

ARE  
YOU  
READY  
TO  
JOIN  
THE  
CLUB?

# Ontario's PRIVATES

**ONTARIO SKI HILL  
NOT EXACTLY AS SHOWN.**

The clubs now emphasize the deeply rooted traditions of the last three generations of skiers and promote themselves as guardians of these traditions for future generations. Grandparents often ski with grandchildren while parents attend adult racing clinics or simply catch up on gossip in pods of chatting skiers. In keeping with the social aspect of skiing, there are lots of special events:

**By Jill Hillhouse**

## **IT'S THE HILL WHERE THE CAPTAINS OF INDUSTRY GO ON WINTER WEEKENDS—**

in the minds of southern Ontario skiers anyway. It's the chairlift where the barons of Bay Street seal the deal. The parking lot where the Range Rovers from Rosedale converge on Saturday mornings. The same place you'll find a physician, lawyer or judge when you really need one. It's the private ski club.

If you want your children rubbing shoulders in the racing gates with the Eatons', the Podborskis' or the heart surgeon's kids, all you need to do is find a couple of sponsors from the club roster then fork over a little initiation fee and pay your club dues in the fall.

While Quebec and the West smirk at the 200- to 300-metre-vertical pimples that Ontario calls ski hills, they do admit the idea of a private ski club, like a golf or yacht club where the members own the infrastructure and the land, or its lease, is truly unique. Privacy also allows limiting the number of skiers on the hill at any one time—indeed, "guests" require reservations to purchase a lift ticket.

Private ski clubs got first dibs on the best skiing when they started in Ontario in the early 1950s with visions of making the hills of the Niagara Escarpment into the Mountains of Ontario. Investments of \$100 to \$500 were asked of the pioneering charter members to get things off the ground. And there's been no looking back.

Photo: KEN GALLARD; Photo-illustration: Martin Olson

theme days, club dances, barbecues and après parties, as well as the infamous men's and ladies' days. Ontario ski clubs also pride themselves on their ski and snowboarding coaches and their ability to keep competitive skiing at the forefront. Many national team members are private club alumni.

So what's the cost of all this fun? Although we haven't compiled an exhaustive list of every private ski club in Ontario, this sampling should give you a good idea of the major players. Many offer additional benefits both with on-

site tennis and swimming facilities for summer use as well as reciprocal privileges at exclusive city yacht, golf and sports clubs.

Of course, since most of the clubs are more than an hour-and-a-half drive from Toronto, we haven't even scratched the surface of the cost involved in owning a chalet, condo or farm. So if you plan to ski privately in Ontario, keep an open mind, and chequebook. And pray to the snow gods that your children don't turn instead to hockey. ❄️

NOTE: Days open excludes Christmas, March Break and special events. All dollar figures are exclusive of GST or New York state sales tax.

## ALPINE Collingwood

**Established:** 1960  
**Members:** approx. 2,200  
**Runs:** 30  
**Lifts:** 4 chairs, 1 moving sidewalk  
**Days open:** Wednesday-Sunday  
**Initiation fee:** \$32,500  
**Annual dues** (2 adults, 2 children): \$2,370-\$2,670 (depending on ages of children)  
**Assessments:** Alpine is into year two of a five-year Heritage Plan fee of \$500 per family per year  
**Dining minimum:** none  
**Waiting list:** no  
**Contact information:** 705/445-0339, www.alpineskiclub.com

## BEAVER VALLEY SKI CLUB Kimberley

**Established:** 1967  
**Members:** 2,200-2,800  
**Runs:** 25  
**Lifts:** 5 chairs  
**Days open:** Wednesday-Sunday  
**Initiation fee:** \$16,000  
**Annual dues** (2 adults, 2 children): \$2,300-\$2,560 (depending on ages of children)  
**Assessments:** none in the last seven years  
**Dining minimum:** none  
**Waiting list:** no  
**Contact information:** 519/986-2520, www.bvsc.com

## CALEDON SKI CLUB Caledon

**Established:** 1958  
**Members:** approx. 3,000  
**Runs:** 23  
**Lifts:** 6 chairs, 1 moving sidewalk, 1 handle tow  
**Days open:** Wednesday, Friday-Sunday

**Note:** Caledon is open to the public on Wednesdays and Fridays but snowboarders must be signed in by a member (seriously)  
**Initiation fee:** first adult: \$10,000; second adult: \$5,000; children aged 6+: \$5,000 each  
**Annual dues** (2 adults, 2 children): \$2,230  
**Assessments:** none for last 10 years  
**Dining minimum:** none  
**Waiting list:** 1-2 years  
**Contact information:** 519/927-5221, www.caledonskiclub.on.ca

