



Stillwater Bowl at Moonlight Basin, MT, offers views of the Spanish Peaks and wide-open slopes.

Top 10 Ski resorts for all reasons

Our favorite mountain getaways, from British Columbia to Big Sky

1 SUN PEAKS RESORT, B.C.

FAMILY FUN Most mountains claim they cater to families, but Sun Peaks gets it just right with a kid-friendly village where the lifts, hotels, and restaurants are within steps of one another. And because the resort's 3,678 skiable acres funnel into an intimate base area, allowing younger ones to roam is no problem. There's a top-notch ski school for ages 3 to 12, plus an adventure park with mini snowmobiles and toboggans, an outdoor ice rink, and even a bungee trampoline. www.sunpeaksresort.com or 800/807-3257. —KIMBERLY BROWN-SEELY

2 HOMEWOOD MOUNTAIN RESORT, CA

VIEWS, VIEWS, VIEWS SMILE, YOU'RE AT HOMEWOOD! is a fitting motto for one of Lake Tahoe's oldest ski resorts, located on the quiet West Shore—and directly across the street from the hallowed blue waters. Which you'll get to look at all day long. The locals' favorite little mountain is especially fun on powder days—hit Hobbit

Land for tree skiing and Quail Face for steeps—and get waist-deep snow without the wind or the "Squawlywood" scene down the road. New owners have already made much-needed improvements like lodge upgrades (now all it needs are faster lifts). www.skihomewood.com or 530/525-2992. —RACHEL LEVIN

3 KIRKWOOD MOUNTAIN RESORT, CA

SEASON-PASS STEAL No question, skiing is a spendy sport, but there are deals out there, like Kirkwood's \$339 season "value pass." One swipe of the credit card and you've got five months of nearly unlimited access to 2,300 acres of skiable terrain, line-free lifts, and arguably the best, not to mention the most, snow in Lake Tahoe. (Last season, Kirkwood boasted the deepest snowpack in North America, at 850 inches.) Perks for non-pass holders include two-day tickets for \$99 and free skiing for kids on Sundays. www.kirkwood.com or 209/258-6000. —R.L.

