

INDULGE

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Holiday IN MIAMI style!

EXPERT ADVICE FOR GIVING
THE PERFECT PRESENT

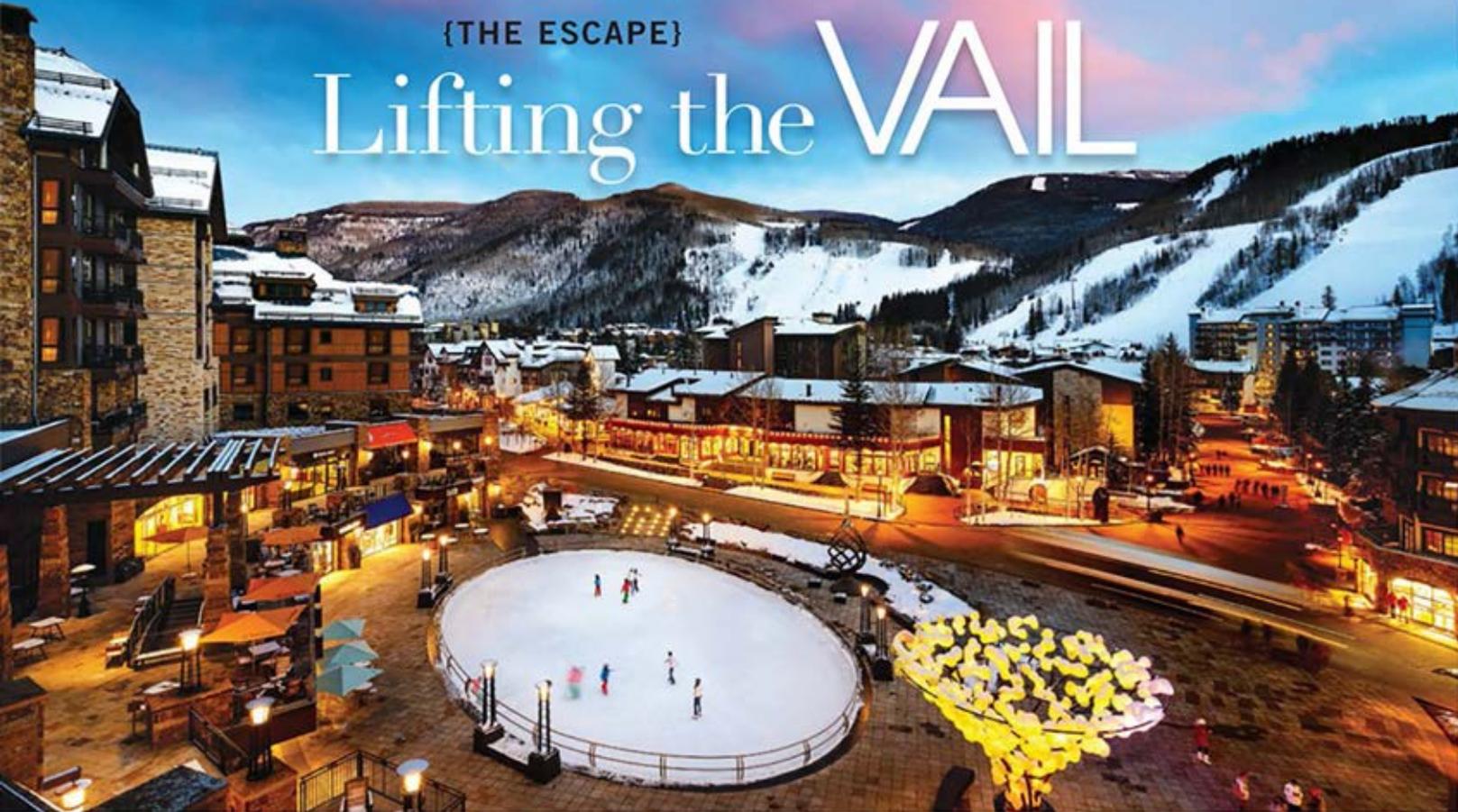
DELICIOUS INSPIRATION
FROM FIVE FABULOUS
HOME COOKS

THE SECRET TO
PULLING OFF A GREAT
COCKTAIL PARTY

SARAH ARISON

She tops our list of the fresh faces
energizing philanthropy in the Magic City

{THE ESCAPE}
Lifting the VAIL



A town, mountain and ski resort all rolled into one, this alpine destination is among winter's hottest tickets.

