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# BROMLEY MOUNTAIN THRILL ZONE!

Those who know the ski industry or, for that matter, those who've read the other side of this page, know that Bromley Mountain's stewards have been and are now visionary and innovative. That explains Bromley's storied place in skiing history and it also explains why, back in the summer of 1975, Bromley's owner looked up at a grass-covered mountain and thought something like, "Wouldn't it be nice to have people coming down those slopes all year long?"

And so, in the summer of '76, Bromley Mountain unveiled the Bromley Alpine Slide. It was the nation's first double-tracked Alpine Slide (the third track was added in '78) and as of this writing, it's still one of the country's longest at 2/3 of a mile long. The Alpine Slide remained the only summer game in town until some twenty years later when Bromley's longtime President looked up and thought something like, "Wouldn't it be nice to give the folks a variety of summertime rides and attractions suitable for the whole family?" It would indeed be nice and fill a seasonal void, he reasoned, and began, in the early 1990's, to experiment with various diversions. More attractions were added until, sometime around 2000, it dawned on everyone that what they had on their hands was a full-blown, Vermont-style fun park.



Bromley's original Alpine Slide, circa late 1970s



The Thrill Zone's Alpine Slide - Still the longest

A fun park needs a name of its own, and so the Bromley Mountain Thrill Zone opened for business in the Summer of 2000. Vermont's largest summer fun park, the Mountain Thrill Zone, now hosts the 456' Big Splash, Vermont's longest water slide ride; the 100' Adrenaline Zip Line; two Trampoline Things that let you flip, spin and jump some 25' in the air (all harnessed in, of course); a 24' multi-faced climbing wall and a beautiful, 18 hole championship mini golf course.

PigDog's Fun Park, a special place just for the smallest members of the crew, offers a NEW 24' Super Kiddie Slide, the incredibly bouncy Bounce House and the ever-popular, and somewhat splashy, Bumper Boats.

Photo credits: Bromley Mountain Ski Area

The summer of 2003 marked the arrival of the Space-Bikes, in which you race against another cyclist or the clock as you actually pedal your way into a fixed orbit - like a bicycle race turned on its head - and the Twin-Spin, an around and round you go sort of a thing, until you yell "Stop!" on the two-to four-rider, self-propelled spinning sensation.

What, you may wonder, is next? It's a good question, and one that occupies a considerable amount of time for the folks who run Bromley. Each year, brochures and catalogs are gathered by the score, web-sites too numerous to mention are visited, trips to ride and amusement manufacturers are taken, as are "research" jaunts to other parks across the North East. Yes, it might look like an awful lot of fun, they'll tell you, but it's serious business, as Bromley strives to find unique attractions you won't find in other parks.

Well, they go all-out to ensure that the Bromley Mountain Thrill Zone is nothing short of the best it can be and that it stays the premier summer fun park in Vermont; exciting, thrilling, colorful, clean, and fun for the whole family.

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Bromley's Thrill Zone's 456' "Big Splash," Vermont's longest water slide ride.

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Bromley's Founder, Fred Pabst, circa late 1940s

It could be said that, had Fred Pabst Jr. liked the beer business as much as he was expected to, there'd be no Bromley Mountain today. Fred, scion of the Pabst Brewery founders and the heir to the fortune of same, didn't care all that much for beer or beer making.

Fred's passion, picked up while vacationing in Europe, was Alpine skiing, a sport which, in the America of the 1930s, was barely known. That didn't bother Fred much. He knew that people would come to the right mountain at the right time. And he knew he'd have to spend some time and money himself, if he was to find such a mountain.

Between 1934 and 1939, on a trek that stretched from Wisconsin, to Canada, across New York, through New Hampshire, and finally here to Peru, Vermont, Fred bought or built his way east in a mountain developing and purchasing spree that Ezra Bowen, former ski editor of *Sports Illustrated*, called "...an odyssey of acquisition and invention unmatched in the history of skiing."

The is that Big Bromley, as it was then known, was the final link in a long chain of mountains that Fred built. Many of the innovations that debuted at Bromley – including new lift designs, year-round trail grooming and specialized off-season trail plantings, extensive snow-making systems and slopeside day care, among others – have since become the norm industry wide.

What could not be duplicated elsewhere, however, is Bromley's unique situation – another of Fred's goals – of being the only major ski mountain in New England with a southern exposure. Hence Bromley's designation as "Vermont's Sun Mountain." *SKI Magazine* put it this way: "If the sun's shining anywhere in Southern Vermont it's shining on south-facing Bromley."

Just as Bromley was an innovator in skiing's early years, it more than keeps up with the times now. Thanks to an extensive, ongoing capital improvement campaign that began in '99, Bromley has since cut new trails and glades, expanded and upgraded snowmaking, added several new terrain parks for skiers and snowboarders of all ages and abilities, installed a new high-speed quad lift, completed



Riding the rails,  
21st century style, in Bromley's Halo Free-Style Park  
Photo credits: Bromley Mountain Ski Area



A busy day at Bromley, as seen from VT Route 11, mid-late 1950s

a major base lodge expansion and renovation and completely redesigned its entrance way, added a wide and welcoming front plaza, a grand heated staircase and, on weekends and holidays, the first valet parking service at a Vermont ski area (there we go again!).

Interestingly enough, the thing that Bromley is most famous for – aside from its relationship with the sun – can't be duplicated anywhere else, at any price. It's a feeling. A sense of security, comfort, loyalty and belonging – a sense of family, really – that's been cited repeatedly over the years by Bromley's extensive family of regular visitors. Folks really do love Bromley.

Paul Maraschiello, writing in *The Ski Bum News*, noticed the phenomenon this way: "The people I rode up the chair with at Bromley were fiercely loyal. They LOVED [his emphasis] the mountain and everyone I talked to seemed to be a regular visitor to this resort. They took great pride in the fact they skied there on a regular basis. After spending a day there, I can see why."

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