

## SUMMER STANDOUT

### Fodor's Names Valley Ski Resort To Top 10 List

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*A large bucket dumps water on unsuspecting floaters at the Massanutten Water Park last month. Fodor's Travel placed the McGaheysville-area attraction on its list of the 10 best ski resorts to visit for summer fun. (Photos by Jason Lenhart / DN-R)*



*Summer waterparkgoers wait in line for the Flow Rider attraction in the indoor section of Massanutten Water Park last month. "We were very excited and very pleased because we're listed among a very impressive list of resort destinations across the United States," said officials at the McGaheysville-area resort of a top 10 spot on a recent list by Fodor's.*

**HARRISONBURG** — In recent years, Sarah Elson said Monday, Massanutten Resort has worked to beef up its offerings for summer visitors.

An influential voice in the travel industry apparently has taken notice of the changes. Last month, Fodor's Travel placed the McGaheysville-area attraction on its list of the 10 best ski resorts to visit for summer fun.

Elson, the resort's director of business relations, said Massanutten officials were thrilled to be on a list with several internationally known ski destinations.

"We were very excited and very pleased because we're listed among a very impressive list of resort destinations across the United States," she said. "Massanutten has a lot to offer, and to now be recognized for all the effort we've put into our summer operations over the last five to eight years is really great for us."

Fodor's brief synopsis of Massanutten highlighted its outdoor activities as a major reason to visit.

Kayaking, horseback riding, scaling the climbing wall, and chilling at the water park as well as visiting the petting zoo and participating in a cupcake-making competition were among the resort offerings highlighted. A photo accompanying the online listing shows golfing at the resort.

### **Visitors Impressed**

Though they had no clue about the Fodor's recognition, Bill and Donna Tacker said that when they arrived at Massanutten on Saturday they were surprised by all it had to offer.

"Especially if you're someone with a young family, you don't have to leave the resort," Donna Tacker said Monday afternoon as the couple from Union Valley, Texas — east of Dallas — checked out Harrisonburg Tourism & Visitor Services in the Hardesty-Higgins House Visitor Center to learn about more local attractions.

The couple said they wanted to spend time in the Shenandoah Valley during a trip to West Virginia to visit their son. RCI, a timeshare exchange company, recommended Massanutten, so they traded time in Florida for accommodations here.

Bill Tacker, 76, was impressed by the resort's size.

"It's huge," he said.

Donna Tacker, 70, said she checked out some of the recreation areas and attended a yoga class Monday morning.

"We're just kind of getting into what's available," she said.

Tubing and canoeing interested the couple, as did miniature golf.

They said they might have gravitated to more adventuresome attractions, such as zip-lining (which they'd done before in Mexico), if Bill Tacker didn't have to have hip surgery when he returned home.

### **New Busy Season**

Elson said the family adventure park, which features three zip-line experiences, is one of the activities added within the last eight years.

A few years ago, the resort opened a nature center in its ski lodge in the summer, she added. Arts and crafts classes and a birds of prey show are based there, and visitors can launch nature hikes and chairlift hikes from the center.

The added emphasis on summer fun combined with the amount of time families have to visit have flipped the resort's business model, Elson said.

"Summer is definitely our peak season," she said, "whereas 20 years ago, we were pretty much a ski resort. In the summer, we're pretty booked from mid-June until the end of August."

The recognition was a surprise for resort officials because they had no idea Fodor's was working on such a list. Elson said she learned of the honor when she received a Google Alert that something referencing Massanutten Resort had popped up on the Internet.

Resort officials have used the information and photos on the Fodor's page to create an 11-inch-by-17-inch poster, she said. The posters have been put up around the resort and requested by every department.

A post about the recognition, Elson said, also was placed on the resort's Facebook page.

Massanutten is a somewhat of a geographic outlier on the list. The six East Coast resorts highlighted are well to the north (two in New York and Vermont and one each in Maine and New Hampshire), and destinations in Montana, Oregon and California round out the publication's top 10.

### **Fodor's Top 10**

The 10 best ski resorts for summer fun, according to Fodor's Travel:

- » Whiteface Lake Placid; Lake Placid, N.Y.
- » Killington Resort; Killington, Vt.
- » Northstar California Resort; Lake Tahoe, Calif.
- » Sunday River; Newry, Maine
- » Timberline Lodge; Timberline Lodge, Ore.
- » Attitash Mountain Resort; Bartlett, N.H.
- » Mohonk Mountain House; Mohonk, N.Y.
- » Big Sky Resort; Big Sky, Mont.
- » Stowe Mountain Resort; Stowe, Vt.
- » Massanutten Resort, McGaheysville

Source: Fodors.com.

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