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TALK OF THE TOWN

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NO MATTER WHAT YOU CELEBRATE, holiday gift-giving offers a sense of joy to both the gift-giver and the giftee. Of course, we love unwrapping and the surprises that come with that, as well as supporting our local retailers, but we've taken a different approach with our gift-giving guide this year. Instead of items you'll find on shelves, we're inviting you to think of amazing experiences you can gift to your loved ones that will contribute to lifelong memories (Unforgettable Gifts, page 28).

A wonderful winter meal can be an adventure itself when you visit Tennessee Pass Cookhouse (page 18) for a ski-in, four-course dining experience. And don't worry, if you're too full to ski back out, they offer overnight yurt accommodations.

Other mountain adventures include a visit to the Breckenridge Nordic Center, the brainchild of Gene Dayton, who is often referred to as the father of modern Nordic skiing in Summit County, and who still works there with his family today (Alpine Adventures, page 52). And go backcountry in a big way with a snowcat trip (Fresh Tracks, page 56).

When you do select some gifts to wrap, check out Brookstone's collection and partnership with Castle Rock's own football legend, Christian McCaffrey. You'll find the ultimate home and travel luxury items that McCaffrey uses himself (Pro Products, page 20).

Most of all, we wish you a joyous season with friends and loved ones. Whatever holidays you celebrate, our best to you and yours!

Heather Shoning

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AvidLifestyle is a luxury lifestyle magazine serving Denver's south suburbs. And we're excited to add new, experienced writers to our growing list of contributors. Do you have magazine writing experience? Do you know Denver's south suburbs? Can you dig deep for the unique story about the people, places and events that make our community special? If so, we want you! Please email heather@avidlifestyle.com with basic info about yourself and at least three published clips (links are fine).

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Q&A



Accessible Art

LONE TREE ARTS CENTER makes enjoying art easy and fun

By Kastle Waserman

PRIDING ITSELF IN QUALITY performances, the Lone Tree Arts Center offers professional art experiences encouraging engagement with children, seniors and other underserved populations within the community. We spoke with executive director Leigh Chandler about what visitors can expect and what's coming up.

Q For those not familiar with Lone Tree Arts Center, what is the backstory?

A: We were built in 2011 by a Lone Tree citizen-approved bond. The vision at the time was for a community gathering place. It quickly turned into more. We have a main stage, a multidisciplinary event hall, an outdoor space and a gallery space with four rotating exhibits a year.

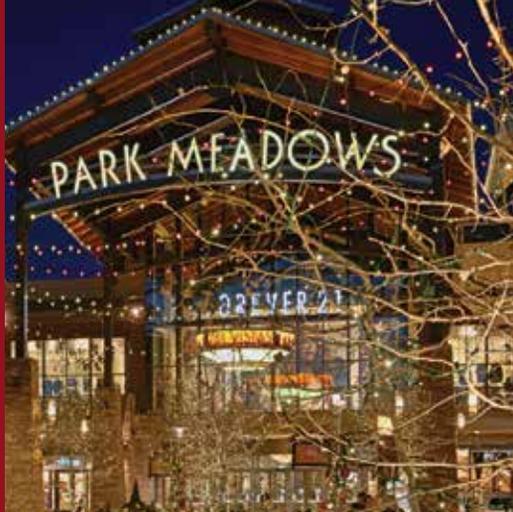
Q How did you become executive director and what does that entail?

A: I came on as marketing director nine years ago. Working for an organization with a hybrid model of producing and presenting shows was exciting to me. I wanted to be able to make a difference in the community. In 2021, our founding executive director left, and I became the executive director a year later. I oversee all aspects of the organization, but my real passion is the programming. >>>



Leigh Chandler

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Q What does the programming at Lone Tree Arts Center consist of?

A: Our main stage has touring artists that are international, national and Colorado-based. We also produce extended-run shows. One of the things that sets us apart is that we operate under an agreement with Actors' Equity, which means the shows are akin to what you would see at Denver Center or on Broadway.

Q Does the Lone Tree Arts Center offer children's programming?

A: We have Seedlings for toddlers and their caregivers to get kids interested in theatre. Then, the Passport to Culture program for elementary and middle-school-aged kids will introduce them to the power of the arts.

Q Are there also programs for seniors?

A: We have Arts in the Afternoon for seniors who no longer drive at night so they can get a quality performing arts experience and social time.

Q What programming do you offer for those with memory loss?

A: Our SPARK program is for people in the early stages of memory loss. It's an interactive performance, and you can see the connections that are sparked in our participants' minds. We've heard feedback from families crying tears of joy because they felt like they were losing their loved ones, but this was a way for them to connect at that moment.



PHOTO: BYDANNYLAM

Q What is the sensory-inclusion program?

A: It's for children and adults on the autism spectrum or those who have other sensitivity or developmental disabilities. We keep the lights up a bit, the sound levels down, and let people walk around if they want to. And we have a quiet room. We work with the artist to make these shows accessible for people who wouldn't otherwise be able to experience a theatrical performance.

Q What exciting things are coming up at Lone Tree Arts Center?

A: We have the Million Dollar Quartet this fall, the Syncopated Ladies, a female tap dance group created by Emmy-nominated tap dancer and choreographer Chloé Arnold. She has worked with Debbie Allen. Beyoncé even promoted them on her website.

Q What do you love most about the Lone Tree Arts Center?

A: We always want to treat our patrons, the artists, our volunteers, staff and crew incredibly well so they can't wait to come back. That has helped our success, and quite frankly, it also makes it a really fun place to work!



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Beef Stew

Ingredients:

1 lb ground beef or lamb
1 medium onion, diced
2 carrots, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tbsp tomato paste
2 tbsp all-purpose flour
1 cup beef broth
1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp dried thyme
1 tsp dried rosemary
Salt and pepper to taste
1 cup frozen peas

Mashed Potatoes

Ingredients:

1.5 lbs (24 oz) potatoes, peeled and quartered

4 oz butter
1/4 cup milk or cream
Salt and pepper to taste

Garnish

Ingredients:
1 tsp fresh rosemary, chopped

Directions:

1. Prepare the Beef Stew: Start by cooking the ground beef or lamb in a large skillet over medium heat until it's browned, then drain any excess fat. Begin adding the diced onion, carrots and minced garlic to the skillet, sautéing the mixture until the vegetables are softened, which should take about 5-7 minutes. Stir in the tomato paste

and let it cook for an additional 2 minutes to deepen the flavor. Then sprinkle the flour over the mixture and stir well to combine, which will thicken the stew. Slowly pour in the beef broth, stirring constantly to prevent lumps, and then add Worcestershire sauce, thyme, rosemary, salt and pepper. Finally, allow the stew to simmer for 15 minutes until it thickens stir in the frozen peas and cook for another 5 minutes.

2. Prepare the Mashed Potatoes: While the stew is simmering, boil the potatoes in a large pot of salted water until tender. Then drain the potatoes and return

them to the pot. Finally, add butter and milk or cream. Mash until smooth and creamy and season to your liking.

3. Assemble Shepherd's Pie: Start by preheating the oven to 400°F. Ladle the beef stew mixture into individual cast iron bowls (or a large casserole dish if you prefer), then top the stew with an even layer of mashed potatoes. Place the bowls under a broiler until the top is golden brown and crispy.

4. Serve: Remove the cast iron bowls from the broiler and sprinkle chopped fresh rosemary for garnish. Finally, serve hot and enjoy.

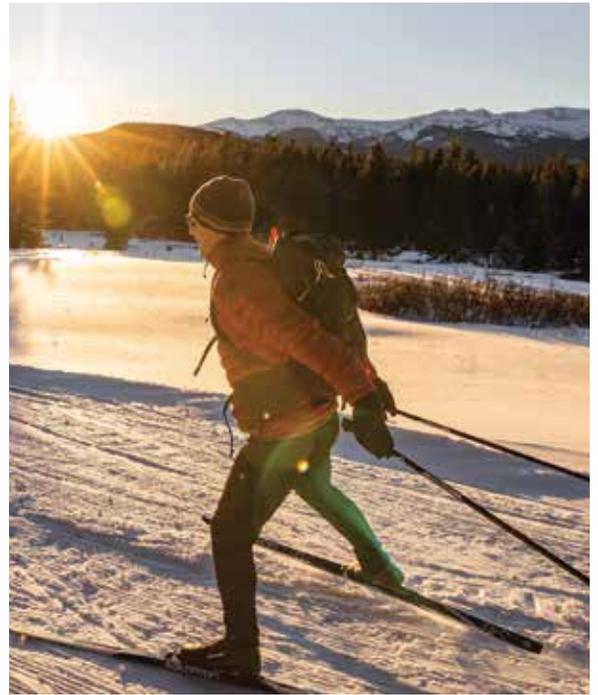
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Tennessee Pass

Cookhouse

This **SKI-IN BACKCOUNTRY EATERY** offers four-course dining amid views of the Continental Divide

By Corey Buhay

Photography by Emily Sierra





MOST COLORADANS THINK of backcountry adventure and five-star dining as mutually exclusive. You can have one or the other—maybe on the same day, but certainly not at the same time. Unless, of course, you dine at the Tennessee Pass Cookhouse.

Tucked amid evergreen forest just north of Leadville, the Cookhouse is a tiny establishment—just a small kitchen and a handful of tables tucked into a canvas-sided yurt. In the winter, the only way to get there is via a one-mile ski or snowshoe. Those nights, the forest is quiet. Moonlight casts aspen shadows across the glittering snow, and the only sound is the swish of your skis through powder. When you finally arrive, the yurt seems to materialize from thin air, a surreal mirage against the winter white.

Stand on the front porch, and you'll be treated to sweeping views of the Sawatch Range and the Continental Divide. Wander inside, and you'll be greeted by the savory aromas of seared game and homemade soup, roasted potatoes and fresh-baked bread. Juxtaposed against the snow and silence, the warmth and bustle feel almost surreal—a scene straight out of Narnia. But this is no spellbound illusion. It's the very real brainchild of Ty and Roxanne Hall, the couple who bought the Tennessee Pass Nordic Center in 1994 in hopes of building it into something better.

