

LEFT BRAIN/RIGHT BRAIN ASPEN

Aspen boasts an inordinate share of *Forbes* list billionaires. Why is this once small mining community now a glam paradise for the über-rich? It's got it all: Besides its magnificent natural setting and outdoor pursuits, it's got beauty and brains, activity and creativity. There's the influential Aspen Institute's Aspen Ideas Festival in June, which is almost entirely left brain, and music, ballet, art, and abundant other cultural activities that are decidedly right brain. But no need to be a billionaire or pick a dominant hemisphere to enjoy time in one of our favorite mountain towns. In Aspen, it's all good.



HOTEL JEROME



THE ST. REGIS ASPEN RESORT

STAY

DANCING BEAR ASPEN: From the crimson velvet embossed bathroom wallpaper to the lustrous gold silk ruffled bed pillows, this private residence club makes you feel warmly at home in a sensory playground that is anything *but* home. Where else can you indulge in breakfast made to order while lounging in the rooftop spa with one of the best views of downtown, only a few blocks from Colorado's most renowned ski slopes? **970.236.6640, www.dancingbearaspen.com**

HOTEL JEROME: Now sporting a multimillion-dollar design transformation and historic restoration, this landmark hotel with 94 guest rooms was originally opened in 1889. Built in the early silver-mining days, it was a luxury property even then. In true Aspen style, the hotel is historic and grand—like a business baron's home—but with its thoughtful renovation, it's also very contemporary. We think Aspen icon and hotel founder and namesake Jerome B. Wheeler (half-owner of Macy's) would approve. **855.331.7213, hoteljerome.aubergeresorts.com**

THE ST. REGIS ASPEN RESORT: The St. Regis Aspen's 2011 \$40 million redesign means new rooms, including one "emulating a guest suite in a historic late-19th-century mountain manor." On a recent stay, we were in room 307—marble bathroom, French windows letting in the crisp mountain air, and pine trees just outside. Vacationers longing for the thrill of the hunt should set their aim on St. Regis' new hunting clinic, instructed by the Aspen Outfitting Company and offered through early March. Guests of the three-day, four-night clinic enjoy tailored, intimate lessons, plus a complimentary room upgrade at the hotel. **970.920.3300, www.stregisaspen.com**

TIMBERLINE CONDOMINIUMS: Staying in Aspen doesn't have to break the bank, especially in the summer. At Timberline Condominiums, you can reserve a two-bedroom, two-bath unit with a fireplace (June nights in Colorado can still be chilly!) for less than the cost of dinner at Matsuhisa Aspen. Plus, you'll have an excuse to buy extra goodies at the Saturday market to cook in the fully equipped kitchen. What could be better than goat cheese *crostini*, a glass of wine, and a free DVD rental from the front desk? **800.922.4001, www.thetimberline.com**

EAT

520 GRILL: Named after its opening date of May 20, 2010, 520 Grill offers guests traditional American cuisine with a twist. Chefs Troy Selby and Wheaton Augur use fresh, locally sourced ingredients (Colorado all-natural beef for burgers, Red Bird turkey from the Front Range in Boulder, and area produce in the summer) to provide a dining experience that is both healthy and filling. **970.925.9788, www.520grill.com**

AJAX TAVERN: Enscorced at the base of Aspen Mountain in the Little Nell, Ajax

DAVID BURKE KITCHEN ASPEN**EIGHT K RESTAURANT**

Tavern is a favorite après-ski spot, not least because of its smashing mountainside patio. Try the truffle fries with *Parmigiano-Reggiano* and strawberry lemonade created with fresh strawberries and house-infused vodka. **970.920.6334**, www.ajaxtavernaspen.com

