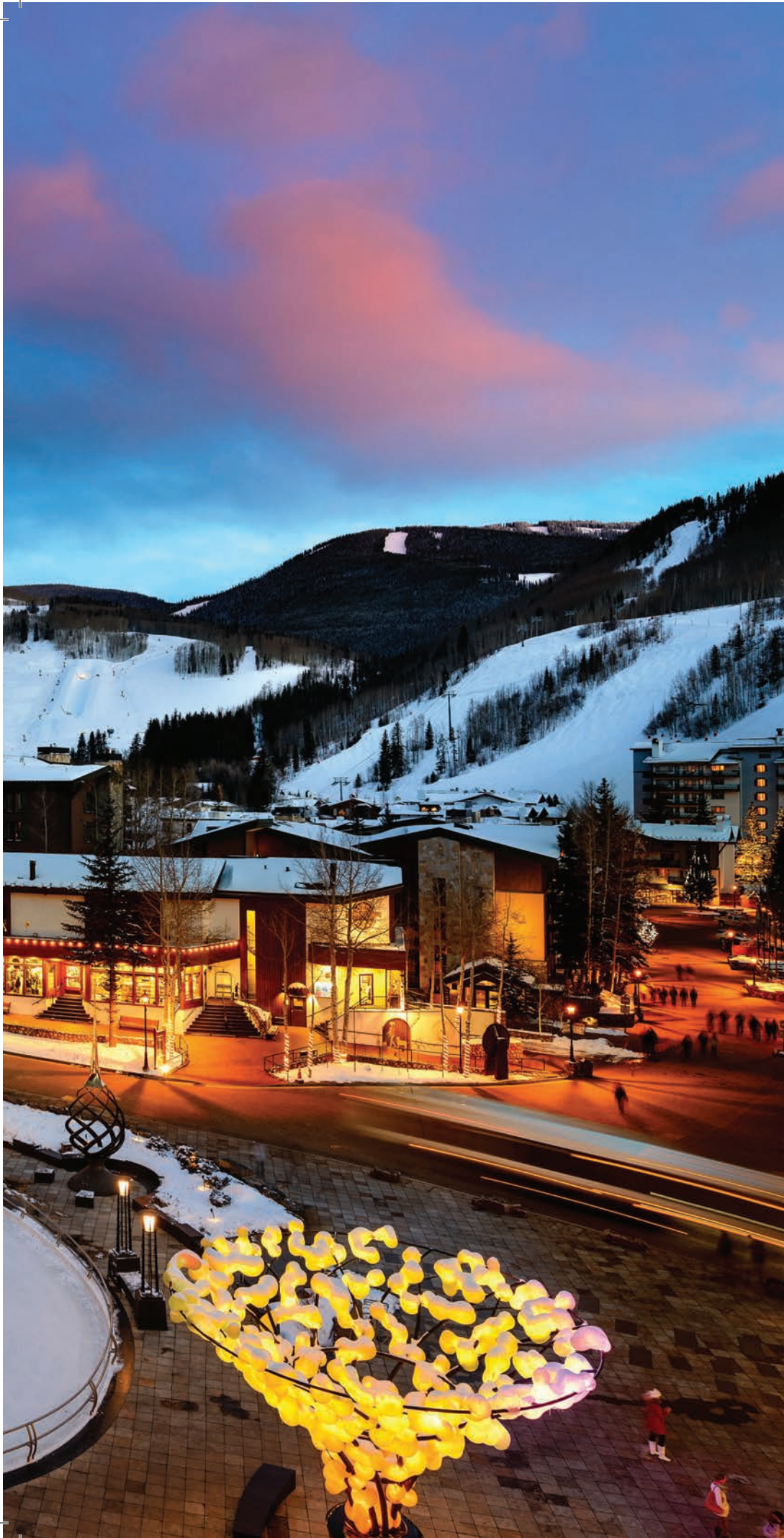


| travel

Ready! Jet Set! Go!

WE'VE FOUND THE LATEST
TRENDS TO INDULGE IN—AND
THE BEST PLACES TO STAY, WINE,
DINE, AND RELAX—AT THESE
FOUR LUXE DESTINATIONS.

Solaris Residences in Vail Village.



EAT: VAIL, COLO.

