

## TRAVEL

# Mountain GOATs: The best new ski resorts from New York to New Mexico

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Visit Utah's utterly transformed Deer Park, with 60 new runs.

Re Wikstrom Photography

If you're the type who cheers when the weather turns chilly, and can't wait to swap swim trunks for salopettes, there's plenty of excitement on the way this winter with a raft of new ski happenings around the country.

To unearth the best, we tapped a brain trust of ski-mad travel experts to call out a highly selective and subjective rundown of the need-to-know newness all around the country — as well as a few slam dunks within easy reach of NYC.

## The big news: Utah



The Beehive State's Deer Valley Resort is abuzz with 4,300 acres of skiable terrain.

Eric Schramm

Get ready for a Kris Jenner-level facelift in Deer Valley, which will leave it virtually unrecognizable (and rejuvenated) by season's end. The numbers are staggering: The resort's skiable terrain will almost double year over year, adding more than 80 new ski runs, seven new chair lifts and a first-ever 10-passenger East Village Express Gondola to connect the new Deer Valley East Village with Park Peak.

The total skiable terrain is now a staggering 4,300 acres.

The expansion was much needed, said Embark Beyond's ski guru Josh Geller, calling it a "game changer." That's because moving forward, folks won't need to go over to Park City or the Canyons for extra runs. There are new accommodations, too, but not so many as to pack the pistes, he said.

The bowling alley-equipped, ski-in-and-out Montage on the hill remains a standout, though the new Grand Hyatt's a handy addition.



The heavens are beaming over the new Grand Hyatt Deer Valley, at least in renderings.

Grand Hyatt Deer Valley

Kevin Jackson, of high-end outdoors specialist EXP Journeys, raved about the family-friendly service and the terrain, which is primed more for first timers than other, more challenging mountains.

If you're not keen to be among the first to road test the new look at Deer Valley, head over to Park City instead, which adds a 10-passenger Sunrise Gondola this winter in place of the old Sunrise chairlift, pumping up capacity from Canyons Village. It's well-timed, too, with the arrival of Elevation at Canyons Village, the confusingly named but handily located five-bedroom townhomes right at the base of the gondola — book them via the adjacent Hyatt Centric Park City.

## The contender: New Mexico



Serious skiers powder up at newly renovated Taos in New Mexico.

Taos: Gai Willey

Need an antidote to the après-ski-powered scene of so many resorts? Come to Taos.

"The powder is fantastic, and it's great for hardcore skiers who don't need Bogner ski suits," said Geller.

It's also undergoing a major reinvention, with more than \$300 million plowed into its facilities over the last decade. This season's new upgrades include a new fixed-grip triple chairlift (replacing the 40-year-old Lift 7), the new Taos Kids store and improvements on Maxie's Terrain Park trail.

There's also increased flight capacity with a new direct route from Denver on Contour Airlines, plus upped frequencies to everywhere from Austin to LA — both served by semi-private JSX.

Stay at the brand new 51-room Hotel Willa, which opened this spring in what was once the 1960s adobe-style motor lodge El Pueblo downtown. Score \$70 lift tickets for the resort's founding, a two-thirds discount, if you come early this season (before Dec. 17) or plan to join one of the women's ski weeks, running three times this year (Dec. 14 to 19, Jan. 25 to 30 and Feb. 22 to 27).

## The luxe option: Wyoming



Hoback — a \$250 million ski-in, ski-out residence club — is Jackson Hole's hottest and most luxe new arrival.

Hoback Club

The pair of entrepreneurs who founded what's now Jackson Hole in 1965 were visionaries, recognizing the potential for the middle-of-nowhere Teton resort. Their aim was to turn the challenging terrain there into a Euro-style ski hub — and the continued buzziness here underscores the success of that bold swing. Come celebrate its success on Dec. 19 with a massive bash, including \$60 lift tickets and a retro costume contest.

There's more to come, too, as the AARP-entitled resort is nowhere near retiring: Look at the sixth new lift in 10 years and the upgraded Sublette Quad, which cuts ride time more than in half, climbing 1,000 feet every minute.

