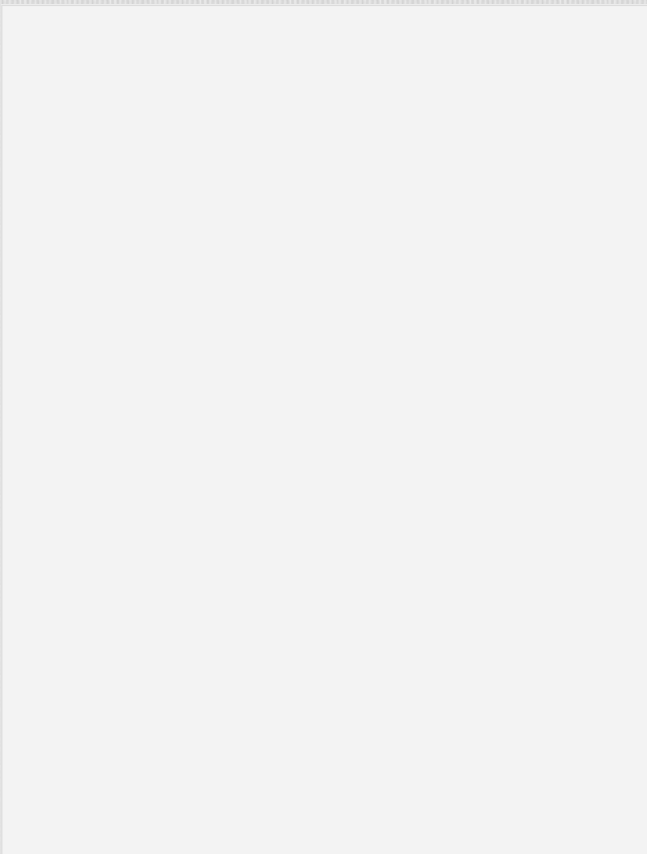




Seasonal Dining at the Grand Hyatt Vail



Colorado resident, Sandy Bornstein, and her husband, Ira, visited one of the state's preeminent resorts where they got to enjoy the springtime menu. Grand Hyatt Vail, in a Bavarian-style mountain village, changes the menu with the season so that regulars always have something new to try and so that everyone, no matter when they visit, can enjoy the new flavors that come with each growing season.



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Seasonal Dining: Tasting the Spring Menu at the Grand Hyatt Vail

Foodies usually take advantage of dining in a wide range of restaurants when they are traveling. However, sometimes it is simply more convenient to remain on a resort property. Such was the case during our spring visit to the Grand Hyatt Vail. A last-minute media trip to this [ski-in/ski-out luxury destination](#) made it extremely challenging to eat at any of Vail's culinary treasures. Instead of becoming frustrated by a lack of available reservations during the COVID mandated seating restrictions, Ira and I chose to remain onsite.

Meet Executive Chef Pierson Shields

We were not disappointed by this decision. Executive Chef Pierson Shields and his culinary staff of twenty-five individuals works hard to keep guests satisfied and did their best to accommodate our special dietary requests



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which focus on an abundance of nutrient-dense foods.

When we visited, the spring menu was being presented. But any time of year, there is an emphasis on delicious and healthful ingredients that take advantage of seasonality.

Affluent mountain communities like Vail struggle finding competent individuals who can work and live in an expensive ski destination. Chef Pierson is concerned. "If the cost of living keeps increasing there will simply be nowhere for us, in the trade/hospitality industry to afford to live." Hopefully, government officials will address this issue soon so that the overall quality of a Vail experience will not be diminished.

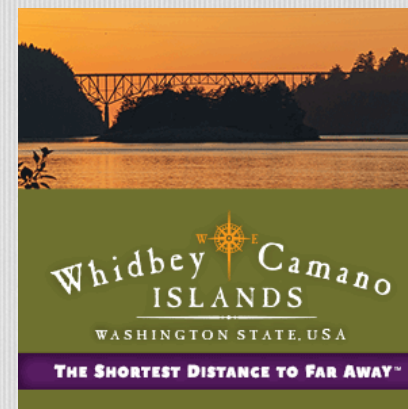
Like restaurants around the world, Hyatt restaurants have implemented numerous pandemic policies. When asked how this has affected his restaurants, Chef Pierson responded, "I think COVID has shown a lot of people the importance of hygiene, hand washing, and not talking too close. If we can stay healthy then we can all enjoy the things we love more."

By having more than one dining location, hotel guests can choose from different menus offering seasonal ingredients. To entice guests to stay onsite, the Grand Hyatt Vail has diverse experiences in its [onsite restaurants](#)—the Gore Creek Kitchen, the Fireside Lounge, and the Gessner Restaurant and Bar. During our two-night stay, we enjoyed breakfast and dinner at the Gessner Restaurant and had a casual lunch in the Fireside Lounge.