"We were looking for ways to expand beyond cross-country skiing, and we realized there was a picnic table where the Cookhouse is now," says co-founder Ty Hall. The table, which overlooked a sweeping mountain panorama, was a popular lunch spot.

"We wondered if people would ski to a

restaurant at night," Ty Hall says. "We decided to give it a shot." They petitioned the Forest Service for permission and scored a permit for a temporary structure—hence the yurt. But thanks to its unique look and intimate feel, the yurt stuck.

The Halls hired a chef and promised guests a high-end dining experience, spotlighting wild game and traditional Colorado fare (think: four-course meals featuring dishes like succulent elk ribs and bison tenderloin). For the first few years, they barely broke even. But slowly, things started to take off. Today, the Cookhouse is a local institution. Diners travel from all over the world, and many reserve tables a year in advance.

It's not hard to see the appeal. There are few places in Colorado cozier than the Cookhouse on a busy night. Candlelight dances on the walls, and a golden warmth emanates from the

wood-fired stove. The air thrums with talk and laughter, set to a rhythm of clinking plates and chiming glasses.

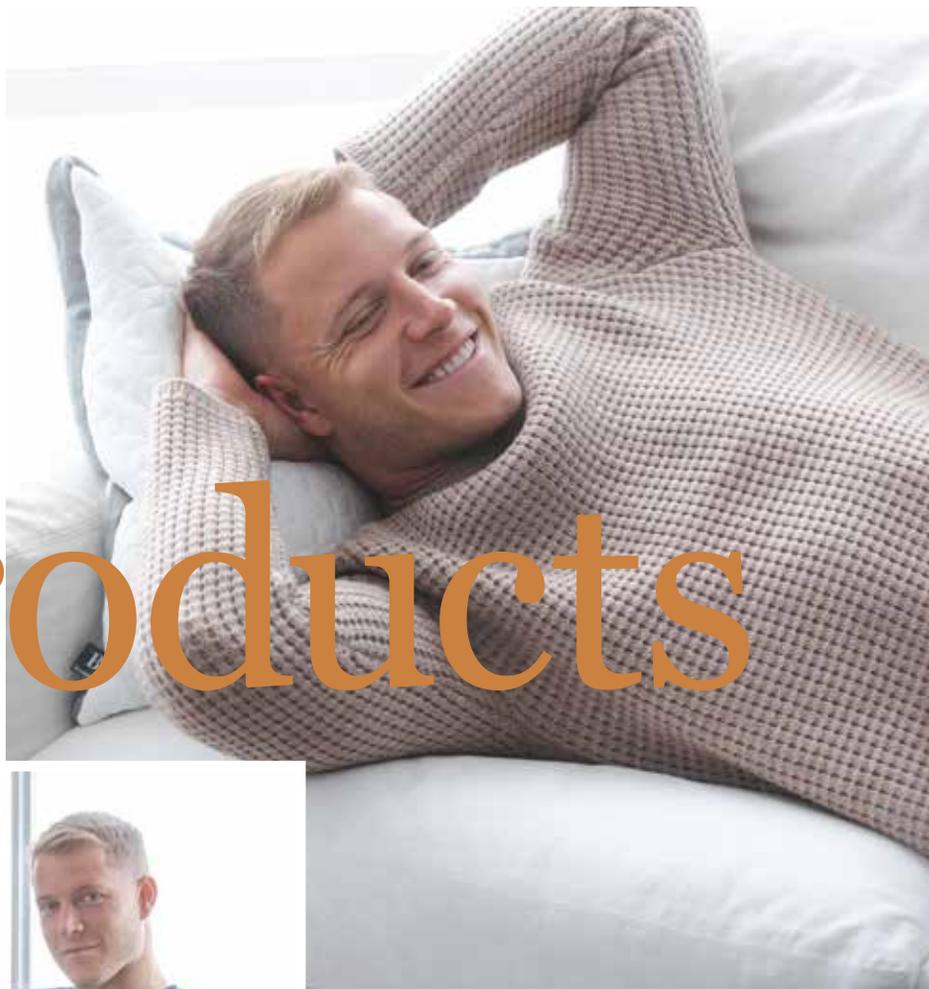
"It's so close and cozy and welcoming," Ty Hall says. "It's that kind of intimate dining setting where people really talk to each other. I'm amazed at how many times groups decide to join tables."

The atmosphere is friendly and relaxed. No one is in a hurry. After all, few diners have to commute home. Most end the night by skiing straight to their accommodations: a handful of cozy sleep yurts that offer soft beds, wood stoves—and a way to keep the magic going just a little longer. 🦋

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Pro Products



Make yourself at home like **CHRISTIAN MCCAFFREY** with these top-notch Brookstone products

By Heather Shoning

CASTLE ROCK COOL KID Christian McCaffrey is now the brand ambassador for Brookstone's curated collection of fitness, recovery, wellness, travel, technology and lifestyle products. "I've had the chance to experience and use these products for a while now, and they truly enhance my everyday life. Whether you're traveling, relaxing or training like I do, they support a balanced lifestyle," he says.

The three-time Pro Bowler and All-Pro Athlete is a true champion, revered by many as one today's greatest NFL players. McCaffrey first hit the public spotlight in 2015 while at Stanford before being drafted in the first round of the 2017 NFL draft, with the eighth overall pick to the Carolina Panthers. Known for his skills in both rushing and receiving, he has set various records in a single season. In 2022, he was traded to the San Francisco 49ers, where he continues to showcase his many talents, including last year's Super Bowl appearance.

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Top Right: Brookstone x Christian McCaffrey Dual Comfort Cooling Pillow, \$59.99; Bottom Left: Brookstone x Christian McCaffrey Shiatsu Foot & Calf Massager, \$279.99

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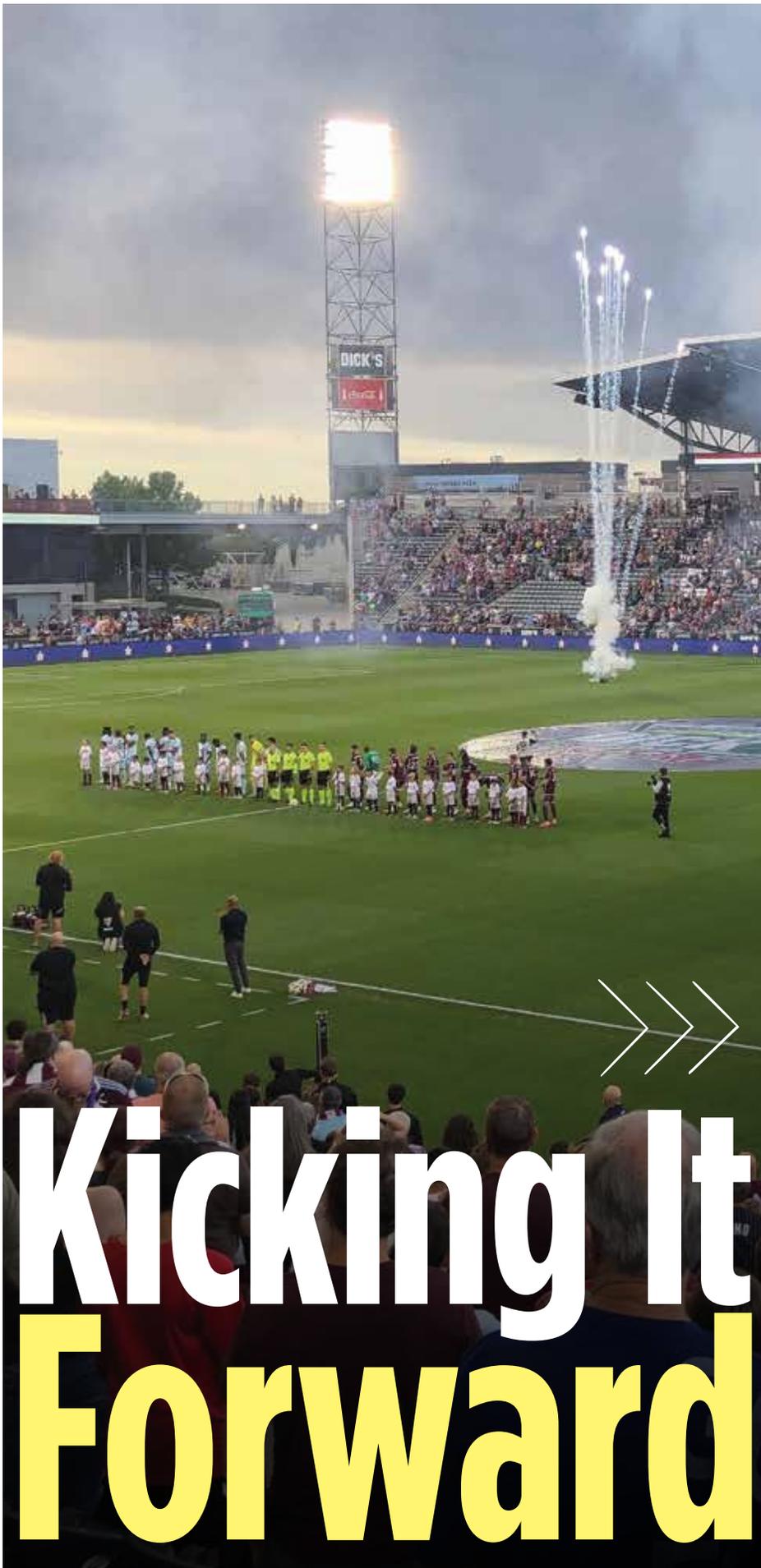
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How a Littleton man sparked Colorado's "SOCCER EXPLOSION"

By Flint Whitlock

**Flint Whitlock is a local military historian specializing in World War II. This content is based on his collaboration with Joe Guennel to edit the latter's autobiography, Life Is A Game (Cable Publishing, 2021).*

LOOKING AROUND local parks and playing fields these days, filled with a colorful profusion of boys and girls kicking soccer balls while being cheered on by soccer moms and dads, it's easy to think that the game has always been part of the American sporting landscape. But you'd be wrong to think that.

