

# Building Brand Excellence Through Strategic PR

VISIT  
**BIG SKY**  
^ MONTANA ^



# WHAT IS PUBLIC RELATIONS?

- Telling a great story
- Amplifying the message of the destination through earned media
- Marketing and PR can complement each other - but they are not the same
- Earned media can be more valuable by bringing third-party validation - a higher sense of trust than a marketing message





# INVESTING IN PR

- Visit Big Sky saw a need for PR support
- Since then, Big Sky has hosted 50+ A-list media in the destination in winter, summer, and fall
- Produced national in top-tier publications nationally, as well as in Australia and the UK
- "Public relations professionals are more valuable than ever" - Cision State of the Media Report 2024

# BIG SKY IS HAVING A MOMENT

- Community's investment in infrastructure - we always have "news" to feed to writers
- We prioritize PR for the long term - maintaining relationships with media over time
- Media hosting is taken seriously - we only have one chance to WOW them
- "Storytelling is the most powerful way to put ideas into the world today" - Robert McKee, author, screenwriter, editor



Sample of Generated Stories



# VOGUE

## Why Big Sky, Montana Is the Hottest Coldest Ski Resort to Visit This Winter

BY DEVORAH LEV-TOV  
November 6, 2023



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Sample of Generated Stories

# THE AUSTRALIAN



## US resort set to rival Aspen and Jackson Hole

A decade of investment in infrastructure, amenities and terrain expansion has made this mountain world-class snow-sports destination



Visitors might be tempted to join the linedancers at Tips Up.

# THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

## outandabout

6 • PLAYLIST SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA NEWS GROUP SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2024

TRAVEL



Views of the Spanish Peaks and other Rocky Mountains ranges extend to the horizon from the new Lone Peak tram's terminus, elevation 11,166 feet, at Montana's Big Sky Resort. PHOTOS BY BEN DAVIDSON

By Ben Davidson  
Correspondent

It was midwinter and I was on the summit of Montana's pyramidal Lone Peak, elevation 11,166 feet. I reached this lofty aerie with remarkable ease, thanks to Big Sky's new Lone Peak tram, the crown jewel of this sprawling resort, the third-largest ski area in the nation, celebrating its 50th year this season.

Exiting the Austrian-designed, Swiss-built tram into the brisk alpine air, I took in a stunning, 360-degree Rocky Mountains panorama: the snow-dusted peaks of the Madison Range; the nearby Spanish Peaks; the Gallatin, Bridger, Beartooth and Absaroka ranges spreading to the horizon like a vast 3D topographical map. On clear days, Lone Peak summit views reach far to south, all the way to Wyoming's distinctively jagged Grand Tetons. It was pure Rocky Mountains majesty.

It takes only about four minutes for the tram to ascend Lone Peak from a midmountain base to the summit. Skiers and snowboarders take in the views, then descend the peak's steep, 6-mile trail that drops 4,300 vertical feet. Skiers and riders ride the tram back to the midmountain station to continue long, sweeping descents (blue and double blue) on the resort's beginner (green) runs to the town's Madison and Mountain Village bases. After the tram ride down to the village, I checked into a wildlife sighting: a white mountain goat sunbathed on a knife-edge ridge above the tram line. This wild animal is part of a herd that was originally relocated from Glacier National Park, and the resort's skiers have named a few of the intrepid creatures, including "Larry" and "Steve" — regulars on remote ridges. Once back at the midmountain tram base, I strapped on my skis, strapped on my long cruiser ride on the Mr. Ed runs to the Mountain Village base. The Explorer gondola is

# Big Sky HAS A MOUNTAIN OF AMENITIES

A new fast summit tram is the latest offering for skiers and snowboarders



hotel opened in winter 2021 and features ski-in/ski-out access to Big Sky Resort, a three-meal restaurant, lobby bar and lounge, market, pub, bowling alley, two pools and signature Spa Montage. Details: montage.com/bigsky

**Dining** Montana is carnivore country, and wild game dishes (elk, venison and bison) are commonly on the menus along with exotic cuts of meat such as tomahawk steaks and meat imported from Japan and Australia. Vegetarians, pescatarians and vegans should not have high expectations for fine dining but won't go hungry.

