

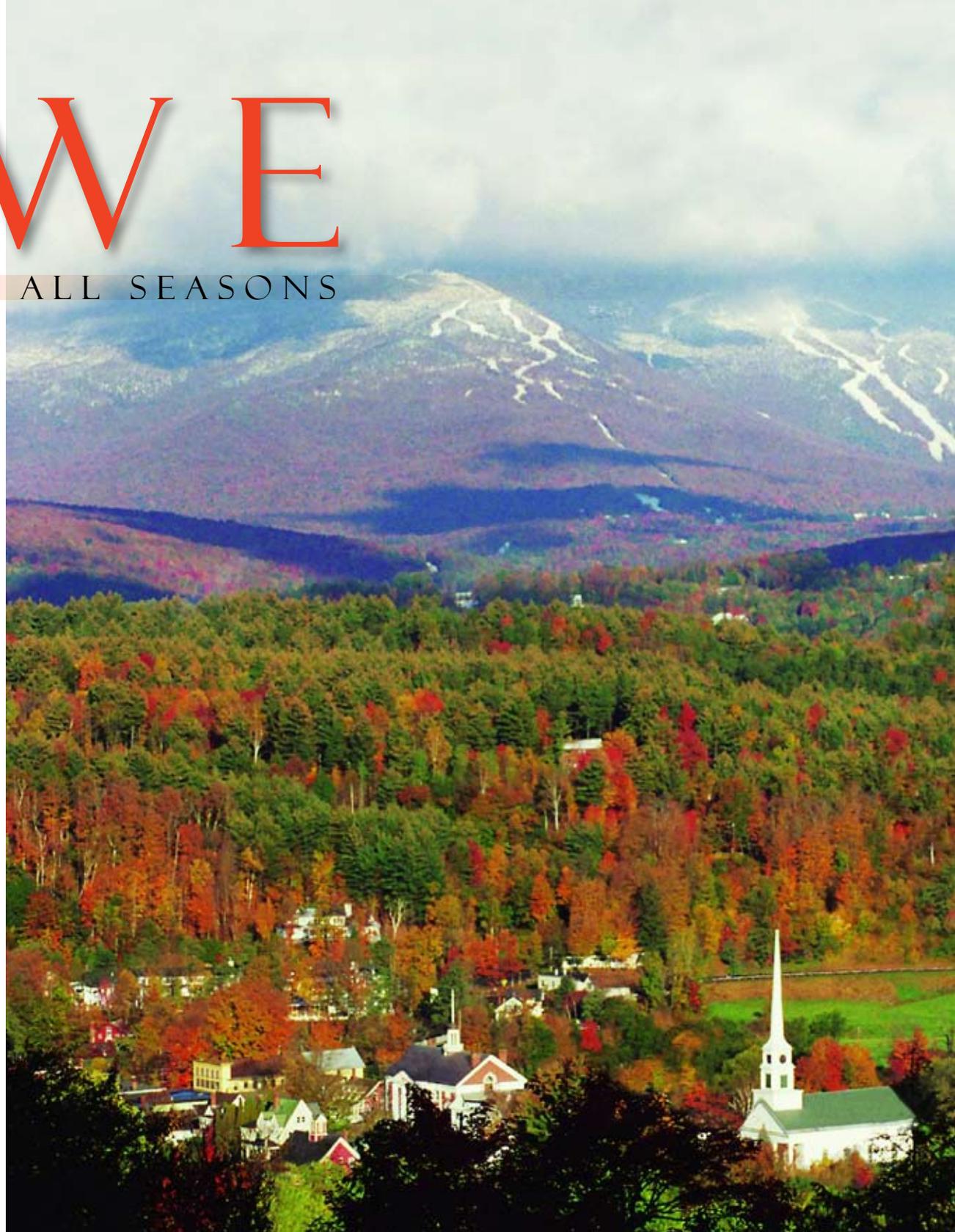
# STOWE

A VERMONT TOWN FOR ALL SEASONS

PHOTOGRAPHS & ESSAYS BY

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INTRODUCTION BY BIDDLE DUKE



# STOWE

A VERMONT TOWN FOR ALL SEASONS



# T THE LIGHT AND THE LAND AND MY CAMERA *by Orab Moore*

I moved to the Stowe area in 1987 with my young family.

I had skied here as a child on many family holidays. Years later, just out of high school, I helped my mom and dad build a small cottage on Elmore Mountain Road that they could use for weekend getaways. Eventually they built their dream home for retirement on the same land.

Dad was an avid skier and an engineer. So building his own home in a land he dearly loved was pretty close to the best retirement he could have imagined. He first came to Stowe to ski as a young man in the 1940s, back in the days when a single chairlift hauled skiers up Mount Mansfield. I remember the arrival of the first triple chair, with heavy wool ponchos to help skiers stay (somewhat) warm during the long and slow ascent to the top.

Once my parents were living here full-time, Dad was out early almost every winter morning to make first tracks on the Front Four. He was

not a good barometer of the actual ski conditions. If you asked him what it was like up on the mountain, he always had the same answer: "Great!" To get the real skinny on the weather, you would have to ask, "But how would your wife like the skiing today?" Then he might answer, "She would think it was too windy...or too cold...or too cloudy." But to my dad, the mountain was beloved, and every day he spent on it was a gift to his soul.