Sixty years ago, Littleton became the epicenter of a seismic shift of sport in Colorado—thanks primarily to the efforts of one man: the late Gottfried K. Guennel, an émigré from Nazi Germany. "Soccer didn't simply spring full-grown like Athena from the head of Zeus," Guennel said. "A lot of people and a lot of hard work went into making it happen."

"Joe," as Americans later called him, literally got the ball rolling. He and his parents escaped from Germany in 1934, just as Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party were coming to power. Like most European boys, his first love was soccer, and he became one of the best young players in Oelsnitz, near the Czech border.

But when he couldn't find a soccer team to play with in his new town of Bangor, Pennsylvania, he turned to the uniquely American sport of baseball and discovered that his youthful athletic talents also extended to this activity.

With the world marching toward war in the late 1930s, Joe enrolled at Butler University to study forestry. After Pearl Harbor, he, along with millions of other young American males, enlisted in the U.S. Army. With his excellent grades, he was selected for the Army's ASTP—the Army Specialized Training Program—established at hundreds of colleges nationwide; he was assigned to attend the University of Missouri. >>>

Pre-game fireworks at soccer-specific Dick's Sporting Goods Park in Commerce City. When the Colorado Rapids were founded in 1995, they enabled kids to dream that they might one day become professionals in the world's most popular sport. For many Colorado players, that dream has come true.

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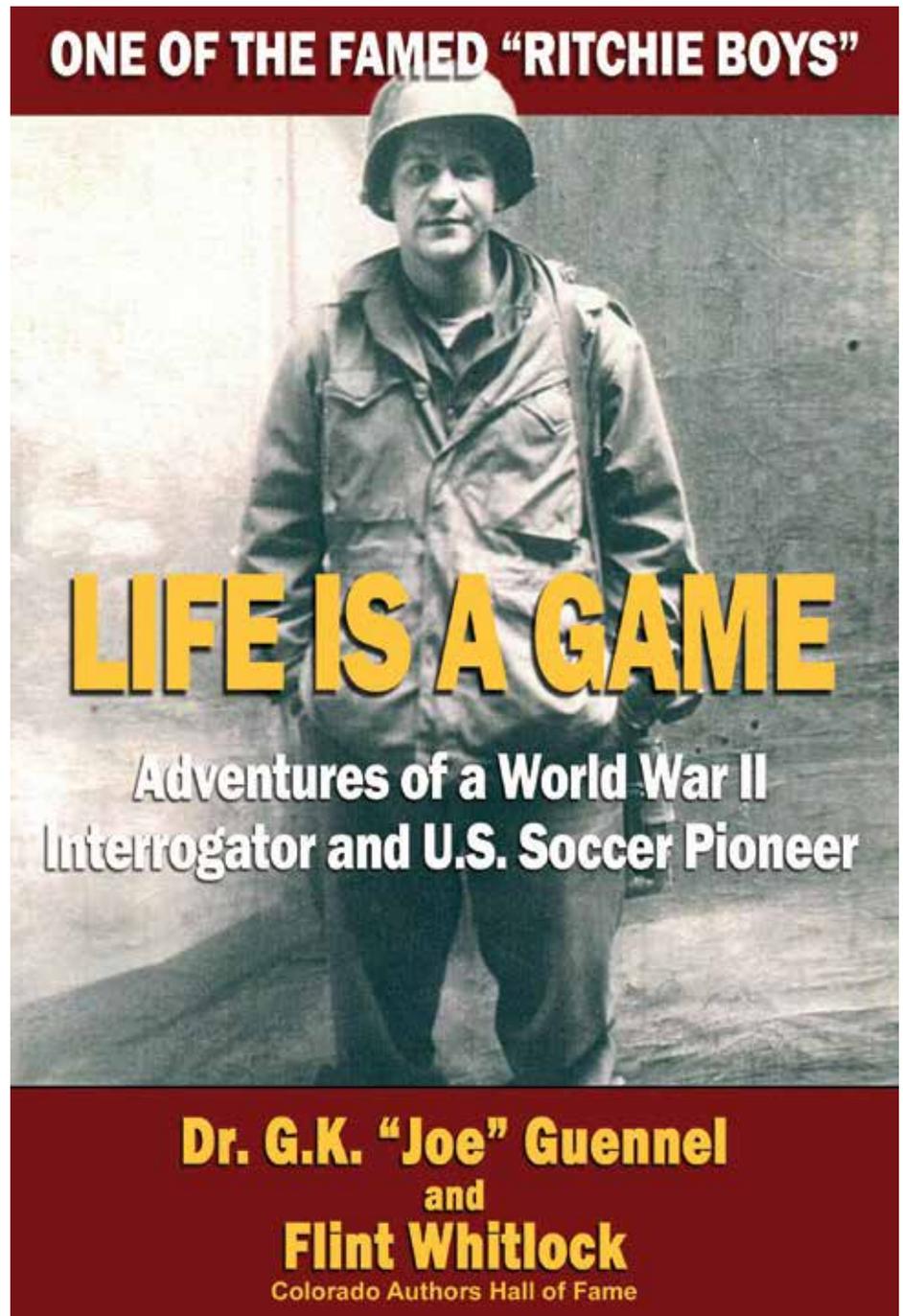
The ASTP was a hothouse for breeding officers with unique abilities; Joe happened to be fluent in German. Joe also organized a soccer team of fellow ASTPers, most of whom had never seen a soccer ball, simply to get a little exercise. Word soon leaked out about this ad hoc team, and a match was arranged between Joe's team and the top high school team in the St. Louis area, one of the few soccer hotbeds in America at the time.

As the date for the game drew nearer, Joe became terrified that his soldiers would be badly embarrassed by the high schoolers, and he wanted to cancel the match; his players convinced him otherwise, and the team played in front of 4,000 spectators, ending in a 1-1 draw. Greatly relieved that it had not been a disaster, Joe was singled out by St. Louis sportswriters as being the star of the Army team; it was praise that would propel him to devote his life to soccer after the war.

The ASTP was canceled in April 1944 because of severe manpower shortages in the combat units, and Joe thought he would end up as a rifleman in a foxhole somewhere on the front lines. Instead, the Army sent him to Camp Ritchie, Maryland, where he took accelerated courses in how to interrogate prisoners of war.

After a few months of study, he was shipped to France, arriving there in November 1944. He was immediately assigned to Interrogation Team 124 and attached to the 3rd Infantry Division. The six-man team's duty was to question German soldiers captured on the battlefield and obtain as much information from them about their units' activities as possible.

During much of his time overseas, Joe, an excellent artist, sketched and painted his way across Europe. As his unit neared Munich, they came across the newly liberated Dachau concentration camp, where piles of corpses presented a scene of unimaginable horror. "Those images



are burned indelibly in my brain," he admitted. Stunned, Joe threw some of his packaged rations over the barbed wire, where thousands of starving inmates hungrily grabbed them. To recover from the nightmare, Joe and his team took a jeep trip south to Berchtesgaden, home of Hitler's alpine retreat on the Germany-Austria border and the Third Reich's purported "final redoubt," where the Allies expected the Nazis to make their last stand.

The clean mountain air and glorious vistas were a refreshing tonic from the awfulness of Dachau. Believing that his team was the first group of Americans to reach the area, Joe and his

buddies rampaged through Hitler's bomb-damaged "Berghof" and carried off souvenirs; Joe took an ashtray, a small plaque and a bath towel. Before returning to their unit, the team also nabbed a sled full of wine from secret passages below the SS canteen.

Once the war ended, Joe was selected to interrogate some of the top Nazi generals and administrators. He thought he would be assigned to be an interpreter at the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal in 1945, but that assignment didn't come through. He stayed in war-torn Germany for a couple of years, even marrying a German girl named Hilde Lang. >>>



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FOGO DE CHÃO

The two of them then came to the U.S., where Joe enrolled in a graduate program at Indiana University and earned his doctorate in paleontology. While there, he organized and coached the school's first club soccer team in 1949. (After becoming a varsity team in 1973, Indiana eventually became one of the most successful, winning eight NCAA and 18 Big Ten titles.) With his degree in hand, Joe began applying for jobs, finally landing one with Marathon Oil in Littleton in 1961.

Soccer soon became his focus again. He met with the athletic director at the University of Denver and helped the school start a soccer program to replace its now-defunct football team. He was becoming nationally known when he became the secretary-treasurer of the fledgling National Soccer Coaches Association of America.

Seeing no one playing the sport in Littleton's parks and schools, Joe, like an artist viewing a blank canvas as having unlimited potential, met with a local man, John Meyer, who had just organized a couple of kids' teams. But Meyer soon moved away, leaving the field open to Joe. "I wanted to do what I could to promote kids' soccer in Colorado. Nobody asked me to do it, nobody said I would get rich or famous doing it, but I did it anyway," he said. "I wanted American kids to have an alternative to the other American sports such as basketball and football—especially kids who weren't big enough for football or tall enough for basketball. Soccer was perfect for the 'average' kid."

It didn't take long before Littleton's parks were alive with children kicking balls around. And Joe was the driving force behind it. "I built the portable goals, lined the fields, wrote news releases and bought soccer balls from a mail-order supply house in New York," he said, "because the local stores didn't sell them. And my wife washed the uniforms."

Joe also taught coaches how to coach and referees how to referee. He fund-raised, coached, refereed, held player and coach clinics, and did whatever else was necessary to get this new and alien sport off the ground. But there was a sticking point: the schools. "I tried to get the schools to add soccer to their athletic programs but got a lot of resistance from athletic directors—especially football coaches who saw soccer as a threat. It would take a while before the high schools finally added soccer."

"I built the portable goals, lined the fields, wrote news releases and bought soccer balls from a mail-order supply house in New York because the local stores didn't sell them. And my wife washed the uniforms."

—Joe Guennel



The first Denver-area high school league adopted the sport in 1968, and the Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA) sanctioned the sport in 1971.

