

AS SEEN IN

SKI

THE MAGAZINE OF THE SKI LIFE

● PLUS

7 GREAT MOUNTAINS TO SKI WITH YOUR KIDS

Purgatory at Durango Mountain Resort

Park City Mountain Resort

Cannon Mountain & Bretton Woods

Beaver Creek

Stowe

Tremblant

Northstar-At-Tahoe



**Mountain Life Market Report
on Durango, Colorado**

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//////////////////////////////////// **7 GREAT** ////////////////////////////////////// **BY MOIRA MCCARTHY**
//////////////////////////////////// **MOUNTAINS TO SKI** //////////////////////////////////////
//////////////////////////////////// **WITH YOUR KIDS** //////////////////////////////////////

Some resorts just know how to show families a good time. Everyone knows the usual stars—Smugglers’ Notch, Snowmass, Okemo, Steamboat—so here are a few you might not have thought of. The family ski trip is the stuff of lasting memories. Get it right.



PARK CITY MOUNTAIN RESORT UTAH

A LITTLE HISTORY, A LOT OF SKI TERRAIN AND ALL OF PARK CITY'S CHARMS AT YOUR DISPOSAL

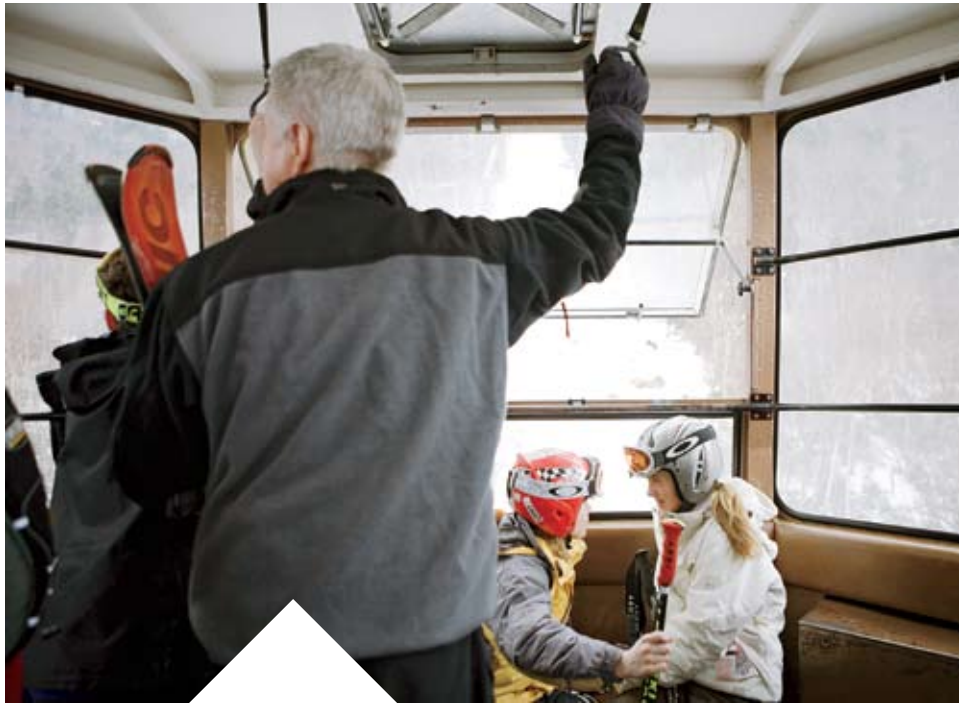
Park City was founded by rough, hardy miners, but it was bunch of kids who got the whole skiing thing going. A group of local teenagers helped build a ski jump in 1935, and it all blossomed from there. Now PCMR, the original Park City resort, is a tapestry of history, with great skiing (on three mountains), versatile accommodations and a Disney-esque variety of options. Stay in a downtown hotel and use the famous Town Lift, where you can step from bustling sidewalks to snowy slopes in minutes, or book a more traditional slopeside room with all the amenities. The resort has worked hard of late to make itself easier to navigate. Vacationers can visit an online mountain planner, tell it what kind of skiing they like (blues, greens, blacks, bumps, groomers or a mix), and up pops their personal mountain skiing itinerary. This season, there's a planner specifically for families, so you can arrive at Park City with a trail map designed just for yours. It's sure to include a long spin down Home Run, a meandering green groomer that snakes along for three and a half miles. And then there are the terrain parks. With dedicated areas for every level, PCMR gives families a place where Mom and Dad can throw down with the kids. Prior kid consent required, of course.

