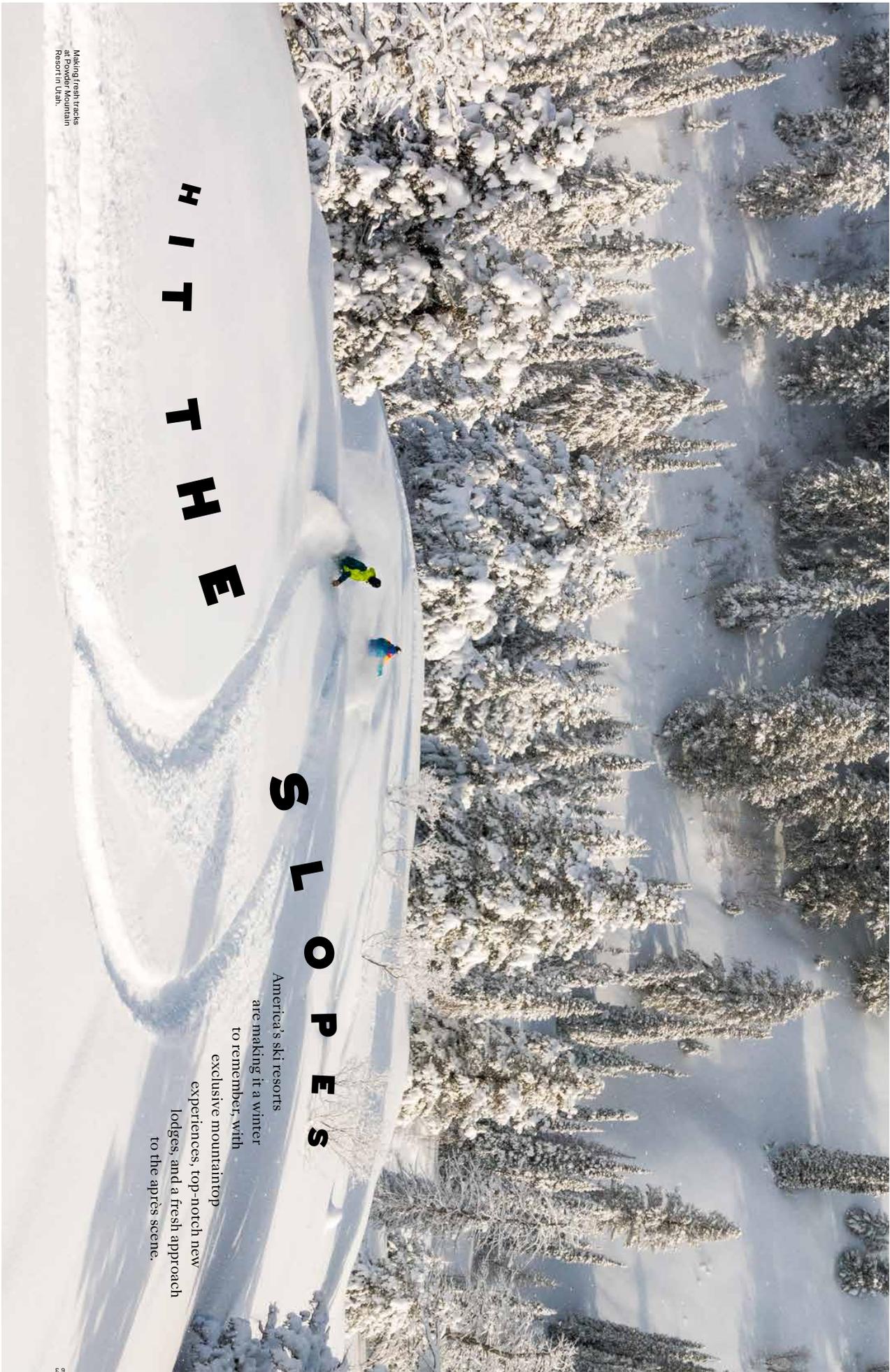


JANUARY | FEBRUARY 2021

DEPARTURES

THE
ESCAPES
ISSUE

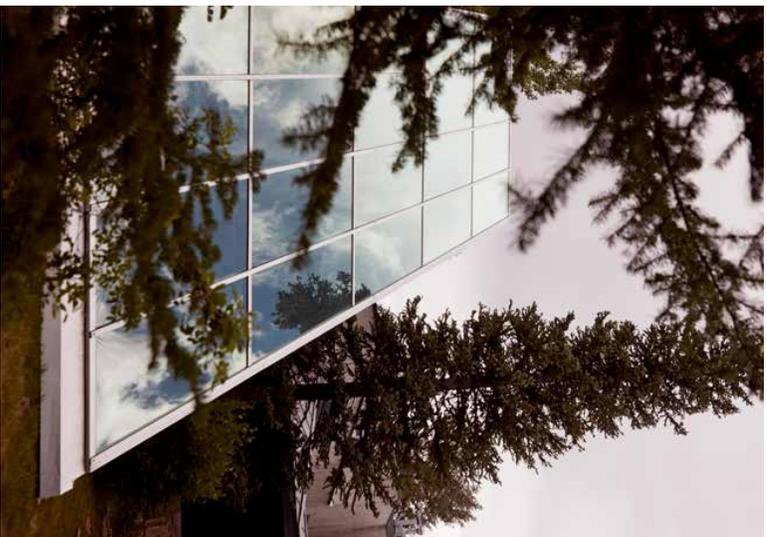




HIT THE SLOPES

America's ski resorts are making it a winter to remember, with exclusive mountaintop experiences, top-notch new lodges, and a fresh approach to the après scene.

Making fresh tracks
at Park City Mountain
Resort in Utah.



ASPEN IS STILL KING OF THE MOUNTAIN

AT CAMP KASBAH, a new resort on Bartermill Mountain, guests are welcomed not to a lobby, but to a space called “the grand tower.” The octagon-shaped room, with its polished plaster walls and black-and-white mosaic tiles, doesn’t watch over anything in particular, but it does guard something magical: an immense glass solarium, which feels like another world. Orange trees and 18-foot-tall bougainvillea hover over a long dining table surrounded by elegant French chairs, and hand-carved Moroccan daybeds are draped with Indian silk.

Though it’s just 15 minutes from downtown Aspen, Camp Kasbah (*from \$15,000 per night for up to 14 guests; campkasbah.com*) could just as easily be half a world away—say, in Marrakech or Paris. The retreat, which officially opens for fall buy-outs this month, is the work of Los Angeles–based developers Mami Vanecka and Tess Ferguson of Native Design & Development. Last year, the duo acquired the 14,000-square-foot

mansion (initially designed as a private residence by the Uruguayan architect Horacio Kawazami and completed in 1993) and filled its many spaces—including seven suites, the solarium, a fitness center, and a spa—with art and design pieces and whimsical details from around the world. In their new creation, they have crafted the perfect antidote to pent-up wanderlust, a free-spirited escape where guests are called “campers” and everything is done with a hint of playfulness and heaps of imagination.

In keeping with the theme, Kasbah’s hosts call themselves “camp rangers” (think of them as a more laid-back version of a concierge) who lead guests in a variety of activities. There’s the traditional Ukrainian egg-decorating class in the craft room, and champagne sabering lessons in the Great Room. Go for a massage upstairs in the spa, overlooking Mount Sopris, or dig through the treasures in the costume closet, which is stocked with vintage hats, scarves, and gloves, to play dress-up for the property’s themed dinners. Best of all: There’s skiing straight out the back door.

