

# Ski resorts add amenities

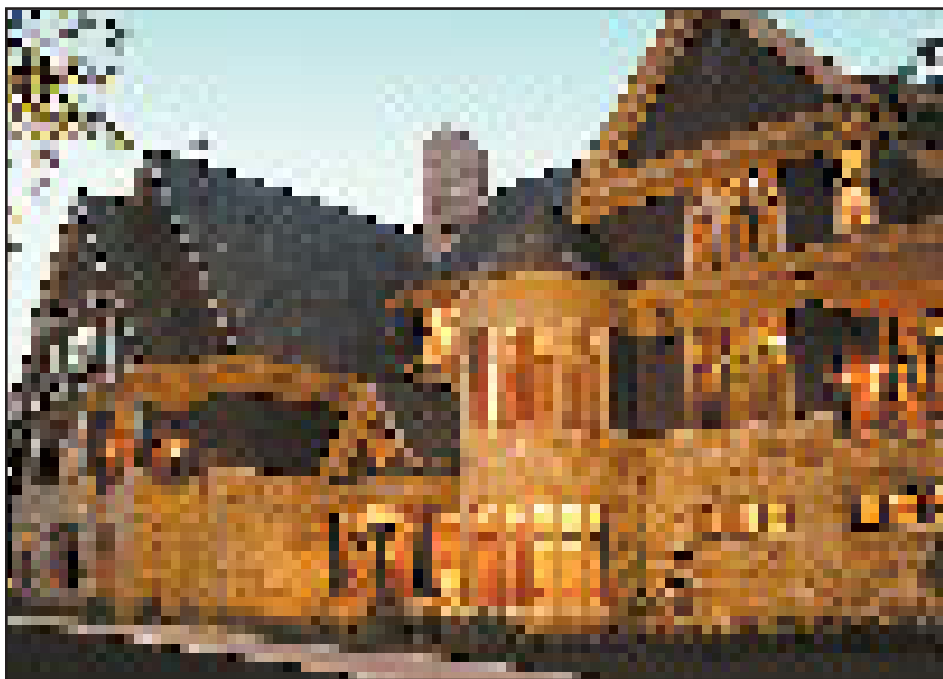


Photo courtesy Don Rutt

The newly built Kinlochen Lodge at Crystal Mountain.

## • New trails, lodges, snow-making highlight the upgrades

By MIKE TERRELL

Special to the Record-Eagle

Winter was a mixed bag across the Midwest last season, but those on east side of Lake Michigan ended up having better seasons than those on the west side.

Shanty Creek and Crystal Mountain both had one of their best seasons ever, and Boyne Mountain and Highlands and Nubs Nob weren't far behind.

On the other side of the lake ski resorts reported a good year, but no near records or even close.

Who knows what kind of winter we'll have this year. Long range forecasting for the Great Lakes area is about as accurate as the Farmer's Almanac or a Ouija Board. I've heard rumors that El Nino is lurking around again. If you remember the last time it was here just a few years ago, the winter wasn't anything to write home about. Yet, that was the best winter ever for Nubs.

Remember that cabin fever is preventable. The best advice is to get out and enjoy winter while it's here.

Following is "what's new" for the

upcoming winter season at northern Michigan ski resorts.

Boyne Mountain and Highlands may be one of the oldest ski areas in the nation, but Boyne Mountain continues to expand and improve. Construction on the Mountain Grand Lodge and Spa is expected to be ongoing this winter with an anticipated opening date of fall 2003. A new entrance and arrival to the Lodge is underway.

New this season at the Mountain will be 10 new trails and a new double chairlift near the log cabin development. The ski-in/ski-out cabins, started a couple of seasons ago, offer a real treat for those who like seclusion and a rustic atmosphere. Boyne Highlands will be adding three new trails for the upcoming season, and expanding the ski-in/ski-out Alpine Village condos.

Both resorts are expanding their terrain parks adding a new jump course, rails, lighting, and a sound system.

The good news is Boyne USA is offering their own version of the "blue light special" this season.

"We've rolled back our prices this season," said Julie Ard, Boyne public relations manager. Saturday lift ticket prices, which have been near \$50 the last few seasons, will be only \$39 for adults and \$37 for juniors (ages 9-15), which is a great deal. Local midweek skiers — Sunday through Friday — can get tickets good from noon until 4:30

p.m. for just \$21 all season long. Children 8-and-younger always ski free at Boyne USA resorts. And don't forget that discounted lift tickets are available at all Boyne Country Sports, which are scattered around the state.

Nubs Nob, for the second year in a row, was voted the number one Midwestern ski area in SKI Magazine's annual reader poll. Readers touted its snow and grooming as being the best in the region. Not one to rest on its laurels, Nubs added 20 additional snow guns during the summer bringing their total firepower to 179 guns, which, according to longtime GM Jim Bartlett, will ensure good conditions no matter what Mother Nature may throw at them this winter. They also widened the north side of their Learn to Ski Slope, which is served by the purple lift and is free for beginners to use anytime.

Shanty Creek expanded the beginner and teaching slopes at Schuss Mountain, and added lights to the purple chairlift on the backside of Schuss. A new "extreme" tubing run has been added on the Summit slopes, which, according to PR director Barry Godwin, "is the only one like it in the state. It will be fun and exciting." A new ski-in/ski-out Italian bistro called La Vigna has opened in the Cedar River Lodge. The rental operation at the

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