

Trapp lodge marks 50 years of Nordic skiing in Stowe, Vt.



ROCHELLE LASH
Checking In

The Trapp Family Lodge, a Tyrolean-style mountaintop resort in Stowe, Vt., has attained legendary status on many fronts.

Most compelling is the sheer scope of the property, a vast swath of splendid Vermont countryside — more than three times the size of all three peaks of Montreal’s Mount Royal Park.

And it is absolutely loaded with possibility: sports facilities, a kids’ club, several dining choices and morning-to-evening diversions.

Trapp’s is like an Alpine village, encompassing the hotel, mountain chalets, a maple-sugar grove, extensive gardens in summer, a herd of grass-fed Highland cattle, von Trapp Brewing and three shops with clothing, gifts, beer, sports gear and “everything Trapp,” from blueberry jam to tuques. The greenhouse supplies fresh tulips, hibiscus and narcissus all year round.

The ambience is as close to the Austrian Alps as you can get in Vermont’s Green Mountains.

The valets wear embroidered Tyrolean vests and the female servers wear ruffled dirndl dresses. The menus feature schnitzel and sachertorte, and the meeting rooms are named for Mozart and Schubert.

Above all, Trapp’s is warm and intimate, even though it is sizable. Family members Johannes, Kristina and Sam often are on-site. The resort is heaven for children, and there are a half-dozen fireplace lounges with books and games that are ideal for mingling.

Apart from tourism superlatives, the resort’s principal claim to fame is the von Trapp family’s tale, indelibly part of showbiz history.

Backstory, 1900s: To prep for my visit, I streamed The Sound of Music, the sugar-coated 1965 movie about the talented von Trapp family who escaped the Nazis in Austria in the late 1930s.

It was such a wholesome scenario, with Julie Andrews, Christopher Plummer and seven precocious children singing their way across meadows of dewy edelweiss and over the snow-capped Alps.

The Sound of Music won five Academy Awards including Best Picture, and in its first year

IF YOU GO

Trapp Family Lodge: 800-826-7000, 802-253-8511, trappfamily.com, vontrappbrewing.com; 700 Trapp Hill Rd., Stowe, Vt. Dog-friendly (\$50 per night). **Price:** Rates fluctuate and are approximate. Some accommodations have private balconies, mountain views, whirlpool tubs, fireplaces or wet bars. Rooms (until April 1), \$195-\$400 U.S., Sun.-Thurs., and US\$295-\$500, Fri.-Sat., including some activities, trail access (free for guests), indoor swimming pool, outdoor hot tub, evening turndown, Wi-Fi, newspapers, in-room coffee, coffee/tea corner. Summer: outdoor pool, Concert Meadow, mountain biking, four clay tennis courts, hiking, garden tours. Suites, Villas and Guest Houses also are available. Children 12 and under stay for free, and have some meal discounts. **Ski Vermont:** 802-223-2439, skivermont.com.

became the highest-grossing film to date, surpassing Gone with the Wind.

It tugged at many heartstrings, reflecting wholesomeness, family strength and Old World charm.

The von Trapp clan, now in the third generation in Stowe, has maintained those values, turning their Vermont farm into a country lodge in 19 and focusing on hearty, healthy cuisine and mountain life. (Maria, governess-turned-matriarch, was fond of the great outdoors.)

The hotel incorporates 96 rooms in several wings, with a variety of styles, some homespun and some recently renovated.

On snow, 2018: The experts at the extensive Outdoor Center, founded in 1968, cover everything you need to know about “heel-up” sports, including waxing, bindings, clothing and technique.

Trapp’s Nordic system encompasses nearly 160 kilometres on snow-covered logging roads, bridle paths and hiking trails that connect to 30 additional kilometres around Stowe. Backcountry



The Trapp Family Lodge in Stowe, Vt., opened its outdoor sports facility 50 years ago. The property is more than three times the size of all three peaks of Montreal’s Mount Royal Park. TRAPP FAMILY LODGE

skiers can revel in an additional 40 kilometres.

About 10 years ago, Trapp’s was one of the first to add snow making, so early season conditions are less risky. One special experience is the five-kilometre excursion to a remote cabin for a fireside lunch and hot chocolate.

Off trail, 2018: The resort’s amazingly varied calendar might include skiing with a von Trapp family member, an evening movie, yoga, classes in pottery, art or baking, a maple-sugar tour, a sleigh ride, wine tasting, a brewery tour, chess tournaments, water aerobics, rock-wall climbing or a talk about the family’s history. (Some activities are free.)

For children, depending on the season, there are sing-a-longs, nature walks and scavenger hunts, kite flying, fishing, arts and crafts. Mountain Kids Club (for ages three to 12, with a fee) also covers such activities as snow-fort building and science experiments.

Dining: Many ingredients, like apples, pork, eggs, beef and vegetables, are homegrown.

Trapp’s newest dining spot is the Bierhall, a lively ski-in, ski-out pub with a soaring cathedral ceiling and breathtaking views.

Austrian-inspired specialties include von Trapp brews, and sausages — bratwurst, knackwurst, bauernwurst — as well as potato salad, sauerkraut and braised cabbage.

The Austrian Tea & Tap Room is a quaint warm-up stop for beef lager stew, roasted butternut squash and hefty sandwiches.

The Lounge, complete with fireplace and cosy bar, is the spot for cocktails, entertainment on some nights and robust casual fare like house-made pastrami, charcuterie or the Johannes-burger.

Trapp’s dining room is more formal, with white tablecloths, silver flatware and dinnerware embossed with the family crest. Starters include foie gras and braised lamb belly; main courses might be venison, quail, Wagyu steak and lamb chops.

Fabulous European pastries include sachertorte, linzertorte and apfelstrudel, as well as Vermont cheeses.

The breakfast buffet is an exceptional healthy and satisfying spread of berries, muesli, flax seed, pastries and smoked salmon as well as eggs and meat.

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