

Catamount is located on both  
New York and Massachusetts



**With  
development  
plans approved  
this is one cat  
that is ready to POUNCE!**

# CATAMOUNT

**C**atamount opened for skiing in 1939. That date was December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941 and obviously Catamount's coverage in the New York Times took a back seat to Pearl Harbor Day. You may have passed Catamount while traveling to the Berkshires, Catskills, upstate New York, and Vermont, but now this area is poised to attract serious attention.

Location, location, location, is the real estate message for success. The owners and the developer of this modest size ski area (thousand feet vertical and a longest run of 2-1/2 miles) 115 miles north of Manhattan, are making sure it is their mountain's time in the limelight.

Owners Don Edwards and Bill Gilbert have "seat of the pants" experience with managing ski areas. Catamount is their third. They cut their teeth on Fahnestock, Silvermine, and Sterling Forest areas in New York prior to acquiring the "Cat" in 1973.

In this age of rising energy costs, increased security and concern about travel expenses, they are convinced that Catamount is poised for success. Their area is an easily accessible, four-season "boutique" resort that is just a short drive away for millions of outdoor enthusiasts.

Located near Hillsdale, New York, Catamount is near the Hudson River Valley to the west and the scenic Berkshires to the east. In fact, its very location allows Catamount to claim a rare statistic. The ski area is in both New York and Massachusetts. Catamount is approachable via major highways from Connecticut, Massachusetts and New York including The Taconic State Parkway, the Massachusetts Turnpike, and the New York State Thruway.

On April 6<sup>th</sup> of this year the resort received final approval for a three-phase project that has been in planning for five years and will be constructed over

three successive seasons. Planned by developer Dale Salsman, and the resort area owners, the new development will center around a pedestrian village campus centered on the base of a ski lift. Rare is it when we find goals and an opportunity this worthy. Catamount's development plan will take the best qualities of mega resorts such as Tremblant and Stratton, and scale them down to make a quaint New England pedestrian village. Rarer still is it to have a developer at the helm with an architectural as well as real estate background who is sensitive to the special ecological needs of a mountain resort.

Built in a beautiful valley, and limited in overall size due to its support parking, this village will take advantage of existing topography. It is to be built on three elevations: a parking plaza level, a pedestrian plaza level with supporting retail shops, and the highest, a skier's plaza level, all linked by a grand staircase.

The slope-side village will include 125 condominiums managed as a hotel, complete with indoor/outdoor heated pool and supporting retail spaces. Road improvements and an additional quad lift are part of the package.

This is pursuing a significant dream. Dale Salsman has been a skier for decades, and he has seen the seasonal nature of the industry's employment. Dale understands how difficult it can be for a one season resort to find and keep employees. In search of a better way, Dale has joined forces with the local Chamber of Commerce as



well as the Columbia/Hudson Partnership, the area's Industrial Development Agency, to create desirable local jobs. He is serious about creating a year round resort with an especially strong summer venue of activities.

Efficient, compact, comprehensible, and with a goal of providing year round jobs for its employees, this grand design may well be the recipe for success for winter sports over the next decade. We will have to wait and see.

"The Owner's goals are not just all about the sale of real estate", says Dale. He describes that resort operators are always expressing their joy in realizing their desire for guests to have a good time. Continued growth is not the core driving force at "The Cat", it is the perennial quality of the experience. \*

By Richard Butler

