

Jackson Hole: Stylish Western Ski Town Families and Non-skiers Will Love

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You'll definitely want to wait until at least 10 a.m.," said the tattooed pro-shop clerk, with the kind of *yeah-braah* stoner's talk-laugh that makes you feel your middle age. This followed the lengthy note about "Conditions..." that arrived in a 6:45 a.m. text from our guide, Paul Boillot.

It was March, and the tail end of 2019's record-setting, 505-inch season of snowfall in [Jackson Hole](#), the wide valley that encompasses both the town of Jackson and the namesake [Jackson Hole Mountain Resort](#) in Teton Village. Until our arrival, the mountain had seen several consecutive bluebird days. My family and I were hell-bent on leveraging our East Coast-calibrated body clocks for full days of skiing, despite warnings of poor visibility and icy terrain. By 7:30 a.m., we were all-but-helmet ready. How bad could it be? I thought.

Paul compromised with us on a 9:30 start. We met at the Sweetwater Gondola, just steps from our hotel, Caldera House, in the heart of Teton Village. When this boutique property opened in 2018, it replaced a beloved honky-tonk — a loss that half the town was still smarting over. (Most evenings the other half seemed to spill out of the stylish yet cozy joint on Caldera's ground floor.)

"We skied Deer Valley most recently," I heard my 15-year-old son, Henry, say to Paul, who smiled and nodded politely. I'd later learn from the barman at our hotel that such an admission was, for Jackson Hole residents, tantamount to getting pushed into a wave and calling it surfing. We stuck to the lower part of the mountain that morning, but fog as thick as meringue all but erased any trace of the skier ahead in our five-person slalom train. We all agreed that these slopes felt different — or, as my younger son, 13-year-old Will, said, "I feel like I have banana peels on my skis."



Jackson Hole Mountain Resort. | The Ingalls

And while other ski resorts have welcomed slick luxury-brand outposts that inevitably erode local distinction, Jackson's restaurants and shops remain fiercely independent. Star restaurateur Gavin Fine, whose Jackson Hole empire started with Rendezvous Bistro and now includes the Kitchen, Enoteca, Bin 22, and Bovine & Swine, has all but bypassed an entire generation of squeeze-bottle-dotted, chef-y food in favor of a simpler farm-to-table — or, more accurately, greenhouse-to-table — approach.

Bin 22, the always-crowded wine store and tapas bar, serves salumi and seasonal vegetable-forward small plates (like the perfectly dressed Spanish salad of arugula, Manchego, and Marcona almonds and salmon rillettes I had one night) that are on par with big-city stalwarts.