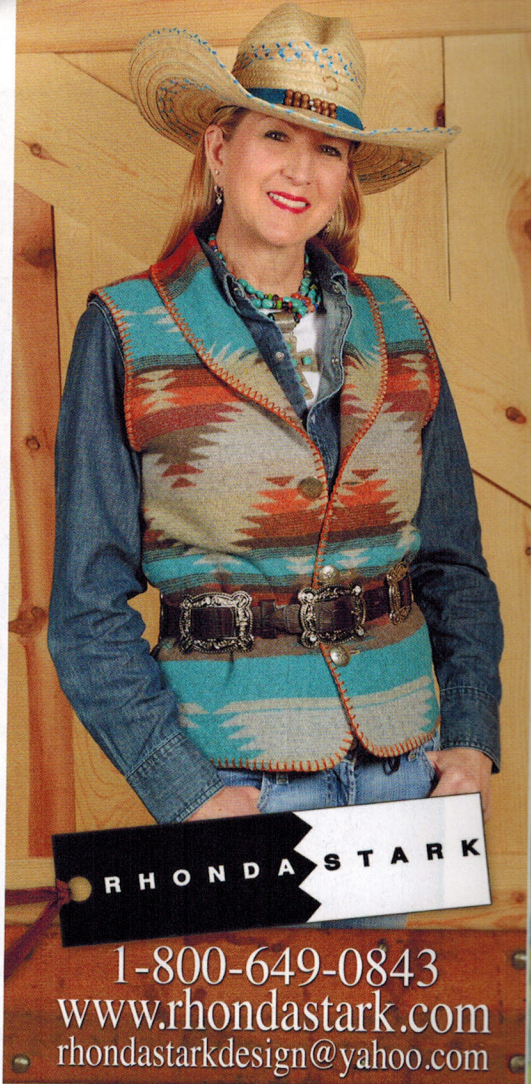
BB'S KITCHEN: Opened in 2011, bb's is a favorite local gathering spot. Serving American comfort fare with a farm-to-table emphasis, the kitchen rarely misses, whether it's serving up a Gioia Cheese *burrata*, Crispy Boulder Half Chicken, or Peanut Butter Bon Bon. No wonder Mario Batali came back three times during Aspen's *Food & Wine Classic* and tweeted about it. Bluesy music, just-baked breads, and a view toward Independence Pass complete the allure. **970.429.8284**, www.bbskitchen.com

BREXI BRASSERIE: Take a glance in the mirror behind Brexi's impressively stocked bar and you might see yourself in Manet's *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*. But instead of a glass of Beaujolais, your reflection might reveal a fine Colorado IPA. This traditional French brasserie offers tasty bistro bites at a reasonable price. The Colorado striped bass with roasted red pepper couscous followed by the profiteroles melds some of the best flavors of Colorado and France. **970.925.2838**, www.brexi.aspen.com

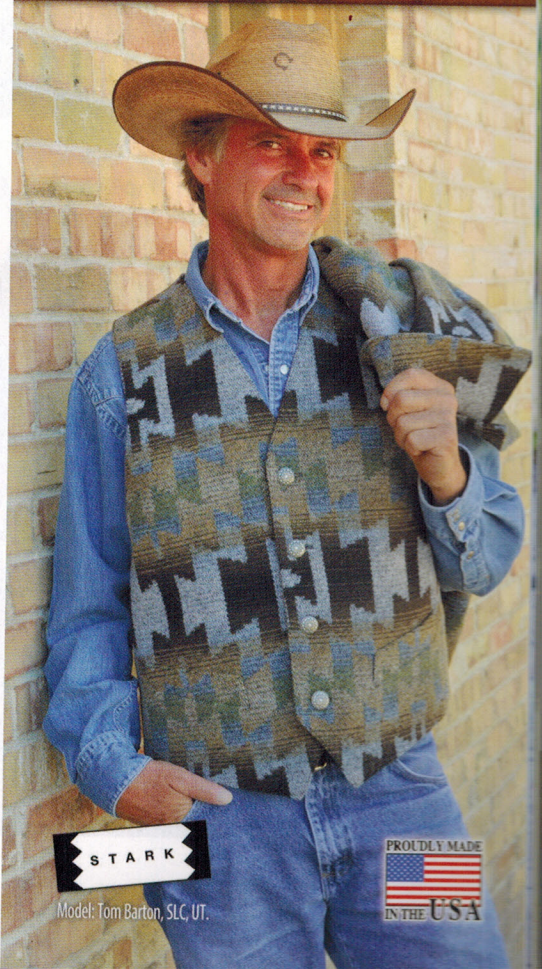
DAVID BURKE KITCHEN ASPEN: Open since March, the contemporary farm-to-table restaurant in the heart of downtown boasts a creative menu worthy of the *Top Chef Master*, like peanut butter maple bacon dates with fried grapes or short ribs with wild mushroom, cavatelli, and black truffle mousse. Don't miss chef Burke's signature dry-aged patented beef—or the outdoor terrace and its unparalleled views. **www.davidburkekitchen.com**