A set of African teak doors connects the solarium to the guest rooms, each of which has its own theme (the Slyph Suite, for example, features wallpaper with a stylized celestial motif), a tub for soaking, zellige tile-work, and a canopy bed draped with fabrics to look like a Berber tent. The primary suite, known as the Sanctuary, comes with its own private courtyard and a pair of marble bathtubs. Downstairs, the Enchanted

Below: Cross-country skiing on Green Mountain, in Wyoming. Opposite, from far left: The solarium at Camp Kasbah in Aspen; serving fresh with fruit in the spa; and a guest in the hotel’s themed dinners.

Forest dining room, which has a one-ton smoked-glass table and a treelike chandelier lit by lightbulbs cast as iridescent woodland creatures, is the setting for elaborate omakase and other multicourse feasts that might start with avocado and pobano chips topped with white truffles and togarashi and end with DIY ice cream sundaes. The 15-acre property is also home to plenty of space that has been left blissfully alone, including a private Nordic-skiing course—just in case the chairlifts in town don’t sound appealing.

Camp Kasbah is a refreshing new face in a ski season that might have been uncharacteristically ho-hum. And it’s not alone. In this unusual winter of social distancing, Aspen’s off-the-slope appeal has, however improbably, only become more exciting, with new openings that offer especially exclusive experiences and a low-risk social scene. There may not be any dance parties under champagne showers at Cloud 9 or packed live performances at Belly Up, but there is no shortage of places to stay and adventures to be had.

Aspen Street Lodge (*from \$30,000 per night for up to 32 guests; aspenstreetlodge.com*) is another exclusive-use property that opened this season. The nine-room, two-suite lodge—[CONTINUED ON P. 94](#) →

FOUR RESORTS WHERE THE MOUNTAINS YOURS AND YOURS ALONE

of the Rockies’ most ideal downhill conditions. Buyouts from \$15,700 for up to ten guests; [elevationexperience.com](#).

