

>> TRAVEL

# At Montage Deer Valley, service gets personal

Utah resort welcomes guests with dogs, ski-boot heating and plenty of other perks

**JENNIFER BAIN**  
TRAVEL EDITOR

PARK CITY, UTAH—The thing that stands out about two nights at the Montage Deer Valley is lobby ambassador John Ostezan.

He's the guy tasked with creating a "warm and welcome environment" in the lobby. You won't find him at a desk or behind a counter. Ostezan roams the lobby, greeting, helping, directing, arranging transportation and talking up the luxury resort and the area. He showed me his favourite nooks (like the bowling alley), told me what time to hit the s'mores campfire, gave me a heads up on the heated ski boot service and escorted me to my room.

The Montage is all about the "highly personalized guest experience" and starts the moment you arrive when you come into Ostezan's orbit.

**Canine cuisine:** I was the first guest to try the hotel's new "canine cuisine" room-service menu in December. Steamed jasmine and seasonal vegetables are topped with a prime burger patty, organic chicken breast, grilled salmon or scrambled eggs and served in silver bowls.

"I guarantee we're going to have people order off the dog menu," predicts chef de cuisine Christian Ojeda.

I also went to the daily meet-and-greet with the hotel's ambassador dogs (Bernese mountain dogs), Parker and Monty.

"In a 1.3-million-square-foot building with every available amenity, the dogs are such an unbelievable draw," says the hotel's assistant finance director and dog owner Brian Reeder. "Everybody loves them."

**People food:** The big food draw for humans is the daily s'mores firepit. There are store-bought graham wafers, milk or dark chocolate and chef-made artisan marshmallows in flavours such as peppermint, cinnamon and mocha.

Of the resort's five restaurants, I loved Burgers & Bourbon. Try rosemary sea salt fries with fry sauce — a "very Utah" mix of ketchup, mayo and Sriracha. Get the Ol' Smoky



MONTAGE DEER VALLEY PHOTOS

Lobby ambassador John Ostezan is the man tasked with creating a "warm and welcome environment" at the Montage Deer Valley in Park City, Utah.

cocktail with Booker's small-batch bourbon, demerara sugar, house biters, peat and orange. Slightly unnerving: the fact the servers know your name and use it.

**Ski perks:** Most guests come for Deer Valley Resort and the Montage offers online ski equipment rentals and quick fittings when you arrive. Compass Sports also warms boots to about 32 C and slips them on for guests. I didn't use their rentals, but couldn't resist having Tyler Lee give

me the preheated boot treatment. Ski valets will carry gear outside and staff will print lift tickets that were ordered online.

Compass staff will even gear up your kids and escort them to and from ski school.

**Non-ski perks:** When money is no object, Montage has private day trips to Arches, Zion, Bryce Canyon and Canyonlands national parks. It also has a snow-tubing park with a magic carpet. More affordable outings,



Parker, a Montage ambassador dog, prepares to chow down on a bowl of canine cuisine. (Dogs can only have room service.)



The resort has a s'mores firepit and guests can make their own daily. Ask John Ostezan for the best time to make one.

such as dog sledding, sleigh rides, snowshoeing and snowmobiling, can be arranged.

The resort has a spa, fitness facilities, a pool and yoga studio, plus a four-lane regulation bowling alley inside a pub.

Alas, the only perk I had time to take advantage of was the free shuttle into town for dinner.

**Rooms:** There are 220 rooms and all kinds of choices, starting with king or double queen rooms, with resort, vis-

ta or peaks views, private balconies or patios.

Rooms average a generous 600 square feet and boast marble bathrooms, gas fireplaces, commissioned artwork and sitting areas.

There are suites and residences, as well. Trust me, though — as lovely as the rooms are, you're here to get outdoors.

Jennifer Bain was hosted by the Utah Office of Tourism and its partners, none of which reviewed or approved this story.

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