As the years went on, the sport continued to grow in Littleton and beyond as Joe applied his talents to helping other communities—in Texas, Ohio, Montana, and Oklahoma—start their own youth programs. He became the "Johnny Appleseed of American soccer."

It also took a while for professional soccer to take root in Colorado. The first pro team—the Denver Dynamos of the North American Soccer League—began play in 1974 but moved to Minnesota after two years. The Dynamos were followed in 1978 by the Colorado Caribous and the indoor Denver Avalanche (1980–1982), but they, too, faded from the scene. It was not until 1995, when the Colorado Rapids, owned by Kroenke Sports, came into being as one of the original teams of Major League Soccer, built an 18,000-seat stadium in Commerce City and won the championship in 2010 (ex-Denver South High School star Conor Casey scored the winning goal).

In addition to the Rapids, two other professional teams have begun operations—the Colorado Springs Switchbacks of the United Soccer League and the Northern Colorado Hailstorm FC in Windsor (of the USL's League One; one of the owners is former Colorado Rockies outfielder Ryan Spilborghs).

Since Joe Guennel's pioneering work, soccer has continued to grow. The Colorado State Soccer Association reports that in 2023, more than 60,000 children played on 1,190 competitive and 600 recreational teams, while more than 1,600 adults played on 82 teams.

Colorado soccer made great strides and gained national recognition. Dr. Robert Contiguglia of Littleton served as president of the U.S. Soccer Federation from 1998 to 2006 and helped the U.S. host the 1999 Women's World Cup. Coincidentally, the Colorado Rush Nike Girl's Soccer Team, based in Littleton, was the first girls' team in U.S. Youth Soccer history to win three consecutive national championships. Their Under-17 team won the cup in 1999, the U-18s won it in 2000, and the U-19s won it again in 2001.

Dozens of Colorado kids who first fell in love with the sport that Joe Guennel founded in 1961 have gone on to play professionally both in the U.S. and abroad. And the very best have established themselves on the U.S. Men's and Women's National Teams. April Heinrichs of Denver was captain of the U.S. Women's Team that won the very first FIFA Women's World Cup in 1991 and was the national team's head coach from 2000 to 2005. More recently, players such as Mallory Pugh Swanson of Highlands Ranch (who played her amateur soccer with Littleton's Real Colorado team), Lindsay Horan of Golden and Sophia Smith of Windsor have become the stars of the U.S. Women's National Team.

For his lifetime of contributions to the sport, Joe Guennel, in 1980, was inducted into the U.S. Soccer National Hall of Fame. Sadly, Joe passed away in 2013 and was laid to rest beside his first wife at the Fort Logan National Cemetery in Sheridan, Colorado. Yet his most significant achievement—establishing soccer in Colorado—will never die.

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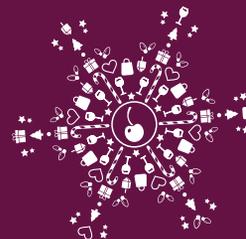
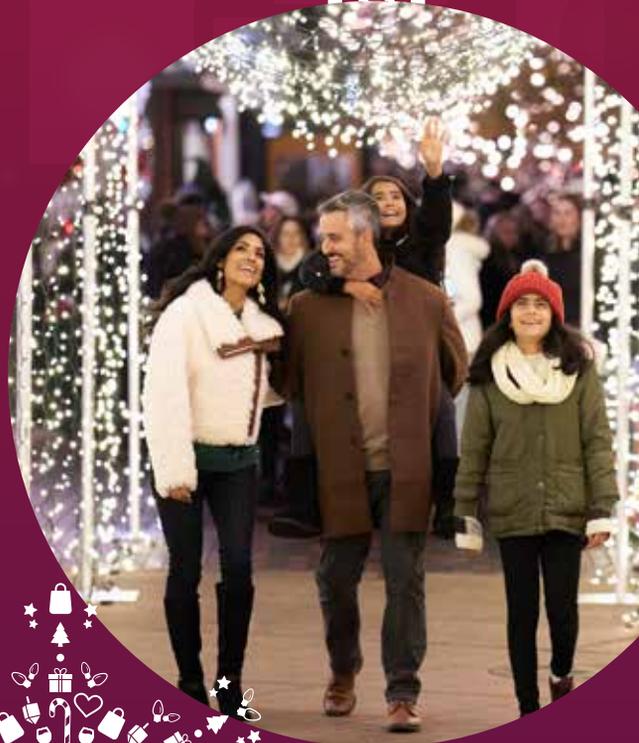
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Unforgettable Gifts

For one or the whole family, a unique experience is a beautiful way to say “I love you” this holiday season

By Heather Shoning

UNWRAPPING PRESENTS is a time-honored tradition—especially for the kids—but consider gifts of a lifetime this year with experiences your loved ones will never forget. From an exceptional family getaway to a thrill-seeking adventure, you’re sure to create perfect memories for the special someones on your gift-giving list. Many companies across the Centennial State offer these adventures, and we’ve listed some to help you start your research.



SPEED DEMON

DOES SOMEONE on your gift list love speed and luxury? They dream of getting behind the wheel of a high-performance supercar—think Ferrari, Lamborghini or McLaren—and feeling the raw power as they navigate some of Colorado's scenic winding roads, open highways and scenic routes. The engine's roar echoes through stunning landscapes, from the Front Range to mountain passes, giving them an adrenaline rush like no other. It's not just about the speed; it's about the thrill of mastering a machine engineered for pure performance. Perhaps your loved one prefers a beastly off-road truck, designed for raw power and built to conquer the toughest terrains. With a rumble that shakes the ground, they're ready to tackle rugged dirt trails, steep inclines and sharp turns with confidence. On the road or off, an exotic driving experience is the perfect bucket-list experience for the luxury vehicle lover or speed junkie on your holiday list.

Exotic Car Driving Tours, [oxotic.com](https://www.oxotic.com)
Rally Truck Off-Road Driving Experience, [drivenexperiences.com](https://www.drivenexperiences.com)



GIDDY UP

STAYING ON A dude ranch in Colorado is like stepping into a different world—a world where the rugged beauty of the Rocky Mountains meets the charm of the Old West. It's an experience that combines adventure, relaxation and a deep connection to nature, all while living the cowboy lifestyle. Imagine waking up in a rustic cabin, having a hearty breakfast, then heading out on horseback to explore miles of scenic trails. Additionally, dude ranches offer fishing, hiking, mountain biking and even the opportunity to participate in cattle drives and roping lessons. The ranch hand and cowboys treat you like family, sharing their knowledge of the land, horses and Western traditions. It's more than just a vacation—it's an immersive experience where you feel connected to the land, the animals, and the rich history of the American West.

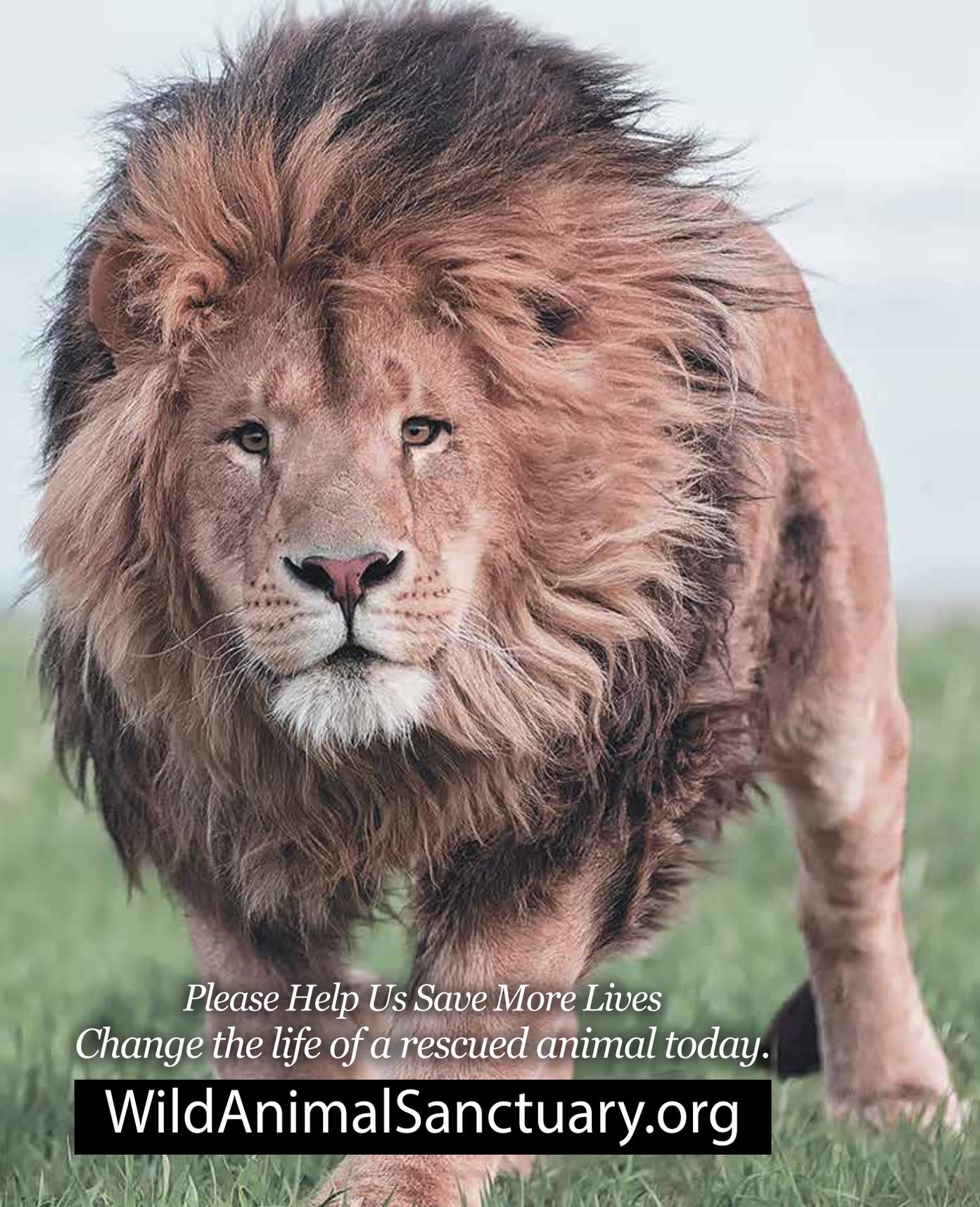
Colorado Dude & Guest Ranch Association,
coloradoranch.com



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Skydive Colorado Springs,
skydivecoloradosprings.com
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FAMILY TRAIL TIME

BOND WITH THE whole family with a family backpacking adventure. Leave the coordination and heavy lifting to the tour company, while you and your soak up the incredible views from the trail and chances to observe wildlife. This is all about creating lasting memories, where every moment of the trip becomes an opportunity for discovery, connection and adventure. And the Centennial State offers a variety of adventures from hikes through thick forests, along alpine lakes, through wildflower meadows and up towering mountain peaks— there’s a perfect route for every family. Guide companies plan all the activities and itineraries for your trip, provide all the gear, pack meals and make sure your family can enjoy an adventure of a lifetime without the stress of planning your outdoor adventure. You can even choose lodge-to-lodge treks if tent camping is not your thing.

