

Ski Activities Make Catskills A Winter Resort

There was a time when the Catskill Mountains slept serenely over winter months, their peace undisturbed by the quiet falling snow. But no more. Today Catskill Mountain resorts are thriving in winter as well as summer, reports the New York State Commerce Department. Sixteen ski centers will operate in these famous old mountains this winter, four more than last year. There are indications of more to come next year. Even if snow is scant, the centers will operate, for most of them can make their own snow.

Cave Mountain Ski Center at Windham, two years in the making, is a major new ski center adding to the winter facilities in the Catskills. The center will open with a 2,500-foot double chair lift to serve three trails and beginners' and advanced slopes. A 300-foot rope tow will be at the ski school slope. The base lodge will include a lounge, restaurant and cocktail lounge. The center is just outside Windham, a popular summer resort village that can furnish ample accommodations.

Davos Ski Resort, at Woodridge, zoomed into immediate popularity in its inaugural season last year. It has expanded during the summer with a third double chair lift, a second beginners' slope and four more in the intermediate category. The snow-making installation has been expanded to cover the entire area. The snow-making installation here is believed to be the world's largest. A restaurant, bar and cocktail lounge are included in the main lodge with cafeteria service in a secondary one. Overnight accommodations at the center supplement ample facilities at nearby Woodridge.

The Hunter Mountain Ski Bowl, adjacent to the village of Hunter, is another newcomer to the Catskills that opened late last season. Hunter is opening a vast new area on the slopes of the Catskill's second highest mountain this season. A new mile-long double chair lift rises to the Colonel's Chair, a twin peak of Hunter Mountain.

The new area includes two expert and two intermediate-expert trails. With a 1,700-foot vertical drop the new trails will give runs of almost two miles. Two open slopes have their own double chair lift and the beginners' area is served by a rope tow. A large base lodge contains a restaurant, cafeteria, bar, cocktail lounge and a "beer hut." The resort village of Hunter has a wide selection of accommodations.

DePitt's Mountain Lodge ski center, Fleischmanns, will be open for daily operation with two slopes and five trails served by a rope tow. While part of a resort hotel operation, the ski center is open to the public.

Plattekill Mountain Ski Center, outside Rosbury, is another project opening this season. Initially, the center will operate weekends. It has a beginners and intermediate slopes and an advanced trail. All are served by three rope tows. A lift line, it is expected, will be installed next summer. The area includes a base lodge with snack bar and rental equipment is available.

Several of the Catskills famous resort hotels open their ski facilities for public use. In this category are the Concord Hotel at Kiamasha Lake, Grossinger's Hotel at Grossingers, Youngs Gap Hotel at Liberty, and Williams Lake Hotel, Rosendale.

Last season the Catskill centers broke all records in numbers of skiers. Operators of the various resorts this year look for an even greater volume and in preparation have improved and enlarged facilities.

Among the centers that have reported improvements for the 1960-61 ski season are the large State-owned Belleayre Ski Center at Pine Hill; Roxbury Ski Center, Vega, and Shayne's Ski Resort, Highmont, all with mechanical lifts and all to be in daily operation.

Other centers operating on a weekend basis include Highmount Ski Center, Highmount; Holiday Mountain Ski Area, Monticello; Phoenicia Ski Center, Phoenicia, and Silvermine Ski Center, Bear Mountain.