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KERI RUSSELL SOCAL SWEETHEART
BREAKS THROUGH TO SERIOUS STARDOM
PARTY GUIDE: WHAT TO WEAR FROM SILVER LAKE TO TAHOE
THE INS AND OUTS OF WEST COAST ETIQUETTE

DECEMBER 2007 \$4.99



C travel

Deer Valley reserves its 2,026 acres on some 99 runs for skiers and does not allow snowboarding.

DELUXE DEER VALLEY

From full-service slopes to luxury lodges, Utah's winter wonderland is fit for the whole family BY MELISSA BIGGS BRADLEY

My family first started skiing in Deer Valley close to 20 years ago. I'll never forget how my father—who had enrolled us, the four sisters, in ski school on the East Coast as toddlers, then took us on ski vacations every year in Europe—described the Utah resort.

"It's so indulgent," he said. "They have Kleenex boxes in the lift lines, and little ski fairies swoop out of the trees to help you up if you fall down." The last bit was a mild exaggeration, but Deer Valley was the first resort in the world to build tissue boxes into the lift lines, to limit daily lift tickets so the slopes wouldn't get too crowded and to post ski valets in the parking lots and hosts around the mountain. It probably also has the highest percentage of groomed trails of any resort, but my family continued to return because no other mountain manages to balance serious skiing, creature comforts and family-friendliness so well. Taos, Alta and Zürs may have tougher skiing, and Aspen and Courchevel better shopping and dining, but children can seem tolerated, not truly embraced. Other spots do a good job of catering to families, but in doing so, they often force a diet of hot dogs and pizza on children and adults alike. Deer Valley understands parents can love skiing with their kids and also relish good food and wine at lunch.

The resort of Deer Valley was founded to bring first-class-hotel-quality service to the entire ski experience, but it was all crafted as somewhat of a high-end secret. In the '90s, a number of wealthy denizens bought houses on the mountain and invited friends who then became repeat visitors. Vice President Al Gore and his family could stand in the lift lines without being bothered—no photographers and no fuss. Not until the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City did the resort attract the attention of a wider circle. In 2005, it was voted the best ski resort in North America by readers of *SKI* magazine; it was recently declared No. 1 again for 2007-2008.

One of its distinct advantages has always been how easy the resort is to reach: There are many flights into Salt Lake City, and then it's a 50-minute highway drive, depending on the



Deer Valley Lodging's Paintbrush cabin

road conditions. Even in snowstorms, the airport and the highway almost always remain open.

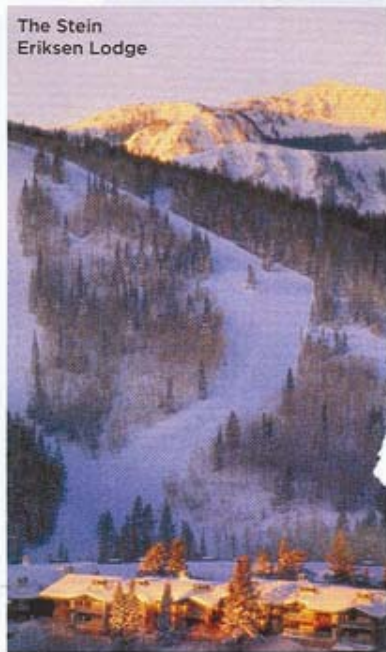
A new crop of luxury hotels, including one from **Montage** and another from **St. Regis**, as well as expensive residence clubs, including **Talisker**, are in the works to raise the hospitality bar. The **St. Regis Resort & Residences** was slated to open for this winter season but will most likely launch next year instead.

For this ski season, which begins on December 8 and runs through April 13, 2008, there are major on-mountain improvements, including the new high-speed quad chairlift, Lady Morgan Express, which will add more than 200 ski-able acres.

Ever since Norwegian Olympic gold medalist **Stein Eriksen** opened his eponymous lodge in 1982, it has been the top address on the mountain for those seeking a classic alpine-resort experience. There's always a fire blazing in the lobby amid soaring rock walls, a copper chandelier and a large elk



Deer Valley gets an average of 300 inches of snowfall a year



The Stein Eriksen Lodge



Goldener Hirsch Inn

NO OTHER MOUNTAIN BALANCES SERIOUS SKIING, CREATURE COMFORTS AND FAMILY-FRIENDLINESS SO WELL



PAINTBRUSH: COURTESY DEER VALLEY LODGING

THE CLIST

THE BEST OF DEER VALLEY

C combed the slopes for insider picks throughout the Valley. From door-to-door rentals to reservations-only dining, Deer Valley is at your service.

