

As the Ritzy Deer Valley Ski Resort Expands, One Hotel Aims to Democratize It

Utah's most exclusive place to ski—not snowboard—is doubling in size. And a new hotel targeting points junkies may help make it more accessible.



Deer Valley ski resort in Park City, Utah. Photographer: Deer Valley

By Gordy Megroz

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Deer Valley ski resort, only 38 miles east of the Salt Lake City International Airport, has long been known by superlatives. Chief among them are the most exquisitely groomed beginner and intermediate ski slopes in North America—miles and miles of corduroy. The resort is also highly exclusive: A one-day lift ticket at Deer Valley Resort can often cost \$299, whereas Aspen's prices top out at \$264 per day. And they're available only to skiers, with a strict policy of no snowboarders allowed.

Now the ski area is becoming one of the largest resorts in North America, too.

When Deer Valley opens for skiing this season, visitors to the resort in Park City, Utah, will have 316 new acres of terrain to carve down, which will include 19 new trails and three new chairlifts.

And that's merely a fraction of what's to come. During the 2025-26 season, the ski area expects more than 2,500 additional acres of terrain, six more chairlifts and 100 new trails, more than doubling Deer Valley's current size. When complete, the expansion will be one of the largest in history by any ski area and will bump up Deer Valley to the fourth-largest ski resort in North America.

Construction is happening off-mountain, too, with a new base village anchoring the new terrain. Called Deer Valley East Village, it will eventually include restaurants, rental shops, retail and more, making it the first alpine village of its kind to be developed in North America in decades. This winter, it will have little more than a ski school and a new Grand Hyatt hotel—the first of seven that are in the works. But that first hotel is significant. It will be one of the very few spots in town that can be booked with points—something that can go a long way towards make an entire destination feel more accessible.



The Grand Hyatt Deer Valley, which will be the first of seven hotels to open in Deer Valley East Village *Photographer: Photographer Johnny Adolphson*

For most avid skiers, the focus will be on the new terrain, which will largely comprise the type of runs Deer Valley is famous for: beginner and intermediate slopes that roll and meander down the mountain. Among the additions will be an extension to McHenry, a beginner run that, with added vertical, will now measure 4.2 miles, making it the longest trail at the ski area. Some expert terrain, including gladed tree skiing, is also part of the plan.

The expansion has been years in the making. More than a decade ago, Gary Barnett, president and founder of Extell Development Co., a real estate development firm, began buying up land on the eastern slope adjacent to Deer Valley's existing terrain. "I'm not a skier, but my kids convinced me that this is a great place to ski," Barnett says. "So when I found out that this land was for sale, it made sense that it should someday be used for skiing."

The first parcel Barnett bought was 40 acres. The second one was 3,000 acres, and more land purchases followed. About five years ago, Barnett's Extell began installing infrastructure, including roads and aqueducts. The potential plan was to build an independent ski area, which would be known as Mayflower Mountain Resort (named after the Mayflower Complex, a series of now defunct mines on the mountain).

But that changed a year ago when Deer Valley agreed to lease the land from Barnett, fully integrating the new terrain and infrastructure into its existing resort. "The reason that happened was that the opportunity to seamlessly double the size of the ski area was a very rare opportunity that couldn't be missed," says Emily Summers, a spokesperson for Deer Valley.



Skiers head up the mountain at Deer Valley Resort Source: Deer Valley

Included in the new infrastructure is the aforementioned Grand Hyatt Deer Valley, with more than 400 rooms and three oversized hot tubs, which is open for reservations from Nov. 20.

With panoramic views of the Uinta Mountains and the Jordanelle Reservoir, a 5-mile-wide body of water, Barnett chose to place a Grand Hyatt on the property because of his long working relationship with the company. “We built the Park Hyatt in New York and several other Hyatts,” he says. “We know them well and work with them well.”

The Grand Hyatt is not without competition. There’s the Stein Eriksen Lodge, a local mainstay; Montage and St. Regis have outposts with ski-in, ski-out access; and Auberge’s Goldener Hirsch rounds out the five-star offerings at the base of the Sterling Express lift. Rates for all of them tend to hover between \$600 and \$800 in early December.



A render of the Grand Hyatt lobby. Source: Grand Hyatt Deer Valley

The Grand Hyatt, by contrast, has rates in early December that start at \$270, though like the other resorts, it's a starting point that quickly escalates as the snow starts to pile up. Even still, it will provide value by contrast.

The resort will also be built on a larger scale than its competitors, with more than twice as many rooms as the Montage and St. Regis. An array of dining options will include gussied-up grab-and-go breakfast options for the first-tracks crowd and bars with stages for live music. The main restaurant, Remington Hall, will have an all-American menu and an emphasis on locally sourced ingredients such as small-batch sourdough, handcrafted cheese and smoked trout. And its living room, which features an oversize fireplace, will offer a twist on afternoon English tea, instead serving artisanal hot chocolate and pastries. The bar may carry the most clout when it opens: It will have a cocktail menu designed by Frank Kurt Maldonado of New York's Employees Only.

As for the rooms, they are simply styled. Woodsy and gray tones flicker at an alpine aesthetic, leaving the visual drama to ubiquitous views of the Uinta Mountains or the Jordanelle Reservoir.



A rendering of the game room at Grand Hyatt Deer Valley, which is part of its family-friendly offerings. Source: Grand Hyatt Deer Valley

But, Barnett says, the biggest attraction will be 11 meeting spaces, which sprawl over nearly 30,000 square feet and are drawing substantial corporate business. "We're getting a lot of bookings for meetings, even some that had formerly been held in tropical places," says Anthony Duggan, the property's general manager.

All those venues may make the Grand Hyatt feel a bit like a village unto itself, and that will have to be the point until the rest of the East Village town center takes shape.

When asked if plans to charge more than \$800 for an entry-level room during peak winter will only reinforce Deer Valley's exclusivity, rather than opening it up to new audiences, Barnett says he hopes the opposite is true. "We don't want it to be exclusive," he says. "We're hoping the rates are approachable."

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-09-26/first-look-at-the-grand-hyatt-deer-valley-utah-s-most-exciting-new-ski-resort?srd=pursuits-vp&sref=vDm8pS9H&leadSource=uverify%20wall&embedded-checkout=true>