

VAIL: Under 'The Mountain' lies a European village
By **Steve Winston**

...continued

(300 days of sunshine a year), our scenery, our dining and shopping options, our outdoor recreational opportunities—and our ambiance—meeting attendees take away a very special experience.”

The brand-new Vail Plaza Hotel & Club, for example, is a true five-star “experience,” with 100 guest rooms, 51 condominiums, two restaurants, a bar, a full-service spa and fitness center, and 7,000 square feet of meeting space, including two ballrooms that can be formed into 10 breakout rooms. The Lodge at Vail, nestled at the foot of Vail Mountain, features the brand-new Avanyu Spa, 11,600 square feet of pure indulgence. Its restaurants are award-winning. Meeting spaces are as large as 6,000 square feet.

Yet another Vail “experience” is offered at the Sonnenalp Resort of Vail, with its Swiss-style red gabled roof, wooden borders around each window, and balconies with fresh flower pots. There’s also the recent addition of a new wing with 13 hotel rooms and 24 suites. Meeting space of nearly 5,000 square feet—accommodating anywhere from 10 to 200 people—offers planners a variety of options.

The Vail Cascade Resort & Spa recently underwent a \$30 million renovation. It’s also a winner of the coveted AAA Four-Diamond Award and one of the bigger meeting places in the Vail Valley, with 35,000 square feet of meeting and event facilities.

Outdoor activities? In the winter, you can start, of course, with downhill skiing, and then go on to sledding, snowmobiling, snow-boarding, cross-country skiing, sleigh rides, ice skating, inner-tubing down “The Mountain,” ski biking (yes, it’s a bike on skis), or snow-shoeing, just for a start. (And if you’re lucky, you may get to see some of the international celebrities and royalty who flood the slopes every winter.)

In summer, there’s hiking in the mountains, rafting, rowing, mountain biking, taking a gondola ride up Vail Mountain, swimming, horseback riding, hot air ballooning, mountain climbing, walking, and Nordic hiking.

“Vail is different from anyplace else,” says Romer. “The natural beauty is unique. The diversity of recreational opportunities—both winter and summer—is unique. Our European-village ambiance is unique. And we’ve demonstrated, time and again, that we know the meaning of service.”

Roz Rogers, an executive with Peak Learning Systems of Evergreen, Colo., can confirm that.

“Staff at the Vail Marriott seemed to know what we wanted before we even asked for it,” Rogers says. “And the river rafting was a great bonding experience for our group. I think we left there energized and excited.”

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