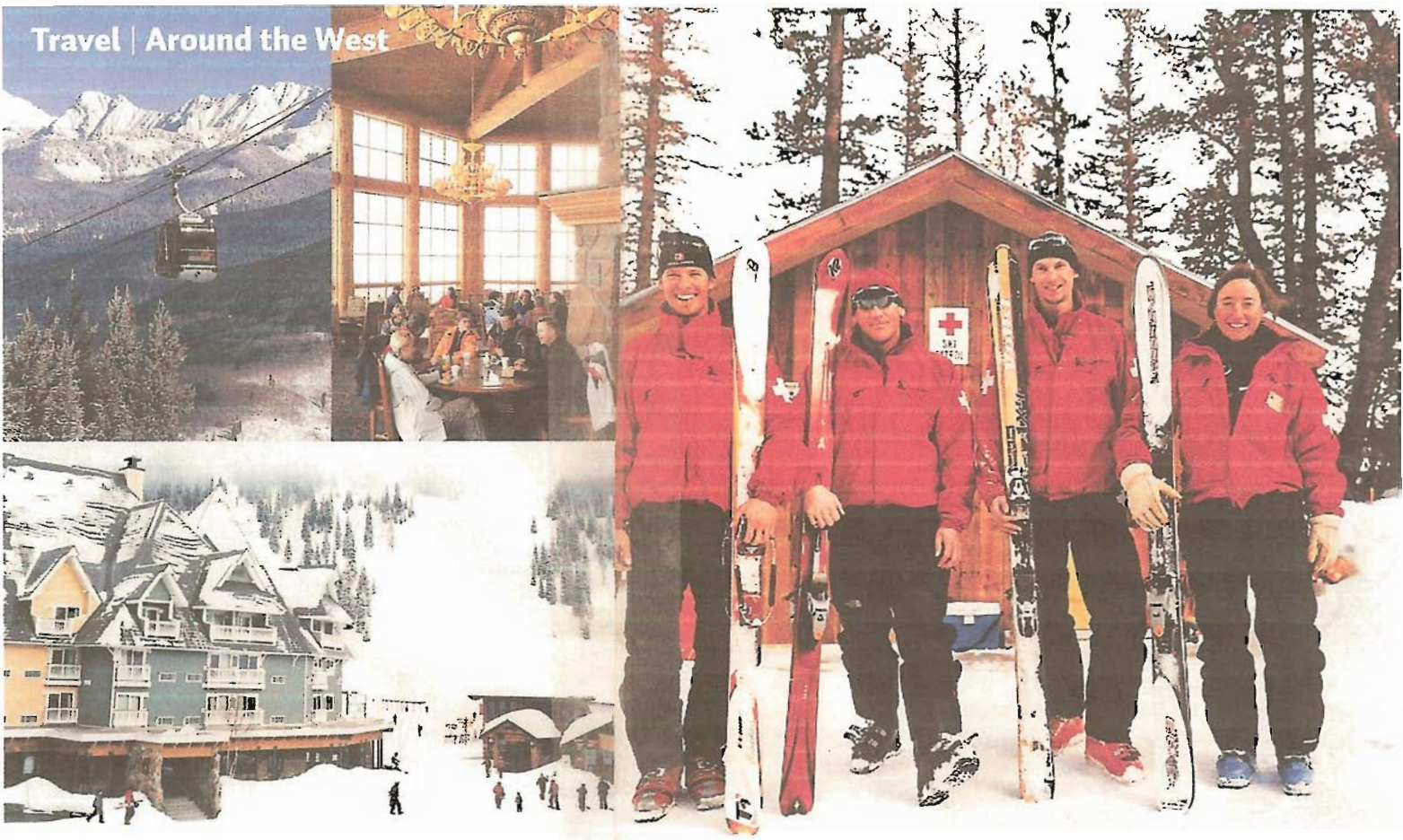
4 RED RIVER, NM

OLD SCHOOL For Western skiing the

way it used to be, head to Red River, where, besides snowmaking and some newfangled modernizing, not much has changed. Lifts take off right from Main Street and are a short stroll from the town's rustic lodging and steakhouses. For the moment, you won't find any million-dollar condos, only a classic Rocky Mountain ski area with foot after foot of fluff—and not an ounce of pretension. www.redriverskiarea.com or 800/331-7669. —TED ALAN STEDMAN

5 DEER VALLEY RESORT, UT

FOUR-STAR SERVICE At \$77 a pop, it better be posh. Skiers-only (and proud of it), Deer Valley is brimming with elitism and Utah's featherlight snow. A max of 6,500 tickets are sold per day, which ensures solitary schussing; free overnight ski storage eases the burden of lugging; and, running to the top of Bald Mountain, a new high-speed quad has replaced a sluggish lift. Above all, Deer Valley feeds its Chanel goggle-clad patrons well. Each day lodge has its own chef—and



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT It's a bluebird day at Vail, where you'll soar over mountain peaks in a gondola powered, now that Vail has gone green, by wind-generated energy. Warm up at 8,900 feet in Snowbasin's John Paul Lodge, with views out wall-length windows. Moonlight Basin's super-skilled ski patrol near the top of the Six Shooter lift. You'll find snow, peace and quiet, and a place to sleep at the base of Schweitzer Mountain, located just south of the Canadian border.

specialty: butternut squash enchiladas at Snow Park, sushi at Silver Lake, and pressed panini at Empire Canyon. www.deervalley.com or 800/558-3337. —R.L.

6 SNOWBASIN RESORT, UT LOCALS' SECRET When fresh powder blankets the Wasatch Range, most skiers flock to big-name Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons. But those in the know head to Snowbasin, 33 miles north of Salt Lake City. State-of-the-art snowmaking, four new lifts that doubled the terrain, and three new day lodges were added so Snowbasin could host the downhill skiing events of the 2002 Olympics. What wasn't built, though, was base lodging—leaving locals with a world-class resort for themselves. www.snowbasin.com or 888/437-5488. —RYAN BRANDT

7 VAIL, CO GREEN GIANT Ski areas don't exactly have that enviro-feel-good rep, but Vail Resorts—which recently switched to 100 percent wind-generated energy—is now the second-largest corporate purchaser of wind power in the country.

The operator of five major mountains (Vail, Keystone, Breckenridge, Beaver Creek, and Heavenly) will avoid spewing millions of pounds of CO₂ emissions annually. And Vail's growing: Renovations at LionsHead Village are on track for completion in fall '07, but experience the mountain's back bowls, bumps, and chutes now. www.vail.com or 970/476-9090. —T.A.S.

8 WINTER PARK RESORT, CO EASY RIDE After tackling the moguls of Mary Jane Mountain (including seven new glade runs this year), nothing feels better than letting someone else do the driving back to Denver. The Ski Train departs from the base right after lifts close—and the two lounge cars come to life before the wheels start turning. Admire sweeping vistas as you chug the quick two hours to Denver, gloating all the way about how you bypassed the battle on I-70. From \$49 round-trip; www.skitrain.com or 303/296-4754. —R.B.

9 SCHWEITZER MOUNTAIN RESORT, ID SLOPES TO YOURSELF Set far up in the Idaho Panhandle, Schweitzer feels

like your own private Idaho, sans day-trippers, traffic, or a chaotic village scene. With its tree skiing, quiet glades, endless untracked backcountry, and views of Canada, Montana, and Washington from the 6,400-foot summit, Schweitzer is achingly beautiful. Four hundred new acres make Schweitzer's already uncrowded terrain even more delightfully deserted. www.schweitzer.com or 800/831-8810. —K.B.S.

10 BIG SKY/MOONLIGHT BASIN, MT MOST MOUNTAIN Like sisters forced to share the same room, a frosty relationship was inevitable when Moonlight Basin opened next to Big Sky Resort on Montana's Lone Mountain in 2003. Last year, though, the ice melted with the debut of the Lone Peak Ticket (\$79), combining the resorts' 5,300 acres. Bolstered by 200 more acres at Big Sky this year, the area is now the largest contiguous swath in U.S. ski country—with enough greens, blues, and double-blacks to keep everybody happy. www.bigskysort.com or 800/548-4486; www.moonlightbasin.com or 877/822-0430. —R.B.