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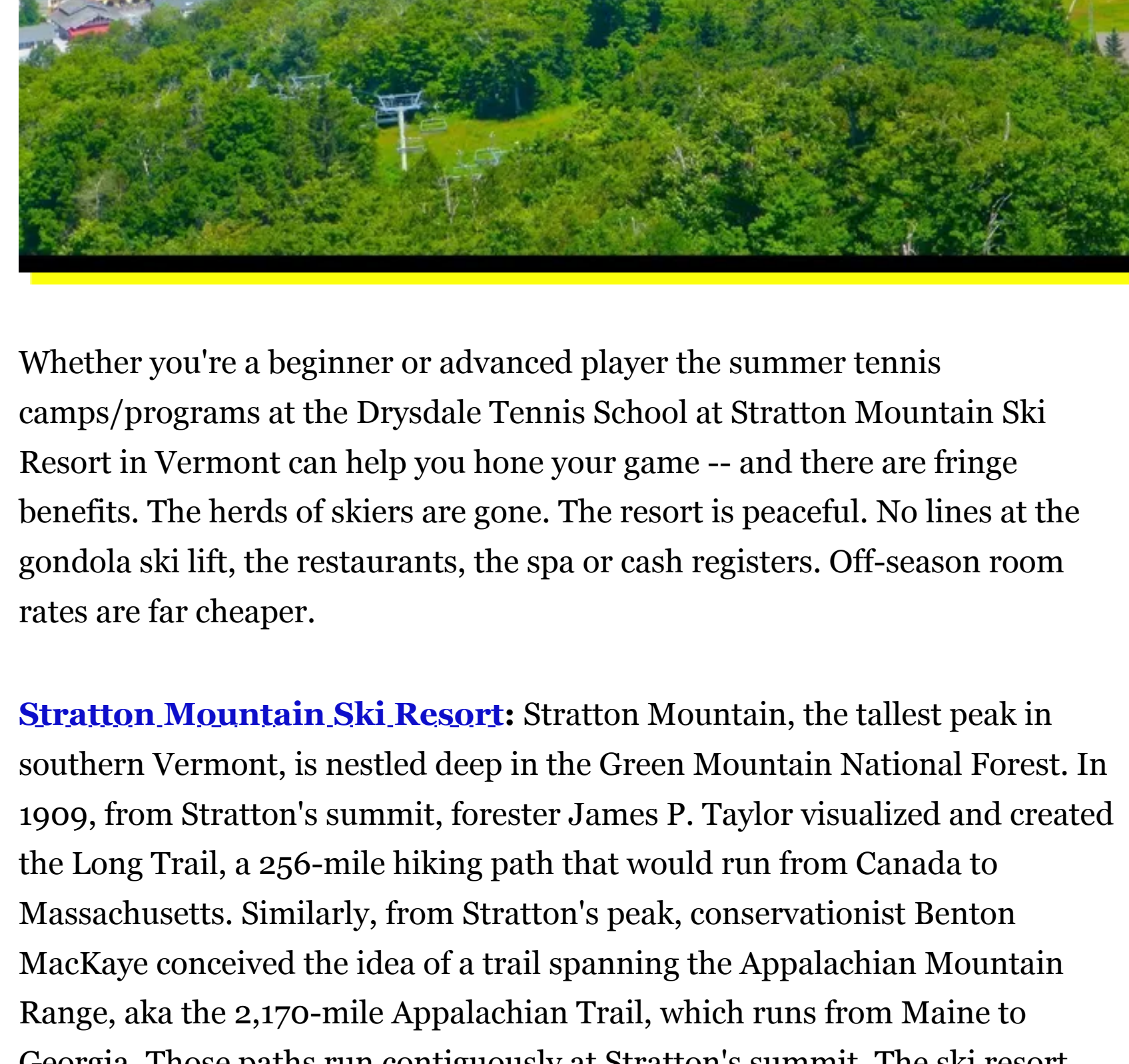
Stratton Mountain, Vermont: Game On At The Drysdale Tennis School (PHOTOS)

Whether you're a beginner or advanced player the summer tennis camps/programs at the Drysdale Tennis School at Stratton Mountain Ski Resort in Vermont can help you hone your game -- and there are fringe benefits.