Wilderness Trek, wildernesstrek.org
Wildland Trekking, wildlandtrekking.com





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Along the way, experienced guides share fascinating stories about the history, geology, and wildlife of the area, making the journey as informative as it is thrilling. Whether you're bouncing over boulders or cruising through peaceful valleys, a Colorado Jeep tour gives you the perfect mix of adrenaline-pumping adventure and stunning panoramic views of the Rocky Mountains.

RMNP Green Jeep Tour, greenjeeptour.com
Durango Jeep Tours,
coloradooutbackadventures.com



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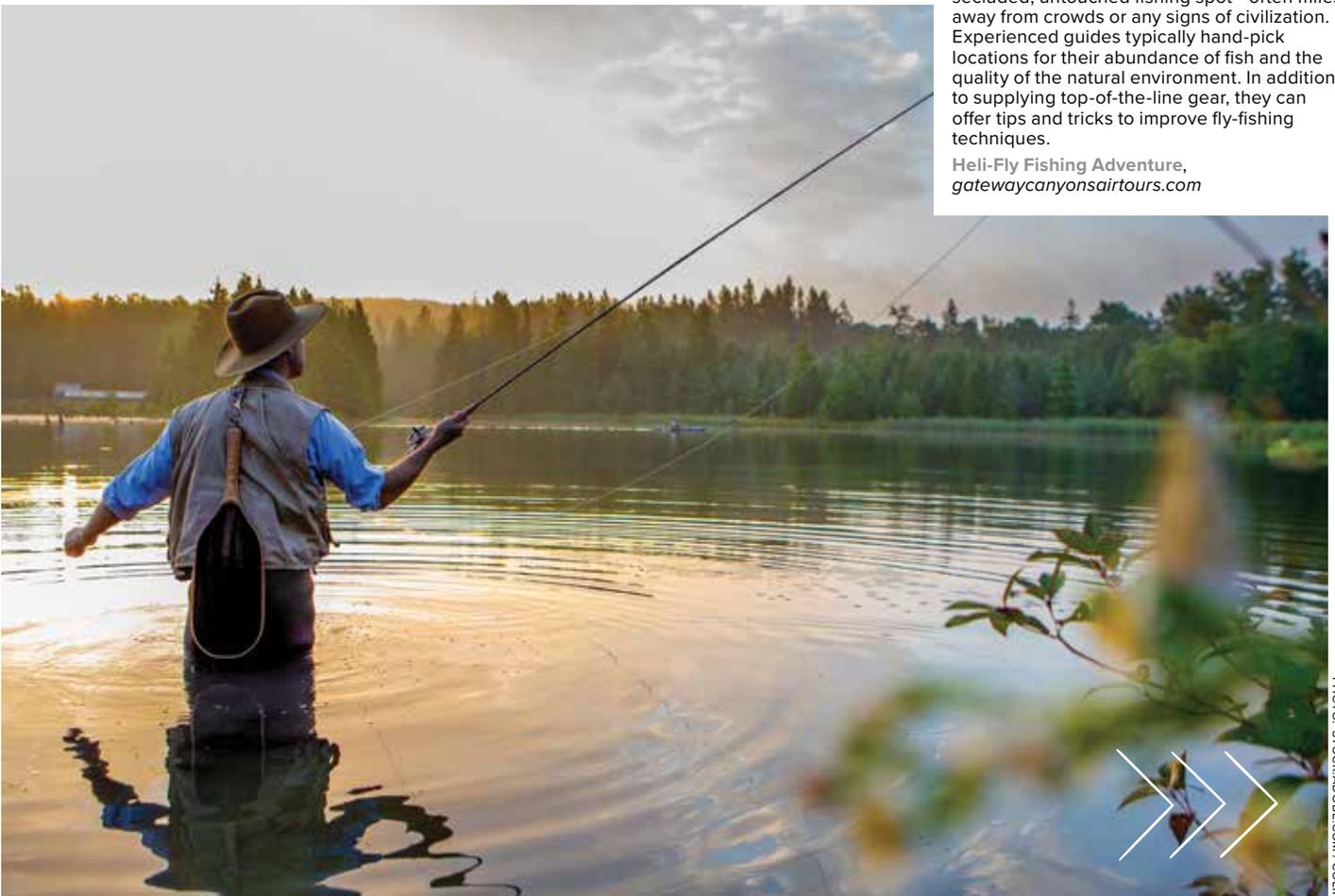




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Heli-Fly Fishing Adventure,
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Eleven, elevenexperience.com





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and a prosperous New Year.

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is the reason we thrive,
and we're incredibly thankful
to be part of your homes and lives.

May your holidays be filled with laughter,
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Aero-Cruise Balloon Adventures,
aerocruiseballoonadventures.com
Fair Winds Balloon Flights,
hotairballoonridescolorado.com

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South Denver **PILATES STUDIOS** take it to the next level

By Amanda Lacey

IT'S THAT TIME of year again—our minds are fixed on gift giving, the cocktails are flowing, and the countertops are flooded with treats—we're in the moment indulging with our loved ones and prioritizing our self-care might not be at the top of the list. Fortunately, south Denver has a variety of Pilates studios doing the most in the least amount of time to help meet our needs.

For those unfamiliar, Pilates is defined as a system of exercises using special apparatus, designed to improve physical strength, flexibility and posture and enhance mental awareness. The best part about it? The variety of options and practices available to suit your needs. From practicing on a mat to using a reformer machine or partaking in a one-on-one session, there's something for everyone.

While some conventional practices may use a combination of the classic 34 moves created by Joseph Pilates, we've got the scoop on studios around town that take it to the next level.

FIERCE45

Combining high intensity with low impact means you'll feel it hard on your muscles but easy on your joints. This reformer Pilates is practiced on a custom "fierce former" machine that can be adjusted and tailored to your needs. Slow movements are done over the course of forty-five minutes and optionally incorporate the use of weights, blocks and balls. This full-body workout may seem like a challenge in the moment, but the more you feel your body shaking, the better. Your heart rate will be up, and your spirits will be just as high. And for those to-be moms, Fierce45 also offers quarterly pregnancy workshops.

HAVN HOT PILATES

As the fitness landscape evolves, HAVN Hot Pilates offers a unique blend of contemporary mat Pilates, strength training and infrared heat. This trifecta enables you to not only have a higher caloric burn, but also allows the body to get deeper into each move, all while detoxing and flushing out toxins at the same time. With the use of weights and different props (bands, rings, blocks and balls) you also have the ability to progress during each class, allowing for a workout you can constantly go back to. "We go for the fast but slow. So, we'll move fast into one move, but then once you're there, you're slowing down, you're mindful, you're connecting to your breath, you're connecting mind to muscle, you're really engaging your body," owner Chelsea Stewart says.

LAGREE LUXE

Lagree is different from Pilates but often referred to as high-intensity Pilates. This workout combines strength, cardio, balance, core and flexibility in every move. "Using the Lagree method allows you to workout smarter—not longer—for faster results," says Christa Chase, owner and instructor, says. "Our instructors use a hands-on, high-energy and motivating approach to help you push your limits—you'll feel a lift in mind, body and soul after each and every workout." At the core of each total body Lagree workout is the megaformer machine. This machine facilitates a high-intensity but low-impact workout. By removing momentum from the exercises, the tension on muscles stays constant, activating more slow-twitch, fat-burning muscle fibers. No extra props involved here—you can move further up or down the reformer as needed while optionally using the machines attachments.

One thing each of these practices have in common? Whether beginner, intermediate or advanced, modifications make each of these workouts suitable for all ages and fitness levels. They're also great to assist in injury recovery and rehabilitation or cross-training, leaving you feeling stronger for your day ahead.