Twin Farms

The sprawling slopes of Killington may be just 30 miles away, but this Vermont resort’s network of downhill and cross-country trails is reserved for a maximum of 40 guests. Even the ascent is exclusive: In lieu of a chairlift, the property’s Ski Sherpas—high-powered snowmobiles that can seal up to nine—carry skiers to the top of the mountain. Rooms from \$2,000; [twinfarms.com](#).

Nemacolin

Ski day and night at this Pennsylvania spa resort, where only guests have access to Mystic Mountain—and they can even buy it out for an isolated day on the slopes. The three-lift peak has 25 acres of trails covered in man-made and natural snow and is illuminated for after-hours runs. Snowboarders will appreciate the multi-feature terrain park. Rooms from \$315; [nemacolin.com](#) —Devorah Lev-Tov

Scamp Ridge Lodge

Located 13 miles from Crested Butte Mountain Resort, the town of Iron, Colorado, gets an average of 450 inches of snow each year—and its peaks are only accessible to the occupants of this six-room lodge and its neighboring guest-house. Expert guides shuttle skiers via Sno-Cat to more than 1,000 acres in the West Elk range, where the wide bowls and deep powder create some

COURTESY CAMP KASBAH. PREVIOUS SPREAD: IAN MATTESSON

COURTESY BRUSH CREEK LUXURY RANCH COLLECTION



THIS WINTER, KNOW YOUR SKI ETIQUETTE

The length of the average ski is about six feet, making the slopes the perfect place to hide out—and stay socially distanced. Across the U.S., the mountain scene will look different from years past, with new rules and more space to swish and schuss the day away. Here's a primer for the season.

Before You Go

Planning is everything this winter as most resorts, including Park City and Stowe, require advance reservations and limit daily entry to avoid overcrowding. Other destinations, such as Big Sky, have developed strategies to disperse skiers throughout the resorts, giving them a more backcountry feel—but making it necessary to map out your route ahead of time. And skiers should come prepared to wear a face covering around lifts and indoors.

On the Mountain

Destinations like the Killington and Vail already had contactless tickets and touch-free ID cards, which minimized face time around chairlifts and at payment points. Now they've built more social distancing into the experience. There will be fewer opportunities to make friends on the mountain commute, as resorts prioritize personal space on lifts rather than pack them full of strangers. But there will be fewer lines to begin with thanks to faster lifts, such as Aspen Snowmass's new Big Burn Express, which climbs almost 2,000 feet in less than seven minutes. Rather than encourage indoor dining, many resorts will also offer picnic baskets filled with their most popular dishes or, as at Utah's Powder Mountain, pickup windows at each of the mountain's restaurants.

After Hours

Après-ski may be reined in this year, but it's still alive and well and, in some places, even more exclusive. At Utah's Alta Ski Area, only lodge guests are allowed into the Sitzmark Club after a day on the snow. Nearby at Montage Deer Valley, the new Empire Lounge is reserved for just a handful of diners at a time; the Park City hotel will also replace the outdoor terrace seating at its Vista Lounge with heated private-dining igloos. And at Idaho's Sun Valley Resort, the old-school ski social is making a comeback: Personal tailgate parties—well-distanced and out in the open air—have become a favorite way to close out the day. —*Kelsey Ogilvie*



Above: Horn & Carlie, the restaurant at Lone Mountain Ranch in Montana. Opposite: Downhill skiing at Big Sky Resort.

BIG SKY IS ABOUT TO BE A BIG DEAL

CAMPBELL SCHNEBELY was on her annual ski trip to Big Sky when coronavirus infections started spiking in New York City. It was early March 2020, and the Manhattan-based literary agent and her fiancé decided to hunker down in the Montana mountain town for a couple of weeks. Weeks turned to months, and by summer they stopped pretending they were going back to the big city.

"We completely shifted all life plans," says Schnebely, who now runs Big Sky's Acre Café & Cocktails with three other New York expats. "There's a real shift happening in this town, and we had an opportunity to be a part of it."

Located halfway between Bozeman and Yellowstone National Park, Big Sky has always been a refuge for movers and shakers coming in from the coasts. The allure is understandable: Montana has the third-lowest population density in the U.S., and

