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As You Like It

NO LONGER JUST MINERS' CABINS AND SKIERS' MOTELS, PARK CITY IS A SMALL TOWN THAT SLEEPS LIKE A BIG CITY.

By Susan Reifer Ryan



Park City's silver rush began in the 1860s and lasted decades, changing the rugged Wild West town into a place of prosperity. But it's the town's early-21st-century hotel boom that is transforming it into one of the world's best ski destinations for shelter across the spectrum. True luxury? Check. Family-friendly? Sure. Hipster? Oh, yes. Good value? That too.

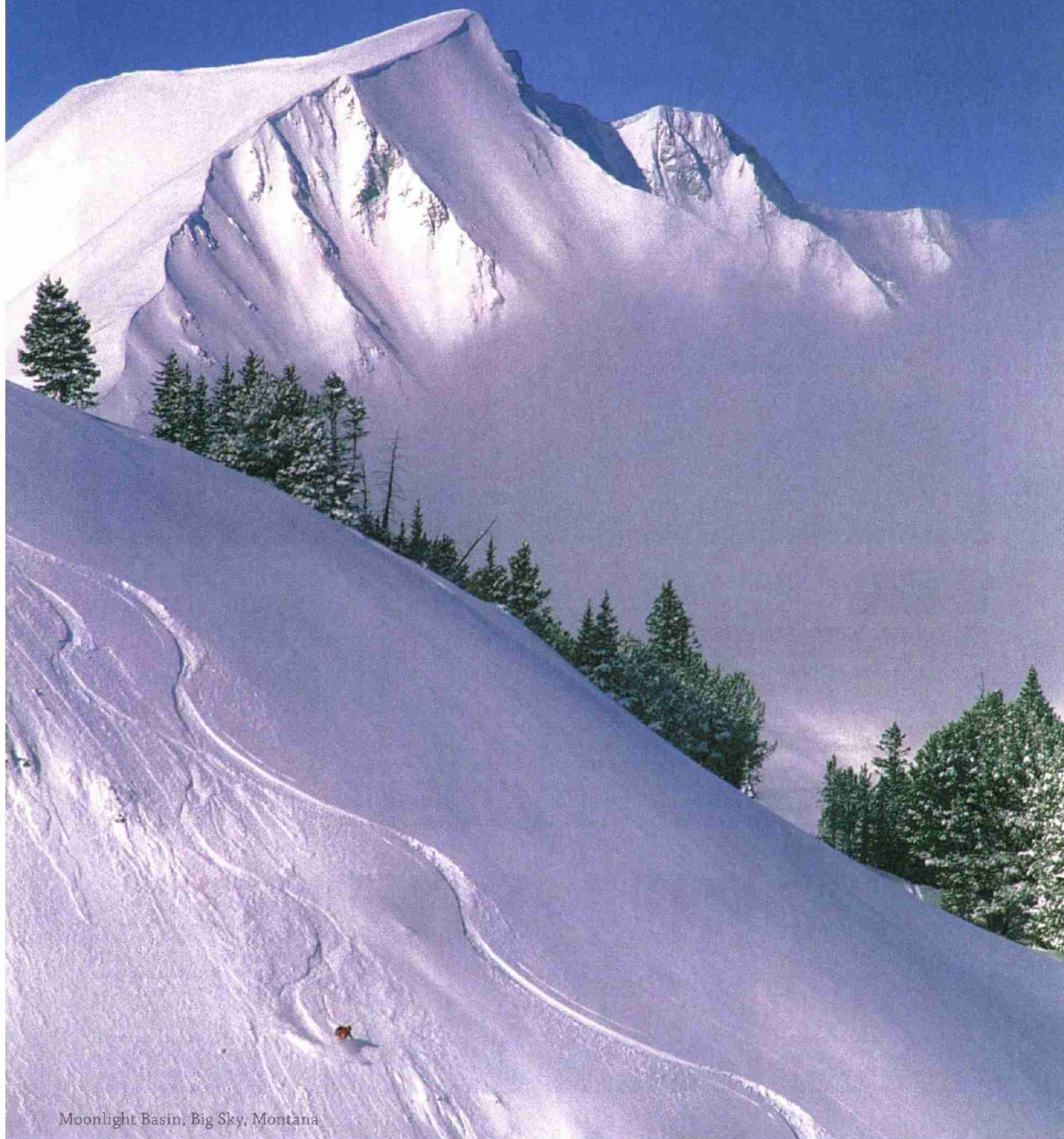
Since the 2002 Olympics, lodging has grown by 33 percent, now accommodating about 24,000 guests. Newish sleeps include Old Town's sleek Sky Lodge (soon to embark on a spa and fitness-center renovation), the sprawling, Montage and tony St. Regis (both slopeside at Deer Valley), the Hyatt Escala Lodge, Waldorf Astoria Park City, and a newly branded Hilton Grand Vacations Club (at Canyons Resort), and Kimball Junction's Newpark Hotel. Meanwhile, faithful standbys (like Old Town's sumptuous Washington School House Hotel) have been updated. And increased competition means that classics like the Goldener Hirsch and the Stein Eriksen, the latter beginning an expansion this spring, stay on top of their games. Here are three very different Park City picks.

