

Park City, UTAH

BY ANN WYCOFF

This adventure playground, an easy 25-minute drive from Salt Lake International Airport, has blossomed into a cosmopolitan community thanks to the 2002 Winter Olympics, the international influence of the Sundance Film Festival and an influx of city transplants grateful to reside there. The historic mining town now boasts over 100 restaurants, deluxe lodgings, endless hiking and mountain biking trails, scenic trout fishing, the world's greatest snow, an Olympic Park and gold-medal golf.



While snowy slopes and pristine alpine fairways may be the big draws today, originally the mountains' silver veins lured fortune seekers to the area in the late 1860s. George Hearst—father of William Randolph Hearst—bought a local mine which yielded \$50 million for the family. Others, too, were lured by the chances for such fortune, and soon the mining boom created the town.

Nestled into a narrow canyon in the Wasatch Mountains, Park City has retained much of its historic charm despite The Great Fire of 1898. The original City Hall and town jail on Main Street now house a museum with an abundance of relics from the past like the 19th century stagecoach which ran the Park City to Salt Lake line. Many of the miner shacks and Victorian-styled homes and cottages still dot the Old Town landscape.

In the recent years, golf has become a magnetic draw, as Park City is anchored by several way-above-average public courses, including Park City Golf Club, whose best asset is its location. The 6,622-yard course sits at the edge of town at 6,500 feet with sweeping views of the Wasatch Mountains. This walkable gem boasts challenging holes with tricky, undulating greens, water play, tree-lined fairways and the occasional moose.

A quick 15-minute jaunt over to Heber Valley reveals 90 holes of solid public golf within five miles of each other. Wasatch State Park sports four 18-hole options, all extremely playable, well maintained and incredibly reasonable at \$42 for 18 holes with a cart. The Mountain Course meanders up and down the Snake Creek ravine with intoxicating views, especially when fall colors paint the hillside. The flatter and more user-friendly Lakes Course, weaves past ponds and streams with a fluid design inte-

gration into nature. Abundant wildlife including elk, deer, mallards and sly foxes share the property.

Another two stellar, resort-style courses await at Soldier Hollow, site of several events during the 2002 Winter Olympics. The Gold plays long (7,598 yards) with challenging elevation changes, menacing ravines and dizzying 360-degree panoramic views of the bucolic farmlands and snowcapped peaks. The slightly tamer Silver, with its wide-open fairways and wildflower patchworks, sports grand views of majestic Mt. Timpanogos which sits regally above Mr. Redford's Sundance Resort.

Like the silver mine owners of the past, real estate developers and investors have discovered a new strike in Utah. Park City's ease of access, available land and majestic setting has triggered a modern day boom, particularly in golf communities.

Among the very best is Talisker, which offers homesites at Whispering Hawk and Silent Creek, set around their Mark O'Meara championship course which boasts extraordinary views of the Jordanelle reservoir and the Uinta and Wasatch Mountains. Home sites start \$450,000 and include golf membership.

Owners at Talisker have access to endless amenities like an exquisite private Tower clubhouse on Flagstaff Mountain at Deer Valley, an authentic cowboy-cum-naturalist who guides hikes and horseback trips, private fly-fishing spots, elegant members-only dining and spas.

Glenwild's exclusive Tom Fazio course, a par 72, measures 7,543 from the championships tees and has continuously been rated as Utah's best course by Golf Digest. One-hundred-ninety-nine home sites make up this exclusive community, ranging from \$495,000 to just under \$2 million.



far left: Park City Golf Club; **left:** Red Ledges, a Jack Nicklaus design in Heber; **this page:** Skiers on a downhill run; **below:** Tuhaye Golf Course at Talisker Club



Developing golf communities to check out include Victory Ranch with an exquisite 18-hole Rees Jones course ready to play in late spring 2009 and an executive course to follow. In Heber Valley, Red Ledges, has 18 glorious holes completed and by designed by Jack Nicklaus. The 7,770-yard course, maintained by Troon and playable late summer 2009 carves through the dramatic red rock topography with sweeping views of the reservoir and mountains. A short Nicklaus 9-hole will arrive in the future.

When not teeing off, visitors and residents alike enjoy endless year-round activities. The region boasts over 300 miles of bike trails, with several family-friendly rides like the Farm and Rail Trails. Flyfishing enthusiasts swear the Provo River is one of the liveliest fishing spots in the country, and during summer months you can find outdoor live music at least five days a week scattered throughout the town or slope-side.

The Utah Olympic Park has a monster zip-line for adrenalin-infused fun, or go for the gold and try the brain-rattling bobsled called "The Comet," where you'll hit upwards of 80 miles per hour. Then check out the free Olympic Museum or watch the U.S. ski team do aerials into the giant pools with their skis on.

Savory cuisine is also easy to find. Locals favor Shabu for its hip vibe, tasty Asian fusion and great sushi thanks to chef Robert Valaika who opened Nobu in Aspen. Tasty southwestern fare can be found at Chimayo which serves some serious ribs and fine margaritas, while Robert Redford's Zoom shines in comfort foods, best enjoyed on their big patio on warm summer evenings.

Ride the chairlift up to Royal Street Café at Silver Creek Lodge in Deer Valley for their famous turkey chili or hefty

burgers or head next door to for upscale fare at Glitretind in the Stein Eriksen Lodge where Chef Zane Holmquist delights guests with gourmet innovations like Kobe beef meatloaf and foie gras with crisp bananas in peanut sauce and pork tenderloin with lobster grits.

Finally, make the scenic trek over to Sundance (45 minutes from Park City) for rustic haute cuisine at Redford's Tree Room (think Buffalo tenderloin with gorgonzola bread pudding), then sip a nightcap at the Owl Bar, the resort's cozy waterhole with the original 19th century rosewood bar that sports bullets holes from the Sundance Kid's days with the Hole-in-Wall gang.

For lodging, swanky Stein Eriksen Lodge, opened by the Norwegian Olympic ski icon in 1982, still gives it clientele gold star service mountainside at Deer Valley; but Hotel Park City boasts the nicest rooms in a craftsman-styled hotel that faces the Wasatch Mountains just at the edge of town. All 100 suites and cottages overlook the Park City Golf Club and have fireplaces, private decks, frette linens and Bulgari products.

Families will love the Grand Summit Hotel at The Canyons with its giant pool, kids' camps, summer farmer's market and superb wine and food festival. Sky Lodge, Main's Street newest spot, has the chic modern feel of a W Hotel with great amenities like their Japanese spa chic Amatsu and rooftop bar for sunset cocktails.

More world-class luxury will soon arrive as both a St. Regis property and a Montage Resort have broken ground. This new golf Mecca sports a plethora of stunning courses to play, gorgeous second home communities and a wealth of alpine adventures when you are not swinging those golf clubs. 🍷