

SKI REPORT: REVISITING COPPER MOUNTAIN

[NEWS](#) [OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES](#) [SKIING](#) [TRAVEL](#) [TRIP REPORTS](#) By **Kühl**

Editor on 03/02/22

Table of contents [hide]

- 1 Accommodations
- 2 Reintroduction to Copper Mountain
- 3 Sawmill Pizza and Taphouse
- 4 Guided Tour
- 5 Downhill Dukes
- 6 Tubing at Copper Mountain
- 7 JJ's Rocky Mountain Tavern
- 8 Final Thoughts

Olympic skiers and boarders competing in the Winter Games demonstrate impeccable skills as they sail down the slopes. Their pathway to becoming part of the U.S. Olympic team includes years of visiting specialized facilities that cater to their needs. Many members of the 2022 U.S. Ski and Snowboarding team began their journey at [Woodward Mountain Park at Copper Mountain](#), Colorado's only summer snow park. During our recent visit to [Copper Mountain](#), Ira and I sat on a chairlift with a bird's eye view of one of these training areas, as well as the slopes where members of the US Ski and Snowboarding team practiced and qualified for the team.

While Woodward Mountain Park and the [U.S. Ski Team Speed Center](#) are impressive, most skiers and boarders choose Copper Mountain. Located 75 miles west of Denver, Copper Mountain's 2,500 acres of naturally-divided terrain has three peaks, four bowls, and 155 trails. With about a quarter of the runs devoted to gentler terrain, newbies and families traveling with young children have plenty of runs to explore. Unlike other resorts where it is possible for beginners to inadvertently end up on a trail beyond their ability, Copper Mountain's unique topography prevents this from occurring.

Decades ago, when I was a beginner, I was thrilled that I could make wide turns on green runs without expert skiers diverting my attention. Novices can stay on the west side of the resort while intermediate boarders and skiers gravitate to the center. Expert skiers head east and to the back bowls where they don't have to worry about beginners.

Accommodations

We celebrated Valentine's Day with a two-night stay at the [Element 29 Hotel](#), a 127-room, limited-service hotel adjacent to Ten Mile Creek. After almost 50 years operating as a ski resort, Element 29 became Copper Mountain's first hotel in the spring of 2021. With an abundance of condominium options already available at Copper Mountain, this four-story building offers visitors the option of staying in a modern hotel in a convenient location. It should be noted that when this story was written, the hotel did not have a restaurant. After checking in, we were able to take advantage of an extraordinary, sunny Colorado afternoon by skiing for several hours.

Reintroduction to Copper Mountain

To meet Olivia Butrymovich, the communication coordinator for Copper Mountain, we walked a short distance to the Center Village where the three of us rode the American Eagle lift. From the top of the lift, we skied down the Rhapsody and Main Vein runs to the base area where we took the American Flyer chairlift. After exiting the chair lift, we skied down the Highpoint and Coppertone trails so we could hop on the Rendezvous chair lift. Near the top of the lift, we stopped to admire the panoramic view of portions of the Tenmile and Mosquito Ranges.

Our spirits were soaring as we headed to Copper Bowl where we skied down the Otto Bahn trail to the two-person Blackjack chairlift. We skied down the Union Park and Sluice Trails to the Coppertone trail and then eventually went to Skid Road which led to the Super Bee chair lift in the East Village. At the top of the Super Bee chairlift, we stopped for pictures before heading further down the Copperopolis Trail.



Ira and Sandy pose for picture at top of Otto Bahn trail

As shadows started to engulf the runs, we returned to the Center Village by skiing on Bouncer Trail. After a 40-year hiatus from skiing at Copper Mountain, Olivia offered us a quick paced overview of the original resort, as well as the expansions and updates that have been made in the last few decades.

Sawmill Pizza and Taphouse

Smaller ski resorts tend to have fewer dining options that appeal to health-conscious audiences. People on special diets can prepare their own food in a rented condo or deviate from their normal diet for a few days. Since we were staying in a hotel, we needed to be flexible, especially since some food options were not open on specific weekdays.

An afternoon of skiing peaked our appetites. We strolled back to the base of the mountain in the Center Village to dine at the [Sawmill Pizza and Taphouse](#), Copper Mountain's newest restaurant. This popular eatery was filled with families interspersed with a few couples. None of the seats at the bar were available. We followed the trend of ordering a custom pizza made with hand-tossed pizza dough and the restaurant's signature pizza sauce.



Custom made pizza at Sawmill Pizza and Taphouse

To satisfy our immediate hunger pangs, we shared a house salad made with romaine, baby greens, cucumbers, grape tomatoes, carrots, and croutons. This was a wise choice, since the wait time for our pizza made with an assortment of vegetables was about 45 minutes.

Guided Tour

The next morning, we took advantage of a half-day [Copper Guide](#). With decades of mountain experience, Todd Casey gave us a world-class tour that matched our skiing ability and tempo. Part of the morning was spent on runs that we had skied the day before while the rest of the time was spent on green and blue runs in unfamiliar territory.



