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CIRCULATION
Superior Distribution Services

Colorado Golf Magazine is published under ISSN No. 1099-7776 quarterly by Pade Publishing, Inc., 559 E. Second Avenue, Castle Rock, CO 80108. All contents of this magazine are copyrighted 1987-2007 by Pade Publishing, Inc., all rights reserved. Reproduction or use of the editorial or graphic content of this magazine, without permission, in any manner, is prohibited. ©

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National Photography Award 1st Place
International Network of Golf Awards 2004 & 2005



COLORADO GOLF MOUNTAIN ESCAPES

THE "NEW" BEAVER CREEK GOLF CLUB
The popular mountain resort ups the ante with course and clubhouse improvements 8

STAY & PLAY IN ASPEN
It's not just about glitz—though Aspen has plenty to spare 12

BEST OF ASPEN 2007
What to do, see and experience this summer in Colorado's well-heeled mountain town 16

VAIL VALLEY DINING OUT: VISTA AT ARROWHEAD
A popular eatery moves up to the country club with familiar food and friendliness in tow 18

BEST OF VAIL 2007
From splurge to surprisingly affordable, Vail's best runs the gamut of diversions 22

SUMMER IN STEAMBOAT
The resort town has something for everyone 24

BEST OF SUMMIT COUNTY 2007
What's your pleasure? Summit County is the place to enjoy it ... 30

SPRINGS AND THINGS - VACATIONING IN SOUTHERN COLORADO
Head south this summer and discover the other Colorado—the one blissfully removed from the Denver hustle and I-70 crowds (and prices) 32

H2 OH!
The big, bad boy of the desert has picked up city class without losing muscle 36

BEST OF

Vail

2007



FROM SPLURGE TO SURPRISINGLY AFFORDABLE,
VAIL'S BEST RUNS THE GAMUT OF DIVERSIONS

BY LISA PERRY

VAIL ALWAYS SEEMS TO CONJURE UP IMAGES OF LUXE LIVING, AND WITH GOOD REASON. ITS UPSCALE ENVIRONS HAVE LURED VISITORS FROM DAY ONE, SO YOU EXPECT TO PAY DEARLY FOR SOME EXTRAVAGANCES. BUT SUMMERTIME IN VAIL VALLEY ALSO OFFERS A NUMBER OF FREE AND INEXPENSIVE DIVERSIONS. HERE'S OUR TAKE ON THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

BEST 19TH HOLE

The clubhouse, Red Sky Golf Club.

Many Colorado golf courses feature decks with great views, but Red Sky's clubhouse vista of emerald-green fairways and white sand at the base of a towering mountainside can take your breath away. In summer, Silver Sage Restaurant kick-starts weekends with Thursday evening toe-tappin' bluegrass concerts in the midst of sumptuous outdoor surroundings. 970.477.8362

BEST MARTINI

The Yukitini, Park Hyatt Beaver Creek Resort & Spa

Don't let the "yuk" part fool you—this drink is so tasty that a nonalcoholic version is available for the younger set. Belly up to Park Hyatt's Antler Hall or Whiskey Elk bars for a special blend of vanilla vodka, Frangelico, vanilla syrup and cream. It's shaken, à la James Bond, and served with a chocolate dog bone for garnish. Woof! 800.233.1234

BEST STEAKHOUSE

Chap's Grill & Chophouse, Vail Cascade Resort & Spa

Succulent steaks, prime rib and pork chops star along with regional game, seafood and traditional grilled entrées. It's all served in an idyllic setting that puts the "ah" in "chophouse." Nestled on Gore Creek at the base of Vail Mountain, you can savor meats along with mountain air and scenery on Chap's riverside patio. Live music in the Fireside Bar will have you lingering with a rich, after-dinner drink. 970.479.7014

BEST NEW RESTAURANT

ZaccaZa in Avon

ZaccaZa is a pizza joint with pizzazz, featuring moderately priced, family-style, Southern Italian dishes. Well-known Vail owner/chef Paul Ferzacca bakes signature deep-dish Chicago-style and Napolitano thin-crust pizzas in coal-fired ovens. A place for all ages, diners can play bocce ball or relax around a fire pit at the outdoor bar. 970.476.1244

BEST PLACE TO SEE AND BE SEEN

Friday Afternoon Club, Vail Mountain

Every Friday from June 29—Aug. 31, summertime happy-hour fans take a free ride on the Eagle Bahn Gondola beginning at 4 p.m. Up top, tax brackets mingle on Vail's largest deck taking advantage of drink specials, burgers and dogs and live music. Get into a volleyball match, toss horseshoes or play indoor laser tag. Or just kick back. Another example of Vail on the cheap, this is one club that's easy to join.

BEST LIVE MUSIC

Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival

Vail's acclaimed classical music fest celebrates 20 years from meager beginnings when musicians outnumbered the audience. This year, 60,000 are expected from June 24—Aug. 2. Performances hit all the right notes, from small ensembles to the New York Philharmonic. The free Fourth of July concert at the

Ford Amphitheater features patriotic works performed by the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra. Festival guest artists include Judy Collins and Wynton Marsalis. Bravo, indeed! 877.812.5700

BEST TAKEOUT FOOD

Moe's Original BBQ, LionsHead

Sometimes you just want to grab some food, head for home base and be as messy as you want. When you've tired of nights out, pick up Moe's down-home 'Bama barbecue—tender smoked pork, chicken and ribs, all slow-cooked over hard wood. Moe's LionsHead location is ideal for a quick dash in and out. 970.479.7888

BEST WAY TO IMITATE AN EAGLE

Vail Valley Paragliding

Picture yourself perched on a tiny seat under a parachute-like canopy, gently wafting among the mountain peaks and clouds over Vail. If the thought doesn't give you an immediate panic attack, hire a tandem pilot and just sail along for the ride. An introductory flight is \$175—add \$50 for the sunset version. Done that? Classes are available, from workshops to certification-level instruction. 970.845.7321

BEST PLACE TO STAY

Sonnenalp Resort of Vail

Consistently rated Vail's favorite, Sonnenalp offers superb accommodations, friendly staff and award-winning golf. Enjoy five dining venues, soothing spa, workout room, tennis, Jacuzzis and pool. There are onsite, organized kids' activities and a library with board games. The golf course is one of Golf Digest's Top 100 resort venues and ranked Top 3 by *Colorado Golf Magazine*. Want to splurge? Try Sonnenalp's Great Golf Escape with four nights lodging, breakfast, shoeshine, amenities and gifts along with rounds at Sonnenalp, Eagle-Vail and Vail golf clubs. \$1,470 off-peak, \$2,170 in summer. 866.284.4411

BEST SPA TREATMENT

Aqua Sanitas at Allegria Spa, Park Hyatt Beaver Creek

The Park Hyatt recently devoted \$12 million to reinventing its renowned Allegria Spa, adding this co-ed water sanctuary that is one-of-a-kind in Colorado. With three custom thermal pools, aromatherapy steam room, warm-heat Tepidarium and Cascata Rain Showers, the entire experience lives up to its "Healing Waters" name. 970.748.7500

BEST WAY TO SPEND A SUMMER EVENING

Bud Light Hot Summer Nights Concerts, Vail

Tuesday nights sound like fun with free tunes at Ford Amphitheater, June 19—Aug. 21. Hear a spectrum from funk to reggae plus country, Celtic and "rockin' blues." July 31 is entirely devoted to hip-hop with Vail International Dance Festival performers. It's an easy walk to Village restaurants and nightlife at concert's end. vvf.org/cultural/concertseries.php for schedule