

## Archive » July 31, 2008

### GOLF & TRAVEL

By Ray Navis, Contributing Writer

#### **Vail in the summer**

When I think of Vail, Colo., the memory of our late President Gerald Ford always comes to mind. It's easy to see why an avid skier and golfer, which Ford was, fell in love with this area.

The skiing is world renown, with probably the best powder and one of the longest seasons in the U.S. There also is much to do in the summer, including great golf options, horseback riding, water rafting, fly fishing, hiking, ballooning and biking.

All of this is within a short distance of elegant restaurants and shopping in Vail Village. The Vail Mountain Lodge and Spa is perfectly situated for all these activities.

#### **The lodge**

Vail Mountain Lodge and Spa is located in the heart of Vail Village on the banks of Gore Creek. This is a boutique hotel with 28 rooms and condos. Private fireplaces, deep soaking tubs and luxurious feather beds await the tired skier, golfer or shopper after a long day of play. Many of the rooms face the river, offering non-stop refreshment with the soothing sound of the rushing waters below. Open your windows at night and you can be assured a deep, relaxing rest as the sounds of nature lull you to sleep.

The Terra Bistro is located in the lobby area and offers fine dining with an emphasis on health. They serve free range meat and poultry as well as vegetables from local markets.

Terra Bistro is very popular with this fitness conscious community. Following this theme, the hotel is home to the Vail Athletic Club, which is located on its lower floors.

This is a not your normal hotel workout facility, but actually is the hub for fitness in Vail Village.

They have two floors of equipment and as good a setup as I have ever seen. The hotel's spa also is located in this area. On a cold winter day you would never have to leave the building if you decided to train or soothe your muscles instead of hitting the slopes. For more information, visit <http://www.vailmountainlodge.com>.

#### **The golf**

Vail Golf Club is just a mile or so down the road from the Village. The course offers

scenic views of the Gore mountain range from every hole. It is a level course and easy to walk if you choose. But remember that you are at 8,200 feet here, and consider a cart — especially if you just arrived. After a few days you will adjust to the altitude, but before you do make sure to drink plenty of water as well.

This is a traditional layout that can be played anywhere from 5,277 yards on up to 6,740 yards.

The ball will fly farther at this altitude, especially if you hit a high ball. Plan on hitting it at least 10 percent farther than you do on lowland courses.

Vail Golf Club winds its way past ponds and rivers and offers an abundance of wildlife viewing.

The practice range is very spacious, and they also have a large putting and chipping area. For more information, visit <http://www.vailgolfclub.net>.

### **The village**

Vail Village has something for everyone: shops of all kinds, great restaurants just below the lifts, and gondolas rising up to its famous ski slopes. We dined at La Tour, which is very popular.

This French-American Restaurant has a distinctively European flavor. The ambiance is that of fine home adorned by colorful artwork. This, combined with its great location, makes it popular year round.

The food and the service were top drawer. Our table ordered Colorado lamb, Dover sole, and Tasmanian salmon following an appetizer of escargot. All in our party were very happy with their choices.

La Tour is located on one of Vail's more popular streets and offers café-style seating with great views out to the Village. For more information, visit <http://www.latour-vail.com>.

### **The sightseeing**

A trip to Vail would not be complete without a ride on its state-of-the-art gondola. This ride, from the Lionsgate section of the village, will whisk you up to Adventure Ridge, where there are many activities and great dining as well. It is a quick vertical ascent, offering views of the entire valley. At the top we dined at the Blue Moon Restaurant, and the food — once again — was excellent.

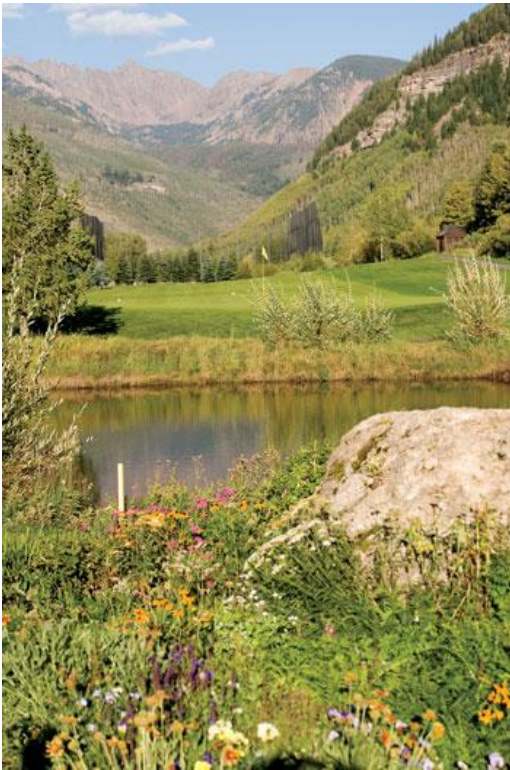
Adventure Ridge offers numerous activities for all ages.

My own children were mesmerized by the trampoline, which acts like a mini bungee jump. Ice skating, ski-biking and numerous hiking trails also are available at this 10,000 foot site.

The views are awe-inspiring, with towering snow-capped mountains in every direction and thick forests below. For more information visit <http://www.vail.snow.com>.



Vail Golf Course lodge - Courtesy photo



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