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A Vail Valley Winter

By Maren Bartels

SINCE 1962, Vail has captured the hearts of Nordic seekers of all ages, and this winter season proves this sought-after Rocky Mountain destination keeps getting better and better. With the majestic Gore Range as the backdrop to bountiful outdoor activities, creative culinary offerings, luxury shopping and cultural events, Vail really does have something for everyone. Although Vail is spectacular any time of year, it truly becomes magical during the holidays, evoking “Old World” European charm paired with contemporary offerings and natural beauty. With the snow-covered pines and twinkling lights “all aglow” you feel like it’s a Christmas carol come to life right before your eyes. This winter wonderland is complete with enough memory-making moments delight even the toughest Scrooge so check out our guide to all-things Vail for your next escape.

WHERE TO STAY

“When planning your trip to Vail, pack a good attitude and sense of adventure,” says Mark

Dubovy, president and owner of the full-service local **Mountain Resort Concierge**, which prides itself on curating a first-class, authentic and stress-free experience for its clients. “It’s your job to have fun and relax, and ours to manage the rest,” states Dubovy. The sky is the limit to what Dubovy’s team does—vacation home rentals, groceries, ski lessons, babysitters, spa reservations, private chef dinners and so on—all to make your vacation more enjoyable. mountainconcierge.com

The Residences at Sebastian—Vail offers families the opportunity to own a slice of mountain paradise in the heart of the action. Each residence is equipped with a full kitchen, living room, multiple bedrooms and an abundance of amenities such as a pre-arrival grocery shopping, daily housekeeping, complimentary around-town transportation, in-residence chef opportunities for home-cooked meals, a personal concierge to assist with restaurant reservations, transportation and VIP access

to the slope-side Sebastian Base Camp. With delectable dining at Leona (check out the holiday-themed breakfast and dinners), a world class spa where mom and dad can enjoy some pampering and plenty of entertainment for the kids, including a year-round heated pool, Battle Mountain Kids Camp and Tykes Room for ages 4 and under. Plus you can take your vacation on the road with Timbers’ Reciprocity Program and spend a few weeks at any of the properties around the globe. thesebastianvail.com

A brand-new luxury resort concept with elevated adventures like heli-skiing with Olympians, on-site wellness with Lululemon and private culinary tastings, **The Hythe** is poised to bring a new level of sophisticated vibrancy, imbuing guests with a sense of celebration and adventure year-round. Currently completing the final phase of a \$40 million renovation, guests of The Hythe will enjoy elevated interiors like the vivacious and welcoming arrival and lobby experience, four brand-new food and beverage

slope-side Mountainside Terrace is the perfect spot to sip champagne and enjoy the raw bar in the afternoon sun or toast the evening under the twinkling lights. Relax with a well-earned cocktail by the hot tub or year-round heat-ed pool. Oh and don't forget to try the Ramen Pop-Up to warm your soul at Sakaba along with the fresh fish they receive daily from Japan. ritz-carlton.com

WHAT TO DO

Vail Valley offers a festive and magical holiday season in an iconic setting with a plethora of events for all. The beautiful mountain villages with twinkling lights and crisp mountain air are the backdrop for many celebratory holiday events which will spark holiday spirit for visitors and locals alike.



At an elevation of just over 8,000 feet, Vail Valley offers three different villages connected by a network of cobblestone streets (that are actually heated!), there is seriously an infinite amount of wintertime activities in which to partake in when visiting this picturesque town. From skiing the beautiful mountain trails to hopping on a joyful sleigh ride, here are just a few of the amazing holiday vacation activities that await you in Vail.

With 5,289 skiable acres, 195 runs and 31 lifts with a variety of terrain for skiers of all abilities, Beaver Creek is home to the most dedicated learning terrain in Colorado. With the founding of **Beaver Creek's Signature Parks Collection**, beginner and intermediate skiers have more terrain built for their skill level than ever before. These dedicated learning areas provide beginner terrain that mimics the setting of advanced trails, granting guests a chance to explore more of the mountain on terrain they are comfortable skiing and snowboarding. The Signature Parks Collection is specifically designed to inspire confidence, progressively improve skills and evoke a sense of wonder and accomplishment. These terrain areas, combined with the **Cookie Cabin, Candy Cabin** and **Ice Cream Parlour** make Beaver Creek Kids Ski and Snowboard School the industry-leading kids learning experience. New this season, Beaver Creek is adding 250