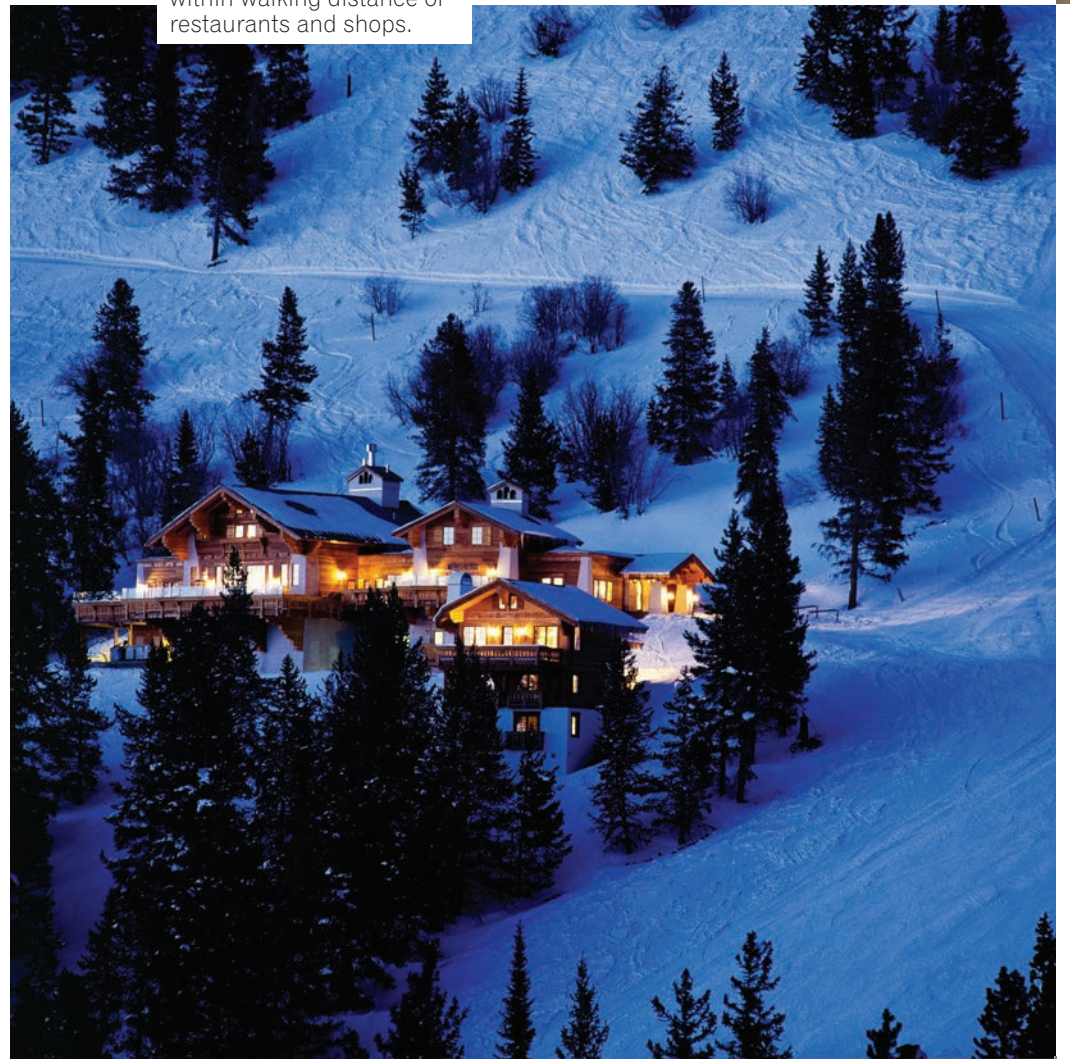


The Solaris Residences are within walking distance of restaurants and shops.

If you're a skier or mountain biker, you know that the town of Vail, Colo. is considered one of the top summer and winter destinations in the country. Vail Mountain celebrated its 50th anniversary last year, debuting its ultra high-tech Gondola One, the fastest in North America, all while having invested more than \$2 billion in improvements over the last eight years. But Vail has much more to offer visitors than fresh powder and acres of skiable and hikeable terrain. It's also a foodie's fantasyland with chefs now utilizing Colorado's once-underwhelming ingredients on their menus, making the beautiful Rocky Mountain landscape here what you go for and the Rocky Mountain cuisine what you go back for.

