

# VOGUE

CONCIERGE

## Great escape

Savour the splendour of ASPEN and a cruise along Croatia's DALMATIAN COAST, as well as a DOM PERIGNON lunch in Melbourne.

*The twin peaks of the Maroon Bells tower over Maroon Lake, about 20 kilometres from Aspen.*



# America's best-kept secret

One of the world's most FAMOUS celebrity ski resorts, ASPEN shrugs off its glitzy winter coat to emerge as a THRIVING centre for ARTS and CULTURE.

Photographer MICHAEL WEE Writer FREYA HERRING



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Aspen, Colorado is world-famous as a winter playground for the rich and famous. But what about when there's no snow (and no celebrities) in sight; what do people do then? Trade places with the local black bears — who emerge from their winter dens as the snow melts — to rest, recover and hibernate until the next ski season?

Nothing could be further from the truth, because, although it's little known to people outside the US, this small community of some 7000 people is a hive of activity when the weather warms up. In fact, the town's busiest month for tourism is actually July, right as the Northern Hemisphere summer kicks into gear.

That is because Aspen is so much more than a celebrity ski resort. Boasting some of the grandest accommodation in the US, incredible dining experiences and amazing art collections, snow really is near the bottom of the list of attractions in this vibrant place.

Chicago industrialist Walter Paepcke visited Aspen in 1945 and, inspired by its natural beauty, he decided to help revitalise the once-booming silver mining town. He brought in Bauhaus master Herbert Bayer the following year and the two men began turning Aspen into an artistic centre. They founded the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, erected new buildings and faithfully restored those that were falling apart, including the imposing Wheeler Opera House and the historic Hotel Jerome.

Today, the public can visit The Aspen Institute's permanent exhibition of Bayer's work. The campus also includes examples of his extraordinary buildings. It's an education in post-Bauhaus design. "Bayer designed architecture and created the first earthworks," says institute curator Lissa Ballinger. "He designed typefaces, tapestries, paintings, tea sets, atlases — he did everything."

Aspen's evolution into a place of art and creativity continues today, as seen in the 2014 opening of the Aspen Art Museum building, designed by Pritzker Prize-winning Japanese architect Shigeru Ban.

Strikingly contemporary in contrast to much of central Aspen — which is populated mostly by traditional, alpine-style buildings — the museum is an elegant glass box wrapped in a screen that resembles strips of wood. "Shigeru's vision was based on transparency and open view planes," says museum director Heidi Zuckerman Jacobson. "He invited those outside to engage with the interior and the art, and those within to see the surrounding landscape."

Visitors enter the museum at street level and climb to the top via the Grand Stair. "After visiting Aspen, Ban's design incorporated his observation that people who ski or snowboard ascend to the top of the mountain and descend to see the views," Zuckerman Jacobson says.

If that wasn't enough for art lovers, there is also the new Powers Art Center in Carbondale, 46 kilometres north-west of Aspen. Also opened in 2014, the centre has an extensive collection of pop artist Jasper Johns' works, and is worth a visit for the stunningly pared-back Hiroshi Nanamori-designed building alone. It is named after John Powers, a lawyer, publisher and avid collector of pop art who lived on the site until his death in 1999. "This was his way of sharing his collection with the community," says centre director Melissa English.

Dining in Aspen is also world class, with Nobu's sister restaurant Matsuhisa just around the corner from Hotel Jerome. There's a reason why Nobu's miso-marinated black cod is famous the world over, so



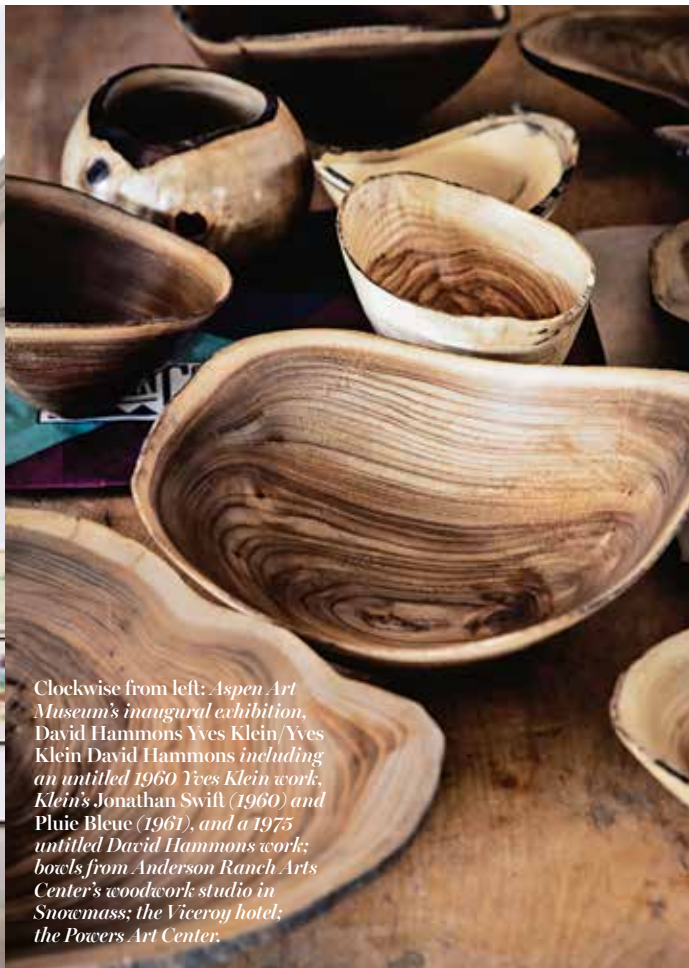
Above, clockwise from top: traditional rodeo; Bauhaus artist Herbert Bayer's *Geometry of an Illusionist* is on display at The Aspen Institute; the atmospheric lounge at Hotel Jerome. Opposite page, clockwise from top: majestic East Beckwith Mountain is a short drive from Aspen; a view through the woven wooden cladding of Aspen Art Museum; locals fly the flag; Daniels Antiques proudly displays the town's past; alpine architecture.

