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SEE PAGE 20

INSIDE:

Time for Taiwan
Ski Mont-Tremblant
Wave Season Selling
Update on All-Inclusives

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SKI



Shops and restaurants line rue des Remparts in Mont-Tremblant's pedestrian village.

Mont-Tremblant, QUEBEC

WITH PORTER AIRLINES (www.flyporter.com) offering a new nonstop, roundtrip flight between New York and Mont-Tremblant (www.tremblant.ca), access to this Quebec ski destination is easier than ever. While it may be premature to say for sure, the new flight seems to have been positive for tourism in the region.

"As the flight from New York to Mont-Tremblant by Porter began on December 22, it is too early to measure the benefits after only three weeks of operation," says André Jean Lauzon, coordinator for Tourisme Aérien Laurentides. "However, the first data on the flights are encouraging: for the period from Christmas break, more precisely from December 22 to January 8, we

had 240 passengers on flights from New York, an increase of 45 percent compared to the same period last year. It is important to mention that last year during the holiday season, the New York airport was closed and flights [then operated on Continental] were canceled on December 26, 27 and 29."

New and Improved

The new arrivals can enjoy \$1.5 million worth of new investments at the resort this season. For the first time this season, guests at Les Suites Tremblant can take advantage of the First Tracks program, which allows guests to start skiing at 7:45 a.m. before the official opening at 8:30 a.m.

New snowmaking on the Algon-

quin run provides access to the Versant Soleil and Casino de Mont-Tremblant, and new automated Series 5 snow blowers have expanded snowmaking at the top of the Sissy Schuss run and the bottom of Fuddle Duddle. The resort used that new equipment to combat the warm weather during December.

"Like the other ski resorts in Quebec, Tremblant has faced the warm weather of December," Chloé Lefebvre, communications coordinator for Station Mont-Tremblant-Intrawest, tells *Travel Agent*. "With one of the most powerful snowmaking systems in Eastern Canada, Tremblant now offers 84 trails [out of] 95. Fortunately, the Laurentians got a lot of snow since the holidays."

PHOTO BY MICHEL FVEN-GAGNON

Agents booking Mont-Tremblant for families can highlight the new offerings at the Tremblant Snow School. The new Mother Nature Camp combines a half-day of day care with a half-day of skiing for children ages three and four. The snow school also holds new private parent-child lessons.

Families can also take advantage of off-slope activities such as dogsledding, snowmobiling, horseback riding, snowshoeing, ice climbing, sleigh riding and shopping in the resort's pedestrian village, which now boasts a new Oakley store on rue des Remparts.

AT TRAVEL AGENT UNIVERSITY

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When booking, agents can take advantage of the "Spring Break Lodging Offer," available between February 20 and March 16. This package gives 15 percent off lodging on minimum two-night stays, and allows kids ages six to 17 to ski or ride for five consecutive weekdays for \$99. Travel agents receive 10 percent of the reduction. Agents with questions about the resort or for bookings should call 888-738-1777.

Getting There

Nonstop flights to Mont-Tremblant International Airport (YTM) are available from New York's Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR) through April 12 and from Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport (YTZ). An airport shuttle is available for every arriving aircraft. For a list of participating hotels, visit www.tremblant.ca and search "mtia_shuttle." —ADAM LEPOSA

AGENTADVICE

"You will think that the line looks longer for the Express Gondola, but think again," says Marrilee McLean of **Alabama World Travel**. "It will get you to the top faster than taking two separate chairlifts. So, get in that Express Gondola line."

For après ski, she recommends The Shack at the base of the lifts. "There is a maple tree trunk growing through the floor. [It has] rustic charm and an irresistible à la carte dinner menu."

Her favorite hotel is the **L'Ermitage du Lac**. "It has a shuttle service to and from the airport," McLean says, "it includes a full breakfast complete with waffles until 10 a.m. [and] there is an espresso machine in the lobby."

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