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Whether you're a beginner or advanced player the summer tennis camps/programs at the Drysdale Tennis School at Stratton Mountain Ski Resort in Vermont can help you hone your game -- and there are fringe benefits. The herds of skiers are gone. The resort is peaceful. No lines at the gondola ski lift, the restaurants, the spa or cash registers. Off-season room rates are far cheaper.

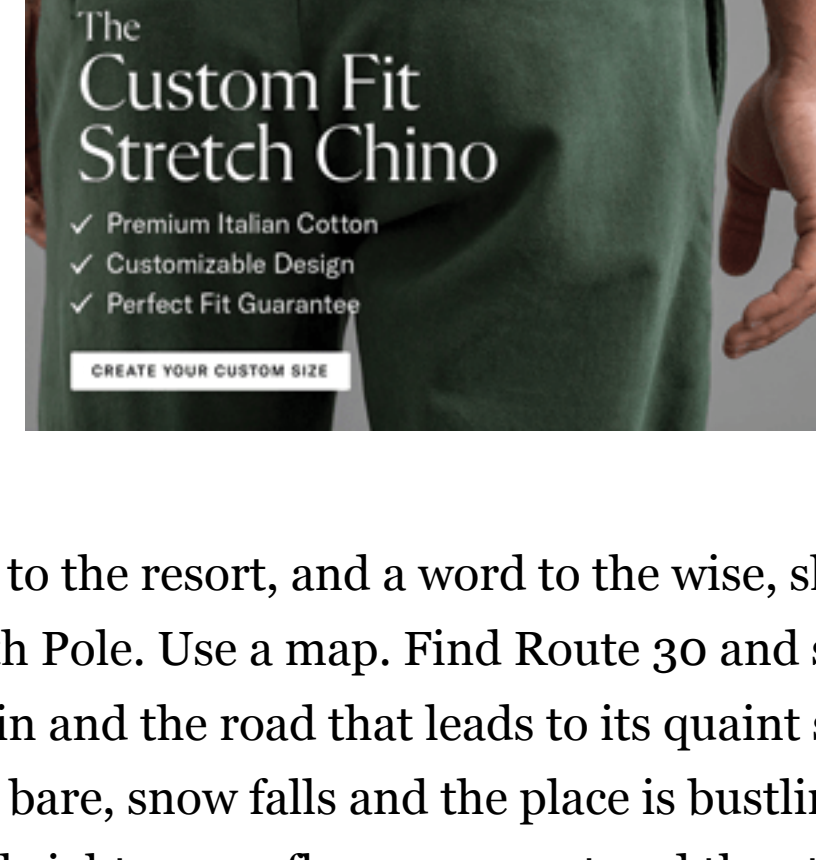
Stratton Mountain Ski Resort: Stratton Mountain, the tallest peak in southern Vermont, is nestled deep in the Green Mountain National Forest. In 1909, from Stratton's summit, forester James P. Taylor visualized and created the Long Trail, a 256-mile hiking path that would run from Canada to Massachusetts. Similarly, from Stratton's peak, conservationist Benton MacKaye conceived the idea of a trail spanning the Appalachian Mountain Range, aka the 2,170-mile Appalachian Trail, which runs from Maine to Georgia. Those paths run contiguously at Stratton's summit. The ski resort opened in 1961, and even today Stratton is still a bit of a trailblazer as it was one of the first major resorts to embrace snowboarding.

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You'll need to drive to the resort, and a word to the wise, skip the GPS or you'll wind up at the North Pole. Use a map. Find Route 30 and signs will point you to Stratton Mountain and the road that leads to its quaint ski village. In the winter the trees are bare, snow falls and the place is bustling. In the summer the dense foliage is bright green, flowers are out and the atmosphere tranquil. The resort is a series of lodges, buildings and a village set among 625+ acres. Check in at the Inn at Stratton Mountain and request a suite at a lodge like the "Long Trail," where one side of the building faces the main road, and the other views lodges and a small pond. The full kitchens with granite countertops, large bedrooms, wall-to-wall carpeting, fireplaces and a balcony will make you feel at home. The outdoor pool and hot tub are a blessing under the summer sun.