Everett's 8800 offers an Alps-influenced menu and a wide deck with an outdoor bar and exceptional views of Lone Peak. Headwaters Grille at the Madison base offers barbecue and local beers. Backcast Bar & Grill at the Montage has piping hot bison ramen. Peaks Chophouse at the Summit Hotel and Horn and Cantile at the Lone Mountain Ranch near the resort are favorites for authentic Montana culinary experiences including steaks and wild steelhead trout.

A unique and very fun on-mountain dining experience is the Montana Diner Yurt, tucked away high in the hills above the Mountain Village. One chilly evening I climbed aboard a burly red snowcat named Rosie (another snowcat is named Ginger), equipped with a passenger cabin and rooftop seating platform for a 15-minute ride to a secluded yurt. We started with a warming bowl of French onion soup, then, after optional sledding, our choice of filet mignon with peppercorn sauce or roasted wild salmon. Sides included garlic mashed potatoes and roasted vegetables. The meal was topped off with Toblerone chocolate fondue with pound cake and bananas dessert. Details: bigskyyurt.com

**Après-ski** Perhaps the best choice for après at Big Sky is the Umbrella Bar, a Euro-style circular spot with a retractable roof. Try the Tram Car IPA from Bozeman's MAP Brewing or the Glacier Glasses cocktail (lemon vodka, lime juice, pea flower syrup and

HOTELS + RESORTS > MOUNTAIN + SKI RESORTS

## How Big Sky, Montana, Became One of America's Best Places to Ski — and Why 2024 Is the Year to Go

Generations of skiers have known Big Sky as a low-key ski destination. But with new luxury resorts and tricked-out lifts, word is about to get out.

By [Gloria Liu](#) | Published on November 29, 2023



Descending the Liberty Bowl at Big Sky Resort, in Montana. PHOTO: MARK HARTMAN

Aspen. Vail. Park City. Jackson Hole. Big Sky? Yes, Big Sky. This Montana ski resort about an hour from Bozeman, which celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this 2023-24 winter season, is finally ready to be included among U.S. ski resort royalty. In fact, it's ready to give its new peers a run for their money.

Big Sky Resort, which is owned and operated by the family-run Boyne Resorts, debuted in 1973 with four lifts and less than 20 trails. Today, it boasts 38 lifts and more than 300 trails, but more than that, it has panache and vibe that's helping it go toe-to-toe with legendary mountains thanks to new luxury accommodations, top-of-the-line lifts, bucket-list experiences, and pure Rocky Mountain snow power. The upgrade comes courtesy of a \$150 million capital improvement plan launched by the resort in 2016, with completion of its infrastructure, sustainability, and community enhancements expected by 2025.



From left: Downtown Big Sky; skiers on the Spotted Elk run. PHOTO: MARK HARTMAN

After a lunch of grilled cheese and prosciutto sandwiches with truffle fries at Everett's 8800, one of the resort's on-mountain restaurants, we go to the Headwaters, another zone with expert-level steep skiing. As we ride the two-person chair to the top, I watch skiers navigate the wind-buffed slope, breaking off chunks of snow that cascade down the mountain and tinkle like bells. Suddenly, an odd movement catches my eye. A teenage-looking skier, dressed in black, is sliding headfirst beneath us. From the chair ahead, Shannon and another skier shout at him to get his skis below him to stop his fall, but as he bounces over a bump, one ski breaks loose, then another. He's well over halfway down and still sliding fast.

Up to this moment, I hadn't thought about how sheer this slope is, but now I'm spooked. We're about to ski Cold Spring, a trail often used as a test run for the Big Couloir. I do a quick head check — I used to race mountain bikes,

## Sample of Generated Stories



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# Big Sky, Montana

Hit the slopes at what soon could be America's best ski resort.



Big Sky is one of the largest ski resorts in the U.S., offering 5,850 acres of terrain. Still, it's often passed over more developed mountains in Colorado and Utah. That's about to change as the Montana resort area enters the first phase of an ambitious 10-year project to make Big Sky one of the top ski destinations in North America.

Skiers are already enjoying the Lone Peak Tram, which replaced the original gondola from 1995 and can reach the resort's 11,166-foot summit in less than five minutes. This season, visitors can also look forward to chairlift improvements that will make for faster, more comfortable skiing. Soon, they'll even have a shiny new place to stay in addition to the Montage Big Sky, which put the town on a luxury travel map when it opened in 2021. High-end hotel brand One&Only has chosen Big Sky as the site of its first resort in the U.S. A new gondola and Ski Lodge restaurant debut for the 2024–2025 ski season, followed by the full resort—with 73 guest rooms and suites, a Japanese steakhouse, hammam-style spa and more—in summer 2025.



