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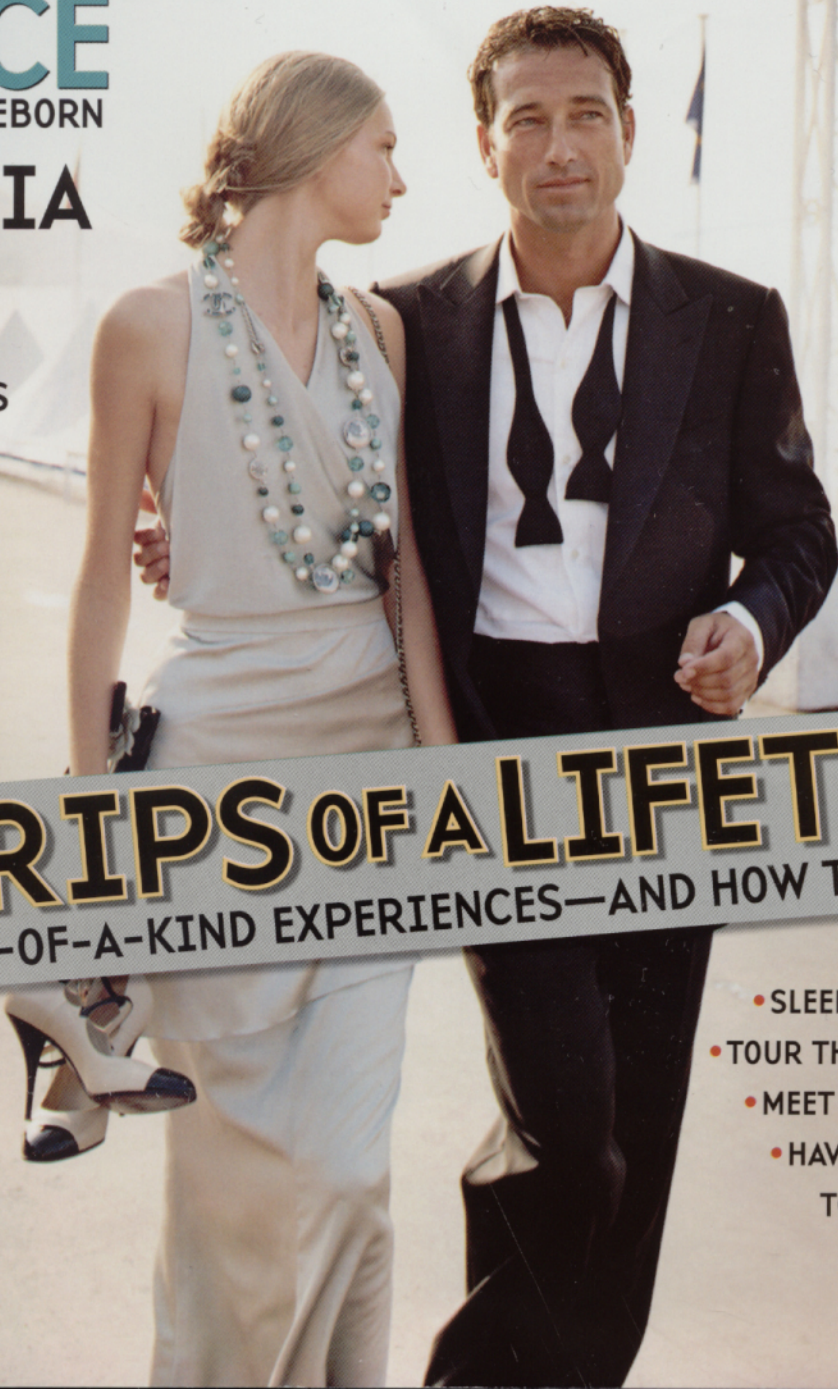
DECEMBER 2005

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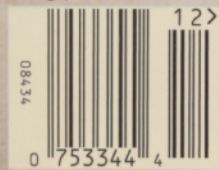
READERS' POLL
**TOP SKI
RESORTS**
IN NORTH AMERICA



50 TRIPS OF A LIFETIME
ONE-OF-A-KIND EXPERIENCES—AND HOW TO GET THEM

- SLEEP IN A PYRAMID
- TOUR THE SECRET KREMLIN
- MEET THE DALAI LAMA
- HAVE THE VATICAN TO YOURSELF

U.S.A. \$4.50
Foreign/Canada \$5.50



2005

TOP 50

CONDÉ NAST TRAVELER'S 10TH ANNUAL

SKI RESORTS

IN NORTH AMERICA



High society: Atop Whistler Mountain, in British Columbia's Coast Range, skiers tackle Matthew's Traverse.

