

The Washington Post
TRAVEL

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2017 · SECTION F



SENIOR SALVIE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

THE SKI ISSUE

Powder power

You don't have to be a superhero to enjoy hurtling downhill at fantastic speeds. But it helps.

ADVENTURE SKIING

At the Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, experts can hone their skills at multiday ski camps. **F3**

LUXURY SKIING

Don't let the heated sidewalks fool you: Colorado's Beaver Creek is rugged where it counts. **F5**

BUDGET SKIING

How you and the family can hit the slopes without having to hock your skis afterward. **F6**

FAMILY SKIING On a week-long multigenerational ski trip to Steamboat Springs, Colo., family ties stay tight. **F5**

THE SKI ISSUE

For a longtime powder-chaser, still some lessons to learn

BY DINA MISHEV

Snow whips at my group of six from all directions. Having just left the warmth of the waffle shack at the top of Jackson Hole Mountain Resort's tram, it feels especially cold and wet. Still, standing in our skis, arranged in a line at the top of Rendezvous Bowl, we all begin disrobing our upper halves. Each of us is wearing between three and five layers, but in less than a minute we're all down to our base layers. Then, Kori Richards starts a countdown: "3, 2, 1."

At one, each of us removes our last layer, so that all we're left with are our sports bras.

Something between a cheer and a roar erupts from my mouth. Similarly unspecific but equally joyful noises come from the rest of the group.

A camera is filming and, reveling in our silliness, we wave at it for several seconds, then we put back on our layers. We follow Richards, a 30-something ski instructor with a near-mystical power for noticing when I'm not pressuring the inside edges of my skis enough at a certain point of a turn, and ski away.

Usually in such conditions — poor visibility, strong winds, choppy snow — I'm a solid-but-hesitant skier, like most of the group. But, this run, we're all on fire, skiing fast and aggressively, and judging by the exultant shouts that continue as we ski down, loving it.

Past the bowl, almost without pausing, we drop into a double-black-diamond run, ungroomed and full of tight trees. It's like we're all temporarily possessed by the type of skiers we've always wanted to be. Maybe this possession is our earlier silliness graduating to recklessness? But none of us hurts ourselves on this run, and we all agree it was the most fun and strongest run we'd each skied during our two-and-a-half days together. We're not the same skiers we were three days ago, when the resort's annual Elevate Women's Ski Camp began.



DINA MISHEV

An expert skier in the Elevate Women's Ski Camp at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort in Wyoming works through the Rock Springs Bowl.

A learning experience

For years, I avoided lessons because I thought skiing was something that could be learned on your own. I spent 10 years doing just that. I got better every season, but never had any breakthroughs. My progression was skiing the same intermediate runs faster rather than graduating up to more difficult runs. It's fine to be stuck if you're happy skiing intermediate runs, but I wasn't.

This realization hit me on a January afternoon in 2007 in Taos, N.M., where I was researching a ski story. Taos's public-relations department knew that I lived in Jackson, Wyo., home of the ski resort generally regarded on the continent. They assumed I



THE WASHINGTON POST

was more than an intermediate skier because, well, if you've lived and skied in Jackson for 10 years, which I had at the time, you have to almost actively work to not be an expert skier. Taos had a former national extreme skiing champ

show me around the resort.

She hid well her frustration at my slowness and frequent falls on the resort's ungroomed, steep runs. In a mid-mountain bathroom stall, I shed hot tears of shame. How could I not have

quired a three-hour operation, a seven-inch surgical steel plate, 14 screws and 31 stitches. Why mess around with a single-day lesson when there's a four-day camp? Also, I had done one-off lessons here and there. Although each of these gave me knowledge of what I was doing wrong, I felt like a day wasn't long enough to effect lasting change.

The resort's four-day Steep & Deep camp is a bucket-list item for many — more than 1,000 skiers (and snowboarders) come here every winter to scare themselves silly in it. About 90 percent of Steep & Deepers are men and about 100 percent have Type-A personalities. Being pretty Type-A myself, Steep & Deep grabbed my attention. Having been founded in the 1990s by then-world extreme skiing champion Doug Coombs, though, it had one problem: the requirement that campers be expert level. Also, its online description promised that the final day could include skiing Corbet's Couloir, generally regarded to be the most difficult inbounds ski run in North America. The intent of this news was to get wannabe participants psyched up: "Yeah! Lucky you! Corbet's!" But that wasn't how I read it. My translation was, "You'll probably end this camp on crutches."