Drysdale Tennis School Stratton: The tennis school is located at the Sports Center on Arbor Drive. The tennis pro shop is the focal point surrounded by a gym, spa and pool. There are two indoor courts, but heaven is outback where the eight red clay tennis courts and six gray Har-Tru clay courts have gorgeous views of the mountains and forests. The scene looks like it belongs in Gstaad, Switzerland, backdropped by the Alps. Private lessons, clinics, tournaments, cardio tennis, doubles and singles games are played all day.

Tennis Director and former Davis Cup player Jean-Max Mangones heads the Summer Program. Max works with a friendly team of pros whose clear advice, positive reinforcement and infectious humor puts everyone at ease. They don't radically change your strokes; they just help you fix what's broken. The instruction is a great start, but it's the steady competition that will really fine-tune your game. Round Robins, team tennis, doubles and singles play helps you sharpen tactics, strategy and fortitude. During special gatherings, like the "Legends Weekend," the atmosphere is particularly cordial and the participants are very social. Wine and one-liners flow and prizes are given for "Most Improved," "Best Shot," "Winning Team." The friendly, courteous vibe reflects back on the spirit of the school's mentor/owner Cliff Drysdale.

Cliff Drysdale could coax and charm a better stroke out of anyone:

The amiable Drysdale, winner of 33 singles titles, six doubles titles and a doubles championship at the 1972 U.S. Open, is a legend in the international tennis community. Most tennis fans know him as the tennis sports announcer for ESPN, who has analyzed matches, profiled players and reported from international tournaments for decades. His tennis wisdom has gravitas: "Coil the upper body on a two-handed backhand. For forehand strokes, bring the racquet back early, swing, keep the ball on the racquet for the greatest amount of time and follow through." He dissects the technique of [Roddick](#), [Federer](#), [Nadal](#) and [Djokovic](#) and distills it into simple, game-improving advice.

Anyone who plays tennis knows that technique, motor skills and athleticism are just the half the battle. The other half is mental, and mastering the psychological aspects is paramount to winning: Drysdale counsels, "Pressure is a privilege. You play tennis to get to a crescendo where you have to win. You play just for these moments. You've got to accept these challenges (e.g. serving for a game, set or match) and execute. At these crucial times, think about specific things that work for you. Trust your swing. Trust your serve. Think back to a person you know you can beat, relax and act."

Several, mythical tennis tidbits about Drysdale add to his persona. The best one is that back in the day, Roger Federer's mom had a major crush on the dapper player, who's a fellow South African. Thus she encouraged her son to take up the sport, and the rest is history.

Things to Do: If you play golf, [Stratton's Championship 27-hole Golf Course](#) is one mile down the road from the village. It was designed by golf architect Geoffrey Cornish and has hosted [LPGA](#) Tournaments. There are three nine-hole courses -- Mountain, Forest, Lake -- and all are surrounded by Green Mountain views. If your game needs a bit of polish, hit the tees at the Stratton Golf School, a state-of-the-art teaching facility founded by [Arnold Palmer](#).

At the Sports Center and Fitness Facility there's a 75-foot long indoor pool, cardio and weight rooms, steam rooms, cycling, fitness classes and you can even take a 15-minute gondola ride to the top of the Stratton summit for a 75-minute Mountain Top yoga class. And while you are at the summit, there are five marked hiking trail loops and a three-quarter-mile walk to a fire station lookout with 360-degree panoramas of Vermont and New York.

