

1960 Legacy

Fall Line by John Fry, Ski Magazine

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A half-century ago, a skier who hadn't wintered in the Alps was as déclassé as a debutante who hadn't been to a ball. Why? That's what designer Oleg Cassini asked himself in 1959, as he sat in his Vermont farmhouse gazing at the newly opened Sugarbush ski area. Cassini enlisted his brother, the society columnist Cholly Knickerbocker, along with some cafe society acquaintances, and formed Ski Club 10, a private club at the mountain's base. Ski Club 10 quickly transposed the Stork Club and El Morocco to the mountains. Among its jet-set regulars were shipping mogul Stavros Niarchos, Fiat scion Gianni Agnelli and various Kennedys, Shrivvers and Heinzes. New York impresario Armando Orsini opened a restaurant, and Stein Eriksen briefly headed the ski school.

The press labeled Sugarbush "Mascara Mountain," and Slim Aarons, who was to high society what Ansel Adams was to wilderness, photographed socialite Nan Kempner and supermodel Cindy Hollingsworth there. Ski Club 10's manager, a young Frenchman named Olivier Coquelin, set up a dance floor with flashing lights, a precursor to the first disco in America. But Mascara Mountain's notoriety was short-lived, and in due time the beautiful girls in Bogners vanished from the lift lines and lodges. The old Ski Club 10 still exists at Sugarbush, but today the building is filled with the joyous giggles of the glitterati's grandchildren.