



Long a favorite of serious skiers and jet-setting celebrities, Vail also draws a hip crowd interested in hiking, biking, snowmobiling or scenery-gazing at any time of the year.

By Lindsey Epperly

There's a reason that this is my first *Southern Views* article on a cold-weather destination: it's my first time traveling to one in over ten years! Always a beach bum, never a snow bunny, I was initially hesitant to join my family for a wintery getaway in Vail.

I was even more hesitant about the trip when I looked at the temperature: the high in Vail would be 11 degrees on our first day. However, when we arrived into the frigid winter, it honestly didn't feel that cold. It's true that the cold we experience in the South is entirely different than how it feels in the West.

The night before our arrival, Vail and the surrounding area had received over nine inches of fresh snow, making for a very scenic drive from Denver as the flurries continued to fall. It's hard to truly dislike the snow when it makes everything look so beautiful.

By the time we reached Vail that evening, the town was illuminated by Christmas lights. We stayed at the Four Seasons, which was cozy and warm from the minute we stepped into the lobby to the minute we walked into our room, complete with a fireplace and view of Vail Village.

The property is located right outside of the village and is an ideal winter retreat. The Four Seasons Vail features an immaculate heated pool, fantastic service, and is just steps away from all of the local dining and shopping of Vail Village, as well as the slopes.

Not only is the Four Seasons amazing, the perks are even better: I'm able to get my clients complimentary breakfast, a \$100 spa credit, and an upgrade if available. Beyond that, this is the first property I've ever visited that allows guests complimentary access to their fleet of GLK-Class Mercedes-Benz cars. Guests can simply sign off and check out one of the brand new cars for the afternoon, no rental fee or anything. Now that's service.

For those who might not be comfortable driving in the snow, the Four Seasons offers a complimentary shuttle service to anywhere in the Vail or Lionshead area, making it easy to get around the neighboring villages.

On our first full day in Vail, we took a snowmobile tour through a fantastic comp pany called Sage

Outdoor Adventures, located about 45 minutes outside of Vail. Sage picked us up from the hotel, transported us to their headquarters, and guided us on ATVs all before we even reached the snowmobiles – just getting there was an adventure. Once on the snowmobiles, we enjoyed a morning of jetting around the breathtaking mountain scenery. It was around this time I realized I might actually like winter weather vacations.

While I try my best not to make vacations into work trips, I just couldn't keep myself from touring a few other properties. While the Four Seasons was easily my favorite in Vail, another top contender was nestled in nearby Bachelor Gulch, right beside the village of Beaver Creek.

When we arrived into the frigid winter, it honestly didn't feel that cold. It's true that the cold we experience in the South is entirely different than how it feels in the West.