EIGHT K RESTAURANT: Modern high-tech ambiance accentuated by blue neon bar lighting and gold-mesh place mats characterize this hip-crowd space in the Viceroy Snowmass hotel. Eight K's fare is American bistro meets Creole; a varied menu includes barbecue shrimp, duck gumbo, Southern fried chicken, and grilled Angus rib-eye. **970.923.8000**, www.viceroyhotelsandresorts.com

MATSUHI SA ASPEN: This gourmet Japanese seafood and sushi hot spot located inside a blue Victorian draws crowds, who come for the menu's abundant fresh fish that are caught within the last 24 to 36 hours and overnights from the Pacific Northwest and Japan. Often considered Aspen's best restaurant, Matsuhisa offers standouts such as broiled black cod marinated in sweet miso and Chilean sea bass topped with fresh black truffles. **970.544.6628**, www.matsuhisa.aspen.com



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PLATO'S: This restaurant at the Aspen Meadows Resort offers up-close views of the Buttermilk and Aspen Highlands mountains. Try the seared diver scallops or Colorado lamb rib-eye. **970.925.4240**, www.platosaspen.com

PYRAMID BISTRO: Who'd have thought you'd find delicious vegetarian food upstairs from Explore Booksellers in a historic Victorian? This treehouse-like "nutritarian" cafe offers Kale Crunchies with cashew crust and the healthiest nori roll you've ever had (quinoa, chickpea purée, and radishes). **970.925.5338**, www.pyramidbistro.com

STEAK HOUSE NO. 316: This quintessential steakhouse is tucked inside an old 1888 mining cabin that has been redone with red tufted booths. Strains of Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra play on the sound system, and wines are offered on tap. We recommend Lulu's Kale Salad and the prime New York strip. **970.920.1893**, www.steakhouse316.com

SHOP

PITKIN COUNTY DRY GOODS: Few can resist the Chan Luu wrap bracelets, Blue Duck jackets, and Leatherrock handbags and accessories. **970.925.1681**, www.pitkincountdrygoods.com

KEMO SABE: Much more than hats and boots—but what great hats and boots! Need a leather notebook for your mountain reveries and a hair-on roll-arm bench where you can cozy up while you scribble? This is your place. **970.925.7878**, www.kemosabe.com

DO

In the winter, it's all ski and après ski. In the spring, after the snow melts, it's mountain biking and hiking. In the summer, it's festivals and wildflowers. In the fall, well, that's when the aspens turn and foliage drives are the order of the day. With the possible exception of mud season, there's really no bad time to go. Here are some upcoming events and attractions you might put on an Aspen itinerary. www.aspenchamber.org

FOOD & WINE CLASSIC: "America's premier culinary event" features cooking

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ASPEN

emos and wine tastings by culinary luminaries such as Tim Love and Giada De Laurentiis. June 20–22, www.foodandwine.com/classic

ASPEN SATURDAY MARKET: You may think the *Food & Wine Classic* is the only show in town, but wander away from the circus-sized tents toward the portable ones on East Hopkins to find the best Colorado-based produce, arts, and crafts. Open Saturdays 8 a.m.–3 p.m. from June 14 through October 11. After Labor Day, hours are 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

ASPEN SUMMER WORDS: At this series of writing workshops, you will be exhorted to: “Explore the written word. Celebrate the literary arts.” June 14–18, www.aspenwriters.org

ASPEN IDEAS FESTIVAL: Hosted by The Aspen Institute and *The Atlantic*, this defining event gathers thinkers and leaders from around the United States and abroad to discuss their work, the issues that inspire them, and their latest ideas in stimulating seminars, forums, interviews, and lectures that are open to the public. June 24–July 3, www.aspenideas.org