In this year's **ski resorts poll** (p. 72), we reveal our readers' picks for the preeminent places to schuss and stay. And as perennial favorite Whistler gears up for the 2010 Winter Olympics, **Nichole Bernier** finds that there's more to the Canadian heavyweight than just its slopes

SINCE SKIERS REALLY DON'T NEED A CAR ONCE THEY'RE IN Whistler, the smart ones take the Perimeter Bus for the 80-mile ride from the Vancouver airport. It's a good way to appreciate the views from Highway 99—best enjoyed from the left side of the vehicle—without having to worry about keeping your eyes on the road. This is no landlocked Colorado or Utah, after all. This is coastal country, the western edge of the continent, and the nearness of the Pacific defines everything. North of Vancouver, the horizon opens up in a British Co-

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CATHRINE WESSEL STYLED BY BEITRESSA MANDELBAUM

2005 TOP 50 SKI RESORTS IN NORTH AMERICA

Property and Ski Area	Trails*			Number of Rooms	OVERALL SCORE	Terrain & Conditions	Lifts & Lines	Location	Rooms	Service	Dining/Food	Other Facilities	Noteworthy
	%	Beginner	Intermediate										
1. Ritz-Carlton Bachelor Gulch, Beaver Creek, Colo.	34%	39%	27%	237	85.5	89.6	85.4	88.3	81.9	90.4	85.1	77.7	The expanded kids' program offers marshmallow roasting.
★ 2. Sonnenalp Resort of Vail, Vail, Colo.	28%	32%	40%	84	85.2	94.2	74.3	90.1	84.5	93.0	88.7	71.8	Renovations will update the spa and add a restaurant and heated garage.
3. Four Seasons Resort, Jackson Hole, Wyo.	10%	40%	50%	140	85.1	88.8	81.3	100	87.1	87.1	83.9	67.7	Experience the longest continuous vertical drop (4,139 feet) in the country.
★ 4. Fairmont Chateau Whistler, Whistler Blackcomb, B.C.	20%	55%	25%	550	84.4	82.9	79.4	96.5	80.9	87.8	86.1	77.4	The revamped valet ski area now has flat-screen TVs.
★ 5. St. Regis Resort, Aspen, Colo.	0%	48%	52%	179	83.8	87.5	75.3	96.1	83.3	86.3	85.3	72.5	A \$37 million face-lift earlier this year remodeled rooms and the spa.
6. Fairmont Le Château Frontenac, Mont-Ste-Anne, Quebec	23%	46%	31%	618	83.7	75.9	82.8	86.4	81.8	90.9	77.3	90.9	A permanent exhibition of historic memorabilia will be unveiled this season.
★ 7. Little Nell, Aspen, Colo.	0%	48%	52%	92	82.4	87.5	75.3	98.2	78.9	83.5	84.4	68.8	The lobby was redesigned with terra-cotta colors and leather chairs.
★ 8. Stein Eriksen Lodge, Deer Valley, Utah	15%	50%	35%	175	82.2	90.8	91.4	82.2	71.0	78.5	91.6	70.1	This Norwegian-themed lodge has more than 145 fireplaces.
9. Summit at Big Sky, Big Sky, Mont.	17%	25%	58%	213	82.0	82.1	87.4	95.2	81.0	85.7	71.4	71.4	Under a new partnership, guests have access to 5,300 acres with one ticket.
★ 10. Park Hyatt Beaver Creek Resort & Spa, Beaver Creek, Colo.	34%	39%	27%	274	81.2	89.6	85.4	96.2	73.6	79.2	67.9	76.4	During the Ashitsu massage, a barefoot therapist walks on the guest's boots.
11. Pines Lodge, Beaver Creek, Colo.	34%	39%	27%	60	81.1	89.6	85.4	96.3	77.8	81.5	77.8	59.3	A new high-speed quad will sweep skiers to Larkspur Bowl.
12. Inn at Beaver Creek, Beaver Creek, Colo.	34%	39%	27%	45	80.8	89.6	85.4	93.8	84.4	71.9	65.6	75.0	This month, Beaver Creek hosts the Men's World Cup downhill race.
★ 13. Peaks Resort & Golden Door Spa, Telluride, Colo.	24%	38%	38%	174	80.5	85.0	89.3	91.5	80.9	72.3	61.7	83.0	The 42,000-square-foot spa was refurbished last summer.