Shortly after checking in, we had our first meal in the Gessner Restaurant. Glancing through the menu, we could see how Chef Pierson's Lebanese background and later culinary experiences influenced the culinary options. As a small child, he was introduced to the flavorful spices found in tabbouleh, Laban yogurt, and kibbeh nayeh. Later



Executive Chef Pierson Shields of Grand Hyatt Vail. Photo courtesy Grand Hyatt.



on, his parents took him to professional kitchens near Cleveland, Ohio. After he obtained an undergraduate degree at Chicago's Kendall College, Chef Pierson enhanced his culinary skills working in hotels and restaurants as well as touring with Kenny Chesney.

Looking back on his culinary portfolio, Chef Pierson recalls two mentors who helped shape his career. "Chef Kaeo Yuen taught me how to be tough but also how to motivate people so they can achieve their goals. He didn't give me a pass during the four years we worked together. The other great mentoring chef was Martin Pfefferkorn. His attention to detail and eye for what guests desire is prescient. These two chefs were a positive influence on me."

[Hungry for more? Read about an experience at a Colorado guest ranch.](#)

Nutrient-Dense Dinner

We started with a sweet potato hummus appetizer with vegetables, falafel, and pita served on an oblong tray. This was followed by our halibut entrées, which were seasoned with a bright green pesto sauce. The generous pieces of grilled fish were placed on top of a mound of vegetarian quinoa. Our waiter paired this main course with a Sonoma County chardonnay. An oversized bowl of mixed berries complemented our other healthy choices.



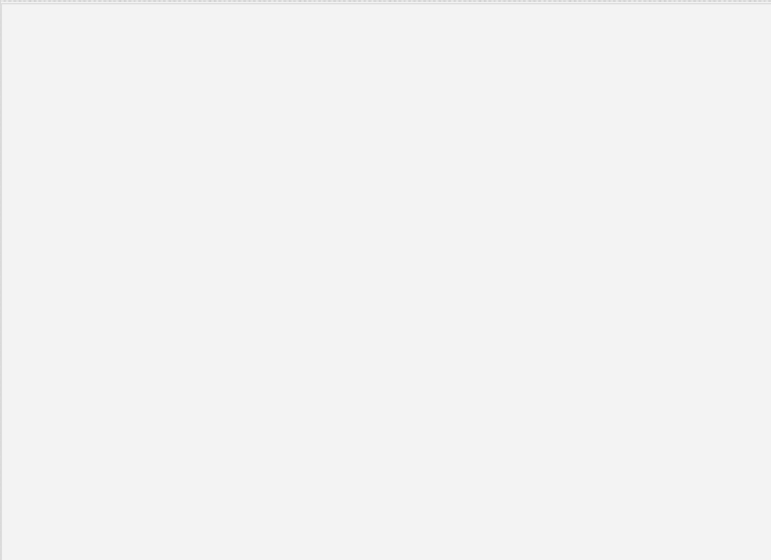
We started with the Sweet Potato Hummus Platter. Photo by Sandra Bornstein.



Halibut was served on a bed of quinoa, topped with a green pesto. Photo by Sandra Bornstein.

Hearty Breakfasts at Grand Hyatt Vail

Before heading out for our two ski days, we ate vegetarian omelets served with roasted potatoes. Our high protein selection provided an energy boost for our aggressive mornings of skiing on Vail's powdery slopes. With ski-in/ski-out access, we merely had to walk a few steps to gain access to the Cascade Chairlift and, at the end of our time on the slopes, follow a special ski trail back to the resort.





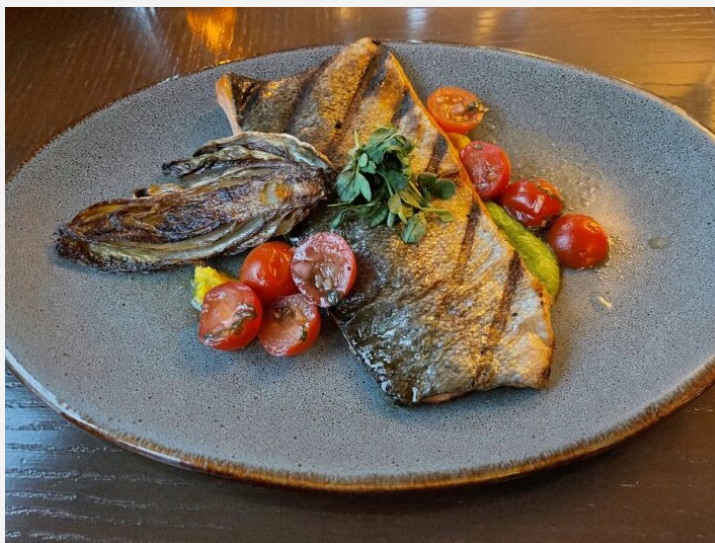
Roasted potatoes accompanied a vegetable omelette for breakfast. Photo by Sandra Bornstein.

