



Gunstock, N.H.

Views of Lake Winnepesaukee and a determination to remain a community ski hill keep this family-friendly resort at the head of its class. ■ By David Healy

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UNSTOCK REGULARS KNOW THE SCENE WELL: A COUPLE of skiers pause at the top of Flintlock to revel in picture-perfect views of New Hampshire's Lake Winnepesaukee, with snow-capped Mt. Washington just beyond. Enter antsy child, sighing, "Can we go now?" That's high drama at Gunstock, a historic resort less than a two-hour drive from Boston.

Most of the gawking occurs at the top of the mountain's aptly named Panorama high-speed quad. Though the resort claims the East's first chairlift, installed in 1937, the quad dates to 2003—the first piece of a three-year, \$5-million revitalization package—and serves all but three of Gunstock's 51 trails. Trigger, a favorite warm-up from the summit, meanders 1,400 vertical feet down the mountain, mixing classic cruising with the occasional black-diamond plunge. The most consistent pitches, and the best bets on a powder day, can be found under the Tiger Triple, on runs such as Flintlock Extension. Savvy locals, among them 1960 Olympic silver medalist Penny Pitou and two generations of her brood, sneak over to Pistol on the southern edge of the resort for solitude and some delectable groomers.

Founded during the Depression, with a sublime timber-framed lodge built by FDR's Civilian Conservation Corps to prove it, county-owned Gunstock is well grounded in its tradition of public access: Summer campsites, not condos, surround the base area, and its slopes are a mix of groomed blues and textbook learning terrain, along with New Hampshire's longest tubing hill and a terrain park where

platoons of camo-clad teens log air time. In short, Gunstock gets it, and even offers a user-friendly Flex lift ticket that's good for any eight hours of its 12-plus-hour ski day. Add the award-winning "Mountain Magic" program (which guarantees, for \$120 per person, that a beginner will be able to call himself a skier in three lessons or the ski school will keep at it for free) and deeply discounted season pass prices, and you have Gunstock's formula for success.

The Town

At the foot of the mountain, the town of Gilford offers a timeless Colonial look neatly dressed in white clapboard and red brick. But down by the shores of

LAKE EFFECT Gunstock skiers enjoy inspiring views of Lake Winnepesaukee from the slopes and great seasonal deals in nearby Gilford, which is primarily a summer destination.