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VAIL RESORTS PURCHASING AUSTRALIA'S PERISHER SKI RESORT

Vail Resorts is acquiring Australia's Perisher Ski Resort in New South Wales for approximately \$136 million in a deal that should close in the fourth quarter of this year. Perisher is the largest ski resort in Australia -- and in the southern hemisphere -- with 3,000 acres, 47 lifts, five terrain parks, more than 100 groomed trails and 62 miles of X-C trails. The deal includes the ski areas of Perisher Valley, Smiggin Holes, Blue Cow and Guthega and it's close to the country's largest cities -- Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane and Canberra.

According to a Ski Area Management Magazine article, Bob Katz, chairman and CEO of Vail Resorts, said "The acquisition of our first international mountain resort is a significant milestone for our company. This acquisition is part of Vail Resorts' continued strategy to drive season pass sales and build loyalty with guests from around the world. Australia is one of the most important international markets for ski resorts across the Northern Hemisphere, generating an estimated more than 1 million skier visits annually to resorts in North America, Japan and Europe. We see this as a ground-breaking acquisition that will dramatically enhance the connection between our company and Australian skiers and riders."

Perisher has re-opened season pass sales for its upcoming ski season, set to open on June 6. Perisher's "Freedom Pass" is currently on sale for AU\$749, and will include benefits substantially similar to Vail Resorts' Epic Local Pass—with unlimited skiing and riding at most Vail Resorts, and 10 days at Vail and Beaver Creek—subject to certain holiday restrictions.

NEW LIFT AT POWDERHORN

Powderhorn Resort, near Grand Junction, Colorado, will replace their main Take Four quad lift with a detachable quad that will reduce the transit time from 17 to seven minutes to the top of the ski area. The lift will also carry mountain bikes in the summer.

CNL PLANS TO SELL 16 NORTH AMERICAN SKI RESORTS

Plans by Florida-based CNL Lifestyle Properties, the investment company which owns 16 of the leading ski areas in the US to sell them all, maybe, is unlikely to impact skiers, say pundits. If they are all sold to one buyer, it will be the biggest sales of ski resorts in one go in the history of the world. Other options include individual sales, management buy outs and so on.

CNL Lifestyle Properties began snapping up ski resorts, as part of a portfolio of more than 100 travel and leisure companies, nearly a decade ago, buying resorts that in many cases had been owned by previous ski resort empires like the American Skiing Company (ASC). However unlike ASC, CNL do not actually run the resorts day-to-day. They bring in other companies as operators. This has led industry experts to say skiers and boarders are unlikely to see any immediate changes, and perhaps no changes at all, at individual areas if a sale goes through. Well known ski areas currently owned by CNL include Sunday River and Sugarloaf in Maine and Crested Butte in Colorado. The company also own ski areas in states from the US East to West Coasts including New Hampshire, Vermont, Utah and California.

NEW INDOOR SLOPE FOR MIAMI?

Triple Five, the Canadian company that currently owns New Jersey's as-yet unopened American Dream Mall where North America's first indoor snow ski slope was built seven years ago, has announced plans for a new and even larger American Dream Miami Mall, which will contain a second indoor snow slope. The 800-foot-long Miami indoor ski slope would be modeled after the indoor slope in their New Jersey mall -- which was at one point was called Xanadu -- and, although the mall is still unfinished, it has now been under construction for 15 years and is being built by its fourth owner. The Triple Five company says that they hope to open the \$4 billion Miami mall in 2017. The complex would be located on a 200 acre site near Interstate 75 and would employ 25,000 people and contain more than 500 retail shops.

LES OTTEN TO REDEVELOP NEW HAMPSHIRE'S BALSAMS WILDERNESS SKI AREA

Les Otten, the former head of American Ski Company is now heading a project that hopes to create the largest winter resort on the east coast from a ski area that's been closed for since 2011.

The Balsams Wilderness Ski Area in New Hampshire, as it was known from 1966-2011, has been closed since September of 2011. Now, they are trying to not only reopen the resort, but are oping to enlarged it to become the biggest ski resort in New England. The idea is to open up seven interconnected peaks behind the old skiing terrain for new ski terrain. It's 2,200 acres of skiable acreage and a huge bowl containing 500 acres of glades, 22 lifts, and exposure to protect the snow from the wind and weather. The Balsams resort will have a base elevation of 2,350 feet, making it also one of the highest in New England.

Otten was running day to day operations at Sunday River at the age of 23 in 1973. By 1980, he bought Sunday River. In the nineties, he founded what eventually became American Ski Company, which then owned Killington, Mount Snow, Sugarbush, Sunday River in the northeast plus Heavenly in Lake Tahoe, and the Canyons in Utah.

MTS LOCATIONS AND DATES SET FOR 2017 and 2018

The Mountain Travel Symposium has awarded their next two meetings to Banff/Lake Louise Tourism and the Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel to host the March 28-April 8, 2017 meeting and to the Lake Tahoe Visitor's Authority, Heavenly Mountain Resort, Harrah's, Mont Bleu Resort and the Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel to host the 2018 meeting April 8-14.

BRIXEN IM THALE TO BUILD WORLD'S FASTEST CHAIRLIFT

Austria's Brixen im Thale, part of the giant Skiwelt area in the Tirol region, has announced it will be installing the world's fastest chairlift in time to begin operation next winter. The new Jochbahn, a detachable eight-seater chairlift, will operate on the resort's sunny side will be nearly two and a half times faster than the lift it replaces, travelling at a world beating almost 20 feet per second compared the eight feet per second of the older lift. The Jochbahn, which comes with a 13.2 million dollar price tag and an impressive hourly uplift capacity of 3,000 people, deploys not just the very latest technology as the 75 chairs on the two-kilometer long lift will be equipped with comfort suspension, heated seats and weather protection hoods.



The National Ski Club Officers' Newsflash is emailed each month to America's ski club officers by The National Ski Club Newsletter on a year-round basis to augment our four printed issues which published in November, January, March, and May. If you wish additional club officers to receive the Newsflash, please email their names, club name, their office within the club, and email addresses to wilbanks@ski-club.net.

