

THE CONNOISSEUR

NORTH AMERICA'S SKI SEASON SHORT LIST

With reports that this winter's El Niño phenomenon will be the strongest it's been in 50 years, it's anyone's guess which mountains Mother Nature will bless with skiable conditions. Regardless, there's plenty to do both on and off the mountain this season. DEPARTURES canvassed the top resorts in the United States and Canada to discover this winter's most exciting news. (For skiing further afield, in Japan, see "Title TK," page 00.) From newly accessible terrain at Jackson Hole to a destination farm-to-table restaurant minutes from Killington, Vermont, there's plenty to appeal this season, no matter what the weather brings. —Jen Murphy

COLORADO

Aspen and Snowmass

The **St. Regis Aspen Resort** (rooms from \$599; 315 E. Dean St.; 970-920-3300; stregisaspen.com) has a new altitude concierge who provides guest rooms with oxygen machines. The **Viceroy Snowmass** (rooms from \$225; 130 Wood Rd.; 970-923-8000; viceroyhotelsandresorts.com) has started offering ski-in/ski-out spa services, while **The Little Nell** (rooms from \$370; 675 E. Durant Ave.; 970-920-4600; thelittlenell.com) is now catering diners in a mining cabin at T-Lazy-7 Ranch.

The St. Regis Aspen Resort



Telluride

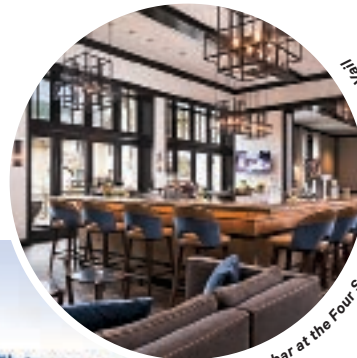
Fat bikes—which have wide rims and extra-large tires—are the hottest winter toys. **Hotel Telluride's** Snow Bike & Brew package includes guided rides along snowy single-track trails, with stops at Telluride Brewing Company and Telluride Distilling Company. *From \$1,500, including a three-night stay; 199 N. Cornet St.; 866-468-3501; thehoteltelluride.com.*

Vail and Beaver Creek

The new **White Carpet Club** (\$150 per day; beavercreek.com), in Beaver Creek Village, has boot dryers and a concierge for lift tickets and dinner reservations. German beers are on tap at the just-debuted **Bier** hall at the **Park Hyatt Beaver Creek** (Rooms from \$265; 136 E. Thomas Pl.; 970-949-1234; hyatt.com). **Remedy**, the bar that recently opened at the **Four Seasons Resort & Residences Vail** (Rooms from \$695; 1 Vail Rd.; 970-477-8600; fourseasons.com), serves pre-Prohibition cocktails.



Head-Line Mountain Holiday's heli-ice-cave adventure in Whistler, Canada



The Remedy bar at the Four Seasons Resort & Residences Vail

CANADA

British Columbia

Hardcore skiers can tackle endless terrain with **Canadian Mountain Holiday's** Nomads trips. The experience pairs a group with two guides and a private helicopter that can access the far reaches of the Bugaboos, Revelstoke, Bobbie Burns, Galena, and K2. This season's new base is a recently renovated lodge in Galena, or guests can also choose to stay at Halcyon Hot Springs resort. *From \$86,760 for a four-day trip with up to ten people; 800-661-0252; canadianmountainholidays.com.*

Whistler

Helicopters aren't just for skiing. **Head-Line Mountain Holidays**, a new luxury adventure outfitter, drops guests at backcountry hot springs and takes them to caves to explore the blue labyrinth in Pemberton Ice Cap. (For more on Whistler, see "Story TK," page 00). *From \$1,300 per person based on four people; 604-902-6415; headlinemountainholidays.com.*



The Waldorf
Astoria
Park City

ALASKA

Juneau

Ski fresh lines, stand-up paddleboard past calving glaciers, and hike on Admiralty Island aboard the SV *Arcturus*. New outfitter **Adventure Flow** offers three-to-nine-day Sail, Soak and Adventure voyages for up to six guests. Captain and crew navigate while a chef prepares fresh-caught crab and a photographer shoots the action. *From \$300 per person; adventureflow.us.*

UTAH

Park City

The big news this winter is the merger of Park City Mountain Resort and the Canyons to create the U.S.'s largest ski resort. New owner Vail Resorts invested \$50 million in the 7,300-acre megaresort. Skiers can refuel on hobo stew and s'mores at **Miners Camp** (parkcitymountain.com), a new 500-seat restaurant at the base of Silverlode lift. The après libers at **Park City Waldorf Astoria** (rooms from \$450; 2100 Frostwood Dr.; 435-647-5500; parkcitywaldorfastoria.com) will arrange a cocktail kit and cheese-and-charcuterie spread in guests' rooms.

IDAHO

Sun Valley

The ski resort has traditionally been viewed as harder to access than other U.S. destinations. That's no longer true. Direct flights have increased 46 percent in the last three years. The iconic **Sun Valley Lodge** welcomes guests with a fresh look after a multimillion-dollar renovation and expansion; book a white-cloud aromatherapy massage at the lodge's new 20,000-square-foot spa. *Rooms from \$330; 1 Sun Valley Rd.; 800-786-8259; sunvalley.com.*

WYOMING

Jackson Hole

Climbing 1,650 vertical feet, the new Teton quad lift allows skiers to access an area of 200 acres, half of which was previously only accessible by hiking. The new stay in town is **Hotel Jackson**, whose 58 rooms have reclaimed-barn-wood walls and gas fireplaces. Warm up in the library lounge with a Wyoming Campfire: coffee, hot chocolate, Bailey's, Kahlua, and whiskey with a toasted marshmallow. *Rooms from \$330; 120 N. Glenwood; 307-733-2200; hoteljackson.com.*

VERMONT

Stowe

Powder snobs often turn up their noses at skiing in the East, but last year Vermont saw the most snowfall in the continental U.S. Stowe Mountain Resort has added family attractions, including an ice rink and an adventure center.

Field Guide, a new boutique hotel ten minutes from the slopes, has 30 rooms with organic wood headboards and nature-inspired wallpaper. Request the Trail Suite, which sleeps eight and has a loft area, deck, and fireplace. *Rooms from \$260; Trail Suite from \$340; 802-253-8088; fieldguidestowe.com.*

Killington

The dining scene around Killington has always been lackluster, until Kevin Lasko, a former chef at New York City's Park Avenue, opened the **Backroom**. Located behind the Pittsfield General Store, the restaurant has a dinner-party atmosphere. A cocktail hour is followed by three courses that might include slow-roasted salmon with chard, faro, and beets. There is only one seating on Friday and Saturday nights so it's smart to book ahead. *\$45 per person; 802-770-4357; thebackroomvt.com.*



Hotel Jackson's library



Stowe Mountain Resort