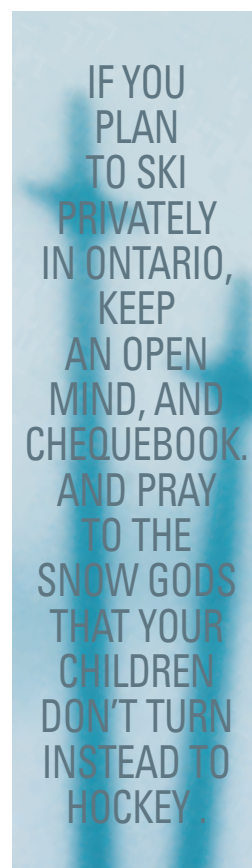
## CRAIGLEITH SKI CLUB Collingwood

**Established:** 1958  
**Members:** approx. 2,800  
**Runs:** 32  
**Lifts:** 5 chairs  
**Days open:** Wednesday-Sunday  
**Initiation fee:** \$30,000  
**Annual dues** (2 adults, 2 children): \$2,415-\$2,735 (depending on ages)  
**Assessments:** first assessment in 20 years was in 2004 for \$1,600 per voting member  
**Dining minimum:** none  
**Waiting list:** approx. 1 year  
**Contact information:** 705/445-3847, www.craigleith.com

## DEVIL'S GLEN COUNTRY CLUB

Glen Huron  
**Established:** 1965  
**Members:** approx. 2,500  
**Runs:** 21  
**Lifts:** 3 chairs, 1 T-bar, 1 rope tow  
**Days open:** Friday-Sunday  
**Initiation fee:** \$30,000  
**Annual dues** (2 adults, 2 children): \$2,420-\$2,760 (depending on ages

of children)  
**Assessments:** \$200 in 2004 and 6 per cent of annual dues for next five years for a new drinking water system  
**Dining minimum:** none  
**Waiting list:** no  
**Contact information:** 705/445-4890, www.devilsglen.com



## THE GEORGIAN PEAKS CLUB

Thornbury  
**Established:** 1960  
**Members:** approx. 1,900  
**Runs:** 21  
**Lifts:** 4 chairs  
**Days open:** Friday-Sunday in January, Wednesday-Sunday in February and March  
**Initiation fee:** \$30,000

**Annual dues** (2 adults, 2 children): \$2,715-\$3,225 (depending on ages of children), plus mandatory purchase of book of guest passes  
**Assessments:** two since 1987; \$750 for new chairlift and \$2,500 for new buildings  
**Dining minimum:** \$250 per family per season  
**Waiting list:** no  
**Contact:** 519/599-6771, www.georgianpeaks.com

## THE HEIGHTS OF HORSESHOE SKI AND COUNTRY CLUB

Barrie  
**Established:** 1990  
**Members:** approx. 2,500  
**Runs:** 20 (plus the use of 22 slopes across the road at Horseshoe Resort)  
**Lifts:** 4  
**Days open:** Saturday and Sunday  
**Initiation fee:** \$15,000 (Note: this is an equity membership that can be sold with 10 per cent of the initiation fee at time of sale payable to the club)  
**Annual dues** (2 adults, 2 children): \$2,000-\$2,080 (depending on ages of children)  
**Assessments:** \$500 in 2004 to top up capital reserves  
**Dining minimum:** none  
**Waiting list:** no  
**Note:** in addition to skiing, club members have the use of Horseshoe Resort Sports Centre seven days a week  
**Contact information:** 416/283-2988, www.horseshoeresort.com

## OSLER BLUFF SKI CLUB

Collingwood  
**Established:** 1949  
**Members:** approx. 1,400  
**Runs:** 26  
**Lifts:** 4 chairs  
**Days open:** Wednesday-Sunday  
**Initiation fee:** \$50,000  
**Annual dues** (2 adults and 2 children): \$2,370-\$2,890 (depending on ages of children)  
**Assessments:** \$500 five years ago for new chairlift  
**Dining minimum:** none  
**Waiting list:** 1-2 years  
**Contact information:** 705/445-4507, www.oslerbluff.com

## HOLIMONT

Ellicottville, New York  
**Established:** 1964  
**Members:** approx. 4,000+  
**Runs:** 51  
**Lifts:** 7 chairs, 1 T-bar  
**Days open:** every day until April, then weekends only  
**Initiation fee:** US\$11,000  
**Annual dues** (2 adults and any number of children): US\$1,395  
**Assessments:** US\$100 each year for three years for the club's new electricity generation plant  
**Dining minimum:** none  
**Waiting list:** 1-2 years  
**Note:** although HoliMont is in New York state, it's included in this survey since half of its members and guests are Canadian  
**Contact information:** 716/699-2320, www.holimont.com