acres of lift-served, welcoming ski terrain for beginner and intermediate skiers & riders to elevate their mountain experience. **The McCoy Park** investment is a commitment to the guest experience which will delight skiers and riders of all ages and abilities. A dedicated family-friendly learning zone with an amazing natural feel, including signature groomed, graded trails, McCoy Park is a place for the entire family to connect with nature and each other in an accessible bowl setting. As the third installment of the Signature Parks Collection, McCoy Park offers 17 trails serviced by two new quad lifts, while maintaining snowshoe and cross-country areas. McCoy Park comes with a brand-new warming hut—**Eaton Haus**, offering guests a view of the Colorado Rockies that most visitors have never seen before.

At the top of Vail Mountain, rev up your adrenaline with snow biking, tubing and more at **Adventure Ridge**.

Imagination Station is a paradise for kids looking to expand their minds with water flow features, a marble play wall, a light wall, a light table, builder boards that inspire problem solving and a hyperbolic funnel that models planetary motion.

If alpine skiing isn't your thing, get your heart pumping and take in the majestic views of the Gore Range with a snowshoe or nordic-ski outing followed by lunch at the newly renovated **Vail Golf & Nordic Clubhouse**. And the all-seasons yurt adjacent to the Eagles Nest gondola atop Vail Mountain is home to the **Nature Discovery Center** where you can explore the wonders of the natural world with guided of snowshowing tours.

Bundle up for a historic ride on horse-drawn sleighs and sleds and take in the beautiful mountain scenery at **Bearcat Stables** or **4 Eagle Ranch**.

Grab some skates and glide your way to winter fun at one of the ice rinks in town. **Solaris** and **Vail Square** offer outdoor rinks while **Dobson Ice Arena** is an indoor rink, perfect for a pick-up hockey game.

For centuries men have been gliding over snow with their best four-legged friends, and you

concepts, exclusive mountain-forward excursions and much more. thehythevail.com

Tucked into an exclusive enclave of Beaver Creek Mountain where luxury meets adventure, a winding drive to where the grand slope-side façade of **The Ritz-Carlton, Bachelor Gulch** comes into view. The breathtaking ski-in and ski-out property is curated specifically for each guest's extravagant escape—from multi-generational families to couples to solo travelers in search of the ultimate winter adventure. To ensure The Ritz's every moment is merry and bright, check out their 25 decorated holiday trees among the more than 125,000 sparkling holiday lights and 600 feet of garland decking the halls throughout the winter wonderland. And Ritz Kids offers festive activities including letters and storytelling with Santa; cookie decorating; holiday crafts and snow globes; snowshoeing, tracking animal prints through the forest and building snow castles. For unmatched après, The Fireside Bar on the

PHOTOS: COURTESY VAIL RESORTS



can experience this thrilling mode of transportation with **Mountain Musher Dog Sled Rides**.

Celebrate Colorado snowsports with stories that educate and inspire others to seek adventure at **Colorado Snowsport Museum Hall of Fame**. The priceless artifacts tell the stories of the birth, rise and explosion of skiing and snowboarding in Colorado.

Get rid of the ski soreness and tension with a relaxing treatment at any of Vail's world-class spas at **The Vail Raquet Club**, **The Sebastian-Vail**, **The Sonnenalp** or **Exhale Beaver Creek**.

Shop 'til you drop in Vail Village and Beaver Creek's trendy boutiques like **Axel's**, **The Golden Bear**, **Due Luca Bruno**, **Gorsuch**, **Perch** and **Kemosabe**.

For a relaxing evening, head to **CineBistro** for an intimate dinner and a movie in the heart of Vail Village.



PHOTOS: COURTESY VAIL RESORTS

The entire family will be delighted with the lighting walk through experience the **Magic of Lights Vail** at the **Ford Park Lower Bench** and **Betty Ford Alpine Gardens** area. The half-mile loop will feature an array of majestic lighting displays, interactive elements, fire pits and s'more stations, concessions with warm beverages, Kids Playground, live music, and more!

WHERE TO EAT

Culinary adventures await foodies and a bevy of beverages to set the mood.

