN

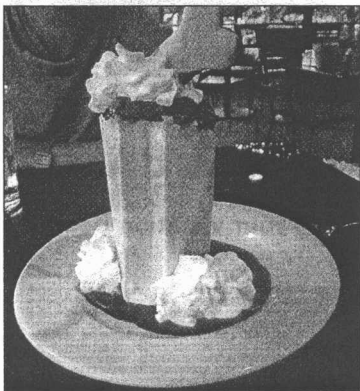


STOWE, Vt – Only Stowe, Vermont combines a classic 200-year-old village with Mt. Mansfield, Vermont's highest peak. This unique juxtaposition imbues Stowe with a character reminiscent of great European mountain resorts. Just log on to www.gostowe.com where you will find a web site chalk-a-block full of ideas to enjoy at this year-round vacation spot. You can also call 1-877-GOSTOWE.

My family and I recently spent some time in the area. It was in fact our first visit there in a decade. Though Stowe enjoys an international reputation as a winter destination, for downhill skiing, snowboarding, cross country and skating, it is just as exciting in summer. It is never too early to plan ahead for the summer of 2012. If your trip is targeted for late July try and sample The Taste of Stowe Arts Festival (<http://craftproducers.com>). This is an unusual event, combining a market for handmade crafts, original art, music, and an array of gourmet edible treats.

From June to Labour Day (and weekends after that through mid-October), you just have to try the Alpine slide. What you will experience is an exhilarating 2,300 foot ride down Spruce Peak. You can also take the easy way up the mountain in the famous Stowe gondola and try your luck with the Summer Inflatable Obstacle Course, located on the same site as the alpine slide.

Autumn in Stowe deserves special mention. Vermont is world-famous for its spectacular fall foliage, and Stowe is Vermont's most beautiful and dramatic fall foliage viewing venue.



The Gracie's "Doggie Bag" is one of the most delicious desserts this writer has ever tasted

The historic Green Mountain Inn (www.greenmountaininn.com) has been offering travellers respite for over 175 years. Located at 18 Main Street, it features 107 guest accommodations, ranging from traditional guest rooms to luxury suites and townhouses. The Inn is owned by the Gameroff Family Trust. Marvin Gameroff was a Montreal businessman who took a liking to Stowe in the 1970s and purchased the Inn in 1982.

The Inn is also home to the wonderful Whip Bar and Grill (<http://www.greenmountaininn.com/whipbarandgrill.html>). This spot provides travellers respite, refreshment, and fine dining in a casual atmosphere. It features an extensive menu full of flavorful food prepared with Vermont products and the freshest ingredients from local farmers. There are fresh homemade breads and incredible desserts. It is open for lunch, dinner and Sunday brunch. I would strongly remember the grilled swordfish, which cuts like butter. It comes with vegetables, but you can switch this for the mashed potatoes. We shared some garlic shrimp as an appetizer. It came with two sliced baguettes. You can order a half Caesar salad here to save more room for the entrée. There is a kids menu, but the younger ones might want to try the delicious flatbread pizza from the main selections. Besides the swordfish, you can try the salmon, tilapia, wild striped bass and oven roasted Boston cod. There are also steaks, chicken, burgers and sandwiches.

Many veteran Stowe vacationers also strongly recommended Gracie's Restaurant (www.gracies.com) at 18 Edson Hill Road. Owners Paul and Susan Archdeacon are wonderful hosts. Paul, known simply as "Archie," came here in 1972 from Boston to ski and never left. This is where he met Sue. In 1991 the couple opened the restaurant, naming it after their new shelter rescue dog Gracie, a Yellow Lab Airdale mix from the South Burlington Humane Society. The name stuck and the restaurant took off. Right from the start Gracie's owners were committed to producing as much of their menu as possible themselves. All the breads, rolls and desserts are made on the premises. This led to the introduction of Gracie's "Doggie Bag." A penny candy bag painted on the inside with white chocolate, frozen and filled with chocolate mint mousse. When ordered the paper bag is peeled off and the chocolate sack is served over double boil hot fudge. The "Doggie Bag" is garnished with fresh baked



A look at Stowe's wonderful skiing opportunities during Christmas time

sugar cookies cut to look like milk bones. I have not tasted such an exceptional dessert in a long time.

The doggie theme carries throughout the menu with all the burgers, made with Boyden Farms all natural ground beef, named after particular breeds. There is some type of canine logic to the names with the Chihuahua served with a side of quacamole. The barbecue ribs are slow roasted for 12 hours, Memphis style, and slide right off the bone. I combined my order with chicken, garnished in fabulous

BBQ sauce, along with wild rice and cole slaw. The bar steak, a six ounce filet mignon, is another house favorite. All steaks here are hand-carved in the kitchen by Gracies' chefs. Recommendations are accepted at 802-253-8741.

Stowe has over 60 retail stores for shopping year round and every one of them is locally owned!

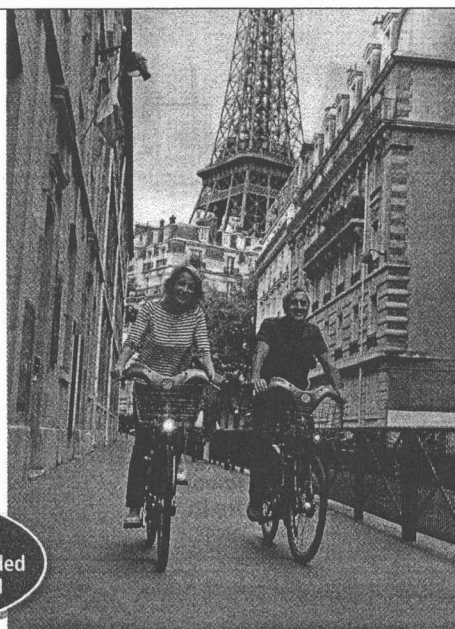
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