STAY HERE On mountain, you can't beat the Snow Flower, located right at the halfpipe (\$140-1,150; 800-852-3101; snowflow-erparkcity.com). Off mountain, consider a posh stay at the Hotel Park City (\$179-\$999; 435-200-2000; hotelparkcity.com). Their suites have plenty of room, and the whole family will soon understand why celebrities pick this spot.

ON MOUNTAIN Mining tour on skis. You'll ski the mountain and see real mines and historic spots.

OFF MOUNTAIN Gorgoza Park (435-658-2648), a nearby family fun spot,

offers tubing, kid-sized snowmobiles and other snow fun. **COOL FACTOR** The town. Explore its shops and soak up its history. At the old town jail you can get in a cell. And, more importantly, get out. **ONLY HERE** Visit the Utah Olympic Park, home of the Olympic ski jumps and sled sport tracks. It's a Park City must, especially for the bobsled rides.



CANNON MOUNTAIN & BRETTON WOODS NEW HAMPSHIRE

GRAND MOUNTAIN VISTAS AND CHARISMATIC SLOPES IN THE CRADLE OF EASTERN SKIING

Make the lavish, historic Mount Washington Hotel your base, then take your pick: the mellow slopes of Bretton Woods, across the street, or historic Cannon, 20 miles away in spectacular Franconia Notch. At Cannon, you can ski the Taft Trail, one of the oldest in the U.S., and visit the New England Ski History Museum. Kids love the Aerial Tramway (North America's first). At Bretton Woods, you'll gaze out at magnificent Mt. Washington, the Northeast's highest peak. Bretton has more skiable acres than anywhere else in the state, but every turn leads to manageable terrain, so even novice families can ski together. The hotel, a posh summer destination for more than 100 years and a top winter retreat since 1999, exudes history and ambience. It's jackets-for-dinner classy but never forgets to have fun, as one glimpse of its lighted tubing hill confirms. Live music, bonfires and special events such as chef shows and visits from Bode Miller keep things hopping.

STAY HERE The Mount Washington Hotel (\$199-727; 800-314-1752; mtwashington.com) has family suites and packages that include gourmet meals in the grand ballroom. Room 400, a double tower suite, is the best room in the house. **ON MOUNTAIN** At Bretton Woods, have lunch at Top of the Quad: good food, extraordinary views. At Cannon, learn about—and ski—the Taft. **OFF MOUNTAIN** While you can't ski down it anymore,

you can still take the kids for a winter ride up Mt. Washington on the steam-powered Cog Railway. **COOL FACTOR** This is Bode Miller country. He grew up skiing Cannon; now he's got a house at Bretton Woods. **ONLY HERE** Family nordic ski programs on the lovely grounds of the hotel.



BEAVER CREEK COLORADO



EAGLE COUNTY'S PREMIER ADDRESS BLENDS LUXURY AND ADVENTURE

Beaver Creek is all about ensuring guests a top-notch stay, and that extends to families. The one-two punch of a Beaver Creek ski experience with a Ritz-Carlton Bachelor Gulch stay may just be the pinnacle of family ski vacations. Start at the Beaver Creek website. There's a kids-only section with an interactive trail map that teaches safety, helps kids get acquainted with the mountain and makes things fun from the start. BC packs the après hours with activity—bonfire singalongs, skating shows and parties, kids' movie nights, even slopeside magicians. The family can take on a mountain that excels in variety. Is there a cruiser better than Harrier? Bumps sweeter than those of Screech Owl? A more family-friendly bowl than Larkspur? The warm cookies in the afternoon lifelines are no fable—deliciously pampering, perfectly timed, appropriately Beaver Creek.