It's no secret that Miamians have turned Aspen into their Hamptons in the Rocky Mountains. But make no mistake: Vail, too, has a lot going for it, which is why our city's ski- and snowboard-obsessed circles have joined the throngs of South Americans, Mexicans and Texans flocking to one of the largest ski bases anywhere. They're so committed that direct flights operate from Miami to Vail's Eagle County Airport. The new, six-passenger Avanti Express Lift (#2), which takes skiers from the Lionshead area to mid-mountain, only sweetens these slopes.

BAVARIAN BEDTIME

Located in Lionshead, a Bavarian-wonderland base that's a short walk west of Vail Village, the **Arrabelle at Vail Square**, a RockResort, sits steps from Eagle Bhan Gondola and Alderhof Ice Rink. Its developers spared no expense, investing more than \$1 million in carved stonework and stenciling and a clock tower that chimes hundreds of tunes, among other exquisite details.

Sixty-one rooms and suites juxtapose décor inspired by Biedermeier, an aesthetic movement from the first half of the 19th century, with modern conveniences like LED lighting and iPads loaded with the property's app. After capturing tricks and terrain on complimentary GoPro cameras, kids of all ages can recuperate in the rooftop heated pool and hot tubs. Need even more work? Besides massages, the 9,000-square-foot spa has gained a following for its fruit and spice body peel and wrap with facial-grade products. Spray tans solve snow-enhanced pasty skin. For longer stays, 21 unique private residences offer different experiences: Viking appliances for cooks, fireplaces for cuddlers and laundry rooms for large broods. Design is all over the place: the four-bedroom Unit 682 features wood panels in silver and dove gray that give the illusion of a luxe cabin. The sprawling, five-bedroom Unit 529 is booked solid thanks to mountain views from its enormous sectional sofa and 10-seat dining table. Or sleep on the mountain in its Game Creek Chalet.



Winter wonderland: Vail Mountain's ski slopes and Solaris Plaza's ice rink; a group lesson with Vail Ski School.



Clockwise from left: the Sebastian Vail, a Timbers Resort, boasts an art collection; Sonnenalp Hotel, an Alpine-inspired property with cozy charm; whitefish tiradito from Matsuhisa; baby octopus at Mountain Standard.



The Sebastian Vail, a Timbers Resort, trends more Miami than Alpine. Miamians, who are used to being surrounded by art in commercial settings, feel like they're back home with original paintings by famous Mexican muralist Manuel Felguérez and icicle sculptures by Seattle glass blower Scott Chambers.

Magic City natives will also take to the hotel's tapas restaurant, Leonora, where Serrano ham and cheese *croquetas* make a familiar appearance on the menu. And they'll especially love Frost Bar, which not only claims the largest selection of Scotches around, but also plants 11 mint varieties for *mojitos*. The resort's signature Mexican hot chocolate is all the pastry chef's genius though. Pour hot cocoa over a chocolate sphere so it melts to release gourmet surprises we wouldn't dare divulge. Renovated a year ago with a cozy contemporary look, the hotel offers 84 rooms and 23 suites. New room hangtags offer ski lifesavers like bubble baths, lip balm and hand warmers. There's every amenity to be desired (a spa and four hot tubs!), but the Battle Mountain Kids Camp seals the deal for most families. Its programming far exceeds skiing and is key for nipping boredom in the bud on day three of vacation. Everyone sick of skiing? The adventure concierge can arrange a slew of other activities like moonlit snowshoeing and tubing.

