

Colorado Golf



Beaver Creek Resort

By Jason Deegan

The stunning, wintry, white ski slopes surrounding the Vail Valley have always overshadowed the lush green fairways that emerge every summer.

The valley, about 110 miles west of Denver, houses some of the country's best ski resorts -- Breckenridge, Beaver Creek, Vail and Keystone, all owned by Vail Resorts Inc.

Photo above by Dann Coffey

But two of those properties, Beaver Creek and Keystone, are not just winter destinations. Come summer, those same beautiful mountain views that captivate skiers will create a golf trip you'll never forget.

And since the sun shines in the valley an average of 300 days a year, smart golfers flock there as often as snowbirds.

Beaver Creek Resort

Beaver Creek Resort, an alpine village retreat at 7,000 feet

of elevation in Avon, offers a good course of its own, a 6,750-yard Robert Trent Jones Jr. design, but the addition of two new dramatic layouts at Red Sky Golf Club, a 36-hole private club in nearby Wolcott, has taken its status up a notch. Red Sky, good enough to entice one of the most powerful men in golf, PGA Tour commissioner Tim Finchem, to buy a second home there, is only accessible by staying at Vail Resorts Inc. properties.

The 7,113-yard Tom Fazio course at Red Sky, which opened



Keystone Resort

in 2002, wins more praise than its younger sister, the 7,580-yard Greg Norman course.

The Fazio plays shorter and friendlier than the difficult Norman course, which demands courageous shots over gulches and gullies. The Fazio climbs up the property to a flawless back nine that flows through a secluded aspen forest high on Bachelor's Gulch, providing some awe-inspiring vistas.

Back at the resort, the Beaver Creek Golf Club starts off with two of its toughest holes at

Photo above by Jack Affleck

No. 1 and No. 3 - both tee shots must stay between tight tree lines and steer clear of the creek that meanders throughout the entire 18 holes. If your ball survives those holes, chances are you'll score well the rest of the day.

The resort also offers the other outdoor activities that make Colorado so attractive -- mountain biking, hiking, horseback riding at its equestrian center and tennis.

Staying at the Elkhorn Lodge provides some convenience, although a lavish new Ritz-Carlton (called Bachelor Gulch) and the Beaver Creek Park Hyatt are also

onsite. The lodge sits next door to the golf club (and its upstairs lunch hotspot) and is within walking distance of the Beaver Creek Village, the heart of the resort.

Trendy shops and eateries dot the extravagant village, centered around an outdoor skating rink that is open year-round. The Vilar Center for the Arts welcomes some of the nation's finest plays, theatre groups and performances for nightly entertainment.

Dinner haunts range from the Beaver Creek Chophouse to the Toscanini, a fine Italian eatery. The Allegria Spa ([www.allegrias-](http://www.allegriaspa.com)

pa.com), a 20,000-square-foot spa in the Hyatt designed by feng-shui experts to promote bliss and balance, invites visitors looking to unwind with dozens of treatments, including a Swedish or Thai massage.

The nearby Vail Village, about 10 minutes from Beaver Creek, has more of the same walkable, friendly feel with its collection of tourist traps and restaurants.

Keystone Resort

About 45 minutes east of Vail, and about an hour from Denver, the 36-hole Keystone Resort in Silverthorne has long been ranked as one of the nation's top 100 golf resorts.

The main village and condominiums in the River Run Village, the centerpiece of the resort, can only be described as more functional than flashy when compared to Beaver Creek and Vail. The Keystone Lodge Hotel, in the nearby Lakeside Village, boasts the best choices among the resort's 1,500 rooms. Chances are you won't be spending much time in your room, though.

Each golf course has a fun, distinct personality. Many consider the flatter, more traditional 7,090-yard Keystone Ranch course, designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr., as the country club of the resort. It plays out of a log-cabin-style clubhouse that features the state's No. 1 restaurant, three years running, in the ZAGAT Survey.

Visitors flock to the more

Photo right by Jack Affleck

dynamic 6,886-yard par-71 River course, designed by Michael Hurdzan and Dana Fry. It has the mountainous feel players love about the Rocky Mountains. The front nine follows the Snake River until the trees tighten their grip on the back nine.

Believe it or not, your best memory of Keystone won't be golf related. The venture to the highly regarded Alpenglow Stube, the highest fine-dining restaurant in North America at 11,444 feet above sea level, requires a romantic 45-minute gondola ride up the mountain to a fantastic seven-course meal.

The panoramic views will stay with you long after your trip home. **MG**

Keystone Resort

www.golfkeystone.com

800-876-1429

Beaver Creek Resort

www.Beavercreek.com

800-404-3535

Red Sky Golf Club

www.redskygolfclub.com

866-8-RED-SKY



Beaver Creek Resort