14. Four Seasons Resort, Whistler Blackcomb, B.C.	20%	55%	25%	273	80.3	82.9	79.4	96.2	76.9	84.6	76.9	65.4	Ski instructors host fireside chats, with complimentary hot beverages.
★ 15. Sun Valley Lodge, Sun Valley, Idaho	36%	42%	22%	148	79.9	80.4	84.8	77.3	72.7	86.4	83.0	75.0	Order après-ski cocktails at the heated outdoor pool.
16. Snowmass Club, Snowmass, Colo.	7%	55%	38%	54	79.6	94.3	87.1	78.8	75.8	81.8	63.6	75.8	Prep with ski-conditioning classes at the 19,000-square-foot health club.
17. Lodges at Deer Valley, Deer Valley, Utah	15%	50%	35%	261	78.8	90.8	91.4	90.9	90.9	78.8	48.5	60.6	For the mountain's 25th anniversary, 75 acres of new terrain will open.
18. Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise, Lake Louise, Alberta	25%	45%	30%	550	78.5	73.5	80.4	87.7	72.3	81.5	81.5	72.3	Après-ski, shoot pool and sip cocktails at the Glacier Saloon.
19. PlumpJack Squaw Valley Inn, Squaw Valley, Calif.	25%	45%	30%	61	78.5	88.7	72.6	92.0	68.0	72.0	96.0	60.0	The restaurant has added more than 300 new wines to its global list.
20. Westin Resort & Spa, Whistler Blackcomb, B.C.	20%	55%	25%	419	77.0	82.9	79.4	98.2	78.6	67.9	64.3	67.9	Treatments at the Avello Spa include a hot rock massage.
21. Pan Pacific Whistler Mountainside, Whistler Blackcomb, B.C.	20%	55%	25%	121	76.6	82.9	79.4	97.4	76.3	84.2	60.5	55.3	The locker rooms were upgraded in November, adding extra ski storage.
22. Fairmont Banff Springs, Ski Banff at Norquay, Alberta	20%	36%	44%	770	76.5	61.0	76.3	81.5	66.7	87.0	75.9	87.0	Banff Norquay lures adrenaline junkies with its quintet of mogul runs.
23. Steamboat Grand Resort Hotel, Steamboat, Colo.	13%	56%	31%	327	75.6	84.3	81.2	93.9	69.7	66.7	66.7	66.7	Rent a wristband transmitter to track companions on the slopes.
★ 24. Hotel Jerome, Aspen, Colo.	0%	48%	52%	92	75.1	87.5	75.3	75.3	67.4	83.1	82.0	55.1	Ski with a concierge who takes hotel guests off the beaten path.
24. Mount Washington Hotel, Bretton Woods, N.H.	31%	41%	28%	200	75.1	79.4	82.4	80.0	60.0	84.0	72.0	68.0	Team Bode, named for Bode Miller, teaches children ski-racing techniques.
★ 24. Sunriver Resort, Mt. Bachelor, Ore.	15%	25%	60%	239	75.1	77.9	76.5	77.4	87.1	67.7	54.8	83.9	The resort hosts 150 Christmas events, including cookie decorating.
★ 27. Lodge at Vail, Vail, Colo.	28%	32%	40%	165	74.4	94.2	74.3	94.6	63.4	66.7	73.1	54.8	A new chef is revamping the menus at Wildflower and Cucina Rustica.
28. Trapp Family Lodge, Stowe, Vt.	16%	59%	25%	96	73.5	65.5	57.3	76.0	68.0	88.0	84.0	76.0	A \$2.5 million fitness center with a new pool opens this month.
29. Resort at Squaw Creek, Squaw Valley, Calif.	25%	45%	30%	403	73.4	88.7	72.6	94.5	67.3	67.3	60.0	63.6	A \$50 million renovation added fireplaces and flat-screen TVs to rooms.
★ 30. Beaver Creek Lodge, Beaver Creek, Colo.	34%	39%	27%	72	71.4	89.6	85.4	84.4	71.1	64.4	51.1	53.3	The resort's new Grand Bohemian Gallery showcases local art.
30. Lodge & Spa at Cordillera, Vail, Colo.	28%	32%	40%	56	71.4	89.6	85.4	46.4	67.9	75.0	71.4	64.3	A new moonlit snowshoe tour includes dinner at Timber Hearth Grille.
32. Cliff Lodge & Spa, Snowbird, Utah	27%	38%	35%	511	71.0	86.1	75.8	87.1	67.1	57.6	60.0	63.5	Rock climbers scaled the resort's walls to hang its 200-plus Asian rugs.
33. Sun Valley Inn, Sun Valley, Idaho	36%	42%	22%	109	70.8	80.4	84.8	69.6	69.6	69.6	52.2	69.6	A super pipe was added this season for freestyle skiing and snowboarding.