Still, I wanted to do it. I signed up for my first Steep & Deep four winters later, in 2011.

A changing experience

The camp was transformative, and not just for my confidence when I wasn't put into the lowest group. Coach Bill Truelove taught me about "schmearing," a type of turn in which you control your speed throughout the entire arc, and helped me learn how to do it.

Since my first Steep & Deep camp, I've done three more. And, after skiing at the resort on my own one day in 2013 and having a group from one of the women's camps blow past me on a double-black-diamond run and seeing how much fun they were having, I've also done two Elevate women's camps. The one in which

WYOMING CONTINUED ON F4

Three mountains, infinite memories!



Ski and snowboard at three great resorts for one great family vacation! Enjoy 79 slopes and trails on more than 465 skiable acres and 9 terrain parks between Seven Springs, Hidden Valley and Laurel Mountain on the Highlands Ski Package!

ONLY 3 HOURS FROM WASHINGTON, DC!

WEEKEND STARTING AT \$435/ PERSON

based on double occupancy



- Two nights of lodging at Seven Springs
- Unlimited skiing/snowboarding at Seven Springs, Hidden Valley and Laurel Mountain
- Breakfast each morning
- Overnight ski and snowboard check
- Access to the fitness center and swimming pool



For more information or to make your reservations, please call (866) 437-1300.

866-437-1300 | 7Springs.com

THE SKI ISSUE

After a decade of going it alone, teachers show her the error of her ways

WYOMING FROM F3

my group stripped to sports bras — for a funny movie to be shown at the final night's banquet — was my first.

Steep & Deep and Elevate are similar, but different. Both are four days of skiing and instruction. (But in Elevate, the four days of skiing happen over five days; Day 3 is a rest day.) Both camps allow participants early access to the tram. Both use the first morning to divide campers into groups of no more than five. This, along with a coach, is your group. It is possible to move between groups, but no one has ever joined or left the six groups I've been in. There's no Hogwarts-esque sorting hat, but there might as well be; the coaches are that good.

Sorting happens early the first day of camp: Coaches watch all campers ski the same run, one at a time. For all of my Steep & Deep camps, this run was in Cheyenne Bowl, an area of ungroomed, black-diamond runs off the Sublette lift. During last winter's Elevate, this run was Easy Does It, a groomed, intermediate slope underneath the high-speed Casper quad lift. (While Steep & Deep is limited to expert skiers, Elevate is open to skiers who are intermediates and above.)

I'd like to say there weren't any differences in the mostly-men and all-women's camps but once again, stereotypes held true. Waiting at the top of Cheyenne Bowl with my fellow Steep & Deepers, almost always the talk is serious and about how great they're going to do. Waiting at the top of a women's camp ski-off, the talk is always about how much better — more graceful, more athletic, more aggressive, more balanced — the woman who just skied is than we are.

Both camps include lunch, video analysis and have après-ski parties. At Steep & Deep, the last usually involves a shot ski — an old ski with multiple shot glasses attached to its base — at the least-fancy bar in the base area, Nick Wilson's Cowboy Cafe. At Elevate, it means cocktails, wine and elk nachos at the Spur, a restaurant in the posh Teton Mountain Lodge.



DINA MISHEV

A group in Jackson Hole Mountain Resort's Elevate Women's Ski Camp waits with an instructor for a backcountry guide (not pictured) to give them an all-clear to ski down. In addition to ski techniques, campers spend time learning about safety — and potential avalanches.

If you go

WHERE TO STAY

Hotel Terra Jackson Hole
3335 W. Village Dr., Teton Village
307-201-6065

hoteltterrajacksonhole.com
A cowboy-chic, LEED-certified boutique hotel with 132 rooms at the base of the ski resort (but not quite ski-in/ski-out). Rooms from \$237.