But winter is not the only season in Stowe. As a photographer, I am in love with every season, every day, every sunrise, every sunset.

I am often asked if I take my cameras with me everywhere. The answer is yes and no. Yes, I have my cameras with me more often than the average person might. But I'm not always able to stop and shoot—and sometimes, I've left my cameras at home. I miss some awesome opportunities. When that happens, I store the scene away in my mind.

There are two methods to my nature photography. One: I return often to the same route, to see new patterns of light on familiar scenes. Two: I scout out new routes, to see the light fall on unfamiliar scenes.

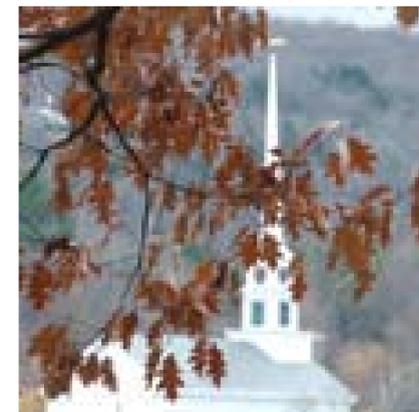
Stowe is a special place. It has a natural beauty because of how the land lays, nestled into the Mansfield mountain range and flanked by the Worcesters. And at a time when traditional main streets are disappearing, the village is truly lovely. Stowe has a mix of year-round locals, second-home owners, and once-a-year repeat visitors. Weekend travelers—or someone simply passing through—can't help but be struck by the charm and beauty of this place. Stowe also has a core of dedicated community members who organize amazing events, from outdoor recreation to arts and culture. It's a rare weekend when there is not more to do in Stowe than time to do it. The arts are alive in Stowe, with far more than the sound of music.

This book is my gift to the community. I may not portray every iconic view, nor every popular event. I also have included a few images that were shot in a neighboring town, or while standing in Stowe looking toward, for example, Elmore Mountain. My goal is to present the integrity and essence of Stowe in a well-rounded collection of seasonal images.

I have been photographing Stowe "in earnest" (as The Logger might say) since the day I moved here, when the long-gone Mayo Farm had its pigs eating leftovers from the Ben and Jerry's ice cream factory. ("They like every kind except the mint," a farmhand told me as I photographed the pigs slobbering over a bucket of strawberry.) I did not know then how entwined the light and the land and my camera would become for me. I just shoot—as often as possible.

Just like dad and his skiing: it's me and the light and the land and my camera.

*O. Moore*



# WINTER

stretches loosely over six months in Stowe.

It sputters and stutters in November, with shorter and shorter days. It teases in December, as we count down to the solstice, but we usually have a white Christmas and several good days of skiing. The bone-chilling cold and clear starry nights of January hold the snowpack between the occasional thaw.

...MORE LIGHT.

February is fickle, with big blizzards followed by dry spells. It's the finest time to be outside. We snowshoe and ski, downhill and cross country, as often as we possibly can.

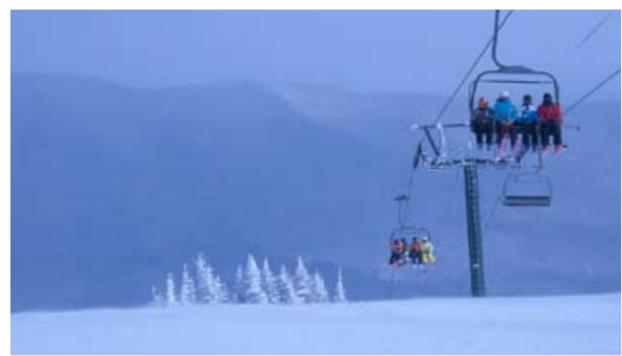
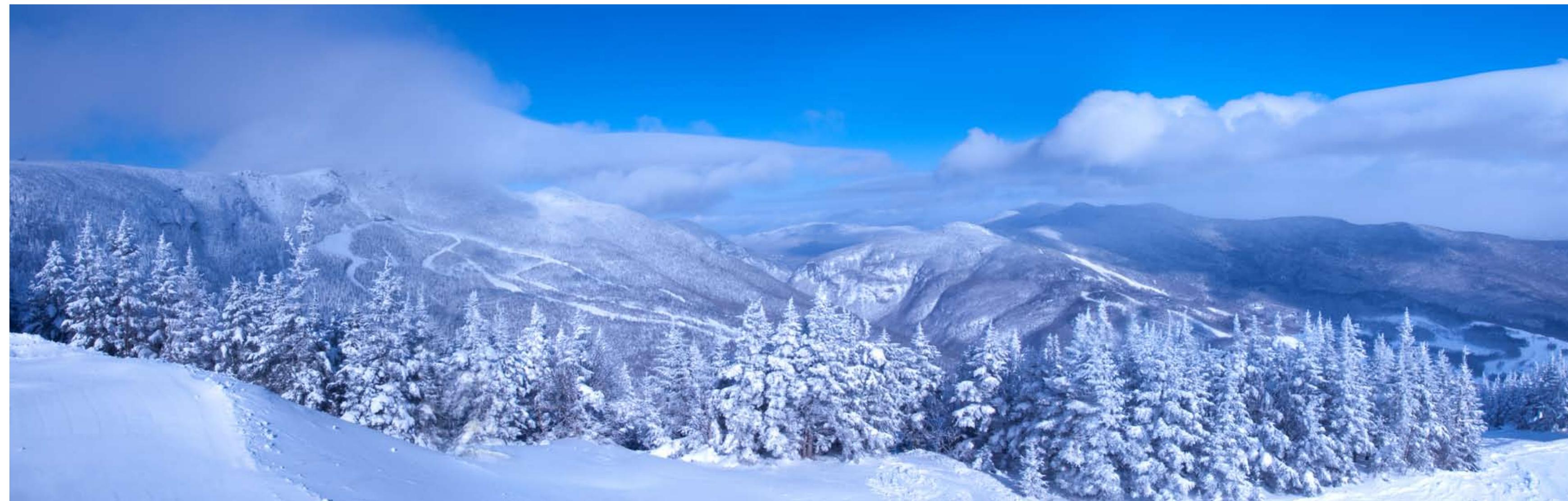
...MORE LIGHT. MORE SNOW.

