



Since the Last Time You Were in Aspen

The toniest ski town this side of the Alps kicks off the season with a spiffed-up St. Regis, hosting rights for the Winter X Games, and whispers of a thrilling new expansion into the daredevil Highland Bowl.

- By [Jamie Marshall](#)



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- Aspenites are already bragging about the new **Deep Temerity lift**, scheduled to open next year. The resulting expansion will increase the vertical drop at Aspen's Highland Bowl by more than 1,000 feet and add 270 acres of experts-only steeps. To prepare, try the new "Bowl for Boomers" program (970-989-2529), an extension of the wildly popular "Bumps for Boomers," which helps creaky-kneed baby boomers navigate Aspen's expert trails. Good news for beginners: The old West Buttermilk double has been upgraded to a **high-speed quad** with a midway load station, simplifying the leap from the gentle slopes of Panda Peak to the slightly more challenging West Buttermilk trails.

- Those who don't want to fork over \$500 for a room at the newly reopened and completely revamped **St. Regis** (970-920-3300) should check out the new **last-**

minute package deals at aspensnowmassonsale.com: 20 to 55 percent discounts on accommodations (the Gant, Aspen Square Condos, the Skier's Chalet) are released a week or two before you'd have to travel.

- The fractional-ownership craze is a welcome relief in a town where the average house price is a tad under \$4 million. Nearly half of the 25 two- and three-bedroom apartments (from \$300,000 to \$1.5 million) at the brand-new **St. Regis Residence Club Aspen** have already been sold. Next up, fractional offerings from both the **Hyatt Grand Aspen** (opening December 2005; 970-920-3204) and the posh **Little Nell** (summer 2006; 970- 544-0499).
- Opening this week, the sumptuous **Remède Spa** aims to poach Aspen's fickle celebrity clientele from the Aspen Club, where the likes of Paula Zahn and Will Smith indulge when they're in town. The soothing **hematite and basalt hot-stone massage** is perfect for ski-fatigued muscles.
- The **Winter X Games** return to Buttermilk January 29 to February 1. This year, check out the new **Women's Ski Superpipe**, and keep an eye out for local boarder **Gretchen Bleiler**, a top contender.
- This season's **Prada ski jean** and **Volkl Supersport 6 Star all-mountain ski** can be picked up at Performance Ski, while Ralph Lauren's sprawling new Polo store provides trendy pieces like a version of the red-and-black **Aspen Ski Instructor jacket**. Jewelry fanatics can satisfy their urges at **Chopard's** new boutique in the historic Brand Building or at the **Seaman Schepps** salon recently installed inside Caribou Jewels.
- Book now (before you leave!) at the long-awaited, just-opened **Manrico restaurant** above the eponymous cashmere store. Chef Massimo Masciaga, who honed his skills under Alain Ducasse, serves up duck with wild mushroom and asparagus cassoulet, and John Dory with baby squid and artichoke ragout. For the best mixed-grill fajitas and sweet-potato fries in town, head to the newly expanded **Blue Maize**. Oenophiles, take note: The Little Nell's affable master sommelier, Richard Betts, has just released the first vintage of Australian Grenache from the new **Betts and Scholl Winery**.
- At the ever-popular Caribou Club, head bartender Scott Sherry will be pouring a potent new cocktail called a **WMD** (Taittinger champagne with a raspberry Stoli floater) for the deep-pocketed clientele (weekly memberships are \$500; \$1,000 over Christmas). While locals still mourn the demise of the dressed-down live-music club **Double Diamond**, its old location will house a new club, opening in January (name TBD); management promises bands will come on early enough to ensure you get a good night's sleep before hitting those tricky black diamonds.

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