STAY HERE Family suites at the slopeside Ritz-Carlton Bachelor Gulch (\$275–995; 970-748-6200; ritzcarlton.com) come with luxury kitchens and Ritz service. Schedule time to walk Bachelor the dog, the house mascot. **ON MOUNTAIN** Sleigh-ride up the mountain to dinner at Beano's, where kids can check out the open kitchen. Watch for the porcupines outside. Don't pet them. **OFF MOUNTAIN** Shuttle over

to Vail's Adventure Ridge for tubing and snowmobiling (970-476-9090; vail.snow.com). **COOL FACTOR** Kids' spa treatments at the Ritz are a mini version of the pampering everyone loves. **ONLY HERE** The kids' hill has its own cool gondola—easy to board, always warm.

STOWE VERMONT



STILL FEARSOME, STOWE HAS A LIGHTER SIDE NOW—ALL SPRUCED, READY FOR FUN

Spectacular Mt. Mansfield has long lured mountain lovers. It hasn't been known as one of the easiest places for families, but Stowe has poured an astounding \$50 million into on-mountain improvements over the past two years, most of it with an eye toward winning ski-family hearts. A 90-second gondola ride now connects a new beginner center at Spruce Peak to the Mansfield slopes. Trail work, new lifts and a snowmaking overhaul have transformed sunny, gentle Spruce into a family playground. And later this season, with the opening of the new Stowe Mountain Lodge at the base, the resort hopes to become one of the most convenient and luxurious family destinations in the nation. None of what made Stowe great is gone. You can still earn bragging rights on the Front Four. And a run down Toll Road should still be on every family's list.

STAY HERE By spring, the Stowe Mountain Lodge (sprucepeak.com) will offer luxury suites with kitchenettes. Great backup: The Stoweflake Mountain Resort (\$243–1,089; 800-253-2232; stoweflake.com), just down the road. Family-owned for generations. Comfortable, classy, convenient. **ON MOUNTAIN** Nightskiing on Saturdays. The gondola terrain, lighted top to bottom, offers uncommonly long nighttime runs with cozy, kid-friendly rides up. **OFF MOUNTAIN** Tea or dinner at the world-renowned Trapp Family Lodge (800-826-7000; trappfamily.com), where you still might bump into a Von Trapp. **COOL FACTOR** Your own "alpine concierge" takes care of you from pre-trip to departure, booking lessons, finding dinner spots, figuring out après events. It's included in your on-mountain stay. **ONLY HERE** House naturalist Kim Jensen guides snowshoe hikes, teaching you about local flora and wildlife.





TREMBLANT QUEBEC



A LITTLE FOREIGN CULTURE—CLOSE TO HOME AND FULL OF FUN

Often said but true: Tremblant is like a family trip to Europe without leaving the continent. The resort—styled in the *Québécois* vernacular—has a convincingly Old World vibe, from the food to the French feel to the quaint but classy village. But they did it in a way that makes families feel at home rather than cast into a distant nation. The skiing is interesting but never death-defying, with lovely views of Lac Tremblant and the surrounding hills. And there’s always something going on in the village, from carnivals to games to special food events. In fact, it’s the après scene that wins you over. The village is small enough that even cautious parents will let children wander around a bit while Mom and Dad sip a cocktail. But you’ll want to enjoy the village with them, too. The narrow streets, side alleys and cobbled plazas are crammed with shops, and the indoor water park—La Source—is an easy walk from any hotel. A ski trail through the village makes getting to and from the slopes effortless. You can even purchase lift tickets the night before.