A skier at Big Sky Resort in Big Sky, Montana.  
Craig Moore/Getty Images/

*New side to old favorites:* Get ready to swap out the Incan citadel of Machu Picchu high in the Andes Mountains for Peru's Colca Canyon. Or, skip Miami Beach in lieu of exploring Little River, South Carolina, and its highly buzzed-about culinary scene. For truly remote getaways, travelers will likely opt to venture to Greenland or Western Australia for a rugged outdoor adventure, according to Chase Travel.



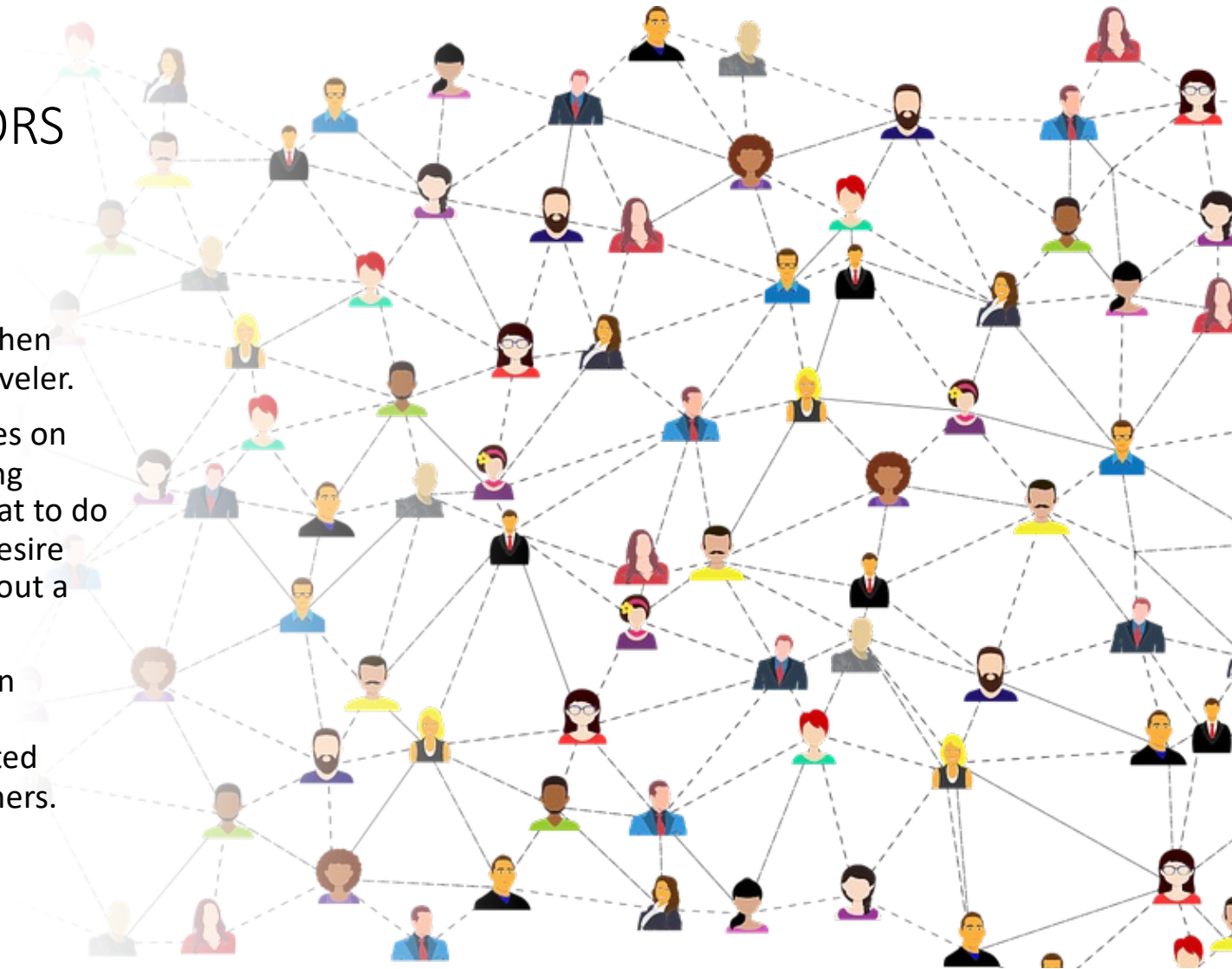
## HOW DO WE MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM?