WHERE TO STAY

Vail is huge in terms of a ski town, so you have plenty of options when it comes to lodging. And public transportation is completely free, so getting around is a breeze. The ultra-swanky Solaris Residences (www.solarisvail.com) are located in the heart of Vail Village and within walking distance to restaurants and shops. It offers studios to six-bedroom penthouses; rates vary depending on season, but start at \$785 for winter season. The Four Seasons Vail Resort (www.fourseasons.com/vail) also offers standard guest rooms, suites, and





Clockwise from top: Restaurant Kelly Liken's Bar, Sweet Basil's Sticky Toffee Pudding, Elways' Dungeness Crab Cakes, Sweet Basil's Tuna Tartar, Sweet Basil's Tomato Tower, Burgers from the Four Seasons' Burger Bar, and Elways' Sauteed Corn.



private residences in Vail Village if you prefer a more traditional hotel stay.

WHAT TO KNOW

There's so much to do in Vail you can vacation here and never put on a pair of skis (why would you, though?). Touring the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens is a must—even if there's snow. It's the world's highest botanical garden and is named in honor of former first lady Betty Ford for her contributions to the area. Of course, if you plan to be on the slopes for opening day on Nov. 22, you'll probably want to book some recovery time at The Vitality Center at Vail Mountain Lodge. Go for one of the signature treatments like the Epicurean's Body Facial, which starts off with a grape seed and papaya body polish followed by a full body massage. You can also warm up in the sauna, rejuvenate with a morning yoga session or detox all of those diners with a long sit in the steam room.

WHERE TO DINE

You probably don't think of Colorado when you think of fresh produce and local ingredients. But that's beginning to change. And one of the newest hotspots in Vail Village at the forefront of

utilizing local ingredients is Mountain Standard. It's from the same owners as Sweet Basil—a longtime favorite in Vail since 1977. Executive chef Paul Anders helms the kitchens of both restaurants (they're located in the same building overlooking Gore Creek) but the similarities end there. Sweet Basil's menu focuses on classical fine dining but Mountain Standard is totally low key. Glassware is recycled wine bottles and chairs are made of recycled plastic Coca-Cola bottles. But the main element here is wood: Walls and flooring are made of reclaimed spruce, and most food is cooked on a wood-fired rotisserie. Share a range of starters and small plates: We love the whiskey braised pork belly, Colorado beef carpaccio, coal-roasted olives, and yellowfin tuna crudo. Pair these with a "special sauce" (cocktail) like the W.U.P.E. (Cabo Wabo Repodado with lime and blood orange San Pellegrino) or one of several Colorado draft beers.

If you're looking for cool cocktails (and great food), head to three-time James Beard nominee Kelly Liken's eponymous restaurant. The menu focuses on seasonal Colorado ingredients like lamb, elk, and bison, but the "bar chefs" here are mad scientists that concoct unusual—and outstanding—signature cocktails like Kelly's

Original Tomato Consommé Martini with Cap-Rock Vodka and crystal clear Colorado tomato essence; and the Colorado Campfire (pine nut-infused Breckenridge Bourbon, grilled Palisade peaches, and cold-smoked ice cubes).

After a long day on the mountain, you might just want a big old burger, and when that's the craving, call the Four Seasons Resort Vail and book the Back of the House Burger Bar. This super casual table is located in the kitchen at Flame restaurant where executive chef Jason Harrison has created a fun menu with massive (like you-have-to-eat-it-with-a-fork massive) burgers like the Big Mamba (wagyu patty with egg, mushrooms, mixed peppers, house gruyere cheese, and chipotle aioli), the Columbine (fried chicken sandwiched between two bacon, green onion, and cheddar waffles) and the Grizzly Peak (Skuna salmon with relish and avocado). Did we mention these were massive? The menu at BOH also features adult milkshakes—think creamsicle (Stoli O vodka and housemade vanilla ice cream), birthday cake (cake vodka and housemade cake batter ice cream), and black forest (cherries, Grey Goose Cherry Noir with housemade chocolate ice cream)—so save room if you can. —Sarah Gleim