Sonnenalp Hotel lies on the opposite end of the spectrum for its Old World luxury that seems straight out of the Swiss Alps (in reality, straight out of Ofterschwang, Germany, home of its sister property). But that doesn't mean the boutique hotel's stuck in the dark ages. Its Ludwig restaurant's whole menu, down to the salad croutons, climbed onto the gluten-free bandwagon a long time ago. Burn off homemade tagliatelle on the slopes, and experience hearty German-influenced Colorado cuisine by way of oven-roasted elk rack with chestnuts and red cabbage. A portion of its 112 balconied suites and 15 rooms has been renovated with hardwood floors and new furniture to complement handmade Bavarian pieces. Gas log fireplaces



thaw frozen feet and bathrooms feature heated marble floors. Dip into Deutschland at the 10,000-square-foot spa's heated indoor/outdoor pool. But the warmest spot in town may be around the relaxation cove's huge, crackling fire. A lemongrass and eucalyptus-scented oxygen bar alleviates altitude sickness.

BRING YOUR ALPPETITE

Mountain Standard is a restaurant that brings in every strata, from CEOs to ski lift operators, thanks to its upscale casual direction. The wood-fire rotisserie and grill touch every dish, even if it's just to char lemons for oysters or tomatoes for halibut tartare and bloody Marys. Famished skiers can easily finish hefty portions of buffalo and beef rib-eyes. Just steps from the restaurant's front door, the roaring Gore Creek also provides culinary inspiration. Executive chef partner Paul Anders fillets and serves sustainable, Idaho-farmed freshwater trout with a frothy almond milk foam and green bean and toasted farro salad. For dessert, slick with the campfire spirit by sharing a slice of s'more pie topped with torched marshmallows.

This isn't Anders's—or his restaurant group's—first rodeo. Right above Mountain Standard is their Sweet Basil, a 38-year-old mainstay that pioneered farm-to-table eating here (not to mention

a nonsmoking policy and wines by the glass, innovative concepts back in those days.) Just in time for ski season, they have revamped the whole operation including interiors, uniforms and tabletop settings. Updated menus focus on small plates like Mason jars layered with preserved peaches, Hudson Valley foie gras and duck liver paté. The Peruvian ceviche's Pacific albacore tuna, whose raw state has a similar flavor to ahi tuna, exemplifies Sweet Basil's commitment to sustainable seafood. Leche de tigre sauce and pickled carrots give it a sweet and tart yin and yang. But they didn't dare mess with the Myers's rum-soaked sticky toffee pudding, joking it's the McDonald's of desserts with "over one million served."

Crespelle's relocation to the top of Bridge Street makes the gluten-free creperie the perfect pit stop before or after riding Gondola 1. Regulars can still wolf down a gooey colto ham and Gruyere combination but a new "bowl" option helps those who are watching their waistlines. Stuff either with fun fillings like bahn mi or the Rabbit Food's quinoa and seasonal produce. Cold-pressed juices also were added in the move.

This winter, its hip partners who have worked for decades at village restaurants, from Kelly Liken to Larkspur, are opening **Commissary**. Small plates churn Euro classics through the Brooklyn fare factory—pine-smoked nettle pistou

the life



Crazy Mountain Brewing, Vail Valley's first brewery; Wilco performing at the annual Vail Snow Daze in December; Colorado rack of lamb from Elway's in the Lodge at Vail, a RockResort. Sweet Mana's candles in exclusive Vail scents are available at the Four Seasons' Spa.



paired with cracklins, and foie gras pistachio cannoli, whose loquat marmalade and smoked sage may even surpass the borough's boundary-pushing attempts. And don't forget to drink your vegetables, which is easy when they're infused and simmered in vodka and consommé for the Commissary Mary.