If you're after First Chair, grab a breakfast burrito and latte from **Loaded Joe's** by the covered bridge as you head to the Vista Bahn Gondola, or stop in the **Gorsuch Ski Café** with European-inspired coffees and pastries. Or get up the mountain fast and head to **Buffalo's Grill** at the top of Chair 4 for a grab 'n go breakfast croissant sandwich before you make those fresh tracks.



Blü Cow Café is a longtime family-owned restaurant located in the Vail Valley since 1967. With their Vail Village location, it's the perfect pit stop for a Swiss hot dog and a beer.

For a truly high-end experience, treat yourself to lunch with views overlooking the majestic Gore Range at **The 10th** (a nod to the 10th Mountain Division that trained at nearby Camp Hale during WWII). While reservations are highly recommended, you can always head to the back bar and secure a "first-come, first-served" table in the lounge.

Executive Chef Jack Burkhardt turns out highly curated culinary offerings at **Fall Line** in the bright modern space decorated with 60s-era ski photos and pops of color. The duck ramen bowl and nightly specials are always delightful.

Sweet Basil is one of Vail's best-known culinary destinations that has gained a devoted following of locals and visitors alike with tried-and-true dishes and a welcoming staff.

Alpenrose has been serving up authentic German and Austrian cuisines like Spaetzle, Wienerschnitzel and Apfelstrudel since 1974. The genuine Bavarian atmosphere, complete with dirndls and lederhosen will make you feel like you're in the Alps.

Bully Ranch at The Sonnenalp Hotel is the ideal place to round up friends and family for lunch, dinner or a pitcher of legendary mudslides at happy hour.

The modern wine bar at **Root and Flower** offers over 50 vinos by the glass, plus a changing menu of New American bites in a setting that inspires intimate conversation.

Vin48 in Avon serves up seasonal plates featuring an eclectic mix of rustic, modern cuisine featuring wood-fired steak and seafood to poultry and vegetables. Plus they offer more than 40 wines by the glass, all stored and served via an innovative enomatic wine system.

Located just minutes from Vail and Beaver Creek Resorts and along the banks of the Eagle River is **Juniper**, who's locally-sourced

contemporary and seasonal cuisine has been a staple since 2002.

With a lively après-ski and late-night scene, **The George Restaurant & Pub** is a beloved basement hangout with a food menu that will satisfy the hungriest of adventurers.

Bonfire Brewery in Eagle will wet your whistle with their savory local suds, and don't miss a sip at **10th Mountain Whiskey & Spirit Company's** tasting room by the Covered Bridge in Vail Village.

Solaris' Bol brings a sophisticated scene to the traditional bowling alley with lounge-style seating and a restaurant with global fare. It's great for families as well as after-dinner entertainment for all.

Finally, awaken your senses with a ride in the Beaver Creek snowcat-pulled sleigh, with breathtaking moonlit and star-dotted skies to pave your way to any of Beaver Creek's cabin dining destinations; **Beano's Cabin**, **Zach's Cabin** and delight in the re-imagined line-up of deliciousness at **Allie's Cabin**. Each one offers a unique and memorable experience that you'll ooh and ahh over for years to come.

The ski area that was founded by Pete Seibert and local rancher Earl Eaton in 1962 at the base of Vail Pass has truly become legendary. We are so fortunate to have this sought-after destination in our backyard, and this season promises to be epic with all the offerings and experiences to be had—a winter wonderland if there ever was one. 🦋

CHECK IT OUT

BEAVER CREEK EVENTS, Dec. 1 – Jan. 23

DEC. 2 – 5: Xfinity Birds of Prey Audi FIS Ski World Cup

DEC. 26 – JAN. 2: Beaver Creek Extraordinaire presents Cheer

DEC. 31: New Year's Eve Celebration

JAN. 14 – 16: Beaver Creek Wonder Celebration

JAN. 16: Snowshoe Race Series

JAN. 20 – 23: Winter Culinary Weekend

Weekly programming:

SATURDAYS, DEC. 11 – APRIL 2: Family FunFest

THURSDAYS, DEC. 16 – MARCH 24: Thursday Night Wonder

VAIL EVENTS, Dec. 1 – Jan. 1

THROUGH DEC. 13: Revely Vail

DEC. 2 – 5: Vail Snow Days

DEC. 9 – 12: Powabunga Music Festival

DEC. 16 – JAN. 1: Vail Holidays

DEC. 19: Vail Winterfest