The Anvil

215 N. Cache St., Jackson
307-733-3668

anvilhotel.com
This 49-room 1950s motel was renovated by Brooklyn-based

Studio Tack, which went with a modern take on traditional Western decor, including working with Woolrich on custom blankets for every bed. Rooms from \$140.

Four Seasons Resort Jackson Hole

7680 Granite Loop Rd., Teton Village
307-732-5000

fourseasons.com/jacksonhole
A 124-room ski-in/ski-out hotel with elegant Western decor and an impressive contemporary art collection. Rooms from \$460.

WHERE TO EAT

Piste Mountain Bistro

At the top of the Bridger Gondola, Teton Village

307-732-3177

jacksonhole.com/piste-mountain-bistro.html

Fine on-mountain dining featuring hearty lunches and dinners with sophisticated flavors like pork tenderloin with curry vinaigrette. Lunch daily from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., dinner 5:30 to 9 p.m. Reservations recommended. Entrees from \$13.

Southcable Cafe (inside Caldera House)

3275 W. Village Dr., Teton Village
307-201-5340

calderahouse.com/restaurant/southcable-cafe
An informal cafe with the best

espresso in Teton Village, baked goods from Persephone Bakery and quick-and-easy breakfast and lunch menus. Open daily 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Items from \$5.

WHAT TO DO

Jackson Hole Mountain Resort Steep & Deep Camp

3395 Cody Ln., Teton Village
800-450-0477

jacksonhole.com

Steep & Deep is the country's original camp for bettering your skills in steep terrain and deep powder. Expert skiers only. The 2018 camps are Jan. 9-12, Jan. 23-26, Feb. 6-9 and Feb. 27-March 2. A Snowboard Steep & Deep Camp, that runs Jan. 30-Feb. 2, costs \$1,525, with lift tickets. Women's Elevate is specifically designed for intermediate-and-above women skiers. Both of this winter's camps run Monday through Friday, and take Wednesday off. The camp runs Jan. 15-19 and is \$1,850, with lift tickets. Elevate II runs from March 5-9 and costs \$1,525, with lift tickets.

Arnica Sore-Muscle Massage at Chill Spa

3335 Village Dr., Teton Village
307-201-6065

hoteltterrajacksonhole.com

Its locally harvested arnica will help soothe your tired muscles. From \$145.

Grand Teton National Park

307-739-3399

nps.gov/grte

Rangers offer a free, two-hour guided snowshoe trek on vintage snowshoes at 1:30 p.m. every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday between mid-December and early March. You can also snowshoe on your own with rental snowshoes from Jackson Hole Sports (\$20 a day). Entrance to the park costs \$5 per car, per day.

INFORMATION

jacksonhole.com

D.M.

For the author's full list of recommendations for Jackson Hole and its surroundings, visit washingtonpost.com/travel

15 Minutes FROM CHRISTMAS TOWN TO WORLD-RENOWNED.

Minutes from More AT COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG, YOU'RE ALWAYS MINUTES FROM MORE ACTIVITIES, MORE EVENTS, AND MORE FUN — ESPECIALLY DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON.*

Holiday Getaway Package Includes:

- Hotel accommodations
- Complimentary daily breakfast
- Tickets to Colonial Williamsburg and Busch Gardens® Christmas Town.

Visit colonialwilliamsburgresorts.com or call 855-431-9850.

Colonial Williamsburg Hotels
WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

*Valid for up to three consecutive days. Two-night minimum stay required. Parking pass to Busch Gardens is included in package. Additional tickets can be purchased at the hotel for \$53 per adult (13+) or \$45.50 per child (6-12).



MOUNTAIN RULES #16

EAT YOUR VEGETABLES.
Tell YOUR MOTHER YOU Love HER.
WORSHIP POWDER DAYS.

Some things you need to hear again and again.
Others, just once.
Especially when it comes straight from The Mountain.
So start stockpiling those "sick" days.
Load your power song.
And be forever ready at the drop of a hat.

The Mountain is calling.
Who's with us?

snowshoemtn.com/mountainrules

Snowshoe