make sure to try it here; it will not disappoint. There is excellent coffee (made by Australians) at Victoria's Espresso, classic diner fare at 1950s-style eatery Boogie's Diner and butter-rich cornbread at Hotel Jerome's Prospect restaurant. The influx of Hollywood's finest throughout the year means there are also plenty of health-conscious, Los Angeles-style eateries. One of the best is Spring Cafe, where delicious, nutritious breakfasts will set you up for the day.

In between meals, Aspen is crammed with activities. You could take a yoga class at 3415 metres atop Aspen Mountain itself; hike through the countryside and satisfy your sightseeing desires, encountering old Wild West ghost towns, wild moose — and maybe even bears — along the way; go hot air ballooning over the Rockies at dawn; or shop at one of the many boutiques. Worth a look are Georgia Brown Home, a phantasmagoria of Americana mixed with international finds, and Daniels Antiques, which specialises in vintage Louis Vuitton luggage and mechanical pieces transformed into sculptures.

One thing is clear: this former mining town boasts a rich vein of artistic and cultural attractions — a resource whose value outweighs any silver strike and will last longer than many ski seasons combined. >





Clockwise from left: *Aspen Art Museum's inaugural exhibition, David Hammons Yves Klein/Yves Klein David Hammons including an untitled 1960 Yves Klein work, Klein's Jonathan Swift (1960) and Pluie Bleue (1961), and a 1975 untitled David Hammons work; bowls from Anderson Ranch Arts Center's woodwork studio in Snowmass; the Viceroy hotel; the Powers Art Center.*

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Clockwise from above: *Aspen Art Museum; Hotel Jerome's lobby; 1950s styling at Boogie's Diner; a clothing stall at a rodeo; the Maroon Bells, two peaks in the Elk Mountains; mustard-crusted trout at Prospect; welcome to Alderfer Antiques.*



### STAY

#### *The Little Nell*

Situated at the ski lift, The Little Nell is celebrated for having some of the most beautiful suites in Aspen. 675 East Durant Avenue, (+1) 970 920 4600; thelittlenell.com.

#### *Hotel Jerome*

Built in 1889 and recently renovated to celebrate its heritage, Hotel Jerome is now one of the most prestigious addresses in town. Dine at the excellent Prospect restaurant and have a drink at J-Bar, Hunter S Thompson's unofficial 'office' and hangout of movie stars Gary Cooper and John Wayne. 330 East Main Street, (+1) 855 331 7213; hoteljerome.aubergeresorts.com.

#### *Viceroy, Snowmass*

With each room boasting a fireplace — not to mention a downstairs spa complete with waterfall — this is a stunning option if you choose to stay out of town. 130 Wood Road, Snowmass Village, (+1) 970 923 8000; viceroyhotelsandresorts.com/en/snowmass.

### SHOP

#### *Georgia Brown Home*

One of the most eclectic homewares stores in Aspen. 217 Galena Street, (+1) 970 429 8216; bdantiques.com.

#### *Daniels Antiques*

Pick up repurposed design or vintage Louis Vuitton. 431 East Hyman Avenue, (+1) 970 544 9282; danielsantiques.com.

#### *Alderfer Antiques*

The rugged exterior hides a treasure trove of quirky preloved items. 309 East Main Street, (+1) 970 925 5051.

### EAT & DRINK

#### *Matsuhisa Aspen*

Try casual sushi upstairs or the full Nobu experience in the basement. 303 East Main Street, (+1) 970 544 6628; matsuhisaaspen.com.

#### *Boogie's Diner*

Hearty burgers and thickshakes in a classic Americana setting. 534 East Cooper Avenue, (+1) 970 925 6610.

#### *Spring Cafe*

Enjoy vegetarian fare at this organic cafe. 119 South Spring Street, (+1) 970 429 8406; springcafe.org.

#### *Victoria's Espresso*

Need a flat white? Look no further. 510 East Durant Avenue, (+1) 970 920 3001; aspenespresso.com.

### EXPLORE

#### *Aspen Art Museum*

Both the exhibitions and the

building will delight and inspire. 637 East Hyman Avenue, (+1) 970 925 8050; aspenartmuseum.org.

#### *The Aspen Institute*

Take in the outstanding Herbert Bayer and Bauhaus retrospective. 1000 North Third Street, (+1) 970 925 7010; aspeninstitute.org.

#### *Powers Art Center*

One of the world's most influential private collections of pop art. 13110 Highway 82, Carbondale, (+1) 970 963 4445; powersartcenter.org.

#### *Aspen Farmers' Market*

Enjoy local produce. 8am–3pm, Sundays; aspenchamber.org.

#### *Anderson Ranch Arts Center*

Try a new art or craft at one of the many workshops. 5263 Owl Creek Road, Snowmass Village, (+1) 970 923 3181; andersonranch.org.

#### *Above It All Balloon Company*

Get a birds-eye view of the Rockies with a dawn balloon ride. (+1) 888 927 9606; aboveitallballoon.com.

### GETTING THERE

For more information on the area, visit aspenchamber.org and gosnowmass.com. For flight packages, see travelplan.com.au. **VL**