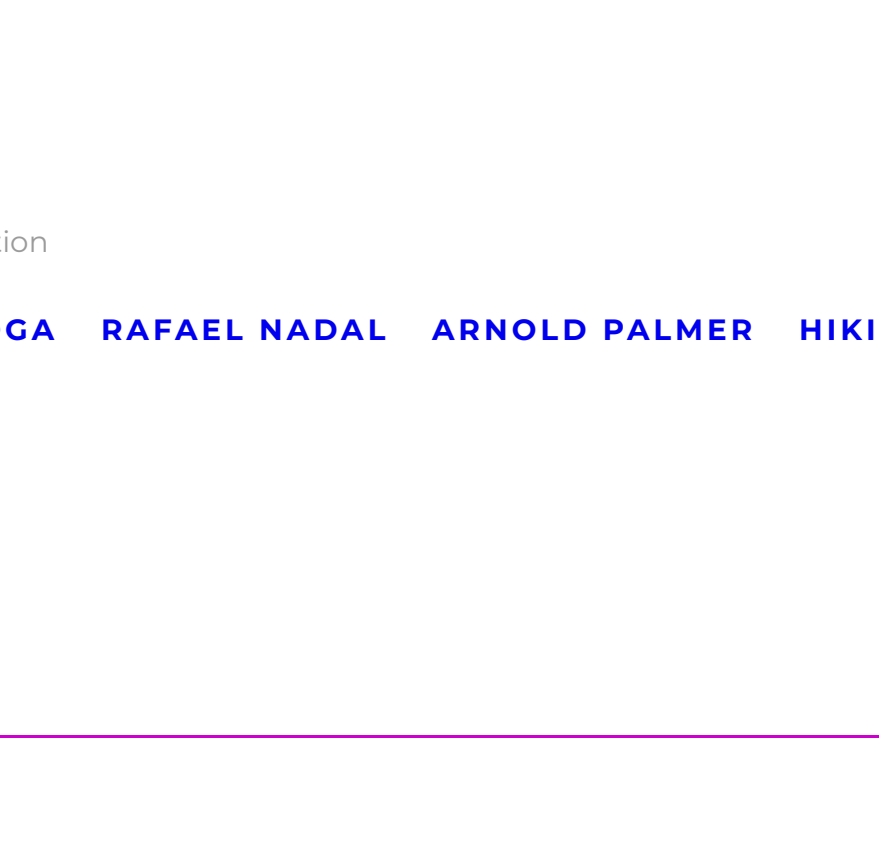
Stroll through the ski village and you'll often see live music on the street as you consider your shopping options: jewelry (Von Bergen's Jewelry, LLC), tents (Stratton Sports), ski or snowboard boots (The Boot Lab) or chocolates, truffles and fudge (Mountain Sweets). And sometimes at night there are evening concerts at the base of the mountain.

Eating Out: Verde is the village's top restaurant. Booths with embroidered upholstery, a chatty bar scene, an open kitchen and jazz music streaming from the corners of the room set the tone: very adult, quite cozy and sublimely plush. Start with a sip of Ravines Dry Riesling, from the Finger Lakes region, before you dig into the tangy, hearty Gazpacho soup made with tomatoes, roasted vegetables, fennel, cucumbers, carrots peppers and topped with lime yogurt. The Misty Knoll Farm pan roasted chicken breast with jalapeño grits, homemade andouille sausage, sweet corn, heirloom tomato, broccoli and basil milk is a mixture of tastes you'll want to savor slowly. For dessert, strawberry short cake with fresh local strawberries and the ice cider dessert wine Eden caps off the perfect meal.

Try the prime rib or burgers at Mulligan's, the sashimi, tempura and local pie at the Organic Pizza Company.

Vacationing at a ski resort in the summer, fall or spring? Why not? [Learning to play tennis or upping your game?](#) Do it. For a tennis getaway, solo or with family, friends or that special someone, [Drysdale Tennis Schools](#) all over the world beckon players. At Stratton specifically, they put out a very friendly welcome mat in the middle of the Green Mountain National Forest. When you leave here, you might not be able to take a set off [Serena](#), [Maria](#), [Murray](#) or [Tsonga](#) but you'll feel like you can. The school gives you that much confidence. The ball is in your court.

Visit travel writer Dwight Brown at [www.DwightBrownInk.com](#)



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