

R H A P S O D Y

NOVEMBER 2014

**JESSICA
CHASTAIN**
*OUT OF
THIS WORLD*

*THE MOST
LUXURIOUS
SKI RESORTS
IN AMERICA*

*PICASSO
AND DALÍ
SQUARE OFF*

*BETTING
BIG ON
FANTASY
FOOTBALL*

UNITED 

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

FIRST PERSON, FAR FLUNG

AMERICA'S CLASSIC SKI RESORTS

The U.S. has a rich history of places to cut first tracks.

*We sent our writers to five of the most
enduring—and luxurious.*

VAIL MOUNTAIN

THE ONE THAT STARTED IT ALL

Eagle County, Colorado

VAIL IS America's most popular ski resort, with more than 1.6 million reported annual visitors (and one Olympic-champion resident by the name of Lindsey Vonn). Yet thanks to its massive size—nearly 200 trails spread across a whopping 5,289 acres—it rarely feels crowded. In fact, when I visited the ski area late this past winter, I spent most

of my morning runs without coming across another soul, with the exception of my private instructor. He was well worth the expense, as he was able to show me the quickest, most direct routes that would allow me to cover as much terrain as possible. (You can even compete against your past records: With your EpicMix interactive lift ticket—which works across all Vail Resorts mountains, including Vail, Beaver Creek and Breckenridge—you can see precisely how many vertical feet you've logged in a given day.)

The Back Bowls were particularly desolate. Carving down exquisitely groomed Poppyfields before coasting across the wooden bridge leading to the Tea Cup Express lift, it was easy to imagine the wonderment World War II veteran Pete Seibert must have felt in the late 1950s when he and fellow Vail founder Earl Eaton hiked seven hours to the top of the mountain and laid eyes upon the pristine landscape. Although it's no longer quite so untouched, with 31 chairlifts now serving the resort—including one of the world's fastest gondolas, equipped with heated seats and (unbelievably) Wi-Fi—it's definitely become much easier to get to the top, and back down again. —SEAN MANNING



FOUNDING FATHER
Vail Mountain
co-founder Pete
Seibert (right)
surveys his winter
wonderland ahead
of its 1962 opening

COURTESY OF VAIL RESORTS



TEA AND POWDER
Actor Burgess
Meredith with his
wife, actress Paulette
Goddard, circa 1946

THE BEST PLACES TO STAY AND APRÈS

	ALYESKA	BEAVER CREEK	JACKSON HOLE	PARK CITY	VAIL
LODGING	The Hotel Alyeska Deep in the Alaskan wilderness, in a valley of the Chugach Mountains, Hotel Alyeska is surrounded by mountain peaks, hanging glaciers and ocean views. It's one part base camp and another part restorative oasis, as this ski-in/ski-out chateau-style hotel features both a full-service spa and a yoga center.	The Ritz-Carlton, Bachelor Gulch Although inspired by the grand lodges of the U.S. National Park Service, this stately timber-and-stone edifice has plenty of modern luxuries, including Asprey bath products and Frette linens. The spa's signature massages are the perfect antidote to a body-wracking day on the slopes.	Four Seasons Resort Jackson Hole Whether soaring over the mountains on a wildlife helicopter safari, indulging in a stout beer ice-cream float at après hangout The Handle Bar or taking in the panoramic mountain view from your very own private balcony, this Four Seasons resort acts as the perfect luxury base camp.	The Washington School House Park City's Victorian architecture and mining-era saloons ooze charm, so forgo slopeside convenience for this former 19th-century boarding school. Farm-to-table breakfast and après-ski cocktails are included in rates, as is a house car to whisk guests to the town's three ski resorts.	The Sebastian-Vail When First Lady Michelle Obama skied Vail with her daughters in 2011, they stayed here—and it's obvious why. In the heart of Vail Village, this 84-room boutique hotel is a finely balanced mix of rustic comfort and modern luxury: One-bedroom suites feature roaring fireplaces as well as heated marble bathroom floors.
DINING	Sakura After a cold day of skiing Alyeska, there's nothing more satisfying than a ceramic <i>tokkuri</i> (essentially, a small decanter) of steaming hot sake, paired with a handcrafted Alaskan salmon or king crab roll. Sakura, Hotel Alyeska's modern sushi bar and restaurant, provides just that.	Spago The menu and decor at this Wolfgang Puck outpost is the definition of refinement. However, down-to-earthiness still abounds: Sommelier Jason Hunter helps nail the perfect pairing, and Chef de Cuisine Jared Montarbo often hand-delivers only-in-the-Rockies entrees like roasted elk loin.	The Kitchen While the pan-seared deer is a menu item worth considering, you won't find any elk antlers over the mantle at this strikingly minimalist eatery. The warm glow cast over the bamboo tabletops provides the perfect ambiance for Asian-influenced dishes like IPA-marinated hoisin spare ribs.	High West Two minutes' walk from the Washington School House is the fantastic High West Distillery and Saloon, which claims to be "the nation's only ski-in/ski-out distillery." Its whiskeys have won many accolades and are incorporated into several excellent dishes, such as the whiskey-braised beef short ribs.	Sweet Basil In the early 1970s, the restaurant space at 193 Gore Creek Drive saw six different tenants in as many years. Then, in 1977, Sweet Basil opened and has been wowing diners ever since with its unique twists on hearty American fare such as delicious Colorado lamb T-bones with eggplant caponata.

✈ **BOARDING PASS** When you feel the call of fresh powder, let your smartphone help you answer with United's re-engineered mobile app, which recently won the coveted #CIO100 award.