■ **Skis on the Run** offers full-service ski rental delivery and pick up, plus all the basics (down to socks). 435-940-0744; skisontherun.com.

■ Steak and fine wine lists at **Cellars** at members-only Club Lespri. 435-645-9696; clublespri.com.

■ **Artichokes & Co.**'s Holly Addi for floral design. 801-474-2784; artichokesandcompany.com.

■ The **Deer Valley Ski School** coaches all ages, all levels. 435-645-6648; deervalley.com.



■ Sundance Resort's **Zoom** for lunch with family. 435-649-9108; zoomparkcity.com.

■ **White Pine Touring and Homestead Resort** for cross country skiing. 435-649-8710; whitepinetouring.com; 888-327-7220; homesteadresort.com.

■ Stay at the **Stein Eriksen Lodge** for the ultimate ski-in/ski-out, spa and brunch buffet experience. 435-649-3700; steinlodge.com.

■ **Blind Dog Grill** for great sushi and steak. 435-655-0800; blinddoggrill.com.



■ Watch the Olympians train and then take a luge ride at **Utah Olympic Park**. 435-658-4200; olymparks.com.

■ **Grappa Italian Cafe** for romantic dining. 435-645-0636; grapparestaurant.com.

■ **Chloe Lane** stocks the latest jeans. 435-645-9888; mychloelane.com.

■ Lunch mid-mountain at Silver Lake Lodge's **Royal Street Cafe**. 435-645-6724; deervalley.com.

■ **Cole Sports** for high-end ski wear from Prada Sport and Pucci (pictured). 435-649-4601; colesport.com.



Wahso

head that hangs over the mantel. Valets ready ski equipment for guests in the latest ski fashions, then steer them to the hot chocolate and cider service when they come off the slopes. From \$500, 435-649-3700; steinlodge.com.

Just down the slope from Stein sits **Goldener Hirsch Inn**, a 20-room, European-style chalet. Its namesake hotel in Salzburg, Austria, is famous not only for hosting the stars of the Salzburg Music Festival but also for its gourmet restaurant. This outpost has equally delicious food and a charming Tyrolean aesthetic that verges on Heidi-esque, but it works for the setting. An antler chandelier hangs in the lobby, as do old-fashioned snowshoes. It is run like many family-owned places in the Alps with a young European staff of a formal but friendly demeanor. From \$279, 435-649-7770; goldenerhirschinn.com.

With its family draw, the majority of Deer Valley's visitors rent condos or houses. In fact, **Deer Valley Central Reservations** (800-558-DEER) allows booking private houses or condos through a central phone number or its website, and **ResortQuest** (resortquest.com) and **Mountain Reservations** (mtnres.com) offer condos and houses in Deer Valley with housekeeping service.

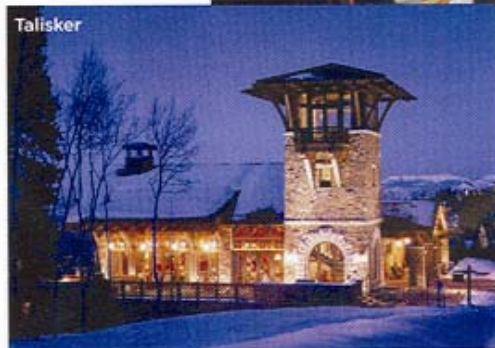
No matter where you stay, the lunch scene at Deer Valley resembles those at European resorts more so than American ski mountain counterparts. There are some large lodges with cafeterias, but there are many gourmet restaurants that require reservations for three courses and impressive wine lists. For dinner, it's best to head into Park City, and it's essential to reserve far in advance during peak season. The hottest tables to book this year:

Mustang, Wahso, Riverhorse and Chimayo—all of which are located on Park City's Main Street.

Mixing culture with skiing, a popular time to visit Deer Valley is during **Sundance Film Festival** (Jan. 17-27; sundance.org). Tickets for screenings don't come easy, but a certain number are reserved for locals. Many residents secure tickets to share, and savvy concierges can often wrangle passes.

Last year, Dad tested out Deer Valley again, this time with nine grandchildren in tow.

The verdict: The younger generation loves it just as much as the first two. ●



Talisker