

# Area's best slopes

Continued from Page 4

degree pitch, it's arguably one of the easier-even though that sounds like an oxymoron. The approach is a nice long, easy run-in, which gives you plenty of time to plan your descent. It also has a nice long run-out at the bottom, which gives you plenty of time to slow down in case you missed a turn on the way down the steep section in the middle.

Caberfae's South Peak arguably offers some of the best intermediate and advanced-intermediate skiing in the Lower Peninsula. Opened in 1986, it offers two or three ways off the peak from trail-like skiing to open-slope.

Coupled with a moderately pitched, sustained steep pitch from top to bottom, it gives you lots of room to meander back and forth across the slope or follow the fall-line for a quick, aggressive descent.

Both Shanty Creek's Schuss Mountain slopes and Crystal Mountain offer lots of great intermediate cruisers.

At Schuss I enjoy winding my way down Sapporo and Pink Schussycat. Both offer a good sustained pitch that keeps you alert and on your edges. At the top, tighter turns will

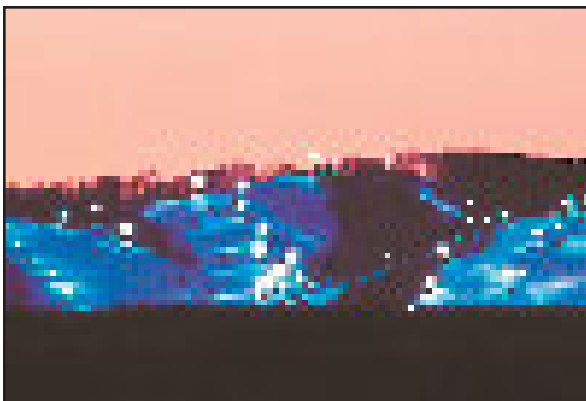


Photo courtesy Don Rutt

## A night view of the slopes at Crystal Mountain.

help you check your speed. As you ease into the middle section of the slope, long GS turns down the fall line allow you to carry your speed to the pink chairlift. All of the slopes off the red chair are short, great cruisers that appeal to all levels of skiers; even gutsy beginners can enjoy them.

Crystal's Canyon and Wipeout offer some nice cruising terrain off Loki Peak. Both wrap around the peak and offer great fall line skiing with natural contours to follow. All seven of the slopes down the back-side of Crystal offer some short, sweet cruising runs.

Nubs Pintail Peak, with its stunning views of Little Traverse Bay, offers some great intermediate skiing.

Twelve treed runs spill down this second peak, opened just a few seasons ago, and, although rated from novice to advanced, the vast majority of the runs are various shades of intermediate.

They offer some great "outback" cruising.

Boyne Highland's Kath Run, for a novice run, has a nice sustained pitch the whole way down. The novice skier will have to keep working back and forth across the slope to keep their speed in check, but this wide

western-style slope has plenty of room. It's a top-to-bottom run that both intermediates and novice skiers can enjoy.

Shanty Creek's Summit slopes are great for the novice skier. Although they list a couple of the trails as intermediate, that's a stretch. At best they are novice runs with a little pitch. The wide trails, which flow around islands of trees, allow ample room for practicing turns and maneuvers. And the scenery from the Summit Lodge overlooking Lake Bellaire adds a nice backdrop. It's arguably, the best novice ski hill in northern Michigan.



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