Taking in the views on a bluebird day at Copper Mountain

The trail system allowed us to move freely between the western, central, and eastern sections of the resort. We stopped for a moment to watch some boarders navigate Central Park and other terrain park areas. During our guided tour, we were content to simply enjoy the pristine environment. Since it was mid-week, the lift lines were minimal.



Terrain Park at Copper Mountain Ski Resort

The evening groomers had done a superlative job preparing the slopes for a fresh day of skiing. We did not encounter any icy or crusty spots left over from an afternoon melt followed by freezing nighttime temperatures. Instead, we came across an abundance of corduroy and well-groomed runs.

Downhill Dukes

To maximize our desire to enjoy the bluebird day, we patiently waited for a seat on the south facing outdoor patio at [Downhill Duke's](#) in the Center Village. As I consumed a Southwestern inspired quinoa bowl with grilled salmon, roasted tomatoes, sweet corn, avocado, red beans, toasted pepitas, and scallions, Ira munched on a seared salmon sandwich served on a toasted telera bun with sliced avocado and island slaw. Our unobstructed view of the base area allowed us to watch skiers coming down multiple runs and boarders tackling the impressive Superpipe.



Quinoa & salmon bowl at Downhill Duke's

Our leisurely lunch left little time for more skiing or the opportunity to snowshoe or ice skate. We needed to return to our guest room to get ready for our first-time tubing experience in the East Village. Gridlock from an earlier I-70 accident caused the local roads and adjacent highway to be impassable. Instead of driving, we walked the short distance.

Tubing at Copper Mountain

To reach the top of [Copper Mountain's tubing hill](#), we rode the magic carpet. This outdoor conveyor belt system allowed us to reach the summit with minimal effort.



Magic carpet to top of tubing hill

On the tubing hill, several attendants positioned the participants in one of four lanes. With a gentle push, we headed downhill in separate tubes while facing one another with our legs intertwined. Sometimes, our tubes switched direction and hit the steep icy embankment while other times our tubes went speeding downhill. Within a matter of a few seconds, we were at the bottom and walking back to the magic carpet dragging our tubes behind us. On a couple of occasions, we started downhill in a spinning rotation and other times we were placed in a different configuration.



Sandy and Ira get ready for tubing adventure at Copper Mountain

This exhilarating activity is great for couples and families with children over the 36-inch height requirement. When our hour time slot was completed, we were glad that we had taken advantage of another first-time activity.

JJ's Rocky Mountain Tavern

We ended the day in the East Village at the adjacent [JJ's Rocky Mountain Tavern](#). People stranded by the highway closure clogged the entryway. As a result, our wait time was considerably longer than anticipated. Once again, nachos, burgers, pizza, and beer were the main draws. A handful of salads, some pasta entrees, and an assortment of tavern entrees rounded out the menu.

When it was time to head back to our hotel, we were surprised that the roads remained congested as security personnel went from car to car with updates on the highway closure. Fortunately, we were not leaving until the next day.

Final Thoughts

We enjoyed our media opportunity to visit Copper Mountain before the crowds arrive next season to celebrate the resort's 50th anniversary. Even though the pandemic slowed the construction of some of the scheduled projects, the resort has matured considerably since our last visit more than 40 years ago when you could use one pass to ski Summit County's four ski areas—Arapahoe Basin, Breckenridge, Copper Mountain, and Keystone Resort.

Even though each phase of the resort's development introduced improvements, the long meandering runs with a laid-back feeling enhanced by spectacular views remains intact. After skiing a couple of days at Copper Mountain, I can see why I was disappointed when it was no longer possible to ski all of Summit County on one pass.

Disclosure: Copper Mountain Resort hosted The Traveling Bornstein's 3-day stay at Copper Mountain.

When Sandy Bornstein isn't trekking in Colorado or writing, she's [traveling with her husband Ira](#). After living as an international teacher in Bangalore, India, Sandy published an award-winning book, [May This Be the Best Year of Your Life](#), as a resource for people contemplating an expat lifestyle and living outside their comfort zone. Among other things, Sandy writes about family, intergenerational, and active midlife adventures highlighting land and water experiences.



Kühl Editor

DON'T MISS NEW STORIES AND STYLES

Get all the news right in your mail

SUBSCRIBE

FEATURED POST



Must-See Sights in Yosemite National Park

Yosemite National Park is one of the most popular and beautiful parks in the United...

READ FULL ARTICLE

SEASONAL FEATURE



A Guide to Salt Lake City's Ski Resorts

Salt Lake City is home to KÜHL headquarters for a reason. Aside from making mountain...

READ FULL ARTICLE

CATEGORIES

[View All](#)

[Adventure](#)

[Travel](#)

[Style](#)

[Food + Drink](#)

[DIY / Craft](#)

[Wellness](#)

RELATED POSTS



Giving Tuesday 2021

The greatest gift of living, is the joy of giving! In celebration of Giving Tuesday and in support of ou

@ KÜHL NEWS



Resort Review: Snowshoe Mountain Resort, West Virginia

If you're a skier in the south or mid-Atlantic, you may not have much experience with a true ski village

ADVENTURE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES



Interview Duncan

KÜHL chats v Cudaway Kni

NEWS

STAY UPDATED

Enter email

SUBSCRIBE

BORN IN THE MOUNTAINS®

 Chat