STAY HERE Le Sommet des Neiges (\$99–219 per person; 888-738-1777; tremblant.ca) is gracious yet family-friendly.

ON MOUNTAIN Ski Les Bouleaux—relaxed, sun-splashed glades of well-spaced trees on the gentle Versant Sud (South Slope). **OFF MOUNTAIN** Water park, ziplines, ice climbing, horse-riding, sleigh rides, snowmobiles, dogsleds. **COOL FACTOR** Bone up as a family on basic French and use it during your stay. The kids will feel so cosmopolitan. **ONLY HERE** Take an all-day snowmobile tour into the forest on converted railroad (819-681-4848).



NORTHSTAR-AT-TAHOE CALIFORNIA

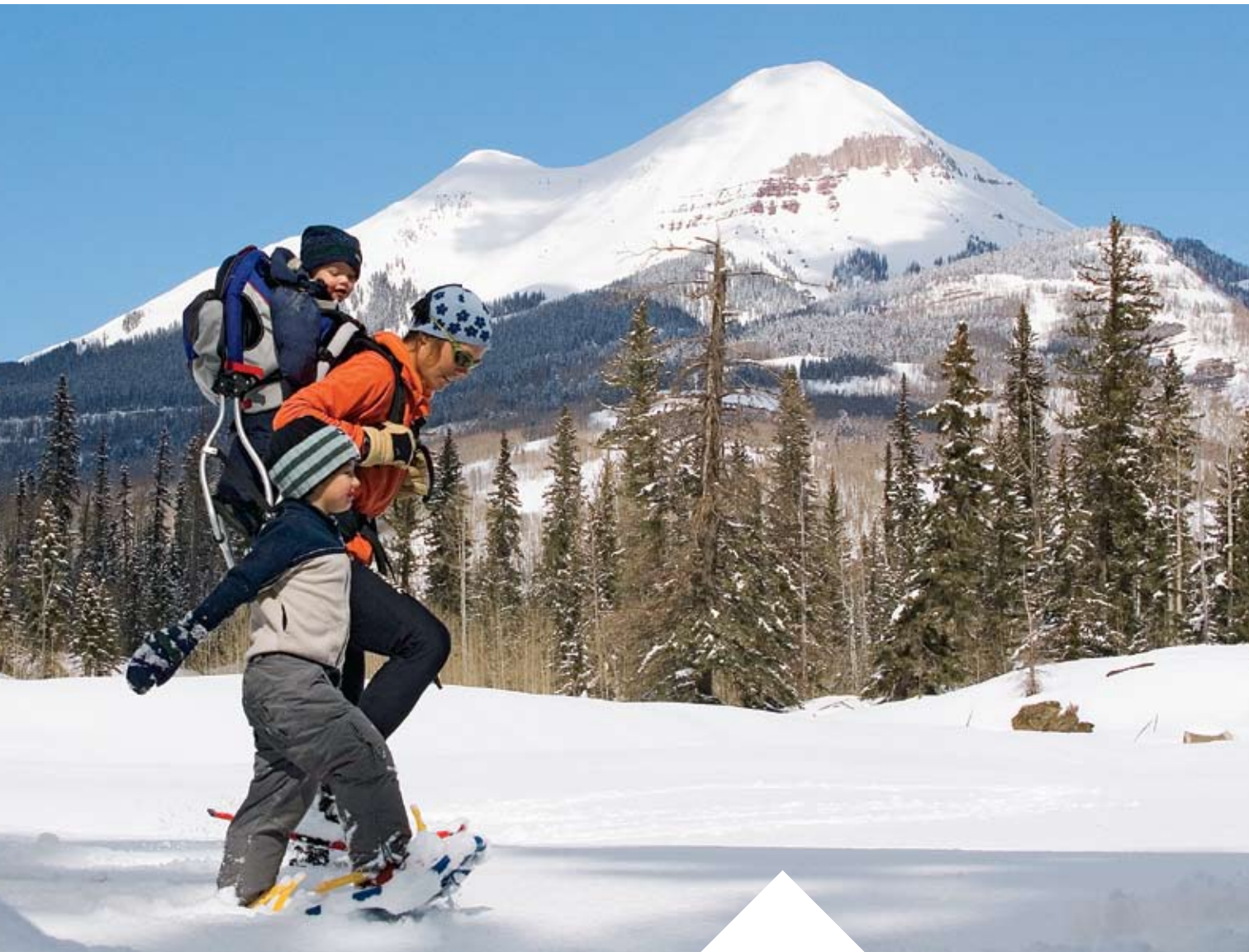


TAHOE SKIERS KNOW, AND OTHERS ARE LEARNING: THERE'S A NEW PLAYER ON THE FAMILY SCENE

Tahoe skiing means sublime views, varied terrain and yes, those casinos. Singles have long understood the lure. But who knew one of the nation's nicest family ski spots would be tucked away here? Northstar, near the north shore of the lake about as far from the casinos as it can be takes family fun seriously. Each trail pod is its own themed mini area, which helps families make sound choices when heading out. Looking to cruise gentle groomed terrain? Mount Pluto is your choice. Ready to take it up a notch but still feel safe as a group on every trail? Northwest Territory awaits. Ready for some bumps and powder? Head to the backside. And when you're game to rip steps and trees, Lookout Mountain has plenty of both. The new village makes staying and playing a snap as well. Families can choose from lofts or condos, all slopeside. The skating rink—centerpiece of the resort—is always lighted and open. Shuttles run continuously, and a “ConSkiErge” will stow and retrieve your gear for you.

STAY HERE The new slope-side village condos are your best bet. Posh yet affordable (\$206–\$665; 800-466-6784; northstaratahoe.com) **ON MOUNTAIN** 45-minute Mom and Dad and Me lessons are free on weekdays for parents with kids 4 and under. **OFF MOUNTAIN** Moonlight family snowshoe tours (530-562-2206). **COOL FACTOR** Supervised kids-only adventure parks are

