



HOMEGROWN CHAMPION

Four-time overall World Cup title winner Lindsey Vonn on why Colorado is the best ski destination in the world

Text by KEITH GORDON

Lindsey Vonn, America's brightest female skiing star, has basked in her share of Olympic and World Cup glory. Integral to her rise as a world-class skier was her family's decision to move to Colorado when she was a child in order to nurture her talents. As she recovered from a training accident last fall, the Olympic gold medalist spoke to Maxim about her favorite things to do in her home state.

You moved to Colorado with your family when you were young. What was the motivation for the move, and why Colorado?

Mostly the motivation was bigger and better mountains. I grew up on a very small hill called Buck Hill in Minnesota. Buck Hill was great for learning my technique, because it was so repetitive going up and down so many times on the rope tow, but I eventually outgrew it and we moved to Colorado. We chose Vail specifically because my father was a great ski racer and had a lot of connections with Pepi Gramshammer, a Vail legend, and the Vail Ski & Snowboard Club.

How did Colorado impact your development as a skier and future Olympian?

Buck Hill is where I learned the technical aspect of skiing, but if you want speed, you need a bigger mountain. Colorado is where I learned my love for speed and where I became a great downhill skier.

Which Colorado ski area is your favorite?

I've ski raced all around Colorado—Beaver Creek, Breckenridge, Loveland, etc.—and all are fantastic, but I love Vail the most. Great mountains, snow, and shopping—what more could a girl ask for?

Which is the most underrated (or underappreciated) Colorado ski area?

Breckenridge is a favorite resort of mine because there's a lot of history that the town was built on. It's a very laid-back, colorful ski town with great runs for all levels and incredible views.

What are your favorite trails at Vail?

That depends, because Vail has so much to

offer. If you're looking for family-friendly, I would suggest Golden Peak or Lionshead. If you're more experienced, my run ("Lindseys," on Vail Mountain) is pretty challenging: It was the hill for the women's speed events at the Alpine Ski Championships in 1989 and 1999. For powder-heads, the Back Bowls are always spectacular after a fresh snow.

Where would you recommend visitors eat while they're in town?

The one place I can't leave Vail without stopping by is Pazzo's Pizzeria. It's a really fun restaurant where I can be myself. If you're looking for something trendier, I would suggest the 10th, on the gondola in Mid-Vail. They have great food in a great atmosphere, whether you're on the mountain for lunch, having an après-ski, or going for a romantic dinner with a view.

Are there any noteworthy nightlife options in Vail if you somehow have energy after a day on the slopes?

Vail has a pretty excellent nightlife scene

for whatever you're looking for. If I want live music, I go to Shakedown Bar [at the top of Bridge Street], or if I feel like something more casual, the Red Lion is a Vail classic.

Other than skiing, what's your favorite outdoor winter activity?

Unfortunately, I don't have enough time in the winter to do much besides ski—but what I love to do after a long day of skiing is find a hot tub!

What's your favorite warm-weather outdoor activity in Colorado?

I love hiking and yoga. Colorado has beautiful summers, and it's nice to get out with my dogs and enjoy the mountain air.

What's the best warm-weather town in Colorado?

The best warm-weather town for me would be Vail. I spend a good majority of my summers at home there. After the long ski season, it's nice to relax, not have anyone ask for my autograph, and spend time with friends and family.



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Champion skier Lindsey Vonn is the author of *Strong Is the New Beautiful: Embrace Your Natural Beauty, Eat Clean, and Harness Your Power*