These workouts will lend that instant dopamine rush and leave you anxiously awaiting your next class. While it's recommended to take 2 to 3 classes a week, upwards of 5 is also encouraged. And if you're still not sure where to begin, call your studio and request a one-on-one to get in the swing of things, or jump right in and go at your own pace. 🦋

FIERCE45

1610 E Girard Pl, Ste G
Englewood
720.812.3394
fierce45.com
(Greenwood Village studio coming soon)

HAVN HOT PILATES

5979 S University Blvd
Greenwood Village
720.515.2716
havnhotpilates.com

LAGREE LUXE

300 Josephine St #220
Denver
720.260.4338
lagreeluxe.com

Kimba Lingas



Sue O'Dell



PHOTO: COURTESY:GRWC

PHOTO: COURTESY SRWC / MARIA GAIR

Community *Minded*

Leaders of the **SOUTHWEST REGION**
WOMEN'S CLUB strive to keep alive its long
history of community service

By Kastle Waserman



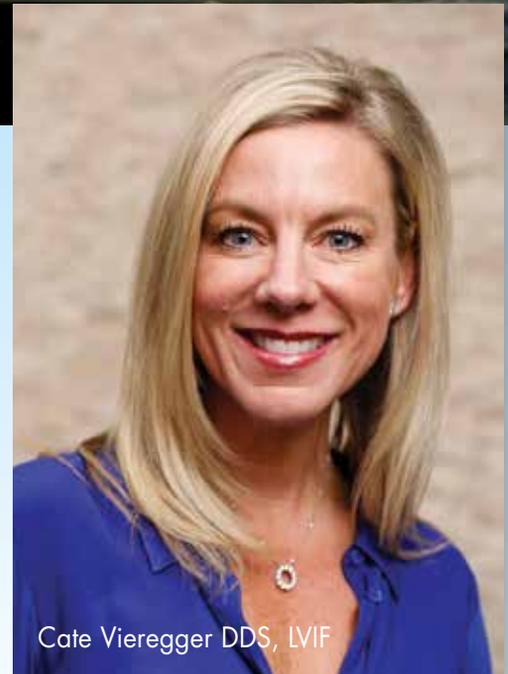


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TODAY'S WOMEN aspire to a lot: powerful careers, a thriving family life and personal goals. They also seek camaraderie in connecting with other women. One group keeping an age-old tradition of community service alive while providing an outlet to connect is the Southwest Region Women's Club (SRWC).

As a subset of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the Southwest Region Women's Club meets regularly in Lakewood and carries the torch lit in 1890, when women, who weren't allowed in the workplace, focused their attention on their community.

The Southwest Region chapter started 25 years ago and grew from six members to roughly 50 today. The club works to better the community by donating needed items to The Action Center and Benefits in Action organizations, as well as doing awareness events and service projects for various causes in a bipartisan, non-political way.

Kimba Langas recently took over as president, and, for her, the club is about paying it forward: "I co-founded a nonprofit fourteen years ago called Free The Girls, collecting bras to support survivors of trafficking. I just recognize the importance of that volunteer support for so many organizations that are under-resourced."

One particular effort Langas is involved in is collecting donations of women's items. "We have 'tampon parties,'" she says. "We collect pads and tampons because Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program's benefits do not cover that for low-income individuals and families."

Langas recently took over the role from long-serving president Sue O'Dell, who now acts as membership director. O'Dell explained how the organization leans on the power of a group to make significant contributions of food, clothes, diapers or whatever the food bank needs. "When I go to the store and buy a bag of groceries and drop it at The Action Center, that's not as impactful as twenty of us dropping twenty bags of groceries. It makes you feel good knowing that you can do that."

Both Langas and O'Dell say there are various reasons women join the group. Most do it to contribute to community efforts, while others do it for the friends they make and to be around a diverse group of women ages 30 to 80. Many do it because volunteerism runs in their family. "A lot of us grew up in a household where our grandmas and moms went to women's clubs," says O'Dell. "Now we invite our daughters and their friends."

"A lot of us grew up in a household where our grandmas and moms went to women's clubs. Now we invite our daughters and their friends." —Sue O'Dell

GIVING

SOUTHWEST REGION WOMEN'S CLUB FOCUSES ITS GIVING IN FOUR MAIN AREAS.

Home Life: targets food insecurity and homelessness and encourages healthy lifestyles.

Conservation: boosts awareness of the protection of natural resources.

International Outreach: addresses global hunger, disease, trafficking, unclean drinking water and poor education.

Arts: promotes creative endeavors of art, dance, music and theater.

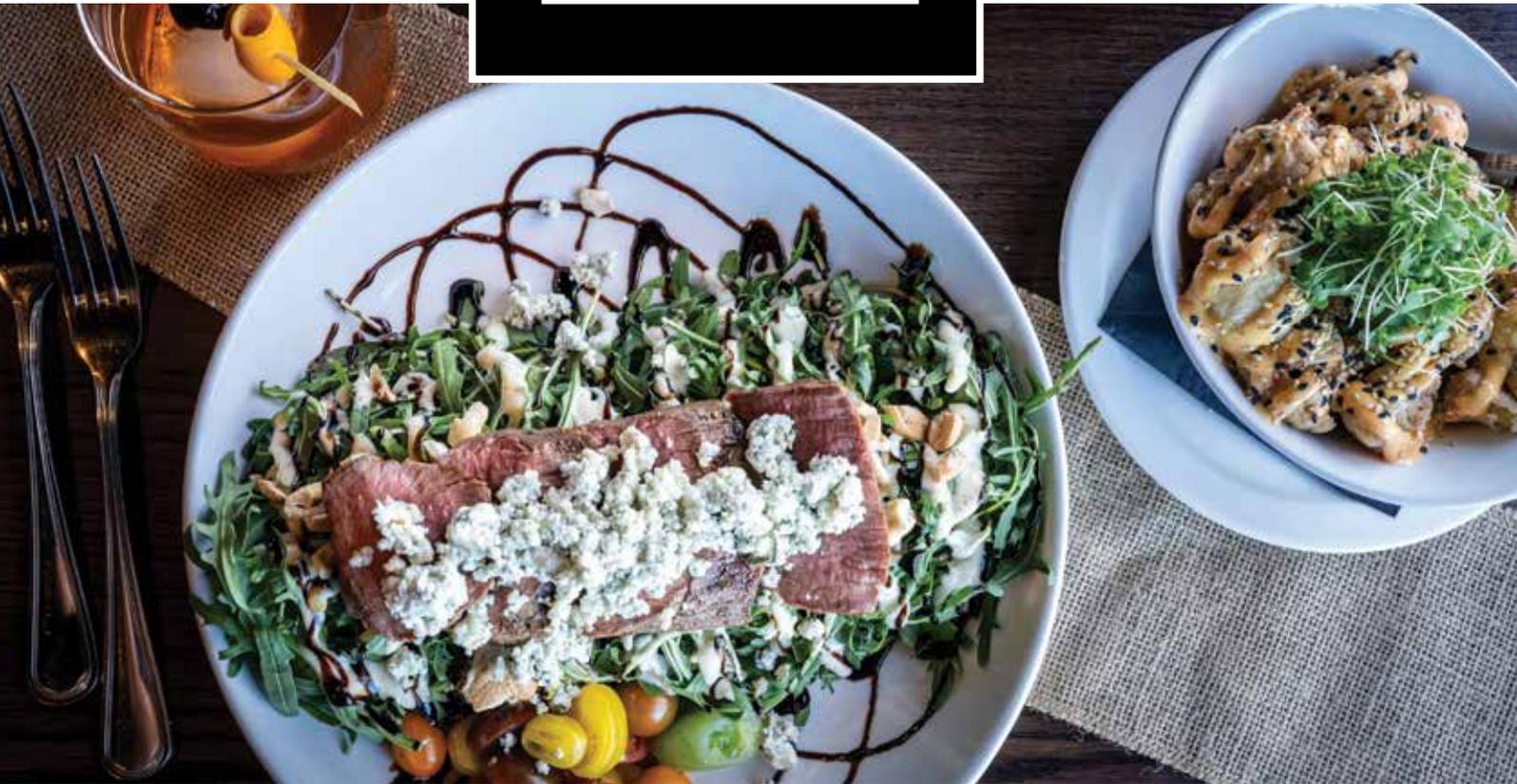
The cost to join is \$40 a year, and members can participate as much or as little as they want. "Some women just want to come visit with their friends and have dinner and throw five dollars in the pot. Other people sign up for everything," says O'Dell.

The SRWC is always looking for more members. O'Dell says it's not about being required to participate in a certain number of events; it's about being part of the greater effort in whatever way you can contribute. "We pride ourselves on passing on the legacy of women volunteering and helping the community."

SOUTHWEST REGION WOMEN'S CLUB
gfwc-srwc.org

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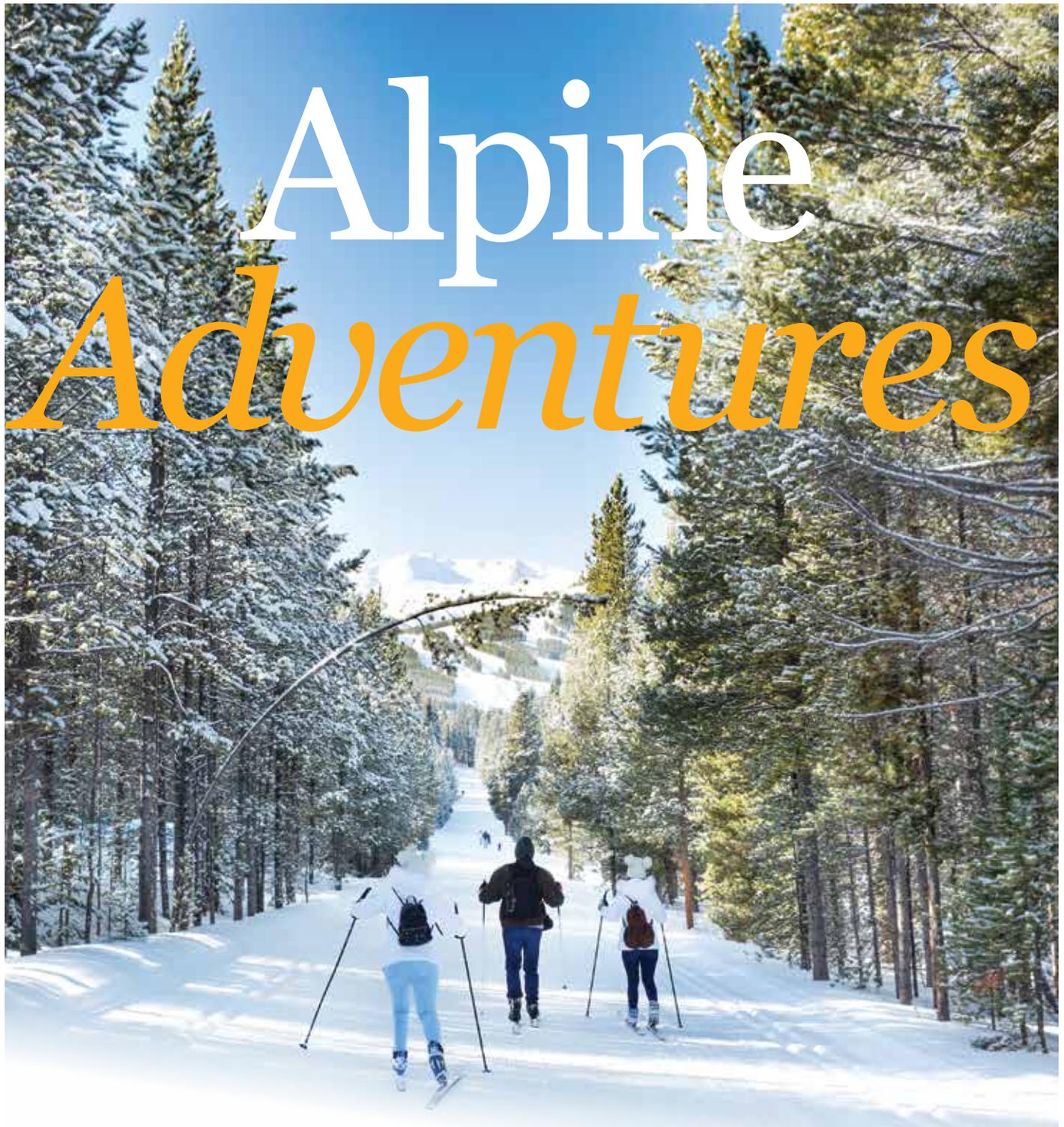
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Alpine *Adventures*

