

The Everlasting Magic of Aspen

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It all started in Monte Carlo when I first heard of Aspen from a devastatingly handsome guy who stole my heart in a fraction of a heartbeat. Later I learned that for whatever strange reason, men and women are equally gorgeous wherever you look in this town, just like my ten-year-long romance with Aspen has been—as if Aspen and Monte Carlo had something in common. In the middle of expensive, elegant, sexy, classy partying, you make connections that last a lifetime. Is this because people are gorgeous and irresistible? Or, is this because of the personality they all seem to share? Elegance coupled with a laidback approach are both at work at the same time. There is something really special and inviting about such ambiance. Add that to Aspen's own magical touch, that intriguingly inspiring charm you cannot find anywhere else, and you understand God's mischievous creation for fun everlasting!

The fresh greens in regal mountains, the crispy cool breeze, and the snow-covered heights even in the summer can easily outdo islands or even majestic oceans. The scenery is powerful with a fairytale-like overwhelming beauty. The mountains envelop you, make you feel safe, and encourage you to just be yourself. Altitude baby—not attitude. Down and dirty, as close to Mother Earth as can be, yet closer to the sun because of its 11,000-foot elevation is really a cool way to live. Running into a bear or two in your backyard, or (God forbid) your kitchen is not a surprise. While I am hesitant about which “weapon” I should equip myself with—just in case—natives aren't bothered by it. They just lock their trash and start sipping wine after a day spent enjoying strenuous or even dangerous sports. Any better way to finish the day?

Aspen is talked about as a ski paradise. However, this place is so much more. Summers here are almost better than winters, although personally I prefer to describe it as a year-round paradise, which fits the magic of Aspen the most.

Living such a refreshing and rejuvenating life in the mountains, one cannot help but realize that life in a big city is merely

a human-made illusion. It comes with the chaos of the 21st century, the electronic age. The folks in the mountains have a better grasp of it core: somehow life feels real here, as it was meant to be, lived at a speed that is more congruent with humans than electronics. And then there are the rest of us: running at the speed of an Energizer bunny — just as advertised. Mass consciousness and we pretty much belong. But being different is courageous. And, in return, courage makes a difference. Life of the mountains, the life of Man! That feels to me the motto in Aspen, Colorado.

If you want to grasp a good picture of it all, try some of the local delicacies, such as **Wienerstube** for breakfast. Talk about being a country girl and eating for two even if you are not pregnant. Old-fashioned hearty and thick plates. Forget fat-free, this is mountain style living in and out. A very different ambiance with a hip, upbeat feel is what you get at **Campo de Fiori** for dinner. David, a good looking local (representing well for Aspen) will make you feel right at home adding to the charms of a Positano-like Italian restaurant with tons of fun and outstanding food. You will come back over and over again.

A much more elegant setting at **Syzygy**, with its world-class cuisine and live jazz at night is an absolute must for anyone. The locals gather here regularly and Syzygy is also known for sponsoring an array of events in town, such as the world famous **Aspen Food and Wine Classic** every year. Those looking for memorable party times should venture over to **Jimmy's** for the most fun in a bar setting always packed to the max. The steak is great, but this bar is a must for those settling in for drinks and spreading their antennas. Should you be lucky enough to be invited by a member of the world renowned and private **Caribou Club** that is talked about as the “**Best club in America**,” you will find yourself amongst the movers and shakers of Aspen along with a good number of celebrities and dignitaries from around the world. Whether you are a guest or a member, it is a privilege. Just in case the late night partying wears you out, the **Aspen Club & Spa**, a one of a kind, state-of-the-art full service spa will put you right back on track. Located in a scenic mountain setting with a full size swimming pool, indoor and outdoor Jacuzzi, steam rooms, sauna, juice bar, spa services, trainers, beauticians and even chiropractors, it has amenities to satisfy all worldly desires and give you a glimpse of the good life!

Although Aspen has the best hotels in the world, being a part of the local way of life is best achieved by staying in their homes. **Andy Calvetti** can recommend rentals and Jonny Aspen, formerly at Stefan Kaelin's exclusive ski store, will tell you insider tips.

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