- Impact - What do you want to be known for?
- Unique stories - what makes you different?
- Timely, relevant news angles - Why is your story interesting now?
- Human Interest - who is making a difference in your community?
- Hosting/Payment - See it to believe it.



## WORKING WITH CONTENT CREATORS (INFLUENCERS)

- Social media is a powerful promotion tool, especially when marketing to the modern traveler.
- Social media outreach focuses on assisting with details including helping people to decide what to do on a trip, create a sense of desire and envy and brag a little about a vacation to Big Sky.
- Hosting content creators is an excellent way to capture the attention of digitally connected Millennial and Gen Z consumers.



# Content Creator Collaborations



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Digital creator

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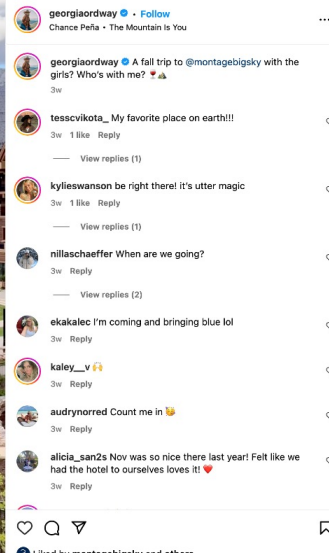
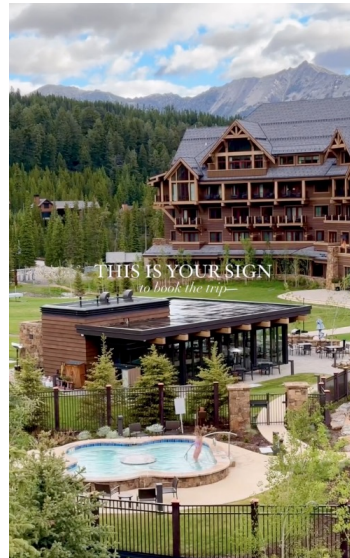
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Award-Winning Travel Creator

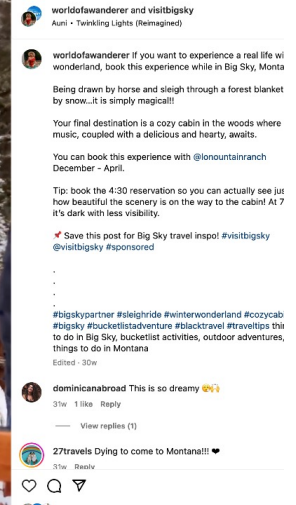
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# MARKETING TO DIVERSE AUDIENCES

- DEAI efforts are incredibly important, and it's not just the right thing to do, but it's good for business.
- Media pitched and hosted should represent a range of gender, race, nationality, and LGBTQ+ qualities to amplify diverse voices to share their authentic experience in Big Sky.
- Diverse media are actively being recruited by publications to ensure their content will be shared to large audiences regardless of their background.





## HOW TO PARTNER WITH VBS

- Share your story
- Potential to host visiting media
- Create media resources such as fact sheets and images
- Promote your neighbors; be a cheerleader for all of Big Sky
- Trust your DMO is a partner in your success

# HOSTING MEDIA

Assist with covering hosting costs, it is an investment in your business

Provide experiences the public can access

Understand media may cancel or pull a no-show

Make it easy for the DMO to do business with you (cover gratuities, pre-payment, invoicing, etc.)

Understand that guaranteed coverage is not possible

Share Media Guests with DMO

A single negative experience can change the tone of the story



A scenic landscape photograph of a mountain lake. The lake is calm, reflecting the surrounding green mountains and sky. A hiker with a backpack stands on a large rock in the middle of the lake. The foreground is filled with large, grey rocks and fallen logs. The background shows more mountains and dense evergreen forests. The word "Questions?" is written in white text on the right side of the image.

Questions?



Thank you for your support!