BRECKENRIDGE NORDIC CENTER

enjoys a long history of sharing passion for snow

By Kimberly Lord Stewart

THE OH, BE JOYFUL Lodge at Breckenridge Nordic Center combines Old World alpine charm with the relaxed and inviting atmosphere typical of Colorado. If you prefer a more tranquil alternative to the noisy ski-boot traffic and the whiff of bravado

that comes with downhill skiing, don't miss spending a day and evening here.

The lodge, with its 1400 miles of cross-country skiing and snowshoeing trails, as well as the hosted ski programs,

is the brainchild of Gene Dayton, who is often referred to as the father of modern Nordic skiing in Summit County. If you can catch Gene standing still, it's a rarity; he will tell you about how this place started as a 15-foot igloo. Instead of high-tech



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PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / MARGARET WIKTOR



PHOTO: COURTESY BRECKENRIDGE NORDIC CENTER

snowcat grooming, he pulled an old tire or mattress springs behind a snowmobile. “We are stewards, we don’t own anything—it is all a gift from God,” he says. “The miracles we have experienced are too numerous to count.”

Gene, along with his wife Therese and their youngest son, Josh, built the lodge using felled spruce trees that were cleared to open the Breckenridge Ski gondola, as well as pine bark beetle pine. Each log was milled, peeled, lathed, and stained by hand, serving as a testament to the family’s dedication to creating a beautiful, enduring, and memorable lodge for the community. They opened the lodge’s doors on Christmas Day in 2013. Since then, Therese greets guests with a mug of hot mulled wine, and Gene often joins in with his accordion when live bands perform on Friday nights. “We work together with our family on a daily basis and share the joys of serving our guests,” Gene Dayton says.

The family has introduced skiing to people of all abilities in Breckenridge, including Ski for Light for visually impaired skiers and adaptive skiing at the Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center’s Hartford Ski Spectacular. The annual event gives people with special needs and disabilities opportunities to learn and enjoy outdoor experiences. Regardless of experience level, there is something for everyone: groomed trails and cross-country ski lessons, guided snowshoeing and snowcat rides with schnapps and hot chocolate. The lodge is also available for events and weddings.



**BRECKENRIDGE
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breckenridgenordic.com

COLORADO NORDIC SKI AND SNOWSHOEING SPOTS

Summit County is home to multiple Nordic skiing centers; **Gold Run Nordic Center** (breckenridgerecreation.com) at the **Breckenridge Golf Course** and **Frisco Nordic Center** (town of *Frisco.com*) are connected by groomed paths.

Nestled in the Elk Mountains, near Aspen, is **Ashcroft Ski Touring** and **Pine Creek Cookhouse**. Visitors can choose 735 acres of stunning trails for guided or unguided Nordic skiing and snowshoeing or take a Percheron horse-drawn sleigh ride. Trails lead to the Pine Creek Cookhouse restaurant for lunch or dinner. Reservations are required. pinecreekcookhouse.com

If you’ve never ventured to **McCoy Park**, you are in for a spectacular experience at the top of **Beaver Creek**. This lift-accessible nature area, with breathtaking views of the **Sawatch Range**, has about 42 miles of groomed and rustic trails for Nordic skiing, telemark, and snowshoeing. The rental center near the Strawberry Park building has all the gear you’ll need.

Beauty, luxury, and adventure come together at Frazier Valley’s **Devil’s Thumb Ranch, Nordic Center**. With 260 miles of winter trails, cross-country skiers, snowshoers, and even dogs (on approved trails) have no shortage of options. Fat tire winter biking, ice skating, backcountry skiing, and sleigh or trail rides are also available. Don’t forget to book a massage at the spa for your tired body at the end of the day.

Lastly, if you have your gear, don’t leave out **Colorado Rocky Mountain National Park** and state park options for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Popular state parks include 50+ miles of trails at **Mueller State Park**; **State Forest Park**, with 6 miles of groomed trails and thousands more rugged routes; **Vega State Park** and **Grand Mesa National Forest** offer breathtaking views and a high mountain lake; **Steamboat’s Pearl Lake**, with year-round yurts, and **Steamboat Lake**, with cabins at the marina and winter RV sites, are ideal for longer snow adventures.

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Fresh Tracks



Book a **SNOWCAT TRIP** for first-run fun every time

By *Kim D. McHugh*

UNTRACKED POWDER is the aphrodisiac of skiers and snowboarders. But despite having thousands of skiable acres and dozens of lifts, Colorado's more than 20 resorts can't keep it untracked for long. Unless you're at or near the front when the lifts start up or the forecast calls for a raging storm the day you hit the slopes, the fresh stuff is adios by lunchtime. Instead, forego lift lines teaming with other powder seekers and book a snowcat outing. Here are three operators that can lead you to pristine powder even days after a storm.

Permitted to access 1,635 skiable acres, Monarch Cat Skiing deposits its guests atop their first run during an outing that can result in 15 to 20 runs, depending on conditions, available terrain, group size—and how much time is spent taking selfies at the bottom of the trails, which are primarily for advanced level skiers and riders.

"Our terrain is largely double black diamond consisting of open bowls, chutes and trees. Guests should be confident skiing and riding that terrain in deep snow. We have seats for up to twelve in our cabin cat that provides room for guests to comfortably, safely and quickly get to their next great run. We offer both single seats as well as full cat bookings. Guests frequently comment that their day cat skiing was the best day skiing they have ever had," says Zach Moore, assistant director of mountain operations.

Cat skiing is an excellent way to venture into terrain outside of the resort, offering a guided experience with trail mitigation efforts present while also providing more intimate and adventurous skiing and riding than may be available inbounds.

Purgatory Snowcat Adventures is Colorado's largest snowcat skiing operation, with 35,000 acres of guided skiing for skilled skiers and riders. Putting ginormous smiles on guests for two and a half decades, the company is an expert at seeking out quality snow in terrain that is largely treed, though there are wide open areas in the mix as well.

"Our terrain is relatively mellow compared to the extreme terrain of Silverton Mountain. While I would encourage guests to be comfortable advanced or intermediate skiers and riders, I would by no means say one must be an expert. The terrain can be tricky for folks new to skiing and riding through trees, especially in deep snow. We've had kids as young as eight years old ski with us. If they are confident, in control and can follow directions, they are welcome," says Grady James, lead guide and operations manager.

Appealing to skiers, riders and non-skiers/riders is the Snowcat Dining Excursion, which includes an evening ride to the top of the mountain followed by a five-course

dinner featuring scrumptious seasonal dishes. Scenic snowcat daytime tours are also available.

Operating since 1983, Steamboat Powder Cats knows how to show guests a fabulous backcountry adventure. Its permitted terrain on Buffalo Pass boasts snowfall depths north of 500 inches annually, so romping in fresh powder is pretty much a given. Runs vary in length from 500 to 1,200 vertical feet and between 15 and 40 degrees in steepness.

"We are blessed with terrain that fits all levels with lower angle open slopes that fit the slower pace of an intermediate level guest and steeper, more aggressive terrain that experts seek out every run. We are all-inclusive and, beyond the ten to fourteen runs in fresh powder, we provide skis and snowboards, avalanche transceivers, breakfast, catered lunch, snacks, three guides per trip, professional quality images of guests and a post-tour après ski party," says Kent Vertrees, whose title is master of chaos.

The company created an ability level system based on Intermediate, Advanced and Expert levels. Not only does this system provide a way to have less experienced guests on a tour they didn't think doable, but it also gives comfort knowing they won't be holding up others.



IF YOU GO:

There are numerous cat skiing options in Colorado and beyond. Operators enlist backcountry protocols, mindful of avalanche dangers and keeping guests safe. Being in good physical condition is a real plus. Prices range from \$650 to \$950 a day per guest—and sharing an epic powder day with family and friends is, well, priceless. Book your trip early in the season, as spaces sell out quickly.