MICHAEL SPENGLER

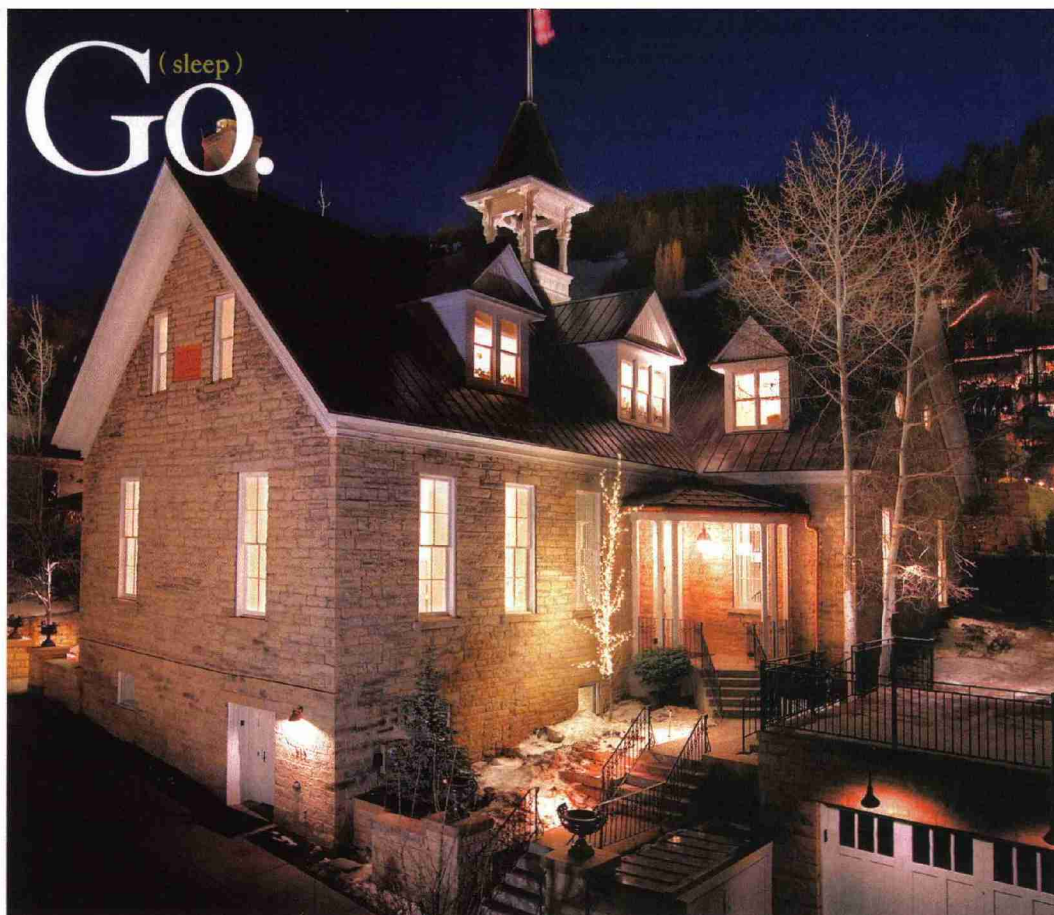


I JUST LOVE TO MAKE TURNS

and that freedom I enjoy on a pair of skis is without comparison in any other sport. You can look out on a bluebird day; the sky is cobalt and the powder snow is as deep as you want. I could live anywhere in the world, and I choose to live here in Montana, all winter long. —Warren Miller **MONTANA** WINTERMT.COM



Moonlight Basin, Big Sky, Montana



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: MICHAEL SPENGLER; COURTESY OF NEWPARK HOTEL; COURTESY OF GOLDENER HIRSCH INN

WASHINGTON SCHOOL HOUSE HOTEL » Pratesi linens are smooth to the touch. Porthole windows look onto Utah powder drifting over the rooftops of Old Town. A sterling tea service with a steaming Bodum waits on the ottoman of a Cogswell chair in an inviting dormer. The eye meanders from the smoky crystal chandelier to modern American oils and back to the view.

This 12-room luxury hotel—the latest reincarnation of an 1889 schoolhouse with chiseled limestone edifice—makes the most of its architectural inheritance. Inside, colors are white and gray, rich and light. Nine-foot-tall windows and 16-foot ceilings have been restored to full height. Wide-planked, reclaimed-oak barnwood flooring is accented with Persian rugs. Bathrooms are ice-white marble and Utah quartzite. Outside, a new pool deck and lounge feature an Olympic flame. Inside, service is a commandment. In the airy front room, chefs prepare breakfast to order, then serve wine and appetizers as skiers make their way back. Perfect timing. washingtonschoolhouse.com

tip >

Fans of Old Town's High West Distillery & Saloon, take note: A satellite branch will debut inside Terminal 2 of the Salt Lake City International Airport next summer. Maybe getting bumped isn't so bad after all.

GOLDENER HIRSCH INN

» Staying at this recently renovated, 20-room Deer Valley boutique hotel is like being transported to a luxury lodge in Austria where traditional Alps hospitality reaches its floral-painted, hand-carved, goose-downed, crackling-fired heights. The main difference: This nonsmoking *hof* is just steps from the Sterling lift. goldenerhirschnn.com



NEWPARK HOTEL & RESORT

» Practical luxury is the guiding ethos at this design-centric, family-friendly sleeper in Kimball Junction. Park City's hip big-box zone. Rooms maximize natural light and vistas, and most feature private deck hot tubs, fireplaces, and full kitchens. Indoor/outdoor pool, rec center, and nearby brewpub and bowling lanes make this a contender. newparkresort.com