

Springfield Ski Club - 2008 - 2009 Ski Trips

VAIL, COLORADO

Lodging: Vail Resorts

Dec 9th - 14th, 2008

December Vail Ski Trip

It was a cold, dark, stormy night when we began our ski trip. Well, actually no, it was 9:00 am and reasonably bright and sunny for December, but somehow that lacks a certain literary punch. After a 3+ hour ride to Indianapolis, some time spent waiting at the airport, the flight to Denver, and the bus ride to Vail (with the obligatory food and beer stop on the way), we finally arrived in Vail about 8:30 pm. We were treated to a wine and cheese party on our arrival, which gave the hotel staff time to distribute our luggage and ski equipment. (And thank goodness for Nancy and Pat. They let me know that Indianapolis was in the Eastern Time Zone. Otherwise we would have been really pressed for time.) When we got to our condo, our luggage had not yet arrived. However, it arrived shortly, carried in by (I was later told) a very attractive looking young man. Several cougar-like comments later and the young man bolted from the room without even waiting for a tip. Never seen that before! As to the "cougar-like" reference - yes I was in a 3 bedroom condo with 5 females. That's just the way the room assignments worked out. Any comments you hear about the rooming arrangements from people of the male persuasion who were on the trip is just jealousy, pure and simple. Besides Garrett Johnson also roomed with 5 females. I'm nothing if I'm not an equal opportunity dirty old man.

The next day we all hit the slopes bright and early. Mrs. Trip Leader (MTL for future reference) and I did not bring our skis because they only had a base of 27 or so inches of snow. However, the skiing was great - the only place we saw any problems with rocks was on the cat track that all of the runs funneled down to on the way back to our condos. We avoided that in the following days simply by down-loading on the gondola. The weather was also perfect all 4 days we were there. The high was always in the mid-twenties - just cold enough so you didn't sweat, and cold enough to keep the snow from turning into mush.

I could not believe how huge Vail is. We could have skied there 7 days and not hit all of it. I'm not sure why, but MTL and a couple of others wanted to ski Beaver Creek so we took a bus over there and skied it. A number of others from our group also enjoyed the skiing there. It has some very nice cruisers, but is lacking skiing for the more advanced skiers. Several people mentioned they would like to take a trip based there.

The town of Vail is growing rapidly. Construction cranes could be seen everywhere. I've been told the shopping was very good, but cannot (thank goodness) vouch for it myself. The dining opportunities were abundant and tasty. Christmas decorations on the trees and buildings made for a very festive atmosphere. All in all, Vail is a very nice place.

On our last night in Vail, we held a pizza party in our condo. We had 28 people, and I was going to order enough pizzas for that many people. Good thing MTL was around. She insisted we order enough for 40 people, so we did. In addition, everyone brought over their left over snacks. Wow, did that pizza go fast. We should have ordered another couple of pizzas. I guess everyone built up their appetites on the mountain.

We left the next morning at 5:15 am. That meant we had to have our bags packed and at the front door by 4:30 am (yawwwwwn). However, it was worth it when we didn't have to wrestle them down the hallways - the hotel staff picked them up and loaded them under the bus for us. A snow storm came in on our last night and we were wondering if the passes would be open. Unfortunately they were and we had to leave. The ride to Denver was somewhat eventful. The bus maintained a pretty constant speed of only 40 mph, or so. Even so, there were a couple of times when the bus did skid on the highway a bit (kind of like skiing in a way). However, the bus driver recovered nicely each time and on we went. The highlight of the bus ride came when the driver pointed out a herd of elk. As we watched, a couple of the males began fighting. That was cool! The rest of the trip was long (booo!) and uneventful (yeaaaaah!). We got home around 8 pm and everyone said goodbye - tired but pleased over a very good trip.