set up for six different levels. **ONLY HERE** Captain Safety cruises the mountain in his yellow cape, and you can always find him at his superhero phone booth on the mountain. He knows safety and gives out prizes.



PURGATORY AT DURANGO MOUNTAIN RESORT COLORADO



BY ANY NAME, DURANGO (FORMERLY PURGATORY) SHOWS FAMILIES A GOOD TIME, WILD WEST-STYLE

If ever a mountain was created for families, it's Purgatory.

Nature formed it perfectly, with rolling steps that make the skiing roller-coaster fun but never intimidating. The terrain is generally intermediate, but there are kicks on every trail. The once-appealing base area has lagged in recent years. But there's good news: It's back. With the new Purgatory Lodge nearing completion, families will soon find a new daylodge, upscale slopeside lodging and a revamped base area with fire pits, hang-out spots and plenty of regular events like music, cookouts and parties. Thirty minutes away, the quintessentially Western town of Durango bustles with life. Visit the lovely and historic Strater Hotel, shop, dine and take in the mountain-town atmosphere. With the one-two combo of town and resort, families find great skiing, comfortable digs and an authentically Western experience.

STAY HERE When the new resort opens, you'll choose from studios to four bedrooms. Until then, the condos of the Purgatory Village Hotel (\$169-798; 800-982-6103; durangomountainresort.com) set you up steps from the mountain. Also consider a night's stay at the Strater (\$95-\$215; 800-247-4431; strater.com) just for the novelty. **ON MOUNTAIN** San Juan Skiing Company offers family catskiing adventures for intermedi-

ates and above. **OFF MOUNTAIN** Spend a day riding the Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Train (877-872-4607), operating since 1881. **COOL FACTOR** Debut site of the U.S. Ski Team Snow Monsters ski program for kids **ONLY HERE** Spend an evening at the Trimble Hot Springs, halfway between town and the resort (970-247-0111).

SCOTT DOWSMITH