34. Canyons Grand Summit Hotel, The Canyons, Utah	14%	44%	42%	356	70.7	69.3	71.2	90.9	77.3	68.2	59.1	59.1	The First Tracks program offers guided access to prime slopes.
34. Golden Hirsch Inn, Deer Valley, Utah	15%	50%	35%	20	70.7	90.8	91.4	68.8	53.1	59.4	93.8	37.5	Bathroom renovations for this season added tubs with air jets.
34. Keystone Lodge, Keystone, Colo.	19%	32%	49%	152	70.7	72.7	69.6	78.6	71.4	69.0	64.3	69.0	The resort will use wind power to supplement electricity in the lodge.
37. Marriott Grand Residence Club, Heavenly, Calif.	20%	45%	35%	199	70.6	76.1	61.4	97.4	76.9	69.2	53.8	59.0	Heavenly marks its 50th anniversary this month with discount ski passes.
38. Mirror Lake Inn, Lake Placid/Whiteface Mountain, N.Y.	18%	38%	44%	129	70.5	45.2	58.1	75.0	70.0	85.0	90.0	70.0	Paul Sorgule cooks pan-European cuisine at the new restaurant Taste.
★ 39. Vail Cascade Resort & Spa, Vail, Colo.	28%	32%	40%	292	70.2	94.2	74.3	71.8	64.1	61.5	61.5	64.1	This month sees new activities for kids and weekly cooking demonstrations.
40. Hotel Park City, Park City, Utah	18%	44%	38%	54	70.0	80.8	68.0	72.7	72.7	72.7	59.1	63.6	The resort will double in size, completing 46 new cottages by January.
41. Grand Lodge Crested Butte, Crested Butte, Colo.	23%	57%	20%	246	69.6	87.3	76.1	100	76.2	61.9	38.1	47.6	A \$5 million spring makeover freshened guest rooms and the spa.
41. Torian Plum, Steamboat, Colo.	13%	56%	31%	80	69.6	84.3	81.2	100	73.9	60.9	34.8	52.2	Staff ski down the mountain with handheld lights on New Year's Eve.
43. Huntley Lodge, Big Sky, Mont.	17%	25%	58%	182	69.4	82.1	87.4	92.9	59.5	64.3	54.8	45.2	Former ski instructors perform a musical comedy at Chet's Bar.
44. Historic Taos Inn, Taos, N.M.	24%	25%	51%	36	68.4	75.8	73.7	75.0	66.7	66.7	70.8	50.0	The Adobe Bar has live music and serves signature margaritas.
★ 45. Vail Marriott Mountain Resort & Spa, Vail, Colo.	28%	32%	40%	345	67.8	94.2	74.3	80.2	60.4	63.5	47.9	54.2	The new Southwestern grill, Ocotillo, specializes in all-natural steaks.
46. Teton Mountain Lodge, Jackson Hole, Wyo.	10%	40%	50%	128	67.1	88.8	81.3	75.0	75.0	60.0	40.0	50.0	Foot Reflexology Recovery is a new skier-friendly treatment at the spa.
47. Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe, Northstar at Tahoe, Calif.	25%	50%	25%	422	67.0	71.6	59.5	69.7	74.2	72.7	62.1	59.1	Combat sunburn with a sun facial—an aloe and lavender spa treatment.
47. Marriott's Timber Lodge, Heavenly, Calif.	20%	45%	35%	232	67.0	76.1	61.4	96.9	78.1	62.5	37.5	56.3	Heavenly has new tree-skiing trails that reveal secret routes.
47. Sheraton Steamboat Springs Resort, Steamboat, Colo.	13%	56%	31%	315	67.0	84.3	81.2	92.6	53.7	59.3	42.6	55.6	Catch the Winter Olympics freestyle trials in late December.
50. Juniper Springs Resort, Mammoth Mountain, Calif.	25%	40%	35%	210	66.9	90.6	63.8	100	54.5	59.1	45.5	54.5	The resort opened a ski and snowboard rental shop this fall.

★ Ten "Top Ski Resort" appearances in as many years. Note: Boldfaced scores indicate a top-five rank for Location, Rooms, Service, Dining/Food, and Other Facilities.

* Percentage of trails that are beginner, intermediate, and expert. † Formerly Wyndham Peaks Resort & Golden Door Spa. ‡ Formerly Sheraton Crested Butte Resort. § Formerly Juniper Springs Lodge.