

# The Boston Globe

WINTER TRAVEL

## How New England ski resorts are making sure you have fun, whatever the weather

Why resorts are spending big money to keep you coming back.



IT'S EASY TO GET gun-shy these days about booking a New England ski vacation. I not so fondly recall a recent winter when my family and I spent Christmas week in Maine braving temperatures that bottomed out at about minus 25; two months later, over February school break, we waded our way through an unseasonably spring-like, slushy five days in central Vermont. After that, I swore I would never again plan ski trips more than a few weeks in advance. The weather has just become too unpredictable, more often than not in the extreme. Spend any time talking to ski resort operators and they'll tell you: Climate change is real.

I'm hardly alone in my hesitation. In recent years, ski resort operators across the country have been forced to contend with industry-wide decline, largely related to often inconsistent conditions. Low-snow years cost the industry more than \$1 billion between 2001 and 2016, according to a study

commissioned by the nonprofit group Protect Our Winters. Making snow requires specialized equipment, and the electricity to run it, which is why one report predicted that only about half of Northeast ski resorts will be economically viable by 2039. So here in New England, resorts are working hard to not only attract new skiers but also to retain the ones they've got. It's no longer enough to offer great skiing and riding. These days, what happens before and après ski is just as important.

### **The Williams Inn, Williamstown, Massachusetts**

The 64-room inn ([williamsinn.com](http://williamsinn.com), 413-458-9371) in the northern Berkshires, which opened this summer, is just 20 minutes from family favorite Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort ([jiminypeak.com](http://jiminypeak.com), 413-738-5500), the largest ski and snowboard resort in Massachusetts. Cambridge-based architecture and design firm CambridgeSeven designed the inn to be reminiscent of a classic American farmhouse using locally sourced antiques and furniture from area artisans, while an in-house restaurant called The Barn fits in with a farm-to-table ethos, craft bar, and cozy atmosphere. Rates start at \$169 per night.