

TRAVEL

## Hot spots for après-ski warm-ups

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When it's bitter cold in the mountains, there are plenty of hot spots to duck into that offer a warm welcome and a well-made meal. Here are a few favorites, some of them new.

### Aspen: BB's Kitchen

The price is right at the new BB's, a small, chic room with a bar and spacious patio on the second floor of the Aspen Grove Building. The bistro serves exquisitely conceived upscale comfort food — celery-root ravioli with mascarpone and black truffle, pan-seared scallops in caper brown butter, braised short ribs with Jerusalem artichoke puree — with reasonable price tags, about \$18-\$24. Their roster of in-house cured meats and baked items is impressive and delicious, and the wine and beer lists are equally fun and fairly priced. Service is impeccable, but the casual space is a bit jammed — don't go expecting intimacy. Three meals a day, with a delectable breakfast (check out the bananas Foster French toast with butter pecan ice cream) starting at 7 a.m.



BB's makes many items from scratch, including its house-cured meats. (Jason Dewey)

525 E. Cooper Ave., 970-429-8284

### Breckenridge: Modis

The owners of Downstairs at Eric's have had this place since the 2007-08 ski season, and it continues to pack in the swanky crowd, which comes for the rack of lamb and the ahi tuna, the surprisingly decent prices on the wines and the crisp service. The loft is the place to sit, not to be seen but to see — the comings and goings in the dark, romantic restaurant and along Main Street below. The sticky toffee pudding is a good reason not to overindulge, but the rich butternut-squash ravioli is hard to skip from the starter roster.

113 S. Main St., 970-453-4330, [modisbreck.com](http://modisbreck.com)

### Crested Butte: Django's

Tucked into the Mountaineer Square Courtyard, cozy Django's is run by Chris and Kate Ladoulis, a husband-and-wife team who have perfected the art of service (Chris) and cooking (Kate). The food is outstanding; check

out "date with a pig," fresh Medjools paired with prosciutto and creamy lemon, and the cocoa-butter-seared scallops with browned butter caramel brittle and Meyer lemon confit is inspired. The interesting wine list is delightfully reasonable by any standards but especially so for being yards away from a ski hill. It's dinner-only Tuesday-Sunday, but they also offer a special après-ski menu of small plates 3-5 p.m.

620 Gothic Road, 970-349-7574, [djangos.us](http://djangos.us).

### Steamboat Springs: Truffle Pig

With its slope-side location in One Steamboat Place — the firepit-warmed patio is a good après-ski spot — the chic Truffle Pig sounds super-fancy but actually



Carolyn Quimby of Pine sits at Django's wine bar in Crested Butte. (Kyle Wagner, The Denver Post)

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The topping options for the Truffle Pig's flatbreads change daily. (Truffle Pig)

attracts a good mix of ages and has a good kids menu that pulls in families, too. Despite the name, the menu isn't a roster of things drenched in truffle oil — in fact, with the exception of the foie gras appetizer and the outstanding bouillabaisse, the dishes are pretty accessible to the masses: roast chicken, steak frites, braised lamb. Happy hour at the bar, with snacks, can be a madhouse, but that's the way we like it.

2250 Apres Ski Way, 970-879-7470, [trufflepigrestaurant.com](http://trufflepigrestaurant.com)

### **Vail: The George in Vail**

Cheap drinks — about \$3-\$4 — make The George *the* place for 3-7 p.m. après ski. Locals know to get there early (be off the mountain by 3 p.m.) to make it anywhere near the bar or to snag a seat on one of the comfy leather couches. Come hungry because for less than \$17 you can take down tasty things like King crab legs and steak, and the rest of the snack items are about half that. Sure, you're essentially in what feels like a basement — by the way, the George can be hard to find; just ask around if you don't see it right away — but if you're looking for something off the beaten path and less "ski resortish," this is it.

292 East Meadow Drive, 970-476-2656

### **Winter Park: Back Country Grill**

Kobe beef burgers, pork chops done Buffalo-wing-style and sweet-potato fries are top picks at this rustic, laid-back eatery that has two-for-one beers during happy hour, spot-on service and even makes its own drop biscuits and habanero-peach jam (which you can buy by the jar). Not to mention a hot waffle ice cream sundae for dessert. Live music on weekends really brings the townies out, and kids are very welcome.

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