COLORADO

Monarch Cat Skiing
719.530.5000
skimonarch.com

Purgatory Cat Skiing
970.385.2100
purgatory.ski

Steamboat Powder Cats
970.879.5188
steamboatpowdercats.com

Eleven Experience (Crested Butte)
970.575.5413
elevenexperience.com

The Ridge Cat (Loveland)
303.571.5580
skiloveland.com

Silverton Powdercats
970.422.2223
silvertonpowdercats.com

Winter Park Snowcat Skiing
970.726.5514
playwinterpark.com

IDAHO
Selkirk Powder Company
208.263.6959
selkirkpowder.com

Soldier Mountain Cat Skiing
208.765.3437
soldiermountain.com

MONTANA
Great Northern Powder Guides
406.881.2032
greatnorthernpowderguides.com

UTAH
Park City Powder Cats
435.649.6596
pccats.com

Snowbird Cat Skiing
800.232.9542
snowbird.com

WYOMING
Wyo Cat Skiing
307.413.9300
wyocatskiing.com

CANADA
Big Red Cats
250.362.2271
bigredcatskiing.com

Great Northern Snowcat Skiing
800.889.0765
greatnorthernsnowcat.com

Selkirk Snowcat Skiing
800.799.3499
selkirksnowcatskiing.com



PHOTO: COURTESY STEAMBOAT POWDER CATS



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Ongoing Through December 22

SANTA AT THE STATION

Make your way to the Great Hall of Denver Union Station on Sundays throughout the holiday season for free visits with Santa & Mrs. Claus. Food and drink are available for purchase throughout the building. Santa's helpers will take photos on your personal phone or camera. All free visits are honored on a first-come, first-served basis by waiting in line. Not keen on waiting in line? No problem. Guests can reserve a specific time slot by purchasing a "St. Nick Express Pass." Sundays from 11 a.m.–4 p.m. **UNION STATION**, denverunionstation.com



PHOTO: COURTESY OF GRACE DENVER

Ongoing Through December 23

CHRISTKINDL MARKET

A winter wonderland awaits you at the Denver Christkindl Market. Located at Denver Civic Center Park, this authentic German-style holiday market hosts both local and European craft & food vendors and entertainers for everyone to enjoy. The Denver Christkindl Market is a must-see holiday experience that is free and open to the public. Map, hours and more info available online. **DENVER**, christkindlmarketdenver.com

Ongoing Through December 24

CHERRY CREEK HOLIDAY MARKET

Taking place daily in Cherry Creek North on Fillmore St. between 1st and 2nd avenues, you can discover 50+ weekly rotating local makers, designers and creators outdoors at the Cherry Creek Holiday Market produced by Fetch Concepts. Providing shoppers with a wide array of premium options and unique gifts, this free outdoor event also features a highly decorated holiday atmosphere and a full bar of festive drinks inside Mistletoe Lounge. It's a holiday tradition that has something for everyone. Hours and vendor booth map available online. **CHERRY CREEK NORTH**, cherrycreeknorth.com

Ongoing Through December 29

COLORADO BALLET: THE NUTCRACKER

Colorado Ballet's The Nutcracker returns to delight audiences of all ages. Don't miss this timeless tradition that captures the spirit of the holidays with dancing mice, sweet Sugar Plums and a symphony of swirling snowflakes. November 30th through December 29th at the

Ellie Caulkins Opera House, with live music by the Colorado Ballet Orchestra. **DENVER**, coloradoballet.org

Through December

CHRISTMAS IN COLOR

Pack the whole family into the car and head to one of the three area locations for Christmas in Color, featuring millions of holiday lights perfectly synchronized to the music from your vehicle's radio. A special add-on package includes fun and festive extras like light-up wands and Rudolph noses. **ARAPAHOE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS, RED ROCKS PARK, and WATER WORLD**, christmasincolor.net

December 1–17

WINTER WONDERLAND

Get into the holiday spirit at the Winter Wonderland events held at The Ridge at Castle Pines, brought to you by the City of Castle Pines. Start off your holidays at the Tree Lighting event with fireworks, local entertainers, hot cocoa and Santa on December 1. Then be sure to get your reservations for the popular movie night on December 2, followed by Gingerbread House Decorating on December 3, the Bonfire on December 8, the Holly Jolly Brunch on December 9 and the Carriage Rides on December 16–17. **CASTLE PINES**, castlepineschamber.com



PHOTO: COURTESY OF IAN HOLT

December 3

CLASSICAL MUSIC SERIES: HOLIDAYS WITH STRINGS AND PERCUSSION

The Highlands Ranch Cultural Affairs Association proudly presents a three-part series of classical music at The Highlands Ranch Historic Mansion, where you will be treated to an evening of beautiful music performed by members of the Colorado Symphony. Head to the Grand Ballroom of the mansion for an enchanting holiday event. The mansion will be dressed to the nines for a program of holiday favorites arranged for string quartet and percussion. Expect to delight in the beautiful sights, enjoy a glass of wine and be carried away by melodies that embody the holiday season. The doors will open one hour before the performance to allow attendees to enjoy self-guided mansion tours. **HIGHLANDS RANCH**, hrcaonline.org



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Gala

February 6, 2025 • The Oaks at Plum Creek in Castle Rock

Guests are invited to dress to delight in the beauty of the butterfly and take flight at this one-of-a-kind charity Gala. Proceeds benefit the Rock of Hope Campaign to bring expert, compassionate, faith-centered cancer care to AdventHealth Castle Rock.

Black tie optional.



REGISTER HERE

December 6–8

**MANNHEIM STEAMROLLER
CHRISTMAS BY CHIP DAVIS**

Mannheim Steamroller Christmas by Chip Davis has been America's favorite holiday tradition for more than 35 years. Grammy Award winner Chip Davis has created a show that features *Mannheim Steamroller Christmas* classics in the distinctive Mannheim sound. The program includes 15 musicians playing more than 20 instruments against a backdrop of dazzling multimedia effects — capturing the spirit of the season in an immersive yet intimate setting. Details and tickets available online. **DENVER**, denvercenter.org

December 7 & 8

A VERY CHERRY CHRISTMAS

Celebrate the magic of the season at “A Very Cherry Christmas” as the Cherry Creek Chorale joins the Lone Tree Symphony Orchestra to present a heartwarming evening filled with holiday favorites. Get swept away by the enchanting melodies and festive cheer, making this concert a joyful highlight of your holiday season. **LONE TREE ARTS CENTER**, lonetreeartscenter.org

December 7

CENTENNIAL JINGLE JAM

Centennial will be getting the party started this holiday season with a special event full of color, light and sound. Almost everyone can enjoy the annual Centennial Jingle Jam, which

will run for two hours (1–3 p.m.) in Centennial Center Park. To help get the holiday season off to a festive start, the activity will showcase the talents of local youth choirs. The Big Guy in red has also included the celebration in his December plans, and the kids in the crowd will be able to meet him in person. Warm up while sipping hot chocolate and cider, and nosh on a cookie while enjoying this family-friendly event. **CENTENNIAL**, centennial-art.org

December 7

MAYOR'S HOLIDAY LIGHTING

Light up your holiday season and join Mayor George Lantz and the City Council as they welcome wintertime with holiday light displays, rides on the Polar Express, carolers, hot cocoa and visits with Santa Claus. 3–5:30 p.m. at City Hall/Carson Park. Resident registration is open now. **GREENWOOD VILLAGE**, greenwoodvillage.com

December 7

REINDEER GAMES

It's time for holiday fun for the whole family. Enjoy kid-friendly activities in a winter-themed wonderland, including live reindeer, Santa (parents bring your cameras), s'mores, hot chocolate, sleigh rides, train rides, outdoor games and an obstacle course. Kids will receive a prize at the end of the obstacle course while supplies last. The event is primarily outdoors, so dress warmly. 1–4 p.m. at **PHILIP S. MILLER PARK**, crgov.com

December 10

COLORADO GIVES DAY

The many hardworking nonprofits in Colorado appreciate support year-round, but the second Tuesday in December is set aside as Colorado Gives Day, the state's largest 24-hour fundraising event. Jump online to search for nonprofits by location and/or category, like education, animal-related, arts and culture, the environment, and more at coloradogives.org

December 13

THE JINKX & DELA HOLIDAY SHOW

You better watch out, you better not cry, because “The Queens of Christmas” (Entertainment Weekly) is coming to Denver with a brand-new edition of the internationally acclaimed The Jinkx & DeLa Holiday Show. Another holiday season brings another year of fabulous spectacle, whip-smart comedy, brand-new songs and annual favorites. Join the sugary DeLa and spicy Jinkx for an evening the New York Times says is “sure to lift your spirits and make you howl with laughter.” **DENVER**, denver.org

December 14 & 15

SANTA IN THE HANGAR

On Saturday, Dec. 14, prepare for a day of family fun and celebrate the holiday season at Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum. Arrive early to see Santa arrive in a helicopter at 10 a.m. On Sunday, Dec. 15, you can expect the family fun to continue for the Exploration

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ON THE AGENDA // can't-miss events

of Flight event, where Santa will arrive again, but this time, it will be at noon. Doors open at 11:30 a.m. **ENGLEWOOD**, wingsmuseum.org

December 23

FAMILY HOLIDAY MOVIE EVENT: ELF

Celebrate the holidays with a special screening of the classic movie Elf! Enjoy light bites, games, and activities before the film in the Main Stage Theater. Ideal for all ages, sing along and show your holiday spirit. Adult tickets include a free cocktail; snacks and nonalcoholic drinks are complimentary. Activities start at 3 p.m., with the movie at 4 p.m. **LONE TREE ARTS CENTER**, lonetreeartscenter.org

December 31

WHITE ROSE GALA

The Denver New Year's Eve White Rose Gala returns for its second year at the iconic Ritz-Carlton, Denver, promising an elevated experience with even greater elegance and luxury. This renowned venue ensures an unforgettable evening filled with grandeur and sophistication for all who attend. The experience at the White Rose Gala is nothing short of enchanting. From the moment you step in, you're whisked away to the golden era of the Roaring '20s. The ambiance resonates with the luxurious charm of Art Deco designs, while the air is filled with the melodious tunes of jazz and lively conversations. **DENVER**, newyearspartydenver.com



PHOTO: COURTESY OF LIZ HYATT

December 31

FAMILY DAY OUT: NYE PARTY TAKE-HOME

Is your family ready to celebrate the new year? Get ready for a party and create various menu items from treats to nibbles and noshes to help you prepare for the best New Year's Eve yet. Head over and cook together at Uncorked Kitchen as a family and create yummy appetizers (think bacon & cheddar twists and funfetti pudding cups) you can take home to enjoy all night long. **CENTENNIAL**, uncorkedkitchen.com

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