March is usually reliable for sunshine and snow. The sap begins to run. Trees get tapped, buckets get filled and emptied. Lines get checked, and the boiling starts, bringing the sweet smell and taste of maple syrup. Liquid gold.

...MORE LIGHT. LONGER DAYS. MORE!

Then there is April, the month of transition. Some of us grow weary of winter, while others relish the last days of spring skiing. Still others are nurturing seedlings inside, waiting for the promised spring.







# MUD & SUGAR

season sneaks

in come March, when the snow is still flying but the temperatures bounce up, causing short sleeves to be donned for a few hours. The season plays with us—and sends sugarmakers into a tizzy, with starts and stops in the sap runs. Will it be a good year for making syrup? Will it be better than last year or worse? Will those extra taps play out?

Will the syrup be mostly **FANCY**,  
or start with **MEDIUM AMBER** right out of the tree?  
And will the truck make it through the mud?

Speaking of mud...I recently called the Stowe highway department to ask about the most notoriously muddy road in town. I wanted to get some really good mud and pothole shots, and in recent years, I just haven't been able to find those sections guaranteed to suck your car into a 10-inch rut and make steering all but impossible. Just over the border in Waterbury or Elmore? Sure, I know those places. But where in Stowe proper?

Nowhere, apparently. "We fill the holes as soon as we find them," they said.  
"We have our own gravel pit!"

Now that is just no fun.  
But it does make it easier to get to the sugarhouses for another nip of  
**HOT, FANCY, LIQUID GOLD.**



# SPRING

in Stowe is a gift,  
our reward for making it through another long season of cold and white.  
Green begins to assert itself in April. Every shoot, every bud is green,  
but not summer green: spring green.

IT'S SPRING GREEN, LIME GREEN,  
BUDDING GREEN, NEWBORN GREEN.

April and May are the unidentical twin-sister months of spring.

April has one foot in winter and one foot in spring.  
And at some point every crocus and daffodil, and even the tulips,  
may briefly wear a coat of snowy white.

But green marches on. It shrugs off the white and does not look back.

May has one foot in spring and one foot in summer. It's a perfect match.  
May is delightful, with brilliant shades of green, fields full of dandelions, and welcome  
warm weather. Early gardens get started. Late frosts threaten and then recede,  
reassuring us that summer will soon be here.





# SUMMER

seems so brief in Stowe that we immediately embrace it, squeezing every wakeful moment out of June, July and August.

## WE CELEBRATE.

The summer light vibrates with every color in nature's palette: green grass, red barns and blue sky. Multi-colored hot-air balloons grace the sky. Cows graze the pastures. Gardens bloom.

## WE CELEBRATE.

Hikers, bikers and runners explore every square inch of Stowe's mountains and trails. We get outside.

## AND WE CELEBRATE.

Enjoy the annual two-day August heat wave, or complain about it. Then blink and summer is gone, as autumn slips in.







# AUTUMN

is the signature season in Stowe.

It is beauty in its most concentrated and compact form.

There's a twinge of panic in late summer that stretches into early fall, when the first maple leaf turns red on an otherwise green tree. Soon it will be cold.

We accept it. And then we glide through late fall that stretches into early winter, when the last yellow poplar leaf lets go of an otherwise naked tree.

But autumn, sometimes sharply defined as fall foliage season—that high-energy time when thousands arrive in our fair land—is really only about one thing:

## PEAK COLOR.

It's two, three, maybe four days at the most. The color is full force and high octane, at times so surreal that one tourist asked me, "Did they paint the leaves red?"

Yes, "they" did. Every single leaf—

## RED, CRIMSON, ORANGE, UMBER AND GOLD.

Peak foliage is a thing of wonder. It's intense...and then it is gone.

Silence. Except for the wind whistling through the empty limbs as we collectively turn toward winter once again.