The celebrity chef craze made its way to the mountains at **Matsuhisa**, a Los Angeles-based chain from the same chef restaurateur behind the Nobu empire. Didn't reserve ahead? The 10-seat sushi bar and 14-seat bar are first come first served. Besides his hits (black miso cod), current crowd pleasers include Japanese wagyu beef sizzled on 450-degree salt rocks and, for dessert, green tea puree and condensed milk poured over vanilla ice cream and shaved ice, which somehow sells like hot cakes on the coldest nights.

Warm up at **Yeti's Grind**. Its husband and wife founders source Corvus Coffee and Sweet Bloom Coffee in Denver, but the real secret lies in a local dairy's organic milk. Eschew standard drinks that you can get back home for their specialties: the Cocomel, a caramel and coconut-flavored latte with a pinch of pink Himalayan sea salt; and the chocolatey Lonestar latte spiced with cinnamon and cayenne pepper. White chocolate peppermint mocha recreates the holidays in a mug.

Since it's hard to wrap your head around fall flavors in hurricane season, get your fix on vacation. The burnt orange color of **Crazy Mountain Brewing's** Rocky Mountain High Pumpkin Pie Ale comes from 200 pounds of the state-grown squash. Tour and try more beers at Vail Valley's first production brewery in nearby Edwards.

One can't come to Alpine country without sampling fondue. **Elway's**, a steakhouse at the Lodge at Vail, puts a Western spin on the decadent dish with Colorado lamb and green chile cheese.

CAPES & CANDLES

Perch boutique partner Laurie O'Connell brings her A-game from years in marketing at J.Crew and Calvin Klein in New York. Discerning patrons who travel the world (like part-time Vail resident and American World Cup alpine ski racer Lindsey Vonn, and former Saks Fifth Avenue president Marigay McKee) shop 100 women's brands for winter must-haves like Golden Goose sneakers and mocha heather-hued, fringed capes from 360 Cashmere. Lauren Wood, an artisan in Telluride, Colo., knits hats and scarves in thick wool cashmere blends. With its mining heritage, Colorado is prime country for jewelry designers. Denver-based Bloom's lariats and charm necklaces sparkle with garnets, pyrite and black kyanite.

After customers constantly requested kids' clothes, Perch expanded with Skipper & Scout. Shop mini-me collections from Stella McCartney, Marc Jacobs and Milly for newborns to tweens. Few moms and aunties can resist Oh Baby!'s star wands and T-shirts with antler appliques.

Luca Bruno, a native of Turin, Italy, who moved to Vail 21 years ago, worked for Armani and Ralph Lauren Purple Label before founding his namesake boutique in the early 2000s. His ski boot-wearing clientele pounds its river-rock floors in search of the latest Missoni knits. Men wait all year to buy a wardrobe's worth of his private label's cashmere sweaters and hybrid anorak/blazers. A nylon puffer vest reverses to reveal cashmere and deer skin. **Luca Bruno Due**, his second store down the street, caters to contemporary brands such as James Perse and Anatomie by Miami designers Kate and Shawn Boyer.

For Sweet Mana's hand-poured, body butter soy candles in exclusive Vail scents, you'll have to visit **Four Seasons'** spa boutique. The signature fragrance blends juniper and balsam, while Vail Ale smells of hops, citrus and wildflowers.

WINTER GAMES & GALAS

If exploring 5,200 acres of ski and snowboard terrain doesn't occupy every minute, winter packs in more sports and entertainment. The inaugural **America's Opening** celebrates the season with a series of live concerts, ski races and a Black Diamond Ball, from December 1 through 6. Check the music lineup for **Vail Snow Daze's** free concerts in Vail Village at Solaris during mid-December. Bridge Street transforms into Bourbon Street for **CarniVail**, another new event, in early February; its organizers promise a Mardi Gras parade and crawfish boil. Snowboarding fans should mark their calendars for the 34th annual **Burton U.S. Open**, from February 29 to March 5. Expect Olympic-level and headliner performances on and off the slopes. **TEXT BY REBECCA KLEINMAN**