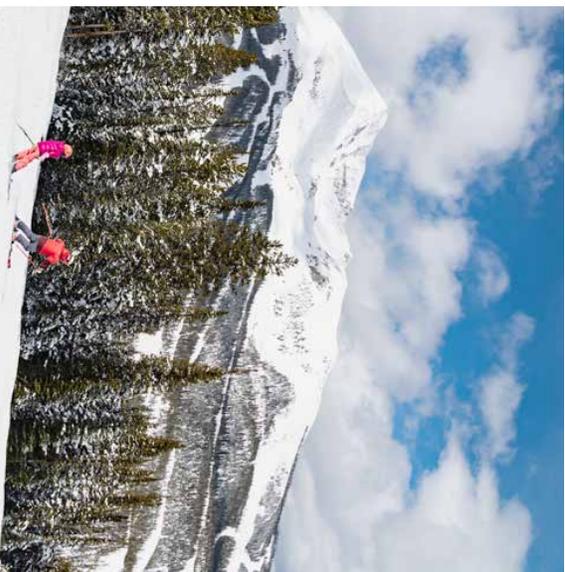
on an average day at Big Sky, there's more than an acre of terrain for every skier. All that privacy and epic mountain air have lured plenty of prominent part-time residents, including Tom Brady and Gisele Bündchen, Bill and Melinda Gates, and Justin Timberlake and Jessica Biel—all of whom have built vacation homes there. But recently, another wave of transplants has discovered the destination's charms, just as new hotels, shops, and restaurants are turning the seasonal ski resort into a year-round destination.

Though many newcomers arrived during the pandemic, Big Sky has been preparing for them since 2016, when it began a ten-year, \$150 million expansion project. As part of it, the slope-side Summit Hotel (*rooms from \$350; bigskyresort.com*)—long the only upscale option in town—has begun renovating its 213 rooms and Peaks Restaurant and added a dining terrace overlooking Lone Mountain. Later this year, it will be joined by Montage Hotels & Resorts, which is opening a ski-in/ski-out property with 150 rooms and suites and 39 residences in the exclusive Spanish Peaks Mountain Club development. One&Only Resorts is also planning a hotel, a Moonlight Basin, which is among Big Sky's most coveted addresses (along with Spanish Peaks and the Yellowstone Club, the 20-year-old private ski resort that the Bradys and Gateses call a second home).

Outside the clubs' gates and beyond the slopes, the village, about 15 minutes down the hill from the resort, has taken off too, with new art galleries, boutiques (including a handful of home shops specializing in the ubiquitous Montana-die style), restaurants, and breweries. Riverhouse BBQ, a Texas Hill Country joint, has become a local favorite, and just yonder, at the resort Lone Mountain Ranch (*rooms from \$475 per person; lonemountainranch.com*), the hipster-cowboy restaurant Horn & Carlie is the après reservation of choice. Of course, it doesn't yet rival Aspen—but that's the point, says Talley Laney, a broker at Big Sky Sotheby's International Realty. "Here people still feel like they can get in on the ground floor." Even with the recent flurry of new residents—Laney says her sales doubled from 2019 to 2020—Big Sky still has room to grow.

And then there's the mountain. With an average of 400 inches of snow a year, Big Sky has some of the best and most consistent powder conditions in the U.S.—a reassuring detail for skiers who have had winter trips spoiled by lack of precipitation in California and Colorado. Along with a renovated base lodge and more slope-side dining options, the resort has added high-efficiency Snow-Cats and chairlifts, part of an ambitious plan to be carbon-neutral by 2030.

Still, insists Schnebely, the slopes are no longer the only show in town. "Big Sky is much more than just a place to ski," she says. "The town itself is becoming a destination. It's developing its own character aside from the resort." —*Brianne Wallin*



FROM TOP: ALYSSA HENRY; JON RESNICK

“RETURN TO COSTA RICA”
JUMP

(CONTINUED FROM P. 65) former hotel—has been redesigned with French oak staircases, rift-sawn oak cabinets, and curvy Poliform furniture. It pairs resort-style perks like a heated pool and an in-house bar with the comforts of home, including an office, a game room, and a kitchen serviced by a private chef.

A few blocks away, the Gant (*rooms from \$495; gantaspen.com*) offers 120 residential-style accommodations featuring full kitchens and full service (including ski butlers). Though the property is a short distance from the Silver Queen Gondola up Aspen Mountain, guests have access to something even better this season: 300,000 acres of forested backcountry terrain accessible only by helicopter, courtesy of the hotel’s partnership with Nomad Inc. Excursions with the outfitter offer the chance to tackle up to 14,000 feet of vertical drops in the San Juan Mountains.

Aspen’s après scene is delivering something new for the times too. At the Little Nell (*rooms from \$1,232; thelittlenell.com*), the always-packed Chair 9 has been turned into a wine bar where private lounge areas can accommodate single parties of up to eight—reservations required—and a DJ safely spins downtempo tracks from behind a plexiglass partition. At the Hotel Jerome (*rooms from \$833; aubergeresorts.com*), poolside cabanas have been transformed into warming huts where guests can dig in to bowls of ramen and sip hot toddies. And if you can’t score a reservation for the hotel’s speakeasy, Bad Harriet, there’s a solution that might just top any social engagement in town: Made-to-order cocktails delivered straight to your room.—*Jen Murphy*

“THE CALL OF MERIDA”
JUMP

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