Hungry for more? Read about Sandy's Low Country feasting in S. Carolina.

A Medley of Flavors to Enjoy

Our senses were enhanced on our second night when we had a sampling of Middle Eastern and European cooking. A Moroccan carrot appetizer garnished with feta cheese, garbanzo beans, and pumpkin seeds made us reflect on past adventures to Mediterranean destinations.

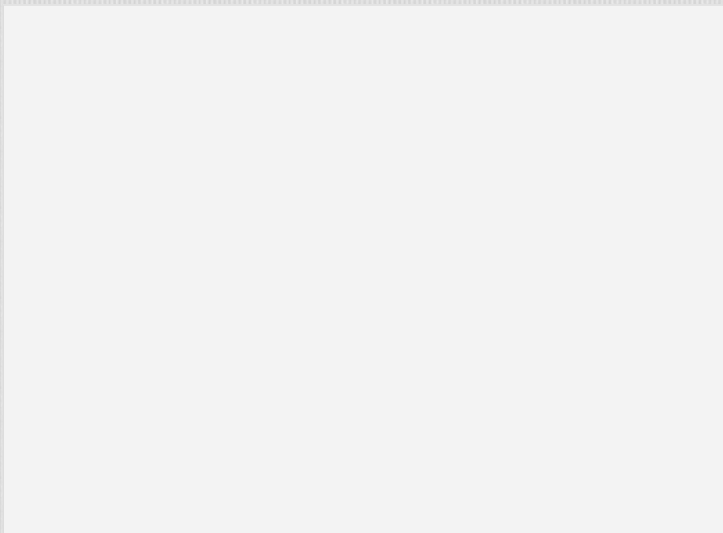
Unlike most Rocky Mountain trout entrées that have an American presentation, this dish was complemented with endive, petite pois puree, preserved lemon balsamic reduction, and tomato vinaigrette which had a European flair.



The Rocky Mountain Trout entree at Grant Hyatt Vail. Photo courtesy Sandra Bornstein.

Grand Hyatt Vail's Romantic Yurt Experience with Champagne Sabering

To conclude our meal, we walked a short distance to the Cascade Village. As bright stars dotted the evening sky, Sous Chef Jarrett Raiguel demonstrated a champagne sabering. Upon entering the nearby yurt, I was handed a glass filled with Chandon Brut champagne and Ira was offered a flavored sparkling water. As we sipped our beverages, we tasted the healthy chia pudding dessert and nibbled on the generous selection of cheeses and meats complemented with an assortment of olives, pickles, and pretzel bread.





Celebrating together in a romantic Yurt. Photo by Sandra Bornstein.

[Hungry for more? Read about Sandy and Ira's celebrations in San Diego.](#)

Upcoming Menu Changes

Guests planning a visit this the Grand Hyatt Vail summer will be treated to an enhanced culinary experience. People sitting by the pool can enjoy a new barbeque menu, while inside the Fireside Lounge will be offering sandwiches, burgers, and healthy salads. The Gessner Restaurant will continue to serve regional Colorado ingredients with a Swiss touch. In addition to these changes, the Grand Hyatt Vail will introduce a Creekside Dinner Series. On six separate dates, a guest chef will prepare a four to six course meal with wine pairing. The notable chefs will be coming in from all over the United States. This event will be limited to approximately 30

people and will be announced by mid-May.

Anyone considering a stay at the Grand Hyatt Vail should be aware that the property is a short distance away from Vail Village and [Lionshead](#). The hotel offers a complimentary shuttle to both locations. Guests can also take a scenic stroll along the Gore Creek Trail. Learn more about the resort on their [website](#).

— *Story by Sandra Bornstein/The Traveling Bornsteins.*

Please note, as is often the policy to help a writer facilitate an article, The Grand Hyatt Vail hosted the Traveling Bornsteins for a two-night stay including most meals. Read our [disclosure](#) page to learn more.

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by Sandy Bornstein | May 14, 2021 | Colorado, Grand Hyatt, halibut, Moroccan, Sandra Bornstein, Sandy Bornstein, The Traveling Bornsteins, trout, Vail, where to eat in Colorado, yurt



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Sandy has visited more than 40 countries and lived as an international teacher in Bangalore, India. Sandy's award-winning book, *May This Be the Best Year of Your Life*, is a resource for people contemplating an expat lifestyle and living outside their comfort zone. Sandy writes about food, family, intergenerational, and active midlife adventures highlighting land and water experiences, historical sites, and Jewish culture and history. You can follow Sandy on Facebook and Instagram.

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