"There's a cowboy-chic vibe, but it still draws pro athletes — Jimmy Chin lives there," said Jackson, co-director of the Oscar-winning documentary "Free Solo." "It's an under-the-radar, super-luxe destination for quality skiers."

Even better, of course, you touch down at the airport here in the middle of a national park, for maximum natural immersion, and that tiny airport still has terrific connectivity — in season, hosting more than a dozen nonstop directs around the country.

The biggest news for this winter? The arrival of the much-anticipated Hoback Club, a new property that's primed to elbow much-loved Caldera House aside among elite snow bunnies. The \$250 million ski-in, ski-out residence club, with rental homes as large as 6,500 square feet, sits right between the tram and gondola in Teton Village.

"It will be a big draw," said Geller, who added that it thrives on exclusivity. "I've got clients who recently moved to Aspen, and they love it, but everyone they know from NYC or LA has been transplanted there."

## The near thing: New England



Making pizza on Gore Mountain.

Courtesy of the NYS Olympic Regional Development Authority

There's plenty of fresh and exciting skiing for anyone who wants to stick within a few hours' drive of the Big Apple.

In the Adirondacks, try the new lodge North Creek Ski Bowl at Gore Mountain, which will stay open year-round and is part of a \$40 million attempt to revitalize Old Gore (see, too, a new, faster chairlift to speed up access to the slopes there).

At Belleayre Mountain in the Catskills, both Discovery Lodge and Overlook Lodge have seen major facelifts, along with 20,000 new feet of snowmaking pipe.

There's also improved snowmaking up at Lake Placid's Whiteface Mountain, with 115 high-efficiency guns and a modern, fixed-grip double chairlift replacing the pair of creaky 1980s-era lifts there.

Fancy splashing out on a little VIP R&R? Vermont's Skandena Six just outside Woodstock, a family friendly, almost century-old ski spot, now allows up to 150 people to rent the mountain, including ski passes and guided activities like racing and cross-country skiing.

If you're worried about weather, consider booking at Topnotch in Stowe, which has just launched a partnership with Sensible Weather, one of a slew of new forecasting start-ups, offering insurance against bad conditions. Opt in to the program and you'll get automatic reimbursement if the conditions aren't good enough to hit the slopes.



Plunge right into Tordrillo Mountain Lodge in Alaska. It's the coolest spot for all things snow with a massive new wellness center.

Tordrillo Mountain Lodge

Until luxe specialist Eleven Experience launches the new exclusive use Winterlake Lodge in the Alaska Range next winter, the place to stay in America's largest state is undoubtedly Tordrillo Mountain Lodge. It kicks off its first-ever women's heli-ski camp this winter (Feb. 28 to March 7), hosted by local shredders Jess McMillan, Jamie MacIntosh and Lel Tone and aimed at everyone from would-bes to vets. Ease those end-of-day aches at its new 2,400-square-foot onsite wellness center, with traditional shou sugi ban walls (that's singed cedar, Japanese-style).

Christian Chumbley, of adventure specialist **Gray & Co.**, called Mt. Rose in Tahoe "an under-appreciated gem, with a big-mountain feel — quiet backside runs, easy front side slopes for kids, and wide, sweeping terrain throughout." More snowmaking arrives this winter with a new 20-lane tubing park for families. "It's not fancy, just fun," he said.



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The Nantucket-based boutique chain White Elephant is the latest lodge to check into Aspen, America's buzziest and most competitive ski town.  
White Elephant Aspen

Heading to Aspen again? Book a room at White Elephant, the latest hotel to arrive on the scene, a 51-room reimagining of the former Hotel Aspen by the Nantucket-started boutique chainlet known for its no-expense-spared retro reimaginings. Pair that with dinner at the new Petit Trois, the first spot beyond LA for Chef Ludo Lefebvre's celeb hot spot — Jimmy Kimmel's a regular and Justin Timberlake is an avowed fan.