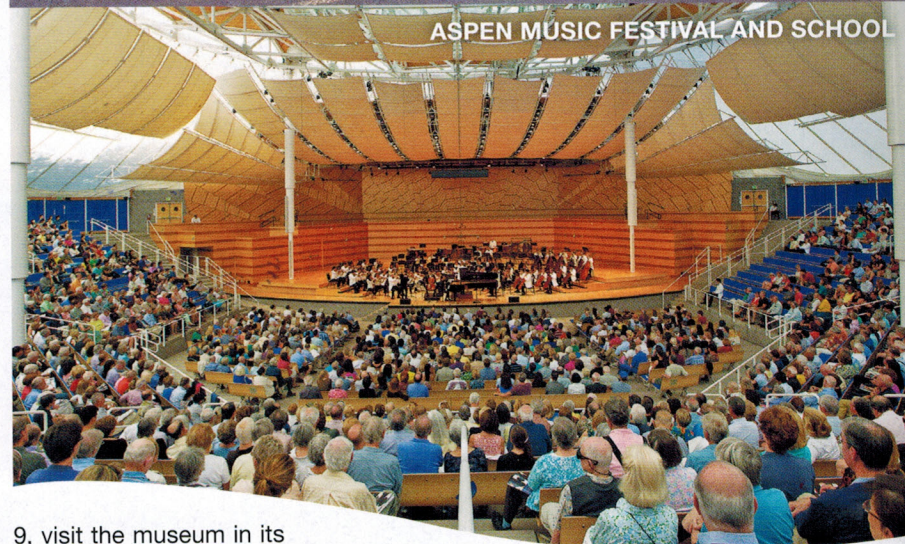
ASPEN MUSIC FESTIVAL AND SCHOOL: You must apply to the school, but anyone can listen at the festival. June 18–August 17, www.aspenmusicfestival.com

JAZZ ASPEN SNOWMASS JUNE FESTIVAL: The two-week event features four nights of headline concerts from the likes of Diana Krall and Tony Bennett. June 19–28, www.jazzaspensnowmass.org

SNOWMASS RODEO: Start with a plate of award-winning Hickory House barbecue and then settle in for the action-packed show. Every Wednesday night mid-June to mid-August, www.snowmassrodeo.org

DOWNTOWN ASPEN ART FESTIVAL: This free outdoor art festival showcases a variety of visual artwork by the nation’s best artists. July 26–27, www.artfestival.com

ASPEN ART MUSEUM: Starting August



9, visit the museum in its new downtown location designed by Japanese architect Shigeru Ban. Inaugural exhibitions in the much larger space will be led by Yves Klein and David Hammons. Admission to the museum is free. www.aspenartmuseum.org

ASPEN PARAGLIDING: For a bird’s-eye view of some of the country’s most beautiful terrain and the world’s most expensive real estate, take the leap with an Aspen Paragliding tandem guide. Fly in January and sail over Aspen Mountain skiers or soar in September and see the aspens turning for a golden experience. www.aspenparagliding.com

HIKE

SILVER QUEEN GONDOLA ON ASPEN MOUNTAIN: Boasting spectacular panoramic views of the city of Aspen and the Elk Mountains, the gondola takes 18 minutes to climb 2.5 miles to the summit. www.stayaspensnowmass.com

UTE AVENUE TRAIL: This hiking and biking trail off Highway 82 crosses the Roaring Fork River and is lush with oak trees, aspen stands, conifer trees, serviceberries, lilacs, irises, and woodland wildflowers. www.aspendestinations.com

CONUNDRUM HOT SPRINGS: Tucked away in the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness Area, this 8.5-mile out-and-back hike rewards you at the top (11,200 feet) with a therapeutic soak in the natural spring pools. Follow the valley floor trail up a steady incline through dense forests and parabola framed wide-open spaces until you reach the springs. Don’t be surprised, however, if you find yourself communal bathing with some nudists. Clothing is optional at this hippie dip.

—Wolf Schneider, Jaime Netzer, and Amanda McCracken